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KITCHEN & BATHROOM MAKEOVERS

Spring is in the air (hopefully)!

Welcome to the March edition...

It's a great time of year to start thinking about your next house move, or having a Spring clean, or maybe getting around to those home and garden improvements you've been putting off and off...

We have a wide range of organisations and tradespeople who advertise in here who are all local and keen to take on more work in the area.

Don't forget **Mothers' Day on Sunday 22nd March** – there's loads of lovely restaurants and walks in the area to treat her to - and check out page 6 for some ideas on local events.

Until next month,

Zoe

Zoe Reece

Tel: 07557 220585

Email: zoe@dorridgedirectory.com

www.knowleanddorridgedirectory.com



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community events

Springtime Quiz Night

26th March, 7.30 pm

Knowle Village Hall, B93 0NH

Join the KVHA for a fun Quiz Night (Knowle Village Hall fundraising event). Book your team in now (max. 6 people). Please bring your own drinks and "nibbles". Great prizes! Tickets £6 each from 01564 778163 or 01564 779898 or from the Friday Coffee morning at the Hall (10am – noon).



Foraging Courses at Elmdon Park

21 March, 12noon – 3.30pm

Elmdon Park, Solihull B92 9EJ

Join us for an informative foraging walk where we will ID the various wild plants and mushrooms we find. Enjoy homemade refreshment along the way and a light 'Wild Food' lunch with us to finish the day. Call 01981 590604 for more information.

Solihull Spring Fair

2nd – 5th April

Solihull Town Centre

Get your garden summer ready at the Solihull Spring Fayre. There will be plenty of garden plants and furniture available to purchase to spruce up your home. A Continental Street Market will also be in town so you can taste flavours from around the world whilst you shop.

Get Crafty in the Wild

7th April, 10.30-11.30am

The Parkridge Centre,

Brueton Park, B91 3HW

Off we go to get arty in the wild! We'll be making massive stick pictures and getting muddy with our special mud paint recipe. Suitable for children aged 2+. £4 per child. To book tickets: www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/events



Outdoor Cinema

1st May, 7-10.45pm

Arden Academy, Knowle

Come and see "The Greatest Showman" on a big screen under the stars! Sing along, bring a chair, have a picnic or indulge in some great street food. This event, which is open to the whole community, will raise funds for Arden Academy. Prices: Family £25 (2+2), Adult (18+) £10, Child (U18) £5. For more information and to book tickets: www.jumblebee.co.uk/Ardenpfatthegreatestshowman



THE CORE LIBRARY

0121 704 6965

- **Councillor's Surgery** - these are face-to-face meetings held by councillors for local people to raise issues in their area. First and last Saturday of the month, 10.00am-12.00pm
- **Rhyme Time** - Wednesdays 10.15am to 10.30am, term-time only. A short interactive session for 0-2s that includes finger and action rhymes and songs. Come along and meet up with other parents/carers and discover what the library can offer your child.
- **Meet and Play** - Fridays 10.15am to 11.15am, age 0 - 2 years (term time only. Our new Meet and

Play session offers the chance for young families to meet up, relax, chat, play, sing or make music together! The session is for families, led by families. Toys and musical instruments are provided. For more information contact 0121 704 6965.

- **Homework Club** - Tuesdays 3.45pm to 5.15pm, term time only
- **Silent Reading Cafe** - Held once a month on Thursday evenings, this is a chance to unwind and read in a cosy, informal environment without distractions. It begins with an hour of silent reading from 6pm with a chance to chat (if you want) between 7pm and 7.45pm.

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To a Special Mum

Remembering mums of kids with additional needs on Mothers' Day

On Mothers' Day my Facebook and Instagram feeds fill with photos. The captions declare, 'Beautiful bouquet from my son!' #mothersday or 'My daughters

took me to see Les Mis' #mothersday. In spite of the fact that I have a much-loved son he will never send me flowers or take me to the theatre. Tom has Down Syndrome and is also autistic, non-verbal and has a myriad of complex health problems. I love him and I know he loves me, but I will be his carer long after my friends' kids have left home and started their own families.

This is my shout-out to other mums whose Mothers' Day celebrations will be bittersweet.

You are not alone - There are more of us than you think. Our children may all have different problems, but we understand each other's sense of being on the outside, at the celebrations 'normal' families take for granted: Christmas, birthday parties, family get-togethers and Mothers' Days.

You are AWESOME - You are a full-blown superhero my friend. Your superpower is the ability to deal with situations other parents could not conceive in their worst nightmares. You might acquire knowledge and skills beyond those required by most doctors, memorising medication regimens, side effects, and how to inject or infuse the drugs. You deal calmly with your hysterical child during horrendous medical procedures. You deal with melt-downs in public toilets over hand-dryers! You encourage your child to do the things doctors assured you they would never do. You crash, you burn, and you get up and do it all again the next day anyway.

You celebrate your kids' achievements on their terms - Other parents crow about their child's GCSE results or a grade 4 piano exam passed with distinction or a star-of-the-week award for neat handwriting. Our celebrations look different though they are no less important. We celebrated Tom signing 'Mum', 'Dad' and 'love' for the first time, and we definitely celebrated him taking a bath without screaming, drowning us or flooding the house!

You have the best black sense of humour - 'nuff said. We know that we laugh at things parents

of typical kids would not find the least bit funny, like the weird people you meet during all-nighters in A&E departments, discovering excrement smeared over your freshly-painted walls, or an aquarium full of dead fish because your child wanted to feed them and the only box he could reach was the small one posted through the door containing a sample of washing powder! RIP Tom's fish!

You accept, and don't compare - You become the mum other mothers confide in

because their child doesn't walk, talk, read, or ride a bike as well as their peers. Never mind that your child is 10, non-verbal and rides a large trike because of balance issues! You accept (mostly) other parents' rights to brag or worry about their kids even though you often feel that sense of 'otherness'. You are special. To mothers of additional needs kids everywhere.



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Sat 18th	MOTOWN MAGIC PARTY with MR D SMOOVE	£32.50
Fri 24th	THE 'NOLAN BAND' PARTY NIGHT with THE SHANE NOLAN BAND	£35.00

MAY

Fri 1st	GEORGE BENSON - STEVIE WONDER PARTY with NAT AUGUSTIN	£35.00
Fri 8th	THE DADS ARMY 'VE DAY' PARTY with REVOLVER & VINTAGE VOICES	£45.00
Fri 15th	BACK TO THE 80's PARTY with BORN IN THE 80's	£35.00
Fri 22nd	MOTOWN DIVAS SHOW with THE DREAMETTES	£35.00
Sat 30th	'MAMMA MIA' PARTY with VIVA ABBA	£35.00

JUNE

Fri 5th	'SWINGING 60's & MOTOWN' PARTY with THE KRYSTALETES	£35.00
Sat 13th	THE 'MIDSUMMER MOTOWN BALL' with SOULTOWN COLLECTIVE	£40.00
Thur 18th	ROYAL ASCOT 'LADIES' DAY in THE MARQUEE	£79.50
Fri 19th	ROYAL ASCOT CHARITY DAY in THE MARQUEE	£79.50
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JULY

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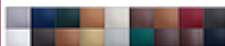
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It's several weeks since my New Year resolution to lose weight and get fit. It's cold and damp outside. The gym is miles away, and there's a TV program on about a knitting group in Nicaragua that looks interesting, and this sofa is ever so comfortable.

My self-motivation tank is empty!

Does your determination and energy to get fit after New Year's Day seems to run out sooner each year? Do you need to get fit? Do you need to lose weight? Do you know you'll feel better if you do? It's so much easier to fall back into old habits than to actively make a difference to our health isn't it? So how do we stay motivated?

Motivation is all in the mind. There is no physical difference between those who get fit and those who get fat. The fit people are just those who manage to leave the house and move their bodies. Clearly, we need to help our mind overcome the inertia currently preventing us moving from the couch.

Get up, get dressed, get out.

It sounds simple but getting out of the door is the biggest hurdle. If you can force yourself to go through the motions of getting into your exercise kit, walking to the door and out of the house you're 90% of the way towards actually exercising. If you're standing outside dressed for exercise it's harder to change your mind and sneak back inside for another slice of cake.

Set an alarm to tell you when it's time for your exercise class, run, etc. Make sure you've got workout gear that makes you feel good.

Something stylish, comfortable, colourful, or high-tech; it doesn't matter, use whatever works for you. Make the getting dressed part something to look forward to. Baggy, stained, holey jogging bottoms will put you off the idea of stepping outside. Then just grab your keys, open the door and step outside.

Start slowly.

It's important to pace yourself. Just because your neighbour can sprint 5 km in 20 minutes doesn't mean that you have to. Whatever exercise you are doing find a pace that is comfortable while still pushing you. As you exercise more you will gradually increase your exertion. Push yourself too hard at the beginning and exercise will seem exhausting, painful and make it harder to get going the next time. Once you begin to see your performance improving, you'll get excited about beating your personal best and want to prove to yourself just how good you are.



Set a short-term goal.

The ultimate goal might be to fit into a size 10 dress, or have a perfect six pack with matching biceps, but realistically that's probably more than a few months away. Pick a goal that you can achieve within the next two months. Dropping one dress size, being able to run non-

stop for 1 km, being able to do a proper pull-up. Achieving goals is as important as setting them when trying to keep your motivation high. Small successful steps build one on the other until all of a sudden, your ultimate goal is just within reach.

Keep on keeping on. Don't over-think it, just do it.

By Robert Grant

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Cornwall

As one of the most popular UK destinations for a getaway, this is sure to tick all the doggy-boxes. An incredible 51 beaches welcome dogs all year round, and a further 81 have seasonal restrictions. Several attractions found in Cornwall also welcome our dogs, so you can explore the area with the whole family in tow. Take a steam train ride along the Bodmin and Wenford Railway or explore the Eden project where dogs are allowed in outdoor areas on a lead. You can even head to Truro and introduce your dogs to stand up paddleboarding!

Devon

Thousands flock to the South Coast for its incredible coastal walks, great summer weather and miles of beaches. Some of its finest attractions welcome dogs including The Donkey Sanctuary, the Miniature Pony Centre and the Devon Railway Centre which means your days out can include your dogs too. You can find designated sections of many

beaches that allow owners to relax on the sand while their dogs run off their lead. Many of the country-side pubs allow dogs in on their lead, with many beachside cafes providing water and treats for our beloved pets. Beer allows dogs on its beach all year round October to April. The rest of the year allowed on half of the beach.

Peak District

The Peak District is an ideal holiday destination with your dog, with glorious views from up high, picturesque villages and attractions galore that welcome both human and dog. Head to the Peak Rails heritage line running between Rowsley and Matlock and be welcome on board the train. For a relaxing drink, head to The Cobbles where you and your canine champions can enjoy views from a large beer garden and young and old can enjoy the play area. In fact, you can find over 100 dog-friendly pubs in the Peak District area!

Snowdonia

The best way to enjoy North Wales' scenery is by climbing to its highest peak, Mount Snowdon's summit, which stands at 1085m. The National Park here allows dogs on a

lead, and as long as fitness permits, they can accompany you on the journey to the summit. From high to low, head to Sygun Copper Mine which offers a fascinating day of adventure exploring underground, just bear in mind that the metal steps to climb could prove more difficult for larger dogs.

The Lake District

A trip to the Lake District won't be complete without experiencing some of their incredible day outs from Lakeland mountain walks to the Claife viewing station and the west shore of Windermere. After a long day of exploring, quench your thirst at the many dog-friendly pubs, we recommend The Snooty Fox Country Inn which dates back to 1624! For a cosy welcoming, head to Jasper's Coffee House, rumour has it they're the friendliest dog café in Kenswick.

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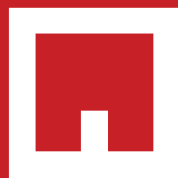
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More Fool Us

By Sarah Davey

With April Fools' Day looming it's always fun, trying to spot the fake story. Some would say that in the current political climate it's now almost

impossible to separate fact from fiction. But back in the good old days when regular news stories didn't sound as though they'd been dreamed up by the team who wrote *Twin Peaks* or *Walking Dead* newspapers and TV channels vied to see who could pull off the best prank.

The most famous is definitely the BBC's 1957 Panorama report on the bumper spaghetti crop. Huge numbers of British viewers were fooled by the footage of Swiss peasants gathering long strands of pasta from the trees!

In 1962, Swedish television viewers were duped into thinking that they could magically transform their black-and-white TV sets into colour by

stretching a nylon stocking over the screen!

Australians were confused in 1975 when they were told they were converting to metric time, with 100 seconds to the minute, 100 minutes to the hour and 20-hour days.

Finally, in 2008 people were amazed to see a BBC film of Adélie penguins flying across the Antarctic on their way to spend the winter in the rainforests of South America. This became one of the most viewed videos on the internet. Totally fake.



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WIN 4 TICKETS

to see **Woodland Tales with Grandad**

on 9th April at 2.30pm

The Core Theatre, Solihull (formerly Solihull Arts Complex)

For your chance to win these tickets, visit the Core Theatre website page for this event - www.thecoretheatresolihull.co.uk - to find the answer to this question:

What age is this show suitable for?

Email your answer to: thecoretheatre@solihull.gov.uk – and please put 'Woodland Tales' as the subject line.

Closing date for entries is 31st March. The winner will be drawn at random and notified by email after this date.

Please note there is no cash value nor exchange for this prize so please don't enter if you cannot attend the date shown above.

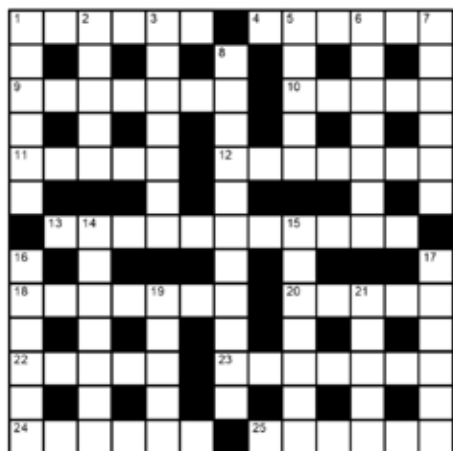
About the show:

Something is happening in the woods, voices can be heard, and a strange metallic smell fills the air. Machines are gathering at its edge and a mysterious call is heard across the valley.

Laura the ladybird, Jeffrey the spider, Brett the Woodlouse and Willoughby the Woodpecker are worried. Velda the Vixen knows there's a one person who can help them – Granddad.

But is there enough time? Can they save the wood? And will the mystery stranger help? This promises to be an incredible show with an important environmental message to share.

crossword



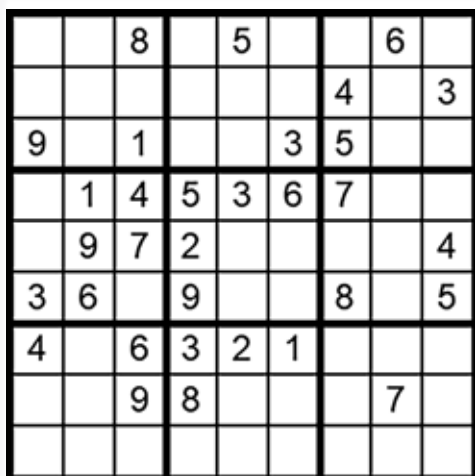
clues

Across

- 1 Deactivate, neutralise (6)
- 4 Infinite, grandiose (6)
- 9 Sturdy, powerful canine (7)
- 10 Disinterested (5)
- 11 Devoted, faithful (5)
- 12 Before the court (2,5)
- 13 Dinner jacket and white shirt (coll) (7,4)
- 18 Kenyan capital (7)
- 20 Seraph (5)
- 22 Perch (at night) (5)
- 23 Displeasure, chagrin (7)
- 24 Expressive verse (6)
- 25 Breathe out (6)

Down

- 1 Tinker, play at (6)
- 2 Frivolous, nonsensical (5)
- 3 Danger sign (3,4)
- 5 Curved path around a planet (5)
- 6 Gin cocktail (7)
- 7 Snuggle, caress (6)
- 8 Humiliating (11)
- 14 Personification (7)
- 15 Crate used as a makeshift stand for a speaker (7)
- 16 Implicate, seduce (6)
- 17 Sheep's woolly coat (6)
- 19 Exterior (5)
- 21 Tropical fruit (5)



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.

answers on page 36

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1 LOWBROOK LANE, SOLIHULL, B90 1QR

Beef in Guinness with Herb Dumplings

Ingredients

For the stew

2 tbsp oil
1kg braising steak , cut into large pieces
2 tbsp plain flour , well seasoned
3 onions , sliced
500ml Guinness
2 sprigs thyme

For the dumplings

75g butter, frozen and grated, or 75g suet
150g self-raising flour
1 small onion , grated
2 sprigs of thyme , leaves
stripped and chopped
Water for mixing

Method

Heat the oven to 150C/fan 130C/gas 2.
Heat a little of the oil in a large oven-proof pan.

Lightly flour the pieces of braising steak and fry in small batches until well

browned. Remove them with a slotted spoon and place them on a plate.

Add the onions to the pan and fry on a fairly high heat until they soften and tinge brown at the edges.

Pour the Guinness into the pan, letting it bubble up, then return the meat to the pan along with the thyme. Cover the pan and transfer to the oven for 2-2 1/2 hours or until tender. The sauce will sweeten and thicken during the cooking time.

Make the dumplings (towards the end of the cooking time by mixing the grated butter or suet, flour, onion and thyme together and season well.

Gradually add water to the dry ingredients until you have a soft dough. Divide into 12 balls. Place the dumplings on top of the casserole and return it to the oven, uncovered, for 25 minutes.

Serve with shredded Savoy cabbage



Prep time: 20 minutes
Cooking Time: 3 hours
Serves: 4-6

Suck it up!

Is it time for a new vacuum cleaner?

My previous vacuum cleaner was over a decade old, a bit unwieldy and mostly held together with duct tape. I hadn't realised that the world of vacuum cleaners

had moved on so much in the intervening years. Different shapes, sizes, colours and features. Perusing my local electrical retail establishment felt like a bizarre speed-dating event for dust-busters, complete with its own jargon, 'bagless, HEPA, light ball, and Roomba.

But I did the research, so you don't have to. Here's what I discovered:

Upright vacuums remain popular because they're easy to use and don't involve much bending. They are great on carpets and rely on a spinning brush bar.

Cylinder vacuums are smaller, lighter, mostly cheaper, and take up less storage space. They are good for cleaning stairs, upholstery, and small spaces.

Dust bags capture and store dust, dirt, and hair picked-up as you clean. Some can be emptied and re-used, but most are disposable. Bags are hygienic, airtight and good for asthma and allergy sufferers. Obviously, the downside of disposable is that the bag has to be replaced when full, which could prove costly over time. There used to be a loss of suction as a bag filled up, but this is less of a problem with newer vacuum models.

Bagless vacuum cleaners tend to possess a filter within the dust canister to trap the dirt, dust and hair. Some, like the Dyson use a cyclonic action to separate the dust from the air and trap it inside the canister. Bagless means you never

have to replace the bag and can see when the canister needs to be emptied, or whether you've sucked up a mislaid earring or a prized Lego piece. They can be messy though when emptying out and are often more expensive to purchase than cleaners which use bags.

If you're a pet-owner, you might want to consider a vacuum which targets pet hair and odour. Miele produce one with a high intensity motor and a turbo brush to make it easy for to get rid of stubborn clumps of pet hair. It also has an ActiveClean filter to capture odours to keep your home smelling fresh.



Trailing cables are a trip hazard for older people, and those with poor eyesight. You might want to consider a cordless vacuum cleaner. Some of these are very light too, weighing in at just over 3Kg, making them easy to carry upstairs. A couple of models even have LED lights, like little headlights to improve dust visibility. They run for between 40-60 minutes and then have to be recharged which can take 4 hours.

Finally, you might want to consider the vacuum of the future, a robovac. The Roomba sets the standard though there are cheaper models available. They trundle around your house using sensors to detect the dirt particles. They are even stair-aware, so they don't take a tumble! They connect to an app meaning you can schedule a time for them to clean, and even programme them to stay out of certain rooms. They return to their charging port on their own after 90 minutes. Truly a 21st century cleaning experience!

By Tracey Anderson

a taster of what's coming up...

CINEMA



Radioactive from 20th March

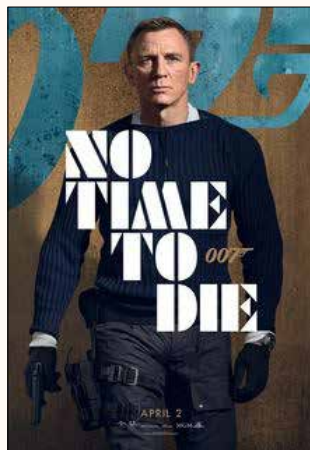
This is a journey through Marie Curie's enduring legacies – her passionate relationships, scientific breakthroughs and the consequences that followed for her and for the world. After meeting fellow scientist Pierre Curie, the pair go on to marry and change the face of science forever by their discovery of radioactivity.

Mulan from 27th March

When the Emperor of China issues a decree that one man per family must serve in the Imperial Army to defend the country from Northern invaders, Hua Mulan, the eldest daughter of an honoured warrior, steps in to take the place of her ailing



father. Masquerading as a man, Hua Jun, she is tested every step of the way and must harness her inner-strength and embrace her true potential.



No Time To Die from 3rd April

Bond has left active service and is enjoying a tranquil life in Jamaica. His peace is short-lived when his old friend Felix Leiter from the CIA turns up asking for help. The mission to rescue a kidnapped scientist turns out to be far more treacherous than expected, leading Bond onto the trail of a mysterious villain armed with dangerous new technology.

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a good read

reviews By Willow Coby

The Handmaid's Tale

by Margaret Atwood



You'd have to have been living under a rock over the last couple of years to have not heard of The Handmaid's Tale even if it is just through the hugely successful TV series on Channel 4. However, the novel itself is not was first published in 1985 and appears on set text lists for English Literature courses from A Level to university degrees. Fans of the book have not been disappointed by the TV series and so this bodes well for people wanting to go the other way. Like the TV series, the novel tells the story of life in Gilead from the point of view of Offred, a handmaid to commander in the new political regime. A dystopian view of America presents us with a country where fertility levels have declined due to radiation poisoning and so Offred's ability to reproduce means that she is forced to bear children for the upper echelons of society. Atwood uses a form of dual narrative to present the story to us, as chapters alternate between 'night' revealing more of Offred's feelings and glimpses into her past, and 'day' showing us glimpses of day to day life in Gilead. It is hard to put your finger on what has made this novel so successful, but Atwood's sources of inspiration may offer a clue. She has said that everything she writes about in the novel is based on events that happened at some point in history. There is nothing fantastical here, but purely the uneasiness of realising what human beings might indeed be capable of.

Lost and Found

by Oliver Jeffers



'Once there was a boy and one day he found a penguin at his door'. This is the opening line of this wonderful picture book. A very simple story but one that can't help but draw you in emotionally.

Finding a penguin at your door is not a normal everyday occurrence, and what happens next isn't normal and everyday either. The boy realises that the penguin is lost and is determined to help him find his home. After checking and the 'lost and found' and realising that no one has reported a missing penguin, he sets out to return him to the South Pole in a small rowing boat. But is the penguin really lost and will returning him to the South Pole really be what the penguin wants? This is a wonderful story of an unusual friendship and finding what is missing in life.

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local police contact for Solihull

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

Sudoku Solution
from page 26

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

crossword Solution
from page 26



- Solution to Mind benders**
1. An American in Paris
 2. Iron curtain
 3. Mixed emotions

mindbenders
from page 16

Saints Days

Why do we have them and how are saints chosen?

March 1st is St David's Day and March 17th is St Patrick's Day. Most of us know they are the patron saints of Wales and Ireland respectively. But why do we have saints? Who chooses them and to what purpose?

Saints derive from the Catholic Church; they form no part of Protestant faiths. The process the Church uses to name a saint is called canonization. Prior to the tenth century saints were chosen by public acclaim but gradually bishops and finally the Vatican took over the authority. Canonization is a complex and lengthy process which begins after the death of a catholic regarded as particularly holy. Mostly it starts many years after the death to allow for perspective on their life and work. Initially the local bishop investigates the candidate's life then the case is referred upwards to a panel of theologians at the Vatican. If approval is granted the pope proclaims the candidate 'venerable.'

Beatification is the next step and requires evidence of one miracle or act of martyrdom. A miracle must have taken place after the candidate's death as a direct result of an appeal made to them. They are generally related to recovery from a deadly medical condition. For such a recovery to be declared miraculous, it must be complete, instantaneous, durable (so it can't return) and scientifically inexplicable. If the pope bestows beatification the person may be venerated by members of the catholic faith.

Canonization can only occur, even for martyrs, after a further miracle. The title of saint means that the person lived a holy life, is in heaven and is to be honoured by the Church. Canonization does not make someone a saint; it is simply recognition by the Pope of what he declares God has already done.



St David and St Patrick are both patron saints. These are saints chosen as special protectors or guardians over certain areas of life. The areas can include occupations, illnesses, countries or causes. While the Pope decides whether someone can be canonized, patrons may be chosen by individuals or groups of people. Patron saints are often chosen because an event in their lives or a talent overlaps with a particular area. For example, David, a Welsh bishop who helped to spread Christianity across the continent was born in Wales and served his country through the church. Patrick, though not born in Ireland was taken there in slavery after being kidnapped by pirates. He became fluent in Gaelic, turned to God and helped to bring Christianity to the island of Ireland. For many people saints are still relevant in the 21st century as they act like mentors, providing people with an example of a good life to follow.

By Eloise Constantine



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