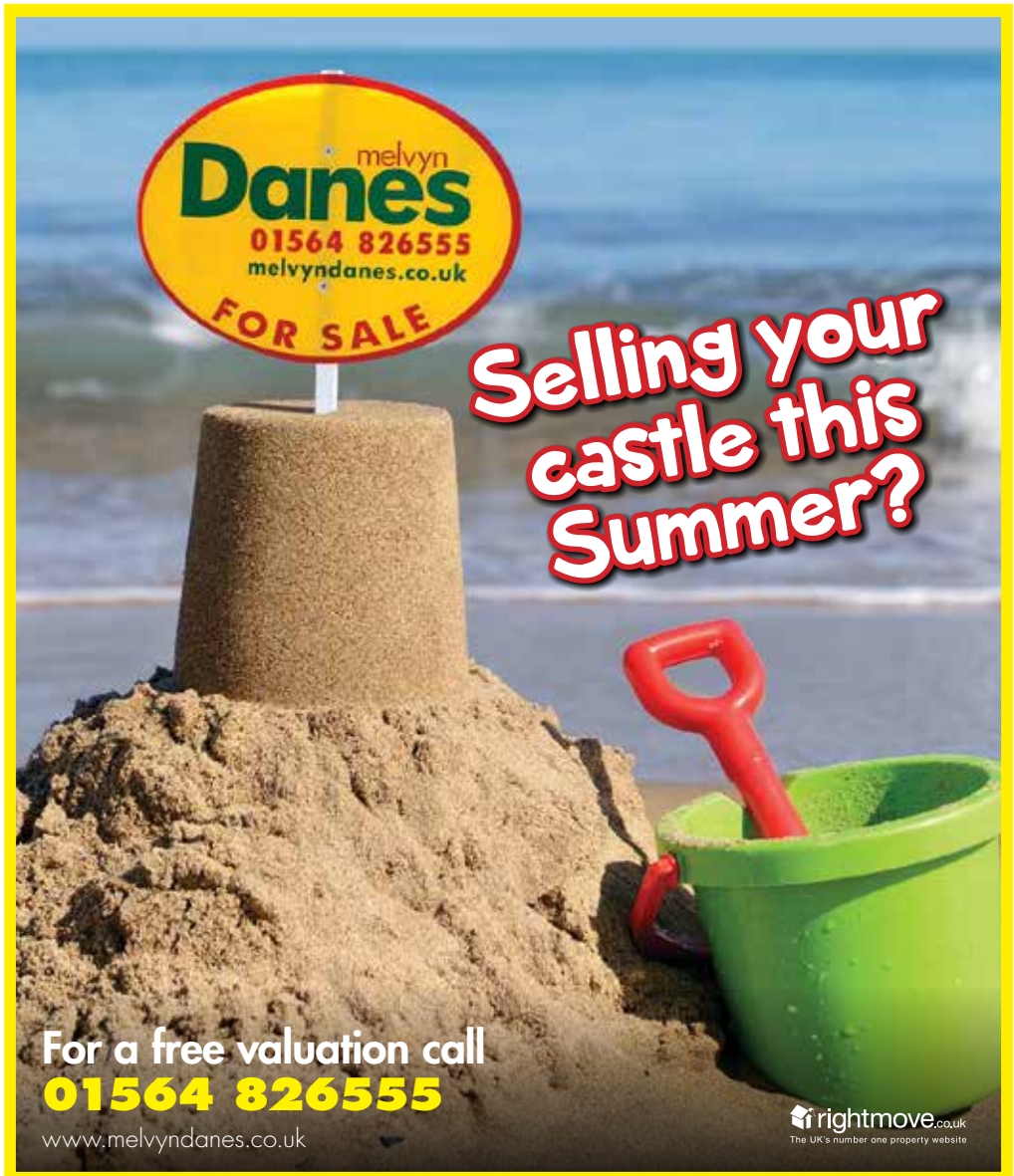


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Joyous June!

Welcome to the June edition

There's a whole load of great events coming up over the next month - from outdoor plays to jazz festivals. Fingers crossed the weather's good to us and we can get our picnic blankets out!

Or maybe you're busy getting your garden summer ready or preparing to move house. If you need help getting your garden landscaped, your drive re-done, or your bathroom or kitchen updated then have a look to see if one of the local and reliable businesses who advertise in here can help. Wishing you a great month ahead. Until next month...

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community events

The Jersey Boys Tribute Night

8 July, Shirley British Legion

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Mamma Mia Summer Party

8 July, Nailcote Hall

This Mamma Mia Summer Party will have you singing all the classic ABBA hits and dancing the night away! Waterloo, Fernando, Thank You for The Music and many more. Includes 3 course dinner, live entertainment, and after-show DJ. Tickets from www.nailcotehall.co.uk

Solihull Jazz Festival

13-16 July, Solihull Town Centre

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for everyone at this landmark music festival in the heart of Solihull, supported by the amazing Continental Food & Drink Market. More info at www.solihullbid.co.uk



West Midlands Fire Service band

15 July, Shirley

Methodist Church

The Band of the West Midlands Fire Service are giving a concert at Shirley Methodist Church on Saturday 15th July 2024, 7.30pm. Come and join us. Tickets from 07591 089104 or ticketsbwmfs@gmail.com or www.ticketsource.co.uk/bwmfs

Sense & Sensibility

25th July, Brueton Park, Solihull

Classic novel by Jane



Austen Sense and Sensibility, adapted for the outdoor stage by Heartbreak Productions. Bring a blanket, a picnic, and maybe something in case it rains! Tickets from The Core Theatre Solihull on 0121 704 6962.

Ricky Gervais

4th September, Utilita Arena Birmingham

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Poached egg flowers

Poached Egg plants are among my summer favourites. *Limnanthes douglasii* (to give it its proper

name) is a fantastic addition to any garden. It is easy to grow, requires little care and produces masses of beautiful flowers that attract pollinators. The best time to plant it is outside from March to May but if you have a sunny, well-drained spot you can plant them in early June and they will reward you handsomely with delightful fat yellow-centred blooms, which I think look more like fried eggs than poached ones! The delicate ferny foliage is also attractive.

Planting *limnanthes douglasii* is straightforward. Sow the seeds directly in a sunny, well-drained area. The soil ideal should be light and fertile. If you have heavy soil, you can improve it by adding sand and organic matter such as compost, leaf mould or well-rotted manure. Don't go mad or you'll end up with lots of leaves and fewer flowers.

Sow the seeds thinly on the surface of the soil and cover them lightly with a thin layer of soil. Water gently to keep the soil moist. Germination usually takes 7-14 days, and once the seedlings have emerged, thin them to a distance of



15cm apart to allow for good airflow and growth.

You might need to go on slug patrol while the plants are small, but once established, poached egg plants are low-maintenance and require little care. Water regularly, during dry spells and that's about it! You can also prolong the flowers by deadheading the faded blooms regularly.

Limnanthes douglasii is a prolific bloomer that produces masses of flowers from June to August, though if you plant now

they'll probably go through to the end of September if your garden is sheltered.

The plant grows to a height of 15cm and spreads to a width of around 15-20cm. It self-seeds freely so makes an excellent ground cover. It can be planted in borders, rockeries, meadows or as a filler in containers. It also attracts bees, butterflies, and other pollinators to the garden, making it an excellent addition to wildlife-friendly gardens.

Plant a poached egg today!
Happy gardening!

Be a BBQ Boss

How to choose a barbecue.

Summer is here, and what better way to enjoy the weather than by hosting a barbecue in your garden? But with so many types of barbecues available, how do you choose the best one for your needs? Here are a few things to consider when selecting the best barbecue for your plot.

Size matters – Well it's an important consideration anyway! Your barbecue should be large enough to accommodate the amount of food you need for all your guests, but not so large that it takes up your whole space. Consider how many people you will usually cook for, and how often you plan to host a barbecue.

Fuel Type – There are three choices: charcoal, gas, or electricity. Each has its pros and cons, so consider which type of fuel is best for your needs. Charcoal barbecues provide that authentic smoky flavour but can be difficult to light and regulate the temperature. Gas barbecues are easy to use and allow for precise temperature control but can be more expensive to run. Electric barbecues are convenient and easy to use but may not provide the same level

of flavour as charcoal or gas. Gas and Electricity also have the advantage of allowing for more spontaneity as they can be switched on and ready to go pretty much instantly. Good for unpredictable British weather.

Construction – A high-quality barbecue should be built to last, with sturdy materials and solid construction. Look for a barbecue with a thick, heavy-duty grill grate, and a durable body made from materials like stainless steel or cast iron. Avoid barbecues with flimsy components that may rust or break over time.

Additional Features – Some barbecues come with additional features that can make cooking easier and more enjoyable. For example, a side burner can be used for cooking side dishes or sauces, while a built-in thermometer can help you monitor the temperature of the food. Other features to consider include warming racks, rotisserie attachments, and smoker boxes.

Price – Barbecues can range in price from under £100 to £1000+. Consider how much you are willing to spend, and what features are most important to you. Remember that a higher price does not necessarily mean better quality, so be sure to do your research before making a purchase.



Accessories – Once you've settled on the barbie, it's time to accessorise. Barbecues can reach over 300C so a pair of heat-proof gloves will reduce the risk of burns. Cleaning your grill while it's still makes removing stubborn grease and sticky marinades a little easier to shift. A hard-wearing scraper and brush that has a long handle is probably the best method. My husband loves his grill press, which is easier to use for searing steaks and burgers than a spatula, and his grill cage, both for cooking fish and also for turning several kebabs at a time! A meat thermometer is also a good investment, especially if you cook a lot of chicken.

In the UK barbecue season is fairly short so let's make the most of al fresco dining while we can.

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Feeling Waspish? In favour of the humble wasp.

With their distinctive black and yellow bodies, angry buzz, and stingers, wasps are easily recognisable. Most of us have splatted one that's becoming annoying. However, they are fascinating creatures with a complex social structure.

Wasps create nests using a combination of saliva and wood fibres. The result is a papery substance that is strong, yet lightweight. The nests themselves can take on a variety of shapes and sizes, depending on the species of wasp. Some nests are small and round, while others can be several feet long

and have multiple levels. They are often incredibly beautiful, and usually last for one season before being abandoned.

Inside the nest, the queen wasp lays eggs and is responsible for the reproduction of the colony. The worker wasps are responsible for building and maintaining the nest, foraging for food, and protecting the colony from predators. The males, or drones, are responsible for mating with the queen and do not have a stinger.

But there's no doubt that wasps can be a nuisance to humans (especially those humans trying to enjoy a

picnic). Instead of killing them try the following:

- Cover sweets drinks and foods.
- Distract wasps to another location, by placing sugar water or banana skins away from seating and eating areas.
- Use a safe, deet-free insect repellent.
- Burn citronella candles.
- Don't eat close to fruit trees - especially ripe plums or apricots, they are a magnet for wasps.



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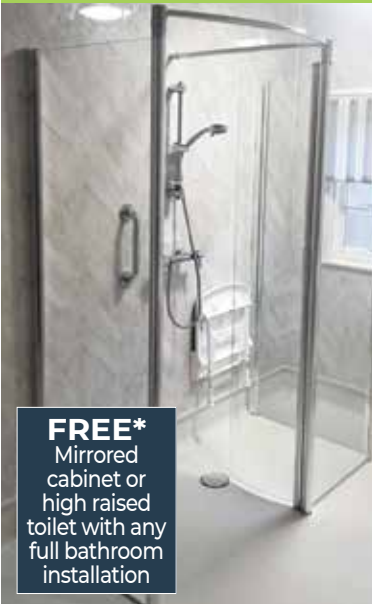
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Mindbenders

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answers on page 26

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COMPETITIONS

Win 2 tickets to Sense & Sensibility

Classic novel by Jane Austen Sense and Sensibility, adapted for the outdoor stage by Heartbreak Productions. If you're the lucky winner make sure you bring a blanket or chair to sit on, weather-appropriate gear, and a picnic, as the tale could take some time to tell, and storytelling can be hungry work.



Win 4 tickets to Dadbelly's Disco!

Fed up of the same old Saturday evenings? Then enter this competition to win 4 tickets to this disco with a difference on Saturday 15th July at RBL Solihull. You'll get to go around the world in 80 sounds, spin the wheel to choose the next music genre, and be entertained with games throughout the evening.



How to enter

For your chance to win, email zoe@dorridgedirectory.com with the subject line Sense & Sensibility or Disco (or both!) and you will be added to our database to receive our monthly e-newsletter about offers and events in Solihull.

The winners will be notified by email after the closing date of 1 July 2023. The disco tickets will need to be collected from the RBL Solihull Club. There is no cash value nor exchanges for the prizes.



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With the cost of living escalating rapidly our collective

mental health is struggling.

Gym memberships are dropping as people try to cut costs, and as a result our physical health could be suffering too.

Enter the humble walk! Walking is a simple yet effective form of exercise that offers numerous health benefits for people of all ages and fitness levels. It's a low-impact activity that can help you improve your physical health, mental well-being, and overall quality of life. What's not to like?

Cardiovascular Health - Walking is an excellent way to raise your heart rate and improve the health of your entire circulatory system. Regular walking can help reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular conditions by improving blood pressure and reducing cholesterol levels.

Weight Loss and maintaining a healthy weight - Walking is an effective way to burn calories and promote weight

loss or maintenance. Walking at a brisk pace for 30 minutes a day can burn up to 200 calories, depending on your weight and intensity level.

Over time, this can add up to significant weight loss and improved overall health.

Muscle and bone strength - Walking is a weight-bearing activity that can help strengthen muscles and bones, particularly in the lower body. Regular walking can help improve bone density and reduce the risk of osteoporosis, as well as improve balance and help prevent falls in older adults.

Stress and Anxiety - Walking is also an excellent way to reduce stress and anxiety, as it releases endorphins that promote feelings of well-being and happiness. Walking in nature or other peaceful settings can be particularly beneficial for reducing stress and promoting mental relaxation.

Cognitive Function - Walking has been shown to improve brain health by increasing blood flow to the area and promoting the growth of new cells. Regular walking has been linked to improved memory, attention, and overall brain function, particularly in older adults.

Accessibility and cost -



One of the greatest benefits of walking as an exercise is that it is accessible and inexpensive. It requires no special equipment or training and can be done virtually anywhere and at any time. This makes it an ideal exercise option for people of all ages, incomes, and fitness levels.

Sociability - Walking alone or with a dog can be very restorative, but its even better with a friend. Walking side-by-side seems to facilitate the flow of conversation and pauses feel less awkward than when you're sitting face-to face. Research shows that friendships which persist into old age help to protect against cognitive decline.

So, whether you are looking to improve your cardiovascular health, maintain a healthy weight, improve your mental health, or reduce the risk of age-related memory loss, regular walking can help you achieve your goals. So why not lace up your trainers or walking boots and start reaping the benefits of this wonderful exercise today?

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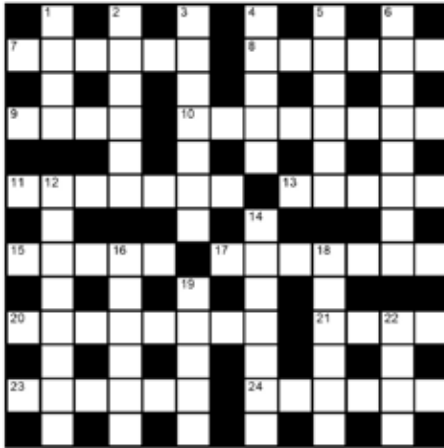


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crossword



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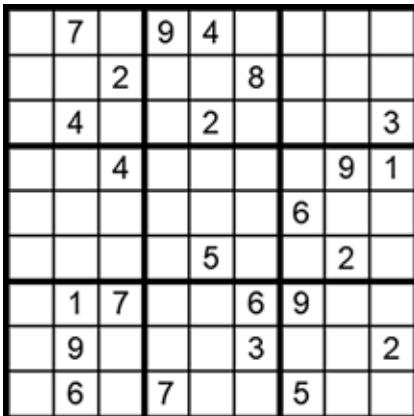
Across

- 7 Assuage, soothe (6)
- 8 Insurgent, mutineer (6)
- 9 Inscribe (4)
- 10 Disturbances, upsets (5-3)
- 11 Sterile (7)
- 13 Food staple (5)
- 15 Chat, utter (5)
- 17 High sea wave (7)
- 20 Traditional, devout (8)
- 21 Lively dance (4)
- 23 Sound system (6)
- 24 Indifference (6)

Down

- 1 Skin blemish (4)
- 2 Chess piece (6)
- 3 School pinafore (7)
- 4 Monk (5)
- 5 Person who behaves affectedly (6)
- 6 Abnormal tissue growth (8)
- 12 Keep apart (8)
- 14 Never attracted to anyone (7)
- 16 Comply, heed (6)
- 18 Common, usual (6)
- 19 Turn of phrase (5)
- 22 Repetition (4)

answer on page 26



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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 26



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Milkman

by Anna Burns

I will preface this by saying that *Milkman*, the 2018 Man Booker Prize-winning novel by Anna Burns, is an excellent but challenging read. It deals with resilience and resistance set in the heart of a divided community. Burns weaves a captivating story centred around an 18-year-old protagonist, known only as “middle sister,” and the community in which she lives. The novel is set in an unnamed city, though it bears a strong resemblance to Belfast during the Troubles. It grapples with the complexities of political conflict, societal expectations, and the power of rumour and gossip. As “middle sister” navigates her life, she attracts the advances of the eponymous Milkman, a middle-aged paramilitary figure who begins to stalk her. The novel’s portrayal of the menacing and intrusive nature of the Milkman’s pursuit encapsulates the larger oppressive atmosphere of the community. The pervasive sense of paranoia and suspicion is conveyed through the use of a first-person narrative, filled with intricate details, creating a vivid and visceral experience for the reader. One of the challenges involves Burns’ use of stream of consciousness. Her prose is often dense and demanding, featuring long, sprawling sentences with minimal punctuation, a stylistic choice reflecting both the chaotic environment and the protagonist’s internal turmoil. The most striking aspect of *Milkman* is the absence of proper names for characters and places. This lends a surreal-but-universal quality to the story, evoking many conflict-ridden societies. The novel explores the impact of gender, politics, and power on the individual, as well as the collective psyche of a community, often using humour so

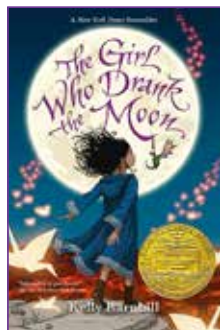


dark it might make the reader squirm. With its unflinching portrayal of the protagonist’s struggles and resilience, it serves as a testament to the indomitable human spirit in the face of adversity. While the novel’s challenging style may not appeal to all readers, those who persevere will be rewarded with an unforgettable and thought-provoking literary experience.

The Girl Who Drank the Moon

by Kelly Barnhill

The Girl Who Drank the Moon is a captivating and enchanting Newbery Medal-winning novel. Set in a world of magic and wonder, it tells the story of Luna, a young girl unknowingly filled with powerful magic after being fed moonlight by the good witch Xan. The novel follows Luna, Xan, a wise swamp monster named Glerk, and a tiny, talkative dragon called Fyrian as they navigate the complexities of Luna’s magical abilities and unravel the mysteries surrounding their world.



Barnhill’s lyrical prose and vivid world-building draws readers into the story, and the characters are both endearing and complex. The book is a delightful blend of fantasy, adventure, and coming-of-age, with a touch of darkness that lends depth to the narrative. It explores themes of love, sacrifice, and the power of knowledge, providing valuable lessons for both young and adult readers. The plot is intricately woven, with enough twists and turns to keep the reader engaged throughout. *The Girl Who Drank the Moon* is a beautifully written, heart-warming tale that effortlessly blends fantasy and reality. It will captivate readers of all ages, leaving them with a sense of wonder and a deeper appreciation for the magic in their own lives.

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Solution to Mind benders

1. Up to you
2. Afternoon tea
3. Multiple choice

mindbenders
from page 17

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

Sudoku Solution
from page 22

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

Crossword Solution
from page 22

local police contact for wythall & hollywood

Telephone: 101

Health

NHS non-emergency 111
Wythall Lane Surgery 0121 628 2345
Hollywood Medical Practice 01564 822642
Hollyoaks Medical Centre 01564 823182

Council

Bromsgrove District Council 01527 881288
(main switchboard)
Bromsgrove District Council 01527 871565
(emergency out of hours)

Utilities

Electricity power cut 105
Gas leak 0800 111 9999
Severn Trent Water
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