

the solihull index

a community magazine and business directory
for residents of solihull



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MARCH

Sat 3rd **THE 'GEORGE MICHAEL' TRIBUTE SHOW with RANDALL BUTLER**
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Sat 10th **MOTOWN DIVAS SHOW with THE DREAMETTES**
 A Stunning Trio of Ladies in full Motown Glamour Singing and Dancing to original choreographed routines, guaranteed to fill the dance floor with all your favourite Motown hits including Diana Ross and The Supremes, Martha Reeves and The Vandellas, Tina Turner, Mary Wells and Aretha Franklin. **£35.00**

Sun 11th **MOTHERING SUNDAY in the OAK ROOM RESTAURANT** **£35.00**
 Celebrate Mother's Day Lunch with guitarist Stuart Toogood, in the beautiful surroundings of The Oak Room Restaurant. **Under 12's £17.50**

Sat 17th **ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARTY with JARZINO** **£37.50**
 Enjoy 'the craic' at our St. Patrick's Day themed Party Night with the great party band Jarzino and our DJ Franco O'Polino!!

Fri 23rd **'THE BEATLES PARTY' with THE LENNON AND McCARTNEY EXPERIENCE** **£32.50**
 Come and join us with the fabulous Lennon and McCartney Experience with all the hits and the unmistakable sounds from the Fab Four, 'She Loves You, Help, Yesterday, Hey Jude and lots lots more!

Sun 25th **AN AFTERNOON TEA PARTY with VINTAGE VOICES** **£25.00**
 Take a nostalgic trip back in time with our Vintage Duo. Reminisce with well-known classic songs of the 40's and 50's era at our Afternoon Tea Party.

APRIL

Sun 1st **EASTER SUNDAY in the OAK ROOM RESTAURANT** **£35.00**
 Enjoy Easter Sunday Lunch in the beautiful surroundings of The Oak Room Restaurant. **Under 12's £17.50**

Sat 14th **'BACK TO THE 80'S' PARTY with 80'S EXPERIENCE** **£35.00**
 Celebrate a night of nostalgia with the greatest hits of the 80's. The 5 piece band will take you back to the days of fun, frivolity and great music from the 80's era.

Sat 28th **THE SPRING PINK BALL for BREAST CANCER CHARITIES with NOLAN BAND** **£49.50**
 A Stunning 'Black/Pink Tie' Ball raising funds for Breast Cancer medical equipment. After our Fund Raising Raffle and Auction, Dance the Night away with the Superb 'Nolan Band' Plus after show Disco with DJ Franco.

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spoilt for choice!

Welcome to the February issue of The Solihull Index.

With Valentine's Day on the 14th and Chinese New Year on the 16th, that gives you at least 2 excuses to go out and celebrate!

If you're in the mood for going out then check out the special events coming up at Nailcote Hall or try lunch or dinner at the Barn at Berryfields in Meriden, with views over the lovely Warwickshire countryside. Or if you just want to put your feet up, see what's coming up at the cinema and Core Theatre in Solihull over the next few weeks.

Don't forget to check out the local events page – you can choose from a quiz night, food fayre, ballroom dancing workshop and so much more.

Enjoy your leisure time, however you spend it!

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



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Chartered Architects Gary Winn RIBA and Dean Poulton RIBA are Progression Architects and have been based in Solihull since 1992. They are about to celebrate 25 years in practice.

The practice specialises in the design of domestic house extensions, one off houses and conversions, although they also have some corporate blue chip clients.

They offer an initial free appraisal of your project, within the solihull area, where their wealth of experience can be offered to examine your initial ideas and work with you to progress your ideas into a design.



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At Progression we are also Chartered Town Planners and members of the Royal Town Planning Institute. We specialise in dealing with planning applications and negotiating with the Local Authorities. We also prepare, submit and attend Planning Appeals, where applications are refused, putting our case forward from an applicant's point of view.

As we are also Architects, we tend to think through our solutions creatively, at times from a perspective that is not immediately apparent. As Arboriculturists, we work together where tree issues meet planning issues, such as Tree Preservation Orders.

community events

Valentine's Quiz Night

Knowle Village Hall

Thursday 15th February, 7.30pm

Light refreshments are available.

Bring your own "liquid refreshment!"

Raffle with great prizes. Tickets cost £6

per person and teams can be up to

6 people. Call Stephen Yeomans on

01564 778163 for tickets. The Quiz is

in aid of the Hall's refurbishment fund.

Strictly Ballroom Dance Workshop

Saturday 17th February

11am -3.30pm

Land Rover Sports & Social

Club, Solihull, B92 9LN

If you've always wanted to learn

all the fabulous dances seen on

TV, but don't have time to commit

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Fine and Local Food Fayre

Saturday 17th February,

9am – 5pm

Mell Square, High Street

and Mill Lane, Solihull

Sample the best of locally sourced

food and produce from a range

of top quality suppliers at this

market, which is held on the

third Saturday of each month.

Hedge Laying

Sunday 18th February

Brueton Park, Solihull

Get involved in hedge laying

and help to create a living fence

which encourages new growth.

For more information visit [www.](http://www.solihullcv.org.uk)

solihullcv.org.uk. To contact Solihull

Conservation Volunteers for more

information or to book onto the

event, email [davidcollins1@](mailto:davidcollins1@aol.com)

aol.com or ring Dave Fernie

on 0121 459 1697.

Mum2Mum Market

The Renewal Family Centre, Vulcan

Road, Solihull, B91 2JR

Saturday 3rd March, 10.30-12.30

Buy or sell second hand children's

items. £2 entry, kids go free.

Visit www.mum2mummarket.co.uk

Table Top Sale

Arden Academy, Station

Road, Knowle

Sunday 4th March, 10.30 –12.30

Stallholders: £8 for a table / £5

for a clothes rail. Entry: Adults

70p / Children FREE. Email

[adminpfa@arden.solihull.sch.](mailto:adminpfa@arden.solihull.sch.uk)

uk for more information.

Solihull Blossomfield Townswomen Guild

The Royal British Legion,

Union Road, Solihull

(opposite House of Fraser)

The first Thursday of

each month, 7.15pm

We are a friendly group of ladies

of various ages who like to laugh

and talk a lot. We have speakers on

a variety subjects. At our February

meeting Laurence Ince will be taking

a Nostalgic Look of Solihull in the

1950's. The guild offers a full and

varied programme with outings,

theatre trips, social, craft afternoons

and a lunch club. We are very

welcoming to new members – so

as a new year resolution - come

and join us! For more information

phone Carol on 0121 705 0874.

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- **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.

how do you like your pancakes?

February 13th is Shrove Tuesday and I will be tossing pancakes with the best of them.

Usually I am a traditionalist and favour lemon and sugar topping but this year in the interests of research I canvassed my friends for their favourite sweet and savoury pancake fillings, and tried them out. Here are my top seven.

Nutty chocolate spread and banana -

This tasty filling bulks the pancakes out, and makes the batter go further. Perfect if there are lots of people at your pancake supper.

Fresh mango and Greek yoghurt

with a splash of Cointreau - Very sophisticated and utterly delicious

Fruits of the forest with vanilla ice cream and a splash of Amaretto liqueur - This one was a revelation. The liqueur works brilliantly with the fruit,

and the hot pancakes with cold ice cream is a

sublime combination. Clearly I have classy friends!

Blueberries and maple syrup – This contribution from an American friend goes well with thick or thin pancakes. She tops hers with bacon, but you can leave that out. If you like.

Mushrooms, tomatoes and bacon

- for a British brunch-style pancake, or maybe a savoury supper.

Wilfed spinach and Ricotta cheese -

Sprinkle with a little fresh nutmeg and this makes a very tasty vegetarian supper.

Stewed rhubarb and crème fraîche - You can

prepare your rhubarb as tart or sweet as you like. I liked mine tart. The creme fraiche works really well with it. I scraped some vanilla seeds into mine and beat them in before serving. This is officially my new favourite way to eat pancakes. Enjoy.

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what crochet taught my son

Two years ago my mother decided to teach my son (aged eight at the time) how to crochet and recently it occurred to me just how much more it taught him.

Intergenerational communication skills

- My mother is clueless about Minecraft, Manga, and mobile phone technology, so conversing with Lucas could be stilted and awkward, but crocheting gives them a task in common and makes talking easier. By teaching him in small steps like a game, she made it seem achievable.

That you don't always need to be 'plugged in'

- A ball of wool and a crochet pin are the only tools required. He no longer asks for 'computer time' or complains that

he's bored when we visit Grandma

That failure is ok - Of course he dropped stitches and tangled his wool but Grandma told him it was ok to stop, and start again, and encouraged him not to give up at the hurdles.

The sense of achievement - When he presented me with his first little coaster he was proud and thrilled. He loved that I put it on my desk and that my coffee cup sits on it while I write. Every time he comes in, even two years later he mentions it. For the Christmas just gone I received a lovely crocheted hat made by him, with help from his Grandma. When I wore it out on Christmas Day he nearly burst with pride.

I don't know if he will continue to crochet but even if stops he will retain the other life skills his Grandmother has imparted, and I may well have another natty hat by then too.

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do you need a hearing test?

Here are five simple ways to tell if it's time to check your hearing:

You often ask people to repeat themselves

- It sounds as though people around you are mumbling all the time and you find it hard to hear people unless they're facing you directly. It's more common to experience hearing loss in the high frequencies so another sign is having trouble understanding women and children who tend to have higher-pitched voices.

Your family complains that the TV is too loud

- If you're turning up the volume to a point where those around you complain about how loud it is, it might be time to pay attention, especially since listening to excessively loud music can do further damage to your hearing.

You hear a ringing or buzzing noise in your ears

- Tinnitus occurs when you hear sounds like ringing or buzzing noise in your ears when no such sound is present. Sometimes it's temporary e.g. after attending a loud concert. But ringing which doesn't fade away, without any apparent cause is a common first sign of hearing loss.

You strain to hear in noisy places

- You struggle to focus on what people are saying in places with background noise, such as a restaurant or shopping centre. This can make you feel very tired.



You miss everyday sounds - If people complain you miss their calls or say they have to knock for ages before you answer the door consider it a warning sign, especially if combined with people complaining you have the TV or radio set too loud.

Whilst it can be tough to admit your hearing isn't as good as it used to be, it's best to take action early on. With the right support and technology, hearing loss doesn't need to keep you from enjoying all the fun things in life. Book an appointment with your GP or an audiologist today.

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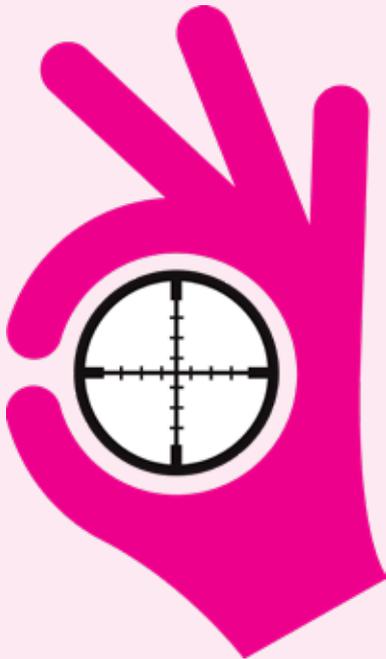
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classic films for valentine's day?

You could go out for an expensive meal, or buy a bunch of overpriced red roses. . .or you could curl up with a glass of wine in front of a classic romantic film. There's something for everyone, whether coupled-up or happily single.

Annie Hall – This was probably the father of all romantic comedies. Alvy (Allen) is a cynical pessimist while Annie (Diane Keaton) is a ditsy, clumsy talented singer and photographer. If you've never seen it, don't expect a neat ending (this is Woody Allen) but it showcases love in all its messy absurdness, and is sharp, funny and never cheesy.

Ghost – This was 1990's second highest grossing movie (Home Alone came out top). Patrick Swayze plays Sam, murdered in the opening



scenes. His spirit tries to warn his grieving lover (Demi Moore) that her life too is in danger. To do this he enlists the help of a reluctant psychic played by Whoopie Goldberg. The result is by turns tender, funny, and bittersweet. You will never hear Unchained Melody again without shedding a tear.

Pretty Woman – This is rather cheesy but has survived the test of time (mostly). It's a Cinderella story really as Vivian (played by Julie Roberts), a prostitute with a heart of gold, is hired by a businessman (Richard Gere) as an escort and turns his life upside down.

As Good as It Gets – No cheese here, just dry wit and snarky humour, delivered perfectly by Jack Nicholson playing Melvin Udall, a misanthropic author with OCD who falls for Carol (Helen Hunt), a waitress who can't stand him. It's a story of redemption.

Moonstruck – If you like your romances complex then this is the film for you. Italian-American widow Loretta (played by Cher) accepts a marriage proposal from her doltish boyfriend, Johnny, but then finds herself falling for his younger brother, Ronny (Nick Cage). She resists, but Ronny blames his brother for the accident in which he lost his hand and has no scruples about pursuing her in Johnny's absence. As Loretta falls further in love she learns that she's not the only one in her family with a secret romance. Cher is a surprisingly good actor and the chemistry between the leads is great.

The Wedding Singer – This engaging film is actually a parody of all things eighties. But the leads play their roles sincerely and that's what makes this work. Robbie (Adam Sandler sporting a fabulous mullet) is a singer, while Julia (Drew Barrymore) is a waitress. They are both in relationships with the wrong people but fortune intervenes to help them discover each other. This is pure romantic cheese, but it's top quality cheese so serve with only the best crackers.



chinese new year

February 16th - 2018 is the Chinese Year of the Dog.

Dog is the symbol of loyalty and honesty. People born in the Year of the Dog are said to be honest, friendly, faithful, loyal, smart, straightforward, and have a strong sense of responsibility.

There are twelve signs of the Chinese Zodiac: rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog and boar. Here is the folk tale behind them.

Long ago in China the Emperor decided to invent a way to measure time. On his birthday he gathered all the animals by a great river and told them that there would be a swimming race. The first twelve animals to cross the fast-flowing river would be declared the winners and each would be named one of the twelve signs of the zodiac.

The animals lined up along the river bank. The rat and the cat were best friends and they were worried because they were poor swimmers. So they asked the ox if he would carry them across and the kind ox agreed. He told the cat and the rat to climb on to his back then carried them across the river. They were excited to see that he was leading the race. But before he reached the bank the rat pushed the cat into the water so he could jump on to the ox's head and leap to the bank claiming first place.

The Emperor did not see the rat's dirty trick so named him the first sign of the zodiac. The poor ox was tricked into second place.

The tiger wasn't a natural swimmer but fought the current all the way across the river to arrive third. The emperor was so impressed he named the tiger the third sign.

The rabbit knew he couldn't beat the river so hopped across on some stepping stones, then jumped on to a log which carried him downstream until he was close enough to jump ashore.

'Bravo!' shouted the emperor, 'I shall call the fourth sign after you.'

Then a dragon swooped down to the shore. 'Why didn't you win the race when you can fly?' asked the emperor.

'First I needed to make some rain because the people needed water for their crops. Then I saw a little rabbit sitting on a log in the river so I blew him to shore.'

'That is kind,' said the emperor. 'You are a worthy winner of the fifth sign.'

He heard the sound of horse hooves. 'Ah the sixth sign,' said the emperor, but then a snake, which had wrapped itself around one of the horse's legs wriggled out ahead and the horse jumped back. So the snake was named the sixth sign and the horse had to be satisfied with seventh.

Then a raft arrived at the bank and a goat, a monkey and rooster climbed ashore. They explained how the rooster had found the raft, the monkey and goat had helped clear the weeds and then the goat and monkey had pushed the raft to shore. The emperor was very pleased at their co-operation and named the goat the eighth, the monkey the ninth, and the rooster the tenth sign of the zodiac.

The dog arrived in eleventh place in spite of being one of the strongest swimmers. He said he had paused to take a bath because the river was so clean.

The last animal to arrive was the boar. He had stopped for a snack then fell asleep. 'You have still done well,' said the emperor, 'The final sign of the zodiac will be named after you.'

But do you remember the poor cat? By the time he had managed to climb ashore, soaked and shivering he had missed his chance of being a winner. This made him very angry and is the reason why cats have hated rats and try to kill them ever since!

Happy Chinese New Year

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Bifold doors

Bifold doors are built to stack neatly to one or both sides of an aperture when open. This allows people to move freely from inside to outside or from one room to another. These can be used as room dividers or to open onto a balcony or terrace.

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Porches



a taster of what's on in february & march ...

CINEMA

Phantom Thread
from 2nd February

This takes place in the glamorous world of post-war London, where dressmaker

Reynolds Woodcock and his sister dress royalty, film stars and dames with their distinctive style. When Reynolds falls for a young, strong-willed woman, his work is disrupted by love. He believes himself cursed, that love will never work for him, and finds his previously controlled, ordered life unravelling around him.



being effectively abandoned by their commanders. Led by Captain Stanhope, who frequently turns to drink to ease his shattered nerves, they know their chances of survival are slim. But in spite of that, young recruit Raleigh is determined to see them through – not least because Stanhope is his sister's fiancé.



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line-up of world class musicians including the awesome talent of Malcolm Pitt as the voice of Lionel Richie in this high octane show which includes all the greatest hits including 'Easy', 'Say You Say Me', 'Stuck On You', 'Dancing On The Ceiling', 'Three Times A Lady', 'Hello', 'All Night Long' and many more...

Roman J. Israel, Esq.
from 2nd February

Roman is an idealistic lawyer who's been doggedly fighting the good fight. But when his partner has a heart attack, he learns some unsavoury details about his firm. Forced to take on the role of the firm's frontman in his partner's absence, he discovers that the company has a record of going against his values of helping the poor and dispossessed, and finds himself in the midst of an existential crisis.



THEATRE

The Core Theatre, Solihull
(formerly Solihull Arts Complex)



Sing-a-Long-a Beauty and the Beast

Friday 23rd February
2pm and 7pm

This is a screening of the hit 2017 film with lyrics on screen, not a live stage show. There is a host who does a 20 minute pre-show prior to the film and returns after the interval but is not on stage during the movie. YOU, the audience, are the stars in a fun-packed interactive celebration of this fabulous new Disney film!

My Fair Lady



6th – 10th March

This much-loved family musical for all ages returns to The Core, performed by the award-winning Knowle Musical Society. Lerner & Loewe's My Fair Lady, based on George Bernard Shaw's play 'Pygmalion', is the winner of a host of Tony and Olivier awards and includes memorable classics such as 'I could have danced all night', 'On the street where you live' and 'Get me to the church on Time'.

Journey's End
from 2nd February

This film takes us to the front lines of the First World War, where a company of British soldiers awaits a German attack after

The Lionel Richie Songbook

Saturday 24th February 8pm
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safer internet day

Safer Internet Day is now celebrated globally in February each year to promote the safe and positive use of digital technology.

The day helps to highlight positive uses of technology and to explore how we create a better and safer online community. This year's slogan is Create, Connect and Share

Respect: A better internet starts with you.

Here are some steps we can all take to stay safe online:

Create complex passwords - Create strong, unique passwords for all your critical accounts. Corporate hacks are commonplace now. One database breach can reveal tens of thousands of user passwords. If you reuse your passwords, a hacker can take the leaked data from one attack and use it to login to your other accounts. The best advice is to use a password manager to help you create and store strong passwords for all of your accounts.

Boost your network security - Now that your logins are safer, make sure that your connections are secure. When you are at home or at work a password-protected router will encrypt your data. When you are out and about you might be tempted to use free, public Wi-Fi. But this is often unsecured, which means it's relatively easy for a hacker to access your device or information. If you access the internet a lot when you are away from home it's worth investing in a Virtual Private Network (VPN). A VPN is a piece of software that creates a secure connection over the internet, so you can safely connect from anywhere.

Use a firewall - This is an electronic barrier that blocks unauthorized access to your computers and devices. It is often included with comprehensive security software. A firewall ensures that all of the devices connected to your network are secured, including Internet



of Things (IoT) devices like smart thermostats and webcams. This is important since many IoT devices aren't equipped with their own security measures, giving hackers a vulnerable point of entry to your entire network.

Watch what you click - Many of today's online threats are based on phishing or social engineering, when you are tricked into revealing personal or sensitive information for fraudulent purposes. Spam emails, phony "free" offers, online quizzes all use these tactics to entice you to click on dangerous links or give up your personal information.

Share selectively - Be cautious about what you share, particularly when it comes to your identity information. Information could be used to impersonate you, or guess your passwords and logins.

Think mobile! - Mobile devices face new risks: dangerous apps and fraudulent links sent by text message. Don't respond to messages from strangers, and only download apps from official app stores after reading reviews first. Make sure that your security software is enabled on your mobile, just like your computers and other devices.

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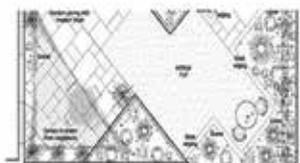
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The Core Theatre, Solihull (formerly Solihull Arts Complex)

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What did Metro say about David Morgan?

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

Closing date for entries is 1st March and the winner will be drawn at random and notified by email after this date.

About the Show:

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DAVID MORGAN Star of ITV2's I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here... Now! And Safeword, Solihull's very own David Morgan has also appeared on shows such as BBC3's Sweat The Small Stuff and E4's Virtually Famous and performed his own solo shows at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

ROBIN MORGAN Robin is a Welsh stand-up comedian and writer whose debut solo show played to packed houses and critical acclaim at the 2016 Edinburgh Festival. As a writer, his credits include Have I Got News For You (BBC1), Newzoids (ITV1) and The Now Show (BBC Radio 4). Robin is also a much in demand warm up artist for some of the biggest shows on television including The Graham Norton Show (BBC1) and Blind Date (Channel 5).

a good read

reviews By Willow Coby

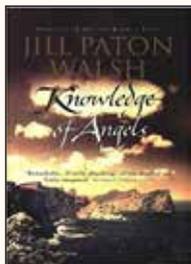
Knowledge of Angels

by Jill Paton Walsh

Jill Paton Walsh is an extraordinarily versatile writer. Many will know her for her numerous works for children, and more recently for her work continuing the legacy of Dorothy L Sayers' Peter Wimsey novels. In addition to this, she has written a number of intriguing and thought provoking novels for adults, and 'Knowledge of Angels' is an excellent example of these two characteristics. The story is set on a Mediterranean island in the fifteenth century, described in almost cinematic detail in the opening pages, as Paton Walsh invites us to contemplate the nature of fiction and storytelling. To this closed community come two strangers – one from the outside, a castaway found by local fishermen, and one from within, a girl seemingly raised by wolves in the forests of the island. One is as eloquent as the other is savage, but their fates become irretrievably tied together as their stories progress.

At the heart of the book lie a number of questions of belief. Palinor, the castaway, professes to have no religion, which poses a challenge to the authority of the Inquisition on the island. Amara, the wolf child, seems unredeemably animal in her behaviour, but begins to grow under the care of the nuns of Sant Clara, raising the issue of nature and nurture. Both of their stories are also about love, and self-knowledge, and what is and is not possible.

Yet the book is written in such a way, that these weighty questions are explored at the same time as creating a page-turning thoroughly engrossing story, in which the reader is drawn in turn into the lives of Amara and Palinor. Disturbing, sensitive and deeply affecting, this is a book that will keep you thinking for a very long time.



Stormbreaker

by Anthony Horowitz

The first novel in Horowitz's phenomenally successful Alex Rider series, this is a must for fans of action, adventure and James Bond style one liners. Alex Rider is a seemingly ordinary 14 year old boy. However, when his uncle is killed in a car accident, his world begins to unravel. An orphan, Alex finds that without the protection of his guardian he is in the hands of his uncle's employers – and they are not a bank, but MI6!

Horowitz keeps the reader moving quickly from action sequence to action sequence, with a liberal amount of humour and contemporary references along the way. The structure is familiar to Bond fans, and once you have suspended your disbelief at the idea of a teenage spy, it all becomes gripping and plausible. In particular, the gadgets Alex uses and the villainous Herod Sayle will appeal to teenage readers – while the intriguingly sinister character of Yassen Gregorovitch is introduced here, ready to be developed further through the rest of the series.

Ideal for fans of ripping yarns and reluctant readers alike, you will find that one chapter is never enough, as Horowitz is the master of the cliff-hanger ending. A 12 year old of my acquaintance told me recently that this book is 'even better than the film' – if you know any 12 year olds, then you will know that I need not say any more than that!



Vanilla Panna Cotta with Raspberry Sauce



Preparation time: 1-2 hours

Cooking time: 10-20 minutes

Servings: 4

For the panna cotta

3 gelatine leaves

250ml/9fl oz milk

250ml/9fl oz double cream

1 vanilla pod, split lengthways, seeds scraped out

25g/1 oz sugar

For the sauce

175g/6oz sugar

175ml/6fl oz water

Splash raspberry, cherry or blackcurrant liqueur

350g/12oz raspberries

To serve

Sprigs of fresh mint and blueberries (optional)

Method

To make the panna cotta, soak the gelatine leaves in a little cold water until soft.

Place the milk, cream, vanilla pod, scraped seeds and sugar into a heavy-bottomed pan and bring to a

simmer. Remove the vanilla pod and discard.

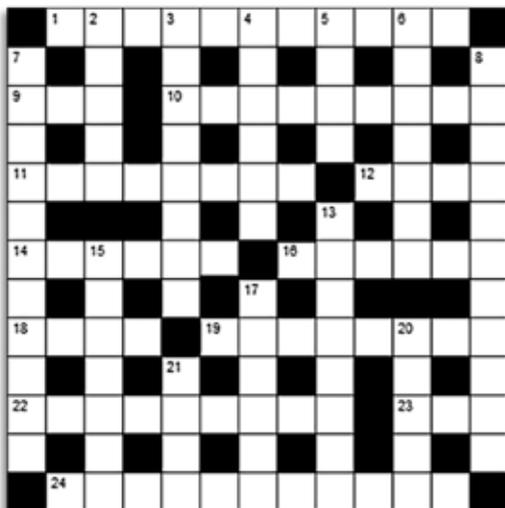
Squeeze the water out of the gelatine leaves, then add to the pan. Remove from the heat and stir until the gelatine has dissolved.

Divide the mixture between four pretty glass serving bowls and set aside to cool. Place into the fridge for at least an hour, until set.

To make the sauce place the sugar, water and the splash of liqueur into a pan and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, stirring until all the sugar has dissolved.

Remove the pan from the heat and add the raspberries. Use a hand blender to blitz the sauce until smooth. Pass it through a sieve to remove the seeds. To serve, pour the sauce over the panna cotta and garnish with the blueberries and a sprig of mint. Alternative serving method - pour the panna cotta mix into oiled moulds rather than serving dishes, and set in the fridge as before. Blitz half the raspberries into the sauce and strain through the sieve, then stir in the remaining raspberries. When the panna cotta are set, dip the moulds in hot water for a few seconds and turn the panna cotta out on to a plate, spoon over the sauce and decorate with blueberries and mint.

crossword



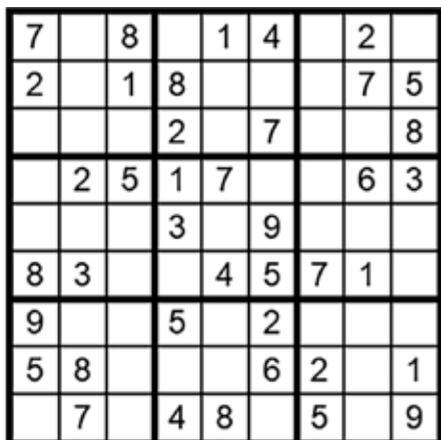
clues

Across

- 1 Place where you can stargaze indoors (11)
- 9 Member of the clergy (abbr) (3)
- 10 Seductive woman (9)
- 11 Rigidly, inflexibly (8)
- 12 Ban, prohibit (4)
- 14 Regional style of speech (6)
- 16 Oat-based breakfast food (6)
- 18 Alone (4)
- 19 Loosest fitting (8)
- 22 Came together again (9)
- 23 Sense of self-esteem / self-importance (3)
- 24 No hearing at all (slang) (4,2,1,4)

Down

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 2 Crowbar (5) | 6 Rubbish, no good (7) | 15 Light perfume (7) |
| 3 Observing, seeing (8) | 7 Intruders, infiltrators (11) | 17 University grounds (6) |
| 4 Eastern place of worship (6) | 8 League, club (11) | 20 A bet with equal stakes on both sides (5) |
| 5 Appraise, estimate (4) | 13 Congested (6,2) | 21 Dog's bark (4) |



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 41

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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.

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

Sudoku Solution
from page 38

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

Crossword Solution
from page 38

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