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Summertime!

Welcome to the July edition...

At the time of writing this the sun is shining brightly so let's hope by the time this reaches you we are still enjoying a lovely Summertime!

After all, there's loads of great places to visit in the local area, which are so much more enjoyable if the sun's shining. If you want some inspiration on what's on in the area, then head to page 6 for more information.

Wishing you a great month ahead. Until next month,



Zoe Reece

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community events

Solihull Summer Fest

19-20 July

Tudor Grange Park

Enjoy a wide range of music live in Solihull this Summer – whether you love pop sensation Louise, the king of reggae Maxi Priest, or are into the magic of Motown with the Detroit Soul Collective. More info at www.solihullsummerfest.co.uk

The Rooted Retreat

25 July

1st Solihull Scouts, 303 Lode Lane, Solihull

Join in for an evening escape into the woods with yoga, campfire, food, drinks and connections. Experience yoga in a woodland clearing, a barefoot nature walk, magical manifestations and intention setting, and a silent disco in the woods. Tickets from www.eventbrite.co.uk

Knowle Food & Music Festival

26-27 July

Knowle Park

This free event will feature 2 days of epic tribute bands, local cover bands, and funky DJ sets. There will also be plenty of sweet treats and street food to keep your energy levels up! Enjoy tribute acts for Bruno Mars, Bon Jovi



and Dua Lipa. More details can be found at www.allevents.in

Run Solihull 2025

10 August

Malvern Park

Starting and finishing in Malvern Park, this is a unique opportunity to run a 5k or half marathon around the closed roads of Solihull. There is also a fun filled event village open, with live performances, bag storage, charity stalls, food and drink vendors and plenty of toilets to use before you head off onto the course! Info from www.acorns.org.uk/acornsevent/run-solihull-2025/

Swinging Summer Ball

16 August

Old Sils Sports Club, Warwick Road, Knowle

Get ready for an evening of delicious food and good music and step back in time with this 1940s Summer Ball. Get ready to swing, sip, and socialise at Knowle's most glamorous summer soirée! Join in for a dazzling evening filled with vintage charm and community spirit. More details: www.visitsolihull.co.uk/event/visit-knowle-swinging-summer-ball/



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No issues at any time. Good, responsive communication from the office, the various teams on site were polite, friendly and low maintenance, the site was left tidy after each day's work, and most importantly, the job looked great when complete. Thoroughly recommended.

AndyE-230 / 31 Jan 2024

Create a Summer Sanctuary

As summer arrives and the days stretch long into the evening, our gardens become more than just places to grow plant - they become outdoor living rooms, perfect for barbecues, garden parties, or simply unwinding with a drink at sunset. Whether we have a sprawling lawn or a compact courtyard, with a few thoughtful touches, we can transform our space into a welcoming haven perfect for outdoor gatherings.

Set the Scene with Lighting

- Good lighting is key to creating atmosphere once the sun goes down. Think soft, warm glow rather than harsh overhead illumination. Solar-powered fairy lights strung along fences or pergolas add instant magic, while lanterns or LED candles on tables create a cosy, flickering ambiance. For a touch of rustic charm, drape festoon lights across trees or between posts. If you want something more permanent, consider solar path lights to guide guests around the garden, or uplighting to highlight feature plants or architectural elements. And consider a firepit - a central focal point that provides warmth, light, and a place to gather.



Bring Colour and Life with Container Planting -

Container gardening is an easy and versatile way to add beauty and personality to your outdoor space. Group pots of varying heights around your seating area to soften the edges and add lushness. Aromatic herbs like rosemary and lavender work particularly well, alongside bright blooms like geraniums and petunias. Add texture with ferns ornamental grasses. If you have the space and the budget consider a small tree such as an olive tree or bay laurel in a large container. It will help define the space and give it structure. Hanging baskets and vertical planters are also great options for smaller gardens or balconies. To keep your containers looking their best through the season, use high-quality

compost, water them regularly, and deadhead faded flowers to encourage new blooms.

Furniture That's Stylish and Functional

- The right garden furniture can elevate your outdoor entertaining experience. If you're short on space, foldable or stackable pieces are ideal. A simple bistro set is perfect for morning coffee or an intimate evening chat. For larger gatherings, opt for a dining table with comfortable chairs, or a modular sofa that can be reconfigured as needed.

Don't forget comfort - add outdoor cushions, throws, or even a rug to bring indoor warmth outside. Choose weather-resistant fabrics and materials like rattan, teak, or powder-coated metal for durability.

If you entertain often, consider a barbecue / cooking area. A drinks trolley, ice bucket, or outdoor bar shelf adds a touch of sophistication and keeps refreshments within easy reach.

Final Touches - Potted candles, a wireless speaker for soft background music, and garden games for guests are all great choices. Ultimately, a welcoming garden is one that feels like an extension of your home - relaxed, beautiful, and ready to be enjoyed.



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a good read

By Natasha Donovan

Reasons to Stay Alive by Matt Haig

Reasons to Stay Alive is a deeply personal memoir that explores the author's journey through depression and anxiety. At the age of 24, Haig found himself on the edge of a cliff in Ibiza, contemplating suicide. The book recounts what led him to that moment, and more importantly, what brought him back. Written in a mix of narrative, short reflections, lists, and quotes, it captures the raw, chaotic nature of mental illness while offering hope and perspective. Rather than a linear story, it's an intimate, fragmented look at surviving the darkest moments, embracing vulnerability, and finding meaning in life again. Haig writes with striking honesty and simplicity, making complex feelings feel understandable and shared. What sets this book apart is its lack of pretension - there are no grand prescriptions or one-size-fits-all cures, just a gentle, persistent reminder that pain passes. Haig touches on love, literature, and the little things that make life worth living. This isn't a how-to book—it's a how-I-did book, and that makes all the difference. Poignant, uplifting, and at times humorous, it's a must-read for anyone navigating their own darkness or supporting someone who is.



The Grand Hotel of Feelings by Lidia Brankovich

In the award-winning The Grand Hotel of Feelings, Lidia Brankovich invites young readers into an imaginative establishment where emotions are personified as guests, each with their own unique characteristics and needs. The attentive hotel manager ensures that every feeling, from the boisterous Anger who requires ample space to vent, to the soft-spoken Sadness who occasionally floods the bathroom, is accommodated with care and understanding. The creative narrative serves as a gentle metaphor for acknowledging and managing one's own emotions, emphasizing that all feelings are valid and transient. Brankovic's whimsical illustrations bring each emotion to life with distinctive visual traits that will resonate with readers of all ages, sparking the imagination and prompting further discussions about the nature of feelings. The book is great for reading aloud and provides an accessible entry into discussions on the complexity of emotions, encouraging children to recognize and articulate their own experiences.



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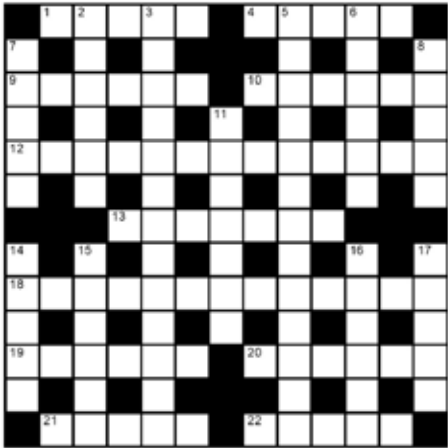


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crossword

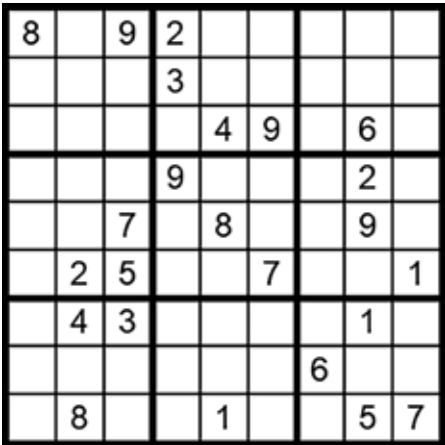


clues

- Across**
- 1 Corpulent, fat (5)
 - 4 Waterside, beach (5)
 - 9 Rip to pieces (4,2)
 - 10 Trivial, superficial (6)
 - 12 Global, cosmopolitan (13)
 - 13 Capacity, talent (7)
 - 18 Enduring, forbearing (4-9)
 - 19 Singer songwriter _____ Keys (6)
 - 20 Loud and harsh laugh (6)
 - 21 Buff, tan (5)
 - 22 Better, greater (5)

- Down**
- 2 Physical attractiveness (6)
 - 3 Repetitive military drill (6 -7)
 - 5 Automatic cash dispenser (coll) (4-2-3-4)
 - 6 Ruler (6)
 - 7 Tread (5)
 - 8 Flair, mode (5)
 - 11 Gradually diminish (4, 3)
 - 14 Austere (5)
 - 15 Not late (2, 4)
 - 16 Three stumps and two bails (6)
 - 17 Gawked (5)

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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Outdoor Cinemas The UK's Summer Movie Revival

Picture this: You're sat outside with your favourite people, curled up on a deck chair

and tucked up in blankets, sipping your favourite drink and munching popcorn.

Over the past few summers, outdoor cinemas have made something of a comeback across the UK - and it's a trend that shows no signs of slowing down. Whether it's in a park, a castle courtyard, or even a rooftop, the magic of watching a film under the open sky has captured our



collective British imaginations.

From drive-in screenings to deckchairs on the lawn, these alfresco film nights gave us a chance to reconnect - not just with each other, but with the simple pleasure of watching a movie together. For many, it was the first time experiencing cinema outside the confines of four walls.

Today, outdoor cinema

events are bigger and better than ever. Organisers are pairing cult classics and new releases with food trucks, cocktails, and stunning settings, turning a night at the movies into a full summer experience. And let's face it—there's something truly magical about watching The Greatest Showman or Top Gun beneath the stars.

Outdoor cinemas are now a beloved part of the UK's summer landscape - a silver lining from a time we'll never forget...don't forget to pack a poncho or a large umbrella.



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Mindbenders

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WAR AND PEA



answers on page 22

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Garden Toys

Gardens are a great place for kids to run around and get that all important fresh air and exercise. The addition of a toy or two will mean you can keep them happily occupied for hours.

Swings are perennially popular. Make sure the size and style is appropriate to the age of the child. Better still buy one which has changeable seats so you can upgrade as the child grows, or simply ring the changes now and then.

Slides come in all sizes. They can be independent structures or attached to climbing frames. You really do get what you pay for in this instance. Do your homework. Is a metal or wooden frame best for your garden. How much use will it get and how many and what ages of children does it need to support? Get the best you can afford and it will serve you for many years.

Trampolines are a relative newbie to the UK garden compared with slides and swings but they are rightfully popular. Even adults can't resist them. You'll need a flat surface, and a safety net is highly recommended. Most trampolining injuries occur when



one child lands on another so buy the biggest your garden will allow. It's almost impossible to police the 'one child at a time' recommendation so bigger is safer as each child has more space.

Kids love dens. Provide a Wendy house or a tepee and let their imagination run wild. If you have the funds you can buy an elaborate fort or tree house. If you don't have space for a permanent Wendy house, provide poles and old blankets and let them construct their own!

If you have space for a sand and water area your children will love it. There are simple small plastic tables designed for the purpose and huge wooden luxury models complete with seats and sunshade. Use specialist

play sand to fill it. Make sure you buy one with a cover to protect it from the weather and prevent neighbourhood cats from using it as a toilet.

We can't all have a proper pool in the garden but most of us have room for a paddling pool. Add a couple of supersoaker water pistols and a waterslide made from heavy duty silicon and you're set for an afternoon of splashy delight.

If you have a large space you could invest in some football goals or a badminton set. But for those who love to play games and have a smaller space there's croquet or outdoor skittles. And there are now outdoor giant versions of family favourites like Connect 4, Jenga and Chess.

Time for some outdoor fun.



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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 Saturday of every month, 10am – 12 noon, excluding bank holidays, for both Silhill and St Alphege residents.

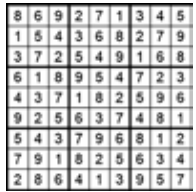
Solution to Mind benders

1. A blessing in disguise
2. Cut a long story short
3. 24 carat gold

midbenders
from page 17



Crossword Solution
from page 14



Sudoku Solution
from page 14

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