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# Autumn is approaching...

Welcome to the September edition...

**It's a busy month with kids going back to school, and individuals getting ready for university. The roads are going to be busier, the mornings and evenings are going to get darker, but there's still lots to look forward to.**

We can start thinking ahead, planning Halloween treats, bonfire parties and eventually starting to think about Christmas plans. There's also lots of interesting and fun things going on locally – just check out page 6 for more details.



Zoe Reece

Tel: 07557 220585

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

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# community events

## A Place In The Sun Live

**19-21 September**

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With expert advice, informative seminars, a wide-ranging property showcase, and plenty of inspiration, the event provides everything you need to take the next step towards owning your perfect home abroad or making a successful relocation overseas. Tickets from [www.aplaceinthesunevents.com/birmingham](http://www.aplaceinthesunevents.com/birmingham)

## Quiz Evening

**26 September, 7.30pm prompt**

**Knowle Village Hall**

Join in and enjoy the fun! Your team can be up to 6 people and tickets are £8 each. There are very good prizes. Please bring your own liquid refreshment and "nibbles"! Tickets available from 01564 778163 or 01564 779898. This is a Knowle Village



Hall Association refurbishment fundraising event.

## The Ultimate Pop Show

**27 September 3pm**

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Delivering the most exhilarating dance routines, latest trends and hits from the biggest chart-topping artists including; Taylor Swift, Girls Aloud, Ariana Grande, Harry Styles, Miley Cyrus, Beyoncé, Justin Bieber, Little Mix and many more. Tickets £18.50, available from 0121 704 6962.

## Boogie Wonderland Tribute

**18 October 7pm**

**Shirley British Legion**

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## Disney On Ice presents Find Your Hero

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# The brilliance of bulbs

**T**here's nothing quite like the joy of seeing the first green shoots poke through the soil after a long,

grey winter. For us gardeners, planting bulbs in autumn is a bit like giving our future self a present - come spring, our garden will be bursting with colour, and all we had to do was plan ahead.

But before we get into favourites and showstoppers, let's talk bulbs. A bulb is essentially a tiny underground storage unit, packed with all the energy a plant needs to produce roots, leaves, and, most importantly, flowers. When we plant a bulb in autumn, it lies dormant through winter. As temperatures rise and daylight increases, the bulb wakes up, using its stored energy to shoot up and flower, often well before other plants have got going.

To create a long-lasting display, aim for a mix of early, mid, and late-spring bloomers. Daffodils, with their golden trumpets, are reliable, low-maintenance, and available in countless varieties. Compact 'Tête-à-Tête' is ideal for pots or front-of-border spots, while creamy white 'Thalia' brings a touch of elegance.



Tulips are another must-have, offering rich colour and drama. Depending on your garden they may not always be perennial so if you're not lucky, replant fresh bulbs each year will guarantee a bold display. The choice of colours is infinite, from white and palest pinks through classic reds and oranges to deep purples like 'Queen of Night'. There's a tulip for everyone.

If you fancy something more unusual, try *Fritillaria meleagris*, known as snake's head fritillary, with its delicate, nodding, chequered flowers. Or go for *Scilla siberica*, a hardy, vivid blue flower that's perfect for under trees or dotted through lawns.

Plant bulbs in well-drained soil, about three times as deep as the bulb is tall, and water them in. If your soil is on the heavy side, a bit of added

grit or compost can help.

To maximise your chances of repeat displays in years to come, a little more planning ahead is required. Once flowering is over apply a liquid fertilizer high in potassium (like tomato feed). Feed while the leaves are still green, as this is when bulbs are busy replenishing their energy reserves through photosynthesis. Keep feeding until the foliage begins to yellow and die back naturally - don't be tempted to cut it early.

Bulbs are one of my greatest pleasures, partly because I always forget about planting them until they pop up out of nowhere to make me smile in early spring. So, grab your trowel and get planting. With a little forward planning (and a dash of tomato feed), your spring garden will be the envy of the neighbourhood.





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# a good read

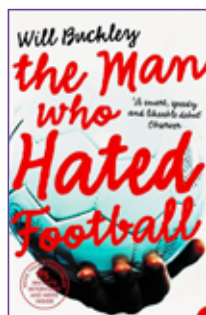
By Natasha Donovan

## The Man Who Hated Football

by Will Buckley

Full disclosure, I love football and come from a long line of Villa supporters (don't judge me), but I confess I missed this book entirely until I was gifted a copy quite recently. Set at the start of the Millennium, The

Man Who Hated Football is a sharp, darkly comic portrait of a man unravelling under the weight of modern life and the beautiful game. Jimmy Stirling is a football reporter who's grown to loathe the sport he covers. His editor despises him, his wife may be having an affair, and his own sense of self-worth is circling the drain. Between his needy twins, a crumbling marriage, and a mortgage he can't afford, Jimmy finds solace only in pints at his local pubs and the occasional cigarette - though even those comforts are tinged with guilt and futility. As the world shifts around him - both personally and globally - Jimmy is forced to confront his own failings and the absurdities of the football industry. Buckley, a seasoned sports journalist himself, delivers a biting satire of media culture and masculinity in crisis, filled with wit, pathos, and painfully relatable moments. If you enjoy Nick Hornby or Jonathan Coe, this novel offers a poignant-but-funny exploration of one man's slow-motion collapse - and the faint hope of redemption.

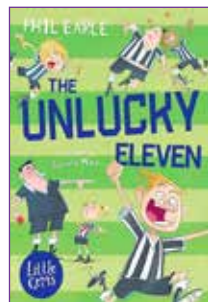


## The Unlucky Eleven

by Phil Earle

Phil Earle has crafted a delightful and humorous tale perfect for younger readers aged 5 to 7.

The story centres on Stanley and his football team, the Saints, who are experiencing an unprecedented streak of bad luck - ranging from bizarre injuries to mysterious illnesses and cancelled games. Convinced that their misfortunes stem from a cursed football kit, the team embarks on a series of comical attempts to lift the supposed curse including putting garlic in their socks! However, their efforts only seem to exacerbate their troubles, leading them to consider giving up on the season altogether. Undeterred, Stanley devises a final plan to break the curse and rally his teammates for one last game. Illustrated by Steve May, the book combines engaging storytelling with lively artwork, making it accessible and entertaining for early readers. It will appeal to children who are developing their reading skills. The narrative not only delivers laughs but also imparts valuable lessons about teamwork, perseverance, and the power of self-belief. The Unlucky Eleven is a charming read that will resonate with young football enthusiasts and anyone who enjoys a good underdog story.



# Aubergine Parmigiana Lasagne

A great vegetarian dish that can be prepared ahead of time



**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 60 minutes

**Serves:** 6

## Ingredients

3 large aubergines  
trimmed and thinly  
sliced lengthways  
4 tbsp olive oil  
250g vegetarian  
mozzarella, drained  
and grated  
50g vegetarian Italian-  
style hard cheese grated  
1 bunch of basil leaves  
roughly chopped, leaving  
some for garnish  
8 dried lasagne sheets (egg  
lasagne sheets work best)

## For the tomato sauce:

2 tbsp olive oil  
6 garlic cloves finely  
sliced chopped  
¼ tsp golden caster sugar  
1 tbsp red wine vinegar  
3 x 400g cans  
chopped tomatoes

## Method

The sauce: Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat and fry the garlic for 1 min until golden. Add the sugar and vinegar, simmer for 30 seconds, then add the tomatoes. Season with salt and return to a simmer for 10 mins. Remove from the heat and set aside. This can be prepared up to two days ahead and chilled until required. Heat a griddle or large frying pan over a medium-high heat. Brush the aubergine slices on both sides with the olive oil and season with a little salt. Griddle the slices in batches until softened and slightly charred (ensure the heat isn't too

high or the aubergine will char before it softens). Transfer the cooked slices to a plate as you go. To assemble: Place a third of the aubergine slices in a layer over the base of a rectangular or square oven-proof dish, then pour over a third of the sauce. Scatter with a small handful of both cheeses and half the basil. Keep most of the cheese for the top. Cover the aubergine layer with half the lasagne sheets. Repeat once more, then finish with a final layer of aubergines topped with the rest of the sauce. Scatter the remaining cheese over the top. After leaving to cool completely this can be frozen so it's a great dish to prepare ahead for busy families. Defrost fully before cooking. Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Place the dish on a baking tray and bake for 30 mins until the cheese is golden and the sauce is bubbling at the edges. Leave to cool for at least 10 mins, then scatter with the reserved basil and serve with a green salad.

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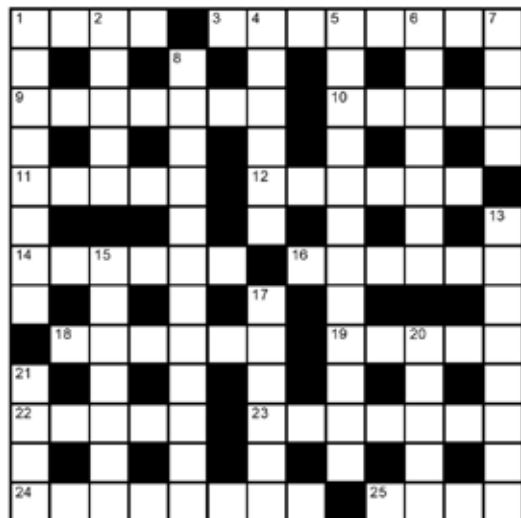


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## crossword



## clues

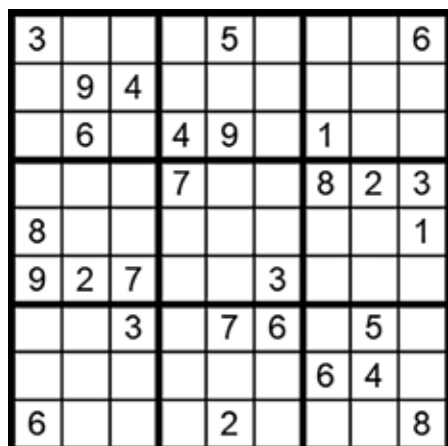
### Across

- 1 Free from danger (4)
- 3 Upright, perpendicular (8)
- 9 Circus swing (7)
- 10 Game in which you shout when you win (5)
- 11 Without clothing (5)
- 12 Appeared to be (6)
- 14 Filtered through fine mesh (6)
- 16 Concern, issue (6)
- 18 Diversion (6)
- 19 Labels (5)
- 22 Predatory marine mollusc (5)
- 23 Highly seasoned Indian rice dish (7)
- 24 Old form of address for a woman (8)
- 25 Presidential assistant (4)

### Down

- 1 Devil worshipper (8)
- 2 Container for fluid (5)
- 4 All the same, however (4,2)
- 5 Mealtime etiquette (5,7)
- 6 Arrogance (7)
- 7 Large wild cat (4)
- 8 Seamstress or tailor (12)
- 13 Social standing (8)
- 15 Antennae (7)
- 17 Clans (6)
- 20 \_\_\_\_\_ Dolphins, American football team (5)
- 21 Moved through the water (4)

answer on page 18



## 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 18



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of fluid. I bet I'm not unusual.

Actual recommended daily fluid intake is approximately: 3.7 litres for men and 2.7 litres for women, which includes fluid consumed in food such as fruit or soup which is estimated at between 10-20% of our total intake.

For moderate exercise or heat, we should add at least an extra 250-500ml, more for prolonged heat or intense activities.

Every cell, tissue, and organ in your body needs water to work properly, because water is fundamental for nearly all of the



body's physiological processes including brain function, joint lubrication, temperature regulation, and waste removal.

I've been making a conscious effort to stay fully hydrated for about a month now and I've definitely noticed that my thinking is clearer. I've even lost a few pounds! So why not monitor your own fluid intake and see if you need to optimise your fluid intake.



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# Mindbenders

Can you find the hidden phrases?

You stink! + Broken leg

theupair



answers on page 22

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Samantha Gethen

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### Misc

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### Solution to Mind benders

1. Add insult to injury
2. Up in the air
3. Be back in tick

**midbenders**  
from page 17



**Crossword Solution**  
from page 14



**Sudoku Solution**  
from page 14

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