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*Sir Sean*  
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VISION Frinton-on-Sea | Edition 4

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# FRINTON SUMMER THEATRE

## 80 Glorious Years

By Jacey Dias

Frinton Summer Theatre was formed in 1934, making it the longest running summer repertory theatre in the UK. This delightful well-researched book pulls together for the first time, a chronology and history of this professional theatre which has an outstanding list of alumni.

The style is highly engaging, drawing on first-hand accounts from actors who have gone on to become household names and global stars. There are interviews with producers and directors past and present, as well as theatre-goers and supporters from across the ages. Archive material and photos illustrate the narrative throughout, with chapters taking the reader from the early days of the 1930s to current times.

The book fills a gap in the history of UK Theatre and highlights the ongoing importance of repertory theatre in this country, sharing the magic of why this little professional theatre on the Essex coast has stood the test of time.

"This is a wonderful tribute to a marvellous institution where I have many happy memories of starting my career"  
Lord Julian Fellowes

"This book reminds us why Frinton Summer Theatre is the longest running summer repertory theatre in the UK. There are some wonderful facts, anecdotes and memories which make joyous reading. I loved it!" Richard Wilson OBE



### HOW TO PURCHASE YOUR COPY!

All proceeds go to Frinton Summer Theatre: Registered Charity: 1170429  
Hand delivery (for those living within the CO13/14 area) is available for £2.50 per order, for orders outside of this area, royal mail postage starts from £3.50. Head to our online shop at [Frintonsummertheatre.org](http://Frintonsummertheatre.org), or call us on 01255 772460 to purchase your copy.

Alternatively, you can Click & Collect your copy from Caxtons, Frinton-on-sea

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jacey is a Trustee of Frinton Summer Theatre and lives in Frinton. She has a professional background in HR Management.

Under her business name of Jacey Graham, she co-authored two best-selling gender diversity books: *A Woman's Place is in the Boardroom* and *The Roadmap*, both published by Palgrave Macmillan. She has a degree in history from Exeter University and doing the research for this book has made her even more aware of just how special Frinton Summer Theatre is!



PROMOTION



# HOME

- TRUTHS -

What a year 2020 has turned out to be and no doubt most of us will be happy to see the back of it!

Whether you have been "stuck" at home or maybe felt "cocooned" in your home, many people have spent a lot more time there while addressing a need for change.

Indeed many of you have moved home this year, will wish to complete the sale before Christmas or will be looking forward to doing so as soon as possible next year. If anything positive must be noted from recent events is the newly felt appreciation for family, friends and a good home.

The ideal home must offer many more qualities and functionalities than at any other time before: spacious but cosy, bright and warm but certainly energy efficient, a stylish kitchen acting as living hub, many more bedrooms with en-suites but the next home may now require office space inside or outside as long as the internet is lightning fast!

The post covid world may well be redefining what each of us expect qualitatively from

our home: it is no longer a place to leave in the morning to go to work and come back to for dinner, watch a bit of TV and go to bed.

How about questioning where your home should be? It might not be the case anymore that you choose a location based on commuting facilities: what if your place of work and your home is the same location? Should you then consider living near a better school for your children? Or maybe you always dreamt of that sea view or countryside lifestyle? Would you move to a different county or even another country? How about the possibility for different generations of the same family to combine their financial efforts to live together?

So many questions to ponder during the coming festivities and I certainly wish us all what we have lived to expect naturally every year and that is the capacity to spend Christmas and New Year among our families and friends.

More importantly I wish you all good health.

Florent Lambert

Supporting our local Frinton theatre

# HOME

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**CONTACT US**

frinton@visionmag.co.uk | 01255 564056

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 Vision Magazine Frinton

FOUNDER | Nik Allen CREATIVE DIRECTOR | Misha Mistry

CO-ORDINATORS | Rebecka Fryer, Amy Pollard

CONTRIBUTORS | Tabatha Fabray, Tim Green

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

# Editor's notes...



Sean Purcell, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** Frinton-on-Sea.

We're now entering the final chapter of 2020, a year with many 'unprecedented' times. In fact that word unprecedented I have

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

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

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

However your year's gone, let's look forward with positivity to 2021. Wishing you a Happy and Healthy Christmas and New Year.

*Sean*



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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

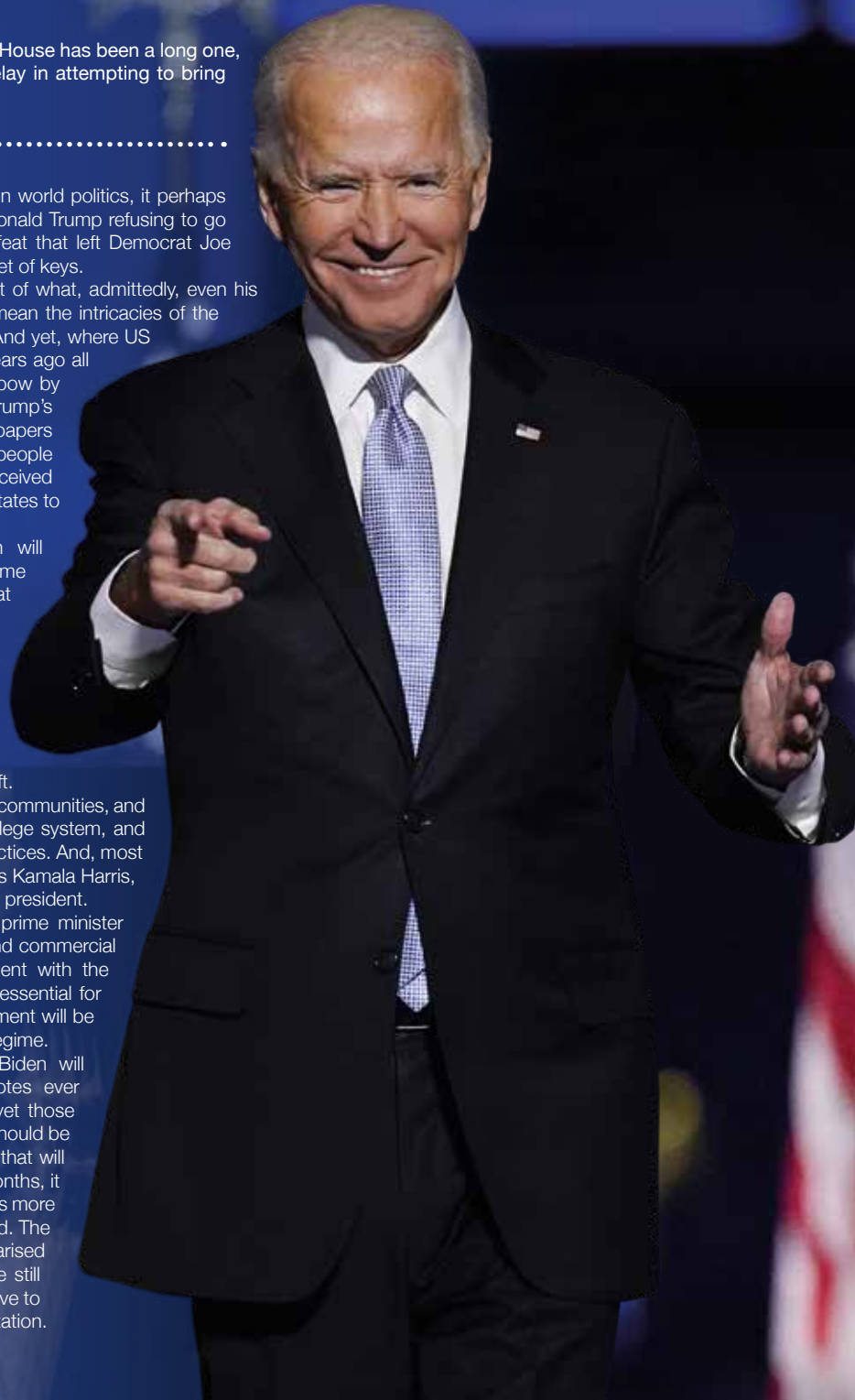


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# BIDEN: His Time

# THE WORLD AROUND US

## Part 2

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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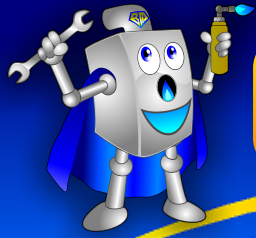
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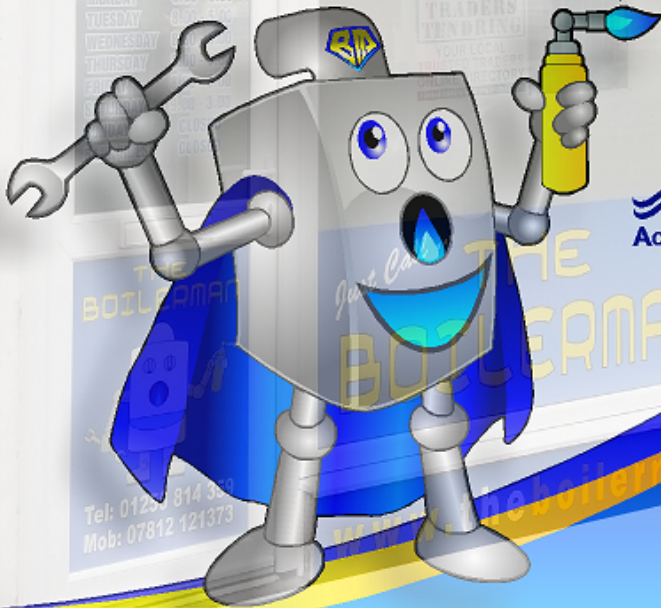
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HOME & DIY

# Time to breathe better



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

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

### KEEP YOUR HOME CLEAN

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

### CHANGE YOUR AIR FILTERS

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

allowing them to circulate around your home.

### INVEST IN AN AIR PURIFIER

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

### HAVE YOUR CHIMNEY SWEPT

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

### INSTALL A CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR

Carbon monoxide is odourless and can be deadly. However, even at non-fatal levels it can be dangerous for people with weakened lungs.



HOME & DIY

# Stylish storage solutions FOR FIREWOOD



1

2

3

4

5

Photo credit: sheilertness.com, ideallhome.co.uk, vanellensternyn.com, aplaceforeverything.co.uk, houzz.com

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

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

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

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

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

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



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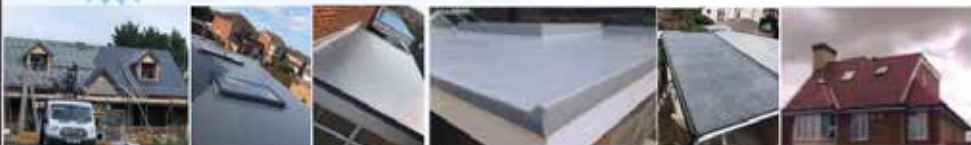
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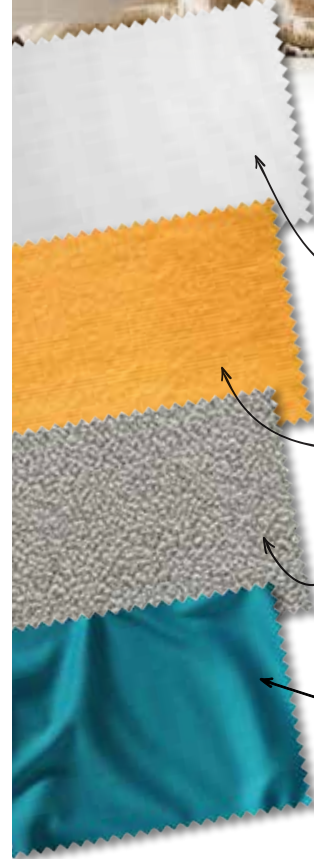


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# Banish the brrrr!



HOME & DIY



If you spend all day every day in the winter months longing to return to the comfort and cosiness of your bed, then you may be interested to find out what the best bed sheets are for winter warmth.

From fleece to flannel, cotton to silk, keep reading to discover what fabric you should choose for your winter safe haven.

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

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

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

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





# DIY Glass art

**N**obody likes to look at a big, bare wall, but there are only so many family pictures that one room can take, so why not have a go at this simple, yet stunning, DIY glass wall art? You only need a few basic craft materials and a little bit of creative flair and you are good to go.

### YOU WILL NEED

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

### HOW TO MAKE

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

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

### TOP TIPS FOR PAINTING ON GLASS

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

### OTHER IDEAS FOR DIY GLASS ART:

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

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HOME & DIY



# Chic OR UNIQUE

THE RETURN OF SHABBY CHIC AND HOW TO PULL IT OFF

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# LOCAL NEWS

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LOCAL NEWS



## Conman caught as victims warn the police

A fraudster has been jailed for his part in a scam targeting elderly victims, including several in Frinton-on-Sea.

Albino Chaves admitted nine counts of conspiracy to commit fraud by false representation and three of conspiracy to defraud.

He was jailed at Chelmsford Crown Court on October 27 for two years and four months.

Chaves, 24, was involved a series of frauds, in which conmen would contact elderly victims claiming to be from their bank. They told victims they would be receiving a new bank card and a courier would go to their home to exchange their old card for a new one.

Chaves was arrested after being identified as the courier. He was released on bail with conditions not to enter Essex.

On April 23, a woman in Frinton-on-Sea was called in the same way as the victims in the other frauds. However, after speaking with her daughter, she was worried it was a scam.

The fraudster rang a few hours later saying a courier would arrive within a few minutes. She explained it was not convenient, but he persisted. She hung up and called the police.

Officers attended and waited for the courier to arrive. During that time, another victim from Frinton-on-Sea called the police to report a courier had collected her bank card.

While officers were responding, they stopped a black Mercedes in Thorpe-le-Soken after they noticed it driving around the area, and became suspicious.

Chaves was one of the men inside. His mobile phone was seized, and they found messages about both fraud victims.

Detective Constable Hollie Hughes, of Clacton CID, said: "Chaves was part of a planned and targeted fraud, with victims losing between £300 and £4,000 each. He had no regard for the distress it would cause his victims and I hope that this sentence will give them some justice."



# Volunteers come to rescue of damaged boat

RNLI volunteers from Frinton-on-Sea were among those who came to the rescue of a damaged angling boat last month.

Walton and Frinton volunteers were paged by the Dover Coastguard just before noon on November 10 after reports were received that the vessel, which was four nautical miles east of the lifeboat station, was unable to make its own way.

Once the rescuers were on the scene, it was found that the angling boat had been on passage to Rye in East Sussex but had bounced on Gunfleet Sands and sustained damage. The boat lost steerage and was also taking on water, which the on-board pump was managing to keep at a safe level. Once the welfare of the two men on board had been established, the

lifeboat crew set up a tow and the *Irene Muriel Rees* towed the vessel into Walton Backwaters.

The lifeboat was met by the yard team at Titchmarsh Marina, who immediately lifted the vessel out of the water to prevent it sinking and to check the damage.

Speaking afterwards, station mechanic Karl Bigwood said: "Although the initial call seemed fairly routine, a broken-down boat which had anchored to await assistance, the situation became much more urgent once we found it was taking on substantial amounts of sea water.

"With the pump running only on battery, it could quickly have turned very serious had the batteries failed or been swamped. Things could have changed very quickly to an operation to save those on board."

## Air ambulance called to accident on beach



Photo credit: SPHO Photography

Emergency services rushed to Frinton Beach last month after reports of a horse-riding accident.

The Essex and Herts Air Ambulance were among those to attend the scene on November 22. It's understood that the rider may have fractured her pelvis but that she was conscious and talking after the accident took place.

The horse was led away from the beach into a horse box.

A spokesman for the East of England Ambulance Trust said: "I can confirm that we responded to an emergency call on November 22 shortly after midday regarding an incident on the Frinton-on-Sea promenade. We sent three ambulances, a rapid response vehicle and an air ambulance to the scene. The patient was transferred to Colchester General Hospital for further care."

## Firefighters called to unusual rescue



Firefighters in Frinton-on-Sea attended an unusual event last month when they came to the rescue of a seagull caught in a tree by a kite line.

The RSPCA was called to Connaught Avenue by a member of the public, who had spotted the bird

caught by some kind of line in a tree on November 14.

The bird was checked over by RSPCA inspector Jessica Dayes and taken to Wildlives Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre.

She said: "This poor gull had become caught in a tree, and we are grateful to the firefighters who rescued him and to the members of the public for reporting this.

"Fortunately, despite his ordeal, he wasn't severely injured, and after a few days rest and rehabilitation he will be released back to the wild."

If you spot an animal in distress, please call the RSPCA's emergency helpline on 0300 1234 999.

## Early Christmas present for jazz fans

If you've been missing live music, Frinton Jazz Club is staging a one-off concert at the Lawn Tennis Club later this month.

After the club staged its first ever sold-out concert in February this year with the Derek Nash Quartet, many others were due to join in March for a second concert with the 2019 British Jazz Award-winning trumpeter Enrico Tomasso, which was cancelled.

So the club has decided to combine the two, with Enrico joining Derek's Quartet for a Christmas special.

There will be two performances of 90 minutes each, with no interval, on Sunday, December 20, at 3pm and 7.30pm.

Tickets are on sale via the online box office [ticketsource.co.uk/frinton-jazz-club](https://ticketsource.co.uk/frinton-jazz-club) and must be purchased in advance.

In the event of government restrictions leading to a cancellation, TicketSource will refund all monies promptly.

For more information, call 01255 674055 or email [enquiries@fosltc.com](mailto:enquiries@fosltc.com)



## Sale goes ahead despite pandemic



Although it was scaled down to comply with social distancing regulations, the Frinton and Walton Heritage Trust still held a successful sale at the Crossing Cottage Museum and Gardens recently.

Although volunteers and the number of stalls were reduced to fewer than 20, visitors were still able to buy apples and plants, mainly from the cottage garden, homemade jams and marmalade.

Trust secretary Brian Jennings said: "This was the first Trust fundraising event of the year and raised a much-needed £550. Our funding events, one in May and the other in October, would normally raise £5,000 and this, with income from membership, helps fund our members' newsletters, allow members free access to our museums, pay overheads and increase our archive resources.

"This year we will have to rely on our reserves to get through the period of lockdown, as our museums at Frinton-on-Sea and Walton-on-the Naze have remained closed all season."





## Daughter outraged at care home inspection

LOCAL NEWS



The daughter of a man with dementia and Alzheimer's says she is furious after government inspectors ruled that the care home where he now lives must remain in special measures.

Inspectors from the Care Quality Commission did not change their rating of Blenheim House Care Home in nearby Walton after visiting the property in March this year.

Vanessa Streete, who lives in Frinton-on-Sea, said she cannot fault the care her dad has been receiving.

She said: "Our hats are off to the dedicated and caring staff who provide him with the attention needed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If I thought even for a second that there were issues, I would be exceptionally wordy and very loud about it."

"The care my dad receives is incredible. Nobody can judge these people."

"They had their second assessment between two lockdowns and have been kicked around for not having done enough. Some staff have stayed for weeks so they didn't cross-contaminate."

"I've seen Dad once in between the two lockdowns and I was wearing a mask, given hand gel and had my temperature taken by the staff, who were all taking it very seriously. I'm outraged."

Blenheim House will be reinspected in six months to check if improvements have been made.

## Open your gardens for the RNLI

Organisers of Frinton Open Gardens have started to plan early for the 2021 spectacular.

They want to hear from green-fingered residents

who can show off their gardens to raise funds for the Walton and Frinton Lifeboat on June 26, 2021, and posted about the event on Facebook.

The post reads: "We need your gardens. This is an incredible opportunity for you to show your beautiful Frinton-on-Sea gardens to members of the public for one day only, on June 26, 2021 and all you have to do is sit and relax and chat to the visitors."

"The Walton and Frinton Lifeboat fundraising guild will do the rest along with an army of volunteers."

Anyone who can help is asked to email frinton.gardens@gmail.com for more information or go to the Frinton Open Gardens Facebook page and send a message.

## Unexploded hand grenade discovered

Police cordoned off a building site in Kirby-le-Soken last month after an unexploded hand grenade was discovered.

Local police officers liaised with a bomb expert, and the site manager and residents in nearby houses were made aware.

The Explosive Ordnance Disposal team from Colchester later arrived and detonated the grenade, allowing the site manager to reopen the site the following day.



Photo credit: Essex Police

SAYING THANK YOU ON

# Boxing Day

THE ORIGINS OF BOXING DAY, DECEMBER 26, EXPLAINED

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sir Sean, you succeeded.

# The Ultimate Bond?



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# Festive treats

Although you may want your pet to be able to enjoy your festive food with you, the majority of Christmas fare is both toxic and dangerous for dogs and cats. However, that doesn't mean they can't tuck into a treat or two over the upcoming weeks.

minutes until brown | Leave to fully cool

### Festive Feline Titbits

YOU WILL NEED: 1 small chicken breast | 1 apple | 300g oat flour (you can make this by whizzing up oats in a blender) | 2 eggs | 1tbsp catnip

### Canine Crimbo Cookies

YOU WILL NEED: 2 cups wholewheat flour | 1 cup plain non-fat Greek yogurt | 1 tbsp baking powder | 1 cup all-natural peanut butter | Water

HOW TO MAKE: Preheat your oven to gas mark 6/200°C | Cook the chicken for 25 minutes until cooked through | Leave to cool and then shred into thin strips | Peel and cut the apple and slice into small pieces | Place the apple in a pan and add water until the apple is covered | Simmer for 20 minutes until the apple has softened | Add the chicken, apple, eggs, flour and catnip to a blender and whizz until combined | Roll out the dough to 1cm thick | Cut into your preferred Christmas shape or design | Place on a lined baking tray and bake for 15 minutes until golden | Leave to cool completely

HOW TO MAKE: Preheat your oven to gas mark 5/190°C | Line a baking tray with parchment paper | Mix ingredients together in a bowl to create a dough | Add a little water if too dry | Roll out your dough and cut into your chosen shape | Bake for 15

Festive foods you should not give to your dog or cat include: Chocolate | Mince pies | Christmas pudding | Onion gravy | Bones from carcasses | Anything too fatty or salty




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GARDENING

HORTICULTURE HEROES:

# Diarmuid Gavin

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

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

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

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

"I think with all these things there has to be a practicality to it – there has to be a take-out. "If I am exhibiting an idea that is preposterously unachievable to the average gardener, then what is the point?"

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

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

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

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

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



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# Holly

DECEMBER BIRTH FLOWER  
OF THE MONTH

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

## What is the symbolic significance of holly?

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

## What does this birth flower say about your personality?

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

## How to grow holly in your garden

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

## Interesting facts about holly

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



# THE ULTIMATE Champagne GUIDE



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

### How to store

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

### How long can you store a bottle for?

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

### Understanding the labels

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

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



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# Christmas

*plants that care and cure*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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# FOUR COMMON WINTER AILMENTS AND HOW TO TREAT THEM



As well as the common cold and seasonal flu, not to mention COVID-19, there are several ailments that many people suffer with during the cold winter months. Let's take a closer look at them and their most effective treatments.

### 1. PAINFUL JOINTS

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

### 2. COLD SORES

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

### 3. ASTHMA

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

### 4. SINUS INFECTIONS

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

### TOP TIPS FOR KEEPING HEALTHY THIS WINTER

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





# PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

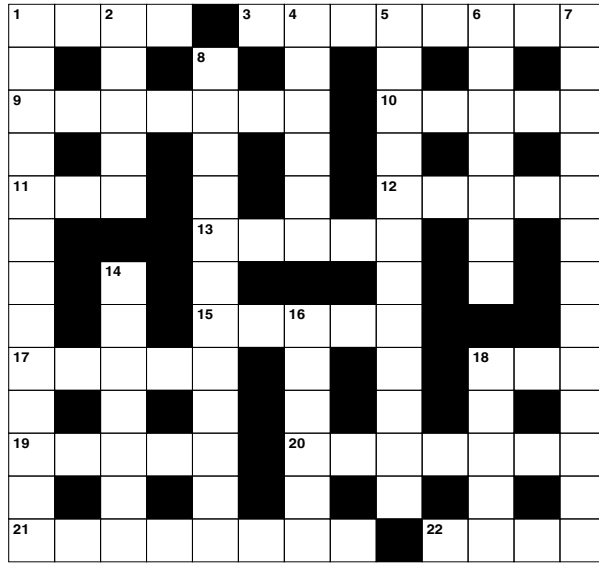
Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4

## ACROSS

- Set of playing cards (4)
- Neck injury (8)
- Genuine (7)
- Kick out (5)
- 17th Greek letter (3)
- The beginning of an era (5)
- Enclosed (5)
- Bird sound (5)
- Turned to ice (5)
- Statute (3)
- Exposes secret information (5)
- Country whose capital is Reykjavik (7)
- Longing (8)
- Refuse to admit (4)

## DOWN

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



- Food shop (12)
- Proportionately (3,4)
- Banner or flag (6)
- Lessen (5)

## DID YOU KNOW?

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

## SUDOKU

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	7	4					8	
			9	6				
	9				6	1		
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		7	8			4	2	
8	4							



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### Why the Help to Buy: Shared Ownership continues to create homes out of houses

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

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

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

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

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

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



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# PENSION PARALYSIS

WHY INVESTING NOW MEANS BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

In these uncertain times, our ability to plan for the future has been tested to extremes. Record numbers of homeowners embarked on payment holidays this year as COVID-19 struck, and forward financial plans and projects have been put on hold across the board – much of it on the advice of government... except where pensions are concerned.

The idea of starting a private pension fund is something that would have confronted most adults, and yet still only two-thirds of us are said to be building a reserve that will service us in our retirement.

This lack of forward planning has brought about a concept known as pension paralysis. Many of us will recognise the idea of spending for now – and in many cases this is a necessity, not a choice – and yet the

accumulation of a pension fund, particularly when matched by employer contributions, can have dramatic uplift by the time we bid farewell to the daily grind of full-time employment.

As an example, someone in their thirties earning £35,000/year who manages to put away 20 per cent of their income, and have that matched by an employer, will end up with a pension fund that pays in the region of £1,200/month on retirement.

However, if the decision to begin to put money aside is left until we're in our forties, that drops to less than £850/month, dipping to below £500/month in our fifties.

While pension paralysis in the short term means providing for our home, our children or our social lives, the end effect can mean a drastic impact on our quality of life in retirement.

The advice from government is to put away even a small amount and to get into a routine that means you don't miss that sum coming out each month. Independent financial advisors can guide you on the correct path, while over-50s receive free advice from Pension Wise.



BUSINESS & PROPERTY



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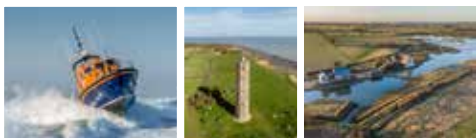
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TECHNOLOGY

# DRONING ON

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

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

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

From specific events, such as the recent wildfires across Australia, to flood and avalanche disasters in China, to missing person searches in any location, it's estimated that it takes 25 people 35 hours to

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

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

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

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



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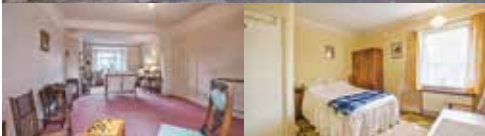
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