



2020  
V

VISION

QUIRKY  
LEAP  
YEAR  
FACTS

**SKY BROWN**

*GB's youngest summer  
Olympian in 50 years*

**TEA FOR TWO**

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February 2020

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# Editor's notes...



Nik Allen, Editor

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

I make little secret of my Everton FC roots, or of the regular bouts of disappointment supporting them provokes. But even by their standards, losing

to a severely weakened Liverpool side – which featured a 16-year-old, two other teenagers, a debutant who hadn't kicked a ball for two months and, in total, eight players aged 24 or under – in the FA Cup third round on January 5, was a new low.

In the aftermath, I considered what I had seen from one of the teams – determination, passion and optimism. I had to applaud that application, and realised they are the elements that should steer all of us forward this year.

As a person and as a publisher, I've always been driven and optimistic, and I love seeing that both in my team here at **VISION** and when I'm out in the local community. That's what we're all about and, while I care deeply about my football team, I need to be quick to remind myself that real life exists not on a 110x75-yard piece of grass.

Instead, it's on the street corners, at the parks, in the halls and clubs, and in every friendly conversation between locals. While it pains me to say it, it's 100 per cent true that the real passion to keep moving forward and to flourish as a community is exactly that shown by those Liverpool youngsters.

Enjoy reading the February edition,

*Nik*

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# SKY IS THE LIMIT

Sky Brown, at 11 years of age, has been picked for the GB Skateboarding team, making her the youngest summer Olympian in 50 years. We look at what she has achieved thus far, and what this sensational youngster might accomplish going forward.

Sky was born in Japan – Miyazaki to be exact, on the south-eastern coast – to a British father and a Japanese mother. The pre-teen prodigy still officially resides in south-east Asia but spends the majority of her time in the United States.

Global sports giant Nike made her its youngest-ever acquisition in February 2019, and she has appeared regularly in ad campaigns with iconic female athletes, including fellow Briton Dina Asher-Smith, American artistic gymnast Simone Biles and South African middle-distance runner Caster Semenya.

At the age of eight, Sky became the youngest female to compete in the Vans US Open Pro Series. Although failing to place in the medals, she did finish higher than a number of competitors 20 years her senior.

This year, Sky clinched gold at Simple Session, a senior women's competition in Estonia's capital of Tallinn, and on a park course specifically designed for male competitors typically twice her size. It is this increased success in competition, matched with a squeaky clean image and the potential of youth, that has elevated her into superstar territory, and she is expected to become a multimillionaire long before she is even able to buy an alcoholic drink.

Dancing is another of Sky's talents and she was the winning celebrity on the US reality TV show *Dancing with the Stars: Juniors* in 2018.

While experts agree Sky's natural talent for skateboarding is without question, it was feared she may not be ready to compete at Olympic level owing to a lack of speed or power from her slight frame.

However, the decision by the British Olympic Association to invite her to compete for them – a significant 'win' given Japan's interest in her and the fact that the 2020 event is being held in Tokyo – has cemented the old adage, 'if you're good enough, you're old enough'.

And yet some commentators have queried the extent to which someone so young is able to cope with the pressure not just of high-level competition, but also of the media glare that will surely confront such a young talent. In Sky's defence, she is a youngster who exudes confidence. She practises surfing, does karate, jujitsu, dancing and singing, thrives on activity and equips herself as a modern, fearless youngster too young to have experienced the pressures that often only begin to surface in the teenage years.

"I just go about things in the way that feels natural," she says. "I am enjoying myself too much to feel the pressure and I'm keen to keep pushing forward with these opportunities that I have."

Those opportunities are probably somewhat wider than she herself appreciates. Competitive events she can handle, and media commitments are, it seems, a doddle. Yet stepping up as a cultural icon across social media, whose movements and actions are going to be lapped up by an adorning fan base spread all around the world... Sky Brown is going to have a busy few years ahead.



“I AM ENJOYING MYSELF  
TOO MUCH TO  
FEEL THE PRESSURE”



29  
FEBRUARY

# LEAP OF FAITH

This year is a leap year, with 366 days instead of 365, the extra day falling on February 29.

The extra day is traditionally when women can turn the tables and propose marriage. It also means people born on February 29 can actually celebrate their birthday on the proper day.

Here are six facts about leap year:

**1.** The leap year's extra day is vital because a complete orbit around the sun takes slightly longer than 365 days – five hours, 48 minutes and 46 seconds longer, to be exact.

At one time, people observed a 355-day calendar with an extra 22-day month every two years. But in 45bc Julius Caesar ordered his astronomer, Sosigenes, to simplify things.

Sosigenes opted for the 365-day year with an extra day every four years to use up the extra hours. The extra day is added to February because it used to be the last month of the Roman calendar.

The system was then fine-tuned by Pope Gregory XIII. He coined the term leap year.

**2.** The tradition of women proposing on leap day is thought to date back to fifth-century Ireland when St Brigid complained to St Patrick that women had to wait too long for suitors to propose.

He then gave women a single day in a leap year to pop the question – the last day of the shortest month. Legend has it that Brigid dropped to a knee and proposed to Patrick that instant, but he refused, kissing her on the cheek and offering a silk gown to soften the blow.

**3.** Others believe the tradition originates from Scotland when Queen Margaret, then aged just five, declared in 1288 that a woman could propose to any man she liked on February 29.

She ruled that men who refused the proposal would need to pay a fine in the form of a kiss, a silk dress, a pair of gloves or one pound. To give suitors fair warning – and possibly a chance to escape – a woman was required to wear breeches or a scarlet petticoat on the day of the proposal.

**4.** In Denmark, a man refusing a woman's leap-day proposal must give her 12 pairs of gloves, while in Finland it's fabric for a skirt.

One in five engaged couples in Greece avoid getting married in a leap year because they believe it's bad luck.

In Italy, legend has it that women are erratic during a leap year, and several proverbs warn against planning important life events in a leap year. *Anno bisesto, anno funesto* means leap year, doom year.

**5.** Workers paid fixed annual or monthly salaries essentially work for free on February 29 because wages are not usually calculated to account for the extra day. And prisoners with one-year sentences must serve the extra day if the term crosses leap day.

**6.** People born on February 29 are called leaplings or leapers. The chance of being born on a leap day is one in 1,461. There are five million leaplings around the world.

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## BOLD as bath

*Brighten up your bathroom with weird but wonderful wallpaper*

From hilarious books detailing *What to do on the Loo* to your Space Hopper 100yd trophy award gleaned from a late nineties trip to Butlins, the British bathroom has long been a place where we exhibit our most whimsical and wacky sides.

The current trend for zany wallpaper, then, makes a welcome addition to this unpredictable canon.

But before you head to the shops, bear in mind that silly can also be stylish. For example, walls adorned with meticulous depictions of tropical fish become a knowing nod to your nautical themed family bathroom. Meanwhile, wallpaper portraying a Victorian theatre audience in stunning detail makes a dull downstairs loo feel fanciful and droll.

Those with horticultural fancies can bring the outdoors in with bright blooms and roses realised in digital floral prints; skyscapes awash with beautiful songbirds in bold technicolour, or even an elaborate jungle scene resplendent with tropical palms, playful

monkeys and sneering tigers.

You can also keep it simple with a splatter paint-inspired wallpaper, which brings a modern touch to your toilet. Similarly, ombré patterns in rose pinks and twilight blues are perfect for those who want a moody and evocative powder room for late-night guests.

There are few interior trends that offer such versatility, to the extent that if your bathroom is already tiled, you can still devote even the smallest space to this decorative craft. Given the nature of the toilet, the back of the door makes a perfect place to entertain your visitors with a collage of your favourite film posters, magazine covers or comic strips – a design that is not only entirely unique but also affordable!

So next time you reach for the trusty white paint or black-and-white tiles, think: does this really show off my personality? For if ever there was a place we Brits like to lose ourselves, it's in the loo.



HOME & DIY

# BACK TO THE FUTURE

FUTURISM, THE LATEST TREND IN HOME DÉCOR, TAKES ALL THE BEST ELEMENTS FROM THE PAST AND PLACES THEM FIRMLY IN THE MODERN WORLD

We may not be zooming around on spaceships just yet or wearing anti-gravity belts, but beloved 1960s cartoon *The Jetsons* certainly predicted some of the technology we now use daily. But beyond video calls and smartwatches, the futuristic family also had some very enviable décor in their Orbit City apartment, as style which is very much the basis of futurism.

Presenting a retro vision of the future, this trend incorporates many classic furniture pieces from the past – think the classic Eames lounge chair, the Thunderbird sofa and pendulum floor lamps – against a colour palate and textural backdrop that is extremely up to date.

Think stainless steel lighting fixtures and rich suede furnishings against a textural rose-gold wall, curvaceous fibreglass dining table and chairs with a huge overhanging light, and heavy granite coffee tables on textural rugs in ethereal hues.

A style that is utterly earthbound but also out of this world, it evokes all the best scenes from classic sci-fi... the *Star Trek* command deck if it had Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen at its helm, or a luxury condo on Magrathea.

So how do you incorporate a little stardust into your current home? Consider adding a little textural juxtaposition, such as natural stone sculptures or clay vases against embossed wallpaper. You can also invest in another current trend of the moment: cacti. These magnificent, verdant beauties stand out beautifully against a softer colour background and are reassuringly low maintenance as well.

In all, futurism isn't something to fear; it's to be embraced – oh, and by the way, it's here right now.




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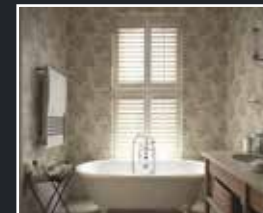
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# Tranquil Dawn

Dulux Colour of the Year



Interior designers and homeowners across the country have been waiting with bated breath to discover what shade Dulux has named as its Colour of the Year for 2020.

And it couldn't be more different from last year's strong Spiced Honey shade.

### Why has Dulux chosen Tranquil Dawn as this year's Colour of the Year?

This cool-tone shade of green, which is extremely versatile, was picked to offer an antidote to an "increasingly disconnected" modern society.

### What exactly does this mean?

Put simply, Dulux believes that modern technologies have left us feeling chaotic and lost, unable to identify with what makes us human. Therefore, this calming and natural shade is supposed to remind us of our real selves and the natural world around us.

### How can you use Tranquil Dawn in your home?

What makes this colour different from other shades of green is its ability to subtly shift its tone depending on what other shades it is used with, allowing you to create many different vibes in your home.

### Design a luxurious living room

Combine Tranquil Dawn with a soft, sandy shade to create a living room that is warm, inviting and promotes positive social interactions.

### Create a calming bedroom

Jumping on the two-tone trend, paint the top half of your bedroom walls in Tranquil Dawn and the bottom in a soothing shade of bluey-grey. Not only will these make your bedroom appear more spacious, they will also bring the focus on to the bed, which should be the main feature in a room designed for restoration.

### Update your woodwork

If you don't fancy steering away from your preferred wall colours, why not paint your woodwork in Tranquil Dawn? This versatile shade has been matched with 36 other colours by Dulux so there are literally thousands of combinations you could go with.



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HOME & DIY

## REWIND DESIGN

Introducing the Laura Hodges Studio

At first glance, Laura Hodges' style sensibilities appear to originate directly from the New York mode of interior design. Consider Tribeca and Greenwich Village and you'll be close to referencing her take on a look that embraces antique excellence with clean lines, draws in comfort and durability, and closes out with more than a hint of feng shui.

And yet, not only does this visionary now operate out of Washington, but her inspirations are also more Vivienne Westwood than Val Kilmer, given that she hails from the earthy, warehouse-driven, post-industrial blueprint afforded by 1980s Manchester.

In addition, the designer has travelled to more than 30 different countries in pursuit of a mood modus operandi that has her talked about as one of the true emerging names, in a marketplace for ideas that twists and turns at every new room,

corridor or window display.

"My mother was British, my father Jamaican and my grandmother Norwegian, and with a passion for absorbing ideas from the places I have visited, you could say I have a wide realm of influences all crashing and colliding together," Laura says.

In a material sense, that produces a look that's bold and classic, using high-contrast elements that are clean and classical.

It brings in vintage, antique and eclectic, yet on a base that's flat, uncomplicated and crisp. The premise is to move art and furniture to the foreground against a backdrop that complements its lack of complication.

"People are really responding positively to such a bold, tailored and sustainable approach," she says. "There is a lot of fog in the world and to bring forward any environment that offers a bit of clarity must surely be good for the mind."

Touted as one of the stylists to follow in 2020, Hodges' studio is already attracting major clients, but with a look and image that anyone can replicate, her design is as relevant for Bolton as it is for Baltimore.

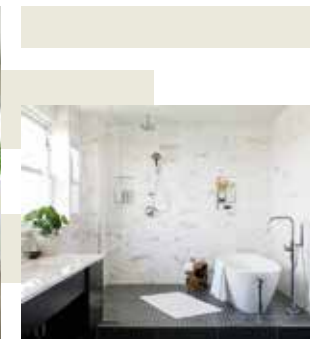


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# Off-Piste

## NOT OFF COLOUR

### FARROW & BALL AND THE PAINT NAME GAME

It's said there are more than 1,000 shades of white in existence, so with that in mind it's little wonder the paint purveyors of our interior design outlets may occasionally go rogue in naming their latest combinations.

While you might expect that of high-street brands such as Dulux and Crown, even 'next level' producers Farrow & Ball have started mixing up their paints (literally). The brand that sells itself on its insistence of using fewer binding agents and less water, adding in chalk, china clay, titanium dioxide and, most importantly, only using real pigments, has been going off-piste, albeit never off colour:

**COLOUR #229 ELEPHANT'S BREATH**  
A greying beige to the untrained eye, this can be used by itself or as part of a 'stone' scheme, and thankfully doesn't come as a 'scratch & sniff' variety.

**COLOUR #25 PIGEON**  
Apparently based on late 18th- and 19th-century paint collections, twitches would be forgiven for thinking the homing bird used to camouflage with trees and grass, given that the colour is closer to green than grey.

**COLOUR #28 DEAD SALMON**  
This shade is a reference not to a deceased member of the fish community liberally splattered across your bedroom walls, but rather to the 'flat' or 'dead' finish of the salmon colour. While it remains slightly strange, it still sounds better than #290, Salmon Drab.

**COLOUR #214 ARSENIC**  
A highly toxic semi-metallic substance that is grey or yellow in its raw form, and burns blue, is chosen to represent what many laymen would term 'medium green'. Figure that one out.

Other odd names include #276 MOLE'S BREATH, #245 MIDDLETON PINK, #W108 BROCCOLI BROWN and #40 MOUSE'S BACK.

Of course, when it comes to home decoration, it matters not whether you go Tom Ford or Henry Ford, whether you pay £10 for a pot of rich gloss or £100... ultimately it's all about whether it lands on the wall without any landing on the carpet.



HOME & DIY

Photo credit: Lorna Roberts/Shutterstock.com, homebase.co.uk





# 5 uses for a PAPER BAG

If you think that paper bags can only be used for bringing your shopping home from the supermarket, then think again. These environmentally friendly carriers are ideal for a number of household tasks and DIY projects.

## MAKE DIY WOVEN BASKETS

You can never have enough storage solutions in your home, and these DIY baskets are ideal for smaller items such as keys or sewing materials. Simply cut your paper bag into long strips and then, starting with the base, start weaving. Finish with a handle if desired.

## CLEAN YOUR WINDOWS

If you have ever experienced problems in getting your windows to shine rather than streak, then a paper bag could be your saviour. Merely tear up your bag, scrunch it together and get scrubbing. You can also apply a light spray of white vinegar for increased sparkle.

## WRAP PRESENTS

With the sudden surge in nature-inspired design and décor, why not jump on the bandwagon and create some sustainable wrapping paper? Just cut up your paper bag, lay it out flat and then wrap up your item. Add some simple twine and a sprig of your favourite herb to create a unique and gorgeous gift.

## CREATE DIY LANTERNS

Whether you want to create an inviting atmosphere for your next party or just love to experiment with crafts and candles, this is the ideal project for you. Simply use silhouette stamps to create your chosen design and then pop an LED candle into your bag. Do not use a real lit tea light or candle for safety reasons as the bag is flammable.

## IN THE KITCHEN TWO WAYS

1. Ripen fruit. Place your fruit in a paper bag, seal and leave at room temperature for a few days. The result? Perfectly sweet and juicy fruit.
2. Make popcorn. Simply pour ¼ cup of uncooked popcorn kernels into a plain paper bag, seal and cook in the microwave for 2½ minutes or until the popping stops.

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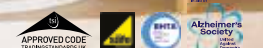
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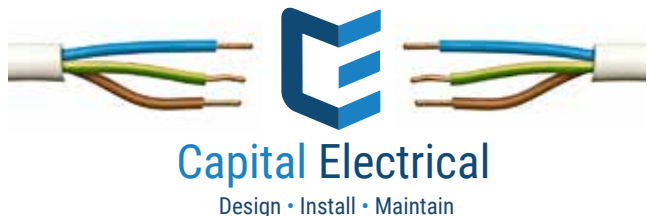
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# LOCAL NEWS

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LOCAL NEWS BRENTWOOD



## Popular festival won't take place this year

One of the most popular annual events in the Brentwood calendar will not be taking place this year.

The organisers of the Brentwood Festival, which attracts thousands of people, have announced that they will not be holding the event in 2020.

The decision was confirmed on January 10, with organisers saying it would allow the team to recharge ahead of a return in 2021.

The event has been taking place for 14 years, with the 2019 event attracting global performers such as Clean Bandit, Jessie J, Sophie Ellis-Bextor and Fleur East.

They were joined by Paul Young, Gary Christian, Toyah Willcox, Katrina and The Waves and Denise Pearson from Five Star.

There were also various local bands and DJs playing across two stages.

A spokesperson for the Brentwood Festival said: "Thanks for your patience in waiting for news on Brentwood Festival presents Evoke 2020.

"We would normally have made an announcement by now, but have made the tough decision to not hold the event for this year.

"After 14 years of all-year round hard work and organisation, we have decided to take a short break to allow the team to recharge.

"We would like to thank you all for your ongoing support, and look forward to welcoming you all back next year."

The news left many festival revellers disappointed. Amy Grew said: "I am absolutely gutted. I look forward to it each year and always do my best to attend.

"Let's hope it does come back in 2021 because it would be a shame for the event to disappear."





# Charity donates to community projects in need

Trustees of a Brentwood charity have made donations to three worthwhile causes. In September, the Community Charity Fund for Brentwood (CCFB) took applications from organisations and volunteer groups that wanted to be considered for donations. The CCFB aims to promote local community cohesion by offering a helping hand to smaller charities, community projects and individuals in need. The CCFB has now made donations to The Gates (a volunteer group which has social, educative and therapeutic opportunities for vulnerable adults), Moses Basket (which supports families with babies and young children) and the Brentwood Club for Visually Impaired Persons. Paying tribute to former Brentwood Mayor Will Russell, who inspired the setting-up of the fund, trust

secretary Neville A Brown said: "Will Russell had witnessed the range of small voluntary groups working in our town, many of whom were struggling to survive due to increasing costs and loss of grants. "His ambition was to establish an evergreen charity which would be there to support these groups and encourage them in their own fundraising efforts. "The charities we have just helped are typical of those we shall hope to assist in future. "We hope to build on what we have achieved so far, and look to recruit two new trustees and/or to welcome friends who can help in raising funds for our charity." This year, the trust is planning various fundraising events, and also encourages local groups who feel they may qualify to apply for funding. Application forms are available from CCFB.

# Skiers speed their way to medal hail



A team of skiers from Brentwood School's newly formed ski team came home from the Independent Schools Ski Championships (ISSC) with four medals recently. The outing in the French resort of Les Deux Alpes saw the Brentwood team secure two gold medals and two silver medals following superb performances by the Kingsley twins, Max and Sam. Mrs Zeta Hill, head of skiing, said: "The trip was a huge success, with the highlights being securing two gold medals, two silver medals and three trophies in the junior category. "However, the senior boys and the senior girl competitors were also outstanding, especially in light of the fact that this was our first time ever racing on snow; there are lots of results and improvements, of which we can be very proud."

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## BURGHART for BRENTWOOD



Alex Burghart MP for Brentwood and Ongar



LOCAL NEWS BRENTWOOD



As a new decade dawns over our county and  
country – a new Roaring Twenties, we hope – a  
new era in British politics is opening up. By the time  
you read this, the UK will have left the European  
Union, fulfilling my party's main promise at last year's  
General Election, and Britain will be making its own  
way in the world again.

There is, of course, a great deal more to do besides.  
We are planning to build 40 new hospitals and  
upgrade a further 20, to put an extra 20,000 police  
officers on the streets (with our area getting its fair  
share), and we are gearing up to increase funding for  
all pupils in all schools.

In Parliament I am continuing in my role as the Prime  
Minister's Parliamentary Private Secretary – a sort  
of dogsbody, bag carrier and fixer for the PM. If you  
watch Prime Minister's Questions you'll see me (or  
at least a bit of me) sitting behind him, passing him  
notes.

Locally, I am working with local businesses,  
landlords and councillors to explore ways in which  
we can breathe new life into our high streets – and  
bring additional businesses into the area. And I am  
supporting local constituents in helping to address  
local issues – including making sure their local roads  
and pavements are kept in good nick.

Next month I will be holding another Mock  
Parliament for local sixth formers – teaching them a  
bit about how Parliament works and how to hold a  
formal debate. When we held one of these last year  
it was a huge success – hopefully it will become a  
regular thing.

Over the course of the next year or two I am looking  
to meet as many local businesses as possible – so if  
you are a local company, please get in touch with my  
office, I'd love to come and see you.

*Alex meeting Essex county council leader David Finch*

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# News from THE ROTARY CLUB Brentwood

The Rotary Club of Brentwood will be hosting its annual Spring Concert in Aid of Little Havens Hospice and other local charities. The concert will include the Phoenix Youth Orchestra and will have special performances from Shenfield St. Mary's Primary School Choir and Becket Keys Stage Band. The concert will be held in the beautiful setting of St Thomas of Canterbury Church in Brentwood.

The church provides a perfect backdrop with brilliant acoustics to showcase these young performers. The date of the concert will be Saturday, March 28, 2020 at 7pm. Tickets are available on the door or from our website. Search Rotary Club Brentwood on Google. Adult tickets cost £10 and 18 years and under cost £5.

## Author launches her 12th book



Billerica-based author Sylvia Kent recently celebrated the launch of her 12th book, *Brentwood In 50 Buildings*. The book explores Brentwood from the year 1176, when it was a tiny hamlet within the huge South Weald parish. Only 50 buildings were chosen for the historical book, but the author says she "could have chosen hundreds". Sylvia said: "It was difficult to choose just 50. Then I started collecting 'back' stories of the folk who were associated with those venerable buildings and I became hooked on the past. So the reader has a flavour of religion, pubs, schools, shops, modest homes and business structures where in Brentwood people had lived, loved, worked and died." Sylvia told **VISION**BrentwoodOngar that, although the 50 that did make the cut are all special, she does have a few favourites. She said: "One is the oldest – the ruin of St Thomas' Chapel in Brentwood High Street. "This actually brought me to the town in 1963 on a study trip when I learnt that the chapel was founded in 1221 as a 'chapel of ease' to its mother church of South Weald, and even now, I love to visit. I've enjoyed meeting some fascinating people with whom I worked or visited during my research and have made many new friends." Sylvia has been fascinated with architecture for decades. She said: "I've been intrigued by architecture since childhood. My freelance work is intrinsically linked to the past, so it was a pleasure to revisit some of them to produce a book about Brentwood – a place I lived in for 40 years." *Brentwood in 50 Buildings* is out now. Find out more about the author at [syviakent.blogspot.com](http://syviakent.blogspot.com)

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# Call for IVF to be reinstated as free service

A fertility charity is urging medical chiefs to reinstate free IVF treatment in Brentwood.

The call comes from fertility charity Progress Educational Trust (PET) after North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) announced on January 20 that it would reinstate IVF after five years without the service.

However, Basildon and Brentwood CCG continues to have no plans to reverse its ban on free IVF treatment, which helps couples get pregnant.

The axe on free IVF treatment at Basildon and Brentwood has come in for criticism as it means those trying to get pregnant have their chances dramatically

altered by their postcode.

Sarah Norcross, director of charity PET, said patients would be "overjoyed" at the news, and called on Brentwood's CCG to reconsider its stance.

She said: "PET urges the four CCGs who still refuse to provide NHS fertility treatment to follow suit and restore NHS IVF now."

North East Essex CCG's change of heart comes on the heels of Minister for Care Caroline Dinenage's strongly worded letter to those CCGs who do not provide any NHS fertility treatment and raises the hope that they are beginning to address England's unacceptable IVF postcode lottery.

## Boxing legend comes to town for event

One of the world's most iconic boxing legends, Floyd Mayweather, is to come to Brentwood as part of his Legendary Icon Tour.

It will be a chance for fans to hear stories from his incredible career and to enjoy photo opportunities, a tell-all Q&A with some 'punchlines' and the chance to win a signed boxing glove.

The tour comes to Essex on Tuesday, March 3 at Brentwood Live.

James Taylor, the director of the Entertainers – who host shows at their venue, Brentwood Live – said: "We are absolutely thrilled to bring one of the biggest names in world boxing to Essex. There is a big appetite for the sport in this part of the country and I hope boxing fans are as excited as I am to have the chance to hear first-hand how Floyd became the best pound-to-pound fighter the sport has ever seen."

Photo credit: Getty Images/Shutterstock.com



LOCAL NEWS BRENTWOOD



# Bar to reopen more than a year after death



Photo credit: Google Maps

A Brentwood bar is to reopen more than a year after a man died after an altercation. Paul Wellington, from Shenfield, was involved in an altercation outside The Vine on Christmas Eve 2018. Following Paul's death, the bar closed and a police investigation has been ongoing, with a man charged recently with manslaughter. Paul died in hospital five days after the attack. Leslie Wiseman, 30, of Leigh-on-Sea, is now facing court action.

of Dunton Hills Garden Village to provide a new community. Once complete, Dunton Hills Garden Village could provide 2,600 new jobs and around 1,400 affordable homes. BBC Leader, councillor Chris Hossack, said: "It is good to see the continued support from the government towards the innovative scheme planned for Dunton Hills Garden Village. "This will be a new community that is being designed to complement the surrounding villages and towns."

## Club disinfected after revellers fall ill

An investigation has been launched by Public Health England (PHE) after clubbers say they fell violently ill following a New Year's Eve party at Brentwood's Sugar Hut. Several revellers who attended the event complained of severe vomiting. In a statement issued on social media, music and events director at the club, Dan Perrin, said: "If you've been ill then hopefully you're feeling a bit better by now and although it's not something which was under our control we're sorry that you had to go through it.

"It hurts to have so much hate thrown at you. We will of course be deep cleaning and steaming every inch of the club." Public Health England has been informed of the alleged norovirus outbreak. Brentwood Borough Council (BBC) and Public Health England released a joint statement. It said: "In conjunction with Public Health England, an investigation was launched to try to identify the source of the illness, which included symptoms of vomiting, diarrhoea and stomach cramps. "The investigation into the cause is ongoing and on PHE and BBC's advice the venue has been thoroughly disinfected as a precaution."



## Funding boost in bid to create new community

Ambitious plans by Brentwood Borough Council (BBC) to build a new community with thousands of new homes, new schools and healthcare facilities are a step closer. BBC has received an extra £150,000 towards its plans for Dunton Hills Garden Village. This takes the funding to date to £750,000 on the project designed to deliver 4,000 homes. The funding boost was announced on January 14 and comes from the government's housing accelerator Homes England. BBC was due to submit its Pre-Submission Local Plan in January 2020, which includes allocation

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# LOCAL NEWS

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LOCAL NEWS ONGAR



Photo credit: Andy Duncan

## Railway looks ahead to 2020 after busiest ever year

Epping Ongar Railway (EOR) is looking ahead to another successful year after figures confirmed 2019 was the busiest ever for the community railway as 45,710 passengers used the service.

The huge number of passengers who used the railway exceeds the previous record by 3,906, which was set in 2018.

The passenger numbers were boosted by a bumper number traveling on the Santa Specials, when more than 16,000 people rode on trains during December.

One highlight of 2019 was the return to service of the tender locomotive, Pitchford Hall No. 4953. Although 'Pitchford' will probably be visiting other heritage railways during 2020, it is expected that other exciting locos will be visiting the EOR in her place.

EOR's 2020 season starts in February (19, 20, 21, 22, 23) when children's fares will be reduced to £1 as

part of its half-term offer.

The half-term holiday will finish on a high with one of the Railway's very popular bus events on February 23.

New for 2020 will be a Mother's Day breakfast, lunch or afternoon tea offer on March 22, when the railway will be working with local caterers to bring a unique way to thank mothers on board vintage trains.

Roger Wright, managing director for EOR, said, "Again, the hard work and dedication of the railway's staff and volunteers has paid off.

"The results are part of a long-term trend of growth at the EOR, and with an exciting programme for 2020 we look forward to welcoming even more passengers."

If you're interested in volunteering for the EOR, email membership@eorailway.co.uk or to book on to one of the many upcoming events or to find out more information, visit www.eorailway.co.uk



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# Former council chair faces court



A disgraced former Ongar Town Council chairman faces crown court after being charged with six counts of indecent assault against an underage boy.

Keith Tait, who has a 36-year association with Ongar Town Council as a parish and latterly a town councillor, appeared before a short hearing at Chelmsford Magistrates' Court on January 8.

The alleged offences date back to the late 1980s against a teenager under the age of 16.

The now 75-year-old denies the charges, but no formal plea has yet been entered.

Tait was given unconditional bail and at the time of writing was due to appear for a plea hearing at Chelmsford Crown Court (pictured) on February 5.

# New year but same old form for Town

Ongar Town Football Club started 2020 in the same way they finished 2019, continuing their winning ways.

Having only formed at the start of this season following a merger between Ongar Town and Ongar Jubilee FC, the club is well placed to win the Essex Olympian Football League (EOFL) Division One.

They finished January in fourth place, but with seven games in hand on the current leaders, Chingford Athletic, they are well placed to overtake them and continue their upward trend.

With promotion the target for Ongar in the league, it is not known what the make-up with the league will look like, as the EOFL has been in discussions with Mid Essex Football League to form one structure.

However, a potential merger has reached an impasse.

EOFL said: "So much has already been achieved

between the two leagues, with processes, administration, fines and rules brought into line with each other.

"The two leagues will continue talks to try to make further progress towards a full integration that is acceptable to the leagues, the member clubs and the Essex County Football Association for the benefit of all.

"The originally proposed club meeting in February will not now take place."

# Students learn about a career in the fire service

Students from a secondary school visited the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service headquarters to learn about the variety of career opportunities on offer.

Pupils from The Ongar Academy met with different members of staff at the emergency service headquarters on January 16.

Fire service watch manager, Dave Bond, organised the visit after working with the charity Unity Enterprises East Anglia.

Pupils spoke to members about their roles, including the Ambulance Service and charity sector.

Mr Bond also spoke to the group about his career and how he has drawn on experience from other jobs he had before he joined.

He said: "You never know what experience you'll end up drawing on in situations, and I spoke to the group about working as a sound engineer around the world.

"I learnt to communicate with people who spoke different languages and this has served me well to communicate with the different communities in Essex.

"The skills I learnt setting up my own business have helped with project management."

The group then had a tour of the service headquarters, the control room and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's office before heading off to the service training centre in Witham.



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## CALL CHANGE

HOW BRITAIN CONVERTED TO DECIMAL CURRENCY

For those who lived through them, the 1970s are often regarded as a decade of struggle. Yet while the Three Day Week, bin strikes, economic decline and David Bowie's morphing into alter ego Ziggy Stardust proved troubling for some, Britain could at least thank the decade for decimalisation, a positive event that saw us take a needy grip on our currency... if only people had more of it in their pockets.

This new dawn began the morning after Valentine's Day 1971. And sure enough, the people were quick to embrace a love affair with multiples of 10 and 100, in the process bidding farewell to the sixpence, florin, crown and half crown – some of which had been a part of everyday life for centuries.

In truth, although the conversion may officially took effect on February 15, changes had been phased in over the course of months and even years. Indeed, it was 1966 when Parliament announced we were set for the country's greatest ever single currency change. Then, in 1968, some three years before D-Day (Decimal Day), new 5p and 10p coins were introduced. Simple replacements for the existing shilling and two-shilling coins, they were followed by a 50p coin in the shape of a heptagon. And then, finally, on D-Day, half-pennies, 1p and 2p coins were worked into circulation.

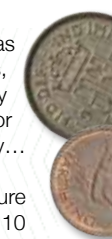
A huge public information campaign was fired up in the days and weeks leading up to the big day, meaning, for the most part, that British shopkeepers and their customers were ready... but were the banks? In short, no – the huge task of removing an entire currency from the system meant a massive physical operation in every city, high street and rural bank. As a result, our financial institutions closed for four days to prepare for the changeover.

When they reopened, the way we bought goods and services would never be the same again.



2 FARTHING - 1 HALFPENNY  
2 HALFPENCE - 1 PENNY  
3 PENCE - 1 THRUPPENCE  
6 PENCE - 1 SIXPENCE - A 'TANNER'  
12 PENCE - 1 SHILLING - A BOB  
2 SHILLINGS - 1 FLORIN - A 'TWO BOB BIT'  
2 SHILLINGS AND 6 PENCE - 1 HALF CROWN  
5 SHILLINGS - 1 CROWN  
20 SHILLINGS - 1 POUND

HISTORY





# PUZZLES & TRIVIA

## PUZZLES

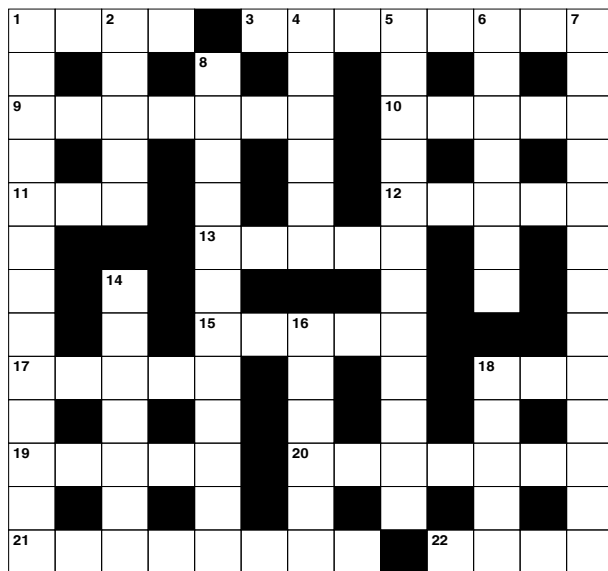
Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4

### ACROSS

1. Creative disciplines (4)
3. Unyielding (8)
9. Shock with wonder (7)
10. Happening (5)
11. Cut of pork (3)
12. Public square (5)
13. At that place; not here (5)
15. Stem of an arrow (5)
17. Individual things (5)
18. Popular beverage (3)
19. Instruct; teach (5)
20. Mark the boundaries of (7)
21. Lenience (8)
22. In a tense state (4)

### DOWN

1. Misplaced in time or date (13)
2. Motet (anag) (5)
4. Small parrot (informal) (6)
5. By chance (12)
6. Mediocre (7)
7. Wastefully; lavishly (13)
8. Most perfect example of a quality (12)
14. Get ready (7)
16. Sour to the taste (6)
18. Shy (5)



## DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ An octopus has three hearts. They need all of them to circulate blood through their bodies
- ▶ African penguins can swim underwater for up to two and a half minutes trying to catch small fish
- ▶ The cheetah is the world's fastest land mammal. It can accelerate from 0 to 60mph in three seconds
- ▶ Polar bears don't hibernate, but females enter into a dormant state while pregnant
- ▶ Dark patches around meerkats' eyes help them be effective lookouts by reducing the glare of the sun
- ▶ Unlike other cats, lions are social animals and live in prides. They can keep track of one another by roaring

## SUDOKU

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

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# As **BOLD** as ice



**D**ancing on Ice glides over new ground as Ian Watkins and Matt Evers are unveiled as the show's first same-sex duo

.....

It's both encouraging and demoralising that ITV's dance reality show *Dancing on Ice* should court so many headlines over the decision to showcase its first same-sex couple – encouraging in the sense that prime-time television is embracing a move regarded as an industry first; demoralising in the sense that such a simple reflection of everyday society finds itself worthy of headlines in the first place.

Equality campaigners will also point to how long it has taken the terrestrial networks to reach this point, although there is still no indication that BBC big brother *Strictly Come Dancing* will follow suit.

The dancers in question are Ian Watkins – former member of Steps and better known by his stage name of H – and professional dancer Matt Evers, whose debut performance in the first week of January wowed the live audience and provoked widespread approval across social media.

The pair, who are both openly gay, have captured the imagination and admiration of the watching audience during an era in which LGBT issues are at the forefront of hearts and minds.

ITV's decision to feature the pair will almost certainly prove a ratings winner; but more

than that, it is hoped the move will set a positive precedent across other prime-time shows, reflecting the progressive values of acceptance, tolerance and respect that our nation has always found itself a world leader in displaying.

Watkins said after the first dance, "It was emotional, because I have wanted this for so long and it means so much to so many people, and the world is ready for this."

The judges – including Jayne Torvill, Christopher Dean and Ashley Banjo – were ubiquitous in their acclaim of the dancers, while John Barrowman broke down in tears in admiration of the duo.

He said to the performers, "I am emotional; it makes me happy on a complete multitude of levels, just because of seeing two men who represent someone who is like me, and to skate as well as you did... you've done it now, the nerves are out of the way."

Watkins and Evers are second-favourites to take the crown, though they have tough competition in the 2020 edition of the show, which regularly attracts viewing figures in excess of six million. Also present in the 12th iteration of the reality series are, among others, model Caprice, Paralympic sprinter Libby Clegg, presenter Joe Swash and former footballer Kevin Kilbane, with Diversity dancer Perri Kiely tipped as early favourite to lift the *Dancing on Ice* crown.

As for Evers, who is a former world figure-skating competitor, he credits both Watkins and the show's producers for taking such a positive step. "I just have to say thank you to the network, thank you to ITV and thank you to everybody at home who is accepting of this, because this is normal... this is absolutely normal. "This is my 12th series of *Dancing on Ice* and this year is special. This journey is going to mean a lot to a lot of people in this country and around the world."

# Choosing your PET NAMES

THE MOST POPULAR AND MOST PUZZLING PET NAMES IN 2020

While the pet market has never been more buoyant in the UK, it seems neither has our ability to label our loved ones with popular and puzzling names in equal measure.

We looked at some of the quaint and curious titles given to four of our favourite fluffy ones.

## DOGS

The most popular dog names all revolve around the traditional, happy-go-lucky and cute echoes of having a pet in the home. That means Bella, Charlie, Luna, Lucy, Max and Bailey feature high up on lists, with the likes of Cooper, Daisy, Sadie and Molly also ranking as popular.

For unusual names, consider Shakespeare, Soup, Bug, Hawtry and, of course, plain old Dave.

And if you want to sound clever when beckoning your pooch over in the park, what about Mary Poppins?

## CATS

As far as felines go, Oliver, Bella, Simba, Chloe, Luna, Max, Lucy, Lily, Nala and Sophie all rank highly.

For the more unusual tags, try Tucker, Lulu or Winston. And again, for the clever clogs (or should that be claws), try Kitty-Purry, Harry Pawtter, or even Mr Meowgi. Ouch.

## HAMSTERS

Low maintenance and incredibly tame, hamsters are loveable pets good for all ages. And while you might be happy to give them one of the UK's most popular names, in the form of Bob, Chewy, Comet, Fudge, Hamlet, Paws, Rocky or Stitch, could you really bring yourself to go for such leftfield options as Keyboard, Vanilla, Kujo or Rags? No... thought not.

## RABBITS

Finally rabbits, and if you believe Thumper, Cinnamon, Snowball or Oreo are a bit overdone, perhaps consider Bunilla Ice, Rabbit Downey Jr or Like Skyhopper.

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# REACH NEW HEIGHTS

with these captivating climbers

Climbing plants are a great way to add height and structure to your garden, as well being ideal for covering up boring and unsightly walls or fences. Plus, there are so many bold and beautiful climbing plants for you to choose from.

### Climbing Hydrangea – Best for a shady wall

This hardy yet attractive plant is ideal for planting up a shady wall as it needs little sunlight to thrive. Expect beautiful white flowers and lime-green foliage that blooms in late spring.

Plant climbing hydrangeas all year round as long as the ground is not frozen or excessively dry.

### Winter Jasmine – Best for a low-growing wall or fence

Known for its dazzling yellow flowers, although not technically a climbing plant as it does not twine or have tendrils to hang on with, winter jasmine is a scrambler by nature. Therefore, it is the perfect plant for spilling over a low ground wall and providing a splash of colour in the winter.

Plant in early spring for winter flowering.

### Hedera Ivy – Best for sheds or dark corners

Arguably the most easy climbing plant to grow, ivy is extremely tough but can also be fairly invasive, so do not grow it near a tree or your home. However, it can make an attractive addition to your garden and is perfect for brightening up a particularly dark corner that would otherwise go unnoticed.

Plant all year round, preferably in limy soil, although it will grow pretty much anywhere.

### Mahonia aka Winter Sun – Best for a house wall

This evergreen shrub is best grown on a house wall so that you can fully enjoy its rich fragrance. Expect bold evergreen leaves and upright yellow flower spikes that will uplift any garden.

Plant in early spring, in partial or full shade.



V  
GARDENING





PLANT OF THE MONTH:

# Lilies

Who doesn't love to be gifted a beautiful bunch of lilies? Among the most recognisable flowers in the UK, lilies are known for their stunning scent, their bold colours and their imposing size. And, thankfully, they are relatively easy to grow.

## When should I plant lilies?

Lily bulbs can be planted as early as autumn or winter, but they are perfectly fine to plant in early spring as long as they are in by the end of March.

## Where should I plant my lily bulbs?

Lilies will reappear year after year, so it is important that you bear this in mind when choosing where to plant them. As a rule, they like a sunny spot or an area with some light shade. However, brightly coloured lilies keep their colour better in areas with consistent shade.

## How to plant lily bulbs

Soak your bulbs in warm water for 12 hours before planting – this will save you 2–3 weeks of growing time | Plant your lily bulbs in groups of 3–5 for a more effective display | Dig a 20cm-deep hole for each group of bulbs | Spread a 5cm layer of grit over the bottom for improved drainage | Plant the bulbs pointy end up | Cover with soil

## How to protect your lilies

Lily leaf beetles are your lilies' biggest threat, with the ability to munch their way through their foliage and flowers when they are in bloom. Luckily, these beetles are easy to see and can be easily squashed with your fingers. Alternatively, spray the beetles with a mixture of olive oil and water.

## What do lilies represent?

Lilies symbolise humility and devotion and this is why they are the 30th wedding anniversary flower. They are also often used at funerals to symbolise that the soul of the deceased has had their innocence returned after death.



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# It's not ROCKERY SCIENCE

A rockery makes the perfect garden feature, adding structure and providing the ideal environment for alpine plants. Plus, you can recycle any unwanted bricks or tiles you have lying around.

## FIND THE IDEAL SPOT

Before you start building your rockery, you need to pick the perfect location that will allow plants to thrive. Alpine plants, the type you need for a rockery, need lots of light, so it is important that you choose an area that is not overshadowed by trees or shrubs.

## CHOOSE THE RIGHT ROCKS

Depending on your budget, you can either visit your local reclamation yard to pick whatever rocks you like (natural-looking ones work best), or you can utilise any broken bricks, tiles or even paving slabs that you have left over from another DIY project.

## CLEAR THE GROUND

The worst thing for a rockery is an abundance of weeds as they can weaken or damage it over the years. Therefore, you must ensure that you

thoroughly remove any existing weeds. Then you should add a layer of rubble on the ground, which will improve drainage and support the rocks. Finally, cover these with landscape fabric.

## POSITION THE ROCKS

Start with the larger rocks, creating a mountain shape, and make sure to point them in a variety of directions. Use smaller rocks and topsoil to stabilise them. Next, add smaller rocks in a horseshoe shape to create planting pockets.

## MAKE ALPINE COMPOST

If you want your plants to thrive in your rockery, then they need the right type of compost. Alpine compost should be made up of weed-free topsoil, leaf mould and horticultural grit.

## ADD PLANTS IN EARLY SPRING

Plants that love rocky ground include:

Alpine pink | Creeping thyme | Mount Atlas daisy  
Saxifraga | Fairies' thimble



GARDENING





TEA FOR TWO?

## Why not try Kombucha?

Fermented foods and drinks have been experiencing a surge in popularity in recent years, with many people singing the praise of this refreshing, if not slightly sour, tea that is known for being rich in antioxidants and probiotics.

### How to make Kombucha at home (1L)

You will need;

1L water (dechlorinated) | 1 teabag (black tea is considered to be the best but other tea can be used) | 50–100g sugar (cane sugar is advised) | 1 small scoby (these can be bought online) | 100ml starter liquid (this will come with the scoby)

How to make;

Boil 250ml water | Add the teabag and sugar, stirring until dissolved | Brew for 10 minutes | Remove teabag | Add the rest of the cold water | Add the scoby and starter liquid | Ensure you leave a minimum of a 5cm gap at the top of your liquid to allow for fermentation | Cover the jar with a cloth and fasten with an elastic band | Leave to ferment for 6–9 days at room temperature | It's then ready for the 'secondary fermentation'

process | Remove the scoby and add additional flavour if desired | Store in an airtight bottle with at least a 3cm gap at the top | Leave at room temperature for between 5–14 days

### What flavours can I add to my Kombucha?

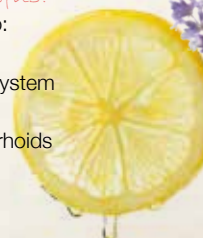
This is completely dependent on your taste preferences, but some of the recommended flavour ideas include;

- | Berries or citrus fruits
- | Dried fruits such as goji berries, figs or dates
- | Frozen fruit
- | Herbs such as lavender, mint or lemon balm
- | Mild spices like turmeric, allspice or cardamom

### What are the health benefits?

Kombucha has the ability to:

- | Improve your digestion
- | Strengthen your immune system
- | Reduce blood pressure
- | Alleviate gout and haemorrhoids
- | Improve liver function
- | Fight cancer



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# MADDENING MIGRAINES

Anyone who experiences migraines will know only too well the tell-tale signs, including nausea, vomiting, an increased sensitivity to light and sound, and, of course, the unbearable throbbing pain on the side of your head.

## WHAT CAUSES MIGRAINES?

Around 1 in 5 women and 1 in every 15 men experience migraines. The exact cause of this debilitating affliction is still unknown, although some experts believe that it could be the result of a temporary change in the chemicals, blood vessels and nerves in the brain. Migraines can also be hereditary, as well as be brought on by stress, tiredness and/or specific foods and drinks.

## HOW CAN YOU PREVENT MIGRAINES?

Although there is no sure fire way to prevent a migraine from happening, there are ways that you can lower your risk of experiencing one, namely avoiding the triggers that are causing your migraines, whether that be stress or a particular food. It is also advised to lead a healthy lifestyle with

adequate sleep, exercise and ensuring that you stay hydrated. Alcohol and caffeine should be avoided.

## HOW CAN YOU RELIEVE THE SYMPTOMS OF A MIGRAINE?

Sadly, there is no miracle cure, but there are some medicines that you can take to help alleviate your symptoms, such as painkillers like paracetamol or ibuprofen, anti-emetics and/or triptans. Triptans are a specific type of medicine that are designed to reverse the changes in your brain that actively cause migraines and are normally prescribed to people who suffer from severe migraines.

Other tips that may help you feel better include:

- Using a cold pack
- Dimming the lights or sitting in a dark room
- Using a heat pad
- Practising some relaxation techniques
- Trying not to chew
- Drinking some ginger tea
- Giving yourself a scalp massage



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10 Mar	<b>Varicose veins, 7pm</b> Mr V Gadhvi, <b>Consultant General Surgeon</b>

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\*Mini consultations are an opportunity to ask any questions you have and are not a formal outpatient consultation. If you wish to proceed to surgery or your consultant suggests that further treatment may be necessary, a full outpatient appointment will be required to assess your suitability for surgery/treatment.

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Natasha 07545 810037

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### Wednesday

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Jo 07976 770921

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We all know the secret to long life is health, well-being and happiness, and scientists believe that as well as human interaction and diet, our inclination to exercise can have a direct bearing on our mental and physical welfare.

New research from Copenhagen suggests the key to extending our lives beyond the average – 79 for a man and 83 for a woman – could be the simple action of exercising for 30 minutes each day. Not only that, but the results were actually better than for those who had worked out for 60 minutes.

Here are six key benefits that are only a run, walk, cycle, swim, game or gym session away:

**ONE** – The heart. Exercise helps to ward off the threat of stroke, cardiovascular disease and complications borne out of diabetes.

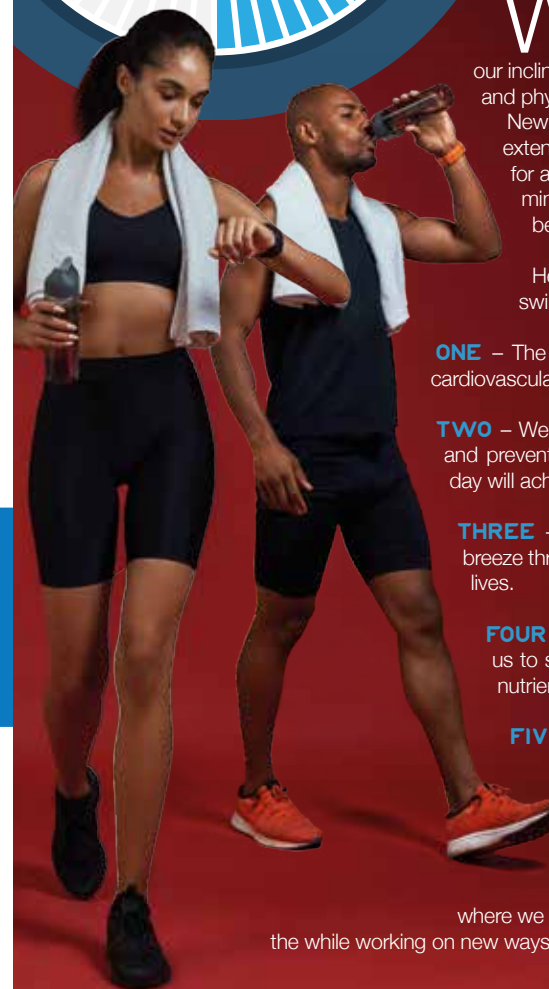
**TWO** – Weight loss. We know the value of keeping mobile, active, and preventing the build-up of fat, and a 30-minute workout each day will achieve that.

**THREE** – Stress. Getting sweaty is the perfect way to blow a breeze through worry, anxiety and the mental tension that shortens lives.

**FOUR** – Energy. It sounds strange, but rather than sending us to sleep, exercise will boost alertness by delivering oxygen, nutrients and activation chemicals around the body.

**FIVE** – Self-confidence. 'Exercise is sanity', as the saying goes. In building confidence and offering a dynamic sense of achievement, that half-hour investment can take you to a whole new level of belief.

**SIX** – Clarity. Exercise transports us to a place where our minds can flush away the stresses of everyday life, where we can step back and see problems in a whole new light, all the while working on new ways to tackle them.



HEALTH & FITNESS



# Hair today

GONE TOMORROW

## HOW TO SLOW HAIR LOSS WITHOUT OVERLY EXPENSIVE TREATMENTS

**M**en beware, there is an enemy in our midst and, for many of us, its presence is already being felt. It resides not on the dark web, nor in damp alleyways – instead, it lives in the follicles of your hair... at least, that's if you've got any of the damn stuff left.

Since the dawn of time, hair loss in men has been an inevitable by-product of getting older. Hair leaves the scalp and instead migrates downwards to emerge out of ears and nostrils. Yet with follicle technology having never been better, and putting to one side the cheats' method of a full-on hair transplant, consider the following inexpensive treatments that, while not solving hair loss, can certainly slow it:

### Shampoos

Shampooing can be harsh on hair follicles, yet using a specialised formula (such as Davines' energizing shampoo) can stimulate the scalp, while hirs shampoo's DHT-reducing product reduces the rate at which hair falls out. Consider as well protein- and caffeine-heavy products for the shower.

### Diet

A diet rich in oils, proteins and nutrients will send positive elements to the places your body needs them most. Consider too that smoking and alcohol consumption restricts the blood vessels, thereby reducing blood flow and circulation to the follicles.

### Vitamin D

The *Journal of Dermatology* reported that people with alopecia are usually deficient in vitamin D, leading to the theory that the vitamin can help hair reset its growth phase.

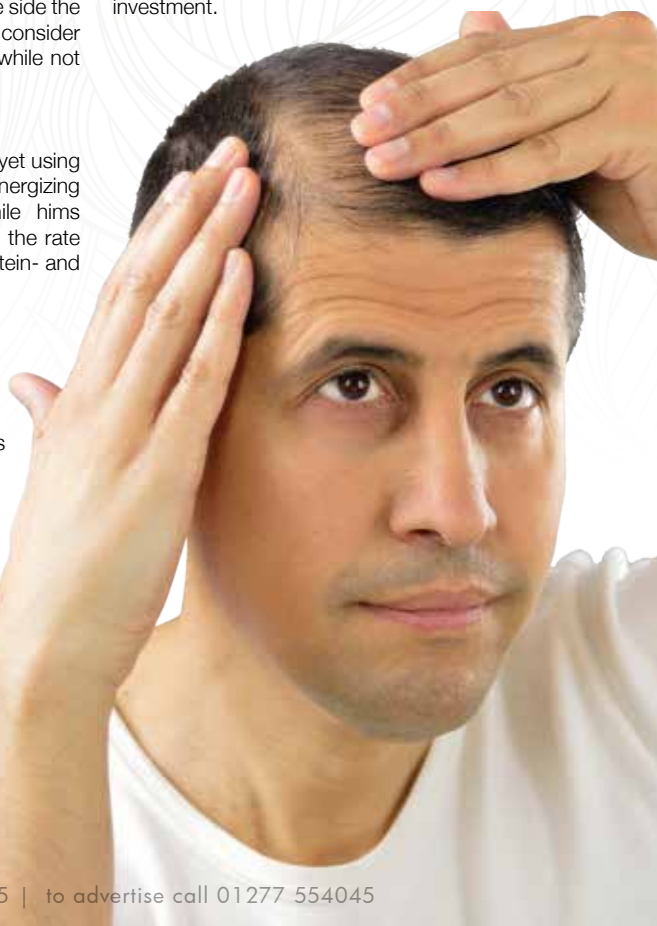
### Stress

Stress is a known cause of hair loss, so cutting stress, boosting exercise and even practising meditation can improve not only

your hair retention but physical well-being in other parts of the body too.

### Prescribed formulas

From over-the-counter formulas (the most common in the UK being Regaine) to platelet-rich plasma (PRP) treatment, which injects centrifuged blood back into the scalp at around £1,000 a go, speaking to a health professional about regrowth for follicles that are dormant, not dead, could be a worthwhile investment.



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# WHAT IS AI BEAUTY?

IS AI BEAUTY THE FACE OF THE FUTURE?

**A**I, or artificial intelligence, is already an integral part of our daily lives, with many people utilising smart technologies such as Siri or chatbots; so, of course, the beauty industry is also getting in on the action.

## WHAT IS AI?

To put it simply, AI is a computer system that imitates intellectual human behaviours; basically, you provide your personal information and then the computer uses an algorithm to provide you with the service, product or solution that you need.

Sometimes, it can predict your needs before you even know about them yourself.

## HOW IS AI BEING USED IN THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY?

### 1. A BESPOKE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

The beauty industry is completely over-saturated with products, which can make the buying process difficult. However, by completing a simple questionnaire before you shop, AI can provide you with a tailored number of products that suit your individual beauty needs. A certain make-up brand even has a custom-made foundation machine that promises to find your exact match.

### 2. A PERSONALISED BEAUTY ROUTINE

If you have ever worried that you are applying your foundation wrongly or that you are missing parts of your face when applying creams, then AI can help you. There are now beauty tools available that use AI to let you know how to improve your make-up and skincare routine, such as a facial cleansing brush that uses skin sensors to analyse your skin.

### 3. MORE RELEVANT PRODUCTS

If you sometimes feel that the beauty industry is just churning out more and more products to make money, then AI could signal the end of this. AI can utilise customer data to help strategically create products that are actually in demand, rather than marketers just guessing what we want.



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SEARCH

## THE MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE WHEN BOOKING FLIGHTS

**H**oliday fever... whether it's packing your case at home, arriving at the airport or stepping out onto foreign soil at the other end, vacation vivaciousness hits all of us at some point, and nothing else in the world matters.

And yet, what if you could wind back a few months to when you booked that flight and mend that badly timed departure you booked, or erase the hassles and inconveniences of connections, or just save a big wedge of cash? Here are five things you need to consider when booking flights:

to book is around a month before. Buy flights too early or too late and airlines will be charging either uncompetitively or, worse still, at a premium.

### WEEKEND WOE

Don't book flights at weekends when everyone else is online. The best new deals hit sites early in the week, and prices generally hold up better during the daytime than in the evening.

### DAYTIME DALLIANCES

It may be convenient to have a bit of breakfast then saunter to the airport, but the best-priced flights are those very early in the morning. Getting a 5am plane out will also mean more time at your chosen destination, even if you do spend the rest of the day yawning.

### CHEAP = CHEERFUL?

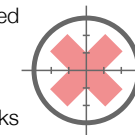
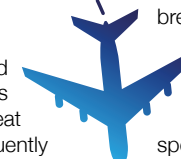
Sometimes the cheapest fare will actually end up costing you more. A number of airlines offer a basic ticket with no luggage, no seat reservation and no frills. You may subsequently discover you're paying extra to check baggage in, or are adding cost at check-in to sit next to a loved one.

### FORTNIGHT FORETHOUGHT

Airfares start increasing sharply in the two weeks leading up to departure, and typically the best time

### FLY PAST

Don't just settle on a departure from your nearest airport. An extra hour in the car may save you hundreds of pounds by going to a different departure location.







# Timeless DENIM

*Trends will come and go...  
...but denim is forever*

**H**ere are just a few staple denim pieces that men and women should have in their wardrobes, safe in the knowledge that they will never go out of style...

## THE DENIM JACKET

As practical as it is en vogue, the denim jacket will never fail you. Women, make a floral spring/summer dress edgier by teaming it with a light denim jacket. For a more casual aesthetic, go for distressed denim. For a rock chick vibe, stud detailing will be your best friend.

Men, relive the early noughties and brave the double denim like Justin Timberlake and Britney Spears at the 2001 AMAs. Alternatively, wear a dark-coloured denim jacket over a casual white shirt and chinos for a subtle nod to the trend.

## SLIM AND SKINNY JEANS

Slim and skinny jeans aren't going anywhere. Ladies, jeans and a blouse teamed with a chic

blazer and an oversized tote is a perfect smart/casual look that will take you from office to cocktail bar with ease. Mix things up by opting for white denim during the warmer months.

And gents, dark-coloured jeans with a shirt in a bold hue – the more daring, the better – complete with your favourite loafers, are great for standing out from the crowd. Team with a crisp white shirt and a sharp blazer for a smarter aesthetic.

## BOYFRIEND JEANS

Slim fit jeans are in, but that doesn't mean their comfier and more voluminous cousins are out. Au contraire, boyfriend jeans are hotter than ever, and can be enjoyed by men and women alike. Sometimes, if you're lucky, the very same pair.

Girls, make like an off-duty supermodel and pair yours with simple tank tops, trainers and oversized sunglasses. Timberlands, flip-flops, wedges and even sky-scraping heels are all approved footwear choices.

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# DO THE RUMBA

*How this spirit went from being the preferred bounty of pirates to a premium tipple...*

**W**hen Christopher Columbus introduced the Americas to sugar cane, he couldn't have possibly realised his actions would one day lead to the creation of one of the finest drinks around: rum.

Like many revelations, the discovery of rum was a happy accident, which occurred when sugar planters in the 17th century grew frustrated at the waste product of sugar: molasses. At a loss with what to do with the thick, syrupy liquid, any molasses they couldn't give away was simply discarded, until some bright spark discovered that by mixing the molasses with water and leaving to ferment in the sun, they created a spirit – rum!

Early rum wasn't the smooth and delectable beverage we quaff these days, of course. It was strong, unsophisticated and a great cure-all for the many ills that befell those living in the tropics; probably why it was nicknamed rumbullion or kill-devil.

And yet, despite rum's more acerbic qualities, it soon became popular as plantation owners sold it at discounted prices to local naval ships, knowing that their presence in the area would discourage pirates. For as we well know, no one loves rum as much as pirates...

The glorious golden spirit continued to garner popularity, to the extent that the British Navy couldn't go without it, and in the 1730s they adopted a daily ration of half a pint of 160 proof rum, which remained (though to a diminished strength) until 1969.

These days, rum is a billion-pound industry, and there are many wonderful brands that you can happily sip neat with just an ice cube or two. So next time you're relaxing with a finger of the finest, remember to raise a toast to the sugar planters who finally figured out why you should never EVER throw molasses away. Cheers, me hearties.



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FOOD & DRINK



Whether you want to save time in the kitchen, don't always have the necessary cooking appliances to create your favourite dishes or simply love a good hack, these four unusual tips will ensure you never look at cooking in the same way again.

### Use dental floss to cut

Sometimes, cutting with a knife can be tricky, especially if the food you are attempting to chop up is either very soft or prone to crumbling. Dental floss is a great tool for cutting foods such as a cake or a very mature cheddar, providing more precision and less mess than a knife.

### Use cling film pouches to poach eggs

Eggs are an easy and filling snack or meal; however, poaching the perfect egg can be a challenge. Avoid your eggs disintegrating by lining a cup with cling film, spraying with olive oil and cracking in an egg. Then tie it closed, drop it into simmering water and cook as normal.

### Place an ice cube in your burgers

Do you often worry about serving dry burgers at your BBQs? A simple trick is to press a small ice cube into the middle of your burger patty before cooking, sealing the beef around it and then grilling or frying as usual. The result? A moist and juicy burger that no one will suspect has had an ice cube in it.

### Cook chicken in glass jar

If you do not have a grill pan but have a craving for tender chicken kebabs, this hack is for you. Simply place your kebabs (on a wooden skewer) in a glass jar, cover with tin foil and cook in the oven until the chicken juices run clear.



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# TURNED OFF

## BY TECH

FIVE TORRID TECHNOLOGY FAILURES



TECHNOLOGY



#### AMAZON FIREPHONE

An android mobile device designed to capitalise on the incredible success of the Kindle Fire eBook readers and Fire tablets, this 2014 launch was set to catapult the brand into the communications mainstream while also knitting together its retail and film elements.

The phone only lasted a year, though, as Jeff Bezos found the might of Samsung, Apple and co to be impenetrable.

#### OCULUS RIFT

When Mark Zuckerberg got behind the virtual reality market, there was the expectation that technology and consumer interest would be catapulted forward, but it hasn't happened. As Oculus trips through new products – such as the Quest – a persistent lukewarm response seems to imply that headset hedonists are few and far between.



#### GOOGLE GLASS

Evidence, as if it were needed, that while tech is a big part of our lives, we don't want to be imprisoned by it. The Google Glass threatened just that – 24/7 connectivity and the ability to answer stressful work emails even when relaxing in the bath. Great.

Ultimately, the failure of the 'smart glasses' came down to the fact that it was never going to be a big job to reach into a pocket and pull out a mobile phone.

#### APPLE MAPS

When angling for a place in the Google Maps market, Apple launched its own cartography app, but users rapidly found the service to be inferior, with poor directional capabilities, a lack of detail on city plans and, in some cases, fictitious information. At one point, Ireland's Ministry of Defence had to warn users that a non-existent airport was showing near Dublin. Y'know, minor problems...



#### SINCLAIR C5

The Sinclair C5 was a fully electric, low-riding vehicle that was meant to span the gap between car and bike. Owing to its low speed, poor battery life and the fact any encounters with buses or lorries were set to leave the rider paralysed by fear, production ceased after seven months.

Photo credit: amazon.com, Peppinuzzo/shutterstock.com, Hadrian/shutterstock.com, Steve Mann/shutterstock.com





KIDS

# BANISH BEDTIME BLUES

If your little one's bedtime routine has become a living nightmare, consider sprucing up their bed so they'll never want to get out of it

Every parent knows the perils of bedtime. The repeated calls to get pyjamas on, the never-ending stories, followed by the midnight excursions into your room which usually result in no one getting a decent night's kip. The trouble is, kids never want the fun to end, which is why turning their regular bed into a themed one could be a great way to make bedtime the final exciting event to end every day.

Deciding on your design and theme is really down to space, money and your little one's personal taste. And really, there is no need to spend a fortune when children have such vibrant imaginations. One of the cheapest and most obvious alterations is to attach wheels and a toy steering wheel to a basic wooden frame. Add a lick of red paint and you've got a racing car bed – licence not required! You can also erect a tent over the bed – because what child wouldn't want to pretend they were camping every night? Or perhaps a sail to transform it into a pirate ship?

If your little one is lucky enough to have a mid sleeper (higher than a regular bed with the space underneath usually housing storage or a desk) you can afford to get really creative. You could add a slide, or even build a playhouse or cardboard castle, converting a boring old bed into a veritable playground.

But remember that, with kids, you sometimes don't need to do very much to bring magic to a dull routine. Just adding some fairy lights, glow stars or some cool new bedding can be enough to get them leaping under the covers, every single night.

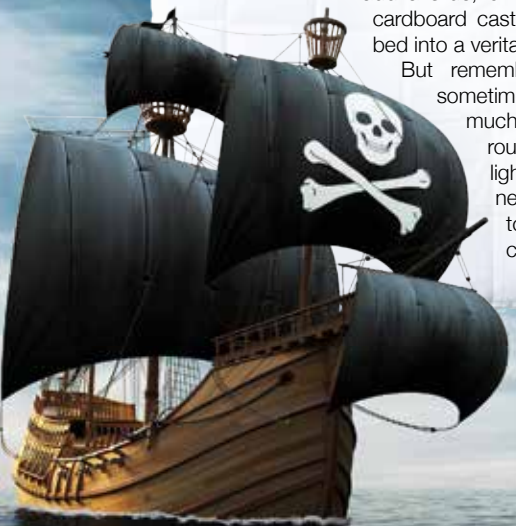


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### Q What Can Coversure Brentwood Help With?

**A** With our wide suite of insurance products, it'd be easier to list what we can't help you with! Whether it's insurance protection for your house, your business or even your van, we can help you find the cover you need for less.

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### Q How Can You Save Money On Your Insurance?

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## TONE UP YOUR FINANCES IN 2020

### RECONNECT WITH YOUR GOALS

Whatever life stage you've reached, you'll no doubt have some short and long-term financial goals you want to achieve, such as moving to a new home, saving for a child's education, or retirement planning. Reviewing these goals and determining the amount of money required to fulfil them is a good discipline and putting you in better stead of ultimately achieving them.

### PRIORITISING YOUR PENSION

The earlier you start saving into your pension, the more you can contribute and the longer your money has time to grow. With tax relief available on contributions (within limits), pension saving is one of the best ways to ensure you stay on track for a comfortable retirement.

### TAX-EFFICIENT SAVING

As the tax year end approaches, you still have time to use your annual ISA allowance, giving you even more opportunity to build up your savings tax-efficiently.

### REVISIT YOUR MORTGAGE

If it's been a while since you took out your existing mortgage, there could be a more suitable deal for you which could potentially enable you to deflect money into your pension or savings.

### REVIEW PROTECTION POLICIES

Life insurance and other types of protection, such as income protection or critical illness cover, should form a vital part of your financial plan. It's worth reviewing these policies as your circumstances change, to ensure you have the right type and level of cover in place.

### KEEP TALKING

As part of the service at HCR, we take the time to understand our clients' unique planning needs and circumstances, so that we can provide you with the most suitable solutions in the most cost-effective way.

For a free review of your current financial situation, please contact Karyn Vogel on 01277 654153.

**The value of investments can go down as well as up and you may not get back the full amount you invested. The past is not a guide to future performance and past performance may not necessarily be repeated.**

**As a mortgage is secured against your home or property, it could be repossessed if you do not keep up mortgage repayments.**

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# ADVERTISING IS

*an investment ...not a cost*

Sir Richard Branson always hoped 1994 would be a big one for his business. In the autumn of that year, the billionaire Brit entrepreneur launched his most brazen attempt at global domination: the release of his Virgin Cola brand.

In some ways, seeing Branson go up against the world's biggest drinks brand was the perfect boxing match. Not only did both companies personify their brand with the use of a posturing guy sporting a big, white, bushy beard, but the marketing ploy of Coca-Cola – to entrench a simple fizzy drink deep into the psyche of a global marketplace of customers – was very much from the Virgin chief's same school of thought.

What Coca-Cola mastered was the concept of subliminal advertising and low-level marketing. Consider the fact that, as customers, we're bombarded with all manner of advertising messages – brands are desperate to hold our attention, and for the most part they do it very well. And yet, researchers have found that, in many cases, the most effective campaigns are the subconscious ones we don't even notice going on around us. That's why even a colossal brand leader such as Coca-Cola will spend £6billion globally on advertising each year.

Forget the showpiece ads, big promotions and special offers – we're talking about discreet in-store branding or billboards,

simple page advertising, advertorials and TV activity with barely a bottle or a bubble in sight.

These adverts don't actually appear to be selling anything specific, yet they're embedding in our minds repetition and strengthening brand identity. That theoretical 'strength' translates into a level of comfort, familiarity and trust it's difficult to put a price on.

Branson knew this, and although he couldn't topple the world's biggest drinks company, his smorgasbord of Virgin brands – from gyms to holidays, financial services to internet connectivity – each involuntarily strengthened the others, which continues to today.

Our finest business brain saw advertising as an investment in the future, not a cost in the present... and these days he's toasting with something considerably stronger than cola.

Photo credit: s\_bukley/Shutterstock.com





# DEALS ON WHEELS?

THE TOP 10 MOST EXPENSIVE **CARS** IN THE WORLD REVEALED

## TEN - £910,000 - Zenvo ST1

Assembled in Denmark, the Zenvo is a machine of incredible power, housing a 6.8 litre V8 engine with supercharger and turbocharger giving 1054 bhp.

## NINE - £1.1million - Ferrari LaFerrari

With 0-60mph in less than three seconds and on to 124mph in seven seconds, there aren't many quicker in acceleration.

## EIGHT - £1.2million - Pagani Huayra

Its unusual name celebrates the Incan god of wind. Unlike that god, it possesses a 6.0 litre V12 engine with two turbochargers for 620bhp.

## SEVEN - £1.3million - Aston Martin One-77

When James Bond wants to get away from or catch up with the bad guys, he should use this - 220mph top speed, 0-60 in 3.5 seconds from a 7.3 litre V12.

## SIX - £1.5million - Koenigsegg One:1

This is a Swedish megacar that looks more like a diecast model! It's low and wide and can do 0-60mph in less than 2.9 seconds, with a top speed of 280mph.

## FIVE - £1.9million - Ferrari F60 America

A stylish and classic look and bodywork, it's brutal along with its beauty - the perfect combination for a supercar. A 6.2 litre V12 gives 740 bhp and 0-60 in 3.1 seconds.

## FOUR - £2.6million - Mansory Vivere Bugatti Veyron

At last, we can hear you say - a Bugatti! Well, this one is a beast. An 8.0 litre engine, a top speed of 255mph and 0-60 in less than 2.5 seconds.

## THREE - £2.6million - W Motors Lykan Hypersport

This car appeared in *Furious 7* where it displayed its tremendous capacity and animal-like qualities. 0-60 in less than 2.8 seconds; a top speed of 245mph.

## TWO - £3.4million - Lamborghini Veneno

Possibly the most amazing-looking vehicle ever made, with a top speed of 221mph, and 0-60 in 2.8 seconds.

## ONE - £3.7million - Koenigsegg CCXR Trevita

The 1,004 bhp, 0-60 in 2.9 seconds and top speed of 254mph mean it's a shame there were only three of these ever made.



Photo credit: wsupercars.com, www.Shutterstock.com - arda savasciogullari, auto-data.net, dimgcars, Jia Li, PhatTai, Shaun P, Steve Lagreca, Vasilika, Zavatskiy Aleksandr



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**TOKYO 2020**  
**THE NEW SPORTS**



SPORT



## 2. SOFTBALL

**In the latest instalment showcasing sports set to debut or return at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo later this year, we take a look at softball.**

Five new pursuits have been added to the roster for Tokyo 2020, which kicks off on July 24. It will be the second time that the Far Eastern metropolis has hosted the Summer Olympiad... it would have been the third had the Second World War not intervened in 1940.

Softball, in essence, is a sport very much like baseball, and there will be six countries competing for the gold medal.

Last seen at the Olympics in Beijing 2008, the qualification process for Tokyo saw 2018 WBSC Softball World Champions United States, Europe/Africa winners Italy, Americas victors Mexico, and Australia as the Oceania representatives. Canada

qualified along with Mexico, while Japan is present as host.

Softball has seven innings, two fewer than

baseball, a bigger ball measuring two inches more in circumference, and a smaller bat. The pitch is also smaller than its compatriot and the pitching distance of softball is around 40ft from the plate, as opposed to 60ft in baseball. Also, whereas the ball is pitched overarm in baseball, an underhand technique is used in softball.

Returning after a hiatus of 12 years, following its removal for the 2012 Games in London, it was previously part of the programme between Atlanta 1996 and Beijing 2008.

The six countries will compete with a roster of 15 players each, with the 90 athletes helping to make up the estimated 11,091 who will compete in Tokyo.

Softball was invented in the late 19th century in Chicago as a game designed to move at a faster pace than baseball. Contrary to common knowledge, since the 1930s, the "soft" ball is actually hard... spectators beware.





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# WHAT'S ON

## *in your area*

### Brentwood Wine Society

Shenfield Parish Hall, 60 Hutton Road,  
Shenfield, Brentwood, CM15 8LB  
Second Tuesday of the month,  
8pm – 10pm



Stock image

The society's aim is to help members improve their experience, understanding and enjoyment of wine.

Invited wine experts present samples of wines from a country or region of the winemaking world.

Through these tastings, we have a broadened interest which has led to a deeper knowledge and love of wine.

If you would like to come along in the first instance for a free tasting, email enquiries@brentwoodwinesociety.co.uk

### Talk and Tasters

The Greenhouse, 21 Crown Street,  
Brentwood, CM14 4BA

February 15, 11.30am – 12.30pm

A talk packed full of practical advice and inspiration on how to grow herbs successfully at home.

Sample some of the cocktails that can be made with your harvest and nibble on a few delicious leaves. This will be followed by a plant doctor Q&A session.

Attendees will receive a takeaway information booklet, plus a 10% off voucher for their next purchase or workshop at Superb Herbs and a 10% off voucher for The Greenhouse.

£15 per person. To book, visit superbherbs.co.uk

### Amazing Authors Arts Activity Day

Zinc, Great Stony, High Street, Chipping  
Ongar, CM5 0AD

February 18, 9.30am – 3pm

Come along this February half-term for a creative,

inspiring time at our Amazing Authors activities, celebrating some of our best-loved children's authors.

Suitable for ages 5–11 years. £25 per child. Lunch included.

Visit [zincarts.org.uk/event/amazing-authors-arts-activity-day](http://zincarts.org.uk/event/amazing-authors-arts-activity-day) to book.

### Goldies Sing and Smile

Finch Court, Coles Close, Chipping Ongar,  
CM5 0AY

March 10, 2.30pm – 3.30pm

Goldies is not a choir but fun social groups where you sing along to the popular hits of the 1950s onwards, chat and laugh with friends, stretch and sometimes dance.

Goldies is open to everybody but is particularly aimed at those aged 70+ who may sometimes find themselves lonely.

£2 voluntary donation per session. For more information, visit [www.golden-oldies.org.uk](http://www.golden-oldies.org.uk)



### Fundraising Quiz

South Weald Village Hall, 85 London Road,  
Brentwood, CM14 4NP

March 20, 7pm for 7.30pm

The trustees of the Community Charity Fund for Brentwood (CCFB) invite readers to support the Trust's second fundraising quiz.

Tables of eight, although smaller numbers can be accommodated, and there will also be the opportunity to 'make up'. £7.50 per person.

Bring your own drinks and nibbles.

To book a table, email [neilahornsby@outlook.com](mailto:neilahornsby@outlook.com) or call 07980 941650.

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Completely free and open to all, our events are your opportunity to listen, learn and talk to our highly qualified team of experts. For our full list of hospital events, visit [nuffieldhealth.com/book](http://nuffieldhealth.com/book)

### Cosmetic Surgery

Thursday 27 February 2020

From 6:30pm with Mr Venkat Ramakrishnan and Miss Mary Morgan, Consultant Plastic Surgeons.

Thursday 19 March 2020

From 6:30pm with Ms Kallirroi Tzafetta, Consultant Plastic Surgeon.

### Cataract Surgery

Tuesday 24 March 2020

At 6:30pm with Mr Niaz Islam, Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon.

### Haemorrhoids

Thursday 26 March 2020

From 6:30pm with Mr Veerana Shatkar, Consultant General Surgeon.

### Weight Loss Surgery

Thursday 26 March 2020

At 6:30pm with Mr Sanjay Agrawal, Consultant Bariatric Surgeon.

### Knee Surgery

Wednesday 1 April 2020

At 6:30pm with Prof Kevin Cheah, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon and Mr Jesse Holloway, Physiotherapist.

### Children's Ear, Nose and Throat Disorders

Monday 20 April 2020

At 6:30pm with Mr Anurag Jain, Consultant ENT Surgeon.

### Women's Health – Menopause and HRT

Wednesday 22 April 2020

At 6:30pm with Miss Seema Bagtharia, Consultant Gynaecologist and Mrs Linda Griffin, Men's and Women's Health Physiotherapist.

To book your place or find out more, go to  
[nuffieldhealth.com/book](http://nuffieldhealth.com/book) or call 01277 554181

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