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Happy New Year!

Welcome to the January edition...

So, if one of your new year's resolutions is to try new things then check out the local events (page 6) that are happening in the area, from cocktail masterclasses to litter picking!

Or if you're not feeling quite so active, check out what's coming up at the cinema and the Core Theatre this month (see page 28). There's some great new films and shows out and it's nice to get out the house and beat those Winter blues!

The Knowle and Dorridge Directory is also full of local suppliers who can help you with anything from plumbing, plastering and pilates to drives and decorators, and many other things in between! They are all based locally and would love your support.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy **2020**.



Zoe Reece

Tel: 07557 220585

Email: zoe@dorridgedirectory.com

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community events

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6th January – 6th April, 9.30am

Desco Lounge, Stratford Road, Shirley B90 3GG

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Elmdon Park Litter Pickers

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- **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
- **Poetry Group** - Monthly on a Tuesday 11.00am -12.00pm
- **Scrabble Club** - Adult Scrabble Club Fortnightly – Thursday 2.00pm

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Your 2020 Vision for 2020

Hindsight is a wonderful thing. We often reflect on the past year and mourn chances we didn't take or connections we didn't make. Instead of looking longingly backwards, perhaps 2020 is a good year to develop your vision for the future so that it's...well...20/20!

Review your goals — short and long-term

Are your everyday activities helping you to accomplish your short-term goals? Are you working on meaningful projects? Make sure at least some of your daily activities help you to accomplish your short-term goals, and that those short-term goals can build to let you accomplish larger goals and objectives.

But don't be a slave to your goals.

It's okay to change directions and shift deadlines. January is a great time to reevaluate. Are your long-term goals from six months ago still relevant to you today?

It can be helpful to write down your goals using pen and paper, and then hang them in a place where you can see them. This acts as a visual prompt to remind you and inspire you during the day-to-day grind.

Nurture relationships

Sometimes friendships and family relationships get placed on the backburner when we're busy. Are there friends and relatives in your contacts list who you haven't spoken with lately? Use this season to catch-up, reconnect, and nurture the relationships that matter.

Request a planning meeting

It could be with your boss, or your partner!



When you think about the next year — do you see yourself staying at the same job? If so, do you want to be considered for promotion or a transfer? Would you like to plan a big trip with your partner, or start a family?

With your boss you might mention projects you'd like to lead, qualifications you'd like to study for.

With your partner you might want to talk about joining a gym together, planning a safari, or taking up ballroom dancing. These discussions are useful in both your work and your private life. They can help you understand points of dissatisfaction in your work or relationship and give you the clarity you need to explore a change.

Invest in yourself

There's a difference between being comfortable and being complacent. Try stepping out of your comfort zone and take an online course, sign up with the Open University or night classes at college. Try out a yoga class or a massage, or simply go away with a friend or a partner to a spa for a few days.

Reflect on lessons learned

January is not all about new beginnings. It's nice to think about all you accomplished during 2019. What did you learn? What did you achieve? A lot probably happened in the past 12 months, but life moves so fast that too often we don't take time to reflect on all we've learned. Take note of your discoveries and think about ways you can apply those lessons with intention as you move into the new year.

By Anne McCarthy

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It's Written in the Stars...or is it?

What should we make of astrology?

As the new year begins, those who enjoy astrology will check the heavens to see what the future might have in store.

Astrologers look for answers, signs and predictions in the movements of the celestial bodies. **There is a long history of humans using the stars to plan their lives.** Farmers used the skies as a calendar as long ago as Ancient Egyptians, when the rising of Sirius, the Dog Star, around mid-July, was seen as a marker of the imminent annual flooding of the Nile; and Sailors have long used the night skies to aid navigation.

We don't know who first came up with the idea of looking at divining the influences of nature on humans, but some form of astrology shows up in the various belief systems of ancient cultures.

In Ancient China, noblemen looked at eclipses or sunspots as portents of good or bad times for their emperor. The Sumerians and Babylonians watched planets and stars as a way to keep track of where gods were in the sky. The ancient Egyptians contributed the idea that patterns of stars made up constellations, through which the sun appears to "move" at a specific time during the year.

It's thought that all of these ideas came together when Alexander the Great conquered Egypt in around 330 BC. The Greek logisticians and mathematicians worked out rules for how divination by the stars could work.

Imagine a straight line drawn from Earth through the Sun and out into space beyond our solar system to where the stars are. As the Earth



follows its orbit around the Sun **this imaginary line rotates, pointing to different stars throughout one complete trip around the Sun** — or one year. All the stars that lie close to the imaginary flat disk swept out by this imaginary line are said to be in the zodiac.

The astronomer Ptolemy helped popularize the 12 signs in his book *The Tetrabiblos*. They are: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces. Ptolemy also developed the idea that signs along the zodiac that were 30° wide, and that the sun moved through them regularly during the year.

For centuries, astrology was considered basically the same thing as astronomy

- the scientific study of celestial bodies. This only changed around the beginning of the Enlightenment in the late 17th century with Sir Isaac Newton's work on the motion of the planets and gravity. He started a whole new mathematical and scientific approach to looking at the sky and the motion of planets and the earth.

But the appeal of looking to the stars for answers has never waned. Astrology remains popular today, probably due to the fact that humans tend towards romanticism and also towards a psychological phenomenon known as confirmation bias where **we search for interpretations that match what we already hope to be true.** We latch on to events that corroborate our beliefs and ignore those that don't fit the pattern.

But if nothing else, astrology is fun, and scientist that I am...I still read the horoscopes!

By Louise Addison

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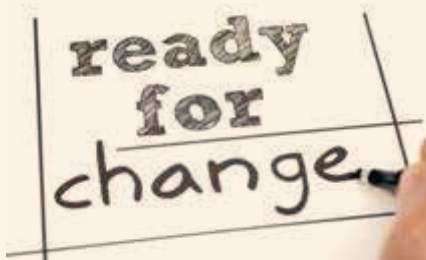
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It has a fascinating history which can be discovered all over the island. It has a world heritage site, The Pitons which are 2 very distinctive mountainous volcanic plugs.

It's a beautiful island and has a tropical climate with temperatures ranging from 25c to 35c all year round. The dry season is from December to May and the rainy season is from June to November.

So you want to get away now, St Lucia is perfect! You don't need a visa, there's only 4 hours difference at the moment.

In St Lucia you drive on the left so hiring a car is easy and as it's only 27

miles by 14 miles you can explore anyway you want.

There are lots of things to do like;
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Mamiku Gardens
Sulphur Springs

St Lucia is perfect for birdwatching, snorkelling, diving, sailing, deep-sea fishing, kite surfing on the Atlantic ocean side. There is Sea Trek Helmet Diving.... No masks/ mouth pieces, you can even wear glasses your entire head dry under

water. Whale and dolphin watching, there are 33 different species of whale and 20 species either live or visit St Lucia.

I could go on forever about this amazing place but to name just a couple more things, amazing World class cricket, tennis and golf. There are also lots of cultural activities too and a fabulous destination to get married in!

If you would like further information about St Lucia, happy to give you everything you need.



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Who does Nicholas Crane hold two world records with?

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

Closing date for entries is 1st February. The winner will be drawn at random and notified by email after this date.

Please note there is no cash value nor exchange for this prize so please don't enter if you cannot attend the date shown above.

About the show:

Nicholas Crane is an author, geographer and cartographic expert. He has been the lead presenter on more than 80 BBC films including the hugely popular BBC2 series Coast. Also for BBC2 he has presented Map Man, Great British Journeys & Town, Britannia. Nick presents The Making of the British Landscape - or Our Island Story: which tells the illustrated 12,000-year story of Britain's physical evolution from the Ice Age to the Shard, from hunter-gatherers to farmers and city-dwellers. Including amusing tales and observations from 10 years of presenting over 80 BBC programmes.

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New Year, New Home!

By Sarah Davey

It's a sad fact that animal rescue centres are always busier after Christmas.

If you've been thinking of getting a pet, consider rehoming one.

Is my lifestyle suitable for rehoming a cat or dog?

If you're at work all day, like to go out for hours and love weekends away, your lifestyle may not be suitable for a dog. A cat, or two, might be a better choice.

I've never owned a pet before.

There are thousands of successful pet adoptions each year. Animal charities are always happy to advise on which pet is best suited to you as they have the best interests of the animal at heart.

Will my new cat or dog need to be trained?

Every animal is unique: it's a myth that all rescue pets are aggressive or timid. But equally they will need help to settle into their new life with you. The charity will advise on training and behaviour considerations.

Do dogs and cats find it difficult to adapt to a new owner?

Being rehomed is stressful, but animals learn to love again surprisingly quickly. Dogs and cats are naturally curious creatures so will quickly begin to explore new surroundings. If you love animals but don't feel ready to rehome one, why not consider volunteering for a charity instead. **You will learn a lot, and make new friends too, both the human and the furry kind!**

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It supports the arts - Small local businesses support creativity! Look for art on display created by local artists. These are one-of-a-kind pieces you won't find anywhere else.

It helps the local economy - The money you spend in a local business stays within your town and community, thus improving its future.

How?

Instead of purchasing items from national chains, try to purchase things from a **business local** to your area.

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By Anne McCarthy



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MARCH

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How I beat **type 2** diabetes

By John Spring

When his diabetes doctor suggested he should share how he put his diabetes into remission, John Spring went one better, he wrote a humorous book about it.



I've now been in remission from type 2 diabetes (T2D) for eight years, so I guess I must be doing something right. Being in remission means that T2D isn't damaging me anymore. The newly diagnosed will have been

made well aware of the longer-term havoc it can do to their bodies. Unless, when they were told, they put their fingers in their ears and started humming, "La, la, la, I'm not listening". Which is exactly what I did for several years.

5% of the UK's adult population have been diagnosed with T2D, and another 1.3% don't know they have it yet. By the year 2035, 10% of us will be type 2 diabetic. **That might make the recently diagnosed feel a little better**, as there is some safety in numbers, but the NHS isn't too keen on the prospect.

New patients may not be feeling any immediate effects of T2D, so it becomes easy to be complacent. You can liken it to a mild acid flowing around your body, slowly eating away at your nerves, your organs and your eyes. It is the end of this slow production line of diabetic damage that the NHS is now contending with. **I'd read about rapid weight loss having a high success rate in putting T2D into remission** and the NHS is now trialling liquid-based diets of 800 calories per day.

There's also bariatric surgery, but it isn't infallible as a patient's bad eating habits can find

ways around it. Likewise, you probably don't want to survive on liquids for the rest of your life, especially if they don't contain alcohol.

I devised my own practical regime for losing weight fast. The most positive benefit of this workable approach was that I learned how to avoid temptation by becoming the master of my own food. I also learned how to fit exercise into my busy life. These are the lessons that have kept me in remission.

I started by identifying the heavy hitters in my diet. I then developed workarounds to drastically reduce my consumption of those.

I also pre-prepared my own breakfast and lunch, thus avoiding the calorific temptations lurking in coffee shops and lunchtime sandwich bars. My home cooked dinners featured healthier ingredients and I soon realised that there really is no such thing as a low-calorie takeaway. They are all evil.

I discovered convenient exercise by walking set routes every day and I built up to being the world's most unlikely runner. After four months I had lost four stone and my blood sugar came down from 60 mmol to 42mmol (48 mmol is the diabetic threshold). Most importantly I'd also equipped myself with the knowledge of how to maintain that weight loss.



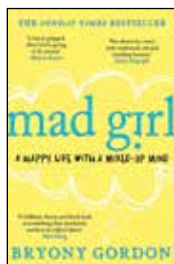
The low-calorie liquids or the surgeon's knife may well kick T2D into remission, but they're arduous procedures to undertake. Staying in remission is also hard work, but that has been made easier for me by using a new lifestyle to beat this lifestyle related disease.

a good read

reviews By Willow Coby

Mad Girl

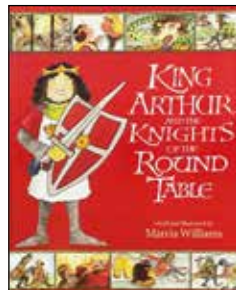
by Bryony Gordon



Mental health is in the news a lot these days with high profile campaigns by the younger royals to raise awareness, and discussions over funding for people who need help. When we talk about mental health it helps to reduce the stigma surrounding the issues, and people have been shown to be more likely to seek help. And this is where the book by Daily Telegraph columnist Bryony Gordon comes in. This is a funny, inspiring, and frank look at mental illness as Bryony recounts her own personal experiences. Starting in her childhood when she developed OCD and bulimia she looks back on her experiences and doesn't shy away from reality of her life back then. A pervasive fear that she had killed someone but had forgotten about it led to her to try to find some aspect of her life that she could control – which led to the bulimia. Each chapter then leads the reader through different phases of her life as it begins to spiral out of control with drug abuse, before an inspiring trip to the Arctic Circle as part of her job helps her to turn her life around. It was a slow process, but she finally decides to take control and starts on the journey that lead her to the present day. This is a must-read for everyone, regardless of how good, or otherwise your life currently is. We all struggle at times and Bryony's story provides plenty of food for thought.

King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table

by Marcia Williams



Much has been written around the mythology of various cultures – from the Greeks and Romans to the Norse gods. All too often our own mythology is forgotten though, so this wonderfully illustrated comic

strip style book is a treat. It retells the British myths of King Arthur for a new generation. Marcia Williams has gathered together a number of different stories and, with a wonderful sense of humour, presents them for young readers. There is something for everyone: the sword in the stone, the origins of the round table, and the search for the holy grail, to name a few. Familiar characters are on every page including Arthur, Merlin, Guinevere, and Lancelot. She also introduces characters who are not so familiar such as Sir Pellinore, and Sir Accolon, who nearly kills Arthur in a case of mistaken identity! This is a fantastic introduction to the stories of King Arthur and is bound to inspire young readers to want to learn more about these stories that have gripped readers for centuries.

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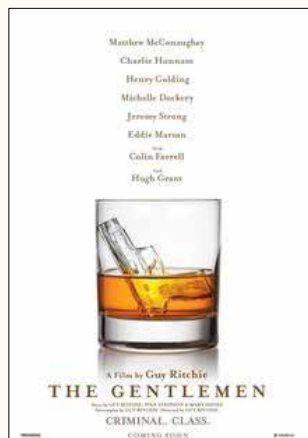
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Bacon and Mushroom Risotto

A tasty and simple New Year supper

Preparation: 10 mins

Cooking time: 30 mins

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 tbsp olive oil
1 onion
8 rashers streaky bacon, chopped
250g chestnut mushrooms, sliced
300g risotto rice
1 litre hot chicken stock
Grated parmesan to serve

Method

Heat the oil in a deep frying pan and fry the onion and bacon gently for 5 mins to soften. Add the mushrooms and cook gently for a further 5 minutes until they start to release their juices. Stir in the rice and cook until the rice begins to look translucent.

Add the stock, a ladleful at a time, stirring well and waiting for most of the stock to be absorbed before adding the next ladleful – it will take about 20 mins for all the stock to be absorbed.

Once the rice is cooked, season and serve with the grated Parmesan.



Preparation time: 10 mins

Cooking time: 30 mins

Makes: 4

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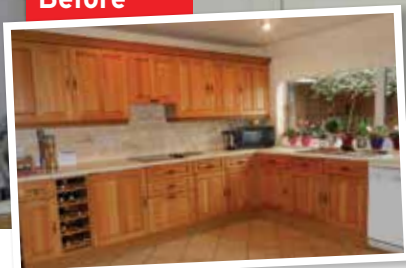
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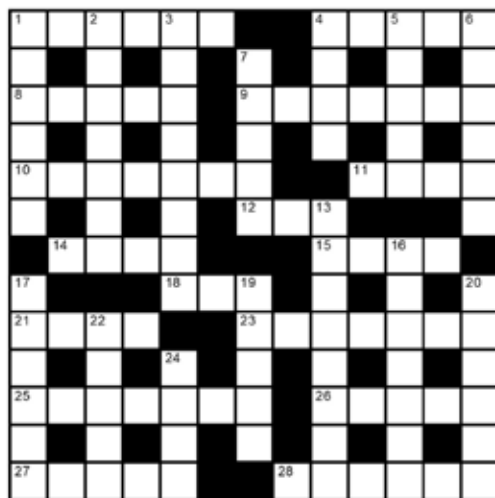
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crossword



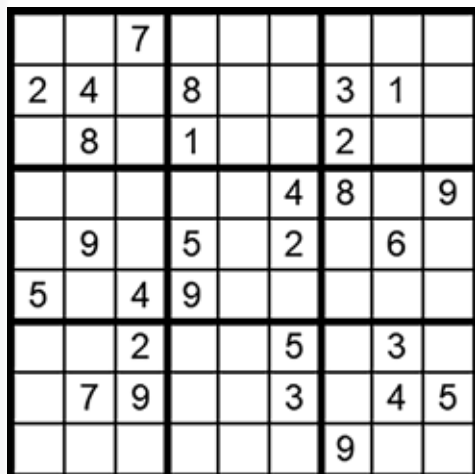
clues

Across

- 1 Informal gathering (6)
- 4 Intolerant person (5)
- 8 Bloodsucking worm (5)
- 9 Exceptional, particular (7)
- 10 Funeral procession (7)
- 11 Lazy (4)
- 12 Short sleep (3)
- 14 Fakir, mystic (4)
- 15 Admire, commend (4)
- 18 Winner's trophy (3)
- 21 ____ and hearty (4)
- 23 Salad vegetable (7)
- 25 Branched horns (7)
- 26 Sibling's daughter (5)
- 27 Large wading bird (5)
- 28 Smouldering pieces of coal (6)

Down

- 1 Join two ends (6)
- 2 Casual farewell (7)
- 3 Physically strong, fit (8)
- 4 Infuse, ferment (4)
- 5 Association, society (5)
- 6 Steering lever on a boat (6)
- 7 Pale with shock or fear (5)
- 13 Precious metal (8)
- 16 Four stringed instrument (7)
- 17 Sword case (6)
- 19 Delux, lavish (5)
- 20 Splits, cuts apart (6)
- 22 Subsequently (5)
- 24 Long period of time (4)



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answers on page 45

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Dear Diary...

Did you ever keep a diary when you were younger? I did. I poured my angst-ridden heart out to its blank pages. I look back on those fat notebooks with a mixture of fascination and horrified amusement. They are a funny, embarrassing, touching testament to my teenage turmoil and inner weirdness.

I stopped journaling my thoughts at some point, but a few years ago, when I was gifted a rather beautiful notebook one Christmas, I started again. It was a good call. Writing in my diary helps me in many ways. I track my moods, my anxieties, the funny things my kids say, and the daily routine of writing helps me thrash out solutions to some of life's challenges. There are many benefits to keeping a diary. Here are my favourites.

It organises your thoughts - most of what we think and feel would be incomprehensible to anyone able to look inside our heads. Writing helps to articulate thoughts and make them comprehensible to our conscious mind.

It improves your writing - Not everyone aspires to be a journalist or a writer. But many of us have to produce handouts, talks or web content in the course of our jobs. Writing daily in a diary helps us improve our style and fluency.

It helps set and achieve goals - A diary is a good place to write down ambitions, aspirations and new year resolutions. Writing them down makes them real. They can then be used as a reminder, and to monitor progress.

You can record ideas - It could be ideas for birthday gifts, holiday destinations or the name of the shop in which you saw the perfect curtains for the bedroom you're currently decorating. The benefit of a diary is that it can all be recorded in one place, whenever it comes to mind.



It's a stress-reliever - It can be helpful to 'brain-dump' anxieties, frustrations and pains into a diary. Teenage me waxed lyrical about problems with my parents, teachers and how worried I was that no boy would find me attractive while I had braces on my teeth. Adult me expresses concerns in my diary as a good way to free up any tension that prevents me from feeling content in my life today.

You can reflect - Life races by at breakneck speed. We get caught up in day-to-day responsibilities and expectations. Journaling our thoughts is a good way to hit the pause button, take a step back and reflect. Whether it's gratitude for something someone has done for us, or simply what we achieved today, a little daily reflection means can look back at our life after a few months or years and see how we've changed. We can note how our priorities have shifted and what we might do to be a better person in the future.

It's a memory prompt - Our brain is more likely to store information that we write down. Teachers know that when you write new knowledge down your brain makes stronger connections with the information which means you'll be able to recall it more easily in the future.

It boosts creativity - Diary-writing a great way to unleash creativity. Everyone has the potential to be creative, but most of us don't take the time. You can start a novel, jot down ideas for outfits, plan a themed party, doodle or sketch.

It's your diary...have fun with it.

By Sarah Davey

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39 D.A. Mander & Son 01564 700 200**Cleaning Services**9 Sparkly oven 01564 757 310
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31 Proline 0800 956 1315

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30 Cullen Plumbing & Tiling 07896 862916

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

Sudoku Solution

from page 36

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

crossword Solution

from page 36

**Solution to Mind benders**

1. Blast from the past
2. A piece of cake
3. Prime time

mindbenders

from page 21

Witch Hazel

By Rachael Leverton

January is a great time to plant deciduous trees and at this time of year a tree with added winter interest is always a welcome sight. **Enter the witch hazel.** These lovely trees with their citrus-scented spidery flowers are widely sold in garden centres as container-grown plants

Look for plants with a number of evenly distributed well-placed branches and avoid those showing signs of stress, damage or disease.

Ideally choose an open, sunny position in the garden. **They also work well if planted next to pathways and doors where you can enjoy their gorgeous scent on wintry days.** Avoid very shady sites though or the plant may become straggly

Witch hazels need free-draining soil that doesn't dry out in summer. A light soil mixed with plenty of organic matter, such as well-rotted manure or compost, is best. They will also grow on heavier clay soils but make sure

that as well as digging in plenty of organic matter you ensure good drainage by planting on a slight mound, about 25-30cm (10in-1ft) high and 1m (3½ft) in diameter. The only soil witch hazels won't tolerate is a shallow chalky soil. And make sure you don't plant them out if the ground is waterlogged.

Witch hazels grow slowly but eventually make large spreading shrubs. They aren't fond of pruning so make sure you leave enough space around your plant for it can develop naturally. Make sure they are well-watered throughout the first couple of springs and summers as they take a long time to fully establish and lack of moisture can cause flowers to drop.

They don't need regular feeding but applying a top dressing of a general in late winter or early spring will help young plants to grow.

Happy New Year and Happy Gardening!





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