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# Autumn is approaching...

Welcome to the September edition

**It's a busy month with kids going back to school, and individuals getting ready for university.**

The roads are going to be busier, the mornings and evenings are going to get darker, but there's still lots to look forward to. We can start thinking ahead, planning Halloween treats, bonfire parties and eventually starting to think about Christmas plans. There's also lots of interesting and fun things going on locally – just check out page 6 for more details.



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# community events



## Quiz Night

**27 September 7.30pm, Knowle Village Hall.**

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## Botown – The Soul Of Bollywood

**28 September, 7pm, Core Theatre Solihull**

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## Wythall Beer & Cider Festival

**11 and 12 October, 12pm-11pm, Wythall Park**

The annual event is back raising funds for Wythall Park, with a choice of 20+ real ales and ciders alongside a fully-licensed bar. Live music and food. More information from [wythall-park.org.uk](http://wythall-park.org.uk) or Facebook.

## Tina Turner Tribute Night

**12 October, 7pm, Shirley British Legion**

Get ready for an electrifying evening of music, dance, and pure entertainment! Join in for a sensational Tina Turner Tribute Night that will have you dancing to the rhythm and feeling the soul of the iconic Tina Turner herself. Whether you're a die-hard Tina fan or simply looking for a fantastic night out, this event promises to be a night to remember. Tickets from [www.ticketsource.co.uk](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk)

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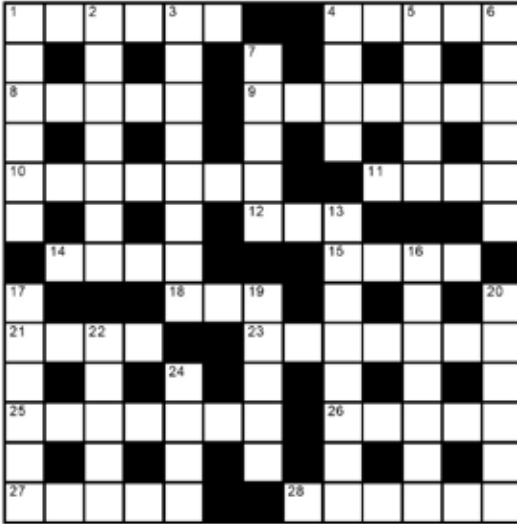
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### crossword



### clues

#### Across

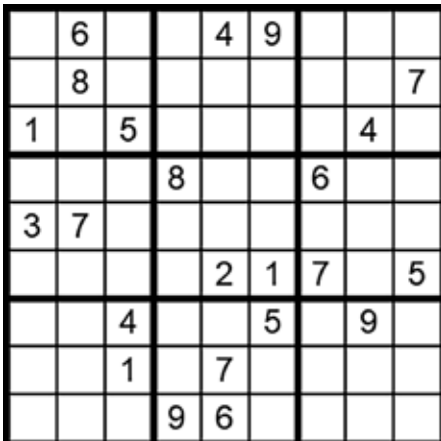
- 1 Eastern European country (6)
- 4 Thin crisp biscuit (5)
- 8 Overhaul, modernise (5)
- 9 Loudly, uproariously (7)
- 10 Slim, lithe (7)
- 11 Skin irritation (4)
- 12 Top, cover (3)
- 14 Jealousy (4)
- 15 Type of goat (4)
- 18 Weep, cry (3)
- 21 Retort, riposte (4)
- 23 Guitar-like instrument (7)
- 25 Conceded, endorsed (7)
- 26 Emaciated, cadaverous (5)
- 27 Black (5)
- 28 Onset, arrival (6)

#### Down

- 1 Church district (6)
- 2 Portable lamp (7)
- 3 In this day and age (8)
- 4 Lament, moan (4)
- 5 Pass out (5)
- 6 Beat pattern (6)
- 7 Growl, grumble (5)
- 13 Spilled the beans, disclosed (8)
- 16 Assassinate, kill (7)

- 17 Four-sided shape (6)
- 19 Chum, mate (5)
- 20 Group of six (6)
- 22 Eskimo house! (5)
- 24 Rock rhythmically (4)

answer on page 14



## 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



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answers on page 14

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# a good read

By Natasha Donovan

## The Swallows

by Lisa Lutz

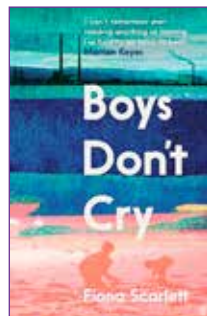
Alexandra Witt is a new teacher at the prestigious Stonebridge Academy where she quickly stumbles upon undercurrents of sexual exploitation and manipulation, which are poisoning the school. Disturbed by the casual acceptance of such behaviour, Witt takes it upon herself to empower the students, especially the girls, to challenge the status quo. This sparks a rebellion that gradually exposes the toxic culture perpetuated by a select group of male students known as "the darkroom." Lutz's narrative is sharp and fast-paced, weaving multiple viewpoints that allow the reader an insider view as events unfold within the school. Each character offers a unique perspective which serves to highlight the complexity of teenage dynamics and adult responsibilities. The climax of the book is both shocking and satisfying, providing a resolution that feels both inevitable and earned. The reader will be left pondering the dynamics of power and the courage required to overturn them. *The Swallows* is a darkly intriguing novel that blends elements of suspense with biting social commentary, which makes it stand out in the densely populated thriller genre. The writing is both witty and sharp, infused with a sardonic tone that perfectly complements the serious themes she tackles.



## Boys Don't Cry

by Fiona Scarlett

While not strictly young adult fiction, I'm recommending *Boys Don't Cry* for older teens, because it tells the story of two brothers, Joe, aged 17, who is a talented artist, and Finn, aged 12, through their own words. The boys live in a tower block in Dublin with their mother and father (known as Da'), who works for a local gang leader and is in and out of prison. Joe's accounts of how he is dealing with traumatic loss, while struggling against the criminal influences of his father and the expectations everyone else has of him, that he's destined for a life of crime, is heartbreaking. Finn on the other hand relates his experiences of being diagnosed with and treated for leukaemia, and the effect he sees this having on his brother and parents. Scarlett's prose is beautiful and the voices of the two boys are believable and authentic. Teen readers will quickly identify with and become emotionally invested in the brothers as their stories intertwine in the most impactful way. The author skilfully weaves humour through the sometimes harrowing themes, because even at life's darkest moments, or perhaps because of them, there are always flashes of hilarity. The stories of Joe, Finn and the other characters who live in 'The Jax' tower block will stay with the reader for a long time. My own teen suggested this title to me and thinks this should be on the GCSE English syllabus because of the engaging story and the author's insight into boy's lives and minds.



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**D**o you spring out of bed at 7am, ready to face the day?

Or do you wake up feeling tired and drained?

GPs are reporting that more and more patients complain of having no energy. So much so, that the syndrome has its own acronym –TATT, or ‘tired all the time.’ There are many different causes of fatigue, and it’s always a good idea to start by speaking to your GP or practice nurse.

Overwhelming exhaustion, which gets worse with activity and does not improve with rest, might be an indicator

of myalgic encephalopathy (ME) or chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS). A cure has not yet been found, but there are treatments and self-help measures that can ease the symptoms. A GP can also rule out conditions such as anaemia, thyroid problems, food intolerances or diabetes.

In the meantime, there are lifestyle changes which can help.

**Sleep** – Make sure you are getting enough good quality sleep. Try to keep to the same earlier bedtime for a few weeks and see if this helps. Sometimes an eye mask and or

earplugs are all that’s needed to improve sleep quality.

**Reduce stress** – Build relaxation into your daily schedule. This might be a bath, or listening to music, or even yoga or meditation.

**Diet** – Try eating small healthy snacks throughout the day, rather than one large meal in the evening. Reduce alcohol and caffeine, and drink more water.

Finally, you may not feel like it, but exercising is another proven way to fight fatigue. Even a quick 15-minute walk around the block will give you an energy boost.

## local police contact for Shirley

Email: [shirley@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk](mailto:shirley@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk)

### LOCAL COUNCILLORS

#### SHIRLEY WEST

**Dr Rosemary Sexton**

0121 285 3883  
[rosemary.sexton@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:rosemary.sexton@solihull.gov.uk)

**Tim Hodgson**

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**Maggie Allen**

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**Crossword Solution**  
from page 8

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

**Sudoku Solution**  
from page 8

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**midbenders**  
from page 10

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