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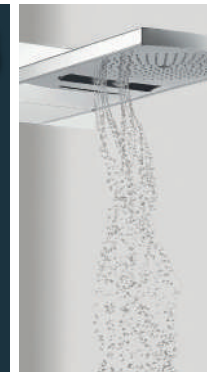
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Editor's notes...



Nik Allen, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION**Brentwood.

As we close off 2017 and celebrate our achievements of the year, I always like to reflect on what has been achieved and where I can improve. I've focused on doing this for the past few years. This year has been a great and very busy one for me. Business wise, we have now expanded the **VISION** brand into three areas across Essex and to see the magazines grow every month and to hear positive feedback from advertisers and readers is very pleasing for me.

On a personal note, I got married this year and moved house, both busy tasks.

I'm looking forward to 2018 and we look forward to bringing you fresh and exciting content every month, whilst we continue to preach to our readership to keep your £ local.

So for the final time this year, in local news, the winners of the Brentwood Sports and Health Awards have been announced, a family move into new council houses and a fire rips through a hay barn.

As always please make sure you are quoting **VISION** when calling our advertisers inside the magazine.

I would like to wish you all every success in 2018.

I hope you have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year with this festive edition, enjoy reading.



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BLUE IS THE COLOUR

As Sir David Attenborough returns to our screens with arguably his most spectacular and revealing series yet, we ask the world's most renowned naturalist if human beings will ever know everything about the deep.

From brine pools that lure in unsuspecting eels to cuttlefish that hypnotise their prey; from shrimps living in deep sea coral sponges to airborne trevallies – fish that leave the water to eat low-flying birds – we are discovering new mysteries of the deep with every mission. And no better are these more elegantly presented than in *Blue Planet II*, Attenborough's majestic, subterranean return to form, and currently the Sunday night feeding frenzy for natural world fans of all ages, all backgrounds.

"Nature is one of those unique things that unites us," begins Attenborough, now 91, and in his sixth decade of documentary-making with the BBC. "It pays no attention to social class or skin colour or wealth – nature inspires everyone in equal measure, and that's what makes it so perfect for me."

Of all nature, the ocean remains arguably the biggest mystery. Clearly, humans are not genetically equipped to venture to the depths, but even the latest technology can only take us so far.

"They say 95 per cent of the oceans are still unexplored, and when you get to the ocean floor that figure climbs to 99 per cent. If 70 per cent of the Earth's surface is water, you can see how little we actually know," Attenborough continues.

"We need to prepare ourselves for some spectacular discoveries in future. We will learn more about ecosystems and these strange environments, building a greater understanding of just how magnificent mother nature is.

"But with learning comes responsibility, and that's what I am most interested in ensuring we preserve, long after I've departed. We have a duty to protect what we find – from the coral reefs to fishing quotas to sand dunes – because if we can do that, then all the exploration is worthwhile."

Every week, viewers are mesmerised by the sights that are shown on their TV, with many calling the show a real-life Pixar. The filming is something to be admired, with the crystal-clear imagery, but it's the creatures of the sea that are the real stars. Here are some of the extraordinary moments from the show.



Bobbit Worm

Viewers were left terrified during the third episode of the show with one of the scariest creatures – the bobbit worm. At around a metre long, the predator hides underneath the sand stalking fish until they come close enough to make their move.



Giant Trevally

The giant trevally can grow to around 1.7m in length. It is no normal fish, as it tracks the flight path of a bird and then leaps out of the ocean to catch it. It will capture any bird sitting or gliding over the surface.



Transgender Fish

Female wrasses have the ability to become male, but not all of them do. This is still puzzling to scientists and they are still trying to figure out why.



Cuttlefish

One of the most fascinating creatures to be shown on the show was the cuttlefish, which has hypnotic powers. It lurks in south-east Asia and changes colour and pattern and pulsates its body to put its prey in a trance. This gives the fish enough time to capture its prey.



Ocean Swells

Impressive ocean swells aren't just for blockbuster movies, the stunning scenes were shot by the film crew showing enormous waves forming and crashing, displaying their true power.

THE GREAT BRITISH BAKED OFF



The eighth series of *The Great British Bake Off* returned to our screens in August, with this being the first to be broadcast on Channel 4. Many of the show's fans were sceptical with the channel move which meant a new judge, new presenters and adverts, however they quickly warmed to the changes.

Prue Leith was chosen to judge the bakers alongside Paul Hollywood and Noel Fielding and Sandi Toksvig fronted the show.

Throughout the weeks there were several incredible bakes, as well as some the contestants would like to forget. But one of the constant front runners was Sophie, who was crowned the overall winner of the series.

In week one, she made herself known to the other bakers as she received the famous 'Hollywood handshake' and came first in the technical challenge. There were only three weeks in the whole competition where she wasn't one of the judge's

favourite bakers, announced star baker or the winner of the show.

However, outside of the Bake Off tent, Sophie was in the media for the wrong reasons. It was reported by *The Sun* that she was being investigated over benefits fraud for claiming single person's allowance despite living with her boyfriend.

But a Bake Off spokesperson denied this, telling *The Sun*: "Sophie has recently declared a change in her circumstances to the Department for Work and Pensions. Any suggestion of benefit fraud relating to Sophie is categorically untrue."

On the day of the final, Prue tweeted the result hours before the show had been aired. She blamed the blunder on being in a different time zone and later apologised to fans for ruining the result. Despite this, 7.7 million people still tuned in to watch Sophie be crowned the champion.

The Great British Bake Off returns to Channel 4 in 2018.

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HOME & DIY

THE INTERIOR DESIGN TRENDS THAT ARE TAKING SCANDINAVIA BY STORM

Lagom

Cited as the new 'hygge' – think cosiness and contentment – lagom is more about 'not too little, not too much'. A tad less indulgent than its plaid-clad predecessor, lagom is about finding the balance in life. In interiors it is interpreted as having less clutter with a focus on good-quality, ecologically-sourced investment pieces.

Stylish storage

A step on from the Ikea clothes rail you used to overload in your student dorm, this is more about having a storage unit which is almost a work of art in itself, which you can then use to create a capsule wardrobe of your most aesthetically-pleasing pieces. A dead-cert way to impress the lover you could never get in college...

Outdoors indoors

There's nothing better than sleeping out under the stars, but if your locale is more the North Circular than the Northern Lights, you can still delight your little ones with a wood-stick tent bed. Fast becoming popular in Sweden, these adorable

tented canopies are light, easy to assemble and fit over existing frames. Glow-in-the-dark stars not essential.

Tech-free spaces

Philistines rejoice. Bedrooms can be device-free once more. Scandi style has always had a certain minimalism to it and this is now beginning to extend into people's desires to have bedrooms that are an oasis rather than an extension of one's TV room/office. Colour palettes soften to milky whites and greys, and designers are drawn to natural fabrics once more: like sheepskin and leather.

Black and white

Live your life like a Nordic noir television show by drenching your home in monochrome. Following in the lagom style of not too little, not too much, the trick is to add touches of black and white while keeping the overall colour scheme soft and neutral: a chevron throw, for example, or your favourite black and white film poster, though perhaps not one you can buy in Ikea.





Smells LIKE HOME

Whether you prefer candles, sprays or diffusers, find out what your candles and home scents say about you.

Vanilla and sugar scents

If you love to fill your home with sweet and soothing fragrances, you are likely to be a homebody – someone who strives to make their home as welcoming and comforting as possible. Vanilla is one of the most calming aromas and is often used in candles that aim to evoke childhood memories like cupcakes or ice cream.

Pine and woody scents

You have get-up-and-go and like to wake up in a home that is as invigorating as a clear winter's day. You decorate your home with rustic flourishes and lots of wood to match this wonderful earthy perfume.

Rose and floral scents

In Victorian times, flowers were used as a way of expressing love, making them a very romantic scent to spritz. Die-hard dreamers can't get enough of the heady scent of rose, which is evocative of a first kiss, while those who prefer lighter florals like daisy and honeysuckle have a more whimsical and care-free approach to life.

Cotton and fresh scents

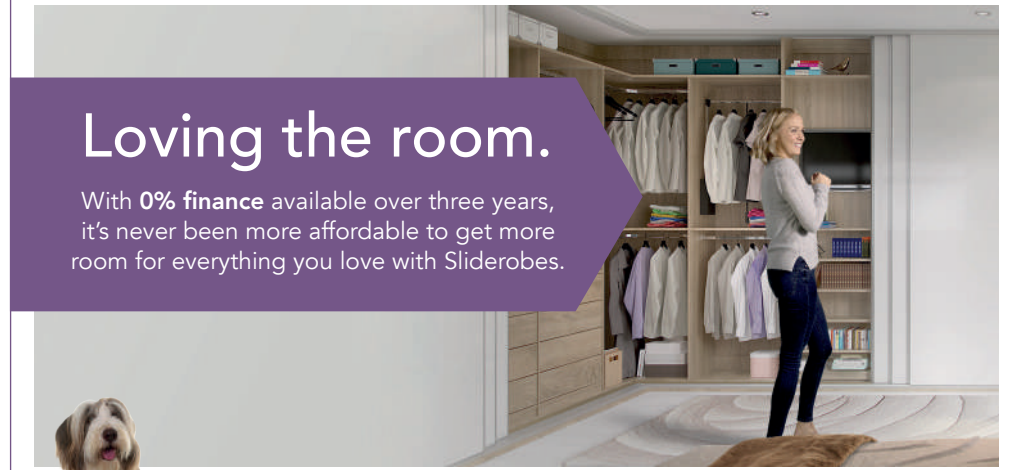
Throw those windows open and let the sunshine in! If bracing fragrances that evoke the ocean or fresh laundry are your thing, you are likely to be a very breezy, care-free person. You love bright, airy spaces and your home is an immaculate retreat from the chaos of the world.

Frankincense and musky scents

You are mysterious and have a penchant for the exotic. Your home is equally provocative and features lots of dark wood and velvet. Candles which feature amber and frankincense are ideal for the bedroom and are virtually guaranteed to set the mood.

Citrus and fruity scents

You have a happy and optimistic outlook on life and prefer a home fragrance which uplifts, even on the gloomy days. But citrus scents can sometimes overwhelm and be reminiscent of bathrooms, so consider fig as a summery alternative.



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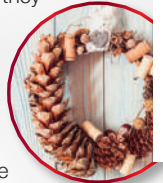
HOME & DIY

Ideas to make your very own DIY Christmas wreaths, easily and inexpensively

Good Wreaths!

What a corker

Hide (or exhibit) your Chrimbo booze consumption by threading wine corks interspersed with baubles onto string until they form a circle. The perfect dining room decoration.



Disco doorbell

Create that Christmas party feeling at home with a sparkle-studded bauble wreath. Incredibly simple to make, just take a polystyrene ring base and glue on as many miniature baubles as possible until you can no longer see the white underneath. Finish with an extra sprinkle of glitter, or if you're feeling traditional, a spray of fake snow.



Light fantastic

Guide Santa to your house with a fabulous neon wreath. Use a wire metal wreath as a base and wrap layers of different coloured lights (battery-powered LED preferably) around the wire, alternating with tinsel to cover the light leads. Keep all-white for a classic effect or go colourful and flashy so everyone knows where the party is.



Fun floral

Naturally, one wants to avoid a wreath that feels funereal rather than festive, so you may think you ought to steer clear of flowers. Consider using pom-pom bursts of hydrangeas in alternative colours for a look that is both bright and beautifully Christmassy.



Rustic romance

Create the classic wreath using gifts from Mother Earth as you forage and find bits and bobs from an autumn walk (or just pop to your local florist). Using either a straw or metal ring as a base, attach anything from pine cones to fir branches, apples and cinnamon sticks, dried lemon slices and flowers, and even candy canes and ribbons.



Gingerbread bake

Using either a cardboard circle or gingerbread base, bake an array of biscuit shapes (leaves, trees, candy canes, etc.) which you can attach and decorate with icing. How fabulously festive of you.





MOULD WATCH

Damp weather makes a perfect environment for mould to grow, which can lead to health problems and even structural damage to your home. As with most things, prevention is better than cure and by following these tips you can keep your household healthy and mould-free all year long.

Ventilate

One of the simplest ways to prevent mould is to keep air flowing throughout your home, particularly in areas like bathrooms and laundry rooms where moisture builds up. Try to open windows for at least half an hour to allow steam to clear post-shower, or if your bathroom doesn't have a window then a decent extraction fan is vital.

Bleed radiators

Mould loves cold, damp corners, which is why it will often accumulate in rooms that are used less, like spare bedrooms or closets. Proper insulation will reduce your risk of mould enormously, but if you have a room with a faulty radiator there is no heat there to insulate, so at the start of the cooler season check all your radiators are heating up the way they ought to.

Clear gutters

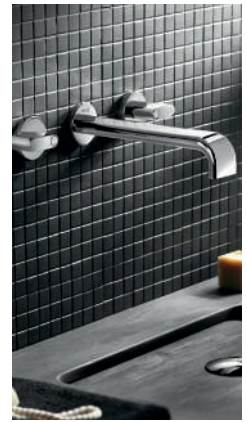
If dampness starts appearing in a ceiling or exterior wall, there is a good chance that a blocked gutter preventing effective drainage is to blame. By clearing gutters regularly in autumn and winter, you will prevent the build-up of fallen leaves that will turn into pipe-blocking mulch when it rains.

Use specialised paint

If mould has already appeared, you can clear it with a fungicidal wash. Then re-paint the area with a good quality fungicidal paint or gloss – note that the paint becomes ineffective if finished with non-fungicidal products.

Wipe down

The best way to avoid mould is to keep your home warm, ventilated and dry, so if you find condensation building up on windows, crack the window open a little and give them a wipe down daily with a tea towel. And always wring it out rather than drying on a radiator, as that puts the moisture straight back into the atmosphere.



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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



LOCAL NEWS



Beer festival set to get the community in the festive spirit

Brentwood Brewery is getting in the festive spirit and hosting its Christmas Beer Festival this month.

Despite a punishingly busy schedule, Santa has promised to make an early sleigh stop at the festival which is being held on Saturday, December 9 between 10.30am and 5pm.

There will be plenty of Brentwood and Elephant School Brewing beer, festive food served from the brewery's snack van, Beer Grylls, live music, a

variety of games for all the family and the chance to sing some traditional Christmas carols.

The event will be raising donations for SNAP (Special Needs and Parents), a charity based in Warley. They help families with children and young people who have special needs and disabilities living in Essex.

To receive a free pint, bring the brewery's ad in this issue of **VISION** (page 64) with you to the festival.

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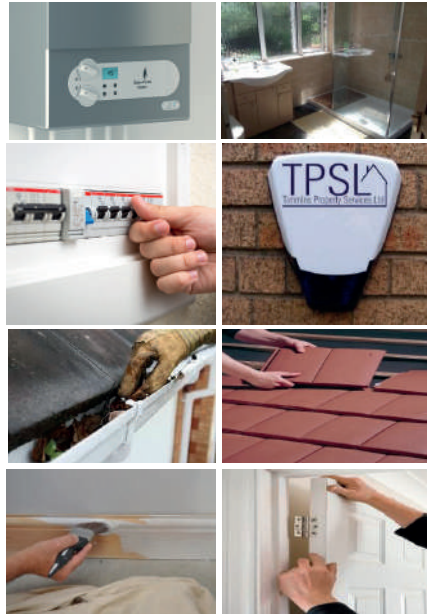
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LOCAL NEWS



Sporting talent honoured at awards ceremony

The best sporting talent from across Brentwood were celebrated at an annual awards ceremony in November.

The Active Brentwood Sports and Health Awards 2017 took place at South East Essex Golf Club on Wednesday, November 8.

It recognised people, groups and organisations that work behind the scenes to provide opportunities for people locally to take part in and promote physical activity.

Twelve awards were handed out by the Mayor of Brentwood, councillor Will Russell, and Brentwood

Borough Council's chief executive Phil Ruck.

Cllr Russell said: "The Active Brentwood Sports and Health Awards give us the opportunity to recognise our sporting heroes as well as the coaches, volunteers, clubs and organisations who make the sporting activities happen.

"We are fortunate in Brentwood to have a wealth of sporting talent that it was an honour to celebrate at the awards ceremony."

The winners will now be put through to the Active Essex Sports Awards which will take place on December 5.

Applications open for 2018 primary school places

Parents in Essex can now apply for their children's Reception places.

Children are entitled to start primary school in September after their fourth birthday, and parents/carers of children born during September 1, 2013 and August 31, 2014 must apply before January 15, 2018.

Essex County Council has warned that any late applications submitted after the deadline will only be considered once all on-time applications have been determined.

The council has also encouraged parents to use all four of the preferences available and to check the admissions criteria for each school they wish to apply for.

Cllr Ray Gooding, Essex County Council's cabinet member for education, said: "Starting school for the first time is a significant milestone in every child's life and we understand that deciding which schools to apply for can be a hard decision to make.

"To ensure parents have the best chance of being offered a preferred place, I would again stress the importance of submitting applications on time and using all four of the preferences available.

"I would also encourage parents to carefully consider the admissions criteria for each school they are applying for and to make use of all of the information available on our website."

Applications can be made online at www.essex.gov.uk/admissions

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LOCAL NEWS

Business Showcase bigger than ever

The Brentwood Business Showcase returned bigger and better than before following the success of last year's event.

More than 500 people attended the biggest business event in the borough on Wednesday, November 1 at Brentwood School.

Brentwood Borough Council put together the event, with the help of several sponsors, as a place for companies to network, raise their businesses' profile and make new contacts.

This year's showcase was focused on digital features and entrepreneurship which included an insight into the digital future for businesses.

It was led by Google Digital Garage, who held two masterclasses on digital skills needed to grow your business, and Microsoft, who spoke on digital transformation and why it's important to businesses of all shapes and sizes.

Leader of Brentwood Borough Council, councillor Louise McKinlay, said: "Our promise was to make the Brentwood Business Showcase bigger and better than last year – which we did successfully. More people came together to network, learn from each other and share ideas with 70 per cent attending for the first time.

"The digital focus for this year's event meant we had some big names attending like Google Digital Garage and Microsoft to share advice and their wealth of experience to other businesses. And our fantastic mix of speakers and workshops meant there was invaluable information and advice on offer.

"Brentwood is an extraordinary place to do business due to its transport links and the right mix of people and what was clear on the day was that the natural entrepreneurial spirit in Brentwood really shone through."

Volunteers required for Half Marathon 2018

Organisers of the Brentwood Half Marathon are asking for the public's help to volunteer for next year's event.

The event is organised totally by volunteers, so all proceeds go to good causes.

It does however require an army of helpers on race

day to ensure the best runner experience.

The event will be held on Sunday, March 18, 2018 and organisers are asking for the public to spend a few hours helping out on the morning, marshalling the route.

If you can help, visit www.brentwoodhalf.org/contact

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ETIC supports county's business development



The Essex Technology and Innovation Centre (ETIC), in Ongar, is playing a significant part in Essex's growth as a business hub, with a thriving community taking advantage of the services available.

The centre, based on Fyfield Road, specifically aims to support entrepreneurship and small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Managed workspaces are available at all-inclusive monthly charges (excluding rates/telecoms). These spaces also come with free on-site parking and no long-term commitment is required.

More than 20 businesses currently reside at ETIC.

As centre manager Pam Winter explains: "ETIC is more than just a business space. What businesses value most is the opportunity to share ideas and learn from other people who have been through the same early-stage experiences."

VitalCare UK, a prominent manufacturer of consumable medical devices, is just one of the businesses to have benefited from setting up a base at ETIC.

Managing director Lewis Calcutt said: "ETIC offers great flexibility. We can work at any time of the day or night to deal with urgent issues or meet across time zones."

ETIC is operated and managed by INVEST Essex, now part of the 'Let's Do Business Group' delivering services for Essex County Council.

For more information or to enquire about availability at ETIC, please contact centre manager Pam Winter on 01277 368200, email pam.winter@investessex.co.uk or check out the website www.essexenterprisecentres.co.uk. You can also follow ETIC on Twitter (@ETIC_Ongar).

Council to save with new powers

Drivers who illegally leave their cars parked preventing road resurfacing could face being fined and having their car moved under new

powers.

Essex County Council has decided to trial the use of powers to move vehicles and the driver with a fine to help offset the cost of moving the vehicle.

On the occasion that a car may need to be moved, crews will aim to move it to a safe and nearby alternative parking location. Crews will make efforts to contact the driver before and will also inform police of the car's new location.

Councillor Ian Grundy, Essex County Council cabinet member for Highways, said: "Moving a vehicle will always be a last resort after our crews have made every effort to find the driver of the vehicle."

First council houses in 25 years completed



A family has moved into new council houses which are the first to be built in the borough for 25 years.

Brentwood Borough Council welcomed the Asante family into Magdalen Terrace.

The homes will accommodate residents who are in need of larger property and who meet the criteria for affordable rent.

Magdalen Terrace is the first phase of a project to repurpose disused sites.

The next phase will see four single-storey properties in Knights Square for senior residents.

Derick Asante, who moved into the property with his family, said: "The children have been itching to get in and use the garden as they will finally have the space to play. We want to say thank you to Brentwood Borough Council for their generosity."

Community, health and housing management committee chairman councillor Chris Hossack said: "Brentwood is a highly desirable place to live and rightly but we are seeing a huge problem when it comes to affordability and house building."



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ON PATROL WITH... THE PASTORS



Good news from the Street Pastors in Essex. A new initiative is coming to the county. As part of our role with the Ascension Trust guidelines, our national charity, we are soon to launch Rail Pastors in addition to all our Street Pastor patrols in the Night Time Economy.

Rail Pastors are experienced Street Pastors who have undertaken additional training to become available to patrol on Network Rail stations and trains. We have a great relationship with The Samaritans who provide us with one-day training called 'Managing Suicidal Contacts'. We seek to support the work they do as we go about our efforts in trying to intervene in those dark times and hopefully help someone to realise that there are other options to take in life. We also have an additional day with the Train Operating Company to ensure we are safe around the railway network.

We hope to begin our patrols on the Greater Abellio line between Shenfield and Colchester before

Christmas. All our volunteers will be over 18, DBS checked, trained and accredited before patrolling. This is a very exciting new initiative which we hope will expand to cover the whole line and also then look to launch along the C2C line in 2018.

Since I last reported, I am also excited to report that Billericay Street Pastors celebrated their fourth birthday of operating in the High Street. We continue to feel that what we are doing in our community is worthwhile and brings some peace and support to that area during our patrols.

Next month I have some exciting news about Schools Pastors projects in Southend, Billericay and Brentwood.

If you would like to know more about Street or Rail Pastors or are a Street Pastor and want to join in then please feel free to email us at Billericay@streetpastors.org.uk or follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

Ambulance emergency calls increase by more than 30,000



Emergency calls to the East of England Ambulance Service have increased by more than 30,000 during the winter compared to the same period in 2010/2011.

The East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) released the figures as part of their Winter Wise campaign.

The figures show that in Essex, 119,707 calls were received in winter 2016/2017 compared to 89,697 in winter 2010/2011.

The most common types of call to the ambulance service in winter include patients with chest pain, breathing difficulties, falls, and traumatic injuries. Alcohol-related injuries and illness are also a factor.

Kevin Brown, director of service delivery for EEAST, said: "We will be there for patients who are suffering from life-threatening illnesses and injuries this winter. We always prioritise our response to those with the highest priority need so ask that we are only called from emergencies where other health advice and support is not appropriate.

"We would urge everyone to take measures to protect themselves to avoid a 999 call this year. Getting vaccinated against flu and using the most appropriate service for your needs such as NHS 111, will really help the emergency ambulance service."



LOCAL NEWS



**PHOENIX
FIREPLACES**

BUSINESS REVIEW

We recently made a visit to the lovely village of Battlesbridge to look at what's on offer at Phoenix Fireplaces.

Parking is easy and plentiful and as well as looking at fireplaces we had time to browse the many antique outlets and have a meal in one of the excellent pubs.

The showroom at Phoenix is large and everything is laid out to make it easy to view. The staff are friendly and very helpful and we were impressed with the enthusiasm and knowledge that Triston had. His advice on how to choose the right product was of enormous benefit and we felt confident that he was steering us in the best direction for us. They have a range of products that seems unequalled, and certainly ranges like Vision Trimline, Acquisitions, Capital, Dik Geurts, DRU and Spartherm don't seem to be available elsewhere.

The company fits their products themselves and don't sub-contract which we found particularly reassuring, they also offer a bespoke service on stone and for restoration.

They have over 100 fireplaces in the showroom and are open every day 10am to 5pm. Have a look at www.phoenix-fireplaces.co.uk or call 01268 768844



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Schoolgirl fencer wins prestigious award



Brentwood School fencer, Madeleine Gale, is one of the youngest ever winners of the Young Sports Personality of the Year award.

She won the award at the Brentwood Sports and Health Awards 2017.

Madeleine's very proud mum Elaine said: "This achievement is Maddy's and I am extremely proud of her, but it is one that could never have happened without School Master i/c Fencing Christiaan Galesloot's unrelenting determination and hard work that gives Maddy, and all his fencers, the passion and skill to become world class fencers one day."

Mr Galesloot, coach at Brentwood School and the GBR Talent Pathway Coach for Foil, added: "Maddy is a very talented young athlete.

"At various times, Maddy has been Essex and Eastern Region Champion, won a silver medal at the England Youth Championships, bronze medals at the Public Schools' Fencing Championships and various quarter-final positions in England and British Youth Championships.

"Internationally she finished 38th place in the Under 14 World Class International Tournament, Marathon Fleuret in Paris, with more than 180 fencers. This was the second best British result."

Luxury care homes to be built

A new luxury care home in Brentwood plans to include an on-site cinema and salon.

Hallmark Care Homes has put in a planning application to redevelop the former Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) site in Rayleigh Close.

The Billericay-based care provider intends to redevelop the area into a luxury 77-bed care home with 55 exclusive assisted-living apartments, a concierge service, basement parking and landscaped gardens.

The new care home will also boast several state-of-the-art facilities. This includes a luxurious hair salon and therapy room where residents can enjoy a weekly hair and nail appointment, a vibrant café and a cinema room where residents can watch films, sport and documentaries.

Outside, award-winning landscape architect David Fountain will enhance the gardens with new planting as well as a beautiful water feature, which will encourage wildlife to the area.

Since the industry-leading care group acquired the site, they held a public consultation meeting at the site in June, to which a large number of local residents attended.

If planning permission is granted, Hallmark Care Homes will commence development with the care home and assisted living properties becoming available for viewing in summer 2020.

Community comes together on Remembrance Sunday



Members of the community came together on Sunday, November 12 to take part in this year's Remembrance Day Parade and Service.

The parade assembled in Library Square, Brentwood School, and made their way to the War Memorial accompanied by the Brentwood Imperial Youth Band.

This was followed by a service conducted by Canon Phillip Need, acting vicar at St Thomas' Church and the Bishop of Brentwood Rev Alan Williams from Brentwood Cathedral, where the laying of wreaths took place.

A two-minute silence took place at 11am, after which the parade left the War Memorial.

A march past and salute was taken by Lord Lieutenant Jennifer Tolhurst, accompanied by the Mayor of Brentwood, councillor Will Russell, and the president of the Brentwood Royal British Legion Brian Kitchener in the High Street and was followed by a Service of Remembrance in St Thomas' Church.

ADVERTORIAL

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Orienteers strive for perfection

LOCAL NEWS



head than any other police force: that needs to be addressed urgently.

"We have more 999 calls for help than the national average and have moved people from local policing teams to deal with horrific crimes.

"The report sets out very clearly that we are wringing the benefit out of every penny we have. We know how crime is changing, we prioritise the most harmful incidents imaginable and we know how demand for our help will change as Essex changes.

"Work is already under way to improve the experience of people calling the 101 service for help and we will never be satisfied with our work until every victim whom we help is too."

Faultless showjumper is clear winner



Super showjumper Eloise Squibb's faultless performance at the Home Pony International saw her scoop a team gold for England and a solo win in the 128cm Grand Prix.

Eloise's outing at The English Home Pony 2017 event at Southview Equestrian Centre, Cheshire, was the third time this year that she has been selected to represent her country.

The 12-year-old, who is in Year 2 at Brentwood School, rode two clear rounds in the competition to help England win the coveted medal.

She then went on to take the 128cm Grand Prix crown on the same pony, Wyndham Tom Thumb, jumping three clear rounds with a super-fast jump off.

Proud mum, Sarah, said: "We are bursting with proud at Eloise's successful year; qualifying for every major final possible, being selected three times to represent her country and winning two big Grand Prix finals.

"We are also proud of how Eloise balances her showjumping and school work, her grades are excellent and she really does work hard all round."

Headteacher Ian Davies said: "All of us at the school are very proud of Eloise's achievements."

Brentwood School's enthusiastic bunch of orienteers will re-group to evaluate a successful outing to Langdon Hills.

Standout results included Kate Bowie-Britton (50.24), Heather Trevelyan (52.55) and Sarah Prior (59.42) who were the 2nd, 3rd and 4th girls home on the Orange 3km course.

Brentwood Preparatory School Year 6 pupil, Jake Horton, had a brilliant time on the White 1.56km route even though he forgot to punch checkpoint number 8.

Sam Lee was 2nd place on the Yellow 2.66km course in a fantastic time of 28.51 and Janie Horton was 3rd girl home in a time of 40.40. The rest of the Brentwood pack romped home with many similar times.

Head of orienteering Mrs Rachel Barford praised the team on their weekend performance.

She said: "Have a good look at the results and your map and think your way through the course again."

Essex Police rated good for efficiency

Essex Police have been rated 'good' in four areas following a report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire Services.

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh said: "In policing every decision has a consequence, but today's report demonstrates that Essex Police have taken the right steps in the face of severe financial constraints to prioritise keeping the most vulnerable people in our county safe.

"Being told we're 'performing well across the board' recognises not only the good work Essex police officers and staff do every day but also our ambition and clarity about the future, even in the most challenging of times.

"Essex Police have the lowest cost of policing per

BURGHART for BRENTWOOD



Alex Burghart MP for Brentwood and Ongar



LOCAL NEWS

Since I became MP for Brentwood and Ongar in June I've enjoyed taking the occasional break from surgeries, door knocking, ribbon cutting and local meetings to pop into some of the extraordinary historic churches dotted around the area. In almost every village there are remarkable stories to be found in the local church – and as Christmas approaches, it's the perfect time to look in and enjoy our local heritage.

In Willingale there are a pair of ancient churches side by side – an extremely rare occurrence in England. Sadly, there's unlikely to be any truth in the legend that this came about because of a feud between sisters – but it does suggest that during the 14th century when the wool trade was flourishing, that the village was rather larger than it is today.

The church of St Thomas in Navestock has the dubious honour of being one of the few in Essex to be bombed by the Luftwaffe in 1940. Fortunately, only the graveyard was hit meaning that the wonderful elaborate graves and memorials, many commemorating the Waldegrave family, have survived. Not so far away in High Laver, the 13th century church of All Saints boasts the grave of one of our country's foremost philosophers, John Locke, the "Father of Liberalism" who spent the last 13 years of his life in the village.

My personal favourite is St Andrew's, Greensted – the oldest wooden church in the world which may date to the 9th century. Greensted appears in the Domesday Book as having 44 households and 520 pigs, and it's a somewhat striking thought that some of those people are likely to have sat in that same church that we can sit in today.

As **VISION** goes to press, our country has just marked Remembrance Day. Locally there were powerful services in St Thomas's Brentwood and at the war memorial in Ongar. I couldn't help thinking of a grave I'd found, quite by accident, in a churchyard in East Horndon overlooking Tilbury and the Thames. This was that of a soldier, Private Gripton, killed on



November 9, 1918 – two days before the Armistice. It is a tombstone I will never forget.

Buildings like these are crammed with local history – whatever your faith, they are the perfect place to ponder things past, please do take the time to appreciate and support them.

If there is any issue I can help with, please get in touch with me through my website: www.alexburghart.org.uk

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Festive Plant

S A F E T Y

The Christmas season brings with it lots of Christmas plants. We put up and decorate our Christmas trees, hang mistletoe above our doors and display holly in our homes. But not all of these plants are considered safe in the hands of children and animals.

Christmas trees

Christmas trees are probably the most popular plant to bring indoors over the festive season. Although not a major concern, cedars, pines and firs are mildly toxic. The biggest concern is the possibility of puncturing part of the gastrointestinal tract. The tree oils could also cause irritation to the skin.

Holly

As holly is so widely used it may seem surprising that this plant is poisonous if eaten. The berries are poisonous to both people and pets and swallowing them can cause a number of illnesses, including vomiting, diarrhoea, dehydration and drowsiness. Holly leaves can also cause problems if eaten, but due to their prickly nature, they are usually left alone.

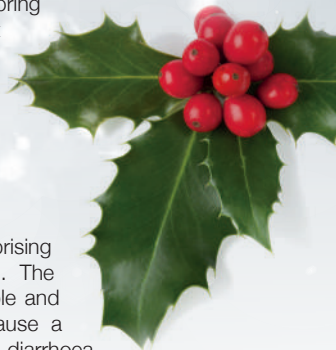
If you are decorating with holly this winter, remove the berries before displaying the leaves, as even if they are out of reach, the berries can soon dry out and fall to the floor.

Mistletoe

Mistletoe is one of the most popular Christmas plants, but also one of the most dangerous. If a child eats a couple of berries it's unlikely to cause much of a problem, but a small pet could be harmed by this. However, if any amount of mistletoe is eaten, it's advised to seek medical advice.

Poinsettia

Although the poinsettia isn't particularly dangerous, it can cause irritation if the sap gets onto your skin. It will leave you with an itchy rash, but this is one of the safest festive plants.



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SCHOOL SAVVY

Forget Christmas, if you're a parent with a child enrolling into a new school next year, then this is the most stressful period for you. But don't fret, for here are some dos and don'ts for picking the right school for your little one.

DO attend the open days: It's easy to gloss over an establishment's flaws when looking at a fancy brochure, which is why attending a school's open day is essential (even though this is still arguably the best the place will ever look). Upon arriving, pay attention to how the school feels – what's on the walls, how organised are the classrooms, are the teachers friendly and, if it's a daytime opening, how engaged are the kids?

DON'T be afraid to ask questions: Take the opportunity to ask teachers and pupils alike how they feel about the school, and don't fret about being upfront with representatives regarding any nagging doubts you have.

DO pay attention to the Ofsted report and league tables: Official statistics will tell you test and exam

results for the schools you're looking at, offering a pretty reliable snapshot of how each is performing, while the Ofsted report will offer a broader understanding of how the curriculum is taught and the pupils' overall wellbeing.

But **DON'T** base your decision entirely on that: If an institute has an 'outstanding' Ofsted rating, but you've heard of excessive bullying or disruption at the school, it's important to bear both in mind. Similarly, if a school has a 'satisfactory' rating but seems to have got its act together since the report, it may be worth giving it a second look.

DO go with your heart: Whatever the facts and figures, the most important barometer is how you and your little one feel about the school, and that feeling normally comes from the heart.

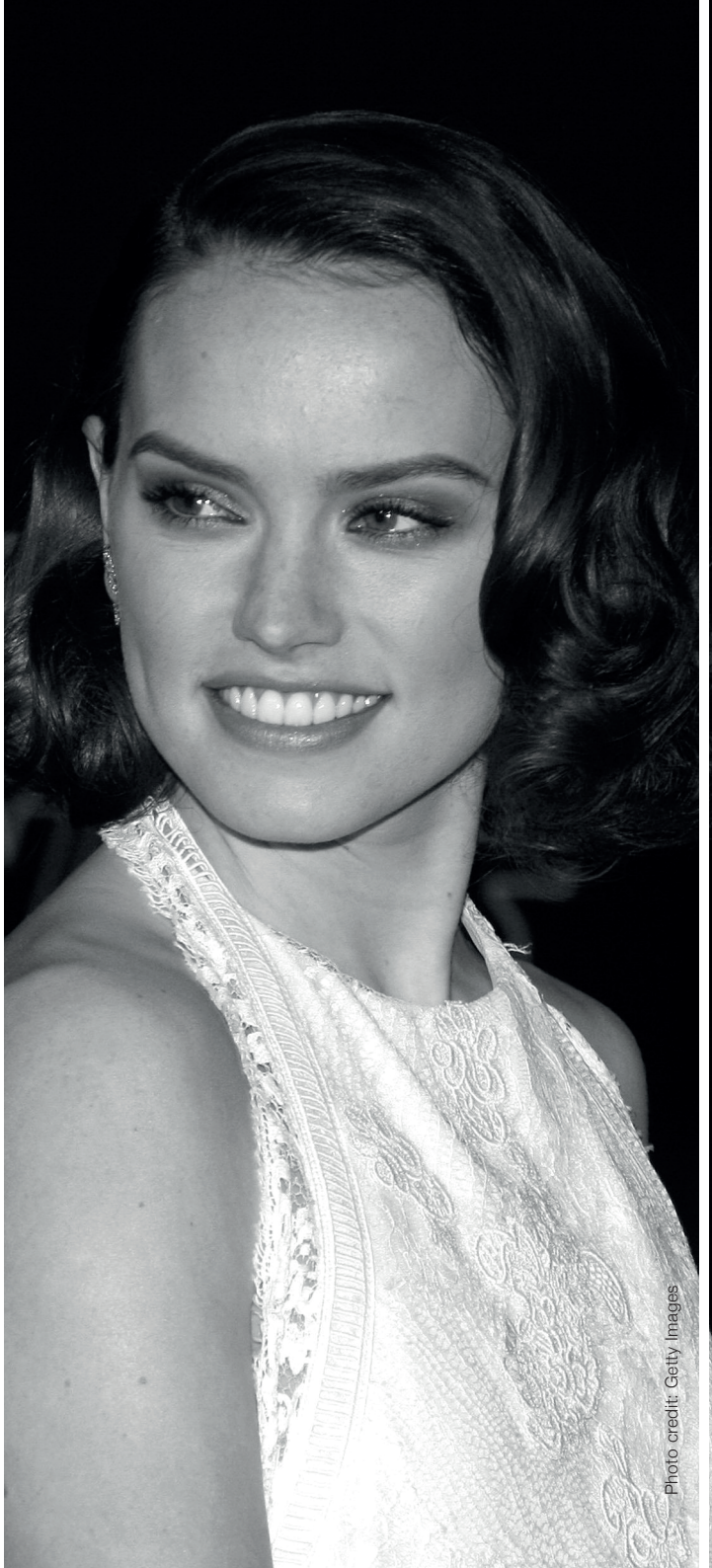


Photo credit: Getty Images

STARRING *Miss Daisy*

Her cinematic journey may have begun in a galaxy far, far away, but *Star Wars* actress Daisy Ridley is still as down-to-earth as they come.

In the last few years she has become one of Hollywood's biggest and brightest stars, but Daisy Ridley is exactly the same – bubbly, grounded and infectiously relatable, which is all the more astonishing given that her breakout movie, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, is the third highest grossing film of all time. “Everyone keeps asking me how I have changed, like it was this guaranteed expectation. Was I supposed to? I don’t feel any different,” demurs the 25-year-old star.

Having won a scholarship to Tring Park School for the Performing Arts in Hertfordshire, followed by small, earnest roles in TV shows like *Casualty* and *Mr Selfridge*, it’s hard to imagine a faster onward ascent to stardom, with Ridley plucked from obscurity and placed smack bang into one of the biggest, most lucrative franchises of all time.

So how is the London-born beauty coping with her fledgling fame? “In terms of personal life, nothing has really changed,” she says with a shrug. “Professionally, it’s been brilliant – the people I’m getting to work with and the places I’m travelling to, places I never thought I would get to see at this stage in my life... that’s all different, of course, and sometimes you have to stop and think, ‘How is this possible?’. It’s madness. And I don’t believe I will never stop being wowed. It’s all astonishing to me.”

The so-called “madness” is set to continue, with two major films released before the end of the year. Already in cinemas is Kenneth Branagh’s lavish re-imagining of Agatha Christie’s classic mystery *Murder on the Orient Express*, starring Branagh himself as the infamous and immaculately moustachioed detective Hercule Poirot. Ridley plays the indignant Miss Debenham, alongside Johnny Depp, Judi Dench, Olivia Colman and Michelle Pfeiffer.

When asked if she was excited about featuring in such a stellar line-up, Ridley is unable to contain her glee, saying with a laugh: “Oh my god, are you kidding? Seriously, if someone had asked me my dream cast, I don’t think I’d have come up with a combination so utterly amazing.”

Next year, Ridley will play the titular role in *Ophelia*, a reimagining of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* told from the perspective of Ophelia, arguably one of the Bard’s most tragic female characters. She also lends her vocal talents to the cast of animated romp *Peter Rabbit*.

But first, we have the release of *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*, which continues the journey of Ridley’s Rey as she and the Resistance seek out Luke Skywalker. Shrouded in secrecy, principal photography of the film was completed almost a year-and-a-half ago, but fortunately, Ridley has become very good at keeping secrets.

“I quite like it,” she says with a wry smile. “I’d done it before with the first film, and I thought it would be completely impossible to keep my mouth shut because, you know, I like to talk. Yet it was easier than I predicted, and seeing the reaction from moviegoers makes it all worthwhile.”

It's a Wonderful Life

Home Alone 2: Lost in New York

If you aren't a nine-year-old boy who harbours a secret desire to ditch your family for a solo frolic in New York, then you likely have a soft spot for the Big Apple and would love nothing more than a pre-Christmas shopping spree at Bloomingdales.

Bad Santa

You're the kind of person who tells very inappropriate jokes at the Christmas dinner table to varying degrees of success, like the year you almost made your grandmother choke on her stuffing.

The Holiday

If this is on the top of your viewing list, you are probably a very stressed-out mum who would happily swap your shambolic household for a bit of peace and quiet by the beach this Christmas.

It's a Wonderful Life

You're a philosopher. Of course, Christmas is expensive and stressful and more hassle than it's worth, but hey – it could always be worse. It could be New Year's Eve.

Holiday Inn

Oh, you old romantic. Do you remember when Christmas really used to mean something? When it was all about love rather than consumerism? Do you remember when everything was in black and white? *Sigh*

The Muppet Christmas Carol

You love a classic, but also feel that even Charles Dickens would prefer this hilarious and musical retelling of his most famous novella.

Love Actually

You might be a wee bit lonely, actually...

Elf

You're a child at heart and love to revel in all the Christmas merriment, from hollering out carols to tearing open presents and drinking candy cane-flavoured vodka until you pass out.

Die Hard

You always initiate the annual Christmas Nerf war in your mother's house, and when she berates you for knocking over the Christmas tree, yell: "Welcome to the party, pal."



Blondes

CELEBRATING SUCCESS

As owner Leeann Connold celebrates the salon's 17th anniversary in Brentwood, Essex.

VISION caught up with her to find out what it is that makes Blondes different from the rest, and how they have become one of the longest running salons on a busy high street that is popular for Beauty.

Leeann told **VISION**, "When I started the business back in 2001 it was an uncertain time for local businesses everywhere in the UK with the country being in a recession. What I believe has made us now such an established part of Brentwood and the community is how we value our customers and we never take them for granted.

If you visit our Facebook page and check out all our positive 5* reviews you will see why we have such a loyal customer base and what makes our customers keep coming back and recommending us to their family and friends.



The team of experienced stylists at Blondes pride themselves on the service they give their customers. You will receive an in-depth consultation giving you the very best advice for all the cutting, colouring and conditioning your hair needs.

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Went to Blondes, lovely atmosphere, superb service and a great haircut. Would highly recommend. Thanks Blondes. From Keeley via our Facebook page

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HOW TO BEAUTY:

eyes and hair



When it comes to Christmas parties, hair and make-up are often the most talked about subjects. How should you have your hair? Up or down? Should you go all out and wear your new red lippy or be subtle and go for a nude shade? Whatever you plan to wear, these hair and make-up ideas will be the perfect accompaniment to any outfit.

Smoky eye

A smoky eye is the perfect choice as you can often achieve this look by adding to your original make-up. So, if you're rushing to get ready after work, this is a great time saving make-up idea. If you want to make more of an impact, use darker shades, or for a subtler look, use light brown tones.

Start by using a light tone of eye shadow and applying this all over the lid and slightly above. Then, using a darker shade, apply a small amount

to the outer eye and blend in towards the inner eye. This will create your smoky eye look. You can also add winged eyeliner for added impact and top up your mascara for bolder eyelashes.

Waves

Waves are a must this festive season. With the cold weather, they are perfect for when you are wearing a woolly hat or ear muffs. Waves are also longer lasting than straight hair as often the cold weather will make it wispy and frizzy. This is less noticeable with wavy hair and it can be styled in numerous ways which are simple yet stylish.

For a perfect party updo, create a messy bun. This is easy to do and will only take a matter of minutes. Creating a bun with wavy hair will also give it more volume. The messy bun trend has been huge recently and you can even add hair accessories such as pins and clips to add a touch of glamour.



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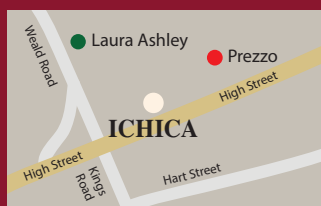
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Snow Queens

It is the season for Christmas and New Year parties, so it's time to start thinking about party cover-ups. Many think that by adding a jacket you will be ruining your glamorous look, but these cover-up ideas will have you turning heads.

Sequin shrug

If you have a simple outfit with little embellishment or detail, sequin shrugs will be the perfect addition. If you have a dark-coloured dress such as black or navy blue, then add a contrasting coloured shrug such as gold. It will make the overall look more glamorous and sparkle when the light hits.

Furs

This timeless piece will add a touch of chic to any look with its faux fur finish and bow. With the cold weather setting in, it will also keep you warm and is available in a variety of colours to go with any outfit.

Ponchos

Ponchos are a great addition if you want something to keep you snug. They make the perfect layering piece and can easily be paired with any outfit.

Cape

While more expensive to buy, capes are the perfect substitute for a coat. They are great whatever the weather and with a relaxed fit, they will slip on easily. Buy your cape in a colour that will go with any outfit, such as black, and wear it time and time again.

Cover-up

For something simpler and just as stylish, why not opt for a knitted cover-up? They are great for wrapping up on a cold evening and will complement any outfit, particularly print dresses.



Photo Credit: www.debenhams.com

FOLLOWING SUITS

What every man should consider when buying a suit

THE FIT

Get it right and you'll stroll about like a king; get it wrong and you'll feel (and perhaps even look) like a teen at prom wearing his dad's old suit.

If you're buying off the rack, try assorted brands to get a fit that suits you. The shoulder pads ought to lie flat, the jacket should fall straight and just cover your buttocks, while the trousers are meant to rest on the top of your shoes. Too long and they start to look sloppy.

THE LINING

Feeling fancy? Then why not indulge in a lining, which makes the suit feel heavier and more luxurious. Choose a colour that's a shade or two darker than the suit, or if you're feeling bold, a rich purple or royal blue.

THE BUTTONS

Three-button suits used to be the most popular, but the higher V-shape they create can make them feel restricting and stuffy. Two-button varieties are ubiquitous now and feel formal without being old-fashioned; while the slim-fit suits horribly popular among Shoreditch types have only one.

THE FABRIC

Even on a tight budget, a 100 per cent polyester suit ought to be avoided. They look shinier than other materials and don't breathe well, meaning you might be sweating long before you walk through the door for that important meeting.

Wool is always the safest option and comes in a variety of cloths. Whereas flannel and tweed are heavy and a tad old-fashioned, worsted wool is durable, long-lasting and can be woven into various thicknesses.

THE ACCESSORIES

With your perfect suit nailed, you can add your own embellishments. Ties are no longer essential, but belts are, and ought to be of a decent quality. Other accessories include cuff links, pocket scarves, socks and lapel pins, but while it's good to show your personality, be sure to err on the right side of novelty.



Get knotted

Christmas and New Year celebrations are approaching, so it is time to get out your finest suits and practice your tie knots. This year, impress your friends, family and work colleagues with these knots. We have included the traditional bow tie and the adventurous Eldredge.

The Eldredge Knot

Difficulty – 5/5

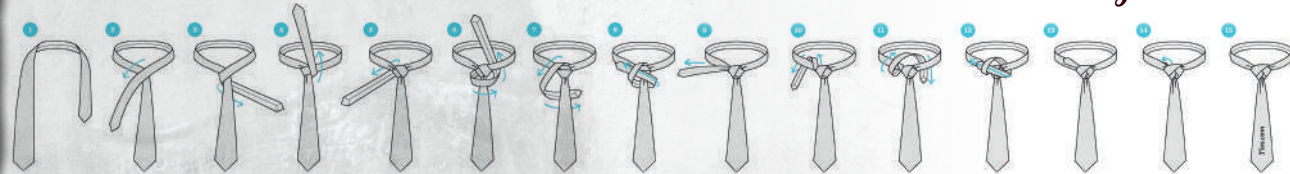
1. Start with the wide end of the tie on the left and the small end on the right. The tip of the wide end should rest at the top of your belt buckle. Only move the small end.
2. Move the small end over the wide end to the left.
3. Move under the wide end and to the right.
4. Move up to the centre towards the neck loop.
5. Place down through the neck loop and to the left.
6. Move across the front, to the right, then up into the neck loop from underneath.
7. Place down to the left and around the back of the wide end to the right.
8. Bring it across the front towards the left and through the loop made in the previous step.
9. Pull the small end towards the left to tighten.
10. Move up to the centre towards the neck loop. Down through the neck loop and to the left.
11. Move up to the centre towards the neck loop. Down through the neck loop and to the right.
12. Place across the front towards the left and through the loop made in the previous step.
13. Pull the small end towards the left to tighten.
14. Tuck the rest of the small end behind the neck loop on the left side.

Bow Tie

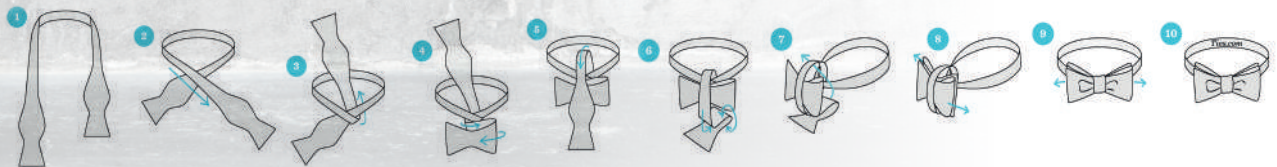
Difficulty – 4/5

1. Start with the bow tie lying face up. Adjust the bow tie so the right side is slightly shorter than the left. The end on the left will be referred to as A and the end on the right will be referred to as B.
2. Move A to the right side, across B.
3. Bring A under B and up through the neck loop.
4. At the joint, fold B towards the right and then towards the left to create a bow shape.
5. Bring A straight down over the middle of the bow shape that was made with B.
6. Fold A back towards the chest and pinch the fold.
7. Push the pinched end (A) through the loop behind B.
8. Pull on the folded parts of the bow to tighten.
9. Adjust until balanced on both sides.

The Eldredge Knot



Bow Tie





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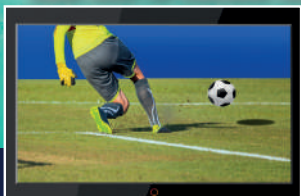
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FOOD & DRINK

SHAKEN & STIRRED cocktail for Winter

From James Bond to Tom Cruise, the humble cocktail has been a staple of every party-lover's back catalogue of booze. Here is a fantastic recipe for a winter cocktail that will revolutionise your reputation as a master mixologist.

INGREDIENTS

- ▮ 1 part dark rum
- ▮ 1 bar spoon honey
- ▮ 1 large lemon peel
- ▮ 1 ounce hot water

HOT TODDY

With honey, sugar and lemon combined with the full-bodied blast of dark rum, this cocktail is perfect to enjoy with friends around a roaring fire – and will even stave off any sniffles in the process.

INSTRUCTIONS

Prepare a mug by rinsing it with boiling water and pouring the water out. Add the honey (or sugar) and the lemon peel and pour in an ounce of hot water and stir until the sweetener has dissolved. Add dark rum and top off with more boiling water.



ANYTHING BUT *turkey*

Tired of the traditional bird for your Christmas Day feast? Then consider one of these tasty delights instead...

beef wellington

Christmas is the perfect excuse to buy a tender hunk of beef fillet. First sear your meat in a pan, then put mushrooms, chestnuts and garlic in a food processor until it forms a paste that you gently fry. Once cooked, spread onto ready-made puff pastry, roll up your beef, and bake.



coca-cola ham

Place your gammon joint in a big saucepan then add two litres of Coca-Cola, a peeled onion, halved, and simmer for around two-and-a-half hours. Once cooled, remove the skin and score the fat and stud it with cloves, before smearing with black treacle, brown sugar and mustard. Once roasted, this gammon will be magnificently moist with a fragrant glaze.



stuffed pumpkin

Vegetarians needn't miss out this Christmas with this decadent dish. Neatly chop off the top of your pumpkin and scoop out the seeds. Then fry your choice of spices – onion, garlic, dried cranberries, ginger, mixed spice, saffron, clementine zest – before adding rice and vegetable stock. Simmer until cooked. Once cooled, stuff your filling into your pumpkin and transfer to a deep roasting pan with foil protecting the base. Add an inch of water and roast in the oven for approximately two hours.



pomegranate-braised pork belly

Brown your pork in a sturdy roasting pan on the hob before adding pomegranate juice, cinnamon, allspice, lemon juice, honey and red wine vinegar. Simmer, cover with foil and transfer to the oven for an hour. Then remove your meat before reducing the juices on the hob until it becomes a sticky glaze which you can then baste your pork with. Return all to the oven for another 45 minutes and serve sprinkled with pomegranate seeds for a dish that's even prettier than your Christmas tree.



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Introducing THE VISION LISTINGS



FOOD & DRINK



5 WAYS TO GET CREATIVE WITH Brussels Sprouts

Far from being just a Christmas dinner side dish, these vitamin-packed powerhouses are a superb way to brighten up many a comfort food, adding a wealth of health benefits along the way.

Lemony sprouts and breadcrumb penne
A superb use for leftovers, just fry cooked sprouts with garlic and chilli until warmed through, then add half a glass of white wine and reduce. Finally, stir in cooked penne and toasted breadcrumbs with the zest of half a lemon.

Bacon and Brussels hash
A classic flavour combination, this hash topped with a poached egg makes a fantastic hangover breakfast and is a great way to use up leftovers. Simply fry bacon, onions, parboiled potatoes and cooked Brussels sprouts in a little oil until crispy, golden and delicious.

Sprout salad with apple, walnut and blue cheese
Wash your sprouts and separate the leaves before tossing with toasted walnuts, shredded apple and chunks of blue cheese. Finish with a classic vinaigrette dressing.

Caramelised sprouts with garlic
Set a sturdy roasting pan on the stove with oil and add a pound of halved, raw Brussels sprouts (cut side down) with five peeled garlic cloves and sauté until the bottoms are browned. Season the pan and transfer it to a pre-heated oven (approx. 200C) for 10-15 minutes, shaking occasionally. Add a glug of good balsamic vinegar and serve.

Gruyere and parmesan gratin
If you are going to serve sprouts as a side, consider mixing it up by including them in a gratin. Rich, creamy and flavoursome, this makes an impressive little dish and the only skill required is the ability to whip up a béchamel sauce with plenty of tangy gruyere and parmesan, which you can then bake with your parboiled veg. Consider Brussels sprouts haters fully converted.



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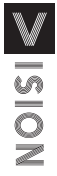
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The Women's Edition: Menopause Matters

Dec 2017

This month it's all about the girls – we talk about the menopause as a focus, and what you can do should you be going through the change. We also introduce our newest award winning treatment 'Mona Lisa Touch®'.

The menopause affects all women in their lives – The ovaries make the hormones oestrogen and progesterone as part of your menstrual cycle. As you approach the menopause, your body produces less of these hormones which can lead to a number of symptoms, and it affects them all differently. Damage to the ovaries caused by specific treatment such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy, or when the ovaries are removed, often at the time of a hysterectomy can also bring on the change.

How will I know?

The average age of the natural menopause is 51 years but again, this can of course vary and happens usually between 40 and 58. Things to look out for can be anxiety and mood disturbance or feeling low,

your periods becoming more heavy or stopping, night sweats, vaginal dryness, fatigue, thinning hair – all are signs that you could be approaching the menopause or are 'perimenopausal'

How can I control it?

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) aims to top up or restore the levels of these hormones.

You can take HRT in a number of different ways, depending on your medical history and your personal choice. These can include:

- Tablets to be swallowed
- Patches to apply on, or gel to be rubbed into your skin ("transdermal")
- A pessary (a small tablet that you put into your vagina) or a vaginal ring.

What about Vaginal Atrophy?

The vaginal walls respond to the action of oestrogen and therefore reduction of oestrogen leads to the decline in health and condition of these tissues. This can lead to dryness, irritation, burning sensations and pain during sexual intercourse, affecting up to about 40% postmenopausal women.

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HEALTH & FITNESS

Festive Fatties

THE ABSOLUTE CALORIE CON OF CHRISTMAS BEVERAGES

It used to be that Christmas indulgence lasted for a couple of days at the end of December. And while it is possible to put on weight from even just a day or two of excessive eating, it's fairly easy to bounce back. The trouble is, with every high street chain keen to offer an abundance of fattening festive fare, often from as early as late October, it can be easy to unwittingly consume massive amounts of extra calories.

The most insidious of these festive 'treats' is arguably the ubiquitous Christmas beverage, be it hot chocolate with festive sprinkles or a latte infused with gingerbread. The first problem is – like when consuming wine or beer – it can be easy to forget that what you're drinking is counting towards your daily calories.

But the biggest problem is just how much fat and sugar is packed into some of these mugs, particularly when you consider the barista's casual upsell to a bigger size or the addition of cream and marshmallows. In anticipation of this year's fair cocktail menu of hot drinks, we looked at the calorific content from last year's recipes, and found...

COSTA MINT HOT CHOCOLATE MEDIO 452 calories | 20.4g of fat | 45.5g of sugar

TALL STARBUCKS GINGERBREAD LATTE 305 calories | 15.6g of fat | 28.6g of sugar

CAFFÈ NERO PRALINE LATTE & WHIPPED CREAM 325 calories | 20.9g of fat | 25.4g of sugar

But there is some good news. It appears some coffee chains are aware of the problem: Starbucks has been whispering about reducing the sugar content in its most iconic Chirrimbo drinks, and have already removed the largest size from menu boards, with others set to follow suit.

Plus, remember, it's actually okay to treat yourself occasionally, but try to limit your intake and do your best to resist the dreaded 'whipped cream upsell'!



FESTIVE holiday maths



How much exercise do you need to do to burn off a mince pie? **VISION** finds out...

It is widely believed that we double our calorie intake on Christmas Day, which means that by the end of the entire chocolate-scoffing, Baileys-quaffing festive marathon, you would have to do, well, a marathon to burn off the damage. But what if you could drop some of the excess along the way?

A mince pie for example, is around 295 calories, which would require you to jog for around 45 minutes, but you could also inspire a family footie match down the park or have a rambunctious game of tag around the house.

A single portion of Christmas pudding is sadly a little more fattening at 350 calories (not including cream), but the good news is that dancing can burn up to 400 calories an hour, meaning you can have seconds AND an evening of jiving to *Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree*.

So with two of the worst festive offenders taken care of, let's take a look at everyone's favourite Christmas tipples. Sweet and spicy mulled wine can sometimes go down a little too easy, but at only 106 calories a mug, it's not that hard to expend. In fact, you can burn an extra 42 calories an hour from just standing, so if you volunteer to do the post-lunch washing up you'll be both popular and slimmer by the end of it.

A large glass of Baileys (100ml) however, is around 327 calories which equates to a three-mile run. Include the customary chocolate liquor on the side of it and those calories are creeping back up. Thankfully Christmas comes but once a year, and if you're prepared to do a little work after the main event, then it's probably better to just enjoy yourself and prepare to lace up those running shoes in the New Year.



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SHRINKFLATION

SCANDAL

You might recall the recent furore over the new shape chosen for Toblerone chocolate – but the much-loved and mountain-bedecked sweet treat isn't the only product feeling the force of 'Shrinkflation'...

Younger people may have heard their elders complain about how products have changed from their day – and it seems they have a point. Recent analysis from the Office for National Statistics has revealed that more than 2,500 products have shrunk in size but not price in the last five years.

This phenomenon, whereby products shrink in size while their cost remains the same or increases, is known as 'Shrinkflation'.

Angry consumers have noticed Toblerone, Maltesers and Mars bars are smaller than they used to be – with a Maltesers sharing bag shrinking by a whopping 15 per cent – and the

most blatant examples of 'Shrinkflation' appear to be coffee, confectionary and fruit juices. But it's not just those with a sweet tooth that have been hit: a standard roll of Andrex toilet paper now contains 221 sheets, down from 240.

The reason behind 'Shrinkflation', according to confectionary manufacturers, appears to be an increase in the cost of raw materials, despite the fact that sugar and cocoa costs have actually dropped in recent years, with the latter seeing a sharp drop after a five-year period of increases. The recent fall in the value of the pound may also have had an effect on prices.

Andrex has reasoned that its toilet roll is now better quality, despite there being less of it, and Maltesers maker Mars has attributed the 15 per cent decrease to a bid to make the product more affordable. With the inflation rate for products such as chocolate actually 1.22 percentage points higher (when the smaller size was taken into account) than the national average, consumers with a sweet tooth may soon have to look elsewhere for an affordable sugar fix.

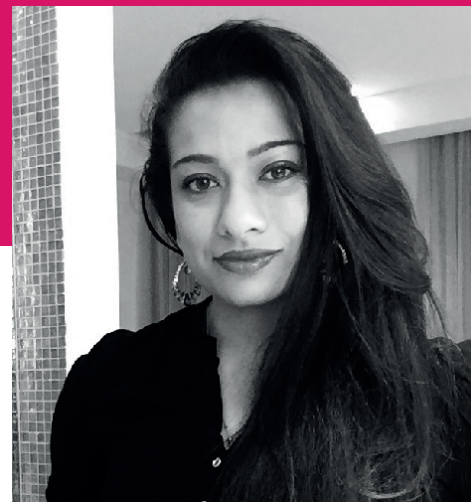


Usha Khokhar

CERT CII (MP)

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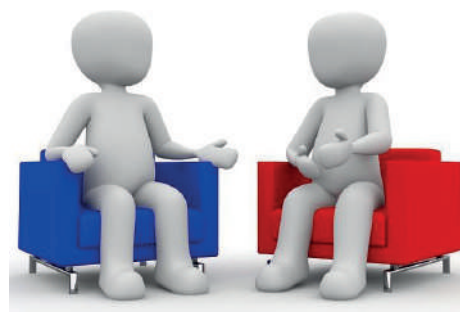
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PUZZLES & TRIVIA



PUZZLES

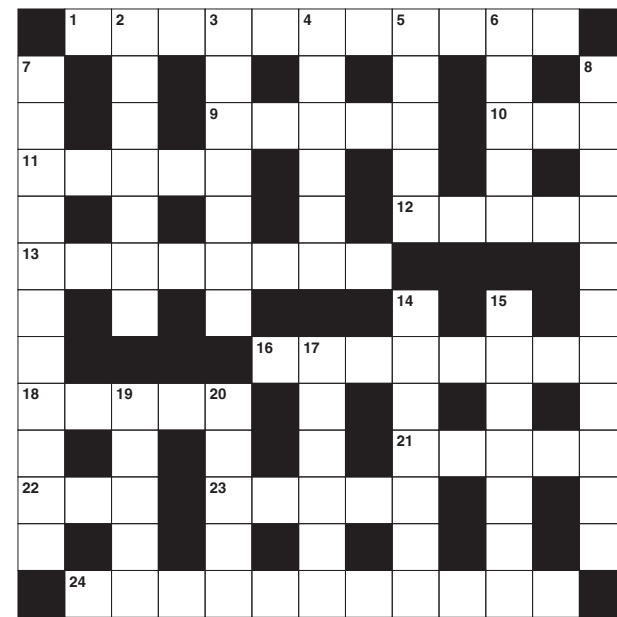
Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4

ACROSS

1. Disenchant (11)
9. Holy chalice (5)
10. Arrest; apprehend (3)
11. Academy award (5)
12. Active cause (5)
13. Sweet on a stick (8)
16. Definite and clear (8)
18. Meat and vegetables on a skewer (5)
21. Musical times (5)
22. Grandmother (3)
23. Group of eight (5)
24. Rural scenery (11)

DOWN

2. Freezing (3-4)
3. Firmly establish (7)
4. Temporary shelter (4-2)
5. Latin American dance; sauce (5)
6. Snow leopard (5)
7. Attractive (4-7)
8. State of preoccupation (11)
14. Segregated groups or areas (7)
15. Impressed a pattern on (7)
17. Experienced adviser (6)



19. Small drum (5)
20. _____ Ulvaeus: member of ABBA (5)

DID YOU KNOW

▶ Britain was introduced to the Christmas tree in 1841, when Queen Victoria's German husband Prince Albert brought one to Windsor Castle for the Royal Family

▶ The Christmas cracker was invented in 1847 by Tom Smith, a baker of wedding cakes from Clerkenwell, London.

▶ The Christmas candy cane, shaped as a shepherd's crook, represents the humble shepherds who were first to worship the new-born Christ.

▶ In some countries, the baby Jesus delivers the gifts, in others, the Three Wise Men. But in most countries, Santa Claus does the honours.

SUDOKU

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| | | 9 | | | 1 | | |

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WHAT'S ON

Narnia

Brentwood Theatre, 15 Shenfield Road, Brentwood, CM15 8AG

December 5 – December 30

A musical retelling of this much-loved family classic. Join us on a journey beyond the wardrobe for a musical retelling based on the C.S. Lewis classic *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*.

Presented by special arrangement with The Dramatic Publishing Company, Woodstock Illinois.

Book by Jules Tasca. Music by Thomas Tierney. Lyrics by Ted Drachman. Directed by Ray Howes.

Tickets are £15, concession prices are also available.

Wreath Making at Weald Country Park

Crossing Temple's Visitor's Centre, Weald Road, South Weald, Essex, CM14 5QS

December 7, December 14, 5.30pm – 9pm



Learn how to make your own glossy green Christmas wreath using fresh foliage, real berries, ribbon and a variety of floristry grade decorations. Enjoy a creative and social evening in the cosy setting of Crossing Temple's Visitor's Centre, all whilst enjoying a complimentary snack and drink. Then take your creation home and be the envy of all your friends when you hang it on the door. Attendees are asked to bring secateurs and gloves.

You can book onto the 5.30pm – 7pm or 7.30pm – 9pm session.

To book email CrossingTempleBarns@essex.gov.uk or call 0333 013 2738.

Live Music At The Bardswell Social Club

Bardswell Social Club, Weald Road, Brentwood, CM14 4TJ

December 9, 7.30pm

Relive the music of Cliff Richard and The Shadows

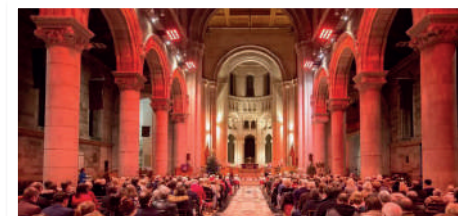
at the Bardswell Social Club, Weald Road, Brentwood.

Live on stage will be the celebrated Rich Clifford and the Young Once. Doors open at 7.30pm. Admission is £5.

Telephone 01277 214057 or visit www.thebardswellclub.co.uk for further details.

Carols at Christmas - Alzheimer's Society at Brentwood Cathedral

Ingrave Road, Brentwood, CM15 8AT
December 16, 6.30pm – 8.30pm



We are delighted to announce our first ever regional Carol Concert in Essex at the stunning Brentwood Cathedral on December 16.

Join us for a magical evening of carols, choir performances including Singing for the Brain group and readings from special guests all in support of Alzheimer's Society. Delicious mince pies and mulled wine served before the concert.

All proceeds raised to help those living with dementia. Together we will unite against dementia.

Ticket Prices: £10 per person: Concert ticket, £15 per person: Combined concert ticket for a person with dementia and their carer, £5 per child aged nine and under.

Music for Christmas

Brentwood Centre, Dodinghurst Road, Brentwood, CM15 9NN

December 23, 7pm – 10pm

An evening of your favourite carols and Christmas music, plus excerpts from the Chelmsford Ballet Company's *Alice's Adventures* and the popular *Night before Christmas* narrated by Graham Padden.

For more information and to book tickets visit www.hscs.org.uk/tickets.html

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MAY THE FOURTH BE WITH YOU

Not since the legendary racing icon James Hunt has F1 found someone who mixes style and substance in the way Lewis Hamilton does. Yet when gawping at his questionable fashion statements, or in looking past the ubiquitous throng of beautiful women, it's easy to dismiss the fact that the 32-year-old Stevenage-born racer has just surpassed the great Sir Jackie Stewart's longstanding record of three World Championship victories.

"I try to find a balance in my life," he begins. "The lifestyle I live is definitely different to the other drivers, but who says it has to be the way they are doing things? My style works perfectly for me.

"If people don't know or don't recognise the amount of preparation I put into this then I'm pretty sure they'll never get it."

Hamilton's recent move into the history books is just the latest milestone in a career saturated by success. Alongside his four Championship titles, the Brit also holds the record for pole positions in qualifying, and is the only driver in the sport's history to have won a race in every season he's competed. He's even managed to bag a BBC Sports Personality of the Year along the way.

And while his 'try hard' behaviour has made for tabloid ridicule and feuds with fellow drivers, there's another side to Hamilton off the track - it's the side that stays ultimately grounded, guided by an unrelenting show of support he has for his younger brother Nicholas, who was born with cerebral palsy and constantly defied the odds to end up as a current-day British Touring Car Championship competitor.

"Nicholas was told he'd never walk, or play the drums, or drive, and he can do all those things now and more," the elder Hamilton brother beams. "I look at him and I'm incredibly inspired every day.

"He acts as a constant reminder of how very blessed I am whilst carving out his own future and his own success. It's just incredible - he is the hero, not me."

For British number one Anthony Joshua, it has been quite a ride, yet ask those in the boxing fraternity, and they'll tell you the 28-year-old Watford-born fighter's journey has only really just begun.

Whatever is in store, it appears Anthony's grounded personality is here to stay. After all, why should the orthodox heavyweight champ change tact? His sucker-punch humility has already done for everyone who's crossed his path up until now.

Here are the British bulldog's magic moments so far:

🔥2009-2012

As an amateur, Anthony boxed through home and international tournaments, coming second in the AIBA World Boxing Championships in 2011 before clinching Olympic gold for Team GB at London 2012.

🔥October 5, 2013

Anthony's first professional fight vs Emanuele Leo of Italy - won with a TKO (technical knock-out) after just 2mins 47secs.

🔥September 13, 2014

Sealing his first year as a professional, Anthony boxed and defeated Konstantin Airich at the Manchester Arena, to take his professional record to 8-0. This was also his longest fight to date, making it all the way to the third round!

🔥October 11, 2014

Anthony won the vacant WBC International Heavyweight title at the O2 Arena by defeating Denis Bakhtov, and retained that title seven months later against Kevin Johnson to take his record to 13-0.

🔥2015-2016

Anthony picked up the vacant Commonwealth, British Heavyweight and IBF Heavyweight titles, as well as retaining his existing belts in bouts against Dillian Whyte, Charles Martin, Dominic Breazeale and Eric Molina.

🔥April 29, 2017

In Anthony's biggest victory yet, he defeated Wladimir Klitschko, a modern-day icon, to also claim the WBA Super and IBO Heavyweight titles.

🔥October 28, 2017

Tricky Frenchman Carlos Takam put up a good fight but succumbed to Anthony's power in the 10th round in Cardiff.

🔥**Boxing record:** 20-0 (5 Kos, 15 TKOs).





SLOPING OFF

Skiing has become extremely popular in recent years, as the slopes are no longer exclusive to the rich and famous. For resorts that offer excellent pistes for all abilities, look no further.

SCHMITTENHÖHE, AUSTRIA

One of the most popular ski resorts in Salzburg, Schmittenhöhe offers unbeatable diversity. Beginners can look forward to flat family pistes, while experienced skiers can showcase their skills across the Standard and Trass piste. You can take in the breathtaking views as you look out with views to 30 3,000metre high mountains. This resort also offers cosy huts, sunny terraces and good food – perfect for the whole family to enjoy.

THE PARADISKI, FRANCE

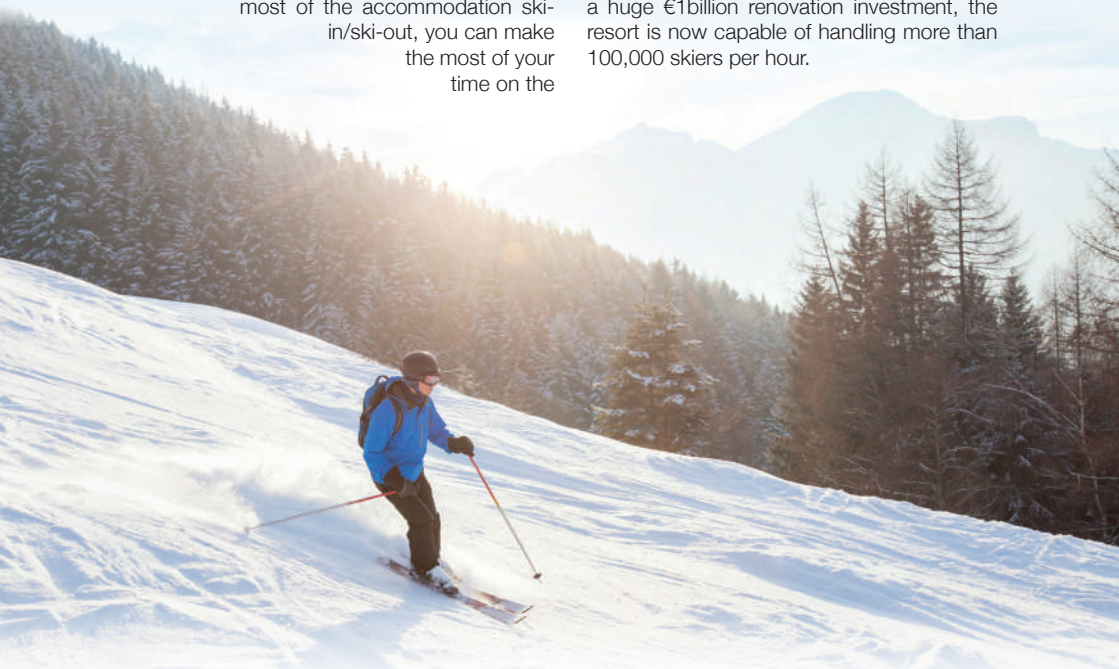
The huge Paradiski area includes three resorts – Les Arcs, Peisey-Valley and La Pagne. Covering 425km of piste, this area caters for every level of skier and snowboarder. With most of the accommodation ski-in/ski-out, you can make the most of your time on the

slopes. There's a range of green, blue, red and black runs which are sure to keep you busy.

Off piste, there are restaurants for all budgets, nightlife for the pub drinker or the outgoing party-goers, as well as plenty of non-ski activities. The Paradiski offers something for everyone.

GRANDVALIRA, ANDORRA

Grandvalira, located in Andorra, covers the skiable areas of two of Andorra's seven parishes. It was founded back in 2003 when two of the Pyrenees' oldest resorts joined together. This gave rise to one of the largest resorts in Europe with 210km of ski run spread over 128 slopes for all abilities. After a huge €1billion renovation investment, the resort is now capable of handling more than 100,000 skiers per hour.



Gold

PLATED

Whether you consider them ostentatious or a symbol of prestige, the market for personalised number plates has established itself as a multimillion-dollar industry. But what are the most expensive number plates in the history of automobiles, and who owns them?

For many multimillionaires, owning the latest model of luxury sports car just simply isn't enough, with a few adding their own touch of individualism to the vehicle with a personalised number plate. While anyone can own one of these fancy auto accessories, the very top end of personal plates can often cost their buyers a seven-figure sum – with the world's most expensive, a plate bearing the single number '1', currently belonging to Saeed Abdul Ghaffar Khouri of Abu Dhabi, who parted with £7million for his prized possession.

Looking a little closer to home, here's a run-down of the three most expensive plates that the UK currently has to offer:

VIP 1

3. 'VIP 1' – ROMAN ABRAMOVICH

Abramovich's name has become synonymous with splashing the cash since taking over Chelsea Football Club in 2003, and the Russian oil mogul grabbed the 'VIP 1' plate in 2006 for £285,000

in a deal he hopes to provide more value for money that the £50million he gave Liverpool for the services of Fernando Torres. Interestingly, this unique plate was originally commissioned to be put on Pope John Paul II's Popemobile for a papal visit to Ireland.

M 1

2. 'M 1' – MIKE McCOMB

After selling his Mobile Phone Store to BT Cellnet in 2000, Mike McComb had a fairly large pile of wonga lying about. Six years later he decided to put £330,000 of that to good use by purchasing the 'M 1' plates as a present for his son... who was just six years old at the time.

F 1

1. 'F 1' – AFZAL KHAN

Bradford-born entrepreneur Afzal Khan takes the top spot for vehicular vanity in Britain by grabbing the holy grail of petrol-head plates to affix to his Mercedes SLR McLaren for a massive £440,000. At the time, Khan described the figure as "a good price to pay" as the plates were "probably worth 10 times that".

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