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WILMORE LANE, WYTHALL

A three bedroom detached house, having potential for extension subject to planning. Briefly comprising; porch, reception hall, kitchen/diner, lounge/diner, side passageway, utility room, shower room, cloak room, three double bedrooms, family bathroom, two garages with in and out driveway and superb rear garden with open views.

Offers Around £575,000

HOLLY DRIVE, HOLLYWOOD



HOLLY DRIVE, HOLLYWOOD

A well presented four bedroom detached house in this most convenient cul de sac in Hollywood. Briefly comprising; hallway, dining room, lounge, kitchen/diner, utility room, conservatory, master bedroom with en-suite three further bedrooms, family bathroom, double garage, rear garden and driveway.

Offers Around £565,000

MEADOW ROAD, WYTHALL



NO UPWARD CHAIN.

MEADOW ROAD, WYTHALL

A three bedroom semi-detached bungalow with a large rear garden & potential for extension subject to planning. Briefly comprising; porch, hallway, lounge, kitchen, dining room/bedroom, conservatory, shower room, separate w.c. Two further bedrooms, garage, large front and side driveway, rear garden.

Offers Around £400,000

SILVER STREET, WYTHALL



NO UPWARD CHAIN.

SILVER STREET, WYTHALL

A well presented two bedroom retirement property in this popular development at Silvermead Court in Wythall for the over 50's. Briefly comprising; entrance hall, kitchen, lounge/diner, guest w.c. ground floor bedroom, one further bedroom on the first floor, shower room, allocated parking and communal gardens.

Offers Around £225,000

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Holiday Time!

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!



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community events

Shirley Dining Club

25 August, noon - 6pm

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Malcolm Pitt delivers a powerhouse and breathtaking performance in this high octane show celebrating the music of Lionel Richie and the Commodores. Call 0121 704 6962 to book.

an event programme with tasting notes. Live music provided by Ray's Open Night musicians. More info at www.shirleylions.co.uk/events/beerfestival.html

Male Voice Choir

6 September, 7pm

Knowle Village Hall.

The Knowle Village Hall Association invites you to enjoy a late summer Evening of Song with the Birmingham Male Voice Choir (formerly the Canoldir and the Icknield Male Voice choirs). Tickets £15 from 01564 779898 or 01564 778163 or from the Friday Coffee Morning at the Hall from 10am until noon.

The Lions Beer and Cider Festival

12 & 13 September, noon to 11pm, Shirley Royal British Legion, Parkgate, Shirley

A charity fund raising event organised by Acocks Green, Shirley and Solihull Lions Clubs, featuring 18 different real ales and 10 ciders. Admission £10, including £5 worth of drinks tokens, a souvenir glass and

Elvis Tribute Show

19 September

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A Tribute to Lionel Richie

6 September

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a good read

By Natasha Donovan

Small Pleasures by Clare Chambers

Small Pleasures is a quiet gem of a book that unfolds with the grace of a classic British drama, while packing a modern literary punch. Set in the meticulously rendered suburbs of 1957 southeast London the story follows Jean Swinney, a journalist approaching her fortieth birthday, and stuck writing lightweight 'women's pieces'. Her life is defined by routine, duty, and the quiet ache of unrealised dreams. When she's assigned to investigate a local woman's claim of a virgin birth, she anticipates a hoax. Instead, she finds herself drawn into the lives of Gretchen Tilbury, her charming daughter Margaret, and Gretchen's enigmatic husband, Howard. As Jean's professional curiosity evolves into personal entanglement, Chambers masterfully explores themes of loneliness, desire, and the societal constraints of postwar Britain. The novel's strength lies in its subtlety. Chambers crafts a narrative rich in period detail and emotional nuance, where the most profound moments are found in the quietest exchanges. Jean's internal struggle between duty and desire is portrayed with a tenderness that resonates deeply, making her journey all the more poignant. While the mystery of the virgin birth is central to the plot, it's Jean's personal awakening and the intricate dynamics between characters that draw us in. Small Pleasures is a novel that lingers, reflecting on the small joys and quiet tragedies that define a life. It's a reminder that the most extraordinary stories often emerge from the most ordinary lives.



The Book of Stolen Dreams by David Farr

This is a dazzling children's debut that sweeps readers into a richly imagined world where courage and imagination are the keys to survival. Set in the oppressive city of Brava, siblings Rachel and Robert Klein find themselves thrust into a perilous adventure after their librarian father entrusts them with a mysterious, forbidden book. Their mission: to find the missing final page and prevent the book from falling into the hands of the tyrannical ruler, Charles Malstain. Farr's screenwriting and theatre credentials are very much present as he brings a cinematic flair to his storytelling, deftly balancing moments of suspense with real humour and warmth. There are many parallels to be drawn with certain chapters in history as well as more current events. Farr paints a compellingly grim picture of life under highly restrictive rules and regulations where almost every kind of fun is outlawed, and teaching takes place under the tightest of rules. In spite of this, Rachel and Robert's spirits shine like beacons as they embark on their adventures. The Book of Stolen Dreams is more than just a fantasy adventure; it's a poignant exploration of the power of stories and the resilience of the human spirit. The suggested age range is 8-12 but quite frankly this 40-year-old adored it as much as her son.



Astrantias

The quiet star of a cottage garden

If you've ever wandered through a traditional English cottage garden in midsummer, chances are you've caught sight of astrantias - those charming, understated flowers that quietly hold their own among the showier blooms. Also known as masterworts or the rather quaint "Hattie's pincushion," these perennials are the perfect blend of beauty and practicality.

With their starry, pincushion-style blooms in shades from soft white to dusky pink and deep ruby, they're a treat for the eye - and for the bees and butterflies, too!

Astrantias bloom their hearts out from June right through to August, giving us gardeners a generous season of colour, not to mention plenty of nectar for our insect friends. They're absolutely brilliant for shady spots, especially those damp, awkward corners where other plants might sulk. Moisture-retentive soil is their sweet spot, but don't worry if your patch is on the drier side - they'll still do well with regular watering and a good mulch.

Speaking of soil, astrantias are fans of the rich stuff: well-rotted manure, home-made compost, or leaf mould



worked into the ground before planting. Pop the plant into a prepared hole, firm it in, and water generously. Keep up the watering through the first summer, especially if your soil's particularly free-draining. Once settled, they're pretty self-sufficient, and wonderfully resistant to slugs and snails, which is a real bonus in my own garden!

If you want to encourage a second flush of flowers (and who wouldn't?), cut them back after their first round of blooming. Give them a proper haircut again in autumn or early spring to keep them looking tidy.

Astrantias can be divided in spring. Lift a clump, gently prise it apart with your hands or a fork and replant the sections right away. If you've

got the patience, they can also be grown from seed - either collected from your own plants or from a packet under cover in spring.

Astrantias are mostly trouble-free, though occasionally powdery mildew can be an issue. Keep them healthy with plenty of water and mulch and bin any mildewy leaves in autumn.

For varieties, try 'Roma' for soft pink blooms, 'Venice' for a dramatic ruby red, or 'Hadspen Blood' if you're after something truly striking. For a lighter look, 'Buckland' and 'Alba' are gentle on the eye and lovely in a pastel scheme.

In all, astrantias are reliable, romantic, and ridiculously easy to grow - a real cottage garden treasure.

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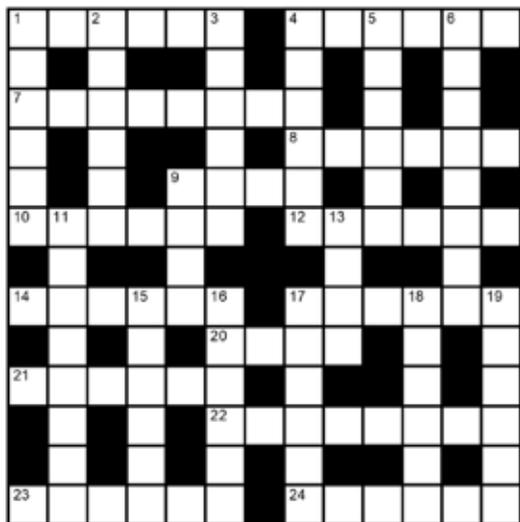
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crossword



clues

Across

- 1 Prejudiced (6)
- 4 Whiten, decolour (6)
- 7 Maritime, used on the ocean (8)
- 8 Rhododendron-like shrub (6)
- 9 Particle (4)
- 10 Shortcrust, flaky or puff _____ (6)
- 12 Every twelve months (6)
- 14 Socially awkward (6)
- 17 Daredevil (6)
- 20 Ruffian, thug (4)
- 21 Ceramic artist (6)
- 22 Items of jewellery (8)
- 23 People who look after others (6)
- 24 Abrupt (6)

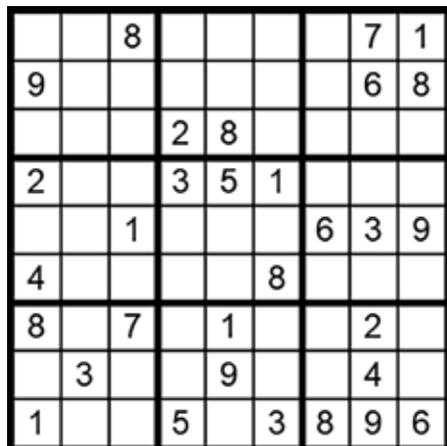
Down

- 1 Church official (6)
- 2 Warning devices (6)
- 3 Delicate, fragile (6)
- 4 Married to two people at the same time (6)
- 5 Mistake in print (6)

- 6 Shrub with waxy scented flowers (8)
- 9 Bowed structure (4)
- 11 Large South American snake (8)
- 13 Welsh name (4)
- 15 Oxen and cows (6)

- 16 The act of leaving a place (6)
- 17 _____ dancing, type of folk dancing. (6)
- 18 Stretched out the body or neck to see better (6)
- 19 Toxic substance (6)

answer on page 18



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 18

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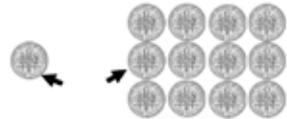
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Mindbenders

Can you find the hidden phrases?



moonceon



answers on page 18

What is Bubble Tea?

You've probably seen bubble tea shops popping (no pun intended) up on a high street near you recently. Bubble tea, also known as boba, is a colourful, chewy drink, that's taken the UK by storm in recent years. Originally from Taiwan in the 1980s, it was created by blending milk tea with tapioca pearls, which are small, chewy balls made from cassava starch. The drink is typically served cold, with a wide straw to slurp up the "bubbles."

Classic bubble tea is made with black tea, milk, sweetener, and tapioca

pearls, but modern versions are highly customisable. You'll find fruity teas, green or matcha options, flavoured jellies, and popping boba (juice-filled spheres).

Bubble tea began gaining popularity here in the late 2010s, especially in larger cities with strong East Asian communities and university populations. Its appeal spread quickly thanks to the drinks' Instagram and TikTok appeal. Trendy tea chains like Bubbleology and Gong Cha, began to open shops around the country, and now it's widely available on most high streets.

While the teas are popular, they're pricey, and they're not exactly health drinks. Most shop-bought bubble teas are loaded with sugar, artificial flavours, and sweetened condensed milk, with some coming in at 400 calories per cup. The Tapioca pearls themselves are comprised mainly of carbohydrates and have little nutritional value, and the portion sizes are often huge.

If you're tempted, but want to try a healthier option, many stores offer reduced sugar, plant milk, or fruit tea bases, so you can tailor the drink to your taste and diet.



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Crossword Solution

from page 14

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

Sudoku Solution

from page 14

Solution to Mind benders

1. A dime a dozen
2. Once in a blue moon
3. Call it a day

mindbenders

from page 15

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