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# A Note

## From the Editor

Welcome to our April/May edition.

April is the month of warm spring sunshine, Easter holidays where families and friends gather, chocolate eggs, hot cross buns, long walks, spring flowers and St George's Day.

Egg hunts have been a beloved tradition in England since the reign of Queen Victoria and generations of children have delighted in the thrill of running around a garden or park in the hope that they might discover a treasured prize. Many stately homes are holding spring events this year which promise to be wonderful days out.

Spring gifts don't just have to be for children, adults will enjoy receiving some artisanal chocolates or treats, a bunch of flowers or spring plant or even the invitation for a walk to a local coffee shop for a friendly catch up.

May is a wonderfully comforting warm and sunny month here in England, and with the mild, light evenings many of us are dusting off our barbecues, strolling to the pub or local restaurant for a delicious meal or picnicking in the park and watching the birds nesting in trees that are fast filling with leaf. Nature is in full force now; spring flowers are in bloom and many of us are enjoying the feeling of a new start that fills us with optimism for the months ahead.

May is a very English month. There is nothing quite so English as listening to the thwack of leather on willow and polite clapping as local teams play a game of cricket before retiring to the clubhouse for tea or watching skilled crown green bowlers pit their skills against an opposing team in gentle but determined competition. All around mowers hum as lawns are trimmed, and radios play timeless Motown classics reminding us how lovely the month of May is.

Here are some dates for your calendar:  
3rd April - Good Friday (Bank Holiday);  
5th April - Easter Sunday; 6th April -  
Easter Monday (Bank Holiday); 23rd  
April - St. George's Day; 4th May - Early  
May Bank Holiday; 25th May - Spring  
Bank Holiday.

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

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

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# Affordable Luxury: Rethinking the Garden Room

Creating more space at home doesn't have to mean a costly extension. Across the West Midlands, garden rooms are becoming a smarter, more cost-effective way to add space, giving you something practical, flexible, and built to last.

## What Does 'Affordable' Really Mean?

When it comes to garden rooms, 'affordable' is often misunderstood, and many focus on the lowest upfront price. While a poorly built garden room may save you money initially, without proper insulation, professional installation or durable construction, it can become costly to maintain and repair, or even unusable in winter. Affordability is about long-term value, investing in a space you can use year-round, for years to come.

## An Easier Way to Create Space

Compared to traditional brick and mortar extensions, garden rooms are a hassle-free way to create extra space. Installation is faster, disruption is minimal, and the result is a room that can be used for work, hobbies or relaxation, just steps from home. From home offices and gyms to creative studios or entertainment spaces, garden cabins are being designed around how people actually live.

## Affordable Luxury, Without Compromise

For those looking to keep the cost of their garden room down, **Cabin Master's Studio Range** offers the solution. With set sizes and specifications, these ready-to-use buildings remove the need for a full bespoke design, helping to keep your new studio budget-friendly.



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## Designed Around You

Of course, **bespoke garden rooms** are an option for those wanting complete flexibility. From layout and glazing to internal paint colours and premium cladding options, a tailored design allows homeowners to create a space that fits their exact needs, whether for work, relaxation, or a bit of both.

## Built for Everyday Living

Modern garden rooms aren't just an add-on anymore. With full insulation and professional installation, they're designed to be used every day, in every season, just like any other room in your home. Done properly, a garden room doesn't just give you more space, it gives you a better way to use it.

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# Dementia Care focus

*With good advice, careful consideration and a person-centred approach choosing the right care for someone with dementia can help them live well.*

With almost a million people living with dementia in the UK, and that set to increase by around forty per cent by 2030 the condition is often referred to as the UK's biggest health and social care crisis. But with good care people suffering from dementia can live good lives.

## DEMENTIA

Dementia is a syndrome, a group of related symptoms, and it is mainly associated with the decline of certain brain functions which include memory loss, but also includes thinking speed, mood, movement, understanding and others. Alzheimer's disease is one of the most common types of dementia along with vascular dementia but there are numerous others.

## UNDERSTANDING THEIR NEEDS

Many people who suffer from dementia have complex needs, which range from the need to feel safe, to the need to take medication properly and regularly to the need to maintain their dignity and to maintain their selfhood. Any dementia care needs to focus on meeting these needs and any other needs that are specific to the individual.

## RESEARCH CARE OPTIONS

When considering care options family members need to undertake extensive research into what help is available. This can begin with support to live at home through to living in a care or nursing home. If you have been helping someone live independently or semi independently but as symptoms have worsened a needs assessment will be required from social services. Your local GP is a good place to begin this process and seek advice, guidance and support.

## EVALUATE FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Dementia sufferers have extensive needs but there is help out there. Care homes are assessed by the Care Quality Commission and the most recent report is a good place for families to access an initial assessment.



## LOCATION AND FACILITIES

The location of a care facility can have an impact on the ability of someone with dementia to live well, and being close to friends and family can have a massive impact on their health. However, because dementia requires higher levels of specialist care whether there is an appropriate care or nursing home with the facilities to care for people is also an important factor.

## CONSIDER COST AND FUNDING

The cost of caring for someone with dementia can be considerably higher than for those without it. There should be 24-hour cover, with specific trained staff who understand dementia and can create and implement a care plan to help your loved ones live well and be happy. This specialist care makes dementia care cost relatively high. There is financial assistance out there, but this is often means tested. Your local GP will be able to offer advice and put you in touch with care specialists to allow informed decision making.

Choosing the right care for your loved one involves many factors but if they are able, it should involve the person with dementia as much as possible so they can live their best life.



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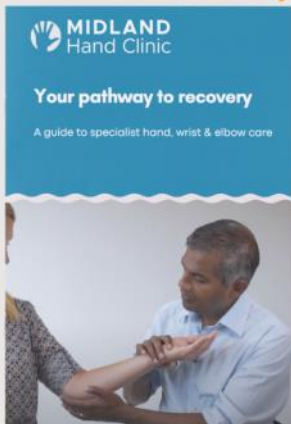
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# Spring energy dip



*Spring – it's the season that's meant to reinvigorate, revive... the time of the year when we come out of our collective shells and feel, well... better!*

*So what is the disconnect of the spring energy gap? And how can we find a way past it?*

## THE PROBLEM

The clocks have changed, daylight returns, gardens come back to life; yet for many people, April brings a surprising dip in energy rather than a lift. Tiredness lingers, motivation drops, and bodies feel heavier than they should after winter. It's a quiet contradiction that leaves many wondering why they feel flat just as the year seems to be waking up.

This disconnect has a name: the spring energy gap.

## THE BACKGROUND

It happens because our bodies don't switch seasons as quickly as the calendar does. After months of lower daylight, reduced movement and disrupted routines, many people emerge from winter running on depleted physical and mental reserves. Immune systems have worked harder, sleep patterns have drifted, and daily movement has often become more limited... all of which combine to leave energy stores low.

Vitamin D levels are one factor. Sunlight is our primary source of vitamin D, and by the end of winter, levels are often at their lowest. Low vitamin D has been linked to fatigue, low mood, muscle weakness and increased susceptibility to illness, and these are all common complaints in early spring.

Sleep is another hidden contributor. Brighter mornings and later evenings can quietly disrupt sleep cycles, particularly after the clocks change. People may go to bed at the same time but fall

into lighter, less restorative sleep, creating a cumulative energy drain that builds across weeks.

Movement also plays a role. Winter habits tend to involve more sitting and less spontaneous activity. Even those who exercise regularly may still experience stiffness, slower circulation and reduced flexibility after months of lower overall movement.

There is also mental fatigue to consider. Winter brings a steady background load of stress - shorter days, financial pressures, seasonal illness and social slowdown. By April, this low-grade strain hasn't yet lifted, even though the weather has improved.

## THE SOLUTION

The solution isn't a dramatic reset. In fact, extreme changes can deepen fatigue rather than resolve it. What works best are gentle, consistent adjustments. Morning daylight exposure – even 10 minutes outdoors – helps reset internal body clocks.

In addition, light daily movement improves circulation and joint comfort; while regular mealtimes support stable energy levels.

Hydration improves focus and reduces headaches while, finally, earlier bedtimes can repair sleep quality after the clock change.

Ultimately, the spring energy gap isn't a failure of motivation – it's a natural seasonal transition. Once bodies catch up with the calendar, energy usually returns quietly and steadily... often without people realising exactly when it happened.

Ultimately, April isn't about pushing harder - it's about allowing your body to rejoin the year at its own pace.



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# How to save your pet from loneliness



Is your pet lonely? Find out by exploring the subtle signs that a lot of us miss.

They're fed, walked, stroked and adored, so how could your pet possibly be lonely?!

In truth, loneliness in pets is one of the most common and misunderstood behavioural issues vets and trainers see, and it often hides in plain sight.

Part of that is because it doesn't present itself in the same way as it does for us humans – after all, loneliness doesn't look like your dog staring sadly out of the window all day!

Instead, it looks like 'naughty' behaviour. It looks like a suddenly chewed shoe, an accident on the carpet, a cat that's gone aloof, or a dog that won't settle even after a walk.

Animals are social creatures. They are wired for routine, stimulation and company, and after a long winter of darker evenings, cancelled walks and shorter days, many pets quietly slip into emotional hibernation.

Come spring, that bottled-up restlessness starts to show. So with that in mind, here are the signs most owners miss:

- following you from room to room
- whining
- pacing or excessive grooming
- sudden clinginess or, conversely, withdrawal
- destructive behaviour that comes out of nowhere
- oversleeping

- loss of interest in toys
- increased barking or vocalising

As discussed, this isn't naughtiness, it's communication.

The good news is, the fix doesn't need to be dramatic, and it certainly doesn't need to involve guilt.

Start with stimulation, not miles. Ten minutes of sniffing, training games, puzzle feeders or gentle agility work can tire a dog out more effectively than a long walk.

For cats, rotating toys weekly and introducing short, high-energy play bursts can completely change their mood.

Next, change the day, not just the evening. Many pets are alone for long stretches while we're at work. Local dog walkers, pet day-care centres and home-visit sitters can transform behaviour with just one or two mid-day interactions a week. It's often cheaper than repairing skirting boards!

Finally, add social variety. Dogs benefit hugely from regular contact with other dogs, even quiet ones. Cats may prefer human interaction, but they still thrive on predictable routines and gentle novelty such as a new perch, a different window view, a heated mat, or a feeder that makes them think.

Ultimately, loneliness in pets doesn't mean you've failed. It means your animal is asking for something, and usually it's not more treats! Instead, it's connection, stimulation, rhythm and reassurance.

# 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 carer, 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](http://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).

## **Free Digital Training for older Solihull residents**

Various times.  
Age UK Solihull are offering free digital training  
for older Solihull residents who would like to

improve their digital skills. Group courses and  
one-to-one support is available, for both  
beginners and those who already have basic  
digital skills. The training can help with online  
shopping, video calling, searching for  
information, accessing online learning,  
downloading and using apps, and more. For more  
information, contact Ashlee on 07397 718 455 or  
visit [www.ageuk.org.uk/solihull/digital-champions](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/solihull/digital-champions)

## **Berkswell and Balsall Common Sports & Community Association**

Date: varied / Time: varied / Venue: The Lant,  
Meeting House Lane, Balsall Common  
With cricket, hockey, running, sailing and tennis  
clubs plus a clubhouse and bar. Facilities also  
available for private hire. See [www.bbcsc.co.uk](http://www.bbcsc.co.uk)  
or Facebook - BBCSCA / Berkswell Sports Bar

## **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**

Date: Mondays / Time: 9.30 - 11.30am / Venue:  
Balsall Common Methodist Church, Station Road;  
Date: Thursdays / Time: 2 - 4pm / Venue: St  
Peter's Church, Balsall Street East;  
Date: Fridays / Time: 2 - 4pm / Venue: 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-hubs](http://www.solihull.gov.uk/here2help/warm-welcome-hubs).

## **Balsall Common u3a All-Members Meetings**

Date: first Thursday of the month; Time: 2 pm /  
Venue: St Peter's Church Hall, Holly Lane  
If you are looking to meet new people, try  
something different, or pick up a hobby you've  
always been curious about? The U3A is the place  
for you. We have over 390 members and 40

interest groups ranging from table tennis to photography to theatre trips, giving you the chance to explore new interests and share experiences with others. We welcome those who are semi-retired or retired. Find out more: [www.balsallcommon.u3asite.co.uk](http://www.balsallcommon.u3asite.co.uk).

### **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. New members welcome. Contacts: Lynn 07933 353600 and Liz 07834 072238

### **Stories and Painting**

Date: every Monday / Time: 2.15 - 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 0JA  
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 stitchers. Irons and drinks provided. For further information contact Joy Fine 07773994847

### **Charity Quiz Night**

Date: 12th April, 7th June / Time: 7.30 - 10.30pm / Venue: The White Horse, Balsall Common  
Grab your team and join us for a night of fun, trivia, and friendly competition, and support this amazing local cause. Prizes for the winners and, more important, bragging rights for the best team in Balsall Common! £5 per person - all proceeds go to good causes, so book in your Quiz Team through Lion Mark Whitfield (07795 184745, or [lionmarkwhitfield@gmail.com](mailto:lionmarkwhitfield@gmail.com))

### **Spring Foodbank Collection**

Date: 18th April / Time: 11am - 2.30pm  
Food banks are stretched to breaking point. 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 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 or at one of our many Drop-off points around Balsall Common. Alternatively, if you miss us, you can donate here. <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/28383>  
Thank you for your support!

### **Firebird Singers concert**

Date: 9th June / Time: 1.30 - 6.30pm / Venue: Manor Hotel, Meriden  
"Cartoon Heroes" featuring songs from Aladdin, Mary Poppins, The Lion King, The little Mermaid and many more. All proceeds to the Air Ambulance. Tickets £8 each available from Val Martin 01676522963, Anna Bird 0792 525999

### **Movie Matinee**

Date: 6th June / Time: 2.30pm / Venue: Knowle Village Hall  
If you like film music, then the Strolling Players invite you to join them at their summer concert on 6th June. Come and enjoy a medley of songs from the Silver Screen, including favourite numbers from the world of Disney, "The Wizard of Oz," the Bond movies, "The Lord of the Rings", "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" and many more. Tickets - £10.00 : available from 01564 777634.

### **Balsall Buzzfest**

Date: 11th July / Time: 3pm - 9pm / Venue: The Hornets, Lavender Hall Lane, Balsall Common  
Building on the success of the Balsall Beerfest, this year's event, organised once again by Balsall Common Lions Club and Balsall Hornets Football Club will be bigger and better than ever! Tickets will be on sale from mid-May via Lions, Hornets, and Michaels Drinks World. Tickets will be more expensive on the day so make sure you get yours in advance!

### **Balsall Common Fun Run**

Date: 13th September / Time: 12pm / Venue: Balsall Common Primary School  
The Balsall Common Fun Run is organised each year by The Lily Mae Foundation, a local charity that supports parents and families, living in the West Midlands and Warwickshire, who have lost a baby to Stillbirth, Neonatal Death, Miscarriage or to a Medical Termination.  
To book your place please visit: [www.stuweb.co.uk/events/2026/09/13/4555/](http://www.stuweb.co.uk/events/2026/09/13/4555/)

*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](mailto:info@stonesthrowpublications.co.uk)*

# Horoscopes: April



## ARIES

(MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Venus has arrived at the financial angle of your chart and is shining a powerful light on how you make your money; your earning ability is ripe for change, be sure to take advantage of a brilliant opportunity to meet new people who can influence your progress and success. The powerful new moon in your sign on the 17th suggests that bold decisions have the potential to bring positive results.

## TAURUS

(APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

The dynamic energy of Venus in your sign, plus revolutionary Uranus coming to the end of your sign, have the potential to make April the most important month of the year. This is your cue to shift gear and turn up the pace in all areas of your life. Lucky planet Jupiter shines a beneficial light on positive communication, suggesting the opportunity for you to welcome in a new sense of confidence and joy.

## GEMINI

(MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Your career and some new and exciting connections are in the spotlight this month as these two areas of your chart are dominant. Jupiter, planet of expansion and growth is now gathering speed offering challenge and change in all directions. Saturn and Neptune, both in fiery Aries suggest a new passion for life as you find yourself driven to make improvements that broaden your horizons on a grand scale.

## CANCER

(JUNE 22 - JULY 22)

Mercury and Mars both in intuitive Pisces, occupy the sector of your chart concerned with your higher mind and travel. You'll be feeling energetic about making some exciting plans for the future. Abundant Jupiter is now moving direct in your sign and shining a helpful light by empowering you to make the right decisions. The powerful Aries new moon on the 17th offers the opportunity for a change of direction.

## LEO

(JULY 23 - AUGUST 23)

The powerful new moon in fiery Aries on the 17th offers you an opportunity to make some outstanding business connections, particularly where foreign travel is concerned. A possible career change comes to light and some brilliant prospects are up for grabs. Venus illuminates the highest point of your chart, be sure use your intuition and focus on turning exciting ideas into long term projects.

## VIRGO

(AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 22)

Relationships and partnerships are on your agenda this month. You'll certainly be feeling the need for tenderness and soft words as communicative Mercury, your ruler, occupies this area of your chart. The powerful Aries new moon on the 17th pushes you to see a completely different view point in significant areas of your life, a new beginning is looming, particularly concerning finances, investments and shared resources.

## LIBRA

(SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 23)

April presents a powerful blend of opportunities and challenges for you as the cosmic energies are urging you to find a better balance in all aspects of your life. Saturn, Neptune and the radiant Sun are in your opposite sign, and the Aries new moon on the 17th brings up some important and lasting decisions that will need to be made. Venus arriving in Gemini on the 24th offers a positive breakthrough.

## SCORPIO

(OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

This month, you are encouraged to review all aspects of your working life by delving deep into your work life balance. The emphasis on the powerful Aries energy is urging you to seek new directions as you move into a new phase of inner transformation. Trusting your inner strength and resolve will hold you in good stead for the important changes that are to come. Venus, in your opposite sign of Taurus until the 24th helps you to stay grounded.

## SAGITTARIUS

(NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 21)

Your health, daily rituals and wellbeing are your main focus this month as abundant Venus in down to earth Taurus assists you with inevitable change. As a free spirit, you know that adjustments and transformation are part of life and as your vision of the future becomes clearer you'll feel more confident and ready for anything that comes your way. Dynamic Mars arrives in your love and romance area on the 10th, be ready for surprises!

## CAPRICORN

(DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 20)

Your home and family are in the spotlight this month illuminating some issues that need addressing. Mercury in Pisces suggests that deeper healing is possible with the added potential for successful communication. Get ready to release your inhibitions and embrace a new way of living as the new moon in dynamic Aries on the 17th offers you an energy boost, enabling some major shifts to take place.

## AQUARIUS

(JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 18)

Passionate communication is high on the agenda for Aquarians this month as this sector of your chart fills up with dynamic Aries energy. Mars arrives in this sign on the 10th followed by the powerful new moon on the 17th. Uranus, your ruler, is also on the move arriving in Gemini on the 26th. The cosmic message is indicating a month of breakthroughs enabling you to expect the unexpected and push forward.

## PISCES

(FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20)

The creative and inspirational influence of communicative Mercury and dynamic Mars both in your sign until mid-month indicate that sharing your ideas should be your main focus, even if you feel a little shy about opening up to strangers. The powerful Aries new moon on the 17th will no doubt shake things up as cosmic alignments indicate some valuable new insight are yours for the taking, as long as you embrace an entirely new perspective.

*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.

Mobile: 07813 483549 | [www.restyleyourlife.co.uk](http://www.restyleyourlife.co.uk) | [christine\\_chalklin@hotmail.com](mailto:christine_chalklin@hotmail.com)

# April Gardening Jobs

*April is a busy one out in the garden as gardeners sow, plant and prepare their plots in preparation for summer.*

*Perhaps the busiest month in the garden, April is a delight to behold as the vegetable plot begins to take shape, the flower garden has fresh blooms and lawns are a beautiful baize inviting workers to stop a while and smell the early flowering roses like the tough but stunning *Rosa rugosa*.*

## VEGETABLES

If you have been forcing some delicious rhubarb there should be plenty of sweet pink stems to harvest this month, and your late winter crops of leeks, spring greens, kale and broccoli should still be providing a lot for the dinner table. And, towards the end of the month early potatoes will be succulent and delicious eaten on their own with just a little butter.

This month you can begin sowing outdoors in earnest, including peas and broad beans, spring onions, beetroot and carrots. But make sure you don't risk sharing these precious seeds with the birds! Cover them with sticks, twigs or by making use of cuttings from blackberry bushes. Fine netting is probably the best thing to use to keep your plants safe, but you could try items like hanging foil and old CDs to scare birds away. Feeding the birds their favourite food might also help to reduce their interest in your tender plants.

Frosts are not unheard of in April so keep an eye on the forecast and make sure you have cloches and fleeces ready to protect tender shoots. Also, protect early potato shoots by regularly hoeing up soil.

## FLOWERS

Because spring weather and temperatures can veer unpredictably from cold and wet, to an early heatwave as in April 2025, only hardy annuals should be sown directly into the soil outside. These include cornflowers and poppies, fragrant sweet peas and sunflowers. Half-hardy annuals such as cosmos and tobacco plants should not be risked outside and only planted inside, or under glass this month. They can be transplanted outside later.

## LAWN

Lawns are growing fast and will need feeding this month. Choose a feed product with a high nitrogen content as this will encourage plenty of green growth – there are numerous dedicated spring and summer granular feeds will have the right nutrient balance for your spring lawn. Wait to feed until you have mowed the lawn a few times and after you have done your thorough spring moss raking.

## OTHER WORK

As well as plants, weeds are also growing fast this month, so regular hoeing is required to keep on top of the problem in the vegetable and flower garden. Mulching can reduce weed growth and helps to keep moisture in the soil as the sun gets stronger and the temperatures rise.

If not already done, April is a good time to check, repair or replace any parts of your water retention system, check gutters and water butts, or consider investing in upgrading your system, to make the most of any April showers!



# Restaurants & Takeaways

Please send  
any updates to  
[stpdirectories@  
hotmail.com](mailto:stpdirectories@hotmail.com)

## 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 7D

### 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 0LB  
**01675 444 890**

### The White Lion Inn *Gastropub*

High Street, Hampton-in-Arden B92 0AA  
**01675 442 833**

### Soho Tavern *Gastropub*

Hampton-in-Arden B92 0AH  
**01675 442 277**

### Peel's Restaurant. *British, European*

Hampton Manor, Shadow Brook Lane, B92 0EN  
**01675 446 080**

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## Blueberry Cinnamon Breakfast Swirls

### INGREDIENTS:

#### For the dough

420g Strong white flour, plus extra for dusting  
4 tbspcaster sugar  
2 tsp Dried fast-action yeast  
100ml Milk  
40g Butter, plus extra for greasing  
Oil, for greasing

#### For the filling

150g Blueberries, halved  
Zest of an orange  
1 tsp ground cinnamon  
Nutmeg  
4 tbspcaster sugar

#### To finish

1 Beaten egg  
70g Icing sugar  
1–2 tbsplemon juice or water  
Fresh whole blueberries, to decorate

### METHOD

**Dough:** Pour the milk and 100ml water into a saucepan with the butter. Heat gently until the butter is melted. Leave to cool until it's lukewarm.

Place the flour, sugar, and yeast into a bowl (or the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook). Make a well in the centre. Pour the milky mixture into the well. Either mix with your hands or in the mixer on the slow setting with the dough hook. Knead for about 5 minutes, or until a smooth dough has formed.

Oil a large bowl and place the dough inside. Cover with cling film and leave to rise in a warm place for about 2 hours. When the dough has doubled in size, place on a lightly floured surface and knead for a second time by hand for a few minutes. Butter a 23cm/9in round springform tin.

Roll the dough out to a rectangle. Scatter the orange zest, ground cinnamon, nutmeg, and brown sugar over the dough, then top with the blueberries. Strating from the long side, roll up the dough as though you were making a Swiss roll. Slice into 9 swirls using a sharp knife. Place the swirls gently into the buttered tin, eight around the edge and one in the middle, cut-side up.

Brush with oil, cover with clingfilm and place in a warm place to rise for about 30 minutes this time, or until doubled in size again.

Preheat the oven to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6.

Brush the top of the buns with beaten egg and bake for 20–25 minutes, or until golden-brown and cooked through. Place on a wire rack to cool.

Mix the icing sugar and lemon juice in a bowl until the consistency is suitable for drizzling. Drizzle over the swirls. Scatter over the fresh blueberries and enjoy.





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We welcome people of all ages and abilities.

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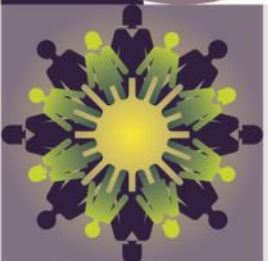
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