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ISSUE 173

FREE

GEORGES

This St. Georges Day we look at kings

A ROYAL FEAST

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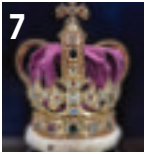
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LOCAL LINKS



ISSUE 173

Dear Readers,

We've hit Royal fever here at Local Links this May. With the Coronation pageantry in full swing and a bonus bank holiday on the horizon we're gearing up for a fun time!

In honour of His Majesty we take a look at some of the important historical crowns and we have a recipe for you to make one of King Charles III's favourite dishes... got you wondering now haven't we? Read on to find out what it is!

Before the royal highlights begin we've also got St. George's Day to celebrate. To keep things on a regal theme we take a look at all the Kings with the saint's namesake. Not forgetting that there's potentially a new one in the line.

We've also got seasonal goings on in the countryside and on the allotment and a brilliant competition from the wonderful Top Academy Aesthetics!

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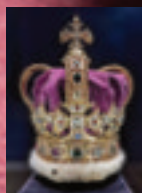
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Sovereign Crowns

As the country hots up in anticipation of the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty The Queen Consort we couldn't help wondering about the regalia that might be involved on the day. Nothing signifies Monarch more than the Crown, so let's take a look at some in the Royal Collection...

ST. EDWARD'S CROWN



St. Edward's Crown is the centrepiece of the Crown Jewels of the United Kingdom.

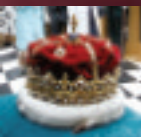
Named after Saint Edward the Confessor, versions of it have traditionally been used to crown English and British monarchs at their coronations since the 13th century. The original crown was a holy relic kept at Westminster Abbey, Edward's burial place

THE IMPERIAL STATE CROWN



The Imperial State Crown, or Crown of State, is the crown the monarch exchanges for St Edward's Crown, at the end of the coronation ceremony. The Imperial State Crown is also used on formal occasions, such as the annual State Opening of Parliament.

CROWN OF SCOTLAND



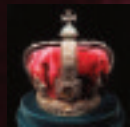
The Crown of Scotland (Scottish Gaelic: Crùn na h-Alba) is the centrepiece of the Honours of Scotland. It is the crown that was used at the coronation of the monarchs of Scotland, and is the oldest surviving crown in the British Isles and among the oldest in Europe.

QUEEN VICTORIA'S CROWN



A small Diamond Crown was worn by Her Majesty Queen Victoria. This miniature imperial and state crown made at the request of Queen Victoria in 1870 to wear over her widow's cap following the death of her husband, Prince Albert. It was perhaps the crown most associated with the queen and is one of the Crown Jewels on public display in the Jewel House at the Tower of London.

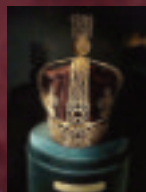
STATE CROWN OF GEORGE I



The State Crown of George I is the imperial and state crown crafted in 1714 for King George I. It was modified and used by

subsequent monarchs until 1838. The empty gold frame and its aquamarine monde which dates from the reign of King James II are both part of the Crown Jewels of the United Kingdom.[1] They are on public display in the Martin Tower at the Tower of London.

CORONATION CROWN OF GEORGE IV



Because of the postponement of George IV's coronation due to the trial of his wife, Queen Caroline, the final bill for the hiring of the stones came to £24,425. After his coronation, the king was reluctant to part with his new crown, and lobbied the government to buy it outright so he could use it for the annual State Opening of Parliament, but it was too expensive. The crown was dismantled in 1823. Emptied of its jewels and discarded by the royal family, the crown was loaned to the Museum of London by the Amherst family from 1933 until 1985. Now part of the Royal Collection, diamonds worth £2 million on loan from De Beers are displayed next to the crown to give visitors an idea of how it looked originally.

Lulu - For The Record *by Lichfield Garrick*



legend. On the eve of the 60th anniversary of Shout, she'll be touring the UK for the first time since Autumn 2019 with her most intimate show to date.

For The Record will combine remarkable stories and stunning clips with song. The show will be a chance to get to know the star, who has entertained legions of fans across 60 glorious years.

Lulu said: "I'm excited to be sharing my story and my music with my first tour in four years. It's been an incredible story and I'm looking forward to telling that in For The Record. This is a completely different show to anything I've ever done before."

The show will feature stories

from Lulu's remarkable career – from being friends with The Beatles to marrying a Bee Gee, from winning the Eurovision Song Contest to enjoying a colossal hit with Shout, from her relationship with David Bowie to the wonder of Relight My Fire, her Number One with Take That. There'll be exclusive photography and video footage as well as incredible songs from a pop icon, whose star continues to burn bright.

LULU – For The Record will be coming to the Lichfield Garrick on Wednesday 24th May 2023. Tickets can be booked via the box office on 01543 412121 or on the Garrick website:

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We're very excited to finally announce that Lulu will be coming to the Lichfield Garrick on Wednesday 24th May 2023 for her show: Lulu – For The Record

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By The Barn *by Angela Sargent*

"Now fades the last long
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quick
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and thick
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blow"
Tennyson

Into spring now April is here and farms are busier and busier as lambing proceeds in the uplands of our county and those farms who have finished will be clearing out sheds.

As cattle will be outside too, kicking up their heels after a few months inside and maybe getting ready to calve, the manure, rich in nutrients will be spread on the fields where new crops will be sown. Any fields to be silaged later in the year will also be fertilised to aid growth .

Crops such as Spring sown

wheat and barley or maybe oil seed rape will be planted as soon as possible as the ground begins to warm up and soil testing to check the acidity or alkalinity will be carried out.

Soil is so important to a farm as it produces the crops or grass needed for livestock. From that we get our food and, in return, the farmer should get a profit-without that why would they do it?

The composition of soil partly depends on whether it is heavy clay or a light sandy soil but by adding organic matter it can be improved. Roughly 5 % is organic, the rest is air and water with nearly half being mineral composition. Compacted soils are less healthy as soil organisms and worms find it harder to survive. Growing crops will be checked for pests and disease and treated accordingly if necessary and farm machinery

will be put to work.

Many larger tractors, particularly on arable farms or where the fields are large, use GPS to pinpoint particular parts of the field which have different needs to the rest and can adapt amounts accordingly. Of course it has other uses but is a target for thieves and rural crime is a serious problem.

Many trees will be flowering now, such as the Oak, Ash , Hornbeam and Beech and you may see a Shrew scurrying under logs, between stones or along hedges as it looks for beetles, worms and other invertebrates to eat. Hunted by owls, it has a pointed snout and a shortish tail.

And Ted has decided he quite likes the retired life and pointedly ignores any field of sheep we come across on our walks.



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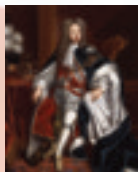


St. George's Day & Royal Georges

This April 23rd, we celebrate St. George's Day. In past years we've looked at the Saint himself, but this year we're doing something a little bit different! was the coronation of King Charles the third on the 6th of May, we thought we take a look at some past kings named George. To date, there have been no fewer than six King Georges!

King George I

1714 - 1727



Ridiculed by his British subjects; he was thought unintelligent due to being wooden in public. He was unpopular in Great Britain due to his supposed inability to speak English, though such an inability may not have existed later in his reign as documents show that he understood, spoke and wrote English. His treatment of his wife, Sophia Dorothea, became something of a scandal.

King George II

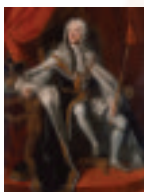
1727 - 1760



This George donated the royal library to the British Museum in 1757, as he had no interest in reading, or in the arts and sciences, and preferred to spend his leisure hours stag-hunting on horseback or playing cards.

King George III

1760 - 1820



George III lived for 81 years and 239 days and reigned for 59 years and 96 days: both his life and his reign were longer than those of any of his predecessors and subsequent kings; only queens Victoria and Elizabeth II lived and reigned longer. George III was dubbed "Farmer George" by satirists, at first to mock his interest in mundane matters rather than politics, but later to portray him as a man of the people, contrasting his homely thrift with his son's grandiosity.

King George IV

1820 - 1830



George was described as the "First Gentleman of England" on account of his style and manners. He was bright, clever, and knowledgeable, but his laziness and gluttony led him to squander much of his talent. The Times wrote that he would always prefer "a girl and a bottle to politics and a sermon".

King George V

1910 - 1936

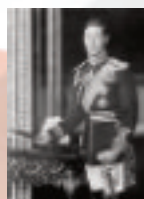
He appeared hard-working and became widely admired by the people of Britain and



the Empire, as well as "the Establishment". In the words of historian David Cannadine, King George V and Queen Mary were an "inseparably devoted couple" who upheld "character" and "family values".

King George VI

1936 - 1952



He became king at a point when public faith in the monarchy was at a low ebb. During his reign, his people endured the hardships of war, and imperial power was eroded. However, as a dutiful family man and by showing personal courage, he succeeded in restoring the popularity of the monarchy.

King George VII?

With King Charles III's grandson named George in good time we expect there will be a King George VII! That's if he chooses to use his baptismal name.

Though most monarchs of the United Kingdom have used their first baptismal name as their regnal name, on three occasions monarchs have chosen a different name, so we guess we'll just have to wait and see!

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Spring into Summer

by Deb Walker



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As an elected member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours (RI) and the Royal Society of Marine Artists (RSMA), Deb exhibits at the Mall Galleries, just off Trafalgar Square in London. The annual exhibition of the RI is on show at the Mall Galleries until 8 April and available online at <https://www.mallgalleries.org.uk/whats-on/exhibitions/royal-institute-painters-water-colours-211th-exhibition>. To view paintings by Deb prior to visiting 'the gallery' please visit: www.walker-art.co.uk

Workshops at Ridware Arts fill up fast, but you can view the current workshop programme by visiting the website's

Workshop page. We have one day watercolour and mixed media workshops as we spring into Summer; and in July we have a three day oil painting summer school. All workshops are tutored by Deb, who teaches by demonstration on an individual basis. You can enquire by email: deb@walker-art.co.uk or through the website Contact page for further information and / or availability.

For directions to 'the gallery' from the A515 Kings Bromley to Yoxall road, turn left at the roundabout to Hamstall Ridware and continue to turn or bear left to Blythe House Farm.

the gallery@Ridware Arts

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

T: 01889 504102

E: deb@walker-art.co.uk

W: www.walker-art.co.uk



'Spring into Summer'

a mixed exhibition of paintings, ceramics and jewellery

Opening Thursday 13th April

Gallery open Thursday to Saturday 2.30pm - 5.00pm
(at other times please call 01889 504 102 - if we're in, we're open!)

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You can find more information at: www.top-aesthetics.co.uk

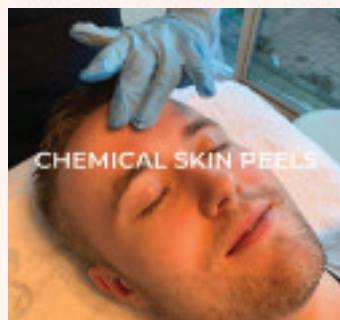
To enter this month's competition, all you have to do is email your name, address and daytime telephone contact number to:

local@locallinksmedia.co.uk

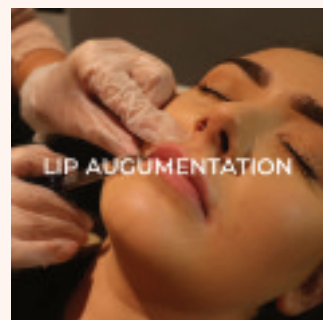
Alternatively, you can post your details to:

**Local Links Media
Top Aesthetics Competition
PO Box 8049
Burton-on-Trent
DE14 9NQ**

The closing date for entries is the 16th of May and the winners will be announced in our June edition. Good luck to everyone who enters!



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A Royal Feast

A Royal editor once divulged that King Charles III's favourite foods are not quite what you might expect "It's more simple. It's a boiled egg." Surprisingly for a main meal

"However, his ideal meal is wild mushroom risotto with organic lamb". So in the spirit of His Majesty's Royal proclivities here is a recipe sure to delight!

Lamb & Mushroom Risotto

Ingredients:

4 lamb shanks
30g plain flour
100ml olive oil
3 garlic cloves, bruised
1 large onion, finely chopped
1 carrot, roughly chopped
1 celery stalk, roughly chopped
Small bunch of thyme sprigs
40g dried mushrooms
200ml white wine
500ml chicken or beef stock
200g chestnut mushrooms
250g arborio rice
Finely grated zest of 1 lemon, to serve

Method:

•Lightly coat the lamb in flour. Heat 2 tbs oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Season the lamb, then cook, turning, for 6-8 minutes until browned. Transfer to a plate and set aside.

•Reduce heat to medium. Add 1 tbs oil, garlic, half the chopped onion, carrot, celery, most of the thyme and half the dried mushrooms. Season and cook for 4-5 minutes until vegetables have softened. Increase heat to high. Add the wine, scraping the bottom of the pan, and cook for 1 minute or until the alcohol has evaporated.

•Return lamb to the pan. Add stock and enough water to cover the lamb. Reduce heat to low, cover with a lid and cook for approximately 3 hours until very tender, the meat should fall easily from the bone. Remove lamb from the casserole and shred the meat. Remove the vegetables from the stock, reserving the liquid; you should have 1.2L, top up with water if needed keeping stock over a low heat.

•Soak remaining 20g dried

mushrooms in hot water until softened. Drain well and roughly chop.

•Heat 1 tbs oil in a large frypan over medium heat. Chop chestnut mushrooms in half and cook for 2-3 minutes until softened. Remove and set aside. Add remaining 1 tbs oil and finely chopped onion and cook, stirring, for 3-4 minutes until softened. Stir in rice to coat grains.

•Stir in hot stock one ladleful at a time, stirring constantly and allowing the stock to be absorbed before the next addition, until you have roughly 250ml stock left and risotto has thickened, this will take 20-25 minutes. Add lamb, chestnut mushrooms and chopped rehydrated mushrooms, and stir in the remaining stock. Season. Sprinkle with the saved remaining fresh thyme and lemon zest to serve.



What's On Guide

MONDAY 17TH APRIL

Beginners Watercolour - Tutbury

Every Monday at Tutbury Village Hall from 10am - 12 noon. Ideal for anyone who has never painted before. For details or to enrol contact Ann on 07816 118776. Admission by prior registration only. www.artmoves.co.uk

TUESDAY 18TH APRIL

Walking for Health

Free event, meets every Tuesday at 2pm starting from Stretton Green. Walk for 1 hour and then meet afterwards for a drink. Friendly group.

WEDNESDAY 19TH APRIL

Priory Art Group

Every Wednesday morning 9.30 to 12. We are a small friendly group of artists meeting at the Priory Centre, Church Road, Stretton. New members always welcome. Contact Sandra 01283 329743 or call in and see us.

THURSDAY 20TH APRIL

St Mary's Coffee Morning

Every Thursday morning from 9.30am to 11.30am. Join the village community for coffee, biscuits, a chat and good company. At the Old Grammar School Room in the church grounds off Church Road Rolleston on Dove. Contact Lee Cooke on 07973 411431 or Bryan at secsldt@yahoo.com

FRIDAY 21ST APRIL

Time for a dance? Latin Steps In Line

Every Friday. No partners required! Learn cha-cha, salsa, mambo, rumba, merengue, samba plus waltz, quickstep etc. Intermediate: 9.45-10.45am £6.00. Beginners: 11.00-11.45am £5.00 (Both classes £8.00) Venue: Priory Centre, Church Road, Stretton DE13 0HE. Ring 07598159744, email larhiney@hotmail.com for more details or just turn up.

SATURDAY 22ND APRIL

Spirit Café

Free event. Every Saturday at 7.30pm. Live Spiritual Readings with our team. A great no pressure way to get insight, healing, and perspective. Online event: bit.ly/3dsbCev

SUNDAY 23RD APRIL

Vinyasa Flow Yoga

Every Sunday 10am. Contribution £5-£15 (pay what you can - contact for reduced rate due to financial circumstances). My yoga is for everyone. Online event: bit.ly/3QIEtzw

MONDAY 24TH APRIL

Kundalini Yoga & Gong Bath

Free event. Every Monday. Starts 7pm. Evening yoga class designed to inspire and give you the tools to transform your life and those around you. Open to all levels. Online event: bit.ly/3PSQuYz

TUESDAY 25TH APRIL

Online event Life Drawing

Free event. Donations welcome. Every Tuesday at 7pm and Friday at 10am. Our life drawing sessions are perfect whether you're a complete beginner or the next Picasso! Online event: bit.ly/3oYWAJ7

WEDNESDAY 26TH APRIL

Lichfield Camera Club

A friendly club that meets every Wednesday from 7:45 to 10pm in Lichfield Methodist Centre, Backcester Lane Lichfield WS13 6JH. Photographers of all abilities are welcome. Visit lichfieldcameraclub.org for further details.

THURSDAY 27TH APRIL

YESS Parent Support Group

'Your Emotional Support Service' host a free parent support group on the last Thursday of every month from 6-7.30pm at 23 Carter St, Uttoxeter, ST14 8EY. Please call ahead to register your place 01889 567756

Bowel Cancer Support Group Lichfield

Every fourth Thursday of the month at Whittington Village Hall, Langton Crescent, Whittington, WS14 9LR. From 10.30am - 12.30pm. All welcome for a brew and a natter. For further information please contact 07369 224653

FRIDAY 28TH APRIL

BEATUS: Music for Royal Occasions

On the eve of The Coronation, St Peter's Church Yoxall warmly welcome BEATUS choir to sing Music for Royal Occasions at 7:30pm, featuring organist Tom Corfield. Tickets are £10 including refreshments and available from Diana Muir on 01543 473455 or by email dianamuir50@gmail.com.

SATURDAY 29TH APRIL

Weekly Mandarin Corner

Free event. Every Saturday. Starts 2pm. Informal conversation sessions at two different levels (Beginner - Intermediate and Intermediate - Advanced) that enable you to get together with fellow classmates, make new friends and discuss Chinese language and culture in a relaxed, friendly environment. Online event: bit.ly/3poAZAO

SUNDAY 30TH APRIL

Intro to Coding Workshop

Free event. Every Sunday. Starts 1pm. This workshop is intended for those who have little or no experience in coding and want to find out if a career in web development is right for them. Online event: bit.ly/3Aw0OFx

MONDAY 1ST MAY

Drink & Draw

Free event. First Monday of the Month. Starts 7pm. Drink&Draw is a casual event, run by London ACM SIGGRAPH hosted online every first Monday of each month. Online event: bit.ly/3p0vjgb

Walkie Talkies

Free event. New walking group. Meet every Monday at 2pm starting from Stretton Green. Plan to walk for 1 hour around Stretton and then meet afterwards for a chat. Everyone welcome.

TUESDAY 2ND MAY

Tuesdays Art Class

Every Tuesday morning 10am-1pm, during term time. Suitable for beginners and improvers. £18 per session, or £15 per half-term in advance. Newcomers taster session £15. For more info or to book your place please email helentarratt@gmail.com or phone or text 0779122888.

WEDNESDAY 3RD MAY

Barton WI

Meeting the 1st Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm at St James's Hall Barton. For more information email Michelle Mcinerney at mcinerneys2160@btinternet.com

THURSDAY 4TH MAY

Coffee at the Castle

Free event, every Thursday. Starts 11am. A friendly results driven online networking event. Online event: bit.ly/3zFqn5g

FRIDAY 5TH MAY

Burton Flower Club

Our friendly club meets on the first Friday of most months 7.30pm at The Priory Centre, Church Road, Stretton DE13 0HE. We enjoy excellent Flower Arranging Demonstrations, Workshops (take part or watch and learn) all followed by a cuppa. Friday 5th May Jo Davis "Women who changed the World". For more information contact 07778804038 or visit our facebook page.

Cribbage Club

Stretton Bowls Club, every Friday at 7.30pm

SATURDAY 6TH MAY

Electronics Club For Children

Free event. Every Saturday, starts 6pm. 1 hour session every weekend on Electronics during weekends (delivered through Zoom). Each weekly session will have unique content and will build on the knowledge from the previous sessions. Online event: bit.ly/3zyyGj2

Find more events on our website

SUNDAY 7TH MAY

Ryknild Rabble Morris Dancers

We welcome anyone who wants to come and experience the joy of traditional dancing. FREE and no obligation. At Kings Bromley Village Hall 11am to 1 pm. Every Sunday. For more information call 07875 999673

MONDAY 8TH MAY

Burton Prostate Cancer Support Group

Every second Monday of the month at The Riverside Hotel, Branston, Burton, DE14 3EP. From 6.30 - 8.30pm. All welcome, refreshments provided. Various speakers and activities throughout the year. For further information please contact m. 07369 224653

Midlands Bowel Cancer Support Group

Every second Monday of the month. Various speakers and events planned. Please come along for tea/coffee/cake and a natter, everyone welcome.

TUESDAY 9TH MAY

Marstons Club - Over 50s

Over 50s Bingo every Tuesday afternoon. 1 'til 3pm. For more information contact Christine Adams on: 01283 299833

WEDNESDAY 10TH MAY

Photography for Children

Free event, every day. Starts 7pm. Little eyes, Big stories A photography course for children aged 6+ to encourage them to think creatively and use what they have around the house. Online event: bit.ly/3zxYBHO

THURSDAY 11TH MAY

Burton Breast Care Support Group

Every 2nd Thursday of the month at Burton Library. Meetings start at 7pm. Friendly group with speakers, teas and homemade cakes. For more info email ann.davidson@sky.com

FRIDAY 12TH MAY

Abstract Art Workshop

Donations welcome. Every Friday. Starts 7pm. This workshop is for everyone who wants to relax, who feels isolated with lockdown and wants to enjoy art and explore new ideas. Children, adults, families, all welcome Online event: bit.ly/3QrNtZ

SATURDAY 13TH MAY

Reduce Procrastination Workshop

Free event, every day. Starts 7pm. Join this free 1-to-1 workshop to better understand how you can overcome procrastination and fatigue, in order to maintain sustainable high performance and consistency towards your business and life goals. Online event: bit.ly/3bK9Y7v

SUNDAY 14TH MAY

Intro to Coding Workshop

Free event. Every Sunday. Starts 1pm. This workshop is intended for those who have little or no experience in coding and want to find out if a career in web development is right for them. Online event: bit.ly/3p4i8L0

MONDAY 15TH MAY

Stapenhill WI

Meet every 3rd Monday of the month from 10am-12pm at Emmanuel Church in Stapenhill with speakers' crafts and outings.

TUESDAY 16TH MAY

Barton Arts

Every Tuesday 10 til 12.30 at Barton Village Hall, Casual Arts and crafts, 'Bring your thing', and join our friendly chatty group, all abilities, just bring your thing. £15 per month. Contact Judith Freeman for more information judithmick.f@hotmail.co.uk / 01283 550344

WEDNESDAY 17TH MAY

A Climate of Change

Free event every Wednesday. Starts 4pm for 8-15yrs, 6pm for 16-24yrs. Everyone has had a different experience of COVID-19 and we want to give young people a unique opportunity to express themselves through music and the creative arts, to explore how the environment and social culture is changing around them. Online event: bit.ly/3Zf6hRl

Stroke and Neuro Exercise group

Every Wednesday at 11am. Run by experienced neuro physiotherapists. All ages and abilities welcome. Circuit exercise class with exercises tailored to each individual. £10 per class. Run at our bespoke clinic in Needwood. Screening assessment and first class FREE! Please call or email to book. info@pathwaysphysio.co.uk / 07410 623439. www.pathwaysphysio.co.uk

THURSDAY 18TH MAY

Creative Writing Workshop

Free event every Thursday. Starts 7pm. Let your imagination flow and put your spiralling thoughts to paper in this light and friendly creative writing workshop. All levels and abilities welcome. Online event: /bit.ly/3AbWQsq

Smelly Wellies

Let your little ones imagination develop, grow and flourish through the wonderful world of play. Set in the imaginary town of Smelly Wellies. Aimed at walkers to 5 years, younger siblings are more than welcome. From 11am-12noon at Rugeley Community Church and Centre, WS15 2HX. £5 for up to two children, £7 for up to three children.

FRIDAY 19TH MAY

Anglo-German Club

Last Friday of each month from 7.30 pm - 9.30 pm in the Lichfield Room at Wade Street Church, Lichfield. There is no need to speak German as meetings are held in both German and English. Meetings include talks, quizzes and films. We also hold a monthly conversation group for those wishing to practice their German. Please note that we do not teach German. For more info contact: Nicola Morris 07442135412 or nicster2001uk@yahoo.co.uk

SATURDAY 20TH MAY

Spirit Café

Free event. Every Saturday at 7.30pm. Live Spiritual Readings with our team. A great no pressure way to get insight, healing, and perspective. Online event: bit.ly/3dsbCev

SUNDAY 21ST MAY

Ryknild Rabble Morris Dancers

We welcome anyone who wants to come and experience the joy of traditional dancing. FREE and no obligation. At Kings Bromley Village Hall 11am to 1 pm. Every Sunday. For more information call 07875 999673

COMPETITION WINNERS

Congratulations to our **Golding Skip Hire** competition winner, who has won a Skip Delivery & Collection:

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LAST MONTH'S SUDOKU PUZZLE SOLUTION

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2. Different aged cats will need different food, so always make sure their food is age-appropriate.

3. Some cats may have medical needs that require specialist food. Your vet will be able to advise you on what is best.

4. How much to feed your cat will completely depend on their situation, whether they are over or underweight, their age, their health status, and which brand you are feeding.

5. There will be a guide on the packaging so use the recommendation for your cat's age and weight as a starting point.

6. Monitor your cat's condition and behaviour, in case they need more or fewer calories each day.

7. Some cats prefer dry food, others wet.

8. No matter which you feed your cat make sure it is a 'complete' food as this means they will be getting all the nutrients they need from it.



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Let's Get Gardening!

By Tim Brooks

I regard this time of year as one of the busiest in the gardening season, as everything is raring to go! It's a busy month for sowing seeds and getting your garden prepared for planting again. On our allotment site in Burton most of the plots are now looking fresh again after being dug or rotovated, ready for the seeds or veg plants to be set.

By the end of April is really the last chance for planting out seed potatoes and also for sowing Tomato seeds, Onion sets and Shallots. I shall be setting out my tray sown Broad Beans, though many folk sow them direct in the soil. Tray grown ones seem to be ready a bit earlier I find. You can also sow outdoors, Carrots and Beetroot and Peas, but protect Peas from pigeons who enjoy 'nipping off' the sweet shoots of Peas. Always best to net them over or cover with chicken wire. It also helps to support the long tendrils and add a few tree twigs too for them to cling to. I like growing the 'Onward' variety of Peas, as they are quite large 'marrowfat' peas and many to a pod. Ideal for freezing too.

Peas also like 'garden lime', so sprinkle and hoe some in before sowing directly in the soil.



Later this month I shall be starting to sow my Courgettes and Pumpkins in the greenhouse in pots. Always sow the seed with the flat edges vertically with the 'pointed part' facing upwards. If you sow them horizontally they can rot off. They need drainage to germinate and grow well. I usually add some 'perlite' to the compost to assist drainage in the pots. We grow quite a few pumpkins & squashes, as they store well over winter, invaluable for soups, curries and pies. Not just a novelty item for Halloween!...they contain vital vitamins like Vitamins C, A, B6 and provide calcium, copper, potassium and magnesium, which can help keep your

heartbeat regular and blood pressure low. One of the easiest plants to grow too. Their main requirement being water! I give the young plants a general fertiliser and plant them about a metre apart. They spread out a lot so need plenty of space. Water well.

I also sow a few flower seeds too as these will obviously attract the much needed bees to your garden. I like to grow 'rudbeckia's' with their bright yellow petals and black centres, the bees and butterflies love these. They grow to around 60 cms tall. Sow thinly in a small tray and transplant around 15 to a normal sized tray. I also sow Dahlias, large and dwarf types. They are great 'cut and come again' flowers. Very underrated flowers. 'Cosmos' are another good summer flower for the back of a border, various pinks, white and purple shades in a packet. Easy to grow.

So enjoy the great outdoors by growing some fruit and vegetables yourself this year!

LOCAL LINKS SUDOKU

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Sudoku is a logic puzzle where you follow one simple rule:
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all contain every digit from 1-9.

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