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Stourbridge Gets Ready

To Light Up The Town For Christmas!

It might only be November, but Christmas is already on its way to Stourbridge, with the town centre getting ready for one of its biggest festive events of the year.

The Stourbridge Christmas Lights Switch On takes place on Saturday 21 November, giving local families, friends and visitors the perfect excuse to head into town, enjoy some festive fun and officially kick off the countdown to Christmas.

The celebrations will run from 11am through to 5.30pm, with plenty happening throughout the day before the big moment arrives at 5pm, when the Christmas lights will officially be switched on.

There will be seasonal entertainment and funfair rides taking place around the town centre, so there will be plenty to keep families entertained throughout the afternoon. Whether you're bringing the children along for the rides, meeting friends for a coffee or simply want to soak up the atmosphere, there should be something for everyone.

And of course, the lights themselves are the real stars of the show!

As the afternoon draws to a close, the excitement will build towards the 5pm switch-on, when Stourbridge will be transformed into a much more festive-looking town as the Christmas lights come to life.

The switch-on is also a great opportunity to support the many independent businesses that make Stourbridge such a great place to shop, eat, drink and spend time. With Christmas shopping starting for many of us, why not make a day of it and have a look around some of the local shops while you're in town?
The event is being supported by Dudley Council and Stourbridge BID, who continue to work together to promote the town and encourage people to visit and support local businesses.
For local traders, events like this are an important part of the town's calendar, bringing extra footfall into Stourbridge and giving residents another reason to shop locally.

For families, meanwhile, it is simply a great chance to get together, enjoy some entertainment and start feeling a little bit Christmassy!
If you're planning to attend, the main event takes place in Stourbridge town centre, with activities running from 11am. The Christmas lights will be switched on at 5pm, with the wider event continuing until around 5.30pm.

As with any large outdoor event, timings and arrangements can sometimes change, so it's worth checking online before setting off, particularly if you're travelling into Stourbridge specifically for the switch-on.

And if you haven't visited Stourbridge town centre for a while, this could be the perfect opportunity to rediscover what is on your doorstep. From independent shops and cafés to pubs, restaurants and local services, there is plenty to enjoy before and after the lights come on.



So, get the date in the diary, wrap up warm, bring the family and get ready to join the crowds as Stourbridge officially switches on Christmas 2026!

STOURBRIDGE
CHRISTMAS LIGHTS
SWITCH ON
Saturday 21 November
11am–5.30pm
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For the latest event information, updates and any changes to timings, visit:
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Flying Scotsman Brings Steam

and Excitement to Stourbridge

Stourbridge Junction was the place to be for railway enthusiasts and curious local residents in September, as the world-famous Flying Scotsman made a special appearance on its journey through the area.

The legendary LNER Class A3 steam locomotive, built in 1923, passed through the region on Saturday 19 September as part of a journey from Stourbridge Junction to Bristol Temple Meads.

The excitement began early, with crowds gathering at the station to catch a glimpse of the historic locomotive. The Flying Scotsman arrived at Stourbridge Junction at around 7.04am, having travelled from Tyseley via Snow Hill and Rowley Regis.

It was an early start for those hoping to see the famous engine, with some residents braving the morning chill and arriving before 6am. Their patience was rewarded when the locomotive steamed into the station, creating a memorable sight for everyone gathered on the platforms.

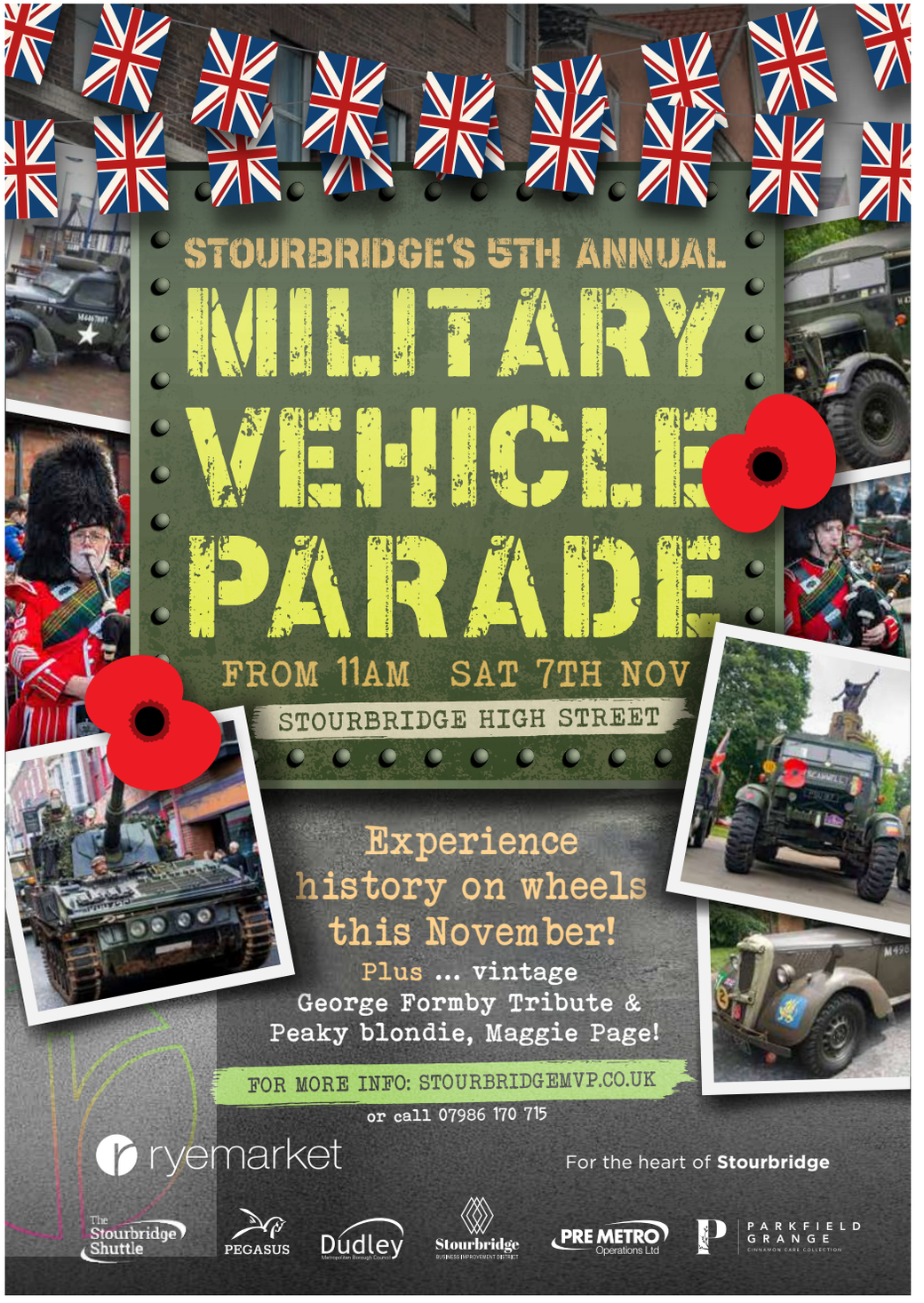
The Flying Scotsman departed Stourbridge Junction at 7.13am before continuing its journey through the area. It travelled via Kidderminster at around 7.21am, with residents also watching as it passed through stations including Hagley, Hartlebury and Blakedown.

For many spectators, it was about more than simply seeing a famous locomotive. The sight and sound of a powerful steam engine passing through a familiar local railway station brought back memories and created a shared experience for those watching.

Videos and photographs were captured by residents as the locomotive made its way through the Black Country and North Worcestershire, with social media quickly filling with footage of the historic engine.

One spectator described the atmosphere as one of excitement, with the sound of the locomotive approaching, the smell of steam and people sharing stories as they waited.

For Stourbridge, it was a memorable morning and another reminder of the fascinating railway history that continues to pass through our local area.





Stourbridge Military Vehicle Parade

Returns for Fifth Year

The popular Stourbridge Military Vehicle Parade returns on Saturday, November 7, for its fifth year, bringing dozens of historic military vehicles, live entertainment and a 1940s atmosphere to the town while raising money for the Stourbridge Poppy Appeal.

What started as a small gathering of military vehicles has grown into a much-loved community event, attracting large crowds and helping to raise thousands of pounds for the local Poppy Appeal.

The parade was originally organised by David Spruce and a small group of friends, who for more than 25 years had displayed their military vehicles in Stourbridge to help raise money by selling poppies.

After the Covid pandemic brought the tradition to a halt, David was keen to find a way to bring the vehicles back to the town.
In 2021, he approached the council about returning to the clock, but when this wasn't possible, he came up with another idea – a convoy through the town before parking up at the Bonded Warehouse.

Just 12 vehicles took part that first year. Since then, the event has grown considerably.

Last year's parade saw an impressive 57 military vehicles take part, with huge crowds lining the streets to watch the convoy make its way through Stourbridge. Collection buckets were also positioned around the town, raising more than £4,600 for the Stourbridge Poppy Appeal in a single day.

David was also presented with a Dudley Mayor's Civic Award in recognition of his work organising the parade and supporting the local community.

This year's fifth anniversary event promises to be bigger than ever, with a collection of rare Second World War military vehicles heading into Stourbridge.

Following the parade, the vehicles will line up along Lower High Street, which has been made available for the event with permission from Dudley Council.

For the first time, there will also be a stage supplied by Black Country Radio, which will broadcast live from Stourbridge throughout the day, alongside live entertainment.

Visitors are encouraged to get involved with the 1940s theme by dressing in period clothing, adding to the atmosphere as the town remembers those who served and supports the Poppy Appeal.

With historic vehicles, live entertainment and plenty to see, it promises to be another memorable day for Stourbridge.



Living in a Digital World

By Nigel Reid

As we become increasingly driven by technology, it is important to understand what living in a digital world means.

Computers, the internet and digital devices now play an important role in almost everything we do. They shape how we communicate, work, shop, travel, access information, receive services and entertain ourselves. Much of everyday life is connected through online systems, from keeping in touch by smartphone or video call to managing money, paying bills and ordering groceries. We can book GP appointments, access medical records, use digital prescriptions, plan journeys, buy electronic tickets and watch television through streaming services. Government services, such as paying council tax and completing tax returns, are increasingly available online. Artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT can answer questions and assist with everyday tasks.

There are clear advantages. Information is available almost instantly, communication is quicker, and many tasks can be completed from home. Technology can save time and money, while giving people access to education and services from almost anywhere. It also creates new opportunities for businesses and employment.

However, this progress brings challenges. People without internet access, computers or smartphones may find it difficult to use essential services. Older people and others who lack confidence with technology can be left behind. Personal information may be collected, shared or misused, and criminals use digital tools to deceive people. False information can spread quickly online.

Digital communication can also contribute to social isolation when it replaces contact in person. And when systems fail, people who depend on them may struggle to manage basic tasks.

These issues will matter even more as technology becomes further woven into daily life. Artificial intelligence, smart homes, driverless vehicles, digital identification, online healthcare and automated services are likely to influence how we live.

Living in a digital world is not simply about owning a smartphone or knowing how to use a computer. It means understanding how technology is changing society and being able to use it safely, confidently and effectively. It also means recognising that people should be able to choose how much technology they use. Essential services must remain accessible to those who are offline or prefer face-to-face help. Technology should make our lives easier, not make it impossible to live without it. The challenge is to ensure that everyone can benefit from the digital revolution, rather than leaving some people behind.

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Crafty Individuals Wanted For

Age Concern Christmas Fayre

Age Concern Stourbridge & Halesowen is calling on local crafters, businesses and community groups to book a stall at its annual Christmas Fayre.

The event will take place at the Elton Centre, St John's Road, Stourbridge, on Saturday 28 November from 12 noon to 2pm. Organisers are looking for sellers with handmade crafts, seasonal gifts and Christmas-themed products.

Stalls cost just £10. To book, contact Kim on 01384 390065. The charity supports people aged 50 and over across Stourbridge, Halesowen and surrounding areas. Its activities, advice and practical services help local people stay active, connected and independent. From social groups and learning opportunities to trips and events, there are plenty of ways for people to get involved and make the most of later life.

David Harbach, Chair of Trustees, said:

"Our Christmas Fayre is always a fantastic community event and a great opportunity for local stallholders to showcase their products. In previous years we have welcomed sellers offering handmade gifts, knitted and crocheted items, jewellery, cards and festive decorations, and we would love to make this year's event even bigger and better.

"As a locally funded charity, events such as our Christmas Fayre play an important role in helping us raise the funds needed to continue supporting older people across the area. Every pound raised helps us provide activities, services and opportunities that make a real difference to people's lives."

The charity offers advice, information and support, alongside a wide range of social activities and events at its purpose-built centre. These give people the chance to meet others, make new friends and enjoy life to the full.

For more information about Age Concern Stourbridge & Halesowen and its services, visit www.ageconcernsh.org.uk or call 01384 390065.

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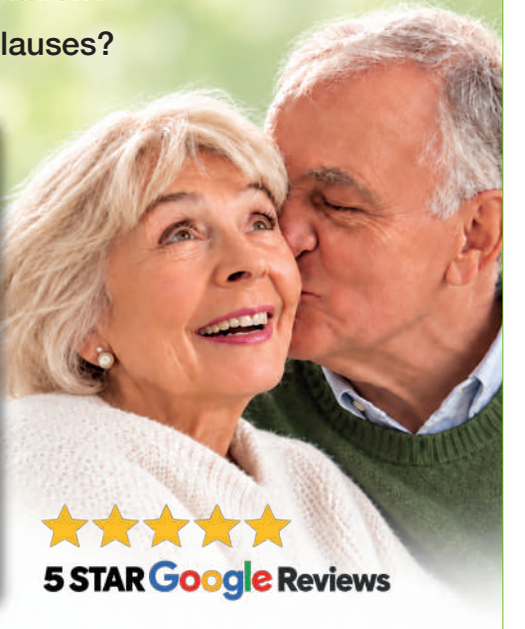
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Cat Eccles Member of Parliament for Stourbridge

Community, Social Care and Road Safety Labour Party Conference focused on the issues that matter most to people across the country and celebrated our local communities.

One highlight was hearing the Prime Minister mention Stourbridge in his conference speech, reflecting on the extraordinary response to this summer's wildfires. It was a proud moment and a tribute to local people's generosity and resilience. Recovery continues, and my office remains in regular contact with affected residents, helping them access support. I also continue to meet families and partner organisations involved in the recovery effort.

Conference also focused on the long-standing social care crisis. Around two million older people have unmet care needs, often because support is unaffordable. A National Care Service would improve support for everyone who relies on care. A Fair Pay Agreement and expanded Care Workforce Pathway would strengthen and professionalise the workforce.

There has also been considerable debate about reforms to the triple lock. The key point is simple: no one's State Pension will be cut. Pensions will rise every year by at least inflation or 2.5%. The reform smooths unusually large one-off increases caused by temporary wage spikes while ensuring pensions broadly keep pace with earnings over time. A more sustainable system will provide the long-term stability needed to tackle a social care challenge successive governments have failed to resolve for decades. I am proud to be part of a Government prepared to address difficult issues rather than kick them into the long grass.

It has been a pleasure to meet residents at recent coffee mornings in Lye, Stourbridge, Netherton and Brierley Hill. These events are invaluable opportunities to hear local concerns and discuss the issues I am taking forward on residents' behalf.

Locally, I recently welcomed plans for average-speed cameras on Thorns Road and convened a Community Speeding Forum with police, council and highways representatives. Residents heard about increased enforcement against dangerous and anti-social driving, new powers to tackle vehicle nuisance, and planned road safety improvements across the constituency.

Since the meeting, Police and Anti-Social Behaviour teams have increased enforcement, issuing 16 £100 fines for anti-social driving and noisy exhausts and seizing four vehicles for street racing in Stourbridge. Enforcement continues at night and during the day to help make our streets safer.

Following the serious collision at Oldswinford Cross, I secured an immediate junction review. I have raised concerns about this junction for years, and recent works have concerned residents, businesses and me. I will continue pressing for any changes needed to make it as safe as possible.

You can contact Cat via email, telephone or online:

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The Witch Elm Market is Coming to Stourbridge

Looking for something a little different? Witch Elm Market is bringing a touch of the unusual to Ryemarket Shopping Centre on Saturday 14 November.

With more than 30 stalls from artists, independent makers and creatives from across the country, there'll be plenty to browse. Expect handmade gifts, artwork and one-of-a-kind creations, alongside crystals, candles, jewellery, clothing and handmade home décor.

You'll also find herbs, brooms, wands, bone art, coffins and plenty more unusual discoveries. Whether you're looking for a special present, a new addition to your home or simply something that catches your eye, you never know what treasures you might find.



Visitors can also explore psychic and tarot readings during the day, offering a chance to pause, ask a question and add a little extra intrigue to their visit.
Organised by Witchenorium and supported by Stourbridge BID, the market arrives as Stourbridge moves from Halloween towards the Christmas season. It's an opportunity to get ahead with your festive shopping while supporting independent artists and makers.

More than just a place to shop, Witch Elm Market is a chance to meet the people behind the work and discover creations you won't find on the high street. From unusual gifts to handmade pieces with a story, there should be something to tempt curious visitors of all ages.

So, if you enjoy browsing independent stalls and discovering something out of the ordinary, make time for a visit. Bring a friend, take a look around and see what the makers have brought to Stourbridge.

Witch Elm Market
Saturday 14 November
2026, 9am–5pm

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Organised by
Witchenorium,
supported by
Stourbridge BID







From Gunpowder Plot to Bonfire Night

The Story of 5th November

Bonfire Night, also known as Guy Fawkes Night, is celebrated in Britain every year on 5 November. The tradition began after the Gunpowder Plot, a failed attempt in 1605 to blow up the Houses of Parliament and kill King James I.

The plot developed during a time of religious tension. England was officially Protestant, while many Catholics faced restrictions on practising their religion. When James became king in 1603, some Catholics hoped he would treat them more fairly. Their hopes were disappointed, and a group of conspirators decided to use violence to change the government. Robert Catesby led the plan, and Guy Fawkes, who had military experience, was chosen to guard the explosives.

The conspirators rented a cellar beneath the House of Lords and secretly stored barrels of gunpowder there. They intended to set them off during the State Opening of Parliament on 5 November, when the king, members of Parliament and other important people would be present. The explosion was meant to kill the king and destroy the building, creating an opportunity for the plotters to replace the government.

The plan was uncovered after an anonymous letter warned Lord Monteagle to avoid Parliament. Officials searched the building during the night of 4 November and found Fawkes near the gunpowder. He was arrested and questioned. The other conspirators were pursued; some were killed resisting arrest, while others were captured. Fawkes and several surviving plotters were executed in January 1606.

Soon after the plot failed, people lit bonfires to celebrate the king's survival. Parliament made 5 November an annual day of thanksgiving. Over the centuries, the observance changed. Fireworks became part of the celebrations, and people began making effigies called "Guys" to burn on the bonfires.

Today, families and communities mark Bonfire Night with fireworks, bonfires, food and gatherings. The event recalls the foiled plot, but it also reflects the religious divisions of seventeenth-century England.

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Remembrance Sunday in Stourbridge

Remembering the Fallen

Remembrance Sunday is observed across the United Kingdom on the second Sunday in November, close to 11 November. At 11 a.m., people pause for a two-minute silence to remember those who died in wars and conflicts, and to honour those who served.

The date recalls the Armistice that ended fighting in the First World War on 11 November 1918. The first anniversary was marked in 1919 with a two-minute silence and a ceremony at London's Cenotaph. Poppies became symbols of remembrance, and the Royal British Legion began its Poppy Appeal in 1921. During the Second World War, the national ceremony moved to a Sunday. In 1946, Sunday observance was formally adopted. Today, Remembrance includes those who died in both world wars and later conflicts.

In 2026, Remembrance Sunday falls on 8 November. In Stourbridge, the annual parade and act of remembrance take place at the war memorial in Mary Stevens Park. The Stourbridge branch of the Royal British Legion's published guidance asks parade participants to muster by the old council offices at 10.20 a.m.; the parade moves off at 10.35 and gathers in front of the memorial. The act of remembrance is listed for 11 a.m., followed by a short service and march past. The branch advises that parking in the park is very limited, so walking is encouraged where possible. Check the branch or Dudley Council before travelling to confirm the 2026 arrangements.

The memorial records local history. Designed by Ernest W. Pickford, with sculpture by John Cassidy, it was unveiled in 1923. Public subscriptions raised more than £8,000 for Stourbridge's memorial scheme. The town-centre memorial commemorated 377 local people who died in the First World War. In 1947, 135 names were added for those killed in the Second World War. The memorial moved to Mary Stevens Park in 1968, and later additions remember people lost in subsequent conflicts.

Residents gather to honour local service and sacrifice. The silence connects national history with local families. It also offers a moment to reflect on the cost of war and the hope for peace.



The Dining Room, Creating a Welcoming

Space for Family Meals and Entertaining

For many years, the dining room seemed to be disappearing from modern homes. Open-plan kitchens and breakfast bars became increasingly popular, with families choosing to eat wherever was convenient.

But there is something rather appealing about having a proper place to sit down and eat together, particularly as we head towards the colder months.
November is the perfect time to rethink your dining space. You don't necessarily need a separate dining room either. A small table tucked into a kitchen, an extension of the living room or even an unused corner can become a welcoming place to eat.

The table is the obvious starting point. Choose a size that suits the space rather than trying to squeeze in the biggest table possible. Round tables can work particularly well in smaller rooms because they allow people to move around them more easily.
Comfort matters too. Dining chairs don't have to be matching, and a combination of styles can give the room a more relaxed feel. Just make sure they are comfortable enough for long lunches and evening meals.

Lighting can transform the atmosphere. A pendant light positioned above the table creates a natural focal point, while dimmer switches allow you to change the mood from bright family breakfast to relaxed evening dinner.
November also gives us plenty of opportunities to make the table feel special. You don't need elaborate decorations. A simple vase of seasonal foliage, candles, linen napkins or a few autumnal touches can create a beautiful setting.

And perhaps the biggest benefit of bringing your dining space back into use is what happens around it. Sitting down together encourages conversation and gives everyone a reason to put their phones away for a while.
As the nights get longer and Christmas approaches, a welcoming dining space can become the heart of the home once again.



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Preparing Your Home for the Colder Months

November is often the month when we really notice the change in our homes. The evenings are darker, temperatures begin to drop and suddenly we're reaching for the heating and extra blankets.

Before winter properly arrives, it's worth spending a little time getting your home ready. Small jobs now can make the colder months more comfortable and may help prevent bigger problems later.

Start with your windows and doors. Check for obvious draughts around frames and gaps, particularly in older properties. Draught excluders can be a simple and inexpensive way to stop cold air coming underneath doors, while thicker curtains can help keep warmth inside.

Your floors deserve some attention too. Rugs can instantly make a room feel warmer and more comfortable underfoot, particularly if you have wooden or tiled flooring. They also add colour and texture without requiring a major change to the room.

November is also a good time to look at your lighting. With darkness arriving much earlier, rooms can feel gloomy if you're relying on a single overhead light. Add a couple of lamps to living rooms and bedrooms to create a softer, warmer atmosphere.

Don't forget those jobs that aren't particularly exciting but are worth doing. Check your radiators, bleed them if necessary and make sure furniture isn't blocking them. If you have a fireplace or wood burner, make sure it is clean and ready for use.

Then there are the simple comforts. Bring out the thicker throws, change lighter summer cushions for warmer textures and make the bedroom feel inviting with heavier bedding.

Preparing your home for winter doesn't have to mean spending a fortune or completely redecorating. Often, it's simply about making the most of what you already have and creating a home that feels warm, comfortable and ready for the season ahead.

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Kitchen Storage

Making Better Use of Every Inch

The kitchen is one of those rooms where it never seems possible to have enough storage. No matter how many cupboards you have, there always seems to be another pan, appliance or packet that needs somewhere to go.

Before buying more storage, however, take a fresh look at the space you already have. You may be surprised by how much potential is hiding inside your cupboards and drawers.

Start with the awkward areas. Corner cupboards are notorious for becoming dumping grounds, but rotating shelves, pull-out baskets and clever corner storage can make these difficult spaces far more useful.

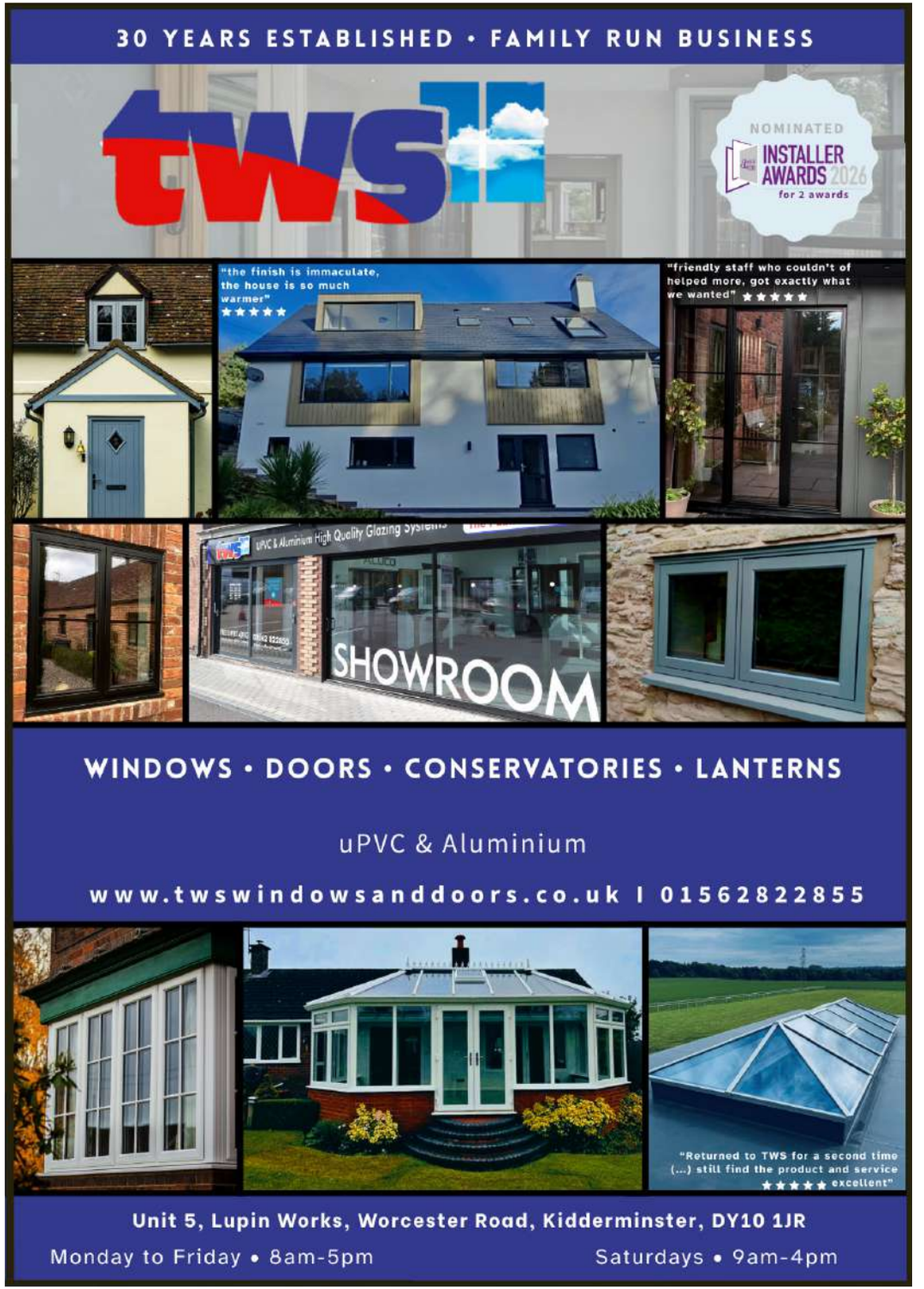
Drawers can often be improved too. Simple dividers can stop cutlery and utensils becoming mixed together, while deeper drawers can be used for pans, chopping boards and larger kitchen equipment.

Don't forget the inside of cupboard doors. Small racks can provide useful extra space for spices, cleaning products, chopping boards or food wraps without taking up valuable shelf space.
If your worktops are becoming crowded, think about which appliances genuinely need to stay out. A toaster and kettle may be used every day, but less frequently used gadgets could be stored away until they're needed.

Open shelving can also be useful, particularly in smaller kitchens, although it works best when kept relatively tidy. A few attractive everyday items can become part of the room rather than simply being storage.

November is also a good month for a kitchen clear-out. Check the back of cupboards for food that has passed its best-before date, donate items you no longer use and think about whether you really need duplicates of everything.
Good kitchen storage isn't simply about having more cupboards. It's about making the space you already have work harder.

With a little organisation, even a compact kitchen can feel less cluttered, easier to use and much more enjoyable to spend time in.





Making a Small Living Room Feel Bigger

Simple Ways to Create Space, Light and Comfort

Small living rooms can be some of the hardest spaces to get right. You want them to feel comfortable and welcoming, but too much furniture or too many accessories can quickly make the room feel cramped.

The good news is that you don't need to knock down walls to create the feeling of more space. A few clever changes can make a surprisingly big difference.

Start with the furniture. Rather than filling every available corner, think carefully about what you actually use. A large coffee table, oversized armchair or bulky television unit can take up valuable floor space. Choosing furniture with slim legs can help too, as more of the floor remains visible underneath, creating a lighter feel.

Mirrors are another simple trick. A well-placed mirror can reflect light and give the impression that the room continues beyond the wall. Try positioning one opposite a window or another light source for maximum effect.

Colour can also change how a room feels. Lighter shades on walls and ceilings can make a smaller space appear brighter and more open. That doesn't mean everything has to be white. Soft creams, warm greys, pale greens and muted blues can all work beautifully.

Lighting is particularly important as we head into November and the evenings draw in. Rather than relying on one central ceiling light, use a mixture of table lamps, floor lamps and smaller lights to create different pools of light around the room.

Finally, don't underestimate the importance of keeping surfaces clear. A carefully chosen collection of accessories will usually have more impact than dozens of ornaments competing for attention.

A small living room doesn't have to feel restrictive. With the right furniture, lighting and layout, it can actually become one of the cosiest and most inviting rooms in the house.

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Why Your Body Needs More of the

'Sunshine Vitamin' During the Darker Winter

As November arrives and the days become noticeably shorter, there is one nutrient that deserves a little more attention: vitamin D. Often called the "sunshine vitamin", vitamin D is produced by our bodies when our skin is exposed to sunlight. The problem is that in the UK, there simply isn't enough strong sunlight during the autumn and winter months for most people to make enough of it.

Vitamin D plays several important roles in the body. It helps maintain healthy bones and teeth, supports normal muscle function and contributes to the normal functioning of the immune system. While a balanced diet can provide some vitamin D, sunlight remains our main natural source.

During the summer months, most people can usually make enough vitamin D through regular time outdoors. However, between October and early March, the sunlight in the UK is generally not strong enough for our skin to make sufficient amounts. This is why UK health guidance recommends that everyone consider taking a daily vitamin D supplement during these months.

For most adults and children over four, the recommended supplement is 10 micrograms (400 IU) of vitamin D per day. Some people may need to take vitamin D all year round, particularly if they spend very little time outdoors, usually cover most of their skin when outside, or have darker skin. Babies and young children also have specific recommendations, so it is worth checking the guidance that applies to you.

You can get small amounts of vitamin D from foods including oily fish such as salmon, sardines and mackerel, egg yolks and some fortified foods such as certain breakfast cereals and spreads. However, it can be difficult to get enough vitamin D from food alone.

It is also worth remembering that taking more does not necessarily mean taking better care of yourself. Very high doses of vitamin D over a long period can cause too much calcium to build up in the body, which can damage the kidneys and heart. Stick to the recommended amount unless a healthcare professional has advised you otherwise.

November is also a good month to think about your overall winter routine. Try to get outside during daylight hours when you can, even if it is just for a short walk. Regular movement can help support your physical health and can also be good for your mood as the darker evenings arrive. If you are unsure whether you should take vitamin D, speak to your pharmacist or GP, particularly if you take regular medication or have an existing health condition.

So, while you might not be able to bring back the summer sunshine, a little attention to vitamin D can help you look after your health as we head into the colder, darker months.





Cranberry Topped Traditional
Raised Pork Pie



Ingrediants

For the filling
- 500g boneless pork shoulder
- 250g pork belly
- 650g chicken drumsticks
- 100g smoked streaky bacon
- ½ tsp ground mace
- 2 pinches of ground nutmeg
- 1 tsp ground white pepper
- 1 tsp ground black pepper
- 1 fresh bay leaf
- 4 thyme sprigs
- ½ bunch parsley
- 4 sage leaves

For the hot water pastry
- 140g lard
- 550g plain flour
- 1 egg

For the jellied stock
- 300ml chicken stock
- 2 gelatine leaves

For the topping (optional)
- 50g granulated sugar
- 100ml dry sherry
- 200g fresh or frozen cranberry

Method

Step 1
To make the stock, simmer the chicken and pork bones with 600ml water for 30 mins. Strain and reduce to 300ml. The bones should provide enough gelatine, but add 1 leaf as in step 10 if needed.

Step 2
Mix the filling ingredients with 1½ tsp salt. For the pastry, boil 150ml water with the lard and ½ tsp salt. Remove from the heat once melted.

Step 3
Sift the flour and 1 tsp salt into a bowl. Pour over the hot liquid and stir vigorously into a dough.

Step 4
Knead for 2 mins, then keep covered with cling film.

Step 5
Set aside one-third of the pastry for the lid. Roll out the rest to £1-coin thickness and use to line a 20cm-deep springform tin, pushing it into the corners and up the sides.

Step 6
Pack the filling tightly into the pastry case, creating a flat top.

Step 7
Roll out the reserved pastry and place on top. Press and trim the edges, then crimp if desired. Brush with beaten egg and cut a hole in the centre. Chill for up to 24 hrs or cook immediately. Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4.

Step 8
Bake for 30 mins, then reduce to 150C/130C fan/gas 2 and cook for 1 hr 45 mins. The centre should reach 75C, or feel hot when a spoon is held in it for 10 secs.

Step 9
Cool on a wire rack, then remove from the tin. Warm the stock. Soak the gelatine in cold water for 5 mins, squeeze dry and stir into the warm stock until dissolved. Season and pour into a jug.

Step 10
If necessary, use a skewer to create space between the pastry and meat. Pour in two-thirds of the stock, reserving about 4 tbsp. Chill for at least 2 hrs.

Step 11
Gently heat the sugar and sherry until dissolved, then boil and add the cranberries. Cook for 1-2 mins, stopping before they burst. Cool.

Step 12
Once the pie stock has set, top with the cranberries. Melt the reserved stock over low heat and brush generously over the fruit. Chill for 1 hr to set. Enjoy within 3 days.



Root Vegetables

The Taste Of November

November is the month when root vegetables really come into their own. As the weather turns colder, there is something wonderfully comforting about filling the kitchen with the smell of vegetables roasting in the oven, bubbling away in a casserole or being turned into a creamy, warming soup.

The good news is that many of our favourite root vegetables are at their best at this time of year. Carrots, parsnips, swede, turnips, beetroot and celeriac are all packed with flavour and are incredibly versatile.



For an easy midweek dinner, try a roasted root vegetable traybake. Chop carrots, parsnips, swede and red onion into similar-sized pieces, toss with olive oil, salt, pepper and a little rosemary, then roast until golden and tender. Add sausages for a one-tray dinner, or serve alongside roast chicken.

Parsnip and apple soup is another great November warmer. Fry a chopped onion, add sliced parsnips and a couple of apples, then cover with vegetable stock and simmer until soft. Blend until smooth and finish with a splash of cream. The sweetness of the apple works beautifully with the earthy parsnips.

For something a little more substantial, try a root vegetable cottage pie. Cook diced carrots, swede, mushrooms and onions with vegetable stock and herbs, then top with creamy mashed potato. For meat eaters, add minced beef or lamb to the filling.

And don't forget beetroot. Roasted beetroot makes a fantastic side dish, especially when combined with goats' cheese, walnuts and a little rocket. You can also grate cooked beetroot into a winter salad or add it to a rich chocolate cake for extra moisture.

For Sunday lunch, why not give the traditional roasties some competition? Roast chunks of parsnip, celeriac and carrots alongside your potatoes. They caramelise beautifully and add plenty of colour and flavour to the plate.
Root vegetables might not always get the attention they deserve, but November is their time to shine. They're inexpensive, filling and full of flavour, making them ideal for the kind of comforting home cooking we all start craving as winter approaches.



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Gaz Brookfield Brings

His Live Show to Stourbridge

Fans of honest songwriting, acoustic music and brilliant live performances can look forward to a special night in Stourbridge this November as Gaz Brookfield comes to town.

The acclaimed singer-songwriter will perform on Saturday 21st November, with SOAAR presenting an evening showcasing one of the UK's most successful independent musicians.

Gaz has spent more than a decade building a loyal following through relentless touring and a reputation for delivering powerful, entertaining and completely genuine live performances. Since being named Acoustic Magazine's Singer/Songwriter of the Year in 2010, he has continued to take his music directly to audiences across the UK and beyond.

His story is particularly impressive because he has done it entirely on his own terms. Gaz has no record label, no manager and no agent, instead relying on his music, his guitar, his van and an unwavering determination to keep doing what he loves.

That independent approach has clearly paid off. He became the first independent musician to sell out Bristol's The Fleece, with a capacity of around 450, followed by sell-out shows at The Bierkeller, which holds around 750, and SWX, with a capacity of approximately 1,000.

Gaz has released an impressive nine studio albums, building a substantial back catalogue along the way. His latest album, Morning Walking Club, proved that his popularity continues to grow, entering the Official UK Folk Album Chart at number one. It also reached number three in the Official UK Indie Breaker Charts, number six in the Official UK Download Charts and number ten in the Official UK Indie Album Charts.

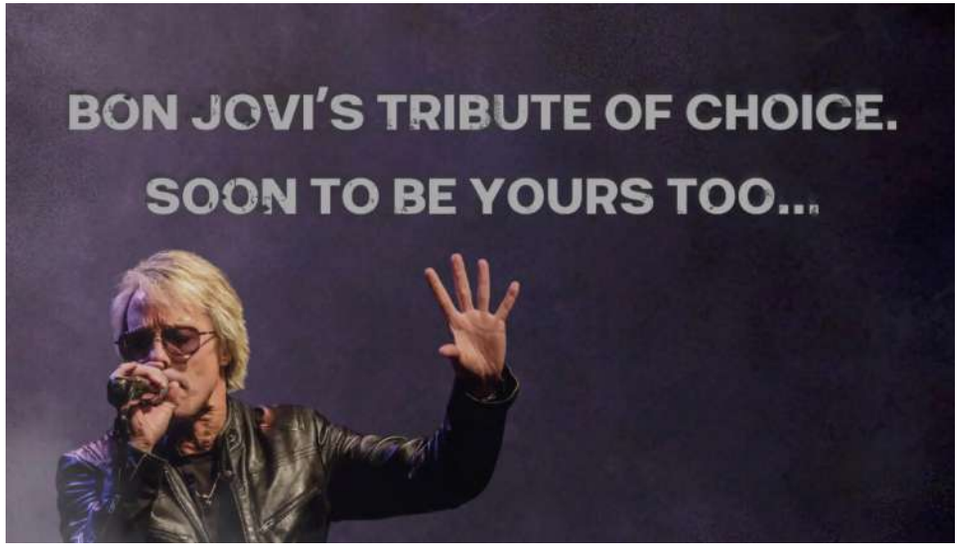
But it is arguably on stage where Gaz really comes into his own. His songs combine storytelling, humour and plenty of raw emotion, creating the kind of live performance that feels personal rather than polished and distant. For fans who have followed Gaz for years, this is another chance to see an artist who has built his career from the ground up. For anyone discovering him for the first time, it could be the perfect introduction.

Gaz Brookfield performs in Stourbridge on Saturday 21st November, with SOAAR presenting.

By tickets online at:
www.katiessecretgarden.com







The Bon Jovi Experience

The River Rooms This November

Get ready to rock this November as one of the UK's most popular Bon Jovi tribute shows heads to Stourbridge for a night packed with huge songs, big guitar riffs and plenty of nostalgia.

The Bon Jovi Experience arrives at The River Rooms on Friday 27th November, bringing the sound and spectacle of one of rock music's biggest bands to the town.

The show promises a full-on celebration of Bon Jovi's greatest hits, recreating the energy of the band's legendary stadium performances and taking audiences on a journey through some of the biggest rock anthems of the last few decades. Fronted by Tony Pearce, the show features a talented live band and delivers a high-energy performance packed with familiar favourites.

Expect to hear massive Bon Jovi hits including Livin' On A Prayer, You Give Love A Bad Name, It's My Life, Always, Bad Medicine and plenty more.

Whether you grew up with Bon Jovi playing on the radio or simply love a great night of live rock music, this is the sort of show designed to get people singing along from the first song to the last.

The tribute has also attracted some impressive praise over the years, with the show being described as an authentic celebration of Bon Jovi and its frontman. The organisers say the production has even received an endorsement from Jon Bon Jovi himself.

The River Rooms is a natural setting for an evening like this, with its live music atmosphere and reputation for bringing a wide variety of bands and performers to Stourbridge.

Doors open at 7.30pm, with the show starting at 9.30pm. Tickets are £13, making it an affordable night out for local music fans.

The event is open to 14 to 17-year-olds when accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, although under-18s must leave once the live music has finished.

There is also free car parking for River Rooms customers, but remember to enter your vehicle registration on the tablet at the main entrance to avoid a parking fine. So dust off your leather jacket, warm up those vocal cords and get ready to go halfway there – because The Bon Jovi Experience is bringing the big rock anthems to Stourbridge this November.

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The JAECOO 7 The New Name
Taking Britain by Storm

There's a new name appearing more and more on British roads, and if you haven't spotted a JAECOO 7 yet, you probably will soon.

JAECOO only arrived in the UK in January 2025, but the JAECOO 7 has already made a serious impression. In March this year it actually became the UK's best-selling new car for the month, with more than 10,000 registered. By June, it was still sitting inside the UK's top ten, with 3,145 registrations in that month alone.

So what is all the fuss about?
The JAECOO 7 is a mid-sized SUV, with chunky styling, a surprisingly premium-looking interior and plenty of technology. It's clearly designed to appeal to drivers who like the idea of a bigger family SUV without necessarily wanting to spend premium-brand money.

There are several versions available, including petrol, self-charging hybrid and plug-in hybrid models. The plug-in SHS-P version combines a 1.5-litre turbocharged engine with an electric motor and can travel up to 56 miles using electric power alone. JAECOO quotes a combined range of up to 745 miles.

Inside, the emphasis is very much on technology. There's a large central touchscreen, digital displays and a comprehensive collection of drive assistance systems, including adaptive cruise control, blind-spot monitoring and autonomous emergency braking.

It also comes with a seven-year or 100,000-mile warranty, while the UK retailer network has expanded rapidly as the brand establishes itself.
And perhaps the most interesting thing about the JAECOO 7 is that it doesn't feel like a car from a brand trying to quietly find its feet. The styling is bold, the equipment list is generous and the company clearly has ambitions to become a familiar sight on British roads.

With prices currently starting from around £29,210 for the self-charging hybrid and £35,170 for the plug-in hybrid, the JAECOO 7 is certainly giving established manufacturers something to think about.

Whether JAECOO becomes a household name remains to be seen, but one thing is already clear the JAECOO 7 has arrived, and British motorists are definitely taking notice.



Stourbridge FC

November Ahead for the Glassboys

November promises to be another busy month for Stourbridge FC, with the Glassboys facing six league fixtures as their Southern League Premier Division Central campaign continues.

The month begins with a trip away to Needham Market on Saturday 7th November, before Stourbridge return to the War Memorial Athletic Ground on Tuesday 10th November for a midweek meeting with Alvechurch, with kick-off at 7.45pm.

There is another away trip on Saturday 14th November when the Glassboys travel to Bishop's Stortford, before a local fixture catches the eye on Saturday 21st November. Stourbridge will welcome Redditch United to Amblecote for a 3pm kick-off.

The following Tuesday, 24th November, brings another eagerly anticipated fixture as Stourbridge make the short journey to face Halesowen Town, before November concludes with a home game against Rushall Olympic on Saturday 28th November.

November Fixtures
Sat 7th Nov
Needham Market v Stourb 3pm
Tue 10th Nov
Stourb v Alvechurch 7.45pm
Sat 14th Nov
Bishop's Stortford v Stourb 3pm
Sat 21st Nov
Stourb v Redditch United 3pm
Tue 24th Nov
Halesowen Town v Stourb 7.45pm
Sat 28th Nov
Stourb v Rushall Olympic 3pm

With six fixtures packed into four weeks, it could prove to be an important period for the Glassboys as they look to build momentum during the winter months. There is a good mixture of home and away matches, with supporters having plenty of opportunities to get behind the team at the War Memorial Athletic Ground and on the road.

The club is also continuing its 150th anniversary season, making 2026/27 a particularly special campaign for everyone connected with Stourbridge FC. The War Memorial Athletic Ground remains the home of the Glassboys, with the club continuing to welcome supporters for first-team league fixtures.

As always, fixtures can be subject to change, so supporters are advised to check the club's official channels before travelling. For local football fans, November offers plenty to look forward to and with six league games on the calendar, there should be no shortage of action for the Glassboys.



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