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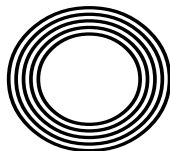
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# BEN STOKES OBE

Legendary cricketer sets his sights on World Cup victory



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# Editor's notes...

OCTOBER 2023



Nik Allen, Editor

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

I'm excited to share my recent customer service encounters that have left an indelible mark on me. As the saying goes: "You don't truly appreciate good customer service until you've experienced the opposite."

On the brighter side, a recent visit to a local bookstore demonstrated the magic of outstanding service. The staff's knowledge, willingness to assist and genuine enthusiasm made my visit not just enjoyable but also memorable. It's a powerful reminder of how good service can elevate a mundane task into a delightful experience.

However, not all tales are as sunny. A frustrating experience with a telecom provider left me grappling with automated phone systems and impersonal support. It's a stark reminder that poor customer service not only erodes trust but also tests our patience.

Customer service is the cornerstone of our consumer experience. It's our privilege to bring you stories that shed light on the importance of striving for excellence. As we navigate the customer service spectrum, let's remember the impact it has on our daily lives and the potential for change it holds.

We at **VISION** strive for excellent customer service when working with local businesses.

*Nik Allen*

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

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# Sooty™

Turns Seventy-Five

In an era where a fad is lucky to last a full five minutes, the enduring magic of hand puppet Sooty must be something of a mystery to young audiences. And yet, when faced with his snuggly yellow fur, button eyes and sweet, shy demeanour, they inevitably melt with adoration as generation upon generation of children before them have done.

Discovered by Harry Corbett OBE in a joke shop on Blackpool North Pier on July 19, 1948, 'Teddy' – as he was then known – was purchased for seven shillings and six pence.

Having long harboured ambitions for the stage, Bradford native Corbett first appeared with the silent bear in a 1952 BBC TV show, *Talent Night*. The act was an instant success and Sooty soon became the star of his very own show featuring magic tricks, slapstick comedy and songs – a nod to Corbett's former ambitions as a concert pianist which were thwarted by his being deaf in one ear. Soon afterwards, he was joined by his pals: there was Sweep, a grey male dog who communicated with a squeak, and Soo, a female panda with a human voice.

After suffering a heart attack in 1975, Corbett's son Peter (stage name Matthew) took over as Sooty's friend and keeper. In the ensuing years, and with the character now a mainstay on *Rainbow*, Corbett Senior would make occasional guest appearances on spin-off *Sooty Show* (by this point now airing on ITV) until his death in 1989.

Under Matthew Corbett, Sooty and co. would enjoy enormous success. He changed the format of the show to one of a sitcom but kept the integral elements. Namely, Sooty's wand, the catchphrase 'izzy, wizzy, let's get busy', and the silent bear's enduring love of water pistols and mayhem in general.

In 1998, Corbett was succeeded by Richard Cadell. Only a few weeks into his new role, he found himself at 10 Downing Street for a special awards ceremony honouring brave children, hosted by then Prime Minister Sir Tony Blair and his wife Cherie – who Sooty dutifully squirted with his water pistol.

Sooty and Sweep were also guests at the birthday party of His Majesty Prince Charles, as he was then, in 2018 (Sooty actually being a few months older than our now King). The pair have courted numerous other politicians, musicians and celebrities and even – on the hand of Harry Corbett – shared a giggle with Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

So how is it, then, that a premise so simple remains so beloved in an age of CGI and swanky animation?

"I think the great thing with Sooty – and this is a famous Harry Corbett quote – is that he's never really been in fashion, so he's never really been out," laughs Cadell.

"It's not like one of these children's things that spike and then disappear," explains the 54 year old, who will embark on *75th Birthday Spectacular* – a special UK national tour that kicks off on October 21 at Bradford's Alhambra Theatre and runs through until April 2024.

He adds: "Sometimes the things we cherish most as children, and adults, are based in simple entertainment, and I am delighted that fact has held true despite so much else around us changing."



Photo credit: Moviestore/Shutterstock



# BEHIND the scenes

Are you a complete TV addict? What would you say if we told you that there are iconic sets all across the UK that you can visit? From *Coronation Street* to *Only Fools and Horses* to *Downtown Abbey*, here are some locations from popular shows that are open for visitors today.

## **Coronation Street – ITV Studios, Manchester**

This walking tour of *Coronation Street*, the UK's longest-running soap, is a must for any Corrie fan. Complete with an expert guide, you can take a closer look at all the iconic shops and businesses on the street, including The Rovers Return, Roy's Rolls café and Webster's Auto Centre.

## **Only Fools and Horses – Bristol Temple Meads Train Station**

One of Britain's most-loved comedies, who wouldn't want to take a closer look behind the scenes at this legendary sitcom? The *Only Fools and Horses* three-and-a-half-hour coach tour takes you to filming spots of more than 10 episodes and includes a look at Nelson Mandela House, Sid's Café and the road where the iconic Batman and Robin scene took place.

## **Peaky Blinders – Central Liverpool**

A gritty masterpiece, *Peaky Blinders* was filmed in Liverpool even though it is set in Birmingham, owing to this city's well-preserved Victorian industrial architecture. Hop on either the half-day or full-day guided coach tour and see the homes of Polly and Field Marshal Russell, Garrison Lane and so much more.

## **Downtown Abbey – Bampton, Oxfordshire**

Become Lord or Lady of Grantham for the day, with the *Downtown Abbey* and Village group tour. Visit the charming village of Bampton, which fans will know as Downtown Village. Then head to Highclere Castle, where you will be able to explore the estate and the rooms within and enjoy a spot of lunch.

## **Bridgerton – The Abbey Hotel, Bath**

Channel your inner Daphne or Duke of Hastings with a guided *Bridgerton* tour. Explore many of this popular show's filming locations during this two-hour tour, including Lady Danbury's mansion, Gunter's Tea Shop and the modiste dress shop.



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GREAT BRITISH INTERIOR DESIGNER: LAURA HAMMETT



HOME & DIY

Laura Hammett is an award-winning design house, run by Laura and her husband Aaron since 2008. With more than 25 years of experience between them, they are known for creating contemporary interiors with classic touches, resulting in stunning elegance.

Laura Hammett's work spans the globe and even includes a private jet. You can also enjoy the Laura Hammett look with a creative approach.

### A CLASSIC STYLE FOR THE MODERN ERA

When you examine Laura Hammett's style, you're instantly transported to modern London. The designs are full of light and detail, creating beautiful looks that would be right at home in any design coffee table book.

Colour palettes include lighter shades of grey and taupe, paired with darker details to add contrast. Light upholstery, rich walnut and subtle marble are some of the styles that have been used in the Laura Hammett portfolio, adding character and elegance to all kinds of homes.

### CREATING THE LOOK

With these simple tips, you can transform your home with a modern luxe look the Laura Hammett way.

- Enhance the natural light in your home by keeping walls light. Think greige, off-white and white to draw the light in.
- Adding details such as cushions and throws in rich fabrics can make your interior look more upmarket, without designer price tags.
- Statement light fittings and abstract wall art in your colour scheme can complete your space, helping you create some interest without filling the room with clutter.
- Search antique shops and second-hand stores to find high-quality furniture items you can restore to their former glory.

Laura Hammett's style is on trend and attainable, a look that can you can adapt to your own home to create subtle modern elegance.

Photo credit: laurahammett.com, @laurahammett interiors via Instagram







Is your hallway looking more shabby than stylish? Has it become a place to dump everything and anything that doesn't have a proper home?

Discover five simple ways to transform the entrance to your home, with inspiring ideas to suit all hallways.

### 1. ADD POPS OF COLOUR

If you have a small hallway, you may be tempted to stick to white paint to make the space appear bigger.

However, by adding pops of bright colours such as yellow or green, you can create visual interest and fashion a vibrant space. If you don't want to go all out with colour on the walls, why not add a few bold accessories instead, such as brightly coloured coat hooks, colourful floor tiles or a piece of bold artwork?

### 2. MAKE THE MOST OF MIRRORS

Dark hallways can make the entrance to your home feel gloomy and unwelcoming. Counteract this by creating the illusion of light with a few well-placed mirrors. Don't be afraid to experiment with different sizes and shapes, as this can help to make more of a style statement.

### 3. INVEST IN FUNCTIONAL FURNITURE

Most hallways are narrow, which means they offer little in the way of space. Therefore, if you want to add a piece of furniture, then you need to make sure it is both stylish and practical. For example, a seating area that doubles up as a storage unit. It can also be a good idea to make use of any available vertical space, for example by hanging a wall cupboard above your coat hooks.

### 4. EMBRACE CONSCIOUS STYLING

As a transitional space in your home, it is important that your hallway is clutter free, well lit, and, most importantly, that it is styled in keeping with the rest of your interiors. Take a walk around your home and see what design elements you can incorporate into your hallway.

### 5. LAYER LIGHTING

You can transform a dark hallway with the right lighting, with layered lights offering a stylish and practical way to illuminate this key space. Try combining multiple pendant lights with directional wall lights for maximum impact.



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# Have you TWIGGED?

If you love the current rustic vibe but not the hefty price tags, check out these easy twig projects.

## SUNBURST TWIG MIRROR

### YOU'LL NEED:

- > Lots of straight twigs of roughly the same size
- > A 25cm round frameless mirror
- > A 35cm circle of corrugated cardboard
- > A hot glue gun

### HOW TO MAKE:

- > Glue the mirror in place in the centre of the cardboard circle.
- > Glue the twigs on the cardboard so that one end is right against the mirror edge and the other is sticking straight out, overlapping the cardboard. Layer on enough twigs so that the cardboard is completely covered.

For safety reasons, we recommend you prop your mirror on a shelf rather than hang it up.

## TWIGGY PHOTO FRAME

### YOU'LL NEED: For a 10cm x 15cm (6in x 4in) photo frame:

- > 2x 15cm twigs
- > 2x 20cm twigs
- > Twine
- > PVA glue
- > A piece of baking paper slightly larger than the photo
- > Scissors

### HOW TO MAKE:

- > To form the first corner, lay a longer twig on top of a shorter twig, allowing 2.5cm of each twig to stick out where they overlap.

- > Wrap the two together so the twine forms a cross shape on top. Tie to secure.

- > Complete this step on all corners in the same way to create a rectangle.

- > Glue the photo onto the baking paper. Then glue the edges of the baking paper to the back of the frame, with the picture facing out.

## JEWELLERY TREE

### YOU'LL NEED:

- > A strong hardwood branch – approx. 25-30cm tall
- > A log slice about 5cm thick and 13-15cm in diameter
- > Epoxy glue (e.g. Araldite)
- > A drill and drill bits suitable for wood

### HOW TO MAKE:

- > Drill a hole in the log slice, the same width as the main stem of the branch.

- > Fasten the branch in the hole with the glue and leave it to dry.

- > Hang up your jewellery!

Happy twigging!



HOME & DIY

Photo credit: saltygirlandtheliondog.com, doodlecraftblog.com

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# Let's get ready to TUMBLE!

**D**id you know that there are many more uses for tumble dryer sheets than just to reduce static and make your clothes smell nice? Discover five surprising uses for the humble dryer sheet below.

## TO REMOVE FOOD RESIDUE FROM POTS AND PANS

If you have forgone the washing up in favour of more enjoyable activities, then you are likely to be left with food residue that simply won't budge. To remove this with minimal effort, simply place a dryer sheet in the middle of the pot or pan, add warm water and some washing-up liquid and allow it to soak. After an hour, remove the sheet, drain the water and wipe away the stains with a sponge.

## TO PICK UP PET HAIR FROM CLOTHES AND UPHOLSTERY

Does your pet leave dander all over your clothes and upholstery? When it comes to removing stubborn pet hair, nothing beats a tumble dryer sheet. More effective than a lint roller, all you need to do is rub a fresh sheet against the item and watch the dander disappear.

## TO CLEAN YOUR TV AND COMPUTER SCREENS

Out of screen-cleaning wipes? Don't panic, as you can use a tumble dryer sheet with equally impressive results. Designed to reduce static cling, a dryer sheet can effectively remove dust and prevent it from resettling.

## TO REMOVE RESIDUE FROM YOUR IRON

Over time, residue will start to build up on your iron, which will make it less effective at removing creases. To clean this appliance, turn it on to a low heat setting and carefully rub a tumble dryer sheet over the surface, making sure not to touch the iron plate with your bare fingers. The heat will soften the residue and make it easy to remove.

## TO SHARPEN SCISSORS

About to start a new craft project or wrap a present and realise your trusty scissors are blunt? Carefully run a tumble dryer sheet against the dull blade and enjoy restored sharpness in an instant. Be sure not to touch your finger directly to the blade!



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The company, based locally, offers homeowners the opportunity to maximise their storage space with a loft ladder, 50sqft of boarding and a light – all fully fitted in less than a day from just £444! But it's not just the affordability of the package that makes Home Counties Loft Ladders stand out, as manager Jamie Oakley explains: 'Our

watchwords are Quality, Integrity and Value. Quality in the materials that we use for all our installations and the fact that all our loft packages are fitted by time served tradesmen, so our customers are assured of the best job.

Integrity in that we will turn up at the time we say and make sure the house is spotless when we leave, and value in that we offer our services at a price people can afford.

Our business relies on referrals and we get a huge amount of our calls from people who have been referred to us by our existing customers

– that simply wouldn't happen if we didn't adhere to our overriding principles.

At the end of the day the old adage that happy customers lead to more happy customers is true and we work hard to make that happen for

every installation we carry out!

So, if you want to make use of your loft space, call Jamie free on 0808 301 9551 and he'll be happy to pop round and give you a no obligation quote so you too can make use of your loft!



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## LOCAL MARKET ROUND UP



Over the last 12 months the average sales price in Brentwood was **£455,350**. The total value of sales was **£378,393,772**.

Disclaimer: This report is provided for general information only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information, the publisher does not accept any liability for errors or omissions. The information is provided on an 'as is' basis and should not be relied upon for any specific purpose. The report is based on data published by the Land Registry on 01/10/23.

House price growth  
over 1 year and 5 years



+6%



+12%

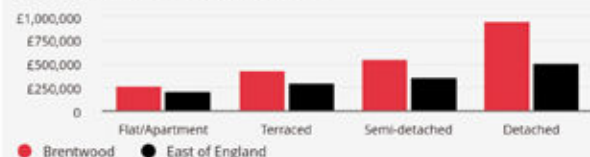
Top transaction  
in last 3 months



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Average prices over last 12 months



Source: DataLeft, Land Registry

## NATIONAL MARKET



With Halloween just around the corner, the countdown to secure a buyer by Christmas begins. Let's again look at the UK's housing market with a detailed focus on our local market in Brentwood.

### House prices

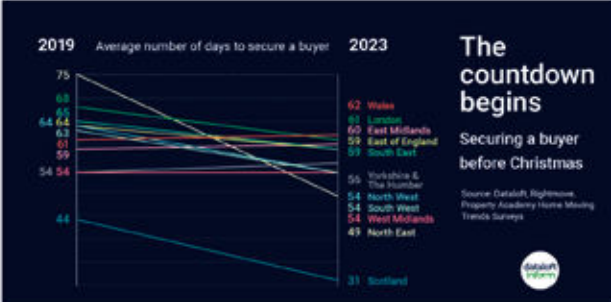
The average price for a property in July was £289,824, up 0.6% year-on-year, and 0.5% on the previous month (ONS).

### Economy

The Bank of England has held base rates at 5.25%, ending a cycle of 14 consecutive rate rises, in their attempt to curb inflation. The Bank expects inflation to slow to 5% by the end of the year.

### Transactions

The HMRC report that 86,500 sales took place in July. This is a mild improvement on the previous month (up 0.8%). Compared to last year's higher levels however, this is notably lower (-16.3%).



**The countdown begins**

Securing a buyer before Christmas

Source: DataLeft, Rightmove, Property Academy Home Moving Trends Surveys



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**SCAN ME!**

## School building found to have unsafe concrete



Photo credit: Google Maps

A school in Ongar has been found to be affected by the government's new reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) guidelines.

The government recently announced its concerns over the safety of schools with a high amount of RAAC and advised education settings to vacate these areas.

The Key Stage 2 block at Chipping Ongar Primary School has been listed as having unsafe levels of RAAC.

Councillor Tony Ball, Essex County Council's cabinet member for education excellence, lifelong learning and employability, said: "I would like to acknowledge that for pupils, parents, school staff and education colleagues at the council, this isn't the start to the autumn term you expected or will have wanted. I can reassure you that across the council, we are doing all we can to support schools to manage the situation and get affected children safely into schools and learning as quickly as possible."

Chipping Ongar Primary School has been contacted for comment.

## Nightclub loses licence after 'mass brawl' at birthday party

A Brentwood nightclub has had its licence revoked after hosting a 14th birthday party that descended into chaos.

Essex Police were called to Bloc 40 on the High Street shortly after 9pm on Friday, June 16, as a "mass brawl" spilled out onto the streets.

According to the police report, up to 60 under-18s were involved in the altercation, with bottles being

used as weapons.

A Brentwood Borough Council Licensing Sub-Committee hearing was held on September 5, and the decision was made to revoke the bar's licence.

The council stated: "Revocation must be a last resort. However, bearing in mind the evidence of management failings – both in the handling of the violent incident on June 16 and in the subsequent lack of openness with the responsible authorities – the sub-committee considered that the premises licence holder could no longer be trusted to operate the premises consistently with the licensing objectives. Therefore, revocation was the only appropriate option."

Bloc 40 has been contacted for comment.

## Conservation works begin on chapel ruins

Conservation work on the ruins of a historic chapel in Brentwood began on Monday, September 25.

The ruins of the Chapel of St Thomas a Becket date from the 13th century.

Formal consent from Historic England for the works was gained in 2022, while consent from the Chelmsford Diocese was gained in July 2023.

The works, which are expected to take eight weeks, include the removal of vegetation growing on the ruins, repairs of stonemasonry, pointing/repointing, rubble facework and crack repairs.

Councillor David Kendall, chair of Brentwood Borough Council's Finance, Assets, Investment and Recovery Committee, said: "We are committed to protecting important heritage assets in the borough. We hope the ruins remain a prominent feature for many more years to come."



Photo credit: Paul Farmer





# BURGHART for BRENTWOOD

Alex Burghart MP for Brentwood and Ongar



Photo credit: Alex Burghart MP

The post-pandemic years have been notable in seeing a rise in people struggling with their mental health. Two years of uncertainty, social distancing and a major disruption to routines were difficult to handle even for those with the most robust outlook on life.

Fortunately, access to help is easier than it has ever been. In the last 10 years or so, the NHS has developed 'Improving Access to Psychological Therapy', and just renamed it NHS Talking Therapies. The service offers a range of support to thousands of people to help them improve their low mood, anxiety and depression and to find ways to manage their mental health.

In my constituency, the Brentwood and Ongar NHS Talking Therapies service offers evidence-based talking therapies and new ways of coping to

anyone over the age of 16 to help you manage your mood. The therapies are free, you can self-refer to the service, and there is no need to go to the GP. Help is also available to support the mental health of those with long-term conditions including diabetes, irritable bowel syndrome and chronic pain.

It's reassuring to see the days of hiding depression and anxiety are passing, and access to help is easier and without stigma.

You can find out more about the service, which is free and confidential, at [www.vitahealthgroup.co.uk/news/podcasts](http://www.vitahealthgroup.co.uk/news/podcasts)

If you live in Brentwood, you can get in touch by phone on 01268 977171. If you are in Ongar, the number is 0333 015 2966.

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# From rural surroundings to entertainment icon



LOCAL FEATURE



You wouldn't expect to find a buoyant behemoth of modern primetime entertainment lingering in the leafy, rural, countryside surrounds of Stanford, yet Rylan Clark-Neal's life in Essex is indeed the epitome of serenity, and a world away from the flashbulbs and entertainment excesses that pattern his day job.

Born Ross Clark and raised in Stepney, East London, the presenter we now know as Rylan got his big break when he auditioned for the ninth series of *The X Factor* in 2012. Though his singing skills may not have been the strongest among the contestants, his magnetic personality quickly captured the hearts of both the audience and assembled judges. Finishing in fifth place, his time on *The X Factor* provided a solid foundation for his future career in television.

*Celebrity Big Brother* followed, with audiences won over by the star's vibrant personality and natural charm. Presenting duties proved an obvious route for someone who, while never turning his back on his reality TV roots, was keen to explore other areas. These have included *Big Brother* spin-offs, plus daytime TV (*This Morning*), game shows (*Supermarket Sweep*), panel shows (*Celebrity Juice* and *Would I Lie to You?*) and *Eurovision*.

Rylan is openly gay, and while he uses his influence to good effect in terms of fundraising and providing exposure to minority groups – such as the LGBTQ+ community – the 34-year-old remains grounded and sincere.

The current voice of car retailer Cinch, the presenter is set to embark on a busy schedule of work in the coming months, including a rumoured *Big Brother* return.

Clark-Neal recently swapped Stanford for Brentwood, where his mother Linda lives, and remains loyal to his Essex image. As he says: "There is no better place on Earth – the people, the places, the vibe. It's always Essex."



# YOUR LOCAL EVENTS

**JAM FACTORY JAZZ NIGHT**  
**Bardswell Social Club, Bardswell**  
**Close, Brentwood, CM14 4TJ**  
**Friday, October 13, 7.30pm**



Photo credit: Spotlight

Join the Jam Factory for an evening of jazz from Essex bands Jam Factory and Sofrito with vocalist Jo Allen.

The event is in aid of the Spotlight Radiotherapy Appeal, which aims to improve the experience of radiotherapy patients in mid and south Essex, with a charity raffle to be held on the night.

Tickets are £10 in advance or £12 on the door.

Purchase your tickets via [www.spotlightappeal.org/product/jam-factory-jazz-night](http://www.spotlightappeal.org/product/jam-factory-jazz-night)

## CUT CAPERS

**SX Bar and Venue, 10 Warley Hill,**  
**Brentwood, CM14 5HA**  
**Friday, October 13, 8pm**

Bristol favourites Cut Capers are a nine-piece band who have built a killer reputation for their live shows, ultra-high energy experiences, epic arrangements, booming brass hooks and scintillating solos.

Tickets start at £14. Purchase them from [www.bit.ly/3LwU27A](http://www.bit.ly/3LwU27A)

## THE ROCK ORCHESTRA BY CANDLELIGHT

**The Brentwood Centre, Doddinghurst Road,**  
**Pilgrims Hatch, Brentwood, CM15 9NN**  
**Tuesday, October 17, 7pm – 11pm**

Following on from a second sold-out UK tour, The Rock Orchestra is back with a massive new 90-minute setlist featuring the biggest rock and metal of all time –

performed in stunning candlelit surroundings.

It will perform the music of iconic bands including Metallica, Black Sabbath, Rage Against the Machine, AC/DC, Rammstein, Led Zeppelin, Evanescence, Guns N' Roses, Billy Idol and more.

Tickets start at £39.37 and can be purchased from [www.rb.gy/vur2e](http://www.rb.gy/vur2e)

## MIND BODY SPIRIT AND CRAFT FAYRE

**Budworth Hall, 205 High Street,**  
**Chipping Ongar, CM5 9JG**  
**Saturday, October 21, 10am – 3pm**

A day packed with therapies, spiritual therapies and readers, health advice, beauty advisers, psychic readers, tarot readers, magnetix, sweets, jewellery, craft stalls, gift stalls and more. A happy energy and suitable for those with disabilities.

There will also be workshops and talks on a variety of different subjects.

Admission is £2 for adults, and those aged 17 and under go free. Purchase tickets via [www.bit.ly/3LykMnV](http://www.bit.ly/3LykMnV)

## GHOST TRAIN

**Epping Ongar Railway, Station Approach,**  
**Epping, CM5 9BN**  
**Wednesday, October 25, to Saturday, October 28, various times**

Dare you ride the Ghost Train from North Weir? Dress up in your scariest outfit and join this spooktacular ghost train for some Halloween fun.

To find out more and see prices visit [www.eorailway.co.uk/events/fright-week](http://www.eorailway.co.uk/events/fright-week)



Photo credit: Epping Ongar Railway

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# HALLOWEEN PUMPKIN LANTERNS

*An Illuminating and Spooky Tale*

The origins of Halloween go back around 2,000 years to a Celtic festival called Samhain (pronounced 'sow-in'). The Celts believed that when the harvest ended and winter took hold, the barrier between our world and the spirit world became blurred – and this meant that dead spirits could come back to haunt us. But why pumpkins?

## AN ENCHANTING STORY FROM IRELAND

Stingy Jack is a character from Irish folk tales who liked playing pranks, even on the devil. One day, Jack tricked the devil into turning into a coin, so he could pay for their drinks. Jack then pocketed the coin, and the devil was trapped. Eventually, he set the devil free but made him promise not to claim his soul. So when Jack died, he couldn't go to hell or to heaven. He was stuck roaming the world with a glowing coal inside a turnip to light his way.

## LANTERNS FROM TURNIPS

As time passed, Samhain mixed with Christian traditions such as All Saints' Day (or All Hallows' Day)

on November 1 – and All Souls' Day, the day after. By the 16th century, the festival was already known as Halloween, taking its name from All Hallows' Eve. And as part of their Halloween celebrations, people in Ireland carved turnips into lanterns to ward off spooky spirits.

## PUMPKINS WORK BETTER

When Irish people moved to America in the 1800s, they took their Halloween tradition with them. But they soon discovered that pumpkins were much easier to carve than turnips. In honour of Stingy Jack, the carved pumpkins became known as Jack-o'-lanterns.

Today, as we carve our pumpkins to light up the night, we continue to honour customs that have journeyed through time, from our Irish neighbours to America – and, in the 1990s, back over the seas to Britain.



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# AUTUMN COCKTAILS

Just because summer now seems like a distant memory, doesn't mean that you can't still enjoy a delicious cocktail or two after work or when the kids are tucked up in bed. Why not have a go at making one of these recipes below, and warm your cockles on a chilly night?

### PUMPKIN WHITE RUSSIAN

**You will need:** 25ml pumpkin spice Kahlua | 50ml vodka | 25ml double cream  
**How to make:** Pour the ingredients into a glass over ice | Stir lightly and serve.

### CARAMEL APPLE MULE

**You will need:** 50ml vodka | 15ml caramel | 30ml apple cider vinegar | Ginger beer to top | 1 apple | 1 cinnamon stick  
**How to make:** Shake the vodka, caramel and apple cider vinegar with ice | Strain into a mule mug over ice | Top with ginger beer | Garnish with an apple fan and cinnamon stick.

### SLOE GIN FIZZ

**You will need:** 50ml sloe gin | 25ml lemon juice | 2 tsp sugar syrup | Sparkling water | Lemon slice | Fresh or frozen blackberry  
**How to make:** Pour the sloe gin, lemon juice and sugar syrup into a cocktail shaker and top with ice | Shake well | Strain into a tall glass with more ice | Top with sparkling water and stir gently | Garnish with a lemon slice and a blackberry.

### CAMPFIRE SLING

**You will need:** 50ml rye whisky | 7ml maple syrup | 3 dashes of chocolate bitters | Orange peel twist  
**How to make:** Add all the ingredients to an old-fashioned glass with one piece of ice | Stir thoroughly | Scorch a piece of orange peel over the glass to release the oils.

### MULLED APPLE JUICE

**You will need:** 1 litre apple juice | 1 cinnamon stick | 3 cloves | Orange slices | Sugar or honey to taste  
**How to make:** Simmer the apple juice with the orange peel, cinnamon and cloves for 5-10 minutes | Sweeten with sugar or honey | Serve with some orange slices and a cinnamon stick.

Photo Credit: [bloggoodfood.com](http://bloggoodfood.com), [tastingpanelmag.com](http://tastingpanelmag.com)



FOOD & DRINK



# HOW TO BUILD YOUR *own soup*

**S**oup is cheap, filling and the perfect antidote to the cold weather. Sadly, supermarket offerings can be both costly and underwhelming. So we thought we'd share with you our foolproof method for prepping the perfect soup every time.

1. **CHOOSE A FAT:** Butter | Olive oil | Palm oil | Sunflower oil
2. **SELECT A BASE LIQUID (1 OR 2):** Beef/chicken stock | Vegetable stock | Cream | Tomato purée
3. **PICK A PROTEIN:** Chicken | Fish | Tofu | Lentils | Beans
4. **DECIDE ON A GRAIN:** Rice | Noodles | Pasta | Barley
5. **CHOOSE YOUR VEGGIES (UP TO 3):** Carrots | Onion | Peppers | Sweet potatoes | Parsnips | Spinach | Broccoli | Mushrooms
6. **ADD SOME FLAVOUR:** Garlic salt | Cayenne pepper | Cumin | Basil | Thyme | Chilli powder

## How to make your soup

**STEP 1:** Heat your fat and sauté your aromatic veggies, such as onion and garlic, for 3-5 minutes.

**STEP 2:** Add your chosen protein and cook until browned or softened.

**STEP 3:** Add any other vegetables and allow them to soften for 5-10 minutes.

**STEP 4:** Pour in your base (unless using a cream base; if so save this until step 6), your grain and your selected spices and mix well.

**STEP 5:** Bring to the boil, reduce the heat and allow to simmer for around an hour.

**STEP 6:** Add cream if you are making a cream-based soup.

**STEP 7:** Allow to cool, and blend if you want a fully puréed soup.

**STEP 8:** Garnish with croutons, cheese or a herb-infused oil.

## Freezing your soup

You can freeze your soup, ideally on the same day you make it, in an airtight container or freezer bag for 2-3 months. Most soups freeze well, with the exception of cream- or milk-based soups, which tend to separate. Add any fresh herbs or starchy elements such as rice or pasta once thawed and reheated, not before freezing, for optimum results.



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# BIG BEN

**BEN STOKES OBE'S INCLUSION IN THE WORLD CUP SQUAD IS GREAT NEWS FOR ENGLAND CRICKET... LESS SO FOR OUR OPPONENTS!**

When Durham and England all-rounder Ben Stokes OBE decided that the gruelling cricketing schedule was too much for him and his body to take, a collective sigh of relief from those who cherish the clack of leather on willow must have been heard all around the world in the sport.

It was July 2022. Stokes had spent the previous three months leading his country in Test cricket after succeeding Joe Root MBE as captain, and things in that regard had started perfectly, with four wins in a row.

However, after commenting that he felt playing all three of cricket's formats – Test, ODI and T20 – was “unsustainable”, Stokes’ last 50-over tussle came against South Africa at his home ground, Durham’s Riverside.

Yet a year is a long time in sport, and even longer in the seesaw nature of the Christchurch-born all-rounder’s career. So roll on 12 months, and despite a huge summer Ashes series ahead, Stokes began speaking to his limited overs captain Jos Buttler MBE and coach Matthew Mott about a quickfire return to the ODI circuit.

Stokes says: “The closer this World Cup got, the more I was becoming interested in having those discussions. And when you consider that we are the defending champions, it almost feels right to want to ensure you defend that crown.

“At the same time, I had to remind myself of the original reason for choosing to retire from this format of the game.”

Return he has, with a pledge from the 32-year-old to listen to his body, perhaps better than he has in the past when the almost constant demands of the game have had an impact on not just physical abilities, but the star’s mental wellbeing too.

“Let’s see how this World Cup goes,” he adds, “and I’ll decide then if it’s my last hurrah.”

Had Stokes not chosen to return to the fold, we would have been denied his record-breaking knock against New Zealand in the third ODI at The Kia Oval in September. Coming into bat alongside Dawid Malan with England compromised on 13/2, Stokes was about to rev it up against the Kiwis.

His 15 fours and nine sixes contributed to an almost unimaginable personal total of 182, beating Jason Roy’s 180 against Australia in Melbourne in 2018. His efforts saw England reach a mammoth 368 off 48.1 overs. New Zealand could only muster 187 all out and Stokes took a further leap into the echelons of iconic status.

“I need more time to get used to its rhythm, but I think I managed well this time,” he said, referencing that spectacular knock. “The announcer mentioned my record just before I was done. I didn’t even know about it until then. Jason congratulated me, and I apologised to him,” he laughs.

Does Stokes feel that England can become world champions again, and in the process become only the third side to defend the title since its inception in 1975?

“Everyone recognises our team’s strength, and it’s not boastful to admit we have a talented line-up. We’re optimistic about our chances, but in World Cup matches, it’s all about handling pressure.”

Photo credit: Kieran Mollenius/Shutterstock



# How to grow SNOWDROPS

Snowdrops are one of the first signs of spring and can make a wonderful addition to any garden. Instantly recognisable by their small, white, bell-shaped flowers, snowdrops are easy to grow and will come back year after year.

## WHERE TO PLANT SNOWDROPS

Snowdrops thrive in moist but well-drained soil and in partial shade. If you plant snowdrops in soil that is too dry, you risk the bulbs drying out and failing to flower. Choose to grow snowdrops beneath deciduous shrubs or along the front of borders where herbaceous plants can provide ground cover when these flowers are dormant. They also do well planted in grass, in spring border displays and in rock gardens.

## HOW TO PLANT SNOWDROPS

Dry snowdrop bulbs can be planted in autumn, but these are often hard to establish. Instead, opt to plant snowdrops in the green in January or February. Simply lift snowdrop plants just after flowering and before the foliage has turned yellow, and replant somewhere else. You can buy snowdrops in the green from your local garden centre or online.

## HOW TO CARE FOR SNOWDROPS

Once snowdrops are established, they require no maintenance. Allow the foliage to die back naturally as this will help to ensure that the nutrients from the leaves are returned to the bulbs. Once every two years, divide any established clumps to avoid overcrowding.

## HOW TO PROPAGATE SNOWDROPS

To propagate snowdrops, lift and divide established clumps after flowering in either March or April. Using a fork, carefully lift the bulb with the roots intact and the foliage still in place. Replant in the garden immediately and water well. The foliage may appear a little sorry, but it should look healthy by next winter.

## TOP SNOWDROP VARIETIES:

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A study done by the New England Journal of Medicine found that bathing in a hot tub stimulates the beneficial effects of exercise.

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# WILD WEAR

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While gardening is a careful curation of your outdoor space, it's important not to forget the importance of maintaining your own green-fingered style.

## TROUSERS

A pair of dedicated garden workwear trousers or dungarees will suit you much better than a simple pair of old jeans.

If you've gardened before, you'll know the perils of pinching waistbands, seams riding up, back-of-the-knee fatigue and general ripping or snagging; so investing in a pair of trousers that is waterproof, strong, flexible and with ample pockets on the front and sides, plus has all-essential knee pads, is a great idea.

## HEADWEAR

Hats are a must when the sun comes out, and will also keep you warm when temperatures drop. Most gardeners will showcase a variety of headwear – from a nice woolly beanie hat in winter to a brimmed hat for summertime. Mix it up and keep your head in a good place.

## FOOTWEAR

Footwear should be comfortable, as long hours on location can bring about foot pain and sores. From classic Crocs to garden sandals, sturdy boots to full-length wellies, your footwear will most likely match weather conditions.

Don't forget to invest in a few good pairs of socks too – in the winter, they will excel at keeping the cold out, while breathable varieties for the summer will minimise the threat of fungal infections.

## GLOVES

While most gardeners are more than happy to get their hands dirty, gloves are essential for protecting your skin from sharp matter, such as rocks, stones and thorns. Switch between thicker and lighter varieties for seasonal versatility.

## JACKET

Finally, as the weather changes, keep the cold out if you're committing long hours to the soil with a jacket that's breathable, a hood for sudden inclement weather, and plenty of pockets for essentials.



GARDENING



# Book Your Tickets To The Ball!

Following the 5-star success of The Panto Adventures of Peter Pan 2022-23, the Towngate Theatre's spectacular panto for 2023-24 will be the fairytale story of Cinderella!

They'll be sure to sweep you off your feet with magic and have you rolling in the aisles with laughter, with their sparkling adventure for all the family!

The Towngate's award-winning, critically-acclaimed pantomimes are the jewel in the crown of Essex, with their talented panto team winning multiple Great British Pantomime Awards over the years and being awarded 5 star reviews across the board on previous productions.

Their legendary baddie, Sophie Ladds, returns this year as the ultimate female panto villain – the Wicked Stepmother! Their hilarious dame, Ian Hallard, returns for his third year running – he'll once again be popping on his fabulous frocks and wacky wigs as one of the Ugly Stepsisters. Stewart Briggs joins Ian as his fellow Ugly Stepsister sibling, alongside Alice Hoult as the fairytale Cinderella. Completing the panto dream team will be Luke Ward-Wilkinson as cheeky Buttons, Jack Speck as dreamy Prince Charming and Aaron Bladen as mischievous Dandini.



And of course, Basildon favourite, Simon Fielding, will once again be overseeing this enchanting production as the Co-Producer and Director, bringing his renowned panto magic to every performance.

With stunning scenery, colourful costumes, dazzling dancers and a fantastic live band – each show is a non-stop, musical extravaganza that is not to be missed!

After the record-breaking success of The Panto Adventures of Peter Pan, it is strongly recommend booking your tickets now for Cinderella, as another sold-out sensation is certain!

**Cinderella runs from Friday 24 November 2023 – Tuesday 2 January 2024**

Book tickets online now at [www.towngatetheatre.co.uk](http://www.towngatetheatre.co.uk)  
or call the Box Office on 01268 205 300

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# Keeping your dog SAFE IN AUTUMN



**A**utumn is one of the best times of year for long walks with your dog, when the leaves are falling from the trees and the weather has cooled. That being said, there are lots of lurking dangers that you need to be aware of.

**ACORNS:** Acorns contain a toxic ingredient called tannic acid which can cause damage to your dog's liver and kidneys. When ingested, they can also lead to vomiting, diarrhoea, lethargy and abdominal pain.

**CONKERS:** Conker seeds boast a spiky green shell that can injure your dog's mouth if picked up and carried around. The shiny brown conker inside can be a choking hazard and, if ingested, can cause vomiting, diarrhoea and sometimes an intestinal blockage.

**FALLEN FRUIT:** If you take your dog on long country walks, they are highly likely to encounter fallen fruit such as apples and plums. When these fruits fall on the ground, they start to ferment and produce a natural alcoholic substance. If eaten in large quantities, this can cause vomiting and diarrhoea.

**HARVEST MITES:** Harvest mites are tiny red mites that tend to appear at the end of summer and into autumn. They are often found on a dog's coat, in between their toes and in their ear folds. These mites can cause extreme itching and trauma to the skin.

**WILD MUSHROOMS:** Wild mushrooms come in all sorts of shapes, colours and sizes, which makes it very hard to distinguish between the edible ones and those that are poisonous. If your dog eats an unknown fungus, it may cause a mild stomach upset, or it could be deadly.

**SPRING BULBS:** Many people plant spring bulbs in autumn, such as daffodil, tulip and spring crocus bulbs. These are all toxic to dogs and can make them very unwell if ingested.

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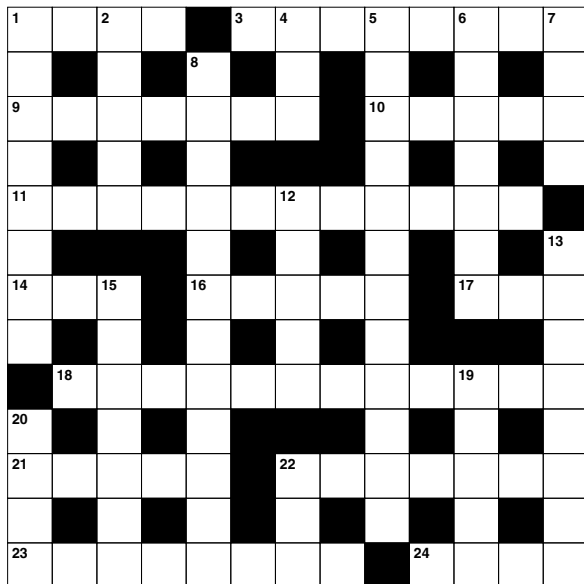
# PUZZLES & TRIVIA

## ACROSS

1. Light blast of wind (4)
3. Fast runner (8)
9. Not tense (7)
10. Written agreements (5)
11. Opposite of amateur (12)
14. Decay (3)
16. Lacking meaning (5)
17. Wonder (3)
18. Incessantly (12)
21. Concerning (5)
22. Mound made by insects (7)
23. Shows (8)
24. Snake-like fish (pl.) (4)

## DOWN

1. Sweat (8)
2. Leaf of parchment (5)
4. Collection of many sheets of paper (3)
5. Enhancements (12)
6. Musical composition (7)
7. Repose (4)
8. Based on untested ideas (12)
12. Set out (5)



13. Uses again (8)
15. Slight earthquakes (7)
19. Part of a church tower (5)
20. Edible fat (4)
22. Nay (anag) (3)

## DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ A hummingbird beats its wings up to 70 times per second.
- ▶ Hummingbirds are the only birds that can fly backwards.
- ▶ There are reportedly more than 350 known species of hummingbird, from the giant hummingbird weighing around 20g, to the bee hummingbird which measures less than three inches.
- ▶ Hummingbirds use their long, thin tongues like straws to drink nectar from flowers.
- ▶ Rufous hummingbirds migrate 4,000 miles from Mexico to Alaska every spring.
- ▶ Female hummingbirds use spider silk to weave together twigs and leaves for their nests.
- ▶ Hummingbirds have no sense of smell.

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# RAINCOAT *revolution*

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## A TECHNOLOGICAL MARVEL

Back in the early 19th century, there were no synthetic fibres available, and keeping clothing waterproof was a constant challenge. But Glasgow-born Charles Macintosh's innovation changed all that. He created a revolutionary material that was made by rubberising cotton cloth, making it waterproof. Macintosh patented his method, and the first 'Mac' hit the market in October 1823. His Mackintosh coat became an instant sensation, and the brand became synonymous with stylish and functional outerwear loved by workers and aristocrats alike.

## STRANGE SMELLS AND MELTING COATS

Early Mackintosh coats faced a few issues - they smelled strange, the fabric was stiff, and they sometimes even melted in hot weather. Thankfully, these problems were largely solved in 1844 with the patenting of another groundbreaking innovation: the vulcanising of rubber. This chemical process made the fabric stronger and less sensitive to temperature changes.

## BACK FROM THE BRINK

In the 1980s and 1990s, Mackintosh faced challenges from lightweight synthetic waterproof fabrics like Gore-Tex. However, a management buyout in the mid-1990s breathed new life into the brand. It also reclaimed its status as an upmarket brand, collaborating with prestigious fashion houses like Louis Vuitton.

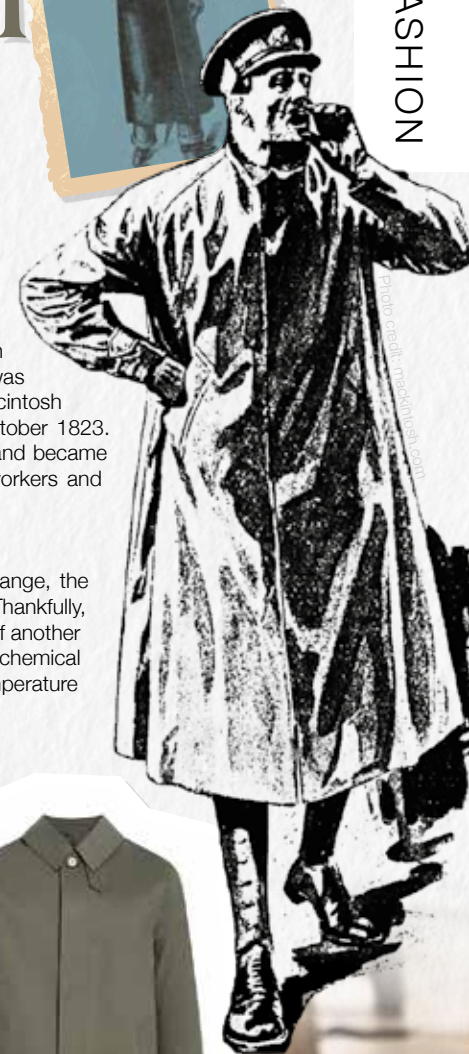
## THE MAKING OF A MACKINTOSH

To this day, the coats are still handmade in Cumbernauld, near Glasgow, using a fabric that's very similar to Macintosh's original. Skilled craftsmen and women cut, sew and seal the material by hand, using special rubber-based glue. Each seam is also taped to ensure the coats are 100 per cent waterproof.

Now owned by Japanese firm Yagi Tsusho, the Mackintosh has weathered the storms of fashion and remains a symbol of British style and innovation. If you want one, you'll need to start saving now; a classic trench coat will set you back almost £1,000.



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## BAD SPORTSMANSHIP:

# ERIC CANTONA

With true skill, finesse and regular glimpses of genius, when Eric Cantona was good, he was very good. Yet the Frenchman was tainted with a self-destructive element that permeated his game.

Cantona was ever the mercurial talent, and was an iconic figure for Manchester United during the club's early glory years under Sir Alex Ferguson CBE.

From the outset of his career, Cantona's undoubted flair was plainly evident, yet so too was his lack of composure.

During a match in 1988 between his club, Auxerre, and Nantes, the Marseille-born forward kung fu kicked Michel Der Zakarian, landing him a three-month ban which was later reduced after the club threatened to withdraw him from French national team selection.

As it would turn out, this would not be an isolated incident. A string of other disciplinary issues in France prompted a move to England, with Leeds United the beneficiaries as they clinched the final First

Division title before the inception of the Premier League in 1992. A tempestuous time at Elland Road then saw him move to hated rivals Manchester United for a cut price £1.25million.

Talent and turbulence would continue at Old Trafford, but never more so than one night in January 1995 in South East London. After being sent off for his kick at opposition defender Richard Shaw, Cantona was confronted by Palace supporter Matthew Simmons, who had run down 11 rows of the stand to confront and racially abuse the Frenchman. Cantona responded by launching into the crowd with another of his trademark kung fu kicks and followed this with a series of punches.

The sultry, softly spoken Frenchman's reaction to his subsequent eight-month ban went down as one of football's famous quotes. "When the seagulls follow the trawler," he said, taking a sip of water, "it's because they think sardines will be thrown into the sea."



SPORT

Photo credit: Colorsport/Shutterstock



# Signs you are ADDICTED to CAFFEINE

Do you love an energy drink? Can't get out of bed without your morning cup of coffee? If the answer is yes, then you are far from alone. It is suspected that as many as three out of four regular caffeine consumers are addicted to the substance.

**1 You get headaches if you miss your caffeine fix:** Caffeine is a vasoconstrictor, which means it makes the blood vessels narrower and restricts blood flow. This in turn relieves headaches, so if you miss your morning fix, you may develop a pounding head as a result.

**2 You're bad-tempered before you get your first dose:** Not a morning person? This could be because you are too reliant on caffeine. Caffeine stimulates the dopamine receptors in the brain, which makes you feel good. Therefore, if you don't get your morning hit, you are much more likely to experience a bad mood.

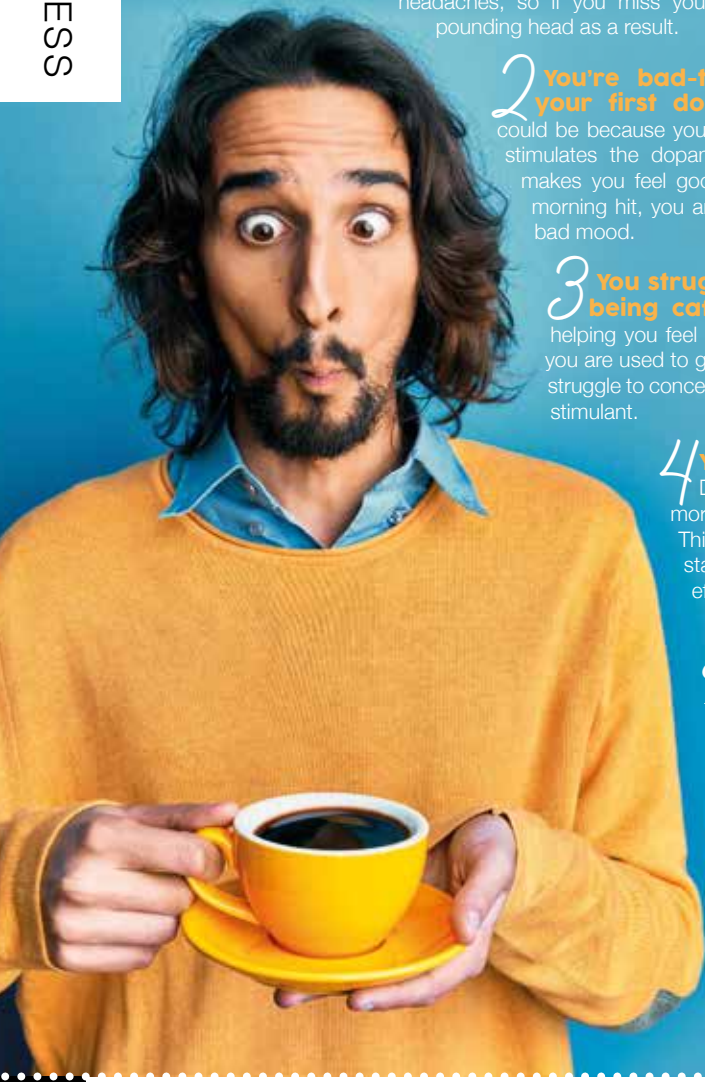
**3 You struggle to concentrate without being caffeinated:** Caffeine is known for helping you feel more alert and focused. However, if you are used to getting that boost every day, you may struggle to concentrate without the help of this popular stimulant.

**4 You've built up a tolerance:** Do you feel like you need more and more caffeine to enjoy the same effects? This is likely because your body has started to become immune to the effects of this substance.

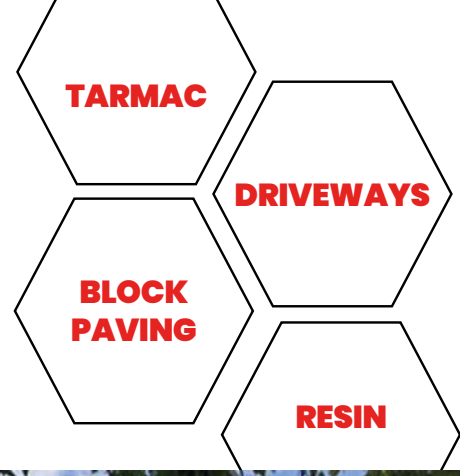
**5 You feel constantly on edge:** Do you often get the jitters? High doses of caffeine can cause you to feel jumpy and can even cause anxiety and panic attacks.

## How to reduce your caffeine intake:

- ☛ Keep a caffeine diary ☛ Switch to herbal teas
- ☛ Check labels for other sources of caffeine, such as fizzy drinks and chocolate
- ☛ Gradually cut down your daily intake rather than going cold turkey.



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# Are women suffering in silence?

Ms Seema Bagtharia, Consultant Gynaecologist at Nuffield Health Brentwood Hospital, explains.

The menopause is when a woman stops having periods. It happens when your ovaries stop releasing eggs or have been removed. Women in the UK have their menopause between the ages of 45 and 55 years, with the average age being 51 years. The time before your last period, when your oestrogen levels are falling, is called the perimenopause ("the change"), which can last from a few months to several years. Around half of all women notice physical and/or emotional symptoms during this time.

Every woman experiences the menopause differently. The most common issues are:

- periods can become erratic/ heavy
- hot flushes
- night sweats
- vaginal dryness
- low mood and/or feeling anxious
- joint and muscle pain
- loss of interest in having sex.

Some women choose to go through the menopause without treatment, while others prefer some form of treatment to manage their symptoms, by using either hormone replacement therapy (HRT) or an alternative treatment.

**We offer treatment to make the menopause easier.**

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT). HRT is the most common form of prescribed treatment for menopausal symptoms. It helps to replace the hormone oestrogen in your body, which decreases around your menopause. You may sometimes also need other hormones (such as progestogen and testosterone) that your body is no longer producing.

HRT (hormone replacement therapy) replaces your lost hormones

to counteract the effects of the menopause. Your consultant can discuss and recommend the right type of HRT for you. This discussion should cover both the short-term (over the next five years) and the longer term (beyond the next five years) benefits and risks for you.

There are different ways to have HRT:

- a daily tablet
- A skin patch applied to the skin
- Gel medication applied to the skin


#### Benefits of HRT:

It is an effective treatment for:

- Hot flushes and low mood associated with the menopause.

- It can improve sexual desire and reduce vaginal dryness.
- It helps keep your bones strong by preventing osteoporosis.

*Ms Seema Bagtharia is a Consultant Gynaecologist at Nuffield Health Brentwood Hospital who specialises in general gynaecology including heavy menstrual bleeding, infertility, endometriosis, prolapse, minimal access/invasive surgery, with a special interest in recurrent miscarriage, perimenopausal problems (including post-menopausal bleeding and menopausal symptoms). She also performs early pregnancy and gynaecological ultrasound scanning.*



**Women's Health  
Menopause & HRT**

Wednesday 18 October 6.30pm  
Ms Seema Bagtharia  
Consultant Gynaecologist

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Website: [www.nuffieldhealth.com/hospitals/brentwood](http://www.nuffieldhealth.com/hospitals/brentwood)



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with Ms Seema Bagtharia, Consultant Gynaecologist

#### Varicose veins

Thursday 19 October 2023 at 6:30pm

with Mr V Gadvhi, Consultant Vascular Surgeon

#### Breast reduction surgery

Tuesday 24 October 2023 at 6:30pm

with Ms Sascha Dua, Consultant Breast Surgeon

#### Cosmetic surgery

Thursday 9 November 2023 at 6:30pm

with Mr V Ramakrishnan and Miss M Morgan, Consultant Plastic Surgeons



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# UNDER pressure!

## HEALTH & FITNESS

**D**id you know that you can help to control high blood pressure with exercise? Here are five of the best physical activities, proven to lower your blood pressure.

### BRISK WALKING

If you are overweight and have high blood pressure, you may not be able to undergo a vigorous workout regime. Fortunately, studies have shown that multiple short sessions of brisk walking can be as effective at lowering blood pressure as high-intensity exercises. Aim for three 10-minute walks each day.

### SWIMMING

A great form of aerobic exercise, swimming is a good option for older adults and those who require a low-impact fitness regime. For best results, aim for 45 minutes of continuous swimming four or five times per week. Don't worry if you cannot manage 45 minutes right away, as you can gradually build up your fitness and endurance levels.

### DANCING

If you get bored easily and like to have fun when working out, then you will be pleased to hear that dancing is a great form of exercise for people with high blood pressure. Another effective form of aerobic exercise, aim for at least 30 minutes a day, five times per week.

### HIKING

For those who like a bit more of a challenge and love the great outdoors, hiking is the physical activity for you. Guaranteed to get your heart rate up and help you lose any excess weight, there are lots of beautiful hiking spots in the UK. This physical pastime has been shown to lower blood pressure by up to 10 points.

### RESISTANCE TRAINING

Resistance training can be added to your workout routine to further help with reducing blood pressure. This type of training can be done less frequently than cardio exercises; movements such as squats, push-ups, planks and abdominal crunches should be carried out two or three times a week. For anyone less mobile or who doesn't want to use weights, resistance bands are a good choice as they will not put your body under as much pressure.

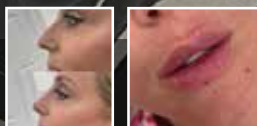




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V  
BEAUTY

# VEGGIE vision

**M**ost people know that fruits and vegetables are good for your complexion when eaten regularly, but not everyone knows that they can also be applied to the skin and hair to achieve amazing results. Here are four of our favourite veggie-based beauty treatments.

**PUMPKIN FOOT MASK – Best for dry, cracked heels**  
**You will need:** ½ cup of pumpkin purée | 1 whole egg | 1 tsp honey  
**How to apply:** Combine all of the above ingredients in a bowl | Massage into the feet and ankles | Cover with cling film or put on a pair of old socks | Leave for 15 minutes and then rinse with warm water

**BUTTERNUT SQUASH HAIR MASK – Best for dull or dry hair**  
**You will need:** ½ large butternut squash | 3 tbsp honey | ¼ cup of plain yogurt  
**How to make:** Peel and cook the squash until soft enough to remove the inner contents | Mash the squash | Combine with the honey and yogurt | Apply the mixture to damp hair and put on a plastic shower cap | Leave on for 20 minutes and then rinse with warm water

**BEETROOT FACE MASK – Best for ageing skin**  
**You will need:** 2 tsp beetroot juice | 1 tsp yogurt | 1 tsp lime juice | 2 tsp gram flour  
**How to make:** Mix the beetroot juice with the flour and then add the yogurt and lime juice | Mix until you have a smooth paste | Spread the mixture evenly over the face and leave for 15 minutes | Rinse off with warm water | Pat your face dry

**POTATO CLEANSER – Best for acne-prone skin**  
**You will need:** 1 potato | 1 cucumber | 1 tsp baking soda | 1 tsp water  
**How to apply:** Peel and chop the potato and the cucumber | Blend in a food processor or blender for 20 seconds | Add the water and baking soda | Apply to the face daily to cleanse and remove make-up, dirt and impurities.



# SMILE HQ

## Exceptional Dentistry

### A Brand New Smile in One Day?

From the outside, Brentwood High Street's SmileHQ looks more like a boutique hotel than a dental practice.

Inside, owner Dr Vishal Patel and a highly skilled team of dental surgeons provide a treatment that transforms much more than just smiles.

The clinic is earning rave reviews for its Same-Day Teeth treatment – a life-changing procedure that gives patients a brand-new replacement smile in just one day.

**Dr Vishal and the SmileHQ team are now offering an exclusive 10% discount on the procedure, which could save VISION Magazine readers up to £2,060.**



### Life Without Smiles

Life without a complete set of teeth isn't just an oral health challenge, says Dr Vishal. "While it sounds trivial, the problem of loose or missing teeth and poorly fitting dentures can be a real blight on lives.

"These conditions prevent patients from eating their favourite foods and getting the balanced diet they need. It can also be a constant drain on confidence that leaves people feeling afraid to smile."

### The Same-Day Solution

In the past, the only option for patients with missing teeth was removable dentures or implanted teeth.

However, dentures often leave wearers facing problems with eating and speaking clearly, while implant surgery is a lengthy process leaving patients without functional teeth during recovery.

SmileHQ's Same-Day Teeth changes this – reversing even the most extreme effects of failing oral health and tooth loss in a single day.

The procedure uses state-of-the-art dental implants to replace loose or missing teeth, so it's also perfect for those who live with the daily inconvenience of dentures.

Results are such a dramatic improvement that Same Day Teeth are often life-changing

for SmileHQ patients, says Vishal: "The changes we see in patients after receiving their brand new smiles aren't just cosmetic. For many, it represents a new lease of life, with improved confidence, a more youthful look and radically improved dental function."



### The Science of Same-Day Smiles

Same Day Teeth technology uses a series of strong titanium implants as a substitute root for the replacement teeth. Where traditional methods require 6-10 implants per jaw and a lengthy recovery time, Same Day Teeth uses just four for a completely new arch of teeth.

Crucially, this means patients can walk into the practice with no teeth and leave the same day with a brand-new smile.

### Take advantage of our offers

- A comprehensive 45-minute assessment with our Senior Implant Surgeon, Dr Vishal Patel for FREE
- Currently, we are offering a CBCT scan (usually worth £250) for FREE
- To secure this appointment, all we require is a £50 booking fee, which is fully refundable when you arrive for your appointment.
- Single Implant with the crown – from £1950 per tooth

### Trust SmileHQ's Same-Day Experts

Dr Vishal and the SmileHQ team have successfully placed thousands of same-day implants and also have extensive experience in advanced implant techniques, including bone grafting and sinus lifts.

If you suffer from loose or missing teeth or have poorly-fitting dentures, they are here to listen to you and explain the options at every step of the way.

"We believe everyone should be able to enjoy the benefits of a healthy, functional smile without the wait," says Dr Vishal.

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\*Terms and Conditions apply. Full-price treatment costs £17,000 per jaw. Saving is £1,700 per jaw. Free initial Consultation & Assessment (usually £195) and free CBCT scan (usually £250) only applies if you decide to proceed with treatment. A £50 refundable deposit is required when booking a consultation.





# The GLOBAL ZOO

Animals unique to one place and how to see them

The ability of animals to explore the world is only bettered by the wanderlust of humans, yet there is still a clutch of species who have never ventured from their home continents and, in some cases, countries. While the Galápagos Islands typically take credit for the planet's most unique array of life, here are some others worth celebrating.

## GELADA, ETHIOPIA

A monkey that looks like it's wearing a tuxedo, the gelada is native to the highlands of Ethiopia and has rarely strayed. While other monkey species are known for swinging from trees with reckless abandon, these are happiest on the desert floor, eating grass, seeds, roots and insects.

## INACCESSIBLE ISLAND RAIL, INACCESSIBLE ISLAND

Yes, there is a place called Inaccessible Island – it's in the South Atlantic – and it requires little description. To describe the world's smallest flightless bird (which also takes the 'Inaccessible' name) is undoubtedly to make a straightforward link

to how this little creature has never made it to the mainland.

## THORNY DEVIL, AUSTRALIA

This lizard looks like something out of a Marvel comic, albeit it's never been exported any further than the Aussie outback. It can drink water through its skin, which is just as well, as there is precious little of the stuff about in the summer heat of the Southern Hemisphere.

## TEXAS BLIND SALAMANDER, USA

Without eyes or skin colour, this peculiar amphibian detects prey by virtue of vibrations around it. It has never made it out of US waters and you're highly unlikely to ever see one in the flesh, since it lives deep underwater in cave networks.

## MANX CAT, ISLE OF MAN

Lastly, there's the famous Manx cat. Although these have been brought across to the mainland, they stand apart from other cat species owing to a rare genetic mutation that means they are born with no tails.



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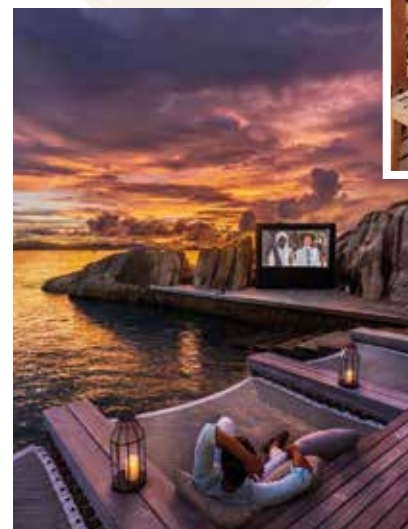
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KIDS

# Incy wincy spider

Halloween provides the perfect opportunity for you to get crafty with your kids, and this spooky spiderweb doesn't disappoint. Suitable for little ones and older children alike, discover how to make your very own salt and glue spiderweb craft below.

**WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**  
Black paper or card | A pencil | A ruler | PVC or Elmer's glue | Table salt | Watercolour paints | A soft brush

**HOW TO MAKE:**  
**1 Draw your spiderweb design:** Your child can do this by hand themselves, depending on their age and ability, using a pencil or ruler, or you can help them with this step. Alternatively, you could print out a spiderweb template to use.

**2 Trace the shape with glue:** The next step is to trace glue along each line of your spiderweb. Again, young children may need help with this if they want to achieve a good spiderweb shape. To make the glue lines as smooth as possible, do not allow the tip of the glue bottle to touch the paper but instead, hover slightly above it.

**3 Cover the spiderweb with salt:** Fill a ramekin or small bowl with table salt and then use two fingers to pinch the salt and sprinkle it over the glue. Make sure that you cover each line and curve with enough salt. Leave the glue to fully dry, ideally overnight, before moving on to the next step.

**4 Paint your spiderweb:** Now comes the really exciting part: adding colour to your spiderweb. Watercolour paints are perfect for this as they spread well on dried glue and salt. Using a soft brush, plenty of water and your chosen watercolours, add a drop or two of colour to a salt line. Use a light touch and do not scrub as this may dissolve your spiderweb.

**MAKE A HANGING SPIDERWEB**  
Take your craft to the next level by applying the glue and the paint, minus the salt, to a thin plastic sheet, gently peel it off and then fix it to your preferred surface using sticky glue dots or hang around the room with string. Make sure you allow the glue to fully dry before peeling.

Photo credit: maeandpops.com, thepurplepumpkinblog.co.uk



# Get BALANCED!

Did you know that National Work/Life Balance Week takes place this month, with the aim of generating awareness of the importance of a healthy balance between your professional and personal life?

If you struggle to switch off after leaving work or you find the lines between your work and home life have blurred, then we are here to help you.

## Why is a good work/life balance important?

A good work/life balance involves finding a harmonious relationship between your home life and your working life. This is vital

to your overall wellbeing as people need to engage in a wide range of activities, as well as rest, in order to thrive. If you work too hard or work very long hours, you are more likely to experience high levels of stress and suffer from insomnia, depression and/or anxiety.

## What is an unhealthy work/life balance?

The most common signs of an unhealthy work/life balance are:

- > Regularly working long hours, including evenings, weekends and holidays
- > Neglecting your personal/family life owing to excessive work demands
- > Experiencing burnout, which causes physical, emotional and mental exhaustion
- > A lack of time for self-care, including sleep and leisure activities
- > Strained relationships owing to work commitments

## How to achieve the right balance between work and home life

**1. SET BOUNDARIES:** Make sure that you establish clear boundaries between your work and personal life by defining specific working hours and sticking to them.

**2. FOCUS ON TIME MANAGEMENT:** Sometimes people are guilty of working hard rather than smart, which can mean they have to spend longer at the office and less time at home. Instead, prioritise the most important tasks both at home and at work.

**3. BE FLEXIBLE:** At times, you will need to have to adjust your work schedule to accommodate unforeseen personal circumstances or emergencies, so don't feel guilty about doing this.



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## GOOD CARS

### for ULEZ 2023 EXPANSION



Regardless of your thoughts on the controversial expansion of London's Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), there is a wide selection of cars out there ready to help you bypass this expensive charge.

The extension of ULEZ to encompass the whole of Greater London became operational at the end of August, and not without considerable objection.

Now, petrol vehicles must meet Euro 4 standards, with even tighter Euro 6 requirements for their diesel cousins.

Entering the ULEZ with a non-conforming vehicle invites a daily charge of £12.50, so Mayor of London Sadiq Khan's £2,000 grant for Greater London residents looking to change to a ULEZ-compliant motor is appealing, as are some of the cars that fit the criteria.

For instance, for those desiring a premium touch, the Mercedes-Benz A-Class hatchback is a worthy contender, boasting advanced technology and a luxurious interior. Models from 2013 hover around the £10,000 mark.

The widely admired Ford Focus has numerous ULEZ-compliant variants. One with fewer than 50,000 miles could be yours for less than £6,000.

Or what about the iconic Mazda MX-5? The Japanese brand is revered for superb driving experience and affordability. However, look out for some older versions, as these may not meet ULEZ requirements.

Lastly, the VW Polo, particularly the 1.2 TDI BlueMotion edition of the Mk5, is famously fuel-efficient, boasting up to 91.1mpg on motorways and 67.3mpg in urban settings. With no emission zone charges and some high-mileage models available at under £4,000, it's a sound option.

While virtually all petrol cars sold after 2005 are ULEZ compliant – along with petrol vans after 2006 and motorbikes registered after July 2007 – it ultimately pays to check your vehicle, as well as the status of a potential new one, online at [tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/check-your-vehicle](https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/check-your-vehicle)



MOTORING

Photo credit: mercedes-benz.co.uk, ford.co.uk, mazda.co.uk, volkswagen.co.uk



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