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# Festive mood?

Welcome to the November edition

By the time this arrives Christmas will only be about 6 weeks away! Check out page 6 to see what local events are coming up to get you in the festive mood.

You've just about got time to make any last-minute changes to your home in time for Christmas so remember to support local businesses as they really value their customers – we have a great collection of local tradespeople and businesses who are local and are looking for your custom. Here's hoping the pre-Christmas build up isn't too hectic and that you find the time to relax, maybe over a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie!

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### local events

# community events



### Christmas Fair

### 30 November 10am - 1pm, Knowle Village Hall

Come and browse amongst a lovely selection of Christmas gifts and cards, Christmas wreaths for the door, books, Bric -a Brac, competitions and lots more, including the Grand Christmas Raffie! Refreshments will be available. All proceeds to the Hall refurbishment fund.

### Whitney Houston Tribute Night

### 14 December, Knowle British Legion

Immerse yourself in an evening filled with the timeless hits and unforgettable melodies that made Whitney Houston a legend. Tickets from www. tributenightpromotions.co.uk



### Could it be Magic?

### 29 November, The Lake at Barston

Fantastic 4 piece boyband performing all of Take That's biggest and best tracks from the early days to now. Now with second set dedicated to Boybands, Backstreet Boys, Westlife, Boyzone, 5ive, Blue, One Direction & The Wanted and a bit of anything goes to get you up on the dancefloor. Ticket price is £40 per person, or £35 in the Annexe, which includes a 3 course Dinner, Entertainment and late bar. Call 01675 444890 to book.

### QE2 – The very best of QUEEN

### 7 December, Land Rover Sports & Social Club

QE2 - The Very Best of Queen have been performing at some of the best known venues, festivals and arenas across the UK and Internationally for over 25 years. Their aim is to recreate the Live Magic that Queen provided during their live career. Queen formed in 1970 and were active up until 1991. Buy tickets online from www. landroversc.co.uk.

### The Greatest Showman Tribute

### 31 December, Shirley British Legion

Join in for a spectacular New Year's Eve celebration at Shirley British Legion. Get ready to ring in the new year with a night filled with music, dancing, and memories with The Greatest Showman Tribute! Tickets from www. tributenightpromotions.co.uk











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# Mark O'Sullivan

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### useful info

# The Right Rice

ave you ever looked at all the different varieties of rice on the supermarket shelves and wondered what the differences are between them? Understanding the distinct types of rice and their uses can enhance your cooking.

**Basmati Rice** is a long-grain variety known for its fragrant aroma and delicate texture. Predominantly used in Indian and Middle Eastern dishes, it's perfect for pilafs, biryanis, and as a side to curries. Basmati stays fluffy when cooked, making it ideal for dishes that need distinct grains. Jasmine Rice is another aromatic long-grain rice, popular in Thai and Southeast Asian cuisine. Its slightly sticky texture and floral scent make it a great accompaniment to stirfries, grilled meats, and curries.

Arborio Rice, a shortgrain variety, is known for its creamy consistency. Its high starch content makes it perfect for dishes like risotto and rice pudding, where a soft, rich texture is desired.

Sushi Rice, also short-grain, is sticky and slightly sweet, ideal for sushi rolls and Japanese rice bowls. It clumps together well, making it easy to shape.



**Brown Rice** retains its bran layer, giving it a chewy texture and nutty flavour. It's more nutritious than white rice, making it a great choice for healthy grain bowls, salads, and stir-fries.

Wild Rice, though not technically a rice, adds a chewy, nutty flavour to salads and soups. Its distinct texture pairs well with roasted vegetables or as a side to hearty mains.



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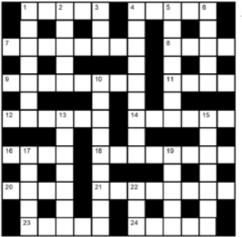
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### crossword



#### Down

- 1 Real, true (7)
- 2 Overturn (5)
- 3 Fade, wain (3)
- 4 Conductor, terminal (9)
- 5 Attendant, minion (7)
- 6 Depart (5)
- 10 Indistinguishable (9)
- 13 Strain, stress (7)
- 15 Ineffectual, futile (7)

### clues

### Across

- 1 Indicator, meter (5)
- 4 Artist's stand (5)
- 7 Not fit for purpose (8)
- 8 Back, behind (4)
- 9 Territory (8)
- 11 Highest point, peak (4)
- 12 Middle (6)
- 14 Yield (6)
- 16 Golf club (4)
- 18 Concepts, proposals (8)
- 20 Cab (4)
- 21 Muse, ponder (8)
- 23 Musical or colour harmony (5)
- 24 Layers (5)
  - 17 Respond, reply (5)
  - 19 Lift, elevate (5)
  - 22 Enmesh, nab (3)

answer on page 18

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

# how to play SUDOKU

### It's simple!

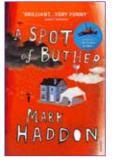
Fill in the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box, contains the numbers 1 through to 9 with no repetition. You don't need to be a genius. These puzzles use logic alone. Watch out! Sudoku is highly addictive.

answer on page 18

# a good read By Natasha Donovan

### A Spot of Bother by Mark Haddon

A Spot of Bother is a darkly humorous and poignant exploration of a family unravelling under the weight of its own dysfunctions. The central character, George Hall, is a retired man in his late fifties who becomes obsessively convinced



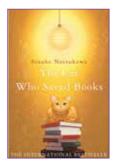
that a lesion on his hip is cancerous, leading to a gradual mental breakdown. While this sounds a depressing premise for a story, Haddon's deft handling of the anxieties of middle age and the fragile nature of mental health, ensures that the reader is able to smile, wince, cheer along and empathise with everyone involved. The narrative weaves together the perspectives of George's immediate family, each dealing with their own crisis, as is often the way of families. His wife, Jean, is having an affair, while their dauahter, Katie, is preparing for a second marriage to a man that no one in the family likes. Their son, Jamie, is struggling both with his identity and his and his own relationships. Each of them is so wrapped up in their own little world that they fail to notice that George, who is like an extra in the film of their own lives, is falling apart in front of them. The blend of dry wit and deep empathy, keeps all the relationships authentic and relatable and there are moments when the reader, no matter which generation they belong to will recognise themselves and their own family relationships. Haddon's prose is sharp, and his ability to balance humour with moments of genuine emotional depth is impressive. A Spot of Bother is a compelling read, offering both laughout-loud and moments of introspection.

#### The Cat Who Saved Books

### by Sōsuke Natsukawa, translated by Louise Heal Kawai

Rintaro Natsuki has always considered Natsuki Books, his grandfather's tiny, second-hand

bookshop, a place of wonder and the perfect refuge for a quiet, introverted young boy. He has spent many happy hours there reading. Then his grandfather dies leaving Rintaro grieving and along and the boy turns inwards even more and even stops going to school. Then he encounters a talking



tabby cat named Tiger who wanders in and asks Rintaro for help. Tiger explains that he needs a book lover to accompany him on a mission to save books from people who have imprisoned, mistreated, and betrayed them. Together they embark on a series of book-themed adventures. Sayo Yuzuki, is a strong, sensible girl who Rintaro has known since primary school. She calls by the bookshop to bring Rintaro homework, because she is concerned about his increased reclusiveness. They begin to discuss the power of books throughout the centuries; how books can introduce us to new ideas and how every difficult book offers us a new challenge. The children begin to develop a friendship through their shared love of stories. This children's novel was originally published in Japan in 2017, and Kawai's elegant translation renders it accessible to English-speakers, without losing any of the essence of the Japanese language and culture. A wise and whimsical novel, about how love and loss affect our lives. Beautifully written and thought provoking, it will appeal to both children and adults alike.

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## Create and Curate a Memory Box

memory box is a wonderful way to preserve and cherish your most treasured moments. Whether it's for yourself, as a future gift for a child, or to remember a family member who has died. Here is a step-by-step guide to creating and curating a meaningful memory box.

#### Step 1: Choose Your Box

Start by selecting a suitable container. It can be a decorative wooden box, a sturdy shoebox, or a specially purchased memory box. The size depends on how many items you plan to include. You can cover or decorate the box to reflect the theme or personal style, using paint, stickers, or fabric.

#### **Step 2: Gather Your Memories**

Collect items that hold sentimental value. These can include photographs, letters, concert tickets, travel souvenirs, or small mementos. Choose items that evoke specific memories or milestones, such as baby's first shoes, wedding invitations, or holiday postcards. Ensure each item has a personal significance and tells part of the story.

#### Step 3: Organize and Arrange

Carefully arrange the items in the box. You can sort



them chronologically or by theme (e.g., travel, family, achievements). Use envelopes or small pouches for delicate items like jewellery or pressed flowers. Adding labels or notes can help explain the significance of each item, providing context for future reminiscing.

#### Step 4: Personal Touches

Add personal touches to make the memory box even more special. Write a letter or include a diary entry to capture your emotions and thoughts. Add scented sachets to evoke memories through smell, or digital elements like a USB drive with a playlist of favourite songs or video clips.

#### Step 5: Maintain and Update

A memory box should be a living collection. Keep it updated with new memories and revisit it periodically to curate it. Remember, the container is a limit. You can keep anything, but not everything. My mother used to say, 'If everything is special, nothing is special,' so keep only the most cherished items. Curating can be a therapeutic activity and talking about the items with others, keeps the memories alive.

Each member of my family has their own memory box. They get to decided what is special enough to keep in their box. This is very important; if you have delightful memories of reading The Gruffalo to your firstborn and are deeply attached to the book, but they don't consider it special enough to keep, the memory is clearly yours, so it should go in your own memory box. Don't guilt them into keeping it in theirs!

Creating and curating a memory box is a deeply personal and rewarding project. It not only preserves your most cherished memories but also serves as a tangible connection to your past. So, gather your mementos, let your creativity flow, and start building your own treasure trove of memories today.

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## Beyond the Classroom

he arts subiects are being squeezed in in secondary education as successive Governments put ever more emphasis on maths and science.

Improved academic results: Studies show that students who participate in the creative arts tend to perform better academically across all subjects. In schools where the arts are intearated into the curriculum students perform better in maths, English, critical thinking, and verbal skills, suggesting that arts education positively impacts overall academic achievement.

#### Enhanced Wellbeina: Arts

subjects provide an outlet for self-expression and help build confidence. Many students report that arts lessons act as a release from academic pressures and everyday stresses, contributing to improved mental health.

**Cultural Awareness and** Empathy: Engagement with the arts helps young people develop a sense of their own identity and values, while also fostering awareness and appreciation of diversity. This cultivates empathy and understanding of different perspectives, essential



aualities in our increasinaly interconnected world. **Closing the Achievement** Gap: Arts education has been shown to have a particularly positive impact on students from disadvantaged backgrounds, Students from low-income families who participate in arts activities at school are three times more likely to earn a dearee, demonstrating the potential of arts education to level the playing field.

### Sausage and Bean Bowl Give sausage, mash and beans an autumnal makeover.



Preparation time: 5 mins Cooking time: 34 minutes Serves: 4

Ingredients 1 tbsp olive oil 2 onions finely sliced 1 large garlic clove, finely chopped 8 pork sausages 400g tin chopped tomatoes 2 tsp Dijon mustard ½ chicken or vegetable stock cube, made up to 175ml 420g tin baked beans Mashed potato, to serve

### Method

Heat half the oil in a lidded saucepan over a medium heat. Add the onions and fry until golden. Stir in the garlic and fry for 2 more minutes. Transfer to a plate and set aside. Increase the heat, add the remaining oil and the sausages, and cook for until caramelised browned all over. Return the onion and garlic to the pan with the tomatoes and mustard. Add the stock, season with pepper, and cook over a medium heat for 10 minutes, adding the beans after 5 minutes. Cover and cook for 5 more minutes until the sausages are cooked through. Serve poured over creamy mashed potato.

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

#### **Suduko Solution** from page 11



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for wythall & hollywood

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