

# Life *Almanac*

March arrives with a calm sense of shift. Not dramatic, just a gentle nudge that the season is edging forward. Days feel a little looser, ideas come more readily, and the world seems to offer up small invitations to try something new. Whether it's a trip, a book, a workshop or a quiet moment to yourself, March is here to remind you that change doesn't need to be big to matter.



WORDS: CAROLINE BLIGHT & EMMA COXON. IMAGES: GISELLE BY ALICE PENNEFATHER; BRIDGERTON; SHADOWLOADS; IS THIS THING ON; THE STITCH FESTIVAL; AND SHUTTERSTOCK.

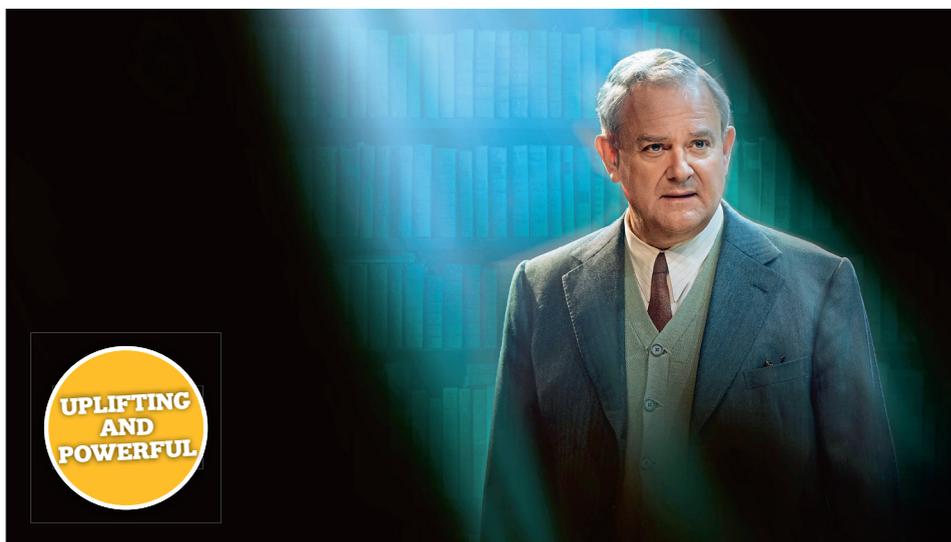
## *Noted & noteworthy*

### **March's Nature Marker: The first bold buds**

Look closely this month and you'll spot them: the brave little buds that appear before we're fully convinced winter is done. Blackthorn blossom, early magnolia, catkins shaking out their colour. March has a way of nudging the landscape awake – a soft signal that the season is beginning to turn, even if the skies say otherwise.

# What's On: March Almanac

This month's Almanac brings you everything worth seeing, reading, listening to and wandering towards: standout theatre, a fresh twist from the Bridgertons, uplifting cinema, brilliant podcasts, compelling books and small adventures that brighten the days. It's your companion to a month that encourages gentle forward motion.



## LIFE-LONG ROMANCE

Hugh Bonneville returns to the West End in William Nicholson's play *Shadowlands*. Based on the romance between *The Chronicles of Narnia* author C.S. Lewis and American poet Joy Davidman, it's an uplifting and powerful journey of life and love. The play explores their relationship, which begins with intellectual sparring and develops into a deep connection, and how it is tested and transformed when Joy is diagnosed with cancer. 'I am thrilled to be revisiting William Nicholson's beautiful play about love and loss,' says Hugh. 'Aldwych theatre holds a special place in my heart as it's where I saw my first Shakespeare.'

**Shadowlands**, 5 February – 9 May, Aldwych Theatre, London

## Fairytale TV

Bridgerton's Cinderella

We focus on the next sibling of the Bridgerton family looking for love and happiness in London high society with the fourth instalment of this period drama with a twist. The fourth season of *Bridgerton* turns its focus to bohemian second son Benedict (Luke Thompson), who, despite his older and younger brothers being happily married, is loath to settle down.

That all changes when he meets the enchanting Lady in Silver at his mother's masquerade ball. But in the Cinderella-esque storyline, the woman who has captivated his heart is Sophie Baek (Yerin Ha), a maid forced into servitude by her cruel stepmother.

**Bridgerton**, 29 January, Netflix



## How To Fail: The Next Chapter

Elizabeth Day is back – wiser, warmer and still brilliantly unfiltered. Expect thoughtful conversations, big feelings, and the comforting realisation that nobody has their life perfectly tidied into colour-coded boxes.



## The Shift with Sam Baker

Chatting to women doing remarkable things after 40 – artists, thinkers, rebels, reinventors – Sam's approach is part pep-talk, part intimate fireside chat. Covering topics like menopause, career and identity, it's exactly the sort of companion you want on a March stomp around the park.





## Mother's Day, but make it yours

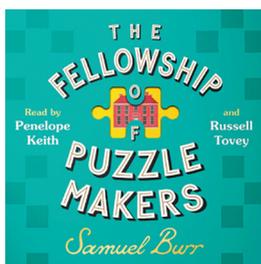
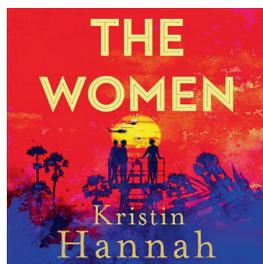
This year's Mother's Day (Sunday 15 March) invites a broader, warmer celebration. Yes, honour the women who raised us, but also the mentors, the friends, the soul-sisters and the women who mother themselves every day through grit and grace. Celebrate the women who showed you the way, the ones who remind you who you are, and the one you've become. Mark it however you like: a long lunch, a handwritten letter, a quiet walk, a toast to your own resilience.



### AUDIOBOOK SPOTLIGHT

*The Women*  
by Kristin Hannah

A moving, impeccably narrated story following a nurse in Vietnam as she learns what bravery really looks like – on the field and long after coming home. Powerful, human and beautifully delivered.



*The Fellowship of Puzzle Makers*  
by Samuel Burr

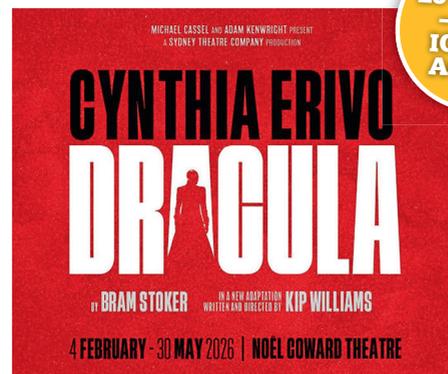
A warm and witty mystery filled with lovable oddballs, clever clues and the kind of heart that sneaks up on you. Perfect audio company for a long bath, a slow morning, or any moment you want something quietly joyful.

## Serious stage talent

Blood, sweat and tears

Celebrated actor Cynthia Erivo is taking us on a rollercoaster in her adaptation of gothic horror *Dracula*. Cynthia will transform into all 23 roles in the play. 'Returning to the stage feels like a homecoming, one that I've been craving for a long time,' she says. 'From the moment I was asked, I could not get the role out of my mind. It's a rare gift for an actor to inhabit so many voices and perspectives in one piece. The prospect of doing this show scares me and I know it will be a huge challenge. This show will ask everything of me – and I'm ready to give it.' *Dracula*, 4 February – 30 May, Noël Coward Theatre, London

23 ROLES  
– ONE  
ICONIC  
ACTOR





## MUST-READS THIS MONTH

### ***The Artist* by Lucy Steeds (£20, John Murray)**

Provence in the 1920s: sun-soaked streets, complicated geniuses, and a journalist who is far too clever to be anyone's muse. This dazzling debut brings together a reclusive painter, his quietly brilliant niece, and a woman determined to write her own story. Stylish, atmospheric and deliciously sharp – no wonder it took home the 2025 Waterstones Debut Fiction Prize.



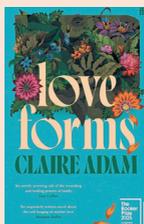
### ***The Ministry of Time* by Kaliane Bradley (£20, Sceptre)**

Part rom-com, part time-travel tangle, part bureaucratic fever dream – and somehow it all works. When a civil servant is assigned to supervise a man yanked forward from the past, chaos (and chemistry) ensues. Smart, sly and surprisingly funny.



### ***Love Forms* by Claire Adam (£16.99, Faber & Faber)**

Dawn Bishop has crafted a life that looks wonderfully composed – at least from a polite distance. Then a message from the daughter she gave up as a teenager neatly upends her sense of order. A sharp, beautifully observed novel about identity, old decisions and the courage it takes to reopen a chapter you thought was closed. Longlisted for the Booker Prize 2025.



## DARK BALLET

Dance of death

This haunting ballet returns to the stage in a bewitching production that compliments Adolphe Adam's stunning score. Peasant girl Giselle discovers her lover Albrecht is actually a nobleman promised to another and, in despair, she kills herself. Her spirit joins the Wilis, the vengeful ghosts of women who have been jilted and die before their wedding day, who will kill any man that crosses their path in a dance to the death. When a guilt-ridden Albrecht visits Giselle's grave, he faces her ghost and the Wilis. This quintessential romantic ballet takes us on a supernatural journey of love lost. ***Giselle***, 14 February – 20 March, Royal Opera House, London



TIMELESS, HAUNTING BALLET

## Feel-good film

Real-life inspo

After many years together, Alex (Will Arnett) and Tess (Laura Dern) have realised their marriage is over – their split may be amicable, but that doesn't make the next stage of working out how to live apart and raise their sons any easier. As they navigate the confusion, Alex starts a new hobby as a stand-up comedian, and making jokes about his life helps him understand more about himself and what happened to his relationship. This touching comedy, directed by Bradley Cooper, is loosely based on the life of British comedian John Bishop. 'You would think [his story] was a movie, so it was just the perfect structure for us to explore something,' explains Bradley.

***Is This Thing On?*** in cinemas from 30 January



ALL THE EMOTIONS

# Make a Day of It - March Edition

As the month unfolds, it's the perfect time for small, soul-lifting outings. Here are a few lovely ways to enjoy a day beyond your front door.



## 1 THE STITCH FESTIVAL, LONDON

19-22 March 2026

A joyful haven for makers of every stripe, from seasoned stitchers to hopeful beginners. Expect hands-on workshops, gorgeous textiles and indie sellers who'll tempt you into at least one new hobby. It's the kind of place where inspiration leaps off every stand and into your tote bag. You'll get home buzzing with ideas – and a sudden urge to reorganise that craft drawer properly. [businessdesigncentre.co.uk/event/the-stitch-festival-2026](https://businessdesigncentre.co.uk/event/the-stitch-festival-2026)

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## FORAGING WALK – INTRODUCTION TO WILD FOOD FORAGING, CUMBRIA

8 March 2026

A gentle ramble through Cumbria's hedgerows and woodlands, where you'll learn to spot spring's edible treasures before they hit the fancy farm shops. Think fresh air, good company and the smug joy of identifying wild garlic with absolute authority. A deliciously grounding way to welcome the season, with snacks you foraged yourself. [wildrootsforaging.co.uk](https://wildrootsforaging.co.uk)



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## RHS SPRING ORCHID SHOW, WISLEY

13-15 March 2026

A riot of colour just when we need it most, with orchids in every shape, shade and show-stopping flourish. Wander through rare varieties and beautifully staged displays that feel like stepping into a secret tropical world. Expect expert talks, surprising botanical lore and plenty of tips to make even your windowsill plants feel hopeful. It's pure floral escapism – enough bloom-soaked magic to carry you happily through the final stretch of winter. [rhs.org.uk](https://rhs.org.uk)

## Mindful Moment

Let yourself lean into what feels good

March often brings a mix of soft light and unpredictable weather, so give yourself permission to keep things simple. Choose what supports you, drop what doesn't, and follow what feels nourishing. One intention is enough. Ease into the month in a way that feels true to you.



### WORDS OF WISDOM

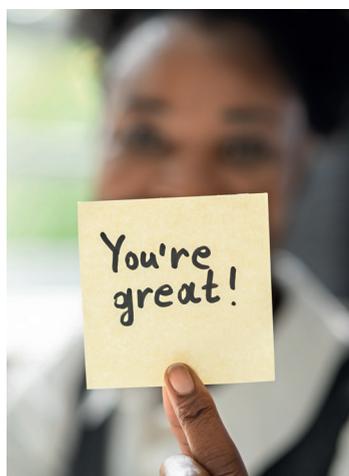
*'We can do no great things, only small things with great love'*

Mother Teresa

### *The bright side*

Kindness tip: give a little glory back

This month, pass along a little praise. Tell someone in your world what you value about them – the quiet brilliance, the everyday generosity, the courage they might not see in themselves. It's a tiny gesture with a surprisingly long glow.



## This Month in History

March 1982: the first women join the UK Fire Service

This month marks the anniversary of the first female firefighters officially joining the UK service. Their courage reshaped expectations and opened doors for the generations of women who followed. A powerful reminder that barriers bend when brave women push.

