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SIR CLIFF RICHARD OBE
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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 Billericay/Shenfield**.

We continue to ride the choppy waves of 2020 that have been riddled with restrictions and unprecedented times.

We know things are still

far from normal, so it's never been a better time to check in with our friends and family.

I had a chat with a friend recently who said he hadn't spoken to his brother for years and couldn't really remember why, to which I replied, "Life's too short to hold grudges or have any negativity with anyone, whether they did you wrong or not. Be the bigger person and just pick up the phone and give them a call. You never know, they may need you now more than ever."

I've had this too, over the years. Relationships I've had with friends just become distant and we blame life for getting in the way - usually work or starting a family being the excuse.

But although it's harder to meet face to face at present, we are in a world now where it's never been easier to get in touch by phone, text, FaceTime or social media.

Just pick up the phone and say, "How are you?" You never know, it might be the call you and they both need more than ever.

Got a story for our Local News section? Email billericay@visionmag.co.uk

I hope you enjoy this month's edition.

Nik

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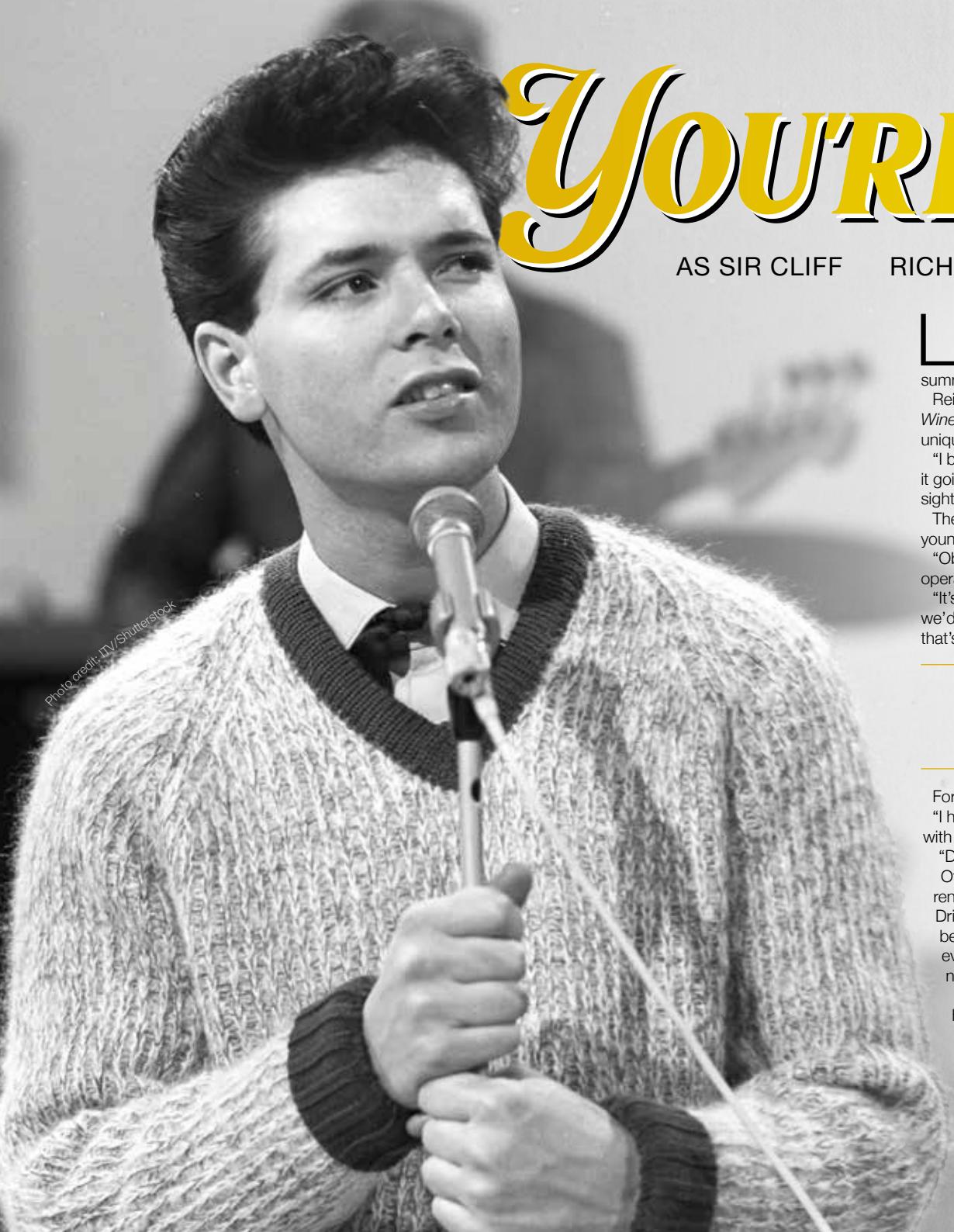
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YOU'RE THE VOICE

AS SIR CLIFF

RICHARD OBE PASSES 80, HIS STAR IS STILL CHARTING HIGH

Let's begin with a stat: for a long while, Sir Cliff held the record for scoring number one songs in consecutive decades in the UK. He'd hit the top spot twice in the 1950s and on seven occasions in the 1960s. The following decade he left it late, with *We Don't Talk Anymore* his solitary chart-topper in the summer of 1979.

Reinventing himself for the 1980s, spoof track *Living Doll* hit the heights in 1985, followed by *Mistletoe and Wine* in 1988; before *Saviour's Day* in 1990 and *The Millennium Prayer* in 1999 ensured he preserved a most unique chart first.

"I became aware of the run back in the 1970s but it was never an intention to churn out tracks just to keep it going," he says. "I think if you focus too much on that it becomes a bit of a vanity project and you're losing sight of the music itself; but while it went on, it was fun."

These days, the charts aren't for the likes of Sir Cliff. In 2020, they are almost solely the domain of youngsters, both in terms of the record-buying public and the artists themselves.

"Obviously the internet has created major change in the record industry and revised entirely how everything operates.

"It's a shame the charts don't represent the excitement of old when new releases would move around and we'd all follow their progress at home on our radios. I know a lot of people are sentimental about the change that's happened, but as long as people are out there making good music, that should be enough."

*'YOU WORK HARD. YOU DO YOUR BEST. AND YOU JUST WANT
SOME PEACE: AND THAT'S ALL I WANTED'*

For Sir Cliff these days, new music often takes the form of festive tracks.

"I have inadvertently built a reputation for putting Christmas music out there," he admits. "It really all started with *Mistletoe and Wine*.

"Do I mind the association? Of course not – it's such a magical time of the year."

Of course, recognition solely as a musician does a disservice to so many other things Sir Cliff has become renowned for in a celebrated career that began way back in 1958 as lead singer of British group The Drifters. As his pop career exploded, film roles also came his way (famously in *Summer Holiday*) and, beyond that, a passion for wider showbiz projects, faith, philanthropy and a clean-living bachelor lifestyle, even though he came close to marrying on more than one occasion (notably to former British tennis number one Sue Barker).

A proud, kind-hearted and sincere exemplar of a golden age of British entertainment, Sir Cliff found himself in the news for the wrong reasons in 2014 when the darkness surrounding Operation Yewtree began enveloping a number of well-known names.

Almost immediately it became clear that there was no story to be had, and he successfully went on to sue South Yorkshire Police and the BBC for their parts in the media pursuit that followed.

"You know, you get to the point, especially after all these years, where you just want a quiet life," he says. "You work hard, you do your best, and you just want some peace; and that's all I wanted."

Whether Sir Cliff gets peace as he passes 80 is unclear. In socially distancing terms, he will, but as a worldwide base of adoring fans continues to follow his every move, it's clear this is someone who will stay in our admiring consciousness for quite some time yet.

Photo credit: IV/Shutterstock

THE WORLD AROUND US

Part 1

In the first of a new four-part environmental series, we look at the key drivers in the health and well-being of the planet. In this issue, it's animal life, and in particular, the humble cow.

It's not easy being a cow. While farmers are eyeing you up for a trip to the abattoir, those on both sides of the eco debate are ready to slap the blame tag on a little embarrassing flatulence.

Scientists believe the average cow releases between 70kg and 120kg of methane per year. A greenhouse gas, like carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide, methane forms a dangerous blanket around the planet.

A molecule that lasts a decade, in real terms what it contributes to the atmosphere can be equated to little more than two cups of water inside a swimming pool, yet its chemical shape is remarkably effective at trapping heat, thus it has a big impact on how much, and how quickly, the planet warms.

And with 1.5 billion cows on the planet, it's clear there's real environmental interest in reducing the emissions of these animals, who can also lay claim to being the source of two-thirds of all

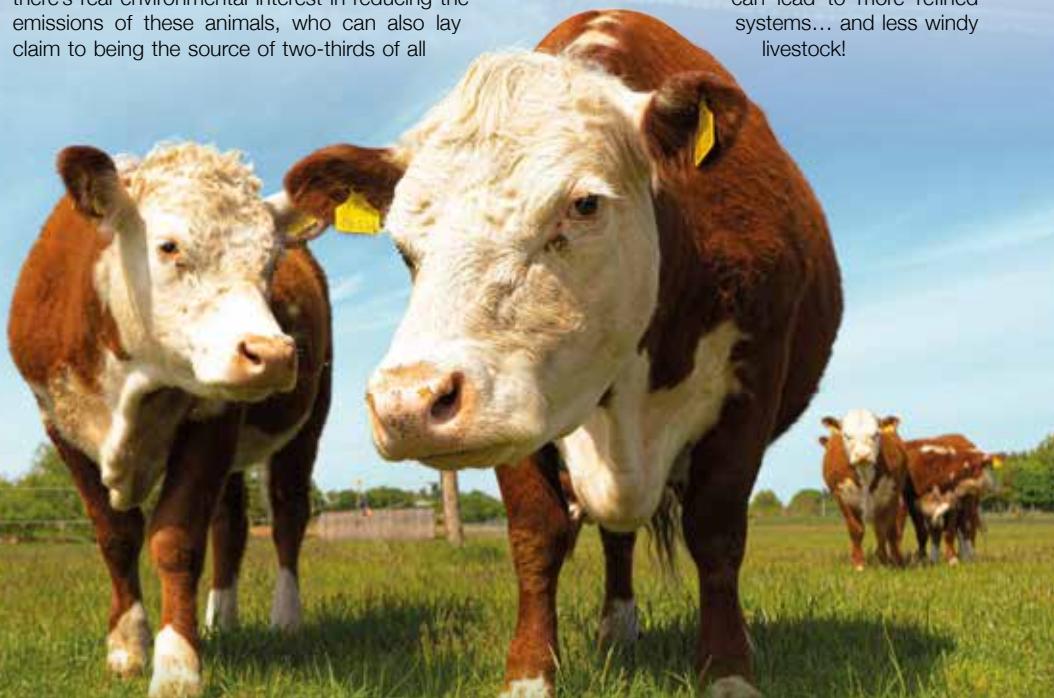
ammonia in the atmosphere.

In 2019, an experiment in New Zealand saw cows given a vaccine to rid them of certain gut microbes responsible for producing methane. Further development of this could drastically reduce cows' impact on the planet, while still allowing our ravenous consumption of meat and dairy foods.

In the UK, farmers mainly use grass-based silage. By changing to a maize compound, a one-tenth drop in methane production could be achieved.

As ever, environmental aims must be balanced with commercial sense. The UK agricultural industry is worth £25 billion per year, yet it's clear less-fibrous diets, further vaccine research and other subtle changes – such as introducing seaweed and higher-quality constituents into the food mix

- can lead to more refined systems... and less windy livestock!



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Do you know your microfibre from your feather? Your vacuum from your air compression? If not, you are not alone. We too have been guilty of using whatever fabric we have to hand to remove dust from our home, whether that be a tea towel, a cloth or even an old pair of pants. However, using the right duster for the job is vital if you want optimal results.

FEATHER DUSTERS

Commonly associated with maids in stately homes, feather dusters are best for cleaning delicate or expensive objects such as artwork, figurines or jewellery.

Pros of feather dusters: Will not scratch surfaces, objects or furniture | Offer non-invasive contact

Cons of feather dusters: Not the best at collecting dust | Unethical as feathers are plucked from live animals

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Cons of microfibre dusters: We couldn't find any!

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Cons of vacuum dusters: Handheld vacuum dusters are not very powerful | Can be expensive

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This type of duster is used to remove dust from electronics, plug holes and other small, inaccessible areas. Perfect for dusting your keyboard if you are working from home.

Pros of compressed air dusters: The best option for all computer accessories, electronics and office equipment

Cons of compressed air dusters: Can be expensive



BRICKING it

LEARN HOW TO EXPOSE,
PREPARE AND LOOK AFTER A
BRICKWORK FEATURE WALL

It's the design feature that flipped on its head the old adage of plastering over walls for a smooth, 'complete' finish.

These days, exposed brickwork is all the rage – a modern take on a feature wall that circumnavigates modern, industrial and rustic.

Preparing an exposed brick wall and looking after it isn't difficult if you follow a few simple steps.

Exposing

Chip away a small section of plaster to check your brickwork is in good order. Cover the floor with sheeting, as removal of plaster will throw up considerable dust. Wearing a dust mask, chisel away sections and finish using a wire brush.

Preparing

Use a mild solution comprising equal parts water, dish soap and salt. Use a clean cloth to apply, allowing the solution to soak into the wall. Leave for 10 minutes so the salt dissolves any remaining plaster particles, then wipe the entire wall using a sponge or wet cloth.

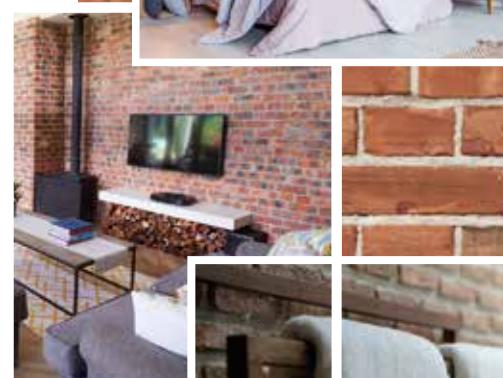
When dry, use an industrial sealant across the entire wall. An acrylic-based application will mean your wall is resistant to scratches, spills and dirt. You'll need to apply at least two coats, ensuring you work the solution into all the gaps.

Looking after

With your pristine wall the envy of visitors, you'll need to make sure you look after it properly. It's inevitable that parts may be fragile and flake off over time, but light cleaning (even with something as simple as a feather duster) will keep particles at bay.

Remember, all brick walls are different, and how they respond will depend on their age, the room temperature and whether they are interior or exterior walls.

The good news is that the matt finish and unpolished look most go for will hide a multitude of sins.



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DIY headboard designs



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The right headboard has the power to transform a boring bed into a thing of beauty, but with many shop-bought varieties costing hundreds of pounds, surely there must be a cheaper alternative?

Fortunately, there is.

Simply check out these DIY designs that will help you create a stylish sanctuary without busting your budget.

DIY Pillow Headboard

To create this super simple and soft headboard in less than an hour, all you need is a copper pipe, some leather or faux leather and two floor cushions or several smaller cushions.

Simply use the leather to create two straps for each of your chosen cushions, thread them along your copper pipe and attach above your bed.

DIY Woven Headboard

To make this rustic, home-made headboard, you need six woven placemats, two jute table runners or small rugs, a hammer and some small finish nails. Once you have your supplies, all you need to do is secure the

two runners directly above your bed, one on top of another, and then attach a placemat next to each end of the runners and you are done.

DIY Lego-inspired Headboard

Create this cool kid's headboard using just four 3D wall panels, some plywood, caulk, paint and four pieces of decorative wood trim. Start by gluing your 3D panels to a 40x40-inch piece of plywood. Once dry, glue your chosen trim around your plywood and seal with caulk. Paint your panels in your preferred colour. Hang using a French cleat.

DIY Plywood Headboard

Natural wood is the ideal material for those wanting to create a minimalist vibe in their bedroom. Simply purchase a pre-cut sheet of plywood for the headboard and then add three shelves for additional functionality.

Other DIY Headboard Ideas

Jute headboard | Pallet headboard | Pegboard headboard | Woven vertical blinds headboard



PLASTIC BAGS

fantastic

Even though you know you should take them with you when you go shopping, somehow you always seems to forget and come back with even more plastic bags.

Fortunately, there are several other uses for these non-biodegradable land fillers.

Protect your plants

If you worry about your delicate plants over winter, you can easily protect them from frost by gently tying a plastic bag around them. The bag will not only safeguard them from the wind, but will also trap warm air inside, ensuring their roots stay insulated. Plastic bags can also be used to protect your outdoor taps and your car's wing mirrors.



Make a skipping rope

Yes, this can be done. Simply cut off the handles so you are left with just rectangles and cut 12 long strips. Take six strips and tape them together, then tape to the back of a chair and start braiding. Repeat with the second strip of six and then twist the two braids together to create your



Photo credit: alphapackaging.co.uk, childhoodlist.com, dengarden.com, craftystaci.com

skipping rope. Use duct tape to add handles.

Create a textured paint surface

If you are wanting to create a textured effect on your walls, there is no need to buy any special paint. All you need to do is cover a clean paint roller with a plastic bag, roll it in your chosen colour and apply it to the walls.

Stuff cushions

Instead of buying traditional stuffing when your cushions start to look a little flat, simply fill them with plastic bags for a similar effect. This money-saving trick can also work wonders for pet beds.



Other quick uses

- > Line your bathroom bin
- > Car sickness bags (check the bag doesn't have air holes)
- > Parcel padding
- > To prevent paintbrushes from drying out

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STRATTONS, NORFOLK

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V19

CANCEL CULTURE



The BBC TV licence – do you need to pay?

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The BBC has never felt pressure like it: a new director general looking to shake things up, accusations of political and social bias, and the move to begin charging over-75s for TV licences – it has left 'Auntie' scratching about for relevance in a changing world where digital and premium channels are taking our attention... and our money.

While the BBC remains one of our country's finest institutions, and excellent value for those who regularly enjoy its diverse range of programming, there have been recent moves to defund the organisation – a Twitter campaign rapidly gained 100,000 followers and continues to apply pressure across social media.

This has led to many looking at the criteria for paying the licence; namely, whether you do indeed need to pay the £157.50 annual charge (£53 for a black and white TV). The answer is yes, if...

> ... you watch or record live TV as it is being transmitted, on any channel

> ... you watch or stream programmes live on an online service (such as ITV Hub, All 4, YouTube, Amazon Prime Video, Sky Go, etc)

> ... you download or watch programmes on iPlayer
And the above applies to use on any device, from television to computer to games console.

The good news is that the BBC's brilliant range of national and regional radio is exempt.

If you believe you don't need a licence, the process for opting out is simple – simply declare to TV Licensing via its website and cancel any direct debits. That will stop what many describe as a barrage of threatening letters. However, the onus is, of course, on you to reapply for a licence if your watching habits change.

What's clear is that in a changing world the BBC's stranglehold on compulsory payment may well be coming to an end – even more so if Prime Minister Boris Johnson's move to decriminalise non-payment continues to gather pace.

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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Andy goes wheelie fast to set a new world record

A man originally from Billericay has set a new Guinness World Record after travelling in a wheelie bin at a speed of more than 40mph.

Andy Jennings, 28, transformed a household rubbish bin into a unique racing vehicle by adding a motorbike engine, a gearbox, an ignition, a bike seat and the steering from a mobility scooter.

He took on the challenge in a bid to raise £3,000, which he has since surpassed, to support the Marillac Neurological Care Centre in Brentwood after it cared for his friend Ben Ellis, also from Billericay, before Ben sadly died in June.

Guinness World Record officials said Andy would have to reach a speed of more than 30mph in order to beat the previous fastest wheelie bin. But the engineer, who now lives in Swindon, exceeded this goal, hitting an impressive 43mph on the runway.

Andy said: "The whole purpose was to think of

something to get people donating. The main reason was to keep Ben motivated because he was into this sort of thing. In the six-month run-up to the event, it really kept him going, and it's a shame he never got to see it happen.

"It's been a great day. I got my record, with 43.35mph – which is well above the target I was set of 30mph, so I was really happy with that."

In 2015, Ben was induced into a coma following a work accident on his family farm. More than a year later, he was awake and able to breathe for himself and he was cared for at the Marillac.

Andy said: "They really kept him going. Having somewhere to visit such as the Marillac makes the situation all the easier to deal with, and without it things would not be the same."

To donate to Andy's cause, visit justgiving.com/crowdfunding/thefastestbin

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Ricky handed funding boost as fans still not let in

Billericay Town FC were handed a boost ahead of the new season after they were awarded funding to help cover the cost of lost revenue.

The club will benefit from a Matchday Support Fund (MSF) grant which will help them prepare the stadium for fans to return and cover costs until they do.

The MSF is financed by the Premier League and supports non-league and Women's Football Pyramid clubs with the costs of improvements to their grounds.

The good news came ahead of the club's season opener on October 3, when they beat Brackley Town on penalties in the FA Cup Second Qualifying Round.

However, despite the funding, no date has been set for fans to be allowed back to the New Lodge as the government has still given no indication as to when supporters at Ricay's level will be allowed back in.

Greg Lake, co-owner of Billericay Town FC, said: "Billericay Town really appreciate this grant and the support that we've received from the Football Foundation. It is real financial help like this that will allow many clubs to survive."

"We know the grant is to provide us with some cover until the end of the year, but hopefully we will have fans back in the ground before then."

Heartbreak as thieves break into theatre



Photo credit: Ruby Ward, @theartoflondon

Police are investigating after thieves broke into The Billericay Theatre and stole a till recently. CCTV captured the crooks in the early hours of September 30 as they broke in, leaving the theatre owner "frustrated".

Helen Arber, 38, told **VISIONBillericayShenfield**: "The police still haven't been able to find those responsible and it comes at a time when we are fighting to survive."

"It's just gut-wrenching for someone to do this when we have been struggling and working such long hours."

"I think it will cost about £1,000 to fix all the damage."

"There was some money in the till. CCTV shows it was a group of three youngsters who came from the station."

"I guess they knew they were on a timescale as the alarm was going off. This is the latest blow after the impact of the virus."



Pub keeps licence as soirée gets out of control

A Billericay pub which hosted a "soirée" that got out of control with up to 3,000 people attending has been told it can keep its licence.

The event in August at the Beauvoir Arms led to a police investigation after they were called to disperse the crowds that were violating COVID-19 restrictions.

Now the council has decided to allow the pub to keep its licence as it deemed it a "one-off".

Following the incident, Beauvoir Arms issued a statement. It said: "Unfortunately this event did get out of hand, but we worked with the police and council to get everyone out safely, which was our main concern.

"We would like to apologise again for any upset caused and understand resident concerns."

Man charged after teen dies in collision

A man from Billericay has been charged after a collision led to the death of a teenager.

Tommy Wilson, 27, of Billericay was hospitalised with serious injuries before later being arrested and charged with causing death by dangerous driving, failing to provide information relating to the identification of the driver of a vehicle when required, and aggravated vehicle taking.

Wilson was due to appear in court on October 23, as VISIONBillericayShenfield went to print.

The collision happened on September 19 just before 2.30pm, when a Mercedes and a black Ford Kuga collided in Hartswood Road, Warley.

A pedestrian, a 17-year-old boy from Brentwood, was injured in the collision before later losing his life in

A statement as part of the decision from the council said: "Several local residents had been subjected to verbal abuse – and, in one instance, physical assault – when they sought to challenge inconsiderate parking and anti-social behaviour by patrons.

"There had been cannabis use throughout the event. There had also been a woeful failure to implement/enforce social distancing measures, thereby increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

"Having regard to all the circumstances, however, the committee took the view that with the steps set out, together with the licence-holder's assurances, a recurrence of the incidents which had triggered the review was unlikely."

hospital on September 24.

Jack Madel, 28, of no fixed address, was charged prior to the teenager's death with causing serious injury by dangerous driving, causing serious injury by driving while disqualified, failing to stop after an accident, and driving without insurance.

Inspector Mark Fraser said: "My thoughts are with everyone who has been affected by this tragic incident.

"We are progressing our investigation and we'd like to speak to any witnesses who have yet to come forward. We are also looking to trace a cyclist who was in the area at the time."

Contact the Serious Collision Investigation Unit on 101, quoting incident 648 of 19 September, or email CollisionAppeal@essex.pnn.police.uk

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Rotary Club refuses to give up in bid to raise funds



The Billericay Rotary Club had to contend with the ever-changing restrictions imposed because of the pandemic to ensure its annual John Baron Billericay Fun Walk took place.

The money raised from the event, which totals above £1,000, will go to the club's chosen charities.

When the country was in lockdown, Billericay Rotary Club made plans for the event on September 22 to be a virtual walk, before an improving situation meant groups of 30 would be able to take part.

But on September 14, the new restrictions meant only groups of six could take part.

The club did not give up and, on a glorious sunny day, the smaller group of intrepid walkers assembled outside the Dukes Head Pub in Little Burstead.

With charity maestro Roger Kettle in the lead, they set off on a circular tour ending back at the Dukes Head, while raising vital funds in the process.

Police appeal after stabbing

Police are appealing for information after a man was stabbed in Billericay.

Emergency services were called at 8.30pm on September 14 after the attack on Outwood Common Road, near to St John's Church.

The suspect was described as a black man, who was around 6ft tall and was wearing a black tracksuit.

The victim, who is aged in his 20s, was being treated for injuries at the time of going to print. They are considered serious, but not life-changing.

An Essex Police spokesperson said: "While we're keeping an open mind as to the motive of this assault, detectives think that it's unlikely it was random."

"We'd like to hear from anyone who was in the area around the time and witnessed any suspicious behaviour or a man matching this description."

"We're also keen to speak to those who live in the area and have doorbell, CCTV or dashcam footage."

"Please contact us if you have any information. Alternatively, you can call 101 or contact independent

charity Crimestoppers anonymously.

"Please quote reference 42/147423/20 when providing information."

Dental practice nominated for award

Grange Green Dental Practice has been nominated in the Private Dentistry Awards for Best Treatment of Nervous Patients, and Lampros Flouris is also in line to win Best Young Dentist at this year's prestigious event.

The Private Dentistry Awards exists to recognise excellent standards in dentistry in the UK.

Lampros, who practices at Grange Green Dental Practice in Billericay, creates great new smiles with his colleague Rachel White and the support team.

Grange Green's owner's, Thomas Sealey and Tony Aneiros, said: "We are delighted that the team Lampros has been nominated for these awards, which shows the efforts and care they provide for their clients."

"Entering an award offers practices and dentists the chance to assess their work against others and build trust with their clients. Being shortlisted for any award is an honour for any dentist and their team."

"We are so proud of all our staff, who deserve this recognition for working really hard to consistently deliver such high standards for our patients, even more so through the unprecedented times we find ourselves in."

To celebrate, Grange Green Dental Practice is offering great discounts on smile makeovers discussed throughout November and December.

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Photo credit: Essex Police



This month has seen further changes to the regulations around COVID-19. These changes affect all of us, how we socialise, how we work and how we feel.

We have been busy carrying out patrols to ensure we are all safe. This includes the rule of six and changes to the licensing times in drink-in and eat-in venues.

We continue to patrol areas highlighted to us by you to deter and disrupt antisocial behaviour.

It's still not possible for us to restart our Coffee

with the Cops, but we are looking to run a number of outdoor pop up events at locations in Billericay including Outwood Common, Southgreen, Queens Park, Meadow Rise and the High Street. These will be advertised on our Facebook page.

Please continue to tell us about issues that concern you. We have worked on your information to successfully disrupt criminality and are determined to keep people safe and catch the baddies.

Man arrested after Telford shooting

An 18-year-old man from Billericay was one of six people to be arrested after a man was shot dead in Telford last month.

Four men and two boys were arrested in connection with the shooting of Tamba Momodou at the car park at the Bridges Business Park in Horsehay, Telford on October 13.

The man from Billericay, three 19-year-old men from Northolt, Tipton and Bromley and two 16-year-old boys from Redbridge and Blackheath were arrested on suspicion of murder and taken into custody. They were later released on bail.

Detective Chief Inspector Mark Bellamy, senior investigating officer, said: "Our thoughts remain with Tamba's family at this time. I would like to thank the public for their assistance with our enquiries so far and continue to appeal to anyone who does have information that may assist to please let us know. If they do not want to report this to police they can do so anonymously to the independent charity Crimestoppers."

To report information anonymously, call 0800 555 111 or visit www.crimestoppers-uk.org



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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Wolf runner completes virtual marathon to raise funds

A Shenfield man has raised more than £3,000 for charity after running the virtual London Marathon in a wolf costume. Paul Howard completed the 26.2-mile distance on October 4 in memory of his friend, Heather Thompson, who sadly passed away from lupus at only 18 years old.

Lupus is a disease that occurs when the body's immune system attacks its own tissues and organs. Paul is now is CEO of LUPUS UK, which is the only registered national charity of its kind.

Paul told VISION Billericay Shenfield: "The marathon was tough going. The rain soaked my costume and made it quite heavy. I'd planned a route without steep hills, though, and found a comfortable rhythm to finish in five hours and eight minutes."

"It was strange to run a marathon in my local area, but also really nice. I did 10 laps of my route so I saw

my wife more during the challenge, and some work colleagues and friends came to cheer me on too. It was also nice to finish and be able to get straight into a hot shower.

"I chose a wolf costume because 'lupus' is latin for wolf so it has some connection to the disease. I'm glad I wore the costume because lots of locals cheered, waved and honked their car horns to help motivate me."

"I'm blown away by the support I've received for this sponsored event, from friends, family, colleagues and strangers. It is vitally important to raise money for LUPUS UK because income has fallen owing to many cancelled fundraising events, but its services and support are needed more than ever."

To donate to Paul's cause, visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/paul-howard-lm2020

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Howzat for success as cricket star shines



A former Shenfield High School pupil continues to make an impression on the international cricket stage after she helped England to victory.

Mady Villiers, 22, took two wickets for England Women on September 23 as they sealed a 47-run victory over the West Indies in the second T20 and took a 2-0 lead in the five-match series.

Villiers picked up two wickets for two runs in three overs to continue her impressive form since being handed a call-up earlier this year prior to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

It also follows her appearance at the T20 cricket World Cup, where poor weather ultimately led to England's exit.

Talking about her success, she said: "To be able to represent your country is a massive achievement and I am really proud that I've done it."

"It hasn't come without hardships, but it gives me a focus and a purpose."

"When I was in school I didn't dream I'd be where I am now. I didn't know England women's cricket was a thing."

Huge £30,000 reward on offer as fresh appeal launched

A reward of £30,000 is on offer for anyone who can help with an investigation after a violent burglary in Hutton Mount last year.

The reward comes as a fresh appeal is made a year on from the incident, which happened at Heronway on September 24, 2019.

At least five men wearing balaclavas broke into a property and demanded money from a woman.

She was hit with a crowbar, had a cleaning product

sprayed into her eyes and was threatened.

The victim suffered serious bruising to her arm and back. The suspects stole two watches as well as a jewellery box.

The reward is now being offered through the charity Crimestoppers, for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of those responsible.

The victim said: "This has had a significant impact on my life – I have been unable to return to work and have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

"The attack has left me extremely traumatised and has had a profound effect on me.

"I would urge anyone with any information regarding this crime to do the right thing and to come forward as these men need to be locked up behind bars so that they don't this to other people."

The reward will only qualify for information passed to Crimestoppers via 0800 555 111.

Firefighters tackle blaze on Boundary Drive

Two fire crews had to rush to a residential street in Hutton to tackle a skip blaze.

Emergency services hurried to Boundary Drive on September 19 to tackle a fire in a skip outside the front of a property.

The fire caused a huge plume of smoke that filled the street, and the emergency services received several calls.

In attendance were two fire engines and several police cars and officers.

Once the fire was extinguished, an investigation into its cause was started, although it is not known whether it was a deliberate act or an accident.

An Essex County Fire and Rescue Service spokesperson said: "Firefighters were called to a skip fire in Boundary Drive, Hutton, at 12.57pm.

"On arrival, crews reported that there was a large skip on fire and worked to extinguish it by 1.25pm. The cause has been recorded as accidental or deliberate, both possibilities."



Photo credit: Google Maps

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Alex Burghart MP for Brentwood and Ongar



the coronavirus pandemic.

Bonnie and Jerry Minihane, who run the Foodbank, told me dozens of volunteers have been working tirelessly to reach those who need help in the community. They told me the people who have been helped by the Foodbank are often lonely, susceptible, isolated individuals and elderly couples who may face a very hard winter.

Brentwood Foodbank has been one of the key sources of support for those who have found themselves in need. It's just moved to new premises in the town centre, thanks to the generosity of a local businessman in offering premises, and is collecting donations from generous individuals and businesses to provide basic food packs.

I visited the Brentwood Foodbank earlier this month and saw first-hand the work being done to collect, collate and distribute food and basic toiletries to families who have been left vulnerable as a result of

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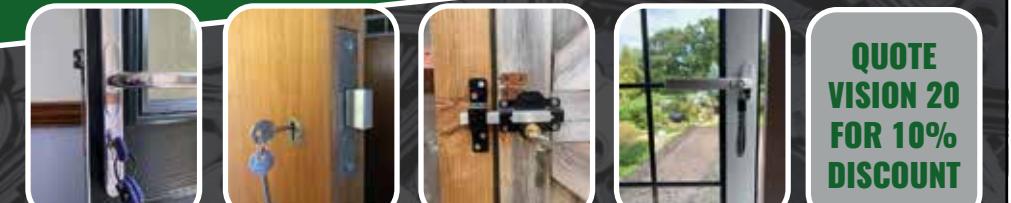
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CORONAVIRUS FUELS A RECORD RISE IN CAMPERVAN HOLIDAYS IN THE UK

It's been a year like no other, where overseas travel has either been ruled out completely or become fraught with danger and the threat of quarantine.

So with that in mind, it's little wonder the UK has experienced an exponential rise in campervan holidays. They offer freedom, seclusion in safe groups, affordability and safety, plus a wanderlust that was sparked in most of us from having spent so many weeks in lockdown.

Consider as well what has been a beautiful British summer, and experts believe our appetite for UK holidays on wheels has truly been reignited thanks to coronavirus.

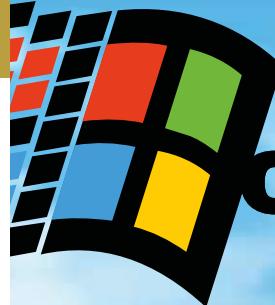
The numbers speak for themselves – the rise in people hiring campervans is up 170 per cent, and that's despite a lack of bookings that would usually come from trips to Glastonbury and other music and culture festivals. And the caution that

appears to have been placed on every aspect of our lives hasn't stretched as far as four wheels, with 69 per cent trying out a campervan for the first time.

Perhaps we shouldn't be so surprised – these vehicles are virtual mobile hotels and a far cry from the flimsy caravans of decades past. With the ability to comfortably accommodate up to seven people, with large kitchen spaces and almost as much internet access as you'd get at home, people can feel detached from real life, yet still perfectly connected.

The biggest draw, however, is almost certainly the thrill of waking up in a new location each day. And as for where we're headed to in these magnificent motorhomes, the Highlands, predictably, top the list. Cornwall and the Peak District are other go-to locations for families and groups looking to get away, with the trend for campervan holidays now on the increase all year round.





Microsoft celebrates 25 years of Windows

Microsoft's launch of Windows back in 1995 marked a true turning point in personal computing. Not only was it fresh, accessible and affordable, but as something called 'the World Wide Web' gradually came into focus, it connected us with the rest of planet Earth in a way we'd never before thought possible.

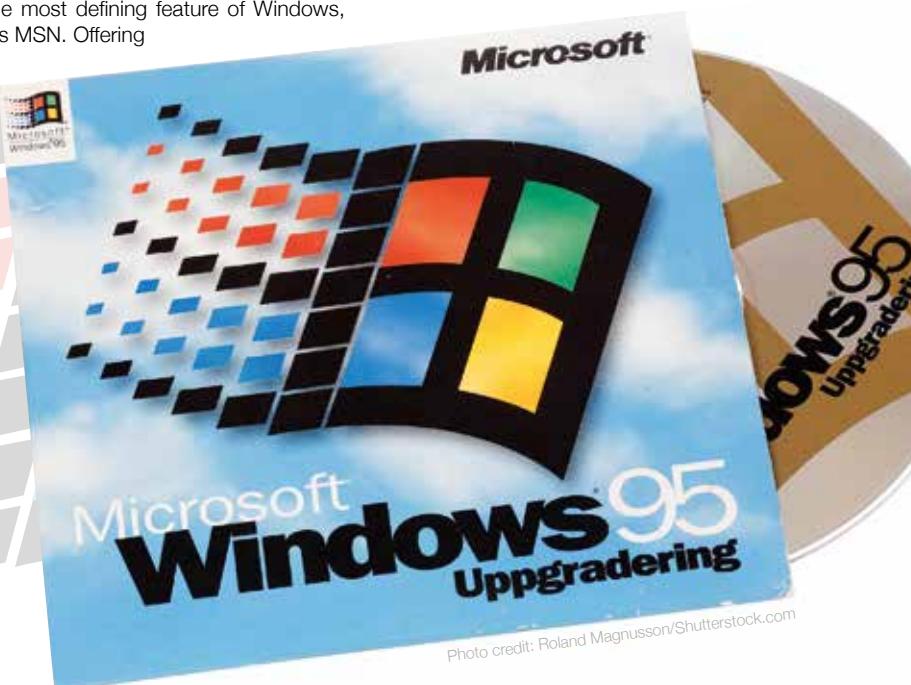
In many ways, Bill Gates and his team of boffins simply took a customer-focused approach to software, where previously it had been the domain of tech nerds and those who loved the intricacies of computing. A start button, a menu, a task bar and better naming and labelling systems for files do not today seem like revolutionary steps, but as the Millennium approached, our reliance on computers increased, and with that, a need to make them as user-friendly as possible.

Perhaps the most defining feature of Windows, however, was MSN. Offering

chat rooms, email, newsgroups and, crucially, the ability to type those holy characters 'www' into a URL box, we were truly the masters of our own tech destiny.

Windows' popularity also saw use of the Internet Explorer browser exceed anything else out there, and by 2003 a whopping 95 per cent of consumers were using it to access the web. While its decline since owes much to rivals Mozilla and Google Chrome upping their game, Windows itself has stuck.

Yes, Mac and Linux have mixed things up in a market that is distinguishable by its refusal to sit still, but what is certain is that Windows 95 (and its various updates over the years... 7, 8, 10, XP, Vista and 2000 to name a few) is regarded as being as innovative and revolutionary today as it was then.



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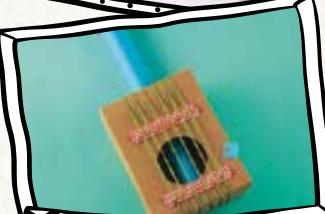
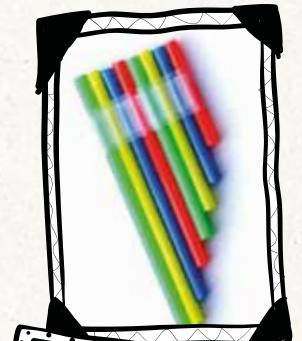
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Kids love making music. From the moment they are able to hold a spoon and start banging it on your pans, to the time when they are able to learn a real instrument.

So why not encourage this natural passion and challenge them to make their own band?

Get organised

This initial step will be dependent on your children's ages, although it can be a good idea to get your older kids to help the younger ones. You can set them the task of deciding what type of music they would like to make, what name they want to give their band and who is going to play what.

Make your own instruments

Some great ideas for DIY musical instruments include:

- > **A HARMONICA.** This can be easily made by sellotaping different-sized straws together and blowing in the holes.
- > **SENSORY BIN SHAKERS.** A great option for little ones. Fill different-sized containers with rice, buttons, pasta or anything else you have to hand, secure and shake.
- > **CEREAL BOX GUITAR.** If someone is keen to be the lead guitarist in the band, then all you will need is an old cereal box, a pair of scissors and a few elastic bands.
- > **CAN DRUMS.** Simply take some old tin cans, stretch a cut-up balloon over the open ends and hit with a spoon or stick.

Start practising

Again, this will be dependent on your kids' ages and attention spans and can range from half an hour to a full day. Keep them motivated by creating a 'show time' when they will be able to perform to the rest of the family.

Ideas for simple songs that they can try to play along with:

Jingle Bells | Twinkle, Twinkle | Hickory, Dickory, Dock | Incy Wincy Spider | Baby Shark

NB: Please make sure all instruments are safe for babies and young children. Avoid or cover safely all sharp edges and small choking items. Remember to secure or seal all tubs tightly.

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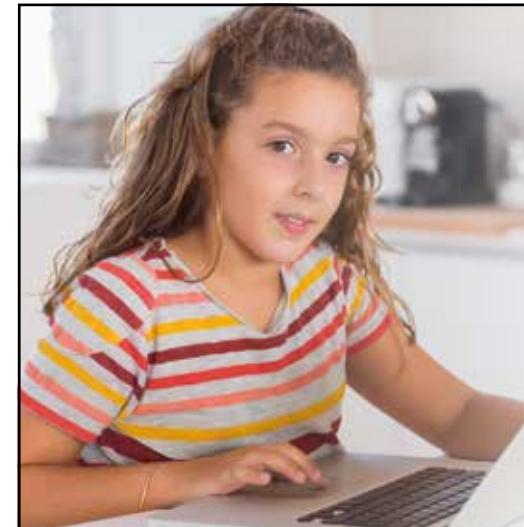
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Kirsty Gallacher



...A GOOD SPORT

From fashion undergraduate to Sky Sports presenter, it was a curious career trajectory for Kirsty Gallacher, who seemingly had the world of light entertainment at her feet.

That was, until a series of events knocked the Edinburgh-born beauty off track.

Her recent return to the limelight is tribute to the strength and perseverance of the 44-year-old, but also a marker for us all in these difficult times.

The die was cast relatively early for Kirsty, as the daughter of Scottish Ryder Cup champion Bernard Gallacher, with a career in sport seeming the obvious choice. In reality, however, the presenter endeavoured for the cut and thrust of fashion, even when, still a youngster, the family upped sticks and moved to Wentworth to help her father's golfing ambitions.

Swapping Scotland for Surrey, Kirsty came to count Bruce Forsyth as a neighbour when growing up. And with a golf star for a dad, she was hardly unfamiliar with larger-than-life personalities popping in for coffee.

"I think maybe there was a pressure for me to do something grand," she begins, "but for many years that wasn't really me. I guess in the end I fell into it, but there was no nepotism going on – I was just lucky."

Kirsty recalls the time as a broadcaster with BSkyB when, having climbed to the position of editorial assistant, there came the opportunity to do a screen test.

"I was horribly nervous, but I've always been of the mind that once you are offered something you should always give it a try. Plus, back then, there was still a sense of adversity from traditionalists who didn't believe in women fronting sport, although that has clearly changed now."

Her time on Sky Sports News led to onward recognition as she went on to front shows including *Kirsty's Home Videos*, *Kirsty and Phil* and *Soccer Extra*.

So for someone so happy, it was perhaps surprising to see Kirsty's light fade in the midst of her father's poor health, and a painful divorce to ex-rugby pro Paul Sampson, her partner of 13 years, of which they were married for five.

"There were some tough things to process, though rather than take some time off to regroup and look after my boys, I threw myself into work, into new ideas and new projects."

A stint doing *Strictly Come Dancing* saw Gallacher looking desperately thin, and when a drink-driving incident saw her lose her driver's licence for 18 months, the star had hit a new low.

"It's actually really interesting how just when you think you are calm and settled, the carpet can be swept from beneath you," she admits. "It was horrific at the time, truly horrific – but at least now I can see that it was just a few life events colliding together. We are human beings for our ability to ride the rough waves and emerge out the other side stronger, and that's what I've done."

Her focus these days is on celebrating a return to the front line of presenting duties. Her successful podcast, *Stripped Back Sport*, is back on our screens at prime time, and even in a few short years she has witnessed a real evolution in television.

"As far as gender goes, it's definitely played out on more of an equal footing now," she says. "Broadcasting has really undergone a fantastic change over the past 20 years and British television remains the very best in the world. From a purely selfish perspective, it's so great to be back."

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NOVEMBER BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH

Chrysanthemum

For those born in November, your birth flower is the cheerful chrysanthemum. Often referred to as just "mums", these beautiful blooms have a long and rich history. One of the most popular autumn garden flowers, chrysanthemums are easy to grow and will come back year after year.

WHAT DOES THE CHRYSANTHEMUM SYMBOLISE?

Native to Asia, the chrysanthemum is considered by both Japan and China to be an emblem of youth. The flower is also said to help prevent grey hairs, and a single petal placed at the bottom of a wine glass is believed to aid longevity.

When presenting the chrysanthemum as a gift, the colour you choose conveys a particular meaning:

- A red or pink chrysanthemum means "I love you"
- A white chrysanthemum symbolises innocence and purity
- A yellow chrysanthemum represents unrequited love

WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOUR PERSONALITY?

If your birth flower is the chrysanthemum, you are said to be friendly, cheerful and loyal. Although at times you may appear tough on the outside, you are a compassionate person who is fiercely protective of your loved ones.

HOW CAN I GROW CHRYSANTHEMUMS?

If you love these vibrant flowers, you will be pleased to hear that they are relatively easy to grow. They thrive in moist but well-drained soil, so choose a sheltered and sunny spot and add plenty of compost or well-rotted manure. However, chrysanthemums do tend to break at the base, so they will need staking. Once they finish blooming in autumn, mulch them with straw to protect them from frost.

ARE CHRYSANTHEMUMS POISONOUS TO PETS?

Unfortunately, chrysanthemums are toxic to pets, and to cats, dogs and horses in particular. If your animal does ingest the flower, they may experience vomiting, skin inflammation and hyper-salivation.

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HORTICULTURE HEROES: **Finances Tophill**



It speaks volumes when someone who has ascended the horticultural heights of Alan Titchmarsh tips you to become the next big thing in green-fingered greatness; though to her credit, Frances Tophill hasn't yet allowed the praise to go to her head.

Tophill, a regular on *Gardeners' World*, offers a fresh, young, dare we say stylish take on the earthy, sometimes grubby surrounds of our lawns, beds and shrubbery. She is a presenter who articulates and conveys a sense of calm, with a modus operandi that is always to embrace anything that comes her way. That is, after all, how she got into gardening in the first place.

"I was 19 years old and desperate really just to reach out and do anything. I'd never given gardening a second thought, nor did I know much about it, but I saw an apprenticeship advertised and, when I read up further, quickly fell in love with everything to do with the outdoors."

Frances' energy on screen is infectious.

"My advice to people is just to get out there and enjoy yourselves," she says. "Get some dirt under your fingernails, perhaps pull up some weeds, or even just lie down on a lawn and soak up what it feels like to be in a pure, green space."

"Our gardens are very different environments to our local parks, and for the most part are private spaces where we can create our own world. I think that's what excited me the most, and once I realised how much was there and available, I never really looked back."

That brand of enthusiasm and endless excitement has seen her move to the top table of terrestrial gardening.

"I am the example of someone making it up as they go along, and we all know that's the secret to great gardening."

Photo credit: Pinterest

Nasty Niffs

HOW TO KEEP CATS (AND WHAT THEY LEAVE BEHIND) OUT OF YOUR GARDEN

For those of us lucky enough to have an English country garden, the greatest joy is being surrounded by the many delights of nature. However, some of the guests that wander through our outdoor spaces are prone to leaving smelly little surprises in their wake. While there are chemical aids that can be used to deter these funky felines, these natural alternatives are equally effective...

SHARP OBJECTS: No one likes finding poo in their flower beds, which is why you need to make these secluded, cosy spots a little less appealing to Felix. Egg shells, branches and holly cuttings are a simple way to deter the defecator, without disrupting your plants.

MOTION-ACTIVATED SPRINKLERS: Cats hate getting wet. Fact. And while this may not be the cheapest option, it is incredibly effective and a sure-fire way to protect your wildflowers from being watered by other people's pets.

CERTAIN SCENTS: Cats have keen noses and a natural dislike for some smells. Lavender, citrus and mint are among these, which is ideal as lavender and mint plants make glorious additions to your herb garden. Alternatively, you could try simply spraying these particular fragrances about the place, though this requires constant maintenance.

ULTRASONIC SOUNDS: Like a feline burglar alarm, these motion-activated devices emit a high-pitched sound when disrupted, which is very unpleasant to cats.

LION POO: Want to keep away the small cats? Then why not use the mighty power of the big cats? Fortunately, this organic and efficient method of repellent doesn't require you to trek around the Savannah with a pooper scooper as it's available as a natural fertiliser. And yes, it contains authentic lion whoopsies.



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THE BATTLE OF BERLIN

REMEMBERING THREE DECADES SINCE MODERN GERMANY WAS UNITED ONCE AGAIN

Celebrating the collapse of the Berlin Wall signifies something so expansive and important in the context of both the past and the present, that even some 31 years on, it is a milestone that must not be forgotten.

The Wall has now been removed for longer than it stood – it was constructed in 1961 and pulled down some 28 years later – but the social and political explanation of everything it stood for lives on. Indeed, it shapes the way Germany and Western Europe is today.

To understand the Berlin Wall, it's first necessary to know its purpose, and to discover its foundations ultimately had a lot to do with us here in Britain.

At the cessation of the Second World War, Germany was divided into zones, reflecting the four Allied powers: the United Kingdom, the United States, France and the Soviet Union. Berlin, the capital, despite being fully in the Soviet zone, was similarly split up.

While the principle was to keep the country under the administration of four 'allied' powers, in truth they all stood for very different things. In the developing years under Joseph Stalin, the Soviets attempted to place a firm communist imprint on their East Germany territory, which included the eastern part of Berlin.

Britain, the US and, to a lesser extent, the French, adopted a fierce consumer- and business-driven capitalist method, where control, freedom, ambition and self-improvement was presented to the people.

In the decade after the end of the war, East Germans could see their Western counterparts not just rebuilding, but flourishing under new principles, in the same way that on mainland UK the green shoots of recovery really took hold in the 1960s.

What logically followed then was a mass migration from East Germany to West, much to the chagrin of Stalin, who began to impose tougher restrictions and quotas on those wishing to relocate.

Things reached a head when, in 1952, Stalin created an inner-German border, thus cutting off travel between the two. Berlin, however, represented a major loophole in this plan, given that movement was easily facilitated, not least by train.

When these routes were eventually removed, the Soviets accelerated plans to limit further movement – by 1961, 3.5 million East Germans had fled, totalling 20 per cent of the population. Left behind was an older, poorer demographic, hamstrung by a regime that repressed and stifled capitalism.

The Berlin Wall (in many places two walls and a no man's land) therefore came to represent a physical and social barrier for a divided nation. At a height of 3.6 metres, it spanned 96 miles around West Berlin, containing 20 bunkers and more than 300 watchtowers. Across 28 years its 'death strip' accounted for the lives of 140 people desperate for freedom, yearning to be reunited with loved ones.

However, the opening of the Iron Curtain between Austria and Hungary in August 1989 set in place a chain of events whereby the Eastern Bloc had disintegrated and East Germany, as an entity, was no more. By November 9, the call came for guards to allow free passage of movement, and by that evening tens of thousands took to the streets to begin breaking, hammering and dismantling the Wall.

The united Germany is now an even more enriched, prosperous and tolerant country for its past ills, and the Wall, still present in places, sits as a reminder of past mistakes.

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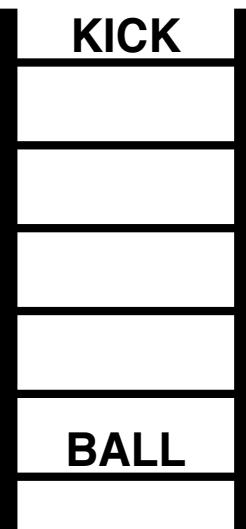
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DID YOU KNOW?

- Vatican City is the smallest country in the world
- The Gotthard Base Tunnel in Switzerland is the longest rail tunnel in the world
- E is the only vowel not used as the first letter in a US state name
- Russia is the largest country in the world
- The African continent has three deserts: Sahara, Kalahari and Namib
- Peninsulas are surrounded by water on three sides, for example Spain and Portugal
- Angel Falls in Venezuela is the world's largest uninterrupted waterfall
- Canberra is the capital city of Australia
- The Trafalgar Square Christmas tree is donated by Norway every year

WORD LADDER



THE AIM: Change the word at the top of the ladder one letter at a time to make the word at the bottom.

HOW TO: Change one letter on each step to make a new word. By the time you reach the end, you should have created the new word.

DO NOT rearrange the order of the letters.

TIP: There is usually more than one way to solve this puzzle.

Eating right ISN'T COMPLICATED

Top tips on how you can achieve a healthy and balanced diet

Eating a healthy, balanced diet is an important part of maintaining good health, and can help you feel your best. Some basic rules to follow are:

- > **Have a meal or small snack every three to four hours.** This fuels your metabolism and helps prevent binges, and blood sugar levels stay balanced.
- > **Combine protein and fibre at every meal.** This formula provides long-lasting fuel and necessary nutrients for brain, bone and muscle growth.
- > **Get up, move around.** Sitting for long periods slows the metabolism, which affects the body's ability to regulate blood sugar and blood pressure and to break down body fat.
- > **Drink water often.** There are specific times throughout the day when drinking water can boost your overall health and cognitive functioning. Drink one glass of water 30 minutes before a meal to help digestion. Remember not

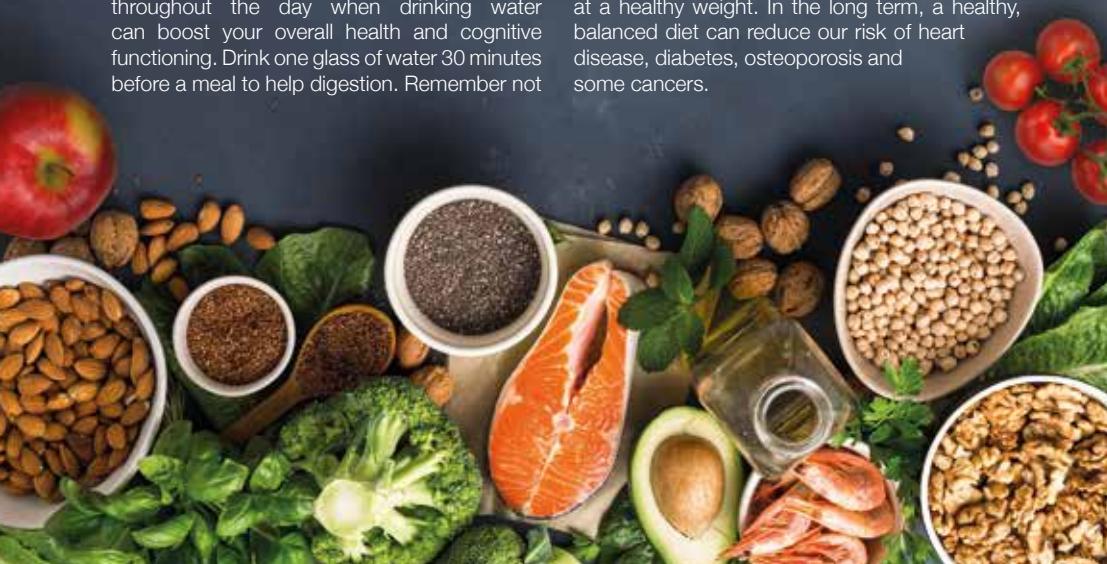
to drink too soon before or after a meal as the water will dilute the digestive juices.

Remember to vary your diet because healthy eating isn't necessarily that healthy if you eat the same things over and over again. Having a healthy, balanced diet is about getting the right types of foods and drinks in the right amounts.

As a rough guide, try to base your portions, with 200g (one cup) being one portion, around these healthy food groups:

- > **Fruit and vegetables:** 5+ portions per day
- > **Starchy carbohydrates:** 3–4 portions per day
- > **Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins:** 2–3 portions per day
- > **Dairy and alternatives:** 2–3 portions per day

Ultimately, in the short term, eating a healthy diet can help us to feel good, look our best and stay at a healthy weight. In the long term, a healthy, balanced diet can reduce our risk of heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and some cancers.



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Are you getting enough VITAMIN D?

After enjoying an unseasonably warm and sunny spring and a pretty typical British summer, people's thoughts are now turning to the cold, and probably wet, winter ahead. Yet have you thought about how you are going to get sufficient vitamin D into your body during the months when sunlight is sparse?

Why is vitamin D important?

Vitamin D helps to regulate the amount of calcium and phosphate in the body, both of which are needed for maintaining healthy teeth, bones and muscles. It is also known for improving brain development and reducing inflammation.

A vitamin D deficiency can lead to a loss of bone density which makes you more prone to fractures and osteoporosis. In children, it can cause rickets.

How much sunlight do I need to get sufficient vitamin D?

The main source of vitamin D for our bodies is the sun, yet in winter in the UK we do not get sufficient sunlight to meet our daily requirement of this vital vitamin. In the summer months, a mere 15 minutes of sun at midday is enough exposure, although people with darker skin, such as those of African or South Asian origin, may require a little longer.

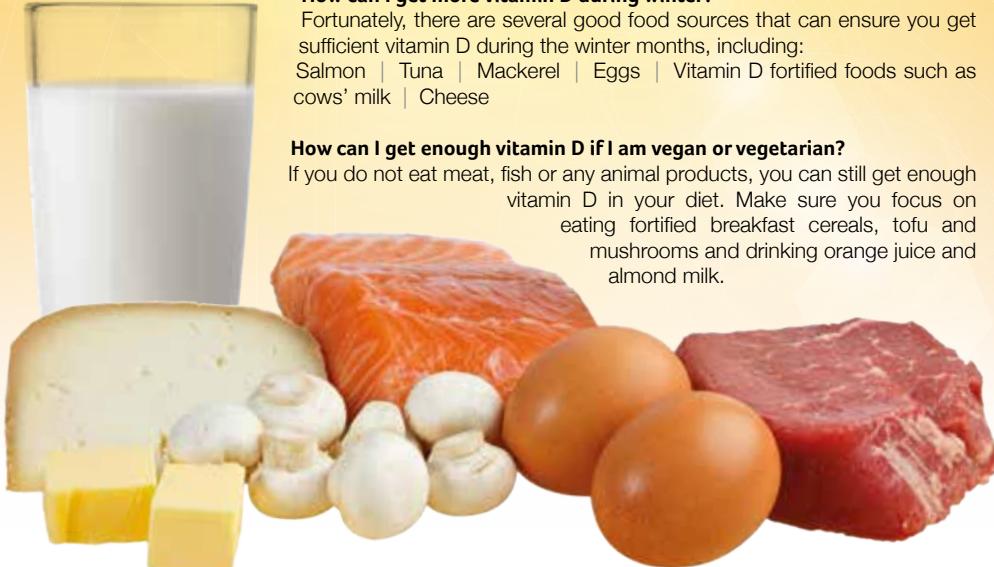
How can I get more vitamin D during winter?

Fortunately, there are several good food sources that can ensure you get sufficient vitamin D during the winter months, including:

Salmon | Tuna | Mackerel | Eggs | Vitamin D fortified foods such as cows' milk | Cheese

How can I get enough vitamin D if I am vegan or vegetarian?

If you do not eat meat, fish or any animal products, you can still get enough vitamin D in your diet. Make sure you focus on eating fortified breakfast cereals, tofu and mushrooms and drinking orange juice and almond milk.



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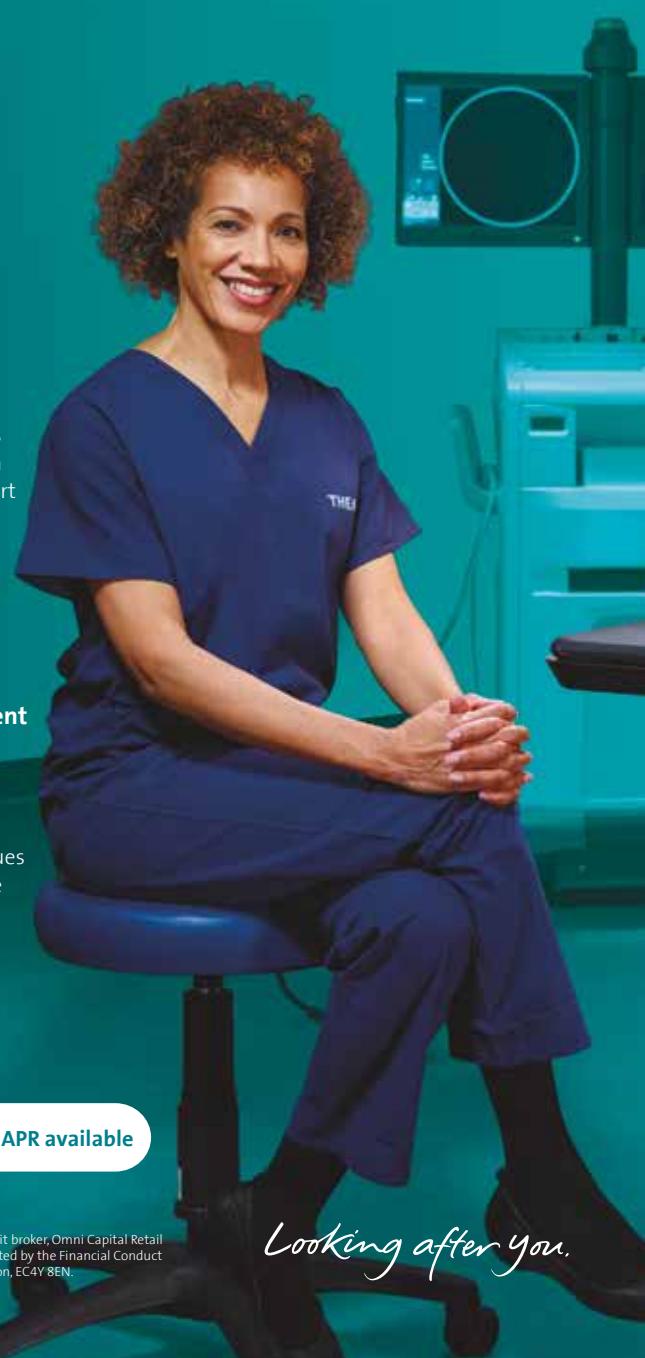
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The OBESITY ALPHABET

Your definitive A to Z guide for health

- A** for **Apple**: Choose whole fruit over juices – the sugar content is less and the fibre will fill you up.
- B** for **Boredom**: Be aware whether you're eating out of hunger or simply for something to do.
- C** for **Calories**: Keeping a check on calories is a restraining belt to excess.
- D** for **Doughnuts**: 'Dough nut' undo your good work with empty processed calories.
- E** for **Exercise**: The best counter to obesity of them all.
- F** for **Fats**: Know your good fat from your bad.
- G** for **Goals**: Set them, make them achievable and stick to them.
- H** for **Holiday**: Have a cheat day each week.
- I** for **Inspiration**: Surround yourself with positive examples and role models.
- J** for **Juice**: Beware of the sugar content of supposed healthy juices and smoothies.
- K** for **Keep a diary**: Log fitness progress and also the foods that make you most energetic, bloated and gassy.
- L** for **Lemon**: Great for cleansing the gut, hot water and a lemon is a winner.
- M** for **More not less**: Fill yourself up with bowls of healthy, nourishing food.
- N** for **Night-time**: Don't eat after 7pm.
- O** for **On the money**: Stick to the fundamentals rather than wasting money on fads.
- P** for **Prep**: Meal prep is essential to prevent you reaching for the easy microwave option.
- Q** for **Quit**: Choose five things to categorically strip from your diet.
- R** for **Rest**: Sleep is an important part of stabilising metabolism.
- S** for **Shout**: Announce your success with like-minded people.
- T** for **Takeaways**: Fast food and takeaways are the evil of good health.
- U** for **Undermine**: Keep self-doubt – as well as fatty foods – at arm's length.
- V** for **Vitamins**: A vitamin supplement will boost your health quickly and easily.
- W** for **Wholefoods**: Go for wholefoods and avoid anything processed, if possible.
- X** for **X-treme**: ... dieting never works.
- Y** for **Yesterday**: ... is gone; look only to the future with your health.
- Z** for **Zinc**: Zinc is a brilliant mineral that helps control your metabolism.



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TOEING the line

COULD TOE WRESTLING REALLY BECOME AN OLYMPIC SPORT?

It's the younger, slightly cheesier cousin of arm wrestling, but is a sport to be taken seriously, with a sizeable rise in competitions year on year. Toe wrestling, created in the foothills of the Peak District in the 1990s, is here to stay.

In combat, competitors sit across from one another with the big toe interlocked into their opponent's on a cleverly named 'toedium'. On the shout of "Toes away", battle commences, with the aim of using toe strength to push the other person's foot to a vertical board a few inches away. The non-wrestling foot must be in the air at all times, while each competitor's bottom must be grounded.

The sport requires good foot strength, obviously, but also strong thighs and the mental strength to second-guess, defend and attack an opponent. Bouts usually take the form of 'best of threes', with right, left and right toes engaged in toe-tal combat.

While it is a fun, summer sport played usually in pub locations and with a detectable whiff of light-hearted British Bulldog spirit

that also embraces cheese rolling, gut baring and gravy wrestling, competitors actually take the challenge rather seriously. Some have been known to have their toenails surgically removed so as to prevent opponents from gaining added grip, while the founder of the sport's governing body, the World Toe Wrestling Federation, based in Staffordshire, shaved his buttocks as a method for gaining extra floor grip.

While the sport is popular in pub environments, its elevation into a recognised pursuit is now in conversation, given the formation of an official hierarchy, and the leaders are in dialogue with chiefs about its presentation as an Olympic sport.

Undoubtedly, to elevate the battle from a simple Peak District pub-floor activity to a global entity, it would be no mean feet.



The PARTEY IS OVER

Arsenal's decision to lay off club mascot Gunnersaurus on the day they splashed £45million on midfielder Thomas Partey has furthered the debate of just how connected our Premier League sides are to the real world.

The decision to release the Gunners' iconic mascot, who has been parading around home games for 27 years, was announced at the start of October. That meant lifelong fan Jerry Quy would have to find something else to do on matchdays.

In the club's defence, it was accepted that dressing as a dinosaur and parading around the pitch in front of empty stands was probably a waste of time; but Arsenal, just like so many other clubs who have cut back in the wake of coronavirus, have scored a spectacular own goal in their failure to see the bigger picture.

From north London neighbours Tottenham Hotspur to Premier League champions Liverpool, an insistence on micromanaging rarely ends well when we are, as a nation, looking for togetherness and unity as we are during the time of this pandemic.

When players' astronomical wages are paid in full yet staff on the minimum wage are furloughed and, in some cases, made redundant, you wonder if the disconnect can ever be bridged.

When a 126-year-old club such as Macclesfield Town, who played in the Football League last season, are allowed to be wound up for the sake of less than two weeks of Arsenal midfielder Mesut Özil's wages, surely we've lost sight of the game.

Speaking of Özil, who hasn't played competitive football for the club in seven months but continues to pick up his full wage, the German did at least begin to repair his reputation with Gunners fans perennially underwhelmed by his energy and application, by offering to front up Gunnersaurus's wage himself.

It's troubling that a player has to make that move, and that his employers cannot see that abandoning the little man – or in this case, dinosaur – is a PR faux pas that becomes far more costly.

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5 natural BATH SOAKS



Is there anything more relaxing than soaking in a warm bubble bath during the winter months? Arguably not, but have you ever stopped to think about all the harsh chemicals that you are exposing your skin to each time you reach for your preferred products? Here are five natural alternatives to try.

1. Honey

Honey is an antibacterial substance that can help prevent infections and heal minor skin abrasions. It is also full of natural antioxidants that can help boost your immune system and help combat the signs of ageing.

Simply add two tablespoons of raw honey to a running bath and then soak for a minimum of 15 minutes.

2. Green tea

A popular choice for a bath soak, green tea can help to reduce muscle pain, soften skin and reduce any redness. Loaded with antioxidants, it also has anti-ageing benefits. Just fill your bath as normal, pop in six green tea bags, leave to steep for 15–20 minutes and remove.

3. Lavender

You may already be using a lavender-scented bath product owing to this herb's ability to instantly soothe and relax. However, why not cut out the chemicals and use pure lavender essential oil instead? All you need to do is add between six and eight drops to running water.

4. Baking soda

A store cupboard essential, also known as sodium bicarbonate, this natural ingredient is found in most bath products owing to its exfoliating properties.

Simply mix five tablespoons of baking soda into a warm bath and allow to dissolve.

5. Epsom salt

Not actually a salt but a naturally occurring mineral, Epsom salt is made up of magnesium and sulphate. Ideal for counteracting stress, Epsom salt can also help to ease pain and alleviate sore muscles. Add one or two cups to your bath five minutes before you plan to get in.

FLAWLESS

flicks

With the Christmas party season fast approaching, even if this year it is looking to be a bit more virtually festive, what better time to learn how to create the perfect eyeliner flick? Especially as your eyes are the one part of your face that is not covered by a mask!

THE NATURAL FLICK – Best for all eye shapes

Ideal for those who want an understated look, the natural flick should be subtle and slightly smudged. It is best created using a pencil eyeliner.



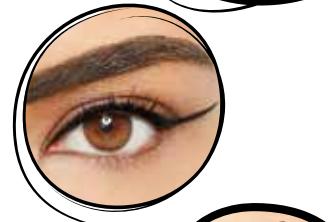
THE ALL-AROUND FLICK – Best for upturned or hooded eyes

Slightly more dramatic and perfect for an evening occasion, as the name suggests, this flick goes all around your eyes. Best achieved with a pencil eyeliner.



THE LONG FLICK – Best for small eyes

If you are wanting to look elegant, yet edgy, this long line flick is the look for you. Best for those who feel confident in their flicking abilities. Use a precise gel liner.



THE FISHTAIL FLICK – Best for round eyes

A more futuristic flick, this look requires clean and precise lines, so you need to bring your make-up-applying A game. Opt for a skinny gel liner and practise until perfect.



THE REVERSE FLICK – Best for almond eyes

Who says that the perfect flick has to be on the top of your eyes? Become an exotic goddess with a reverse flick that is subtle, yet seriously sexy. Make sure you add lashings of mascara to your top eyelashes to avoid looking tired.



TOP TIPS FOR ACHIEVING THE PERFECT FLICK

Use a hairpin for more precision | Create a dot sequence if you struggle to draw a fluid line | Use a magnifying mirror | Prime oily eyelids first | Use a combination of pencil and liquid liners | Be bold with colour – blue eyes suit greens and brown eyes look great with navy.

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Shoe care

Whether you live in your trusty trainers or you favour a more sophisticated leather shoe, caring for your chosen footwear can be a bit of a nightmare. Fortunately, we are here to help.

Suede & Leather

The first thing you should do if you buy a pair of leather or suede shoes is to treat them with a specialised spray protector, as this will help preserve them for longer.

In terms of cleaning, suede should be gently brushed with a suede brush to remove any dirt or dust without damaging it.

Leather is best cleaned with shoe polish as this will not only clean but also moisturise it, which helps to lengthen the lifespan of the shoes.

If your leather shoes get caught in the rain, place them upside down on dry paper (not newspaper) and leave to dry naturally.

Canvas & Fabric

Slightly easier to take care of, most canvas shoes can be washed in the washing machine, although be sure to let them air dry and never place them in the tumble dryer as this will ruin their shape. If there is only one spot of dirt on your fabric or canvas shoes, simply brush it off with a toothbrush or wash with a sponge dipped in soapy water.

Trainers

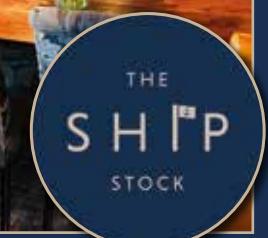
Some trainers can be washed in the washing machine, although always check their label before doing so. It can be a good idea to place your trainers in a pillow case before washing and to wash them with a few towels to avoid your footwear banging around and becoming damaged. Liquid detergent is preferable as powder can get stuck in your trainers.

Signs your shoe soles need replacing

- > The centre of your soles feel weak or spongy
- > They start to feel thinner in some areas
- > You notice a circle emerging



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Return TO YOUR ROOTS^{part 2}

Last month we celebrated the carrot, praised the parsnip and tackled the turnip. Now it's time to explore the culinary delights of three more tasty and nutritious root vegetables.

BEETROOT

Instantly recognisable by its bright purple hue, the beetroot often gets a bad rap as some believe that it tastes a little too much like the soil in which it is grown. However, it is worth sampling for its health benefits alone, with this root vegetable being rich in antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.

HOW TO STORE: Place beetroots in a perforated plastic bag in the vegetable drawer of your fridge. Lifespan: 3 weeks.

HOW TO COOK: The most famous beetroot dish is borscht, an eastern European winter warmer. Alternatively, roast in olive oil and cumin seeds.



JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE

Full of iron, potassium and vitamin B1, the Jerusalem artichoke is reported to be both an aphrodisiac and a natural digestive. In season from November to March, choose artichokes that are firm to touch and pale brown in colour.

HOW TO STORE: Keep in the fridge or in a cool, dark place. Lifespan: 1-2 weeks.

HOW TO COOK: Cook Jerusalem artichokes in the same way that you would a potato or parsnip: roasted, sautéed, dipped in batter and fried or puréed into a soup.



SWEET POTATO

Seen as a healthier alternative to potatoes, this root vegetable contains iron, calcium, selenium, vitamin A and C, plus it's full of fibre.

HOW TO STORE: Avoid storing in the fridge as this will result in an unpleasant taste; instead, place in a dry, well-ventilated container away from heat. Lifespan: 3-4 weeks.

HOW TO COOK: Although baking sweet potatoes will result in a richer taste, when boiled they have a low glycaemic index (GI).



MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR

TOASTER

If you don't have the time, energy or expertise to make a home-cooked meal every night of the week, these six surprising snacks can be cooked to (almost) perfection in the humble toaster.

POTATO WAFFLES

Loved by parents across the nation as a quick and filling accompaniment to your kids' lunch or dinner, no longer do you have to wait for the grill to heat up. Simply pop them directly from your freezer into your toaster.

VEGETARIAN BURGERS

Although you don't want to be putting beef burgers into your toaster owing to their high fat content, veggie burgers work just fine. No sogginess in sight.

SWEET POTATO CHIPS

If you love chips but are looking for a healthier option, this sweet potato variety is just what you need. Simply cut your sweet potato into 1cm wide slices and toast for 10–15 minutes. Alternatively, why not try sweet potato toast? Slice thickly, toast and top with avocado and feta.

LEFTOVER PIZZA

Who hasn't been indulging in a few too many takeaways in recent months? Rather than throwing away leftover pizza, or worse still, heating it up in the microwave, simply pop it into a toaster bag, toast and you're good to go.

HOMEMADE TORTILLA CHIPS

If you have ever made your own tortilla chips in the oven using wraps or flour tortillas, you will know how much tastier these are than the shop-bought ones. However, for a real time-saver, tear a wrap in half, put in the toaster and then break into snack-sized bites.

ASPARAGUS

Arguably the most surprising ingredient that you can cook in the toaster. Place a few pieces in a toaster bag with a drizzle of oil and your preferred herbs or spices, and hey presto, delicious roasted asparagus.



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THE perfect pud

Packed with delicious dried fruit, drenched in brandy and served with lashings of cream, it wouldn't be Christmas without a rich and decadent Christmas pudding. Although you can purchase a shop-bought variety for as little as £2, there is something special about taking the time to make your own.

YOU WILL NEED:

120g suet | 20g breadcrumbs | 100g flour | 175g soft dark brown sugar | 500g dried fruit (raisins, sultanas, etc.) | 25g flaked almonds | 25g candied peel | 1 tsp mixed spice | ½ tsp nutmeg | ½ tsp cinnamon | 1 grated cooking apple | zest of ½ orange | zest of ½ lemon | 150ml brandy | 2 eggs | optional: coins

HOW TO MAKE:

Combine suet, breadcrumbs, flour, sugar, fruit and spices in a bowl | Add the rest of the ingredients and mix well | Butter



a heatproof pudding bowl | Pour in the mixture | Cover with baking paper and tie on securely with string | Place the pudding in a large pan and pour in boiling water until it reaches halfway up the outside of the bowl | Cover with a lid | Steam the pudding for 4 hours making sure it does not boil dry (add water if necessary) | Test if the pudding is cooked by inserting a skewer into it; if it comes out dry, it is done | Leave to cool | Cover with fresh baking paper and wrap tightly in cling film | Store in a cool, dark place for up to 6 weeks | When ready to serve, steam for a further 2 hours | Light using a ladle of warm (not boiling) brandy

VARIATIONS ON THE TRADITION:

Instead of brandy, try adding rum, stout or sherry | For a vegan pudding, leave out the eggs and use vegetable suet with a little bit of soya yogurt | Substitute traditional raisins, currants and sultanas for cherries, figs or crystallised ginger

If you are going to add coins, wrap them in tin foil first to avoid choking.

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SEO 101

A beginner's guide

To the uninitiated, SEO, or search engine optimisation, can seem like a daunting task, and enlisting the services of a professional can be expensive. However, there is no reason why you can't learn to master the art of SEO yourself.

SEARCH FOR KEYWORDS

The foundation of any SEO campaign, keywords are ideas and terms that describe what your content is about and they are designed to help increase your visibility online. You can come up with the right keywords for your business by:

- > Brainstorming with your team
- > Checking out your competitors' sites
- > Using Google Ads Keyword Planner

OPTIMISE YOUR TITLES AND META DESCRIPTIONS

This is where it gets a little bit more technical. Once you have your list of keywords, you need to optimise your page titles using these keywords in as natural a way as possible. Page titles and meta descriptions are shown in search engine results and therefore these need to clearly convey what each page is about. You can optimise these via your content management system or in your SEO plug-in.

OPTIMISE YOUR PAGE CONTENT

Your next step is to add your keywords to your website text. These include your header tags (your headings and subheadings) and the rest of the text on the page. Again, try to do this in as natural a way as possible and don't overstuff your content with keywords as both Google and searchers are put off by this technique.

BUILD LINKS

If you want your site to get on that much-coveted first page of Google, you need to focus on getting high-quality backlinks, i.e. hyperlinks from other websites to your own. There are several techniques that you can use to build backlinks, including:

- > Be active on social media
- > Write competitive content
- > Create an infographic
- > Write testimonials for other websites



Getting back to

BUSINESS

The unexpected upturns coronavirus brought about for small businesses

One has to be careful with any mention of a global pandemic in some way being good for business. Clearly what enveloped the world over the course of 2020 was a set of circumstances and outcomes we would never want repeated, and they carry on today. Yet while COVID-19 called time on the legacy of thousands of businesses, for others it has provided new vision, renewed focus and a world of opportunity.

Most of these have come in the form of directors, managers, sole traders and other decision-makers having a rare opportunity to step back and reassess.

In the early days of the lockdown, so profound were the circumstances around us and so urgent was the need to strip back, downgrade and economise, that businesses reverted to skeletal structures just to survive.

So when the UK began to emerge out of the famine of lockdown, many owners realised they could survive on these new,

low levels of efficiency. From reverting to four-day weeks to cancelling direct debits for subscriptions, software and other resources we actually didn't use; from encouraging working from home, embracing tech such as video conferencing, right through to enriching staff by asking them to adopt fresh ideas, tackle wider tasks or embrace new skills in order to get additional jobs done, there was a new take on what we needed.

In total, we found that COVID-19 brought about a need for transparency none of us could pull a curtain across. Unequivocally, it changed our attitudes towards everything from money to socialising to personal space, but also altered our perception of business – what it is, how we utilise it and, in some cases, how little we need the bells, whistles and fanfare. We are a simpler, more efficient nation because of coronavirus, and once we're out of the woods that will surely help us to flourish again.

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ARE YOU ON YOUR BEST INVESTOR BEHAVIOUR?

In uncertain times, where we've witnessed periods of stock market volatility, it's easy to let emotions influence investment decisions, but a good strategy for investors to adopt is not to react hastily. Human instinct is to be responsive, so traversing these behavioural biases can be challenging, but once mastered, resisting the urge to flight can be rewarding.

As an investor, controlling these hard-wired behavioural biases and learning to resist the urge to panic, can bear fruit. Take stock market volatility in March this year as an example. Retail investors sold investment funds worth £10bn in just one month, with many selling just as the stock market was falling to its lowest level in eight years. In doing so, they missed out on the subsequent market bounce of almost 30 per cent. If hindsight is a marvellous thing, by its very definition, foresight is insight gained by looking forward. In other words, when it comes to investing, look forward, because markets tend to bounce back over time, though it can't be guaranteed.

DIFFERENT DRIVERS

Several factors lead people to respond differently to market occurrences – what your objectives are, your risk tolerance, beliefs, preferences, emotions and past experiences, can all result in different investor behaviour. One event, such as a market fall, can lead to different behaviours; ceasing investing until markets

stabilise, selling in case it's the beginning of a market downturn, or contrarian investors may see the correction as an opportunity to invest. Some beliefs could lead to successful investment outcomes, others could result in behavioural biases that are counterproductive and endanger the prospect of successfully achieving your objectives.

MANAGING BEHAVIOURAL BIASES

The best defence mechanism to safeguard from knee-jerk reactions and defend against the influence of your biases, is to follow a robust, objective and disciplined process, and that's where we come in. In addition to having a well-thought-out investment process, investing with a clear idea of what you want to achieve, will determine how we structure your investments. Whether you are building your retirement nest egg or a fund to put children through university, you have a better chance of achieving your goals if they are used to frame all investment decision-making.

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The concept is great – cleaner, cheaper, some may even say smoother driving. Electric cars have given us a new way of getting from A to B, but for many considering investing in one of the greenest advancements ever conceived, the need to recharge at such regular intervals has been a major stumbling block.

And yet, improvements in technology have meant the range of our electric vehicles is better than ever. Take this year's Tesla Model S, for instance. Elon Musk's pioneering vehicle brand is ripping up the rule book and this shimmering, humming piece of tarmac tech will take you 402 miles on a single charge... that's right up there with petrol and diesel vehicles. The only downside is the £75,000 price tag.

And if you fancy a hybrid of electric and traditional fuel, check out the 2018 Toyota Camry LE. This will get you an almost mind-boggling 689 miles – that's the equivalent of driving from London to Amsterdam... and back.

If you want to go for a purely electric car without needing to remortgage the house – in other words, steer clear of Teslas, who occupy four of the top five positions for range, with their X (351 miles), 3 (322 miles) and Y (316 miles) models – then have a look at the Chevrolet Bolt EV. You'll be looking at around £30,000 for a car that will take you well over 250 miles on one charge.

Hyundai (the Kona Electric also hits 250 miles) and Kia (the Niro Electric will take you 230 miles before you plug in again) both represent good value, and 2018 models can be picked up second-hand for around £15,000. For those seeking a bit more status, there is of course the ever-popular Jaguar I-PACE. Up to 300 miles in a car that balances eco and image perfectly... what's not to like?





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