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Welcome to the December edition...

By the time this arrives I'm sure you'll all be counting down the days to Christmas, whether it's due to excitement or if you just want life to get back to normal!

Apart from the excitement of the big day, there's always lots of other things going on at this time of year – check out pages 30 and 31 to see what great new films are on at the cinema this month and what local pantomimes are playing. If you'd rather curl up in the warmth of your own home, have a look at our book reviews on page 45 or try making Scandinavian cookies from our recipe on page 48.

For those of you that eat too much over Christmas and who want to help others, why not try the Lions Festive Walk from Baddesley Clinton National Trust on 27th December (more details on page 6). There's a choice of different length routes so you can do what you're comfortable with.

I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

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



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community events

Christmas Outdoor Cinema

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Visit the marquee in Mell Square to see showings of your favourite childhood Christmas movies, including Frozen and Miracle on 34th Street. The movies are free to watch, and seating is on a first come, first serve basis. Refreshments will be available to buy, including hot chocolate and hot dogs.



Big Fat Christmas Quiz

Boston Tea Party, Herbert Road, Solihull

20th December, 6.45pm-8pm

Winner takes all Christmas quiz! Tickets are £5 each and include a mince pie. Booking is essential, email Solihull@bostonteatartyco.uk to get your ticket. Tickets available online from www.solihullchoral.org.uk or on the door.

Lions Festive Walk

Baddesley Clinton National Trust House
27th December

Join hundreds of walkers for this free charity fundraising

event. Just turn up and make a donation and take your pick of walks from 1.4 miles to 8.6 miles.

This is a great opportunity to raise funds for The UK Sepsis Trust, SoLO and local causes.



For details and to register visit www.knowleanddorridge lions.com/ walk or call 08458 335 894.

“Scrooge – the Musical”

Wednesday 30th Jan to Friday 1st Feb 2019 (7.30pm) / Saturday 2nd Feb 2019 (2pm & 7pm)

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Based on “A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens, this spectacular

musical, full of joy, memorable songs and magical illusions, is about hope, redemption and the kind of happiness that money can't buy. Tickets available on-line: www.solihull-smash.org.uk or telephone 07506 206892. For ages 7+. Adults £12.50, children (under 16) £8.50 - including refreshments.

Quilting Exhibition, Shirley, Solihull

23rd February, 10am - 4pm

Warwick Room, Shirley Institute, Church Road, Shirley, Solihull, B90 2AX

Quilts and Projects by local group, Round the Corner Quilters. There will be something for everyone, young and older. Demonstrations, sale of accessories by local companies, raffles and prizes. Proceeds of the raffle in aid of Alzheimer's Society.

KNOWLE LIBRARY

- **Jellybeans** – held monthly on a Thursday morning for story-time and rhymes for the under 5's 10.45am -11.30am
- **Monday Story Times** - Weekly story time and rhymes for toddlers and pre-school children 10.30am-11.00am
- **Under – fives** Rhyme Times at 2pm every Friday
- **Knowle Knit and Natter Group** – held monthly on a Tuesday 10.30am -11.30am
- **The Reading Café** – Monthly on a Friday morning 10.30am -11.30am
- **Self-Running Family History Group** – Monthly on a Tuesday 2.15pm -4.00pm
- **Reader's Circles** – Knowle Readers Circle meets monthly on a Friday 2.15pm
- **Knowle Library Self Running Readers Circle** monthly meeting Tuesday 11.00am -12pm
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The countdown is ON! Our town looks beautiful and **we are all looking forward to Christmas ..or are we?** My December diary has more squeezed into it than Santa's Spanx and I know my credit card is shaking with fear of burn out, so what can we do to ensure we don't suffer the same fate by January, slumped on the sofa feeling guilty and broke!!

Looking at our values is a great way to ensure the way we behave is in line with what is most important to us. This year I am going to really look deeply at how our family celebrations fit in with my values and sometimes this will even mean I save time and money.

Bonus!

I value family and friends so spending time with them fits in great with that...I also value kindness and gifting will be

a big part of Christmas... But not at great expense- I value the environment and my own well-being so will not be spending hours shopping for expensive gifts and writing cards for people I see all the time that will **end up in landfill!**

Whenever we see a lovely present for someone that doesn't cost the earth, we immediately feel guilty and worry it won't be enough.

But if we want to value generosity and tradition surely a bargain ticks those boxes, and at the same time is in line with values of integrity and honesty.

If you want to make sure your Christmas plans fit in with the values that are important to you, have a look at the GuruYou™ list of values and highlight yours. You can then think about how your plans fit in with these (or not!) **and ensure you will feel good all the way through the festivities...and after!**



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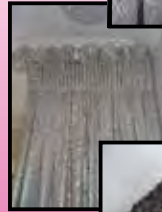
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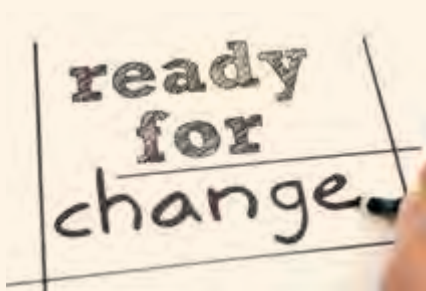
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Whether it's the gradual increase in food prices over the past year, or your desire to cut back on food waste, there has never been more incentive not to over cater at Christmas. But just how do you work out how much food and drink you need when you're feeding far more people than usual? We've come to the rescue.

Turkey - Allow approximately 500g per person. This doesn't mean that you'll get 500g of meat each, simply that to get a good portion size you need to allow this much turkey-weight per person. So, if you want to feed 8 adults your turkey should be at least 4Kg, more if you want leftovers.

Roast beef or pork - If the joint is off the bone, allow 250g per serving – so 2kg for eight people. Allow 350g per serving for roasts on the bone – so around 3kg for eight.

Roasties - Everyone loves roasties! Allow 250g of potatoes per person, so 2kg for eight people.

Stuffing - You need to allow 100g of stuffing per person, so that's at least 800g for eight people!

With stuffing it's better to have more than run-out, and it's great on turkey sandwiches later!

Sprouts - Unless you are a sprout-lover allow 80g per person – or 650g for eight people. If you do have any leftover they go great in bubble and squeak for boxing day brunch.

Carrots and other roast or steamed veg - 80g-100g is about right for any serving of vegetables, so you need 800g combined for eight people. I allow more because lots my family are vegetarian.

Gravy - 125ml per person is enough for a normal family, but if your relatives are like mine and treat gravy as a food group then allow double. You can always freeze leftovers for an easy addition to midweek suppers.

Cranberry Sauce - At least 50g per person. I'm sure I eat more than that though!

Bread Sauce - 75ml seems to suffice because not everyone likes it, but those that do LOVE it. Around 600-700ml is usually enough.

Christmas Pudding - A 900g pudding will be plenty to feed eight.

Custard - Treat it like gravy. 125ml per person unless your family are the type that can't stop pouring!

Unfortunately, there isn't one shopping list to suit all families, but this is a good basic guide; adapt it to suit your own catering preferences.

Happy feasting!



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COMPETITION



WIN 2 PAIRS OF TICKETS

to see **Paul Jones and Dave Kelly Acoustic Duo**

Wednesday 16th January 2019, 7.30pm

The Core Theatre, Solihull (formerly Solihull Arts Complex)

For your chance to win these tickets, worth £88, visit the Core Theatre website page for this event - www.thecoretheatresolihull.co.uk - to find the answer to this question:

Paul Jones and Dave Kelly are founder members of which band?

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

Closing date for entries is 31st December and the winner will be drawn at random and notified by email after this date.

About the Show:

Paul Jones and Dave Kelly's tangled and colourful roots go way back into the true undergrowth of the Blues tradition. As well as their own original material, they also perform the work of the greats, ranging from Howling' Wolf, John Lee Hooker, through to Sonny Boy Williamson.

After over a quarter century as presenter of his BBC Radio 2 R&B show, as a thrilling singer and harmonica maestro, and a member of The Manfreds, what Paul Jones doesn't know about the Blues can be written on a pinhead. The same can be said about Europe's leading bluesman, Dave Kelly. He's played with them all, including legends such as James Burton and Buddy Guy. Superb blues vocals combined with guitar virtuosity have elevated him into the higher echelon of international blues performers.

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For front entrance and back entrance, there are three main types of products used in homes today – wooden, UPVC and composite doors.



UPVC Doors

UPVC doors are available in a wide range of colours and finishes and their comparative lower cost to alternative materials has made them popular in recent years. They also have other benefits, such as a higher resistance to weathering and generally require less maintenance



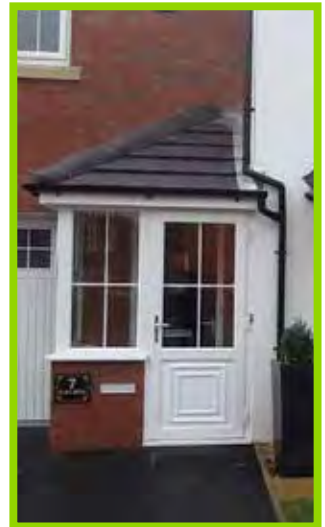
Bifold doors

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.

Composite Doors

As their name suggests, they are made up from several different materials to produce a robust, secure and attractive-looking to protect your home. The combination of materials, such as PVC, wood, insulating foam and GRP (glass reinforced plastic) results in a product that is very strong and requires no painting or varnishing to keep it looking good over its long lifetime. An occasional wipe with a damp cloth is all that is needed to keep it clean and retain its smart appearance.

Porches



Why we hang Stockings?

By Tracey Anderson

And other odd Christmas traditions...

Christmas is all about traditions, but why do we hang stockings, eat chocolate logs and drink eggnog (why would anyone drink eggnog?)

Stockings – Noddy Holder belting out, 'Are you hanging up your stocking on the wall?' is a Christmas tradition in itself. There's no official explanation of why we hang socks up for Santa though. It probably derives from a tradition of leaving out hay-filled shoes on December 5, the eve of St. Nicholas' feast day. Children would wake to discover that the hay they left for St. Nick's donkey had been replaced with treats or coins.

Snacks for Santa – Whether it's milk and a chocolate digestive or sherry and mince pie, when we leave goodies for Father Christmas we're possibly participating in a tradition that some scholars date back to ancient Norse mythology! According to legend, Odin had an eight-legged horse named Sleipnir. Kids would leave treats for Sleipnir, hoping that Odin would favour them with gifts in return.

Carolling – You might suppose this is a centuries-old tradition but although the songs go back hundreds of years, visiting neighbours to bid them good luck and good cheer by singing for them didn't happen until the Victorian era.

The Yule Log – Yule logs also predate Christianity. As part of winter solstice celebrations, Gaels and Celts burned logs decorated with holly, ivy, and pinecones to cleanse themselves of the past year and welcome the next one. The practice changed over time and eventually edible representations of the log appeared, which is why we eat chocolate logs today!

Eggnog – Surely the most revolting of traditions. However, historians agree that 'nog' was probably inspired by a medieval drink called 'posset', a milky drink made with eggs, milk, and sometimes figs or sherry. These were all pricey ingredients, so it was a bit of status symbol to offer it to guests. No-one seems to know for sure why it's called 'nog', but it maybe from the old word 'noggin' which was slang for a wooden cup.

Mistletoe - This was associated with fertility and vitality by Celtic Druids because it blossomed even during the most frigid winters. Quite how we got from that kissing under the mistletoe is a mystery, but we do know that it began in the 18th Century and started with guests kissing the hand of their host under the mistletoe, then became progressively more personal over the decades that followed!

Advent calendars - The modern advent calendar, with its little doors containing sweets or small gifts, began with Gerhard Lang in the early 1900s. His inspiration was a calendar that his mother made for him when he was a child, featuring 24 coloured pictures attached to a piece of cardboard.

Christmas Cards – In these days of high postage costs, texts and emails, plus more environmental awareness this tradition may be at risk of dying out. Christmas cards are a surprisingly recent tradition anyway, with the first formal card only hitting shelves in 1843.



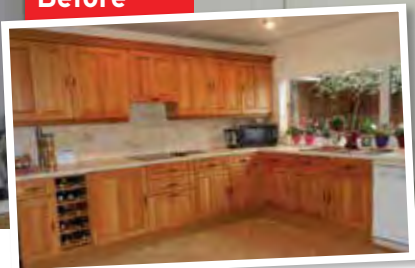
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a taster of what's on in December and January...

CINEMA

Surviving Christmas
from 31st November

Two sisters, and their families, return to their recently deceased parents' country house for Christmas, with disastrous consequences. Being related to someone doesn't mean you have to like them – old resentments flare up and chaos threatens to engulf them.



The Old Man and the Gun
from 7th December

This is the true story of Forrest Tucker, who escaped San Quentin prison at the age of 70 and went right back to robbing banks. He'd spent most of his life in and out of prison, but he just couldn't stop doing what he loved.



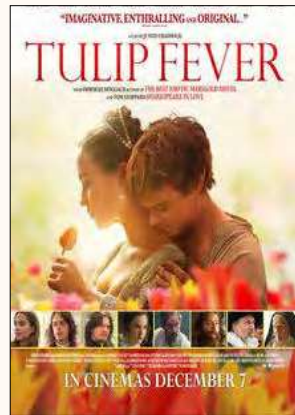
White Boy Rick
from 7th December

Richard Wershe Jr., aka 'White Boy Rick', became an informant for the FBI when he was a teenager in the 1980s. But he used his standing with the FBI as a chance to make money and ended up becoming a notorious drug trafficker.



Tulip Fever
from 7th December

Amsterdam is in the grip of 'Tulip Fever', with everyone gambling on the tulip market. Against this backdrop, a young artist falls in love with the woman he's painting. She's unhappily married and she and the artist begin a passionate affair in secret.



Aquaman
from 14th December

Arthur Curry, 'Aquaman', is heir to the throne of the underwater

city of Atlantis. Caught between the surface world and the undersea kingdom, he's forced to grapple with his own mixed feelings about wearing the crown, and a new threat that's beginning to emerge.



Mary Poppins
from 21st December

After their first adventure with their magical nanny, Jane and Michael Banks have grown up – and Michael has three children. Mary Poppins returns to help them again as they've suffered a personal loss, and the wonder has gone out of their lives. But with the help of Mary they'll be able to rediscover the joy and magic they once shared.

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THEATRE

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Sleeping Beauty

Various dates from 14th
December to 6th January

Inside Bromwich Castle the royal family are preparing for the christening of their baby daughter, Princess Rose. The family get more than they bargained for when the wicked fairy and thorn in their side hears of the celebrations and sets out to ruin their happiness.

**Sleeping Beauty –
Relaxed Performance**

4th January

Designed to welcome audiences who may find the usual theatre experience uncomfortable or difficult – this might include children and adults on the autism spectrum, with dementia or many other conditions that may prevent them from attending or enjoying this traditional family show.



**Paul Jones and Dave
Kelly Acoustic Duo**

16th January

Founder members of The Blues Band, Paul Jones and Dave Kelly's colourful roots go way back into the true undergrowth of the Blues tradition. As well as their own original material, they perform the work of the greats, ranging from Howling' Wolf, John Lee Hooker, through to Sonny Boy Williamson.



**Go And Play Up Your Own
End – In Concert**

18th – 19th January

The cast of the original show wanted to celebrate its 20th anniversary and so this live concert version of the show was created. It will be very much like the original version of the play with all the songs that audiences know and love.



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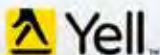
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Top Toys for Christmas

By Alison Foster

In these days of iPads and online gaming do kids still play with toys? Yes of course they do. Toys have always changed to keep up with trends and technology and 2018 is no exception. Here we have six of the best.

Fingerlings Untamed Dinos (under £20)

Fingerlings are popular robotic friends which cling to your child's finger and respond to motion and sound. This year is all about the dinosaurs. There are several different Raptors, and word was

out at time of printing that there may be a T-Rex one released just before Christmas



LEGO Harry Potter Hogwarts Express (around £75)

The Harry Potter books remain perennially popular, and LEGO is always a hit so combine the two and you have a winning Christmas gift. There is a Hogwarts Hall available but its super-expensive, so this is a good compromise with a nice solid train, five mini-figures plus Dementors.



Elasti Plasti (under £15)

So many kids love slime and this stuff is great. It's super-expandable and you can make giant bubbles with it. As a bonus it's non-sticky so parents will love it too, or at least not hate it!

Monopoly 'Cheaters' edition or Fortnite Edition (£20-£25)

Almost everyone has at least one game of Monopoly at Christmas so ring the changes with the Cheaters edition. It encourages players to fake a dice roll, steal money and even skip rent. Ok...maybe it's not in the spirit of Christmas



but it sounds more fun than normal Monopoly. And if you want to prise your youngsters away from the computer this festive season, try tempting them with the Fortnite edition!

Ricky the Trick-Lovin Pet (£134.99)

Ok this one is pricey, but real pups are NOT for Christmas as we know, and when you factor in the cost and ongoing responsibility of a real puppy, including vet bills, and food, suddenly

Ricky looks very good value indeed for a dog-loving child. He is soft and cuddly and has more than 100 sound and motion combinations. He can balance a biscuit on his nose and even give you a paw-shake! Frankly he makes my terrier look like a bit of a dunce. Ricky is perfect if your child is pestering you for a dog but you're not sure about the long-term commitment, and as a bonus, he doesn't shed hair!



GraviTrax Starter Set (around £50)

I love marble runs, never mind my kids, and GraviTrax is a super-cool marble run for the 21st Century. It encourages the use of imagination in creating tracks and is educational too. It's great for teaching kids (and adults) about gravity, magnetism, and kinetic energy and it's so much fun. You can use the tasks and blueprints included to help you to get started but you'll soon be designing your own tracks. This is trickier than it might appear and is great for encouraging problem-solving skills. There's even a GraviTrax app to allow you build and test a track before building it in the real world.



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Plants for Christmas

With Christmas just around the corner I'm often asked what houseplants I recommend as gifts. Here are my top five. *Hippeastrum / Amaryllis* - is a remarkable bulb, which produces 60cm / 2ft tall, fleshy drainpipe stems and flamboyant trumpet flowers up to 20cm / 8in across. 'Red Lion' with deep scarlet flowers; 'Apple Blossom' with pink-tinged white flowers, and 'Christmas Gift' with plain white flowers, are readily available. You can buy them as DIY plant-it-yourself kits, or as ready-planted gifts.

Citrus bushes make interesting presents. Sold at this time of year with both flowers and developing fruit, they are deliciously scented. Lemon varieties 'Meyer' and 'Four Seasons' are lovely but also consider calamondin oranges. The plant should be kept in a light, frost-free spot over the winter with a minimum night temperature of 5C, then in the summer the pot can be moved outside.

Cyclamen persicum is wonderfully decorative. The flowers range from white, through pink, to red. This is probably a gift for a more experienced gardener as persuading it to flower again can be a challenge, but it can be done. Keep it in full light in winter, at a steady 13C-16C. Give it a liquid feed fortnightly while it is in flower. Water less as the stems start to bend and collapse, then keep it completely dry for

three months during its dormant period. Gently introduce water again as new leaves appear.

Schlumbergera x buckleyi, the Christmas cactus is a perennial favourite. It has protruding stamens at the end of succulent, flattened leaves, and pretty flowers. It likes high humidity while flowering so mist it regularly with a fine spray of clean water, and feed it monthly with a high-potash feed. When it's finished flowering put the plant in a light spot and keep the compost just moist.

Hyacinthus orientalis 'Ostara' is a stunning hyacinth with deep-blue flowers, powerfully scented and particularly nice when planted as a trio in a bowl or basket. **Christmas hyacinths are 'forced' to flower earlier than they would naturally.** They need a cool spot, preferably no more than 13C, so that they do not flop. No-one wants a floppy hyacinth! The bulbs can be planted in the garden afterwards so will continue to provide pleasure in future years.

Viburnum x bodnantense 'Dawn' is not a houseplant but it makes a fabulous gift. It flowers from November, while the leaves are still on, through the winter. The pink flowers are scented and a few sprigs in a small vase at this time of year are just joyous. Even better it is totally hardy so is great for the non-green-fingered, and can be planted out of a pot at any time, if the ground isn't frozen.

Don't wrap plants, just tie a big bow around the pot. It's a thoughtful touch to provide printed or hand-written instructions for aftercare. Make sure any living plant is well watered before you hand it over. They will probably be a bit neglected over the festive period, but a good watering should make sure that they last past New Year.

Happy festive gardening.



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a good read

reviews By Willow Coby

The Bedlam Stacks

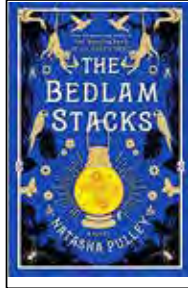
by Natasha Pulley

If you like a novel that feels like a luxurious meal in a restaurant where you can enjoy each course at a slow pace, then this is the novel for you. This slow-burner is in no rush to reach its conclusion and invites you to indulge in the world of 19th century Peru.

Pulley skilfully mixes facts and historical fiction with fantasy as the novel turns in a way that you don't expect. It is 1859 and Merrick Tremayne is asked to undertake an expedition to Peru by the East India Company. As an ex-opium smuggler, and a gardener, they want him to supervise the search for cinchona trees. The bark of these trees produces quinine, a much sought-after treatment for malaria. Despite knowing that it is a suicide mission, since others have tried and failed, he agrees to go to get away from his miserable life at home.

Once in Peru he travels to a mysterious village, given the name Bedlam Stacks. Three large pillars of rock rise into the sky with homes and shops built on to the sides of them. And this is where fact (the expedition did take place, led by Clement Markham, who accompanies the fictitious Merrick) and historical fiction meets fantasy and you realise that the novel is not going where you thought it might.

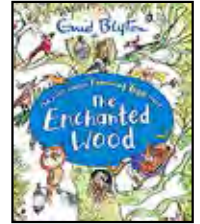
A line of salt that no one can cross, statues that move, and a priest with knowledge far beyond his years. What will Merrick discover, and will it ultimately be more valuable to him than the precious quinine?



The Enchanted Wood

by Enid Blyton

Enid Blyton is an author that most adults will be familiar with and now her books are finding a new generation of readers. Whilst not as well-known as her Famous Five series, or any of her boarding school series, this is nevertheless well loved and fondly remembered.



Woods can be mysterious places, full of old trees. Some are older and bigger than others and one such tree is the Magic Faraway Tree. When siblings Joe, Frannie, and Beth move to the outskirts of the wood, they go exploring and discover the tree. Unable to see the top they decide to climb it and find that it is inhabited by many magical creatures. There is Silky the fairy, Dame Washalot who spends her time washing laundry and throwing the dirty water down the side of the tree, and Moonface, a happy man with a face like the moon who befriends the children.

At the very top of the tree is a ladder and here is the most magical thing about the tree. Each time that the children visit they can climb the ladder and visit a magical land from the Land of Birthdays to the Land of Do-As-You-Please. Some are pleasant, some are not, but whatever they are the children know that they must not stay too long lest the land moves on to another tree in another wood.

Just as the children never know what they will find at the top of the tree, neither does the reader. All the reader knows is that adventure will be had, and their imagination ignited.

Christmas with **Autism**

By Alison Foster

My oldest son has a diagnosis of High Functioning Autism (what used to be called Asperger Syndrome). When he was younger Christmas nearly tipped both of us over the edge. **Even without autism Christmas can be a special kind of hell**, but if you're the parent of an autistic child, or a child with sensory issues, Christmas can come with a super-sized side-serving of stress and meltdowns.



for us. We felt it was good for him to see that sometimes he needed to compromise too.

Autistic kids often find comfort in routine.

Christmas means change: decorations, Christmas music, crowds, balloons, pop-up markets and parades, disruption to the normal school timetable. There's a lot of potential for upset. Identify possible changes and pre-warn your child. It can be helpful to show them photos or create a social story to help them understand the sequence of events and what will be expected of them. If your autistic child is old enough and / or verbal enough, involve them in planning which events they want to be part of, and which events they'd prefer to skip. For events they can't avoid, what will help? A fidget toy? Noise-cancelling headphones? This approach encourages them to develop their own coping strategies as they get older.

A visual method for counting down to Christmas is useful. My son found a chocolate advent calendar too stressful, so we found a fabric one where a Christmas-themed item is added each day with the use of Velcro. Simple but effective.

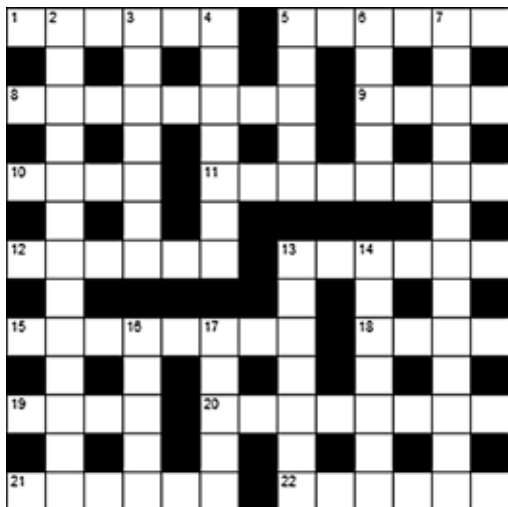
Many ASD kids don't like surprises so it might be better to pre-discuss gifts. When our son was younger he didn't like wrapped gifts, even ours. We left his unwrapped, but my husband and I explained that wrapping was part of our Christmas to each other and it was important

Discuss the Christmas Day schedule in advance. Who will arrive, when and how they should be greeted. Some kids (even those without ASD) hate hugging relatives so prewarn guests if this is an issue. **It might be prudent to go through the etiquette for receiving a gift too.** We explained to our son that if we don't like a gift we should still say thank you to show our appreciation of the thought. Be prepared for the odd slip-up! On receiving a scratchy woollen scarf from his Auntie one year he glanced at me and asked, "Do I thank her for the thought even if it was about how to make my neck as itchy as possible?" which left me smiling weakly at my bemused sister-in-law.

Finally, if they don't want to eat the Christmas food and would rather have a sandwich, or a pizza, let them. It's a small thing, don't sweat it. In the grand scheme of things it's not important. And things change. My fifteen-year-old autistic son now tucks in with the rest of us but for three years between the ages of four and seven he ate cheese on toast for Christmas lunch (because that's what he ate for lunch every day!). **We look back now and smile fondly at the memory.**

Merry Christmas.

crossword



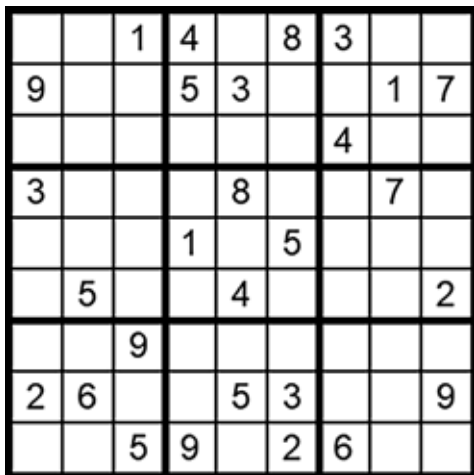
clues

Across

- 1 Bough (6)
- 5 Desert plant (6)
- 8 Cute, charming (8)
- 9 Windows to the soul' (4)
- 10 Largest continent (4)
- 11 Glass vessel used in science (4,4)
- 12 Clergyman (6)
- 13 Make certain (6)
- 15 Spectator (8)
- 18 Test, assessment (4)
- 19 Charismatic celebrity (4)
- 20 Songwriter (8)
- 21 Most strange (6)
- 22 Tune, song (6)

Down

- 2 Shared out, apportioned again (13)
- 3 Recount, chronicle (7)
- 4 Natural environment of an animal (7)
- 5 Strategy-based board game (5)
- 6 Swindle, con (5)
- 7 Without shame (13)
- 13 Tympanic membrane (body part) (7)
- 14 Cut out design, motif (7)
- 16 Mysterious, spooky (5)
- 17 Manservant, butler (5)



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 50

Smør Bullar

Festive Scandinavian cookies, though no-one seems to know their exact origins. These small spheres of butter, flour, powdered sugar and nuts, dusted with more powdered sugar for good measure are a Christmas delight.

Preparation time: 20 mins

Cooking time: 8-10 mins

Makes 20-24 cookies

Ingredients

225g Butter
 60g Icing sugar
 300g Plain flour, sifted
 ¼ tsp salt
 1 tsp vanilla essence
 100g Pecan nuts or walnuts, chopped fine
 Extra icing sugar for dusting

Method

Preheat oven to 200C / Gas mark 6

Cream the butter and sugar together thoroughly. Add flour, salt, vanilla and pecans, and mix well. Cover dough and chill for half an hour.

Form dough into small balls (about 1 inch / 2.5cm diameter). If the dough seems too crumbly don't be tempted to add water or the resulting cookies will be hard, just let the heat from your hands gradually bring it all together. Place 2 inches / 5cm apart on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake until set but NOT brown (8-10 minutes). Allow to cool for 3 minutes before removing from baking sheet, then roll in icing sugar. When completely cool, roll in the icing sugar again. They make lovely festive handmade gifts in pretty boxes



Makes: 20-24 people
Preparation and cooking time: 28-30 minutes

useful numbers

Health

NHS non-emergency	111
Dorridge Surgery	01564 776262
Knowle Surgery	0121 796 2777
Solihull Hospital	0121 424 2000
Spire Parkway Hospital	0845 850 1451

Council

Solihull Council	0121 704 6000
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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

DORRIDGE & HOCKLEY HEATH

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 icourts@solihull.gov.uk

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 amackiewicz@solihull.gov.uk

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local police contact for knowle & dorridge

Sergeant Mike Lloyd

Telephone: 101 ext 892 6037

Email: rural@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk



Accountants

39 Athos Business Solutions 0333 400 7876

Bathrooms

29 EH Smith 0121 713 7200

Blinds / Curtains / Fabric

10 Tudor Rose Curtains 0121 445 2072

Builders

17 Parkfield Building Services 0121 241 2959

Car Services

11 Crossroads Service Station 01564 703 225
36 Johnsons Cars 01564 454 51
37 Easylease 0121 693 0573

Care Services

19 Lady Katherine Housing 01564 772 850

Carpets

22 Don Mander 01564 700 200

Cemeteries

14 Temple Fields 07711 121 099

Cleaning Services

41 Dorridge & Knowle Domestic Cleaning Services 07809 567 264

Computer Services

10 Byte Support 0790 151 2544
16 On Track Computers 0800 077 8301
52 PC Medic 0121 705 1999

Drives

20 Dimension Landscape & Driveways 0121 733 1463

32 Central Drives Landscapes 0121 702 1456

Estate Agents

62 DM & Co 0156 4777 314

Events

5 The Henley 01564 793 715
9 Land Rover Sports

& Social Club 0121 742 5490
12 Hatton Country World 01926 843 411
13 Nailcote Hall 02476 466174

Fascias & Gutters

44 Proline 0800 956 1315

Garden Services

20 Dimension Landscape & Driveways 0121 733 1463
32 Central Drives Landscapes 0121 702 1456
43 Oakland Group 0700 598 2828
44 Midlands Grounds Machinery 0156 4773 614

Graphic Design

42-43 Hotlobster Design Ltd 0121 369 1977

Handyman Services

15 Prestige Multi-Trades 07886 922 280

Health & Beauty & Wellbeing

9 Guru You 07930 1477 997
10 My Exceptional Life 07943 394 147
11 Matthew Chinn Podiatry 0756 157 1742
16 Equanimity 0844 6931 282

Kitchens

27 Dream Doors 0121 314 0956
29 EH Smith 0121 713 7200
51 Granite Transformations 01926 675 230

Painter & Decorator

22 Adrian Lewis 07811 455546
23 Bill Boyce 0121 744 0040

Plumbing

3 Knowle Domestic Appliance Repairs 01564 730183
28 Cullen Plumbing & Tiling 07896 862916

Restaurants

2 The Barn at Berryfields 01676 522155

Roofing

1 N Bird & Son 0800 195 6946
23 C Stevens Roofing 0121 733 1276
41 Roofing & Guttering Services 0795 6228 842

Solicitors

38 Wallace Robinson Morgan Solicitors 0121 705 7571
40 Probate 0156 4758 055

Windows & Doors

9 Windowfix 0121 704 1339
30-31 Mainstream 0121 430 9150

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

Sudoku Solution

from page 47

B	R	A	N	C	H	C	A	C	T	U	S
E	A	A	A	H	H	N					
A	D	O	R	A	B	L	E	E	Y	E	S
I	R	I	S	A	M						
A	S	I	A	T	E	S	T	T	U	B	E
T	T	A									A
P	R	I	E	S	T	E	N	S	U	R	E
I				A	T	R					
O	B	S	E	R	V	E	R	E	X	A	M
U	E	A	D	N	S						
S	T	A	R	L	Y	R	I	C	I	S	T
E	I	E	U	I	E						
O	D	D	E	S	T	M	E	L	O	D	Y

Crossword Solution

from page 47



Solution to Mind benders

1. Away in a Manger
2. Little Donkey
3. It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

Mindbenders Solution

from page 9

Kitchen - Perla Bianca worktop and Royal Ivory flooring with Metropolis Opal mosaic and Metallic Champagne doors. Mr & Mrs Gent, Ramsbottom, Lancashire

AFTER



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