



TOP 7
INTERIOR
TRENDS
FOR 2023

Relax and unwind
with adult colouring

SAVE MONEY
try no-spend January

Celebrate the creation
OF WINNIE-THE-POOH

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DANNY DYER

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Editor's notes...

JANUARY 2023



Nik Allen, Editor

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

If December wasn't busy enough, we had a tremendous World Cup to distract us from the usual Christmas build-up. The lead-up to the event was of course filled with controversy surrounding the hosts, but away from that, they sure did put on a great show for us all back at home. I'm glad we were able to focus on the impressive athletics on display.

I thought England gave a great account for themselves in the tournament, including Gareth Southgate, whom I'm pleased has decided to carry on until after Euro 2024. You can feel this team improving on past

failures and being stronger together, which certainly bodes well for the future. It does feel like real success is closer with Gareth than under previous managers.

The final was one of the greatest we've seen in recent years, with Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappé showing why they are both considered to be amongst the world's elite. Congratulations to Argentina on a hard-fought and well-earned third World Cup.

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas and spent some quality time with friends and family. Finally, I wish you every success for this new year.

Nik Allen

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

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SPARE?

AMID THE RELEASE OF HARRY AND MEGHAN'S TRIO OF PROJECTS, WE LOOK AT HOW THE 'SPARE' AND HIS WIFE HAVE BEGUN TO TELL THEIR TRUTH

Since their unexpected flight from both British shores and the working Royal Family in January 2020, Prince Harry and his wife Meghan have caused quite the stir, constructing a new narrative that neither they nor the Royal Family can be certain of recovering from.

First came a biography of the pair, *Finding Freedom*, written by close confidante Omid Scobie, which hinted at unease within the royal ranks. Then, in March 2021, their shock interview with TV talk show maven Oprah Winfrey aired to global comment on both sides of the Atlantic.

Since then, things have been reasonably quiet and calm as the Sussexes have settled into their Los Angeles lifestyle and adjusted to family life with their two children, Archie, aged three, and 18-month-old Lilibet. However, as several multimillion-dollar deals reach their point of fruition, our red-headed prince and his raven-maned wife are once again back in the spotlight.

Last month, their six-part Netflix documentary *Harry & Meghan* was released, which saw the Duke and Duchess of Sussex attempt to tell their side of the story. Capturing the couple from their earliest days together right up to the period after Prince Philip's death, the series has certainly split opinion. While some find it to be insightful and informative, others believe it to be shocking and villainous. Or in some cases, opinions have flipped completely, and those who might not have supported them before have now gone to the other side and have begun to empathise with the pair.

'I'VE HAD TO MAKE PEACE WITH THE FACT THAT WE'RE PROBABLY NEVER GOING TO GET GENUINE ACCOUNTABILITY OR A GENUINE APOLOGY'

To add to any nerves the Royal Family may have already been experiencing, Harry's book, *Spare*, is released this month. The title alone conveys the Duke's deep disconnection from his own family, one that doesn't appear as if it will be healed anytime soon.

All things come in threes, and Netflix has announced it is also behind the couple's other new project, entitled *Live to Lead*. It showcases inspirational figures – from climate change activist Greta Thunberg to New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, to South Africa rugby star Siya Kolisi, the first-ever black captain of the side. Harry was inspired by the efforts of Nelson Mandela, and true to the former president's lifelong aspirations, the series of interviews is positioned to offer hope, vision, perspective and understanding... arguably at a time when the world needs it most.

Hopefully Harry himself will find in 2023 ways to reconcile what has been a turbulent and heart-wrenching year for the royals. He and Meghan's latest moves won't have done much to repair relations, but his transparency and clarity over how he feels hard done by may indeed act as a line in the sand, from where a new vista may emerge for the outliers, even if he questions the possibility of that.

"I've had to make peace with the fact that we're probably never going to get genuine accountability or a genuine apology [from my family]," says Harry in the documentary. "My wife and I, we're moving on. We're focused on what's coming next."

Such sentiments have been uttered by many of us regarding our own families, and unequivocally this shows us that when it comes to matters of the heart, the Windsor family, for all their wealth, prestige and glory, really are just like the rest of us. But is this family's broken relationship past the point of repair?

Photo credit: Tim Rooke/ Shutterstock



Winnie-the-Pooh

A bear of very little brain

Winnie-the-Pooh might not seem smart, and he certainly gets himself into some scrapes. But there's no doubt he's also friendly, kind and thoughtful – and comes up with some great ideas to get his friends out of trouble.

And did you know he has his own special day on January 18? All things Pooh Bear are celebrated then because it's when Pooh's creator A.A. Milne was born, back in 1882. To join in the fun, why not organise a teddy bears' picnic, watch a Pooh movie, or just eat a load of honey?

Pooh was named after the teddy owned by author A.A. Milne's son, Christopher Robin – who also stars in the Pooh books. But the original drawings were based on Growler, the teddy owned by the son of the book's illustrator, E.H. Shepard.

Milne's tubby creation made his first appearance in print in a 1924 edition of *Punch* magazine. And two years after that, the first collection of Pooh stories appeared in an eponymously titled book, *Winnie-the-Pooh*.

Piglet, Eeyore, Kanga, Roo and Tigger – as well as Pooh – were all based on toys owned by young Christopher Milne. But Owl and Rabbit were the author's own inventions.

The Hundred Acre Wood, where Pooh and his friends lived, is Milne's version of Ashdown Forest in East Sussex, where the family bought a house in 1925.

Perhaps Pooh's most outstanding achievement was inventing the game of Pooh sticks. Standing on a bridge over running water, each player drops a stick on the upstream side, and the winner is the one whose stick appears first on the downstream side.

Or perhaps his greatest achievement was being one of the highest-earning literary characters ever. The rights to Pooh were sold to Disney in 2001 for a staggering \$350million.

Not a bad achievement for a bear of supposedly very little brain.

Photo credit: winniepoohshow.co.uk; Disney; E. H. Shepard; Wikipedia

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Designer HOME TRENDS

THE SMALL DÉCOR CHANGES YOU CAN MAKE TO YOUR HOME FOR 2023

Outdoor indoor: With all the stresses of modern life, the natural hues of the great outdoors are a perfect way to de-stress. So bring the outside in with wood, lush plant life and a colour scheme rooted in nature.

Aqua calm: Similarly, anything reminiscent of the sea works to ground those of us who are in thrall to modern life. Turquoise, tranquil blue and anything suggestive of the azure depths will soothe and calm the busy mind.

Homely habitat: Another trend expected to be prevalent in 2023 is being sympathetic to your local community. So rugs shorn from local sheep, furniture crafted from upcycled wood and art, and sculptures from resident artists.

Gorgeous gold: Neither garish nor flashy, this trend is warm, earthy and classy. Think gilded mirrors, glowing lanterns and burnished candlestick holders. Anything that exudes warmth will work.

Largesse lampshades: Does anything tie a room together quite like a lampshade? Looming over us in all their glory, larger lampshades are having a moment. Beautiful brass or the purest paper, some are even crafted from nothing but feathers, and yet the impression they leave endures.

Craving curves: Sensuous, soft and languid, straight lines are eschewed in 2023 and replaced by curves. Sofas, tables, chairs and mirrors – everything needs to have that gentle touch and slightly out-of-focus edge.

Lavender love: According to predictions, the Colour of the Year in 2023 is going to be Digital Lavender. This is a light shade of violet which expresses two sets of emotions: cheerfulness and calmness. By applying this colour to the home, you can create a relaxing yet mood-lifting ambience.



HOME & DIY

Snuggly as a BUG

In light of the huge rise in energy bills, households up and down the country are being more frugal with their central heating and looking for more creative ways to stay warm.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF HEATED BLANKETS?

Unlike electric blankets, which operate much like mattress toppers and come with elasticated straps or as a fitted sheet, heated blankets are designed for you to curl up under. Much more versatile and visually appealing, heated blankets can be used on the sofa, on the bed or even at your desk.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HEATED BLANKETS?

There are many reasons why you may want to invest in a heated blanket, such as the fact that they are comfy, can be carried from room to room, and come in a variety of colours and designs. However, it is the cost-cutting aspect that is the most attractive element.

HOW MUCH MONEY CAN YOU SAVE?

Both heated blankets and electric blankets are highly cost-effective and cost only pennies to run. In fact, if you choose to invest in a heated blanket, it can cost you as little as 1p for around seven hours on the minimum heat setting. To put this into perspective, it costs on average of £2.76 per hour to run your central heating based on a 24kW boiler. Plus, you can control how much electric you use by adjusting the various heat and timer settings and the automatic shut-off function.

BEST HEATED BLANKETS ON THE MARKET

- > Best for wearing around the house: Lakeland Electric Heated Poncho
- > Best for energy efficiency: Dreamland Velvety Electric Throw
- > Best budget buy: Silentnight Luxury Heated Throw
- > Best for ease of use and convenience: Homefront Electric Heated Throw



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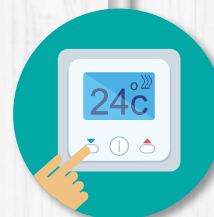
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5 ENERGY SAVING *Top Tips!*



HOME & DIY



Sure, you can save energy by investing in a new boiler, solar panels or roof insulation. If you've got the funds, they'll make a real difference. But these days, most of us don't have the money upfront. And what if you rent your home? Here's our round-up of the best ways to reduce your energy bills – without shivering like crazy or going broke.

CHECK YOUR HEATING

Turn your thermostat down a degree or two and see if the temperature's still okay. Turn down radiators in any room you don't use much. And don't have the heating on when you're out.

If it's not too chilly, put on some warm slippers and a jumper before reaching for the heating switch. If you're reading or watching TV, curl up under a cosy throw.



DON'T LEAVE APPLIANCES ON STANDBY

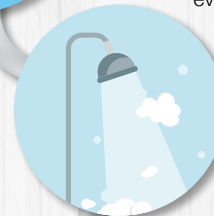
Don't keep your electrical appliances on standby mode. This goes for TVs, game consoles, laptops, printers, microwaves, electric cookers and phone chargers. And remember, devices with an LED panel, clock or light still use electricity even when they're switched off.



IN THE KITCHEN

Wait till you've got a full load to use your washing machine and run your programme at 30°C. Avoid using your tumble dryer whenever possible – it'll use a lot of electricity even in eco mode.

Only put on your dishwasher when it's full. And don't overfill the kettle – just boil the amount you need for your tea, coffee or cooking.



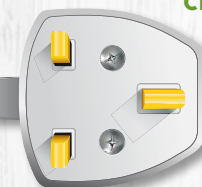
IN THE BATHROOM

If you can, take showers rather than baths and limit them to four minutes. You'd be surprised how much less water you'll use. And don't leave taps running – that goes for the kitchen, too.



CHECK THE LIGHTS

Choose energy-efficient LED lightbulbs. They cost a bit more, but they save energy and money in the long run because they use 90 per cent less energy than conventional halogen bulbs. Oh... and don't leave lights switched on when you don't need them.





HOME & DIY

A BRITISH **suck-cess** STORY



THE STORY BEHIND BRITAIN'S ICONIC VACUUM CLEANER

He's not the most aesthetically pleasing member of the household cleaning family, nor the most powerful, and as far as cutting-edge technology goes, he pre-dates even the era of the mobile phone and internet connectivity.

Yet despite all of that, our love affair with Henry lives on, more than 40 years since the compact and affordable vacuum cleaner was launched by Numatic International.

Its founder, Chris Duncan, first started toying with his vacuum cleaner concept back in 1969, when he dressed up one of his standard vacuum cleaners with a Union Jack, hat and smiley face during a particularly long night at a trade show.

The response from visitors was a revelation for the inventor, who discovered that taking an inanimate object and giving it a personality enchanted people who were looking for something different from the standard cleaning devices.

Of course, the cleaner plays its part where performance is concerned too, using large-capacity microfibre dust bags encased in a shell that is built for longevity and durability.

Since the machine was officially launched in 1981, sales continue to accelerate and now frequently exceed the one million mark each year. While Numatic has never advertised the machine, nor does it employ the services of a PR agency, an estimated 20 million have been sold in the UK to date.

Henry isn't the only named machine in the range. Previous versions have been called James, Charles, Nuvac, George, David, William, Edward, Basil, Wendy, Harry and Jack, while limited-edition models have been launched for B&Q, Screwfix and John Lewis.

It has also led to spin-off designs, notably the Henry and Hetty Spray Mops.

In 2023, it is the only mass-produced consumer vacuum cleaner still made in Britain, and has made its founder a millionaire many times over.



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THREE DIFFERENT WAYS TO USE

anti-freeze

Most car owners have a can or two of anti-freeze in their boot, especially during the winter months, but did you know that there is more than one use for this must-have motoring product?

WHAT IS ANTI-FREEZE?

Anti-freeze is an additive that is used to decrease the freezing point and increase the boiling point of any water-based liquid. It is made by combining any of the following with water: methanol, glycerol, ethylene glycol or propylene glycol.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN USES FOR ANTI-FREEZE?

AS A CAR ENGINE COOLANT

The most common use for anti-freeze is to prevent an engine's cooling system from freezing or overheating. It stops the water in your car's engine from freezing during cold weather conditions and from becoming overheated when temperatures are high.

TO PROTECT HVAC SYSTEMS

Heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems are an integral part of most residential homes and commercial properties. Anti-freeze can be used to help prevent the pipes within these systems from freezing, bursting and causing damage. It can also help to reduce the risk of scale build-up and corrosion.

TO MAINTAIN SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS

As more and more UK households embrace solar energy, it is important that you know how to properly take care of these types of energy systems. Anti-freeze can be used as a heat transfer fluid to provide protection from freezing in colder weather. Always hire a professional to do this for you as solar energy systems are pressurised.

HOW TO DISPOSE OF ANTI-FREEZE

Due to its toxic nature, you must make sure you dispose of anti-freeze in the right way. Never pour it down the drain as it can damage the environment and kill animals. Instead, contact your local recycling centre as they should be able to properly dispose of it for you.



HOME & DIY



Introducing our impressive
new Care Home Development

Dudbrook House



From left to right: Paul Cunah (MG Partnership), Donna Regan (Deputy Manager Dudbrook Hall), Richard Keely (Lavingtons), Claire Watson (Director St Michaels Homes), Mitchell Fletcher (Horizon Construction London), Kerry Toulson (Manager Dudbrook Hall), Sean Watson (Director St Michaels Homes Ltd)

Work is fully underway in the development of our new care home project to construct Dudbrook House on the estate of Dudbrook Hall, a care home for the elderly located within beautiful park like gardens, surrounded by Essex countryside. The home is owned and run by St Michaels Homes Ltd.

St Michaels Homes Ltd was awarded planning permission to construct a new care home in the grounds of its existing care home Dudbrook Hall. The new improved Dudbrook House care home will provide improved facilities for residents and staff with state of the art accommodation. Works are planned to take 68 weeks from commencement and the grand opening of the new home is planned for mid-August 2023.

A family run business, St Michaels Homes Ltd was established by Managing Director Sheila Watson in



1991. Sheila trained as a registered nurse and midwife, followed by 25 years in midwifery, followed by five years as a health advisor to the elderly, and obtained a diploma in gerontology. With this experience care of residents comes from the

top down, this can be seen by the way the residents are cared for by staff and quality inspections. The company is now being operated by Sheila's children Sean & Claire Watson who are fully hands on with the successful running of its care homes and new build development. St Michaels Homes also operates another home next to this new development called Howard Lodge, which was also renewed in 2014 and is within walking distance of Dudbrook Hall, Howard Lodge has been rated by CQC as Outstanding, so it now matches its facilities with its exceptional care.



Howard Lodge Care Centre,
Beacon Hill Rd, Kelvedon Common,
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Dudbrook Hall Care Centre
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Sean Watson, Director at St Michaels Homes Ltd said: "Due to the extensive three acre grounds we have around our care homes, these works will not affect the day to day running of the existing home. Our commitment of care to our residents is our utmost priority and we are very excited about the plans for this impressive new care home.

We have a well-established reputation in the local and wider community for providing quality care and are proud to be a family run business. The A star care provided by our staff will now be matched by A-star facilities with the completion of the new home which will increase the much required bed capacity offered from the old home

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from 44 to 64. Dudbrook House will bring unrivalled facilities including spacious rooms – all with en-suite, as well as hairdressers, sun terrace, balconies, private patios, activities and training facilities, day care centre, coffee lounge for residents with dining and living rooms on each floor along with landscaped gardens and a dementia garden.

The new facilities will benefit all existing residents as well as providing increased space for newcomers welcomed to the home."

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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Photo credit: Brentwood School

Ice hockey player to compete in championship

A Brentwood School Year 12 student has been called up to the Bosnia and Herzegovina national ice hockey team and will compete in the World Championships this month.

Amor Šačić, 16 (pictured right), has been a part of the Bosnian set-up at U18 and U20 levels, and in 2021 he competed in the senior World Championship as a reserve goaltender for the senior team.

He has now been called up for the 2023 International Ice Hockey Federation U20 World Championships, which will take place in Istanbul from January 26 to February 2.

Amor started playing ice hockey when he was just four years old. He joined Brentwood School's Lower Sixth in September and took a two-month break from his intensive training regime to settle into life in the UK,

having recently arrived from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

To keep fit, Amor joined the school's rugby team, saying: "When I first came to the UK, I wanted to try as many new things as possible, and since rugby is nowhere to be found in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I wanted to try it."

Although he has no ambitions to play ice hockey professionally, Amor said: "I will forever continue improving and becoming better in order to represent my country in a brighter light, and I would like to one day play for the senior men's team, instead of being a reserve."

Headmaster Michael Bond said: "We were delighted to welcome Amor in September. The attributes that have taken him so far so quickly in ice hockey have helped him make a flying start to life in Brentwood."

BRENTWOOD PROPERTY NEWS



LOCAL MARKET ROUND UP



Over the last 12 months the average sales price in Brentwood & Shenfield was **£468,016**. The total value of sales was **£421,731,427**.

Transactions by price band over the last 12 months

NATIONAL



BRENTWOOD & SHENFIELD



- less than £100k
- £100k-£250k
- £250k-£500k
- £500k-£750k
- £750k-£1m
- £1m-£2m
- £2m-£5m
- £5m+

House price growth over 1 year and 5 years

1

+3%

5

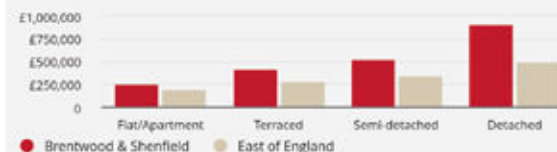
+10%

Top transaction in last 3 months

£2,555,000

SPURGATE CM13

Average prices over last 12 months



Source: Dataloft, Land Registry

NATIONAL MARKET

JANUARY 2023



Happy New Year!

I am delighted to announce that I have now partnered with the team at Dataloft, so I can bring you the latest trends in the UK's housing market with a detailed focus on our local market in Brentwood.

House prices

All the national indices report annual property price growth is softening, with price readjustments expected over the course of 2023. In the 2 years since the re-opening of the market in June 2020, average prices rose by 23% (ONS).

Economy

The rate of inflation slowed slightly in the year to November to 10.7% from 11.1% in October but the cost of living remains high. The drop was mainly due to falling fuel prices.

Transactions

UK Finance anticipates house purchase sales will drop by 21% in 2023 to just over 1 million. They forecast lending by Banks and Building Societies will fall by 23% back to pre-Covid levels.



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Tributes paid to 'dedicated' family man

Brentwood-born firefighter David Lambert (pictured top left) has passed away aged 46 following a cancer diagnosis last year.

David, whose funeral took place on December 21, was a dedicated family man and leaves behind his mother, siblings and three children.

He was a firefighter in Potters Bar for more than 25 years and a devoted Southend United fan. Potters Bar Fire Station have named one of their fire engines after David.

Brett Shohet, a friend of David's, said: "He was a dedicated father and a family man, besotted with his children and tremendously loyal to his family.

"He took so much pleasure helping people and would have a conversation with anyone."

At Southend United's 2-2 draw with Altrincham on Saturday, December 3, his family and friends wore specially made scarves and t-shirts emblazoned with his nickname, 'Elmo'.

Brett added: "The memorial couldn't have gone better. The club was amazing with how they helped.

"We got personalised scarves and t-shirts made. We had a picture of him printed, a testimonial piece in the programme, and the announcer read out the statement at half-time."

A statement in the Southend United programme said: "David was a well-known, loveable character in the East Stand as well as the far post bar.

"He is being remembered here today by his family and friends."

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Car park prices see further increase

Parking in some Brentwood car parks have become more expensive this year.

Brentwood Borough Council is hoping to raise £900,000 through increased parking prices at William Hunter Way Car Park, with prices rising from £1 per hour to £1.10.

Meanwhile, the Coptfold Road Multi-Storey Car Park remains at £1, with the price for all-day parking reducing from £8 to £6. The council says this is to provide workers with cheaper parking.

The £2 per night charge is also being scrapped, and drivers arriving at 7pm who park for six hours will now pay £6.60.

Leader of the council, councillor Chris Hossack, said: "This is not aimed at penalising residents. This is aimed very much at people who are coming to the high street, whether day or night.

"What we want to do is incentivise those people into using the multistorey to free up William Hunter Way and Chatham Road."

BURGHART for BRENTWOOD



Alex Burghart MP for Brentwood and Ongar



The devastating effect of motor neurone disease (MND) on individuals and families has been brought to the forefront of our attention recently by the well-documented experience of former professional rugby league player Rob Burrow, as the disease has taken his movement and voice from him, and the sad death last year of his friend Doddie Weir.

MND is a condition that affects the brain and nerves, and 5,000 people in the UK are thought to have the condition. There is currently only one drug licensed in the UK to treat MND, Riluzole, which slows the progression of the disease and extends someone's life by a few months.

A small group of constituents who are affected by MND are in regular contact with me about government funding for more research, so it is good to start 2023 knowing £50million has been

made available to meet those requests. This will be used to fund specialist research centres and partnerships with leading researchers, and to accelerate work on the most promising treatments.

The government will cut red tape in order to speed up research into MND across the UK, with immediate investment so NHS patients can benefit from cutting-edge treatment and medicines. The National Institute for Health and Care Research and Medical Research Council will work together to ensure proposals are referred to the most appropriate scheme for consideration at the early idea stage.

It means some of the UK's brightest and best scientific minds are battling to find treatments – and one day, a cure – for the cruel and devastating condition that is MND.

Visit my website at www.alexburghart.org.uk



Photo credit: RSPCA

Puppy found with cropped ears

The RSPCA has launched an appeal for information after a puppy with her ears illegally cropped was bought in Brentwood.

Lira, a four-month-old bull breed, was bought in the Brentwood area by her new owners, who contacted the RSPA after they became concerned.

The puppy is currently under the care of the RSPCA and is undergoing veterinary treatment, though the animal welfare charity has been unable to trace who was responsible for Lira at the time of her illegal surgery.

Ear cropping, an entirely aesthetic and completely unnecessary process whereby part or all of the ear is removed, is illegal in England and Wales under the Animal Welfare Act.

RSPCA inspector Chris McGreal said: "We are trying to find out who was responsible for this pup when she had her ears cropped. Her owner has told us she was bought from a stranger with her ears already cropped in a field around Hutton Mount, Brentwood.

"If anyone can help us, please call us on our inspectorate appeals line on 0300 123 8018."

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Photo credit: Brentwood School



Pupil stars in new Netflix comedy drama

A Brentwood School pupil has made her Netflix debut, starring in a festive comedy drama.

Christmas on Mistletoe Farm is a family-friendly comedy that tells the story of a widowed father-of-five who inherits a farm at Christmas.

Delilah O'Riordan (pictured second from left), who hopes to be a professional film and theatre actress, plays the eldest of five siblings, Rosie Cunningham.

Delilah said: "Working on *Christmas on Mistletoe Farm* has been without a doubt the most magical adventure of my life so far. We, the five Cunningham siblings, lived in a hotel near the set for six weeks and by the end I felt as though I really did have four new younger siblings."

"I love them all and we will be friends for life. Our days on set were filled with amazing things such as cycling, quad biking, swimming, singing, dancing, cuddling newborn animals, and so much more. A real kid's dream."

Her mum, Dr O'Riordan, said: "Delilah suffered from severe glue ear, causing deafness from the ages of four to eight. We were told that most people with her level of hearing loss would give up academically and become disruptive."

"Delilah didn't do either of those things and this hearing loss makes her achievements all the more remarkable. I am incredibly proud of Delilah's drive, determination and organisation."

Parents push for road safety near schools

Parents are pushing for further improvements on a busy Brentwood road.

St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School, St Helen's Catholic Junior School Academy, Grove House School, and Becket Keys Church of England School are all located on Sawyers Hall Lane.

Traffic during the school run remains an issue, as reported in **VISION** BrentwoodOngar September 2022 edition, with some parents parking on the side of the road when picking up their children from school.

Essex County Council (ECC) has since removed 26 waiting and parking spaces from the road to allow for a widened footway to increase safety standards, but parents say this doesn't go far enough.

A spokesperson for ECC said: "Initial measures to improve the walking environment of Sawyers Hall Lane were installed over the summer."

"Further measures are under consideration and are being discussed by the Brentwood Active Travel steering group."

"Further interventions are subject to funding being available."

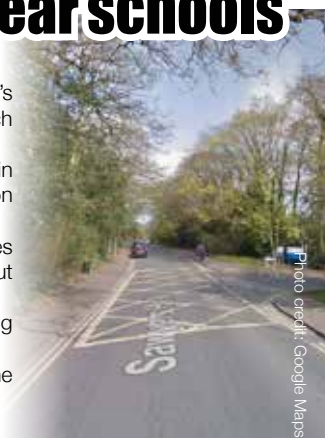


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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Police station goes up for sale to raise money

The former Ongar police station will be put up for sale to raise funds for front-line policing.

The High Street building closed in 2011 and the intention to sell it was announced in 2015 to allow for reinvestment in other areas of the force.

Now, despite residents' fears over the decreasing visibility of police in Ongar, it has been confirmed that the police station will be sold.

Essex Police have sought to allay concerns following the news.

Chief Inspector Tina Cooper, District Commander for Brentwood and Epping Forest, said: "We know that police stations are symbolically important, but the reality is it is police officers who catch criminals,

protect victims, prevent crime and engage with our communities."

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex, Roger Hirst, said: "Police officers prevent crime and keep people safe, not buildings, and there are now more police officers in Essex than ever before, protecting our community.

"This is because of both our and the government's continued investment in policing over the past five years. The sale of the former Ongar police station, which hasn't been open to the public for more than a decade, will bring significant money back into the force which will be invested straight back into front-line policing."

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Photo credit: Epping Forest District Council



LOCAL NEWS ONGAR

High Street is not omitted from bike ride

The RideLondon-Essex cycle ride in May 2023 will continue its established route through Ongar, despite requests for the High Street to be omitted.

A series of community consultation events were previously held in Ongar and elsewhere in Essex to query residents about their concerns. However, organiser London Marathon Events has announced no changes to its proposed route.

Organisers considered omitting Ongar High Street from the route, with proposed variations marked on posters displayed at the public engagement sessions. However, Essex County Council (ECC) has agreed that the event will continue on the same route as in 2022.

A report to Epping Forest District Council said:

"Details of road closures will follow, along with information about community engagement plans."

Reactions to the announcement have been largely negative, with one resident saying: "I really am at a loss. What on earth does ECC think this event could ever achieve in the face of such near unanimous disapproval?"

Another resident said: "What's worse is that hordes of cyclists use this route to practise on every weekend, so it isn't just a problem for one day. They hold up traffic every weekend. No fun for anyone all year round."

ECC and London Marathon Events have been contacted for comment.

Fundraiser launched for beloved resident

A fundraiser has been launched for a memorial bench in memory of Edwyn Gilmour (pictured right), the former editor of *Ongar News*.

Edwyn, born on June 6, 1932, lived in Marden Ash for more than 50 years and was a well-known and popular individual in the area.

The fundraiser seeks to raise £7,000 for an engraved circular memorial bench to be situated at The Pleasance Car Park in Ongar.

A family member said: "Thank you so much to all those who are helping to raise money for the memorial bench in Ongar in honor of our beloved and hugely missed Dad. We are very touched, as would he be."

To donate, visit www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/edwyingilmourmemorialbench



Home Storage Trends for 2023

The New Year is synonymous with fresh starts and, of course, the big January house declutter which gets us all thinking about how we can make changes to the way we organise our homes. If 2023 is the year you plan to give your home a stylish lift, here are some top home storage trends from Sliderobes, that are set to dominate the world of interiors in the months ahead.

Home office order

With the shift to home working, people have been looking at ways to create an organised home office that's free from distraction. The new trend for home offices is storage solutions that are built in and bespoke, when it comes to their shelving, drawers and desks. Not only does this give it a personal touch but also makes the area feel like a functional workspace, to promote productivity.

Sustainable storage

2023 will be the year for sustainable storage. Eco-friendly options aren't anything new but this trend is gaining momentum and it's likely that more people will be opting for natural materials and aesthetics such as rattan and bamboo, glass and wood for their storage, whether it's baskets, boxes, shelves or wardrobes.

Crittall doors

In terms of styles, Sliderobes have seen a huge increase in crittall style doors for their customers' wardrobes and this trend is here to stay. It's easy to see why, as it's chic and minimal but has a bit of a modern edge. It's also versatile enough to suit any room style; from mid century to Scandi.



Rich deep blues will look luxurious, whilst grey toned denim blues can create a sense of peace and calm.

Blue is back

Grey has long been the interiors shade of choice but colour is making a comeback. Last year saw the resurgence of green but this year blue will be the perfect pick. Depending on the shade, blue can suit any room and style.



Bespoke for you

The ultimate trend for storage in 2023 will be personalised design. Everyone wants their home to feel unique and reflect their character and this will be integrated into storage solutions too. After all, everyone has individual storage needs. Whether it's a bookworm who wants a library of shelving or a shoe lover who needs a built-in shoe-rack in their wardrobe to protect, show-off and store their collection, storage that's fit for your lifestyle and your belongings, makes it much easier to keep a space calm and organised, as everything will have its own place.

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With the dwindling use of cash, the Mint has expanded into other areas, including precious metals investment, historic coins and luxury collectibles. And it's doing pretty well.

Cambridge University Press, the world's first publishing company, was founded in 1534 and publishes academic and educational texts.

Moving down the years, Royal Mail, as it's now known, was founded in 1586. For almost 500 years, it was owned by the state. But by 2015, it was fully privatised. At one stage in the early 20th century, the company had 22,000 pigeons. And someone's gone to the trouble of counting how many elastic bands it currently uses to bundle mail – apparently 342 million a year.

Barclays Bank was founded in London in 1690. The institution's long history is contained in an archive of photos, letters and curiosities housed in the Barclays Group Archives in Manchester.

In 1706, Thomas Twining bought a coffee shop in London's Strand and began to sell tea. Back then, tea was very costly. But Twining spotted a trend. And when he started selling loose tea leaves, as well as cups of the beverage itself, business boomed. By 1717, he'd bought additional space next door – and the shop's still open for business today.



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DYER STRAITS

DANNY DYER'S EXIT FROM *EASTENDERS* MARKS ALMOST A DECADE OF THRILLING DRAMA IN THE SQUARE

That Danny Dyer evolved so admirably from regal cockney to Queen Vic landlord Mick Carter is one of the more celebrated evolutions of British celebrity culture.

The East London-born West Ham United superfan has waved goodbye after almost a decade on Albert Square – a solid commitment to E20 and the drinks industry that has seen the once-derided actor and presenter rise to the cream of the soap opera fraternity.

Dyer emerged as a spiky, punchy, salt-of-the-Earth type who passed up an interest in usual working-class opportunities to embark on acting classes. Bullied at school for his passion for drama, Dyer soon had the last laugh, appearing in *Prime Suspect 3* at the age of 16.

Terrestrial gigs in *Cadfael*, *A Touch of Frost*, *Loved Up*, *Highlander*, *Soldier Soldier* and *Skins* followed, before his big film break came in *Human Traffic*, an iconic coming-of-age clubbing movie that also saw the emergence of John Simm.

Soon after, he was asked to front Bravo documentary series *The Real Football Factories* (a real-life take on *The Football Factory* movie he had previously starred in), which proved to be a big hit in an era where terrace casuals were still prevalent in the Premier League and beyond (as the subsequent *The Real Football Factories International* proved).

This was followed by *Danny Dyer's Deadliest Men*, in which he interviewed Britain's most notorious gangsters.

He turned down the chance to join the cast in Walford in 2009, citing fears of being too exposed in the public eye, but having experimented with a number of low-budget film projects, was lured to *EastEnders* in 2013 as Queen Vic landlord Mick Carter.

Enjoying a bevy of controversial storylines, he has clinched three awards in the role, including Best Serial Drama Performance at the National Television Awards. Along the way, he has made the change from the rough and ready hard man of the Square to someone capable of carrying through a wealth of poignant and emotive storylines. Having spent years developing his skills, he now looks to take that forward with other projects.

"*EastEnders* has been amazing for me," says Dyer. "I'm grateful for the beautiful years I've had there. I'm going to miss the people massively."

Talking about what comes next, the 45 year old says: "I know the landscape has changed slightly, but I want to go out there and have another go, and the only way I can do that is if I decide to walk away from the job."

Dyer will next be seen in a four-part Channel 5 drama called *Heat*, for which filming is to begin shortly in Australia.

Ahead of his Albert Square exit, executives were tight-lipped on how the storyline would develop, but there was all the drama expected of an *EastEnders* Christmas special – including a car chase, a cliff-top brawl, and ultimately tragedy as Mick met his watery end.

Perhaps the true tragedy is that one of the true mainstays of the British landscape is gone... for now, but maybe not forever.

Photo credit: BBC/Jack Barnes/Kieron McCarron



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TONE UP YOUR FINANCES IN 2023

While a financial overhaul may seem a less exciting prospect than taking on a new challenge or hobby, taking the time to do this now could really have a positive impact on your future wealth.

RECONNECT WITH YOUR GOALS

Whatever life stage you've reached, you'll no doubt have some short- and long-term financial goals you want to achieve. Reviewing these goals and determining the amount of money required to fulfil them is a good discipline and helps you connect to your aspirations, standing you in better stead of ultimately achieving them.

PRIORITISING YOUR PENSION

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

TAX-EFFICIENT SAVING OPPORTUNITIES

As the tax year end approaches, you still have time to use your annual ISA allowance, giving you even

more opportunity to build up your savings tax-efficiently.

REVISIT YOUR MORTGAGE

Usually a family's biggest monthly outgoing, it's important to review your mortgage as there may be a more suitable deal for you, especially if you're paying interest at your lender's standard variable rate.

REVIEW PROTECTION POLICIES

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

KEEP TALKING

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.



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HOW TO CHOOSE THE PERFECT OFFICE

Whether you're on the hunt for your first office for a new start-up or you have an established enterprise needing to relocate or upsize, we can help you to find the perfect commercial property for your business.

TRANSPORT AND PARKING: Is the office located in an area that boasts good transport links? Is it convenient for you, your employees and your clients? Do you need office parking? If yes, how many spaces do you need? Is it included in the price or available at an additional cost?

VISIBILITY AND PASSING TRADE: Is the office easy to find? How much foot traffic does it get? Depending on the nature of your business, you may need an office space that offers both visibility and passing trade.

REPUTATION OF THE AREA: Although you may want to try to cut costs, if your chosen office space is in an area that is not considered to be attractive or safe, this could have a detrimental effect on your business.

LOCAL AMENITIES: It is unlikely that you want an office space that is in the middle of nowhere with no local amenities such as cafés, restaurants and shops – especially if you love to wine and dine your clients.

SQUARE FOOTAGE: Another crucial factor is the size of the office space. You need to think not only about how many employees you have but also whether or not you need to store supplies on site. Remember to consider the long-term as well as the immediate future.

OFFICE FACILITIES: Make sure you know what is included in your rental agreement. For example, will the space be fully furnished? Is there a reliable and fast internet connection? Are utility bills and business rates included?

CONTRACT LENGTH: Are you looking for a long-term lease or a more flexible, short-term contract? Long rentals often work out cheaper, but only if you are able to commit to the agreed length of time.



Hama-rikyu Gardens



Hestercombe House



Flower Festival



Tresco Abbey Garden

GARDEN GETAWAYS

If you love gardening, then you are going to love our suggested destinations that are just perfect for green-fingered travellers.

Whether you want to explore gardens in the UK or go further afield, here's something for every gardening enthusiast.

Italy: Whether you choose to explore its formal gardens or simply enjoy the abundance of breathtaking blooms around the country, Italy is a great destination for garden enthusiasts. The gardens that overlook the Italian lakes are a must-see, with the botanical gardens of Villa Taranto overflowing with azaleas and rhododendrons.

Japan: This East Asian country is renowned for its pink cherry blossom and Zen gardens which have to be seen first-hand to be believed. Head to the Hama-rikyu Gardens in Tokyo in March, and don't forget to also schedule a trip to Japan's most popular Zen garden at the Ryōan-ji Temple.

Somerset: If you are looking for a gardening getaway that is closer to home, Somerset is the perfect choice. Visit country houses such as Hestercombe House, Kilver Court and Lytes Cary Manor and marvel at their impeccable grounds and stunning natural surroundings.

Madeira: Boasting a sub-tropical climate, Madeira is a haven for a whole host of rare species that guarantee to impress. From North American sequoia trees to pretty ponds filled with koi carp, there are many colourful sights for you to enjoy. Don't miss the Flower Festival in April 2023, where you can see some of Madeira's finest gardens and landscapes.

Isles of Scilly: The Isles are famous for their unspoilt natural beauty, with an abundance of beaches, rugged landscapes and wildlife. Head to Tresco Abbey Garden, where you can marvel at 20,000 plants from more than 80 different countries.



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The Travel Boutique, Travel Lounge in Shenfield has reopened much to everyone's delight. We may have been working remotely for the past 10 months but throughout we have continued to provide our loyal customers with our personal service and impartial advice and the widest variety of holidays, with many of you enjoying treasured getaways in 2022 and already booked with us for 2023.

Our Luxury Concierge Service can assist with a personalised itinerary for a truly unforgettable experience. Janette Healey owner of the Travel Boutique is delighted to be back on the High Street: "What a wonderful welcome back. It's so nice to see my customers in person after months of speaking by telephone and over skype. Planning holidays is what I love to do best and with more than thirty years in travel there is nothing better than sitting face to face with my clients. I have personally been to some wonderful places all over the World and I love to share my knowledge and insight. During my



time in Travel I have built some wonderful relationships with Hotel and Tour Operator partners across the Globe. Travel is our passion and customer care, our forte."

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PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

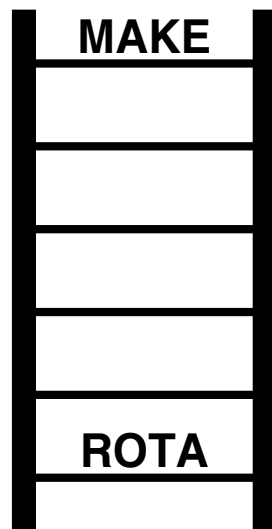
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- ▶ OPAL
- ▶ QUARTZ
- ▶ RUBY
- ▶ SAPPHIRE
- ▶ TANZANITE
- ▶ TOPAZ
- ▶ TOURMALINE
- ▶ TURQUOISE



DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ More than one million animal species have been identified on Earth.
- ▶ There is only one species of koala in the world.
- ▶ In the wild, red pandas are mainly active during the twilight period and until the early hours of the morning. Otherwise, they are usually found resting.
- ▶ Like domestic cats, giant panda bears have vertical slits for pupils.
- ▶ It's thought there are more tigers in captivity than are left in the wild.
- ▶ Lions can eat up to 40kg of meat in a single meal. That's around a quarter of their body weight.
- ▶ You can tell the species of an elephant by the shape of its ears.

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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Make sure your 2023 is filled with memorable Travel experiences.

City Breaks are a perfect way to get you through the year. Best of all, they are often excellent value for money.

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PARIS

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Visiting Paris is always a unique experience. Paris has it all. The perfect mix of art, culture, fashion and food means plenty of eating, drinking, shopping and sightseeing. Famous city landmarks such as The Louvre, Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame and the Arc de Triomphe are just a few of the famous sights you should see on a city break here.



BRUSSELS

From *£270 per person

A treasure trove of more than 100 museums but also rich in history, architecture, gastronomy, culture and so much more. From medieval masterpieces to glass-roof covered arcades lined with shops, cafés and brasseries, charming neighbourhoods and spectacular views, there really is something for everyone. A fine and beautiful city to explore.



AMSTERDAM

From *£275 per person

There's so much more than just the tulips of Amsterdam to discover. With its picturesque canals, rich history and eclectic cultural scene, the capital of the Netherlands is one of the World's most vibrant cities. With fascinating museums, quirky festivals, theatre, live music, laid-back bars and delightful restaurants, there's never a shortage of things to do in Amsterdam!



COLOGNE

From *£385 per person

The cathedral city of Cologne has many reasons why you'd want to visit. Located on the Rhine it is also considered one of Germany's greatest cities for shopping with everything from independent design shops, edgy Scandinavian fashion boutiques to vast flea markets. The city has a distinctive historical charm and among the narrow-cobbled streets you'll find many of the city's coolest pubs, shopping streets, museums, and historical buildings.



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GARDENING



WINTER *Wonderland*

HOW TO GET THE BEST OUT OF YOUR GARDEN IN THE COLD WINTER MONTHS

Some of us may regard winter as the season when our desire to venture out into the garden wanes completely. Yet whether we're negotiating a path across a frosty lawn, or simply viewing nature from the warmth and comfort of the indoors, making your garden into a winter wonderland is a rewarding task.

So while you may not have the summer sorcery of flower sprays, sun loungers and an abundance of fruit and produce, these tips will help keep your outside space special even in the depths of winter.

beautiful – consider the pinky purple of dogwood, evergreen rhododendrons and the shining white trunks of a birch tree.

TAKE FORWARD TRADITION

Planting a number of hardy winter varieties will give your garden presence as well as helping to carry forward the legacy of a traditional English garden. Use hellebores and snowdrops to create a classic, elegant effect.

TREMENDOUS TREES

Stripped of their summer decoration, let skeletal trees stand out against a snowy backdrop. Mixed up with evergreens, you can create a brilliant contrast.

FANTASTIC FEASTS

Finally, don't assume your winter garden can't put produce on the table. Carrots and fava beans will still thrive throughout the winter, and you can extend the growing period of a number of other varieties of fruit and veg if you keep your greenhouse operational throughout the cold months.

STRUCTURAL STATEMENTS

A winter garden is one that's lighter on detail, so create new space and interest with some cool man-made structures. From trellises to metalwork, benches to rockeries, winter provides a great opportunity for man-made materials to enter the fray.

CALL FOR COLOUR

The assumption that the colour drains out of our gardens in winter is, ultimately, wrong. There are many stem-like winter plants that are radiant and

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GARDENING

PRUNED TO *perfection*

If you want to enjoy a good fruit cycle, you need to prune your apple and pear trees over the winter. For those who are new to fruit pruning, this step-by-step guide tells you all you need to know.

GET THE RIGHT TOOLS

You need to have clean, sharp tools that are designed for pruning, such as secateurs, loppers or a pruning saw if you have a larger pear or apple tree. Make sure you sharpen them before use.

CUT BACK SUCKERS AND LOWER BRANCHES

Use secateurs to cut back any suckers. These are unwanted shoots that grow near the base of the trunk. Also, cut back lower branches as these do not get sufficient light to bear good fruit.

REMOVE DEAD OR DISEASED WOOD

Remove all branches with discoloured or flaking bark towards the base of the branch by making a cut above an outward-facing bud (one that is on the opposite side of the stem to the main trunk). If there are no buds, remove the entire branch.

CREATE A VASE SHAPE FRAMEWORK

Ideally, you want four or five main branches that help

to create an open vase shape. If you have more than five, remove some at the base by cutting 6mm from the branch collar – this refers to the bulbous area that is attached to the trunk.

Avoid removing more than 25 per cent of the branches in one go as this can affect the tree's health and fruit production.

REMOVE CROSSING OR RUBBING BRANCHES

Remove any branches that are growing into the centre of the tree as this will allow for better air circulation. If two branches are crossing, keep the one that best retains the vase shape of the tree and remove the other one.

SHORTEN THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S GROWTH ON EACH BRANCH BY ONE-THIRD

Cut just above an outward-facing bud on each main branch so that new branches grow outwards. This will help the tree to develop into a healthy shape and prevent congestion.



KISS A Ginger

CELEBRATE KISS A GINGER DAY THIS MONTH

On January 12, it's Kiss A Ginger Day – the perfect time to show redheads some love. But you might need to take a good look around – because red hair is rare. Only two in every 100 people are natural redheads, making it the rarest hair colour in the world. And the rarest people of all are redheads with blue eyes.

The genes responsible for red hair are recessive. This means that to have a red-haired baby, both parents must carry a red-haired gene. If both parents carry the gene but don't have red hair themselves, they'll have around a one in four chance of having a red-haired baby. If one of the parents is a redhead and the other is a carrier of the gene but doesn't have red hair, the chances go up to around one in two. And if both parents have ginger locks, chances are that all their children will have red hair too.

Hundreds of years ago, redheads were thought

to be witches and were shunned by society. These days, things have thankfully improved – although some people still think natural gingers are brash and hot-headed. That's not true, of course. But recent studies have shown that redheads require more anaesthetic than people with other hair colours. Their response to painkillers is also different – for the medication to work, they need more of some types of painkillers and less of others.

So how are you going to celebrate on January 12? If you've got a natural ginger among your family and friends, show them how much you appreciate their extraordinary tresses. And if you're not that lucky, listen to some music by redheads – Ed Sheeran or Florence and the Machine, anyone? Or how about a film starring Julianne Moore or Jessica Chastain? The choice is yours.





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Chinese New Year LANTERNS

This year, Chinese New Year falls on January 22, marking the beginning of the Year of the Rabbit. Chinese communities throughout the world celebrate the New Year with family meals and outdoor events featuring firecrackers, fireworks and dragon puppets. And at the end of the festivities, there's a lantern festival to welcome the full moon.

To mark the occasion, why not create some beautiful paper lanterns? Plain ones can look gorgeous, but choose rabbit-printed paper or add some decorations for a bit of extra festive fun. You could even adorn your lanterns with homemade bunny features, such as ears, eyes and noses.

YOU WILL NEED:

- > Some sheets of paper (A4 paper makes a lantern about 20cm tall, and A5 paper makes a lantern about 14cm tall). You can use different coloured or patterned paper
- > A ruler, pencil and eraser
- > A glue stick
- > Scissors
- > Extra decorations such as stick-on shapes, sequins, braid or ribbon (optional)

HOW TO MAKE:

1. Fold your paper in half lengthways so you have a long, slim rectangle.
2. Draw a line parallel with the long edge, where the two sides of the paper meet. This line should be about 2.5cm away from the edge.
3. Starting about 2.5cm in from one of the short edges, draw a series of parallel lines across the rectangle, from the folded edge up to the long line you've just drawn. These lines should be about 2.5cm apart.
4. Cut along each of the short lines.
5. Erase any noticeable pencil marks, then unfold the paper.

6. Run your glue stick along one short side of the lantern. Form the paper into a tube shape, then glue the two short sides together.
7. If you like, decorate your lantern or add a ribbon or paper handle.

The lanterns look great strung along a piece of ribbon or string!



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Shell YEAH!

If you're thinking about staying in this Valentine's Day, shellfish offers a decadent and delicious centrepiece for a romantic meal for two.

However, if you're unsure what to serve for that special someone come February 14, here are five of the most popular types of shellfish, as well as how to serve them.

OYSTERS

Oysters are the most nutrient-rich shellfish available and also the most expensive. With a reputation as an aphrodisiac, oysters have a gooey texture and a salty flavour. Most commonly served raw on ice, you can fill their shells with lemon, butter, hot sauce or a zingy mixture made from shallots and vinegar. Alternatively, they can be grilled, baked or fried.

MUSSELS

One of the easiest shellfish to prepare and cook, mussels are usually steamed in flavoured broth or sauce. Mussels need to be kept alive before they are cooked and can only be refrigerated for one or two days. Any mussels with broken shells or ones with open shells and that don't close when tapped should be discarded. Enjoy moules frites (steamed mussels and fries), served with a huge chunk of crusty bread.

CRAB

Crabs take a bit more effort to prepare and cook, but it's definitely worth it as you'll be rewarded with tender, delicious meat. You can boil, roast, steam or grill crab and this shellfish is commonly used in dips, pastas, seafood dishes and salads. White crab meat boasts a meaty texture and a more delicate flavour, whereas brown meat is softer with an almost pâté-like consistency.

SCALLOPS

Another highly tender and succulent type of shellfish, scallops make the perfect starter. Boasting a rich, buttery flavour, you can choose between small and sweet bay scallops or big and bold sea scallops. Pan-seared scallops with peas and mint are our go-to recipe at any time of year.

LOBSTER

Known for its melt-in-the-mouth texture, lobster is the epitome of elegance. Lobster can be cooked whole, and the most succulent meat is found in the tails, legs and claws. Try garlic herb butter lobster tail as a delicious starter or lobster risotto as a main course.



Giggling Squid

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Yes please TO CHEESE

JANUARY 20, IS NATIONAL CHEESE LOVER'S DAY – HERE'S HOW TO CELEBRATE

Feeling a little cheesed off? Well don't despair, for Friday, January 20, is National Cheese Lover's Day, giving you carte blanche to celebrate and indulge in all your favourite dairy delights.

Not surprisingly, Britain is a nation of cheese lovers. Whether it's a humble cheddar sarnie, a saucy slice of Welsh rarebit or a fancy fondue dip, the average Brit eats 30g of cheese a day and there are more than 700 cheeses produced in the UK.

Around half of sales are cheddar – named after the famed Cheddar Gorge caves in Somerset where the cheese was once stored to ripen – but we're still partial to more exotic fromages such as mozzarella, parmesan and feta.

HOW TO CELEBRATE

With such a thriving cheese industry in this country, it couldn't be easier to indulge in this Wookey Hole-iest of days. Most major supermarkets now boast English-made gems such as Wensleydale Blue and Red Leicester, but it's also worth seeking out some lesser-known treats from your nearest speciality cheesemonger. Or, if you're really enthusiastic, you can head to your local dairy farm where they will likely have a shop selling their creations.

Not only is cheese incredibly tasty and diverse, it's also highly nutritious. A great source of protein, it contains vitamin B12 (which is vital for red blood formation), and a matchbox-sized slice provides one-third of an adult's daily calcium requirement.

So don't be sheepish – make like a mouse and treat yourself to a little of what you fancy. Whether red, yellow or blue, in moderation, cheese is very good for you.

BRITAIN'S TOP 10 CHEESES*:

1. Cheddar
2. Red Leicester
3. Brie
4. Mozzarella
5. Parmesan
6. Stilton
7. Cream cheese
8. Wensleydale
9. Camembert
10. Feta

*According to a study by Branstor Pickle in 2017.



Put your NECK on the line

Do you always stick to the same style of jumper? Then maybe now is the time to explore other options. Discover the most popular jumper necklines below and find the perfect fit for you, your shape and your style.

Shawl collar

A shawl collar is a cross-over style of neckline that is found on both men's and women's jumpers. Although stylish and sophisticated, this type of jumper neckline is predominantly used to provide warmth around the neck area.

Polo or turtle neck

A polo neck is a tight-fitting style of collar that you can turn or roll down if desired. It typically extends from the collarbone up to the lower jaw and is ideal if you have a pear-shaped figure as it can help to broaden the shoulders.

Cowl neck

A cowl neck jumper features a funnel neck that drapes down to show off your collarbone and neckline. It is similar in style to a polo neck jumper but the fabric falls more loosely or in a bundle. This shape flatters all body types.

Crew neck

A crew neck, sometimes referred to as a round neckline, is one of the most popular jumper neckline styles. Predominantly found on pullover-style jumpers, a crew neckline is versatile and works well on men and women alike.

Scoop neck

A scoop-neck neckline drops much lower than a usual neckline and is often used to showcase a little bit of cleavage. Although mostly found on women's clothing, you can also find men's jumpers that feature a scoop neck.

Banded collar

This type of jumper neckline features a small band or tab of fabric that delivers a smooth and smart appearance. You can find V-necks and round necks that have a banded collar.

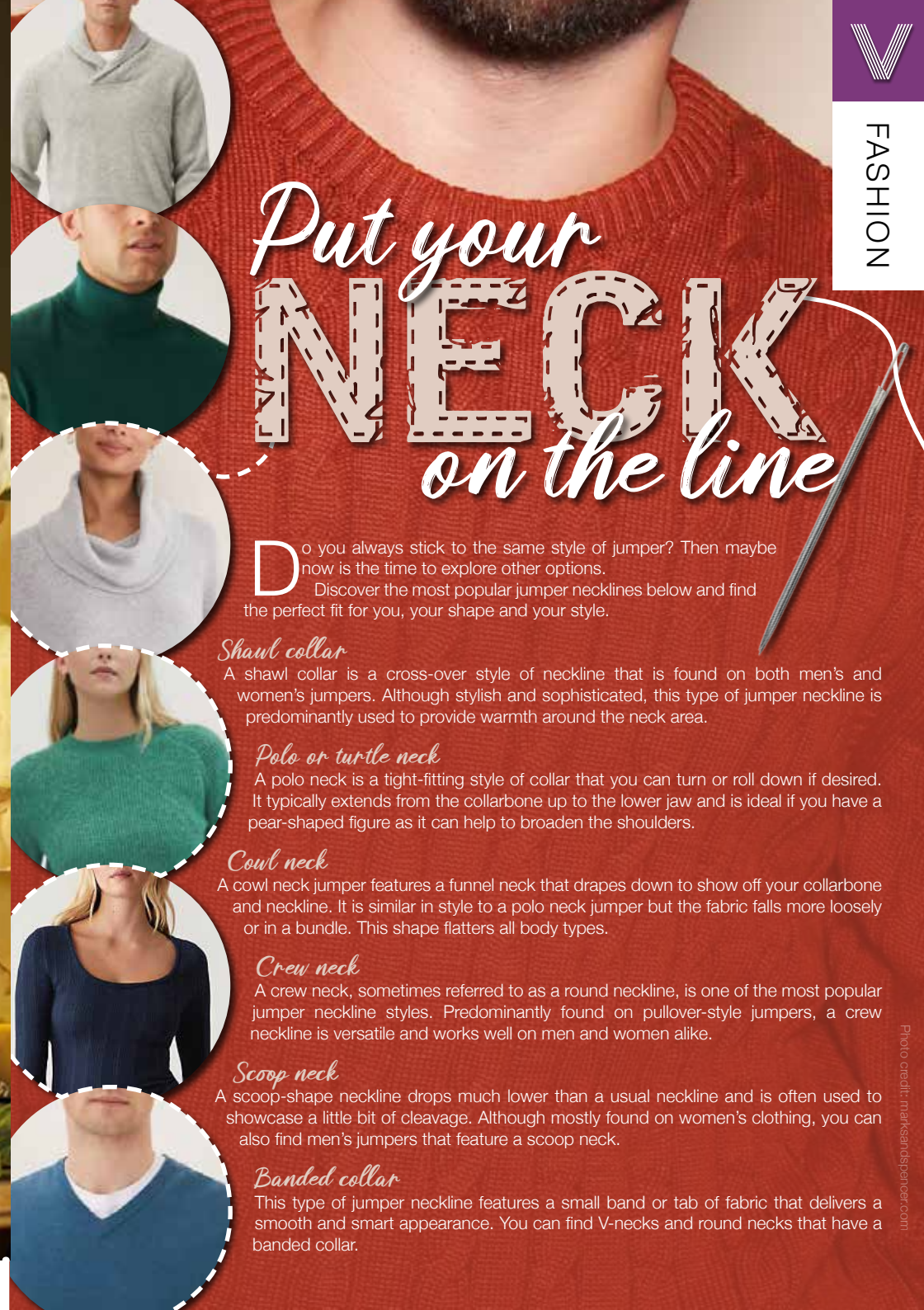


Photo credit: marksanispencer.com



BURN, baby, BURN

We know sport is great for reducing stress and boosting confidence, but let's be honest: for most of us, the biggest lure of exercise is to get fit and trim some fat.

With that in mind, here are the seven sports that burn the most calories per minute. Calorie expenditure is based on a healthy, able-bodied person of average build.

▲ RUNNING (UP TO 1,000 CALORIES/HOUR)

Running is great for burning calories, and even those hitting the pavements at a slow pace can burn around 700 calories per hour. And as logic dictates, the faster you run, the more calories you vanquish.

▲ SQUASH (UP TO 900 CALORIES/HOUR)

The best all-round sport of them all, squash combines energy bursts with stamina, power, competitive spirit and mental awareness, and is great for burning fat.

▲ CYCLING (UP TO 700 CALORIES/HOUR)

Despite the fact that cycling affords you the chance to step off the gas, it remains an excellent exercise for burning calories.

▲ BOXING (UP TO 700 CALORIES/HOUR)

It's quick bursts of energy that make boxing such a great exercise, with power, constant motion and the need to stay aware all combined in this fun, fast-paced workout.

▲ SWIMMING (UP TO 600 CALORIES/HOUR)

Not only is swimming excellent for putting every part of your body to use, but the continued resistance against water means additional calorie burn.

▲ ROWING (UP TO 600 CALORIES/HOUR)

While some may assume rowing is primarily a strength challenge for the arms, this exercise also requires leg flexibility and movement. The more muscles being used, the more calories you'll burn.

▲ AEROBIC DANCE (UP TO 550 CALORIES/HOUR)

Aerobic dance is not only a fun way to exercise, but is also effective at improving your fitness.

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colour me calm

Are you looking for a new hobby? Sales of adult colouring books have surged since the pandemic as people look for ways to relax, de-stress and enjoy some much needed me-time. Not convinced that colouring should be your new pastime? Discover five benefits of picking up pens and pencils below.

Colouring relaxes your brain

Does your brain often feel frazzled by the end of the day? As colouring is a focused activity, it can help to relax your mind and keep worries at bay. It has also been shown to improve brain function as it activates the creative part of your mind.

Colouring improves your motor skills

Adult colouring books often feature complex designs which require you to hone your hand-eye coordination and motor skills. This can be particularly beneficial if you spend a lot of time looking at screens.

Colouring aids sleep

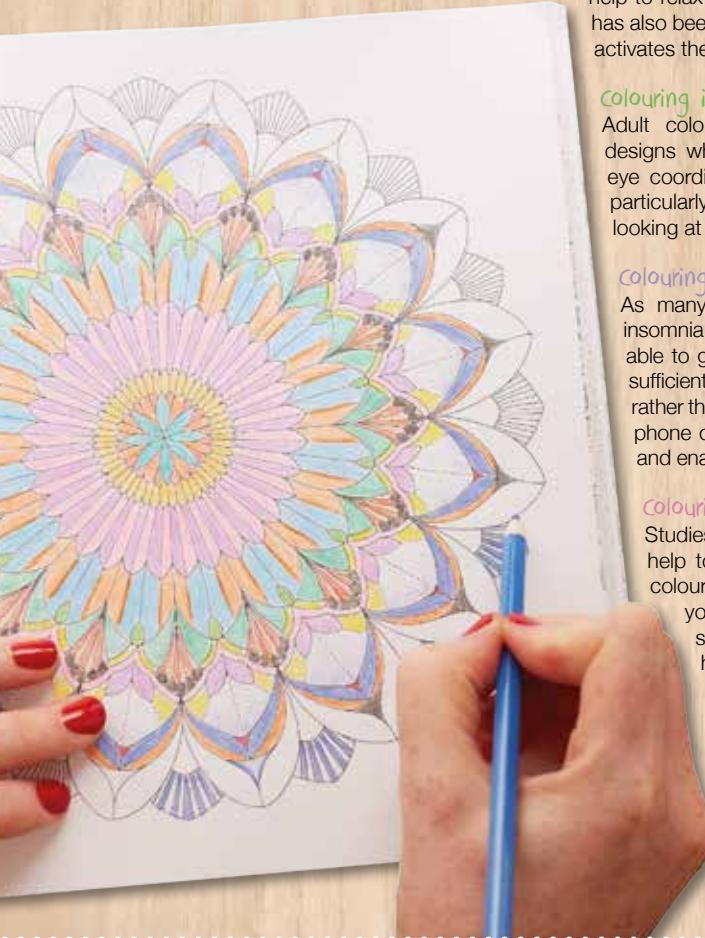
As many as one in three people suffer with insomnia, which is characterised as not being able to get to sleep or not staying asleep for a sufficient amount of time. Colouring before bed, rather than being exposed to blue light from your phone or tablet, can help to release melatonin and enable you to easily drift off to sleep.

Colouring reduces anxiety

Studies have shown that colouring can help to reduce anxiety in adults. Simply by colouring for 20 minutes a day, you can lower your heart rate and decrease feelings of stress or anxiety. Colouring can also help to improve your mood.

Colouring can be therapeutic

Similar to art therapy, colouring can be therapeutic as it helps to put your mind into a meditative state. This enables you to focus purely on the present and remove any negative thoughts from your mind.



MEN'S HAIR TRENDS

FOR WINTER 2023

TOP TIPS FROM AWARD-WINNING MEN'S HAIRDRESSER AND OWNER OF TONI&GUY BILLERICAY, JIM SHAW

There will be one stand-out hair colour trend for men this winter – bleached hair. Men will look to lighten their hair and have it toned for a clean, platinum hue or an icy white/grey tone that's fitting for the season.

We will also see cooler-toned brights becoming popular, such as dark greens, blues and purples for men who want to add a pop of colour to their look.

Disconnected cuts have been in and out of fashion over recent years, and this season they're back on trend. This means we'll see men requesting their hair to be super short on the sides with longer length on top.

The military-inspired regulation cut will also be popular. This is a very sharp and fresh style whereby the hair is trimmed down on the top but kept longer than the sides, which are tapered and gradually cut shorter before reaching the nape of the neck, where the hair can be shaved off completely to help reflect a true regulation cut.

For those looking for a haircut that's longer in length, mullets will be the textured haircut of the season. Hair should usually be cut shorter and choppy towards the front and sides and left longer at the back. However, for 2023, we will see a more modern take on this trend, with men looking for the gradation of different lengths to be a lot softer.

In terms of styling for winter 2023, this all depends on the cut you have. If you have a shorter haircut, sleek styles will be very on trend. Incorporate a pomade with a shine finish, gel or wax into your styling routine to give your hair a neater, more polished appearance.



Photo credit: Tony Le Britton



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National Eye Care Month



PEIS

January is National Eye Care Month, so what better time to learn how to take care of your pet's eyesight? Sight is an essential sense that enables your pet to navigate their environment, communicate with other animals and even express emotion, so find out how to look after your pet's vision below.

Sadly, eye problems are relatively common in pets and can be caused by many different things such as exposure to chlorinated water or saltwater, fungal infections from a change in climate or humidity, genetics, and ageing. Some breeds are also more susceptible to certain eye conditions than others.

1. Regular maintenance

One of the easiest and most effective ways to keep your pet's eyes in good condition is by preventing any issues before they occur. You can do this by periodically cleaning their eyes with a soft, damp cloth or a specially formulated rinse and regularly trimming the hair around their eyes. Also check for any debris or contaminants in and around the eyes.

You can help to support your pet's eye health by giving them eye vitamins. A more long-term approach to eye health, these are packed with antioxidants that work hard to fight harmful free radicals. Research shows that these can help to prevent the onset of age-related and hereditary macular degeneration.

While it is important that you keep your pet clean and well groomed, some grooming products can irritate their eyes. Use chemical-free shampoos and soaps and avoid air fresheners in the home if your pet has sensitive eyes.

Many eye problems cause watery or mucus discharge, so make sure that you look out for this as well as any swelling or redness. Sensitivity to light, rubbing at the eye and holding the eye closed are also signs of a potential infection or issue.

ENGLAND'S FINEST?

BEN STOKES OBE HAS TRANSFORMED HIMSELF AND THE GAME OF CRICKET

It's only five years since Ben Stokes OBE found himself facing not just exclusion from the sport he loved, but also potentially a prison sentence, having been charged with affray outside a Bristol nightclub.

The incident – in which the brilliant all-rounder was defending a homosexual couple – cost Stokes his place in the 2017/18 Ashes team, and sent the Durham cricketer on a journey of self-discovery that, ultimately, has led him to the heights he finds himself at now.

Stokes roared back from the Bristol incident, inspiring England's 2019 World Cup win, batting sensationally at Headingley in that year's Ashes to win the third Test when all seemed lost, and being named Player of the Series in South Africa that winter.

Last year, Stokes was instrumental in bringing England T20 World Cup glory, yet it is his ascent as Test captain that is truly captivating a nation at the moment.

England clinched an away Test series in Pakistan – a country in which they had only ever won two matches in their entire history – yet it is the manner of the cricket being played that truly reflects a new dawn for the sport.

'Bazball', as it is referred to, is a driven, dynamic and outlandishly positive method of playing the game, the like of which five-day Test cricket has never seen. This cricket revolution epitomises not just Stokes' captaincy, but also his approach to life itself.

As inspirational English sportspeople go, there are few who can rival Stokes' efforts.

Further proof of this was offered when Stokes was named as runner-up in the 2022 BBC Sports Personality of the Year Award. Though he didn't win, his nomination is evidence enough of his incredible success.



Photo credit: Anjum Naveed AP/Sutterstock

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THE CLAIM GAME

VEHICLE INSURANCE CLAIM

While no one expects to be involved in a car accident, these types of incidents can happen in the blink of an eye and, if you don't know what to do next, can cause you untold stress and expense.

Here's everything you need to know about making a claim following an accident.

WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED TO MAKE A CLAIM?

If you are involved in a motoring incident with another person, you should do your best to obtain the below information on the scene:

- > Their full name
- > Their vehicle registration
- > A contact telephone number

It can also be a good idea to find out their address and details of their insurance provider. If there are any witnesses, try to get their details as well. When you phone your insurance company, they are likely to ask you for your policy number, so make sure you have this to hand.

WHEN DO I NEED TO MAKE A CLAIM?

Although it can vary from one insurance provider to the next, typically you have 24 to 48 hours to inform them if you are involved in a motoring

accident. This is regardless of whether the incident was your fault or caused by another party. Where possible, you should call them while still at the scene.

DO I HAVE TO MAKE A CLAIM AFTER AN ACCIDENT?

There is no rule that says you have to make a claim after a road accident, but you are required by law to tell your insurer about what has happened.

DO I NEED TO CALL THE POLICE AFTER A CAR ACCIDENT?

According to the Road Traffic Act, you must report a car accident to a local police station within 24 hours. You can do this using the non-emergency number 101. If there is an injury or the road is blocked, call 999 immediately.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T WANT TO MAKE A CLAIM?

You may choose not to make a claim. This will allow you to keep your no-claims discount intact, although you will have to pay for any necessary repairs to your vehicle yourself. It is worth knowing that, even if you do not make a claim, the other driver involved may still do so.

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Awning & Interior
Shutter Specialists
for over 100 Years**

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- Factory Showroom with Free Parking
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- Patio Awning Showroom
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- Custom-Made Window Shutters
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- Roller Garage Doors
- Home & Commercial



**As a local company we offer a
wide choice of Blinds, Shutters,
Patio Awnings & Roller Garage
Doors & with competitive
prices all year plus
**FREE NO OBLIGATION
QUOTATIONS****

sales@worthblinds.com

Unit 13 Parkside Centre, Potters Way, Temple Farm Industrial Est, Southend SS2 5SJ

sales@worthblinds.com

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Valentine's 4 Course Dinner

WITH LIVE ENTERTAINMENT ~ TUESDAY 14TH FEBRUARY 2023



STARTERS

Red Pepper Soup (V)

Crème fraîche

Scallops

Carrot Purée, Cucumber, tomato,
Onion, Heritage Carrot

Red Prawns

Pomegranate, Avocado, Red Onion,
red Pepper Sauce

Pork Belly

Ham Hock Bombe, Celeriac Purée,
Spinach, Girolle Mushroom

Pigeon

Beetroot Purée, Candied Beetroot,
Broccoli, Poached Baby Pear in
Port Wine



Champagne Sorbet



MAINS

Fillet of Beef

Potato Purée, Spinach, Baby Carrot,
Parsnip Purée, Veal Jus

Venison

Broccoli Purée, Shallot, Tender
Stem Broccoli, baby Beetroot

Sea Bass

Mussels, Asparagus, Thai Shallots,
Sun Blushed Tomato, Beurre Blanc

Lobster

Romanesco, Baby Turnip, Baby
Carrot, Pack Choi, Lobster Bisque
Sauce

Ravioli (V)

Artichokes, Spinach, Capers,
Sundried Tomato, Vegetarian
Parmesan Cheese

DESSERTS

Raspberry Soufflé

Red Berry Sauce

Dark Chocolate &

Passion Fruit Cake

Passion Fruit Gel, Passion Fruit
Sorbet

Strawberries Parfait (N)

Pistachio, Honey Combe

Exotic Fruit Meringue Dome

Pineapple & Coconut Coulis



Tea/Coffee with Petit Fours



Food Allergies & Intolerances (N) denotes dishes containing NUTS. If you would like more information about the ingredients used in the preparation of our menu items, before placing your order, please speak to a member of our staff who will be happy assist you.

£79.50

PER PERSON, INCLUDING VAT

A discretionary 12% Service Charge will be added to your final bill.

A non-refundable deposit of £25.00 per person is required at the time of booking.



MARYGREEN MANOR
HOTEL & RESTAURANT

Website: www.marygreenmanor.co.uk Telephone: 01277 225252

London Road, Brentwood, Essex, CM14 4NR