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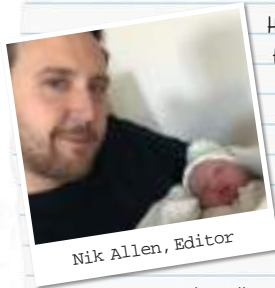
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Editor's notes...



Nik Allen, Editor

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

Last month my wife Kathleen and I were blessed with the safe arrival of our first child.

On November 5, Max Ritchie Allen weighed in at 7lb 10oz and arrived 10 days early. In lots of ways it was the worst and best day of my life.

Kathleen went into labour unexpectedly and I have never felt so helpless and useless.

My anxiety levels were through the roof as there were some complications during the birth.

There's not much you can do as an expectant father in that situation apart from offer support and encouragement.

But then the relief I felt was indescribable as Max was delivered safely and healthily. I have never been so filled with pride and love.

We are so excited about the future. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank my wonderful wife for giving me the most precious gift.

Also a big thank you to all the readers who have been in contact with me in the build-up to Max's arrival.

Finally I would like to express my appreciation to all our advertisers, contributors and readers who have made this year such a successful and unforgettable one.

So, until next month which will be next year, look after yourselves and keep buying locally.

Merry Christmas to you all.

Nik

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As *Mary, Queen of Scots* prepares to ride into cinemas on December 7, we look into the real history of the enigmatic Scottish royal (played on screen by Saoirse Ronan) and her powerful cousin Queen Elizabeth I (Margot Robbie).

We consider ourselves to be living in progressive times with women taking on more and more leadership roles in the UK, but there was a period during the 16th century when both England and Scotland were ruled by queens. Both strong-willed and admirably independent, Mary Queen of Scots and Elizabeth I were anomalies in a system still very much run by the patriarchy. And yet it wasn't all 'girl power' and sisterhood for the two monarchs, with Mary's unquenchable quest for supremacy ultimately leading to her death.

But then what else would you expect from a woman who was raised to rule? Born in 1542, Mary Stuart was the only surviving (legitimate) child of King James V, and was merely a six-day-old infant when she succeeded her father to become Queen of Scotland. Naturally, the role was taken over by regents until she came of age, and she actually spent much of her childhood in France, eventually marrying the Dauphin of France – who briefly became King Francis II – before his death in 1560.

By the time Mary returned to Scotland in 1561, her cousin Elizabeth I was ruling England. But all was not content in the kingdom, for many Catholics believed that Mary was the true heir to the English throne, as it was only because Henry VIII's last will and testament had excluded the Stuarts from claiming the crown that it fell instead onto the heads of his daughters (Mary I of England followed by Elizabeth I).

Not surprisingly, Mary was seen as an immediate threat to the English monarch, and her lack of finesse regarding the intricacies of religion and British politics only fanned the flames. Her first misstep was marrying a fellow Catholic – also her first cousin – Lord Darnley, with whom she had a son, James. When their union soured, his murder was blamed on nobleman Lord Bothwell, whom Mary would take as her third husband, a decision that would lead to her being forced to abdicate to her one-year-old son.

Imprisoned in Loch Leven Castle, Mary would eventually make a bold escape attempt, raising an army of 6,000 men, before accepting defeat and heading for England where she would ask Queen Elizabeth I for help in regaining her throne. But self-preservation won the day, with Elizabeth I ordering that Mary remain locked up until her eventual execution in 1587.

As time has gone on, it is Elizabeth I who is often revered as being an admirable and courageous queen, and yet, Mary's intelligence, passion and steely determination cannot be overlooked.

Like *Braveheart* before it, the film *Mary, Queen of Scots* could very well see the courageous Celt become a modern icon... or, it could simply confirm what history has come to show – that when it comes to matters of the crown, blood is no thicker than water.

Mary

QUEEN
OF SCOTS



HISTORY

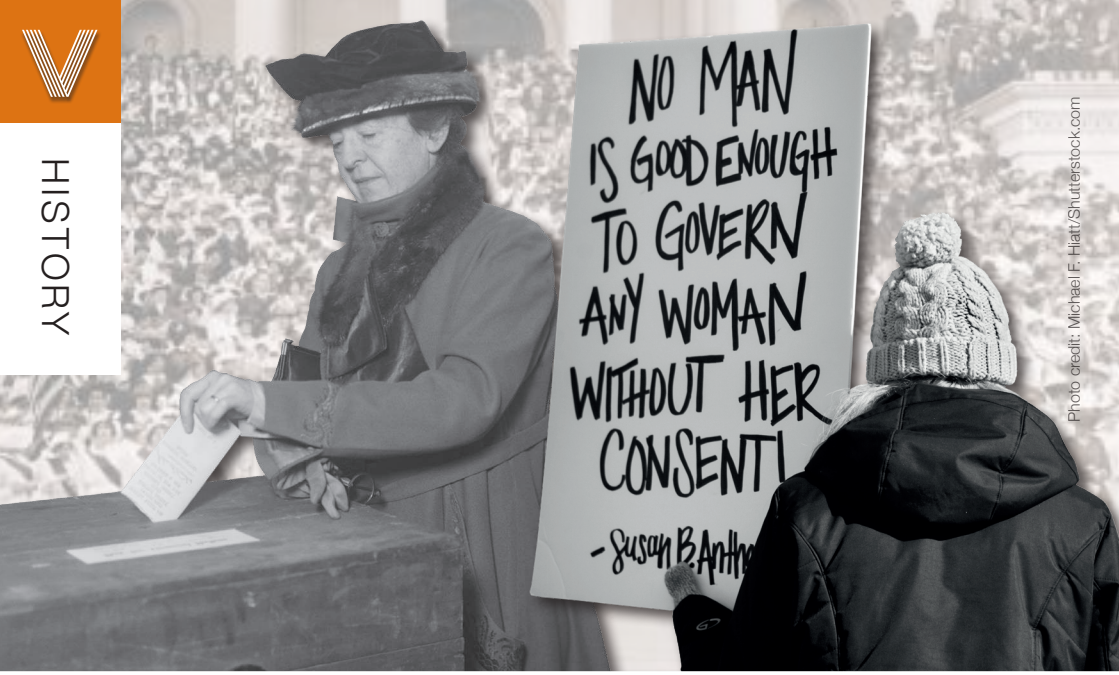


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A CENTURY of common sense

It's 100 years since women were given the vote in parliamentary elections, with the nation embracing this incredible landmark in what is being dubbed The Year of the Woman.

The #MeToo movement may have kicked off an incredible drive for equality in the Western World, but perhaps it should have referenced more strongly the incredible battles faced at the start of the 20th century, both here and abroad, by a women's rights movement that was every bit as battle-hardened as today's campaign.

Talk about women being given the vote and most people will reference Emily Davison, the British suffragette who stumbled in front of King George V's horse at the Epsom Derby in 1913. Her subsequent death made her a central icon for the fight for equality, though in truth Emily made just one small part of a significant movement across the country. She was involved in a UK-wide hunger strike with other women arrested while demonstrating in the

months and years leading up to that fateful race, with the Emmeline Pankhurst Women's Social and Political Union proving a driving force for change, and one that, eventually, had to be listened to.

Sure enough, within five years women were granted the right to vote, and now a century on, a series of political, cultural, social and artistic events will reference and recognise the incredible sacrifices made by so many.

You only have to look at the empowerment of women in UK politics – a female Prime Minister, a female leader of Scotland's biggest party, not to mention the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, ranked the most powerful woman in world politics – to see just how far we've come. In short, do your own ironing.

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HOME & DIY

Whether you decide to embrace tradition or try the new trend, homemade is always better. And there's no excuse not to with our easy-to-follow DIY guides...

CHRISTMAS STOCKING:

You will need:

- ★ ½ yard of two different fabrics such as felt or cotton for the outside and fur or fleece for the inside
- ★ Stocking pattern template (available online)
- ★ Optional extras for decorating including coloured felt and wool

How to make:

- ★ Fold your outer fabric in half and using the template, cut around so you have two mirror images of your stocking shape
- ★ Repeat with inside fabric
- ★ Sew around the bottom and sides of your outer fabric
- ★ Repeat with your inner fabric (inside out)
- ★ Now turn your inner fabric right side out and your outer fabric inside out
- ★ Place the inner within the outer and sew around the top, leaving a 2-3 inch opening
- ★ Turn it all out and fill

You can personalise your stocking with felt letters, a homemade Santa or a snowman with a bobbly knitted hat.

CHRISTMAS EVE BOX:

You will need:

- ★ A wooden crate
- ★ Wooden letters in your child's name
- ★ "Christmas Eve Box" template (available online)
- ★ Acrylic paint in your chosen Christmas colours
- ★ Festive wrapping paper
- ★ Optional further decorations

How to make:

- ★ Paint your wooden letters in red, green or gold
- ★ Leave to dry and then stick onto the crate
- ★ Using a soft pencil outline the "Christmas Eve Box" template onto the side of the box
- ★ Paint in the stencil in your chosen Christmassy colours
- ★ Add any glitter, sequins or stars
- ★ Line your crate with festive wrapping paper
- ★ You are ready to fill

IDEAS FOR FILLING:

Festive pyjamas, a Christmas film, hot chocolate and marshmallows, satsumas, chocolate coins and homemade food for Santa's reindeer.



DIY Christmas Cracker

Christmas dinner without Christmas crackers is like Santa without his reindeer, greatly anticipated, thoroughly enjoyable but with something definitely missing.

However, the cost of Christmas quickly adds up and cheap crackers are often disappointing and filled with plastic junk that nobody wants.

So why not make your own instead? It's easier than it looks, budget-friendly and you can add whatever gifts you fancy inside.

YOU WILL NEED:

- * 6 toilet roll tubes
- * Decorative paper – Christmassy or try a theme such as Disney princesses or superheroes
- * Cracker snaps (available on Amazon or at Hobbycraft)
- * Coloured thin card (20cm long) to complement the design of your A4 paper
- * Coloured string or ribbon
- * Optional sequins, glitter and tinsel
- * Your chosen tokens

HOW TO MAKE:

- * Place the tube on the long edge of the paper, in the centre and stick down with tape
- * Thread one cracker snap through the tube

- and stick down – this is what makes the bang
- * Roll the tube across the paper and stick in place
- * Cut two 20x5cm strips of the thin card, curl into a circle and stick with tape
- * Place one inside each cracker end leaving 2cm sticking out and secure with tape
- * Twist one end and tie with ribbon
- * Add your personalised gifts
- * Twist other end and seal
- * Add any additional decoration

IDEAS FOR GIFTS/NOVELTIES

- * Paper hats (homemade of course)
- * Chocolate sprouts (available at Asda)
- * Handwritten jokes
- * Personalised keyrings
- * Miniature liqueurs for adults
- * Personalised tree decorations for the kids

Alternatively, if you are short on time but still want to offer a personalised and homemade selection of crackers this Christmas, several retailers offer 'Fill Your Own' crackers where all you need to do is pick and add your individual gifts.



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All is BERRY & BRIGHT

From jammy red to deep mauves, berry colours are a brilliant way to brighten up your home. If your home decor is getting you down with its poverous palate of beiges and greys, then consider adding a little flavour with some delicious berry colours.

“But how do I decorate my home in these sumptuous ruby tones without making one’s house look like the scene of bloody crime?”, you cry.

Well, simply by combining the right shades with sensible application in each room, you can achieve mulberry bliss over murder mystery madness.

CHERRY RED: Bold and bright, cherry is ideal for helping your kitchen come to life. Contrast wooden cabinets with the shiniest most daring red tiles you can find, and then accessorise with kitchen gadgets (toaster, kettle etc.) in the same shade to create an energising and inspiring space.

CRIMSON: There is something particularly elegant about crimson, making it an ideal tone for hallways and entrance areas. Both invigorating and luxurious, a crimson carpet or wallpaper makes your home feel cosy and welcoming without being gloomy, particularly when set-off with royal blue accents.

BURGUNDY: Creating a cosy living room is a fine art. Too many rich colours and it can feel stuffy and old fashioned, but too much white and it becomes cold. Find the balance then by choosing a statement wall or two to cover in a particularly decadent burgundy wallpaper (felted or fabric) while leaving the rest of the room to breathe in rather more neutral hues.

PURPLES: Like lips stained with blackberries, purple is a particularly sumptuous shade, making it perfect for the boudoir. Go all out with thick-pile mauve carpets, lilac linens and walls splashed with mulberry. You’ll never want to leave.

SCARLET: Playful and exuberant, scarlet really is a glorious colour. However, use too much around your home and it can start to feel a little gaudy. So keep this orange-tinged red specifically for accents: a rug here, a lampshade there, and anywhere else you feel needs a little lifting.



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Rug IT UP



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As 'the Dude' once observed, "a rug can really tie a room together". And yet, you don't need to be a fan of hit 1990s bowling comedy *The Big Lebowski* to understand the transformative power of a bit of old carpet.

A mismatched collection of furniture can suddenly feel immaculately curated, a cold and cavernous lounge becomes a snug bolt hole, and that horrendous red wine stain on your white carpet fades to nothing but a distant memory... and it's all thanks to the power of the humble rug.

So now that you've decided you need a bit of floor decoration in your life, here are the styles, shapes and designs to bear in mind:

Texturised

Considering the fact our feet contain hundreds of nerve endings, it makes sense to choose a rug that not only looks good, but feels good too. From plush velvety fabric to bobbles of natural wool, the texturised trend is really about utilising all of your senses.

Graphic design

Geometric patterns have long been a popular carpet trend, but the modern styles are even more lust-worthy, as simple designs meet a fresh colour palate to create a minimalist but classic look. Think chevrons in mint green or breezy yellow, or diamond shaped in eggshell blue and a blush pink. These designs are bang up-to-date with just a little art deco chic.

Less hassle, more tassel

Tassels are a big design trend in both fashion and the home right now, and what's not to love about them? Simultaneously fun and stylish, tassels are great for adding a little pizzazz in an uninspiring room.

Bohemian chic

Rugs bring a certain carefree decadence to a room, which is why the bohemian trend makes perfect sense. Think casual, flowing fabrics in a faded mass of colours, or in music terms, Stevie Nicks strewn seductively across your floor.



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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



LOCAL NEWS BRENTWOOD



Racer wins 2019 Ginetta Junior Scholarship

Brentwood racer Ethan Brooks has scooped one of the most sought-after prizes in UK motorsport beating 66 other aspiring drivers to secure the Ginetta Junior Scholarship 2019.

The 15-year-old driver wowed the instructors during the three-day competition at Blyton Park, Ginetta's own test track, impressing their team of experienced drivers, across all disciplines.

It was the first time Ethan had been behind the wheel of a racing car and the win secures him entry into the 2019 Ginetta Junior Championship, the use of a G40 Junior race car, insurance, consumables, tyres and fuel, plus professional car preparation from an experienced team for the duration of the season.

Ethan secured entry into the Scholarship competition by winning the British Schools' National Karting Competition (BSKC) with his brother, Callum Brooks, in July this year.

The new 2019 Ginetta Junior Scholar said: "My time at Blyton Park was extremely enjoyable and productive as I found my limits both mentally and physically. I learnt a lot from the expert driver coaching and also advice on how to present myself to the media."

Mike Simpson, Ginetta development driver, said: "It was great to see the progression of Ethan's driving

throughout the scholarship. The standard of drivers was particularly high which made judging a difficult task so changing the track layout over the days helped us to really see which drivers adapt.

"Ethan is the perfect example of why we hold the scholarship, his natural talent really showed through his driving sessions and his professionalism throughout his media and fitness session really did make a difference."

Ethan is now appealing for sponsors to back his ongoing campaign and to support his bid for a grid place in the first round of the Ginetta Junior Championship at Brands Hatch in April.

Proud mum Michele Brooks explained: "The championship will be broadcast live on ITV alongside the British Touring Car Championship and be viewed by over 19 million people but without sponsorship we will be struggling to meet the high costs involved.

"Ethan will require additional funding in the form of sponsorship and contributions to help fund pre-season testing, travel costs, accommodation costs and his race gear, all of which is essential for success and isn't funded within his scholarship."

If you would be interested in sponsoring or funding Ethan please email: EthanBrooksRacing@gmail.com



Don't kick your old boots into touch and help save a life

A charity which aims to reduce disease, infections and snakebites in Africa by utilising old sports footwear is calling on the support of Brentwood residents.

Boots2Africa collects, transports and distributes donated football boots, trainers and sports footwear to Africa's children and young adults through relief organisations.

Relying on donations from local communities the charity has collection points across the region including at the Brentwood Centre.

Set up two years ago by Iain Finch, Boots2Africa has gone from strength to strength with more than 8,000 boots delivered to children and adults in Africa, 15,000 items of kit donated with nine countries benefitting to date.

It is hoped the charity can help reduce the number

of deaths from lack of footwear in Africa with 10,000 children dying each year.

Iain said: "A couple of years ago I was clearing out my garage with my sons and we found 38 old pairs of boots and it gave us an idea. We looked online to find a charity we could donate them to but couldn't find one so we set one up ourselves.

"In the 2018/19 football season, we aim to have collected 5,000 boots.

"We are also now looking to support Western Sahara who are part of the The Confederation of Independent Football Associations.

"Further to that we hope to return to Kenya or Malawi at the end of March 2019 and we're expecting our donations to rise to over 12,000."

For more information, visit www.boots2africa.co.uk or visit their Facebook or Twitter pages.

The X Factor star leaves following public vote

Brentwood's *The X Factor* star Bella Penfold was eliminated from the competition following the Week 5 public vote.

The 19-year-old had impressed the judges throughout the competition, however Big Band week proved too much for the singer.

She sang *Strong* by London Grammar and received mixed comments from the judges following her performance.

In the results show, she left the competition immediately after she received the fewest number of public votes.

Speaking to Dermot O'Leary following the announcement, Bella said: "I have had the most incredible journey and it wouldn't be the same without any of them [the contestants].

"If there's one person in this room I have to thank more than anyone it's Simon Cowell. He's changed my life."

Later on in the evening, following Shan Ako's shock elimination, mentor Cowell decided to change the rules and allow her and Bella to join the final six and perform on the tour.

Photo credit: Thames/Syco



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Photo credit: BTUH

Rotary Club donates equipment to hospital

A local Rotary Club has helped respiratory patients this winter with additional equipment for the wards at Basildon University Hospital.

The Brentwood à Becket Rotary donated six nebulisers in total.

Two went to Orsett Hospital and four to Florence Nightingale and Marjorie Warren wards at Basildon University Hospital.

A nebuliser helps you breathe in medicine as a mist, through a mask or a mouthpiece and are used by patients with respiratory conditions, such as COPD,

asthma and bronchiectasis. There are a many different types of nebulisers available, such as jet nebulisers and ultrasonic nebulisers.

Brentwood à Becket Rotary Club representatives Greg Roberts and Neville A Brown are pictured holding the nebulisers to give to staff on the Florence Nightingale Ward.

The hospital said a huge thank you to the Rotary Club for its donation.

People on social media praised the Rotary Club. One said: "Brilliant news."

Station to be improved as part of Local Plan

Improvements to Brentwood railway station are part of the key elements of the Brentwood pre-submission Local Plan which has been approved by the council.

The new plan will set out the council's long-term vision for how and where the borough will develop over the next 15 years.

Key elements of the plan approved by the council include the building of over 7,000 new homes, to support improvements to Brentwood and Shenfield railways stations and potentially create five new primary schools and one secondary school.

The plan will now be published for public consultation from mid-November to mid-January 2019.

Councillor Louise McKinlay said: "The plan focuses

on identifying land for both residential and commercial use over the coming years. It also will mean that we can look to have the kind of development we need while protecting the things that matter to people, such as our open green spaces, and ensuring we have what is needed for our children and grandchildren.

"Under this plan 87 per cent of the land in the borough will remain as green belt; it will help to provide the affordable homes and the next round of work on the plan focuses on the essential infrastructure that is required for Brentwood to grow in a sustainable way. The plan aims to ensure that much-needed housing is delivered whilst protecting the borough's special characteristics."





School hosts one-day conference

Brentwood Preparatory School recently hosted a one-day Chaplaincy Conference. The event, held on November 1, was open to all those involved in any form of chaplaincy within the Diocese of Chelmsford. Dozens of delegates, from all faiths, attended A Ministry of Presence exploring the nature and theology that underpins this important ministry. Keynote speakers included The Rt Revd Stephen

Cottrell, Bishop of Chelmsford and Dr Edward Kessler MBE, founding director of The Woolf Institute, Cambridge. Brentwood School Chaplain, Rev Dr Adrian McConnaughe (pictured), who organised the event, said: "The conference also provides an important time for all engaged in chaplaincy to listen to the experiences of colleagues working in similar and different contexts and to share good practice."

Super Scout to represent UK at jamboree



Brentwood School super Scout Jack Elsworth is busy raising much-needed funds for the trip of a lifetime to the 2019 Australian Jamboree where he will represent both Essex Scouts and the UK. Jack, who has been involved with the Scouting movement since he was just six years old, will spend a few days in Hong Kong before heading to Australia for the 10-day jamboree. The jamboree (AJ2019) will be held from January 4-14 in Adelaide, South Australia, and will witness a pop-up city of 10,000. The Scout camp is so big it has to have its own hospital, post office, newspaper, radio station, bus station and mail. Fifteen-year-old Jack, an Explorer Scout, is on a final fundraising push for the £3,550 he needs for this amazing opportunity. He has already taken part in a race night, cake sales, cleaned cars, and put on his gardening gloves in support of his trip. He even abseiled from the top of the Orbit in the Olympic Park. After a few days in Hong Kong, he will head to Australia seeing in the New Year in Cairns, before exploring the Great Barrier Reef and the National Heritage Rainforests. At the conclusion of the jamboree, Jack will move on to Sydney. During the jamboree, Jack will join Scouts from across the South Pacific and Australasian continent undertaking community projects and teambuilding challenges. For further information about future events or how to support his fundraising, please contact Jack's mum Mrs Liz Elsworth: lizelsworth@hotmail.com



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Street Pastors have had an exciting month and have just celebrated our fifth birthday in Billericay. We have been patrolling now every Friday and Saturday night from 9pm until 1.30am in our dark blue uniform in the High Street since November 2013.

We currently have 42 trained Street Pastors who are trained in various relevant topics and all have DBS certification. It is very important for us to celebrate these significant birthdays as we constantly acknowledge the ongoing support we get from our local churches, police and town council. We hosted a public celebration at St Marys Church on Sunday, November 18 which is a place we operate as a safe hub. Anyone who is or becomes vulnerable for any reason whilst out and about is more than welcome to come and find us here and then we can help in whatever way we see fit.

We are very well aware of the support we get through social media like the Billericay Discussion page but would like people to consider donating to us via our Easy Fundraising page. If you shop online then you can nominate us as your charity by going to www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/billericaysp

Every time you make a purchase using this method the retailer will donate to our charity which won't cost you any more on your purchase.

We were also blessed this month by taking delivery of a mini bus, donated by Billericay Baptist Church which we have now had sign written by Black Square Litho of Radford Way, Billericay, and we enjoyed using it for the first time at the Billericay Fireworks.

For further information, follow us on Facebook or Twitter or email billericay@streetpastors.org.uk

Law firm rated one of the best in Essex

A law firm which has an office in Brentwood has been rated one of the best firms in Essex by legal industry rankings.

Pinney Talfourd recently announced their services were yet again recommended as some of the best in the region by Legal 500 UK.

Managing partner, Philip Cockram, said: "We are delighted that our hard work has been acknowledged yet again in such a prestigious listing. I am very proud of all the teams here and the fact that individuals have been singled out for their excellent work just goes to show that we are achieving our goal of providing our clients with a first-class service with first-class results."



LOCAL NEWS BRENTWOOD



Town remembers 100 years on

Thousands paid their respects on Remembrance Sunday as Brentwood commemorated those who had sacrificed their lives for their country. This year's Remembrance Day Parade and Service took place in Brentwood on Sunday, November 11. 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 and the Bishop of Brentwood Rev Alan Williams followed by the laying of wreaths. There was a two-minute silence at 11am, after

which the parade left the War Memorial and went towards the High Street via Shenfield Road. Mayor of Brentwood Sheila Murphy said: "Brentwood stopped at exactly 100 years since the guns of the First World War fell silent for the final time to remember. "We commemorated and paid respects to those who have given their lives for the ultimate sacrifice for their country during both World Wars and all the conflicts since. "It is important we never forget them, and I am proud that this year more people than ever turned out to watch the parade and show their support for the Armed Forces."

War hero honoured with stone dedication

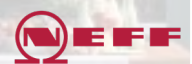


A Brentwood war hero has been honoured at Brentwood's War Memorial by the dedication of a stone in his memory. Commemorative paving stones have been laid across the UK for Victoria Cross recipients to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War. A special Victoria Cross paving stone in honour of Sergeant William Merrifield was unveiled at the war memorial. Sergeant William Merrifield was part of the 4th Battalion, 1st Central Ontario Regiment, in Canada and was awarded the Victoria Cross in 1918. He was born in Brentwood on October 9, 1890. He emigrated to Canada and worked as a fireman with the Canadian Pacific Railway for 18 months. Soon after the war broke out, he enlisted in 4th Battalion, 1st Central Ontario Regiment, in Canada. Sergeant Merrifield was awarded the Victoria Cross for acts of bravery and devotion to duty in 1918. He died on August 8, 1943 in Toronto, Canada. Chairman of the Royal British Legion Brentwood and District Branch Sydney Bryer said: "Representatives from the Brentwood Branch of the Royal British Legion were honoured to be invited to the dedication of the memorial to Sgt William Merrifield VC. A fitting memorial to a very brave man."



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Tandoori for Tapestry raises money for charity



Law firm Pinney Talfourd, which has an office in Brentwood, held a charity curry night recently to raise money for their Charity of the Year Tapestry.

Staff, business clients, friends and families met up at the restaurant for a welcome drink before listening to a short speech from Catherine Loadman, a partner at Pinney Talfourd and chairman of the charity committee.

Tapestry marketing manager Lucy Pattrick and trustee Mark Burton also said a few words of thanks with Lucy commenting on how pleased she was that so many people had joined them and that the funds raised would be going towards their sensory garden and revamp of facilities at HOPWA House.

Catherine stated: "Our charity committee have been busy raising funds in various ways, but this curry night was an opportunity to bring a wide range of people together in a social environment.

"Thank you to the staff at Uraswamys who served some delicious food with impeccable service. I will be going back again soon."

Ticket sales, dinner party games and a raffle raised over £550.

Town's Ford headquarters set to close

The building that houses Ford UK in Brentwood is set to be sold.

The closure remains subject to the relevant board approvals and local authority reviews.

The aim is to bring together all of Ford's UK-based main office activities in our Dunton Technical Centre and the Dagenham Diesel Centre by the end of September 2019.

A spokesperson from Ford UK said: "As part of an effort to improve our business fitness, we are entering a period of consultation with our union colleagues on a proposal to consolidate our South East Essex office facilities.

"The proposal includes the re-positioning of Ford Motor Company Limited's UK headquarters and Ford Credit Europe's headquarters to Dunton, creating a customer-centric hub of our UK-based activities in Dunton."

There will be no impact on jobs at the Brentwood office.

The spokesperson continued: "No direct jobs are impacted as the majority of the 1,400 working here go to Ford's Dunton Technical Centre, on the edge of Basildon, and the balance – a few hundred – to Ford's other SE Essex site in Dagenham."

Student's gymnastics devotion pays off

A Brentwood School gymnast won gold in her first competitive outing in the ribbon discipline recently.

Eleven-year-old Anita Chetraru claimed the title at the International Rhythmic Gymnastics Tournament Devotion Cup 2018.

Some 265 gymnasts representing 22 clubs from seven countries took part in the event, which was hosted by the Devotion Rhythmic Gymnastics Academy at the Newham Leisure Centre.

She took the ribbon gold medal in the Year 2007 Level B class.

Anita started taking gymnastics classes when she was just eight years old.

She trains with the London Sport Academy four times a week for up to five hours per day.





BURGHART for BRENTWOOD



Alex Burghart MP for Brentwood and Ongar



LOCAL NEWS BRENTWOOD



Photo credit: Ian Davidson

One of the most poignant pieces of audio brought to light in the recent commemorations marking 100 years since the end of the Great War, was the recording of the sounds of guns and explosions up until 11am on November 11, 1918.

At 11 o'clock precisely, the gunfire and shells stopped, their final sounds fading like a thunderstorm passing over, until there was silence, punctuated by the occasional, surprising, sound of birdsong. For those on the front line it was the first time in days, weeks and even months when the noise of battle was not surrounding them with deafening inevitability.

The centenary of the end of the war has enabled many of us to look at our family trees and remember those uncles and cousins who took part in, but in many cases did not return from, the Great War. There were also those who were left behind - those who were widowed and those who never married because the men they would have married had been killed.

We must always be grateful for living in a more peaceful age - to have been spared the horrors of total war that destroyed two generations. At this time of the year, we should take time to find some peace to reflect not on what we lack but on how lucky we are to have what we have. Finding the calm to do this can be difficult in the clamour of Christmas - but we should seek it so as to spend a little uninterrupted time with those whom we love.

I hope that this Christmas you are able to find time to be with your friends and family, to halt the deafening sounds and to cherish the birdsong.



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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.

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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Girl proves medical staff wrong

The family of a girl who continues to prove doctors wrong are continuing to fundraise to get the best therapy available.

Amber Regan, from Ongar, had to be resuscitated and given two blood transfusions at birth due to complications.

This has left her with cerebral palsy, epilepsy and vision and hearing loss.

Her mum, Benna Regan, said: "It was a good pregnancy but when I hit 37 weeks I couldn't feel her moving so I was rushed to hospital.

"Amber was stillborn and had to be resuscitated. This meant she lost 80 per cent of her blood.

"She was given two blood transfusions in the first 10 minutes."

Doctors didn't think Amber would be able to survive when she was taken off the life support machines.

Benna continued: "They said she wouldn't survive, she would be in a vegetative state and would only last

seven minutes.

"On day five we turned off her life support and we were just waiting for her to pass away if I'm honest, but Amber decided to keep fighting."

Now aged six, Amber can breathe and feed on her own. She has to have continuous physio and exercise to stimulate her in several different ways.

The family continually fundraise as the cost of the therapy sessions are very costly.

Benna said: "The continuous weekly therapy comes to about £250 a week.

"In May we went to America which is one of the best places in the world for different therapies. They are very high-tech and open to new ideas.

"It really fast forwards therapy sessions and Amber has started to walk on a walker."

The next event is a casino night on March 30.

To donate, visit www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/just4children/ourfightinglittleangel

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Photo credit: St Clare Hospice Nikki Linco



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Light Up A Life this festive season

St Clare Hospice is preparing to come together to celebrate the lives of family, friends and loved ones at a series of seven Light Up A Life services.

A service will be held at St Martin's Church in Chipping Ongar on December 12 at 4pm.

Light Up A Life is St Clare's Christmas time celebration of everything that the hospice stands for – standing side by side with families from across the community in honour of their loved ones. There will be carols, music, readings and refreshments available.

Sarah Thompson, chief executive of St Clare Hospice, extended the invitation to the services to the whole of the charity's local community.

She said: "St Clare has been bringing warmth and love to the lives of people across West Essex and the

borders of East Hertfordshire for more than 25 years. The care and support we offer does not end when someone dies, and our Light Up A Life services are just one of the ways we continue to support people when they need it most.

"I warmly invite everyone in our local towns to join with us for one of our Light Up A Life services – whether that is at the hospice, at a service near your home, or a simple period of reflection in your own home. The events are so special, and offer precious time to pause and remember those close to our hearts, in the company of others who understand."

You can let the hospice know which service you are planning to attend through stclarehospice.org.uk/light-up-a-life or by calling 01279 773750.

Two arrested following car crash

Police are appealing for information following a car crash in Ongar recently.

Two cars crashed head on at a bend in Greensted Road at around 8am on Tuesday, November 6.

A man inside the Ford KA ran from the scene with a serious cut to his head and the driver of the other vehicle, a white Volkswagen up, was taken to hospital with chest injuries.

He has since been discharged from hospital.

Essex Police arrested a 28-year-old man from Ongar at the scene on suspicion of causing serious injury by dangerous driving, taking a motor vehicle without

consent and driving under the influence.

A 22-year-old man from Ongar was then arrested in hospital on suspicion of causing injury by dangerous driving, taking a motor vehicle without consent and driving under the influence.

They have both been released under investigation pending further enquiries.

Anyone with information is asked to call Chigwell Roads Policing Unit on 101 quoting incident 173 of 06/11. You can also report information by visiting www.essex.police.uk/do-it-online or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.



Residents urged to get active with new grants



Photo credit: Epping Forest District Council

Residents in Ongar are being encouraged to apply for an Active Epping Forest Capacity Grant.

Grants of up to £500 are available to individuals, clubs and small businesses to encourage residents to reduce inactivity.

The cash can be used to fund new projects, which should then be sustainable through volunteer support or alternative approaches.

Funding can also be used to expand existing projects if applicants can demonstrate how it will bring added value.

Projects must target over 18s and demonstrate how they will reduce physical inactivity and achieve a 70 per cent participation rate of participants considered to be inactive.

Councillor Helen Kane, cabinet member for leisure and community services, said: "So many people find it difficult to commit to regular exercise to improve their health and wellbeing.

"Anything that encourages us to become more active is a positive step towards improving our physical and mental health."

For application forms and for further information please email Louis Walton, community grants officer at lwalton@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Indulge this festive season at Zinc

So, you've run yourself ragged buying everyone the perfect gift, your shopping list is slowly being ticked off, stocking fillers all chosen, meals planned and food ordered, but there always seems to be something else to do. Sounds familiar?

It's time to stop and take a breath. Go and indulge yourself with a luxury festive afternoon tea in Zinc's Victorian building.

This Christmassy twist on the traditional afternoon tea is the perfect way to relax and catch up with

family or friends during the busy festive season.

With a wonderful variety of festive fillings, a Christmas slice, homemade scones and mince pies, there's no better way to treat yourself.

There is also the option to add prosecco or mulled wine to really get yourself into the festive spirit.

It may be the season for giving, but you deserve a treat too.

From just £10 per head, please call Zinc on 01277 365626 to book.

Join a star-studded cast for Aladdin this Christmas

Now in its fourth year, Stage One and Zinc Arts bring to life *Aladdin* for this year's panto.

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Join the star-studded cast at Zinc Arts for this year's pantomime including Andrew Hayler, who is currently performing at the English National Opera, actress Sonia Cakebreak and the director of Zinc Arts who will appear as the Genie.

Tickets are priced from £10 and are available online by visiting www.zincarts.org.uk or calling 0333 666 3366.

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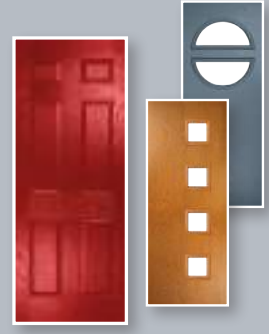
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It's only Natural

Even though he's been a constant of the natural world for well over six decades, Sir David Attenborough admits to being more enchanted now by the flora and fauna of our incredible planet than at any time in the past.

Since his TV debut way back in 1954, Attenborough has been a name synonymous with the natural world. He has spent his 92 years on planet Earth, and in that time explored almost every corner of it, documenting nature's rich array, from the polar icecaps to the tropics, in doing so endearing himself to audiences the world over.

In remarkably good shape given his age, Attenborough scoffs at the suggestion that he is superhuman. "Nonsense," he exclaims. "I'm moving much slower than I used to; I'm definitely feeling my age. But I'm still upright so one can't complain too much about that."

If he is feeling his age, he certainly isn't showing it. The evidence? Well, over the past year, Attenborough has been busier than ever, producing and preparing a plethora of documentaries for what many consider to be his spiritual home, the BBC, having spent time hosting series for other networks. His newest project, *Dynasties*, sees a return to the Beeb, in following five endangered species fighting for their future survival.

"You see in the Sunday papers, all these advertisements, 'Go to the Galapagos', 'Go to Timbuktu' or wherever, and I get to do that. And people pay me to go there, so why would I even want to give it up?"

The show is an example of Attenborough's ability and willingness to evolve at the same rate as his audience's watching habits. In a sense he has had to embrace our changing tastes for wildlife and the way we consume it.

"I'm glad to say the new series is different to a lot of what I've done before because we are focusing on specific animals – chimpanzee, lion, emperor penguin, tiger and the painted wolf – as a family group, rather than taking a broad sweep of an environment," he says.

"In a sense, the natural world is about every individual animal and species, and the fight for survival and longevity, so to come back to a series that really is about the smallest of groups feels right."

Over time – through *Wildlife on One* to *Frozen Planet*, *Life in the Freezer* to *Planet Earth* – Attenborough's ability to paint the most vivid of pictures through his incredible narrative has certainly been aided by technology.

"The cameras have got smaller, the lenses sharper, and our ability now to view without intruding has never been better. This all adds up the greatest understanding of the natural environment we have ever had," he says.

Attenborough can also lay claim to advancing our understanding of the literature world too – the term 'single-use' was recently named 'Word of the Year' by the Collins Dictionary, notably for its reference to plastics in the *Planet Earth II* series when referencing society's throwaway culture and the damage it does to the natural world.

We should also be grateful that the seemingly ageless Attenborough shows no signs of letting up, with retirement something of a dirty word for him. "You see in the Sunday papers, all these advertisements, 'Go to the Galapagos', 'Go to Timbuktu' or wherever, and I get to do that. And people pay me to go there, so why would I ever want to give it up?" he laughs. "And I've been so, so lucky. My knees are shot, and I'm creaky and groaning in certain places, but otherwise I've been very lucky."

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GARDENING



Kew Gardens

THE HISTORY

Photo credits: Komellia Cakaurun/Shutterstock.com

It is the beautiful botanical garden that houses the largest and most diverse botanical and mycological collections in the world, but despite its scientific leanings, Kew Gardens actually has a rich royal heritage.

It all began in the early 18th century when aristocrats keen to escape the bustling city escaped to Kew, a burgeoning enclave for the wealthy, and home to Kew Palace, the summer residence of the Royal Family. Keen to make the most of the vast greenery, in 1759 Prince Frederick and Princess Augusta enlisted Scottish botanist William Aiton to tend to their small 'Physick garden', which would eventually attract talented gardeners and scientists, all keen to experiment in the blossoming landscape.

By 1769 the garden contained more than 3,400 plant species, but it was under the direction of the great botanist Sir William Jackson Hooker that Kew became the bastion of botany that it is today.

During his tenure from 1841 through to his death in 1865 – when he was succeeded by his son Joseph Dalton – Hooker expanded the gardens from 10 to 75 acres, with an arboretum of 270 acres. He also created a number of specialist museums, which still exist today, albeit in different forms (The Orangery is a restaurant and Cambridge Cottage is now used as a gallery).

Kew's modern presentation showcases 8.5 million items from all across the planet, with leading scientific research drilling right down to plant DNA, plus extensive herb, seed, fungus and spirit collections (including over 76,000 jars of preserved plant specimens).

It all combines to make the site one of London's best and most cherished tourist attractions, enabling over 2,000 years of knowledge to be condensed; and green minds, young and old, to immerse themselves in the flora and fauna of this incredible world.



HEALTH & FITNESS

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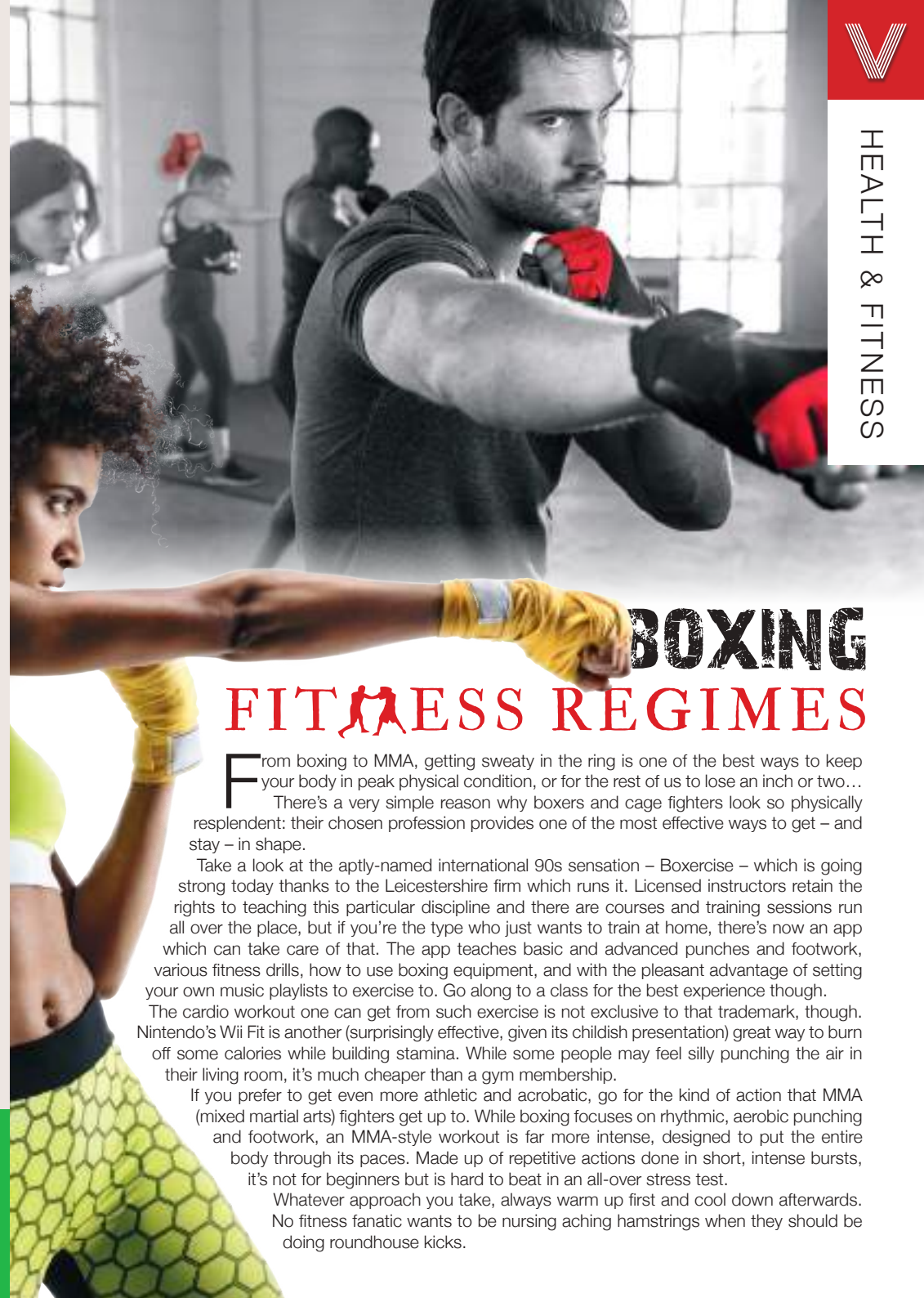
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BOXING FITNESS REGIMES

From boxing to MMA, getting sweaty in the ring is one of the best ways to keep your body in peak physical condition, or for the rest of us to lose an inch or two...

There's a very simple reason why boxers and cage fighters look so physically resplendent: their chosen profession provides one of the most effective ways to get – and stay – in shape.

Take a look at the aptly-named international 90s sensation – Boxercise – which is going strong today thanks to the Leicestershire firm which runs it. Licensed instructors retain the rights to teaching this particular discipline and there are courses and training sessions run all over the place, but if you're the type who just wants to train at home, there's now an app which can take care of that. The app teaches basic and advanced punches and footwork, various fitness drills, how to use boxing equipment, and with the pleasant advantage of setting your own music playlists to exercise to. Go along to a class for the best experience though.

The cardio workout one can get from such exercise is not exclusive to that trademark, though. Nintendo's Wii Fit is another (surprisingly effective, given its childish presentation) great way to burn off some calories while building stamina. While some people may feel silly punching the air in their living room, it's much cheaper than a gym membership.

If you prefer to get even more athletic and acrobatic, go for the kind of action that MMA (mixed martial arts) fighters get up to. While boxing focuses on rhythmic, aerobic punching and footwork, an MMA-style workout is far more intense, designed to put the entire body through its paces. Made up of repetitive actions done in short, intense bursts, it's not for beginners but is hard to beat in an all-over stress test.

Whatever approach you take, always warm up first and cool down afterwards. No fitness fanatic wants to be nursing aching hamstrings when they should be doing roundhouse kicks.

KETO *like a Kardashian*

Every day a new diet seems to appear that promises to help you shift those unwanted extra pounds for good, each with their own unique selling point. But how do you know which diet is right for you? The ketogenic diet is a low-carb, high-fat diet that Halle Berry and Kourtney Kardashian swear by, but how exactly does it work?

THE SCIENCE

The keto diet works by drastically reducing your carbohydrate which sends your body into a metabolic state called ketosis. Ketosis makes your body extremely efficient at burning fat for energy which is why the diet recommends high levels of fat consumption. This state also helps your body turn fats into ketones within the liver which in turn supplies energy to the brain. This diet lowers your blood sugar and insulin levels by shifting your body's metabolism away from unhealthy carbohydrates that are high in sugar to healthy fats.

FOODS YOU NEED TO AVOID OR REDUCE:

- ❌ Sugary foods such as cake, ice cream, biscuits and fruit juice
- ❌ All fruit except small amounts of berries
- ❌ Grains and starches
- ❌ Beans and legumes such as kidney beans, lentils and chickpeas
- ❌ Root vegetables
- ❌ Any low fat or diet products; these are highly processed and carb-heavy
- ❌ Alcohol
- ❌ Limit unhealthy fats
- ❌ Sauces and condiments due to high sugar content

FOODS YOU SHOULD EAT:

- ✅ Meat
- ✅ Fish including oily fish such as salmon and mackerel
- ✅ Eggs
- ✅ Butter
- ✅ Unsalted nuts
- ✅ Avocados
- ✅ Healthy oils like coconut oil
- ✅ An abundance of low-carb, non-starchy vegetables

DOES IT WORK?

Studies have shown that people on the keto diet lose over two times more weight than those on a standard calorie-restricted diet. They also lower their blood sugar and insulin levels.

ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?

The 'keto flu' is common in the first few days with symptoms including low energy levels, trouble sleeping, nausea and increased hunger. This should pass.



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BEAUTY

Make-Up FOR MEN

As Chanel launches *BOY-FRIEND* we ask if men wearing make-up is really becoming the norm

We're in an era where we've put ourselves constantly on show. Social media means very few moments are private, and for women, even chatting to friends at home can mean checking hair is neat or lip gloss applied.

While the bar has been raised in terms of looking good all of the time, the barriers for men been lowered when it comes to being open about grooming and beauty routines. Influenced by the pink pound and normalised by brands such as Nivea and L'Oréal, who have mercilessly attacked the men's market well beyond just moisturising, Chanel has taken the next brave step in tackling the idea of men applying make-up.

Okay, so previously you might have found blokes with a cheeky stick of concealer – often borrowed from a sister, girlfriend or mum – in order to hide facial blemishes or spots. But now, with on-screen role models publicly adding edge and definition to

their faces, is it really a surprise that we're extending that idea into our everyday lives?

Last year ASOS started stocking MMUK Man foundations, brushes, eyebrow fillers and 'manscara', and this summer L'Oréal UK boss Vismay Sharma said he expected male beauty counters to be commonplace within five years upon the launch of male make-up brand *BOY-FRIEND*.

"Today you have a very small proportion of men who want to use make-up products, but that proportion is growing and it will continue to grow. We are listening very carefully to consumers and what they want," he said.

And don't think this is all to do with the selfie generation – it was only 100 years ago that men stopped wearing make-up. Before the Victorian era, blokes were often seen in eyeliner, as well as applying face powders and nail varnish... "Pass the bronzer my good fellow."

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Bronze Age

Does your skin need a little warming up over these cold and gloomy months? Well, here's how to apply bronzer like a pro... (you're welcome).

Choosing your bronzer: To avoid looking like you've been tangoed, first apply a foundation which is one tone darker than your complexion, then choose bronzer just one shade above that – never more. This way you get a natural-looking glow where the tones meet in the middle, rather than a noticeably darker sculpted area.

Tools of the trade: Blusher brushes work well when applying bronzer, but if you're serious about becoming a golden goddess, invest in a bronzer brush. Thanks to their abundance of bristles, which are tightly packed together, you get more colour per stroke.

Three is the magic number: The equation for a perfectly-sculpted, glowing façade is three plus three equals gorgeous. Starting from your temple, swoop round to your cheekbone and then back down your jawline (a three shape) on both sides of your face.

Add shimmer: Assuming you're using a matte product, it's nice to add a few touches of shimmer in key places for maximum va-va-voom. Either crème or powder, apply sparingly under cheekbones, along the bridge of your nose and just above your cupid's bow.

Blend, blend and blend some more: Using a blusher brush or sponge, go over the edges of your bronzer and highlighter until they are seamlessly merged with your foundation. Remember to also blend the colour into your neck and apply a touch at the nape if your hair is very short or in a ponytail. What you should end up with is a sun-kissed glow which looks natural and highlights all your best features. Expect compliments.



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BUSINESS & FINANCE

There are several examples where society finds itself fighting back against the corporate monsters, but perhaps one of the strangest revivals in recent years has been the re-emergence of vinyl records.

At a time when the digital music revolution made listening to our favourite tunes cheaper, instantaneous and effortlessly mobile, we threw value and convenience out the window to reacquaint ourselves with bulky, immobile, dusty, scratch-happy records... but why?

Researchers and scientists believe our connection with music actually hooks into our desire to have physical objects around us, and digital music only ever satisfies one of those emotions. Vinyl records – and the sleeves they come in – offer something to hold, to read, to savour; while collecting records and building our own ‘project’ through music is said to satisfy our human desire to anchor and look after.

From a low-point in 2008 to last year giving the

industry its biggest annual vinyl sales since the early 1990s, vinyl records now account for over three per cent of all music sales (including streaming and downloads); or, put another way, over four million albums sold in the UK in 2017.

And it's not just new music sales that are flourishing, with the second-hand market also proving our desire for physical music continues on its upward shift (thanks in no small part to sites such as eBay and Discogs). Perhaps it's time to have a look in the attic at some of your forgotten classics, particularly if your collection includes any of the artists below:

The 10 most collectable vinyl artists:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Elvis Presley | 6. Miles Davis |
| 2. Bob Dylan | 7. Led Zeppelin |
| 3. The Beatles | 8. Beach Boys |
| 4. Nirvana | 9. Metallica |
| 5. Jimi Hendrix | 10. Depeche Mode |



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DRESS CODE 2.0

What counts as suitable office attire in 2018?



BUSINESS & FINANCE



Perhaps the reason what we wear at work is up for so much discussion is because there are no hard and fast rules, with attitudes towards how employees look at work having been relaxed considerably over the last couple of decades.

In simple terms, as the popularity of men's ties started to wane, so too did the office stereotype begin to change, to the point where now only one in 10 men or women wears a suit to work, as revealed in a 2018 study by hotel chain Travelodge. Popular in 2018 are trousers and shirts for men; skirts and tops for women... any colour, any design.

In the past, many would agree there was always slightly more licence for women anyway when it came to being able to express themselves at work, and this probably fuelled the move to level the playing field in terms of versatile workwear for both sexes. But most of all, the change came about because of the growth of the service sector in this country – offices were no longer just the place for accountants and solicitors; instead they were being inhabited by a new, young breed of marketers, creatives and salespeople who had different fashion ideals to the previous generation.

Yet for employers, relaxing the rules over the way employees dress can lead to concerns that the company is telling staff to act more as they would at home, and that relaxing workwear means relaxing work ethos. And yet, there is no evidence to suggest staff link casual dress code to a casual attitude... just the opposite in fact, with a 2017 survey finding that 61 per cent of employees were more productive in 'comfortable' clothes.

Ultimately, few need to be told what is (and isn't) appropriate in the workplace and when client-facing, with credible, conscientious employees drawing attention to themselves not by the clothes they wear, but by their contribution to the business.

**REACHED YOUR HALF-CENTURY?
HOW TO PLAN FOR RETIREMENT**

Once you reach 50, it's time to get serious about planning your retirement. True, it could still seem ages away, and you may not be thinking of giving up work anytime soon. However, putting a retirement plan together will help you understand what your finances will look like when you decide to take life easy.

Retirement planning isn't just about getting your money organised, although that's vitally important. Depending on your circumstances, you may want to think about completely changing your lifestyle, moving home, travelling the world, or simply putting your feet up. And like all big projects in life, the more time you can invest in thinking it through, the better.

Start by taking stock – Getting financial advice will help you get a true perspective on how your pension planning is shaping up. We will help you work out the value of your current plans, including your state pension entitlement. If you've lost track of pensions held with past employers, now is

a good time to get them traced. If you've several pension plans, we will be able to help you work out if it would make sense to consolidate them.

And don't just think about pensions; having money in ISAs will help in planning your retirement income tax-efficiently.

Do your sums – Don't leave it until the last minute to work out how much money you'll need to live on in retirement. Some costs will go down, like travel to work, but others like utility bills are likely to increase as you spend more time at home. Factor in the cost of the travel, holidays and hobbies you're likely to want to pursue when you have more time.

As part of the service at HCR, we take the time to understand our clients unique planning needs and circumstances, so that we can provide you with the most suitable solutions in the most cost-effective way. For a free review of your current pension plans and financial situation, please contact Andy Costin, Independent Financial Adviser on 01277 654153.



**Who do you think becomes
the guardian for your children?**

It's never too early to make provisions for your children

YES it is difficult but it is essential to face the possibility that young children could be left without parents to care for them. Who would you want to look after your children if you were to die? If you do not decide, the local authorities and courts will decide for you. Their idea of the 'best' care for your children may be very different from yours. Be aware too that an unmarried father does not automatically become guardian to his children.



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MOTORING

ANOTHER FINE MESS

A motoring fine is intended to represent the offence. And yet, have a look at this list below of some of the more unusual two and four-wheeled misdemeanours.



MALCOLM IN THE MIDDLE

Hogging the middle lane on a motorway is one of the most common driving bugbears, and this inconsiderate act can cost a driver £100 and three points.

APPLE PAY? KEEP ON DRIVING

It's illegal to use your phone to pay for food at a drive-through under new laws passed in 2018. Keep searching for that loose change in the glove compartment.

SNOW HOPE

While there is no law stating it is illegal to drive with snow on your roof, if it falls off your car when driving or into the path of another car you can be penalised for several offences including driving without due consideration or using a motor vehicle in a dangerous condition.

SLEEP IT OFF?

If you've had a few and want to sleep it off in your car, think again. Even with the key tucked safely in your pocket, napping in a motor when over the legal limit can still see you get a whopping 10 points on your licence.

SAT NAV, NOT LAP NAV

A mobile phone must be fixed in place if being used as a sat nav. Fail to do so and you're risking a £100 fine and up to nine penalty points on your licence.

A PUDDLE MUDDLE

It may be fun to see the spray come up from a puddle, but if you (accidentally or, ahem, otherwise) end up soaking a pedestrian, you could find yourself on a 'due care or consideration' charge, and that's a fine and points.

ICE ICE BABY

Failure to properly clear your windows before you drive off could result in a £60 fine and three points on your licence. Simply removing a square from the driver's side is not enough. You must de-ice the entire windscreen.

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Keep the children entertained over the Christmas holidays with this simple and easy recipe. This Christmas cookie tree is great for when friends come over, or can be wrapped up and given as a present.

You will need to have star cookie cutters of multiple sizes. These are widely available from high street stores and online.

MAKING THE COOKIES...

INGREDIENTS

- ★ 225g butter, softened
- ★ 110g caster sugar
- ★ 1tsp vanilla extract
- ★ 275g plain flour
- ★ Piping icing

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180C /350F/Gas mark 4. Line a baking tray with baking paper.
2. Cream together the butter, vanilla extract and sugar until light and fluffy.
3. Sift in the flour. Mix together to form a dough.
4. Lightly sprinkle the work surface with flour and roll out the dough, making sure it is of equal depth.
5. Using the cutters, cut out the biscuits and place on the baking paper.
6. Cook for 10-12 minutes until golden brown.
7. Place on a cooling rack and leave them until completely cool.
8. Assemble the tree by stacking the cookies with the largest at the bottom, using the piping icing to secure them together.
9. Get creative and decorate your Christmas cookie tree.

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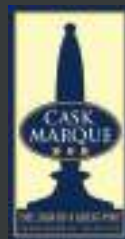
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FOOD & DRINK

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CANDY CANE-FLAVOURED VODKA

You will need:

8 candy canes | 2 cups of vodka

To make:

Break up the candy canes into small pieces | Pour the vodka into a sterilised glass jar and add the crushed candy | Shake well and leave to sit for 1-2 days | Once the candy has completely dissolved the vodka is ready to enjoy

WINTER WONDERLAND LIQUEUR

You will need:

¼ cup of brown sugar | 2 cups of brandy | 1 tsp whole cloves | 1 tbs black tea | 1 cinnamon stick | Zest of 1 orange

To make:

Put all of the above into a sterilised jar | Leave to infuse for 3 weeks | Sieve the liqueur if desired | Serve with warm spiced cider

INDULGENT IRISH CREAM

You will need:

250ml single cream | 14oz condensed milk | 350ml Irish whiskey | 1 tsp coffee essence or liqueur | 1 tsp vanilla essence | 1 tsp almond essence

To make:

Blend all the ingredients together | Pour into sterilised jars and place in the fridge to chill | Shake well before serving

SWEET AND SPICY EGGNOG

You will need:

3 cups of whole milk | 1 cup of double cream | 3 cinnamon sticks | 1 vanilla pod | 1 tsp nutmeg | 5 eggs | 130g granulated sugar | ¼ cup dark rum or bourbon

To make:

Bring the milk, cream, cinnamon, vanilla and nutmeg to the boil | Remove from heat and allow to steep | Separately beat the egg yolks and sugar until combined | Slowly mix in the milk mixture | Add the rum | Leave to chill in fridge overnight | Before serving beat the egg whites to soft peaks and gently fold into the eggnog





MONKEY BREAD WITH...

a twist

Christmas is the ideal time to get all the family involved in some seasonal baking and this monkey bread is so simple to make but yet so decadent to eat. Add our Christmas-inspired edible decorations and you have created a real showstopper.

YOU WILL NEED FOR THE DOUGH:

- 200ml whole milk
- 85g unsalted butter
- 2 medium eggs
- 500g self-raising flour
- 2 ½ tsp dried yeast (fast action)
- 40g caster sugar

YOU WILL NEED FOR THE COATING:

- 125g unsalted melted butter
- 200g caster sugar
- 3 tbsp cocoa powder, 1 tsp cinnamon, ¼ tsp nutmeg and ¼ tsp allspice

TO DECORATE:

- Icing sugar and edible holly

HOW TO MAKE:

- Melt the butter with the milk and leave to cool slightly
- Mix in the beaten eggs
- Add the sugar, yeast and flour and combine
- Tip out and knead for 10 minutes until your dough is shiny and stretchy
- Place your dough in a bowl, cover and leave to rest until it has doubled in size
- Turn out dough and separate into lots of individual dough balls
- Dip each ball into melted butter, then sugar, then into the cocoa and spice mixture
- Place all dough balls in a bun tin, cover and leave for an hour until doubled in size
- Bake in the middle of the oven for 35 minutes at 160 degrees
- Remove from tin and leave to cool

HOW TO DECORATE:

- Sieve icing sugar over the top of the bread to create a Christmassy effect
- Decorate with edible holly

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raffles and prizes)

31st December
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SPORT



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A PREMIER MAN

THE LEICESTER CITY TRAGEDY AND HOW THE CLUB IS SHAPING THE FUTURE

Mention the name Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha anywhere outside of East Midlands before that fateful night of October 27 and even the most knowledgeable of football fans might have struggled to correctly identify the Leicester City owner.

Yet, as is so often the case, only in death does the respect and recognition people deserve truly come to the fore, and that was certainly the case with the Thai billionaire.

After all, his efforts in transforming Leicester City Football Club from relegation favourites to Premier League title winners – in less than a year, and without splashing hundreds of millions of pounds – brought together the purists of football and, of course, those who like to think that, even in the modern age of the sport, fairy-tales do still occur.

It wasn't all plain sailing for the 60-year-old, who bought the club in 2010. When he disposed of the services of popular manager Claudio Ranieri in February 2017, some felt the owner had thrown away an incredible union, yet his donations to the local

community and 'one of the people' mentality meant he quickly won supporters round again. Leicester rallied, first under manager Craig Shakespeare, then Claude Puel. Although they will most likely never repeat that incredible league title triumph, they're at least now clearly established as a top-half Premier League side, having spent much of the last 25 years yo-yoing between divisions, even finding themselves in the third tier in 2008/09.

While the outpouring of emotion across the football world has been incredibly touching, the Foxes must now move on, with Srivaddhanaprabha's son Aiyawatt taking over the reins at the club. Himself a businessman, the 33-year-old is a Buddhist, a former monk and a polo player, who looks set to create his own legacy at the King Power Stadium, but always with his brilliant father in mind.



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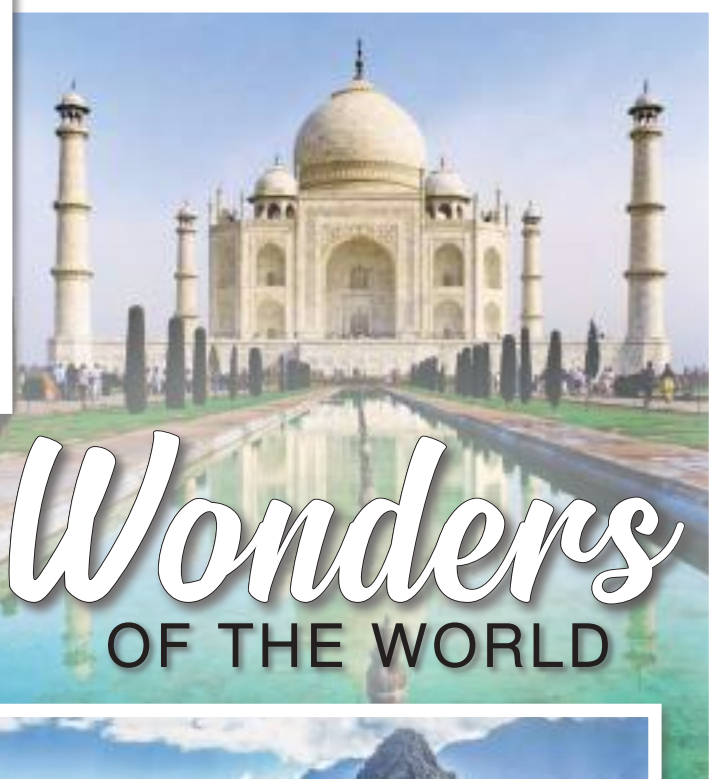
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7 Wonders OF THE WORLD



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The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World have all but succumbed to old age or natural disaster – with the Great Pyramid at Giza the only lasting reminder of a list that includes the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Lighthouse of Alexandria, the Statue of Zeus at Olympia, the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus and the Colossus of Rhodes.

Though these breathtaking testaments to ancient design are now just mainly dust and memories, there's a new breed of mighty man-made monument around, and all well within the grasp of any traveller willing to seek them out.

CHICHÉN ITZA: The ancient city of Chichén Itza is located on Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. This well-known Mayan city served as a religious, political and economic centre for several hundred years. The Pyramid of Kukulcan is probably the most recognised ruin of Chichén Itza, standing at 80ft high and incorporating a total of 365 huge stone steps.

CHRIST THE REDEEMER: This statue of Jesus is one of Rio de Janeiro's most widely recognised monuments. It stands 98.5ft tall atop the summit of Mount Corcovado, which itself rises more than 2,300ft. With an outstretched arm-span of 92ft, and a weight of approximately 700 tonnes, the concrete and soapstone leviathan is the destination of many a pilgrimage.

THE COLOSSEUM: Gladiator contests, group combat, battle re-enactments and other productions were staged at the Colosseum to an audience of almost 50,000. Today, even after some renovations in the 1990s, the wear and tear from poor weather, natural disaster and vandalism show, but they can't take away from this iconic Italian sight. And while you're there, why not soak up Rome's unique culture at the same time?

THE TAJ MAHAL: This 42-acre marble mausoleum complex located in Agra is a stunning Indian landmark. Construction started in 1631, spanning more than two decades, requiring more than 20,000 labourers and costing several million rupees.

GREAT WALL OF CHINA: The Great Wall of China is without doubt a modern marvel and rightfully belongs amid the other seven Wonders. Contrary to popular belief, the wall isn't one continuous structure – it's actually made up of several separate structures that cover approximately 4,500 miles. Pack your walking boots.

PETRA: Located in south-west Jordan are the ruins of the ancient city of Petra. Massive temples, tombs and monuments have been cut into the surrounding sandstone cliffs and were immortalised in 1989's *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. Perhaps the most impressive Petra structure is the Sik al-Khazneh, an elaborately carved and embellished tomb.

MACHU PICCHU: Built in the 15th century, this ancient Incan city is nestled between two peaks – Machu Picchu (Old Peak) and Huayna Picchu (New Peak) at an amazing elevation of 7,710ft. It is often called the lost city of the Incas, because it was hidden amid the lush forest and clouds of Peru for more than three centuries. Now rediscovered, it is a sight to be admired, and one that retains every ounce of mystical promise.

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WHAT'S ON

Michael Frith Lunchtime Organ Recital
Brentwood Cathedral, Ingrave Road,
Brentwood, CM15 8AT
December 5, 1pm – 1.45pm
Free admission and parking.

Toy Collector's Fair
The Brentwood Centre, Doddinghurst Road,
Brentwood, CM15 9NN
December 8, 10am – 2.30pm

J and J Webb have always endeavoured to provide an excellent service and value for money at all of their Toy Collector's Fairs. They have set themselves high standards and they take pride in every Toyfair they promote making sure that all the venues are all carefully selected to reflect those standards.

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Police Drop-In Meetings
Jubilee Park Pavilion, Love Lane, Ongar,
CM5 9BL
December 10, 7.30pm

PC Paul Harrison, Ongar Neighbourhood Officer, will be in attendance and requests residents to provide any incidences and/or evidence for investigation within the local community.

To find out more about what's going on in your local area and to meet you local policing team, come to the meeting.

This is an open meeting and all members of the public are welcome.

Tea and Mince Pie Morning
Council Office, Basons Way, Ongar, CM5 9AS
December 19, 10am – 11am



Ongar Town Council invites you to come along to its tea and mince pie morning to meet all of the council's staff and councillors.

Hutton & Shenfield Choral Society's Music for Christmas
The Brentwood Centre, Doddinghurst Road, Brentwood, CM15 9NN
December 22, 7pm



Celebrate the lead-up to Christmas with live music to get you and your family in the festive mood.

Join us for a festive feast for all the family, with choirs, ballet, a full orchestra, audience sing-along and a visit from Father Christmas too.

Tickets from £6. Visit www.ticketsource.co.uk/huttonshenfieldchoralsociety

Nine Lessons and Carols
Brentwood Cathedral, Ingrave Road,
Brentwood, CM15 8AT
December 23, 4pm
Parking is available but limited.

Mental Health and Wellbeing at Work
CREATE Business Hub, Kings House, 101-135 Kings Road, Brentwood, CM14 4DR
January 7, 4pm – 6pm

Join us for a workshop about mental health and wellbeing at work hosted by nutritional therapist Chiara Facco.

Learn how to understand the stress response, implement strategies to reduce stress in the workplace and tweak your nutrition to prevent mental health consequences.

Serving complimentary refreshments, drinks and nibbles throughout the event. This event is not one to miss.

To book on to the workshop, visit www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mental-health-and-well-being-at-work-tickets-52004262148



PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4

ACROSS

- Measure of how strongly an object reflects light (6)
- Narrow sea inlets (6)
- Patio area (7)
- Container releasing a fine spray (7)
- Private room on a ship (5)
- Stood up (5)
- In the area (5)
- Small antelope (5)
- Assumed proposition (5)
- Move; agitate (7)
- Exertions (7)
- Wanders off; drifts (6)
- Dog-like mammals (6)

DOWN

- Lofts (6)
- Disease (8)
- Draw off liquid from (5)
- Periodical (7)
- Raised edges (4)
- Elegant and slender (6)
- Seaside scavenger (11)
- Conjoining contradictory terms (8)
- Form of public worship (7)

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18		19									
21						22					

- Large quantity (6)
- Overtakes (6)
- Towering (5)
- Raps (anag) (4)

DID YOU KNOW

- ▶ In total, there are 1665 steps from the esplanade up to the top of the Eiffel Tower, but the stairway from the 2nd floor to the top is not open to the public.
- ▶ Buckingham Palace has over 775 rooms, 19 of these are state rooms along with 52 official royal bedrooms and guest rooms.
- ▶ In 1886, the Statue of Liberty was given to the United States by France to celebrate the friendship they endured during the American Revolution.
- ▶ President George Washington selected the site for the White House in 1791. Every president since John Adams had occupied the building.
- ▶ The construction of the Leaning Tower of Pisa began in 1173 and was completed in 1399.

SUDOKU

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	7	8		5				2
	6				1			9
	9	2						
		1		6		7		

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