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December 2026

YourMag

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Cranberry Bread Pudding



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Editor's Note

I've always loved Christmas - and I still do - but coming from a large family, I sometimes find myself feeling stressed about the gift buying task ahead of me. I agonise for ages, trying to decide on the perfect gift as I don't want to disappointment anyone and I also don't want to waste money on an item that may end up in landfill in a few weeks' time!

This year I'm trying to change my approach. Rather than focus on the amount I'm spending on each person, I'm going to focus instead on simply buying them something that I think they will like, regardless of cost.

Many years ago when I was a teenager with very limited funds, I bought my two year old nephew a second hand spring mounted bouncy chair from the local charity shop. It cost a few pounds - all that I could afford. That little boy loved that present! He spent all Christmas playing on it, to the point that he bounced himself to sleep! That experience taught me an important lesson that has gradually faded from memory over the years. But not any more!

Right now, with not a single one of the 36 needed presents yet purchased, I am actually looking forward to selecting personal gifts for each of my family members. Let's hope I still feel the same way in a month's time!

Happy Christmas!

Debbie Singh-Bhatti

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Tools Everyone Should Own



You don't need a workshop full of professional equipment to tackle everyday jobs around the house, but having a few good tools to hand can make all the difference when something needs fixing, hanging, tightening or assembling. You don't need to spend a fortune, nor do you need every tool ever invented. The trick is to have a handful of reliable essentials and understand what they're actually for.

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

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

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

A spirit level is similarly inexpensive but invaluable. If you've ever put up a picture only to realise afterwards that it is visibly wonky, you'll understand why. Add a pair of pliers, an adjustable spanner and a sharp utility knife, and you've got a toolkit capable of dealing with a surprising number of minor household repairs.

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

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

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



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'Our watchwords are Quality, Integrity and Value. Quality in the materials that we use for all our installations and the fact that all our loft packages are fitted by time served tradesmen so our customers are assured of the best job. Integrity in that we will turn up at the time we say and make sure the house is spotless when we leave, and Value in that we offer our services at a price people can afford. Our business relies on referrals and we got a huge amount of our calls from people who have been referred to us by our existing customers - that simply wouldn't happen if we didn't adhere to our overriding principles.

At the end of the day the old adage that happy customers lead to more happy customers is true and we work hard to make that happen for every installation we carry out!'

So, if you want to make use of your loft space, however big or small, call Warren on **0800 612 8359** and he'll be happy to pop round and give you a no obligation quote so you too can make use of your loft!



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MOBILITY AIDS



The correct mobility aid can improve a person's quality of life, enhance independence, improve safety and reduce pain. So what is available?

Canes
Probably the simplest aid available, a cane can be bought for a few pounds and can make a massive difference to someone's ability to get around safely and confidently.

Walkers
There are various designs for different needs:

Basic Walker – a simple, lightweight but sturdy frame that users lift and move forward.

Rollator – a walker with wheels, handlebars and often brakes, and a seat for resting.

Knee Walker – allows users to rest their knee on a cushion while propelling the walker along with the other leg.

Mobility Scooters
There are two main types in the UK, based on their speed, design, and intended use. Class 2 mobility scooters are restricted to a speed of 4 mph and can travel on pavements and in pedestrian areas. Class 3 scooters have a top speed of 8 mph and can go on roads and pavements.

There are two main designs: three-wheel scooters are generally quite manoeuvrable and thus suitable for indoor use or use in tight spaces. Four-wheel scooters offer greater stability and are ideal for outdoor use on various terrains.

Scooters come in lightweight models, which are easy to transport, and heavy-duty options for users who need extra strength and durability. Battery range, speed, comfort and adjustability are also important considerations when choosing the best model for you.

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You don't have to want to be the next heavyweight champion to benefit from boxing. In fact, the modern version of the sport has very little to do with taking punches and everything to do with learning how to move, react and work your whole body.

That versatility is one of its biggest attractions. A typical boxing workout can combine cardiovascular exercise, strength, balance, coordination and agility – a workout for the whole body – often in a single session. One minute you're skipping, the next you're working combinations on a punchbag before moving into bodyweight exercises or footwork drills.

Boxing also makes you think. Remembering combinations, watching a moving target, maintaining your stance and coordinating your feet with your hands all demand concentration. That mental engagement can make a session feel considerably more absorbing than simply running through the same machines at the gym.

It can also improve balance, reaction speed and body awareness, particularly as you become more comfortable with the movements.

Furthermore, there is something undeniably satisfying about hitting a punchbag after a difficult day. The physical intensity gives you something immediate to concentrate on, while the repetitive rhythm of punching and moving can provide a welcome break from whatever has been occupying your mind.

That doesn't mean boxing is literally a way of 'working out your anger'. Rather, it provides a structured physical outlet and demands enough concentration to stop you dwelling on everything else.



Punch Drunk

Perhaps the biggest change in modern boxing is that you don't have to spar. Boxercise classes, bag work, pad sessions and boxing-inspired gym workouts allow people to learn the movements and enjoy the fitness benefits without getting into a ring. That makes the activity much more accessible, particularly for anyone who might otherwise be intimidated by the idea of boxing.

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Christmas Shopping - Know Your Rights

Many of us still like a wander around the shops, but a huge number choose to shop online. So, what rights do we have, regardless of where we buy?

Shopping on the High Street

- Goods must be of satisfactory quality, fit for purpose and as described
- You have a legal right to a full refund if you reject faulty goods within 30 days of purchase
- After 30 days, you generally have the right to a repair or replacement
- You have no automatic legal right to a refund if you simply change your mind
- The shop can decide whether to offer an exchange, credit note or refund
- If a shop advertises a returns policy, it must honour it

Shopping Online

- You have the same protection against faulty goods
- You have 14 days from the day after receiving the goods to change your mind and cancel the purchase
- You have a further 14 days in which to return the goods
- You don't have to give a reason for your change of mind
- The retailer must refund the original delivery charge as well as the purchase price
- You may have to pay return postage if the retailer informed you of this beforehand
- If an item is personalised, bespoke or perishable, the retailer is not obliged to offer a refund

Finally, beware of online scams and counterfeit goods. They are constantly on the rise. If an offer seems too good to be true, it probably is a scam. Don't rush into buying anything. If you have doubts, check with friends and family first before making a decision. Use Paypal or a credit card to make payments, as they carry limited insurance against fraudulent transactions.

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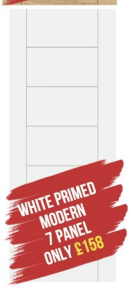

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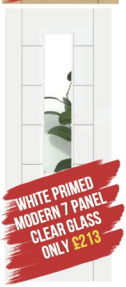

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Gadget Gifts Under £50

You don't have to spend a fortune to give someone a gadget they'll genuinely use. In fact, some of the most useful technology around is surprisingly affordable. There is plenty to choose from without crossing the £50 mark.

For an easier life

Some of the best gadgets are the ones you don't think you need until somebody gives you one. A compact digital kitchen scale, for example, can make baking and portioning far easier, while a rechargeable electric screwdriver can save an extraordinary amount of fiddling with small household jobs. There are also clever motion-sensor lights, compact label makers and small charging stations that can bring a little more order to busy homes.

For the home lover

Technology has become increasingly useful around the house without necessarily becoming complicated. Affordable smart plugs can make lamps and appliances easier to control, while simple smart bulbs can transform the atmosphere of a room without requiring a complete lighting overhaul.

There are also useful gadgets for the kitchen, including milk frothers, food thermometers, compact coffee equipment and rechargeable kitchen accessories. These make particularly good gifts because they feel like a treat while still having a practical purpose.

For travellers

A universal travel adaptor is one of those objects that becomes indispensable the moment you need it, while compact power banks, cable organisers and luggage trackers can all earn their place in a suitcase.

Even something as simple as a good pair of wireless headphones can make a long train journey or flight considerably more pleasant.

For the car

Phone mounts, USB charging accessories, compact tyre inflators and emergency power devices are practical presents for drivers, while small cleaning gadgets can help keep the car looking respectable between visits to a professional.

For younger drivers, a useful car accessory can be a far better gift than another novelty item that quickly loses its appeal.

For the person who has everything

This is where the more unusual gadgets come in. Think digital photo displays, miniature projectors, electronic notebooks, clever desk lights or small devices designed to make hobbies more enjoyable. They don't necessarily solve a major problem, but they can add something to a person's daily routine.

And that is really the secret of a good gadget gift. It doesn't need to be expensive, revolutionary or particularly glamorous. It simply needs to make somebody think, "That's actually rather useful."

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Christmas Traditions

Christmas in the UK is filled with enchanting traditions and festive spirit that make it truly magical. Here are some highlights.



Decorations
The sight of twinkling lights, beautifully adorned Christmas trees, and festive wreaths brings a warm glow to homes and streets.

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

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

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

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

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

Boxing Day
The day after Christmas is a time for relaxation, shopping sales, and enjoying sports, adding to the festive vibe.

Festive Spirit
The overall sense of goodwill, kindness, and community during this season creates a magical atmosphere that resonates with many.





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Santa's Sleigh Runs

Christmas 2026 - South Side

Maltby and Rother Valley Lions will be out and about with Santa's sleigh in the following areas over the Christmas period:

SOUTH SIDE Area & Start Point

Wednesday	9th Dec	Old North Anston & Mill Lane - Cutler Pub, 5.30pm
Thursday	10th Dec	Aughton - Bottom of Ulley View 5.30pm
Friday	11th Dec	Aston (Lodge Ln & Redmile Estate) - Church School, 5.30pm
Saturday	12th Dec	No evening sleigh
Sunday	13th Dec	Aston (The Chase & Rosegarth) - Church Ln, 5.30pm
Monday	14th Dec	Swallow Wood, Swifts & Alpina Estate Swallow Wood Rd. Chesterfield Rd End 5.30pm
Tuesday	15th Dec	Laughton Common - Gallows Pub, 5.30pm
Wednesday	16th Dec	Throapham/ Manor Rd - Hunters Chase, 5.30pm
Thursday	17th Dec	Woodsetts - Butchers Arms, 5.30pm
Friday	18th Dec	Dinnington High Nook - Top of Swinston Hill, 5.30pm
Saturday	19th Dec	No evening sleigh
Sunday	20th Dec	Harthill - Bee Hive Pub, 5.30pm
Monday	21st Dec	North Anston (Lakeland Drive) - Swinston Hill End, 5.30pm
Tuesday	22nd Dec	Dinnington (Church Ln) - Aldi, 5.30pm
Wednesday	23rd Dec	South Anston - Trooper Pub, 5.30pm
Thursday	24th Dec	North Anston (Wimpey Estate) - Little Mester, 4.30pm



Static

Saturday	19th Dec	Tesco – Dinnington, 10.00am to 2.00pm
Saturday	19th Dec	Morrisons – Halfway, 10.00am to 2.00pm
Sunday	20th Dec	Morrisons – Catcliffe, 10.00am to 2.00pm

All of the members and volunteers of Maltby and Rother Valley Lions Club would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for 2027.

Please note due to weather conditions: times/dates/routes may have to change.

*Please check our **Facebook page** for up-to-date information and detailed routes.*
*Visit our **website** to find out more about the Lions: **www.maltbylions.org.uk***
*If you require any further information please call: **Lion President Lynn on 07504326336.***

Like

Maltby and Rother Valley Lions

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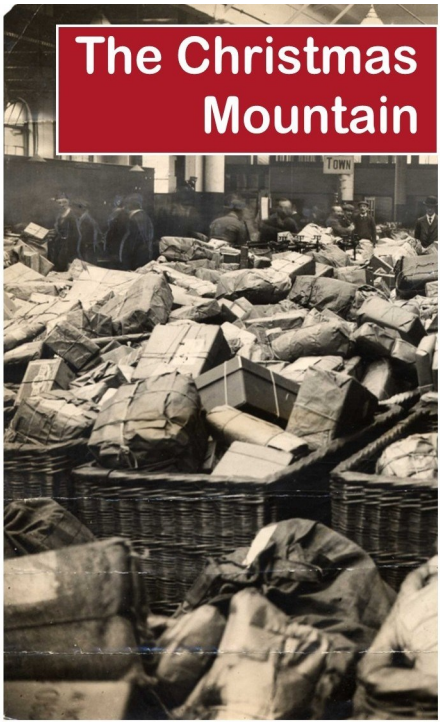
The Christmas Mountain



There are few photographs that capture the sheer scale of Christmas quite like this one. Taken at Mount Pleasant sorting office in London in 1922 - before the age of barcodes, computerised sorting and online tracking - every parcel had to be handled, sorted and sent on its way by hand.

Mount Pleasant was one of the largest sorting offices in the world. The Post Office had taken over part of the former Coldbath Fields Prison site in 1887 and by Christmas 1897, an estimated 190,000 items were being handled there every day.

The Christmas rush was a formidable annual event, as getting all the post through London was very difficult. The capital's streets were notoriously congested, and the volume of mail continued to grow.

In 1914, the Post Office began constructing an underground railway, operating around 70 feet below London's streets, specifically to move mail between major sorting offices without having to contend with the traffic above. The First World War interrupted the project, and although the tunnels were completed in 1917, soaring post-war costs delayed the scheme further. Work finally resumed in 1923.

Four years later, the Post Office Underground Railway, later known as Mail Rail, opened in December 1927. Mount Pleasant was its central station and depot, connecting the sorting office with locations including Paddington and Liverpool Street. The railway operated until its closure in 2003.





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Aston Footpath No. 10

Residents of Aston who use the gennel known as Aston Footpath No 10, which runs from Mansfield Road to the Brook at Heron Hill/Church Lane, may already be aware that this area has become overgrown with bushes, trees and brambles and that the green space between the footpath and Redmile Housing Estate has been used for fly tipping.

It has taken me three years to find out who is responsible for maintaining this area, and I now have the contact details for the relevant parties. The building contractors, Redmile Housing, have appointed Greenbelt Group to maintain the footpath and surrounding area.

Although the grass is cut regularly, the trees and bushes appear to have been neglected, and I am trying to get a regular maintenance programme implemented. But I am only one voice, so I feel that if residents come together, our united effort could achieve much more than my individual attempts.

If you would like to raise a complaint or report an issue about the state of the footpath, these are the people to contact:

Greenspace Redmile Fairfield Estate Issues
Initially, contact customercare@greenbelt.co.uk and gelenquiries@greenbelt.co.uk. If no response or action then escalate to chris.mclellan@greenbeltgroup.co.uk. If still nothing happens then escalate to the following directors of Greenbelt Group: colin.thompson@greenbeltgroup.co.uk; donald.ferguson@greenbeltgroup.co.uk; tariq.saeed@greenbeltgroup.co.uk

Footpath Aston No10 (only) issues
Contact RMBC, Alex.Couszins@rotherham.gov.uk

Thank you for your help.

Adrian Davies, Aston resident





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Gardening in December



December is a quieter month in the garden, but when the weather permits, there are important jobs to get done.

Planting

December is a good month to plant bare-root trees and shrubs including some fruit bushes, hedge plants and deciduous trees. At this time of the year, these plants are dormant and will take better.

Pruning

Carefully cut back any shoots on your wisteria that grew over the summer to two or three buds. Also, remove diseased or damaged growth from climbing roses and prune back older flowered side shoots by a half to two-thirds.

Soil Preparation

If you have clay soil, roughly dig it over and let the wintry weather naturally break down the large lumps. Add organic matter, like well-rotted manure or compost, and nutrients will be released into the soil, which helps improve drainage and allows birds to help themselves to any pests who might be residing in your ground.

Wildlife Care

Keep bird feeders stocked and ensure fresh water is available, especially during frosty weather. Birds need water to drink and to keep clean. It is also important at this time of year to keep your bird feeders clean to help avoid disease.

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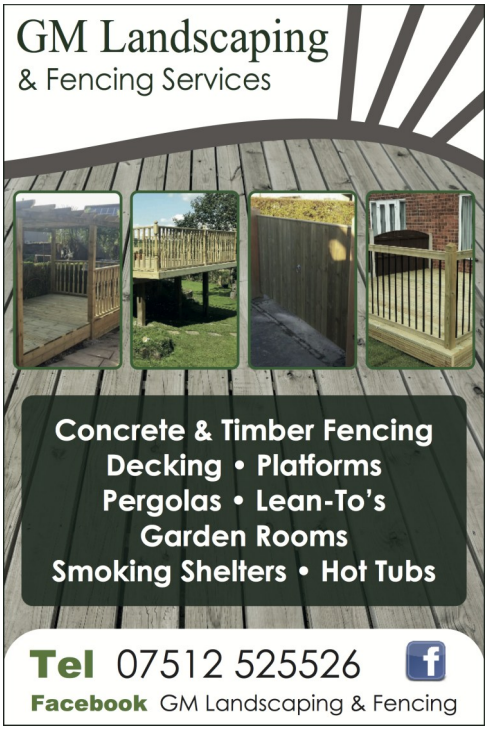

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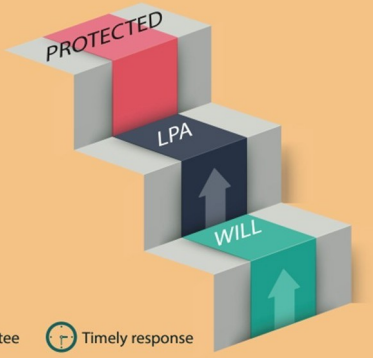

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Cranberry Bread & Butter Pudding

Serves 4
Prep time: 20 mins (plus resting time)
Cooking Time: 45 minutes



Ingredients
25g dried cranberries
100ml cranberry juice
2 tsp sugar
4 eggs
450ml milk
450ml single cream (you can use all milk if you prefer)
50g sugar
grated rind of 1 orange
50g butter
1 loaf bread (at least a day old, sliced into thick cubes)
Soft brown sugar for sprinkling over

Method
Poach the dried cranberries in the cranberry juice with 2 tsp sugar. Reduce the mixture down until it thickens and becomes a little jammy. Place it on one side to cool.

In a separate dish beat together the milk, cream (if using) and eggs, and then stir in the sugar and grated orange rind.

Butter the bread on both sides and place into a buttered dish, alternating layers of bread with layers of cranberry. Finish with a layer of bread then sprinkle a few cranberries over the top.

Pour the egg mixture over everything and let the pudding rest for at least 2 hours (or overnight in the fridge).

Preheat the oven to 180°C or gas mark 4. Sprinkle the finished pudding with soft brown sugar and place in the oven for 45 minutes.

This is lovely served with crème fraîche or custard.

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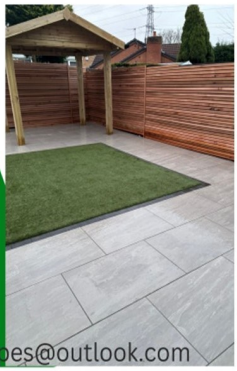
TODWICK



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Visitors are welcome to come and try us for free at any time without obligation. Contact Chris Stanton 01709 818927, email cdstanton@hotmail.com.

Upcoming Meetings

Dec 11 - Lunch, The Elms, Retford
Jan 8 - Stephen Willimot, Brodsworth Hall
Jan 22 - Sam Millard, Rufford Poachers

Affected By Cancer Support Group

Our support group offers a safe space for anyone affected in any way by cancer. We meet on the second Tuesday of the month from 11.30am-1pm at The Salvation Army Hall, 3 Leicester Road, Dinnington S25 2PX. Contact us at ladiesbagclub@gmail.com.

Please email debbie@yourmag.net with details of your community group in Aston, Aughton and Swallownest

The Cardiac Support Group

On Friday 7 November we enjoyed a talk by Mike Ogden as we sailed for miles through the waterways and lochs of several counties.

We look forward to Christmas lunch on December 14th at The Shireoaks Inn. On 8 January 2027 is our AGM when we share a pie and pea lunch with entertainment from The Two Mikes.

May I wish all YourMag readers a very Happy Christmas and a healthy 2027.

Pat Broskom (Chair) 01909 562361

Anston Arts and Crafts

As 2026 comes to a close, we would like to thank YourMag for allowing us editorial space to promote our group and also the team at Anston Parish Council who assist us in our changing table layouts and help bring our Autumn Fair plan to fruition.

Thanks also go to all our member family, who gather weekly to craft, chat and of course eat cake!

After a short break from mid-December, we will re-open on Wednesday, 6 January 2027 at Anston Parish Hall from 12-3pm, ready to begin our New Year crafting projects.

If you fancy joining us, our door is always open. For more information, contact our Membership Secretary Sue Sayles on 01909 564891 or roysayles123@btinternet.com. Or just pop in!









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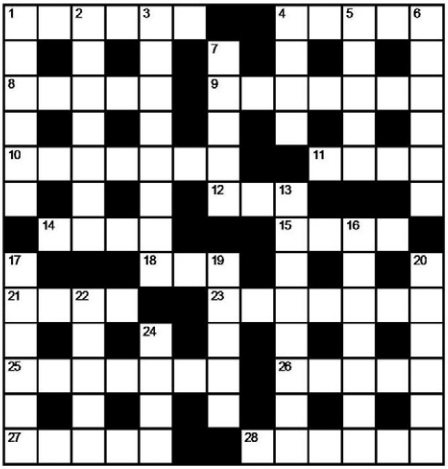

Across

1 Individual, human (6)
4 Fortuitous, blessed (5)
8 Alert, attentive (5)
9 Trap, tangle (7)
10 Young tree (7)
11 Scram, vamoose (4)
12 Devour, ingest (3)
14 Song of praise (4)
15 Bow, curve (4)
18 Leaf-based beverage (3)
21 3D shape (4)
23 Domestic help (7)
25 Story, justification (7)
26 Spine, prickle (5)
27 Molten, liquefied (5)
28 Admired, cherished (6)

Down

1 Applaud, appreciate (6)
2 Recoat, reattach (7)
3 Compliant, law-abiding (8)
4 Mislay, misplace (4)
5 Teach, explain (5)
6 Cowardly (6)
7 Fend-off, equivocate (5)
13 Accomplished, brilliant (8)
16 Directness, honesty (7)
17 Sweet pastry (6)
19 Keen, sharp (5)
20 Cut-back, sheared (6)
22 Rasher, pancetta (5)
24 Active, engaged (4)

Word Search

Can you find all of the festive words hidden in the grid?

Angels	Christ	Goodwill	Manger	Star
Bells	Church	Greetings	Peace	Sweets
Bethlehem	December	Holly	Rudolph	Toys
Candles	Decorations	Ivy	Santa	Tree
Carols	Elf	Jesus	Saviour	Wise Men
Cheer	Feast	Joy	Sleigh	Wreaths
Chimney	Gifts	Love	Snow	

Sudoku

How to play Sudoku

It's simple! Fill in the grid so that each row, column and 3 x 3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 with no repetition. You don't need to be a genius. These puzzles use logic alone. Watch out! Sudoku is highly addictive!

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

Solutions on Page 34

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

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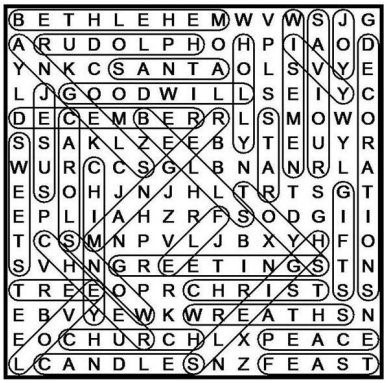
DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE 9 DECEMBER

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS



Solution to December Quick Crossword



Solution December Word Search

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

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