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october 2022

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

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Boo!

Welcome to the October edition.

As soon as October hits we all start thinking about Christmas. But there's Halloween and Bonfire Night to enjoy first. Check out page 6 to see what you can do to get into the seasonal spirit and make the most of your time now that the nights are longer and colder.

With Christmas approaching, it's a time of year many of us set deadlines – we want the extension finished by then, the carpets professionally cleaned, the gutters cleared... whatever you need help with there are a range of local professionals who advertise in this magazine who are ready and willing to help.

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community events

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22 October, Park Hall, Wythall Park

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Bonfire & Fireworks

5 November, Wythall Park

Gates Open 6pm | Bonfire Lighting 6.30pm | 1st Fireworks Display 7.30pm | 2nd Fireworks Display 8.30pm | Venue Close 9.00pm. Tickets from wythallfireworks.eventbrite.co.uk



Elf The Musical

1-5 November, The Core Theatre Solihull

Based on the beloved holiday film, this hilarious fish-out-of-water comedy follows Buddy the Elf in his quest to find his



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Solihull Round Table Fireworks

5 November, 4.30-9pm, Tudor Grange Park

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Heating Horror

You don't need me to tell you that the cost of fuel is truly frightening at the moment. Gas bills have soared, and people are genuinely frightened to heat their homes. We don't know how long this situation will last; most of us are not eligible for Government help, and those that are eligible are most likely not going to receive enough. So, what should we do?

Well, as my late father used to say, 'We are where we are.' In other words, we have to work with the tools we have.

For years during cold winters old people have been urged to 'Prioritise one room, keep that heated and live in that space.' I'm ashamed to say that I never considered how patronising and Victorian that was until I started to read that same advice being applied to families and young people. Most people can't live in just one room. But we are where we are, and it makes sense to look at our living spaces to see if we can make more use of one particular area and prioritise heating that.

If you have a south-facing room, it's a good place to start. South-facing rooms get the sun all day so stay naturally warmer. If you don't have a south-facing room, choose an east-facing one for morning sun or west for the evening sun. North-facing rooms unfortunately will get no benefit from the sun.

Keeping warm air in and cold air out is crucial (and blindingly obvious). Seal leaks around windows and doors using caulk or weather stripping. Duct tape and clear plastic sheets make good DIY double glazing. I used it in my freezing room during my student years to great effect. Clear lets sunshine in through the windows, which helps warm the room and obviously means you don't need to turn on a light.

Desperate times

Draft excluders can be made for free or very cheaply from old tights or trousers stuffed with newspaper or other old tights. Rolled towels and blankets also work well.

Don't forget to look for subtle leaks. To do this use a candle. Move it slowly around problem spots like windows. If you see the flame flicker it's a sign that you have a leak.

Portable electric space heaters or halogen heaters can be a good investment. The cheap ones heat a space quickly but don't have an automatic cut off. More advanced ones have timers and / or temperature sensors which switch the heater off when the room reaches the required temperature. These appliances heat only the space you are using so they



are more economical than heating the whole house. Never leave them switched on unattended, or while you are sleeping.

One family I know decided that camping in their own home is the best option for staying warm. They set up their tent and sleeping bags and sleep together in one room.

As I type this another price rise is coming and people are scared about how they will cope. Writing about camping in your own front room and seeking south-facing spaces would have seemed ridiculous just 12 months ago, yet we are where we are.

Wishing you warmth and safety wherever you are.

Christmas is a Coming

Sorry to mention this but Christmas is right around the corner. Get ahead of the game with our pre-Christmas-season checklist.

Clear out the food cupboards Make room for festive goodies. Throw out all out-of-date items and things you know will never be eaten, even in a zombie apocalypse.

Clear out the toy cupboards Encourage your children to sort out toys they no longer play with and donate them to charity. It not only makes space for Christmas gifts, but it will also hopefully teach them compassion.

Order meat early Farmers' markets and shops are always packed out by the first week in December.

Puddings and cakes These need to be made early to give them time to

mature. Stir up Sunday is traditionally the time when Christmas puddings are made. It's the last Sunday before advent and this year it's on November 20th.

Write any cards and annual letters It's less of a chore than it used to be as more people eschew cards in favour of e-cards or texting, but for many people a card with a brief personal message is a welcome arrival in the post. If you get a few written every week in November then come December you can relax and feel virtuous.

Check guest lists It's worth checking who might be planning to spend Christmas with you well in advance so you can be prepared. Don't forget to ask whether anyone is vegetarian, vegan or has any allergies or intolerances. Forewarned is forearmed!

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answers on page 32

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Seasons of mist...

...and mellow fruitfulness, states the first line of the famous Keats poem. There is something rather lovely about autumn. The days are cooler but often sunny, yet the ground is more moist and so easier to dig. It's the perfect time of year for gardening.

It's tempting to tidy up all the browning plant stems but try not to get carried away. Leave some standing because they provide important habitats for wildlife. I do harvest a few seedheads each year: poppies, nigella, and alliums are my favourites. I cut them, leaving their long stems intact and put the heads inside a paper bag, then hang

the bunches inside to dry. The ripe seeds fall into the bag and can be labelled and kept for sowing next year's free plants! The decorative heads look nice in a vase too.

My neighbour (who is retired) makes fabulous leaf mould in meshed cages he's constructed himself. I take a 'busy mum' approach to fallen leaves. I run them over with a mower then rake the resulting confetti off my lawn into the flower beds and borders and let them rot naturally. They soon break down and are incorporated into the soil by worms. I still hanker after my own leaf mould crates though.

If you planted any perennials a few years ago they might need to be divided. Take a look at your plants. If they are dying off in the middle but have good growth around the edges, it's time to lift and divide. Dig up the root ball of the plant, brush and pull off excess soil and set on to a plastic ground sheet. Pull (or use a garden fork to prise) apart the football into three or four clumps, each with a section of healthy shoots and roots. Replant the 'new' plants elsewhere in the garden or try swapping plants with friends. Don't forget to keep them well-watered until they have become established.

If you feel that your garden needs a little more colour heading into winter add a couple of dogwood shrubs into your borders. There are striking red and yellow varieties available. You can also plant sedum, Japanese anemones (*Liriope*) and Michaelmas daisies (*Aster*). These flower well into late autumn and early winter.

Finally, a little planning for next year goes a long way. October is the perfect time to plant daffodil, crocus, hyacinth and allium bulbs for next spring.

Happy gardening.



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100g plain Greek yogurt or sour cream.
1 large orange, about washed and cut into pieces with the rind, but remove the seeds
1 tsp vanilla extract

Glaze

Juice of one large orange
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IMPORTANT:

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Method

Preheat oven to 175°C
Prepare an 8 inch / 21cm springform pan by spraying the sides with sunflower oil or butter and lining the base with greaseproof paper.
Place the sugar and eggs in a large bowl and beat with a mixer until light and fluffy and increased in volume. Sift the baking powder and flour together then add to the mixture in the bowl a little at a time along with the



softened butter. Continue to mix until completely blended, then stir in the yogurt or sour cream. In a food processor or blender, process the whole orange until it is almost pureed.

Add this blended orange to the cake mixture along with the vanilla extract and stir until evenly combined, then pour the batter into the prepared tin. Bake for 50-60 minutes depending on your oven. The cake is ready when

a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Allow to cool for about 15 minutes, then remove the side of the springform pan. Make the orange glaze

Prepare the glaze by heating the sugar and the orange juice in a saucepan, and allow to simmer for a few minutes, until the liquid has a syrupy consistency. Skewer the top of the a few times, then spoon and brush over the top of the cake and allow to cool completely before cutting.



Mark O'Sullivan

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Bear Faced! The story of Hercules

More than forty years ago on September 13th 1980 Hercules the Grizzly bear had an eventful day.

Hercules had been hired to star in a Kleenex commercial which was being filmed on the Scottish Island of Benbecula in the Outer Hebrides. Quite why Kleenex needed a full grown Grizzly for the job is not a matter of record, but at some point during the day's shoot he seems to have become disillusioned with the idea of his impending stardom and wandered off.

A massive search was set up but was eventually called off and Hercules was presumed dead.

Then a crofter spotted the 8' 4" (2.54m), half tonne animal as he was swimming. A rescue team arrived and shot Hercules with a tranquilliser dart. He was captured in

a net and gently transported by helicopter back to his relieved owner and trainer.

Following this escapade Hercules was fitted with a radio bleeper...just in case.

The gentle giant went on to become a TV star, appearing regularly on children's TV throughout the 1980's and he even managed a cameo role in the James Bond film, Octopussy.

He also appeared on several Hollywood chat shows and the cover of Time magazine.

He died some twenty years later in February 2000, following a fall from which he never fully recovered.



Beds / bedrooms

18 Hollywood Beds	01564 898118
25 Hollywood Bedrooms	07861 645054

Car Services

27 AP Alloys	07972 852758
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Carpenter

15 Carl Bishton	07810 373899
24 Andy B Installations	07941 396749

Carpets & Flooring

19 Goods	0121 430 5289
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Cleaning Services

13 The Maid Brigade	07855 435073
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Digital services

17 Paul Kallu	07875 475554
---------------	--------------

Doors and windows

9 Cloudy 2 Clear	0800 61 21 118
14 Garolla	01564 340 046
29 Finesse Windows	0121 514 5270

Estate Agents

1 & 2 Melvyn Danes	01564 826555
36 smarthomes	0121 744 4144

Flooring

7 Number 1 Flooring	0121 745 9352
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Funeral Directors

11 Thomas Brothers	01564 822001
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Gardens and Drives

5 Solihull Tree Care	0121 604 6809
11 J Kelly	07718 620226
14 Turner Landscapes	07833 215412
15 Drives 4 U	0800 303 2559
26 Projects	07961 358367
28 Heritage Drives & Landscapes	0121 690 5581
35 Central Drives & Landscapes	0121 702 1456

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15 Adele's Foot Care	07802 987072
15 Denture Clinic Birmingham	0121 777 5528
31 Mark O'Sullivan Chiropody	07824 506839

Heating

8 Grant John	07974 226558
10 Wythall Heating	01564 824350
24 Dennis Plumbing & Heating	07903 715360

Locksmiths

20 Lockfit	07368 508936
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Lofts

9 Stu's Loft Ladders	07712 327889
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Mortgages

12 Oaktree Mortgages	01564 829787
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Plumbing

24 Dennis Plumbing & Heating	07903 715360
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Restaurants

3 Monsoon	01564 829200
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Roofing

24 Deluxe Roofing	0800 747 1461
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Storage and wardrobes

25 Hollywood Bedrooms	07861 645054
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Vehicle Graphics

10 Baker Ward	01564 822465
---------------	--------------

Website & Graphic Design

21 Hot Lobster Design Ltd	0121 369 1977
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Crossword Solution

from page 34



Sudoku Solution

from page 34

Solution to Mind benders

1. Up against the clock
2. Double Dutch
3. Fair play

mindbenders
from page 17

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

Utilities

Electricity power cut	105
Gas leak	0800 111 9999
Severn Trent Water (main switchboard)	024 7771 5000
Severn Trent Water (emergencies)	0800 783 4444

Travel

National Rail Enquiries	03457 48 49 50
First Bus Worcestershire	0345 646 0707

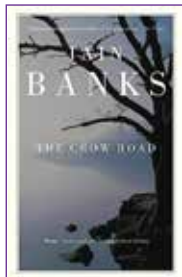
a good read

By Natasha Donovan

The Crow Road

Iain Banks

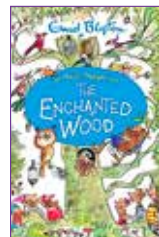
'He's away the crow road.'
So says Prentice McHoan's grandmother before she too takes that path. I'm not sure why I'd never read Iain Banks before. If I'm brutally honest, I think I was put off by the monotone covers. It's not a great reason and it did drive home the point that you really can't judge a book this way! I picked up *The Crow Road* to read on a short break and I've been steadily devouring Banks' work since. If the cover didn't attract me then the opening line did: 'It was the day my grandmother exploded.' In the aforementioned Prentice, it has an engaging, honest, and endearing hero, and in his family it has a complex, disturbing and fascinating cast of characters. There is drama, humour, mystery, and philosophy in equal measure. What's not to love? The central strand of the story is the disappearance of Prentice's Uncle Rory – presumed dead by many, but presumed alive by Prentice's father, Kenneth. Rory's unfinished papers include the idea of 'Crow Road' – a novel? a factual account? Nothing is clear. As Prentice attempts to unravel the thread, Banks moves his own story backwards and forwards in time, switching perspectives and retelling events from different angles. For a novel which is frequently about death, there is an awful lot of humour too – often dark, but equally hilarious. Banks is also known for his science fiction, written as Iain M Banks, and he wrote a whisky-logue 'Raw Spirit,' which is both well written, and responsible for introducing me to this spirit. It was certainly a summer of firsts for me! *The Crow Road* will always have a special place in my heart though, because it was the novel that first introduced me to Banks.



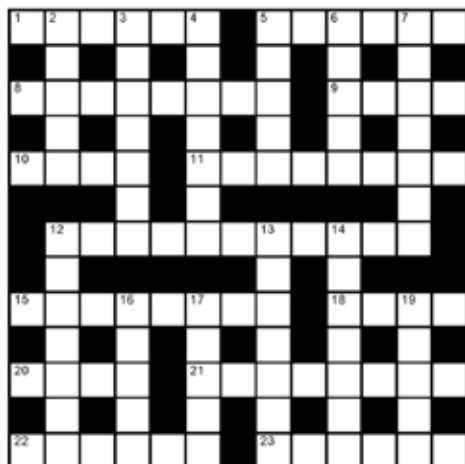
The Enchanted Wood

by Enid Blyton

For those of us of a certain age Enid Blyton was a childhood favourite. Through the eyes of an adult there is no doubt that she was a deeply flawed human being, though arguably she was simply a product of her upbringing. Her books drifted out of favour for many years, but many have recently been modernised for today's children...after all, a good story is still a good story several decades on. *The Enchanted Wood* is the first in the Faraway Tree series, in which three children find themselves living close to the most amazing tree you have ever seen. It grows different fruits at different points, depending on how it is feeling. It is inhabited by all manner of strange folk – Silky the fairy, the old Saucepan Man, Dame Washalot, and the Angry Pixie. At the top lives Moonface, in a perfectly round little house with a slide that runs right to the bottom of the tree. And best of all, there is a small ladder through the clouds which leads to a different magical land every time... Joe, Beth, and Frannie (the names have been updated from Blyton's originals) have all manner of adventures there. Sometimes the lands are full of fun – The Land of Birthdays, for example – while others are slightly more threatening – Dame Snap may no longer be Dame Slap, but her school is still somewhere no-one would like to visit! *The Enchanted Wood* was a favourite of mine as a child and this slightly tweaked version is a perfect chapter book for independent reading.



crossword



Down

- 2 Communication device (5)
3 Examiner of accounts (7)
4 Actions producing responses (7)
5 _____ = distance / time (5)

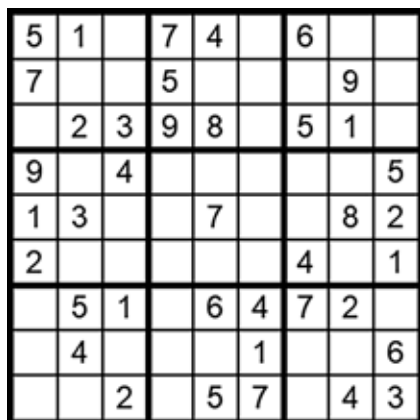
- 6 The Pied _____ of Hamlin (5)
7 Exact copy (7)
12 Coastal town (7)
13 On the way (2,5)
14 Hiker, leisure walker (7)

- 16 Frenzied (5)
17 Contraction of Edward (5)
19 Squeezed and twisted to remove water (5)

clues

- 1 Pointed tipped weapons (6)
5 Terrific, wonderful (6)
8 Source of wealth or valuable information (4,4)
9 Resides at the Vatican Palace (4)
10 Undiluted (4)
11 Support from beneath (8)
12 Roadside facility for travellers (7,4)
15 Device to measure energy usage (3,5)
18 Weak cry (4)
20 Soft feathers (4)
21 Bend over with laughter (6,2)
22 Tacky, gummy (6)
23 Make furious (6)

answer on page 32



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 32



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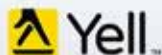
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