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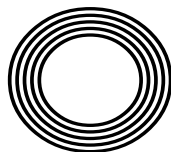
TOP 5  
tech-free  
holidays

*Why we celebrate*  
ST PATRICK'S DAY

VIVA MAGENTA:  
Pantone Colour of the Year

# PETER JONES CBE

How this dragon proved he's impossible to slay



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# Editor's notes...

MARCH 2023



Nik Allen, Editor

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

I recently saw a picture of basketball player LeBron James making a shot that would break the all-time scoring record in the NBA. Although this was an iconic moment, it was the crowd that caught my eye.

Out of around 200 people in the shot behind him, in the crowd you could count on one hand how many of them did not have their smartphones out videoing this moment. In a world where you can see every sporting moment on video nowadays, it made me realise how important it is to remember to live in the moment and enjoy it with our own eyes, rather than through a

camera lens.

I have been more conscious of this now, even when I'm at home, to spend less time on my phone and more time in the moment. Having a daily cut-off point when my phone gets locked away for the evening and also on weekends has helped me spend less time staring at a screen.

So how about setting yourself the challenge of stepping away from your phone this month? You'll be amazed at how your quality time with family and friends improves when you no longer have this distraction to hand.

*Nik Allen*

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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 All pages are recyclable



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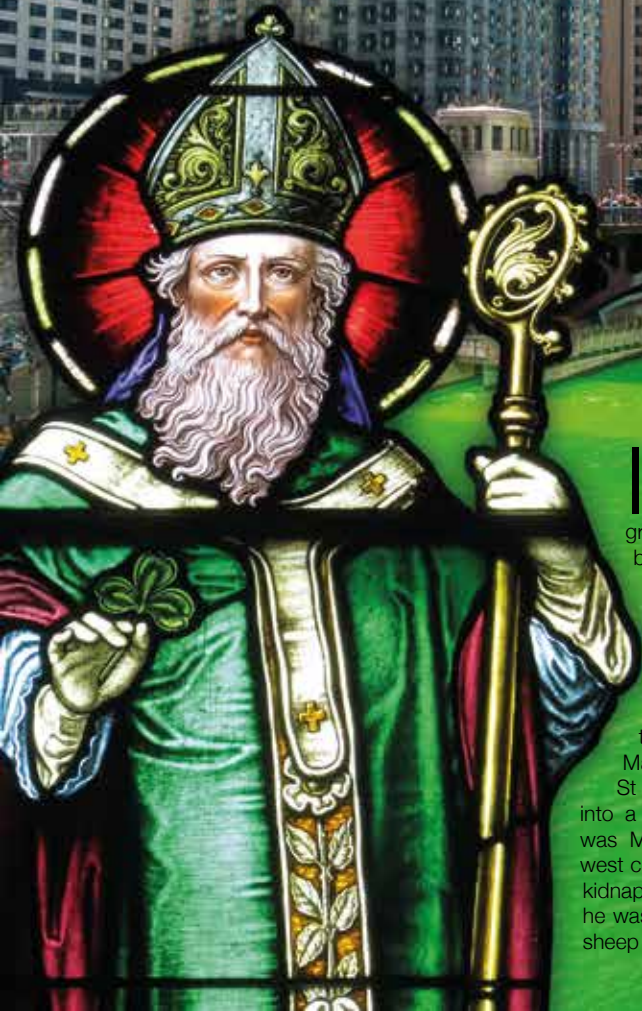
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# The story of ST PATRICK



In the USA, some people celebrate St Patrick's Day not just by wearing green clothes, but also by drinking green beer or milkshakes and eating green bagels and grits. Chicago even dyes its river bright green. If you think all this sounds more American than Irish, you're spot on. People join in the parades and celebrations whatever their heritage, but about one in every 10 citizens in the USA claims to have Irish ancestors. So what's the real story behind St Patrick's Day on March 17?

St Patrick was born in Britain around 386 AD into a well-to-do Roman family. His birth name was Maewyn Succat, and he grew up on the west coast, probably in Wales. At age 16, he was kidnapped by pirates and taken to Ireland, where he was sold as a slave. His job was to look after sheep for his master, a Druid high priest.

During his time as a slave, Maewyn devoted himself to Christianity, his parents' faith, and became determined to convert pagan Ireland.

After six years in captivity, Maewyn persuaded some local sailors to let him board their ship. After landing in France, he made his way back to his family in Britain. And from there, he travelled back to France to train as a priest in Auxerre.

When he was ordained, Maewyn changed his name to Patricius – or Patrick – which comes from the Latin for 'father figure'. Then, Pope St Celestine sent him to Ireland to spread the Christian message.

At first, the Irish people weren't keen. Patrick was threatened, robbed and beaten. But his strategy of persuading the most influential people first, including his former slavemaster, eventually paid off. He also had the good sense to incorporate pagan rituals into church practices to make them more appealing. Over the years, Patrick and his fellow missionaries spread their teachings across the country and set

up churches, monasteries and schools.

It's believed that Patrick died on or around March 17, 461 AD, when he would have been in his mid-70s. He died in Saul in County Down, Northern Ireland, and he's said to be buried in Downpatrick.

The Catholic church never formally declared him a saint, because the system for creating saints didn't start until the 12th century. But the Irish people and their leaders recognised him as one because of the decades he'd spent spreading the gospel.

The Irish have celebrated St Patrick's Day for more than 1,000 years. Traditionally, it involved donning a shamrock, going to church and tucking into a traditional meal of cabbage and bacon. But over the years, some St Patrick's Day fun from the USA has caught on back home. You won't find green beer – and certainly not green rivers. But there are plenty of lively parades, particularly in Dublin, with traditional singing, dancing and colourful floats.

Photo credit: TZIDO SUN/Shutterstock.com



# Holi

## THE FESTIVAL OF COLOURS

If you're lucky enough to experience the Hindu festival of Holi in India, it's an experience you'll never forget. People put aside their differences and come together to celebrate the end of winter and the beginning of spring, based on the Hindu lunar calendar.

This year's festival takes place on March 7 and 8 in India and among Hindu communities across the world. But what really happens at Holi, and how did it come about?

On Holi day itself, people take to the streets, singing and dancing and throwing powdered dyes and coloured water at each other – so it's no surprise that everyone ends up drenched in a rainbow of colours.

The colours of the dyes are significant. Red is associated with purity, green with vitality, blue with calm, and yellow with piety.

In the evening, when everyone's had a chance to freshen up and put on clean clothes, people visit their friends and exchange sweets.

In some places, people start celebrating the evening before Holi by lighting a bonfire. As a token of gratitude for the harvest, people throw coconuts, wheat sheaves and green chickpeas into the flames.

The bonfire tradition is based on the tale of a witch called Holika. She was burned to death in a fire by the Hindu god Lord Vishnu for trying to kill her devout nephew. To this day, some people burn an effigy of her on their bonfire.

The origin of the coloured dyes may lie with another Hindu deity, Lord Krishna. When he was a boy, he loved practical jokes, including throwing coloured water over his playmates.

But others say the custom comes down to Holi falling at a time of year when people are most at risk of catching diseases. Before the tradition of flinging around colourful dyes started, people threw herbs to keep ailments at bay.

Whatever the reason, Holi is definitely a time to celebrate life – and long may it last.

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In addition to the business side, it's been nearly a year since we started our *Stand With Ukraine* campaign. We are deeply humbled by how Brentwood and wider Essex community came together to help. The support and kind words that we continue to receive are overwhelming!

Millions of Ukrainians were forced to leave their homes and seek refuge in shelters and safer places away from homes. Millions of women, children and elderly fled the country leaving their sons, husbands and fathers fight for Ukraine, for their homes, their lives.

If each of us continues doing something, no matter how big or small, to support Ukraine and its people, it will help to bring the end of this horrible war closer.

Here are some of the ways in which you can assist:

- Drop any items from the following list to Schmidt Brentwood (71 High Street, Brentwood CM14 4RW) or Woodland Coffee Shop (37 Ongar Road, Brentwood, CM15 9AU): tinned food — tinned fish, tinned meat, tinned soups, other tinned food; long shelf life food — pasta, rice, flour, baby food, protein/energy bars; hygiene items — baby and adult nappies, sanitary towels, toothpaste, shower gels, razors, shaving gels, etc; medical supplies — Field or ordinary First Aid Kits, wound dressings, Halo (or analogue) chest seals, Quikclot or Celox gauze, tourniquets,



bandages, antiseptics, etc; torch lights, flash lights, batteries, portable charges (25K+ mAh) thermoses, thermal underwear for men, carry mats, sleeping bags, reusable plastic plates.



- Donate money via our Justgiving page for the purchase of the power generators.
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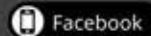
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# Faux Flowers Galore

At this time of year, there aren't too many flowers in parks and gardens. Shop-bought faux versions can be just as beautiful as the real thing, but why not impress your friends and family by creating your own?

These stunning tissue-paper flowers are simple to make and an ideal family craft – though young children will need a bit of help from an adult.

You can make each flower from a single colour of paper – or choose two or more. Alternate the colours or stack batches of colours on top of each other. Making your tissue-paper florals is all about trying different things and deciding what you like best.

When you're done, display your flowers as they are or string them into a garland. If you make them with stems, simply arrange them in a vase.

## YOU WILL NEED:

- > Coloured tissue paper: 8 pieces of 8 x 13cm paper for a medium flower | 10 sheets of 10 x 15cm paper for a large flower
- > Wire twist ties (if you don't need stems)
- > 50cm chenille sticks/pipe cleaners in green or brown (for the stems)
- > A pair of scissors

## HOW TO MAKE:

1. Stack the pieces of tissue paper into a neat pile.
2. Pleat the stack of paper into a concertina shape, starting at one of the long sides.
3. Use the twist tie or end of the chenille stick to tightly tie the middle of the paper strip.
4. Using the scissors, cut each end of the strip into a point or curve – or gently round them.
5. Carefully separate each layer of tissue paper.

## TOP TIPS:

- > It's easier to cut the tissue paper rectangles as a stack rather than individually
- > When separating the layers, do one side first then the other
- > A mix of medium and large blooms works best if you're making a bunch of flowers.



Photo credit: thehappyhomemaker

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## How to use LEFTOVER paint



HOME & DIY

Anyone who's decorated their home will know the dilemma of what to do with leftover paint. You'll often find tins left over after painting projects, which normally end up gathering dust (or rust) in your shed or garage.

So what should you do with all that leftover paint? Here are five ideas for some simple projects for your unused paint.

### ADD A COLOURFUL ACCENT

While you might not have enough paint left over for a whole wall, you can use it to paint part of a wall. An accent behind some shelving, around a photo frame or simply to break up a block of colour can add a nice contrast to your walls.

### UPCYCLE SOME FURNITURE

Leftover paint can be used to upcycle old furniture. From a pop of colour to a more neutral hue, your unused paint can bring a new lease of life to a piece in need of a facelift.

### PAINT A PATTERN ON THE WALL

Patterned walls don't just have to come from wallpaper. From polka dots to lines and animal-style splodges, you can use your paint to create a cool contrasting pattern that will add some interest to your space.

### GIVE PLANT POTS A MAKEOVER

Want to brighten up your plant pots? Use your leftover paint to give them a new look and instantly brighten up your garden and windowsill.

### PAINT PHOTO FRAMES

Adding a little colour to photo frames can make them stand out and is an ideal way to upcycle them, saving you some money and helping the environment too.

Finding ways to use up your leftover paint will help you prevent waste and help you do some interesting and colourful DIY projects around the home.

Photo credit: gillio-designs.com, mixandmatchdesigns.com, framebridge.com



# BACK TO THE *eighties*



If you're planning to paint your walls white and buy a sleek grey sofa, it's time to rethink. After years of Scandinavian minimalism, things in the world of interior decorating are changing. So it's time to ditch those clean lines and cool colours – and plump for something warmer and more inviting instead.

Interior experts predict that brown-based colours, like caramel, coral and terracotta, are set to make a big comeback this year. Pastels are proving popular, too – especially dusky pink and soft greens.

If you're after new wallpaper or soft furnishings, there's an eighties vibe here, too. Think ditsy country florals, colourful gingham and tropical prints. Choose cushions with frilly edges. And instead of the hard lines of a minimalist sofa, opt for something chunkier, curvier and squishier instead. It's all so much cosier. While you're at it, don't forget to buy a rattan chair or two – and treat yourself to a glass-topped table.

If you want to put up some shelves, opt for brass ones, preferably with curved edges. To adorn the shelves, choose rounded vases and bowls. And if you can get hold of some eighties-style candlesticks, show them off by adding some twisted candles – they're easy to find and cost just a couple of pounds.

For those decorative touches, add a touch of macramé. This could be a wall hanging, lampshade or plant hanger. And talking of plants, check out the Maidenhair and Boston ferns in your local garden centre. You won't find many plants more reminiscent of the eighties than these.

Like any style revival, of course, there are some things you'll need to leave firmly back in the eighties. So don't revive anything that's yellow pine, think carefully before you decide to reinstate those frilly roman blinds, and whatever you do, don't lay carpet on your bathroom floor.

Photo credit: thegoodpainter.com, wreckkitchens.com, lifed.com



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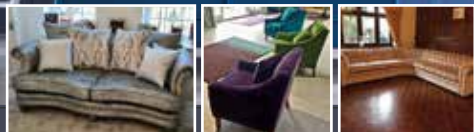
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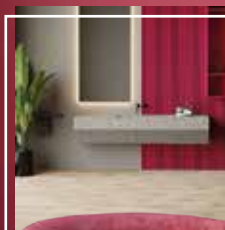
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Pantone Colour of the Year 2023:

# Viva MAGENTA

A bold and brave shade, Pantone's Colour of the Year for 2023 is Viva Magenta. Perfect for anyone who wants to start the spring feeling empowered and unstoppable, there are lots of ways that you can incorporate this colour into your home.

### What is Viva Magenta?

According to the colour experts at Pantone, Viva Magenta is "a pulsating colour whose exuberance promotes a joyous and optimistic celebration, writing a new narrative". A hybrid shade of red, pink and purple that provides the perfect balance between warm and cool tones, Viva Magenta is an inclusive colour that is easy to add to your home.

### What does Viva Magenta represent?

The story behind Viva Magenta is all about the balance between our digital and physical lives. In recent years, people have become drawn to nature in their homes and Viva Magenta has been chosen to reflect our pull towards natural colours. Furthermore, it reflects the movement surrounding climate change, sustainability and land protection.

### How can you use Viva Magenta in your home?

Incorporating Viva Magenta is an easy way to add a touch of fun to your home. Some of the best ways to incorporate this shade into your existing interior design include:

- Paint a magenta feature wall in your bedroom or living room
- Invest in an eye-catching magenta sofa
- Add pops of colour through rugs, curtains, pillows and other soft furnishings
- Paint your kitchen cabinets a rich pink or invest in a magenta splashback
- Try magenta dinnerware to create a sense of opulence in your dining room

### What colours go well with Viva Magenta?

Viva Magenta pairs well with both yellow and turquoise, as well as being a good match for most dominant colour categories.

Photo credit: zen-living.ca, snugsofa.com



HOME & DIY





# IS A LOFT CONVERSION WORTH IT?

**R**ather than move house, more of us than ever are weighing up the value of extending and expanding upwards with a loft conversion project for that extra bedroom and en suite bathroom. Done well with specialist builders converting that dusty, unused space into a loft conversion could help you escape the hassle of moving to a new house. So, if you're fighting for more house room and need square footage and when loft-conversion costs can start at as little as £35,000, having a straightforward home improvement project by converting your loft is a win, win solution...

Most loft conversions are generally allowed under permitted development rights, so there's no need to go through the tedious process of obtaining planning permission for that new bedroom or bathroom. And, another plus is that you'll get the extra room you want, but without having to sacrifice your garden space, as is usually the case with a conventional rear or side house extension.

## Lofty Benefits

Loft conversions can be one of the best returns on investment you can get when it comes to extending, with experts suggesting they add up to 20 per cent to the value of your home. To make it worthwhile, the cost of your loft conversion shouldn't be greater than the added value to your property, so do the sums and ensure what the ceiling price for properties in your area is to avoid disappointment later.

A loft conversion is particularly appealing as it makes use of unused space to create an extra room. It often costs less per square metre to convert a loft rather than



build a conventional extension, as much of the structure you need is already in place. As well as creating that extra bedroom and adding value, a loft conversion can even make your home more energy-efficient as well as worth more. All that extra insulation can help bring down the cost of your utility bills.

## Loft Conversions

Organising a loft conversion involves everything from getting the correct paperwork signed (if applicable), deciding on roof type, how the staircase will reach the new room, choosing the insulation and keeping to height regulations. Of course, some loft conversion decisions will be made for you by your architect or loft builder – but it's always worth getting ahead of the game so that when you're asked, you know what living space you want, where you'd like the plumbing to be. There are various types of really usable living spaces you may consider:

- **Roof light conversion**– the cheapest option where just a dormer window will fit, floor joists are reinforced, and stairs are added to make the space habitable.
- **Dormer conversion**– where a new loft space protrudes from the slope of the roof. This is the most popular type of home conversion space as it's suitable for pretty much any property with a sloping roof.
- **Hip-to-gable conversion**– these work by extending the sloping 'hip' roof at the side of your property outwards to create a vertical 'gable' wall space.
- **Mansard conversion**– the most costly, involving a loft conversion running the whole length of the property's roof, altering its angle to make it almost vertical.



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# LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Photo credit: NCA

## Fugitive criminal leader arrested in Thailand

An organised crime boss from Brentwood who was on the run for five years has been arrested in Thailand.

Richard Wakeling, 55 (pictured centre), fled the country in January 2018 on the eve of a 12-week trial. He was convicted in his absence of trying to import £8million worth of amphetamine in 2016 and sentenced at Chelmsford Crown Court in April 2018 to 11 years in prison.

Wakeling was placed on the National Crime Agency's (NCA) most wanted list and was arrested by the Royal Thai Police at a Bangkok garage as he went to collect his car on Friday, February 10.

He had been living in the beachside town of Hua Hin and remains in custody, with extradition proceedings underway.

David Coyle, NCA regional manager for Thailand, said: "The NCA has worked relentlessly to trace Wakeling and ensure he returns to the UK to serve his prison sentence.

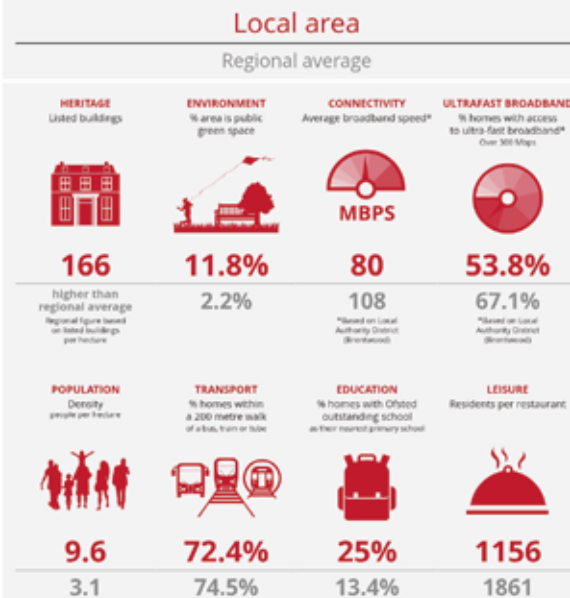
"I thank the prosecutors of the Attorney General's office, the Royal Thai Police and the Commissioner of the Central Investigations Bureau for their extensive work helping us identify and arrest Wakeling.

"We are committed to doing everything possible to find those who have fled justice in the UK."

## BRENTWOOD PROPERTY NEWS



### LOCAL AMENITIES



### HOUSING STOCK AND TENURE

There are **19,598** dwellings within Brentwood. **27.1%** of properties are flats, with houses making up **73%** of housing stock. **73.7%** of households own their own homes while **13.6%** live in privately rented accommodation.

### New development

In the last five years there have been **639** new homes built across Brentwood, an average of **128** per year.

Source: datafirst/Valuation Office Agency, Office for National Statistics, Department of Education, Department for Transport, Ordnance Survey and Royal Mail, Historic England and data licensed by the Office of Communications, 2011 Census, OLSHC.



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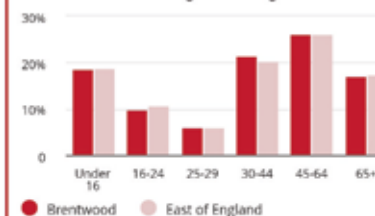
### POPULATION PROFILE

March 2023

There are **43,915** people living within Brentwood. The overall population increased by **10.1%** in the ten years between 2001 and 2011.

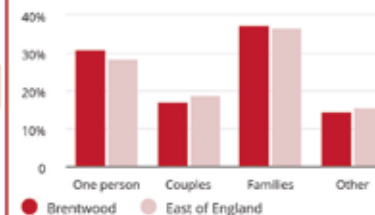
### Age profile

**21.7%** of the population are aged between 30 and 44 which is above the regional average.



### Household profile

**30.9%** of households comprise just one person while **37.5%** of households include families with children.



The most predominant industry of employment is **Public admin, education & health** representing **27.7%** of the working age population. During the working day, the population decreases by **-4.8%**.



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## Pupil cuts hair in memory of close friend



A Brentwood Preparatory School pupil has cut her hair for charity, helping to raise money and awareness in memory of a former classmate who passed away.

Aoife Burke, 10 (pictured above), who is in her last year at the school, cut off around 12 inches of her hair on Friday, February 17, in memory of her close school friend.

She donated her hair to the Little Princess Trust, a charity that provides real hair wigs free of charge to children and young people who have lost their own hair through treatment for cancer or other conditions.

The act was in memory of Aoife's friend, Aaron, a fellow pupil who died last year.

Aoife, after hearing about the Little Princess Trust, said: "I want to grow my hair and donate some of my hair so that a wig can be made for a child suffering with cancer."

Aoife set her fundraising target at £250, but far exceeded this by raising £2,300.

She said: "I miss my friend Aaron very much and I wish he was here to see this."

## School named in the top 20 for sport

Brentwood School has been named as the 17th best school in the country for sport by *School Sports Magazine*.

The list includes both state and independent schools, and according to *School Sports Magazine*, reaching the top 30 puts you in the top one per cent of sporting schools in the country.

The school's sporting triumphs from the last year include achieving second place in the national athletics final, alongside reaching other national finals in netball, squash and swimming.

The school's teams also performed well nationally in cricket, football, hockey and rugby competitions.

Neil Gamester, director of sport at Brentwood School, said: "A huge congratulations to all the students and

staff on this outstanding achievement. This ranking is a testament to the commitment that both students and staff show towards the sports programme.

"While our primary focus will always be on maximum participation, it is pleasing to see that we have so many students and teams who are excelling on the national stage."

## Supermarket wins appeal to build

Lidl has won an appeal to build a supermarket in Brentwood town centre after the plans were refused by the council over traffic concerns.

Brentwood Borough Council, advised by Essex County Council (ECC), refused planning permission to allow the site in Wates Way off Ongar Road to be developed into a food store and 46 residential flats.

It was argued that the changes would lead to an "unacceptable impact on the free flow of traffic along Ongar Road and Wilsons Corner", though appeal inspector John Wilde disagreed.

The inspector accepted that while the introduction of traffic signals in place of an existing mini-roundabout at the proposed site access would cause some delays, they would not be severe.

Mr Wilde also rejected ECC's contention that 70 per cent of traffic would be new, and adopted the developer's suggested 30 per cent assumption.

He said: "I have concluded that assuming a new trip generation for the proposed development of 30 per cent would be reasonable."

Lidl has been contacted for comment.







# Animal sanctuary declines zoo licence



Photo credit: Hopefield Animal Sanctuary

Hopefield Animal Sanctuary in Brentwood, which was reported on in **VISION** BrentwoodOngar February 2023, has decided not to apply for a zoo licence.

This decision means that from March, its exotic animals will only be on display six days a year.

In 2020, the sanctuary announced it was applying for the licence as it was a "legal requirement", owing to the animals in its care and owing to the number of days per year it was open to the public.

However, following a meeting with the local council and a Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs zoo vet, it decided not to apply for the licence because of restrictions it would impose.

In a statement, it said: "We feel as though it hugely contradicts our morals and ethics, and as a sanctuary that rescues animals, there are many elements that we just couldn't agree to, such as having to remove 'imperfect' animals from public display, euthanising any animals dumped at the gate, breeding as part of conservation, and so much more."

"We were told we would have to be a zoo first and foremost, with the rescue element being pushed aside."

"It seems absurd to us that you can go online and buy these exotic animals, but a rescue whose sole purpose is to ensure these animals are safe and cared for isn't able to without facing restrictions that will hugely affect us."

To find out more, visit [hopefield.org.uk](http://hopefield.org.uk)

# Man criticises changes to heating bill aid

A Brentwood man has decried changes to energy cost support which sees those living in small and newer homes potentially no longer qualifying for help with their bills.

Paul Downie lives in a rented flat in Rollason Way which is less than 20 years old and less than 50

square metres – factors that mean he can no longer access any warm home discount.

In 2021/22, he applied and was provided with the £150 discount, but changes to the criteria mean he can no longer access the support, despite arguing that his circumstances have become more difficult.

He said: "It's understandable why they are doing it, but it's not particularly pleasant. It's £150 that would have been very handy – it pays essentially for two months' energy."

"In 2021 and 2022, the winter wasn't that cold. This year, it has been colder and the prices have gone up, so it was just as important to get it."

A statement from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy said: "Households qualify if they are in receipt of a means-tested benefit and are judged to have relatively high heating costs."

"We have used Valuation Office Agency data on property type, age and size to estimate the relative heating costs of households. Larger, older, more detached homes tend to have higher heating costs."

"Therefore, someone living in a small, relatively modern flat will not be eligible under that element of the scheme."

# Theatre to host production of Shakespeare play

Brentwood Theatre will play host to a production of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* between March 16 and 18, put on by the newly formed theatre group 1:4:9 Productions.

*Hamlet* is considered to be one of the most powerful tragedies in the English language. It tells the story of a Danish prince who finds his mother has married his uncle following the sudden death of his father.

A spokesperson for 1:4:9 Productions said: "We are a new group, but with plenty of experience. Many of our cast members have been performing Shakespeare in the park for years. We cannot wait to bring Shakespeare's epic tragedy to life this March at Brentwood Theatre."

To buy a ticket, visit [brentwood-theatre.co.uk/event/hamlet](http://brentwood-theatre.co.uk/event/hamlet)



Photo credit: 1:4:9 Productions

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## BURGHART for BRENTWOOD



Alex Burghart MP for Brentwood and Ongar



LOCAL NEWS BRENTWOOD

The threat of global warming has never been more apparent, with the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report making for very sobering reading. It lays out the stark consequences climate change is having on our planet and what will happen if decisive action is not taken now.

The report highlights that immediate action is required to reduce emissions to net zero by 2050 to give a good chance of limiting global warming to 1.5°C in the long term and help to avoid the worst effects of climate change. I was encouraged that the progress achieved at COP26 and in the Glasgow Climate Pact will hopefully be looked back on as the beginning of the end of climate change.

No action to tackle climate change is too small, and I am heartened at the determination of so many young people in the constituency to make a difference.

Woodlands School in Hutton has its own Climate Club, which has recently had a great boost after one of its members, Alice Witham, won a £3,000 sustainability grant in BRITA's Whale Watchers competition.

Alice created a new design for BRITA's recycling bins



to inspire others to reduce, reuse and recycle. I was very pleased to be invited to the school to hear about what pupils are doing to protect the environment. Their vegetable garden and plans for litter picking are admirable and I have no doubt these small steps will make a big difference in years to come.

## New parking ban causes stir

Traders have warned Essex County Council (ECC) that plans to partially ban parking in parts of Brentwood town centre will be a death sentence.

ECC is looking to introduce 'no waiting at any time' restrictions on Kings Road, halving the space for people to park in an effort to reduce congestion.

According to ECC, it is often difficult for buses and other large vehicles to pass owing to the number of cars parked on the road.

However, residents and business owners have shared their concerns that the restrictions will threaten the viability of their shops.

One person said: "There is not enough parking at this end of the town as it is. If the parking is lost, I will have to think about relocating out of Brentwood."

A spokesperson for ECC said: "The shops' and businesses' needs, along with those of all other users of Kings Road, were given careful consideration and an extreme amount of thought was put into determining a scheme that would holistically bring greater benefits to the widest number of parties."

Photo credit: Google maps







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# LOCAL NEWS

*from your neighbourhood*



Photo credit: Essex Police

## Two men jailed for 35 years following robbery

Two men have been sentenced to a combined total of 35 years in prison for their parts in a robbery at an Olympian's home in Ongar.

As reported in **VISION**BrentwoodOngar February 2023, a number of men entered the family home of professional cyclist Mark Cavendish MBE in the early hours of November 27, 2021.

During the incident, Mr Cavendish was assaulted and threatened in front of his family. The intruders left with a Louis Vuitton suitcase and two watches.

Ali Sesay (pictured left) was linked to the incident soon after and was sentenced to 20 years in prison on Tuesday, February 7.

Romario Henry (pictured right) was linked to Sesay and denied two counts of robbery, but was found

guilty after a 14-day trial at Chelmsford Crown Court. He was sentenced to a total of 15 years in prison.

His Honour Judge David Turner told the court: "This was serious organised crime, no run-of-the-mill domestic burglary. This was planned, targeted, orchestrated and ruthless offending aimed at an international sportsman and his wife."

In a statement, Mr Cavendish and his wife Peta said: "Part of the reason we are speaking today is to show that we are moving forward as a family. We still have difficult times – especially the children – but we're continuing to build our life together."

"No family should ever have to go through what we went through, and I am glad that two people have been sent to jail for significant periods today."

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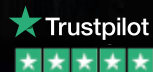
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## Council calls for High Street restrictions



Photo credit: Glyn Baker

Ongar Town Council (OTC) has renewed calls for a weight restriction and a 20mph speed limit to be introduced in the High Street.

OTC is also set to bring the issue to the attention of Alex Burghart, MP for Brentwood and Ongar, and Essex Police.

The council first raised the issue four years ago in an attempt to prevent heavy goods vehicles such as lorries from entering the busy road, especially when the nearby M25 is closed.

Now, councillor Lee Scott, Essex County Council's cabinet member for highways maintenance and sustainable transport, says he wants to raise the matter once more, but that he would need support from the police.

OTC chairman councillor Derek Birch said: "It's a very historic town, and some shopkeepers say when the lorries come through, you can feel the vibrations. What's the possibility of us getting a weight restriction in Ongar?"

Cllr Scott said: "You have the pinch point where a car can't get through if a lorry is there. Deliveries would have to be allowed.

"I will contact the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner as we need the police to agree with whatever we are doing. I will be happy to take that forward."

## Man charged with burglary offences

A man has been charged and remanded into custody as part of an ongoing investigation into several residential burglaries, including in Ongar.

Jay Maxwell, 25, of Saddleworth Square, Romford, has been charged with three counts of burglary dwelling and theft, one count of attempted burglary

dwelling with intent to steal, and two counts of theft of a motor vehicle.

The offences took place in Ongar, Braintree and Dunmow between June 28 and September 6 last year.

Following several enquiries, and as a result of forensic evidence, Maxwell was arrested and charged with six offences on January 26. He was due to appear at Chelmsford Crown Court on Monday, February 27, as **VISION**BrentwoodOngar went to print.

## Food charity celebrates second anniversary

An Ongar food charity and community hub has celebrated its second anniversary of supporting the local community.

3Food4U, founded by Pesh Kapasiawala (pictured below centre) in 2021, provides basic groceries and other essentials to those in need.

In a statement, 3Food4U said: "We're so proud to celebrate our second anniversary supporting the Ongar community on Thursday, February 2. We've made so many wonderful friends.

"Massive thanks to the community for stepping up. We couldn't deliver our vital service and get this far without the generous and kind support of our hosts and our volunteers."

Meanwhile, Pesh was presented with a British Citizen Award in late January for services to the community.

He said: "It still hasn't sunk in that I've been honoured with the British Citizen Award. Seeing and hearing from so many amazing community champions that have climbed and moved mountains to support their communities, I feel humbled to be among them.

"I'm very thankful and grateful for the support of my community in Epping Forest and that of the hundreds of volunteers who have stepped up to deliver the projects I organise."





# PETER JONES

## AND A HOST OF TALL TALES

At 6ft 6", formidable *Dragons' Den* mainstay Peter Jones CBE has a lofty view over more than just his business landscape.

His is a stature that has evolved over four decades of being at the cut and thrust of business, on the way amassing a personal fortune of more than £1.2 billion.

The idea of standing up to one of the formidable commercial minds in *Dragons' Den* is, ultimately, a thing few entrepreneurs relish. The hit BBC reality business show puts pitchers through their paces en route to a prospective investment offer, yet few who duel with telecoms wizard Peter Jones ever emerge victorious.

The 56 year old has been the only Dragon to appear in every season of the hit show, the 20th series of which is currently airing on BBC One.

He has mastered the art of pulling off a devastating look of utter incredulity, although the element of surprise is part of what makes the show so entertaining.

"Over so many years in business, there should

be few things that surprise me," he begins, "and by now I thought I might have exhausted the ability to be surprised or shocked by some of the ideas or investment valuations that come my way.

"In truth, though, people will always surprise you, and that's what makes the show so entertaining. You can expect the unexpected, because it will always arrive."

That line perfectly encapsulates Jones's climb to becoming one of the country's most successful and best recognised entrepreneurs. Growing up in Langley, Berkshire, before moving to Maidenhead at the age of seven, his first business was in the production of personal computers, a venture he began at the age of just 16.

While the business excelled at first, the evolution of home computing in the 90s saw Jones lose ground. A series of bad decisions led to the collapse of his enterprise, and with it went his millionaire status. At 28, he was forced to sell the remnants of the company to IBM and start again.

Subsequently joining Siemens, he was soon branching out again by himself, launching Phones International Group in 1998, a business that garnered more than £14 million in sales in its first year alone.

Further personal ventures in TV, retail and lifestyle projects have been supplemented with more than 60 investments via *Dragons' Den* – where Jones is regarded as the most plain-speaking and shrewdest on the panel.

"I think when it comes to business, it's important to be polite and engaging, but ultimately you can't hang about," he says. "If something needs to be said, it needs to be said, and tiptoeing around the issue has been the death of many a good idea."

As well as gaining a CBE in 2009, he runs The Peter Jones Enterprise Academy and The Peter Jones Foundation – both committed to driving and promoting the next generation of business minds, no matter what barriers exist in someone's life.

As for the most salient business lesson of them all – Jones insists there is nothing more defining than starting again from scratch. "Failure is arguably the best route to success," he says. "Most entrepreneurs have been at the point where the hopelessness seems profound. I've been there myself, and to be that low, only to rise back up, is one of the most fulfilling things you can do. Ultimately, never give up."

Photo credit: BBC Studios





If you're visiting Sheffield this year, the multi-award-winning Winter Garden offers the chance to take a step away from the bustle of Britain's fourth-biggest city. It's wheelchair and buggy friendly, open every day except Christmas Day, and entry is free.

#### WHAT EXACTLY IS IT?

It's an exotic landscaped garden housed in a vast greenhouse with soaring arches and a glass roof. It houses around 2,500 plants, all originating from temperate climates in the Southern Hemisphere. There are also bedding plants, which are changed five times a year – so there's always something new to admire.

The Winter Garden is 75m long, 23m wide and 21m high – that's big enough to house 5,000 average domestic greenhouses.

And it's not just about plants – there's also an art gallery, a café and shops at the garden. So allow plenty of time for your visit.

The greenhouse was opened in May 2003 by the late Queen Elizabeth II, and was designed by London

architects Pringle Richards Sharratt and Bath-based construction consultants Buro Happold.

#### WHAT TYPES OF EXOTIC PLANTS ARE THERE?

As well as a stunning bamboo curtain, lush tree ferns and elegant grasses, you can also feast your eyes on some of these:

- > Thorny acacia trees, which in their native habitat are an important food source for animals, including giraffes and elephants
- > Pines from the araucaria family, including monkey puzzle trees
- > Palm-like cordylines, often grown as houseplants in the UK
- > Desert plants like cacti, agave and aloe vera
- > Eucalyptus trees, mostly found in Australia and prized for their timber, the oil in their leaves and providing food for koalas
- > Low-growing phormiums, which are native to New Zealand and have elegant, sword-like leaves
- > Trachycarpus palm trees, known for their chunky trunks.

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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.

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GARDENING

# GET wildlife READY

**O**ur gardens start to bloom in earnest this month – but March can be a surprisingly tricky time for wildlife. That includes humble but helpful insects and worms, as well as bees, birds, amphibians and hedgehogs. So what can you do to help?

## LEAVE FOOD FOR HEDGEHOGS

Leave out water and meat-based cat or dog food – ideally chicken in jelly. Do this when it's getting dark, and remember to throw away any uneaten food the next morning. If you have hedgehogs in your garden, you could also buy a hedgehog house or even build one.

## FEED THE BIRDS

Birds need calorie-rich food at this time of year to get ready for breeding. Choose sunflower hearts (seeds without the husk), fat balls or suet pellets. Steer clear of peanuts just in case adult birds feed them to their young and cause them to choke.

## BEE KIND

If you're adding new garden plants, choose ones with open flowers that are rich in pollen and nectar. Good choices include aconites, evergreen clematis, primroses, and winter-flowering heather and honeysuckle.

## BUG LOVE

Helpful insects and even earthworms find it hard to flourish in March as food sources can be scarce. To help them, create a log pile in a shady spot. You might also want to start a compost heap. And, while you don't have to turn your garden into a jungle, insects will love it if you let a corner of your garden grow wild.

## POND LIFE

March is the main breeding month for frogs, toads and newts. To make your pond amphibian-friendly, select the plants they like to breed around, such as marsh marigold, water forget-me-knot and brooklime. You could add plants such as hornwort and curled pondweed to keep the water oxygenated and help shelter tadpoles from predators.



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# CAMERA JARGON Explained!

Want to improve your photography skills? Then spending time with a camera is a good place to start. While mobile phones are great for point-and-shoot, for the best photos a camera is required. At first glance, a camera can seem confusing with all its buttons and settings. Fortunately, we've got you covered with our simple guide to some basic camera terms.

**Exposure:** One of the most important terms to learn in photography. Getting the exposure right will help you take great photos with all of the elements in balance. Put simply, exposure is the amount of light that reaches your camera. Too much or too little exposure can affect the quality of your photo. The 'exposure triangle' is the combination of aperture, shutter speed and ISO that will help you capture the perfect photo.

**Aperture:** The hole that allows light into the lens, represented by the f-number. The lower the f-number, the more light is allowed into the lens. It's the aperture that helps you determine which elements of the shot are in focus, allowing you to play with your depth of field.

**Depth of field:** The distance between the closest and furthest subjects in a photo. A shallow depth of field will put your main subject in focus, creating a blurred backdrop for your subject to sit against. A deep depth of field helps to put the backdrop or landscape in focus, blurring the nearest object.

**Shutter speed:** Controls how much light is allowed into the camera from the lens. It signals how long the lens is open to capture the light. A low shutter speed is ideal for most situations, but when you are faced with fast-moving subjects (such as animals or sports) you'll want to use a high shutter speed to prevent blurring.

**ISO:** The ISO settings determine the light sensitivity. The higher the ISO, the brighter your images. A higher ISO may cause images to feature noise or grain, which can be more difficult to fix during the editing process than an underexposed shot.

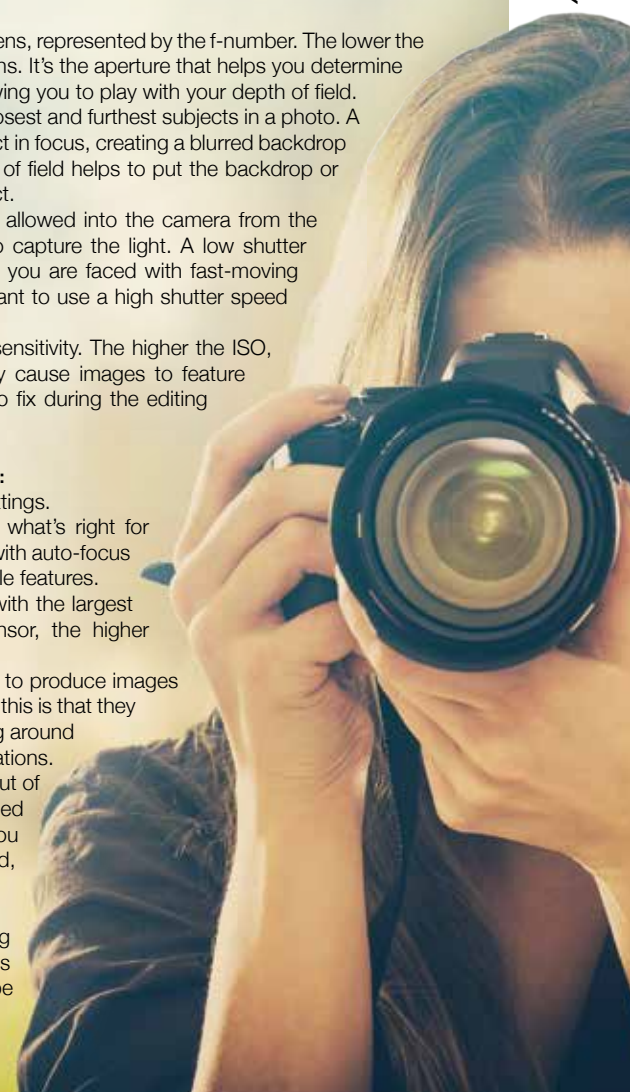
### Points to consider when purchasing a camera:

- Rent or borrow a camera first to trial the settings.
- Consider the size and weight to discover what's right for you. Mirrorless cameras are more portable with auto-focus features, while a DSLR has more changeable features.
- For high-quality photos, look for cameras with the largest sensor size. Generally, the larger the sensor, the higher quality your photos will be.
- A high number of megapixels (MP) will help to produce images that are highly detailed, but the downside to this is that they don't perform as well in low light. Something around the 20MP mark performs well for most situations.
- Invest in a range of lenses to get the most out of your camera. A macro lens is ideal for detailed close-up shots, while a long lens will help you capture high-quality shots from further afield, such as landscapes or wildlife.

Capturing the perfect shot means finding the balance between the three key settings (aperture, shutter speed and ISO). Don't be afraid to experiment and get creative.



TECHNOLOGY





# DIY Mother's Day BEAUTY GIFTS

**D**o you want to help your child make a handmade gift for their mum, grandmother or mother figure this Mother's Day? Beauty gifts are always welcomed and provide the perfect opportunity for mums to enjoy a little me-time.

## Microdermabrasion scrub

Combat the signs of ageing with this super simple microdermabrasion scrub.

### How to make:

Mix 6 tbsp of sugar with 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil | Add 3-5 drops of lemon juice | Add ½ tbsp baking soda and 3 drops of lavender oil | Mix thoroughly | Spoon into a small pot and add a handwritten label

## Rose whipped body butter

Give the gift of super-soft skin with this luxurious body butter.

### How to make:

Melt 1 cup of coconut oil and 1 cup of shea butter in a small bowl | Leave the oils to cool slightly | Mix the oils using a whisk or standing mixer until you have

a whipped cream-like consistency | Add 8 drops of rose absolute and whip for a further 1-2 minutes | Spoon into a mason jar and add a pretty bow

## Lemon peppermint bath salts

Add an element of fizz to bath time with this aromatic bath salt.

### How to make:

Mix ½ cup of fine sea salt and 1 cup of Epsom salt in a medium-sized bowl | Stir in 15 drops of lemon essential oil and 5 drops of peppermint oil | Scoop the bath salts into a mason jar and tie on a small measuring spoon with some ribbon

## Honey facial mask

Soothe sensitive skin with this natural facial mask.

### How to make:

Mix together 1 cup of honey, 1 tbsp of cinnamon and ½ tbsp nutmeg | Stir until the spices are fully incorporated with the honey | Pour into a bottle that has been sterilised with boiling water | Cover the bottle with some pretty parchment paper or fabric.

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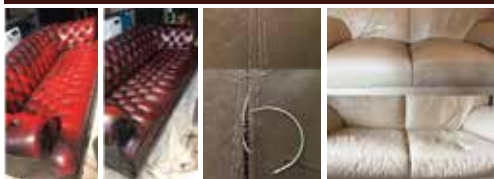
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# Pet DIET



PETS

**A**re you worried about your pet's weight? Perhaps you've allowed them to over-indulge during the winter months? With as many as half the nation's dogs and cats being overweight, it has never been more important for pet owners to take control of their pet's health and help them to lead a happy and healthy life.

**Calculate calories:** If you don't know how many calories your pet needs each day, then now is the time to find out. While you may think that you can simply refer to the recommended amount on their preferred pet food, this does not take into account metabolism, age and other factors such as activity levels. Ask your vet for a bespoke calorie allowance.

**Measure meals:** Many pet owners simply guess how much they are feeding their pet, or they offer an all-you-can-eat buffet and fill their bowls readily throughout the day. However, it is a much better idea to use a pet measuring cup so that you can make sure you give them the correct amount at each meal.

**Tactical treating:** If you are guilty of giving your pet a few too many treats, then tactical treating offers the perfect solution. This involves choosing low-calorie, no-sugar treats that are beneficial to their health. Carrots and apple slices are a good choice for dogs, and cats enjoy broccoli florets, green beans and catnip. Don't forget that you need to factor these extra calories into their total daily intake.

**Experiment with exercise:** When it comes to keeping your pet healthy and at their ideal weight, daily exercise is key. As well as daily walks for dogs and allowing your cat to explore in the garden, there are lots of other fun exercises you can enjoy with your pets, such as playing fetch, interacting with toys, tug of war and obstacle courses.

**Signs your pet is overweight:** Visual signs such as excess body fat around the stomach, spine and waist | Lack of grooming | Reduced mobility | Difficulty breathing.







# PACK IT IN

IN HONOUR OF NATIONAL NO SMOKING DAY ON MARCH 8, HERE ARE SEVEN TIPS ON HOW TO QUIT SMOKING FOR GOOD

## BE PREPARED

It's unlikely you'll simply wake up one morning and decide to never smoke again. Smoking is an addiction, so take time to come up with a plan that gives you the best chance of quitting for good.

health to finance to the feeling of having achieved something important – will help you stop smoking.

## DON'T GIVE UP

Quitting is hard. Know that and give yourself a break should you fail. Each day is a new day, and it is never too late to stop.

## REWARD YOURSELF

Put away those pounds you would have spent on cigarettes and you'll soon see the benefits. Treating yourself to something special is the least you deserve for persevering with such a difficult task.

## SEEK ALTERNATIVES

Though they may be tempting, e-cigarettes are not the ideal way to quit, as they still contain nicotine. However, they are less harmful than tobacco cigarettes. Nicotine replacement therapy, on the other hand – in the form of gum, lozenges and patches – can help with withdrawal side effects.

## BE TRIGGER AWARE

If you crave a cigarette every time you have a few drinks at the pub, it may be best to stay home or, even better, hit the gym. Knowing what makes you want to smoke and then doing the opposite is a useful technique to help you avoid temptation.

## TELL YOUR FRIENDS

Not only is it reassuring to have some enthusiastic cheerleaders on your side, but your buddies can also help you on your way.

## KNOW YOUR REASONS

Whether you want to run a marathon or are motivated to quit for the sake of your young children, having a clear purpose – from



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Thursday 16 March 2023 from 18:30pm  
with Mr S Jacob, Consultant General Surgeon
- Back pain, injury or surgery**  
Wednesday 19 April 2023 at 18:30pm  
with Mr A Qureshi, Consultant Neurological Surgeon
- Knee pain, injury or surgery**  
Friday 21 April 2023 at 18:30pm  
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- Haemorrhoids**  
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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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# TECH-free TRIPS



**D**o you and your family need a break from technology? Are screens taking over your lives? Then these phone-free holiday destinations are just the antidote you need.

## QUIRPON ISLAND, NEWFOUNDLAND, CANADA

If you can think of nothing better than spending your next getaway marvelling at the wonders of Arctic life such as polar bears, puffins and icebergs, then this is the holiday destination for you. Located in the far reaches of the North Atlantic, there is virtually no phone service and definitely no wi-fi.

## PARRANO, ITALY

If you're looking for a remote destination in Europe, then the Eremito retreat in Parrano, Italy, is just what the doctor ordered. Boasting 21 rooms and only a 90-minute drive from Rome, there is no internet, wi-fi or television, so you're guaranteed a tranquil and restorative stay.

## DENALI NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE, ALASKA

Denali National Park is home to the Sheldon Chalet, a luxury five-bedroom lodge that is only accessible by plane or helicopter. Perfect for those who want to experience nature in the extreme, the panoramic views of snow stretch for miles. Plus, with no mobile phone coverage or internet, you can enjoy the peaceful silence with zero distractions.

## BADEN-BADEN, GERMANY

If you love a spa break, the Villa Stéphanie mansion and spa is just the digital detox destination for you. Located in the famous spa town of Baden-Baden, this decadent five-star hotel boasts a sauna, plunge pool, thermal suite and private gym. And, of course, no technology in sight.

## TOP END, NORTHERN TERRITORY, AUSTRALIA

As you would expect, there is no wi-fi deep in bush country, so you can kick back and relax or enjoy the local wildlife, including blue-winged kookaburras, magpie geese, wallabies and crocodiles. Book into the Bamurru Plains safari lodge for a restful night's sleep and five-star dining.

Photo credit: wehralians.com, theluxuryarchitecturalcompany.com, theluxuryspaedit.com, khorico.uk

## ON THE MONEY

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## GIVING YOUR CHILDREN A HELPING HAND

With the current generation of graduates typically leaving university with a mountain of debt, it is perhaps unsurprising that so many parents are now looking to ease the burden by investing on their children's behalf.

### UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE

Government statistics show the average debt accumulated by a university student is currently around £45,000. Thankfully, graduates only start repayments when their earnings hit a certain threshold and, at the moment, loans are written off after 30 years however much debt remains. As a result, some students will never pay back their loans in full.

### INCREASING DEBT BURDEN

Many students, though, do repay a significant amount of their debt, and recent reforms to the loans system means many more will do so in the future – government forecasts suggest that, from next year, over half of students will repay their loans in full. This inevitably places an even greater burden on future graduates' shoulders, both as they enter the world of work and, potentially, throughout their entire careers.

### SAVING FOR THEIR FUTURE

Most parents are keen to help their children fund

university, and many do so by investing on their behalf through a stocks and shares Junior ISA (JISA). While there are risks with stock market investments, historically they have performed better than cash-based savings and consistently delivered above-inflation returns. The annual JISA allowance is currently £9,000 per child which, for anyone who starts saving early, can grow to a sizeable tax-free lump sum. Smaller amounts can mount up too, particularly when combined with contributions from other family members.

### PEACE OF MIND

Investing on a child's behalf can make a huge difference to their future, whether they decide to go to university or put the money towards something else. It also provides parents with the comfort of knowing that they are giving their children the best possible start to adult life.

**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 get A PATENT

Thinking about applying for a patent to stop others from copying or selling your invention without your permission? Find out everything you need to know about how to get a patent in the UK below.

- ✗ Essentially biological processes such as crossbreeding animals or plants
- ✗ Software that has a non-technical purpose

## HOW MUCH DOES A PATENT COST?

When you apply for a patent, you must pay fees to the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) when you file your application and also for processing your application after you file. This costs at least £310 if you complete the process. You may also want to hire a patent attorney for help and advice.

## HOW TO APPLY FOR A PATENT IN THE UK

Getting a patent in the UK is a fairly complicated process and it can take several years, even with professional help. Therefore, you should only start the application process if you are confident that your invention is new and that a patent meets your needs. If you decide to go ahead, then you need to:

- Prepare detailed documents that describe your invention
- File these documents with the IPO

Typically, around 18 months after you apply, the IPO will publish your application in full. You may then have to amend your application based on its recommendations.

## WHAT CAN YOU PATENT IN THE UK?

To patent an invention in the UK, it must be:

- ✓ New – it must not have been made publicly available anywhere in the world
- ✓ Inventive – it cannot be an obvious change to something that already exists
- ✓ Something that can be made and used, a technical process or a method of doing something

## WHAT CAN YOU NOT PATENT?

There are some things that you are not allowed to patent, including:

- ✗ Literary, dramatic, musical or artistic works
- ✗ A way of doing business, playing a game or thinking
- ✗ A method of medical treatment or diagnosis
- ✗ A discovery, scientific theory or mathematical method
- ✗ The way information is presented

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# THE HOT DRINKS *hero*

MEET THE MAN BEHIND THE INVENTION FOR HOT (AND COLD) DRINK LOVERS EVERYWHERE

The next time you unscrew your flask to pour a coffee, spare a thought for Scottish scientist Sir James Dewar. He was the man who made it happen – even though keeping your drinks hot wasn't what he had in mind.

Dewar, who died 100 years ago this month, was best known for his work on the liquefaction of gases. It's not the right place for a chemistry lesson, but when gases are in liquid form, they're much easier to store, so it was important work.

The problem was that Dewar couldn't keep the liquid gases cold enough for long enough to study them. And when they got too hot, they turned into gas again.

To solve the problem, he put his glass flask of liquid gas into a bigger flask. Then he created a vacuum between them and mirrored their outside walls. So the inside flask was almost perfectly insulated, and heat couldn't reach the liquid inside.

Dewar exhibited his creation at London's Royal Institution on Christmas Day 1892. The principle behind his flask is the same one behind the vacuum flasks manufactured today.

Dewar's invention could have made him a wealthy man. The problem was he didn't take out a patent. But the German glassblower who made Dewar's flask had an idea: he realised that the flask could keep liquids warm as well as cold and spotted a gap in the market. He created a flask in a protective metal casing and set up a company called Thermos – Greek for 'hot'. He successfully applied for a patent in 1904 – and the Thermos flask was born.

Dewar sued Thermos for using his invention. Sadly for Dewar, he lost the case. But, refusing to retire, he carried on working as a professor at the Royal Institution until his death at the age of 80 in 1923.



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# PUZZLES & TRIVIA

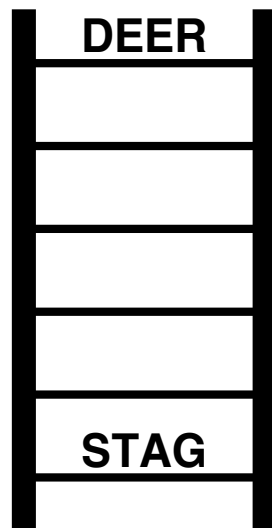
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## DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ There are 63 million pairs of chopsticks manufactured in China every year – that's 126 million single sticks.
- ▶ In Pakistan, a small city called Sialkot is where 40 per cent of the world's footballs are produced.
- ▶ Covering 2,653 miles, Chile is the world's longest country from north to south.
- ▶ There are more than 2,100 castles stand in Germany.
- ▶ Canada has more lakes than every other country in the world put together.
- ▶ Iceland has no army and is recognised as the world's most peaceful country.
- ▶ Disneyland Paris is the most visited place in Europe.

## 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.

## Award Winning Wedding Flowers

I've always had a strong art and design background and spent much of my childhood with my grandparents on their farm where they grew beautiful flowers. I ended up working in London for a commodity trading company, but in 2009 I signed up to an evening floristry course, which I fell head over heels in love with. After completing Level 1, 2 and 3 NVQ I was able to create floral arrangements and funeral tributes for family and friends. I then began to receive orders through recommendation.

In 2012 my cousin asked me to be her wedding florist. This was my first wedding, and I knew I had found my calling. I was getting recommendations but still working in London as I wanted to build a portfolio and see if I could turn floristry into a fulltime occupation.

In 2014 I completed a two-week intensive diploma for Business of Floristry at Judith Blacklock Flower School in Knightsbridge.

It was such an amazing course, giving me all the tools and knowledge I needed. The plan was to hand my notice in in December 2014, but fate stepped in and I was made redundant in July 2014 – the same week as I found out I was expecting our first child. I immediately started setting up my business and getting my floral studio in Brentwood ready to hold consultations. I had a website and social media pages set up, sorted my marketing and signed up for wedding shows before the arrival of my first child in March 2015.



Seven years later my team and I work all over Essex, Hertfordshire, Suffolk, Kent and London.

2022 saw a huge change with everything getting back to normality for the wedding industry. Our Industry was hit very badly in the pandemic and to see the return of normality was wonderful.

Elisha's Floral Design was fortunate enough to get through to the Final of The Essex Wedding Awards for 'Wedding Florist of The Year 2023'.

A Gala Dinner was held at Fenns in Braintree on 17th November 2022. As they announced the Category Wedding Florist of The Year and to hear and see my business, Elisha's Floral Design, was the winner was a pinch-me moment.

I proudly accepted the prestigious award from Martin & Su from Radio Essex.

I want to thank all of the local Brentwood Community and surround areas for supporting my family business through the pandemic. Without you buying your gift bouquets we may not have survived to go on to become an awarding winning Florist. From the bottom of my heart, thank you so much!

*Elisha*

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## CELEBRATE BRITISH PIE WEEK, STARTING MARCH 6, WITH SOME TASTY TREATS

### Spicy Vegan Pie

**INGREDIENTS:** 1 onion, thickly sliced | 50g small broccoli florets | 2 red peppers, cut into chunks | 350g courgettes (2 medium), thickly sliced | 2 tsp cumin seeds | 1 tbsp avocado oil | 200g low-fat houmous | 50g coriander (chopped) | Zest of one lemon | A pinch of chilli flakes | 375g packet of ready-rolled puff pastry (dairy free) | 225g sweet potato, peeled and thinly sliced | Non-dairy milk

the sweet potato) with the oil and cumin. Roast for 25 minutes then mix in the houmous, coriander, lemon zest and chilli flakes.

- > Turn the oven down to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6.
- > Cut the pastry into two rectangles and lay one on a baking tray. Layer the sweet potatoes on top, leaving a 2cm border, then top with the vegetable mixture.
- > Drape the remaining pastry over the filling and press the edges to seal.
- > Brush with milk and bake for 25-30 minutes till golden brown.

### HOW TO MAKE:

- > Heat the oven to 220°C/fan 200°C/gas 7.
- > In a roasting tin, mix all the vegetables (except

**INGREDIENTS:** 150g granulated sugar | 4½ tsp cornflour | 225g rhubarb, cut into 1.5cm slices | 1 orange (juice and zest) | A pinch of cinnamon | 4 sheets of filo pastry (each approx. 48cm x 25.5cm) | 2 tbsp melted butter | 2 tsp icing sugar

### HOW TO MAKE:

- > In a medium saucepan, mix the sugar and cornflour together, then add the rhubarb, 4 tbsp of orange juice and a teaspoon of zest. Cook gently till it's thickened. Add the cinnamon and cook for 10 minutes, then leave to cool.
- > Heat the oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6.
- > Lay the filo sheets on top of each other, brushing with melted butter between layers.
- > Spread the filling along one of the longer sides and roll it up, folding in the ends as you go.
- > Make a few cuts in the top, then bake for 15-20 minutes till golden.
- > Cool, then sprinkle with icing sugar.

### Rhubarb Strudel



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UNUSUAL SPORT...

# CHEESE ROLLING

A lump of dairy, a hill, an ambulance on standby – it's the Cooper's Hill Cheese Rolling Championship

**W**e've all heard of cheese rolling. Indeed, many of us have seen the frankly terrifying sight of grown men and women hurtling down Cooper's Hill in Gloucestershire on a balmy spring bank holiday in pursuit not just of a 9lb lump of Double Gloucester cheese, but also of the respect of the local community.

The annual event, which takes place on a slightly terrifying 200-yard slope in the town of Brockworth, has become iconic as the go-to cheese rolling event in the UK, yet it attracts competitors from all corners of the world.

While the perception is that anyone who catches the cheese takes the title, in truth this is a 'race to the bottom', with the first person across the finish line claiming the delightful dairy.

Now classed as an extreme sport, there is a series of individual races for have-a-go heroes to compete and contort in, with local legend Chris Anderson the most successful participant in the event's near 200-year history, having won a record 23 races. Ironically, the ex-1st Battalion light infantryman doesn't even like the cheese on offer, insisting on a passion for cheddar instead.

Injuries are commonplace – not just to participants, either. On many occasions, spectators have been struck by the tumbling cheese, which can reach speeds of up to 70mph as it tumbles downhill.

While COVID-19 halted the 2020 and 2021 events, the festival returned in 2022, complete with all manner of sprains, bashes, aches and breaks. Perennial champ Anderson has since announced his retirement, clearing the decks for a new era of southwestern sadist when the event returns this year on Monday, May 29.

While Brockworth hosts the country's most famous competition, there are other cheese rolling events across the UK with their own take on the concept, albeit none quite as flavoursome.





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**DOUBLES, SINGLES AND MORE... ROAD MARKINGS AND HOW TO WORK THEM IN YOUR FAVOUR**

We're all familiar with the sight of single and double yellow lines – yet where many of us have fallen foul of road markings, it's because we may not understand what they mean.

This guide to road markings may not make it any easier to find a parking space in your local area, but at least you'll know the risk you're taking when you apply the handbrake.

## **SINGLE LINES**

Single yellow lines are an indication that waiting restrictions are in place, albeit only at certain times of the day. The intention is to eliminate congestion at busy times.

Always look for the accompanying signs, which will state the times when parking is prohibited. However, you may stop there.

If you see a single red line, stopping is also prohibited at certain times.

## **DOUBLE LINES**

Parking on double yellow lines is prohibited at all times, unless there is accompanying signage which may indicate an ability to park there on rare or seasonal occasions.

With both single and double yellows, the good news is you get five minutes' grace, and a traffic warden must observe your car for the full duration of those five minutes before writing out a ticket.

If you see a double red line, the message is simple – no stopping (or parking) at any time.

## **ZIGZAG LINES**

White or yellow zigzag lines offer the same instruction as double red lines, except they are placed near places of high public footfall, such as on level crossings or outside schools and places where emergency services may operate, such as hospitals.

## **LOADING OR UNLOADING**

To confuse matters, loading and unloading is permitted on double and single yellow lines, but only if it's continuous. You'll get between 20 and 40 minutes, depending on your vehicle.

However, if two yellow stripes are seen emerging from the road and up the curb, even loading and unloading is prohibited. For one yellow stripe, stopping is permitted based on the times shown.



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