

# STONESTHROW DIRECTORY

MERRY  
CHRISTMAS

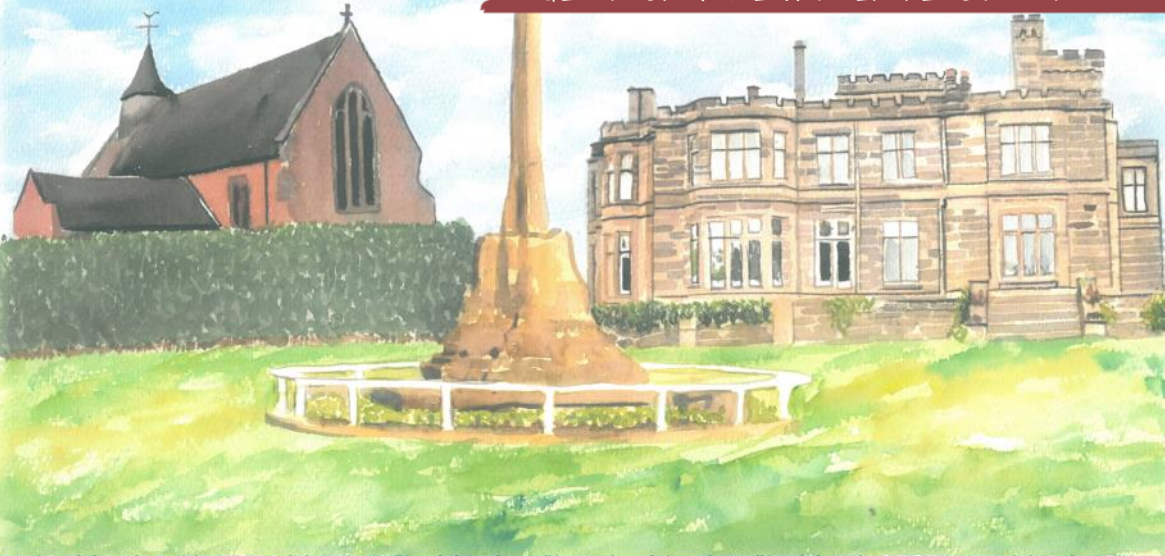
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USEFUL LOCAL TELEPHONE NUMBERS / ARTICLES / HOROSCOPES

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GET YOUR HOME WINTER-READY P.27



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DECEMBER / JANUARY 2023-2024

JAMIESON CHRISTIE  
WEALTH MANAGEMENT



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# A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to our Festive Edition! Christmas happens on the same day every year, and yet we all rush around at the last minute getting ready to celebrate. Many people try to pack the holiday with elaborate parties and extravagant gifts, but we all have hectic schedules and sometimes time and money are in short supply. The best advice is to keep it simple; enjoy the company of friends and family, share some good food and drink, and don't get too stressed if things don't go to plan.

There's always next year!

Winter solstice occurs on the 22nd of December, the shortest day with the smallest number of daylight hours in the year. This is why it's a traditional time for gathering together, feasting and merriment, and many cultures light fires to celebrate the coming of the light.

Several charities have organised fun events during December. The Alzheimer's Society has Elf Day, an opportunity to dress up on the 6th of December to raise awareness and much-needed funds for research (alzheimerevents.org.uk). The 7th of December is Christmas Jumper Day, an event organised by Save the Children. Wear a festive sweater of your choice and make a donation to the charity (Christmas Jumper Day 2023 | Save the Children UK).

If you could be charitable this festive season - perhaps pay a visit to your elderly relative or a neighbour who might be on their own. Your smile and a chat might be the only interaction they get all week. Let's share the love and the warmth!

As always, we ask you to mention Stonesthrow Directories when calling our advertisers, so we can bring even more special offers from local trades directly to you.

Here are a few of dates for your calendar:

25th December - Christmas Day (Bank Holiday); 26th December - Boxing Day (Bank Holiday); 1st January - New Year's Day (Bank Holiday).

December is a busy time of festive celebration and feasting for most of us, so I'd like to wish all our readers a very Merry Christmas!

Yours, Stonesthrow Publications.

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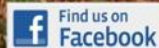
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# SHOP LOCAL

## THIS CHRISTMAS

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**MAKE A LIST AND CHECK IT TWICE:** Write down all of the people you'd like to buy a gift for this Christmas and jot down one or two gift ideas for each of them. Make sure you have plenty of time to explore local options and find the perfect gift or order it from a local supplier.

**RESEARCH LOCAL BUSINESSES** Make a list of stores and shops you'd like to support and ask friends and neighbours for recommendations. Some shops may have a website or social media posts that show the type of goods they have in store, prices, sale items or discounts. Some shops may offer a free local delivery service.

**VISIT LOCAL MARKETS** Many towns and villages hold craft fairs during the festive season. You could find artists and artisans that make jewellery or design clothes, creating unique handmade gifts from local vendors.

**EXPLORE LOCAL ART GALLERIES:** You could find a painting, sculpture or other artwork that would be a unique and beautiful gift. If you can't find the ideal present, why not ask a local artist to create a bespoke item?

**BUY GIFT CARDS:** Some shops may offer a gift card, which is a great way to support them even if you can't decide what to buy. It also allows the

recipient to choose their own gift and helps the business with cash flow.

**BREWERS, DISTILLERIES AND FARM SHOPS:**

It may be possible to purchase special tipples and edible gifts from local artisans. Butchers, bakers, and even candlestick makers will produce all manner of regional goodies. Purchasing items from your neighbourhood will help promote community commerce.

**CONSIDER A LOCAL RESTAURANT:** You could choose a locally owned restaurant for a special meal or purchase a gift card so that friends and family can enjoy a local dining experience.

**SUBSCRIPTION BOXES:** Some small businesses offer a subscription box service, delivering products on a regular basis for a small fee. This can be a great way to support local entrepreneurs.

**PROMOTE ON SOCIAL MEDIA** Take photos and videos of your shopping experiences and post it online. By adding hashtags like #shoplocal #SupportLocalBusiness you can encourage others to join in and support their own community.

Shopping locally contributes to the variety of businesses in your neighbourhood, making a positive impact and adding a vibrant variety and uniqueness to the range of shops and stores. Making Christmas a locally sourced event could make all the difference to nearby retailers, and contributing to the local economy will ensure your high street continues to trade throughout the coming year.

*By Emma Russell*



# MICHAEL

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# FAIRWAYS

## ARBORICULTURE SERVICES

TREE PRUNING  
TREE REMOVAL  
TREE INSPECTION  
STUMP GRINDING

Umberslade Business Centre  
Pound House Lane, Hockley Heath,  
Solihull B94 5DF

01564 779319

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[www.fairwayslimited.co.uk](http://www.fairwayslimited.co.uk)

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[www.physioandhealthmatters.com](http://www.physioandhealthmatters.com)

# Kids' Page



Rudolph is looking for his friends.  
Can you find them in this grid?

C	P	R	A	N	C	E	R	N
U	D	X	F	V	R	X	D	E
P	B	L	K	E	I	Z	T	C
I	S	R	C	I	D	X	B	E
D	J	N	O	L	A	F	E	T
C	A	J	M	P	S	E	N	N
D	C	D	E	J	H	Z	B	M
B	L	I	T	Z	E	N	N	X
D	O	N	N	E	R	E	C	U

Blitzen	Dancer	Prancer
Comet	Dasher	Vixen
Cupid	Donner	



Can you help the Christmas  
fairy find her way to the  
top of the tree?



## CHRISTMAS LIMERICK

The Christmas tree Fairy looked glum  
She said, "I'M really not HAVING MUCH FUN  
The top of this tree  
ISN'T comfy For Me

U	C	E	R	N	N	O	N	E
X	N	Z	T	E	L	I	T	B
M	B	M	H	J	C	D	E	D
N	N	N	S	E	M	P	J	C
E	B	E	C	I	S	R	C	I
C	T	C	Z	I	L	A	F	E
D	E	T	F	E	T	O	L	N
R	N	C	E	R	A	N	C	E

Reindeer word grid solution



# USEFUL LOCAL

## TELEPHONE NUMBERS

### MEDICAL

NHS Advice Line & Out of Hours Dental Advice  
111  
Warwick Hospital 01926 495 321  
Coventry University Hospital 02476 964 000  
Solihull Hospital 0121 424 2000  
Balsall Common Health Centre 01676 935 000

### POLICE & FIRE

West Midlands Police 0845 113 5000 or 101  
Warwickshire Fire & Rescue 01675 62 007  
Bickenhill Community Fire Station 0121 380 7527  
Solihull Fire Station 0121 380 7521

### HELPLINES & HOTLINES

Samaritans 116123  
Consumer Advice 03454 04 05 06  
Citizens Advice Bureau 01926 457 900  
RSPCA 024 7671 3717

### UTILITIES

Electricity Power Loss 0800 3281111  
Severn Trent Water 0800 783 4444  
Transco Gas Leak 0800 111 999  
BT Fault Line 0800 800151  
National Rail Enquiries: 03457 48 49 50

### TRAVEL

Chiltern Railways 08456 005165  
National Rail Enquiries 08457 484950  
West Midlands Trains 0333 311 0039  
Bus Travel Line 0871 2002233  
Coventry Airport 02476 301717  
Birmingham Airport BHX 0871 222 0072



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# WHAT'S ON LOCALLY

## **Balsall Common Country Market**

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

We are more than just a place to shop – we are a place where people meet and belong.

Come and have a cup of tea or coffee with us along with home-made cakes and goodies. Our range of foods includes cakes to die for, savoury meals you can pop in the freezer for later in the week and jams and marmalades in a class of their own.

We have splendid flower arrangements, plants for your garden that include both the unusual and old favourites. Our fruits and vegetables are home grown and wholesome.

## **Coffee Together**

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

## **Balsall Common Memories Cafe**

Date: 2nd Wednesday of every month / Time: 1.15pm – 3.00pm / Venue: Balsall Common Village Hall, Station Road CV7 7FF.  
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](http://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](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/solihull/digital-champions)

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

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

## **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.

## **Heart of England WI**

Date: 2nd Thursday of the month / Time: 7.30pm / Venue: Balsall Common Village Hall, 112 Station Road CV7 7FF  
The Heart of England Women's Institute is a thriving group, with lively members who enjoy rambles, lunches, coffee mornings and craft evenings. New members are always welcome. The programme of speakers for 2024 starts on 8th February with the History of Balsall Common by Stephen Gill. More information is on Heart of England WI Facebook page or by phoning Lyn 01676 533675 or Kathryn 01676 534824. Email: [hoewi2019@hotmail.com](mailto:hoewi2019@hotmail.com)  
Looking forward to seeing you.

## **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.

## **Santa Sleigh**

Date: 15th - 23rd December  
See Balsall Common Lions Facebook page for route, dates and updates.



### **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.

### **The Spirit of Christmas by Firebird Singers**

Date: 10th December / Time: 2.30 and 7.30pm /

Venue: The Manor Hotel Meriden CV7 7NH

'The Spirit of Christmas' is a Christmas concert with a twist. Great for adults and children. Our second concert in support of The Air Ambulance Service. Tickets only £8. For tickets contact Anna on 07792 525999, Val on 01676 522963 or Carole on 07969 980475.

### **Special Charity Quiz Night**

Date: 10th December / Time: 7.30pm / Venue:

The White Horse

Our Sunday Charity Quiz will be back, plus we throw in a little extra competition in the interval - all to raise monies for local good causes.

Book your team in with Lion Mark Whitfield (07795 184745, or

lionmarkwhitfield@gmail.com). All funds raised will go to our nominated Charity. Collectively, through our quiz nights, we have raised and donated over £1500 for local good causes.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

### **Meriden Rotary Santa Fun Run**

Date: 10th December / Time: 11am / Venue:

Packington Estate

Festive fundraisers will be hoping to run up a fantastic total for local causes when they gather for the Meriden Rotary's 12th annual Santa Fun Run next month. The traditional event returns to follow a 5km route at Packington Hall. £15 adults, £7.50 children (registration fee includes Santa suit and water bottle). Register here: [www.meriden-santa-fun-run.org.uk](http://www.meriden-santa-fun-run.org.uk)

### **Christmas Market**

Date: 16th December / Time: 10am - 4pm /

Venue: Talisman Square, Kenilworth

The annual Kenilworth Christmas Market is back this year hosted by Kenilworth Town Council in association with CJs Events! Come and shop local for your Christmas gifts this year where there will be the usual shop window competition, free parking in all Warwick District Council carparks and entertainment by the pop voices choir.

### **Coventry Christmas Market 2023**

Date: 18th November - 7th January / Time: 11am - late / Venue: Broadgate, Coventry

This year's stalls will include mulled wine, flame-grilled BBQ, German swing grill, toasted marshmallows, Tennessee fried chicken, Yorkshire pudding wraps, candied nuts, crepes, chocolate kisses and more. Lit by the beautiful Christmas

lights, immerse yourself in the magic of Christmas in the heart of our city. During your visit why not hop on the Coventry Big Wheel! The wheel will be open to both adults and children to ride throughout the day and into the evening. The wheel is well over 100ft at its highest point and is set to provide breathtaking views over the city! Find out more. There are several car parks close to Broadgate and the Coventry Christmas Market. These include the West Orchards car park on Smithford Way, the Salt Lane car park, the Barracks car park on Barracks Way and the Lower Precinct car park.

### **Carols for Families**

Date: 24th December / Time: 2.30pm / Venue: Coventry Cathedral, 1 Hill Top, Coventry, CV1 5AB

A fun, interactive retelling of the Christmas story with singalong carols. A lighter take on Christmas, everyone is welcome! Children might like to come dressed as a character from the nativity. Adults might want to wear their jazziest Christmas jumper! Free event, no need to book.

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

## **STAY UP TO DATE WITH OUR NEWS, EVENTS & OFFERS**



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# HOROSCOPES: DECEMBER / JANUARY

## ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Jupiter arrives in Pisces at the end of the month, your intuition is heightened and you should start to feel that big changes are beginning to emerge. First you need to sweep out the old in order to create space for these exciting new prospects. Mars, your ruler, arrives in pivotal position from the 13th and the powerful Sagittarian new moon on the 4th will have ensured that your optimism is at its strongest. Your ambitions and your highest goals are in the spotlight during January as you plan for what could turn out to be a transformational year. Dynamic Mars, your ruler, is strong in fiery Sagittarius, emphasising the need for you to connect with your higher mind. Excellent opportunities are now available, providing that you use your confidence and courage!

## TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

Finances and resources are about to arrive in the spotlight as the radiant Sagittarian Sun with business minded Mercury light up this area of your chart. December brings some necessary but positive re-structuring ideas to the surface and at the end of the month flamboyant Jupiter suggests that a new friendship group is about to emerge offering some innovative ideas that will broaden your horizons. January: The line-up of planets at a pivotal sector of your chart ensure that further education, travel and romance are seriously linked together this month. Your ruler, love planet Venus, is currently in down-to-earth Capricorn, moving back to direct motion on the 29th. A relationship issue that has been concerning you for months could last present the practical answer you seek.

## GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Relationships are highlighted during December as the Sagittarian Sun and outgoing Mercury emphasise this area of your chart. Communication should be good and that special someone could have a surprise in store for you. Expansive Jupiter, arriving in Pisces at your career sector, reveals that 2024 will be a positive and successful year offering some wonderful opportunities. Be practical and optimistically cautious as you push yourself forward. January: Dynamic Mars and the emotional moon are a powerful combination in Sagittarius at the start of the month. Partnership issues are concerning you and it's now time to put your point of view across and win support from an unexpected quarter. Finances arrive in the spotlight after the Cancerian full moon on the 17th, take full advantage of any opportunities that come your way.

## CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 22)

Romance looks lively during the first weeks of December as dynamic Mars in sexy Scorpio dominates your chart. Work opportunities are also looking rather positive as the Sagittarian Sun and communicative Mercury both shine a powerful light on anything to do with your career prospects. New adventures and socialising are also in the forefront, especially after Jupiter arrives in Pisces on the 29th. January: Your health and wellbeing are high on your agenda at the start of this month as Mars and the moon in Sagittarius urge you to take stock and put more energy into a good life balance. The pivotal full moon in your sign on the 17th offers a challenge, but also helps you to reach a new understanding if you trust your intuition and your instincts.

## LEO (JULY 23 - AUGUST 23)

Events in December hinge around optimistic and expansive Jupiter spending most of the month at the end of Aquarius. This highlights your relationship and partner area and some long lasting decisions may have to be made before Jupiter's move to Pisces on the 29th. Interesting opportunities present themselves around the Gemini full moon on the 19th, it's a positive time for some new friendships and group endeavours. January: As forceful Mars in Sagittarius is now active in a pivotal sector of your chart, you'll find that your focus is changing. The value of broadening your horizons and using your creative talents becomes increasingly important. The full moon in Cancer on the 17th throws some light on an issue that's been troubling you for a while.

## VIRGO (AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 22)

December highlights all things to do with your home and family, the Sagittarian Sun and communicative Mercury highlight the need for spending some quality time here. The new moon Sagittarius on the 4th stirs up your curiosity and your desire to experience something new, could a move be on the cards for 2024? Venus spends all month in Capricorn suggesting challenges in your love life, it's a good time to sort out any relationship issues. January: Relationship minded Venus remains in practical Capricorn all month, continuing the theme of all things to do with love and romance. You might need to let go of any preconceived ideas about trying to solve a recent problem, go with the flow and use your intuition. The Cancer full moon on the 17th brings some fresh insight and lucky Jupiter in Pisces also lends a helping hand to whatever is bothering you.

## LIBRA (SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 23)

Enthusiastic Mars in intuitive Scorpio is stirring up the financial angle of your chart during December, anything that needs your attention should be dealt with now before Mars changes sign on the 13th. Expansive Jupiter offers you some creative and innovative ways to boost your earning potential during the last few weeks of Aquarius. Capricorn Venus suggests that home renovations could also surface this month. January: Vibrant Mars in Combination with the fiery Sagittarian moon ensure a dynamic start to the month. Your communication skills are the main focus and anything that's not working will have to be scrutinised and changed. Jupiter and Neptune highlight your health and wellbeing as new and exciting ways of keeping fit present themselves, particularly around the Cancer full moon on the 17th.

## SCORPIO (OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

Dynamic Mars, your ruler, has two weeks left in your sign suggesting that whatever projects need finishing should command your full attention. Mighty Jupiter arrives in a pivotal position on the 29th, possibly highlighting a period of expansion, particularly in your creative endeavours; the emphasis is on how you communicate your ideas to others. The Gemini full moon on the 19th offers a new perspective for making long term plans. January: The Sun, Venus, Pluto and Mercury are all activating the communication sector of your chart offering a new sense of direction concerning some important interaction. Future plans look rosy so don't be afraid to take the initiative. The Capricorn new moon on the 2nd is significant as it highlights the possibility of linking your creative ideas with some firm foundations.

## SAGITTARIUS (NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 21)

December is your birthday month, the Sun and Mercury light up your sign and with the new moon arriving on the 4th this couldn't be a better month for you. It's important to take stock on how successful you have been over the past year, the emphasis is now on how you value yourself and making sure that you stay with a positive vibration. Dynamic Mars arrives in Sagittarius on the 13th, bringing some extra vitality your way. January: A busy month is indicated as vibrant Mars aligns with the moon in your sign. Four planets in Capricorn suggest that rearranging some financial issues will become a central theme. You may feel the need to break free from old ways of doing things, but if you keep an open mind, you can learn a great deal. The full moon in Cancer on the 17th offers you a sense of changing priorities.

## CAPRICORN (DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 20)

The Venus Pluto conjunction on the 11th heralds a time of great change and transformation. This important cosmic event ensures that some great achievements are possible. It's vital that you use your intuition when making decisions and trust that your self-confidence will pave the way forward. Jupiter's arrival in your communication sector on the 29th adds potency to this dynamic, bringing you a sense of deep satisfaction. January: Four planets in your sign appear to be marking the beginning of a new chapter in your life, just right for the start of the New Year! Jupiter is strong in Pisces, encouraging you to be flexible about the future and to be prepared to change your plans. The new moon in your sign on the 2nd offers you some extra powers of persuasion.

## AQUARIUS (JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 18)

Bountiful Jupiter is about to leave your sign after a one year stay. Arriving in Pisces on the 29th this change will ensure that your sensitivity, empathy and intuition are at their peak and your main objectives may involve helping and serving others. The planets are stirring up the more adventurous sector of your chart, new ideas involving innovative groups of friends are forming so get ready for change and a new lease of life. January: Dynamic Mars in Sagittarius gives you great enthusiasm and a buoyancy when it comes to achieving your goals. New contacts can arrive out of nowhere and your networking skills will be at their very best. Wise Saturn in your sign gives you staying power for new projects as you leave recent problems behind and win the recognition that you deserve.

## PISCES (FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20)

It's all change at the end of December as mighty planet Jupiter joins mystical Neptune and arrives in your sign. This move should give you a positive boost as optimism takes over from some rather unhelpful thoughts. Your career also gets a boost as the Sun and Mercury strengthen this area of your chart. Romance is also looking positive with a view to a long term partnerships becoming more serious. January: Expansive Jupiter is now firmly in your sign filling you with hope for a rewarding year ahead. Big ideas lead to remarkable results, so be sure to make your thinking optimistic and forward-looking. The new moon in Capricorn on the 2nd highlights friends and group activities that are connected to your personal aims and goals, teamwork is the way forward!

*Christine Chalklin, Inspirational Astrologer and Life Coach.*

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





## GET YOUR HOME WINTER-READY

*As the days get frostier and the nights chillier, it's time to gear up and get your home winter ready. The last thing you want is to be caught off guard. That's why I've whipped up this maintenance checklist to help keep your home safe and snug all winter long.*

**CHECK YOUR HEATING SYSTEM:** First things first, make sure your boiler and central heating system are up for the challenge. Give them a test run to check they're working properly. Bleed those rads and consider booking a boiler service with a Gas Safe engineer, to avoid any unexpected breakdowns.

**SEAL THOSE GAPS:** Seal gaps around windows, doors, and even electrical sockets. This small step can make a big difference to keep the warmth in and the cold out.

**CLEAN THOSE GUTTERS:** Those fallen leaves may look lovely, but they can wreak havoc on your gutters. Clean out any debris to prevent clogs that might lead to water damage. While you're up there, check for any loose or damaged gutters and get them fixed up.

**ROOF INSPECTION:** A solid roof is your first line of defence against the elements. Call in a professional to check your roof for any damaged or missing tiles. It's better to fix a small issue now than to deal with a huge leak later.

**FIREPLACE AND CHIMNEY:** If you're lucky enough to have a real fireplace, get it ready for those cosy nights in. Make sure the chimney is

clear to avoid any smoke or fire hazards and give the fireplace a good clean before lighting it up.

**OUTDOOR PLUMBING:** Frozen pipes are a big winter headache. Insulate exposed pipes and shut off the water supply to outdoor taps and hoses. Drain any excess water to prevent your pipes freezing, and if you're going away, leave the heating on a low setting to avoid bursts. Insulate, Insulate, Insulate: Insulation is your best friend in winter. Check your walls, floors and loft – heat rises, and you don't want it escaping through the roof.

**TEST SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS:** Safety first! Test all your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to make sure they're working properly. With windows and doors closed more often, you'll want to be alerted immediately if there are any issues.

**CONSIDER A SMART THERMOSTAT:** If you haven't jumped on the smart home bandwagon, now might be the time. A smart thermostat allows you to control your heating remotely, which can be handy if your plans change suddenly.

There you have it, the ultimate winter maintenance checklist! By giving your home a little extra care and attention, you'll be able to enjoy the season without any unnecessary stress. Now, get that checklist ticked off, so you can sit back, relax, grab a mulled wine and enjoy the Xmas festivities without a care in the world!

*Written by Caroline Buist: [www.abovebeyondva.co.uk](http://www.abovebeyondva.co.uk)*

# RESTAURANTS & TAKEAWAYS

## BALSALL COMMON, BERKSWELL

**Bengal Brasserie** *Indian*

349-351 Kenilworth Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7DL  
**01676 533 883**

**Masala Club** *Indian*

235-239 Station Rd, Balsall Common CV7 7EG  
**1676 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  
**1676 248384**

## 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**

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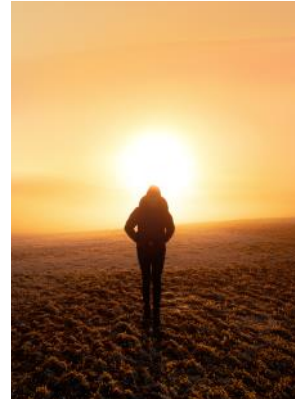
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# CONFRONTING SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

Seasonal Affective Disorder or 'winter blues' affects around two million people of any age in the UK each year. How can we confront it and cope this winter.

As the nights get longer, and the days shorter, more and more of us begin to feel a little down, some experience mild winter blues, and others the medical condition Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). No two people are the same and neither are any two cases of SAD. But there are some easy, free or inexpensive ways to combat and confront Seasonal Affective Disorder.



## KEEP ACTIVE!

Much research shows that keeping active when the comfy sofa beckons is one of the best ways of confronting SAD. A walk in the middle of the day could in fact be as helpful as light treatment for coping with the winter blues.

## GET OUTSIDE

It might sound too simple but going outdoors in natural daylight is a great way to fight Seasonal Affective Disorder. It works best on bright days but is good even in cloudy wet weather.

## KEEP WARM

Being cold makes you more depressed. It has also been shown that staying warm can reduce the winter blues by half. A good way to keep warm is to drink hot drinks and eat hot food. Wear warm clothes – a few layers are best - and warm socks and aim to keep your home at a minimum of 18C.

## EAT A HEALTHY DIET

A healthy diet is proven to boost your mood and it will give you more energy. Try and eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.



## SEE THE LIGHT!

Most of us have heard of light therapy and one way to do it at home in winter is to sit in front of a light box for up to 2 hours a day. Light boxes give out very bright light at least 10 times stronger than ordinary home and office lighting.

## TAKE UP A NEW HOBBY

A new hobby keeps your mind active, and this seems to ward off symptoms of SAD!

## SEE YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

It has been shown that socialising is good for your mental health and helps ward off the winter blues. So why not try and keep in touch with people you care about? And accept any invitations!

## TALK ABOUT IT

Whether you seek out professional help or the listening ear of a friend, talking can help you cope with symptoms.

## JOIN A SUPPORT GROUP

Why not consider joining a support group. Sharing your experience with others can make your symptoms more bearable.

## SEEK HELP!

If all else fails, and if your symptoms are so bad that you cannot live a normal life, see your GP for medical help.

Seasonal Affective Disorder can affect many of us, if one of these tips does not work for you, try one of the others.

*Rob Bullock:*  
[www.robbullockauthor.blogspot.com](http://www.robbullockauthor.blogspot.com)

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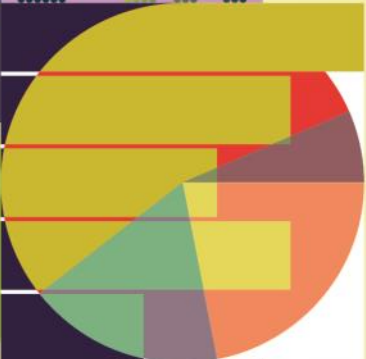
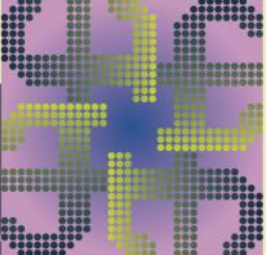
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