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ISSUE 134

FREE

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LOCAL LINKS



ISSUE 134

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Dear Readers,

Oh my goodness, are you panicking yet? It's the middle of November and the festive season is looming. Feels like we were only here a few months ago, isn't it terrifying how quickly the year has flown?

On a more cheerful note, it's the season when we have lots to look forward to! If you haven't been to one in a while, why not get into the spirit early and go to a Pantomime? Cheesy? Possibly, but sometimes we need to learn to take life not so seriously! Even if you haven't got kids let your hair down and get a bit silly. Read about the history of Panto in this issue!

We've also included a great recipe for Vegan Christmas Pudding for you to try this year. It's guaranteed to be something everyone will enjoy.

The **LOCAL LINKS** team

Next issue deadline:
Tue 3rd December

Next issue out from:
Wed 11th December

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Volunteer With Guide Dogs



Shrewsbury Guide Dogs Community Team, which covers Shropshire, Staffordshire and The Black Country are on a mission. They are aiming to reach more people living with visual impairment than ever before, current projections show that by the year 2050, there will be four million people in the UK negotiating with the challenges that are created through life with sight loss.

Guide Dogs are rising to this challenge and have set a

target of filling an extra eight thousand five hundred roles by 2023 as they move from 24,500 to 33,000 roles filled by volunteers. An increase which excites Community Fundraising Development Officer Mary Conner.

“There has never been a more exciting time to volunteer for Guide Dogs, not only are we embracing new ways of volunteering but there is more variety in the volunteer opportunities we have to offer than ever before. For example, we are looking for exciting roles like an Area Speaker Co-ordinator a Name A Puppy Co-ordinator, and Group Co-Ordinator’s to name a few”.

Engagement Officer Andy Farrell also applauds the

variety on offer “I think that it is fitting that we have such a wide variety of volunteer roles, it reflects the amount of time work and effort that is put in by those living with visual impairment have to put in, before they decide to pursue the option of having a Guide Dog”.

If you feel that you have the skills and the passion to support Guide Dogs, in the pursuit of making the world a more accessible place for those living with a visual impairment then visit www.guidedogs.org.uk/volunteering for more information about the wide variety of roles available in Shropshire Staffordshire and The Black Country today or call your Community Team on 0345 1430226. .

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Panto: It's Not Behind You...

It's the time of year when many of us start thinking ahead and planning for Christmas. One of those time honoured traditions of the festive season is the Christmas Pantomime! Ever wondered when the Pantomime tradition started?

The word pantomime was adopted from the Latin word *pantomimus*, which is derived from the Greek words "panto" meaning "all", and "mimos", meaning a dancer who acted all the roles or all the story.

Traditionally Pantomimes is a type of musical comedy stage production designed for family entertainment. It was developed in England and is performed throughout the United Kingdom, Ireland and (to a lesser extent) in other English-speaking countries, especially during the Christmas and New Year season. Modern pantomime includes songs, gags, slapstick comedy and dancing. It employs gender-crossing actors and combines topical humour with a story more or less based on a well-known fairy tale, fable or folk tale. Pantomime is a participatory form of theatre, in which the audience is expected to sing along with certain parts of the music and shout out phrases to the performers.

In the Middle Ages, the "Mummers Play" was a traditional English folk play, based loosely on the Saint George and the Dragon legend, usually performed during Christmas gatherings, which contained the origin of many of the archetypal elements of the pantomime, such as stage fights, coarse humour and fantastic creatures, gender role reversal, and good defeating evil. It developed partly from the 16th century *commedia dell'arte* tradition of troupes of travelling entertainers performing comedic moral tales around Italy and other European and British stage traditions, such as 17th-century masques and music hall.

Some of the most popular pantomime stories include Cinderella, Aladdin, Dick Whittington and His Cat and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, as well as Jack and the Beanstalk, Peter Pan, Puss in Boots, Sleeping Beauty, and Mother Goose. Classic conventions of the Pantomime include:

- The leading male juvenile character (the principal boy) is traditionally played

by a young woman in male garments (such as breeches).

- An older woman (the pantomime dame – often the hero's mother) is usually played by a man in drag.

- *Risqué double entendre*, often wringing innuendo out of perfectly innocent phrases. This is, in theory, over the heads of the children in the audience and is for the entertainment of the adults.

- Audience participation, including calls of "He's behind you!" and "Oh, yes it is!" and "Oh, no it isn't!" The audience is always encouraged to hiss the villain and "awwwww" the poor victims, such as the rejected dame, who is usually enamoured with one of the male characters.

- Music may be original but is more likely to combine well-known tunes with re-written lyrics. At least one "audience participation" song is traditional: one half of the audience may be challenged to sing "their" chorus louder than the other half.

- The animal is often a pantomime horse or cow (though could even be a camel if appropriate to the setting), played by two actors in a single costume, one as the head and front legs, the other as the body and back legs.

So this Christmas, why not have some fun and pop along to your nearest Panto! How about Cinderella? www.lichfieldgarrick.com



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Netball Fever Sweeps The Nation



The Vitality Netball World Cup, this year hosted in Liverpool, has sent the country into Netball overdrive with over 160,000 women taking up the Sport since the tournament.

Leagues4you is the biggest provider of social Netball in England and Wales and is currently rolling out fresh and exciting new leagues across Staffordshire. At the heart of every league that Leagues4You

launches is the wider benefits being active can bring – from a person’s mental wellbeing to developing new skills.

Charlotte Waugh, a founding partner of Leagues4you said, “We are so excited to be bringing our leagues to Burton on Trent. We start new areas with our ‘Couch 2 Court’ sessions. They are suitable for anyone who wants to get back into netball, but doesn’t feel ready to jump straight into joining a league. They’re open to players of all experience levels, and are perfect for anyone who hasn’t played since school.”

Charlotte added “During the session players take part in coached games and drills,

and have the opportunity to brush up on the rules of the game during some match play. Anyone over 14 is welcome to join regardless of ability, fitness and age, and we arrange everything, from the courts to the bibs to the teams. Most importantly the sessions are fun and a great social event if nothing else. They’re the perfect opportunity to meet new people, and even form a netball team of your own!”

The new Burton on Trent sessions start on Monday 18th of November 2019, 19:00 - 20:30 at John Taylor Free School and cost just £5.

For further information visit leagues4you.co.uk or text 07723414160.

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By The Barn *by Angela Sargent*

November already and after a damp and blustery October it will be nice to have some cold and crisp days. We may have to bring our cattle inside if the ground is too wet and the weather miserable.



whilst grazing but neither have much perception of depth- they can't easily tell if something is 19 yards or 100 yards away and that is why they don't like to walk over shadows. They're not sure if it's a deep hole or not!

The young steers came in at the beginning of October, followed a few days later by the heifers, after a long period of heavy rain and also to settle them before we carry out our 6 monthly BTB test.

Cattle and sheep see things differently to us and this can affect their reaction to being handled. Being prey animals they both have a much wider peripheral vision, particularly when their heads are down

Cattle can't see immediately behind themselves and don't like bright lights. They can also pick out yellows and oranges but otherwise see grey shades.

Sheep can't see immediately in front of their nose, but are quite far sighted and are also sensitive to motion. They can spot hi viz clothing from a long way off and ours aren't keen on it. That is why 'countryside' clothing is the colours that

it is - Browns, greys, greens, tweeds and all have to be hard wearing.

Trade is a worry at the moment- if we've left the EU then we may be exporting under WTO rules, which puts a tariff on anything we export- this makes items more expensive so buyers look elsewhere. If less is exported it floods the home market pushing prices down. If, in return, we don't put tariffs on imports then it again makes our produce more expensive comparatively as imports are cheaper.

Either way, in the short term our home produce- whatever it is, loses out and then there is less income, less investment and less viability.

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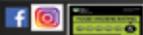
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Festive Vegan Treat

When family get together it can be difficult to cater to everyone's dietary needs. Why not try this Vegan Christmas Pudding. Everyone is guaranteed to be happy!

INGREDIENTS:

260g dried fruit
10 dried dates or figs
10 dried apricots
80mls brandy, or port, dark rum, a good sherry or a nice dark stout.
50g plain flour
65g dried out bread crumbs
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp allspice
80g dark brown sugar
1 medium apple, grated
1 large orange, zest only
3 tablespoons aquafaba, this is the liquid from a can of chickpeas
2 tbsp molasses
75g coconut oil

YOU WILL ALSO NEED:

1 litre/2 pint pudding basin
baking parchment
tin foil
some string
scissors

INSTRUCTIONS:

Put the dried fruit, including the dates or figs and apricots, into a large mixing bowl and pour over the brandy (or alternative alcohol). Leave until the liquid has been absorbed by the fruit. How long it takes varies depending on the fruit you use but it will be somewhere between about 15 and 30 minutes.

While that is happening, place

the pudding basin on some parchment paper and draw a circle around the bottom of the basin onto the paper. Cut it out and set aside. Then turn the basin over and draw another circle around the top of the basin. Cut that one out but cut a few millimeters inside the line this time so the circle will fit on top of the pudding mix when you put it in the basin. Set that circle aside too.

Place a heatproof saucer upsidedown or something similar in the bottom of a large saucepan so the pudding doesn't come into direct contact with the heat when it goes in, and a full kettle boiled and ready.

Grease the pudding basin with some coconut oil and place the small circle in the bottom of the basin.

Once the liquid has been absorbed by the fruit, add the flour, breadcrumbs, baking powder, allspice and sugar to the bowl and stir really well to combine.

Then add the orange zest, apple, aquafaba, blackstrap molasses and coconut oil and stir well until combined.

Spoon the mixture into the pudding basin, smooth it out and top with the large circle of parchment paper, pressing it down all over and into the sides gently.

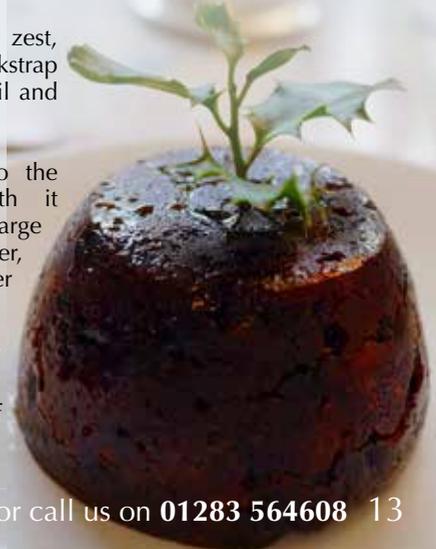
Cut a large rectangle of silver foil and a slightly smaller rectangle of

parchment paper. Enough to go over the top of the pudding basin with plenty to spare. Then lay the foil flat on your surface and the parchment paper flat on top of the foil. Make a pleat in them both to allow steam to expand them as it cooks.

Cover the top of the pudding basin with the foil and paper making sure the pleat is in the middle, then press it down all around the basin as tightly as you can, then tie twice around the basin with string as tightly as you can.

Place the pudding gently on the upturned saucer inside the pan and pour boiling water carefully down the sides so it reaches about halfway up the side of the pudding basin. It must not reach the foil.

Bring to a simmer but don't let it rolling boil as you don't want the water to get up under the foil. Cook for 3 hours, checking periodically and carefully topping up with boiling water as necessary.



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Forever Family

In the run up to Christmas we quite often get swept up in thinking about family and friends, and the warm feeling that reminds us how loved we are. Unfortunately there are many children and teenagers who aren't fortunate to come from loving, stable homes and are swept into a lifetime of temporary care.

Sometimes children, for whatever reason, find it difficult to be matched with a suitable adoptive family. It can be because these 'Priority' children have specific needs, and these tend to be the ones who wait the longest for a loving home. These children could be in a sibling group, be children from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, older children and those with complex health needs or those that are disabled.

The majority of adopted children have suffered significant abuse, violence or neglect in their birth families and most have spent time in foster care.

Adoption gives children a second chance of stability, permanence, and the love and nurture that all children need. The outcomes for adopted children are better than for those who stay in care. However, adoption is not a silver bullet. The trauma suffered in early childhood is carried with children into their adoptive families. Those families need consistent, specialist support to help them give their adopted children

the best possible chance of a brighter future.

7 MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ADOPTING:

1. I'm single so I can't adopt: Single people can adopt, whatever their gender. Many single people and unmarried couples have successfully adopted children.

2. I'm too old to adopt: Adopters need to be over 21 but there is no upper age limit. Agencies will expect you to have the health and vitality to see your children through to an age of independence.

3. I can't adopt because I'm gay: Whether you are heterosexual, lesbian or gay is not a factor in your right to adopt.

4. I work full time so I'm not allowed to adopt / I'm unemployed or too poor to adopt: Your financial circumstances and employment status will always be considered as part of an adoption assessment, but low income, being unemployed or employed do not automatically rule you out. You can be an adoptive parent while on benefits. Your local authority may provide support, especially for adopters of sibling groups or of children with a disability or special need of some kind.

5. I can't adopt because I have a criminal record:

If you have a criminal caution or conviction for offences against children or certain sexual offences against adults then you will not be able to adopt but, with the exception of these specified offences, a criminal record will not necessarily rule you out. The key is to be totally honest in your application.

6. It is a big risk to adopt a child because so many adoptions break down: Not true. The vast majority of adoptions are successful and the experience of ordinary family life gives children the opportunity to rebuild their trust in adults.

7. I can't adopt a child from a different ethnic background: Not true. You can be matched with a child with whom you do not share the same ethnicity, provided you can meet the most important of the child's identified needs. All families should be able to get support to help their adopted child to understand and appreciate the important cultural, religious or linguistic values of their birth community.

To learn more about adoption, visit: www.adoptionuk.org and contact your local council for further information.



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Diabetes in Dogs & Cats by Scarsdale Vets

What causes diabetes in dog and cats? Diabetes is caused by pets not producing any or enough Insulin or not responding to it properly. This then leads to high levels of glucose (sugar) in your pet's blood.

Signs of diabetes

- Increase thirst and appetite
- Increased urination
- Weight loss despite a good appetite
- Lethargy / weakness / collapse
- Vomiting
- Risk of urine infections (due to glucose being present in the urine which is then a source of energy for bacteria)
- Higher susceptibility to infections
- Poor coat quality
- Cloudy eyes (dogs)
- Sunken back legs (cats) - they walk on their ankle joint rather than their toes

Treating & Managing Diabetes:

There are several components to treating your pet with diabetes and it does require a lot of commitment. This can sometimes be overwhelming, not only coming to terms with the fact that your pet has been diagnosed with a condition, but that you will have to give them Insulin injections.

We offer diabetic clinics with our nurses who will be able to give you lots of tips on how to give the injections and lots of other advice about coping with diabetic pets

- Insulin therapy – depending on how unwell your pet is, the initial treatment for diabetes may involve them being hospitalised. Once stable treatment can be carried on at home in the form of twice daily injections under the skin (usually done in the scruff of their neck). The needles that are used are very small and are usually well accepted by dogs and cat. We advise that you always feed your pet before giving them their injections to ensure that their blood sugar level does not go too low if they don't eat. Your vet will calculate the initial dose of insulin that they will require, and the aim is to reduce the level of blood glucose and thus reduce the symptoms associated

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with diabetes i.e. the increased thirst and urination. The dose of insulin may need to be altered depending on their response to the treatment.

- Regular exercise – this is to ensure that they have the same glucose requirement each day, excessive exercise may lead to low blood glucose levels.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Regular feeding times and amounts – it is important to feed the same amount of food each day to ensure that they will need the same amount of insulin each day and avoid fluctuations in blood sugar levels. Your vet may recommend you change your pet's food to a diabetic specific diet.
- Spay – if you have a female dog that is entire and has been diagnosed with diabetes, the female hormone progesterone can interfere with the way insulin works.

If you suspect that your pet has diabetes symptoms take them to your local veterinary practice immediately.

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Furtive Fire Risks

Many of us are quite vigilant regarding the obvious fire hazards around the home, but are you aware of some of the more hidden hazards? Here are some sneaky threats that might have been slipping under your radar!

DRYER DANGER

Tumble dryers can be the biggest culprits in appliance fires. Dryer fires start when built-up lint near the motor, gas burners or heating elements catches on fire. This fire can then spread to ignite lint in the vent pipe.

CHIMNEY CAUTION

Your home's chimney should be swept at least once a year. This fire safety measure will help remove soot and debris (such as bird nests built during the spring and summer months) which could become a fire hazard. When using the fireplace, keep any flammable materials, such as blankets, curtains and rugs away from the fireplace and never leave children unattended near a working fireplace.

BEWARE SQUARE BATTERIES

People know a 9-volt battery and some steel wool is a great fire starter. So batteries shouldn't be kept loose in a junk drawer, especially 9-volt batteries. It's possible that the metal in the junk drawer could short out a 9-volt battery and spark a fire. It's best to keep batteries in the packaging or

keep the posts covered with tape. Check with your council on how to best dispose of 9-volt batteries.

MIRROR MAYHEM

Fishbowls, jam jars, magnifying make-up & shaving mirrors and glass door knobs have helped cause home fires in the past. If they stand in direct sunlight and if the angle is just right, the rays from the sun can become concentrated enough to begin combustion.

FAKE FAGS

With cigarettes already the single biggest cause of fire deaths in the UK, a recent study has revealed that fake cigarettes filtering onto the market pose an even bigger danger.

Since November 2011, every cigarette sold in the EU must meet a reduced ignition propensity (RIP) requirement by having ultra-thin bands of slightly thicker fire-retardant paper at intervals down the length of the cigarette so that, once lit, it will self-extinguish if not actively smoked. This reduces the fire risk from them being left burning in an ashtray, dropped, or from the smoker falling asleep, for example.

What about the increasing numbers of counterfeit cigarettes smuggled into the country as the price of legal brands continue to rise? And it is not just fake cigarettes bought in pubs or on the street which pose a risk. Raids recently conducted by trading standards officers on nine shops in Derbyshire revealed that only one of 18 samples tested features the mandatory RIP bands.

Apart from the obvious fire risk, fake cigarettes also carry huge health risks and are even more toxic than genuine brands, often containing noxious cancer-causing chemicals such as arsenic, lead, cadmium, benzene and formaldehyde, sawdust, tobacco beetles and, in some cases, rat droppings. Consumers should therefore check the cigarettes they buy carefully.

For more information on fire prevention visit: www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/fire.htm



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A Switch Off Spa Day for Two!

For this month's competition, a lucky reader can win a SWITCH OFF SPA DAY FOR TWO worth £190 at **The Health Club & Spa at Hilton, St Georges Park.**

The Health Club and Spa at St. George's Park sits in harmony with its luxurious atmosphere of tranquillity, surrounded by acres of beautiful Staffordshire countryside.

Their facilities include a state-of-the-art gym with Technogym equipment, 17m pool with bubble pool, thermal experience foot spas, experience shower, ice fountain, sauna and steam room. Four treatment rooms are available, each with shower and heated bed. The Elemis products are available to purchase so the St. George's Park experience can be taken home. You will enjoy a truly harmonising treatment to not only relax your mind but repair your body and soul.

If you're not our lucky winner,



why not treat yourself? Whether you are off on holiday or have a special occasion to attend, why not treat yourself to a body treatment like no other? If it is anti-ageing, firming or cellulite that is your concern, let the spa's dedicated therapists envelop you with wonderful but truly effective wraps to put all your concerns at ease.

Our lucky winner will receive a "Switch Off Spa Day" for two. This is a relaxing day of quality 'me' time and includes:

- access to the Health Club & Spa
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You can find more information at: www.healthclubandspasgp.com

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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Anglesey Business Park,
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Alternatively, you can e-mail your details to: local@locallinksmedia.co.uk

The closing date for entries is the 10th of December, and the winners will be announced in our January edition.

Good luck to everyone who enters!

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Pretty Poinsettias

At Christmas it's common to see poinsettia plants dotted around shops and homes, providing a welcome splash of festive colour. You could be forgiven for thinking that the poinsettia has always been associated with Christmas in the UK, but not so!

Aztec people use the plant to produce red dye and as an medication to reduce fever. Today it is known in Mexico and Guatemala as Flor de Nochebuena, which means Christmas Eve Flower. In Chile and Peru, the plant became known as Crown of the Andes.

The poinsettia is a plant that is indigenous to Mexico. It is particularly well known for its red and green foliage and is widely used in Christmas floral displays. It derives its common English name from Joel Roberts Poinsett, who was the first United States Minister to Mexico, and who introduced the plant to the US in 1825.

The coloured bracts—which are most often flaming red but can be orange, pale green, cream, pink, white, or marbled—are often mistaken for flower petals because of their groupings and colours, but are actually leaves. The colours of the bracts are created through photoperiodism, meaning that they require darkness (12 hours at a time for at least five days in a row) to change colour. At the

same time, the plants require abundant light during the day for the brightest colour.

The plant's association with Christmas began in 16th-century Mexico, where legend tells of a girl, commonly called Pepita or Maria, who was too poor to provide a gift for the celebration of Jesus' birthday and was inspired by an angel to gather weeds from the roadside and place them in front of the church altar. Crimson blossoms sprouted from the weeds and became poinsettias. From the 17th century, Franciscan friars in Mexico included the plants in their Christmas celebrations. The star-shaped leaf pattern is said to symbolize the Star of Bethlehem, and the red colour represents the blood sacrifice through the crucifixion of Jesus.

There is a common misconception that the poinsettia is highly toxic. This misconception was spread by a 1919 urban legend of a two-year-old child dying after consuming a poinsettia leaf.

While the sap and latex of many plants of the spurge genus are indeed toxic, the poinsettia's toxicity is relatively mild. Though its latex can cause an allergic reaction in sensitive individuals.

What's On Guide

MONDAY 18TH NOVEMBER

Stapenhill WI

We meet at Immanuel Church Hawthorn Crescent Stapenhill from 10am to 12pm on the 3rd Monday of every month. Join us for friendship and an interesting programme of events. New members and visitors are assured of a warm welcome. Contact Teresa Tel 07720 863097

Leagues 4U Social Netball

19:00 - 20:30 at John Taylor Free School and cost just £5. For further information visit leagues4you.co.uk or text 07723414160.

TUESDAY 19TH NOVEMBER

Burton Dance & Social Club

Every Tuesday evening 8-11pm at Marstons Sports and Social Club, Shobnall Road. 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

Shakespeare Group

Interested in Shakespeare? Limited spaces available. The group read and watch Shakespeares works Tuesdays 10 to 12 noon Call 01543 251556

WEDNESDAY 20TH NOVEMBER

Burton Amateur Radio Club

Burton Amateur Radio Club meets every Wednesday evening at 7-30pm 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

THURSDAY 21ST NOVEMBER

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.

Stars

Stars is a weekly club for senior citizens held at Yoxall Parish Hall. Every Thursday 2-4pm. Variety of activities including quizzes, arts, crafts, special events and lots more. £3.50, includes tea or coffee, cakes, biscuits and raffle ticket into the weekly prize draw. For more details call Claire 01543 472145

FRIDAY 22ND NOVEMBER

Beginners Latin in-line Class

At the Priory Centre, Church Road, Stretton, DE13 0HE - 11.15-12.00 pm NO PARTNERS REQUIRED - £4.00 Ring 07598159744 for more details.

FitSteps with Rose

Fridays 18.00 at Want2Dance with Victoria, Wharf Road, Burton £5 per class. FitSteps is a fun class, based on ballroom and Latin dance steps, with no need for a partner. Beginners always welcome Contact: Rose 07562 331041 to book

SATURDAY 23RD NOVEMBER

Claymills Victorian Pumping Station

Guided tours given around one of Britain's largest Victorian steam pumping stations. Contact: 01283 509929

SUNDAY 24TH NOVEMBER

Sudbury Hall Christmas 'Game On'

Join us this Christmas when for the very first time, we invite you to play the Sudbury game. Play your way around the hall with larger-than-life versions of family favourite board games. Expect festive surprises around every corner as you and your family enter the magical world of games in the Sudbury Christmas Compendium.

MONDAY 25TH NOVEMBER

Meno Class with Sam

Support, education and exercise to help you to take control of menopause. Every Monday at 7.30pm at Want2Dance with Victoria, Wharf Road, Burton on Trent DE14 1PZ. Classes are £8 and must be booked in advance as space is limited. For more information call Sam on 07866 746215 or email sam.lee@menohealth.co.uk

Meditation

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

TUESDAY 26TH NOVEMBER

Carers + Cafes

Carers + cafe meets in the Brewhouse every Tuesday from 10 o'clock to 12.30 pm organised by the Rotary club of Burton upon Trent it is for Carers and the cared for to meet with and make new friends, enjoy a cup of coffee or tea in a safe and friendly environment.

WEDNESDAY 27TH NOVEMBER

Barton Under Needwood Flower Club

Barton flower club invite you to a demonstration by Sandra Gunner entitled "I'm dreaming of" 7.30pm in St James church hall, sales table, raffle and refreshments visitors £8.00 everyone welcome.

THURSDAY 28TH NOVEMBER

Beginners Ballroom & Latin Dance

Learn to dance in a relaxed and informal setting you will soon learn to waltz, cha-cha, and foxtrox your way around the dance floor. The 8 week course costs just £40, or £6 per class per week. 6.30pm to 7.15pm, no partner necessary. Location: Want2Dance with Victoria, Wharf Road, Burton, DE14 1PZ. For more information please contact: 07791204903

FRIDAY 29TH NOVEMBER

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.

Baby Sing 'n' Jam

At The Hub at St Mary's Lichfield, exciting live music event especially created for babies, toddlers and their families! Led by professional singer Kelly Percival with support from her live band. Ticket Details Each session lasts 45 minutes - 2 sessions 10am & 11:30am £9 for one adult and one under 3, £5 for an additional adult or under 3. For more information visit: www.thehubstmarys.co.uk

SATURDAY 30TH NOVEMBER

Literature Festival in a Day

Bring your bookmarks and reading glasses for, Literature Festival in A Day. Held at The Hub, four best-selling authors join us in this taster for the Lichfield Literature Festival Tickets are per Author, 2 hour session - £10 /£8 for under 16's. For more information visit: www.thehubstmarys.co.uk

SUNDAY 1ST DECEMBER

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 2ND DECEMBER

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. First Monday in the month except Bank Holidays. Always call to check meetings: 07478 889577, or email on: burton.prostate.cancer.supprp@gmail.com

Find more events on our website

TUESDAY 3RD DECEMBER

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. Contact Dave Jones for more information on: 07429 074758

WEDNESDAY 4TH 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

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. Enjoying a wide range of activities, from ice skating to canoeing, and craft to cooking, there is something for every girl! Call: 07794 759608

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 5TH DECEMBER

Beginners Ballroom & Latin Dance

Learn to waltz, cha-cha, and foxtrot your way around the dance floor. The 8 week course costs just £40, or £6 per class per week. 6.30pm to 7.15pm, no partner necessary. Want2Dance with Victoria, Europa House, Wharf Road, Burton, DE14 1PZ. For more information contact Victoria Neale on: 07791 204903

FRIDAY 6TH DECEMBER

Burton Flower Club

We meet at The Priory Centre, Church Road, Stretton DE13 0HE on the first Friday of the month at 7.30pm Visitors are always welcome. Contact 01283 704180/ 01283 348754, visit www.flowersnorthmidlands.co.uk

Momentum - Young Musicians on Stage

Lichfield Arts provides an opportunity for talented young bands and musicians to cut their teeth performing on a stage. Come along and enjoy an evening of music from some of the areas local talent. Who knows who you might discover! For more information visit: www.thehubstmarys.co.uk

SATURDAY 7TH DECEMBER

A Festive Concert

A Festive concert with Beatus Musical Director James Foulds 7.30pm at St. Wytstan's Church, Repton. An evening of a cappella singing old and new Christmas carols and songs. Tickets available at the door or contact 01283 702410

A Christmas Concert & Burton Big Band

At St Mary's Church Hall on Hillfield Lane, Stretton, and will start at 7pm. Tickets are £5 each and are available from Laura & Paul Spencer on 01283 561566 or from the Parish Office on 01283 564216.

SUNDAY 8TH DECEMBER

Barton 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

MONDAY 9TH DECEMBER

Briz Valley WI

Meeting at Violet Way Academy, Violet Way, Stapenhill on the 2nd Monday of the month, 7.30-9.30pm. We like to keep our meetings informal and friendly with an interesting programme of events. New members and visitors are always welcome, so why not come along and see what you think. For further details please contact Pat 07580568883

TUESDAY 10TH DECEMBER

Walton-on-Trent WI

Every 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7.15pm at Walton Village Hall. Come and join us for fun, friendship, learning and sharing. For more information contact: Joan on 01283 713380

Branston Womens' Institute

Hold 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. Contact Mrs Barbara Reeves, President, Tel. 01283 546536

WEDNESDAY 11TH DECEMBER

Stretton & Claymills Womens' 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 email: strettonandclaymillswi@gmail.com

THURSDAY 12TH DECEMBER

Burton Belles Womens' 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

Fafunia Snowy Stories

Come explore and play in a winter wonderland! Sing, dance and be merry in a magical land of snowflakes and stars! An interactive storytelling experience based in the fairy kingdom 'Fafunia!' inspired by Icelandic Folklore. Suitable for age 3+ or early years with parental supervision. For more information visit: www.thehubstmarys.co.uk

FRIDAY 13TH DECEMBER

Loving Jeremy Corbyn: Self Help Guide

A humorous, intelligent, poetry show about Labour, Tories and the division of the left by BBC Slam Champion, Jess Green. She's fallen head over heels in love with Jeremy Corbyn and his raw socialist magnetism but if only everyone else agreed. Following the success of her first show, Burning Books which received 5 star reviews both at the Edinburgh Fringe, Jess returns with a rousing, lyrical and humorous look at modern politics. For more information visit: www.thehubstmarys.co.uk

COMPETITION WINNERS

Congratulations to our **Remona** competition winners, each winning a £25 Voucher:

Mrs. Dawn Craner, Branston
Christine Benning, Barton
Emma Wigley, Rolleston-on-Dove
Mrs. D. Simpson, Barton
Rachel Hughes-Rowlands, N'ampton
Sarah Banks, Barton
Stephen Johnson, Stapenhill
Shirley Huckerby, Barton

Look out elsewhere in **LOCAL LINKS** this month to win A Switch Off Spa Day for Two from Hilton Spa

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What The Dickens!

Few writers are more inextricably linked with Christmas than Charles Dickens. There are plenty of Christmas tales, but none that resonate as much around the world as "A Christmas Carol". Countless adaptations of this story have been performed and filmed in the last century, from serious actors to Muppets injecting their own brand of humour into the telling of the tale.

But how much did Charles Dickens shape Christmas as we now know it?

Christmas celebrations had actually been falling out of fashion at the time in England. Old customs like carols, 12-day feasts, and Father Christmas had all but faded away, and the Christmas tree was still a new-fangled fad from Germany, an idea imported by Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's Husband, in 1841.

It was the end of the Industrial Revolution after all, and most of England was poor. Child labour was common. Working conditions were generally abysmal. Charles Dickens had firsthand experience with this: as a child, he was forced to leave school and work 10-hour days in a boot-blackening warehouse in order to support his family.

By 1843, he was already a successful author, but the memory of brutal childhood poverty never left him. He toured factories, mines, and government run schools, and

was consistently appalled by the abuse of working class children.

The most widespread theories of how to "help" the poor at the time revolved around getting the poor to "help themselves." The idea was that work-houses and prisons should be unpleasant, so poor people would be motivated to work harder and improve their station in life. This refused to recognise the situations that those in poverty are subject to, often poor health and disability, eliminating their ability to work and change their circumstances.

"A Christmas Carol" was written in six weeks and finished by the end of November. The book was published during the Christmas season of 1843 and its low selling price did not bring in a lot of profits. The book however, was an immediate success. By Christmas Eve, the first edition of A

Christmas Carol had entirely sold out.

The story's vocabulary has crept into today's conversations, with a "Scrooge" being someone who refuses to get in the holiday spirit, and "Tiny Tim" being any innocent in a vulnerable situation.

The story does not only give us a vivid portrayal of Christmas feasting, Dickens is also concerned to tell a story of change, of release from the imprisoning chains of material wealth and possessions into the freedom of compassion and generosity.

Most importantly, every time this piece of literature is read or displayed on the silver screen, it reminds us of a vision of Christmas that has little to do with displays of wealth, and instead focuses on loved ones and the joy of an act of charity.



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Police Propriety

999 is a number that everyone knows, children from a young age are taught to call 999 if there is an emergency, but do you know when you should call 101 instead?

Every year the Police force receive millions of 999 calls, but often many of these calls weren't emergency calls. This means that many calls are classified as 'inappropriate use of 999' and should have been directed to another agency. The police often get calls asking for taxi numbers, opening hours of the local convenience store and over Christmas one police force even had a call to 999 from someone reporting a queue jumper in the Santa Grotto.

101 or 999?

Often when people panic they remember the 999 number and call it. The Police are there 24/7 365 days a year to help you, but if it's identified as being a non-emergency then you may have to wait for another operator. The Police need to free up the 999 lines as there could be a life or death emergency waiting to get through.

Advice for calling 999:

- call when it's an emergency
- a crime is in progress
- someone suspected of a crime is nearby
- when there is danger to life
- when violence is being used or threatened

If you don't need an emergency response, then you should call 101.

This could be to report a crime or to seek advice, for example your car has been stolen, your property has been damaged or you suspect drug use or dealing in your neighbourhood. Use 101 for reporting:

- nuisance, rowdy or inconsiderate neighbours
- vandalism, graffiti and fly-posters
- street drinking
- environmental damage including littering, dumping of rubbish and abandonment of cars
- prostitution related activity
- begging and vagrancy

- fireworks misuse
- inconsiderate or inappropriate use of vehicles

Calls to 101 incur a 15p charge but this is a flat fee for the entirety of the call [mobiles included].

Those who make hoax calls to emergency services are uselessly wasting vital services, and could be endangering the lives of others by diverting them from those in genuine need.

All calls to the emergency services are recorded and they can always trace the number, even if the call is made from a withheld number. If you are found to be making a hoax call you could be fined or even sent to prison.

Misuse of 999 and hoax calls are a criminal offence. You could face a maximum penalty of up to six months in prison or a fine of £5,000.



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

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.

LLS-44-28

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