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ISSUE 143
FREE

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LOCAL LINKS



Dear Readers,

Welcome to the October edition of Local Links.

It's great to see so many of our repeat advertisers. We hope you will continue to support local businesses during this difficult economical period.

We know that the usual celebrations that take place this time of year won't quite be the same, but that doesn't mean that children (or adults!) have to miss out. We have some Covid-friendly ideas for Halloween night that we think you will love, as well as the perfect recipe for the season; cinder toffee. This honeycomb delight is fun to make and kids will love it!

Our competition this month is courtesy of *The Boars Head* in Sudbury; the perfect rural location to enjoy a cosy meal or drinks. We have six (yes six!) vouchers to give away, so make sure you enter!

Have a safe and happy Halloween and Bonfire Night everyone!

The **LOCAL LINKS** team

ISSUE 143

SALES

Heather Digby
Sarah Deakin

DESIGN

Rebecca Whitehurst

ACCOUNTS

Jan Evans

01283 564608

local@locallinksmedia.co.uk

Local Links Media
PO Box 8049
Burton-on-Trent
DE14 9NQ

www.locallinksmedia.co.uk

facebook.com/
locallinks magazine



CONTRIBUTORS

Including: Sarah Davey,
Angela Sargent, Jacqui
Hollyhead, The Boars
Head, Tracey Anderson
& Scarsdale Vets

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RECIPE: CINDER TOFFEE

Part science experiment, part sweet treat. This is fun for the kids and perfect for Halloween and Bonfire Night.

PREPARATION TIME

5 minutes

COOKING TIME

15-20 minutes (plus cooling).

SERVES: Depends how sweet your tooth is!

INGREDIENTS

165g demerara sugar

165g caster sugar

60ml golden syrup

4 tbsp water

15g butter, diced, plus extra

to grease

Pinch of salt

1 tbsp bicarbonate of soda

*You will also need a kitchen thermometer

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Generously grease an approximately 24cm square tin.
2. Put the bicarbonate of soda within easy reach of the hob.
3. Place both sugars, syrup, water, and butter in a deep, heavy-bottomed pan with a pinch of salt. (Make sure it is a deep pan or the 'science bit' will go horribly badly!).
4. Heat gently, stirring, until

the sugars and butter have dissolved, then turn up the heat slightly and bring to the boil. Simmer until it reaches 138C turns amber and bubbles - this will take about 10-15 minutes.

5. When the mixture gets to temperature, remove it from the heat and quickly and thoroughly whisk in the bicarb. It will foam and grow alarmingly. The kids will love it!
6. Pour the foamy mixture into the tin and leave to set. When cold, get the kids to smash it into pieces!

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Every October thousands of pumpkins are sold to be displayed proudly on our doorsteps for Halloween, carved into ever more creative shapes and patterns. Every year we also see a rise in recipes which encourage us to save the sweet flesh and seeds from the bin, adding them to traditional pies and tarts or more experimental dishes. We set out with the best intentions to make one of these fantastic dishes, but often end up leaving the pumpkin sitting on the side until the last minute. The carving ends up taking longer than we thought, we don't have a sharp enough knife, the mouth goes all wonky.. By the time this ordeal is over we're ready to forget all about pumpkins for another year.

We're here to say this year can be different! With a little preparation you can have a painless pumpkin experience, and have simple recipes ready to go that you can either have for dinner on Halloween night itself or at a later date.

ROASTING

If you're looking for the simplest way to incorporate pumpkin into a meal, you can't go wrong with roasting the flesh. If

you're not carving the skin then you can slice it up as it comes, cut out the stringy area with the seeds, and put it straight in the oven at 200c with a little oil drizzled over. You can then cut away the skin with ease once it's been roasted.



If you're saving the flesh after carving it, try to use a sharp implement for removal as it'll be easier to create bigger and more uniform chunks.

To further enhance the flavour you can add a dusting of brown sugar, ground clove, cinnamon, nutmeg, and a little sea salt. It'll take around 18-20 minutes in the oven.

SOUPS AND STEWS

These are a great option if you're likely to be taking out a pumpkin's innards without much precision. The flesh will keep in the fridge for up to three days, or up to eight months in the freezer, so you can save more time-consuming recipes for a less busy evening. You can then add your pumpkin to your favourite stew or curry recipes as you would butternut squash, as it will behave very similarly and add a fresh and sweet taste. Or you can make it the star of the show in a hearty pumpkin soup. This can be as simple as cooking off onions, garlic, and your choice of spices before adding the pumpkin and some stock, then leaving on the hob until everything is creamy and ready to go.

SEEDS

Not to be forgotten, pumpkin seeds are very easy to prepare as a snack or to sprinkle on top of your soups and stews. You can either roast them in the oven, or heat in a pan with a little oil until they pop, and they're easy to jazz up with spices if you'd like to try something different. Either way - they are full of a surprising amount of nutrients for such a small snack.

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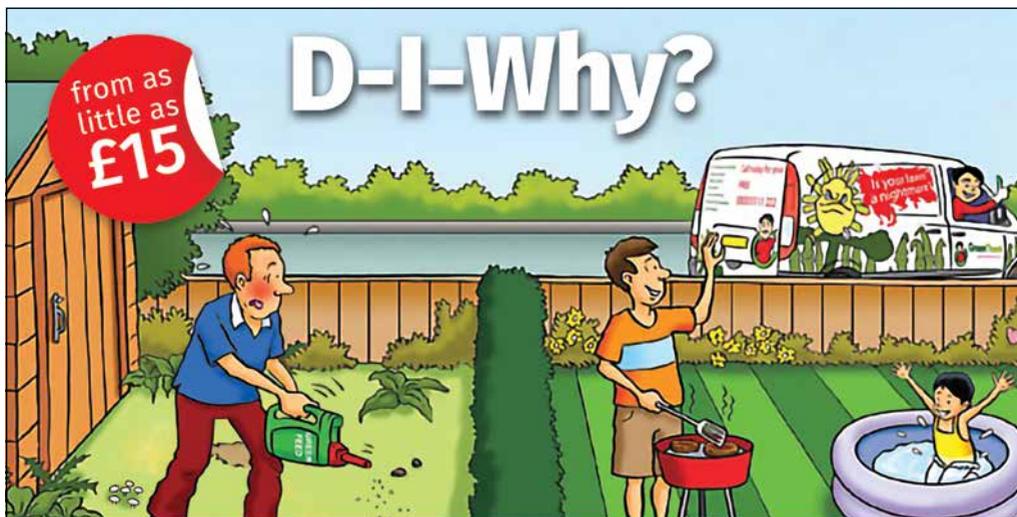
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October brings early nights and darker mornings and, for us, the beginning of feeding silage to our cattle still outside. A few frosty mornings are always a pleasure but not so much the foggy ones as it makes checking livestock difficult. As soon as they hear the tractor start up, the cattle are poised and waiting by the electric fence, all trying to be first to have the best pickings.

We are just finishing off the field work - growing less than previous years and more grass instead. Our

fields are mucked with our own animal's manure and our sheds are emptied and cleaned in readiness for when the cattle come in again for winter.

When the seed has been sown or drilled, the biggest job is keeping the pigeons and crows off the young sprouts as they come through. We use scarecrows (a good way of getting rid of old work clothes!) and occasionally bangers. Some farmers use automated bird scarers. Years ago, hubby used a string of scarer bangers tied onto the scarecrow (he thought it would be double the effect!). It certainly scared the birds as the first shot ignited the scarecrow, which in turn set

off the rest all at once! A case of more bang for your buck!

We have to be careful as to the amount of nitrogen (in the form of manure/fertiliser) we put on our land to prevent excess run-off into any watercourses. We have no arable fields next to any streams and we also have wide field margins next to ditches just to make sure that there is no contamination risk.

Money spider webs may be seen wafting and glistening with dew on the grass, particularly on frosty mornings, and luckily we will see last of the yellow ragwort flowers for this year.

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KNOW YOUR POTATOES!

Did you know that there are over five hundred varieties of potato grown worldwide?! That's right, and there are fifteen varieties that we're much more likely to find in the UK. This is our short guide to help you understand these varieties and how best to use each one.

The two most common factors which determine a potato's best uses are waxiness and starchiness. Starchy refers to starch content, waxy refers to the texture. A starchy potato has a more floury texture and a waxy potato has a higher water content. Starchy potatoes will break up easily when cooked, and absorb flavours well. This makes them well suited to

mash, potato cakes, hashes, and even curries, where you'd like them to soak up some of the sauce. They have a lovely fluffy texture inside when roasted. Waxy potatoes hold together much better when cooked so are suitable for salads and other dishes where you want to keep the potato whole. They can withstand a good boiling! There are also all-purpose varieties, which do exactly what they say on the tin. Or sack.

We are not saying that you can't make some delicious mashed potatoes with an Elfe or boil a Vivaldi, but hopefully this has helped in the potato-choosing process and in your quest to create amazing roasties!

POTATO VARIETIES

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SAFER GAMBLING WEEK

The 19th to 25th November is Safer Gambling Week, an initiative to promote safer gambling in the United Kingdom and Ireland. The aim is to create awareness of, and advise on:

- How to gamble more safely
- The tools that are available to help you gamble safely all year round
- Sources of more advice and support

The whole of the UK and Irish gambling industry including amusement arcades, bingo clubs, bookmakers and casinos has come together to support the initiative, with many events and workshops taking place across the country and online.

If you are concerned about your gambling habits, please call the National Gambling Helpline on **0808 8020 133**. To find out more about Safer Gambling Week or to get involved, visit www.safergamblinguk.org.

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IS HALLOWEEN CANCELLED? BY SARAH DAVEY

Trick-or-treat is either a fun chance to dress-up and claim free sweets from neighbours, or it's an antisocial American travesty which has infiltrated these shores. I happen to fall squarely in the latter camp, my kids the former. They start planning their outfits in March. I don't want to rain on their scary parades, but what should we do about Halloween in the face of a global pandemic?

It's not certain that any of our neighbours will actually welcome my young visitors (or plague-bearers as I've come to think of them of them since their return to school) to their doorsteps, no matter how cute their costumes or beguiling their manners.

Frankly, I'd freak out about them grabbing handfuls of potentially COVID-

coated Crunchie bars, so I'm not exactly devastated that I won't have to accompany them door-to-door and smile apologetically as they beg for treats. But neither am I a total killjoy, so I've come up with some ideas for alternative activities:

1. Hang a spooky piñata for your children in your own back garden.
2. Create a haunted house for your kids at home. Let them dress up and be scared in a fun but safe way.
3. Create a spooky scavenger hunt inside and out. Leave clues, or a trail of blood, or spiders.

4. Snuggle up and watch a scary movie...something like *Monsters Inc* or *The Corpse Bride* (depending on age).

5. Read age-appropriate ghost stories in the dark in front of the fire.

6. If the weather is mild, go outside, snuggle under blankets, light pumpkins and toast marshmallows on a camping stove or fire pit. Now, that's the sort of trick-or-treat night I could get behind!

I suppose we should also leave a bowl of Quality Street and bottle of hand sanitiser on the doorstep and wave at the hardcore trick-or-treaters from the safety of the upstairs window.

Whatever you decide, have a Happy COVID-safe Halloween!



During lockdown, my sleep suffered. Like everyone else my anxiety levels rocketed, and I tossed and turned for hours. I dug out my Fitbit which I hadn't worn since the start of lockdown and began tracking my sleep again. I realised that my sleep score which had previously been 87-92 (good-excellent), was now languishing around 61-64 (bottom end of fair), occasionally dipping into the 50s (poor). No wonder I felt tired and tearful. Something needed to change.

To optimise sleep health, we need to balance how long we sleep with how well we sleep. For years, researchers recommended eight hours of sleep each night as optimal. Now, professionals consider sleep quality to be of equal importance in reaping all the benefits of sleep. In fact, sleep quality is probably a better indicator of overall mental health, mood, and energy levels than sleep quantity. Prior to lockdown, I'd been a 10:30pm-6am sleeper, occasionally 11pm-6:30am. Although that was 30 minutes shy of the perfect 8 hours, I always woke just before my alarm, feeling

rested. During lockdown, bedtimes had become later and later, and although I was 'sleeping' for longer, and not setting the alarm, my sleep was clearly not of the quality I was used to.

Fitness trackers like the Fitbit monitor the quality of our sleep by looking at how much time we spend in the various stages. We cycle through the various stages each night and we each have a unique cycle. During light sleep, our body unwinds and relaxes. This is always the first stage of sleep and we spend most of our time asleep in it. It's important to our mental and physical health that we get enough light sleep. Deep sleep typically occurs within the first few hours of sleep. Our breathing is slower, our muscles relax fully and we're harder to wake during this stage. Typically, we spend about 13% of our night in deep sleep, and this is when our body repairs itself. Deep sleep aids learning, memory, and it supports our immune system. Finally, REM (rapid eye movement) sleep is when we dream. Our heart rate increases and our breathing becomes more irregular. We

also experience a form of paralysis (so we don't start acting out our dreams!). REM sleep is important for mood regulation, learning and memory. It's when our brains process and consolidate our experiences from the day.

A regular bedtime is an important factor in sleep quality. Avoiding stimulants such as blue light from electronic devices or the caffeine in coffee are also a factor, as is making sure we get enough gentle exercise during the day. I decided to take an hour-long walk every day and moved my bedtime back to 10:30pm. I avoided checking my phone for 30 minutes before bed and didn't drink coffee after 7pm. I noticed improvements almost immediately, and within a week my sleep had more-or-less reset to normal. Within a fortnight, my sleep score was back up in the 80s and hasn't dropped since.

If you're feeling stressed and tired or are struggling with low mood, it's worth looking at both the quality and quantity of your sleep.



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Recently, I had an experience that I imagine many can relate to. Through my inability to assert myself and say 'no', I ended up paying £90 for a haircut I hated. Terrible I know, but I have come to acknowledge this event as a very important lesson on self-respect and the importance of establishing boundaries.

After a few days of mourning my old hair, I was able to ask myself some questions. Why did I let this happen, why did I find it so hard to confront the hairdresser, and what can I do to stop this happening again? My gut response was to call myself out as a 'coward'. I

know if this had happened to a friend, I would have told them to storm back into the hairdressers and ask for a refund or a new treatment. And yet, I couldn't do that. I think it's always important to be respectful when someone's craft is involved but equally, you shouldn't be leaving an establishment fighting the urge to sob.

Logically, I know that the hairdressers is nothing more than a service. I wouldn't eat a meal at a restaurant if it was cold and mouldy, let alone pay for it, so what stopped me at the hairdressers? I'm no psychologist, but I think that this behaviour stems from a lack of self-respect. I don't value myself or my

needs enough to fight back when they aren't met.

Women, especially, are programmed to be submissive and avoid confrontation. Far too often, we are encouraged to just 'deal with it' and settle. This mentality is a hindrance and something we should all focus on overcoming. Learning to say 'no,' guilt-free, is crucial in establishing self-respect and maintaining personal boundaries. Nurturing your ability to say 'actually, I deserve better than this' is not only empowering but it is also essential in securing your own happiness. Prioritise yourself - it will change your life!

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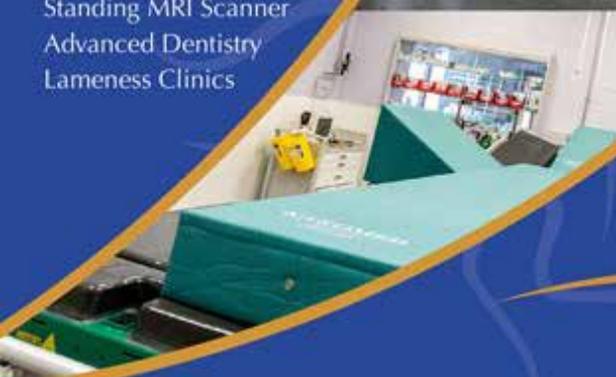


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This month, the lovely people at **The Boars Head** have given us SIX £25 VOUCHERS* to pass onto our lucky readers!

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instantly making you feel at home.

Food is served from 8am-9pm, including breakfasts, and their traditional roasts, £7.45, are served from 12pm onwards. They also offer afternoon teas for £13.50. They are currently offering 25% off food Monday to Friday during October - please check their website for all their up-to-date offers.

To view their menu or make a reservation, please visit www.boars-head-hotel.co.uk or call 01283 820344.

To enter this month's competition, all you have to do is put your name, address

and daytime telephone number on a postcard and send it to:

**Local Links Media
Boars Head Competition
PO Box 8049
Burton-on-Trent
DE14 9NQ**

Alternatively, you can e-mail your details to:

local@locallinksmedia.co.uk

The closing date for entries is the 10th November and the winners will be announced in our December edition. Good luck to everyone who enters!

*Vouchers are not valid in conjunction with any other offer. No change given. Not refundable. Booking essential.



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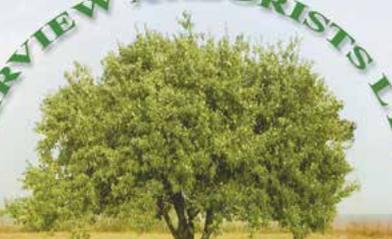
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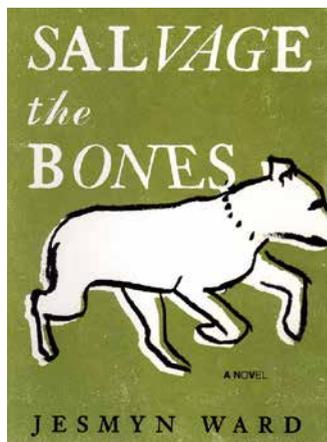
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SALVAGE THE BONES
BY JESMYN WARD

It was a storm that made headlines around the world. In August 2005, Katrina hit the Louisiana coast causing great loss of life and destruction to New Orleans and the surrounding area. This award-winning novel, set over a period of 12 days, tells the story of the Batiste family who live in the fictional town of Bois Sauvage.

Esch is 15 years old and lives with her three brothers and their father. Isolated from the rest of the small town due to the location of their house, they live in extreme poverty, with a largely absent father who, seven years after the death of his wife, still relies on drink to get through the day. So, with the news of a category 5 storm about to hit, they begin to prepare what they can and stockpile

a small amount of food.

Each chapter is one day in the build-up to the storm. Randall, the eldest, is trying to do what he can to hold his family together. Skeetah is preoccupied with his pit bull fighting dog, China, who has just given birth to puppies. Junior, the youngest, is trying to hold his own against his older brothers, and Esch has just discovered that she is pregnant.

A captivating story with engaging characters, it immerses you in their world, illustrated by a touch of Greek mythology thanks to a book that Esch (the narrator) is reading for school. The penultimate chapter will have your heart racing but ultimately this is the story of family love that survives, despite poverty and deprivation.

GOODNIGHT STORIES FOR REBEL GIRLS

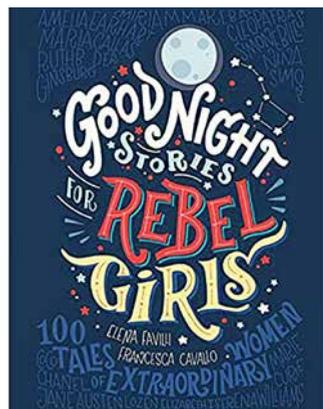
BY ELENA FAVILLI & FRANCESCA CAVALLO

Not a traditional novel here but definitely worth a read. This incredibly popular book (which has sparked a second volume) presents the stories of 100 amazing women who have made contributions to society. It is aimed at telling girls that they can achieve anything that they put their mind to and that their gender should not hold them

back. It challenges female stereotypes and inspires girls to aim high in their career choices.

Each story is told on a single page along with an illustration of the woman - this simple format gives a fantastic introduction to their lives. From mathematicians like Ada Lovelace (who actually built a machine and wrote the first computer programme back in the 19th century) to authors like the Bronte Sisters who defied the expectations of their patriarchal society. There are also tales of astronomers, activists, lawyers, chefs, naturalists, journalists, motocross racers, and even a tattoo artist.

Following the huge success of this book, a version aimed at boys has also been written: *Stories for Boys Who Dare to be Different*, which challenges male stereotypes that say you have to be tough in order to succeed.



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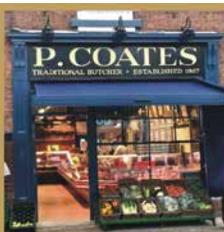


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COMMON SIGNS OF NOISE PHOBIA

- Hiding or trying to find an area to hide
- Trying to escape – digging, running away
- Urinating or defecating
- Shaking
- Pacing
- Panting
- Not eating
- Barking
- Drooling
- Chewing

WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN HELP

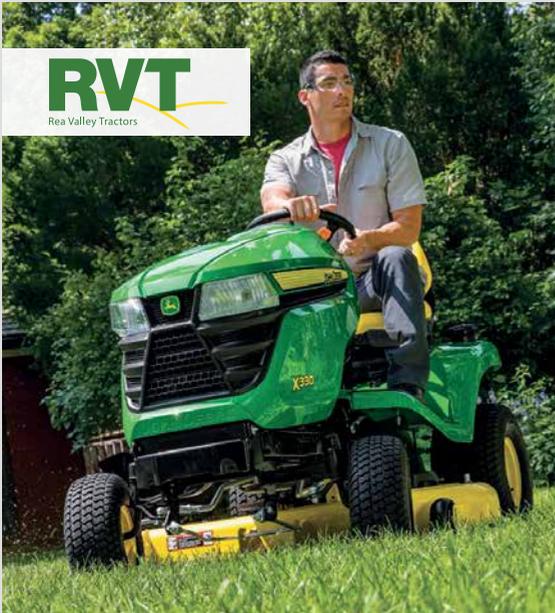
- Create a 'safe haven' where your pet can retreat to.

Consider covering a crate with a thick blanket. If your dog already has an area to hide, make that extra comfortable with blankets and a comfy bed and cover with a blanket.

- Maintain your normal routine and act normal around the dog as much as possible. Be mindful of the response you give to your dog if they are scared - telling them off can make them worse.
- Feed a high carbohydrate meal early evening before the fireworks start; this could be sweet potato mash, brown pasta or rice.
- Try not to walk at dusk or after dark; no walk is better than a walk where

there are fireworks going off.

- Close all curtains and consider using thick blackout curtains.
- Turn up the tv or radio to muffle some of the firework sounds.
- Consider using interactive toys such as Kong toys or a snuffle mat to mentally stimulate your dog during the day and while the fireworks are going off.
- Give your dog something to chew. Chewing is very stress relieving.
- Consider using an Adaptil plug-in.
- Ask your veterinary surgeon for medications that can help your dog cope better.



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

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

COMPETITION WINNERS

Congratulations to our August magazine **Sculpted** by **Rose** competition winners, who have each won a £50 beauty/nail voucher:

Amy Mathews, Brizlincote Valley
Marie Hart, Stretton
Mrs B Kent, Tutbury
Simon Shaw, Rolleston-on-Dove

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