

# WHAT TO DO IN...

# MAY

*Beekeeping, bicycles and elderflower champagne*

In the first of a new regular series, **Mike White** comes up with some seasonal inspiration

## 1 Showtime!

Much more than just prize bulls and well-groomed sheep (though there are plenty of both, if that's your thing) this year's Royal Bath and West show promises everything from art exhibitions and a miniature railway to falconry displays and terrier racing, country crafts and yummy local produce. It's very family-friendly, with a special high-style 'Ladies Day' on Fri 3 June. Advance booking brings serious savings on the ticket price, too. Pull on your Hunter wellies and check the website for full details.

**Royal Bath & West Show** 1-4 Jun, Showground, Shepton Mallet, Somerset. Ff: [www.bathandwest.com](http://www.bathandwest.com)

## 2 All things bright and beautiful

If you've not been over there for a while, we're delighted to report that the Victorian Gothic splendour of Tyntesfield's house and chapel are now scaffolding-free again, the spanking new visitor centre is open for business, and the packed bill of activities and events continues apace. A few highlights of the May calendar include a dusky, torch-lit Bat Walk (Wed 11), a behind-the-scenes Hidden Treasure Tour (Wed 25), expert-led Tree Gazing (Sun 22) and a family-friendly Bio-Blitz (pictured, 20-21 May) - a quest into the estate's fascinating biodiversity, organised by Bristol Natural History Consortium.

**Tyntesfield** Wraxall, Bristol, BS48. Ff: 01275 461900, [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/tyntesfield](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/tyntesfield)



1 From art exhibitions and a miniature railway to falconry displays and terrier racing, you're guaranteed a fun family-friendly day out at the Royal Bath & West Show (1-4 June)



2 Discover Tyntesfield's fascinating biodiversity during their Bio-Blitz event (20-21 May)



# 3



Take a tour of the Chinese herb garden at Bristol University's Botanic Garden and learn about the ancient philosophy behind Chinese herbal medicine (21 May)

### 3 Gardening inspiration

Plants can bring pleasure in many different ways, as this month at Bristol University Botanic Gardens proves. A tour of the Chinese herb garden (Sat 21 May) with Dr Tony Harrison gives a fascinating insight into the ancient philosophy behind Chinese herbal medicine and a chance to see first hand many of the plants used. From 7 May-25 June, the aesthetic side of gardening comes to the fore, as garden designer Christine Pritchard leads an inspiring course in selecting and combining plants for stunning effect in your own garden. The Chinese Herb Garden provides inspiration for a beginner-friendly course in traditional Chinese brush painting (8-15 May) and the glasshouses play host to a course in drawing and painting exotic plants (31 May-5 July). For more sensory delights, herbalist Ann Freeman demonstrates how to capture the heady scents of summer by using fruits and flowers to make your own cordials and elderflower champagne (Thur 26 May).

**University of Bristol Botanic Garden** The Holmes, Stoke Park Rd, Stoke Bishop, Bristol. Ffi: 0117 331 4906, [www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/BotanicGardens](http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/BotanicGardens)

### 4 Bicycle Bella

As summer beckons with all her glorious sun-dappled promise, (and Bristol's Big Spring Ride hoves into view (Sun 8 May, see [www.bristolcyclingcampaign.org.uk](http://www.bristolcyclingcampaign.org.uk)) here's a book for two-wheeled adventuring and the delights of the open road. Written very much for non-bike geeks, this is a welcoming, likeably human book about beautiful bikes and the people who ride them, chock-full of travel, stories and winsome eccentricity.

**The Bicycle Book** Bella Bathurst (Harper Press, £16.99)



# 4

### 5 Give us a ring

Feeling decadent? Contemporary jeweller Diana Porter's latest exhibition of beautiful sparkly things is a collection of show-stopping rings, each one handpicked by Diana herself for its attention-grabbing opulence. From rare gemstones to intricate hand-engraving and wonderfully tactile design, the rings are wearable works of art by 16 leading international designers. Some are true one-offs, created especially for the show - a chance to treat someone special (maybe yourself) to something truly unique.

**Diana Porter** 33 Park St, Bristol. Ffi: 0117 909 0925, [www.dianaporter.co.uk](http://www.dianaporter.co.uk)

### 6 Grow for it!

Love gardening? Wish you knew more about its finer points? The newly established Bath Gardening School offers a series of one-day courses for gardeners of all ages and levels of experience. Class sizes are small (20 or less) and the courses are held in the light and airy Interpretation Centre, tucked away in the heart of Bath's Botanical Gardens. Expect tea and cake, a bit of science and plenty of practical hands-on action, plus an excellent lunch at the nearby Marlborough Tavern. Because of the small group sizes and informal atmosphere, it's easy to focus on what you really need to find out, no matter what the scale of your gardening ambitions! In May there are courses on growing food with a

difference (*A Taste of the Unexpected* with River Cottage's head gardener Mark Diacono, Sat 7 May) and the self-explanatory *A Beginner's Guide to Beekeeping* with Louis Hodgkin of the Bath Beekeeping Association (Sat 14 May). In June you can try *Garden Photography* or spend a cheery day with the 'Bad Tempered Gardener'. Tempted? Give them a call...

**Bath Gardening School** Botanical Gardens, Royal Victoria Park, Bath. Ffi: 01225 317977, [www.thebathgardeningsschool.com](http://www.thebathgardeningsschool.com)

# 5



# 6

Want to get to grips with your garden? Book yourself onto a one-day course at Bath's brand new Gardening School



Show-stopping rings on display at Diana Porter