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Swan Windows volunteers for BBC programme DIY SOS



Swan Windows & Son Ltd has recently completed work for a project on BBC One programme *DIY SOS*.



The Swan Windows team with Nick Knowles and the DIY SOS team

Swan were invited to volunteer and support a build. They jumped at the chance after hearing about the story.

On March 22 2017, 35-year-old Kris Aves attended a London Police Commendation Ceremony and was awarded for his exceptional work as a police liaison officer in the Metropolitan Police. The horrific attacks left five people dead, including police officer Keith Palmer and another dozen with very serious injuries, including PC Kris Aves.

Kris was returning from the ceremony when he was suddenly mowed down by the terrorist in a speeding car. Kris took the brunt of the collision. It left him with two broken legs, numerous head injuries, a lacerated elbow, damaged left shoulder, sternum and tragically a damaged spinal-cord which has left him wheelchair-bound.

Kris now resides at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Aylesbury, undergoing daily routines to assist with his rehabilitations. His partner Marissa cares for his son six and daughter four in their home in East Barnet which is now inaccessible to Kris and unsuitable for his rehabilitation.

The home needed considerable adaptation throughout and the installation of a through floor lift before Kris can return to his loving family.

Ivana Swan from Swan Windows says "We were asked to supply new windows to the front and side elevation of the house. These windows had to match the existing style of the house and must be kept in

line with the character of the surrounding houses.

Robert Swan and Andy Paton did this by installing slim sash white Upvc windows. To accommodate the changes that were being done in the house restricted hinges were put on some of the window to prevent the children from climbing.

We wanted to help the family re-build their lives, what happened to them was tragic and inconceivable, something that should never happen to anyone, anywhere in the world let alone in a great city like London. We want to help where we can, to bring a father and husband back to his family where they can have half a chance to live a life together after a most sick and heart breaking event."

The team had just 10 days to transform a regular three bed semi-detached house in to a home that this family could live in happily and safely, and to make sure that Kris would be able to participate in his children's lives fully regardless of the horrors that have happened to him.

"From start to finish the installation went well, we removed the existing windows and replaced them with the new white slim sash upvc product. Once the scaffolding had been removed we were able to return and finish off the front. On day nine of the Big Build we made sure that everything was just so and ready to hand over to the family on Thursday.

The whole experience was amazing. Being part of such a worthwhile cause and seeing so many tradesmen giving up their time to work in unison was remarkable. The day of the reveal was a truly emotional experience and one we will never forget.

From the moment we were asked to help, Rob, Ivana, Andy, Jo and every single member of staff have wanted to get involved, everyone went the extra mile to achieve our goal and the whole company is feeling closer because of it. But one very important lesson we have all learned is:-

How you can never take anything for granted, your life is so fragile that everything can change in a blink of an eye.

Thank you for the support of ALL our staff at Swan Windows."

"From the moment we were asked to help, Rob, Ivana, Andy, Jo and every single member of staff have wanted to get involved, everyone went the extra mile to achieve our goal and the whole company is feeling closer because of it."



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Editor's notes...



Misha Mistry, Design Editor

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

It's already November and along with it comes the latest edition of **VISION**. Where has 2017 gone?

Are we all starting to get ready for the dreaded C word next month? Christmas.

Personally, this year I am going to try to get myself organised in advance. Famous last words.

I've already started doing some of my Christmas shopping.

This year I will be using Hemel as my shopping destination of choice. There is a variety of shops for the young and old and it's also a great opportunity to get to know local businesses and store owners. I hope you do the same.

Lets keep our £ local this festive season.

In local news this month, local hero Max Whitlock defends his world title and receives an Honorary Doctor of Science award, local officers are honoured at an annual awards ceremony and Mike Penning MP receives a knighthood.

Local news is important to us, so if you have any stories email editorial@visionmag.co.uk

I hope you enjoy reading the November edition of the magazine.

Let us know your thoughts.

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holly molley!



Photo credit: Gettyimages

she's got...

a fab new figure, a bumper pay rise, and has just released her second book. But don't ask Holly Willoughby how she does it, as she isn't sure herself...

She may have the face and figure of a 1950s pinup, but Holly Willoughby is a feminist in the very best and most modern sense. Having recently secured a rumoured £200,000 pay rise to match the salary of her co-host Phillip Schofield, the beloved *This Morning* presenter is making strides for women everywhere – someone who's keen to speak up, is proud of the way she looks and remains driven for equality in any environment. And while she will not disclose the details of her salary – the redtops were quick enough to do that for her – she made it clear the so-called gender pay gap is unacceptable, and that two equally qualified people should earn the same.

"I think there are so many parts of society today that have equality and where it doesn't exist, the gap is slowly narrowing," she said. "We've come a long way compared to where we were 20, even 10 years ago; but I think there is still a distance to go and women should be encouraged to stand up for themselves and their worth."

Strong words indeed, though the truth is few TV presenters – male or female – match up to Miss Willoughby, nor would feel comfortable arguing their own case for a pay increase by using her as a comparison. With an infectious warm personality, candid wit and stunning looks, the 36-year-old has won over the hearts of daytime TV aficionados, as well as enchanting the evening audience too as a team captain on *Celebrity Juice*.

When free time allows, modelling work has seen her represent a clutch of high street brands; she's also the author of two parenting books, the second of which, *Truly Scrumptious Baby: My Complete Feeding and Weaning Plan for 6 Months and Beyond*, came out in September.

But despite almost constant success, the blonde beauty admits it was never in her plan to be a career woman. "In my mind, I would stay at home, following in my own mother's footsteps," she says. "That, to me, was a life project and I would have been just as happy to do that." The opportunity was there, too, with Harry, eight, Belle, six, and Chester, three, the products of a decade of marriage to television producer Dan Baldwin. "Yet, for as long as I feel my children have my time and my love, I am happy to continue combining the roles, but if ever my work got in the way, I would change things."

Admitting that she feels "the luckiest person alive" to do a job she loves whilst also having time to spend with her children, Willoughby has become a poster girl for working mothers everywhere. And proving that even celeb mums sometimes struggle, the newly-slimmed star admits that her recent body transformation is simply down to having more time for herself now her kids are older.

Regardless, we say looking that good straight after the school run should always be something to boast about.



TA-RA VERA

Liz Dawn and the parting of a soap icon

In an era of wall-to-wall soaps, anyone who stands out from the crowd is probably at the top of their game. But in the case of Liz Dawn – or Vera Duckworth as we knew and loved her – being at the top table of UK entertainment for more than four decades speaks volumes of how a fictional, backstreet character crystallised the everyday lives of so many millions.

Vera Duckworth left our screens back in 2010 – her emotional passing captured brilliantly by the *Coronation Street* team as she gently slipped away in her favourite armchair – but as real life mirrored fiction and we said goodbye to Liz Dawn, the actress, on September 25 of this year, the sense is that Vera is still with us – the curly-haired, feisty, warring, caring, brazen and yet so delicately emotional character who was perfectly loyal to husband Jack and the cobbles of Weatherfield.

The tributes for the actress – who also appeared in *Open All Hours*, *Z-Cars* and *Emmerdale* – have been unrelenting, and in an era of largely diluted drama, you do now wonder how she will be replaced. Perhaps that's a task too far; perhaps we should be telling the next generation, 'don't try to be Vera... try to be half as good as Vera was, and you'll be doing well'.

What the stars said about Liz Dawn

Simon Gregson (Steve McDonald):

"She touched the hearts of everyone she met and gave so much back with her charity work."

Michael Le Vell (Kevin Webster):

"She took us under her wing and was the mother figure who helped guide us through the show"

Beverley Callard (Liz McDonald):

"Liz was a darling of a person and one of the kindest people I have ever met."

Barbara Knox (Rita Tanner):

"She was a joy to work with - you always ended up laughing as she had marvellous comic timing."

Antony Cotton (Sean Tully):

"A light had gone out in Weatherfield a few years ago, but now Manchester too has lost a little of its sparkle."

Elizabeth Dawn

November 8, 1939 - September 25, 2017

Photo credit: Gettyimages



CHUNKY KNITTING

THE TREND THAT IS SWEEPING THE DIY WORLD

It's come to that time of year when staying indoors snuggled up in a blanket with a mug of hot chocolate sounds much more appealing than having to go to work in the cold weather. This is especially true if you have a chunky knitted blanket at home. The chunky knit trend has been huge in the DIY world recently and it's a lot easier to do than people may believe.

There are a couple of ways to create gorgeous big knits including using a basic arm knitting technique or giant circular needles. Whichever way you prefer, making chunky projects is the perfect challenge to set yourself this winter.

winter days. They are also a simple first project for beginner chunky knitters. They are also great to make and give to your friends.

BLANKET

A blanket is the perfect way to keep warm in your home. They can be made in any colour, shape or size to suit you and your room. They can be a great addition adding a splash of colour to a dull day.

CHUNKY PUFF

Put your feet up in the evenings with a handmade puff. All you need to do is create the sphere shape, fill it, secure it and relax.

FINGER-KNITTED WREATH

With the festive season upon us, why not create this finger-knitted wreath? Challenge yourself to learn a new way of knitting and show off your creation over Christmas.

KNITTED BAG

For when you need to leave the house, why not take a knitted bag? This can also be used to store all your knitting patterns and projects.

SNOOD

Snoods are perfect for keeping warm on cold



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MEMPHIS HUES



HOME & DIY

Bring a dash of colour and playfulness into your home with a little inspiration from the Memphis Group – though chances are, you've already got some...

Memphis interior style is a tough one to get your head around. Firstly, it was founded in Milan and secondly, its aesthetic is less Graceland, more Legoland. So what on earth is it?

Founded by the modernist architect Ettore Sottsass, the Memphis Group started as a design collaborative and went on to become an Eighties cult phenomenon.

The group's name is said to have come from a record that was playing on repeat at their first meeting in 1980: Bob Dylan's Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again. But even that knowledge gives no hint to the aesthetic, which is derivative of both Art Deco and Pop Art.

It comes as no surprise then that Memphis style is gloriously bright and playful: all acrylic lamps

and bold, geometric glass coffee tables, futuristic bookshelves and unabashedly kitsch sofas. That said, not everyone finds it agreeable – it has been referred to in the past as being "bizarre", "loathed", and "a shotgun wedding between Bauhaus and Fisher-Price".

And yet, despite its critics, Memphis style lives on. Go to any high street furniture shop and there is evidence of the group's influence everywhere. Those aluminium dining room chairs with bright cushions and curved metal arms; that corner sofa, all arcs and soft edges; and almost every modern standing lamp.

So, if you want to brighten up your home with a look that is both playful and sophisticated, why not give Memphis style a go? After all, it was good enough for David Bowie, whose Memphis Group collection was auctioned off posthumously at Sotheby's for a whopping £1.4million. Not bad for something so 'bizarre'.



Photo credit: www.dezeen.com



5 different ways to use...



...a tension rod

A tension rod, unsurprisingly, uses tension to stay in place – no screws, hooks or other fasteners of any kind are required.

While they are usually used to hold curtains without causing material alterations to the wall, tension rods are highly adaptable and can be used for much more...

The beauty of tension rods is in their durability and versatility: because they are spring-loaded, they can be adjusted to fit any width or height. Rubber tips on either end help to keep the rod from slipping and also serve to protect your wall or trim from damage. Best of all, they're affordable and can be moved around the house as needed. Here are five interesting ways to get the best out of your tension rod...

1. Place one under the sink to create a rail across the cupboard from which cleaning supply sprays can be hung by their triggers. Not only does this mean you can still fill the bottom of the cupboard as you please, but all your sprays are kept in a neat line so you know which ones are nearing the end of their use.

2. A quick and affordable combination of a tension rod fitted in a window frame and some hanging baskets can create a lush spot for sun-loving greenery that's perfect for the thrifty home horticulturalist.

3. If your kitchen cupboards always seem cluttered, tension rods can be inserted vertically to create separate spaces in which to store your chopping boards, baking trays and even cookery books.

4. Tension rods can also come in handy for fashionistas. In a similar manner to storing cleaning sprays in the kitchen, a horizontal tension pole (or three) can be put into a wardrobe and used to hang high-heeled shoes from the gap between sole and heel.

5. For crafty customers who despair of keeping their materials neat and tidy, a fitted tension rod can provide a bar from which to hang rolls of ribbon, tape, wrapping paper and other useful items.



Photo credit: Martha Stewart, A Loyal Love, JillM, A Thousand Words, Eloise's Novel Nook

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The Perfect Finish

When it comes to paint, there seems to be a baffling array to choose from. It's essential, therefore, to know which paints do what so you can choose one that's definitely up to the job.

ideal for areas where you'll need to clean the walls regularly; however, you shouldn't use a satin finish where you have a wall with imperfections because it will make them more apparent.

EGGSHELL
 An eggshell finish has a shine that's extremely subtle, but without the same smoothness as a satin finish. It doesn't highlight imperfections as much, making it a more suitable interior wall paint. It's easy to apply and can often cover well with a single coat.

MATTE
 The most common of interior wall paints. There's no shine or sheen to the finish, making it ideal for walls and ceilings where you don't want any visual distractions. On the downside, matte paint is easily marked. Although some marks can be removed with a damp cloth, matte paint needs regular retouching.

MATTE ENAMEL
 Matte enamel is very much like matte paint, but tends to be far more durable. It's much easier to clean and rarely needs retouching, meaning it's great for the kitchen or kids' bedrooms. The visual effect is very similar to matte paint and it can be applied in the same way.

SATIN
 Satin finish is somewhere between matte and gloss and produces a low, soft sheen. This makes it

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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



LOCAL NEWS



Record numbers get muddy for hospice

A record 900 people braved mud and obstacles as they slid, jumped and waded through The Hospice of St Francis' filthiest fundraiser of the year – its legendary Mud Pack Challenge.

Many took to the five or 10-mile Mud Pack route for fun, while others took on the challenge in memory of someone, or to thank the charity.

Among those taking part were Marian Gavin, from Hemel Hempstead, and her husband David, who were part of a 10-strong team running in memory of their daughter Nichola Stringer, who passed away at the hospice in March after a four-year battle with cancer.

Mum-of-two Nichola was diagnosed with cancer just two weeks after the birth of her second child, Michael.

The team 'Nuts for Nic' completed the course wearing T-shirts with a photo of Nichola and her two

children Libby, nine, and Michael, four, on the front.

Marian said: "It would have been Nichola's 40th birthday on October 24, but instead of celebrating that we are doing this.

"We wanted to raise money for the hospice to thank them for looking after Nichola and the family. They have been brilliant with the children and it became a welcome place for them to go and see their mum.

"This is a way we can talk about her again and do some good at the same time. At the moment, we've raised £1,500 but we're expecting that to go up.

"The course was great. All the younger ones managed all the obstacles but I was a bit more selective. We came to have fun and Nichola would definitely have had fun."

The next hospice event is the annual Santa Dash taking place on Sunday, December 10 at Riverside, in Hemel Hempstead.



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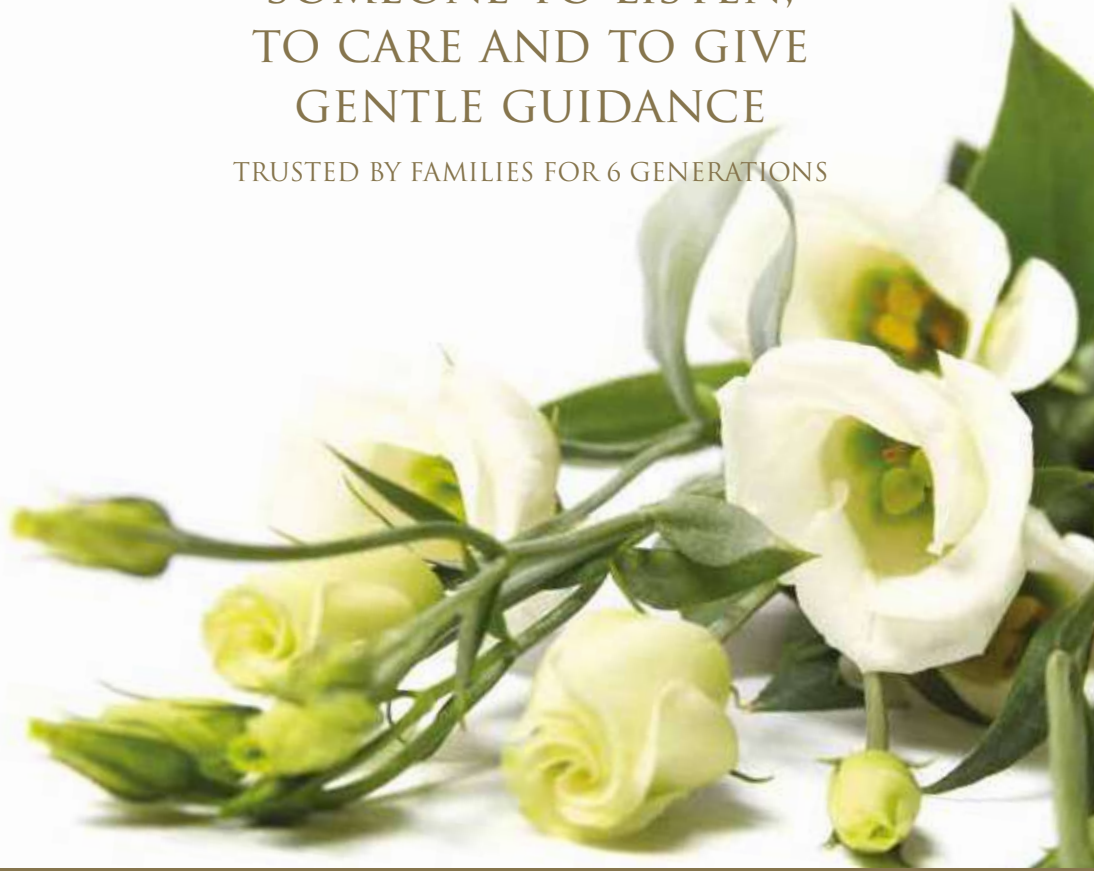
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Raising money for life-changing treatment



A family are hoping to raise £5,000 to give their daughter life-changing treatment.

Michelle Rush has set up a JustGiving page to raise money to send her daughter Chloe, who grew up in Hemel Hempstead and attended JFK school, to Florida for Proton Beam treatment.

Chloe, 20, has a genetic condition called Von Hippel-Lindau Syndrome. At the moment, she has four brain tumours. One has got too big for surgery.

She is being sent to Florida for the treatment which is being funded by the NHS. She will need to stay there for 11 weeks.

Michelle is fundraising to help Chloe live while she is out in Florida.

Michelle said: "Myself or her dad will do shared care for Chloe as she is only 20 years old and cannot stay for up to 11 weeks on her own.

"The money will help as cost of living is very expensive. It will pay for day-to-day living and petrol to and from the hospital every day.

"Chloe is a very brave young person who has a lot to deal with at such a young age. She never moans about her illness and always has a smile on her face."

If you would like to donate, visit www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/michelle-rush-1

Sinkhole repairs 'progressing as planned'

The work to repair the sinkhole in High Street Green is "progressing as planned".

The sinkhole was initially reported to Hertfordshire County Council on May 12.

Residents have grown increasingly frustrated at

the closure, but according to the council, the road could reopen at the end of the month.

A spokesperson from Hertfordshire County Council said: "We would like to reassure residents that the work to fix High Street Green is progressing as planned. Thames Water have nearly completed the repairs to the sewer and expect to be able to hand the site back to Hertfordshire County Council shortly.

"We then plan to fill the hole almost all the way to the top and then allow the utility companies to make sure all of the pipes and cables are secure and properly supported. Once that is done, we will be able to relay the road surface and reopen the road. We hope to be able to do this by the end of November as planned if the final phases of work go smoothly."

Max Whitlock retains world title



Max Whitlock MBE became the first British gymnast to defend a world title recently with victory in the men's pommel final at the World Championships, held in Montreal.

The 24-year-old scored 15.441 points in the final, which was held on Saturday, October 7, exceeding his qualification score of 15.300.

The five-time Olympic medallist comfortably took the title ahead of silver medallist David Belyavskiy who scored 15.100.

Max added an extra element into his routine for the final, but the decision paid off as he claimed the gold medal.

The celebrations kept on coming for Max as he received an award of Honorary Doctor of Science by Anglia Ruskin University.

Thanking the university, Max tweeted: "Truly honoured and very grateful, thank you very much."



LOCAL NEWS



Local officers win big at annual awards ceremony

Police officers, staff and volunteers have been honoured for their exemplary service and dedication to Hertfordshire Constabulary at the Chief Constable's annual awards ceremony.

The event was held at Hatfield House on the evening of Tuesday, October 17 and was attended by more than 100 people.

PC Tom Colvin, who is based at Hemel Hempstead police station, was the winner of the Intervention Officer of the Year award.

He joined in September 2007 and has given all of his 10 years' service to Dacorum.

He has many strings to his bow; being a qualified tutor, a response driver, an authorised taser officer and the longest serving Team 5 intervention officer.

Sergeant Daniel Jones has also been announced as the Safer Neighbourhood Team Officer of the Year winner.

Sgt Jones, who lives in Hemel Hempstead, is hugely respected among his team, and by local councillors, community partners and residents. He has been described as the "epitome of what a SNT officer should be".

He has an excellent record for dealing with offenders; arresting a number of disqualified drivers who had been flashing up on ANPR cameras, resulting in several convictions.

Police and Crime Commissioner David Lloyd added: "I want to congratulate all the winners and nominees and thank them for the incredible work they do protecting our county.

"The awards highlighted the wide range of skills and experiences throughout the police service in Hertfordshire, and I was also pleased to see the work of volunteers given the recognition and gratitude they deserve."

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Halloween party proves a success

More than 5,000 people enjoyed a festive family evening at the Old Town's annual Hallowe'en party on October 29.

The day consisted of street rides, entertainment and the famous fancy dress competition.

Catering for the whole family, the council-run event had everything from a baby rave with Hartbeeps music group to a ghostly tour at the Old Town Hall. There was also a friendly pumpkin, grim reaper living statue, walking dead, illuminated juggling and the fabulous LED butterfly stilt walkers.

Members of the Energy Dance Troupe also provided entertainment and the successful night finished with a bang at 7.30pm at the firework finale in Gadebridge Park.

Photo credit: Rachel Phoenix



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Children's charity appeals for local vote



A charity based in Hemel Hempstead has been shortlisted for the Aviva Community Fund.

Playskill, a local charity running free specialist playgroups for pre-school children with physical disability or development delay, has launched an appeal to the public to help them secure vital funding.

There are currently five groups being held a week in Hemel Hempstead and Watford, helping 41 children with disability each term. The groups support children from the surrounding areas.

They are bidding for a £25,000 award from the Aviva Community Fund.

There is an urgent need for the existing groups to continue running whilst also having a growing waiting list and referrals.

Andrea Clarke, Playskill's founder and director, said: "We are in great need of support to continue in our work with local children with physical difficulty or delay. We have a significant waiting list and we know that every child has a whole family worrying about that child.

"With the expertise Playskill brings, each child will make significant progress and their family will be equipped with the support and skills to dramatically change the situation. Please partner with us and make a change."

The public are encouraged to show their support via the online vote, with the winning projects being those that secure the most votes.

Voting closes on November 21. To vote for Playskill, visit www.avivacommunityfund.co.uk/voting/project/view/17-1862

It's a 'yes' for town centre businesses

Businesses in Hemel Hempstead town centre have voted in favour of establishing a Business Improvement District (BID) – a business-led and

business-funded body formed to improve a defined commercial area.

BIDs charge a levy to local businesses in return for providing services over and above the usual council provision.

Eighty-four per cent of businesses in Hemel Hempstead who voted were in favour of BID.

Mark Gaynor, Dacorum Borough Council's corporate director (housing and regeneration) and director of the business improvement district board, said: "Congratulations to Hemel Hempstead town centre businesses who voted to create a BID for the town centre.

"The 'yes' vote is a huge economic boost for the town centre, which will benefit from at least £900,000 investment over the next five years."

Mike Penning MP awarded Knighthood



The MP for Hemel Hempstead, Mike Penning has been awarded a Knighthood by the Queen.

The announcement was made on Thursday, October 12.

Responding to the news, he said: "This really is a completely unexpected announcement and, of course, I am deeply honoured.

"For someone from my background, it is a great privilege and really very special. To be honest, I think I'm still in shock.

"It is a great honour for me, my family and indeed for the town. Something like this doesn't happen every day.

"It just goes to show that in modern Britain it doesn't matter what background you come from. I hope that it inspires some of our local young people to believe in themselves and that we have future Knights and Dames in our midst.

"I don't know yet when I will attend an investiture at Buckingham Palace, but I'm very much looking forward to it."

Mike has been made a Knight Bachelor.

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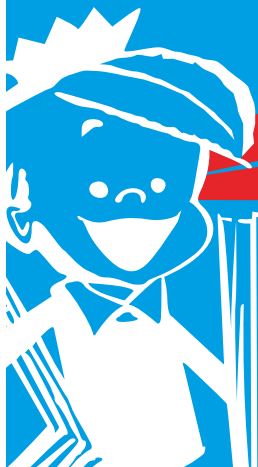
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GARDENING

A SUMMER GARDEN IS MADE IN

Winter

Whilst it may look as though everything in the garden is at rest, winter is the perfect time to begin making that summer garden you've had your eye on.

With gardening being one of the few forms of exercise you can take part in throughout all stages of your life, why stop when the winter weather comes creeping in? It's time to put the gardening gloves back on and make changes that you will benefit from all year round.

MAINTENANCE

Grass does not grow in cold conditions, but following a mild start to winter, mowing the lawn is a good way to keep it at bay until spring. Be sure to mow when the grass is dry and soil has thawed out to avoid damage.

Removing any fallen branches and debris will save underlying plants and grass. Tender plants such as dahlias will benefit from a layer of mulch which helps to protect their roots from frost, while a potassium-rich fertiliser will give apple trees the nutrients they need to flourish.

PLANTING

There is no need for your garden to be bare throughout winter. Evergreens provide colour all year round, and come in a variety of colours. Not only will evergreens bring a fresh appearance to your winter garden, they will also add colour throughout the year.

Winter is the perfect time to begin growing your own vegetables, as many thrive in cooler temperatures, including carrots, garlic and broccoli. Vegetables can concentrate their sugars in the cold, resulting in improved flavour.

WILDLIFE

As winter sets in and we all appreciate the warmth of our own homes, birds would love to do the same. Why not build a bird house to help combat the cold?

While planting evergreen trees and bushes is an easy way to provide shelter; brush piles, roost boxes and bird houses can be an inexpensive project, providing secure, comfortable protection from the elements.

TOP TIPS:

- Putting a ball in any water source will allow airflow when it freezes over, keeping water oxygenated for pond life, and making a natural drinking fountain for birds when the ball is removed.
- A 2 to 3 inch layer of mulch is the most effective in winter.
- Elevating flower beds and adding a sloped edge aids drainage as rainfall increases.





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TRANSFORM YOUR GARDEN INTO A WINTER

Wanderland

As the festive season approaches, it's time to start thinking about decorating your home. This year, instead of just decorating the inside, think about the outside too. Passers-by will stare in delight at your winter wonderland as you celebrate the true spirit of Christmas.

shops. If you have a colour theme, match the decorations on your wreath to the colours in your garden.

Decorate a tree

Who said Christmas trees are only for inside? If you want a traditional Christmas tree these can easily be bought in local stores, or transform the trees you already have in your garden. Cover them in LED string lights and add shatterproof giant baubles and giant bows.

Spruce up your fence

If you have a fence around your garden, bring some life to it by adding a Christmas garland and some lights. To add a splash of colour, add some giant bows just like on the tree.

You can also spray branches of trees in gold or silver to add some extra sparkle. Alternatively, spray some pine cones and hang them on trees around your garden.

Add some lights

Christmas lights are a must to make your own winter wonderland. White icicle lights are simple yet stylish and eye-catching. They can be placed all around the outside of your house and will instantly light up your garden.

Christmas wreath

No front door is complete during the festive season without a wreath. You can make one of these yourself or they are easily available in

Santa, stop here

Line your pathway with lanterns and light them up when the darkness sets in. You can use battery candles or ones you light with a match. When Christmas approaches, put out your 'Santa stop here' sign to ensure he doesn't miss you.



SEE NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE TO LEARN HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN CHRISTMAS WREATH...

JAMIE'S 'MEALS ON WHEELS'

From geezer to nutrition guru, Jamie Oliver has always loved a big adventure, and his latest one is the wildest of them all.

When 'the naked chef' was first dished up back in 1999, this new brand of TV cook was a revelation. A cheeky, charismatic chappy who reinvigorated the nation's passion for home cooking by making it accessible and affordable, his first cookbook became an instant bestseller, and 'pukka' was everyone's favourite culinary catchphrase.

Now, almost two decades later, Jamie Oliver's vim and vigour has diminished none. And while he has perhaps lost some of the charming naivety that made him so instantly likeable, the second helpings of experience and wisdom has set him on a lifelong path towards improving eating habits everywhere.

His mission started in earnest with Fifteen,

the Shoreditch restaurant where disadvantaged young people received the ultimate culinary leg-up. Then, in 2005, Oliver launched his first campaign to improve school lunches, a project that formed Channel 4 four-part documentary, *Jamie's School Dinners*. But while the assault on our loved ones' lunchboxes was arguably successful – with the British government pledging to address the issue in parliament – Oliver was left frustrated by the wider public's reluctance to change habits. "It seems that in many cases eating well is still viewed as an indulgence of the middle-classes," he said, "and I don't believe that should be the case... it baffles me; it makes me sad."

Undeterred, the 42-year-old has ploughed on, even earning a Masters degree in nutrition as a way of furthering his knowledge of the intricacies of food. And under the umbrella

of the Jamie Oliver Food Foundation, he has sparked another food revolution which calls on us all to provoke, debate and inspire real, meaningful, positive change in the way our children access, consume and understand food.

His latest cookbook, *5 Ingredients: Quick & Easy Food* – his 20th since *The Naked Chef* – focuses on delivering tasty, nutritious food without breaking the bank. And when it comes to feeding a brood, Oliver ought to know, as last year he and wife Jools welcomed their fifth child, a son called River Rocket, to join Poppy, 15, Daisy, 14, Petal, eight, and Buddy, seven.

With such responsibility on his recently slimmed-down shoulders, one might expect Oliver to have given up on some of his more freewheeling, laddish endeavours, but when he recently appeared in a video showing off his

new mobile kitchen Land Rover, it was evidence enough that the naked chef inside Oliver was alive and well.

The impressive off-road vehicle bundles a bevy of impressive kit, the like of which you wouldn't find in your average kitchen. In the minute-and-a-half long clip, we see Oliver spit-roast entire chickens on a front-mounted rotisserie, churn butter using a device hidden in one of the car's wheels, and produce baked beans from a slow cooker hidden under the hood. Best of all is the toaster built into the centre console; perfect for peckish passengers.

"I dreamt big and asked for a lot," Oliver admitted. And yes, it's fine to be inspired by the stylish chef – but while healthier school lunches were within our collective grasp, you can't but help wonder if this 'meals on wheels' creation is a journey too far.





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FOOD & DRINK



Making sense of BREAD

Wholewheat, wholegrain, rye, gluten-free – the world of bread is becoming a confusing place indeed. Here's the lowdown on which breads are which, and what you should be feeding your family.

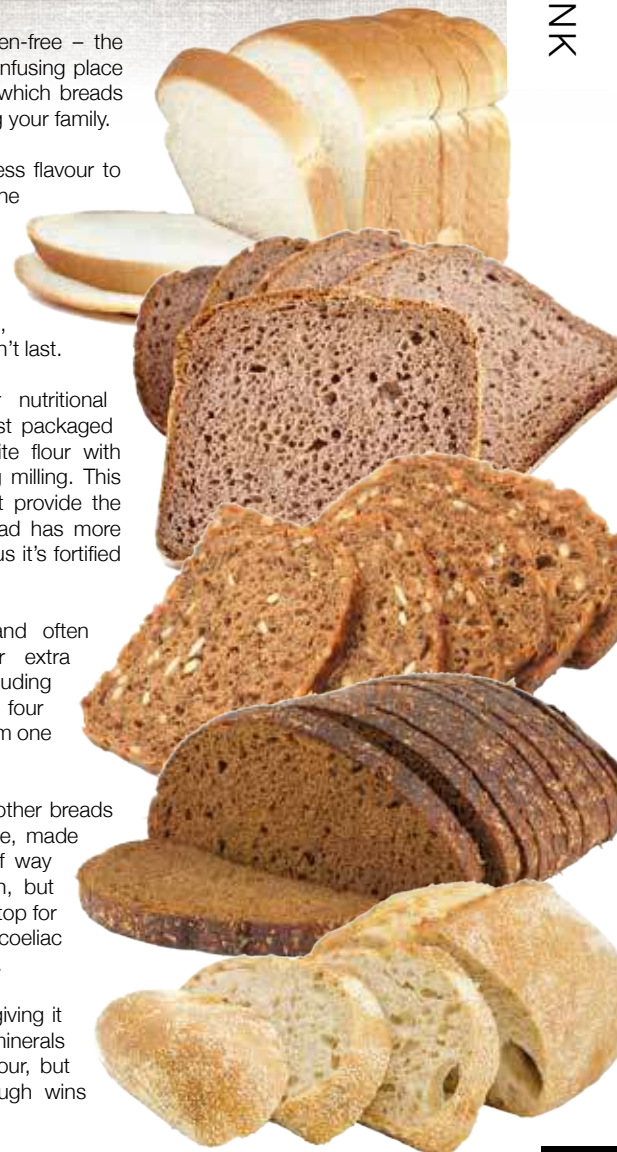
WHITE BREAD offers a soft slice with less flavour to compete with fillings. It doesn't have the fibre of wholegrain, but it's a good source of protein and carbs. It's fortified with thiamin, iodine and folic acid too. But the additives that make the dough rise rapidly also make the glycaemic index (GI) go up, so the energy you get from white bread won't last.

WHOLEMEAL BREAD has a similar nutritional value to wholegrain bread. However, most packaged wholemeal is made by recombining white flour with the bran and wheatgerm removed during milling. This creates a longer-lasting flour, but doesn't provide the same nutritional balance. Wholemeal bread has more fibre, vitamins and minerals than white, plus it's fortified with iodine and folic acid.

WHOLEGRAIN BREAD has grains (and often seeds) added to wholemeal flour for extra nutritional value. Wholegrain breads (including rye and sourdough varieties) have up to four times the fibre of white breads, making them one of the healthiest options.

RYE BREAD has a heavier texture than other breads due to the lower gluten content. Light rye, made from rye and wheat flours, comes in half way between white and wholemeal for health, but wholegrain rye, with added grains, comes top for its fibre and vitamin content. People with coeliac disease, however, must avoid all rye bread.

SOURDOUGH rises for up to 18 hours, giving it more flavour and a lower GI. Vitamins, minerals and fibre levels vary depending on the flour, but one thing's for sure: wholegrain sourdough wins across the board for nutritional value.





Anyone for CRICKET?

Ground-up crickets might sound like something you eat for a dare, but the reality is that products made with cricket flour are quickly gaining popularity and could be the eventual solution to global hunger. But if you're on the squeamish side, you may be wondering why on earth we would want to eat insects.

For starters, crickets are super-nutritious and have an incredibly high protein-to-weight ratio. They are 69 per cent protein by dry weight while chicken breast (31 per cent) and sirloin steak (29 per cent) are significantly lower. This makes them 20 times more efficient as a source of protein than cattle, while also providing 80 times less methane – good news for global warming! They are also uniquely sustainable as they require a fraction of land, water and feed to livestock.

If the thought of eating bugs has you squirming

like a mealworm, the good news is that manufacturers have strived to make them taste delicious. If you didn't know better, you might mistake one for an ordinary protein bar. London-based company Eat Grub offers bars in two flavours: Coconut and Cacao, and Cranberry and Orange, and for those seeking an alternative beer snack, it even sells salt and vinegar roasted crickets. The firm also offers a cook book and a range of unseasoned, freeze-dried critters so you can whip up buffalo worm macaroni cheese at home.

The downside of these creepy crawly treats is that they don't come cheap – a taster pack of four bars from Eat Grub will set you back six quid – but it is hoped that as our perceptions towards eating insects in the UK change, they will become a dietary staple. So altogether now, 'I don't like cricket. I love it...'



Photo credit www.eatgrub.co.uk



A Spot of Relief



If you suffer from bad skin, it can be tempting to bombard it with all manner of over-the-counter treatments in a bid to blitz your face. But what your skin needs to do is heal – and some simple products you already have at home can be just what the doctor ordered.

Healing mask

Honey has antibacterial and probiotic properties, making it an all-natural skin-saving hero. Mix one dessert spoon with two of natural yoghurt – loaded with lactic acid which refines pores – and a pinch of cinnamon. Apply for 10 minutes, then rinse with warm water. Raw honey works better than processed as it's more potent, and it can even be used alone as a gentle morning cleanser.

Easy exfoliant

Scrubbing with harsh exfoliators can strip your skin of its natural oils, which in the long-term will only make the problem worse. Instead, remove dead cells gently with unground sea salt, milled oats or brown sugar, and mixed with enough coconut oil or honey to form a paste. Apply in a circular motion before rinsing.

Terrific toner

Apple cider vinegar makes a great skin toner and is far more affordable than one from

the pharmacy. The vinegar contains gentle exfoliating acids which calm and balance your skin's pH.

Specific treatment

If you've got one or two pimples which require immediate attention, don't squeeze, but dry them out with a cotton bud dipped in tea tree oil – a natural way to unblock sebaceous glands without the risk of scarring.

Inside out

They say beauty's only skin-deep, but for a truly glowing complexion you need to start on the inside. Cut out foods which spike your blood sugar and can lead to hormone imbalance, like processed white bread and cakes. Begin taking a daily probiotic and include at least one portion of oily fish, like salmon, in your diet. The benefits won't be instant, but they will be worth it.





Nailed It



There was a time when nail salons offered two kinds of manicures: French, where they were painted pale pink with a white tip; or a block colour with gloss finish. But thanks to nail art pioneers like Sharmadean Reid, who founded London's WAH Nails, it's now more common – and much cooler – to have emojis, gems and even 'galaxies' adorning the tips of your fingers.

But you don't need to go to an expensive salon to bling up your tips, as there are many looks you can master at home. Nail glitter, for example, comes in an array of dazzling colours, sizes and shapes, like hearts or stars. There is also glitter dust, which can be applied with stencils to create a shimmering pattern, chrome powder to create a flawless metallic sheen, and stick-on jewels to create a snazzy 3D effect. If nails are long enough, you can even pierce the tip and attach a charm.

When it comes to nail art, not even the sky's the limit – as the 'galaxy' trend proves, where varnish is layered with glitter and swirled until the nails twinkle like the Milky Way. Another fantastical phenomenon is the rise of the 'unicorn' nail, where digits are magically transformed to resemble the horn of the mythical creature.

To recreate these looks at home, it's wise to enlist the aid of the many YouTube tutorials on the subject, or simply go to a dedicated salon and let the pros work their magic, leaving you with the arduous task of choosing what design you want.

Chevron and Ombre are both impressive, but somewhat subtle designs. Or if you really want your tips to do the talking, it's got to be the emoji mani.



From big bums to short legs, here's how to pick jeans that compliment every body shape.

A LARGER MIDDLE

If you've got a little extra weight on your tummy, go for a high-waisted cut. Not only is this look naturally slimming as it pulls everything in, it's also very on-trend. In terms of colour, darker shades like indigo are always going to be a little more slimming than, say, white, but if you feel comfortable and body-confident in a lighter shade, that's all that matters.

if you love to show off your booty, there is no need to fear a high-waisted skinny fit.

PERFECTLY PETITE

If you're small in stature, go for the crop. Cropped boyfriend jeans are ideal for a laid-back sexy look, or if you're lucky enough to be petite and slender, skinny cropped denims with heels look killer. Perfect for that hot date.

SHORT LEGS

If you want to elongate your pins then channel your inner Jane Birkin and dare to flare. This is another style that has come back into fashion in recent times, and thank goodness it has, as the silhouette that flared jeans create is super-flattering. Also, you can wear them with towering heels and no one will know.

CURVY

If you'd rather hide your bumpy bits, jeans with a cigarette leg is perfect for balancing out curves. This basically applies to all straight-legged trousers; not skinny, not flared, just right.

THE LONG STRETCH

If you're still confused about what pair of jeans to buy, why not invest in some elastic? Stretch denim basically flatters every single body type and best of all is super-comfy. Perfect for when you're going for a big Sunday lunch.

BIG BUMS

Large pocket details are great for taking the attention away from generous bottoms. However,



LAUREN'S BIG BREAK INTO photography

When I was asked how I got into photography, the phrase 'my big break' came to mind and although it may sound slightly dramatic, it is quite literally how my passion for photography began.

I had dreams of becoming a gymnast and my parents gave me a big Costco garden trampoline for Christmas. I practised my backdrops and front-flips and quickly became very confident. I soon set out to perfect a double back-flip, in hindsight this may have been a little over eager but I was 13 and fearless. I didn't complete the full second flip and bent my arm the wrong way upon landing.

Long story short, it was broken and my parents, quite rightly so, were worried I'd get straight back on the horse and cause more harm to myself. So, they sold the trampoline and with the money they bought me a camera. This is when I found my true passion in imagery, photographs and art.

So, 15 years and one degree later, my award-winning photography company Bubbles Portraits is five years old and my studio is on Rickmansworth High Street. We are also often on the road in exciting new locations or photographing business headshots, family portraits, weddings, golf days, architecture for estate agents and property developers, corporate events and much more. Only recently, I was photographing The Anticoagulation Awards in The Houses of Parliament.

I feel so fortunate to be doing what I love every day and one of my favourite parts of what I do is meeting other local business owners, so I'd like to give your readers a deal on Business Portraits to use for their LinkedIn, 'Meet the Team' or email signatures. For companies with five or more staff members, 25% off all staff headshots, or for the individual, 10% off when booking before December 20, 2017.

As street photographers unite over their photos being used without permission, it raises once again the question of who owns content on social media.

At major fashion events, it is not uncommon to see a well-heeled woman or nattily dressed man being followed by a herd of street photographers yelling for their attention. The payoff? If one nabs the perfect shot of one of these so-called style influencers, they will have the honour of featuring on said blogger's Instagram, hopefully garnering the attention of a major brand. But the increase in influencers, editorial sources and even brands using these images for free – often crediting the person in the pictures and the clothes they are wearing, but not the photographer – has led to a call for change.

Since Milan Fashion Week

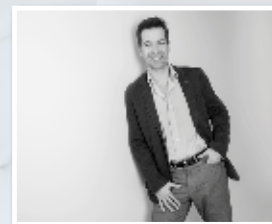
in September, when a group of around 40 photographers came together to publicly protest against the unauthorised use of their street style photography, members of the group – an "unofficial union" named The Photographers – have begun adding the hashtag #NoFreePhotos to images uploaded on their Instagram accounts.

But while images printed in magazines are often copyrighted and protected by laws, the rules governing social media and online content are blurred. It goes right back to the issue of how the internet has altered the value of media, which has affected everything from music to pornography.

Another argument of course is that it is nothing new to work for very little money when starting out in the fashion industry, with the emphasis being more on building a relationship and association with a brand bigger than your own in the hope of attracting paid work in the future. And with so many photographers and influencers all jostling for space in an overcrowded scene, it seems that for the time being at least, there will always be someone willing to work for free.



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HEALTH & FITNESS

FAT? Thin? FICTION.

The question whether you can be fat and fit or thin and unfit has loomed for years. Researchers have been trying for decades to prove their viewpoint. But is it really a myth or a reality?

The term 'obese' is often used to describe a person who's overweight, with excess body fat. According to the NHS, obesity is a common problem in the UK and it's estimated that around one in four adults and around one in five children aged 10 to 11 are considered obese.

Body mass index (BMI) is often used to determine whether someone is of a healthy weight for their size, but calculating this doesn't always give a true representation. If someone is very muscular, having a high BMI doesn't mean that they have excess fat. These people could be considered healthy as they regularly train and so the 'fat and fit' assumption could be deemed as true.

However, many argue that someone could never be fat and fit. Being overweight can lead to several health problems including type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, some types of cancer and the risk of having a stroke is greater. This is still the case even if the person exercises regularly and eats a balanced diet.

On the flip side, is it possible to be thin and unhealthy? Many people think that being skinny is good as you haven't got excess fat, but it is actually just as bad for your health to be underweight. Weighing too little can contribute to a weakened immune system, fragile bones and feeling tired.

Some people simply can't put on weight due to a high metabolism, so they eat junk food as they think it isn't affecting them. In the long-run, these decisions will have impacts on the person's health.

It is also important for thin people to exercise to tone their muscles and get rid of any fat deposits that they might have.

To ensure you are healthy, take part in regular exercise, eat a healthy and balanced diet and keep an eye on your weight. There isn't a perfect weight or size for a healthy person, but the BMI calculator can be used as a guideline.





Stay healthy AS WINTER SETS IN

As the days become shorter and the cold sets in, it can be extremely tempting to come home from work and put on your comfy clothes, put your feet up and enjoy a hot chocolate. But instead of hibernating this winter, keep fit and healthy whatever the weather.

BANISH WINTER TIREDNESS

It's no doubt that many people feel tired and sluggish during the winter months. This is due to lack of sunlight which can make it seem like you are waking up in the dead of the night, which disrupts sleep and waking cycles.

To tackle this, the NHS is encouraging people to get outdoors in as much natural daylight as possible, get into a good sleeping pattern by going to bed and waking up at the same time every day and destress with exercise or meditation.

GET YOUR FIVE-A-DAY

Unhealthy comfort food is often a go-to option during the winter. However, it's important to continue to eat fruit and veg to keep healthy. If your body is healthy, it will also help you to fight off any winter bugs.

DRINK MORE MILK

You are more likely to become ill during the winter so it's important to look after your immune system. Milk and dairy products are good sources of protein, vitamins A and B12 and calcium.

TRY SOMETHING NEW

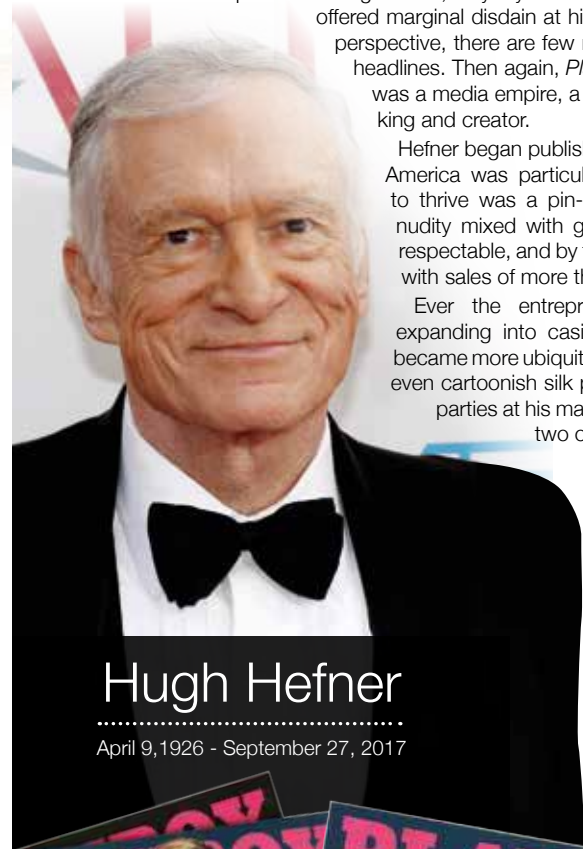
Get out with the family and try out a new activity. Winter is the perfect time to go ice skating or on a winter walk. Regular exercise helps to control weight and boost the immune system.



The Ultimate 'KID IN THE CANDY STORE'

Remembering Hugh Hefner and his impressive legacy

When Hugh Hefner passed peacefully away at his home – the iconic Playboy Mansion in Los Angeles, on Wednesday, September 27 there was a wide outpouring of emotion, and most of it positive. Men expressed their gratitude, Playboy Bunnies set about their mourning and, yes, some feminists offered marginal disdain at his somewhat controversial legacy. But whatever your perspective, there are few magazine founders whose death would make global headlines. Then again, *Playboy* was always much more than an adult mag - it was a media empire, a money-spinning brand and a lifestyle, with Hefner its king and creator.



Hugh Hefner

April 9, 1926 - September 27, 2017

Hefner began publishing *Playboy* from his kitchen in 1953, a period when America was particularly prudish, and the last thing you would expect to thrive was a pin-up magazine. But somehow the glossy images of nudity mixed with genuinely insightful features made it seem suddenly respectable, and by the Seventies it was the world's best-selling magazine with sales of more than seven million copies a month.

Ever the entrepreneur, ambitious Chicago native Hefner began expanding into casinos and nightclubs, and as those iconic Bunnies became more ubiquitous, Hefner too embodied his brand. An exaggerated, even cartoonish silk pyjama-clad cad who threw exuberant, star-studded parties at his mansion, he dated an unfathomable number of Bunnies, two of whom he married along the way.

After suffering a stroke in 1985, Hefner changed his lifestyle significantly, leaving charge of his empire to his daughter, Christie. And over the years *Playboy* too has had to move with the times as values shift, and what was once seen as admiration for the female form has become, some say, perverse and misogynistic.

But love him or loathe him, Hefner's phenomenal success and contribution to modern culture is impossible to deny, and we are reminded of one of his most famous quotes: "I am a kid in a candy store. I dreamed impossible dreams and the dreams turned out beyond anything I could possibly imagine. I'm the luckiest cat on the planet."





PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4



Photo credit: Lorna Roberts/Shutterstock.com

70 years of wedded bliss

The Queen and Prince Philip will reach a new milestone in their remarkable lives this month with their 70th wedding anniversary.

Her Majesty, 91 and the Duke of Edinburgh, 96, are the first British royal couple to reach a platinum celebration.

They said "I do" on November 20, 1947 in front of 2,000 guests as they married at Westminster Abbey in a service that was broadcast live to 200 million radio listeners.

The wedding came at an austere time for Britain, just two years after the end of the Second World War.

In the grim post-war era, the Queen famously saved ration tokens to buy the material for her Norman Hartnell dress and she did her own make-up on the big day.

The couple's love story began when the Queen was 13.

The distant cousins had been at the same gatherings on a number of occasions, but had their first publicised and pivotal meeting at the

Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, Devon, in July that year when King George VI and Queen Elizabeth visited with their two daughters.

Dashing, blond-haired, athletic Philip caught Lilibet's eye as he entertained her by jumping over tennis nets.

The then Princess Elizabeth fell head over heels in love, and remained devoted to Philip, writing him letters throughout her teens. Her father, King George V, agreed to the couple's marriage in 1946 but requested that they wait to get officially engaged until she had turned 21.

In April 1947, Philip proposed to Elizabeth as they walked together in the grounds of Balmoral. He presented his bride with a square cut diamond and platinum ring, which was created using stones from one of his mother's tiaras.

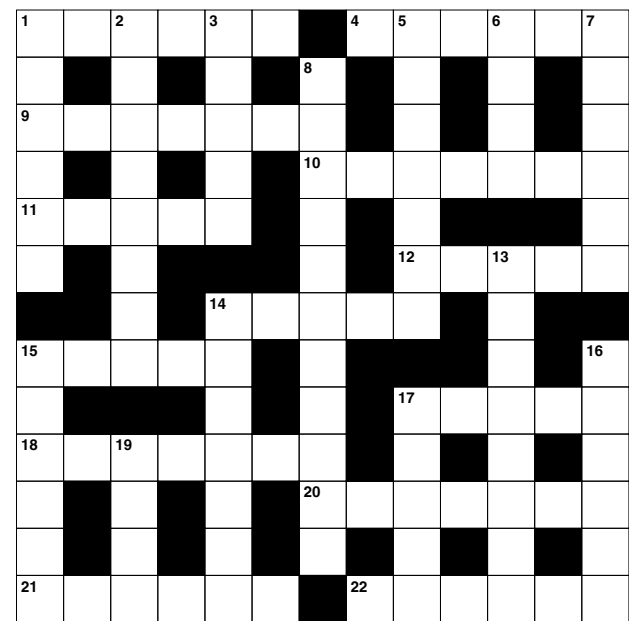
But the official announcement of the engagement came on July 10, 1947 as Princess Elizabeth and Lieutenant Philip Mountbatten, as they were then, were pictured arm in arm at Buckingham Palace.

ACROSS

- 1. Covered in flowers (6)
- 4. Remain (anag) (6)
- 9. Eg use a towel after showering (3-4)
- 10. Salt lake in the Jordan valley (4,3)
- 11. Lucid (5)
- 12. City in Bolivia (2,3)
- 14. Unsuitable (5)
- 15. Device that splits light (5)
- 17. Destroy (3,2)
- 18. ____ Day: Shrove Tuesday (7)
- 20. Open-meshed material (7)
- 21. A husband or wife (6)
- 22. Stick to a surface (6)

DOWN

- 1. Continent (6)
- 2. Opera texts (8)
- 3. Smell (5)
- 5. Attack (7)
- 6. Pubs (4)
- 7. Not real or genuine (6)
- 8. Unconcerned (11)
- 13. Type of employment (4-4)
- 14. Diacritical marks (7)



- 15. Small songbirds (6)
- 16. Climax or culmination (6)
- 17. Quoted (5)
- 19. Emperor of Rome 54-68 (4)

DID YOU KNOW

- ▶ At birth, Dalmatians are always pure white - their black spots come later.
- ▶ Fish and insects do not have eye lids - their eyes are protected by a hardened lens.
- ▶ If you lift a kangaroo's tail off the ground it can't hop - they use their tails for balance.
- ▶ At a rate of eight to 10 beats per minute, the blue whale's heartbeat can be heard from over two miles away.
- ▶ Horses have 16 muscles in each ear, allowing them to rotate their ears 180 degrees.
- ▶ The only animals to undergo menopause are elephants, humpback whales and human females.

SUDOKU

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

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Potato Stamp Wrapping paper

V
KIDS

Christmas is one of the best times of year to get crafty. This year, instead of buying wrapping paper, why not create your own? All you will need is some brown paper for the base, some good-sized potatoes (yes, potatoes), paint, a paint brush and a knife.

Step one: Cut your potato in half ensuring you get a clean cut.

Step two: Using a knife, slice in the shape for your stamp making sure you only go part of the way down. Roll the knife around the edge of the potato where the slices end and lift out the pieces you don't want.

Step three: Paint your potato stamp.

Step four: Stamp your potato onto the paper.

Leave for a few hours to dry to ensure that it doesn't smudge when you wrap your presents.

For Christmas...our favourite Christmas stamps include Christmas trees, stars, stockings, candy canes, snowflakes and holly. You could also create snowmen and baubles and once dried, decorate them with felt tip pens.





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HOW TO NOT MAX OUT OVER THE HOLIDAYS

The worst thing about Black Friday is that it inevitably leads to Blue Monday. That dreaded day of the new year where you've already given up on your diet, it feels like forever since you were last paid and you're acutely aware of both your overdraft and credit card bill. But while mince pie binges and payday impatience are inevitable, debt isn't, and with a bit of planning you could have your most financially-sound Christmas yet.

The first rule of a frugal festive period is to start planning early. Scout out the good deals as shops just start ramping up their festive promotions and are eager for a promising early sales boost, particularly on non-perishable items like alcohol, wrapping paper and gifts. Set a budget for presents and purchase everything as early as possible to avoid the Christmas Eve panic-shop. If you're feeling crafty,

you could even gift homemade items like jam and cookies.

It's obvious to say you should only spend what you have saved, but this isn't always possible. So, if you must borrow, then at least find a credit card that has a good rate, and perhaps even a cashback offer, rather than signing up impulsively to a high-interest store card. You should also do everything in your power to stop 'post-Christmas party' 1am spending - £100 on a novelty jumper is not a smart investment.

Lastly, remember the point of Christmas is not just about drinking too much mulled wine, show-off gifts and looking cute in your Christmas Day onesie. Although these things are important, it's primarily about spending time with those you love and who love you...honestly.



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Good Little

RUNNER

Forget the Ferrari and let go of your Lamborghini dream – sometimes you just need a nice little motor that can clock the miles without causing a car crash in your wallet. And when it comes to affordable automobiles in the UK, you can't go wrong with any of these new and bank account-friendly vehicles.

The **VAUXHALL VIVA** places the same emphasis on value for money as its predecessors. With every model costing less than £10,500, you get important features like modern safety systems and an economical engine with even the cheapest model, yet not superficial things like alloy wheels.



Even if the **KIA PICANTO** isn't the cheapest model on the list – air-con, Bluetooth and an upgraded engine will all add to the bill – it does have some advantages over its contemporaries: alongside being cheap to run, it has space for four adults and decent boot room left over, making it the ideal city car.



If you can manage without air-con, electric windows and other niceties, a **HYUNDAI i10** could be yours for less than £9,000, and for that amount of cash

you'd be securing a five-door, five-seater vehicle that's perfectly sized for the city dweller.



The cheapest car on this list, the entry-level **DACIA SANDERO ACCESS** costs a shade less than £6,000, but it's by no means skimping. Bigger than a Ford Fiesta, but costing less than a Ford Ka+, the Sandero may not be extravagantly equipped – with even a stereo reserved for the options list – but it does offer robust construction and modern engines with decent fuel economy and impressive reliability.



The **DACIA DUSTER**, meanwhile, comes in at less than half the price of similar-sized SUVs. There are precious few luxuries on board – you won't find air-conditioning or a DAB radio – but with up-to-date safety and security features the Duster may well be the best-rounded and most affordable car currently on Britain's lots.





SPORT

WINTER WARMERS

The spectator sports to look out for as the cold weather sets in.

ICE HOCKEY

In the US ice hockey is so popular it is referred to simply as 'hockey', but despite receiving very little attention in the media, Britain's Elite Ice Hockey League is alive and pucking. With teams like the Guildford Flames and Milton Keynes Lightning in action every weekend, ice hockey makes for a fun and reasonably cheap night out.

SNOW POLO

If you fancy a day out in the new year that combines snow, people-watching and rugged men bashing around balls while on horseback, then you'd best head to St Moritz in January for the 34th Snow Polo World Cup... or, err, catch it on the telly.

Since 1985, teams from around the world have competed for the coveted Cartier Trophy on little more than a frozen lake – upper-class sporting debauchery at its finest.

CURLING

When Team GB's women glided their way to victory at the 2002 Winter Olympics at Salt Lake City, it reinvigorated the nation's interest in this

historic sport.

Curling, invented in medieval Scotland and often referred to as 'chess on ice', makes for a surprisingly nail-biting watch, and could become your guiltiest of pleasures.

CRICKET

Alternatively, if none of that warms the cockles, why not ward off the cold chill this winter by getting stuck into the Ashes. In typical style, the England squad has been beset by problem, from a lack of form by its top order batsmen to a lack of control by all-rounder Ben Stokes on a night out in Bristol. If we stand any chance of retaining the Ashes and avoiding a similar 5-0 whitewash to the one we experienced 'down under' in 2013/14, we'll need to start well at The Gabba in Brisbane.

The Aussies, displaying all their usual humility, are confident of home success, but should perhaps look at their own recent Test record, included in which is an embarrassing defeat in Bangladesh, before claiming the Ashes will have a new home come January 2018.



Looking for something different this Christmas?

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26.12.17



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THE GALLERY





SPORT

ROAD TO RUSSIA: ACCESS GRANTED



World Cup qualifying has been secured, and as a nation, we have never been less excited. **VISION** looks at the teams England will be battling with for global glory.

After another untroubled qualifying campaign, England secured their berth at next year's World Cup in Russia, yet uninspiring performances mean the Three Lions' chances of emerging as top dogs in July 2018 matches every bit the 25/1 odds most bookies are offering.

Of course, we have many to raise our game, but just as Rome wasn't built in a day, nor will Moscow be conquered in a month of the world's biggest sports tournament; that is, unless drastic improvements can be made in all areas of the England team.

And manager Gareth Southgate's formation headaches will be made all the worse when he looks at the sides we might face. Consider World champions Germany, Euros winners Portugal, the might of Spain, the technical wizardry of France. Mull over Belgium's golden generation, and while Brazil and Argentina had very different qualifying campaigns, both will be there and both always perform on the biggest stage.

Of the others – England included – who consider themselves in with an outside chance, Colombia, Poland, Mexico, Nigeria and Uruguay can give anyone a good game, and let's not talk about Iceland... let's just not do that.

At the time of going to print, the play-offs and remaining African fixtures left the fortune of some sides still in the laps of the football Gods, and divine intervention is certainly something England will be hoping for if next year is to blow the full-time whistle on more than five decades of hurt.

QUALIFIED: Russia (as hosts), Belgium, Germany, England, Spain, Poland, Serbia, Iceland, France, Portugal, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, Iran, Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and Egypt.

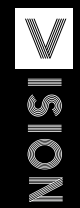
PLAY-OFFS: Switzerland, Italy, Croatia, Denmark, Northern Ireland, Sweden, Republic of Ireland, Greece, Peru, Honduras, Australia and New Zealand (with three African groups yet to be decided).

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4  1  3 



Gammon Close £400,000

4  2  1 



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2  1  2 



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5  2  1 



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