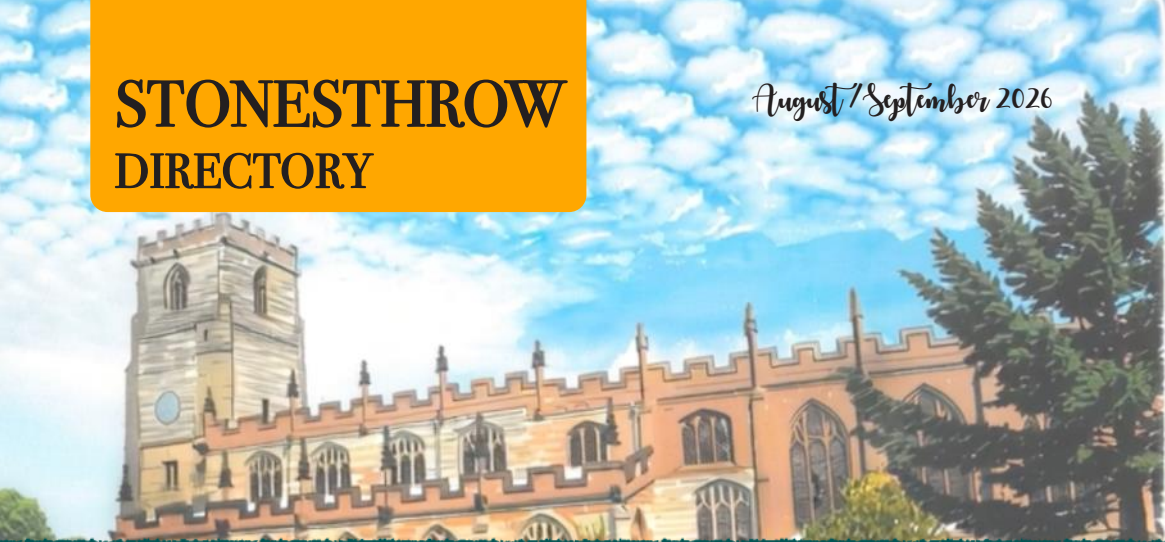


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A Note From the Editor

Welcome to our August/September edition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yours, Stonestrow Publications.

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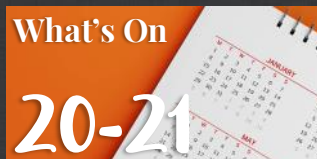
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Horoscopes



What's On

20-21



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SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR WHEN CONSIDERING CARE

As people become less able to look after their physical needs and mental well-being they could need some support.

Here in the UK, according to the Department of Health and Social Care, last year there were more than 350,000 people living in care homes in England, additionally, there were nearly one million people who received some level of domiciliary care.

Different Kinds of Care

Social care can vary greatly and includes different levels of support, from assistance with everyday chores to specialised nursing support. It can include caring for someone in their own home, which is known as domiciliary care, to day centres where someone can visit and get hot food and socialise, to care provided by residential and nursing homes.

Signs to Consider When Considering Care

Everyone is different and everyone has different care needs. Some people might need someone to visit each day and clean their home, or do cooking and shopping, others might have a medical condition that requires 24/7 specialised nursing care, and care needs change over time. Spotting the signs of changes or that a loved one needs help can be difficult and it can include watching for physical deterioration, personal changes, changes to someone's mental wellbeing or just struggling with things that they have always done.

Physical Signs

These can perhaps be easier to spot especially if someone is struggling with their mobility or has had falls. Losing weight, increased frailty or if some is having difficulty with their daily routines might be harder to spot but this might suggest a loved one is not managing well on their own.

Personal Care Challenges

Something that might be more obvious is if someone is struggling with their personal care, like bathing, dressing, grooming or neglecting their personal hygiene when this has never been an issue before. This might suggest some underlying health issues like dementia, and the need for professional care.

Cognitive Changes

Memory issues can affect many people as they get older and can include forgetfulness or confusion. Forgetfulness can indicate cognitive decline, or worsening of a condition like dementia, which may require specialised care. If someone is struggling to manage their home or their finances when before this was not a problem this could indicate a loved one needs have changed and that there is an increased care.

Social Isolation

Because of health or mobility issues many people find it difficult to get out of the house and this can lead to depression and loneliness and the effects they can have on a loved one's emotional wellbeing could indicate that they need extra care. Spending long periods on their own and losing interest in social activities that were once important to them can severely impact mental health and lead to further issues.

Although they can be subtle and hard to spot, recognising the signs early can help ensure that you can help your loved one receive the support they need to maintain their best quality of life.

By Rob Bullock

Eastcote Park Retirement Village & Care Home Knowle Road, Eastcote, Solihull B92 0JA
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Ask your local Councillor:

Dave Pinwell (Solihull MBC)

What is the council's position on new housing developments in Knowle and Dorridge?

Every planning application must be given due consideration in accordance with a strict process against the National Planning Policy Framework, the Solihull Local Plan and the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Plan. Our officers undertake detailed consideration of each one before making a recommendation on whether to recommend approval or not. The clearest statement of the Council's position is set out in the extant Local Plan:

(www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/StrategiesPlansPolicies_Solihull_Local_Plan_2013.pdf)

How will new developments affect local schools, GP surgeries, and roads?

There are approx. 820 new dwellings which have been given planning approval in the area at present, all in areas set out as appropriate for development in the Local Plan when it was published in 2013. There are firm plans to expand school, surgery and road capacity to cope with these, with funding to be provided in part by the developers through Section 106 Agreements and in part by the Department of Education and NHS. However, there are limits to growth and, as one of our local councillors, my position is to strongly resist further developments which would outstrip our infrastructure. These issues are complex and subject to a lot of detail and some uncertainties. Anyone who is interested in a fuller grasp of these matters could digest the series of bulletins I am developing on my website (www.davepinwell.com).

How are residents' objections considered during planning applications?

These are considered by the planning officers during their assessment process and by planning committee members at their decision making sessions. Residents should be aware that, within the planning framework, only valid planning matters can be considered. Common objections that must be dismissed, I regret to say, are 'it will spoil my view' and 'construction will be noisy',

whereas 'the road is too narrow to cope' and 'it will undermine the conservation area'

would be valid objections. Residents should also let the Neighbourhood Forum, Knowle Society/DDRA and/or we local councillors know their views so that we can determine which objections are valid, aggregate them and make our representations on their behalf.

How can Knowle High Street attract more independent businesses?

Knowle does attract independent businesses and lack of a premises of the right scale, location and cost is more of a barrier than a lack of independents looking to move into Knowle. The work that Visit Knowle (of which I am a founder Director) has done since 2019 has had a significant impact on the appeal of Knowle to incoming openings.

What is being done about empty shop units?

The number of empty units in our area has about halved in the past two years and a number of those currently empty are under offer or have active interest. All retail centres have turnover, that inevitably leaves units vacant for a spell. In my view, we no longer have an empty unit issue.

How can residents get involved in the council's decision-making / be heard?

There are many ways to be heard: emails, letters, petitions, deputations, membership of the Forum/Knowle Society/DDRA and other organisations that that give collective voice to our citizens or even, for anyone who would like to get really involved, looking at the possibility of becoming a councillor. Your current councillors can advise in many cases. But I would say to anyone who wants their view to be heard, it will be no different to complaining anywhere, angry rants exact little sympathy, informed and credible arguments will.





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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The Black Boy *Gastropub*
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01564 772655

Freda's Deli *Café*
1636A High St, Knowle B93 0NA
01564 779240

Dorridge Fish Bar *Fish & Chips*
15 Station Approach, Dorridge B93 8JA
01564 775954

The Forest Hotel *British*
25 Station Approach, Dorridge B93 8JA
01564 772120

Minh's Cantonese Restaurant *Cantonese*
8 Station Rd, Dorridge B93 8HH
01564 779929

Costa Coffee *Café*
1 Forest Rd, Dorridge B93 8HA,
01564 774 218

Skogen *Bar, Café*
2 Station Approach, Dorridge B93 8JF
01564 772283

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Grange Rd, Dorridge B93 8QA
01564 773531

Drum & Monkey *Gastropub*
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01564 772242

Aroma Restaurant *Indian*
100C Widney Rd, Bentley Heath B93 9BN
01564 777613

Giggling Squid *Thai*
The Bank House, 1634 High St, Knowle B93 0JU
01564 330220

Brondi *Café*
Units 4 - 5, Arden Buildings, Station Road,
Dorridge B93 8HH

BistroViola *Café*
1590 High Street, Knowle B93 0LF
01564 779468

Swan Yard *Café*
Unit 2 High St, Knowle B93 0NA
07944 126277

Ellora *Indian*
1661 High St, Knowle B93 0LL
01564 776400

Elderberry Blacks *Café*
1678-1680 High Street, Knowle B93 0LY
01564 776344

Bella Venezia Ristorante & Pizzeria *Italian*
1628 High St, Knowle B93 0JU
01564 779806

Daawat *Indian*
St Johns Cl, Knowle B93 0JU
01564 779802

Costa Coffee *Café*
1648 High Street, Knowle B93 0NA
01564 771245

Knowle Indian Brasserie *Indian*
1690 High St, Knowle B93 0LY
01564 776453

Eros *Italian/Greek*
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Bickenhill Community Fire Station	0121 380 7527
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Email bhcountrymarket@gmail.com to receive our weekly order email.

Knowle Male Voice Choir

Date: every Wednesday during school terms / Time: 7.30pm / Venue: Dorridge Methodist Church, Mill Lane, Dorridge

Ask anyone who sings with a choir or sings anywhere, and they will all agree, Singing is Good for You. Practices are followed by a refreshing trip to the local pub immediately afterwards. If you are interested in joining our choir please contact us at kmvc14@gmail.com or for more information visit www.knowlemalevoicechoir.org.uk

Donate your old glasses

Working with our sister Lions club in Chichester, your old pairs of used glasses are collected, sorted and distributed each month to eye clinics as far as Papua New Guinea, Ghana, Nigeria and Nepal. Don't worry if your spectacles are broken as they will be recycled for their scrap metal and the funds used to support eye-related projects both in the UK and overseas. Knowle and Dorridge Lions Club are being supported by these opticians in B93: Alan Tyler Opticians - Dorridge, Bannister Eyecare - Knowle, Vision Express - Knowle. Just drop your used glasses into them and we'll do the rest! Thank you!

Knowle Renew Café

Date: every Wednesday / Time: 2pm - 4pm / Venue: Guild House, Knowle

All welcome, no booking required. A shared wellbeing space where you can enjoy a calm cuppa; spend time with a coffee (activities available or bring your own); have a chat with others; join an optional prayer & meditation session. For more information please visit: www.kpc.org.uk

Knowle & Dorridge Round Table

Date: every other Tuesday
Knowle and Dorridge Round Table 812 was founded in 1963. We are an organisation run by and for Tablers as a hobby. We bring smiles to the local and wider community by helping and raising as much money as we can whilst having as much. We indulge in various activities like sports, tours and lots of 'ings' such as gliding, hiking, biking, riding, shooting, kayaking, fishing, rallying, karting, off-roading, making, climbing, bowling, cooking or just enjoying the odd pint (or two). Please email to get in touch: kanddrt@gmail.com

Rapport Social Group

Rapport is a, non profit making, social group for unattached adults age 50+ on their own and would like to meet new friends. We have a varied monthly programme of hosted events, including coffee mornings, lunches and evening meals, cinema, theatre and National Trust visits, day trips, walks and pub nights. For more information contact Jenny Brown on 07725 094123

Free Digital Training for older Solihull residents

Various times and 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

Knowle Probus Club

Date: 3rd Tuesday of the month / Venue: The Solihull Masonic Centre, Warwick Road, Knowle
The Knowle Probus club is a luncheon Club for retired and semi-retired Professional or Businessmen living in or around Knowle. We meet for an excellent three course lunch followed by interesting and informative talks. If you would like to know more go to www.knowleprobus.org.uk or Phone Paul on 07713 94228.

Age UK Solihull Weekly Thursday Friends Lunch Club for Over 65s

Date: every Thursday / Time: 12pm - 2.30pm / Venue: Red Lion Pub, High Street, Knowle
Run by Age UK Solihull staff and their volunteers. Come along for a hot meal, tea/coffee, social activities and great company. Cost is £8 (£6 for hot lunch and refreshments, £2 for raffle, bingo/entertainment). For more information please call 0121 704 7846 (Mon-Thurs) or email befriending@ageuksolihull.org.uk.

Ladies Circle

Date: Wednesdays / Time: 11am / Venue: Dorridge Methodist Church, Mill Lane, Dorridge B93 8NY
Ladies living locally meet for a coffee & a chat. Every fourth week there will be singing, speakers or games.

Dorridge Probus Club

Date: first Tuesday of the month / Time: 12 noon / Venue: Copt Heath Golf Club, Warwick Road, Knowle

We meet for a friendly chat followed by lunch and a talk focussing on members interests and requests. Probus is a friendly, social meeting point for retired and semi retired men. For more details see our website www.probusclub.net/dorridge.

Drinking cans collection

Venue: Ale rooms, Knowle

Please support Ryan's work by dropping off your

empty aluminium cans in the blue bin situated right outside the Ale Rooms, Knowle High Street. Ryan from "We Can" collects aluminium drinking cans, crushes them and trades them for money to help buy food to address food poverty locally.

Welcome Wednesdays

Date: last Wednesday of every month / Time: 2 - 3.30pm / Venue: Eastcote Park Care Home and Retirement Village, Knowle Road, Barston B92 0JA
This is a chance meet new people, enjoy a hot drink and a slice of cake, and help raise funds for Age UK Solihull. Everyone is welcome, including carers, older people, and anyone who wants to break up the week and enjoy some company. We ask for a suggested donation of £3 per person to attend, which includes a hot drink and cake. Please let us know if you are coming by calling us: 0121 7047842 (leave a message) or email to: events@ageuksolihull.org.uk.

The Thursday Friends Lunch Club

Date: first Thursday of every month / Time: 12 - 2.30pm / Venue: The Red Lion Pub, 1672 High St, Knowle B93 0LY
Hot meal, activities and wonderful company
Total cost - £12. (includes lunch, hot drinks, as well as a raffle and bingo).

Knit & Natter

Date: 3rd Monday of the month / Time: 2- 4pm / Venue: Bentley Heath Community Centre, Widney Road B93 9BN
Bring your own project. Just turn up no charge.
Contact Dennise on 07899 914 228

Knowle and Dorridge Dementia Cafe

Date: every Tuesday / Time: 10.30am - 12.30pm / Venue: Dorridge Methodist Church, Mill Lane
The café aims to provide a supportive and friendly environment for individuals living with dementia and their carers. Attendees can enjoy a variety of activities, socialise, meet people in similar circumstances and find helpful information and resources. Sessions, including refreshments, are £3 per person and will be guided by experienced care professionals and volunteers.

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).

South Solihull u3a

Date: 2nd Monday of each month / Time: 1:45 pm for 2:00 pm start / Venue: Bentley Heath Community Centre, Widney Road B93 9BQ
We are a very friendly group of retired or semi-retired people aiming to learn new skills and make new friends along the way. In addition to the monthly meeting when we usually have an invited speaker, we also have a wide range of over 20 activity groups meeting throughout each month.

For further information please visit: www.southsolihull.u3asite.uk and contact our Membership Secretary, Richard: memberships3a@yahoo.com

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.

Run Solihull

Date: 9 August
Take part in this 5k or half marathon around the streets of Solihull, and support local charity, Age UK Solihull. See full details and sign up at www.ageuk.org.uk/solihull/run-solihull

Table Top Sale

Date: 29th August / Time: 10am - 1pm / Venue: Knowle Village Hall
The Knowle Village Hall Association invites you to its Table Top Sale, which, weather permitting, will be held on the Hall forecourt. Do come and join us. All proceeds to the Village Hall Refurbishment Fund.

Dorridge Day

Date: 6th September / Time: 11am / Venue: Dorridge Park
Knowle and Dorridge Round Table are excited to announce a vibrant Brazilian Carnival theme, and we have prepared an incredible lineup for the whole community. Children's Activity Trail; Classic Carnival Games; Massive Inflatables; Dazzling Dance Shows; The return of the Classic Car Show!

Charity Quiz

Date: 17th September / Time: 7pm / Venue: Eastcote Park Care Home, Knowle Road, Barston B92 0JA
Teams of 6 (max) £15 per team, all proceeds to the Cameron Grant Memorial Trust.

Quiz Night

Date: 25th September / Time: 7.30pm / Venue: Knowle Village Hall
Teams can be up to 6 people. Please bring your own drinks and "nibbles". Great prizes and a lot of fun !
Tickets : £8.00 each. Available from 01564 779898 or 01564 778163. Book your table now! All proceeds to the Village Hall Refurbishment Fund.

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



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

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

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

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

Twenties: Experiment and explore

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

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

Thirties: Building strength and balance

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

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

Forties: Investing in future health

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

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

Fifties: Staying mobile and engaged

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

Sixties and beyond: Movement matters more than ever

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

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



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Horoscopes: August



ARIES

(MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

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

TAURUS

(APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

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

GEMINI

(MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

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

CANCER

(JUNE 22 - JULY 22)

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

LEO

(JULY 23 - AUGUST 23)

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

VIRGO

(AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 22)

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

LIBRA

(SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 23)

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

SCORPIO

(OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

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

SAGITTARIUS

(NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 21)

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

CAPRICORN

(DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 20)

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

AQUARIUS

(JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 18)

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

PISCES

(FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20)

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

Christine Chalklin, Inspirational Astrologer and Life Coach

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

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Roasted Duck Breast with Plum Sauce

INGREDIENTS:

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

PLUM SAUCE

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

METHOD

Step 1

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

Step 2

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

Step 3

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

Step 4

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

RECIPE TIPS

Creamed Potatoes

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

Buttered Spinach

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



Meriden: The Home of Triumph Motorcycles

For more than four decades, the village of Meriden stood at the heart of British motor cycling. From wartime production to world championship victories and iconic road bikes, the Triumph factory at Meriden became synonymous with engineering excellence, speed and style. Although production ended in 1983, the factory's legacy continues to shape one of Britain's most famous motorcycle brands.

Triumph's story began in Coventry in 1902, but the company's future changed dramatically during the Second World War. Following heavy bombing of the original Coventry factory during The Blitz on the night of 14 November 1940, just two years later a new manufacturing plant was established in Meriden. Initially producing motorcycles for the British military, the factory helped supply more than 50,000 machines during the war, proving both reliable and robust under the toughest conditions.

After the war, Meriden became the centre of Triumph's civilian motorcycle production. The factory produced legendary machines such as the Speed Twin, Tiger 100 and Thunderbird, motorcycles that combined performance with everyday usability. Edward Turner's revolutionary parallel-twin engine design transformed the industry and became the blueprint for British motorcycles for decades. The 1937 Speed Twin is widely regarded as one of the most influential motorcycles ever built.

The 1950s and 60s marked Triumph's golden age. The brand enjoyed worldwide success, particularly in the United States, where Hollywood stars including Marlon Brando and Steve McQueen helped cement Triumph's image as the motorcycle of choice for rebels and racers alike. McQueen even visited the factory in August 1964 to collect custom built Triumph Trophy motorcycles for his US team to race in East Germany.

Meriden-built Bonneville's became renowned for their speed and reliability, while Triumph machines dominated production racing, setting land-speed records and achieving multiple victories at the Isle of Man TT. Malcolm Uphill's record-breaking 100 mph lap on a production Bonneville in 1969 remains one of the company's proudest achievements.

However, by the early 1970s Britain's motorcycle industry faced fierce competition from Japanese manufacturers offering cheaper, more technologically advanced machines. Financial difficulties led to the creation of Norton Villiers Triumph (NVT), which announced plans to close the Meriden factory in 1973. Refusing to accept the decision, the workforce staged a famous sit-in that lasted more than a year before forming the Meriden Workers' Co-operative.

The co-operative became one of Britain's best-known industrial experiments. Supported by government loans, the workers resumed production of the beloved Bonneville and other classic models. Although the venture demonstrated remarkable determination and preserved British motorcycle manufacturing for another decade, limited investment and increasing competition ultimately proved insurmountable. The factory finally closed in August 1983, bringing an emotional end to motorcycle production at Meriden.

Today, the original factory has disappeared, replaced by housing, though street names such as Bonneville Close and Daytona Drive commemorate the site's remarkable past. Meanwhile, Triumph itself was successfully revived with a new factory established at Hinckley in Leicestershire. Modern Triumph motorcycles continue to honour the engineering traditions established at Meriden, where generations of skilled workers built machines that became icons of British design.

Meriden was more than a factory—it was the spiritual home of Triumph. Its motorcycles captured the imagination of riders across the globe, and its story remains one of innovation, resilience and enduring British craftsmanship.

Keri Wills, Meriden Library



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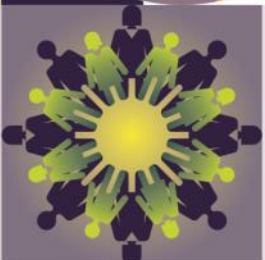
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