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October / November 2026



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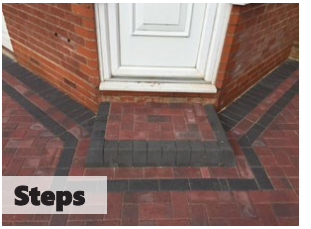
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A Note

From the Editor

Welcome to our October/November edition.

October has inspired poets, writers and musicians for centuries. It is the month of warm colours, reds, golds, browns all around us in our gardens, parks, commons and countryside radiant and inviting us to feast our eyes.

October is also pumpkin festival time, with farms, historical houses and parks across England opening their doors for day and nighttime fun for all ages. You can pick your own pumpkins, carve them or eat lots of delicious treats made from them whilst enjoying fresh air and beautiful scenery.

November 5th is Bonfire Night, which offers the chance of an evening out with convivial company, enjoying hot baked potatoes, a warming drink of mulled cider or a hot chocolate, and some cinder toffee. Most towns and villages, sports clubs, and community centres offer spectacular organised events, often raising money for good causes, and allowing spectators to watch a fantastic firework display in safety.

Stonesthrow Directories celebrate 15th anniversary this November. It has been our mission to bring together our community and businesses serving it. We love receiving your feedback on articles, listings and features you read in every edition. We like to think that printed 'coffee table magazines' are a trusted source of local news, events and business listings. You're more likely to find a truly local tradesman or service here than online, where the whole world competes for your attention all at once. So we ask you to keep supporting our local business by taking the time to share your thoughts and feedback with us, by calling the services your see in Stonesthrow Directories and mentioning where you found their number, by choosing to book and shop local where possible.

Here are the dates for your calendar: 25th October - Daylight Saving Time Starts; 31st October - Halloween; 5th November - Guy Fawkes Day; 8th November - Remembrance Sunday.

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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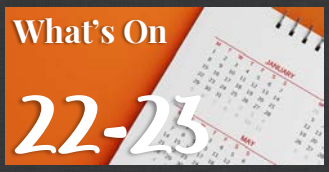
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Remember, Remember the 5th of November



Catholicism in England was heavily repressed under Queen Elizabeth I, particularly after the pope excommunicated her in 1570. Dozens of priests were put to death while Catholics were not allowed to celebrate their religion. When King James took to the throne in 1603 it was hoped this would change, but in 1604 he publicly condemned Catholicism, calling it a superstition, and called for priests to leave the country. In May 1604 a handful of Catholic dissidents—Guy Fawkes, Robert Catesby, Tom Wintour, Jack Wright and Thomas Percy—met at the Duck and Drake inn in London. Here, Catesby proposed a plan to blow up the Houses of Parliament with gunpowder, which they all supported with an oath. Other conspirators later joined what became known as the Gunpowder Plot. Although Catesby was the ringleader, Fawkes has been the one who gained the most publicity, mainly after spending around ten years fighting for Spain against Protestant rebels in the Spanish-controlled Netherlands. He also asked the King of Spain to help with an English rebellion against James. By 1605 Fawkes was calling himself Guido rather than Guy. Also, by using the alias John Johnson, he served as the caretaker of a cellar below the House of Lords. This was where the plotters stockpiled gunpowder. The plan was that Fawkes would light a fuse on November 5, 1605, during the opening of a new session of Parliament. This would result in the death of James and his eldest son – meanwhile, fellow conspirators would kidnap James' daughter Elizabeth and install her as a puppet queen who would be married off to a Catholic to restore the monarchy in their faith. However, there was an anonymous tip-off and a search party found Fawkes in the cellar late on November 4, next to 36 barrels of gunpowder – and some matches. He was tortured in the Tower of London by order of King James. Fawkes and his surviving co-conspirators were all found guilty of high treason and sentenced to death in January 1606 by hanging.

Soon after the plot was revealed, Londoners celebrated with bonfires and the Parliament designated November 5 as a day of thanksgiving. This has now become a time to set off fireworks, light bonfires and burn effigies. The demands for 'penny for the Guy' come from Fawkes' first name. Little is known about the earliest celebrations however in areas such as Carlisle, Norwich, and Nottingham, local councils provided music and artillery salutes. Canterbury celebrated 5 November 1607 with 106 pounds of gunpowder and 14 pounds of match, and three years later food and drink were provided for local dignitaries, as well as music, explosions, and a parade by the local militia. While the annual rituals are more festive and fun than religious and monarchical, it is ironic that the history and perception of Guy Fawkes himself has taken on new meaning. Rather than being seen as a religious extremist and terrorist he has become known as something of a populist hero. His life has been romanticised in tradition and culture and celebrated globally. Yet had the plot been a success, it would have killed everyone in Parliament, with the neighbouring area being destroyed. Ultimately, Guy Fawkes would have been complicit in one of the biggest terrorist acts in British history.

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free things to do in & around Balsall Common this Autumn

Looking for things to do in and around Balsall Common in October and November?

We've put together a list of free community events to keep you busy. Please check with the event organisers ahead of time to confirm the events details.

Spooky Crafts Halloween Drop-in

Thursday, October 29th • 10.15AM - 12.15PM • Balsall Common Library

Children and their families are invited to drop into the library for free Spooky Craft Sessions on Halloween. You will be able to choose from a selection of creepy crafts. Suitable for children age 4-11 years old. Get in touch for details: 01676 532590 / balsallcommonlibrary@solihull.gov.uk / www.solihull.gov.uk/Libraries

Board Games Celebration Morning

Saturday, November 4th • 10.15AM - 12.15PM • Balsall Common Library

Join us for a relaxed morning playing classic board games for grown-ups and young adults at the library to celebrate International Games Month. Suitable for children age 13 years old and above with family. Get in touch for details: 01676 532590 / balsallcommonlibrary@solihull.gov.uk / www.solihull.gov.uk/Libraries

BookTrust Storytime

Thursdays, November 7th - December 5th • 10.30AM - 11.15 PM • Balsall Common Library

This Autumn, Balsall Common Library is hosting five very special storytimes for the under 5s and their families in conjunction with BookTrust, the UK's largest children's reading charity. As well as listening to a different story each week there will be a range of free and lively activities in a space where you can have fun and enjoy stories together. Come each week and collect a sticker for an exclusive BookTrust sticker book, as well as voting on your favourite story! No need to book, just turn up.

Lavender Hall Park and Nature Preserve

Walk or jog the paths and enjoy the changing autumn colours in a peaceful local setting. Dogs allowed.

Nature Makers Intergenerational Sessions

Wednesdays • 11AM • Harper Fields Care Home

Brings toddlers and care home residents together for outdoor exploration, nature play, and mindful nature-inspired arts and crafts. Booking is required in advance via the Nature Makers page as spaces fill up quickly (www.nature-makers.co.uk/classes). Contact/ Email: ruthcov@nature-makers.co.uk

Lavender Hall Junior Parkrun

Sundays • 9AM • Lavender Hall Park, Lavender Hall Lane, Balsall Common, Solihull, CV7 7BN

A free, fun, and friendly weekly 2k event for juniors (4 to 14 year olds). The aim is to have fun. Please come along and join in whatever your pace! All parkrun events are organised by volunteers.
Email lavenderhalljuniors@parkrun.com to help. Every week we grab a post parkrun coffee at a local café - please come and join us!

Coffee Companions

Wednesday 14th, 28th October; Wednesday 11th, 25th November • Time: 11AM - 1PM • Balsall Common Library

Good company and a chat over coffee for residents, hosted by Citizens Advice Solihull.

Coffee, Conversations & Community

2nd Tuesdays of each month • 10.30AM - 12PM • Balsall Common Library

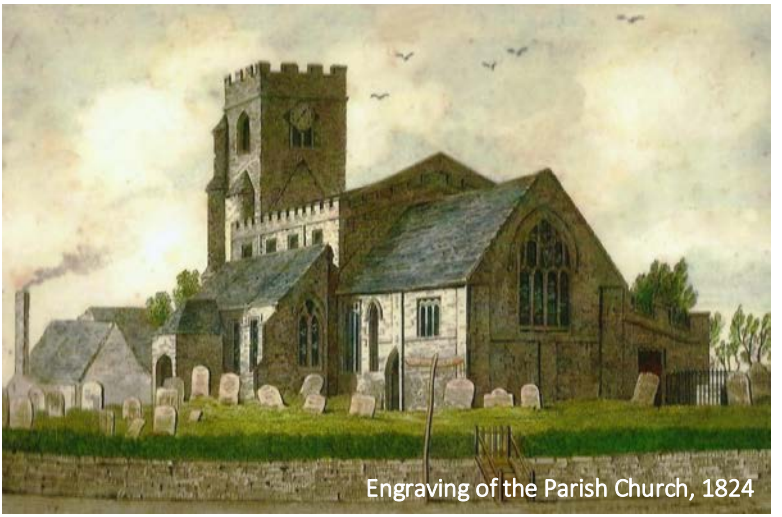
A monthly drop in for voluntary community sector residents and local groups to chat about connecting and funding opportunities.


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The Parish Church of Saint Mary and Saint Bartholomew, Hampton-in-Arden



Engraving of the Parish Church, 1824

Building work on the church that we know today is said to have begun in 1130, although the exact date is not known. J.C. Adams gave this date in his history of the village (1951) and Pevsner estimated c. 1130 – 40 in his buildings of Warwickshire (1969), as the architectural evidence suggests this. In his book Rev Adams stated that Geoffrey de Wirce began the work in 1130 but the Norman noble would have been about 90 years old at the time, if he was still alive. It is believed that he died before 1100 and the Lord of the Manor in 1130 was Sir Roger de Mowbray who had inherited the estate from his father, Nigel de Albini (d'Aubigny), the year previously.

The oldest part of the church is the chancel and for a while this may have been the church in its entirety. It is comparatively long and narrow for the period, in a church of this size. A number of features are clearly of Norman origin – the buttresses, the three small round-headed windows, and the simple north doorway with a tympanum containing a fragment of an ancient coffin lid with an incised cross.

The nave was added later in the 12th century and may originally have been the same width as the chancel. The north aisle and arcade were added in the mid 13th century, widening the nave by five feet. In the late 14th century the north aisle was rebuilt on its old foundations. The south aisle was also rebuilt, in the early 15th century. The building of the west tower began around this time but was not completed until late in the century. The clerestory was added in the 16th century, as was the spire which only lasted until 1643 when it was struck by lightning and destroyed.

The church was greatly restored in the late 1870s under the direction of the architect Eden Nesfield. The most important work centred on the chancel which was rebuilt reusing the old materials. The south porch and the vestry are modern additions. A millennium building project resulted in an extension to the vestry being built to the designs of architect Brian Ellender. It was opened on 5th March 2003 by the Duchess of Gloucester in the presence of the Bishop of Birmingham, John Sentamu.

Clive Hinsull
Secretary, Hampton-in-Arden Local History Group
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Keeping fit in retirement



Pilates

Joining a Pilates class is a great way to keep active during your retirement years. This form of exercise sees the participants perform particular movements beneficial for the body, from a single leg stretch to rolling like a ball. These moves can be put together to form routines. This kind of activity may help certain kinds of body ailments, and by joining a class with a qualified instructor they will know exactly what moves are suitable and beneficial for you.

Walking

You don't need to make a particular effort to visit the gym or subscribe to a particular fitness class to keep active, as just by stepping outside you can easily go for a walk. Power-walking, where you maintain a brisk pace, helps to increase cardiovascular fitness and over time can even help reduce body weight and reduce the chance of developing Type 2 diabetes. As well as the physical activity, the fresh air and company of a fellow walker are other benefits to this activity.

Dancing

Attending dance lessons weekly is not only great fun, but it also assists in keeping you fit and active. There are a variety of dance classes you can choose to attend. These include those that focus on ballroom dancing, which will cover dances such as the waltz, foxtrot and quickstep, or the faster pace of Latin dancing classes that feature dances such as the cha-cha-cha, samba and jive. This activity is also great for partners or friends to attend together, as it gets the heart beating and laughter flowing.

Gardening

Believe it or not, just going outside into the garden is a brilliant form of regular movement that helps keep you active. All these activities, from weeding your vegetable patch to planting out spring bulbs, mowing the lawn and watering the plot, are beneficial for your health. Creating a vegetable garden not only keeps you on the go but also produces healthy tasty crops to use in the kitchen. If you find you struggle with movement, however, or use a wheelchair, try getting raised beds erected as they offer a much more accessible platform for vegetable gardening with reduced need to bend down to the ground. You can even get your family and friends to get involved with this activity too.

Swimming

Getting into the water at a local swimming pool, or even the ocean, can help keep your muscles moving as you get older. Committing to swimming and going to the pool for regular lengths increases your cardiovascular fitness, but you don't have to take the sport seriously to feel the benefits. You can take the kids and grandchildren along, and you'll find that the continuous movement through the water is beneficial and uplifting for both your physical and mental health. There are even classes for water aerobics that you can attend too.

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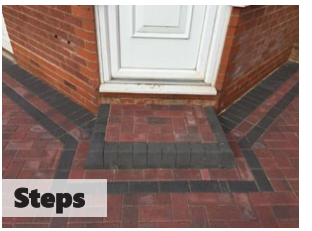
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What's On

Balsall Common Country Market
Date: every Saturday / Time: 10am - 12pm / Venue: The Jubilee, 225 Station Road, Balsall Common CV7 7FE
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 and Berkswell. Coffee and homemade cake for £2. Any profit goes to charity. All are welcome.

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, activities, entertainment, 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).

Free Digital Training for older Solihull residents
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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 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.bbcsca.co.uk or Facebook - BBCSCA / Berkswell Sports Bar

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.
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;
Would you welcome the opportunity to enjoy cheerful chat in a warm, safe and relaxed environment? Activities available (jigsaws, board games etc.) for those who wish to take part. Everyone welcome.

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.

Heart of England WI
Date: 2nd Thursday of the month / Time: 7.30pm / Venue: Balsall Common Village Hall
The Heart of England Women's Institute is a thriving group with lively members aged from mid-20s to 90s. New members are always welcome. October Talk - Blood Bikes. November Talk - Project Linus. More information is on Heart of England WI Facebook page or by phoning Lyn 07933 353600 or Liz 07834 072238 or email hoewi2019@hotmail.com

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.

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

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.

Knit & Natter

Date: every Wednesday / Time: 11.30am - 1pm / Venue: Eastcote Park Care Home, Knowle Road, Barston B91 0JA
Love knitting, crochet, or just a good chat over a cuppa? Join us for friendly faces, yarn, and conversation.

Community Coffee Mornings

Date: every Friday / Time: 11am - 12.30pm / Venue: Eastcote Park Care Home, Knowle Road, Barston B92 0JA
Freshly brewed tea and coffee and homemade sweet treats.

Meriden CAMEO

Date: Every 4th Friday of the month / Time: 2pm / Venue: Meriden Village Hall CV7 7NG
Come And Meet Each Other is a friendly group for over 60's. With a speaker or activity at 2pm, just come along or get in touch: rus-selljoan330@gmail.com / 07899938568

Balsall Common Lions Prostate Screening Event

Date: 10th October / Time: 9.30am - 1.30pm / Venue: Heart of England School
Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men, but when detected early it is often highly treatable. Thanks to fundraising, sponsorship and community support, Balsall Common Lions is subsidising the cost of each test (£15 instead of £26). Visit www.balsallcommonlionsorg to book.

Balsall Common Lions EIGHTIES NIGHT!

Date: 10th October / Time: 7.45pm / Venue: Heart of England School
Join Balsall Common Lions for a fantastic night of live music and classic 80s favourites, featuring Mario. Tickets: £15. This fun evening will help raise funds towards our Prostate Screening Event, taking place earlier the same day — supporting local men's health in our community. To book tickets, contact: Lion Rob Jones – 0345 833 8565; contact@balsallcommonlions.org

Balsall Common Lions Autumn Foodbank

Date: 17th October / Time: 11am
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: www.cafdonate.cafonline.org/28383

Balsall Common Lions CHARITY QUIZ NIGHT AT THE WHITE HORSE!

Date: 18th October / Time: 7.30pm / Venue: The White Horse, Kenilworth Road, Balsall Common, CV7 7DT
£5 per person, with all proceeds supporting local good causes. Book in your Quiz Team through Lion Mark Whitfield (07795 184745, or quiz.night@balsallcommonlions.org)

Berkswell Beer Festival

Date: 27th November / Time: 7pm / Venue: Jordan Room, St. John Baptist Church, Church Lane, Berkswell CV7 7BJ
12 different local beers to try. Gin and prosecco bar, snacks and a live band. Tickets £10 (includes 4 beer tokens). For tickets please email: berkswellbeerfestival@gmail.com

Firebird Singers Christmas Concert "Sofa to the Big Screen"

Date: 29th November / Time: 1.30pm - 6.30pm / Venue: Manor Hotel Meriden
Tickets £10. Contact Anna 07792 525999, Val 01676 522963 This year's charity Breast Cancer Now.

White Collar Boxing Event

Date: 28th November / Time: 7pm - 11pm / Venue: XCEL Leisure Centre, Coventry
Join us for a fantastic evening of White Collar Boxing and support The Lily Mae Foundation's dedicated boxers, who have trained hard for 8 weeks to step into the ring and raise vital funds for The Foundation. Come along and help us continue being there for bereaved parents and families following the loss of a precious baby, at any gestation. Visit www.lilymaefoundation.org/events to purchase your tickets.

Charity Darts Competition

Date: 12th December / Time: 6pm - Midnight / Venue: St Peter's Church and Hall, Holly Ln, Balsall Common CV7 7EA
Join us for a fun-filled evening of darts, friendly competition, and fundraising! Whether you're a seasoned pro or just fancy a great night out, this charity tournament guarantees multiple games and a thrilling knockout stage. Visit www.lilymaefoundation.org/events to sign up!

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***

Horoscopes October



ARIES
(MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)
October brings a powerful energy surge as the new moon arrives in your opposite sign on the 10th Vitality will be at its peak, but try to remember to take time out for rest and relaxation. Relationships and partnerships are also in the limelight as the Sun shines brightly in Libra, take care with any disagreements and try to use your intuition before you act.

TAURUS
(APRIL 21 - MAY 21)
October turns the focus to your health and wellbeing; a nutrition and fitness review may well start now as the Libra Sun demands a better balance in your daily life. Venus, your ruler, is intensely emotional in Scorpio in your relationship sector, suggesting that you must dig deep and connect with your most intimate desires and the shadow side of life.

GEMINI
(MAY 22 - JUNE 21)
Important breakthroughs come to the surface during October as your curiosity and creative spark reaches a highpoint. A dynamic Leo Mars, very active in your communication sector, gives you the energy and vitality to push ahead with any business and work matters. Mercury in Scorpio offers the chance for some deep and meaningful conversations.

CANCER
(JUNE 22 - JULY 22)
Domestic issues are one of your top priorities during this month as you strive to create peace and harmony within your home and with your family. The Libra Sun is in an ideal position for any ongoing problems to be ironed out. The powerful Taurus full moon on the 26th is highlighting group activities and new friendships, it's time to enjoy whatever comes your way.

LEO
(JULY 23 - AUGUST 23)
Your interactions are bold and daring during October as action planet Mars continues on its journey through your sign. Creativity is also high on your agenda, bringing you joy and inner happiness doing the things that you love. The Sun, in the sign of the scales mainly strengthens your communicating ability, enhancing your talent to see both sides of any discussion.

VIRGO
(AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 22)
Mercury, your ruler, is powerful and intense in the commanding sign of Scorpio. This is an excellent placement for standing your ground and solving any misunderstandings or disagreements that may have recently cropped up. Financial issues may also be evident, deep thinking and forward planning is essential, particularly around the time of the Taurus full moon on the 26th.

LIBRA
(SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 23)
It's your birthday month and Venus, your ruling planet, is intense and deeply emotional in the sign of Scorpio. An exciting new romance could be on the horizon as your new moon on the 10th enforces the fact that this is a very important month and some kind of new beginning is inevitable. A brilliant aspect between innovative Uranus and the Libra Sun offers a boost to your courage and self-confidence.

SCORPIO
(OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)
Venus, the planet of love, is retrograde in your sign until the 26th. This powerful cycle acts as a cosmic review for your relationships, finances and personal self-worth. Expansive Jupiter joined by dynamic Mars both indicate that new opportunities are on the horizon and any new project that you start now should turn out to be highly successful.

SAGITTARIUS
(NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 21)
During October the balanced Libran Sun illuminates the sector of your chart that governs friendships, groups, idealism and your relationship to the collective. Innovative new people will appear as humanitarian concerns become your driving force. The powerful full moon in Taurus on the 26th offers brilliant opportunities for connecting with new directions within your career.

CAPRICORN
(DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 20)
This month the radiant Libran Sun illuminates the highest point of your chart, indicating that you are able to find diplomatic solutions to challenging situations, particularly in the workplace. The new moon on the 10th offers a dramatic turning point and the Taurus full moon on the 26th favours intense interactions with others, possibly furthering your career goals.

AQUARIUS
(JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 18)
October is a powerful time for you to press on with innovative plans for the future. The radiant Sun in balanced Libra offers you new insight as your focus turns to reassessing your vision and your life goals. Relationship planets Venus and Mars, both in intense Scorpio, suggest that finding balance is a key issue and some deep soul searching may well be needed.

PISCES
(FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20)
This month highlights the need for insight, balance and stability concerning your investments, finances and resources. The Libra Sun urges you to take a step back and work out what's best for the future. Love planet Venus in Scorpio until the 26th offers you an excellent opportunity to communicate your innermost needs and wants to those around you.

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 / christine_chalklin@hotmail.com

Seasonal Recipe

Butternut Squash Soup & Cheese Toasties

INGREDIENTS:

For the grilled cheese:

4 slices St Pierre Brioche Loaf

2 tbsp butter, softened

1 small garlic clove, crushed

1 tbsp chopped parsley

2 large handfuls grated cheese

For the soup:

1 butternut squash (about 1.5kg)

1 tsp paprika

2 garlic cloves, unpeeled and smashed

Few sprigs fresh thyme

1 tbsp olive oil

Salt and pepper

2 onions, diced

1 large carrot, peeled and chopped

1 stalk celery, sliced

1000ml vegetable stock/bouillon (made with stock/bouillon powder or cube)

4 tbsp light cream

Few extra thyme leaves for garnish

Crushed chili flakes



METHOD

First make the soup. Preheat the oven to 190°C / 170°C fan / Gas Mark 5

Peel, then halve the butternut squash and scoop out the seeds

Wash the seeds, dry on kitchen paper then tip onto a baking tray. Drizzle very sparingly with olive oil and sprinkle with paprika

Chop the butternut squash flesh into roughly 1 inch chunks and tip onto another baking tray together with onion, carrot and celery

Add the smashed garlic and a few whole sprigs of thyme, drizzle with 1 tbsp olive oil and season with a pinch of salt and black pepper

Roast in the oven for 25 minutes at the same time as the squash seeds

When the seeds are toasted and crispy, remove them and set aside

Prepare the grilled cheese toasties. Mix together the softened butter, crushed garlic and parsley then spread over one side of each slice of brioche loaf. Turn two slices over and divide the cheese between them

Top each with another slice of bread, garlic buttered side on the outside (so you have two toasties with garlic butter spread on the outsides). Set the toasties aside

Discard the thyme sprigs and skins from the garlic (but leave the roasted garlic flesh) then tip all the vegetables into a large saucepan

Pour over the stock and bring to a simmer for 10 minutes. Turn off the heat and stir in the cream

Use a stick blender to whizz the soup until smooth.

Heat a large skillet over medium heat and add the toasties

Cook for a couple of minutes then carefully turn over and cook the other sides until golden and the cheese has melted

Serve the soup with a swirl of cream, sprinkling of toasted squash seeds, chili flakes and a few thyme leaves

Cut the grilled cheese toasties in half and serve alongside the soup for dipping in

Bon appétit!

Restaurants & Takeaways

Please send any updates to **stpdirectories@hotmail.com**

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235-239 Station Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7EG
01676 533 210

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307 Station Road, Berkswell CV7 7EG
01676 533 890

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

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01676 533 118

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01676 522 155

Marco Pierre White *European*
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01676 522 735

Strawberry Bank Hotel & Restaurant *British*
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01676 522 117

The Bulls Head *Gastropub*
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01676 523 798

Toby Carvery *British*
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The White Lion Inn *Gastropub*
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01675 442 833

Soho Tavern *Gastropub*
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Hampton Manor, Shadowbrook Lane B92 0EN
01675 446 080

Grace & Savour *British, European*
Hampton Manor, Shadowbrook Lane B92 0EN
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Taste of The Estate *British, European*
Hampton Manor, Shadowbrook Lane B92 0EN
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Stay healthy during the darker months



As October arrives and the clocks prepare to go back, many people begin to notice the effects of shorter days and longer nights. While autumn and winter have plenty to offer, the change in season can affect everything from our energy levels to our mood. Fortunately, a few simple habits can help keep both body and mind in good shape throughout the darker months.

For many of us, the changing of the clocks marks the point where summer finally feels behind us. The evenings become darker earlier, mornings can feel colder and it is often tempting to spend more time indoors. While that is perfectly natural, maintaining a healthy lifestyle during autumn and winter is just as important as it is during the warmer months.

Sunlight

One of the biggest challenges at this time of year is reduced exposure to sunlight. Sunlight helps our bodies produce vitamin D, which plays an important role in maintaining healthy bones, muscles and immune function. As daylight hours decrease, many people find it harder to get enough naturally.

Spending time outdoors whenever possible can help, and some people may choose to discuss supplements with a healthcare professional if appropriate.

Exercise

Exercise is another key factor. When the weather turns colder, motivation can quickly disappear, particularly when activity remains one of the best ways to support both physical and mental wellbeing. This doesn't have to mean intense gym sessions. A brisk daily walk, swimming, cycling or even gardening can all help keep the body active and the mind refreshed.

Sleep

Sleep can also become more important during the darker months. While some people find themselves naturally wanting to sleep longer, disrupted routines and reduced daylight can affect sleep quality. Sticking to regular bedtimes, limiting screen use before bed and creating a comfortable sleeping environment can all contribute to better rest.

Social

Social activity should not be overlooked either. As evenings become darker, it can be easy to decline invitations and spend more time at home. Yet maintaining contact with friends, family and community groups can have significant benefits for mental wellbeing. Whether it's joining a club, attending local events or simply meeting someone for a coffee, social interaction can help combat feelings of isolation during the winter period.

Nutrition

Finally, nutrition plays a vital role in staying healthy. A balanced diet rich in fruit, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins helps provide the nutrients the body needs to function effectively. Seasonal favourites such as root vegetables, apples and leafy greens can all be excellent additions to autumn menus.

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