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When talking to the Manager of Cloudy2Clear Richard Burke it became evident that the value of saving their customers money

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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.

Zoe

Zoe Reece

Tel: 07557 220585

Email: zoe@dorridgedirectory.com

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**GOT SOMETHING
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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

A Place In The Sun Live

19-21 September

NEC

With expert advice, informative seminars, a wide-ranging property showcase, and plenty of inspiration, the event provides everything you need to take the next step towards owning your perfect home abroad or making a successful relocation overseas. Tickets from www.aplaceinthesunevents.com/birmingham

Quiz Evening

26 September, 7.30pm prompt

Knowle Village Hall

Join in and enjoy the fun! Your team can be up to 6 people and tickets are £8 each. There are very good prizes. Please bring your own liquid refreshment and "nibbles"! Tickets available from 01564 778163 or 01564 779898. This is a Knowle Village



Hall Association refurbishment fundraising event.

The Ultimate Pop Show

27 September 3pm

The Core Theatre Solihull

Delivering the most exhilarating dance routines, latest trends and hits from the biggest chart-topping artists including; Taylor Swift, Girls Aloud, Ariana Grande, Harry Styles, Miley Cyrus, Beyoncé, Justin Bieber, Little Mix and many more. Tickets £18.50, available from 0121 704 6962.

Boogie Wonderland Tribute

18 October 7pm

Shirley British Legion

Get ready for an unforgettable night of soul, funk, and disco with the fantastic Hot 2 Trot Band! Tickets £16.75 each, over 18's only, from skiddle.com

Disney On Ice presents Find Your Hero

29 October - 2 November & 7 - 9 November

BP Pulse Live, NEC

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The brilliance of bulbs

There's nothing quite like the joy of seeing the first green shoots poke through the soil after a long, grey winter. For us gardeners, planting bulbs in autumn is a bit like giving our future self a present - come spring, our garden will be bursting with colour, and all we had to do was plan ahead.

But before we get into favourites and showstoppers, let's talk bulbs. A bulb is essentially a tiny underground storage unit, packed with all the energy a plant needs to produce roots, leaves, and, most importantly, flowers. When we plant a bulb in autumn, it lies dormant through winter. As temperatures rise and daylight increases, the bulb wakes up, using its stored energy to shoot up and flower, often well before other plants have got going.

To create a long-lasting display, aim for a mix of early, mid, and late-spring bloomers. Daffodils, with their golden trumpets, are reliable, low-maintenance, and available in countless varieties. Compact 'Tête-à-Tête' is ideal for pots or front-of-border spots, while creamy white 'Thalia' brings a touch of elegance.



Tulips are another must-have, offering rich colour and drama. Depending on your garden they may not always be perennial so if you're not lucky, replant fresh bulbs each year will guarantee a bold display. The choice of colours is infinite, from white and palest pinks through classic reds and oranges to deep purples like 'Queen of Night'. There's a tulip for everyone.

If you fancy something more unusual, try *Fritillaria meleagris*, known as snake's head fritillary, with its delicate, nodding, chequered flowers. Or go for *Scilla siberica*, a hardy, vivid blue flower that's perfect for under trees or dotted through lawns.

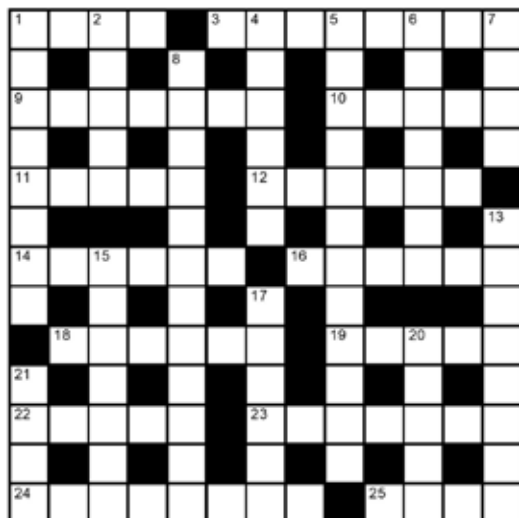
Plant bulbs in well-drained soil, about three times as deep as the bulb is tall, and water them in. If your soil is on the heavy side, a bit of added

grit or compost can help.

To maximise your chances of repeat displays in years to come, a little more planning ahead is required. Once flowering is over apply a liquid fertilizer high in potassium (like tomato feed). Feed while the leaves are still green, as this is when bulbs are busy replenishing their energy reserves through photosynthesis. Keep feeding until the foliage begins to yellow and die back naturally - don't be tempted to cut it early.

Bulbs are one of my greatest pleasures, partly because I always forget about planting them until they pop up out of nowhere to make me smile in early spring. So, grab your trowel and get planting. With a little forward planning (and a dash of tomato feed), your spring garden will be the envy of the neighbourhood.

crossword



clues

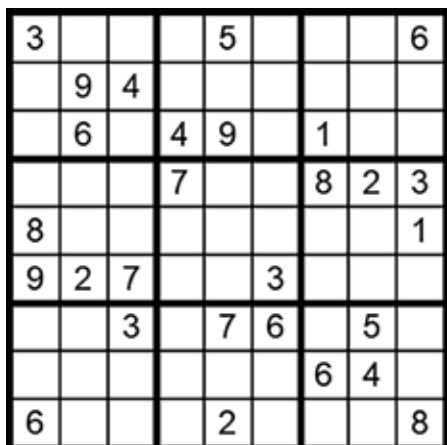
Across

- 1 Free from danger (4)
- 3 Upright, perpendicular (8)
- 9 Circus swing (7)
- 10 Game in which you shout when you win (5)
- 11 Without clothing (5)
- 12 Appeared to be (6)
- 14 Filtered through fine mesh (6)
- 16 Concern, issue (6)
- 18 Diversion (6)
- 19 Labels (5)
- 22 Predatory marine mollusc (5)
- 23 Highly seasoned Indian rice dish (7)
- 24 Old form of address for a woman (8)
- 25 Presidential assistant (4)

Down

- 1 Devil worshipper (8)
- 2 Container for fluid (5)
- 4 All the same, however (4,2)
- 5 Mealtime etiquette (5,7)
- 6 Arrogance (7)
- 7 Large wild cat (4)
- 8 Seamstress or tailor (12)
- 13 Social standing (8)
- 15 Antennae (7)
- 17 Clans (6)
- 20 _____ Dolphins, American football team (5)
- 21 Moved through the water (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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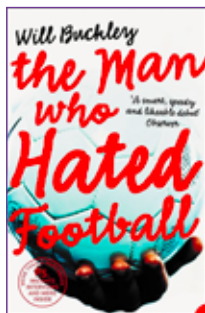
a good read

By Natasha Donovan

The Man Who Hated Football by Will Buckley

Full disclosure, I love football and come from a long line of Villa supporters (don't judge me), but I confess I missed this book entirely until I was gifted a copy quite recently. Set at the start of the Millenium, The

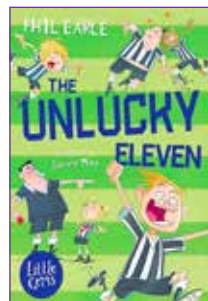
Man Who Hated Football is a sharp, darkly comic portrait of a man unravelling under the weight of modern life and the beautiful game. Jimmy Stirling is a football reporter who's grown to loathe the sport he covers. His editor despises him, his wife may be having an affair, and his own sense of self-worth is circling the drain. Between his needy twins, a crumbling marriage, and a mortgage he can't afford, Jimmy finds solace only in pints at his local pubs and the occasional cigarette - though even those comforts are tinged with guilt and futility. As the world shifts around him - both personally and globally - Jimmy is forced to confront his own failings and the absurdities of the football industry. Buckley, a seasoned sports journalist himself, delivers a biting satire of media culture and masculinity in crisis, filled with wit, pathos, and painfully relatable moments. If you enjoy Nick Hornby or Jonathan Coe, this novel offers a poignant-but-funny exploration of one man's slow-motion collapse - and the faint hope of redemption.



The Unlucky Eleven by Phil Earle

Phil Earle has crafted a delightful and humorous tale perfect for younger readers aged 5 to 7.

The story centres on Stanley and his football team, the Saints, who are experiencing an unprecedented streak of bad luck - ranging from bizarre injuries to mysterious illnesses and cancelled games. Convinced that their misfortunes stem from a cursed football kit, the team embarks on a series of comical attempts to lift the supposed curse including putting garlic in their socks! However, their efforts only seem to exacerbate their troubles, leading them to consider giving up on the season altogether. Undeterred, Stanley devises a final plan to break the curse and rally his teammates for one last game. Illustrated by Steve May, the book combines engaging storytelling with lively artwork, making it accessible and entertaining for early readers. It will appeal to children who are developing their reading skills. The narrative not only delivers laughs but also imparts valuable lessons about teamwork, perseverance, and the power of self-belief. The Unlucky Eleven is a charming read that will resonate with young football enthusiasts and anyone who enjoys a good underdog story.



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

Sudoku Solution
from page 8

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| A | S | E | N | | L | C | N | | | | | |
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| S | I | F | T | E | | M | A | T | T | E | | |
| T | E | W | T | | N | | E | | | | | |
| D | E | T | O | | U | R | | N | A | M | E | S |
| S | L | R | I | | E | I | T | | | | | |
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| A | R | E | E | | S | M | G | | | | | |
| M | I | S | T | R | E | S | S | | A | I | D | E |

Crossword Solution
from page 8



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