

THE
JOY OF
HOLI
FESTIVAL

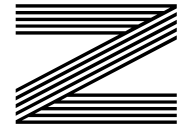
TOP 5
tech-free
holidays

Why we celebrate
ST PATRICK'S DAY

VIVA MAGENTA:
Pantone Colour of the Year

PETER
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How this dragon proved he's impossible to slay



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Editor's notes...

MARCH 2023



Nik Allen, Editor

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

I recently saw a picture of basketball player LeBron James making a shot that would break the all-time scoring record in the NBA. Although this was an iconic moment, it was the crowd that caught my eye.

Out of around 200 people in the shot behind him, in the crowd you could count on one hand how many of them did not have their smartphones out videoing this moment. In a world where you can see every sporting moment on video nowadays, it made me realise how important it is to remember to live in the moment and enjoy it with our own eyes, rather

than through a camera lens.

I have been more conscious of this now, even when I'm at home, to spend less time on my phone and more time in the moment. Having a daily cut-off point when my phone gets locked away for the evening and also on weekends has helped me spend less time staring at a screen.

So how about setting yourself the challenge of stepping away from your phone this month? You'll be amazed at how your quality time with family and friends improves when you no longer have this distraction to hand.

Nik Allen

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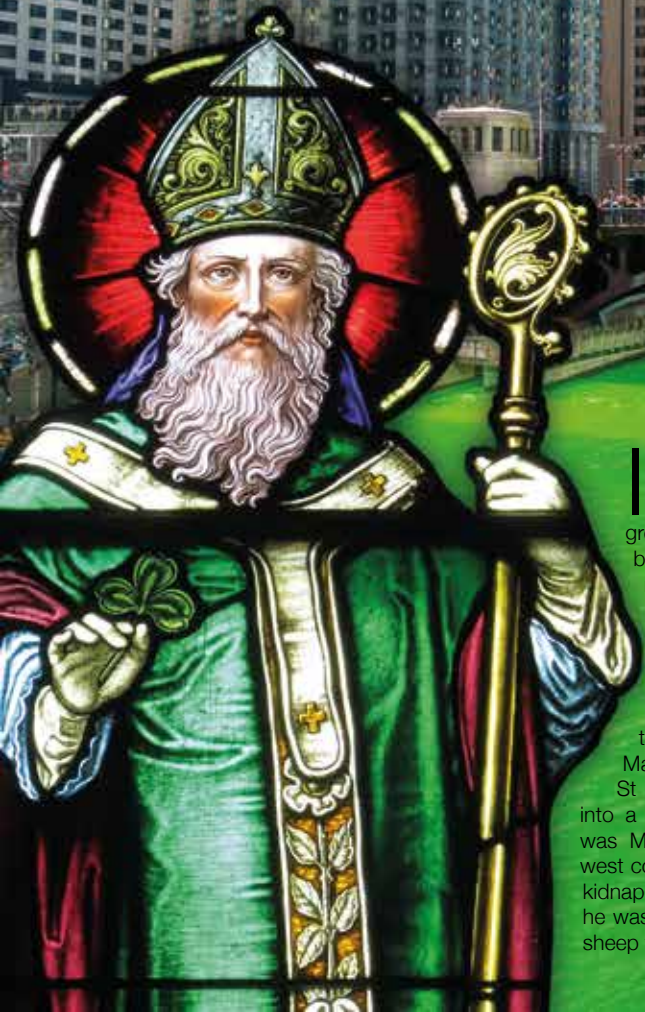
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The story of ST PATRICK



In the USA, some people celebrate St Patrick's Day not just by wearing green clothes, but also by drinking green beer or milkshakes and eating green bagels and grits. Chicago even dyes its river bright green. If you think all this sounds more American than Irish, you're spot on. People join in the parades and celebrations whatever their heritage, but about one in every 10 citizens in the USA claims to have Irish ancestors. So what's the real story behind St Patrick's Day on March 17?

St Patrick was born in Britain around 386 AD into a well-to-do Roman family. His birth name was Maewyn Succat, and he grew up on the west coast, probably in Wales. At age 16, he was kidnapped by pirates and taken to Ireland, where he was sold as a slave. His job was to look after sheep for his master, a Druid high priest.

During his time as a slave, Maewyn devoted himself to Christianity, his parents' faith, and became determined to convert pagan Ireland.

After six years in captivity, Maewyn persuaded some local sailors to let him board their ship. After landing in France, he made his way back to his family in Britain. And from there, he travelled back to France to train as a priest in Auxerre.

When he was ordained, Maewyn changed his name to Patricius – or Patrick – which comes from the Latin for 'father figure'. Then, Pope St Celestine sent him to Ireland to spread the Christian message.

At first, the Irish people weren't keen. Patrick was threatened, robbed and beaten. But his strategy of persuading the most influential people first, including his former slavemaster, eventually paid off. He also had the good sense to incorporate pagan rituals into church practices to make them more appealing. Over the years, Patrick and his fellow missionaries spread their teachings across the country and set

up churches, monasteries and schools.

It's believed that Patrick died on or around March 17, 461 AD, when he would have been in his mid-70s. He died in Saul in County Down, Northern Ireland, and he's said to be buried in Downpatrick.

The Catholic church never formally declared him a saint, because the system for creating saints didn't start until the 12th century. But the Irish people and their leaders recognised him as one because of the decades he'd spent spreading the gospel.

The Irish have celebrated St Patrick's Day for more than 1,000 years. Traditionally, it involved donning a shamrock, going to church and tucking into a traditional meal of cabbage and bacon. But over the years, some St Patrick's Day fun from the USA has caught on back home. You won't find green beer – and certainly not green rivers. But there are plenty of lively parades, particularly in Dublin, with traditional singing, dancing and colourful floats.

Photo credit: TZIDO SUN/Shutterstock.com

Holi

THE FESTIVAL OF COLOURS

If you're lucky enough to experience the Hindu festival of Holi in India, it's an experience you'll never forget. People put aside their differences and come together to celebrate the end of winter and the beginning of spring, based on the Hindu lunar calendar.

This year's festival takes place on March 7 and 8 in India and among Hindu communities across the world. But what really happens at Holi, and how did it come about?

On Holi day itself, people take to the streets, singing and dancing and throwing powdered dyes and coloured water at each other – so it's no surprise that everyone ends up drenched in a rainbow of colours.

The colours of the dyes are significant. Red is associated with purity, green with vitality, blue with calm, and yellow with piety.

In the evening, when everyone's had a chance to freshen up and put on clean clothes, people visit their friends and exchange sweets.

In some places, people start celebrating the evening before Holi by lighting a bonfire. As a token of gratitude for the harvest, people throw coconuts, wheat sheaves and green chickpeas into the flames.

The bonfire tradition is based on the tale of a witch called Holika. She was burned to death in a fire by the Hindu god Lord Vishnu for trying to kill her devout nephew. To this day, some people burn an effigy of her on their bonfire.

The origin of the coloured dyes may lie with another Hindu deity, Lord Krishna. When he was a boy, he loved practical jokes, including throwing coloured water over his playmates.

But others say the custom comes down to Holi falling at a time of year when people are most at risk of catching diseases. Before the tradition of flinging around colourful dyes started, people threw herbs to keep ailments at bay.

Whatever the reason, Holi is definitely a time to celebrate life – and long may it last.

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BACK TO THE

eighties

If you're planning to paint your walls white and buy a sleek grey sofa, it's time to rethink. After years of Scandinavian minimalism, things in the world of interior decorating are changing. So it's time to ditch those clean lines and cool colours – and plump for something warmer and more inviting instead.

Interior experts predict that brown-based colours, like caramel, coral and terracotta, are set to make a big comeback this year. Pastels are proving popular, too – especially dusky pink and soft greens.

If you're after new wallpaper or soft furnishings, there's an eighties vibe here, too. Think ditsy country florals, colourful gingham and tropical prints. Choose cushions with frilly edges. And instead of the hard lines of a minimalist sofa, opt for something chunkier, curvier and squishier instead. It's all so much cosier. While you're at it, don't forget to buy a rattan chair or two – and treat yourself to a glass-topped table.

If you want to put up some shelves, opt for brass ones, preferably with curved edges. To adorn the shelves, choose rounded vases and bowls. And if you can get hold of some eighties-style candlesticks, show them off by adding some twisted candles – they're easy to find and cost just a couple of pounds.

For those decorative touches, add a touch of macramé. This could be a wall hanging, lampshade or plant hanger. And talking of plants, check out the Maidenhair and Boston ferns in your local garden centre. You won't find many plants more reminiscent of the eighties than these.

Like any style revival, of course, there are some things you'll need to leave firmly back in the eighties. So don't revive anything that's yellow pine, think carefully before you decide to reinstate those frilly roman blinds, and whatever you do, don't lay carpet on your bathroom floor.



Photo credit: thegoodpinner.com, wrenkitchens.com, lifrad.com

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Home Office/Studies



Faux Flowers Galore



Photo credit: thehappyhomemaker

At this time of year, there aren't too many flowers in parks and gardens. Shop-bought faux versions can be just as beautiful as the real thing, but why not impress your friends and family by creating your own?

These stunning tissue-paper flowers are simple to make and an ideal family craft – though young children will need a bit of help from an adult.

You can make each flower from a single colour of paper – or choose two or more. Alternate the colours or stack batches of colours on top of each other. Making your tissue-paper florals is all about trying different things and deciding what you like best.

When you're done, display your flowers as they are or string them into a garland. If you make them with stems, simply arrange them in a vase.

YOU WILL NEED:

- > Coloured tissue paper: 8 pieces of 8 x 13cm paper for a medium flower | 10 sheets of 10 x 15cm paper for a large flower
- > Wire twist ties (if you don't need stems)
- > 50cm chenille sticks/pipe cleaners in green or brown (for the stems)
- > A pair of scissors

HOW TO MAKE:

1. Stack the pieces of tissue paper into a neat pile.
2. Pleat the stack of paper into a concertina shape, starting at one of the long sides.
3. Use the twist tie or end of the chenille stick to tightly tie the middle of the paper strip.
4. Using the scissors, cut each end of the strip into a point or curve – or gently round them.
5. Carefully separate each layer of tissue paper.

TOP TIPS:

- > It's easier to cut the tissue paper rectangles as a stack rather than individually
- > When separating the layers, do one side first then the other
- > A mix of medium and large blooms works best if you're making a bunch of flowers.

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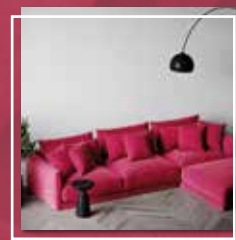
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HOME & DIY

Pantone Colour of the Year 2023:

Viva MAGENTA



A bold and brave shade, Pantone's Colour of the Year for 2023 is Viva Magenta. Perfect for anyone who wants to start the spring feeling empowered and unstoppable, there are lots of ways that you can incorporate this colour into your home.

What is Viva Magenta?

According to the colour experts at Pantone, Viva Magenta is "a pulsating colour whose exuberance promotes a joyous and optimistic celebration, writing a new narrative". A hybrid shade of red, pink and purple that provides the perfect balance between warm and cool tones, Viva Magenta is an inclusive colour that is easy to add to your home.

What does Viva Magenta represent?

The story behind Viva Magenta is all about the balance between our digital and physical lives. In recent years, people have become drawn to nature in their homes and Viva Magenta has been chosen to reflect our pull towards natural colours. Furthermore, it reflects the movement surrounding climate change, sustainability and land protection.

How can you use Viva Magenta in your home?

Incorporating Viva Magenta is an easy way to add a touch of fun to your home. Some of the best ways to incorporate this shade into your existing interior design include:

- Paint a magenta feature wall in your bedroom or living room
- Invest in an eye-catching magenta sofa
- Add pops of colour through rugs, curtains, pillows and other soft furnishings
- Paint your kitchen cabinets a rich pink or invest in a magenta splashback
- Try magenta dinnerware to create a sense of opulence in your dining room

What colours go well with Viva Magenta?

Viva Magenta pairs well with both yellow and turquoise, as well as being a good match for most dominant colour categories.

Photo credit: zen-living.ca, snugsofa.com





How to use LEFTOVER paint



Anyone who's decorated their home will know the dilemma of what to do with leftover paint. You'll often find tins left over after painting projects, which normally end up gathering dust (or rust) in your shed or garage.

So what should you do with all that leftover paint? Here are five ideas for some simple projects for your unused paint.

ADD A COLOURFUL ACCENT

While you might not have enough paint left over for a whole wall, you can use it to paint part of a wall. An accent behind some shelving, around a photo frame or simply to break up a block of colour can add a nice contrast to your walls.

UPCYCLE SOME FURNITURE

Leftover paint can be used to upcycle old furniture. From a pop of colour to a more neutral hue, your unused paint can bring a new lease of life to a piece in need of a facelift.

PAINT A PATTERN ON THE WALL

Patterned walls don't just have to come from wallpaper. From polka dots to lines and animal-style splodges, you can use your paint to create a cool contrasting pattern that will add some interest to your space.

GIVE PLANT POTS A MAKEOVER

Want to brighten up your plant pots? Use your leftover paint to give them a new look and instantly brighten up your garden and windowsill.

PAINT PHOTO FRAMES

Adding a little colour to photo frames can make them stand out and is an ideal way to upcycle them, saving you some money and helping the environment too.

Finding ways to use up your leftover paint will help you prevent waste and help you do some interesting and colourful DIY projects around the home.

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HOME & DIY

TILE- *Tastic!*



If you're looking for an affordable and highly effective way to update your kitchen, then installing new kitchen tiles is the way to go.

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TONAL SHADES: Neutrals, greys and creamy whites remain a safe but sophisticated choice for your kitchen and promise to make this pivotal space look both fresh and clean. However, rather than sticking to just one colour, why not combine several tonal shades? Choose tiles with a naturalistic finish for a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

COLOUR BLOCKING: If you're not a fan of patterned tiles but you still want to make an impact, colour blocking is a great solution. Put a spin on your standard brick tiles by arranging them in horizontal, vertical or even diagonal stripes of colour. Alternatively, play around with different widths of coloured tiles on the floor to see what looks best.

EXPOSED BRICK: Add character to your kitchen with exposed brick-style tiles that are perfect for both feature walls and splashbacks. Much more affordable than using actual bricks, brick slips, which are tiles that are made to look like bricks, allow you to achieve the same look without breaking the bank.

HEXAGON TILES: If bright colours in your kitchen aren't your thing, then why not add an extra dimension by filling the space with different shapes? For example, white hexagon tiles can be used to create a sleek and contemporary look in a modern kitchen.

3D TILES: 3D tiles have seen a surge in popularity in recent years owing to their ability to add the wow factor to any style of kitchen. Choose from sharp geometric shapes, undulating wave patterns or more subtle textured tiles.



Photo credit: fireclaytile.com, Future PLC/Mark Scott via idealhome.co.uk, tiles360.co.uk, loveproperty.com



CELEBRATE BRITISH PIE WEEK, STARTING MARCH 6, WITH SOME TASTY TREATS

INGREDIENTS: 1 onion, thickly sliced | 50g small broccoli florets | 2 red peppers, cut into chunks | 350g courgettes (2 medium), thickly sliced | 2 tsp cumin seeds | 1 tbsp avocado oil | 200g low-fat houmous | 50g coriander (chopped) | Zest of one lemon | A pinch of chilli flakes | 375g packet of ready-rolled puff pastry (dairy free) | 225g sweet potato, peeled and thinly sliced | Non-dairy milk

HOW TO MAKE:

- > Heat the oven to 220°C/fan 200°C/gas 7.
- > In a roasting tin, mix all the vegetables (except

the sweet potato) with the oil and cumin. Roast for 25 minutes then mix in the houmous, coriander, lemon zest and chilli flakes.

- > Turn the oven down to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6.
- > Cut the pastry into two rectangles and lay one on a baking tray. Layer the sweet potatoes on top, leaving a 2cm border, then top with the vegetable mixture.
- > Drape the remaining pastry over the filling and press the edges to seal.
- > Brush with milk and bake for 25-30 minutes till golden brown.

INGREDIENTS: 150g granulated sugar | 4½ tsp cornflour | 225g rhubarb, cut into 1.5cm slices | 1 orange (juice and zest) | A pinch of cinnamon | 4 sheets of filo pastry (each approx. 48cm x 25.5cm) | 2 tbsp melted butter | 2 tsp icing sugar

HOW TO MAKE:

- > In a medium saucepan, mix the sugar and cornflour together, then add the rhubarb, 4 tbsp of orange juice and a teaspoon of zest. Cook gently till it's thickened. Add the cinnamon and cook for 10 minutes, then leave to cool.
- > Heat the oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6.
- > Lay the filo sheets on top of each other, brushing with melted butter between layers.
- > Spread the filling along one of the longer sides and roll it up, folding in the ends as you go.
- > Make a few cuts in the top, then bake for 15-20 minutes till golden.
- > Cool, then sprinkle with icing sugar.



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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



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Charity announces not-for-profit café plans

A new Billericay-based charity has announced plans to open a not-for-profit café later this year.

Human Kind aims to help combat loneliness and social isolation, connecting the community by providing a safe and welcoming space for all.

Its community-run café, which will be based at 111 High Street, will serve healthy vegetarian and vegan meals, with customers asked to pay what they can afford. Where possible, they will also be asked to 'pay it forward' and contribute to a future customer's order.

The charity currently holds weekly community sessions on Wednesdays in The Reading Rooms, 73 High Street, and offers different activities each week.

There are also plans to introduce a human library, where those with specific skills can share their expertise with those who require aid in certain areas, such as in financial services, counselling or arts.

A spokesperson for Human Kind said: "We are a new charity with the aim to help combat social isolation.

"We've been running weekly sessions in The Reading Rooms on a Wednesday morning since last summer, with a different activity or speaker each week. All materials are provided along with some games, and the kettle is always on."

To find out more, search 'Human Kind Billericay' on Facebook.

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Car park could replace recycling centre

A Billericay recycling centre could be closed to make way for a car park.

Basildon Council launched a consultation on the proposals for South Green Recycling Centre on Barleylands Road last month.

The area has been a hotspot for littering, and some councillors and residents feel the space would be better utilised as a car park.

Councillor Andrew Schrader, who represents Billericay East on Basildon Council, said: "I would think this area would be far better utilised to provide additional parking for South Green shops.

"The shopkeepers and residents complain about it [the recycling centre], the noise, how people are loudly dropping stuff off day and night.

"Meanwhile, shopkeepers are keen for more parking, which would make a big difference to the shops."

Councillor Andrew Baggott, Leader of Basildon Council, said: "This was first brought to our attention four, maybe five years ago. Residents said there were antisocial behaviour issues, as well as noise at ungodly hours."

However, some residents have spoken out against the proposals.

One resident said: "This area is always full; it's used all the time. Getting rid of it would be mad.

"We're meant to be encouraging recycling and a healthy lifestyle and yet you want to get rid of the recycling zone and encourage more cars."

The consultation closed on February 28.

Area's 10km race voted best in the county

The Billericay 10km race has been voted as Essex's Best Road Race for 2022.

Despite torrential rain, hundreds of runners took part in the most recent edition of the race, which is organised by the Billericay Striders, on November 6, 2022.

In a statement, a member of the Billericay Striders said: "We are over the moon to announce that the Billericay 10km race last year was voted by all the Essex Running Clubs as the Best Road Race in Essex for 2022. This is a fantastic achievement and all down to the commitment of everyone involved in putting the race on.

"We would like to thank all the clubs that voted for our race, all the people who are involved in the organisation of the race and of course the runners who come back year after year."

The Striders are supporting a 10km run in South Woodham on Sunday, May 21. To book your place, visit www.runbritain.com/races and search 'South Woodham'.

Photo credit: Billericay Striders



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Photo credit: Remus Horse Sanctuary

Sanctuary celebrates despite recent difficulties

Remus Horse Sanctuary, near Billericay, is celebrating its 40th birthday this year, a fantastic achievement in the face of various setbacks and difficulties over the past few years.

The sanctuary provides care for horses, ponies, donkeys, goats, sheep and cats which have been victims of physical and mental abuse.

Having faced extreme weather over the past year – with the heatwave in the summer and snow this winter – the sanctuary is appealing for aid to enable it to continue helping animals in need.

The sanctuary is completely funded by public donations and fundraising events.

On its JustGiving page, it wrote: “You’ll know from your own food shopping how the costs are escalating, and we’re seeing exactly the same thing with hay, straw and feed. Please help us to help as many animals as we can.”

To find out more, please call the sanctuary on 01277 356191 or email info@remussanctuary.org

To donate to the appeal, visit www.justgiving.com/campaign/WinterHayAppeal

Free community open day to promote groups

A community-run event is being held in Billericay to promote some of the local clubs, groups and organisations that are based in the town.

The free event, sponsored by Billericay Town Council, will give residents the opportunity to meet with the local groups and find out more about them.

There will be a variety of clubs and groups offering different interests, including support groups, crafts, wellbeing, environment and much more.

The event will take place at the Chantry Centre between 10am and 3pm on Friday, March 24, and refreshments will be available.

Local resident Lyn Wilson proposed the idea for the event as she is keen to highlight community services to those who do not have access to the internet or who are unable to find the relevant information.

For more information, please contact Lyn on 07899 818115.



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Photo credit: Nicky Hayes Photography



Blues lose four games consecutively

LOCAL NEWS BILLERICAY

Billericay Town FC Women will be looking to find form in the FA Women's National League South after three straight defeats which saw the Blues score four goals and concede 12.

The run of poor form, which started after the team played their own development side as reported in February 2023 edition of **VISION** Billericay Shenfield, saw the Blues lose four games in all competitions despite scoring three in two of the games they lost.

Playing away against MK Dons, the Blues scored three times in the dying minutes of the game, despite being 6-0 down and having only 10 players after Holly Turner (pictured left) saw red five minutes into the second half.

Following the defeat, manager James Gibson said: "It was a tough day and a heavy defeat. The performance in the first half was not good enough. The good news is that it is the basic things that we were not doing well, which means we can fix them."

"In the second half, we started the better team with a response, then we had a red card which we are looking into. There may have been a misunderstanding; it could have been something was misheard."

In March, the Blues will play back-to-back games against Bridgwater United. The last match between the two teams resulted in a 1-0 loss for Billericay.

To keep up to date with the latest news from the club, visit www.billericaytownfc.co.uk/women

Police to protect threatened badger sett

Police moved to protect a 30-year-old badger sett in Billericay after damage was reported by a resident.

Posting on Twitter, Essex Police Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime said that they had received reports of damage to a sett and were working with the Essex Badger Protection Group (EBPG) to protect and maintain the site.

Darren Parker, from EBPG, explained that badgers have legal protections to prohibit action that damages or blocks a badger sett unless a specific licence is held from Natural England.

An Essex Police spokesperson said: "Our Rural Engagement Team has been working with our local partners, including EBPG, to protect a badger sett."

"This was following a report to us on January 16 with concerns that the sett was being damaged. Essex Police will continue to monitor this protection in place."



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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Photo credit: Google Maps

Bank to close as in-person usage declines

Shenfield's Barclays bank branch is to close from Wednesday, April 19.

Barclays has announced that 15 branches across the UK will be closing as more customers choose online banking.

The closure of the Hutton Road branch means that Shenfield will no longer have a high street bank, with residents needing to travel to Brentwood should they require in-person banking.

Figures provided by Barclays state that 91 per cent of customers who use the Shenfield branch had banked using the Barclays app, online or by phone in 2021.

The statistics also revealed that only 12 customers use the Shenfield branch regularly as their only way to do banking, while 47 per cent of the branch's customers had used nearby branches in the last 12 months.

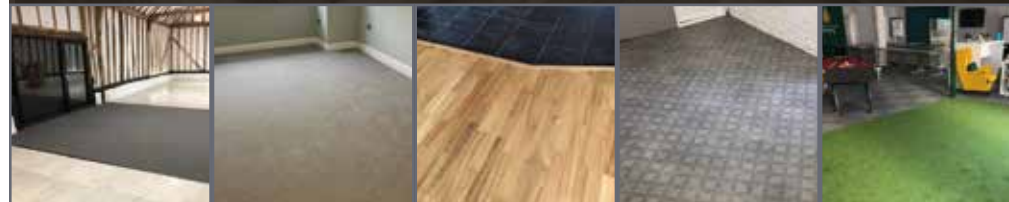
In a statement, Barclays said: "Back when we opened this branch, visiting us in person was one of the only ways to do your banking.

"Now, as there are lots of ways to manage your money without even leaving your home, we're seeing many customers choosing to bank using our app, and online or telephone banking. This has had a big impact on the number of customers coming in to see us."



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Alex Burghart MP for Brentwood and Ongar

LOCAL NEWS SHENFIELD



The threat of global warming has never been more apparent, with the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report making for very sobering reading. It lays out the stark consequences climate change is having on our planet and what will happen if decisive action is not taken now.

The report highlights that immediate action is required to reduce emissions to net zero by 2050 to give a good chance of limiting global warming to 1.5°C in the long term and help to avoid the worst effects of climate change. I was encouraged that the progress achieved at COP26 and in the Glasgow Climate Pact will hopefully be looked back on as the beginning of the end of climate change.

No action to tackle climate change is too small, and I am heartened at the determination of so many young people in the constituency to make a difference.

Woodlands School in Hutton has its own Climate Club, which has recently had a great boost after one of its members, Alice Witham, won a £3,000 sustainability grant in BRITA's Whale Watchers competition.

Alice created a new design for BRITA's recycling bins to inspire others to reduce, reuse and recycle. I was very pleased to be invited to the school to hear about what pupils are doing to protect the environment. Their vegetable garden and plans for litter picking are admirable and I have no doubt these small steps will make a big difference in years to come.

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Passenger has cardiac arrest

A stranger leapt into action after a fellow train passenger suffered a cardiac arrest in Shenfield.

The East of England Ambulance Service (EEAS) rushed to Shenfield railway station just before 9am on Friday, February 3. The CPR and defibrillation provided by the stranger significantly increased the passenger's chances of survival.

Ambulance.

A spokesperson for EEAS said: "Before the teams arrived on scene, a member of the public had performed high-quality CPR and early defibrillation on the patient, which greatly aided the man's chances of survival."

"The team worked on the patient for just over half an hour until he was stabilised, and he was then transferred to Basildon and Thurrock University Hospital for further treatment."

Officers from British Transport Police also attended the scene, alongside two vehicles from the Hazardous Area Response Team and the Essex & Herts Air



CAMERA JARGON

Explained!

Want to improve your photography skills? Then spending time with a camera is a good place to start. While mobile phones are great for point-and-shoot, for the best photos a camera is required. At first glance, a camera can seem confusing with all its buttons and settings. Fortunately, we've got you covered with our simple guide to some basic camera terms.

Exposure: One of the most important terms to learn in photography. Getting the exposure right will help you take great photos with all of the elements in balance. Put simply, exposure is the amount of light that reaches your camera. Too much or too little exposure can affect the quality of your photo. The 'exposure triangle' is the combination of aperture, shutter speed and ISO that will help you capture the perfect photo.

Aperture: The hole that allows light into the lens, represented by the f-number. The lower the f-number, the more light is allowed into the lens. It's the aperture that helps you determine which elements of the shot are in focus, allowing you to play with your depth of field.

Depth of field: The distance between the closest and furthest subjects in a photo. A shallow depth of field will put your main subject in focus, creating a blurred backdrop for your subject to sit against. A deep depth of field helps to put the backdrop or landscape in focus, blurring the nearest object.

Shutter speed: Controls how much light is allowed into the camera from the lens. It signals how long the lens is open to capture the light. A low shutter speed is ideal for most situations, but when you are faced with fast-moving subjects (such as animals or sports) you'll want to use a high shutter speed to prevent blurring.

ISO: The ISO settings determine the light sensitivity. The higher the ISO, the brighter your images. A higher ISO may cause images to feature noise or grain, which can be more difficult to fix during the editing process than an underexposed shot.

Points to consider when purchasing a camera:

- > Rent or borrow a camera first to trial the settings.
- > Consider the size and weight to discover what's right for you. Mirrorless cameras are more portable with auto-focus features, while a DSLR has more changeable features.
- > For high-quality photos, look for cameras with the largest sensor size. Generally, the larger the sensor, the higher quality your photos will be.
- > A high number of megapixels (MP) will help to produce images that are highly detailed, but the downside to this is that they don't perform as well in low light. Something around the 20MP mark performs well for most situations.
- > Invest in a range of lenses to get the most out of your camera. A macro lens is ideal for detailed close-up shots, while a long lens will help you capture high-quality shots from further afield, such as landscapes or wildlife.

Capturing the perfect shot means finding the balance between the three key settings (aperture, shutter speed and ISO). Don't be afraid to experiment and get creative.



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PETER JONES

AND A HOST OF TALL TALES

At 6ft 6", formidable *Dragons' Den* mainstay Peter Jones CBE has a lofty view over more than just his business landscape.

His is a stature that has evolved over four decades of being at the cut and thrust of business, on the way amassing a personal fortune of more than £1.2billion.

The idea of standing up to one of the formidable commercial minds in *Dragons' Den* is, ultimately, a thing few entrepreneurs relish. The hit BBC reality business show puts pitchers through their paces en route to a prospective investment offer, yet few who duel with telecoms wizard Peter Jones ever emerge victorious.

The 56 year old has been the only Dragon to appear in every season of the hit show, the 20th series of which is currently airing on BBC One.

He has mastered the art of pulling off a devastating look of utter incredulity, although the element of surprise is part of what makes the show so entertaining.

"Over so many years in business, there should

be few things that surprise me," he begins, "and by now I thought I might have exhausted the ability to be surprised or shocked by some of the ideas or investment valuations that come my way.

"In truth, though, people will always surprise you, and that's what makes the show so entertaining. You can expect the unexpected, because it will always arrive."

That line perfectly encapsulates Jones's climb to becoming one of the country's most successful and best recognised entrepreneurs. Growing up in Langley, Berkshire, before moving to Maidenhead at the age of seven, his first business was in the production of personal computers, a venture he began at the age of just 16.

While the business excelled at first, the evolution of home computing in the 90s saw Jones lose ground. A series of bad decisions led to the collapse of his enterprise, and with it went his millionaire status. At 28, he was forced to sell the remnants of the company to IBM and start again.

Subsequently joining Siemens, he was soon branching out again by himself, launching Phones International Group in 1998, a business that garnered more than £14million in sales in its first year alone.

Further personal ventures in TV, retail and lifestyle projects have been supplemented with more than 60 investments via *Dragons' Den* – where Jones is regarded as the most plain-speaking and shrewdest on the panel.

"I think when it comes to business, it's important to be polite and engaging, but ultimately you can't hang about," he says. "If something needs to be said, it needs to be said, and tiptoeing around the issue has been the death of many a good idea."

As well as gaining a CBE in 2009, he runs The Peter Jones Enterprise Academy and The Peter Jones Foundation – both committed to driving and promoting the next generation of business minds, no matter what barriers exist in someone's life.

As for the most salient business lesson of them all – Jones insists there is nothing more defining than starting again from scratch. "Failure is arguably the best route to success," he says. "Most entrepreneurs have been at the point where the hopelessness seems profound. I've been there myself, and to be that low, only to rise back up, is one of the most fulfilling things you can do. Ultimately, never give up."

Photo credit: BBC Studios

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The new Garden Lounge lends itself to private events too, including birthday celebrations, anniversaries and baby showers and your afternoon tea or buffet experience can be bespoke with the option to include prosecco and cocktails.

Wedding, Events and Marketing Manager Christie Steel says: 'We are very excited about the new space. Afternoon Tea is one of our most popular offerings and it's great to have more room to accommodate guests in real style. We are also looking at including live music events in the Garden Lounge and Terrace throughout the spring and summer months'.

As well as the Garden Lounge, the Spa now offers the award-winning Medik8 professional skin care and will soon be opening a new Aesthetics Clinic as part of the main spa offering a selection of cosmetic surgery treatments including dermal fillers with a team of qualified staff.

Launch date and opening offers coming soon, for details and to book visit greenwoodshotel.com or call the friendly reservations team on 01277 829990 for further information.



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cakes and pastries as well as fresh baked scones with clotted cream and Tiptree preserves. All served with your choice of quality teas and coffee, price from £29.50.



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In an era where there's so much that's nonsensical about fashion, Hilary Alexander OBE brought ingenuity and intelligence to the runway.

The former *The Daily Telegraph* fashion director passed away on her birthday - February 5 - aged 77, leaving behind a legacy of fashion that saw her decorate the industry with colour, charisma and humility.

Perhaps now more than ever before, we rely on commentators, journalists and designers who can knit the whole crazy operation together, and Hilary was undoubtedly one such person.

From working with the British Fashion Council, to the Council of Fashion Designers of America; from being heaped with praise by the likes of Michael Kors, Claudia Schiffer and Sir Philip Green; right through to appearances on TV, across *Style Challenge*, *The Weakest Link* and *Britain's Next Top Model*,

there was nothing either beneath or above Hilary Alexander. Born in New Zealand, Hilary moved to the UK as an adult and soon ascended to the role of fashion editor with *The Daily Telegraph* in 1985. As visiting professor at the University of the Arts London, she offered great influence over Central Saint Martins and the London College of Fashion at the turn of the millennium.

While malleable and respectful, Hilary was also someone willing to speak out. Her praising of Margaret Thatcher in 2013 as a "global style icon" was an expression of her desire to be honest and topical, more than it was a salutary piece of prose designed to create conjecture in the wake of the former Prime Minister's death.

Hilary's infectious influence reached every style, design and demographic - someone the industry truly celebrated and admired. And she will continue to do so, even after her passing.





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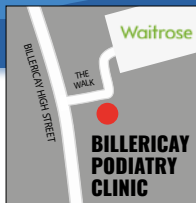
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IN HONOUR OF NATIONAL NO SMOKING DAY ON MARCH 8, HERE ARE SEVEN TIPS ON HOW TO QUIT SMOKING FOR GOOD

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SEEK ALTERNATIVES

Though they may be tempting, e-cigarettes are not the ideal way to quit, as they still contain nicotine. However, they are less harmful than tobacco cigarettes.

Nicotine replacement therapy, on the other hand – in the form of gum, lozenges and patches – can help with withdrawal side effects.

BE TRIGGER AWARE

If you crave a cigarette every time you have a few drinks at the pub, it may be best to stay home or, even better, hit the gym. Knowing what makes you want to smoke and then doing the opposite is a useful technique to help you avoid temptation.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS

Not only is it reassuring to have some enthusiastic cheerleaders on your side, but your buddies can also help you on your way.

KNOW YOUR REASONS

Whether you want to run a marathon or are motivated to quit for the sake of your young children, having a clear purpose – from health to finance to

the feeling of having achieved something important – will help you stop smoking.

DON'T GIVE UP

Quitting is hard. Know that and give yourself a break should you fail. Each day is a new day, and it is never too late to stop.

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with Mr J Edwin, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

Cosmetic surgery
Thursday 9 March 2023 from 18:30pm
with Mr V Ramakrishnan and Miss M Morgan, Consultant Plastic Surgeons

Hip pain, surgery
Tuesday 14 March 2023 at 18:30pm
with Mr A Waheed, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

Varicose veins
Thursday 16 March 2023 from 18:30pm
with Mr S Jacob, Consultant General Surgeon

Back pain, injury or surgery
Wednesday 19 April 2023 at 18:30pm
with Mr A Qureshi, Consultant Neurological Surgeon

Knee pain, injury or surgery
Friday 21 April 2023 at 18:30pm
with Mr A Ali, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

Haemorrhoids
Wednesday 26 April 2023 from 18:30pm
with Mr V Shatkar, Consultant General Surgeon



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DIY Mother's Day BEAUTY GIFTS

Do you want to help your child make a handmade gift for their mum, grandmother or mother figure this Mother's Day? Beauty gifts are always welcomed and provide the perfect opportunity for mums to enjoy a little me-time.

Microdermabrasion scrub
Combat the signs of ageing with this super simple microdermabrasion scrub.

How to make:
Mix 6 tbsp of sugar with 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil | Add 3-5 drops of lemon juice | Add ½ tbsp baking soda and 3 drops of lavender oil | Mix thoroughly | Spoon into a small pot and add a handwritten label

Rose whipped body butter
Give the gift of super-soft skin with this luxurious body butter.

How to make:
Melt 1 cup of coconut oil and 1 cup of shea butter in a small bowl | Leave the oils to cool slightly | Mix the oils using a whisk or standing mixer until you have

a whipped cream-like consistency | Add 8 drops of rose absolute and whip for a further 1-2 minutes | Spoon into a mason jar and add a pretty bow

Lemon peppermint bath salts
Add an element of fizz to bath time with this aromatic bath salt.

How to make:
Mix ½ cup of fine sea salt and 1 cup of Epsom salt in a medium-sized bowl | Stir in 15 drops of lemon essential oil and 5 drops of peppermint oil | Scoop the bath salts into a mason jar and tie on a small measuring spoon with some ribbon

Honey facial mask
Soothe sensitive skin with this natural facial mask.

How to make:
Mix together 1 cup of honey, 1 tbsp of cinnamon and ½ tbsp nutmeg | Stir until the spices are fully incorporated with the honey | Pour into a bottle that has been sterilised with boiling water | Cover the bottle with some pretty parchment paper or fabric.

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LET THERE BE LIGHT!



BEAUTY

Do you want younger-looking skin? Then you need to know about LED light therapy. Originally used to treat wounds, LED – which stands for light-emitting diode – is now used by aestheticians to help regenerate ageing skin and treat other skin problems.

WHAT IS LED LIGHT THERAPY?

LED light therapy is a skincare technique that uses varying LED wavelengths to help treat a whole host of different skin complaints, including acne, inflammation and ageing skin. Unlike other types of light therapy, LEDs do not contain ultraviolet rays, which means they are safe for regular use.

HOW DOES LED LIGHT THERAPY WORK?

You can choose to have LED light therapy carried out by a trained professional or you can buy LED devices that you can use at home. There are two main types of light frequencies: red and blue. The former is used primarily for ageing and the latter to treat acne. Typically, each LED light therapy session lasts around 20 minutes, and, for best results, you need up to 10 treatments.

ARE THERE ANY DRAWBACKS TO LED LIGHT THERAPY?

Some of the potential downsides to LED light therapy include:

- > It can be expensive
- > The results are not guaranteed
- > It is not safe if you have an active skin disorder or take certain medications
- > Side effects are rare but may include redness, rashes and inflammation of the skin

BEST LED FACE MASKS

If you want to try LED light therapy at home, check out the below top-rated LED face masks:

- > CurrentBody Skin LED Light Therapy Mask – Best for all skin types
- > No7 Laboratories Age-Defying LED Mask – Best for budget buy
- > Project E Beauty Skin Rejuvenation Photon Mask – Best for acne-prone skin
- > Dr Dennis Gross Skincare DRX Spectralite Faceware Pro – Best for ageing skin.





GARDENING

GET **wildlife** READY



Our gardens start to bloom in earnest this month – but March can be a surprisingly tricky time for wildlife. That includes humble but helpful insects and worms, as well as bees, birds, amphibians and hedgehogs. So what can you do to help?

LEAVE FOOD FOR HEDGEHOGS

Leave out water and meat-based cat or dog food – ideally chicken in jelly. Do this when it's getting dark, and remember to throw away any uneaten food the next morning. If you have hedgehogs in your garden, you could also buy a hedgehog house or even build one.

FEED THE BIRDS

Birds need calorie-rich food at this time of year to get ready for breeding. Choose sunflower hearts (seeds without the husk), fat balls or suet pellets. Steer clear of peanuts just in case adult birds feed them to their young and cause them to choke.

BEE KIND

If you're adding new garden plants, choose ones with open flowers that are rich in pollen and nectar. Good choices include aconites, evergreen clematis, primroses, and winter-flowering heather and honeysuckle.

BUG LOVE

Helpful insects and even earthworms find it hard to flourish in March as food sources can be scarce. To help them, create a log pile in a shady spot. You might also want to start a compost heap. And, while you don't have to turn your garden into a jungle, insects will love it if you let a corner of your garden grow wild.

POND LIFE

March is the main breeding month for frogs, toads and newts. To make your pond amphibian-friendly, select the plants they like to breed around, such as marsh marigold, water forget-me-knot and brooklime. You could add plants such as hornwort and curled pondweed to keep the water oxygenated and help shelter tadpoles from predators.



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A GARDEN IN WINTER

If you're visiting Sheffield this year, the multi-award-winning Winter Garden offers the chance to take a step away from the bustle of Britain's fourth-biggest city. It's wheelchair and buggy friendly, open every day except Christmas Day, and entry is free.

WHAT EXACTLY IS IT?
 It's an exotic landscaped garden housed in a vast greenhouse with soaring arches and a glass roof. It houses around 2,500 plants, all originating from temperate climates in the Southern Hemisphere. There are also bedding plants, which are changed five times a year – so there's always something new to admire.
 The Winter Garden is 75m long, 23m wide and 21m high – that's big enough to house 5,000 average domestic greenhouses.
 And it's not just about plants – there's also an art gallery, a café and shops at the garden. So allow plenty of time for your visit.
 The greenhouse was opened in May 2003 by the late Queen Elizabeth II, and was designed by London

architects Pringle Richards Sharratt and Bath-based construction consultants Buro Happold.

WHAT TYPES OF EXOTIC PLANTS ARE THERE?
 As well as a stunning bamboo curtain, lush tree ferns and elegant grasses, you can also feast your eyes on some of these:

- > Thorny acacia trees, which in their native habitat are an important food source for animals, including giraffes and elephants
- > Pines from the araucaria family, including monkey puzzle trees
- > Palm-like cordylines, often grown as houseplants in the UK
- > Desert plants like cacti, agave and aloe vera
- > Eucalyptus trees, mostly found in Australia and prized for their timber, the oil in their leaves and providing food for koalas
- > Low-growing phormiums, which are native to New Zealand and have elegant, sword-like leaves
- > Trachycarpus palm trees, known for their chunky trunks.

Photo credit: travellight/Shutterstock.com

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TECH-free TRIPS



Do you and your family need a break from technology? Are screens taking over your lives? Then these phone-free holiday destinations are just the antidote you need.

QUIRPON ISLAND, NEWFOUNDLAND, CANADA

If you can think of nothing better than spending your next getaway marvelling at the wonders of Arctic life such as polar bears, puffins and icebergs, then this is the holiday destination for you. Located in the far reaches of the North Atlantic, there is virtually no phone service and definitely no wi-fi.

PARRANO, ITALY

If you're looking for a remote destination in Europe, then the Eremito retreat in Parrano, Italy, is just what the doctor ordered. Boasting 21 rooms and only a 90-minute drive from Rome, there is no internet, wi-fi or television, so you're guaranteed a tranquil and restorative stay.

DENALI NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE, ALASKA

Denali National Park is home to the Sheldon Chalet, a luxury five-bedroom lodge that is only accessible by plane or helicopter. Perfect for those who want to experience nature in the extreme, the panoramic views of snow stretch for miles. Plus, with no mobile phone coverage or internet, you can enjoy the peaceful silence with zero distractions.

BADEN-BADEN, GERMANY

If you love a spa break, the Villa Stéphanie mansion and spa is just the digital detox destination for you. Located in the famous spa town of Baden-Baden, this decadent five-star hotel boasts a sauna, plunge pool, thermal suite and private gym. And, of course, no technology in sight.

TOP END, NORTHERN TERRITORY, AUSTRALIA

As you would expect, there is no wi-fi deep in bush country, so you can kick back and relax or enjoy the local wildlife, including blue-winged kookaburras, magpie geese, wallabies and crocodiles. Book into the Bamurru Plains safari lodge for a restful night's sleep and five-star dining.



TRAVEL



Photo credit: wehretalians.com, theluxuryarctictravel.com, panay.com, theluxuryspedi.com, kuon.com



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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.

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How to get A PATENT

Thinking about applying for a patent to stop others from copying or selling your invention without your permission? Find out everything you need to know about how to get a patent in the UK below.

WHAT CAN YOU PATENT IN THE UK?

To patent an invention in the UK, it must be:

- ✓ New – it must not have been made publicly available anywhere in the world
- ✓ Inventive – it cannot be an obvious change to something that already exists
- ✓ Something that can be made and used, a technical process or a method of doing something

WHAT CAN YOU NOT PATENT?

There are some things that you are not allowed to patent, including:

- ✗ Literary, dramatic, musical or artistic works
- ✗ A way of doing business, playing a game or thinking
- ✗ A method of medical treatment or diagnosis
- ✗ A discovery, scientific theory or mathematical method
- ✗ The way information is presented

- ✗ Essentially biological processes such as crossbreeding animals or plants
- ✗ Software that has a non-technical purpose

HOW MUCH DOES A PATENT COST?

When you apply for a patent, you must pay fees to the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) when you file your application and also for processing your application after you file. This costs at least £310 if you complete the process. You may also want to hire a patent attorney for help and advice.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A PATENT IN THE UK

Getting a patent in the UK is a fairly complicated process and it can take several years, even with professional help. Therefore, you should only start the application process if you are confident that your invention is new and that a patent meets your needs. If you decide to go ahead, then you need to:

- Prepare detailed documents that describe your invention
- File these documents with the IPO

Typically, around 18 months after you apply, the IPO will publish your application in full. You may then have to amend your application based on its recommendations.



It's time to make an LPA. There is a common misconception that Lasting Powers of Attorney only need to be put in place when an individual gets older. In fact, it is always wise to put LPAs in place earlier in life. By doing so, you will gain peace of mind that your affairs – both financial and health – can be looked after if you are ever unable to do so. You will also be ensuring that your loved ones are not left in an impossible position, unable to deal with your affairs, if the worst should happen.

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GIVING YOUR CHILDREN A HELPING HAND

With the current generation of graduates typically leaving university with a mountain of debt, it is perhaps unsurprising that so many parents are now looking to ease the burden by investing on their children's behalf.

UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE

Government statistics show the average debt accumulated by a university student is currently around £45,000. Thankfully, graduates only start repayments when their earnings hit a certain threshold and, at the moment, loans are written off after 30 years however much debt remains. As a result, some students will never pay back their loans in full.

INCREASING DEBT BURDEN

Many students, though, do repay a significant amount of their debt, and recent reforms to the loans system means many more will do so in the future – government forecasts suggest that, from next year, over half of students will repay their loans in full. This inevitably places an even greater burden on future graduates' shoulders, both as they enter the world of work and, potentially, throughout their entire careers.

SAVING FOR THEIR FUTURE

Most parents are keen to help their children fund

university, and many do so by investing on their behalf through a stocks and shares Junior ISA (JISA). While there are risks with stock market investments, historically they have performed better than cash-based savings and consistently delivered above-inflation returns. The annual JISA allowance is currently £9,000 per child which, for anyone who starts saving early, can grow to a sizeable tax-free lump sum. Smaller amounts can mount up too, particularly when combined with contributions from other family members.

PEACE OF MIND

Investing on a child's behalf can make a huge difference to their future, whether they decide to go to university or put the money towards something else. It also provides parents with the comfort of knowing that they are giving their children the best possible start to adult life.

At HCR, we take the time to understand our clients' unique planning needs and circumstances, so that we can provide you with the most suitable solutions in the most cost-effective way. For a free review of your current financial situation, please contact Karyn Vogel on 01277 654153.



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THE HOT DRINKS *hero*

MEET THE MAN BEHIND THE INVENTION FOR HOT (AND COLD) DRINK LOVERS EVERYWHERE

The next time you unscrew your flask to pour a coffee, spare a thought for Scottish scientist Sir James Dewar. He was the man who made it happen – even though keeping your drinks hot wasn't what he had in mind.

Dewar, who died 100 years ago this month, was best known for his work on the liquefaction of gases. It's not the right place for a chemistry lesson, but when gases are in liquid form, they're much easier to store, so it was important work.

The problem was that Dewar couldn't keep the liquid gases cold enough for long enough to study them. And when they got too hot, they turned into gas again.

To solve the problem, he put his glass flask of liquid gas into a bigger flask. Then he created a vacuum between them and mirrored their outside walls. So the inside flask was almost perfectly insulated, and heat couldn't reach the liquid inside.

Dewar exhibited his creation at London's Royal Institution on Christmas Day 1892. The principle behind his flask is the same one behind the vacuum flasks manufactured today.

Dewar's invention could have made him a wealthy man. The problem was he didn't take out a patent. But the German glassblower who made Dewar's flask had an idea: he realised that the flask could keep liquids warm as well as cold and spotted a gap in the market. He created a flask in a protective metal casing and set up a company called Thermos – Greek for 'hot'. He successfully applied for a patent in 1904 – and the Thermos flask was born.

Dewar sued Thermos for using his invention. Sadly for Dewar, he lost the case. But, refusing to retire, he carried on working as a professor at the Royal Institution until his death at the age of 80 in 1923.





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?

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MOTORING

ROAD MARKINGS

DOUBLES, SINGLES AND MORE... ROAD MARKINGS AND HOW TO WORK THEM IN YOUR FAVOUR

We're all familiar with the sight of single and double yellow lines – yet where many of us have fallen foul of road markings, it's because we may not understand what they mean.

This guide to road markings may not make it any easier to find a parking space in your local area, but at least you'll know the risk you're taking when you apply the handbrake.

SINGLE LINES

Single yellow lines are an indication that waiting restrictions are in place, albeit only at certain times of the day. The intention is to eliminate congestion at busy times.

Always look for the accompanying signs, which will state the times when parking is prohibited. However, you may stop there.

If you see a single red line, stopping is also prohibited at certain times.

DOUBLE LINES

Parking on double yellow lines is prohibited at all times, unless there is accompanying signage which may indicate an ability to park there on rare or seasonal occasions.

With both single and double yellows, the good news is you get five minutes' grace, and a traffic warden must observe your car for the full duration of those five minutes before writing out a ticket.

If you see a double red line, the message is simple – no stopping (or parking) at any time.

ZIGZAG LINES

White or yellow zigzag lines offer the same instruction as double red lines, except they are placed near places of high public footfall, such as on level crossings or outside schools and places where emergency services may operate, such as hospitals.

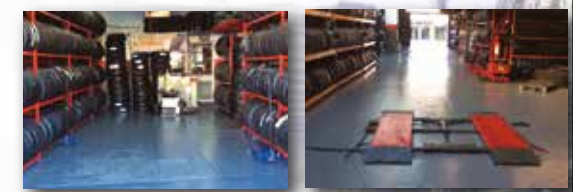
LOADING OR UNLOADING

To confuse matters, loading and unloading is permitted on double and single yellow lines, but only if it's continuous. You'll get between 20 and 40 minutes, depending on your vehicle.

However, if two yellow stripes are seen emerging from the road and up the curb, even loading and unloading is prohibited. For one yellow stripe, stopping is permitted based on the times shown.



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UNUSUAL SPORT...

CHEESE ROLLING

A lump of dairy, a hill, an ambulance on standby - it's the Cooper's Hill Cheese Rolling Championship

We've all heard of cheese rolling. Indeed, many of us have seen the frankly terrifying sight of grown men and women hurtling down Cooper's Hill in Gloucestershire on a balmy spring bank holiday in pursuit not just of a 9lb lump of Double Gloucester cheese, but also of the respect of the local community.

The annual event, which takes place on a slightly terrifying 200-yard slope in the town of Brockworth, has become iconic as the go-to cheese rolling event in the UK, yet it attracts competitors from all corners of the world.

While the perception is that anyone who catches the cheese takes the title, in truth this is a 'race to the bottom', with the first person across the finish line claiming the delightful dairy.

Now classed as an extreme sport, there is a series of individual races for have-a-go heroes to compete and contort in, with local legend Chris Anderson the most successful participant in the event's near 200-year history, having won a record 23 races. Ironically, the ex-1st Battalion light infantryman doesn't even like the cheese on offer, insisting on a passion for cheddar instead.

Injuries are commonplace - not just to participants, either. On many occasions, spectators have been struck by the tumbling cheese, which can reach speeds of up to 70mph as it tumbles downhill.

While COVID-19 halted the 2020 and 2021 events, the festival returned in 2022, complete with all manner of sprains, bashes, aches and breaks. Perennial champ Anderson has since announced his retirement, clearing the decks for a new era of southwestern sadist when the event returns this year on Monday, May 29.

While Brockworth hosts the country's most famous competition, there are other cheese rolling events across the UK with their own take on the concept, albeit none quite as flavoursome.

Photo credit: Simon Chapman/Limp/Shutterstock, visiglooucester.co.uk

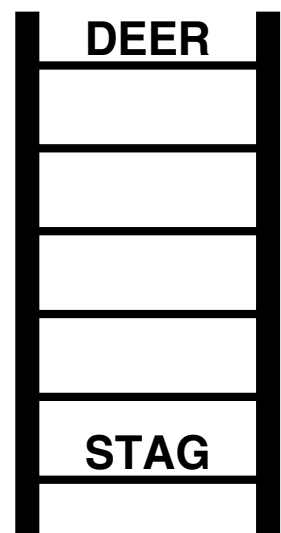
- ▶ BUFFALO
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DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ There are 63 million pairs of chopsticks manufactured in China every year - that's 126 million single sticks.
- ▶ In Pakistan, a small city called Sialkot is where 40 per cent of the world's footballs are produced.
- ▶ Covering 2,653 miles, Chile is the world's longest country from north to south.
- ▶ According to some estimates, there are more than 20,000 castles in Germany.
- ▶ Canada has more lakes than every other country in the world put together.
- ▶ Iceland has no army and is recognised as the world's most peaceful country.
- ▶ Disneyland Paris is the most visited place in Europe.

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.

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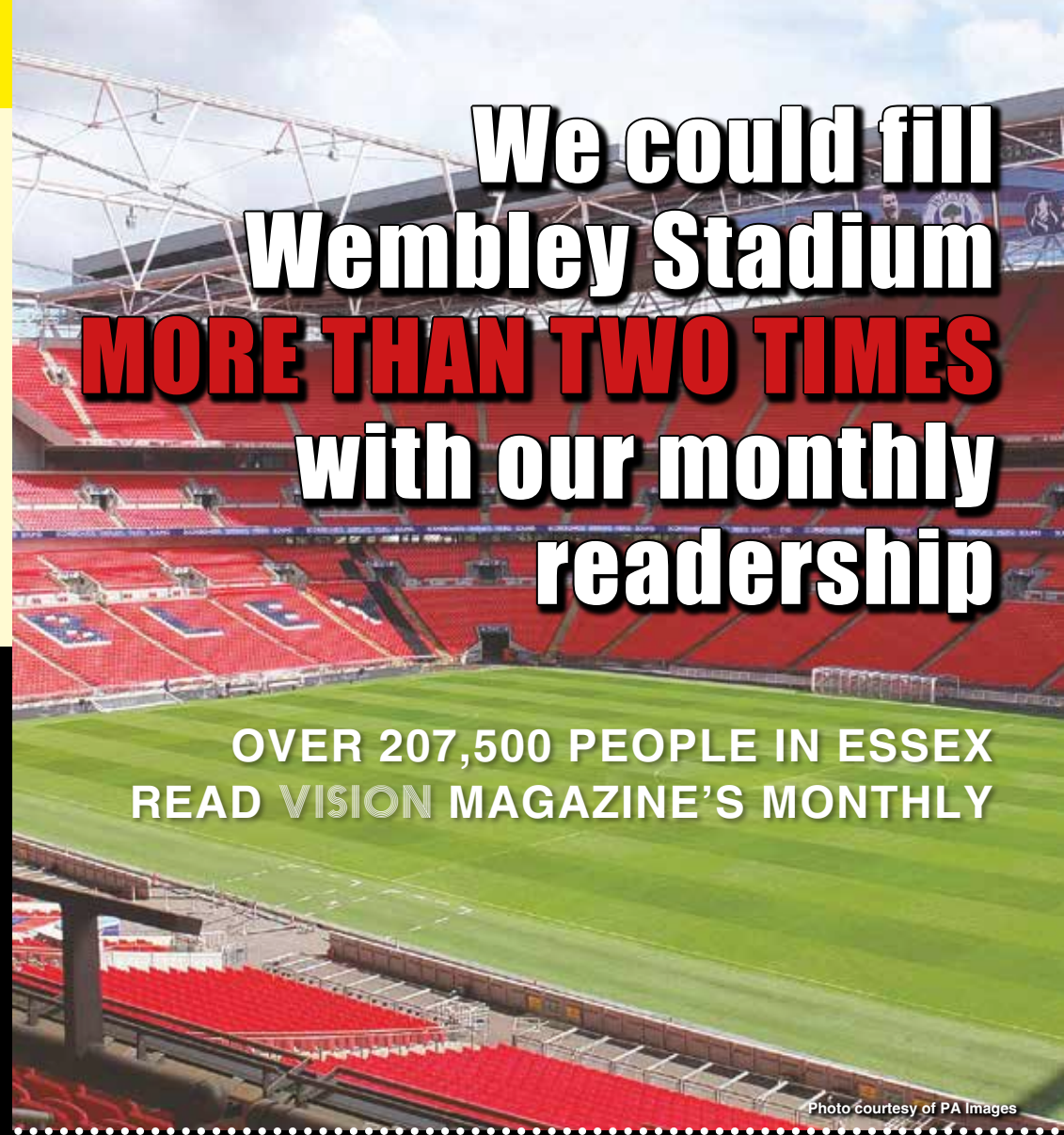
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