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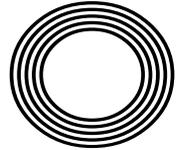
*Dr Alex George named Youth
Mental Health Ambassador*

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Their greatest sporting moments

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MIDDLETON**

From Army and Royal Marines veteran to TV hardman



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AT BRENTWOOD BEIGELS, BEIGELS RUN IN THE FAMILY



Beigel lovers in Brentwood should head to Brentwood Beigels where owner Jackie Wells is somewhat of a beigel expert.



Beigels have been a big part of Jackie's life from an early age. Growing up in Brick Lane, East London, she was a regular visitor to the Brick Lane Beigel Shop and her dream

was always to bring a piece of that nostalgia from the East End to Brentwood. She said: "None of this would have been possible without the help and support from my husband Eddie and my two girls Brooke 19 and Tillie 15. My girls work for me every weekend and have a genuine love for the place."

was always to bring a piece of that nostalgia from the East End to Brentwood.

Jackie's dream became reality in March last year when Brentwood Beigels opened for business and she uses the Brick Lane Beigel shop to purchase fresh beigels daily.



Jackie said she is delighted with her first year of business.

Sadly, Brentwood Beigels was only open for 10 days before the first lockdown came in but normally the shop seats 18 inside while there is also plenty of outside seating in the summer. While the lockdown is in progress the shop is offering takeaway only.



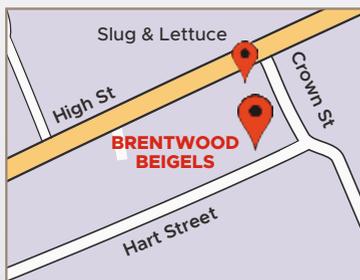
She added: "The response, feedback and reviews regarding the food and the atmosphere has been fabulous, I'm totally blown away. I love the place with a passion!"

So for traditional hot salt beef, pickles & mustard beigels, salmon & cream cheese, along with an endless list of fillings, head to Brentwood Beigels at Ropers Yard.

Jackie and her team also offer jacket potatoes, salads and freshly made sandwiches along with a selection very popular cakes and pastries. There is also a wide selection of coffees and teas.

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Editor's notes...

MARCH 2021



Nik Allen, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** BrentwoodOngar. I am, at the moment, planning our areas of expansion this year, in regard to the towns where we will be launching new editions of **VISION**. In a year of ups and downs so far, it would certainly be looked at as a bold move by most, especially because the last 12 months have been focused on preserving and saving what we have.

I mentioned this plan to a friend the other day and he was aghast. "Why are you expanding?" he said. "Most people I know are scaling back."

He had a point, of course. And yet I answered him by explaining that everything I've done in business and, more importantly, in life has been with a focus on positivity, expecting change, planning for it, and hitting the ground running when it comes about.

To some, planning expansion so soon after a lockdown is a strange move, but to me it says nothing more than this - we will get out of this (sooner rather than later), we will get back to normal, and those wise and brave enough to prepare for when we come out of it now will have the ultimate head start. Why not start planning your next chapter now? I believe the message will be more than ever about supporting your local high street and tradespeople. Keep supporting local.

Nik Allen

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

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

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MORNING GLORY

Good Morning Britain

HOW PIERS MORGAN AND SUSANNA REID ARE PUTTING THE 'GET UP AND GO' BACK INTO BREAKFAST TV

In many ways, the Piers Morgan/Susanna Reid combo shouldn't work. The former is an ex-red-top editor decorated in a history of salacious headlines, controversial tabloid practices and a puffed-up sense of self-importance that flits between entertaining and aggravating.

The latter is a vastly experienced journalist who, while she possesses a chipper, jagged edge, is a calming weekday morning influencer, a sympathiser and an empathiser whose delivery is effortlessly measured and reassuringly sensible.

Put mildly, Piers Morgan and Susanna Reid are poles apart.

Yet as far as breakfast television goes, there is a chaotic chemistry that links the two and, in the process, knits together perfectly two and a half

hours of early-morning chat, debate and news delivery. Perhaps not since the days of Anne Diamond and Nick Owen has there been a duo who seem so comfortable, calm and considered as our breakfast companions; and their ability to spar, speak up and fire off each other is completely borne out in viewing figures which show *Good Morning Britain (GMB)* to be making impressive moves in the breakfast TV battle.

In the latest round of figures, the ITV show has been narrowing the gap on *BBC Breakfast*, although still remains about a million viewers behind its rival.

Piers and Susanna first worked together back in 2014. It was a strange time for Morgan, the former editor of the *News of the World* and *Daily Mirror*, who was looking to revitalise a career that had

enjoyed a surprising leg-up through reality TV shows and his partnership with Simon Cowell. The 55-year-old has perhaps never looked the epitome of cutting edge, but his breathless honesty – be that in front of a Whitney wannabe on *Britain's Got Talent* or a politician crumbling under his indomitable journalistic scrutiny – wicked turn of humour and fearlessness to voice an opinion – both on TV and across social media – have earned our respect. Certainly, it all provided the perfect tonic to Reid's punchy, spiky, slightly girl-next-door approach to topical news.

Fifty-year-old Reid first came to our attention in the early Noughties when she worked for Radio 5 Live, before moving to *BBC News 24* and, latterly, *BBC Breakfast News*. The broadcaster made a controversial switch to ITV in February 2014 as *GMB*

replaced the outgoing *Daybreak*.

As a combination, you sense there is a 'good cop, bad cop' approach to getting sunrise answers the news headlines demand. There's little of the stuffy formality that decorates the styles of Dan Walker, Louise Minchin and others over on the Beeb; instead, issues are tackled using a tried and tested approach which delivers debates without holding back.

Perhaps what's best about the pair is they know how to push each other's buttons. *GMB* feels like a news programme, a lifestyle show and an episode of *Coronation Street* rolled into one. If the dynamic duo can get anywhere near to the longevity of Jack and Vera, they'll have done well, and we'll have been treated to perhaps the best wake-up call of a generation.



Photo credit: 10 Downing Street

DOCTOR'S ORDERS

THE *LOVE ISLAND* DOC HELPING US FIND A HAPPIER REALITY

Doctor Alex George is the *Love Island* contestant who wowed viewers with an altogether different take on what constitutes 'national health'. For an army of admirers, his great looks, impeccable shape, well-spoken manner and charm added up to a dream combination. He's also rumoured to be particularly good with a stethoscope. Moving away from the reality show, the doc has carved for himself an impressive career in the spotlight. And yet, unlike so many other names who have built their brand through reality TV, there is real substance behind the style.

The 30-year-old was announced Youth Mental Health Ambassador by Prime Minister Boris Johnson in February and is a passionate advocate of well-being initiatives, not least because he sees a nation struggling to come to terms with the various effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Indeed, the death of his brother, Llyr, who took his own life having suffered with depression, only reinforces a desire in the popular doc to open up channels of communication and encourage people to talk.

Alex's five top tips to boost mental health and well-being:

- > **ONE:** Get outside
"Getting natural light and filling our lungs with air is crucial for well-being. It's uplifting and can instantly make us feel better."
- > **TWO:** Exercise
"We've all had those times when we just can't be bothered to get out and exercise, but be it a run, a walk or a bike ride, just 20 minutes per day will boost blood flow and increase endorphins."
- > **THREE:** Call a friend
"Lockdown has been very frustrating and a lonely experience, but staying in touch with friends is essential."
- > **FOUR:** Eat well
"What we consume affects the way we feel, so fuel and replenish your system, and eat as much green stuff as possible."
- > **FIVE:** Sleep routine
"Sleep is very important, but so is resting at regular times, so monitor your sleep habits and ensure you're getting what you need."

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Make a wish

Are the bargains from this frequently discussed website all they're cracked up to be?

Scouring for bargains online will always present one or two sites where the deals appear to be too good to be true, but over the past couple of years, Wish, a retail platform based in China, has cemented its place as being one of the most affordable and diverse sites on the net.

From sportswear to phones, jewellery to lingerie, tech to trumpets, Wish's diversity is its greatest strength.

And yet, weaknesses are prevalent too. Such is the breadth of the site – it is a truly global entity – that quality control checks aren't the strongest, and waiting times for the transportation of goods can be long.

You also need to consider that regulations and guidelines for products in the UK won't be the same abroad, so with something like a child's car seat, some imported products might be substandard.

What Wish ultimately represents is another opening-up of trade, often directly between the individual and the product manufacturer and/or retailer.

The world is a much smaller place today, but while that's true, there's nothing to suggest the famous old adage 'buyer beware' isn't as important now as it ever was.

By June 2020, Wish could boast 122 million visits, with almost 70 million of those being unique users.



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AWAITING THE GREEN SHOOTS OF SPRING? USE YOUR TIME EFFECTIVELY

The winter months may still endure, but the hope of spring hangs in the air. So, while you're awaiting the green shoots of spring, why not take the opportunity to get your finances in order before the end of the tax year? It's a good time to double check you've taken advantage of all the tax-efficient allowances available to you; remember, we're on hand to get you organised to avoid a last-minute rush. Here's a reminder of some of your main tax planning opportunities:

PENSIONS – Current Annual Allowance of £40,000. For every £2 of adjusted income over £240,000, an individual's Annual Allowance is reduced by £1 (the minimum Annual Allowance will be £4,000)

The Lifetime Allowance places a limit on the amount you can hold across all your pension funds without having to pay extra tax when you withdraw money, the limit is currently £1,073,100

MAKING INHERITANCE TAX-FREE GIFTS – Each financial year you can make gifts of up to £3,000 (in total, not per recipient) and if you don't use this in one tax year, you can carry over any leftover allowance

to the next year (some other exempted/small gifts allowable). To reduce the amount of IHT payable, many families consider giving their assets away during their lifetime. These are called 'potentially exempt transfers'. For these gifts not to be counted as part of your estate on your death, you must outlive the gift by seven years. If you have enough income to maintain your usual standard of living, you can make gifts from your surplus income. Advice is essential as strict criteria apply.

USING CAPITAL GAINS TAX (CGT) ALLOWANCES – £12,300 annual exemption per person, £6,150 for trusts – currently under review, correct at time of publication.

INDIVIDUAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS - Maximum annual contribution £20,000 per adult (ISA) and £9,000 per child (Junior ISA).

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WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN BUYING A HOLIDAY HOME IN EUROPE POST-BREXIT

It's a piece of escapism almost all of us love and crave – even just the thought of having a holiday home we might slip away to is enough to keep us going through those long, cold, monotonous months of work.

Of course, for those of us who will at some point be lucky enough to own an overseas abode, the question of how accessible and affordable that place in the sun will be has arisen recently in light of the UK departing the European Union.

Within that, perhaps the most profound impact of Brexit will be that UK residents are only permitted to stay in the EU for a total of 90 days in every 180-day period.

As far as purchasing a home goes, British nationals will now need to undertake the same procedures as non-European residents, and while this doesn't prohibit us from investing in a holiday hideaway, it does mean an extra layer of paperwork, and in future may require applicants to apply for a visa in order to claim residency.

In time to come it may also be seen that Brexit leads to an increase in stamp duty for British buyers, while changes in the currency markets could mean that mortgage availability becomes more limited.

As it stands, though, the subsequent transition period – and with it, a large

amount of uncertainty – hasn't led to any profound changes. Indeed, people who already own property in an EU country are protected by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights – the longwinded premise being a simple one, namely that whether a member of the European Union or not, individual property rights must be respected. So if you do move forward in retaining or investing in property abroad, your little piece of homely heaven is assured.



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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.

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?

Contact Coversure Brentwood

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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CUTLERY

care guide

Whether you use stainless steel, silver-plated or silver cutlery, or a combination of all three, if you want your silverware to last and looks its best for longer, you need to take care of it.

STAINLESS STEEL CUTLERY: The most popular material choice for cutlery, stainless steel is both durable and versatile, but that doesn't mean it is completely stain-resistant.

- HOW TO CLEAN:**
- > Rinse before placing in dishwasher
 - > Never leave to soak or in damp conditions as this can lead to corrosion
 - > Remove stubborn stains using stainless steel polish and a soft cloth

- HOW TO STORE:**
- > Store in its original canteen to prevent pieces rubbing together
 - > Can be stored in kitchen drawer but may reduce lifespan

SILVER-PLATED CUTLERY: A more decadent choice, silver-plated cutlery is relatively easy to care for but does require some special care.

- HOW TO CLEAN:**
- > Keep away from stainless steel cutlery, as contact can cause corrosion
 - > Place in dishwasher, but turn off the drying cycle and dry each piece by hand to avoid staining
 - > Polish to maintain shine

- HOW TO STORE:**
- > Store in a tarnish-proof cutlery roll and then in an airtight container

SILVER CUTLERY: Ideal for use at dinner parties and other special occasions, silver cutlery is both lavish and luxurious.

- HOW TO CLEAN:**
- > Clean as soon as possible after use
 - > Wash separately from stainless steel and silver-plated cutlery to avoid corrosion
 - > Do not put in dishwasher; instead, clean by hand
 - > Do not polish too often as this can wear down the finish

- HOW TO STORE:**
- > When not in use, roll each piece of silver cutlery in acid-free tissue paper or unbleached cotton muslin and then place in a resealable plastic bag.
 - > Add a piece of chalk wrapped in cheesecloth to the bag to absorb moisture and prevent tarnishing.



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DIY reed diffuser



If you want to enjoy an aromatherapy experience at home, then a scented reed diffuser is the ideal choice. However, you don't need to spend your hard-earned cash on shop-bought varieties when you can make them at home with a few simple ingredients and supplies.

WHAT YOU NEED: Small bottle or vase | 20–25 drops of your preferred essential oil | ¼ cup of baby oil | 3 tbsp of vodka or rubbing alcohol | Bamboo skewers or ideally diffuser reeds | Zest peels and herbs are optional

HOW TO MAKE: Pour the baby oil into a bowl | Add the rubbing alcohol or vodka | Carefully add the drops of essential oil and zest peels and herbs if preferred | Pour the mixture into your vase or glass bottle using a funnel until it is ¾ filled | Place five skewers into the vase | Cut the skewers to size if necessary so that they stick out roughly 4–6 inches

- Top tips for your DIY diffuser**
1. Check the liquid quantity monthly and top up if needed
 2. Rotate the diffuser reeds once a month
 3. Replace diffuser reeds after 4–6 months
 4. Recycle a perfume bottle if you don't have a suitable vase
 5. Cut your skewers carefully to avoid splinters

How to choose essential oils for each season

Spring: Choose fresh floral notes, such as a mix of citrus, lavender, geranium and jasmine.

Summer: Uplift your home with magnolia, bergamot and lemon.

Autumn: Embrace the cooler weather with a combination of juniper berry, cedarwood, cardamon and cinnamon.

Winter: Cosy up with a warming blend of spruce, patchouli and Douglas fir.

An alternative to reed diffusers

You can purchase an electronic oil diffuser, but make sure to do your research first as they come in different sizes. These diffusers produce a more concentrated fragrance and add moisture to the air, albeit in quite small amounts.

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O, Easter tree!

Who says that decorative trees are just for Christmas? We think everyone could do with a bit of extra cheer this year, so why not have a go at creating your own Easter centrepiece tree, complete with ornamental eggs?

How to create your Easter tree:

For the tree itself, simply gather a selection of branches and place in a vase. The best tree branches to look out for include:

Cherry blossom | Magnolia | Willow | Forsythia | Dogwood

How to hollow out your eggs:

Poke a small hole in the pointier side of an egg and then another, slightly larger, hole on the opposite side. Place your mouth over the smaller hole and blow out the egg. Wash the shell and leave to dry.

Marbled eggs:

Mix 1 cup of hot water with 10 drops of liquid food colouring and 1 tsp of vinegar. Submerge the eggshell in the water for two minutes and leave to cool. This is your base colour.

Next, fill a bowl with fresh hot water and add a darker food colouring and 1 tbsp of olive oil. Roll your egg around to allow it to absorb the second colour.

Egg nests:

If you favour a more natural look, these miniature nests, complete with tiny Easter egg treats, are the perfect decoration for your tree. Gently break away some of the egg shell on the front of your egg, fill with straw and then add a single mini egg to each one.

Glitter eggs:

Create a pattern across your egg using tape, apply PVA glue to the rest of the egg and sprinkle generously with glitter. Leave to dry and remove tape. Choose to paint your eggs first for more a more vibrant end result.

How to hang your eggs:

To finish, simply thread a ribbon or piece of cotton through the top hole of each egg, wiggle it until it pokes out the other side and tie a knot to secure.



HOME & DIY

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Marvellous marble



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Wall panels: You can buy marble-effect wall panels in many different colours and styles, each offering a multitude of patterns giving off the impression of this much sought-after polished stone. The most popular choice is the calacatta – it's a word derived from the Greek language and means to sparkle, flash and gleam. The detail is in the rich and familiar graining, and that's what most people associate with marble.

Not only do panels look great and give a feel of authenticity, they're also incredibly easy to maintain – simply wipe down. Panels also remove the pain

of grouting – nor will the filled parts lose colour over time. And as for the frustration of chipped marble; well, you're covered there too. Panels are also far easier to maintain and clean.

You can also use panels as a design feature – decorating the whole bathroom, or perhaps a select area (usually in the shower cubicle).

Of course, if you've rather more time on your hands and still fear the look of marble panels is slightly manufactured, you can use a light paint effect to recreate the classic marble veining.

Begin by painting your wall a grey-white shade; then, using a small paintbrush, detail in your own marble-effect veins and streaks. It's time-heavy and labour intensive, but the added detail will have you singing your own praises in the shower.



HOME & DIY



INTERIOR *traveller*

Embrace the global influence trend to cure your wanderlust

Have you tried catching a flight out to Zambia recently in order to sample the breathtaking, unique wonder of an African safari? Let's just say, your luck is out.

Of course, so much of interior design is about taking ideas and influences from around the world and incorporating those into our living spaces. With that in mind, and ignoring the fact all our planes are grounded, the trend of 'global influence' aims to embrace the charm and beauty of the world, while we remain resolutely stationed at 29 Acacia Avenue.

While 'global influence', as a term, suggests embracing interior design influences from all corners of the globe, in reality its focus is on the colours, textures and ideas you might commonly associate with African savanna safari expeditions – nature's most expansive showcase of wildlife.

Global influence takes on board woven fabrics; it focuses on earthy colour palettes, shows off cooling stone patterns and embraces natural textiles and all manner of woods, rattan and bamboo. The styles are uncomplicated, uncluttered and unpretentious.

Furniture and objects are wholesome, earthy and rugged. In matched a leather sofa, linen and perhaps some animal-themed art prints, you can truly bring the breathless elegance and simplicity of nature into your living space.

Of course, the individuality of interior design ultimately means global influence can represent whatever you may want it to. So if tropical flavours and flourishes are more your thing, why not embrace bright colours, wicker items, a beach vibe and miniature palm trees? Similarly, a Scandinavian vibe is easily put together with hardwoods, light colours and a style vision that's stripped back and simplistic.

Ultimately, whatever your individual taste, global influence is there to compensate for the fact that while we may not be able to visit these enchanting places, we can at least still sample their uniqueness.

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People power sees popular shop reopen

A town shop that was ordered to close by Brentwood Borough Council (BBC) reopened as a click-and-collect service last month after pressure from the community and local councillors.

The Emporium Discount Store on Warley Hill, which has been in Brentwood for 25 years, was ordered to close last month despite having been trading since the first lockdown last March.

The move proved controversial with local people and, after pressure from residents and other councillors through a petition signed by more than 900 people, owner Barry Rose is now able to serve his customers again.

Barry said: "People can come and collect stuff from the door, which is better than nothing. Even in my appeal case, the reason was that I'm predominantly a homeware store, but I sell cleaning supplies, medicines and tools as well as other everyday essentials. I've had unbelievable local support."

Liberal Democrat councillor for BBC, Karen Chilvers,

led calls for the shop to reopen.

She said: "There was absolutely no need to close the store and the mystery remains as to why officers visited. If they had visited the similar, but much larger, high-street chain stores offering the same products too it would have made sense, but to just target a small, independent trader with no backup corporate legal department is wrong."

BBC leader, councillor Chris Hossack, sympathised with Barry.

He said: "I know The Emporium provides a valuable local service. However, it does not fall into the strict categories set out in law, try as I did to argue the case. I have spoken with Barry to try to resolve this, but we cannot overrule the law as it stands."

"We are working very closely with The Emporium to ensure that it can trade within the letter of the law through click and collect, and there is additional grant funding available, which The Emporium will now receive."

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Victorious Vidisha well deserving of award

A schoolgirl from Brentwood got some much-deserved recognition last month for helping educate disadvantaged children.

Vidisha Handoo, 17, is a pupil at King Edward VI Grammar School in Chelmsford and won a Jack Petchey Foundation (JPF) award.

The JPF recognises and celebrates the achievements of young people, helping them take advantage of opportunities and to play a full part in society.

Vidisha received a framed certificate and £250 in the form of a cheque, made payable to her school. The money will now be spent on a school or community project of the recipient's choice.

Vidisha said she's been keen to help less-fortunate children during the pandemic.

She explained: "The school closure was a reminder of the privileges I hold: especially going to a well-resourced school.

"Recognising that this was not available to everyone, I started by teaching more than 20 children from disadvantaged backgrounds all over the country. Per school day missed, I taught an hour of GCSE and Key Stage 3 science, as well as helping children whose first language wasn't English in 11-plus creative writing."

Vidisha also held weekly Zoom meetings with a Year 7 mentee and, as president of the school's Chemistry Society, she ran a Zoom session for Years 10 and 11.

Finally, she trained and volunteered as a listener on her school's online counselling platform. Vidisha said it provided a challenging yet rewarding experience.

Resident shares her secret to a long life

The oldest resident of a Brentwood care home received her first dose of the coronavirus vaccine recently and then shared her secret to a long life – a daily, pre-lunch glass of wine.

Ellen McCarthy, 103, has lived at Leonard Lodge in Hutton for the last two years. As well as for her midday aperitif, she is known for her love of certain cakes.

Ellen said she looks forward to life getting back to normal and the lockdown restrictions being lifted.

Mihaela Munteanu, general manager at Leonard Lodge, said Ellen is very popular at the home.

She said: "She is quite the character and we should all be so lucky to look as young as her when we get to 100."



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BURGHART for BRENTWOOD



Alex Burghart MP for Brentwood and Ongar



The first week of March brings a great moment in the calendar for bibliophiles across the globe – World Book Day.

In more normal times, children are encouraged to go to school dressed up as their favourite character, and I hope the week's online lessons are attended by any number of Matildas, Paddingtons, Tracy Beakers, Harry Potters and, my favourite, Noggin the Nogs.

For those children who live in homes where books are cherished and reading is encouraged, the lockdown has been a glorious time to savour the excitement of new stories. But for those who find reading a chore, who cannot afford to buy books and cannot even go to the library owing to lockdown, COVID-19 has widened the economic and educational gap.

World Book Day helps to tackle book poverty and encourages all children to read for pleasure. This year it is more important than ever, especially as we know the transformational power of reading for children. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child's future success, more than family circumstances, parents' educational background or income.

World Book Day tries to tackle this inequity with the distribution of free £1 book tokens to as many children as possible. Research carried out for World Book Day in 2019 found that one in seven children (three in 10 children receiving free school meals) said that the



book they 'bought' with their World Book Day book token was the first book of their own.

World Book Day changes lives through a love of books and shared reading. This means encouraging families and children to read, especially those from disadvantaged and low-income backgrounds. We want as many families as possible to know about £1 World Book Day books and how children can get one for free with their £1 book token.

I'd be interested to hear about your favourite book, both now and from your childhood. If you or a young person in your household would like to send me the title and author, and even a drawing of your favourite character, I'd love to hear from you. You can find contact details on my website, at www.alexburghart.org.uk

Freeze on council tax approved

People in Brentwood will not have to pay any extra council tax to the borough council after a freeze was approved by councillors owing to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions.

Councillor Chris Hossack (pictured), Brentwood Borough Council leader, said he believed the financial burden on residents should be kept to a minimum.

He explained: "A combination of shrewd investing, maximising assets, reducing costs and streamlining services means the council can deliver a zero per cent council tax increase this year."

Cllr Hossack said the council is also launching initiatives to help retail and leisure businesses recover.

The budget was approved on February 24.



LOCAL NEWS BRENTWOOD



NHS staff set up new COVID-19 recovery ward

NHS staff in Essex transformed an unused ward in Brentwood Community Hospital in just one week to provide recovery care for COVID-19 patients.

Teams from the North East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT) worked to create the new ward, which is made up of 19 new beds, to support acute hospitals in the area.

Patients who have contracted COVID-19 who no longer need acute care but still require medical support and care are transferred to recovery and rehabilitation wards, which now include the new Courage Ward at

Brentwood Community Hospital.

The 19 new beds join the more than 70 extra beds that have been created at Brentwood since the start of the pandemic, and mean NHS staff at acute hospitals can care for more seriously ill patients.

Dominic Ward, assistant director for Frailty and Immediate Care for NELFT, said: "The new ward will help get patients out of hospital sooner so we can support them in a community setting local to them and get them discharged safely. The team have worked extremely hard to get the wards set up and running as quickly as possible."

Police appeal for help to identify man

Police who want to speak to a man after criminal damage at a block of flats in Brentwood last year have released a picture.

A man was seen trying to get into The Square, Hart Street, at around 1.15am on December 8.

After failing to open two doors, he forced open a third and entered the complex. Shortly after, he was seen leaving.

The man is described as white, aged in his 20s and of slim build.

He was wearing a dark puffer-style jacket, a dark hooded jumper, grey Adidas jogging bottoms and grey trainers with a white sole.

Anyone with information on the man can report it online at www.essex.police.uk or call 101 and cite crime reference 42/206625/20.

You can also contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or crimestoppers-uk.org



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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Hero Hector completing challenge in honour of granddad

A budding athlete from Ongar is undertaking a running challenge throughout the whole of lockdown to raise funds for the hospice that cared for his beloved grandfather.

Hector Bodiam, nine, began his challenge on January 6 this year, when his primary school was shut owing to the pandemic and his family wanted to find a way to keep him physically active during the winter lockdown.

He committed to running one kilometre every day on the family's running machine for the whole of lockdown – and decided to use the opportunity to fundraise for St Clare Hospice.

Hector's grandfather, Bob Bowers, was cared for in the hospice's inpatient unit for two weeks before his death from oesophageal cancer in April 2017, when Hector was just six years old.

Hector smashed his fundraising target in just three days, reaching more than £1,000. At the time of writing, his fundraising page was on more than £3,000, which is enough to fund more than 60 90-minute home visits by one of the charity's Hospice at Home healthcare assistants.

Hector's mother, Claire, said she is very proud. She said: "Hector decided that to keep himself motivated, and to help others, he would raise money while doing his one kilometre every day.

"We were blown away that he raised more than £1,000 in just three days, and it's a fantastic motivator for Hector. He loved his grandad and St Clare's is a great local cause which needs our support through the pandemic more than ever."

You can donate by going to www.justgiving.com/fundraising/claire-bodiam1



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New hub to lend a helping hand to community



There is help at hand for people in Ongar who are struggling as a result of the pandemic.

That's after the launch of 3food4u's latest community surplus hub at Zinc Arts, in Chipping Ongar.

Founder Pesh Kapasiawala (pictured right) said he believed the hub would play a vital role.

He commented: "We're very conscious that it can be embarrassing and awkward asking for support for the most basic essentials, food and clothes. That's why our ethos is NO assessment or referral and NO questions asked."

Pesh said he was delighted with the local reaction.

He added: "We were delighted to be visited by Alex Burghart, MP for Brentwood and Ongar, and Epping Forest District Council chairman Jaymey McIvor, who were both overwhelmed by the dignified way we support those in need and by our professional team of volunteers."

You can donate by going to give.net/3food4u
Volunteers are welcome please email info.3food4u@gmail.com

Strong opposition to new homes plan

People in Ongar are being urged to sign a petition against a development of 93 homes planned for the town.

The Ongar Residents Against the Planned Greensted Road Development say the plans, which include three-storey flats, are out of character with the rural neighbourhood.

An online petition sets out more of the group's objections against the development.

It reads: "We need the right homes for the right

places, but instead we have almost 50 per cent of the development as one- or two-bedroomed houses or flats, and not enough spacious three-bed family homes that local residents can afford. Flooding, road safety and traffic issues in Greensted Road are ignored. This will be a blight on the landscape and cramped living conditions for generations to come."

You can get more information on the group and the link to sign the petition by searching for Ongar Residents Against the Planned Greensted Road Development on Facebook.

You can view the planning application by going to the Epping Forest District Council website's planning section. The planning application reference is EPF/2627/20.

Police appeal after man stabbed

Police are appealing for witnesses after a man was stabbed in Ongar last month.

Police were called to an alleyway off Moreton Road shortly after 5.30pm on February 13, by ambulance service colleagues.

The victim, a 21-year-old man, had been stabbed in the back and was taken to hospital.

No arrests have been made and police are appealing for anyone with information to make contact.

Anyone who witnessed the incident or has information can report it at essex.police.uk

Alternatively, you can call the police on 101 and cite incident 842 of February 13. Information can also be given to Crimestoppers 100 per cent anonymously on 0800 555 111 or at crimestoppers-uk.org



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Positivity of the MIDDLE MAN

ANT MIDDLETON'S CLIMB TO PHYSICAL AND MENTAL MAGNIFICENCE

Anyone who has watched his SAS series knows Ant Middleton isn't a guy to be messed with. Grit, steel, determination, power and a large dose of bloody-mindedness have propelled the former military man into the mainstream; and while a new career in the lens suits the 40-year-old Army and Royal Marines veteran nicely, the impact he is having on everyday folk is profound.

For a long time the various fitness, health, strength and well-being trends that have taken up countless column inches and patterned our social media feeds have needed a confident, high-energy figure to take them forward. Yes, we have various reality stars putting out fitness tutorials, and Joe Wicks is always there to advise on the best way to pull off the perfect burpee, but can they do it on a cold Tuesday night in Stoke? The answer, undoubtedly, is no.

Ant Middleton, however... let's just say he makes The Potteries look like a beach holiday in the Maldives.

So much of what this inspirational tour de force has done up to now has been about physical determination. His Channel 4 SAS: *Who Dares Wins* series is a military training show of brutal extremes, with an adventure/reality crossover that pushes participants to the absolute limits of body endurance.

While this type of programming has seen the Portsmouth-born hardman make his mark, in truth it represents only one half of what it takes to truly ascend to the next level. Thus, squaring the circle in his new project, which centres on a series of talks on the subject of positive mindset, seems the natural progression.

"We all know that physical toughness can only take you so far," says the author of the best-selling book *Zero Negativity*. "You need to have the mental strength to keep pushing on when the body says no."

"The brain can outlast and outpace anything the body can do, so training our minds to interpret, recycle, repair and renew the messages flowing through us means we can achieve things way beyond what our muscles tell us is possible."

Middleton's emergence as a mainstream player is no better exemplified than in the fact he was joined on a recent project by terrestrial TV poster boy Ben Shephard. "Ben's a good guy who has absolute determination in his career. He's a great example of someone who is a winner – we all come in different shapes and sizes."

In a streamed live event that took place at the start of February, Middleton's *Be Prepared for 2021* did exactly what the title suggested, with an unscripted, unrehearsed and unfiltered conversation designed to unpick the various roadblocks that 2020 had put in the way of so many of us.

"The past year felt like such a crushing low for a lot of people, but rather than dwell on the negativity, as a nation we need to look at the things we learned, and appreciate the positives we took out of the year," he says.

"We need to appreciate how we grew and developed strengths many of us never knew we had."

"This is the road to ensuring 2021 is a better year. We cannot change the world around us, but we can alter the way we decide to tackle its challenges."



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The very notion of overseas travel seems slightly optimistic at the moment, but as 2021 rolls on there is hope we may be able to stretch our legs on foreign shores before long. And if that's the case, it pays to know how to insure against travel pitfalls as we prepare for jaunts and journeys to EU countries in this post-Brexit world.

The first thing to ensure is that you have six months left on your passport, or you may not be going anywhere, with travel restrictions having tightened post-Brexit.

Next, there's the relinquishing of the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). You cannot replace this – we're no longer in the EU – but it is still effective until the expiry date listed. If yours has timed out, you will need to apply for a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This, like the EHIC, will cover you for pre-existing conditions, maternity and emergency care. Go without one and you run the

risk of incurring expensive healthcare treatment.

Remember, though, the GHIC is not an alternative to purchasing travel insurance, as it doesn't cover any private medical healthcare, such as being flown back to the UK in the event of serious injury.

And as part of your own private insurance, you should still take out cover for unexpected events, such as cancellations or lost luggage, just as you would have done previously.

As for other matters, you are permitted to stay in the EU for 90 days in any 180-day period (see slightly differing rules for Croatia, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Romania), with a visa required if you're hanging about for longer. Mostly, though, EU countries are keen to make the transition period as smooth as possible. It doesn't suit nationals travelling in either direction to find themselves held up or, worse still, turned away at customs; but it does pay to double-check on everything in these uncertain times.

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Cloudy2Clear, A Local Service With A Smile.

I think we can all agree that the sooner we see the back of 2020 and this dreadful corona virus the better. That said, there are also some heart warming positives that we can take out of this situation. It has often been said that we can only really get to know one another and realise what is truly important in times of crisis. I think few would argue that in this case what has proven to be important is local community spirit.

When talking to the Manager of Cloudy2Clear windows Chris Miller it became clear that these values have been held dear for a number of years. Since starting the business some years ago Cloudy2Clear have remained true to their core values of

supporting the local community by providing a service that saves the public money.

The Cloudy2Clear service only requires the glass to be replaced and not the whole window once the unit has failed. Chris commented "Cloudy2Clear were able to assist our community through the last financial crisis in 2008 due to the savings that can be made in using our service. Unfortunately we might be going through something similar again soon and the public can rest assured that we will be there to help again".

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PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

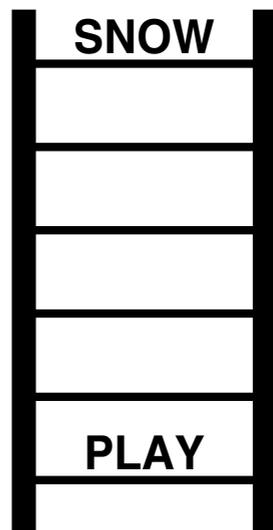
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DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Central Park in New York is one of the world's largest urban parks, covering 843 acres
- ▶ Paris has few skyscraper buildings compared to other cities owing to building height restrictions
- ▶ The Flavian Amphitheatre in Rome became known as the Colosseum because of a colossal statue that is situated nearby
- ▶ Istanbul lies in two continents – part in Europe and part in Asia
- ▶ The world's first electric traffic signal was put into place in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1914
- ▶ It's thought that Amsterdam has more bikes than people
- ▶ More chocolate is bought at Brussels Airport than anywhere else in the world

WORD LADDER



THE AIM: Change the word at the top of the ladder one letter at a time to make the word at the bottom.

HOW TO: Change one letter on each step to make a new word. By the time you reach the end, you should have created the new word.

DO NOT rearrange the order of the letters.

TIP: There is usually more than one way to solve this puzzle.

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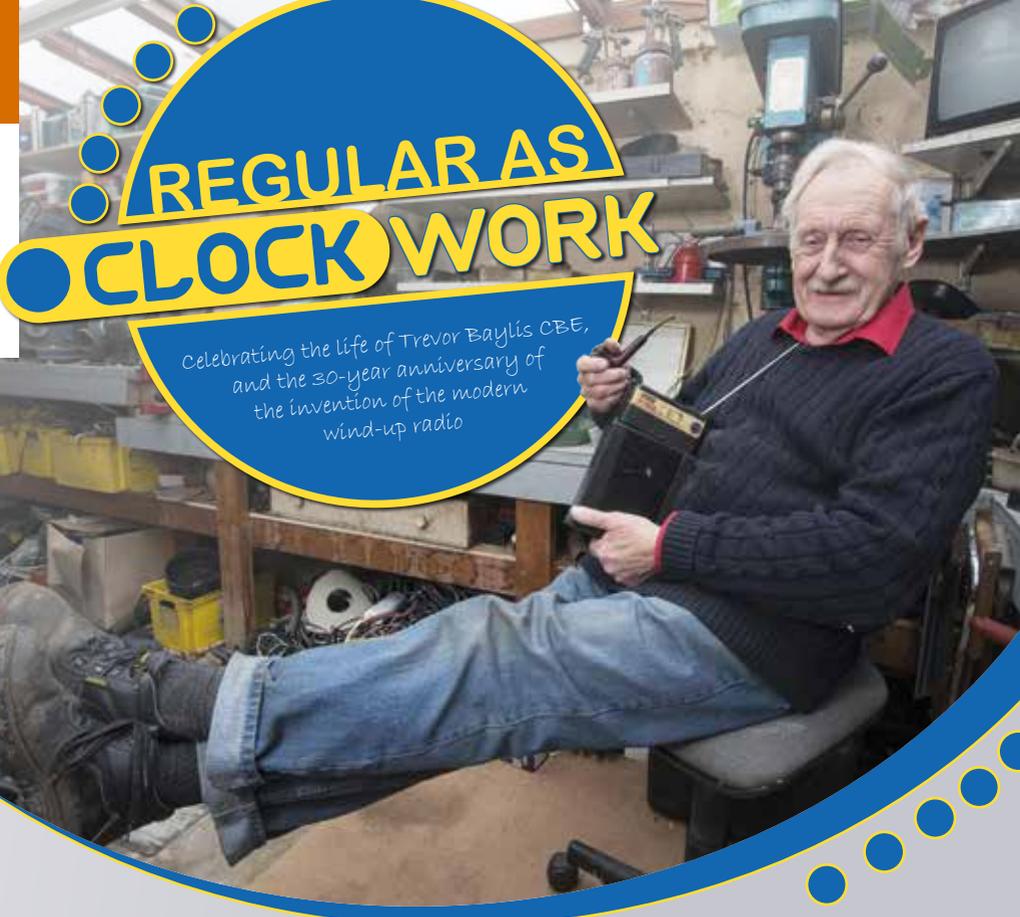
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HISTORY



REGULAR AS CLOCKWORK

Celebrating the life of Trevor Baylis CBE, and the 30-year anniversary of the invention of the modern wind-up radio

It's now three decades since British inventor Trevor Baylis CBE came up with a prototype that was to have a profound effect on limiting the spread of AIDS across Africa. Invented in his garage, the wind-up radio took less than an hour to construct, and came about after the then 54-year-old saw a programme on the BBC detailing a devastating swathe of developing-world deaths provoked by poverty and lack of sexual education.

While radios powered by handcranked generators were, in themselves, nothing new, Baylis's modern clockwork model was free of batteries, meaning information could be broadcasted to places in Africa without electricity. A patent was granted the following year.

It wasn't the first time the eccentric inventor had stepped out of the shadows to help those less fortunate than himself. As a young man he was a brilliant swimmer – he narrowly failed to qualify for the 1956 Summer Olympics in Melbourne – and his dexterity led him into stunt work. This in turn

exposed him to the needs of disabled people, and he subsequently invented and developed a range of products for the disabled, named Orange Aids.

Wind forward to 10 years after the invention that truly made him famous, and in 2001 Baylis launched a similar energy-generating product in the form of a pair of shoes that produced electricity as people walked. He trialled the invention with a 100-mile walk across the Namib Desert, at the same time raising money for the Mines Advisory Group.

Baylis, who died in March 2018, lived on Eel Pie Island on the River Thames. His fame in later life saw appearances on *The Big Breakfast*, and he was awarded an OBE and a CBE for humanitarian efforts and services to intellectual property respectively.



Photo credit: Paul Grover/Shutterstock

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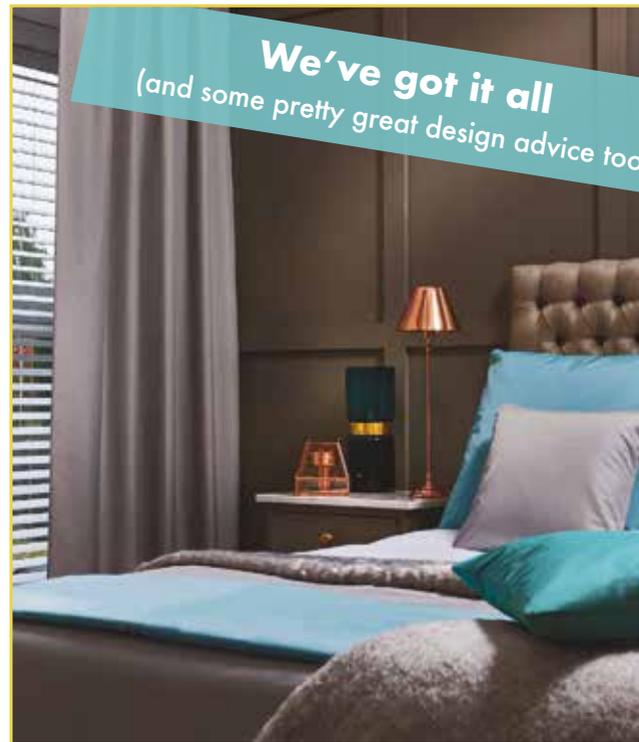
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PEDIGREE CHUMS

HOW TO ENSURE YOU BUY A PUPPY FROM A TRUSTED BREEDER

Just as you would only buy your electrical appliances from a trusted vendor, the same ought to be true of a puppy. Unless you are getting an older dog from a shelter, it is imperative you seek a registered dog breeder, or you risk buying from a puppy farm. Puppy farms put profits over the welfare of the animals. Cramped and unsanitary, these businesses often facilitate inbreeding and overbreeding, which leads to poor health for both mum and pups. Furthermore, the babies are often separated from their mother before the recommended 10 weeks.

Remember, too, these criminal enterprises go to great lengths to appear as legitimate breeders, which is why it's important to know the signs of a farm. This will save both your pet and your family a lot of heartache in the long run.

HOW TO SPOT A PUPPY FARM:

✿ It's too good to be true – The dogs look perfect in their advert photo, both parents are

thoroughbreds and the price is so reasonable, but your gut instinct is telling you otherwise, so investigate further.

- ✿ They have multiple ads – A legitimate breeder will often only have one litter and breed available at a time, so if there are several ads with similar wording, styles or even phone numbers, there's every chance it's a farm.
- ✿ They only take cash – Legit breeders want to make sure their pups go to good homes which means offering refunds if the buyer changes their mind. In short, they don't do 'cash and dash'.
- ✿ They want to meet at a public place – Always see your new pet in their natural habitat and meet its mother to ensure reliable provenance.
- ✿ They are already vaccinated – No dogs ought to be vaccinated until they are at least eight weeks old, so if an ad tells you otherwise, it's a scam.



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MARCH BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH:

Daffodil

GARDENING



If you were born in the month of March, your birth flower is narcissus, also known as the daffodil. The quintessential flower of spring, the daffodil is instantly recognisable by its bright yellow petals. Perfect placed in beds and borders, daffodils will brighten up your garden every year.

WHAT DOES THE DAFFODIL REPRESENT?

Named after Narcissus, a character from Greek mythology who was so in love with himself he drowned in a pool of water while admiring his own reflection, this flower is said to be a symbol of vanity. It is also known to represent new beginnings, rebirth and rejuvenation. The daffodil is also:

- > The national flower of Wales
- > The official 10th wedding anniversary flower
- > The official emblem of cancer charities
- > A symbol of luck and prosperity during Chinese New Year

WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOUR PERSONALITY?

If your birth flower is the daffodil, you are said to be extremely creative. You are also known for being kind and welcoming to everyone you meet and dedicated to living a life of peace and happiness.

ARE DAFFODILS EASY TO GROW?

Anyone can grow daffodils in their garden and you can choose to plant your bulbs in beds, borders, grass verges, lawn edges, hedgerows and banks. Plant your bulbs between September and November in well-drained soil and aim to keep your bulbs 4-8 inches apart, as overcrowding can cause daffodil blindness – when daffodils shoot up with foliage but no flower.

HOW TO LOOK AFTER DAFFODIL BULBS FOR ANNUAL GROWTH

- > Allow the leaves to die back naturally before cutting off
- > You can lift bulbs between June and August and store in a cool, dry place ready for replanting
- > Apply a rich fertiliser to the soil once you have removed bulbs



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GARDENING

GARDEN OF LIFE

TREES AND SOIL *socialism*

In the second of a four-part series that shows how even the most urban garden can be a haven for the wonders of wildlife and the nurturing of nature, we look at the role of trees and fungi below the surface.

We view our trees with respect and admiration – a fluttering, swaying mass of potency and life that evolves with every passing season, presenting a haven for all manner of wildlife, from insects to birds, plant-life to rodents, as well as being a valuable source of oxygen for all living things.

And yet, the true strength of a tree is not what we see above ground, but its rooted, tangled masses beneath it. At the heart of this are microbes called mycorrhizal fungi.

Once considered an enemy to plant life, in recent decades the fungi – which release hyphae, tying together tree and fungus at cellular level – have been better understood. This mycorrhiza bond links below-surface connections... a 'Wood Wide Web'.

It leads to the creation of one superorganism that looks after, supports and talks to each tree, be that a small crab apple just a few yards away, or a thundering oak several hundred metres down a ravine.

The creation of this network is for mass sustainability – the fungi have minerals that the tree needs; the tree has carbon that the fungi need – but the result is a kind of soil socialism that looks after its own.

For so long it was believed that trees and fungi were at war, both looking to snatch what they could from the ground. Now, it's believed that without the mycorrhizal fungi, trees would be toy-sized, and in the case of the 400 species of mycoheterotrophic plants that cannot photosynthesise, they would die out altogether.

So the next time you stand back and admire the beauty of a tree, perhaps take a respectful glance towards ground level while you're at it.





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GARDENING



Why your garden NEEDS A GREENHOUSE

If you are considering getting a greenhouse installed in your garden but are not entirely convinced it's the right decision for your property, check out these seven benefits of greenhouse ownership.

This offers you more flexibility when it comes to the plants you can grow.

1. GROW FRESH, ORGANIC PRODUCE

Arguably the best aspect of having your own greenhouse is that you can grow a wide variety of fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as plants, from the comfort of your own garden. Plus, you can change what you want to grow in it each year.

4. PROTECT YOUR PLANTS FROM PESTS

As well as protecting your plants from the elements, a greenhouse can help to keep them safe from pests such as caterpillars, spider mites and locust swarms.

2. STORE GARDENING TOOLS

If you struggle to find somewhere to store all your gardening tools, supplies and equipment, a greenhouse can double up as a garden shed, offering quick and easy access to everything you need, all in one designated spot.

5. OFFER AN OPTIMUM ENVIRONMENT

Plants love warm and humid environments, which is why they thrive when grown in a greenhouse.

6. SAVE MONEY

If you spend a fortune every spring in your local garden centre, then a greenhouse can save you a lot of money. You can grow as many seeds as you want and you may even find you have plenty of plants left over to give to friends and family.

3. ENJOY CONSISTENT CONDITIONS

By growing your plants within the safety of a greenhouse, you can avoid any problems caused by extreme weather conditions and seasonal changes.

7. ENHANCE THE LOOK OF YOUR GARDEN

Greenhouses comes in many different designs and you can pick the perfect one to complement your garden.



Are HIGH HEELS good for your health?

Marilyn Monroe famously once said, "I don't know who invented high heels, but all women owe him a lot." A pair of killer heels is undeniably the most effective way to add oomph to any outfit, but do you know what they are doing to your overall health?

Stress on your spine: Walking in high heels causes your spine to sway unnaturally, which, in turn, results in stress on your lumbar erector spinae muscle and an increased risk of a sore lower back.

Pressure on your knees: High heels put extra weight on the inner side of your knees and knee joints. This can increase your chances of experiencing twisting injuries to the knees.

Swelling of the feet: Bunions are synonymous with high heels, but the uneven weight distribution that occurs when wearing this type of shoe can also cause blisters, calluses, pinched nerves, swollen joints and tendonitis.

Restricted circulation: High heels force your ankle to bend forward, which restricts blood circulation in your lower limbs, leading to varicose veins.

Shortening of the calf muscle: Over time, wearing high heels can cause the muscles and tendons in your calves to shorten. This can lead to stiffness, reduced range of motion and a higher risk of strains, sprains and lower-body injuries.

Treatment & pain relief

- > Look for cushioning in the soles to absorb the impact of your foot hitting the ground
- > Opt for high heels with a wider toe box
 - > Carry out foot and toe stretching exercises
 - > Choose a thicker heel rather than a stiletto
 - > Treat any blisters or sores with a foot balm and use blister pads
 - > Ice your feet after wearing
 - > Take an over-the-counter pain reliever



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- ◆ Thyroid surgery
- ◆ Varicose vein surgery
- ◆ Weight loss surgery.

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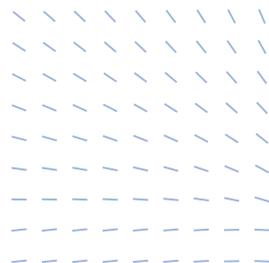


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Do you need a **DECHOX?**

Calling all chocoholics. Now is the time to tackle your addiction once and for all. The British Heart Foundation is petitioning for chocolate lovers up and down the country to give up chocolate for 31 days this March.

Why do we love chocolate so much?

There are several reasons why we can easily stop at eating just one apple but could quite happily munch our way through a whole box of chocolates. These include:

- > Eating chocolate stimulates the brain's reward centres, triggering the release of feel-good chemicals such as dopamine and serotonin.
- > Chocolate contains theobromine, which increases the heart rate and brings about feelings of arousal.
- > Chocolate contains caffeine, which enhances our ability to work and focus.
- > It is high in fat and sugar, which are traditionally preferred food sources as they are calorie dense.
- > It smells good, it tastes good and it melts on our tongues in the most irresistible way.

How can I combat my chocolate cravings?

- > Drink more water. Sometimes when you think you are hungry, you are actually dehydrated.
- > Focus on eating good fats such as avocados and nuts, as these are known for banishing sweet cravings.
- > Set boundaries. If you know you can't resist chocolate, don't have it in the house.
 - > Manage your stress levels. You may find that you reach for chocolate when you feel stressed, so try to find other ways to cope when you feel emotional or under pressure.
 - > If you desperately need a chocolate fix, opt for a low-calorie hot chocolate drink instead.
 - > Eat one piece of very dark chocolate before each meal. This has been proven to help banish cravings and promote weight loss.





Beat Eating disorders

Recognise the signs

Concerned that someone you know and love is suffering with an eating disorder such as anorexia nervosa or bulimia? Eating disorders can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or background, but early intervention can be life-saving.

What are the signs?

There are many symptoms to look out for that may indicate a loved one is struggling with an eating disorder. However, it is worth noting that each individual case will be different.

- > A distorted body image
- > Using stimulants or laxatives
- > Frequent weighing
- > Extreme weight change
- > Mood swings
- > Loss of hair
- > Brittle nails
- > Depression
- > Skipping meals
- > Purging
- > Anxiety
- > Insomnia
- > Skin rash or dry skin
- > Erosion of tooth enamel
- > High interest in exercise
- > Withdrawal from friends

How can I support someone?

As well as seeking treatment, your loved one will need your love and support in order to overcome their eating disorder. Ways in which you can help them include:

- > Learn about their eating disorder
- > Be honest about your feelings
- > Be a role model by eating a nutritious diet
- > Help to build up their confidence
- > Suggest activities to do together than don't involve food

Where can I get help for someone?

If you suspect that someone in your family or a close friend has an eating disorder, your first course of action should be to sit down and talk to them in a non-confrontational way. It can also be a good idea to suggest they schedule a check-up with their doctor, who can determine any unusual changes in body mass index or weight percentile.

If diagnosed with an eating disorder, they are likely to be prescribed a treatment plan, which may include talking therapies and medication if they are also suffering with depression.

Charities and organisations

- > Beat: www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk
- > Anorexia & Bulimia Care: www.anorexiabulimiacare.org.uk



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to floss

or not to floss?



No, we are not talking about the dance craze that swept the nation in 2018, but the act of cleaning in between your teeth using dental floss.

Sadly, only an estimated 31 per cent of people clean between their teeth on a daily basis. This is despite the fact that the NHS recommends that from the age of 12 people should include flossing in their daily oral health routine.

HOW TO FLOSS: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

1. Break off between 18 and 25 inches of dental floss
2. Wind the floss around both of your middle fingers, leaving between one and two inches for your teeth
3. Hold the floss taut with your thumbs and index fingers
4. Place the dental floss between two teeth
5. Gently glide the floss up and down, making sure to rub against both sides of each tooth
6. When the floss reaches your gum, curve the floss

at the base of your tooth, creating a C shape

7. Be careful not to scratch or bruise your gums
8. Repeat as you move from tooth to tooth
9. Always use a clean piece of floss for each tooth section
10. Do not recycle or reuse dental floss as this can redistribute bacteria around your mouth, even if you wash it first

WHEN SHOULD YOU FLOSS?

For optimal oral health, you should always floss first and brush your teeth afterwards. It is recommended that you brush your teeth twice a day and floss once, preferably in the evening.

WHY SHOULD YOU FLOSS?

Flossing helps to remove food and plaque from in between your teeth. Brushing alone cannot do this as the bristles are not able to reach deep enough. Regular flossing can result in less dental plaque in your mouth and therefore a lower risk of developing gum disease.

Kohlrabi

This month we will be starting a new regular feature: we will be introducing you to a lesser-known fruit or vegetable, allowing you to expand your palate and widen your repertoire of recipes. This month we bring you kohlrabi, an undeniably odd-looking vegetable that packs a real punch in terms of flavour.

WHAT IS KOHLRABI?

Kohlrabi is also known as a cabbage turnip and is very popular in northern and eastern European countries. Part of the broccoli and cabbage family, it can be green, white or purple in colour and is available all year round. When buying kohlrabi whole, look for crisp-looking and vibrant leaves, which indicate freshness.

WHAT DOES KOHLRABI TASTE LIKE?

It has a similar flavour to cabbage but with the spicy kick of a radish; the smaller the bulb, the milder the taste. Crunchy when eaten raw, the stems and leaves can also be cooked and eaten; they resemble a mild-tasting Swiss chard.

HOW TO COOK KOHLRABI

All edible elements of kohlrabi need to be peeled before cooking to avoid a bitter taste. Once peeled, trim the brown end and separate the leaves from the bulb.

Choose to steam, sauté or roast kohlrabi, or you could even hollow out the bulbs and stuff with other vegetables or grains. Alternatively, serve raw in thin slices on a salad or added to coleslaw. You can also steam or sauté the leaves in the same way that you would fresh kale or spinach.

HOW TO STORE KOHLRABI

A kohlrabi bulb can be kept uncovered in the fridge for up to one month. The stems and leaves should be cooked as soon as possible as they wilt within a day or two.

WHAT ARE THE NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS OF KOHLRABI?

Low in fat | High in fibre | High in calcium
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FOOD & DRINK

Are you guilty of buying the same cuts of meat week in and week out? If yes, surely it's time to try something different?

To celebrate National Butchers' Week, we have found the tastiest, not to mention most cost-effective, meat cuts which we guarantee you and your family will love.

Beef Onglet

Also known as hanger steak, this forgotten choice is a flat cut from the diaphragm or lower belly of the cow. Great value and with an intense flavour, this meat cut is best served medium rare.

HOW TO COOK: Fry in a hot pan for 3-4 minutes on each side and then leave on a warm plate to rest for 10 minutes.

Pork Cheeks

Incredibly cheap, pork cheeks offer a leaner alternative to pork belly, plus they are mouth-wateringly moist.

HOW TO COOK: Brine in sugar and water before braising until tender. Once cooked, cut into small pieces, breadcrumb and fry.

Lamb Sweetbreads

Classified as offal, lamb sweetbreads are the pancreas and thymus glands and considered to be a delicacy in the culinary world. Providing all the B vitamins, lamb sweetbreads are creamy and tender with a delicate flavour.

HOW TO COOK: Soak in cold water for a few hours before simmering quickly. Allow to cool before trimming away any sinew or gristle. Sauté as they are or lightly breadcrumb first.

Venison Ribs

Low in fat, relatively cheap and full of flavour, venison ribs make a great alternative to pork ones. Like all wild game, deer ribs are very lean so need to be prepared with moist methods of cooking.

HOW TO COOK: Trim the ribs of fat and cut into strips. Cover the venison in brine or your chosen marinade. Bake, grill or slow cook for optimum tenderness.



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Icing on the cake

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY ICE A BIRTHDAY CAKE (no matter your skill level!)

Step One: Fake it or bake it

If you aren't much of a baker, there really is no harm in buying a pre-made sponge. The benefit of this is that the layers will be perfectly proportioned, making icing easier. On the other hand, a homemade cake is hard to beat, though you will need to trim the top of your cake with a bread knife if it has domed so the surface is perfectly flat and even.

Step Two: Filling fun

Everyone loves the first peek inside a birthday cake, which is why you need to get the filling as even as possible. If you're using jam, spread that first (heat gently in a bowl sat in boiling water to make it more spreadable), before piling your buttercream in the centre of your bottom layer. Now, add your top layer and gently twist with a little pressure to spread the filling across your cakes, removing any excess icing that spills out with a palette knife.

Step Three: Oh, crumbs

Ever wondered how professional bakers achieve that flawless finish? The answer is the crumb layer – a light layer of icing to catch stray crumbs before the second layer is applied. Place a third of your remaining icing in a separate bowl and move your cake onto a turntable or cake stand. Put a large dollop of buttercream in the centre of the cake and smooth it across the top, repeating the process until it looks even. Then, do the same with the side of the cake, turning it gently to distribute the icing and using your palette knife to flatten. Place your cake in the fridge for two hours to set.

Step Four: Final touches

Repeat the icing process for your final layer, being sure to fully cover the crumb layer beneath, and finish your masterpiece with some decorations. And a final top tip: hundreds and thousands look very impressive when applied liberally.



SOLVE A PUZZLE

If you are struggling to keep your kids occupied indoors, then look no further than a good old-fashioned jigsaw puzzle. With the ability to not only provide educational benefits, this calming activity also helps to promote good mental health...

ENHANCED COGNITIVE FUNCTION

When you are doing a jigsaw puzzle, you use both the left and right sides of your brain. The right is in charge of creativity and your emotions, whereas the left is the logical and methodical side. Using both sides helps to increase cognitive function, a crucial part of your child's development.

IMPROVED PROBLEM-SOLVING ABILITIES

At its simplest level, a jigsaw puzzle is an activity of trial and error. Your child is required to try out different pieces in different places in order to find the right fit. This helps to improve their problem-solving abilities and helps them to see things from varying perspectives.

DECREASED STRESS LEVELS

If you have been worried about your child's mental health during this challenging year, you will be pleased to hear that jigsaw puzzles are a great stress-buster. In fact, when your child is doing a puzzle, there is a distinct shift in their consciousness, with their brains changing from a state of 'Beta' to 'Alpha'. The 'Alpha' state is similar to when they are dreaming and can lead to an improvement in mood, relief of stress and a lower heart rate.

INCREASED IQ

Certain studies have shown that just 25 minutes a day spent doing a puzzle can raise a person's IQ by four points. Furthermore, this activity will help improve your child's memory, concentration and reasoning skills.

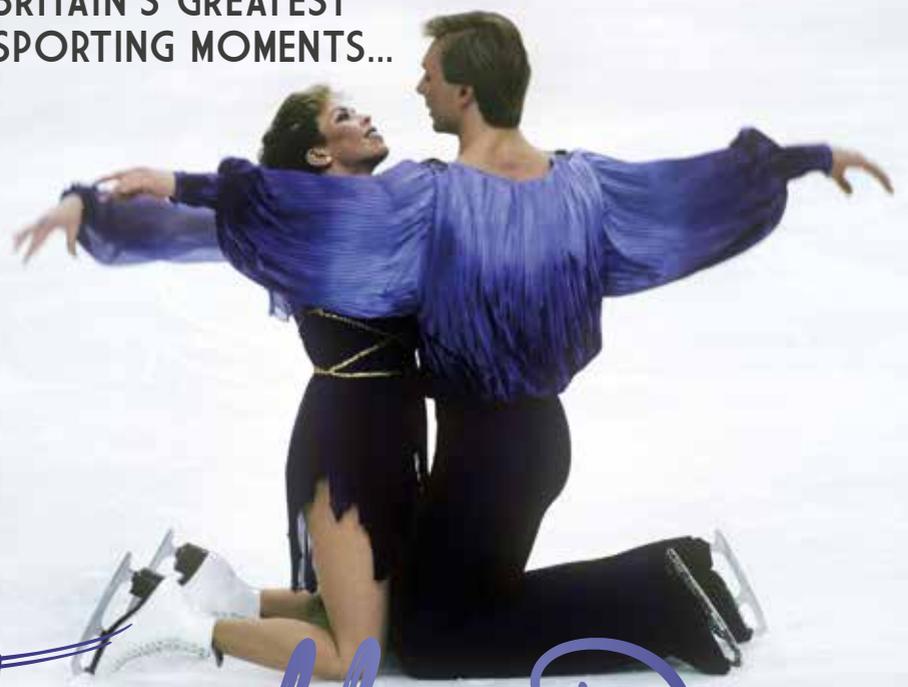
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BRITAIN'S GREATEST SPORTING MOMENTS...



Torvill & Dean

Each month we look at significant events in British sporting history. This month, it's 40 years since ice skaters Torvill and Dean were awarded MBEs, but their greatest moment was yet to come.

To an entire generation of terrestrial TV watchers, the mere sound of Ravel's *Boléro* will instantly bring about memories of Jayne Torvill OBE and Christopher Dean OBE's incredible gold-medal-winning routines at both the Olympics and the World Championships in 1984.

At both events, the duo performed a modern artistic masterpiece that captivated a generation of fans. The routine had emotion, precision and drama packed into four and a half minutes of twists, turns, lifts and pirouettes.

At the World Championships, in Ottawa, the couple received a standing ovation from the entire crowd as flowers rained down onto the ice. It was the last amateur performance of the greatest ice dancers the world had ever known, performed with such ease that it belied the incredible technicality of a routine coached by Betty Callaway.

Their score of 13 perfect 6.0s was the most ever

scored by any skaters in competition, as the couple, who had been performing together since 1975, truly went out on top of the world, having taken 11 6.0s at the Olympics two months previously.

While 1984 was ultimately the pinnacle, it's easy to forget how respected and regarded they were before then. Already prolific World and European champions, they had been awarded MBEs previously, with the 40th anniversary of their trip to Buckingham Palace being marked this year.

That these iconic skaters could still push for perfection as amateurs was the ultimate endorsement of their decision to turn professional and begin to earn a living for their art beyond grants and sponsorship. And that has been borne out in the fact that their dedication to ice skating in all its forms rolls on even today, with the pair regulars on our television screens, notably in ITV's *Dancing on Ice*.

Photo credit: Colorsport/Shutterstock



CRISTIANO RONALDO

CRISTIANO RONALDO AND THE COMPLETION OF A UNIQUE GOAL FEAT

When Cristiano Ronaldo signed for Manchester United at the age of just 19, football knew it had a real talent in its midst. Yet it's still unfathomable that the Portuguese striker would go on to create a new goalscoring world record – something the 36-year-old achieved in January when he notched up his 760th senior goal (even if his strike for Juventus versus Napoli was from just a yard out).

The feat was celebrated all over the world, and rightly so, even if there's still some conjecture regarding exactly how many goals some of his net-busting rivals have clocked up over the years.

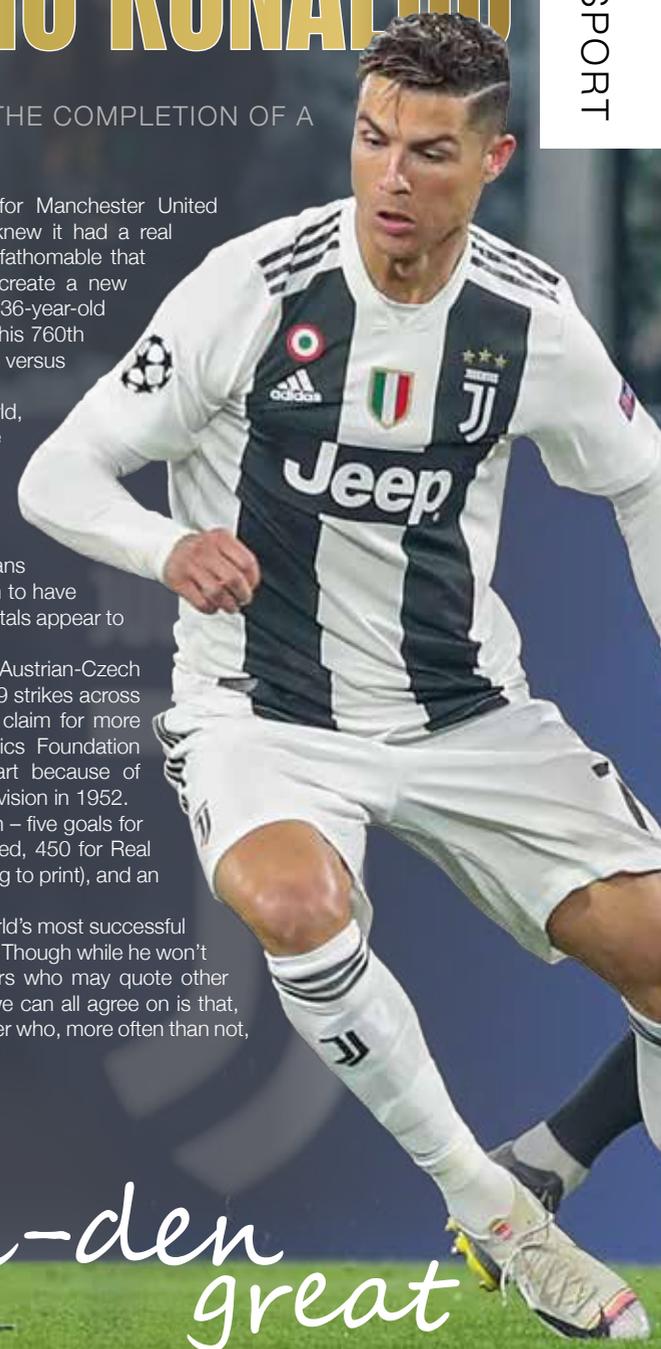
The problem is not with CR7's total, more the tally of his contemporaries. Brazilians Pelé and Romário, for instance, both claim to have scored more than 1,000 goals, yet these totals appear to include amateur and reserve games.

Even the man whose total Ron bettered, Austrian-Czech footballer Josef Bican, who clocked up 759 strikes across a career surpassing two decades, has a claim for more goals, with the Rec.Sport.Soccer Statistics Foundation (RSSSF) claiming more than 800, in part because of missing records from the Czech second division in 1952.

Ronaldo's total is unquestionable, though – five goals for Sporting Lisbon, 118 for Manchester United, 450 for Real Madrid, 90 for Juventus (at the time of going to print), and an incredible 102 for Portugal.

Knowing Ron, the status of being the world's most successful goalscorer of all time will mean a lot to him. Though while he won't be able to completely silence the doubters who may quote other players and their respective tallies, what we can all agree on is that, over the years, he's been a handy little striker who, more often than not, has chipped in with a useful goal or two.

Photo credit: Action Press/Shutterstock



Goal-den great





Fan belt failure

HOW TO DIAGNOSE ONE OF THE MOST COMMON MOTORING ISSUES

The serpentine belt, alternator belt, or fan belt as it is better known, is a peculiar piece of rather essential kit as far as your car engine goes. We all know our car has one, a few of us can locate it, yet very few know what it does.

What's important is that when it does malfunction – usually through being worn out – we can get it fixed cheaply and easily.

THE SIGNS

Most people become aware of fan belt failure when they begin to hear a loud screeching or squealing sound coming from the engine. You may also discover the power steering or air conditioning isn't working, and in really bad cases the engine may overheat.

All of these effects result from the fan belt's faulty function, and that function is working with the idler, tensioner and pulleys inside the accessory drive

belt system – essentially, it provides power to key components in the engine.

A dodgy fan belt is bad news, and although the car may be driveable, you're risking a breakdown.

THE DIAGNOSIS

Fan belts can become cracked, split, grazed, misaligned or might fall off completely. Unless your amateur mechanic skills are really up to Henry Ford levels, it's probably best to take your motor to the nearest garage.

THE COST

Thankfully, a faulty fan belt won't see you off the road for too long; nor should it set you back any significant amount. Typically, a new one will cost somewhere in the region of £100–£200. It's a relatively quick job and your garage should be able to turn it around in a couple of hours.



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