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2021



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Holidays!

Welcome to the August edition...

While many of us can't get abroad due to the ever-changing restrictions, there's still plenty of opportunities to have a great Summer.

Try exploring places a little further afield for some lovely day trips, go on picnics, dust off your BBQ, have friends over, or maybe book a couple of nights away somewhere you've always fancied going to.

If you're in the mood for live music make sure you book tickets for Solihull's Summer Fest in Tudor Grange Park this September or enter our competition on page 26 to win 4 tickets to see Pop Divas Live!

Until next month...



Zoe Reece
Tel: 07557 220585
Email: zoe@dorridgedirectory.com
www.solihullindex.com



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community events



Summer Market

Hafton Country World

21-22 August 10am – 5pm

Our Summer Markets are awash with a plethora of stunning gifts and crafts. Find some exciting and absolutely fascinating – bespoke crafts, stunning cards, beautiful jewellery, exceptional wall art, fabulous wooden gifts and a multitude of amazing merchandise and goodies. You will fail not to be surprised!

Solihull Summer Fest

11-12 September

Tudor Grange Park

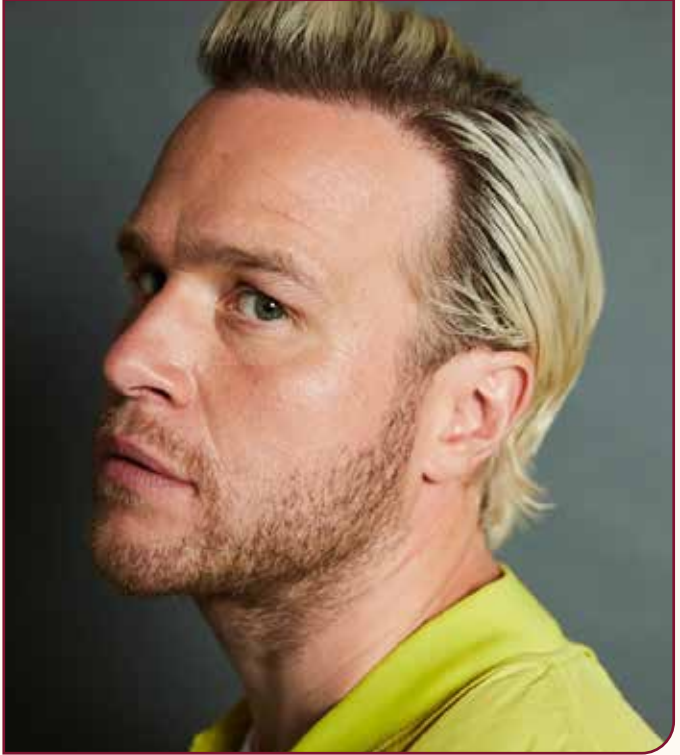
Should you go for Olly Murs, Marti Pellow, and Alexandra Burke on the Saturday – or are you more into Tony Hadley, Kim Wilde and Nik Kershaw? Or if you can't decide - why not go on both days?! Tickets from solihullsummerfest.co.uk

Balsall Common Fun Run

19 September

Heart of England School, Balsall Common, Solihull CV7 7FW

Our slogan is Walk | Jog | Run | Race and we welcome people of all ages and abilities for the



Mini Runs, Junior 5KM, Family 5KM and Adult 5KM & 10KM events. For more information: www.stuweb.co.uk/event/3838

Solihull Food & Drink Festival

24-26 September

Solihull town centre

You will be spoilt for choice with a huge selection of food

and drink traders in the town centre. The much-loved demo kitchen will be back, with a delicious and diverse variety of food and drink, family entertainment and the live music stage. We're also delighted to announce that Ainsley Harriott will be headlining the festival.



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Visit Alfresco Style for all your gardening needs.

Our Events

Summer Markets and Chili Festival - Sat 14th & Sun 15th Aug.

Summer Markets - Sat 21st & Sun 22nd Aug, Sat 28th to Mon 30th Aug.

Autumn Craft Fayre - Sat 11th & Sun 12th Sept.

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Tip of the Month:
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A Hobby a Day...

Keeps the doldrums away

During a busy working week do you manage to carve out any time just for you? Or maybe you're recently retired after a busy working life and finding it difficult to fill those empty hours. It's time to invoke **the power of the hobby.**

My dictionary defines 'hobby' as 'an activity or interest pursued for leisure or relaxation and not as a main occupation.'

There have been many scientific studies over the years which show that people who participate regularly in hobbies live longer, healthier lives. This beneficial effect seems to be independent of other factors such as general health or how wealthy you are.

In psychology-speak, hobbies are, a modern expression of suppressed primordial instincts!

What this means is that we are essentially pack animals and that we like to belong to a group or a tribe, even those of us who consider ourselves loners. Think about it for a second. Many hobbies do involve belonging to a specific social group or club, with rules and structure: golf, football, train spotters etc. Even anti-social people often spend hours gaming on their pc with other gamers or blogging to other like-minded folk.

However, there's more to a hobby than belonging. Hobbies allow us to tap into two qualities which are fundamentally human. The first is our capacity for imagination. Whether we're creating something beautiful, like a quilt, or painting, or designing a new layout for our train set, or planning a route for a hill-walking weekend, it's our imagination which is key to the final outcome. The second quality is our need to drive forward or push boundaries. Whatever our hobby, we're always striving for improvement: can we obtain that



particularly rare stamp; can we climb a higher mountain; can we take a better photograph?

While we're using our imaginations or pushing ourselves that bit further, our hobby acts as a release valve for the stresses of modern life. It's difficult to worry about your boss or the household bills while you knit, play guitar or swim.

So where do you start when choosing a hobby? There is an old saying that everyone ought to have three hobbies: an intellectual one; a physical one and a spiritual one.

Modern life doesn't leave much time for three hobbies but it's still a good starting point and some hobbies can combine two or even all three of those desirable attributes. Bird watching, for instance combines intellectual and physical, as you'll learn about birds and get out and about to find them. Yoga combines physical and spiritual attributes. Get creative: make a list of things which interest you and design your hobby to fit your lifestyle. You never know what you might achieve.



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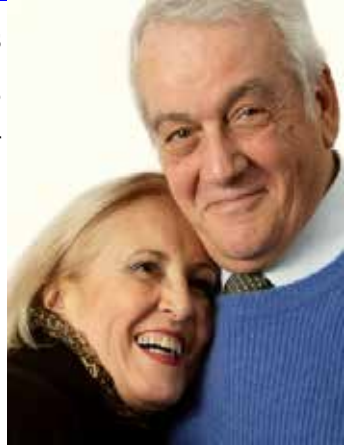
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A Feat of Endurance

Swimming the English Channel is still an amazing achievement

On August 24th, 1875, Captain Matthew Webb became the first person to swim the English Channel without the use

of artificial aids. Since that time, the channel swim has become the pinnacle achievement for an open-water swimmer. But the journey to success is complex, and most people who attempt it fail.

There are many factors that combine to make the Channel swim so difficult, but the cold has to be number one. Ironically, super-fit swimmers with lots of muscle and little body fat get cold more quickly, so are more likely to suffer from hypothermia.

Unpredictable Channel tides and extreme weather conditions mean that swimmers need to book pilots almost two years in advance. Pilots are people with years of experience of tides and weather, who are skilled in escorting swimmers and evaluating when to pull them out of the water.

The health risks of swimming the channel are high:

Hypothermia - Known as the 'umbles': Cold - the grumbles; loss of fine motor co-ordination - the fumbles; the slowing of thinking and speech - the mumbles, and loss of gross motor co-ordination - the stumbles. At this point the shiver response stops and the heart might become arrhythmic, leading to sudden death.

Afterdrop - While the environment is cold, the body protects vital organs by constricting blood vessels in the skin and extremities. When the swimmer exits the water, blood rapidly returns to the extremities, causing bright pink skin, and a correspondingly

dangerous drop in core temperature.

For an official channel attempt, no aids to heat retention, such as a wetsuit or neoprene cap are allowed, so these are real issues that any potential channel swimmer has to overcome.

Weight issues - Many budding channel swimmers gain extra body fat deliberately prior to their attempt. This comes with certain risks: hernia, acid reflux, and gout have all been recorded, and these tend to be reversible. But there is also a condition called swimming-induced pulmonary oedema, where the lungs fill with fluid, making it difficult to breath.

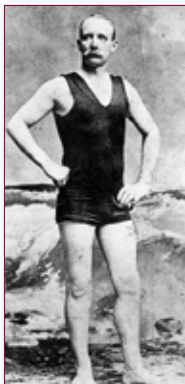
Seasickness - This can afflict swimmers as badly as it does boat passengers. In addition, repeatedly swallowing salt water which often contains excrement, is guaranteed to induce vomiting.

Jellyfish - The zone between the two shipping lanes in the channel is full of jellyfish, some of which have a particularly nasty sting!

Ships - To swim from England to France you have to swim across the shipping lanes. In normal, non-COVID times there are over 600 commercial ship movements and 80 to 100 ferry crossings between Dover and Calais every DAY - and it's the job of the pilot boat to keep the swimmer out of the path of these vessels.

In addition, swimmers are alone in their heads for long periods so face huge a huge mental challenge during a feat that can last an average of 13-15 hours but may be far longer.

Yet in spite of all the hazards and hurdles in recent times around 100 people per year set out to attempt the swim. If you'd like to be one of them visit <http://csfp.co.uk/>



Myths of Marriage and Divorce

Dipika Mistry, Legal Director at Shakespeare Martineau in Solihull
busts some of the common myths of marriage and divorce.

1. Can I get divorced if we've just drifted apart?

Until 'no fault divorce' comes in April 2022, falling out of love and drifting apart are not legal grounds for divorce. Currently, you have to prove your marriage has irretrievably broken down due to one of the five 'divorce facts': adultery, behaviour, desertion, or separation of at least two years, or in some cases, five years.

2. Will my partner get 50%, even if they've cheated?

In England, the starting point is always a 50/50 split of assets, including pensions. But there are instances where this may not be the case, such as a disparity in incomes, whether there are children or health issues, the length of the relationship, contributions, and if large sums of inheritance or money is generated after separation or pre-marriage. Fault – such as one partner cheating – has no bearing on the division of assets.

3. Do I have to give my engagement ring back?

If you break up with your partner, you may feel a moral obligation to return the ring - however, unless it can be proved that the ring was given conditionally, the law states that it is an absolute gift, meaning you do not have to return it to your ex.

4. Do I need a solicitor?

While it's possible to divorce without a solicitor, you may risk missing important legal loop holes, such as the 'remarriage trap'. Put simply; if you remarry without a claim for a financial order you may be barred from seeking maintenance and other financial claims. Also, without full legal severance it's possible an ex-partner could chase you for a share of funds you may accrue later in life – whether that be a pension pot, inheritance or even a lottery win!

5. We're not married, but we've been together years – will I get 50%?

There is no such thing as a 'common law wife/partner'. If you choose not to marry then consider a 'living together agreement' to protect your best interests.



For more information and support call 0121 705 8151
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6 Reasons...

why you should book now for summer 2022

How far in advance do you make plans?

Last-minute lovers don't like to plan too far ahead and would rather go with the flow, however, some like to have something to look forward to and make years in advance. But should you be booking your holiday a year in advance? Quite simply, yes!

1. Availability is higher so you'll get what you want

Get exactly what you want, not what's left! Prefer to have a room overlooking the pool? Or perhaps, you're needing that interconnecting room so that the kids have their own space? Maybe you're wanting that luxury room in the adults-only wing? Booking ahead means there's plenty of availability and you'll get exactly what you're wanting! It also means you can get the dates you want to also, in peak travel times, such as school holidays, seats on planes and rooms in hotels fill up quick so you'll want to get dibs.

2. Free Kids Places

Everyone loves a freebie; so how about a Free Kids Place? That's right, you



could be paying £0 for your child to go on holiday! Operators will only have limited numbers of these, so booking ahead allows you to grab a Free Kids Place. Typically these are on package holidays, making it perfect for that Summer holidays getaway. You'll often find that these can be on certain dates too so you'll want to book early to avoid the disappointment of missing out.

3. Low deposit

When booking in advance, you'll be able to put a deposit down on your holiday rather than paying in full. This means you'll have more time to pay off your holiday and make it more affordable. Low deposits range from £60pp - £400 roughly, depending on the type of holiday and tour operator, but it's still a lot less than paying the full amount. Typically holiday balances are due around 16 weeks before so booking a year in

advance gives you plenty of time to pay your balance. No waiting for payday is needed, and you can bag your perfect holiday there and then!

4. Direct Debit

Life is made easier with direct debit payments! You'll take advantage of a low deposit, then pay low monthly payments up until 6 weeks before you travel.

5. Best prices

We've all heard of supply and demand? When something is high in demand, prices tend to increase. But booking in advance means there's plenty of availability and so prices are generally lower than if you left it last minute.

6. You can change your mind

Talk to a personal travel expert and they will help you book with the right tour operator or they will have their own generous terms of booking.

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Recalibrate Your Life

What will your new normal look like?

Be honest, before the pandemic did you ever think, 'Wouldn't it be great to start over? If I had a fresh start I'd do things so differently.?'

As we exit the 18-month period during which life's ordinary patterns paused, it's a good time to ask, before a more 'normal' life kicks back in, what would I like 'normal' to look like for me?

My friends and I often talk about pre-pandemic life in a pretty sentimental way. We speak in general terms: we miss visiting family, hanging out, and travelling.

More recently I've been trying to work out what specifically my friends and I don't miss: toxic friendships, endless commutes, arrogant bosses, rude customers, and irritating co-workers came top.

Pre-pandemic life how often did you hang out with that friend who makes you feel bad about yourself? How often did you avoid conflict at work, even when you knew your boss or co-worker was being unreasonable? How often did you feel 'guilted' into attending a family dinner? It's a human trait to avoid rocking the boat...then COVID came along and rudely capsized everyone's boats!

I'm not making light of the past year. I lost my grandfather to COVID. It was a truly awful time, and no-one ever wants to return to the huge death counts of last summer. But most of us have been looking forward to a relaxation of the restrictions on our lives while at the same time secretly dreading a few things about 'the return to normal'.

So how can we bring about some permanent positive changes.

Write these two specific questions down and underneath, write your answers.

What did I dislike from my life before

the pandemic and haven't missed?

What do I like from the pandemic times that I will miss when normality fully returns?

Be particularly honest about the first question. Be specific about toxic friendships, and unproductive habits and behaviours.

Make a list of things to leave in the pre-pandemic era.

Some things you may feel you can't change, like a commute, a job, or a friendship / relationship. But if you examine them closely you might find you have more control than you think. If the pandemic has been a welcome break from any of the answers you wrote, ask yourself whether you could make that break permanent. What would it take? This might be your best chance.

Make a list of what you want to keep and take forward.

Did you find you liked spending more time at home and discovered a love of gardening or reading? Did you take up running, cooking, painting, or singing? Think about how about how you might be able to re-engineer your life to include fewer business trips, fewer meetings, and more time for your hobbies, on your own or with friends who actually enrich your life.

I'm not suggesting that you abandon your family and run off to a retreat in the Outer Hebrides or resign from your job and announce you're a writer, with no thought for how you'll support yourself. This is an exercise in recalibrating and making a few adjustments to your course through life.

2020 and 2021 have been unrelentingly grim, but human beings are amazingly resilient and most of us have experienced glimpses of 'happy' here and there. The trick going forward will be to scrape of the grim while holding on tight to the happy.

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A bit of holiday fun

In August many of us just go into the garden to relax, drink a glass of wine and watch the kids in the paddling pool. We might cut the grass, but for most of us August is about last days and chilled summer evenings.

So, this month I'm taking a pause from work to pass on a few interesting garden facts you can pass on over a gin and tonic.

A sunflower is not one flower

Believe it or not each individual petal and the brown centre comprise 1,000 – 2,000 individual flowers, held together on a single stalk. Every "petal" is actually an individual flower, comprising of a single floret with male and female parts!

There are more microorganisms in one teaspoon of soil than there are people on earth

Seriously...microbes are important for keeping the soil full of nutrients. There are at least 7.5 billion people on earth so that teaspoon of soil is aliiiiiiiive.

Plants really do respond to sound

The Myth Busters published a video comparing a silent greenhouse to one where they piped in a voice soundtrack and found that plants in the latter grew more. So, speak sweetly

to your plants...or maybe sing to them.

A little bicarbonate of soda can help you grow sweeter tomatoes

I have tested this theory after reading it in a magazine and it works! A regular light sprinkling of bicarb your plant's soil helps reduce acidity and produces a sweeter crop.

The Rose Family is the largest contributor of ornamental plants

Trees in the rose family that bear fruit: apples, pears, plums, cherries, apricots, and peaches. Also, blackberries, raspberries and strawberries are all members of the Rosacea Family.

There is an orchid that smells of chocolate

This is because the vanilla bean derives comes from the orchid family. The Oncidium hybrid called Sharry Baby has a rich chocolate smell...like baking choc chip cookies, and is also exceptionally beautiful.

If you haven't got room for a composter...cheat!

Used coffee grounds, crushed eggshells, and chopped-up banana peels, can be applied direct to the soil and offer plants nutrients as they decompose. You can bury them a few inches under the earth in already planted beds, so they don't spoil the look of your plot.





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Techy Tips to Make Life Easier

1. Put your USB drive in the right way the first time

Why do we get it wrong on the first try so often? Get it right first time, every time. Here's the secret: Grab any USB cable sitting around your house. Find the symbol on one side? It's not just for decoration. That symbol will point up if you're plugging in horizontally and if you're plugging a cable vertically, the USB symbol will face you. Now you know.

2. Reopen a closed browser tab

It happens all the time. You have a dozen tabs open in your browser and accidentally close the wrong one. I know you can open up your browser's history and reopen the tab from there, but did you know you can do it with a couple of keystrokes. Hit Ctrl+Shift+T on your PC or Command+Shift+T on your Mac to automatically reopen the tab you just closed. Simple.

3. Share a YouTube video at a precise point

You find a brilliant YouTube video but the bit you really want to share is 3 minutes and 24 seconds in. If you want to share it at that exact point, you can get a link that takes people directly to the moment. Simply click the Share button below the video. Look for a little box below the link. This automatically displays the time at which you currently have the video stopped. You can stick with this time or pick any time you like. Then when you copy the link and share it, whoever views the link will view it from point you chose.

4. Search WhatsApp chats

WhatsApp chats can be fast-moving, and messages accumulate over time. When you want to find the address of the party, or the joke someone told you two weeks ago, you don't have to scan back through every conversation, you can search for it. On iOS there's a search bar, and on android device there's a search icon.





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COMPETITION



Win 4 tickets

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Pop Divas Live

at **Solihull's Core Theatre** on **Saturday 28 August, 7pm**

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's the running time of this show?

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

Closing date for entries is 21st August.
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.

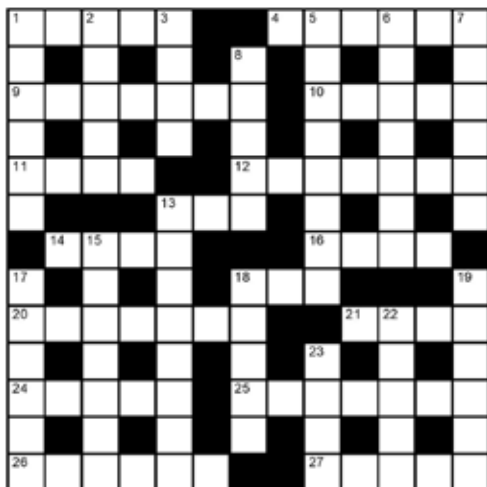
About the show:

Get ready for the best songs from all your favourite female stars in one fabulous fun-packed show – Pop Divas Live! Little Mix will cast some Black Magic and Taylor Swift will Shake It Off as four enormously talented girls bring you up close and personal with the greatest female pop performers of today.

Meghan Trainor, Ariana Grande, Beyoncé and Rihanna will all be dropping in to the biggest Pop Party ever, so make sure you're there. With dazzling choreography, state of the art videos and superb vocals, Pop Divas Live! is the perfect pop concert for the little divas in your life.

crossword

clues



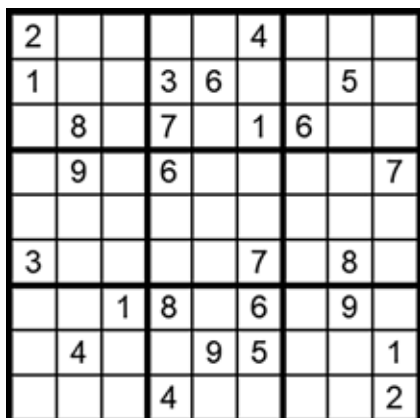
Across

- 1 Number of musicians in an octet (5)
- 4 Derive, deduce by reason (6)
- 9 Snake (7)
- 10 Corn (5)
- 11 Sound reflection, repetition (4)
- 12 Circular, flyer (7)
- 13 Female deer (3)
- 14 King ____, Shakespearean play (4)
- 16 Nemo's forgetful friend! (4)
- 18 Secret agent (3)
- 20 Small, fast dog (7)
- 21 Celebrity, idol (4)
- 24 Indigenous people of New Zealand (5)
- 25 Culinary herb (7)
- 26 Toboggan (6)
- 27 48th Vice President of the US Mike ____ (5)

Down

- 1 Festival celebrating Christ's resurrection (6)
- 2 Circumference (5)
- 3 Expedition (4)
- 5 Northern Italian region (8)
- 6 Cooling cabinet (7)
- 7 Accord, alliance, settlement (6)
- 8 Fashion, flair (5)
- 13 Rendered fat from roasted meat (8)
- 15 Chapter, instalment (7)
- 17 Marshlands, everglades (6)
- 18 Footrest (5)
- 19 Furrow, corrugation (6)
- 22 Exercise, work out (5)
- 23 Small military 4x4 (4)

answer on page 33



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 33

A taste of Japan...



Preparation time: 15-20 minutes

Cooking time: 15-20 minutes

Serves: 4

Tonkatsu Pork

Ingredients

2 eggs, beaten
 4 tbsp flour
 75g panko breadcrumbs
 4 thick pork loin steaks
 Oil for frying (sunflower or ground nut)
 ½ Chinese cabbage, finely shredded
 Salt
 Freshly ground black pepper.

For the Tonkatsu sauce

125g tomato ketchup
 75ml sake or rice wine (dry sherry makes a good substitute).
 2tbsp Worcester sauce
 2 tbsp dark soy sauce
 1 clove of garlic, finely grated
 1tsp finely grated

fresh root ginger
 1 tsp Japanese mustard (Dijon makes a good substitute)
 1tbsp mirin
 1tbsp sugar

Method

The Sauce

Place all the sauce ingredients into a small saucepan and stir well.

Heat until simmering and allow to simmer for about 5 minutes or until the garlic and ginger are soft and the sauce has a good pouring consistency.

When its ready strain it through a fine sieve and allow to cool to room temperature.

The Pork

You'll need four plates. Pour the flour (seasoned with salt and pepper) on to the first; pour the beaten eggs on to the second and the breadcrumbs on to the third. NOTE - Panko breadcrumbs are crisper than normal breadcrumbs. The recipe will work with normal breadcrumbs, but you might prefer to use finely crushed cornflakes or crackers.

Coat each pork loin generously in the seasoned flour, then dip it into the beaten egg so its covered, then finally coat each loin steak in breadcrumbs. Transfer them all to the fourth plate.

Pour enough oil into a frying pan to shallow fry the pork steaks and allow the pan to heat up over a moderate heat.

When hot enough add the steaks and fry until golden on each side (4-5 minutes per side). Don't overcrowd the pan as this will cause the steaks to steam and the breadcrumbs will become soggy.

Place the cooked steaks on a plate and cut into thick slices. Drizzle the Tonkatsu sauce over the steaks and serve with some shredded cabbage and Japanese pickles.

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Councillor surgeries these are face-to-face meetings held by councillors for local people to raise issues in their area. Held at The Core Library, Solihull on the first and last Saturday of the month, 10am – 12 noon.

local police contact for Solihull

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

Sudoku Solution

from page 27

E	I	G	H	T			E	L	I	C	I	T
A	I	R	S		O	H	R					
S	E	R	P	E	N	T	M	A	I	Z	E	
T	T	K	Y	B	L	A						
E	C	H	O		L	E	A	F	L	E	T	
R				D	O	E	R	E	Y			
L	E	A	R			D	O	R	Y			
S	P	I	S	P						G		
W	H	I	P	P	E	T		S	T	A	R	
A	S	P	O	J	R	O						
M	A	O	R	I	O	R	E	G	A	N	O	
P	D	N	L	E	I	V						
S	L	E	D	G	E		P	E	N	C	E	

crossword Solution

from page 27

a good read

reviews By Willow Coby

The Dilemma

by Penny Vincenzi

Sometimes we're daunted by the thickness of a book and wonder whether we should invest our time in something so enormous? Well 880 pages is certainly a big commitment. Anyone who has seen Vincenzi's books on the shelves in a bookshop or library may well have felt a little intimidated. But Vincenzi really is worth the time and energy, though you may need a cheat sheet to keep track of all the characters! An alibi. A simple alibi. That's all Brad Channing asks of his wife, Francesca. She simply has to say that he spent the day in the country with her, and so could not have been in London. All a mother wants for her family is for them to be happy and safe. If Brad is convicted, it would be the end for all of them. His business would fall apart and the comfortable life they've built for their family would be destroyed. Like her other novels *The Dilemma* is ultimately a family saga. It may be set against a backdrop of wealth and business success on a scale that most of us can only dream of, but it shows that no matter your position or status in life we will all fight for the same things when it comes to those we love.



Wild Swans

retold by Xanthe Gresham Knight

(illustrated by Charlotte Gastaut)

Eliza is the youngest of twelve children, looked after and protected by her eleven older brothers. Their father, the king is determined that the children will remain safe from the plague that is ravaging the kingdom and killed his wife. So, they are kept inside the palace walls. One day their stepmother persuades their father that they need to go out and explore the Eleven Kingdoms that they will eventually reign over, and she casts a spell on them that turns them into swans. They may only return to human form only when the sun sets. Can Eliza break the spell and bring her brothers back?

This charming story is based on Hans Christian Anderson's tale of the same name and has been retold many times in books, films, and TV. This version transports the tale to Japan, and the beautiful illustrations are worth the price on their own. It's perfect for youngsters who are gaining confidence in independent reading.

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