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# Understanding Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control: Breaking the Silence

**Domestic abuse, often known as domestic violence, is a deeply concerning issue affecting many relationships. Legal Director, Dipika Mistry, at Solihull-based law firm Shakespeare Martineau explains what it is and how you can get legal support.**

## **What is domestic abuse?**

Domestic abuse is a pattern of behaviour used by one partner to maintain power and control over another within a relationship. The behaviour can be physical, emotional, sexual, financial, or digital abuse. It also be controlling behaviour, with coercive control being one of its subtle yet profoundly damaging aspects. It is important to recognize the signs, and importantly, break the cycle.

## **What is coercive control?**

Coercive control is subtle. The abuser may be manipulative, intimidating, and use psychological tactics to dominate their partner. Unlike physical abuse, coercive control operates on emotional and mental levels, making it harder to recognise. Victims can become isolated from friends and family because their partner is monitoring them, or limiting their access to money. They may also doubt their perceptions and feelings because they are being 'gaslighted', which is when the abuser uses manipulation to make victims question their own sanity or powers of reasoning.

## **What legal advice is available?**

There are steps which can be taken to put legal protections such as Non-Molestation and Occupation Orders. A Non-Molestation Order gives protection from violence, threats and intimidation and harassment. Breaching this order is an arrestable offence and can lead to imprisonment. An Occupation Order deals with living arrangements within a family home and grants a right to stay in the home, or restricts another family member from entering or living in the same property even if they are a legal owner. This order is especially important in domestic violence situations, as it allows victims and their children to remain in their homes without fear. Such court orders can be obtained from the Family Court. Legal advice from a family law solicitor is crucial and will help you understand your rights and options fully.

## **Take action**

Domestic abuse and coercive control have no place in a healthy relationship. Understanding the signs, seeking help, and empowering yourself are essential steps toward breaking free from the cycle of abuse. Remember, you are not alone, and there is help available.

**If you, or a friend or family member are affected by the contents of this article call the National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247. If you are in immediate danger, call 999.**



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email [dipika.mistry@shma.co.uk](mailto:dipika.mistry@shma.co.uk) or visit [www.shma.co.uk](http://www.shma.co.uk)**

# CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS IN MELL SQUARE



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Located in Mell Square, Green's offers innovative cocktails alongside classics, cheese and charcuterie boards and a great selection of gin, wine and beer with a stunning garden-themed backdrop. There's also live music each and every Wednesday.

Whilst Vita serves speciality coffee and tea, festive hot chocolate, healthy breakfast and brunch options, delicious cakes and pastries from local bakers as well as sparkling wine in a stylish setting.

A covered, heated outdoor pergola style seating area is home to pop-up street food traders from all types of cuisine, from handmade burgers and authentic pizzas to vegan delights. Taste Collective plays host to some of the Midlands' top



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# Feeling Festive?

Welcome to the November edition

**By the time this arrives Christmas will only be about 6 weeks away! Check out page 6 to see what local events are coming up to get you in the festive mood.**

You've just about got time to make any last-minute changes to your home in time for Christmas so remember to support local businesses as they really value their customers – we have a great collection of local tradespeople and businesses who are local and are looking for your custom.

Here's hoping the pre-Christmas build up isn't too hectic and that you find the time to relax, maybe over a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie!

Zoe Reece

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# community events

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**25 November, Land Rover Sports & Social Club**

Voted the best Elvis Tribute Act in the Midlands by local radio station BRMB, Mark's vocal range is such that it allows him to spectacularly mimic many of the performances of Elvis, through some of his most prominent years. To book: [www.landroversc.co.uk/shows-and-events/](http://www.landroversc.co.uk/shows-and-events/)

## Menopause Café

**26 November 10am, Paramo Lounge, Solihull High Street**  
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Café, a supportive space to share experiences, learn, and connect with others navigating the menopause journey. All welcome to come along.

## The Super Weekender 2023

**1-3 December, NEC, Birmingham**

This 3-day event will bring together over 15,000 dance lovers from across the country. Dancers can compete, perform, train and exhibit under one roof with unmissable competitions and world-class training from sought-after choreographers and dance professionals. For more info: [www.thenec.co.uk/whats-on/the-super-weekender/](http://www.thenec.co.uk/whats-on/the-super-weekender/)

## Christmas Fair

**2 December 10am - 1pm, Knowle Village Hall.**

This annual Fair is a Knowle Village Hall Fundraising event. Christmas door wreaths will be on sale as well as plenty of gifts, cards, chocolates etc - lots to choose from! Refreshments will be available and there is a Grand Raffle. Come and join in!

## Comedy Night

**25 November, Knowle British Legion**

Don't miss this sensational line-up of talented comedians who will have you rolling in the aisles from start to finish. So mark your calendars and prepare for an unforgettable night of non-stop laughter. Tickets from [www.tributenightpromotions.co.uk/](http://www.tributenightpromotions.co.uk/)

## Donny Osmond

**9 December, Resorts World Arena**

Legendary music star Donny Osmond has announced his first UK tour in six years. The pop superstar will be bringing his electrifying Vegas show to UK arenas from December. To book: [www.resortsworldarena.co.uk/whats-on/donny-osmond/](http://www.resortsworldarena.co.uk/whats-on/donny-osmond/)



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# How Secure is your Wi-Fi?

**H**ow much thought do you give to your home Wi-Fi security? Probably not enough. An insecure home Wi-Fi network means that outsiders can easily access it, and as well as using your internet for free, they can exploit it for malicious activities. They could access data on devices connected to that network, including passwords, financial data, personal photos, and confidential documents. Someone could even use your network to engage in illegal activities online which could be traced back to you. Even if unauthorized users aren't engaging in malicious activity, the added traffic can lead to network congestion, resulting in reduced performance for legitimate users.

Wi-Fi security might seem daunting, but it's more about taking the right steps than it is about technical complexity. Here are areas where people often slip up:

**Setup:** Adjusting router settings feels like a chore, but investing a little time now can prevent problems later. Make it a point to familiarize yourself with your router's control panel.

**Weak Passwords:** Opt for a robust Wi-Fi password. Avoid easily guessable



passwords like "password" or "12345678", or your surname!

**Default Admin Passwords:**

Replace the generic passwords e.g., 'admin', that your router came with to prevent unauthorized access.

**Using Outmoded Security**

**Protocols:** Move beyond outdated encryption like WEP or even WPA. WPA3 is the newest standard, so look for routers that support it.

**Enabled Vulnerable Services:**

Disable insecure features like Wi-Fi Protected Setup (WPS) and Universal Plug and Play (UPnP), which can be easily exploited.

**Unnecessary Remote Access:**

Unless essential, turn off remote access to your router to prevent external threats.

**Ignoring Guest Networks:**

Use the guest network feature for visitors to keep them separate from your primary network. This limits their access to sensitive files and devices.

**Smart Devices on Main**

**Network:** Assign smart home gadgets to a guest network. This prevents potential security lapses from affecting your main devices.

**NOTE** Hiding your Wi-Fi network means disabling the "SSID broadcast" feature on your router, making the network name (SSID) invisible to most users. While it might seem like a smart security measure, there are several problems associated with it:

It can give you a false sense of security, because hiding your SSID doesn't make your network invisible to everyone. People with the right tools or software can still detect hidden networks and their SSIDs.

Also, every time you want to add a new device to your network, you'll need to manually input the SSID and password since the network won't appear in the list of available Wi-Fi connections. This can be inconvenient and troublesome, especially for less tech-savvy individuals.

Most importantly hiding your SSID is not a substitute for implementing robust security measures, such as strong encryption (like WPA3) and a solid password.

Hopefully I've helped you understand a little better how to protect your home Wi-Fi so that you can stream and surf safely.



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# Pear and Chocolate Pudding Cake

A light and luscious cake using in-season pears.



**Preparation time:** 20 min

**Cooking time:** 40 min

**Serves:** 8

## Ingredients

85g butter, plus 1  
tbsp extra for tin  
85g golden caster sugar,  
plus extra for tin  
85g gluten-free dark  
chocolate, broken  
into pieces.  
1 tbsp brandy  
3 eggs, separated.  
85g hazelnuts or almonds,  
toasted and ground in  
a food processor.  
4 very ripe pears, peeled,  
halved, and cored.  
Icing sugar, for dusting

## Method

Grease the sides of a  
25cm loose-bottomed  
cake tin and line the base

with baking parchment.  
Sprinkle in 2 tbsp caster  
sugar and swirl it around to  
coat the base and sides,  
then tip out any excess.  
Preheat the oven to 180C/  
fan 160C/gas 4. Melt the  
chocolate and butter in  
a bowl over a pan of hot  
water, remove from the  
heat, stir in the brandy  
and leave to cool.

Whisk the egg yolks with the  
caster sugar in a large bowl  
until pale and thick; then fold  
into the cooled chocolate  
along with the ground  
hazelnuts or almonds.

In a separate bowl, with a

clean whisk, beat the whites  
until they reach a soft peak  
(don't over beat). Stir a  
spoonful of the whites into  
the chocolate mix, then  
carefully fold in the rest of  
them in. Spoon the mixture  
into the prepared tin. Level it  
off, then arrange the pears  
over the mixture, cut side  
down. Bake for about 40  
mins until the pears are soft  
and the cake is cooked  
all the way through. Leave  
to cool in the tin for five  
minutes before releasing  
it, then place on a rack  
to cool completely.

Dust with icing sugar and  
serve with crème fraîche.



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# a good read

By Natasha Donovan

## Infinite Detail

by Tim Maughan

Maughan's debut novel is a mesmerizing and thought-provoking exploration of a future world shattered by the sudden collapse of the internet. Set in a near-future dystopia, Maughan skilfully navigates the intricacies of a society that has lost its digital connectivity and the profound impact it has on both individuals and the collective consciousness. The novel weaves together two narrative threads: one set in the days leading up to the 'Zero Day' event, when the internet vanishes, and the other in the aftermath, where society grapples with the consequences. Maughan's prose is both evocative and insightful, capturing the tension and unease of a world suddenly thrust into chaos. Through a cast of compelling characters, he explores how our reliance on technology shapes our identities, relationships, and perceptions.

Maughan's vision of a post-internet world is hauntingly vivid, painting a picture of a society in disarray, where once-thriving cities become desolate and communities fragment. As characters navigate this new reality, the author delves into themes of power, surveillance, and the blurred lines between the virtual and the real. The novel's exploration of the human condition amidst technological collapse is deeply resonant, inviting readers to contemplate their own relationship with the digital realm. It's a cautionary tale; a portrait of the fragility of our current status quo, and it is as thought-provoking as it is terrifying; you won't ever take your Wi-Fi for granted again.



## Time Travelling with a Hamster

by Ross Welford

This is a delightful and heartwarming novel aimed at young readers aged 8-12. It masterfully combines the complexities of time travel with a touching exploration of family bonds and personal growth. The story follows Al Chaudhury, a twelve-year-old boy who stumbles upon a time machine built by his late father. Filled with a mix of curiosity and determination, Al embarks on a mission to change the past and save his father's life.

Welford's writing is imbued with a genuine sense of wonder and a keen understanding of a young person's perspective. Al goes on a rollercoaster adventure through time, navigating paradoxes and unforeseen consequences with pluck and humour. Al's interactions with his pet hamster, a hilarious and unlikely companion in his journey, add a nice touch of whimsy to the story.

This is a beautiful novel about the emotional complexity of loss, and the lengths one is willing to go to mend a fractured family. Al's relationship with his late father, the mystery surrounding his last words, and the bond he shares with his unconventional grandfather all contribute to the novel's emotional depth. Through the intricacies of time travel, the author explores the idea that every action has a ripple effect, highlighting the importance of accepting the past while embracing the present.

Time Travelling with a Hamster captures the essence of childhood curiosity, resilience, and the power of love. It effortlessly weaves together science fiction elements with relatable coming-of-age experiences, making it a captivating read for young readers and adults alike. It is a heartwarming tale that reminds us of the preciousness of time and the significance of the relationships that shape our lives.



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# Thanksgiving

## What's the story behind America's Iconic Celebration?

Every year, on the fourth Thursday of November, Americans gather with friends and family to indulge in a turkey feast. Thanksgiving is one of the most iconic and cherished American holidays. But how did it come to exist?

Thanksgiving can be traced back to 1620 when a group of English settlers, known as the Pilgrims, arrived on the shores of present-day Massachusetts aboard the Mayflower. Fleeing religious persecution from the Church of England, they sought to start a life in the New World. But their first winter in America was brutal and nearly half of the 102 settlers died.

The romanticised history goes that Pilgrims encountered an English-speaking Native American named Squanto. He and members of the Wampanoag tribe taught the settlers how to fish, cultivate corn, and extract maple from trees. With these skills, the settlers were able to sustain themselves, and in the autumn of 1621, they experienced a bountiful harvest. To express their gratitude and celebrate, the Pilgrims organized a three-day festivity and invited the Wampanoag tribe, including their leader, Chief Massasoit. The feast included dishes made from the harvested



crops, though the meat was probably deer rather than turkey.

In reality, much bloodshed took place both before and after that first feast, and it was Massasoit who negotiated a treaty between the settlers and the Wampanoag tribe, which included an agreement that no member of either group would harm anyone from the other, and that they would leave their weapons at home when trading. This lasted for a decade, with the pilgrims trading English goods for Wampanoag land, access to natural resources and other assets.

But tensions began to simmer as 25,000 more European colonizers arrived, claiming rights to land, and bringing with them diseases which decimated the native population. Mistrust between the two groups grew and the Native Americans were viewed as the enemy of the pilgrims, with horrifying consequences.

Although the 1621 feast is recognized as the first Thanksgiving, the practice of celebrating the harvest did

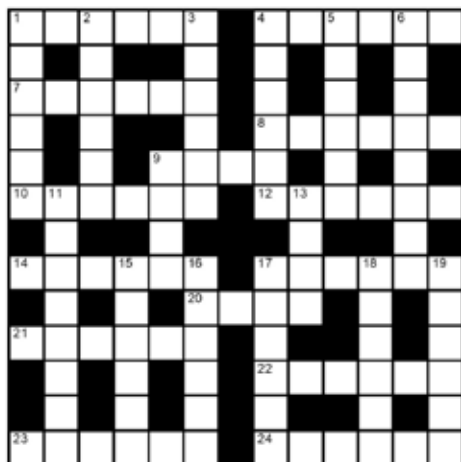
not immediately become an annual tradition. Days of Thanksgiving were held, but they were sporadic and varied in nature: some were religious, others more like parties.

By the 19th century Thanksgiving began to resemble the modern national holiday. Sarah Josepha Hale, the author of the nursery rhyme "Mary Had a Little Lamb," played a pivotal role. She embarked on a 20-year campaign to establish Thanksgiving as a national holiday, lobbying politicians, presidents, and other influential figures.

In 1863, in the midst of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln declared the last Thursday of November as a National Day of Thanksgiving. He hoped the holiday would help unify a nation torn apart by conflict.

Over the years, the traditions and meanings behind Thanksgiving have evolved and diversified. Today, Thanksgiving is a time for reflection, gratitude, and spending time with loved ones, (though it's important to acknowledge that mistreatment of Native Americans still goes on). It's also a time for parades, football, and Black Friday sales. Yet despite its transformation over the centuries, the core values of 'giving thanks' remain unchanged.

## crossword



## clues

### Across

- 1 chaos, uproar (6)
- 4 congratulations, adoration (6)
- 7 clippers (6)
- 8 fashionable, stylish (6)
- 9 administer, distribute (4)
- 10 small flat metal ring (6)
- 12 stippled (6)
- 14 acclaimed, recognised (6)
- 17 alcove (6)
- 20 at that time (4)
- 21 type of straw hat (6)
- 22 request, summon (6)
- 23 seat for riding (6)
- 24 as night falls (6)

### Down

- 1 allot, grant (6)
- 2 anticipates with horror (6)
- 3 assemble, collect (6)
- 4 heaved, puffed (6)
- 5 hopeless and downtrodden (6)
- 6 without pips or kernels (8)
- 9 bill of fare (4)
- 11 semi-aquatic snake (8)
- 13 harbinger, portent (4)
- 15 offer a higher price (6)
- 16 band (6)
- 17 careless (6)
- 18 begrudges, yearns (6)
- 19 mute (6)

answer on page 22



## 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 22



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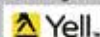
**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

The whole house has been transformed by Rockwarm using a traditional white finish render for the External Insulation. We are extremely pleased with the installation, and the attention to detail throughout, any minor problems were overcome with ease, a very helpful office staff, good communication and friendly. Wouldn't hesitate to highly recommend Rockwarm.

GaryMM-1318, 24 Aug 2023



## Tel: 02476 34 55 54

Trident Business Park, 4 Holman Way, Nuneaton, CV11 4PN

info@rockwarm.co.uk • www.rockwarm.co.uk



## All guttering cleaned and repaired from £49.99

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Contact Zoe Reece on 07557 220585 /  
zoe@dorridgedirectory.com

#### LOCAL COUNCILLORS

##### SOLIHULL / SILHILL

Mike Gough

Tel: 07480 253181

Michael.gough@solihull.gov.uk

Peter Hogarth MBE

Tel: 0121 705 5455

phogarth@solihull.gov.uk

Wazma Qais

Tel: 0121 709 3404

wazma.qais@solihull.gov.uk

##### ST ALPHEGE

Sardul Marwa MBE

Tel: 07940 775122

sardul.marwa@solihull.gov.uk

Angela Sandison

Tel: 07500 557427

angela.sandison@solihull.gov.uk

Samantha Gethen

Tel: 07360 648047

samantha.gethen@solihull.gov.uk

#### local police contact for solihull

Solihull Police Station: 0845 113 5000 or 101

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

(supply & emergencies)

0800 783 4444

##### Travel

National Rail Enquiries

03457 48 49 50

Network West Midlands (buses)

0345 303 6760



##### Sudoku Solution

from page 20



##### crossword Solution

from page 20

#### 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.

# Hatton

## GARDEN CENTRE & SHOPPING VILLAGE

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Step into Christmas with British Garden Centres. From unique gift ideas to enchanting décor, trees and lights, this brand new store has everything you need to create a Christmas to remember.



#### Every Weekend

Our popular Christmas Markets run every weekend right up until Christmas. Visit our website for more details.

Hatton Country World, Hatton, CV35 8XA  
[Hattonworld.com](http://Hattonworld.com)

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**[homecare@belmonthhealthcare.co.uk](mailto:homecare@belmonthhealthcare.co.uk)**

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