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Welcome to the November edition...

By the time this arrives Christmas will only be about 6 weeks away! Check out page 6 to see what local events are coming up, including Solihull's very own Jingle Bell Jog!

You've just about got time to make any last-minute changes to your home in time for Christmas so remember to support local businesses as they really value their customers – we have a great collection of local tradespeople and businesses who are local and are looking for your custom. Here's hoping the pre-Christmas build up isn't too hectic and that you find the time to relax, maybe over a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie!

Fancy winning a bottle of Prosecco?!

Just scan the QR code below to be entered into our free prize draw. All you need to do is submit a Google review of the magazine and we'll draw a winner at random and deliver a bottle to your door!*



Zoe Reece

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*** Google reviews** must be received by 10th December 2021. To qualify you will need to email zoe@dorridgedirectory.com after you have submitted a review with your name, telephone number, and address (which must be in the B90 or B91 postcode).

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community events

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Bon Jovi & Bryan Adams tribute night

Knowle Royal British Legion

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A Christmas Fair

Knowle Village Hall

Saturday 27 November

10am – 1pm

Browse through Christmas cards, gifts, cakes and preserves, decorations, books, bric-a-brac and more. There will be competitions and refreshments. This is a Knowle Village Hall fundraising event.

Solihull's Jingle Bell Jog

Solihull

12 December

Join Solihull BID to spread plenty of festive cheer this December by donning a Santa suit and



completing the Jingle Bell Jog to raise money for homeless charity Change Into Action. Run, walk, dance, jog or jingle your way around our family-friendly 2.5km fun run through Solihull town centre. To book: www.solihullbid.co.uk/events/solihulls-jingle-bell-jog-2021/

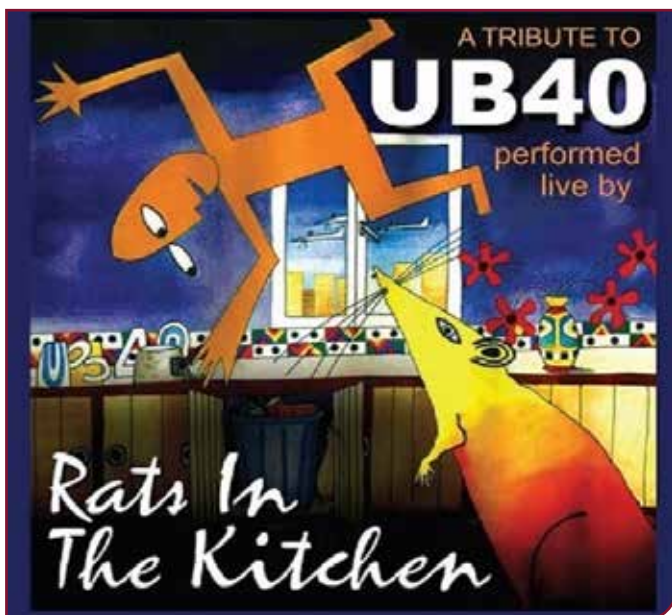
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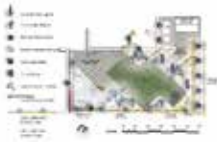
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If I Only Had a Moustache!

It's Movember!

So sings the character Marcus Thornton in the film *A Million Ways to Die in the West*. If you haven't seen the clip on YouTube, watch it and give yourself an ear worm for the whole of Movember! You're welcome.

The Movember movement started in Australia in 2003. Travis Garone and Luke Slattery came up with the idea (over a beer of course). It began as a jokey way of trying to bring the moustache back into fashion. Inspired by a friend's mother who was fundraising for breast cancer, they decided

to make generate a campaign for men's health and prostate cancer. They designed the rules of Movember, which remain unchanged today, and agreed to charge ten dollars to 'Grow a Mo'. Trav designed the first Movember logo, and they sent out an email, subject: 'Are you man enough to be my man?' and found 30 volunteers.

In 2004 they formalised the idea, registered a company and created a website.

They researched men's health issues and agreed to formally support prostate cancer as their cause. By 2006 the Movember Foundation was established as an official Australian charity. They also started to branch out into supporting male mental health. The following year Movember started to grow internationally. There are now official campaigns in 21 countries and together they have raised around 350 million pounds and supported more than 1,000 men's health programs. They focus on the four key men's health issues: prostate cancer, testicular cancer, poor mental health, and physical inactivity.



So, what are the rules.

- The first step is simply registering on Movember.com.
- Start with a clean-shaven, including your upper lip, sideburns, and handlebar zones.
- For the entire month of Movember, you must grow and groom a moustache
- Beards, goatees and fake moustaches don't count
- Use the power of the moustache to create conversation and raise funds for men's health
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Routine: Get into a homework routine as soon as possible. Immediately after school is good, after they've had a snack and a drink, as they will still be in the right frame of mind. Find out what works best for your child though. Some may need to expend pent-up energy first; others may need to chill for twenty minutes.

'Worst first': When mental energy is high work on the most difficult subject. Don't try to cram too many subjects into one session.

Talk: Encourage your child to talk through any projects with you first. Your child is then more likely to get the work right and won't get frustrated. Gently ask questions about any areas they seem unsure about and what materials or preparation they might need to undertake.

Study station: Designate an area for home learning. Make it as uncluttered and distraction-free as possible. Ensure all equipment required is nearby, so there's no stalling.

No TV: Anything with a screen should be switched off until after studying. Use it as a bribe if necessary. No games or TV until homework is completed!

The earlier your child gets into a routine the easier homework will become...for both of you.



Are Pre-nups just for the **Super rich**?

They aren't considered to be particularly romantic, but a prenuptial agreement (pre-nup) is a way of protecting your assets, should your marriage or civil partnership breakdown.

Dipika Mistry, Legal Director at Shakespeare Martineau in Solihull explains.

A lot of people think that pre-nups are only for millionaires and lottery winners, but they are becoming more and more important as people enter blended families or marry later in life when assets are greater. If you have significantly more wealth than your partner, personally or via a business, or have children from a previous relationship you'd like to protect, then you should consider a nuptial agreement.

What is a pre-nup?

A pre-nup is a legal agreement between a couple, which sets out how finances or assets will be distributed, in the event of divorce. They can be used to ring-fence assets that one or both parties bring to a marriage, or be used to protect assets inherited during the marriage. Where possible they should be flexible, in order to deal with changes in the family such as children or illness – backed up by an up to date will.

Are pre-nups legally binding?

No. A pre-nup is not legally binding in English law, however, they are becoming increasingly upheld provided that they are entered into fairly and on a voluntary basis and both parties have received independent legal advice before doing so. Pre-nups do not overrule a court's decision on financial arrangements on divorce but they do carry some influence.

I'm already married – how can I protect my assets?

It is possible to record an agreement after marriage or civil partnership; these are called postnuptial agreements. Similar to a pre-nup they outline the decision reached between a couple in relation to what will happen to their finances, should it breakdown. Some couples who have already entered into a pre-nup choose to enter into a further post-nup to confirm the arrangements still stand. For the best chance of these agreements being upheld, as with a pre-nup, a post-nup must be entered into fairly, after independent legal advice.



For more information and support call 0121 705 8151
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The Glorious Madness of The Beaujolais Run

At one minute past midnight on the third Sunday in November, villages and towns in a region in France release cases of wine for immediate delivery across the world.

"Le Beaujolais est arrivé!" This rousing call signals the introduction of the year's new wine, the famous Beaujolais Nouveau. Originally, pitchers of the wine were taken straight from the producers' barrels to the towns amid much fanfare and celebration. Then in 1972 an enterprising soul saw a fabulous marketing opportunity: a race to distribute the first bottles of the new vintage. The Beaujolais Run involves teams competing to be the first to get the first case of Nouveau from Paris to London. It's a 500mile race to south-eastern France to collect the first bottles of the new wine, and then 500 miles back again. Beaujolais is described by wine sellers as '...a light fruity red burgundy wine made from the Gamay grape.' It's described by almost everyone else as 'awful', and by French standards it's pretty rubbish if we're honest, so you'd have to be utterly bonkers to undertake a round trip of 1000 miles to get your hands on a bottle. Well, us Brits have elevated being bonkers to an artform. The more ridiculous or pointless the challenge, the more likely we are to bounce enthusiastically into action. And so it proved with the Beaujolais Run.

In its early years the event was purely about speed. Any mode of transport could be used. The glorious madness peaked in the 1980s when the RAF touched down in Beaujeu with a Harrier Jump-Jet at midnight, picked up the wine and then landed 32 minutes later in London. At that point the organisers had to rethink the rules! So now the mission is to get from southern England to Mâcon by covering the shortest distance. The Beaujolais Run has become a treasure hunt through the French countryside,

following a series of cryptic navigational clues through six checkpoints. Competitors must take a photograph of themselves at an obscure landmark at each checkpoint to prove they were there. You can use maps, sat-navs or even ask the locals! Handy Hint: Map readers tend to succeed over tech-users because some countryside back routes thwart the sat-navs.

The Beaujolais Run is a popular event in the amateur motor sport year, and anything goes - vintage cars family saloons, motorcycles

and even supercars. Dress code is fancy dress! There is a new theme every year and locals have learned to be quite blasé about being stopped and asked for directions by someone dressed as a gorilla, or a WWII German Officer, driving a Morris Minor! The entry fee is £1995 per car which includes the Eurotunnel fees, accommodation, and organised dinners and drinks events along the way. In addition, participants are required to raise a minimum of £1,250 per car for the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund.

If you fancy taking part, take a look at www.beaujolaisrun.com for further information. You need a minimum of two team members, a vehicle, an entry fee, and the intention to raise a lot of money via sponsorship. A sense of humour and a love of scavenger hunts, cryptic clues and / or escape rooms is advantageous.

The French say, 'La vie est trop courte pour boire du mauvais vin', which translates as Life is too short to drink poor wine, however it would appear that Brits will happily drive very long distances for it!



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How Much Is That Phone in the Advert?

Mobile phones are expensive. I mean really expensive. The latest iPhones and top of the range Android phones cost upwards of £1000 so they are a big financial commitment. But are they value for money? Is £1000 phone any better than one which costs £200?

When you watch a phone advert it's easy to believe that owning the latest model will make your life infinitely better. With ultrahigh resolution screens, multiple professional quality cameras and massively powerful computing engines, you could easily use your phone to replace your laptop, camera, TV and, at a push, your spouse!

But how many of these fantastic features will you actually use?

Most of use our phones for fairly mundane, low-power tasks. We text, check our social media, post selfies or snapshots, watch

YouTube videos, make quick videos to post on social media, play a game, and some of us even use them to make phone calls. But none of these tasks require any of the high-end features that are pushing the cost of your phone through the roof.

Budget phones summon up the image of a piece of sad plastic that struggles to turn on, let alone do anything useful. But there's a big difference between 'budget' and 'great value for money.'

Big brand names such as Apple and Samsung market their phones as status symbols. Pulling out the latest iPhone or flipping open your foldable Samsung is

the same as wearing a Rolex watch or rocking up in your sports car. If you enjoy that feeling and are happy with the cost then these are the phones for you.

If you want a phone that has almost all the features of the top brands; screen, cameras, powerful processor etc., there are a range of less well-known brands that will deliver all this for a lower cost. Many of these from Chinese manufacturers where components and labour costs are lower. You'll still get a high-quality product, and the phone will power through all of your day-to-day tasks with room to spare, but people won't recognise the logo on the back.



For example, my 12-year-old needed a new phone and we wanted to get one that would be fun to use rather than the low powered basic model he'd started out with. I came across a phone from Xiaomi, the Redmi Note 9. This has a

powerful octa core processor, loads of memory, 64 GB of storage space, ultrahigh resolution screen, three high resolution specialist cameras, fast charge, and long battery life and all for the very pocket friendly cost of £150. From a pre-teenage point of view, he's pleased as punch with the power and quality of the phone. From a parent point of view, I'm delighted with the price.

So, when buying a new phone my advice is to be honest about what you're going to use it for. If you feel a premium phone is worth the money go for it. If you want a phone that does everything and is a pleasure to use but is easy on your pocket, shop around.

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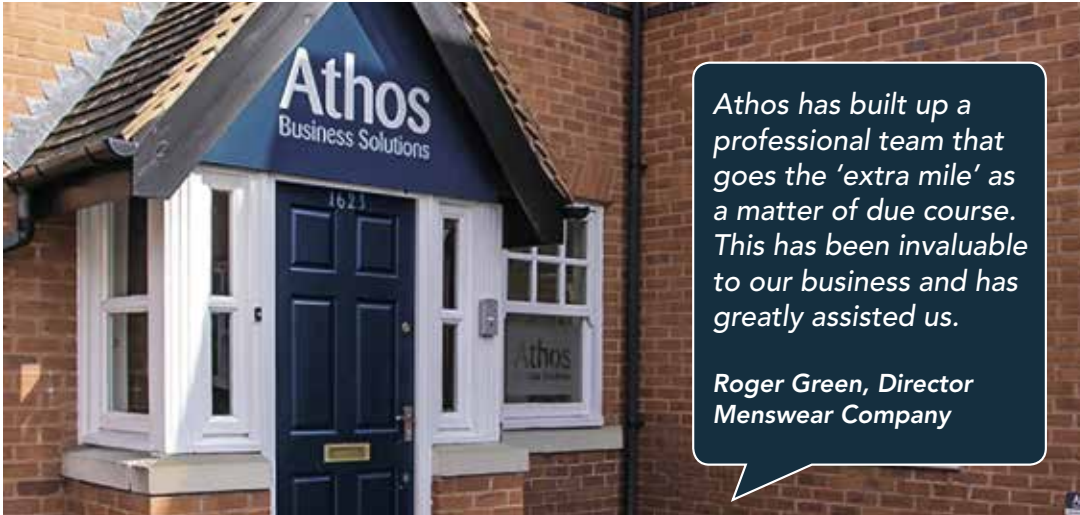
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a good read

reviews By Willow Coby

Project Hail Mary

by Andy Weir

Ryland Grace wakes up on a spacecraft with no idea how or why he is there-or even who he is, and on top of this he has to work scientific miracles, from scratch using a Heath Robinson approach to staying alive. If this sounds like the plot of *The Martian* there are indeed similarities. Grace, like Mark Whitney is a scientist's scientist, self-deprecating, highly intelligent, and funny. The book alternates between Grace-on-Earth and Grace -in-Space as the narrative flips between the present day on the Hail Mary, and the events that led to him waking up alone and with no memory at the beginning of the book. The best science fiction happens when the author has put in the background work, uses it to craft a world we believe in, then creates characters we care about. Andy Weir has achieved all that here, and maintains a slick, fast paced plot to boot. There's loads of real science for the geeks, interesting, well-developed characters, excitement, thrills, and a touching friendship between the central characters. During the final third of the book, the stakes are raised ever higher, and I found myself reading ever faster in suspense all the way to the final page.



Everyone Dies Famous in a Small Town

by Bonnie-Sue Hitchcock

This is a young adult novel with a difference. It's a collection of interconnected short stories all set in the mid-1990s, in Alaska and small towns scattered across the American west. Each story centres around one or two disparate teen characters who each face the challenges and rewards of small-town life. Told through the ordinary events of their lives, we glimpse brief moments, like peeking through a window. We can see their inner struggles, how they deal with pain or boredom or survival, and how they find new paths and moments of healing. There are hitchhikers, kids with a 'reputation', free spirits, and young people who have suffered loss. Woven through the stories are some common threads; we get an early warning of wildfire in one story which is at the centre of the plot of another. The aftermath of events in one story, pop up in later ones. Each character's life has a 'butterfly effect' on the lives of other characters, some big and some small, and most of the characters never know the threads that connect them, even though we as readers are treated to the bigger picture and have the pleasure of seeing where all these lives overlap. In *Everyone Dies Famous in a Small Town*, Hitchcock takes us into the inner workings of young minds and hearts. A beautiful read for older teens.





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Hear This - Tinnitus is a modern epidemic

Tinnitus is the name given to the perception of persistent ringing, buzzing, hissing, or whistling sounds in the head or the ears without an external sound source. The word 'tinnitus' derives from the Latin for 'ringing'. It can be intermittent or continuous; low, medium, or high pitched and can be a single noise or many. It can be heard in one or both ears, or may feel like it is in the head. For some people it's a minor annoyance, but for others it can be debilitating.

It is not a disease or illness; it is a symptom generated within the auditory system which may be due to an underlying condition or may be idiopathic (a medical term which means 'unknown cause').

The British Tinnitus Association estimate that 1 in 8 people suffer from the condition. Tinnitus in older people is mostly a function of wear

and tear, so as people live longer, the number of people with tinnitus will increase. But the rise in numbers over the past two decades is only partially explained this way. A study from Statistics Canada revealed that 80% of adults aged 19 to 29 reported using headphones or earbuds connected to audio devices in the past year, significantly more than adults aged 30 to 49 (53%) or 50 to 79 (28%), and those adults aged 19 to 29 had rates of tinnitus over one third higher than for older adults. This could further inflate the numbers.

If your tinnitus is preventing you getting to sleep, it may be that the shift from a relatively noisy daytime environment to the quietness of the bedroom makes the tinnitus noises more noticeable. Some people find having some low-level sound can help mask tinnitus.

For more information go to www.tinnitus.org.uk



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Poached Pears

Pears are in season right now and this is such a great way to serve them



Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 1 hour + 5-10 minutes for the sauce

Serves: 4

Ingredients

1 750ml bottle of soft, fruity red wine
125g granulated sugar
2 cloves
1 stick of cinnamon
Zest of half a lemon
1 vanilla pod, split (optional)
4 hard pears
Creme de cassis

Method

Preheat the oven to 180C/ gas mark 4. Pour the wine into a saucepan with the

sugar, spices and lemon zest and bring to the boil, stirring dissolve the sugar.

Meanwhile, peel the pears. Leave the stalk intact but cut out the core at the base. Use a non-metallic ovenproof dish just wide enough to hold the pears in a single layer and lay them in there. Don't use a large dish because when you pour the spiced wine over the top - the fruit should just be submerged. Cover the dish

and bake for about an hour, checking after 45 minutes. When the fruit is tender, but still holds its shape, lift it out of the liquid and set aside.

Then pour the liquid back into the saucepan and bring to the boil. Reduce by about half until it becomes thick and syrupy, then taste and pour in the creme de cassis to taste. Pour the sauce back on to the pears and serve warm or cool, with ice cream, cream, or custard.

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5 Reasons Why You Should Visit Canada

1. Unforgettable Wildlife

The amazing diversity of wildlife in Canada is one of the top reasons as to why people travel to Canada. The country's most famous animals are thanks to a wide range of habitats, such as forests, sea and snow. During the summertime in British Columbia, a phenomenon known as the Salmon Run brings a high number of grizzly bears to places along the west coast.

2. The Great Outdoors

Scenic coastlines, sprawling prairies, picturesque forests and magnificent mountains make Canada home to some spectacular scenery. The range you'll find in Canada is incredible, across the territories and provinces you'll find icefields and mountains in some and world-class beaches and coastlines in others. Natural parks can be found all across the country, providing some incredible backdrops for your morning hike. You'll find plenty of natural wonders located in Canada such as the awe-inspiring Rocky Mountains and the famous Niagara Falls.

3. Rich Culture

In Canada, the people, culture

and communities encapsulate the past of the country and you'll find this no matter what part of the country you're visiting. There is an incredible rich indigenous culture that can be found across the country and you can enjoy First Nations art in the likes of British Columbia. The First Nations people are the largest group of aboriginal peoples in Canada, with more than 600 recognised bands across the country.

Canada is also home to the Inuit who mainly live in the Arctic areas, while the Metis people are a distinct group that came from the multicultural interactions of the Europeans and First Nations people.

4. The Rocky Mountaineer

You might have seen this iconic railway on TV series, the Rocky Mountaineer train journey not only gives you unrivalled views of the Rocky Mountains from its glass-domed roof, but the incredible hosts make sure you're comfortable and tell you fascinating stories about the places you travel past.

5. The Skiing

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Canada is your place. You'll find some world-class ski resorts such as Whistler, Sun Peaks, Big 3 in Banff and Tremblant to name a few. Plus all resorts have a great choice of runs perfect for beginners to pros. If skiing or boarding isn't quite your thing, you won't be left out. There are awesome winter sports such as tubing, snowshoeing and sledging or if you're wanting a more laid-back vibe hit up one of the Scandinavian-style spas.

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Protect and Survive

Not the 1970s public information campaign exhorting us to hide under a table in case of nuclear attack. This is far more useful. It's my public information campaign

about protecting tender perennials and taking cuttings to over winter so your plants survive and even multiply. First the protection: to protect tender perennials such as Salvias and Pelargoniums, lift them and bring them into a greenhouse. If you have a heater, set it to the frost setting (around 5C). You can use bubble wrap to insulate the greenhouse for additional heat conservation. If you do this the heater will only need to kick in on extremely cold days and nights.

For tender bulbs and tubers such as dahlias, wait until the foliage has been blackened by the frost, then lift them and place in a box of sand in a dry, dark, frost-free location.

Plants like Agapanthus, which are generally happy to be left in the ground with a little protection, are best left undisturbed. Cover the top with a generous quantity of well-rotted compost or bark mulch. This can be removed from around the crown of the plant in spring and will help retain moisture throughout the spring growing season.

November is the start of the bare root planting season. Plant roses, hedging and trees, and it's also a good time to move any of these plants which you think are in the wrong area of the garden. They are more likely to survive this treatment if moved at this time of year.

So, what else can we do in November?

- Ideally your spring bulbs should already be planted but if you haven't done it yet, just put some in this month. November is actually the perfect month to plant tulip bulbs are because the less time they are in the ground the less likelihood of them developing a virus called tulip fire blight.
- Plant garlic cloves if you have an area with free draining soil.
- Dig over the vegetable plot, leaving clods to break down over winter
- Rake the fallen leaves regularly from lawn areas because if you leave them they deprive the lawn of light.
- Bring in garden tools for the winter. Clean, sharpen, and oil them first.
- Keep removing weeds. It is easier to see them once garden plants have died back. November is a great time to get rid of persistent perennial weeds





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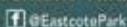
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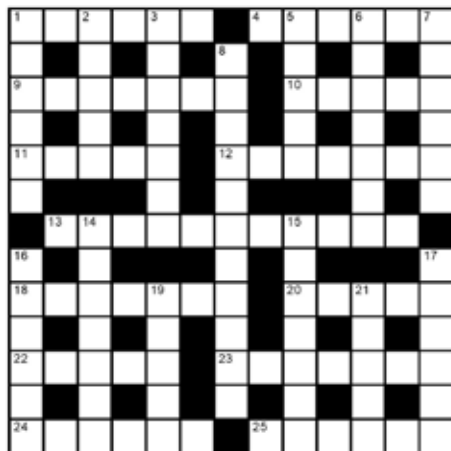


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crossword



clues

- 1 Second in command (6)
- 4 Person who maltreats or harms (6)
- 9 Flammable gas (7)
- 10 Small herring (5)
- 11 British Actress _____ Mirren (5)
- 12 American term for poorly educated person from the south (7)
- 13 Weaken, fall apart (11)
- 18 Delinquent, thug (7)
- 20 Man-made fibre (5)
- 22 Home of Glasgow Rangers (5)
- 23 _____ Man - Beatles song (7)
- 24 There are eleven in the song 'Twelve Days of Christmas' (6)
- 25 Large snake (6)

Down

- 1 Hidden _____ - quiet wisdom or insight (6)
- 2 Move stealthily (5)
- 3 Learner, cadet (7)
- 5 Located, stationed (5)

Across

- 6 Glut, plethora (7)
- 7 Second try at an exam (6)
- 8 The action of enlisting new people (11)
- 14 Activity done purely to increase someone's sense of self-importance (3,4)

Across

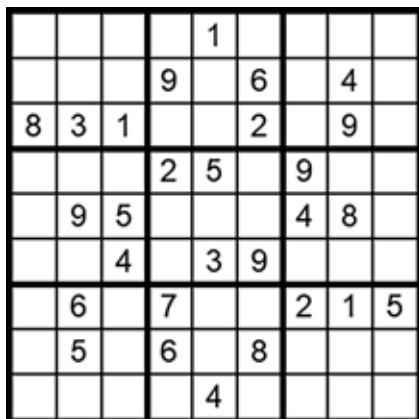
- 15 Escapee, fugitive (7)
- 16 Shellfish (6)
- 17 Hidden, not noticed (6)
- 19 Famous Egyptian city (5)
- 21 Blood-sucking worm (5)

answer on page 45

how to play sudoku

It's simple!

Fill in the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box, contains the numbers 1 through to 9 with no repetition. You don't need to be a genius. These puzzles use logic alone. Watch out! Sudoku is highly addictive.



answer on page 45

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

Sudoku Solution

from page 40

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

crossword Solution

from page 40

A Tiny Musical Renaissance

There's so much to love about the ukulele

In September while staying with friends in the countryside, I attended a late summer fete. It was a low budget cliché involving hay bale seats, a hog roast, young performers from the local school and a smattering of stalls selling jams and random craft items. It amused my friends to drag a cynical Londoner to an event which included the 'Most Creative Vegetable Sculpture' award.

They insisted I stayed to listen to the village ukulele 'orchestra', which comprised an enthusiastic group of players who took the stage wearing amusing hats, and wielding kazoos. They chink-a-chinked their way through hits from the sixties to the nineties with an occasional nod to timing and tuning. They were joyous in their performance, and clearly loved every minute of their local celebrity. During their twenty-minute set they embodied everything that music should be: accessible, enjoyable, and inclusive. The audience (and I) loved them, to the amusement of my friends.

Back at home I googled ukuleles. There are at least 300 groups in the UK and a number of ukulele festivals, which occur throughout the year. Local events in churches and school halls nearly always play host to a home-grown group of enthusiasts.

The ukulele arrived here from Hawaii over a century ago. Contrary to popular belief it was not born in Hawaii but originated in Europe and was originally known as a branguinha, or machete. It was introduced to Hawaii in 1879 by a Portuguese immigrant named Joao Fernandez. The Hawaiians were so impressed by his fingerboard gymnastics that they called the instrument "ukulele," (pronounced oo-ko-lay-lay) which translates to "jumping flea." Fernandez became a local sensation and the popularity of the little instrument spread across

the islands.

When it arrived in the UK it was initially considered an exotic instrument but was quickly snubbed by both the pop and classical music scenes; even folk groups didn't want a ukulele! But with the help of the hipsters (who play their ukes ironically) and armies of mainly senior citizens up and down the land (who play them sincerely and with gusto), and schools, where they've replaced the previously ubiquitous recorder as training instruments, the little ukulele has become the musical comeback kid. This can be traced in large part to its accessibility, affordability, and YouTube popularity. While festivals offer live workshops on fingerpicking, playing by ear, and even song writing, most people do seem to learn their uke skills from YouTube.

Well, dear reader I bought myself a uke and I have discovered the joy of learning an instrument in my fifties. There are no uke police, so unlike the music lessons of my early years, there are no disapproving teachers dripping sarcasm and heaving sighs. I am responsible for my own progress and even though I have not yet plucked up the courage to join my local uke orchestra, thanks to Professor YouTube I can bash out a few chords and simple tunes.

And that's the joy of the ukulele. Unlike the piano it doesn't demand virtuosity, and unlike the violin there's no painful induction period, even absolute beginners can make a pretty sound. This cheerful unintimidating little instrument is enjoying a well-deserved renaissance, so why not join the fun?



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