

the shirley index

a community magazine and business directory
for residents of shirley

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Did you have an Eggsellent Easter?!

Welcome to the April edition

I hope you enjoyed your lovely long Bank Holiday weekend - whether you relaxed at home, jetted off on a long-awaited break, or just used the time to catch up on all those jobs that never seem to get done.

And if you need help sorting out that never-ending 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.

Zoe Reece
Tel: 07557 220585
Email: zoe@dorridgedirectory.com
www.shirleyindex.com

A close-up photograph of a hand pressing a large, pink key on a white computer keyboard. The key has the word 'Advertise' written on it in white. The text 'ADVERTISE HERE' is overlaid in large, bold, pink letters at the top left of the image.

**ADVERTISE
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No issues at any time. Good, responsive communication from the office, the various teams on site were polite, friendly and low maintenance, the site was left tidy after each day's work, and most importantly, the job looked great when complete. Thoroughly recommended.

AndyE-230 / 31 Jan 2024

community events

Soul, Funk & Disco Night

27 April 7pm, Knowle British Legion Club, Warwick Road, Knowle

Get ready for a night of great fun, singing and dancing away to your favourite soul and disco classics. Tickets from www.ticketsource.co.uk

Boogie Bingo

4 May, Nailcote Hall

Are you ready to shake your booty and win big at Boogie Bingo? There's disco lights, a groovy DJ, and the best game of bingo you've ever played! But that's not all - fantastic prizes will have you jumping out of your seat with excitement! Tickets from www.nailcotehall.co.uk

Matilda in Concert

12 May, 11am and 3pm, NEC

Prepare to be enchanted for this first-ever film-with-orchestra experience under the grand Big Top tent at the North 5 Outdoor Event Space at the NEC. You'll also be able to enjoy an array of food stalls, bars, and fairground rides. Tickets from www.thenec.co.uk

Art exhibition

21 May - 10 June, The Courtyard Gallery, The Core, Touchwood

Local artist and art lecturer, Vicky ArtsAndCraftsV, is set to captivate audiences with her solo exhibition Beautiful Open Spaces. The exhibition promises a feast



for the senses, inviting visitors to immerse themselves in the vibrant world of her acrylic paintings. For more information visit www.ArtsAndCraftsV.com



Charity Plant Sale

25 May from 12 noon, 64 Lawnswood Avenue, Shirley

Shirley Lions annual plant sale in aid of Prostate Cancer Research. Hundreds of plants, shrubs, flowers, and vegetables for sale plus numerous gardening books. The sale will finish when everything is sold. As the aim is to raise funds for charity, attendees can donate what they feel their purchases are worth.

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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 14

Mindbenders

Can you find the hidden phrases?

answers on page 14

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Gut Feeling

Why IBS can be a pain...literally

Unglamorous they may be, but our guts are complex and clever. The gut is an hydraulic engineering system with its own brain and nervous system; its own immune system and its own hormone-producing system. It deals with digestion and absorption and defends us against infection.

Gut contents are squeezed along by muscular action. The various parts are separated by sphincters, little muscular trapdoors, which regulate speed and direction of travel. Food takes about 24 hours to travel through a healthy gut.

Because the gut is so complex perhaps it's unsurprising that it malfunctions quite easily.

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is the most common problem experienced and up to 1 in 5 of us may suffer it at some point. Sufferers can experience constipation, diarrhoea, bloating, nausea, and colic. But why?

Gut muscles mix and move the contents, but the gut has to know what it's dealing with, so it knows which digestive hormones

to release, when to release them and in what quantities (it doesn't want to digest itself!)

Amazingly, it can detect different molecular structures which make up the foods we eat. It knows which ones require the release of bile for instance and which ones don't. The enteric nervous system, which governs all this, functions like a second brain and is very finely attuned. It



has to be bombarded with food, drink, and air, it's a constant challenge for the gut to maintain constancy.

Our brain pays close attention to the 'gut brain' and researchers have found that if the enteric nervous system is stimulated it can help depression, epilepsy and even memory. In fact, 90% of gut nerves take information to the brain and only 10%

receive information from it.

IBS has historically been thought of as a psychological or neurotic problem but in fact scientists are now discovering that the close communication between brain and gut means that stress can cause very real problems, impairing the nerve function and causing marked sensory pain. If we know that a sufferer experiences more pain when they are

stressed we can use neurochemicals to block the response. Tri-cyclics are particularly helpful agents.

There is also a relationship with serotonin (often connected with depression). In fact, 95% of the body's serotonin is found in the gut. Detector cells in the lining of the gut squirt serotonin which

excites the nerve fibres. Some people cannot turn this process off again though which can either cause diarrhoea, or, if the nerves are stimulated to the point of exhaustion, constipation.

People with IBS often give up hope of relieving their discomfort, but there is now good quality medical help available, so consult your GP. You don't have to suffer.

a good read

By Natasha Donovan

The Seven Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle

by Stuart Turton

Our hero awakens in a mysterious, damp forest, clad in an unfamiliar tuxedo and inhabiting a body that isn't his own. With no recollection of his identity or how he came to be in this situation, he makes his way to Blackheath House, and soon discovers he is Aiden Bishop, trapped there for a purpose. A masked figure reveals to him that a disguised murder is set to occur that day. Bishop has eight attempts to unravel it, reliving the same day in different bodies, each termed a "host." He retains memories from each host, but failure to identify the killer by the eighth cycle means a reset to day one, with all memories wiped, a cycle he has already undergone numerous times. As Bishop gradually begins to make sense of his predicament, he learns of competitors: two others at the country house party are also inhabiting foreign souls, each racing to solve the murder to escape the time loop. As if this was not enough peril, a relentless psychopath is also pursuing him, threatening each of his hosts.

Author Turton masterfully orchestrates a narrative replete with diverse, enigmatic characters, while scattering random clues throughout. The 'rules' of the story rules evolve as Bishop navigates his way through each day. I'm doubting that many readers will solve the mystery before the final plot twist.

It's Agatha Christie, Cluedo, and Groundhog Day, with a twist of time loop chaos. It takes a while to orientate yourself within the story but it's well worth the effort. Turton's debut novel is inventive, chaotic, and brilliantly bonkers. Buckle up and hold on tight.



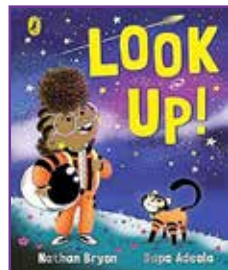
Look Up!

by Nathan Bryon and illustrated by Dapo Adeola

Rocket dreams of becoming the most brilliant star-catcher, and space explorer in the world, like her idol Mae Jemison, the first African-American woman in space. Fizzing with excitement about an imminent meteor shower, Rocket

makes an announcement about it over the supermarket loudspeaker while the cashier is distracted. She makes and distributes flyers to all the shoppers, despite her older brother Jamal's disapproval and embarrassment. Jamal is usually engrossed in his phone and video games and finds Rocket annoying. When he's too absorbed in gaming to take Rocket to the park to see the meteor shower, Rocket faces a dilemma. But an unexpected visitor at their door turns out to be a delightful could save the day in the most delightful manner.

Bryon and Adeola's captivating picture book introduces us to chatty, Rocket, a character whose passion for space is all-consuming. Adeola's characterful illustrations capture Jamal's angsty teenage moodiness and Rocket's excitement about stargazing. Packed with space facts and insights into meteors, this book also beautifully depicts family dynamics, sibling bonds, and a young girl's contagious zeal for the cosmos.



An annual pleasure

Every year since I began to garden, come spring, I grabbed my spade and in a fit of enthusiasm I dug over the soil. Then I filled any empty spaces with annuals. These might be carefully nurtured in my greenhouse, sprinkled direct from the packet, or purchased in packs at my local garden centre.

Several years ago, due to an injury, I was unable to get out and begin this frenzy of activity. I resigned myself to the fact that my garden simply wouldn't be as colourful that year. Nature however had other plans.

As I waited for my perennials to surface something wonderful happened. Hundreds of self-sown annuals from the previous year also began to surface. They'd been there all along,

just waiting for the warm spring sun to bring them to life.

It occurred to me that my habit of stopping deadheading towards the end of the season (to leave some interesting seed heads which feed the birds and look so pretty covered in frost) had benefitted me in more ways than the one I'd intended.

Calendula, Candytuft, Cosmos, Larkspur, Nicotiana, Poppies, Sweet Alyssum and Love-in-a-Mist were popping up everywhere I looked. I've never been so delighted.

I waited until they were a couple of inches tall then on a slightly drizzly day I eased some out and transferred them to barer soil.

My reward was a display of annuals every bit as lovely as if I'd spent hours with my spade and trowel.

So last year I experimented.

Throughout the flowering season I noted where I might need an extra patch or two of colour and then, when I stopped deadheading, I simply grabbed a few seed heads and dropped them in the appropriate spot.

That spring and summer I had another beautiful display of annuals. Why hadn't I discovered this lazy way to garden before?

Of course, there are some teeny disadvantages. The main one is that annuals grown from seed flower later than those bought as plugs or plants from garden centres. Don't let this put you off though. If you have a good range of perennials the annuals can take their time, taking over when the others begin to fade. Also, no-one says it has to be all or nothing. I have a passion for cosmos, so I bring in a few plants early on every year. That way I can savour their pretty blooms right through the season.

So, if you're planting annuals this spring, plan ahead a little. Look at your garden as an evolving piece of work and let at least some of them self-seed. Then next year don't be so quick to brandish a spade... you'll gain two commodities gardeners always need more of...time and money.



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

Sudoku Solution

from page 8

Solution to Mind benders

1. Perfect storm
2. Two peas in a pod
3. Code breaker

mindbenders

from page 9

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