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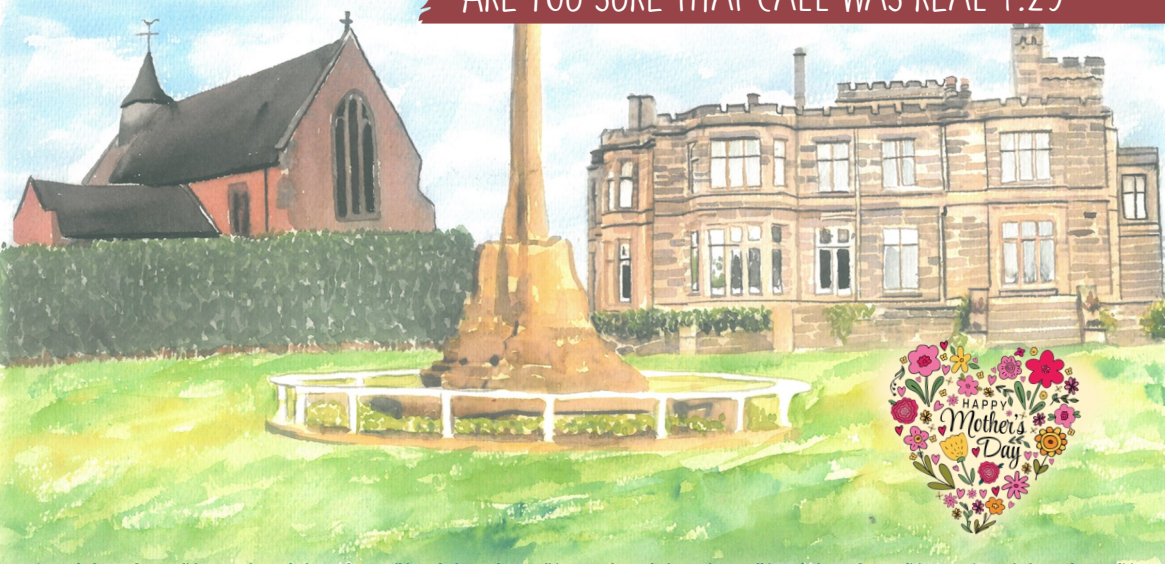
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A NOTE

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to our festive February/March Edition.

To many February 14th is a time to celebrate our loved ones on Valentine's Day but it is also the beginning of National Nest Box Week.

Nest Boxes can be homemade, recycled or bought new, but as well as making sure the birds in your garden are fed, putting up a nest box is the single biggest thing we can do for our feathered friends.

By installing a nest box, we are giving birds a safe place to raise their next generation, and this is a truly worthwhile way to look to the future and the prospect of new beginnings.

Shrove Tuesday occurs on the 4th of March this year, when we traditionally eat sweet or savoury pancakes. You don't have to be religious to enjoy this custom, it dates back to the 15th century when people would race and have competitions tossing pancakes.

Schools, libraries, and bookshops will celebrate World Book Day on the 6th of March. This year's theme is 'Book an Adventure', celebrating 80 years of bringing stories to life and encouraging young readers to explore new worlds and embark on literary journeys. Children can obtain a £1 book token and choose a free book. (worldbookday.com)

Mother's Day falls on the 30th of March this year, so be sure to celebrate your Mum and make her feel special. Many local retailers are happy to work with you and create a bespoke gift for the special mother in your life.

As always, we have prepared a few interesting reads for you to enjoy: from seasonal foods and recipes to an article about telephone and online scammers to a few reasons to plant a tree in one's lifetime.

Dates for your calendar:

14th February - Valentine's Day; 17th March - St. Patrick's Day; 30th March - Mother's Day; 30th March - Daylight Saving Time starts.

However you decide to spend next couple of months - keep your heart and your business local.

Yours, Stonesthrow Publications.

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Stonesthrow
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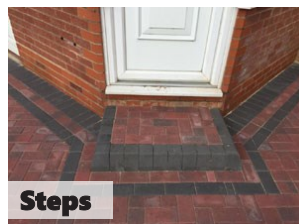
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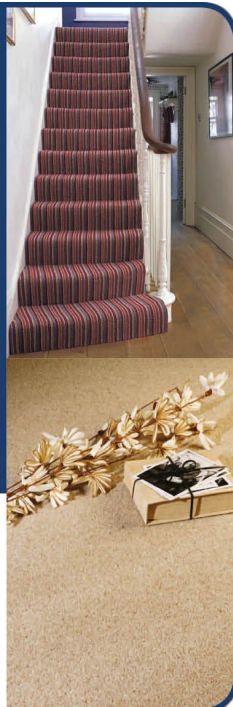
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A tree lined road has been shown to increase property values by up to 15%.

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Trees reduce runoff water by up to 80%, therefore reducing the risk of severe flooding.

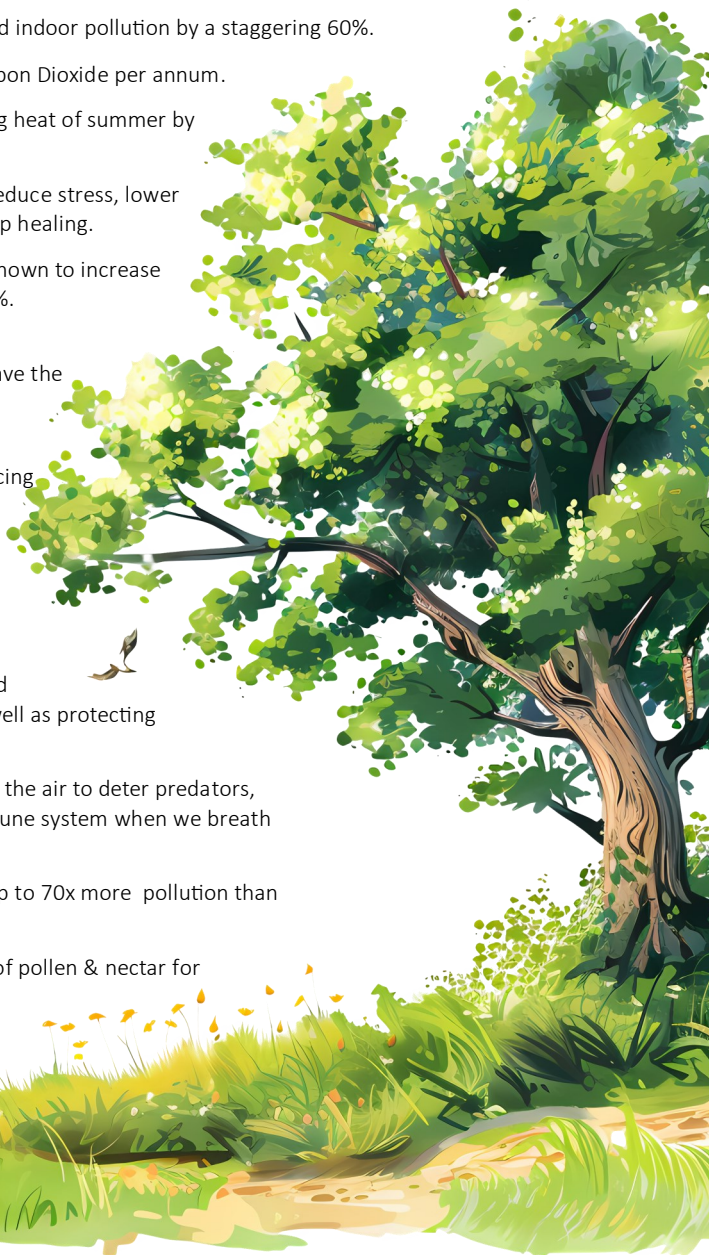
Street trees absorb up to 9x the pollutants compared to trees growing further away from the road.

Street trees have been found to reduce traffic speeds as well as protecting pedestrians from accidents.

Trees release chemicals into the air to deter predators, but they also boost our immune system when we breathe them in.

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CHOOSE SEASONAL FOODS

WINTER 2025 EDITION

Celebrate the best of seasonal produce by trying two fabulous February foods – sweet potatoes and celeriac, which make versatile, tasty and inexpensive dishes. Rob Bullock looks at just how versatile and tasty these two seasonal foods can be.

By shopping seasonally we can get produce at its most delicious, nutritious and reasonably priced. Two of my favourite February foods are sweet potatoes and celeriac. Here are some suggestions on how to enjoy them.

SWEET POTATOES

Sweet potatoes brighten up your kitchen during the cold winter months. With vibrant orange flesh and a satisfying sweet flavour, this root vegetable is the perfect ingredient for a light lunch or tasty supper.

Sweet potatoes are one of the most nutritious vegetables you can eat. They're packed with nutrients that help fight inflammation and enhance immunity. Health benefits of sweet potatoes including support healthy vision, aid good digestion, help manage diabetes, enhance brain function and boost the immune system.

BAKED SWEET POTATOES WITH CHEESE AND YOGHURT

This meal is highly nutritious, filling, easy to make and inexpensive and a novel play on an old favourite. Preheat a hot oven and use a fork to poke holes into the sweet potatoes and set them in your oven. Bake for 40 to 50 minutes, or until the skin has puffed up and you can easily pierce them with a fork. The most important thing is do not that wrap them in foil. To get that delectable, puffed-up crispy skin cook them unwrapped. Substitute plant-based cheese and yoghurt to make this meal deliciously vegan.

CELERIAC

Don't be put off by its appearance – there's perfection beneath a celeriac's imperfect skin. A variety of celery cultivated for its edible roots; celeriac has a tough, knobbly outer layer that hides creamy white flesh underneath. But be warned when you peel it, celeriac will discolour quickly, so place in water with a squeeze of lemon to keep it fresh.

February is a good time to eat this hero of the vegetable world which tastes better than it

looks with its subtle, celery-like flavour, with nutty overtones.

Celeriac is thought to have several health benefits, such as improving bone and heart health, and helping to reduce the risk of diabetes.

CELERIAC POTATO AND HAZEL NUT SOUP

For a tasty, easy to make lunch or comforting supper why not try this soup.

In a pan, gently heat some oil. Add some thyme, bay leaves and chopped onions. Season well. Cook through and add some garlic, then put in a chopped celeriac and a potato. Add some vegetable stock, bring to the boil and cook for about half an hour until the vegetables are soft. Stir in cream, remove from the heat and blitz until completely smooth. Just before serving add some chopped hazelnuts. Serve piping hot with crusty bread.

Sweet potatoes and celeriac are in season in February, they are good to eat and at their most nutritious and there are so many delicious possibilities for you to enjoy!





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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.

For those with dementia and their carers our free afternoon sessions provide an opportunity to meet together for a chat a laugh over refreshments and enjoy a varied programme of activities and entertainment. For more information contact Christine 07974 140353

Balsall Common Memories Café, Coffee and Chat

Date: 1st Thursday of the month / Time: 11.00am – 12.30pm / Venue: Balsall Common Library, Kenilworth Road CV7 7EL
For those with dementia and their carers. Drop in for a chat and a laugh, we'd love to see you, come along and join us for coffee/tea/ biscuits. For more information contact Christine 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

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

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 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, £2 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: 1000-1200, at 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: Every second Thursday / Time: 2-4pm / Venue: St Peter's Church

Would you like the opportunity to enjoy cheerful chat in a warm, safe and relaxed environment? If so, why not come and join us. Tea/coffee and biscuits are provided free of charge. Why not use this opportunity to make new friends or to chat with old ones? All are welcome.

Balsall Common u3a All-Members Meetings

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

We are vibrant group and are open and welcome to everyone semi-retired or retired – sometimes described as a youth club for mature people! We have over 390 members and 40 interest groups ranging from table tennis to social and political history and everything in between! With light refreshments and a Guest Speaker - visitors welcome! We are a friendly group so why not take a look at our website by searching balsallcommonu3a.org and call Matthew on 07419 770164 or email

Chairman@balsallcommonu3a.org or membership@balsallcommonu3a.org

Trivia Night

Date: every Thursday / Time: 8pm / Venue: Ye Olde Saracens Head

Hosted by Liam Sawyer, all proceeds go to Balsall Common primary school. £3 entry.

Heart of England Wl

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 always welcome. Over the next few months our programme includes:

13th February - Move Better with Jo Boland. A talk and demonstration of Pilates practice. 13th March - "My Journey with Chocolate" by Sally Daniels. 10th April - "Gardening in April" by Duncan Coombs.

Half Term Crafts

Date: 18th February / Time: 10.15am - 12.15pm /
Venue: Balsall Common Library
Drop in any time this morning for crafting fun for under 11s.

Stories and Painting

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

Charity Quiz Night

Date: 9th February / Time: 7.30 - 9.30pm / Venue: The White Horse, 487 Kenilworth Road, CV7 7DT
A regular charity fundraiser with all funds going to local good causes. A very popular topical quiz, with some extra entertainment and great prizes! Contact Lion Mark Whitfield (lionmarkwhitfield@gmail.com) or 07795 184745

Balsall Common Lions Annual Presentation Night

Date: 24th February / Time: 7.30 - 9.30pm /
Venue: The White Horse, 487 Kenilworth Road, CV7 7DT

Last year, Balsall Common Lions celebrated their 50-year milestone of providing Service to the Balsall Common community, and what a fantastic year it was, thanks to the support of our local community! We will be inviting all of our Partners, Sponsors, supporters etc, and will be presenting cheques and certificates to many of them. At this event, you will also get a chance to meet and greet many of your local Balsall Common Lions and your peers from the community. In addition, you will see many examples of our work and activities in the Balsall Common, and neighbouring community – a year in the life of Balsall Common Lions compressed into just a few hours! www.balsallcommonlions.org

Balsall Common Lions Charity Race Night

Date: 28th March / Time: 7pm / Venue: Heart of England School. Gipsy Lane, Balsall Common
As part of Balsall Common Lions commitment to the youth of our local community, Balsall Common Lions will be hosting a charity Race Night. We are looking for local youth groups to bring along a team(s), typically of 8 – 10 (kids can be included). Very simple – we do all the work; local youth organisations have the fun and receive the benefit. If you are a part of a local youth set-up, whether it be sports, scouts, dancing, school PTA, we would love to hear from you. For more information, message us on: contact@balsallcommonlions.org

Charity fundraising golf day and evening dinner dance

Date: 11th April / Venue: Belfry Resort
The Lily Mae Foundation, a local Charity, supporting parents & families after the death of a baby, is holding its annual Golf Day and Evening Dinner Dance. GOLFERS: the cost for a team of 4 is £600, which includes a day on the Brabazon Course and entry to our evening dinner dance. NOT A GOLFER: join us for the dinner dance for £60 per person, to include a three course dinner, Take That Tribute band and disco. For further information and to book your places, please visit: www.lilymaefoundation.org/events and scroll down to Golf Day.

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: FEBRUARY

ARIES

(MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Pioneering Mars, retrograde in the sensitive sign of Cancer, remains strong in your domestic area all through February, suggesting that some excellent opportunities for innovative new home projects and ventures will begin to emerge very soon. Love planet Venus arrives in your sign on the 4th, your social life should be on a roll now; there is much to be gained from courageously marching forward into new friendships and relationships.

TAURUS

(APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

Strong Aquarian energy is at the highpoint of your chart, indicating that now is the time for keeping an open mind on all your potential goals, including some that you may have previously dismissed. Pluto in Aquarius offers the chance for total transformation - will you take it? Venus, your ruling planet arrives in fiery Aries on the 4th, romantic matters are now also on a high - this could be a good time for taking time out with a partner to explore the world.

GEMINI

(MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Pluto, Mercury and the Sun together in Aquarius during February, suggest that the pull to broaden your horizons and take up new lines of study becomes stronger than ever. Action planet Mars remains in Cancer all month, this placement highlights your finances and earning potential, assisting your ability to work with your intuition when making important decisions. Things get easier after the 24th as Mars starts to move forward.

CANCER

(JUNE 22 - JULY 22)

Higher education and distant travel are on your mind this month. With so many planets in Pisces your long held dreams and aspirations take centre stage. The independent minded Aquarian Sun emphasises your need to break free and explore entirely new dimensions in your life. Take time out to make new plans concerning your career prospects, the time could soon be right to take the plunge and begin a brand new project.

LEO

(JULY 23 - AUGUST 23)

The radiant Aquarian Sun, Mercury and transformational Pluto are strong in your opposite sign during February. This powerful combination is emphasising the fact that you might need to address any difficulties in your relationships. The full moon in your sign on the 12th throws some light on an issue that's been troubling you for a while, good communication will help tremendously as a creative solution comes into view.

VIRGO

(AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 22)

Mighty planet Jupiter, very powerful at the highest point of your chart, offers the potential for some big changes to your goals and to your career. After the 4th be on the lookout for some important new information related to better your financial plans. The current planetary trends also suggest that this is a good time for restructuring a nutritional review, particularly around the new moon in your opposite sign on the 28th.

LIBRA

(SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 23)

Some new and exciting creative opportunities are suggested during February as the Sun, Mercury and Pluto all occupy this important area of your chart. Innovative new ideas can flourish and as Venus, your ruler, arrives in courageous Aries on the 4th you should find yourself at the top of your game. The auspicious Leo full moon on the 12th illuminates your many talents and offers the chance of a brilliant new networking opportunity.

SCORPIO

(OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

Saturn, Venus and Neptune in Pisces are gathered in the sector of your chart concerned with your creativity, self-expression and joy. This is the perfect month to explore your talents, maybe even a hobby that you haven't visited for a while. The Aquarian Sun and Mercury are both active in your domestic sector, indicating that radical change could now be on the horizon, particularly around the Pisces new moon on the 28th.

SAGITTARIUS

(NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 21)

February's powerful Leo full moon on the 12th accentuates your craving for long distance travel and all forms of further study. It's time to pull out all the stops and get busy with major initiatives; your strong intuition now may prove to be spot on in the months ahead. Mighty Jupiter, your ruling planet, leaves the retrograde phase after the 4th offering you the chance to view your decisions in a very different light.

CAPRICORN

(DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 20)

Transformational Pluto, the Aquarian Sun and communication planet Mercury are strong in your financial area, indicating that it's a good time for initiating any sort of innovative change and for reviewing your earning potential. The powerful Venus Neptune conjunction in mystical Pisces is suggesting there may be some loose ends to tie up before you embark on an entirely new life journey; use your intuition and you can't go wrong.

AQUARIUS

(JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 18)

Expansive planet Jupiter is strong and courageous in the area of your chart concerned with self-expression, joy and creativity, particularly as the energy gets stronger after the 4th. This could turn out to be an exciting month as your new ideas seem to just fall into place. The Pisces new moon on the 28th highlights finances and asks you to use your analytical abilities and problem-solving skills to make important changes.

PISCES

(FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20)

The month starts with the coming together of Saturn, the moon, Venus and Neptune all in your sign - what could be better for a brand new start? This is the start of a new cycle, it's time to plant seeds of intention and dream about the possibility and potential of 2025. Venus in your sign ensures that you are attractive to others and also enhances your intuitive ability. Tuning in and trusting your inner guidance will make the way ahead look so much clearer.

Christine Chalklin, Inspirational Astrologer and Life Coach.

Take a refreshing new look at the year ahead by booking an astrological reading now- Consultations are available on Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp or telephone. Mobile: 07813 483549 | www.resjoleyourlife.co.uk | christine_chalklin@hotmail.com



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01676 533 883

Masala Club *Indian*

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

The Brickmakers Arms *Gastropub*

307 Station Road, Berkswell CV7 7EG
01676 533 890

The White Horse *British, European*

Kenilworth Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7DT
01676 533 207

The George in the Tree *Gastropub*

Kenilworth Rd CV7 7EX
01676 533 118

Cafe Tamarinds *Pan-Asian*

376 Kenilworth Rd CV7 7ER
01676 533 308

Balsall Common Fish Bar *Fish & Chips*

207 Station Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7FE
01676 533 576

La Delicia *British, European*

231 Station Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7EG
01676 532 177

Oriental Express *Chinese Takeaway*

176 Station Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7FD
01676 535 900

Costa Coffee *Café*

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

McKees Brasserie *British, European*

273 Kenilworth Road, Balsall Common CV7 7EL
01676 533 004

Oakes farm Shop & Café *Café*

Balsall Street, Balsall Common CV7 7AQ
01676 535 537

Ye Olde Saracens Head *Gastropub*

Balsall Street, Balsall Common CV7 7AS
01676 533 862

Domino's Pizza *Takeaway Pizza*

209 Station Road, Balsall Common, CV7 7FE
01676 530 099

The Railway *Gastropub*

547 Station Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7EF
01676 533 284

The Oak Room at Nailcote Hall Hotel *British, European*

Nailcote Lane, Berkswell
02476 466 174

Bear Inn *Gastropub*

Spencers Lane, Berkswell CV7 7BB
01676 925 562

Bewitched Coffee *Café*

345 Kenilworth Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7DL

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

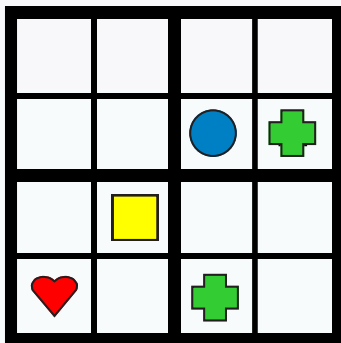
Peel's Restaurant, *British, European*

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

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KIDS PAGE

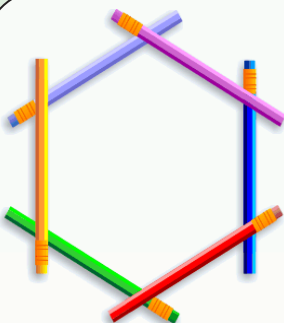


SHAPE SUDOKU

Can you fill in the grid so that each row, column and 2x2 box, contains the shapes



WITH NO REPETITION



PENCIL PUZZLE

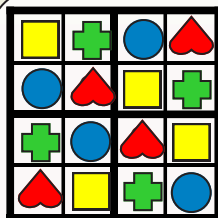
In the picture the six pencils are placed on a table so that every one of them touches two others. This arrangement is easy, try it. Now can you place the same six pencils on the table so that each pencil touches every other pencil?

RIDDLE- DIDDLE

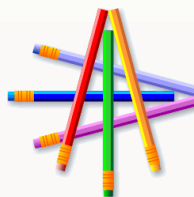
Look at my face and you see somebody.
Look at my back and you see nobody. What am I?

RIDDLE ANSWERS
A mirror
A clock

I have a face but cannot see. What am I?



SHAPE SUDOKU SOLUTION



PENCIL PUZZLE SOLUTION

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ARE YOU SURE THAT CALL WAS REAL?

In 2024, one in three people fell victim to scams involving AI-driven technologies and voice cloning. Imagine attending an urgent Zoom meeting set up by your manager, asking you to make an immediate payment to a supplier to improve business relationships. Or a vendor calls you up requesting an urgent update to their account details after a supposed data breach. Or receiving a phone call from a family member needing money. Acting in good faith on what seems like a legitimate request from people you know and trust, you comply—only to discover later that it wasn't really them.

This is the unsettling reality of deepfakes, a threat growing rapidly and even catching large companies with advanced cybersecurity measures and trained personnel off guard.

In a world where criminals are now using advanced sophisticated AI tools to mimic voices, faces, and expressions with startling accuracy, it has become easier to fool colleagues, friends, and family members into believing requests for money or sensitive information are real. These scams are getting more sophisticated by day, posing serious risks for both individuals and businesses. Criminals know that people tend to follow instructions from authority figures, and they exploit employees' trust and loyalty to gain access to sensitive information, resources, or funds.

SO HOW TO SPOT A DEEFAKE

Detecting deepfakes can be challenging, but there are some common warning signs to watch out for:

- Unnatural Facial Expressions or Eye Movements.

Deepfake technology at this stage struggles with realistic eye movements and subtle facial expressions.

- Mismatch in Voice and Lip Movements: If the audio doesn't match the person's lip movements precisely, or if there's a slight delay, it could indicate a deepfake.



- High-Pressure or Urgent Requests: Scammers often create a sense of urgency to push people into quick decisions. If a caller on video is pressuring you to act immediately, pause and verify the request through another channel. The same rule applies to emails and messages—urgency can be a major red flag!

PROTECTING YOURSELF AND YOUR BUSINESS FROM DEEFAKES

Verify Requests Through Other Channels: If you receive an urgent request, confirm it using a separate contact method—never use the same method to verify the request. Using multi-factor authentication for payments and sensitive Data transactions also helps ensuring the legitimacy of requests.

Head Movements: If you are not sure about the person on the video call ask the person to turn their head sideways to 45 degrees. Deepfake technology struggles to maintain realism with certain angles and movements. (Be creative when asking for it, like that's an interesting book on your bookshelf prompting them to turn their head.) (If you want to see how head-turning can affect a deepfake, there are some examples in a [Metaphysics.ai](#) blog post.)

Trust Your Instincts: If something doesn't feel right, don't hesitate to take extra time to verify. Encourage your employees, colleagues, and family members to do the same. Fostering a culture of caution and verification can help protect everyone from falling prey to financial loss or Identify theft scams.

On a final note, always verify before you trust, and question before you obey. Staying cautious is your best defence against these evolving scams.

Written by Alessia Widowski, Business Continuity & Compliance Consultant

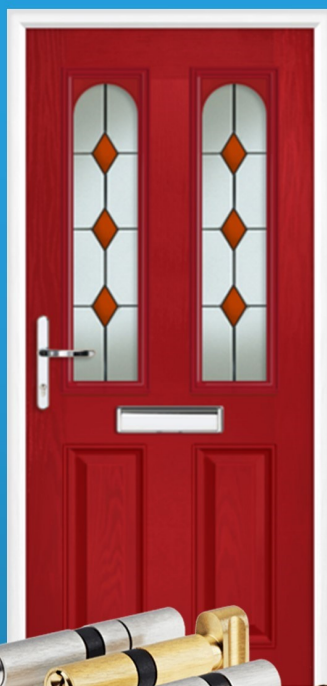
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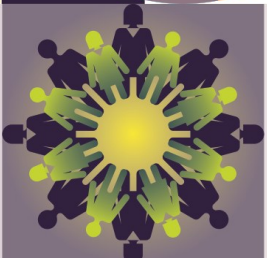
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