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LARGEST
DINOSAUR**

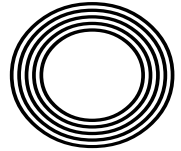
SPRING REFRESH
Tips for the season

Celebrating the life of
JOHN MOTSON OBE

COBALT BLUE
How to wear the on-trend colour

SUSANNA REID

Breakfast TV presenter celebrates 20 years on screen



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Editor's notes...

APRIL 2023



Nik Allen, Editor

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

As our communities continue to face the challenges imposed by the pandemic, it's more important than ever to support our local businesses.

On our local high streets, we are fortunate to have a wealth of independent shops and small businesses that offer a personal touch, excellent customer service and a range of unique products that you won't find in big chain stores. By choosing to shop with these businesses, you are investing in the community and supporting the growth of our local economy.

So, whether you're in need of groceries, gifts or home essentials, be sure to check out your nearest independent shop or local high street store. Not only will you be supporting the community, but you'll also benefit from the personalised service of small business owners.

It's also worth noting that many of the businesses featured in this magazine are independently owned and operated. When you call to make a purchase or enquiry, be sure to mention that you saw their advert in our publication. It's this kind of support and feedback that allows us to keep producing high-quality magazines that celebrate and promote our local businesses and communities.

In short, shopping local is crucial to ensuring the prosperity of our businesses and communities.

Nik Allen

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

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THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL

JOHN MOTSON OBE

On occasion, sports commentators can be more famous than the very stars they report on. John Motson OBE ascended to such a level – larger than life in the best sense, instantly recognisable by sight or voice, and arguably the most iconic football reporter the country has ever produced. His death in February may have saddened the nation, but his legacy lives on.

“Oh, what a goal! What a goal! Radford the scorer. Ronnie Radford! And the crowd... the crowd are invading the pitch...”

These are the magical words that John Motson uttered as Hereford United legend Ronnie Radford – who himself passed away just three months before Motty – thundered an equaliser into the top corner, on a quagmire of a pitch, in an FA Cup third round reply against Newcastle United in February 1972.

The Salford-born Motson has since described this as the moment he put himself on the map at the BBC, as those in power quickly pushed a three-year contract his way and promoted him to their commentary team for high-profile matches.

Motty’s contribution to English and international football folklore past that point is mesmerising. He covered 29 FA Cup finals, 10 FIFA World Cups, 10 UEFA European Championships, and more than 200 England national team matches.

Motson’s first work with the BBC was as a sports presenter on Radio 2, in 1968. He stepped up for his first radio commentary game a year later, in December 1969, as World Cup winner Alan Ball scored the only goal in Everton’s victory over Derby County at Goodison Park.

“It felt like the start of something big for me,” Motty said in a recent interview, “and really it was my absolute dream to be commentating on football.”

‘He covered 29 FA Cup finals, 10 FIFA World Cups, 10 UEFA European Championships, and over 200 England national team matches’

“Whether it was Wembley in front of 90,000 or a non-league game in front of a few hundred, the pleasure was in covering every shot, every run, every pass. I do believe I have been so, so lucky.”

While fans can reel off Motty’s commentary to accompany special moments for their respective sides, there were darker moments in the broadcaster’s career too. Indeed, on April 15, 1989, during an FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest, Motson had to draw upon professionalism and humanitarianism, while keeping his emotions intact, as the horrific events of Hillsborough unfolded in front of him. He later appeared as a witness at the Hillsborough inquiry.

While his own club allegiances were kept secret for much of his professional career – which also branched out into radio commentary for BBC 5 Live and talkSPORT – Motty actually revealed in his book that he was a Chelsea fan.

“When I got to *Match of the Day* in 1971, Chelsea was my first commentary. Somehow, my Chelsea loyalties were pushed into the background, as I always wanted to be unbiased and neutral.

“I deliberately avoided answering honestly when someone enquired who I supported. ‘Barnet’ was my usual response!”

Motson, who was famous for his sheepskin coat, had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the game, and always carried with him his own self-penned book of statistics relating to the clubs he was covering.

He passed away peacefully on February 23, 2023, aged 77 years old, thus concluding more than half a decade of exemplary service.

The influence he had over the modern game has been immense, and will continue to be even after his passing.

MEET THE MIGHTY TITANOSAUR

Imagine coming face-to-face with a creature four times as long as a London bus and weighing as much as 15 African elephants.

Sadly, the colossal titanosaur that meets this description, probably the largest-ever land creature, died out about 66 million years ago. But from March 31, the Patagotitan mayorum will be displayed in Europe for the first time at London's Natural History Museum.

So what can you expect to see? For starters, you can walk beneath the spectacular titanosaur cast, moulded from the most complete fossil specimen ever discovered. But there's so much more to this interactive exhibition than that.

While you're gawping in awe at the Patagotitan, you can also check out the plants and animals that were around at the time by admiring the surrounding illustrations. And you can follow the life history of a titanosaur on film, from its birth from a football-sized egg to a fully grown adult.

You can also handle fossil specimens, stare into the creature's giant skull, measure yourself against its massive thigh bone, and even smell its poo.

The original Patagotitan fossil consists of bones from seven creatures, found in the same area just nine years ago. It all began when an Argentinian farmer spotted his lost sheep on an odd-looking rocky ledge. Dinosaur finds in the area aren't rare, so he called the scientists in to get their thoughts. The rocky ridge turned out to be a thigh bone of a new species – the biggest dinosaur ever.

Life as the Biggest Dinosaur is open from March 31, 2023, till January 7, 2024, at the Waterhouse Gallery, National History Museum, South Kensington. The exhibition is suitable for children aged five and over. Tickets cost £16 for adults and £9 for children. Concessions and family tickets are available.

For more information, visit www.nhm.ac.uk



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HOME & DIY

ALTERNATIVE USES FOR

CAT LITTER



If you have a feline friend, then chances are you always have a bag or two of cat litter in your cupboard. But did you know that this pet essential also has many other uses in the home?

TO ABSORB ODOURS FROM SHOES

If you or anyone in your household suffers with smelly feet, then you may be interested to know that cat litter is highly effective at absorbing unpleasant odours. Simply sprinkle a small amount in the offending footwear, leave for 30 minutes and then pour out.

TO MOISTURISE PLANTS

Cat litter is great at retaining moisture, which means it is perfect for use in the garden. When planting shrubs, trees or new flowers, add cat litter to the hole in the ground and then fill with soil. You can also use cat litter to keep houseplants hydrated.

TO PREVENT SLIPPING ON ICE

Icy pathways and steps are incredibly hazardous, but can easily be remedied with just a sprinkling of cat litter. It is very similar to the grit that is used on roads; pour anywhere where you see ice to help prevent accidents.

TO DRY FLOWERS

If you have some cut flowers that you would like to preserve, then all you need to do is place them in a tray of clean cat litter and then wait for all the moisture to be absorbed. Take note, this can take several days.

TO SALVAGE A MOBILE PHONE

If you have dropped your phone in the bath – or worse, the toilet – then cat litter is even more effective than rice at stopping the liquid from getting into the device. Simply slide your phone into an old sock, fill with cat litter and leave for one or two days.



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A *SPRING REBOOT* for your home

Spring cleaning is all very well. But sometimes you might feel the need to do something more. So why not bring in the new and throw out – or better still, recycle – some of the old? You'll feel energised and refreshed, all ready for the brighter days ahead.

ADD A SPLASH OF COLOUR: The terracotta and dark greens we all loved in winter can look a bit dowdy in spring, so perk things up with something brighter. Yellow, bright green and pink can all liven up a home. You don't need to redecorate completely; painting a piece of furniture in a new colour can help to put a fresh spin on things. And if you don't want to go that far, add a few cushions, lightweight throws or an art print. Floral designs are perfect and look great with stripes or gingham.

BRING IN THE GREEN: Not the colour this time, but foliage. Think fresh flowers, potted plants and terrariums. If you want to be super-thrifty, a bunch of

wildflowers from the garden can look great when arranged in a big glass jar. Have a hunt for some unusual containers – galvanised watering cans, terracotta pots and woven baskets can all work well.

LIGHT UP YOUR LIFE: You won't have to draw your curtains or blinds so early with the longer evenings. This is often enough to make your room look bigger and brighter, but don't forget to wash the windows. If you like, add some inexpensive sheer curtains. You could also choose some spring-scented candles – though remember to follow safety guidelines.

GET MOVING: Rearranging existing decorations costs nothing and can give a room a new lease of life. Try moving mirrors, lamps and furniture to see how it makes you feel.

Above all, have fun!





HOME & DIY

Morning. nune and night



Bringing design influences from both sides of the Atlantic, nune is a collaboration between British designer Sheena Murphy and Canadian Tor Sauder, who run studios in London and New York respectively and create dreamy designs all over the world.

Known for subtle, clean designs that are full of light, their projects have a Scandinavian influence that is popular in many contemporary homes.

The designers state their work is "driven by the simple belief that thoughtful design contributes to wellbeing; we work to create comfortable, approachable spaces". Their style has a calming, pleasing aesthetic, and uses a lot of light colours paired with wooden accents and dashes of colour for a look that's modern but timeless.

Their style works in contemporary apartments and Victorian period properties, highlighting nune's talent for transforming spaces into liveable works of art.

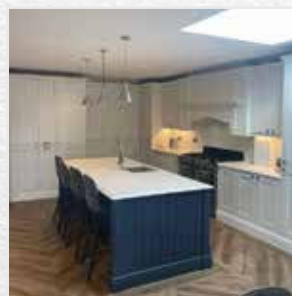
How to get the nune look

The great thing about the nune aesthetic is that it can be simple to create in your own home. Some great tips to refresh your space and embrace the nune style include:

- > Keep spaces light and airy by choosing lighter colours for your walls and flooring, like white, cream, beige and grey, and bring in black, grey and wooden accents to add some contrast.
- > Take a minimal approach. Add storage to hide clutter for spaces that are easy to maintain. This will also help to create a more calming environment.
- > Use abstract art to add touches of personality to your space. Finding artwork that complements your colour scheme can help keep the look simple but coordinated.
- > Use soft textures like fluffy or knitted cushions and throws to add cosy vibes, ideal for making a home feel warmer during the colder months.

The nune style is an easy one to recreate in your own home and can be budget-friendly.

Photo credit: nunenune.com



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Shake your POMPOM



Forget weird little pom-pom creatures with googly eyes; these fuzzy balls of fun have just got a whole lot cooler. Pom-poms have been decorating the tops of hats for centuries; even Vikings wore them. More recently, they've been spotted on the hats of soldiers, sailors, priests, and all manner of berets and beanies.

How to make:

Traditionally, pom-poms are made using two cardboard circles.

- For a 6cm diameter pom-pom, draw and cut out two cardboard circles, each 5.5cm diameter.
 - Then draw and cut a section out of the circles and cut a 2cm hole in the centres.
 - Place the two circles together.
 - Using long lengths of yarn, feed your yarn through the centre hole and wrap all the way around the edges of the circles and back up. Continue till the hole is nearly full.
 - Break the yarn, then push your scissors between the two circles from the outside edge and cut through the yarn all the way around.
 - Tie a length of yarn very tightly around the middle then remove the circles.
 - To finish, just give your pom-pom a neat haircut.
- To speed things up, get hold of some pom-pom makers from your local craft shop or online; they only cost a few pounds.

Pom-pom ideas:

- Use your pom-poms to create furry animal decorations – add googly eyes and even little ears and tails cut out of card
- Hang them on a key to make a keyring
- Make a pair of dangly earrings
- Thread them on a long piece of yarn to make a garland
- Sew a large pom-pom or three smaller ones onto the corners of a plain cushion
- Attach them around the top of a plain basket
- For some simple wall art, hang a few lengths of yarn from a piece of dowel and thread a few pom-poms on each.



HOME & DIY

Photo credit: thehomesihavenmade.com

FIVE REASONS TO CHOOSE FITTED FURNITURE



Fitted furniture may not be the first option that springs to mind when you're thinking of updating your home, but for many, it's the best option to maximise space, increase storage and create a look that feels true to you.

Here are a few reasons why it might just be right for you, from Sliderobes – the fitted furniture experts.

1 Extra storage

Inside a fitted wardrobe, you can add however many shelves, drawers and rails you need to hold your belongings – whereas with standard wardrobes, you're limited to the one rail or shelf that it comes with. Sliderobes fitted solutions typically go from floor to ceiling, making the most of the height in your room, as well as the depth. Fitted options also don't have to have a back panel that creates a gap between the wardrobe and the wall, wasting space.



2 It's designed specifically for you, your taste and your lifestyle

People often don't realise just how bespoke their fitted furniture can be. Sliderobes has a collection of colours, materials and finishes to choose from. How the wardrobe looks is your decision, right down to the door handles. Sliderobes designers learn about your preferences and use their knowledge of trends and styles to help you make the right design choices.



3 Well made and is long lasting

With forty years of experience, Sliderobes knows a thing or two about quality to ensure your furniture stands the test of time and we're so confident in that, that we offer a 10 year guarantee. And, instead of you sitting down with an instruction manual and screwdriver, with Sliderobes, your piece will be installed by a professional fitter.

4 Suitable for every room in your home and any awkward spaces

Fitted furniture works in any room in the home, from built-in media units in the living room to integrated home office shelving. It can also be designed around features like slopes, alcoves, chimney breasts or beams in our homes that create pockets of wasted space.

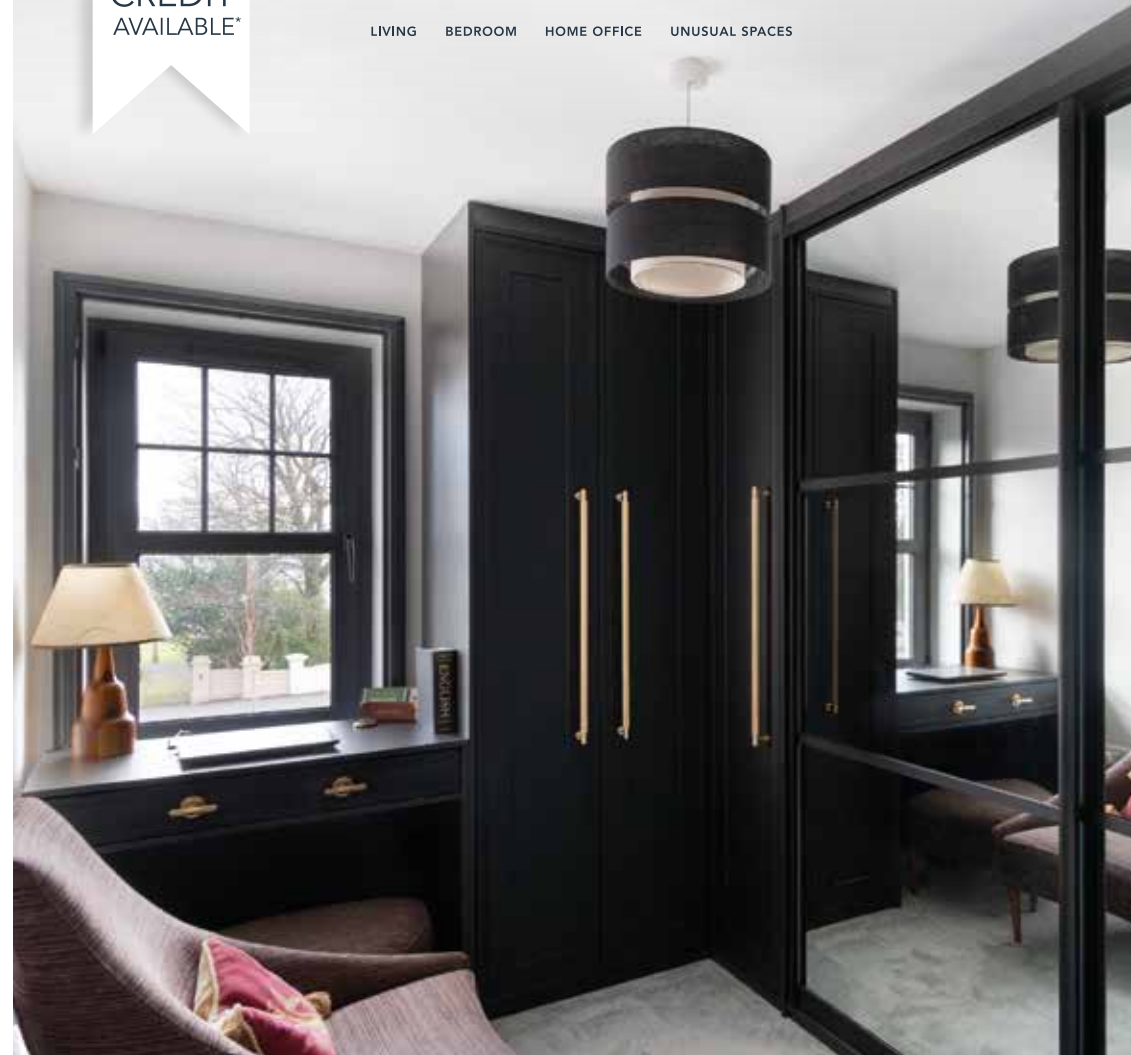
5 It's an investment that can add value to your home

Fitted furniture is an investment but one that is so worth it, as you won't have to replace it as frequently. And if you're planning to sell your property, your fitted furniture can be an attraction, as storage space is a premium that prospective homebuyers are willing to pay for.

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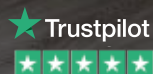
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FOOD & DRINK

A SLICE OF HISTORY

Simnel Cake

There are some stories you wish were true – and the myth behind Simnel cake, the marzipan-covered fruitcake popular at Easter, is one of these.

Back in the mists of time, a certain Simon and Nelly apparently fell out while making a fruitcake. One said it should be boiled; the other wanted to bake it. After a squabble, they settled on using both cooking methods. The resulting cake was named after both of them.

Simnel cake dates back to the 17th century when live-in staff returned to their families around Lent, often bringing food with them. By the 19th century, Simnel cakes looked like the cakes we know today, complete with 11 balls of marzipan to represent Jesus' apostles – minus Judas, the traitor.

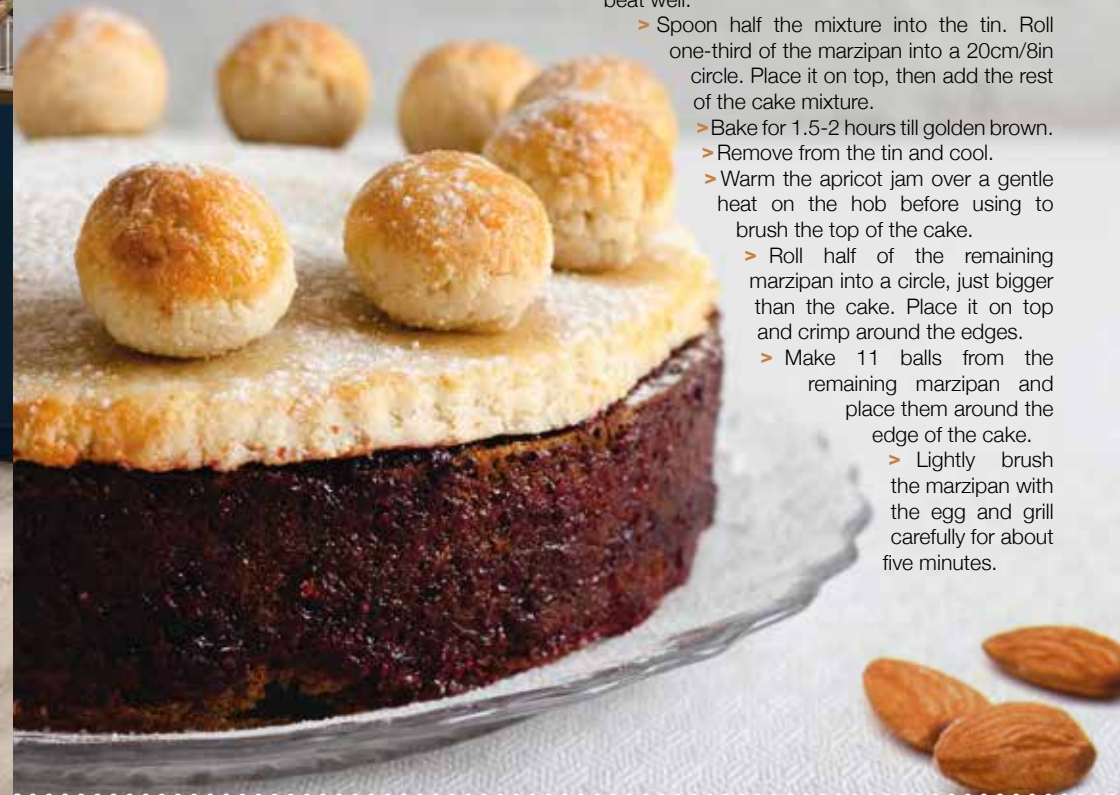
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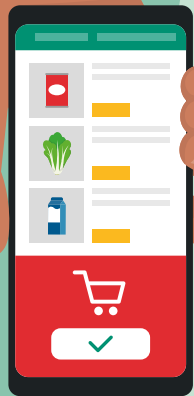
FOR THE CAKE: 175g light brown soft sugar | 175g soft butter (plus extra for greasing) | 175g self-raising flour | 3 large eggs | 50g ground almonds | 3 tbsp milk | 200g mixed dried fruit | 100g glacé cherries, quartered | 2 tsp mixed spice powder

FOR THE TOPPING: 450g golden marzipan | 3 tbsp apricot jam | 1 egg, beaten

HOW TO MAKE:

- > Preheat the oven to 160°C/Fan 140°C/Gas 3.
- > Grease a deep 20cm/8in cake tin and line it with baking paper.
- > Put all the cake ingredients into a large bowl and beat well.
 - > Spoon half the mixture into the tin. Roll one-third of the marzipan into a 20cm/8in circle. Place it on top, then add the rest of the cake mixture.
 - > Bake for 1.5-2 hours till golden brown.
 - > Remove from the tin and cool.
 - > Warm the apricot jam over a gentle heat on the hob before using to brush the top of the cake.
 - > Roll half of the remaining marzipan into a circle, just bigger than the cake. Place it on top and crimp around the edges.
 - > Make 11 balls from the remaining marzipan and place them around the edge of the cake.
 - > Lightly brush the marzipan with the egg and grill carefully for about five minutes.





WASTE NOT *want not!*

THE BEST APPS TO CUT DOWN ON FOOD WASTE



The UK was responsible for 9.52 million tons of food waste in 2018 alone. If you are currently wasting a lot of food, then don't worry, it is never too late to turn things around.

Check out these top four apps that promise to help you cut down on food waste and save money in the process.

TOO GOOD TO GO

One of the biggest causes of food waste is uneaten leftovers and unsold items in restaurant kitchens, fridges and cupboards. The Too Good To Go app looks to reduce this by inviting people to take advantage of unsold food at a highly reduced cost. Shops and restaurants sign up to the app and then sell bags of food based on what they have left at closing time. App users can then go and collect the food.

OLIO

Olio allows you to access surplus food from other households in your local area. You can choose to either take a photo of any unwanted food that you have for your neighbours to collect, or you can search for surplus food for your own family. You can also become a Food Waste Hero by collecting unsold food from local businesses and listing it on the app.

KARMA

The Karma app works in a similar way to Too Good To Go and allows you to purchase takeaway food at a highly discounted price. Once you are signed up, you can earn loyalty bonuses every time you place an order.

NOSH

Nosh is an AI-based app that helps you to track the food you have in your own home. Users can view expiry and use-by dates all on one screen, and prioritise what items they need to eat first. You can also receive recipe recommendations and a suggested weekly shopping list based on your buying and wasting habits.



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FROM YOUR AREA



LOCAL NEWS

Cast of popular sitcom reunite in spin-off special



Photo credit: UKTV

Characters from the hit TV show *Gavin and Stacey* will return to screens for a spin-off special which will see them travel from Billericay to Wales.

Alison and Larry: Billericay to Barry will follow stars Alison Steadman OBE and Larry Lamb down memory lane, reflecting on their time playing Gavin's parents, Pam and Mick.

The actors will take a road trip from Billericay to Barry in Wales, the home towns of the two titular characters in *Gavin and Stacey*.

During the 210-mile journey, they will stop off at places that have a special meaning to them both. They will also take part in activities to "unleash their inner Pam and Mick".

Alison said: "I can't wait to take this trip down memory lane to explore Pam and Mick's neck of the woods, as well as so many other locations precious to me. And who better to do it with than Larry. I'm so excited to be reunited."

The show will air on Gold later this year.

in a critical condition at the time of writing.

Officers from Essex Police and the British Transport Police (BTP) were called to Radford Way shortly before 1.30am on Saturday, March 18. The driver of the vehicle did not stop at the scene.

Detectives are appealing for anyone who may have witnessed what happened to come forward. In particular, they are urging taxi drivers who will have been at the taxi rank at the time and in the nearby area to double check their dashcam footage around this time.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the BTP by texting 61106 or calling 0800 405 040, quoting reference 2300030549. Alternatively, you can call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Football club qualify for Essex Premier Cup finals

Shenfield AFC will go head to head with the Wakering Sports Reserves at the BBC Essex Saturday Premier Cup on Wednesday, April 12.

The match will take place at Shenfield Association First from 7.45pm.

The team qualified for the finals after beating Rayleigh Town Saturday First 2-1 and drawing 4-4 with Woodford East First at the semi-finals on Saturday, March 18.

After winning the game, Shenfield AFC tweeted: "What a feeling! Looking forward to seeing you, Wakering Sports! County cup final... yes please."



Photo credit: Shenfield AFC Twitter

Man charged in connection with hit and run incident

A man from Billericay has been charged with attempted murder and taking without consent.

Joshua Lloyd, 27, of Oak Green, appeared at Southend Magistrates' Court on Monday, March 20, in connection with an incident where a man was hit by a car at Billericay Station two days previously. He has been remanded in custody until his next appearance in court on April 7.

The victim was taken to hospital, where he remains



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BURGHART for BRENTWOOD

Alex Burghart MP for Brentwood and Ongar



Brentwood is a borough with 87 per cent green belt land, making development opportunities for housing and employment tricky to negotiate.

However, Brentwood Borough Council's Local Plan (www.brentwood.gov.uk/adopted-local-plan), which was adopted last year, is making the most of every bit of brownfield land available – and, with care, some greenfield sites.

Planning consent has just been granted for a development at the Brook Street roundabout, as part of the plans to improve the 'gateways' to Brentwood.

Brentwood's determination to bring employment opportunities to the area has not gone unnoticed by smaller local businesses. I was pleased to be asked to join the team behind Chigwell Window Centre to officially open the company's new showroom on Mascalls Lane recently.

At a time when those living in older properties,

like many in my constituency, are doing all they can to make their homes as energy efficient as possible to minimise energy bills, I suspect the company has made a good choice in bringing its wares to the town.

Not far from the Brook Street development plans, Brentwood is also fortunate to have secured the future of a large area of agricultural land through the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) project. LTC saw Hole Farm in Warley come up for sale last year, and has bought its 95 hectares to create a community forest and education centre. LTC intends to make this huge project – which will see a second Thames Crossing to alleviate pressure on the Dartford Bridge and Tunnel – as carbon neutral as possible and the community forest will go a great way to doing this.

Finding out more about the project was a warming experience and something I know the community will be able to enjoy for many years to come.

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YOUR LOCAL EVENTS

WHAT'S ON

COMEDY NIGHT AT THE CRICKET CLUB

Billericay Cricket Club, 2 Blunts Wall Road, Billericay, CM12 9SA
Friday, April 21, 8pm – 10.30pm



Photo credit: Billericay Cricket Club

If you're up for a laugh, come along to Billericay Cricket Club for this month's comedy event. Three acts will perform on the night. Previous comedians have included Bob Mills, Leo Kears, Angelos Epithemiou and Ricky Groves. Tickets cost £15 and can be bought from www.eventbrite.com/e/comedy-night-at-the-cricket-club-tickets-564416473867?aff=ALLEVENTS

CHARITY FASHION FAIR

Doddinghurst Village Hall, Church Lane, Doddinghurst, CM15 0NJ
Sunday, April 23, 1pm – 4pm

Bargain lovers will be in their element at this charity fashion show run by Home-Start Essex. You'll get the chance to browse through pre-loved clothes, shoes and accessories, which will be sold at half price. The event starts at 1pm, and the first 20 guests will receive a free goody bag to take home. There will also be a prize raffle, mini afternoon tea and relaxation sessions. Entry is free but donations are welcome on the door.

ST GEORGE'S DAY SPECIAL WITH COURTNEY

Billericay Theatre, 34 Radford Way, Billericay, CM12 0DX
Sunday, April 23, doors open at 3pm, performance starts at 4pm

If you're looking for somewhere to celebrate St George's Day, head down to Billericay Theatre. Entertainer Courtney will sing classic hits. Tickets cost £12 and can be bought from www.tickettailor.com/events/thebillericaytheatre/853257 or by calling 01277 655861.

CHELMSFORD MILITARIA FAIR

Shenfield High School, Alexander Lane, Shenfield, CM15 8RY
Sunday, April 30, 10am – 1.30pm

Shenfield High School will be hosting a Militaria Fair this month, where a variety of war collectables and memorabilia will be for sale. Entry costs £3.50 and there will be plenty of free parking available on the day. If you would like to set up a trade stall for £30, please contact james@chelmsfordmilitaria.com

RETURN TO THE FORBIDDEN PLANET

Brentwood Theatre, 15 Shenfield Road, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 8AG
Saturday, May 27, 2.30pm – 5pm and 7.30pm – 10pm

An amateur theatre group will perform *Return to the Forbidden Forest* at Brentwood Theatre next month. The musical is presented by the Brentwood Operatic Society and is based on Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* and the 1956 sci-fi film *Forbidden Planet*. Tickets cost £15 for concessions and £18 full price and can be bought from www.brentwood-theatre.co.uk/event/return-to-the-forbidden-planet/2023-05-27/2

BARLEYLANDS COUNTRY SHOW

Barleylands Showground, Barleylands Road, Billericay, CM11 2UD
Sunday, May 28, and Monday, May 29
10am – 5pm

You can enjoy a range of activities at Barleylands Country Show next month, including archery and shopping. There will be a number of displays to watch, like motorcycle stunts, sheepdogs, birds of prey and dancing. Animal lovers can visit the petting zoo and reptile enclosure, as well as the fun dog zone. Tickets can be bought on the day, and are free for under-fives, £5 for children over five and £15 for adults.



Photo credit: Barleylands

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Epping Forest's history is as celebrated as it is sinister – a place of great natural and agricultural beauty, yet also a place renowned as a hiding spot for the county's gangster fraternity.

At first glance, Epping Forest's beauty is rather simple – an ancient woodland of some 6,000 acres that straddles the border between the counties of Essex and Greater London, and one that serves as a thriving oasis of natural beauty and biodiversity.

It rates as the largest public open space in the London area, providing a vital green lung for millions of people who seek solace in its verdant embrace.

The forest dates back thousands of years, when it was part of a vast, continuous woodland that stretched across England. In the 12th century, it became a designated royal hunting ground, and in 1878, Queen Victoria bestowed it upon the people for their enjoyment and recreation. Since then, the City of London Corporation has managed the forest, ensuring its preservation for future generations.

It contains more than 50,000 ancient trees – majestic beech, oak and hornbeam – many of which are more

than 1,000 years old, with traditional and fiercely protected woodland management practices that reflect its ecological past.

Subsequently, Epping Forest provides a critical habitat for various wildlife species, including the rare and elusive fallow deer, as well as a host of other mammals, birds, insects, and a rich variety of fungi. It's also thought to be a hotspot for truffles.

The forest contains a vast network of footpaths, bridleways and cycling trails, inviting visitors to explore its enchanting beauty.

These routes have also, in the past, offered an elaborate map for local criminal entities to dispose of contraband, weaponry and bodies. In addition, the much-vaunted Epping Forest Country Club, a collection of three nightclubs, endured a controversial existence before final closure in 2002.

In 2023, Epping Forest has largely been returned to a place that captivates and inspires visitors with its breath-taking landscapes, vibrant ecosystems, and profound historical significance.



Photo credit: LucasGranger/Shutterstock.com



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For help when choosing a residential home please follow this link which will cover all of the information you need <http://www.payingforcare.org>. This is a not for profit organisation

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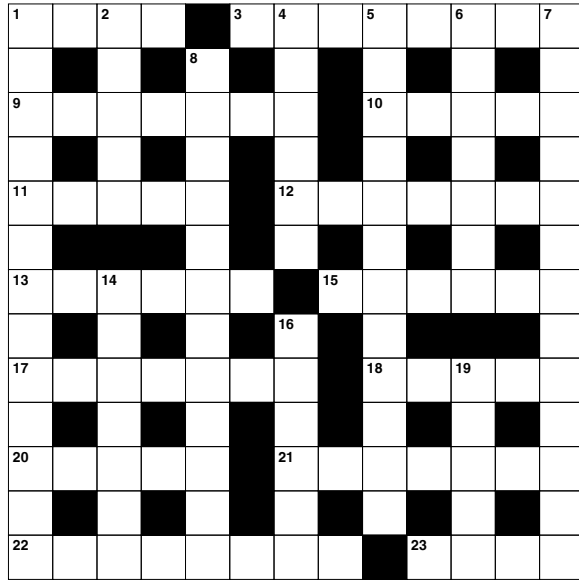
Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

ACROSS

- 1. Liability (4)
- 3. Heated exchange of views (8)
- 9. Free a ship from her moorings (4,3)
- 10. Opposite of below (5)
- 11. Device used to connect to the internet (5)
- 12. Pulls back from (7)
- 13. Bird with yellow and black plumage (6)
- 15. Seem (6)
- 17. In the place of (7)
- 18. Head monk of an abbey (5)
- 20. Embed; type of filling (5)
- 21. West Indian musical style (7)
- 22. Gibberish (8)
- 23. Verge (4)

DOWN

- 1. Decay (13)
- 2. Beads (anag) (5)
- 4. Implement change (6)
- 5. Intolerable (12)
- 6. Passionate (7)
- 7. Hidden store of valuables (8,5)
- 8. Preservative chemical (12)
- 14. Pancreatic hormone (7)
- 16. Official proclamations (6)
- 19. Animal that uses two legs for walking (5)



DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ One million Earths could fit inside the Sun – and the Sun is considered an average-sized star.
- ▶ The sunset on Mars appears blue.
- ▶ Space is completely silent. There is no atmosphere in space, which means that sound has no medium or way to travel to be heard.
- ▶ There are more trees on earth than stars in the Milky Way. There are about three trillion trees on Earth, and between 100 to 400 billion stars, approximately, in the galaxy.
- ▶ Saturn is the only planet in our solar system that is less dense than water. It could float in a bathtub – if anybody could build a bathtub big enough.
- ▶ One day on Venus is longer than one year on Earth.

SUDOKU

8		4						9
			2					5
	6		5		7	3		
	7		3			8		
		1			2			5
		5	8		4			1
1					3			
	8					7		9

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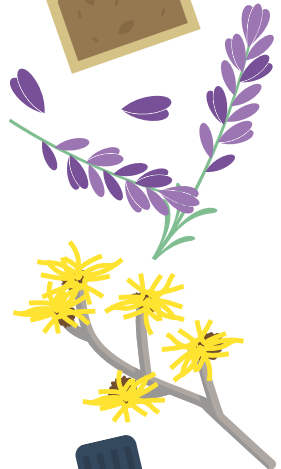
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KIDS

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Do you reach for your trusty bottle of Calpol whenever your child shows the first signs of illness? If yes, you should know that there are alternatives to this popular painkiller.

CHAMOMILE TEA

If your child is suffering with a headache, then a cup of chamomile tea can help to relieve pain and soothe them to sleep. Encourage them to take small sips and add a natural sweetener such as honey if they don't like the taste.

COOL LAVENDER COMPRESS

For children with a temperature, a cool lavender compress can work wonders. Simply dip a cloth in cool (not cold) water with a few drops of lavender oil and then place on their head, chest or legs.

WITCH HAZEL COMPRESS

Another effective natural remedy for headaches, a cold compress with a bit of witch hazel can be placed directly on the forehead for instant relief.

TEA TREE OIL SPRAY

Tea tree oil has been proven to help the body fight off infections as it contains active bacteria-fighting chemicals known as terpenes. Fill a spray bottle with water, add a few drops of tea tree oil and spray around the room or directly onto their body to soothe any inflammation and reduce a high temperature.

PLENTY OF REST

When your child is unwell, the most important thing to do is ensure that they have sufficient rest. Don't be afraid to let routine go out the window and allow your child to nap as and when they want to. If they have a headache, a dark and quiet room is a must.

WHEN TO CALL YOUR GP:

- ✓ If your child is under three months old and has a temperature of 38°C or higher
- ✓ If your child is between three and six months old and has a temperature of 39°C or higher
- ✓ If your child has a high temperature that has lasted for more than five days
- ✓ If your child has other signs of illness, such as a rash
- ✓ If your child is dehydrated.



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WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON CAUSES OF SKINCARE ISSUES IN DOGS?

Dogs are susceptible to many of the same skin problems as humans, and these are typically caused by the following: Poor nutrition | External allergies or bites | Parasite infections | Skin conditions such as seborrhoea | Food allergies | Bacterial infections

HOW TO BUILD A SKINCARE ROUTINE FOR YOUR DOG

Wash them regularly

On average, you should wash your dog once a week to preserve their skin and coat. However, this can vary depending on breed, with very active dogs requiring more frequent bathing. Always use two applications of shampoo: one to cleanse the coat and skin of dirt and old skin cells, and one that should be left on for 10-15 minutes, to penetrate the skin.

Protect them from pests

Flea control is a must if you want to keep your dog's skin in optimal condition. Use flea prevention treatments all year round and visit your vet regularly for check-ups.

Focus on good nutrition

The foundation of healthy skin is nutrition, so you need to make sure that your dog is getting a complete and well-balanced diet. You don't need to buy the most expensive dog food on the market; you only need to ensure that their diet fits their needs.

Apply sun cream

Dogs can suffer with sunburn in the same way you can, especially those with short hair or light skin. Therefore, it is vital that you apply sun cream that is specially formulated for dogs during the warmer months of the year. You can also buy animal clothing that offers UV protection.



GOOD MORNING

from Susanna Reid

LOOKING BACK OVER A PRESENTING LEGACY THAT CONTINUES TO GROW FOR SUSANNA REID, ONE OF OUR FAVOURITE BROADCASTERS

Susanna Reid is synonymous with newscasting in the UK. The 52 year old is the sometimes friendly, sometimes fierce face of breakfast TV, and in 2023 celebrates two decades of waking up those in the UK to the news and views of the world.

The journalist has accomplished something many set out to do, yet few achieve – presenting the news with confidence, balance and no small amount of personality.

“I think they are skills which emerge over time, and you can only really learn on the job,” says Reid, who made a controversial switch from the BBC to ITV in 2014. “I think in my early days, I was certainly a lot more stunted in my delivery. In many ways, a presenter or interviewer puts too much pressure on themselves, when they should just let the interviewee, or the news item, do the work for them.

“And I don’t think I’m the finished article yet, either,” she continues. “The news and the technology evolve all the time, so the blueprint for what we do changes in similar ways.”

Reid built her name for exemplary broadcasting when she started work as a news producer for BBC Bristol back in 1994. She later joined BBC News 24, getting her big break one night when the 11pm presenter did not arrive on set. That stand-in role soon turned into a permanent position, and she later moved into rather more sociable work on BBC *Breakfast* (notwithstanding the 3am alarm calls), presenting alongside the late Bill Turnbull, as well as Charlie Stayt and Sian Williams.

Having also appeared on *The Andrew Marr Show* and as the host of the BBC’s Oscars coverage, in 2014 Reid scoffed at rumours she was going to defect to ITV, saying: “If you cut me open, I’d bleed BBC.”

Yet a month later, ITV announced their impressive scoop, with Reid signing a £1million-a-year contract to front *Good Morning Britain* alongside the likes of Ben Shephard and Piers Morgan.

Reid has interviewed an impossibly wide cross-section of people from the worlds of sport, entertainment and more. She is known to be particularly resilient when coming up against politicians, and has famously sparred with former Prime Ministers Boris Johnson and David Cameron, as well as Nigel Farage and Sir Keir Starmer.

In spite of Reid’s relentless schedule, she has cultivated a busy and rewarding homelife, and has three children with her journalist ex-husband Dominic Cotton.

In addition, she has proved herself to be unafraid of stepping above the parapet of the traditional broadcaster, appearing on *Strictly Come Dancing*, *Gogglebox* and *Tipping Point*, and is a fan of Premier League club Crystal Palace.

“I think if I spent my whole life reading and presenting news on everyone else that would be pretty dull,” she laughs. “I’m not one of those people who wants to put themselves in everyone’s faces, but if the opportunity arises to do something exciting, then I will take it.

“My main focus has been and will always be helping viewers get motivated for the day. That can sometimes be difficult when the news is negative, but we always do our best to put a positive shine on things and to get smiles on people’s faces.”





Happy HEDGEHOG

Hedgehog numbers are in decline in the UK, so it has never been more important for us to take care of our prickly pals. Here's how you can look after the hedgehogs in your garden and keep them happy throughout the year.

WHAT DO HEDGEHOGS EAT?

If you want to encourage hedgehogs to visit your garden, then you can supplement their natural diet of worms, beetles, earwigs and caterpillars by leaving out food and fresh water. Some foods that hedgehogs enjoy are:

- > Tinned cat or dog food
- > Crushed dog or cat biscuits
- > Meat-based hedgehog food

If you notice very young hedgehogs in your garden (roughly apple-sized), then you need to soak any biscuits in water before leaving them out.

WHAT SHOULD YOU NEVER FEED HEDGEHOGS?

You should never leave out milk or bread for hedgehogs as the former can cause diarrhoea and the latter is not very nutritious for these small mammals. Mealworms can also cause health problems when consumed in large quantities.

WHEN TO FEED HEDGEHOGS IN YOUR GARDEN

It is a good idea to put food and water out for hedgehogs all year round. In spring, this will give

them a boost after hibernation, while in summer and autumn, it will help them to build up fat reserves to survive the winter. During periods of hot and dry weather when natural resources are scarce, fresh water and food is even more important.

HOW TO FEED HEDGEHOGS SAFELY

- > Place food in a shallow dish and place this in a sheltered area of your garden
- > Remove any uneaten food each day and refill with fresh water and food
- > Clean the dishes daily using hot, soapy water and then rinse well to reduce the risk of spreading diseases between different hedgehogs.



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A guide to **GARDEN OBELISKS**

Looking for a simple way to add interest and style to your garden or patio area? Garden obelisks are one of the most versatile structures available and can be used effectively in any outdoor space, no matter how big or small.

WHAT ARE GARDEN OBELISKS USED FOR?

Garden obelisks are commonly used to support flowering plants and can act as a stunning focal point in your garden. They are usually made of wood or metal, and are perfect for defining the entrance to your garden, adding an extra dynamic to a seating area or even placing in a conservatory to bring a touch of the outdoors in.

TOP TIPS FOR ADDING OBELISKS TO YOUR GARDEN:

- > Make sure you place each one on a flat piece of ground
- > Bury the feet of the obelisk in the soil to prevent it from falling over
- > Opt for a larger size to accommodate growing plants
- > Hang bird feeders off an obelisk to attract birds
- > Place in a circular flowerbed to create a showstopping centrepiece

BEST PLANTS TO GROW UP YOUR GARDEN OBELISK:

Clematis | Wisteria | Sweet peas | Star jasmine | Common ivy | Morning glory | Climbing roses

HOW TO CHOOSE A GARDEN OBELISK:

When choosing a garden obelisk, there are several factors you need to consider:

1. Is it weather resistant?
2. Does it come pre-built or is construction required?
3. Is it the right height for your chosen plants?
4. Do you want a garden obelisk that is designed to rust for a more authentic look?
5. What type of finial do you want? (This is the decorative feature that sits on the top of the obelisk)

WHERE TO BUY GARDEN OBELISKS:

While you can make your own garden obelisk, you will need a certain amount of DIY expertise and a number of tools to do so. Therefore, you may prefer to purchase one either online or in a store. Most garden centres offer a range of obelisks to choose from.



Photo credit: sarahraeven.com

SEASONAL LAWN TREATMENTS

SPRING

This is a great time to really focus on lawn renovation after the cold, dark months of winter.



Even though you'll have kept mowing as the grass kept growing during winter, it's reinvigorated by warmer weather, so spring can help make the most of your lawn's potential.

During this time of year, we put a plan in motion to get your lawn set up for the rest of the year, so that while we're doing our work you can sit back and enjoy your garden.

Moss

This will likely have developed over the winter, stripping nutrients from the grass, and limiting its growth potential. Moss control is the main focus of our spring treatment.

Lawn feed

We use seasonally specific fertiliser, designed for cooler conditions to kickstart your lawn's growth and colour. It also strengthens the lawn to tackle the oncoming warmer weather.

Scarify

We recommend this to really get your grass growing well. Working like mechanical raking, it removes thatch and moss caused by debris such as fallen leaves.

Overseed

Spring is also a good time to fill in bare patches of lawn too. Using an overseeding technique is one of the most effective ways to rejuvenate your lawn.

Mow

You should begin to increase the frequency of your mowing, cutting your grass more regularly to help it as the growth rate increases.

You can read our lawn care tips and other advice on how to look after your lawn on our website www.greensleeves-uk.com, together with further information on our leading lawn treatments.



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FASHION

How to wear COBALT blue

Seen on catwalks in Paris, Milan, New York and London, cobalt blue is big news for spring 2023. A bold and beautiful colour that demands to be seen, here's how you can wear this stunning shade in five different ways.

COLOUR CLASH

Cobalt blue has the unique ability to work well with almost all colours, including black, navy, white, beige, red, orange and green. Try adding an element of cobalt blue to a grey suit for understated elegance or grab attention by teaming it with yellow.

TRY TONAL

If you love to layer, then rocking various shades of blue is the perfect look for you. Cobalt blue and pastel blue work wonderfully together, with the lighter shade softening your look and the cobalt blue acting as the highlight of your outfit.

MAKE IT MONOCHROME

Alternatively, for a bold vibe, wear head to toe cobalt blue in the form of a trouser suit, jumpsuit or dress with matching shoes. This is a very slimming look, and you could even add some cobalt blue accessories.

DENIM DELIGHT

Cobalt blue and denim are a match made in heaven, and there are so many stylish ways to mix these two trends together. Whether you pair a cobalt blue shirt with your favourite jeans or rock a denim skirt and cobalt blue boots, you can't go wrong with this perfect combination.

ACCENT WITH ACCESSORIES

If cobalt blue is a little too in-your-face for you, then why not opt for a more understated look with some cobalt accessories? Look for a cobalt blue clutch or a pair of cobalt blue earrings and matching bracelet to give a plain outfit just the lift it needs.



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GUIDE TO False eyelashes

Would you love to have luscious lashes? While not everyone is born with long, fluttering eyelashes, you can fake it with some high-quality falsies.

 **INDIVIDUAL** lashes are a great choice if you want a subtle boost to the fullness and length of your natural lashes. You can get individual packs of lashes in sets of 30-60 strands and in a wide variety of lengths. Apply each individual lash using a pair of tweezers or a lash applicator.

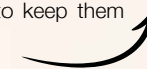
 **CLUSTERS**, which are sometimes referred to as flares or accents, are ideal for those who do not want to apply a full strip of lashes. These can be strategically applied to create a number of different looks and are often used on the outside corners of the eyes to create a cat-eyed effect.

 **STRIPS** are the most common type of false eyelashes and come as a horizontal band that you apply across your entire upper lash. With the ability to add drama and volume, full lash strips are typically applied with lash adhesive and tweezers.

 **MAGNETIC** lashes are a relatively new addition to the world of false eyelashes, and are perfect for anyone who struggles with the gluing stage of the application process. Gentler on the skin and on your natural lashes, magnetic lashes can be easily applied with just magnetic eyeliner and a pair of tweezers.

EXTENSIONS are for if you want a fuller look all the time; they offer an effective and highly aesthetically pleasing solution. However, it is worth noting that eyelash extensions do not come cheap, and that regular maintenance is needed to keep them looking their best.

Photo credit: lolalashes.co.uk



BEAUTY



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."

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AIRPORT Pro

They say your holiday begins as soon as you arrive at the airport, which makes getting it right, pre-flight, all the more important.

Here's our list of departure lounge dos and don'ts.

DO relax

Finally, your break from work and from the stresses of everyday life can begin. It's important to take time to relax – you deserve it!

DON'T stress about time

While it's important to be on time at the airport, it's also worth remembering you have plenty of time. Most pre-flight stresses come about because people panic they will miss their flight, but keeping a clear head is important, even if the departure gate seems like it's in a different postcode!

DO refresh

Although it's easy to grab a snack once in the air, buying a sensible meal and drinks after you pass through security is a good idea before a long flight.

DON'T be excessive

Many people celebrate going on holiday by having a tipple or two before the flight. While it might seem like a good idea at the time, arriving at the airport early or filling time if your flight is delayed, means it's easy to drink too much. If that happens,

you run the risk of being turned away at the gate.

DO organise hand luggage

Keep a close check on luggage allowance, and remember that the items you carry on board need to be scrutinised. Liquids of no more than 100ml should be kept in a single, transparent, resealable plastic bag which holds no more than a litre and measures approximately 20cm by 20cm. This should be placed at the top of your hand luggage, together with any electrical items.

However, restrictions on liquids and electrical items are on their way out. Airports in the UK have until June 2024 to install new security technology, which will mean passengers can leave liquids and large electrical items in cabin luggage as they go through security. London City Airport is the first to put this new technology in place, thereby reducing hassle for passengers.

DON'T overdo the shopping

While it's tempting to pick up booze, fragrances and all manner of other discounted items in the departure lounge, it's much smarter to do this on your return journey. Anything you buy in the airport before your outbound flight will contribute to your baggage allowance on your return flight. Whereas if you save your airport shopping for before your inbound flight, anything you buy can go in your hand luggage.



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Billericay Mayflower Rotary's Soapbox Derby

on Sunday, April 30

Gates open for this very popular, annual Billericay event at 10am, and racing starts at 11am, when about 25 karts will be racing down London Road/Sun Corner, Billericay, CM12 9JZ in the hope of winning one of the following prizes:

Student Class – 1st, 2nd, 3rd.

Wacky Racer Class – 1st, 2nd, 3rd.

Corporate Class – 1st, 2nd, 3rd.

Fastest Soapbox Class– 1st, 2nd, 3rd.

There will also be a prize for the "Best Constructed Soapbox".

There's a lunch break from 1pm - 2pm, during which there will be some exciting entertainment.

Racing will resume at 2pm and continue until around 5pm.

Prizes will be presented at 5.15pm.

The event will close at 6.00 pm.

There will be several attractions to keep everyone happy, including many drink and food outlets, a large area for children's rides and amusements, free face-painting. As a special treat, there will be a Billericay Theatre parade along London Road, where you'll be able to spot many favourite characters. On the stage we'll welcome Funky Voices and the Billericay Theatre singers. The afternoon entertainment includes a rock band who will be playing before the prize-giving.

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Bananas about BANANAS

As well as being delicious, bananas are also one of the healthiest foods around. And what better time to celebrate them than National Banana Day on April 19?

LOOK AFTER YOUR HEART

Bananas are rich in potassium, which can help lower your blood pressure and prevent your arteries from becoming stiff.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

The starch in bananas breaks down and becomes food for the beneficial bacteria in your gut. The pectin, meanwhile, can help keep you regular. Because bananas are relatively low in calories but also filling, they can also play a part in maintaining a healthy weight.

AVOID TYPE 2 DIABETES

The vitamin B6 and fibre in bananas may reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes. But if you already have this condition, ask your health professional before eating more bananas because they contain a lot of sugar.

IMPROVE YOUR WELLBEING

The vitamin B6 in bananas can help you sleep, while the magnesium can help your muscles relax. What's more, tryptophan, which converts into serotonin, together with the antioxidants also contained in this popular fruit, could help improve your mood.

BOOST YOUR ENERGY

The sugar and fibre in bananas will give you an instant energy boost. At the same time, potassium may reduce the risk of muscle cramps. This makes them a good snack both before and during exercise.

NOT JUST FOR EATING

Try these unusual uses for bananas:

- > Use banana skins as a garden fertiliser – chop them up and mix them in the soil around your plants
- > Tape a small piece of the inside of a banana skin to a wart or verruca to help remove it
- > Mash up a banana and use it as a face mask – it will hydrate your skin and help reduce blemishes
- > Use the inside of a banana skin to give dull houseplant leaves a shiny new finish.



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The procedure usually deals with the problem in one visit, although occasionally, you may need more than one appointment.

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Are you suffering from a painful hernia?

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Why choose Nuffield Health Brentwood Hospital for your hernia repair surgery?

There are a range of different hernias which can form in different parts of the body, luckily every hernia can be removed, however some removal procedures are traditionally more invasive than others.

What types of hernias can you repair?

There are two common types of hernias that we can repair, hernia bilateral and hernia unilateral.

Hernia bilateral

This form of hernia presents itself on both sides of the groin area or lower abdomen at the same time.

Hernia unilateral

- This type of hernia occurs on one side of the body.
- In men, an inguinal hernia happens at the inguinal canal. This is a narrow passage in which blood vessels supplying the testicle pass through the abdominal wall
- More common in women, a femoral hernia appears in the groin
- Femoral hernias happen at the hole in the wall of the abdomen where the femoral artery and vein pass from the abdomen into the leg
- These hernias tend to occur following childbirth.

What happens during hernia repair surgery?

We can perform two types of surgery, both with quick recovery times, open surgery and Laparoscopic

(keyhole) surgery. You may not even need to stay in hospital overnight.

How quick is the recovery?

- Recovery from hernia repair surgery is usually very quick.
- You'll be mobile very soon after the procedure and will be encouraged to increase how much you walk around over the first few days post surgery
- Most patients return to normal daily activities within a week
- Your consultant at Brentwood Hospital will inform you of any specific "dos and don'ts", depending on your type of hernia and the chosen surgery.

Are there any risks with hernia repair?

As with all operations, hernia repair surgery has a risk of complications. Be sure to discuss any concerns you might have about these risks with your surgeon.

For any enquiries, to book an initial consultation or to request more information, please contact our dedicated hospital enquiry team at **Nuffield Health Brentwood Hospital** on **01277 695 631**



www.nuffieldhealth.com/hospitals/brentwood

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with Mr A Ali, Consultant
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Haemorrhoids

Wednesday 26 April 2023 from 18:30pm
with Mr V Shatkar, Consultant
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Varicose veins

Thursday 15th June 2023 from 18:30pm
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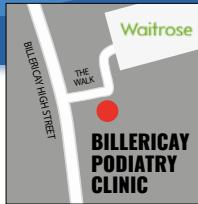
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HEALTH & FITNESS

WHY Spring Cleaning IS GOOD FOR YOU

It sounds like a line to make us splash out on new dusters and mops, or perhaps a government message to promote hygienic homes. But according to psychologists, cleaning our homes in spring really can boost our mental health.

First of all, most of us feel our energy levels increase as the days become brighter and longer. We want to pack away our winter clothes, get outdoors, and clean and reorganise our homes.

Many people find that cleaning their home makes them feel good and gives them a sense of mastery over the world around them. While many of us profess to hate housework, regularly cleaning your home is known to have positive effects.

"A lot of people do find cleaning to be very satisfying, but also to be a very good way of managing stress or anxiety," explains Dr Dawn Potter, a clinical psychologist from Cleveland, USA.

When people are facing problems they can't solve or feel overwhelmed, she

continues, cleaning can help restore a sense of control and calm.

Whether wiping your kitchen counter or vacuuming your carpet, household chores are also easy-to-achieve acts of mindfulness. While you're doing them, you naturally concentrate on the task and your worries take a back seat, at least for a while.

There are also more obvious benefits to keeping your home clean and tidy. Who doesn't want to wake up somewhere clean and bright – and return home to it at the end of the day? If you work from home, this is even more important.

On the flip side, if your home environment is a mess, it can make you lose confidence and feel unorganised.

So now you have no excuses. Roll up your sleeves, grab your Marigolds and get stuck in this spring.



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SPORT



RIVALRY

on the River

Every year, on the last Sunday in March or the first Sunday in April, two of Britain's most prestigious universities battle it out in a gruelling 4.2-mile Boat Race along the Thames.

On March 26 this year, the eight Cambridge men plus a coxswain were first across the finishing line and now have 85 victories compared with Oxford's 81. Only once has there been a dead heat – back in 1877.

WHY ALL THE FUSS? The Boat Race is a symbol of fierce academic and sporting rivalry between the two universities. It's also a tough test of strength, endurance and strategy. Rowers spend months ensuring they're at peak mental and physical fitness on race day.

The Boat Race is also steeped in history and tradition. The first event was held in 1829 and has been held almost every year since, except during the First and Second World Wars and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Watching the race live makes an exciting and low-cost day out, and every year thousands of people line the riverbank and stand on the bridges to watch the event.

WHAT'S THE ROUTE? The race starts at Putney Bridge and the teams navigate several bridges, including Hammersmith Bridge and Barnes Bridge, before reaching the finish line at Chiswick Bridge.

One of the most challenging parts of the course is the stretch of the river known as the Tideway, near the Houses of Parliament and the London Eye. This part of the river is subject to strong currents and tidal changes, making rowing difficult.

IS IT JUST FOR MEN? Not anymore. The first women's race was held in 1964, and since 2015 the women's course has been identical to the men's. That said, the men's race is still the one that makes the headlines. This year saw the Cambridge women win the Boat Race, marking their sixth straight win.

Photo credit: Nordin Catic via Cambridge University Twitter: The Boat Race Twitter



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IT PAYS TO THINK ABOUT ESTATE PLANNING.

Inheritance Tax (IHT) is once again in the spotlight following the Chancellor's decision to freeze IHT thresholds for a further two years until April 2028. Extending the frozen thresholds, together with rising house prices and soaring inflation, mean that more estates are likely to be affected.

IHT RECEIPTS ON AN UPWARDS TREND

The latest IHT figures released in October make interesting reading. Total HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) receipts for April 2022 to September 2022 were £3.5bn, £0.4 billion higher than in the same period last year.

NOT JUST A TAX ON THE VERY WEALTHY

IHT is a tax payable on all your assets when you die and potentially on some gifts you make during your lifetime. If the estate is liable for IHT, it is usually payable at 40 per cent. These days, you don't have to be hugely wealthy to be affected by IHT and this can cost your estate thousands of pounds when you die.

A REMINDER OF THE THRESHOLDS

An individual's current threshold, or nil-rate, is £325,000. A couple (married or civil partners) has

£650,000. Any unused nil-rate band can be passed to the surviving spouse or civil partner on death.

In 2017, the government introduced an additional nil-rate band when a residence is passed on death to a direct descendant. The main residence nil-rate band is £175,000, and when added to the existing threshold of £325,000, could potentially give an overall allowance for individuals of £500,000.

To reduce the amount of IHT payable, many families consider giving assets away during their lifetime. Some gifts will be automatically free from IHT; for example, £3,000 each financial year, certain wedding gifts and gifts to charities.

Getting the right balance between gifting money during your lifetime and ensuring you have enough for your future years requires careful planning. Expert planning can legitimately mitigate IHT, meaning you can pass on assets to your family as you'd intended.

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.

Don't worry BE HAPPY

If you are feeling a little down, this may not be because of something happening (or not happening) in your life, but may be owing to where you live.

According to an annual survey carried out by property experts Rightmove, there are 10 places in the UK where residents feel the happiest.

1. **St Ives, Cornwall:** Coming in at number one is St Ives in Cornwall, which scored highly for community spirit, safety and a sense of belonging.
2. **Galashiels, Scotland:** One of the most affordable areas in the top 10, Galashiels scored highly for friendliness and politeness of the locals.
3. **Woodbridge, Suffolk:** The market town of Woodbridge came in third overall and first in the East of England.
4. **Hexham, Northumberland:** Well known for its stunning floral gardens and parks, the market town of Hexham came in fourth on the list.
5. **Perth, Scotland:** The vibrant riverside city of Perth, which was once the capital of Scotland,

came second in Scotland and fifth overall owing to its sense of belonging.

6. **Harrogate, Yorkshire:** Harrogate is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and scored highly on access to nature and green spaces.
7. **Anglesey, Wales:** Hitting the top spot in Wales, Anglesey gained the highest score for its local green spaces and abundance of nature.
8. **Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk:** A historic market and cathedral town, Bury St Edmunds is surrounded by countryside and boasts a rich history.
9. **Stirling, Scotland:** Coming in third out of all locations in Scotland and ninth overall, the historic city of Stirling is known for its friendly local community.
10. **Cirencester, Gloucestershire:** Cirencester sadly could not beat St Ives in the South West but still made it into the top 10 owing to its beautiful countryside and picturesque Cotswold villages.



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- Separation Agreements

If your case is suitable we can offer a 40-minute free consultation with one of the team.



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A WILL WRITER'S WORDS OF WISDOM

WORRYING PROBLEMS

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

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

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

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

If a couple dies simultaneously, the elder is deemed to have died first - s184 Law of Property Act 1925, leaving only the

younger spouse's family to inherit

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

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

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

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

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

PEACE OF MIND SOLUTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The estates of current or retired members of the Armed Forces, fire police and ambulance services, and most rescue organisations are entitled to exemption from Inheritance Tax if they die on active service, or if their later death was caused by an injury or disease that was received or aggravated while they were on active service

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

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

HAVE YOU MADE YOUR WILL?

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Picasso

...BEST ARTIST EVER?



Pablo Picasso, who died 50 years ago this month at the age of 91, wasn't just a painter. He was also a sculptor, printmaker, ceramicist, stage designer and writer. At times, he was almost as famous for his complicated love life as his art – and the many women in his life played a massive role in his art.

Picasso was born in Malaga, southern Spain, in 1881. In 1904, aged just 23, he moved to Paris. The French capital was the centre of avant-garde art – experimental art that challenged the norms of the time.

Picasso produced so much work that art historians have divided it into eight categories. The best-known is Cubism, which Picasso co-invented with fellow artist Georges Braque around 1910. Cubism involves painting an object from lots of different angles and combining them into the same picture.

Between the two world wars, Picasso became heavily involved in the Surrealism movement, made famous by artists like Salvador Dali. In 1937, during the Spanish Civil War, Picasso was commissioned by the Republican government to paint one of his most famous works. The mural, *Guernica*, which includes images of fallen soldiers and injured horses, symbolises the pointlessness of war.

It's subjective as to whether Picasso is the best artist ever. His technical skills were as good as anyone's – he could produce paintings like old masters while still in his teens. But what's certain is that no one in the 20th century influenced art quite like he did.



DID YOU KNOW?

- > Picasso's iconic striped t-shirt was designed by Coco Chanel
- > His full name is actually 23 words long: Pablo Diego José Francisco de Paula Juan Nepomuceno María de los Remedios Cipriano de la Santísima Trinidad Mártir Patricio Clito Ruiz y Picasso
- > He produced 47,800 works of art in his 78-year career
- > His father was an art professor
- > In 2005, his painting *Le Rêve* sold for \$155million.

Photo credit: picassobase.org

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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 Billerica 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 Billerica 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 Billerica 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 April on Sunday afternoons include:

- April 2nd – World Chaos – who is going to fix it? (discussion)
- April 9th – Jesus' resurrection – Fact or Fiction? (discussion)
- April 16th – The Kingdom of God – What, Where, When, Why and Who?
- April 23rd – Why belief and baptism are mandatory for salvation
- April 30th – When will God End Pain and Suffering?

Visit our website for a full list of times and titles in and around Billerica. There are also recorded talks on a wide range of Bible topics to stream or download. Don't miss our "The Bible" special 3 part video series or Free home self-study packs to download.

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MOTORING

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MGB GT/ROADSTER

Iconic in shape, and dating back to the 1960s, the Roadster comes in a hard- and soft-top. It was the motor that generations of future Ferraris were modelled on.

Incredibly, you can pick up a GT for a little more than £5,000.

LAND ROVER DEFENDER

When Land Rover ceased production of the Defender back in 2016, the price of those remaining was expected to rocket, but it hasn't happened.

Instead, you can pick up this classic rural runaround for well under £10,000. The only warning will be that many may have lived a life of being slung around country roads and farms, and the repair bills can be punchy.

FORD CAPRI

The Capri is a car whose shape was as cool and laidback as the person behind the wheel. Its influence was the Ford Mustang, and you can sense the muscle car behind this classic 1980s motor, which can be yours for a smidge over £10,000.

PORSCHE 924

A Porsche for under £5,000? It's possible. While the 924 hasn't gone down in the motor annals as one for the purists, this mid-80s master still looks incredible, and the pop-up headlamps are a thing of beauty.

SAAB 900 TURBO

They say you don't know a Saab until you've driven a Saab, and this classic model, the 900, can find its way onto your driveway for as little as £4,000. Sleek, solid and Swedish – it's a classic motor from a classic era.



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