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Aug/Sep
2025

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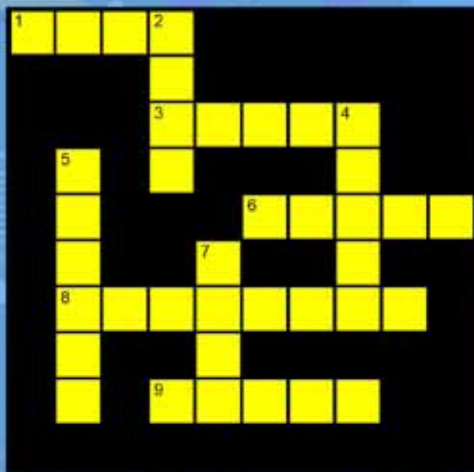
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Kids' Page

ACROSS

Can you solve our park crossword?

DOWN



Everyone is tangled up. Who does the dog belong to? AND WHO OWNS the truck?



Puzzle Solution

WORD

MAGAZINE

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Welcome to the Summer update from Warfield Parish Council

Summer of Fun 2025

The town and parish councils of Bracknell Forest are pleased to present our annual Summer of Fun events once again. The events are free to attend, and many of the activities are also free! The Warfield event has now taken place, but there are five other events to attend over the summer.

All the events run between 11am and 3pm. Please check with individual town and parish council websites for locations and details.



Arts Week 2025

The Annual Binfield, Warfield & Winkfield Arts Week will take place from Sunday 26th – Sunday 2nd November.

Full details of the programme of events and how to book can be found on the website www.arts-week.org.

Contact the Parish Council

If you need to contact us out of opening hours, please call us on **01344 457777** and leave a message or e-mail info@warfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk. You can also use these contact details if you wish to reach your local councillor. To receive our newsletter please sign up using the link below or using the QR code.

<https://mailchi.mp/warfieldparishcouncil/warfield-parish-council>



Local Author's New Book Strikes a Powerful Chord with Readers.



Local author Finlay McArthur has released a moving and beautifully written new book that's already capturing hearts and earning international glowing praise. With several 5-star reviews to its name, the book invites readers on a deeply personal yet universal journey through emotion, resilience, and reflection.

Author and coach Finlay McArthur, shares his own journey of expression, from the unstructured world of being autistic to the boundless realm of creativity. His mission is simple yet profound: to empower you to find your unique voice and remind you that being creative is for everyone, so take a leap, set aside doubt, and let your creativity shine.

'Lines From The Soul' brings vivid storytelling with poetic insight, this is a collection that speaks to anyone who has ever faced life's turning points and felt they have been left on the outside. Whether you read it in a quiet moment or share it aloud, each page offers warmth, wisdom, and a deeper connection to what it means to be human. And maybe, just maybe you'll see parts of your own story written in these lines too.

A celebration of both vulnerability and strength, this book is quickly becoming a must-read—and it all began right here in our community.

'Lines From The Soul' Is available on Amazon, Waterstones, TG Jones and all good bookshops. Enjoy a sample of Finlay's poetry:

London's Heart

Amongst the noise, the fuss, and grime
There is a city that stands the test of time
A place of dreams and memories old
Where majestic stories, and love unfold

In cobbled streets, shadows roam
Through whispered secrets, they find a home
Where every corner holds a tale
Of triumph, loss, where hearts set sail

The Thames, a ribbon of hope, sings its song
Through histories short and stories long
Reflecting time warm bridges, steadfast yet true
Connecting the cities souls, both old and new

In ageless parks, where dreams find solace
Where lover's kiss, a whispered promise
The tales of present and past entwine
Where the future is bright, and forever sublime

The bustling markets, and tree lined lanes
Where solitude and beauty stand and reign
In every breath, and within every sigh
London's soul lives on, and will never die

So when you wander, hand in hand
Through streets where history makes a stand
Walk in this city, and feel your part
Forever binding yourself, to London's heart

Experience exceptional care at Bickerton House care home

Bickerton House is part of Care UK, one of the UK's leading independent care home providers, with over 40 years' experience of delivering high quality care to older people.

Our experienced team at Bickerton House takes pride in offering the best residential, nursing, dementia and respite care. We put your loved one at the heart of their care and everything we do is personalised to their unique needs and wishes. What's more, you and your loved one are fully involved at every step.

Relax in luxurious surroundings

Living in a Care UK care home is all about enjoying fulfilling experiences every day. Bickerton House residents can enjoy a café, cinema, hair and beauty salon and stunning gardens.

At Bickerton House our team is passionate about supporting your loved one to enjoy a fulfilling life, full of meaningful experiences.

Our Lifestyle team organises small group and one-to-one activities, as well as events, entertainment and outings all tailored to residents' interests and backgrounds. Daily activities range from baking and exercise classes, to pet therapy, arts and crafts and gardening. With regular trips out in the local community. The team often meets with residents to find out what they're enjoying, and adapts the programme accordingly.



Trust us to care

Over 9,000 families across the country trust Care UK to care for an older loved one. Our team will be here for you every step of the way, whether you need information, advice or a listening ear, you can trust us to care. At Care UK, we are proud to deliver exceptional care across the UK, with some of the highest regulatory ratings of any provider. Our teams offer personalised, expert residential, nursing, dementia and respite care that has been trusted by families for over 40 years.

To find out more about Bickerton House, call **01344 981528** or visit our website, **careuk.com/bickerton-house**



Join us for
our next
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**Bickerton House care home,
Bracknell**

Friendship café

The second Thursday of each month,
10.30am - 12pm

Canine café

The first Wednesday of each month,
2pm - 4pm

Alzheimer's Singing for the Brain

The fourth Monday of each month,
10.30am - 12pm

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Warfield Environment Group

July Update

We have undertaken our first bat survey of the season, a field survey around Jealott's Hill, and we are scheduled to complete the late surveys of our wildlife verges along Harvest Ride.

Coming up:

Summer Walk – Saturday 23 August, 2.30pm – 4.30pm

Join us and Binfield Environment Group for a two-hour summer walk around Blue Mountain and Cabbage Hill, some of the best green spaces in our area for nature. We will be on the look-out for birds, butterflies and other things beginning with B! Meet at 2.30pm at the Blue Mountain Car Park on Forest Road, Binfield.



Annual Bat Walk – Saturday 6 September, 7.45pm – 9.00pm

Book to see and hear some of our native bats and learn more about these fascinating creatures. We will use bat detectors to hear Pipistrelles on the edge of Hayley Green Wood and, if lucky, Daubentons around Westmorland pond. Accompanied children welcome, but event not suitable for dogs. Please wear warm clothes and suitable footwear, and bring a torch. Tickets available here <https://tinyurl.com/y47s9axk> from 18 August at 8.55am or scan the QR code (right).



Please consider walking or cycling to our events where you are able, to help minimise emissions of carbon and other pollutants.



warfieldenvgroup.wordpress.com
✉ warfieldenvironmentgroup@hotmail.com
f Warfield Environment Group



Join our mailing list for the latest information on upcoming events

August is the New January

I was sitting in a pub garden with my two closest friends, enjoying cold drinks in the sun when talk turned to which was the worst month of the year. "Well, I hate August!" declared Lucy,

"Ugh! Me too," agreed Alice, and they both went on to explain (in some detail) why August sucks.

"It's the end of summer but not quite Autumn. The plants in my garden are crispy and most have gone over. School is about to restart, and I've not even thought about new shoes and uniform."

"Yeah... And most of the elaborate plans I had for doing things with the kids this summer never really came to anything. August just feels like a long list of obligations."

I was surprised. I like August, and not just because it's my birthday (oh dear, maybe that was one of the obligations Alice referred to). If you feel like August is your least favourite month, please let me advocate for a moment on its behalf.

New Start – August has lots in common with January. It feels like a new start! As a child I remember new shoes, clothes, and stationery (oh the thrill of new colouring pencils). I could reinvent myself with a new teacher and unblemished exercise books. August, like January was full of potential and possibilities. So what if I'd broken all my New Year's resolutions before the last of the festive fairy lights had been packed away; August was another chance. This academic year I could be a cooler, kinder version of me, who worked harder and achieved better grades! Call me a cock-eyed optimist but



even as an adult, August still evokes those feelings for me.

New Season –

Ok, Autumn doesn't start until September, but August is the prelude. Temperatures are dropping and you can 'smell' the difference in the

mornings. I adore the heat and freedom summer but by the middle of August I'm looking forward to opaque tights and craving the calmness and structure of 'back to school' days.

Summer is more stressful as an adult. As a child the whole summer was mine. I focussed only on fun and friends. Now even though I love summer frivolity, it has to be fitted around my job. Summer feels fun-but-frantic, so by mid-August I'm anticipating the finish line.

Reset – No matter what the first 7 months of the year were like, there's still time to instigate changes. July was the start of the long summer break yes, but really July was just an extension of June, packed with end-of-term chaos: exams, concerts, presentations, school trips and sports days. August on the other hand provides the mental space for bit of a soft reset, to evaluate how the first half of the year went and think about what went well, and what needs to change.

"August resolutions should definitely be a thing," I finished happily, before realising my friends were now regarding me with something akin to a mix of incredulity and pity.

Well, my besties may not be convinced, but what about you? Are you ready to embrace a fresh start and make a resolution or two? Who's with me?

By Gemma Brown

Choose the Right Driving Instructor

Learning to drive is a big milestone, and also an expensive one, so finding the right instructor is important.

In the UK, all professional driving instructors must be approved by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Authority (DVSA).

Anyone you choose should be an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) who displays a green badge in their windscreen. Trainee instructors carry a pink badge – they can still teach, but they're not fully qualified yet.

Consider personal and online reviews, pass rates, and how well the instructor explains things. A good instructor will be calm, patient, professional, and never make you feel anxious or rushed. Red flags include turning up late, being distracted (e.g., using their phone), or pushing you to take a test before you feel ready. If something seems 'off' it's a good idea to switch instructors.



Decide whether you want lessons in a manual or automatic car – and whether the instructor's car suits your needs (e.g., small, and easy to park, good visibility, dual controls).

If you can practice between lessons, it's very helpful. Make sure

the parent or friend who sits with you, meets the legal requirements though. They must be over 21, have been a qualified driver for at least three years, and insured. It also helps if they are calm, sensible and unlikely to start shouting at you!

Private practice is good for reinforcing what you've learned and building confidence in different settings, such as at night, on rural roads, or in the rain!

With the right instructor, you'll be on the way to shedding your L plates before you know it.

By Jack O'Neil

Sudoku

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

How to Play

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9, **with no repetition!**

That's all there is to it.

You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic - there's no maths involved and no adding up.

It's fun. It's challenging. It's addictive!

(solution on page 18)



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- ✓ Dates - 19th July and 16th and 30th August

Workshops

- ✓ Wildlife Gardening - 2nd August
- ✓ Composting - 6th September
- ✓ All tools provided, please bring gloves and suitable clothing

Details:

- 📅 Selected Saturdays
- 🕒 10am - 1pm
- 📍 Wellers Lane, Warfield, RG42 6BQ

Workshop Pricing

- £ Active JHCL Volunteers £5.00
- £ General Public £25.00

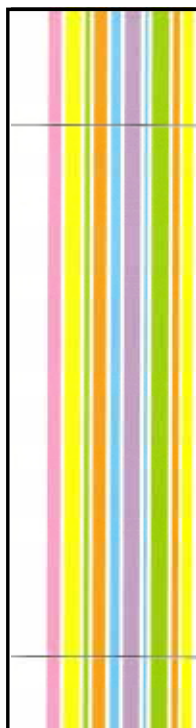
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Garden View

This month - Astrantia, the quiet star of the cottage garden

If you've ever wandered through a traditional English cottage garden in midsummer, chances are you've caught sight of astrantias - those charming, understated flowers that quietly hold their own among the showier blooms. Also known as masterworts or the rather quaint "Hattie's pincushion," these perennials are the perfect blend of beauty and practicality. With their starry, pincushion-style blooms in shades from soft white to dusky pink and deep ruby, they're a treat for the eye - and for the bees and butterflies, too!

Astrantias bloom their hearts out from June right through to August, giving us gardeners a generous season of colour, not to mention plenty of nectar for our insect friends. They're absolutely brilliant for shady spots, especially those damp, awkward corners where other plants might sulk. Moisture-retentive soil is their sweet spot, but don't worry if your patch is on the drier side - they'll still do well with regular watering and a good mulch.

Speaking of soil, astrantias are fans of the rich stuff: well-rotted manure, home-made compost, or leaf mould worked into the ground before planting.

Pop the plant into a prepared hole, firm it in, and water generously. Keep up the watering through the first summer, especially if your soil's particularly free-draining. Once settled, they're pretty self-sufficient, and wonderfully resistant to slugs and snails, which is a real bonus in my own garden!

If you want to encourage a second

flush of flowers (and who wouldn't?), cut them back after their first round of blooming. Give them a proper haircut again in autumn or early spring to keep them looking tidy.

Astrantias can be divided in spring. Lift a clump, gently prise it apart with your hands or a fork and replant the sections right away. If you've got the patience, they can also be grown from seed - either collected from your own plants or from a packet under cover in spring.

Astrantias are mostly trouble-free, though occasionally powdery mildew can be an issue. Keep them healthy with plenty of water and mulch and bin any mildewy leaves in autumn.

For varieties, try 'Roma' for soft pink blooms, 'Venice' for a dramatic ruby red, or 'Hadsen Blood' if you're after something truly striking. For a lighter look, 'Buckland' and 'Alba' are gentle on the eye and lovely in a pastel scheme.

In all, astrantias are reliable, romantic, and ridiculously easy to grow - a real cottage garden treasure.

Happy gardening,



By Rachael Leverton



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A Good Read



Small Pleasures by Clare Chambers

Small Pleasures is a quiet gem of a book that unfolds with the grace of a classic British drama, while packing a modern

literary punch.

Set in the meticulously rendered suburbs of 1957 southeast London the story follows Jean Swinney, a journalist approaching her fortieth birthday, and stuck writing lightweight 'women's pieces'. Her life is defined by routine, duty, and the quiet ache of unrealised dreams.

When she's assigned to investigate a local woman's claim of a virgin birth, she anticipates a hoax. Instead, she finds herself drawn into the lives of Gretchen Tilbury, her charming daughter Margaret, and Gretchen's enigmatic husband, Howard. As Jean's professional curiosity evolves into personal entanglement, Chambers masterfully explores themes of loneliness, desire, and the societal constraints of postwar Britain.

The novel's strength lies in its subtlety. Chambers crafts a narrative rich in period detail and emotional nuance, where the most profound moments are found in the quietest exchanges. Jean's internal struggle between duty and desire is portrayed with a tenderness that resonates deeply, making her journey all the more poignant.

While the mystery of the virgin birth is central to the plot, it's Jean's personal awakening and the intricate dynamics between characters that draw us in.

Small Pleasures is a novel that lingers, reflecting on the small joys and quiet tragedies that define a life. It's a reminder that the most extraordinary stories often emerge from the most ordinary lives.

The Book of Stolen Dreams by David Farr

This is a dazzling children's debut that sweeps readers into a richly imagined world where courage and imagination are the keys to survival. Set in the oppressive city of Brava, siblings Rachel and Robert Klein find themselves thrust into a perilous adventure after their librarian father entrusts them with a mysterious, forbidden book. Their mission: to find the missing final page and prevent the book from falling into the hands of the tyrannical ruler, Charles Malstain.

Farr's screenwriting and theatre credentials are very much present as he brings a cinematic flair to his storytelling, deftly balancing moments of suspense with real humour and warmth.

There are many parallels to be drawn with certain chapters in history as well as more current events. Farr paints a compellingly grim picture of life under highly restrictive rules and regulations where almost every kind of fun is outlawed, and teaching takes place under the tightest of rules. In spite of this, Rachel and Robert's spirits shine like beacons as they embark on their adventures.

The Book of Stolen Dreams is more than just a fantasy adventure; it's a poignant exploration of the power of stories and the resilience of the human spirit. The suggested age range is 8-12 but quite frankly this 40-year-old adored it as much as her son.



By Tash Donovan

THE MID-LIFE CRISIS

Myth, reality, and cure

When my neighbour Ted, reached 50, he bought himself a shiny new sports car. He still had two teenagers living at home, so the tiny two-seater was not exactly practical. His wife was both incredulous and annoyed. The phrase 'mid-life crisis' was heard.

The term mid-life crisis refers to a period of emotional upheaval or self-reflection that typically occurs between the ages of 40 and 60. For some, it can be a time of renewal and personal growth; for others, it brings confusion, restlessness, or a longing for change. But what provokes it, and is it even a real phenomenon?

Mid-life often brings a convergence of life events: aging parents, teenage children, career plateaus, health concerns, and the stark realization that more life may be behind than ahead. These factors can trigger existential questions: Am I happy? Did I achieve what I wanted? Is this all there is?

Other triggers include divorce, job loss, bereavement, or even a milestone birthday. These events can spark a re-evaluation of our goals, identity, and purpose.

The concept of the mid-life crisis was popularised in 1965 by Canadian psychoanalyst Elliott Jaques, who described it as a period when adults confront their own mortality and reassess their accomplishments. The idea gained traction in the 1970s and 80s, often depicted in the media through impulsive purchases, or romantic affairs.

Men and women can experience mid-life crises differently, shaped by social roles, expectations, and hormones. Men are



more likely to seek adventure, or an affair with a younger woman, to reclaim a sense of youth or vitality. Women, particularly after children reach late teens, may reflect on an identity beyond motherhood or grapple with aging and societal invisibility.

But these are generalizations. The emotional experiences -

self-doubt, regret, and a desire for reinvention - can affect anyone, regardless of gender.

Is It Even Real? - Psychologists are divided. While many people report going through mid-life transitions, there's little scientific evidence to suggest a universal phenomenon. In fact, studies show that emotional well-being often improves after mid-life. It may be more helpful to think of it as a mid-life transition period - a natural phase of reflection and change rather than a breakdown.

If you or a partner seems to be in the midst of a mid-life shift:

Try to talk openly about feelings without judgment.

Seek purpose through hobbies, volunteering, or new goals.

Avoid impulsive decisions - give changes time to unfold.

Consider therapy or coaching to explore identity and direction.

Stay physically and socially active, both of which support emotional health.

Ultimately, a mid-life "crisis" can be reframed as a chance to realign with what truly matters. With support and self-awareness, it can mark the beginning of a more meaningful second act.

By Andrew Schilling

Useful Numbers

Crimestoppers 0800 555 111
(Anonymous freephone number)
Thames Valley Police 101
(Non-emergency number)
Emergency 999

Gas Emergency 0800 111999
Electricity Emergency 0800 0727282
Power Cut Helpline 105
Water Emergency 0800 3169800

Bracknell Forest Council 01344 352000
(Customer Services)
Bracknell Town Council 01344 420079
Binfield Parish Council 01344 454602
Warfield Parish Council 01344 457777
Winkfield Parish Council 01344 885110

ChildLine 0800 1111
Samaritans 116 123
DrinkLine 0300 1231110

National Rail Enquiries 03457 484950
Gatwick Airport 0344 8920322
Heathrow Airport 0844 3351801

NHS help & advice 111
Heatherwood Hospital 0300 6145000
Wexham Park Hospital 0300 6145000
Frimley Park Hospital 0300 6145000
Royal Berkshire Hospital 0118 3225111

South Hill Park 01344 484123
Bracknell Leisure Centre 01344 454203
The Look Out 01344 354400

Sudoku Solution

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

University Challenge

What to expect from higher education



Hoorah! You've done it. All the hard work paid off and you've passed your A-levels. University beckons, but are you ready?

It's easy to assume that uni will be 'like school but bigger,' but that's not the case.

In school, while you will have been encouraged to do some independent thinking and research, much of what you learned was broken down and served up in manageable chunks.

At university study is fast-paced and students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning. This is a major adjustment for most young people, and many struggle to adapt. A common complaint from higher education tutors is that their students have never learned how to learn!

Stella Cottrell has produced ***The Study Skills Handbook*** which I would recommend to all new students. It aims to help you learn how to sort, process, and recall all the information you'll be required to absorb.

Today's students also have to grapple with the rise of generative AI. This was not the case even five years ago. Universities are adapting quickly, but a good resource for students is David Meehan's recently published book ***Generative AI for Students: The Essential Guide to Using Artificial Intelligence for Study at University***. Don't be put off by the dry title, it's packed with useful information in an easy-to-follow format, to help student

enhance their academic work efficiently and ethically.

At least 60% of first year undergraduates feel out of their depth at times, so you won't be alone if this happens to you. If you're struggling, talk to your tutor directly. Most people who work in higher education are passionate about their subject and will be happy to help. Talk to them as soon as the problem arises though, don't wait until the day before an assignment is due!

Tutorials and seminars are your chance to take the initiative. Make the most of them. Go in armed with any questions and thoughts you have. The more you put into university study, the more you'll get out of it.

If you are neurodivergent, disabled or have a specific learning difficulty like dyslexia, make yourself known to the Student Learning Service. They offer support and run advice sessions.

It's not just the academic side of life which requires adjustment. You may be moving to the other side of the UK or from the countryside to a city. Try to arrange to spend a weekend in the new area during the summer. Familiarise yourself with the transport system and local amenities and it won't seem quite as strange when term starts. Think about how you'll manage your finances and don't be too proud to talk your parents about this aspect of independent living. They've been through similar situations even if they didn't attend university themselves.

Finally, university is also about making new friends. Attend any 'welcome' events and sign up for one or two clubs. Don't over-commit yourself in the early days though because you'll already have a lot to deal with.

Most people look back on their time at university with fond memories. It's an exciting time. Prepare well, work hard, and don't forget to enjoy yourself. You've earned it.

By Sarah Davey

What's Bugging You?

Stings and bites and what to do about them



Summer is peak bug time, and whether we're enjoying a walk in the countryside or a BBQ in the garden, insect bites and stings can be an unfortunate seasonal nuisance. So, let's demystify bites and stings.

We'll start with why bites and stings cause pain or itching? Well, when an insect bites or stings you, it introduces substances into your skin. Biting insects like mosquitoes inject saliva, which contains proteins that stop your blood from clotting while they feed. Your immune system sees these proteins as foreign invaders and releases histamine, a chemical that triggers inflammation, itching, and redness.

Stinging insects like bees and wasps inject venom. This venom can cause pain, swelling, and irritation. In some cases, it also triggers a more intense immune response, leading to more significant swelling or even allergic reactions.

Some people react more strongly than others. Local swelling is common and usually harmless, but for those with allergies, a sting can cause a condition called anaphylaxis. This is a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction. Symptoms may include difficulty breathing, swelling of the face or throat, a rapid heartbeat, dizziness, or a drop in blood pressure. If you or someone else experiences these symptoms, seek emergency medical attention immediately - call 999.

However, for most bites and stings, simple home care is effective:

- *Clean the area with soap and water to reduce the risk of infection.*
- *Apply a cold compress to reduce swelling and numb the pain.*
- *Avoid scratching because this can break the skin and lead to infection.*

You can also use over-the-counter (OTC) treatments available from a pharmacist:

- *Antihistamine creams (like chlorphenamine or diphenhydramine) can ease itching and reduce inflammation.*
- *Hydrocortisone cream (1%) can help soothe inflammation, especially in allergic-type skin reactions.*
- *Oral antihistamines can also be effective if the reaction is more widespread or you're getting multiple bites.*

Insect repellents and wearing long sleeves can help prevent bites in the first place, particularly in high-risk areas like woodlands or near stagnant water.

When should we seek medical help?

- *If the swelling or pain is severe and spreading.*
- *If signs of infection are visible (e.g. pus, increasing redness, or the skin feels hot).*
- *If there are signs of an allergic reaction.*
- *If the sting or bite is inside the mouth or near the eyes or throat.*

The majority of Insect bites and stings though annoying, are usually harmless, and knowing how to treat them can keep a summer outing from being spoiled by a sting.

By Louise Addison



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BURST YOUR BUBBLE

What is bubble tea?

You've probably seen bubble tea shops popping (no pun intended) up on a high street near you recently. Bubble tea, also known as boba, is a colourful, chewy drink, that's taken the UK by storm in recent years. Originally from Taiwan in the 1980s, it was created by blending milk tea with tapioca pearls, which are small, chewy balls made from cassava starch. The drink is typically served cold, with a wide straw to slurp up the "bubbles."

Classic bubble tea is made with black tea, milk, sweetener, and tapioca pearls, but modern versions are highly customisable. You'll find fruity teas, green or matcha options, flavoured jellies, and popping boba (juice-filled spheres).

Bubble tea began gaining popularity here in the late 2010s, especially in larger cities with strong East Asian communities and university populations. Its appeal spread quickly thanks to the drinks' Instagram and TikTok appeal. Trendy tea chains like **Bubbleology** and **Gong Cha**, began to open shops around the country, and now it's widely available on most high streets.

While the teas are popular, they're pricey, and they're not exactly health drinks. Most shop-bought bubble teas are loaded with sugar, artificial flavours, and sweetened condensed milk, with some coming in at 400 calories per cup. The Tapioca pearls themselves are comprised mainly of carbohydrates and have little nutritional value, and the portion sizes are often huge.

If you're tempted, but want to try a healthier option, many stores offer reduced sugar, plant milk, or fruit tea bases, so you can tailor the drink to your taste and diet.



By Sarah Davey



Are you a leftie? If you are, then like me, you're part of the special minority who make up about 12% of the population.

Handedness arises from a complex mix of factors which include: genetic influences, prenatal development,

hormones, birth circumstances, and even season you're born in!

Studies on twins suggest that genetics account for around 25 % of the variance; the rest likely stems from developmental "noise" in the womb, which refers to the random, unpredictable biological factors that affect how a baby develops during pregnancy. These are non-genetic influences, so they're not inherited, but instead arise from subtle variations in the environment inside the womb. In the context of left-handedness, developmental noise might include:

- Small fluctuations in hormone levels, especially testosterone.
- Slight differences in blood flow to parts of the brain.
- Minor changes in how cells grow or

organise on the left vs. right side of the body.

- Birth position or events during delivery.

All these random factors can influence which side of the brain becomes dominant for things like language and motor skills - ultimately determining whether a child becomes left or right-handed, which is why identical twins (with the same DNA) can have different handedness. Biology is not always predictable!

In medieval Europe, being a leftie was linked to witchcraft and evil – 'sinister' literally meant left, so children were often forced to use their right hand.

In a right-handed world, everyday tools - scissors, kitchen knives, your computer mouse, are usually designed with right-handers in mind. If you want to know how annoying that is...try cutting along a straight line using normal scissors with your left hand!

Left-handers often bring advantages though, such as improved spatial awareness, creativity, and sometimes even an edge in sports.

Being left-handed is part of what makes me 'me'. I like being a leftie, even if scissors are my nemesis!

By Kye White

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