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Welcome to the April edition...

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And if you need help sorting out that neverending list, why not see if some of the people and businesses who advertise in here can help you. Whether you need your roof fixed, the kitchen updated, your washing machine repaired, the house decorated, or a new carpet, there's lots of lovely local and helpful people in here who can help.

However you spend your Easter, hope it's good one.

Zoe

Zoe Reece

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Email: zoe@dorridgedirectory.com

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23 April

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The Big Walk

2 May.

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Comedy Night

6 May.

Shirley Royal British Legion

Featuring some fantastic talent with headline acts Masai Graham, Jon Pearson, Stevie Gray, Howard Anstock and MC; Fat Theo, probably the biggest name in comedy within the area
Tickets from www.skiddle.com

Soul & Motown Night

7 May.

Knowle Royal British Legion

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"Everything Must Go" Table Top Sale

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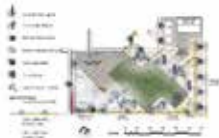
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The Easter Parade and other traditions...

The Easter weekend is the principal religious feast of the Christian year, yet most of its traditions have no basis in Christianity at all. In fact, the Jewish festival of Passover, or Pesach which is closely linked to

Easter by dates and symbolism was celebrated long before the birth of Jesus. And long before the name 'Easter' was used, early Christians celebrated 'Pascha,' a word derived from Pesach.

The word 'Easter' actually comes from an Anglo-Saxon fertility goddess called Eostre, who was associated with spring and new beginnings. Both Easter and Passover centre around re-birth, and bond neatly with the Anglo-Saxon festival of 'Eostre-monath' – Eostre's month.

Hot cross buns, traditionally eaten on Good Friday, are linked to Passover. Originally they were unleavened bread, an important Passover food. Nowadays, they are leavened (which

makes them light and delicious) and marked with a cross to serve as a reminder of the crucifixion.

The tradition of eating chocolate eggs derives from the fact that during Eostre, eggs were given as gifts to celebrate the end of winter and as a symbol of new life. Once again this ties in with Passover, where a traditional meal is Beitzah, a hardboiled egg. Eventually Christians began decorating the shells with colourful patterns, and later thanks to enterprising chocolatiers in France and Germany delicious chocolate Easter eggs began to appear.

But what about the Easter Bunny? Surely an Easter hen would be more logical. At least a hen lays eggs! But if we look back at the Goddess Eostre, her scared animal was the hare, and it's not a huge jump (see what I did there?) from a hare to a rabbit.

The Easter Bunny and egg hunts seem to originate in Germany in the 16th century. Children made

nests in the garden and, if they were good, the Easter Bunny would leave them coloured hard-boiled eggs to find the next morning. This tradition travelled to America with early German settlers and, like many old traditions, has now returned to Britain substituting chocolate eggs for a sweeter egg hunt.

Egg rolling on Easter Monday is one of the strangest traditions. Some sources say that it represents the rolling away of the stone blocking Jesus' tomb. It's also known as Pace-Egging, which derives once again from the word Pesach. It's centuries old but no-one is entirely sure of the origins, though it might have originated as a way of getting everyone

out of the house for some much-needed exercise after a long weekend of feasting!

On Palm Sunday it is said that Jesus was welcomed to Jerusalem by an adoring throng. This and the procession which followed Jesus carrying the cross are often seen as the earliest predecessors

of the modern Easter parade.

During the Dark Ages, Christians in Eastern Europe would gather in a designated spot before Easter church services, then walk solemnly to the church. Afterwards they would retrace their steps while singing songs of praise. Participants usually wore their finest attire to show respect for the occasion.

Eventually the Easter parade transformed into a large American cultural event consisting of a festive strolling procession on Easter Sunday. Participants dress up and there is a particular emphasis on ladies' hats...the Easter bonnets made famous by the song from the 1948 film *Easter Parade*.

And speaking of traditions...it's our family tradition to watch that musical while we tuck into our Easter Eggs.

Happy Easter.

By Tracey Anderson





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A New Epidemic

Is stress making you sick?

We all know about coronavirus but in fact one of the major health risks today is stress. Workdays lost to stress, depression, and anxiety, are

estimated to cost the British economy in excess of about £35 billion a year in lost output.

But what exactly is stress?

Stress is a natural, short term, response to danger. It floods our bodies with the hormones, adrenalin, and cortisol.

In combination these hormones activate our heart and cardiovascular system. They raise our blood pressure and set us in a heightened state of alertness. They affect our liver and increase our blood sugar. During a stressful event all nonessential body functions, e.g., cell repair and ovulation, cease.

If we're under immediate threat from say, a mugger, or a life-threatening accident, a strong stress response is good, it may even help to save our lives. But long-term stress is bad for us. Exposure to large quantities of adrenalin and cortisol over a long period compromise our immune systems and increase our risk of suffering from high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease and Diabetes.

The most common form of long-term stress reported to GPs is work-related and specifically it is reported by those people who feel they have little or no control over their working environment. A healthy working environment includes choices; some control over what you do and an element of appreciation for the effort you put in. Unfortunately, many working environments fall short of this.

Alarmingly, The Whitehall Experiment, which monitored 10,000 civil servants over a long period, found that those at bottom of the hierarchy experienced 4 times the mortality rate of those at the top, even when poor diet and smoking were factored into the calculations! It seems that some of us quite literally, are working ourselves to death.

If you feel this is you and a change of job isn't



possible, then advice has been to try to balance stress levels both at and away from work. Yet recently the pandemic has meant that for many of us home and work have become inseparable, and this has added to wider stress in the world, including soaring food and energy prices and the war in Ukraine.

Take a few minutes and see if you can articulate in a few words what the major sources of stress are in your working environment: unrealistic deadlines or targets, obstructive colleagues, interfering management etc. Then do the same for stress triggers away from work. If you feel you can tackle any of the issues, then do that. This isn't always possible, but sometimes just knowing exactly why you are feeling stressed is enough to help you cope and see a way forward. Perhaps you need to restrict the time you spend answering work emails out of hours or cut down on the amount of news you consume or make time to go for a walk in the fresh air. Exercise is actually an excellent stress reducer, along with yoga. A well-balanced diet also helps and drinking lots of water is a great way to help the body rid itself of toxins.

In addition, it has been shown that therapies such as massage also have potent stress-reducing properties.

Bringing down your stress levels in 2022 may not be easy but your body will thank you for trying.

By Louise Addison

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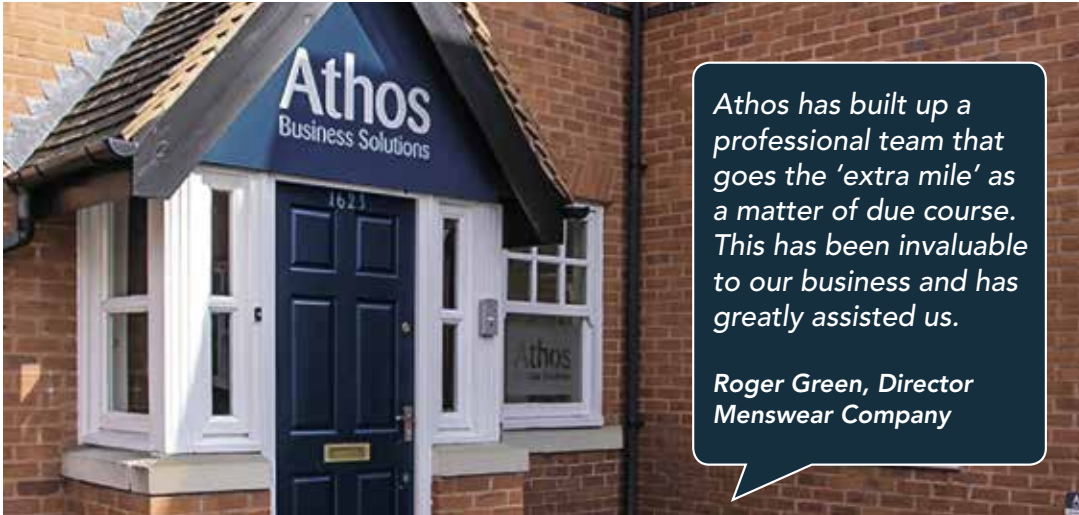
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If you write a lot of notes you still end up with lots of physical notebooks, but your work is saved on your PC and searchable for future reference.



Rocketbook Smart Reusable Notebook

Unlike the Moleskine, the Rocketbook saves on trees while still letting you write on 'paper'. The Rocketbook is a 42-page notebook with seven different page styles allowing notes, sketches and plans etc. The dot-grid and lined pages also act as a paper 'tablet' and you use the free Rocketbook app (available for iOS and Android) to save your work to cloud services like Google Drive, Dropbox, Evernote etc. The Rocketbook works with any Pilot FriXion pen, marker, or highlighter. When you've finished you wipe clean with a damp cloth to start

over. For people who like to use colour in their note-taking the Rocket book works well. For those of us who like to go back and re-annotate our original notes, the wipe-clean approach can seem a bit final.

The ReMarkable 2

The ReMarkable 2 bills itself as "the world's thinnest tablet". It's just 4.7mm thick and stylish, especially if you choose the leather cover option. It captures all the best attributes of notetaking on paper including sound, sensation, and the ability

to erase with the other end of the pen, yet you can create as many notebooks as you like, revisit them, edit them, copy and paste from them into new notebooks, and save them within the device. This last one is a gamechanger for someone who wishes they could take ALL their notebooks with them everywhere! You can then sync your notes to phone and laptop using the app. You can easily import templates such as a diary, or household budget planner. It's more expensive than the previous two options (starting at around £400), but in my opinion, vastly superior. The only disadvantage is no colour, but that's a small concession for notebook Nirvana!

Happy scribbling.

By Louise Addison



Puzzled!

Unless you've been living as a hermit in a cave in the Himalayas you will have encountered Wordle, the simple word game, created by Josh Wardle, which took the internet by storm and was sold to the New York Times for a seven-figure sum.

This fun little game has generated a whole host of similar timewasters. Here are some of the best.

Nerdle - A number version of Wordle. Players have to work out a six- to eight-character calculation, for example $7 + 6/3 = 9$, in six guesses.

There are 17,723 valid solutions for an eight-digit Nerdle. Played in combination with Wordle, it makes for some serious daily brain training.

Worldle - This one is a geography-based puzzle. A silhouette of a country or territory is presented, and users have six chances to work out the answer.

Byrdle - One for Classical musicians. Byrdle uses only composers and musical terms. Other than that, it's the same as Wordle. It's also completely fiendish!

Crosswordle - There are several games that go by this name but a particularly good one is the one created by Robert Flack, which requires users to guess two intersecting words.

And it was only a matter of time before Lordle of the Rings and Wizarding Wordle (for Harry Potter fans) appeared.

Finally, there's Swardle - Popular among my son's teenage friends! It's pretty self-explanatory. Like Wordle...but naughtier.

By Tracey Anderson

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Don't get caught out with joint property

Almost 60%* of those looking to buy a home do not realise that if they die and they are joint tenants with their partner, their partner will automatically inherit the house – regardless of what it states in their will. **Hannah Tait**, partner at Shakespeare Martineau and **Ben Sharp**, associate at the firm in Solihull explain why understanding how your joint property is held is so important when estate planning or making a will.

If you own your home with someone else, there are two ways in which the property can be held: joint tenants and tenants in common.

Joint tenants

Where property is held as joint tenants, on the death of one owner, the property passes automatically to the other, regardless of the provisions of that person's will. While this can benefit the parties if it is their intention for their partner to inherit their house, sometimes, particularly in second marriages, this may not be the case and it means your partner may inherit the property rather than your share passing to children from a previous marriage, for example. The best option is to sever the joint tenancy to create a tenancy in common and then make a will to leave your share to a named beneficiary.

Tenants in Common

Where property is held as tenants in common and one person dies, the share belonging to them passes in accordance with the terms of their will, or if they don't have a will – will pass via the intestacy rules to potentially unwanted beneficiaries. So, if you're an unmarried couple and neither of you has a will, if one person dies, it may be that their share in the house is passed to their family and not the living partner.

How it affects estate planning

Many people wish to benefit people other than those with whom they co-own property in their wills. Subject to the other assets in the estate, this will only work practically if the property is held as tenants in common and not where property is held as joint tenants.

The best option is strictly dependant on individual circumstances and it isn't always easy to identify with the untrained eye which way a property is held, particularly with unregistered titles. Our experts can help with this so obtain specialist legal advice before committing to one option over another.

*Survey conducted by Shakespeare Martineau in 2022



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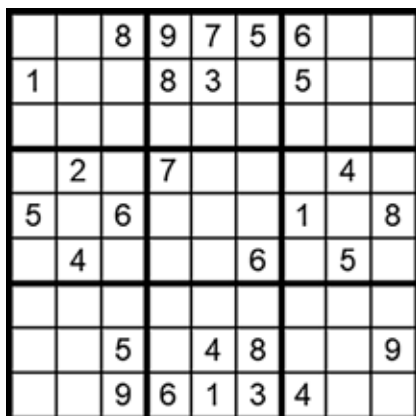
For your chance to win these tickets, visit the Core Theatre website page for this event - www.thecoretheatresolihull.co.uk - to find the answer to this question:

What did Elaine Paige say about this show?

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

Closing date for entries is **1st May 2022**.
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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.



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answer on page 45

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Smoke Gets in your Eyes

Firepit tips and tricks

Back when all get-togethers had to be outside, my brother bought me a firepit. I imagined evenings spent under the stars with my friends, toasting marshmallows. The reality was a smoky, eye-watering disaster.

I stuffed it in the shed and forgot about it until the owner of my local hardware store asked if I'd considered buying a firepit. I cut him off and related my story. "Oh, you're probably doing it wrong!" he smiled. I gawped at him; I mean how many ways are there to use a firepit...come on!? Well dear reader, after a little re-education, I'm now a convert!

Excess fire pit smoke is the most common reason people stop using their firepit. Typically, it results from firewood burning incompletely due to excess moisture in the wood. The pitch or sap in some woods can also be a factor.

The next cause is an improperly constructed fire which causes fuel to smoulder instead of burn, producing more smoke.



So, what's the solution? First choose the right kind of wood. This should be both adequately dried and not naturally predisposed to smoking excessively when burned. Wood smoke is generated when certain chemicals within the wood burn inefficiently. In an efficient, well-burning, hot fire, these chemicals are typically burned off quickly before significant smoke forms.

Look for seasoned wood, which has a moisture content of 30% or less, the lower the better. Seasoned wood has gone through an indoor or outdoor aging process under the right conditions. You can also buy kiln dried wood, which is more expensive but works incredibly well. Basically, dry wood burns efficiently, and efficient burning means

less smoke. On the other hand, fresh cut wood, or older wood which has been allowed to get damp contains more water and burns inefficiently which means smoke.

You can buy properly seasoned wood from your local hardware store, and for most of us who use firepits for a couple of hours at the weekend this is convenient. If you want better value and you have room to store the wood you can buy in bulk from a log merchant. If you want to check moisture levels in wood you've cut and dried yourself you can purchase an inexpensive handheld moisture metre. They generally cost between £40 and £100.

Wood with a maximum of 30% moisture is the baseline but 20% or less is best (that's the standard with most kiln dried firewood)

Other things to watch out for are old, potentially damp ash, embers, and other debris that accumulates in firepits. These can impede the ignition process and result resulting in a fire pit that won't 'catch' properly, and smokes. Empty your firepit after use and store upside down so it doesn't fill up with rain!

It's best to avoid pine, because it has a super high sap content, which tends to produce more smoke. Softwoods in general tend to be more 'sap rich' and can actually be useful in the initial stages of a fire as they burn 'hot' for a brief period, so they are good when trying to get the main wood to burn.

Finally, make sure your fire is stacked correctly. You need good airflow. Make a wigwam structure with your wood or use a log-cabin stack (think Jenga without the middle pieces!) to keep air flowing and provide a gap in the middle for tinder and kindling.

Then sit back and bust out the marshmallows!

By Sarah Davey



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How to Cope in an Uncertain World

Over the past couple of years, we've had to cope with a pandemic, political uprisings and now war in the Ukraine. Life is constantly changing so you'd think we'd be better at dealing with uncertainty. But humans crave stability, and we crave it most when life is unpredictable.

This is where coping strategies come in to play. There are unhealthy coping strategies, like alcohol or junk food and there are also healthy coping strategies.

What is coping?

Coping is an active process where you pause, appraise the situation, target the problem, and then choose a set of interventions.

Stay grounded

- Create a safe space for you and your family. Structure your home so that you and your family feel grounded. Reduce the sadness and stress of uncertainty by keeping News to a minimum. Don't talk endlessly about sensational stories. Connect with each other and think of your home as a sanctuary from the uncertainty of life.

Use routines

- Keep scheduled mealtimes and bedtimes, and daily chores, including the kids' homework.

Also make sure there are regular periods of relaxation and fun, like a family games night or a walk. Routines provide a steady rhythm and research shows that when your day has an organised framework, you develop a greater tolerance for unpredictability.

Choose information sources carefully

- During uncertain times be guardedly curious and try not to accept sensational stories as factual.

Embrace uncertainty

- Ultimately we have to live with uncertainty. Cultivating hope and possibility during uncertain times is important. Instead of focusing on sadness or anxiety, shift the focus to wonder or curiosity. Confronting what we don't know can trigger creative thinking and problem solving and help you and your family feel empowered in the face of the unpredictable.

Practice gratitude

- Make time to notice and reflect on the good and meaningful things and people in your life and encourage your children or grandchildren to do the same. Studies show that gratitude generates feel-good neurochemicals serotonin and dopamine in your brain which help to reduce worry.

By Kate McCarthy



Potato Rosti with Poached Egg and Bacon

For an egg-cellent Easter treat try this brilliant sweet 'n' salty brunch.



Ingredients

500g Maris Piper potatoes
(King Edward also work well)
250g parsnips
50g butter
3tbsp sunflower oil
12 rashers smoked bacon
2tbsp maple syrup
6 free range eggs

Serves: 6

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 25-30 minutes

Method

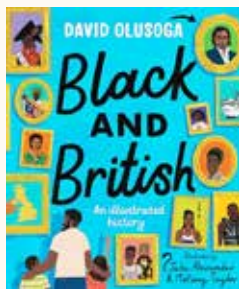
Peel the potatoes, then coarsely grate them along with the parsnips, and squeeze out all the liquid (really important or you'll get soggy mush rather than crispy rosti!)

Season well and separate into six portions, then shape each portion into flat pancake shape. These are the rosti. Heat the butter and oil in a pan and cook the rosti for 6-7 mins on each side until deep golden brown and crispy. Meanwhile, grill or oven cook the bacon for 20-25 minutes, until crisp and golden. Smoked bacon is sublime but unsmoked is good too. A few minutes before the bacon and rosti are ready, bring a pan of water to a gentle simmer and poach the eggs. Top each rosti with 2 rashers of bacon and 1 poached egg. Serve with maple syrup.

book reviews

Black and British: An Illustrated History, by David Olusoga

David Olusoga is a British-Nigerian historian. His book *Black and British, A Short Essential History* is an excellent introduction to how Black culture has both enriched and forms an integral part of British culture. While not aimed at children it's accessible enough for fluent readers, and personally I feel it should be a core text for the National Curriculum.



This book though is an illustrated and abridged version aimed specifically at children aged 8-11. Like the adult text, it charts the often-overlooked histories

a good read

reviews By Tash Donovan

of Black people in Britain from Roman times (yes there were Roman Africans!) right through to the present day, encompassing the black soldiers who fought for Britain in World War 1 and Windrush, which has once again been in the news.

The full colour illustrations are beautiful and include maps and portraits. This is an informative book for all children (and their parents), no matter what their heritage might be.

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9	5	2	4	6	1	8	3	7
8	2	1	7	5	9	3	4	6
5	9	6	3	2	4	1	7	8
7	4	3	1	8	6	9	5	2
6	8	4	5	9	7	2	1	3
3	1	5	2	4	8	7	6	9
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Sudoku Solution
from page 37

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SATURDAY 23RD JULY 2022

SHAGGY

ALL SAINTS

BOYZLIFE | SHALAMAR

ARTFUL DODGER | SNAP! | DUKE



FEATURING KENNY THOMAS

SUNDAY 24TH JULY 2022

BILLY OCEAN

KOOL & THE GANG

BELINDA CARLISLE

BAD MANNERS

**THE REAL | DR & THE
THING MEDICS**



FEATURING TREVOR NELSON

FOR TICKETS AND INFO VISIT: WWW.SOLIHULLSUMMERFEST.CO.UK

D.A. MANDER & SON Ltd

PROFESSIONAL FITTER AND SUPPLIER OF QUALITY CARPETS

*Don Mander does not have retail premises. If you need him
please call him direct – the only way to buy carpets*



Need a carpet?

Support the NHS
Stay at home and stay safe

We come to you

ACCURATE
*See colours in their
true light*

CONVENIENT
*View in the comfort of
your own home*

EASIER
*Than walking round
lots of shops*

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We can uplift and remove existing carpets and move furniture

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See our Review's at



N.BIRD & SON

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- Small brickwork jobs



249 Lyndon Road, Solihull B92 7QP

NO PAYMENT UNTIL YOU ARE 100% SATISFIED