

NEWS: *What's happening this month...*

Editor's Eye

This month is sure to go with a bang, with fireworks top of the agenda. In this issue, we meet the men behind our local displays – most of us will agree, as we gaze heavenward on 6 November, we've got a lot to thank them for.

Seasonal food is always something worth celebrating, too – read our special feature on local game, where to buy and how to cook it.

Time to at least start thinking about Christmas, which is why this issue comes with our packed Christmas Gift Guide. We at Index are always delighted to be able to support both our local businesses and our local charities – in this area we're fortunate in having a wealth of independent boutiques on our doorstep selling every sort of imaginative gift, and, meanwhile, when it comes to Christmas essentials – cakes, cards, calendars and trees – it's great to be able to buy from a local charity, knowing that profits are going to support their important work. Happy shopping!

The Editor

Charity of the month: **Multiple Sclerosis Society**

(Tunbridge Wells and District Branch)

Around 100,000 people in the UK have the neurological disorder multiple sclerosis, and it's the most common neurological condition affecting young adults.

Some people live with a cycle of MS relapses and remissions; others have a progressive pattern. The linking factor is the unpredictability of the condition, which is caused by damage to the myelin sheaths that protect nerve fibres.

The MS Society is a membership organisation, but provides services to everyone. It funds research and provides respite care, grants, education and training. The society also helps people negotiate the maze of treatments and social care available.

A network of local branches gives easy access to the society's services, and allows

MS

Multiple Sclerosis Society

members to meet up – the Tunbridge Wells and District branch organises monthly pub lunches for members. Christine Stibbard, who co-ordinates the Tunbridge Wells and District Branch, says: "A lot of people, when they are diagnosed, don't want to find people worse off than themselves – but they come round to it in the end. They see people who lead full, happy lives, and they think 'I'll join.' We had an information day recently, and one of the healthcare professionals asked, 'how many of you get fatigue?' All these hands went up, and people's faces lit up – it's very helpful to see you're not alone."

For more information about the Tunbridge Wells and District Branch, contact 0845 603 7882. Details of the society can be found at www.mssociety.org.uk.

Call for entries!

If you're an artist who lives, works or studies in Kent and uses photography in your work, there's still just time to be considered for inclusion in the prestigious Ko-ax Exhibition, which runs at Mascalls Gallery in Paddock

Wood from 19 January 2011 to 19 February 2011 and whose selection panel includes the likes of Simon Baker, Curator of Photography at the Tate. Submissions must be received by November 5 – for details see www.mascallsgallery.org

A little bird told me...

If you've ever watched a bird of prey bearing down on something small and squeaking and wanted to harness those sharp eyes and sharper talons for yourself, now's your chance.

Master falconer Steven Charlton is running activity days for individuals and small groups at Fair Oak Farm, Mayfield. A typical session would involve holding a

raptor on the glove, and then learning how to free-fly an owl or a hawk. Spectators can take it easy in the warmth of a fully-glazed barn with terrace views of the falconry and archery fields.

The morning or afternoon sessions start from £50 for group members or £75 for one-to-one and are suitable for anyone aged over 12. See www.fairoakfarm.co.uk, or call 01435 884122.



Art exhibition brings community together

When Patsy Dixon from Liberty Gallery was asked to put on an Open Art Exhibition for the inaugural Tonbridge Arts Festival she could not have imagined she would end up selecting, hanging and having the private view in one day – but with the help of fellow selection panel members sculptor Guy Portelli and sculptor, artist and Chairman of the SEOS Rod McIntosh – that is what she did!

Over 130 submissions by nearly 100 artists were filed past the selection panel in the manner of the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition – from which over 80 pieces were selected and hung in plenty of time for the arrival of guests to the Private View that same evening.

