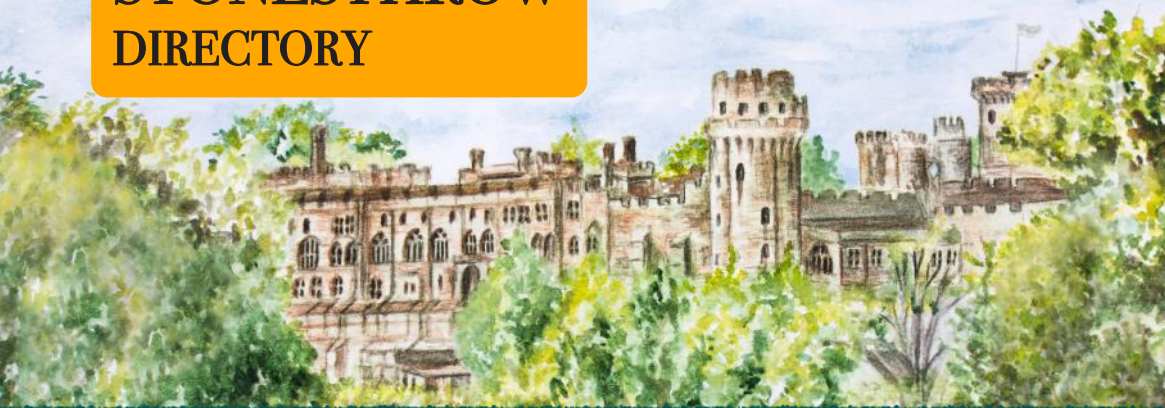


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A Note From the Editor

Welcome to our August/September edition.

August is the month to relax, enjoy life and, for once, be a little lazy. In fact, August 10th is National Lazy Day here in the UK when we are encouraged to take life a little easier for one day, to skip cooking and treat ourselves to a meal delivered to our door, to pamper ourselves, perhaps with a spa day or even a relaxing bath to unwind, or to just generally disconnect from modern life by turning off electronic devices and social media to truly relax.

Many of us will enjoy a holiday away this month and those who are staying at home can enjoy the holiday feel in the garden, the park or a local beach. And by staying at home, you can avoid the crowds or traffic and choose to enjoy dining alfresco by way of a picnic or barbecue or sitting outside a delightful local café savouring a fresh scone with some seasonal blackberry jam on top, or in the beer garden of a beloved country pub with a cool drink just enjoying the month.

September is the month when many go back to school, to college, university or work after the long hot lazy days of summer. For those returning to school, this month is a busy one as new classes are attended and new subjects tried for the first time. September 8th is International Literacy Day, and, for young and old, on September 13th Roald Dahl Story Day!

Harvest festivals are taking place in village halls all across the country with gardeners proud to show off the fruit of the hard labour, while visitors can sample delicious afternoon teas, sandwiches, cakes, pastries and a cup of tea or glass of something cold and refreshing. Food festivals are also becoming more popular allowing visitors the chance to enjoy culinary celebrations featuring top chefs, street food and live entertainment.

Here is the date for your calendar:
31st August - Summer Bank Holiday;

As always, we ask you to please remember to mention Stonesthrow Directories when calling our Advertisers, so we can keep bringing even more trusted local professionals and quality local stories to your door every other month.

However you choose to spend the next couple of months - please remember to keep your heart and your business local.

Yours, Stonesthrow Publications.

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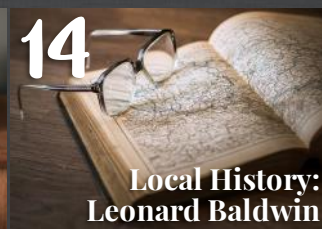


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The Warwick and Leamington Tramway

Next time you are on the bus from Warwick to Leamington, on the rather circuitous routes they take, think that our forebears could hop on a tram which travelled on the direct route between the twin towns. In the 1900s, you could catch a tram every 10 minutes throughout the working day, with services running from 4:50 am to 11:20 pm on weekdays and 10:00 am to 10:00 pm on Sundays. Special late-night trams took theatre goers back to Warwick after a night out in Leamington and extra services were run on Warwick race-days.

The tram was first proposed in 1870, but experienced some opposition, mostly on the grounds that it would not be in keeping with genteel Leamington Spa or historic Warwick. When the tramway was opened on 26th November 1881 by the Leamington mayor, H. Bright it ran literally on two horse power. The horses were stabled at Coten End on premises leased from the Earl of Warwick. The horse trams came to be known as 'Wackrill & Bright's Rattlesnakes', named after Mayor Bright and Councillor Wackrill who had been instrumental in promoting the service, and alluding to the lack of comfort experienced when riding the tram.

The Warwick terminus was outside the Warwick Arms Hotel, and the line ran via Smith Street and Emscote Road across Portobello Bridge into Leamington Spa, and then via Warwick Place and Warwick Street, then down The Parade, terminating at Leamington Spa railway station. The rails were single track with several passing places. Portobello bridge had to be widened with the wrought iron overhanging footpaths (still in place today) and Emscote canal bridge had to be made less steep; even so, at busy times, three horses were needed to get the trams over the bridge.

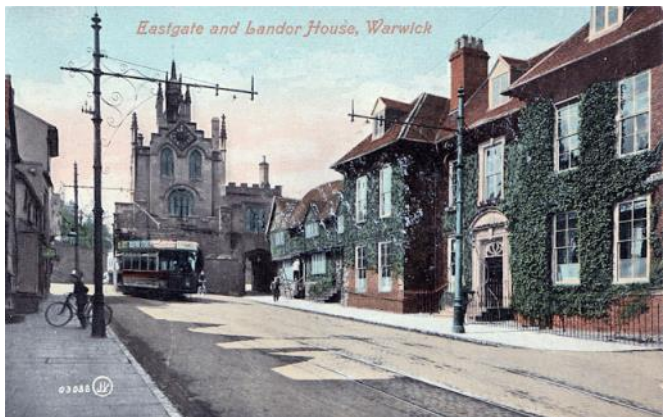
In 1905, the route was double tracked over most of its length and converted to electrical operation. A new tramway depot and power station were built

next to the Grand Union Canal in Emscote on the site now occupied by Tesco.

A significant event in the history of the tramway happened on 3rd January 1916. The conductor is said to have released the hand brake on the tram at the Warwick Arms terminus, not realising that the driver had stepped off. Tramcar No 7 rolled away down Jury Street gathering speed and derailed at the sharp bend around Eastgate, crashing into the bar of the Castle Arms. Miraculously no one was badly injured although the tram was damaged beyond repair and the bar and a first floor room of the pub were wrecked.

After World War One the tramway was run-down, and could no longer compete with unregulated motor bus services which could operate on more flexible routes and served new housing estates in the expanding towns. The final trams ran on 16th August 1930.

The history of the tramway was the subject of a talk at the Looking at Warwickshire group of Warwick and District u3a www.warwickdistrict.u3a.site.uk. This organisation has a friendly and enthusiastic membership of over 1,000 retired and semi-retired individuals, who enjoy coming together to learn in a sociable environment. There are 100 different interest groups and activities, which are open to all members – something for everyone!



Misty Double Glazing?

Hi My name is Dave Millidge, let me introduce my company where I repair windows and replace misted up Double glazed units.

The area that I cover is Coventry and Warwickshire. You may have seen me around in your street or even have family and friends who I have worked for in the past ten years, with over 6,000 satisfied customers during that period. I started Misty to Clear to give customers the best value repairs in the current climate.

The Misty to Clear website allows total transparency of the customer experience. You can log into the website and view work that I have carried out. You can also leave feedback on social media. Therefore I give a 5 year guarantee on all new double glazed units fitted by Misty to Clear.

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I started Misty to Clear mindful that the cost of repairs is probably key to most people's budget when using tradesmen to do work on their behalf in their homes.

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Thinking of improving your home? Some projects can significantly increase a property's appeal and market value, while others may cost far more than they return.

Before reaching for the toolbox, it pays to know where your money is likely to make the biggest impact.

Property values are influenced by many factors, but well-chosen improvements can make a home more attractive to both buyers and valuers. Whether you're planning to sell soon or simply investing for the future, some upgrades consistently deliver better returns than others.

1. A modern kitchen, for instance, remains one of the strongest investments. Often described as the heart of the home, a bright, practical kitchen can dramatically improve first impressions. This doesn't necessarily mean spending tens of thousands of pounds. New worktops, cabinet doors and lighting can sometimes achieve excellent results without a complete overhaul.

2. Bathrooms are another area buyers scrutinise closely. Fresh tiling, modern fixtures and improved ventilation can transform a tired room into a major selling point. Even relatively modest upgrades can create a more contemporary feel.

3. Energy efficiency has become increasingly important. Better insulation, double glazing, efficient boilers and renewable technologies can help reduce running costs while making a property more appealing to environmentally

conscious buyers. Energy Performance Certificate ratings are attracting more attention than ever before.

4. Kerb appeal should never be overlooked. First impressions matter, and simple improvements such as repainting exterior surfaces, replacing worn fencing, tidying gardens and upgrading pathways can instantly enhance a home's appearance.

5. Additional living space can also add considerable value. Converting a loft, garage or underused room often provides more practical square footage without the cost and disruption of moving house.

6. Gardens deserve attention too. Attractive outdoor spaces became highly desirable in recent years, with buyers increasingly looking for areas suitable for relaxing, entertaining and family life.

Naturally, before undertaking any major project, seek professional advice and obtain multiple quotations. Local builders, tradespeople and property experts can often identify the improvements most likely to deliver value in your particular area, and when it comes to making changes that truly add up, it's often worth getting the professionals in rather than trying to remodel things yourself.

Ultimately, when planned carefully, home improvements can enhance both daily life and long-term financial prospects, whether you're staying put or looking to cash in.



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Exercise looks different at every stage of life. The good news? Staying active is not about pushing harder as we age - it is about adapting smarter.

Ageing changes the body, but it does not have to mean slowing down completely. In fact, health experts consistently point to regular movement as one of the biggest factors in maintaining quality of life long-term.

According to NHS guidance, adults should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week, yet millions of Britons still fall short of that target.

The challenge is not necessarily motivation. Often, it is knowing what kind of exercise works best at different stages of life. So let's have a look:

Twenties: Experiment and explore

For many people, their twenties are the decade of physical freedom. Energy levels tend to be higher, recovery is faster, and there is often more opportunity to explore different sports and routines.

It is an ideal time to build healthy habits and discover forms of exercise that are genuinely enjoyable rather than purely functional. Team sports, running clubs, climbing, swimming, cycling and gym-based training all offer both physical and social benefits.

Thirties: Building strength and balance

By the thirties, the body gradually begins to change. Studies suggest adults can start losing muscle mass from around their thirties onward if strength training is neglected. Metabolism may also slow slightly, making movement and recovery increasingly important.

This is why many experts recommend incorporating resistance training into weekly routines, even in small amounts. Strength work supports muscle retention, posture and long-term mobility.

Forties: Investing in future health

The forties are often viewed as a key decade for preventative health. Cardiovascular fitness becomes increasingly important, particularly as risks linked to heart health, weight gain and blood pressure can begin to rise with age. Activities such as brisk walking, jogging, cycling and hiking help support heart health while remaining manageable long-term.

Bone density also becomes a greater consideration, especially for women. Weight-bearing exercise and moderate strength training can help maintain both balance and overall strength later in life.

Fifties: Staying mobile and engaged

By 50, many people begin rethinking fitness less as competition and more as lifestyle. Activities such as tennis, dancing, golf, hiking and swimming can provide both movement and enjoyment, helping exercise remain sustainable and social. Flexibility and mobility also become increasingly important, with Pilates, stretching and yoga helping maintain joint movement and posture.

Sixties and beyond: Movement matters more than ever

Exercise remains hugely important later in life. Research increasingly links regular activity with improved mobility, better mental wellbeing and reduced risk of conditions associated with ageing.

Even moderate exercise can make a difference. Walking, gardening, swimming and light resistance training all help support balance, coordination and strength.



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Leonard Baldwin, hotel keeper, of Warwick Arms Hotel, High Street

Leonard Baldwin was the hotel keeper at the Warwick Arms Hotel in the second half of the Victorian era. He lived there for nearly 40 years, with his wife Louisa and their six children. Their son William also joined the business after training as a veterinary surgeon. The Warwick Arms Hotel was very busy. It was a stopping place for the mail coaches as well as for other travellers. Having a vet on hand to look after the horses would have been a selling point for the hotel.

Mail coaches delivered letters and parcels across the country for Royal Mail. They followed a network of roads and stopped at designated coaching inns where they could swap horses. Coaches followed a strict timetable and swapped horses every 10 to 15 miles. It could take as little as three minutes to make the swap when the coach was in a hurry.

Well used by the county as a whole

The Warwick Arms Hotel was well used by the people of Warwick and the wider county. Records show it was a popular venue for holding property auctions and committee meetings. Groups such as the Warwickshire Agricultural Society, the Warwickshire Tenant Farmer Association and the Warwickshire Hunt would meet at the hotel.

The Earl and Countess of Warwick frequently used the Warwick Arms for hosting dinners and entertainment. One bill to the Earl of Warwick was for 30 dinners and desserts, and another 30 the next day. The bill lists the drinks and cigars bought by the Earl too,

including whisky, wine, sherry, ale, port.

Livery hire

Leonard also offered Livery Hire from the Warwick Arms Hotel. People would hire carriages and horses from him. Newspaper adverts list the types of carriages that were available for weddings and funerals. You could choose between a glass hearse with one horse or a pair, or a hearse with plumes. Horses suited for hunting could be hired for the hunting season.

The success of the Warwick Arms Hotel during Leonard's time as Hotel Keeper might have been in part due to his personality. A short obituary describes him as the 'genial proprietor of the Warwick Arms Hotel' and says, 'his urbanity gained for him a large circle of friends.' This suggests Leonard was a welcoming, friendly host.

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Warwick High Street., showing the Warwick Arms Hotel





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Date: every 2nd Wednesday / Time: 10am - 12pm / Venue: All Saints Church Hall, All Saints Road Warwick CV34 5NJ

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Email: enquiries@warwickshire.vision
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skm9inver@aol.com or Jenny Mikulsky: jenwren200@gmail.com

Warwick Lions Club

Warwick Lions aim to provide help and funds for those in need. We assist individuals and families in crisis, provide items of essential household equipment, distribute food parcels and make donations to local schools and other charities. We are all volunteers committed to helping those in need, we are non political, non religious, have no cultural boundaries or gender discrimination. If you would like to know more or to join us in helping others please contact us via our Facebook page or by telephoning 0345 833 5921.

Warwick Probus Club No.2

Date: 1st Wednesday of every month / Time: 10am / Venue: the Pavilion, Hill Close Gardens, Warwick, CV34 6HF

Warwick Probus Club No.2 was formed to give retired and semi-retired business men the opportunity to expand their interests and make new friends over a cup of tea or coffee while being entertained by a guest speaker. We are always pleased to welcome new members. If you think that you may be interested in joining us call our Membership Secretary 07983211467

Milverton Folk Dance Group

Date: every Thursday / Time: 8pm - 10pm / Venue: Budbrooke Village Hall, Hampton on the Hill, CV35 8QS

We are a friendly folk dance club and welcome complete beginners, individuals or couples and equally those rekindling their knowledge. Come and give us a try if you would like to use your memory and be active! For more information, please contact us on 01926 334808 or 07866 961967, alternatively visit our website: www.milvertonfolkdancegroup.org.uk/

Warwick Memory Singers

Date: Wednesdays / Time: 1pm - 2.30pm / Venue: All Saints Church, Vicarage Fields CV34 5NL
Open to anyone living with dementia or other neurological condition, accompanied by their carer. Led by specially-trained musicians, our weekly sessions can help build new friendships and boost confidence, enabling people to feel more positive and supported. £5 per week, carers go free. First Session free! To book a place or for further information, please contact Sarah Riddell: sriddell@armonico.org.uk or call 07722 632242

Thrift Shop

Date: 1st Saturday of each month / Time: 10am - 12pm / Venue: Warwick Methodist Church Community Centre, Barrack Street CV34 4TH
Good quality second hand clothes at bargain prices, typically £1 to £5. Refreshments also available.

Coventry And Warwickshire Schools Liaison

Community

We have speakers on many hot topics and careers. Also activity kits we lend to schools and clubs, all free of charge.

www.schoolsliaisoncommunity.net/CWSLC.htm
01926 490 456

Coventry And Warwickshire Retired Engineers

Date: third Thursday of most months / Time: 10:30 for 11AM / Venue: Dunchurch Village Hall CV22 6PN

All events are open to the general public.
www.retiredengineers.net 01926 490 456

Workshop Wednesdays

Date: every Wednesday during term time / Time: 1.30pm - 4pm / Venue: Warwick Arts Centre
Our weekly artist-led workshops allow you to get hands on with creativity, meet new people, and take some time for yourself to unwind. Drop in to learn a new creative skill, and experience clay, printmaking, music, and more! Entry is free, donations gratefully accepted. No need to book, just drop in!

Leamington Market

Date: every Friday / Time: 10am - 4pm / Venue: Holly Walk, Leamington Spa CV32 4LY
Holly Walk is set to host a brand new weekly market in the heart of Leamington Spa! Taking place every Friday, the market will showcase a fantastic range of local produce – from fresh fruit & veg to handmade artisan goods. It's the perfect way to shop local, discover something new, and support the amazing independent businesses.

Repair Café

Date: every 4th Saturday of the month / Time: 10am - 2pm / Venue: The Court House Jury Street
Bring your broken item for our volunteers to mend. Free, donations welcome. Café for refreshments.

SummerFest

Date: 9th August / Time: 10am - 5pm / Venue: Parade, Royal Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 4BL
Step into our mini pop-up beach, complete with buckets, spades, and sand for the little ones, creating the ultimate family-friendly vibe. Treat yourself to delicious ice creams, sweet treats, and summer snacks while exploring a host of sea-themed activities and entertainment designed to delight visitors of all ages. Live performances, interactive attractions, giant artisan market showcasing the best local makers, artists, and producers.

Warwick Classic Car show

Date: 16th August / Time: 9am- 4pm / Venue: Market Place, Warwick, CV34 4SA
Meander some time away on a relaxing Sunday, in the tranquil setting of Warwick Market Place, among many fine examples of classic and retro vehicles.

Please see confirmed road closures: Market Place - from its junction of Market Street outside Costa Coffee, heading North bound to its junction of Market Place outside the Shire Hall. Old Square - From New Street to Market Place. The Holloway - Full closure.

Eco Fest

Date: 5th September / Time: 10am - 5pm / Venue: Royal Pump Rooms The Parade, Leamington Spa, CV32 4AA

Learn about how to decrease your carbon footprint, increase your healthy eating and step outside more to explore beautiful local green spaces. Vegan, veggie and local organic meat is available, along with craft activities, live music on the bandstand, a performance by a theatre company and more!

The BIG Summer Market

Date: 31st August / Time: 11am - 4pm / Venue: Warwick Town Centre, Market Place, Warwick, CV34 4SA

We're excited to showcase a fantastic mix of arts, crafts, and locally-produced goodies. Discover the talents of our local artisans and take home a one-of-a-kind find. Street food, face painting and rides. There's so much to keep the kids entertained.

Leamington Food and Drink Festival

Date: 12th, 13th September / 10am - 6pm / Venue: Pump Room Gardens, Leamington Spa
The popular Leamington Food and Drink Festival is back. Come and enjoy a tasty treat or watch some cookery demonstrations at the Leamington Food and Drink Festival, along with live music and an array of stalls, it makes a great day out.

Sausage & Cider Festival

Date: 12th September / Time: 12—10pm / Venue: St Nicholas Park Warwick CV34 4QY
Tribute acts, Celebrity Guests, Children's Tent, Silent Disco, Axe Throwing, Huge Festival Market, 30+ Ciders, 20+ Sausages. To purchase tickets please visit: www.sausageandciderfest.co.uk/warwick

Walk for Myton

Date: 20th September
Starting and ending at our Warwick Myton Hospice, Walk for Myton's the perfect opportunity to explore the beautiful countryside with family, friends and even your four-legged companions, while raising vital funds for The Myton Hospices. With 3 routes to choose from, including a casual 3-mile stroll, a more challenging 6-mile walk, and a 13.1-mile hike for those looking to push themselves, there's a route for everyone! For more information please visit the Myton Hospice website:
www.fundraise.mytonhospice.org/event/walk-for-myton

While we do our best to ensure the accuracy of our listings, events may be postponed or cancelled without notice. Please confirm with the organiser before making any plans for attending events. For your news, events and group meetings to be featured free of charge on our What's On Page please email Ksenia: info@stoneshrowpublications.co.uk

Spotlight: meet your local heroes

Jackie D'Arcy Warwick Mayor 2025-2026

Looking back on my year as Mayor of Warwick, which came to an end on 21 May 2026, I feel an enormous sense of pride, gratitude and privilege. Serving our wonderful town has been one of the greatest honours of my life, giving me the opportunity to meet so many remarkable people whose kindness, dedication and community spirit make Warwick such a special place.

At the heart of my mayoral year was the theme of Resilience. I chose this because resilience is something we all need at different times in our lives. Whether facing personal challenges, supporting loved ones, overcoming adversity or adapting to change, I saw first-hand how resilience helps individuals and communities grow stronger together. Throughout the year, I met countless residents whose determination, compassion and willingness to help others embodied this theme.

A particular passion of mine was supporting young people, because they are the future voices of our community. Visiting schools, meeting youth groups and seeing the enthusiasm, creativity and confidence of the next generation was both inspiring and encouraging. By listening to young people, giving them opportunities to be heard and helping them build resilience, we are investing in the future of Warwick.

Every week brought new experiences, from civic ceremonies and school visits to community celebrations and charity events. It was a privilege to represent Warwick at occasions such as Mayor Making, Remembrance Sunday, Victorian Evening and the Two Castles Run. These events celebrated not only our town's rich history and traditions but also the incredible sense of belonging that makes Warwick such a welcoming community.

My chosen charities reflected my theme of resilience. Women Stepping Out provides invaluable support, encouragement and friendship to women facing challenging circumstances, helping them rebuild confidence and move forward positively. SOS: Silence of suicide carries out vital work in raising awareness of mental health and suicide

prevention, encouraging open conversations and ensuring people know they are not alone. I was deeply touched by the generosity shown by residents who supported fundraising throughout the year, making a real difference to both organisations. I was equally inspired by local community groups, including Warwick Men's Walking and Talking, whose regular walks provide friendship, support and connection, and The Crafting Tree Group at Chase Meadow, where creativity brings people together, combats loneliness and builds confidence. Both groups demonstrate that resilience often grows through simple acts of kindness, conversation and companionship.

One of the greatest joys of serving as Mayor was meeting the many volunteers who give their time so generously. Whether organizing events, supporting charities, helping neighbors or working behind the scenes, they are the heart of our community. Their commitment and selflessness continually reminded me that resilience is not just about overcoming challenges ourselves, but about helping others to do the same.

Although my mayoral year concluded on 21 May 2026, the memories and friendships I made will stay with me for a lifetime. I would like to thank my fellow councillors, Town Council officers, local organizations, volunteers, my family and friends, and above all the people of Warwick for the support and kindness they showed me throughout the year. It has been a tremendous privilege to serve as your Mayor, and I remain immensely proud of our resilient, caring and generous community. I hope that, together, we will continue to nurture resilience, support one another and encourage our young people to become the confident voices and leaders of tomorrow.



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Horoscopes: August



ARIES

(MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Warrior planet Mars, your ruler, is strong in Gemini in your communication area, indicating that some ingenious and inspirational ideas are coming your way. Be prepared, your life could take on a totally different path. The powerful Leo solar eclipse on the 12th highlights all aspects of your relationships, Leo is the sign of love affairs and extreme joy – be open to some wonderful experiences!

TAURUS

(APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

August is a power packed month as dynamic Mars in Gemini stirs up your financial sector; you'll have the courage to make some major changes and possibly take some risks that will put you in a much better position. The Leo eclipse on the 12th falls in your home and family sector, be prepared as the cosmos is suggesting some radical transformation concerning family members.

GEMINI

(MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Power packed Mars remains in your sign until the 11th, make the most of this auspicious time by restructuring the way you plan and think and be sure to remain open to exciting opportunities that will present themselves. The powerful Leo new moon eclipse on the 12th offers some excellent creative ideas, take time to think things through and plan your future.

CANCER

(JUNE 22 - JULY 22)

During August the radiant Leo Sun suggests that creative money making schemes are at an all-time high, particularly around the Leo new moon eclipse on the 12th. Venus arrives in Libra on the 7th energising your home and family sector with practical and creative new concepts. Mars arrives in your sign on the 11th, this unique energy leaves you feeling successful and prosperous.

LEO

(JULY 23 - AUGUST 23)

August is always your special time and this year Jupiter and the solar eclipse both work together as a cosmic power boost making it especially action packed. Your energy and enthusiasm will be at an all-time high as new friendships and group endeavours are particularly favoured. The new moon on the 28th offers a turning point, encouraging you to take up the challenge on an important project

VIRGO

(AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 22)

August offers a radical shake up in all matters concerning your goals, ambition and career prospects. Dynamic Mars and radical Uranus are suggesting that exciting new beginnings are evident. Venus arrives in your money sector on the 7th, indicating that some financial issues will come to the surface and need some careful consideration - and a practical solution!

LIBRA

(SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 23)

August draws you toward faraway travel, adventure and higher learning. Action planet Mars and radical Uranus in restless Gemini ensure that some exciting changes are about to take place. Jupiter in Leo and the powerful solar eclipse in courageous Leo on the 12th both point you in the direction of some exciting new friendships and group endeavours.

SCORPIO

(OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

The powerful Leo Solar eclipse and expansive Jupiter are highlighting your ambition and career sector, flagging up some important challenges that will need your undivided attention. Adjustments will need to be made so that you can move forward positively. Venus arrives in Libra on the 7th offering favourable new insight around any decisions that need to be made.

SAGITTARIUS

(NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 21)

August is an optimistic time for Sagittarians as positive planetary activity is at its height. Abundant Jupiter, your ruler, is courageous and optimistic in Leo and the powerful solar eclipse on the 12th brings many things to a conclusion. Power planet Mars arrives in Cancer on the 11th, indicating that a financial issue will surface and offer the potential for positive change.

CAPRICORN

(DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 20)

August brings some important personal issues to your attention as Mercury in your opposite sign of Cancer requests that you face facts both personally and professionally. Life seems to get much easier after love planet Venus arrives in Libra around the 7th and your intuition should flow nicely, particularly around the time of the Leo solar eclipse on the 12th.

AQUARIUS

(JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 18)

August is an important month for Aquarians, expansive Jupiter and the powerful solar eclipse are both in your opposite sign of Leo. All your relationships come to the forefront during this month as a variety of issues demand your attention. Uranus, your ruler, might be stirring up some trouble and you'll need to keep a clear head to avoid any arguments.

PISCES

(FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20)

Expansive Jupiter and the powerful Leo Sun light up your work sector as you start to explore some creative new ways of structuring your day and improving your earning potential. The new moon eclipse in your sign on the 28th emphasises your need to use your intuitive gifts. Mercury in sentimental Cancer suggests that good communication is vital, as any decisions made now will need your full attention.

Christine Chalklin, Inspirational Astrologer and Life Coach

Take a refreshing new look at the year ahead by booking an astrological reading now. Consultations are available on Zoom, WhatsApp or telephone.

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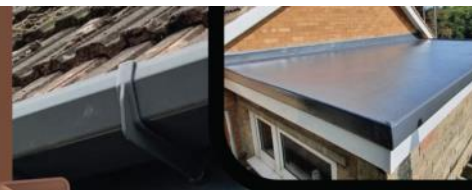
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Roasted Duck Breast with Plum Sauce

INGREDIENTS:

2 Duck Breasts
1 Sprig of Thyme
1 Star Anise
25g Butter

PLUM SAUCE

1 Shallot, finely chopped
1 tbsp Olive Oil
250g Dark Red Plums, halved, stoned and cut into small wedges
50g Demerara Sugar
50ml Red Wine
300ml Beef Stock

METHOD

Step 1

For the sauce, fry the shallot in the oil for 5 mins or until softened but not coloured. Add the plums and sugar, stirring for a few mins until the sugar has dissolved. Add the red wine and stock, then simmer for about 15 mins, stirring occasionally, until softened and slightly thickened. Keep warm or leave at room temperature for up to a day before reheating to serve.

Step 2

Meanwhile, heat the oven to 180C/ 160C fan/gas 4. Score the skin of the duck breasts with a sharp knife and season well with salt and pepper. Heat a non-stick frying pan and place the duck breasts in, skin-side down. Fry for 6-7 mins, then turn and add the thyme, star anise and butter. Allow this to melt, basting the duck with the juices, then transfer everything to a small roasting tin and finish in the oven for 5-6 mins for pink or 10-12 mins for well done.

Step 3

When the duck is ready, baste again with the juices, then rest for 5 mins while you finish everything else.

Step 4

To serve, thinly slice each duck breast on a chopping board. Arrange on each plate along with a spoon of the Creamed potatoes, some of the plum sauce and the Buttered spinach.

RECIPE TIPS

Creamed Potatoes

Quarter 450g Maris Piper potatoes and boil in salted water for 20-25 mins until cooked. Drain well, return to pan and mash, gradually adding 50g butter, 50ml double cream and 50ml milk as you do. Season.

Buttered Spinach

Wash 250g spinach leaves in a colander. Throw into a big pan with a knob of butter and some seasoning, then wilt for 1 min, stirring.



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