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SIR ELTON JOHN

End of an era for singing sensation



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- 6 CLAIRE FOY
- 8 FREE EDUCATION?
- 11 HOME & DIY
- 19 LOCAL NEWS
- 35 GARDENING
- 37 SIR ELTON JOHN
- 41 HEALTH & FITNESS
- 45 BEAUTY
- 49 FOOD & DRINK
- 55 FASHION
- 56 BECOMING ROYAL
- 61 WHAT'S ON
- 62 PUZZLES
- 64 MOTORING
- 67 BUSINESS & FINANCE
- 69 TECHNOLOGY
- 70 SPORT
- 72 LOCAL TRADES & SERVICES
- 74 THE **VISION** LISTINGS

CONTACT US

www.visionmag.co.uk/brentwood
brentwood@visionmag.co.uk | 01277 554045

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 Vision Magazine Essex

EDITOR | Nik Allen DESIGN EDITOR | Misha Mistry
CO-ORDINATORS | Rebecka Fryer, Kim Plater
CONTRIBUTORS | Amy Pollard, Charles Rae

Editor's notes...



Nik Allen, Editor

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

It's been a very difficult few weeks.

Early in March I received a phone call telling me my Aunt Caroline had died

unexpectedly. She was only 62 years old, had just retired and was looking forward to enjoying it with her husband and family.

It's a devastating blow for our family but I learnt to never take anything or anyone for granted.

Losing my aunt has made me realise I have to make the time to call my parents more regularly. I need to really appreciate good moments with my wife, friends and siblings. Life teaches us all lessons, some much

more difficult than others to understand.

I can't think of a more fitting tribute to my Aunt Caroline or indeed to anyone we've lost than to wring out every drop of life while we can. To enjoy, love and never take tomorrow as a given.

So pick up your phone and call that friend you haven't spoken to in ages, smile at a stranger, give your kids an extra big hug and tell your loved ones you love them.

In local news this month, locals are honoured at Civic Awards, a man caught with £800k worth of cocaine is jailed for six years and a popular playing field is to be renovated.

I hope you enjoy reading this month's edition of **VISION**Brentwood.

Nik

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She wears THE CROWN

Having portrayed Her Majesty for two seasons in Netflix series *The Crown*, Claire Foy has her sights set on some of the biggest roles in Hollywood in what's set to be her biggest year so far, but will she have pay equality on her side?

Every jobbing actor knows that it only takes a single role to dramatically transform your career. In the case of Claire Foy, that once-in-a-lifetime opportunity came when portraying one of the most iconic women of the last century, when the Buckinghamshire-raised beauty was asked to play Queen Elizabeth II in hit Netflix series *The Crown*. Overnight, she became one of the hottest stars on the planet, as everyone from Helen Mirren to Elton John rushed to heap praise on the 33-year-old.

But with recognition – and a Golden Globe award for Best Actress – comes inevitable tumult and change, and like the person she embodied with such impeccable steely grace, the actress has had to adjust to life in the spotlight, with 2018 already bringing a raft of perhaps unexpected challenges. In February it was announced that she and husband of four years, actor Stephen Campbell Moore, would be going their separate ways. “We have separated and have been for some time. We do however continue as great friends with the utmost respect for one another,” read the joint statement from the pair, who share their three-year-old daughter, Ivy Rose.

Then, weeks later, it transpired that Foy was paid less than Matt Smith, who played the Queen's husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, in *The Crown*, landing the actress right in the middle of the current gender pay gap furore. In the end, the show's producers Suzanne Mackie and Andy Harries claimed that Smith earned more per episode because he was a much bigger name when the series began. They had a point, given that Smith was *Doctor Who* for four years up to 2014, but noted that for the third series the deficit would be rectified, stating: “Going forward, no one gets paid more than the Queen.”

Not that Foy cares one jot about the third series, as she won't be in it. Instead, *Broadchurch* star Olivia Colman will don the hefty jewels as the series jumps forward to the Seventies, seeing much of the cast replaced for older actors. But having catapulted her career into the stratosphere, *The Crown* has done enough for Foy to ensure she won't be short of offers for the foreseeable future, as the focus turns to Hollywood, with two huge releases set for this year.

First up, she will portray the earth-bound wife of Ryan Gosling's Neil Armstrong in Damien Chazelle's *First Man*, followed by the highly coveted lead in *The Girl in the Spider's Web* – the much-delayed reboot of the Stieg Larsson *Millennium* series. As the formidable Lisbeth Salander – last played by Rooney Mara in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* – Foy will appear pierced, inked and in full leathers as she takes on Russian criminal organisation The Spider Society.

But first, the mercurial star will simply be enjoying some downtime as she shrugs off those royal robes for the very last time and focuses on being “a normal mum”. “It's the role I cherish most,” she states, and surely no amount of money comes close to it.





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EDUCATION FOR ALL?

Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party is the latest to float the idea of scrapping university fees in England. But is free education a viable economic option, or just a perennial political pipe dream?

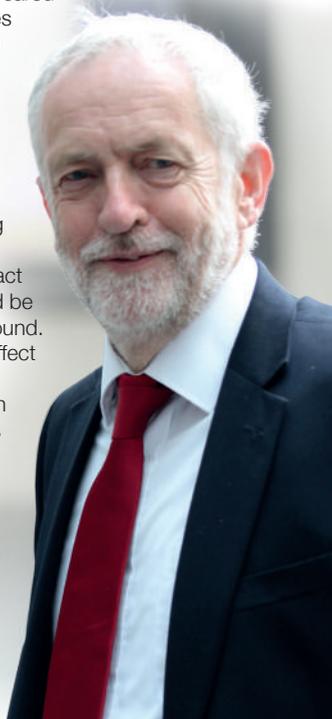
It's an issue that often makes or breaks politicians - whether or not the idea of free university education is economically possible. Since the tuition fees of £9,000 a year appeared in 2012, the debate over free education has intensified. With some universities now charging £9,250 across 12 months, with a 6 per cent interest rate on loans also applicable, more and more students are emerging from university with crippling debts that they may never shake.

This is one of the many reasons why Jeremy Corbyn's Labour has made the announcement to scrap tuition fees if they get into power - but is it really that simple? The idea of free education undoubtedly carries an almost universal appeal among younger voters especially, but the abolition of university fees would realistically lead to there being a need for money coming in from elsewhere to make up that gap.

The benefits of more people going to university, most argue, lie in the fact more graduates create a better skilled workforce and higher education would be available and affordable to everyone regardless of economic or social background. But figures show that the introduction of £9,000 fees didn't have a negative effect on poorer school-leavers attending university.

Some countries in Europe already offer students a free education. Scottish students, for example, get free university tuition if they study in the country. It is also available to all students in Norway regardless of study level or nationality, international students in France and students in Austria.

Essentially, whilst free education is a political masterstroke in terms of its appeal, the recent history of the Liberal Democrats should act as a warning for any party willing to stake its reputation on this policy. Viable alternatives, such as a scrapping of interest owed, or the better promotion of vocational training, may, in the long run, ease the financial burden on graduates and still keep skilled workers available.



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Tired of crayoned walls and stained carpets? Here's how to choose kiddie proof decor.

Whether you've got a bundle of joy on the way, or already have a tearaway or two running amok in your home, you'll be fully aware of the need to consider the small people when decorating or furnishing your house. Children are a wonderful addition to any home, of course, but even the best-behaved ones will have the odd moment of absentmindedness, usually right in the middle of devouring a chocolate ice cream cone.

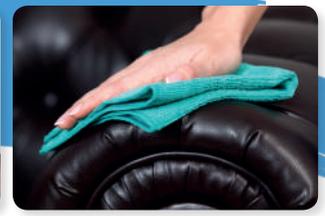
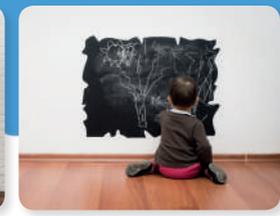
If you have the luxury of starting fresh with your décor, then be sure to choose hardwearing fabrics. Carpets, particularly light ones, won't serve you well, so go for lino or well-maintained wood floors. You can then buy rugs to add cosiness and sound proofing, preferably ones that can be easily washed and are patterned to disguise spillages.

When it comes to walls, wipeable paint is your new best friend. Matte finishes tend to lock dirt in,

so choose gloss, eggshell and satin. If your child is a determined artist, it may be worth painting one wall or door with blackboard paint, so they have a space to create their magic/mess.

In terms of furniture, leather is preferable as it's wipe-clean, and if you already have a fabric sofa it's worth buying a few easy-care throws and blankets for protection. Equally if you have a wooden kitchen table, you will definitely need an everyday table cloth you can whip off for special occasions. Cut-to-size PVC fabric is perfect as it often comes in bright stylish patterns and is practically indestructible.

And finally, obey the 2ft rule whereby anything valuable is placed at least two feet above your precious poppet's head. This ought to prevent any more tears before bedtime (for both parent AND child).





WIPING THE SLATE CLEAN



YOUR GUIDE TO HOW OFTEN HOUSEHOLD CHORES OUGHT TO BE DONE

Once a day: It may seem like hard work to clean every day, but these are simple habits it's worth getting into in order to minimise germs that build up in crucial areas of your home.

- ▶ Wipe down kitchen and dining surfaces with antibacterial solution
- ▶ Sweep the kitchen floor
- ▶ Squeegee shower walls
- ▶ Sanitise kitchen and bathroom sinks

Once a week: These chores are ideal for a weekend spruce.

- ▶ Wash towels and bed sheets
- ▶ Clean out the fridge
- ▶ Vacuum carpets and furniture
- ▶ Dust down the furniture and clean the mirrors
- ▶ Scrub kitchen appliances, bathroom surfaces and the toilet
- ▶ Clean the microwave
- ▶ Sanitise sponges and cloths

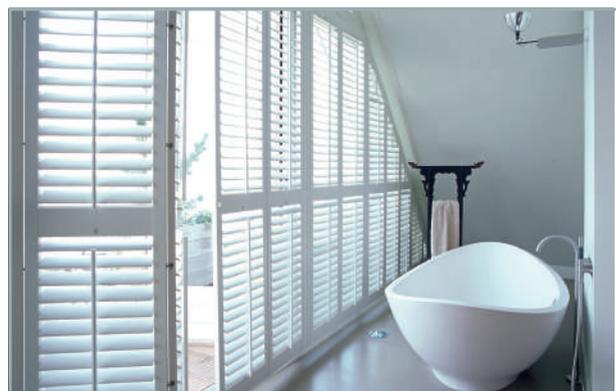
Once a month: Make time to rid your house of all the invisible dirt and dust which has been building up.

- ▶ Deep clean the dishwasher and washing machine
- ▶ Dust blinds and light fittings

- ▶ Wipe down skirting boards
 - ▶ Clean inside the vacuum
- Every six months:** Here we get down to the slightly grimy jobs which no one really wants to do, but will really help prolong the lifespan of the appliances and surfaces in your home.
- ▶ Deep clean inside the fridge
 - ▶ Wash the shower curtain
 - ▶ Vacuum behind the sofas
 - ▶ Clean the oven and extractor hood
 - ▶ Flip the mattress
 - ▶ Clean out the freezer
 - ▶ Wash duvets and pillows

Once a year: At this point your house ought to be looking and feeling pretty clean, meaning that there are only a few additional jobs you might want to consider.

- ▶ Deep clean carpets and upholstery
- ▶ Wash curtains
- ▶ Clear out the gutters
- ▶ Deep clean windows
- ▶ Clean fireplace and chimney
- ▶ Clear out dryer vents and washing machine filter



CREATE THE LOOK

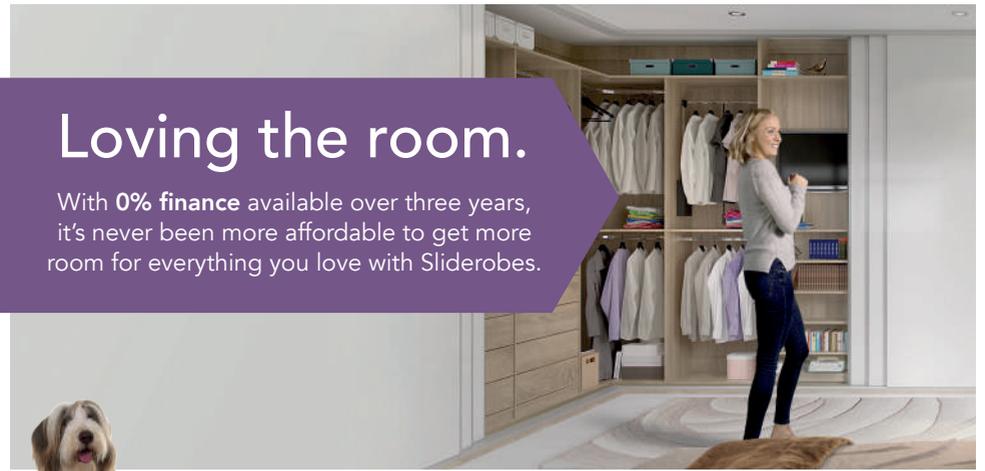
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Crystal Vision

Can natural crystals placed strategically around your home really improve your zen?

Crystals are the hot new thing in feng shui. At least that's what's being said on the digital grapevine. They're certainly a simpler and probably cheaper method of boosting the positive energy in your home, as they require no renovations or rearranging of your furniture, and add natural beauty to any room.

However, there is nothing new about utilising the power of natural crystals, as they have been a valuable tool in healing, protection and energy restoration for centuries. And yet, there is no concrete scientific evidence to prove they actually work. Some say this is because the powerful vibrations they are said to omit are too tiny to be measured, and it is these which help us manifest and transform that energy into action.

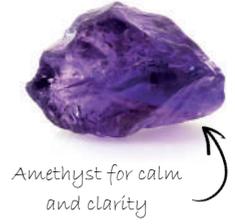
So, for example, if you want to recover from a bad relationship, or nurture love and romance, you'll be needing the rose quartz. A master healer in matters

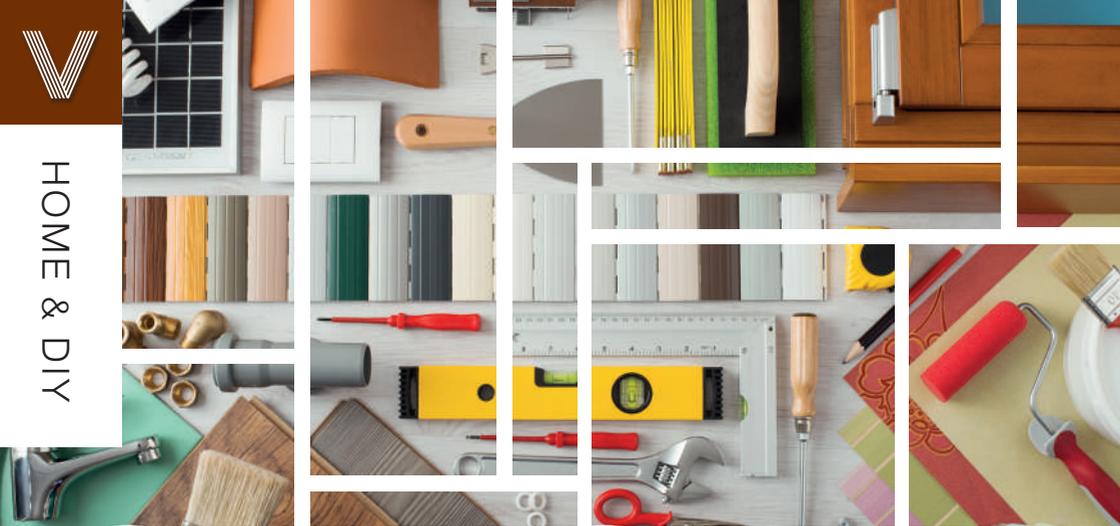
of the heart, place several tumbled rose quartz stones in a bowl on your nightstand, or two heart-shaped stones under you and your partner's pillow to help navigate a rocky patch in your relationship.

In contrast, the clear quartz is the last thing you want in your bedroom, as it can stimulate too much energy. Instead, these wonderfully diverse stones work well in a family room, as they clear out negative energy and amplify happiness.

A tourmaline by your front door will offer protection, and an amethyst will help bring calm and clarity to areas where you need to foster concentration and meditative thought, like an office, or for some, the downstairs loo.

The most important thing to bear in mind when using these natural beauties is that crystals help channel and amplify the energy you put out there, so if you've got no faith in crystals, they'll have no faith in you.





SPRUCE UP

cash in

Selling up? These DIY ideas will add value to your home.

Fix the front door

As the first port of call, you need your front door to make a big impression. So give it a fresh coat of paint, change the doorknob and add a shiny new letterbox.

Change the windows

PVCu windows will certainly add worth, but only if your home isn't a high-value period property, in which case it is vital to maintain the original frames.

Install central heating

If you don't already have it, you'll spend £1,000-£3,000 but central heating will add £5,000 to your property.

Spruce up the kitchen

For many families, the kitchen is the heart of the home and therefore needs to look welcoming and modern. Replace shabby cabinets and counter tops and consider installing a dishwasher if there isn't one already.

Put mirrors in the hall

A simple trick for a cramped hall space is to place a mirror on either side for instant spaciousness.

Pave the front garden

If parking is tricky in your area, paving over a barely-used front garden could add up to £50,000 to your home. Now that's easy money.

Declutter

The overall feeling in a home is important, so don't cost yourself money by leaving toys and junk all over the place. Keep it clear, clean and simple.

Boost your bathroom

Small details are important in the bathroom, and as taps and shower curtains can look grubby quickly, it's worth replacing them.

Convert the garage

It's relatively inexpensive to turn a garage into a living space, but to know if it's really worth it, multiply square footage gained by local price per square foot.

Add a final flourish

Buying a home is a huge commitment, and the first impression can really sway a buyer's mind. So, buy fresh flowers, make sure your home smells nice and ensure it's relatively clean to make potential buyers feel instantly at ease.



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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



LOCAL NEWS

Locals honoured at Civic Awards



The winners of the Civic Awards 2017 have been announced by Brentwood Borough Council.

The awards recognise individuals who have dedicated their time to help others in Brentwood.

They were presented at the Civic Dinner on March 2 at Hutton Mount Banqueting Suite.

The winners were Chris Boyland - Service to the Community, Royal British Legion Brentwood and District Branch, Paula Hills - Lifetime Achievement and Brian Kitchener - Lifetime Achievement.

Chris Boyland said: "It has been mentioned to me that I am happy when I see everyone else enjoying themselves, so helping with Lighting up Brentwood and seeing many happy faces is very rewarding. I have been very blessed in life in many ways, by giving something back into the community - that means a lot.

"I'm thankful for the award, but I wouldn't have been able to do this without those who I have worked with, the members of Churches Together and the Community Services team at the council to be able to put these events on for people in Brentwood and the current and past mayors who have all been supportive."

Chairman of the Royal British Legion Brentwood and District Branch Sydney Bryer said: "Our work at the legion has been important to support the veterans, families of veterans and Cadet Forces in the Brentwood area and to raise awareness and the meaning of remembrance. It is an honour for the RBL to be the first group to receive this award and to be recognised in this way."

Paula Hills said: "SNAP is like a family and it has been important to me to help over the past 24 years. When I had my son, who has disabilities, there was very little information available for parents like me, so I knew how much a service like SNAP was needed, especially to create a support and an information network."

Brian Kitchener said: "I am honoured to have received this award. I got involved with the Royal British Legion as Brentwood is a garrison town, and it was important to keep the memory alive of those who had fallen. It was very important to keep the branch going, so early on I was involved in many roles until more members joined. I couldn't achieved what I have without the other members who have helped make the branch what it is."





College Players to put on musical



Award-winning drama group, The College Players, are bringing the satirical musical play *Oh What A Lovely War* to Brentwood in May, as commemorations to mark the centenary of the ending of the First World War get under way.

First performed in 1963 in Stratford East by Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop, the production uses music which would have been heard in the music halls at the time, and sung in the trenches by those fighting, to highlight the grim horror faced by young men who had gone off with their brothers and friends to fight for their country.

Director Lindsay Hollingsworth says although the College Players consider themselves to be a drama group, the music will be a strong feature.

She said: "We will have a live band to support the cast who, while not known for their singing, will bring an enthusiasm to the performance of classic songs of the time, from *It's a Long Way To Tipperary* to *Keep The Homes Fires Burning* to *Goodbye-ee* and, of course, *Oh What A Lovely War*.

Lindsay added: "My mum remembers going up to

Stratford East to see the original show in 1963. It was the go-to show of the time and we're hoping those audience members would like to see it again."

The College Players will be performing *Oh What A Lovely War* at the South Weald Parish Hall on London Road in Brentwood on Friday, May 11 at 8pm, Saturday, May 12 at 2.30pm and 8pm and Sunday, May 13 at 2.30pm.

Tickets are available by calling or texting 07775 882949 or emailing thecollegeplayers@outlook.com

Man caught with £800k worth of cocaine jailed for six years



A driver caught with cocaine worth around £800,000 has been jailed for six years. Police stopped a Ford Fiesta on the A127 near Brentwood on November 22 last year.

Seven blocks of cocaine, each weighing a kilo, were found inside a holdall and a carrier bag in the boot. The street value was estimated to be £800,000 to £840,000.

The driver, Alexander Warren, was arrested and refused to comment to most questions put to him during interview. He said he was asked to collect the bags but did not know what was in them.

He pleaded guilty to possession of cocaine with intent to supply when he appeared at Basildon Magistrates' Court on November 23.

Warren, 42, of Newbury Road in Highams Park, London, was sentenced at Basildon Crown Court on February 26.

An Essex Police spokesman said after the hearing: "The street value of the drugs seized was potentially in the region of £840,000 and would have presented significant harm to our communities.

"Time and again we see the misery that drugs cause and will continue to work to bring those involved in their supply to justice."

Photo credit: Essex Police



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Fencer breaks school record

Fencer Maddy Gale has become the first Brentwood School female fencer to win two events at the Public Schools' Fencing Championships.

Fourteen-year-old Maddy was in superb form at the Crystal Palace event winning both the Foil and Sabre disciplines and reaching the quarter-final of the Girls' Mount-Haes Épée.

Her string of successes meant Maddy was also presented with the Champion at Arms trophy which is awarded to the overall highest ranked Mount-Haes girl fencer over all three weapons.

It was a very successful three days of competition for all the Brentwood School fencers at this annual tournament.

Fencing instructor Mr Chris Galesloot said: "Overall the whole team performed admirably and the fencing staff felt very proud to work with this group. There were

many, many encouraging results and championship highlights."

Mr Galesloot also paid special tribute to Rosa Xu, Faith Child, Matthew Goodwin, Neo Merrell and Jack Elsworth for reaching the quarter-finals of one of their individual events.

Bronze medals were won by Ian Ho in Boys' Junior Sabre and Ana Belova in Girls' Senior Sabre.

On top of his quarter-final in the Boys' Mount-Haes Épée, Jack Elsworth won a silver medal in his own discipline Foil. These two results and a good result on Sabre made Jack second in the Boys' Mount-Haes ranking over all three weapons.

All the school's fencers' results combined ensured Brentwood not only secured a number of prestigious team trophies, but ended the 2018 championships in second place overall.

Marimbist wows at young musician competition

A sixth former from Brentwood School made the finals of the Stratford and East London Music Festival's Young Musician of the Year competition.

Eighteen-year-old Jonathan Akerman, who plays the marimba, was one of eight outstanding musicians who impressed adjudicators the most over the course of last month's half term festival.

It was the first time the marimba, a percussion instrument consisting of a set of wooden bars struck with mallets, has been heard at the competition.

Organisers said they felt privileged to hear Jonathan play.



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BURGHART for BRENTWOOD



Alex Burghart MP for Brentwood and Ongar



LOCAL NEWS

There's a huge drive at the moment to encourage some of the subjects of the future – Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (or STEM) – and a particular push to get girls to continue with these topics to A-level and beyond.

It was good to see Emma McCarthy, a former Brentwood School pupil, in Westminster recently at the “STEM for Britain” event. Emma, who is studying for her PhD in Birmingham, was there to display her work on the influence of cobalt ions on collagen matrix formation and the corresponding cellular response. No, I don't know either.

Now I'm a historian through and through, but I am very glad there are various initiatives and events to inspire more young people, particularly girls, into the industries which need STEM subjects.

In total, £177million was made available in last year's autumn budget for maths teaching, including £27million to expand the successful Teaching for Mastery maths programme into a further 3,000 schools. Also, £80million will be made available to reward schools and colleges who support their students to study maths beyond GCSE.

With 2018 being the Year of Engineering there is

a cross-government campaign to raise the profile of engineering among seven to 16-year-olds and widen the pool of young people who might consider engineering as a career.

The government is working with hundreds of industry partners to raise the profile of engineering among young people, their parents and their teachers. This will include offering at least a million direct experiences of engineering to young people from all backgrounds – from behind the scenes tours and family days out, to school visits and the chance to meet engineering role models.

More than 1,000 partners have signed up to support the Year of Engineering, including Siemens, the Science Museum Group, Ocado, Usborne, BAE Systems and Crossrail. Teaming up with partners from many different sectors, the government will deliver a year of UK-wide school visits, exhibitions and open doors events – all aimed at encouraging young people and their parents to take a closer look at engineering. If you run or work for a business that would like to be involved please get in touch with me at www.alexburghart.org.uk

www.alexburghart.org.uk

Prezzo to close later this year



Photo credit: chrisdomey/Shutterstock.com

Prezzo in Brentwood is set to close following the announcement to close 94 outlets across the UK. It's estimated that hundreds of jobs will be lost due to the closures.

The company is also closing many of Prezzo's subsidiary brands including Chimichanga.

The Body Shop closes down branch

A popular high street store in Brentwood has closed. The Body Shop in the Baytree Centre, near High Street, shut on March 10 after the beauty retailer decided not to renew the lease.

A spokesperson said: “We regularly review our store portfolio and have taken the decision not to renew the lease of our Brentwood store.

“We are committed to redeploying the sales team to nearby stores where possible and are currently in consultation with those affected.

“Our valued customers can still purchase their favourite products online or via The Body Shop At Home.”



Photo credit: Essex Police

LOCAL NEWS



Man jailed for five years for manslaughter of father-of-two

A man who killed a devoted father-of-two following a disagreement has been jailed for five years.

Nathan Turner, 23, of Myrtle Road, Brentwood was jailed at Chelmsford Crown Court on March 9, after pleading guilty to the manslaughter of Dean Jose at an earlier hearing.

Mr Jose, who was known as Deano to his friends and family, had been visiting Brentwood with his wife Maxine to attend a charity event to raise money for a local hospice.

The court heard the pair, from King's Lynn, Norfolk, returned to their hotel in King's Road, Brentwood at around 12.45am on Monday, August 28, 2017 when an argument broke out with a group of girls.

The girls got into a waiting BMW but a short time later Turner got out of the car and a fight broke out between him and Mr Jose.

During the fight Turner punched Mr Jose to the ground and, whilst he lay defenceless, kicked him to the head.

Mr Jose, a rehabilitation specialist, suffered devastating head injuries and died on September 2

leaving behind his wife and two daughters.

Following the sentencing, Senior Investigating Officer DI Stuart Truss of the South Major Crime Team said: "What started as a minor disagreement quickly and unnecessarily escalated leaving so many lives shattered in the aftermath.

"There was no need for Turner to involve himself in what was a minor argument. He did and the level of violence he used was such that Mr Jose suffered devastating head injuries from which he never recovered.

"Turner will have to live with the consequences of his actions that night for the rest of his life.

"Mr Jose's family, and in particular his wife and two teenage daughters, will never recover from the untimely and needless loss of their loved one Dean. I only hope they find some comfort in today's sentence being passed."

Turner was also sentenced to eight months to prison concurrently for possessing the Class B drug cannabis with intent to supply and possession of the Class A drug cocaine.

Popular playing fields to be renovated

Warley Playing Fields will undergo a £235,000 renovation, it has been announced.

The play area is being funded by Section 106 money received from the Warley Training Centre development.

Community, health and housing committee chairman councillor Chris Hossack said: "The winning proposal is innovative, different and will really add a fantastic facility to Warley and the borough as a whole. It's clear from the plans that this is going to be a great place for all generations to enjoy with new paths and the setting will look totally different. Further discussions are under way for Brentwood's first Outdoor Gym to be built here

too later this year."

The winning scheme will include cable runways, traditional see-saws, climbing frames and roundabouts. Large open swings and large basket swings for more than one person will feature together with equipment that will cater for those with sensory or mobility requirements.

A new type of safety surface is being used that will ensure all-weather access and use. New metal railings are part of the plan to provide a new safer entrance along the main road along The Drive. Footpaths and benches will also feature as part of the revitalisation.



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understand what you should be looking out for in your home.

The maintenance of heating in your home is an area which people tend to forget about. If the house warms up we just assume that the heating is working, however, this isn't always the case. There are signs that radiators will give us to let us know that they need attention. Our engineers will be able to fix any issues you may have with your heating.

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When a flat roof is replaced there are Part L Building Regulations that the homeowner and the contractor must comply with. **Please call for free information regarding the Part L Law.** The homeowner should also be made aware that insurance companies will no longer accept any liability for any external or internal damage caused by a leaking flat roof which is over 10 years old.

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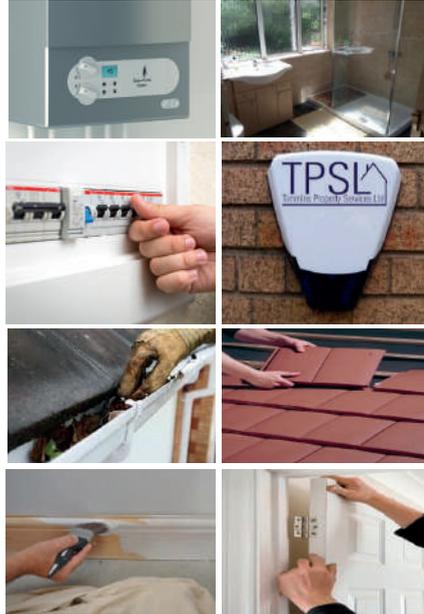
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ON PATROL WITH... THE PASTORS



had our first patrol on the Greater Anglia route as Rail Pastors and our intention on the railway is to help the Samaritans in any intervention work we can do around preventing suicide. This is an issue that really affects too many people. Those affected include the close family of the victim and also friends and the travelling community. We hope that through our presence we can instigated conversations to help people value themselves more.

We have also been to several public events to spread the good news of what we are trying to do on behalf of the local Christian churches which support what we do. This included the Annual Awards Day with the Police and Fire Crime Commissioner Roger Hirst. Although we didn't win an award it was great to be able to have a stand as we continued to reach out to our communities explaining what we do.

Street Pastors continue to patrol the night time economy in Brentwood and Billericay. We go out to help, listen and look out for anyone who is or becomes vulnerable.

Since our last report we have had exciting news. Financial support has been received to also branch out our projects onto the rail lines. We have now

If you require any more information you could follow us on Facebook or Twitter or email Phil Norton at Billericay@Streetpastors.org.uk

Student success in computer challenge



Thirteen-year-old Brentwood School pupil Tabitha Williams was a finalist in a UK-wide computing competition run by the University of Oxford.

Tabitha, who is in second year, was among the top 60 highest achieving students in her age group invited to the final round of the UK BEBRAS Computational Thinking Challenge.

Around 200 computer-savvy students took part in the competition finals held over two weekends in January and February at the university's Department of Computer Science and Hertford College.

Brentwood School's Abigail Rice also made the finals but was unable to attend.

After competing in the final challenge at Oxford, Tabitha was presented with her finalist's certificate at a prize giving ceremony from Professor Peter Millican at Hertford College. She also had a chance to look round another college, and listen to talks about Oxford and computing.

The annual UK BEBRAS Computational Thinking Challenge is designed to get students excited about computing and computational thinking. It is a problem-solving contest with questions inspired by topics in computer science.

In the first round, held in their own schools, students have to try to solve as many problems as possible in the allotted time. There are six age categories and the highest scoring students from the four oldest age groups (Elite, Senior, Intermediate, and Junior) were then invited to the Oxford finals.





School joins forces with homeless charity

Brentwood School students have joined forces with a homeless charity.

The school is set to become important pawns in Chess Homeless charity's bid to engage the younger generation in opening doors for the homeless in Essex.

The young drama students' powerful cameo depictions of life on the streets have sparked an important partnership between the school and the Chelmsford-based charity which will be used to encourage other youngsters to get involved.

The charity collaboration follows a school production entitled *Change Please*, an immersive performance which took the audience on an emotional promenade around the cold and dark campus, and laid bare the plight of the homeless.

Chess Homeless fundraiser Miss Lindsay Hurrell

visited the school's drama department to watch students perform, answer their questions about the charity and the issue of homelessness, and present a short film about one of their users.

Miss Hurrell said she was amazed by the passion and realism portrayed in each of the short vignettes.

She said: "Homelessness can happen to anyone. We need to start to engage with this generation and reach out to senior schools, colleges and universities and these students can help us to achieve this."

Drama teacher Mrs Lynsey Cleaves, who organised the communications with Chess, said: "We will be helping to devise a pilot scheme, including promotional videos, outreach workshops and assemblies, for the Chess charity. We see this as the beginning of a hugely important partnership."

Prep school to undergo major revamp

Brentwood School has secured planning permission for a major programme of improvement works at the preparatory school.

The multi-million pound investment in Middleton Hall Lane will include new buildings, refurbishment and upgrading existing buildings. There will also be improvements made to external areas and landscaping.

The new and refurbished buildings will result in an increase in students, expanded and reorganised early years facilities, new assembly and dining amenities and a suit of state-of-the-art teaching areas. From September 2019, the prep school will also be able to offer a nursery provision and an additional places in Year 3. The new buildings will be constructed to a high quality with low energy designs.

Prep headteacher Jason Whiskerd said he was delighted the project had been given the go-ahead.

He said: "This is a very exciting time for Brentwood Preparatory School which has a long and illustrious history. Only last year we celebrated our 125th anniversary."



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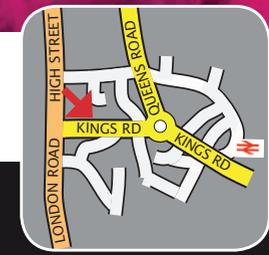
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If you're thinking about adding some much-needed colour to your garden but want to plant something a little different this year, then ditch the daffs and try these fresh floral ideas for spring.

Like the ebullient animal which shares the same name, *Fawn Lilies* are a joyous signaller of spring. Also known as white beauties, these creamy white flowers have a slightly 'out of this world' quality, as their star-shaped petals defy gravity to reveal delicate yellow tendrils.

All poppies add glorious colour, but there is something about the giant crepe paper petals of the *Oriental Poppy*, which makes it a stunning addition to any garden in bloom. Whether you desire the bright pink regality of the *Raspberry Queen* (which can grow to up to 3ft), the salmon-pink of the *Mrs Perry*, or the rich jamminess of *Patty's Plum*, there is a poppy for you.

Originally from mountainous regions of Asia, *Foxtail Lilies* add a dramatic flourish to the landscape. Bursting out of the ground in an orange spike composed of tiny blooms, this is one plant which appears exactly as its name would suggest.

According to legend, the *Pasque Flower* springs from the blood of viking warriors and grows upon their graves. Sadly, these wondrous wildflowers may go the same way as those warring invaders, as the lack of suitable land (Britain has lost 97 per cent of its wildflower meadows since the 1930s) makes it ever harder for them to grow. So, add the magnificence of purple and gold to your garden by investing in this rare wildflower.

The pretty *Polygonthus* may be a commoner compared to its rarer counterparts, but this hardy and bold blossom is a superb way to cheaply and efficiently fill your beds with life. Some gardeners find their hues bright to the point of garish, but if you can't create a natural carpet of cherry, crimson and stonewash blue, what's the point of nurturing a garden at all?



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Sir Elton John CBE

Goodbye yellow brick road

Sir Elton John CBE is facing an important crossroads in his life. After 50 years at the top of the charts, wowing fans around the world with his legendary catalogue and such generational classics as *Sacrifice*, *Daniel*, *I'm Still Standing* and *Candle in the Wind*, the icon is hanging up his sparkly shades after one final tour... albeit a very long one spanning three years that will kick off this September.

But this is far from a sad departure for the singer. In fact, the father of two – to Zachary, seven, and Elijah, five, with husband David

Furnish – couldn't be happier, revealing "nothing is more important than my boys", and therein lies the reason for calling it quits.

Elton (real name Reginald Dwight) is very clear – this is not retirement. Far from it, it appears as the star will simply be switching gears, remaining as busy as ever in the studio.

Speaking with characteristic honesty, the 71-year-old talks health scares and plans for the future, as well as delving deeper into the decision to keep the tour truck firmly off the yellow brick road.

The INTERVIEW

You've got your biggest and, sadly, last tour coming up - firstly what made you decide to give up touring?

ELTON: I've been mulling it over, giving it a lot of thought for a sizeable chunk of time. It's not an easy decision but it's the right decision. It's time. But I'm possibly the most excited I've ever been for a tour because I'm planning on visiting every country in the world that's welcomed me and given me tremendous support. This is my 'thank you' to each and every fan. So, it's not a sad goodbye, it's a triumphant thank you.

So this isn't retirement?

ELTON: I'll never retire; it sounds so boring to me. I'm simply stopping all the travel. My boys are at an age now where it's no longer practical with their schooling and schedules, and if we didn't have children, I would continue travelling.

But I'm still going to record albums, I'm still going to write music. I'm still going to produce movies, I'm still going to write musicals. It's going to free up time for me to focus on other projects.

And I have a family now - my husband, my boys. It's not about me, I can't be self-focused and I have to pull back. They come first before anything and anyone else.

Are you sad to say goodbye to the road?

ELTON: No, honestly no. Yes, I would still continue to tour because I enjoy it, but I've been doing it since I was 16. This is now a different, new chapter in my life and it's difficult for the two to marry - I'm happy to put that last chapter to bed and focus on what's to come with these vibrant, wonderful little people. I just want to be with them.

You did previously say you wanted to die on stage?

ELTON: Things change. Life happens and I'm so lucky it did.

It'll be beneficial for your health surely slowing things down, a little?

ELTON: Every year, I would do a couple hundred flights and as time has gone on and I've gotten older, it's starting to take it out of me. I'm happy for that to come to an end.

And yes, I had a health scare last year. It was quite serious and I'm not going to sugar coat it. I'm fine now and have a full clean bill of health, but it played into the decision. My body isn't invincible, I have to respect it and treat it kinder, and chopping out all those air miles can't hurt.

Are you more aware of your mortality after it?

ELTON: Yes, definitely. It was a wakeup call, it changed my perspective, and I'm glad it did.

But you'd already decided to quit before that happened?

ELTON: I had but this only reinforced it. I'd decided three years ago really, so this isn't a shock announcement - we thought long and hard about it.

What can fans expect?

ELTON: It's going to be very elaborate, very memorable, and the perfect send-off for the music that changed my life. It's going to be a huge celebration, exploding with colour and vibrancy. I want to go out to the biggest bang no one will forget.

And the boys will be there, even though this is the reason you want to stop?

ELTON: They will be with us for some of the way, most likely Australia and Asia, because I want them to experience those cultures. We will be taking them out of school and having a tutor with us, but those travel experiences in themselves are invaluable educational.

Are they fans of your music?

ELTON: They do like Daddy's music - certain tracks more than others.

What's their favourite?

ELTON: They love *I'm Still Standing*. They love coming to the shows and get very excited, but then once we get home it's all forgotten about. I'm no one special in my own home.

If I was a footballer, I would be God to them. What I do doesn't rank quite so highly.

As you look back on your career and your life, what lessons do you want to teach your boys?

ELTON: They already have a very different life to the one I was brought up with.

I think their upbringing is going to come with its own set of built-in difficulties. They come from a well-off background which will afford its own advantages, but mine was very working-class where I had to battle for everything I got, and I want to instill those same values in them. But it's harder growing up in this world and David and I are very mindful of that.

They're fantastic young boys, they have good hearts and compassionate, kind personalities. We just want to be there for them - to guide them as best we can. It's all you can do really as a parent.



HPV Vaccination. Reducing the Risk

April 2018

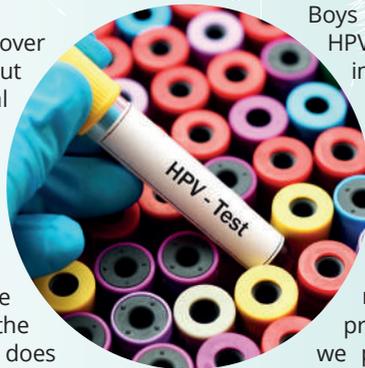
Essex Private Doctors GP Doctor Alice Scott looks at the issue of HPV related cancers, and the protection the HPV Vaccine provides to girls, and boys alike.

HPV, or human papillomavirus, is a virus that infects the skin and the cells lining body cavities. Whilst it has been shown that 99.7% of cervical cancers are due to infection with "high risk" types of HPV, HPV does not only affect women. Men can also be infected too.

What is HPV?

HPV is a virus, there are over 100 types of HPV and about 40 of these affect the genital tract. HPV is passed by sexual contact and is very common, with up to 40% of women being infected with at least one type of HPV within two years of their first sexual encounter. The use of condoms decreases the risk of passing on HPV but does not eliminate it.

Whilst most HPV genital infections clear up by themselves and do not cause any problems, some types of HPV are "high risk" and are associated with cervical, vaginal, penile and anal cancer, as well as some types of cancer of the mouth and throat.



What is the HPV Vaccine?

Since 2008, girls aged 11-13 have been offered a vaccination against the two most common 'high-risk' types of HPV, HPV 16 and 18. Girls up to the age of 18 can request vaccination through the NHS if they weren't vaccinated aged 11-13.

Boys are not eligible to have the HPV vaccination within the NHS immunisation programme. It is thought that vaccinating girls will indirectly protect, however this won't provide protection to men who have sex with men.

It is possible to have the HPV vaccination privately if you do not fall into the NHS vaccination programme, and this is a service we provide from our private GP Practice in Shenfield.

If you would like to discuss any health concerns raised by this article, or to book a private smear or a private HPV vaccination please call the surgery on 01277 201001 to book your appointment.

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Spring IN YOUR STEP



If you've been feeling sluggish over the dark winter months, then now is the perfect time to get outside and rediscover your fitness, with the spring season promising to restore both body and mind.

TAKE A HIKE

Spring is a wonderful time to be surrounded by nature as life, both animal and plant, is born anew. If you're lucky enough to have access to woodlands or fields, hiking is a wonderful way to gently reinstate your fitness with little risk of injury, and equally, a brisk walk round your local park is just as beneficial to your body so long as you maintain a steady pace.

JOG ON

For those with a little more vigour to spare, try starting your day with a gentle jog. With less risk of slipping on ice or falling into gutters thanks to the early morning light, this a great opportunity to slowly rediscover your pace ahead of the summer.

UPCYCLE

While the 'Beast from the East' was stalking the

streets of Britain, the bus or train was arguably the safest and comfiest commute to work. But with the warmer weather blowing back in, the chance to hop on a bike is surely too good to refuse? Try it – it's invigorating, life-affirming and without the discomfort of other commuters' dubious personal hygiene.

SUPER CIRCUIT

If you're looking to get beach body ready, you'll be wanting to find a high-impact workout that will help you burn fat and build muscle, fast. Outdoor bootcamps are a fantastic way to maintain motivation, meet new friends and get results. Plus, they're usually far cheaper than a gym membership.

JUST BREATHE

You don't have to break out in a sweat to do something really positive for your body, and if all you're looking for is a little peace and quiet, then meditating in nature is about as healing as it gets. All you need is a park bench or garden, and perhaps some chirping birds to provide the soundtrack.





CHAINED *to the* RHYTHM

Why obeying your circadian rhythm can drastically improve your overall health

If you're feeling constantly fatigued and under the weather, it may be time to start listening to your circadian rhythm. It's not some new style of dance music, or trendy workout style, but your internal body clock, otherwise known as your sleep/wake cycle.

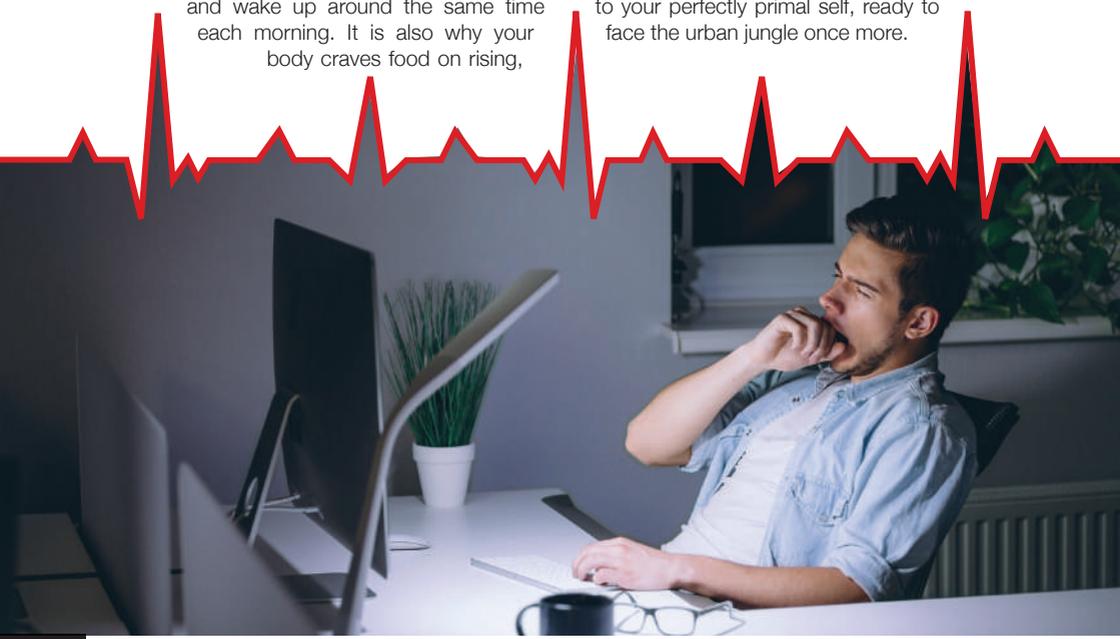
The problem is us humans are so used to dictating and controlling every area of our busy lives, we sometimes refuse to acknowledge that some things really are out of our grasp. A bit like that inability to resist delicious food which combines fat with sugar, or when mild stress triggers the full fight or flight response, our circadian rhythm is a primal and fundamental part of who we are, and ignoring it can lead to serious health problems.

It tells our bodies when to sleep, rise and eat. It is the reason you feel tired at the same time each night and wake up around the same time each morning. It is also why your body craves food on rising,

and also why you have that energy slump most afternoons after lunch. When we obey this clock we feel rested, content and tend not to overeat, but when we have too many late nights or disrupt the clock with artificial light (from mobile phones) it can spark a myriad of health issues from insomnia, diabetes, depression and even cardiovascular events.

So how do you reset a disrupted clock? Firstly, set yourself a bed and a wakeup time, don't sleep in, and don't nap during the day. Make sure your bedroom is dark in the evening and try to avoid phones and TVs before sleep. In winter months invest in a SAD alarm clock which emulates sunrise, plus limit your caffeine and alcohol intake as this can interrupt sleep patterns.

Within a few weeks you ought to be feeling back to your perfectly primal self, ready to face the urban jungle once more.



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Just FOR MEN



BEAUTY

FELLAS, DON'T ENDURE RAZOR BURN AND BLOCKED PORES.

Here's our guide to protecting your complexion the macho way...

✓ DO buy a decent cleanser

If you've been washing your face with regular soap and water, you might be surprised by how much more refreshed your skin feels with a proper cleanser. It doesn't have to be expensive, just face specific.

✗ DON'T over-exfoliate

If your skin feels flaky and irritated the worst thing you can do is scrub it as this will damage its natural barrier, thus exacerbating the problem. Instead, choose a cleanser that contains glycolic acid and never exfoliate more than once or twice a week.

✓ DO use aftershave

It smells good, makes you feel good, and closes pores after a shave, though go for one without alcohol as this is less dehydrating.

✗ DON'T buy cheap razors

Cheap razors are very bad, and surprisingly, expensive ones with numerous blades aren't great either as they will leave you more vulnerable to ingrown hairs and razor burn. Instead invest in a decent safety razor, the blades for which are very affordable.

✓ DO buy a moisturiser

If your skin is oily pick a water-based lotion, or if normal/dry, try an oil-based one. But whatever you do, DON'T skip this step.

✗ DON'T be put off by anti-ageing labels

Dream of being a silver fox one day? Then it's never too early to protect your skin. Using a product with retinol – which boosts collagen and cell growth – as early as your twenties will prevent fine lines later.

✓ DO stay hydrated

Help your pores from the inside by drinking plenty of water.

✗ DON'T bake in the sun

Getting a daily dose of vitamin D is one thing; leaving your skin unprotected for hours, day after day in the scorching sun is quite another. Buy a moisturiser with SPF and you won't end up looking like old leather.

Vegan VIXEN

THE RISE OF ANIMAL-FREE MAKE-UP AND WHERE TO FIND IT

There are over half-a-million vegans in the UK and any one of them will tell you that veganism is not just a diet, it's a lifestyle. But while it's easy to eschew meat and dairy in your meals and choose synthetic clothing fabric, finding beauty and make-up options that contain zero animal products can be a lot more complicated.

One reason it's difficult to know what you're buying is because language used on ingredients lists can be vague and misleading, so it's important to know the lingo. For starters, 'cruelty-free' usually means the cosmetics haven't been tested on animals – and is entirely different from animal-free (contains no animal products whatsoever).

Other words to look out for:

- **CARMINE** (AKA cochineal, crimson lake, natural red 4) – a colour created from crushing insects (think your favourite red lipstick)
- **BEESWAX** – found in lip balms and mascara
- **LANOLIN** – a grease extracted from animal wool
- **GUANINE** – fish scales that are used to create shimmer and shine

Another difficulty can be finding products that are effective and affordable, but with veganism being the fastest-growing lifestyle movement in the country (there are three-and-a-half times more vegans than there were in 2006) it appears that beauty brands are finally listening.

Barry M, for example, is one of the best-value make-up lines on the high street and plenty of its products (not all) are vegan, while Superdrug's B line is entirely vegan.

Some high-end brands have upped their game too and companies like Kat Von D, Illamasqua and Charlotte Tilbury all have products that are both cruelty-free and vegan – meaning you can look like a fox without wearing anything that's ever harmed one.



*The ten pound donation goes to the Dogs Trust or Guide Dogs.



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FOOD & DRINK

If you're looking to eat less meat but don't know where to start, consider just having one day a week without it. And as these five delicious veggie meal ideas will prove, substituting meat doesn't necessarily mean missing out on flavour.

Both warming and filling, the combination of cannellini, pinto and red kidney beans with canned tomatoes, peppers, onion and spices make this a seriously hearty dish.

ROASTED VEGETABLE LASAGNE



This sumptuous lasagne doesn't even require a meat substitute, as red peppers and aubergines are roasted before being layered with tomato, béchamel sauce and pasta sheets, then topped with cherry tomatoes and mozzarella. Once baked in the oven, you wouldn't know the difference.

PUMPKIN GREEN CURRY WITH NOODLES



Make a green curry as you usually would, but swap the prawns or chicken for chunks of fresh pumpkin. Meanwhile, boil some noodles and sauté it with coconut oil and seasoning.

THREE-BEAN MEXICAN CHILLI



BAKED SQUASH



A fabulous dish for a dinner party, simply cut and deseed your squash, then score and brush the flesh with garlic, chilli and olive oil. Next, roast along with courgette, pepper, tomato and onion (in a separate dish). Then mix the roasted veg with breadcrumbs, parmesan, pine nuts and goats cheese, before spooning into your squash halves. Bake until golden and bubbling.

BLACK BEAN BURGERS



Packed with protein, these beauties are as good as the real thing. Tinned black beans, breadcrumbs, spring onions and chilli are mixed together before being moulded into burger-shaped patties. Chill your burgers in the fridge for 10 minutes to maintain shape, before frying. Serve in a bun with onions, tomatoes and whatever relish you fancy, and serve with a cold beer. Heaven.



Rare Breed



WHAT DOES THE WAY YOU LIKE YOUR STEAK SAY ABOUT YOU?

Steak tartare

This suggests an individual with refined taste, a flair for the exotic and an air of mystery. Chopped-up raw beef steak served with onions, capers, Worcestershire sauce and often a raw egg, this is authentic French cuisine and not for the squeamish. If preparing tartare at home, be sure to buy the freshest meat you can, and always hand-chop – don't mince.

and say what you mean. Of course, you enjoy the odd thrill in life, but never throw caution entirely to the wind; you're far too busy for that. You have a lively social life and a broad spectrum of acquaintances. So whether dining at The Wolseley or The Wolf and Hound, you need a meal you can always count on – a medium-rare sirloin and chips with peppercorn sauce is just that.

Rare

You are bold, outgoing and like to grab life by the horns; literally, in this case. When it comes to business, you have a nose for a deal and will stop at nothing to get what you want. You buy your suits from a tailor, avoid carbs and work out with a trainer. Order fillet for the most tender, melt-in-the-mouth meat, and balance your carnivorous tendencies with a fresh salad on the side.

Well-done

Not one to take risks, you like to know exactly what you're getting yourself into. Before dining out, you check the menu online, and most importantly the reviews. You value loyalty and prefer to have a few good friends over many acquaintances, with whom you love nothing more than to have a good chat and one, maybe two glasses of red wine. But while your dinner may be reliably decent, you run the risk of getting bored, so why not liven things up with a tasty side dish (spicy onion rings) or a decadent pud?

Medium-rare

You're a reliable sort; you know what you like



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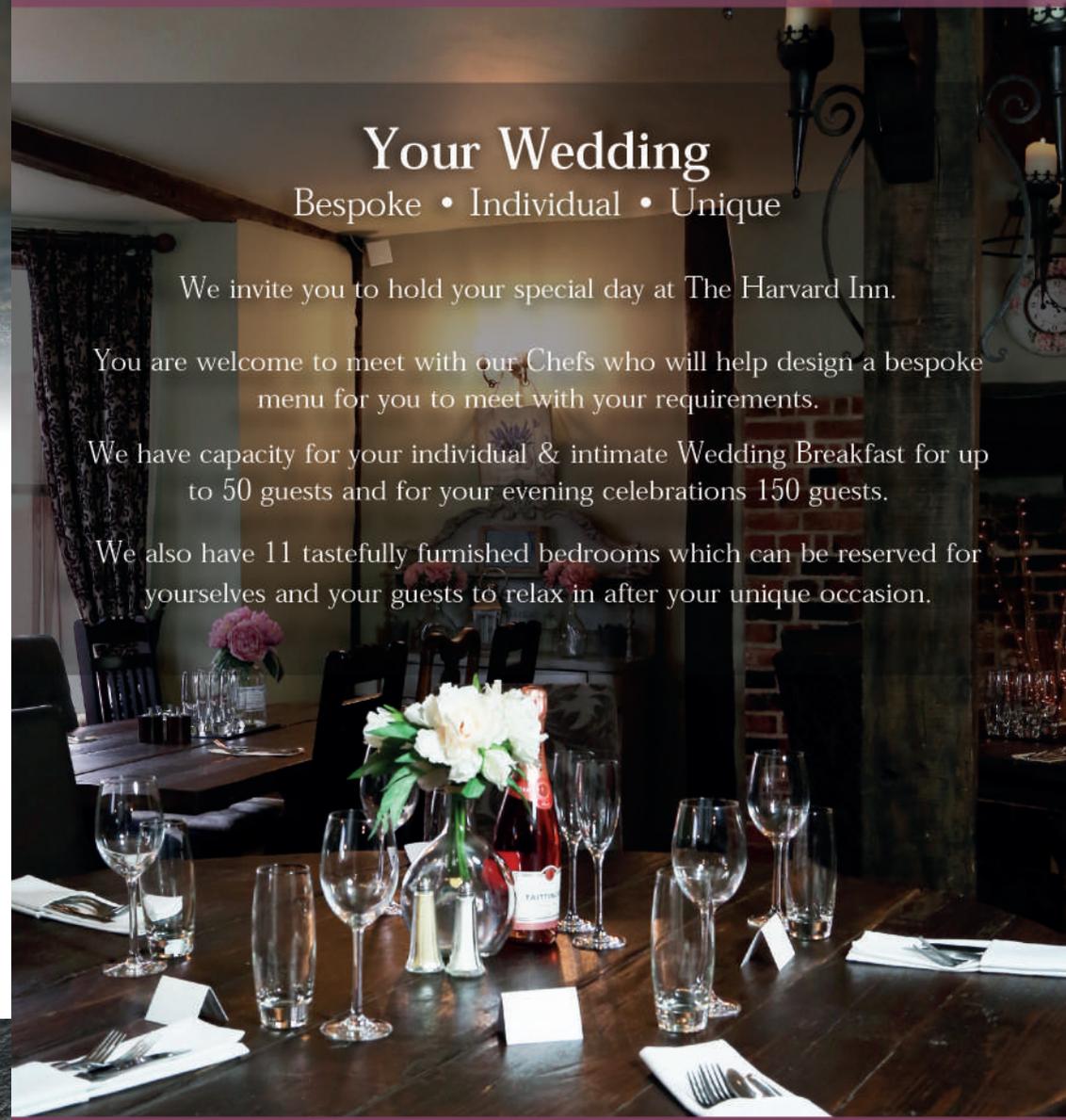
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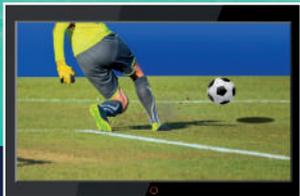
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FASHION

Acceptable in THE EIGHTIES

The 1980s are officially back in fashion, but don't bust out your spandex and stonewash denim just yet, because these looks are all about the uber glam.

ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD...

In fact it can be silver, blue, pink, vermillion, turquoise, or any colour as long as the overall look is drop-dead fabulous. Think feathers, sequins and of course, lamé. With such ostentation however, it's still important to keep this look modern, so choose a sleek and slinky silhouette, keep makeup natural and go easy on the accessories.

GIVE WINTER THE COLD SHOULDER...

By reviving the classic eighties asymmetric look. Proving that the 1980s were simpler times, back then you didn't need to flash a pound of flesh. In fact, one perfectly exposed clavicle would do. Keep it current by choosing muted colours and going for a structural statement rather than anything flouncy or frilly.

WOMAN MAY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO VOTE FOR 100 YEARS...

But the power suit only became a thing in the 1980s. Not just for important board meetings, worn right, the perfect suit will take you from the office to the dancefloor, and looks good in almost every colour. But while the structure hasn't changed – broad shoulder, slender waist, BIG impact – the overall feel is more feminine, with silky underwear underneath and killer heels.

BE THE PROM QUEEN ONCE AGAIN...

With the latest incarnations of the tulle skirt. Keep it short and punky or long and elegant, just don't over accessorise. Think cool and sophisticated, NOT Cyndi Lauper.

JOAN COLLINS' CHARACTER IN DYNASTY HAD BROAD SHOULDERS...

In more ways than one, and fans of the classic soap opera will rejoice that shoulder pads are back in fashion. The rest of us however, will just have to take consolation that the trend calls for a subtle, rounded shoulder over the American Football player silhouette. Withering sneer is optional.



A Yank

FINALLY MAKES IT TO A BRITISH ROYAL COURT

Meghan Markle is the third American to attempt to join the Royal Family.

But she looks certain to succeed where the two others failed.

It is not that long ago that such a union between the fifth in line to the throne and a commoner, an actress and divorcee with African American heritage would have been unthinkable.

However in the last few decades, immigration has softened racist attitudes about the unsuitability of people from the fringes of the empire for marrying blue bloods.

Also in 2002 the Anglican Church ended restrictions on divorcees remarrying in the church.

But Americans Wallis Simpson and Koo Stark did not have the more enlightened days to help them in their quest to find love in the Royal Family.

Wallis, like Meghan, was a divorcee, and her marriage in 1937 to Edward VIII caused him to abdicate and brought the Royal Family to one of the biggest crises in its history.

It also paved the way for the reign of our present Queen through her father Albert – George VI-, Edward's brother.

Koo, like Meghan, was an actress and for two years she dated Harry's uncle Prince Andrew in the early '80s. Their friendship floundered after the revelation of a naked shower scene in a 1976 art house film *emily*.

This, coupled with pressure on Andrew and Koo by press, paparazzi and the Palace, contributed to the split.

In 1988 Koo said: "The amount of attention and pressure on me became unbearable. It was a nightmare."

Their romance ended in 1983. Stark went on to marry Tim Jeffries in 1984, and Andrew married Sarah Ferguson in 1986. Neither marriage lasted.

In contrast Meghan has been warmly welcomed into the Royal Family.

Social media has been super excited that #blackgirlmagic is coming to the Royal Family.

But the biracial American actress is actually pretty magical in other ways, too.

The 36-year-old seems to be more than fulfilling what fans want from a novice royal in a fairytale royal romance. It also helps that she is smart, beautiful and passionate about humanitarian efforts around the world.

Photo credit: www.vogue.co.uk

Queen George Duke Princess HRE

THE ROYAL NAME Swapping game

It is a complicated business when it comes to names – especially if you are royal.

And it is something that new bride to be Meghan Markle will have to understand.

Like Prince William's wife Catherine, Meghan, 36, will not be a real princess, as women who are not of royal birth can hold that title.

Her official title will be Princess Henry of Wales, just as Catherine is Princess William of Wales.

Catherine was listed as "princess of the United Kingdom" in the occupation box of Prince's George's birth certificate because of her official title.

The Queen is expected to make Harry and Meghan the Duke and Duchess of Sussex as a wedding present, so she will then become Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, as well.

On the point of princesses, Princess Diana was also not a princess although she was commonly known as one.

On her marriage she became simply The Princess of Wales, as there can only ever be one Prince of Wales. On her divorce when she lost her HRH status she was just Diana, Princess of Wales. The very important word THE, with a capital T had also been removed.

Though most monarchs of the United Kingdom have used their first baptismal name as their reign name, on three occasions monarchs have chosen a different name.

First, Queen Victoria had been christened Alexandrina Victoria, but took the throne under the name Victoria.

When Victoria's son, Prince Albert Edward, became king in 1901, he took the reign name Edward VII, as Victoria had made it known that she never wanted any king to rule as Albert so as not to eclipse her Albert. Edward therefore chose to use one of his other names.

In 1936, after the abdication crisis, Prince Albert, Duke of York, assumed the throne as King George VI rather than "King Albert" for the same reason.

Prince Charles may elect not to be known as "Charles III" out of concern about comparisons with Charles II of England (who was known as a playboy), Charles I of England (who was executed after the English Civil War) and the Jacobite memory of the "Young Pretender" Charles Edward Stuart (who claimed the title "Charles III").

He may instead choose George VII in honour of his grandfather.

Prince Victoria Duchess Edward

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WHAT'S ON *in your area*

Lunchtime Organ Recital
Brentwood Cathedral, Ingrave Road,
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April 18, 1pm – 1.40pm

On Wednesday, April 18 at 1pm to 1.40pm a Lunchtime Organ Recital in Brentwood Cathedral, Ingrave Road, to be given by Alex Fishburn from Royal College of Music London. Refreshments provided afterwards. Free parking.

Gung-Ho!

Weald Country Park, Brentwood, CM14 5QS

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Live Music at the Bardswell Social Club
Bardswell Social Club, Weald Road,
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April 21, 7.30pm

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Live on stage will be The Backbeats. Doors open at 7.30pm. Admission is £5.

Telephone 01277 214057 or visit www.thebardsellclub.co.uk for further details.

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Brentwood Brewery, Ongar Road, Brentwood,
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April 25, 6.30pm

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opportunity to network and make some new connections in a relaxed informal environment.

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Non-members are welcome to join us.

www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-taste-of-brentwood-beer-tickets for more information.

Country Music Club - Shaun Loughrey and his Band plus Brian Mann

Brentwood Theatre, 15 Shenfield Road,
Brentwood, CM15 8AG

April 29, 7pm

Every month, country music fans meet to listen to nearly THREE hours of LIVE country music. We throw open the doors extra early, with the bar opening at 6pm and the show starting at 7pm.

The performance will end at approximately 10.30pm. Tickets cost £16.

Visit www.brentwood-theatre.co.uk/event/country-music-club-shaun-loughrey-and-his-band-plus-brian-mann/ for more information.

Oh What A Lovely War

South Weald Parish Hall, London Road,
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May 11 – May 13



Award-winning drama group, The College Players, are bringing the satirical musical play *Oh What A Lovely War* to Brentwood in May this year, as commemorations to mark the centenary of the ending of the First World War get under way.

Tickets are available by calling or texting 07775 882949 or emailing thecollegeplayers@outlook.com



WHAT'S ON



PUZZLES & TRIVIA

Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4

PUZZLES

ACROSS

1. Hang loosely (4)
3. Arguments (8)
9. Pertaining to marriage (7)
10. Condescend (5)
11. Church council (5)
12. Japanese dish of raw fish (7)
13. Regalia (6)
15. Fish with thick lips (6)
17. Funnel-shaped river mouth (7)
18. Suit (5)
20. Small arm of the sea (5)
21. Letter-for-letter; verbatim (7)
22. Dullness of colour (8)
23. Anxious; nervous (4)

DOWN

1. Having patience in spite of problems (4-9)
2. Attractive flower (5)
4. Except when (6)
5. Reallocate (12)
6. Draws forth (7)
7. Mawkishly (13)
8. School for young children (12)
16. Rides a bike (6)

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14. ___ Portman: actress (7)
19. Unit of capacitance (5)

DID YOU KNOW

- ▶ A hard-boiled egg can spin – uncooked or soft boiled ones don't.
- ▶ Unless food is mixed with saliva you can't taste it.
- ▶ Honey is the only natural food that doesn't spoil.
- ▶ Flamingos can only eat when their heads are upside down.
- ▶ It takes between seven and 21 days to make a single jelly bean.
- ▶ It takes around 12 hours for your food to entirely digest.
- ▶ Cabbage is made up of 91 per cent water and cucumbers are 96 per cent
- ▶ Eggs contain all the vitamins except vitamin C and most of the vitamin C in fruits is found in its skin.
- ▶ Fresh apples float because they contain 25 per cent air.

SUDOKU

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MOTORING



PARKING MAD

HOW TO CHALLENGE PARKING TICKETS... AND WIN.

We've all been there. You've popped out for a loaf of bread and returned to your vehicle a few minutes later only to find a parking ticket slapped on the windscreen. That's a £50 sourdough you're not going to get back.

Or are you?

These days, council parking is regulated to the hilt, and wardens must abide by strict criteria if they are to make your parking ticket stick... literally. So before you begrudgingly pull out that debit card, take a look at this quick guide to see if you've got grounds to challenge the fine:

1 THE FIVE-MINUTE WINDOW

Unless you're on double yellows, attendants must observe your vehicle (standing next to it) for five minutes, and in some situations as many as 10, before issuing a ticket. Check they have done this by referring to the times on the ticket. If they haven't, it's invalid.

2 'FAIR OPPORTUNITY'

The council must have given you a fair opportunity

to buy a ticket - that means a working machine in easy reach or alternative payment service, such as the 'Pay by Phone' facility. No way to pay? No ticket.

3 LINEAGE AND SIGNAGE

Road markings must be solid with no breaks in the paint, and signs must be clearly displayed, clean and within readable distance of the vehicle. Even in these days of administrative red tape, most tickets are cancelled because councils constantly fail to adhere to their own regulations.

4 CONTRAVENTION CODES

Parking wardens must list a specific contravention code in relation to the parking infringement and this can be found on the ticket. Wrong code? You're off the hook.

In the UK last year around a quarter of tickets were disputed, and 40 per cent of those challenged were overturned. And while private car parking rules and regulations differ, visiting Citizens' Advice online is an excellent first stop for further information and guidance.



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BUSINESS & FINANCE



MIND THE GAP

Recent studies suggest that the pay gap between men and women is smaller than it's ever been. But is this an example of real, effective change, or do the seemingly positive statistics hide a need for further progression?

Last year, figures from the Office for National Statistics showed that the UK's gender wage gap had narrowed to a record low, with women earning 9.4 per cent less than men. Compared to figures in the seventies – where the pay gap stood at around the 45 per cent mark – this new number shows an improvement in the discrepancies between men and women's pay in the workplace. But is this enough?

Eyebrows were raised in July last year when the BBC published a list of its top-earning employees. Only one third of BBC employees earning over £150,000 a year were women, and the top seven places on the list were held exclusively by men. The highest-earning female, Claudia Winkleman, was paid between £450,000 and £499,000 a year – but that figure pales in comparison to top-earning employee (and man) Chris Evans' £2.2million-plus pay cheque.

Another problem with the latest ONS figures is the rate at which the gap has closed over the last five years. In 1997 the number stood at 17.4 per cent, but in 2012 it was down to 9.5 per cent, signalling just a measly 0.1 per cent decrease in the last half-decade.

In April last year, employers with more than 250 staff were required by law to collect data so they can publish their gender pay gap, gender bonus gap and the proportion of men and women in each of four pay segments.

The results must be published within 12 months on the employer's website and a government site. There are no rules about what bosses should do once they uncover pay gaps, but the new measures may mean employees have grounds to ask for a raise.

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Retro TECH

FIVE OLD SCHOOL RETRO TECH ITEMS THAT REACH DECENT MONEY ON EBAY...

do you have one?

Short of a bob or two? Get up into the loft and see if you've got any of these money-spinners gathering dust.

ANALOGUE TELEPHONE (1970)
Stylish, slick, colourful, and with echoes of art deco, this was arguably the best thing the 1970s produced when it came to fashion. Although it's only worth £40 now, that's still significantly more than a new home phone.

POLAROID CAMERA (1974)
Classic, contemporary and, at the time, sitting at the very peak of stills technology. Nowadays, the 195 is almost unusable.
However, if you've got one of these lingering around, you could be pocketing anything up to £600. Smile for the camera.

CASIO CALCULATOR WATCH (1983)
We've all been sat on the bus desperate to work out something using Pythagoras, and Casio found the

answer. Nowadays, Siri will do it for you, and you can invest the £275 it'll make you in other ways... a full-sized abacus, perhaps.

NINTENDO GAMEBOY (1989)
Where personal gaming began, the Nintendo, in both design and playability, was utterly unique.
This is one of those rare items that still has as much to offer as it did when released, but if you've got one at the back of the cupboard, you might want to cash it in for up to £250 and buy yourself a new Xbox instead.

IPOD CLASSIC (2001)
Anyone who thinks mass-storage phones have made iPods largely valueless needs to think again. This classic from 2001 was Apple's first punt at the music market, and stored what seemed, at the time, a bewildering 1,000 tracks. It's now moved into 'antique' mode and will make you a cool £150, although remember to wipe that Gareth Gates album off it first.



NATIONAL TREASURE

It's the racing event of the year, flush with fleet-footed fillies and promises of wealth untold, and now you can get to the track in top shape with this guide to the runners and riders in the 2018 Grand National.

The Grand National is, by a length, the racing event of the UK calendar, and this year is no different. On April 14, the crowds will head to Aintree Racecourse in Liverpool to see some of the biggest names in horseracing competing for the coveted prize, with a cheeky little flutter or three included.

This year's early standout contender is TOTAL RECALL at 12/1. Despite having a rocky start in competitive racing that saw this stallion as likely to unseat his jockey as to win by a country mile, a recent change in owner has seemed to have done wonders for the horse, who has now won three races on the trot (and at a gallop).

At 16/1 punters backing THE LAST SAMURI will be hoping for a bit of numerical luck this year. Having come second in 2016 before a disappointing 16th place finish last year, it may be a case of three times the charm - especially given the fantastic form already shown this season by this aspiring champ.

CAUSE OF CAUSES at 20/1 may not seem like a potential champ, but the knowledge that this spirited contender was just pipped to the win in 2017 by then 25/1 outsider One for Arthur, and is known for being a solid chaser in most conditions, should tell you everything you need to know.

Meanwhile, owner Paul Nicholls has previous in training Grand National winners, after overseeing the development of Neptune Collonges in 2012. This year he's hoping that VICENTE will come up with the goods at Aintree, and secure the first ever consecutive Grand National one-two for Scottish owners.

Grand National Betting 2018 | Best Odds*

Horse	Race Age	Trainer	Best Odds
Total Recall	9	W P Mullins	14/1
Blaklion	9	Nigel Twiston-Davies	14/1
The Last Samuri	9	Kim Bailey	16/1
Anibale Fly	8	AJ Martin	20/1
Cause of Causes	9	Gordon Elliott	20/1
Tiger Roll	9	Gordon Elliott	25/1
Minella Rocco	8	Jonjo O'Neill	25/1
Bellshill	8	W Mullins	25/1
Seeyouatmidnight	10	A M Thomson	33/1
Vicente	9	Paul Nicholls	33/1
Gold Present	8	Nicky Henderson	25/1

ONE FOR ARTHUR (left, No22, Derek Fox) in rear at the 3rd fence on his way to winning The Randox Health Grand National Aintree, 8 Apr 2017
Photo credit: Steven Cargill/racingfotos.com/REX/Shutterstock

*All odds updated 19/03/18. All subject to change.
www.grandnational.org.uk/2018-grand-national-tips-ante-post-odds.php



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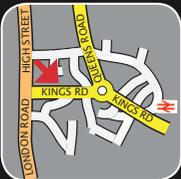
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