

FREE



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ISSUE 26

JAN / FEB 2023



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and of course still delivered in our very own approachable, friendly way from our Milford office. Rest assured, there are still complimentary beers and puppies to play with!

Happy New Year Boom Readers!

With the expense of Christmas and the current financial climate I think most of us are feeling the pinch. That's why Issue 26 is jam-packed with cost-cutting ideas to see you through 2023.

We begin with ideas to cut down your food bill from dietician Sascha Landskron and then Transition Belper have put together some great energy-saving tips for your home; Rhys from Peak Money hits us with his top tips for managing finances in these uncertain times, whilst Amy from Primrose Art Club has some DIY craft ideas for cheap entertainment at home!

Our centre pages are filled with inspiration for days out this Winter including FREE and 'under £5' suggestions.

We have a new writer, Alice Harmon, a local children's author who has found lots of ways to get FREE books for kids. Following on from this Dormouse Books, a new independent Book Shop, share their story and book recommendations.

Don't let the cold weather stop you from getting out with the kids – it's all about the right kit - and Spotty Otter share their top tips for successful winter walks. Sara Green also shares her ideas for garden preparation in time for Spring and some great free resources to support this.

As my own children are growing, the magazine is adapting to reach children from pre-school all the way through Primary school. We therefore are starting to list groups & classes for 0-11 years in our popular timetable, which now covers any of the areas to which we distribute, from Allestree to Belper, to Ripley to Crich and everywhere in-between!

We are very much an online magazine as well as print so don't forget to share our mag with friends at www.boommagazine.co.uk and follow us on social



Jo Leigh

Editor of Boom Magazine and local mum
info@boommagazine.co.uk • www.boommagazine.co.uk



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We always welcome more ideas and feedback for Boom Magazine – please fill in our quick survey at:



Magazine design by:

45 Degrees Design & Print
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Front cover credits:

Photograph taken by Marcia Thompson and provided by Spottyotter.co.uk

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CHEAP AND CHEERFUL EATS

Written by Sascha Landskron, local mum and dietitian.

This article is intended to offer some support and ideas to make your shopping bill more manageable:



Plan your meals and shop with a list. You will be less likely to fall prey to the offers and add-ons promoted by many supermarkets to make us spend more.

Schedule your shop. If you shop with the children in tow or when you are hungry, you are more

likely to make snap decisions and buy things that you would not buy otherwise. Shop at the end of the day, just before the supermarket closes, and you will be able to pick up last minute reduced fare.

Buy fruit and vegetables in season. They taste better, cost less and are more nutritious. Apples in September are on average significantly less expensive than they are in June. Don't be afraid to buy frozen fruit and vegetables. They are likely to have been picked ripe and then flash frozen, rather than picked green and ripened artificially in a warehouse. Even tinned fruit and vegetables can be nutritious. Choose fruit tinned in juice, rather than syrup, and pour off the sugary juice from the fruit. Pour the salty brine from tinned vegetables.

Give online shopping a try. When you search for items, you can list them by relevance or by price to find the least expensive option. Click and collect may also be free in your area.

Avoid food waste. Cup your two hands together as if you were catching water from a fountain. This is the size of your stomach, and ideally the volume that should go on your plate at mealtimes. The same two-hand rule is true for babies and children. It's easy to serve too much for little ones and then end up throwing out the excess. Many baby and toddler serving dishes are too large. Try to find bowls and plates that hold the volume of their two hands.

Freeze your loaves of sliced bread. They keep fresh longer and you can pop them right from the freezer into the toaster. You can also make sandwiches with frozen bread in the morning and they will defrost by lunchtime.

Refresh your wilted veggies. Slice the ends off carrots, celery, cucumber, and other vegetables and soak them in a container of water in the fridge overnight. If they are just wilted (but not moldy) they have lost their water content. They will suck up water and stay fresh in the same way as cut flowers do.

Modify your recipes and go veggie (or part-veggie). The cost, per gram of protein, for meat is significantly higher than the equivalent cost of vegetarian alternatives. If your family are not keen on lentils, beans, pulses, tofu etc., try going part-veggie. For example, if you are making spaghetti bolognese, you can use less mince and add in red lentils when you add the tomato sauce. Unless you have especially hypersensitive or aversive fussy eaters, they are unlikely to notice, and you will have saved money, reduced your carbon footprint and increased the fibre and nutrient content of your dinner. Still love your meat? You can save by reducing the amount of meat by a third or a half and doubling the vegetables in most casserole and soup recipes.

Pre-prepared food and ready meals will almost always cost you more in the long run, compared to cooking from fresh. But who has the time to cook?! And let's be honest chopping vegetables can be soul-destroyingly boring. Give yourself a break and use quick meals when it's too busy or stressful at home. But if the kids are settled and you are chopping for one meal, why not chop up the rest of the onions, carrots, peppers etc. and freeze them in containers or freezer bags for another meal? Then when you are short on time, take them out of the freezer, knock them on the counter to break up the pieces and dump them into the soup pot, casserole dish or slow cooker. The same goes for grated cheese. It's much more expensive than blocks of cheese. Grate it yourself (when you have a minute of time) and freeze little ready-to-go bags or containers. If you are cooking a meal that can be frozen, make a double or triple batch and freeze it for a home-made ready meal next week. The extra that you pay for double ingredients will be recouped the following week when you buy one less meal.

Nutritious food ideas that cost less:

- Be a Cereal Killer! Most breakfast cereals are ultra-processed and expensive. Try porridge instead – add one cup of large flake oats, to one cup of milk in a saucepan and leave in the fridge overnight. It's quick to heat up on the hob the next morning, and the cost per bowl is significantly less.
- Tinned mackerel in tomato sauce and tinned sardines in olive oil are nutrient powerhouses! Small oily fish are less expensive and healthier than salmon and tuna because they contain fewer toxins.
- Cottage cheese and Greek yogurt – packed with low-cost high-quality protein.

- Chicken thighs – more iron than chicken breasts and less expensive.
- Natural peanut butter – use in sandwiches for more protein than cheese spread or jam.
- Red lentils – instead of (or mixed in with) minced beef.



Find recipes and food ideas to save money and reduce waste on: www.respectfood.com



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A 5-STEP PLAN TO REDUCE ENERGY AND SAVE MONEY

By Tony Cooper, Transition Belper

Here are some low-cost actions you can take. You may need to put some time in, so you've gotta wanna do it!

STEP 1 – SPEND TIME GETTING USED TO THE NUMBERS

- Track your Gas and Electricity - Monitor usage daily/ weekly/monthly, and relate it to what you are doing to cause it – heating, appliance use etc. You'll be able to measure how effective some of your actions are. Get used to using KWH to make comparisons
- Smart Meters - make tracking easy. It displays your current usage every 30 mins/daily/weekly etc. If you don't have one – get your energy supplier to fit one – for free



DONT FORGET - The PRICE CAP applies to your tariffs (pence/KWH), not your total £££ energy spend. You still need to reduce KWH usage to save money

STEP 2 – MANAGE YOUR CENTRAL HEATING

Your biggest energy gobbler so top of the list:

- Keep your boiler serviced and check all your radiators are working (tip – bleeding radiators is a simple DIY task but worth it- web search 'bleeding radiators')
- If you have a combi boiler (with no hot water tank) check the central heating water temperature (the FLOW TEMPERATURE) from your boiler is below 60 degC. This enables condensing boilers to run efficiently and save money. More info to help you at www.theheatinghub.co.uk. Your radiators will take a little longer to heat up, but you can adjust your thermostat 'on' time if you need to.



- If you don't have Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRVs) – get some fitted and use them. You can use these to control when and how much heat goes into each room
- If there are rooms you don't use for large parts of the day/night, keep the doors shut and don't heat them until you use them
- Program your main thermostat to deliver most heat when you need it, and least when you don't. It's a false economy to keep your home unnecessarily warm overnight or when no-one is in – better to bring the temperature up when you need the warmth
- Experiment with turning down your thermostat by 1 or more degrees. But you still need to stay comfortable so combine this with wearing warmer clothes
- Avoid using gas fires which send heat up the chimney.

STEP 3 – LOW COST INSULATION IMPROVEMENTS

The warmer your home, the more insulation you need:

- Insulate yourself first!
- If you have long pipe-runs between some of your radiators, wrap insulation around them where you can get at them
- Check your loft insulation is adequate – if not, add more. This can be quite disruptive but well worth it. You need at least 300mm (12in.) of loose laid insulation. If you want to store stuff on boards, use 'loft legs' to raise the boards above the joists allowing more insulation, or fit expanded polystyrene slabs on top of existing boards. Don't forget the loft access door
- Go for 100% Double Glazing - but if your budget won't reach, consider removable secondary glazing using perspex and magnetic strip seal – neat, insulates and kills draughts





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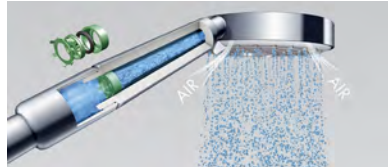
- Curtains and Blinds - Even if double glazed, windows and patio doors will lose more heat than insulated cavity walls. You can fit simple, inexpensive cellular insulating blinds close to window frames, as well as heavy lined curtains in front of them. IKEA do them cheaply, look for 'HOPPVALS Cellular blind'
- Radiators under Windows - You can deflect rising warm air into the room by fitting a shelf above the radiator or extending the window sill. Never close curtains in front of working radiators – better to shorten them. Fit insulating foil behind the radiators
- Draughty Windows/Doors - Use stick-on sealing strips and brush seals as appropriate
- Chimneys - Stop up unused flues with balloons – search 'chimney balloons'



STEP 4 - USE HOT WATER EFFICIENTLY

- Hot Tap - Run your hot tap water. If it's unbearably hot you should reduce its temperature, as it's safer and will save energy. If you have a hot storage tank, you can adjust the thermostat there, but you must keep the temperature of stored water at or above 60 degC for hygiene reasons. If you have no hot water storage tank (combi system), you can adjust at the boiler (tap symbol) to 55 degC to allow the boiler to run efficiently and to reduce heat loss in the pipes. If you're unsure about how to do this, get professional help
- Insulate - If you have a hot water storage tank make sure it's well insulated. There will still be heat from pipes to air clothes. Avoid using the electric immersion heater for additional heat if you can
- Don't boil any more kettle water than you need at the time
- Dishwashers are efficient, as long as they run full.
- Minimise tumble dryer use and run your washing machine on a low temperature (Eco) cycle

- Reduce shower time - Showers use a lot of energy. 12 mins in a 10 KW electric shower will cost you 2 KWH or 70p or up to £10 per week
- Try fitting an AERATED SHOWER HEAD - Water sucks air into the shower head, which means you can turn down the flow for the same shower effect. Search 'lowenergysupermarket'



STEP 5 - SAVE ELECTRICITY

- Minimise electricity use for space heating. The price of a KWH of electricity is 3 or 4 times that of gas. Use central heating radiators with TRVs when you can
- Switch to LED lighting indoors and out
- Switch off stuff you're not using – smart meter will reveal overnight consumption

And if you're struggling to pay your energy bills now, or can't manage to take any of the actions we've suggested above, 'Warmer Homes Derby and Derbyshire' is here to help. They can help you manage your energy bills, provide clear and simple advice about what you can do to use less energy, and help you carry out the suggestions you decide to follow. They can be contacted on 0800 677 1332 or at wdd@mea.org.uk. For full details see www.mea.org.uk



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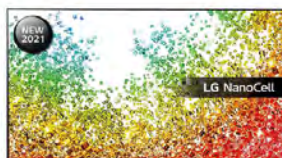
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TOP FINANCIAL TIPS..

By Rhys Schofield, Managing Director of Peak Money



Well what a rollercoaster of a year it has been for all of us financially.

Utilities, petrol, food and mortgages. It has all got significantly more expensive. There are, however, steps that most people can take to leave a bit more money in their back pocket each month.

I've come up with a list of favorites that I have come across from talking to our customers this year:

1. Take the 1 day savings challenge. Save 1p on day 1, 2p on day 2, 3p on the third and so on. After a year you'll have saved over £650!

2. Have a no-spend weekend once a month where you do free activities like walking, movie night or free museums. You could even cook with leftovers. The savings do add up.

3. Try a cheaper holiday. I did this semi-disastrously when we decided to drive to Wales to 'camp in the car' for a few days in April - and lasted one night. My back decided this was not a good idea so we ended up booking a yurt up a Welsh mountain on Air B&B. Hands down that week - with an outdoor shower, camp fire and compost toilet was one of the best holidays I've ever had. Your kids will love it!

4. Buy wonky veg. It all tastes the same when you've cooked it but it's significantly cheaper. Bonus points if it's a rude shape!

5. Don't cancel those insurance premiums. It may look tempting but with costs going up that 'deadline to headline' for most of us is shorter. The loss of an income would be truly disastrous. That being said, review what you're paying for with a proper advisor who might be able to get you more bang for your buck.

6. Change your bank account. The banks actually make this easy for you and often offer bonuses for doing this. Sometimes up to £200.

7. When you're in the supermarket look at the unit price. For example for washing powder look at the price per wash as this will tell you what is actually cheapest.

8. Don't go food shopping on an empty stomach and make a list before you go. This avoids those impulse buys. I certainly end up coming home with a lot of crisps if I shop hungry.

9. Share deals. There are plenty of websites out there where you can earn vouchers for referring friends and family for things they were likely to do anyway. At Peak we've always offered £50 in vouchers for referring friends and family who use us to arrange mortgages and protection. Some of our clients earn a few hundred pounds a month.

10. Switch phone and broadband providers using websites like uSwitch. We know staying put just gets us a more expensive bill each year so don't take it sitting down. Those annual RPI cost increases take the mickey a bit.

11. Skim your change. Most online banking apps allow you to round up your spending to the nearest pound and keep the difference in a savings account. It's a nice steady way to build a savings pot.

12. Cook in bulk. It's well and truly stew season right now so a full slow cooker not only means tea but it means Tupperware's of lunch for the week. £4 meal deals would be £20 for 5 days so you'll see an immediate saving. Just remember to bring them home to wash up before you create a biohazard.



Rhys runs Peak Mortgages and Protection (Part of Peak Money) - multiple winners of Derbyshire Mortgage Advisors of the Year - based in Milford.

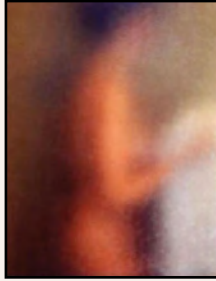
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Fri 4-5pm (10-13 yrs)
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https://primroseart.club/

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Kilburn Village Hall: Thurs 9.30 - 11am

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Strutts Community Centre, Belper:

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https://belperpilates.co.uk

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(0-18m - non-walkers)

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Tues 11:15am-12:15pm

St Joseph's RC Church Hall, Ripley:

Fri 10:45-11:45am

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Ripley Leisure Centre:

Thurs, 10-11am (Birth-6m)

11:30am-12:30pm (6m-13m)

1-2pm (Birth-13m)

BOOK 07989 443734

babysensory.com/centralderbyshire

Nest & Nurture

Nest & Nurture Studio, Belper North Mill

Hatchlings (Baby Massage & Postnatal Yoga

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Nestlings Baby Yoga

(4/5m - crawling)

Mon 10-11am BOOK

Fledglings - Messy/sensory play and yoga (6/7

months - 2 years)

Thur 10.30am-11.30am

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Fridays Baby Massage/Baby Yoga 1.30-2.30pm

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Welcoming all families, babies & toddlers to our play, colouring, reading & sensory areas area. Hot/ cold drinks and cakes provided.

Fb/ 078773 56262 / Kilburnbaby@gmail.com

www.facebook.com/KilburnBabyAndToddlers

Belper Early Years Centre

Alder Road, Belper

Natural World Group (6m-5yrs)

Fri 10-11:30am

Toys, sing-alongs & sensory room

No need to book (£1 donation)

Special Friends Coffee Morning

& Playgroup

(for children with additional needs and their

families) 2nd Weds of Month 9:45-11:45am

belperearlyyearsfun@gmail.com/01773 821288

B.E.A.R.S.

Breastfeeding Support Group

Belper Early Years Centre, Alder Road:

Fri 11:15-2:15pm

Heanor Children's Centre:

Tues 9:30-11am

Alfreton Children's Centre:

Thurs 10:30-11:30am

Refreshments, social and breastfeeding support,

meet other parents, toys and entertainment for

the little ones. See FB page for breastfeeding

support and details of walk & talk sessions

bearbreastfeeding@gmail.com/07776 495900

Little Church (0-5's)

St Peter's Church Belper

Wed 10am-12pm

Prams & First Shoes Meet-Up (0-2.5s)

St Mark's Church, Openwoodgate

Thurs 9:30-11:30am

Messy Church

St Swithun's Church, Belper

2nd Sat in the month 4-6pm.

St Mark's Church, Openwoodgate

4th Sat in the month 4-6pm

Story and Rhyme Time

Belper Library

(please contact direct for latest details)

Tel: 01629 533 192

Email: belper.library@derbyshire.gov.uk

Strong Mums Pre & Postnatal Exercise

Class (babies 0-12 mths)

Cross Fit Deviant, Mansfield Rd Derby

Tues & Thurs 1-2pm

jemma.shaw@hotmail.com

Acorns Toddler Group (0-4's)

Woodlands Church, Allestree

Mon - 9:30-11:15am

Free play, snacks, singing and a Bible story

01332 551336/ www.woodlandschurch.org.uk

If you are a new group and wish to be listed in later editions...
please get in touch info@boommagazine.co.uk

** Please note that this information was correct at the time of publishing. Please check all details before attending.

Yellow Daisies Stay & Play (0-5's)

The Village Hall, Heage

Mon, Wed & Fri- 9-11am
Fb (term-time only)

Edward Bear Praise & Play Toddler Group (0-5's)

St Oswald's Church, Ashbourne
Thurs – 9:30-10:30am (term-time only)
Ashbournechurch@gmail.com
01335 343052

Moo Music Alfreton (0-5 yrs)

Genesis Centre, Alfreton:

Mon & Tues

Baby Moo (0-walking) – 9:30-10am

Mixed Moo (0-5) 10:20-11am

Scout Hut, Swanwick:

Wed

Mixed Moo (0-5) – 10-10:40am

Village Hall, Somercotes:

Thurs

Mixed Moo (0-5) – 10-10:40am

Greenwich Park Pavilion, Ripley:

Fri

Mixed Moo (0-5) – 10-10:40am

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www.moo-music.co.uk/alfreton

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Kilburn Village Hall: Tues 4pm

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burnettacademy@hotmail.com | 07779 521141

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www.vsdance.co.uk BOOK

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admin@mandm.academy / 07818 559309

www.mandm.academy

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07799892320 | <https://captiveaudience.org.uk/>

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Ballet Classes (2.5 – 17yrs)

Wirksworth Memorial Hall:

Mon

Preschool - 9.40-10.20am

Reception - Y3 - From 4pm – 7pm

Middleton Village Hall:

Thurs

Y4+ - From 5pm – 8.30pm

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www.peakballet.co.uk

Mini Sportz (2-7 yrs)

Duffield Methodist Church

Mon – 9:30-10:15am (3.5-4.5 yrs)

Fri – 9:30-10:05am (2.5-3.5 yrs)

St Alkmunds, Duffield

Thurs – 4-4.45pm (y1&2)

Thurs – 4:55-5:40pm (R)

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www.minisportz.co.uk



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3:30 - 5:45

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www.theplay-village.com



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- Matlock (Wednes)
- Darley Abbey (Thurs)
- Ripley (Fri)

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Email: Jacqui@twistintots.co.uk

07977 578 359

www.twistintots.co.uk



Welcome to



Interactive role play centres based in South Derbyshire

Titchy Town and Hero Town are both indoor play villages designed especially for little ones up to 8 years of age. Children can freely explore the many different play zones in both villages. The villages are designed to allow children's imagination to run wild whilst they role play in a safe environment.

Grown-ups can participate in their child's play, or just sit back and watch them learn whilst enjoying a mug of freshly brewed tea or coffee and an amazing homemade cake from our little coffee shop.

Where are we?

Titchy Town is based on the site of Scallywags Private Day Nursey in Chellaston (Rowallan Way, DE73 5WX).

Hero Town is based on the site of Scallywags Private Day Nursery in Melbourne (Castle Lane, DE73 8JB).

Please use Scallywags car park at both sites. You will find signage in both car parks on how to access the centres.

How it works?

Both role play centres work on a pre-book via our website and pay on arrival basis with sessions lasting 90 minutes. On your first entry you will be issued a loyalty card and for every nine sessions you attend you will receive your 10th entry free of charge! Loyalty cards can be used across both sites. Payment is cash only.

Titchy Town Play Village



Castle Store
Town House
Vets 'n' Pets
Anabelle's Café
Wash 'n' Go
Harry's Yard
Baby Zone



Hero Town Play Village



Dolly Dogs Grooming Parlour
George's Garage
Simon's Shed
Foston's Fire Station
Mrs Potts Tearoom
Castle Lane Clinic
The Land Where Dreams Come True
Baby Zone



To find out more or to book into a play session...

Visit our websites: titchytown.com or hero-town.co.uk

Inspiration for Winter Days Out



Here's a list of activities to keep little ones entertained in the winter months! We have included FREE or lower cost (under £5) attractions too but you may still need to pay parking...

Free Admission

- Derby Museum & Art Gallery
- Museum of Making, Silk Mill, Derby
- Pickford House Museum, Derby
- Erewash Museum, Ilkeston
- Wirksworth Heritage Centre
- Story Times at local libraries
- Hassop Station Bike Trail and Café
- Matlock Meadows Farm (Fri-Sun)
- Monsal Trail, (perfect for bikes, prams and wheelchairs)
- National Stone Centre & High Peak Trail, Wirksworth
- High Peak Junction Trail (wheel-friendly and with railway carriages to climb!)
- Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield (just pay parking)
- The National Arboretum, Burton

Woodlands

Here are some of our readers' favourite woods to explore:

- Shining Cliffs Woods, Ambergate
- Allestree Woods
- Heritage Wood, Ashbourne
- Dukes Quarries, Whatstandwell
- Bow Woods, Cromford
- The Chevin, Belper to Milford
- Holbrook Woods
- Shirley Parks, Osmaston
- The Longshaw Estate, Hathersage

Parks and Play Areas

- Croots Farm Shop: play area with sandpit, tractor and playground with outside tables for café cakes and coffees
- Allestree Park: beautiful lake to toddle or scoot around and woods to explore
- Carsington Water Reservoir: two updated playgrounds, sailboats, ducks and museum
- Elvaston Castle: playground & circular walk with café
- Darley Park: sensory garden, play area & café
- Three-Corner Rec, Belper: modern play equipment
- Ashford-in-the-Water: play area and river nearby to explore and feed ducks
- Youlegreave: picturesque river walk to a play park with a view
- Markeaton Park, Derby: play area with a huge pirate ship!
- Bargate Road Rec: climbing wall, zip line and space to run
- Belper River Gardens: ducks, swan boats, café and playground
- Hall Leys Park, Matlock: lovely tended green areas and playground
- Crossley Park, Ripley: playground, toilets, large grassy areas for ball games
- Shipley Park: trim trail and diverse areas to explore
- Chatsworth: adventure playground and farm
- The National Memorial Arboretum, Burton-on-Trent



Winter Walks

For family-friendly walks around Amber Valley, Derby and the Peaks check out our Family Walks for Little Legs.

It's a walks guide jam-packed with 24 easy to follow walks, just head to boomhousebooks.co.uk to get yours for just £7.99!



£5 or under

- Matlock Bath Arcades & Aquarium
(Free for under 4 years)
- Nature Tots Playgroup, Carsington Water
- Swimming (FREE for young children - age limits vary)
- Jumpin Fun Inflatable Park, Derby: Toddler/SEN/After School
- Oxygen Freejumping Derby: 'Little O's Toddler session
- Lanes Garden Centre & Open Farm, Risley
- Odeon Kids Club Cinema
(adult & child £5 on set days/times)

Swimming Pools

- Belper Leisure Centre: Pool & family fun sessions
- Ripley Leisure Centre: Pool & family fun sessions
- William Gregg Leisure Centre Heanor: Pool & family fun sessions
- Alfreton Leisure Centre: Pool & family fun sessions
- Matlock Arc: Includes a splash pad & soft play
- Moorways Sports Village & Water Park: New with slides, wave pool & soft play
- Victoria Park Leisure Centre, Ilkeston: 3 pools & slides & sensory pool
- Water Meadows, Mansfield: Water slides, waves & pirate pool

Local Attractions

Here are some of the most local ...

- Titchy Town, Chellaston
- Hero Town, Melbourne
- Dinky Dinos, Heanor
- The Playmill, Bonsal
- Peak Adventures, Rowsley
- Injoy Soft Play, Climbing and more, Derby
- Treetops Activity Centre, Riddings
- Dobbies Garden Centre Soft Play, Findern
- Play Village, Ashbourne
- Freddy's Play Kingdom, Spondon
- Hickory Dickory's Play House, Derby
- Clip n Climb, Derby
- Matlock Farm Park & Soft play: Under 2's Free
- Megazone Laser Tag, Derby
- Willows Sports Centre
- Adventure Golf & Bowling, Derbion
- Rollerworld, Derby

National Trust

You may enjoy a National Trust Membership - A family of 4 works out as £11.15 a month and local attractions include:

- Children's Country House, Sudbury
- Kedleston Hall, Derby
- Hardwick Estate, Chesterfield
- Calke Abbey, Ticknall



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SPOTTY OTTER'S TOP TIPS FOR WINTER WALKS

By Sarah Watson at spottyotter.co.uk



Winter can be a magical time for family walks. The weather can give you so many opportunities for adventure; crisp cold days, snowy days, wet and muddy days – each can be fun if you have the right clothing!

Early morning walks on a crisp frosty day are magical! You might be lucky enough to catch sight of animal footprints left in the frost, or a hardy spiders web glittering in the sunshine. Why not make a list of all the different signs that animals leave behind them?



Rainy days means puddle jumping! Who doesn't love puddle jumping – even as adults there is nothing more satisfying than jumping in a puddle and creating a good splash! Catching raindrops on your tongue and watching rivers being created as puddles spill over are the

little things that children love to stop and explore. Perhaps we should all take a mindfulness leaf out their book and join in?

And if we are lucky, snow days are the best - don't you just love the silence that happens when it snows? What snow creatures can you build? How many snow angels can you make? Having a snowy walk means you often come across other families out having fun – it's a lovely community experience.

Don't forget to take SNACKS! Be it a nice flask of hot chocolate, or some treats to keep energy levels up. Having a winter 'picnic' while cosy and filled with good winter air is such a nice way to take a moment out your day.

My top advice on how to keep warm while out on your walks is wearing layers. They are the key to successfully avoiding having to cut your walk short because someone gets too cold (or too hot if you've got some seriously warm clothing on!)

Base layers, Micro Fleece mid layers and insulated waterproof outer layers each work to control the body temperature well, taking off a layer or adding another as needed keeps little ones comfortable and happy.

Depending on the weather and terrain of your walk, you will need a good pair of wellies or walking boots, fleece-lined wellies & neoprene wellies are fantastic for puddle jumping, snowman building or muddy trails. The best socks worn on winter walks are merino – merino wool is naturally insulating and moisture wicking, meaning that you'll avoid cold toes and sweaty feet in one easy step!

Waterproofs are essential both insulated and non-insulated suits are good depending on weather conditions.

Once you have the right layers on get out and enjoy your winter walks whatever the weather!



Spotty Otter would like to offer Boom Readers a discount on all purchases, just enter **BOOM15** at checkout to receive **15% off!**

Spotty Otter are a trusted brand specialising in outdoor wear for children. We have something to suit everyone. From the Forest range offering jackets and dungarees, to the Adventure and Patrol ranges, made from Ottertext fabrics to give ultimate protection from the elements. We also have a fabulous range of hats, scarves and gloves and 2 choices in winter wellies - amazingly flexible and toasty warm. There is the perfect product waiting for your little ones, all in one place with our Spotty Otter range available online at: www.spottyotter.co.uk

Please mention Boom when responding to adverts!

8 WAYS TO FIND... ...GREAT CHILDREN'S BOOKS ON A BUDGET



Alice Harman – children's author, www.aliceharman.com

1. BOOK SWAPPING

An amazing way for kids to enjoy regular book top-ups, and to get in the habit of talking about books with other children. Set up a WhatsApp group with local parents who have kids around the same age – to boost numbers beyond family and friends, you could ask around at school, in community groups or on Nextdoor and in local Facebook parents' groups.

Ask everyone to share a book once their child has finished with it – maybe with a little voice note or written review, if the kids are old enough. When the child who receives a book has finished it, it can go back into swap circulation!

2. NETGALLEY

Here's an exciting one – a chance to read books for free before everyone else! Sign up at netgalley.co.uk as a reviewer, complete your profile and once you're approved you can request books with your child. Publishers may not always pick you as an advance reader but it's so worth it when they do! Kids can read the ebook on a computer, tablet or smartphone – and then have fun writing a review.

Tip: To boost your approval rates, post book reviews from your child on goodreads.com, a simple book blog or a dedicated social media account. If the blog or account gets popular enough, publishers might want to send you free books in the post.

3. OXFORD OWL

Oxfordowl.co.uk is a really lovely, user-friendly website from Oxford University Press, with around 100 free kids' ebooks to read online on a computer or tablet.

It takes seconds to create a free account, then you can read straight away – and it has simple tools so you can bookmark your place, and draw/highlight on the page.

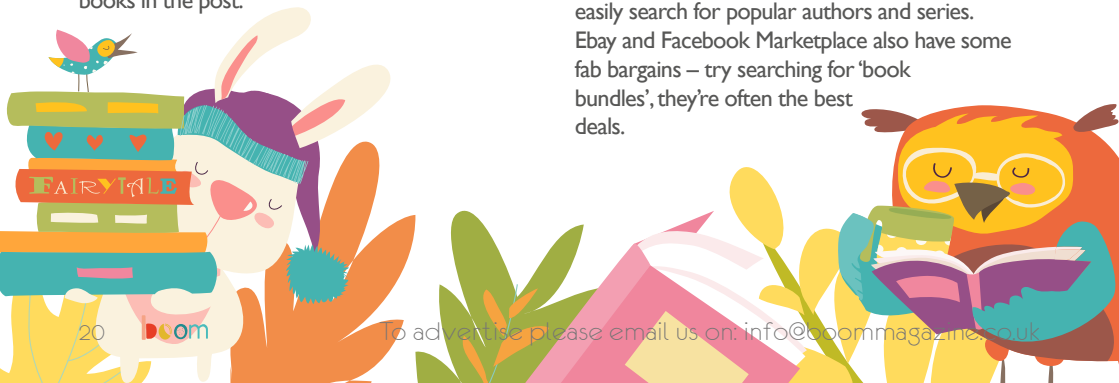
4. YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY

OBVIOUSLY, I hear you groan. But if you've got a computer, smartphone or tablet at home, there's probably a whole other online side to your local library – one that you may not have seen yet.

I'm a BIG library person but for ages I thought ebook and audiobook loans would be a total faff and ignored them. I was wrong – it's really simple. Head to your local library's website for instructions, but usually you just install an app, like Borrowbox, RBDigital or Libby, and you're good to go. Kids can choose from a fantastic selection of books – and often comics, too.

5. PRE-LOVED SHOPPING

Car boot sales, local markets and school fairs are all great places to find cheap books, and there are really some good online spots, too. Try musicmagpie.co.uk, worldofbooks.com and awesomebooks.com – they all have absolutely loads of cheap kids' books in stock, and you can easily search for popular authors and series. Ebay and Facebook Marketplace also have some fab bargains – try searching for 'book bundles', they're often the best deals.





6. YOUTUBE

There are SO many storytelling video channels to watch for free at Youtube.com. This can be a great way to get younger, less confident and more reluctant readers to feel more comfortable and enthusiastic about books.

Tàta Storytime is a particularly lovely channel aimed at 2–8 year olds, with really engaging actors reading picture books by authors of African, Caribbean and African-American heritage. Other popular channels are CBeebies Bedtime Stories and Cressida Cowell's own channel, where she reads her smash-hit *How to Train Your Dragon*, chapter by chapter, in a series of videos.

7. BOOKSTAGRAM

Twitter and Instagram are full of authors, publishers and bookshops that want your attention – and one way they do that is by running competitions to win free books. If you sidestep accounts from blockbuster authors like David Walliams and seek out smaller publishers, lesser-known authors and independent bookshops, you won't be competing against that many people – so your odds of winning can be pretty good!

You'll also hear about special deals to get books for less – and discover all sorts of amazing children's books that, without the big marketing budgets given to celeb authors, can end up a bit invisible.

8. LOCAL INDEPENDENT BOOKSHOPS

Okay, hear me out. Your first thought may well be that this is way too expensive an option, however lovely it is. But if you have any money to spend on books, independent bookshops can offer amazing value.

How? Re-reading favourite books is great for kids, and the passionate, knowledgeable staff at local bookshops can help pick the PERFECT books that they'll fall in love with and read again and again. These shops are also run by normal people who understand that money can be tight, so they often have sales, loyalty programmes and more.

Indie bookshops typically run events like author meets, storytelling sessions and workshops, too, providing hours of entertainment as well as getting kids excited about reading. Check for your nearest bookshop at booksellers.org.uk/bookshopsearch (check 'Children's' in the sidebar for specialist kids' ones).





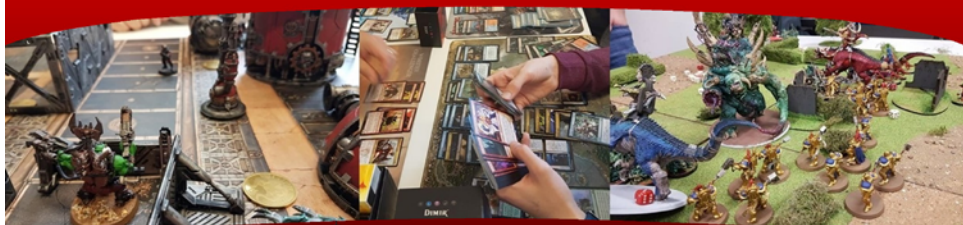
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DORMOUSE BOOKS



I asked Stephanie from 'Dormouse Books' to share a little more about what Belper's new independent book shop is all about. Here she shares the vision and ethos of a Community Interest Company that is very much about supporting local children, teens and adults to have great choices and a love for reading...

Hi I'm Stephanie. My colleague Tracy Beardmore and I set up Dormouse Books in September 2022 as a Community Interest Company. **We decided we wanted social impact rather than profit.** We aim to run groups, classes and events to help young readers and writers. Being a CIC means that any 'surplus' we make (money above general running costs) will be used for the community: running free courses; gifting book vouchers to young people; putting on big literary events.

So why a CIC? Because we don't think 'worth' can or should be measured in profit. We aim to pay our staff a living wage, pay our suppliers and contractors fairly (and on time) and get local people reading books and talking about books. Any profits go to running free events for young people and gifting books and vouchers to schools. **Nothing is more powerful than getting a child reading and letting them choose their own books is very important.**

We are bursting with ideas for projects we can run (we have a personal interest in life writing and using experimental life writing to help teenagers explore the last couple of years) but our first aim is to consult the community on the types of projects and courses they'd like to see in the shop. **Pop in and let us know your ideas!**

We've already put on plenty of events. We made potions at Halloween and read spooky stories to a group of year 8s.

We're planning lots of fun for World Book Day on the 3rd March 2023. We'll have free books in the shop for children, World Book Day fancy dress and an evening of readings and a literary feast for the grown-ups.

We invite you to come and get involved in our projects, browse our books and...visit our spooky cellar if you dare!

Here are a couple of our Children's book recommendations for Boom's readers...

Leila and the Blue Fox by Kiran Milward Hargrave

Fox wakes and begins to walk. She crosses ice and snow, over mountains and across frozen oceans, encountering bears and birds beneath the endless daylight of an Arctic summer, navigating a world that is vast, wild and wondrous.



Meanwhile, Leila embarks on a journey of her own - finding her way to the mother who left her. On a breath-taking journey across the sea, Leila rediscovers herself and the mother she thought she'd lost, with help from a determined little fox. For ages 9+

Oi Frog by Kes Gray

Bold, and vivid illustrations and a silly story make this a hilarious picture book for the youngest readers. For ages 2+



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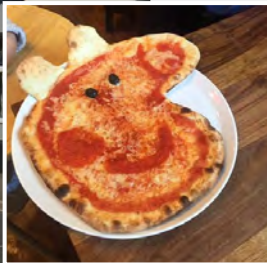
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GARDENING ON A REDUCED BUDGET

By Sara Green of Sara Green Garden Design



Gardening is a wonderful hobby that should be accessible for everyone, but many of us are put off because gardening can be expensive. Gardening is for everyone - you don't need to have a lot of know-how, expensive tools, or much outdoor space to grow. I hope these five money-saving tips encourage you to get outdoors and get planting this spring!

1. Plant pots - There are many household items that can be recycled and used as seeds trays and plant pots, such as egg boxes, plastic food containers and bottles, paper cups, toilet paper tubes, tin cans, tetra pack cartons, and even drainpipes. Larger planters can be made from old plastic tubs, bins, sacks, troughs, sinks, barrels, and barrows. Just ensure there are plenty of drainage holes at the bottom of any container! Donated pots can be acquired at the Plant Pot Exchange at **Belper Community Hall**. Alternatively ditch the pots and grow directly – simply create new “no dig” beds on top of your existing lawn (mow it first), by layering sheets of dampened cardboard, topped with a 10cm layer of peat-free compost, or build raised beds out of scaffold boards and wood off cuts.



2. Propagate – the cheapest and most sustainable way of creating new plants is through propagation, by dividing perennials, taking cuttings, and saving and sowing seeds. Ask friends to swap propagated plants, attend local plant swaps, and advertise on local selling pages. **Eartharmony** runs a free seed bank in store, as well as surplus swaps during harvest season.

3. Look local – if you are growing from seeds (the cheapest option) then why not share with friends, each sowing different plants and sharing the seedlings? Check out local **selling and recycle pages online** for plants and recycled materials (such as wood and pallets), as

well as utilising waste like cardboard packaging from local businesses (e.g. **Reunion Deli, Belper**). Shop at local plant fairs, car boots, open gardens, and markets (you can pick up good finds at plant stalls such as those ran by **Belper Gardening Club**). Borrowing and sharing tools is another means to cut costs and live more sustainably.

Wilder Belper have a Tool Library as part of **Transition Belper**

4. Soil care – The saying goes “Spend a penny on the plant and a pound on the soil”. Well, you don't need to spend that pound! Create a compost bay in your garden using wood offcuts and chicken wire, to utilise your kitchen waste, garden waste, newspapers, and cardboard. Use the eventual compost as mulch to improve the soil, suppress weeds, and to retain water through the summer. Mulch around trees and shrubs with hedge trimmings, leaves, and cut material. Grow comfrey to make your own plant feed, rather than buying in fertilisers, and bag up fallen autumn leaves from pavements and car parks to create leaf mould.

5. Switch to perennials – perennial plants are those which come back year after year. Choosing perennials over annuals can save you time and money. I'm a fan of perennials in hanging baskets, and why not transition your veg patch into a perennial veg garden? **Earthed Up!** is Belper's local edible perennial nursery and suppliers of peat-free compost too.

It's also possible to become a gardening volunteer at a local park or community garden – contact **Shipley Woodside Community Garden**, **Smalley Community Group**, **Grow Outside CIC**, **Down to Earth Derby**, **Transition Wirksworth**, or **Transition Belper** for multiple volunteer gardening groups and community projects.



Sara Green Garden Design

In addition to garden design services based in Belper, Sara also offers more affordable design consultations, and home visits to advise about planting choices, sustainability, biodiversity, gardening for wildlife, and more. Visit saragreengardendesign.co.uk

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DIY CRAFT TOYS

Created by Amy Stevenson at Primrose Art Club.

After all the excitement of gifting our loved ones with presents at Christmas, we end up with a lot of leftover boxes, wrapping paper and other things we can re-purpose.

When I was little my Gran often encouraged me to try making the things I lacked for games with my toys – eg bottle caps for plates. One time I made a rabbit run using a stick, shoe box, glue and some felt tip pens.

As the start of the year is a great time to try new things and after Christmas is the perfect time to have access to lots of materials, I thought this issue we could explore creating some D.I.Y toys.

Instead of having a set method I have created some examples of toys you could make using recyclable materials to help inspire you. I encourage you to have a go at coming up with and making your own to suit your favourite games.

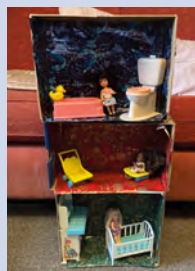
Older children and grown-ups could also have a go at upcycling some old furniture into a cool new toy, or make it fit in a themed room.

In the photo below you can see the bedside table my Gran upcycled into an oven for me when I was a toddler:



If you would like some other ideas, typing “upcycling” into pinterest will bring up loads of different decorative, useful and fun things.

What about a little house for a new cuddly toy, or a washing station for animals or dolls. You could even put boxes together to make a multi-story house, stage, tree house or Batcave!



Special thanks to Amy who provided this craft inspiration. Amy runs Primrose Art Club, check out her website to see what arts & crafts the children create during their weekly sessions - www.primroseart.club



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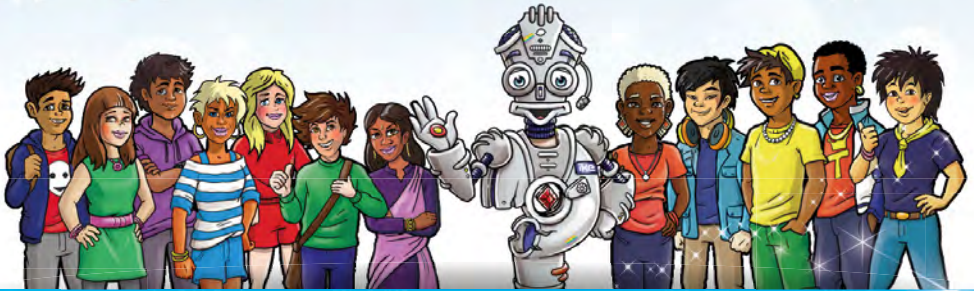
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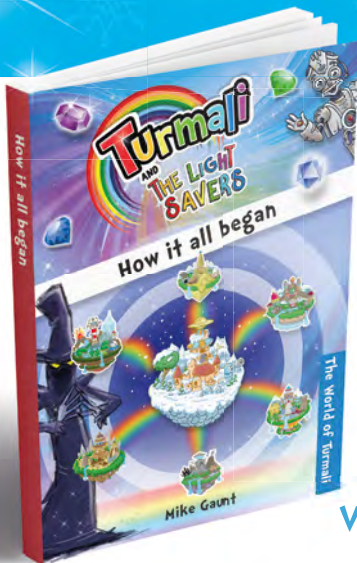
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