

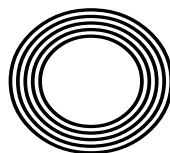


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Sir
TOM MOORE

Inspirational war hero receives knighthood



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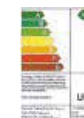
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June 2020

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

Editor's notes...



Nik Allen, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** BrentwoodOngar. I hope you are all keeping well in these uncertain times. Anyone who knows me will tell you I have always tried to look for the positive in every situation, and yet the past few weeks have tested even my own strength of optimism.

Firstly, my father was hospitalised with COVID-19 - a battle I am relieved to say he won - and my business, like most small enterprises, faced some challenging times.

And yet we have weathered the storm and are back on the rise, and in something of a metaphor for this new dawn, my wife and I welcomed a new addition to our family in April when my daughter Emily was born happy, healthy and well.

I am not alone in having faced very real challenges, and yet, in adapting to the 'new normal', as they say, so many people have sensed a tremendous opportunity for reflection, and to be grateful for the lives they live.

What's more, I sense that our enforced separation from family and friends over this past couple of months will only make those relationships stronger and even more cherished in future, and perhaps that's the greatest positive of all.

Remember to keep your distance and keep washing your hands.

Hope you enjoy reading this month's **VISION**.

Nik

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The TV doctor whose finger has been on the pulse of the nation's health needs for more than three decades.

Readers of a certain age will best associate Dr Hilary Jones with the so-called golden era of daytime TV when, in the 1990s, producers presided over formats that would cement the careers of the likes of Chris Evans, Ulrika Jonsson, Richard and Judy, Nicky Clarke, John Torode and Gino D'Acampo.

As GMTV's softly spoken, likeable and, to some, slightly lusty healthcare pro with all the answers, Dr Hilary found himself answering questions on everything from puberty to piles in front of a watching television audience of millions.

Having qualified as a medical doctor at the Royal Free Hospital in London in 1976, he spent time practising abroad before becoming a junior doctor, then GP, in Basingstoke. The charisma and calm he brought to matters of the body and mind meant it was only a matter of time before the media spotlight came his way, and he has since spent a career supplementing TV appearances with magazine columns (notably *The Sun* on Sunday pull-out *Fabulous*) and radio appearances (he is a regular on Steve Wright's mid-afternoon Radio 2 show).

"When I was first asked to appear on television, the concept of people phoning in to discuss their problems was a peculiar one, and no one was quite sure if it was an idea that would take off," he says.

"But it did, and it has spawned a huge range of regular shows that encourage people to open up about many aspects of their lives, their bodies and their minds.

"As a medical professional, it can only be a good thing to see people being honest about what's going on, although I'm always wary that we don't want to cheapen the issues as this is real life."

Dr Jones' relatability to a wide demographic has certainly come to the fore in recent weeks as he has re-emerged centre-stage as one of the leading mainstream voices offering support and advice in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

While championing the magnificent efforts of the public in the nation's fight to stem increases in coronavirus deaths, the 66-year-old also showed his tough side in the first week of May, when he took umbrage to a minority flouting regulations.

"We've all got to be in it together. Are those who refuse to self-isolate going to wear a t-shirt to hospital saying, 'Don't treat me, I didn't participate'? I don't think so.

"People who are careless are endangering not just their own lives but also the lives of so many around them," he continued, explaining that his colleagues on the frontline of hospital care are 12 times more likely to contract the virus than ordinary members of the public.

Current issues aside, the thrice-married TV personality has carved an impressive career out of his time at medical school. He has had six books published, participated in the fifth series of *Dancing on Ice*, and even appeared on a celebrity version of *The Chase*.

"I've had a lot of fun along the way, but the nuts and bolts of what I do will always come back to helping people get well and stay well – that's what I'm really passionate about."

Calling
Dr Jones

THE *Positive* *Pandemic?*

REFLECTING ON COVID-19'S SILVER LINING

While for an entire nation, the world around us has changed in ways more dramatic than we ever thought possible, there have been a couple of unexpected upsides to the terrifying global pandemic.

Firstly, we've seen society return to a much simpler way of life. Many work pressures – right down to the morning commute – have been removed, and with it, the hourly anxieties of jobs, tasks and duties lifted.

Children have enjoyed quality time with parents, and we've caught up with old friends more frequently than ever before, albeit online.

From bike rides to DIY, crafts to baking, health, relaxation and endless spurts of creativity and community spirit, the impact on us, as people, has been profound.

And yet, that is only half of the story. With our physical footprint on the environment lessened, we have seen nature reclaim great swathes of the country.

Car journeys have been minimised, meaning fewer harmful pollutants in the air (carbon dioxide levels have dropped 25 per cent); and there were 67 million fewer flights in the first three months of 2020 compared to the same period last year. Indeed, researchers at Stanford University estimated that improvements in air quality have saved the lives of 20 times the number of people killed by the virus.

Consider too that pollution levels in rivers are down – we all saw the pictures of the crystal clear canals in Venice – and even by Greta Thunberg's own admission, the Climate Crisis is "on hold".

While the positive environmental effects of coronavirus may only be temporary, perhaps the pandemic has opened our eyes to the very real impact we have on the world. And perhaps that, in turn, will ensure that while our investment in community, social distancing and hygiene is forever changed, so may we just give that little bit extra to the natural world too.

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HOME & DIY



WHY WE HAVE BECOME A NATION OBSESSED WITH DOING UP OUR HOMES

While it's clear the year 2020 is set to be a disastrous one for the sales departments of estate agents, the trend for doing up rather than shipping out is one that began long before coronavirus changed our financial and lifestyle habits.

The lure for people to take what they have and improve on it has a lot to do with the growing escalation of the housing market. Across the UK, prices have increased, on average, by around five per cent each and every year over the past decade. While that doesn't sound much, it means a house bought for £200,000 in 2010 is now valued at £325,000.

That increase means it is unaffordable for many people to enter the market, while others who already own are happy to keep riding the wave in respect of prices continuing to rise, before considering selling as the curve lessens.

Of course, that tailing off could well happen by the end of the summer. The UK housing market is in something akin to cold storage at the moment, at a time when business is usually booming.

This COVID-19-driven change is enhanced by a 'stay at home' premise that is actually encouraging people to tend to all those home and DIY jobs that have typically been left. Sure enough, the more we 'mend this, change that, fix them', the more we paint, restyle, upcycle and redo, the less tendency we have to want to 'up sticks' and move somewhere else.

Put another way, an enforced and prolonged period of isolation could well make us one of the most creative nations in the world in terms of interior design and tending to our gardens. Now where are those *Amazing Spaces* and *Ground Force* books?

CHESTER JONES

Celebrating two decades of the interior design and former architect

HOME & DIY

There's something very gentleman-like about the style guide offered by Chester Jones. The renowned British interior designer, who operates out of Chelsea, has become one of the UK's leading lights in working together a combination of styles. Comfortable combining traditional and modern, his talent is in matching pieces from vastly different eras, with a bridge between the two that could lean on emotion, intellect, colour, or simply texture. "I never want to feel I am being held back by a contrast of styles," he says. "The real talent of an interior designer is to accept a number of pieces a client already has and wants included, even if they are vastly differing."



TO ACHIEVE THE CHESTER JONES LOOK, THERE ARE, HOWEVER, A FEW STAPLES:

- | Storage... there is no reason to hide away possessions that have been kept because they are valued, but using display and hidden elements to create a stylish space that is also lived in and appreciated is key
- | Pictures, sculptures, books... these three things represent the pivotal elements
- | Elements... wooden floors and big rugs offer cleanliness and maturity, but the browns should be broken up with rounded antiques, splashes of colour and lots of light
- | Craftsmanship... curves, bends and twists are designed to work together, while also blending the harder edges of 'on show' items such as books
- | No room for the showroom... perhaps the most important consideration is that any Chester Jones interior must be lived in and loved. It is not somewhere put together for a catalogue; it is an evolving, breathing space that invites people to relax in a style that has homeliness at its heart.

Photo credit: chesterjones.com

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HOME & DIY

Whether you are concerned about
contributing to the supply shortage, are
worried about the additional expense or
perhaps you just fancy getting crafty, making your
own face mask could not be simpler.

SEW OPTION

YOU WILL NEED:

2 of 10 inches x 6 inches rectangles of fabric –
tightly woven cotton is recommended | 2 of 6 inches
pieces of elastic or rubber bands | Sewing machine
| Needle and thread

NO--SEW OPTION

YOU WILL NEED:

A bandana or square
cotton cloth (22 inches x
22 inches) | Rubber bands
or hairbands

HOW TO MAKE:

Take the fabric and fold
the top and bottom
into the centre | Fold
the sides towards the
centre and loop the
rubber bands around the
fabric | Tuck one end of
the fabric into the other | Lift
the mask to your face and
loop the bands over your
ears | Adjust as needed,
ensuring that your nose
and mouth are fully covered

Photo credit: www.sarahmaker.com

HOW TO MAKE:

Stack the two rectangles on top of each other | Fold
over the long sides ¼ inch and hem | Fold the double
layer of fabric over ½ inch along the short sides and
stitch down | Run a piece of elastic through the wide
hem on each side of the mask using a large needle
| Fasten the ends tightly together in a knot | Gently
pull the elastic so the knots are tucked inside the
hem | Adjust to fit your face

DIY FACE MASKS SHOULD:

- ✓ Fit snugly and always be secured over the face
- ✓ Include multiple layers of fabric
- ✓ Allow you to breathe without restriction
- ✓ Be washed regularly

DIY FACE MASKS SHOULD NOT:

- ✗ Allow too much light to filter through the fabric
- ✗ Need to be adjusted continuously
- ✗ Be used as a replacement for social distancing
and good hygiene practices

Banish BACTERIA



Did you know that bacteria can live for several months on surfaces within your home, as well as on other areas that you may not even have considered?

Handle the hotspots

When trying to keep their houses germ-free zones, people often forget crucial spots that everyone touches, such as doorknobs and tap handles. Spray these hotspots with a disinfectant, leave for 5-10 minutes and wipe clean.



Banish bed bacteria

With many spending more time in bed than usual, it is important that you wash your bedding on a more regular basis. To completely kill all bacteria, wash your sheets and pillowcases on a hot wash and dry on an antibacterial cycle.



Focus on your feet

If you have been heading out for your daily exercise, you could be bringing unwanted germs into your home. Take off your shoes before entering and wash the soles with hot, soapy water. Cleaning your doormat is also advisable.



Tackle technology

How many times a day do you touch your phone or your tablet? Probably more than you care to admit. Cleaning your technological devices with antibacterial wipes throughout the day is crucial if you want to stop the spread of bacteria.



Clean your cleaning equipment

Cleaning equipment such as mops and cloths are often overlooked when it comes to disinfecting items in your home. However, a failure to do this can lead to you spreading germs rather than eliminating them. Wash in hot, soapy water with a few drops of bleach for added oomph.



Home in on your home desk

Did you know that your home desk could contain up to 400 times more bacteria than your toilet seat? Prevent these germs from getting transferred to your hands by consistently wiping down any surfaces you work on with a disinfectant that contains at least 70 per cent alcohol.



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USE YOUR noodle in the home

FIVE WAYS TO USE A POOL NOODLE IN YOUR HOME

If you have children and they like swimming, then chances are you have a fair few pool noodles lying around the house, because even though they are fairly big and noticeable items, you never seem to be able to locate one when you need it.

Thankfully, there are ways that you can upcycle these popular pool aids.

Help your boots keep their shape

Lovers of knee-high or thigh-high boots rejoice: you no longer have to worry about them losing their shape in the bottom of your wardrobe. Simply cut an old pool noodle down to size, insert a piece into each boot and voila. Your boots will retain their shape indefinitely.

Child-proof your home

If you have an explorative toddler on your hands, then you will be keen to protect them from any dangers in your home. Pool noodles make the perfect protective covering for corners as they are soft and shock-resistant. Just slice down the middle and place on any sharp edges.

Use for press-painting

Most little ones love to craft, but the constant trips to Hobbycraft can become expensive. Luckily, your children can enjoy a fun messy play activity using just a pool noodle and some paint. All you need to do is cut your noodle into small circles and let the press-painting commence.

Prevent trousers from creasing

If you tend to overcrowd your wardrobe, you may find that your clothes, especially trousers, become easily creased. Fortunately, a humble cut of pool noodle inserted over the bar of a hanger can solve this problem.

Use as a hose alternative

How often have you struggled to fill a big bucket in your sink? Avoid this issue by simply attaching a pool noodle to your tap and then placing the other end in your bucket.



HOME & DIY

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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



'Cowardly' criminal jailed after violent attack

A Brentwood man who attacked another man with a glass bottle in a bar in Billericay has been jailed for 11 years.

Charles Cory, 34, of De Paul Way, was sentenced at Basildon Crown Court on March 31 for grievous bodily harm with intent after he previously admitted the offence in court.

The violent attack took place on March 30 last year after Cory was seen talking to a woman in a bar called French Martini, in Western Road, Billericay.

She went on to dance with another man, frustrating Cory, who threw liquid from a glass at the man before striking him in the face with a glass bottle.

This caused several deep cuts to his face and the victim was left bleeding heavily.

Cory was jailed for nine years and seven months for the assault, and another one year and five

months for breaching a suspended sentence, to run concurrently.

Investigating officer, PC Tyler Hadlow, said: "Cory approached the victim from behind, threw liquid over him and then struck him in the face once he turned around.

"The glass shattered as it hit his face and Cory ran from the scene after staff attempted to detain him.

"As a result of the attack, the victim suffered from several permanently visible injuries, which consisted of deep cuts to his forehead, nose and cheek, as well as severe bruising.

"This was a completely unprovoked attack and it was found that Cory had used a weapon intending to cause as much damage as possible.

"This week, he received 11 years in prison for his cowardly actions."

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LOCAL NEWS BRENTWOOD



Sweet-toothed teenager helps raise thousands for charity

A Brentwood schoolgirl has raised thousands of pounds for the NHS by selling her family's popular confectionery treats.

Fifth Year pupil Hannah Malyon-Davies, who was inspired by Sir Tom Moore and her late grandfather, raised more than £2,500.

The 16-year-old's sweet delicacies were quickly snapped up by chocolate lovers, so Hannah and her sisters set about making 600 special bags of treats for staff at three local hospitals.

Hannah said: "My grandad, Allan Malyon, started Rascal Confectionery 50 years ago, and sadly he

passed away 18 months ago. My parents now run the business.

"I know my family and friends absolutely love our chocolates, so I thought to help raise money for the NHS.

"We set up at home in our dining room and started packing 200gram bags of two products. My two sisters also advertised on their Instagram page.

"We raised £2,551 which went directly to the NHS. We also sent Captain Tom a large selection of our confectionery for his 100th birthday. A big thank you to anyone reading this who donated."

PCSO completes marathon on her driveway



A Brentwood PCSO had the support of the community as she ran a marathon on a treadmill to raise money for charity.

Julie Buckley usually gets her steps in each day by patrolling the streets of Brentwood and keeping everyone safe.

However, she went further, much further, on April 26 as she ran 26.2 miles on a treadmill placed on her driveway in a bid to raise funds for Saint Francis Hospice.

She was all geared up to run her third London Marathon until it was rearranged, but she still took on the challenge to raise vital funds.

She said: "In the six and a half hours it took to complete, I was never on my own. I was either on FaceTime to family and friends, or neighbours were hanging out of their windows, cheering me on."

Julie, who also polices the Epping area for Essex Police, raised £3,500 in total.

Essex Police said: "A huge well done to one of our police community support officers who ran a full marathon at home for charity."



Teen crowned Slimmer of the Year



A teenager from Brentwood has been crowned the nation's Young Slimmer of the Year after losing half of her body weight. Holly Bolton, 18, is Slimming World's Young Slimmer of the Year 2020 after losing more than eight stone.

Her weight had increased to around 15 stone by the time she was 11 years old. But now, with a bright future ahead of her, Holly is optimistic.

She said: "Doctors noticed that my weight was becoming an issue and so I was referred to a dietitian. It wasn't a nice experience at all.

"At just 12 I was told that I wouldn't be able lose the weight without surgery, which is quite a lot to process at such a young age.

"The warnings did nothing to spur me on to lose weight – they actually had the opposite effect."

Shortly after the stark warning, Holly's mum heard about Slimming World when a leaflet was posted through their door and she suggested they join.

Holly added: "Despite being just 12 I'd already tried lots of ways of losing weight – from calorie-controlled diets to soups and shakes.

"Of course, they never worked for me because they were too restrictive, and I just couldn't stick to them – it was never a lifestyle change."

Police warning as criminals take advantage of victims

Police are warning residents in Brentwood to be vigilant as criminals use the pandemic to take advantage of their victims.

The warning comes as police are investigating reports of a distraction burglary in Brentwood, where

a man knocked on the door of an elderly woman and told her he was there to check whether she had coronavirus.

Investigating Officer, DC Edward Gosling, said: "We want to remind people to stay vigilant and be aware of criminals who are using concerns about coronavirus to take advantage of and target vulnerable people.

"They are very convincing and often carry fake identification, going to great lengths to try and gain access into your home.

"Thankfully, on this occasion, nothing was stolen and no one was hurt.

"If you do get an unexpected visitor, explain that you need to check who they are, close the door and make a call to the organisation they say they are working on behalf of.

"If they are genuine, they will understand your caution and will happily wait while you make that call."

Teenager praised after selling face masks for NHS

A Brentwood teenager has been raising funds for the NHS by selling home-made face masks.

Jessica Evans, 15, was hailed by the Brentwood Borough Council (BBC) leader after she took more than 400 orders.

The teenager said: "I really enjoy sewing so I thought this was something that I could do to help. My mum put it on social media, and I have had so many orders."

Within weeks she had raised £500 for the NHS, and on May 21 Jessica and her family, sister Rebecca, mum Di and dad Mark, attended the Town Hall where BBC leader councillor Chris Hossack congratulated Jessica on realising her fundraising goal.

Cllr Chris Hossack said: "How impressive to see Jessica put her skills to such use. For a 15-year-old to dedicate her time to making something so useful and worthwhile is a great example to us all."



Photo credit: Brentwood Borough Council

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Alex Burghart MP for Brentwood and Ongar



It's now just over three months since the UK coronavirus pandemic lockdown restrictions began, and six months since it began to become clear a new and dangerous strain of the coronavirus was causing severe respiratory illnesses and deaths in China.

Since the beginning of lockdown all our lives have changed in multiple ways. We cannot see or visit family and friends when we want to, we cannot go to the pub or out for a meal. Home-schooling has become the norm for school children and their parents, and working from home, seeing colleagues only via online meetings, has changed the work environment entirely.

The government, HMRC and the NHS have been working at warp speed. HMRC staff have identified and paid out billions of pounds through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self Employment Income Support Scheme. NHS front-line and administrative staff have opened up and equipped wards and staff to deal with COVID-19 patients. (The government guidance is updated daily at [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus), covering everything from

repatriation flights to education resources.)

The best medical and scientific minds in the world are working to develop an effective vaccine for coronavirus, again at a speed that defies belief when compared to the usual development and testing times.

The number of tests carried out throughout the country to find out who has coronavirus has been rapidly increased, with the government working to boost the capacity in the UK to 200,000 daily tests. Thanks to the rapid increase in testing capabilities, everyone aged five and over who has coronavirus symptoms is now eligible for a test. You can also apply on behalf of someone you live with, if they have symptoms. The government has also expanded the criteria so that NHS and care workers can now get tested even if they don't have symptoms.

Trials are even beginning for specially trained 'COVID dogs' that may be able to detect coronavirus (COVID-19) in humans. The dogs, who successfully detect certain cancers, will undergo intensive training to see if they can spot coronavirus before symptoms appear.

This pandemic is far from over, and everyone should continue to follow medical advice and stay alert, to control the spread of the virus and save lives.



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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood

LOCAL NEWS ONGAR



Stay at Home Festival hailed as a great success

This year's Ongar Festival was a huge success despite coronavirus restrictions forcing the community to celebrate in a different way than originally planned.

The annual festival was due to take place on May 8 with a special VE Day theme before coronavirus put the brakes on months' worth of plans.

Instead it became the Ongar Stay at Home Festival, where residents decorated their homes, entertainment was provided by performers who filmed their acts so people could watch from home and people dressed up for the occasion.

The High Street was also decorated to ensure anyone who had to make an essential trip out of their home knew it was still a special day.

Kelly Stone, from the festival committee, said: "It was looking really dire at one point when we knew the original event had to be cancelled.

"However, we rallied and managed to get our hands on lots of bunting to decorate the High Street, and flyers were made so people knew it had become a stay at home festival.

"There was a great response by the community, and we are grateful for the effort and support people showed for the event.

"It was heart-warming to see people open their doorsteps and driveways while talking to neighbours from a safe distance – I think it brought many people together and friendships were made.

"There was definitely a real street festival feeling which wouldn't have happened if it wasn't lockdown.

"We are looking to hold the VE Day event next year as a 75-plus festival, so hopefully much of the planning can be put to good use for then."

Visit www.ongartownfestival.co.uk or the festival's Facebook page for more information.



Report sightings of oak processionary moth



Members of the public in Ongar are being asked to report any sightings of the tree pest oak processionary moth (OPM) caterpillars.

The caterpillars and their nests contain hairs which can cause itchy rashes and eye and throat irritations, and should not be touched. The tree pest was spotted in Essex in 2019.

You can identify them by their nests, which are typically dome or teardrop-shaped, averaging the size of a tennis ball. They are white when fresh, but soon become discoloured and brown.

Andrew Hall, Forestry Commission Operations Manager, said: "Many people are enjoying green spaces and it's really important for the public to be aware of the risk of tree pests and to report any sightings via our TreeAlert website or by calling the Forestry Commission."

Please report sightings to the Forestry Commission by email opm@forestrycommission.gov.uk or call them on 0300 067 4442.

Man admits starting fire at police station

A man from Ongar admitted starting a fire at a police station when he appeared in court last month.

Jake Grace was arrested after a fire was started at Cheshunt Police Station in Hertfordshire.

The 28-year-old was charged with arson and a separate charge of arson with intent to endanger life after a fire caused damage to the front of the station.

The incident happened at around 4.20am on April 24, causing damage to the entrance to the station and forcing it to close for a period following the blaze.

No one was hurt during the incident.

Grace pleaded not guilty to arson with intent to endanger life which was accepted by the court. He

admitted the charge of arson.

At the time of writing, he was next due appear on July 28 at St Albans Crown Court.

Fundraising launched in bid to save brave mother's life

More than £50,000 has been raised in a bid to fund potentially life-saving treatment for an Ongar woman.

Erica Jane Booroff is just 39 years old but has sadly been diagnosed with terminal bowel cancer.

Her friends Charlotte Buck, Alexandra Allen and Lauren Donnellan have vowed to do all they can to raise the funds needed for potentially life-saving treatment that is not available in the UK.

They set up a fundraising page and within a week raised more than £50,000 of their £100,000 target.

Erica, who was originally diagnosed with bowel and breast cancer last year, had already undergone extensive chemotherapy, radiotherapy and numerous operations before finding out that her illness had become terminal.

On her fundraising page, Erica's friend Charlotte said: "Erica has a beautiful little girl, Ella, who is only two years old. The life of her loving and supportive partner Gary, and that of Erica's family, have been turned upside down overnight."

"As close friends of Erica, we have set up this fundraising site, to help raise the money Erica will so desperately need for life-saving treatments."

"At this moment in time, we are still exploring and investigating further medical treatments available; however, Erica will need the financial support to continue with her life-saving treatment immediately after her nine-week course of chemotherapy."

"Unfortunately, due to the extremely aggressive nature of Erica's cancer, time is not on her side."

To donate, visit www.gofundme.com/f/Ericas-fight-against-cancer



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The truly inspirational SIR TOM MOORE

THE STORY OF THE WAR HERO WHO WAS CERTAIN HIS DAYS OF NATIONAL DUTY WERE BEHIND HIM

When social media is bad, it can be the source of an intense amount of ill-feeling, frustration and negative conjecture; but when it's good, it is life-changing, charming and the most wonderful reflection of the human spirit.

Ultimately, as the story of the newly knighted Sir Tom Moore unfolded towards the end of April, it was shown to be the latter, and how...

Here was a former British Army Officer who performed heroics in the India and Burma campaigns of the Second World War. Retiring from combat in the 1950s to become an instructor at the Armoured Fighting Vehicle School down in Dorset, his return to civilian life only once saw him raise his head above the parapet as a guest on the late Terry Wogan's 'Marmite' celebrity wordplay game show *Blankety Blank*, and even that was some 37 years ago.

So when the then 99-year-old decided to take on 100 laps of his back garden – 10 laps per day at 25 metres per lap – to raise money for the organisation NHS Charities Together, it was one of the very simplest and yet most precious gestures the father of two had made in an impressively rewarding life.

Hoping to raise £1,000, the fundraising project soon caught the imagination of social media, and, as with all things that go viral, a simple act grew to a magnitude that someone of any age, let alone a centenarian – a landmark Sir Tom reached on April 30 – would struggle to fully comprehend.

Surging onwards and having

broken the £39million barrier by the second week in May, Sir Tom's efforts have personified the heroic spirit the nation is witnessing and applauding in wake of the COVID-19 outbreak.

And sure enough, his rewards have been a delight for several million admirers to bask in. The inspirational role model was named an honorary Colonel, was rewarded with an RAF fly-past, and enjoyed a personal greeting from Prime Minister Boris Johnson, as well as, of course, receiving the obligatory telegram from the Queen marking his 100th birthday.

Sir Tom, who contracted skin cancer aged 98, said, "Reaching 100 is quite something. Reaching 100 with such interest in me and huge generosity from the public is very overwhelming.

"People keep saying what I have done is remarkable; however, it's actually what you have done for me which is remarkable.

"Please always remember, tomorrow will be a good day."

Sir Tom's immediate 'tomorrows' may still be spent trying to answer some of the 150,000 birthday cards he has received; while he may at least be consoled that the demise of *Top of the Pops* means he doesn't have to venture to Elstree to perform his duet *You'll Never Walk Alone* with Michael Ball, after their version leapt to the top of the singles chart.

But perhaps in the greatest tribute of all, Sir Tom was awarded a knighthood, an award fast-tracked through the walls of power.

As an exemplar for ordinary people performing extraordinary things, the veteran is the first to deflect praise towards others; but in troubled times a nation needs figureheads, focal points and friendly faces in order to make our collective efforts feel real, and in Sir Tom Moore we have all that and so much more besides.



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PUZZLES

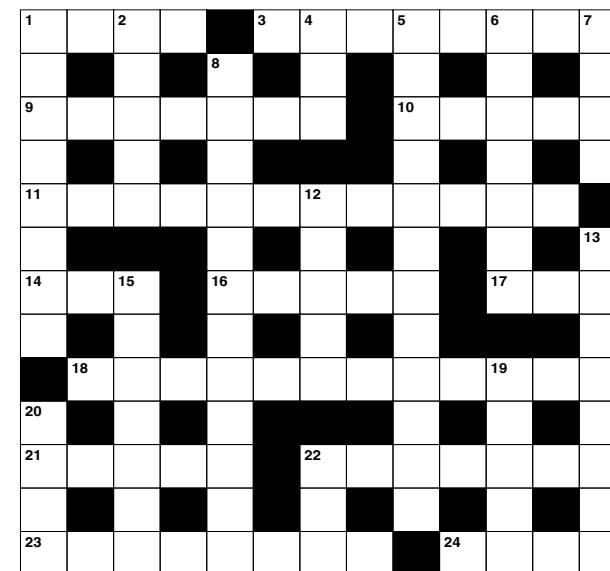
Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4

ACROSS

1. Pretty (4)
3. Battered (8)
9. Act of turning up (7)
10. Arboreal primate (5)
11. Directions (12)
14. Silent (3)
16. Scale representation (5)
17. Be unwell (3)
18. Vehemently (12)
21. Female relatives (5)
22. Circular hall (7)
23. Comes into flower (8)
24. Type of wood (4)

DOWN

1. Personal magnetism (8)
2. Conditions (5)
4. Entirely (3)
5. A large number (12)
6. European country (7)
7. Mend with rows of stitches (4)
8. Excessive stress (12)
12. Military trainee (5)
13. Reproduce recorded sound (4,4)
15. Keepsake; reminder (7)
19. Spear (5)
20. Young sheep (4)
22. Strong spirit (3)



DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ When cranberries are ripe, they will bounce like rubber balls
- ▶ Pound cake got its name from the ingredients – you typically use a pound of flour, butter, sugar and eggs
- ▶ Fruits such as apples, pears and apricots are all part of the rose family
- ▶ Apples can float because they are made up of around 25 per cent air
- ▶ The word potato came from Spanish patata
- ▶ Bananas grow in large hanging bunches
- ▶ Grapes explode when you put them in the microwave
- ▶ A strawberry has an average of about 200 seeds and a pomegranate can contain up to 1,000 seeds

SUDOKU

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

ALWAYS ONLINE

Does the era of 'live chat' actually mean you're talking to a robot?

Any kind of online web chat experience has the potential to go sour – we've all ended up speaking to someone many thousands of miles away wondering if we'd be better off writing a strongly worded letter instead.

While the experience of speaking to someone in a call centre in a faraway land isn't always the best, the attempt at a pleasant exchange is usually flawless, and the reality that we are speaking to a real person is something we've grown to take for granted.

Yet the new era of customer service often means we're not talking to a human... not in London, Glasgow, nor Islamabad. Instead, while it may not be evident in the initial exchanges, we're conversing with a chatbot.

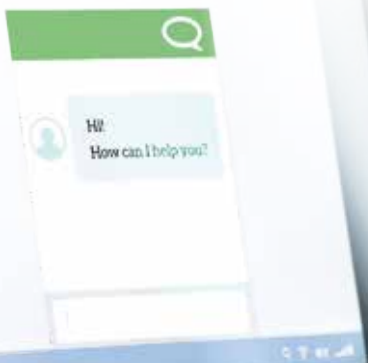
The technology that powers these computers has moved on in waves over the past decade or so. Intelligent, polite and immediate, these chatbots offer customers the chance to source answers and direct enquiries rather than having to endure the frustration of searching or waiting around for a real person to enter the chat.

Companies like chatbots because they are low cost and highly productive, though there are, of course, limitations to this latest wave of AI. Consumers can feel they are being fobbed

off and there is a good chance complex enquiries are just moved on to a real person anyway, in which case the process actually takes longer, and it's only really relatively simple queries that can be solved by a robot.

The jury is still out, particularly as it's difficult for companies to judge feedback – after all, satisfied customers will tell, on average, nine people about their experience, while for dissatisfied customers that number is 22.

Either way, just remember the next time you engage in a web chat, you might want to hold off on pleasantries about the weather... the robot you're conversing with really doesn't care.




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Dan Pearson



GARDENING



THE GARDENER GOING BACK TO THE SOIL

It's fair to describe Dan Pearson as someone who never tires of experiencing the thrill of nature's rustic wholesomeness.

Dan is a horticulturalist of the highest regard, who has trained at the UK's greatest botanical institutions, written newspaper columns for more than two decades and even been dedicated an exhibition at the Garden Museum, London. To Dan, gardening represents an absorbing, encompassing experience that reconnects him with something spiritual.

"Being outdoors and seeing nature, in its simplest form, growing and flourishing around you is the most amazing thing," he says. "It's something we can all enjoy – whether that's rich sprays of colour or the simple green bounty of plants interacting and intersecting with each other."

Our ability to grow and flourish in our natural surroundings is something even the most modest gardener can do.

"My advice is to start with something small – even just a window box. Choose plants that interest and excite you, learn about them and go from there."

"I think that horticulture has an enormous amount to give back to a world that needs this connection with greenery and things that you eat: knowing where your food came from, and knowing how to go about growing it while still preserving space."

"That means the gardens are never static; they are always changing and always adapting."

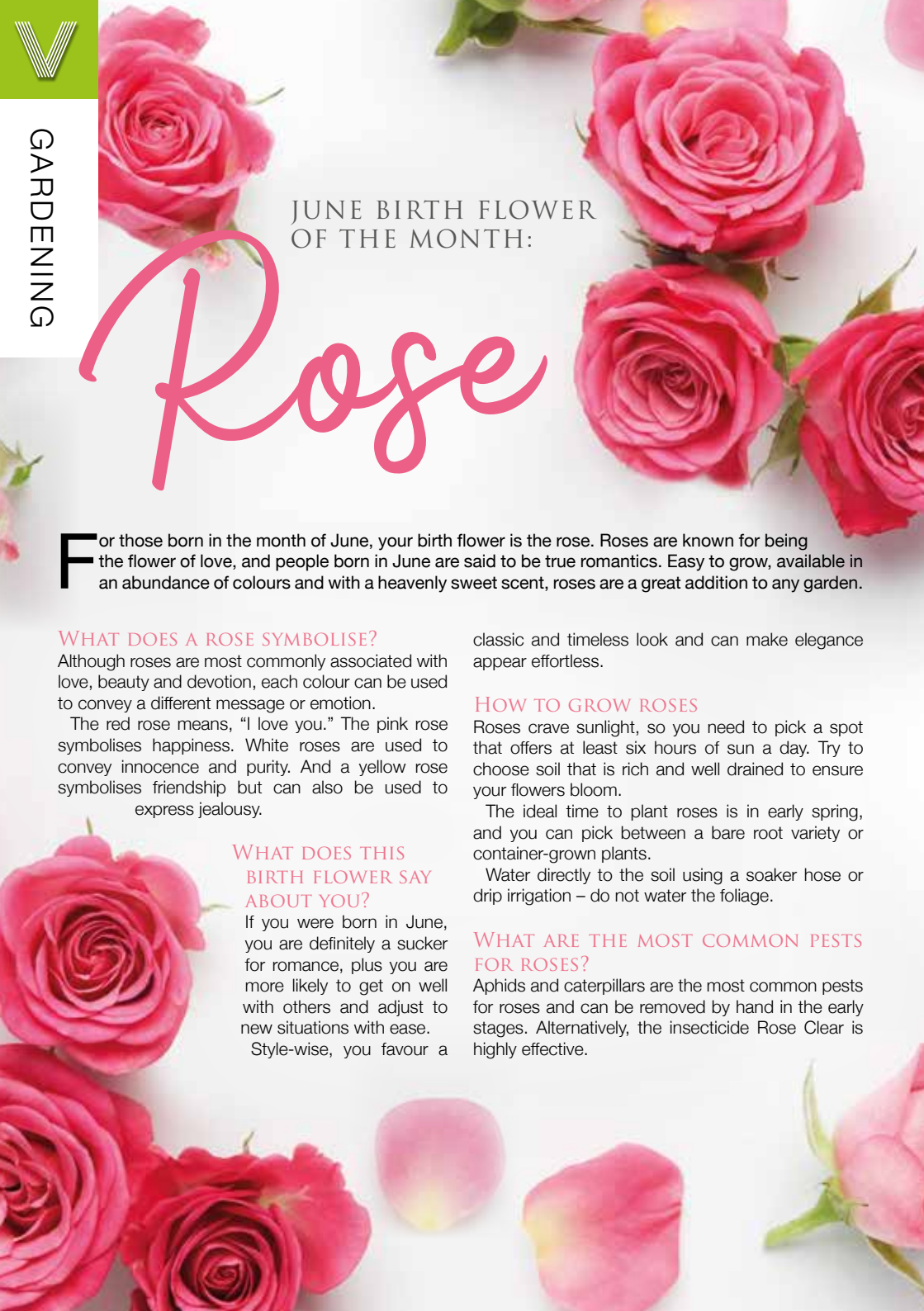
Pearson says the crucial step in effective gardening is to have a plan – to structure a project from the start, to set goals and to follow through on them to the end.

"It really doesn't matter what you decorate your garden with – you should go with what feels right. However, what I would say is it's so easy to get distracted, and I am testament to the fact you can end up with four or five unfinished jobs unless you plan properly, so that would be my best tip."

Photo credit: Heathcliff O'Malley/Shutterstock

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V45



JUNE BIRTH FLOWER
OF THE MONTH:

Rose

For those born in the month of June, your birth flower is the rose. Roses are known for being the flower of love, and people born in June are said to be true romantics. Easy to grow, available in an abundance of colours and with a heavenly sweet scent, roses are a great addition to any garden.

WHAT DOES A ROSE SYMBOLISE?

Although roses are most commonly associated with love, beauty and devotion, each colour can be used to convey a different message or emotion.

The red rose means, "I love you." The pink rose symbolises happiness. White roses are used to convey innocence and purity. And a yellow rose symbolises friendship but can also be used to express jealousy.

WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOU?

If you were born in June, you are definitely a sucker for romance, plus you are more likely to get on well with others and adjust to new situations with ease.

Style-wise, you favour a

classic and timeless look and can make elegance appear effortless.

HOW TO GROW ROSES

Roses crave sunlight, so you need to pick a spot that offers at least six hours of sun a day. Try to choose soil that is rich and well drained to ensure your flowers bloom.

The ideal time to plant roses is in early spring, and you can pick between a bare root variety or container-grown plants.

Water directly to the soil using a soaker hose or drip irrigation – do not water the foliage.

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON PESTS FOR ROSES?

Aphids and caterpillars are the most common pests for roses and can be removed by hand in the early stages. Alternatively, the insecticide Rose Clear is highly effective.

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SIMPLE TREE IDEAS FOR GARDENS OF ANY SIZE

We all know the majesty of trees – decorative, oxygen-giving, protecting, privacy-offering and effortlessly evolving over time; they are perhaps the friendliest of nature's plants for the variety and variance they offer to both the biggest and the smallest spaces.

That means, whether you have a sprawling field out the back of your property or a simple back yard, clever use of trees can really shape a space.

PYRUS CALLEYRANA

An upright, tear-shaped tree that is perfect for gardens that have light up above, though perhaps are restricted in terms of square footage.

The green spread casts light down and the tree will self-maintain through all seasons.

ACER GRISEUM (PAPERBARK MAPLE)

This is a tree recently voted the most beautiful for gardens, given its characterful grey trunk and a spray of leaf colours that blend and weave into any foreground. Slow-growing, it won't consume the space.

MAGNOLIA GRANDIFLORA

A tree that bows out at the top to provide the perfect cover for something you wish to hide, like a street lamp or neighbour's basketball hoop. And of course, with a spray of white flowers that emerge as the year progresses, this is a variety that takes on an evolving personality.

CRAB APPLE TREES

So often the tree of our childhoods; as kids we contemplated whether to eat the apples that dropped from the tree. In garden terms, these small and perfectly formed beauties can be used to shield street-side windows from prying passers-by.

They won't grow to any extreme height, and flower attractively too.

BONSAI TREES

Of course, if space is really at a premium but you still crave the lure of a plant that has the rigidity of bark and the personality of a tree, bonsai are the way forward. While we mainly associate them as being very small, bonsai can grow well above head height.





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WORKING FROM HOME?

In the current climate, many of us have had to carry on with our work from home, and we may well be required to do so for the foreseeable future.

Working from home has many advantages, such as saving time and money on the daily commute, but it also comes with disadvantages such as little quiet space to concentrate, or make and receive private business calls. This can lead to a lack of routine, which in turn can cause a drop in productivity compared with working in a normal office environment.

One way in which you could eliminate distractions would be to look at the garden as the place for a new workspace. Your usual outlay on commuting could help offset the cost of having an R. Page Concrete Buildings Garden Room installed in your garden.

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zooming INTO FOCUS

WHY THE VIDEO-CONFERENCING TOOL IS 2020'S BIG SUCCESS STORY

When it became clear the COVID-19 pandemic's presence was going to have a profound effect on society, speculating traders quickly went on the lookout for an investment stock that would pay big... after all, as the saying goes, there is money to be made out of a crisis.

Any who included video-conferencing tool Zoom in their portfolio may now be laughing all the way to the bank – or at least they will be when the banks reopen – after the Silicon Valley-based corporation announced triple-digit growth over the past three months.

Zoom is, of course, the perfect method for homebound people – and at the last count that's the vast majority of the population – to stay in touch with friends, family and work colleagues. It's not unique – rivals include

WebEx, BlueJeans, TeamViewer, Microsoft Teams and even Google Classroom – but what Zoom has thrown behind its product in a way rivals haven't are innovation, simplicity of function and a serious amount of reinvestment.

It's all led to first-time installations increasing five-fold in March, and an increase in the stock price of well over 100 per cent.

In reality, though, Zoom and the other video-conferencing tools cannot rest on their laurels. They may well be making hay while the sun shines given the restrictions placed on our physical interactions, but when these regulations are lifted, the danger for these firms is that the public will forget the software just as quickly as they downloaded it, and return to past habits.

The only way the tech boffins can prevent what will be an inevitable crash in user numbers is if their accompanying marketing team can convince us to change our habits long term, where speaking over an internet connection is preferred to face-to-face meetings.

In the new world, post-COVID, anything is possible.



ON THE MONEY

Financial advice from our
financial adviser Karyn Vogel
Contact 01277 654153



FINGER ON THE PULSE – INVESTING IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Global stock markets are suffering a period of volatility as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Although markets do not respond well to periods of uncertainty, what is certain is that volatility goes hand in hand with stock market investment; and although market movements can be concerning, experience teaches us to expect the unexpected.

CALM AND COLLECTED

To navigate market volatility, stick to your plan, diversify your holdings and very importantly, expect and accept volatility. Investors with diversified portfolios, who stay in the market, have historically and consistently experienced steady gains over time. Even though it can be difficult to ignore market movements, it is vital to focus on the long term and remember that volatility also presents opportunities.

Investment requires a disciplined approach and a degree of holding your nerve if markets fall. The worst investment strategy you can adopt is to jump in and out of the stock market, panic when prices fall and sell investments at the bottom of the market.

WEATHER THE STORM TOGETHER

A well-defined investment plan, tailored to your objectives, in line with your attitude to risk, that takes

into account your financial situation, can help you weather short-term market fluctuations. Market volatility is a timely reminder to keep your investments under regular review.

THE RIGHT STRATEGY

Financial advice and regular reviews are essential to help position your portfolio in line with your objectives and attitude to risk and to develop a well-defined investment plan, tailored to your objectives and risk profile. Financial advice is obviously key, so please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have regarding your investments.

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.

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Q Who Are Coversure Brentwood?

A We're Coversure Brentwood, one of Essex's leading independent insurance brokers. We opened in 2013 and since then have helped hundreds of residents and businesses in Brentwood and the surrounding areas. Director Neal Brezina has over 25 years of insurance experience, so you know you're in safe hands.

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.

Q Why Should You Use Coversure Brentwood?

A We pride ourselves on our exceptional customer service. No risk is the same and we'll take the time to truly understand your needs before recommending a product that's tailored to you. We have access to some of the UK's biggest and best insurers, meaning that you get the strong customer service of a local broker with the insurance policies of a national chain.

Q How Can Insurance Protect You?

A Depending on what kind of cover you're after, insurance can provide a safety net against a variety of risks you face on a daily business. Insurance can be the difference between your business running smoothly or going under. The difference between your delivery vehicle being off the road for months or days.

Q How Can You Save Money On Your Insurance?

A Whether combining multiple risks on to a single policy or simply looking at your cover levels, there's plenty of ways you could save money on your insurance. Why not get in touch with us and see if we can save you money?

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For all your insurance needs, get in touch with Coversure Brentwood. You can call us on 01277 295 504 or email brentwood@coversure.co.uk. We look forward to hearing from you!



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GETTING A GRIP ON OUR CONTACTLESS SPENDING

We are a society increasingly surging towards apparent glorious cashlessness – and an increase in the allowed spending limit to £45 per transaction was greeted by a record number of card payments in April.

Of course, the government's drive to limit the possible spread of coronavirus germs via the exchange of physical cash has been a defining factor in the latest spike, continuing an upward trend of contactless payments that was already up 16 per cent year on year. And yet, even before the pandemic, the ease with which we got used to the purchase of goods and services with a simple tap on a card reader means we are edging ever closer to a time when, in some situations, cash may become totally redundant.

Contactless payments offer a raft of benefits with very few downsides. There's the time-saving element – an average of seven seconds are saved per transaction versus chip

'n' pin, and 15 seconds on cash, according to research by Barclaycard. Then there's the removal of the need to carry heavy, dirty coins, or to head to the cashpoint to withdraw notes.

There's also the convenience of having a digital record of all transactions, and even the option to pay using a phone or watch.

And yet, while the drive towards convenience suits most of us, it does not apply to everyone – there are still 1.3million people in the UK who do not have a bank account. Consumer groups have also noted the dangers of people idly 'tapping' away without any real thought about the money they are spending. And while fraud accounts for only 2.5p in every £100, the ease with which someone can spend on a stolen card is considerable.

What's certain is that as much as the powers that be may want to encourage our spending habits towards a certain way, as with most things, it is the consumers who will decide.





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Why building up your baby's skin layers with creams and moisturising is so important

It's true to say the best moisturiser a baby will ever have is its own. It's called vernix and is the creamy white coating it is born with. Yet past the first couple of months, helping a baby regularly coming into contact with a variety of surfaces and air elements can really protect it going forward.

Non-soap cleanser

Traditional soap dries out skin, so following your baby's daily bath – which shouldn't exceed 10 minutes – apply a mild cleanser. Best bought from the pharmacy, these are great moisturisers.

Avoid bubble bath as it removes natural oils from the skin, while antibacterial and perfumed soaps may irritate too.

Post-bath moisturiser

When out of the bath, smear over a thick, pH-neutral moisturiser. Not only will your baby love the massaging feel, but he or she will benefit from the enriching of pores that a quality applicant can provide.

Thicker creams and ointments are more effective than lotions, and you should avoid anything that contains plant or food products.

Barrier creams

For nappy rash or eczema, the process of constant changes and reapplying of cream is really important. For each baby it's different, but barrier creams, usually containing zinc, are a great way to prevent fabrics and clothes from irritating the area further.

Try to limit the use of baby wipes, don't use talcum powder, and let the baby go nappy-free for as long as possible, as allowing air to get to any sore area is the best thing for it.

Sun protection

Any baby below the age of one should be kept out of the sun. Past that, look for a SPF above 30 and smother your little one in protection. A hat, sunshades and light clothing will suit them well, and remember to reapply cream every two hours.



Heavenly HOME-MADE HAND CREAM

Ensure your hands are silky smooth, no matter how many times you wash or sanitise them, with this simple and nourishing DIY, non-greasy hand cream recipe.

YOU WILL NEED:

- > 3oz shea butter – although both avocado and mango butter are good alternatives
- > 1 tbsp sunflower oil – organic if possible
- > 10 drops of essential oils – we love eucalyptus and lemongrass, but you can use whatever you have in the cupboard

HOW TO MAKE:

- > Add the shea butter and sunflower oil to a small pan
- > Gently heat until melted
- > Pour into a non-reactive bowl
- > Stir in your preferred essential oils
- > Place in fridge for 30 minutes to harden
- > Whip mixture with a hand mixer for 30 seconds until cream is fluffy and doubled in size
- > Do not overwhip as the mixture will turn stiff
- > Transfer cream into a sterilised jar

- > Use whenever your hands feel dry or in need of a moisture boost
- > Also use on rough patches of skin on your feet, knees and elbows

WHAT MAKES THIS HOME-MADE HAND CREAM SO EFFECTIVE?

Shea butter is the nirvana of skincare ingredients, having the ability not only to nourish your skin but also to heal it as it contains vitamins A and E. Plus, unlike coconut-oil-based moisturisers, shea butter will not leave your hands feeling greasy, just super smooth.

Sunflower oil is known for its calming effects on the skin, making it ideal for hands that are feeling sore and irritated from frequent sanitising.

Depending on what essential oils you choose to include, you can expect to experience a whole host of benefits. We recommend lemongrass for its ability to relieve stress and combat insomnia, and eucalyptus which can help heal sores, cuts and any other abrasions owing to its germicidal qualities.

NO GYM?

No Problem!

Fancy burning off some self-isolation boredom by popping to the local gym? Your luck's out. COVID-19 has ensured our time posturing and perspiring in the company of others is postponed indefinitely, but that doesn't mean you can't still get in shape.

RUNNING: It's the go-to exercise that we all come back to in the end – it's free, requires no expensive equipment, is endless in its range, and the more you do it the easier it gets. From pavement plodders to sparky park speed merchants, is the simple 'run' the best exercise option of them all?

FRONT ROOM WORKOUT: Joe Wicks may have cornered the market with his lithe lounge routines, but right back to Rosemary Conley on TV-am we were stretching, straining and sweating to workouts in the confines of our front rooms. There's never been a better time to take up the challenge.

TOUR DE UK: The bike succeeds where so many other forms of exercise fail by allowing its rider the rare pleasure of easing off the gas when things get tough. A venture out on your bicycle is not only pleasurable, but will also give your limbs a deserved rest whenever you can locate a downhill section.

THE WEIGHT IS OVER: Free weights at home can quickly boost muscle mass, and in the comfort of your bedroom, kitchen or garden, you can ensure absolute privacy where no unsuspecting audience will witness eye-popping strains akin to an episode of *World's Strongest Man*.

YES TO YOGA: If you feel your exercise regime is more of the mind than the body, start with a simple yoga or Pilates tutorial. You can ease yourself into positions you never previously thought achievable, while politely backing out at difficult moments or when you decide it's 'Pimms O'Clock'.





STAYING FIT & HEALTHY AT HOME

Looking after yourself has never been more important, yet, sadly, it has never been more difficult. Fortunately, there are several ways that you can ensure you stay fighting fit and healthy at home.

EMBRACE #HOMEWORKOUTS

Missing your motivational gym classes? Fear not, social media is awash with free workouts that you can carry out from the comfort of your own home. Whether you fancy some stress-busting yoga or something a bit more hardcore, such as Peloton indoor cycling classes, there truly is a training session for everyone.

STEP UP YOUR CLEANING REGIME

Doing housework burns a lot more calories than you might think. Half an hour cleaning your windows? 150 calories. Digging up some weeds? Up to 200 calories per 30-minute session. Simply pop on some of your favourite tunes and get to work. The more effort you put in, the better the results.

FOCUS ON FEEL-GOOD FOODS

Nutrition is just as important as your activity levels if you want to stay fit and healthy at home. Try to incorporate foods that are rich in minerals like iron, zinc and selenium which will release 'happy hormones' and make you feel physically and mentally strong.

DO NOT BECOME TOO SEDENTARY

Understandably, most of us will be spending more time sitting rather than moving at the moment, but long periods of inactivity can have long-lasting effects on your body. Combat this by alternating periods of sitting with standing if you are working from home, running up and down the stairs a few times every hour and taking full advantage of your allowed outdoor exercise time each day.

OTHER FUN WAYS TO KEEP FIT IN YOUR HOME INCLUDE:

- ♥ Dancing
- ♥ Playing with your dog
- ♥ Skipping
- ♥ Playing games such as It and hide and seek with your kids



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ANY GIVEN SUNDAE

Home-made sauces and ideas for superb summer treats



Let's be honest, we're all going to be spending a bit more time than we've been used to in the kitchen this summer.

While recreating that true summer vibe somewhere exotic may appear a pipe dream as things stand, that doesn't mean our limited outside space can't host a daring and dazzling array of summer treats, so here are some sauce ideas to get you going:

NUTELLA NICETIES

Perhaps the simplest sauce of them all – just melt three tablespoons of Nutella in a pan, adding a bit of water to keep the mixture moving.

When your sauce is smooth, runny and hot, add nuts, hundreds and thousands or any other textured topping and serve with ice cream or over some sliced banana pieces.

RASPBERRY SALTED CARAMEL SAUCE

This one takes a bit more effort but is well worth it. Take a cup of water and ½ cup of sugar and mix in a heated pan until it boils and the sugar turns brown.

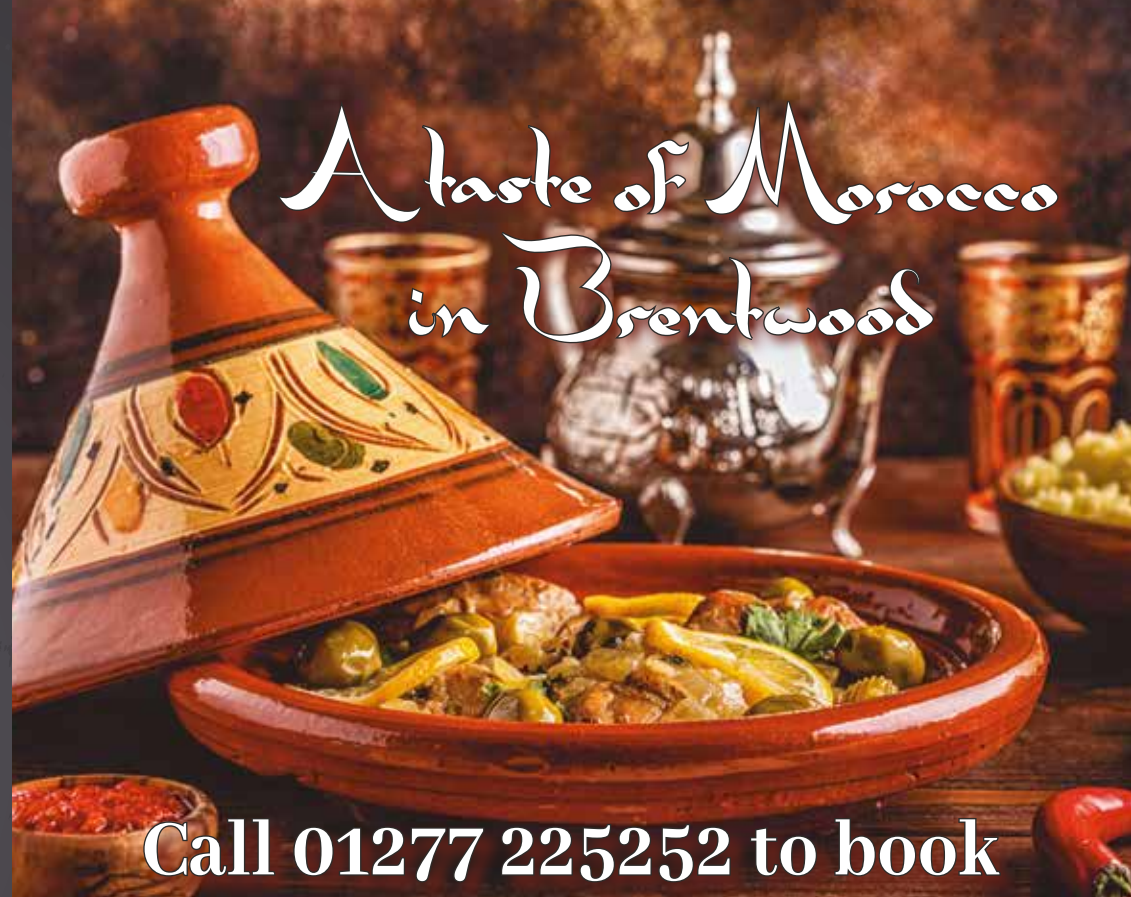
Then add ¼ cup of cream and the same quantity of raspberry purée, having first strained it to remove the seeds. Whisk, add 3 tbsp of butter, remove from the heat and add ¾ tsp of sea salt.

Use immediately for a thin sauce or refrigerate overnight for a thicker topping that's a belter on chocolate brownies.

COFFEE SALTED CARAMEL SAUCE

For a more adult twist, adjust the ingredients to create the perfect coffee sauce that's great on cakes, cookies, muffins and more. This time it's one cup of sugar, ½ cup of water (and a further ¼ cup to make your coffee), then ¾ cup of cream. Butter increases to 5 tbsp but sea salt reduces to just ¼ tsp.

Make in much the same way, adding the ¼ cup of coffee where you'd previously introduced the raspberries, with 1/4 tsp of vanilla extract which is the final touch to set the whole thing off in a smoky, dreamy, saucy complexion.



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SOMBRE VE CELEBRATIONS

for our departed heroes

The street parties were present, Vera Lynn's eclectic harmonies piped out of speakers, while generations paid emotional, wistful tributes to departed heroes, and yet VE celebrations this year took on a rather unusual feel.

That a nation still came together to commemorate and lay thanks on May 8, the 75th anniversary of VE Day, typified the fortitude and spirit that guided us to victory all those years ago. While we took seriously the distancing limitations of coronavirus, people across our county refused to have their tributes quelled by a modern pandemic.

Britons also encountered another challenge this year, and one that had nothing to do with the two-metre rule – millions of diaries and calendars were published with this, one of the key dates of the year, being wrong. It was as a result of the early May Bank Holiday moving back four days to mark those World War II celebrations. With the switch only being finalised in June last year, an estimated 30 million diaries and calendars were incorrectly printed.

While events this year weren't allowed to feature mass gatherings, special events or the participation of pubs, perhaps it was fitting that on such a landmark anniversary people were offered the chance to make rather more sombre, personal tributes to those who fought for their country between 1939 and 1945. It's a far cry from when hundreds of thousands of people marked the end of the bitter war with celebrations centred in The Mall, London, outside Buckingham Palace, as King George VI and Queen Elizabeth stood on the balcony to wave to the cheering crowds.

Missing on that day was a young Princess Elizabeth – one of the rare times that the future Queen slipped incognito to join in the revelries of her future subjects, as she and her sister, Margaret, accompanied by a 16-strong group of trusted members of the royal household, slipped out of the palace to sample first-hand the celebrations.

Recalling the event in an interview a few years ago, the Queen said: "I think it was one of the most memorable nights of my life."

It was also memorable for one 15-year-old boy from Harrow, Ronald Thomas, who told his family how he had danced with the future Queen. For years he had trouble getting people to believe him.

This year, the Queen paid tribute to those fallen heroes, as well as referencing the profound challenges 2020 has brought, in an emotive speech, delivered in her usual impeccable style.

"Today it may seem hard that we cannot mark this special anniversary as we would wish. Instead we remember from our homes and our doorsteps.

"But our streets are not empty; they are filled with the love and the care that we have for each other.

"And when I look at our country today, and see what we are willing to do to protect and support one another, I say with pride that we are still a nation those brave soldiers, sailors and airmen would recognise and admire."





SNEAK PEAK

The unsung beauty of the Peak District



While the total population of the Peak District fails even to top 40,000, more than 20 million people live within an hour's drive, making it one of the UK's most accessible tourist areas. But what does it have to offer?

NATURAL WORLD

Clearly, the Peak District's most obvious selling point is its wild expanse of national park, with landscape, outward bound pursuits, hiking routes and picture-perfect villages nestling within stunning geology. Whether on foot or in your vehicle, the green and grey wilderness offers a wholesome connection with the majesty of Mother Nature.

BELOW GROUND

If you're willing to delve below the surface, the Peak District's caving network is something to be admired. Organised caving and potholing experiences – from walk-in routes to vertical drops from ground level – reveal the mysteries of thousands of years, with passageways, streams and chambers testing physical durability and mental strength.

HISTORY

From the resplendent and regal Chatsworth House to museums, temples and mills, the history and heritage of what in some places was a heavily industrial area provides a remarkable step back in time to rather simpler ways, long departed.

FOOD AND DRINK

Derbyshire's connectivity is what gives its pubs, bars, restaurants and cafes a rich combination of southern and northern flavours. Certainly, the trend for gastro and high-end dining in remote converted cottages has given the Peak District a versatile base on which to build its culinary power, with Eyam, Castleton and Bakewell doing more than most to lure in tourists.

The real hidden beauty of the Peak District, however, is not in the big tourist attractions or the places that attract visitors of all persuasions – it's in the period picture postcard properties, the drystone walls, the rolling vistas that appear out of nowhere and, of course, its people. It is a place and a spirit all in one.



TOKYO 2021

THE NEW SPORTS



5. CLIMBING

In the final instalment showcasing sports set to debut or return at the now postponed Tokyo Olympics, we take a look at climbing.

Climbing's debut in Tokyo reflects our growing love for strength-based pursuits that also require precision, strategy and focus.

That the sport has, over the past two decades, accelerated itself from the most basic of human endeavours to a physical challenge enjoyed both outdoors and indoors by participants of all ages, is testament to the number of activity centres that now provide walls to scale. Many have felt it was only a matter of time before the IOC opened its doors.

A dynamic challenge, the Olympic format will be split into three disciplines – Speed, Bouldering and Lead.

In Speed, it's a straight two-competitor race to the top of a 15-metre wall, in a set-up that is expected to excite spectators most, and, for a certain generation, will undoubtedly offer echoes of an ITV *Gladiators* finale.

In Bouldering, it's a more challenging 4.5-metre wall, while in Lead, it's a case of

getting as high as possible in a set time.

Every competitor will take on all three formats, with the best overall performer being crowned Olympic champion.

As ever, the vertical walls offer handholds and footholds, as well as shapes, sizes, positive sections (slabs) and those with negative aspects (steeps or overhangs), meaning competitors will need to be at their best from the off.

Safety ropes are allowed, though the best competitors will try to limit any lost time and will be harnessing flexibility, skill and no small amount of mental decisiveness in tackling a new Olympic sport expected to thrill at every grab.



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PARK LIFE

PENALTY CHARGE VS PARKING CHARGE – WHEN TO PAY AND WHEN TO PLAY

The scourge of the modern motor car is arguably not the cost of petrol, the maintenance or insurance premiums – it's the fact that once we've paid out for all of those elements that keep it on the road, there's actually nowhere to park the damn thing.

But millions of motorists are paying excessive, unfair and exploitative parking charges in the belief that they have committed an offence, when in reality all that's happening is they're being presented with an invoice. Welcome to the vagaries of a penalty charge versus a parking charge.

A penalty charge is a ticket issued by your local authority – usually the police or the council. Chances are you've committed a genuine offence, such as overstaying parking or showing an invalid permit. In these instances you're banged to rights and, while appealing is a decent option in asking for leniency, in most cases the penalty stands.

A parking charge, on the other hand, is something issued by an independent parking operator – perhaps you've parked in a private car park, in a space adjoining a building, or even in a leisure park. This issuer actually has no authority to issue a ticket – all you're being given is an invitation to pay what amounts to an invoice.

Sure, it's an invoice that looks very much like a penalty charge, and intentionally so; and the wording will have you believe dire consequences will follow if you fail to pay.

The reality is that virtually no cases ever get to court, and these unscrupulous businesses profit only from those who respond. So the next time you get a parking charge, search for the issuer online and check carefully exactly what it is you have in front of you. Motorists are now getting smart to filing these charges where they belong – in the bin – and saving millions in the process.

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