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MARK WRIGHT MAKING
HIS FOOTBALL COMEBACK

Valentine's Day traditions
FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Alisan
HAMMOND

The TV presenter emerging into the spotlight



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VISIONEppingTheydon | Edition 15



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Editor's notes...



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

I hope everyone is coping with this rather dreary start to the new year. It's not the start to 2021 we had in mind, but with the vaccine roll-out hopefully the end of this lockdown will soon be in sight.

Having said that, we can't just rely on our fabulous NHS to fix all our problems - the worst thing we can do once the COVID-19 figures begin to fall is live our lives as if the pandemic never happened. We must continue to keep our distance and wear our masks until we are fully in the clear.

In the meantime, it's easy to go stir-crazy. My lockdown philosophy has been that, if I'm going to be living similar days over and over, I want them to be productive ones. That's why setting up a routine and structuring my days has been pivotal, and I suggest that anyone struggling at the moment tries to do this themselves.

I'm having more Zoom meetings than ever before; I've started going for longer walks and I bought a bike from a local business to add something else to the mix. Little things like these can make a huge difference.

I hope you enjoy our latest edition. If you have any queries or contributions you would like to share with us, please get in touch. And as always, stay safe.

Brett Shohet

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CONTRIBUTORS | Tabatha Fabray, Kathy Miller

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



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The WRIGHT STUFF

HOW ONE OF OUR MOST ADORED REALITY TV STARS WENT BACK TO HIS ROOTS...
GRASSROOTS

It's a fantasy that has crossed the mind of every grown man in his late twenties who has a normal, run-of-the-mill, everyday job. It's the thought, 'Perhaps it's not too late to realise every boy's dream and become a professional footballer; perhaps I can still make it.'

That reality TV star and Heart DJ Mark Wright still held those very unfulfilled ambitions is perhaps less of a surprise. He was, after all, on the books of West Ham, Arsenal and Tottenham as a youngster. When released at the age of 18, the left back was picked up by Southend United, but drifted into non-league football as the distractions of nightclub promotion and reality TV came about.

After spells in then Conference with Grays Athletic, Crawley Town and Rushden & Diamonds, the charismatic Essex-born star joined the cast of *TOWIE*. One of the original cast members, he was only with the ITV show a year, but the die was cast, and from *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!* to *Take Me Out: The Gossip*, through presenting jobs on *Mark Wright's Hollywood Nights*, *The Bachelor* and *This Morning*, the husband to actress Michelle Keegan has been a permanent fixture on our screens for a decade. And when adding in his Heart radio show duties – a gig he's had since 2012 – it's any wonder he has any spare time...

But what about those football ambitions?

"I've never got over the fact I didn't make it in the game," he says. "And despite everything I achieved elsewhere, being a professional footballer now would top it all."

In October last year, Wright set out to make one final crack at the game he loves, and a call to John Yems, his former manager at Crawley, saw the now 33-year-old invited to West Sussex to train with the club.

The presenter describes the three months that followed as a whirlwind, combining media duties with a punishing physical routine designed to get his fitness up to League Two standards. His every move has been followed by a BBC film crew, whose iPlayer series *Mark Wright: The Last Chance* has proved a huge hit.

"I never had any expectations, but I always knew I'd give it everything I had, and the welcome I got at the club was tremendous from day one."

In December, Wright's dreams moved a step closer – he signed a contract until the end of the season. And being named on the bench for Crawley's FA Cup fourth round clash with Leeds United on January 10, just two days after his brother Josh signed for the club, set up the most impossible of scenarios. Could he make the comeback of all comebacks?

Crawley strode 3–0 up against their star-studded Premier League visitors, on their way to grabbing all the weekend's giant-killing headlines. A perfect day could only be topped by a call to the bench for a substitution. And so it happened... he may have only come on in the 91st minute, he may have only touched the ball three times, but a dream was realised on that cold Sunday lunchtime at the People's Pension Stadium.

And it doesn't stop there – the Reds are eyeing up promotion from League Two and there will be no resting on his laurels for Mark Wright... a reality star in every sense.

THE WORLD AROUND US

Part 4

In the last part of our environmental series, we look at the final key driver in the health and well-being of the planet: global warming.

The phrase 'climate change denier' has become commonplace in conversations about the gradual warming of the planet and the causes of this. Scientific opinion points to humans and our explosion of population, industry and consumption as the real effects of the Earth increasing in temperature by 1° Celsius since 1880.

It doesn't sound a lot, does it? And yet, a one-to two-degree drop was all it took to plunge the Earth into the Little Ice Age in the Medieval Period.

The platform climate change deniers have generally seen their voices amplified well beyond what they should be. The results of various studies often level out at around the same rate – namely that only two or three people out of 100 will dispute the scientists' theory that humans are the cause of global warming.

With such a large accepting consensus, the drive to combat this gradual warming of Earth has

accelerated in recent years. Equipping ourselves with data, while ensuring we have the ability to interpret it, is vital.

Temperatures across a timespan of a year, five years or even a decade might rise four degrees in one region and drop six in another (which is why anomalies occur, such as Greenland's Jakobshavn Glacier actually increasing in mass since 2016), but overall, there is trouble ahead.

The next, vital step the Earth faces is a willingness of its people to do something about it. For all the UK's action over the past couple of decades, for all the destruction global warming has already contributed, such as coastal erosion, moorlands fires, floods and more, we contribute just 1.2 per cent of the world's total emissions.

It means that, as if it were ever in doubt, a global solution requires a true global investment of action from the planet's inhabitants.



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CLEANSE ME...



Whether you are looking to remove stubborn mascara, thick sun cream or the dirt and impurities that your skin has picked up over the course of the day, a cleansing balm should be your go-to product, providing a delicate, yet effective, way to clean the skin on your face.

WHAT IS A CLEANSING BALM?

Cleansing balms are creamy and rich cleansers that gently remove any make-up, dirt and impurities from your skin without leaving it stripped of its natural oils. Unlike oil cleansers, which can be a bit messy, cleansing balms deliver oils to melt make-up, in a solidified form, meaning portion control is easier.

Furthermore, cleansing balms can be used around the eyes to remove make-up, as they are made with natural ingredients and are therefore suitable for this delicate area.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN BENEFITS?

- > They provide a deep cleanse which can help to prevent breakouts
- > They hydrate your skin
- > They are suitable for sensitive skin

- > They provide quick results
- > Many contain antioxidants
- > They are high in oils, meaning you can skip daily moisturiser if you wish

HOW TO USE CLEANSING BALMS

1. Take a 10p-sized amount of balm and warm it between your fingers
2. Apply to dry skin in circular motions
3. Once the make-up starts to break down, add warm water to your skin
4. Continue to massage
5. Remove with a warm, damp cloth or muslin

WHAT ARE THE BEST CLEANSING BALMS?

- > Clinique Take The Day Off Balm – best all-rounder, suitable for all skin types
- > ESPA Nourishing Cleansing Balm – best for dry skin
- > Pond's Makeup Remover Cleansing Balm – best for sensitive skin
- > Slaii Makeup Melting Butter Cleanser by Drunk Elephant – best for removing waterproof make-up
- > Emma Hardie Moringa Cleansing Balm – best for ageing skin

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dress to impress
pierre cardin

Remembering and reflecting on the life of designer Pierre Cardin, who passed away in December.

Mention the name Pierre Cardin and a modern generation of fashionistas will most likely point you to a range of smart casual shirts and t-shirts adorning the racks of retailers over the UK, from House of Fraser to TK Maxx. And yet, to think that the French clothing label should end up in such safe, formal surrounds is to besmirch the work of a designer who fairly revolutionised high-street style in the Swinging Sixties.

Cardin passed away at the end of December having cast an artistic pencil over the fashion world for more than seven decades. His passing was met with genuine sadness by a list of admirers and proteges, including designer Jean-Paul Gaultier, but his legacy is one to be admired and celebrated.

For starters, Cardin was one of the first designers to display a logo on garments, and a self-titled brand logo at that. The idea of giving a piece of clothing its own status well beyond the cuts of cotton or cashmere was something the industry had not seen before, and it led to a host of other licensed products emerging from the Paris-based fashion house, from pens to perfumes, sunglasses to food.

Cardin's idea was to bring ready-to-wear, premium-looking clothes to the everyday market, and at a price that meant people could indulge in the image and grandiosity of the catwalk.

Always looking to be different, he revolutionised design with sharp edges, outlandish curves and stylings that border on architecture as much as clothing. Inspiring so many, he dressed everyone from Bardot to The Beatles, all the while satisfying his own desire to be different.

What we see in so much of today's collections is more than a little influenced by a humble Frenchman with big ideas, Pierre Cardin.

Photo credit: catwalker/Shutterstock.com



SKN..ESTI By Parveen

Parveen has over 11 years experience as a medical aesthetician and working in high-end medical clinics. During her years of practice, Parveen has developed her expertise in helping clients to improve their skin health, including ex-cancer patients and clients who suffer from conditions such as pigmentation and Polycystic Ovary Syndrome.

The skin is the largest organ of the human body. Our skin is constantly exposed daily to many free radicals that can damage our skins overall health. So, it is imperative we take care of skin concerns such as: Acne, Pigmentation, Ageing, Post cancer care, psoriasis, eczema, or general skin health.

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NO MEAN FOOT

Why our humble feet may be the lynchpin to overall body health alignment

Never underestimate just how fantastic our feet are – sure, they will get you around the house, to work, or down to the pub, but more than that, they are the lynchpin to overall body health too.

Consider 10 toes, more than 50 bones (that's around a quarter of all those in the human body), and more than 60 joints, plus more than 200 muscles, tendons and ligaments, and it's clear why your feet are the cornerstone to overall body health.

Mobility

In the most obvious sense, your feet are the tools that move you around. Essential for almost every form of exercise, health and well-being, which begins at ground level.

Back and joint issues

The way we walk ultimately affects the way the rest of our body functions, and this is no truer than in people who suffer with flat feet. This condition causes a misalignment with the ankle, which can move up through the body into the knees, hips, spine, neck and other joints.

Balance

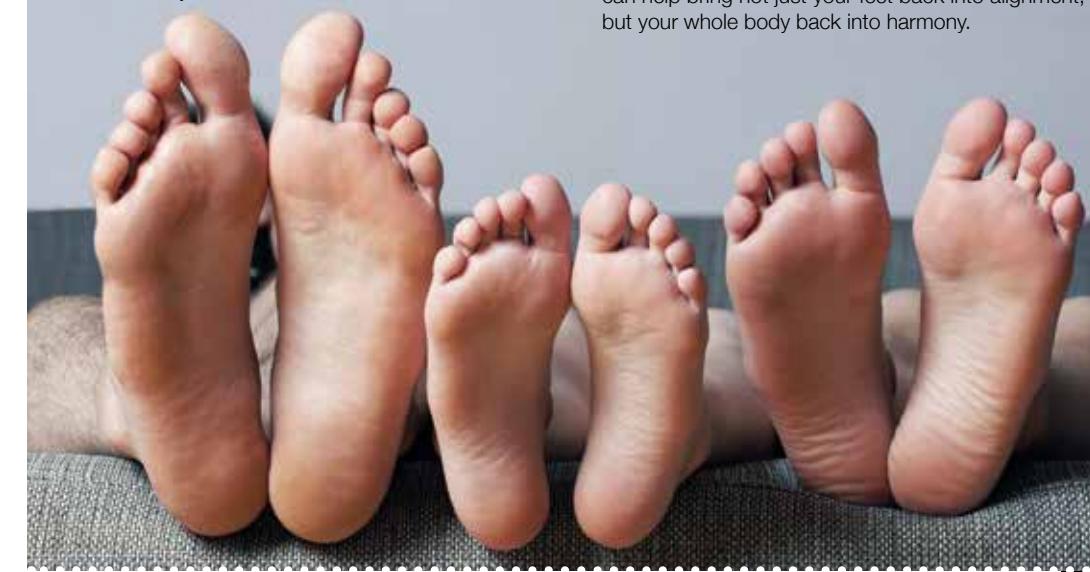
Balance in the human body is finely configured so that any imbalances can have negative effects on general health, from wobbly through to vertigo-type symptoms.

Organs

In the most extreme cases, when the mesh of nerves and touch receptors in our feet are blocked, insufficient messages can send disruptive adjustments through the body, including into our organs.

It is for these reasons that looking after our feet is pivotal to good health. Sure, get the pumice stone out in the bath, but more than that, ensure you are wearing properly fitting shoes. That might mean accepting that narrow styles are not going to work for your wide feet, or that perhaps you will need to buy flip-flops with a little more support.

Also consider a whole variety of foot exercises that can help bring not just your feet back into alignment, but your whole body back into harmony.



THE REAL PiLL

Placenta encapsulation: is it gross or full of goodness?

We all know the value of a mother's placenta. A rich, nutritious, nourishing source of life that feeds, grows and sustains a baby in the womb. As the miracles of nature go, it's right up there with the best of them – in fact, we wouldn't be here without the placenta.

It follows, then, that some mothers are loath to let the placenta go, post-birth. From using it to make jewellery or picture frames to donating it to medical science, through to something rather more symbolic such as planting it, there are a number of ways to respect this incredible organ.

Of course, given its goodness, reingesting the placenta makes perfect sense too – welcome to the world of placenta encapsulation.

In this process, the placenta is put into ice then sent off to a lab where it's made into pill form. Many mums feel a physical and emotional boost when consuming their placenta as a daily supplement,

saying that it helps with general well-being, limits the ups and downs associated with those immediate weeks and months after giving birth, gives an energy boost, and helps with breast milk production.

And that all makes sense – the placenta is loaded with vitamins B6 and B12, plus iron and reproductive hormones that drop after birth. To repackaging those and putting them back into the body makes sense.

However, there are risks. There aren't any standards in place for the process, meaning poorly encapsulated pills may harbour bacteria. There are also environmental toxins such as heavy metals – like lead and arsenic – that accumulate in the placenta, while a theory exists that the progesterone present in the pills may actually slow down milk supply.

Placenta encapsulation remains one for the scientists to unpick, but in the meantime it continues to increase in popularity.



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Supermarket Savings

THE BEST TIMES OF THE DAY TO HEAD TO OUT TO GRAB A BARGAIN

As a percentage of our annual food bill, saving 50p on a carton of fresh soup, or picking up a pack of crumpets for an amount taken care of with just a handful of coppers, doesn't make any real imprint. And yet, that unique feeling of satisfaction that only comes with landing a bargain is something we all crave, and knowing when's best to land sneaky supermarket snips has become a fine art.

While different food retailers have slightly different rules, there are a few general trends you can follow:

The teatime tease

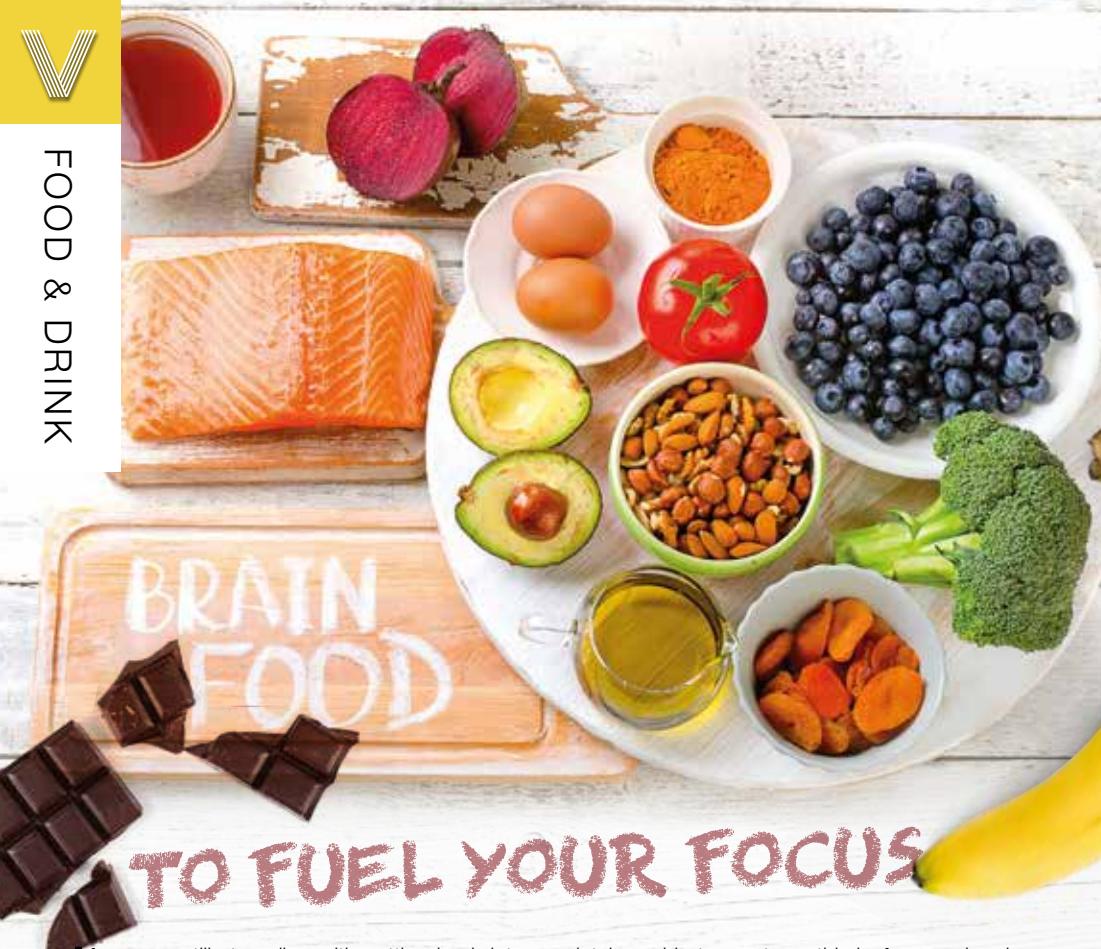
You can expect up to 50 per cent off as soon as early evening comes around. The target market is people grabbing a bargain for their dinner, or who are happy to consume something later in the week that's past its best before or use-by date.

Closing time

In the last minutes up until closing time, prices fall like water cascading out the bottom of a sieve. The major supermarkets will discount up to 90 per cent in order to save on the cost of waste disposal.

The final freebie

And for those of you who shop at the more salubrious stores – this is common for Waitrose and M&S – it's not unknown for staff to approach customers at the till to offer free items, usually immediate perishables such as fruit, veg, dairy and cheese. Yum.



TO FUEL YOUR FOCUS

If you are still struggling with getting back into a routine and could do with some help improving your concentration levels, these foods will boost your brain power and motivate your memory.

SUPER SALMON: Providing a concentrated source of omega-3 fatty acids, salmon can help to rebuild your brain cells, slow cognitive decline and strengthen the synapses in your brain that are responsible for memory.

BEETROOT: A shockingly underused root vegetable, beetroot contains nitrates that increase blood flow and oxygen to the brain, resulting in improved mental performance.

BANANAS: Cheap, filling and high in potassium, bananas are the ideal afternoon pick-me-up for times when your concentration levels are waning.

SPINACH: Spinach is known as the ultimate brain food and it's not hard to see why. Rich in folate,

lutein and beta-carotene, this leafy green has been linked to the prevention of dementia. Aim to eat three portions a week for optimal results.

AVOCADOS: Avocados are a bit like Marmite – you either love them or you hate them. Fortunately for those who fall into the former category, this fruit can fire up your brain cells and keep hunger pangs at bay.

NUTS: The best thing about nuts is that you only need a very small serving to enjoy all the benefits of this super snack. Both nuts and seeds are great sources of vitamin E, which is associated with a reduction in cognitive decline. Plus, they contain essential oils and amino acids that help you focus.

DARK CHOCOLATE: Because we all deserve a treat from time to time, dark chocolate makes a great alternative to coffee in the morning, having the ability to boost your serotonin and endorphin levels which are both associated with increased concentration.



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BYE BYE BOOZE

If you enjoyed an alcohol-free January, here are some alternatives to alcohol to try...

BEER

It's that time of year when we reflect on our bad habits and do our best to become healthier, happier and wiser, and if giving up alcohol is your New Year's Resolution, then all is good. Low-booze business is booming, and that means there are plenty of delicious, low-calorie options to help keep you motivated.

SPIRITS

Any designated driver will tell you that the previous offerings from major breweries fell a little flat in the flavour department. But just as burgeoning independent brewers have completely transformed our ale habits, they too have tasked themselves with creating exciting low-alcohol options that don't skimp on that gloriously hoppy flavour. With 'endless session' IPAs, low-alcohol lagers and sobering stouts and sours, craft beer connoisseurs have a raft of options for their refined palates.

WINE

For those lamenting their 5pm gin and tonics or pre-dinner Negronis, there are even more options as teetotallers use distilling alchemy to create potions that offer all the depth and nuance of an expertly concocted spirit with none of the units. There are juniper and bergamot blends that perfectly complement tonic water for that G&T experience, luxurious citrus and herb creations that mimic the dry bitterness of vermouth, and even elegant elixirs containing herbs such as lemon balm and valerian root – ideal as a soporific nightcap for those who would otherwise drink whisky.

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WINE

In the past these underwhelming alternatives have often had their alcohol violently removed, leaving an unsatisfying liquid that would barely satisfy as grape juice. Now, canny cultivators have turned to nature in order to create wines that are naturally lower in alcohol by halting the fermenting process earlier. With red wines this can often lend a natural sweetness, whereas whites have a more delicate profile. The best low-alcohol wines, however, are the ones with a natural fizz, such as Pet Nat, which offer all the celebratory joy of champagne without the hangover.

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DULUX LOOKS TOWARDS SAFE GROUND IN NAMING ITS COLOUR FOR 2021

There's only one contradiction at play as far as Dulux's Colour of the Year goes – namely that in establishing a tone that speaks quietness, calmness, unassuming peace and tranquillity, the paint manufacturer is treading safe ground and not, as the shade's name implies, Brave Ground.

And yet, despite Dulux failing to state what is courageous about this tone, we can at least revel in its ability to encapsulate the mood of the world. It pleads for calm, reflection and philosophical thoughts, and offers a serenity to interiors that is very different from the intention borne out in Pantone's Colour(s) of the Year.

This warm beige shade is one that will work beautifully when matching with light woods, particularly in the bedroom or living room.

Combined with white it reclines elegantly into the

background, and as a flat shade, it can find itself offset by fabrics and furniture that offer depth and detail.

The tones of grey present in Brave Ground are also earthy enough to take interiors away from the overtly beige patterns of the 1970s that often strayed too far in the way of oranges and browns.

Consider also mixing with pastels, or sharpening the edges with blacks and greys, particularly in cushions, throws, curtains or lampshades. Ultimately, Brave Ground is a colour that will bring lightness while offering a knowing nod to dark luxury.

Indeed, perhaps in adopting a shade that is the very epitome of neutrality, perhaps in offering a platform on which we can place our existing belongings as well as bring in new renovations, Dulux is showing itself to be brave after all.



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Understanding

THE DOS AND DON'TS TO ACHIEVING PERFECT UNDERFOOT CONDITIONS

You think splashing the cash on a swanky new length of carpet is the first and last bit of expense you need to worry about, before someone reminds you that carpet without underlay is akin to a new motor without tyres on the wheels.

It's recommended that you change your underlay whenever you change your carpet – after all, years of wear, tear, and no small amount of gravity will have squashed the best life out of it.

New underlay will provide for you a number of things – firmness, bounce, insulation, noise reduction, preservation of your new flooring, as well as reinforcing the feeling that your new piece of carpet is worthy of something you'd find on the way into a film premiere.

Premium underlay will set you back up to £10 per metre square, though perfectly good brands can be picked up for less than half that. It's true to say the higher quality your underlay, the longer it will, in

turn, look after your carpet.

Typical depth is around 10–13mm, with a lower grade on the stairs. You'll also have to consider the tog rating – anything higher than 2.5 tog will insulate nicely, though if you have heated floors then switch back down to a lower tog of around 1.0.

As for the fabric, PU foam is the most common underlay on the market. It offers a soft feeling underfoot, is made from recycled materials and is a good insulator. Other types are made from rubber, sponge rubber and crumb rubber, the latter being made from car tyres. Felt and wool carpet underlay also come well recommended.

And if you're fitting wood or laminate flooring, then consult a specialist who can bring forward a range of hardfloor-specific underlays that are lighter and thinner, and respect what is an intentionally solid top layer.

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PU FOAM



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CRUMB RUBBER



WOOL FELT

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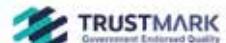
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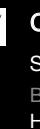
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BETTER SAFE than sorry

Whether you are investing in home security for the first time or you want to upgrade your existing set-up, the below guide will ensure you pick the perfect home security system for your property.

Determine the purpose: The first step in choosing a security system for your home is to determine its primary purpose. There are three types of home security systems: home automation, intruder protection and environmental monitoring.

Home automation is the most advanced option, where all your devices are connected to each other via the internet of things. Intruder protection is designed to protect your home from burglars, and environmental monitoring systems detect anomalies like fire and leaks.

Choose the right components: There are many different home security packages on the market and you need to decide which elements you want in yours to make you and your family feel safe and protected. Popular choices include smart

doorbells, motion cameras, burglar alarms, smart lights and window sensors.

Pick a monitoring system: If your budget allows it, you could invest in round-the-clock call centre monitoring for your home. Your chosen provider will call you if they notice anything strange or to alert you of a natural disaster. Alternatively, you could use DIY monitoring and opt to receive notifications to your phone.

Select a network: Every home security system needs a network to function. You can choose either a wired or a wireless one. Wireless networks are becoming increasingly popular as all they need is a Wi-Fi or cellular connection and they are good to go.

Decide about installation: You can either install your home security system yourself or pay a professional to do it for you. Professionally installed systems tend to be more reliable but will obviously cost you more money than doing it yourself.

The infectious personality of ALISON HAMMOND



The presenter who has chuckled, chortled and guffawed her way through almost two decades on camera... and we're all better off for it.

The Brummie whose laugh-a-minute approach to presenting has won her admirers across the entertainment world... and we include Harrison Ford and Ryan Gosling in that number.

As if proof were needed that Alison Hammond, while always kind, enthusiastic and respectful, does not subscribe to the idea that celebrities and film stars are unreachable demigods not worthy of our time, in a hilarious 2017 interview for *This Morning*, Hammond charmed and bewildered two of Hollywood's finest in a recording that had more than 12 million YouTube views. You could say she upstaged her two guests by laughing them into submission.

Having first appeared on our screens as a contestant in the *Big Brother* house, Hammond is another example of a reality star who has maximised the possibilities out of what is a very simple and short-lived platform.

She has swept her way through a variety of entertainment shows over the past decade, appearing in *Celebrity Fit Club*, *Celebrities Under Pressure*, *Stars in Their Eyes*, *Celebrity Ready Steady Cook* and many, many more; she has been a panellist on *Loose Women*, and made it to the seventh week of *Strictly Come Dancing* when she partnered Aljaž Škorjanec.

"I've always been someone who wants to grab life by the horns and go for a ride," she laughs. "It's very rare that I'll turn down an opportunity, and if I do it's because it's taking me too far from home and being around the people I love, and those are the ones who must always come first."

And Hammond's reputation as a brilliant reporter on *This Morning* has borne fruit in a way she wouldn't have imagined – in the middle of December 2020 it was announced that she and Dermot O'Leary would take over full presenting duties on Fridays from regular incumbents Eamonn Holmes and Ruth Langsford.

The shake-up is further evidence of a nation embracing those down-to-earth personalities who reflect our own thoughts, ideas and sensibilities.

"A long time ago I realised that to get on in the world you just need to be yourself," she says. "I think in the early days of getting TV work there was a temptation to be the person you thought people wanted to see, and when you do that you lose an edge."

"What people see is what they get, but it is all me – an uplifting, fun, sparky person who treats everyone as equals."

Indeed, geographically, Hammond, 46 in February, has stayed true to herself as well. Despite *This Morning* being filmed at Television Centre in White City, the presenter still lives in 'the second city', commuting to the capital for work. "I couldn't ever leave Birmingham behind – it means everything to me, as do the people.

"It's also my son's home, and I want him to grow up a proud Brummie like me... who likes to laugh."

Valentine's traditions AROUND THE WORLD

Love is in the air with these beautiful, and in some cases bizarre, Valentine's Day traditions from around the globe.



SOUTH KOREA: In this country in east Asia, lovers celebrate the day of love on the 14th of every month. May 14 is the "day of rose", June 14 is the "day of kisses", and there is even a "black day" in April when couples eat black noodles together.



PHILIPPINES: Young couples in the Philippines are sponsored by the government to get married as a form of public service. Well, there are worse ways to serve your country.



GHANA: Known as National Chocolate Day, February 14 is used to increase tourism in Ghana, one of the largest cocoa-producing countries in the world.



BULGARIA: A simple yet highly enjoyable tradition, in Bulgaria, couples young and old celebrate their love by sharing a glass of local wine.



WALES: Lovers from Wales celebrate Valentine's Day on January 25, and rather than exchange cards and flowers, they

give their partners handcrafted wooden spoons.



SPAIN: The day of love in Spain falls on October 9 and is known as the feast of Saint Dionysius. On this day, men gift their women a "macadora", which is a marzipan figurine.



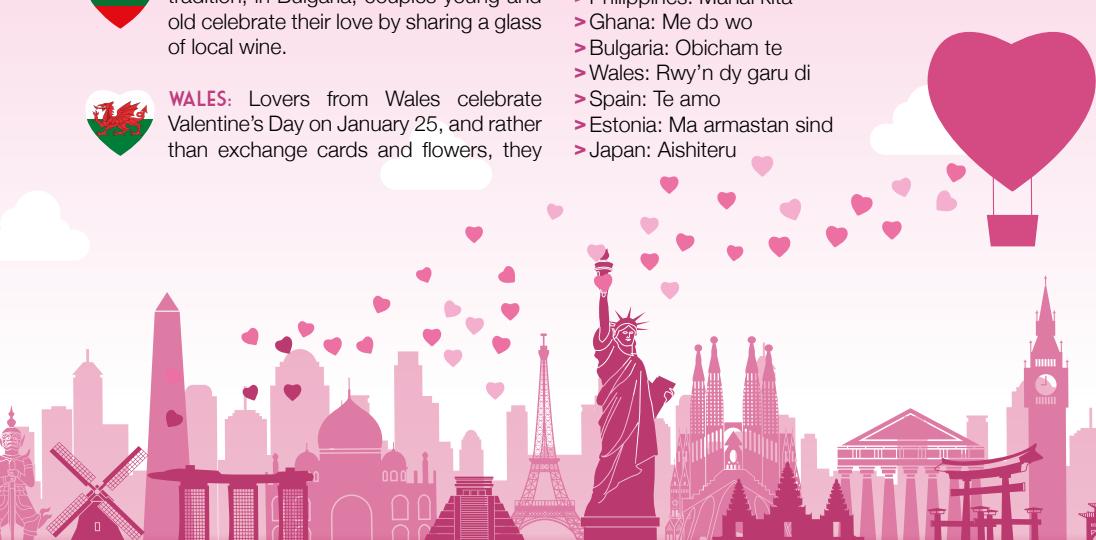
ESTONIA: Still taking place on February 14 but with a slight twist, Estonians celebrate all relationships on this day rather than just romantic ones.



JAPAN: A country that prides itself on being unique, Valentine's Day in Japan is quite unlike anywhere else in the world. On February 14, women buy gifts for men, but men are not allowed to return the favour until March 14, known as the "white day".

HOW TO SAY "I LOVE YOU":

- > South Korea: Saranghae
- > Philippines: Mahal kita
- > Ghana: Me do wo
- > Bulgaria: Obicham te
- > Wales: Ryw'n dy garu di
- > Spain: Te amo
- > Estonia: Ma armastan sind
- > Japan: Aishiteru



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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



New leisure centre and shops: what about parking?

Redevelopment plans for the Bakers Lane and Cottis Lane car parks were discussed by Epping Town Council (ETC) on January 14, with councillors expressing approval for the leisure centre and concerns over parking and whether the town needs more retail units.

Councillors welcomed the plans for a new leisure centre on the Bakers Lane site but voiced concern than only six parking spaces have been allocated for Blue Badge holders.

Deputy Mayor Michael Wright said: "I think the benefits [of the leisure centre] for the town are going to be absolutely enormous," but added that coaches and disabled drivers could have problems parking.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse welcomed plans to replace the current sports centre, which he described as "beyond its useful life", and said that "the relationship [of the new building] with the neighbours, Bakers' Villas and Albany Court, needs to be considered".

Councillor John Duffell asked if a museum could be

included in the Cottis Yard development.

"[It] does remind you of Harlow," he said. "Shops are closing, and we are struggling to fill them."

Councillor Mari-Louise Whitbread said she was "very excited" about the leisure centre which will benefit people "of all ages".

She said: "This is another place for someone to walk to in Epping."

"I do support the retail but appreciate some of the shops in Epping are empty."

"You might get different sorts of retail."

Councillor Richard Griffiths said of the proposed development: "We need to do everything to make it and the High Street all one area."

A spokeswoman for Epping Town Council told VISIONEppingTheydon: "The main aim is that anything provided does not affect the vitality of the current High Street and market, but rather supports it," and said that the councillors' comments have been forwarded to building firm Qualis.

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Walk or run for cancer charity this summer



Residents of all ages are being encouraged to take part in Cancer Research's Race For Life event in Epping on July 7.

Despite its title, the event is not competitive, with many people choosing to walk or jog, rather than run.

Participants can set themselves a target of 5km or 10km to raise money for research into cancer, a cause that is predicted to suffer a £300million drop in income over the next three years, largely owing to the cancellation of many fundraising events during the pandemic.

Those taking part can set off on the course alone or in small, socially distanced groups.

Megan Bailey, Cancer Research UK's event manager for Essex, said: "The truth is, COVID-19 has slowed us down. But we will never stop and we are absolutely determined to continue to create better treatments for tomorrow."

An estimated 35,500 people are diagnosed with cancer in the East of England each year, and one in two people born in the UK after 1960 will get cancer in their lifetime.

Money raised through Race For Life events funds research to beat 200 types of cancer, including cancer of the bowel, breast, prostate and testicles, lung and brain, as well as children's cancers and leukaemia.

For more information visit www.raceforlife.org

Self-isolating? Help is at hand

People who have to self-isolate can apply for a payment of £500 from Epping Forest District Council (EFDC).

EFDC has received a grant from Essex County Council (ECC) to help residents who have to stay at home but lack the financial means to do so, perhaps because they are ineligible for the government's Test and Trace Support Payment.

A person who stays at home when they or a

household member has tested positive for COVID-19 can apply for the £500 per head discretionary grant to help them through the two-week period.

Councillor Chris Whitbread, leader of EFDC, said he welcomed the grant, which came from the government's Contain Outbreak Management Fund.

He said: "This one-off grant will go a little way towards helping support them while they cannot work.

"It is intended for those residents who don't qualify for any of the other government grants available."

For more details, visit www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk or call 01992 564000.

COVID-19 test: new 'collect and drop-off' site opens

A centre has opened in Epping to allow people who do not have COVID-19 symptoms to collect a kit for a test that they take at home, before returning it to the centre.

The collect and drop-off centre, at Lindsey Street Community Association, 28 Frampton Road, is open from Monday to Thursday (opening times vary).

The polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test is available to anyone who lives or works in high-risk areas, such as Epping Forest, who does not have COVID-19 symptoms.

There is no need to book and the procedure is very simple:

- Turn up and collect your kit
- Take it home
- Register a home test kit at GOV.UK
- Do the test
- Drop it back at the centre

Completed test kits are collected each day by courier from the centre.

Test results are managed by the NHS Test and Trace system and are usually sent within 48 hours via email, text or telephone.

Anyone with symptoms should not go to the centre but should self-isolate and book a COVID-19 test online.





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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Red route through the Forest provokes anger in village

Residents and parish councillors are seeing red at the creation "without any consultation with the parish council or other interested parties" of a red route in High Beech, which could lead to parking charges in Epping Forest and encourage visitors to park in Theydon Bois instead.

Councillor Anthony Purkiss wrote on the Theydon Bois Parish Council (TBPC) website that this measure, which imposes a penalty for any vehicle that stops even momentarily, was introduced "at very short notice and at considerable expense".

The red route, which has been introduced as a temporary traffic regulation order, cost an estimated £98,000.

It was commissioned by Essex County Council, Essex Police, Epping Forest District Council, North

Essex Parking Partnership (which administers parking fines) and the City of London Corporation, conservators of the forest since 1878.

Theydon Bois resident Patrick Gill, who is a Commoner of Epping Forest (someone with grazing rights), said: "There is not a single record or minute anywhere about this that I can find. They are using emergency powers and sneaking it in under the cover of COVID. They say it's temporary, but why spend all this money on a temporary scheme?"

"Residents should be concerned at the expense and by the lack of democratic consultation."

In his report on the TBPC website, clrr Purkiss asked: "[Will] these new restrictions [lead to] charging in the forest car parks, and if so, what impact could this have on our village?"



COVID-19 new fast-testing centre opens

As COVID-19 infection rates rise, residents in Theydon will be able to benefit from the opening of a fast-testing centre.

The centre has opened in Theydon Bois Village Hall and will help identify hidden cases of the virus in the community.

Residents who do not have symptoms will get their results within 30 minutes and those who test positive will be asked to self-isolate and await a further test.

On December 31, Epping Forest had the highest case rate in the county, and on January 7 was found to have 1,321.9 cases per 100,000 people.

Dr Mike Gogarty, director of public health and well-being for Essex, said: "This additional testing centre will allow us to test even more people in the worst affected areas where we continue to see worryingly high rates."

Epping Forest District Council leader Chris Whitbread described the new testing centre as "great news".

There are three ways to book a test if you have no symptoms. Visit www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/fast-covid-testing-centre-opens

Alternatively, call 0333 772 6144 or email booking.confirmation@nhs.net

Village identified as a 'burglary hotspot'

Residents will be concerned to learn that Epping Forest comes almost top of a national table of burglaries.

According to research carried out by the price comparison website MoneySupermarket, the RM4 postcode, which includes Theydon Bois, came second in a table of burglary claims.

The IG7 postcode, which covers Chigwell, ranked 11th in the table, with Digbeth in Birmingham having the dubious distinction of being the worst burglary hotspot in Britain.

People living in Theydon Bois, Abridge, Stapleford Abbotts and Lambourne End reported 69.26 burglaries per 1,000 residents, while the rate per 1,000 residents was 50.16 in Chigwell, making it the

11th worst area in the country.

Nearby Woodford Green came 14th, with 48.15 burglary reports per 1,000 residents.

The good news is that nationally, burglary claims fell slightly (by 7 per cent) this year, possibly because criminals were deterred by people spending more time at home during lockdown.

However, there is no room for complacency, according to Kate Devine, insurance expert at MoneySupermarket.

She said: "It's important to remember that burglaries remain a reality across the UK, so it's important that you protect your home."

Ms Devine cited alarms, security lights and timers as effective deterrents against burglars.



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FEBRUARY BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH:

Violet

The February birth flower is the vibrant violet. People born in this month tend to be both modest and mild mannered, hence the popular expression "shrinking violet". Sweet violets are regularly found in the UK in woods and hedgerows and are often candied and used to decorate cakes.

WHAT DO VIOLETS SYMBOLISE?

Violets have been around for centuries and were first cultivated by the Greeks around 500BC. According to Greek mythology, violets were created when one of Artemis' nymphs was pursued by her twin brother Apollo. To protect her, Artemis turned her into a violet, which in turn led to this flower being known to represent modesty.

WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOUR PERSONALITY?

If you were born in February, you are said to be wise beyond your years. A private person, you are also prone to being a bit of a dreamer. It can take you a while to warm up to people, but when you do, you are fiercely loyal.

CAN I GROW VIOLETS IN MY GARDEN?

Violets typically grow in the wild, although they are decreasing in numbers owing to habitat loss, which means if you want to grow them in your garden, you need to recreate these conditions. Violets thrive in winter and spring sun but need summer shade, so their ideal spot is under a deciduous tree or shrub.

Violets will self-sow, but growing your own from seed is a challenge as the seeds need to be fresh. Instead, buy plants during the spring and plant immediately in moist but well-drained soil.

WHAT PESTS ARE COMMON TO VIOLETS?

If your violet leaves turn yellow, this could be the result of an attack by red spider mites. This pest strikes when your plant becomes too hot or dry.

The best remedy is to defoliate the plant completely.



GARDEN OF LIFE

FOX IN the box

In the first of a four-part series that shows how even the most urban garden can be a haven for the wonders of wildlife and the nurturing of nature, we look at the faithful fox. Whether out at night or hiding in plain sight, this sly urban dweller has adapted better than any other animal to human environments.

Perhaps we shouldn't be so surprised when we spot a fox meandering its way through the park, across a garden, or even on the pavement outside where we live. These beautiful creatures are, after all, past masters in urban environments, even if they are just as accustomed to survival in the rugged wild.

For all its impressive presence, your average fox will rarely approach humans or animals – chickens, rabbits and guinea pigs notwithstanding. This sly old foe simply wants to hunt for scraps, play, mate and return to its den to rest and tend to its offspring. Only when threatened will a fox move into offensive mode.

The fact foxes have become so much a part of our urban and suburban lives has a lot to do with the way they feed. They'll consume almost anything they find – from fruit and veg, raw and cooked meat, cheese, bread and even dog biscuits. Increasingly brave around humans, they'll often take food for storage, burying it for later consumption.

That means there's little risk in leaving food out for foxes if you're hoping to get a glimpse of these fiery nocturnal beauties, who will happily roam around in the late afternoon as well.

There is a downside, however. From fouling the garden to chewing shoes left outside, to trampling lawns and even digging up deceased pets, if you encourage foxes in, you'll have to go along with their inquisitive, playful habits.



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LEOPARD GECKOS: A reptile may not be the first pet you have in mind when considering a companion for your older years, but the leopard gecko is actually a fantastic little friend who's also easy to look after. Requiring little more than a cosy, heated habitat in the form of a tank, insect edibles and a bowl of water, these big-eyed beauties are not only calm and friendly, but also happy to be handled by gentle hands.



TROPICAL FISH: You may not be able to cuddle a koi carp when you're feeling low, but bright-coloured, beautiful tropical fish are clinically proven to have a calming effect on our minds. From gorgeous, fantailed guppies to bright little neon, you can buy tropical fish in an array of dazzling colours, even creating your own underwater paradise with the addition of ornaments and plants. Tropical fish, of course, require a little more in terms of heating and pumping systems, but

they are arguably far more desirable to look at than your common or garden goldfish.

ZEBRA FINCHES: Originating from Australia, these feathery little friends are fantastic pets for those wishing to bring a little music into their lives. Prone to loneliness, zebra finches crave companionship and require exercise. They're also daytime creatures, so prefer to play in the day and sleep at night.



BENGAL CAT: They may look like tiny leopards, but Bengal cats are actually incredibly tame and love a cuddle. They are agile and love to play, which means they do need a little space to jump and run around in. However, they're better off being kept indoors, not only because it is far safer there but also because of their high value.

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BRUSH UP

on children's oral health

February is National Children's Dental Health month, so what better time to tackle any tooth-brushing issues your child has?

Discover the top five reasons why your child doesn't want to brush their teeth below. Plus, how you can encourage them to practise good oral hygiene.

WHY DOES MY CHILD HATE BRUSHING THEIR TEETH?

1. They are sensitive to having their teeth brushed

Some children experience a gag reflex when brushing their teeth that can be unpleasant. Others might not like the feel of the brush against their teeth or in their mouth. Sensitivities are more common in children with autism or attention disorders.

2. They are asserting their authority

If you find yourself caught in a battle with your child every morning and evening when it comes to brushing their teeth and there is no physical reason why they won't brush, they could simply be pushing boundaries.

3. They have become anxious

You may not be able to determine the initial reason why your child started to hate brushing their teeth, but if it has become a daily issue in your household, your child may now feel anxiety around this daily activity.

4. They don't like the taste of the toothpaste

It is always a good idea to ask your child if they would like to choose a different flavoured toothpaste if they do not like the one you are currently buying.

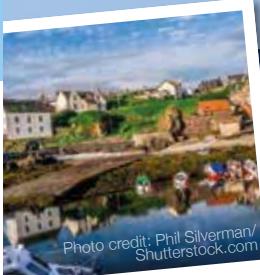
5. They are a picky eater

Children who are picky eaters are more likely to not like the texture and taste of a toothbrush and toothpaste in their mouth.

How can I encourage my child to brush their teeth?

- Stick to a routine
- Make it fun
- Provide choice in terms of what products they use
- Stand behind younger children
- Allow your child to hold a toy they can squeeze to calm them
- Offer a reward such as an extra bedtime story





St Abbs

THE WONDERFUL WEE VILLAGES THAT MAKE A TRIP TO THE SCOTTISH BORDERS WORTHWHILE

There's something about the Scottish Borders that transports minds back to heavy conflict, deep patriotism and bloody warfare, with emperor Hadrian, way back in AD128, constructing a literal divide between two countries that has lasted ever since.

It's peculiar, then, that the battles that existed in this huge belt of masonry are totally at odds with the picturesque villages that decorate a swathe of land that you could spend a lifetime exploring, without ever conquering.

Here are five picture-postcard villages and towns that will grab your attention if you ever find yourself on the Scottish Borders:

St Abbs: A stunning fishing village on the south-east Berwickshire coast, the journey up through Northumberland holds beauty that can rival any coastline in the UK. When you arrive at St Abbs, sample still waters, characterful pubs and the beautiful expanse of the North Sea.

Selkirk: Selkirk combines industrial power with royal heritage, a gateway to the north that dates back to the 13th century. The closeness of the streets offers a feel that likens itself to the Cotswolds, but the open expanses beyond remind you of rich Scottish countryside.

Peebles: Strange sounding but beautiful looking, Peebles has royal roots and is based on the River Tweed. Golf, fishing, mountain-biking and walking are popular pursuits, with the Victorian architecture offering hotels and hosteries to relax in after a day in the wilds.

Kelso: A sleepy market town that has the potential to burst into life at any moment, Kelso is a holidaymakers' dream, with great accommodation, impeccable dining, stunning architecture and a horse racing track that's the envy of the rest of Scotland.

St Boswells: Community is the buzzword in sleepy St Boswells – this place was recently named one of the top 10 places to live in Scotland.

Flanked by stunning countryside and the River Tweed, and featuring a number of artisan independent businesses, this cosy village is worth a visit.



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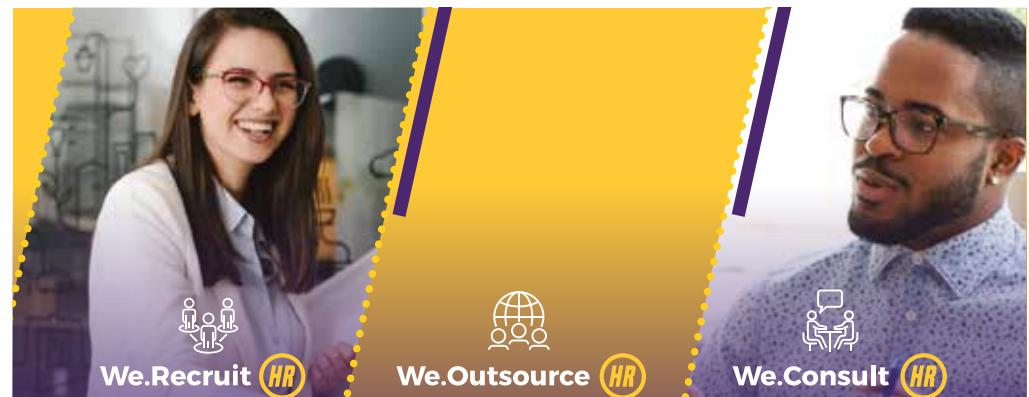


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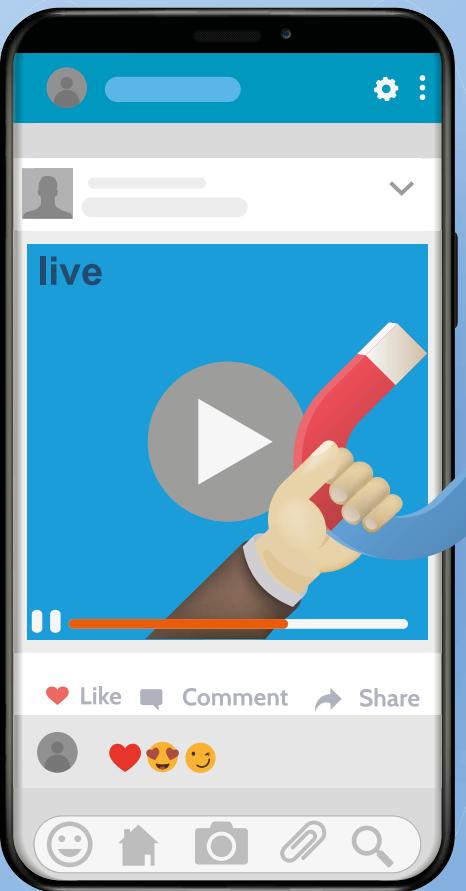


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The Power of Social Media



memes and GIFs. Avoid overly promotional posts.

Increased interaction: Video continues to be one of the strongest social media strategies, with an estimated 78 per cent of users watching video content on a monthly basis. Ideal for grabbing people's attention, conveying your brand personality and showcasing your passion as a business. You could even try live-streaming an event.

Improved customer service: Although social media can be a blessing for your business, it can also cause a lot of damage if you don't keep an eye on it. Remember that, first and foremost, social media is a customer service channel, so you need to monitor your mentions and keep tabs on your reviews. Always respond to comments asap and deal with any problems via private messaging.

The lowdown on the popular social media platforms:

- **Facebook.** Best for generating leads and building relationships
- **Twitter.** Perfect for businesses with a younger audience
- **Pinterest.** Great for driving sales and for brands with visual appeal
- **Snapchat.** Ideal for building relationships with influencers and driving brand recognition and loyalty
- **Instagram.** The best option for e-commerce sites and for telling your brand story
- **YouTube.** To help you get seen by Google and tap into YouTube traffic

How To CLEAN AND PROTECT your car seats

Even with the best will in the world, your car seats will eventually succumb to stains and spillages. Fortunately, if you care for and clean them appropriately, they can be restored to their original glory.

FABRIC CAR SEATS

- > The first step when cleaning your fabric car seats is to vacuum the upholstery to ensure the area is free from dirt and debris. If pet hair is an issue, utilise a pet hairbrush to lift the hair before vacuuming.
- > Next you need to apply your chosen cleaner or shampoo. Try not to make the area too wet – damp is best – and then gently rub in the solution with a soft-bristled brush.
- > Top tip: Concentrate on small areas and an even spread of solution to avoid water stains.

LEATHER CAR SEATS

- > Leather car seats are less prone to stains than fabric ones but they are also more delicate and susceptible to abrasions. Therefore, when vacuuming you need to be extra careful and take your time to avoid any scratches or tears. You also need to purchase a leather-specific upholstery cleaner, which often comes as a cream rather than a spray or shampoo.
- > Apply the product and gently rub the area with a microfibre towel.
- > Top tip: The more matt your leather seats appear, the cleaner they are.

HOW TO DRY YOUR CAR SEATS

It is always advisable to clean your car seats early in the day and when no rain is forecast. If you can keep an eye on your vehicle, leave your windows slightly open to prevent trapped moisture and let your seats dry naturally.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CAR SEATS

- > Condition leather seats to prevent cracks
- > Spray fabric seats with a fabric protector



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NEW OLYMPIC SPORT:

BREAKDANCING

THE NEW SPORT SET TO DEBUT AT THE 2024 OLYMPICS IN PARIS... BREAKDANCING!

While the postponement of the Olympic Games in Tokyo proved one of 2020's most frustrating episodes, hosting the Games this coming summer has at least given the International Olympic Committee (IOC) the chance to run its eye over prospective new sports that could be showcased.

And fans of breakdancing – a pursuit created and styled on the mean, urban streets of New York in the 1970s before being exported to a truly global audience – will be glad of the extra time, albeit the first we'll see of it will be in 2024 when Paris hosts.

A movement centred as much on music as it is dance, there are distant similarities with other performance events at the Games, such as synchronised swimming and dressage.

In the Olympic format, competitors look likely go up against each other 1v1, as was

the case at the 2018 Youth Olympics in Argentina. The success of the event there, some significant backing by Red Bull and a desire by organisers for the Olympics to speak to a younger, more urban demographic, means breakdancing – or 'breaking', as it will be called in event terms – sailed through the trial on its way to debuting at the world's biggest sporting tournament.

It's also significant that the IOC has embraced breaking despite some of the activity's leading purveyors insisting that it needs to retain its artistic and cultural edge, and shouldn't be bracketed in with the Olympics' sometimes rather formal take on sport.

Whether breaking will inspire anyone older than the teenage market to take it up is unclear. If it does, expect sales of paracetamol to soar.



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READY, STEADY, *Sslcoooooow*

ON THE SNAIL TRAIL IN NUTTY NORFOLK

While Gloucestershire prides itself on its annual cheese-rolling race, and mid-Wales will claim to be the spiritual home of bog snorkelling, both still have a way to go to catch up with Norfolk's take on leisure pursuits. Often with a lingering hint of ale and wine in the air, the flatlands to the east have found themselves chiefly responsible for some bizarre takes on entertainment, with perhaps nothing more peculiar than snail racing.

The 'sport' – the true polar opposite to Lewis Hamilton's record-breaking efforts in a racing car – first came about in the 1960s in the quaint village of Congham, although its true roots lie, predictably, in France. Hosted as part of the annual fete, snails are positioned on a flat, circular table. The first gastropod to make it to the outer boundary is determined the winner.

Times are recorded and recent years have seen more than 200 snails entered into the 'blink and

you'll miss it' tournament.

The popularity of the pursuit even led drinks brand Guinness to depict snail racing in its Bet on Black ad campaign back in the year 2000.

Unfortunately, the 2020 event had to be cancelled owing to COVID-19, leaving the slithery creatures that usually enter the race with very little else to do but, one would imagine, munch on some lettuce.

Rival competitions have emerged – the Grand Championship Snail Race in the appropriately named Snailwell, Cambridgeshire, celebrates its 30th anniversary next year, and regularly attracts 400 people to the village, doubling its population.

What's best about the annual snail trials, wherever they are held, is that there's no monotonous dominance, no Hamiltons or Schumachers on show; for the simple reason that with an average snail lifespan of around nine months, you're guaranteed a new 'gastropod great' each year.

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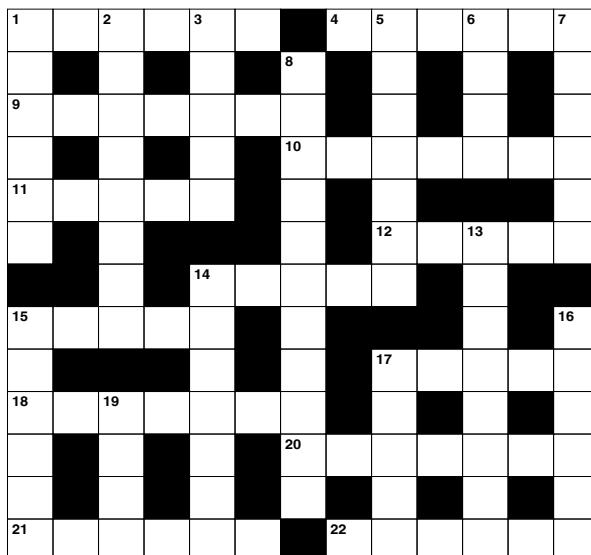
PUZZLES & TRIVIA

ACROSS

1. Straighten out (6)
4. Vocalist (6)
9. Animal fat (7)
10. Not friendly (7)
11. Oozes (5)
12. Compassion (5)
14. Expect; think that (5)
15. Word of farewell (5)
17. Wedding assistant (5)
18. Supervisory worker (7)
20. Burdensome work (7)
21. Short choral compositions (6)
22. Entertains (6)

DOWN

1. Except when (6)
2. Musical pieces for solo instruments (8)
3. Regulations (5)
5. Annoying (7)
6. Large desert in Asia (4)
7. Make less dense (6)
8. Residents (11)
13. People with auburn hair (8)
14. Furthest away (7)
15. State publicly (6)
16. Tremulous sounds (6)
17. Deprive of weapons (5)
19. Speak in a wild way (4)



DID YOU KNOW?

- Adélie penguins breed and raise their offspring in Antarctica
- Puffins can flap their wings up to 400 times a minute. They can fly at around 55 miles an hour
- The bald eagle, which was once on the brink of extinction, has been the national symbol of the United States of America since 1782
- Once a flamingo lays an egg, the parents take turns sitting on it to keep it warm. The egg usually hatches in around 30 days
- The ostrich is the tallest and heaviest of all the birds
- As a male snowy owl gets older, it turns whiter. Males are often whiter than females
- Red-tailed hawks can spot a mouse from 30 metres up in the air

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