

# the wythall directory


august 2024

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

A photograph of a sandcastle on a beach. A yellow circular sign with a red border is stuck in the sandcastle. The sign contains the text: 'melvyn Danes', '01564 826555', 'melvyndanes.co.uk', and 'FOR SALE'. To the right of the sandcastle is a red bucket with a red handle. The background shows the ocean and a clear blue sky.

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**Offers Around £625,000**

**DARK LANE, HOLLYWOOD**



**DARK LANE, HOLLYWOOD**

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**Offers Around £575,000**

**STATION ROAD, WYTHALL**



**STATION ROAD, WYTHALL**

A superbly presented & extended two bedroomed period cottage in this most convenient & sought after location in the village of Wythall. Briefly comprising; porch, lounge, kitchen, lobby, dining room, utility, ground floor bathroom, two bedrooms, shower room, landscaped gardens and detached garage.

**Offers Around £350,000**

**LINKS ROAD, NR HOLLYWOOD**



**LINKS ROAD, NR HOLLYWOOD**

A well-presented three bedroomed semi-detached house in this most pleasant & secluded cul de sac location near Hollywood. Briefly comprising; Hallway, lounge, modern kitchen/diner, utility, store, three bedrooms, family bathroom, rear garden and a large front driveway.

**Offers Around £325,000**

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# Holidays!

Welcome to the August edition

**For those of you that aren't jetting off overseas this Summer, there's lots of great things happening locally, including tribute acts and beer festivals.**

Check out the local event guide on page 6 to see what takes your fancy. Whether you're staying locally or exploring Europe or further afield, this Summer, have a great month and make the most of the weather and the Summer holidays, while they last!



Zoe Reece

Tel: 07557 220585

Email: [zoe@dorridgedirectory.com](mailto:zoe@dorridgedirectory.com)

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# community events

## The 3 Lions Beer & Cider Festival

**6 & 7 September 12noon -**

**11pm, Shirley British Legion**

Entry is £10 which includes a souvenir beer glass, tasting notes for all the beer and cider, £5 worth of beer/cider tokens, and live entertainment from Ray's Open Mic Night. Tickets can be obtained from the Legion or at [www.shirleylions.co.uk/events/beerfestival.html](http://www.shirleylions.co.uk/events/beerfestival.html)

## Circus & Storytelling Workshop

**27 August, Core Theatre Solihull**

Join circus artist and storyteller Gaby for an exciting day of circus skills and stories. You'll even get to make your own piece of circus kit to take home. Don't miss out,



the circus is only in town for one day! For ages 7 to 13. Tickets £30 from [www.thecoretheatresolihull.co.uk](http://www.thecoretheatresolihull.co.uk)

## "The Supremettes" tribute to Diana Ross & The Supremes

**31 August, The Lake at Barston**  
Among others The Supremes

had number ones with "Baby Love", "Stop! in the name of love", "Come see about me", "Ain't no mountain high enough" and "You can't hurry love". Tickets £33 per person, or £28 in the Annexe, which includes a 3 course Dinner, Entertainment and late bar. Ticket price show only - £10 per person. Call 01675 444890 to book.



## Hits Radio Live

**22 November, Resorts World Arena**

Hits Radio Live is back in 2024 for an incredible night of performances from your favourite hits and throwback artists. Previous Hits Live shows have included Lewis Capaldi, Rita Ora, Tom Grennan, Anne Marie, Craig David, James Arthur, Becky Hill, Busted and many more! Tickets from [www.resortsworldarena.co.uk](http://www.resortsworldarena.co.uk)



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# What to Do If Your A-Level Grades Are Poor

Receiving disappointing A-level results can be a stressful, disheartening experience, but it's important to remember that it's not the end of the world. Here are some steps to help you navigate this challenging time:

## 1. Stay Calm and Seek Support

First, take a deep breath. It's crucial to remain calm and composed. Talk to family, friends, and teachers about your results. They can offer valuable support and perspective during this time.

## 2. Review Your Options

Visit the UCAS website to explore Clearing. Clearing

allows you to apply for courses that still have vacancies. Many universities offer great courses through this system.

## 3. Contact Universities

If you missed your firm or insurance offers, don't hesitate to contact the admissions departments directly. They may still accept you, particularly if you were only marginally off the required grades or have relevant experience that could make you a valuable candidate.

## 4. Consider Re-marks and Resits

If you believe there's been a mistake with your grades, speak to your school about the

possibility of getting your papers re-marked. Additionally, resitting exams is another option.

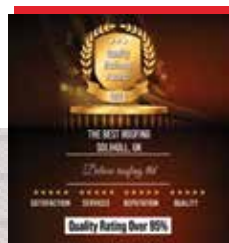
## 5. Explore Alternative Paths

Look into alternative qualifications, apprenticeships, or vocational courses. These can offer practical skills and experience that are highly valued in the job market. Taking a gap year to gain work experience or travel can also be beneficial and give you time to reassess your options.

Remember, many successful people faced setbacks during their education. Use this experience as an opportunity to explore new avenues and grow stronger in your career journey.



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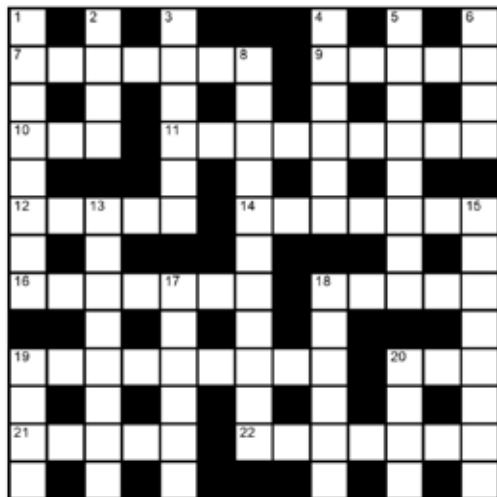
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## crossword



## clues

### Across

- 7 Voted in, chosen (7)
- 9 Concepts, notions (5)
- 10 Affirmative response (3)
- 11 Outward Behaviour (9)
- 12 Denigrate, exploit (5)
- 14 Enlightened, tolerant (7)
- 16 Analyses, observes (7)
- 18 Stick, cudgel (5)
- 19 Mobilising troops (9)
- 20 Blockade, stopper (3)
- 21 Bamboo-eating bear-like animal (4)
- 22 Ice river (7)

### Down

- 1 A decade (3,5)
- 2 Chaos, disarray (4)
- 3 Filling, cloying food (6)
- 4 Baking soda (abbr) (6)
- 5 Not a Republican! (U.S) (8)
- 6 Russian emperor (4)
- 8 Destroying, breaking (11)
- 13 Supplanting (8)
- 15 Monument, feature (8)
- 17 Line joining points of equal atmospheric pressure on a weather map (6)
- 18 Tramp, drifter (6)
- 19 Drug, sedate (4)
- 20 Trickle, plop (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



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# Reluctant Readers

In 2023 a survey of 71,400 children and young people by the National Literacy Trust revealed that fewer than one in three children (28%) aged eight to 18 read daily for enjoyment.

If that's true it's incredibly sad. Blame is apportioned to politicians, teachers, the TV, and internet, but blame doesn't achieve anything. Instead, as parents what can we do to encourage our children to engage with literature? Try these great tips to engage reluctant readers.

Let them see you reading! It sounds obvious but it works. Read some funny bits from



your own book aloud to them or try an interesting newspaper article.

Try to schedule a small part of the day for reading. It doesn't even have to be them reading. My ten-year-old son still loves me to read to him...especially when I put on accents and voices to suit the

characters. Lose your inhibitions and have fun with reading and your children will follow suit.

Try a joke book or nonsense poetry books. Kids love jokes and rhymes, the sillier the better. They won't even realise they are reading as they regale you with their new-found anecdotes and ditties.

Use the power of movies. My ten-year-old really engaged with reading when he saw the first Harry Potter movie. He read the book straight afterwards and realised how much richer in detail it was compared with the film. From then on he was hooked.

# a good read

By Natasha Donovan

## Queenie

by Candice Carty-Williams

Queenie Jenkins, a 25-year-old British-Jamaican journalist in London, faces a life-altering change when her white boyfriend, Tom, suggests a break. She is forced to reassess her life, questioning her actions and identity. Queenie could be 'just another chick lit novel' about a twenty-something navigating her career and relationships. She has been called the Black Bridget Jones, but if this is the case then it's Bridget Jones without the cushion of middle-class white privilege. Throughout the novel, Queenie confronts and challenges various forms of micro-oppressions and injustice. Carty-Williams tackles societal issues head-on; the depiction of casual systemic racism is eye-opening, and handled with a deftness and inside humour of one who has experienced all of it. Queenie and her friend Kyazike are compelling in their struggles and resilience, offering a portrayal of young Black women just living their lives, which is often missing in books and media. Queenie's experiences as a woman are relatable for the majority of young women, evoking laughter one moment and discomfort the next. It's an honest depiction of life as a twenty-something in a big city. Despite covering many important topics, it's an easy read. The humour is sharp, and the storytelling fosters a deep empathy with the characters. The reader will care about Queenie as she battles her demons. Carty-Williams has managed to strike a balance between light and dark, reinventing the rom-com to include significant issues. This blending of tones makes this a cut above the usual romantic holiday read.



## The Girl Who Stole an Elephant

by Nizrana Farook

This is an exhilarating adventure set in a lush, fictional part of Sri Lanka. Chaya is a spirited and courageous young girl who quietly champions the poor, the injured, and the widowed. The way she funds these charitable deeds is a little questionable, but readers will love her anyway. Chaya's attempt to help an injured villager lands her, her best friend, and a new girl in town in a LOT of trouble. What starts out as a robbery of the Queen's jewels ends up in a wild chase as she steals the king's elephant and unwittingly sets off a thrilling chain of events. Farook's narrative is full of fast-paced action, which young readers will love. The lush tropical setting of Serendib is full of details that transport the reader to the exotic land. Chaya is an engaging hero, whose bravery and sense of justice are matched by her loyalty to her friends. The book tackles themes of friendship, loyalty, and the fight against injustice, making these concepts accessible to young readers through the dynamic plot and relatable characters. Neel and Nour, add depth and diversity to the story, each bringing their own strengths and challenges to the group dynamics. The Girl Who Stole an Elephant is a thrilling ride that manages to subtly explore issues of social inequality and the implications of rebelling against it. Farook skilfully balances moral questions with exciting escapades, making this a thoughtful yet fun story for young readers.



# A Bit Batty

## International Bat Night 24th-25th August

Thanks to Count Dracula, bats get a bad rap. International Bat Night hopes to change our perception. During this annual celebration, public events such as bat walks, take place across the country.

Bats make up just over a quarter of the UK's mammal population and they are the only ones that can fly. There are 18 native species plus occasional migrant visitors, and populations are under threat from predation, crime and habitat loss, so UK bats and their roosts are protected by law.

Pipistrelles are our



commonest bats, weighing in at just 5 grams (less than a £1 coin). Noctules are our largest bat but still measure less than 5cm long!

Bats fly and feed in the dark, and all UK bats live on insects, which they find using echolocation - producing a stream of high-pitched calls and listening to the returning

echo. They 'see' best using sound but contrary to popular belief they are not blind.

The saying about having 'bats in the belfry' is not accurate because they rarely roost in church towers, preferring somewhere quieter, and less draughty. If bats do set up home in your roof, their access must not be impeded. If you'd like to encourage these interesting little creatures to your garden you can buy or make bat boxes to fix to outside of your home. Help, advice and general information on Britain's bats is available at [www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk).

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# The power of deadheading

**D**eadheading is quite simply, the removal of dead flower heads from a plant. It's one of the most important August jobs in the garden.

Faded, browning flowers can spoil the appearance of beds, borders and containers, especially in small gardens where each individual plant has more of a starring role. Deadheading helps keep displays looking lovelier for longer.

## **In addition:**

Plants put more of their energy into stronger growth and more flower production, instead of producing seeds (obviously leave the flowerheads untouched if you WANT seeds).

It prevents plants from self-seeding. Some plants that self-seed readily can become a nuisance, such as sea holly (*Eryngium*) and lady's mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*).

It prevents petals scattering everywhere.

Deadheading is best carried out as soon as the blooms begin to look scruffy. For some plants, such as summer bedding, this might be a daily task, whereas for others it can be carried out weekly. Some plants,



like lilacs might only need deadheading once, after a brief blooming period. I don't worry about timing too much. I usually take off fading flowers as I'm pottering about in the garden of an evening.

The simplest method is to pinch or snap off the spent blooms with a finger and thumb, aiming to remove the flower with its stalk, to keep the plant looking tidy. For plants with tough or stringy stems, you use secateurs, scissors or even a knife. On most plants, trim the dead flower just above the next bud or leaf on the stem.

Plants like delphiniums and lupins produce heads of multiple flowers. In this case pinch off individual flowers and then eventually, when all the flowers have died, prune the entire head to just above a lower bud, leaf or side shoot. Some plants, like

hardy geraniums, cat mint (*Nepeta*) and lady's mantle (*Alchemilla*), will produce a second flush of flowers if you cut them back close to ground level after flowering.

Not all plants need to be deadheaded. Fuchsias, obligingly and neatly deadhead themselves, saving you the trouble. Others don't set much seed in the first place (e.g. bedding lobelias). Some plants, such as *Deutzia* and *Spiraea* produce so many flowers that deadheading becomes impractical, and some are simply too tall to reach!

I never deadhead rudbeckias, cornflowers, sunflowers, viburnums, *Amelanchier* and rambling roses because the birds love to eat the seeds, berries and hips they produce.

And finally, the other plants that don't require deadheading are probably my favourites, those which have ornamental seedhead as attractive as their flowers, such as *love-in-a-mist* (*Nigella*) and *Chinese lantern* plants (*Physalis alkekengi*).

If you're looking for a super simple way to increase the flowering potential of your garden this summer, try a spot of deadheading.



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**Serves** 4

## Ingredients

### Marinade

- 1 tbsp coriander seeds
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped.
- 2.5cm piece of ginger, finely chopped
- 3 tbsp finely chopped lemongrass
- 2 kaffir lime leaves, shredded
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1/2 tbsp soy sauce
- 1/2 tbsp brown sugar
- 500g skinless, boneless chicken thighs

### For the sauce

- 2 bird's eye chillies seeded and finely chopped
- 5 shallots, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1/2 tsp shrimp paste
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 150ml coconut milk

- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 150g unsalted peanuts, roasted and roughly chopped (or finely ground if you prefer a smoother sauce)
- Juice of 1 lime

### Method

Toast the coriander seeds in a dry pan until fragrant, and then grind to a powder in a pestle and mortar. Add the garlic, ginger, lemongrass and kaffir lime leaves and pound to a rough paste along with a generous grinding of black pepper. Transfer to a large bowl and stir in the oil, soy sauce and sugar. Cut the chicken into long strips about 3cm wide and stir into the marinade, mixing well. Cover, refrigerate and leave to marinade for at

least 30 minutes. While the chicken is marinating soak eight wooden skewers in water until ready to use. Meanwhile, make the sauce. Put the chillies, shallots, garlic, and shrimp paste into a pestle and mortar, or the small bowl of a food processor, and pound or blitz to a paste. Heat the oil in a wok or wide frying pan, and then fry the paste for a couple of minutes or until it smells cooked. Add the coconut milk and brown sugar and simmer for a couple more minutes, then add the peanuts and simmer until slightly thickened. Stir in the soy sauce and lime juice, add a little water or coconut milk if it's too thick, then taste to check the balance of flavours; add more lime juice, sugar, or soy sauce to your own taste. Serve warm or at room temperature. Thread the strips of meat onto the skewers in an "S" shape. Pushing them down so they all touch. Cook the skewers on a barbecue, or a griddle pan over a medium-high heat, for about 20 minutes until cooked through, turning regularly. Serve with the sauce, crispy fried shallots, and a green salad.

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

### Sudoku Solution

from page 11

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

### Crossword Solution

from page 11

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