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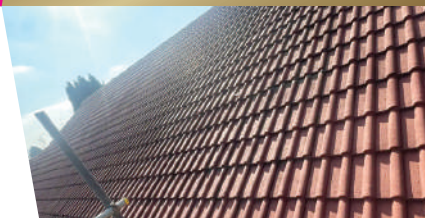


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Featured

- 5 Why Stourbridge Became**
World Famous for Glass
- 7 Running Community Finds Its Stride**
in Wombourne
- 8 Stourbridge Gears Up for Biggest**
Ever Remembrance Vehicle Parade
- 11 This Months**
Local Lowdown, Quirky Tales & Local Lore

Regular

- 14 Black Country Duck Race Returns**
For a Quacking Family Fun Day at The Waterfront
- 17 MP Update**
Cat Eccles Member of Parliament
for Stourbridge
- 22 A Trusted Name in Times of Need**
Gaunts Funeral Directors
- 31 Interiors**
Cooks Garden Centre, Grow your own Tomatoes
& Hypoallergenic Pillows and Quilts
- 39 Health & Wellbeing**
10,000 Steps, Hayfever tips and the truth about
Apple Cider Vinegar health benefits
- 43 Food & Drink**
Celebrating the Great British Sausage Roll
- 46 Whats On**
Mischief and Mayhem comes to Stourbridge Town
Hall and P!nk Beautiful Trauma Live at
The River Rooms
- 52 Motoring**
Driving into June



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Why Stourbridge Became World Famous for Glass

For generations, Stourbridge was known across the world for one remarkable industry, glass-making. Long before modern shopping centres and busy commuter roads arrived, the glow of furnaces lit up the night sky across the town and surrounding villages, while skilled craftsmen produced some of the finest glass ever created.

The story of Stourbridge glass dates back to the early 1600s, when Huguenot glassmakers fleeing religious persecution in France settled in the area. They brought with them specialist skills and techniques that would help transform the local economy for centuries to come.

But why Stourbridge? The answer lay beneath the ground itself.

The region was rich in natural resources essential for glass production. Local supplies of coal fuelled the furnaces, while nearby fireclay deposits were ideal for creating heat-resistant pots used in the glassmaking process. Combined with the area's growing canal and railway links, Stourbridge quickly became the perfect location for the trade to flourish.

By the 19th century, the town had become internationally recognised for the quality of its crystal and coloured glass. Names such as Stevens & Williams, Webb Corbett, Stuart Crystal and Royal Brierley became famous not only across Britain, but around the globe. Their work could be found in royal palaces, luxury hotels and wealthy homes worldwide. What made Stourbridge glass so special was the extraordinary craftsmanship involved. Every



piece was shaped, blown, cut or engraved by highly skilled workers who often spent years learning their trade. Many techniques were passed down through generations of local families.

At its peak, thousands of people across the area worked in the industry. Entire communities in places such as Amblecote, Wordsley and Wollaston relied upon the glass trade for employment. The heat from the furnaces, the sound of cutting wheels and the sight of glowing molten glass became part of everyday life.

Stourbridge also became famous for innovation. Local

companies experimented with colours, engraving techniques and artistic styles that gained worldwide praise. During the Victorian era in particular, demand for luxury glassware exploded, helping the town cement its reputation as a centre of excellence.

However, like many traditional British industries, glassmaking faced major challenges during the 20th century. Rising production costs, foreign competition and changing consumer habits gradually led to the closure of many factories. One by one, famous names disappeared from the skyline.

Yet despite this decline, the legacy of Stourbridge glass remains incredibly strong.

Today, the area's proud heritage is preserved through museums, collections and skilled artisan makers who continue the craft. The nearby Red House Glass Cone stands as one of the most important surviving symbols of the industry. Built in the 18th century, it remains one of only a handful of glass cones left in the entire UK and attracts visitors keen to learn about the town's remarkable past.

Even now, Stourbridge glass is still associated with quality, artistry and tradition. For many local residents, it represents more than just an industry it is part of the area's identity.

THE ELEPHANTS  PYJAMAS
MUMMY, BABY & GIFT SHOP

The Next Chapter

at The Elephants Pyjamas

Meet Kelly – the new owner continuing a much-loved Kinver boutique



Kelly – proud new owner of The Elephants Pyjamas

Hello, I'm Kelly – the new owner of The Elephants Pyjamas.

I'm a proud mum and step-mum to six wonderful children and a very happy grandmother to one gorgeous grandson.

For the past 30 years I've worked as a PA and Event Planner, bringing people together and creating memorable experiences. Alongside this, I've always been passionate about fundraising and supporting charities close to my heart, including Macmillan, Teenage Cancer Trust and Birmingham Children's Hospital.

In 2025 my husband and I moved to the beautiful village of Kinver and instantly fell in love with the warm community here.

The Elephants Pyjamas quickly became one of my favourite boutiques. When I heard that Nicki was retiring and the shop might close, I simply couldn't let such a special place disappear.

With the support of my family, I'm proud to continue the story of this much-loved shop – keeping it cosy, welcoming and full of thoughtful gifts for our wonderful community.

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Running Community Finds Its Stride in Wombourne



A local running community is quickly building momentum in the local area, as Wombourne Run Club welcomes runners of all abilities to lace up their trainers and get involved.

Founded with a simple aim of bringing people together through fitness, friendship and fresh air, the club has already created a warm and welcoming atmosphere for runners across Wombourne and the surrounding areas. Whether members are experienced runners training regularly or complete beginners looking to improve fitness and confidence, the club is designed to be inclusive, social and supportive.

The group meets every Tuesday evening at 7pm outside The Red Lion in Wombourne, setting off together for relaxed social runs that focus just as much on community as they do on exercise. Organisers say the emphasis is firmly on enjoyment rather than competition, helping people stay active while meeting new friends along the way.

Wombourne Run Club has also made it clear that everyone is welcome, including well-behaved dogs, making the sessions feel informal and accessible for local residents wanting to try something new. Younger runners under 18 are also able to take part when accompanied by an adult.

As a new independent social running group, the club is not UKA affiliated and participation is entirely voluntary, with runners encouraged to ensure they are fit and healthy before taking part.

Alongside the weekly runs, the club is already creating a strong

social scene, with excitement building for its upcoming Summer Social at The Red Lion on Saturday 27th June from 2pm onwards. Tickets are priced at £15 per person and include a burger, fries and first drink, alongside live music and a chance for members to celebrate the growing success of the club together. Football fans will also be pleased to know FIFA World Cup matches will be shown later in the evening at the venue.

For anybody looking to get active, meet like-minded people and become part of a friendly local community, Wombourne Run Club could be the perfect place to start.





Stourbridge Gears Up for Biggest Ever Remembrance Vehicle Parade

A proud Stourbridge local is helping drive one of the town's most anticipated Remembrance traditions to new heights. David Spruce, who was born and raised in the town and now works as a driver on the Stourbridge Shuttle, has played a key role in building a community event that continues to grow year after year. For more than 25 years, David and a group of friends

displayed military vehicles in the town centre over Remembrance weekend, raising both funds and awareness for the annual Poppy Appeal. Positioned by the town clock, the display became a familiar and well loved sight for residents. However, like so many events, it was brought to a halt during the COVID pandemic.

Determined to bring the spirit

of the event back to life, David approached Dudley Council in 2022 to request use of the original space once again. When that was not possible, he refused to let the idea fade. Instead, he worked with fellow enthusiasts to create something new, a moving display of military vehicles travelling through the town before gathering at a central location.

That first year saw just 12 vehicles take part, finishing at the Bonded Warehouse where they were met with an overwhelmingly positive response from the public. Since then, the event has grown rapidly. In 2025, its fourth year in this new format, an impressive 47 vehicles joined the parade, including two tanks. Thousands of people lined the streets to watch, and more than £4,700 was raised for the Stourbridge Poppy Appeal in a single day. Local businesses also saw a welcome boost, with increased footfall across the town.

Now heading into its fifth year, plans are already underway to make the 2026 event the big-



gest yet. Organisers are hoping to transform the Lower High Street into a lively celebration of the 1930s and 1940s, complete with live music from the wartime era. Residents and businesses alike are being encouraged to embrace the theme, helping to create a truly immersive and memorable experience for visitors.

The Stourbridge parade is now firmly on the map as one of the largest events of its kind in the region, with more than 50 military vehicles expected to take part this year. Despite its growth, David is quick to highlight that its success has been a true team effort. Support from local organisations, including Pre Metro Operations, who run the Shuttle, and waste management

company, We Are Pegasus, has been instrumental. Continued backing from Dudley MBC has also helped the event develop year on year.

There has also been strong community leadership behind the scenes. Former MP Suzanne Webb, who took on the role of Stourbridge Poppy Appeal co-ordinator last year, has helped bring everything together, and is now part of the event's organising group.

David is keen to see even more people get involved as the event continues to evolve. Whether through ideas, volunteering or simply turning out on the day, the aim is to make this year's parade a true town wide occasion. In recognition of his efforts, Da-

vid was recently awarded the prestigious Mayor's Award at a ceremony held at the Copthorne Hotel, a fitting tribute to his dedication to the community.

This year's parade will take place on Saturday 7 November, a date that promises to be a highlight in Stourbridge's calendar.



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THIS MONTHS

Local Lowdown Quirky Tales & Local Lore

Every town has its hidden corners and untold tales, and Stourbridge has plenty to spark the imagination. Beyond its bustling streets and familiar landmarks, whispers of unusual happenings continue to capture local curiosity

One long-standing story surrounds Mary Stevens Park, where evening walkers have occasionally reported seeing a lone figure sitting quietly on benches before suddenly vanishing without a trace. Some say it is simply the tricks of fading light, while others believe the park holds memories from generations past that refuse to fade away.

Another tale centres around the old railway lines near the town, where residents have spoken of hearing the distant sound of a train whistle late at night despite no trains running for hours. The eerie echo has become part of local folklore, with some convinced it is connected to the area's rich industrial history.

There are also stories from around the River Stour, where anglers and dog walkers have described strange ripples appearing in still water and unexplained splashes on otherwise quiet mornings. Most laugh it off as wildlife, though a few insist there is something more mysterious at play.

Whether these tales are fact, fiction, or simply part of Stourbridge's character, they continue to add charm and intrigue to the town. Next time you are exploring the area, take a moment to look a little closer because you never know what story might be waiting to be discovered.

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Cancer Charity Urges Parents To Learn the Early Warning Signs of Childhood Cancer

A childhood cancer charity is calling on parents to be more aware of the early warning signs of cancer in children after new research revealed that only three in ten parents feel confident they could identify potential symptoms.

The Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust has launched a new awareness campaign, You Know Them Best, encouraging parents and carers to trust their instincts. The message is clear:

if something doesn't seem right with your child's health, seek medical advice promptly.

Families are being urged to look out for a range of symptoms, including unusual paleness, extreme tiredness, persistent or recurring pain, unexpected lumps or swelling, unexplained bruising or bleeding, and changes in vision such as a new squint. The campaign is set to run across Worcestershire and surrounding areas, using cinema advertising, radio, outdoor displays and digi-

tal media to spread the message as widely as possible.

The Trust was founded in 2016 in memory of four-year-old Grace Elizabeth Kelly, who sadly passed away from cancer in 2014. Since its creation, the charity has supported more than 500 families across the region, offering guidance, raising awareness and championing earlier diagnosis.

Among those backing the campaign is local parent Sam Polard, whose son was diagnosed with cancer at the age of seven. Sam said: "Trust your instinct you know your child best. If you think something is wrong, go back to your doctor."

Healthcare professionals emphasise that early detection can make a life-changing difference. Spotting symptoms sooner means children can receive investigations and treatment at the earliest opportunity, improving outcomes and giving families vital reassurance.

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Black Country Duck Race Returns

For a Quacking Family Fun Day at The Waterfront

The much-loved Black Country Duck Race & Family Festival is making a splash once again this summer, and organisers are inviting families, businesses and community groups from across the region to get involved in one of the Black Country's most entertaining charity events.

Taking place on Sunday 28th June 2026 at The Waterfront, the event promises a fantastic day packed with family fun, live entertainment, delicious street food, stalls, activities and, of course, plenty of duck racing action.

The festivities begin from 12pm, with the famous duck race starting at 3pm as hundreds of yellow ducks battle it out along the waterfront in aid of a wonderful

cause. One lucky duck owner will walk away with the £100 first prize and the prestigious Mick Bailey Duck Race Trophy 2026.

Organisers are encouraging local residents to sponsor a duck and join in the fun. At just £3 per duck (plus a small admin fee), it's an easy and exciting way to support the hospice while having the chance to become this year's champion duck owner.

But there's more than just racing on the water. This year's event will also feature the hilarious and creative "Duck Pageant" corporate challenge, where local businesses can decorate giant ducks to be displayed throughout the festival. Visitors will then vote for their favourites

before all giant ducks take part in the spectacular GIANT Hook-a-Duck finale from the bridge. The event is kindly sponsored by NBB Law and Blackthorns Chartered Accountants, in partnership with The Waterfront and Bailey's Tackle Shop.

Whether you fancy cheering on your lucky duck, enjoying a family day out, or entering your business into the giant duck challenge, organisers say you would be absolutely quackers to miss it.

To sign up, sponsor a duck, enter the corporate challenge or find out more, contact the fundraising team on: 01384 377778 or email info@mshfundraising.co.uk.



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Cat Eccles Member of Parliament for Stourbridge

In Parliament last month, I raised concerns about Dudley Council's ongoing difficulties with collecting food waste and kerbside recycling. Many residents have contacted me about this issue, and it's vital that households can rely on consistent, effective waste services. I will continue pressing for improvements so that residents receive the standard they deserve.

I also spoke about the vital role of Allied Health Professionals, such as Physiotherapists, Radiographers and Operating Department Practitioners, who are essential to our NHS but too often overlooked. If we are serious about cutting waiting lists and improving care, we must properly support these staff through robust workforce planning, targeted investment, and the removal of

unnecessary barriers that prevent them from doing their jobs effectively.

Across the constituency, I've spent time meeting people in Stourbridge, Brierley Hill and Netherton who are doing fantastic work. This included visiting the school council at Link Academy, where students are leading efforts to improve their school through environmental initiatives, events and improvements to school meals. It was also a privilege to meet the creators behind Animal Antics, a special book beautifully illustrated by a talented local artist. The book supports boys living with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (a cause close to the author's heart) and is available from a number of local businesses and online.

Additionally, I had the opportunity to visit the local offices of SSAB Swedish Steel Limited to see the incredible work they're doing to produce zero carbon steel. With the recent publication of the UK Steel Strategy, it is crucial to ensure downstream companies are supported, and I'll continue to raise concerns that these vital business in our community have flagged with me with the Secretary of State.

This month also marked the final SEND consultation sessions before I present the views of parents, professionals and stakeholders from across the constituency to Parliament, and I'm deeply grateful to all those who have contributed their experiences to help build a picture of SEND support in Stourbridge. There are many ways to get involved in the work I'm doing in the coming months, and I'm keen to hear your views. Netherton and Holly Hall have been awarded £20 million in Pride of Place funding (£2 million a year for 10 years) to invest in local initiatives. This funding will be shaped by local voices, so please get in touch if you have ideas or projects that could benefit the community.

As always, if you need assistance or would like to share your views, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

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A Hidden Gem in Kinver

Tucked away in the enchanting woodland of Kinver Edge, Nanny's Rock is one of the Wyre Forests most intriguing hidden gems.

Nestled deep within the woodland trails of Kinver Edge, Nanny's Rock is one of the Midlands' most intriguing natural attractions. With an impressive 4.7-star Google rating and over 2,000 glowing reviews, this atmospheric sandstone cave has become a must-visit destination for families, walkers, and curious explorers.

Also referred to as the "Hermit's Cave," Nanny's Rock is believed to have been carved by hand into the rock face, with several chambers and archways that stir the imagination. Its history is laced with local legend—some say it was once inhabited by a reclusive woman known as "Nanny," while others whisper of hermits, smugglers, or even witches hiding within its walls. The site offers a fantastic mix of history, folklore, and nature. As you explore the surrounding Kinver Edge area, part of the National Trust, you'll discover dramatic sandstone outcrops, sweeping views, and the famous Kinver Rock Houses, once home to families living right inside the cliffs.

Perfect for all ages, Nanny's Rock is a free-to-visit, dog-friendly spot that adds a touch of adventure to any day out. Children love playing in the echoing chambers of the cave, while



adults can soak up the peaceful beauty of the forest or enjoy a scenic picnic nearby.

It's an ideal escape for photographers, walkers, and anyone seeking something a little different. The cave is accessible via woodland footpaths—sturdy shoes are recommended—and a small torch adds to the fun for peeking into the darker nooks inside.

Whether you're planning a peaceful weekend walk or looking for a unique place to entertain the kids, Nanny's Rock offers a memorable experience rich in charm, mystery, and natural beauty.

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The People's Platform Where Stourbridge Finds Its Voice

Looking for a night of creativity, connection and powerful storytelling right here in Stourbridge? The People's Platform is a monthly spoken word and open mic night that's quickly becoming a must-visit event on the local arts scene.

Held at Stourbridge Social on Mill Race Lane, this welcoming and inclusive evening brings together poets, authors and wordsmiths of all levels. Whether you're stepping up to the mic for the very first time or you're a seasoned, published writer, The People's Platform offers a supportive space to share your voice—free from judgement and full of encouragement.

Expect an atmosphere buzzing with creativity, where every performance offers something dif-

ferent. From thought-provoking and challenging pieces to heart-felt stories filled with love and laughter, the night showcases the incredible talent our local area has to offer.

Not ready to perform? No problem. Come along and enjoy an evening of inspiring live spoken word, meet like-minded people, and soak up the energy of a truly creative community. You'll even have the chance to purchase books from the performers on the night (cash only).

The venue is fully accessible, with plenty of parking available, making it easy for everyone to attend. Best of all—there's no need to book. Just turn up and enjoy. Entry is completely free.

If you're interested in performing,

follow The People's Platform on Facebook and send them a message to get involved.

Because art is the voice of the people!





A Trusted Name in Times of Need

Gaunts Funeral Directors

For more than a century, Gaunts Funeral Directors has been a name synonymous with compassion, dignity and trust across Stourbridge and the wider Midlands. What began as a simple act of kindness has grown into a sixth-generation family business, supporting thousands of families through some of life's most difficult moments.

The story of Gaunts Funeral Directors dates back to 1900, when Percival Gaunt, a local carpenter, was asked to make a coffin for a friend. With the help of his father, Decimus, he rose to the occasion unaware that this moment would mark the beginning of a long-standing family tradition. As the business developed, Percy's sons, Stanley and Ronald, joined him, forming F.P.

Gaunt and Son and laying the foundations for what would become one of the Midlands' most respected independent funeral directors.

Today, more than 125 years later, that same family ethos remains at the heart of everything they do. Now spanning six generations, Gaunts Funeral Directors continues to provide a service built on care, understanding and personal attention values that have been passed down and strengthened over time.

The company has grown steadily and serves communities across the region, with locations in Stourbridge, Rowley Regis, Cradley Heath, Smethwick, Kidderminster, Stourport on Severn, and Tenbury Wells. Despite their expansion focus remains firmly on delivering a truly local service, with each branch maintaining close ties to the community it serves.

Gaunts Funeral Directors offers a full range of funeral services, designed to meet the individual



needs of every family. Whether arranging a traditional service or something more contemporary, their experienced team provides guidance and support at every stage. From handling legal and administrative requirements to organising transport, liaising with crematoriums or burial grounds, and arranging bespoke elements such as celebrants or memorials, every detail is managed with professionalism and sensitivity.

Flexibility is also key. Families can choose between attended or unattended funerals, allowing them to create a farewell that feels right for them both emotionally and financially. Above all, Gaunts believes

every funeral should reflect the life of the individual, ensuring a meaningful and personal tribute.

Beyond their services, Gaunts Funeral Directors is also deeply committed to giving back. The company actively supports local charities and community initiatives, reinforcing its role not just as a business, but as a valued part of the areas it serves. This dedication to community is one of the many reasons why so many local families continue to place their trust in them, generation after generation.

In towns like Stourbridge where community connections run deep, reputation matters

and Gaunts Funeral Directors has built theirs over decades of consistent care and professionalism. They are known locally not only for the quality of their service, but for their genuine empathy, offering quiet reassurance and support when it is needed most.

As they continue to grow across the Midlands, Gaunts Funeral Directors remains firmly grounded in its founding principles. More than 125 years on from that first coffin crafted by hand, their commitment to dignity, respect and family values remains unchanged ensuring they will continue to be a trusted name for generations to come.

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Outdoor Entertaining Create The Perfect Garden Gathering

When the warmer months arrive, there's nothing quite like bringing people together in your garden. Whether it's a relaxed barbecue or an evening drinks party, a little planning goes a long way in creating a welcoming and memorable outdoor space.

Start with your layout. Think about how guests will move around the garden and create clear zones for seating, dining, and socialising. Arrange furniture in small clusters to encourage conversation, and ensure there's enough seating without overcrowding the space. If you're short on chairs, outdoor cushions, benches, or even picnic blankets can add a casual, comfortable feel.

Lighting is key to setting the mood, especially as the evening draws in. Layer different types of lighting to create warmth and

depth. String lights or festoon bulbs draped across fences or trees instantly add charm, while solar lanterns or candles placed on tables bring a softer glow. For a practical touch, make sure pathways and steps are well lit for safety.

When it comes to food, keep things simple and accessible. Opt for dishes that can be prepared in advance and served buffet-style, allowing guests to help themselves. This not only reduces stress for the host but also encourages a more relaxed atmosphere. Use sturdy outdoor-friendly tableware and consider covering food to keep it fresh and protected from insects. A drinks station with a selection of chilled beverages, glassware, and ice means guests can top up without needing to ask.

Creating atmosphere is all about the details. Background music

played at a low volume can enhance the mood without overpowering conversation. Add personal touches such as fresh flowers, herbs in pots, or themed decorations to tie everything together. If the weather is unpredictable, have a backup plan parasols for shade or light rain, and blankets or a fire pit for cooler evenings.

Ultimately, the best outdoor gatherings feel effortless. Focus on comfort, flow, and a relaxed vibe, and your guests will naturally settle in and enjoy the space you've created.





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Plant of the Month Hydrangea

If you're looking for a showstopper this summer, the Hydrangea is hard to beat. Bursting into full bloom in June, these classic garden favourites are known for their large, colourful flower heads in shades of blue, pink, white and purple. They're a staple in UK gardens and right now, they're trending thanks to their versatility, low maintenance, and ability to transform any outdoor space into something truly eye-catching.

One of the biggest reasons Hydrangeas are so popular is their adaptability. They work beautifully in borders, containers, or even as feature plants in smaller gardens. Whether you're filling a shady corner or brightening up a patio, there's a variety to suit almost every space. Hydrangea thrives best in moist, well-drained soil rich in organic matter and prefers a position with morn-

ing sun and afternoon shade. Caring for Hydrangeas is refreshingly straightforward, making them ideal for both beginner and experienced gardeners. The key is consistent watering these plants don't like to dry out, which is reflected in their name, derived from the Greek word for water. Mulching around the base helps retain moisture and regulate soil temperature, especially during warmer June days. Regular watering and occasional feeding will keep blooms healthy and vibrant throughout the season.

One of the most fascinating features of Hydrangeas is their ability to change colour. In certain varieties, flower colour can shift depending on soil pH acidic soils tend to produce blue blooms, while alkaline soils encourage pink tones. This unique trait adds an extra layer of interest and allows gardeners to experi-

ment with their planting schemes.

Hydrangeas are trending not just for their beauty, but for their reliability. As long-lived perennials, they return year after year with bigger and better displays. Their lush foliage and dramatic flowers also make them perfect for cut arrangements, bringing that summer garden feel indoors. In short, if you want maximum impact with minimal fuss this June, Hydrangeas are the plant to choose bold, beautiful, and brilliantly easy to grow.





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Fall Back in Love With Your Kitchen With Dream Doors

If your kitchen has lost its sparkle over the years, now is the perfect time to fall back in love with it. Instead of the disruption, cost or weeks of mess that come with a full renovation, a kitchen makeover offers a smart, affordable and stress-free way to rekindle the warmth and beauty of your space. More homeowners are discovering that you can completely refresh the look of

your kitchen in just a few days, without removing the existing layout or cabinetry. Up to 50% less than a full new kitchen simply by replacing your doors and worktops, a makeover gives you the chance to transform your home and enjoy your kitchen again without the hefty price tag.

It's a practical and eco-conscious

option too. By retaining your original units, you reduce unnecessary waste while still achieving a modern, stylish finish. And because most makeovers take just two to three days, you'll be enjoying your revitalised kitchen far sooner than you might expect ideal for anyone who wants a fresh new space without the disruption.

Choosing the right company is key to ensuring a smooth and enjoyable experience. A trusted kitchen makeover specialist should have a local showroom where you can see styles, colours and finishes in person before making decisions. They should also offer an in-home consultation, bringing samples directly to you so you can see how different options look in your own lighting. Asking where the products are made is important too, with UK-manufactured doors and worktops often offering the highest quality and durability.

Transparency matters just as much. Not all quotes include



fitting or essential final connections such as electrics, gas or plumbing, so always check exactly what is included. A fully managed service takes the stress away, ensuring you don't have to source your own tradespeople. Genuine, independent customer reviews are also invaluable for understanding the quality of service a company provides. And any reputable provider should also handle waste removal as part of the job, leaving your kitchen clean, fresh and ready to enjoy.

This level of service is exactly what you can expect from Dream Doors who are based in Wordsley combine experience, craftsmanship and exceptional customer care. Owner Chris Drew explains, "We're a one-

stop shop for kitchens. Our makeovers can cost up to 50 percent less than a fully fitted kitchen and by simply replacing your existing doors and worktops, you can create a completely fresh, contemporary look."

At the showroom, Gwen, the Showroom Manager, helps customers browse hundreds of door styles and worktop combinations, offering inspiration and expert guidance. Once you've found the styles you love.

Installation is carried out by Dream Doors own fitting team a fully managed service by Nathan our project manager, delivering high-quality workmanship so every kitchen looks its absolute best. Because Dream Doors uses an in-house team rather

than subcontractors, customers enjoy a smooth process from initial design through to the final finish. "Buying your dream kitchen should be enjoyable," says Chris. "We manage everything so the experience is as easy and stress-free as possible."

Whether you want to breathe new life into your existing kitchen or you're planning a full installation, Dream Doors offers the expertise, quality and personal service needed to help you fall in love with your kitchen all over again.

To find out more or book a consultation:
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Grow Your Own Tomatoes With Confidence

If you are new to growing your own food, tomatoes are one of the best places to start. They are easy to care for, grow well in a variety of spaces, and reward you with a steady supply of fresh, flavourful fruit throughout the summer.

Cherry tomatoes are especially beginner friendly. They thrive in pots, hanging baskets, or small garden beds, making them ideal whether you have a large garden or just a sunny patio. Start by choosing a good quality tomato plant from a garden centre or grow from seed if you are feeling more adventurous. Tomatoes need plenty of sunlight, so pick a spot that gets at least six hours of direct sun each day.

Use a container with good drainage and fill it with nutrient rich compost. Once planted, water regularly to keep the soil moist but not waterlogged. Consist-

ency is key, as irregular watering can affect the quality of the fruit. As your plant grows, it will need support, so add a cane or small frame to keep it upright and healthy.

Feeding your tomato plant every couple of weeks with a liquid fertiliser will encourage strong growth and better fruit production. You will also need to remove small side shoots that grow between the main stem and branches. This helps the plant focus its energy on producing fruit rather than excess foliage.

Within a few weeks, you will start to see flowers appear, followed by small green tomatoes that gradually ripen into vibrant red or yellow fruits. The moment you pick your first homegrown tomato is incredibly rewarding, and the taste is often far superior to anything bought in a shop.

Growing tomatoes is not just about the end result. It is a relaxing and enjoyable process that connects you with nature and gives you a real sense of achievement. Once you have mastered tomatoes, you may find yourself inspired to grow even more.



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Sleep Easy This Hay Fever Season with Hypoallergenic Pillows and Quilts



As hay fever season arrives, many people notice their symptoms worsen not just outdoors, but indoors too. Pollen can easily find its way into the home on clothing, hair and even through open windows. Once inside, it settles into soft furnishings like bedding, making nights just as uncomfortable as days. This is where hypoallergenic pillows and quilts can play an important role in improving sleep quality.

Hypoallergenic bedding is designed to reduce exposure to common irritants, including pollen, dust mites and pet dander. These products are made using materials that resist the build up of allergens and help create a cleaner sleeping environment. Synthetic fibres such as micro-fibre or specially treated cotton are commonly used because

they are less likely to trap particles compared to traditional fillings.

During hay fever season, symptoms such as sneezing, congestion and itchy eyes can feel worse at night. Standard pillows often hold onto allergens over time, even with regular washing. Hypoallergenic pillows are created to stay fresher for longer, helping to reduce irritation and support clearer breathing while you sleep. This can make a noticeable difference, especially for those who struggle with blocked noses or disrupted rest. Quilts also play a part in maintaining comfort. Hypoallergenic options provide warmth without the allergen retention often linked to feather or down fillings. They are typically lightweight and breathable, helping to regu-

late body temperature and prevent overheating, which can also disturb sleep.

Keeping bedding clean is essential, particularly during peak pollen months. Most hypoallergenic pillows and quilts are easy to wash at higher temperatures, helping to remove allergens more effectively. Washing bedding regularly and changing pillowcases more frequently during hay fever season can further reduce exposure.

Making the switch to hypoallergenic pillows and quilts is a simple yet effective way to create a more comfortable bedroom. At a time of year when allergies can feel unavoidable, it offers a practical step towards better sleep and more refreshed mornings.

Why Walking 10,000 Steps Isn't the Only Goal That Matters



For years, the idea of walking 10,000 steps a day has been promoted as the gold standard for good health. While it's a helpful target, the truth is far more flexible and far more encouraging for those struggling to hit that number.

The 10,000-step goal didn't originate from medical research. It dates to a 1960s Japanese marketing campaign for a pedometer, and while it stuck, modern science suggests that health benefits begin well below that figure. In fact, studies show that walking around 6,000 to 8,000 steps a day can significantly reduce the risk of conditions such as heart disease and Type 2 diabetes particularly for older adults.

What really matters is consistency. Regular movement, even in shorter bursts, can improve cardiovascular health, boost mood, and help maintain a healthy weight. A brisk 20-minute walk, a lunchtime stroll, or choosing the stairs over the lift all contribute to your daily activity levels. It's about building movement into your routine in a way that feels manageable.

It's also important to remember that not all steps are equal. Walking at a faster pace, tackling hills, or mixing in other forms of exercise like cycling, swimming, or strength training can deliver even greater health benefits. Quality of movement can be just as important as quantity.

For those with busy lifestyles, setting realistic goals is key. If 10,000 steps feels overwhelming, start with 5,000 and gradually build up. Using a step counter or smartphone app can help track progress and keep motivation high, but it shouldn't become a source of pressure.

Ultimately, the best approach is the one you can stick to. Whether it's 6,000 steps or 12,000, staying active on a regular basis is what truly makes the difference. In the long run, it's not about chasing a number it's about creating a healthier, more active lifestyle that works for you.

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HAYFEVER HELP!

What you need to know Before reaching for an injection!

By Lindsey Watson, Elle Jay Aesthetics
CQC Registered Clinic, Stourport



As the warmer months arrive and nature bursts into life, many of us look forward to longer days and time outdoors. But for those who suffer from hay fever, it can be a season of dread rather than delight. Sneezing fits, itchy eyes, runny noses, and sinus pressure can make spring and summer feel unbearable.

At Elle Jay Aesthetics, we often see clients desperate for fast relief. Understandably, many turn to the popular hay fever injection, often referred to as the "Kenalog jab". But before making that decision, it's important to fully understand your options – and the risks.

Start With the Basics:

Antihistamines - Hay fever is a seasonal allergic reaction to pollen. The body mistakenly treats pollen as a threat and releases histamine, causing inflammation and those familiar allergic symptoms. The first line of defence should always be over-the-counter or prescription antihistamines.

It may surprise you to learn that it's safe for many people to take up to four antihistamines a day (always under pharmacist or GP guidance). Taking one daily might not be enough to control symptoms during peak pollen season, especially if you're highly sensitive. Combining a non-drowsy antihistamine in the morning, with a different one in

the evening, plus a nasal spray and eye drops, can often bring significant relief.

The Hay Fever Injection – Know the Risks

The Kenalog injection is a corticosteroid, designed to dampen the immune system's overreaction to pollen. When your symptoms are severe and nothing else is working, it can be a useful short-term fix. However, it should never be the first port of call – especially not when your symptoms are mild or manageable.

Steroids are powerful. They suppress the immune system, and if your hay fever symptoms

are low, the steroid can begin attacking your body instead. Side effects can be serious including impotence, mood changes, weight gain, insomnia, and increased risk of infection.

We've seen clients come to us after being offered the jab too early in the season, before pollen levels even peaked. This can be dangerous. Steroid injections should only be given when symptoms are genuinely unmanageable, and all other options have been exhausted.

At Elle Jay Aesthetics, we always carry out a full consultation to assess the severity of your symptoms and explore all alternatives before

considering such a treatment.

Natural Remedies Worth Trying?

There are also natural remedies that can help ease symptoms. One increasingly popular option is stinging nettle, available as teas or capsules. Nettle acts as a natural antihistamine and anti-inflammatory. Drinking nettle tea daily can help reduce the body's reaction to pollen over time.

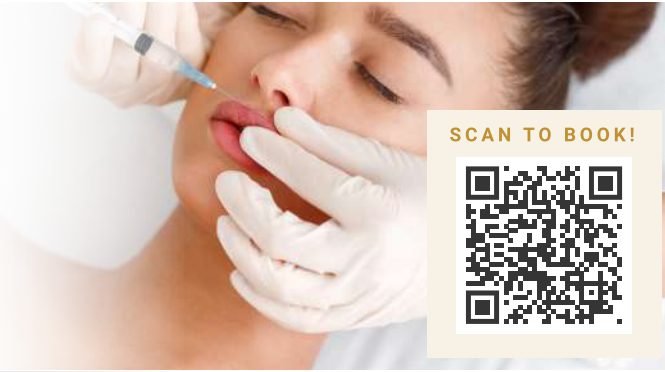
Other useful natural approaches include local honey, which may help desensitise you to local pollen, and using saline nasal rinses to flush allergens from the nose.

Support from a Trusted Clinic

At our CQC registered clinic in Stourport, we believe in a safe, layered approach to managing hay fever. We're here to guide you through your options with clinical knowledge and care.

If you're suffering, book a consultation to discuss your symptoms – but remember, injections are a last resort, not a quick fix.

Remember: Kenalog is a prescription-only medication and should only ever be administered by a qualified nurse or doctor in a CQC registered clinic.



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Lindsey has been in nursing for over 30 years, currently working as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner.

Lindsey takes pride in treating people as individuals and working with them to achieve realistic goals and help them make informed decisions about their treatment.



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**Apple Cider Vinegar
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Apple cider vinegar has been used for centuries as a natural remedy, and today it's enjoying a well-deserved resurgence. Made from fermented apple juice, this tangy liquid contains acetic acid, probiotics, and trace nutrients that can support overall wellbeing when used correctly.

One of its most talked-about benefits is its potential to aid digestion. Apple cider vinegar may help stimulate stomach acid production, making it easier for your body to break down food and absorb nutrients. Many people take a small, diluted amount before meals to reduce bloating and support gut health. It's also commonly linked to

blood sugar control. Some studies suggest that consuming apple cider vinegar before or with meals may help improve insulin sensitivity and reduce blood sugar spikes particularly after carbohydrate-heavy foods. This can be especially helpful for those looking to manage energy levels throughout the day.

Weight management is another area where apple cider vinegar may play a role. While it's no miracle solution, it may help promote feelings of fullness, which can reduce overall calorie intake when combined with a balanced diet. In addition, apple cider vinegar has natural antibacterial properties and is sometimes used to

support skin health or as a home remedy for minor ailments.

However, it's important to use it safely. Always dilute apple cider vinegar in water before drinking to protect your teeth and throat and consult a professional if you have underlying health conditions. Used wisely, this kitchen cupboard staple can be a small but beneficial addition to a healthy lifestyle.



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Rolling into June Celebrating the Great British Sausage Roll

There are few things more comforting, more British, and frankly more irresistible than a freshly baked sausage roll. Golden, flaky pastry wrapped around perfectly seasoned sausage meat it's a simple pleasure that never goes out of style. This June, food lovers across the UK have the perfect excuse to indulge, as National Sausage Roll Day rolls around once again.

But while the sausage roll feels like a true British icon, its origins actually stretch much further back. The concept of wrapping meat in pastry dates to ancient times, with

early versions appearing in Ancient Greece and Rome, where cooks used pastry to preserve and cook meats. The modern sausage roll as we know it began to take shape in France during the 17th century, before becoming firmly established in Britain during the 19th century. By the time Victorian bakeries were thriving, sausage rolls had become a popular, affordable snack for the masses quick, filling, and easy to eat on the go.

Today, the sausage roll has evolved into a staple of British food culture. Whether you grab one from your favourite local bakery, enjoy a gourmet

twist at a café, or try your hand at making your own at home, this is a day dedicated to celebrating a true classic. The beauty of the sausage roll lies in its versatility. From traditional pork fillings to modern variations featuring caramelised onion, chilli, or even vegetarian alternatives, there's a version to suit every taste.

Of course, for those who enjoy getting creative in the kitchen, making your own sausage rolls can be incredibly rewarding. It's also a fantastic activity to do with family or friends, especially when you can

experiment with flavours and techniques. If you're feeling inspired, be sure to check out the sausage roll recipe on the following page, where you'll find a simple step-by-step guide to creating your own delicious batch at home.

National Sausage Roll Day is more than just an excuse to eat well it's a celebration of a beloved staple with a rich history that has stood the test of time. So this June, whether you bake, buy, or share, take a moment to appreciate the humble sausage roll in all its golden glory.

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Easy Sausage Rolls with Apple Sauce or Chutney



Ingredients

375g all-butter puff pastry
flour for dusting
2 tbsp apple sauce pickle or
chutney
400g sausage meat or sausages,
skins removed
1 egg beaten
2 tsp sesame seeds

Step 1

Roll out the pastry to a 35 x 30cm rectangle on a surface lightly dusted with flour. Trim the edges neatly, then cut in half lengthways to form two long strips. Spread with a thin layer of the apple sauce, pickle or chutney, leaving a border along the edges.

Step 2

Tip the sausage meat into a large bowl, add 3 tbsp cold water and

Method

squash together. Divide the mixture in two and mould each half into a cylindrical shape. Put each portion of meat into the middle of a pastry strip, leaving a border at either side.

Brush the pastry border and the top of the sausage mix with the beaten egg. Fold one edge of the pastry over the meat and roll to encase, then use a fork to press the pastry edges together.

Cut the sausage rolls into 5cm lengths and arrange on a lined baking tray. Chill for 20 mins. Can be made a day ahead or frozen for up to one month; to bake from frozen, add an extra 10 mins to the cooking time.



Step 3

Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Brush the sausage rolls with the rest of the beaten egg and sprinkle with the sesame seeds (if using). Bake for 30-35 mins until the pastry is deep golden. Transfer the sausage rolls to a wire rack and leave to cool for 10 mins.

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Mischief and Mayhem Comes to Stourbridge Town Hall

Families are in for a delightful treat this June as Sam Bradshaw Productions brings the timeless magic of The Cat in the Hat to life on stage at Stourbridge Town Hall.

Based on the beloved children's classic by Dr Seuss, this lively stage adaptation promises an afternoon full of laughter, imagination and playful chaos. The story follows Sally and her brother on a rainy day that quickly turns extraordinary when the iconic Cat bursts into their home. With his tall red and white striped hat and a talent for trouble, he transforms an ordinary afternoon into a whirlwind of tricks,

surprises and unforgettable fun. Perfectly designed as a first theatre experience, the show is aimed at children aged three and above, offering a fast paced and engaging performance that keeps young audiences captivated from start to finish. With a running time of approximately 45 minutes and no interval, it is ideal for little ones with shorter attention spans while still delivering plenty of excitement. Adding to the magic, children will have the chance to meet the Cat in the Hat after the performance at no extra cost, making it an experience that extends beyond the stage and into lasting memories.

Performances take place on Saturday 6 June at 2pm and 4.30pm, and Sunday 7 June at 11am. Ticket prices are family friendly, with discounts available for group bookings, making it a perfect outing for families, friends and community groups alike.

Expect laughter, silliness and a touch of theatrical magic as this much loved story leaps from page to stage in spectacular style.

Find out more or buy tickets at - www.boroughhalls.co.uk



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P!nk Beautiful Trauma Live at The River Rooms

Get ready for an unforgettable night of music and energy as P!nk Beautiful Trauma arrives at The River Rooms on Friday 26th June 2026. Doors open at 7:30pm, with the live show starting at 9:30pm, promising an evening packed with powerful vocals, iconic hits and an electric atmosphere.

This spectacular tribute is led by Stacy, an international award winning performer who has built a reputation as one of the most exciting P!nk impersonators in the UK. With over eleven years of experience performing across the country and beyond, she has been crowned the UK's Best Multi Tribute Act. Her attention to detail and stage presence bring the spirit of P!nk to life in a way that truly connects with audiences.

Teaming up with the highly regarded Vertigo Band, this show delivers all the excitement fans would expect. Together they recreate the sound and energy of P!nk's biggest hits, from early favourites like Just Like A Pill and So What to more recent anthems such as What About Us and Beautiful Trauma. The performance is enhanced with full production, including authentic costumes, props and a dedicated light show that captures the feel of a major arena concert.

What makes this show stand out is the atmosphere. Stacy prides herself on creating an experience that goes beyond simply performing songs. With audience participation, high energy staging and a genuine passion for the music, the night becomes

a celebration of everything that has made P!nk such a modern icon. It is designed to have the crowd singing along, dancing and fully immersed from start to finish.

The event is open to guests aged fourteen to seventeen when accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Under eighteens must leave once the live music finishes. Free car parking is available for customers, with vehicle registration required on arrival.

For fans of P!nk, this is a night not to be missed. Expect big songs, bold performances and a party atmosphere that will leave you wanting more.

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A Night of Mystery and Laughter with Inspector Drake

Thursday 11th June brings a truly special evening of live entertainment to Katie's as Inspector Drake's Vintage Radio Show arrives for theatre lovers looking for something a little different. Set in December 1945, this unique live radio play by David Tristram transports audiences back to a time of classic storytelling, sharp wit, and wonderfully absurd humour.

The story begins with a baffling discovery that quickly escalates into a full blown murder investigation. Enter Inspector Drake, the only man capable of unravelling such a strange and puzzling case. With his loyal yet often

hopeless Sergeant by his side, Drake navigates a maze of eccentric suspects, each more suspicious than the last and all bearing an uncanny resemblance to one another.

What makes this performance stand out is its clever blend of traditional theatre and vintage radio style. Audiences are treated to a live production that captures the charm of old time broadcasts, complete with comedic timing and imaginative storytelling. The show also features musical moments, with songs from a by-gone era performed live, adding warmth and nostalgia to the evening.

Starring Alan Birch as the iconic Inspector Drake, this production pays tribute to classic radio comedy while delivering a fresh and entertaining experience. Expect plenty of twists, plenty of laughs, and a mystery that keeps you guessing until the very end.

Doors open at 6.30 pm. This is a show not to be missed.

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Driving into June Motoring Matters This Month

As we head into June, it's the perfect time to get out on the road and make the most of the longer days, brighter evenings, and improving weather. Whether you're planning a weekend getaway, commuting locally, or simply enjoying a scenic drive through the countryside, this is one of the best months of the year to enjoy your car.

Before setting off, it's worth giving your vehicle a quick seasonal check. Warmer temperatures can put extra pressure on tyres, so ensuring they're correctly inflated and have sufficient tread is essential for both safety and fuel efficiency. It's also a good idea to check coolant levels, oil, and screen wash, especially if you're planning longer journeys. A clean windscreen and working air con-

ditioning can make all the difference when driving in bright sunshine.

June is also a popular time for road trips, with many people choosing to explore more of the UK. From coastal drives to countryside escapes, there are plenty of routes right on our doorstep that offer stunning views and a chance to unwind. Planning ahead can help avoid traffic hotspots, particularly during weekends and school holidays, so it's worth checking your route before you travel.

For those thinking about upgrading their vehicle, summer often brings a range of offers from dealerships, making it a great time to explore new or

used options. Electric and hybrid vehicles continue to grow in popularity, offering lower running costs and a more environmentally friendly way to travel, particularly for shorter local journeys.

Finally, remember that with more cyclists, pedestrians, and motorcyclists on the roads during the summer months, extra awareness is key. Taking a little more care and allowing extra space helps keep everyone safe and ensures that June's journeys are enjoyable for all.

So, whether it's a short trip across town or a longer adventure further afield, make the most of the season and enjoy the road ahead this June.

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Stourbridge FC End of Season Focus

It has been a challenging campaign for Stourbridge FC, with the season now drawing to a close and the Glassboys battling hard to secure their status.

After a year of mixed fortunes and determined performances, the focus ultimately shifted to survival. Every point proved vital in a tightly contested lower end of the table, where margins were fine and pressure remained high throughout the run-in.

The War Memorial Athletic Ground once again played its part, with loyal home support providing a constant lift. The fans have stood firmly behind the team all season, and that backing has been crucial during the toughest moments.

While this was not the outcome the club had initially hoped for, there have been clear signs of resilience and character within the squad. Grinding out results when it mattered most could prove decisive in preserving their place.

If survival is secured, it will mark an important achievement given the circumstances and provide a foundation to build on heading into next season.

As the curtain falls, attention will quickly turn to regrouping, rebuilding, and coming back stronger, with supporters hopeful of a more positive campaign ahead.

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