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ISSUE 126
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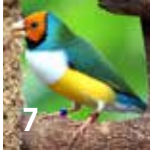
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LOCAL LINKS



Dear Readers,

The weather in February was unseasonally glorious! It does worry us a little that the poor little birds are getting confused and starting to nest when we could still get a cold snap.

The same goes for seedlings at this time of year. Have a read of our fab gardening article by Alan Parsons who gives good advice on what you can do this time of year.

Don't forget that the clocks go forward at the end of the month too! If you struggle to adjust to the switch, we've got some ideas to get your body clock back on track!

Stay cheery!

The **LOCAL LINKS** team

ISSUE 126

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Rolleston, Walton on Trent

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Have you just adopted a new kitten? Have you thought about how your new addition will adapt to its new home?

Why should I socialise my kitten?

From two weeks to eight weeks old a kitten's brain is still developing and the things they encounter influence how this development occurs. Everything from who they meet, will teach them whether what is happening is threatening or non-threatening.

Positive experiences will teach them that these experiences are non-threatening but negative experiences, can cause a kitten to become fearful – a feeling that is likely to last into adulthood. Positive experiences as a kitten are essential.

Check out our Kitten Socialisation page to find out everything about kitten development and how we can help them get ready for the world: www.cats.org.uk/kitten-socialisation

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Beautiful Birds

Spring is in the air and birds are starting to chirp and nest. Many birds have a cheeky flash of colour in their plumaged but a truly bright bird is a rare sight in this country. You might be surprised to learn how truly garish some birds can be! Here are a few of our favourites!



Cardinal Bird

Found in North and South America usually in open woodland this bright red bird is instantly recognisable!



Mandarin Duck

Native to East Asia but surprisingly a large, feral population exists in the UK that have escaped from private collections!



Sun Parakeet

Calling the continent South America their home, these romantic birds mate for life and nest in palm trees.



Painted Bunting

Found in North American thickets this pretty bird is shy and secretive and despite their bright colours, difficult to spot.



Gouldian Finch

Also called the Rainbow Finch this pretty bird is native to Australia. They eat seeds and eat 30% of their body weight per day!



European Bee Eater

This bird lives in southern Europe but winters in tropical Africa. As you can guess they eat bees, wasps & other insects!



Quetzal

This Mexican bird is quite large quite often measuring more than a foot in length! They eat fruits, berries and frogs!



Green Headed Tanager

Found in Brazil, Paraguay & Argentina, this little bird makes its home in orchards and parks and sometimes on bird tables!



Blue Jay

This striking bird lives in central and eastern USA. Like squirrels, blue jays are known to hide nuts for later consumption.



Victoria Crowned Pigeon

This flamboyant looking bird lives in the swamp forests of northern New Guinea and was named after Queen Victoria.



Lilac Breasted Roller

Living in eastern and southern Africa. Protective of their nest they will fly in a rolling pattern to detract nest predators.



Violet Backed Starling

Found in sub-Saharan Africa this bird is rarely seen on the ground preferring to perch in the safety of trees.

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Boost Your Body Clock

March is a month we welcome! The weather warms up, the sun shines more. The whole world just feels like it's waking up after a big long chilly slumber. The clocks will go forward by an hour on Sunday 31st March making the evenings a little shorter again just temporarily.

If your body-clock gets a bit out of whack with all this confusion, here are some helpful things to try to get you back in that perfectly rested sleepy-time rhythm.

Adjust your bedtime...

but be patient. If you're aiming to go to sleep earlier, try slowly scaling back your bedtime until you are at the desired hour. Adjust your bedtime by no more than 15 minutes earlier every two to three days.

Do not nap...

even if you feel tired. Napping can interfere with going to sleep at night. Try exercising when you feel like napping. The exercise will chase away the sleepiness. Then you can save up that drive to sleep for later.

Bye-bye lie-in...

and get up at the same time each day. Being consistent is important in maintaining a functioning sleep schedule. Get a good alarm clock and don't hit snooze. The clock in your head needs instructions, it needs to know, what is your desired time to get up. Your brain expects you to more or less wake up at the same time every day. The idea of weekends or travel across time zones is foreign to how the brain works.

Be strict...

by sticking to your sleep schedule. Once you have reached a workable bedtime and a consistent wake up time, don't allow yourself to stray from it. Even one late night can ruin the progress you've made. Predictability is key.

Avoid exposure to light...

before you want to sleep. According to research exposure to evening light can shift your body clock to a later schedule. Reducing household

light exposure before bedtime is a simple and effective step towards reducing circadian misalignment. This includes light from phones, laptops, and TV screens, so keep your surroundings dim at night.

Avoid activity & eating...

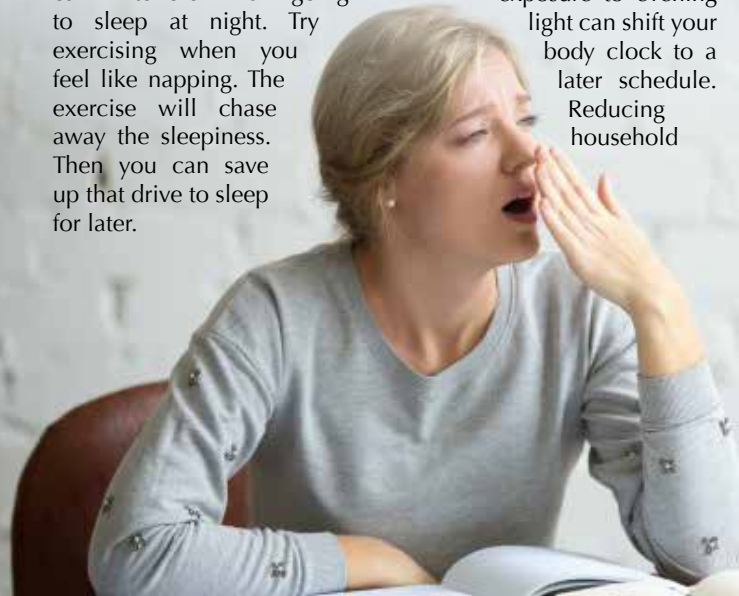
or exercising too close to bedtime. Exercise can wake you up and food can give you heartburn, which could keep you up. Also watch out for caffeine and nicotine, both of which are stimulants.

Set the mood...

and create a relaxing bedtime routine. Take a warm bath and play some relaxing music, for instance. Make sure your bed is comfortable, the room is dark, and the temperature is not too warm. Going to sleep should not be a chore.

Try melatonin...

under supervision from your doctor. Melatonin supplements can help to reset your circadian rhythms as melatonin's main job in the body is to regulate sleep-wake cycles. Darkness causes the body to produce more melatonin, which signals the body to prepare for sleep. Some people who have trouble sleeping have low levels of melatonin.



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By The Barn *by Angela Sargent*



“The sixth sick Sheik’s sixth sheep’s sick” - supposed by some to be one of the most difficult tongue twisters in the English language and our sheep do indeed come to the fore this month, as we start lambing.

Many farmers began weeks ago and their lambs will be outside and taking advantage of the new spring grass, as it begins to grow.

The daylight hours have extended and the sunshine has some warmth, so as soon as the earth warms up enough, the growth is triggered. The clocks go forward (we lose an hour of sleep), Spring has arrived!

For the last six weeks we have been supplementing the ewes with some extra feed in the form of ewe rolls- a concentrated pellet that contains protein, vitamins and minerals to help her nutrition.

This is when the lambs inside her are growing fastest and taking more from her. We also want her to milk well after their birth and be healthy.

We will see the occasional butterfly or moth around if we

have some warm and sunny days or maybe a caterpillar or several will flop onto the paths from the overhanging bushes as they start the cycle of life again.

Flowers are becoming easier to spot and the early celandines are turning their face to the sun once again.

And maybe we will have brexit or maybe we won’t! Uncertainty will not help our industry and who knows how our lamb trade will fare? But the farming year carries on regardless!

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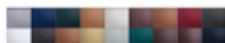
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Beware the Ides of March *by Alan Parsons*

For gardeners this time of year brings great promise but also dangers. The ides of March – traditionally March 15th in the Roman Calendar – could be freezing cold or unseasonably hot, which we must take as a warning not to get ahead of ourselves in planting out into the garden.

Last year April was slightly colder than average (about 10 degrees) but later in the month a very hot spell was followed by a very cold and wet spell. So do not be tempted to plant out too early.

Of course, this does not mean that we should not make a start in getting seeds going and prepare for another growing year. Tomatoes and herbs can be started off in seed trays at the end of March if kept on window sills, avoiding direct sun if possible. Once they have started to germinate keep in a light airy area and water with a sprayer to avoid soaking. If you have the space dwarf beans and runner beans amongst others can be started off in cold frames or outside if warm enough, though cover up if frost is likely.

I gave up my allotment last year but even in our small garden I can still grow plenty of vegetables and herbs for the kitchen. A ten inch pot is ideal for a courgette plant and will provide a good crop if looked after – two is even better! If you have a space in front of a sunny wall then a grow bag at the bottom would make a good spot for anything from French beans to Swiss Chard to Sugar Snap peas. Last year we had great success with trailing tomato plants which we put in hanging baskets. We purchased the hanging baskets directly from a garden centre with the tomatoes already growing.



Another thing that we had a success with last year was the herb ladder, as shown in the photo. I made this one but there are kits available online or you can try the DIY stores. This is near our back door and provides a steady supply of herbs for the kitchen. If you want to grow mint then it is best in a pot anyway which can be put on a ladder such as this, as it spreads very quickly in the garden. Use the biggest pot you have space for herbs as smaller pots dry out quickly.

Don't forget our feathered friends. Very cold weather can decimate bird numbers so we put up hanging feeders throughout the spring until the trees are fully in leaf. By that time there should be enough caterpillars and other bugs for the birds to feed to their young. We have had a bird box in our garden for six years that has never been used. This year a couple of blue tits have been going in and out, so hopefully 2019 will see our first bird family arrive. It is going to be an exciting year, so lets get started!



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Dishwasher Tablets

These can contain phosphates that are hazardous to water supplies. Make your own natural dishwasher liquid and enjoy plates that sparkle for less.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup liquid castile soap
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
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Method:

Stir the water and soap together. Add the rest of the ingredients and stir until blended. Transfer into a bottle for storage. Use 2 tablespoons per load.

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The group's aims are simple and revolve around Prostate Cancer (PCa) Support and the raising of PCa awareness. The group go out into the community and visit local Heath Fairs and even provide talks to individual groups in the Staffordshire area, to raise awareness.

Monthly meetings are held at Burton Library, Riverside, DE14 1AH on the 1st Monday in the month basis. External speakers regularly attend meetings, presenting talks based on medical research, practical issues and humorous topics.

Any person interested in visiting the BPCSG at Burton Library, or wishing to book a talk from the group should make contact in the first instance by telephone, or by email. Telephone: 07478 889577, Email: burton.prostate.cancer.suppgrp@gmail.com



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Why Eat the Seasons? *by Rebecca Tucker*

Quite simply, when you eat locally and seasonally you know you are eating the freshest, most abundantly available produce. It's better for everyone – you get the tastiest veg, the local farmer benefits and food miles (the distance our food has to travel from the farm to your fork) decreases so you get to save the environment, too. In a week-long delay from harvest to the dinner table, sugars turn to starches, plant cells shrink, and produce loses its vitality. Buying locally avoids all this.

Another unexpected benefit is to reconnect to nature's seasonal cycle. If you have children, this is especially important as it teaches that food does grow at specific times, a hard concept to grasp when imports from all around the globe ensure that supermarket shelves look the same practically every week of the year.

Where to buy seasonally:

Farmers' markets are a great place to find local seasonal veg. Make it your mission this month to find out what's on and go in search of new veg to try! This website is a great resource: www.farmshop.uk.com

Having someone else do the hard work and just bring you the goodies is also a great idea. If you've never considered getting an organic veg box, it can be an amazing experience. It'll quickly teach you what is in season when, you'll get some of the best produce available in your area and delivered to your door, and it will wake you up to the magic of cooking.

Inviting a veg box into your life forces you to try something new, and this can be very invigorating. Of course, you can pick and choose the types of ingredients you want and avoid having things added that your family doesn't like, but I urge you to have a go and see what happens.

Riverford Farm and Abel & Cole offer a huge variety of fruit and veg boxes, with a 'pick your own' element where you can choose exactly how much of what you have.

Broccoli is in season this month and if ever there was one of nature's superfoods it's this vegetable! It's bursting with vitamin C and packed with liver-supporting sulphur.

This recipe perfectly combines the tartness of lemon with the creaminess of the cashews for a tasty side dish.

Stir Fried Broccoli with Lemon & Cashews

Ingredients:

- ½ head of broccoli
- 1 tsp coconut oil
- 1 red chilli, chopped
- Handful of cashews, chopped
- ½ lemon, sliced
- 1 tsp sesame oil

Method:

- Lightly steam the broccoli for 2-3 mins.
- Rinse under cold tap to cool.
- In a frying pan add 1 tsp coconut oil, chilli and add the broccoli and flash cook for 1-2 mins.
- Stir in the cashews, lemon slices and sesame oil and serve.

Rebecca Tucker is a Registered Nutritional Therapist practising at The Natural Healthcare Centre, Burton. For more healthy recipes or to book a complimentary 30 minute appointment to discover how nutritional therapy could help you, visit: www.nourishbalanceglow.com



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Celebrating a new spring and over 30 years of keeping lawns green, our competition for this month is in partnership with lawn treatment service **GreenThumb**.

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In addition to the First Place and Runner-Up prize, every **LOCAL LINKS** reader who contacts **GreenThumb's** team on **01283 735675** can have a free, no-obligation lawn survey and soil analysis.

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:

**Local Links Media,
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DE14 3NT**

Alternatively, you can e-mail your details to:
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The closing date for entries is the 9th of April, and the winners will be announced in our May edition. Good luck to everyone!

** Prizes are for lawns up to 400 square metres.*



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Like Mother Like Daughter

Mother's Day falls on Sunday 31st March this year and it makes us wonder how much like our mothers we are. If you're a daughter, it can be sometimes fun or sometimes scary to notice the similarities you share. Here are some celebrity mums and their daughters, it's interesting to see how the genes got passed down!



Reese Witherspoon is an Oscar winning actress, her daughter Ava Phillippe, being only 19 has not embarked on a career just yet.



Madonna is an icon of the music industry and Lourdes Leon at 23 years old has started working as an actress.



Cindy Crawford and Kaia Gerber are both models.



Robin Wright and Dylan Penn are both actresses.



Goldie Hawn and Kate Hudson are both actresses.

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What's On Guide

TUESDAY 19TH MARCH

Burton Dance & Social Club

We invite and welcome anyone over 18 years of age. We meet 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

Painting for Pleasure

Every Tuesday from 1pm to 3.30pm. Painting for Pleasure is a meeting place for artists to practise their skills in a friendly group. The cost is £12 per month, for the room hire. There are occasional visits and demonstrations from visiting artists, and an annual Christmas lunch. New members are welcome to come along and see for themselves. For more information contact Dave Jones: 07429 074758

WEDNESDAY 20TH MARCH

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

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 21ST MARCH

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

Rangemore & Tatenhill WI

Meeting at Henhurst and District Recreational Club on 3rd Thursday of every month, starting at 7.30 p.m. Lively and friendly group of ladies meet to enjoy good company, an interesting and entertaining programme of events and refreshments. New members and visitors of all ages welcome. For more information contact Marian on 07752160996

FRIDAY 22ND MARCH

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.

Latin-in-line Classes

Latin-in-line class - 11.15-12.00 pm - No partners required - includes cha-cha, salsa, mambo, rumba etc. Cost £4. Venue: the Priory Centre, Church Road, Stretton, DE13 0HE. 07598159744 larhiney@hotmail.com

SATURDAY 23RD MARCH

Claymills Victorian Pumping Station

Guided tours given around one of Britain's largest Victorian steam pumping stations. Magnificent Victorian workshop where you can see steam restoration in action. Videos of the station in steam in the visitor centre. Contact: 01283 509929

SUNDAY 24TH MARCH

Rapper Sword Dance Workshops

Come along and try Rapper Sword Dancing, this is the fastest and most spectacular of all the traditional English dances. We are running a series of beginners workshops. Kings Bromley Village Hall, Alrewas Road, Kings Bromley DE13 7HW from 10 am to 11 am. For more information call Nigel Moss 01283 790088.

MONDAY 25TH MARCH

Burton Art Club

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

TUESDAY 26TH MARCH

Art Classes

1-3pm at Anslow Village Hall. Discover how to paint and draw what you see, use colour with confidence and create beautiful art in a friendly group with a supportive tutor. Beginners welcome. Fees: £11 per class on the day or £9 per class for 6 weeks. For details and to book your place phone 07791 228 881, or email helentarr2002@yahoo.co.uk

WEDNESDAY 27TH MARCH

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

THURSDAY 28TH MARCH

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 29TH MARCH

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.

Tots, Pots & Tales

Fridays at The Mug Tug, Barton Marina. Listen to a story and paint a pot related to the tale. Juice and biscuit for the Tots, Grown-ups welcome to bring their own hot drinks. 1.30pm to 2.30pm - See our website for more details. Call 01283 711341 to book.

SATURDAY 30TH MARCH

Burton Bowls Social Club

Now open every evening! Darts, pool, dominoes, crib and crown green bowls during bowling season. Members, members guests and new members always welcome

SUNDAY 31ST MARCH

Lichfield & District Ramblers

Various routes if you would like to walk with a friendly, organised group, why not join the Lichfield & District Ramblers? We walk every Sunday throughout the year. 01543 491469

MONDAY 1ST APRIL

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

Burton Prostate Cancer Support Group

Men suffering, being treated, or recently diagnosed with Prostate Cancer, plus spouses, are invited to join with a dynamic Support Group meeting at Burton Library, Riverside, DE14 1AH. You will be able to talk with fellow PCa sufferers, listen to interesting speakers and will be made most welcome. The BPCSG meet on the first Monday in the month except Bank Holidays. Always call to check meetings: 07478 889577, or email on: burton.prostate.cancer.suppgrp@gmail.com

Find more events on our website

TUESDAY 2ND APRIL

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 3RD APRIL

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

Burton Folk Dance Club

Burton Folk Dance Club meet every Wednesday (except 2nd Wednesday each month) at Rough Hayes Community Centre, Henhurst Hill, DE13 9PX. From 7.30 to 9.30pm. New members welcome. Contact 01283 812645.

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 4TH APRIL

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 Jazz Club

Every Thursday, at Marstons' Sports and Social Club, Shobnall Road, we present some of the best Jazz Bands in Britain, and occasionally Europe. We book as wide a variety of jazz as possible, but are mostly Traditional, Swing and Mainstream. Admission £9 on door from 7.30pm, for 8:30pm start, no membership, all welcome.

FRIDAY 5TH APRIL

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. 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.

Beatus Chamber Choir

Songs from childhood & other choral delights. Directed by James Foulds will be singing at St James' Church, Barton under Needwood supporting The Children's Society. (www.childrenssociety.org.uk) Tickets £7.50 are available from Barton Post office, from members of the choir or from the box office at 01283 712809. This includes interval refreshments.

SATURDAY 6TH APRIL

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.

SUNDAY 7TH APRIL

East Staffordshire Ramblers

Walkers of all abilities are welcome to join us on Wednesdays, Fridays & weekends for walks in Staffs, Derbys & Leics. Visit www.eaststaffsramblers.org.uk or contact 01283 713209.

MONDAY 8TH APRIL

Red & Ginger's Lindy Hop Dance Class

Learn to Lindy Hop, Charleston and swing dance. 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 0BW. hello@dancewithredandginger.com

TUESDAY 9TH APRIL

Branston Womens' Institute

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 10TH APRIL

Stretton & Claymills Women's Institute

Meeting 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

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. Contact Sandra: 01283 329743

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 812072

THURSDAY 11TH APRIL

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. £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 12TH APRIL

Bingo at Barton Bowls Club

On the 2nd Friday of every month. Members guests and new members always welcome. Eyes down at 8pm.

COMPETITION WINNERS

Congratulations to our TLC competition winners each winning £50 voucher:

Mrs. Betty Dennis, Barton
Mrs. Chris Taylor, Brizlincote Valley
Paul Bellamy, Yoxall
Mrs. Pam Armshaw, Burton

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And It's Go...Go...Go!

by Perry Deakin

Well here we are; It's March and the Formula 1 circus is almost ready to unleash power, noise controversy and drama on petrol-heads all over the world right up until late November!

This is, without doubt, a pivotal season for the owners of F1 due to the complete dominance of Mercedes over the last few years – the owners themselves will be desperately hoping that Ferrari or Red Bull are able to mount a credible challenge over the season and prevent Mercedes from winning their 6th consecutive championship – frankly, the racing public are bored of this seemingly one-horse race each year and viewing numbers have been steadily dropping, all over the world.

F1 boss Chase Carey has promised excitement and drama and everyone in the paddock will be hoping he is right!

Lewis Hamilton will continue to split opinion across British sports fans – Hamilton really is a strange case – we are a sports mad country and in general revere our sports stars, particularly those as successful as the Stevenage born, five-time world champion. However, Hamilton seems to annoy British fans like no other with his demeanour and petulance; even the good-folk of Stevenage 'disowned' him

last year when he declared leaving the town was akin to escaping the slums – nice work Lewis, now that's how to win friends!

So how are the various F1 teams shaping up following pre-season testing and as we head towards The Albert Park circuit in Melbourne, Australia for the sports traditional season opener?

The answer will delight F1 fans everywhere and Chase Carey will be breathing a sigh of relief because it looks at this stage as if Ferrari will be genuine challengers for 2019.

They have topped the speed and time charts during both pre-season testing weeks and look to be pre-season favourites – tests can be a little misleading of course, with teams sometimes 'sand-bagging' to ensure they are not showing their hand too early – however, informed paddock whispers seem to suggest that Ferrari are genuinely fast with their 2019 car and that it is Ferrari themselves who are sand-bagging with the car capable of going even faster.

Mercedes finished testing as the second fastest team, around half a second slower than their Italian rivals – half a second in F1 terms of course is a significant difference and Mercedes will be working hard right up to the first green light in

Australia to close that gap – Hamilton was up to his usual tricks after testing by 'praising' Ferrari for their closed-season work and declaring his delight that they might challenge him this year – Ferrari's response to this 'patronising comment' is unprintable – way to go, again Lewis!

Surprisingly for most, Renault were third in the speed/time charts during testing – the French team showing genuine improvement on last years car and putting themselves ahead of Red Bull who declared themselves delighted with their car after signing a long term contract with Honda for engine supply – their fourth place in testing may prove to be a little misleading and I expect them to be challenging Ferrari and Mercedes on a regular basis this year – their star driver, Max Verstappen will continue to ruffle feathers with his aggressive driving and refusal to concede ground – long may that last!

Things aren't looking that positive for McLaren (8th) or Williams (10th), so expect difficult seasons for these two British teams as they scramble to find more speed – a sixth place finish for either team would be considered progress! Here's to an exciting season!



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Based on a white door 7ft x 7ft

Puppy Essentials!

by Scarsdale Vets

After careful research and consideration, you have chosen your new family member but it is also important to ensure you have the correct items at home to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Here are a few essential things to consider for your shopping list when you get a new puppy.

1. Bedding

Puppies will have accidents so ensure the bedding is washable. Specially made blankets like vet beds do help to keep your puppy dry if they are prone to accidents. Also, they are going to grow so keep in mind the eventual size when choosing your bed.

A lot of owners now crate train puppies from a young age, so that they have a safe haven in the house. Always ensure if you decide to do this that they can comfortably stand up and stretch out and seek advice on how to train them correctly.

2. Collars and Leads

Your puppy will not be able to go for its first walk until it

is fully vaccinated, but your puppy should wear a collar with a name tag. Also consider whether you will be using a collar, harness or halti for walks so training can gradually be introduced. It is important to consider the breed of your dog, for example short nosed dogs like Pugs and French Bulldogs would benefit from harness walking to minimise pressure on the windpipe.

3. Toys

Playing with toys is an important part of your puppy's training and development. Puppies' teeth are just like babies' teetj so it is important to also have some toys for them to chew. Don't take short cuts and try to use things from around the house. Sticks can splinter and cause serious injuries and socks can cause blockage of the gastrointestinal tract.

It is important to get toys that are appropriate to your puppy's size, a chew toy that is suitable for a Chihuahua may be too small and too soft for a Labrador. Get advice when buying these essentials if you are unsure.

4. Grooming Equipment

It is important to get your pet used to being groomed from a young age.

5. Food and Water Bowls

There is a wide choice available for purchase and there are also bowls designed for special problems with a particular breed. For example, bowls designed to slow down eating to avoid it being gulped down in one go. Or to stop long eared dogs' ears dangling in water and food when they bend down.

6. Dog Appeasing Pheromone

This is made by Adaptil. It is a synthetic copy of the natural comforting pheromone released by the mother to reassure her puppies so is ideal to help your puppy settle into its new home.



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

Sudoku is a logic puzzle where you follow one simple rule:
Simply fill in the boxes so that the nine rows, the
nine columns, and the nine 3x3 squares
all contain every digit from 1-9.

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