

LOCAL LINKS

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ISSUE 144
FREE

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

Learn more about Remembrance Sunday

10 VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY IDEAS

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MINCE PIE CUPCAKES

A twist on a seasonal classic!

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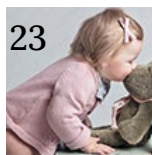
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LOCAL LINKS



ISSUE 144

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Dear Readers,

We hope this issue finds you safe and well.

As we have mentioned so many times over the past 6 months, it is so important to support our local businesses right now. With Christmas approaching, we hope you will consider purchasing your gifts locally this year. We have some tips on page 10 on how to shop locally and safely during the current lockdown period.

We also want to help you get into the Christmas spirit! Why not make the most of being at home and have a go at making our mince pie cupcakes - the recipe is on page 17, or get ready to decorate your home by reading our article on page 21 on choosing the perfect tree. We also have some great ideas if you are hosting a virtual Christmas party this year! We can still have some fun even if we can't celebrate in person, right?!

For our competition this month, the lovely Lucinda from *Lucinda Smith Photography* is kindly offering £200 worth of photography plus runners-up prizes, so be sure to enter!

Stay Safe!

The **LOCAL LINKS** team



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Tues 1st December

Next issue out from:
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Tatenhill
Yoxall

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WE WILL REMEMBER THEM BY SARAH DAVEY

WHY DO WE WEAR A POPPY?

Scarlet poppies grow wild all over Western Europe wherever the soil has been disturbed. The battles of the First World War churned up such vast areas of earth that millions of poppies germinated and bloomed, often around the bodies of the fallen soldiers.

A Canadian surgeon called John McRae wrote the poem *In Flanders Fields* in which the poppies symbolise the deaths of those who fought. It is a

haunting memorial to those soldiers who have died in any war.

WHY DO WE HAVE A TWO-MINUTE SILENCE?

It was on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month that the guns of World War I fell silent. Four years of fighting and devastation finally ended. The following year, ceremonies of remembrance took place on what was known as Armistice Day.

An Australian journalist, Edward George Honey first proposed a respectful silence to remember the dead. He wrote a letter to the London Evening News which was brought to the attention of King George V. The king then issued a proclamation which called for a two-minute silence.

These days, Armistice Day is known as Remembrance Sunday and is a chance to honour the fallen soldiers of all conflicts.



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In the last few years, supermarkets have been trying to help with the anti-food waste campaign that is spreading throughout the country.

Certain shops have pledged to donate unsold items to food banks, inspired by French legislation which forbids any edible food to be thrown away. While this is admirable, it looks unlikely that the UK will pass such a law any time soon. While the big shops certainly have a lot to answer for when it comes to the way they promote and date their food, there is also a move to encourage shoppers to approach their produce purchasing more thoughtfully.

Although the amount of food thrown away in the home makes up the smallest portion of total food waste, the largest is at the food manufacturing stage. It may seem as though we as consumers don't have much of a say in the 1.8 million tonnes of food wasted in manufacture, but our expectations of how the 'perfect' produce should look does play a part in what makes it to market. It is often supermarkets which enforce the standards of what can be accepted onto manufacturers, despite there no longer being government regulations that require them to do so.

Produce at the manufacturing stage can be rejected for a variety of reasons - not

straight enough, not long enough, and most surprisingly - too big! None of these factors affect the taste or quality, although they can sometimes lead to rather amusing shapes which it seems supermarkets would rather avoid us seeing! As home growers and farmers' market goers will know, fruit and vegetables come in all kinds of curious shapes and sizes. From carrots and parsnips that have two crossed legs, to curly courgettes and tomatoes that seem ready to burst at the seams, there is a huge variation.

The desire for uniform food has become a Catch 22. Supermarkets sell it, so people accept that it must be the best produce; then supermarkets have to continue to sell it because customers won't buy anything that looks different. While they are definitely making small moves to introduce fruit and veg that they call 'wonky' or 'ugly', they are still far

behind local markets and farm shops which have always been proud to offer fruit and veg in all their forms. By buying locally, we can continue to support farms that don't contribute to the many tonnes of food waste.

Restaurants are playing their part too. Chefs who source their ingredients locally and proudly display this fact are beginning to allow the variation to make it to the plate. This is another great move in celebrating the rich diversity of our land's crops.

Once you learn to embrace nature's weird and wonderful, there is one issue that may arise. What to do with those little odds, ends, and knobbles? My favourite solution is to throw them all into a pot with water and herbs, and boil until you have a delicious stock that you can use as a base for your favourite soups and gravies.





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Our Christmas shopping is going to look a little different this year.

With the winter lockdown in place, it can seem like the only option is to go to big online outlets to find gifts for your loved ones. However, our local businesses need us now more than ever, and many of them have a whole range of options available for you to find gifts that your friends and family will love. Some will have their own websites with local delivery or collection options, many will also have vouchers available so your loved one can pick something special when the shops open again. Vouchers are also a great option for experience gifts, like a trip to the local salon or a favourite restaurant, so you can give the gift of something to look forward to in the new year! Spending locally will bring the best gifts home whilst sharing the Christmas spirit with our community of small shops and businesses.

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How much rain will we get this November? Will it drown the seed and cause problems with harvest as it did last year?

Hopefully, the month will be crisp and allow livestock to remain outside for as long as possible. Dry, crisp, sunny days help keep bedding to a minimum whereas wet, dank days mean the bedding doesn't last as long.

Water-logged ground

also means the growing crops may suffer through important nutrients and fertilisers being leached out of the soil before they have had a chance of uptake. Problems from run-off from agricultural ground have been largely mitigated by the use of regulation as to when and how much fertiliser or manure can be applied, but also by the use of buffer zones - an expanse of ground between the arable acreage and a watercourse.

Water is obviously a necessity and much is made of the amounts used in various production methods, particularly in the meat vs vegan debate. Water footprints can be calculated and use 3 categories: green

= rainfall, blue = tap water supply, grey = fresh water used to dilute pollution. So for example, English lamb uses 0.1% blue water and 96.6% green water, English beef equates to 0.4% blue water and 84.4% green. Producing 1 litre of milk uses 8 litres of blue (including washing down, cleaning etc) whereas 1 litre of almond 'milk' requires 158 litres of blue (5,290 litres of blue to produce 1kg of raw Californian almond kernels).

Trees are losing their leaves and hedgelaying begins. The Yew tree, famous for its wood and highly poisonous, retains it's leaves and can live for more than a thousand years.

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Care for our elderly loved ones is rarely out of the media these days. Whether it is a question of funding or the challenges in securing high quality reliable care, it sometimes feels like it's a problem too big to fix.

At Visiting Angels East Staffordshire, we believe we have a solution as we approach care differently. We acknowledge that the need for

help can be a difficult decision; an elderly person wishes to remain independent in their own home but needs support to achieve that. Everyone deserves to be in their own home with all their home comforts and their loved ones close by. If you need help in your home, taking medication or more complex support on a regular basis, we have highly trained staff to help. Our "Angels" will help with those daily chores and let you focus on the things you love best.

We take our time to find and recruit the very best "Angels" - people who truly care, and we constantly support and invest in their training to ensure they give the very best care to our clients. We understand the importance of building a

relationship with the "Angels" who support you, which is why we give our clients the opportunity to choose their caregivers. This, together with the fact that we provide a minimum of one-hour visits at a time which suits you, means you will always be provided with truly exceptional person-centred care provided by the same "Angel". During Covid-19 we have invested in specific training, infection control and PPE, making sure both the caregiver and client remain safe. At Visiting Angels, we pride ourselves on providing continuous, consistent person-centred care all of the time.

Contact us at **eaststaffs@visiting-angels.co.uk** or call us on **01283 319400** to learn more.



Our angels can help you to stay safe and stay connected this Christmas

Visiting Angels are continuing to deliver vital care and support in the community during these challenging times, and we know that Covid-19 is a major concern for our clients and their families, even more so when they cannot be together in person.

So our carers have additional training in infection control, and how to help you to stay connected with loved ones, either by using their sanitised smartphones, or by helping you with using your technology to connect safely and securely.

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How good is your memory?

Many believe that the older you get the more the memory fades, which for most is true. But from fading to sharp can often be easily triggered a word, a reminder of an event, a smell or taste, and it instantly reminds you of something in your past, perhaps from many years ago. I believe the brain is an amazing organ, that all the memories are still there. But with so much information having been stored in our brain over the years, it needs triggers to bring it to the fore. It is like an amazing filing system.

Things that are of little consequence are the most difficult to recall. Why would we want to remember the trivia of life? Well, one reason could be mouldering away in your freezer. Remember that bag of 'something' that every now and then you spy,

have no idea what it is so put it back again? That is one memory that is unlikely ever to come back to you.

A survey earlier this year of more than 1,000 British people came up with an unedifying list of how much stockpiling of food in fridges and freezers was currently being held.

The results showed that over 30% said they had items in their freezer that were more than a year old. 8% had items over two years and over 5% had an item more than five years old! Quite a sobering thought. So, you are not alone if you find you have forgotten items in your freezer. The brain obviously cannot have all this information there at the flick of a switch.

It seems that once we've put something in our freezer, we are reluctant to throw it away, even if we are never going to eat it. The longest stored foods as identified

in the survey were ready meals, meat and fruit. One respondent confessed they had a box in their freezer for years and no idea what it was other than 'an unknown and disgusting looking stew that I will never eat'.

So, sort out your freezer and use that 'way back' memory to recall happy holidays, cute things the children said or did, family members long gone, joyful Christmas celebrations, happy parties, or where you left your keys! Keep a 'memorabilia' box with photographs, a special birthday or Christmas card, a personal letter, a holiday postcard, a theatre ticket, a piece of jewellery, anything of significance to you, any one of which could release a forgotten memory, and in a moment you are transported back to that occasion. Well done brain!

Survey conducted in September 2020 by Prominence Support, www.prominencesupport.co.uk





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 Georgina Wilson
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RECIPE: MINCE PIE CUPCAKES

For this month's recipe we are helping you get into the festive spirit with a twist on a timeless classic. These will appeal to those with a very sweet tooth and the kids will love helping you make them!

PREPARATION TIME

20 minutes

COOKING TIME

25 minutes

SERVES: 6

INGREDIENTS

CUPCAKES

100g soft butter
100g caster sugar
2 large eggs
1tsp almond extract

100g self-raising flour

25g ground almonds

120g mincemeat

BUTTERCREAM

75g soft butter

75g icing sugar

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 190°C/170°C fan/gas mark 5.
2. Beat together the butter and caster sugar in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy.
3. Add the eggs one at a time, beating until fully combined. Stir in the almond extract.
4. Sift in the flour and ground almonds and mix until fully combined.
5. Place 6 cupcake cases into a cupcake tin and pour the

mixture carefully into each case.

6. Use the back of a teaspoon to make a dip in the centre of each cupcake, then add a generous teaspoon of mincemeat into this dip.
7. Bake for 20-25 minutes until the cakes are golden brown.
8. In the meantime, make the buttercream by beating the butter until soft, adding the icing sugar a spoonful at a time and beating until fully combined.
9. Once removed from the oven, let the cupcakes cool on a rack until they reach room temperature. At this point you can either use a piping bag or a spoon to top them with the buttercream.
10. Enjoy!

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LOCAL ESTATE AGENT CELEBRATES DOUBLE WIN!

A local estate agent is celebrating after being recognised as being part of the best sales and lettings agency in the country.

Victoria Sylvester, who runs EweMove across Lichfield & Barton-Under-Needwood, was delighted to be part of the team which were presented with the awards for Best National Sales and Best National Lettings Agency at the recent EA Masters event.

EweMove triumphed ahead of thousands of competitors to win the accolade. Victoria explained why: "Winning these awards shows the level of customer care we provide our clients. We were independently judged

on our property marketing, customer service and results during a data analysis project and a large-scale mystery shopping exercise". EweMove is also consistently at the top of the review site Trustpilot estate

year, the market is very active, with lots of demand from buyers whose needs have changed over the past few months or people wanting to take advantage of the Stamp Duty holiday. We have adapted new ways of working to ensure that everything we do follows the government's safety guidelines. Whether you prefer virtual or physical appointments, we have something to suit your needs. All the properties we sell benefit from a free video tour. This gives viewers a different perspective of the property to attract those who are seriously interested and reduces unnecessary physical viewings in the current climate".

To find out more, visit [EweMove.com/Barton-under-Needwood](https://www.ewemove.com/Barton-under-Needwood)



Left: double award, Right: proud as punch; Victoria Sylvester

agency league table with over 10,000 reviews from buyers, sellers, landlords and tenants.

Commenting on the local property market, Victoria said: "Despite the challenges of this

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HOW TO CHOOSE THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS TREE



Picking out the annual Christmas tree is one of **THE big moments of the season and a memory to be remembered, so don't let a sad one ruin your Christmas! Here are our top tips and advice on choosing the perfect tree:**

In the UK, we generally have three main species of Christmas tree on sale, these are:

NORWAY SPRUCE

These have been growing in the UK for almost 100 years! They are widely available but they do lose their needles more readily.

NORDMANN FIR

A bushy compact tree with soft, glossy needles that they will mostly keep, but they don't have much of a scent.

NOBLE FIR

Gaining in popularity because of their narrower shape, they have a good scent with dense, long-lasting needles.

Once you've decided on a variety, here are the main points to check before you head to the checkout:

FRESHNESS

The tree's trunk should be slightly sticky.

SECURE NEEDLES

Tap the cut end of the tree on the ground; if a few needles fall off, it's okay, but if a lot of needles fall off, keep looking.

EVEN COLOUR

The greener the better!

Once you get home, take these small steps to ensure your tree lasts and stays fresher for longer:

1. Cut off about 2.5cm from the bottom of the tree's trunk, as you would do with fresh flowers. This will help the tree absorb more water, hold it's needles and keep it's colour.
2. Place the cut tree in water as quickly as you can.
3. You may want to place the tree next to a fireplace, but be aware that this will cause your tree to dry out faster.

You're now ready to decorate and make your Christmas tree the focal point of your home.





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Lucinda Smith PHOTOGRAPHY

For this month's competition, one lucky reader will win £200 worth of photography from *Lucinda Smith Photography*, with studio session prizes for the runners-up!

Lucinda has been bringing a sense of fun and spontaneity to family, baby, newborn and lifestyle photography for over a decade. She offers a wonderful portrait experience followed by beautiful photographs that you will treasure forever.

Her studio is based in the beautiful village of Tatenhill,

Burton-on-Trent, and is surrounded by magnificent countryside, making it the perfect location for relaxed outdoor lifestyle images.

Our lucky first prize winner will receive a complimentary studio photo session plus £200 worth of product vouchers, while our runners-up will receive not only a studio session, but a complimentary 7x5" print too.

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

number on a postcard and send it to:

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Alternatively, you can e-mail your details to:

local@locallinksmedia.co.uk

The closing date for entries is the 8th December and the winners will be announced in our January edition. Good luck to everyone who enters!

*No cash alternative is available. One entry per person.



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HOW LONG SHOULD YOU COOK YOUR TURKEY FOR?

It's looking like more of us than ever will be cooking Christmas dinner this year. With that in mind, you may wonder how long the turkey should stay in the oven for. If you undercook it, you risk giving the family food poisoning. You don't want to leave it in for too long either - nobody wants dry turkey on Christmas Day! Here is a quick guide to the recommended cooking times:

Weight	Cooking Time
Under 4.5kg	Allow 45 minutes per kilogram, plus 20 minutes
4.5kg-6.5kg	Allow 40 minutes per kilogram
Over 4.5kg	Allow 35 minutes per kilogram

For more tips on preparing and cooking turkey safely, head to www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/cooking-turkey-safely/

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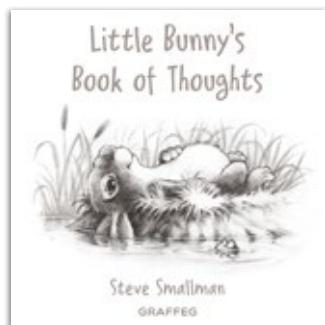
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LITTLE BUNNY'S BOOK OF THOUGHTS

BY STEVE SMALLMAN

With the growth in popularity of mindfulness and relaxation books comes a new title by award-winning author and illustrator Steve Smallman. This uplifting

rhyming text encourages people of all ages to take a moment out of their day for themselves, to reflect and try something new. Mental health is an ever prominent issue, particularly with the challenges we currently face, and this book provides an easy way to help present these issues to people of all ages and raise awareness of mindful thinking with a gentle approach.

The delightful pencil illustrations present Little Bunny experiencing challenges and showing a range of emotions, making him an instantly relatable and universal character. This compact picture book is the perfect choice for a bedtime story, a relaxed

activity for children to end the day, or the perfect gift for someone special. 'I think that whatever age we are, we can get bogged down with everyday worries and insecurities and become very inward-looking. Taking the time to stop, look 'out' instead of 'in' and be kind to yourself is a lesson Bunny can teach us all!' - Steve Smallman.

The author of *Smelly Peter the Great Pea Eater* (Winner of the Sheffield Children's Book Award 2009) and *The Lamb Who Came for Dinner* (shortlisted for the Red House Children's Book Award), Steve also received the Sheffield Children's Book Award in 2019 for *Cock-a-Doodle Poo!*.

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Whenever I look up into the sky and see a red helicopter, I feel immensely proud of being a volunteer for the Midlands Air Ambulance Charity.

I joined the team in 2018 after having searched for volunteering opportunities with a local charity. The values cherished by the charity and the fact that the service is lifesaving made it an easy choice to make. Since then I have never looked back and feel so much part of the MAAC family.

The Midlands Air Ambulance Charity was formed in 1991 with just one helicopter. Now there are three, providing a pre-hospital service to a population of six million people, 365 days a year, across the six counties of Staffordshire, West Midlands, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire and Gloucestershire. The helicopters are based strategically at Tatenhill, RAF Cosford and Strensham, in order to reach and treat patients as fast as possible. Recent additions to the service are two critical care cars enabling MAAC to provide even more patients with advanced critical care, as well as accessing areas more challenging for the helicopter, such as towns and cities. The cars and helicopters are staffed by a doctor and one or two critical care paramedics, providing hospital

level care and medication on site rather than waiting until the patient arrives at hospital, thus increasing the chance of recovery and survival. The incidents most frequently attended are cardiac, road traffic accidents, falls and collapses, stabbings and sports related.

Each helicopter mission costs £2500 and each critical care call out £224. Demand for the service is growing by 25% year-on-year even during the pandemic, making MAAC one of the busiest Air Ambulances in the UK. The clinical teams work long hours and face potential risk from Covid-19 as they continue to deliver high quality care to their patients. This incredible work is made possible by the generosity of the public and local businesses as Midlands Air Ambulance receives no government funding for its daily missions.

The current pandemic has had an impact on fundraising, resulting in a significant shortfall, due to the temporary closure of the charity's shops in Walsall, West Bromwich, Telford and Newcastle-Under-Lyme and the postponement of events which would have

funded many potentially lifesaving missions. Undeterred, MAAC has turned to virtual fundraising including a virtual bucket collection, a home-based 'Bake Off', virtual open days at two airbases, online quizzes and sponsored events.

The Midlands Air Ambulance Charity has taken care of its volunteers during Covid-19; telephoning to ensure we are well and offering help where needed. We have been able to join in several activities from home, but cannot wait until we can resume the wonderful events where we get to meet so many people who are interested in the work of the charity.

We are always looking for volunteers and supporters so if you would like to know how to get involved, then please have a look at our website. It's great fun working with such a wonderful team!

www.midlandsairambulance.com



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YOUR PET'S WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

by Laura Preite RVN, Scarsdale Vets

If you have an overweight cat or dog, here are a few tips to help them stick to a daily calorie allowance:

1. Establish their ideal weight in order to work out how much to feed them.
2. Establish their activity levels. An indoor cat or a dog that has reduced activity will need less calories. Some feeding guides will show the daily allowance for an active, very active and sedentary animal.
3. Avoid measuring cups and use digital scales to weigh the food out. Measuring cups can give inaccurate

measurements and can vary as much as 20%.

4. If you can't cut treats out of the diet completely, switch to low calorie treats, and remember to reduce their normal daily food accordingly.
5. If you have a severely overweight cat/dog, consider changing to a specific weight loss diet to initiate the weight loss.
6. If your cat or dog eats quickly, try using slow feeder bowls, activity cubes or puzzle boards. This also creates stimulation and increases

activity levels in some cases.

An exercise routine is important to help aid weight loss. For dogs, factor in daily walks and playtime. For cats, try and stimulate play when in the house.

For initial weight loss monitoring, it is advisable to weigh every 2-3 weeks to check that the current feeding amounts and activity levels are right for your pet. Clinic nurses at all our practices hold free-of-charge weight consultations to help you and your pet in their weight loss journey. Visit www.scarsdalevets.com for more information.



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10 VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY IDEAS

2020 could well be 'The Christmas to Remember' and December is likely to be a little different to usual.

Whether you've been tasked with organising a virtual office Christmas party, or you're hoping to interact online with family and friends who are unable to get together, here are some suggestions to help you create a memorable festive experience. Who knows, maybe some will catch on for future years when the weather is snowy and people don't want to venture out in party wear?!

1. STICK THE RED NOSE ON FATHER CHRISTMAS

A version of the traditional 'Pin the Tail on the Donkey' for the kids. Each family could stick a picture of Father Christmas on a door and then watch online as each child is blindfolded to stick the red nose on.

2. CHEESE AND WINE TASTING BY THE CHRISTMAS TREE

A sophisticated night where a variety of cheeses and wines are decided in advance. It's a good chance to get to see other people's Christmas trees too.

3. CHRISTMAS CHARADES

This can work just as well as a virtual event as in person. People can all excitedly shout at their screens.

4. CHRISTMAS KARAOKE

This is either one for the whole family, or for a night when maybe a little alcohol is consumed and grow-ups become more confident.

5. SECRET SANTA

Regularly done in offices, this can be organised in advance, and gifts can be delivered to the participants for them to open on-screen.

6. FANCY DRESS CHRISTMAS QUIZ

Whether you love or hate quizzes, it's a great way to involve everyone – young or old, and the fancy dress aspect will make it different to all the other quiz nights that have taken place during lockdown.

7. TIPPLE TV. PICK A PROGRAMME/FILM/STAND-UP COMEDIAN

Agree on a few specific words and then all participants watch at the same time and take a sip of their favourite tipple every time the specific words are spoken. Could get quite giggly.

8. ONLINE FAMILY BOARD GAMES OR BINGO NIGHT

Snakes and Ladders, Ludo, Connect 4 and more can all be played for free online. But if you prefer Bingo, one person can act as the caller.

9. CHRISTMAS CHEF

For those who like to cook/bake – and for those who are terrible at it! Email a recipe in advance, then everyone cooks at the same time. Laughter is likely to occur and conversation will be created, then the finished items can be compared and critiqued.

10. CHRISTMASSY CHARACTURIST

These artists can normally be booked to attend your party. Throughout the evening, they draw comical pictures of the guests. This year, they could be booked to attend online and draw each person from looking at them on-screen, then at the end of the evening the pictures can be revealed!

A virtual Christmas can be sociable, engaging and, most of all, memorable. Helpful tip: if it's really not your thing, you could always make the excuse that your internet connection is unstable!



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

COMPETITION WINNERS

Congratulations to our September **Claypot Lounge** competition winners who have each won a £50 dine-in voucher:

Carol O'Hara, Branston

Brian Meek, Stretton

Mrs Bridie Shelton, Burton-on-Trent

Claire Cassie, Fradley

Look out elsewhere in **LOCAL LINKS** this month to win a £200 voucher from **Lucinda Smith Photography**.

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