



REVEALED

Pantone Colours
of the Year 2021

Most bizarre
excuses

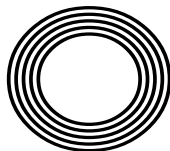
**FOR PULLING
A SICKIE**

Remembering a legend

**DAME BARBARA
WINDSOR DBE**

Lewis HAMILTON

Sports Personality of the Year racing into the record books



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Editor's notes...

JANUARY 2021



Sean Purcell, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** Frinton-on-Sea. Well, let's just say 2020 was quite a year. There is not a single person in the country who hasn't been affected by COVID-19. As a publishing house, over the course of a few months, we sank to some profoundly low depths. It's fair to say I had sleepless nights over what the future might entail, but looking back I'm left with a sense of having gained from the experience. That might seem a strange thing to say, but coronavirus woke us up to what we needed as a business; boring financial reviews, the drive for greater efficiency, streamlining and a change to work practices.

And what about the positives we as individuals have discovered? Working from home - brilliant; more contact with relatives - overdue; paying attention to our health and fitness - great.

Of course, we have all lost a lot, but now, in the dawn of a new era - and a vaccine - let's try to gather in all the things we have gained, while being better prepared and stronger for the new year ahead. This lockdown is an unwelcome step, but necessary to reach our ultimate goal of returning back to some sense of normality.

With that in mind, I'd like to thank all our loyal customers and readers. We are in this together. Wishing you all a very happy and healthy new year.

Sean Purcell

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

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The great Dame BARBARA WINDSOR DBE

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND CAREER OF THE QUEEN OF TV

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Of course, Windsor's infectious persona,

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

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

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

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

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

Photo credit: Shutterstock



THE WORLD AROUND US

Part 3

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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BIG ENERGY SAVING WEEK...

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JANUARY 18 - 24

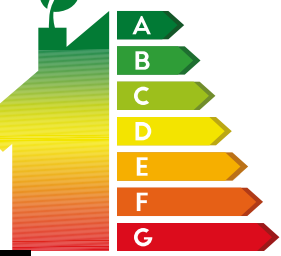
What better time to try to reduce your energy bills than in the week before payday when you are undoubtedly feeling the pinch after Christmas?

Plus, you don't even have to make massive changes to your lifestyle to enjoy significant savings.

Remember, all the little things really do add up.

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

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



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

- 4. Don't use metal trays in the oven:** Glass and ceramic dishes retain heat better than metal ones, making them more energy efficient.
- 5. Keep heating rings clean:** Any food that has become stuck to your heating rings will absorb heat, making them less efficient.
- 6. Wash your clothes at 30°C:** 90 per cent of your washing expenditure is spent on heating the water, so by reducing the heat to 30°C when possible, you can save one-third on your washing costs.
- 7. Unplug any unused appliances:** Unplug or switch the power off on any appliances that you aren't using. This includes charger cables.
- 8. Turn down your thermostat:** By turning down your thermostat by just 1°C, you can save up to £80 per year.

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

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



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HOW YOU CAN JOIN THE PLASTER EFFECT INTERIOR TREND

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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Grey DAY?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Photo credit: designer.com, diegoblanki.com



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SQUEAKY SCREEN

Nobody looks forward to having to clean their screens, and you may leave this frustrating task until you literally can't handle the smudges and streaks any more.

However, screen cleaning doesn't have to be so stressful.

a good idea to polish and wipe down your phone case before reattaching.

COMPUTER MONITOR SCREEN

For general cleaning, use a soft, lint-free cloth to remove dust from your computer screen. To remove stains, slightly dampen your cloth or a sponge and softly rub the screen, making sure no excess liquid gets on it. Leave to naturally air dry. Avoid using alcohol or an ammonia-based cleaner on your laptop screen as this can damage it.

What **NOT** to do when cleaning any screen

- > Use aerosol sprays or solvents
- > Spray liquid directly onto the screen
- > Use your fingernail to scratch off stubborn stains

NATURAL CLEANING SOLUTION FOR SCREENS

If you prefer to make your own natural cleaning solutions, this DIY spray is suitable for most screens. Simply mix equal parts vinegar and water, dab your microfibre cloth into the liquid and gently wipe the screen.

TV SCREENS LCD PLASMA

These delicate screens should never be wet cleaned; instead, you should dust them with a soft, dry microfibre cloth. For stubborn smudges, use a pre-moistened wipe that is specifically designed for use on electronics. Make sure you don't miss the dust caught in the vents at the back of your TV.

MOBILE PHONE SCREENS

The screen of your mobile phone can get very dirty so it is important to clean it regularly. Start by removing your phone from its case, powering it down and then polishing it with a microfibre cloth. Rub gently with a wipe that is safe for use on electronics – for example, Lysol – to remove any germs and leave to air dry. Polish again using your cloth. It can also be

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HOME & DIY

SPICY STORAGE SOLUTIONS

Who says that kitchen storage has to be boring? Check out these super stylish and space-saving storage solutions for your spices that will guarantee you reach for some added flavour every time you cook.

TEST IT OUT

If you have a handful of trusty spices that you use regularly, then this is the spice storage solution for you. Simply purchase a set of test tubes, fill with your preferred seasonings and place in a wooden box that you could make yourself or pick up from your nearest craft shop.

STACK IT, STACK IT

For those who want a practical and attractive option, why not store your spices in mini mason jars or tins that have been labelled using chalk paint? Perfect if you love the shabby chic look. These can be stacked on your worktop or stored in a drawer.

MAGNET MAYHEM

If you want your spices within grabbing distance but you don't want them taking up valuable space on your kitchen worktop, try using magnets. You could attach metal spice pots to the inside of your cabinet doors, under your cabinets or in any other convenient location in your kitchen.

TIC TAC ON-THE-GO

Ideal for taking spices outside your home, whether on holiday or into work. Simply pour your favourite spices into old Tic Tac containers, label and you are good to go. Make sure you thoroughly clean the containers first to avoid a minty taste on all your spices.

HANG IN THERE

For another great way to utilise space underneath your kitchen cabinets, simply hang your spice jars directly on the wall using some small hooks and string. Glass storage jars work best for this so that you can easily see what spices are in each container.



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Viva

DRIED FLOWERS

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

HOW TO DRY FLOWERS

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

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

WHAT ARE THE BEST FLOWERS FOR DRYING?

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

HOW TO DISPLAY DRIED FLOWERS

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

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



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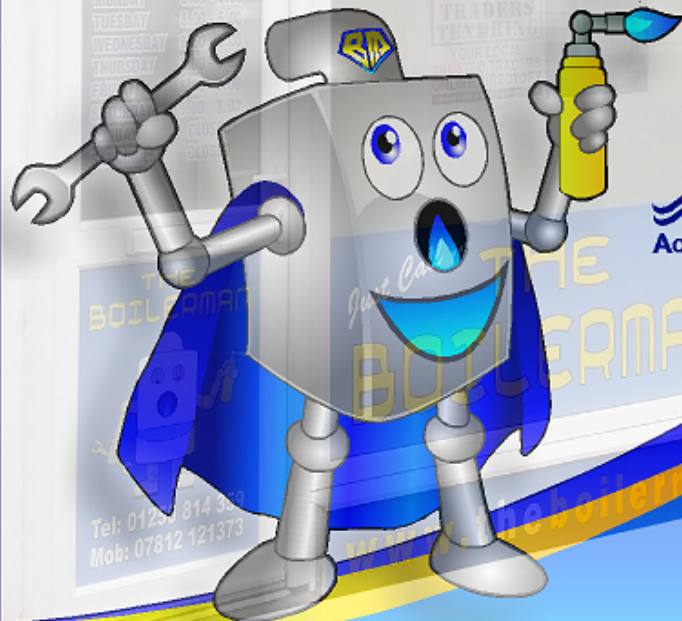
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TRAVEL

TRAINS, PLANES & starry-lit fields

QUIRKY OVERNIGHT STAYS TO ENJOY IN THE UK

BOATHOUSES

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

BUSES

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

PLANES

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

FIELDS

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

TRAINS

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



Photo credit: we love whitby.com, coolstays.com, applecampnr.co.uk, coolcampnr.com, railwaytravels.co.uk

GERBILS on film

THE MOST POPULAR PETS IN MOVIE HISTORY

TURNER AND HOOCH

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

BABE

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

SHADOWFAX

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

UGGIE

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



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

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The ULTIMATE formula

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Post Office serving elderly and vulnerable people reopens

A Post Office in Frinton-on-Sea which closed recently reopened last month after calls from Frinton and Walton Town Council.

The branch at Martin's in the Triangle Shopping Centre was closed in November, but last month a temporary reopening ceremony was attended by a number of councillors demonstrating that the provision of this vital amenity for local people has all-party support from Frinton and Walton Town Council.

The Mayor, councillor Fiona Robertson, made a short speech in which she praised the work of councillor Anne Davis and the town clerk in getting the

temporary Post Office open.

Cllr Robertson then cut a ribbon and declared the temporary Post Office open for business.

In the longer term, the town council plans to locate a permanent Post Office in its own building in the Triangle if its application for this facility is approved.

The new Post Office will be open from 9am to 5.30pm Monday to Wednesday and from 9am to 3pm on Thursdays and Fridays.

Data has shown that it is used by around 1,500 customers a week, the large majority of whom are elderly or vulnerable.

Green-fingered volunteers get recognition



A group of selfless green-spirited volunteers, who worked throughout 2020 to maintain open spaces in Frinton-on-Sea so they could be enjoyed by the community, has received some special recognition.

The Royal Horticultural Society, which runs the Britain in Bloom competition, has been encouraged by the ingenuity in the way in which communities have been working together and inspiring others.

It has issued certificates to the In Bloom Groups who have overcome and worked through these testing times, and these include Frinton in Bloom, which was awarded an Outstanding certificate for both the Crescent Gardens, managed by Tendring District Council, and the Railway Cottage Garden, maintained by the Frinton and Walton Heritage Trust gardeners.

Frinton in Bloom was also awarded the community certificate.

Meanwhile, Anglia in Bloom 2020 held a virtual competition from visuals sent in for the various categories, for which Frinton received 12 highly commended certificates.

David Foster from Frinton in Bloom said everyone involved should feel very proud.

He added: "Well done to all those who took part to keep Frinton-on-Sea a place to be proud of."

Electric blanket starts fire in flat

Firefighters have issued safety advice after an electric blanket caused a fire in a flat.

Crews were called to a fourth storey flat in The Esplanade, Frinton-on-Sea, on December 14 at 3.06am.

An electric blanket had been left on and set fire to bedding. The occupant was woken by her smoke alarm, got out of the flat and alerted the caretaker.

Firefighters from Clacton, Frinton and Weeley attended and extinguished the fire, which was contained to the bedroom, by 3.36am.

They also administered first aid to the occupant,

who had suffered smoke inhalation, and ventilated the property by 4.01am.

Nick Singleton, operational risk manager and on-call crew manager, gave safety advice regarding electric blankets as part of the service's advent calendar.

He said: "With the winter nights upon us, if you or a loved one has an electric blanket you might want to follow this advice. Check it for signs of wear and tear, never leave it on overnight, get one that has an overheat protect function and make sure it conforms to British Standards and has the Kitemark."



Did you witness assault on two teenage boys?

Police are appealing for witnesses to an incident in which two teenage boys were assaulted by a large group of men in Frinton-on-Sea.

The incident happened in the playing fields on Jubilee Way when the two 16-year-old boys were assaulted by a group of up to six men on Saturday, November 7.

Officers investigating the incident would like to hear from anyone who may have seen what happened.

They are particularly keen to hear from a woman, described as white and aged in her 40s, who was walking a dog believed to have been named Harley. The woman stopped to see if the victims were okay and police believe she may have witnessed the incident.

Anyone with information can contact PC Adam Buckingham at Clacton Local Policing Team on 101, quoting Athena reference 42/182601/20. Alternatively, call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.





Fire service warns not to try to tackle fires

People who discover fires at home have been urged not to try and tackle them after a man had to be treated for smoke inhalation in Kirby Cross last month.

Firefighters were called to a house fire in Peake Avenue on December 1 at 5pm after the resident heard his smoke alarms going off.

On arrival, crews reported that the second floor of a three-storey house was on fire and worked to extinguish it by 6pm.

The fire was caused after a battery charger had overheated and has left the property uninhabitable due to the smoke damage.

A man was treated for smoke inhalation by paramedics after he attempted to tackle the fire when

it was smaller.

Nick Singleton, operational and community risk manager for North Essex said: "I'd really like to highlight the importance of having working smoke alarms on every floor of your home, they alerted this resident to this fire which was on another floor.

"We understand your immediate reaction might be to try and tackle a smaller fire yourself, but we strongly advise against this as the risk of suffering from smoke inhalation and burns are serious and fires can spread quickly.

"When charging larger batteries, we recommend remaining in the room with them as they can overheat quickly."

Strong support from town delights independent traders



One of the co-owners of a shop in Frinton-on-Sea says she and other traders have been greatly encouraged by the amount of residents who were shopping in independent outlets in the town in the run-up to Christmas.

Judith Charlesworth and Sally Johnson co-own Caxton Books and Gallery on Connaught Avenue.

Judith said she was delighted to see locals returning to the town.

She commented: "I just wanted to say a big thank you to the community who are coming out in huge numbers (socially distanced, of course) to shop with the indies in town. I am sure that I am not alone in wanting to pass on my appreciation. It has been such a boost after a very difficult year. It's so lovely to see all your familiar faces.

"One of the things I have always mentioned is that having local shops open has social benefits for the residents as well. It's not just about buying things over the counter but also strengthening relationships that have formed over many years."

The budget will also increase the council's reserves by nearly £30,000.

Tendring District Council, Essex County Council and the county's police and fire commissioner make up the remainder of the council tax bill.

Royal recognition for police volunteer chief

The overseer of Essex Police cadets and volunteers has received a British Empire Medal in the Queen's New Year Honours List.

In 2008, Jenny Brouard, who is from Frinton-on-Sea, created an annual Volunteers Awards evening to ensure all those who gave up their time for the force were recognised in a dedicated ceremony. As the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) Officer, she now oversees the biggest CSAS scheme in the country, with 46 organisations and 545 people taking part.

In 2015, she devised the concept of Active Citizens, volunteers who would support teams with house-to-house enquiries, reassurance visits and other community-based activities.

Numbers now stand at 148 Active Citizens, and this practice was used as a case study at the 2018 National Police Chiefs' Council Conference.

She later assumed responsibility for the Volunteer Police Cadets in 2018, with 260 cadets and 60 leaders across 10 cadet units. She took the time to visit all units personally and the cadets now stand at more than 400 in number, with three new units being introduced.

Jenny has already received numerous awards for her work – including an Essex Police Award in 2009 for developing volunteering and a Community Safety Award in 2015.

New trees take root for National Tree Week

The planting of 500 trees took place in Frinton-on-Sea last month as part of National Tree Week.

The 90cm-tall whips were positioned in Valley Walk, Clays Road, as part of Tendring District Council's (TDC) drive to plant more trees in support of the environment.

Species planted included field maple, cherry, crab apple, hazel and hawthorn. The trees will take a few years to reach maturity.

Councillor Michael Talbot, TDC cabinet member for environment, said: "These trees will help to convert carbon dioxide to oxygen, giving us a fresher environment and helping to tackle climate change, as well as improving biodiversity and providing habitat for wildlife.

"Having planted these, it's now all of our responsibility to cherish and protect these trees, which should stand tall and enhance the area for decades to come."

Town council sets out spending plans

Police community support officers will continue to be a regular sight on the streets of Frinton-on-Sea after Frinton and Walton Town Council set its budget for the next financial year last month.

The budget of £622,413 also includes £16,200 for work to convert a room at Frinton and Walton Town Council offices in Triangle Shopping Centre into a Post Office.

In total, the town council is putting up its share of the bill by 4.5 per cent, which means the average Band D household will be paying an extra £3.08 towards the town council's share of the bill.



Photo credit: Simon Rich Photography



JANUARY BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH:

Carnation

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

WHAT DOES A CARNATION SYMBOLISE?

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

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

WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOUR PERSONALITY?

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

HOW CAN I GROW CARNATIONS?

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

DO CARNATIONS COME BACK YEAR AFTER YEAR?

Carnations come in annual, biennial and perennial types, so depending on the amount of space you have, you are guaranteed to be able to find a variety to fit your garden. Perennial carnation seeds should be planted in late autumn to early spring and annual carnation seeds can be sown directly in the ground from April to May or in shelter from as early as March.



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Horticulture Heroes:

There's nothing quite like learning building knowledge from the ground up, and for a young Ellie Harrison, the wildlife, ecology and wide-open spaces of Zimbabwe provided a fertile and expansive canvas on which to construct her career.

From kids' TV to wildlife programming and on to the BBC, stopping off along the way at the Chelsea Flower Show, the now-43-year-old's focus has always been in the embracing of the natural world, even in home surroundings.

"I'm not sure where the phrase 'wildlife gardening' came from, but it requires little explanation," says the presenter and broadcaster. "As much as I admire the ingenuity and craft so many of us invest in our green spaces at home, I sometimes feel it is a look that can be a bit too contrived and planned.

"Wildlife gardening is really about embracing living landscapes. It doesn't matter if you're talking about

a 100ft lawn or something as simple as a flower bed, the point is that our spaces have all the life and variety that nature and the countryside provide."

At the heart of it is having the right platforms for birds, bees and insects. That will stimulate the impact of genuine wildlife in an area that might be bereft of anything noticeable.

"It's a case of making natural and organic decisions to decorate your space. Instead of using a dull wooden fence, invest in a living boundary that can feature bamboo, twine, flowers, scent and berries."

Similarly, a pond can be used to harvest natural life such as newts, tadpoles, frogs, toads and insects, rather than fish imported in from the local pet shop.

"The exciting thing about wildlife gardening is the creation of a world that grows and evolves in front of you, and all by itself. The phrase 'how nature intended' never seemed so pertinent."

Photo credit: bbc.co.uk

ELLIE HARRISON

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NATIONAL PULL A SICKIE DAY ON



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

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

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

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

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

“My grandmother poisoned me with her ham”

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

“I’m too drunk to drive”

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

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

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

How you should call in sick to work

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



THE RISE OF VOICE SEARCH

Did you know that 60 per cent of smartphone users have tried voice search at least once in the last 12 months, and 55 per cent of teenagers use this technology on a daily basis?

WHAT IS VOICE SEARCH?

Voice search is an innovative technology that allows internet users to perform a web search by verbally asking a question on their smartphone or smart device, rather than by typing it in to a search box.

HOW CAN I GET MY BUSINESS FOUND ON VOICE SEARCH?

1. BECOME THE FEATURED SNIPPET
 Featured snippets are small sections of text that appear at the top of Google's search results and are designed to answer a searcher's query. If your business is the featured snippet, this is the response that will be read aloud by the voice assistant. Both blogging and detailed FAQ pages can help you get featured in the snippet.

2. UPDATE YOUR GOOGLE MY BUSINESS LISTING

Most voice searches are local ones, so you need to make sure all your company contact information is up to date on both your website and your Google My Business listing.

3. OPTIMISE YOUR WEBSITE WITH LONG-TAIL KEYWORDS

When using a voice assistant, people talk as if they're speaking to a real person. This means asking full questions and using longer phrases than they would if they were typing a search into Google. Therefore, your website needs to be optimised with longer phrases, also known as long-tail keywords.

4. IMPROVE YOUR PAGE SPEED

A simple tip, the faster your webpage loading speed, the more likely you are to appear in voice search results. You can use Google PageSpeed Insights to check the speed of your site or you can do it manually. Google recommends a page loading time of less than two seconds.



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



On January 18, 1882, A. A. Milne, the creator of Winnie the Pooh, a character cherished by children and adults alike, was born. To celebrate this skilled storyteller, January 18 has become known as National Winnie the Pooh Day. As well as being fun to read, these iconic stories offer some important life lessons that resonate just as well today as they did back then.

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

Photo credit: catwalker/Shutterstock.com

PUZZLES & TRIVIA

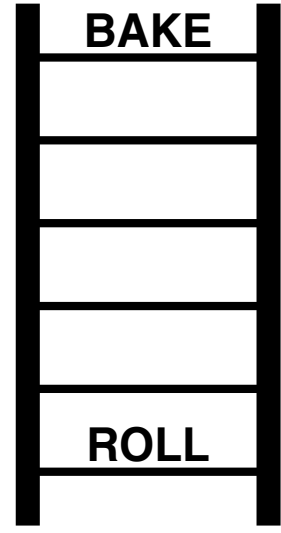
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DID YOU KNOW?

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

WORD LADDER



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

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

DO NOT rearrange the order of the letters.

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

Send & Receive

New Email

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From: Ray Tomlinson

To: BBN Technologies

Subject:

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the first ever email

Meet Ray Tomlinson – he is the man who transformed your life; he is the man who changed the way you interact with other people, and while he was at it, he revolutionised the business world too.



To explain, Ray was the man behind the first ever email. It was sent by the computer engineer from a machine at BBN Technologies in Massachusetts, to a different computer positioned less than 10 feet away.

While the distance covered may have been small, the action was mindbogglingly big. The then-30-year-old, through the simple action of putting a message in a file directory on a different computer, accessible when the user logged in, had provided the catalyst for connecting the whole world in a way never thought imaginable.

In the split second it took the email to arrive at its new location, the manual, functional, time-consuming and expensive way in which we conducted our business and personal lives had changed forever.

While we consider email a modern tool, it's startling to think this all happened 50 years ago. Indeed, one of the first people to send an email in the UK was the Queen, way back in 1976. It was only through the embracing of home computing in the 1980s and 1990s, and the adaption of technology that went with that, did email messaging come into the mainstream. As soon as it did, we were hooked, for life.

No more letters sluggishly sent through the post or sports journalists having to file match reports in a phone box; to fully appreciate what this technology has done for us, just consider the world without email.

These days there are almost four billion email accounts, with 300 billion messages sent every day. Ray passed away five years ago, but his legacy – and his emails – live on.

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The PROPERTY Bug?

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

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

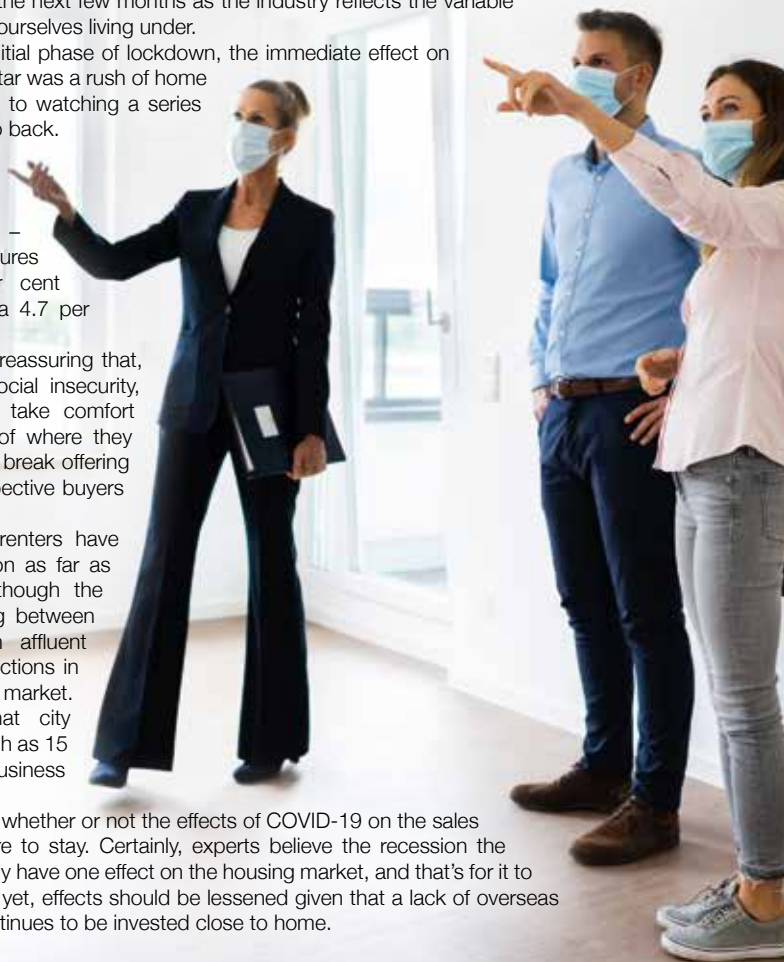
Certainly in the initial phase of lockdown, the immediate effect on our bricks and mortar was a rush of home improvements akin to watching a series of *DIY SOS* back to back.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

 **LAUGH MY APP OFF (LMAO):** We all need cheering up at least once a day, and with the LMAO app the job is done for us. Select one gag each day, or indulge in a pool of almost endless chuckle-worthy one-liners; you'll be 'appy before you know it.



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Linda Fisher (seller)



Home Domus approach was new and refreshing. The marketing and photography was superior as was the house description and detail. The concept of selling an overall package was novel. Not just the house but what the town has to offer. Their follow up and bookings were first class.

Robert Wallace (seller)



We haven't moved in 25 years and were concerned about estate agents. The owner, Florent was excellent and his fresh approach to house selling inspired us. The charges are fair and he has conducted the whole process with full professionalism. I would have no hesitation in recommending him to anyone looking to sell their home.

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