



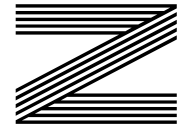
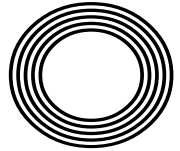
**TOP 4
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RAYE

Singer makes history on her rise to fame



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Editor's notes...

MARCH 2024



Nik Allen, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** Halstead Braintree. It's a fair assumption that only those living beneath a rock will be unaware of artificial intelligence (AI) and its growing influence.

The thing is, whilst I consider myself largely au fait with tech and modern trends, even I have felt intimidated by the threat of AI. With everything from self-driving cars to military analysis to online software that will write you a Hollywood screenplay while you sleep, it can feel very disconcerting.

And yet, consider the way we open apps on a phone via facial recognition. Consider our social media interactions, or Google searching or smart heating your home. Think about online banking, YouTube recommendations and even early cancer diagnosis. This is all AI in action... and none of it causes us to lay awake at night fearing the destruction of mankind as we know it.

I'm making a pledge to embrace the possibilities of AI, not fear them. AI, after all, was designed by humans to make our lives easier. It has done that, and I trust in the fact that it will continue to do so. Until next month, take care of yourself, each other, and your self-driving car.

Nik Allen

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Barbie's BIRTHDAY BASH

LEARN THE HISTORY OF THE ICONIC DOLL THIS WORLD BARBIE DAY, ON MARCH 9, AS BARBIE TURNS 65!

Barbie made her grand entrance into the world in 1959 at the American International Toy Fair in New York. She was sporting a blonde ponytail and black and white swimsuit – and was an instant hit. She was the brainchild of Ruth Handler, co-founder of Californian toy company Mattel.

Barbie was special because she had an adult body shape. Back then, most dolls were shaped like babies or young children. But when Handler watched her young daughter play with a German fashion doll on a family holiday in 1956, it sparked an idea.

Handler hoped that the new doll would help girls dream big, and over the years,

Barbie has had around 200 careers, including astronaut, Olympic athlete, and US presidential candidate. She's even worked at McDonald's.

Since 1961, she's been in a relationship with her boyfriend, Ken. And in 1962, she got her first Dreamhouse!

Over the years, Barbie has changed. She's had a range of

haircuts and hair colours. And in 1970, she became fully poseable – she didn't just bend at the knees and twist at the waist; she could do the splits. Her side-glancing eyes now gazed forward, and her pursed lips turned into a pearly white smile.

However, the first African-American and Hispanic Barbies didn't hit the shelves until 1980. We also had to wait until 1997 for her figure to become more realistic, with a larger waist and smaller breasts. In 2016, things went a step further with Barbies in three new body types: tall, curvy and petite.

There's also a wheelchair-user Barbie, introduced in 2020, and there are Barbies with hearing aids and prosthetic legs. Last year, British model and actress Ellie Goldstein unveiled a new Barbie with Down's syndrome, the condition she has herself.

In the 2023 movie, Barbie and Ken live in the perfect world of Barbie Land before being transported to the real world, where they discover the challenges of human life.

Barbie was one of last year's most talked about

films and earned nearly £1.12 billion at the box office, becoming Warner Bros.' biggest global success to date – even ahead of *Harry Potter*. It was also nominated for eight Oscars and sparked a love of all things pink and the Barbiecore trend.

But did you know that all the Barbie Land scenes were filmed not in sunny Los Angeles but at the Warner Bros. Studios in Leavesden, near Watford, Hertfordshire?

SIX FUN-FILLED BARBIE FACTS

- ★ Her full name is Barbara Millicent Roberts.
- ★ Her boyfriend Ken was named after Ruth Handler's own son, Kenneth.
- ★ Barbie originally cost just \$3.
- ★ 100 Barbies are sold every minute.
- ★ She's owned outfits by Oscar de La Renta and been painted by Andy Warhol.
- ★ The most expensive special edition Barbie, complete with authentic diamond jewellery, was sold for £300,000 in 2010.



Ruth Handler



photo credit: Barbie.com, shopping.mattel.com



'HANDLER HOPED THAT THE NEW DOLL WOULD HELP GIRLS DREAM BIG AND OVER THE YEARS BARBIE HAS HAD AROUND 200 CAREERS'

Spring EQUINOX



Spring is finally on its way, but when does the season actually start? If you're confused, it's not surprising. That's because there are two different types of spring – one based on weather patterns and the other on the positions of the Earth and the Sun.

ALL ABOUT WEATHER

The spring that depends on the weather is called meteorological spring and is all about making things easy. The year is split into four seasons, each lasting for three months. So, according to meteorology, spring begins on March 1 and lasts until May 31.

ASTRONOMICAL SPRING

Astronomical spring depends on the Spring Equinox – the date when day and night are pretty much the same length, wherever you are. This date varies very slightly from year to year. But it always falls between March 19 and 21 – and this year it falls on March 20.

WHAT IS THE SPRING EQUINOX?

The Spring Equinox happens because the Earth is tilted, not straight. As our planet travels around the Sun, spinning as it goes, most places get more sunlight at some times of year than at others. It all depends on whether your part of the planet is leaning towards or away from the Sun, and this is what gives us our seasons.

During the Spring Equinox, the Sun is directly over the Equator. This means the Earth's tilt isn't leaning toward or away from the Sun – so the days and nights are almost equal wherever you are in the world.

WHY DOES THE DATE VARY?

The date of the Spring Equinox varies because it takes the Earth around 365 days to orbit the Sun – but not exactly. We adjust for this with a leap year every four years, but the timing still isn't perfect.

Now that you know all about spring dates, go out and enjoy the wonders of the season!

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MOTORING



Jump starting a car might seem straightforward, but doing it safely is crucial to prevent irreparable damage to the battery, fried electronics and even serious personal injury!

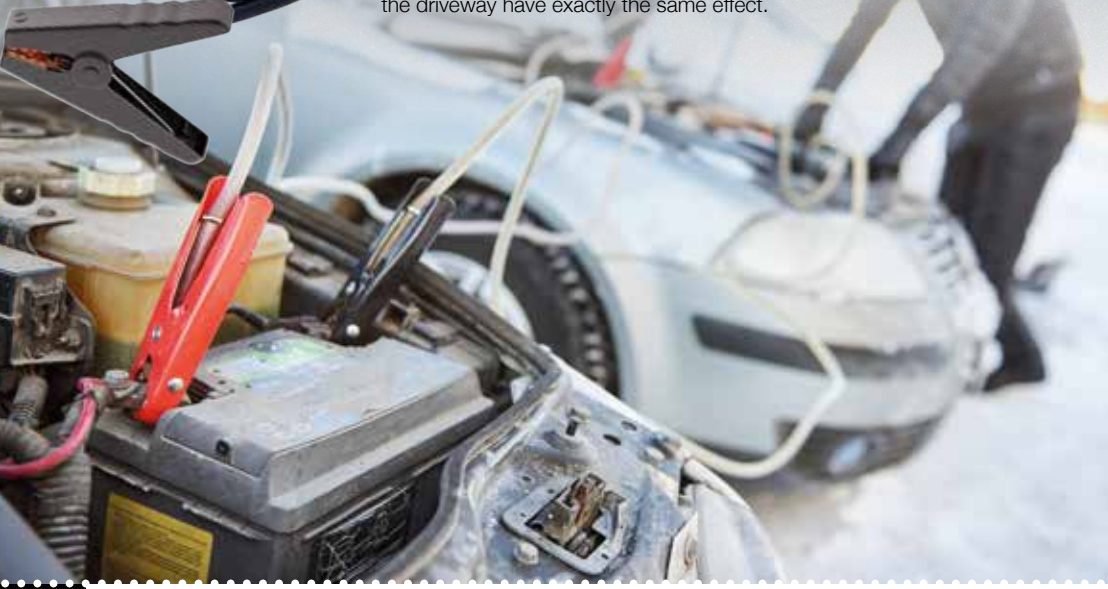
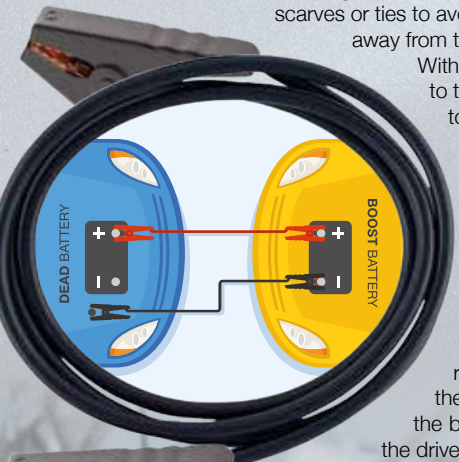
To start with, inspect both the battery and the leads. Do not attempt to jump start if the battery is damaged, swollen or leaking. Similarly, damaged jump leads should not be used, and if they get hot during use, stop immediately.

When connecting the leads, safety in your environment is key. Remove any loose clothing like scarves or ties to avoid them getting caught in engine parts, and keep metal objects away from the batteries to prevent sparks that could ignite battery gases.

With both cars turned off, connect one end of the positive (red) lead to the positive terminal of the dead or lagging battery, and the other to its equivalent on the good battery. Then, connect one end of the negative lead (black) to the good battery. For the other end of the negative lead, attach it to a metal ground on the engine block of the car with the dead battery, away from the battery itself. This helps to prevent sparks.

Once the leads are securely connected, start the engine of the car with the good battery, let it run for a few minutes, then start the car with the dead battery. Let both vehicles run while still connected for a further two or three minutes.

With the jump-started vehicle running, detach the cables in the reverse order you attached them and close the bonnets. Keep the jump-started vehicle's engine running for about 30 minutes for the battery to fully charge – driving it around or leaving it running on the driveway have exactly the same effect.



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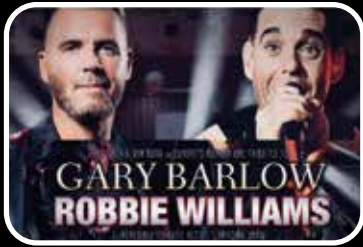
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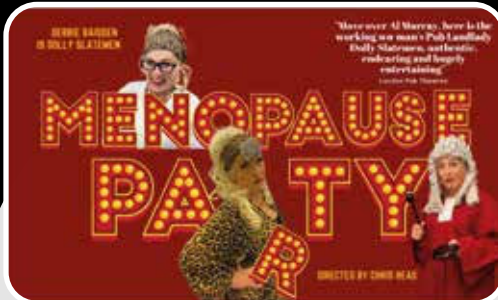


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GREAT BRITISH INTERIOR DESIGNER: KATHARINE POOLEY LONDON



HOME & DIY

Katharine Pooley has build up her renowned interior design business over the last 18 years, earning multiple accolades while working all over the world to transform homes and create incredible spaces.

With her elegant, classic styling, Katharine Pooley's portfolio serves as the perfect inspiration for decorating your own home.

BRITISH STYLING WITH INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES

Katharine Pooley has travelled the world, using her adventures as the inspiration for her designs. But despite these influences, many looks feel quintessentially British, making the most of traditional features and making them at home among more modern details. Her work includes a mixture of country houses, city living and international residences, with each project resulting in a completely unique look. Neutrals serve as the perfect base for Pooley's visions, with the detail coming through in the accent colours and textures that bring the spaces to life.

Pooley's designs are timeless and multi-layered to create intriguing styles. She also has her own home accessories line, allowing you to bring some of her work directly into your home.



HELPFUL HINTS FOR RECREATING THE KATHARINE POOLEY LOOK

While each of Katharine Pooley's projects is unique, there are some themes that run throughout her portfolio. Some of the ways you can emulate Pooley's style include:

> Keep spaces light to help make them feel larger. You can contrast with darker shades to add some detail – blues and greys are a popular choice in Katharine's work.

> Incorporate statement lighting to help make your space unique. You can pick up affordable light fixtures from a range of retailers.

> Metallic details such as gold accents on furniture and lighting add a little luxury without being overpowering. Consider changing the handles and hardware of your furniture to add subtle glamour.

> Use fresh flowers and greenery to make a space feel warmer and more homely – homes should look lived in, and this can instantly add a more personal touch.

With the right styling, you can create your own Katharine Pooley-inspired space that has a classic, timeless feel even in the most modern of homes.

Photo credit: katharinepooley.com, @katharinepooley ltd via Instagram



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HOME & DIY

How to create a SELF-CLEANING HOME

Every day can seem like Groundhog Day when it comes to housework, as if often feels like no matter how much you do, it all miraculously undoes itself by tomorrow. But what if it didn't have to be that way? What if your home could clean itself?

SET UP CLEANING STATIONS: Cleaning stations are a must if you want a self-cleaning home, enabling you to spot clean with ease. Some of the most useful cleaning stations are a microfibre cloth and all-purpose cleaning spray under the bathroom sink, a dusting caddy complete with a furniture touch-up kit in a cupboard in the living room, and a small broom and dustpan and brush under the stairs.

INVEST IN SMART STORAGE SOLUTIONS: When investing in storage for your home, try to pick items that are easy to wipe down and ones that are not prone to accumulating dust. For example, closed cabinets rather than open shelving. Also, divider drawers are great for keeping things in order.

USE AUTOMATION TOOLS: Technology has come a long way in recent years and you can now find tools that will do your housework for you. Among the most popular automation tools for the home are robotic vacuums which effectively remove dirt and debris from the floor all on their own. If you have a cat, self-cleaning litterboxes are great.

TRY TASK CLEANING: Task cleaning involves dividing your home into tasks and assigning a day of the week to each task for a deep clean. This can stop you from feeling overwhelmed at the prospect of cleaning the whole house at once and help you to keep on top of things.

EMBRACE MINIMALISM: The less clutter you have in your home, the easier it is to keep clean. To embrace a more minimalistic approach, get rid of any items that don't serve a purpose or bring you joy.



HOME & DIY



A GUIDE TO CHOOSING MATTE VS...

Confused about the difference between matte and satin paint? Not sure which finish to use in which parts of your home? Here's our guide to which paint you should choose for your next project.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

The main difference between matte and satin paint is the finish. Satin paint provides a shinier finish, whereas a matte paint finish is more flat. More specifically, satin finishes have between 25 and 35 per cent gloss and matte finishes have between five and 10 per cent gloss. This means that satin paint reflects as much as three to five times more light than matte paint.

WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF MATTE AND SATIN PAINT?

- Matte paint pros:** Covers imperfections well ✓ Easy to touch up ✓ Provides good depth of colour ✓
- Matte paint cons:** Difficult to clean ✗ Holds dirt ✗

- Satin paint pros:** Easy to clean ✓ Reflects more light ✓ More durable and long-lasting ✓
- Satin paint cons:** Does not hide imperfections ✗ Hard to touch up ✗

WHERE TO USE MATTE AND SATIN PAINT AT HOME

Matte paint: On the ceilings, walls in the bedroom, dining room and living room.

Satin paint: In high-traffic areas such as bathrooms, the kitchen and children's rooms and on windows, doors and trims.

WHICH IS BETTER: SATIN OR MATTE PAINT?

If you want a rich, dark and dramatic colour, then matte paint is the perfect choice as it boasts a low-shine finish. However, if you want to paint a room in a more neutral shade or lighter tones, then satin paint is preferable as it reflects light more effectively. Satin paint is much more flexible but you do need to apply it carefully, whereas matte is easy to use and dries more quickly.

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The Saffron Walden Crank Up is a popular steam and vintage vehicle show. This will be the third Crank Up to be held at the former RAF Debden, now known as Carver Barracks.

The event was started in the early 1970s by late vintage vehicle enthusiast Paul Engelmann at his Shire Hill home. Since 2015 the event has been organised by a small group of volunteers on behalf of the East Anglian Traction Engine Society – a registered charity.

You will be able to see a range of full size and miniature steam engines, of all types, including some that worked in the local area. The miniature engines are often built by their owners and are a masterpiece of home engineering, working and looking just like their big brothers.



It's not all about steam engines though, there will be vintage tractors, vehicles, stationary engines, and bygones, with



quite a few of the exhibits having local connections. Our traditional fairground will once again feature the Rule family's 1893 steam gallopers (carousel) and German Chair-o-plane ride.



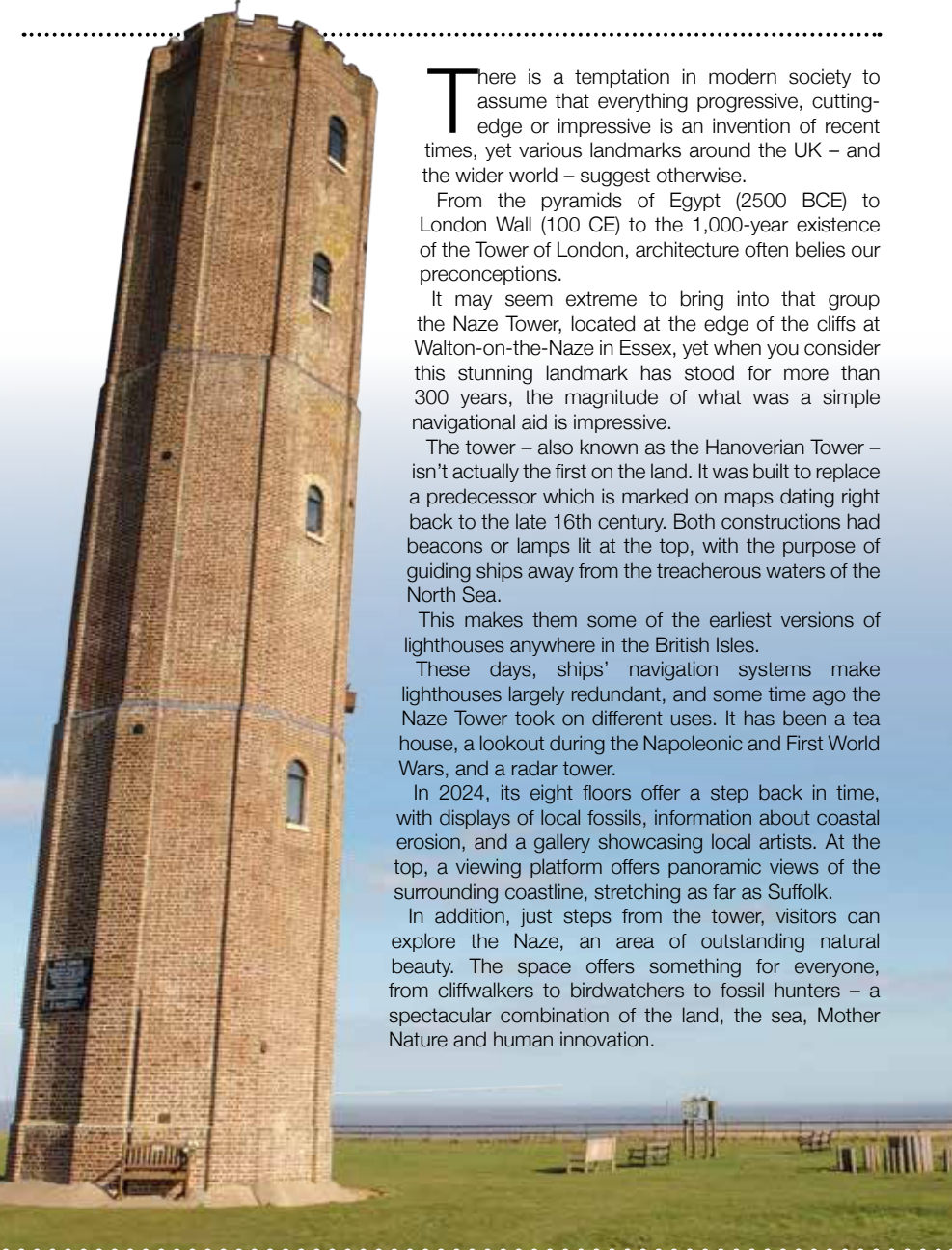
Music will be provided by traditional mechanical organs, and there will be trade and craft stalls, refreshments and a licenced bar available, as well as a picnic area where you are welcome to enjoy your own food in comfort while the show happens around you.

Gates open at 10.00 each morning, and there is ample free parking. Admission is just £7.50 per adult, with free entry for accompanied children under 16. You are able to pre-book tickets online, at discounted rates (see our website for details), or cash and card are welcome on the gate.

Further details may be found on our website: www.swcrankup.co.uk or find us on Facebook.



Three centuries of the spectacular Naze Tower



There is a temptation in modern society to assume that everything progressive, cutting-edge or impressive is an invention of recent times, yet various landmarks around the UK – and the wider world – suggest otherwise.

From the pyramids of Egypt (2500 BCE) to London Wall (100 CE) to the 1,000-year existence of the Tower of London, architecture often belies our preconceptions.

It may seem extreme to bring into that group the Naze Tower, located at the edge of the cliffs at Walton-on-the-Naze in Essex, yet when you consider this stunning landmark has stood for more than 300 years, the magnitude of what was a simple navigational aid is impressive.

The tower – also known as the Hanoverian Tower – isn't actually the first on the land. It was built to replace a predecessor which is marked on maps dating right back to the late 16th century. Both constructions had beacons or lamps lit at the top, with the purpose of guiding ships away from the treacherous waters of the North Sea.

This makes them some of the earliest versions of lighthouses anywhere in the British Isles.

These days, ships' navigation systems make lighthouses largely redundant, and some time ago the Naze Tower took on different uses. It has been a tea house, a lookout during the Napoleonic and First World Wars, and a radar tower.

In 2024, its eight floors offer a step back in time, with displays of local fossils, information about coastal erosion, and a gallery showcasing local artists. At the top, a viewing platform offers panoramic views of the surrounding coastline, stretching as far as Suffolk.

In addition, just steps from the tower, visitors can explore the Naze, an area of outstanding natural beauty. The space offers something for everyone, from cliffwalkers to birdwatchers to fossil hunters – a spectacular combination of the land, the sea, Mother Nature and human innovation.



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'Essex is unique to me, as are its people'



Despite living in the Cotswolds since the early 1980s, renowned British author Dame Jilly Cooper still remains an Essex girl at heart.

Born in Hornchurch on February 21, 1937, and residing in a house in Osborne Road, Jilly's early years may have been beset with the trials of the Second World War – not least given that her father was serving at the time – yet the inconsistency of those years undoubtedly led to creativity and discovery; the perfect ingredients for an author!

The inspiration began as war unfolded, with Jilly and her brother sent to Yorkshire to get away from London and its surrounding counties – an obvious target for German bombers.

Relocating to Surrey, then Wiltshire, after the cessation of war, her attempts at a career in national journalism were unsuccessful, yet she landed a job at the *Middlesex Independent*. From there, she ascended to arguably her journalistic pinnacle – a column in *The Sunday Times* and, later, *The Mail on Sunday*.

Jilly's witty wordplay resonated with readers and led to her first book, *How To Stay Married*, in 1969. Her fiction career took off in the 1970s with her series of novels blending humour, romance and social observations.

The *Rutshire Chronicles* books, starting with *Riders* in 1985, also sparked *Rivals*, *Polo*, and others, catapulting her to international fame.

Cooper's connection with Hornchurch is as valued to her as her career, and she often speaks fondly of a county she was forced to depart much earlier than she would have liked. "My novels have

often been about the upper echelons of society, and that's why I love Essex so much. It is a working man's heartland, with graft, energy, personality and naughtiness, at all levels of the social spectrum.

"Essex is unique to me, as are its people." Jilly often makes pilgrimages back to her home county, and her adopted Labrador/collie cross rescue dog also comes from Essex, having been rescued by Battersea Dogs Home.



LOCAL FEATURE

Photo credit: Ken Mackay/ITV/Shutterstock



WHAT'S ON

YOUR LOCAL EVENTS

GARY BARLOW VS ROBBIE WILLIAMS

Empire Theatre, 57 Butler Road, Halstead, CO9 1LL
Sunday, March 24, doors open at 4.30pm for a 5.30pm start



Photo credit: The Robbie Williams & Gary Barlow Tribute Show

Jon Fisher and Dan Budd perfectly take on the roles of Gary Barlow and Robbie Williams in this spectacular show with an incredible live band. The pair have worked together for eight years and have become some of the top tribute acts in the country.

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Tuesday, March 26, 10.30am – 1pm

Take this specially guided tour and go on a journey through the history of the 19th century textile trade, delving into the most recent research into this fascinating industry. Tours begin at the museum and there is a short walk through historic Braintree to the Warner Textile Archive.

Tickets cost £20 and include light refreshments. To book, visit www.bit.ly/3UYEPRX

EASTER HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

Hedingham Castle, Bayley Street, Halstead, CO9 3DJ
Sunday, March 31, to Sunday, April 14, 11am – 4pm

This Easter, children of all ages and their parents can experience a host of exciting activities at the castle. These include Easter trails, a medieval jousting show, a knight school, and much more.

Tickets start from £9. To find out about each individual

event and ticket prices, visit www.hedinghamcastle.co.uk/events/easter

BOCKING WINDMILL OPEN DAY

Bocking Windmill, 300 Church Street, Braintree, CM7 5LQ
Sunday, April 7, 11am – 3pm

Experience a piece of local Essex history, with everyone invited to climb to the top of the windmill, see the sights and sails, and learn more about its history.

Booking is not needed, but a small monetary donation on the day is required (cash only). To find out more, email bockingwindmill@outlook.com

WE THREE KINGS – OF ROCK 'N' ROLL

The Institute, 15 Bocking End, Braintree, CM7 9AE
Friday, April 12, 7.30pm

Three West End stars will bring some of rock 'n' roll's icons back to life. Steve Halliday plays the King himself, Mr Elvis Presley. Marc Robinson and The Counterfeit Crickets perform as Buddy Holly and his band, while Darren Page revives as crooner Roy Orbison.

Tickets cost £21.50 and can be purchased from www.bit.ly/48ACQGR

NIGHTJAR ECOLOGY AND MIGRATION

St Andrew's Church Hall, 14 Parsonage Street, Halstead, CO9 2JZ
Tuesday, April 16, 7.15pm – 9pm

This talk is an interesting event for all birdwatchers, organised by the Braintree Local Group. British Trust for Ornithology official Greg Conway will be discussing one of the most enigmatic birds of them all, the nightjar.

This event is free, but a donation of at least £3 is appreciated. To find out more, call 07742 294358.



Photo credit: Andrej Chudy



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RAYE



TALENTED YOUNG SINGER BREAKS BRIT AWARDS RECORD

After topping the UK charts, RAYE has also broken the record for the most BRIT Awards nominations ever received by one artist; yet the singer/songwriter has been waiting in the wings for more than a decade.

They say revenge is best served cold, and yet South London soloist RAYE (AKA Rachel Keen) is the hottest thing in music right now.

In January, the soulful sweetheart made BRIT Awards history by becoming the first artist to score seven nominations in a single year – including in the top category of Album of the Year for *My 21st Century Blues*, a stonking tour-de-force of a record that effortlessly melds pop, deep house, hip-hop, funk and R&B, with RAYE both spitting out rhymes and crooning like a nightingale.

Fresh from breaking records at the BRIT Awards, RAYE was also named best female act at the MOBO Awards, held in Sheffield on February 7.

Her lyrics are frank, raw and bruisingly honest, with many a mention of the industry that left her marooned in music's wilderness for years. For though her name may be new to the ears of many, RAYE has been making music since she was in her teens and landed her first record deal in 2014 with Polydor after wowing with the self-released EP *Welcome to the Winter*.

By 2021, Raye was understandably dismayed with her label and vented frustrations on social media site X, writing: "I have been on a four-album record deal since 2014! And haven't been allowed to put out one album. All I care about is the music. I'm sick of being slept on and I'm sick of being in pain about it."

Eventually taking matters into her own hands, RAYE left Polydor and released *My 21st*

AFTER MANY YEARS OF BEING STUCK ON THE SIDELINES

Century Blues independently. Not only was the album critically acclaimed, but it also missed out on a number-one chart spot by the thinnest of margins, garnered a nod at the Mercury Prize, and led to RAYE scoring a win at the Ivor Novello for the single, *Escapism*.

Now thoroughly vindicated, the 26 year old can focus all her energy on the artistry so dear to her. However, despite her frustrations regarding the major label machine, RAYE amassed a cadre of songwriting credits – for the likes of Beyoncé, Rihanna and John Legend – and guest spots for other artists during her time at Polydor. In 2016, she scored a top-three hit with her guest vocals on Jax Jones's *You Don't Know Me*, and more recently, her Joel Corry and David Guetta collaboration *BED* was in the running for British Single of the Year at the 2022 BRIT Awards.

Raised in a musical household, RAYE's father was a musical director at a local church which boasted a gospel choir that both RAYE and her mother sang in. In her early teens, she attended Croydon's renowned The BRIT School but dropped out after two years as she felt "confined... despite learning an extensive amount", going on to release her debut EP at the age of 16.

On the track *Mary Jane*, RAYE sings: "Look what they done to Amy," in reference to Amy Winehouse. Certainly, there are musical comparisons between RAYE and the late South Londoner whose own prolific musical output was both profoundly honest and heart-breaking.

However, unlike Amy, it appears that RAYE's dark days are firmly behind her. Not an artist who craves the triumph or the attention of the accolades now flooding her way, but after so many years of frustration, they are nothing but deserving.

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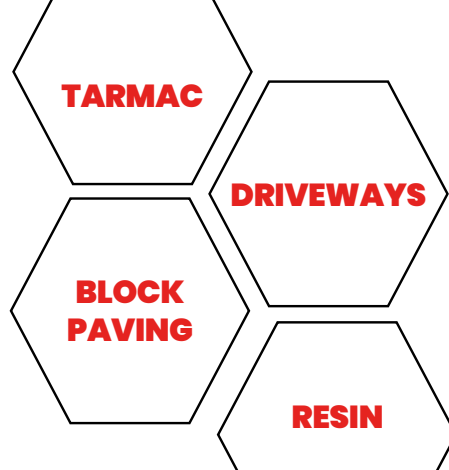
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A GUIDE TO AIR LAYERING

Air layering is a plant propagation method that is highly effective at getting plants to root from cuttings. Some of the most common plants that are suitable for this type of layering are magnolias, roses, jasmine, rhododendrons, azaleas and acers.

HOW TO AIR LAYER PLANTS

- STEP 1:** Choose a one- to two-year-old stem that is straight and healthy. Trim off the side shoots and leaves from a 30cm section.
- STEP 2:** Remove some of the outer layers of the stem (known as making a wound) by making a 2.5cm cut through a leaf bud, angled towards the shoot tip. This will create a tongue that can easily be lifted.
- STEP 3:** Apply a hormone rotting compound (powders or gels work best) to the surface of the wound. This is a synthetic substance that replicates the natural growth conditions in plants and encourages roots to form.
- STEP 4:** Pack a small amount of moist sphagnum moss under the tongue of the wound. This is a type of potting medium that can be purchased online or

at most garden and DIY shops.

- STEP 5:** Wrap the wounded stem section loosely with black plastic, sealing it at one end with weather-resistant tape.
- STEP 6:** Pack the wrapping sleeve with moist sphagnum moss to a thickness of 7.5-10cm.
- STEP 7:** Seal the other end of the wrapping sleeve with weather-proof tape.
- STEP 8:** Leave the wrapping in place for up to one year. Open and check it occasionally for signs of rooting.
- STEP 9:** When you start to see strong roots coming through the moss, remove the plastic sheet and cut through the stem just below the rooted section.
- STEP 10:** Pot the rooted stem in potting compost that is suitable for the plant. Do not remove the moss from the roots. Continue to water and watch grow until established enough to plant outside.

WHEN TO AIR LAYER PLANTS?

Air layering is best carried out in autumn and spring. Evergreens are best suited to layering during the spring, whereas deciduous plants can be layered in either season.

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Here at Deck Solutions, we offer everything you need for an end-to-end domestic decking experience. We sell high-quality parts and materials, design and install your decking for you, and tailor each job to the consumers' needs. The finished product is a delightful decking area for your Essex home or caravan.

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THE UNUSUAL WAYS EASTER WEEKEND IS CELEBRATED ACROSS THE GLOBE

In the UK, Easter, which this year falls on Sunday, March 31, is all about chocolate eggs, the Easter Bunny and hot cross buns, but this isn't the case elsewhere in the world. In fact, most countries have their own Easter traditions – some of which you may find a little strange!

GERMANY: *Easter trees*

An Easter tradition that is fun for the whole family, coloured eggs and other decorations are hung on the branches of trees and bushes in Germany. In larger cities, you can expect to marvel at tens of thousands of eggs.

POLAND: *Easter bread*

In Poland, it is traditional for women to prepare and bake Easter bread, which is shaped like a donut and can be filled with mini chocolate eggs. It is believed that men's moustaches will turn grey and the dough will not rise if any males participate in the making of this bread.

FINLAND: *Easter witches*

Similar to Halloween, in Finland at Easter, children dress up as witches and go from door to door collecting sweets in exchange for decorated bouquets made out of pussy willow. This tradition is designed to welcome spring and ward off evil spirits.

FRANCE: *A giant Easter omelette*

In the small French town of Bessières, the locals come together to make a gigantic 15,000-egg omelette in their town square every Easter. A huge fire is stoked and more than 50 volunteers help to crack the eggs in preparation for the feast to follow.

AUSTRALIA: *The Easter Billy*

In Australia, rabbits have a history of destroying crops, which is why this country decided to embrace its own native marsupial instead of the Easter Bunny. The Easter Billy, with its distinctive cute face and long ears, is loved by children and eagerly awaited each year.



GERMANY



POLAND



FINLAND



FRANCE



AUSTRALIA

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Get your **RA-DISHES** ready

Although most people tend to only eat radishes raw in salads, there are actually so many exciting ways that you can enjoy this jewel-toned vegetable. Here are five wonderful ways to cook with radishes, which are in season this month.

WHAT DOES A COOKED RADISH TASTE LIKE?

If you're not a fan of the peppery and spicy taste of raw radish, you'll be pleased to hear that cooked radishes are a lot more mellow and juicy. Texture-wise, they are similar to a cooked potato and simply melt in the mouth.

HOW TO COOK WITH RADISHES

BRAISE THEM: Radishes are perfect for braising as they absorb all the flavourful liquid and become sweet and juicy. A great alternative to potatoes, try radishes in your next meat or vegetable stew.

ROAST THEM: Nearly all root vegetables respond well to roasting, and radishes are no exception. You can roast radishes in just 10 minutes, and they quickly begin to caramelise.

GRILL THEM: Whole or halved, radishes can be grilled with just a little oil or butter and develop a lovely smoky taste. Perfect for your next barbecue.

SAUTÉ THEM: Don't forget that you can also eat radish tops, either raw like lettuce or cooked. For best results, stir-fry or sauté the tops or blanch as greens and blend with garlic, nuts and cheese to make a pesto.

PICKLE THEM: If you want to retain their crunch, radishes can be pickled by tossing them in equal amounts of red wine vinegar and caster sugar. They are also a great addition to homemade kimchi.

OUR FAVOURITE RADISH RECIPES:

- > Pickled red onion and radishes
- > Brown butter-basted radishes
- > Roasted radish and feta salad
- > Braised radishes with garlic, white wine, dill and mint.



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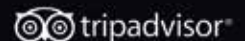


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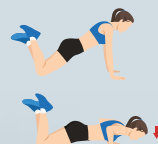


Proper PUSH-UPS

Great for building upper body strength, burning calories and improving posture and balance, push-ups are one of those exercises that can transform your overall fitness and strength. However, they only work if you have the correct form.

HOW TO DO PUSH-UPS CORRECTLY

- > Place your hands on the floor shoulder width apart or slightly wider.
- > Make sure that your hands are angled in a way that feels comfortable for you.
- > Place your toes on the floor shoulder width apart or slightly wider so you end up in a high plank position.
- > With your body in a straight line from your head to your heels, brace your core and glutes, and then look a few inches in front of your fingers to lengthen your neck.
- > Begin to bend the elbows to a 90-degree angle or slightly less. Your elbows should be a few inches from your body so that your form looks like an arrow if looking top-down.
- > Pause and then push down into the floor, continuing to engage your core and glutes to press up to the plank position.



PUSH-UP MODIFICATIONS

Push-ups on your knees

If you are struggling to perform a full push-up, follow the above instructions but, this time, with

your knees on the ground. This makes push-ups easier as you are pushing less of your body weight off the ground.



Incline push-ups

Place your hands on a bench or sofa rather than directly on the floor and follow the above instructions. Again, this requires you to push less body weight which makes the movement easier than a traditional push-up.



Decline push-ups

If you want more of a challenge, then place your feet on a bench, the sofa or a medicine ball and then follow the same instructions as above. This is great for working your upper chest more.



HOW MANY PUSH-UPS SHOULD I DO?

If you are a beginner, start with 5-10 reps per workout and gradually increase. Make sure you take rest days to allow time for your body to recover.



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





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BEAUTY



PREVENT & protect

As the saying goes, prevention is better than cure, and this couldn't be more true than when it comes to caring for your skin.

wrinkles, as well as resulting in clearer, less acne-prone skin.

WHAT IS PREVENTATIVE SKINCARE?

Preventative skincare, as opposed to skincare repair, is concerned with the prevention of the ageing of the skin. Typically, this type of skincare routine is best suited to those in their 30s and 40s, although people in their 50s and beyond who do not have too many deep-seated wrinkles can also benefit from this process. If you are a smoker or your skin has had a lot of sun exposure, preventative skincare is even more vital if you want to keep your skin looking younger for longer.

HOW CAN I ADOPT A PREVENTATIVE SKINCARE ROUTINE?

1. Focus on facials

Dry and dehydrated skin shows signs of ageing much more readily than plumped-up, hydrated skin. Fortunately, a facial that cleanses, exfoliates and hydrates can help to prevent fine lines and

2. Load up on vitamins

As your skin starts to age, you may experience issues such as larger pores, facial redness and an uneven skin tone. To combat this, look for skincare that contains ingredients such as vitamin C, which is known for brightening the skin, and vitamin A, which can help to protect from sun damage.

3. Consider a weekly retinol serum

Retinol has the ability to actively boost collagen in the skin, smooth fine lines and wrinkles, and minimise pigmentation. If you have not used retinol before, then you should start slowly (once or twice a week) and gradually increase if needed.

4. Apply products gently

By gently pressing creams, serums and oils into your skin, instead of rubbing, you will enjoy all the benefits of the ingredients of your chosen skincare products without any of the damage of application.

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REVIEW

Another Amazing Spa Day at this Beautiful Place.
Booked the Time Together Spa package for my partner's birthday and it is by far the best we've had.
We loved the Serial Mud Chamber, our Afternoon Tea was absolutely delicious, fresh sandwiches, huge scones and the cakes so soft and moist.
But the 75 Minute Treatment - Full Body Massage, Facial and scalp massage really did complete our day of relaxation.
Jess and Amy our Spa Therapist were amazing and the rest of the Staff were very friendly and helpful.
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KIDS

DIY Egg piñata

Are you looking for a fun and creative activity to do with your kids this Easter? These DIY piñata Easter eggs are perfect for all ages and couldn't be easier to make.

YOU WILL NEED:

- PVC glue
- Water
- Balloons
- Some old newspapers
- Tissue paper in a variety of different colours
- A pair of scissors
- Coloured ribbon

HOW TO MAKE:

1. Blow up a balloon and tie it with a knot.
2. Rip the newspaper into roughly 7-8cm strips – you will need a lot of these.
3. Mix one part glue with two parts warm water in a plastic container and mix well.
4. Dip a strip of newspaper into the glue mixture and then apply it to the balloon.
5. Keep repeating this step until the balloon is completely covered.
6. Allow the balloon to completely dry, ideally overnight.
7. Repeat this process three or four times until the balloon has been covered with several layers.
8. Cut the tissue paper into 5cm squares. You will need enough of this to cover the balloon.
9. Scrunch each tissue paper square, add a big drop of glue and attach it to the egg (as per the image).
10. Continue to add more tissue in various colours until the balloon is completely covered.
11. Once fully dry, use a pin to pop the balloon and then cut a small opening on one side of the piñata.
12. Fill it with sweets, mini chocolate eggs or small toys.
13. Close the opening and cover with more coloured tissue paper. Allow to dry.
14. Take your scissors and poke two holes on each side of the top of the balloon – this is where you will attach the ribbon to hang your piñata.
15. Thread the ribbon through the holes and then tie it around a tree in your garden or somewhere appropriate in your home.

Get whacking!

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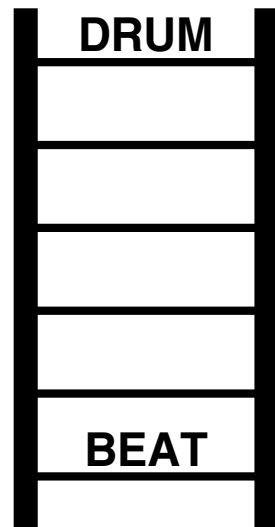
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DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Most owl species have asymmetrical ears, with one positioned higher than the other, as this allows them to better pinpoint the source of a sound.
- ▶ There are around 250 species of owl and they all live above ground – except for the burrowing owl, which nests in burrows left by other animals such as armadillos.
- ▶ Most owls pair with the same mate every year to breed, and work together to raise their young.
- ▶ Owls have special bones in their skulls to support their large eyes, but this means their eyes are fixed in place, hence their ability to turn their necks 270 degrees in either direction.
- ▶ A group of owls is called a parliament.

WORD LADDER



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

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

DO NOT rearrange the order of the letters.

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

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