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# Feeling Festive?

Welcome to the October 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 to get you in the festive mood.**

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!

Zoe Reece

Tel: 07557 220585

Email: [zoe@dorridgedirectory.com](mailto:zoe@dorridgedirectory.com)

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# community events

## Elvis And The Dixie Rock 'N' Roll Band Live Show!

**25 November, Land Rover Sports & Social Club**

Voted the best Elvis Tribute Act in the Midlands by local radio station BRMB, Mark's vocal range is such that it allows him to spectacularly mimic many of the performances of Elvis, through some of his most prominent years. To book: [www.landroversc.co.uk/shows-and-events/](http://www.landroversc.co.uk/shows-and-events/)

## Menopause Café

**26 November 10am, Paramo Lounge, Solihull High Street**  
Join us at Menopause

Café, a supportive space to share experiences, learn, and connect with others navigating the menopause journey. All welcome to come along.

## The Super Weekender 2023

**1-3 December, NEC, Birmingham**

This 3-day event will bring together over 15,000 dance lovers from across the country. Dancers can compete, perform, train and exhibit under one roof with unmissable competitions and world-class training from sought-after choreographers and dance professionals. For more info: [www.thenec.co.uk/whats-on/the-super-weekender/](http://www.thenec.co.uk/whats-on/the-super-weekender/)

## Christmas Fair

**2 December 10am - 1pm, Knowle Village Hall.**

This annual Fair is a Knowle Village Hall Fundraising event. Christmas door wreaths will be on sale as well as plenty of gifts, cards, chocolates etc - lots to choose from! Refreshments will be available and there is a Grand Raffle. Come and join in!

## Comedy Night

**25 November, Knowle British Legion**

Don't miss this sensational line-up of talented comedians who will have you rolling in the aisles from start to finish. So mark your calendars and prepare for an unforgettable night of non-stop laughter. Tickets from [www.tributenightpromotions.co.uk/](http://www.tributenightpromotions.co.uk/)

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As a lot of people know, the HMRC tax year end was on 5th April. If you are a business owner or earn income that isn't taxed at source you will need to send HMRC a personal tax return. The deadline for sending the return in and paying any tax is 31st January next year, but don't leave it until then! Please contact us as soon as you can so we can prepare your return for you in good time, with no rush. This will give you peace of mind that the return is correct and know how much tax you will need to pay.

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Whilst Vita serves speciality coffee and tea, festive hot chocolate, healthy breakfast and brunch options, delicious cakes and pastries from local bakers as well as sparkling wine in a stylish setting.

A covered, heated outdoor pergola style seating area is home to pop-up street food traders from all types of cuisine, from handmade burgers and authentic pizzas to vegan delights. Taste Collective plays host to some of the Midlands' top



independent eateries in addition to creating a fun and relaxed environment with its outdoor bar and unique design, which is weather-proofed for all conditions. Plus, every Thursday, put your knowledge to the test with themed Quiz Nights. And on Wednesday's we play Music Bingo!

Created to appeal to a wide range of ages and tastes, Green's, Vita and Taste Collective offer the perfect setting to eat, drink and socialise with friends and family in Solihull this Christmas.



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A modern shower with a glass door and black fixtures. The shower is set against a wall of light-colored, rectangular tiles. The glass door is framed in black, and the showerhead and hand shower are also black. The floor is a light-colored, smooth material.

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A close-up of a shower door handle. The handle is a long, horizontal, black bar with a small circular detail at each end. It is mounted on a glass door. The background is a wall of light-colored, rectangular tiles.

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## An Eggs-ellent Lunch In praise of the omelette

Eggs are always a satisfying and easy lunch choice, and the omelette is the King of the egg dishes.

Eggs are packed with essential nutrients. They're a natural source of high-quality proteins, essential amino acids, and crucial vitamins like B12 and D. Additionally, the yolk contains choline, an essential nutrient that supports brain health. By munching a lunchtime omelette, you're nourishing your body with vital nutrients to keep you energized throughout the afternoon.

The beauty of the omelette is

its adaptability. Whether you crave a simple cheese and herb mix or an exotic blend of veggies, meats, and spices, the omelette can be customized to suit every palate. This means it's nearly impossible to get bored with omelettes. In this fast-paced world spending hours in the kitchen at lunchtime isn't feasible. Omelettes are quick to prepare and cook. All you need is a hot pan, a few ingredients, and a delicious omelette can be yours in mere minutes. Regardless of your dietary preferences or restrictions (unless you're allergic to eggs



in which case I am deeply sorry for writing about omelettes!) there is an omelette for you. From low-carb and keto to vegetarian or low calorie, the omelette can be tailored to align with your needs. With their combination of nutrition, versatility, convenience, and affordability omelettes are a standout choice for lunch. So, the next time you're pondering over what to eat for your mid-day meal, consider the humble yet delicious omelette.

# Understanding Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control: Breaking the Silence

**Domestic abuse, often known as domestic violence, is a deeply concerning issue affecting many relationships. Legal Director, Dipika Mistry, at Solihull-based law firm Shakespeare Martineau explains what it is and how you can get legal support.**

## **What is domestic abuse?**

Domestic abuse is a pattern of behaviour used by one partner to maintain power and control over another within a relationship. The behaviour can be physical, emotional, sexual, financial, or digital abuse. It also be controlling behaviour, with coercive control being one of its subtle yet profoundly damaging aspects. It is important to recognize the signs, and importantly, break the cycle.

## **What is coercive control?**

Coercive control is subtle. The abuser may be manipulative, intimidating, and use psychological tactics to dominate their partner. Unlike physical abuse, coercive control operates on emotional and mental levels, making it harder to recognise. Victims can become isolated from friends and family because their partner is monitoring them, or limiting their access to money. They may also doubt their perceptions and feelings because they are being 'gaslighted', which is when the abuser uses manipulation to make victims question their own sanity or powers of reasoning.

## **What legal advice is available?**

There are steps which can be taken to put legal protections such as Non-Molestation and Occupation Orders. A Non-Molestation Order gives protection from violence, threats and intimidation and harassment. Breaching this order is an arrestable offence and can lead to imprisonment. An Occupation Order deals with living arrangements within a family home and grants a right to stay in the home, or restricts another family member from entering or living in the same property even if they are a legal owner. This order is especially important in domestic violence situations, as it allows victims and their children to remain in their homes without fear. Such court orders can be obtained from the Family Court. Legal advice from a family law solicitor is crucial and will help you understand your rights and options fully.

## **Take action**

Domestic abuse and coercive control have no place in a healthy relationship. Understanding the signs, seeking help, and empowering yourself are essential steps toward breaking free from the cycle of abuse. Remember, you are not alone, and there is help available.

**If you, or a friend or family member are affected by the contents of this article call the National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247.  
If you are in immediate danger, call 999.**



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# How Secure is your Wi-Fi?

**H**ow much thought do you give to your home Wi-Fi security? Probably not enough. An insecure home Wi-Fi network means that outsiders can easily access it, and as well as using your internet for free, they can exploit it for malicious activities. They could access data on devices connected to that network, including passwords, financial data, personal photos, and confidential documents. Someone could even use your network to engage in illegal activities online which could be traced back to you. Even if unauthorized users aren't engaging in malicious activity, the added traffic can lead to network congestion, resulting in reduced performance for legitimate users.

Wi-Fi security might seem daunting, but it's more about taking the right steps than it is about technical complexity. Here are areas where people often slip up:

**Setup:** Adjusting router settings feels like a chore, but investing a little time now can prevent problems later. Make it a point to familiarize yourself with your router's control panel.

**Weak Passwords:** Opt for a robust Wi-Fi password. Avoid easily guessable



passwords like "password" or "12345678", or your surname!

**Default Admin Passwords:**

Replace the generic passwords e.g., 'admin', that your router came with to prevent unauthorized access.

**Using Outmoded Security**

**Protocols:** Move beyond outdated encryption like WEP or even WPA. WPA3 is the newest standard, so look for routers that support it.

**Enabled Vulnerable Services:**

Disable insecure features like Wi-Fi Protected Setup (WPS) and Universal Plug and Play (UPnP), which can be easily exploited. Unnecessary Remote **Access:** Unless essential, turn off

remote access to your router to prevent external threats.

**Ignoring Guest Networks:** Use the guest network feature for visitors to keep them separate from your primary network.

This limits their access to sensitive files and devices.

**Smart Devices on Main**

**Network:** Assign smart home gadgets to a guest network. This prevents potential security lapses from affecting your main devices.

**NOTE** Hiding your Wi-Fi network means disabling the "SSID broadcast" feature on your router, making the network name (SSID) invisible to most users. While it might seem like a smart security measure, there are several problems associated with it:

It can give you a false sense of security, because hiding your SSID doesn't make your network invisible to everyone. People with the right tools or software can still detect hidden networks and their SSIDs.

Also, every time you want to add a new device to your network, you'll need to manually input the SSID and password since the network won't appear in the list of available Wi-Fi connections. This can be inconvenient and troublesome, especially for less tech-savvy individuals.

Most importantly hiding your SSID is not a substitute for implementing robust security measures, such as strong encryption (like WPA3) and a solid password.

Hopefully I've helped you understand a little better how to protect your home Wi-Fi so that you can stream and surf safely.

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# Pear and Chocolate Pudding Cake

A light and luscious cake using in-season pears.



**Preparation time:** 20 min

**Cooking time:** 40 min

**Serves:** 8

## Ingredients

85g butter, plus 1  
tbsp extra for tin  
85g golden caster sugar,  
plus extra for tin  
85g gluten-free dark  
chocolate, broken  
into pieces.  
1 tbsp brandy  
3 eggs, separated.  
85g hazelnuts or almonds,  
toasted and ground in  
a food processor.  
4 very ripe pears, peeled,  
halved, and cored.  
Icing sugar, for dusting

## Method

Grease the sides of a  
25cm loose-bottomed  
cake tin and line the base

with baking parchment.  
Sprinkle in 2 tbsp caster  
sugar and swirl it around to  
coat the base and sides,  
then tip out any excess.  
Preheat the oven to 180C/  
fan 160C/gas 4. Melt the  
chocolate and butter in  
a bowl over a pan of hot  
water, remove from the  
heat, stir in the brandy  
and leave to cool.

Whisk the egg yolks with the  
caster sugar in a large bowl  
until pale and thick; then fold  
into the cooled chocolate  
along with the ground  
hazelnuts or almonds.

In a separate bowl, with a

clean whisk, beat the whites  
until they reach a soft peak  
(don't over beat). Stir a  
spoonful of the whites into  
the chocolate mix, then  
carefully fold in the rest of  
them in. Spoon the mixture  
into the prepared tin. Level it  
off, then arrange the pears  
over the mixture, cut side  
down. Bake for about 40  
mins until the pears are soft  
and the cake is cooked  
all the way through. Leave  
to cool in the tin for five  
minutes before releasing  
it, then place on a rack  
to cool completely.

Dust with icing sugar and  
serve with crème fraîche.

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# a good read

By Natasha Donovan

## Infinite Detail

by Tim Maughan

Maughan's debut novel is a mesmerizing and thought-provoking exploration of a future world shattered by the sudden collapse of the internet. Set in a near-future dystopia, Maughan skilfully navigates the intricacies of a society that has lost its digital connectivity and the profound impact it has on both individuals and the collective consciousness. The novel weaves together two narrative threads: one set in the days leading up to the 'Zero Day' event, when the internet vanishes, and the other in the aftermath, where society grapples with the consequences. Maughan's prose is both evocative and insightful, capturing the tension and unease of a world suddenly thrust into chaos. Through a cast of compelling characters, he explores how our reliance on technology shapes our identities, relationships, and perceptions.

Maughan's vision of a post-internet world is hauntingly vivid, painting a picture of a society in disarray, where once-thriving cities become desolate and communities fragment. As characters navigate this new reality, the author delves into themes of power, surveillance, and the blurred lines between the virtual and the real. The novel's exploration of the human condition amidst technological collapse is deeply resonant, inviting readers to contemplate their own relationship with the digital realm. It's a cautionary tale; a portrait of the fragility of our current status quo, and it is as thought-provoking as it is terrifying; you won't ever take your Wi-Fi for granted again.



## Time Travelling with a Hamster

by Ross Welford

This is a delightful and heartwarming novel aimed at young readers aged 8-12. It masterfully combines the complexities of time travel with a touching exploration of family bonds and personal growth. The story follows Al Chaudhury, a twelve-year-old boy who stumbles upon a time machine built by his late father. Filled with a mix of curiosity and determination, Al embarks on a mission to change the past and save his father's life.

Welford's writing is imbued with a genuine sense of wonder and a keen understanding of a young person's perspective. Al goes on a rollercoaster adventure through time, navigating paradoxes and unforeseen consequences with pluck and humour. Al's interactions with his pet hamster, a hilarious and unlikely companion in his journey, add a nice touch of whimsy to the story.

This is a beautiful novel about the emotional complexity of loss, and the lengths one is willing to go to mend a fractured family. Al's relationship with his late father, the mystery surrounding his last words, and the bond he shares with his unconventional grandfather all contribute to the novel's emotional depth. Through the intricacies of time travel, the author explores the idea that every action has a ripple effect, highlighting the importance of accepting the past while embracing the present.

Time Travelling with a Hamster captures the essence of childhood curiosity, resilience, and the power of love. It effortlessly weaves together science fiction elements with relatable coming-of-age experiences, making it a captivating read for young readers and adults alike. It is a heartwarming tale that reminds us of the preciousness of time and the significance of the relationships that shape our lives.





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**St. Andrew's Day - November 30th**

## How did St Andrew (who never set foot in Scotland) become its patron Saint?

**B**orn in Bethsaida on the Sea of Galilee, Andrew was the brother of Peter. Before following Jesus, both brothers were fishermen. In Christian tradition, St. Andrew was known for his strong faith and fervent devotion, and he is credited with being the first apostle and introducing his brother to Jesus. His missionary journeys are believed to have included areas like Greece, Turkey, and possibly parts of modern-day Russia and Poland.

However, what ties St. Andrew to Scotland is not his life but

the manner of his martyrdom and subsequent legends. After Jesus died, Andrew continued to preach about Jesus and his teachings. The Roman rulers took exception to this and martyred Andrew for his beliefs.

Andrew was crucified on an X-Shaped cross, called "Crux Decussata", more commonly known as the Saltire, or St.

Andrew's Cross. The connection with Scotland deepened with legends suggesting that some of St. Andrew's relics were brought to Scotland by St. Regulus. St Andrew has been



celebrated in Scotland for over one thousand years, with feasts being held in his honour as far back as the year 1000 AD. However, it wasn't until 1320, when Scotland's independence was declared with the signing of The Declaration of Arbroath, that he officially became Scotland's patron saint.



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# Saqib Bhatti MP

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## Get in touch



*It has been another year to remember with so much happening locally and nationally. This year we saw the nation celebrate the coronation of King Charles III. The joyous event brought communities together on a momentous day to welcome a new chapter of the British monarchy. It was also a year to remember for sports with the England women's football team making it all the way to the World Cup Final. Locally we have seen a host of wonderful local community events from fun runs to fireworks displays. I've enjoyed attending all of these events and look forward to another amazing year of community spirit.*

*This festive season I am particularly excited to visit our local shops and support the wonderful businesses in our community. From a wide range of shops to restaurants and cafes, our constituency is home to many exciting businesses, and I encourage everyone to show them support by shopping locally. On the topic of local talent thank you to all the local primary schools that have participated in my Christmas card competition! Picking a winner is always one of the hardest tasks I have to undertake with so many amazing entries and I am always blown away by the talent on display in our community.*

*Particularly at this time of the year, I am sure that you will join me in saying a prayer for those less fortunate than us and praying for peace around the world. As ever, my office remains open and we are conducting surgery appointments, so do not hesitate to book a slot. My contact details can be found below.*

***Finally, I would like to take this chance to say, from my family to yours, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.***

### Constituency office:

631 Warwick Road, Solihull B91 1AR



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