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October / November 2023

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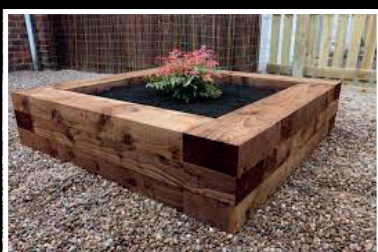
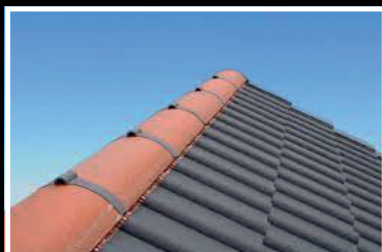
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When talking to the Manager of Cloudy2Clear windows Brian Stanley it became clear that these values have been held dear for a

number of years. Since starting the business some years ago Cloudy2Clear have remained true to their core values of supporting the local community by providing a service that saves the public money.

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with extra 30 minutes for those who want to stay longer

Free to come every week!

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Reach For A Star invites all families to join us for fun and fitness in the park! Every Saturday, we bring families together to play, exercise and simply relax whilst your children make new friends.

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Location
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Reach for a Star



What to expect

- ★ Join a vibrant community of families who support and inspire one another
- ★ Combine the benefits of being in nature with physical activity
- ★ Take a break from screens and your daily routine to reconnect as a family and with others
- ★ Opportunity to start new friendships, share parenting experiences and advice
- ★ Get your children active outdoors and build healthy habits together
- ★ Enjoy the added endorphins, as well as improved physical and mental well-being


Why not join us this Saturday and try something new with your family? There's no pressure to participate so come along to get a feel for Active Stars. Meet some new faces, and enjoy a change of scenery for both you and your children.

We are always looking for volunteers!

We are also looking for an aspiring yoga teacher or fitness instructor who'd like to dedicate some of their time to Active Stars on a flexible basis, come along to find out more!

Contact details
Contact number: 07443032026
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Darlaston & Wednesbury Life

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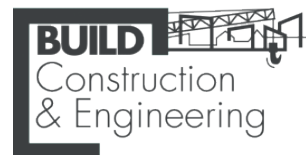


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Dear Reader,

Welcome to the October/November issue of Darlaston & Wednesbury Life.

I don't think I'll be the only one who won't be disappointed to see the end of the summer. What summer? Exactly!

We had a week in Malta, when the weather was actually quite good, but since then, it's gone to pot. We're now looking forward to a week in Turkey with some of the family in October and to be honest, I can't wait.

My parents have been raving about Icmeler [in Turkey] for about 20 years (they go for four weeks in May and another four in September) and for various reasons, we're the only members of the family who haven't been out with them, so we're putting that right this year.

My Dad celebrates his 92nd Birthday while we're there and I'd say he's as fit and healthy as any other nonagenarian and I hope he's still going abroad when he hits 100, but you never know.

I'm also being a good brother by taking my sister, who lost her hubby a few years ago and isn't comfortable travelling on her own. I know they say you can't choose your family, but mine aren't a bad lot, so a week away should be fine. I'm taking earplugs, just in case...

Talking of holidays, we had a few days in the Lake District in August. If you've never been, you're missing a treat – read about our visit towards the back of the magazine.

While I write this, there's still a lot of anger about the Spanish football official who kissed one of the players without consent. What was he thinking? Is it a culture thing? If so, it needs to change. I hope in the UK, we've come a long way in the past twenty or thirty years, but I'm pretty sure there's more work and education needed.

We can all do a bit more (me included). Be polite, be respectful and most of all, be kind. It doesn't cost anything.

Due to the increasing cost of print, more than ever, our advertisers are vitally important to the continuation of this magazine. Please have a look at their adverts and if you do purchase anything from them, PLEASE TELL THEM YOU SAW THE ADVERT IN THE DARLASTON & WEDNESBURY LIFE MAGAZINE!

The next issue will cover December and January (doesn't time fly!) and will be out on 8th December, so if you want to be in it, please contact me by 17th November.

Enjoy your read!

Simon



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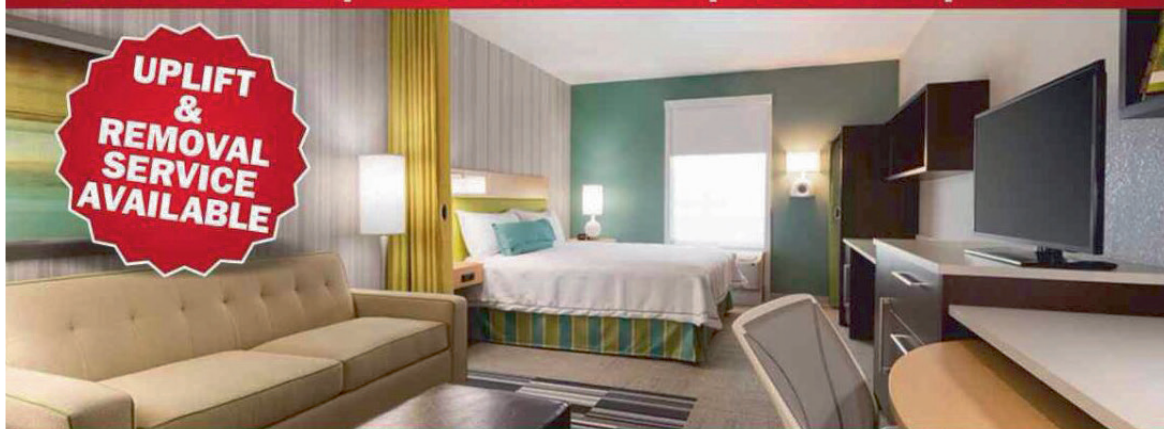


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Not All Heroes Wear Capes and These Are True Heroes

On the 30th June 2023 while at work at A & R Vehicle Services, 257 Darlaston Road, Darlaston, Wednesbury, Wayne Bowring had a cardiac arrest and collapsed.

His work colleagues came to his aid and administered CPR and mouth to mouth and the ambulance was called and the paramedics arrived along with the air ambulance response car and shocked Wayne to get him back before blue lighting him to New Cross Hospital.

The paramedics from the Ashmore Lake Depot in Willenhall James, Bronwin and Caroline on Ambulance WL4919 worked on Wayne and said later if it hadn't had been for his work colleague's quick reaction Wayne would not have survived.

He owes these guys his life. Wayne was what was known as clinically dead as he was gone for over 5 minutes, so, they really are true heroes.

Wayne is now recovering after having fitted a mechanical heart valve and a Defibrillator.

New Cross hospital, where he spent nearly 4 weeks couldn't have looked after him better and his surgeon Steve Billing was amazing in finding out Wayne's issue with his heart faulty valve.

Wayne said, "I will be forever grateful to these amazing work colleagues.

He has worked at A & R Vehicle Services for 3 years, as a Body Shop Technician.

Wayne had a sick note for 12 weeks so will be returning to work around October.

Wayne and his wife Melanie are avid readers of the magazine and wanted to share this good news story with the local community.





Wild Canvas: Creative Hiking Adventure

Free family day out to Cannock Chase!

21st October 2023

Transport provided!
Collection in Darlaston at 9:30am with predicted return at 3pm

Active Stars invites the families of Darlaston for an adventure in Cannock Chase. Join us for active outdoor fun and nature-inspired creativity. Come and enjoy a memorable day filled with exploration, imagination, and open-air excitement with Active Stars!

Hosted by  Reach for a Star
Funded by  CREATIVE BLACK COUNTRY

Only 32 spaces available

For all families in Darlaston, this **free day out** will give you the chance to get creative in nature, collecting items along the walk and using it to create nature-inspired artwork after the trip.

Activities on the day

- 9:30am collection & transport
- Create your own map of the hike
- Collecting keepsakes along the way
- Noting down memorable moments and observations
- Video diary documented by That's All Media C.I.C.
- Professional photos capturing the day by a local mom
- 3pm coach return to Darlaston

Packing list


- ☐ Wellies
- ☐ Raincoat
- ☐ Comfy clothes
- ☐ Packed lunch

As part of the trip, on a separate day, COAR will host a day to get creative through art, poetry or a short story, using your keepsakes and experiences. Artwork will then be displayed in a communal exhibition!

Join our Facebook group!

Get in touch with us to book your space!

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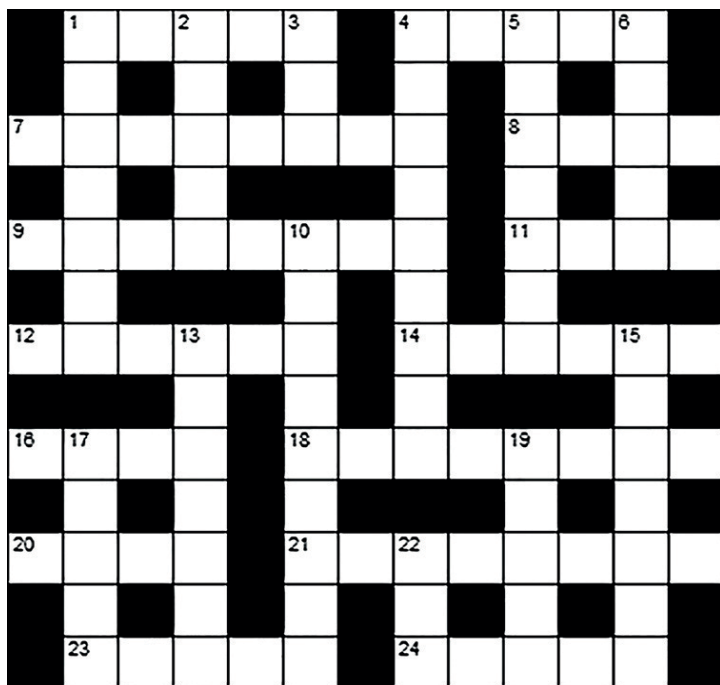
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SHOWROOMS OPEN 9am-5pm Monday to Saturday

* For qualifying cases

Crossword

Please see answers
on page 31



Across

- 1 Biblical grandson of Abraham (5)
- 4 Jolly outing or excursion (5)
- 7 Directly above (8)
- 8 Conservative (informal) (4)
- 9 Definitive (8)
- 11 Desert in Asia (4)
- 12 Silky wool (6)
- 14 Individual, organism (6)
- 16 Squabble, altercation (4)
- 18 Lesson, coaching session (8)
- 20 Indian garment (4)
- 21 Southern English county (8)
- 23 Last letter of the Greek alphabet (5)
- 24 Pleasant, refreshing weather (5)

Down

- 1 Spear (sporting) (7)
- 2 Royal breed of dog (5)
- 3 Farewell (informal) (3)
- 4 Decision, opinion (9)
- 5 Tense, anxious (7)
- 6 Spasm, pound (5)
- 10 Girl's name (Russian) (9)
- 13 Sketch, rough plan (7)
- 15 Catastrophe (7)
- 17 Ancient Greek philosopher (5)
- 19 Bucolic, pastoral (5)
- 22 Angry group (3)



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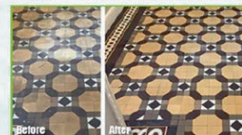
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Festive Lunch Menu

Closed Mondays. Not available Sundays.
Available from 28th November to Friday 22nd December
Also available 28th, 29th, 30th, December
Two course £19.50 Three course £24.50

Two course pensioners £16.50
Three course pensioners £19.50

Full vegan, vegetarian & gluten free menu available on request

Starters

- Tomato & basil soup, herb croutons
- Devon crab, chilled king prawns, pickled salad, lime & dill crème fresh.
- Brie & caramelised red onion quiche
- Breaded mushrooms, herb mayonnaise, mix leaf
- Duck liver, cranberry & orange pate, toasted French bread slices

Mains

- Roast Turkey Breast, sage & onion stuffing, chipolata sausage, pan gravy
- Roast sirloin of Herefordshire beef, beef dripping roast potatoes, Yorkshire pudding
- Luxury shepherd's pie Slow braised pulled lamb shoulder, in a red wine and mint gravy, topped with cheese potato
- Pan roast seabass fillet on a bed of creamed shredded sprouts, chestnuts & bacon lardons
- Festive burger, panko breaded chicken breast, melted brie, crispy pancetta, cranberry sauce, triple cooked chips, beer battered onion rings
- 8oz Herefordshire sirloin steak, triple cooked chips, baked tomato, sautéed mushrooms, beer battered onion rings **£7.50 supplement.**

Desserts

- Christmas pudding
- Apple crumble, custard
- Sicilian Lemon meringue pie, seasonal berries
- Black forest baked cheesecake

Drinks for lunch and evening menu

- House port £3.20
- Late bottle vintage £3.95
- Filter coffee £2.50
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Also available 28th, 29th, 30th, December

Two Course £27.95 Three Course £32.50

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Starters

Tomato Bisque, toasted crouton, basil oil

French onion stuffed mushrooms baked with a
gruyere crust

Smoked beef brisket Macaroni cheese

Tian of Cornish crab, north Atlantic prawns &
avocado, lemon dressing

Pressed pork belly, seared scallop, king prawn
tempura, cider mustard and sorrel dressing

Trio of mini scotch egg, Turkey & stuffing, smoked
haddock, pork & black pudding.

Mini baked garlic & rosemary studded camembert,
warm onion marmalade, garlic dough balls

Mains

Hand carved Roast Turkey breast, sage & onion
stuffing, roast potatoes, chipolata sausage

Guinness braised blade of beef, Colcannon potato,
roast parsnip, kale

Sage & panko breaded pork tenderloin Medallions,
fondant potato, honey roast chanterey carrot, tender
stem broccoli, apricot & apple puree

Slow roast lamb shank, Dauphinoise potato,
red wine & mint jus

Beef wellington, rosemary & garlic fondant potato,
baked heritage carrots,
rioja jus **£9.50 supplement**

Festive Burger

Panko Breaded chicken fillet melted brie & cranberry,
crispy pancetta, triple cooked chips, beer battered
onion rings.

Desserts

Traditional Christmas pudding, custard

Sticky toffee pudding, biscoff butterscotch,
vanilla ice cream

Black forest cheesecake, baked chocolate
cheesecake, topped with black forest fruits, whipped
cream and shaved chocolate

Vanilla crème Brule, cinnamon & orange shortbread

Festive Eaton mess, Christmas pudding, orange truffle
baileys whipped cream, crushed meringue

Sicilian lemon meringue, seasonal berries

Warm chocolate brownie, vanilla ice cream

Chefs selection of festive cheese & port,
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Grill

All our steaks come with beer battered onion rings,
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choice of sauce.

8oz sirloin steak **£7.50 supplement**

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10oz fillet **£12.50 supplement**

Sauces: peppercorn, beef dripping, Diane, bearnaise

Hope into Action

Hope into Action Black Country Areas (HIABCA) is a charity (reg: 1202215) incorporated in 2023 as a Community Interest Organisation (CIO) that provides supported accommodation for the homeless population in Walsall, Sandwell, Wolverhampton and Dudley. Our operations in the Black Country area were previously under the national Hope into Action UK organisation until April 1st 2023, which was when HIABCA was created. The charity focuses on supporting homeless individuals, including ex-offenders, victims of modern-day slavery, refugees, and asylum seekers, to improve their circumstances and transition to independent living.

HIABCA is at the forefront of addressing the pressing challenges of homelessness which our communities face every day. The cost-of-living crisis has dramatically increased the difficulties faced by many of the individuals we serve. As the cost of essentials soar, the demand for our services has also surged significantly. Homelessness is an acute consequence of these economic hardships and has impacted many in the communities in which we live and serve. The number of individuals seeking our assistance has risen markedly, underscoring the need for direct intervention, in the provision of supported accommodation services for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness. We offer a holistic support system that empowers individuals to increase their confidence and regain a

place in society that values their contribution and increases their wellbeing.

Our Empowerment Workers have guided tenants towards gaining employment, accessing training, and securing financial housing support as well as supporting individuals to secure and maintain affordable accommodation.



By offering supported accommodation, this instils a foundation for stability and growth, facilitating the restoration of dignity and purpose in the lives of those we serve. Through tailored interventions, we have witnessed individuals breaking free from the cycle of homelessness, building better family relationships, and contributing positively to society. Beyond individual transformation, our work enriches the community as a whole, alleviating the strain on local resources and promoting social cohesion.

We adopt a holistic approach that leverages partnerships with four local churches and community organizations. These alliances generate a robust support network with shared resources, volunteer efforts, and expertise. By engaging with the community, we continue to support those who are actively engaged in the use of our services and those at risk of homelessness. Additionally, we support our service users to build their capacity for resilience and an eventual transition towards alternative accommodation when their residence with us is nearing its end.

Through established partnerships, an understanding of service gaps, and a commitment to supporting the most vulnerable, we amplify the effectiveness of our community's efforts to work towards reducing homelessness.

If you want to know more or visit our offices, please contact Merylen Pearce, Director.

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Woods Methodist Church, Coronation Rd.
Wednesbury WS10 0TT

Lauren 07415 277950

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Delves Baptist Church, Bell Lane,
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Lesley 07545 263348

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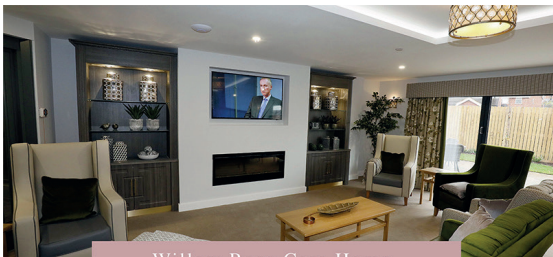
Our Manager

Shelly Trotman is the Manager of Willow Rose and is a dedicated nurse with over thirty years' experience in the care sector. She has previously worked with many large healthcare companies in the UK and so she brings a wealth of knowledge to her new role.

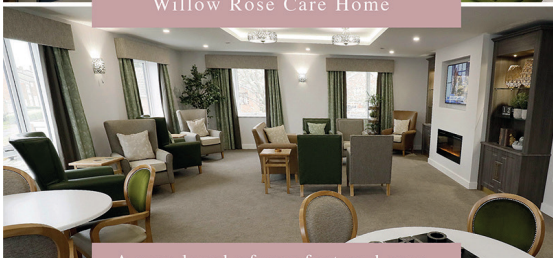
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Sovereign Brass

Magazine Editor, Simon Archer, caught up with Phil Green from Sovereign Brass to find more about their history and recent successes.

SA – Would tell us a little bit about the history of the band and how you find yourself in Wednesbury?

PG – The band started in 1987, in Smethwick, rehearsing for quite a long time at Holly Lodge School. Many of the band had been students in Sandwell and, not wanting to give up playing, formed Sovereign Brass. The band had a meteoric rise through the brass band leagues, rising from 4th Section (lowest) in 1987 to Championship (highest) by 1991 and competing with bands such as Brighouse & Rastrick and Grimethorpe Colliery in 1992 at the Royal Albert Hall. In 1992 the band were ranked amongst the top 20 brass bands in the world!

Finding a rehearsal facility for a band that consists of 25 brass players, 3 percussionists and the plethora of percussion equipment we use, plus the library cabinets where we store music, our music stands, uniforms, 30 chairs..... we've moved around through Sandwell a little bit over the last 30 years but, through a parishioner at St. Mary's in Wednesbury, who happens to be a player and committee member, we've found a new and very good home at the Church Hall.

SA – So, are you all professional musicians?

PG – No, not at all. Brass Bands are all amateur status. We have teachers, accountants, medical practitioners, police staff and a few retirees. The standard of our concerts though is as professional as you'll get.



SA – And you rehearse together, how often?

PG – Normally twice a week, for two hours each time. So, four hours ensemble practice, with our Musical Director each week but we are all expected to practice at home so that we only rehearse playing together, not individual player's parts. That works most of the time. We also try to perform around 12 concerts and take part in at least 2 competitions each year. Altogether we're probably together, at some point, on 120 days of the year. Thank goodness we all have understanding families.

SA – And speaking of contests, how have your latest results been?

PG – Well, we've actually won both of the competitions we've competed at this year. We're currently the Midlands (First Section) Champions and also the winners of the first contest run by the Birmingham Conservatoire, the cleverly named ConStest, beating bands that are ranked higher than us at both events. We also came Runners-up in the National Championships – not too shabby!

SA – And is it prize money that funds the band?

PG – No, I wish! The entry fee for each contest is as much as the prize money in most cases. Funding is our major headache as a committee. We all pay a voluntary monthly subscription which covers some

of our fixed costs (rent, insurances, fees, music, instruments, uniforms, transport, repairs etc) but we have a shortfall that needs to be met through our concerts. It costs us approximately £12,000 per year to run the band and keep our assets current. We're constantly looking for new ways to raise funds – including searching for organisations with an interest in local community arts to 'sponsor' items our expenditure. If any of your readers have ideas or suggestions, we'd love to hear from them.

SA – You mention local community arts – what do you do in and around Wednesbury?

PG – Well, we've been really lucky to form a relationship with the Jill and Donna at the Knights of Wednesbury, promoting concerts at the Town Hall on Thursday evenings. We played a Christmas Gala Concert last year and this year a Night at the Proms. The Christmas concert was really well attended and received and we're looking forward to the same this year. The Proms concert was an experiment to see if there's an audience for that type of event in Wednesbury – it seems not – at least not on a Thursday night! We were asked to play at the turning on the Wednesbury lights but had a prior engagement, performed Carols by the Christmas Tree in the town centre and this year played at the Friends of Brunswick Park community day. We'd love to perform more often so again, if your readers have suggestions for bookings, we would be really interested to work with them to put on a concert. We can perform as a full band (28 players) or smaller groups, to fit the occasion (and the stage of course!).



SA - What are your plans for the rest of the year?

PG – July has been a really busy month with festivals in Pershore (Worcestershire) and Ironbridge (Shropshire) and our first CD recording in 21 years. This is a Christmas CD of all our favourite music. It took 16 hours, over a Saturday and Sunday, to record and we hope to have a first edit in September for our Musical Director to hear and help with the editing process. It should be out in time to purchase at our concerts in December. Also in September we'll be playing in Cheltenham at the Brass Band Championships to represent the Midlands. It'll be a tough contest with the best bands from Yorkshire, Lancashire, Scotland and Wales, amongst 17 others, all competing for the title. We're looking to perform a Stage and Screen programme in early October and then travel to Evesham to perform at another festival in November. After leading the Remembrance parade into Dartmouth Park (one of our highlights of the year) it's full speed ahead into our Christmas programmes. There are a few weekends off in that period but not many.....

SA – So we'll see you out and about over Christmas?

PG – Absolutely. We're confirming the date of the Gala Concert with Jill and Donna, will be performing a wonderful Community Carol Service at St Mary's (with some special guest). Invites for the Wednesbury Lights or Carols by the Tree haven't arrived yet but if we can play at those events we will. We'll also probably be out in small groups busking, trying to raise a few bob to keep our heads above water in this ever-more expensive climate.

SA –If anyone has any ideas about how they might help, or just want to get in touch how can they reach you?

PG – Well, we have a brand-new website. The address is www.sovereignbrass.co.uk; then we have FaceBook/Twitter/Instagram (Sovereign Brass) or can be contacted by email (info@sovereignbrass.co.uk). And if none of those methods appeal, I can be called directly on **07740 740211**.



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Luxuriating in Low Wood Bay

With spectacular views across Lake Windermere, it was easy to see why Low Wood Bay should be high on your list of spa hotels to visit.

Sitting on the A591, between Ambleside village, this lakefront resort and marina is a 3 mile drive from Windermere village and the train station.

This well-presented venue has it all, with Low Wood Bay Watersports Centre across the road, or a relaxing health and wellbeing spa, with outdoor infinity pool, several saunas and steam rooms, indoor pool or if you want to get your walking boots on, the possibilities are endless.

We arrived mid-afternoon and were shown to our room in the exclusive Winander Club, which allows guests access to Winander Club Lounges with free hot drinks and chilled water, a roof top terrace with panoramic views of Lake Windermere, Langdale Pikes and beyond and exclusive access to the Winander Bar and roof top terrace. The Winander Club private breakfast lounge serves continental buffet options and cooked breakfasts, which include vegetarian and vegan options. Guests also benefit from a late check out of 12 noon.



Our room had stunning views of the surrounding countryside and we decided to stretch our legs after the car journey and followed the well sign posted paths into the woods, where we found streams and waterfalls and felt like we'd well and truly arrived in the Lake District.

On our last visit, we sampled the delights of The W restaurant, so this time, we opted for the cosy Blue Smoke Restaurant, which offers a wide selection of local produce, to satisfy all tastes. I started with a spicy, crispy duck pancake and followed with easily the best lobster I've ever had. My wife had prawns first, which, in the interests of research, I had to try, followed by a rib-eye steak, which I was less fortunate with. It melts in your (her) mouth apparently. I'll have to take her word. The desserts didn't disappoint either – you can't beat a lemon



meringue, well, that is unless you try their chocolate brownie. You decide. We couldn't.

We were intrigued by the poster for 'wood-fired afternoon teas' (the wife is a connoisseur), so had to book one for the following day to see what that involved.

After a lovely breakfast, with views of the lake and surrounding scenery, we went into the main building to begin our three hour 'Thermal Spa Journey'. Having visited quite a few spas around the UK, we feel qualified to know a good one from a not so good one.

This one has it all. A good-sized indoor pool, outdoor infinity pool, where you can sip prosecco (they have it on draught, you know) and lose your thoughts while watching the paddle boarders and boat trippers on Lake Windermere. I know, sounds like heaven! The thing we liked best is that it's never over-crowded. Other spas we've been to tend to cram in as many visitors as they can, but not this one.

Lunch was the much-anticipated Wood-fired afternoon tea, which didn't disappoint. If I could design an afternoon tea, this would probably come close. The food came on a three tiered set of pans, which the waitress struggled to carry, with a mouth watering selection of tasty bites, including; pulled pork baps, tacos, nachos, spicy chicken wings, wedges, coleslaw, battered prawns and a few sweet treats of doughnuts with caramel sauce, custard tarts (possibly pastel de natas). They did keep one traditional item – scones, jam and cream. Or is it cream and jam. Let's not start that one!

To accompany the food, they offer a 'prosecco flute' which consists of four small glasses – three normal and one dessert wine, which the wife took advantage of and informed me that they were lovely.

I needed to give my liver a rest and also wanted to



appreciate (and stay awake for) my aromatherapy massage, which was to follow.

The other half had a back massage and facial and we both agreed that the treatments were top notch and we left our spa day feeling relaxed, refreshed and chilled.

There's so much to see and do around Windermere that we decided to go out for our evening meal and searched online for a restaurant that served local dishes. When in Cumbria...

I booked a table at the Lamplighter Dining Rooms in Windermere's High Street, which had a few good reviews and looked like it had a homely feel.

I started with the marinated pig's cheeks, apple sauce and home-made slaw, while the missus had her old favourite, chicken liver parfait, which we both happily devoured. The waiter had invited us to try the 'specials' of lamb rump and sea bass which were both generous portions and cooked to perfection. I'm not sure why, but I was most impressed with the presentation.

I think the earlier lunch and the portion sizes here, meant we couldn't do justice to afters, but it was a close run thing as I'm sure the 'local cheese' board was winking at me.

As I mentioned, there's so much to see and do in these parts and frankly, we hadn't seen and done enough, so we asked if our room was available for an extra night and luckily it was, so we were able to get the car out and go off exploring the following morning.

It's on trips like these, that I wish I could paint or draw.

If you can, there's no shortage of landscapes, hills, mountains or stretches of water to satisfy your needs. We had no plan and just went over hills and round lakes until we landed in the village of Coniston for a pit stop. The hill, rising above the village, known locally as the 'Old Man of Coniston' is strangely beguiling and somewhat scary. I'm not sure I'd like to live there with that sitting above me.

We had half an idea to visit Wordsworth Grasmere, but as we approached, we could see how busy it was, so decided to wander lonely as a cloud (see what I did there) over to Keswick for lunch. For such a small town, it has a plentiful selection of eateries, most with outdoor seating and as it was such a nice day, we plonked our bums on a bench by the Dog & Gun and had a lovely jacket spud.

For our last supper (I always over dramatize things!) we'd tried to get into the Old Stamp House, but the Michelin starred restaurant had been on Tom Kerridge's 'Hidden World of Hospitality' so the world and his wife had beaten us to it, so we went for a place a few doors down, which looked quirky (in a good way) with its witty description of each dish.

I phoned Lucy, owner of Lucy on a Plate and she booked us in for 7.45pm. I was surprised how chatty she was and how interested she was in taking our names (Carol without an e) and asking if we were celebrating anything.

All became clear when we arrived and were seated with our menus. At Lucy's, they print a new menu each night, with a front page which mentions some of the people dining there that evening. Halfway down the page I spot, "Simon and Carol are rejoicing after 34 years of matrimonial harmony". What a lovely touch and if I may say, a cleverly crafted unique selling point.

That finished off a most enjoyable visit, to what is fast becoming our favourite part of the country.

We're in good company as the list of royalty and celebrities, who have visited Low Wood Bay include; Prince (now King) Charles, Princess Anne, King Hussein of Jordan, Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman.

I hope they enjoyed their stay as much as we did, but I bet they didn't get a mention on Lucy's menu!

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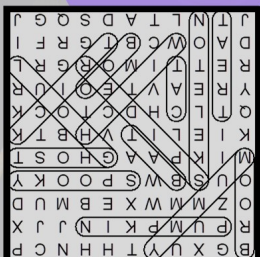
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From page 10



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