

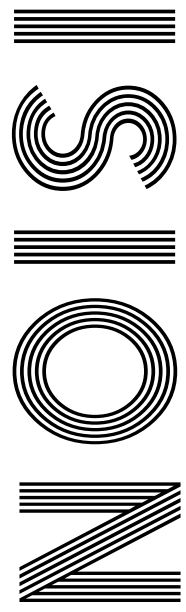


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At the time of print all content in VISION was relevant and up to date according to COVID-19 government guidelines

Editor's notes...



Nik Allen, Editor

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

I hope you are all keeping well in these uncertain times. Anyone who knows me will tell you I have always tried to look for the positive in every

situation, and yet the past few weeks have tested even my own strength of optimism.

Firstly, my father was hospitalised with COVID-19 - a battle I am relieved to say he won - and my business, like most small enterprises, faced some challenging times.

And yet we have weathered the storm and are back on the rise, and in something of a metaphor for this new dawn, my wife and I welcomed a new addition to our family in April when my daughter Emily was born happy, healthy and well.

I am not alone in having faced very real challenges, and yet, in adapting to the 'new normal', as they say, so many people have sensed a tremendous opportunity for reflection, and to be grateful for the lives they live.

What's more, I sense that our enforced separation from family and friends over this past couple of months will only make those relationships stronger and even more cherished in future, and perhaps that's the greatest positive of all.


Remember to keep your distance and keep washing your hands.

Hope you enjoy reading this month's **VISION**.

Nik

ACROSS: 1. CUTE, 3. HAMMERED, 9. ARRIVAL, 10. LEMUR, 11. INSTRUCTIONS, 14. MUM, 16. MODEL, 17. ALL, 18. EMPHATICALLY, 21. AUNTS, 22. ROTUNDA, 23. BLOSSOMS, 24. TEAK
 DOWN: 1. CHARISMA, 2. TERMS, 4. ALL, 5. MULTIPLICITY, 6. ROMANIA, 7. DARN, 8. OVEREMPHASIS, 12. CADET, 13. PLAY BACK, 15. MEMENTO, 19. LANCE, 20. LAMB, 22. RUM

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The TV doctor whose finger has been on the pulse of the nation's health needs for more than three decades.

Readers of a certain age will best associate Dr Hilary Jones with the so-called golden era of daytime TV when, in the 1990s, producers presided over formats that would cement the careers of the likes of Chris Evans, Ulrika Jonsson, Richard and Judy, Nicky Clarke, John Torode and Gino D'Acampo.

As GMTV's softly spoken, likeable and, to some, slightly lusty healthcare pro with all the answers, Dr Hilary found himself answering questions on everything from puberty to piles in front of a watching television audience of millions.

Having qualified as a medical doctor at the Royal Free Hospital in London in 1976, he spent time practising abroad before becoming a junior doctor, then GP, in Basingstoke. The charisma and calm he brought to matters of the body and mind meant it was only a matter of time before the media spotlight came his way, and he has since spent a career supplementing TV appearances with magazine columns (notably *The Sun* on Sunday pull-out *Fabulous*) and radio appearances (he is a regular on Steve Wright's mid-afternoon Radio 2 show).

"When I was first asked to appear on television, the concept of people phoning in to discuss their problems was a peculiar one, and no one was quite sure if it was an idea that would take off," he says.

"But it did, and it has spawned a huge range of regular shows that encourage people to open up about many aspects of their lives, their bodies and their minds.

"As a medical professional, it can only be a good thing to see people being honest about what's going on, although I'm always wary that we don't want to cheapen the issues as this is real life."

Dr Jones' relatability to a wide demographic has certainly come to the fore in recent weeks as he has re-emerged centre-stage as one of the leading mainstream voices offering support and advice in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

While championing the magnificent efforts of the public in the nation's fight to stem increases in coronavirus deaths, the 66-year-old also showed his tough side in the first week of May, when he took umbrage to a minority flouting regulations.

"We've all got to be in it together. Are those who refuse to self-isolate going to wear a t-shirt to hospital saying, 'Don't treat me, I didn't participate'? I don't think so.

"People who are careless are endangering not just their own lives but also the lives of so many around them," he continued, explaining that his colleagues on the frontline of hospital care are 12 times more likely to contract the virus than ordinary members of the public.

Current issues aside, the thrice-married TV personality has carved an impressive career out of his time at medical school. He has had six books published, participated in the fifth series of *Dancing on Ice*, and even appeared on a celebrity version of *The Chase*.

"I've had a lot of fun along the way, but the nuts and bolts of what I do will always come back to helping people get well and stay well – that's what I'm really passionate about."

Calling Dr Jones

THE Positive

Pandemic?

REFLECTING ON COVID-19'S SILVER LINING

While for an entire nation, the world around us has changed in ways more dramatic than we ever thought possible, there have been a couple of unexpected upsides to the terrifying global pandemic.

Firstly, we've seen society return to a much simpler way of life. Many work pressures – right down to the morning commute – have been removed, and with it, the hourly anxieties of jobs, tasks and duties lifted.

Children have enjoyed quality time with parents, and we've caught up with old friends more frequently than ever before, albeit online.

From bike rides to DIY, crafts to baking, health, relaxation and endless spurts of creativity and community spirit, the impact on us, as people, has been profound.

And yet, that is only half of the story. With our physical footprint on the environment lessened, we have seen nature reclaim great swathes of the country.

Car journeys have been minimised, meaning fewer harmful pollutants in the air (carbon dioxide levels have dropped 25 per cent); and there were 67 million fewer flights in the first three months of 2020 compared to the same period last year. Indeed, researchers at Stanford University estimated that improvements in air quality have saved the lives of 20 times the number of people killed by the virus.

Consider too that pollution levels in rivers are down – we all saw the pictures of the crystal clear canals in Venice – and even by Greta Thunberg's own admission, the Climate Crisis is "on hold".

While the positive environmental effects of coronavirus may only be temporary, perhaps the pandemic has opened our eyes to the very real impact we have on the world. And perhaps that, in turn, will ensure that while our investment in community, social distancing and hygiene is forever changed, so may we just give that little bit extra to the natural world too.



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Celebrating two decades of the interior design and former architect



There's something very gentleman-like about the style guide offered by Chester Jones. The renowned British interior designer, who operates out of Chelsea, has become one of the UK's leading lights in working together a combination of styles.

Comfortable combining traditional and modern, his talent is in matching pieces from vastly different eras, with a bridge between the two that could lean on emotion, intellect, colour, or simply texture.

"I never want to feel I am being held back by a contrast of styles," he says. "The real talent of an interior designer is to accept a number of pieces a client already has and wants included, even if they are vastly differing."



TO ACHIEVE THE CHESTER JONES LOOK, THERE ARE, HOWEVER, A FEW STAPLES:

- | Storage... there is no reason to hide away possessions that have been kept because they are valued, but using display and hidden elements to create a stylish space that is also lived in and appreciated is key
- | Pictures, sculptures, books... these three things represent the pivotal elements
- | Elements... wooden floors and big rugs offer cleanliness and maturity, but the browns should be broken up with rounded antiques, splashes of colour and lots of light
- | Craftsmanship... curves, bends and twists are designed to work together, while also blending the harder edges of 'on show' items such as books
- | No room for the showroom... perhaps the most important consideration is that any Chester Jones interior must be lived in and loved. It is not somewhere put together for a catalogue; it is an evolving, breathing space that invites people to relax in a style that has homeliness at its heart.



IMPROVE don't move



WHY WE HAVE BECOME A NATION OBSESSED WITH DOING UP OUR HOMES

While it's clear the year 2020 is set to be a disastrous one for the sales departments of estate agents, the trend for doing up rather than shipping out is one that began long before coronavirus changed our financial and lifestyle habits.

The lure for people to take what they have and improve on it has a lot to do with the growing escalation of the housing market. Across the UK, prices have increased, on average, by around five per cent each and every year over the past decade. While that doesn't sound much, it means a house bought for £200,000 in 2010 is now valued at £325,000.

That increase means it is unaffordable for many people to enter the market, while others who already own are happy to keep riding the wave in respect of prices continuing to rise, before considering selling as the curve lessens.

Of course, that tailing off could well happen by the end of the summer. The UK housing market is in something akin to cold storage at the moment, at a time when business is usually booming.

This COVID-19-driven change is enhanced by a 'stay at home' premise that is actually encouraging people to tend to all those home and DIY jobs that have typically been left. Sure enough, the more we 'mend this, change that, fix them', the more we paint, restyle, upcycle and redo, the less tendency we have to want to 'up sticks' and move somewhere else.

Put another way, an enforced and prolonged period of isolation could well make us one of the most creative nations in the world in terms of interior design and tending to our gardens. Now where are those *Amazing Spaces* and *Ground Force* books?

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Banish

BACTERIA

Did you know that bacteria can live for several months on surfaces within your home, as well as on other areas that you may not even have considered?



Handle the hotspots

When trying to keep their houses germ-free zones, people often forget crucial spots that everyone touches, such as doorknobs and tap handles. Spray these hotspots with a disinfectant, leave for 5–10 minutes and wipe clean.



Banish bed bacteria

With many spending more time in bed than usual, it is important that you wash your bedding on a more regular basis. To completely kill all bacteria, wash your sheets and pillowcases on a hot wash and dry on an antibacterial cycle.



Focus on your feet

If you have been heading out for your daily exercise, you could be bringing unwanted germs into your home. Take off your shoes before entering and wash the soles with hot, soapy water. Cleaning your doormat is also advisable.



Tackle technology

How many times a day do you touch your phone or your tablet? Probably more than you care to admit. Cleaning your technological devices with antibacterial wipes throughout the day is crucial if you want to stop the spread of bacteria.



Clean your cleaning equipment

Cleaning equipment such as mops and cloths are often overlooked when it comes to disinfecting items in your home. However, a failure to do this can lead to you spreading germs rather than eliminating them. Wash in hot, soapy water with a few drops of bleach for added oomph.



Home in on your home desk

Did you know that your home desk could contain up to 400 times more bacteria than your toilet seat? Prevent these germs from getting transferred to your hands by consistently wiping down any surfaces you work on with a disinfectant that contains at least 70 per cent alcohol.



Make your own MOUTH MASK

Whether you are concerned about contributing to the supply shortage, are worried about the additional expense or perhaps you just fancy getting crafty, making your own face mask could not be simpler.

SEW OPTION
YOU WILL NEED:
2 of 10 inches x 6 inches rectangles of fabric – tightly woven cotton is recommended | 2 of 6 inches pieces of elastic or rubber bands | Sewing machine | Needle and thread

HOW TO MAKE:
Stack the two rectangles on top of each other | Fold over the long sides ¼ inch and hem | Fold the double layer of fabric over ½ inch along the short sides and stitch down | Run a piece of elastic through the wide hem on each side of the mask using a large needle | Fasten the ends tightly together in a knot | Gently pull the elastic so the knots are tucked inside the hem | Adjust to fit your face

DIY FACE MASKS SHOULD:
✔ Fit snugly and always be secured over the face
✔ Include multiple layers of fabric
✔ Allow you to breathe without restriction
✔ Be washed regularly

DIY FACE MASKS SHOULD NOT:
✘ Allow too much light to filter through the fabric
✘ Need to be adjusted continuously
✘ Be used as a replacement for social distancing and good hygiene practices

NO-SEW OPTION
YOU WILL NEED:
A bandana or square cotton cloth (22 inches x 22 inches) | Rubber bands or hairbands

HOW TO MAKE:
Take the fabric and fold the top and bottom into the centre | Fold the sides towards the centre and loop the rubber bands around the fabric | Tuck one end of the fabric into the other | Lift the mask to your face and loop the bands over your ears | Adjust as needed, ensuring that your nose and mouth are fully covered

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USE YOUR noodle in the home

FIVE WAYS TO USE A POOL NOODLE IN YOUR HOME

If you have children and they like swimming, then chances are you have a fair few pool noodles lying around the house, because even though they are fairly big and noticeable items, you never seem to be able to locate one when you need it. Thankfully, there are ways that you can upcycle these popular pool aids.

Help your boots keep their shape

Lovers of knee-high or thigh-high boots rejoice: you no longer have to worry about them losing their shape in the bottom of your wardrobe. Simply cut an old pool noodle down to size, insert a piece into each boot and voila. Your boots will retain their shape indefinitely.

Child-proof your home

If you have an explorative toddler on your hands, then you will be keen to protect them from any dangers in your home. Pool noodles make the perfect protective covering for corners as they are soft and shock-resistant. Just slice down the middle and place on any sharp edges.

Use for press-painting

Most little ones love to craft, but the constant trips to Hobbycraft can become expensive. Luckily, your children can enjoy a fun messy play activity using just a pool noodle and some paint. All you need to do is cut your noodle into small circles and let the press-painting commence.

Prevent trousers from creasing

If you tend to overcrowd your wardrobe, you may find that your clothes, especially trousers, become easily creased. Fortunately, a humble cut of pool noodle inserted over the bar of a hanger can solve this problem.

Use as a hose alternative

How often have you struggled to fill a big bucket in your sink? Avoid this issue by simply attaching a pool noodle to your tap and then placing the other end in your bucket.



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How will we operate in 'The New Normal'

We are fully compliant with the governments guidance on managing the risks of COVID-19. We have put in extra measures in place to ensure that both our clients and staff are safe by carrying out risk assessments, providing our teams with PPE and strict processes in place for both clients and teams when visiting to carry out our services. Feedback from our

customers have been very positive and many have welcomed us back due to the measures we have put in place.

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We are taking on new regular commercial clients. Many offices and commercial businesses who have the responsibility of ensuring that their work spaces are sanitised and cleaned are booking with us for regular cleans.

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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Brave boy set to finally get the bedroom he needs

A brave 12-year-old boy from Billericay who has a life-limiting condition is a step closer to having the bedroom he needs after building work at his home finally started.

George Shippey has the muscle-wasting condition Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) and has had to wait for more than two years for work on his new bedroom to start following a battle for planning permission to be granted.

The £150,000 transformation will feature hoists built into the beams, a specialist toilet and shower, a standing chair, a specialist bed and enough space for George to manoeuvre his electric wheelchair.

A long-standing process with Basildon Council finally came to an end this year before work started on George's new room on April 23.

On the day building work started, George's parents, Kerry and John, shared their relief.

They said: "It's taken us a long, exhausting two-and-a-half-year journey to get to this point.

"Fighting our case for planning permission

approval, advice from medical specialists on future equipment provision like ceiling hoists and room sizing requirements, selecting the right builder, heaps of council red tape – the list goes on.

"We know there's going to be stressful times for four to six months of the build duration, but this next step on our DMD journey is going to make a significant difference to George, and he can finally say goodbye to the stairs in our home which he can no longer get up without help."

A month later, on May 16, George's mum, Kerry, provided an update to **VISION** Billericay Shenfield.

She said: "The piling and footings are now complete, with the block and beam floor being laid next week.

"They will also start to excavate the garden to enable it to be wheelchair friendly to George as he couldn't get into the garden before without us setting up a ramp."

Regular updates on the build and how George is getting on can be followed on the Cure for George Facebook page.

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Could vehicles be banned from the high street?

Vehicles could be banned from Billericay High Street during the day for the rest of the year to ensure there is as much space as possible for pedestrians to socially distance.

The proposal is being led by the leader of Basildon Council, Gavin Callaghan, who wrote to ECC saying: "With retail shops reducing their customer density inside their premises this will inevitably lead to queues outside, greater density in and around entrances, and indeed greater density on the high street.

The plans, which have not yet been confirmed, follow talks by Essex County Council (ECC) and Basildon Council to ban vehicles from both Billericay and Wickford High Streets until February 2021.

"Pedestrian passage that adheres to a two-metre distancing rule on a pavement between a road in use by traffic and a queue for a shop will become impossible; pedestrians will inevitably step off the kerb and into the road. This is very dangerous.

It would mean pedestrianisation of the high street from 6am to 6pm, seven days a week, until February.

It's hoped it will make the town more appealing for people as they will know there is enough space for social distancing measures to be followed.

"Accordingly, we want to propose the full pedestrianisation of the full length of Billericay and Wickford High Streets."

Coward jailed for 11 years after violent attack



A man who violently attacked his victim with a glass bottle in a bar in Billericay has been jailed for 11 years.

Charles Cory, of Brentwood, was sentenced at Basildon Crown Court on March 31 for grievous bodily harm with intent after he previously admitted the offence at court.

The attack took place on March 30 last year after Cory was seen talking to a woman in a bar called French Martini, in Western Road.

She went on to dance with another man, frustrating Cory, who threw liquid from a glass at the man before striking him in the face with a glass bottle.

This caused several deep cuts to his face and the victim was left bleeding heavily.

Cory was jailed for nine years and seven months for the assault, and another one year and five months for breaching a suspended sentence, to run concurrently.

Investigating officer, PC Tyler Hadlow, said: "As a result of the attack, the victim suffered from several permanently visible injuries, which consisted of deep cuts to his forehead, nose and cheek, as well as severe bruising.

"This was a completely unprovoked attack and it was found that Cory had used a weapon intending to cause as much damage as possible.

"He received 11 years in prison for his cowardly actions."



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Billericay is patrolled by a dedicated team of police officers and PCSOs. Their role is to reduce crime and the fear of crime and to investigate and reduce antisocial behaviour, focusing on the areas that pose the greatest harm to the community. They do this by being a visible presence in the local community, working with partners and adopting a problem-solving approach. Some of the officers are dedicated town centre team officers, whose role also includes supporting Billericay businesses and the local authority to create a safe town centre so that the community can enjoy Billericay High Street and its leisure activities. In addition to the dedicated team looking after Billericay and the community, our colleagues from the Basildon Local Policing Team respond to emergencies in and around the town.

paused during the pandemic but we are still here for you, and if you see us out and about please come and say hello, from a safe distance of course. We are following government guidance closely and look forward to the future when we will be able to resume some of our face-to-face activities in Billericay, such as Coffee with Cops and meeting community groups. These meetings may look and feel different as we enter a new normal, but please be reassured your community policing team will continue to help people, keep people safe and catch criminals.

During the pandemic we have been out and about making sure people have been following the government guidance. We are happy to say that the vast majority of people have been complying, and where we find others who are not, we have been engaging with them to explain the importance of following the guidance, encouraging them to follow the guidance. Only as a last resort do we take enforcement action. We are all in this together and we understand that it is inconvenient and frustrating to have your usual activities restricted in this way, but we thank you for doing the right thing to help beat coronavirus.

You can tell the team about issues of antisocial and suspicious behaviour either online or to our email, basildoncommunitypolicingteam@essex.police.uk

As you will be aware, our regular meetings within the community and at community events have been

Citizens of the Year announced



The town has recognised two community heroes by crowning them this year's Citizen and Young Citizen of the Year.

The annual awards, organised by Billericay Town Council, honour those who play a vital role in the community.

Richard Leahy was crowned Citizen of the Year for dedicating hundreds of voluntary hours to the local community and for his involvement with many of the events in the town, including the Soap Box Derby, Christmas Market, Fireworks Display and Santa Sleigh.

Meanwhile, Katie Smith was named Young Citizen of the Year for her formidable voluntary contribution to the Billericay Parkrun, for taking on a number of the volunteer roles and always being positive, friendly and supportive towards all the participants.

A Billericay Town Council spokesman said: "Richard's motivation, energy and commitment to fundraising have helped ensure that many vulnerable and marginalised people have benefited.

"Katie's contribution has helped shape the 'personality' of the event and its positive reputation in the town.

"Congratulations and thank you to both of our winners and to all those that were nominated for volunteering with our community."


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Former soldier completes Zimmer frame challenge



A former soldier from Billericay who is paralysed from the waist down completed an epic challenge.

Steven Salmon has always wanted to compete in the London Marathon and, despite now being in a wheelchair, he was set to achieve that goal on April 26.

Coronavirus then caused the famous marathon to be postponed until October.

Instead, the former Royal Engineer decided to leave his wheelchair and use his Zimmer frame to cover 4,000 metres for the charity, Whizz-Kidz.

The agonising challenge took five hours and seven minutes, and even when he fell, the brave former soldier picked himself up to cover the distance.

Steven said: "Inspired by Captain Tom Moore I worked out I could cover 160m in one length of my road and decided to do repeat it 25 times to make it 4,000 metres.

"It was really difficult, and I had huge blisters on my hands afterwards, but I was not going to give up as Whizz-Kidz means so much to me.

"I am still planning on doing the London Marathon on the rearranged date and am lining up more challenges after. I can honestly say I will always do what I can for Whizz-Kidz."

To donate, please visit www.uk.virginmoneygiving.com/StephenSalmon1

When schools were told to close in March, the principal and headteacher of St John's School, Billericay, started to prepare to deliver lessons in a totally new format. In St John's 92-year history it had never closed or had to deliver remote lessons.

But all at St John's rose to the challenge admirably.

Pupils in the Kindergarten and Junior School had remote lessons using Zoom and Senior School pupils have followed their full timetable using Microsoft Teams.

Headteacher Mr Angeli praised the efforts of the whole school community.

He said: "My pupils have actively engaged in their new learning routines, parental support has been wonderful and our staff have worked relentlessly to ensure our varied curriculum has been delivered. Thankfully, with the technology available our pupils have adapted to this 'new norm' of remote teaching. We do, however, look forward to the coming months and being able to welcome back our pupils and parents through St John's doors once again."

Norsey Wood to be transformed

The Norsey Wood Society (NWS) is continuing to make and plan improvements following a £9,500 donation by the Co-Op's Queen's Park branch.

Shoppers there nominated NWS, which was subsequently chosen as the shop's local cause.

That money is starting to be invested into the wood, with five pedestrian entrance map boards, designed to encourage visitors to explore further into the wood, set to be installed.

Other projects include planting hedgerows and selective felling of the secondary woodland encroaching on Norsey Meadow to recreate habitat for pollinators by encouraging wild flowers and grasses.



Teachers and pupils dealing with pandemic

Staff and students at a school in Billericay have been praised for adapting to the challenges of the pandemic.

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Lucy & Lisa

At Any Little Thing it is business as usual at this worrying time. We as a company will NOT be neglecting our elderly and vulnerable, leaving them to fend for themselves at this incredibly worrying time, we want to support everyone as much as possible.

Our passion to help those in need has not been lost!

The elderly need more reassurance rather than us backing away and giving less.

Our services include household chores, running errands, picking up prescriptions, doing shopping and any other little thing our customers may need.

Obviously in these hard times, we are starting to adapt our plans moving forward as we would like to be able to support our customers as safely as possible. We are of course, as a team, closely monitoring government guidelines with regards to hygiene, always putting our customers and staff first.

Also, within the government guidelines, it mentions that at this time it is extremely important to keep everything clean including highly used surfaces and rooms, where care teams may be entering, as well as any other forms of support for the vulnerable. We supply all our own cleaning products which disinfect surfaces and our staff are supplied with antibacterial wipes and clean cloths as well, to help support this. We are also looking at supplying our staff with other forms of PPE should they or the customer wish for us to use them.

Some of our customers are very lonely or have no support in their lives, or they possibly lack in understanding and/or don't wish to ask neighbours for help and assistance. That is where Any Little

Thing really are appreciated and we love what we do, seeing what differences we make.

Part of our adaptations are to be able to support those that are not too sure about having visitors at this present moment, as well as those who still require us to visit.

WE WOULD LIKE TO REACH OUT TO ALL OF YOU THAT ARE READING AND CAN RELATE TO THIS ARTICLE...

If you are looking for some companionship but would rather a phone call conversation, we as a company are here to listen and to talk. We can assign you a friendly member of staff to have conversation with you at least once a week free of charge amongst these hard times.



You can share your likes dislikes and preferred topic of conversation and we would be happy to ask a suitable member of staff to talk to you. At Any Little Thing we are very passionate about including everyone of you as much as we possibly can!

We can also arrange shopping deliveries tackling the shops so you don't have to!

PLEASE CALL US TODAY & FIND OUT HOW WE CAN HELP YOU!

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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Choir aims to hit the right note and raise £1million

A Shenfield choir is helping an ambitious fundraising bid to raise £1million for the NHS by virtually busking.

The Buskerteers Choir, which includes a group in Shenfield, recorded a version of Ben E. King's hit *Stand By Me* with 150 singers taking part.

It is hoped the charity effort will attract one million viewers with each donating £1 to help the group reach its target. All profits are to be put directly into the NHS, via NHS Charities Together.

The community choir, which has several other groups in Essex, initially had plans to raise money for charity by busking.

This was adapted once the coronavirus outbreak worsened and lockdown started.

Founder and choirmaster, Andrew Small, said: "I

asked all of the members to video themselves singing one of our arrangements, *Stand By Me*, and I was able to edit 150 odd clips together to make a virtual choir of them all singing into their smartphones.

"It sounds so lovely. They are just singing to their phones and when it all comes together like that and it still sounds so beautiful, it's totally overwhelming and actually emotional to watch.

"The lyrics to *Stand By Me* are a really important message, one that we really needed to remind ourselves of but also one that we needed to put out into the community.

"It's a difficult time where people are losing their jobs, being furloughed and so on. People are struggling at the moment, so I didn't want to ask for huge amounts of money from people."

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Schoolgirl sells her toys and DVDs for the NHS



A pupil from Long Ridings Primary School has sold DVDs and toys from outside her house to raise funds for the NHS.

As reported by In Your Area, Year 5 pupil, Phoebe, raised £245 at the time of writing.

She spent the week leading up to the sale making posters for display around the area where she lives in a bid to garner as much interest as possible to raise money for the NHS Together Charities.

Social distancing and hygiene rules were followed, with donations being put in a bucket and antibacterial hand sanitiser being available to shoppers.

The sale was a one-day-only event but people from the community have continued to show their support for the fundraiser by posting money through Phoebe's door or donating online.

Phoebe, aged 10, said: "I really enjoyed the sale, lots of friends and neighbours came, and I'd like to thank everyone who donated."

Phoebe's teacher, Katie Scott, who heard about the fundraiser, said: "All the staff at Long Ridings are so proud of Phoebe's achievement – what a great amount to raise for the NHS."

Donations can still be made to Phoebe's fundraiser by visiting uk.virginmoneygiving.com/PhoebeBrudenell

Safety warning as train numbers increase

Shenfield residents are being urged to take extra care if they are using the level crossing to the east of the town during their daily exercise.

The warning comes as rail services have increased since May 18 after a period of time when fewer trains were running because of coronavirus.

The level crossing is popular with dog walkers and runners and the warning follows an increase in use of the crossing.

Level crossing users are also reminded to close

gates and to keep children close by and dogs on leads when crossing. Parents should also make their children aware of the dangers.

Cyclists should always dismount before walking their bike across.

Becky Crocker, Network Rail's community safety manager for Anglia, said: "Up until now, people may not have seen a train on their daily walk, but level crossings that were quiet last week will be busier this week, so it's important to follow the instructions and double check before you cross. Don't take any chances and stop, look, listen."

Donation allows key workers to eat for free

A kind-hearted man has vowed to pay for the shopping of NHS workers, key workers and vulnerable people in Shenfield until the coronavirus lockdown ends.

The man, who wishes to remain anonymous, wanted to help those who may be struggling financially or practically by paying for their shopping.

He donated £10,000 to the Co-op in Hutton Road so the money could be used by NHS workers, key workers and vulnerable people.

The store manager, Kevin, looks after the money and ensures anyone who needs help with their shopping can access it.

There are no rules as to what items the money can be used on and the kind-hearted donor vowed that once the £10,000 runs out, he would continue to help those most in need.

In a radio interview with Phoenix FM he said: "My wife is ex-NHS which was part of the reason why I decided to do this."

"We have helped people for several years and try not to do large faceless charities – so we thought this would help people locally."

For more information speak to Kevin, the store manager, or call 01276 210134.





SOMBRE VE CELEBRATIONS

for our departed heroes



The street parties were present, Vera Lynn’s eclectic harmonies piped out of speakers, while generations paid emotional, wistful tributes to departed heroes, and yet VE celebrations this year took on a rather unusual feel.

That a nation still came together to commemorate and lay thanks on May 8, the 75th anniversary of VE Day, typified the fortitude and spirit that guided us to victory all those years ago. While we took seriously the distancing limitations of coronavirus, people across our county refused to have their tributes quelled by a modern pandemic.

Britons also encountered another challenge this year, and one that had nothing to do with the two-metre rule – millions of diaries and calendars were published with this, one of the key dates of the year, being wrong. It was as a result of the early May Bank Holiday moving back four days to mark those World War II celebrations. With the switch only being finalised in June last year, an estimated 30 million diaries and calendars were incorrectly printed.

While events this year weren’t allowed to feature mass gatherings, special events or the participation of pubs, perhaps it was fitting that on such a landmark anniversary people were offered the chance to make rather more sombre, personal tributes to those who fought for their country between 1939 and 1945. It’s a far cry from when hundreds of thousands of people marked the end of the bitter war with celebrations centred in The Mall, London, outside Buckingham Palace, as King George VI and Queen Elizabeth stood on the balcony to wave to the cheering crowds.

Missing on that day was a young Princess Elizabeth – one of the rare times that the future Queen slipped incognito to join in the revelries of her future subjects, as she and her sister, Margaret, accompanied by a 16-strong group of trusted members of the royal household, slipped out of the palace to sample first-hand the celebrations.

Recalling the event in an interview a few years ago, the Queen said: “I think it was one of the most memorable nights of my life.”

It was also memorable for one 15-year-old boy from Harrow, Ronald Thomas, who told his family how he had danced with the future Queen. For years he had trouble getting people to believe him.

This year, the Queen paid tribute to those fallen heroes, as well as referencing the profound challenges 2020 has brought, in an emotive speech, delivered in her usual impeccable style.

“Today it may seem hard that we cannot mark this special anniversary as we would wish. Instead we remember from our homes and our doorsteps.

“But our streets are not empty; they are filled with the love and the care that we have for each other.

“And when I look at our country today, and see what we are willing to do to protect and support one another, I say with pride that we are still a nation those brave soldiers, sailors and airmen would recognise and admire.”

Photo credit: Paul Marriott/Shutterstock, Leslie Priest/AP/Shutterstock

The truly inspirational SIR TOM MOORE



THE STORY OF THE WAR HERO WHO WAS CERTAIN HIS DAYS OF NATIONAL DUTY WERE BEHIND HIM

When social media is bad, it can be the source of an intense amount of ill-feeling, frustration and negative conjecture; but when it's good, it is life-changing, charming and the most wonderful reflection of the human spirit.

Ultimately, as the story of the newly knighted Sir Tom Moore unfolded towards the end of April, it was shown to be the latter, and how...

Here was a former British Army Officer who performed heroics in the India and Burma campaigns of the Second World War. Retiring from combat in the 1950s to become an instructor at the Armoured Fighting Vehicle School down in Dorset, his return to civilian life only once saw him raise his head above the parapet as a guest on the late Terry Wogan's 'Marmite' celebrity wordplay game show *Blankety Blank*, and even that was some 37 years ago.

So when the then 99-year-old decided to take on 100 laps of his back garden – 10 laps per day at 25 metres per lap – to raise money for the organisation NHS Charities Together, it was one of the very simplest and yet most precious gestures the father of two had made in an impressively rewarding life.

Hoping to raise £1,000, the fundraising project soon caught the imagination of social media, and, as with all things that go viral, a simple act grew to a magnitude that someone of any age, let alone a centenarian – a landmark Sir Tom reached on April 30 – would struggle to fully comprehend.

Surging onwards and having

broken the £39million barrier by the second week in May, Sir Tom's efforts have personified the heroic spirit the nation is witnessing and applauding in wake of the COVID-19 outbreak.

And sure enough, his rewards have been a delight for several million admirers to bask in. The inspirational role model was named an honorary Colonel, was rewarded with an RAF fly-past, and enjoyed a personal greeting from Prime Minister Boris Johnson, as well as, of course, receiving the obligatory telegram from the Queen marking his 100th birthday.

Sir Tom, who contracted skin cancer aged 98, said, "Reaching 100 is quite something. Reaching 100 with such interest in me and huge generosity from the public is very overwhelming.

"People keep saying what I have done is remarkable; however, it's actually what you have done for me which is remarkable.

"Please always remember, tomorrow will be a good day."

Sir Tom's immediate 'tomorrows' may still be spent trying to answer some of the 150,000 birthday cards he has received; while he may at least be consoled that the demise of *Top of the Pops* means he doesn't have to venture to Elstree to perform his duet *You'll Never Walk Alone* with Michael Ball, after their version leapt to the top of the singles chart.

But perhaps in the greatest tribute of all, Sir Tom was awarded a knighthood, an award fast-tracked through the walls of power.

As an exemplar for ordinary people performing extraordinary things, the veteran is the first to deflect praise towards others; but in troubled times a nation needs figureheads, focal points and friendly faces in order to make our collective efforts feel real, and in Sir Tom Moore we have all that and so much more besides.



PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

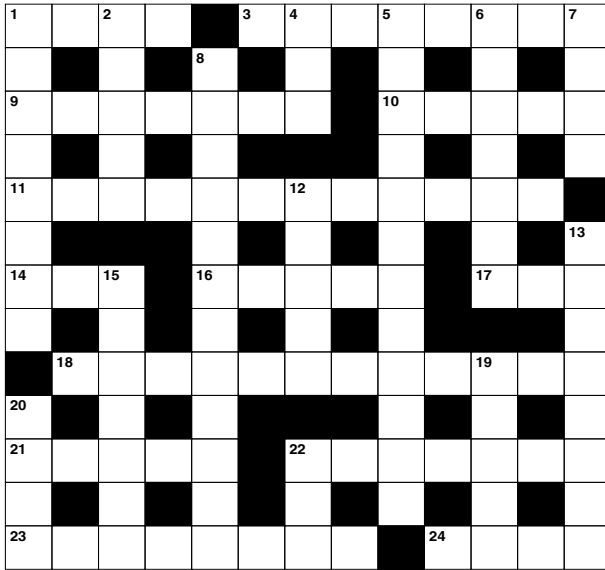
Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4

ACROSS

- 1. Pretty (4)
- 3. Battered (8)
- 9. Act of turning up (7)
- 10. Arboreal primate (5)
- 11. Directions (12)
- 14. Silent (3)
- 16. Scale representation (5)
- 17. Be unwell (3)
- 18. Vehemently (12)
- 21. Female relatives (5)
- 22. Circular hall (7)
- 23. Comes into flower (8)
- 24. Type of wood (4)

DOWN

- 1. Personal magnetism (8)
- 2. Conditions (5)
- 4. Entirely (3)
- 5. A large number (12)
- 6. European country (7)
- 7. Mend with rows of stitches (4)
- 8. Excessive stress (12)
- 12. Military trainee (5)
- 13. Reproduce recorded sound (4,4)



- 15. Keepsake; reminder (7)
- 19. Spear (5)
- 20. Young sheep (4)
- 22. Strong spirit (3)

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ When cranberries are ripe, they will bounce like rubber balls
- ▶ Pound cake got its name from the ingredients – you typically use a pound of flour, butter, sugar and eggs
- ▶ Fruits such as apples, pears and apricots are all part of the rose family
- ▶ Apples can float because they are made up of around 25 per cent air
- ▶ The word potato came from Spanish patata
- ▶ Bananas grow in large hanging bunches
- ▶ Grapes explode when you put them in the microwave
- ▶ A strawberry has an average of about 200 seeds and a pomegranate can contain up to 1,000 seeds

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Tree-lined



SIMPLE TREE IDEAS FOR GARDENS OF ANY SIZE

We all know the majesty of trees – decorative, oxygen-giving, protecting, privacy-offering and effortlessly evolving over time; they are perhaps the friendliest of nature's plants for the variety and variance they offer to both the biggest and the smallest spaces.

That means, whether you have a sprawling field out the back of your property or a simple back yard, clever use of trees can really shape a space.

PYRUS CALLEYRANA

An upright, tear-shaped tree that is perfect for gardens that have light up above, though perhaps are restricted in terms of square footage.

The green spread casts light down and the tree will self-maintain through all seasons.

ACER GRISEUM (PAPERBARK MAPLE)

This is a tree recently voted the most beautiful for gardens, given its characterful grey trunk and a spray of leaf colours that blend and weave into any foreground. Slow-growing, it won't consume the space.

MAGNOLIA GRANDIFLORA

A tree that bows out at the top to provide the perfect cover for something you wish to hide, like a street lamp or neighbour's basketball hoop. And of course, with a spray of white flowers that emerge as the year progresses, this is a variety that takes on an evolving personality.

CRAB APPLE TREES

So often the tree of our childhoods; as kids we contemplated whether to eat the apples that dropped from the tree. In garden terms, these small and perfectly formed beauties can be used to shield street-side windows from prying passers-by.

They won't grow to any extreme height, and flower attractively too.

BONSAI TREES

Of course, if space is really at a premium but you still crave the lure of a plant that has the rigidity of bark and the personality of a tree, bonsai are the way forward. While we mainly associate them as being very small, bonsai can grow well above head height.



Photo credit: gardeninghq.com



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HORTICULTURE HEROES:

Dan Pearson



THE GARDENER GOING BACK TO THE SOIL

It's fair to describe Dan Pearson as someone who never tires of experiencing the thrill of nature's rustic wholesomeness.

Dan is a horticulturalist of the highest regard, who has trained at the UK's greatest botanical institutions, written newspaper columns for more than two decades and even been dedicated an exhibition at the Garden Museum, London. To Dan, gardening represents an absorbing, encompassing experience that reconnects him with something spiritual.

"Being outdoors and seeing nature, in its simplest form, growing and flourishing around you is the most amazing thing," he says. "It's something we can all enjoy – whether that's rich sprays of colour or the simple green bounty of plants interacting and intersecting with each other."

Our ability to grow and flourish in our natural surroundings is something even the most modest gardener can do.

"My advice is to start with something small – even just a window box. Choose plants that interest and excite you, learn about them and go from there."

"I think that horticulture has an enormous amount to give back to a world that needs this connection with greenery and things that you eat: knowing where your food came from, and knowing how to go about growing it while still preserving space."

"That means the gardens are never static; they are always changing and always adapting."

Pearson says the crucial step in effective gardening is to have a plan – to structure a project from the start, to set goals and to follow through on them to the end.

"It really doesn't matter what you decorate your garden with – you should go with what feels right. However, what I would say is it's so easy to get distracted, and I am testament to the fact you can end up with four or five unfinished jobs unless you plan properly, so that would be my best tip."

Photo credit: Heathcliff O'Malley/Shutterstock



GARDENING

JUNE BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH:

Rose

For those born in the month of June, your birth flower is the rose. Roses are known for being the flower of love, and people born in June are said to be true romantics. Easy to grow, available in an abundance of colours and with a heavenly sweet scent, roses are a great addition to any garden.

WHAT DOES A ROSE SYMBOLISE?

Although roses are most commonly associated with love, beauty and devotion, each colour can be used to convey a different message or emotion.

The red rose means, "I love you." The pink rose symbolises happiness. White roses are used to convey innocence and purity. And a yellow rose symbolises friendship but can also be used to express jealousy.

WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOU?

If you were born in June, you are definitely a sucker for romance, plus you are more likely to get on well with others and adjust to new situations with ease.

Style-wise, you favour a

classic and timeless look and can make elegance appear effortless.

HOW TO GROW ROSES

Roses crave sunlight, so you need to pick a spot that offers at least six hours of sun a day. Try to choose soil that is rich and well drained to ensure your flowers bloom.

The ideal time to plant roses is in early spring, and you can pick between a bare root variety or container-grown plants.

Water directly to the soil using a soaker hose or drip irrigation – do not water the foliage.

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON PESTS FOR ROSES?

Aphids and caterpillars are the most common pests for roses and can be removed by hand in the early stages. Alternatively, the insecticide Rose Clear is highly effective.



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Working from home has many advantages, such as saving time and money on the daily commute, but it also comes with disadvantages such as little quiet space to concentrate, or make and receive private business calls. This can lead to a lack of routine, which in turn can cause a drop in productivity compared with working in a normal office environment.

One way in which you could eliminate distractions would be to look at the garden as the place for a new workspace. Your usual outlay on commuting could help offset the cost of having an R. Page Concrete Buildings Garden Room installed in your garden.

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ANY GIVEN SUNDAE

Home-made sauces and ideas for superb summer treats



Let's be honest, we're all going to be spending a bit more time than we've been used to in the kitchen this summer.

While recreating that true summer vibe somewhere exotic may appear a pipe dream as things stand, that doesn't mean our limited outside space can't host a daring and dazzling array of summer treats, so here are some sauce ideas to get you going:

NUTELLA NICETIES

Perhaps the simplest sauce of them all – just melt three tablespoons of Nutella in a pan, adding a bit of water to keep the mixture moving.

When your sauce is smooth, runny and hot, add nuts, hundreds and thousands or any other textured topping and serve with ice cream or over some sliced banana pieces.

RASPBERRY SALTED CARAMEL SAUCE

This one takes a bit more effort but is well worth it. Take a cup of water and ½ cup of sugar and mix in a heated pan until it boils and the sugar turns brown.

Then add ½ cup of cream and the same quantity of raspberry purée, having first strained it to remove the seeds. Whisk, add 3 tbsp of butter, remove from the heat and add ¾ tsp of sea salt.

Use immediately for a thin sauce or refrigerate overnight for a thicker topping that's a belter on chocolate brownies.

COFFEE SALTED CARAMEL SAUCE

For a more adult twist, adjust the ingredients to create the perfect coffee sauce that's great on cakes, cookies, muffins and more. This time it's one cup of sugar, ½ cup of water (and a further ¼ cup to make your coffee), then ¾ cup of cream. Butter increases to 5 tbsp but sea salt reduces to just ¼ tsp.

Make in much the same way, adding the ¼ cup of coffee where you'd previously introduced the raspberries, with 1/4 tsp of vanilla extract which is the final touch to set the whole thing off in a smoky, dreamy, saucy complexion.

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STAYING FIT & HEALTHY AT HOME



Looking after yourself has never been more important, yet, sadly, it has never been more difficult. Fortunately, there are several ways that you can ensure you stay fighting fit and healthy at home.

EMBRACE #HOMEWORCKOUTS

Missing your motivational gym classes? Fear not, social media is awash with free workouts that you can carry out from the comfort of your own home. Whether you fancy some stress-busting yoga or something a bit more hardcore, such as Peloton indoor cycling classes, there truly is a training session for everyone.

STEP UP YOUR CLEANING REGIME

Doing housework burns a lot more calories than you might think. Half an hour cleaning your windows? 150 calories. Digging up some weeds? Up to 200 calories per 30-minute session. Simply pop on some of your favourite tunes and get to work. The more effort you put in, the better the results.

FOCUS ON FEEL-GOOD FOODS

Nutrition is just as important as your activity levels if you want to stay fit and healthy at home. Try to incorporate foods that are rich in minerals like iron, zinc and selenium which will release 'happy hormones' and make you feel physically and mentally strong.

DO NOT BECOME TOO SEDENTARY

Understandably, most of us will be spending more time sitting rather than moving at the moment, but long periods of inactivity can have long-lasting effects on your body. Combat this by alternating periods of sitting with standing if you are working from home, running up and down the stairs a few times every hour and taking full advantage of your allowed outdoor exercise time each day.

OTHER FUN WAYS TO KEEP FIT IN YOUR HOME INCLUDE:

- 👉 Dancing
- 👉 Playing with your dog
- 👉 Skipping
- 👉 Playing games such as It and hide and seek with your kids





Fancy burning off some self-isolation boredom by popping to the local gym? Your luck's out. COVID-19 has ensured our time posturing and perspiring in the company of others is postponed indefinitely, but that doesn't mean you can't still get in shape.

RUNNING: It's the go-to exercise that we all come back to in the end – it's free, requires no expensive equipment, is endless in its range, and the more you do it the easier it gets. From pavement plodders to sparky park speed merchants, is the simple 'run' the best exercise option of them all?

FRONT ROOM WORKOUT: Joe Wicks may have cornered the market with his lithe lounge routines, but right back to Rosemary Conley on TV-am we were stretching, straining and sweating to workouts in the confines of our front rooms. There's never been a better time to take up the challenge.

TOUR DE UK: The bike succeeds where so many other forms of exercise fail by allowing its rider the rare pleasure of easing off the gas when things get tough. A venture out on your bicycle is not only pleasurable, but will also give your limbs a deserved rest whenever you can locate a downhill section.

THE WEIGHT IS OVER: Free weights at home can quickly boost muscle mass, and in the comfort of your bedroom, kitchen or garden, you can ensure absolute privacy where no unsuspecting audience will witness eye-popping strains akin to an episode of *World's Strongest Man*.

YES TO YOGA: If you feel your exercise regime is more of the mind than the body, start with a simple yoga or Pilates tutorial. You can ease yourself into positions you never previously thought achievable, while politely backing out at difficult moments or when you decide it's 'Pimms O'Clock'.

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BEAUTY



Heavenly HOME-MADE HAND CREAM

Ensure your hands are silky smooth, no matter how many times you wash or sanitise them, with this simple and nourishing DIY, non-greasy hand cream recipe.

- > Use whenever your hands feel dry or in need of a moisture boost
- > Also use on rough patches of skin on your feet, knees and elbows

WHAT MAKES THIS HOME-MADE HAND CREAM SO EFFECTIVE?

Shea butter is the nirvana of skincare ingredients, having the ability not only to nourish your skin but also to heal it as it contains vitamins A and E. Plus, unlike coconut-oil-based moisturisers, shea butter will not leave your hands feeling greasy, just super smooth.

Sunflower oil is known for its calming effects on the skin, making it ideal for hands that are feeling sore and irritated from frequent sanitising.

Depending on what essential oils you choose to include, you can expect to experience a whole host of benefits. We recommend lemongrass for its ability to relieve stress and combat insomnia, and eucalyptus which can help heal sores, cuts and any other abrasions owing to its germicidal qualities.

YOU WILL NEED:

- > 3oz shea butter – although both avocado and mango butter are good alternatives
- > 1 tbsp sunflower oil – organic if possible
- > 10 drops of essential oils – we love eucalyptus and lemongrass, but you can use whatever you have in the cupboard

HOW TO MAKE:

- > Add the shea butter and sunflower oil to a small pan
- > Gently heat until melted
- > Pour into a non-reactive bowl
- > Stir in your preferred essential oils
- > Place in fridge for 30 minutes to harden
- > Whip mixture with a hand mixer for 30 seconds until cream is fluffy and doubled in size
- > Do not overwhip as the mixture will turn stiff
- > Transfer cream into a sterilised jar



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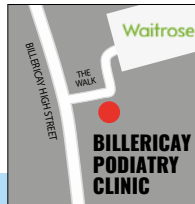
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Personal STYLIST



FASHION

HOW A PERSONAL STYLIST CAN HELP YOU FIND YOUR TRUE STYLE PERSONALITY

You don't have to be a celebrity to employ the services of a stylist; it is a savvy investment which will save you money long term. By learning about your true style personality, what suits your body shape and what colours work with your skin, eye and hair colour, you can avoid costly fashion mistakes.

A personal stylist will work with you to understand your style personality and how you like to express yourself through clothes.

There are six style personalities. You may find that you fall into more than one, depending on your mood and the occasion you are dressing for:

CREATIVE – Loves to dress with an artistic edge and has a quirky sense of style. She likes to push the boundaries in what she wears and will mix and match different prints and looks within an outfit.

DRAMATIC – Likes to make a statement when she walks into the room, she is eclectic in her wardrobe choices and enjoys a statement print, bold colours and accessories. She is happy to experiment with the latest trends.

ROMANTIC – Adores pretty, feminine details such as lace, embroidery and ruffles. She will put a lot of effort into her appearance and enjoys dressing up.

CLASSIC – Enjoys being neat and tidy and doesn't like to buy into the latest trends. She likes her wardrobe to be functional and timeless in style.

NATURAL – Has a casual sense of style and likes her clothes to be comfortable and breathable. She likes her style to be a good balance of relaxed and minimalistic, with low maintenance and natural fabrics.

CHIC – Very 'put together' and always looks immaculate. She enjoys a simple yet elegant style of clothing, tending to invest in her wardrobe rather than buying into current fast-fashion pieces.

Alex Standley is a Personal Stylist with 15 years' experience in the Fashion Industry. If you'd like to find out more, please visit www.luxeleopardlifestyle.co.uk or get in touch at alex@luxeleopardlifestyle.co.uk



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zooming INTO FOCUS

WHY THE VIDEO-CONFERENCEING TOOL IS 2020'S BIG SUCCESS STORY

When it became clear the COVID-19 pandemic's presence was going to have a profound effect on society, speculating traders quickly went on the lookout for an investment stock that would pay big... after all, as the saying goes, there is money to be made out of a crisis.

Any who included video-conferencing tool Zoom in their portfolio may now be laughing all the way to the bank – or at least they will be when the banks reopen – after the Silicon Valley-based corporation announced triple-digit growth over the past three months.

Zoom is, of course, the perfect method for homebound people – and at the last count that's the vast majority of the population – to stay in touch with friends, family and work colleagues. It's not unique – rivals include

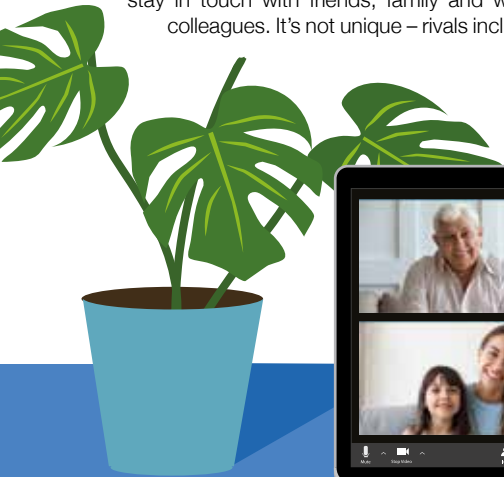
WebEx, BlueJeans, TeamViewer, Microsoft Teams and even Google Classroom – but what Zoom has thrown behind its product in a way rivals haven't are innovation, simplicity of function and a serious amount of reinvestment.

It's all led to first-time installations increasing five-fold in March, and an increase in the stock price of well over 100 per cent.

In reality, though, Zoom and the other video-conferencing tools cannot rest on their laurels. They may well be making hay while the sun shines given the restrictions placed on our physical interactions, but when these regulations are lifted, the danger for these firms is that the public will forget the software just as quickly as they downloaded it, and return to past habits.

The only way the tech boffins can prevent what will be an inevitable crash in user numbers is if their accompanying marketing team can convince us to change our habits long term, where speaking over an internet connection is preferred to face-to-face meetings.

In the new world, post-COVID, anything is possible.




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FINGER ON THE PULSE – INVESTING IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Global stock markets are suffering a period of volatility as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Although markets do not respond well to periods of uncertainty, what is certain is that volatility goes hand in hand with stock market investment; and although market movements can be concerning, experience teaches us to expect the unexpected.

CALM AND COLLECTED

To navigate market volatility, stick to your plan, diversify your holdings and very importantly, expect and accept volatility. Investors with diversified portfolios, who stay in the market, have historically and consistently experienced steady gains over time. Even though it can be difficult to ignore market movements, it is vital to focus on the long term and remember that volatility also presents opportunities.

Investment requires a disciplined approach and a degree of holding your nerve if markets fall. The worst investment strategy you can adopt is to jump in and out of the stock market, panic when prices fall and sell investments at the bottom of the market.

WEATHER THE STORM TOGETHER

A well-defined investment plan, tailored to your objectives, in line with your attitude to risk, that takes

into account your financial situation, can help you weather short-term market fluctuations. Market volatility is a timely reminder to keep your investments under regular review.

THE RIGHT STRATEGY

Financial advice and regular reviews are essential to help position your portfolio in line with your objectives and attitude to risk and to develop a well-defined investment plan, tailored to your objectives and risk profile. Financial advice is obviously key, so please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have regarding your investments.

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 financial situation, please contact Karyn Vogel on 01277 654153.

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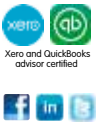
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GETTING A GRIP ON OUR CONTACTLESS SPENDING

We are a society increasingly surging towards apparent glorious cashlessness – and an increase in the allowed spending limit to £45 per transaction was greeted by a record number of card payments in April.

Of course, the government's drive to limit the possible spread of coronavirus germs via the exchange of physical cash has been a defining factor in the latest spike, continuing an upward trend of contactless payments that was already up 16 per cent year on year. And yet, even before the pandemic, the ease with which we got used to the purchase of goods and services with a simple tap on a card reader means we are edging ever closer to a time when, in some situations, cash may become totally redundant.

Contactless payments offer a raft of benefits with very few downsides. There's the time-saving element – an average of seven seconds are saved per transaction versus chip

'n' pin, and 15 seconds on cash, according to research by Barclaycard. Then there's the removal of the need to carry heavy, dirty coins, or to head to the cashpoint to withdraw notes.

There's also the convenience of having a digital record of all transactions, and even the option to pay using a phone or watch.

And yet, while the drive towards convenience suits most of us, it does not apply to everyone – there are still 1.3million people in the UK who do not have a bank account. Consumer groups have also noted the dangers of people idly 'tapping' away without any real thought about the money they are spending. And while fraud accounts for only 2.5p in every £100, the ease with which someone can spend on a stolen card is considerable.

What's certain is that as much as the powers that be may want to encourage our spending habits towards a certain way, as with most things, it is the consumers who will decide.





KIDS



Why building up your baby's skin layers with creams and moisturising is so important

It's true to say the best moisturiser a baby will ever have is its own. It's called vernix and is the creamy white coating it is born with. Yet past the first couple of months, helping a baby regularly coming into contact with a variety of surfaces and air elements can really protect it going forward.

Non-soap cleanser

Traditional soap dries out skin, so following your baby's daily bath – which shouldn't exceed 10 minutes – apply a mild cleanser. Best bought from the pharmacy, these are great moisturisers.

Avoid bubble bath as it removes natural oils from the skin, while antibacterial and perfumed soaps may irritate too.

Post-bath moisturiser

When out of the bath, smear over a thick, pH-neutral moisturiser. Not only will your baby love the massaging feel, but he or she will benefit from the enriching of pores that a quality applicant can provide.

Thicker creams and ointments are more effective than lotions, and you should avoid anything that contains plant or food products.

Barrier creams

For nappy rash or eczema, the process of constant changes and reapplying of cream is really important. For each baby it's different, but barrier creams, usually containing zinc, are a great way to prevent fabrics and clothes from irritating the area further.

Try to limit the use of baby wipes, don't use talcum powder, and let the baby go nappy-free for as long as possible, as allowing air to get to any sore area is the best thing for it.

Sun protection

Any baby below the age of one should be kept out of the sun. Past that, look for a SPF above 30 and smother your little one in protection. A hat, sunshades and light clothing will suit them well, and remember to reapply cream every two hours.

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5. CLIMBING



SPORT

In the final instalment showcasing sports set to debut or return at the now postponed Tokyo Olympics, we take a look at climbing.

Climbing's debut in Tokyo reflects our growing love for strength-based pursuits that also require precision, strategy and focus.

That the sport has, over the past two decades, accelerated itself from the most basic of human endeavours to a physical challenge enjoyed both outdoors and indoors by participants of all ages, is testament to the number of activity centres that now provide walls to scale. Many have felt it was only a matter of time before the IOC opened its doors.

A dynamic challenge, the Olympic format will be split into three disciplines – Speed, Bouldering and Lead.

In Speed, it's a straight two-competitor race to the top of a 15-metre wall, in a set-up that is expected to excite spectators most, and, for a certain generation, will undoubtedly offer echoes of an ITV *Gladiators* finale.

In Bouldering, it's a more challenging 4.5-metre wall, while in Lead, it's a case of

getting as high as possible in a set time.

Every competitor will take on all three formats, with the best overall performer being crowned Olympic champion.

As ever, the vertical walls offer handholds and footholds, as well as shapes, sizes, positive sections (slabs) and those with negative aspects (steeps or overhangs), meaning competitors will need to be at their best from the off.

Safety ropes are allowed, though the best competitors will try to limit any lost time and will be harnessing flexibility, skill and no small amount of mental decisiveness in tackling a new Olympic sport expected to thrill at every grab.

Photo credit: Miko.g/Shutterstock.com



ALWAYS ONLINE

Does the era of 'live chat' actually mean you're talking to a robot?

Any kind of online web chat experience has the potential to go sour – we've all ended up speaking to someone many thousands of miles away wondering if we'd be better off writing a strongly worded letter instead.

While the experience of speaking to someone in a call centre in a faraway land isn't always the best, the attempt at a pleasant exchange is usually flawless, and the reality that we are speaking to a real person is something we've grown to take for granted.

Yet the new era of customer service often means we're not talking to a human... not in London, Glasgow, nor Islamabad. Instead, while it may not be evident in the initial exchanges, we're conversing with a chatbot.

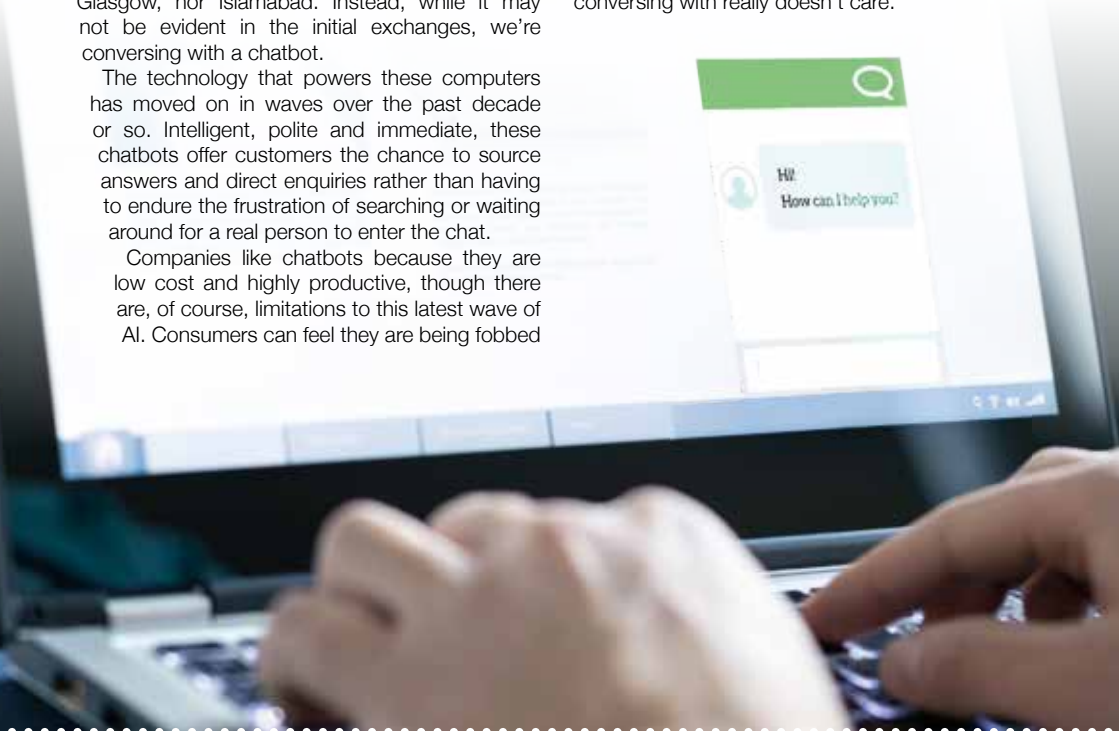
The technology that powers these computers has moved on in waves over the past decade or so. Intelligent, polite and immediate, these chatbots offer customers the chance to source answers and direct enquiries rather than having to endure the frustration of searching or waiting around for a real person to enter the chat.

Companies like chatbots because they are low cost and highly productive, though there are, of course, limitations to this latest wave of AI. Consumers can feel they are being fobbed

off and there is a good chance complex enquiries are just moved on to a real person anyway, in which case the process actually takes longer, and it's only really relatively simple queries that can be solved by a robot.

The jury is still out, particularly as it's difficult for companies to judge feedback – after all, satisfied customers will tell, on average, nine people about their experience, while for dissatisfied customers that number is 22.

Either way, just remember the next time you engage in a web chat, you might want to hold off on pleasantries about the weather... the robot you're conversing with really doesn't care.




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PARK LIFE

PENALTY CHARGE VS PARKING CHARGE – WHEN TO PAY AND WHEN TO PLAY

The scourge of the modern motor car is arguably not the cost of petrol, the maintenance or insurance premiums – it's the fact that once we've paid out for all of those elements that keep it on the road, there's actually nowhere to park the damn thing.

But millions of motorists are paying excessive, unfair and exploitative parking charges in the belief that they have committed an offence, when in reality all that's happening is they're being presented with an invoice. Welcome to the vagaries of a penalty charge versus a parking charge.

A penalty charge is a ticket issued by your local authority – usually the police or the council. Chances are you've committed a genuine offence, such as overstaying parking or showing an invalid permit. In these instances you're banged to rights and, while appealing is a decent option in asking for leniency, in most cases the penalty stands.

A parking charge, on the other hand, is something issued by an independent parking operator – perhaps you've parked in a private car park, in a space adjoining a building, or even in a leisure park. This issuer actually has no authority to issue a ticket – all you're being given is an invitation to pay what amounts to an invoice.

Sure, it's an invoice that looks very much like a penalty charge, and intentionally so; and the wording will have you believe dire consequences will follow if you fail to pay.

The reality is that virtually no cases ever get to court, and these unscrupulous businesses profit only from those who respond. So the next time you get a parking charge, search for the issuer online and check carefully exactly what it is you have in front of you. Motorists are now getting smart to filing these charges where they belong – in the bin – and saving millions in the process.

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