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Saqib Bhatti MP

Meriden and Solihull East

Working for Knowle, Dorridge, Hockley Heath and Bentley Heath

Contact Me



Constituency office:

631 Warwick Road, Solihull B91 1AR

 0121 711 7029

 saqibbhatti.org.uk

 saqib.bhatti@parliament.uk

Please note my office remains open as usual, and we are conducting surgery appointments, so do not hesitate to book a slot.

This advert is funded by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) for the purpose of assisting Saqib Bhatti MP in the performance of their Parliamentary duties.

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Marvellous May!

Welcome to the May edition...

May's one of the best months of the year - we're firmly in the Spring, and have all the anticipation of a lovely Summer ahead, fingers crossed!

It's also a great time for getting your garden looking lovely and for selling your home. We've got a great range of local, reliable businesses in here who can help you get your garden ready and update any aspect of your home, from your roof to your kitchen, your bathroom to your décor, whether you're getting it ready to sell or just want to update it for your own benefit. Wishing you a great month ahead. Until next month.

Zoe Reece

Tel: 07557 220585

Email: zoe@dorridgedirectory.com

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community events

Great American Musicals

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The Strolling Players are celebrating the music of Broadway in this concert at Knowle Village Hall. There will be numbers from "The Sound of Music", "Gigi", "Paint Your Wagon", "Carousel" and lots more! A pleasure to sing, and a pleasure to enjoy! Tickets are £10 and available from 01564 777634 or any of the Players.



BBQ, ice cream, face painting, and much more. Tickets are £5 for adults and £3 for children over 3 years, and family tickets (2 adults and up to 3 children) are £12. To book please call 01564 703444.

Solihull Food & Music Festival

Tudor Grange Park

24-26 May

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Bank Holiday BBQ

26 May, 12 noon - 4pm

Hogarth's, Dorridge

Let someone else do all the hard work on Bank Holiday Monday and head over to Hogarth's for a feast. Enjoy a 2 course BBQ for £30 per person, available 12 noon-4pm. Enjoy treats such as Garlic, Lemon & Lime King Prawn Skewers and Hereford Beef Ribeye Skewers with Zingy Chimichurri. To book call Hogarth's on 01564 779988.

May Bank Holiday Fun Day

26 May, 1-6pm

The Limes Country Lodge Hotel, Earlswood

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Vinyl City

25 May

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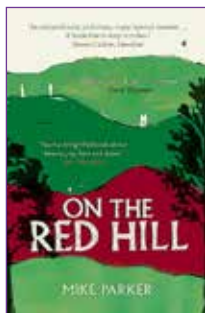


a good read

By Natasha Donovan

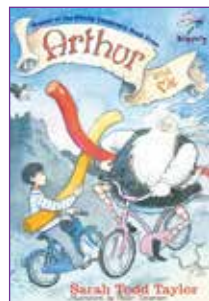
On the Red Hill: Where Four Lives Fell into Place by Mike Parker

This is an evocative and deeply personal exploration of place, identity, and belonging. Set in rural Wales, the memoir chronicles Parker's life alongside his partner, Peredur, after they inherit a farmhouse, Rhiw Goch, from an older gay couple, Reg and George. The book is both a tribute to these men and a meditation on the ways lives intertwine with the land and community. Structured around the four seasons, the narrative intertwines Parker's reflections on his own experiences with the lives of Reg and George, whose unconventional partnership in mid-20th-century Britain defied social norms. Through photographs, journals, and anecdotes, Parker brings their story to life, portraying them as pioneers who lived with integrity and grace. The book delves into themes of love, resilience, and the changing rural landscape, weaving historical and personal narratives into a rich tapestry. Parker's lyrical prose vividly captures the beauty of the Welsh countryside and its complex history. His deep connection to the land and its people is palpable, and his exploration of identity and queer history is both tender and profound. The book's pacing is meditative, reflecting the rhythms of rural life. This is not a book to race through, more one to savour. *On the Red Hill* is a moving and beautifully written work that transcends the personal to touch on universal themes of belonging, heritage, and the passage of time. It is a celebration of love, memory, and the enduring connection between people and place.



Arthur and Me by Sarah Todd Taylor

Arthur and Me is a charming, whimsical tale that blends adventure, humour, and history. Tomos is struggling on the school history trip. They are supposed to be studying King Arthur, but the class bully has taken his lunch, and he seems to be in constant trouble. Then he falls down a hole and manages to wake the real King Arthur. While this is something of a surprise to both of them, it seems that Tomos finally has a chance to impress his teacher. But Arthur, with all his grandeur, chivalry, and medieval quirks, struggles to adapt to the modern world, leading to a series of madcap adventures. As Tomos tries to help Arthur return to his own time, the two form an unlikely friendship. Arthur's chivalric code often clashes hilariously with modern sensibilities, but it also inspires Tomos to find courage and integrity in his own life. Together, they navigate obstacles, uncover hidden truths, and ultimately learn valuable lessons about bravery, friendship, and self-discovery. The wit and storytelling is pitched at ages around seven to nine and will leave young readers reflecting on what it means to be a true hero.



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Helping Your Child with Worry and Anxiety

Just like adults, children sometimes feel worried.

However, if those worries begin to overwhelm them or affect their wellbeing, there are supportive steps you can take.

Talk About It: Encourage your child to talk about their feelings. Make conversations about emotions a normal part of the day, like during mealtimes or car rides. Let them know it's okay to open up.

Listen and Validate: It can be hard to see your child struggle, but try not to dismiss their worries. Instead of saying "there's nothing to

worry about," listen calmly and help them feel heard.

Ride the Emotion Wave:

Emotions rise and fall like waves. Teach your child to "ride the wave" using calming tools such as deep breathing, playing outside, or engaging in relaxing activities. Creating a self-soothing box filled with comforting items like photos or textures can help too.

Challenge Anxious Thoughts:

Anxiety often brings negative thoughts. Help your child notice these and explore why they may not be true, just like spotting a bully's voice. Use a Worry Box: Writing worries down and placing

them in a box can help children let go of anxious thoughts and talk through them later with support.

Seek Help: If anxiety persists, consult your GP or a professional service like the Purple House Clinic for guidance.

Dr Danielle Grey is a Clinical Psychologist and the Clinical Director for the Purple House Clinic, Birmingham. The clinic is based in Coleshill and offers private psychological health care.

For more information visit www.purplehouseclinic.co.uk or call 0121 820 7851.



Mental Health & Neurodiversity Services

At the Purple House Clinic we understand that psychological health is as important as physical health. We believe that everybody deserves to be happy and fulfilled in life, and we are committed to helping people overcome, or adapt to, life's challenges.

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THE BELL

— ON THE GREEN —

SUNDAY
MENU

TO SHARE

LOCAL RUSTIC BREAD

Butter, olive oil & Modena balsamic vinegar / £6.95 V

MARINATED MIXED OLIVES

£4.95 V, VE

BOX BAKED WHOLE CAMEMBERT

Chilli jam & rustic garlic bread / £16.95 V

MEAT GRAZING BOARD

Chorizo sausage, duck & orange pate, home baked ham, pickles, chutneys, rustic bread, olive oil & Modena balsamic vinegar / £18.95 GF*

FISH GRAZING BOARD

Smoked salmon, marie rose prawns, haddock fishcake, tartare sauce, rustic bread, olive oil & Modena balsamic vinegar / £18.95 GF*

STARTERS

SOUP OF THE DAY

Rustic bread / £7.50

BREADED BRIE WEDGE

Apricot & chilli chutney / £8.95 V

CRISPY DUCK SALAD

Hoi sin sauce / £9.50 GF*

DUCK LIVER & ORANGE PATE

Bacon jam & toast / £9.25

SMOKED HADDOCK & SPINACH FISHCAKE

Whole grain mustard cream sauce / £9.50

BANG BANG CAULIFLOWER

Tempura cauliflower florets, sriracha vegan mayo / £8.95 V, VE

SLOW BRAISED BEEF CROQUETTES

Caramelised cauliflower purée, beef jus / £9.50

CREAMY GARLIC MUSHROOMS ON TOAST

White wine cream sauce and toasted baguette / £9.25

MAIN COURSES

BEER BATTERED FISH & CHIPS

Crushed minted peas, tartare sauce, hand cut chips / £18.95 GF*

TRADITIONAL HAM, EGG, CHIPS & GARDEN PEAS

£18.95 GF*

PAN SEARED LAMBS' LIVER

Crispy streaky bacon, spring onion mash & gravy / £17.95 GF*

STEAK & ALE SHORT CRUST PASTRY PIE

Garden peas, hand cut chips & gravy / £18.95

BREADED BREAST OF CHICKEN MILANESE

Tomato and basil linguine / £18.95

CRISPY DUCK SALAD

Hoi sin sauce / £18.95 GF*

PAN FRIED FILLET OF SALMON

Baby spinach, potato gnocchi, white wine cream / £19.95

SUNDAY ROASTS

All served with seasonal vegetables, Yorkshire pudding, roast potatoes & pan gravy.

PRIME SIRLOIN OF 28 DAY BLACKGATE BEEF / £22.95

BREAST OF TURKEY / £20.95

LOIN OF PORK / £20.95

LEG OF LAMB / £22.95

TRIO OF ROASTS: BEEF, PORK & TURKEY / £23.95

Add a side of **CAULIFLOWER CHEESE** / £4.95

BURGERS

PREMIUM WAGYU BEEF GOURMET BURGER

Brioche bun, skinny fries, lettuce, tomato / £18.95 GF

BBQ CHICKEN SCHNITZEL BURGER

Brioche bun, lettuce, tomato, coleslaw & skinny fries / £18.95

ADD TOPPINGS £1 EACH:
CHEDDAR, STILTON, MUSHROOM, BACON
UPGRADE SKINNY FRIES TO
HAND CUT CHIPS £1.50

VEGAN

ASIAN SPICED VEGAN BURGER

Brioche bun, lettuce, tomato, vegan coleslaw & skinny fries / £16.95 VE

FALAFEL & HUMMUS

Skinny fries, pitta bread & seasonal salad / £16.95 VE, GF*

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Whisky glaze, green salad and new potatoes / £16.95

SIDES

HAND CUT CHIPS & GARLIC MAYO / £4.95

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WILD BERRY PAVLOVA / £8.95

DARK CHOCOLATE BROWNIE

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VEGAN RASPBERRY CRUMBLE CAKE

Vegan vanilla ice cream / £8.95 V, VE

BRITISH CHEESE AND BISCUITS

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Growing vegetables: seeds or plugs?

When it comes to growing our own vegetables,

one of the first decisions we face is whether to start from seed or to buy young plug plants. Both methods have their advantages and drawbacks, and the right choice often depends on our experience, time, and gardening goals. Here's a breakdown of the pros and cons to help you decide which approach suits you best.

Sowing from Seed

Pros: Sowing vegetables from seed offers variety, affordability, and satisfaction. Seed packets are relatively inexpensive, and one packet can yield dozens—if not hundreds—of plants.

They also provide access to a broader range of varieties than you'll typically find in garden centres. If you want heirloom tomatoes or rare purple carrots then seeds are your best bet.

Starting from seed will also give you complete control over your plants' early growth. You'll know exactly how they've been treated, what compost has been used, and whether they've been exposed to any chemicals. For many gardeners, this transparency is a big plus.

Cons: However, growing



from seed does require time, patience, and a little bit of skill. Seeds need the right conditions to germinate - usually warmth, moisture, and light - and some varieties are trickier than others. You'll need to sow them at the right time, monitor them daily, and often transplant seedlings to bigger pots before they go into the ground. It's rewarding, but not without effort.

Buying Plug Plants

Plug plants, also known as starts or transplants, are young vegetable plants that have already been germinated and grown for a few weeks.

Pros: The biggest advantage here is convenience. You can skip the tricky germination stage and go straight to planting them in the ground or containers. This saves time and reduces the chances

of early failure. Plug plants are therefore ideal for beginners or busy people who still like to garden. They're a reliable choice for vegetables with long growing seasons, like tomatoes or peppers, especially if the weather is cooler and it isn't practical for you to start the seeds off early indoors.

Cons: The trade-off are cost and variety. Plug plants are more expensive than seeds and often come in limited selections. You may only find standard varieties, not the unique or heritage ones you could grow from seed. Additionally, you won't know how the young plants were raised—some may have been treated with chemicals or stressed in transit.

So, it all really depends on your priorities. Seeds offer choice and value but require time and care. Plugs offer ease and speed but at a higher cost and with less variety. Many gardeners find a balance, starting some vegetables from seed and buying plugs for others. And remember, nothing is set in stone when you're gardening. If plugs get you comfortable growing your own veg, maybe you'll feel confident enough to try seeds next time. There's always a next year when it comes to growing.

Happy gardening.



MAY HALF TERM 24 MAY - 1 JUNE

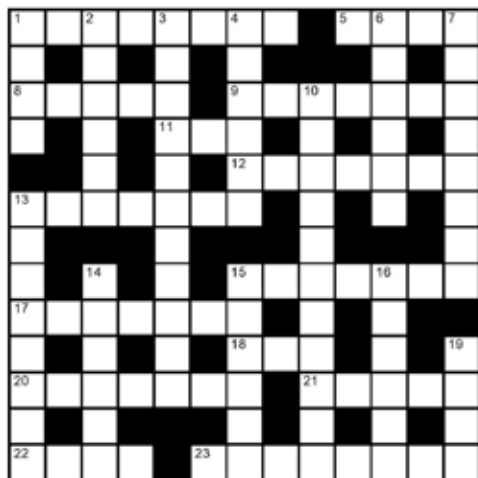
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crossword



clues

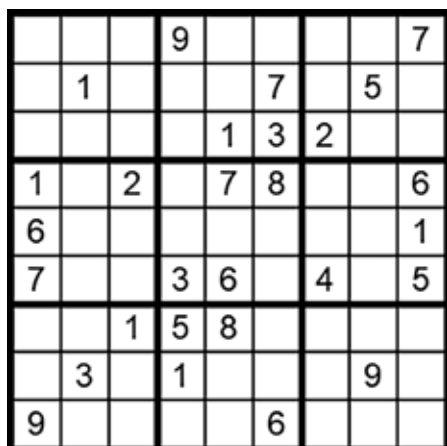
Across

- 1 Joint writer of a book or paper (2-6)
- 5 Run ____, behave uncontrollably and disruptively (4)
- 8 Royal dog (5)
- 9 More slender (7)
- 11 Type of snake (3)
- 12 Foolish, stupid (7)
- 13 Largest great ape (7)
- 15 Spread through, suffuse (7)
- 17 Young pilchard (7)
- 18 Floor covering (3)
- 20 A word of opposite meaning (7)
- 21 First sign of the zodiac (5)
- 22 91.44 centimetres (4)
- 23 Banner, ribbon (8)

Down

- 1 Rooster (4)
- 2 More spacious and well ventilated (6)
- 3 Distress, anguish (11)
- 4 Canadian capital city (6)
- 6 Fixed (6)
- 7 Paraffin oil (8)
- 10 Question systematically in a formal manner (11)
- 13 List of information about the meanings of specialized words (8)
- 14 Excavation, depression (6)
- 15 Allow, authorise (6)
- 16 State as fact, declare (6)
- 19 Emperor, ruler (4)

answer on page 24



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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 24



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Surviving the Pollen Season

Top Tips

Hay fever, also known as allergic rhinitis, is a common condition affecting millions of us. It's caused by an allergic reaction to pollen, typically from trees, grass, and weeds. Symptoms include sneezing, a runny or blocked nose, itchy eyes, and coughing.

To manage hay fever symptoms, both medical and holistic approaches can be effective. Medically, antihistamines are the primary treatment, available over the counter at pharmacies, as tablets, syrups, or nasal sprays.



Holistically, several strategies can minimize exposure to pollen:

- Check pollen forecasts and stay indoors when counts are high, especially between 10am and 4pm.
- Apply petroleum jelly around

your nostrils to trap pollen.

- Wear wraparound sunglasses and wide-brimmed hats outdoors to protect eyes.
- Shower and change clothes after being outside to remove pollen.
- Keep windows and doors closed during high pollen periods and invest in an air purifier.
- Use pollen filters in car air vents and HEPA filters in vacuum cleaners.

By combining these approaches, many hay fever sufferers in the UK can effectively manage their symptoms.

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Sudoku Solution
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Solution to Mind benders

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mindbenders
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useful numbers

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Spire Parkway Hospital 0121 704 1451
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Severn Trent Water 0300 034 2222
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Travel
National Rail Enquiries 03457 484950
Network West Midlands (buses) 0345 303 6760

Asparagus Tart

Asparagus has such a short season. Make the most of it with this delicious creamy tart



Preparation time: 5 minutes
Chill time: 20 minutes
Cooking time: 1hr 10 minutes
Serves: 4-6

Ingredients

Pastry

225g plain flour, plus extra to dust
 Salt and white pepper
 120g cold butter, plus extra to grease
 1 egg yolk
 (If time is tight you can use 250g ready-made shortcrust pastry)

Filling

300g asparagus
 284ml carton double cream
 2 eggs, beaten.
 50g tasty cheddar

Method

If you're not using ready made pastry you'll need to make the dough. Sift the flour and a good pinch

of salt in a large bowl. Grate the butter into the bowl. Rub the butter into the flour with your fingertips until the mixture resembles rough breadcrumbs (or use the pulse function on a food processor if you have one). Mix in the egg yolk and bring the mix together into a dough. If it's too crumbly to form into a ball, add a little cold water. Don't let the dough get too wet, or it will shrink in the oven. Wrap the dough and chill it in the fridge for 20 minutes to make it easier to work. Grease a round, 22cm-diameter tart tin.

Heat the oven to 200C /180C fan / gas 6. Remove the dough from the fridge and roll it into a circle on a lightly floured surface until large enough to line the tin, then

carefully lift it into the tin, and press the pastry into the sides. Trim the excess, and prick the base with a fork, then line with baking paper and fill with baking beans, or rice. Bake for 15 minutes, until lightly golden, then carefully remove the paper and baking beans. Return the tart base to the oven for five minutes. Snap the woody bits from the base of the asparagus, then steam the spears for a few minutes, but leave al dente because they will cook more in the oven. Chop the asparagus into 1.5cm lengths and set the pretty tops aside for later. Place half the chopped stalks into a food processor and blitz to a puree. Pour the double cream into a jug, then beat in the eggs. Mix in the asparagus puree and grated cheese then season well with salt and white pepper. Arrange the remaining asparagus pieces, including the tops, on the base of the pastry, then pour the egg mixture over the top to fill the case. Bake for about 35-40 minutes, until set and golden on top, but it should wobble a little in the middle. Leave to cool, then serve.

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