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BEFORE



AFTER

AFTER



AFTER



BEFORE






AFTER



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

Editor's notes...



Nik Allen, Editor

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

We're now entering the final chapter of 2020, a year with many unprecedented times.

In fact, that word 'unprecedented' I have

heard more times this year than ever before.

The message has certainly become more positive recently, with the hope of a vaccine being close to being rolled out. It really does feel like the positive ending to a Hollywood style 'disaster' movie, and hopefully it's the positive news we all need to end 2020 and write it off as a year most would want to forget.

For me, I'm taking the positives (as always).

We've made a lot of changes in business and in our personal life, and some of the old ways (pre-COVID) I don't want to go back to. I've certainly enjoyed the flexible working from home more; in fact, my team and I have found that we are more productive than working in an office at times.

In our personal life, we've enjoyed more walks as a family exploring more of the beautiful Essex countryside we have on our doorstep. At home we sometimes get caught up in the day to day, and weeks go swooshing by, but these months of lockdowns and more time at home certainly make me appreciate the little things in life that are most special.

However your year's gone, let's look forward with positivity to 2021. Wishing you all the very best.

Nik

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At 77 years young, Joe Biden's journey to the White House has been a long one, but the US Presidential Election winner won't delay in attempting to bring back together a fractured nation.

After a tumultuous four years as the most powerful man in world politics, it perhaps shouldn't have come as too much of a surprise to find Donald Trump refusing to go quietly in the aftermath of a US Presidential Election defeat that left Democrat Joe Biden at the door of The White House... albeit without a set of keys.

Republican Trump's assertion of ballot box fraud in light of what, admittedly, even his fiercest critic would deem a farcical voting process, will mean the intricacies of the November 3 election will play out in the Supreme Court. And yet, where US politics is concerned, we shouldn't be surprised – four years ago all similar accusations of malpractice were shot across the bow by those same Democrats who are now up in arms over Trump's claims. His suggestion was that thousands of new voting papers were added to the mix, that some were in the name of people long deceased, and that many duplicated votes were received after a chaotic postal vote system that allowed individual states to decide their own rules.

When the dust settles, however, 77-year-old Biden will be inaugurated as the leader of the free world. A lifetime ambition, the Pennsylvania-born former lawyer has been at the forefront of politics for well over five decades, having become a senator in January 1973. Re-elected six times, he was vice president to Barack Obama for eight years, and considered running in 2016, but made way for Hillary Clinton.

He is a passionate advocate of raising the minimum wage and investing in green energy, notably in rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement that Trump controversially left. He promotes criminal justice reform and grants for minority communities, and will also look to expand Obamacare, enlarge the free college system, and challenge China's questionable environment and trade practices. And, most notably, he brings with him to the top table of world politics Kamala Harris, America's first female, first black and first South Asian vice president.

Here in Britain we will look on with interest to see if prime minister Boris Johnson can configure the same buoyancy, trust and commercial parallels he enjoyed with Trump. Our long-term alignment with the States on corporate, social and political levels has been essential for the economy, and now more than ever before the government will be seeking reassurance that this can continue under a new regime.

Despite a desperately narrow winning margin, Joe Biden will enter The White House having achieved the most votes ever for an incoming president – more than 77 million. And yet those celebrating the supposed new dawn of American politics should be wary. Putting aside the somewhat ambitious legal claims that will fill the scrolling new tickers over the coming weeks and months, it remains the case that, even in defeat, Trump's vote total was more than any other elected president in history, Obama included. The brand of confrontational, partisan politics that he popularised continues to resonate with America, and with the Senate still under the control of the Republicans, Biden knows he'll have to fight hard to steady the United States' uneasy global reputation.

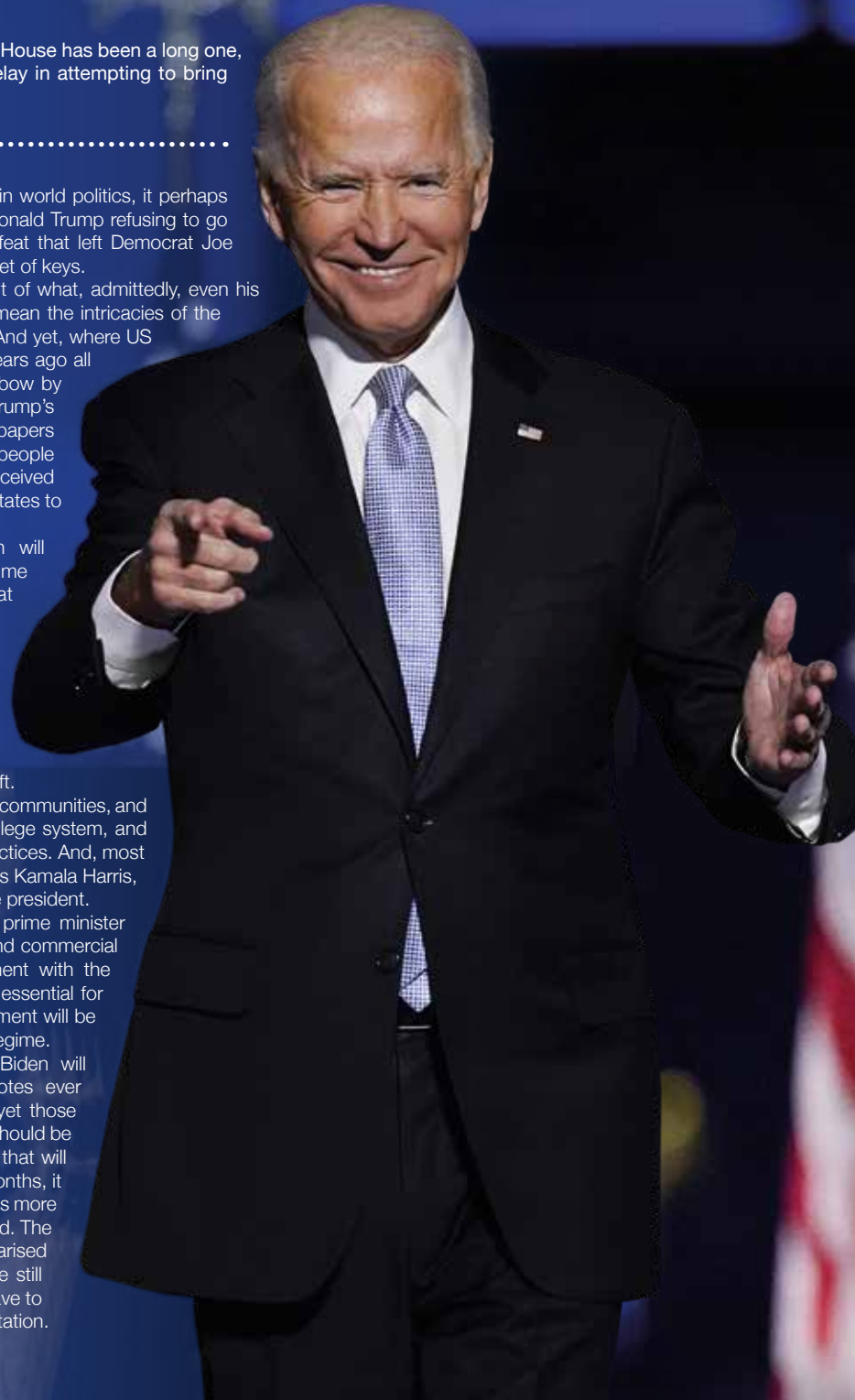


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BIDEN: His Time

THE WORLD AROUND US

Part 2

In the second of our environmental series that looks at the key drivers in the health and well-being of the planet, we're looking at the legacy of our rainforests.

At the end of the 1980s, the realisation that the world's rainforests were being removed at an alarming rate truly propelled a green revolution – one that continues to thrive today.

Where eco awareness and the preservation of our planet are now a part of everyday life, the way we embraced the saving of the Amazon rainforests had never before been seen.

The realisation that deforestation was claiming an area the size of 20 football pitches every minute – for the acquiring of timber and repurposing of land for cattle ranching – was profound, but the deafening screams of those early environmentalists are now just faint murmurs. So what has happened to those green expanses?

Sadly, the problem still exists. A quarter of the Amazon has disappeared, probably never to return, while some speculation suggests the remainder may be felled within 50 years if tighter restrictions are not forthcoming.

Globally, one in four people depends directly on forests for their livelihood, and as many as 120 prescription drugs worldwide are derived directly from rainforests.

And yet, there are two sides to every story. Many South Americans will point to the economic necessity of monetising a natural resource, just as the UK has done with oil and gas. Even the Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro has called the destruction of these plant- and animal-rich expanses “cultural”; and in a country that has more than 20 million people living in poverty, it's not difficult to see why resistance is strong.

To conclude, it seems that while the days are gone where almost every other charitable programme was driven towards preserving these incredible habitats, it's simply a case of having our attention diverted to other ills. Three decades after we first reached out to our rainforests, the battle to save them lives on.



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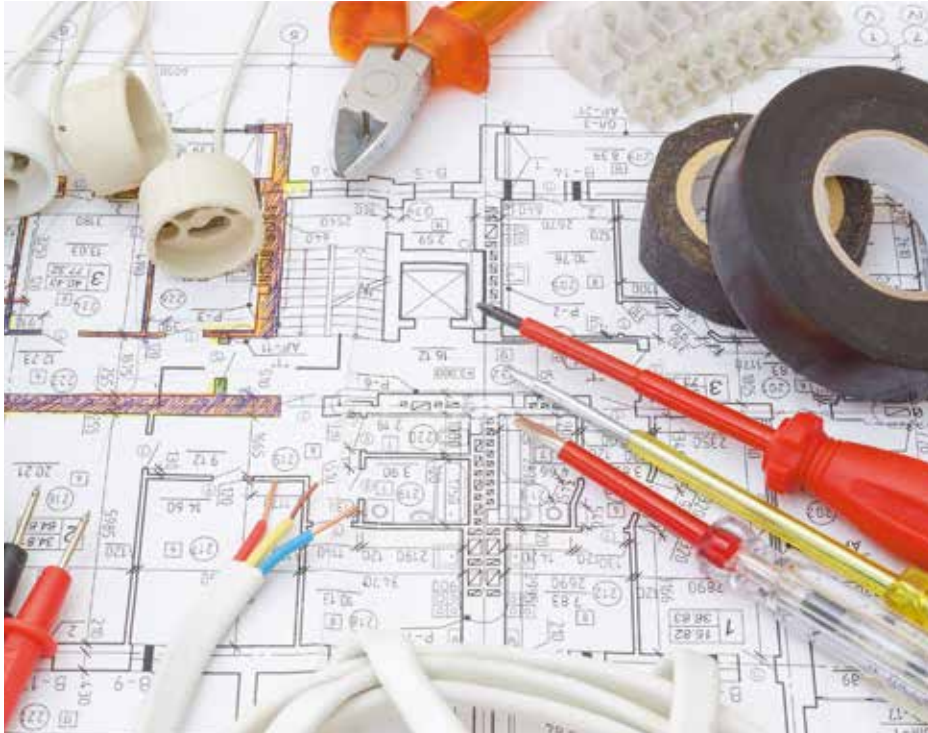
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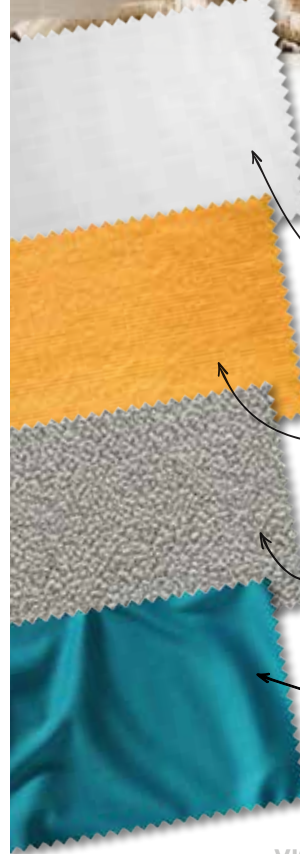
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HOME & DIY



If you spend all day every day in the winter months longing to return to the comfort and cosiness of your bed, then you may be interested to find out what the best bed sheets are for winter warmth. From fleece to flannel, cotton to silk, keep reading to discover what fabric you should choose for your winter safe haven.

Cotton: Although you may think that cotton is more fitting for the summer, if you are the type of sleeper who ends up kicking off your covers halfway through the night, then cotton might be the ideal material for you all year round. A natural fabric, cotton is known for its moisture-wicking abilities, meaning it is great for regulating your overall body temperature. If you have sensitive skin, opt for organic cotton sheets which are both breathable and good for the environment.

Flannel: Synonymous with warmth, flannel is one of the most popular choices for winter bedding. A cross between cotton and fleece, this fabric is soft, airy and breathable, making it the perfect choice for anyone who loves a bed that is warm but not overwhelmingly so.

Fleece: Arguably the warmest material you can choose for your bed sheets, fleece is a synthetic fabric that is ultra-soft and built for insulation. Often used in winter sports gear, fleece is designed to insulate heat in even the coldest conditions, meaning it is ideal for those below-freezing winter nights.

Silk: This may be the last fabric that you would think of when it comes to choosing winter bedding, but silk has the unique ability to retain heat while at same time remaining lightweight and smooth to touch. Opt for pure silk bedding if possible as this has moisturising properties; something that your parched winter skin so desperately needs.



DIY Glass art

Nobody likes to look at a big, bare wall, but there are only so many family pictures that one room can take, so why not have a go at this simple, yet stunning, DIY glass wall art? You only need a few basic craft materials and a little bit of creative flair and you are good to go.

YOU WILL NEED

- > Multipurpose, water-based craft paints (small pots) in your preferred colours
- > Masking tape
- > Glue gun
- > 1 glass picture frame
- > Paint brush – soft acrylic or watercolour brushes work well

HOW TO MAKE

- > Ensure the glass within the frame is secure; if not, use a glue gun to stick it in place
- > Allow the glue to fully dry before continuing
- > Mask the edges of the frame and use a clean, dry cloth to dust the glass

- > Decide upon your design – you could use your initial, a flower or a simple inspirational quote
- > If using a stencil, position your chosen design under the glass or go freehand
- > Paint your design in layers, allowing the paint to dry between each coat
- > Once your design is fully dry, remove the masking tape and display proudly on your chosen wall

TOP TIPS FOR PAINTING ON GLASS

- > Always clean the surface before painting
- > Handle the glass carefully to avoid fingerprints
- > Choose the right brush – synthetic brushes can create visible brushstrokes, whereas natural hair brushes allow for more paint to be applied in one stroke and provide a smoother coverage
- > Do not apply too much pressure with your brush
- > Avoid overworking the paint
- > Always blot your brush after rinsing it to eliminate any excess water
- > Clean away imperfections while the paint is still wet, using a wet brush, toothpick or paper towel
- > When the paint has dried, use a razor blade to scrape or trim off any imperfections

OTHER IDEAS FOR DIY GLASS ART:

- > Use markers to write out your favourite quotes
- > Press flowers (two pieces of glass required)

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HOME & DIY



Chic OR UNIQUE

THE RETURN OF SHABBY CHIC AND HOW TO PULL IT OFF

The revolving circle of décor and design has, over the years, gripped a nation of amateur interior designers. Shabby chic, a style that first came to prominence in the 1980s, is making a concerted return to prominence.

Its invention was as a rebellion to the hard, shiny, ultra-modern, clean-cut image of three decades ago, when yuppies and electronica ruled the roost. The term 'shabby chic' was thought up by fashion journalist Min Hogg.

And the concept hasn't strayed too far since – from distressed furniture to unmatching fabrics and colours, a rustic, rugged essence that's based on comfort and quantity, rather than image and minimalistic posturing.

To achieve the shabby chic look really is to open your imagination, either by pooling existing items or exploring flea markets, thrift stores and antique shops.

Many people think repainting and running a grooved spatula across an old set of drawers is the sum total of shabby chic, but it's about much more than that. Soft background colours flatter furniture and make items the focal point of a room, so think about using whites, beiges or even light greys.

Pastels – baby blues, pale pinks, grainy greys and warm yellows – work best, while that base of brightness means retro, darker shades of wood can match and contrast, be that on tables or chairs. Meanwhile, wicker and throws soften edges and enhance comfort, and wrought iron provides structure.

As far as the walls and surface tops go, flowers, mirrors and pictures using worn frames will assist you in topping off the perfect shabby chic room, with knick-knacks, signs and cushions adding to the mix.

Past that, the only limit is your imagination. And the best thing about shabby chic is that it needn't cost the earth – adding wear and tear to your own items is cheap, if not free.

Photo credit: Spike Powell and Lisa Cohen via idealhome.co.uk



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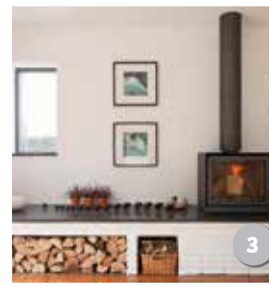
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Stylish storage solutions FOR FIREWOOD



HOME & DIY



If you are lucky enough to have a wood-burning fire in your home, then you probably can't wait to start torching some timber and heating it up. However, where are you supposed to keep all your lovely logs?

1. Fill any gaps: If you have supporting pillars of wood, or you are using a partial dividing wall to separate two rooms, why not take advantage of any hollow spaces or gaps and fill them with logs? Not only does this look stylish, but it is also a great way of using up an otherwise wasted space.

2. Pile high: For those who want to make a statement with their logs, this big and bold solution is for you. Effectively building a feature wall of firewood, you can utilise any unused alcove in your home to create this eye-catching display. This is not advised if you have young children owing to the risk of injury.

3. Create a cubbyhole: If you have a wood-burning stove rather than an actual fireplace and you are looking to build a surface for it to sit on, you should remember to factor storage into your design. This multitasking brick stage includes both room for both logs and kindling.

4. Go rustic: One of the simplest ways to stylishly store your logs is to use a large, country-style basket. Make sure you pick one that is big enough to fit all your log-burning supplies and is both sturdy and strong. Alternatively, for a more contemporary look, opt for a metal design.

5. Be sneaky: If you have an outdoor storage area for your logs, you only need to display a handful in your home, so look for unused space in your property, such as under the stairs or eaves where you can create a bespoke storage space.

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Time to breathe better

To keep out the cold and to keep energy costs down, buildings have become increasingly airtight, with improved insulation and high-efficiency windows and doors. Although this is good for your bank balance, it is not so beneficial to your health.

Fortunately, there are ways in which you can improve the air quality in your home this winter.

KEEP YOUR HOME CLEAN

During the winter, when you are unlikely to have your windows open, dust, animal dander and mould can become a problem. Therefore, you need to stay on top of your cleaning regime. Vacuum at least twice a week, regularly wash your bedding and clear away any clutter.

CHANGE YOUR AIR FILTERS

If you have a forced-air heating system in your home, you need to ensure you are changing the filters on a regular basis. This is because electrostatic filters work to trap dust and other airborne irritants rather than

allowing them to circulate around your home.

INVEST IN AN AIR PURIFIER

If you struggle with allergies but can't control the source of the problem, for example you do not want to give up a family pet, an air purifier can help to catch some of the irritants that trigger your symptoms. A dehumidifier can also be a great idea if your home is prone to damp as it can help prevent the growth of mould.

HAVE YOUR CHIMNEY SWEPT

Wood-burning fires are lovely in winter but they need to be used responsibly. Avoid burning wet logs or coal as these can produce hazardous particles. You should also ensure that your chimney is cleaned at least once a year so that smoke can escape.

INSTALL A CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR

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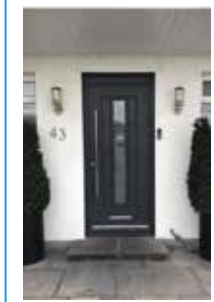
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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood

LOCAL NEWS



Volunteers lend their backing to front-line staff

Front-line staff at Broomfield Hospital in Chelmsford, who are leading the fight against COVID-19, are being supported by volunteers in several ways.

Project Wingman has brought airline crews from across UK airlines together to help support the well-being of front-line NHS staff. The project recreates the atmosphere of an airline lounge to help doctors, nurses and health professionals unwind and get some refreshments in between sessions on hospital wards.

At Broomfield Hospital, airline staff have helped out in a pop-up well-being hub. The flight teams have been looking after teams by serving drinks and snacks and giving them a place to relax away from the front line.

Volunteers have been helping out in other areas at Broomfield, including swabbing. They include Matt Jayasekara, a medical student at Cambridge University.

He said: "I saw in the news the brilliant work

volunteers were doing and I thought I might have something to offer. I was very open-minded and would have done anything. I thought if I could free up the hands of someone directly involved in treating coronavirus it would be worth it."

Other COVID-19 volunteering examples at Broomfield include at the main entrance of the hospital where they have been handing out masks and hand sanitiser, taking temperature checks of visitors and staff and taking patients to different departments and the operating theatre.

With relatives and carers unable to visit patients, Olivia Pether helped them to keep in contact by offering a service whereby they could email a message or picture which would then be printed and delivered to the patient.

Project Wingman (Both pictures taken before wearing of face masks became compulsory)



Man faces charges after officer dragged by car

LOCAL NEWS



A man has been summoned to court following an incident in which an officer was dragged a short way by a moving car.

The incident happened in Princes Road, Chelmsford, on May 7.

Daniel Doyle-Garrett, 29, of Chelmsford, will face charges of assaulting an emergency worker, dangerous driving, driving without insurance, failing to stop when required by an officer, and driving otherwise than in accordance with a licence.

He will also face charges of dangerous driving and assault with intent to resist arrest following an incident in Pump Lane, Chelmsford, on April 26.

He is set to appear at Chelmsford Magistrates' Court on February 24, 2021.

Blue Plaque for first woman to sing live on British radio

A blue plaque has been unveiled in Chelmsford to commemorate the first woman to sing live on British radio.

Winifred Collins broadcast from the Marconi Company's New Street Works in March 1920. The plaque was unveiled by Chelmsford City Council at 11 Widford Road, Winifred's home between 1967 and 1988.

Born in 1897, Winifred moved to Chelmsford in 1915 where she worked at the former Hoffman factory offices. In January 1920, she was part of a local singing group called The Funions. She was asked by Marconi engineers at its New Street Factory to prepare for the opening of the Chelmsford wireless station on June 15, 1920, by Dame Nellie Melba. Winifred Collins performed on three occasions to 214 receivers and earned 10 shillings for her work.

Following the broadcast, a silver medal was presented to Winifred Collins by the managing director of Marconi in recognition of her achievement as Britain's first paid radio artiste. Winifred became a

VIP of the Marconi company after the performance. Councillor Mike Mackrory, cabinet member for sustainable development, said "This latest addition to Chelmsford's Blue Plaque Scheme is another example of our commitment to celebrating our city's rich cultural heritage. It is vital that we continue to ensure residents and visitors alike have the opportunity to discover the myriad of personalities that have shaped our history."

Winners of city photo competition announced

The winners of the Chelmsford City Photo competition, which kept aspiring photographers busy throughout the summer, were named last month.

The winning shots were sent to a panel of judges that included the Mayor of Chelmsford councillor Jude Deakin, deputy leader councillor Marie Goldman and representatives from Blue Sky Printing, Meadows Shopping Centre, Unshaken Photography Training, *Essex Chronicle* and *Essex 2020*.

In October, the shortlisted and winning photos were exhibited in Chelmsford City Centre's Meadows Shopping Centre. This year, all shortlisted photos were entered into another draw where the people of Chelmsford could vote for their winning image.

This year's competition winners include Central Park at Sunset (top image below) by Robert Johnston, which won the Over 16s category, and My Little Brother (bottom image below) by Amelia, which won the Under 16s category. Sunshine on a Cloudy Day by @reallynosuchthingasbadweather won the Instagram category, while Swans at Sunrise by Adam Bennett won the public vote.



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LOCAL NEWS

At this time of year, we normally look forward to Christmas, but we all face extra challenges this year. It is good news that the Prime Minister has said that the national lockdown will be replaced by a tiered system.

There is very positive news about the recent success of vaccines. The UK has secured access to 355 million doses of vaccines from a range of developers. Once set up, the vaccination clinics will be open seven days a week.

In Chelmsford, schools have been doing a great job in supporting our young people even with the challenges presented by COVID-19 cases. I would like to thank all school staff, parents, carers, children and young people for all they are doing.

Essex has been given a grant of more than

£3.8million by the government to support food and essentials for hardest-hit families and individuals over the winter. From next Easter, we will be rolling out the government's Holiday Activity and Food schemes across the country. They not only provide food, but also bring educational benefits.

Essex's extra police officers are making a difference, especially in tackling county lines drugs. Crime across Chelmsford is down by 5.3 per cent this year.

Despite the pandemic, it is important to continue to focus on tackling climate change. The government will issue its first Sovereign Green Bond in 2021. This will raise money to help meet our net zero target and other environmental objectives, including infrastructure investment and helping to create green jobs across the country.



Mayor cuts ribbon to open new shop

Pie and mash lovers in Chelmsford will be pleased after Mayor Jude Deakin cut the ribbon to a new pie and mash house on Moulsham Street last month.

Jude Deakin cut the ribbon to the F Cooke pie and mash shop, first established in 1862 by Robert Cooke, on November 7.

She was joined by the Mayoress Helen Deakin and both tried the pie and mash along with fruit pies and custard for afters, leaving great reviews.

Councillor Deakin said: "We are delighted that Robert has brought this tradition to Chelmsford. It is of course the only pie and mash shop and I'm sure will be incredibly busy."

F Cooke is now open and has been serving traditional pie and mash throughout lockdown by offering takeaways. As soon as restrictions allow, it will be open for a sit-in service where customers can get the full experience.

Cloudy2Clear, A Local Service With A Smile.

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

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

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

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

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How to cope with Christmas when you're grieving



Yes, it is that time of year again, Christmas! Some of you reading this will be facing your first Christmas alone and wondering how you are going to cope. Others will be wondering whether they are going to cope this time around again. Many people will notice a person shaped hole in their heart many years after the loss of a loved one. Whether you celebrate Christmas or not, the fear of any approaching birthday, anniversary or special time of year you would usually celebrate can be equally stressful.

So, what can you do with this anxiety and fear building up inside?

Paul and Cheryl at Secure Haven Funeral Directors believe it's a good idea to have a plan. If you have children, then include them in making the plans. Be honest when talking to them – express how sad you are because that special person will not be there and that it's going to be very different. Ask them what they might like to do to acknowledge how much they miss them too and what they wish to keep or change about your family traditions that usually happen. If there is something that is very special to you that you want to do or not do explain this as well. Unless you share feelings with one another you won't know how they are feeling too! We teach our children to always tell the truth so when we attempt to cover up our feelings and put a brave face on our body language gives us away and they get confused. Even small children can sense this when they are being deceived. It is also a good idea to have a Plan B or escape route. If you suddenly find you do not want to be somewhere then being unable to leave because you've had to remain in a social bubble due to the pandemic can make a bad feeling much worse.

So, if you are spending time with extended family make sure that you explain that you might need to escape to another room every now and again without worrying about being interrogated about where you've been. Avoid spending too much time alone, as griever's we tend to isolate ourselves. We need others around us to share our thoughts and feelings with and to share new experiences that can become new happy memories! If you need a chat or just some advice, please get in touch. At Secure Haven we are not just funeral directors, we care about you long after the sad loss of a loved one. And if you know someone who is grieving the loss of a loved one, think of yourself as a 'Heart With Ears'. Listening is one of the best things we can do to help one another through this, what can be a difficult time of year. Stay safe and look after one another. Please call us if you need a private conversation, we are here for you.

Regards, Cheryl & Paul
01245 377077



Pandemic brings back memories for greengrocer



Staff at the greengrocer stall at the Chelmsford Indoor Market are enjoying the influx of new and regular customers, all wanting fresh fruit and vegetables, to their stall.

Steve Fowler, who runs the stall, has always prided himself on visiting his trusted wholesaler every day for fresh produce, and this volume of customers was a regular scene in the indoor market until the mid-noughties.

The pandemic situation brought back memories of his uncle and how it used to be when he handed over the business to Steve 46 years ago.

Steve started out as a rookie in the business, working weekends and during the school holidays. He learnt the language and terminology associated with greengrocers and their infamous shouting in markets about the price of apples and pears.

If you take a trip to the indoor market from Tuesday to Saturday, you can't help enjoying the entertaining 'banter' that adds to the atmosphere of the market. Many people have changed the way they shop and spend more time online; it would be sad to see this tradition and unique way of shopping become a thing of the past.

You can follow the latest from the market on Instagram @chelmsfordmarkets and Facebook @chelmsfordretailmarket

Donors needed for COVID-19 plasma trial

A new plasma donation centre opened its doors in Chelmsford last month.

Plasma collected at the centre in Victoria House on Duke Street will be used in clinical trials to determine whether the antibody-rich blood plasma found in people who have had coronavirus could be an effective treatment for COVID-19.

The plasma is transfused into patients who are struggling to develop their own immune response. The antibodies could slow or stop the virus spreading, which could save lives.

More than 40 people are already booked in to donate at the new Chelmsford centre over the next month, and the number is growing every day.

Professor Dave Roberts, NHS Blood and Transplant Associate Medical Director for Blood Donation, said: "We would love to see people in Chelmsford and Essex offering to donate so we can book them in for donation appointments now. Donation is safe and easy, and you could save lives. Your body quickly replaces the antibodies afterwards."

If you've had confirmed coronavirus or the symptoms, you can volunteer to donate plasma at www.nhsbt.nhs.uk

Katie steps up to support small businesses

A professional artist and small business owner is adding her bit to help support other upcoming small businesses by creating a dedicated section on her website.

Katie Simpson is owner and artist of The Fluid Fox and specialises in original mixed media resin, acrylic and ink abstract artwork and abstract landscapes.

After gaining a good following on Instagram over the years, Katie has now decided to help support other upcoming small businesses by creating the 'Shop Small Marketplace' business section on her website, which is filled with links to small businesses with gift ideas from sweet treats to bath and body gifts.

Katie explained: "I have curated this to be able to easily find a selection of great businesses to support this Christmas all in one place. I had a lot of submissions for this section and have chosen some amazing businesses. I will also be adding more businesses to this section over the course of the festive season. Now more than ever it is so important to shop small this Christmas and support our hard-working creatives."

To see Katie's work or to visit the Shop Small Marketplace, go to thefluidfox.com



Holly

DECEMBER BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH

If you were born in the same month Christmas, your birth flower is the festive holly. A popular plant for the season of winter, holly is instantly recognisable by its prickly leaves and ruby red berries. Plus, it's easy to grow and is great for garden security.

What is the symbolic significance of holly?

In ancient Celtic cultures, the Druids regarded holly as a symbol of fertility and believed it to have magical powers. Today, holly has been adopted as a symbol of Christmas by Christians, with the sharp leaves said to symbolise the crown of thorns worn by Christ and the berries representing his blood.

What does this birth flower say about your personality?

Those born in December are said to be fiercely protective. Not a fan of criticism, you are naturally defensive and are not afraid to stand up for yourself when required. You also love to make a home feel warm and inviting, both your own and those of your friends and family.

How to grow holly in your garden

The holly plant is fairly easy to grow and will thrive in both sun and partial shade, although it prefers moist but well-drained soil. You can choose to grow holly on your lawn, in a shrub border or even to make some hedges. Holly does not require much pruning, although if you want to cut some as a festive decoration, do so in early winter before its berries are eaten by birds.

Interesting facts about holly

- ✦ It is evergreen
- ✦ It can be grown in pots and containers for up to five years
- ✦ The berries are mildly poisonous
- ✦ Legend says that holly protects from thunder, lightning and witchcraft
- ✦ Real holly plants bloom scented flowers in spring

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HORTICULTURE HEROES:

Diarmuid Gavin

GARDENING

Expert gardener Diarmuid Gavin made his name as the host of BBC teatime hits *Gardeners' World* and *Home Front in the Garden*, but he's been busy tending to different fields of late.

The Chelsea gold-medal-winning designer has tried his hand at ballroom in *Strictly Come Dancing*, proved a degree of culinary expertise on *Come Dine With Me* and made ripples on ITV's celebrity diving bonanza *Splash*.

The 56-year-old's flirtation with mainstream TV perhaps, for a while, threatened to take him away from a professional passion for horticulture that stretches back to the late 1980s.

Indeed, the Irishman has reinforced his commitment to returning to the innocence of the humble garden by refusing to exhibit for the past few years at the Chelsea Flower Show.

"I think with all these things there has to be a practicality to it – there has to be a take-out.

"If I am exhibiting an idea that is preposterously unachievable to the average gardener, then what is the point?"

Diarmuid's reconnection with his horticultural roots has restated the charismatic gardener with what truly thrills him, and his Instagram feed provides an almost daily delve into the passions of our plots.

"People always ask me for advice, and in terms of our own gardens, I'd just advise that people are careful when they plant," he says.

"Plants that are too tender will die very quickly, so spend longer planning and plant later – that's the golden rule... never rush things. Better to be exuberant once rather than spend the same amount by buying lower-priced items twice, because the first lot have died."

At his extroverted peak, Diarmuid produced a Willy Wonka-inspired giant garden that was deemed too big to enter the historic Chelsea Flower Show.

"I have calmed down since," he laughs. "It was way too big... nearly the size of a football field. I knew after that it was time to rein it in."



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DRONING ON

In the first instance, an obsession for hobbyists, nerds and those looking to reap havoc around airports for the lucky few jetting off on holidays. Yet how we perceive drones in 2020 is beginning to change, not least in their ability to save lives.

More and more now, search-and-rescue teams are using drones to survey huge areas quickly and efficiently. Predominantly this is because missions – at sea, on mountain ranges or even in remote wildernesses – are dangerous, time-consuming and particularly expensive. They can demand huge quantities of manpower and can be exhausting.

Drones provide an efficient, versatile, unmanned resource that can take on the workload of what could be hundreds of volunteers, and in a way that is much quicker too. Whether across trees, water or rocks, a drone has the range and the ability to get close to the ground in a way that a rescue helicopter would never be able to.

From specific events, such as the recent wildfires across Australia, to flood and avalanche disasters in China, to missing person searches in any location, it's estimated that it takes 25 people

35 hours to search one square mile for missing persons, compared to the 30 minutes it takes a drone to cover the same area.

It's little wonder the producers of this tech are seeing the value of their companies rocket, with emergency services, the police included, ordering drones in huge quantities in order to make their work easier.

Some drones even have built-in delivery capabilities, enabling urgent blood supplies to be transported to hard-to-reach areas. This was particularly effective with the delivery of 7,000 units of blood – that's 25 per cent of the national blood supply – outside Rwanda's capital city Kigali in 2018, which saved more than a thousand lives.

From geek toys to go-to devices for emergency services, the popularity of drones will continue to ascend.



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As film icons go, there are few to rival James Bond; and as Bond actors go, there are none to rival Sir Sean Connery.

In a year that has been unkind on so many levels, fans of film perhaps felt an added sense of injustice at the end of October when it was announced that Sir Sean Connery had passed away, at the age of 90.

Of course, in many respects, the actor's work was done. Connery was the smooth-talking, sumptuously styled Scot who legitimised, developed and truly delivered 007 into the golden era of film. The first man to step into the secret agent's shoes, with 1962's *Dr No*, Connery, a former bodybuilder who finished third in Mr Universe in the early 1950s, proved to author Ian Fleming that he had the fervour and finesse to carry off the role, having previously been dismissed as "an overgrown stuntman".

It seems perverse that someone who would go on to become so decorated in the indulgence and luxury of 1960s cinema may have been cast aside before it even began, but it's fair to note that the actor's previous engagements had been in rather less salubrious guises, notably in crime drama *Hell Drivers*, fantasy adventure *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* and outward-bound action flick *Tarzan's Greatest Adventure*.

That, within a decade, Connery would have elevated his worth from tracking the movements of a man swinging through the jungle to starring in iconic movies such as *From Russia with Love*, *Goldfinger*, *Thunderball* and *You Only Live Twice*, is remarkable.

What made Connery's sumptuously smooth portrayal of Bond so impressive was that, unlike the modern-day 007s, he interspersed international espionage with an array of other lead roles. Seventeen movies were made across the nine years he portrayed Bond, a sequence that ended in 1971 with *Diamonds are Forever* (although he did agree to reprise the character in 1983's *Never Say Never Again*).

"I got to the point where I felt I had nothing left to prove as far as Bond was concerned," said Connery. "It was a delightful run where the evolution of 007 and everything around him had gathered such pace with every new movie; yet in myself I thought I had probably evolved as much as I had wanted, and it was time to let someone else have a go."

Away from Bond, twice-married Connery flourished in the likes of *Murder on the Orient Express*, *A Bridge too Far*, *Highlander*, *The Untouchables*, *The Hunt for Red October* and as Indiana Jones' father in *The Last Crusade*.

There are the ones that got away too – he turned down the role of Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings* despite being offered a \$30million bounty; he also rejected playing Architect in *The Matrix* trilogy. The truth is, Connery, who was knighted in the year 2000, was always focused on how he saw himself – as an actor, and as a person... how else can you explain turning down a direct invitation to join Manchester United by legendary manager Sir Matt Busby.

"I was 23 at the time and although I had the contract offer in front of me, I had long decided that football would take a backseat to acting. I felt I had more chance of doing something special, something unique, in the acting world; I felt I could give more and put smiles on more faces, my own included."

Sir Sean, you succeeded.

The Ultimate Bond?



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PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

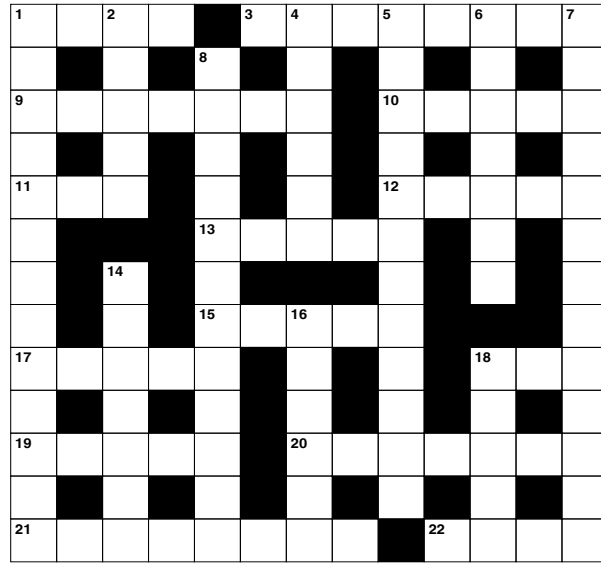
Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4

ACROSS

- 1. Set of playing cards (4)
- 3. Neck injury (8)
- 9. Genuine (7)
- 10. Kick out (5)
- 11. 17th Greek letter (3)
- 12. The beginning of an era (5)
- 13. Enclosed (5)
- 15. Bird sound (5)
- 17. Turned to ice (5)
- 18. Statute (3)
- 19. Exposes secret information (5)
- 20. Country whose capital is Reykjavik (7)
- 21. Longing (8)
- 22. Refuse to admit (4)

DOWN

- 1. Shamefully (13)
- 2. Showing a willingness to achieve results (3-2)
- 4. Doglike mammals (6)
- 5. Planned in advance (12)
- 6. Sanction (7)
- 7. Unenthusiastically (4-9)



- 8. Food shop (12)
- 14. Proportionately (3,4)
- 16. Banner or flag (6)
- 18. Lessen (5)

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Hummingbirds are the only birds that are able to fly backwards
- ▶ The short-horned lizard squirts blood from blood vessels around its eyes when defending itself. This is because the blood vessels rupture under pressure
- ▶ A giant panda will typically eat for around 12 hours a day
- ▶ Elephant ears help to keep the animals cool by radiating heat
- ▶ Young jaguars are blind at birth. They learn to hunt by living with their mother for two years or more
- ▶ Wolves can go for more than a week without eating
- ▶ A fox can communicate with other foxes by using its tail
- ▶ The bald eagle has a wingspan of around eight feet

SUDOKU

							2	9
1	8			2		5		
			5	9		8		
	7	4					8	
			9		6			
	9					6	1	
		2		4	3			
		7		8			4	2
8	4							



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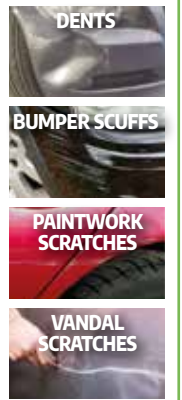


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DIY UGLY Christmas Jumper

SAYING THANK YOU ON Boxing Day

THE ORIGINS OF BOXING DAY, DECEMBER 26, EXPLAINED

Our appreciation of Boxing Day in the modern era is, it's fair to say, somewhat different from how it would have been played out by our forefathers. Nowadays it's a date for hangovers, sporting events, ridiculously early opening hours at clothes retailers and furniture stores, and the continuation of a blizzard of relatives... some welcome, others less so.

The reason we call it Boxing Day remains somewhat shrouded in mystery. It has been celebrated for almost as long as records go back, and certainly the giving of Christmas 'boxes' has a large part to play in the provenance.

One popular theory dates back to the Middle Ages, when churchgoers would collect money for the poor in alms boxes. These were opened in honour of Saint Stephen, whose feast falls on December 26.

Other records reference Roman tributes to the day, though in the 19th century the tradition

of looking after those less fortunate over the festive period certainly came to the fore. The term appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1832, taken on by the Victorians who embraced the giving of gifts and the looking after of established tradespeople, employees and other service providers, as atonement for a driven and at times brutal regime focused on self-preservation and self-improvement.

What can be certain is that Boxing Day is very much a British tradition. It's unsurprising to see the event celebrated similarly in Australia, Canada and New Zealand, but elsewhere, the US included, it's largely regarded as a second day of Christmas rather than a named day in its own right.

This Christmas, perhaps when it's good for us to reflect on what has been a challenging year, perhaps the pure, selfless, charitable tradition of Boxing Day should return to the fore... but remember to go about your goodly deeds with a glass of something warming.



National Ugly Christmas Jumper Day falls on the third Friday of December each year and offers participants the chance to showcase the worst possible festive jumper they can find. However, why not steer clear of the shops this year and make your own original ugly jumper?

COFFEE SHOP UGLY CHRISTMAS JUMPER

If you love nothing more than a Starbucks first thing in the morning, why not showcase your devotion by sticking a coffee cup directly onto your jumper? Start by cutting your cup in half lengthways and gluing it to the lid. Then glue two pieces of felt to the inside of the cup, glue Velcro tape to the felt and to your jumper and attach.

COUPLES' UGLY CHRISTMAS JUMPERS

What could be more cringe than you and your significant other wearing matching garish glittery Christmas jumpers? Using hot glue, stick on sequins that say "Mr" and "Mrs" and then add as much tinsel, glitter and baubles as you can stomach.

LIGHT-UP UGLY CHRISTMAS JUMPER

Whatever design or slogan you choose for your DIY ugly Christmas sweater, the addition of Christmas coloured fairy lights will only ever make it more tacky. Simply turn your jumper inside out, decide where your battery holder should go and then sew in your LED lights.

SNOW GLOBE UGLY CHRISTMAS JUMPER

One of the more inventive options. All you need is a plastic bowl, a selection of cheap Christmas decorations and a glue gun to create your very own 3D snow globe on the front of your jumper.

CUTE KIDS UGLY CHRISTMAS JUMPER

If your children are taking part in national ugly Christmas jumper day, then this DIY Christmas tree jumper is just the ticket. Plus, they can help you make it. All you need is some felt, mini shatterproof baubles, festive beads and hot glue.

Photo credit: ilovetocreate.com, creativefashionblog.com, thesamanthashow.com, brit.co, countryliving.com

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WAYS TO JAZZ UP YOUR
Christmas beard



Whether you have designer stubble or a full-on Santa beard, there is no excuse not to get festive when it comes to your facial hair this Christmas. From baubles to bells, sweets to knits, check out these six fantastically festive beard decorations.

is the festive beard design for you. Best for bushy beards, all you need to do is adorn your beard with canes and you are good to do.

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2. Beard Glitter: A simple yet highly effective idea, a glitter beard will ensure you are the centre of attention for all the right reasons. Simply apply some glitter glue to your beard and then sprinkle with your chosen glitter. Why not use multiple colours for even more oomph?

3. Beard Candy: If you or your kids love candy canes, then this

4. Beard Jingle Bells: For those who don't mind being heard before they are seen, beard bells provide a fun and frivolous way to jazz up your face. Ideal for Christmas carolling.

5. Beard Knits: Does your mum love to make you an annual Christmas jumper? If so, why not ask her this year to knit you a beard warmer instead? It's festive and perfect for keeping out the winter chill.

6. Beard Lights: Last but definitely not least, it wouldn't be Christmas without some well-placed fairy lights, and what better location for these colourful decorations than on your face? Just make sure you buy a clip-on set to avoid a terrible tangle in your bristles.



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WHAT IS CAVITATION?

Cavitation is a revolutionary procedure that uses ultrasound technology to, in simple terms, 'melt' fat. During a cavitation procedure the machine targets specific and desired body areas, then comfortably heats the skin sending shock waves that penetrate through the derma layer.

This causes a micro bubbling in the liquid surrounding the adipocytes (fat cells). Under pressure the adipocytes rupture and release glycerol (fatty acid) 40% safely goes into your blood stream to be used or stored as energy. The other 60% goes to your liver to be metabolised and then finally your body is able to process these glycerol through its proverbial waste-disposal plant: the lymphatic system.



Men's skin toning & tightening after one treatment

Men's stomach after one treatment

Clients can see improvements after three sessions. The recommended course is six treatments, however some clients may need additional sessions depending on the individual.

WHAT IS RADIO FREQUENCY

Radio frequency is used to improve skin elasticity, remove cellulite, renew muscles and enhance skin rejuvenation by applying electromagnetic high frequency waves.

The goal of radio frequency treatment is to tighten the skin of the body and dilated pores, smooth fine lines and wrinkles. Collagen and elastin are boosted, cellulite is removed.

Loose skin, wrinkles and fine lines may give away one's age or make them appear older than they are. Fortunately, skin elasticity can be restored using radio frequency therapy. Collagen takes 14-21 days to synthesise, therefore you may see the best results in the 3rd/4th treatment.

RADIO FREQUENCY / CAVITATION BENEFITS

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- ✦ Boosts Collagen & Elastin Process
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- ✦ Smooths Fine Lines & Wrinkles

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Christmas

plants that care and cure

There are several plants that are synonymous with Christmas, from the decorative poinsettia, to the “kiss me quick” mistletoe, to the evergreen holly and ivy. However, did you know that each of these plants has its own healing properties?

Holly: Often used to decorate your table for Christmas dinner, in terms of medicinal use, you should only use the leaves of the holly as the berries are poisonous. Holly leaves have been known to treat digestive issues, rheumatism, fever, bronchitis and high blood pressure.

HOW TO TAKE: Dry out your holly leaves, crush and add a few teaspoons to a cup of hot water.

Mistletoe: Either a blessing, or a curse depending on who you are standing in close proximity to, mistletoe has been used for centuries to treat medical conditions such as epilepsy, hypertension, headaches and the symptoms of menopause.

HOW TO TAKE: Only use the leaves and stems as the grains are poisonous. Steep in cold water for 12 hours, strain and drink up to three times a day.

Poinsettia: The perfect plant to decorate your home over Christmas, the poinsettia is known for its ability to clean air, and in particular, to remove formaldehyde from insulation, plastic bags and other household items.

HOW TO TAKE: Simply place a poinsettia in your home and let it work its magic.

Ivy: The leaves of ivy are both anti-inflammatory and anti-rheumatic, plus they contain antioxidant properties. Ivy is also said to help settle your stomach, boost your immune system and increase oxygenation of the body.

HOW TO TAKE: The leaves of ivy can either be consumed or applied topically. To make ivy tea, simply soak 4 fresh ivy leaves or 2 tsp of crushed dried ivy in 1 litre of cold water, bring to the boil and then filter immediately.



Professional, helpful, knowledgeable...

What our clients say about us

Michael is always available. His professional service combined with his knowledge in the market and ‘can do’ attitude allows us to run our businesses the way we want to whilst he is out there securing the best possible insurance plans for our staff, whilst making sure the rates remain competitive.

He offers such reliability, we often refer Michael to our own clients and he treats them the same way. Michael has been crucial to have on our team as we have grown as a business, and he has helped us completely overhaul our products so that they are the best they can be. I have nothing but happy staff when it comes to our company private medical insurance. He is always on hand if we need him and our staff feel very reassured having him involved if there are any queries that come up on the policy and claims experience.

I have been a client of Michaels’ for nearly 10 years and I see the same service as I did then as a new client as I do now as an existing client.

Christopher – London

SherwoodHealthcare

I have been a client of Sherwood Healthcare for over 10 years. They are a very professional, helpful company that provides superb service. I have recommended them to many of my friends and all of them are just as happy as I am.

Tea – London

I contacted Mike through recommendation for my life and critical illness cover. I didn’t have any knowledge of the market as this was something I had never looked into before. Mike took me through all of the options, giving me clear advice and was really helpful. It was great to know that Mike worked closely with the market as he was able to explain lots of information that I wouldn’t have been able to find myself online. Mike was available by email and telephone whenever I had questions, which made the experience really personal. Mike was able to secure cover for me on both of my requirements, which had great benefits and a competitive price.

I feel reassured that I now have policies in place and am glad that I used Sherwood Healthcare as a recommended broker.

Stacey – Billericay

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FOUR COMMON

WINTER AILMENTS

AND HOW TO TREAT THEM



As well as the common cold and seasonal flu, not to mention COVID-19, there are several ailments that many people suffer with during the cold winter months.

Let's take a closer look at them and their most effective treatments.

1. PAINFUL JOINTS

If you suffer with arthritis, you may find that your joints become even more painful and achy in the colder months. Although there is no way to avoid the effects of the cold completely, ensuring you partake in regular exercise, manage your weight and continue to take any prescribed medication can lessen any pain or discomfort you are experiencing.



2. COLD SORES

If you are prone to cold sores, you may find that you are particularly susceptible in the winter when your immune system is compromised. Try to ensure you get as much rest as possible, keep your lips moisturised and use a topical treatment when needed.



3. ASTHMA

The dry and cold air in winter can make the symptoms of asthma worse by irritating your airways and causing your muscles to spasm, resulting in loss of breath. You can counteract this by limiting your time outside, wearing a scarf when you do go out and always having an asthma action plan in place.



4. SINUS INFECTIONS

If you have a weakened immune system, are a smoker or suffer with seasonal allergies, you are more likely to suffer with sinus infections. Symptoms include a runny nose, headaches, pain or pressure in your face and a sore throat. Try placing a warm compress on your face, using a decongestant and breathing in steam from a hot shower.

TOP TIPS FOR KEEPING HEALTHY THIS WINTER

- > Eat more fruit and veg
- > Embrace natural daylight
- > Wash your hands regularly
- > Stay hydrated





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FOOD & DRINK

Cooking UP A treat



FOOD FINESSE WITH POPULAR CHEF JAMES MARTIN

When James Martin bade an extremely tearful farewell to his *Saturday Kitchen* colleagues in March 2016, it was imagined the chef would be turning his hand to new projects after 10 years fronting the popular BBC weekend cookery show.

Of course, as these things often materialise, the popular *Yorkshireman* reappeared less than six months later fronting a copycat culinary conflag over on ITV.

Regardless, the 48-year-old's switch to commercial TV has also spawned a run of cookery series, reaffirming his place as one of the most popular chefs on television.

Of course, life on the small screen is already a secondary career for Martin, who excelled with wooden spoon in hand from a young age. Indeed, he was almost asked to leave a cookery class at the age of 12 for serving flambéed chicken and mangetout while his prepubescent classmates struggled to create fairy cakes. He went on to study catering at Scarborough College, coming

top of his class for three consecutive years, and was then offered a job working in London with Antony Worrall Thompson, one of the judges for his final exam.

His accomplishments, however, weren't served up to him on a plate – as a *Yorkshireman*, Martin was taught from birth that “you don't get owt for nowt”. The hard graft paid off, it seems, as he was made head chef of the first Hotel du Vin in Winchester when he was just 22.

Two years later, he began to appear on our screens in shows such as *James Martin: Yorkshire's Finest* and *Ready, Steady, Cook* – his affable nature and dry, self-deprecating humour making him an instant hit with viewers.

From weekend shows to cooking adventures at home and overseas, the chef's fascination with food is unrelenting, as evidenced in his recent return to our screens for *Saturday Morning with James Martin*.

“It's been a great ride so far,” he says, “and the stove is still warm.”



Photo credit: Ken McKay/ITV/Shutterstock

Let's get *Saucy*

Even if you pride yourself on making your own roast potatoes and stuffing your own turkey, not many people take the time to make their own sauces for their Christmas dinner.

So, let's change that. Check out these three popular Christmas sauce recipes that are both simple and delicious.

Easy Peasy Bread Sauce

YOU WILL NEED: 600ml milk | 50g butter | 1 onion | 6 cloves | 6 peppercorns | 2 garlic cloves | 1 bay leaf | 3 sprigs of thyme | 100g white breadcrumbs | 4 tbsp single cream | Pinch of nutmeg (optional)

HOW TO MAKE: Simmer the milk, butter, onion, cloves, peppercorns, garlic and herbs in a pan for 15–20 minutes | Strain and return liquid to heat | Add breadcrumbs and simmer for a further 4 minutes | Stir in cream | Season with nutmeg if desired, and serve

Super Simple Cranberry Sauce

YOU WILL NEED: 200g white sugar | 4 cups of fresh or frozen cranberries | 250ml water | Zest of an orange | Optional spices – cinnamon, nutmeg and allspice

HOW TO MAKE: Rinse cranberries | Boil water and dissolve sugar | Add cranberries and simmer on a low heat until most of the berries have burst | Grate in some orange zest and add a small pinch of your preferred spice | Leave to cool

NB: Cranberry sauce will continue to thicken as it cools.

Perfect Turkey Gravy

YOU WILL NEED: 2 chopped onions | 1 large chopped carrot | 1.3 litres stock – preferably turkey, but chicken will do | 3 tbsp plain flour | 5 tbsp white wine | Turkey neck (optional)

HOW TO MAKE: Add the onion, carrot and turkey neck to a pan | Pour in stock and simmer for one hour | Strain to remove the vegetables and meat, then return liquid to pan | Combine flour with white wine and then add to stock | Heat gently until thickened | Season to taste | Leave to cool and chill

F. COOKE EEL & PIE HOUSE

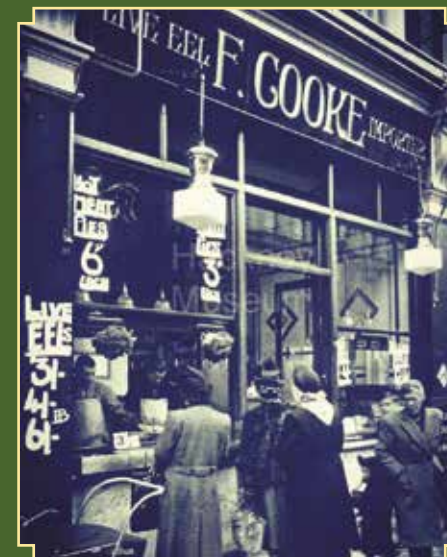
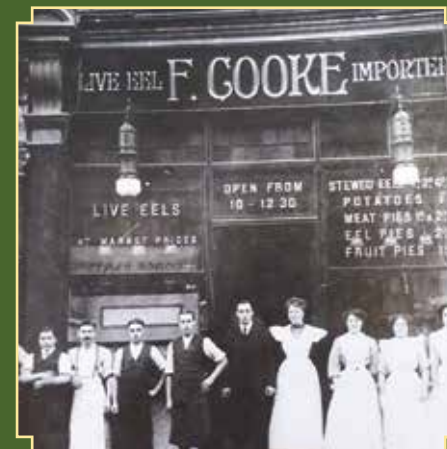
EST. 1862

Established in 1862, F. Cooke remains the longest serving family run eel and pie house.

Founded in East London, serving traditional pie and mash and jellied eels, F. Cooke has gone on to open many shops including Kingsland High Street in Dalston, Hoxton and Broadway Market just to name a few.

Like many East Enders, F. Cooke is now moving out to Essex where 5th generation Robert Cooke will be opening the doors to serve the same delicious recipe from over 150+ years ago.

You can expect to be immersed in all the heritage and history which has made F. Cooke a roaring success since the 1800s but with a modern vibe that will leave you craving more.



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THE ULTIMATE Champagne GUIDE



With Christmas fast approaching, what better time of year to find out everything you need to know about champagne? From how to store it, to how long it lasts, to how to pick the best bottle for your celebration.

How to store

If you can manage to keep champagne in your home long enough to actually have to store it, you need to make sure you are doing it correctly. One hard and fast rule is that you should store champagne horizontally to keep the cork moist, as a dry cork can lead to shrinkage. You should also store bottles in a cool, dark and humid place.

How long can you store a bottle for?

If you have an unopened non-vintage bottle of champagne, it can typically last for between three and four years. Vintage champagne, however, can last up to 10 years. You will notice that champagne changes as it ages, becoming a deeper golden colour and losing some of its fizz.

Understanding the labels

If you have ever looked at the label on a champagne bottle, you will know that they are covered in confusing terms that can stump even the most avid wine lover, so let's take a closer look at what they all mean:

- > **Brut Nature** = Zero grams of residual sugar per litre
- > **Extra Brut** = Less than 6 grams
- > **Brut** = Less than 12 grams
- > **Extra Dry** = 12-17 grams
- > **Sec** = 17-32 grams
- > **Demi-Sec** = 32-50 grams
- > **Doux** = 50 grams or more
- > **Non-vintage/vintage** = Non-vintage denotes grape juice from multiple vintages; vintage will only be produced in a good vintage year and matured for at least three years before being released.
- > **Grand Cru/Premier Cru** = These refer to the classification of the vineyard. Grand Cru is top, Premier Cru is second.



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the only way is... Gin



Hi, I'm Nikki, and I am the founder of The Only Way Is Gin – the new brand of Essex gin.

I am so proud to release to the public this month and I am offering a 10% off for all VISION readers who purchase this month. Perfect for the Christmas celebration or a perfect gift for any gin lovers.

I decided to launch this brand just a year ago. I left my corporate job and wondered what on earth I was going to do next.

After getting involved in the spirits industry and loving it so much, I decided that's where I wanted to be.

Gin has always been my favourite tittle, so I decided to turn my hobby into my career.

After my research was done I knew I wanted to produce gin. I took a commercial distilling course with some of the pro's in the industry and took all the relevant courses I needed to pass to create this brand - The Only Way is Gin wheels were in motion.

The gin is so smooth and sophisticated, perfect for a G&T. With a sweet orange blossom aroma, a fresh citrus kick followed by the long lingering finish provided by the poppy seeds. I can't wait for you to try it!

I have big plans for the business next year and in Chelmsford. The Only Way is Gin will bring a unique gin experience to the vibrant city of Chelmsford with a gin school and distillery planned next year!



"I ordered my first bottle out of batch one. I was not disappointed – a very distinctive flavour, lovely, neat, very smooth. The bottle arrived quickly, well packaged, and what a stunning bottle. Well done Nikki on producing such a beautiful gin." Helena.

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Winter Sun quarantine free destinations

With the latest news of quarantine being reduced from 14 days to five and a possible vaccine, I sense a light at the end of the tunnel for being able to travel more freely once again! When you're ready, I'm here to help and will be there every step of the way.



Dan Salmon, Owner

For your inspiration, please see below my current top five options for some winter sun, that require no quarantine upon your return...

1 One&Only The Palm, Dubai

One of a handful of boutique hotels in Dubai, this Andalucian-style hideaway exudes exclusivity. Often credited with being the emirate's most romantic resort, guests can treat themselves to a delicious portfolio of restaurants with decadent menus curated by triple-Michelin-star-winning chef Yannick Alléno.



highlights include a forest spa with treehouse treatment gazebos.

3 Blue Waters, Antigua

A stylish resort that attracts celebrities and royalty to the north of Antigua. Elegant interiors, efficient staff and top-notch food are complemented by a family offering that includes kids' clubs and access for children to the tranquil spa. Multiple pools and a choice of beaches means you never feel crowded.



2 Viceroy Sugar Beach, St Lucia



Nestled between St Lucia's landmark Pitons on a former sugar plantation, this luxurious hotel occupies one of the most memorable spots anywhere in the Caribbean. With white-on-white interiors, the accommodation is gorgeous; other

4 Ritz-Carlton, Tenerife

A pink palace distinctive for miles around in the south of Tenerife thanks to its Moorish style and surrounding huge, spectacular Championship golf course. There's plenty else to do, with a tennis academy, extensive spa and fitness facilities, seven pools, a beach, and two Michelin-starred restaurants.



5 Niyama, Maldives

The lush Niyama Private Islands is spread over two islands - 'Play' and 'Chill' - and is filled with 4,200 coconut palms. From bathing in showstopper bathrooms with outdoor showers, to hopping on a speedboat to the uber-trendy underwater restaurant, this island chic at its finest.



Walk This way



SOME OF THE BEST PLACES TO VISIT FOR WALKING HOLIDAYS IN THE UK

In troubled times, there's nothing nicer than putting on a pair of sturdy walking boots and disappearing off into the yonder; and the UK has some of the most stunning scenery ready to be explored.

Here are five very different walking holidays that will help you blow away the cobwebs:

For art... Talk to the Welsh about Dylan Thomas and they may well point you around his home town of Laugharne, with spectacular views over the Taf Estuary. His *Poem in October* documents a walk he took on that very route, and now outdoors philosophers can do the same.

For wildlife and nature... The wilds of Cumbria offer spectacular views wherever you are, but head to Howgill Fells for a hike that brings you out at the highest waterfall in the UK. Peaceful, breathless and beautiful in every way, it's a wondrous place to relax.

For foodies... Cornwall's love of everything homely

and rustic extends through to its walks, with the route along the South West Coast Path greeting intrepid walkers with all manner of villages and enclaves. From five-star restaurants to cosy pubs and comfy cafés, fantastic food is around every corner.

For geology... When the Earth was created and rock types were being dished out, Dorset was clearly hogging space at the front of the queue, with the 27-mile route along the Jurassic coast from Weymouth to Swanage providing all manner of stunning ecological features, not least the spectacular Durdle Door.

For wild winter walks... If you're brave enough to venture out to the Highlands, then you'll find a variety of walks, low climbs and vistas that are simply unparalleled. With a backdrop of lochs, remote islands, wild forests and icy peaks, there is little clean-air inspiration Scotland cannot provide.



Contact Dan for expert advice
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Why the Help to Buy: Shared Ownership continues to create homes out of houses

For all its speculation, criticism and conjecture, the housing market represents one of the most stable industries in the UK. Only amid the perils of negative equity in the 1990s did the bricks and mortar of people's fortunes really begin to crumble; yet for large periods outside that time, investment in property has largely been deemed a safe one.

Of course, as a result of this, the market has become much more competitive, and the growing difficulty with which first-time buyers, in particular, are able to get on board means the government's introduction of Help to Buy schemes has gone a long way to guiding people along the footpath to realising those dreams.

The concept is simple – if you cannot afford the mortgage on what would be 100 per cent of a home, Help to Buy: Shared Ownership will allow you to buy a share of the property, which could be anywhere between 25 and 75 per cent of its value.

You would effectively pay rent on the remaining share. This means the initial deposit is smaller and mortgage finance more accessible. On the plus side, owners still enjoy a decent proportion of true investment and, along with that, benefit from rises in market price over time.

The criteria to get involved is sensible. Those applying need to earn less than £80,000/year (£90,000/year in London). Furthermore, you would need to be a first-time buyer, or have owned before while being unable to buy now; or perhaps are in an existing shared ownership arrangement and are looking to move.

Variations to the rules exist for the over-55s and disabled applicants, but for the most part the success of the scheme, which is being repackaged and relaunched for 2021, is evident in the millions of people who have stepped onto the property ladder since its launch four decades ago.

2020 – Christmas with a Difference

I'm feeling in a reflective mood as I write this article for December's VISION magazine.

What a year this has been. Amid all the anguish, anxiety, and sadness, it looks like there is hope on the horizon.

And that's due to the vaccine successes that have been announced recently and which seem highly promising.

Also, it looks like we will all be able to have a semblance of a family Christmas, albeit like none we've had before.



Stephen Frost, Martin & Co

And it was motoring along very strongly until something totally out of the blue derailed it and everything in its path.

The Covid-19 induced lockdown in late March meant the market was placed on hold like never before.

Recessions slow down house sales, this stopped it totally, pretty much overnight following the lockdown announcement.

Then when the first lockdown ended, the market started up again with historic levels of activity.

That continues, perhaps not as crazily as it did in the summer, but lots of people are still looking to move home.

Remembering 2020

When I remember 2020, I think the way the community of Chelmsford came together will be at the front of my thoughts, especially how people responded in the first lockdown.

It was truly inspiring and shows what spirit there is in the town and how many generous, kind, and good-hearted people live here.

From a local property market perspective, 2020 was the strangest year I've experienced in the 20 years we've been serving Chelmsford.

We entered the New Year off the back of a General Election that gave clarity around what would happen with Brexit. The 'Boris Bounce' as it was dubbed made the housing market a lot busier than it usually is in the winter.

2021 - An Optimistic Outlook

I'm confident there will be a real feelgood effect next year when life returns to some form of pre-COVID-19 normality. And I think this will positively impact the property market.

I also wouldn't be surprised if the Stamp Duty Holiday is extended past its current deadline date of March 31 next year.

Let's all keep our fingers crossed, our social distance and stay as safe as possible until



On behalf of everyone at Martin & Co Chelmsford, I'd like to wish you all a safe, peaceful, and enjoyable Christmas and a Happy New Year.



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For a free initial consultation, please contact me to book an appointment.

I'm based in Chelmsford and look forward to meeting you!

Louise

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MOTORING

BLINDED BY THE LIGHT

SHINING LIGHT ON GOOD HEADLAMP ALIGNMENT WHEN DRIVING ABROAD

Having just made the crossing to France and finding ourselves out on the expansive French motorways, many UK drivers would have experienced the strange sensation of a succession of drivers on the opposite carriageway flashing their lights frantically.

No, this isn't a friendly welcome from our continental neighbours, nor is it some kind of automobile backlash resulting from failed Brexit negotiations. Instead, what's happening is that you are blinding other road users with your incorrect headlamp alignment.

In the UK, headlamps are configured to shine to the left, towards the edges of the road and away from the middle. This is to guide motorists away from curbs and ditches, while preventing oncoming drivers from being blinded by our lights.

That means in France, or any country that drives on the right, that same light is actually being shone directly into drivers' faces.

With various advancements in headlamp

technology over the years, new cars are often fitted with a switch control that automatically redirects the headlamps for driving abroad. However, many cars still don't have this function, therefore it pays to know what to do when driving abroad, for both your own safety and that of others.

If manual headlamp realignment cannot be done from the control panel of your car, the most common solution is to buy a set of headlamp unit lenses (or glasses). These deflectors are attached and block out a small amount of your beam, thus keeping light away from other drivers.

These days, it's not a request that headlamps are configured properly, it's the law. 'Do it yourself' beam deflectors – the sort your dad might have made out of black sticky tape in the 1970s – are no longer legal, and deflectors must be operational as soon as you head off the ferry, even in daylight hours.

It's not worth taking the risk when driving abroad... be safe at all times.

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Channel HOPPING

Celebrating the 30-year anniversary of the breakthrough on the most ambitious construction project of them all

It is a piece of engineering that many thought impossible, some considered economically unfeasible, and a few even purported was largely unnecessary; and yet, three decades after contact was made between English and French engineers deep under the sea, the Channel Tunnel continues to celebrate linking and uniting the UK with mainland Europe.

It is estimated that more than 400 million people have ventured deep below the channel, either as a first step towards business or pleasure on mainland Europe or as venture in the opposite direction.

The idea was first conceived way back in 1802, where oil laps would light the route for horse-drawn carts to make the dark, dank descent under the sea. But it wasn't until 1987 that some significantly updated plans saw the first boring of the tunnel.

In connecting the UK and France, the engineers were finally doing away with outdated and overstretched ferry and boat services across the channel. Indeed, it's now the case that 30 per cent of all goods traded between the UK and continental Europe go through the 'Chunnel', worth more than £150billion each year.

It was on the night of December 1, 1990, that one of the 11 mighty boring machines carving a way through rock, which last saw the light of day during the Jurassic period, finally broke through. In doing so, it linked Britain to mainland Europe for the first time in more than 50,000 years, dating way back to before the English Channel swamped the deep valleys that intersect our two great nations.

In that moment, a project that cost £18billion, the most expensive construction project ever attempted, and a unique three-way 25-mile rail link (for Eurotunnel Shuttle, Eurostar and freight trains), moved a step closer to becoming reality. Engineers Graham Fagg and Philippe Cozette shook hands through a 30-inch hole some 50 metres below the seabed, celebrating a unique act of engineering unity.

Now, some two and a half decades after it opened to passengers, it's still natural to wonder at the design (which is actually three large cavern pipes, one in each direction and a service tunnel in the middle). It all means that, whether departing Folkestone in an old banger or London St Pancras in first class, mainland Europe is never more than an hour away.

It has transformed not just our ability to holiday on mainland Europe, but also our perception of travel as a whole – an island nation finally connected to its continent.

As time has gone on, the Channel Tunnel – one of the seven wonders of the modern world – has only ever felt its reputation enhanced. Perhaps it is the ease with which we can board a train to France, effectively without even leaving our car; perhaps it is the relatively low cost (a one-way trip can be taken for as little as £60); perhaps it is simply the customer-friendly approach adopted by Eurotunnel – namely that if you miss your allocated crossing you can simply hop on the next one – or the salubrious pleasure of boarding Eurostar.

Or perhaps it's simply the case that no matter what other emotions have been stirred up through Brexit and our nation's desire to return to a more independent existence, we will always embrace our European cousins and the adventures that lie beyond the tracks.

Since completion in 1994, the equivalent of six times the population of the UK has crossed through the Tunnel.

6x

4G mobile services are available in the Tunnel.

7x Each shuttle is almost 800 metres long, that's the length of seven football pitches.

The earth that was dug out to create the Tunnel could fill Wembley Stadium **7 times**.

Since the year 2000, over **2 million** dogs and cats have travelled with Eurotunnel, representing 80% of all pets crossing the Channel.

Some of the goods that have been transported via the Tunnel have included more than **26 million** trucks.

Over **300,000,000 tonnes** of freight have been transported via the Tunnel, of course trucks, lorries, and all rail freight trains, since it opened.

The excavated earth from the Tunnel is mostly from the Cotswolds region, which is mostly from windering across what was farmland when the shale was dug out.

37.9km (25 miles) The longest undersea tunnel in the world.

The concrete rings that line the tunnels are made of some of the strongest concrete in the world.

26 million pet dogs and cats have travelled through the Tunnel to the UK.

For Valentine's Day each year around **1.8 million** European customers have travelled through the Tunnel since 1994.

£12bn of fresh fruit and vegetables are carried every year by Eurotunnel.

The most expensive car to travel on the Shuttle was a Ferrari, worth **£5.7m**.

The passenger service Eurostar is one of Eurotunnel's biggest customers, **185 million** passengers have travelled through the Tunnel since 1994.

1 million e-commerce express delivery parcels travel through the Tunnel each day.

The service tunnel runs between the two rail tunnels – it is mainly used by maintenance workers, but some staff have also run through it for charity. Chris Froome has cycled through it, and it's been used for filming – from the drama series 'The Tunnel' to an Audi TV ad.

13,000 engineers, technicians and workers helped construct the Tunnel.

The original shaft in Coquelles, France had an internal diameter of **55 metres** and a **depth of 65 metres**. It was large enough to contain the Arc de Triomphe.

11 boring machines were used to make the Tunnel. In total they weighed **12,000 tonnes** – that's even more than the Eiffel Tower weighs.

The idea of a fixed link between Britain and European mainland was first seriously considered in Napoleonic times, and there were many designs drawn up, and attempts made, between then and the opening of the Tunnel in 1994.

We work with specialist transporters to relocate all sorts of animals as part of conservation and breeding programmes. These have included: giant tortoise, cheetahs, snakes, pangolins, eagles, tigers, storks, butterflies and lizards.

8,500 years ago People were walking between what is now the UK and Continental Europe.

If you put all the vehicles that have been through the Tunnel bumper to bumper, the line would be almost long enough to reach the moon and back from Earth. **That's over 477,710 miles**

20% of goods traded between the UK and Continental Europe go through the Channel Tunnel, which represents a value of **€138bn** per year.

4.9 million cubic metres of chalk, marl and shale were excavated during construction and used to create Sardinia Bios – a 30 hectare nature reserve located at the foot of the White Cliffs of Dover in Kent – and a hill at Le Fondignon in France which offers panoramic views over the coastal town of the Coteaux region.

Cheetah Snake Giant Tortoise Penguin

The UK crossover (between the two rail tunnels) is a cavern and is tall enough to stand 2 London double decker buses on top of each other.

Photo credit: www.eurotunnel.com

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