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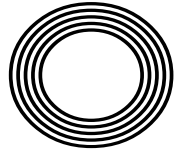
**FIVE  
TV SETS  
YOU CAN  
VISIT**

*Beauty treatments  
using seasonal veggies*

**SOUP SEASON**  
How to build your own recipe

# BEN STOKES OBE

Legendary cricketer sets his sights on World Cup victory



**FREE**

Photo credit: Simon Dael/Shutterstock



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# Editor's notes...

OCTOBER 2023



Brett Shohet, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** Bishop's Stortford. The seasons are shifting as we move from summer into autumn. There's no surer sign of this change than when Halloween decorations begin appearing in the shops - though I did notice some as early as July this year. I've even spotted a few festive decorations lurking on the shelves...

This means it's time to dig out our old jumpers and coats - you might find a crumpled £5 note in a pocket if you're lucky - and begin preparing ourselves for the colder months ahead. But even with the darker evenings and chillier weather, there's still a lot to look forward to. Make sure you check out our what's on page to find out some of the top events in your local area.

It's been reassuring to see that our high streets are getting busier once again. I've recently been out and about supporting local networking groups and helping local businesses make valuable new connections. It just goes to show that here at **VISION**, we will always do everything we can to support our advertisers and help them to succeed.

Earlier this month, a business exhibition featuring a variety of businesses and welcoming hundreds of visitors took place locally. We'll be looking to expand to other areas in the future, so watch this space.

*Brett Shohet*

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

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## Luxury care in the heart of Harlow

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We are delighted to announce the grand opening of The Jubilee Suite - our new luxury care suite situated within Abbot Care Home in Harlow, Essex.

Our new Jubilee Suite has been expertly designed with kindness, and dignity at its heart, providing person-centred nursing, residential and dementia care. With a variety of excellent facilities and spaces to enjoy, we welcome the people who live here to play an active part in everyday life - as we ensure activities, events and mealtimes are carefully tailored to the personal preferences of each individual.

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# Sooty™

Turns Seventy-Five

In an era where a fad is lucky to last a full five minutes, the enduring magic of hand puppet Sooty must be something of a mystery to young audiences. And yet, when faced with his snuggly yellow fur, button eyes and sweet, shy demeanour, they inevitably melt with adoration as generation upon generation of children before them have done.

Discovered by Harry Corbett OBE in a joke shop on Blackpool North Pier on July 19, 1948, 'Teddy' – as he was then known – was purchased for seven shillings and six pence.

Having long harboured ambitions for the stage, Bradford native Corbett first appeared with the silent bear in a 1952 BBC TV show, *Talent Night*. The act was an instant success and Sooty soon became the star of his very own show featuring magic tricks, slapstick comedy and songs – a nod to Corbett's former ambitions as a concert pianist which were thwarted by his being deaf in one ear. Soon afterwards, he was joined by his pals: there was Sweep, a grey male dog who communicated with a squeak, and Soo, a female panda with a human voice.

After suffering a heart attack in 1975, Corbett's son Peter (stage name Matthew) took over as Sooty's friend and keeper. In the ensuing years, and with the character now a mainstay on *Rainbow*, Corbett Senior would make occasional guest appearances on spin-off *Sooty Show* (by this point now airing on ITV) until his death in 1989.

Under Matthew Corbett, Sooty and co. would enjoy enormous success. He changed the format of the show to one of a sitcom but kept the integral elements. Namely, Sooty's wand, the catchphrase 'izzy, wizzy, let's get busy', and the silent bear's enduring love of water pistols and mayhem in general.

In 1998, Corbett was succeeded by Richard Cadell. Only a few weeks into his new role, he found himself at 10 Downing Street for a special awards ceremony honouring brave children, hosted by then Prime Minister Sir Tony Blair and his wife Cherie – who Sooty dutifully squirted with his water pistol.

Sooty and Sweep were also guests at the birthday party of His Majesty Prince Charles, as he was then, in 2018 (Sooty actually being a few months older than our now King). The pair have courted numerous other politicians, musicians and celebrities and even – on the hand of Harry Corbett – shared a giggle with Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

So how is it, then, that a premise so simple remains so beloved in an age of CGI and swanky animation?

"I think the great thing with Sooty – and this is a famous Harry Corbett quote – is that he's never really been in fashion, so he's never really been out," laughs Cadell.

"It's not like one of these children's things that spike and then disappear," explains the 54 year old, who will embark on *75th Birthday Spectacular* – a special UK national tour that kicks off on October 21 at Bradford's Alhambra Theatre and runs through until April 2024.

He adds: "Sometimes the things we cherish most as children, and adults, are based in simple entertainment, and I am delighted that fact has held true despite so much else around us changing."



Photo credit: Moviestore/Shutterstock

# BEHIND *the scenes*

Are you a complete TV addict? What would you say if we told you that there are iconic sets all across the UK that you can visit? From *Coronation Street* to *Only Fools and Horses* to *Downtown Abbey*, here are some locations from popular shows that are open for visitors today.

### *Coronation Street* – ITV Studios, Manchester

This walking tour of *Coronation Street*, the UK's longest-running soap, is a must for any Corrie fan. Complete with an expert guide, you can take a closer look at all the iconic shops and businesses on the street, including The Rovers Return, Roy's Rolls café and Webster's Auto Centre.

### *Only Fools and Horses* – Bristol Temple Meads Train Station

One of Britain's most-loved comedies, who wouldn't want to take a closer look behind the scenes at this legendary sitcom? The *Only Fools and Horses* three-and-a-half-hour coach tour takes you to filming spots of more than 10 episodes and includes a look at Nelson Mandela House, Sid's Café and the road where the iconic Batman and Robin scene took place.

### *Peaky Blinders* – Central Liverpool

A gritty masterpiece, *Peaky Blinders* was filmed in Liverpool even though it is set in Birmingham, owing to this city's well-preserved Victorian industrial architecture. Hop on either the half-day or full-day guided coach tour and see the homes of Polly and Field Marshal Russell, Garrison Lane and so much more.

### *Downtown Abbey* – Bampton, Oxfordshire

Become Lord or Lady of Grantham for the day, with the *Downtown Abbey* and Village group tour. Visit the charming village of Bampton, which fans will know as Downtown Village. Then head to Highclere Castle, where you will be able to explore the estate and the rooms within and enjoy a spot of lunch.

### *Bridgerton* – The Abbey Hotel, Bath

Channel your inner Daphne or Duke of Hastings with a guided *Bridgerton* tour. Explore many of this popular show's filming locations during this two-hour tour, including Lady Danbury's mansion, Gunter's Tea Shop and the modiste dress shop.



Photo credit: ITV, BBC/Caryn Mandabach Productions Ltd./Matt Squire, Joe Scoble/Shutterstock.com

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# RAINCOAT *revolution*

**HOW A SCOTTISH CHEMIST DEvised A FABRIC THAT CHANGED THE COURSE OF FASHION HISTORY**

### A TECHNOLOGICAL MARVEL

Back in the early 19th century, there were no synthetic fibres available, and keeping clothing waterproof was a constant challenge. But Glasgow-born Charles Macintosh's innovation changed all that. He created a revolutionary material that was made by rubberising cotton cloth, making it waterproof. Macintosh patented his method, and the first 'Mac' hit the market in October 1823. His Mackintosh coat became an instant sensation, and the brand became synonymous with stylish and functional outerwear loved by workers and aristocrats alike.

### STRANGE SMELLS AND MELTING COATS

Early Mackintosh coats faced a few issues – they smelled strange, the fabric was stiff, and they sometimes even melted in hot weather. Thankfully, these problems were largely solved in 1844 with the patenting of another groundbreaking innovation: the vulcanising of rubber. This chemical process made the fabric stronger and less sensitive to temperature changes.

### BACK FROM THE BRINK

In the 1980s and 1990s, Mackintosh faced challenges from lightweight synthetic waterproof fabrics like Gore-Tex. However, a management buyout in the mid-1990s breathed new life into the brand. It also reclaimed its status as an upmarket brand, collaborating with prestigious fashion houses like Louis Vuitton.

### THE MAKING OF A MACKINTOSH

To this day, the coats are still handmade in Cumbernauld, near Glasgow, using a fabric that's very similar to Macintosh's original. Skilled craftsmen and women cut, sew and seal the material by hand, using special rubber-based glue. Each seam is also taped to ensure the coats are 100 per cent waterproof.

Now owned by Japanese firm Yagi Tsusho, the Mackintosh has weathered the storms of fashion and remains a symbol of British style and innovation. If you want one, you'll need to start saving now; a classic trench coat will set you back almost £1,000.



Photo credit: mackintosh.com



# VEGGIE *vision*

Most people know that fruits and vegetables are good for your complexion when eaten regularly, but not everyone knows that they can also be applied to the skin and hair to achieve amazing results. Here are four of our favourite veggie-based beauty treatments.

### PUMPKIN FOOT MASK – Best for dry, cracked heels

**You will need:** ½ cup of pumpkin purée | 1 whole egg | 1 tsp honey

**How to apply:** Combine all of the above ingredients in a bowl | Massage into the feet and ankles | Cover with cling film or put on a pair of old socks | Leave for 15 minutes and then rinse with warm water

### BUTTERNUT SQUASH HAIR MASK – Best for dull or dry hair

**You will need:** ½ large butternut squash | 3 tbsp honey | ¼ cup of plain yogurt

**How to make:** Peel and cook the squash until soft enough to remove the inner contents | Mash the squash | Combine with the honey and yogurt | Apply the mixture to damp hair and put on a plastic shower cap | Leave on for 20 minutes and then rinse with warm water

### BETROOT FACE MASK – Best for ageing skin

**You will need:** 2 tsp beetroot juice | 1 tsp yogurt | 1 tsp lime juice | 2 tsp gram flour

**How to make:** Mix the beetroot juice with the flour and then add the yogurt and lime juice | Mix until you have a smooth paste | Spread the mixture evenly over the face and leave for 15 minutes | Rinse off with warm water | Pat your face dry

### POTATO CLEANSER – Best for acne-prone skin

**You will need:** 1 potato | 1 cucumber | 1 tsp baking soda | 1 tsp water

**How to apply:** Peel and chop the potato and the cucumber | Blend in a food processor or blender for 20 seconds | Add the water and baking soda | Apply to the face daily to cleanse and remove make-up, dirt and impurities.



# Recruiting Now

## You can afford to foster

A welcome boost in pay has been given to Hertfordshire County Council's foster carers.

In light of the recent Cost of Living pressures, and in recognition of the invaluable work foster carers do, Hertfordshire County Council has agreed to increase the skills element of the weekly foster carer payment by nine per cent. This is an addition to the recent 12.43 per cent increase of the foster carer set allowance, awarded by the Government.

The extra payments will be awarded to foster carers and backdated to May, taking a foster carer's average weekly pay to £502.30 per week. (Based on caring for a child aged 11-15 and includes skills and child allowance).

The news follows a recent Outstanding Ofsted award was given to Hertfordshire County Council's children services.



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text FOSTERING to 62277  
or ring 0800 917 0925



Welcoming the news is foster carer Nicole from Stevenage who has been fostering for five years. She said: **"The pay increase means that we don't have to worry about having enough money to meet the needs of our foster children. "Our pay increase makes me feel so valued as a foster carer."**

Also pleased with the increase is foster carer Jools from Hemel Hempstead, who with her partner Ed, has fostered for Hertfordshire County Council for nine years.

She said: **"I think it's fair to say we are pleased with the pay rise as things have been so difficult with the huge increases in food, fuel, utilities and clothing. I think along with the increase of qualifying care relief it will be a help."**

There are currently approximately 1,000 children in care in Hertfordshire but only 410 fostering households.



Councillor Fiona Thomson, Hertfordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families, said: **"We are delighted that we have been able to raise the pay of our wonderful foster carers. This is a real commitment and acknowledgement of the vital contribution our foster carers make."**

**"We are fully aware of the pressures that our foster carers are facing in terms of the cost-of-living crisis and are pleased to be able to support them further. As ever, we are very grateful to our foster carers for the amazing work they do."**

Hertfordshire County Council urgently needs more foster carers. As well as generous pay and allowances, the council offers local comprehensive training and 24/7 support, and is a Fostering Friendly council, giving extra holiday and support to employees who are foster carers.

Anyone interested in fostering should be aged over 21 and have a spare room.

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## Recruiting now for foster carers in Hertfordshire



**"We love our busy home. It's good fun"**

Dawn and Alan, Hertfordshire foster carers

## Could you make a big difference to a child's life?

There are approximately **1,000 children and young people in care in Hertfordshire** and many of these children need the love and support of a foster family.

If you are aged over 21, have a spare room at home, and space in your heart, then fostering could be for you.

When you choose to foster with us, you'll receive generous pay and allowances for each child, exceptional training and 24/7 local support right from the very start.



SCAN ME

Get in touch with our friendly team today and we'll help you decide if fostering is right for you.

CONTACT US:

To find out more about fostering, please call our team on **0800 917 0925** for an informal chat or email us on [fostering.recruitment@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:fostering.recruitment@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

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# Incy wincy spider

Halloween provides the perfect opportunity for you to get crafty with your kids, and this spooky spiderweb doesn't disappoint. Suitable for little ones and older children alike, discover how to make your very own salt and glue spiderweb craft below.

**WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**  
 Black paper or card | A pencil | A ruler | PVC or Elmer's glue | Table salt | Watercolour paints | A soft brush

**HOW TO MAKE:**  
**1 Draw your spiderweb design:** Your child can do this by hand themselves, depending on their age and ability, using a pencil or ruler, or you can help them with this step. Alternatively, you could print out a spiderweb template to use.

**2 Trace the shape with glue:** The next step is to trace glue along each line of your spiderweb. Again, young children may need help with this if they want to achieve a good spiderweb shape. To make the glue lines as smooth as possible, do not allow the tip of the glue bottle to touch the paper but instead, hover slightly above it.

**3 Cover the spiderweb with salt:** Fill a ramekin or small bowl with table salt and then use two fingers to pinch the salt and sprinkle it over the glue. Make sure that you cover each line and curve with enough salt. Leave the glue to fully dry, ideally overnight, before moving on to the next step.

**4 Paint your spiderweb:** Now comes the really exciting part: adding colour to your spiderweb. Watercolour paints are perfect for this as they spread well on dried glue and salt. Using a soft brush, plenty of water and your chosen watercolours, add a drop or two of colour to a salt line. Use a light touch and do not scrub as this may dissolve your spiderweb.

**MAKE A HANGING SPIDERWEB**  
 Take your craft to the next level by applying the glue and the paint, minus the salt, to a thin plastic sheet, gently peel it off and then fix it to your preferred surface using sticky glue dots or hang around the room with string. Make sure you allow the glue to fully dry before peeling.



## HOW TO BUILD YOUR own soup

Soup is cheap, filling and the perfect antidote to the cold weather. Sadly, supermarket offerings can be both costly and underwhelming. So we thought we'd share with you our foolproof method for prepping the perfect soup every time.

- 1. CHOOSE A FAT:** Butter | Olive oil | Palm oil | Sunflower oil
- 2. SELECT A BASE LIQUID (1 OR 2):** Beef/chicken stock | Vegetable stock | Cream | Tomato purée
- 3. PICK A PROTEIN:** Chicken | Fish | Tofu | Lentils | Beans
- 4. DECIDE ON A GRAIN:** Rice | Noodles | Pasta | Barley
- 5. CHOOSE YOUR VEGGIES (UP TO 3):** Carrots | Onion | Peppers | Sweet potatoes | Parsnips | Spinach | Broccoli | Mushrooms
- 6. ADD SOME FLAVOUR:** Garlic salt | Cayenne pepper | Cumin | Basil | Thyme | Chilli powder

### How to make your soup

- STEP 1:** Heat your fat and sauté your aromatic veggies, such as onion and garlic, for 3-5 minutes.
- STEP 2:** Add your chosen protein and cook until browned or softened.
- STEP 3:** Add any other vegetables and allow them to soften for 5-10 minutes.
- STEP 4:** Pour in your base (unless using a cream base; if so save this until step 6), your grain and your selected spices and mix well.
- STEP 5:** Bring to the boil, reduce the heat and allow to simmer for around an hour.
- STEP 6:** Add cream if you are making a cream-based soup.
- STEP 7:** Allow to cool, and blend if you want a fully puréed soup.
- STEP 8:** Garnish with croutons, cheese or a herb-infused oil.

### Freezing your soup

You can freeze your soup, ideally on the same day you make it, in an airtight container or freezer bag for 2-3 months. Most soups freeze well, with the exception of cream- or milk-based soups, which tend to separate. Add any fresh herbs or starchy elements such as rice or pasta once thawed and reheated, not before freezing, for optimum results.



Photo credit: maseandpae.com, thepurplecupcakeblog.co.uk





# AUTUMN COCKTAILS

Just because summer now seems like a distant memory, doesn't mean that you can't still enjoy a delicious cocktail or two after work or when the kids are tucked up in bed. Why not have a go at making one of these recipes below, and warm your cockles on a chilly night?

## PUMPKIN WHITE RUSSIAN

**You will need:** 25ml pumpkin spice Kahlua | 50ml vodka | 25ml double cream  
**How to make:** Pour the ingredients into a glass over ice | Stir lightly and serve.

## CARAMEL APPLE MULE

**You will need:** 50ml vodka | 15ml caramel | 30ml apple cider vinegar | Ginger beer to top | 1 apple | 1 cinnamon stick  
**How to make:** Shake the vodka, caramel and apple cider vinegar with ice | Strain into a mule mug over ice | Top with ginger beer | Garnish with an apple fan and cinnamon stick.

## SLOE GIN FIZZ

**You will need:** 50ml sloe gin | 25ml lemon juice | 2 tsp sugar syrup | Sparkling water | Lemon slice | Fresh or frozen blackberry  
**How to make:** Pour the sloe gin, lemon juice and sugar syrup into a cocktail shaker and top with ice | Shake well | Strain into a tall glass with more ice | Top with sparkling water and stir gently | Garnish with a lemon slice and a blackberry.

## CAMPFIRE SLING

**You will need:** 50ml rye whisky | 7ml maple syrup | 3 dashes of chocolate bitters | Orange peel twist  
**How to make:** Add all the ingredients to an old-fashioned glass with one piece of ice | Stir thoroughly | Scorch a piece of orange peel over the glass to release the oils.

## MULLED APPLE JUICE

**You will need:** 1 litre apple juice | 1 cinnamon stick | 3 cloves | Orange slices | Sugar or honey to taste  
**How to make:** Simmer the apple juice with the orange peel, cinnamon and cloves for 5-10 minutes | Sweeten with sugar or honey | Serve with some orange slices and a cinnamon stick.



Photo credit: bbgoodfood.com, tastingpanelmag.com

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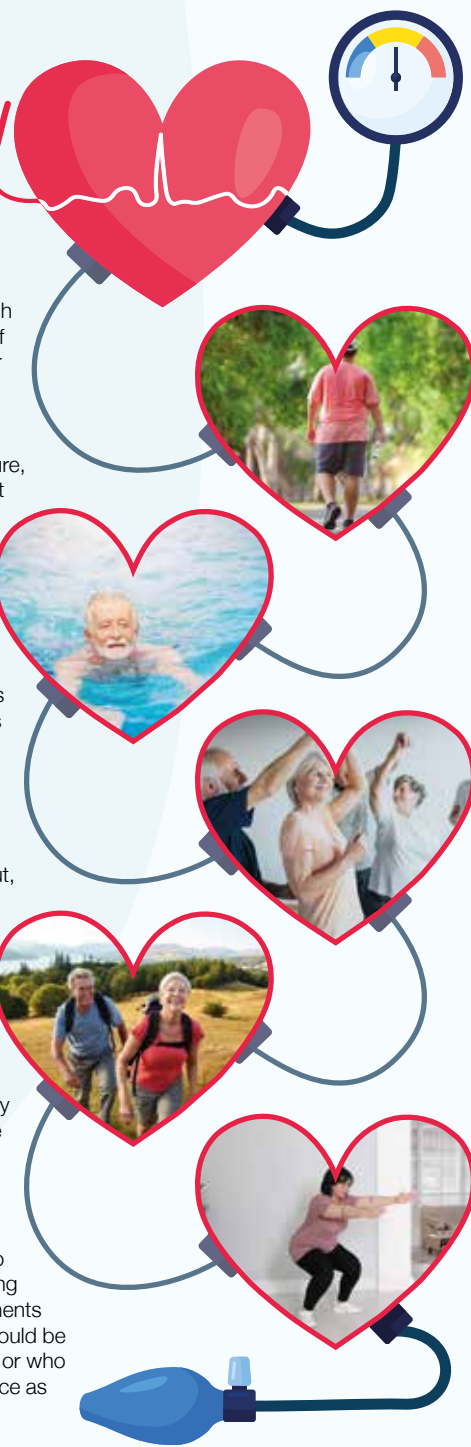
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# UNDER

# pressure!



**D**id you know that you can help to control high blood pressure with exercise? Here are five of the best physical activities, proven to lower your blood pressure.

### BRISK WALKING

If you are overweight and have high blood pressure, you may not be able to undergo a vigorous workout regime. Fortunately, studies have shown that multiple short sessions of brisk walking can be as effective at lowering blood pressure as high-intensity exercises. Aim for three 10-minute walks each day.

### SWIMMING

A great form of aerobic exercise, swimming is a good option for older adults and those who require a low-impact fitness regime. For best results, aim for 45 minutes of continuous swimming four or five times per week. Don't worry if you cannot manage 45 minutes right away, as you can gradually build up your fitness and endurance levels.

### DANCING

If you get bored easily and like to have fun when working out, then you will be pleased to hear that dancing is a great form of exercise for people with high blood pressure. Another effective form of aerobic exercise, aim for at least 30 minutes a day, five times per week.

### HIKING

For those who like a bit more of a challenge and love the great outdoors, hiking is the physical activity for you. Guaranteed to get your heart rate up and help you lose any excess weight, there are lots of beautiful hiking spots in the UK. This physical pastime has been shown to lower blood pressure by up to 10 points.

### RESISTANCE TRAINING

Resistance training can be added to your workout routine to further help with reducing blood pressure. This type of training can be done less frequently than cardio exercises; movements such as squats, push-ups, planks and abdominal crunches should be carried out two or three times a week. For anyone less mobile or who doesn't want to use weights, resistance bands are a good choice as they will not put your body under as much pressure.



# Signs you are ADDICTED to CAFFEINE

**D**o you love an energy drink? Can't get out of bed without your morning cup of coffee? If the answer is yes, then you are far from alone. It is suspected that as many as three out of four regular caffeine consumers are addicted to the substance.

**1 You get headaches if you miss your caffeine fix:** Caffeine is a vasoconstrictor, which means it makes the blood vessels narrower and restricts blood flow. This in turn relieves headaches, so if you miss your morning fix, you may develop a pounding head as a result.

**2 You're bad-tempered before you get your first dose:** Not a morning person? This could be because you are too reliant on caffeine. Caffeine stimulates the dopamine receptors in the brain, which makes you feel good. Therefore, if you don't get your morning hit, you are much more likely to experience a bad mood.

**3 You struggle to concentrate without being caffeinated:** Caffeine is known for helping you feel more alert and focused. However, if you are used to getting that boost every day, you may struggle to concentrate without the help of this popular stimulant.

**4 You've built up a tolerance:** Do you feel like you need more and more caffeine to enjoy the same effects? This is likely because your body has started to become immune to the effects of this substance.

**5 You feel constantly on edge:** Do you often get the jitters? High doses of caffeine can cause you to feel jumpy and can even cause anxiety and panic attacks.

### How to reduce your caffeine intake:

- ☛ Keep a caffeine diary
- ☛ Switch to herbal teas
- ☛ Check labels for other sources of caffeine, such as fizzy drinks and chocolate
- ☛ Gradually cut down your daily intake rather than going cold turkey.





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# HALLWAY to HEAVEN



Is your hallway looking more shabby than stylish? Has it become a place to dump everything and anything that doesn't have a proper home?

Discover five simple ways to transform the entrance to your home, with inspiring ideas to suit all hallways.

## 1. ADD POPS OF COLOUR

If you have a small hallway, you may be tempted to stick to white paint to make the space appear bigger. However, by adding pops of bright colours such as yellow or green, you can create visual interest and fashion a vibrant space. If you don't want to go all out with colour on the walls, why not add a few bold accessories instead, such as brightly coloured coat hooks, colourful floor tiles or a piece of bold artwork?

## 2. MAKE THE MOST OF MIRRORS

Dark hallways can make the entrance to your home feel gloomy and unwelcoming. Counteract this by creating the illusion of light with a few well-placed mirrors. Don't be afraid to experiment with different sizes and shapes, as this can help to make more of a style statement.

## 3. INVEST IN FUNCTIONAL FURNITURE

Most hallways are narrow, which means they offer little in the way of space. Therefore, if you want to add a piece of furniture, then you need to make sure it is both stylish and practical. For example, a seating area that doubles up as a storage unit. It can also be a good idea to make use of any available vertical space, for example by hanging a wall cupboard above your coat hooks.

## 4. EMBRACE CONSCIOUS STYLING

As a transitional space in your home, it is important that your hallway is clutter free, well lit, and, most importantly, that it is styled in keeping with the rest of your interiors. Take a walk around your home and see what design elements you can incorporate into your hallway.

## 5. LAYER LIGHTING

You can transform a dark hallway with the right lighting, with layered lights offering a stylish and practical way to illuminate this key space. Try combining multiple pendant lights with directional wall lights for maximum impact.



HOME & DIY

Photo credit: - dilbertbertage.co.uk, - idealhome.co.uk, - furnifun123.co.uk, - BT-Cheerful.com

Laura Hammett is an award-winning design house, run by Laura and her husband Aaron since 2008. With more than 25 years of experience between them, they are known for creating contemporary interiors with classic touches, resulting in stunning elegance.

Laura Hammett's work spans the globe and even includes a private jet. You can also enjoy the Laura Hammett look with a creative approach.

**A CLASSIC STYLE FOR THE MODERN ERA**

When you examine Laura Hammett's style, you're instantly transported to modern London. The designs are full of light and detail, creating beautiful looks that would be right at home in any design coffee table book.

Colour palettes include lighter shades of grey and taupe, paired with darker details to add contrast. Light upholstery, rich walnut and subtle marble are some of the styles that have been used in the Laura

Hammett portfolio, adding character and elegance to all kinds of homes.

**CREATING THE LOOK**

With these simple tips, you can transform your home with a modern look the Laura Hammett way.

- > Enhance the natural light in your home by keeping walls light. Think greige, off-white and white.
- > Adding details such as cushions and throws in rich fabrics can make your interior look more upmarket, without designer price tags.
- > Statement light fittings and abstract wall art in your colour scheme can complete your space, helping you create some interest without filling the room with clutter.
- > Search antique shops and second-hand stores to find high-quality furniture items you can restore to their former glory.

Laura Hammett's style is on trend and attainable, a look that can you can adapt to your own home to create subtle modern elegance.



Photo credit: laurahammett.com, @laurahammettinteriors via Instagram

# Let's get ready to TUMBLE!

Did you know that there are many more uses for tumble dryer sheets than just to reduce static and make your clothes smell nice? Discover five surprising uses for the humble dryer sheet below.

**TO REMOVE FOOD RESIDUE FROM POTS AND PANS**

If you have forgone the washing up in favour of more enjoyable activities, then you are likely to be left with food residue that simply won't budge. To remove this with minimal effort, simply place a dryer sheet in the middle of the pot or pan, add warm water and some washing-up liquid and allow it to soak. After an hour, remove the sheet, drain the water and wipe away the stains with a sponge.

**TO PICK UP PET HAIR FROM CLOTHES AND UPHOLSTERY**

Does your pet leave dander all over your clothes and upholstery? When it comes to removing stubborn pet hair, nothing beats a tumble dryer sheet. More effective than a lint roller, all you need to do is rub a fresh sheet against the item and watch the dander disappear.

**TO CLEAN YOUR TV AND COMPUTER SCREENS**

Out of screen-cleaning wipes? Don't panic, as you can use a tumble dryer sheet with equally impressive results. Designed to reduce static cling, a dryer sheet can effectively remove dust and prevent it from resettling.

**TO REMOVE RESIDUE FROM YOUR IRON**

Over time, residue will start to build up on your iron, which will make it less effective at removing creases. To clean this appliance, turn it on to a low heat setting and carefully rub a tumble dryer sheet over the surface, making sure not to touch the iron plate with your bare fingers. The heat will soften the residue and make it easy to remove.

**TO SHARPEN SCISSORS**

About to start a new craft project or wrap a present and realise your trusty scissors are blunt? Carefully run a tumble dryer sheet against the dull blade and enjoy restored sharpness in an instant. Be sure not to touch your finger directly to the blade!



# Have you TWIGGED?

If you love the current rustic vibe but not the hefty price tags, check out these easy twig projects.

## SUNBURST TWIG MIRROR YOU'LL NEED:

- > Lots of straight twigs of roughly the same size
- > A 25cm round frameless mirror
- > A 35cm circle of corrugated cardboard
- > A hot glue gun

### HOW TO MAKE:

- > Glue the mirror in the centre of the cardboard circle.
- > Glue the twigs on the cardboard so that one end is right against the mirror edge and the other is sticking straight out, overlapping the cardboard. Layer on enough twigs so that the cardboard is completely covered.

For safety reasons, we recommend you prop your mirror on a shelf rather than hang it up.

## TWIGGY PHOTO FRAME

**YOU'LL NEED:** For a 10cm x 15cm (6in x 4in) photo frame:

- > 2x 15cm twigs
- > 2x 20cm twigs
- > Twine
- > PVA glue
- > A piece of baking paper slightly larger than the photo
- > Scissors

### HOW TO MAKE:

- > To form the first corner, lay a longer twig on top of a shorter twig, allowing 2.5cm of each twig to stick out where they overlap.
- > Wrap the two together so the twine forms a cross shape on top. Tie to secure.
- > Complete this step on all corners in the same way to create a rectangle.
- > Glue the photo onto the baking paper. Then glue the edges of the baking paper to the back of the frame, with the picture facing out.

## JEWELLERY TREE

### YOU'LL NEED:

- > A strong hardwood branch – approx. 25-30cm tall
- > A log slice about 5cm thick and 13-15cm in diameter
- > Epoxy glue (e.g. Araldite)
- > A drill and drill bits suitable for wood

### HOW TO MAKE:

- > Drill a hole in the log slice, the same width as the main stem of the branch.
- > Fasten the branch in the hole with the glue and leave it to dry.
- > Hang up your jewellery!

*Happy twigging!*



Photo credit: sahyutian@imggo.com, doodlerat@img.com

# Home Counties Loft Ladders, Quality You Can Trust!

These days most homeowners suffer from a lack of storage space. So many precious items that need to be kept - but where to store it all? That's where Home Counties Loft Ladders come in.

The company, based locally, offers homeowners the opportunity to maximise their storage space with a loft ladder. 50sqft of boarding and a light - all fully fitted in less than a day from just £444! But it's not just the affordability of the package that makes Home Counties Loft Ladders stand out, as manager Jamie Oakley explains: 'Our

watchwords are Quality, Integrity and Value. Quality in the materials that we use for all our installations and the fact that all our loft packages are fitted by time served tradesmen, so our customers are assured of the best job.

Integrity in that we will turn up at the time we say and make sure the house is spotless when we leave, and value in that we offer our services at a price people can afford.

Our business relies on referrals and we get a huge amount of our calls from people who have been referred to us by our existing customers

- that simply wouldn't happen if we didn't adhere to our overriding principles.

At the end of the day the old adage that happy customers lead to more happy customers is true and we work hard to make that happen for

every installation we carry out!

So, if you want to make use of your loft space, call Jamie free on 0808 301 9551 and he'll be happy to pop round and give you a no obligation quote so you too can make use of your loft!



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# BIG BEN

**BEN STOKES OBE'S INCLUSION IN THE WORLD CUP SQUAD IS GREAT NEWS FOR ENGLAND CRICKET... LESS SO FOR OUR OPPONENTS!**

When Durham and England all-rounder Ben Stokes OBE decided that the gruelling cricketing schedule was too much for him and his body to take, a collective sigh of relief from those who cherish the clack of leather on willow must have been heard all around the world in the sport.

It was July 2022. Stokes had spent the previous three months leading his country in Test cricket after succeeding Joe Root MBE as captain, and things in that regard had started perfectly, with four wins in a row.

However, after commenting that he felt playing all three of cricket's formats – Test, ODI and T20 – was “unsustainable”, Stokes' last 50-over tussle came against South Africa at his home ground, Durham's Riverside.

Yet a year is a long time in sport, and even longer in the seesaw nature of the Christchurch-born all-rounder's career. So roll on 12 months, and despite a huge summer Ashes series ahead, Stokes began speaking to his limited overs captain Jos Buttler MBE and coach Matthew Mott about a quickfire return to the ODI circuit.

Stokes says: “The closer this World Cup got, the more I was becoming interested in having those discussions. And when you consider that we are the defending champions, it almost feels right to want to ensure you defend that crown.

“At the same time, I had to remind myself of the original reason for choosing to retire from this format of the game.”

Return he has, with a pledge from the 32-year-old to listen to his body, perhaps better than he has in the past when the almost constant demands of the game have had an impact on not just physical abilities, but the star's mental wellbeing too.

“Let's see how this World Cup goes,” he adds, “and I'll decide then if it's my last hurrah.”

Had Stokes not chosen to return to the fold, we would have been denied his record-breaking knock against New Zealand in the third ODI at The Kia Oval in September. Coming into bat alongside Dawid Malan with England compromised on 13/2, Stokes was about to rev it up against the Kiwis.

His 15 fours and nine sixes contributed to an almost unimaginable personal total of 182, beating Jason Roy's 180 against Australia in Melbourne in 2018. His efforts saw England reach a mammoth 368 off 48.1 overs. New Zealand could only muster 187 all out and Stokes took a further leap into the echelons of iconic status.

“I need more time to get used to its rhythm, but I think I managed well this time,” he said, referencing that spectacular knock. “The announcer mentioned my record just before I was done. I didn't even know about it until then. Jason congratulated me, and I apologised to him,” he laughs.

Does Stokes feel that England can become world champions again, and in the process become only the third side to defend the title since its inception in 1975?

“Everyone recognises our team's strength, and it's not boastful to admit we have a talented line-up. We're optimistic about our chances, but in World Cup matches, it's all about handling pressure.”

Photo credit: Kieran McManus/Shutterstock

# FROM YOUR AREA

LOCAL NEWS

## Man jailed after raping woman in toilet



A restaurant worker has been jailed for more than eight years for raping a woman in Bishop's Stortford.

The victim was attending her work Christmas party at local Turkish restaurant Skew on December 10, 2022. Staff member Erdal Eryimaz, 40 (pictured above), of Archers Place, Bishop's Stortford, followed her into a toilet cubicle and attacked her.

In a victim personal statement read to the court by prosecution barrister Matthew Walsh, the woman said: "I was raped by a person in a position of trust in the restaurant. It was a staff member who assaulted me while I was intoxicated and vulnerable. I will never be the person I used to be."

Eryimaz denied raping the victim, but was convicted and sentenced to eight years and four months in prison at St Albans Crown Court on September 21.

He must register as a sex offender for life and abide by the terms of a Sexual Harm Prevention Order for 15 years.

## Council's financial review reveals 'spending spree'

The Leader of East Herts Council (EHC) has said that local residents, including those in Bishop's Stortford, should not have to pay rising costs after a recent financial report brought a budget crisis to light.

EHC's Green/Liberal Democrat Joint Administration has undertaken an in-depth review of the council's

financial situation and uncovered an alleged huge budget hole left by the Conservatives after a "reckless spending spree".

EHC's Medium Term Financial Plan shows that annual savings of just over £6million are needed by the end of 2026/27 in order to balance revenues and expenditure. EHC has a total annual spend of around £17million.

The Leader of EHC councillor Ben Crystall said: "Rising costs should not have to fall on residents, many of whom are already struggling financially. We will do our best to solve the issues we've inherited from the previous administration, but will also be looking to the government to help us cover the increasing costs of essential services across the district."

## Technology firm achieves rapid growth

A Bishop's Stortford-based technology workplace specialist has announced a doubling in revenue after diversifying to support the energy industry.

Office Fox, which has offices in both Hertfordshire and Essex, helps companies move towards a more sustainable print and scan environment.

Managing director David Warrington (pictured below) said the company is focused on changing the way its clients consume energy in a bid to reduce emissions while delivering cost efficiencies.

Since its launch, David said the company had seen an increase in oil, gas and engineering firms looking to replace their traditional print and scan systems in line with net-zero goals.

Office Fox said it remains on track to double its revenue once again in the next 12 to 18 months.

Find out more at [officefox.co.uk](http://officefox.co.uk)



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**JULIE MARSON MP**  
Conservative MP for Hertford and Stortford



# Origins of mysterious cave continue to puzzle experts



I'm thrilled about the government's investment in Bishop's Stortford's Castle Park, a fantastic boost for local sports. The improvements include new gates and an online booking system for the park's three tennis courts, making tennis more accessible for residents. This £30million initiative, with £21.6million from the government and £8.4million from the Lawn Tennis Association, represents a significant grassroots tennis investment. This investment promotes physical activity and aligns with the government's goal to enhance sports and wellbeing, so I hope that our community will now be able to enjoy these upgraded facilities for an active lifestyle.

My annual Jobs Fair took place at the Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre in Bishop's Stortford. The event showcased the opportunities available to local residents from employers. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the great local employers who contributed to making the day such a great success. I want to continue fostering connections between

our community and local businesses to promote employment and prosperity.

I am delighted that Greater Anglia is set to reintroduce a four-trains-per-hour Stansted Express service, operating all day, seven days a week. This development is fantastic news for our constituents who rely on Stansted Airport for travel. The Stansted Express rail service offers a sustainable and convenient option for those seeking to fly from Stansted for business, holidays or visits to family in Europe, as well as airport employees.

I attended and spoke at the 2023 East of England Net Zero Conference. This event brought together the public and private sectors to discuss crucial topics like net-zero investments and electric vehicle infrastructure. Amanda Solloway MP emphasised our region's role in sustainability and Stansted Airport reiterated its goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. I highlighted our dedication to sustainability, and will continue advocating for greener policies.



Photo credit: roystoncave.co.uk

The spectacular, if small, Royston Cave lurks below the streets of the quaint North Hertfordshire town.

Located on the very northern-most tip of Hertfordshire and boasting sympathetic rural charm as a settlement that dates back almost 1,000 years, the pinnacle of Royston's picture-perfect history is actually located underground, in the Royston Cave.

The man-made cave was discovered in 1742 by a workman repairing a nearby building. Since then, it has been a subject of fascination and mystery for archaeologists, historians and enthusiasts.

Cylindrical in shape, it measures only five metres in diameter, yet its walls and ceiling are covered in intricate carvings which are believed to have been created during the 14th or 15th century. The carvings depict various religious scenes, including the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the 12 apostles, and various saints.

While artistically and historically the cave is a captivating capsule of the past, researchers have never managed to confirm its purpose, and the identity of its creators remains a subject of debate and speculation. Some believe it was used as a hermitage or a place of worship by a small community of monks or friars. Others argue that it was a secret meeting place for the Knights Templar or a similar medieval religious order.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the cave is the presence of several symbols and inscriptions that are not typically associated with Christianity. For example, there is a carving of a pagan Green Man, which is often associated with pre-Christian religions. There are also several images of a crowned figure, who some have identified as King Edward II. The monarch was rumoured to have been murdered nearby in 1327.

In recent years, efforts have been stepped up in to conserve and protect the cave, which is considered a valuable historical and cultural artefact. Thankfully, it remains open to visitors, providing an opportunity to experience the unique atmosphere and beauty of one of the country's most ancient and mysterious underground chambers.

[WWW.JULIEMARSON.ORG.UK](http://WWW.JULIEMARSON.ORG.UK)





## CLEAR INSPIRATION...

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allow natural light to flow through creating a natural calm feel. Privacy can still be obtained through frosted or tinted glass, and they can provide excellent sound insulation, enhancing both residential and work spaces.

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# YOUR LOCAL EVENTS



WHAT'S ON

### GYMNASTICS HALLOWEEN MADNESS

Stortford Gymnastics Club,  
Twyford Industrial Estate, 231 London Road,  
Bishop's Stortford, CM23 3LA  
Tuesday, October 24, 10am – 3pm



Photo credit: Stortford Gymnastics

A spooktastic holiday camp for children aged four-plus. Dressing up is welcome but must be appropriate for gymnastics. Attendees should bring a packed lunch, snacks and a named water bottle.

Tickets cost £34 for members or £39 for non-members. Find out more at [www.tickettailor.com/events/stortfordgymnasticsclub/987776](http://www.tickettailor.com/events/stortfordgymnasticsclub/987776)

### FLASHBACK@BISHOP STORTFORD

Bishop's Stortford Social Club,  
104 South Street, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 3BG  
Saturday, October 28, 9pm

A talented, female-fronted, four-piece band playing a great mix of popular songs from a varied and flexible repertoire.

Tickets are free for members or cost £5 for non-members, and can be purchased via [www.lemonrock.com/flashback?page=gigs](http://www.lemonrock.com/flashback?page=gigs)

### MATERIAL GIRL

South Mill Arts Centre, 1-3 South Road,  
Bishop's Stortford, CM23 3JG  
Sunday, October 29, 7pm

The iconic *Drag Race UK* legend Baga Chipz hits the road with her first-ever solo theatre show, *Material Girl*. Expect a brand-new show with live singing, dancing, comedy and much more. Are you ready to live Baga Chipz's material girl life?

Tickets cost £26 and are available to purchase from [www.southmillarts.ticketssolve.com/ticketbooth/shows/873647005](http://www.southmillarts.ticketssolve.com/ticketbooth/shows/873647005)

### TOM JONES TRIBUTE

Hunters Meet, Chelmsford Road,  
Hatfield Heath, Bishop's Stortford,  
CM22 7BQ

Saturday, November 4, 7pm – 12am

An evening of songs from the 50s all the way to the noughties with support from live singer Alison.

Tickets cost £25 per person and include a meal. Call 01279 730549 to book your place.

### THE ELVIS YEARS

South Mill Arts Centre, 1-3 South Road,  
Bishop's Stortford, CM23 3JG  
Friday, November 10, 7.30pm

*The Elvis Years* is a musical production which brings to the stage the story of the king of rock and roll, Elvis Presley. Join Mario Kombou, an all-star band and award-winning singers for an unforgettable journey through more than 50 golden greats.

With nostalgic film footage and more than 12 costume changes, this glittering two-hour production features classic hits including *Suspicious Minds*, *Blue Suede Shoes*, *Hound Dog*, and many more.

Tickets start from £28 and can be purchased via [www.southmillarts.ticketssolve.com/ticketbooth/shows/873645733](http://www.southmillarts.ticketssolve.com/ticketbooth/shows/873645733)

### ARMISTICE DAY

War Memorial in Castle Park,  
Bishop's Stortford, CM22 7EU  
Saturday, November 11, 11am

All are invited to come along to the War Memorial in Castle Gardens for a two-minute silence and placing of tributes.

For more information, visit [www.bishopstortfordtc.gov.uk/what-do/events/armistice-day](http://www.bishopstortfordtc.gov.uk/what-do/events/armistice-day)



Photo credit: Bishop's Stortford Town Council



TRAVEL

# The GLOBAL ZOO

Animals unique to one place and how to see them

The ability of animals to explore the world is only bettered by the wanderlust of humans, yet there is still a clutch of species who have never ventured from their home continents and, in some cases, countries. While the Galápagos Islands typically take credit for the planet's most unique array of life, here are some others worth celebrating.

### GELADA, ETHIOPIA

A monkey that looks like it's wearing a tuxedo, the gelada is native to the highlands of Ethiopia and has rarely strayed. While other monkey species are known for swinging from trees with reckless abandon, these are happiest on the desert floor, eating grass, seeds, roots and insects.

### INACCESSIBLE ISLAND RAIL, INACCESSIBLE ISLAND

Yes, there is a place called Inaccessible Island – it's in the South Atlantic – and it requires little description. To describe the world's smallest flightless bird (which also takes the 'Inaccessible' name) is undoubtedly to make a straightforward link

to how this little creature has never made it to the mainland.

### THORNY DEVIL, AUSTRALIA

This lizard looks like something out of a Marvel comic, albeit it's never been exported any further than the Aussie outback. It can drink water through its skin, which is just as well, as there is precious little of the stuff about in the summer heat of the Southern Hemisphere.

### TEXAS BLIND SALAMANDER, USA

Without eyes or skin colour, this peculiar amphibian detects prey by virtue of vibrations around it. It has never made it out of US waters and you're highly unlikely to ever see one in the flesh, since it lives deep underwater in cave networks.

### MANX CAT, ISLE OF MAN

Lastly, there's the famous Manx cat. Although these have been brought across to the mainland, they stand apart from other cat species owing to a rare genetic mutation that means they are born with no tails.



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Mr and Mrs S

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# Keeping your dog SAFE IN AUTUMN



**A**utumn is one of the best times of year for long walks with your dog, when the leaves are falling from the trees and the weather has cooled. That being said, there are lots of lurking dangers that you need to be aware of.

**ACORNS:** Acorns contain a toxic ingredient called tannic acid which can cause damage to your dog's liver and kidneys. When ingested, they can also lead to vomiting, diarrhoea, lethargy and abdominal pain.



**CONKERS:** Conker seeds boast a spiky green shell that can injure your dog's mouth if picked up and carried around. The shiny brown conker inside can be a choking hazard and, if ingested, can cause vomiting, diarrhoea and sometimes an intestinal blockage.



**FALLEN FRUIT:** If you take your dog on long country walks, they are highly likely to encounter fallen fruit such as apples and plums. When these fruits fall on the ground, they start to ferment and produce a natural alcoholic substance. If eaten in large quantities, this can cause vomiting and diarrhoea.



**HARVEST MITES:** Harvest mites are tiny red mites that tend to appear at the end of summer and into autumn. They are often found on a dog's coat, in between their toes and in their ear folds. These mites can cause extreme itching and trauma to the skin.



**WILD MUSHROOMS:** Wild mushrooms come in all sorts of shapes, colours and sizes, which makes it very hard to distinguish between the edible ones and those that are poisonous. If your dog eats an unknown fungus, it may cause a mild stomach upset, or it could be deadly.



**SPRING BULBS:** Many people plant spring bulbs in autumn, such as daffodil, tulip and spring crocus bulbs. These are all toxic to dogs and can make them very unwell if ingested.

# How to grow SNOWDROPS



**S**nowdrops are one of the first signs of spring and can make a wonderful addition to any garden. Instantly recognisable by their small, white, bell-shaped flowers, snowdrops are easy to grow and will come back year after year.

### WHERE TO PLANT SNOWDROPS

Snowdrops thrive in moist but well-drained soil and in partial shade. If you plant snowdrops in soil that is too dry, you risk the bulbs drying out and falling to flower. Choose to grow snowdrops beneath deciduous shrubs or along the front of borders where herbaceous plants can provide ground cover when these flowers are dormant. They also do well planted in grass, in spring border displays and in rock gardens.

### HOW TO PLANT SNOWDROPS

Dry snowdrop bulbs can be planted in autumn, but these are often hard to establish. Instead, opt to plant snowdrops in the green in January or February. Simply lift snowdrop plants just after flowering and before the foliage has turned yellow, and replant somewhere else. You can buy snowdrops in the green from your local garden centre or online.

### HOW TO CARE FOR SNOWDROPS

Once snowdrops are established, they require no maintenance. Allow the foliage to die back naturally as this will help to ensure that the nutrients from the leaves are returned to the bulbs. Once every two years, divide any established clumps to avoid overcrowding.

### HOW TO PROPAGATE SNOWDROPS

To propagate snowdrops, lift and divide established clumps after flowering in either March or April. Using a fork, carefully lift the bulb with the roots intact and the foliage still in place. Replant in the garden immediately and water well. The foliage may appear a little sorry, but it should look healthy by next winter.

### TOP SNOWDROP VARIETIES:

- Galanthus nivalis | Galanthus elwesii | Galanthus woronowii | Galanthus Armine | Galanthus Cordelia.



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While gardening is a careful curation of your outdoor space, it's important not to forget the importance of maintaining your own green-fingered style.

## TROUSERS

A pair of dedicated garden workwear trousers or dungarees will suit you much better than a simple pair of old jeans.

If you've gardened before, you'll know the perils of pinching waistbands, seams riding up, back-of-the-knee fatigue and general ripping or snagging; so investing in a pair of trousers that is waterproof, strong, flexible and with ample pockets on the front and sides, plus has all-essential knee pads, is a great idea.

## HEADWEAR

Hats are a must when the sun comes out, and will also keep you warm when temperatures drop. Most gardeners will showcase a variety of headwear – from a nice woolly beanie hat in winter to a brimmed hat for summertime. Mix it up and keep your head in a good place.

## FOOTWEAR

Footwear should be comfortable, as long hours on location can bring about foot pain and sores. From classic Crocs to garden sandals, sturdy boots to full-length wellies, your footwear will most likely match weather conditions.

Don't forget to invest in a few good pairs of socks too – in the winter, they will excel at keeping the cold out, while breathable varieties for the summer will minimise the threat of fungal infections.

## GLOVES

While most gardeners are more than happy to get their hands dirty, gloves are essential for protecting your skin from sharp matter, such as rocks, stones and thorns. Switch between thicker and lighter varieties for seasonal versatility.

## JACKET

Finally, as the weather changes, keep the cold out if you're committing long hours to the soil with a jacket that's breathable, a hood for sudden inclement weather, and plenty of pockets for essentials.

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The current cost of living crisis seems set to continue for a while longer. One way to help ease financial pressures for homeowners is to look at an equity release mortgage to help pay for day to day living or to top up savings.

The equity in a home forms the savings most people don't realise they have, as 74 per cent of those aged 55 and over, in the UK, own their own home<sup>[1]</sup>. Further, Zoopla's latest Value of Housing report found that there is almost £8 trillion in housing equity in the UK.<sup>[2]</sup>

Equity release allows homeowners to tap into their property wealth, enabling regular draw downs to help with the cost of living, boost savings, enjoy new adventures or help out family.

To be eligible you must be 55 or over and own your own

home; and the equity available, will very much depend on how much your lender will let you release, but it is usually within 25 per cent - 35 per cent of your property's value.

Your lender will give you an initial lump sum (depending on age, health and property value) followed by an agreed amount that can be drawn upon when needed. You will pay interest on the money you have taken, which can be added to the debt but this will cause the debt to increase over time with the effect of compounding; however, you don't need to take the full equity release amount at the start, if you don't need to. This is a more cost-effective way to take money as it slows down your interest growth.

Remember, the money released is yours to spend how you wish, providing you with financial flexibility and freedom.

However, it is incredibly important that you seek professional financial advice before making this decision. The availability of 'reserve' funds very much depends on your financial circumstances at the point of draw down and is not guaranteed. It is also prudent to understand that the interest rate for future draw downs will be based on rates at that time and not linked to the rate secured on the initial advance.

If equity release is something you think you could benefit from and you would like more information on our lifetime mortgage products, please arrange a no obligation discovery call to see how the friendly team at Downton Mortgages and Financial Services can help.

<sup>[1]</sup>Office for National Statistics, English Housing Survey 2019-20

<sup>[2]</sup>[www.propertyreporter.co.uk](http://www.propertyreporter.co.uk)

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A Lifetime Mortgage will reduce the value of your estate and may affect your entitlement to means-tested benefits and tax status. The impact of not servicing monthly interest payments on a Lifetime Mortgage is that the outstanding debt can grow rapidly, thus reducing the value of your estate.

For example, if the interest rate was 7% a year, a £50,000 loan would double to £100,000 after 10 years assuming no repayments are made.

This is an example for illustrative purposes only and personalised advice and recommendations should be sought from a qualified professional. You are strongly advised to register a lasting power of attorney. This will allow your affairs to be managed by somebody else if your mental abilities significantly decline.



SCAN ME

# Get BALANCED!

Did you know that National Work/Life Balance Week takes place this month, with the aim of generating awareness of the importance of a healthy balance between your professional and personal life?

If you struggle to switch off after leaving work or you find the lines between your work and home life have blurred, then we are here to help you.

### Why is a good work/life balance important?

A good work/life balance involves finding a harmonious relationship between your home life and your working life. This is vital

to your overall wellbeing as people need to engage in a wide range of activities, as well as rest, in order to thrive. If you work too hard or work very long hours, you are more likely to experience high levels of stress and suffer from insomnia, depression and/or anxiety.

### What is an unhealthy work/life balance?

The most common signs of an unhealthy work/life balance are:

- > Regularly working long hours, including evenings, weekends and holidays
- > Neglecting your personal/family life owing to excessive work demands
- > Experiencing burnout, which causes physical, emotional and mental exhaustion
- > A lack of time for self-care, including sleep and leisure activities
- > Strained relationships owing to work commitments

### How to achieve the right balance between work and home life

**1. SET BOUNDARIES:** Make sure that you establish clear boundaries between your work and personal life by defining specific working hours and sticking to them.

**2. FOCUS ON TIME MANAGEMENT:** Sometimes people are guilty of working hard rather than smart, which can mean they have to spend longer at the office and less time at home. Instead, prioritise the most important tasks both at home and at work.

**3. BE FLEXIBLE:** At times, you will need to have to adjust your work schedule to accommodate unforeseen personal circumstances or emergencies, so don't feel guilty about doing this.



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## BAD SPORTSMANSHIP:

SPORT

# ERIC CANTONA



Photo credit: Colorsport/Shutterstock

With true skill, finesse and regular glimpses of genius, when Eric Cantona was good, he was very good. Yet the Frenchman was tainted with a self-destructive element that permeated his game.

Cantona was ever the mercurial talent, and was an iconic figure for Manchester United during the club's early glory years under Sir Alex Ferguson CBE.

From the outset of his career, Cantona's undoubted flair was plainly evident, yet so too was his lack of composure.

During a match in 1988 between his club, Auxerre, and Nantes, the Marseille-born forward kung fu kicked Michel Der Zakarian, landing him a three-month ban which was later reduced after the club threatened to withdraw him from French national team selection.

As it would turn out, this would not be an isolated incident. A string of other disciplinary issues in France prompted a move to England, with Leeds

United the

beneficiaries as they

clinched the final First Division title

before the inception of the Premier League

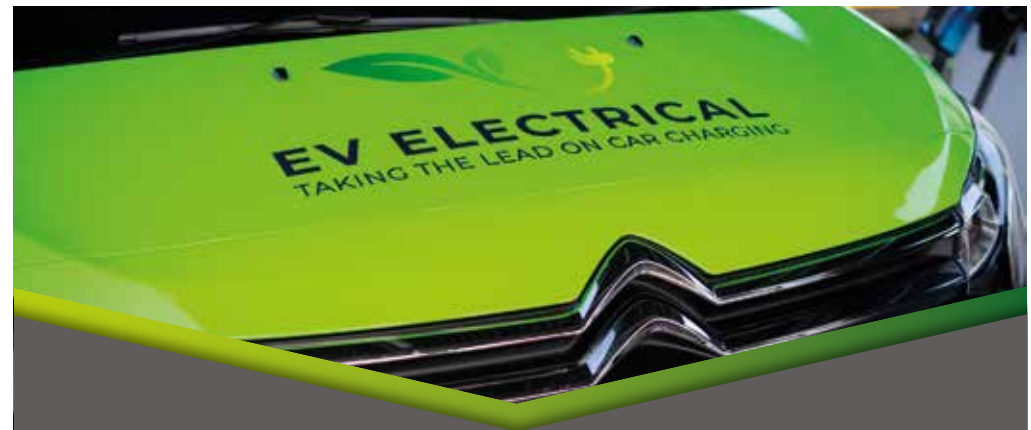
in 1992. A tempestuous time at Elland Road

then saw him move to hated rivals Manchester

United for a cut price £1.25million.

Talent and turbulence would continue at Old Trafford, but never more so than one night in January 1995 in South East London. After being sent off for his kick at opposition defender Richard Shaw, Cantona was confronted by Palace supporter Matthew Simmons, who had run down 11 rows of the stand to confront and racially abuse the Frenchman. Cantona responded by launching into the crowd with another of his trademark kung fu kicks and followed this with a series of punches.

The sultry, softly spoken Frenchman's reaction to his subsequent eight-month ban went down as one of football's famous quotes. "When the seagulls follow the trawler," he said, taking a sip of water, "it's because they think sardines will be thrown into the sea."



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# GOOD CARS

## for ULEZ 2023 EXPANSION



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Regardless of your thoughts on the controversial expansion of London's Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), there is a wide selection of cars out there ready to help you bypass this expensive charge.

The extension of ULEZ to encompass the whole of Greater London became operational at the end of August, and not without considerable objection.

Now, petrol vehicles must meet Euro 4 standards, with even tighter Euro 6 requirements for their diesel cousins.

Entering the ULEZ with a non-conforming vehicle invites a daily charge of £12.50, so Mayor of London Sadiq Khan's £2,000 grant for Greater London residents looking to change to a ULEZ-compliant motor is appealing, as are some of the cars that fit the criteria.

For instance, for those desiring a premium touch, the Mercedes-Benz A-Class hatchback is a worthy contender, boasting advanced technology and a luxurious interior. Models from 2013 hover around the £10,000 mark.

The widely admired Ford Focus has numerous ULEZ-compliant variants. One with fewer than 50,000 miles could be yours for less than £6,000.

Or what about the iconic Mazda MX-5? The Japanese brand is revered for superb driving experience and affordability. However, look out for some older versions, as these may not meet ULEZ requirements.

Lastly, the VW Polo, particularly the 1.2 TDI BlueMotion edition of the Mk5, is famously fuel-efficient, boasting up to 91.1mpg on motorways and 67.3mpg in urban settings. With no emission zone charges and some high-mileage models available at under £4,000, it's a sound option.

While virtually all petrol cars sold after 2005 are ULEZ compliant – along with petrol vans after 2006 and motorbikes registered after July 2007 – it ultimately pays to check your vehicle, as well as the status of a potential new one, online at [tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/check-your-vehicle](http://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/check-your-vehicle)



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# PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

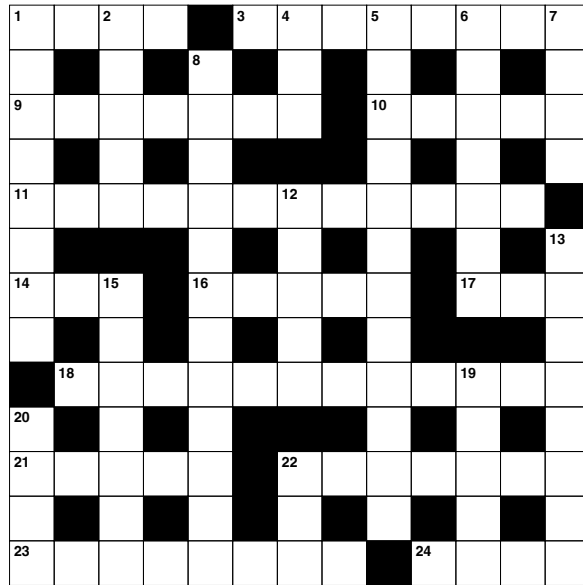
Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

### ACROSS

- 1. Light blast of wind (4)
- 3. Fast runner (8)
- 9. Not tense (7)
- 10. Written agreements (5)
- 11. Opposite of amateur (12)
- 14. Decay (3)
- 16. Lacking meaning (5)
- 17. Wonder (3)
- 18. Incessantly (12)
- 21. Concerning (5)
- 22. Mound made by insects (7)
- 23. Shows (8)
- 24. Snake-like fish (pl.) (4)

### DOWN

- 1. Sweat (8)
- 2. Leaf of parchment (5)
- 4. Collection of many sheets of paper (3)
- 5. Enhancements (12)
- 6. Musical composition (7)
- 7. Repose (4)
- 8. Based on untested ideas (12)
- 12. Set out (5)



- 13. Uses again (8)
- 15. Slight earthquakes (7)
- 19. Part of a church tower (5)
- 20. Edible fat (4)
- 22. Nay (anag) (3)

### DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ A hummingbird beats its wings up to 70 times per second.
- ▶ Hummingbirds are the only birds that can fly backwards.
- ▶ There are reportedly more than 350 known species of hummingbird, from the giant hummingbird weighing around 20g, to the bee hummingbird which measures less than three inches.
- ▶ Hummingbirds use their long, thin tongues like straws to drink nectar from flowers.
- ▶ Rufous hummingbirds migrate 4,000 miles from Mexico to Alaska every spring.
- ▶ Female hummingbirds use spider silk to weave together twigs and leaves for their nests.
- ▶ Hummingbirds have no sense of smell.

### SUDOKU

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

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