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a community magazine and business directory  
for residents of shirley

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# Welcome to the new Shirley Index magazine

Welcome to the May edition...

**The Shirley Index is a new magazine that aims to put the local community in touch with businesses and tradespeople in the area. The magazine also contains information about what's going on in the area as well as some interesting articles, so we hope you find it useful and informative.**

May's one of the best months of the year - we're firmly in the Spring and have all the anticipation of a lovely Summer ahead, fingers crossed! It's also a great time for getting your garden looking lovely or for selling your home. We've got a great range of local, reliable businesses in here who can help you get your garden ready and update any aspect of your home, from your roof to drive, your garden to your kitchen - whether you're getting it ready to sell or just want to update it for your own benefit.

Wishing you a great month ahead. Until next month,



Zoe Reece

Tel: 07557 220585

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

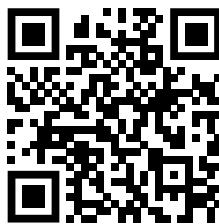
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## contents

- 6 Events
- 19 Book reviews
- 23 Competition
- 24 Recipe
- 27 Puzzles
- 30 Index

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he has it down to a tee! Listen to favourites such as A New Flame, Money's Too Tight To Mention, Stars, and Holding Back The Years. Visit [seetickets.com](http://seetickets.com) to book

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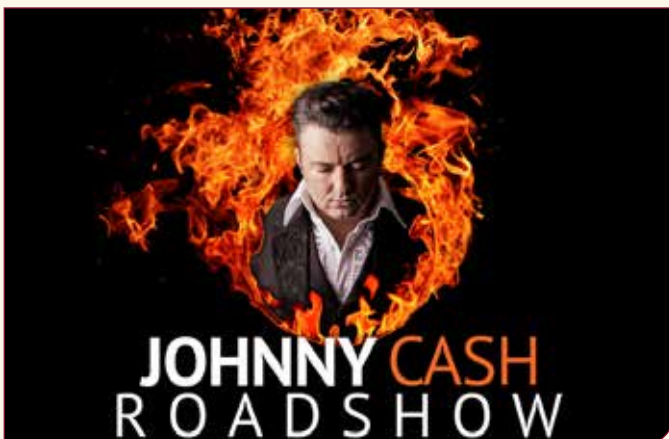
**21 May. Shirley Royal  
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DJ Dancerider made a real name for himself during Lockdown by providing top class reggae music live each week from The Reggae Shed. He is now a well-recognised, top class Midland's reggae DJ who is bringing his decks to Shirley. Tickets from [ticketsource.co.uk](http://ticketsource.co.uk)

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**The Internet** Most libraries provide free internet access for members, although you

may need to book in advance. This gives you the chance to shop, email, work or just mooch about on social networks if you don't have

the internet at home.

**Education** Libraries are brilliant for academic research. They have everything you need in one place. And if your local library doesn't have what you need, they can order it in for

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## Mindbenders

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answers on page 30

# a good read

reviews By Willow Coby

## The Last Thing He Told Me

by Laura Dave

Before Owen Michaels disappears, he manages to smuggle a note to Hannah, his wife of one year: Protect her. Hannah while understandably scared and confused knows exactly who the note refers to. It's Owen's sixteen-year-old daughter Bailey, who lost her mother when she was very young and wants absolutely nothing to do with her new stepmother. As the FBI arrest Owen's boss and US Marshals arrive her home, Hannah realizes her husband may not be who he said he was. If you love a mystery but crave a reprieve from the usual bloody murder and maverick detective scenario, Laura Dave's novel about a man living a lie and his wife and daughter desperately trying to find out who he really is, might be the perfect solution. The mystery of Owen's past is certainly intriguing, but the strength of this book really lies in the characters. This is not a book about Hannah's relationship with Owen, but about her evolving relationship with Bailey. The mother and stepdaughter are forced to set out to discover what it is Owen was hiding, and quickly realise that it goes way beyond the financial fraud his company is accused of. As the tension builds, they don't know who to believe or who they can trust, so they're forced to depend on each other. In the end, the story deals with what it means to be a mother, protecting a child, and the child coming to terms with her world being turned upside down for the second time in her young life. Anyone who has taken on the role of stepmother will probably identify with Hannah and Bailey's relationship on many levels. This isn't a fast-paced novel, but it moves along nicely. It's told in the present using flashbacks to Hannah's marriage to Owen. Hannah is a strong



character, resilient and compassionate with authentic emotions. She's also immensely practical and is not afraid to take matters into her own hands. There are numerous twists and turns, that take them from their home in California to Austin Texas, and the truth when it comes is shockingly unexpected.

## The Suitcase Kid

by Jacqueline Wilson with Nick Sharratt (Illustrations)

Ten-year-old Andrea, known as Andy, is an only child who has always lived at Mulberry Cottage with her mum and dad. But when they split up, Andy has to say goodbye to her childhood home. She's pushed from pillar to post by her mum and dad as they struggle to work out a suitable visitation arrangement. She spends one week at her mum's and one week at her dad's. Suddenly she's coping with the divorce, two new homes, and two new mis-matched families with stepbrothers and stepsisters, not all of whom are nice! She now has five siblings and nowhere to call home. No wonder Andy struggles to feel part of either family and craves her old home and life. Jacqueline Wilson is a consummate storyteller, with a real understanding of a child's inner world. She tells the story poignantly, using Andy as the narrator, confiding her inner most thoughts and fears to the reader in language they can relate to. Can Andy overcome her feelings of not belonging, find new friends, family allies and a sense of belonging?



# The Platinum Jubilee

## It's a mug's game!

Unless you've been living as a hermit it can't have escaped your notice that a significant event takes place this month. That's right...we all have an extra day's holiday to look forward to. Oh, and Her Majesty celebrates her Platinum Jubilee

Jubilees have always been significant events in the history of our country. Even as I type the shop shelves are groaning under the weight of commemorative mugs, and TV adverts exhort us to send off for decorative coins. I'd always assumed that Royal souvenirs were a relatively modern invention, but in fact they have been a popular way of marking royal jubilees and weddings for the last three centuries.

The earliest known English commemorative items date from the Restoration of Charles II, in 1660. They must have been a hit because more followed for his Coronation in 1661 and wedding in 1662! At first such items were purchased only by the wealthy, but as new manufacturing methods developed the ordinary general public was able to buy a little piece of Royal history too. What they bought hasn't changed a great deal over the years: the most popular items are and have always been coins, stamps and ceramics, especially mugs. Oh us Brits do love a Royal mug. Maybe it's related to our love of tea!

Special issue coins were first used to mark the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887. The majority of jubilee coins are issued in 'crown' size. This has nothing to do with a royal crown but is in fact the size of an old crown coin, which was equal in value to 5 shillings. The reason for this is that the large size of the coin allows for more detail. These special coins are not intended for general use and are almost always collected in uncirculated mint condition.

The first stamps associated with a Royal



event were those issued in 1887, the year of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. Interestingly they were not intended as commemorative issues and were never released as a set. Specific Jubilee sets of stamps were first issued in 1935 for George V's Jubilee.

Ceramics have always been popular Royal souvenirs. Commemorative jugs, vases, mugs, and plates survive in significant numbers from the reign of George III onwards.

But it seems the imaginations of the souvenir producers know no limits. Everything from wallpaper to underwear has been given some sort of a Royal twist in times past.

Because most souvenirs are now mass produced they have little commercial value long term, but they're fun and colourful, and a nice little piece of history. I still have the Silver Jubilee coin I was given at primary school.



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# De-Clutter

## Live with less

If you can't lay your hands-on items quickly because they're buried under piles of junk; if you're constantly 'stuff-shifting' - moving things from one pile to a new 'temporary' pile; if you find yourself thinking, "I can't throw this away, it might come in useful one day," you're probably a clutter victim.

One of the side-effects of the events of 2020 was that many of us had more time and less money. We embraced a simpler, slower, less covetous lifestyle and many of us feel we'd like to keep something of that as we move towards a post-pandemic world. There was a collective realisation that possessions are less important than the people we missed.

A decade ago, Californian blogger Dave Bruno set himself the year-long experimental task of reducing his belongings to just 100 items. When his experiment concluded he found he wanted to keep living by his new rules, preferring simplicity to consumerism. His book is worth seeking out.

Since then, whole movement has developed around the aim of a simpler, more minimalistic lifestyle. There are some great blogs and podcasts available: The Practical Minimalists, and The Minimalists are two worth listening to. Listen to them for inspiration while you declutter. I'm not

recommending a sparse monastic lifestyle, but most of us put far too much time, effort, and money into acquiring, keeping, and storing possessions. Sometimes it's good to let go.

If you're ready to de-clutter, then we have a few simple tips. If you feel you need help, there are experts in de-cluttering who will guide you through the process of letting go.

### De-cluttering Tips

**Deal with one room at a time** The task will seem less daunting. Stick with that room until it's finished.

**Choose a nice day** Take the room contents outside. Psychologically it's easier to sort and let go if you're one step removed. It's also less likely that the clutter will make it back inside.

**Sort everything into three piles** Label them dump, donate, and keep. Be realistic: if the item in question hasn't been used for over a year it is unlikely you will ever use it.

**Deal with the dump and donate piles** Do this before anything comes back into the house. It's much harder to mess up your good work if the stuff is physically gone.

**Sort and label** Place the remaining items in clearly labelled boxes. Make sure there is one temporary box to house items which really belong in another room. As each room is sorted those items can be replaced, and other misplaced items can be housed there while the de-cluttering process continues.

**Replace everything that remains** The maxim 'A place for everything and everything in its place' is a good one. House small items in clear plastic boxes and store them in cupboards or wardrobes.

Now you're done instigate a one thing in: one thing out rule. It will make you think twice about acquiring something if you know something else has to go.



# COMPETITION

## Win 4 tickets

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**Like us on Facebook to make sure you don't miss out on other local competitions and offers.**

\* The winner will be drawn at random and notified on 26 May 2022. To qualify you must be a resident of Solihull.



# Carrot Sweet Potato and Feta Fritters

A tasty snack or a light vegetarian meal



**Serves:** 4

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes, plus draining time

## Ingredients

800g carrots  
2 large potatoes  
1 large onion  
600g sweet potatoes  
5 medium free-range eggs  
200g feta, crumbled  
6 tbsp wholemeal flour  
25g fresh coriander, chopped  
2 tbsp cumin seeds  
300ml vegetable oil  
Green salad, lime wedges  
and yogurt to serve

## Method

Peel and grate the carrots, potatoes, onion, and sweet potatoes. Place them into a colander or a large sieve over the sink with a big pinch of salt, and leave to drain for 30 minutes. Take a large bowl and in it combine the eggs, feta cheese, flour, coriander, and cumin seeds. Beat with a fork until well mixed. Squeeze as much liquid from the grated veg as you can, pressing down hard into

the colander or sieve for 1-2 minutes, then add the grated veg to the egg mixture. Stir to combine well and season generously. Heat the oven to 150C/fan130C/gas 2. Heat the oil in a wok or deep saucepan to 180°C, or until a cube of bread sizzles. Put dollops of the mix into a slotted spoon and lower into the hot oil. Cook 2-3 at a time: fry for 1-2 minutes, then turn the fritters over and repeat until golden. Put on a plate and keep warm in an oven set to low.



# Partnership Perfection

When we think about climbing plants, we most often think about growing them to cover a wall or a fence. We might think about growing

them over a dead tree stump too, but one of the nicest ways to grow them is through a living tree or a shrub. It's an excellent way of providing more interest in the same space, either by timing each plant's display so they follow on from each other, or by timing the flowering so they bloom at the same time, thus doubling the impact of the display.

There are a few rules you need to follow when you plant a climber with the intention of growing it up a living host. First, the host shrub or tree should be established, woody, and strong enough to hold up the climber's weight when it's fully grown and flowering. Second you don't want to use too vigorous a climber, otherwise it might swamp the host. Finally, avoid fast-growing evergreen climbers because they prevent light getting to the host, and may cause it to develop disease and die. You can certainly use less aggressive evergreens such as the ivy *Hedera 'pedata'* or *Hedera 'Curlylocks'* around the base of well-established trees. These will look beautiful without overwhelming the structure and flowering of the host plant.

Climbers that look good over trees and shrubs are typically, clematis, honeysuckle, and roses. Look for species that grow to 3m or less as these are ideal for growing up most garden trees. Species that are cut back to 15-20cm every winter are also ideal. Clematis '*Abundance*', '*Etoile Violette*' and '*Little Nell*' are all good choices.

Honeysuckle can often be seen (and smelled) growing through trees in the wild. For your garden look for cultivars of the common honeysuckle, such as *Lonicera periclymenum*.



Rambling roses can grow to monstrous proportions, so look for smaller varieties such as '*City of York*' and '*Parade*', which also have a long season of interest.

If you have a cool moist area try growing the perennial nasturtium, *Tropaeolum speciosum*. The jewel-coloured flowers will brighten a darker space.

## Tips for successful pairing

Don't plant the climber too close to the base of the host or they will be competing for the same water and nutrients.

Counterintuitively plant the climber on the shadier side of the host. That way the climber will be forced to grow towards the light.

If you plant the climber in a large plastic pot with the bottom cut out, it helps contain the plant and reduces competition.

# Car Booty?

## A very British treasure hunt

ate spring is the time when car boot sales pop up all over the country. There is something very British about wandering through a field full of cars, poking around in cardboard boxes of other people's belongings hunting for treasure. We probably all harbour a secret fantasy of appearing on The Antiques Roadshow and saying brightly "I bought it at a car boot sale for 10p," just before the expert responds, "Well it's actually a 17th century masterpiece, very rare and if it came to auction it would sell for thousands." Ok that's unlikely to happen but you might be able to refurnish your home and replenish your wardrobe for just a few pounds, and if you want to make a few pounds from your own decluttering and don't mind an early start, holding a car boot sale can be quite lucrative.

If you're buying the best deals are usually found at the beginning and end of the sale. The best quality items are usually found at the start, while the best prices are found as proceedings are wrapping up. It helps to know broadly what items you intend to buy before arriving because it's easy to get carried away. Haggling is expected, but don't insult sellers by offering too little: Items are very low-priced to begin with.

If you are going to sell at a car boot sale you need to be prepared. Decide whether you want to clear your clutter or make money: you can't always do both. Remember no matter how cheaply you price your goods, people will haggle. You could have a 'Rembrandt' on sale for a pound and someone would offer you fifty pence. Price labels are useful. Block price some items such as "all books fifty pence, three for a pound". Clearly mark anything not included in the block pricing system. Take lots of change with you, plenty of



carrier bags and some old newspapers with which to wrap fragile items. Going in with a friend is a good idea, both for the company and also to help out when either of you need to nip to the loo, or want to browse other stalls.

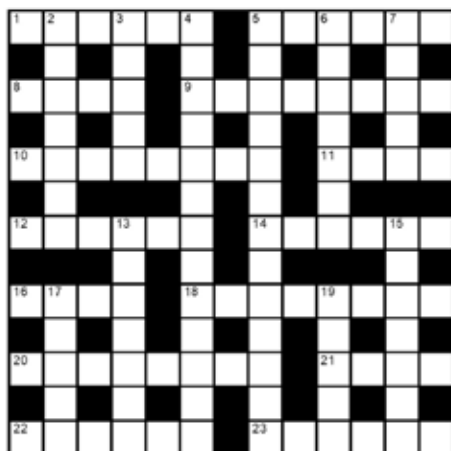
Make sure you pack your table in the car last, so it's the first item to come out and not buried under everything else. Be warned; on arrival at the sale ground you may be mobbed by a canny crowd of experienced 'booters' hunting for bargains. These folk tend to be dealers and they can be intimidating. They are after cheap buys to resell. Consider waiting in your car for a while to give them time to disappear before you unpack.

Busy stalls attract more people so pile it high and sell it cheap. Welcome everyone who approaches your table with a warm smile and a cheery greeting. As the end of the day approaches, cut your prices if you don't want to take everything home again.

Whether selling or buying, with the current economic climate, and energy prices soaring, this could be a bumper year for car boot sales.

People are much more clued up about collectables and antiques now, so it's harder to find 'real treasure'. But you never know, there's always a chance we may see you on The Antiques Roadshow!

## crossword



## clues

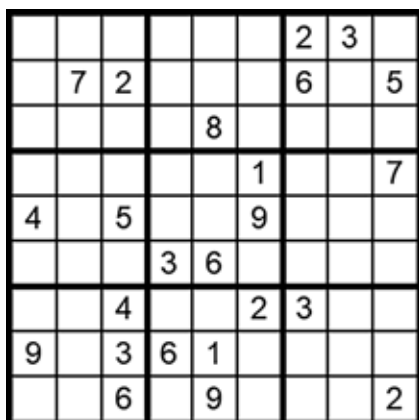
### Across

- 1 Dormant, slumbering (6)
- 5 Metallic element symbol Cu (6)
- 8 Drool, saliva (4)
- 9 Doesn't drink (8)
- 10 Copy from the internet (8)
- 11 Small, round salty cracker brand (4)
- 12 Erupting hot spring (6)
- 14 Custody, detain (6)
- 16 Sheath, husk (4)
- 18 Shows, displays (8)
- 20 Classic French loaf (8)
- 21 Arrange, catalogue (4)
- 22 White root vegetable (6)
- 23 Without effort (6)

### Down

- 2 Think, imagine (7)
- 3 Chewed and swallowed (5)
- 4 Rest and relax (3,4,4,2)
- 5 Goes well with crackers (7,6)
- 6 Coded instructions for computer (7)
- 7 Precise, accurate (5)
- 13 UV skin damage (7)
- 15 Genuine, real (7)
- 17 \_\_\_\_\_ Reeves, Hollywood actor (5)
- 19 Fundamental principle (5)

answer on page 30



## 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 30

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for Shirley**

Email: shirley@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

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

**Sudoku Solution**  
from page 27

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

**Crossword Solution**  
from page 27



**Solution to Mind benders**

1. All in all
2. Sit down and shut up
3. Broken promise

**mindbenders**  
from page 18



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