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Festive mood?

Welcome to the November 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

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GOT SOMETHING TO SHOUT ABOUT?

ADVERTISE IN THIS DIRECTORY

GET THE WORD OUT

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community events

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Knowle Christmas Light Switch-On

27 November, from 4pm

As usual, the evening kicks off with music from around 4pm, before Santa and Knowle Parish Church lead the countdown to the grand



lights switch-on! Always a favourite event of the village, come along and join in the countdown. Knowle's independent shops are opening their doors late, ready for you to browse, shop, and find plenty of Christmas inspiration.

Boogaloo Party

30 November, 4-7pm

Land Rover Sports & Social Club

Who says you can only party at night? Come and dance away the winter blues! An afternoon of music, fun & friends. Tickets are £12, to book please email boogalooababes@gmail.com or call 07984 270317.

Christmas Fair

29 November, 10am - 1pm

Knowle Village Hall

As well as the Grand Raffle there will be gifts and cards, craft stalls, baked goodies, competitions, and lots



more, including seasonal refreshments. Why not come along and join in? This is a K.V.H.A refurbishment fundraising event.

Aladdin - Pantomime

6 December - 4 January

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Houseplants to help reduce condensation

Condensation is a familiar issue in many of our homes at this time of year.

When warm, moist air meets cooler surfaces like windows and walls, it condenses into water droplets, which can encourage damp and mould growth. While good ventilation and insulation are the best long-term fixes, those of us with green fingers can also use houseplants to help reduce and regulate humidity.

Certain houseplants naturally absorb moisture from the air through their leaves, helping to keep rooms drier and fresher. Here are some of my favourites.

Peace Lily (*Spathiphyllum*)

Peace lilies are one of the most effective plants for reducing humidity. Their broad leaves absorb water vapour, and they also filter airborne toxins, improving indoor air quality. They thrive in shady corners, making them ideal for bathrooms or north-facing rooms where condensation is most common.

Boston Fern (*Nephrolepis exaltata*)

A popular Victorian houseplant, this pretty fern loves humid conditions and will



happily soak up moisture from the air. Place it in a hanging basket near a window prone to condensation. Regular misting and indirect light will keep it looking lush.

English Ivy (*Hedera helix*)

English ivy is great at reducing airborne mould spores as well as moisture levels. It's a good choice for kitchens and bathrooms, where condensation can quickly turn into mould growth. Let it trail from a high shelf or windowsill for maximum effect.

Spider Plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*)

Spider plants are hard to kill (even my teenage son can keep them alive!). They are low-maintenance, and excellent at drawing in moisture. They also tolerate a wide range of temperatures, which is perfect for those of us with a draughty home. They are also incredibly easy to propagate because they throw out stems bearing

baby plants called rather adorably, spiderettes.

Areca Palm (*Dypsis lutescens*)

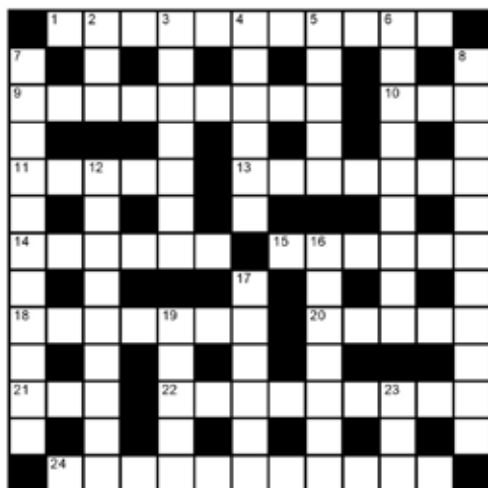
Also known as the butterfly palm, this tall, graceful plant works as a natural humidifier - absorbing and releasing water vapour in a way that balances indoor humidity. It is particularly effective in living rooms and conservatories.

Tips for Success

- Position moisture-loving plants in areas where condensation is worst, such as near bathroom windows, kitchen sinks, or cold external walls.
- Avoid overwatering, as soggy soil can add more moisture to the room. Instead, let the plants do the work by drawing water from the air.
- Combine plants with practical measures like opening trickle vents, using extractor fans, and wiping down wet windows.

While houseplants alone won't eliminate condensation, the plants above can certainly help regulate moisture levels and improve air quality, while bringing greenery and life to our home, which is a welcome bonus on gloomy winter days.

crossword



clues

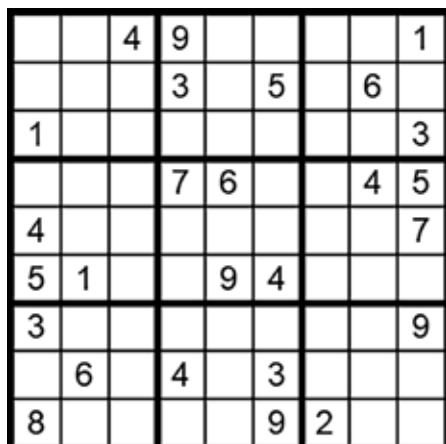
Across

- 1 Said by a magician (11)
- 9 Postmortems (9)
- 10 Sound from a sheep (3)
- 11 Alternative (5)
- 13 Nonconformist, hippie (7)
- 14 Young child (6)
- 15 Reward, settlement (6)
- 18 Regular oval shape (7)
- 20 Russian spirit (5)
- 21 Munch, scoff (3)
- 22 With sore, open wounds (9)
- 24 Use of medication to prevent pain sensation (11)

Down

- 2 Autonomous computer programme (3)
- 3 Painkiller and blood thinner (7)
- 4 With hands on hips (6)
- 5 Bewildered (2,3)
- 6 Had a band of merry men (5,4)
- 7 Instrument used to measure thermal change during a chemical reaction. (11)
- 8 Deck (4,2,5)
- 12 La-di-da, pompous (9)
- 16 Detrimental (7)
- 17 A three-line verse of poetry (6)
- 19 Wait, delay (5)
- 23 French for 'you' (3)

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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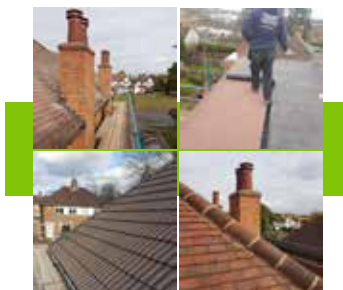
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Mindbenders

Can you find the hidden phrases?



sit! stay!
sit! stay!
sit! stay!
sit! stay! ←

H
C
I
T
T
S
A

answers on page 14

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a good read

By Natasha Donovan

The Bright and Breaking Sea by **Chloe Neill**

This novel is a swashbuckling fantasy adventure set in a magic-infused, alternate Napoleonic era. Captain Kit Brightling, a foundling raised in a home for gifted girls, has risen through the ranks to command her own ship in Queen Charlotte's fleet. Blessed with an innate connection to the sea, Kit is both a skilled sailor and a formidable force in the Isles' Crown Command. When a spy carrying intelligence on the exiled emperor of Gallia is captured, Kit is tasked with a perilous rescue mission. To her chagrin, she must partner with Rian Grant, Viscount Queenscliffe - a war-hardened nobleman, whose aristocratic roots clash with Kit's pragmatic seafaring ways. Together, they navigate treacherous waters, confront cunning pirates, and unravel a conspiracy that threatens the fragile peace of their realm. Neill blends high-seas adventure with political intrigue and a touch of slow-burn romance. The dynamic between Kit and Rian evolves from mutual distrust to a compelling partnership, set against a backdrop of naval battles and magical undercurrents. Fans of historical fantasy and strong female protagonists will find much to admire in Kit's courage and wit.



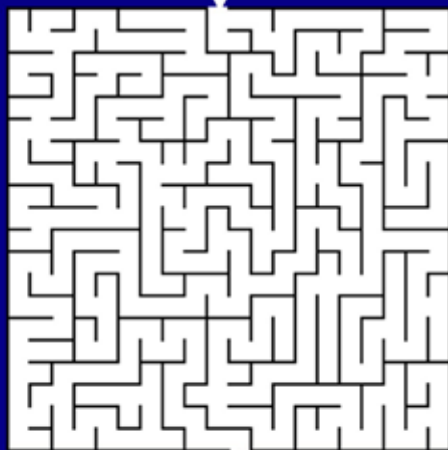
The Night Pirates by **Peter Harris,** illustrated by **Deborah Allwright**

Young Tom is stirred from sleep by mysterious noises outside his home. Peering out, he discovers a band of bold girl pirates stealthily removing the front of his house to disguise their ship! Eager for adventure, Tom joins the spirited crew as they set sail across the high seas. Their mission: to outwit a group of bumbling adult pirates and claim their treasure. Using clever tactics and teamwork, the girl pirates and Tom surprise the grown-up buccaneers, proving that courage and ingenuity aren't limited by age or gender. This swashbuckling tale combines playful rhymes and dynamic illustrations, creating an engaging story that challenges traditional pirate stereotypes. Perfect for young readers, *The Night Pirates* is a delightful bedtime adventure that celebrates bravery, friendship, and the joy of unexpected journeys.



Kids' Page

Can you get these three friends to the firework display?



Can you find all the firework-related words inside the letter grid?

S	P	A	R	K	L	E	M
W	Z	L	C	L	T	J	F
F	H	B	G	L	O	W	B
Z	I	I	A	B	M	K	O
M	O	Z	Z	N	V	S	O
G	P	O	Z	Z	G	P	M
E	Q	O	M	A	L	I	F
G	K	T	P	C	L	N	V

bang
boom
fizz
glow

pop
sparkle
spin
whizz

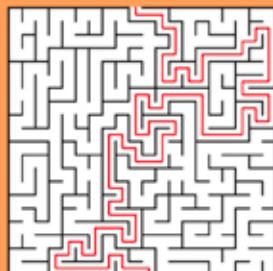
zoom



Did you know that fireworks were invented more than 2000 years ago in China!



Word Grid Solution



Maze Solution

All I Want for Christmas

Why Some Toys Become the “Must-Have” Christmas Craze

Every festive season, one toy seems to leap out of obscurity to dominate wish lists across the country.

This year seems to be the year of the Labubu doll, with its quirky, wide-eyed design and collectible aura. Before that, there were frenzies over Hatchimals, Furbies, and does anyone remember Cabbage Patch Kids in the early Eighties? The pattern repeats itself so reliably that it begs the question: why does one toy suddenly become the toy?

A big part of the answer lies in clever marketing. While demand often seems to be purely organic - with children spotting something they like and spreading the word - many of these crazes are carefully cultivated. Marketing teams understand the power of “word of mouth,” and they know how to spark it: Limited releases, eye-catching designs, and whispers of “sold out everywhere” quickly transform a toy into an object of desire. Scarcity, whether real or engineered, creates urgency. The fewer toys there seem to be, the more parents feel pressured to snap them up, just in case they disappear, creating more scarcity, followed by more pressure etc.

Social media amplifies



this cycle. TikTok unboxings, YouTube reviews, and Instagram photos of children clutching the season’s hot toy make it feel like everyone else already has one. Suddenly, that Labubu doll isn’t just a toy, it’s a ticket to belonging, for both child and parent. The marketing doesn’t need to scream at us directly; the buzz actually feeds on itself.

But where does that leave parents caught in the middle? On one hand, it’s tempting to roll our eyes and resist. After all, if the frenzy is manufactured, should we really be buying into it? Chasing down a toy at inflated prices can feel like playing into a game designed by corporations to separate us from the contents of our wallets. Many parents worry about sending the wrong message - teaching kids that happiness is tied to owning the latest fad.

On the other hand, gift-giving is also about joy. For a child, unwrapping the toy they’ve been dreaming of for months can create a magical memory that lasts far beyond the season. Sometimes, as parents we decide it’s worth indulging in the hype for the smile it brings. After all, childhood is fleeting, and Christmas morning only comes once a year.

Perhaps the balance lies in awareness. Recognizing the strategies behind the craze can help us as parents make informed choices, whether that means joining the hunt for the year’s hottest toy, or intentionally stepping back and offering alternatives that carry just as much thought and love. In the end, the true “must-have” isn’t a doll or gadget at all, it’s the sense of being seen, cherished, and celebrated.

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Solution to Mind benders

1. Speak of the Devil
2. Last orders
3. A stitch up

midbenders
from page 10

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

Sudoku Solution
from page 8



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A	B	R	A	C	A	D	A	B	R	A
C	O	S	K	T	O	P				
A	U	T	O	P	S	I	E	S	B	A
L		T	I	M	E	I	C			
O	T	H	E	R	B	E	A	T	N	I
R	I		I	O		H	O			
I	N	F	A	N	T	P	A	Y	O	F
M	A		T	O	O	C				
E	L	L	I	P	S	E	V	O	D	K
T	U	A	R	E		R				
E	A	T	U	L	C	E	R	A	T	E
R	I	S	E	S	O	S				
A	N	A	E	S	T	H	E	S	I	A

Crossword Solution
from page 8

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