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 saqibbhatti.org.uk

 saqib.bhatti@parliament.uk

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This advert is funded by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) for the purpose of assisting Saqib Bhatti MP in the performance of their Parliamentary duties.

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Merry Christmas

Welcome to the December edition

Wishing you all a very merry Christmas.

Christmas will be just around the corner by the time this reaches you. So here's hoping you're all stocked up with goodies and gifts to see you through the festive season.

It can be the most wonderful time of the year, but it can also be the loneliest. If you have time why not try reaching out to any local people who live on their own to see if they'd like a cup of tea and a chat. However you spend your Christmas, here's hoping you have a lovely time and wishing you all a happy and healthy 2025.



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community events



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Back to the '60's Party Night

10 January, Nailcote Hall

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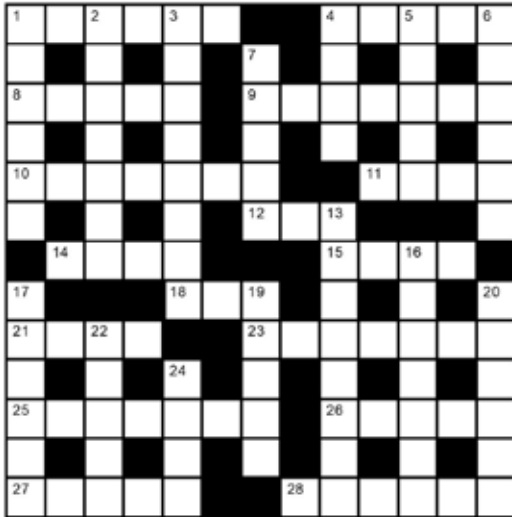
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crossword



Down

- 1 Portray, illustrate (6)
- 2 Baby's room (7)
- 3 Forgiving, lenient (8)
- 4 Means of losing weight (4)

- 5 Stadium, amphitheatre (5)
- 6 Scottish meat pudding (6)
- 7 Resin used to make gramophone records (5)
- 13 Heighten, intensify (8)
- 16 Weirdo, eccentric (7)

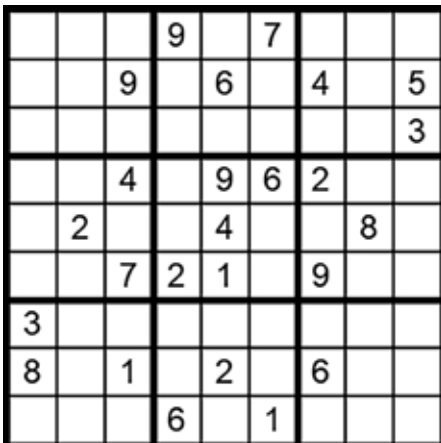
clues

Across

- 1 Contribute, give (6)
- 4 Demise, end (5)
- 8 Jeopardy (5)
- 9 Sank the Titanic (7)
- 10 Distinctly (7)
- 11 Indian dress (4)
- 12 Deceive (3)
- 14 Sung in church (4)
- 15 Reveal, display (4)
- 18 Fasten, attach (3)
- 21 Idol, venerated image (4)
- 23 Wander aimlessly (7)
- 25 Gift (7)
- 26 Modify (5)
- 27 Appoint, nominate (5)
- 28 Affluence, riches (6)

- 17 Small alcoholic drink (6)
- 19 Barren, deserted (5)
- 20 Walking aid (6)
- 22 Very overweight (5)
- 24 Loaned (4)

answer on page 28



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 28

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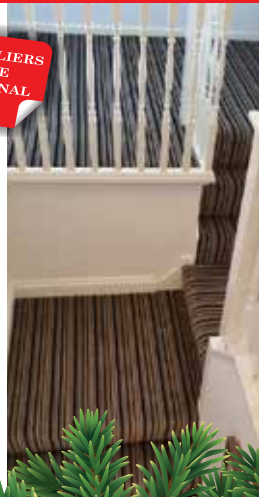
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Christmas Gifts with a twist

With Christmas approaching, finding the perfect gift can be a challenge, especially when you want to avoid the ubiquitous bubble bath and socks. Here are some unusual but meaningful Christmas gift ideas that are sure to delight and surprise your loved ones this holiday season.

Personalized Star Maps -

These maps show the exact alignment of the stars on a significant date in the recipient's life, whether it's their birthday, an anniversary, or another special occasion. Star maps make for stunning wall art but also carry deep sentimental value. They serve as a reminder of a cherished moment, making them both thoughtful and unique.

Experience Gifts - Experience-based gifts have become increasingly popular as most of us concede we own too much 'stuff.' They can be tailored to the recipient's interests, whether they're adventure seekers or food lovers. For someone who values experiences over material possessions, this type of gift shows that you've thought carefully about what would make them happiest, whether that's a cooking class, hot air balloon ride, or a wine tasting tour.

Subscription Boxes - For a gift that keeps giving beyond



Christmas Day these curated boxes can cater to all kinds of hobbies and tastes. Whether your recipient enjoys gourmet snacks, skincare products, books, or gardening, there's a subscription service for them. Subscription boxes add an element of surprise, as the recipient gets to enjoy their gift over time, reminding them of you with each delivery.

Charity Donations in Their Name - For those who value giving back, consider making a charitable donation in their name. This gift is both thoughtful and impactful, as it helps a cause that's meaningful to them. Many organizations offer the option to send a personalized card or certificate, informing the recipient of the donation. Whether it's supporting animal welfare, environmental initiatives, or community projects, this is a great way to make a difference while honouring someone's values.

Customized Art Pieces - This could be anything from a hand-drawn portrait of their pet, a

family illustration, or a map of their favourite city. With many artists offering bespoke services online, you can find a style that perfectly suits the recipient's taste. This kind of art is not only beautiful but also deeply personal, ensuring it will be a cherished keepsake for years to come.

DIY Gift Kits - These allow the recipient to make something themselves. These kits come in a variety of options, from making candles or soap to brewing their own beer or planting a mini herb garden. DIY kits are interactive, engaging, and give the recipient a sense of accomplishment. Plus, they can enjoy the finished product long after the holidays have passed.

Finding a gift that's both unusual and thoughtful doesn't have to be difficult. The key is to select something that reflects the recipient's personality and interests. These gift ideas go beyond the ordinary, offering a unique way to show your loved ones how much you care this Christmas.

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Surviving Christmas!

Tips for managing 'trickier' guests this festive season.

Whether its Uncle Gary, who prides himself on his radical honesty, or Auntie Sally who makes passive aggressive digs at your cooking, handling poorly behaved relatives at Christmas is challenging. It's helpful to have a few strategies in your back pocket so you can navigate the festive season without strangling anyone.

Set Boundaries Early -

Before the event set clear boundaries with relatives who may be troublesome.

Polltely express your desire for a peaceful holiday and outline any behaviours that might disrupt this. For example, let them know you'd prefer to avoid controversial topics like politics or conspiracy theories at the dinner table.

Redirect the Conversation

- If things start to veer into uncomfortable territory, try steering the conversation towards safer, light-hearted topics. Ask about holiday plans, recent hobbies, or festive film recommendations. Anything to keep the mood light and avoid potential landmines.

Stay Positive - Focus on



the enjoyable parts of the gathering and people who make you feel happy and relaxed. Sometimes laughter really is the best medicine, and a little holiday cheer can go a long way in smoothing out those tricky family moments. And if all else fails, tell yourself it's just one day, and next year you can always 'forget' to invite them!

a good read

By Natasha Donovan

A Cornish Christmas Murder

by Fiona Leitch

A Cornish Christmas Murder is a delightful seasonal mystery that transports readers to the cozy, scenic village of Penstowan. In this latest instalment of the Jodie Parker Mystery series, we find the former detective turned amateur sleuth, Jodie "Nosey" Parker, knee-deep in yuletide festivities, only to have the holiday spirit interrupted by a gruesome murder. The novel begins with Jodie hoping for a quiet Christmas with her family, but things take an unexpected turn when a high-profile celebrity chef is found dead at the local holiday festival. With the charming Cornish landscape covered in snow, the idyllic setting makes for a perfect contrast to the sinister crime that unfolds. As Jodie steps in to help the local police unravel the mystery, readers are treated to an engaging plot full of twists, red herrings, and quirky village characters. Leitch's storytelling is full of warmth and humour. This is not a novel for lovers of gruesome gritty city crime set in the real world. Here the cozy atmosphere, mixed with an array of delicious Christmas treats, makes for a festive, page-turning experience. Jodie's wit and determination make her an endearing protagonist who feels like an old friend, and her dynamic with the colourful cast brings the village to life. A Cornish Christmas Murder is a satisfying blend of mystery and holiday charm, perfect for readers to curl up with during the festive season. Just add a roaring fire and a glass of mulled wine.



The Miracle on Ebenezer Street

by Catherine Doyle

This heartwarming and enchanting children's novel reimagines the spirit of Christmas in a way that will captivate readers young and old. Inspired by Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, the hero of the story is 9-year-old George, whose life is overshadowed by sadness since his mother dies. Three years later, George's father has lost all enthusiasm for Christmas, banning any festive celebrations in their home. However, everything changes when George stumbles upon a mysterious Christmas shop and discovers a magical snow globe. This seemingly ordinary item transports George, his father, and his mischievous grandmother on an extraordinary adventure through time and alternate versions of Christmases past, present, and what might be in the future. Each stop on their journey reveals a little more magic, hope, the possibility of healing and rediscovery of joy. Doyle's storytelling is woven with vivid imagery, humour, and emotion, making it a real holiday treat. The characters are relatable and full of warmth, especially George, whose longing for Christmas captures the spirit of the season. Doyle blends themes of grief, love, and the importance of family into a story full of whimsy and wonder. This is a delightful and touching read that will become a much-loved Christmas classic. A great stocking-filler.



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Mindbenders

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home
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N
↑
W ← jingle → E
↓
S

answers on page 28

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

Sudoku Solution
from page 12

Solution to Mind benders

1. Home Alone
2. The Grinch
3. Jingle all the Way

mindbenders
from page 23

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

Crossword Solution
from page 12

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Winter-Spiced Hot Chocolate

You will be the hit of the festive season with this chai-inspired twist on a winter favourite.



Preparation time: 10 mins
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Serves: 2

Ingredients

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 4 tablespoons high quality drinking chocolate
 2 cinnamon sticks
 2 star anise
 6 cloves
 6 green cardamom pods
 ½ teaspoon nutmeg
 freshly grated

Cardamom and Vanilla Whipped Cream

½ cup whipping cream
 ½ teaspoon ground cardamom

2 teaspoons vanilla extract
 3 teaspoons sugar optional (if you don't have a sweet tooth, leave this out)

Method

Spiced Hot Chocolate

Place the milk and all of the whole spices into a small, heavy-bottomed saucepan and bring to a simmer (don't let it boil). Allow to simmer for about 3 minutes, whisking or stirring gently to stop the milk being scorched. Mix the drinking chocolate with a small amount of cold milk to make a runny paste and add this to the milk in the pan, stirring all the time.

Simmer the hot chocolate for a few minutes, whisking or stirring occasionally. Strain into mugs (to catch the whole spices). Top with the cardamom and vanilla whipped cream.

Cardamom and Vanilla Whipped Cream

Chill a mixing bowl for 30 minutes. Then into the bowl, combine the whipping cream, sugar (if using), vanilla and cardamom. Whip the mixture, until you get soft peaks, a light and airy topping. When whipping aim for soft clouds of cream. Stop before the cream gets too thick.

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