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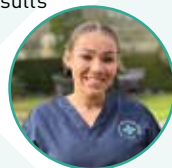
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**by Dr Daphne Hazell, GP,
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Britain's Mould Problems

Why are our homes so damp?

Britain's homes have a damp problem. Damp can cause damage to your home and if left

untreated for a long period of time, it can also cause health problems too. It's estimated that at least 20% of renters in the UK are affected by damp and mould.

The main problem is the age of the housing stock.

The UK has some of the oldest housing stock in Europe. During the industrial revolution many houses were erected quickly in towns and cities to house the influx of workers, and many have not been properly maintained.

Houses built before 1925 were constructed with solid walls which needed insulating, but the costs were prohibitive for many homeowners and councils.

New build properties in Britain have damp proof cavity walls, but demand exceeds supply, and many renters have no option but to stay in properties unsuitable for habitation.

Incorrectly installed cavity wall insulation can cause damp problems too. There are properties that had cavity wall insulation installed in



error because they were not suitable for the treatment. In these cases, the insulation can act as bridge for the moisture to penetrate its way through into the inner walls of the house. Any gaps in the walls or windows of a house, will also mean your home is more vulnerable to damp problems.

The UK is a pretty damp place in general, and climate change means that while we are not necessarily experiencing more rainfall, we are experiencing more extreme rainfall, which adds to underlying problems.

Condensation occurs when moisture laden air comes into contact with a cold surface e.g., a window or a wall. Normal activities such as bathing and cooking are the source of condensation. If heating is not turned on regularly or there is not sufficient ventilation, then moisture starts to build up on cold surfaces. Black mould spots as a result of condensation start to appear

and will eventually lead to more serious damp problems. High energy costs mean many people are trying to use their heating as little as possible at the moment, and this is adding to the issue.

If damp and mould are a problem in your home, contact a member of the Property Care Association (PCA) who can arrange for someone to assess dampness within your walls and check whether or not cavity wall insulation is the root cause of the problem. Any gaps in the walls or windows should be sealed as soon as possible to stop damp from penetrating its way through. A qualified structural engineer should carry out any remedial works to fix structural defects allowing moisture to enter the house. Ventilation and heating are key areas that have to be addressed to stop condensation from forming. Check your boiler efficiency. It might be worthwhile upgrading it. Proper ventilation can have a significant impact on reducing the amount of moisture laden air in your home. Ventilation can be improved by the installation of extractor fans or positive input ventilation systems.

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answers on page 38

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Divorce figures hit 10 year high

No-fault divorce finally became law in April 2022 meaning separating couples no longer have to play the blame game in order to be granted a divorce. However, divorce application figures show divorces are at the highest level in a decade.

No Fault Divorce

The new Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act (2020) marked a significant change in divorce law for England and Wales. It is no longer necessary for separating couples to apportion blame for the breakdown of their marriage, helping them to instead focus on key practical decisions involving children or their finances and look to the future.

Most importantly, the new law has made the divorce process more straightforward and dignified.

The increased number of divorce applications may be as a result of people waiting for 'no fault divorce' law to become available, and could also be attributed to a number of other factors, including the fallout after Covid-19, where it was difficult for people to physically move. Economic turbulence and the rise in the cost of living putting financial pressure on families, can also put marriages under strain.

DIY Divorces

Couples may opt to deal with their divorces without seeking advice from a solicitor, particularly now the system has been modernised and is completely digitalised. Whilst the new digitalised application and reform of the legislation has made it more accessible to parties wishing to obtain a divorce, the data shows that only 27% of those included an application for a financial settlement.

Divorce does nothing more than legally end your marriage. It does not deal with any financial claim that arises because of the marriage. There will be far too many people that lose out significantly on proper financial arrangements or who have claims they thought were ended come back and haunt them. It is important to seek early legal advice in respect of divorce and financial matters, even if you go on to complete the divorce application yourself.



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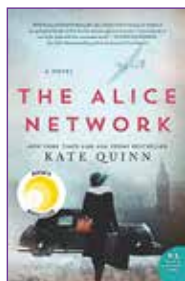
a good read

By Natasha Donovan

The Alice Network

by Kate Quinn

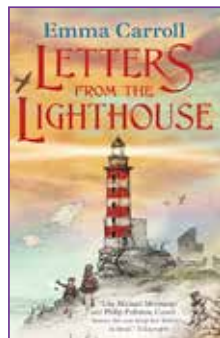
The Alice Network is set in the aftermath of World War II though it straddles both world wars, and follows two women, Charlie St. Clair, and Eve Gardiner, as they navigate the dangerous world of espionage in search of a lost relative. Charlie St. Clair is a young American woman who is pregnant out of wedlock. She is sent to Europe by her family to have the 'problem' taken care of. But she breaks free to search for her cousin Rose, who disappeared during the war. She meets Eve Gardiner, a former spy for the Alice Network, a secret organization of female spies, who now spends her day drunk, haunted by her past. Together, the two women embark on a journey to find Rose and uncover the truth about her disappearance. As they delve deeper into the world of espionage and the aftermath of the war, they encounter a cast of characters, including former spies, soldiers, and politicians, who each have their own secrets. The two women must navigate this dangerous world, relying on their wits and the support of each other to stay alive. The novel explores themes of friendship, loyalty, and the aftermath of war. Its powerful narrative is a testament to the bravery and resilience of women in a time when their roles were often limited. Quinn's novel is well-researched and beautifully written that will appeal both to fans of historical fiction and anyone who enjoys a page-turning spy thriller.



Letters from the Lighthouse

by Emma Carroll

Letters from the Lighthouse is set during World War II. The story follows two siblings, Olive and Cliff, who are evacuated from London to a coastal town in Devon. Their older sister Sukie went missing during an air raid and they have no idea where she is, though a note found in Sukie's coat pocket suggests that she was involved in something dangerous. Then, among the close-knit community where they've been evacuated, Olive discovers something which ties Sukie to a plot as dangerous as it is puzzling. What do the mysterious letters that the children receive from the lighthouse on the coast mean? Written by a shadowy figure known only as "The Keeper", they provide Olive and Cliff with clues which send the siblings off on a dangerous adventure that takes them through the streets of the town and the surrounding countryside. Through their encounters with a spy, a resistance fighter, and a band of smugglers, they must use their wits and their courage to stay alive and uncover the truth.



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Bombay Potatoes



A spicy supper or side dish made with in season Jersey Royals

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: Up to 20 mins for boiling potatoes, 10-12 minutes to fry.

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

900g Jersey Royals
Thumb-sized piece of root ginger, peeled.
3 garlic cloves, peeled
2 large ripe tomatoes
4 tbsp vegetable oil
 $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp mustard seeds
1 large onion, roughly chopped
 $\frac{2}{3}$ tsp turmeric
2 tsp ground coriander
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp garam masala
 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp chilli powder
Large handful of chopped coriander leaves
Salt, to taste

Method

Boil a large pot of salted water. Add the potatoes and boil until just tender, Allow to cool a little.

Quarter one tomato then blend together with the ginger and garlic. Heat the oil in a large non-stick frying pan, then add the cumin and mustard seeds.

When the cumin starts to darken, add the onion. Cook for one minute then add the ginger and garlic mixture, the ground spices and salt. Sauté gently for one to two

minutes until the garlic smells cooked but is not burnt.

Slice the second tomato into thin wedges and add them to the frying pan. Stir well and cook the mixture for three to four minutes.

Tip the potatoes into the pan and cook for three to five minutes allow the flavours to be absorbed.

Season to taste and finally stir in the chopped coriander before serving.

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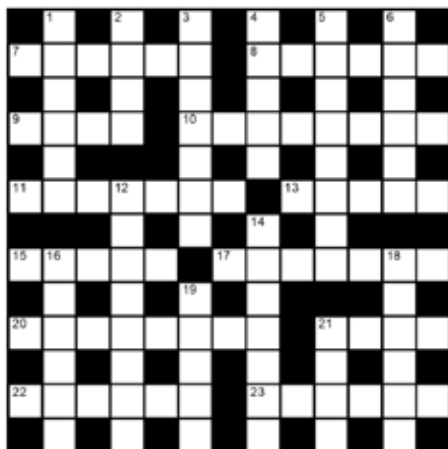
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crossword



Down

- 1 Zealous, fierce (6)
2 Flat-bottomed boat (4)
3 Wreath (7)
4 Ambiguous (5)

- 5 Scholarly world (8)
6 Unit of measurement (6)
12 Most unshaven (8)
14 Bragged (7)

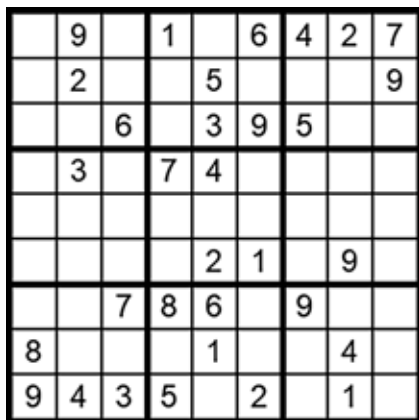
- 16 Church (6)
18 Unbleached cotton cloth (6)
19 Type of farm (5)
21 Hum, murmur (4)

clues

Across

- 7 Severe mental or physical pain (6)
8 Bowed (6)
9 Lease, tariff (4)
10 Wash, cleanse (8)
11 Inscription (7)
13 Fossilised tree resin (5)
15 Caustic, stinging (5)
17 Nicotine-rich leaf (7)
20 Dwellings, (8)
21 Blanched (4)
22 Forbid, ban (6)
23 Improve, embellish (6)

answer on page 38



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 22



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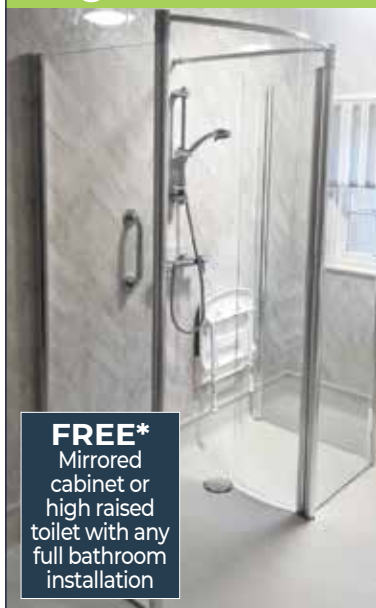
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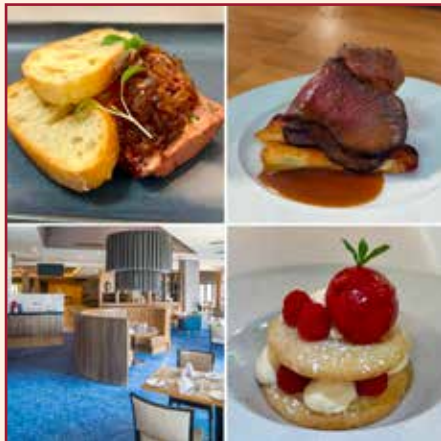
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Solution to Mind benders

1. Dance on thin ice
2. Space invaders
3. Cut above the rest

mindbenders

from page 16

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

Sudoku Solution

from page 32

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

Crossword Solution

from page 32

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