

ISSUE #88

JULY 2017

HEADINGTON

MONTHLY

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WILDLIFE GARDENING

* MOVIE REVIEW * BRAIN GAMES
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Headington Monthly is distributed to residents and businesses in Headington and Marston every month.



Nick Allnatt
Founder/Publisher

GET IN TOUCH
Nick: 07850 120116
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Dear All

July is the month many of us trot off on our hols. If you don't have time to read the mag before this please take it with you as something below may raise a 'titter' on the beach.

As a child my summer holidays were spent mostly in Pembrokeshire as my mother was Welsh and most of her family still live there. My best memories were of the beaches, especially Freshwater East which has been adopted by the family as their own. Also the beach shop which sold great tasting individual blackcurrant and apple pies. From the beach we were often treated to watching target practice as the local army base fired shots at dummy targets out at sea. I loved staying in Tenby with its pretty multicoloured houses, attractive bays and interesting shops, and being lulled to sleep by the seagulls plaintive cries. I loved to watch the lifeboat doing it's launch drill down that long ramp. I also remember the flying boats landing and taking off from Milford Haven. All very exciting to a young lad. That dates

me! Our garden backed onto the Oxford/Coventry canal in North Oxford. I still remember the horse drawn barges carrying coal!

I promised another police story this month as many of you found last month's story raised a chuckle. It goes like this - In the 60s/70s colleges had Rag Weeks. To raise funds for charity various stunts and japes were carried out including one carried out at Loughborough University. Beady-eyed students had noticed a team of council workers had arrived outside the college gates to dig up the road. The students hit upon such a great prank here they were able to sell tickets to their fellows and the staff to view the outcome from the college windows. They phoned the police and told them there was a group of students dressed up as council workers digging up the road outside the college as a Rag Week stunt. While the police were on their way down to investigate the students went outside and told the workers "A group of students dressed up as policemen are coming down to arrest you for illegally digging up the road....just ignore them!". Do I need to say more?

Happy travels

Nick

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Coronation Chicken

A retro summer supper



Preparation time

1-2 hours

Cooking time

30 mins to 1 hour

Serves 4-8

Ingredients

1.5kg/4lb free-range chicken
4 spring onions, sliced
6 garlic cloves, peeled, left whole
1 tbsp sea salt
10 whole black or green peppercorns or a mixture

For the sauce

1 tbsp vegetable oil
1 onion, chopped
1 tbsp curry powder
1 tbsp tomato purée
85ml/3fl oz red wine
150ml/¼ pint water
1 bay leaf
salt and freshly ground black pepper
caster sugar
2 slices lemon
squeeze of lemon juice
425ml/15fl oz good-quality mayonnaise
2 tbsp apricot purée (You can make your

own by blending 4-5 ready-to-eat dried apricots with 3 tbsp water)
3 tbsp whipped cream

To serve

1 tbsp roughly chopped coriander
Boiled rice

Method

Place the chicken into a large saucepan with a tight-fitting lid. Cover with water and add the spring onions, garlic, salt and peppercorns.

bring to the boil uncovered and simmer for 30 minutes. Turn the chicken once during this time. Cover with the lid and turn off the heat. Leave for one hour. Remove the chicken, allow to cool completely, and then tear the chicken from the bones and chop into chunks.

For the sauce, heat the oil in a pan over a medium heat. Add the onion and cook gently for 3-4 minutes until translucent. Add the curry powder and cook for a further two minutes, stirring well. Add the tomato purée, wine, water and bay leaf.

Bring the mixture to the boil. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper, then add the sugar, lemon slices and lemon juice, to taste. Reduce the heat and simmer uncovered, for 5-10 minutes. Strain the sauce through a sieve and set aside to cool.

Once cold fold in the mayonnaise and apricot purée, to taste. Add more lemon juice if required and then finally fold in the whipped cream.

Arrange the chicken on a large platter, pour the sauce over the top, sprinkle with the coriander and serve immediately, with rice, or salad and crusty bread.



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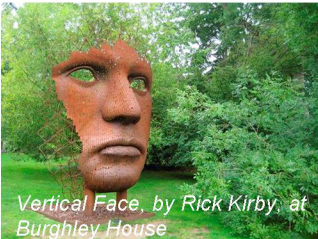
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SCULPTURE PARKS



The sculpture parks and trails of England are a rather well-kept secret. They are found all

over the country and are great places to visit and introduce the kids to real art. They are also good introductions to for anyone who is curious about art but feels they would be a bit out of their depth in a gallery. You can take a picnic and the children can run around. Many are free, or very cheap to enter. Each sculpture park is different in character depending on the surrounding countryside. Why not have a day outdoors and take in some culture at the same time?

Our picks of the parks are:

Yorkshire Sculpture Park – with pieces by Elisabeth Frink, Barbara Hepworth and Antony Gormley

New Art Centre, Wiltshire – set in beautiful lovingly planted gardens.

Burghley House and Gardens, Stamford – My children loved this when they were tiny. There is an additional garden of surprises with quirky water sculptures that children can play in.

Forest of Dean Sculpture Trail, Gloucestershire – 20 sculptures set along a trail which takes about three hours to walk round.

The Pride of the Valley Sculpture Park, Surrey – An enormous number of sculptures, and a varied landscape including lakes and woodland.

Broomhill Art and Sculpture Garden, Devon – More than 300 sculptures in 10 acres of land!



PJ Day for Ronald McDonald House Oxford!

New Marston Primary School of Marston have taken part in PJ Day to raise money for Ronald McDonald House Oxford. This event encouraged all individuals, whether it be at work, school, or just simply at home, to dress down in their PJs for the day on Friday 9th June and donate a pound to the Oxford House.

On Thursday 8th June, Tiffany, the Fundraising Administrator for the house came and gave a talk to New Marston Primary School, who managed to raise £271.09 towards Ronald McDonald House Oxford.

The House cares for the families of children receiving treatment in the John Radcliffe Children's Hospital. Situated on the top floor of the hospital, the House provides both comfort and support, whilst also offering a safe environment where families can share their experiences knowing there will always be someone to listen.

A quote from Kathryn Harris a teacher at New Marston Primary, who has also stayed in the house – "I've stayed at the Ronald McDonald house as my son had cranial surgery. A year later I used the facilities as my other son was in hospital on and off for a month. So I know how important and vital it is to raise money for such an incredible place, and PJ day is a really fun way for the children to engage with the charity".

It costs the House £25 a night to accommodate a family, and the average stay for a family is currently 9 nights.

Throughout 2016, the Oxford House helped 582 families stay close to their children in hospital, and in order to continue to keep families close, the House needs your support. If you wish to sponsor the school please contact Kathryn Harris at: office.2529@new-marston.oxon.sch.uk or 01865 761 560

For more information about the work of Ronald McDonald House Oxford contact:

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Return of the Pawnbroker

What do you think of when you see the word pawnbroker? The slums of Dickens? The austerity-years of the 1930's Great Depression? Think again; modern pawnbrokers are rather smart establishments, and don't look out of place on the high street.

After World War II the pawnbroking went into something of a decline and by the Seventies it had almost died out as a trade with maybe just fifty or so in the whole of the British Isles, generally in poorer areas which boasted a high concentration of itinerant workers.

Now there are over a thousand pawnbrokers in the UK and they are appearing in traditionally affluent areas. The industry is worth an estimated £100 million per year! The Australians have also followed suit with their Cash-Converters, high street buy-back chain.

What's caused the change?

Many of us seem to have lost faith in the banking system which in turn seems to have lost faith in itself as it restricts credit. People suddenly see pawnbrokers as a way of generating cash.

Modern pawnbrokers offer a discreet and confidential service where clients can pledge anything from a piece of jewellery or a watch through to a prize car or even a house. One London pawnbroker says he was once offered a Lear Jet!

Likewise the clients have changed too. In the old days it was men trying to make enough to pay the rent man or the landlord. Now it's just as likely to be a middle class couple looking for a way to pay the mortgage or the school fees.

So how does it work?

Pawnbrokers and their like give a client money in return for an object that is held as security until the customer pays off the loan and any interest charges. There are no credit checks and, once the item is valued and a rate of interest agreed, the customer leaves with the money.

If the loan is paid back within the agreed time the client can reclaim their goods. If the loan is not paid back then the pawnbroker has the right to extend the terms or sell the goods, though many are reluctant to do this as they thrive on repeat business.

Buy-back shops are slightly different. Here the client sells their item with an option to buy it back within 28 days. If they don't reclaim it then the shop can sell the item.

The Consumer Credit Act states that a pawnbroker must give their client a receipt displaying the date the redemption period ends; the amount of credit secured by the pledge, and the interest rate, plus any other charges that individual lender may apply. If you lose your receipt inform your pawnbroker immediately so that no one else can present it.



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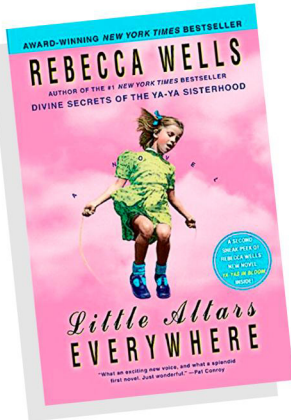
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A Good Read



Little Altars Everywhere by Rebecca Wells

One of the marks of a great book is that it can let you travel the world, and even through time, from the comfort of your own living room (or coffee shop –

depending on where you are reading). This is exactly what *Little Altars Everywhere* does. From your familiar surroundings in the UK this transports you to Louisiana in the heart of the southern states of America and throws you into the lives of the Walker family. Siddalee is the eldest daughter in the family and she is the narrator who opens the story. Growing up in the 1960s life is changing around her and it is only as an adult that she can begin to deal with the turbulence of her childhood.

Each chapter is told by a different member of the family. There is Vivi, the matriarch, and Shep, a father who tries to provide for his family but is under a lot of pressure and unable to quite express his feelings. Siddalee's voice is joined by her siblings, Little Shep, Lulu, and Baylor. This is, in many ways, a collection of short stories, each giving a glimpse into life for the Walker clan.

From the summers spent in Spring Creek, to dance classes, a pregnant dog, and a runaway daughter, the pieces gradually come together. Accompanying the family through their experiences are the Ya-Yas: four close friends, including Vivi, who are loud, colourful, and vibrant. But this is not always an easy story to read. Families can hide secrets that the outside world will never know and the consequences won't be felt for years.

The Beast Within by Serena Valentino

We all know the story of *Beauty and the Beast*. Whether it is through the original fairy tale, Disney's 1991 animated hit, or the recent live action remake. But is there something missing from the story? How much do we know about what happened BEFORE Belle arrived at the Beast's castle to rescue her father? What really happened to turn a beloved prince into a reclusive beast?

Offering a fresh twist on the classic story, this tween/teen read contains many 'ooh, that's clever' moments. Of course, we know that at the end of the story Gaston will arrive at the castle to kill the Beast. But suppose they were once best friends? Filled with familiar characters such as Lumiere and Cogsworth this novel offers another layer to the story we all know. Whilst it is not the greatest work of literature it will definitely appeal to fans of either the animated or live action movie, and is one of a growing series of novels telling the darker side of Disney classics.





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# the garden gnome

## care and balance

**T**oo much of the sun can be harmful to our skin, but with care and balance it can lift our mood out there in wildlife gardening land. The sun can be the kiss of life or death. It depends on the way we use it.

Exposure to sunlight means the brain perhaps starts to release serotonin. This can lead us to feel calm and focused. Without sunlight, our collective serotonin levels can dip.

A number of health benefits associated to exposure to sunlight can also benefit those suffering from depression according to the Journal of Psychiatry & Neuroscience. Anxiety and panic attacks have been linked with changing seasons and reduced sunlight. So what better reason to be getting out there and enjoying nature? In our own gardens, streets or park.

Even the Stone Age people knew the sun brought many healing qualities which is maybe why they worshipped it?

If you suffer from insomnia daytime

exposure to sunlight increases melatonin production during the night which in turn helps us sleep. I personally find the sun rays also ease my swollen joints during peaks of inflammation from Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Whether you garden traditionally or with wildlife in mind, remember, care and balance is what's needed when enjoying the sun's rays. Stay safe out there though.



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# I Want to Ride My Bicycle



Do you remember the thrill of owning your first bike? That sense of freedom and speed? Cycling has increased in popularity again since London 2012 and rightly so – it's an eco-friendly, sociable and healthy activity. Regular family cycling trips can provide a wealth of new experiences and a sense of adventure and bonding.

It's never too late to start: even if junior is too young for their own bike they will love to travel along with you.

Please note that for most trailers and all child bike seats the child should be able to support their own head *wearing a cycle helmet*. For most children this is between 10-14 months but be sure to take advice from your local cycle specialist.

**Trailers** These attach to the adult's bike and may be single or double. They offer some protection from the elements as they can be covered. They can also take children up to 45Kg. An older child has enough space to take along their own snacks and a couple of toys. They can nap in comfort if they wish.

The disadvantage of a trailer is its proximity to the ground: it doesn't afford much of a view. There is also a danger that, if used on the road, some drivers

may not see it.

Hire before you buy. Most cycle-hire outlets offer a good range. It's a great way to find out if a trailer is for you.

You can buy specialist trailers for babies too young to travel in child seats or in conventional trailers. The child is securely strapped in and the framework acts as a roll-cage in case of a toppling accident. The beauty of these specialised trailers is that they also convert into a buggy. They're not recommended for road use though.

**Child bike seat** These are comfortable and offer a great view as the child is raised up. Choose the seat according to the child's weight and height rather than age as children vary so much.

Carrying a child alters the centre of gravity of the bike so practice on soft ground or in a safe area before you venture out on to the roads.

**Trailer bikes / Tag-alongs** These have one wheel, and a saddle with a curved frame which attaches to the adult bike. The child can peddle or just hitch a ride.

For an older child who wants to ride independently but who tires on long cycle rides, you can buy a connector kit to attach their bike to the adult bike. Consult your local dealer for advice.

## IMPORTANT

**No-one** should travel in a conventional trailer or bike seat *unless* they are wearing a helmet.

Bike seats (and to some extent trailers) leave children exposed to the elements. Wrap them up warm in cold weather, and make sure they're slathered in sunscreen when it's sunny.



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# I DON'T FEEL AT HOME IN THIS WORLD ANYMORE

## MOVIE REVIEW BY OSCAR DUXFIELD

Released in January exclusively via Netflix, *I Don't Feel At Home In This World Anymore* forces you through the entire gamut of your emotions within its short run time. It's hard to categorize this film because at one moment you are on the floor laughing and the next you're biting your nails in suspense. Most movies that attempt genre-jump do it poorly, not quite fitting into any of particular genre; however, this film does it so well it manages to fit into all of them.

The film relates the simple tale of a mild-mannered, mildly depressed nurse whose house gets broken into while she is at work. Incensed at what has happened, she teams up with her eccentric neighbor to find the thief. It doesn't sound a particularly innovative or exciting plot but the script and directing more than make up for the seemingly bland concept. The subtle use of camera work by the director (Macon Blair) in the wide shots shows a real grasp of how to entertain the viewer and I had assumed that he had directed at least one other full-length feature. I was, therefore, surprised to find out that this was his directorial debut. Blair, who also writes the feature, sets out this me-first universe so well and from so many different angles we can do nothing but relate to our heroine as she is flung into

a situation where she feels there is only one way out of.

Despite being an "indie" production, the movie still pulled in some fantastic actors such as Elijah Wood (Frodo from *Lord of the Rings*) as an unlikely eccentric neighbor, who almost steals the show as a hapless Christian badass. Nonetheless Melanie Lynskey, who plays the lead, manages to hold her own as an unlikely vigilante with fantastic comic timing – don't miss the scene where she decides to reclaim her computer.

There were some solid supporting performances too – especially Gary Anthony Williams as the weary local cop who simply doesn't have the time, resources or the inclination to pursue the case.

It's the little things that elevate this film from Elijah Woods's rat tail hair do to the gun the bad guys buy on the streets. These are small points that might have been lost in a lesser film.

It's probably best to point out that you may need a strong stomach to finish watching this movie as there are some very violent scenes towards the end although to my mind, definitely warranted. It is not gore for the sake of gore.

It's a hugely satisfying ending too – one of the best I have seen on film in the past five years and left me with a smile on my face for days after.

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Even though retirement ages have been increased recently many people find that when the time comes we don't feel quite ready to down tools and head to the allotment or the golf course. All the knowledge, skills and qualifications we've achieved over the years can't just be switched off, and we might not feel ready to step out of working life entirely. So if the calendar says one thing but our heart and mind disagree, what should we do?

Don't despair; there are in excess of 1.3 million pensioners still in work. We represent 11% of the total workforce, and are living proof that many companies recognise our experience.

**Staged Retirement** Talk to your boss or line manager in advance of your retirement. Ask if you can stage your retirement over a couple of years, maybe dropping to a three day week, then two days etc. Many companies are happy to accommodate loyal employees. Stress that it will make any transitions run more smoothly because you will be able to pass on your knowledge to your replacement and allow them to gradually take over. If you regularly deal with clients it can be very reassuring for them to know that you are still around.

**Benefits** Find out what your entitlements are. Check out [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) to find out about pensions, earnings and tax. If you prefer to talk to someone in person on the phone, ensure you have all relevant

information to hand: P45, NI Number etc. Even if you're only entitled to a few pennies at this stage, the important thing is that you are registered. Other benefits may come your way later.

**Job-hunting** [www.jobcentreguide.co.uk](http://www.jobcentreguide.co.uk) provides an abundance of information on vacancies and also free CV advice, which is especially helpful if you are out of practice in the art of selling yourself to a prospective employer. You can register your CV on line with any number of agencies, such as [www.reed.co.uk](http://www.reed.co.uk), which show jobs in your area, and assist with careers advice. If you prefer to register in person, pop into your local Job Centre or Recruitment Agency. These are all positive moves which will help you feel more confident and in control.

There are many ways to research information about employment. The library and your local college are good starting points. Libraries often have computer terminals available for public use, and some run courses if your PC skills need polishing.

**When you get an interview:**

**Be positive** Stress the good reputation of the firm plus other positive information.

**Play to your strengths** Explain how the skills you've acquired throughout your working life will benefit this company

**Play down the negatives of retirement** Describe any voluntary work, hobbies studying and training you've completed.

**As an older person** Play on your experience and loyalty but...

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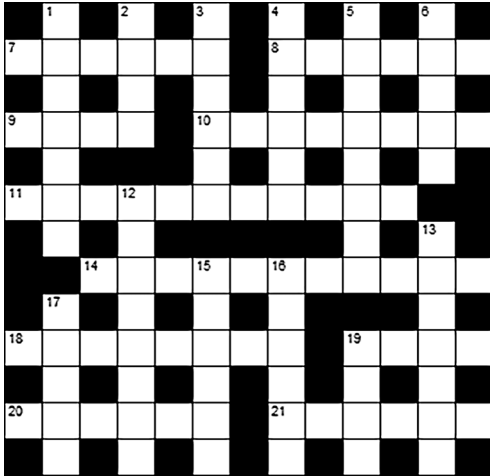


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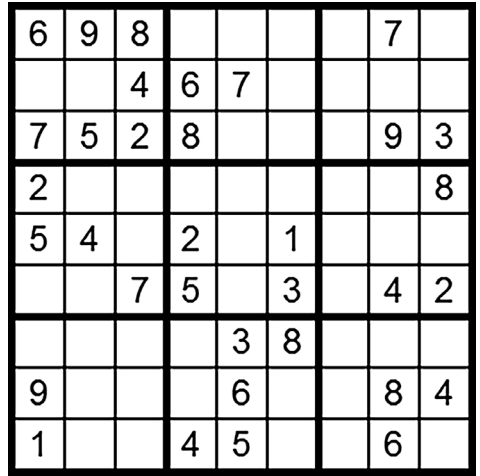
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## BRAIN GAMES

### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU



### CROSSWORD CLUES

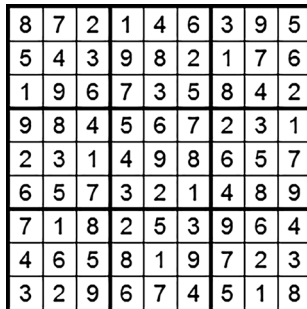
#### ACROSS

- 7 Metal percussion instrument (6)
- 8 Left, departed (6)
- 9 Inflamed eyelid lump (4)
- 10 Survives a storm (8)
- 11 Headliner which attracts a large audience (5,6)
- 14 Exemplified, epitomised (11)
- 18 Frenzy, delirium (8)
- 19 Well-made, superior (4)
- 20 Except for, lest (6)
- 21 Conundrum (6)

#### DOWN

- 1 Whodunit (7)
- 2 Woodwind instrument (4)
- 3 Explode (4,2)
- 4 Minutiae, triviality (6)
- 5 The product of 2 and 9 (8)
- 6 Slightly inebriated, cheerful (5)
- 12 Grappled (8)
- 13 Nom de plume (3,4)
- 15 Scarcest (6)
- 16 Ascended skyward (6)
- 17 Deceiving, perjuring (5)
- 19 Equitable, honourable (4)

Last month's Brain Games solutions:  
*did you get them right?*



#### How to Play SUDOKU

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# SUMMER CONCERTS JUST ADD KIDS

Summer concerts for families have never been more popular. Whether your tastes extend to the classics, jazz, pop or folk there will be an outdoor event to suit your family.

Most young children will not mind which genre you choose. What they'll love is the idea of a leisurely picnic, a chance to run around outside and possibly sideshows like jugglers, magicians and face painters.

If you're a summer concert virgin and you're not sure how your offspring will behave, try a free concert in a local park first off. You will feel more relaxed and they can clap and sing along without you worrying that their antics might disturb other people.

But even larger, more formal concerts tend to be rather informal. It's probably best that your kids are versed in basic etiquette like not running through other people's picnic areas and not throwing food or scrapping with siblings, but with a dose of general good manners normal lively behaviour is well tolerated at such events.

Most concerts tend to take place in large fields anyway so there's plenty of room for running around and even outdoor games such as frisbees and football, providing they're played well away from the main crowd.

Evening concerts are really exciting for children. Being allowed to stay up past normal bedtime is always a thrill and as night falls and people light candles and lanterns the scene becomes magical. Also many evening

concerts have a firework finale. Then there's the excitement of finding your car in the dark with your torch. What more could a child want?

## Tips for Outdoor Concerts

*Choose to sit further back from the stage than you would if you were alone.*

*Dedicated concert goers and those without children tend to sit near the front and they might not take kindly to boisterous youngsters. Sitting further back gives you all more room to stretch out and wander around.*

*Take small amounts of lots of different foods. Variety will keep them interested.*

*Take folding chairs, sunscreen, hats, insect repellent or citronella candles and lots of rugs. Comfort is important, especially as the sun disappears.*

*A flask of hot chocolate is a winner when the evening air takes on a chill.*

*Some glowsticks or lanterns will make the event extra special.*



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Have an event? We happily publicise non-profit, community and charity events through this page. Please email [ads@headingtonmonthly.co.uk](mailto:ads@headingtonmonthly.co.uk) with the subject heading "Community Events" before 2 July with your events for August 2017.

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# CONTACTS, COMMUNITY, CALENDAR.

These are are some useful local numbers and school terms calendar. Please advise us if there are any errors or important missing numbers

## Doctors:

- \* Barton Surgery, Underhill Circus, Headington - 01865 744 221
- \* Bury Knowle Health Centre, 207 London Road, Headington - 01865 761651
- \* Manor Surgery, Osler Road, Headington - 01865 762 535

## Dentists:

- \* 310 Dental Care, 310 London Road, Headington - 01865 766975
- \* Bury Knowle Dental Practice, 207 London Road, Headington - 01865 308 400
- \* Euro Dental Practice, 61 London Road, Headington - 01865 308400
- \* John Miller Dental Practice, 6a The Parade, Windmill Road, Headington - 01865 308 050
- \* Kennett Road Dental Practice, 3 Kennett Road, Headington - 01865 761 965
- \* Manor Dental Practice, 7 Osler Road, Headington - 01865 750 056
- \* Studental, Oxford Brookes University, Colonnade Building, 3rd Floor, Gypsy Lane, OX3 - 01865 484 608

## Chemists:

- \* Barton Pharmacy, 6 Underhill Circus, Headington - 01865 763 106
- \* Boots Pharmacy, 96 London Road, Headington - 01865 763 106
- \* Boots Bury Knowle, 207 Bury Knowle Health Centre, Headington - 01865 765 559
- \* Roundway Pharmacy, 3 Roundway, Headington - 01865 766 994

## Libraries:

- \* Headington Library, North Place, Headington - 01865 762 867

## Other Useful Numbers:

- \* Age UK - 01235 849 400
- \* Childline - 0800 1111
- \* Citizen's Advice Bureau - 0870 200 608
- \* John Radcliffe Hospital - 01865 741 166
- \* Gas Emergencies - 0800 111 999
- \* Power Outages - 0800 072 7282 (Scottish Power & Southern Electric)
- \* Thames Valley Police - 101
- \* Oxford City Council - 01865 252 900
- \* Rt. Hon. Andrew Smith MP - 02072 194 512
- \* NHS Direct - 111
- \* The Samaritans - 08457 909 090
- \* Recycling and waste 01865 249811

## City Councillors for Headington:

- \* Ruth Wilkinson - 07789 368 300
- \* Altaf Khan - 07931 345 554

## School Terms 2016-17

| Term               | Date             | # Days |
|--------------------|------------------|--------|
| Term 1             | 1 Sep - 21 Oct   | 37     |
| Oct. Holiday       | 24 Oct-28 Oct    |        |
| Term 2             | 31 Oct - 16 Dec  | 35     |
| Christmas Holiday  | 19 Dec - 2 Jan   |        |
| Term 3             | 3 Jan - 10 Feb   | 29     |
| Feb Holiday        | 13 Feb - 17 Feb  |        |
| Term 4             | 20 Feb - 7 Apr   | 35     |
| Apr Holiday        | 10 Apr - 21 Apr  |        |
| Term 5             | 24 Apr - 26 May  | 24     |
| Late Spring        | 29 May - 2 Jun   |        |
| Term 6             | 5 Jun - 21 July  | 33     |
| School Year Begins | 4 September 2017 |        |
| Total              |                  | 195    |

*This information is taken from the Oxford City Council website. Please contact your school or visit your school's website to check the return dates for your school and obtain dates of teacher inset days.*

# Ready for Revision

Exam time is stressful for the whole family. So what's the best way to cope?

There's no way round it, the answer has to be *planning and preparation*.

Set up your revision timetable as early as possible, that way you can pace yourself. It's too tempting to put everything off then face a last-minute panic.

How do you study best? Some people prefer to spend a whole day on one subject, others prefer to break their time into smaller blocks and tackle several subjects in short burst. Whichever you choose, make sure you take a short break every hour or so. Pop outside, stretch your legs, have a drink and maybe a snack. Oxygen, nutritious food and water are essential for concentration and mental alertness.

Effective brain function relies on neurotransmitters, which are chemicals made from amino acids. These are found in food rich in good quality protein, like lean meat, fish, soya and beans. In order to convert the amino acids into neurotransmitters the body also need vitamins and minerals, so top up on fruit and vegetables. Refined sugar, found in sweets and chocolate releases glucose too quickly into the bloodstream and this can cause mood swings. Emotions run high around exam time anyway, so it is better to snack on nuts, seeds and fruit, which provide a slow, steady release of glucose.

Our brains also depend on proper hydration to function optimally. Brain cells require a delicate balance between water and various elements to operate. Research has found that if we're even slightly dehydrated we find it more difficult to focus. Aim to drink around up to 1.5-2 litres of water, diluted fruit juice or herbal teas per day. Drinks rich in caffeine, such as Red Bull or coffee trigger production of the stress hormone cortisol which can

make you feel even more edgy and nervous, and make it harder to focus and find the right words under exam pressure.

Gentle exercise, such as walking, or cycling, in between study improves the blood circulation to the brain and actually relieves stress, making you feel more relaxed.

On the day of an exam focus on breathing; slow deep breaths in and out will help to reduce levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Try not to engage in pre-or post exam discussion, as this can make you feel anxious.

If you're well prepared and well-rested then you are ready. But remember they are only exams. They are one measure of your ability taken at one point in time. They do not relate to who you are as a person, or how well you will ultimately do in life. All you can ever do is try your best on the day. Good luck.



## **What type of learner are you?**

**Visual learners** - prefer note cards and tend to map out information on paper.

**Auditory learners** - prefer to read their notes aloud, and listen to them being played back.

**Kinaesthetic learners** need action – Record your voice and play back the information while walking. Take revision notes to the gym and read while running on a treadmill, even sitting on a swing reading notes can work.

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