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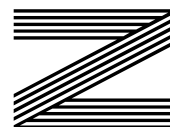
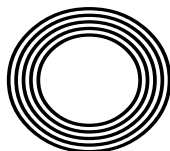
**FIVE
TV SETS
YOU CAN
VISIT**

Beauty treatments
using seasonal veggies

SOUP SEASON
How to build your own recipe

BEN STOKES OBE

Legendary cricketer sets his sights on World Cup victory



FREE

Photo credit: Simon Dael/Shutterstock



THE ZOO IN THE FOREST

Get To Know Animals is an animal rescue centre which is home to over 350 animals across 70 species, providing animal therapy and handling experiences.

Founded in 2016 by Donna Rose who was driven by a deep-rooted passion from her own personal experiences of animal interaction and the amazing impact it can have on both physical & mental wellbeing.

GTKA opened November 2019 in Chingford, and though it was small (a converted betting shop) it made a massive impact and welcomed over 4000 customers through the doors in the first few months!!!

Sadly, the national lockdown in March of 2020 meant that GTKA had to close and couldn't reopen its doors again until April 2021. When it could, the remaining restrictions meant that operating anywhere close to its previous potential was impossible.

Lockdown wasn't all bad news as it led Donna to reconnect with Rob - who would go on to become the love of her life - (an old friend from senior school) and together they made



the decision to relocate to the current site in Epping.

Construction of the brand-new Animal Experience Centre began in earnest in December 2021. Fast forward 15 months, add in a bucket of blood, sweat, tears, mixed with a chain of events that would make the script writers of EastEnders blush, & GTKA finally opened its doors to the eagerly awaiting public.

Since opening, visitors have been able to meet animals ranging from an Armadillo to an Alligator, monkeys to mice, snakes, spiders, skunks, lizards and much, much more!



If you've yet to experience the jungle in Epping Forest, then visit www.gtka.co.uk for more details and ticket options.





OCTOBER 2023

Editor's notes...



Brett Shohet, Editor

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

The seasons are shifting as we move from summer into autumn. There's no surer sign of this change than when Halloween decorations begin appearing in the shops - though I did notice some as early as July this year. I've even spotted a few festive decorations lurking on the shelves...

This means it's time to dig out our old jumpers and coats - you might find a crumpled £5 note in a pocket if you're lucky - and begin preparing ourselves for the colder months ahead. But even with the darker evenings and chillier weather, there's still a lot to look forward to. Make sure you check out our what's on page to find out some of the top events in your local area.

It's been reassuring to see that our high streets are getting busier once again. I've recently been out and about supporting local networking groups and helping local businesses make valuable new connections. It just goes to show that here at **VISION**, we will always do everything we can to support our advertisers and help them to succeed.

Taking place locally this month is a business exhibition featuring a variety of businesses and welcoming hundreds of visitors. We'll be looking to expand to other areas in the future, so watch this space.

Brett Shohet

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

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Sooty™

Turns Seventy-Five

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Photo credit: Moviestore/Shutterstock

REFILMED the scenes

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

Coronation Street – ITV Studios, Manchester

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

Only Fools and Horses – Bristol Temple Meads Train Station

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

Peaky Blinders – Central Liverpool

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

Downtown Abbey – Bampton, Oxfordshire

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

Bridgerton – The Abbey Hotel, Bath

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



Luxury care in the heart of Harlow

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We are delighted to announce the grand opening of The Jubilee Suite - our new luxury care suite situated within Abbot Care Home in Harlow, Essex.

Our new Jubilee Suite has been expertly designed with kindness, and dignity at its heart, providing person-centred nursing, residential and dementia care. With a variety of excellent facilities and spaces to enjoy, we welcome the people who live here to play an active part in everyday life – as we ensure activities, events and mealtimes are carefully tailored to the personal preferences of each individual.

Abbot Care Home is situated amongst peaceful open parkland and features beautiful, landscaped gardens. The people who live here enjoy a comfortable environment and benefit from the home-from-home atmosphere.

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VEGGIE vision

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

PUMPKIN FOOT MASK – Best for dry, cracked heels

You will need: ½ cup of pumpkin purée | 1 whole egg | 1 tsp honey

How to apply: Combine all of the above ingredients in a bowl | Massage into the feet and ankles | Cover with cling film or put on a pair of old socks | Leave for 15 minutes and then rinse with warm water

BUTTERNUT SQUASH HAIR MASK – Best for dull or dry hair

You will need: ½ large butternut squash | 3 tbsp honey | ¼ cup of plain yogurt

How to make: Peel and cook the squash until soft enough to remove the inner contents | Mash the squash | Combine with the honey and yogurt | Apply the mixture to damp hair and put on a plastic shower cap | Leave on for 20 minutes and then rinse with warm water

BEETROOT FACE MASK – Best for ageing skin

You will need: 2 tsp beetroot juice | 1 tsp yogurt | 1 tsp lime juice | 2 tsp gram flour

How to make: Mix the beetroot juice with the flour and then add the yogurt and lime juice | Mix until you have a smooth paste | Spread the mixture evenly over the face and leave for 15 minutes | Rinse off with warm water | Pat your face dry

POTATO CLEANSER – Best for acne-prone skin

You will need: 1 potato | 1 cucumber | 1 tsp baking soda | 1 tsp water

How to apply: Peel and chop the potato and the cucumber | Blend in a food processor or blender for 20 seconds | Add the water and baking soda | Apply to the face daily to cleanse and remove make-up, dirt and impurities.



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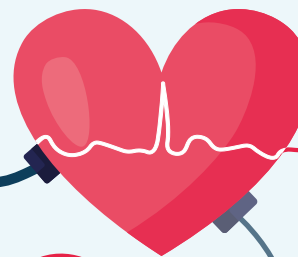
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UNDER *pressure!*

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

BRISK WALKING

If you are overweight and have high blood pressure, you may not be able to undergo a vigorous workout regime.

Fortunately, studies have shown that multiple short sessions of brisk walking can be as effective at lowering blood pressure as high-intensity exercises. Aim for three 10-minute walks each day.



SWIMMING

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



DANCING

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



HIKING

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



RESISTANCE TRAINING

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



AUTUMN COCKTAILS

Just because summer now seems like a distant memory, doesn't mean that you can't still enjoy a delicious cocktail or two after work or when the kids are tucked up in bed.

Why not have a go at making one of these recipes below, and warm your cockles on a chilly night?

PUMPKIN WHITE RUSSIAN

You will need: 25ml pumpkin spice Kahlua | 50ml vodka | 25ml double cream

How to make: Pour the ingredients into a glass over ice | Stir lightly and serve.

CARAMEL APPLE MULE

You will need: 50ml vodka | 15ml caramel | 30ml apple cider vinegar | Ginger beer to top | 1 apple | 1 cinnamon stick

How to make: Shake the vodka, caramel and apple cider vinegar with ice | Strain into a mule mug over ice | Top with ginger beer | Garnish with an apple fan and cinnamon stick.

SLOE GIN FIZZ

You will need: 50ml sloe gin | 25ml lemon juice | 2 tsp sugar syrup | Sparkling water | Lemon slice | Fresh or frozen blackberry

How to make: Pour the sloe gin, lemon juice and sugar syrup into a cocktail shaker and top with ice | Shake well | Strain into a tall glass with more ice | Top with sparkling water and stir gently | Garnish with a lemon slice and a blackberry.

CAMPFIRE SLING

You will need: 50ml rye whisky | 7ml maple syrup | 3 dashes of chocolate bitters | Orange peel twist

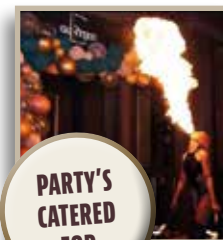
How to make: Add all the ingredients to an old-fashioned glass with one piece of ice | Stir thoroughly | Scorch a piece of orange peel over the glass to release the oils.

MULLED APPLE JUICE

You will need: 1 litre apple juice | 1 cinnamon stick | 3 cloves | Orange slices | Sugar or honey to taste

How to make: Simmer the apple juice with the orange peel, cinnamon and cloves for 5-10 minutes | Sweeten with sugar or honey | Serve with some orange slices and a cinnamon stick.

Photo credit: bbogoodfood.com, tastingpanelmag.com



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FOOD & DRINK

HOW TO BUILD YOUR *own soup*

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

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

How to make your soup

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Freezing your soup

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





Don't just take our word for it.....

Having always been a bit of a golfer and having reached a point where it was time to downsize, Great Hadham Country Club was perfect.

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Mr and Mrs S



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The GLOBAL ZOO

Animals unique to one place and how to see them

TRAVEL

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

THORNY DEVIL, AUSTRALIA

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

GELADA, ETHIOPIA

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

TEXAS BLIND SALAMANDER, USA

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

INACCESSIBLE ISLAND RAIL, INACCESSIBLE ISLAND

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

MANX CAT, ISLE OF MAN

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





Laura Hammett is an award-winning design house, run by Laura and her husband Aaron since 2008. With more than 25 years of experience between them, they are known for creating contemporary interiors with classic touches, resulting in stunning elegance. Laura Hammett's work spans the globe and even includes a private jet. You can also enjoy the Laura Hammett look with a creative approach.

A CLASSIC STYLE FOR THE MODERN ERA

When you examine Laura Hammett's style, you're instantly transported to modern London. The designs are full of light and detail, creating beautiful looks that would be right at home in any design coffee table book. Colour palettes include lighter shades of grey and taupe, paired with darker details to add contrast. Light upholstery, rich walnut and subtle marble are some of the styles that have been used in the Laura

Hammett portfolio, adding character and elegance to all kinds of homes.

CREATING THE LOOK

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

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



Photo credit: laurahammett.com, @laurahammettinteriors via Instagram

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Let's get ready to TUMBLE!

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

TO REMOVE FOOD RESIDUE FROM POTS AND PANS

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

TO PICK UP PET HAIR FROM CLOTHES AND UPHOLSTERY

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

TO CLEAN YOUR TV AND COMPUTER SCREENS

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

TO REMOVE RESIDUE FROM YOUR IRON

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

TO SHARPEN SCISSORS

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



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

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

1. ADD POPS OF COLOUR

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

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

2. MAKE THE MOST OF MIRRORS

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

3. INVEST IN FUNCTIONAL FURNITURE

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

4. EMBRACE CONSCIOUS STYLING

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

5. LAYER LIGHTING

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



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Have you TWIGGED?

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

SUNBURST TWIG MIRROR

YOU'LL NEED:

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

HOW TO MAKE:

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

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

TWIGGY PHOTO FRAME

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

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

HOW TO MAKE:

- > To form the first corner, lay a longer twig on top of a shorter twig, allowing 2.5cm of each twig to stick out where they overlap.
- > Wrap the two together so the twine forms a cross shape on top. Tie to secure.
- > Complete this step on all corners in the same way to create a rectangle.
- > Glue the photo onto the baking paper. Then glue the edges of the baking paper to the back of the frame, with the picture facing out.

JEWELLERY TREE

YOU'LL NEED:

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

HOW TO MAKE:

- > Drill a hole in the log slice, the same width as the main stem of the branch.
- > Fasten the branch in the hole with the glue and leave it to dry.
- > Hang up your jewellery!

Happy twigging!



Photo credit: sahyutianchi.blogspot.com, doodlecraftblog.com

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These days most homeowners suffer from a lack of storage space. So many precious items that need to be kept – but where to store it all? That's where Home Counties Loft Ladders come in.

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

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

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

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

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

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

every installation we carry out!

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



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BIG BEN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Photo credit: Kieran Mollenius/Shutterstock

FROM YOUR AREA

Police unit seizes 15 stolen cars from one location



Photo credit: Essex Police

Essex Police's Stolen Vehicle Intelligence Unit (SVIU) discovered several stolen vehicles in Epping Forest last month.

After receiving information, the force's SVIU attended a location on Monday, September 11, where they discovered several stolen vehicles that had or were in the process of having their identities changed.

Officers found high-value cars alongside family and business vehicles. Following an examination, they discovered that 15 vehicles had been stolen from within Essex and several London areas.

Detective Sergeant David St John said: "Our SVIU officers are experienced, qualified vehicle examiners who are able to carry out enquiries quickly in busy areas, to identify vehicles of interest."

"Changes to each of the vehicles would have made it difficult for a member of the public to detect, but thanks to my team's experience and eye for detail, they have recovered 15 vehicles in what is a significant, intelligence-led policing operation."

"Forensic examination of these vehicles will assist the team in identifying those involved and the wider networks they operate in."

Nominations open for Citizen of the Year awards

Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) is asking residents to vote for those who go above and beyond to support others in the local community.

The council's annual awards recognise those who

contribute positively to the district.

The award categories are Citizen of the Year, Young Citizen of the Year and Team of the Year.

A spokesperson for EFDC said: "These awards have been showcasing people in the community who go above and beyond, making positive changes in the Epping Forest district, for many years."

"It might be a good neighbour or charity worker, or a team of people who perhaps run a club for youngsters or older people."

Nominations are open until Friday, November 24, and you can find out more at www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/time-to-nominate-your-citizen-of-the-year-2024

Golf club announces return of junior championships

Theydon Bois Golf Club is thrilled to announce the return of the Junior Golf Club Championships, following a 15-year hiatus.

The club posted on social media: "This accomplishment is a testament to the dedication of our junior organisers, who've tirelessly nurtured our junior golf community."

"Our junior section is flourishing, thanks to collaborations with community groups and schools. The results are showing, and we couldn't be prouder!"

The news was met with celebrations from the community.

One responded: "The silent few have done a fantastic job in starting and maintaining this great initiative."

Planning for the tournament is currently taking place, with the date yet to be announced.



Photo credit: Theydon Bois Golf Club

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British Telecom had an advertising slogan in the 1990s: "It's good to talk."

Well, that is certainly true when it comes to getting our school students involved in political debating.

I've organised the Epping Forest Schools Parliamentary Debating Competition for many years, with students from the district's secondary schools taking part in a House of Commons-style debate speaking either for or against a topical motion.

This year's competition – the first since the pandemic – will take place in November.

Not only does the competition give our young people the opportunity to debate in Parliamentary style – with myself only occasionally having to shout,

"Order, order" – but it also gives them experience of speaking in public and discussing a topical issue before an audience.

I've seen the young speakers develop year on year with some representing their schools at a young age, and coming up against Sixth Form opposition.

Some of the students have gone on to study politics at university, and others have also been members of Epping Forest District Council's Youth Council, with several going on to become senior local councillors.

These young people are the politicians of the future. They are the Members of Parliament for the next generation and we should applaud them for wanting to get involved in political debating.

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TODAY

From rural surroundings to entertainment icon



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

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

Finishing in fifth place, his time on *The X Factor* provided a solid foundation for his future career in television.

Celebrity Big Brother followed, with audiences won over by the star's vibrant personality and natural charm.

Presenting duties proved an obvious route for someone who, while never turning his back on his reality TV roots, was keen to explore other areas. These have included *Big Brother* spin-offs, plus daytime TV (*This Morning*), game shows (*Supermarket Sweep*), panel shows (*Celebrity Juice* and *Would I Lie to You?*) and *Eurovision*.

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

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

Clark-Neal recently swapped Stanford for Brentwood, where his mother Linda lives, and remains loyal to his Essex image.

As he says: "There is no better place on Earth – the people, the places, the vibe. It's always Essex."



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YOUR LOCAL EVENTS

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Forest Lodge Commercial Complex,
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Every week Tuesday to Friday, 10am – 3pm



Photo credit: Get to Know Animals

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Ticket prices start at £5 and can be booked at gtka.co.uk/product/midweek-specials

THE VICAR OF DIBLEY

Theydon Bois Village Hall, Coppice Row, Theydon Bois, CM16 7ER
Thursday, October 19, to Saturday, October 21, various times

Theydon Bois Drama Society is thrilled to announce that their newest production will be *The Vicar of Dibley*. The play is faithful to the television show and is full of laughs, jokes and fantastic characters.

Tickets cost £13 and are available to book from www.facebook.com/theydonboisdramasociety

RESCUING A RUIN – THE SAVING OF COPPED HALL

Copped Hall, Crown Hill, Epping, CM16 5HS
Saturday, October 21, 10am – 4.30pm

Come along to this study day about the saving of this historic venue. After a nine-year campaign against large-scale development proposals, the heavily vandalised and overgrown site of Copped Hall was saved by the Copped Hall Trust in 1995.

Purchase your £40 tickets, which include lunch and refreshments, at www.shorturl.at/inuU1

THE HIVE HALLOWEEN EVENTS

The Hive, Church Road, High Beach, Loughton, IG10 4AJ
Monday October 23, to Friday, October 27, various times

The Hive is hosting a selection of fantastic spooky events for you and your little ones this autumn, from a minibeast hunt to a spooky afternoon where you can make a nature lantern. Follow a Halloween trail and enjoy some campfire treats.

Tickets range between £10 and £12. To find out more, head to www.shorturl.at/fwCGQ

OKTOBERFEST AT THE WOODBINE

The Woodbine Pub, Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey, EN9 3QT
Various dates from Friday, October 6, to Saturday, October 28

Celebrate the spirit of Oktoberfest at The Woodbine pub, with a fantastic selection of great food, drink, entertainment, German and continental beers, sausages, schnitzels, sauerkraut and pretzels. The final two Saturdays of the month will see Den & Dave and Jamie Callis performing live for your entertainment.

To book your free table, go to www.shorturl.at/ghsO3

GREATER IN SPIRIT, LARGER IN OUTLOOK

Epping Forest District Museum, 39-41 Sun Street, Waltham Abbey, EN9 1EL
Open until Friday, December 22

Epping Forest District Museum and Saffron Walden Museum have worked in partnership on their world culture collections, resulting in a community-curated temporary exhibition.

The aim of the project is to ensure the museums and their collections reflect their diverse communities.

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Photo credit: Suntrap Forest Centre

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WHAT'S ON

How to grow SNOWDROPS

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

WHERE TO PLANT SNOWDROPS

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

HOW TO PLANT SNOWDROPS

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

HOW TO CARE FOR SNOWDROPS

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

HOW TO PROPAGATE SNOWDROPS

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

TOP SNOWDROP VARIETIES:

Galanthus nivalis | Galanthus elwesii | Galanthus woronowii | Galanthus Armine | Galanthus Cordelia.



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Keeping your dog SAFE IN AUTUMN

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

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

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

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

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

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

V

PETS

Incy wincy spider

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

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Black paper or card | A pencil | A ruler | PVC or Elmer's glue | Table salt | Watercolour paints | A soft brush

HOW TO MAKE:

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

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

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

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

MAKE A HANGING SPIDERWEB

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

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Get **BALANCED!**

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

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

Why is a good work/life balance important?

A good work/life balance involves finding a harmonious relationship between your home life and your working life. This is vital to your overall wellbeing as people need to engage in a wide range of activities, as well as rest, in order to thrive. If you work too hard or work very long hours, you are more likely to experience high levels of stress and suffer from insomnia, depression and/or anxiety.

What is an unhealthy work/life balance?

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

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

How to achieve the right balance between work and home life

- 1. SET BOUNDARIES:** Make sure that you establish clear boundaries between your work and personal life by defining specific working hours and sticking to them.
- 2. FOCUS ON TIME MANAGEMENT:** Sometimes people are guilty of working hard rather than smart, which can mean they have to spend longer at the office and less time at home. Instead, prioritise the most important tasks both at home and at work.
- 3. BE FLEXIBLE:** At times, you will need to have to adjust your work schedule to accommodate unforeseen personal circumstances or emergencies, so don't feel guilty about doing this.



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HALLOWEEN PUMPKIN LANTERNS

An Illuminating and Spooky Tale

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

AN ENCHANTING STORY FROM IRELAND

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

LANTERNS FROM TURNIPS

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

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

PUMPKINS WORK BETTER

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

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



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EXPANSION**



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BAD SPORTSMANSHIP:

ERIC CANTONA

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

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

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

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

As it would turn out, this would not be an isolated incident. A string of other disciplinary issues in France prompted a move to England, with Leeds

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

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

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



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PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

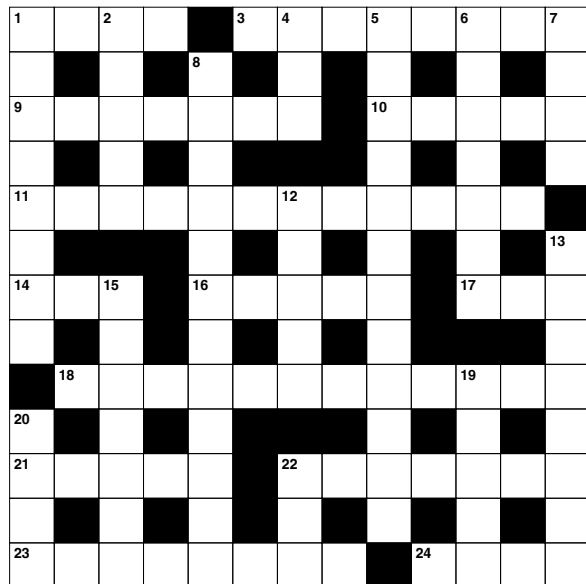
Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

ACROSS

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

DOWN

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



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

DID YOU KNOW?

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

SUDOKU

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

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