

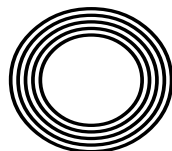
REVEALED
Pantone Colours
of the Year 2021

Most bizarre
excuses
**FOR PULLING
A SICKIE**

Remembering a legend
**DAME BARBARA
WINDSOR DBE**

Lewis HAMILTON

Sports Personality of the Year racing into the record books



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Editor's notes...

JANUARY 2021



Brett Shohet, Editor

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

I don't know how many of you are like me, but every new year I like to jot down my targets for the year ahead and what I'd like to achieve.

Looking at my 2021 targets I can see that, owing to the disruption from the 2020 global pandemic, most of them are identical to last year's. Having said that, I certainly wouldn't label 2020 a 'throwaway' year - rather, it was a year for us to slow down and be grateful for what we already have, rather than looking to build on it. I'm pleased to say that, despite this, we did branch out to more areas in Essex and Hertfordshire.

In hindsight, it was an important year, but one I'm glad to have left behind. I can't wait to see friends and family as normal, as well as hold face-to-face meetings for business. I'm looking forward to having that sense of connection back, which was definitely missed last year.

It was a huge source of pride for **VISION** to support businesses through their most difficult points in 2020 - equally, we appreciate the support, trust and belief that our clients showed in us.

I wish everyone a happy new year and, as always, thank you for reading.

Brett Shohet

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The great Dame BARBARA WINDSOR DBE

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND CAREER OF THE QUEEN OF TV

In a troublesome, traumatic year, many saw Dame Barbara Windsor's death in early December 2020 as another profound low.

An only child born in Shoreditch two years before the breakout of World War II, 'Babs' made her West End debut at the age of just 13, in the musical *Love from Judy*.

As the Swinging Sixties swung, so too did Barbara Windsor's buoyant, bubbly, effervescent personality carry forward an industry. From appearances in films *Sparrows Can't Sing* (for which she won a BAFTA), *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and *The Boy Friend*, to sitcom work with *The Rag Trade* and *Wild, Wild Women*, her acting talent was as admired as it was, at times, underplayed.

Indeed, when the slapstick comedy of the *Carry On* movies came around, while decorated in her roles, Babs became somewhat pigeonholed.

Nonetheless, she re-emerged in the 1970s to return to stage work with *Oh! What a Lovely War* and *Twelfth Night*, among others.

From high jinks to heavy drama, Babs was an entertainment icon in her own right. Never clichéd, never disrespected, she came to represent an era of British entertainment in which our output rivalled anyone else the world over.

And in accepting the opportunity to take ownership of the Queen Vic pub in Albert Square in 1994, Babs' career reinvention proved a masterstroke. A boisterous, no-nonsense, independent pub landlady, she kept a lid on Walford's most tempestuous characters, and remains the only person in *EastEnders'* 35-year history to have tempered the problematic Mitchell brothers, Grant and Phil – her sons.

Of course, Windsor's infectious persona,

effortless charm and cheeky sex appeal saw her decorated with no shortage of admirers. From relationships with Ronnie Kray and comedy sidekick Sid James, she enjoyed a lively 21-year marriage with nightclub owner Ronnie Knight. The pair shared a luxury home on Stanmore Hill. She later married chef Stephen Hollings and wed a third time in 2000, to Scott Mitchell, bridging an age gap of 27 years. She didn't have any children.

Following her passing, the tributes came from far and wide for an actress whose time in front of the camera was really only a platform to a breath-taking life in showbusiness.

The sadness of her death was calmed somewhat by the fact Babs had been in unsteady health for a number of years. In 2014 she retired from all acting duties when diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Undeterred by the darker clouds that she sensed were about to gather, and ably assisted by her husband, she leapt into a new role of raising both funds and awareness for the disease, and continued to campaign up until her death.

While still seen out frequently over the past few years, the toils of public engagements eventually proved too much for someone who had previously bathed in the decorative sunlight of press and publicity.

Slipping away quietly, as she did on December 10, was perhaps the most inauspicious of conclusions to a booming, bustling life full of big personality. And yet, while we all take away slightly different memories of Barbara Windsor, our collective recollections will surely always be of an actress who spearheaded a golden era of British entertainment, always accompanied by a warm smile and mischievous laugh.

Photo credit: Shutterstock



THE WORLD AROUND US

Part 3

In the third part of our environmental series, we look at the key driver in the health and well-being of the planet. In this issue, it's the air above our heads.

In all the trust we place in environmentalists, activists and those passionate about preserving our planet, perhaps when it comes to air we need to invest the greatest level of trust.

On the ground, the world in which we live seems largely pleasant, and as far as air quality goes, our immediate environment is certainly much cleaner today than at any time since the Industrial Revolution, and noticeably so.

Yet in 2020 we are driven by targets – achieving a net zero greenhouse gas equation and an 80 per cent cut in emissions by 2050 being two of the biggest headline grabbers.

The problem for the preservation of air quality is that industry rolls on. We are a long way from the smoggy days of 1950s London, but air pollution still contributes to almost 10 per cent of premature deaths, while costing around £40 billion each year.

Of course, the enforced lockdown in the spring of 2020 was perhaps the greatest exemplar of

how great our footprint is. Within weeks, scientists reported a 40 per cent drop in air pollutants. It showed that protecting our personal health had a hugely beneficial effect on that of the environment.

And yet, when back at full capacity, even the healthcare systems in England will be responsible for an estimated 4 to 5 per cent of our carbon footprint, with 6.7 billion road miles each year coming from patients and their visitors travelling to NHS hospitals and centres.

Never in starker terms was it clear that the play-off between the health of the planet and the health of the people who inhabit it remains a tug of war we will continue to see.

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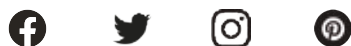
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The best skincare ingredients for your skin

With so many lotions, potions, serums and supposed skin saviours, it can be a nightmare trying to decide what ingredients you should be looking for in your skincare products.

Luckily for you, we have rounded up the best skincare ingredients for 2021 based on the most common skincare problems.

1. Cica Cream – Best for sensitive skin

Cica cream, also known as centella asiatica, was traditionally used to heal wounds, but can now be found in moisturisers and serums owing to its ability to restore skin that is affected by redness and sensitivity. Rich in anti-inflammatories, antioxidants and antibacterial properties, this cream can also help prevent future damage from external environmental stressors.



2. Salicylic Acid – Best for acne sufferers

Salicylic acid is known for its ability to deeply exfoliate the skin and keep your pores clear, so using skincare products that contain salicylic acid can dramatically help reduce breakouts. This acid is also used in higher concentrations to treat acne scars, sun damage and age spots.

3. Retinol – Best for ageing skin

Who doesn't want to wake up with younger-looking skin? Hailed by skin experts as the anti-ageing miracle worker, retinol works by increasing collagen production, as well as increasing the rate of skin cell turnover. Added to face creams, eye creams and serums, retinol can improve your skin's texture, minimise fine lines and even out skin tone.



4. Glycerine – Best for dry skin

Glycerine, sometimes referred to as glycerin or glycerol, is a naturally occurring substance that acts as a humectant to draw moisture to the skin. This skin-saving ingredient is also a great cleanser, helping to remove dirt and oil without stripping your skin.

5. Hyaluronic Acid – Best for dull or damaged skin

Becoming increasingly popular as an ingredient in face-care products, hyaluronic acid is a gel-like substance that has the unique ability to retain moisture. Skin benefits include enhanced hydration, the prevention of wrinkles and healing properties that can reduce the appearance of scars.

NB: Most active ingredients take at least two months to show results, so be patient.



CARING FOR Cashmere

Cashmere is a winter wardrobe staple for many, providing warmth without weight. That being said, it is not a cheap clothing option, so you need to make sure you show your cashmere a little TLC to prolong its life.

Shave regularly: You may have noticed that your cashmere items are prone to fuzz balls, especially under the arms or where you carry your bag. Known as piling, you can remove these using a razor blade or lint tape.

Don't over wash: Cashmere does not need to be washed every time you wear it. In fact, you should only wash your cashmere clothing a handful of times over the whole winter season. Always wash in cold water – handwashing is best – and use a mild detergent. Softener is not needed as cashmere naturally gets softer over time.

Ignore dry clean only labels: Unless your cashmere item has embellishments such as beading or metals that mean it needs to be dry cleaned, cashmere should not undergo this process as it can damage its fibres.

Lay flat to dry: Cashmere is at its most delicate when wet, so this is the cleaning stage that requires the most amount of care. Simply lay your cashmere item down on a dry towel and carefully roll it up to absorb as much moisture as possible. Never wring it. Then lay it in a shady spot to air dry.

Store away from sunlight: You should store your cashmere items inside out in a dust-free and well-aired area that is away from direct sunlight. Before storing, always ensure that your cashmere is clean and free from dust and dead skin, as these can attract moths. If you are storing your cashmere for the summer, make sure you clean, de-crease and remove any fuzz before putting it away.



Are you READY To Go ~~SOBER~~?

Although January may feel like the worst possible time to try to give up your favourite tipple (isn't this month depressing enough?), you may be surprised at how great you feel after cutting out alcohol for just one month.

What to expect when you give up alcohol...

WEEK ONE

Undeniably the most challenging week in your booze-free month, you may experience some unwanted side effects in the first seven days, such as headaches and intense sugar cravings, especially if you are a heavy drinker. That being said, you will also start to see the positive effects of giving up alcohol, including: Better decision-making | More energy | An improved sleeping pattern

WEEK TWO

After two weeks without alcohol, you will continue to enjoy the health benefits listed above, as well as a few new ones, such as: Reduction in acid reflux as your stomach lining becomes normalised | Weight loss | Better mental health

WEEK THREE

As you are now past the halfway

mark, the effects of not drinking will start to contribute to your long-term health, with benefits including: Improved vision | Better kidney health | A reduction in blood pressure, which can lessen your risk of future health problems, such as heart disease

WEEK FOUR

The final week of your no-booze challenge and the effects on your health will be apparent for everyone to see and will include: Better-looking skin | Reduced dandruff and eczema | Up to 15 per cent less fat in your liver

IS DRY JANUARY WORTH IT?

Although Dry January has become increasingly popular in recent years, is it really worth it in terms of your long-term health if you continue to drink for the other 11 months of the year?

According to Alcohol Change UK, yes it is, with this challenge forcing you to confront how much you drink and to take notice of the harm it can cause.



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HEALTH & FITNESS

MIDDLE OF THE LOAD

Fight the flab after 40 with these steps to prevent midlife weight gain

Cut the calories: Though you may feel as active as ever, your metabolism unfortunately is not as efficient as it once was. However, cutting between 250 and 300 calories per day is enough to keep your weight where you want it to be.

Walk it off: Burning fat only requires a slightly elevated heart rate, which means exercising for a longish period while being slightly out of breath is what you need to aim for. So ditch the gruelling runs and aim instead for a brisk walk or swim.

Use your gut instinct: Beat the bloat with healthy bacteria, best found in natural yogurts and fermented foods such as sauerkraut, kimchi and kefir.

Exercise before your eggs: Studies have shown that working out before breakfast can burn up to double the calories – ideal for those who prefer to do their sun salutations as it rises at dawn.

Go nuts: We all know that fruit and vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet, but to maintain blood sugar and control weight you need to be getting plenty of protein too. From a handful of almonds to a bowlful of lentils, or even just a glass of milk, this is one healthy habit you'd be nuts not to try.

Consider HRT: In addition to easing the side effects of the menopause, there is evidence to suggest that hormone replacement therapy can help with weight distribution, which means less fat around the dreaded middle.

Join the resistance: You might balk at the suggestion of using weights in your workouts, yet resistance training is the best way to replace muscle lost through ageing. Pilates, yoga, squats and exercises using small dumbbells are all excellent and enjoyable ways to achieve that toned look.



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Are you addicted to

SUGAR?

Did you know that adults are advised to have no more than 30g of free sugars per day (the equivalent of seven cubes)? To put that into perspective, a single can of Coca-Cola has 35g of sugar, 5g more than your total allowance for the day. So, are you addicted to sugar? Let's find out.

AM I ADDICTED TO SUGAR?

If you are worried about your sugar consumption or you think you may be addicted to the white stuff, then you should look out for the following most common sugar addiction symptoms:

- Headaches
- Feeling tired or lethargic
- Intense sugar cravings
- Muscle pain
- Nausea
- Bloating

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO BREAK A SUGAR ADDICTION?

You will be pleased to hear that you can break a sugar addiction in as little as 10 days. This is because the more sugar you eat, the more you crave it. However, once you stop, or cut back, you will find you want it less and less each day.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF GIVING UP SUGAR?

There are many health benefits to giving up sugar, including:

- Increased energy levels
- Better ability to focus
- Enhanced mood
- Decreased inflammation
- Less stomach fat
- Better-looking skin
- Less risk of tooth decay
- Weight loss

TOP TIPS TO HELP STOP CRAVINGS AND SATISFY YOUR SWEET TOOTH...

Going cold turkey when trying to give up free sugars (sugars that are added to food, rather than naturally occurring) can be a challenge.

Fortunately, there are ways to make the process easier:

- Eat three meals and two healthy snacks a day
- Go for a run or a brisk walk
- Eat fruit in the morning on an empty stomach
- Focus on protein at every meal
- Try a fibre- and protein-rich chia seed pudding
- Chew sugar-free gum



FOOD & DRINK



Surprisingly FREEZABLE foods

Whether you are trying to save money, visit the local supermarket less or you are simply fed up with wasting food, you may be surprised to find out just how many different foods you can freeze.

Bananas

A firm favourite in many households, bananas are cheap and cheerful, yet sadly they do not last very long. Luckily, over-ripe and fresh bananas can be frozen, either with or without skin, and used at a later date.

Potatoes

If you buy your potatoes in bulk to save money but you are often left with half a bag of "sprouters", then you will be pleased to hear that you can freeze the humble potato. Simply peel, blanch in boiling water for five minutes, put in a bowl of iced water and leave to cool. Then freeze in airtight bags.

Milk

If you hate waking up in the morning only to realise you've run out of milk, then buying extra and freezing it is the ideal solution. However, milk does expand when frozen, so make sure you decant it into a larger container first. Once defrosted, mix it and consume within three days.

Cheese

You may not want to freeze cheese that you plan to serve with crackers as it can become crumbly. However, cheese cut into chunks or grated, placed in airtight bags and frozen, is perfect for sprinkling on dishes that will be heated, such as lasagne or cauliflower cheese.

Avocados

Avocados are extremely nutritious, yet they can be expensive. Fortunately, if you see them on offer, you can buy several and freeze to consume at a later date. Cut into pieces or mash them before squeezing lemon juice on the flesh to retain colour and placing in resealable bags. Best for use as an ingredient rather than eaten raw as freezing can change the texture.



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GO NUTS!

With Shrove Tuesday fast approaching, what better time to discover a new tasty topping for your pancakes?

Check out our own version of a well-known hazelnut cocoa spread which is half the calories, vegan and packed full of healthy fats and vitamins.

Super Healthy Homemade Hazelnut Spread

WHAT YOU NEED:

240g raw hazelnuts | 1½ tbsp pure vanilla extract | ¼ cup cocoa powder | ¼ cup pure maple syrup or unrefined sugar | ¼ tsp salt | ½ cup vegan milk (or normal milk if you do not need a vegan recipe) | 2 tsp oil

HOW TO MAKE:

- > Set oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6
- > Roast hazelnuts for 6–8 minutes
- > Leave to cool slightly and then rub off skins
- > Blend the nuts in a food processor until they are the consistency of butter
- > Add all the other ingredients and blend until smooth

Not just for pancakes, try using your homemade hazelnut spread in these yummy

recipes that the whole family will love.

Hazelnut Hot Chocolate

All you need to create this dangerously addictive hot chocolate is cocoa powder, milk and some hazelnut spread. Simply mix all the ingredients together and pop in the microwave for 2 minutes.

Caramel Cream Nutty Chocolate Lollies

The perfect little treat for tiny hands, simply dissolve 70g of hazelnut spread in a pan over boiling water and set aside half. Pour a thin layer into small, round silicone moulds and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Take out and place a hazelnut-sized piece of salted caramel cream in each mould and cover with remaining spread. Place a lolly stick in each and refrigerate for a further 5 hours.

Nutty Iced Biscuits or Cake

If you are bored with your usual icing, why not use some hazelnut spread instead? Just warm some of the nutty mixture in the microwave for 10–20 seconds and then gently spread over biscuits or cakes. It makes a great cake filler too.




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NATIONAL PULL A SICKIE DAY ON



According to UK statistics, the first Monday of February is the day when employees are most likely to pull a sickie. Although excuses may be limited this time round, that doesn't mean we can't take a look at some of the more inventive reasons that people have come up with over the years. You can't make this stuff up!

“My only pair of work trousers is in the wash”

Not the best excuse, as what would you do if your employer simply told you to come in your casual clothes?

“It's my dog's birthday and I need to arrange a party for him”

Even though we are a nation of pet lovers, we can't see too many bosses accepting this far-fetched fabrication.

“My grandmother poisoned me with her ham”

Yes, somebody really did use this as a reason why they hadn't turned up for work. Although, to be honest, this might just be crazy enough to actually work.

“I'm too drunk to drive”

Although this may actually be true, we are not sure that this reason would go down too well with HR.

“I can't come in today, the show I've been watching just released a new series”

Another truthful explanation, and to be fair, we've all been there. Damn you, Netflix!

How you should call in sick to work

- > Contact your employer as soon as possible
- > Keep your reason brief
- > Be as helpful as possible
- > Make sure you speak to the right person
- > If you are struggling with your mental health, be honest and say so, but you are not required to go into details
- > Only text if your employer has previously okayed this method of calling in sick
- > Consider remote working if you feel able to





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HOME & DIY

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JANUARY 18 – 24

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Remember, all the little things really do add up.

- 1. Use your microwave more:** Using your microwave is one of the most efficient ways to both heat up and cook food.
- 2. Be water-conscious:** Whether you are making a cup of tea or boiling food in a pan, only use the amount of water that you need.

cooker over a whole day only uses the same amount of energy as a lightbulb.

- 4. Don't use metal trays in the oven:** Glass and ceramic dishes retain heat better than metal ones, making them more energy efficient.

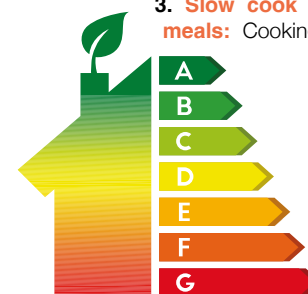
- 5. Keep heating rings clean:** Any food that has become stuck to your heating rings will absorb heat, making them less efficient.

- 6. Wash your clothes at 30°C:** 90 per cent of your washing expenditure is spent on heating the water, so by reducing the heat to 30°C when possible, you can save one-third on your washing costs.

- 7. Unplug any unused appliances:** Unplug or switch the power off on any appliances that you aren't using. This includes charger cables.

- 8. Turn down your thermostat:** By turning down your thermostat by just 1°C, you can save up to £80 per year.

- 3. Slow cook your family meals:** Cooking in a slow



- 9. Use halogen lightbulbs outside:** Halogen bulbs use a quarter less electricity than incandescent bulbs without affecting their brightness, so are ideal for exterior lighting.

- 10. Defrost food overnight:** Defrosting food typically halves the cooking time, meaning less energy used per meal.

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Viva

DRIED FLOWERS

If there is only one interior design trend that you embrace this year, make it the revival of dried flowers. Cost effective, eco-friendly and, most importantly, Pinterest-approved, anyone can dry flowers and arrange a beautiful bouquet to be proudly displayed in their home.

HOW TO DRY FLOWERS

If you want to prolong the life of a bouquet of flowers that has been gifted to you, then drying it out is the perfect solution.

1. Strip off any excess foliage and cut stems to desired length
2. Find a dark and dry area, such as an unused cupboard, and hang your flowers upside down using unflavoured dental floss or string
3. Leave for 2-3 weeks until completely dry
4. Take down and spray with unscented hairspray

WHAT ARE THE BEST FLOWERS FOR DRYING?

If you are new to the flower-drying business, you may want a few ideas to get you started. The below flowers are ideal for drying, although you can dry any varieties: Pansies • Amaranthus • Artemisia • Lavender • Hydrangea • Yarrow • Eucalyptus (although not strictly a flower, this will add lovely greenery to your bouquet)

HOW TO DISPLAY DRIED FLOWERS

Once you have dried your flowers, it is time to carefully arrange them into a delightful display. Below are four different arrangements for you to try out:

- Hanging bunches – tie a few bunches together using twine and hang upside down from a branch or an interior wall
- Wreaths – create a dried flower wreath to hang on your front door
- Mini bouquets – dried posy bouquets look lovely placed in a small vase or as a gift
- Statement displays – if you are looking to create a big and bold display, tie together dried flowers, herbs, leaves and grass. Hang over your dining table for maximum effect.



Grey

DAY?

Revealing Pantone's Colours of the Year, Ultimate Gray and Illuminating

Across a year that offered so much but delivered so little, it's perhaps apt that Pantone has selected not one, but two Colours of the Year. Combined, they reflect the trials and tribulations of 12 months that have seen the very fabric of our lives ripped from under us; and yet we emerge energised, enthused and even perhaps enriched.

Pantone has chosen a combination of shades to represent these feelings. Yes, Ultimate Gray (17-5104), at first glance, appears stern, solemn and even echoes back to the styles and sensibilities of the 1980s. And yet, look closer, and it provides solidity and fortitude.

Now combine those emotions with Pantone's second Colour of the Year for 2021 – Illuminating (13-0647). At first a yellow that resonates with cheerful, sparky, spring-like abandon, it offers light, vivacity and thoughts of energy.

As a single shade, Illuminating works, but combined with Ultimate Gray the end effect is, in Pantone's own words, "A story of colour that encapsulates deeper feelings of thoughtfulness with the promise of something sunny and friendly."

It is indeed a combination that can reignite your interiors – consider a statement piece such as a grey sofa, with yellow scattered cushions. Or what about an existing white or wooden room patterned with a grey rug and yellow feature wall?

Grey and yellow, together or alone, will combine with almost any colours. There is a chic harmony that blends as much as it stands out – even in the bedroom, yellow curtains can offer a feeling of light on the drabest of days; while grey walls, white skirting boards and yellow pictures present a classy combination.

In summing up, expect the Pantone Colour(s) of the Year, Ultimate Gray and Illuminating, to drop into your consciousness, guiding you to happier and more optimistic times in the weeks and months ahead.



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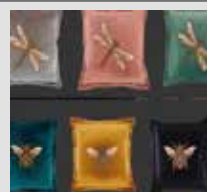
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HOW YOU CAN JOIN THE PLASTER EFFECT INTERIOR TREND

Lockdown saw a lot of us going back to basics, rediscovering at the same time simpler, less-complicated ways of life.

It seems that in the throes of one of the biggest cultural resets we've ever known, the lure of stripping back has extended right the way through to our interiors, with plaster effect a new design trend that relies very much on the simplicity of old.

The concept is clear – a modern, mottled, moulded, matt-effect plaster wall that looks like, feels like and responds to a stripped-back feeling of style and detail.

It uses, first and foremost, a base of plaster. For the fully organic effect, you can leave it as is, but many are embracing the idea of using chalk paint, old rags and a natural sponge to

treat, detail and add depth-driven colour to the walls.

The intention is to go rustic and to promote that unfinished look, and less is most definitely more where this is concerned, with over-decoration making the look too perfect and too polished.

A certain generation will shudder as they make comparisons to Artex, but this is a whole world away, and treated properly, even the very rawest exposed plaster can thrive as a brilliant feature.

And if paint and sponges aren't your thing, you can purchase plaster-effect wallpaper, to deliver devastating design dynamism to your walls with a simple splosh of a bit of paste.

Whichever way you go about it, the end effect is something that's detailed, bright, totally unique and great for promoting space and feelings of clarity. You'll also find your walls are incredible durable, as the look can be maintained simply with the use of warm, soapy water.

Photo credit: Annie Sloan via homesandgardens.com, George Home via goodhomemagazine.com, Matalan via goodhomemagazine.com



HOME & DIY



The ULTIMATE formula

Sir Lewis Hamilton's ascent to being the greatest F1 driver of all time

It's fair to speculate that Sir Lewis Hamilton polarises opinion, even in the midst of being unveiled as the greatest ever Formula One racer.

His victory at the Turkish Grand Prix in the middle of November ensured the Stevenage-born speedster equalled Michael Schumacher's record of seven Drivers' Championships, having already surpassed the German's race victory total in October, in another season of unparalleled dominance. By the close of the campaign in Abu Dhabi on December 13, 2020, Hamilton's points tally was 347, a colossal 123 ahead of closest rival Valtteri Bottas.

The champ said: "To all the kids out there, dream the impossible. Seven is just unimaginable, but when you work with such a great group of people and you really trust each other, there is just no end to what you can do together. I feel like I'm only just getting started; it's really weird."

He may just be correct in that statement. At 35, the Mercedes driver has time on his side – the great Luigi Fagioli was 53 when he scored his final race win at the 1951 French Grand Prix.

Certainly, it's becoming difficult to remember a time when Hamilton's grit, speed and desire wasn't present in the sport. Many believe he truly announced himself at the British Grand Prix in 2008, driving for McLaren. Although he'd already clocked up six victories, dating back to Canada a year previously, his mastery of brutally wet driving conditions to win by more than a minute after starting fourth on the grid set a precedent where he was regarded as the driver to beat.

The world title duly arrived later that year in spectacular fashion, as on the final corner of the final lap in the final race, in Brazil, he overtook Timo Glock to snatch victory from the gearbox of defeat.

After switching to Mercedes in 2014, following a fallow period, Hamilton's synchronicity with the technicians and mechanics accelerated success beyond all expectations, failing just once, in 2016, as Nico Rosberg pipped him to title glory by just five points. The German realised he would most likely never repeat that feat, and promptly retired from the sport, never to be seen again.

Wind forward, and even finding himself struck down with COVID-19 at the start of December was not to dampen the determination and drive of Hamilton, a man who now looks towards new heights, the first of which will be making up the handful of race wins required to get to that magic total of 100.

As far as being the sport's 'Marmite man', his award of the 2020 BBC Sports Personality of the Year Award on December 20, 2020, proves that public swell remains with him.

And anyway, Hamilton gives short shrift to the detractors. He will discuss his knighthood, announced as part of the New Year Honours; he'll reference all those times he's arrowed across the finish line in first position; he'll note the 84 occasions he's started on the front of the grid; and, of course those seven titles. And he'll point to the fact that he is, truly, the greatest ever.

LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Stock Image

Black cabs stored near forest after financial difficulties

It's not every day that iconic black cabs flock from the cities, but with drivers struggling as a result of the pandemic, hundreds of black cabs found themselves on land near Epping Forest before Christmas.

This came after many drivers struggled to bring in a substantial earning and were forced to give the cabs back to rental firms, creating apparent storage overflows.

According to data obtained by the PA news agency, the number of taxis licensed in the capital dropped from 18,900 on June 7 to 15,000 on November 8 according to Transport for London (TfL).

GB Taxi Services, a north London-based rental company, saw the occupation rate of its fleet of 100 black cabs plummet from 95 per cent before the

crisis to just 10 per cent, despite efforts to encourage drivers to hold on to their vehicles by halving their fees.

This firm was joined by another which also used the field to store the unwanted cabs.

However, this plan backfired as intruders stole catalytic converters from roughly 50 of the cabs.

Simon Georgiou, a director at GB Taxi Services, said: "We got our knees taken away with COVID-19 and loads of vehicles getting handed back. Then this theft happens, which costs in excess of £120,000. We're in a right mess."

TfL said it has provided drivers with "practical advice on a number of issues" during the crisis and insisted that black cabs "remain an integral part of the transport network".

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Murder investigation continues



Nine people remain on bail having been arrested over the murder of Stephen Morrison (pictured), who died after being stabbed in a forest car park off Epping New Road, Epping.

Mr Morrison, who was 30, was found with a stab wound near the Shell service station at about 8pm on June 23 last year. He died in hospital later that evening.

Six men aged between 18 and 29, along with three women between the ages of 18 and 24, are currently on bail.

Detective Chief Inspector Julie Gowen, who is leading the investigation, said: "I would like to thank everyone who has got in contact with us so far. Your help has been invaluable. Twelve people have now been arrested in connection with Stephen's death, three of whom will face no further action in relation to this investigation.

"We are still asking anyone who has information to come forward and speak to us. No matter how small or insignificant you think your information is, please get in contact with us. It could be the key to bringing those responsible for Stephen's death to justice."

Anyone with information can submit it online at mipp.police.uk

Alternatively, information can be given via 101 or Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111.

Vaccination centre up and running at hospital

Hundreds of residents aged 80 and over received their first COVID-19 immunisation at vaccination centres near their homes in December, including at a site in Epping.

The St Margaret's Hospital site was confirmed to be opening a vaccination centre in December.

In line with national guidance and to protect those who are the most at risk first, the vaccine is initially being offered in the community to people aged over

80. GP practices are working through their patient lists and will contact people when it is their turn to be vaccinated.

Dr Jane Halpin, the chief executive of the area's three GP-led Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG), said: "I would like to thank everyone who is continuing to play their part in helping to protect our communities from the virus."

Care home manager raises dementia awareness

A care home manager is on a mission to raise awareness of dementia in the area, after personal and professional experience of the condition.

Originally from Mauritius, Nicolas Kee Mew, who works for Oakland Care, which has many local care homes around Epping, watched his grandfather deal with Alzheimer's disease without the information and support available to people in the UK. Nicolas is the manager of Elsyng House Care Home on Forty Hill, which will welcome residents with dementia when it opens this year.

He said: "People living with dementia can experience a range of symptoms, not just memory loss, and the more people know about it and how to support people to live well with dementia, the better."

Nicolas, 34, arrived in the UK as a teenager to study accountancy and took a part-time job as a cleaner in a care home to support his studies. He found he loved chatting with the residents, so when the home asked him if he wanted to be a carer instead, he jumped at the chance. After finishing his degree, he could focus on his care career full-time. He became a home manager at the age of just 30, and in 2017 he was named 'Inspiring Dementia Leader' by the National Dementia Care Awards.

Alongside running Elsyng House, Nicolas is completing a Master's degree in dementia studies and has recently raised £700 for Alzheimer's Research by completing a half-marathon, just eight months after having coronavirus.



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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Scout hut transformed thanks to fundraising efforts

After more than ten years of saving essential funds to improve its Scout hut, 1st Theydon Garnon Scout hut's refurbishment works are finally underway.

Thanks to various fundraising efforts, this much-loved Scout hut has been transformed on the inside with up-to-date windows, a modernised main hall, office space and kitchen area, as well as new toilet facilities.

Owing to COVID-19 restrictions, the works were delayed slightly, but the next phase of the refurbishment will be a roof replacement with hopes of completion by early next year.

1st Theydon Garnon Scout Group has been making a difference to the lives of residents since 1966. The hut has been in constant use for more than 60 years. It serves as not just a Scout hut, but has several other

clubs and community uses too, including Brownies, dance classes and a polling station.

Toby Kinsey, chair of the executive committee that oversees 1st Theydon Garnon Scout Group, was delighted with the progress of the works so far.

He said: "We are keen to use this building as a community space, as well as a Scout hut, as interacting with the community is what Scouts is all about; it's something that's very important to us."

Contractors Gillard & Sons Ltd have provided the majority of the building work, and community supporters have made generous contributions through various fundraising methods.

You can donate by visiting www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/1st-theydon-garnon-scout-group?utm_term=awq6xw6Vv



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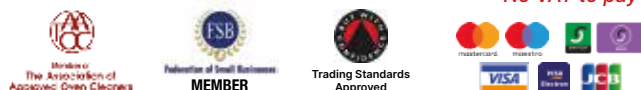
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Walk raises almost £1,000 for hospice



Photo credit: Everything Epping Forest

Sixty walkers took part in a forest walk to support St Francis Hospice and raised nearly £1,000 for the cause.

Along with raffle tickets sold, adult walkers paid £10 each to boost the amount raised, which was a total of £985.85.

Epping Forest MP Dame Eleanor Laing joined the walkers, who set off from St Mary's Church Hall in Theydon Bois. Walkers walked up Coppice Row and into Epping Forest before returning to the church hall for refreshments, including mince pies.

Dame Eleanor MP said: "I was delighted to join the walkers, to get out into our beautiful Epping Forest and support such a valuable local charity that does so much good work which is appreciated by many local people."

The Christmas Charity Walk was organised by Drew and Son independent family funeral directors.

Steve Drew said: "A feel-good charity forest walk is definitely something people needed given the past months of lockdown."

"St Francis Hospice is a dedicated and professional organisation that works hard day in and day out, so it is good to help raise funds for the charity."

He added: "Drew and Son would like to thank everyone who participated."

St Clare Hospice receives £25,000

St Clare Hospice has received £25,000 from the Lloyd's Market Charity Awards 2020, thanks to a nomination by Alan Higgins from Theydon Bois. Alan's wife, Heather, was cared for by the Hospice, after being diagnosed with terminal cancer.

Alan said: "The support received from St Clare Hospice, at one of the most difficult times in our lives,

was transformative. I had no idea how much a hospice could do, or the breadth of support they provide."

St Clare Hospice's director of income generation, Rosie Knowles, commented on the win.

She said: "We are so grateful to the Lloyd's Charities Trust, and to Alan for his nomination. £25,000 is a huge amount for a small charity like St Clare Hospice. This incredible team of nurses and healthcare assistants provide vital personal care to people at the end of their lives, in their own homes. The care makes such a difference to families in need."

Family-run business gets a visit from Epping Forest MP

As part of the annual Small Business Saturday Initiative, Epping Forest MP Dame Eleanor Laing, has been showing her support for small businesses.

Small Business Saturday highlights small businesses and encourages consumers to 'shop local' and support businesses within their communities.

Dame Eleanor MP visited family-run Quality and Excellence Butchers, which has been operating in Theydon Bois since 1996. As well as being a traditional butcher's shop, it sells a wide range of vegetables and cheeses. It is well known in the area for its award-winning pies.


Now the business sells Essex wine, thanks to its new alcohol licence, from New Hall Vineyard at Purleigh, near Chelmsford.

Dame Eleanor MP said: "The granting of an alcohol licence for Quality and Excellence Butchers is a great boost for the shop, and I was pleased to hear that its range of Essex wines are already proving popular with customers."




"A vast number of local businesses have suffered terribly over the past nine months during the COVID-19 pandemic and it is more important now than ever for us all to 'shop local'."

"Small businesses are the backbone of our economy and we do not underestimate how challenging 2020 was for them all."





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GARDENING

Carnation

JANUARY BIRTH FLOWER
OF THE MONTH:

If you were born in January, then your birth flower is the delicately scented and long-lasting carnation. Commonly gifted on Mother's Day, carnations are one of the easiest flower varieties to care for.

WHAT DOES A CARNATION SYMBOLISE?

Carnations come in many shades, and each colour has a different meaning:

- > **LIGHT RED** carnations symbolise admiration
- > **DARK RED** carnations represent deep love and affection
- > **WHITE** carnations are used to convey purity and luck
- > **PINK** carnations are used to show gratitude as well as to remember the deceased
- > **YELLOW** carnations convey disappointment and rejection
- > **PURPLE** carnations stand for unpredictability

WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOUR PERSONALITY?

If your birth flower is the carnation, you are said to be fiercely loyal and have unrivalled love for your family and friends. You are also strongly motivated and will work hard to gain a position of power in your career.

HOW CAN I GROW CARNATIONS?

Carnations are relatively easy to grow, although they do need between four and six hours of direct sunlight a day. For best results, plant in drained soil that is slightly alkaline and fertilise regularly. Tall varieties may need support to hold up their stems as they grow. You can grow carnations in flower beds or in containers such as pots.

DO CARNATIONS COME BACK YEAR AFTER YEAR?

Carnations come in annual, biennial and perennial types, so depending on the amount of space you have, you are guaranteed to be able to find a variety to fit your garden.

Perennial carnation seeds should be planted in late autumn to early spring and annual carnation seeds can be sown directly in the ground from April to May or in shelter from as early as March.



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TURNER AND HOCH

Clumsy, slobbering and probably quite smelly too, it's no wonder that Tom Hanks' detective character, Scott Turner, is reluctant to take on a canine as a companion. Played by Beasley the French Mastiff, Hooch becomes an integral part of Turner's criminal-catching team, winning over the cynical cop's heart in the process.

BABE

The eponymous piglet in one of the most beloved children's tales, Babe single-trotteredly transformed our perception of the humble hog. Proving to be as useful as his best friend Fly, the sheepherding collie, the sweet little piglet proves to have more heart, courage and kindness than any of his human counterparts. Oink oink.

SHADOWFAX

Though there were many weird and wondrous creatures in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, it is surely Shadowfax, Gandalf's trusty steed, who is the most desirable. A majestic and wild white beauty, Tolkien's creation refuses to be bridled, carrying only the wise old wizard on his back. He is surely the bravest bronco we would all love to have in our lives.

UGGIE

If silent French comedy *The Artist* was the unexpected hit of the 2011 film season, then surely Uggie, the flick's beloved Jack Russell, was its star. Rescued from a dog pound by animal trainer Omar Von Muller, the adorable and highly intelligent Uggie became an overnight sensation, winning the Palm Dog Award at the Cannes Film Festival. Though Uggie retired the following year and sadly passed away in 2015, his legacy will forever live on in this Oscar-winning masterpiece.



Photo credit: nerdsandbeyond.com, imdb.com, youtube.com, canyon-news.com



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VOICE CHANGER: It does what it says on the tin – in one instance you're an alien, the next a robot, or a bee, or a ghost. Amaze your mates with the sort of vocal dexterity previously only seen on a Sam Smith album track.



BUBBLE WRAP: Let's be honest, there are very few things those tech bods haven't tried to replicate in phone form, and the satisfaction of bubble wrap is the latest to come to the fore, with an effortless, screen-tapping satisfying few minutes to be had by all.



UGLY CAMERA: As we're all so charismatic, intelligent, funny and, most importantly, good looking, it's good to see things from the other side from time to time, so why not install the Ugly Camera to layer a selection of slightly unusual filters over your otherwise gorgeous demeanour.



GOOGLE OPINION REWARDS: Another cool product from that little silicon valley start-up – this Android app periodically asks you questions regarding research projects, the answers to which earn you credits that can be redeemed in the Google Play Store. A decent way to increase your phone's capabilities without spending a penny.



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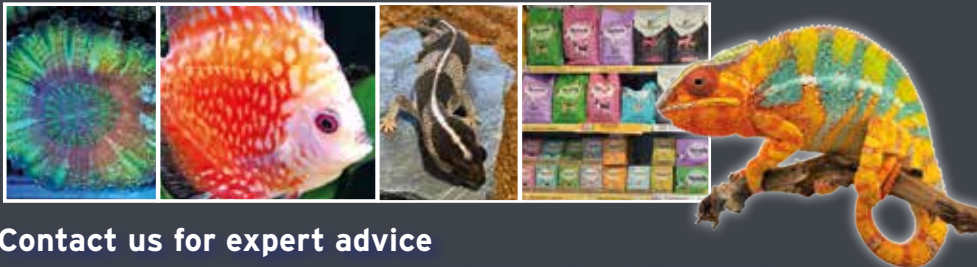


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Isn't it funny, how a bear likes honey?



On January 18, 1882, A. A. Milne, the creator of Winnie the Pooh, a character cherished by children and adults alike, was born. To celebrate this skilled storyteller, January 18 has become known as National Winnie the Pooh Day.

As well as being fun to read, these iconic stories offer some important life lessons that resonate just as well today as they did back then.

"What day is it?" said Pooh. "It's today," said Piglet. "My favourite day," responded Pooh.

As well as teaching the importance of seizing the day, this sweet correspondence between Pooh and Piglet helps to promote resilience and encourages children to put aside their fears and do things anyway.



"Hallo!" said Tigger. "I've found somebody just like me. I thought I was the only one of them."

When children are as young as two, they start to notice that people are different, so it is important that they learn to recognise and celebrate these differences, both in themselves and in others.

"A little consideration, a little thought for others, makes all the difference." (Eeyore)

Although known for being gloomy and depressed, Eeyore does sometimes give out little nuggets of wisdom, such as the advice above. Emotional literacy is crucial in your child's development and this life lesson teaches them the importance of being kind to others.



"Pooh!" whispered Piglet. "Yes, Piglet?" "Nothing," said Piglet. "I just wanted to be sure of you."

A life lesson that most adults today could benefit from, the act of being present in your children's lives, away from the distraction of work and technology, is sometimes all they need to feel loved and connected to you.



KIDS

Photo credit: catwalker/Shutterstock.com

TRAINS, PLANES & starry-lit fields

QUIRKY OVERNIGHT STAYS TO ENJOY IN THE UK

BOATHOUSES

Not quite boasting the seclusion of a desert island, a number of former boathouses and pumping rooms have, however, been converted into cool little overnight abodes. The Whitby Boathouse, sleeping two, features a narrow bridge separating guests from the not-so-distant 'mainland'.

BUSES

With original features such as iconic winding stairs, original seats and even the steering wheel handily in place in what is now a downstairs bathroom, converted double-decker buses give travel fanatics the ultimate experience... just don't expect it to stick to the timetable (not that it ever did).

PLANES

Fancy the thrill of flight without the faff of the airport? Look no further than The Jet Star. Tucked away in Redberth, Pembrokeshire, this little-known Welsh wonder was originally a first-class private plane from the 1970s. Grounded, it now sleeps up to four people – you don't even need to remember your passport.

FIELDS

Wherever you wish to roam in the British countryside, you are sure to be within reach of a traditional shepherd's hut. Originally an essential place for farmhands to seek refuge from inclement weather, the advent of the Airbnb revolution has seen them transformed into cosy and sometimes luxurious boltholes – the ideal way to bask in the beauty of nature without having to pitch a tent.

TRAINS

Finally, for train fanatics, how about staying in a converted restaurant carriage? Rather than slumming it on bumpy rails, this static wagon, positioned overlooking the Rother Valley Railway in Kent, provides more room than you'd expect, and dates right the way back to use during the Second World War.



Photo credit: we.lavwhitby.com, coolstays.com, appletretrats.co.uk, coolcamping.com, railwayretrats.co.uk



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The PROPERTY Bug?

HOW COVID-19 HAS TRANSFORMED NOT JUST OUR LIVES, BUT THE PROPERTY MARKET TOO

While so much of our COVID-19 focus in 2020 was on health, employment and income, the pandemic's impact on the property market has been extreme, with further fluctuations due over the next few months as the industry reflects the variable conditions we find ourselves living under.

Certainly in the initial phase of lockdown, the immediate effect on our bricks and mortar was a rush of

home improvements akin to watching a series of *DIY SOS* back to back.

Sure enough, the Land Registry – generally considered the best guide to house prices in the UK – published September figures that indicated a 1.7 per cent month-on-month rise and a 4.7 per cent increase year on year.

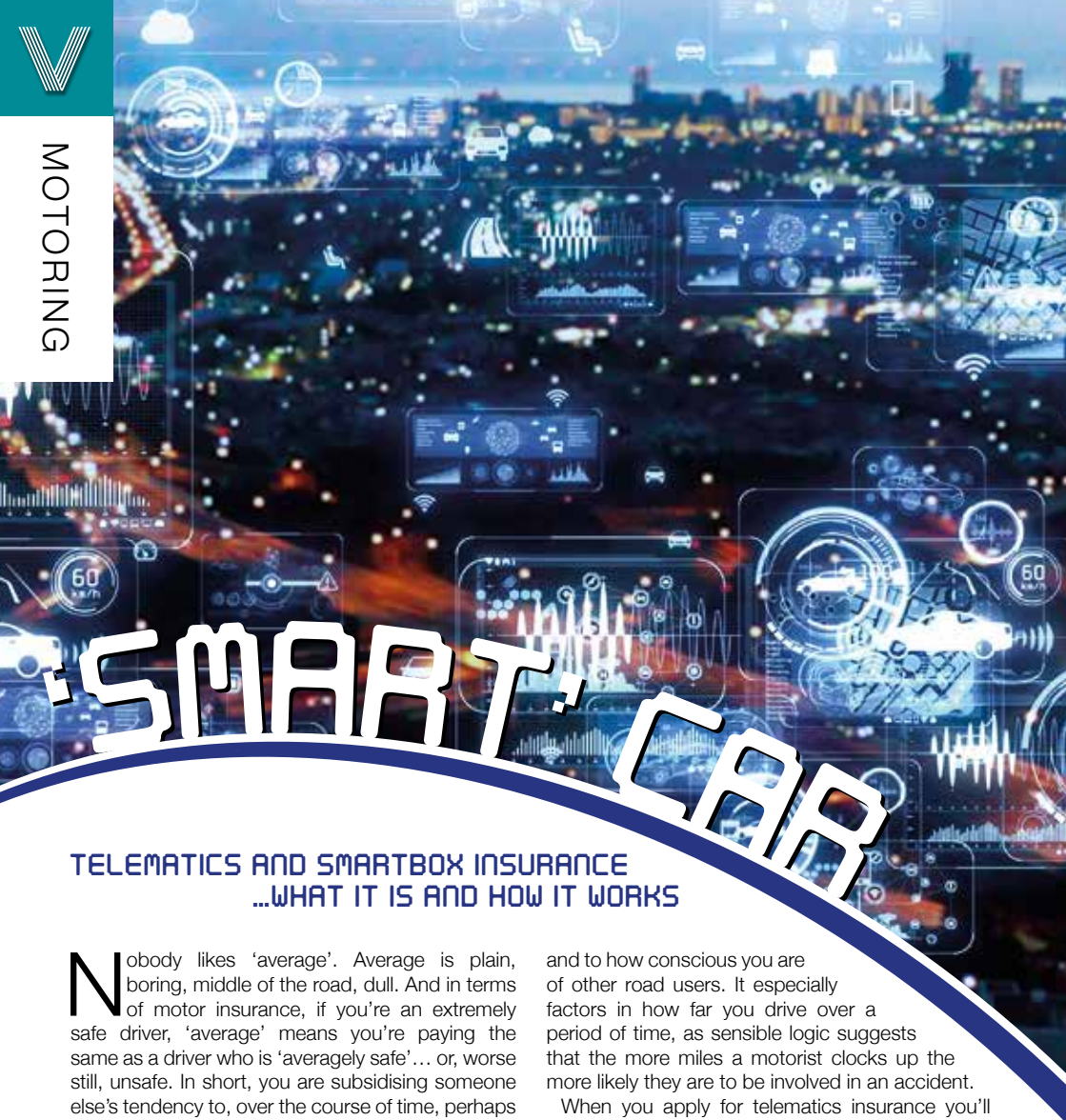
For many, then, it's been reassuring that, through a time of great social insecurity, homeowners can at least take comfort from the increasing value of where they reside, with the stamp duty break offering a further incentive for prospective buyers to go in with higher bids.

And at the same time, renters have enjoyed increased protection as far as tenancy conditions go, although the market finds itself diverging between an increase in rentals in affluent areas and fewer new instructions in the bottom portion of the market. Research also shows that city centre lets are down as much as 15

per cent as some urban business areas become ghost towns.

It all leaves us speculating whether or not the effects of COVID-19 on the sales and lettings market are here to stay. Certainly, experts believe the recession the economy is suffering can only have one effect on the housing market, and that's for it to follow suit into decline. And yet, effects should be lessened given that a lack of overseas travel means the pound continues to be invested close to home.





TELEMATICS AND SMARTBOX INSURANCE ...WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT WORKS

Nobody likes 'average'. Average is plain, boring, middle of the road, dull. And in terms of motor insurance, if you're an extremely safe driver, 'average' means you're paying the same as a driver who is 'averagely safe'... or, worse still, unsafe. In short, you are subsidising someone else's tendency to, over the course of time, perhaps break the speed limit, undertake, be aggressive, and all the other things that lead to accidents which, in turn, lead to car insurance costs being as high as they are.

That's where telematics insurance comes in. Using the technology found in a smartbox (actually just a small device that plugs in below your steering wheel), this clever piece of tech will measure how well you drive.

In other words, the days of having to pay premiums based on the 'average driver' are no more – what you pay is directly related to how safely you take corners, to how much you respect road conditions

and to how conscious you are of other road users. It especially factors in how far you drive over a period of time, as sensible logic suggests that the more miles a motorist clocks up the more likely they are to be involved in an accident.

When you apply for telematics insurance you'll have to provide information regarding where your car is parked, when in the day you usually drive, the types of roads you use and approximate annual mileage. All being well, you'll be rewarded with an initial monthly cost that's much lower than standard insurance.

You'll encounter few problems if you stick to your promise of driving safely and stay within your mileage quota.

However, be warned: from hard braking to speeding to driving too many miles, telematics insurance may well cost you more in the long run if you fail to keep your motoring promises.

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Remembering

DIEGO

*A hero of the game, a villain to himself*

The gap between hero and villain has perhaps never been better exemplified – in sporting terms, at least – than through the life of Diego Maradona.

When the Argentine departed us on November 25, football, sport and the world as a cultural sponge lost someone whose notoriety was as decorated as his talent.

In the space of four short minutes in the Estadio Azteca, in Mexico City, on June 22, 1986, Maradona showed the two sides of his character in the sort of perfect juxtaposition usually reserved for a Shakespeare play. The tragedy came first – that ‘hand of God’ moment that we all know, even if few of us, now, here in 2021, actually saw it happen live.

And then, the comedy, even if it was again England’s footballers being derided, as a dancing, pirouetting, sauntering, bulldozing run through the Three Lions’ defence rubbed salt in our wounds,

while offering up a perfect apology to that same deity for the forward’s earlier misdemeanour.

When that higher force claimed the 60-year-old in November, football fans the world over began to ponder again the best ever – Puskás, Pelé, Ronaldo, Messi. Of course, Maradona would never enter into such debate.

He may have led an average Argentina side to World Cup glory in 1986, and an even flatter version of themselves to the final four years later. He may have performed miracles in guiding unfancied, unfashionable Napoli to Serie A success in Italy. And in later life as drugs, gangs, sex workers and other lurid temptations possessed a man whose only passion, really and truly, was to kick a ball, he may have lost sight entirely of those dusty, poverty-stricken streets in Buenos Aires where he grew up.

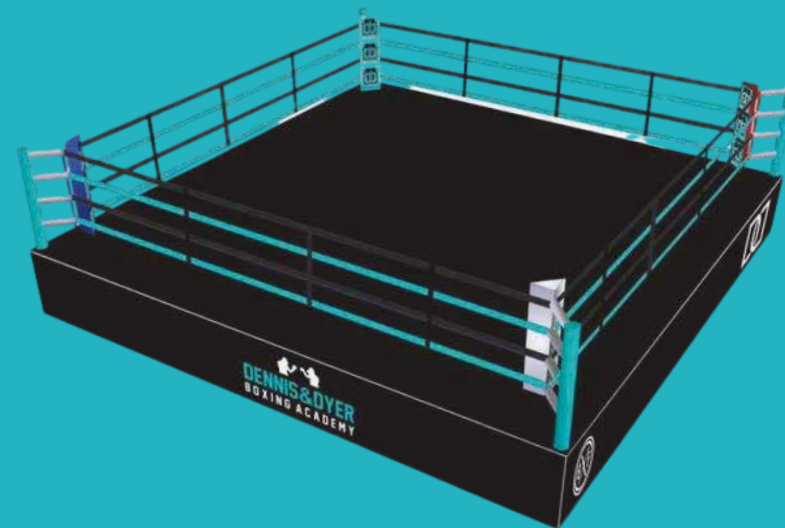
And yet, through it all he stayed true to himself: “I am black and white... I’ll never be grey.”

Photo credit: Carlo Fumagalli/AP/Shutterstock



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Remembering RAY

Bidding farewell to former Liverpool, Spurs and England keeper Ray Clemence

There's something unique about goalkeepers – they have spirit, longevity and a sense of bravery that far outweighs any other player on the pitch. It's also commonly known that they're rather daft... how else can you explain wanting to have footballs fired your way at more than 100mph?

And yet, Ray Clemence was as close to normal as you could get. The former England stopper, who passed away on November 15 at the age of 72, was a scholar of the game – his MBE for services to football bore evidence to that. In more than 1,000 career appearances, more than half of which were for Liverpool in a golden era for the club, he clinched five league titles, three European Cups, three UEFA Cups, two FA Cups and a host of other trophies.

He took his knowledge, guile, influence and experience to the next level with management and coaching projects – he oversaw Barnet as joint manager and tutored the keepers at Tottenham as part of the club's coaching staff.

Yet it was as the national team's goalkeeping coach under Glenn Hoddle, Kevin Keegan, Sven-Göran Eriksson, Steve McClaren and Roy Hodgson that he truly excelled, with multiple World Cup and European Championship campaigns.

Also employed as the FA's Head of Development, Clemence's involvement with the game continued right the way through to his death, and most recently he had been back working with Spurs.

An initial prostate cancer diagnosis arrived in 2005. He lived with that for 15 years, but finally succumbed to the illness in November. His passing was marked by a flood of tributes, as one of the greatest-ever England goalkeepers hung up his gloves for the final time.

Photo credit: Colorsport/Shutterstock



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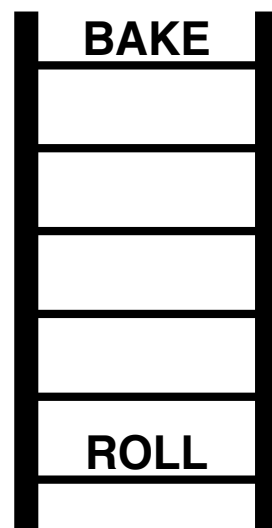
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Y	P	T	L	O	E	I	T	H	E	A	E	T	I	O
H	S	T	H	T	N	B	P	D	H	R	N	I	Y	O
O	G	O	D	L	L	U	B	G	A	J	D	A	U	K
U	S	R	E	O	S	R	R	R	M	N	O	N	S	W
N	A	T	C	B	E	A	G	L	E	H	E	R	G	L
D	U	S	J	O	N	A	N	G	I	G	S	E	B	N

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Nepal's flag is the only flag in the world that doesn't have four sides
- ▶ Purple is the most uncommon colour to be used on flags
- ▶ The flag of Belize uses more colours than any other flag
- ▶ Hawaii's state flag contains the Union Jack. It is the only US state flag to include a foreign country's national flag
- ▶ There are 12 stars on the flag of Europe
- ▶ When the Queen goes to Parliament, the Royal Standard is flown from Victoria Tower
- ▶ Denmark has the oldest flag in the world, designed in 1219 and unchanged since
- ▶ South Sudan has the newest flag in the world
- ▶ The study of flags is called vexillology

WORD LADDER



THE AIM: Change the word at the top of the ladder one letter at a time to make the word at the bottom.

HOW TO: Change one letter on each step to make a new word. By the time you reach the end, you should have created the new word.

DO NOT rearrange the order of the letters.

TIP: There is usually more than one way to solve this puzzle.



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