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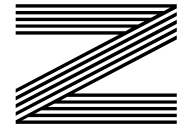
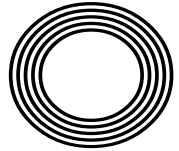
Highlighting LGBTQ+ in sport

Stacey Saloman

From TV personality to organising queen

Dame
JUDI DENCH

The actress showing no signs of slowing down



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Editor's notes...

APRIL 2021



Nik Allen, Editor

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

What a difference a year makes. It was 12 months ago that we found ourselves right at the beginning of a national lockdown.

It was, for all of us, a step into the unknown. It would be fair to say there was an intriguing novelty about the early days of social distancing and the need to stay at home, but that quickly changed when all around us the concerns for health, jobs and our loved ones grew.

Speaking personally, the early days of the pandemic saw my dad in hospital for more than a week. He eventually won his considerable battle

with COVID-19, while at home my wife and I were bracing ourselves for the imminent

arrival of our baby daughter. Now, a year on, I feel better equipped to take a view on those dark days. Things were to get much worse before the corner could be turned.

No matter what our thoughts are on Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the economy or the COVID-19 response, one thing most people I speak to agree on is the speed and effectiveness of the vaccine roll-out so far.

It has given the nation the biggest lift possible. Sure, we will be living with COVID-19 and its variants perhaps indefinitely, but getting the job is ultimately the way we can all get our lives back on track.

Nik Allen

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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

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Stacey Solomon SPOTLESS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

FOUR BOYS... AND POTENTIALLY MORE ON THE WAY – HOW THE STACEY SOLOMON/JOE SWASH LOVE STORY IS A REALITY TV STORY WE ALL LOVE

Stacey Solomon isn't too worried about the airs and graces of celebrity life. Sure, she has grown up in the lens since being catapulted into the scene in 2010 with a stellar display on *The X Factor*. While she ended up falling short – coming third, behind Joe McElderry and Olly Murs – the dye was cast as far as a career on screen was concerned. It was her casual, considered, girl-about-town image that viewers admired; the fact she was never afraid to speak up, to share her emotions and to bridge the gap between viewer and star.

“Throughout my TV career I've always just tried to be myself,” she says. “It's strange when you receive criticism for that – perhaps I don't round my consonants as well as I should, perhaps I act a bit loud at times, but that's just me. I think the era of the manufactured presenter is over and we're all allowed to be a bit more ourselves, and that's something I love.”

.....
‘I think the era of the manufactured presenter is over and we're all allowed to be a bit more ourselves, and that's something I love’
.....

The 31-year-old Dagenham-born star's TV career has ultimately been the 'x factor' that has led her to love, having fallen for the charms of chipper, funny man Joe Swash, also a near-veteran of the reality TV industry. The pair got together five years ago, drawn together by a shared passion for... well, everything.

“We connect on such a perfect level,” says Stacey, “and we're always making each other laugh.”

The pair, who got engaged just before Christmas, now also have a little reality star of their own to share – baby Rex, who arrived in 2019.

“I have two sons from a previous relationship and Joe has one, so bringing everyone together in our home has been perfect.”

The Essex-based couple have recently moved into their new home - aptly named Pickle Cottage. Stacey admitted it would need some work, but what's certain is that she will get it looking spick and span – after all, Stacey has just released her latest book, entitled *Tap to Tidy*. It's a smorgasbord of houseproud hints that also details crafting and design, as well as cleaning and keeping shipshape.

Stacey, who has appeared on and won *I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here*, and has presented shows such as *The Love Machine*, *The Jump* and *Loose Women*, also has a new BBC series, *Sort Your Life Out*, arriving later in the year; while Joe's work ranges from *EastEnders* to *Dancing on Ice* – he is also a previous winner in ‘the jungle’, which is where the likeable pair first met.

“TV was always an industry I admired, and although it has been a strange year, I think so many people have been able to keep their spirits up by escaping for a few hours in the evening to watch something,” Stacey says.

“The pandemic has really brought us back to the basics, where spending time around our family now feels like the most important thing in the world, whereas before we were perhaps more side-tracked by work and careers and more selfish things in our lives.

“That said, I want to get back to normality – it's what we all need, and I've got a wedding to plan, after all!”

Jasmine Harrison WATER BABE



Photo credit: Talisker Whisky Challenge

HOW JASMINE HARRISON BRAVED ISOLATION AND SLEEP DEPRIVATION TO BECOME A WORLD RECORD HOLDER

From rowing across the Atlantic Ocean with only the sound of waves crashing against the sides of a flimsy 21ft boat, to answering a Zoom call from the Duchess of Cambridge, Kate Middleton, on International Women's Day, Jasmine Harrison's journey from desperate isolation to taking centre stage as an example of true human endeavour and resilience has been magnificent.

The 21-year-old world record breaker was inspired to start rowing when she saw the event two years ago while teaching in the Caribbean. Yet despite having not set foot inside a boat until 12 months ago, she powered her way into the record books in February by becoming the youngest woman to row solo across the Atlantic Ocean as part of the Talisker Whisky Challenge.

Going up against a field of experienced entrants, the Yorkshire-based sailor drew on every last sinew of courage and conviction, to the delight of her friends, family and support crew who tracked

her every move across 3,000 miles of water.

The journey, from La Gomera in the Canary Islands to Antigua, took Jasmine 70 days. Despite extreme exhaustion – the longest duration of uninterrupted sleep she could have was two hours – searing heat, dehydration and no small quantity of challenges along the way – including capsizing her vessel just two days before finally making it to the finish line – the intrepid sailor says the experience was the most profound of her life.

"I will take away from this experience so many memories – some bad, but most of them good."

Asked what she was looking forward to most when back on dry land, she laughed: "That's easy – food... lots of food."

As for what comes next, the part-time bartender is almost certainly going to find herself in demand where other marine challenges are concerned.

"I'm going to take some time off then look around and decide what comes next. This isn't a one-off for me and I want to achieve more."

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STYLISH

SPIKES



HOME & DIY

Acactus can make a great addition to any home thanks to its striking shape and often unusual flowers on some varieties. However, this spikey houseplant offers many other benefits.

CACTI ARE SELF-SUSTAINING PLANTS

If you want to inject some greenery into your home but you simply don't have the time to care for plants, then a cactus is the plant for you as it requires little to no maintenance. Native to the desert, cacti store moisture in their roots, leaves and stems and regulate their own food intake so you barely need to water them at all.

CACTI IMPROVE THE AIR QUALITY IN YOUR HOME

Green plants such as cacti actively absorb carbon dioxide from the air and release oxygen, which helps to improve the air quality in your home. Other health benefits of cacti include an ability to reduce stress levels, provide companionship and even enhance your memory.

CACTI CAN MAKE YOU MORE PRODUCTIVE

If you are currently working from home but are being driven to distraction by family life, a well-placed cactus plant can boost your productivity levels. In fact, controlled tests have shown that having a cactus in your office can improve your performance by more than 12 per cent.

CACTI OFFER SUBTLE BEAUTY

For those who follow feng shui in their home, a cactus is the perfect plant for adding an elegant visual experience while at the same time banishing any negative energy. Cacti love the sun, so choose to add one to your windowsill or near the entrance to your home. Avoid placing in the living room or your kitchen, unless you want to be on the receiving end of an unexpected spike.

BEST CACTUS VARIETIES TO GROW INDOORS:

Angel wings cactus | Rat tail cactus | Old lady cactus | Christmas cactus





FAWNING OVER flora

The floral effect, and how to achieve it

Although floral interiors are nothing new, they've certainly become on trend over the last few years. Flowery bedspreads, botanical cushions, jungle-print curtains and all manner of foliage frolics have been brought into the home, with our front rooms, kitchens, bedrooms and even bathrooms better places for it.

Vivacious ideas and vivid colours have become the order of the day, with ambitious, elegant results, all crafted in the knowledge that floral interiors never go out of fashion.

If you've kept your walls clear and fresh, it means that you can just add in colour with floral-print additions to your furniture, with vibrant cushions, rugs and throws in your living room. For perhaps the smallest of makeovers, your inside space can represent all the bounty of an outside garden.

If, however, your current styles mean a drastic design change, a mural or flowered wallpaper may be more in demand. If this is your route, supplement a complicated background with plain cushions and simple, flat, easy-to-digest whites and greys.

In addition, adding real or fake flowers will bring walls into the 3D realm, enhancing your look and creating energy, interest and talking points.

As for the palette you have at your disposal, floral colours offer all manner of outdoor shades, as we know. From pinks to purples, yellows, whites and reds, there are few colours out of bounds.

And once you've remastered a room with a full-on floral theme, you can progress the idea by making small, subtle changes that complement the look, such as adding small garden-themed pictures, or perhaps even candles with floral scents.

Very soon, you can find yourself bringing the outside inside, where opening a window and allowing a breeze to blow through the space completes what is an invigorating and inspirational design effect.



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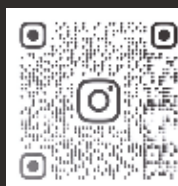
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HOME & DIY



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Whether you are investing in home security for the first time or you want to upgrade your existing set-up, the below guide will ensure you pick the perfect home security system for your property.

Determine the purpose: The first step in choosing a security system for your home is to determine its primary purpose. There are three types of home security systems: home automation, intruder protection and environmental monitoring.

Home automation is the most advanced option, where all your devices are connected to each other via the internet of things. Intruder protection is designed to protect your home from burglars, and environmental monitoring systems detect anomalies like fire and leaks.

Choose the right components: There are many different home security packages on the market and you need to decide which elements you want in yours to make you and your family feel safe and protected. Popular choices include smart

doorbells, motion cameras, burglar alarms, smart lights and window sensors.

Pick a monitoring system: If your budget allows it, you could invest in round-the-clock call centre monitoring for your home. Your chosen provider will call you if they notice anything strange or to alert you of a natural disaster. Alternatively, you could use DIY monitoring and opt to receive notifications to your phone.

Select a network: Every home security system needs a network to function. You can choose either a wired or a wireless one. Wireless networks are becoming increasingly popular as all they need is a Wi-Fi or cellular connection and they are good to go.

Decide about installation: You can either install your home security system yourself or pay a professional to do it for you. Professionally installed systems tend to be more reliable but will obviously cost you more money than doing it yourself.

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SEVEN HANDY HINTS FOR MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR JET WASH HIRE

You're about to embark on a bit of high-pressure jet washing – perhaps you're getting that grubbiness off the walls, maybe your patio needs bringing back to its original sheen, or it could be your windows that want rid of all that winter grime.

Whatever the case, here are some tips that mean when hiring a pressure washer you'll clean up... literally and financially.

ONE: The price is right

It sounds obvious, but it pays to shop around. Kärcher leads the market with consumer pressure washers, but they all work in the same way, so don't necessarily be swayed by a big name or a fancy trim.

TWO: Time is of the essence

Be realistic over how long you want to hire a pressure washer for. Most hire companies will let you extend, but it's cheaper and easier to plan out your workload first; and of course, don't ever waste money by hiring one that you're not going to use straight away.

THREE: Failing to prepare...

With the last point in mind, prepare the areas you're going to use the jet wash for before picking it up. Not only will it help with space and efficiency, but your hire time won't be wasted moving items around so you can get started.

FOUR: Safety first

While great fun, pressure washers pack a huge amount of power, and even a lower-grade machine has enough punch to break through human skin.

FIVE: Pre-wash

Pre-washing any area makes jet spraying so much easier when you come back to it a few minutes later.

SIX: Nozzle knowledge

The pressure washer comes with a variety of nozzles, so ensure you select the right one for the job.

SEVEN: "I need proof (waterproofs)"

Spray will quickly consume you and people in neighbouring counties, so ensure you have waterproof gear, and prepare for a huge amount of dirt while you're at it.

You can use a jet wash for cleaning windows, patios, driveways and even your car.





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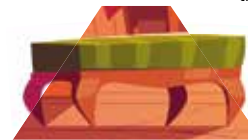
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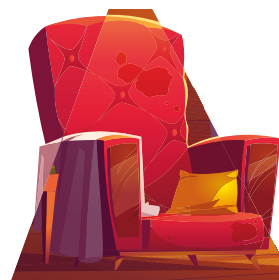
In theory, the loft is the perfect storage place for old mementos, cherished gifts and all manner of items you will sort at some point down the line. What unites all of them is we don't want these books, records, paintings, clothes and pieces of furniture around us in our living spaces – fair enough. And yet, when it comes to retrieving them from the most ideal of home hidey-holes, will they actually return to the light in the same condition we left them?



All told, the evidence appears to be 'no'. Part of the reason for this is because your attic is a hotbed (literally) for wildly fluctuating temperatures. We all know heat rises, so at certain times of the day, and the year, all manner of warmth will spread upwards into your loft space. Conversely, during times of extreme cold, it will be the only place in the house neither insulated nor heated.

Consider as well the creeps and critters that reside in the dark, sometimes damp, sometimes blissfully dry conditions.

You should pay particular attention to:



WOODEN FURNITURE... Wood can expand and crack with frequent changes in temperature, so beware of leaving it in storage for long spells.

FABRICS... Mice, dust mites, beetles and even birds will quickly find a second use for clothes, carpets, toys and rugs.

LEATHER... While the appearance of an old leather jacket will tarnish and fade, a bigger problem may be trying to rid it of a dank, musty odour.



CANDLES, VINYL AND CASSETTE TAPE... Extreme heat will quickly compromise the quality of items that you have cherished, be it that wedding photo album or your Canned Heat LP.

The best way to avoid items deteriorating over time is to wrap them well, store them in boxes and ensure proper ventilation through your loft space.



Lusting for LUSTRE



Modern glass showers and marble counters may look great, but they need care to maintain their lustre – bring forward the Great British Baking Soda solution.

You may not think glass shower doors and cubicles have much to do with those huge slabs of marble that comprise the worksurfaces in your kitchen, but think again. Both undergo daily use, both are largely mistreated – consider limescale and heat in the bathroom and all manner of spillages in the kitchen – and yet both can be kept in A1 shape with the required care and attention... and a bit of baking soda.

GLASS SHOWERS

Tending to a bit of cleaning is the last thing on our minds when we wander out of the shower in the morning, still half-asleep from the night before. Yet daily spraying – with a limescale-fighting premix – and wiping can preserve the lifetime of glass so it stays shiny for longer.

However, if you're the type who would rather do a one-off clean every couple of weeks, use washing-up liquid on a course brush and scrub the areas that contain the tell-tale white, bumpy marks.

Rinse with cool water, then use baking soda to break down some more of the mass, spraying vinegar over the top before rinsing away with warm water.

MARBLE COUNTERS

Baking soda is again your best friend when it comes to returning marble counters to the way they were before soups, sauces, pasta and pancetta took a rather appealing shine away.

Simply mix three tablespoons of baking soda into a litre of water. Apply the mixture to your worktops and leave in place for several hours.

When you return, wash the pasted solution off with warm water, then apply a shop-bought marble sealer.

As ever, regular cleaning, and ensuring you don't leave spillages to set, is the best way to keep your marble at a constantly high level.



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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Photo credit: Hilltop Nursery

Plans submitted for small zoo to be built

A new zoo could open in Billericay after an application was submitted to convert part of an old garden centre.

The application for land at Hilltop Nursery in Ramsden Heath is headed by former Colchester Zoo employee Ryan Shorter, who wants to create a small zoo.

The plan, which officially lists the development as a "zoological visitor attraction", says around 14,500 visitors are expected each year.

It would be built on land not used by the garden centre, to the rear of Hilltop Nursery.

The nursery closed to the public a decade ago, but the garden centre is expected to open later this year.

In a statement included as part of the planning application, Ryan Shorter said: "The venture was originally created in March 2020, when I left my full-time position as a member of the tiger team at

Colchester Zoo. "The aim was to run my business as a mobile zoo for a few months while searching for suitable land to develop the site on, as well as growing a collection of exotic animals to exhibit.

"However, the COVID-19 pandemic affected these plans to operate, but did still allow the expansion of the collection.

"This recreational venture already includes owls, parrots, meerkats, skunks, rabbits, guinea pigs, hedgehogs, snakes, invertebrates, lizards and tortoises. These would relocate to the zoological park.

"In addition to the animals already within the collection, there would be other species such as small mammals and other species of reptile."

The application can be viewed on Chelmsford City Council's website by searching for reference number 21/00226/FUL.



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LOCAL NEWS BILLERICAWAY



Busy food bank is handed a funding boost

Billericaway Food Bank has been given a boost after the council donated £6,000 to the service.

Billericaway Food Bank, which opened in March 2018 and is based at St John's Church, has offered a lifeline to a growing number of people in the community throughout the pandemic.

Chairman of the neighbourhoods and public spaces committee, councillor David Harrison, said: "Food banks like this one in Billericaway were already stretched before the pandemic, but it's an especially challenging

and busy time for them currently.

"Billericaway Food Bank does such important work for residents who rely on its services, so I'm grateful that we've been able to donate this £6,000 to them. This support will benefit many residents at a time when it's most needed.

"Food banks rely on donations, so if you are able to, please consider donating to your local food bank either directly or via the drop-off points within local supermarkets."



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Plans for crazy golf centre and escape rooms

Plans have been put to the council for a new indoor crazy golf centre and escape rooms in Billericaway.

The proposals would see the former Argos store on the High Street, which closed last year, undergo renovation.

The applicant wants to know if the plans are lawful before committing to the "significant investment", meaning Basildon Borough Council has been asked for its opinion.

If the plans get the go-ahead, there would be an indoor crazy golf centre, café and reception on the

ground floor, with the escape rooms on the first floor.

The company representing the applicant said: "Before committing to what is a very significant investment in the town, our client seeks the council confirmation that the proposal does not amount to development requiring planning permission.

"Should a certificate be granted, and once our client takes a lease of the property, a separate application will be made for signage and any changes, such as a new shop front, that materially alter the external appearance of the building."



School shows its competitive side to keep fit

Pupils and teachers at Quilters Infants and Junior Schools have been keeping active thanks to an app founded in Billericay.

Both children and adults have been using the GoJoe fitness app, designed to get little ones moving more during lockdown by running and walking.

The app – co-founded by Billericay-based Will Turner and Phil Steele and backed by high-profile Olympian Alistair Brownlee MBE – aims to inspire “ordinary joes” to exercise more through friendly team-based competition.

Mike Wade, headteacher at Quilters, said: “Everyone has got involved, from the reception children to the teachers to the cooks. I didn’t realise they were so competitive.

“It’s fantastic to see the children wanting to drag their parents out for walks, rather than the other way round.”

GoJoe’s co-founder Phil Steele was delighted with the results and said: “The fact that more than 380 members of the school have been so engaged with this has really put smiles on our faces.”

Inspirational schoolgirl smashes challenge

An inspirational eight-year-old walked a whopping 176 kilometres in just 14 days to raise funds for Billericay Food Bank.

Roseanna Hughes has raised almost £1,000 for the service, by walking 176km, which equates to almost 110 miles, between February 22 and March 7.

Originally, classmates at Quilters School took on the challenge as a competition. But Roseanna wanted to raise money for Billericay Food Bank, which has done amazing work, particularly throughout the pandemic.

The motivated schoolgirl completed the challenge around home schooling with her parents, David and Wendy.

Her proud dad, David, said: “She smashed it. We are so proud. She’s been so motivated. A big thank you to everyone who has donated.”

Her mum, Wendy, added: “We’re very proud parents. We never doubted that she’d make it. Her motivation and determination have been amazing. It’s also been great for her confidence.”

To donate visit www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/roseanna100k



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Arrests made as police execute double raid

LOCAL NEWS BILLERICAY



Drugs, a taser and counterfeit clothing were all seized by police following two raids, including one in Billericay.

Essex Police officers in Castle Point found the items on Wednesday, March 3, as they carried out two raids simultaneously.

The warrants took place at Oak Road in Billericay and Furtherwick Road in Canvey.

The officers found class A drugs, thousands of pounds worth of cash, a suspected taser, as well as counterfeit and stolen clothing.

All items were seized and a man and woman were both arrested on suspicion of a number of offences.

Those offences include being concerned in the supply of class A drugs, possession of a firearm, possessing goods with a false trademark, handling stolen goods and money laundering.

As part of the investigation, police are appealing for information, with people urged to call 101 if they can help.

Former owner quits football for new life abroad

Billericay Town FC's former owner has quit football to start a new life abroad.

Glenn Tamplin, 49, was hugely successful during his time as owner, with the club winning the Isthmian Premier League title, Essex Senior Cup and Isthmian League Cup.

He left the club in September 2019 before taking the reins at Romford. On March 4, it was announced that he had quit.

The larger-than-life character took control of Billericay Town FC in December 2016 and his financial backing saw former Premier League stars such as Paul Konchesky, Jamie O'Hara and Jermaine Pennant head to New Lodge.

Speaking about his departure, Romford FC pointed

towards the impact of COVID-19.

They said: "This has affected everyone – families, businesses and the wider football community.

"After several conversations with Glenn, we have decided to go our separate ways.

"Glenn is now working and living abroad and cannot devote the time required to push the club forward in the manner he wanted to.

"We have parted as friends and wish each other well in what comes next.

"The club is grateful for Glenn's involvement at a time when its survival was in question."

Deliveroo set to arrive in Billericay

Food lovers in Billericay are in for a treat as Deliveroo is set to start delivering in the town. The delivery service will start in April.

The company is looking for new riders and drivers to deliver food to customers from restaurants and grocery retailers across the town.

The company says employees benefit from being able to "choose when, where and how to work", while it also offers "a good way to keep fit and earn money at the same time".

Harrison Foster, Deliveroo's UK regional director, said: "We've seen a huge demand for Deliveroo in Billericay and we're excited to be launching next month.

"We're really excited to be creating new work opportunities for local people."

Deliveroo's arrival in Billericay will also be a major boost to local businesses, who will be able to reach new customers through delivery.

To register as a rider or driver for Deliveroo, visit riders.deliveroo.co.uk/en/apply



Photo credit: 1000 Words/Shutterstock.com



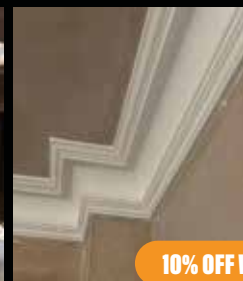
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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



LOCAL NEWS SHENFIELD



Third eco-friendly bench welcomed following initiative

A local campaigner has welcomed a new green bench in Shenfield.

Conservative campaigner Thomas Heard has applauded the arrival of the latest green bench, the third of its kind, which is positioned by the stairs to the Hunter Avenue car park.

The green bench was created following a request by councillor Jan Pound. It has an "I Grew Up in Brentwood" logo marked on the timber to show that the wood was ethically sourced.

The other two benches – also created using eco-friendly timber – are located outside Costa Coffee and opposite Shenfield station.

Mr Heard said: "Everything that we can do to reduce the impact of CO² on our environment is to be strongly welcomed. Brentwood Borough Council is leading the way with delivering an ambitious green agenda locally.

"I would like to thank council leader Chris Hossack and his team for driving this initiative forward for the benefit of our town."

Teenager charged after 16-year-old is stabbed

A 15-year-old boy has been charged in connection with the stabbing of a 16-year-old boy in Hutton.

On Sunday, March 21, Essex Police were called at around 4.30pm to reports that a teenage boy had suffered stab injuries in Roundwood Avenue, Hutton.

The victim is believed to have been injured after a fight broke out between a number of boys in Mount Avenue, Hutton near to the junction with Hutton Gate.

The victim sustained a serious injury to his upper arm

during the incident.

The boy was then taken to hospital and his condition is no longer being treated as life-threatening.

Essex Police have charged the 15-year-old boy from Wickford with GBH with intent, assault by beating and possession of a knife.

At the time of going to print, the boy was due to appear in court for a plea and case management hearing.



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Local business scores new deal with Hammers



A Shenfield law firm has shown its support for women's football after it extended its partnership with West Ham United.

Rainer Hughes, based in Hutton Road, agreed to continue its sponsorship of the Hammers' women's team, having first sponsored them in 2018.

The company has been hugely supportive of the women's team, donating their dedicated matchday in June 2020 to raise awareness of domestic abuse and support the charities Hestia and Refuge.

Sanjay Panesar (left), from Rainer Hughes, said: "We are hugely proud to be sponsors of West Ham United Women.

"Jack Sullivan [managing director of the women's team] (right), the staff and players have welcomed us as part of the team, and it has been a privilege to offer our support to the Hammers over the last four years.

"As a West Ham fan since the age of seven, it has been a dream come true to work with my club, providing support and raising awareness for important causes, and we look forward to continuing to do so in the future."

Lifeline for local shops as virtual high street opens

Independent shops and businesses in Shenfield have been handed a lifeline with the launch of a new virtual high street scheme.

Brentwood Borough Council (BBC) launched the Click It Local scheme on March 9, allowing customers to shop online with local independent businesses.

The online service is available to residents anywhere in the borough, including Shenfield. A large number of retailers have signed up to the scheme, and same-day delivery is available.

BBC leader, councillor Chris Hossack, said: "We have some really strong and unique businesses in the borough and residents are incredibly loyal to our local brands.

"As a council we promised to be innovative and deliver real ways for our retailers to build their companies back up, and better still, expand and gain new customers."

Customers can buy from as many shops as they like, with one payment and one delivery.

Kaye Thurgood, owner of Sincerely Yours in Shenfield, said: "We are proud to be part of the launch of Click It Local in Brentwood, Shenfield and Ingatestone. This platform will be a lifeline for independent shops like mine who are still in lockdown."

To shop go to www.clickitlocal.co.uk/brentwood

Zero-carbon housing scheme launched

An innovative housing scheme will see a new zero-carbon homes built in Hutton.

Brentwood Borough Council (BBC) plans to build 61 zero-carbon homes in Brookfield Close as part of an ambitious programme to develop 185 new homes across the local area.

The designs for the homes will focus on improving air quality to help support residents' health, particularly those with asthma.

BBC's environment, enforcement and housing committee chairman, councillor Maria Pearson, said: "This is a cutting-edge scheme that will lead by example for the type of housing that Brentwood needs and expects.

"It is the first time in the last 50 years that new council homes are being built on this scale and at this pace. It is incredible to see the images of what these homes will look like, and fascinating to see the environmental and economic efficiency that is possible today with such schemes."

During the last six months, the site has been assessed, a master plan prepared, and residents consulted.

A webinar on the proposals can be seen at www.brentwood.gov.uk/index.php?cid=2987





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Remembering the Brixton Riots

APRIL 10 MARKS FOUR DECADES SINCE THE START OF THE Brixton Riots

The Brixton riots were a terrifying, culturally defining 48 hours in which the black population of south London rose up to confront what they determined to be an unfair and illegal era of police brutality and wider social exclusion.

In a foretaste of some of the issues raised by the recent Black Lives Matter movement – albeit in referencing situations Stateside rather than events and actions in our own country – the 1981 Brixton riots, or 'Brixton uprising', were seen as a major turning point in the UK.

The background was a country in recession, and growing unease between police in areas such as Brixton and Lambeth. All it took was a spark of racial tension to ignite matters, and that duly arrived on April 10 when a black youth named Michael Bailey ran towards a policeman, bleeding from a four-inch stab wound. In attempting to get the injured man help, a crowd descended and supposed the police to be arresting him.

By the following day, rumours had spread that

Bailey had been unlawfully killed by police, kicking off a spate of riots, looting and arson attacks on shops, cars and property.

Inadequately protected police struggled to stem trouble, with 299 being injured in scuffles. A further 65 members of the public were injured.

Tensions were finally brought under control in the early hours of April 12, by which time more than 2,500 officers from the home counties had been deployed.

So-called 'copycat' riots broke out in a number of UK towns and cities, and in the aftermath, the Scarman Report concluded that "complex political, social and economic factors [created a] disposition towards violent protest", while also blaming overzealous 'stop and search' tactics.

Four decades on there is undoubtedly greater unity in the UK, though recent events have brought racial tensions to the fore again, with Brixton forever serving as a reminder of the potential fallout from an unfair society.



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HISTORY

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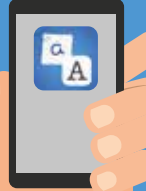
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AppDetox: We've all got a fair quantity of apps on our devices that we would group as 'a bit of fun', while knowing that their very presence is making us less efficient, less engaged and most definitely less sociable. As the saying goes, admitting you have a problem is the first stage towards solving it; the second stage being to download AppDetox, which enables you to block your own access to functions and downloads on your phone, thus keeping temptation at arm's length... or is that finger's length?

CamScanner: We've all tried signing and scanning documents using our phone or tablet cameras.



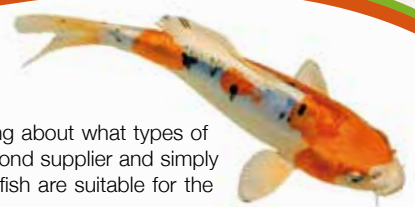
CamScanner solves the problem, with editable uploaded or photographed documents that can be signed and scanned through the app. Removing the need for printouts or shadows on documents, the resulting PDF or JPEG can then be sent direct to your contact, as well as being stored in your phone.



PETS



Big fish, small pond



If you have just added a pond to your garden, you may be thinking about what types of fish you want to buy. However, before you dash to your nearest pond supplier and simply pick the prettiest specimens on offer, you need to find out what fish are suitable for the pond you have picked.

How big is your pond?

Most fish need at least 50cm in depth to thrive, although some varieties such as koi and large carp need at least double that amount. As a general rule, for a new water feature, the total length of the fish you add should not be more than around 25cm for every square metre of surface area.

What types of fish can your pond accommodate?

GOLDFISH: One of the most popular choices for garden ponds. If you want your chosen goldfish to go the distance, you are best off picking either comets or Shubunkins, both of which are attractive and hardy fish.

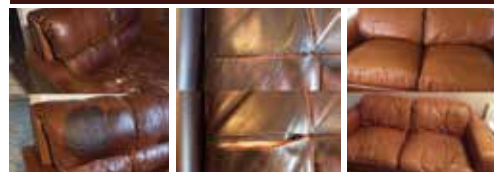
KOI AND CARP: Although beautiful fish, both koi and carp can grow to more than 75cm in length and are therefore only suited to larger, well-filtered ponds. You can find forms of koi that cost thousands of pounds, so if you choose a more expensive variety you also need to consider the security of your pond.

ORFE & RUDD: Orfe love the surface of the water, which makes them a favoured choice for many pond owners who love to spot their fish. That being said, this means they need to be protected from cats and any passing herons. Orfe prefer to swim in shoals so you need to purchase at least six, and as they grow to 30cm or more, you need a large pond to successfully host them. Rudd are similar in their routine to orfe but only grow to half the size, making them ideal for smaller ponds.



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JUDI DENCH

THE LIFE OF THE BUSY DAME

Why Dame Judi Dench is perhaps the most unique acting talent of them all

In a professional career on stage and in front of the camera, it's notable that Dame Judi Dench has, more often than not, played characters who are assertive, strong and definite. From Q in the James Bond films to Ophelia, Juliet or Lady Macbeth on stage; from Evelyn in the *Marigold Hotel* movies, right through to 13 years playing Jean, the comedic mainstay of classic BBC comedy *As Time Goes By*, there has always been a strength present.

And so it follows, then, that the 86-year-old embodies very much those same qualities in real life. How else do you explain the fact that, despite lockdown, the York-born doyenne remains ensconced in one of the busiest periods of her acting career?

"I think the intention was that when I stepped away from Bond I'd be calming things down a bit," she begins. "What actually ended up happening was I found more roles coming my way, as would, I guess, any actor breaking free of a big character."

And therein lies the problem. The determined and decorated cornerstone of British drama simply can't say no. During 2020, while the world's acting fraternity were sitting back doing very little as the entire industry fell into a state of dormancy, Dench was still busy promoting four projects – films *Artemis Fowl*, *Blithe Spirit* and *Six Minutes to Midnight*, as well as an appearance on *Staged*, the widely acclaimed lockdown-themed TV series starring David Tennant and Michael Sheen.

She was also filming parts of what 2021 presents as two major feature films. First up is *Off the Rails*, a drama about a group of friends recreating an interrail journey across Europe, in which she appears alongside Kelly Preston, Ben Miller and Sally Phillips. Then, in *Belfast*, Jamie Dornan co-stars in a drama about a working-class family in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s.

Indeed, since bidding goodbye to 007 in that dramatic, windswept Highlands setting in *Skyfall* in 2012, Dench has appeared in 24 big- and small-screen projects.

"I think, for me, it's about picking and choosing things that make me content and happy," she says. "If I'm being asked to fly halfway around the world for a few minutes on camera, or the brief means being away from home for weeks on end in some inhospitable backwater, I'll say no. The truth, though, is I'm as enchanted as much by acting now as I was when I first performed *Hamlet*, or first stepped in front of a television camera at the end of the 1950s.

"I won't deny the slower parts of lockdown were frustrating, but if you want to keep busy and you want to find yourself things to do, then those things are out there, no matter where you are in the world or in your life," says Dench, who has now been two decades without husband Michael Williams, who died of lung cancer aged 65.

"I know Michael will be looking down, proud of the fact I'm still a workaholic," she smiles. "The truth is it's the only way I know to live."



Photo credit: FAQUINDO ARRIZBALAGA/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock



PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

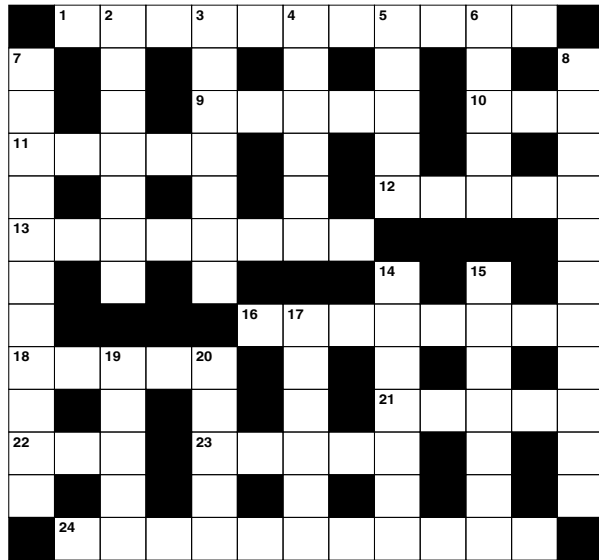
Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

ACROSS

- 1. Dishonestly (11)
- 9. Ape (abbrev.) (5)
- 10. Fish eggs (3)
- 11. Hackneyed (5)
- 12. Giraffes have long ones (5)
- 13. Mad rush (8)
- 16. Eye condition (8)
- 18. Spring flower (5)
- 21. Boredom (5)
- 22. Female chicken (3)
- 23. Island in the Mediterranean Sea (5)
- 24. Study of lawbreaking (11)

DOWN

- 2. Morally right (7)
- 3. Extract (7)
- 4. Wound together (6)
- 5. Unfasten a garment (5)
- 6. Expressing emotions (of poetry) (5)
- 7. Calamity or great loss (11)
- 8. Celebrity (11)
- 14. Panacea (4-3)



- 15. Linking (7)
- 17. Cosmetic cream (6)
- 19. Of the moon (5)
- 20. Device that splits light (5)

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Saudi Arabia is one of the only countries in the world that doesn't have any permanent rivers
- ▶ In the Falkland Islands, sheep outnumber people
- ▶ Napoleon ordered the construction of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris
- ▶ It's thought that in the future, the Maldives may become completely covered by water
- ▶ In Norway, around 98 per cent of the electricity production comes from renewable energy sources
- ▶ The Great Wall of China is 21,196km long
- ▶ Reykjavik is the most northern capital city
- ▶ Indonesia is the world's largest island nation, but no one knows exactly how many islands it contains

SUDOKU

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5	6							
			3	7	6			
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GARDEN OF LIFE

THE BIRDS *and the bees*

In the third of a four-part series that shows how even the most urban garden can be a haven for the wonders of wildlife and the nurturing of nature, we consider how birds and bees are so pivotal to everything outside our windows.

While they appear to be fluttering and buzzing about our gardens in blissful relaxation, the roles of our birds and bees is actually a vital one.

Let's take the humble bee, for instance. Forget a spoonful of tasty honey, the value of these buzzing beauties goes much deeper, with pollination the name of the game. In the first instance, bees as pollinators are responsible for more than one-third of the world's food. Add in the fact that more than 90 per cent of plants rely on bees' cross-pollination skills, and you can see why the move to halt the recent decline in global numbers has been taken so seriously.

Bees also

provide habitats for a huge quantity of insects and animals. Their complex, interconnected ecosystems allow a vast number of diverse species to co-exist. Put another way, a garden without bees would be bare, as would your plate.

A smaller role for bees is as a food source for birds, but go easy on our feathered airborne acrobats – while they have their own pollination qualities and act as pest controllers, they themselves, most crucially, act as a source of food for animals.

There's also something truly cerebral about birds, who predate our own time on the planet by some 150 million years. Sure, they're not cuddly or kinaesthetic, but through birdsong, breathless beauty, their solid commitment to building homes and raising families, and with a level of ingenuity and intelligence that many mammals can't even get close to, birds are a truly cerebral addition to nature's nest.



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APRIL BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH:

Daisy



GARDENING



If you were born this month, your flower is the delightful daisy, a bloom that often doesn't get the appreciation it deserves. Incredibly versatile and easy to grow, daisies can make a cheerful addition to any garden, however big or small.

What does the daisy represent?

A quintessential symbol of both purity and chastity, the daisy can also be used to convey secrecy. In fact, daisies were once called "day's eyes", as they close their petals at night and only reveal their bright yellow centre in the day. This flower can also be used to symbolise true love.

What does this birth flower say about your personality?

If your birth flower is the daisy, you are said to be a happy-go-lucky kind of person who tends to brighten up everyone's day just by being you. You are also adventurous, cheerful and optimistic, all of which means you are often the person whom others choose to confide in.

Why grow daisies in your garden?

Sadly, in the UK, we have lost nearly all of our traditional meadow land, meaning that meadow wildlife is under strain. By planting natural and local meadow plants such as daisies in your garden, you will be giving a much-needed helping hand to meadow insects and other wildlife.

How can I ensure my daisies thrive?

Daisies are the perfect choice for those who are looking for garden plants that do not require much care and attention. English daisies thrive in well-drained and evenly moist soil so be sure to water them during droughts. For the best display of daisies, plant them in full sun.

Best types of daisies for a vibrant show:

English daisy | African daisy | Gloriosa daisy | Blue Marguerite daisy | Shasta daisy | Cape daisy



NOT berry GOOD

THE BERRIES AND BUDS IN YOUR GARDEN YOU NEED TO KEEP YOUR KIDS AWAY FROM

They are colourful, attractive and plentiful – they bring visual decoration to what might otherwise be swathes of uniform greenery, and their presence can lift even the dullest of overcast days. And yet, as far as berries are concerned, keeping them away from curious kids (not to mention inquisitive animals) could be a smart move.

Holly berries

They are some of the most beautiful and easily recognised berries in our UK woodlands, yet the bright red, shiny, leathery holly berries that add such colour and interest are highly toxic and will most likely bring on vomiting or a trip to the bathroom.

Jerusalem cherries

The berries of this plant resemble cherry tomatoes, but they come with none of the niceness, and will bring about vomiting and stomach problems even in small quantities. And if evidence were ever needed as to how something so small can be so destructive, even horses can have serious ill effects from consuming Jerusalem cherries.

Black bryony

This plant decorates heart-shaped leaves with clusters of berries that can be anything from bright yellow to dark red; yet all that beauty is a foil for a terrifying range of effects – from skin irritation to swelling, welts to rashes, this is another one you'll definitely want to avoid.

Deadly nightshade

An old favourite, these sculpted flowers look like something you'd find in the cupboard under the stairs at your nan's house; yet there's no warm hug on offer if you ingest these. The consequences can be anything from blurred vision, loss of balance and headache, through to convulsions, confusion and urinary retention... all of which are best avoided.

Mistletoe

And finally, while mistletoe is a plant associated with affection, it's actually a romance turned rather sour, as the entire plant is poisonous. Ingesting it may lead to blurred vision, stomach cramps and diarrhoea. Love can wait.



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Treasure trails and historic hill forts, secret coves and stunning lochs: all these and more are waiting to be discovered in the UK's 15 National Parks. Let's take a closer look at some of what England has to offer.

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK

Located in the south of Devon, Dartmoor National Park is known for its wild open moorlands and rich local history. For hikers, check out the Meldon Reservoir and then treat yourself to afternoon tea in Ashburton.

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

Made a National Park in 2005, New Forest National Park offers a huge diversity of rare plants and animals. Marvel at the grazing ponies, cattle and pigs that roam freely around the park and enjoy a real sense of freedom whether you choose to explore on foot, on horseback or by bike.

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

Less than two hours from London, South Downs National Park is a destination rich in culture and countryside, as well as some gorgeous country pubs. Don't miss the chance to dine at The Earl of March, owned by Giles Thompson, former executive chef at The Ritz London.

YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK

Perfect for those looking for natural beauty at its finest, the Yorkshire Dales National Park has much to offer, including Aysgarth Falls, the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge and the Force Gill Aqueduct.

NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK

The most northern National Park in England, it is also the least populated and least visited. However, don't let this put you off as this park boasts Hadrian's Wall, Kielder Water and Forest Park and the Sycamore Gap Tree.

NATIONAL PARKS IN OTHER AREAS OF THE UK

There are two National Parks in Scotland: Cairngorms and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs. In Wales, there are three: the Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast and Snowdonia.



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ALL CHANGE: HEDI SLIMANE

FASHION

We look at the creative directors who have transformed some of the world's most famous fashion houses. In this issue, it's Hedi Slimane.

Looking at Hedi Slimane, we see someone who appears to represent the very essence of French style. A creative director of exemplary reputation and influence, he has revived the fortunes of ailing fashion houses at problematic times in their history, allowing them to emerge on the other side with a renewed take on flair, panache and relevance.

And yet the 52-year-old has genetics that originate some distance from his native Paris. Born to a Tunisian father and an Italian mother, Slimane's cultural influences are well mixed. Sure enough, he discovered photography at the age of 11, and by the age of 16 was designing and making clothes.

Perhaps it is the exuberance of Italy and fabric-adorning reputation of north Africa that combined in inspiring Slimane to creative brilliance. If it was, then Yves Saint Laurent was the grateful beneficiary. After serving his apprenticeship at Louis Vuitton, Slimane moved to YSL in 1996, and by the year 2000 was on the move again, installed as creative director at Dior Homme (the menswear line of Christian Dior).

He switched back to YSL for two years from 2016, and is now creative, artistic and image director at Celine, a move that coincided with him topping *Vanity Fair's* list of the 50 most influential French people in the world.

Slimane's edge has always been in combining art, photography, fashion and music. For someone who has operated at the very top table of some of the world's leading fashion houses, he still manages to work in influences of punk, pop, tabloid chat and broadsheet formality.

His collections are never afraid to move brands forward into brave new quarters, and that has only ever reinforced his reputation as a game changer in the fast world of fashion.



Photo credit: Michael Elter/AP/Shutterstock



Do you choose a conditioner based on your individual hair type? If not, you could be doing your hair more harm than good. Discover the right conditioner to transform your locks from limp to luscious.

Oily hair

If your hair is naturally oily, you may find that conditioners make your mane look and feel even worse. That being said, rather than skip conditioner altogether, look for a treatment that actively helps to reduce oil.

- Choose conditioners that are:
 - Light • Volumising • Balancing
- Avoid products that claim to be:
 - Hydrating • Smoothing • Moisturising

Dry or damaged hair

When hair is dry, damaged or brittle, you need a conditioner that will help prevent future breakages and protect against heat damage.

- Choose conditioners that:
 - Moisturise • Hydrate • Offer frizz control • Promote repair

- Avoid products that claim to be:
 - Fortifying • Volumising • Strengthening

If your hair is severely damaged, you may also want to use a coconut oil treatment or deep-conditioning cream once a week for intense damage repair.

Fine or flat hair

Straight hair that does not suffer with frizz, but can appear flat, suits conditioners that add some much-needed texture.

- Choose conditioners that are:
 - Volumising • Lightweight
- Avoid products that claim to be:
 - Heavy • Moisturising • Smoothing

Coloured hair

Coloured hair has very specific needs, especially if you want to retain your colour for as long as possible. In terms of a conditioner, you need one that will seal hair cuticles.

- Choose conditioners that are:
 - Colour-safe • Colour-depositing • Hydrating
- Avoid:
 - Any conditioner that is not for coloured hair

Afro hair

Afro hair tends to be described as kinky owing to the intensity of its curl. However, with the right conditioner, it can look both healthy and shiny.

- Choose conditioners that are:
 - Deeply hydrating • Oil-based • Protein-based
- Avoid products that claim to be:
 - Volumising • Lightweight

Conditioner
Confusion



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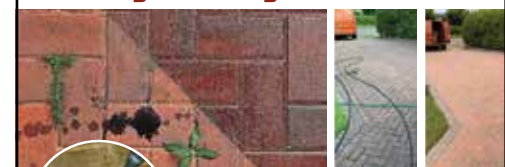
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HEALTH & FITNESS



ARE YOU IBS AWARE?

IBS, irritable bowel syndrome, affects two in 10 people in the UK, with common symptoms including abdominal pain, cramping, bloating and a combination of diarrhoea and constipation.

If you suffer with IBS, you may have noticed that certain foods trigger your condition.

Find out below which foods you should be eating, plus which ones to avoid.

LEAN MEATS: Lean meats such as white meat chicken and turkey, pork and cuts of beef including sirloin are all easily digestible sources of protein, making them an ideal choice for IBS sufferers.

EGGS: As a general rule, eggs are a safe choice for people with IBS. However, some people struggle with the higher fat content of yolks and others experience a sensitivity to egg whites, so it may be a case of trial and error to see what works best for you.

OILY FISH: Fish that is high in omega-3, such as salmon, mackerel and trout, contains anti-

inflammatory properties that can help reduce the symptoms of IBS.

COOKED VEGETABLES: Although IBS sufferers tend to avoid vegetables as they appear to make their condition worse, the right vegetables are very good for your gut flora and can be tolerated by those with IBS. These include carrots, aubergine, parsnips, butternut squash and corn on the cob.

NUTS AND SEEDS: Nuts and seeds are healthy sources of fats that are good for your gut and therefore good for your IBS. Nuts you may want to try include almonds, brazil nuts and walnuts, with super seeds such as pumpkin and sunflower.

FOODS TO AVOID: Insoluble fibre such as wholewheat and bran products | Fried foods | Beans and legumes | Caffeinated drinks | Processed foods | Sugar-free sweeteners | Chocolate | Alcohol | Garlic and onions | Broccoli and cauliflower | Some people also experience issues with both dairy and gluten.



HONE & TONE

cleaning your home



Become a lean, mean cleaning machine with the below common household tasks that are guaranteed to help you burn calories and shift those unwanted pounds.

GENERAL CLEANING: Picking clothes off the floor, wiping surfaces and dusting can all help you to work different muscle groups, making general cleaning one of the most effective household chores for burning calories.

Total calories burnt = 3,976 (based on 280 minutes per week)



VACUUMING: This daily chore that is hated by many has the ability to provide a full body workout. Forcing you to use your entire core muscle groups, the simple act of pushing your Hoover back and forth will target your abs and put both your back and legs to work.

Total calories burnt = 1,248 (based on 132 minutes per week)



IRONING: Another household task that few relish, but you may be surprised to learn that ironing burns a lot of calories. Not only does this task require you to stand up for long periods of time, but it also works your core as you move the appliance about.

Total calories burnt = 1,360 (based on 144 minutes per week)

DOING LAUNDRY: If you have a big family, you may find yourself doing laundry multiple times a day. Although not the most engaging task, you will be pleased to hear it can help you lose weight. The act of washing, folding and lifting all helps to contribute to a full cardio workout.

Total calories burnt = 1,588 (based on 168 minutes per week)



OTHER CALORIE-BURNING CHORES: Cooking = **2,856** (based on 301.7 minutes per week) | Mopping = **2,724** (based on 138 minutes per week) | Making beds = **1,316** (based on 144.2 minutes per week) | Sweeping floors = **1,304** (based on 138 minutes per week)

NB: Calories burnt is based on one month's worth of each activity and is based on the average weight of a person being 156 pounds.



Beat the BURNOUT

Do you have chronic fatigue?

The mechanics that make all of us individuals mean no two people will endure the same medical condition in the same manner, but where chronic fatigue syndrome (also known as CFS or ME) is concerned, the overriding sense of physical and emotional emptiness is one that hits all sufferers.

The health condition, which shouldn't be confused with sleepiness and general lethargy resulting from working too hard or resting for too short a period of time, can be caused by a number of factors – from stress and anxiety to depression, eating disorders and the gradual debilitating impact of life events on the mind.

There can also be medical problems at play, such as thyroid problems, diabetes, vitamin deficiencies, irritable bowel syndrome, high blood pressure and even kidney disease.

A proper diagnosis is essential and should be sought as soon as you feel you are slipping into a

phase where you simply don't have the ability to perform very basic daily functions, such as rising out of bed, conversing with people or leaving the house.

A doctor will use various tests and techniques in attempting to reach a diagnosis; only when this is done will a medical professional set you on a path of therapy to get you back on track.

While medication is a recognised route to this, it could be that making positive changes to diet, routine and physical health will make a profound difference. There might also be moves to improve surroundings, practise mindfulness and build mental positivity in putting you on the road to feeling revived and restored.

Mental health services are of prime focus to the NHS in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, so don't delay in contacting your doctor if you need help – there will be brighter days ahead.

BRITAIN'S GREATEST
SPORTING MOMENTS...



ROGER BANNISTER

Each month we look at one of the most significant events in British sporting history. This month, it's Roger Bannister's sub-four-minute mile in 1954.

It was the sporting feat that the experts said the human body was simply not capable of – running a mile in less than four minutes.

Yet on May 6, 1954, at the Iffley Road track in Oxford, Bannister, who passed away in 2018, arrived to meet a collective of pacemakers keen to do their bit in making history.

Travelling alone, he caught the train from Paddington, immediately preparing to abandon the attempt because of excessively high winds. Yet these had died down by the afternoon, and by 6pm Bannister was ready to go.

Staying at the front of the pack, he clocked the half-mile in 1min 58secs, and coming around for the final lap had 59 seconds to run the final 400m.

He finished, and a crowd of more than 3,000 spectators awaited the verdict, offered by future *Guinness Book of Records* aficionado Norris McWhirter. Purposely drawing out the tension, the

announcer said: "Ladies and gentlemen, here is the result of event nine, the one mile: first, number 41, R G Bannister, Amateur Athletic Association and formerly of Exeter and Merton Colleges, Oxford, with a time which is a new meeting and track record, and which – subject to ratification – will be a new English Native, British National, All-Comers, European, British Empire and World Record. The time was three..."

The roar of the crowd drowned out the rest of the announcement. Bannister's time was three minutes 59.4 seconds.

Of course, in the years to come, several athletes would push the limits of speed and take huge chunks of time out of Bannister's. In the 1980s, Seb Coe, Steve Ovett and Steve Cram each set a new world record, although the most recent PB belongs to Morocco's Hicham El Guerrouj in 1999, as the event appears to have gone out of fashion.

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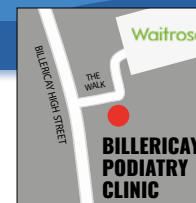
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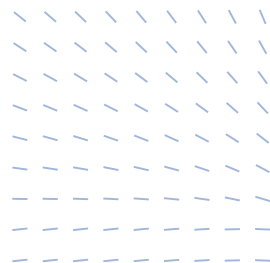
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Making plans for

NIGEL

How Welsh referee Nigel Owens MBE is the latest to bring LGBT issues to the front line of sport

On the face of it, it's perhaps the manliest sport of them all – where the fire and ferocity of competition demands brutish, testosterone-driven combat.

Like it or not, the past hasn't always been kind in associating homosexuality with those characteristics. And yet it's a credit to our progressiveness as a society that those attitudes are changing; and across Gareth Thomas, other male stars, both retired and still playing, plus a whole host of women who have proudly declared their sexuality, rugby is the sport that seems to be pioneering inclusion and diversity above any other.

The rise to prominence of Nigel Owens MBE as an ambassador for such inclusion is, alongside Thomas, perhaps the best example of someone emerging from the shadows. Having previously battled bulimia and suicidal thoughts as side effects to the hiding of his sexuality, the experienced referee came out in 2007.

"It's such a big taboo to be gay in my line of work," he says. "I had to think very hard about it because I didn't want to jeopardise my career. Coming out was very difficult and I tried to live with who I really was for years. I knew I was 'different' from my late teens, but I was just living a lie."

In reality, coming out only enhanced Owens' reputation in the game. He went on to claim the record for most test matches refereed, and in the Queen's 2016 Birthday Honours was awarded an MBE for services to sport. He retired in December 2000 after 17 years at the top.

And yet his work doesn't stop – in a long-term relationship with a teacher, Barrie Jones-Davies, Owens is a pioneer for LGBT issues in both sport and wider society. He works with charitable organisations in raising awareness and acceptance of gay people, using his story as a bridge to greater understanding of the issues involved.

Photo credit: Chris Fairweather/Huw Evans/Shutterstock





VITAMINS

FOR CHILDREN EXPLAINED

Do you currently give your children daily vitamins but are not sure if they are worth the expense? Or are you thinking about buying vitamins for your kids but don't know which ones they need?

WHAT VITAMINS DO CHILDREN NEED?

The Department of Health recommends that all children aged six months to five years are given daily vitamin supplements that contain vitamins A, C and D. They also advise breastfed babies to be given a daily vitamin D supplement from birth. Some experts recommend that the following groups of children should take a daily multivitamin:

- > Those who do not have access to regular, nutritionally balanced meals
- > Picky eaters who are not getting sufficient vitamins and minerals
- > Children who eat a lot of processed or fast food
- > Vegetarians or vegans, who may need an iron and/or calcium supplement

ARE GUMMY VITAMINS A GOOD CHOICE?

Becoming increasingly popular in recent years, gummy vitamins seem to be the perfect solution for kids who lack certain nutrients. However, these are usually higher in sugar than other vitamins, plus they look and taste like sweets, meaning your child

may be tempted to take more than they need, which could be harmful to their health.

WHAT DOES A HEALTHY DIET INCLUDE?

If you are not sure whether your child is already getting all the vitamins and minerals they need from their diet, this guide should help you. A well-balanced diet should include:

- > Milk and dairy products or vegan alternatives
- > Plenty of fruit and vegetables
- > Protein
- > Whole grains

ADVICE FOR GIVING YOUR CHILD VITAMINS:

- > Keep them out of reach so that children do not have more than one a day
- > Do not treat them like sweets
- > Try a chewable vitamin if your child won't take a pill or liquid supplement
- > Consult your doctor first if your child is taking any other medication



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Rambutan

The rambutan is a tropical fruit that closely resembles a lychee. Grown in countries such as Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, the name rambutan means hairy, which refers to the fleshy spikes on the skin of the fruit.

WHAT DOES RAMBUTAN TASTE LIKE?

The flavour of rambutan is similar to a grape but with a bit of a strawberry quality. Slightly acidic and sweet in equal measures, this fruit has a pleasant fragrance that makes it ideal for using in cooked dishes.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF RAMBUTAN?

Rambutans are high in vitamin C as well as containing lots of fibre that is good for your digestive health. They also contain vitamin E, which is known for helping to prevent both acne and premature ageing.

WHERE CAN I BUY RAMBUTAN?

You can find rambutans in most Asian markets and food shops. Look for bright red skin that indicates the rambutan is at its freshest. Green rambutans are not ready to be eaten, whereas black ones are over-ripe.

HOW TO PREPARE RAMBUTAN

You should not peel a rambutan until you are ready to eat or cook with it. To open, carefully cut the skin with a sharp knife or simply twist open with your hands if the fruit is ripe enough to do so. Then peel away the skin to reveal the egg-shaped fruit. Don't forget to cut open the fruit to remove the nut-like seed in the centre.

HOW TO STORE RAMBUTAN

Wrap them whole in a paper towel and put them in a perforated plastic bag before placing in the fridge. Your rambutans should last for up to two weeks.

HOW TO EAT RAMBUTAN

Enjoy rambutans as a healthy snack or as part of a tropical fresh fruit dessert bowl. Alternatively, add to cooked dishes such as curries and soups.





A load of hot air

AIR FRYERS CLAIM TO REINVENT DEEP FRYING, BUT ARE THEY WORTH IT?

When the doyenne of baking, Mary Berry, said that no British home “should own a deep fat fryer”, it caused quite a stir. After all, among the staples of British cuisine are fish and chips, battered scampi and, in Scotland, the infamous deep-fried Mars bar.

However, as much as we love bubbly batter slick with oil, there is no denying that deep frying at home is a messy, greasy and unhealthy endeavour, which is why air fryers are gaining popularity in our kitchens. Using a heating mechanism and a fan, the food is held in a basket while hot air briskly encircles it, giving the speed and crunchy texture of a fat fryer, with far less oil.

Sitting neatly on your worktop, these relatively new inventions really are an excellent way to cook food quickly and efficiently. Chips can be sprayed with oil to create a crunch and flavour that is truly authentic, and because the air fryer works in much the same way as a convection cooker, you can cook almost anything you would in your normal oven, without having to wait for it to heat up (which makes it cheaper, too).

Unfortunately, you can't cook anything that has a wet batter – unless you want a dreadful mess – and while the process is quick, you do need to manually move the food halfway through for even cooking. They also aren't generally that large, so catering for a big family becomes tricky.

The bottom line is that while the design isn't perfect, this is one gadget that is unlikely to gather dust. From cooking chicken nuggets for the kids' dinner to baking frozen croissants or crisping up chips, the air fryer enables you to have your (fish)cake, and eat it.



BREAKING NEWS:

PEAS OUT!

According to Harvard University scientists, peas are not as healthy as we have been led to believe and may not even count towards one of your five a day.

Find out more about this shocking revelation below. Plus, great alternatives to peas that pack a punch when it comes to improving your health.

WHAT DOES THE SCIENCE SAY?

Harvard University believes that it has found the key to leading a longer life, and it lies with consuming the right combination of fruit and vegetables. Its research shows that by eating two portions of fruit a day and three servings of vegetables, you are much less likely to die from conditions such as heart disease, cancer and/or respiratory diseases. However, not all vegetables offer the same longevity-boosting properties, with a higher intake of peas having no link to lower mortality rates.

WHY YOU SHOULDN'T CONSIDER PEAS AS ONE OF YOUR FIVE A DAY

Strictly speaking, green peas are not vegetables, as they are part of the legume family which consists of plants that produce pods with seeds inside.

Furthermore, peas have a high glycaemic index which can cause a spike in your blood sugar levels, and they contain phytates that prevent key nutrients from being absorbed by the body.

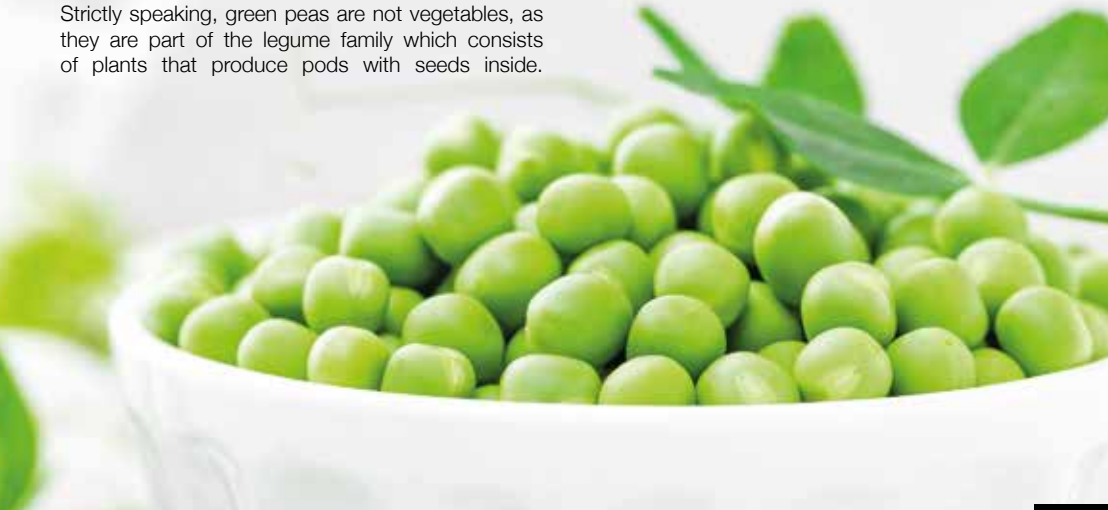
WHAT OTHER FRUIT AND VEGETABLES DO NOT AID LONGEVITY?

During the extensive study, the scientists at Harvard also found no link between a higher intake of starchy vegetables, such as corn and potatoes, and enhanced longevity, as well as drinking fruit or vegetable juices.

WHAT CAN YOU EAT INSTEAD OF PEAS?

If you like to add a bit of greenery to your own and your family's meals, there are still lots of alternatives to peas that most definitely do count towards your five a day:

- Broccoli
- Asparagus
- Spinach
- Kale
- Courgette
- Cooked greens
- Lettuce



SELF-EMPLOYED? BE PENSION PROUD

Last year was challenging, with job losses and pay cuts causing many to tighten their budgets. It was particularly difficult for the self-employed, with many freelancers losing income as companies cut costs and stopped using contractors. Despite government grants being available, many self-employed workers have found they are not eligible.

Almost five million people in the UK are self-employed; or 15 per cent of the workforce. This number is up from 3.2 million in 2000. Although there are many advantages to working for yourself, there are downsides too. Self-employed people do not enjoy the same benefits as employed workers, such as holiday and sick pay; they are also unable to access the benefits of pension auto-enrolment.

PENSION SAVINGS SUFFER

On the back of this, there are concerns that self-employed workers are not saving enough for retirement, with figures¹ showing that 85 per cent of self-employed people do not pay into a pension, up from 73 per cent in 2008/2009. Meanwhile, those who do have a pension have 77 per cent

of the pension wealth of the average population. This can partly be attributed to lower than average incomes and the need for financial liquidity, made worse due to the pandemic. However, it is also down to attitudinal changes and other barriers as, even among the highest paid self-employed workers, only 19 per cent save into a pension.

MAKE 2021 THE YEAR YOU GET YOUR PENSION ON TRACK

If you are self-employed, it is important not to neglect your pension and to make sure you get it back on track by increasing contributions where you can. If you are concerned about your pension and retirement plans, do not hesitate to get in touch.

At HCR we take the time to understand our client's 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.

¹NOW Pensions, Pensions Policy Institute, 2020

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Compassion!

Whatever industry you work in, taking the time to understand and empathise with your employees is vital if you want to provide exceptional leadership. Discover how to become a more compassionate leader below. Plus, find out why compassion is crucial in the workplace.

HOW TO BECOME A COMPASSIONATE LEADER IN FIVE SIMPLE STEPS:

Listen: Think about how often you really listen to your team. Successful leaders seek to understand the perspectives, motivations and challenges of their employees. Make sure you actively listen without judgement for optimal effect.

Empathise: If you don't think that your team members feel able to open up to you, then empathy can help resolve this. Take the time to sit down with your employees and talk to them about non-work-related topics.

Share: If you aren't authentic with your staff, how can you expect them to be with you? Don't be afraid to show your weaknesses; as a leader

you do not have to be better than everyone else.

Respond: Employees need feedback from their leaders, in terms of both their successes and areas in which they still have room to grow. Ensure you explain to your team that you are there to help them improve, and offer any resources they might need.

Change: Compassion is all about commitment, and even simple changes to the way you lead can work wonders for improving employee morale. Challenge yourself to make at least one change a month and build up from there.

WHY COMPASSION IS SO IMPORTANT:

- ♥ Creates enhanced employee engagement
- ♥ Decreases employee turnover
- ♥ Inspires collaboration
- ♥ Increases employee commitment
- ♥ Raises levels of trust
- ♥ Empowers you as a leader

TAKEAWAY TIP: Compassionate leadership is not about giving people what they want; it is about giving people what they need.

A WILL WRITER'S WORDS OF WISDOM

WORRYING PROBLEMS

If a married couple dies together, and where there is no Will, the eldest is deemed to have died first, so only the family members of the surviving spouse will inherit

A beneficiary or their spouse should not be a witness to a Will, or they will disinherit themselves

Unless it has a Contemplation of Marriage clause, marriage or re-marriage invalidates a Will, requiring a new arrangement

Without a Will, spouses and civil partners are NOT automatically entitled to all of the estate assets on death, and the Government could inherit your estate if you die with no surviving traceable relatives

If a couple dies simultaneously, the elder is deemed to have died first – s184 Law of Property Act 1925, leaving only the younger spouse's family to inherit

Without a Will, even grandparents have NO automatic Legal Guardianship of their orphaned grandchildren

Without a Will, the Rules of Intestacy, ie 'The Government Will', could land the children with an IHT liability

A beneficiary or their spouse should not be a witness to a Will, or they will disinherit themselves

Although divorce does not invalidate a Will, marriage will indeed invalidate a Will, unless a marriage clause has been embedded

If you have no surviving parents, siblings, grandparents, uncles or aunts, then under the Intestacy Rules, the whole estate goes to the Crown or the Duchy of Lancaster or the Duke of Cornwall

PEACE OF MIND SOLUTIONS

Always appoint charities as your final beneficiaries, to avoid your estate being claimed by the Government

By the use of a Property Protection Trust, you can ensure that if you pre-decease and your spouse re-marries and has more children, your own children benefit from your share of your home, and not the new spouse. BUT if Probate is not completed, the Trust Deed will not be set up and notified at the Land Registry

If children have special care needs, an appropriate Discretionary Trust could avoid loss of State benefits on them inheriting your estate

A Grant of Probate confirms to Executors that they have the authority to act and carry out the wishes of the deceased

Provide in your Will for continuity of your business on your death

If you own property abroad, you should arrange a Will for your assets in that country, to avoid costly fees and much Probate delay

If a Named Beneficiary, Executor, Trustee or Legal Guardian changes their name, e.g., on marriage or by Deed Poll, it is not necessary to amend the Will: documentary evidence, eg Decree Absolute, is sufficient

A properly worded Will could ensure that half the value of your home is potentially protected against Local Authority care home fees

There is no Inheritance Tax liability if the deceased spouse has left their entire estate to their surviving spouse or civil marriage partner

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Coming up ROSIE

How Rosie Huntington-Whiteley went from supermodel to businesswoman

For years, Rosie Huntington-Whiteley has been perfecting the art of spreading her talents across a wide spectrum.

This is the supermodel who leapt into our consciousness at the age of 16 when she appeared in *Teen Vogue*, then quickly ascended to adult fashion with projects for Victoria's Secret, Burberry, Pirelli and others.

Embracing motherhood – she has a three-year-old son, Jack, with actor Jason Statham – as well as embarking on film projects (*Transformers: Dark of the Moon* and *Mad Max: Fury Road*), you would imagine the now 33-year-old has enough on her plate. Yet burgeoning business ideas have created another angle with which the Plymouth-born model can utilise, maximise and monetise a polished brand.

Sure enough, in November, she announced the launch of her Clean Beauty Collaborative brand. Working with cosmetics firm Amyris, Rosie is building a digital platform for all things beauty, undertaken with an eye on great-performing products that are manufactured sustainably without harm to the planet.

The project follows on from her Rose Inc launch in 2018, which focuses on carbon-neutral eco-friendly initiatives.

She said: "I am passionate about responsible beauty products that are healthy for people and the planet."

Rosie has in the past admitted the maze of looks, styles and messages emanating from social media can be particularly off-putting.

"I want us to get back to the basic thrill of uniting people with access and knowledge and secrets of the industry," she says. "If we can all look as good as we can, while uniting to make the places where we live more sustainable, surely that's a route towards a happier future, because even I find myself getting negatively affected when I'm scrolling through feed after feed. I think we need to celebrate diversity and different kinds of beauty."

Photo credit: Featurelash Photo Agency/Shutterstock.com



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THE PENALTIES AND REPERCUSSIONS FOR OUT-OF-DATE MOTS, INSURANCE AND TAX

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MOT

A huge number of people drive on our roads unaware that their MOT has expired; and yet with the DVLA's reminder system, setting up a simple text message alert would prevent this happening.

The only time you're allowed to travel on the road with an expired MOT certificate is if you're en route to the test centre to get the service done, otherwise you could be looking at a fine of £1,000.

In 2020, during the COVID-19 outbreak and

subsequent lockdown, MOT dates were extended, though this is not the case in 2021.

TAX

Road tax is a necessity for any car, and you can expect a hefty fine in the post (of up to £1,000), if you're driving around in an untaxed vehicle. That may be a better scenario for some than the alternative – your car is clamped, and if the fine isn't paid quickly it is impounded, incurring a daily fee of £21.

INSURANCE

The big one – driving without insurance is the biggest threat to yourself, your passengers and other road users. It is looked upon dimly, and if you are stopped by the police, your keys will be confiscated immediately. A £300 fine and six points on your licence is the minimum, but greater penalties, including disqualification, are possible.

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