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ISSUE 122
FREE

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LOCAL LINKS



Dear Readers,

Yikes! The countdown is officially on and festive panic is starting to set in! Bye bye pumpkins, hello pine needles! Ok, it's not really that bad and if it is, you must really make some time to put the fun back into your festivities. If you've got children, maybe one of Santa's Elves will pay them a visit this year!

If you don't have kids, maybe you'd like to share the cheer by visiting Derek's Tree in Cooper's Square and adding one extra gift to your list this year? We guarantee, it will be the most rewarding gift you'll give.

Speaking of children, we've been contacted by a wonderful couple from Burton who are doing great work giving love and stability to children in Kenya, so grab a cuppa and read on!

Stay warm and kind you lovely folk!
The **LOCAL LINKS** team

ISSUE 122

SALES

Heather Digby
Sarah Deakin

DESIGN

Liona Baldwin

ACCOUNTS

Jan Evans

01283 564608

local@locallinksmedia.co.uk

Local Links Media,
Suite 29,
Anglesey Business Park,
Anglesey Road,
Burton-on-Trent,
DE14 3NT

www.locallinksmedia.co.uk

facebook.com/
locallinksmagazine



CONTRIBUTORS

Including:
Angela Sargent, Deb Walker,
Perry Deakin, at the cedars

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Rolleston, Walton on Trent


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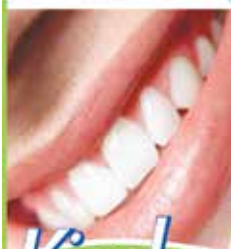
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Get Your Eco-Glow

We've all seen the news recently about our oceans being choked with plastic and it made us think how much single-use plastic surrounds our Christmas festivities. Instead of splurging out on this year's trendy decorations, many of which are made of plastics and flown half-way around the globe, why not have a go at making some tree decorations that are kinder to the environment? The great thing about these garlands, is that after Christmas, you can string them outdoors for the birds to eat!

Popcorn & Berry Garland

You will need:

- Sewing needle
- Thread
- 1 medium sized orange
- 1 cup of cranberries
- 1 cup of plain popcorn

Directions:

1. Begin by drying your oranges. Slice them 1/2 inch thick and place them directly on your oven grate for about 30 minutes at 135 degrees celsius. Remove and allow them to cool.
2. Cranberries can be dried the same way except on a baking tray, or, you can let them air dry. Alternatively you can let them sit out on a towel for a few days near a sunny window. They will dry naturally and still keep their round shape nicely.
3. Pop your popcorn, and now you are ready to start stringing!
4. Thread your needle and begin by stringing 5 cranberries (more if you wish) through the needle.
5. Add a dried orange slice. Just sew directly across the top of the orange and make a stitch to be sure it stays put.



6. Finish the pattern with a few pieces of popcorn. Take caution with this step as the popcorn crumbles easily. Once you have added the popcorn, you can then start the pattern over.

7. Why not try a few variations of the numbers that you alternate to give you different looking garlands!

Frosty Candle Jars

Supplies:

- Glass Jars
- Clear drying craft glue
- Epsom salts
- Greenery, berries & twine
- Flameless battery tea lights
- Hot glue

Directions:

1. Scatter some of the Epsom salts on to a paper plate.
2. Apply a layer of glue around the jar. Be careful not to layer it on too thick or the glue will start to drip once the Epsom salt is applied.
3. Sprinkle the Epsom salt around the jar until evenly covered. Place the jars on a cleanable surface or newspaper in case glue drips down while drying. Allow the jars to dry for several hours, preferably overnight.
4. Attach greenery and berries to the neck of the jar using a dot of hot glue. Then wrap twine around the mouth of the jar a few times and tie off with a bow.
5. Add a flickering tea light to create luminaries for your holiday decor.





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International Men's Day

Let you didn't know that the 19th November is International Men's Day? The day intends to make a difference in the lives of men and boys and help people consider the issues that affect men and boys such as:

- the high male suicide rate
- men's shorter life expectancy (including all men's health issues, workplace deaths and homelessness)
- the unaddressed issues of violence against men and boys (including sexual violence and domestic abuse)
- the struggles that boys can face in getting an education
- the unique challenges of the father-child relationship

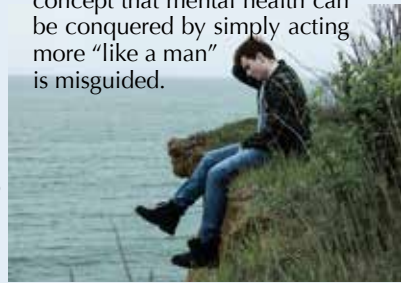
In recent years, this has grown and expanded from the opportunity to avoid shaving for 30 days to addressing many health topics including suicide prevention among men.

Part of the stigma that still exists about mental health for men is that men have greater difficulty talking about their own struggles than women do.

Why does it seem to be more difficult for men to address their own mental health? Men are still faced with some outdated stereotypes, these include expectations of strength, dominating positions of power, the idea that strong and silent is alluring/attractive, the "show no weakness" bravado of heroes in our media.

In many of these macho images, there is little room for showing poor mental health. The men who are most revered in society (famous, wealthy, successful, powerful) are not always ready to admit their struggles in public and that can leave the "average bloke" feeling uncertain about speaking out.

The expression "man up" is still often used for the wrong reasons, unfortunately. The concept that mental health can be conquered by simply acting more "like a man" is misguided.





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By The Barn *by Angela Sargent*



The colourful leaves are flying off the trees with the windy weather and drifting into banks alongside fences and walls, potential homes for bugs and small mammals.

November brings short days and some frosts won't go amiss either, as mild and damp air causes problems for housed livestock - ours are still outside but we are getting the sheds ready for them.

Pheasants are seen picking over dropped feed and straw, accompanied by numerous crows and small birds and there is a cacophony of caws and croaks and trills when they are disturbed.

Although we haven't any cats of our own, several are seen in the sheds hunting for hungry mice and small rats or anything else they can find.

Follow Angela on Twitter @bythebarn

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A CHRISTMAS TO REMEMBER

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22 December

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Free entry



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*Groups of ten or more.

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for more information and to book.

Give A Seat



For some older people Christmas is just another day. It's a shocking statistic, but around 1.4 million older people find their days repetitive and admit Christmas passes them by.

If you have an elderly neighbour that lives alone, why not pop by and invite them to your Christmas dinner?

Loneliness is something that no-one should ever suffer, and often people feel it most at this time of year. An extra plate and a seat at your table could make that person's year and help them feel loved and valued.

If you're interested in helping to make a bigger impact this Christmas, the charity 'Community Christmas' believes that no older person in the UK should be alone on Christmas Day unless they want to be.

They encourage communities to provide companionship to older people on Christmas

Day by running a community Christmas Lunch event, joining up with others at a local pub or restaurant, popping round for tea and cake, perhaps organizing a film viewing or anything else that can be enjoyed by all those that take part. This should be a chance to meet up with old friends and make new friends creating bonds in the community that last well beyond the single day.

If you are part of an organisation that is interested in hosting a local event. Please get in touch with www.communitychristmas.org.uk to let them know so that they can publicise your event for you.



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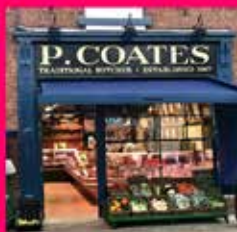
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Shelf Shenanigans

We've reached the time of year when Santa sometimes sends his elves to visit houses. Sometimes you'll be lucky and the elf goes about his business unseen, but sometimes, just sometimes a naughty little elf will stay until Christmas wreaking havoc around your home.

There are tales of these cheeky elves around the world so we thought we'd share some reports of what elves might get up to, so keep your eyes peeled!



1. Elf sticks googly eyes on fruit!

2. They write rude words on the fridge with magnetic letters!

3. They get trapped in jars.



4. They go ballooning in your underpants.

5. Sometimes elves put sticky tape across doors to trap you!

6. Elves sometimes wrap the family toilet like a present!

7. Elves often make 'snow angels' in sugar or sprinkles!



8. Sometimes they 'pea' themselves!

9. Elves often throw toilet paper around the house!

10. Elf sometimes eats all the chocolate spread!

11. These cheeky helpers sometimes hide in the cereal!



12. Cheeky elves draw on family pictures with dry-wipe markers!

13. Some wipe their bottoms on your toothbrush.

14. Some bring lovely gifts of gingerbread house kits.

15. Good elves carry cards with kind jobs for you to do that day.



16. Elf might use your knickers to decorate the tree!

17. Sometimes elf will stick paper santa hats on all your family photos!

18. Elves will fill your shower to the top with balloons!

19. Some elves have been known to draw on sleeping family members with lipstick!



20. Some elves go fishing in your loo!

21. They have wild parties with your toys!

22. They throw sweets around the house!

23. They take silly elfy selfies for you to find!

24. They stick funny stickers on your parents!



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JOHN DEERE



A Winter Collection

We have a solo exhibition of new paintings by resident artist Deborah Walker, at 'the gallery @ Ridware Arts' in the lead up to Christmas this year, opening on Saturday 17th November. Open all year round, Thursday to Saturday 10am – 4pm, please telephone on other days, because if we're in, we're open!

This exhibition runs until Friday 21st December, so why not indulge yourself and make shopping for gifts a pleasure? The gallery is the working studio of Deborah Walker RI RSMA, an elected member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours and

recently elected full member of the Royal Society of Marine Artists. Deb will be painting in the gallery as usual in the run up to Christmas which offers an oasis of calm at this busy time of year. Why not avoid the hassle of city shopping and visit her at 'the gallery' instead? This year's exhibition features new work by Deb and some of the gallery's favourite artists. We have a wide selection of paintings, including a range of mounted, tiny, original watercolours which would make an ideal and unique gift; alongside original prints, ceramics, sculpture, jewellery and glass. Our Christmas Spice, Apple & Cinnamon and Nordic Forest scented candles will surely

put you in the mood for the Festive Season!

For information about workshops for 2019 with Deb, please telephone 01889504102, email, or drop in to view the exhibition and pick up a programme. Be assured of a warm welcome this Christmas! For further information about the forthcoming exhibition please contact Deb at 'the gallery' on T: 01889 504102 or E: deb@walker-art.co.uk

On the A515 from Kings Bromley to Yoxall, turn left at the roundabout to Hamstall Ridware and continue to turn or bear left to Blythe House Farm.

the gallery@Ridware Arts

Blythe House Farm, Hamstall Ridware, Staffordshire, WS15 3QQ

T : 01889 504102

E: deb@walker-art.co.uk

W: www.walker-art.co.uk



A Winter Collection

a Festive selection with paintings by Deborah Walker RI RSMA

Opening Saturday 17th November

Gallery open Thursday – Saturday, 10am – 4pm

(at other times please call 01889 504102 - if we're in, we're open!)

On the A515 from Kings Bromley to Yoxall, turn left at the roundabout to Hamstall Ridware. Continue to turn or bear left at every opportunity leading to Ridware Arts at Blythe House Farm.

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"at the cedars" are based in Barton Under Needwood, just off Main Street, behind Slick Hairdressers, with handy parking in the village car park on Crowberry Lane.

So, what are you waiting for? They look forward to welcoming you soon.

To enter this month's competition, all you have to do is put your *name, address and*

daytime telephone contact number on a postcard and send it to:

**At The Cedars Competition
Local Links Media
Suite 29
Anglesey Business Park
Anglesey Road
Burton-on-Trent
DE14 3NT**

Alternatively, you can e-mail your details to:

local@locallinksmedia.co.uk

The closing date for entries is the 11th December, and the winners will be announced in our January edition.

Good luck to everyone who enters!

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What's On Guide

TUESDAY 20TH NOVEMBER

Footprints Orphanage

From 7.30pm at St Mary's Church, Stretton. Come and hear the amazing story of Footprints Orphanage in Kenya from founder Kerry Wanjala (formerly Watson, originally from Stretton) and her husband Patrick. Free entry. www.footprintsorphanage.com

Art Classes

Weekly classes at The Horseshoe, Tatenhill. Lessons will cost £10, or £8 if paid a half-term in advance. Please email or phone for further details or to reserve your place. Contact: Helen Tarr Tel: 07791 228 881

WEDNESDAY 21ST NOVEMBER

Burton Amateur Radio Club

Burton Amateur Radio Club meets every Wednesday evening at 7-30pm for nights on the air, construction projects, licence exams at all three levels with one to one tuition if required. New members are very welcome and we meet at Stapenhill Institute 23 Main St, Burton-on-Trent DE15 9AP Contact Bob 07812 146333 www.g3nfc.co.uk or club@burton-arc.co.uk

Talk About William H Coltman VC

Speaker Tim Coltman (grandson of William Coltman VC). Tim will be giving a talk on the life of his grandfather whilst serving in the Great War (1914-1918). This talk is to be held at Burton Library on 21st November 2018, doors open at 7:00pm for a 7:15pm start. Tea/Coffee/squash/water available (no additional charge).

Fradley Needlework & Craft Group

Every Wednesday from 1.30pm - 4.00pm at Fradley Village Hall. For anyone who enjoys patchwork, knitting, crochet, cross stitch or any type of craft. Beginners and experts welcome. Instruction available. Contact: 01283 791467

THURSDAY 22ND NOVEMBER

New Beginnings

Mature Singles Friendship Group (55yrs+). If you enjoy the theatre, meals out, walks, cinema, activities, holidays/outings and general socialising but don't want to do it on your own, then New Beginnings is for you. Come and join us to make new friends. Meeting each Thursday 8pm at Fradley Arms (on A38) - feel free to just come along or contact Sue for further details Tel No: 07742 801681

FRIDAY 23RD NOVEMBER

Friendly Fridays

Friendly Fridays, aimed at those living well with dementia and their carers. Brewhouse's cosy cinema space at 1.30pm. We enjoy music with low lighting and controlled sound levels with tea and biscuits.

Changes Support Meeting

A 12 Step Recovery Programme for Mental Distress, meetings held at Burton twice a week, please contact 01827 311006 for further information, do not struggle alone come and talk in a confidential environment to improve your overall mental wellbeing. Prior booking only. Peer Support Meeting Peel Croft Surgery, Lichfield Street, Burton 1-30-3-30pm. Wellness Workshops, Wednesdays & Fridays: 9-45-11-45 am Burton Fire Station, Moor Street, Burton.

SATURDAY 24TH NOVEMBER

Calligraphy Workshop

Internationally renowned calligrapher, Peter Halliday will be teaching on the beautiful St Chad Gospels (on show at Lichfield Cathedral) and tutoring us how to create the beautiful Uncial Style lettering it is written in. A very special workshop! Beginners and experienced calligraphers and artists are welcome. Contact mercianscribes@yahoo.co.uk for more details. Booking essential. At Stretton Priory Centre. 10am - 4pm.

SUNDAY 25TH NOVEMBER

Christmas Lights Switch On

At the Market Place in Burton. Entertainment from 2pm. Christmas market, brass band, fun fair, light switch on and fireworks from 5pm.

MONDAY 26TH NOVEMBER

Burton Art Club

Meets at Stretton Methodist Chapel Main Street, Stretton. Monday evening 7.00pm to 9.00pm We are a lively group who share an interest in art and all abilities are welcome.

TUESDAY 27TH NOVEMBER

Burton Dance & Social Club

Every Tuesday Evening 8-11pm at Marstons Sports and Social Club, Shobnall Road, Burton-on-Trent. Activities include sequence, ballroom and line dancing to professional live music, bingo, raffles and food nights. Come along and join us and meet new friends. For more information contact Pauline: 01283 519159

WEDNESDAY 28TH NOVEMBER

Priory Art Group

We are a small friendly group of artists meeting at the Priory Centre, Church Road, Stretton, every Wednesday morning, 9.30 to 12 noon. New members are always welcome, whatever your level of experience, so why not come and have a chat to see what we have to offer. Contract Sandra: 01283 329743

THURSDAY 29TH NOVEMBER

New Beginnings - Mature Singles

Come and join us to make new friends. Meeting each Thursday 8pm at Fradley Arms (on A38) - feel free to just come along or contact Sue for further details Tel No: 07742 801681

FRIDAY 30TH NOVEMBER

Friday Friends

Waterside Community Centre, Stapenhill Sequence Tea Dance every Friday at 2pm. Admission £1.50, includes Tea & Biscuits and free raffle. New members welcome in a friendly atmosphere. Contact: 01283 543023

Crib Club

Every Friday at 7.30pm. We are a small friendly club who meet at the Wyggeston Pub, Calais Road, for a game of Crib (or some may know this as Cribbage) and an enjoyable social evening. We are looking for new members either male or female who can already play Crib or anyone who would like to learn how to play.

SATURDAY 1ST DECEMBER

Burton Big Band Christmas Concert

Christmas Concert at St Mary's Church, Stretton on Saturday 1st December, starting at 7pm. Tickets are £5 each, including refreshments, and are available from Paul Spencer on 01283 561566.

Family Festivities at Markeaton Park

Christmas in the park for all of the family with a free elf trail, festive food, music and much more. www.derbylive.co.uk

An Evening With The Siddiquis

At Derby Deda, 7.30pm. You'll be entertained by the musings of the local Derby trio; Dad (Sid) and his two sons Umar and Bassit. Join them to discuss everything from major news events, comical Derbyshire quirks and to get the inside scoop on any backstage Gogglebox gossip! All delivered with the Siddiqui brand of dry humour, self-deprecation and pseudo-intelligence, there'll sure be a lot of laughs along the way! www.deda.uk.com

SUNDAY 2ND DECEMBER

Burton Ramblers

Walks most Saturdays, Sundays and every other Wednesday. All walkers welcome to join this friendly local group, walking in Staffs, Derbys and Leics. Please visit our website for more information. www.burtonramblers.org.uk Contact: Burton Ramblers Tel: 07724 352529

MONDAY 3RD DECEMBER

Three Spires Lacemaking Group

A lacemaking self help group which meets at the Community Room - Lichfield Fire Station, every Monday 1-4 p.m. and also monthly on the fourth Saturday, 10.30 -15.30 .

Meditation Class

Weekly Classes of Meditation on Mondays 1pm to 2.30pm and 7.30pm to 9.30pm we are a friendly group who meet for discussion and to meditate with a guided meditation. To join us Contact Kim 07580 551979

Find more events on our website

TUESDAY 4TH DECEMBER

Twelve Days of Calke's Christmas

Experience magical Christmas weekends at Calke Abbey, with lights, illuminations and twelve days of Calke's Christmas. www.nationaltrust.org.uk

WEDNESDAY 5TH DECEMBER

Burton Abbey WI

Meeting at the Brewhouse on the first Wednesday of the month at 10am to 12 noon. Good Speakers, refreshments, also days out organised. New members welcome. For more information contact Pauline Gaskin 01283 565620

Barton-Under-Needwood WI

1st Wednesday of every month at The Village Hall, Crowberry Lane. Meeting 7.30-9.30 with good speakers, refreshments and fun. Organised events and trips throughout the year. New members and visitors always welcome.

THURSDAY 6TH DECEMBER

Prosecco Shopping Evening

From 6pm - 8pm at Needwood Living, 136 Main Street, Alrewas, DE13 7ED. Contact: 01283 711272

Friendship Circle

Meets at 7.30 pm on the first and third Thursday of every month in the schoolroom at the rear of Stretton Methodist Church. We meet for activities, speakers, trips and friendship. All are most welcome. For further information contact Christine - 01283 543813.

Burton Friendship Club

Meets the 1st Thursday in every month 10am for 10.30am in the Rolleston Club. Join us for speakers, quizzes, games, lunches, coffee mornings, day trips and holidays. Phone Stuart and Penny 01283 716626

FRIDAY 7TH DECEMBER

Friday Night Crib Club

Every Friday at 7.30pm. We are a small friendly club who meet at the Wyggoston Pub every Friday evening for a game of Crib(or some may know this as Cribbage) and an enjoyable social evening. We are looking for new members either male or female who can already play Crib or anyone who would like to learn how to play.

SATURDAY 8TH DECEMBER

French With Songs

French with songs, games and fun for children nearly 4 - 9 years, Saturday morning classes in Lichfield at the Tesco community room. Baby and toddler class too - learn to sing 'Wind the Bobbin up' in French! Email juliesfrenchclasses@gmail.com.

A Christmas Concert with Beatus

Musical Director James Foulds 7.30pm on Saturday 8th December 2018 at St. Peter's Church. An evening of a Capella singing of old and new Christmas carols and songs. All profits raised will go to St. Peter's Church. Tickets £7.50 to include refreshments available at the door or from a Church Warden.

SUNDAY 9TH DECEMBER

Burton Ramblers

Walks most Saturdays, Sundays and every other Wednesday. All walkers welcome to join this friendly local group, walking in Staffs, Derbys and Leics. Please visit our website for more information. www.burtonramblers.org.uk Contact: Burton Ramblers Tel: 07724 352529

MONDAY 10TH DECEMBER

Red & Ginger's Lindy Hop Dance Class

Learn to Lindy Hop, Charleston and swing dance. Our relaxed, friendly and welcoming lessons are suitable for all ages and abilities, for those with a partner or without. Monday nights, 8-9pm term time at St Mary's Church Hall, Hillfield Lane, Stretton, DE13 0BV. hello@dancewithredandginger.com

TUESDAY 11TH DECEMBER

Branston Womens' Institute

Our meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month. We are a friendly group and try to mix our meetings with interesting talks, craft, trips and social events. It is for ladies of any age. Visitors are most welcome. Contact Mrs Barbara Reeves, President, Tel. 01283 546536

Walton-on-Trent WI

Every 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7.15pm Walton-on-Trent WI. We are a small friendly group who meet in Walton Village Hall. Come and join us for fun, friendship, learning and sharing. For more information contact Joan on 01283 713380

WEDNESDAY 12TH DECEMBER

Stretton & Claymills Women's Institute

Stretton and Claymills WI is a very friendly Women's Institute that meets in the back room of the Priory Centre, Church Road, Stretton at 7.15pm on the second Wednesday of every month and new members are very welcome. For info www.strettonandclaymillswi.wordpress.com or strettonandclaymillswi@gmail.com

1st Burton Guides

Every Wednesday Evening. A fantastic unit for girls aged 10-14. They will make friends, grow in confidence and learn lots of new skills. To make it better, all this is done through a wide range of activities, from ice skating to canoeing, and craft to cooking, there is something for every girl! Call: 07794 759608

Quiz

Every Wednesday evening at Rolleston Club. Weekly free quiz, open to members and non members. Prize is six drinks tokens. There is a play your cards right game for £1 entry. Contact: Claire Tel: 01283 01283 812072

THURSDAY 13TH DECEMBER

Burton Belles Women's Institute

From 7.15pm-9.30pm. We meet at the St Chads Centre DE14 2SS on the 2nd Thursday of the month. First timers can visit for free and then you can decide whether to pay £4 a month or £41 a year. Come along, make new friends, try something new and have fun. Contact: Wendy Plant Tel: 07772 548230

FRIDAY 14TH DECEMBER

Bingo at Barton Bowls Club

On the 2nd Friday of every month. Members guests and new members always welcome. Eyes down at 8pm followed by Kids Chocolate Bingo. Come and have a laugh! The more there are, the bigger the prize!

COMPETITION WINNERS

Congratulations to our **Burton-On-Trent Golf Club** competition winners, each winning a round of golf for 4 people:

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Mitch Pritchard, Stretton
John Wilkins, Lichfield

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1	4	7	9	6	5	8	3	2
8	2	5	3	7	1	4	6	9
3	5	1	6	2	9	7	8	4
2	7	4	8	5	3	9	1	6
6	9	8	1	4	7	2	5	3

Derek's Tree



This November we see the familiar and much loved return of Derek Liddle's tree. The tree offers our kind-hearted public the opportunity to bring smiles to the faces of hundreds of East Staffordshire children every year.

Visitors can take a tag off the tree in Coopers Square shopping centre. The tag will contain a request for a present from a child that would otherwise receive nothing at Christmas.

The tree tradition was established by Mr Liddle 22 years ago who wanted a community tree in the town centre to support children that need a boost during the festive season. Derek's Tree relies on a team of dedicated volunteers that help every year

Every year a number of local businesses offer their support and working with the Derek's Tree organisation and get involved by having their own tree at their site.

If you wish to get involved you will need to choose which present to buy and which child to buy for. The children's requests vary and usually the value of the gifts requested are

between £5 and £20. You will surely find an item that you can afford and know where to buy it.

Once you've bought the present, take it back, along with the original tag, to the volunteers who will wrap the gift for you, and do the rest to ensure it gets to the correct child.

If you'd like to donate your time to help, there is always a need for people to help and wrap up the 2,000 gifts.

For more information visit Derek's Tree Facebook page or can also contact the volunteers on 07871 011562.

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Marvellous Mushrooms by Rebecca Tucker

Mushrooms are in season, so why not make the most of their delicious flavour and improve your health at the same time? One of the great benefits of mushrooms is their ability to support the immune system. So with the colder weather now upon us, they might just help keep those coughs and colds at bay!

Here's a rundown of some of the benefits of mushrooms, so you can be confident you're doing your health a favour by including them in your diet.

Immune Support

Mushrooms are the only plant based source of vitamin D, which is needed for a healthy immune system. Food sources of vitamin D are especially useful in the autumn and winter months when we aren't able to get as much from the sunshine. Mushrooms also contain selenium, a powerful antioxidant that can give your immune system a boost. Shiitake mushrooms offer even more immune enhancing benefits; they contain a substance called lentinan which has antiviral and antibacterial properties.

Reduce Inflammation

The majority of mushrooms contain an amino acid called ergothioneine which helps reduce inflammation and can protect the body's cells from damage.

Gut Health

When eaten raw, mushrooms contain prebiotics that feed the good gut bacteria. This helps maintain the balance of friendly bacteria, helping to support a healthy gut.

Heart Health

Mushrooms may help lower cholesterol and contain phytonutrients that could prevent plaque from building up in the blood vessel walls. This helps protect the heart by maintaining healthy blood pressure and circulation.

Rebecca Tucker is a Registered Nutritional Therapist practising at The Natural Healthcare Centre in Burton. For further information visit www.nourishbalanceglow.com




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Arrival Of The Messiah? *by Perry Deakin*

So the latest 'messiah' has arrived at Villa Park and for hundreds of thousands of Aston Villa supporters they hope this will be the one!

Dean Smith has taken over from Steve Bruce who was fired by the club's new owners only three months into the season, following a less than impressive start, which saw his side records only 3 wins in their first 12 games to slip into the bottom half of the Championship, with fans chanting on a regular basis for his removal as manager.

There was certainly a level of sympathy for Bruce across the sports media pack, if not universally across Villa's supporter base. He had vowed to remain at the club during a very turbulent summer period when it looked highly likely that the club would fall into administration following woeful mismanagement from their Chinese ownership, and lost both of his parents to illness in a very short period of time – a dreadful burden to carry into a season which he knew would define his time at the club.

New owners arrived; invested significant sums in steadying the financial ship and after a great deal of speculation surrounding their desire to appoint a high-profile manager (and Va Va Voom! Thierry Henry seemed to be the man they considered), announced that they had faith in Steve Bruce and reassured him that he was the man for them!

Three months later Bruce was no-more and left with the boo's and jeer's of Villa supporters ringing in his ears – but weep not for the former Manchester United Captain, his £2 Million pay off will have softened the blow somewhat!

And so, the latest candidate for legend status at Villa Park arrived and this time there were a couple of differences. Not for these owners one of the old-boys network who revolve around the game, sweep in part-way through the season, fail and ultimately leave again with huge pay-offs (Think Sam Allardyce, Alan Pardew and Mark Hughes). No, Villa's owners decided against that predictable route and appointed a manager who had served his time in the lower leagues with Walsall then turned unfashionable Brentford into one of the most attractive, attacking sides in the Championship (who had also and significantly, 'spanked' Villa's backside when the sides had played one another).

Dean Smith's football philosophy revolves around a passing game which is extremely easy on the eye but crucially also has a cutting edge – Barcelona created, ticky-tacky football which saw dozens of passes before an attempt on goal does not inspire fans in England and Smith's style of passing mixed with the occasional longer ball also made Brentford one of the divisions higher scoring sides and Villa supporters look forward to seeing that type of

football from their side, as they re-establish a challenge for promotion.

But there is another element to Smith's appointment which made him an exciting choice as far as supporters are concerned and will also give him a much longer honeymoon period than most – He is an Aston Villa supporter and this means just as much as his experience, style and philosophy as far as the Villa faithful are concerned!

Smith is from the area and grew up supporting Villa. His father also worked at Villa Park on matchdays and supporters know that wins and losses will mean as much to Smith as they do to them.

It may take a while to instil his influence on the football Villa play because fitness levels will need to be improved and this is not a quick fix (players certainly seemed to lack a high level of fitness under Bruce) – but supporters will give him time and get behind him.

Maybe Dean Smith is the one!!



LOCAL LINKS SUDOKU

7	2	8	5					
	1				9	4	6	
		4		7		9		3
	7	9				5	8	
6		1		9		7		
	4	5	7					3
					3	6	2	4

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