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January 2024

a community magazine and business directory
for residents of wythall & hollywood

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CHAPEL LANE, ST MARY'S PARK

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Happy New Year

Wishing you all a very happy 2024.

Here's hoping you've survived the mayhem of Christmas and are ready for a healthy and happy 2024.

If your aim for 2024 is to experience more fun events then see what's coming up on page 6, or if you've decided 2024 is the year to get round to updating your house or fixing all those jobs you never get round to, we have a wide range of local businesses in here who can help.



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PLEASE RECYCLE THIS MAGAZINE

Wythall needs a Residents' Association

Our corner of Bromsgrove District faces challenges that will affect everyone living in Wythall, Hollywood, Walkers Heath and Majors Green.

Pressure from an expanding Birmingham conurbation coupled with political pledges to massively increase new housebuilding could result in further loss of the Green Belt.



There are other threats and issues that require action:

- The emerging Local Plan and future development in the Green Belt
- Lack of affordable homes
- Inadequate public transport and local infrastructure
- Lack of effective police cover leading to increased crime and anti-social behaviour
- An ageing population
- Road safety
- Cost-of-living
- Education capacity
- Primary healthcare provision
- Council tax increases

Wythall Residents' Association (WRA) has existed for the past 87 years, but the active members are now maturing, and we need young blood with fresh ideas from our younger residents. **Membership costs only £5 for 3 years** and you could be involved in our management committee or become a local councillor to help shape Wythall for the future. **Everyone will be welcome, and your views and aspirations will be taken into consideration.**

For more information contact our
Hon. Secretary Helen Cleaver on 07890 689360.
She awaits your call.

Please help YOUR Community.

community events

Olly Murs Tribute Night

27 January, Knowle British Legion

This Olly Murs Tribute Night features the incredible talents of Karl Lewis. Get ready for an evening of fantastic entertainment, filled with the soulful sounds of Olly Murs, right in the heart of Knowle! Tickets from www.skiddle.com

The Full Monty

30 January - 3 February, Alexandra Theatre Birmingham

As in the 1997 smash hit film, this brand-new production is a rollercoaster ride of ups and downs, laughs and heartbreak. Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the film on a major national tour. Book now to relive the music of the 90's and have a great night out in the

company of our group of lads as they work to put on the show of their lives. Tickets from www.atgtickets.com this Elton tribute act truly offers an authentic performance that will leave guests captivated. www.thelakeatbarston.co.uk

Las Vegas Nights - tribute to Swing

9 February, The Lake at Barston

Featuring Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Bobby Darin, Bing Crosby, Nat King Cole, Perry Como, Matt Monro, Tony Bennett and many more! Looking back to the days of the Rat Pack and MGM musical to modern giants such as Michael Buble and Robbie Williams, Legends of Swing takes you on a journey with Hollywood's greatest superstars. To book tickets call 01675 444890



Valentine's Day Romance with Young Lionel

14 February, Nailcote Hall

Embrace the magic of love this Valentine's Day with the enchanting Babalola Jr, a celebrated Soul and Motown artist whose performances have left audiences spellbound. As "YOUNG LIONEL," he weaves a mesmerizing tapestry of Lionel Richie's greatest love songs. Tickets from www.nailcotehall.co.uk

Boatlife Show 2024

15-18 Feb, NEC

Book your tickets now for the UK's largest indoor boat show! Featuring some well-known faces on the live stage, family activities, indoor pool, demos, over 200 boats and more... This fantastic annual event is for the entire boating community to come together and celebrate their love of life on the water. Tickets from www.thenec.co.uk



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▶ **DIGITAL PRINTING**

▶ **SIGNS**

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GaryMM-1318, 24 Aug 2023



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a good read

By Natasha Donovan

Perfect

by Rachel Joyce

Perfect by Rachel Joyce is a beautifully written novel that delves into the intricacies of human nature, exploring themes of guilt, regret, and the search for redemption. Set against the backdrop of a quiet English town in the 1970s, the story intertwines the lives of its characters, primarily revolving around a young boy named Byron and a pivotal moment that alters his life forever.

The narrative unfolds in two parallel timelines – the first follows young Byron and his friend as they embark on a quest for truth after witnessing a tragic accident, and the second, decades later, presents Jim, a middle-aged man grappling with mental health issues and the weight of his past. The dual timelines are elegantly woven, converging to reveal the interconnectedness of these seemingly disparate lives.

Joyce's prose is evocative and deeply emotional. Her portrayal of Byron is haunting; his youthful innocence is clouded by the burdensome weight of guilt and the adult complexities he struggles to comprehend. Jim's story is equally touching, presenting a life marked by isolation, yet seeking connection and understanding.

One of the novel's strongest attributes is its exploration of the concept of 'perfect' – challenging societal norms, personal expectations, and the often-unrealistic standards we set for ourselves (especially at this time of year). Through the imperfect lives of its characters, the novel underscores the idea that perfection is an illusion, and our flaws and mistakes are integral to our humanity.



What to do with a Box

by Jane Yolen, illustrated by Chris Sheban

If your house is like mine, Christmas saw the arrival of at least one big box, and in the enchanting realm of children's literature, Jane Yolen's *What to Do with a Box* stands out as a delightful ode to imagination. With simple prose, Yolen captures the boundless potential of a plain cardboard box, turning it into a gateway to a myriad of adventures. Through her words, children are invited to sail roaring oceans, scale towering mountains, and journey to outer space, all without ever leaving their living rooms.

Integral to the magic of this book are Chris Sheban's evocative illustrations. He masterfully employs soft, dreamy tones and delicate lines to bring to life the whimsical world Yolen describes. Sheban's use of light and shadow emphasizes the contrast between reality and imagination. The fact that he draws the box with all the labels and markings still visible serves to reinforce the power of a child to see beyond what is real.

The story is a celebration of creativity, and the illustrations provide a visual foundation upon which young minds can build their dreams. In this regard, Sheban manages to tap into the essence of childhood wonder.

What to Do with a Box, is more than a story—it's an invitation. to dream, to play, and to remember that in the mind of a child, the most ordinary objects can become the most extraordinary treasures.



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Resolution Revolution

The five best new year resolutions that are NOT about losing weight.

Learn a new skill or hobby:

Commit to learning something new, like a musical instrument, a new language, or a craft. It's fulfilling; it stimulates the brain, introduces you to new communities, and can be a source of joy and pride.

Improve your financial health:

Focus on financial goals such as saving a specific amount of money, learning how to invest, or cutting down on unnecessary expenses. Small changes can lead to long-term improvements in financial security and peace of mind.

Enhance personal

relationships: Resolve to spend more quality time with family and friends. Work on communication and empathy skills to strengthen those personal connections, which are crucial for emotional well-being.

Volunteer and give back:

Commit to regular volunteering or find ways to help others in your community. It can be rewarding and benefit not only those you help but can also give you a sense of purpose and connection.

Prioritise your mental health:

You could try meditation or yoga, and if you have ever wondered whether you might benefit from therapy, this year could be the time to give it a try. Or you could simply work on increasing your leisure and relaxation time. Good mental health is foundational to overall well-being.

Each of these resolutions offers a path to self-improvement that goes beyond physical appearance, focusing instead on personal growth, happiness, and well-being in 2024.

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Mindbenders

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Get It

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try stand
2

answers on page 22

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Have a Nap-py New Year!

In a society where napping is often misconstrued as laziness, there's a growing body of scientific evidence underscoring the benefits of this habit. I love a nap, and I've witnessed firsthand the advantages that a brief midday sleep can offer, aligning with the latest findings from sleep science.

Research on napping has historically been mixed, with some studies highlighting its cognitive and mood benefits, while others pointed to potential health risks, especially in older adults. This ambiguity made experts cautious about recommending naps. However,

recent studies have refined our understanding, suggesting that the ideal nap duration is approximately 20 to 30 minutes.

The need to nap is driven by two physiological processes: homeostatic sleep pressure (HSP), which builds the longer we stay awake, and circadian rhythms that naturally induce sleepiness in the afternoon. Whether someone is a habitual napper or not also depends on genetic factors influencing these processes.

Short naps have been shown to significantly enhance certain cognitive functions, such as memory, information-processing

speed, and vigilance. Research at the National University of Singapore emphasizes the mood-improving effects of napping, noting that even a brief 10-minute nap can be refreshing. A nap lasting around 30 minutes is considered optimal, as it predominantly involves light sleep, making it easier to wake up refreshed.

While longer naps can provide more extended cognitive benefits, they also have downsides. Moving into deeper sleep stages can lead to sleep inertia, a state of grogginess upon waking, which many of us find unpleasant.



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Beef Stroganoff with Herb Pasta

Pappardelle pasta makes the most perfect partner for creamy stroganoff, but you can also rice or any pasta of your choice.



Preparation time: 10 mins (+45 mins freezer time)

Cooking time: 20 mins

Serves: 4

Ingredients

400g beef rump steak, trimmed
 1 tbsp butter
 1 tbsp olive oil
 300g small button mushrooms
 400g pappardelle pasta
 3 shallots, finely chopped
 1 tbsp plain flour
 300ml beef stock
 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
 1 tbsp tomato purée
 3 tbsp crème fraîche
 ½ x 20g pack flat-leaf parsley, chopped.

Method

Freeze the beef for 45 mins before you begin. This makes it easy to slice really thinly. Season well. Melt half the butter and half the oil in a large, non-stick frying pan. Turn the heat up and quickly sear the beef in batches until browned on both sides. Remove the meat and set aside. Repeat with the mushrooms, then set aside with the beef. Boil the pasta. Add the remaining butter and oil to the pan and soften

the shallots for a few mins. Stir in the flour for 1 min, then gradually add in the stock, stirring continuously to prevent lumps. Simmer to allow it to thicken for 5 mins, then stir in the mustard, tomato purée, crème fraîche and seasoning. Simmer for one more minute, then return the beef and mushrooms to the pan. Drain the pasta, toss with half the chopped parsley, season, then serve with the creamy stroganoff, sprinkled with the remaining parsley.

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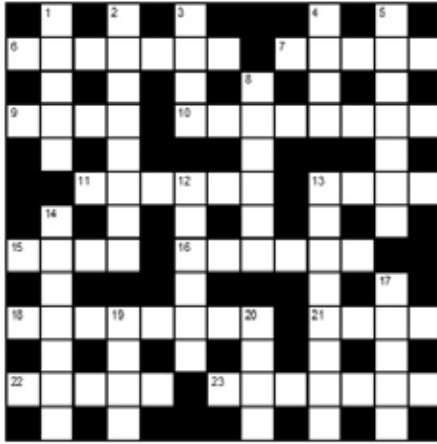
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crossword



clues

Across

- 6 Trailblazer, trendsetter (7)
- 7 Sacked, given P45 (5)
- 9 Wooden shoe (4)
- 10 Measuring rod, inept person (8)
- 11 Belongs to a club (6)
- 13 Jab, prod (4)
- 15 Cat (informal) (4)
- 16 Glace, sour, Morello (6)
- 18 Valve in the loo cistern (8)
- 21 Did not tell the truth (4)
- 22 Oozy goo! (5)
- 23 High military rank (7)

Down

- 1 Undulating landscape (5)
- 2 Chortle, titter (8)
- 3 Imprisoned, incarcerated (4)
- 4 Perfect, spanking-new (4)
- 5 Toasted fruit-bun (7)
- 8 Thinly dispersed (6)
- 12 Call forward with a gesture (6)
- 13 Adjacent lines indefinitely equidistant are said to be _____ (8)
- 14 Responsive to medical treatment (7)
- 17 Turkish meat dish cooked on a skewer (5)
- 19 Floppy (4)
- 20 Part of the underside of a boat used for stability (4)

answer on page 22



how to play sudoku

It's simple!

Fill in the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box, contains the numbers 1 through to 9 with no repetition. You don't need to be a genius. These puzzles use logic alone. Watch out! Sudoku is highly addictive.

answer on page 22



Mark O'Sullivan

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

Sudoku Solution

from page 20

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

Crossword Solution

from page 20

Solution to Mind benders

1. Forget it
2. For once (ones) in my life
3. Try to understand

mindbenders

from page 17

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