

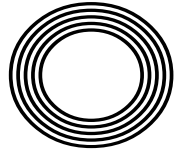


**TOP 7
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TRENDS
FOR 2023**

*Relax and unwind
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*Celebrate the creation
OF WINNIE-THE-POOH*



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DANNY DYER

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Editor's notes...

JANUARY 2023



Nik Allen, Editor

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

If December wasn't busy enough, we had a tremendous World Cup to distract us from the usual Christmas build-up. The lead-up to the event was of course filled with controversy surrounding the hosts, but away from that, they sure did put on a great show for us all back at home. I'm glad we were able to focus on the impressive athletics on display.

I thought England gave a great account for themselves in the tournament, including Gareth Southgate, whom I'm pleased has decided to carry on until after Euro 2024. You can feel this team improving on past

failures and being stronger together, which certainly bodes well for the future. It does feel like real success is closer with Gareth than under previous managers.

The final was one of the greatest we've seen in recent years, with Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappé showing why they are both considered to be amongst the world's elite. Congratulations to Argentina on a hard-fought and well-earned third World Cup.

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas and spent some quality time with friends and family. Finally, I wish you every success for this new year.

Nik Allen

This is your town's hyperlocal magazine, delivering to homes and businesses every month.

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SPARE?

AMID THE RELEASE OF HARRY AND MEGHAN'S TRIO OF PROJECTS, WE LOOK AT HOW THE 'SPARE' AND HIS WIFE HAVE BEGUN TO TELL THEIR TRUTH

Since their unexpected flight from both British shores and the working Royal Family in January 2020, Prince Harry and his wife Meghan have caused quite the stir, constructing a new narrative that neither they nor the Royal Family can be certain of recovering from.

First came a biography of the pair, *Finding Freedom*, written by close confidante Omid Scobie, which hinted at unease within the royal ranks. Then, in March 2021, their shock interview with TV talk show maven Oprah Winfrey aired to global comment on both sides of the Atlantic.

Since then, things have been reasonably quiet and calm as the Sussexes have settled into their Los Angeles lifestyle and adjusted to family life with their two children, Archie, aged three, and 18-month-old Lilibet. However, as several multimillion-dollar deals reach their point of fruition, our red-headed prince and his raven-maned wife are once again back in the spotlight.

Last month, their six-part Netflix documentary *Harry & Meghan* was released, which saw the Duke and Duchess of Sussex attempt to tell their side of the story. Capturing the couple from their earliest days together right up to the period after Prince Philip's death, the series has certainly split opinion. While some find it to be insightful and informative, others believe it to be shocking and villainous. Or in some cases, opinions have flipped completely, and those who might not have supported them before have now gone to the other side and have begun to empathise with the pair.

'I'VE HAD TO MAKE PEACE WITH THE FACT THAT WE'RE PROBABLY NEVER GOING TO GET GENUINE ACCOUNTABILITY OR A GENUINE APOLOGY'

To add to any nerves the Royal Family may have already been experiencing, Harry's book, *Spare*, is released this month. The title alone conveys the Duke's deep disconnection from his own family, one that doesn't appear as if it will be healed anytime soon.

All things come in threes, and Netflix has announced it is also behind the couple's other new project, entitled *Live to Lead*. It showcases inspirational figures – from climate change activist Greta Thunberg to New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, to South Africa rugby star Siya Kolisi, the first-ever black captain of the side. Harry was inspired by the efforts of Nelson Mandela, and true to the former president's lifelong aspirations, the series of interviews is positioned to offer hope, vision, perspective and understanding... arguably at a time when the world needs it most.

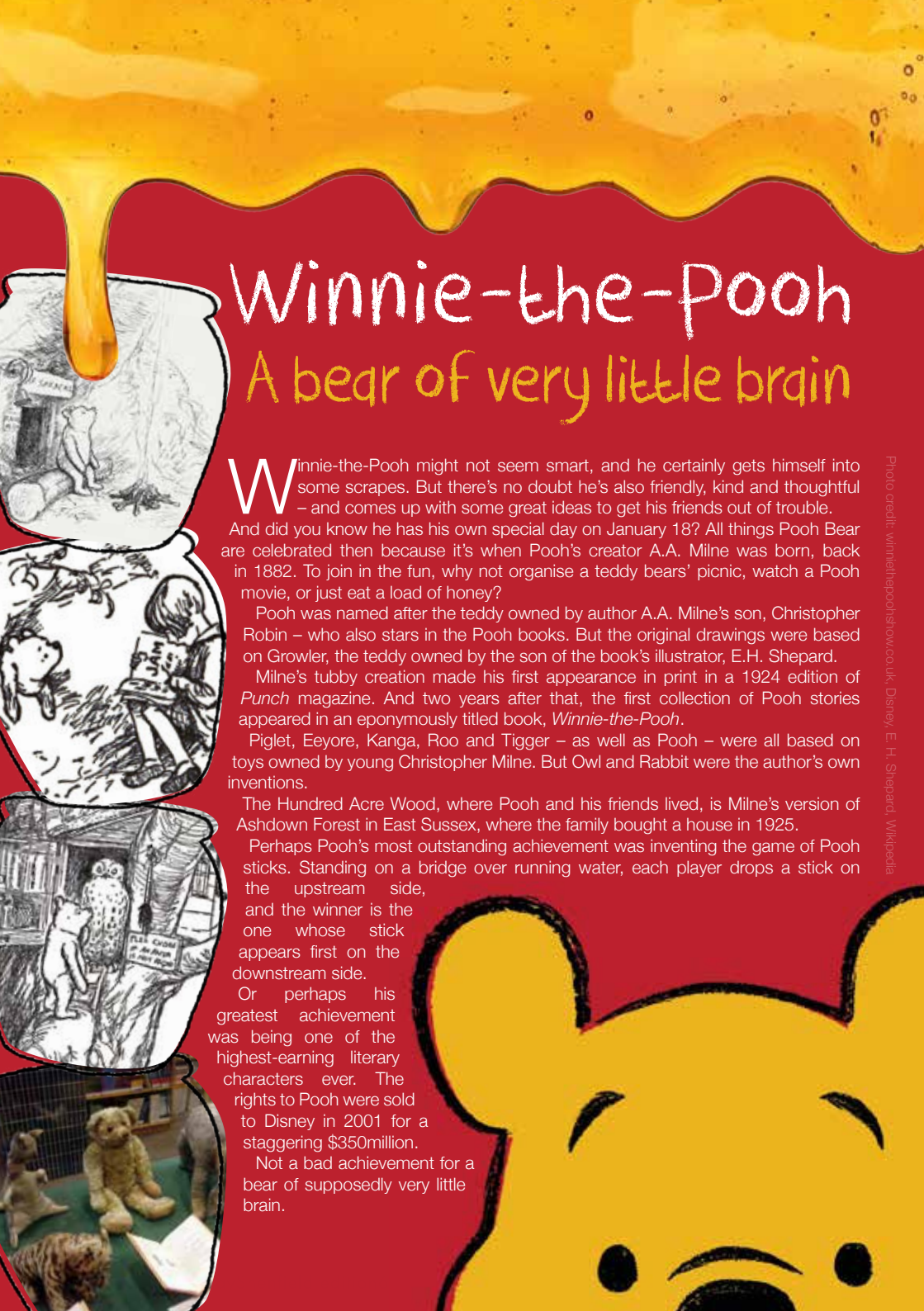
Hopefully Harry himself will find in 2023 ways to reconcile what has been a turbulent and heart-wrenching year for the royals. He and Meghan's latest moves won't have done much to repair relations, but his transparency and clarity over how he feels hard done by may indeed act as a line in the sand, from where a new vista may emerge for the outliers, even if he questions the possibility of that.

"I've had to make peace with the fact that we're probably never going to get genuine accountability or a genuine apology [from my family]," says Harry in the documentary. "My wife and I, we're moving on. We're focused on what's coming next."

Such sentiments have been uttered by many of us regarding our own families, and unequivocally this shows us that when it comes to matters of the heart, the Windsor family, for all their wealth, prestige and glory, really are just like the rest of us. But is this family's broken relationship past the point of repair?

Photo credit: Tim Rooker/Shutterstock





Winnie-the-Pooh

A bear of very little brain

Winnie-the-Pooh might not seem smart, and he certainly gets himself into some scrapes. But there's no doubt he's also friendly, kind and thoughtful – and comes up with some great ideas to get his friends out of trouble.

And did you know he has his own special day on January 18? All things Pooh Bear are celebrated then because it's when Pooh's creator A.A. Milne was born, back in 1882. To join in the fun, why not organise a teddy bears' picnic, watch a Pooh movie, or just eat a load of honey?

Pooh was named after the teddy owned by author A.A. Milne's son, Christopher Robin – who also stars in the Pooh books. But the original drawings were based on Growler, the teddy owned by the son of the book's illustrator, E.H. Shepard.

Milne's tubby creation made his first appearance in print in a 1924 edition of *Punch* magazine. And two years after that, the first collection of Pooh stories appeared in an eponymously titled book, *Winnie-the-Pooh*.

Piglet, Eeyore, Kanga, Roo and Tigger – as well as Pooh – were all based on toys owned by young Christopher Milne. But Owl and Rabbit were the author's own inventions.

The Hundred Acre Wood, where Pooh and his friends lived, is Milne's version of Ashdown Forest in East Sussex, where the family bought a house in 1925.

Perhaps Pooh's most outstanding achievement was inventing the game of Pooh sticks. Standing on a bridge over running water, each player drops a stick on the upstream side,

and the winner is the one whose stick appears first on the downstream side.

Or perhaps his greatest achievement was being one of the highest-earning literary characters ever. The rights to Pooh were sold to Disney in 2001 for a staggering \$350million.

Not a bad achievement for a bear of supposedly very little brain.

Photo credit: winniepoohshow.co.uk; Disney; E. H. Shepard; Wikipedia

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HOME & DIY

THE SMALL DÉCOR CHANGES YOU CAN MAKE TO YOUR HOME FOR 2023

Outdoor indoor: With all the stresses of modern life, the natural hues of the great outdoors are a perfect way to de-stress. So bring the outside in with wood, lush plant life and a colour scheme rooted in nature.

Aqua calm: Similarly, anything reminiscent of the sea works to ground those of us who are in thrall to modern life. Turquoise, tranquil blue and anything suggestive of the azure depths will soothe and calm the busy mind.

Homely habitat: Another trend expected to be prevalent in 2023 is being sympathetic to your local community. So rugs shorn from local sheep, furniture crafted from upcycled wood and art, and sculptures from resident artists.

Gorgeous gold: Neither garish nor flashy, this trend is warm, earthy and classy. Think gilded mirrors, glowing lanterns and burnished

candlestick holders. Anything that exudes warmth will work.

Largesse lampshades: Does anything tie a room together quite like a lampshade? Looming over us in all their glory, larger lampshades are having a moment. Beautiful brass or the purest paper, some are even crafted from nothing but feathers, and yet the impression they leave endures.

Craving curves: Sensuous, soft and languid, straight lines are eschewed in 2023 and replaced by curves. Sofas, tables, chairs and mirrors – everything needs to have that gentle touch and slightly out-of-focus edge.

Lavender love: According to predictions, the Colour of the Year in 2023 is going to be Digital Lavender. This is a light shade of violet which expresses two sets of emotions: cheerfulness and calmness. By applying this colour to the home, you can create a relaxing yet mood-lifting ambience.





HOME & DIY

A BRITISH **suck-cess** STORY



THE STORY BEHIND BRITAIN'S ICONIC VACUUM CLEANER

He's not the most aesthetically pleasing member of the household cleaning family, nor the most powerful, and as far as cutting-edge technology goes, he pre-dates even the era of the mobile phone and internet connectivity.

Yet despite all of that, our love affair for Henry lives on, more than 40 years since the compact and affordable vacuum cleaner was launched by Numatic International.

Its founder, Chris Duncan, first started toying with his vacuum cleaner concept back in 1969, when he dressed up one of his standard vacuum cleaners with a Union Jack, hat and smiley face during a particularly long night at a trade show.

The response from visitors was a revelation for the inventor, who discovered that taking an inanimate object and giving it a personality enchanted people who were looking for something different from the standard cleaning devices.

Of course, the cleaner plays its part where performance is concerned too, using large-capacity microfibre dust bags encased in a shell that is built for longevity and durability.

Since the machine was officially launched in 1981, sales continue to accelerate and now frequently exceed the one million mark each year. While Numatic has never advertised the machine, nor does it employ the services of a PR agency, an estimated 20 million have been sold in the UK to date.

Henry isn't the only named machine in the range. Previous versions have been called James, Charles, Nuvac, George, David, William, Edward, Basil, Wendy, Harry and Jack, while limited-edition models have been launched for B&Q, Screwfix and John Lewis.

It has also led to spin-off designs, notably the Henry and Hetty Spray Mops.

In 2023, it is the only mass-produced consumer vacuum cleaner still made in Britain, and has made its founder a millionaire many times over.



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Snuggly as a BUG



HOME & DIY

In light of the huge rise in energy bills, households up and down the country are being more frugal with their central heating and looking for more creative ways to stay warm.

HOW MUCH MONEY CAN YOU SAVE?

Both heated blankets and electric blankets are highly cost-effective and cost only pennies to run. In fact, if you choose to invest in a heated blanket, it can cost you as little as 1p for around seven hours on the minimum heat setting. To put this into perspective, it costs on average of £2.76 per hour to run your central heating based on a 24kW boiler. Plus, you can control how much electric you use by adjusting the heat and timer settings and the automatic shut-off function.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF HEATED BLANKETS?

Unlike electric blankets, which operate much like mattress toppers and come with elasticated straps or as a fitted sheet, heated blankets are designed for you to curl up under. Much more versatile and visually appealing, heated blankets can be used on the sofa, on the bed or even at your desk.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HEATED BLANKETS?

There are many reasons why you may want to invest in a heated blanket, such as the fact that they are comfy, can be carried from room to room, and come in a variety of colours and designs. However, it is the cost-cutting aspect that is the most attractive element.

BEST HEATED BLANKETS ON THE MARKET

- > Best for wearing around the house: Lakeland Electric Heated Poncho
- > Best for energy efficiency: Dreamland Velvety Electric Throw
- > Best budget buy: Silentnight Luxury Heated Throw
- > Best for ease of use and convenience: Homefront Electric Heated Throw





THREE DIFFERENT WAYS TO USE anti-freeze

Most car owners have a can or two of anti-freeze in their boot, especially during the winter months, but did you know that there is more than one use for this must-have motoring product?

WHAT IS ANTI-FREEZE?

Anti-freeze is an additive that is used to decrease the freezing point and increase the boiling point of any water-based liquid. It is made by combining any of the following with water: methanol, glycerol, ethylene glycol or propylene glycol.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN USES FOR ANTI-FREEZE? AS A CAR ENGINE COOLANT

The most common use for anti-freeze is to prevent an engine's cooling system from freezing or overheating. It stops the water in your car's engine from freezing during cold weather conditions and from becoming overheated when temperatures are high.

TO PROTECT HVAC SYSTEMS

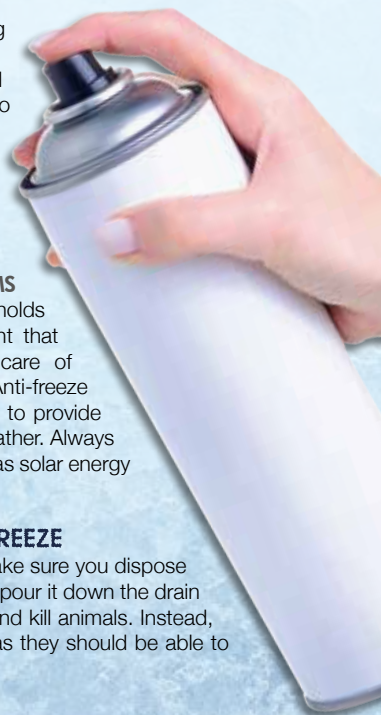
Heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems are an integral part of most residential homes and commercial properties. Anti-freeze can be used to help prevent the pipes within these systems from freezing, bursting and causing damage. It can also help to reduce the risk of scale build-up and corrosion.

TO MAINTAIN SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS

As more and more UK households embrace solar energy, it is important that you know how to properly take care of these types of energy systems. Anti-freeze can be used as a heat transfer fluid to provide protection from freezing in colder weather. Always hire a professional to do this for you as solar energy systems are pressurised.

HOW TO DISPOSE OF ANTI-FREEZE

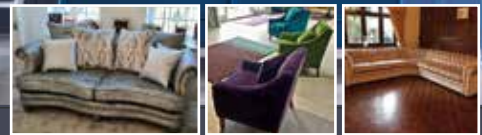
Due to its toxic nature, you must make sure you dispose of anti-freeze in the right way. Never pour it down the drain as it can damage the environment and kill animals. Instead, contact your local recycling centre as they should be able to properly dispose of it for you.



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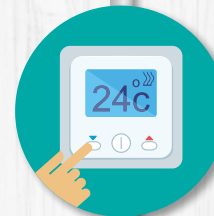
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5 ENERGY SAVING

Top Tips!



Sure, you can save energy by investing in a new boiler, solar panels or roof insulation. If you've got the funds, they'll make a real difference. But these days, most of us don't have the money upfront. And what if you rent your home? Here's our round-up of the best ways to reduce your energy bills – without shivering like crazy or going broke.

CHECK YOUR HEATING

Turn your thermostat down a degree or two and see if the temperature's still okay. Turn down radiators in any room you don't use much. And don't have the heating on when you're out.

If it's not too chilly, put on some warm slippers and a jumper before reaching for the heating switch. If you're reading or watching TV, curl up under a cosy throw.



DON'T LEAVE APPLIANCES ON STANDBY

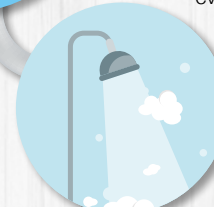
Don't keep your electrical appliances on standby mode. This goes for TVs, game consoles, laptops, printers, microwaves, electric cookers and phone chargers. And remember, devices with an LED panel, clock or light still use electricity even when they're switched off.



IN THE KITCHEN

Wait till you've got a full load to use your washing machine and run your programme at 30°C. Avoid using your tumble dryer whenever possible – it'll use a lot of electricity even in eco mode.

Only put on your dishwasher when it's full. And don't overfill the kettle – just boil the amount you need for your tea, coffee or cooking.



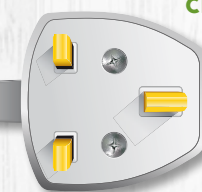
IN THE BATHROOM

If you can, take showers rather than baths and limit them to four minutes. You'd be surprised how much less water you'll use. And don't leave taps running – that goes for the kitchen, too.



CHECK THE LIGHTS

Choose energy-efficient LED lightbulbs. They cost a bit more, but they save energy and money in the long run because they use 90 per cent less energy than conventional halogen bulbs. Oh... and don't leave lights switched on when you don't need them.





HISTORY

BRITISH BUSINESS survivors



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Staggeringly, between 350,000 and 400,000 British businesses close their doors for good every year. But some companies have been up and running for centuries.

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With the dwindling use of cash, the Mint has expanded into other areas, including precious metals investment, historic coins and luxury collectibles. And it's doing pretty well.

Cambridge University Press, the world's first publishing company, was founded in 1534 and publishes academic and educational texts.

Moving down the years, Royal Mail, as it's now known, was founded in 1586. For almost 500 years, it was owned by the state. But by 2015, it was fully privatised. At one stage in the early 20th century, the company had 22,000 pigeons. And someone's gone to the trouble of counting how many elastic bands it currently uses to bundle mail – apparently 342 million a year.

Barclays Bank was founded in London in 1690. The institution's long history is contained in an archive of photos, letters and curiosities housed in the Barclays Group Archives in Manchester.

In 1706, Thomas Twining bought a coffee shop in London's Strand and began to sell tea. Back then, tea was very costly. But Twining spotted a trend. And when he started selling loose tea leaves, as well as cups of the beverage itself, business boomed. By 1717, he'd bought additional space next door – and the shop's still open for business today.



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LOCAL NEWS

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Photo credit: Gleeson Strategic Land Ltd



Plan for 200 homes approved despite rejection

Plans to build 200 homes off Kennel Lane, south of Billericay, have been approved despite an earlier rejection by Basildon Council.

The plans were initially rejected after the application was first submitted in December 2020, but were approved on appeal to the government Planning Inspectorate last month.

In its statement, Basildon Council said: "It is recognised that weight and importance should be attached to the benefit of delivering new homes, particularly where the supply is constrained, as it is here. However, it will be argued that such benefit here is not sufficient to outweigh the harmful impacts."

Pointing out that the borough was only meeting

two per cent of affordable housing needs, the Planning Inspectorate investigating officer said:

"There is a persistent trend of a significant number of people being unable to access their own affordable home in the borough unless suitable, technically unconstrained, well-located housing sites which are capable of meeting those needs are brought forward.

"The evidence before me demonstrates an ongoing and extremely bleak outlook for local affordable housing provision for a further protracted period.

"The capability of the appeal proposal to contribute significantly to addressing the existing and predicted affordable housing shortfall within the next five years attracts considerable weight in favour of this appeal."



Tributes paid to 'dedicated' family man

Billericay resident and firefighter David Lambert (pictured top left) has passed away aged 46 following a cancer diagnosis last year.

David, whose funeral took place on December 21, was a dedicated family man and leaves behind his mother, siblings and three children.

He worked as a firefighter in Potters Bar for 25 years and was a devoted Southend United fan. Pottars Bar Fire Station have named one of their fire engines after David.

Brett Shohet, a friend of David's, said: "He was a dedicated father and a family man, besotted with his children and tremendously loyal to his family.

"He loved to go out and would have a conversation with anyone."

At Southend United's 2-2 draw with Altrincham on

Saturday, December 3, David's family and friends wore specially made scarves and t-shirts emblazoned with his nickname, 'Elmo'.

Brett added: "The memorial couldn't have gone better. The club was amazing with how they helped.

"We got personalised scarves and t-shirts made. We had a picture of him printed, a testimonial piece in the programme, and the announcer read out the statement at half-time."

A statement in the Southend United programme said: "David and his family have been coming to the club for more than 30 years and he was a well-known, loveable character in the East Stand, as well as the far post bar.

"He is being remembered here today by his family and friends."

Blues disappoint with winless league games

Billericay Town FC's men's side have failed to win in their last five games. Billericay, who sit mid-table in the Isthmian Premier League, have struggled for consistency in their recent outings, and suffered last-minute heartbreak against Cray Wanderers on December 17.

The Blues, who were 2-0 down heading into the 70th minute, scored only a minute after conceding the second. They went on to win a penalty in the 80th minute, before Cray scored again in the 83rd minute. Billericay equalised for the second time just four minutes later.

However, Cray scored the winning goal in the 10th minute of injury time.

Manager Danny Brown said: "The way we came back into the game and the goals we scored were a positive, but the goals conceded were disappointing."



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Home Office/Studies



New environmental partnership to clean area

A new environmental enforcement partnership was launched last month to help reduce the amount of waste, litter and fly-tipping in Billericay.

Basildon Council has partnered with Waste Investigations Support and Enforcement Services as of December 1, to help keep all areas of the borough clean and tidy.

The decision comes after a successful trial, when more than 7,000 fixed penalty notices were issued by enforcement officers for waste offences. The majority of these were for dog fouling, littering and fly-tipping.

Individuals identified as suspected of fly-tipping or

littering can be issued with a fixed penalty notice in lieu of prosecution of £120 for littering or £400 for the unauthorised deposit of waste.

Councillor Andrew Baggott, Leader of Basildon Council and cabinet member for enforcement and public order, said: "There's never any excuse for dumping rubbish and this new contract will help us hold the people that do to account.

"We want our residents to be proud of not just the area they live in, but the borough as a whole, and our enforcement teams are working across all areas to make that a reality."

Road to close for two months for gas works

A Billericay road is to close for two months from the end of January while gas mains replacement works are undertaken by Cadent.

Hillhouse Drive will shut from its junction with Perry Street to its junction with Hillhouse Close from January 30 to March 31.

The road has previously been the subject of several complaints by residents and councillors owing to its poor surface quality. Earlier this year, councillor Anthony Hedley said that the road did not meet the criteria for emergency repairs, according to highway authorities.

He said: "As far as I am concerned, the repairs are

justified, and I intend to continue to ask for the road to be resurfaced."

A statement by Essex County Council said: "The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while mains replacement works are undertaken by Cadent.

"An alternative route is available via Stock Road, Orchard Avenue, Perry Street and vice versa (access only into Hillhouse Drive).

"Access for emergency service vehicles and pedestrians will be maintained at all times during the closure."

For more information, visit one.network/uk/essex



Photo credit: Google Maps

Family escapes fire thanks to alarm

The fire service has reminded residents to install smoke alarms after a fire broke out at a property in Billericay in the middle of the night.

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service crews from Billericay and Wickford were called to a residential property on Mill Lane, Ramsden Heath, on December 15 at 3.33am. The building's residents had evacuated the house after being awoken by smoke alarms.

Upon arrival, firefighters reported the ground floor as being smoke logged. Officers entered the property wearing breathing apparatus and the blaze was extinguished shortly afterwards.

It is believed the fire was caused by an electrical fault. Though the family was able to escape with their

lives, they have now sadly been left homeless as a result of the smoke damage.

Watch manager Andy Smith, from Wickford Fire Station, said: "This incident really highlights why it is so, so important to have working smoke alarms at home. The residents were all asleep upstairs, unaware there was a fire developing downstairs. Their smoke alarms saved their lives.

"Please make sure you have at least one working smoke alarm on every level of your home and test them weekly. If you haven't got working smoke alarms, we can fit them for free. Get in touch with our team online at www.essex-fire.gov.uk/book or by calling 0300 303 0088."

Council rejects plans for 44-hectare solar farm

Basildon Borough Council's Planning Committee has refused an application for a solar farm the size of 60 football pitches on green belt land in Billericay.

Submitted by Boom Power Ltd, the application was for a 44.22-hectare solar farm in Crays Hall Farm.

Representatives of Boom Power and Crays Hall Farm said the site had become plagued with weeds and was no longer sustainable as a business, and that using the site for solar energy would provide an opportunity to address the climate emergency.

However, the application was rejected at a council

meeting on November 30.

Billericay East councillor Andrew Schrader said: "I don't believe that renewables alone are going to get us to the level of energy security and self-sufficiency that we need and that's why I'm dubious that things like massive solar farms present adequate justification for the sacrifice of green belt that we're talking about."

Billericay East councillor David Dadds said: "That is absolutely beautiful green belt land. I am shocked that there could be a proposal to destroy that."

Boom Power Ltd has been contacted for comment.



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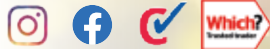
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Photo credit: Essex County Cricket club



Cricket club hosts awards despite controversy

Essex County Cricket held its 20th annual Women and Girls Dinner in Shenfield last month, in the midst of controversy over allegations of racism.

The event, which took place at The Mount Avenue Banqueting Suite, provided the opportunity to reflect on the past year and celebrate players' impressive performances, in spite of recent off-field issues.

Tilly Callaghan (pictured left) scooped a hat-trick of awards, picking up Player's Player, Bowler of the Year and Player of the Year following her leading wicket-taking season which helped Essex reach the T20 Cup final.

Callaghan shared Players' Player with 17-year-old Hollie Dring-Richardson, who also picked up Young Player of the Year. Scarlett Hughes took home Batter of the Year after scoring 355 runs.

Essex Cricket has come under fire in recent weeks,

with newly appointed chair Azeem Akhtar (pictured right) stepping down only days after his appointment over allegations of racism and antisemitism.

In a statement, Mr Akhtar said: "I have taken the decision to voluntarily step aside as chair of Essex County Cricket Club while an independent review takes place into recent matters that have been raised.

"I have made the decision to initiate this review because it is important that I as chair and Essex County Cricket Club more widely hold ourselves to the highest standards of governance and accountability.

"By stepping aside, I want to show leadership and ensure the club can focus on the ongoing challenges it is tackling.

"I am resolutely committed to ensuring that Essex County Cricket Club is an inclusive and welcoming environment for people of all backgrounds."



BURGHART for BRENTWOOD



Alex Burghart MP for Brentwood and Ongar

The devastating effect of motor neurone disease (MND) on individuals and families has been brought to the forefront of our attention recently by the well-documented experience of former professional rugby league player Rob Burrow, as the disease has taken his movement and voice from him. This follows the sad death last year of Scottish rugby union player Doddie Weir.

MND affects the brain and nerves, and 5,000 people in the UK are thought to have the condition. There is currently only one drug licensed in the UK to treat MND, Riluzole, which slows the progression of the disease and extends someone's life by a few months.

A small group of constituents who are affected by MND are in regular contact with me about government funding for more research, so it is

good to start 2023 knowing £50million has been made available to meet those requests. This will be used to fund specialist research centres and partnerships with leading researchers, and to accelerate work on the most promising treatments.

The government will cut red tape in order to speed up research into MND across the UK, with immediate investment so NHS patients can benefit from cutting-edge treatment and medicines. The National Institute for Health and Care Research and Medical Research Council will work together to ensure proposals are referred to the most appropriate scheme for consideration at the early stages.

It means some of the UK's best scientific minds are battling to find treatments – and one day, a cure – for the devastating condition that is MND.

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Photo credit: Shenfield AFC

Club progress to quarter-finals

Shenfield AFC will play Corinthians FC on January 21 in the quarter-final of the BBC Essex Saturday Premier Cup.

Shenfield, who saw a run of decent form interrupted by postponements caused by snow and ice, made it through to the last eight after a 2-1 victory over Harold Wood Athletic.

Ben Absolon scored both their goals, and though the visitors threatened with an equaliser, they were never able to find the finishing touch to put them back into the game.

Corinthians FC sit a division below Shenfield, occupying fourth place in the Essex Olympian Football League Division One, and are below Harold Wood

Athletic who sit top of their table.

Along the way to the quarter-finals, Shenfield enjoyed a massive 21-0 win over May and Baker's Reserves side as well as narrower victories over Basildon Town Reserves and White Ensign Reserves.

With Shenfield's first team not due to play until later this month, they can look back on a record-breaking 2022 which saw their teams play more than in any other year.

Across their first, reserve, third and veteran teams, Shenfield AFC played 135 games, winning 56 and losing 64.

Their veterans over-45s team finished the year with the best record, winning 13 of their 22 games.

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TONE UP YOUR FINANCES IN 2023

While a financial overhaul may seem a less exciting prospect than taking on a new challenge or hobby, taking the time to do this now could really have a positive impact on your future wealth.

RECONNECT WITH YOUR GOALS

Whatever life stage you've reached, you'll no doubt have some short- and long-term financial goals you want to achieve. Reviewing these goals and determining the amount of money required to fulfil them is a good discipline and helps you connect to your aspirations, standing you in better stead of ultimately achieving them.

PRIORITISING YOUR PENSION

The earlier you start saving into your pension, the more you can contribute and the longer your money has time to grow. With tax relief available on contributions (within limits), pension saving is one of the best ways to ensure you stay on track for a comfortable retirement.

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more opportunity to build up your savings tax-efficiently.

REVISIT YOUR MORTGAGE

Usually a family's biggest monthly outgoing, it's important to review your mortgage as there may be a more suitable deal for you, especially if you're paying interest at your lender's standard variable rate.

REVIEW PROTECTION POLICIES

Life insurance and other types of protection, such as income protection or critical illness cover, should form a vital part of your financial plan. It's worth reviewing these policies as your circumstances change, to ensure you have the right type and level of cover in place.

KEEP TALKING

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NO-SPEND JANUARY

Did you overspend during the festive period? Is your bank balance looking a little bleak? Then no-spend January could be just what you need to get your finances back on track for 2023 and beyond.

WHAT IS NO-SPEND JANUARY?

No-spend January is a money-saving challenge that is designed to help people get their finances back in order after splurging over Christmas. It can also help you to reset your budget, reassess where your money is going and break bad spending habits. Although called no-spend January, you are allowed to cover the cost of essentials.

WHAT YOU CAN SPEND MONEY ON:

Mortgage/rent | Credit card repayments | Utilities such as gas, electricity and water | Urgent maintenance costs for your home or car | Food shopping | Pet supplies

WHAT YOU CANNOT SPEND MONEY ON:

Takeaways/eating out | Clothes shopping | Entertainment such as the cinema or bowling | Beauty expenses such as the nail salon or hairdressers

OUR TOP TIPS FOR NO-SPEND JANUARY:

1. Cut down on non-essential food and drink items such as alcohol and treats
2. Use up store cupboard and freezer food before going to the supermarket
3. Don't use your credit or debit card; instead, use cash only
4. Visit your local library for free books
5. Consider a car share to cut down on petrol costs
6. Declutter your home and see if there are any items you can sell
7. Ask family and friends to participate
8. Visit free local attractions such as museums and parks
9. Organise a clothes swap with friends

HOW TO MOVE ON FROM NO-SPEND JANUARY:

If you don't want to revert back to unhealthy spending once January is over, it can be a good idea to introduce a no-spend week or no-spend day once a month. Also, avoid rushing out to buy new things right away as this can undo all your hard work – wait until the sales instead.



DYER STRAITS

DANNY DYER'S EXIT FROM *EASTENDERS* MARKS ALMOST A DECADE OF THRILLING DRAMA IN THE SQUARE

That Danny Dyer evolved so admirably from regal cockney to Queen Vic landlord Mick Carter is one of the more celebrated evolutions of British celebrity culture.

The East London-born West Ham United superfan has waved goodbye after almost a decade on Albert Square – a solid commitment to E20 and the drinks industry that has seen the once-derided actor and presenter rise to the cream of the soap opera fraternity.

Dyer emerged as a spiky, punchy, salt-of-the-Earth type who passed up an interest in usual working-class opportunities to embark on acting classes. Bullied at school for his passion for drama, Dyer soon had the last laugh, appearing in *Prime Suspect 3* at the age of 16.

Terrestrial gigs in *Cadfael*, *A Touch of Frost*, *Loved Up*, *Highlander*, *Soldier Soldier* and *Skins* followed, before his big film break came in *Human Traffic*, an iconic coming-of-age clubbing movie that also saw the emergence of John Simm.

Soon after, he was asked to front Bravo documentary series *The Real Football Factories* (a real-life take on *The Football Factory* movie he had previously starred in), which proved to be a big hit in an era where terrace casuals were still prevalent in the Premier League and beyond (as the subsequent *The Real Football Factories International* proved).

This was followed by *Danny Dyer's Deadliest Men*, in which he interviewed Britain's most notorious gangsters.

He turned down the chance to join the cast in *Walford* in 2009, citing fears of being too exposed in the public eye, but having experimented with a number of low-budget film projects, was lured to *EastEnders* in 2013 as Queen Vic landlord Mick Carter.

Enjoying a bevy of controversial storylines, he has clinched three awards in the role, including Best Serial Drama Performance at the National Television Awards. Along the way, he has made the change from the rough and ready hard man of the Square to someone capable of carrying through a wealth of poignant and emotive storylines. Having spent years developing his skills, he now looks to take that forward with other projects.

"*EastEnders* has been amazing for me," says Dyer. "I'm grateful for the beautiful years I've had there. I'm going to miss the people massively."

Talking about what comes next, the 45 year old says: "I know the landscape has changed slightly, but I want to go out there and have another go, and the only way I can do that is if I decide to walk away from the job."

Dyer will next be seen in a four-part Channel 5 drama called *Heat*, for which filming is to begin shortly in Australia.

Ahead of his Albert Square exit, executives were tight-lipped on how the storyline would develop, but there was all the drama expected of an *EastEnders* Christmas special – including a car chase, a cliff-top brawl, and ultimately tragedy as Mick met his watery end.

Perhaps the true tragedy is that one of the true mainstays of the British landscape is gone... for now, but maybe not forever.

Photo credit: BBC/Jack Barnes/Kieron McCarron

Home Storage Trends for 2023

The New Year is synonymous with fresh starts and, of course, the big January house declutter which gets us all thinking about how we can make changes to the way we organise our homes. If 2023 is the year you plan to give your home a stylish lift, here are some top home storage trends from Sliderobes, that are set to dominate the world of interiors in the months ahead.

Home office order

With the shift to home working, people have been looking at ways to create an organised home office that's free from distraction. The new trend for home offices is storage solutions that are built in and bespoke, when it comes to their shelving, drawers and desks. Not only does this give it a personal touch but also makes the area feel like a functional workspace, to promote productivity.

Sustainable storage

2023 will be the year for sustainable storage. Eco-friendly options aren't anything new but this trend is gaining momentum and it's likely that more people will be opting for natural materials and aesthetics such as rattan and bamboo, glass and wood for their storage, whether it's baskets, boxes, shelves or wardrobes.

Crittall doors

In terms of styles, Sliderobes have seen a huge increase in crittall style doors for their customers' wardrobes and this trend is here to stay. It's easy to see why, as it's chic and minimal but has a bit of a modern edge. It's also versatile enough to suit any room style; from mid century to Scandi.

Blue is back

Grey has long been the interiors shade of choice but colour is making a comeback. Last year saw the resurgence of green but this year blue will be the perfect pick. Depending on the shade, blue can suit any room and style.

Rich deep blues will look luxurious, whilst grey toned denim blues can create a sense of peace and calm.



Bespoke for you

The ultimate trend for storage in 2023 will be personalised design. Everyone wants their home to feel unique and reflect their character and this will be integrated into storage solutions too. After all, everyone has individual storage needs. Whether it's a bookworm who wants a library of shelving or a shoe lover who needs a built-in shoe-rack in their wardrobe to protect, show-off and store their collection, storage that's fit for your lifestyle and your belongings, makes it much easier to keep a space calm and organised, as everything will have its own place.



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WINTER Wonderland

HOW TO GET THE BEST OUT OF YOUR GARDEN IN THE COLD WINTER MONTHS

Some of us may regard winter as the season when our desire to venture out into the garden wanes completely. Yet whether we're negotiating a path across a frosty lawn, or simply viewing nature from the warmth and comfort of the indoors, making your garden into a winter wonderland is a rewarding task.

So while you may not have the summer sorcery of flower sprays, sun loungers and an abundance of fruit and produce, these tips will help keep your outside space special even in the depths of winter.

STRUCTURAL STATEMENTS

A winter garden is one that's lighter on detail, so create new space and interest with some cool man-made structures. From trellises to metalwork, benches to rockeries, winter provides a great opportunity for man-made materials to enter the fray.

CALL FOR COLOUR

The assumption that the colour drains out of our gardens in winter is, ultimately, wrong. There are many stem-like winter plants that are radiant and

beautiful – consider the pinky purple of dogwood, evergreen rhododendrons and the shining white trunks of a birch tree.

TAKE FORWARD TRADITION

Planting a number of hardy winter varieties will give your garden presence as well as helping to carry forward the legacy of a traditional English garden. Use hellebores and snowdrops to create a classic, elegant effect.

TREMENDOUS TREES

Stripped of their summer decoration, let skeletal trees stand out against a snowy backdrop. Mixed up with evergreens, you can create a brilliant contrast.

FANTASTIC FEASTS

Finally, don't assume your winter garden can't put produce on the table. Carrots and fava beans will still thrive throughout the winter, and you can extend the growing period of a number of other varieties of fruit and veg if you keep your greenhouse operational throughout the cold months.



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GARDENING

PRUNED TO perfection

If you want to enjoy a good fruit cycle, you need to prune your apple and pear trees over the winter. For those who are new to fruit pruning, this step-by-step guide tells you all you need to know.

GET THE RIGHT TOOLS

You need to have clean, sharp tools that are designed for pruning, such as secateurs, loppers or a pruning saw if you have a larger pear or apple tree. Make sure you sharpen them before use.

CUT BACK SUCKERS AND LOWER BRANCHES

Use secateurs to cut back any suckers. These are unwanted shoots that grow near the base of the trunk. Also, cut back lower branches as these do not get sufficient light to bear good fruit.

REMOVE DEAD OR DISEASED WOOD

Remove all branches with discoloured or flaking bark towards the base of the branch by making a cut above an outward-facing bud (one that is on the opposite side of the stem to the main trunk). If there are no buds, remove the entire branch.

CREATE A VASE SHAPE FRAMEWORK

Ideally, you want four or five main branches that help

to create an open vase shape. If you have more than five, remove some at the base by cutting 6mm from the branch collar – this refers to the bulbous area that is attached to the trunk.

Avoid removing more than 25 per cent of the branches in one go as this can affect the tree's health and fruit production.

REMOVE CROSSING OR RUBBING BRANCHES

Remove any branches that are growing into the centre of the tree as this will allow for better air circulation. If two branches are crossing, keep the one that best retains the vase shape of the tree and remove the other one.

SHORTEN THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S GROWTH ON EACH BRANCH BY ONE-THIRD

Cut just above an outward-facing bud on each main branch so that new branches grow outwards. This will help the tree to develop into a healthy shape and prevent congestion.



KISS A Ginger

CELEBRATE KISS A GINGER DAY THIS MONTH

On January 12, it's Kiss A Ginger Day – the perfect time to show redheads some love. But you might need to take a good look around – because red hair is rare. Only two in every 100 people are natural redheads, making it the rarest hair colour in the world. And the rarest people of all are redheads with blue eyes.

The genes responsible for red hair are recessive. This means that to have a red-haired baby, both parents must carry a red-haired gene. If both parents carry the gene but don't have red hair themselves, they'll have around a one in four chance of having a red-haired baby. If one of the parents is a redhead and the other is a carrier of the gene but doesn't have red hair, the chances go up to around one in two. And if both parents have ginger locks, chances are that all their children will have red hair too.

Hundreds of years ago, redheads were thought

to be witches and were shunned by society. These days, things have thankfully improved – although some people still think natural redheads are brash and hot-headed. That's not true, of course. But recent studies have shown that redheads require more anaesthetic than people with other hair colours. Their response to painkillers is also different – for the medication to work, they need more of some types of painkillers and less of others.

So how are you going to celebrate on January 12? If you've got a natural ginger among your family and friends, show them how much you appreciate their extraordinary tresses. And if you're not that lucky, listen to some music by redheads – Ed Sheeran or Florence and the Machine, anyone? Or how about a film starring Julianne Moore or Jessica Chastain? The choice is yours.



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PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

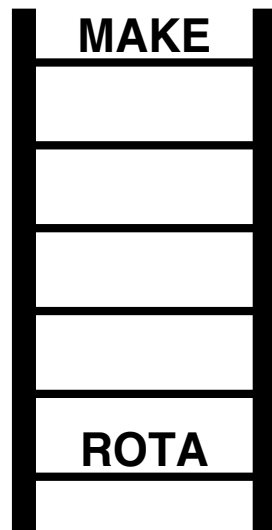
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- ▶ JASPER
- ▶ LAPIS LAZULI
- ▶ MALACHITE
- ▶ MOONSTONE
- ▶ OBSIDIAN
- ▶ OLIVINE
- ▶ OPAL
- ▶ QUARTZ
- ▶ RUBY
- ▶ SAPPHIRE
- ▶ TANZANITE
- ▶ TOPAZ
- ▶ TOURMALINE
- ▶ TURQUOISE

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DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ More than one million animal species have been identified on Earth.
- ▶ There is only one species of koala in the world.
- ▶ In the wild, red pandas are mainly active during the twilight period and until the early hours of the morning. Otherwise, they are usually found resting.
- ▶ Like domestic cats, giant panda bears have vertical slits for pupils.
- ▶ It's thought there are more tigers in captivity than are left in the wild.
- ▶ Lions can eat up to 40kg of meat in a single meal. That's around a quarter of their body weight.
- ▶ You can tell the species of an elephant by the shape of its ears.

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.

CHARGED

How secure are you?

Vehicle theft is at an all time high and the belief is criminals are getting smarter and always one step ahead, but often this isn't the case, usually it can be prevented by a few simple things.

Many people lack any form of security process at home which leads to being inconsistent with locking up and setting alarms. These inconsistencies can be what makes the difference in being targeted by thieves.

For example in this picture, it is late evening, the homeowners were still awake upstairs getting ready for bed and they had not yet set their house alarm nor did they have active alerts set up on their CCTV system and the vehicle keys were left downstairs by the front door. Before going up to bed, they could have enabled a night mode on their home alarm which would have alerted them as soon as the gate was opened and disturbed the thieves by sounding the sirens.

Active alerts from CCTV would have alerted them earlier when the thieves visited and broke open the gate mechanism.

Thieves know the difference between quality security systems and off the shelf products which means you are reducing your risk of being targeted by thieves by having a quality professionally designed and installed security solution. Charged Services offer all aspects of security and specialise in integrating systems like gates and alarms.



OUR TOP SECURITY TIPS

1. **If you have Keyless entry on your vehicle, this can often be disabled in the vehicle menu preventing "Key jumping" entirely. If not, get a faraday box and store keys securely.**
2. **If you have electric gates, check they are secure. Can they be easily lifted and opened?**
3. **Check your side gates or garages to ensure they are locked.**
4. **Lock your doors and keep a set of house keys near your bed for emergencies.**
5. **Does your burglar alarm have a night mode? If not contact a security company for assistance in getting it set up. Get into a routine of setting your alarm at night.**
6. **If you have CCTV, Ensure you have notifications enabled and not blocked by "do not disturb" settings. Being able to respond to an intruder early could make all the difference in scaring them off before its too late.**
7. **Do you have a panic button to set your alarm off? Does it work? Do you test your alarm regularly??**

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National Eye Care Month



January is National Eye Care Month, so what better time to learn how to take care of your pet's eyesight? Sight is an essential sense that enables your pet to navigate their environment, communicate with other animals and even express emotion, so find out how to look after your pet's vision below.

WHAT CAUSES EYE PROBLEMS IN PETS?

Sadly, eye problems are relatively common in pets and can be caused by many different things such as exposure to chlorinated water or saltwater, fungal infections from a change in climate or humidity, genetics, and ageing. Some breeds are also more susceptible to certain eye conditions than others.

HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOUR PET'S EYE HEALTH

1. Regular maintenance

One of the easiest and most effective ways to keep your pet's eyes in good condition is by preventing any issues before they occur. You can do this by periodically cleaning their eyes with a soft, damp cloth or a specially formulated rinse and regularly trimming the hair around their eyes. Also check for any debris or contaminants in and around the eyes.

2. Purchase eye vitamins

You can help to support your pet's eye health by giving them eye vitamins. A more long-term approach to eye health, these are packed with antioxidants that work hard to fight harmful free radicals. Research shows that these can help to prevent the onset of age-related and hereditary macular degeneration.

3. Use gentle grooming products

While it is important that you keep your pet clean and well groomed, some grooming products can irritate their eyes. Use chemical-free shampoos and soaps and avoid air fresheners in the home if your pet has sensitive eyes.

4. Be vigilant

Many eye problems cause watery or mucus discharge, so make sure that you look out for this as well as any swelling or redness. Sensitivity to light, rubbing at the eye and holding the eye closed are also signs of a potential infection or issue.



BEAUTY

MEN'S HAIR TRENDS

FOR WINTER 2023

TOP TIPS FROM AWARD-WINNING MEN'S HAIRDRESSER AND OWNER OF TONI&GUY BILLERICAY, JIM SHAW

There will be one stand-out hair colour trend for men this winter – bleached hair. Men will look to lighten their hair and have it toned for a clean, platinum hue or an icy white/grey tone that's fitting for the season.

We will also see cooler-toned brights becoming popular, such as dark greens, blues and purples for men who want to add a pop of colour to their look.

Disconnected cuts have been in and out of fashion over recent years, and this season they're back on trend. This means we'll see men requesting their hair to be super short on the sides with longer length on top.

The military-inspired regulation cut will also be popular. This is a very sharp and fresh style whereby the hair is trimmed down on the top but kept longer than the sides, which are tapered and gradually cut shorter before reaching the nape of the neck, where the hair can be shaved off completely to help reflect a true regulation cut.

For those looking for a haircut that's longer in length, mullets will be the textured haircut of the season. Hair should usually be cut shorter and choppier towards the front and sides and left longer at the back.

However, for 2023, we will see a more modern take on this trend, with men looking for the gradation of different lengths to be a lot softer.

In terms of styling for winter 2023, this all depends on the cut you have. If you have a shorter haircut, sleek styles will be very on trend.

Incorporate a pomade with a shine finish, gel or wax into your styling routine to give your hair a neater, more polished appearance.



Photo credit: Tony Le Britton



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The gym has some of the latest LifeFitness equipment to help you reach your fitness goals and the friendly gym team including gym Manager Robin Hart are on hand to give advice as well as expert tuition via a PT programme.

Classes include yoga, HITT and Pilates carried out in the pleasant studio and why not indulge in a healthy lunch once your session is over in the stunning lounge bar.

The tranquil spa is the perfect place to chill and with a 20 metre indoor pool, Jacuzzi, steam and sauna rooms, you can build your own spa day whenever as a Gym member or hotel guest.



Spa packages feature the award-winning Elemis products, the British skin care brand at the cutting edge of spa-based anti-ageing facials and body treatments.

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Yes please TO CHEESE

JANUARY 20, IS NATIONAL CHEESE LOVER'S DAY – HERE'S HOW TO CELEBRATE

Feeling a little cheesed off? Well don't despair, for Friday, January 20, is National Cheese Lover's Day, giving you carte blanche to celebrate and indulge in all your favourite dairy delights.

Not surprisingly, Britain is a nation of cheese lovers. Whether it's a humble cheddar sarnie, a saucy slice of Welsh rarebit or a fancy fondue dip, the average Brit eats 30g of cheese a day and there are more than 700 cheeses produced in the UK.

Around half of sales are cheddar – named after the famed Cheddar Gorge caves in Somerset where the cheese was once stored to ripen – but we're still partial to more exotic fromages such as mozzarella, parmesan and feta.

HOW TO CELEBRATE

With such a thriving cheese industry in this country, it couldn't be easier to indulge in this Wookey Hole-iest of days. Most major supermarkets now boast English-made gems such as Wensleydale Blue and Red Leicester, but it's also worth seeking out some lesser-known treats from your nearest speciality cheesemonger. Or, if you're really enthusiastic, you can head to your local dairy farm where they will likely have a shop selling their creations.

Not only is cheese incredibly tasty and diverse, it's also highly nutritious. A great source of protein, it contains vitamin B12 (which is vital for red blood formation), and a matchbox-sized slice provides one-third of an adult's daily calcium requirement.

So don't be sheepish – make like a mouse and treat yourself to a little of what you fancy. Whether red, yellow or blue, in moderation, cheese is very good for you.

BRITAIN'S TOP 10 CHEESES*:

1. Cheddar
2. Red Leicester
3. Brie
4. Mozzarella
5. Parmesan
6. Stilton
7. Cream cheese
8. Wensleydale
9. Camembert
10. Feta

*According to a study by Branstons Pickle in 2017.



Shell YEAH!



If you're thinking about staying in this Valentine's Day, shellfish offers a decadent and delicious centrepiece for a romantic meal for two.

However, if you're unsure what to serve for that special someone come February 14, here are five of the most popular types of shellfish, as well as how to serve them.

OYSTERS

Oysters are the most nutrient-rich shellfish available and also the most expensive. With a reputation as an aphrodisiac, oysters have a gooey texture and a salty flavour. Most commonly served raw on ice, you can fill their shells with lemon, butter, hot sauce or a zingy mixture made from shallots and vinegar. Alternatively, they can be grilled, baked or fried.

MUSSELS

One of the easiest shellfish to prepare and cook, mussels are usually steamed in flavoured broth or sauce. Mussels need to be kept alive before they are cooked and can only be refrigerated for one or two days. Any mussels with broken shells or ones with open shells and that don't close when tapped should be discarded. Enjoy moules frites (steamed mussels and fries), served with a huge chunk of crusty bread.

CRAB

Crabs take a bit more effort to prepare and cook, but it's definitely worth it as you'll be rewarded with tender, delicious meat. You can boil, roast, steam or grill crab and this shellfish is commonly used in dips, pastas, seafood dishes and salads. White crab meat boasts a meaty texture and a more delicate flavour, whereas brown meat is softer with an almost pâté-like consistency.

SCALLOPS

Another highly tender and succulent type of shellfish, scallops make the perfect starter. Boasting a rich, buttery flavour, you can choose between small and sweet bay scallops or big and bold sea scallops. Pan-seared scallops with peas and mint are our go-to recipe at any time of year.

LOBSTER

Known for its melt-in-the-mouth texture, lobster is the epitome of elegance. Lobster can be cooked whole, and the most succulent meat is found in the tails, legs and claws. Try garlic herb butter lobster tail as a delicious starter or lobster risotto as a main course.





The Travel Boutique

Always at the heart of your travel plans...

The Travel Boutique, Travel Lounge in Shenfield has reopened much to everyone's delight. We may have been working remotely for the past 10 months but throughout we have continued to provide our loyal customers with our personal service and impartial advice and the widest variety of holidays, with many of you enjoying treasured getaways in 2022 and already booked with us for 2023.



Our Luxury Concierge Service can assist with a personalised itinerary for a truly unforgettable experience. Janette Healey owner of the Travel Boutique is delighted to be back on the High Street: "What a wonderful welcome back. It's so nice to see my customers in person after months of speaking by telephone and over skype. Planning holidays is what I love to do best and with more than thirty years in travel there is nothing better than sitting face to face with my clients. I have personally been to some wonderful places all over the World and I love to share my knowledge and insight. During my

time in Travel I have built some wonderful relationships with Hotel and Tour Operator partners across the Globe. Travel is our passion and customer care, our forte."

Where can The Travel Boutique take you next?

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We can help send you on your way to some of the most popular luxury resorts with dreamy beachfront locations across the Mediterranean, to boutique hotels on blissful paradise islands in the Caribbean and other distant shores.

ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS

From wildlife encounters in the cloud forests of Costa Rica, glacial escapades in Iceland, to sailing around the glorious Greek islands on a skippered yacht, when it comes to an adventure, we have plenty of travel inspiration for you.

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Prepare to discover the most amazing destinations and charming ports on a cruise holiday whether across the Mediterranean, Caribbean islands and beyond. Let us find the right itinerary and cruise line for you.

CITY BREAKS

Vibrant cities of Europe and further afield where you can have a mini-adventure and enjoy a treasure trove of things to see and do. Whether you want to book a romantic escape, family getaway or solo travel experience the choices are endless.

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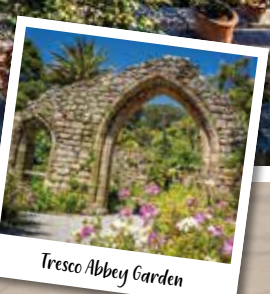
Hama-rikyu Gardens



Hestercombe House



Flower Festival



Tresco Abbey Garden

GARDEN GETAWAYS

If you love gardening, then you are going to love our suggested destinations that are just perfect for green-fingered travellers. Whether you want to explore gardens in the UK or go further afield, here's something for every gardening enthusiast.

Italy: Whether you choose to explore its formal gardens or simply enjoy the abundance of breathtaking blooms around the country, Italy is a great destination for garden enthusiasts. The gardens that overlook the Italian lakes are a must-see, with the botanical gardens of Villa Taranto overflowing with azaleas and rhododendrons.

Japan: This East Asian country is renowned for its pink cherry blossom and Zen gardens which have to be seen first-hand to be believed. Head to the Hama-rikyu Gardens in Tokyo in March, and don't forget to also schedule a trip to Japan's most popular Zen garden at the Ryōan-ji Temple.

Somerset: If you are looking for a gardening getaway that is closer to home, Somerset is the perfect choice. Visit country houses such as Hestercombe House, Kilver Court and Lytes Cary Manor and marvel at their impeccable grounds and stunning natural surroundings.

Madeira: Boasting a sub-tropical climate, Madeira is a haven for a whole host of rare species that guarantee to impress. From North American sequoia trees to pretty ponds filled with koi carp, there are many colourful sights for you to enjoy. Don't miss the Flower Festival in April 2023, where you can see some of Madeira's finest gardens and landscapes.

Isles of Scilly: The Isles are famous for their unspoilt natural beauty, with an abundance of beaches, rugged landscapes and wildlife. Head to Tresco Abbey Garden, where you can marvel at 20,000 plants from more than 80 different countries.

Photo credits: Francesco Borino, Christian Mueller, Castro Cicero all via Shutterstock.com



Chinese New Year LANTERNS

This year, Chinese New Year falls on January 22, marking the beginning of the Year of the Rabbit. Chinese communities throughout the world celebrate the New Year with family meals and outdoor events featuring firecrackers, fireworks and dragon puppets. And at the end of the festivities, there's a lantern festival to welcome the full moon. To mark the occasion, why not create some beautiful paper lanterns? Plain ones can look gorgeous, but choose rabbit-printed paper or add some decorations for a bit of extra festive fun. You could even adorn your lanterns with homemade bunny features, such as ears, eyes and noses.

- 6. Run your glue stick along one short side of the lantern. Form the paper into a tube shape, then glue the two short sides together.
- 7. If you like, decorate your lantern or add a ribbon or paper handle.

The lanterns look great strung along a piece of ribbon or string!

YOU WILL NEED:

- > Some sheets of paper (A4 paper makes a lantern about 20cm tall, and A5 paper makes a lantern about 14cm tall). You can use different coloured or patterned paper
- > A ruler, pencil and eraser
- > A glue stick
- > Scissors
- > Extra decorations such as stick-on shapes, sequins, braid or ribbon (optional)

HOW TO MAKE:

1. Fold your paper in half lengthways so you have a long, slim rectangle.
2. Draw a line parallel with the long edge, where the two sides of the paper meet. This line should be about 2.5cm away from the edge.
3. Starting about 2.5cm in from one of the short edges, draw a series of parallel lines across the rectangle, from the folded edge up to the long line you've just drawn. These lines should be about 2.5cm apart.
4. Cut along each of the short lines.
5. Erase any noticeable pencil marks, then unfold the paper.





A New Year for City Breaks

Make sure your 2023 is filled with memorable Travel experiences.

City Breaks are a perfect way to get you through the year. Best of all, they are often excellent value for money.

Ideal for long weekends or over a bank holiday, they provide a great opportunity to experience the unique charm of a destination, its history and culture, great food, must see attractions and more.

At Instant Breaks, we can arrange some fantastic European City Breaks, all easily reachable by Eurostar. For New Year travel inspiration, we have handpicked a few of our favourite places with prices including return travel and a three-night hotel stay.

So, what are you waiting for, why not get your next City Break in the calendar!

PARIS

From ***£305 per person**

Visiting Paris is always a unique experience. Paris has it all. The perfect mix of art, culture, fashion and food means plenty of eating, drinking, shopping and sightseeing. Famous city landmarks such as The Louvre, Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame and the Arc de Triomphe are just a few of the famous sights you should see on a city break here.



BRUSSELS

From ***£270 per person**

A treasure trove of more than 100 museums but also rich in history, architecture, gastronomy, culture and so much more. From medieval masterpieces to glass-roof covered arcades lined with shops, cafés and brasseries, charming neighbourhoods and spectacular views, there really is something for everyone. A fine and beautiful city to explore.



AMSTERDAM

From ***£275 per person**

There's so much more than just the tulips of Amsterdam to discover. With its picturesque canals, rich history and eclectic cultural scene, the capital of the Netherlands is one of the World's most vibrant cities. With fascinating museums, quirky festivals, theatre, live music, laid-back bars and delightful restaurants, there's never a shortage of things to do in Amsterdam!



COLOGNE

From ***£385 per person**

The cathedral city of Cologne has many reasons why you'd want to visit. Located on the Rhine it is also considered one of Germany's greatest cities for shopping with everything from independent design shops, edgy Scandinavian fashion boutiques to vast flea markets. The city has a distinctive historical charm and among the narrow-cobbled streets you'll find many of the city's coolest pubs, shopping streets, museums, and historical buildings.



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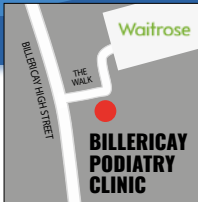
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BURN, baby, BURN

We know sport is great for reducing stress and boosting confidence, but let's be honest: for most of us, the biggest lure of exercise is to get fit and trim some fat. With that in mind, here are the seven sports that burn the most calories per minute. Calorie expenditure is based on a healthy, able-bodied person of average build.

▲ RUNNING (UP TO 1,000 CALORIES/HOUR)

Running is great for burning calories, and even those hitting the pavements at a slow pace can burn around 700 calories per hour. And as logic dictates, the faster you run, the more calories you vanquish.

▲ SQUASH (UP TO 900 CALORIES/HOUR)

The best all-round sport of them all, squash combines energy bursts with stamina, power, competitive spirit and mental awareness, and is great for burning fat.

▲ CYCLING (UP TO 700 CALORIES/HOUR)

Despite the fact that cycling affords you the chance to step off the gas, it remains an excellent exercise for burning calories.

▲ BOXING (UP TO 700 CALORIES/HOUR)

Its quick bursts of energy that make boxing such a great exercise, with power, constant motion and the need to stay aware all combined in this fun, fast-paced workout.

▲ SWIMMING (UP TO 600 CALORIES/HOUR)

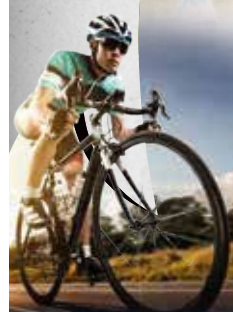
Not only is swimming excellent for putting every part of your body to use, but the continued resistance against water means additional calorie burn.

▲ ROWING (UP TO 600 CALORIES/HOUR)

While some may assume rowing is primarily a strength challenge for the arms, this exercise also requires leg flexibility and movement. The more muscles being used, the more calories you'll burn.

▲ AEROBIC DANCE (UP TO 550 CALORIES/HOUR)

Aerobic dance is not only a fun way to exercise, but is also effective at improving your fitness.





colour me calm

Are you looking for a new hobby? Sales of adult colouring books have surged since the pandemic as people look for ways to relax, de-stress and enjoy some much needed me-time. Not convinced that colouring should be your new pastime? Discover five benefits of picking up pens and pencils below.

Colouring relaxes your brain

Does your brain often feel frazzled by the end of the day? As colouring is a focused activity, it can help to relax your mind and keep worries at bay. It has also been shown to improve brain function as it activates the creative part of your mind.

Colouring improves your motor skills

Adult colouring books often feature complex designs which require you to hone your hand-eye coordination and motor skills. This can be particularly beneficial if you spend a lot of time looking at screens.

Colouring aids sleep

As many as one in three people suffer with insomnia, which is characterised as not being able to get to sleep or not staying asleep for a sufficient amount of time. Colouring before bed, rather than being exposed to blue light from your phone or tablet, can help to release melatonin and enable you to easily drift off to sleep.

Colouring reduces anxiety

Studies have shown that colouring can help to reduce anxiety in adults. Simply by colouring for 20 minutes a day, you can lower your heart rate and decrease feelings of stress or anxiety. Colouring can also help to improve your mood.

Colouring can be therapeutic

Similar to art therapy, colouring can be therapeutic as it helps to put your mind into a meditative state. This enables you to focus purely on the present and remove any negative thoughts from your mind.



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ENGLAND'S FINEST?

BEN STOKES OBE HAS TRANSFORMED HIMSELF AND THE GAME OF CRICKET

It's only five years since Ben Stokes OBE found himself facing not just exclusion from the sport he loved, but also potentially a prison sentence, having been charged with affray outside a Bristol nightclub.

The incident – in which the brilliant all-rounder was defending a homosexual couple – cost Stokes his place in the 2017/18 Ashes team, and sent the Durham cricketer on a journey of self-discovery that, ultimately, has led him to the heights he finds himself at now.

Stokes roared back from the Bristol incident, inspiring England's 2019 World Cup win, batting sensationally at Headingley in that year's Ashes to win the third Test when all seemed lost, and being named Player of the Series in South Africa that winter.

Last year, Stokes was instrumental in bringing England T20 World Cup glory, yet it is his ascent as Test captain that is truly captivating a nation at the moment.

England clinched an away Test series in Pakistan – a country in which they had only ever won two matches in their entire history – yet it is the manner of the cricket being played that truly reflects a new dawn for the sport.

'Bazball', as it is referred to, is a driven, dynamic and outlandishly positive method of playing the game, the like of which five-day Test cricket has never seen. This cricket revolution epitomises not just Stokes' captaincy, but also his approach to life itself.

As inspirational English sportspeople go, there are few who can rival Stokes' efforts.

Further proof of this was offered when Stokes was named as runner-up in the 2022 BBC Sports Personality of the Year Award. Though he didn't win, his nomination is evidence enough of his incredible success.



Photo credit: Arijun Naveed AP/Sputnikstock



The Open Bible Learning Group

Who are they?

You may want to study your Bible some more, to decide for yourself whether it really is unique, but it can be pretty daunting when you are faced with a list of local Christian churches. So many names. So many choices. It can all be rather confusing.

What, you might ask, do they all stand for and does it really matter which you pick? Is it best just to plump for the nearest church to where you live or the one where you know someone else who attends?

Well, the Billericay Open Bible Learning Group, who have a range of online materials, correspondence courses and a regular meeting in the town centre, have a very clear and distinctive viewpoint.

Their position, based on many years of study, is that the Holy Bible is the Word of God – and that this can be proved by compelling evidence! Not convinced? Then ask one of their members and they will show you how!

What's more, because this Word comes from the Creator of all things, it can be completely relied on

from start to finish... with every event it describes as much a part of history as the well-known happenings of the 20th or 21st centuries. This perspective means that every time you speak to a member of this group, they will methodically start with what the Bible says – as opposed to venturing their own opinion on the subject.

But what about the members themselves? Well, they come from all different walks of life: teachers, accountants, homemakers, council workers, health care professionals, sales people and many more besides. However, the common strand is that each one has devoted themselves to studying and applying the Word of God in their day-to-day lives. What's more, a part of their duty is to preach and teach those who have not yet heard about the Bible's wonderful promises and future hope, hence why this group exists.

Intrigued? Well, pop along and speak to someone at the Open Bible Learning Group... after all, what have you got to lose?

**OpenBibleLearningGroup.com
oblg@mail.com 0800 0197 125**



The Reading Rooms The Billericay home of the Open Bible Learning Group



Each Sunday afternoon, The Open Bible Learning Group open the doors to anyone with an enquiring mind and interest in reading their Bible and more effectively.

The group meet 2:30 each Sundays in the Reading Rooms, 73 Billericay High Street to explore the exciting and powerful message God has revealed in his word, the Bible, by means of talks, discussions and presentations.

The Open Bible Learning Group are just ordinary men and women who first met here in the Reading Rooms in 1957 as a place to study and worship.

Topics to be covered in January on Sunday afternoons include:

- Jan 8th – The kingdom of God – in the past
- Jan 15th – The kingdom of God – coming on the earth.
- Jan 22nd – Faith and belief examples in the past, what it means for us
- Jan 29th – How to build a relationship with God

Visit our website for a full list of times and titles in and around Billericay. Also, there are recorded talks on a wide range of Bible topics to stream or download and Free home self study packs to download.

OpenBibleLearningGroup.com/Events

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THE CLAIM GAME

VEHICLE INSURANCE CLAIM FORM

While no one expects to be involved in a car accident, these types of incidents can happen in the blink of an eye and, if you don't know what to do next, can cause you untold stress and expense.

Here's everything you need to know about making a claim following an accident.

WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED TO MAKE A CLAIM?

If you are involved in a motoring incident with another person, you should do your best to obtain the below information on the scene:

- > Their full name
- > Their vehicle registration
- > A contact telephone number

It can also be a good idea to find out their address and details of their insurance provider. If there are any witnesses, try to get their details as well. When you phone your insurance company, they are likely to ask you for your policy number, so make sure you have this to hand.

WHEN DO I NEED TO MAKE A CLAIM?

Although it can vary from one insurance provider to the next, typically you have 24 to 48 hours to inform them if you are involved in a motoring

accident. This is regardless of whether the incident was your fault or caused by another party. Where possible, you should call them while still at the scene.

DO I HAVE TO MAKE A CLAIM AFTER AN ACCIDENT?

There is no rule that says you have to make a claim after a road accident, but you are required by law to tell your insurer about what has happened.

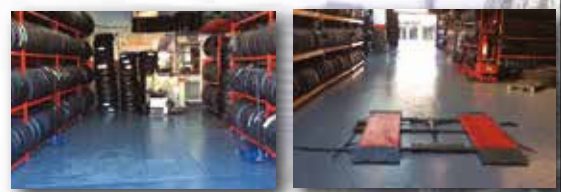
DO I NEED TO CALL THE POLICE AFTER A CAR ACCIDENT?

According to the Road Traffic Act, you must report a car accident to a local police station within 24 hours. You can do this using the non-emergency number 101. If there is an injury or the road is blocked, call 999 immediately.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T WANT TO MAKE A CLAIM?

You may choose not to make a claim. This will allow you to keep your no-claims discount intact, although you will have to pay for any necessary repairs to your vehicle yourself. It is worth knowing that, even if you do not make a claim, the other driver involved may still do so.

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