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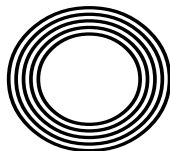
**FIVE
TV SETS
YOU CAN
VISIT**

*Beauty treatments
using seasonal veggies*

SOUP SEASON
How to build your own recipe

BEN STOKES OBE

Legendary cricketer sets his sights on World Cup victory



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BEFORE



AFTER



AFTER



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER





Editor's notes...

OCTOBER 2023



Nik Allen, Editor

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

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

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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

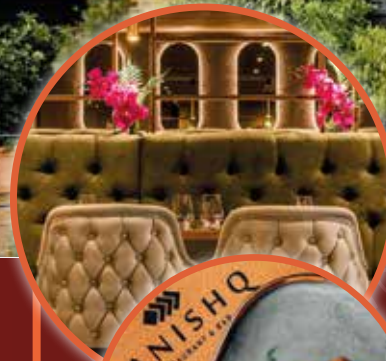
A gritty masterpiece, *Peaky Blinders* was filmed in Liverpool even though it is set in Birmingham, owing to this city's well-preserved Victorian industrial architecture. Hop on either the half-day or full-day guided coach tour and see the homes of Polly and Field Marshal Russell, Garrison Lane and so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



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.



HOME & DIY

Photo credit: diluvheritage.co.uk, idealhome.co.uk, furniture123.co.uk, BTG via housebeautiful.com



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 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!



Photo credit: sahyarharchandhargodag.com, doodlecraftblog.com

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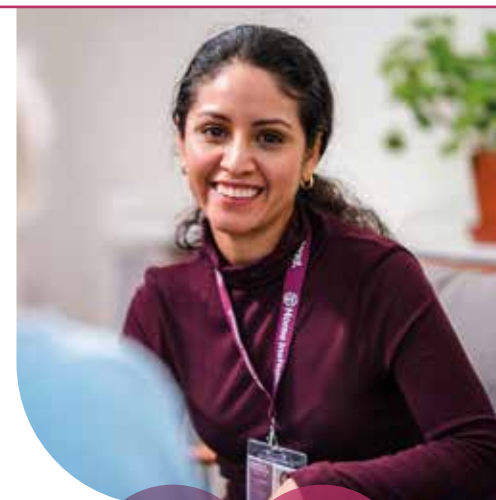
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watchwords are Quality, Integrity and Value. Quality in the materials that we use for all our installations and the fact that all our loft packages are fitted by time served tradesmen, so our customers are assured of the best job.

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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Let's get ready to TUMBLE!

Did 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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We set up our business at the start of 2023 after we both decided to change our lifestyle and work-life balance, taking the brave step to take voluntary redundancy from John Lewis head office.

Our gorgeous studio is in the heart of Writtle village, where we hold samples and catalogues from leading brands, offer design consultations and bookable inspiration sessions.

We have almost 40 years of buying and retail experience between us, an amazing supply base, and passion and energy for product, design and colour.

Zoe is the creative force to be reckoned with and mum of seven-year-old twins. She had worked at

John Lewis for 20 years, buying and developing outstanding products including bed linen, cookshop, utility and beauty.

Holly is the obsessive organiser and mum of four children aged seven, five, four and two. She had worked at John Lewis for 17 years within buying and events management/experiences, in areas including cushions, curtains, cookshop and Christmas.

Our aim is to make interior design fun and exciting without making it expensive and complex. We will take our clients on an inspiring journey of creativity and do all of the hard work for you.

We create mood boards, collate samples, and are able to source all products and oversee installations across all residential and commercial projects.

We are currently working on residential projects across Writtle, Hutton and Chelmsford – anything from a new feature wall in your WC to completely reorganising a spare room to be a tranquil home office, or getting your home ready for Christmas.

We are also working on commercial projects in pubs and restaurants – most recently, we have finished a complete bar make over, toilet glow up and restaurant renovations with new lighting, mirrors, pictures, signage and flower installation at Olio on the green in Writtle..

Interior design and styling can be overwhelming – we don't want our clients to be put off by making creative decisions for your home or business. With a little help from us, you can get the look you've always wanted, whatever your budget.



All photographs courtesy of
Claire Naylor Photography




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FROM YOUR AREA



LOCAL NEWS

Tributes paid to racing driver who will be 'sorely missed'



Photo credit: British Touring Car Championship

Tributes have poured in following the sudden death of a Chelmsford racing driver last month.

After an 18-month hiatus from racing to focus on his award-winning businesses, Dan Kirby returned to the sport earlier this year and enjoyed a brace of top-12 finishes in the new season at Snetterton.

A spokesperson for the British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) said: "We are deeply saddened to hear of the passing of former BTCC driver and team owner, Dan Kirby. A hugely popular figure in the paddock, Dan will be sorely missed. The BTCC community sends condolences to Dan's wife Beth, his two daughters, wider family, friends and colleagues."

A spokesperson for Southend United FC said: "Everyone at Southend United was devastated to learn of the passing of lifelong supporter Dan Kirby last week. Our condolences go to his family and friends, and we will honour Dan at our game against Bromley in December. RIP Dan."

Woman charged with murder after remains found

A woman has been charged with murder after human remains were discovered in Chelmsford.

On Wednesday, September 13, Essex Police received reports of concerns for the welfare of two people aged in their 70s.

Officers attended an address in Pump Hill, Chelmsford, and recovered the remains of two people, believed to be John and Lois McCullough.

The couple's family said: "We are deeply shocked by their deaths and ask for privacy at this difficult time."

Virginia McCullough, 35, of Pump Hill, Chelmsford, has been charged with their murder, and appeared at Chelmsford Magistrates' Court on September 18. She was remanded in custody until a plea hearing on December 1.

Detective Superintendent Rob Kirby, of the Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate, said: "I would continue to urge against speculation as these enquiries continue. A family is grieving the loss of two relatives and officers are supporting them."

MP supports campaign fighting to save landmark pub

A local MP has thrown her support behind a campaign aiming to bring a historic Chelmsford pub into community ownership.

To safeguard the future of The Chequers Pub in Writtle, the Roxwell Chequers Community Benefit Society (RCCBS) has been seeking pledges from residents to secure its future via a community buyout.

Among those supporting the campaign is Kemi Badenoch, MP of Saffron Walden and Secretary of State for Business and Trade.

She said: "I have met personally with those involved with RCCBS and have been impressed by their vision for the establishment of a community pub."

She added that the campaign "will breathe new life both into The Chequers and the wider village".

In response, chairman of RCCBS Sam Metson said that they are "grateful for her steadfast support" which "adds significant weight" to the campaign.

Last month, the campaign reached its target, securing the long-term future of the 250-year-old pub.





VICKY FORD MP

Conservative MP for Chelmsford



A huge thank you to the staff and building contractors at Springfield Primary School, who worked hard over the summer to make the necessary repairs due to reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC). Last term, pupils in Years Five and Six had lessons at The Beaulieu Park School and The Boswells School, but now all pupils are back in their own classrooms. Children's safety must come first.

Across Essex, of the 53 schools with RAAC, 37 have already had mitigation works. These schools opened as planned for all students at the start of term. Six schools delayed the start of term by one week and 10 schools are using a mixture of face-to-face and online learning for a short period until measures are in place.

During the school break, I also visited one of the many holiday activities and food programmes that have been running for children and young people in Chelmsford. I set up this programme nationally when I was Children's Minister. It is great to see so many children enjoying enriching activities over the holidays.

I know that Beaulieu residents are eagerly awaiting the opening of the Generals Lane Bridge. Inspections of the bridge have now taken place; however, highways officials are awaiting some assurances from Countryside which are important for safety. There will then need to be changes to signs, road markings and traffic signals at Boreham Interchange, which will need a weekend closure. I am pressing for this to happen as quickly as possible.

I have been delivering my Local Survey across Chelmsford. Thank you to the hundreds of local people who have already filled it in. The survey helps identify local people's priorities, so we can make a stronger case to authorities and get local issues resolved. Please do take a minute and go to www.vickyford.uk to fill out the survey.

I am campaigning to increase GP surgery capacity in Chelmsford. There are more GP appointments available than ever before, and a 40 per cent increase in staff working in primary care in Chelmsford, but there is also huge demand. Readers who live near the site of the new medical centre in Beaulieu will have seen signs of construction work and I am looking forward to seeing the first brick being laid shortly.

Please do email me at Vicky.ford.mp@parliament.uk if there are particular areas which you would like to raise.



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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

THE SCI-FI HALLOWEEN BALL
Hot Box, 28 Viaduct Road,
Chelmsford, CM1 1TS
Friday, October 27, 7pm – 11pm



Photo credit: HotHaus Drag

Fancy teleporting to a faraway galaxy? Join Kenzie Blackheart and HotHaus Drag at Hot Box for a night of fabulous entertainment this Halloween.

Step inside the spaceship-themed venue, where you'll get an evening of non-stop dancing, singing and spookiness. The costumes are going to be fabulous – from holographic outfits to neon green pieces.

Tickets cost £16.50 and can be purchased from www.bit.ly/3PLpWON

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA
Chelmsford Cathedral, New Street,
Chelmsford, CM1 1TY
Sunday, October 29, 7.30pm

London Concertante present a sensational evening at the opera with an array of the finest opera arias and overtures, including some of the best from *Madama Butterfly*, *Turandot*, *Tosca*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Carmen* and much more. Presented by candlelight with some of the country's greatest opera singers, this truly is an evening not to be missed.

Tickets start from £19. You can purchase tickets via www.londonconcertante.com/29th-oct-2

FIREWORKS SPECTACULAR 2023
Chelmsford City Racecourse,
Chelmsford, CM3 1QP
Sunday, November 5, gates open at 4pm,
display starts at 7.30pm

Watch as the sky lights up to the sound of music. Chelmsford City Racecourse is renowned for its

impressive annual displays, fairground rides, street food, and bars with accompanying DJs.

Children under the age of three go free but need a ticket, and all children must be accompanied by an adult over the age of 18.

Tickets start from £15 and are available to buy from www.shorturl.at/djtFQ

BIG SLEEPOUT
Chelmsford Cathedral, New Street,
Chelmsford, CM1 1TY
Friday, November 10, 8pm – 8am

If you really want to experience what it is like to have to sleep out in the freezing weather, as many have no choice but to do, then take part in the CHESSE Big SleepOut this year. Your fundraising will help to fulfil the CHESSE charity's mission to provide support to people who find themselves homeless.

Registration is now open and costs £10 per adult and £5 per child.

Sign up and find out more at www.chesshomeless.org/bigsleepout

VIVA LAS VEGAS CHARITY BALL 2023
Maidens Barn, High Easter,
Chelmsford, CM3 1HU
Saturday, November 18, 6.30pm

Owing to the success of Taylor Financial Management's 2022 Charity Ball, they are delighted to invite you to the Viva Las Vegas Charity Ball 2023 in support of Essex-based charity Wipe Away Those Tears.

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Purchase your tickets from www.taylorwealth.co.uk/charity-ball-2023



Photo credit: Taylor Financial Management



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Following the closure of Barclays Bank in Tiptree Curtain Call Interiors have taken over the former bank building and transformed the space into an inspirational home interiors showroom and new workroom.

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Curtain Call specialise in making hand finished bespoke curtains, Roman blinds and soft furnishings all made by their experienced team of curtain makers. With their new workroom located adjacent to the Showroom, it allows



owner Natalie and her team of makers and designers to assist customers in finding the right fabric and style for their decoration projects.



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BEAUTY

VEGGIE *vision*

Most 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.



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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

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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

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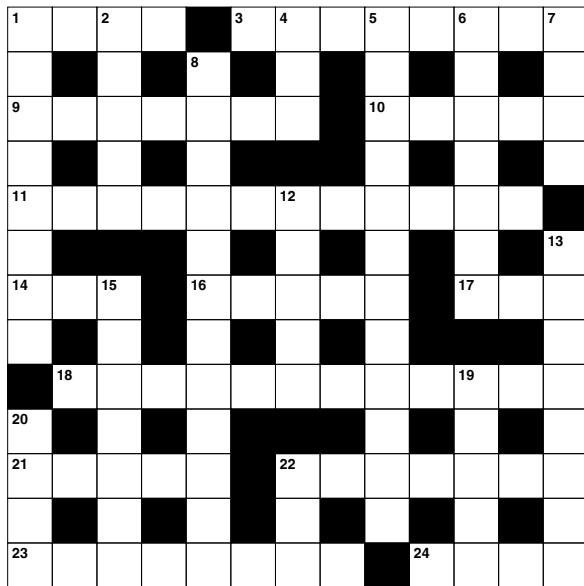
Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

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.

SUDOKU

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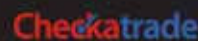
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HOW TO BUILD YOUR own soup

Soup 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.



FOOD & DRINK

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MICHELIN RECOMMENDED

The Windmill Chatham Green is a charming family-run and dog-friendly restaurant and pub, surrounded by the beautiful Essex countryside, just outside of Chelmsford on the route to our city's racecourse.

Michelin star chef Tom Clarke and his partner Nancy Witte officially opened the doors a year ago in October 2022. Ever since, guests are invited with a very warm welcome by Nancy and her front-of-house team to enjoy and discover Tom's exceptional talent, creating different flavour combinations by using foraged and seasonal ingredients.

Earlier this year, it was announced that they are now officially recommended in the Michelin guide.

Both have worked at some of the best restaurants in England and France. Tom, born in Chelmsford, has started his career in some very well-known local restaurants, such as Le Talboth in Dedham before moving on to work at Ramond Blanc's Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons in Oxford, Le Strato Hotel in France, and the legendary L'Oustau de Baumañière.

In 2015, he took over the head chef position at L'Ortolan in Reading where he was awarded one Michelin star and three AA rosettes, which he retained for five years until leaving to open his own restaurant.

Nancy, born near Berlin, has worked at the famous Sacher Hotel in Vienna, before moving to England to work at the private members club Mosimann's in the centre of London, as well as the Michelin-starred restaurant L'Ortolan in Reading, where the couple met.

Tom and Nancy found their true passion for foraging at the small experimental restaurant Forage Kitchen in



Bury St Edmunds, where they worked for two years prior before moving to the hamlet.

It is not so farfetched for the pair to choose this very location for their own venture when you realise that the family roots run deep here for Tom.

His uncle and grandparents ran The Bakery in the nearby village in Great Waltham, selling freshly baked goods to the local community until closing in 1991.

The restaurant has the cosy feel of a county pub with a rustic chic and original features. There is a well-stocked bar with a quite unusual offerings of sprits and cocktails.

The menu is kept short as dishes change frequently with the seasons. Menu descriptions are deceptively and don't reveal the full complexity of cooking until the actual dish arrives, served and described by the chefs and the front of house.

A clear feature as you arrive is the original windmill building next to the pub where Henry Challis, the last miller, stopped grinding wheat to start selling beer back in 1904. Since arriving, the couple have transformed the downstairs room into a very charming private dining room, offering the perfect space to celebrate any special occasion, from birthdays to a smaller wedding reception.

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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.

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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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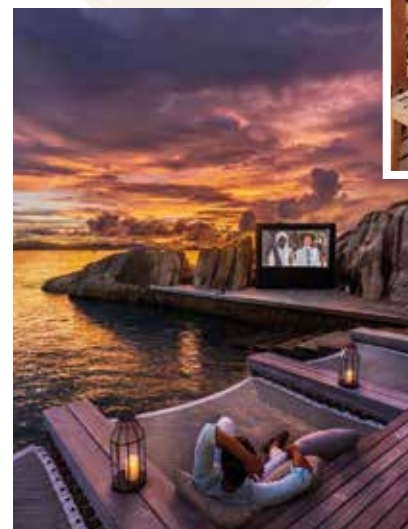
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The GLOBAL ZOO

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.



WELLNESS, REIMAGINED.

When you think of wellness, what is the first thing that comes to mind? Most people think of healthy eating, exercise, relaxation, getting enough sleep and taking supplements as being among our top priorities.

What if we told you that most of these healthy lifestyle choices can be enhanced by slipping into a new hot tub, exercise pool or sauna right in your own back garden? The health benefits of regularly being able to use any of these are vast and provide the perfect mix of relaxation, fun and healthy living.



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Did you know?

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

Stress Relief

Stress results in tension, headaches, fatigue and soreness.

Regular hot tub use, through a combination of buoyancy, heat and massage relieves tension and stress.

Lower Blood Pressure

A study for the Mayo Clinic recommended relaxing in a hot tub can be beneficial for heart disease patients.

Promotes Weight Loss

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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.



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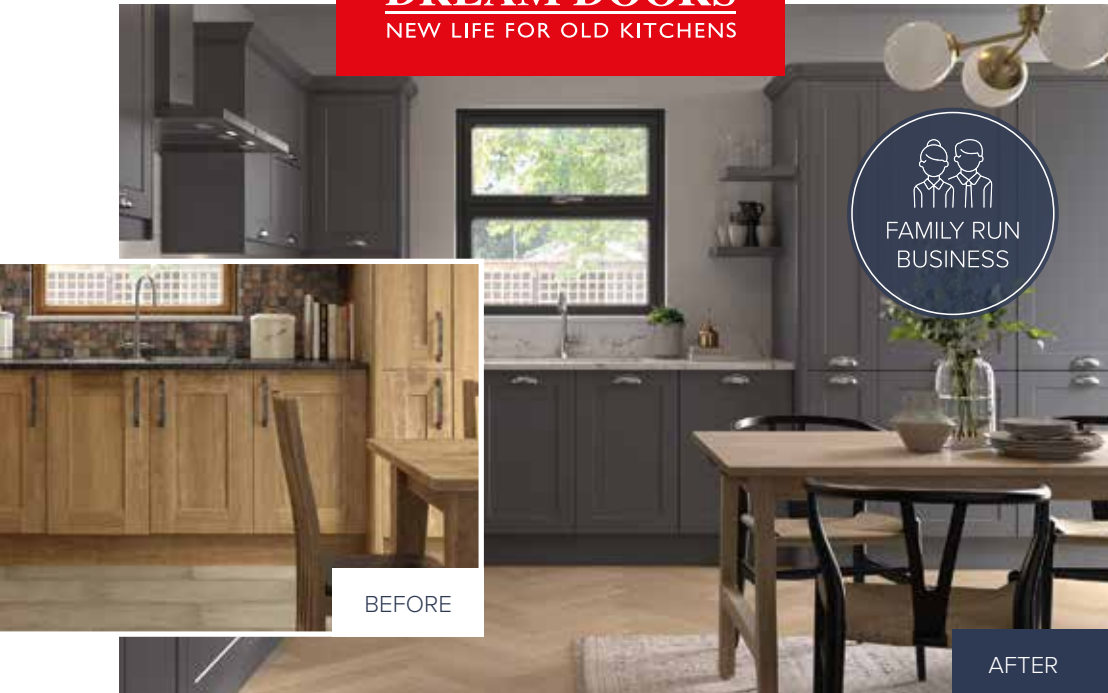
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Regardless of your thoughts on the controversial expansion of London's Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), there is a wide selection of cars out there ready to help you bypass this expensive charge.

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



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Clean running

Fuel is always a topic for conversation considering the ever-rising costs associated with it. Using the correct higher quality fuel with additives in it, is very important for both petrol and diesel engines.

There can be gains made in fuel consumption and engine driveability using a better quality fuel.

It is generally thought that paying extra for certain optimal fuels is all hype, and that you are actually paying more for fuel that is no different or better than the lowest priced fuels available.

The quality of the highest unleaded fuel generally being known mainly as super unleaded is roughly equivalent to what many of our older readers would know as four star, which in the good old days was the best fuel that you could get for your motor vehicle.

You are probably wondering where we are going with this. Well basically, in addition to the gains we have mentioned, of which, of course, a drawback is that paying for a better quality fuel does mean more cost to you at the pump short term, but long term because of its better combustion characteristics, it can also mean more power



from your engine and also help to maintain the efficiency of your fuel injection system.

Diesel engines can benefit from using a higher quality fuel and with the additional additives in the fuel, it can also help with reducing the build up of solid particles in the diesel particulate filtration system, which once these particles have built up beyond a certain point, the only remedy from there, may be the considerable cost of replacing certain expensive components.

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