

*The days are closing in, the leaves are turning golden and the abundant harvest is being gathered. Autumn heralds a time of traditions, both old and new. Our Elevate artists reflect on the season with words and images to delight and inspire you.*



# elevate **your mood**

bringing colour and inspiration to you

Issue No. 2

## Autumn musings



grasses, reeds and foliage into the displays, connecting with subtle changes each week, as the arrangements emerge in my hands.

This year, we filled baskets with flowers, foraged items and home produce, for the village outdoor harvest festival. Permitted only to hum, there was a poignancy about the gathering, which included journal readings from a local farmer, whose apple orchards and grazing fields surround us.

We continue to enjoy the harvest and it's been a fine year for carrots, squash, apples, tomatoes and lantern fruits, the latter of which are benefiting from the extra heat from the poly-tunnel door and skirt, installed last winter. Meanwhile, the sound of hazelnuts dropping onto our tin shed roof cues ladders and baskets, as we climb on the roof to shovel them down.

*Hannah Lefeuvre, who lives off-grid in Somerset, writes:*

What a glorious start to the autumn. Several bright, sunny days have helped to stave off feelings of the days closing in. The garden is slowing and our annual cut back has begun. We start in the most maintained areas, closest to the produce and home. We are continually seeking to increase light in our mature forest garden and this year, a dramatic hedge, cut from our neighbouring small holding, has benefited our autumn raspberries and poly-tunnel produce.

Our seasonal flower arrangements have become a weekly creative challenge. I love to walk the length of the garden, seeking the odd stem that still has colour, or flowers that have turned, but provide structure. I enjoy mixing herbs, berries,



# Autumn traditions

Stephanie Jalland



October and my pockets are stuffed with irresistible treasure: conkers.



I would normally be taking conkers onto the wards and leaving folk with a little comforting gift from the chestnut trees. Faces light up with delight as they stroke the smooth shell, measure its weight in the palm of their hand and chuckle over how long it is since they last held one. When did you last hold one in your hand? Memories of childhood conker fights lead on to other autumn rituals and traditions.

October for me means Nottingham Goose Fair and even though I haven't been for years the start of the month always takes me back to the smells, sights and sounds I grew up with. Traditionally held on the first Thursday, Friday and Saturday, originally geese were driven into the city centre to be sold on the Market Square, but now a large

goose statue is displayed there to herald its arrival.

Extra 'Goose Fair' buses packed with excitement, winter coats, chatter and anticipation transport everyone from the city centre out to the site at Forest Recreation Ground, transformed into a vast glittering fairground. Returning buses are squeezed full of fairground prizes, candy floss in bags, balloons and sleepy young children.

The 'Cake Walk', the Hall of Mirrors and Helter Skelters are as popular as the stomach churning, gravity defying rides that are added to each year. At secondary school we were envious of who got to go first and report back what this year's 'must have' thing was to come away with: a glowing necklace that never really kept glowing when you stored it in the fridge, k-nockers that bruised your wrists, tubes of plastic to whirr over your head hooting into the air.

One year in the midst of the clamouring noise, music, whirring sirens and flashing lights, one side show held a huge and constant crowd: 'The Man who could Guess

Your Age.' You paid £1 to stand on a box under a bare lightbulb hanging from a cable to be stared at by the man and the crowd. If he guessed your age correctly he kept your £1. If he was wrong you got your money back.

*You cannot go to the fair without eating mushy peas served with mint sauce on a small china saucer eaten with a little spoon.*

*'Under the chestnut tree,  
There waits for me, A sight so marvellous to behold.  
Amidst the autumn leaves, it gleams at me. A conker, beautiful and bold'*

Again and again people of all shapes and sizes and undefinable age to me took the challenge and again and again he guessed correctly to the delight of the crowd, who whooped and cheered each time. In that October night light through heavy coats, hats and scarves, this man could see through us all. He noticed. He took notice of the passing of time and how we all weather, and even though we think we are unique we are somehow all the same at heart.



Image: Lisa Fotios www.pexels.com



## 'Once in a blue moon'

There are two full moons in October: on the 1st and 31st. On the 1st of October 2020, we will see the 'Harvest moon', which is the full moon closest to the Autumn equinox. The expression the 'Harvest moon' refers to the importance of a full, bright moon closest to the start of Autumn, where, from the time before electricity, farmers depended on the moon's light to harvest crops late

into the night. On the 31st of October 2020, we will see the 'Blue moon', a name given to the second of two full moons in a single calendar month. It also refers to an older definition where it is the third of four full moons in a single season.

Because of the peculiarity of lunar orbits, 'Blue moons' are rare, prompting the phrase 'Once in a blue moon'. I would like to express my gratitude to ArtCare and Elevate for making sure that while being a patient at Salisbury Hospital, we do not experience quality art that raises our spirits 'once in a blue moon'; instead, we get to experience art at virtually every corner and we are inspired by that quality.



Olu Taiwo, patient at Salisbury Hospital

**Would you like to contribute to a future edition? See back page for details.**

# Mop fairs



*David Davies writes:*

This wonderful diary piece from the Manchester Guardian (opposite), about Mop or Hiring Fairs, reminds me of the annual Mop Fair in Marlborough that's been an autumn tradition in Wiltshire for over 800 years. The Fair is held around Old Michaelmas Day (11th October) when, tradition says, the devil fell out of heaven into a blackberry bush, cursing the fruit as he fell (so blackberries should not be picked after this date!)

Similar Mop or Hiring Fairs – where labourers, servants and craftsmen would seek employment from landowners for the year ahead – were held across England during Old Halloween in November. At the Fair, a would-be housemaid looking for work might carry a mop (hence Mop Fair) and dairymaids a pail. A shepherd might wear a tuft of wool on his lapel; cowmen wisps of straw, and a labourer an ear of corn. A small token of money from the employer – the 'fasten-penny' – sealed the agreement. The new employee would replace their trade signifier with a bright ribbon to indicate they had been hired. Not long after the 1913 diary piece was written, the hiring part of Mop Fairs began to fade and our modern carnival season now continues part of this 'Mop' tradition.

There has been a long tradition of hospital staff taking part in carnival events as this archive image of Salisbury Infirmary Carnival Week 1930 shows.



Image: [www.salisburyhealthcarehistory.uk](http://www.salisburyhealthcarehistory.uk)

## Description of a Cumberland Hiring Fair *Manchester Guardian,* *22nd November 1913*

"We had a rough night, and this morning the rain continued to fall heavily for some hours after daylight. This stormy weather has denuded most of the trees in the garden, but we have yet one or two in sheltered places that are showing autumn tints....

If they seek a new place the men and boys stand in the street often with a straw in the mouth, but when engaged they join the merry throng amongst the booths and shows of the fairground. The women and girls have a hall provided and suitable refreshments supplied. In the evening there is a dance and often other entertainments...

A fear has been expressed by some that these fairs were dying out. I can assure them it is not so. All the servants, young and old, come to the hiring to see their friends and enjoy themselves, do their shopping, and have a good time."

Thanks for reading. It's been good to be in touch. We'd love to include some of your own reflections in future editions. Why not write a few lines, try a poem or send us a picture, on the general theme of winter traditions?

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