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Some of the articles included in this edition

Guy Fawkes Night



Pets In Winter



Christmas Food



Christmas Decorations



Festive Finance



Magic Of Christmas





Hello and welcome to this festive edition of The Local Life.

The Joshua Tree are hosting a carol concert at Chester Cathedral on Saturday 5th December. Tickets are now on sale with proceeds going towards the day to day support of families who have been affected by childhood Cancer. If you are interested in attending, more information and how to purchase tickets can be found on page 31.

As we approach the festive season there are a number of events for you to enjoy locally. Northwich Christmas Artisan Market is back again this year! Taking place on 21st November, what promises to be a great day with a wide range of Christmas products, food & drink and gifts available to purchase. The market will be open 10am - 7pm.

'Snow White' staring pantomime legend Ryan Greaves will be performed at Northwich Memorial Court. 8 shows are currently scheduled between 6th - 31st December with a mixture of daytime and evening performances. Tickets are available on the brio entertainment website.

Are you involved with an upcoming event and would like to feature in the next edition? Please feel free to send over the details and feature on the community section free off charge.

Also included in this edition is a range of Christmas related articles for you to enjoy. Recipes, gift ideas, Christmas decorations to name a few. I hope you enjoy the content included.

Enjoy this edition!

Best Wishes,
Charlie

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Remember, Remember The 5th of November



Catholicism in England was heavily repressed under Queen Elizabeth I, particularly after the pope excommunicated her in 1570.

Dozens of priests were put to death while Catholics were not allowed to celebrate their religion. When King James took to the throne in 1603 it was hoped this would change, but in 1604 he publicly condemned Catholicism, calling it a superstition, and called for priests to leave the country.

In May 1604 a handful of Catholic dissidents, Guy Fawkes, Robert Catesby, Tom Wintour, Jack Wright and Thomas Percy met at the Duck and Drake inn in London. Here, Catesby proposed a plan to blow up the Houses of Parliament with gunpowder, which they all supported with an oath. Other conspirators later joined what became known as the Gunpowder Plot.

Although Catesby was the ringleader, Fawkes has been the one who gained the most publicity, mainly after spending around ten years fighting for Spain against Protestant rebels in the Spanish-controlled Netherlands. He also asked the King of Spain to help with an English rebellion against James. By 1605 Fawkes was calling himself Guido rather than Guy. Also, by using the alias John Johnson, he served as the caretaker of a cellar below the House of Lords. This was where the plotters stockpiled gunpowder. The plan was that Fawkes would light a fuse on November 5, 1605, during the opening of a new session of Parliament.

This would result in the death of James and his eldest son, meanwhile, fellow conspirators would kidnap James' daughter Elizabeth and install her as a puppet queen who would be married off to a Catholic to restore the monarchy in their faith. However, there was an anonymous tip-off and a search party found Fawkes in the cellar late on November 4, next to 36 barrels of gunpowder and some matches. He was tortured in the Tower of London by order of King James.

Fawkes and his surviving co-conspirators were all found guilty of high treason and sentenced to death in January 1606 by hanging.

Soon after the plot was revealed, Londoners celebrated with bonfires and Parliament designated November 5 as a day of thanksgiving. This has now become a time to set off fireworks, light bonfires and burn effigies.

The demands for 'penny for the Guy' come from Fawkes' first name. Little is known about the earliest celebrations however in areas such as Carlisle, Norwich, and Nottingham, local councils provided music and artillery salutes. Canterbury celebrated 5 November 1607 with 106 pounds of gunpowder and 14 pounds of match, and three years later food and drink were provided for local dignitaries, as well as music, explosions, and a parade by the local militia. While the annual rituals are more festive and fun than religious and monarchical, it is ironic that the history and perception of Guy Fawkes himself has taken on new meaning.

Rather than being seen as a religious extremist and terrorist he has become known as something of a populist hero. His life has been romanticised in tradition and culture and celebrated globally. Yet had the plot been a success, it would have killed everyone in Parliament, with the neighbouring area being destroyed. Ultimately, Guy Fawkes would have been complicit in one of the biggest terrorist acts in British history.

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FULL-ON FESTIVE FEES

How to develop a Christmas spending plan that actually works.



Every year, millions of us make the same promise: this Christmas will be different. We'll plan ahead, stick to a budget and avoid the dreaded January credit card bill. Yet somehow, by the time the decorations come down, many households are wondering where all the money went.

The good news is that festive overspending isn't inevitable. In fact, a few smart habits, started in November, can make all the difference.

The first step is surprisingly simple: decide how much you can genuinely afford before you buy a single gift. It's tempting to shop first and tot up the damage later, but setting an overall budget helps every purchasing decision that follows. Don't just think about presents, either. Christmas spending also includes food, drink, travel, decorations, wrapping paper, parties and those unexpected last-minute purchases that always seem to appear.

Once you've settled on a figure, divide it into categories. Knowing you have £350 for gifts and £250 for festive food is far easier to manage than trying to keep one large total in your head.

November also happens to be one of the best months to shop - but with a note of caution. Black Friday and Cyber Monday can offer genuine bargains, but not every deal is as generous as it first appears. Some retailers increase prices in the weeks beforehand before advertising impressive-looking discounts. Taking a few moments to compare prices online or use price-tracking tools can help you separate the real savings from clever marketing.

Another useful tactic is to make a gift list before you begin browsing. Shopping without a plan often leads to impulse purchases, duplicated ideas or buying something simply because it's on offer. Knowing exactly who you're buying for – and having a rough budget for each person – keeps spending under control and reduces the temptation to add "just one more thing" to the basket.

It's also worth remembering that thoughtful rarely means expensive. Experiences, homemade treats, framed family photographs or subscriptions tailored to someone's interests can often leave a stronger impression than another generic gift destined for the back of a cupboard.

If you're worried about overspending, consider paying as you go rather than relying on credit.
Using cash, a debit card or a dedicated Christmas savings pot makes it much easier to see where your money is going and avoids interest charges creeping into the New Year.

Finally, don't underestimate the value of finishing early. Buying gradually throughout November not only spreads the cost but also removes much of the stress that accompanies last-minute shopping. You'll have more choice, fewer queues and a far better chance of sticking to your budget.

Gifting & Buying Local Foods for Christmas



By exploring what is available locally, you can discover some hidden treasures to make the festive season even more special.

Whether you are looking for a special, unique, high-quality gift or are looking to try something new, exploring what food and drink are available locally is a wonderful way to celebrate the holiday season and also support your local community.

Popularity and Trust

Buying local is popular, with more than two-thirds of shoppers in the UK saying that they buy their shopping in their local neighbourhood each week. The main reasons, according to The Grocer magazine, are that they trust the quality of the products and the ingredients in them. Also, many people like the idea that their money stays in their local economy.

What Is Available

Craft Breweries and Cider Makers

Local craft beers are very popular, with many English regions having craft breweries that produce unique seasonal brews. Not only do these taste great, but they can be great for gifting or enjoying during holiday gatherings. Also, in the south of England there are some wonderful artisan cider makers, often using less well-known varieties of traditional apples in their drinks. Some breweries or cider makers also offer tours and tastings, which can be a fun experience for beer or cider lovers and could make a perfect gift for a loved one.

Craft and Boutique Wine and Gin Makers

The south of England is becoming known for its wine, often made in small batches to ensure the highest quality. Because of the region's chalky geology, many boutique wineries are producing some delicious and award-winning sparkling wine.

Craft gins have also become popular in recent years, with local distilleries creating unique craft gins, often infused with local botanicals for a unique taste.

Independent Local Butchers

Buying meat from a local independent butcher ensures the highest quality and traceability, along with friendly, expert customer service, and many stock free-range, grass-fed meats. Local butchers often sell artisan meats, including cured and smoked options from quality sources.

Artisan Cheese Sellers

Unlike many supermarkets, artisan cheese sellers often support local cheese makers by selecting local varieties of their artisan cheeses. These cheeses often have unique flavours and styles, contain no additives and are made in a traditional, unhurried way, making the end product highly nutritious.

Artisan Grocers and Farm Shops

December is the perfect month to visit your local artisan grocer or farm shop for a truly magical atmosphere and expert advice on what food makes the season so special, from the best locally sourced seasonal fresh fruit and vegetables to seasonal hampers that contain a perfect mix of local produce as great gifts. They offer pleasurable, stress-free shopping, often deliver locally and always offer the best produce from your area.

By choosing food and drink from trusted quality suppliers at your friendly local shop, you not only support your community but also enjoy flavours unique to your area that enhance your holiday celebrations and make fantastic and unique gifts.

By Rob Bullock

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Christmas has a habit of turning perfectly sensible shoppers into people who think nothing of spending £40 on something that will be forgotten by February.

However, creating a memorable Christmas doesn't have to mean emptying the bank account.

There is an odd contradiction at the heart of Christmas. We tell ourselves it is about spending time together, yet somehow manage to spend a considerable amount of money proving it.

The good news is that a memorable Christmas isn't necessarily an expensive one. In fact, some of the things that make the biggest difference have very little to do with price tags.

Start with where you spend your money. Rather than trying to buy something for everyone, think about the few things that really matter. Perhaps it's a particularly good bottle of wine, an excellent joint of meat, a beautiful table decoration or a gift you've chosen specifically for somebody. Spending a little more on one thing can be more satisfying than buying several mediocre alternatives simply because they're on offer.

For presents, shop with the recipient rather than the price in mind. A £15 book chosen because it perfectly suits someone's interests can feel considerably more thoughtful than a £50 generic gift. Look at independent shops, local makers and specialist retailers, too. You're often more likely to find something unusual, while supporting a local business at the same time.

Experiences can be surprisingly good value. A theatre trip, afternoon tea, museum visit, country walk followed by lunch or a day exploring somewhere new can create a memory rather than simply another possession. And if you're buying for somebody who already seems to own everything, an experience may be considerably easier to appreciate.

Don't underestimate presentation either. A beautifully wrapped present feels special before it has even been opened. Good paper, ribbon, a handwritten tag and a little imagination can turn even a modest gift into something that looks considerably more luxurious.

The same applies to the Christmas table. You don't need a completely new collection of crockery and decorations every year. Candles, foliage from the garden, fabric napkins and a few carefully chosen decorations can transform an ordinary table.

In the same way, Christmas dinner doesn't need to contain every luxury ingredient available. Choose one or two things to make a feature of and keep everything else simple. A really good cheese, for example, can be far more memorable than an enormous selection nobody finishes.

And don't forget the high street and local businesses. Christmas shopping needn't mean filling an online basket at midnight. Local shops, farm shops, delis, butchers, florists, gift shops and independent retailers can all provide something different, often with the added benefit of advice from someone who knows their products.

The most expensive Christmas isn't necessarily the most memorable one. Spend where it counts, be creative with the rest and, above all, don't allow January's bank statement to become the least enjoyable part of the festive season.



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Copenhagen

Copenhagen is the sort of city that rewards wandering. Compact enough to explore on foot, stylish without taking itself too seriously and packed with good food, fascinating history and Scandinavian design, the Danish capital makes an ideal weekend escape.

Start in the heart of the city on Strøget, the famous pedestrianised shopping street that runs through the centre. This is Copenhagen at its most polished, with Danish design names sitting alongside independent boutiques, cafés and bakeries. Look out for Royal Copenhagen, Georg Jensen, LEGO and HAY, but don't feel obliged to spend: one of the pleasures of Copenhagen is simply browsing the shops and admiring the effortlessly stylish interiors.

When hunger strikes, follow the locals. Copenhagen has developed a formidable food scene, from Michelin-starred restaurants to tiny bakeries and casual street-food stalls. Traditional Danish dishes are well worth seeking out, particularly smørrebrød, the beautifully presented open-faced sandwiches that can be topped with everything from cured fish to roast meat. For something more contemporary, head to one of the city's food halls or street-food markets.

Culture is another reason to come. The National Gallery of Denmark is home to an impressive collection of European art, while the city's museums cover everything from Danish history to modern design. The Carlsberg district offers another fascinating diversion, particularly for anyone interested in the history of the famous brewery.

Then there is Tivoli Gardens. One of the world's oldest amusement parks, it has been entertaining visitors since 1843 and is said to have provided inspiration for Walt Disney. You don't need to be a thrill-seeker to enjoy it. Gardens, restaurants, music and beautifully illuminated buildings make it as much a place to stroll as it is to ride.

Copenhagen is also a city best appreciated from the water. A canal tour provides a different perspective on the colourful buildings and historic waterfront, while a wander around Nyhavn is almost obligatory. Its brightly painted townhouses and old wooden boats have become one of the city's most recognisable sights.

For a quieter experience, head into the old city and look for the places associated with Hans Christian Andersen, Denmark's most famous storyteller. Alternatively, hire a bicycle and explore as the Danes do. Copenhagen is famously cycle-friendly, and getting away from the busiest streets can reveal a more relaxed side of the city.

By evening, settle into one of the city's cosy bars or seek out its celebrated craft-beer scene. Copenhagen has an impressive collection of microbreweries, with Mikkeller among the names that helped put Danish brewing on the international map.

The trick with a Copenhagen weekend is not to cram everything in. Leave room for a coffee, a canal-side stroll or an unexpected bakery. This is a city where the best discoveries are often made when you have nowhere particular to be.



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Refresh Your Wine Rack.

By MJ

As summer slowly fades and the first hints of autumn arrive, it's the perfect time to give your wine rack a seasonal refresh. Gone are the long, warm evenings where chilled rosé was the obvious choice. Now, as temperatures cool and cosy nights return, it's time to welcome wines with a little more depth, warmth and character.

From Rosé to Richer Reds

There's no need to put your rosé away completely. Early autumn can still bring plenty of sunny afternoons, and a crisp, refreshing rosé is perfect for relaxed lunches and lighter seasonal dishes. But as the evenings draw in, our wine choices naturally start to change. Autumn is made for generous reds, warming flavours and bottles that pair beautifully with hearty home cooking.

A soft and elegant Pinot Noir is an ideal wine for the transition between seasons. Light enough to enjoy without being overwhelming, it offers delicious red-fruit flavours and works wonderfully with roast chicken, mushrooms and seasonal vegetables. For something a little richer, Merlot is a great choice. Smooth, rounded and packed with ripe plum and berry flavours, it's a natural match for pasta, casseroles and comforting Sunday roasts.

If you prefer a bolder style, reach for a Shiraz. With its rich fruit, gentle spice and warming character, it's perfectly suited to cooler evenings and hearty dishes such as grilled meats, sausages or slow-cooked stews. And, of course, there's Cabernet Sauvignon for those occasions when you want something with structure and depth. Full-bodied and flavoursome, it's an excellent partner for beef, roast dinners and rich, savoury dishes.

Wine & Autumn Food

One of the joys of autumn is the return of comforting food and choosing the right wine can make those meals even more enjoyable. Think slow-cooked dishes, creamy sauces, roasted vegetables, pies and Sunday roasts, all paired with a bottle that complements the flavours. Autumn is also a great opportunity to step outside your usual favourites. Try a grape or region you haven't explored before or ask for a recommendation based on what you're cooking.

Refresh Your Wine Rack

So, as you pack away the summer barbecue and start planning those cosy autumn evenings, look at your wine collection. Keep a few bottles of rosé ready for those last warm days but make room for some delicious reds too.

Refresh your wine rack, discover new favourites and enjoy everything autumn has to offer - one bottle at a time.





The Ultimate Winter Pet Guide

Shorter days, colder temperatures and plenty of time indoors can make winter challenging for our four-legged companions. Here's how to keep pets warm, healthy, entertained and happy until spring arrives.

Winter changes our routines, and our pets notice it too. The mornings are darker, walks can be wetter and colder, and there may be considerably less opportunity for the outdoor adventures that keep animals stimulated during the warmer months. Fortunately, a little preparation can make the season much easier.

Keep them warm

Not every animal needs a winter wardrobe. Many healthy dogs and cats are perfectly capable of regulating their body temperature, particularly if they have a thick coat. However, puppies, older animals, small breeds and pets with health problems can be more vulnerable to the cold.

With that in mind, make sure there is a warm, dry place to sleep, away from draughts and preferably off a cold floor. If your pet spends time outdoors, they should always have access to suitable shelter and fresh water.

Also, don't assume a long coat means an animal is automatically protected. Wet fur can leave a dog particularly uncomfortable, so a towel by the door is a simple winter essential.

Don't give up on walks

Rain isn't a particularly persuasive argument for staying indoors when you're a dog. Most still need regular exercise and stimulation throughout the winter, so try to maintain a routine rather than abandoning walks whenever the weather turns unpleasant.

A waterproof coat can be useful for some dogs, particularly those with short hair, while reflective... collars, leads or lights are worth considering when you're walking in the dark.

After particularly wet or muddy walks, check paws for grit, mud and anything that may have become trapped between the pads.

Make indoors interesting

Cats and dogs can become bored when bad weather keeps everyone inside, but exercise doesn't have to mean a trip to the park.

Puzzle feeders, treat toys and simple training games can provide mental stimulation, so hide treats around a room and let your dog sniff them out. Also, maybe teach a new command, or create a small indoor obstacle course.

Cats, meanwhile, often appreciate opportunities to climb, scratch, chase and investigate. A cardboard box can sometimes prove more entertaining than the expensive toy sitting beside it.

Watch what they eat

Cold weather can alter energy requirements, but there is no universal rule that every pet needs extra food during winter. Animals that spend a lot of time outdoors may use more energy keeping warm, while indoor pets may actually become less active.

With that in mind, keep an eye on weight and speak to your vet if you're unsure whether your pet's diet needs changing.

With this guide, your pet should ease its way through the winter months, before a whole new host of slightly warmer challenges emerge in the spring!

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Baubles are a staple of Christmas. They're great for hanging on a tree, but can be added anywhere – on door handles, on the edge of a computer screen, around staircase bannisters. The nice thing however is that you can buy blank or white ones and decorate them yourself. Ceramic or wooden are the easiest to paint, though if you find a plastic type that is covered in a paintable layer, then that works too.

These can be bought online or in most arts and crafts shops. Acrylic paint is your best bet, as it is widely available, easily absorbed by ceramic or wood, keeps the colours vibrant and is easy to work with for both adults and children. You could perhaps make a dark blue ball with snowflakes on it, paint a face onto a Father Christmas figure, or go for a little Christmas tree with red and green. Then a ribbon or twine, widely available in most shops this time of year to help hang them up.

Not only the inside of the house but the outside should be decorated. And although fairy lights are a lovely sight to see on a dark night, a well-made wreath is not any less so. For this you will need to have a door that allows you to hang the wreath onto it, or somewhere nearby – confirm this before you start. Secondly, find a location nearby with some woodland so you can get your wreath ingredients. And lastly, it is recommended that you have some garden twine or wire available at hand, just in case your design will need it to help hold itself together.

Natural wreaths can be made from a variety of plants. You can use dry grapevine, willow branches or various kinds of reads, woven together to make a very thick circle. Alternatively, you can go for a greener base. Cedar, pine, fir and juniper trees all look like variations of the traditional Christmas tree, so their branches, if woven together, give both a festive vibe and a nice lush green look. The greatest material to work with however is the cedar tree – it's an evergreen that has soft needles and malleable branches (if small), so are probably the easiest to turn into a weave.

Finally, after you've finished your base, a touch of holly stuck in around the circle will finish everything off nicely. Additionally, if you live somewhere where large pine cones are available, and you're already out and about looking for wreath ingredients, take some of these as well!

These are great to collect and keep for Christmas and the next Christmas after that. Provided you dry them out, then package them away carefully at the end of the season, they don't easily rot or fall apart and make for great eco-friendly decorations. If you like, you can paint them too. Adding a touch of white on the edge of each pine cone's scale is great for adding a wintery vibe. Either 'au natural' or with a touch of paint, these are great for placing on surfaces – mantlepieces, windowsills or tables – to add an extra touch of Christmas.

Some of the most popular forms of DIY Christmas decorations, and the cheapest, are ones made up of paper. And the medium is certainly very versatile – you can make a lot of different things out of just a stack of multicoloured paper or card. For example, a round paper fan, red, green, or white, can be hung up around the house or flat, same as an ornament. And cut out paper snowflakes are very traditional, and can also be hung up, or stuck to the fridge or wall.

If you're feeling daring, you can even go further – origami is a beloved art, but not many people realise it can be a great way to make your DIY Christmas decorations extra special. You can make an origami figurine of your dog or cat, or perhaps a robin or owl, placed in your Christmas tree. And for these paper arts, or any handmaking how-to-do's in fact, YouTube is a great source for tutorials to keep in mind.

Christmas Decs





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With something for everybody, wellness experiences make thoughtful gifts that promote relaxation and self-care.

Wellness experiences are popular, wonderfully thoughtful gifts that show you care. They focus on relaxation and self-care. There is something available for everybody, every taste, and every budget, and they provide an opportunity for individuals to unwind and rejuvenate, making them ideal gifts for Christmas.

Value of Wellness Treatments

Wellness treatments make lovely, thoughtful gifts and show that you care because they help to reduce stress, enhance quality of life, promote a healthier lifestyle and ultimately lead to better physical and mental well-being.

Types of Wellness Experiences

There are many different wellness experiences, and they range from highly active to totally relaxingly inactive; they can last a week, a weekend or a few days, or just a day, or they can be for a specific treatment. They can also be gifted as a membership so that a special someone can enjoy the lasting benefits of your generosity. They include:

Spa Days

Spa Days offer many physical and mental health benefits; they can help lower stress levels, help relax muscles, and they can aid better sleep. Full-day experiences can include many treatments or a choice of treatment combinations and include massages, facials, and numerous other beauty treatments.

Beauty Treatments

Beauty Treatments are often offered as part of a spa day, but they are also offered individually and by local beauty salons. They include manicures, pedicures, and various skincare sessions that are tailored to a client's needs and preferences.

Relaxation Packages

Some hotels with the facilities offer Afternoon Tea & Spa sessions, which are a wonderfully indulgent combination of tea, cake, and a spa relaxation session.
Spa & Dining: These experiences pair spa treatments with fine dining or drinks, making a wonderful gift for someone you care about.

Getaways and Retreats

These short breaks are often one-night stays or weekend getaways that offer a mini-escape from the stresses of daily life by way of a series of wellness treatments.
Wellness Retreats are generally longer experiences, a few days to a week, which focus on relaxation and rejuvenation. They can help improve mindfulness in a peaceful, calm environment and offer the chance to recharge the batteries.

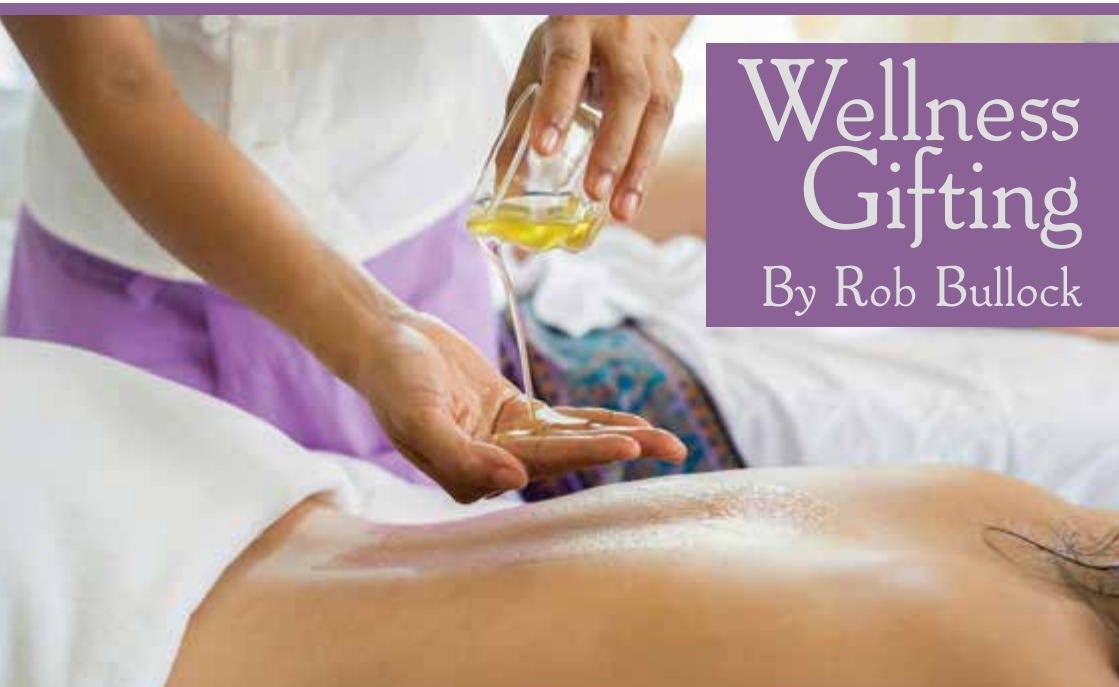
Activity, Fitness and Wellness

Fitness experiences generally offer the chance to get more active and hopefully build good health habits for the future. They can include membership of a gym or a subscription to specific fitness classes such as spin sessions, dance fitness, high-intensity interval training and boot camp.

Some activities are designed to encourage healthy habits while providing calm enjoyment, such as yoga and Pilates, which promote improving physical health and mental well-being.

Benefits of Wellness Gifts

Wellness gifts are thoughtful gifts that not only promote relaxation but also create lasting memories. They encourage self-care and can improve mental and emotional well-being. And by gifting these experiences, you show care for the recipient's health and happiness.



Wellness Gifting

By Rob Bullock

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The Magic of Christmas

As the holiday season approaches, the air becomes filled with a sense of excitement and anticipation. Streets are adorned with twinkling lights, homes are decorated with colourful ornaments, and the smell of cinnamon and mulled wine wafts through the bars and restaurants. Christmas is, for many, truly a magical time of year, filled with love, joy, and the spirit of giving.

A Time for Family and Traditions

One of the most cherished aspects of Christmas is the time spent with family and loved ones. It is a time to come together, share meals, exchange gifts, and create lasting memories. Whether it's decorating the Christmas tree, attending midnight mass, or watching holiday movies together, traditions play a significant role in bringing people closer during this festive season.

The Spirit of Giving Back

Christmas is also a time for giving back to those in need. Many people volunteer at soup kitchens, donate toys to children in hospitals, or participate in charity drives to spread joy to the less fortunate. The act of giving is a reminder of the true meaning of Christmas – a time to show compassion and kindness to others.

Christmas in the UK is filled with enchanting traditions and festive spirit that make it truly magical. Here are some highlights: **Decorations:** The sight of twinkling lights, beautifully adorned Christmas trees, and festive wreaths brings a warm glow to homes and streets.

Traditional Markets: Christmas markets pop up in cities and towns, offering handmade crafts, delicious treats, and mulled wine, creating an exciting and bustling atmosphere.

Carols: Groups of carollers spreading holiday cheer with classic songs evokes a sense of community and nostalgia.

Food: Traditional meals, like roast turkey, stuffing, and Christmas pudding, are central to celebrations, bringing families together around the table.

Pantomimes: These lively theatrical performances, often based on fairy tales, are a beloved holiday tradition, filled with humour and audience participation.

The King's Speech: The annual address on Christmas Day is a moment for reflection and togetherness, watched by many families.

Boxing Day: The day after Christmas is a time for relaxation, shopping sales, and enjoying sports, adding to the festive vibe. Festive Spirit: The overall sense of goodwill, kindness, and community during this season creates a magical atmosphere that resonates with many.

The Magic of Santa Claus

For children, one of the most enchanting aspects of Christmas is the belief in Santa Claus. The joy and wonder on their faces as they write letters to Santa, leave out milk and cookies, and eagerly await his arrival on Christmas Eve is truly heartwarming. The spirit of Santa Claus embodies the magic of Christmas and the importance of believing in the impossible.

Celebrations Around the World

While Christmas is widely celebrated in many parts of the world, each culture has its unique traditions and customs. From the posadas in Mexico to the lighting of the menorah during Hanukkah, the diversity of holiday celebrations reflects the universal themes of love, peace, and joy that unite us all during this special time of year.

Christmas Music and Decorations

Music plays a central role in setting the festive mood during Christmas. From classic carols like "Silent Night" to upbeat tunes like "Jingle Bell Rock," the melodies of the season evoke a sense of nostalgia and cheer. In addition, the colourful lights, sparkling ornaments, and lush greenery that adorn homes and streets add to the enchanting atmosphere of Christmas.

Christmas is a time to embrace the magic of the season, to cherish time spent with loved ones, and to spread joy and goodwill to all. As we gather around the fireplace, exchange gifts, and savour delicious meals, let us remember the true essence of Christmas – a celebration of love, unity, and hope for a better tomorrow.



Save The Planet
Christmas Quiz

1. Since 2015, what is the percentage loss of bird life in the UK?
a.24% b. 70% c. 17 % d. 48%

2. Name a bird which eats up to 20,000 insects daily, can fly up to nearly 70mph, but since 1995 has declined in numbers by 60%.

3. Which bird is a top rate clean-up agent for our gardens, roads and parks, eating many dead creatures. A family of them will eat 40,000 varied pests in one season, and has an intelligence often compared to a human 7-year-old!

4. The UK is in the bottom 10% of all countries for biodiversity. How might we change that?
a. Unlikely that we can, others need to change. b. Grow more crops. c. Stop using pesticides. d. Use our gardens to create mini nature reserves as safe havens for wildlife.

5. What plant does David Attenborough call, "the cornerstone of biodiversity," and urges us all to grow this. (Clues. They provide nectar for pollinators, seeds for finches and sparrows, protection for tiny insects, aphid surplus for tits, and wrens. Ladybirds and lacewings lay their eggs on underside of its leaves; it is the primary food source and egg laying site of many butterflies).

6. Ivy provides food for over how many species of insect?
a. 53 b. 78 c.140 d. 105

7. What percentage of our crops rely on insects to pollinate them?
a. 38% b. 54% c. 68% d. 75%

8. What is companion planting?
a. Placing flowers in attractive colour blends. b. Growing plants that make us feel happy c. Growing certain plants adjacent to others, so the plant odour deters pests, or conversely a plant attracts pests and is more tempting, so your prize plant is left alone.

9. What do Mahonia, Rowan, Elder, Ivy, and Honeysuckle have in common that wildlife need?

10. Which mother insect cares for her eggs by repeatedly licking them clean, and turning them, then feeding the young once born?
a. Stag beetle b. Daddy long leg c. Ladybird d. Earwig e. Dragonfly

1. d. Due to agricultural practices, pesticide use, habitat destruction. Loss of woods and hedges 2. The Swift. Consider installing a swift brick to help this beautiful bird. 3. The Crow, a much misunderstood and amazing bird. 4. c and d Our gardens support 50% of our butterflies and 40% of our birds and mammals'The RHS says that gardens can help mend our fragile planet, and we ignore them at our peril. Wildlife needs us! 5. Nettles! 6. c Ivy provides nectar and pollen, highly nutritious berries a super food for birds, winter shelter for birds and insects, nest sites. 7. d 8. c (Of course you can also colour plan and plant flowers you just love!) 9. They all produce winter berries which provide high energy food when the ground is frozen so worms and insects are less able to be found. 10. e an earwig…amazing mothers.

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Tools Everyone Should Own

You don't need a workshop full of professional equipment to tackle everyday jobs around the house. But having a few good tools to hand can make all the difference when something needs fixing, hanging, tightening or assembling.

Every home has those moments. A picture needs hanging, a shelf needs putting up, a loose screw needs tightening or a piece of flat-pack furniture arrives with instructions that appear to have been written by somebody who has never actually assembled a wardrobe. This is when a decent toolbox earns its keep.

You don't need to spend a fortune, nor do you need every tool ever invented. The trick is to have a handful of reliable essentials and understand what they're actually for.

Start with a good screwdriver set. Flat-head and Phillips varieties will cover an enormous number of household jobs, while interchangeable bits give you even more flexibility. It is worth buying reasonable quality here: poorly made screwdrivers can slip, damage the screw head and make a simple job considerably more frustrating.

A claw hammer is another essential. Hanging pictures, assembling furniture and dealing with the occasional stubborn nail all become considerably easier with one around. Look for a comfortable grip and a weight that feels manageable rather than automatically choosing the biggest one on the shelf.

Then there is the humble tape measure. It may be the least glamorous tool in the box, but it is arguably one of the most useful. Measure shelves before buying them, measure walls before ordering furniture and, above all, remember the old DIY rule: measure twice, cut once.

A spirit level is similarly inexpensive but invaluable. If you've ever put up a picture only to realise afterwards that it is visibly wonky, you'll understand why.

Add a pair of pliers, an adjustable spanner and a sharp utility knife, and you've got a toolkit capable of dealing with a surprising number of minor household repairs.

For anyone who is likely to tackle more ambitious jobs, a cordless drill and driver is probably the most useful upgrade. It can make putting up shelves, curtain poles and cabinets dramatically easier. You don't necessarily need the most powerful model available, but battery life, comfortable handling and a decent range of bits are worth considering.

A stud finder is another useful modern addition, particularly before drilling into walls. And don't forget a decent torch or work light. The darkest corner of a cupboard, loft or garage has a habit of becoming the location of every job that needs doing.

The important thing is not to buy everything at once. Visit a good local hardware shop or tool supplier and ask what would suit the jobs you actually expect to tackle. Sometimes spending a little more on one tool you'll use repeatedly makes much more sense than buying a large, cheap set that spends most of its life gathering dust.

And there is a rather good reason to start building your collection in December: a quality screwdriver set, drill or multi-tool can make a surprisingly useful Christmas present.

Because eventually, something will need fixing. When it does, you'll be very glad you have the right tool for the job.





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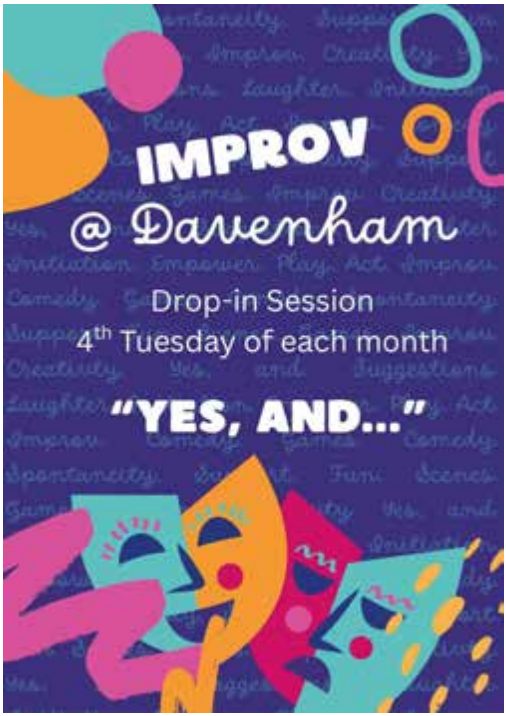
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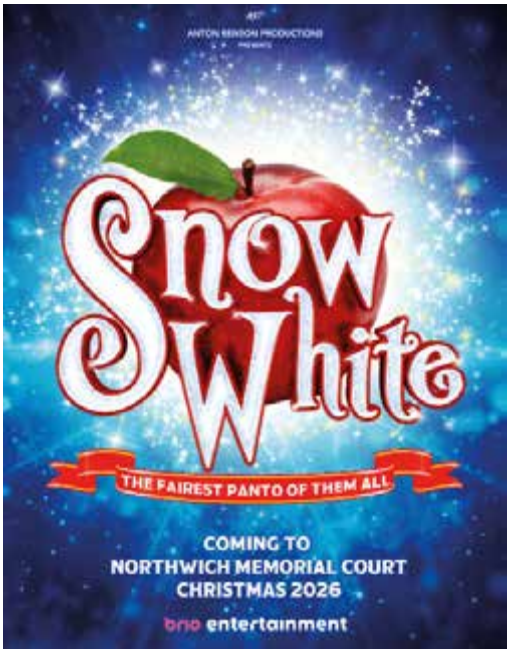
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Bonfire lit: 6:30pm
Fireworks: 7:30pm
Event closes: 9:00pm







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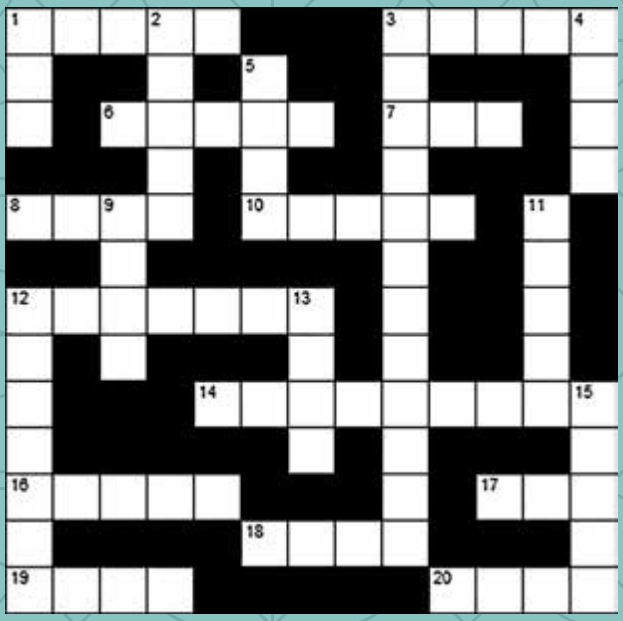
Crossword

Across

1. Traditional Festive drink - rum _____ (5)
3. Striped confectionary - _____ canes 5)
6. Mary gave _____ in a stable (5)
7. Festive colour (3)
8. Given by 12 down (4)
10. Christmas lunch - _____ turkey (5)
12. 12 Down came to _____ the baby (7)
14. City where King Herod lived (9)
16. Also given by 12 Down (5)
17. Christmas trees are usually this type (3)
18. Mary was told her ____ would be the son of God. (4)
19. Christmas Carol - The First ____ (4)
20. Christmas Carol - Oh ____ Night (4).

Down

1. US festive treat Pumpkin ___ (3)
2. Christmas song - When a _____ is Born (5)
3. 25th December! (9,3)
4. ____ log (4)
5. 12 Down followed a ____ (4)
9. The ____ sent an angel to Mary (4)
11. Might be cranberry or bread (5)
12. There were three of them (4,3)
13. Fortified ____, drunk after dinner (4)
15. Greeting - _____ Christmas! (5)



Wordsearch

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



A Christmas Carol

Belle	Ignorance	Muppets
Bob Cratchit	Jacob	Nephew
Charles	Marley	Old Joe
Dickens	Martha	Past
Ebenezer	Michael	Present
Fan	Caine	Scrooge
Fezziwig	Miser	Tiny Tim
Fred	Money	Want
Ghosts	Mrs. Cratchit	Yet to Come
Humbug	Mrs. Dilber	

Kids' Page

All the words inside the tree-shaped letter grid are connected to Christmas. Can you find them all?

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

bauble
bells
candles
carols
gingerbread
present
reindeer
Santa
sleigh
stocking
sweets
tree

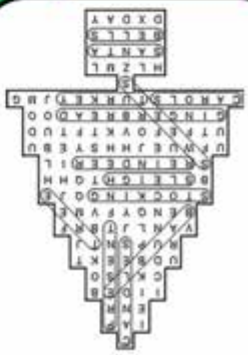


Christmas Conundrums

A police officer sees Father Christmas travelling the wrong way down a one way street but she doesn't pull him over.. Why not?

While trying to deliver presents in a twenty storey building Father Christmas unfortunately fell out of a window. How come he wasn't badly hurt?

Word Search Solution



Christmas Conundrum Answers

The officer didn't arrest Father Christmas because he was walking!

It was a ground-floor window

Quiz

1. What is the name of the reindeer that when translated into german is Thunder?

2. How many ghosts visit Scrooge in A Christmas Carol?

3. Which country gifts the Trafalgar Square Christmas tree to London each year?

4. Which spirit is traditionally added to Christmas pudding before flaming?

5. What is the name of the song the boys of the NYPD Chior were singing, in the song Fairytale of New York by The Pogues?

6. In the film Miracle on 34th Street, What phrase was circled on an American Dollar "prooved" The existance of Santa Clause?

7. What kind of creature is Gizmo in Gremlins?

8. The Nakatomi Plaza is the name of the building featured in which Christmas film?

9. True or False? Santas suit used to be green before it was red?

10. What is the name of the famous Christmas Ballet?

Sudoku

6					9	5	8	
		8	6		7	9		
					5			
9	6							
8			5		2			3
							5	6
			1					
		2	3		4	6		
	4	1	9					2

Solutions

Quiz

1. Donner 2. Four 3. Norway 4. Brandy 5. Galway Bay
6. In God We Trust 7. Mogwai 8. Die Hard 9. True 10. The Nutcracker

Crossword



Wordsearch



Sudoku

6	7	4	2	3	9	5	8	1
2	5	8	6	1	7	9	3	4
1	3	9	4	8	5	2	6	7
9	6	5	7	4	3	1	2	8
8	1	7	5	6	2	4	9	3
4	2	3	8	9	1	7	5	6
7	9	6	1	2	8	3	4	5
5	8	2	3	7	4	6	1	9
3	4	1	9	5	6	8	7	2

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