

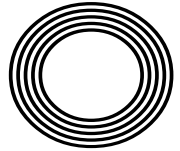
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**MARK WRIGHT MAKING
HIS FOOTBALL COMEBACK**

Valentine's Day traditions
FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Alison
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The TV presenter emerging into the spotlight



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Editor's notes...

FEBRUARY 2021



Brett Shohet, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** Bishop's Stortford. I hope everyone is coping with this rather dreary start to the new year. It's not the start to 2021 we had in mind, but with the vaccine roll-out hopefully the end of this lockdown will soon be in sight.

Having said that, we can't just rely on our Fabulous NHS to fix all our problems - the worst thing we can do once the COVID-19 figures begin to fall is live our lives as if the pandemic never happened. We must continue to keep our distance and wear our masks until we are fully in the clear.

In the meantime, it's easy to go stir-crazy. My lockdown philosophy has been that, if I'm going to be living similar days over and over, I want them to be productive ones. That's why setting up a routine and structuring my days has been pivotal, and I suggest that anyone struggling at the moment tries to do this themselves.

I'm having more Zoom meetings than ever before; I've started going for longer walks and I bought a bike from a local business to add something else to the mix. Little things like these can make a huge difference.

I hope you enjoy our latest edition. If you have any queries or contributions you would like to share with us, please get in touch. And as always, stay safe.

Brett Shohet

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At the time of print all content in **VISION** was relevant and up to date according to COVID-19 government guidelines Inside pages recyclable

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The WRIGHT STUFF

HOW ONE OF OUR MOST ADORED REALITY TV STARS WENT BACK TO HIS ROOTS... GRASSROOTS

It's a fantasy that has crossed the mind of every grown man in his late twenties who has a normal, run-of-the-mill, everyday job. It's the thought, 'Perhaps it's not too late to realise every boy's dream and become a professional footballer; perhaps I can still make it.'

That reality TV star and Heart DJ Mark Wright still held those very unfulfilled ambitions is perhaps less of a surprise. He was, after all, on the books of West Ham, Arsenal and Tottenham as a youngster. When released at the age of 18, the left back was picked up by Southend United, but drifted into non-league football as the distractions of nightclub promotion and reality TV came about.

After spells in then Conference with Grays Athletic, Crawley Town and Rushden & Diamonds, the charismatic Essex-born star joined the cast of *TOWIE*. One of the original cast members, he was only with the ITV show a year, but the die was cast, and from *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!* to *Take Me Out: The Gossip*, through presenting jobs on *Mark Wright's Hollywood Nights*, *The Bachelor* and *This Morning*, the husband to actress Michelle Keegan has been a permanent fixture on our screens for a decade. And when adding in his Heart radio show duties – a gig he's had since 2012 – it's any wonder he has any spare time...

But what about those football ambitions?

"I've never got over the fact I didn't make it in the game," he says. "And despite everything I achieved elsewhere, being a professional footballer now would top it all."

In October last year, Wright set out to make one final crack at the game he loves, and a call to John Yems, his former manager at Crawley, saw the now 33-year-old invited to West Sussex to train with the club.

The presenter describes the three months that followed as a whirlwind, combining media duties with a punishing physical routine designed to get his fitness up to League Two standards. His every move has been followed by a BBC film crew, whose iPlayer series *Mark Wright: The Last Chance* has proved a huge hit.

"I never had any expectations, but I always knew I'd give it everything I had, and the welcome I got at the club was tremendous from day one."

In December, Wright's dreams moved a step closer – he signed a contract until the end of the season. And being named on the bench for Crawley's FA Cup fourth round clash with Leeds United on January 10, just two days after his brother Josh signed for the club, set up the most impossible of scenarios. Could he make the comeback of all comebacks?

Crawley strode 3-0 up against their star-studded Premier League visitors, on their way to grabbing all the weekend's giant-killing headlines. A perfect day could only be topped by a call to the bench for a substitution. And so it happened... he may have only come on in the 91st minute, he may have only touched the ball three times, but a dream was realised on that cold Sunday lunchtime at the People's Pension Stadium.

And it doesn't stop there – the Reds are eyeing up promotion from League Two and there will be no resting on his laurels for Mark Wright... a reality star in every sense.

THE WORLD AROUND US *Part 4*

In the last part of our environmental series, we look at the final key driver in the health and well-being of the planet: global warming.

The phrase 'climate change denier' has become commonplace in conversations about the gradual warming of the planet and the causes of this. Scientific opinion points to humans and our explosion of population, industry and consumption as the real effects of the Earth increasing in temperature by 1° Celsius since 1880.

It doesn't sound a lot, does it? And yet, a one-to-two-degree drop was all it took to plunge the Earth into the Little Ice Age in the Medieval Period.

The platform climate change deniers have generally sees their voices amplified well beyond what they should be. The results of various studies often level out at around the same rate – namely that only two or three people out of 100 will dispute the scientists' theory that humans are the cause of global warming.

With such a large accepting consensus, the drive to combat this gradual warming of Earth has

accelerated in recent years. Equipping ourselves with data, while ensuring we have the ability to interpret it, is vital.

Temperatures across a timespan of a year, five years or even a decade might rise four degrees in one region and drop six in another (which is why anomalies occur, such as Greenland's Jakobshavn Glacier actually increasing in mass since 2016), but overall, there is trouble ahead.

The next, vital step the Earth faces is a willingness of its people to do something about it. For all the UK's action over the past couple of decades, for all the destruction global warming has already contributed, such as coastal erosion, moorlands fires, floods and more, we contribute just 1.2 per cent of the world's total emissions.

It means that, as if it were ever in doubt, a global solution requires a true global investment of action from the planet's inhabitants.

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dress to impress pierre cardin

Remembering and reflecting on the life of designer Pierre Cardin, who passed away in December.

Mention the name Pierre Cardin and a modern generation of fashionistas will most likely point you to a range of smart casual shirts and t-shirts adorning the racks of retailers over the UK, from House of Fraser to TK Maxx.

And yet, to think that the French clothing label should end up in such safe, formal surrounds is to besmirch the work of a designer who fairly revolutionised high-street style in the Swinging Sixties.

Cardin passed away at the end of December having cast an artistic pencil over the fashion world for more than seven decades. His passing was met with genuine sadness by a list of admirers and proteges, including designer Jean-Paul Gaultier, but his legacy is one to be admired and celebrated.

For starters, Cardin was one of the first designers to display a logo on garments, and a self-titled brand logo at that. The idea of giving a piece of clothing its own status well beyond the cuts of cotton or cashmere was something the industry had not seen before, and it led to a host of other licensed products emerging from the Paris-based fashion house, from pens to perfumes, sunglasses to food.

Cardin's idea was to bring ready-to-wear, premium-looking clothes to the everyday market, and at a price that meant people could indulge in the image and grandiosity of the catwalk.

Always looking to be different, he revolutionised design with sharp edges, outlandish curves and stylings that border on architecture as much as clothing. Inspiring so many, he dressed everyone from Bardot to The Beatles, all the while satisfying his own desire to be different.

What we see in so much of today's collections is more than a little influenced by a humble Frenchman with big ideas, Pierre Cardin.

Photo credit: catwalker/Shutterstock.com



CLEANSE ME...



quick

Whether you are looking to remove stubborn mascara, thick sun cream or the dirt and impurities that your skin has picked up over the course of the day, a cleansing balm should be your go-to product, providing a delicate, yet effective, way to clean the skin on your face.

- > They provide quick results
- > Many contain antioxidants
- > They are high in oils, meaning you can skip daily moisturiser if you wish

HOW TO USE CLEANSING BALMS

1. Take a 10p-sized amount of balm and warm it between your fingers
2. Apply to dry skin in circular motions
3. Once the make-up starts to break down, add warm water to your skin
4. Continue to massage
5. Remove with a warm, damp cloth or muslin

WHAT ARE THE BEST CLEANSING BALMS?

- > Clinique Take The Day Off Balm – best all-rounder, suitable for all skin types
- > ESPA Nourishing Cleansing Balm – best for dry skin
- > Pond's Makeup Remover Cleansing Balm – best for sensitive skin
- > Slaai Makeup Melting Butter Cleanser by Drunk Elephant – best for removing waterproof make-up
- > Emma Hardie Moringa Cleansing Balm – best for ageing skin

WHAT IS A CLEANSING BALM?

Cleansing balms are creamy and rich cleansers that gently remove any make-up, dirt and impurities from your skin without leaving it stripped of its natural oils. Unlike oil cleansers, which can be a bit messy, cleansing balms deliver oils to melt make-up, in a solidified form, meaning portion control is easier.

Furthermore, cleansing balms can be used around the eyes to remove make-up, as they are made with natural ingredients and are therefore suitable for this delicate area.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN BENEFITS?

- > They provide a deep cleanse which can help to prevent breakouts
- > They hydrate your skin
- > They are suitable for sensitive skin

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HEALTH & FITNESS

NO MEAN FOOT

Why our humble feet may be the lynchpin to overall body health alignment

Never underestimate just how fantastic our feet are – sure, they will get you around the house, to work, or down to the pub, but more than that, they are the lynchpin to overall body health too.

Balance

Balance in the human body is finely configured so that any imbalances can have negative effects on general health, from wobbliness through to vertigo-type symptoms.

Organs

In the most extreme cases, when the mesh of nerves and touch receptors in our feet are blocked, insufficient messages can send disruptive adjustments through the body, including into our organs.

Consider 10 toes, more than 50 bones (that's around a quarter of all those in the human body), and more than 60 joints, plus more than 200 muscles, tendons and ligaments, and it's clear why your feet are the cornerstone to overall body health.

Mobility

In the most obvious sense, your feet are the tools that move you around. Essential for almost every form of exercise, health and well-being, which begins at ground level.

Back and joint issues

The way we walk ultimately affects the way the rest of our body functions, and this is no truer than in people who suffer with flat feet. This condition causes a misalignment with the ankle, which can move up through the body into the knees, hips, spine, neck and other joints.

It is for these reasons that looking after our feet is pivotal to good health. Sure, get the pumice stone out in the bath, but more than that, ensure you are wearing properly fitting shoes. That might mean accepting that narrow styles are not going to work for your wide feet, or that perhaps you will need to buy flip-flops with a little more support.

Also consider a whole variety of foot exercises that can help bring not just your feet back into alignment, but your whole body back into harmony.





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TO FUEL YOUR FOCUS

If you are still struggling with getting back into a routine and could do with some help improving your concentration levels, these foods will boost your brain power and motivate your memory.

SUPER SALMON: Providing a concentrated source of omega-3 fatty acids, salmon can help to rebuild your brain cells, slow cognitive decline and strengthen the synapses in your brain that are responsible for memory.

BEETROOT: A shockingly underused root vegetable, beetroot contains nitrates that increase blood flow and oxygen to the brain, resulting in improved mental performance.

BANANAS: Cheap, filling and high in potassium, bananas are the ideal afternoon pick-me-up for times when your concentration levels are waning.

SPINACH: Spinach is known as the ultimate brain food and it's not hard to see why. Rich in folate,

lutein and beta-carotene, this leafy green has been linked to the prevention of dementia. Aim to eat three portions a week for optimal results.

AVOCADOS: Avocados are a bit like Marmite – you either love them or you hate them. Fortunately for those who fall into the former category, this fruit can fire up your brain cells and keep hunger pangs at bay.

NUTS: The best thing about nuts is that you only need a very small serving to enjoy all the benefits of this super snack. Both nuts and seeds are great sources of vitamin E, which is associated with a reduction in cognitive decline. Plus, they contain essential oils and amino acids that help you focus.

DARK CHOCOLATE: Because we all deserve a treat from time to time, dark chocolate makes a great alternative to coffee in the morning, having the ability to boost your serotonin and endorphin levels which are both associated with increased concentration.





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If you enjoyed an alcohol-free January, here are some alternatives to alcohol to try...

It's that time of year when we reflect on our bad habits and do our best to become healthier, happier and wiser, and if giving up alcohol is your New Year's Resolution, then all is good. Low-booze business is booming, and that means there are plenty of delicious, low-calorie options to help keep you motivated.

BEER

Any designated driver will tell you that the previous offerings from major breweries fell a little flat in the flavour department. But just as burgeoning independent brewers have completely transformed our ale habits, they too have tasked themselves with creating exciting low-alcohol options that don't skimp on that gloriously hoppy flavour. With 'endless session' IPAs, low-alcohol lagers and sobering stouts and sours, craft beer connoisseurs have a raft of options for their refined palates.

SPIRITS

For those lamenting their 5pm gin and tonics or pre-dinner Negronis, there are even more options as teetotalers use distilling alchemy to create potions that offer all the depth and nuance of an expertly concocted spirit with none of the units. There are juniper and bergamot blends that perfectly complement tonic water for that G&T experience, luxurious citrus and herb creations that mimic the dry bitterness of vermouth, and even elegant elixirs containing herbs such as lemon balm and valerian root – ideal as a soporific nightcap for those who would otherwise drink whisky.

WINE

In the past these underwhelming alternatives have often had their alcohol violently removed, leaving an unsatisfying liquid that would barely satisfy as grape juice. Now, canny cultivators have turned to nature in order to create wines that are naturally lower in alcohol by halting the fermenting process earlier. With red wines this can often lend a natural sweetness, whereas whites have a more delicate profile. The best low-alcohol wines, however, are the ones with a natural fizz, such as Pet Nat, which offer all the celebratory joy of champagne without the hangover.

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Valentine's traditions AROUND THE WORLD

Love is in the air with these beautiful, and in some cases bizarre, Valentine's Day traditions from around the globe.



SOUTH KOREA: In this country in east Asia, lovers celebrate the day of love on the 14th of every month. May 14 is the "day of rose", June 14 is the "day of kisses", and there is even a "black day" in April when couples eat black noodles together.



PHILIPPINES: Young couples in the Philippines are sponsored by the government to get married as a form of public service. Well, there are worse ways to serve your country.



GHANA: Known as National Chocolate Day, February 14 is used to increase tourism in Ghana, one of the largest cocoa-producing countries in the world.



BULGARIA: A simple yet highly enjoyable tradition, in Bulgaria, couples young and old celebrate their love by sharing a glass of local wine.



WALES: Lovers from Wales celebrate Valentine's Day on January 25, and rather than exchange cards and flowers, they

give their partners handcrafted wooden spoons.



SPAIN: The day of love in Spain falls on October 9 and is known as the feast of Saint Dionysius. On this day, men gift their women a "macadora", which is a marzipan figurine.



ESTONIA: Still taking place on February 14 but with a slight twist, Estonians celebrate all relationships on this day rather than just romantic ones.



JAPAN: A country that prides itself on being unique, Valentine's Day in Japan is quite unlike anywhere else in the world. On February 14, women buy gifts for men, but men are not allowed to return the favour until March 14, known as the "white day".

HOW TO SAY "I LOVE YOU":

- > South Korea: Saranghae
- > Philippines: Mahal kita
- > Ghana: Me do wo
- > Bulgaria: Obicham te
- > Wales: Rwy'n dy garu di
- > Spain: Te amo
- > Estonia: Ma armastan sind
- > Japan: Aishiteru





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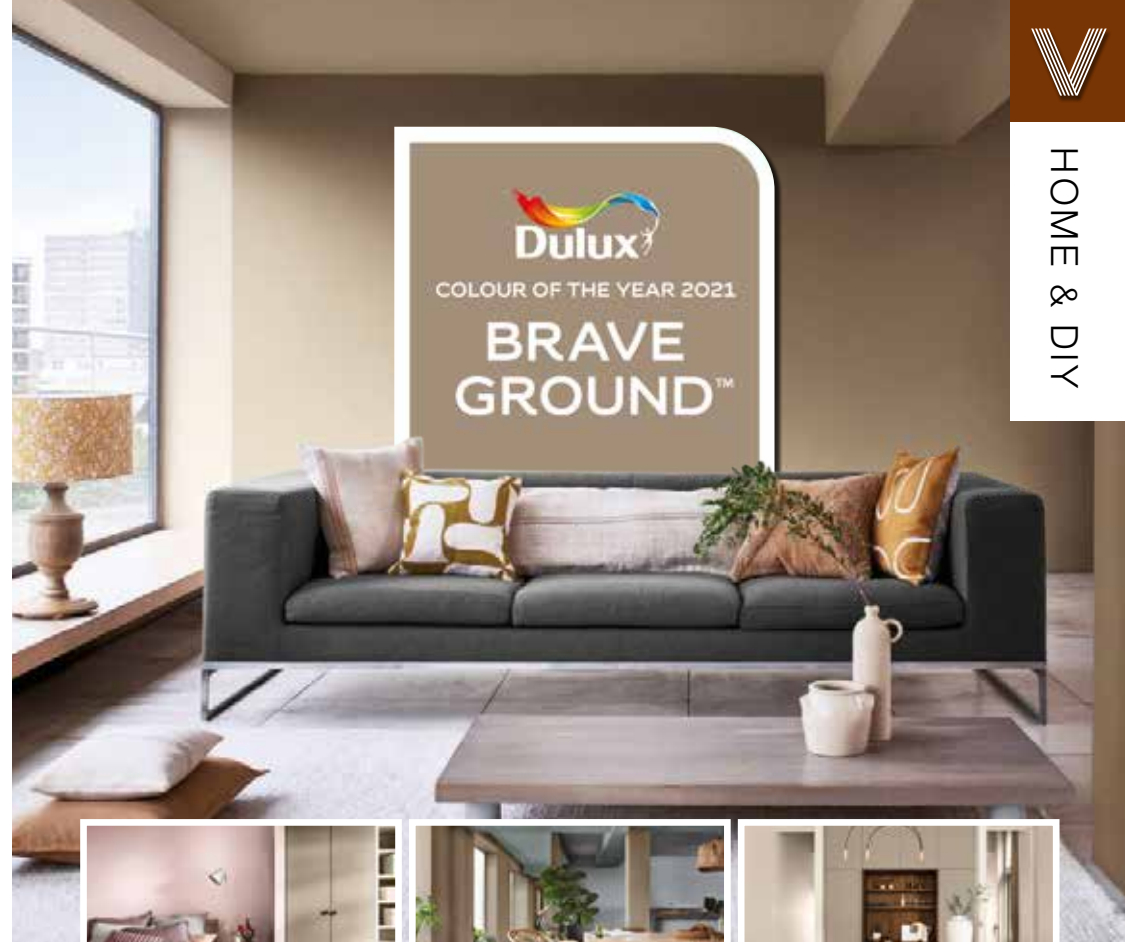
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HOME & DIY



DULUX LOOKS TOWARDS SAFE GROUND IN NAMING ITS COLOUR FOR 2021

There's only one contradiction at play as far as Dulux's Colour of the Year goes – namely that in establishing a tone that speaks quietness, calmness, unassuming peace and tranquillity, the paint manufacturer is treading safe ground and not, as the shade's name implies, Brave Ground.

And yet, despite Dulux failing to state what is courageous about this tone, we can at least revel in its ability to encapsulate the mood of the world. It pleads for calm, reflection and philosophical thoughts, and offers a serenity to interiors that is very different from the intention borne out in Pantone's Colour(s) of the Year.

This warm beige shade is one that will work beautifully when matching with light woods, particularly in the bedroom or living room.

Combined with white it reclines elegantly into the

background, and as a flat shade, it can find itself offset by fabrics and furniture that offer depth and detail.

The tones of grey present in Brave Ground are also earthy enough to take interiors away from the overtly beige patterns of the 1970s that often strayed too far in the way of oranges and browns.

Consider also mixing with pastels, or sharpening the edges with blacks and greys, particularly in cushions, throws, curtains or lampshades. Ultimately, Brave Ground is a colour that will bring lightness while offering a knowing nod to dark luxury.

Indeed, perhaps in adopting a shade that is the very epitome of neutrality, perhaps in offering a platform on which we can place our existing belongings as well as bring in new renovations, Dulux is showing itself to be brave after all.

Photo credit: Ideal Home.co.uk, Dulux.co.uk



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Tencel bedding

In a world where sustainability is not just desirable, but necessary, these alternative fabrics and leathers are presenting as viable options for global brands who want to do their bit for our planet.

TENCEL

Already a ubiquitous eco-fabric, Tencel is used by several major design brands linked to both interiors and fashion.

Produced by environmentally responsible processes from the sustainably sourced natural raw material wood, Tencel is not only a wonderfully soft and breathable material, it also combines beautifully with other fabrics such as cotton, silk and polyester for maximum versatility.

ECONYL

Fabric recycling has come a long way since the days of simple reupholstering that saw tired sofas and chairs less reinvented and more clumsily repurposed into something you could palm off to the kids or into the guest bedroom.

Econyl regenerated nylon is made from, you guessed it... nylon waste, and with an emphasis on closing the loop, this brilliant and innovative brand confesses to having an appetite for creating an infinite quantity of new products, but all using existing resources. In short, we've come a long way since the 1980s.

With 10,000 tonnes of Econyl raw material saving 70,000 barrels of crude oil, this fabulous fabric is being used to create everything from carpets to swimsuits.

PIÑATEX

Piñatex is a leather alternative made from the leaf waste of pineapples. This fluff-like leaf fibre (PALF) gets mixed with a corn-based polylactic acid (PLA), undergoing a mechanical process to create Piñafelt, a non-woven mesh that forms the base of all Piñatex collections.

Coloured using natural pigments and coated with resin to give additional strength, durability and water resistance, this luxurious leather alternative is already doing its bit to lessen the environmental impact of mass leather production and chemical tanning.



Econyl chairs



Piñatex furniture

Photo credit: westelm.co.uk, econyl.com, 21gstudio.com



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THE DOS AND DON'TS TO ACHIEVING PERFECT UNDERFOOT CONDITIONS

You think splashing the cash on a swanky new length of carpet is the first and last bit of expense you need to worry about, before someone reminds you that carpet without underlay is akin to a new motor without tyres on the wheels.

It's recommended that you change your underlay whenever you change your carpet – after all, years of wear, tear, and no small amount of gravity will have squashed the best life out of it.

New underlay will provide for you a number of things – firmness, bounce, insulation, noise reduction, preservation of your new flooring, as well as reinforcing the feeling that your new piece of carpet is worthy of something you'd find on the way into a film premiere.

Premium underlay will set you back up to £10 per metre square, though perfectly good brands can be picked up for less than half that. It's true to say the higher quality your underlay, the longer it will, in

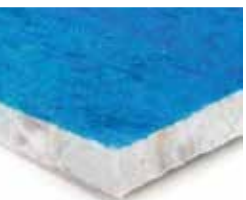
turn, look after your carpet.

Typical depth is around 10–13mm, with a lower grade on the stairs. You'll also have to consider the tog rating – anything higher than 2.5 tog will insulate nicely, though if you have heated floors then switch back down to a lower tog of around 1.0.

As for the fabric, PU foam is the most common underlay on the market. It offers a soft feeling underfoot, is made from recycled materials and is a good insulator. Other types are made from rubber, sponge rubber and crumb rubber, the latter being made from car tyres. Felt and wool carpet underlay also come well recommended.

And if you're fitting wood or laminate flooring, then consult a specialist who can bring forward a range of hardfloor-specific underlays that are lighter and thinner, and respect what is an intentionally solid top layer.

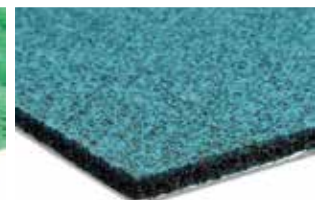
UNDERLAY



PU FOAM



SPONGE RUBBER



CRUMB RUBBER



WOOL FELT

Photo credit: www.diydoctor.org.uk



ARE YOU READY TO

Wabi-sabi

YOUR HOME?

Although it may sound like that spicy green paste that you get with sushi, wabi-sabi is actually a Japanese term that means "finding beauty in imperfection".

The perfect interior design trend for people who prefer their house to look lived in rather than like a showroom, wabi-sabi is all about embracing authenticity, flaws and all.

Showcase homemade décor

Whether you are an artist yourself or not, homemade décor items or things that you have collected over the years on holiday or at local craft fairs are ideal for creating a wabi-sabi home. Allowing you to foster feelings of warmth and originality, even just proudly displaying your children's artwork contributes to the characteristics of this Japanese philosophy.

Clear away clutter

Just because wabi-sabi values imperfection, that doesn't mean you can let your home become a cluttered and chaotic mess. To achieve wabi-sabi, your home should be a calm and peaceful place where you and your family can relax, so make sure you stick to your cleaning regime.

Embrace nature

With a focus on simplicity, bringing elements of the outside into your home is a key component of wabi-sabi. Whether you choose to put some freshly cut flowers in a vase, invest in a house plant or two, or you decide to incorporate natural materials into your home such as stone or wood, nature will always be able to lift your mood.

Be a partial minimalist

Although a wabi-sabi home is not fully minimalistic by nature, it does invite people to keep their possessions to a minimum by only allowing things in their home that offer nostalgia, beauty or utility. This means that you can keep an item that does not necessarily match the décor of your home, as long as it makes you happy.



Photo credit: David Britain via idealhome.co.uk, home-designing.com, Simon Scarborough via idealhome.co.uk, behance.net



The infectious personality of
ALISON HAMMOND

The presenter who has chuckled, chortled and guffawed her way through almost two decades on camera... and we're all better off for it.

The Brummie whose laugh-a-minute approach to presenting has won her admirers across the entertainment world... and we include Harrison Ford and Ryan Gosling in that number.

As if proof were needed that Alison Hammond, while always kind, enthusiastic and respectful, does not subscribe to the idea that celebrities and film stars are unreachable demigods not worthy of our time, in a hilarious 2017 interview for *This Morning*, Hammond charmed and bewildered two of Hollywood's finest in a recording that had more than 12 million YouTube views. You could say she upstaged her two guests by laughing them into submission.

Having first appeared on our screens as a contestant in the *Big Brother* house, Hammond is another example of a reality star who has maximised the possibilities out of what is a very simple and short-lived platform.

She has swept her way through a variety of entertainment shows over the past decade, appearing in *Celebrity Fit Club*, *Celebrities Under Pressure*, *Stars in Their Eyes*, *Celebrity Ready Steady Cook* and many, many more; she has been a panellist on *Loose Women*, and made it to the seventh week of *Strictly Come Dancing* when she partnered Aljaž Škorjanec.

"I've always been someone who wants to grab life by the horns and go for a ride," she laughs. "It's very rare that I'll turn down an opportunity, and if I do it's because it's taking me too far from home and being around the people I love, and those are the ones who must always come first."

And Hammond's reputation as a brilliant reporter on *This Morning* has borne fruit in a way she wouldn't have imagined – in the middle of December 2020 it was announced that she and Dermot O'Leary would take over full presenting duties on Fridays from regular incumbents Eamonn Holmes and Ruth Langsford.

The shake-up is further evidence of a nation embracing those down-to-earth personalities who reflect our own thoughts, ideas and sensibilities.

"A long time ago I realised that to get on in the world you just need to be yourself," she says. "I think in the early days of getting TV work there was a temptation to be the person you thought people wanted to see, and when you do that you lose an edge."

"What people see is what they get, but it is all me – an uplifting, fun, sparky person who treats everyone as equals."

Indeed, geographically, Hammond, 46 in February, has stayed true to herself as well. Despite *This Morning* being filmed at Television Centre in White City, the presenter still lives in 'the second city', commuting to the capital for work. "I couldn't ever leave Birmingham behind – it means everything to me, as do the people.

"It's also my son's home, and I want him to grow up a proud Brummie like me... who likes to laugh."

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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



LOCAL NEWS



Driver furious as yobs target town motorists again

A driver whose windscreen was cracked by stone-throwing yobs on the A120 in Bishop's Stortford says the problem has been ongoing for at least three years.

Jacob Westlake was driving south on the A120 on Tuesday, January 26. As he approached the bridge where Farnham Road crosses over, a car in front slammed its brakes on.

He revealed: "When I reached just before the bridge, I heard a massive bang and slammed on my brakes too. I noticed the massive circular crack in the windscreen and put my foot down, knowing this is a problem around here. I pulled over and dialled 999."

After being home for an hour and a half, Jacob had a call from the police.

He said: "The policewoman explained she went there shortly after my call but the only person she came across was an elderly man walking his dog. Later on, I saw on social media it had happened to

someone else on the next stretch of the bypass."

Jacob was due to sell his car a few days after the incident but said it was illegal to drive so had to make alternative arrangements until the damage was repaired.

He added: "I know the police are doing what they can but it's just so frustrating that after at least three years of this, no one has been caught or held responsible. Anyone that thinks this is funny needs to be held responsible for their actions. They're potentially risking people's lives."

Herts Police have stressed they are taking the issue very seriously.

East Herts Neighbourhood Inspector Chris Hunt said: "We have invested hundreds of policing hours to try to tackle the problem. Some of this work has involved covert tactics. We have not found any evidence of who or what might be responsible but we're doing everything we possibly can."



Home secretary visits to praise police recruitment

Home secretary Priti Patel came to Bishop's Stortford last month to announce that the government had beaten its target to recruit 6,000 additional police officers by March 2021. She was welcomed by Julie Marson, MP for Bishop's Stortford.

Mrs Marson MP said: "Getting more police officers onto our streets is one of the people's priorities, and so I am delighted that in just over one year, this Conservative government has already delivered an extra 111 officers across Hertfordshire.

"Every one of these officers will make an enormous difference in helping to cut crime and keep people safe – and I know that many more will follow as this government continues to deliver on its promise to recruit 20,000 more over the next three years.

"By backing our police with the funding, powers and resources they need, we are keeping the public and our communities safe, so that people everywhere can live their lives free from the fear of crime."

During her visit, the Home Secretary spoke to local officers and met new recruits.

Mum helps explain cancer to children in a flash



When Jen Pope had to tell her young children she had secondary, incurable cancer, she knew it would be an unbearably difficult conversation.

So Jen, from Bishop's Stortford, and her friend Nic Owen, who has also been diagnosed with cancer, designed a pack of colourful, easy-to-understand flash cards to introduce children aged between two and 10 to cancer.

Jen revealed: "Time stood still when they said I had incurable, secondary breast cancer. But thankfully, they told me it is manageable and the cancer is now stable.

"Eliza was eight and Albie was four. We told them the basics. "Eliza understood more and my husband, Richard, explained things to her because I couldn't do it. But that would have been ten times easier with the cards."

The Little C Club flash cards are now available on the Cancer Research UK website.

Defibrillator installed at town police station



A defibrillator has been installed at Bishop's Stortford Police Station with funding support from Police and Crime Commissioner David Lloyd.

Eighteen police stations and bases across Hertfordshire have had the life-saving devices installed at their entrances.

The Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) allow members of the public, as well as officers and staff, to provide potentially life-saving care in emergencies with support of call handlers from the East of England Ambulance Service.

Mr Lloyd said: "This is a vital resource for the public and police officers to enable them to give the best immediate chance of survival for victims of cardiac arrest.

"I would ask people to take note of the location of these defibrillators next time they pass their local police station as they never know when they may need to use one."

All machines are sited within a weather-proof and anti-theft storage cabinet with a keypad code entry system. The access code for the defibrillator will be disclosed to any individual dialling 999.

The defibrillators are equipped with video screens which are designed to be operated by someone with no prior medical training.

Man arrested in Essex drugs probe

A 25-year-old man from Bishop's Stortford was arrested last month by police investigating drugs supply in Harlow.

He was arrested on suspicion of being concerned in the supply of controlled drugs and has been released under investigation while police continue their enquiries.

Two men have been charged in connection with an investigation into drugs supply in Harlow.

Meanwhile, Richmond Agyapong, 26, of Harlow,

is charged with being concerned in the supply of crack cocaine and heroin, being concerned in the supply of cocaine and cannabis and acquiring, using or possessing criminal property.

Louis Preater, 21, of Harlow, is charged with being concerned in the supply of cocaine and cannabis.

They appeared at Chelmsford Magistrates' Court on January 16 and were remanded in custody to appear at Chelmsford Crown Court on February 15.

Care home joins forces to give COVID-19 vaccine

A care home in Bishop's Stortford has joined forces with health professionals and the local community to ensure that its staff and residents received the COVID-19 vaccine.

The multidisciplinary teams worked with the management at Hazel End Care Home on Kitchener Road to ensure that all residents and staff had access to a vaccine.

Some residents were invited to a vaccination clinic on Friday, January 15, at Bishop's Stortford Football Club. Three days later, on January 18, the vaccination team went to Hazel End Care home to ensure that the remaining residents and staff received their vaccine.

Allison Squires, home manager, said: "It has been a very long and difficult year for all of our residents, families and staff. This vaccine means that we can look forward to returning to some kind of normality and hopefully we will be welcoming visitors into our home again."

Alison said she wanted to thank Stort Valley Healthcare Ltd, Church Street GP Services, Hertfordshire Community Healthcare Trust, the NHS, Bishop's Stortford Football Club and Hertfordshire County Council.





Support available for older people

LOCAL NEWS



Older people who live alone and have been unable to see family or friends for months are being supported by a charity with a hub in Bishop's Stortford.

Age UK Hertfordshire, which has a hub in Apton Road, has been creating comfort parcels, distraction packs and activity packs to keep their clients mentally and physically agile.

Roz Wylie is head of engagement at the charity and said staff are doing what they can to help.

She said: "We've had such a positive response to the distraction packs. Our clients tell us that they are really enjoying the gifts and puzzles that we are sending them, and we're so grateful to the businesses and individuals who have donated or helped us to raise funds to keep our clients occupied and connected."

"It's great that some of our clients are now starting to receive their vaccine. And we're hopeful that soon we can reopen our clubs and our volunteers can get back to face-to-face visits, but in the meantime we can still provide support over the phone and online."

Contact them on 0300 345 3446 or visit them online at ageuk.org.uk/Hertfordshire

Appeal for information following indecent exposure

Police are appealing for information following an indecent exposure in Bishop's Stortford.

At around 9.40am on January 11, a woman in her 30s was walking near the junction of London Road and Southmill Road when a man shouted to her from a dark blue pick-up truck.

The woman told him to leave her alone and continued to walk towards the town centre.

As she approached the South Mill Arts centre, the van drove past her again, in the direction of the Shell petrol station. The driver had indecently exposed himself and was touching himself inappropriately, while laughing.

The driver is described as a white man, aged around

late 40s, of large build with brown hair. He was wearing a black t-shirt and a red and white chequered long-sleeved top.

PC Ashleigh Deacon said: "This kind of behaviour is very distressing to witness. Do you recognise the description of the pick-up truck or the man himself?" Anyone with information is asked to email PC Deacon at ashleigh.deacon@herts.pnn.police.uk

You can also report information at www.herts.police.uk/report, speak to an operator in the Force Communications Room via herts.police.uk/contact or call the non-emergency number 101, quoting crime reference 41/2390/21.

Changes to garden waste given green light

People in Bishop's Stortford will have to start paying to have their garden waste taken away from April after East Herts councillors backed the move last month.

Residents took part in a consultation in December to help shape the future of the service.

Graham McAndrew is executive member for environmental sustainability. He said with the coronavirus pandemic having put further pressure on the council's budget, the council needed to explore the option of the introduction of a charged service for those residents who want it rather than the cessation of the service as a whole.

He added: "I'd like to take this chance to thank all residents who took part in the consultation last year. We believe this to be the best option available to us, to ensure that residents continue to get a high standard of service and for the council to reduce its deficit. Charging for garden waste collection is becoming the norm of councils now."

The new opt-in chargeable garden collection service will cost £49 a year and will take effect from April 1.

For more information, go to www.eastherts.gov.uk/gardenwaste



GARDENING

FEBRUARY BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH:

Violet

The February birth flower is the vibrant violet. People born in this month tend to be both modest and mild mannered, hence the popular expression "shrinking violet". Sweet violets are regularly found in the UK in woods and hedgerows and are often candied and used to decorate cakes.

WHAT DO VIOLETS SYMBOLISE?

Violets have been around for centuries and were first cultivated by the Greeks around 500BC. According to Greek mythology, violets were created when one of Artemis' nymphs was pursued by her twin brother Apollo. To protect her, Artemis turned her into a violet, which in turn led to this flower being known to represent modesty.

WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOUR PERSONALITY?

If you were born in February, you are said to be wise beyond your years. A private person, you are also prone to being a bit of a dreamer. It can take you a while to warm up to people, but when you do, you are fiercely loyal.

CAN I GROW VIOLETS IN MY GARDEN?

Violets typically grow in the wild, although they are decreasing in numbers owing to habitat loss, which means if you want to grow them in your garden, you need to recreate these conditions. Violets thrive in winter and spring sun but need summer shade, so their ideal spot is under a deciduous tree or shrub.

Violets will self-sow, but growing your own from seed is a challenge as the seeds need to be fresh. Instead, buy plants during the spring and plant immediately in moist but well-drained soil.

WHAT PESTS ARE COMMON TO VIOLETS?

If your violet leaves turn yellow, this could be the result of an attack by red spider mites. This pest strikes when your plant becomes too hot or dry.

The best remedy is to defoliate the plant completely.





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GARDEN OF LIFE

FOX IN *the box*

In the first of a four-part series that shows how even the most urban garden can be a haven for the wonders of wildlife and the nurturing of nature, we look at the faithful fox. Whether out at night or hiding in plain sight, this sly urban dweller has adapted better than any other animal to human environments.

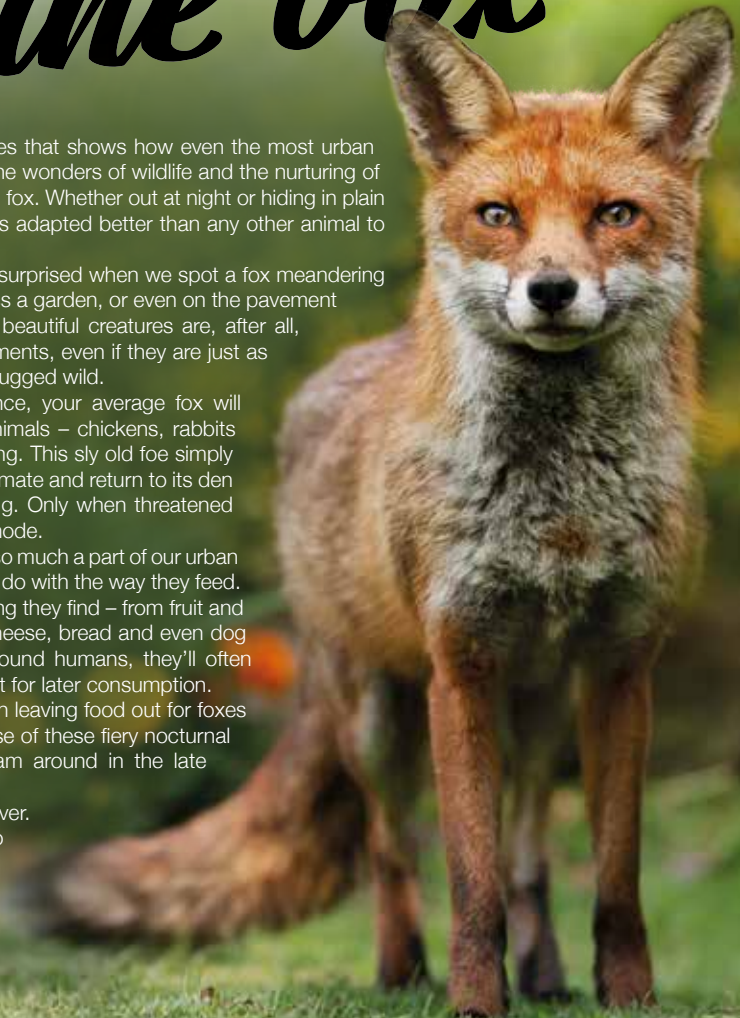
Perhaps we shouldn't be so surprised when we spot a fox meandering its way through the park, across a garden, or even on the pavement outside where we live. These beautiful creatures are, after all, past masters in urban environments, even if they are just as accustomed to survival in the rugged wild.

For all its impressive presence, your average fox will rarely approach humans or animals – chickens, rabbits and guinea pigs notwithstanding. This sly old foe simply wants to hunt for scraps, play, mate and return to its den to rest and tend to its offspring. Only when threatened will a fox move into offensive mode.

The fact foxes have become so much a part of our urban and suburban lives has a lot to do with the way they feed. They'll consume almost anything they find – from fruit and veg, raw and cooked meat, cheese, bread and even dog biscuits. Increasingly brave around humans, they'll often take food for storage, burying it for later consumption.

That means there's little risk in leaving food out for foxes if you're hoping to get a glimpse of these fiery nocturnal beauties, who will happily roam around in the late afternoon as well.

There is a downside, however. From fouling the garden to chewing shoes left outside, to trampling lawns and even digging up deceased pets, if you encourage foxes in, you'll have to go along with their inquisitive, playful habits.



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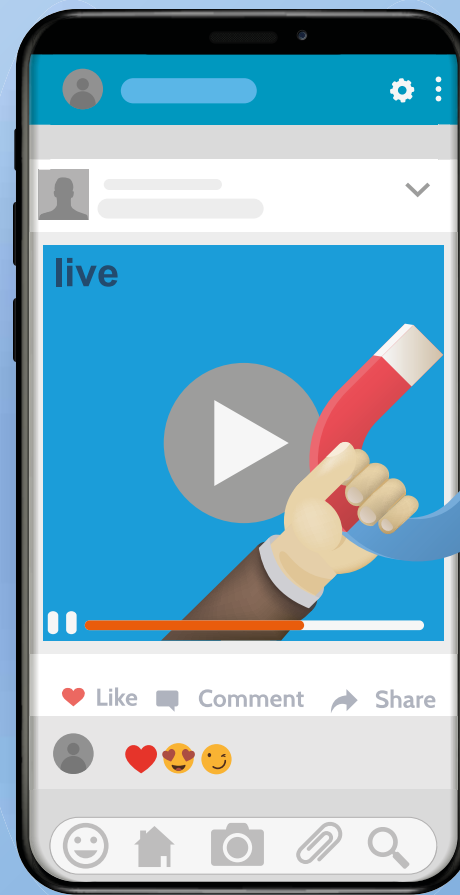
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The Power of Social Media



BUSINESS & PROPERTY

memes and GIFs. Avoid overly promotional posts.

Increased interaction: Video continues to be one of the strongest social media strategies, with an estimated 78 per cent of users watching video content on a monthly basis. Ideal for grabbing people's attention, conveying your brand personality and showcasing your passion as a business. You could even try live-streaming an event.

Improved customer service: Although social media can be a blessing for your business, it can also cause a lot of damage if you don't keep an eye on it. Remember that, first and foremost, social media is a customer service channel, so you need to monitor your mentions and keep tabs on your reviews. Always respond to comments asap and deal with any problems via private messaging.

If you only implement one digital marketing technique to boost your business and build brand awareness this year, then make sure it involves social media.

Providing you with the chance to improve customer service, drive traffic to your site and even spy on your competitors, the power of social media should never be underestimated.

Enhanced engagement: Social media is the perfect technology for engaging with both your existing customers and potential new ones. Make sure you take full advantage of social capability and encourage interaction through competitions, industry news, tips and advice and humorous

The lowdown on the popular social media platforms:

- > **Facebook.** Best for generating leads and building relationships
- > **Twitter.** Perfect for businesses with a younger audience
- > **Pinterest.** Great for driving sales and for brands with visual appeal
- > **Snapchat.** Ideal for building relationships with influencers and driving brand recognition and loyalty
- > **Instagram.** The best option for e-commerce sites and for telling your brand story
- > **YouTube.** To help you get seen by Google and tap into YouTube traffic

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BRUSH UP

on children's oral health

February is National Children's Dental Health month, so what better time to tackle any tooth-brushing issues your child has? Discover the top five reasons why your child doesn't want to brush their teeth below. Plus, how you can encourage them to practise good oral hygiene.

WHY DOES MY CHILD HATE BRUSHING THEIR TEETH?

1. They are sensitive to having their teeth brushed

Some children experience a gag reflex when brushing their teeth that can be unpleasant. Others might not like the feel of the brush against their teeth or in their mouth. Sensitivities are more common in children with autism or attention disorders.

2. They are asserting their authority

If you find yourself caught in a battle with your child every morning and evening when it comes to brushing their teeth and there is no physical reason why they won't brush, they could simply be pushing boundaries.

3. They have become anxious

You may not be able to determine the initial reason why your child started to hate brushing their teeth, but if it has become a daily issue in your household, your child may now feel anxiety around this daily activity.

4. They don't like the taste of the toothpaste

It is always a good idea to ask your child if they would like to choose a different flavoured toothpaste if they do not like the one you are currently buying.

5. They are a picky eater

Children who are picky eaters are more likely to not like the texture and taste of a toothbrush and toothpaste in their mouth.

How can I encourage my child to brush their teeth?

- ☺ Stick to a routine
- ☺ Make it fun
- ☺ Provide choice in terms of what products they use
- ☺ Stand behind younger children
- ☺ Allow your child to hold a toy they can squeeze to calm them
- ☺ Offer a reward such as an extra bedtime story





Charles & Diana

40 years on

Looking back to 1981, and the 40th anniversary of the engagement of Prince Charles and Lady Diana.

February 6, 2021, marks the 40th anniversary of when Lady Diana Spencer made a step into the public spotlight from which, inevitably, she would never return.

At just 19 years old, her engagement to Prince Charles, at 32, was celebrated the world over; 40 years on, with the benefit of hindsight, we look back on the union in a rather different way.

The fact the pair met in peculiar circumstances perhaps should have been a sign – Charles originally dated Diana's sister, Sarah. And in later years it was revealed that the pair had only been together on 13 separate occasions, across six months, before becoming engaged.

Of course, peculiarity and the royal family are common bedfellows. In fact, February 2021 marks another interesting anniversary – the 50th anniversary of the first time Charles met Camilla, his now wife.

So while February 6 certainly won't be looked on as a date in history to be cherished, it is at least a mark in the sand. The couple brought two boys into the world who, in their own way, have made significant contributions; and while their marriage – which was confirmed on July 29, 1981, at St Paul's Cathedral – lasted only 15 years, it's appropriate to remind ourselves that time mends most ills.

Diana, up to her death in 1997, did so much to cultivate her own life away from the stranglehold of the royal epicentre, and largely succeeded; while Charles has reinvented his persona across philanthropic, environmental and entrepreneurial projects, and enjoys a higher grade of popularity now in 2021 than he has at any point in the past.

Photo credit: Getty Images, Shutterstock



Photo credit: Phil Silverman/Shutterstock.com

St Abbs



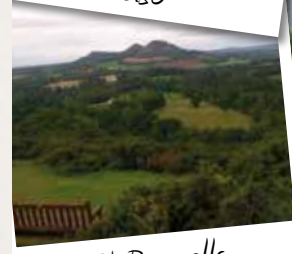
Selkirk



Peebles



Kelso



St Boswells

THE WONDERFUL WEE VILLAGES THAT MAKE A TRIP TO THE SCOTTISH BORDERS WORTHWHILE



There's something about the Scottish Borders that transports minds back to heavy conflict, deep patriotism and bloody warfare, with emperor Hadrian, way back in AD128, constructing a literal divide between two countries that has lasted ever since.

It's peculiar, then, that the battles that existed in this huge belt of masonry are totally at odds with the picturesque villages that decorate a swathe of land that you could spend a lifetime exploring, without ever conquering.

Here are five picture-postcard villages and towns that will grab your attention if you ever find yourself on the Scottish Borders:

St Abbs: A stunning fishing village on the south-east Berwickshire coast, the journey up through Northumberland holds beauty that can rival any coastline in the UK. When you arrive at St Abbs, sample still waters, characterful pubs and the beautiful expanse of the North Sea.

Selkirk: Selkirk combines industrial power with royal heritage, a gateway to the north that dates back to the 13th century. The closeness of the streets offers a feel that likens itself to the Cotswolds, but the open expanses beyond remind you of rich Scottish countryside.

Peebles: Strange sounding but beautiful looking, Peebles has royal roots and is based on the River Tweed. Golf, fishing, mountain-biking and walking are popular pursuits, with the Victorian architecture offering hotels and hostleries to relax in after a day in the wilds.

Kelso: A sleepy market town that has the potential to burst into life at any moment, Kelso is a holidaymakers' dream, with great accommodation, impeccable dining, stunning architecture and a horse racing track that's the envy of the rest of Scotland.

St Boswells: Community is the buzzword in sleepy St Boswells – this place was recently named one of the top 10 places to live in Scotland. Flanked by stunning countryside and the River Tweed, and featuring a number of artisan independent businesses, this cosy village is worth a visit.



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READY, STEADY,

Sllooooooow
ON THE SNAIL TRAIL IN NUTTY NORFOLK

While Gloucestershire prides itself on its annual cheese-rolling race, and mid-Wales will claim to be the spiritual home of bog snorkelling, both still have a way to go to catch up with Norfolk's take on leisure pursuits. Often with a lingering hint of ale and wine in the air, the flatlands to the east have found themselves chiefly responsible for some bizarre takes on entertainment, with perhaps nothing more peculiar than snail racing.

The 'sport' – the true polar opposite to Lewis Hamilton's record-breaking efforts in a racing car – first came about in the 1960s in the quaint village of Congham, although its true roots lie, predictably, in France. Hosted as part of the annual fete, snails are positioned on a flat, circular table. The first gastropod to make it to the outer boundary is determined the winner.

Times are recorded and recent years have seen more than 200 snails entered into the 'blink and

you'll miss it' tournament. The popularity of the pursuit even led drinks brand Guinness to depict snail racing in its Bet on Black ad campaign back in the year 2000.

Unfortunately, the 2020 event had to be cancelled owing to COVID-19, leaving the slithery creatures that usually enter the race with very little else to do but, one would imagine, munch on some lettuce.

Rival competitions have emerged – the Grand Championship Snail Race in the appropriately named Snailwell, Cambridgeshire, celebrates its 30th anniversary next year, and regularly attracts 400 people to the village, doubling its population.

What's best about the annual snail trials, wherever they are held, is that there's no monotonous dominance, no Hamiltons or Schumachers on show; for the simple reason that with an average snail lifespan of around nine months, you're guaranteed a new 'gastropod great' each year.



NEW OLYMPIC SPORT:

BREAKDANCING

THE NEW SPORT SET TO DEBUT AT THE 2024 OLYMPICS IN PARIS... BREAKDANCING!

While the postponement of the Olympic Games in Tokyo proved one of 2020's most frustrating episodes, hosting the Games this coming summer has at least given the International Olympic Committee (IOC) the chance to run its eye over prospective new sports that could be showcased.

And fans of breakdancing – a pursuit created and styled on the mean, urban streets of New York in the 1970s before being exported to a truly global audience – will be glad of the extra time, albeit the first we'll see of it will be in 2024 when Paris hosts.

A movement centred as much on music as it is dance, there are distant similarities with other performance events at the Games, such as synchronised swimming and dressage.

In the Olympic format, competitors look likely to go up against each other 1v1, as was

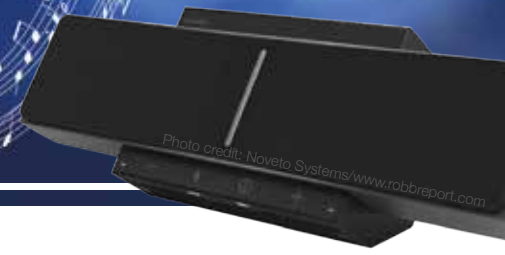
the case at the 2018 Youth Olympics in Argentina. The success of the event there, some significant backing by Red Bull and a desire by organisers for the Olympics to speak to a younger, more urban demographic, means breakdancing – or 'breaking', as it will be called in event terms – sailed through the trial on its way to debuting at the world's biggest sporting tournament.

It's also significant that the IOC has embraced breaking despite some of the activity's leading purveyors insisting that it needs to retain its artistic and cultural edge, and shouldn't be bracketed in with the Olympics' sometimes rather formal take on sport.

Whether breaking will inspire anyone older than the teenage market to take it up is unclear. If it does, expect sales of paracetamol to soar.



BEAM ME UP



A level of gadgetry once reserved for Bond films or the mind of Jason Bourne might soon be coming your way, with boffins in Israel having found a way of beaming music into the brain without the need for speakers or headphones.

It goes by the name of soundbeaming, and this futuristic audio technique has the ability to transform the way we listen to music, play computer games, watch TV or process satellite navigation instructions forever.

The product is called a Soundbeamer 1.0 and is made by Noveto. It sits on a desktop and beams sound to the user – and not just any sound, but rich 3D, circling and weaving soundscapes that fill the ear, swirl around the head and infiltrate the brain, without really seeming to come from any one direction.

What's more, there are no implants required – simply, the 3D sensing module locates and tracks your ear position and sends audio via ultrasonic

waves, creating sound pockets next to the ear. And because there are no headphones blocking other sounds, you will still pick up what's being spoken in the room, so no need for those awkward taps on the shoulder.

The technology is so new and so advanced that even the company's CEO admits he has struggled to come to terms with it.

"The brain doesn't understand what it doesn't know," he says. "It sounds like a speaker but it is just you who can hear it, and that's quite something for the brain to come to terms with."

"We have other technologies that happen around us that are difficult to comprehend but vital to our lives – the internet is perhaps a good example – and I hope this will come to be regarded in the same way."

As for when we can get our hands on the Soundbeamer – the company hopes that the first will be available for sale by Christmas 2021.



How To CLEAN AND PROTECT your Car seats

Even with the best will in the world, your car seats will eventually succumb to stains and spillages. Fortunately, if you care for and clean them appropriately, they can be restored to their original glory.

FABRIC CAR SEATS

- > The first step when cleaning your fabric car seats is to vacuum the upholstery to ensure the area is free from dirt and debris. If pet hair is an issue, utilise a pet hairbrush to lift the hair before vacuuming.
- > Next you need to apply your chosen cleaner or shampoo. Try not to make the area too wet – damp is best – and then gently rub in the solution with a soft-bristled brush.
- > Top tip: Concentrate on small areas and an even spread of solution to avoid water stains.

LEATHER CAR SEATS

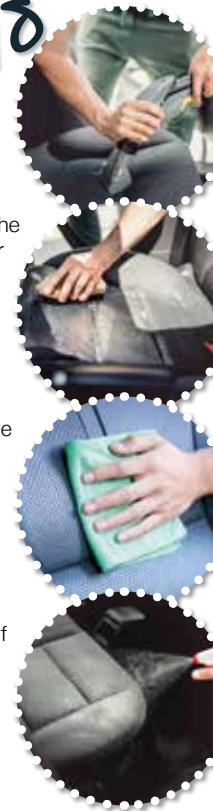
- > Leather car seats are less prone to stains than fabric ones but they are also more delicate and susceptible to abrasions. Therefore, when vacuuming you need to be extra careful and take your time to avoid any scratches or tears. You also need to purchase a leather-specific upholstery cleaner, which often comes as a cream rather than a spray or shampoo.
- > Apply the product and gently rub the area with a microfibre towel.
- > Top tip: The more matt your leather seats appear, the cleaner they are.

HOW TO DRY YOUR CAR SEATS

It is always advisable to clean your car seats early in the day and when no rain is forecast. If you can keep an eye on your vehicle, leave your windows slightly open to prevent trapped moisture and let your seats dry naturally.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CAR SEATS

- > Condition leather seats to prevent cracks
- > Spray fabric seats with a fabric protector



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PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

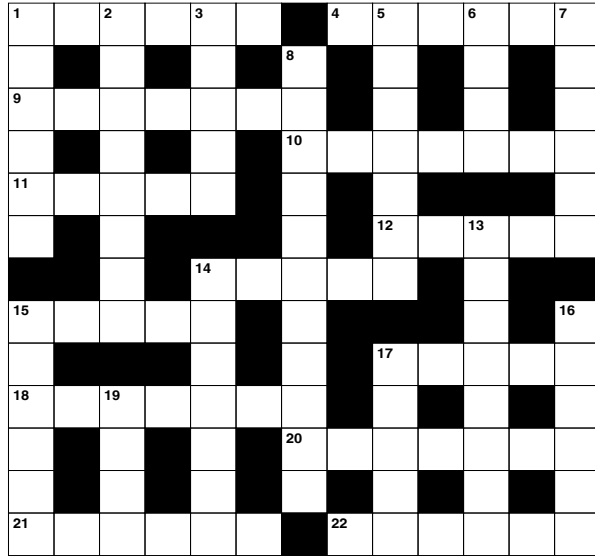
Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

ACROSS

- 1. Straighten out (6)
- 4. Vocalist (6)
- 9. Animal fat (7)
- 10. Not friendly (7)
- 11. Oozes (5)
- 12. Compassion (5)
- 14. Expect; think that (5)
- 15. Word of farewell (5)
- 17. Wedding assistant (5)
- 18. Supervisory worker (7)
- 20. Burdensome work (7)
- 21. Short choral compositions (6)
- 22. Entertains (6)

DOWN

- 1. Except when (6)
- 2. Musical pieces for solo instruments (8)
- 3. Regulations (5)
- 5. Annoying (7)
- 6. Large desert in Asia (4)
- 7. Make less dense (6)
- 8. Residents (11)
- 13. People with auburn hair (8)



- 14. Furthest away (7)
- 15. State publicly (6)
- 16. Tremulous sounds (6)
- 17. Deprive of weapons (5)
- 19. Speak in a wild way (4)

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Adélie penguins breed and raise their offspring in Antarctica
- ▶ Puffins can flap their wings up to 400 times a minute. They can fly at around 55 miles an hour
- ▶ The bald eagle, which was once on the brink of extinction, has been the national symbol of the United States of America since 1782
- ▶ Once a flamingo lays an egg, the parents take turns sitting on it to keep it warm. The egg usually hatches in around 30 days
- ▶ The ostrich is the tallest and heaviest of all the birds
- ▶ As a male snowy owl gets older, it turns whiter. Males are often whiter than females
- ▶ Red-tailed hawks can spot a mouse from 30 metres up in the air

SUDOKU

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

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