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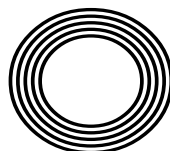
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Editor's notes...



Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** BillericayShenfield. I'm writing this in mid-September - a day after having to turn the heating on for the first time since April. Nothing signifies that the colder months are on their way, like the annual domestic debate around whether it's too early in the year to turn the heating on. It's a conversation which seems to be nationwide around this time of year. I was in the 'Turn it off' camp while Mrs A was very much 'It's on and it's staying on.' Mrs A won that debate; she often does. Talking of debates, Brexit rumbles on; although with prorogation closing Parliament for five weeks, the Westminster heating can remain switched off. I'm joking of course. It shows you the sensitivity around Brexit regardless of your stance that I feel it's necessary to say, 'I'm kidding folks.' I heard a young man on the radio asked about whether Brexit would harm or help his chances in life, and I was struck by his response. He said: "Regardless of who is in power or whether we leave or remain, I'm the person who is responsible for my future success." This sense of responsibility and self-realisation is impressive and good luck to him, although with that mindset he probably doesn't need it. Let's forget about the shenanigans in the corridors of power (warm and toasty no doubt) and look forward to autumn. Thanks for reading,

Nik

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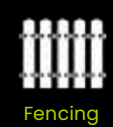
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Has Meghan Markle lost her sparkle...

It was just 17 months ago that 1.9 billion people turned on their TV sets to watch American actress Meghan Markle walk down the aisle to marry Prince Harry.

The former *Suits* actress had already won the hearts of the British people once it was revealed that she and the Prince were dating.

Meghan, 37, could do no wrong and Harry's popularity was rubbing off on her.

But at the end of the summer a new poll on royal popularity turned out to be a shock for the young couple.

First Harry has lost his number one spot to his grandmother the Queen, who at 93, is still showing the rest of them how it is done.

He was followed by his brother William, his wife Kate and then Prince Philip, who has retired.

Then comes Meghan at number six, only slightly higher than her father-in-law Prince Charles.

So, what has gone wrong? The couple have been involved in a number of controversies, which has shaken the images of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex. They are being seen as hypocritical in their determination to become eco warriors. Their mantra has not gone down well with the public as they continue to take expensive carbon polluting private jets while encouraging the rest of us to do more to save the planet.

These included Meghan flying off to New York in George Clooney's private jet for a baby shower before little Archie was born.

And Harry did not score any brownie points by attending a climate change conference in Sicily arriving by private jet. There was also the holiday with Elton John with the couple and Archie arriving by private jet.

Needless to say there was a comparison with William who flew to Balmoral for a holiday with his family only costing £75 a head.

A number of staff have also quit working for the Sussexes for a variety of reasons, but it is earning

Meghan the nickname Duchess Difficult.

And of course, the one that was the most controversial of all was the cost of their new home, Frogmore Cottage in Windsor, which taxpayers forked out £2.5 million to refurbish.

Harry and Meghan have since tried to redeem themselves by taking commercial flights to both Rome and Cape Town recently.

Meghan has also turned to her American showbusiness pals in the hope of improving her image. She has called in a Hollywood Crisis Management company in a bid to improve her reputation.

Sunshine Sachs, who represented disgraced movie mogul Harvey Weinstein in 2015 when he was accused of groping model Ambra Battilana Gutierrez.

One of the bosses of the firm, Keleigh Thomas Morgan, represented Meghan when she was on *Suits* and is working with the Duchess and Harry on the new Sussex Royal Foundation which the couple formed after the split with William and Kate.

But this move is unlikely to go down well at Buckingham Palace, who have their own communications team in place.

The couple also recently hired highly experienced global PR Sara Lathan who was a senior adviser to Hillary Clinton's 2016 Presidential campaign.

Senior Palace courtiers have been left bemused over the last few months that the couple have ignored advice from their own highly professional team and instead listened to outsiders in Hollywood.

One courtier said: "They shouldn't need to hire expensive US PR firms. All they need to do is follow the example of the Queen and other Royals – go out and meet people, shake their hands and be nice to them."

It may pay them to follow that simple advice and save themselves a lot of money on an expensive crisis management solution.

with the British public?



Photo credit: Frank Augustein/AP/Shutterstock



BRITAIN'S MOST SUCCESSFUL TALENT SHOW IS UNDERGOING A CHANGE OF IMAGE...

XFactor's 15 years on our screens have been defined by one thing – it's format. Here's the deal – an unknown 'star', living in a ropery suburb of some nothing northern town with his or her parents and an undernourished cat, gets plucked from obscurity. They become a household name and ride off into the sunset with the Christmas number one and a copy of Leon Jackson's debut LP tucked under their arm, never to be seen again.

We know and love the *X Factor* because we know and love what to expect – the deluded, the hard done by, the emotional, the inspired.

Except, in 2019, there won't be that. With ratings having crashed below four million, master of ceremonies Simon Cowell is planning the show's biggest ever shift. Out goes the whistle-stop tour of UK auditions, in comes a two-show weekly burst with very different endeavours.

The first is a celebrity special, matching household names with classic tracks, in what sounds like a dreadful updating of *Stars in their Eyes*, though surely can't be that bad: "Tonight, Simon, I'm going to be... trending for all the wrong reasons?"

The second show taps into our love of rolling back the past, with former contestants competing to rekindle former glories.

As for the judges, it seems Robbie and Ayda Field will join Louis Walsh, Nicole, Scherzinger and Sharon Osbourne and a few others in the judges reject bin, with Louis Tomlinson's place also looking in danger.

The shake-up is evidently Cowell's last attempt at returning *X Factor* to its former heights.

"The biggest risk is not in doing something new, it's in doing nothing at all," he said.

For a watching audience, and for Cowell himself, it's (almost) time to face the music...

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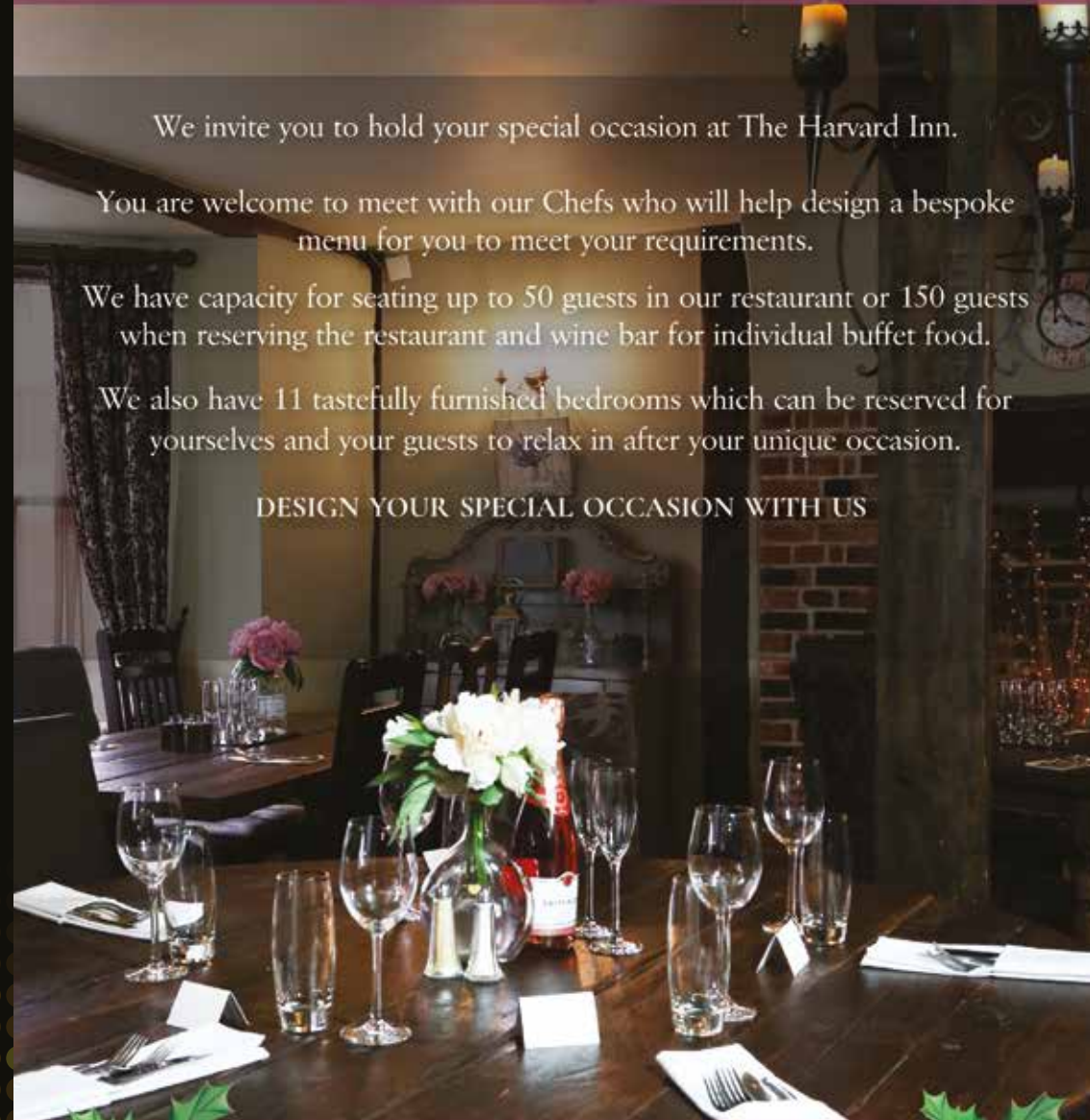
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Nice One NICKY

A dalliance with design that has lasted 50 years

Nicky Haslam has assumed many guises throughout his life - designer, show horse breeder, global socialite, friend to the stars. The inspirational designer even waited until his 73rd birthday to release his debut album, finally indulging one of his boyhood daydreams with the assistance of industry heavyweights such as Nick Mason (Pink Floyd), Helena Bonham Carter, Bryan Ferry and the late Cilla Black.

But it is clearly for his immaculate take on style and fashion that we have become most absorbed in Nicky Haslam's work. The Buckinghamshire-born icon has been the creative auteur and driving force behind London institution NH Design, and while he admits his workload has reduced in recent years as he fights against the idea of retirement, his hunger for interiors has never abated.

"We're slaving away on a wonderful house and a wonderful restaurant in New Orleans, a big project in New York, a place in the south of France outside St Tropez, plus some wonderful penthouses in Park Lane, with 360-degree views of London. We're busy."

The designer, who has written for *The Telegraph*, *Vogue* and *Tatler*, and has properties scattered across London, believes the key to good interiors is detail and control. He fills space with objects, blends styles without fear and constructs a 'lived-in' vibe that is brave yet relaxed.

"People are still looking at image and opulence, but these days there is much more attention being paid to comfort and possessions, probably because we are working so hard and we just want to be settled in our own spaces.

"Minimalism is old hat as far as I am concerned. Just surround yourself in what feels right. Don't splash colour around or re-wallpaper because everyone else is doing it; instead, be inspired by things in your locale - reflection is important - and want to learn. Even having practised design for decades, I am still picking up new ideas."



Photo credit: nh-design.co.uk



pretty PLATES

The humble plate – where would we be without it? But just because it's a functionable item doesn't mean it can't also be a fun and frivolous one.

We've found the best decorative designs out there and we are even going to show you how to create your own.

FLORAL FEVER

Who doesn't love a bit of flora and fauna in their home? And what better way to brighten up your dining table than with a set of beautiful flower detailed plates?

ABSTRACT

For contemporary art lovers out there, why not invest in a set of abstract style plates that will reflect your modern style? Look for designs that do not restrict themselves to a standard shape and instead embrace layering techniques such as this offering from American modern ceramics designer Pigeon Toe Ceramics.

RECYCLED

Eco-friendly tableware is all the rage at the moment with an increasing number of businesses catering for those who want sustainable products throughout their homes. Disposable bamboo plates are an attractive option, but we favour those made from palm leaves.

ANIMAL ANTICS

Ideal for families with a sense of humour or those wanting to unleash their inner party animal, these fun and frivolous Wild Dining plates will turn any occasion into a celebration. We love the Sara Miller collection, which is colourful, vibrant and the perfect antidote to the winter blues.

DIY DESIGNS

If you are a fan of Kate Spade plates but your budget doesn't quite stretch that far then why not create your own version at a fraction of the cost. All you need is a stencil of your chosen design – whether that be an animal, piece of fruit or even a feel-good motto – and some coloured acrylic paints.

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TEN SMALL CHANGES THAT CAN TRANSFORM ANY ROOM...

✓ FOLLOW THE LIGHT

Lamps are the easiest way to transform the entire mood and vibe of a room. They're also pretty cheap.

✓ GO GREEN

Plants bring life and colour to an otherwise drab space. They also improve your air quality, making them well worth the extra care and attention they require. And breathe...

✓ HANG OUT

Art is a great way to really personalise your home and you don't need to spend a fortune. Whether it's a favourite record, childhood photo or quirky cartoon that made you smile once, it belongs on your wall.

✓ SHELVES IT

As well as an excellent way to maximise storage in a room, shelves also become a feature in their own right if you fill them with interesting books and mementos – the kookier the better.

✓ REFLECT

Mirrors aren't just for gazing at yourself adoringly, they can also bring light and space to an otherwise gloomy room.

✓ MAKE A STATEMENT

A really unique piece of furniture can bring to life an otherwise unremarkable space, which is why you need to hunt down that vintage cocktail globe or shabby chic chaise longue, pronto.

✓ GO THROW

Is your sofa looking a little tired? Has your bed seen better days? Then throw a throw on it my friend, the bold and brighter the better.

✓ BELLS AND WHISTLES

From vintage doorknobs to bespoke light switches, it is this attention to detail which sets the style savvy and the style-less apart.

✓ RUG DOCTOR

Not only does a decent rug 'tie a room together' – according to *The Big Lebowski's* 'the Dude' – it can also effectively hide that wine stain from last Christmas.

✓ MAKE IT PERSONAL

You can spend a fortune and still not feel entirely comfortable somewhere, because if it doesn't reflect who you are, it won't feel like home. So find your quirk, embrace your inner weirdness, then frame it and put it on your wall.





HOME & DIY

Want a bold and beautiful colour to transform your home for the coming winter months? Well, this latest trend might surprise you...

As the nights draw in and the days become darker it can be tempting to replicate the outdoor mood inside your home. Greys, navy blues and maroons are common styles that appear as the colder months loom, as we become inclined to hibernate ourselves in a cave-like

hideaway, waiting patiently for the sun to come out once more.

The problem with this gloomy palette, however, is that it offers no relief from the winter blues. Even the darker purple and red shades, though rich and luxurious like ripe midwinter berries, can become stifling. Consider then, fuchsia. Bright, bold and full of promise like the late spring blooms from which the colour derives its name.

Like a neon sign on an otherwise unlit road, fuchsia is a surprisingly refreshing alternative for anyone who wants to go a little bolder and more daring with their interiors. Bringing a depth and lushness which no other pink can measure up to, its blue undertones are actually a perfect match for winter's dramatic persuasions while also hinting at the softness to come as we melt into spring.

The other good thing about fuchsia? It holds its own against the more rugged materials. Rustic woods, heavy metals and dark velvets all come to life against this deep, dark pink backdrop. You'll need lamps and candles as well of course for those long nights when you just want to bed-in with a glass of wine and a good book.

So ditch the dour hues this winter and paint your walls in this glorious and shameless shade. And when the sun finally returns, you'll have barely felt the chill at all.



Photo credit: Interiors by color



Photo credit: www.susanjablon.com



Photo credit: Interior Design Ideas



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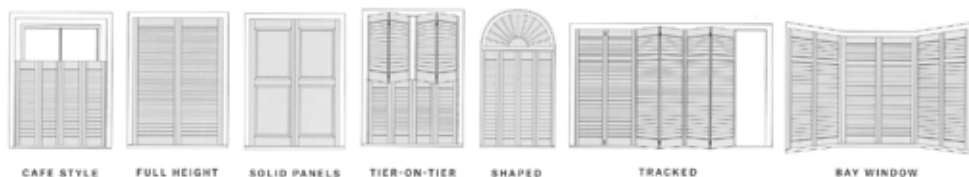
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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood

LOCAL NEWS BILLERICAY



Lake Meadow confirmed as one of Britain's best parks

A Billericay park has been named as one of the best in the country having claimed an award at the UK Park of the Year 2019 competition.

Lake Meadow won the 'Much Loved' award after being placed in the top 20 per cent of all nominations nationally in voting for UK's Best Park 2019.

The 40-acre park is visited daily by hundreds of people of all ages, who utilise the peace, green spaces, mature trees, lake, statues and sports.

The park is maintained by the Friends of Lake Meadows (FOLM) which is an independent local charity, with volunteers working in partnership with Basildon Council and Billericay Town Council for the benefit of the community.

They contribute about 1,500 hours of volunteer time. They help to care for the park, to promote its benefits, improve its facilities and encourage conservation.

One nominator for Lake Meadows was full of praise for FOLM.

He said: "Our Friends group cares for the gardens, runs events, installs exciting projects and promotes wildlife in the ancient woodland, flower meadow and conservation areas."

FOLM told **VISION** BillericayShenfield: "As Friends

we like to think that our efforts have contributed to the award by enhancements to the park both by our volunteering and also the new areas and facilities we have provided.

"We hope that this award will improve the visibility of the Friends and lead to more members. I think that it is a boost to all the volunteers.

"Basildon Council are responsible for the care of the park, but for the last seven years FOLM have helped in various ways. We hold a gardening group with 20 volunteers, who look after all the garden areas every Tuesday, working for 46 weeks a year.

"In addition, we hold a monthly working party to do more general tasks such as the spring clean of all the park signs and benches. Our ecology volunteers help to promote the wildlife by improving habitats, such as developing the wild flower meadow in the conservation area.

"We are also providing information boards about the habitats. We converted the old hut into our information centre with lots of information about the park and its history displayed. This needs manning and a team of volunteers open it for a couple of hours four or five days a week."



Rally team success

Four motor enthusiasts from Billericay said they "had a blast" as they drove more than 2,000 miles to Italy and back to raise money for a social club.

The group took part in a rally known as The Skinflint Rally - *The Italian Job*, with the route taking the teams that were taking part to Italy.

The journey travelled through the Great St Bernard's Pass, which features in the opening scene of *The Italian Job*.

Simon Poole, 44, Marcus Bennett, 43, Gabriel Dascalu, 31, and Daniel Jackson, 43, travelled in their Billericay Skinflint Rally Rover 75 which went on to win the Best Dressed Car award.

The rally, which wasn't a race, saw 12 teams with a budget of just £800 buy and prepare their car for

the journey, which took place between September 12 and 16.

The Billericay team also used the challenge as an opportunity to fundraise for round table.

The four who took part are all round tablers and they set a target of £1,500 which will help go towards events in the town.

Simon, from the Billericay Skinflint Rally Team, said: "We had so much banter with the other teams and we raised a shed-load of money for charity which is awesome and such a big part of it."

"We went from Billericay down to Chembury in the French Alps. We went from there to Turin through the Great St Bernard's Pass from *The Italian Job*."

To sponsor the Billericay Skinflint Rally Team, visit the Billericay Round Table Facebook page for the link.

Electrician sparks to become the best in Britain

A female electrician from Billericay says she is "incredibly proud" after she managed to make it through to the semi-final of a national competition.

Karen Boom, who runs She's Electric, located at 11 Montpelier Close, has stood out in the male-dominated industry to reach the later stages of Screwfix Britain's Too Tradesperson.

As **VISION** goes to print, Karen has her sights on the live final, which will be a remarkable achievement considering she didn't become an electrician until she was 40 years old.

Karen said: "As a female in a traditionally male environment, I'm passionate about being a role model for other women who are thinking of entering the trades."

"Making it through to the regional finals is a real achievement for me, and something I'm incredibly proud of, but to make it through to the national finals would mean even more, showing it's never too late to retrain and do a job you love."

During the semi-final, Screwfix representatives quizzed Karen through interviews about her business, trade skills, customer service and ambitions.

We will catch up with Karen next month and fill our readers in on how she did.



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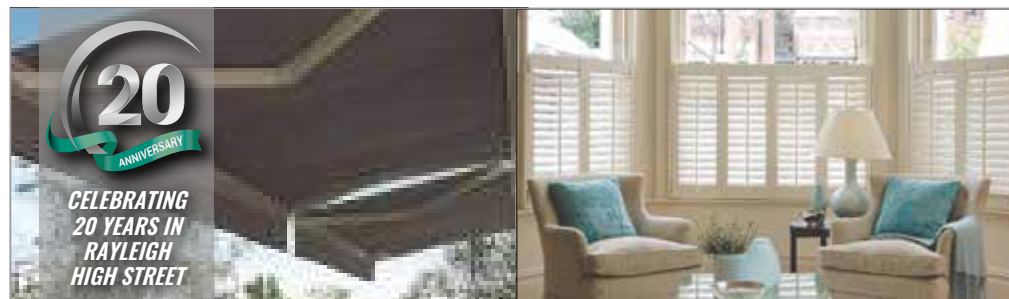
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ON PATROL WITH... THE PASTORS



Street and School Pastors continue to volunteer in their local community during the night-time economy and also in the local senior schools of Billericay. We have been supporting the pastoral work in Billericay School during the last year and now we intend to extend that work into Mayflower School.

With the permission of the senior leadership team, including Mr Brumby, we will deploy school Pastors to support the pastoral work of the school, which includes great work by the local school's ministry of the local churches.

We are also very excited that we will be launching rail Pastors with the support of Greater Anglia onto

our local rail line between Shenfield and Southend Victoria. We will aim to support anyone who uses that service at various times and also be ready to care, listen and help all the staff and volunteers.

We also enjoyed the local Fun Walk organised by John Baron MP and Basildon, Billericay and Wickford CVS.

If you want to join in, are over 18, a Christian in a local church, ready to be trained and available during the day or night then please email Billericay@streetpastors.org.uk or follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

Paralympic heroes help inspire schoolchildren



A school in Billericay recently held its own annual Paralympic games with Great Britain stars and gold medalists adding to the inspirational event.

Quilters Junior School, at Laindon Road, held its second Paralympic Games with charity Power2Inspire, helping teach children about inclusivity and determination.

Danielle Brown, a Paralympic double gold-winning archery star; Freya Levy, an England wheelchair rugby player and Wendy Smith, also a Paralympian, added to the event.

At the annual Quilters Paralympic Week games included sitting volleyball, the Paralympic sport goalball, new age curling based on curling, and polybat, a table tennis derivative.

The pupils competed on Friday Finals Day in classes, with extra points for good teamwork, perseverance, bravery, determination, and caring for others, as well as winning the individual games.

Headteacher at Quilters, Michael Wade, told **VISION** BillericayShenfield about how much the children gained from the week-long event.

He said: "The impact on the pupils was immense. Hearing personal stories from disabled athletes and ambassadors about resilience and determination, our pupils were utterly inspired."



VISION helping to make a difference



VISIONBillericayShenfield is delighted to have helped fund a children's book promoting a positive mindset and has donated copies of it to local primary schools. We supported the book, called *Spot the Different*, which tells the tale of a young girl scared about not fitting in. She meets a magical ladybird called Spot who teaches her to embrace her individuality.

We've received a special thank you from the book's author, Jerry Lyons.

He said: "Without the support of Nik and the **VISION**BillericayShenfield team, this book would not have been possible to publish and distribute. I can't thank them enough for making it possible to share the book's positive message with children in Billericay.

"Its key messages are that it's ok to be different, to have friends from different backgrounds and that the coolest person you can ever be is yourself."

Editor Nik Allen said: "We are delighted to play our part in getting *Spot the Different* out there and into as many young hands and minds as possible. We loved the ideas around the book and when the chance came up to donate copies of the book to local schools we jumped on board."

Buttsbury Junior School has been given 10 copies each of the book.

A pound from each sale of *Spot the Different* is donated to The Children's Literacy Charity, which provides specialist one-to-one literacy support for disadvantaged children who are at risk of being left behind. For more information or to buy the book visit www.spotthedifferent.co.uk

Essex-based, experienced reporter needed

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At first, this will be a part-time/freelance position – perfect for the kind of flexibility needed in local journalism, but with a view to scaling up as our network of titles continues to increase.

To be considered for this Essex-based position, drop Nik an email at nik@visionmag.co.uk including your CV.

Annual fun-filled event is a hit once again

An annual fun walk in Billericay attracted huge crowds and helped raise thousands of pounds for charity.

The annual fun walk event at Barleylands Farm took place on Sunday, September 8 with the town crier and a local MP in attendance.

This year, Billericay's town crier, Jim Shrubbs, helped proceedings along.

As usual, medals and certificates were awarded to the walkers at the finish by Hallmark volunteers.

John Baron MP said a few words of thanks to various parties, including the family of volunteers who have kept the popular event running year-on-year.

Although The Fun Walk Trust, a registered charity, has already secured £35,000 from local businesses for this year, the total monies raised will not be known until the presentation ceremony on Friday, November 22.



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BILLERICAY TOWN FC

LOCAL NEWS BILLERICAY



Photo credit: Nicky Hayes Photography

Former Premier League star takes over the Town hot seat

Despite a lofty league position, Billericay Town have parted company with their manager before immediately replacing him with a former Premier League player.

The Ricay have parted company with Harry Wheeler despite them being seventh in the Conference South and within touching distance of the promotion race.

He has been replaced by former Tottenham, Portsmouth and Wolves player Jamie O'Hara who will take up his first ever managerial position.

O'Hara is just 32 years old but did play for Billericay later in his career after being released by Gillingham.

During his playing career he earned seven England under-21 caps as well as playing in an FA Cup Final for Portsmouth as they lost to Chelsea at Wembley in 2010.

Despite O'Hara's star quality, some Billericay fans have been left scratching their heads as to why the club would let Wheeler leave after a good start to the campaign.

A Billericay Town FC club statement confirmed the reason why.

It said: "We can now confirm that Harry Wheeler has been relieved of his duties and has left the club after a recent meeting with the owner.

"Differences of opinion have led to the decision and the owner feels changes needed to be made.

"Jamie O'Hara will take control of first team duties and will look to immediately make his mark by looking at bringing in some young, talented academy players to add to the good experience we have.

"From all at the club, we wish Harry all the best for the future and we thank him for all his efforts and successes in his time here."



#TogetherWeSailAsOne



Town is recognised as dementia-friendly



The Alzheimer's Society has recognised Billericay as a dementia-friendly town.

The news comes after a lengthy period of hard work by the Billericay Dementia Action Alliance (BDAA).

The BDAA brings together organisations across Billericay who are committed to transforming health and social care outcomes for people affected by dementia.

They share best practice and take action on dementia. Everything BDAA do is in partnership, and informed by people living with dementia and those that care for them.

In order to receive the recognition, the BDAA, which currently has 20 members, submitted its action plan to the Alzheimer's Society with three main objectives.

These included engaging with key stakeholders on Billericay High Street to become members of the BDAA, promoting and aggregating dementia-friendly initiatives in the town and hosting and championing bespoke events to raise awareness and funds to support local dementia support services.

Members in Billericay include Billericay Striders, Santander, Billericay Town Council and Forget Me Not Memory Cafe.

The steering group officially received the recognition last week.

BDAA chairman, Carl Roberts, said: "It is fantastic that the Alzheimer's Society has recognised the BDAA's action plan and Billericay as a dementia-friendly community."

"There have been many hours given by our members to creating this action plan and each of the 20 members each have their own individual plans. This was the easy part and now the hard work begins; putting this plan into action and for us as a community to come together to make Billericay truly dementia-friendly."

BDAA meetings take place at Anisha Grange Care Home on Outwood Common Road.

For more information, or if you would like to join, please contact Carl Roberts on 01277 658 529 or at carl.roberts@hallmarkcarehomes.co.uk

News from the local policing team

This month the Basildon Community Policing Team and the Town Centre Team has been busy in and around Billericay.

In the past few weeks, they have conducted a number of patrols in key areas highlighted by residents, including the High Street and Lake Meadows.

The team also responded to an unauthorised encampment in the town. Whilst the occupants have now moved on, police are continuing to work with Basildon Council and other partners to review such issues and longer-term solutions.

If you have any local issues or want to chat with one of the policing team, the next Coffee with Cops is scheduled for November 1 at 2pm in Costa, High Street.

Man who died outside nightclub is named

Police have named a man who died after being assaulted outside of a Billericay nightclub.

Matthew Bion, 31, died of his injuries on Tuesday, August 27 - a full nine days after the incident outside Reids in Laindon Road.

Another man, who is 26 years old, was arrested after the alleged assault.

The man arrested is on bail until November whilst a 22-year-old woman was also arrested on suspicion of affray although she was later released without charge.

Investigating officer DCI Martin Pasmore, said: "Our investigation is progressing and we continue to provide support to Matthew's family during this difficult time."

Anyone with information is asked to call 101 or email scd.appeals.essex@essex.pnn.police.uk




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New bar opening causes concern for business owner

A cafe owner in Shenfield says she is "worried" about alcohol-related issues after planning permission was given to open a new bar.

The former NatWest Bank in Hutton Road will become a bar and restaurant after Brentwood Council approved plans for it to reopen in its new guise.

It will serve alcohol between 10am and 10.30pm Monday to Thursday, between 10am and 11.30pm on Friday and Saturday and 10am and 10pm on Sundays.

That has caused concern for one nearby cafe owner, Giovanna Georgiou, who objected to the plans.

Describing why she is against the plans, Giovanna said: "I don't think there is really any need for another food establishment in the area. There is plenty already for such a small high street.

"I'm worried this will attract a lot of alcohol-related incidents and make the High Street dangerous and

not very safe.

"It will also make the parking situation a lot harder than it already is."

The new bar and restaurant will not be allowed to serve takeaway hot food as part of its permission from the council, with delivery hours restricted so it does not impact on neighbours.

In response to any concerns about the new bar, Brentwood Council said: "The proposed opening hours are the same as the existing food and drinking establishments surrounding the site and environmental health do not raise concern regarding the noise generated from the proposed change of use subject to conditions.

"It is considered that the level of noise and activity that can reasonably be expected from a food and drinking establishment would not adversely affect the occupiers of any neighbouring property."

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Buses to replace trains every weekend for two months

Train users in Shenfield face disruption every weekend in October and November, with bus replacement services in operation.

It means buses will replace trains between Shenfield and Southend every weekend until Saturday, November 30.

The disruption to services is so Network Rail can upgrade overhead lines.

There will be some disruption into 2020 as well, with the upgrade not due to be complete until March.

In total, 128km of overhead wires between Southend Victoria and Shenfield will be replaced with a new auto tension system that adapts to temperature changes.

This will improve the reliability of services for years to come for passengers on the Southend Victoria line.

The winter weekends phase of works is due to

complete by the end of March 2020, two months earlier than originally planned.

When complete, 320km of wires and 200 structures that support the wires at the correct height and tension will have been replaced on the entire route that runs between London Liverpool Street and Southend Victoria as part of the £46million project.

Mark Budden, Network Rail's route director for Anglia, said: "We're entering the final phases of this much-needed upgrade, which will bring greater reliability for passengers on this busy line."

"I know that there is a lot of weekend disruption for passengers, and I'm sorry their journeys will be more difficult during this time."

"It will lead to a much more reliable service for everyone using the Southend line, reducing delays."

Fake police letters bid to improve parking

Police have warned motorists to be aware after fake letters with their logo were placed onto parked cars in Shenfield.

Some motorists in Chelmsford Road found a letter placed on their windscreen with the letters claiming to be from Essex Police, Brentwood Borough Council and Safer Essex Roads Partnership.

Those letters have been confirmed by Essex Police as fakes and it is thought they were produced and slapped on cars after residents became disgruntled at the quality of some parking.

An Essex Police spokesperson said: "It has been brought to our attention that letters have been left on vehicles in Chelmsford Road."

"These letters have been adapted and logos have been used unofficially."

"If you do find that a vehicle is causing an obstruction and is a danger to other road users and pedestrians, please report to Essex Police using our online reporting system."

Anyone with concerns can contact Essex Police on 101.





Train travels at 80mph with door open during rush hour

Passengers in Shenfield had a terrifying commute recently as the train travelled for 23 minutes at 80mph with a door open.

The Greater Anglia train was approaching Shenfield in late August when the door malfunctioned and remained open.

The faulty door was reported to the driver at Hockley station having already travelled around 16 miles.

Martin Moran, Greater Anglia commercial and customer service director, said: "Safety is our highest priority.

"We immediately took the train out of service when this happened and carried out our own investigation

into the incident.

"We have also carried out checks on every single door on that type of train that we have.

"No-one was injured in this incident and there have been no further incidents since."

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch has conducted an investigation and will release its findings in the coming months.

Derek Monnery, chairman of the Essex Rail Users Federation, said the incident does not happen often.

He said: "It could be a dangerous situation if the train is crowded and a lot of people are standing there, which fortunately it doesn't sound like it was in this case."

Police and council forced to move travellers once again

The police and the council had to once again work together to move travellers from Shenfield Common.

Travellers descending on the common have been an issue several times this year.

However, now well versed in how to remove the travellers, Brentwood Borough Council (BBC), Essex County Council and Essex Police quickly moved them on.

They used a section 61 notice, which can be enforced to remove travellers if there are more than two of them and a police officer believes they intend to "reside" there.

Alternatively, it can be enforced if they have caused

damage, been abusing, already been asked to leave by the owner or have more than six vehicles between them.

Their arrival was slammed by one social media user, who wished not to have their name printed.

They said: "They often only stay a short time as they get moved on but the destruction they leave behind lasts longer.

"Fly-tipping, rubbish strewn everywhere and not to mention how rude some of the travellers can be. I'd rather they stayed away."

BBC and Essex Police have been asked for comment but have not responded at the time of going to print.

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LOCAL NEWS SHENFIELD

More and more of us are using online banking these days, and this has a knock-on effect on the services being offered by banks on the high street.

While some banks have chosen to close less used branches, Barclays bank has decided to run a pilot scheme to attract new customers in areas where it is now the last bank in town. Its Shenfield branch is one of those in the pilot project, with local residents and businesses being offered help to switch their banking to Barclays. In return, the bank is stepping up its visible presence on Shenfield on Hutton Road by getting involved in community activities and running banking and fraud awareness workshops in the library.

Sadly, fraud and financial scams are all too common, and it's often older people who get taken in. It's an issue Lloyds Bank in Brentwood have identified and are taking a proactive approach to protect their customers from the less savoury members of our society who prey on vulnerable, lonely or elderly.

I visited Lloyds in Brentwood to meet senior branch manager Sally Young and branch manager Stephen Willner, who were able to tell me about some of the scams they've come across. I was shocked to find out criminals committing fraud have been known to accompany their victims to bank branches and quietly intimidate them into withdrawing or transferring huge sums of money. Thankfully, bank staff are trained to use the Banking Protocol, which is a partnership between banks, police and trading standards, and which can provide immediate support when branch staff identify customers who may be being defrauded.

These are customers who have always done their banking face to face, and the Lloyds staff I spoke to were proud they knew their customers well enough to identify if something odd was going on and banking behaviour changed. We live in changing times, and I am pleased our banks are doing their best to protect their customers from scammers, both on and offline.

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PLANT OF THE MONTH:

Galanthus

AKA SNOWDROP



More commonly known as the snowdrop, Galanthus is one of those flowers that can brighten up your garden (and spirit) after a long, cold winter by signalling that spring is well on its way. Materialising en masse, snowdrops can create a white blanket of beauty across any garden or woodland area.

What type of plant is Galanthus?

The snowdrop is an herbaceous plant that belongs to the Amaryllidaceae family. It is recognisable by its snowdrop appearance that appears early on during flowering between January and April each year. Each snowdrop can grow to approximately 7-15 cm tall with each bulb producing two leaves and one flowering stalk.

How many different varieties of snowdrop are there?

There are 20 different snowdrop species including the Galanthus Nivalis which you are mostly likely to see in your local woodland area, the Galanthus Atkinsii, recognisable by its honey scent and longer outer petals and the Galanthus Magnet, a hybrid variety that sports an unusually long and elegant stalk.

How do I plant snowdrops?

Great for beginners and pros alike, the snowdrop is a hardy plant that is easy to grow and flowers quickly; plant in October for flowers in late winter/early spring.

- Find a spot in your garden where the soil is well drained and there is moderate shade
- Plant your bulbs 3 inches apart, with their pointed tops 2-3 inches below the surface
- Water well directly after planting

What does the snowdrop symbolise?

The name Galanthus Nivalis actually means 'milk flower of the snow' but has gone under many other names over the years including 'February fairmaids' and 'Candlemas bells.' The flower is said to symbolise purity, optimism, virtue and sympathy, making it the perfect plant to kick start a new season.



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To pond OR NOT TO POND?

THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY THREE MILLION GARDEN PONDS IN THE UK, BUT SHOULD YOU JUMP ON THE BANDWAGON?

PROS:

Ponds are aesthetically pleasing

Probably the most obvious benefit and the reason why people are tempted to install a pond in their garden is that, put simply, they look good. Think colourful fish, exotic plants, waterfalls and statues.

They provide relaxation

On the simplest level, the soothing sound of water can create instant calm in your garden.

Opportunity to encourage education and interaction

If you have children, a pond offers a great platform for discussions about nature. Watch tadpoles turn into frogs and spot any birds that come to visit.

Great for the environment

Fancy yourself as a bit of a conservationist? Then a pond is a great way to help support your local habitat. The moisture that ponds provide can help surrounding soil stay moist which is beneficial to nearby plants.

CONS:

Ponds can be expensive

You need to dig your pond, invest in pond liner, a pond pump and a filter and choose plants, all of which adds up. And don't forget fish – more expense, especially if you have your heart set on some eye-catching Koi carp.

They require a strong commitment

A pond is very high maintenance. It requires constant cleaning to prevent the water from becoming contaminated by plant debris. The pond's filtration system will also need to be cleaned, inspected and repaired when necessary.

Safety can be an issue

As with any open water, you need to be vigilant and take the necessary precautions when any small children are in the vicinity. If you are worried about your children or grandchildren around water, then perhaps a pond is not for you.



GARDENING



Holden

ONTO TOP SPOT

Throughout an impressive career, Amanda Holden has consistently wowed her fans with a breezy, no-nonsense personality and stunning looks. Vivacious and charming, buoyant and brutally honest, it comes as no surprise that the bubbly beauty is also on one of TV's top earners.

Having spent almost three decades in the spotlight – her first television appearance was as a contestant on *Blind Date* back in 1991 – you could forgive Amanda Holden for running out of steam when it comes to career opportunities. However, far from scaling back, the luminous 48-year-old is working harder than ever, pursuing new projects in radio, music and fashion, whilst also retaining her crown as queen of primetime TV thanks to her enduring role as a judge on *Britain's Got Talent*.

With her down-to-earth charm, brilliant wit and stunning looks, Holden is the epitome of the woman the girls want to be and the boys want to date.

Long gone are the days when she was best known as the wife of gameshow host Les Dennis – the Portsmouth native is now an icon in her own right. And though Chris Hughes, husband and father of her two daughters – Alexa, 13, and Hollie, seven – is himself a successful record producer, there is little doubt who the primary breadwinner is in their London household thanks to the announcement in August that Holden had beaten the likes of Holly Willoughby and Claudia Winkleman to be named

television's highest paid female star.

Though she has been steadily maintaining her starry status since joining the judging panel of BGT back in 2007 – the debut season of the talent show – her recent rise to the top of the money tree is thought to be thanks to her new role as a Heart Radio DJ. Replacing Emma Bunton as the co-host for the breakfast show opposite Jamie Theakston, it is rumoured that the blonde beauty is raking in a £1.5million for the pleasure of rousing millions of Heart listeners every weekday morning.

Proving that Britain really does have talent, the former actress turned presenter is embarking on her own pop career after a clip of her and her two daughters singing *Tightrope* from the hit film *The Greatest Showman* went viral. Meanwhile, her foray into the world of fashion has seen her style a critically admired wardrobe with Fenn Wright Mason. Flattering, affordable and perfect for the coming party season, the seven-piece occasion wear collection with the British brand looks set to spell out many more style-based endeavours for the savvy entrepreneur.

Having proved she is far more than just a pretty face, you can be certain we won't be seeing the back of Amanda Holden anytime soon... which is ironic really, as she also recently added 'Rear Of The Year' to an already long list of awards.

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TIME

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Many of us go through the odd moment of wishing we could turn back the clock, but the power of time is something only very few have ever had in their command.

And yet, the meeting of 25 nations in Washington DC 135 years ago this month will always be marked as a monumental moment against which we've been setting our watches ever since. On October 22, to be exact, the great and the good at the International Meridian Conference decided that the Royal Observatory in Greenwich would become the site of the Universal Time meridian of longitude.

It's positioning of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) as a standard bearer for the world is most probably a reference point that will never be changed. Subsequently, the delineation of world time zones has always been either plus or minus a specified quantity of hours – the furthest time zone being that of the Baker and Howland Islands in the Equatorial Pacific, which rank a full 12 hours behind us.

Of course, these time zones are subject to significant shift. When lines marking time boundaries are drawn on a map, a number of peculiarities can be found, often arched around small islands.

The most extreme example of time difference is at the Diomed Islands, which sees us return to the Pacific. Big Diomed dwarfs Little Diomed, which sits two-and-a-half miles away. With one being the

furthest east you can go and the other being the furthest west, and the international date line running down the middle, they are, in effect, one day apart (21 hours, to be exact). That means if you stand on one with a pair of binoculars and look at the other, you are viewing tomorrow... or is it yesterday?

More pertinently, given that one is owned by Russia and the other by America, the Diomed Islands appear a chink in time even GMT won't be able to resolve.

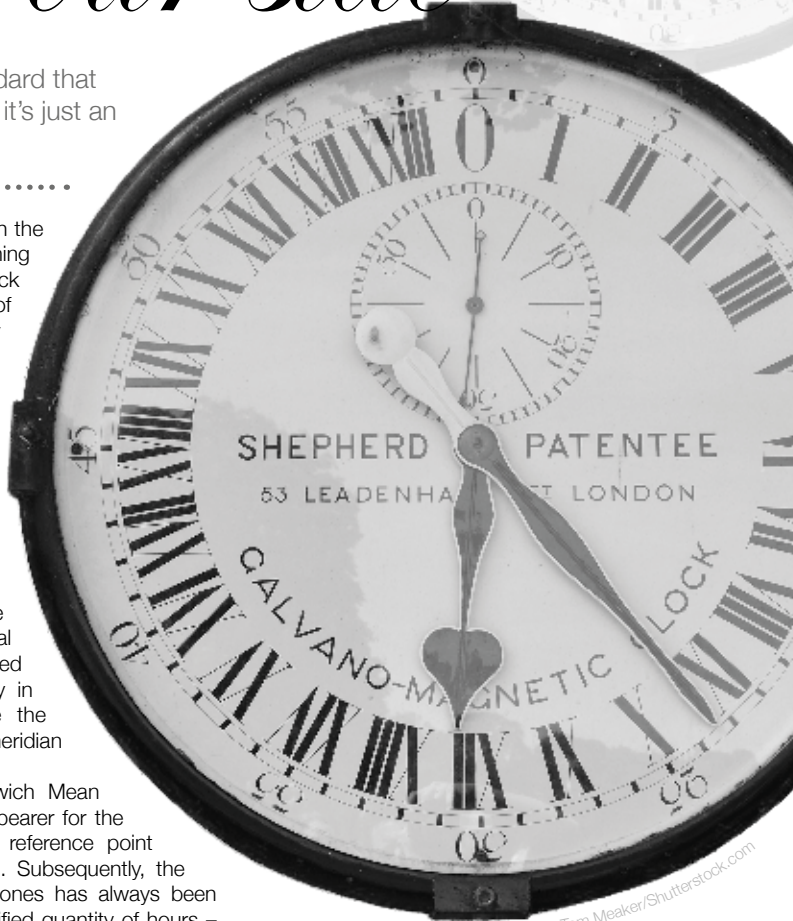


Photo credit: Tom Meaker/Shutterstock.com



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Blurred Vision?

WHAT IS AGE RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION (AMD)?

AMD is the most common cause of visual impairment in the UK. It is more common as you age, with over 10% of those aged over 65 years affected in some form.

Dry AMD is the most common type of AMD and is caused by the macula wearing away. Wet AMD is caused by abnormal blood vessels under the macula leaking fluid and bleeding into the macula.

WHAT IS THE MACULA?

The macula is the central part of our retina and is responsible for detailed vision such as reading and seeing clearly in the distance. The retina is the inside layer of the eye, like the film of a camera.

HOW WOULD AMD EFFECT MY VISION?

Dry AMD can lead to a slow deterioration and blurring of central vision. This usually occurs over many years. Wet AMD is a more rapidly progressing form of AMD which distorts the central vision; commonly making straight lines appear kinked or wobbly.



HOW CAN IT BE TREATED?

Presently Dry AMD cannot be treated directly. A healthy diet and protection from UV light can help keep the macula healthy.

Wet AMD is most commonly treated with injections of special medication into the eye. These injections need to be given repeatedly with regular review and is known to be very successful in improving and maintaining vision.

The effectiveness is individual to every patient. It is important for patients with Wet AMD to have individualised treatment for their condition and be under the care of an eye doctor with a special interest in macular degeneration.

KEEPING
abreast
OF THINGS

18 • Oct • 2019

HEALTH & FITNESS

With October being Breast Cancer Awareness Month, is it time to reassess our perceptions of this illness?

As a nation, our understanding of cancer has never been better, our healthcare is in its best ever place, and rates for the successful banishing of this dreadful biological disease are the best recorded.

We have so much to celebrate where breast cancer is concerned, yet the reality is someone will still wake up tomorrow, and the next day, and the day after that, and have their life ruined by this terrible disease.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is a global campaign running across October that aims to engage as many people as possible in raising both awareness and funds in the fight against the disease. You can take part in wear it pink on Friday, October 18, and find out more on how to get involved by visiting wearitpink.org

The aims coming from the scientific world are big, with the intention that, by 2050, everyone

who develops breast cancer will live. Research is focused into four areas – risk and prevention, early detection and diagnosis, treatment, and secondary breast cancer.

By focusing on these stages of the disease and monitoring progress and results, specialists can use the most advanced techniques to save lives. In 2018, that meant the five-year survival rate topped 95 per cent; up from 82 per cent three decades ago.

So to answer the question posed at the top of this piece – no, it's definitely not time to reassess our perceptions where breast cancer is concerned. It is an affliction that ends lives, as well as causing untold pain for those left behind. It is an enemy of women of almost any age, any background, any social status, and the only thing we need to recalibrate is how we can fight in ways harder, tougher and even more stubborn than before.

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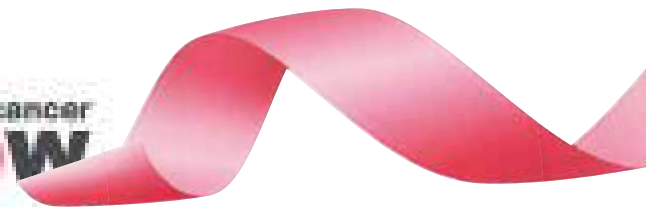
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SKIN TAGS... *Why they matter*

Skin tags are small growths that hang off your skin. They are common and essentially harmless, but can be removed if they bother you.

What skin tags look like

Skin tags are small, soft, skin-coloured growths on your skin. They can vary in colour and size – from a few millimetres up to 5cm (about 2 inches) wide.

They are usually found on the neck, armpits, around the groin, or under the breasts, but they can also grow on the eyelids or under the folds of the buttocks.

They can look like warts, but skin tags are usually smooth and soft (whereas warts tend to be rougher with an irregular surface).

Skin tags are knobby and hang off the skin (whereas warts are usually slightly raised or flat)

Skin tags are not contagious (whereas warts spread very easily, so a sudden outbreak or cluster of growths is more likely to be warts)

NB: Skin tags do not usually cause any pain or discomfort.

Why skin tags occur

Skin tags are made of loose collagen fibres and

blood vessels surrounded by skin. Collagen is a type of protein found throughout the body.

Both men and women can develop skin tags. They tend to occur in older people and (significantly) people who are obese or have type 2 diabetes.

Why skin tags matter

If you have a diet high in carbs and sugars, your insulin will be high as a result. (Insulin controls blood sugar, so more sugar equals more insulin). But insulin has numerous actions on the body, one of which is cell-proliferation (important for example at puberty, when the body grows rapidly).

Uncontrolled cell-growth is a bad thing however, which is why people with type 2 diabetes are more prone to cancer. Skin tags are benign and harmless but they DO indicate that your insulin levels are probably too high. For more information contact Graham Phillips at Prolongevity - no pressure - just helpful qualified, professional advice, 07768 275802, graham.phillips@manorpharmacygroup.co.uk, www.prolongevity.co.uk

NB: Never attempt to remove large skin tags yourself because they'll bleed heavily.

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1:1 Varicose Veins

Thursday 3rd October 2019

From 6.30pm with Mr Vijay Gadhi,
Consultant Vascular Surgeon.

P Thursday 21st November 2019

6.45pm–8pm with Mr Sabu Jacob,
Consultant Vascular Surgeon.

P Snoring and Sleep Apnoea

Thursday 10th October 2019

6.30pm–8pm with Mr Paul Chatrath,
Consultant ENT Surgeon.

P Foot Disorders

Tuesday 15th October 2019

6.30pm–8pm with Mr Amit Bhargava,
Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon.

P Cataract Surgery and Ageing Eye Diseases

Thursday 17th October 2019

6.30pm–8pm with Professor Rajesh
Aggarwal, Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon.

1:1 Men's Health – Worried About Your Prostate?

Thursday 7th November 2019

From 6.30pm with Mr Ramchandran Ravi,
Consultant Urological Surgeon.

P Ageing Aches and Pains

Thursday 14th November 2019

6.30pm–8pm with Dr Matthias Toth,
Consultant General Physician.

1:1 1:1 mini advice session

P Presentation

To book your place or find out more, go to
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*Time frames indicated may vary depending on choice of consultant, type of diagnostic investigation, and procedure package. A referral may be required before a consultation or diagnostics. ^Interest-free loans are subject to status and provided by our medical finance partner.



BOUNCE

yourself fit

If the thought of going to the gym feels you with dread and you can't think of anything more boring than pounding the pavement in an attempt to stay fit and healthy, then trampolining might just be the fitness craze for you.

IS TRAMPOLINE FITNESS FOR ME?

Nearly everyone can get involved in trampolining; whatever your current fitness levels. It is a great activity for those who find workouts boring or can be used as a way of mixing up your existing training schedule.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- Bouncing improves cardiovascular fitness
- Increases leg strength and power
- Can feel less taxing and more enjoyable than jogging or running
- Improves balance
- Strengthens your core muscles
- Good for enhancing coordination
- Aids weight loss
- Helps protect and strengthen your bones and joints

ARE THERE ANY RISKS INVOLVED?

As with any form of exercise there is a risk of injuries; with the most common ones including

ankle sprains, fractures or shin splints as well as soft tissue injuries such as bruising from falling. However, most trampoline enthusiasts feel that the benefits of bouncing outweigh the potential hazards.

HOW DO I ENSURE MY WORKOUT IS SAFE?

If you do not fancy taking a class and would prefer to bounce in the comfort of your own home, then you need to make sure that you are not putting yourself at risk of injury.

- Place your trampoline on a flat and non-slippery surface
- Ensure that the springs, frame and any hooks are covered by shock-absorbing pads
- Always wear shoes that support your ankle
- Start with small jumps

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

There are hundreds of trampolining clubs and classes that run across the UK; for more information visit www.british-gymnastics.org

Fitness Fact: On average, an adult will burn around 200 calories per hour bouncing.

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- Advice and treatment of plantar fasciitis - this includes shockwave treatment/ orthotics/ exercises/ kinesiology taping.
- Digital foot scan to aid assessment of conditions
- Verruca treatment
- Nail issues such as fungal infections/ ingrowing nails/ thickened overgrown nails treated and advice given to help improve conditions
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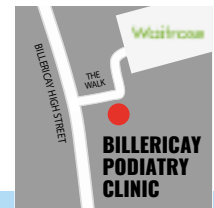


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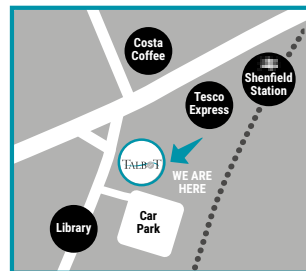
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GO GO graphic EYES

With the start of a new season comes the opportunity to revamp your look and embrace the latest beauty trends that have been showcased on the runway; with inspiration from Tom Ford, Louis Vuitton and Dior, there's something to suit everyone.



Photo credit: whisperrings.com

FUTURISTIC FALSIES

Create a striking look with a set of over the top fringed, silver lashes; don't scrimp on the glitter.

Simply purchase the longest, metallic silver false eyelashes that you can find and apply to either your bottom or top lash line. Finish with a sweep of white liner.

ULTRA-BLACK EYES

Nothing says glam more than a set of sultry eyes adjoined with the darkest eyeliner and eye shadows. This season the more smudge the better.

Prime your lids and then use a pencil eyeliner and shadow and get smudging.

GLITTER GALORE

If you favour a more upbeat look then this Seventies style trend is for you; think disco nights with full-on glitzy eyes.

Apply a neutral eyeshadow, brush your lids with primer and then using a flat shader brush apply your glitter.

NEON

Not for the faint-hearted, shocking shades of neon were seen splashed across the runways, with pink, orange and green featuring highly.

Prime your lids, then using a pointed eyeliner brush, apply your chosen shade across the crease of your lids and down towards the outer corner of your eye.

TWIGGY-ESQUE LOWER LASHES

Who doesn't want to look like the iconic Twiggy? Take a leaf out of Dior's book and rock the painted on exaggerated lower lashes look this autumn.

But if painted on lower lashes are a bit too OTT for you then simply apply individual false lashes to your lower lash line and finish with lashings of mascara on your upper lashes.



“You’re never fully dressed
without a smile”

Want a Hollywood smile but without the A-list price tag? Try out these simple home remedies that are known to help whiten your teeth and even better, they are chemical-free.

Coconut oil: Actually, any oil will work as it is the process of swilling oil around your mouth to remove bacteria that is said to help prevent your teeth from becoming yellow. We recommend coconut oil as it has a pleasant taste and contains lauric acid which reduces inflammation and kills bacteria.

Baking soda: This common kitchen staple has so many uses; one of which being the ability to naturally whiten your teeth. Its abrasiveness can help scrub away stubborn stains as well as stopping further bacteria from growing due to its alkaline properties.

Strawberries: As well as tasting sweet and delicious, the malic acid that strawberries contain may help to remove discolouration from your teeth, although they are unable to penetrate long-standing stains.

Salt: Create a mouthwash using a teaspoon of salt mixed with warm water and swill around your mouth. The antibacterial properties of salt will not only help brighten your smile but will also help keep your gums healthy.

Activated charcoal: Charcoal is definitely having its moment in the spotlight with one of its miracle abilities being an effective teeth whitener. We recommend using a 100 per cent natural tooth polish that is made from activated coconut shell charcoal. Apply as you would with a standard toothpaste.

White foods: Not for rubbing on your teeth but as a general diet choice that will help prevent further stains; white foods such as rice, potatoes and fish are less likely to discolour your teeth than brightly coloured foods.

DIY remedies to avoid: ❌ Lemons ❌ Oranges ❌ Apple cider vinegar

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FASHION

fashion fixes

If you are already feeling the desire to ditch the day dresses, to say sayonara to sandals or to toss out the tank tops, then these key autumn fashion trends for men and women are just what you need.

Baggy trousers

Nope, not a homage to pop band Madness, but a distinctive steer away from the beloved skinny jeans. Not only does this look flatter most body shapes but it can also be dressed down with a jumper and trainers or smartened up with heels and a blouse.

Statement shoulders

If you loved the '80s then you are in for a treat this season, as shoulder pads are back, baby. Or, to be more precise, statement shoulders are the look du jour. Look out for big, bold and embellished designs which will definitely see you stand out from the crowd.

Go hell for leather

A biker jacket is always a must-have item for the colder months, but this year you can expect to see a plethora of leather pieces hitting the high street, from tight leather pants to loose-fit leather dresses. Men can also rock this trend by embracing their inner Hells Angel and buying a leather trench coat asap.

Scarf up

Men look out, this is your autumn accessory: an oversized scarf. Think thick, woolly and super long. You know, the kind your nan used to knit for you. Simply wrap nonchalantly around your neck, over a lightweight jumper.

Velvet galore

Luxurious and decadent, this fabric took over the men's catwalk shows with Dolce & Gabbana, Ralph Lauren and Emporio Armani all showcasing their velvety designs. Expect to see velvet shirts, suits, coats and even ties.

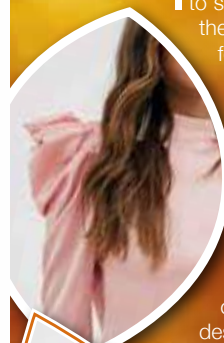


Photo credit: ASOS.com





TRAVEL

TURN ON THE

lights

WHERE ARE THE BEST PLACES TO SEE THE AURORA BOREALIS?

The Northern Lights are one of Planet Earth's most amazing natural phenomena, having drawn in, enchanted and amazed generations of travellers to Scandinavia and North America for hundreds of years.

First witnessed by astronomers Gassendi and Galilei in 1621, the stunning, dancing sprays of neon light, almost extra-terrestrial in their appearance, form when charged particles are emitted from the sun at the time of a solar flare. These penetrate the earth's magnetic shield, then collide with atoms and molecules in the atmosphere.

The key areas for seeing these displays of nature's beauty can be found in a zone within northern Scandinavia, between 66°N and 69°N, otherwise known as the Aurora Zone. The band can become larger when there is high activity of geomagnetic action which is why the lights can, on occasions, even be visible from north-west Scotland.

Traditionally, it's been said the best places to

witness the Northern Lights were Sweden and Norway, but Finland, Iceland and Greenland can all lay claim to offering stunning tourist experiences. Much of this factors in the tranquil majesty of surroundings lakes, forests and fells which, while almost completely devoid of light pollution, also add to the mystical air of this remarkable sight.

In recent times, northern territories in Canada have also attempted to take advantage of what is now a global fascination for the Northern Lights. The Yukon provides wild animals, scattered towns and villages and delicate snowfall against a backdrop of shimmering lights.

And the display isn't just a visual treat to those in the Northern Hemisphere. The Southern Lights (Aurora Australis) are rarer in their visibility but can be spied from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

It's also known that similar displays can be seen above Jupiter and Saturn, although tourism numbers, thus far, have been disappointingly low.

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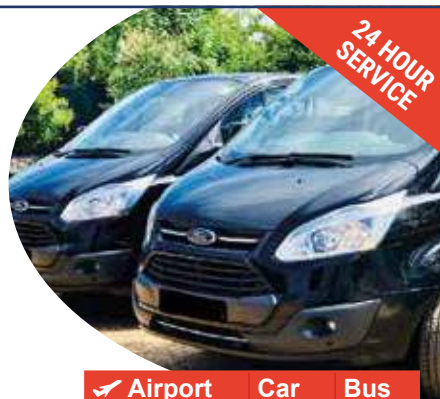
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pick ups only from Heathrow and City



shakshuka

Are you looking for a quick midweek snack or a lazy weekend breakfast? Shakshuka, which literally means "all mixed up", is a popular Middle Eastern dish full of flavour.

This recipe contains a large amount of tomatoes which have numerous health benefits. These include improved eye sight, a good stomach health and reduced blood pressure.

Tomatoes contain a large number of antioxidants that have been proven to fight different forms of cancers. They are also a rich source of vitamins and minerals.

SHAKSHUKA - serves 6

INGREDIENTS:

- > 2 tbsps olive oil
- > 2 diced onions
- > 2 red peppers, cut into strips
- > 3 tins chopped tomatoes (1.2kg)
- > 1 1/2 tsp garlic purée
- > 1 tbsps tomato purée

- > 6 tbsps SPICE WAY Shakshuka Fast Gourmet www.spicewayuk.com/product/shakshuka

- > 6 large eggs
- > Salt and pepper to taste
- > Handful fresh parsley

METHOD:

- > In a large deep frying pan, fry the onions in the olive oil until translucent.
- > Add the peppers and continue frying until they are soft.
- > Stir in the tomatoes, Shakshuka Fast Gourmet mix, tomato and garlic purée, salt and pepper and simmer for 30 minutes. The mixture will thicken.
- > With the back of a ladle, make six small indentations in the sauce and break the eggs into them.
- > Cover the frying pan with a lid and continue to cook for approximately 5-6 minutes, depending on how you like your eggs.
- > Sprinkle chopped parsley on top and serve with crusty bread or pita.

Credit: Karen & Louise www.spicewayuk.com



FOOD & DRINK

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WHAT'S ON

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Shenfield Library, Hutton Road,
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Every first Tuesday of the month,
2.30pm – 3.30pm



This Coffee and Crime Book group meet at Shenfield Library every first Tuesday of the month. Why not join and discuss your favourite crime books with some likeminded people with a hot cup of coffee?

New Billericay Badminton Group

Billericay School Sports Centre, School Road,
Billericay, CM12 9LH

Every Wednesday, 8pm – 10pm

A friendly, mixed group of about 20 people. Mixed ability and backgrounds welcome.

They are looking to expand their numbers in mixed doubles and invite anyone at any level for social badminton along for a taster. £6 a night.

The group gets together socially and plays tennis in the summer.

Call Barry on 07831 509132 to express an interest.

Family fun day

Little Farm, Buttsbury, Ingatestone, CM4 9NZ
October 6, 1pm – 5pm

Remus Horse Sanctuary will be opening its gates for the last time this year on Sunday, October 6 and visitors, members and supporters are welcome to come and meet the 200+ animals and learn about the sanctuary's horse welfare programme.

Parking is available on-site, with disabled access, and dogs are very welcome on a lead. Admission will be £4 per adult and £2 for children.

Sue Burton said: "We always look forward to our open days and the last one of the season is always bittersweet. It means we're able to show off our facilities and our amazing animals and give people an insight into the valuable work we do."

Comedy night

Billericay Methodist Church, Western
Road, Billericay, CM12 9DT

October 12, 12.30pm – 1.30pm

A fundraising night of comedy in aid of Mind and Reach Out For Mental Health, a suicide prevention organisation.

Tickets cost £17.50, which includes a buffet meal. For more information, or to book tickets visit www.reidsbillericay.com/events

Charity lunch

Reids Billericay, 66-68 Laindon Rd, Billericay,
CM12 9LD

October 18, 7.30pm – 10pm

A tasty two-course lunch and drink for only £4.50. There is no need to book. Call 01277 622297 for more information.

Halloween Fun

Shenfield Library, Hutton Road, Shenfield,
Brentwood, CM15 8NJ

October 30, 10am – 4pm

A haunting event packed with activities, including creepy crafts and a horrible hunt around the library.

Frightful fancy dress is welcome.



Church Christmas Fayre

Billericay URC Church, 99 Chapel St,
Billericay, CM12 9LR

November 9, 11.30am – 2.30pm

Billericay United Reformed Church is holding a Christmas Fayre in the Mayflower Hall.

You can come for lunch or stop for a coffee and cake. There will be yummy food. There will also be artisan stalls to browse around, selling craft items, decorations, homemade cakes and preserves.



SCIENCE MADE SIMPLE

FIZZING RAINBOW

Difficulty rating: Very easy

YOU WILL NEED:

- Baking soda • Vinegar • A syringe
- Food colouring

WHAT TO DO:

- Mix 4 tbs baking soda with 3 drops of colouring and 1 tsp water
- Set aside on a tray
- Fill the syringe with vinegar
- Squirt on the soda and watch as it fizzes

FANTASTIC PLASTIC

Difficulty rating: Easy

YOU WILL NEED:

- 1 cup milk • 4 tsp white vinegar
- A bowl • A strainer

WHAT TO DO:

- Heat up the milk (with adult supervision)
- Pour the milk into the bowl
- Add the vinegar and stir for 1 minute
- Pour the milk through the strainer
- You will be left with lots of lumpy blobs
- Leave to cool slightly and rinse
- Mould into your desired shape
- Leave for 2 days to completely harden

BEND WATER

Difficulty rating: Medium

YOU WILL NEED:

- A plastic comb • A tap • A head of clean hair

WHAT TO DO:

- Turn on the tap until you have a very thin stream of water
- Brush the top of your hair 15 times
- Closely bring the comb towards the water. Do not touch the water with the comb
- Watch as the water bends towards the comb as if by magic

BUILD A BALLOON INFLATOR

Difficulty rating: Medium to hard

YOU WILL NEED:

- 1 empty plastic bottle • ½ cup vinegar
- Baking soda • A funnel

WHAT TO DO:

- Pour the vinegar into the bottle
- Stretch the balloon a few times and then, using the funnel, fill it half way with baking soda
- Place the neck of the balloon over the bottle top.
- Lift the balloon up so that all the baking soda falls into the bottle and mixes with the vinegar
- Watch as the balloon fully inflates itself



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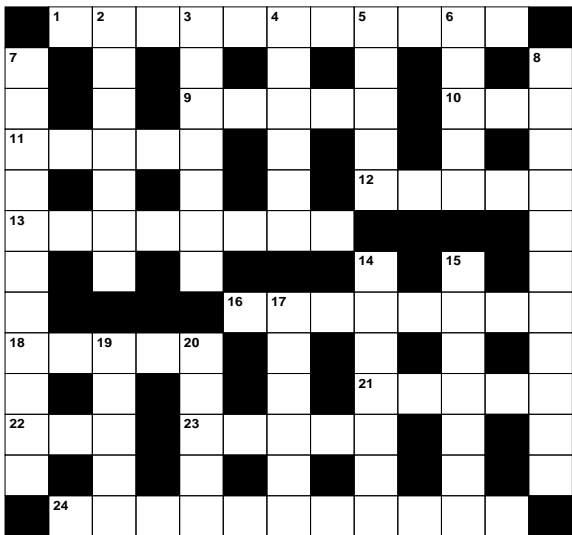
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ACROSS

- American actress (5,6)
- Suffuse with colour (5)
- Pub (3)
- Walked at a steady speed (5)
- Showered with love (5)
- Sufficiency (8)
- Figure of speech (8)
- Financial resources (5)
- Edge (5)
- Bun (anag) (3)
- Awake (5)
- Tumultuous (11)

DOWN

- Prophets (7)
- One of the platinum metals (7)
- Material; textile (6)
- Role; office (5)
- George ____ : *Middlemarch* writer (5)
- Act of making peace (11)
- Unintentional (11)
- Upstart; one who has recently gained wealth (7)
- Henry David ____ : US author and poet (7)
- Follows (6)
- Stroll casually (5)
- Device used to sharpen razors (5)



DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ The 2022 Commonwealth Games will be held in Birmingham
- ▶ Tiger Roll become the first since Red Rum to win the Grand National race back-to-back
- ▶ The 2018 Netball Commonwealth Games was the first final since netball was introduced at the 1998 Games that didn't feature both Australia and New Zealand
- ▶ Wheelchair rugby was originally known as murderball
- ▶ Abe Mitchell is depicted on the top of the Ryder Cup trophy
- ▶ The FIFA World Cup was first held in 1930 and Uruguay was crowned the winner after beating Argentina 4-2 in the final

SUDOKU

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

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PLAIN SITE

TELLTALE SIGNS THAT THE WEBSITE YOU ARE VISITING IS DODGY

One
Staying one step ahead of the fraudsters isn't a battle just reserved for those who patrol the internet. The unregulated nature of the world's biggest information source means we need to take control of our own vigilance. But by following a few easy steps, you can protect yourself from the dark forces at work across the web.

Two **S for security**

When visiting a site, in the web address at the top, look for an 's' after 'http' at the beginning of the line. The lack of an 's' doesn't directly imply you are on a scam website, but it is telling you that the security certificate is inadequate, and you should refrain from entering personal information.

Some browsers – Google Chrome being one – add a padlock icon denoting any website that is fully secure, or the web address could be shown in green. The highest form of encryption for any site will also show the website name before the address.

Three **Too good to be true?**

On the internet, just as in real life, if something you see online appears too good to be true – particularly if you've clicked on an advert or had a pop-up appear on your screen – it probably is.

Four **You have my word**

Consider as well the trustworthiness of sites that have poor spelling or grammar. Very few scammers are fully adept in the finer workings of the English language, particularly if that site is being run many thousands of miles from the UK. Authentic marketing will almost always look professional in style and content.

Five **Google away**

Finally, if a site looks suspicious, put its name into Google. If it's a known rogue business then there's a good chance it's being discussed across the web.



TECHNOLOGY



5 easy ways to £earn extra money

Who couldn't do with some more money in the run-up to Christmas? And what if you could do this without disrupting your daily life or causing yourself any additional stress? You'd be crazy to say no.

1. Sign up for online surveys

You won't make a fortune by signing up to these sites that offer cash or shopping vouchers in return for your information and opinions, but you can make around £50 per month if you put in the work.

2. Become a mystery shopper

This is a great option for those who love to shop and aren't afraid to be honest. Most companies are free to sign up to and there is no commitment to carry out assignments. The only drawback is that you sometimes have to pay for goods or services up front and wait to be reimbursed.

3. Rent out your home (or housesit someone else's)

If you are planning some winter sun, why not rent out your home while you are away? Popular destinations such as London, coastal areas or cities that have a particular seasonal attractions demand the highest fees. Reputable companies like Airbnb will cover insurance in case of any damage.

4. Make money from your skillset

Did you know that more than a quarter of workers in the UK have some sort of secondary income? But if the thought of a second job seems too much, consider offering your services as a freelancer.

5. Become a dog walker

With the cold weather setting in, many people will want to outsource the task of walking their dogs, so if you don't mind the outdoors and are comfortable around our four-legged friends, why not give it a go?



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INVESTMENT JARGON MADE SIMPLE

Commonly used words and phrases in connection with investing can often seem confusing, but the good news is that we are well versed in providing plain English explanations of technical terms.

VOLATILITY

You will probably have heard this term quite a lot recently. Volatility refers to the rate at which the price of an investment moves up and down. If the price moves up and down rapidly over a short period, it is described as having high volatility. If the price remains relatively stable, it is said to be a low volatility stock. Needless to say, investors generally prefer lower volatility.

ASSET ALLOCATION

This is the process of deciding what proportion of your investment portfolio should be invested in different types of investment. There are four main categories of assets – cash, equities, bonds and property. Determining which mix of assets you should hold in your portfolio will depend on personal factors including your investment time horizon and your attitude to risk. Asset allocation helps to spread risk through diversification, which in simple terms, means not putting all your eggs in one basket.

INDEX

An index, and there are several, is a combined measure of fluctuating market prices of shares in a selection of companies that have similar characteristics, such as size. Some indices are designed to reflect the overall performance of a particular market, while others follow a specific sector. So, for example, the FTSE 100 is made up of the UK's 100 largest quoted companies, the FTSE 250 includes the next largest 250 companies, and the FTSE Small Cap includes companies smaller than that. In the US, the Dow Jones Industrial Average consists of 30 large American companies across various sectors.

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On the road again? why not check out **BRITAIN'S BEST ROADS**

For the motoring enthusiast, there are few things in life more pleasurable than an open road, a fast car and a bit of Canned Heat on the stereo.

While many of the UK's best roads wind their way through, along and on top of stunning geological features, mostly in the north of England or Scotland, there may be some 'must-drive' routes a little closer to home:

ONE: A838, Laxford Bridge to Tongue, Scotland

Let's start right at the top, and a road that pivots through the Highlands' incredible natural beauty. At 77 miles long it is the perfect distance to savour sea vistas and mountain landscapes, yet with an average of just 96 vehicles using it each day, you really will feel you have your own slice of tarmac.

TWO: The M6 Toll

For those who have driven through the mess that is the M6, the sheer joy of gliding along the M6 Toll is a sensation like no other. Always clear of incidents, its winding, graceful curves allow fast and satisfying driving. In fact, a recent poll found the average speed of all vehicles on the road to be 76mph, a full 6mph above the speed limit.

THREE: A40, Wales/England Border

On the face of it a dual carriageway linking two countries, the road that skips through Penraig, Whitchurch and Monmouth burrows deep into the Wye Valley, flanking its river and can be likened to the experience of a rollercoaster ride through the Canadian Rockies.

FOUR: A592, Windermere to Penrith

Better known as the Kirkstone Pass, this incredible route reaches almost 1,500ft, with spectacular valley views, drystone walls and wonderful winding roads.

FIVE: The Snake Pass

Edging through the Peak District towards Glossop, the Snake Pass is true to its name in offering a slithering track often seen on car adverts. The tranquillity of the spot is what draws drivers in, with elevation and adverse cambers testing driving skills to the max.



Three-time Formula One World Champion Ayrton Senna died on May 1, 1994, after his car crashed into a concrete barrier while he was leading the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix at the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari in Italy. Photo credit: Shutterstock

LEAVING IT ALL on the track

The recent death of young Renault driver Anthoine Hubert brought home the startling reality that although motor racing is as safe as it's ever been, the race track remains sport's most dangerous arena. August 31, will go down as a sad day for motor racing. Anthoine Hubert, just 22, lost his life following a horrific 170mph crash at Spa-Francorchamps circuit in Belgium. It was a reminder of the perils that these individuals face every time they step into a high-performance car, with the Frenchman becoming the 52nd driver to have been involved in a fatal car accident in high-performance competition since 1952.

UK test driver Cameron Earl was the first – the Yorkshireman was killed at the MIRA circuit in Nuneaton. A total of 14 drivers would lose their lives during the 1950s alone, with the Indianapolis Motor Speedway responsible for more than a third.

In 1982, Canadian Gilles Villeneuve also passed away following a crash in Belgium, but at the older Circuit Zolder. The most notable loss of life came in a horror weekend at the San Marino GP at Imola 12 years later, when three-time world F1 champion and legendary Brazilian driver Ayrton Senna died instantly when his steering column broke.

His death came just 24 hours after the Austrian Simtek driver Roland Ratzenberger was also killed.

Hubert's death was, at least, the first since Jules Bianchi succumbed a full nine months after injuries he sustained in a collision with a track rescue crane at the Japanese Suzuka circuit, in 2014.

The truth is, manufacturers are being pushed to ensure their machines are as safe as they can possibly be, and while performance has been affected by the imposing of new controls, you can be sure no dying driver would ever want the sport to die with him.



The helmet of late-Formula 2 French driver Anthoine Hubert is placed on the ground at the end of the funeral ceremony, at the Chartres cathedral, in Chartres, south of Paris. Photo credit: Thibault Camerlingh/Shutterstock



Photo credit: Paul Currie/BPI/Shutterstock

DEAD AND BURY-D

The sad demise of a once proud football club and what it means for 91 other Football League members.

In September, and in a scenario football fans have seen played out countless times, most expected the white knight to ride in and save Bury Football Club's 125-year membership of the Football League.

The nearer the deadline became, perversely, the more belief grew that things would resolve themselves. And yet, there was no white knight, there were no further stays of execution, and having failed to prove funds were in place for them to survive the season whilst taking care of the Company Voluntary Arrangement agreed a few months previously with creditors, Bury Football Club were expelled from the world's richest football league.

On the face of it, to let a former FA Cup winner wilt for the equivalent of two weeks of Alexis Sanchez's wages is preposterous, but the Shakers' plight is a

stark reminder that self-sufficiency is a requirement, not an option, and the Lancashire club's drive for higher division football – and the wages that accompany it – must be a salient warning to all clubs.

Emotionally, the situation was made worse for the Gigg Lane outfit by local rivals Bolton Wanderers' survival, though this isn't necessarily the end for Bury. They exist still as a business, with owner Steve Dale seemingly desperate to relinquish all ties as the club seek entry at a much lower level – probably the Northern Premier League – for the 2020/21 season.

What's left is very much the same as before. The pursuit of the riches at the top of the game is as fervent as ever in English football, and clubs will continue to gamble big time in pursuing that. What's changed is that chairman and owners know the trap door is no longer bolted shut.

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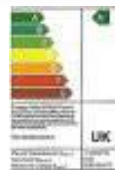


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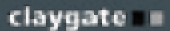
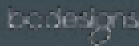
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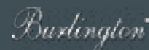
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