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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the December/January Fdition.

The shortest day of the year is 21st December and whilst it might be dark and cold outside there are welcoming

warming firesides inside homes, restaurants and hostelries offering the chance of spending quality time with family, loved ones and friends. This time of year, most of us like to look back at the year that is ending and look forward to the year to come. Many of us begin to plan summer holidays, spring breaks and long walks in our beautiful English countryside.

December is a time of joy as we travel to be with family over the holidays to catch up, enjoy each other's company and give and receive presents. Festivities abound as Christmas markets sell toys and trinkets and let us sample and buy delicious foods, mince pies, gingerbread cookies, panettone, stollen and Buche de Noel and traditional drinks like warming mulled wine, hot apple cider and eggnog.

2025 had an early spring, and a long hot summer but it has almost ended and now we look ahead with joy and excitement to 2026. We count down the weeks to the arrival of the first snowdrops of the year, and the months to the arrival of the Daffodils and Tulips and know that spring is not far away. We plan what we will plant in our gardens and what we'll do around our homes all with the hopeful optimism that 2026 will be the best year yet.

Here are some dates for your calendar: 24th December - Christmas Eve; 25th December - Christmas Day (Bank Holiday); 26th December -Boxing Day (Bank Holiday); 31st December - New Year's Eve; 1st January - New Year's Day (Bank Holiday).

As always, we ask you to please remember to mention Stonesthrow Directories when calling our Advertisers.

Wishing all our readers and supporters a joyful Christmas and a well-deserved festive break.

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CONTENTS IN THIS ISSUE













WHATS ON LOCALLY 22-23





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Whatever your exercise goals, personal training can help you achieve better health, at your own pace, safely under expert guidance.

If you find it hard to get motivated to exercise or are worried about what will work best for you, perhaps a personal trainer is the answer. Personal trainers are qualified, highly skilled and experienced in tailoring exercise to meet an individual's health goals. They can plan, guide, encourage and inspire their clients to better physical health, which in turns helps improve mental well-being.

Personal training

When choosing a personal trainer, recommendations from family, friends or colleagues are useful, as are independent references from people that might have similar health goals to you. Meet and speak with a trainer and get to know them. Be honest about what you want to achieve by training as this will help a professional plan and craft a programme tailored just for you. Personal trainers often help their clients achieve their goals quicker than if they were training independently.

Locations

Where and how you want to exercise will influence your choice of personal trainer. Many trainers work in gyms, but others are happy to visit clients at home, some like to take sessions outdoors, some specialise in resistance training, some aerobic exercises, and some like to combine different techniques. Some trainers use dance and movement, or boxing as a way for their clients to get fit and this might be something that specifically appeals to you and will influence where sessions take place.

Personal exercise plans, correct form and progress tracking

Personal exercise plans work best when they are

realistic and utilise short and long-term goals. A plan will begin with defining what a client wants to achieve, maybe it is weight loss, muscle gain, strength, flexibility, or maybe it is to achieve a target such as a running marathon, or a long-distance swim. Maybe a client wants to use personal training to recover or recuperate from an illness. There are many personal trainers that specialise in helping clients recover health and fitness.

An exercise plan will create a programme of exercise tailored specifically to a client's needs which starts slowly and builds progress gradually. A trainer can use various techniques to track progress perhaps using a log or app to monitor aerobic and strength improvements in the form of endurance, repetitions, resistance increases and levels of flexibility. And, because of the trainer's experience proper form can be monitored to help avoid injuries.

Expect to pay between £40 to £80 per hour upwards for a good personal trainer. A trainer should at least hold a Level 2 Gym Instructor qualification and a Level 3 Diploma in Personal Training and these qualifications should be endorsed by the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA). If you want a specialised trainer they should hold an appropriate specialised qualification. And, before you engage the services of a personal trainer, you should check their levels of insurance, which should include Public Liability and Professional Indemnity cover.

To meet your local personal trainer and discuss your fitness needs, please get in touch:



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Christmas can be a wonderful time of year for some – seeing loved ones, buying presents, and overindulging in mince pies – but for many older people it can also be an unwelcome reminder of loneliness.

Arrange a visit

Being bombarded with images of family reunions and joyful occasions can be hard for people who may not have family living close or don't have a wide social circle, so everyone should pause during the festivities and consider the wellbeing of older people who live nearby. Arranging a Christmas visit to spend some time with elderly neighbours, friends, or family during the festive season is a wonderful way to bring some cheer to someone who'll appreciate it, but there are ground rules to consider before doing so.

Don't turn up unannounced

This could be discomforting for the person if they're not expecting visitors, especially as the nights draw in. Ensure they actually want a visit — It's fair to say that some people are pretty happy in their own company, and it shouldn't be presumed that just because a person lives alone, they are lonely. A kind gesture could then be misconstrued as interfering or 'bothering', leading to embarrassment and potential bad feeling all round.

Take the time to call

Everyone is busy in the run-up to the festive season and routines can get stretched to breaking point with so much to organise. Even so, making time to get in touch with loved ones or friends who are further away can be as easy as picking up the phone in a quiet moment. Taking a few moments out of a busy day to check in with loved ones can also provide a chance to focus on something other than hectic plans.

Help with their shopping

Older relatives will usually enjoy buying family members something nice for Christmas, especially their grandchildren, but they may appreciate some assistance with sourcing suitable gifts. It's a myth that elderly people don't use the internet or know how to order items online; however, not everyone will, and they may be grateful for your input. Most people also like to have some extra groceries or drinks in over the festive season to ensure that visitors always get a chance to share a toast. Therefore, taking them to a supermarket or farm shop to stock up is another way that we can help loved ones prepare for the festivities.

Help with Christmas decorations

If your loved one isn't interested in Christmas, it might be that they don't have the energy to put decorations up or make extra preparations, so find it easier to say they would rather avoid it. Gently investigating if they would like some subtle decorations around their home may provoke an unexpected reaction, especially if it becomes an activity they can share with children in the family.

Offer to drive them to an event

Many places put up attractive Christmas displays in the weeks approaching the festive season, whether it's a garden centre, farm park, or department store. Taking a loved one to see displays and doing some early Christmas shopping at the same time can be a pleasant day out for everyone and help to stimulate some seasonal enthusiasm too. Getting involved in an event that other people of a similar age may be attending could also be a way for your loved one to meet others in their situation, meaning they get to enlarge their social circle too.



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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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From an apple a day to overloading on vitamin C, these are just some of the titbits of advice one might be given on announcing they think they feel a cold creeping over the horizon. However, the human body is far from straightforward and, unsurprisingly, there are many factors that can boost or burden your immune system.

Myth: Vitamin C prevents colds

While vitamin C is important for immune function, research shows it doesn't prevent colds, though it may slightly shorten their duration if taken regularly.

Truth: A rich and varied diet is the key

A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and whole grains provides essential vitamins and minerals that support immune cell function. It's also important to mix it up with your fruits and veggies, which is why an apple a day is simply not going to cut it!

Myth: Exercise weakens your immunity

While excessive working out to exhaustion on a regular basis may leave your body vulnerable – particularly as chronic over exertion can leave you with consistently high levels of the stress hormone cortisol – moderate exercise is generally better for you than no exercise.

Truth: Exercise strengthens immunity

Moderate, regular activity (like brisk walking or cycling) improves circulation and helps immune cells move efficiently through the body. In other words, get off the sofa!

Myth: Echinacea is a proven immune booster

Evidence is mixed. Some studies suggest it may reduce cold symptoms, but it's not a guaranteed way to strengthen immunity.

Truth: Sleep is critical

When it comes to your immune system, there is no supplement which can replace rest. Adults who consistently get fewer than seven hours of sleep are more likely to catch colds compared to those who sleep eight or more. Sleep helps the body produce infection-fighting cytokines, so prioritise it.

Myth: Hand sanitiser boosts immunity

Overuse can actually harm beneficial skin bacteria. Proper handwashing with soap and water is more effective for overall health, and provided you do it at important times (e.g. after using the bathroom, before cooking and after touching pets etc.) you will be fine. In fact, obsessive handwashing and worrying can actually have the opposite effect on your health.

Truth: Some bacteria is really, really good for you

Good gut health is so important and probiotics with a diet high in fibre can support a healthy microbiome, which plays a key role in immune regulation. It can also help reduce bloating, fatigue and provides a first-defence against harmful bacteria. So, chow down on yogurt and fermented foods, while going easy on the less helpful caffeine and alcohol.



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Whether it's mince pies, eggnog lattes or glasses of bubbly, it's very easy to overdo it around this time of year. It is for this reason that a time of joy can turn into one of remorse as the excess of calories and alcohol take their toll.

Fortunately, it doesn't have to be that way. With a little pre-planning and self-awareness, you can avoid those predictable pitfalls.

Question Christmas calories

A soon as those festive sarnies and coffee-shop beverages hit the high street, you might feel your resolve start to dissolve, but make sure you check the nutritional stats on that turkey gut buster or eggnog latte with extra cream, because you may be surprised.

It is certainly not unusual for such treats to contain at least half of your daily recommended calories, and often more. So while you may enjoy the odd item from the seasonal menu, it's important you don't indulge every day leading up to Christmas.

Think before you drink

After all your hard work this year, it's understandable you may want to let your hair down. However, work-related soirees can soon lead to regret as you inadvertently vomit in the staff toilets or attempt to re-enact the scene from Flashdance using your desk chair.

To ensure such malady doesn't befall you, do the

following: before going out, take time to eat. Protein is best, such as a couple of boiled eggs, nuts or even a small turkey salad to line your stomach and slow the absorption of alcohol.

Then, when at the event, aim to drink one glass of water for every glass of booze. Your ego will thank you.

Stay active

Slobbing around in your PJs for an entire week may be tempting, but it isn't sensible. As work winds down, take time to indulge in self-care such as attending a fitness class, or go for a run or cardio in the form of gift shopping.

Then, on Christmas Day, insist on a family walk after lunch and balance all indulgence with a little activity.

Resist stress

Stress is inherently bad for you, and this season can be incredibly stressful. Be careful not to overcommit yourself to others and leave some alone time in your schedule for a bath or long walk.

Be aware of the pressures you may put upon yourself on creating the perfect Christmas Day and instead focus on family, gratitude and love.

As soon as your local yoga, Pilates or meditation centre re-opens, hit the mats and re-centre yourself. Before you know it, you'll be fighting fit for the year ahead!

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WHAT'S ON

Balsall Common Country Market

Date: every Saturday / Time: 10am - 12pm / Venue: The Jubilee, 225 Station Road, Balsall Common CV7 7FE

We are more than just a place to shop — we are a place where people meet and belong. Come and have a cup of tea or coffee with us along with home-made cakes and goodies. Our range of foods includes cakes to die for, savoury meals you can pop in the freezer for later in the week and jams and marmalades in a class of their own. We have splendid flower arrangements, plants for your garden that include both the unusual and old favourites. Our fruits and vegetables are home grown and wholesome.

Coffee Together

Date: first Saturday of every month / Time: 10.30am - 12noon; Venue: The Jubilee Centre, 225 Station Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7FE Organised by Churches together in Balsall Common and Berkswell. Entry fee is £2. this includes coffee and pre-wrapped biscuit. All profits go to charity. Enquiries to Clare Laland at clmap18@gmail.com

Balsall Common Memories Cafe

Date: 2nd Wednesday of every month / Time: 1.15pm – 3.00pm / Venue: Balsall Common Village Hall, Station Road CV7 7FF We meet for social chat, laughter, entertainment, activities, raffle all accompanied by refreshments. Coffee & Chat 1st Thursday of the month 11 - 12.30pm at Balsall Common Library. For those with Dementia and their career, all are welcome. Further information 07974 140353.

Card Club

Date: every 2 weeks on Mondays / Time: 2.15 - 4pm / Venue: Balsall Common Library Refreshments are provided for a small charge. For more information please ask at help desk, call us on 01676 532 590 or visit www.solihull.gov.uk/library-events

Land Rover Sports and Social Club

Date: First Tuesday of every month / Time: 12pm – 3.00pm / Venue: Land Rover Sports & Social Club, 6 Billsmore Green B92 9LN Join Age UK Solihull staff and volunteers for this monthly lunch club with a hot meal, weekly raffle and occasional singer. £10 to attend (includes meal).

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Firebird Singers

Date: every Friday / Time: 7pm - 9pm / Venue: Meriden Village Hall, Main Road, Meriden A small and friendly choir, singing for pleasure whilst raising money for charity. Anyone 16+ that enjoys singing is welcome to join the choir. Come along, learn new songs, participate in our local concerts, make new friends. If you are interested in joining please contact Val on 01676522963 or Anna on 07792525999.

Balsall Common Methodist Church Toddlers Group

Date: every Tuesday / Time: 10am - 11.30am / Venue: Church Hall, Station Road Term time only, £3 per adult, refreshments included. Open to all carers of pre-school children. All will be made very welcome. For further details contact Joy on 01676 532006.

Balsall Common Bat and Chat.

Date: 2nd, 3rd and 4th Friday of the month / Venue: The Jubilee Centre.

Jacqui Clark has started a non-profit making Table Tennis Club. Come along and play Table Tennis. All abilities and ages very welcome. £5 per session which includes a cuppa and biscuits.

Warm Welcome Café

The Warm Welcome Cafe takes place weekly on Mondays: 9.30am-11.30 am at Balsall Common Methodist Church, Station Road; Thursdays: 2pm-4pm at St Peter's Church, Balsall Street East; Fridays: 2pm-4pm at Balsall Common Methodist Church, Station Road.

The Cafe does run during school holidays. Please also see Solihull Council web-site: www.solihull.gov.uk/here2help/warm-welcome-

Balsall Common u3a All-Members Meetings

Date: first Thursday of the month; Time: $\bar{2}$ pm / Venue: St Peter's Church Hall, Holly Lane, Balsall Common

We are vibrant group and are open and welcome

hubs.

to everyone semi-retired or retired – sometimes described as a youth club for mature people! We have over 390 members and 40 interest groups ranging from table tennis to social and political history and everything in between! With light refreshments and a Guest Speaker - visitors welcome! balsallcommonu3a.org or call Matthew on 07419 770164 or email Chairman@balsallcommonu3a.org or membership@balsallcommonu3a.org

Trivia Night

Date: every Thursday / Time: 8pm / Venue: Ye Olde Saracens Head, Balsall Common Hosted by Liam Sawyer, all proceeds go to Balsall Common primary school. £3 entry.

Heart of England WI

Date: 2nd Thursday of the month / Time: 7.30pm / Venue: Balsall Common Village Hall, 112 Station Road CV7 7FF

Heart of England Women's Institute is a thriving group, with lively members enjoying rambles, meals out, coffee mornings and craft evenings. 9th October: "Remembrance Day in other countries" by Christine Gregory; 13th November: La Boutique Florist. New members welcome. Contacts: Lyn 07933 353600 and Liz 07834 072238

Stories and Painting

Date: every Monday / Time: 2.15pm - 2.45pm / Venue: Meriden Library A favourite story and painting fun for under 5s and their grown-ups.

Hobs Meadow Lunch Club

Date: Every Thursday EXCEPT the first Thursday of each month / Time: 12pm - 3pm / Venue: Hobs Meadow Pub, Ulleries Road B92 8ED Come along to this lunch club for a hot meal, entertainment and wonderful company. £10 to attend (includes 2 course lunch, hot drinks and activities)

Welcome Wednesdays

Date: First Wednesday of every month / Time: 2pm - 3.30pm / Venue: Eastcote Park Care Home, Knowle Road, Barston B91 OJA Enjoy hot drinks, cake, activities and a chat with others. Suggested donation to attend - £3.

Sew at the Jubilee

Date: First Friday in the month / Time: 10am - 4pm / Venue: The Jubilee, Balsall Common Bring your own project and equipment and enjoy the company and experience of fellow stitches. Irons and drinks provided. For further information contact Joy Fine 07773994847

Charity Christmas Quiz Night

Date: 7th December / Time: 7.30pm / Venue: The White Horse, Kenilworth Road Join us for some festive fun and fundraising at our special Christmas Quiz! A very popular topical

quiz, with some extra entertainment and great prizes. All proceeds go to local children's charity— Zoe's Place Baby Hospice. Contact Mark Whitfield (lionmarkwhitfield@gmail.com) or 07795 184745

Noël Saturday Artisan Market

Date: 6th, 7th December / Time: 1aam - 5pm / Venue: Station Road, Knowle Join us for a Christmas market to find some beautifully crafted gifts at our artisan market. Step into the magic of Christmas at the first-ever Noel Market — a festive artisan celebration bringing together the best of local creativity, seasonal treats, and holiday cheer. Wander through twinkling stalls brimming with: Handcrafted gifts from talented local makers; Artisan makers selling one-of-a-kind Christmas gifts.

Santa Claus is coming to Balsall Common!

Date: 13th - 23rd December (excluding Sundays) / Time: approx. 5pm / Venue@ Balsall Common & surrounding areas

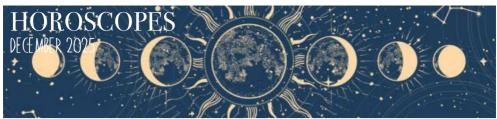
Santa has already received hundreds of letters from children around Balsall Common, and he will be visiting starting on Saturday 13th December, through most evenings until Thursday 23rd December. Plus, he will also be in Balsall Common. village centre on Saturday 20th December, and outside the Co-Op on Christmas Eve. This year we are proud to announce the arrival of a new local Lions Club: Warwickshire Westwood Lions. They will be working with Santa in Burton Green and additional route for Santa in Westwood Heath. Last year you helped us raise over £7,000 which went towards many local, national and international projects. You can support Santa this year by visiting www.cafdonate.cafonline.org/29339. you can see Santa and his amazing sleigh if you follow Santa's progress every evening at approx. 5pm using the Santa Tracker on Lions' Facebook Page.

Winter Foodbank Collection

Date: 17th January / Time: 11am - onwards / Venue: Door to door collection in Balsall Common Food Banks are stretched to breaking pointy. Your support could help food banks provide emergency food and vital advice to everyone who needs it, including to the thousands of people who will need to use the foodbanks for the first time. Balsall Common Lions will be collecting essential supplies with a door to door collection. Leave your donations on your doorstep ar at one of our many drop off points around Balsall Common. Alternatively, if you miss us, you can donate here: www.cafdonate.cafonline.org/28383 Thank you for your support!

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@stonesthrowpublications.co.uk



ARIES

(MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Mars, your planetary rûler, is making a brilliant aspect to your sign up until the 15th and with the Sun in fiery Sagittarius, some very positive opportunities will be up for grabs. Your intuition is heightened and you should start to feel that big changes are beginning to emerge. It's essential that you sweep out the old in order to create space for these exciting new prospects. The powerful Sagittarian new moon on the 20th ensures that your optimism is at its strongest.

TATIRLIC

(APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

Finances, investments and resources are in the spotlight this month as the radiant Sagittarian Sun, accompanied by dynamic and powerful Mars light up this area of your chart. Beneficial Jupiter in intuitive Cancer suggest that you can take your chances when the opportunities arise. Neptune and Saturn in Pisces, both indicate that new friendship groups could be about to emerge and offer some innovative ideas that will broaden your horizons.

CEMINI

(MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Partnerships and relationships are highlighted during December as the Sagittarian Sun, energetic Mars and love planet Venus all emphasise this area of your chart. Communication should be good and that special someone could have a surprise in store for you. Expansive Jupiter in Cancer urges you to connect with your intuition and go with your gut feelings, this way 2026 will be a positive and successful year, offering some wonderful opportunities.

CANCER

(JUNE 22 - JULY 22)

Health and wellbeing are high on your agenda this month as the Sagittarian sector of your chart is in the spotlight. Mars and Venus both offer encouragement as you become more open to completely new ways of keeping yourself fit and healthy. Work and group endeavours are also looking rather positive, as new adventures and socialising become more important. The Winter Solstice on the 21st could offer a relationship challenge, possibly indicating the direction of your life for 2026.

LEO

(JULY 23 - AUGUST 23)

Évents in December hinge around powerful contacts from the Sun, dynamic Mars and Venus all in optimistic Sagittarius. These powerful aspects highlight the love and romance sector of your chart and some long lasting decisions around a relationship may have to be made. Interesting opportunities present themselves around the Sagittarian new moon on the 20th, important breakthroughs are imminent, it's better to trust your own judgement and ignore well-meant advice.

VIRGO

(AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 22)

December highlights all things to do with your home and family, the Sagittarian Sun, Mars and Venus highlight the need for spending some quality time in these areas of your life. The new moon Sagittarius on the 20th stirs up your curiosity and your desire to experience something different and exciting, could a move to pastures new be on the cards for 2026? The love planet Venus arrives in Capricorn on the 25th, suggesting some serious reviews concerning a relationship may well be due.

LIBR

(SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 23)

Venus, your planetary ruler, has just arrived in intuitive and open minded Sagittarius. The Sun and Mercury also shine brightly in this sign, favouring anything to do with communication and business matters. Expansive Jupiter is at the highpoint of your chart offering you some creative and innovative ways to boost your earning potential. Be sure to tune into the new moon in Sagittarius on the 20th, it's perfect for enhancing your new plans.

SCORPIO

(OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

Your financial sector is strongly illuminated by the Sun, Venus and dynamic Mars, one of your rulers. An unexpected opportunity to get a great deal closer to your current goal could transform your chances of success in 2026. Whatever projects need finishing should command your full attention now as you can then focus on a period of expansion, particularly in your creative endeavours. The powerful Sagittarius new moon on the 20th offers a brand new perspective.

SACITTARIUS

(NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 21)

December is your birthday month, the radiant Sun has returned to your sign and is accompanied by energetic Mars and vibrant Venus. The new moon arriving in Sagittarius on the 20th indicates that December, and well into 2026 could turn out to be an extremely positive time for you. It's important that you take stock on how successful you have been over the past year. Staying true to your beliefs and values is vital for success.

CAPRICORN

(DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 20)

Transformational Pluto is in your financial sector indicating that some new plans will soon be underway. The emphasis on the intuitive sign of Sagittarius also bodes well for future business success. Use this time to realise how many options you now have by not letting your recent doubts about the future undermine your confidence or make you overly cautious. Dynamic Mars arrives in your sign on the 15th suggesting a time of positive action.

AOUARIUS

(JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 18)

Abundant Jupiter in Cancer illuminates the work area of your chart, suggesting that exciting new opportunities will come your way this month. The radiant Sun, dynamic Mars and love planet Venus are all in the fiery sign of Sagittarius, stirring up the more adventurous sector of your chart. As you feel pulled in two different directions it's important to stay centred and find a good balance. Tune into the powerful Sagittarian new moon on the 20th, by using your intuition and inner guidance, you can't go wrong.

PISCES

(FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20)

Your ruler, Neptune, is still hovering around the last degree of your sign, this probably makes you feel rather uneasy about what the New Year will bring. What matters now is standing back, staying centred and seeing the bigger picture as you make your plans for an exciting 2026. Expansive Jupiter is illuminating your love and romance sector, this bodes very well for an exciting festive period full of fun and laughter. The New moon of the 20th brings some welcome surprises.

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 Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp or telephone. Mobile: 07813 483549 / www.restyleyourlife.co.uk / christine_chalklin@hotmail.com



Saving money is often associated with huge sacrifices such as a ban on holidays, subsisting on beans and rice and, basically, having zero fun ever. Yet, in reality, some of the most effective savings come from small, consistent swaps in everyday habits.

Making coffee vs buying

If you're often left wondering where all your money has gone, consider your caffeine habit. A daily, basic barista-made latte is around £3.50. Multiply that by five days a week, and you're spending almost a thousand pounds a year on the dark stuff!

Compare this with brewing your own coffee at home and, even factoring in quality beans, milk, and electricity, the cost per cup is closer to 40p. That brings your yearly spend to roughly £100—£150, saving you in excess of £800. That's enough to cover several months of utility bills, or instead let it fund a cheeky weekend getaway.

Packed Lunch vs takeout

These days, grabbing lunch out can easily cost up to £10. If you do this four times a week, you're spending around £2,000 annually. Preparing lunches at home – think pasta salads, sarnies or leftovers – brings the cost down to about £2 per meal.

Walking or cycling vs. public transport

If you live in a city, commuting costs add up

quickly. A monthly travel card in London, for example, can cost over £160 - that's nearly £2,000 a year. If your commute is short enough, cycling or walking will not only cut that cost dramatically, it will also improve your health and general wellbeing.

Even if you invest in a decent bike (£400) and maintenance (£100 annually), you could still save £1,500+ per year, so get on your bike!

Branded vs own-label groceries

Supermarkets charge a premium for branded items but own-label alternatives are often just as good. Swapping branded cereal, pasta and cleaning products for supermarket versions can shave 20–30% off your grocery bill. For a household spending £80 a week, that's a saving of around £1,000 annually.

This is not just a financial swap, but a psychological one. Pay attention to your own feelings and responses when it comes to labels and try to remove the powerful association between brand and personal status.

SIM-only vs contract phone plans

Finally, many people stick with expensive phone contracts long after their handset is paid off. A typical contract might cost £50 a month, while a SIM-only plan with plenty of data can be as low as £10. You could even use that saving to purchase a refurbed or second-hand device!

RESTAURANTS & TAKEAWAYS

BALSALL COMMON, BERKSWELL

Sumatrah Indian

351 Kenilworth Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7DL 02475 920 797

Masala Club Indian

235-239 Station Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7EG

01676 533 210

The Brickmakers Arms Gastropub 307 Station Road, Berkswell CV7 7EG

01676 533 890

The White Horse British, European Kenilworth Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7DT 01676 533 207

The George in the Tree Gastropub Kenilworth Rd CV7 7EX 01676 533 118

Cafe Tamarinds Pan-Asian 376 Kenilworth Rd CV7 7ER

01676 533 308

Balsall Common Fish Bar Fish & Chips 207 Station Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7FE 01676 533 576

La Delicia British, European 231 Station Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7EG 01676 532 177

Oriental Express Chinese Takeaway 176 Station Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7FD 01676 535 900

Costa Coffee Café

unit 2 Station Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7FE 01676 529 277

McKees Brasserie British, European 273 Kenilworth Road, Balsall Common CV7 7EL 01676 533 004

Oakes farm Shop & Café Café
Balsall Street, Balsall Common CV7 7AQ
01676 535 537

Ye Olde Saracens Head Gastropub Balsall Street, Balsall Common CV7 7AS 01676 533 862

Domino's Pizza Takeaway Pizza 209 Station Road, Balsall Common, CV7 7FE 01676 530 099

The Railway Gastropub 547 Station Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7EF 01676 533 284 The Oak Room at Nailcote Hall Hotel *British, European* Nailcote Lane, Berkswell 02476 466 174

Bear Inn Gastropub Spencers Lane, Berkswell CV7 7BB 01676 925 562

Bewitched Coffee Café

345 Kenilworth Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7DL

Please send any updates to

stpdirectories@

hotmail.com

Store & Stove Café
10 Church Lane, Berkswell CV7 7BJ
01676 248384

Monica's Bakes Café 231 Station Road CV7 7EG 07984 990241

MERIDEN

The Barn at Berryfields Farm Cafe
The Berryfields Farm Shop, Berkswell Road,
Meriden CV7 7LB
01676 522 155

Marco Pierre White European
The Manor Hotel at Meriden, Main Road,
Meriden CV7 7NH
01676 522 735

Strawberry Bank Hotel & Restaurant British Main Rd, Meriden CV7 7NF 01676 522 117

The Bulls Head Gastropub Main Rd, Meriden CV7 7NN 01676 523 798

Toby Carvery British Stonebridge Island, Coventry Rd, Meriden CV7 7HL 01675 442 326

HAMPTON IN ARDEN

The Lake at Barston Global Grill Marsh House Farm Ln, Barston B92 OLB 01675 444 890

The White Lion Inn Gastropub High Street, Hampton-in-Arden B92 OAA 01675 442 833

Soho Tavern Gastropub Hampton-in-Arden B92 OAH 01675 442 277

Peel's Restaurant, *British, European* Hampton Manor, Shadow Brook Lane, B92 OEN **01675 446 080**









CAN YOU FIND ALL THE CHRISTMASSY WORDS HIDDEN IN THE GRID

BAUBLE PUD

CARDS SNOW

CAROLS SPARKLE

GIFTS STAR

LIGHTS TINSEL

PARTY TURKEY





ALL THE (HARACTERS IN THE SCHOOL NATIVITY PLAY HAVE BEEN MIXED UP. CAN YOU UNSCRAMBLE THEM

KYEOND YRAM
RPEKENEIN PHEOJS
PRESSHHED LEANG
SWIE ENM RAST

SOLUTIONS:



SLVE VACET TOSEPH MARY

ALISE WEN
SHEBHERDS
INNKEEBER
DONKER

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MULLED WINE AND MINCE PIES AFTERNOON

 A festive afternoon with the opportunity to find out more about Eastcote Park's Care Home and Retirement Apartments, Thursday 11th December from 2 - 4.30pm.

CHRISTMAS CHARITY QUIZ

- Join us for our final quiz of 2025 in support of Knowle Donkey Sanctuary
- Thursday 11th December from 6.30pm.

KNIT AND NATTER

- A warm welcome awaits every Wednesday from 11.30am to 1pm in the Piano Bar.

COMMUNITY COFFEE MORNING

- Come a join us every Friday from 11am to 12.30pm in the Piano Bar.

Numbers are limited so to secure your place please call Nicola on 0121 7567 158 or email: eastcote.enquiries@cinnamoncc.com



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