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for residents of solihull delivered FREE to 5700 homes

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**SUMMER FEST**

2021



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**SATURDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2021**

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**THE BRAND NEW HEAVIES**

**SNAP! | THE BLOW MONKEYS**

**SUNDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2021**

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## SUMMER HAPPENINGS

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### Outdoor Markets

Located right next to the Shopping Village our Outdoor Markets are packed with a plethora of treats...

**Summer Markets:** Sat 19<sup>th</sup> to Sun 20<sup>th</sup> June

**Summer Markets:** Sat 10<sup>th</sup> to Sun 11<sup>th</sup> July

### Escape Rooms

Looking for something a little bit different... Experience immersive adventures at our **Escape Rooms**. Seek treasure on a pirate ship or go undercover in gangland Chicago. **Will You Escape?**

### Drive In Cinema & Diner

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**The Jungle Book:** Fri 25<sup>th</sup> June, 6pm

### Adventure World

**Hatton Adventure World** has a fun packed programme planned everyday, with animals, family shows, fun fair ride and so much more. Plus, we are allowed back inside so our massive **Indoor Play** centre is back open!

For more information on all of the above please visit our website.

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# Joyous June!

Welcome to the June edition...

**I'm delighted to have been able to put together an events page for the Solihull Index, finally! After months of not being to do anything, we can all now start making plans and going places!**

So check out the local events section on page 6 – there's lots of great things planned in Solihull over the next 4 weeks so it's a great opportunity to support the local community and get out and about once more.

And if you fancy venturing slightly further afield, Alfresco Style at Hatton Country World are kindly offering a £5 discount when you spend £20 or more in their lovely garden centre – see page 8.

However you spend your leisure time, I hope you have a marvellous month.

Until next month...



**Zoe Reece**

**Tel: 07557 220585**

**Email: [zoe@dorridgedirectory.com](mailto:zoe@dorridgedirectory.com)**

**[www.solihullindex.com](http://www.solihullindex.com)**



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## community events

### Wimbledon Big Screen in Solihull

**5-11 July**

**Mell Square Solihull**

The large screen, located in Mell Square, will show the final week of the Wimbledon tennis championships as the tournament reaches its thrilling conclusion. There will be deckchairs and benches available so you can sit back, relax and get into the Wimbledon spirit right here in Solihull



### Welcome back to Solihull Party

**15 July**

**Solihull Town Centre**

You'll be able to enjoy a range of food and drink from the Continental Food & Drink Market and then sit back and relax with some live music on the main stage in Mell Square. Rats In The Kitchen, the World's number one UB40 tribute band, will be performing live.

### Outdoor Tabletop Sale

**17 July 10am – 1pm**

**Knowle Village Hall Forecourt**

The Knowle Village Hall Association invites you to visit our Outdoor Sale (Weather and Covid regulations allowing) and find a bargain. All proceeds to the Knowle Village Hall Refurbishment Fund.

Solihull town centre will be hosting music across the weekend with a Continental Food & Drink Market accompanying the tunes.



### Solihull 'Sort Of' Jazz Festival

**16-18 July**

**Solihull Town Centre**

The main stage in Mell Square and a number of venues across



### Open Air Cinema Bohemian Rhapsody

**23 July, 5.30pm – 10.30pm**

**Tudor Grange Park**

Following the film there will be a LIVE performance by Killer Queen. Food vendors and fully licensed bars will be available. Adults £10, children £7.50. To book please visit [tkt.to/bohemianrhapsody](http://tkt.to/bohemianrhapsody)

# Meet The HR Dept



Hello, my name is Erica Burke and I run **The HR Dept Solihull** providing fully outsourced HR services to SMEs in the Solihull area. Our services cover everything to do with employing people and will help you prevent people problems or resolve problems when they arise. This can be for a 'one-off' issue or you can join us on a yearly retained basis. Use us for as much or as little as you like.

## What makes The HR Dept different?

I am like you, a small business based in Solihull passionate about helping local business owners thrive. I offer pragmatic and personal advice which is tailored to you and your business, so you won't need to explain who you are or what you are trying to do, over and over again.

## How can I help?

I can help with recruitment to redundancy and everything in between, but let's start from the beginning, contracts and handbooks.

When was the last time you checked whether they were up to date and reflect the current situation? There were a lot of employment law changes last year, and if you are bringing people back to work, either in the same way or in a new way of working, your documents will need to reflect everything that's changed. It may be time for a Spring clean of your HR documents.

Don't forget, these documents underpin your whole employment relationship and are the 'go-to' place if things go wrong. So, make sure they're right!

**Contact me for a FREE review of your contracts and handbooks. You can also visit my website to access some free resources and sign up to my monthly People Matter newsletter.**

**0121 217 8038**

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Check plants daily and water them if the soil is dry – especially newly planted fruit trees and shrubs that are still getting established. Keep on top of weeding. Your plants shouldn't have to compete for precious water, light, and nutrients.

Visit Alfresco Style for all your gardening needs.

## Our Events

Summer Markets and Fashion & Flower Fest - Saturday 19th & Sunday 20th June.

Summer Markets and Strawberry Festival - Saturday 10th & Sunday 11th July.

Summer Markets - Saturday 24th & Sunday 25th July.

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# Is Laughter the Best Medicine?

## It certainly seems to help.

It feels so good to laugh doesn't it. Especially at the moment, after more than a year of social restrictions, closed pubs, theatres, and comedy clubs. On of the things I've missed the most during lockdown is communal laughter. It connects people. From a tiny titter to a great guffaw, laughter can completely change the temperature of a room.

Scientists are fascinated by laughter. Researchers at the Loma Linda University in California have been researching the health benefits of laughter and made some interesting discoveries.

Laughter lowers blood pressure – and lower blood pressure means a reduced risk of stroke and heart attack.

It reduces stress hormone levels – laughter makes us feel less anxious and stressed, which reduces the negative impact of these emotions on our body, while simultaneously increasing the health of our immune system.

It helps tone your abs – Ok, it's not going to replace your tums, burns, and thighs class but when you laugh the muscles in your stomach contract and relax, similar to when you intentionally exercise them. That can only be a good thing, right?

It increases cardio activity - Laughter gets your heart pumping and burns a similar number of calories per hour as walking at a slow to moderate pace. Who knew?

It increases our sense of wellbeing. Doctors have found that people who have a positive outlook on life tend to fight off diseases better than people with a more negative outlook. The reason for this may be that it boosts T-cells, which are the specialist immune system cells. Laughter activates T-cells, so happy people who laugh frequently are probably less vulnerable to infection!



It triggers the release of endorphins, which are the body's natural painkillers, so laughter can help relieve chronic pain.

Did you know that we are 30 times more likely to laugh when in a group than when we're alone? Or that that four-year-olds laugh 300 times a day but 40-year-olds only 300 times every 10 weeks! This is probably due to a number of factors, including the belief that adulthood and work is 'serious', but also because we worry about offending, about the joke falling flat, and about just not being funny. We become scared to be silly. No one is suggesting that you suddenly start telling off-colour mother-in-law jokes, but a little levity can lighten everyone's day, whether it's a shared snigger with a colleague over a one of your boss's foibles, or a funny anecdote about your dog shared with a friend.

During last year's lockdown with the shift to remote working, incidence of loneliness and depression has increased dramatically. Many of us have felt disconnected, so when we laugh with someone – even through a screen or 2m apart – we generate a cocktail of hormones that strengthens our emotional bonds, our wellbeing and our immune system in a way that wouldn't otherwise be possible.

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What if you've never cruised before, don't worry you can try a taster cruise of 3 nights.

I know there are lots of you looking for a nice warm holiday soaking up the sun. What if you could go on a week-long cruise and the captain just searched for the best weather each day. Sailing in European waters there will be no shortage of warm

sunshine for you to sit by the pool on deck or relaxing on your balcony with a cocktail or two before dinner. So yes! There are cruises just for the sun lovers like myself to relax the days away.

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# The Garden Goddess

Iris was the goddess of the rainbow in Greek mythology. I have a thing for Greek mythology, and I love Irises. The large, bearded types unfurl at this time of year and they reflect the colours of the spectrum from deepest purple, through dusky orange, egg-yolk yellow and the most delicate of blues, to the brightest of whites. They comprise of standard petals, which are carried aloft over the graceful fall petals, which arch downwards.

From the upper bases of the falls grow groups of fuzzy hairs called beards and from this the bearded Iris gets her name. Even the foliage is attractive: large pale green swords that shoot straight upwards from the earth.

Bearded Irises love full sun and prefer to have their fleshy rhizomes (the underground stems) near the soil surface so they can take full advantage of the sun's warmth. They actually prefer a more impoverished soil, so if your soil is a bit thin and dry they may be perfect for your garden.

As the clumps become overcrowded the centres die out. Dig them up immediately after flowering and chop them into single healthy rhizomes, each with a fan of leaves. Shorten each fan with scissors by about half, then replant about 30cm apart in another sunny spot so that the rhizomes are just visible under the surface. Although they like drier



conditions make sure they are watered in and looked after for a few weeks until established. But really you don't need to do much to them. Overly enriched soil is not a friend to the iris, which might decline to flower in such conditions. My best flowering plants are in the driest, most sun-baked part of my plot!

But for those who have shadier gardens and boggy conditions try the non-bearded *Iris sibirica*. I have one in a sun-dappled spot by a water feature. Its leaves are greener and grassier, which complements the water, and it has lovely rich blue flowers which look particularly nice in the shade. I also like *Iris ensata*, which I plant by my pool at the water's edge. It's also a good choice in borders if you garden on richer soil than mine.

So, invoke the power of the Goddess Iris in your garden, and enjoy the rainbow of colour.

Happy gardening.



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# Summer Wine

The summer months require a different approach to wine. We're more likely to want something refreshing, or to mix it with soda water for a spritzer. Also, even staunch red wine-lovers often drift towards a white or a rose as the temperatures rise.

Look for a dry white with high acidity, a light to medium body. If you favour sweetness try to make sure it also has high acidity. Look for fruity notes, particularly apple and citrus, and stay away from full-bodied chardonnays. Try Riesling, Pinot Grigio, and Sauvignon Blanc. A more unusual option is Albariño, a beautiful refreshing Spanish wine. Rosés are fresh-tasting because they are meant to be drunk young. They tend to be fruity and vary from sweeter to dry. Either work nicely for a summer day, and sparkling rosés are particularly pretty and festive

for summer celebrations. Try Grenache rosé served cold for a perfect crisp blend of tannins and acidity. Sangiovese rosé is slightly sweeter and fruitier and perfect for warm summer evenings. Some folks just love their reds even in summer. However, avoid heavy, full-bodied varieties unless you want to feel sleepy and dehydrated. Look for lighter reds that are best served chilled, with low tannin and high acidity. Cinsault is probably my favourite summer red on account of its fruitiness. It's nicely high in acidity too. Frappato is also a good summer choice with low tannins and a fresh taste. Lambrusco can be sneered at in some circles but it's actually the perfect bubbly sweeter red for summer.

# Do You Want Ketchup on That?

## The history of the nation's favourite sauce.

Ketchup is found in 97 percent homes but there's more to it than burgers or hotdogs.

In fact, ketchup dates back to imperial China. It was originally made with fermented fish entrails, meat by-products and soybeans... yum! This fish sauce was easy to store on long ocean voyages. The tomato-based ketchup we love today wasn't invented until 1812.

Tomato plants were brought to England from South America in the 1500s, but amazingly their fruits weren't eaten for centuries because some people thought they were poisonous.

The 1700s were a golden age for ketchup. There were recipes made from oysters, mussels, mushrooms, walnuts, lemons, celery, and plums. Usually, the ingredients were either boiled down into a syrup-like consistency or left to sit with salt for extended periods of

time. This resulted in a highly concentrated end product: a salty, spicy condiment that became extremely popular. In 1812, someone finally thought to use tomatoes in the recipe. James Mease, a Philadelphia scientist, is credited with developing the recipe. Initially preservation of tomato ketchup was an issue because the fruits decomposed quickly. A relatively new company called Heinz developed a formulation which included, brown sugar, salt, spices, and distilled vinegar. They also pioneered the use of glass bottles, so customers could see what they were buying. Today, Heinz is the best-selling brand of ketchup the UK. 650 million bottles and 11 BILLION sachets are sold around the world each year. Something to consider next time you order a hotdog!





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# Care Homes

## How to choose the right one

One of the elderly is an emotive subject, and has become even more so during the pandemic. Whether you are choosing a care home for yourself, or searching on behalf of an elderly relative, you want to make sure you get it right.

First you need to decide on the level of care required.

**Residential homes** are for people who can no longer cope with daily activities in their home. They may also need help washing, bathing, dressing and going to the toilet.

**Nursing homes** are for those people who require regular nursing care, by or under the supervision of a qualified nurse. Residents tend to have no mobility or severely limited mobility, mental confusion, and may be faecally incontinent.

As with any home, location is important. You may want to choose a place where family or friends can visit regularly?

Once a location has been decided on, select as many care homes as you can and visit every one of them. The Care Quality Commission ([www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)) have over 18000 care homes registered with them and publish all their inspection reports online, so this is a good place to start. Two other excellent sources of information are the websites [www.yourcarehome.co.uk](http://www.yourcarehome.co.uk) and [www.carehomesupport.co.uk](http://www.carehomesupport.co.uk).

Groundwork is good, but there is no substitute for visiting and assessing the standard of service yourself. This is harder at the moment but that option should still be offered, even with all the restrictions in place. Begin your inspection by ringing to arrange appointments to visit the premises. Ask yourself if the phone



was answered in a friendly way. Did the person answering the phone sound stressed or abrupt?

When you visit, what are your first impressions? Is the place bright and clean, comfortable, welcoming and airy? Did the receptionist make eye contact and smile? Were you offered a cup of tea while you waited?

What are the noise levels like? Are there any unpleasant odours? Look at the residents and chat to them if you have an opportunity. Do they look clean, well-cared for and happy?

Monitor how much interaction there is between the staff and the residents. Is there lots of friendly chatter? Check to see if call lights over doors are on and being left unanswered. This might indicate staffing problems.

Check the floor, especially in corners and under beds. This is a good indicator of whether standards of hygiene and care are high throughout.

When you've reached a decision, take good financial and legal advice. What are the fees and what do they include? Can you afford them on a long-term basis? What happens if funds dry up? What is the protocol for making a complaint? Consult the Office of Fair Trading 'Fair Terms for Care' booklet to see whether the contract you'll be asked to sign is a fair one.

Ask as many questions as you can up front, and you will help ensure that any move you or your elderly relative makes will be the right one.

# Fun at Fountains!

At Fountains Care Home in Solihull you'll find more than just bespoke care, from art and fitness classes to virtual performances and events, we make every day stimulating and fun, and our talented chefs create healthy, nutritious menus for sociable mealtimes. We also offer a choice of visiting options, from indoor visits to garden visits when the weather allows.

Our staff receive specialist training across a range of different skills, including specialist dementia care, giving you the reassurance your loved one will receive high-quality care and be supported by our friendly team of experts.

Fountains Care Home is part of Barchester Healthcare - one of the UK's leading care providers with over 25 years' experience and award winning health and safety. Currently rated 10/10 on CHUK, why not call us to arrange a visit to see what our home has to offer and how we can help. These are just some of our recent activity at Fountains.

## The Joy of Live Music!

For our celebrations of VE Day fountains residents and staff enjoyed a day filled with music, fun and dancing. With restrictions easing Fountains welcomed back garden performances and were delighted to have



'Ruby Ann Sings' here to perform for them. Ruby filled the home with her beautiful voice and sang songs from the 1940's with a sprinkling of rock 'n' roll and classics from the 50's too. Residents had a wonderful time and the sound of lived music filled fountains with joy.

## Families reunite in the Sunshine!

Fountains residents and staff are delighted to welcome families back to our gardens for outdoor visits. Families and residents have loved making the most of the glorious sunshine whilst catching up.



Visit the website for more information  
<https://www.barchester.com/home/fountains-care-home/> or  
 call directly on 0121 5148360.

Visit our Facebook page to keep up to date with events and activity stories at <https://m.facebook.com/BarchesterFountains>

**Preparation time:** 30 min

**Cooking time:** If making meringues allow 2 hr 30 mins plus cooling. Otherwise, no cooking time!

**Serves:** 6



The summer favourite

## Eton Mess

### Ingredients

For the meringues (or you can use good quality shop-bought meringue nests)

175g caster sugar

1 thick lemon slice

3 egg whites, at room temperature

1 pinch salt

### To assemble the mess

500g ripe strawberries

50g caster sugar

450ml double cream

1 tbsp icing sugar

1 tsp vanilla paste

Mint for garnish

### Method

#### Meringues

Preheat the oven to 220C / gas 7. Line a baking tray and pour the sugar on to it then bake in the oven until it just begins to melt at the edges. Rub the inside of the mixing bowl with the lemon (this gets rid of any grease) and add the egg whites. Just before its time to take the sugar out of the oven, start whisking the whites at high speed. Carefully tip the hot sugar and the salt into the fluffy foamy whites. Continue whisking until the mixture is cool, glossy and forms soft peaks. Lower the heat in the oven to 130C / gas ½. Heap

dollops of meringue on to lined baking trays, making sure they are well spaced. Bake in the cool oven for about two and a half hours. Check after two hours. The outsides should be crisp and golden but not burned! Turn off the oven and leave the meringues inside to cool completely.

#### The mess

To prepare the strawberries: wash and hull the fruit, and slice into half or quarters. Aim for bite-size pieces. Place the strawberries in a bowl, sprinkle with the caster sugar, making sure all the strawberries are coated. Place in the fridge for half an hour until the fruit goes squidgy and leaks juices. Set a third of the strawberry mixture on one side for later. Using a potato masher lightly crush the rest into a chunky puree. Pour the double cream into a big bowl (it's best if the bowl is cold). Sift in the icing sugar and the teaspoon of vanilla paste (not essence) and whip to soft peaks. Roughly squash and break six of the meringues. Fold the pieces and the crushed strawberries into the whipped cream. Don't mix too thoroughly. The red and white should be clearly distinct. I tend to leave mine in a big serving dish so people can help themselves, but it looks lovely spooned into tall glasses and topped with a sprig of mint.





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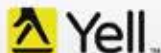
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# a good read

reviews By Willow Coby

## The Midnight Library

by Matt Haig

We all experience both good and bad in our lives. Some people seem pretty content with their lot in spite of adversity, and some are dissatisfied even when others feel they've been dealt a good hand. At some point all of us have wondered, what if? What if things were different?

Nora certainly does. She's in her 20s yet feels trapped. As a teenager she was destined to become an Olympic swimmer, but gave it up, went to university to study philosophy, and ended up working in a local music shop, living alone with her cat. Nora's life seems to be going from bad to worse, so she decides to not go on living at all, and one night, just before midnight, she takes an overdose and writes a goodbye note. Suddenly she finds herself in a library; an infinite library where the time is always 00:00 – the Midnight Library. There she meets Mrs Elm, her old school librarian, who explains that this is where she can decide whether or not to live. But she doesn't have to live her current life; she can live ANY possible life that she could ever have had. Every regret that she ever had has led to another version of her living that life in another possible existence. She now has the chance to decide if she would like to live one of those lives. The Midnight Library draws on classical philosophical ideas, and this thought-provoking novel will lead you to question what happiness is really all about. Will Nora decide to live and if so, which life will she choose?



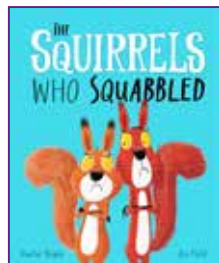
## The Squirrels who Squabbled

by Jim Field

This picture book was loaned to me by the four-year-old son of a friend, who said it was his favourite book and I should review it – and I can see why. It is autumn and all through the forest creatures are busy storing up the food they need for the winter.

All that is except one squirrel: Spontaneous Cyril. As usual, he doesn't bother with that. He imagines he can grab some food at the last minute. Then the last minute arrives and he spies a fat pinecone, full of lovely nuts. It is just what he needs, and he sets off to acquire it. But he isn't the only one eyeing it up. Plan-Ahead Bruce has also seen it. His store is getting on nicely and this is the perfect pinecone to finish it off. Who will get to it first?

With wonderful illustrations and text to match it, this book teaches the value of teamwork to young readers.



# useful numbers

Shirley Lions Club 0345 833 9547

## Health

NHS non-emergency 111

Grove Surgery 0121 705 1105

Northbrook Group Practice 0121 746 5000

Hobs Moat Medical Centre 0121 742 5211

Solihull Hospital 0121 424 2000

Spire Parkway Hospital 0121 704 1451

Daleswood Health, Solihull 01675 489489

## Council

Solihull Council 0121 704 6000

## Utilities

Electricity power cut 0800 6783 105

Gas leak 0800 111 9999

Severn Trent Water 024 7771 5000

Severn Trent Water (emergencies) 0800 783 4444

## Travel

National Rail Enquiries 03457 48 49 50

Network West Midlands (buses) 0345 303 6760

## LOCAL COUNCILLORS

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#### Kate Wild

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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

Solihull police station

Telephone: 0845 113 5000





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