2008 - gone but not forgotten

JANUARY
Carole Matthews celebrates the new year by issuing a new book. It's A Kind Of Music follows its 'siblings' straight into the book chart, and into the bedside cabinets of ladies all over the land.

Antiques Roadshow favourites Hilary Kay and Paul Atterbury are at The Stables and as we take down the final remnants of the Christmas season, thecentre:mk go and book in The Caravan Show. It's time to think of those summer breaks.

The Living Archive presents Our Place MK, an exhibition celebrating the Pioneers and Heroes who have crafted the place that we call home, and at MK G all eyes are focused on... Grande Casseolle, an artistic offering by Belgian artist Marcel Broodthaers. It's a casserolette pot loaded with mussels. Takes all sorts.

The fourth festival of literary stuff is a world-y visit in Stony Stratford and MK City Orchestra has a new Principal Conductor, Simon Edwards.

FEBRUARY
The RSPCA comes up with a novel way to re-home its hills of waddles - it holds a speed dating event, helping you to find your perfect pet partner!

In a bid to help you sort your blue kits from your blackbirds, The Parks Trust holds a Bird Identification Walk.

At Aerial Extreme, Leap Year is made more interesting by a Big Leap, raising funds for The Ark Amphilbans Campaign, because half of our amphibian pals are on the brink of extinction.

MARCH
MK Chorale cleared their throats and joined with Fiof Musicali for a concert at the Church of Christ the Cornerstone, and MK Sinfonia visit too for their Spring Concert. Bletchley Park presented a repeat pattern of imaginary corals and environments. 'The exhibition includes the remnants of a bowl of porridge, a shop dummy and a jar of marmalade. Guess what though!' It gets shortlisted for this year's Turner Prize!

Local artist Peter Everdell shows us his skills with a paintbrush and paper as he arrives in our office with a perfectly formed picture of Acker Bilk and his Paramount Jazz Band live at The Stables. We show the work to Acker who is duly impressed, declaring it to be 'very, very good...thank you', he told our man with the perfect brush stroke.

Belfast-born artist Cathy Wilkes brings her creations to MK Gallery with a delivery 'characterised by the creation of a slowly emerging personal vocabulary of sculptures and paintings that the artist makes and re-makes in evolving assemblies and environments.' The exhibition includes the remnants of a bowl of porridge, a shop dummy and a jar of marmalade. Guess what though!

It's at Waterstone's Bookstore, signing copies of his autobiography just in time for Father's Day!

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The 31st Annual Stoke Goldington Steam Rally transforms the usually quiet village into a hub of activity for train enthusiasts. But this event truly has something for all - whether you are attracted to arts and crafts, to live music, bouncy houses or even, wait for it, ferret racing, just some of the many events on offer.

Hula Animal Rescue host a Doggie Fun Day. Did you take your walkies?

Cathy Wilkes' MKG show continues to raise eyebrows. One Go! art critic who attends the exhibition comes close to trashng the display.

A member of the security team had to step in and stop our chap. His crime? Almost stepping on a random, solitary rose pedal in the middle of the floor!

JUNE
Richard Hammond, the motor-loving speed freak from Top Gear, is at Waterstone's Bookstore, signing copies of his autobiography just in time for Father's Day!

Stony Stratford celebrates a milestone this month, as the famed Stony Live music and arts festival, hits its tenth birthday. All genres are covered too: from blues-rock to ball-blocking. Music fans feel the heat at the two-week long event with more than 50 events. Hats off to the small stable of workers who make the event happen year on year, and make not a penny from their efforts.

The same can be said of those busy bees over at Dogfest, another city based music festival which also celebrates its tenth birthday this month.

The Cornerstone Chamber Orchestra launch their new season with a little help from acclaimed local pianist Benjamin Andrew.

OCTOBER
Richard Madeley is in MK without wife Judy, as he promotes his

engrossing new read, Fathers & Sons, a fascinating look into the lives of four generations of Madeley men. “At the start of the story it’s like a Dickens novel, and it finishes in a television studio,” he tells me. “It starts in 1907 and finishes in 2007.”

All eyes reach for the skies around Campbell Park as the annual Fireworks Display and Charley Boorman – recently seen on our screens in his latest travelling tour diary By Any Means – is scribbling his name on books at Waterstone’s.

NOVEMBER
DJ Tim Westwood is touring to promote his joint initiative with Durex which is spreading the safer sex message. He calls in at Buddha Blue.

Musicians come together at Stonabury Campus Theatre to remember a man who was instrumenital in helping MK’s music scene in every sense. Stuart Pemberton, and MK Sinfonia hosts their autumn concert at the Church of Christ the Cornerstone.

DECEMBER
MK Museum and Bletchley Park are two of the best places to go if you fancy a slice of pre-Christmas, seasonal cheer, while Hula Animal Rescue are holding their own open day, and appealing for local folks to donate a few pence, a tin of dog or cat food or even a blanket to help those animals who, having been let down by others, are now being looked after at their Aspley Guise base. It’s Christmas time for doggies and puddle-tats too. And good will to all.