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ISSUE 145
FREE

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winter walks

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of Christmas

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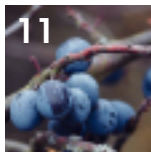
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LOCAL LINKS



ISSUE 145

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Dear Readers,

As the year draws to a close, many of us are finding ourselves totally in awe of the year we've just had... and no doubt a few of us will be glad to see the back of it! But, ever the seekers of silver linings, we've found a few things to be thankful for, have a read on pg13. This Christmas be thankful for your loved ones, lost and living.

We'll certainly be heading out for walks between bouts of feasting, so in the spirit of spirits, we've found some fun and festive drinks to fill your flasks with!

And as is the flavour of the month, we take a look at "Why is it we associate spices with Christmas?".

Wishing you health and happiness for the festive season.

Love always,

The **LOCAL LINKS** team

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Hot Stuff!

Many of us have taken to enjoying the outdoors, whether it's short walks from the home or longer rambles in the countryside, getting some fresh air has been worthwhile. As the colder weather sets in, there's no reason to discontinue stretching your legs and headspace, just fill a flask with something warm and head on out! But if you're weary of tea or coffee, and now that the festive season is upon us, why not try something a little different or a touch more decadent!

Mulled Apple Drink

We're sure many of you have tried this as an alternative to mulled wine but try this recipe that uses apple juice instead of cider so that it's suitable for children and designated drivers. You can always make the 'adult version' by adding a splash of brandy or rum!

Ingredients (serves 4-5)

2 cinnamon sticks
4 allspice berries (or pinch of ground allspice)
4 whole cloves (or pinch of ground cloves)
Peel from 1 orange
Peel from 1 lemon
2 tbsp maple syrup
1 litre of apple juice

Method: Put the cinnamon sticks, cloves, allspice, orange peel and lemon peel into a large sauce pan. Add the maple syrup and apple juice then heat until almost at

boiling. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 30 minutes. Serve in a mug and add a splash of rum for the grown-ups!



Peppermint Mocha Chocolate

Try this very decadent hot chocolate recipe. The coffee and the mint schnapps will certainly put a spring in your step! This could be adapted for children by leaving out the schnapps and substituting the milk chocolate for mint chocolate to keep the minty flavour.

Ingredients (serves 1-2)

1 cup of milk
1 tsp of coffee
50g dark chocolate
25g milk chocolate
A splash of mint schnapps
Whipped cream
Crushed candy canes

Method: Heat the milk in a saucepan over a low heat. Add the coffee and both types of chocolate. Whisk until everything is melted and combined. Remove from heat and stir in the schnapps. Serve in mugs topped with whipped cream and a sprinkle of crushed candy canes. Absolutely delicious!

Modern Hot Toddy

According to legend, the Hot Toddy originated on the damp streets of Edinburgh, mixing whiskey with hot water and spices, with the water said to come from Tod's Well, hence the name. It's origin is also said to be traced back to British-occupied India and the Hindi word "taddy", referring to a fermented drink made from palm sap, originating from the 1600s!

Whatever the true history there is no doubting that when the cold weather demands a stiff drink, this one is hard to beat. Try this very modern twist on a classic drink!

Ingredients (serves 1)

2-3 cardamom pods
1 tsp butter
2-3 slices of fresh ginger
1 tsp brown sugar
Pinch of orange zest
Pinch of nutmeg
Vanilla essence
1 measure of whiskey
Hot water

Method: Add the dry ingredients (including the butter) to a mug. Mix the whiskey and hot water then pour over the spices etc. Mix well and serve with a cinnamon stick and a drop of vanilla essence.

Whether you're out walking or snuggled up at home in front of the tree, we're sure you'll enjoy!



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Christmas Turkey

With UK turkey farmers talking of the difficulty of fulfilling Christmas orders due to Covid-related staff shortages, or turkeys being too large for many families in the UK facing the possibility of a more modest celebration this year, due to restrictions on gathering numbers under current rules, it might be time to look at alternatives to the traditional turkey roast or to look at some creative ways of making the most of the inevitable turkey leftovers.



Lemon Turkey Soup

Something a little lighter after Christmas Day excess!

Ingredients (4 people)

Olive oil

1 red onion, chopped

1 garlic clove, minced

1-2 carrots, thinly sliced

1 stick of celery, chopped

1/2 red pepper, diced

500ml chicken stock

250g cooked turkey, chopped

2 tbsp lemon juice

2 tsp lemon zest

Handful of spinach leaves

Salt and pepper

Method: eat oil in a large pan on medium heat. Cook onion and garlic for a couple of minutes until fragrant. Add carrots, celery, pepper: cook until carrots start to soften.

Add chicken stock to the pan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 20-30 minutes.

Stir in the chopped turkey, lemon juice, lemon zest, spinach leaves and simmer until spinach is wilted. Season with salt and pepper and serve.



Turkey Paella

Try this take on a Spanish classic.

Ingredients

100g chorizo, chopped

1 onion, chopped

2 cloves garlic, chopped

1 green pepper, chopped

250g white rice

1 can chopped tomatoes

1/2 tsp saffron

1 tsp smoked paprika

250g cooked turkey

1 tbsp chopped parsley

100ml white wine

1 litre chicken stock

Method: In a large pan, fry the chorizo in oil until coloured. Add onions and pepper and cook for 5 minutes. Add garlic, paprika, salt, pepper and the saffron. Add the rice and cook for a couple of minutes until coated with the cooking oil. Add the wine and cook until almost evaporated. Add the turkey, tomatoes and half of the chicken stock. Cover and cook for 10 minutes. If it gets too dry add more stock. Continue cooking until rice is just tender, 20-30 mins. Serve and sprinkle with the chopped parsley and lemon wedges.

Or if you fancy, dispense with the turkey this year and try an alternative bird:

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By The Barn *by Angela Sargent*

*"They gave him of the corn
land, that was of public right,
As much as two strong oxen
could plough from morn till
night." - Chaucer*

Under lockdown, unlike so many in cities across the UK, we are so lucky to live where we do! The beautiful English countryside, particularly here in Derbyshire, has never been so appreciated by us and those that live nearby.

Whilst we welcome anyone exercising or just enjoying a ramble on our many footpaths, it is important that notice is taken of the countryside code-gates left as they are found, litter taken home, care taken when near livestock and not allowing dogs to roam too freely (disturbing and displacing wildlife) and please be aware you are walking through someone's home and workplace.

December is a mixed month-short days, dark nights and cold, bleak, dreary weather and we are bringing in our remaining cattle, to pass the next few months indoors. Dairy cattle will be in already and cattle are quite happy to be dry, warm and well fed and

watered. Just like us, they won't move far if everything is to hand.

We let ours out into the yards whilst we scrape out and bed and some will jump and skip about, happy to stretch their legs, others have to be pushed out and lurk by the gate, ready to come in at any opportunity. We also take the chance to check water troughs and electrics when they're out of the way.

It's a fallacy often promoted by single agenda groups, that farmers do not care about the welfare of their animals. Of course there are those who don't (as in society as a whole) but mostly, our livestock is treated fairly and sensitively and the UK ranks as one of the only four countries world wide reaching the highest grade for commitments to animal welfare. There is also a strong legal framework alongside assurance initiatives.

We have put the rams in with the ewe flock and they have been on fresh pasture to make sure they've had enough nutrition for their pregnancies. Last years lambs have been sold in batches through the

livestock market, but we still have quite a number left.

The question is do we sell all as quickly as possible, because of brexit (at the time of writing no trade deal with the EU, our largest customer has been done and there is no 'third country' legislation in place either for imports/exports), or do we keep them and assume everything will be sorted?

Luckily over a million people lobbied to make sure there was a trade and standards commission in place to scrutinise deals on the agriculture sector's behalf, showing consumers do care how their food is produced.

Our fields are full of wheeling crows and pigeons and field fares chatter as they swoop and settle then lift and swirl around to land again further along. The plaintive cry of a young buzzard as he flaps clumsily after his parents echoes eerily and sparrows argue as they feast on hedgerow fare of hips, haws and left over sloes.

Wishing you a good Christmas, whatever your circumstances for what the year ahead brings.

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Auld Lang Syne or Good Riddance?

Let's face it: for many people 2020 has been a fairly terrible year. Is it all bad though? Well, believe it or not there are many positive outcomes from the consequences of lockdown.

Community Spirit

Despite lockdown, many communities have thrived during the pandemic with support groups springing up to help the vulnerable. From volunteers doing shopping and collecting medicine for the elderly and nearly a million people responding to the Governments plea for NHS volunteers.

Reduced Carbon Emissions

With the slowing down of the economy, fossil fuel usage has also diminished. It's estimated that carbon emissions have reduced by nearly 10% in 2020. This has led to significantly cleaner air and beautiful blue skies in many locations across the planet.

Love For Essential Workers

Ordinarily, delivery drivers, shelf-stackers and supermarket cashiers are not thought of as heroes. But the pandemic has highlighted the essential roles played by key workers that we all depend on in our daily lives. Across the world, people have been publicly applauding medical staff and suddenly these often low-paid workers are getting the appreciation they deserve too.

Families and Friends

While a lot of us have spent a lot of time in isolation, many people have reported being more in touch with their family and friends than ever. Furloughed workers suddenly have found themselves with more free time and through technologies such as Zoom and other video platforms, it's possible to connect with loved ones online. With less time spent commuting to the office families have also had more dinners together.

Life Restructuring

It's a common idea that time alone provides a healthy opportunity to stop, breathe and reflect on your current situation and direction. While lockdown rules are limiting people's normal social lives, it's also been a good time to think about what really matters to you. Whether it's pursuing a new career, moving to the countryside or focusing on your family, now is the time to make that change.

Learning Has Increased

During the pandemic there has been an incredible surge in people spending time to learn: whether it's a new language, an instrument, how to bake bread or virtual museum tours via the internet - learning is definitely one of the biggest positives of lockdown.

So despite the disconnection from the 'normal' treadmill, we've found a reconnection with some very important things. Stay well and be safe!



It's a Wrap!

by Heloise D'Souza

Rose Slocombe certainly knows a thing or two about wrapping. Having been an employee at Hippyckick for close to twenty years, she has had plenty of time to perfect the art. Come Christmas, Rose is dedicated to the task of offering Hippyckick's gift-wrapping service, which can see her wrapping hundreds of gifts every week.

'Fortunately, most of our items are boxed, which makes life pretty easy when it comes to wrapping' says Rose. 'But cuddly toys, especially rabbits with long ears, which are unboxed can prove particularly tricky. And items that are more triangular than square, can throw people completely off track.'

Here are some of Rose's wrapping tips to ensure you get the perfect wrap, every time.

1. The quality of the wrapping paper is **EVERYTHING**. There might be a lot of cheap paper around to tempt you, but poor-quality paper can tear easily, and is therefore a false economy. But you don't need

to go overboard. Brown parcel paper is always a good choice and leaves you with plenty of scope for artistic licence – with ribbons, felt tip pens and colourful gift tags.

2. Layered tissue paper can also surprisingly strong and flexible – ideal for wrapping soft gifts such as cuddly toys.

3. Never trust your instincts. You need to be absolutely sure the paper you are working with is the right size. There's nothing more frustrating than working with a piece of wrapping paper that doesn't quite meet in the middle!

4. Place the gift in the middle of your wrapping paper. Make sure that the paper will cross with room to spare, over the largest part of the gift. Err on the side of generosity – always! You can cut back, if necessary.

5. Preparation is key! Use a table (not the floor, particularly a carpeted one). Make sure you have all the tools you might need to hand and within easy grasp including sharp scissors. A

steel ruler will tear paper with great accuracy and a sharp edge.

6. Find a box! As we all know, wrapping stuff with straight edges is so much easier and neater. So always keep things like shoe boxes to accommodate particularly awkward shapes.

7. Double sided tape will add a professional touch. And always double fold the paper to create a neat, straight edge before applying the tape.

8. Use your fingernail along a fold line to create a sharp edge

9. Put on some Christmas music. There's nothing like a good Christmas classic to get you in the mood for a wrap.

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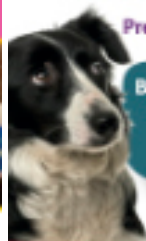
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Christmas Top Tips by Robert Woodward BVetMed MRCVS

We at Scarsdale Vets want Christmas to be not only a happy and enjoyable time for you and your family, but also for your household pets. Here are some top tips to keep your pets safe and content this holiday:

Secure your Christmas tree

Christmas trees are a seasonal favourite but can pose hazards to pets. Firstly make sure that your tree is secure so that it can't be easily pulled over. Also try to hide or cover electricity cables for Christmas lights so that they are not easily accessible to chew. Food items should also not be left beneath the tree that animals could eat.

Amazingly we do see the odd animal every year with pine needles stuck in their foot causing irritation or infection. For this reason it is recommended to keep the floor around the tree clear of needles and restrict access of pets to the room where the Christmas tree is kept.

Keep Christmas decorations away from pets

Decorations are lovely but should always be placed away from easy access to animals. Ribbons or tinsel when ingested can cause gut obstructions. Mistletoe is also poisonous when eaten or chewed.

Give your pet the right treat

Of course it is fine to give your pet the occasional treat, so long as it is not given in such amounts as to replace their daily diet. Small bits of chicken or turkey are fine and generally well tolerated by many healthy animals. If your pet is on a prescription diet we even have recipe's available for you to make your own treats out of their food.....please feel free to contact the surgery for more details.

Chocolate, some nuts and dried fruit (raisins, sultanas and currants) should all be avoided as they can prove very toxic to dogs.

Give your pet space to relax

Christmas can be a stressful period not only for us adults, but also for our pets. The sudden influx of visitors and increased attention can be overwhelming. Here just giving your pet a space to escape away from activity can be a real help to relieve stress. Pheromone sprays or diffusers are also available to promote a calming environment for dogs and cats. Come in and ask us for advice if this is a concern.

Care exercising your pet

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Fail to Prepare, Prepare to Fail

There are some things that just catch us out on Christmas Day. Be like the Guides and Scouts... be prepared!

1. Batteries

Best to buy in bulk over the internet if you're organised. If not, best join the queue in Argos for a pack big enough to power a space shuttle! If you don't remember, there will be tears. Guaranteed.

2. Indigestion remedy

Christmas is the only time of year when we are unnaturally possessed to consume our own body weight in dried fruit and booze.

3. Plasters

Fabric. Waterproof. Sugar fuelled children or drink

fuelled adults, it's difficult to spot the difference sometimes and accidents ensue. Be prepared!

4. Wire cutters or very strong scissors

Some toy and present packaging would give the Ocean's 11 team a run for their money! Be sure you're able to open those pesky plastics.

5. Bin bags

Nanna always gets the gift buying so wrong. Ok, we are joking here, don't throw it out, do give it to a charity shop after Christmas. Don't forget that bin bags are a must for all the packaging and peelings!

6. Enough cream

Everyone will want it on their puddings and trifle, but if they

don't you can use it up in a lovely wintery soup.

7. A gravy boat

Be classy and ditch the Pyrex measuring jug at the dinner table. Nothing says "I've got my life together" more so than a gravy boat.

8. An emergency present

A box of Ferrero Rocher chocolates are a good idea to have to hand, if of course you can resist the temptation! A gift card from a high-end shop like M&S or John Lewis is always useful, you can always use it yourself if you don't end up giving it!





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Expert Watch Repair by Post!



This month's Local Links lucky readers will be in with a chance to win one of several watch repair prizes worth over £350!

Family run for over 21 years, Repairs By Post, is the first 5* company to offer qualified, fully guaranteed, secure, door to door watch repairs online, by post.

All top brands are covered e.g. Swiss quality battery replacement and service for TAG Heuer, Omega, Ebel and many more, all fully insured.

Passionate about watches, specialists with over 30 years' experience, combine industry knowledge with high-end watches, repairing over 20,000 watches for over 500 brands.

Founder Jonathan Goldstone says: "It is recommended a watch is serviced professionally every 3-5 years to maintain optimum condition, accuracy and extend its lifespan.

Repairs By Post takes pride in every watch, is forward thinking, straightforward, transparent, focused on quality at a fair price. It is obsessively passionate about helping customers maintain and optimise their emotional and financial investment.



1st Prize - Service of a quartz movement watch including battery or mechanical replacement up to the value of £200.

2nd Prize - Quartz service up to the value of £100 for brands such as Michael Kors, Mondaine, Emporio Armani. Please see website for brands.

3rd Prize - Battery replacement up to the value of £59.99 for the

likes of Maurice Lacroix, Tissot, TAG Heuer or x 2 fashion watches.

There's also 10% off list price, for the first 10 readers to apply, using code: links*102020.

For more information visit: www.repairsbypost.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
Repairs By Post Competition
PO Box 8049
Burton-on-Trent
DE14 9NQ

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

The closing date for entries is the 12th of January, and the winners will be announced in our February edition. Good luck to everyone who enters!

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Feeling Festive

Local estate agent EweMove is feeling festive! The local agency is celebrating the season by giving their For Sale boards a Christmas makeover. Their quirky sheep mascot; Ewenice, has been given a Santa Hat to keep her warm this Christmas.

Branch Director Victoria Sylvester commented 'The reaction from our customers has been "baa"rriliant, we often get lots of comments about our sheep logo and we thought giving our mascot Ewenice a Christmas makeover would be a bit of fun!'

'Anyone who lists their property for sale before

Christmas will have a Christmas board outside their property. It's a great way to increase the exposure of the property too and get more interest from buyers'.

Victoria is participating in a 'reverse' advent calendar this year. This involves putting an item of food in a box each day, and at the end of the 25 days



donating the items to Burton Food Bank. She is encouraging others to join in with this idea and she will be happy to collect complete boxes of food donations and deliver them to the food bank. You can contact Victoria on 01283 247 076 to request a collection.

She is also getting involved with Christmas Jumper day for Save The Children by sporting her best Christmas jumper on Friday 11th December. To show your support and donate £2 simply text TEAMEWEMOVE to 70050. If you want to join in, get involved and make sure you tag EweMove Lichfield & Barton-under-Needwood on Facebook!

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Virtual Christmas What's Online Guide!

MONDAY 14TH DECEMBER

Christmas Story and Rhyme Times

Free event! Starts 2pm-2.30pm. Join us for our special Christmas themed story and rhyme time. Suitable for under 5s and their parents/carers. This event will be taking place via Zoom. www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/christmas-story-and-rhyme-times-tickets-127871580339?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch

TUESDAY 15TH DECEMBER

SeeAbility's Christmas Concert

Free event! Starts 7pm-8pm. Join us virtually for an evening of special songs and some of your Christmas favourites performed by Bryan Ederly and Amy Boujenah. www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/seeability-christmas-concert-tickets-128259572835?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch

WEDNESDAY 16TH DECEMBER

Christmas is Murder

Starts 7pm. The Queen of Crime Val McDermid, master of the dark and sinister story, presents Christmas is Murder, a festive collection of chilling tales. Tickets £3 - £10: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-christmas-zoom-chat-with-val-mcdermid-christmas-is-murder-tickets-127439321441?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch

THURSDAY 17TH DECEMBER

Zola the Kind Hearted Elf

Free event! Starts 4.15pm-5pm. Follow the story of Zola the Elf on a wonderful Christmas adventure that begins on Christmas Eve when Santa is out and about delivering presents to children all over the world. This is a special, festive workshop that focuses on the themes of selflessness, kindness, friendship and fun. www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/zola-the-kind-hearted-elf-tickets-129852898515?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch

FRIDAY 18TH DECEMBER

Festive Quiz & Social

Free event! Starts 4pm-6pm by zoom. Test your trivia knowledge and get in the festive spirit at the Drama and Film online quiz and social! Silly hats and festive outfits very welcome! www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/festive-quiz-and-social-tickets-130410466215?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch&keep_tld=1

SATURDAY 19TH DECEMBER

Virtual Storytime with Santa

Spreading some christmas cheer with a virtual storytelling session with Santa, the elves and Mrs Claus. The event will feature 2 short stories and will be read by an authentic Mrs Claus. This will be followed by a virtual Christmas quiz for all the family to enjoy! Tickets £6: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/virtual-santa-claus-story-session-tickets-130718848595?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch&keep_tld=1

Big Christmas Concert - Live

Starts 7.30pm. Watch and be part of Alistair Griffin's live streamed Big Christmas Concert from Castleton Church. With a stirring mix of festive tunes with Alistair and his band in a magical candlelit setting. Tickets £15: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/big-christmas-concert-livestream-tickets-129030683247?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch

SUNDAY 20TH DECEMBER

Don Giovanni - Royal Opera House

1st - 27th December. Kasper Holten's visually striking production accentuates the beauty and invention of Mozart's dazzling tragicomedy. Available to watch for £3: <https://stream.roh.org.uk/packages/don-giovanni-2019>

MONDAY 21ST DECEMBER

Humbug

Starts 10am. Deep beneath the city a secret world full of wonder awaits; where wizards bake endless gingerbread, goblins bottle festive cheer, and there's a whole department devoted to detangling fairy-lights! Tickets £10: www.divegehub.org/hub/humbug

TUESDAY 22ND DECEMBER

The Snow Queen

Starts 11am and 2pm. From the comfort of your home, join Holly this Christmas for a magical, snow-filled adventure, inspired by the classic fairy tale by Hans Christian Anderson, 'The Snow Queen'. Clap your hands, make some magic and join in with the whole family, wherever they are in the world. Tickets £20: [https://iris theatre.ticket solve.com/shows/873616142/events/128289744?utm_source=thelists&utm_medium=listing&utm_campaign=snow _queen](https://iris theatre.ticket solve.com/shows/873616142/events/128289744?utm_source=thelists&utm_medium=listing&utm_campaign=snow_queen)

WEDNESDAY 23RD DECEMBER

Cinderella

Starts 1pm & 6pm. You shall go to the ball next Christmas, with the Fairy Godmother of all pantomimes Cinderella! With sparkling sets and lavish costumes, amazing song and dance numbers, giggles galore and bags of audience participation, fun and laughter is guaranteed for the whole family. Tickets

THURSDAY 24TH DECEMBER

Father Christmas Storytime

Free event! Starts 6pm. He is very busy getting ready for Christmas but he has found the time to read a bedtime Christmas Story to you, recite some poems and have a little chat! If there is time at the end he will give a few shout outs and a hello! <https://fantasticforfamilies.com/online-events/13475/father-christmas-bedtime-storytime?StartDate=2020-12-24-1800&EndDate=2020-12-24-1845>

FRIDAY 25TH DECEMBER

Christmas Day All-Day Events

Free event. Starts 10am. Start your Christmas day with a powerful Pilates session, end with some cocoa and a festive film! It wouldn't be a The Social Programme Christmas without our Christmas Day events. This year we have a whole day of events ready for you – so mark your calendars, and get ready for one of the busiest, jolliest days of the year! www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/christmas-day-activities-ual-social-tickets-130790007433?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch

Christmas Day Church Service

Free event! Starts 8am. A live traditional language eucharist service streamed online: www.lichfield-cathedral.org.

SATURDAY 26TH DECEMBER

Virtual Christmas Lights Tour

Starts 6pm. Explore London by night on this 90 minute guided Christmas tour, when we walk among the illuminated streets in all their glimmering splendour. We discover hidden passages, fashionable Mews and meticulously decorated designer shops accompanied by historical stories of those shopping and living in the area. Tickets: £16.76: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/virtual-christmas-lights-tour-tickets-127985027663?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch

SUNDAY 27TH DECEMBER

Enigma Variations - Royal Opera House

4th December - 3rd January. Enigma Variations portrays the essence of British ballet, with music by Elgar, period designs by Julia Trevelyan Oman and Ashton's signature choreographic style. Available to watch for £3. <https://stream.roh.org.uk/products/enigma-variations-2019>

MONDAY 28TH DECEMBER

The Big Christmas Quiz

Free event! Starts 6.30pm. 'Tis the season to get quizzing – a great opportunity to challenge your family and friends in our live, interactive online quiz. www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-big-christmas-quiz-tickets-131075429137?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch

TUESDAY 29TH DECEMBER

A Festive Evening

Starts 7pm. Streaming LIVE online in high quality from Penny Cars Stadium in Airdrie. Join us for a festive evening of fun, live music, surprise guests, live interviews, interactive audience Q&A and celebrity santa will be giving away signed goodies to random viewers. Tickets £16.50: www.wegotickets.com/event/509106

...helping you stay safe.

London of Charles Dickens

Starts 7pm. An affectionate celebration of the real places behind this timeless classic. A revealing virtual tour of the City Dickens knew so well. Tickets £8: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-london-of-charles-dickens-a-christmas-carol-tickets-126752962523?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

Festive Meditation

Free event! Starts 11am. The sessions last 30 minutes, ideal for you to implement into your morning routine! Mental and physical wellbeing are important for all. www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/festive-meditation-with-alix-uall-social-tickets-130699432521?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch

Acting Lessons for Young People

Free event! Starts 6pm. Ages 11-14. Lesson are for all abilities and are designed to help young people develop their performing arts skills and confidence. www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/acting-lessons-for-young-people-aged-11-14-tickets-121231840699?aff=ebdssponlinesearch

Public Speaking for Beginners

4 weekly 2hr sessions. Starts 7pm. Dread speaking in front of others? You're not alone. We can help you to conquer that fear painlessly, enjoyably and from your own home! Course £20-£25. www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/master-the-fundamentals-of-public-speaking-for-beginners-tickets-12973956352?aff=ebdssbnonlinesearch

Grief Sessions

Free event, starts 11am. This is an opportunity to remember people and things that have died, fallen apart or have been lost in today's complex world. www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/griefsessions-tickets-131174838473?aff=ebdssbsearch

Singing Lessons for Young People

Free event! Starts 5pm. Ages 11-16. Our free sessions are for young people who enjoy singing. No need to read music or have any previous singing experience, just a love for music! <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/singing-lessons-for-young-people-aged-11-16-tickets-121230970095?aff=ebdssonline&search>

The Beginner's Guide to Whisky

Prebooking essential so that you can be sent whisky samples. Starts 7.30pm. - You will receive a "World of Whisky"

Tasting Pack (6x 25ml whiskies), a Whisky Club bespoke Glencairn tasting glass and a guided whisky tasting experience via Zoom hosted by Amy, owner of The Whisky Club. Tickets £42.40: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/online-tasting-the-beginners-guide-to-whisky-tickets-127472450531?aff=ebdssonline&search

DIY Mask Sewing Workshop

Free event, starts 11am. Delivered online and are designed to help develop new skills, promote connectivity and reduce social isolation as a result of the pandemic. www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/diy-sewing-workshop-sew-your-own-face-mask-tickets-126705241789?aff=ebdssbonline

Silent Mindfulness Online Retreat

Free event! Starts 9am. Relax and listen to teachings on mindfulness and silence and practise mindfulness techniques that nurture tranquillity, serenity, equanimity, and insight in these challenging times. www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/register-your-interest-for-silent-mindfulness-online-day-retreat-tickets-128853627669?aff=ebdssbonline
search

Online Writer Training

Starts 7pm. A 2-hour online workshop to learn the tricks of how to make sure you make the most of the writing time you have, and keep your motivation. Tickets £30: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/online-writer-training-session-how-to-get-writing-and-keep-writing-tickets-121526175061?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch

Starts 7.30pm. Help your kids tell fact

from fiction online. Webinar for parents (grandparents and other adults) to help children spot misinformation in their newfeeds, searches and social media. Tickets £15. www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/is-that-a-fact-help-your-kids-tell-fact-from-fiction-online-tickets-130245005317?aff=ebdssbonlinereach

Book Club: *The Courage to Be Disliked*

Free, starts 6pm. Wildly popular in Japan, written by Ichiro Kishimi. Everyone assumes that their past behavior influences how they think about the world, but it is not our patterns that control us in the present, but our goals. www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/book-review-discount-the-courage-to-be-disliked-tickets-123285693829?aff=ebdssbonline
search&keep_tld=1

Virtual Charity Skincare Party

Free event, please make a charity donation! Starts 5pm. As the sessions are virtual anyone can attend from the comfort of their homes. Before each session, participants will be sent free Mary Kay sample products which they would use during the skincare sessions. www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/virtual-charity-skincare-party-registration-123671513827?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch

Tales Tattled & Told on Zoom

Free event, donations welcome. Starts 7.30pm. Lichfield-based storyteller Maria Credali joins the Tales Tattled & Told crew for an evening of storytelling by and for grown-ups. www.list.co.uk/event/1612963-tales-tattled-and-told-on-zoom/

Starts 8pm. Oxfordshire Mind and

Jericho Comedy are taking over The North Wall Arts Centre for their annual Oxfordshire Mind Comedy Gala. Tickets £11.37: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/oxfordshire-mind-comedy-gala-2021-streaming-tickets-only-tickets-130587714369?aff=ebdssnonlinesearch

Congratulations to our **Boar's Head**

congratulations to our **Boat's Head** competition winners, each winning a **£25 Voucher**:

Les Allen, Barton-under-Needwood
Jenni Curtis, Stretton
Michelle Wright, Burton-on-Trent
Helen Rakic, Burton-on-Trent
Paula Bates, Rolleston-on-Dove
Joanne Alderson, Barton

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

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I'm Dreaming of a Green Christmas!

Christmas really doesn't necessarily have to be all about excessive consumption and unwanted gifts that are destined for landfill. Here are some alternative ideas for more ecological and ethical gifts this year.

Zero Waste Starter Kit



£26.00 from LowToxBox

This eco-friendly set is a great way to help reduce your daily plastic consumption and help save the planet. Plus, for every box purchased a new tree is planted. Kit includes a reusable Tote bag, mesh shopping bag, reusable vegan wax food wrap, stainless steel straw and other sustainable items.

Book: Plant Conservation



£14.99 from RHS Bookshop

For the keen gardener, this book discusses ways to adapt our gardens to make a positive local contribution to tackling environmental issues.

Ethique Pinkalicious Shampoo Bar



£12.99 Holland & Barrett

Wash away the guilt of those pesky single use plastics with this delightfully refreshing shampoo bar to keep your hair heavenly. The turtles will thank you!

Charity Gift Card



From £10.00, Oxfam

This is the perfect present for someone who doesn't want a physical gift.

Oxfam have a range of e-cards and gift cards that help fight poverty. For a limited time, all proceeds of Unwrapped gifts are helping people affected by the coronavirus pandemic

Life is already challenging enough for people facing conflict, disaster and poverty. There couldn't be a better time to use your gift to help others.

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Steve Frost

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Spice Up Your Life!

Not just for adding to curry recipes, spices play a key part in many of the well-known tastes of Christmas: from mulled wine to adding an extra taste to your ham joint.

One theory is that the Crusaders brought back the idea of using Spices in food and associated it with the celebration of Christ since he was born in modern day Palestine. It also helped to firmly establish Christmas as a Christian holiday, replacing the pagan Sol Invictus. Another theory is that the strong smell and taste of spices helped to mask the taste of meat that was past its best!

Many spices also have natural medicinal properties. We take a look at the four most used spices at Christmas.

Allspice

Despite its name, Allspice isn't a mixture of many spices it's actually a single spice. It's Caribbean in origin and is the dried berry of the Pimenta Diocia tree, a relative of Myrtle. It was the English who gave it the name Allspice when it was discovered in the 1600s due to it tasting similar to a combination of cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg.

Allspice can be used in both sweet and savoury dishes but it's perhaps best known in Caribbean/Jamaican 'jerk seasoning'. It also has many

medicinal properties with many folk medicines using it as a key ingredient. It's often used to treat colic, stomach upsets and for general pain relief.

Cloves

Cloves are a very pungent spice made from the flower buds of an evergreen tree called, appropriately, The Clove Tree!

The dried buds are shaped like a small reddish-brown spike and they can be used whole or ground. Ground cloves are very pungent so be careful with the amount you use in recipes!

Cloves are grown in India, Madagascar and Indonesia. At one time, the trade in Cloves was so lucrative in the Spice Islands that in 1667, following the Second Anglo-Dutch War, the British relinquished the Spice Islands to the Dutch in exchange for New Amsterdam, which is now known as Manhattan Island!

As well as being used in many sweet and savoury recipes, the essential oil from Cloves is very commonly used in aromatherapy for stress relief. Cloves are often used in Indian and Chinese medicine as a warming and stimulating substance.

Cinnamon

True Cinnamon dates back to Chinese writings in 2800 B.C and is native to Ceylon (Sri

Lanka). So prized, centuries ago it was said to be worth fifteen times the same weight in silver!

As well as a key flavour for many sweet and savoury cuisines, Cinnamon was widely used by doctors and medieval physicians. The spice was also valued for its preservative qualities for meat - the phenols it contains inhibit bacteria responsible for spoilage, with the added bonus that the strong aroma masked the stench of aged meats. The Egyptians also used it in their embalming process!

Ginger

Ginger is the root of the giner plant *Zingiber Officiale* and belongs to the same family as turmeric and cardamom. It's widely available in six different forms: fresh, dried, pickled, preserved, candied and powdered and is easily used in sweet and savoury cooking. The taste of fresh ginger compared to powdered ginger is very different and is not easily exchanged in recipes.

Ginger also has many health benefits especially stomach upsets or gastrointestinal problems. There is also scientific evidence that it can help control nausea, reduce pain and improve joint function for people with arthritis and is a natural antibacterial.

LOCAL LINKS SUDOKU

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

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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Reverse Advent Calendar



1 Cereal	2 Peanut Butter	3 Rice Pudding	4 Coffee
5 Biscuits	6 Tinned Fruit	7 Jam	8 Tinned Tuna
9 Tea Bags	10 Apple Sauce	11 Long Life Fruit Juice	12 Cranberry Sauce
13 Baked Beans	14 UHT Long Life Milk	15 Rice	16 Custard
17 Pasta	18 Tomato Sauce	19 Chicken Soup	20 Tomato Soup
21 Tinned Sweetcorn	22 Pot Noodles	23 Tinned Carrots	24 Christmas Cake

On each day, add an item to a box.
Then on Christmas Eve, donate the
box to a food bank.

Victoria Sylvester
Branch Director

Our reverse advent calendar is a great way for you to donate food for families living in poverty in the local area, to give them a treat this Christmas.
If you're struggling to get to a food bank, you can contact me on 01283 247 076 and I will collect it from you.

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