



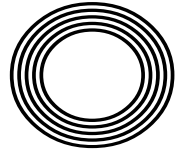
REVEALED
Pantone Colours
of the Year 2021

Most bizarre
excuses
**FOR PULLING
A SICKIE**

Remembering a legend
**DAME BARBARA
WINDSOR DBE**

Lewis
HAMILTON

Sports Personality of the Year racing into the record books



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Editor's notes...

JANUARY 2021



Brett Shohet, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION**Hertford. I don't know how many of you are like me, but every new year I like to jot down my targets for the year ahead and what I'd like to achieve. Looking at my 2021 targets I can see that, owing to the disruption from the 2020 global pandemic, most of them are identical to last year's. Having said that, I certainly wouldn't label 2020 a 'throwaway' year - rather, it was a year for us to slow down and be grateful for what we already have, rather than looking to build on it. I'm pleased to say that, despite this, we did branch out to more areas in Essex and Hertfordshire.

In hindsight, it was an important year, but one I'm glad to have left behind. I can't wait to see friends and family as normal, as well as hold face-to-face meetings for business. I'm looking forward to having that sense of connection back, which was definitely missed last year.

It was a huge source of pride for **VISION** to support businesses through their most difficult points in 2020 - equally, we appreciate the support, trust and belief that our clients showed in us.

I wish everyone a happy new year and, as always, thank you for reading.

Brett Shohet

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The great Dame BARBARA WINDSOR DBE

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND CAREER OF THE QUEEN OF TV

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Of course, Windsor's infectious persona,

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

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

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

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

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

Photo credit: Shutterstock





THE WORLD AROUND US

Part 3

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

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

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

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

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

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

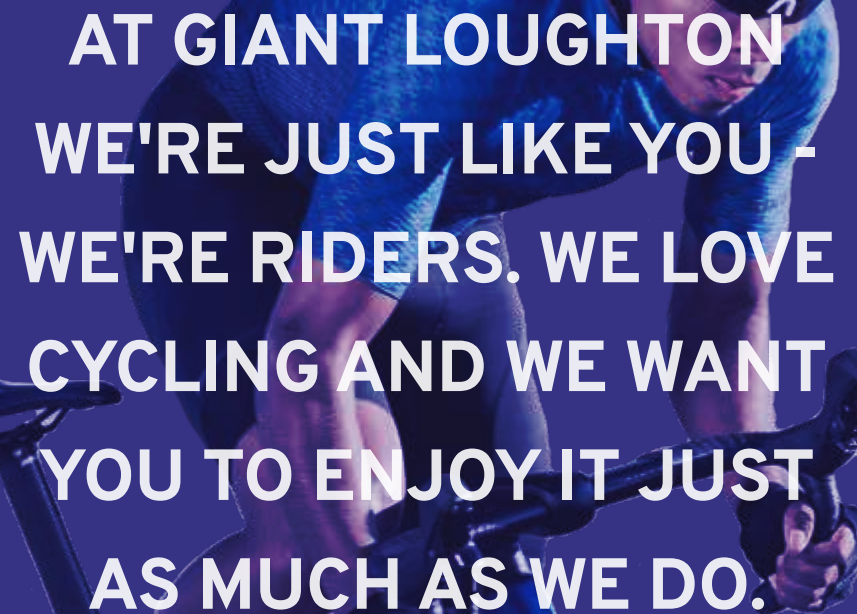
how great our footprint is. Within weeks, scientists reported a 40 per cent drop in air pollutants. It showed that protecting our personal health had a hugely beneficial effect on that of the environment.

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

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

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CARING FOR Cashmere

Cashmere is a winter wardrobe staple for many, providing warmth without weight. That being said, it is not a cheap clothing option, so you need to make sure you show your cashmere a little TLC to prolong its life.

Shave regularly: You may have noticed that your cashmere items are prone to fuzz balls, especially under the arms or where you carry your bag. Known as piling, you can remove these using a razor blade or lint tape.

Don't over wash: Cashmere does not need to be washed every time you wear it. In fact, you should only wash your cashmere clothing a handful of times over the whole winter season. Always wash in cold water – handwashing is best – and use a mild detergent. Softener is not needed as cashmere naturally gets softer over time.

Ignore dry clean only labels: Unless your cashmere item has embellishments such as beading or metals that mean it needs to be dry cleaned, cashmere should not undergo this process as it can damage its fibres.

Lay flat to dry: Cashmere is at its most delicate when wet, so this is the cleaning stage that requires the most amount of care. Simply lay your cashmere item down on a dry towel and carefully roll it up to absorb as much moisture as possible. Never wring it. Then lay it in a shady spot to air dry.

Store away from sunlight: You should store your cashmere items inside out in a dust-free and well-aired area that is away from direct sunlight. Before storing, always ensure that your cashmere is clean and free from dust and dead skin, as these can attract moths. If you are storing your cashmere for the summer, make sure you clean, de-crease and remove any fuzz before putting it away.



'90s HAIR revival

From Jennifer Aniston's boho beach waves to Victoria Beckham's bob to Winona Ryder's pixie cut, one of the biggest hair trends of 2021 will be the return of hairstyles from the '90s. Think new year, new do.

THE LIVED-IN LOOK

One of the greatest things about the '90s was the effortlessly cool and laid-back style that spread across the nation, in terms of both fashion and haircuts. Spring 2021 will see hairstyles that feel less structured and more lived-in. Whether you go short or long, ask your hairdresser for a natural-looking, low-maintenance cut.

THE BOB

Although the bob has been a strong and unwavering hair trend throughout 2020, next year will see the return of the classic '90s bob. For those with straight hair, opt for a blunt and unstructured bob that is cut to chin level and tucked behind the ear.

THE BOXY CURL

If your hair is naturally curly, then 2021 is all about short and boxy shapes for added bounce. Avoid a straight cut and instead ask for layers and a light fringe. This look is all about texture and volume so you may want to invest in a good-quality volumising spray for added oomph.

THE SUPER-SHORT PIXIE

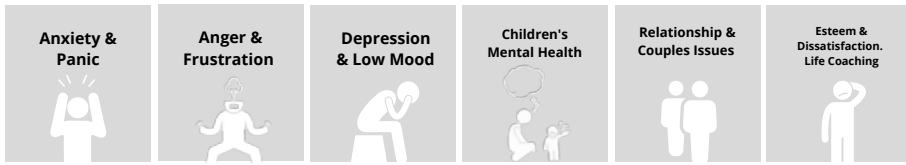
If you are feeling particularly bold and daring in 2021, you may want to try the super-short pixie cut. Or, if you are ready to take the ultimate plunge, you could even choose a buzz-cut pixie loved by the likes of Kate Hudson and Cara Delevingne.

THE FACE-FRAMING LAYERED LOOK

This look was fairly popular this year but is only set to get stronger in 2021 and beyond. In fact, you won't be able to go five minutes on Instagram without some face-framing plaits popping up on your feed.

Photo credit: Pinterest

What's worrying you...?



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Are you READY TO GO ~~SOBER~~?

Although January may feel like the worst possible time to try to give up your favourite tipples (isn't this month depressing enough?), you may be surprised at how great you feel after cutting out alcohol for just one month.

What to expect when you give up alcohol...

WEEK ONE

Undeniably the most challenging week in your booze-free month, you may experience some unwanted side effects in the first seven days, such as headaches and intense sugar cravings, especially if you are a heavy drinker. That being said, you will also start to see the positive effects of giving up alcohol, including: Better decision-making | More energy | An improved sleeping pattern

WEEK TWO

After two weeks without alcohol, you will continue to enjoy the health benefits listed above, as well as a few new ones, such as: Reduction in acid reflux as your stomach lining becomes normalised | Weight loss | Better mental health

WEEK THREE

As you are now past the halfway

mark, the effects of not drinking will start to contribute to your long-term health, with benefits including: Improved vision | Better kidney health | A reduction in blood pressure, which can lessen your risk of future health problems, such as heart disease

WEEK FOUR

The final week of your no-booze challenge and the effects on your health will be apparent for everyone to see and will include: Better-looking skin | Reduced dandruff and eczema | Up to 15 per cent less fat in your liver

IS DRY JANUARY WORTH IT?

Although Dry January has become increasingly popular in recent years, is it really worth it in terms of your long-term health if you continue to drink for the other 11 months of the year?

According to Alcohol Change UK, yes it is, with this challenge forcing you to confront how much you drink and to take notice of the harm it can cause.



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MIDDLE OF THE LOAD

Fight the flab after 40 with these steps to prevent midlife weight gain

Cut the calories: Though you may feel as active as ever, your metabolism unfortunately is not as efficient as it once was. However, cutting between 250 and 300 calories per day is enough to keep your weight where you want it to be.

Walk it off: Burning fat only requires a slightly elevated heart rate, which means exercising for a longish period while being slightly out of breath is what you need to aim for. So ditch the gruelling runs and aim instead for a brisk walk or swim.

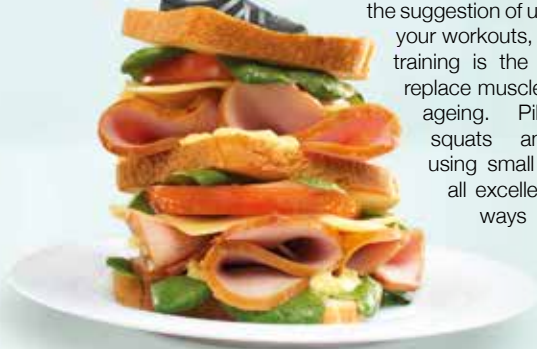
Use your gut instinct: Beat the bloat with healthy bacteria, best found in natural yogurts and fermented foods such as sauerkraut, kimchi and kefir.

Exercise before your eggs: Studies have shown that working out before breakfast can burn up to double the calories – ideal for those who prefer to do their sun salutations as it rises at dawn.

Go nuts: We all know that fruit and vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet, but to maintain blood sugar and control weight you need to be getting plenty of protein too. From a handful of almonds to a bowlful of lentils, or even just a glass of milk, this is one healthy habit you'd be nuts not to try.

Consider HRT: In addition to easing the side effects of the menopause, there is evidence to suggest that hormone replacement therapy can help with weight distribution, which means less fat around the dreaded middle.

Join the resistance: You might balk at the suggestion of using weights in your workouts, yet resistance training is the best way to replace muscle lost through ageing. Pilates, yoga, squats and exercises using small dumbbells are all excellent and enjoyable ways to achieve that toned look.



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Are you addicted to

SUGAR?

Did you know that adults are advised to have no more than 30g of free sugars per day (the equivalent of seven cubes)? To put that into perspective, a single can of Coca-Cola has 35g of sugar, 5g more than your total allowance for the day. So, are you addicted to sugar? Let's find out.

AM I ADDICTED TO SUGAR?

If you are worried about your sugar consumption or you think you may be addicted to the white stuff, then you should look out for the following most common sugar addiction symptoms:

- Headaches
- Feeling tired or lethargic
- Intense sugar cravings
- Muscle pain
- Nausea
- Bloating

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO BREAK A SUGAR ADDICTION?

You will be pleased to hear that you can break a sugar addiction in as little as 10 days. This is because the more sugar you eat, the more you crave it. However, once you stop, or cut back, you will find you want it less and less each day.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF GIVING UP SUGAR?

There are many health benefits to giving up sugar, including:

- Increased energy levels
- Better ability to focus
- Enhanced mood
- Decreased inflammation
- Less stomach fat
- Better-looking skin
- Less risk of tooth decay
- Weight loss

TOP TIPS TO HELP STOP CRAVINGS AND SATISFY YOUR SWEET TOOTH...

Going cold turkey when trying to give up free sugars (sugars that are added to food, rather than naturally occurring) can be a challenge.

Fortunately, there are ways to make the process easier:

- Eat three meals and two healthy snacks a day
- Go for a run or a brisk walk
- Eat fruit in the morning on an empty stomach
- Focus on protein at every meal
- Try a fibre- and protein-rich chia seed pudding
- Chew sugar-free gum



FOOD & DRINK





GO NUTS!

With Shrove Tuesday fast approaching, what better time to discover a new tasty topping for your pancakes?

Check out our own version of a well-known hazelnut cocoa spread which is half the calories, vegan and packed full of healthy fats and vitamins.

Super Healthy Homemade Hazelnut Spread

WHAT YOU NEED:

- 240g raw hazelnuts | 1 1/2 tbsp pure vanilla extract | 1/4 cup cocoa powder | 1/4 cup pure maple syrup or unrefined sugar | 1/4 tsp salt | 1/2 cup vegan milk (or normal milk if you do not need a vegan recipe) | 2 tsp oil

HOW TO MAKE:

- > Set oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6
- > Roast hazelnuts for 6-8 minutes
- > Leave to cool slightly and then rub off skins
- > Blend the nuts in a food processor until they are the consistency of butter
- > Add all the other ingredients and blend until smooth

Not just for pancakes, try using your homemade hazelnut spread in these yummy

recipes that the whole family will love.

Hazelnut Hot Chocolate

All you need to create this dangerously addictive hot chocolate is cocoa powder, milk and some hazelnut spread. Simply mix all the ingredients together and pop in the microwave for 2 minutes.

Caramel Cream Nutty Chocolate Lollies

The perfect little treat for tiny hands, simply dissolve 70g of hazelnut spread in a pan over boiling water and set aside half. Pour a thin layer into small, round silicone moulds and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Take out and place a hazelnut-sized piece of salted caramel cream in each mould and cover with remaining spread. Place a lolly stick in each and refrigerate for a further 5 hours.

Nutty Iced Biscuits or Cake

If you are bored with your usual icing, why not use some hazelnut spread instead? Just warm some of the nutty mixture in the microwave for 10-20 seconds and then gently spread over biscuits or cakes. It makes a great cake filler too.



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JANUARY BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH: *Carnation*

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

WHAT DOES A CARNATION SYMBOLISE?

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

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

WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOUR PERSONALITY?

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

HOW CAN I GROW CARNATIONS?

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

DO CARNATIONS COME BACK YEAR AFTER YEAR?

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



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BIG ENERGY SAVING WEEK...

- CHECK
- SWITCH
- SAVE

JANUARY 18 - 24

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

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

Remember, all the little things really do add up.

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

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

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

- 4. Don't use metal trays in the oven:** Glass and ceramic dishes retain heat better than metal ones, making them more energy efficient.

- 5. Keep heating rings clean:** Any food that has become stuck to your heating rings will absorb heat, making them less efficient.

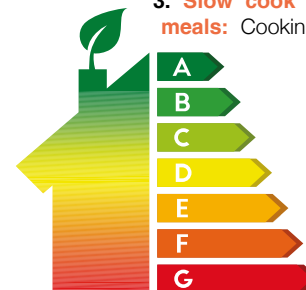
- 6. Wash your clothes at 30°C:** 90 per cent of your washing expenditure is spent on heating the water, so by reducing the heat to 30°C when possible, you can save one-third on your washing costs.

- 7. Unplug any unused appliances:** Unplug or switch the power off on any appliances that you aren't using. This includes charger cables.

- 8. Turn down your thermostat:** By turning down your thermostat by just 1°C, you can save up to £80 per year.

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

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





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Cover of the Year 2021

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Grey DAY?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Photo credit: designer.com, diegoblanki.com



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The ULTIMATE formula

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Multimillion leisure centre plan approved for 2021

East Herts Council's planning submission for the expansion and renovation of a leisure centre in Hertford has been unanimously approved by its Development Management Committee.

An investment of £9million will see the Hartham Leisure Centre extended and improved, with a new state-of-the-art gym, additional studio spaces, a new café opening onto Hartham Common, a soft play facility, improved changing facilities and refurbishment of the pool hall.

Eric Buckmaster, executive member for well-being at East Herts Council, said: "We are delighted to

be moving forward and making such a worthwhile investment and to be able to provide great facilities to support the health and well-being of our residents.

"This year has shown how much the leisure industry is valued within the community, and the improvements to the facility will provide future-proofing for the demand. Residents can look forward to the works getting underway in the spring for a project that will provide a real asset to Hertford."

The next stage of the project is to appoint a main contractor, which will take place in March 2021 ready for construction work to commence in the spring.

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Plans for theatre redevelopment submitted

Plans for the redevelopment of Hertford Theatre are all systems go, as the process has moved on to the next stage with plans being submitted to East Herts District Council.

This is a big move for the theatre, which was first opened as Castle Hall in 1977, and will help to improve the existing 408-seat auditorium, dance studio and café.

The application comes after a public exhibition and consultation was held earlier in the year to consider the proposals for development.

Plans for the theatre will see improvements including three bespoke and purpose-built cinema screens with a capacity of 200 seats, enhancing the auditorium capacity to 500 seats, acoustic improvements, new café and bar areas and creation of a black box studio space.

In the planning statement prepared by Montagu Evans LLP, a number of advantages of the

redevelopment, such as increasing the number of films available, are laid out.

The planning statement reads: "The audience experience will be enhanced by providing improved comfort, accessibility, improved facilities and theatre services.

"Audience choice will also be enhanced by increasing the depth and breadth of programming in the auditorium, including an increased range of first release cinema films within dedicated screened auditoria."

The potential redevelopment will also improve accessibility to Hertford Castle for residents and visitors, as the plans feature a new boardwalk that would link the theatre to the castle gardens.

It is expected that a decision will be made on the planning application by spring 2021.

To find out more information about the plans, go to www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning

Pedestrians injured after car collision



Photo credit: Liam Winters/Shutterstock.com

Two pedestrians had to be taken to hospital last month after they were hit by a car in Hertford.

The pedestrians, a man and woman, who are aged in their 70s, were hit by a Kia Rio on December 5 and sustained serious injuries.

A spokesperson for Hertfordshire Constabulary said: "Police were called at 1.05pm on December 5, to reports of a collision in Mead Lane close to Merchant Drive. Recovery was arranged for the vehicle and the road was clear by 2.45pm."

Directly after the incident, a spokesperson for Essex and Herts Air Ambulance said: "Teams worked together on scene to optimise patient outcome. The patients were transferred to the Emergency Department for ongoing treatment."

At the time of going to print there had been no update on the pedestrian's conditions.

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Charity has 'adopted' station to add touch of nature

A local charity is hoping to keep Hertford East station in tip-top condition with a little bit of love and appreciation.

Mudlarks has 'adopted' the station as part of a partnership with the New River Line Community Rail Partnership, which includes Greater Anglia.

The project will benefit both Mudlarks and the station, as it allows the charity to continue helping adults with learning difficulties to learn new skills to find routes into sustainable community garden projects.

So far six planters have been installed to add a touch of floral for all those who pass through the station.

Vic Hobson, managing director of Mudlarks, said they hope the project will bring some joy to the station and encourage people to get out and enjoy nature.

"We are so pleased to be adopting Hertford East station. The idea is to bring the river and meadow feel to the station and encourage people to go for walks along the river and meads when they arrive in Hertford.

"Our gardeners chose all the plants and have planted up the first of the winter perennials. As the weather warms, we will add colourful flowers to the displays and aim to bring some Mudlarks joy to the station for all its users."

Greater Anglia's customer and community engagement manager, Alan Neville, said: "I'm delighted to welcome the Mudlarks team to Hertford East station. They've made a real difference already which I'm sure passengers will appreciate as they pass through the station."

Restaurant opens town centre location

The popular and award-winning restaurant, Lussmanns Sustainable Fish and Grill, has opened in a more central location in the town.

Lussmanns relocated after 17 years in its previous location and is now situated at 83 Fore Street.

The managing director Andrei Lussmann was glad to reopen after being closed for 265 days owing to COVID-19 restrictions, although the restaurant is now closed again for dining in because of the lockdown.

Andrei, talking about the new opening, said: "We

opened our first restaurant outside London in Hertford and it was great to see the support we received. We have a loyal following in that area.

"As a result of that, even if we couldn't look after mixed households, the restaurant was full when we opened.

"The new location has a grade-listed building offering ground-floor dining, private dining options and a bar, and there is a more open and larger environment to feel COVID-19 safe."



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Walk-through COVID-19 testing facility opened at County Hall

A new walk-through COVID-19 testing facility has opened at County Hall in Hertford.

This enables the government to continue improving the accessibility of coronavirus testing for the public.

The facility opened on Friday, December 4. People with symptoms will have to pre-book appointments and can do it seven days a week from 8am to 8pm.

People being tested will need to follow public health measures. These include social distancing, not using public transport to get there, good personal hygiene and wearing a face mask.

Anyone attending an appointment at a walk-through

test site will be provided with guidance on getting to and from the test site safely.

Councillor Ralph Sangster, executive member for resources and performance, said: "Prompt access to a test is key to controlling the spread of coronavirus, and this new site will make it easier for local residents with symptoms to book a test as quickly and as close to their home as possible.

"The site at County Hall will reduce the need to travel long distances for many, especially via public transport, and is therefore crucial in preventing and reducing the possibility of transmission in the community."

Hair salon suffers fire a day before reopening

A hair salon in Hertford town centre was hit by a fire just a day before reopening after the second national lockdown.

Smoke could be seen billowing out of Tom Ashley in Old Cross as the emergency services were called to the scene.

Luckily, there were no injuries to any staff at the salon, and the owner posted an update on Facebook thanking people for their concerns.

He said: "We are all fine. There has been a fire at the salon. Thank you all for your concerns."

Tom posted a further update the next day, saying: "It is with a heavy heart that we share the news that on Tuesday, the basement section of our beautiful salon caught fire. Thankfully, our team are safe after a successful evacuation of the building.



Photo credit @SteveAsh7

"This will clearly affect our reopening as we assess the damage and our ability to operate."

Photo credit: Google Maps





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NATIONAL PULL A SICKIE DAY ON



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

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

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

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

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

“My grandmother poisoned me with her ham”

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

“I’m too drunk to drive”

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

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

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

How you should call in sick to work

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





The PROPERTY Bug?

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

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

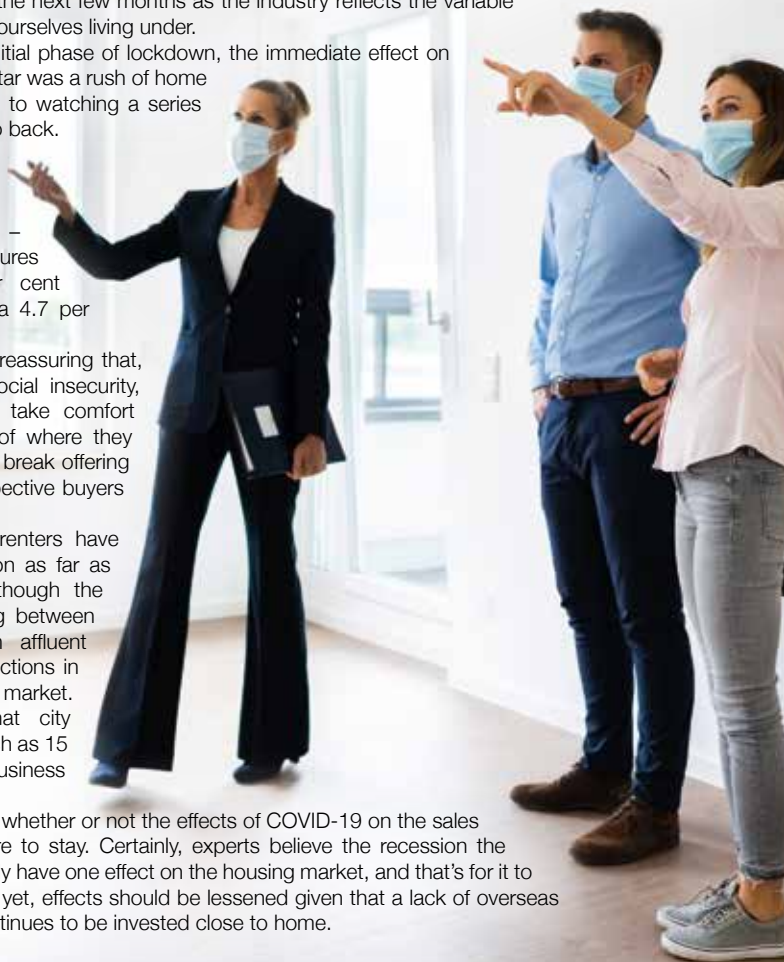
Certainly in the initial phase of lockdown, the immediate effect on our bricks and mortar was a rush of home improvements akin to watching a series of *DIY SOS* back to back.

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

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

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

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



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3. OPTIMISE YOUR WEBSITE WITH LONG-TAIL KEYWORDS

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

4. IMPROVE YOUR PAGE SPEED

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





TRAVEL

TRAINS, PLANES & starry-lit fields



QUIRKY OVERNIGHT STAYS TO ENJOY IN THE UK

BOATHOUSES

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

BUSES

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

PLANES

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

FIELDS

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

TRAINS

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

Photo credit: welovewhitby.com, coolstays.com, applecampin.co.uk, coolcamping.com, railwayretreats.co.uk

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SMART CAR

TELEMATICS AND SMARTBOX INSURANCE ...WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT WORKS

Nobody likes 'average'. Average is plain, boring, middle of the road, dull. And in terms of motor insurance, if you're an extremely safe driver, 'average' means you're paying the same as a driver who is 'averagely safe'... or, worse still, unsafe. In short, you are subsidising someone else's tendency to, over the course of time, perhaps break the speed limit, undertake, be aggressive, and all the other things that lead to accidents which, in turn, lead to car insurance costs being as high as they are.

That's where telematics insurance comes in. Using the technology found in a smartbox (actually just a small device that plugs in below your steering wheel), this clever piece of tech will measure how well you drive.

In other words, the days of having to pay premiums based on the 'average driver' are no more – what you pay is directly related to how safely you take corners, to how much you respect road conditions

and to how conscious you are of other road users. It especially factors in how far you drive over a period of time, as sensible logic suggests that the more miles a motorist clocks up the more likely they are to be involved in an accident.

When you apply for telematics insurance you'll have to provide information regarding where your car is parked, when in the day you usually drive, the types of roads you use and approximate annual mileage. All being well, you'll be rewarded with an initial monthly cost that's much lower than standard insurance.

You'll encounter few problems if you stick to your promise of driving safely and stay within your mileage quota.

However, be warned: from hard braking to speeding to driving too many miles, telematics insurance may well cost you more in the long run if you fail to keep your motoring promises.



Remembering DIEGO

A hero of the game, a villain to himself

The gap between hero and villain has perhaps never been better exemplified – in sporting terms, at least – than through the life of Diego Maradona.

When the Argentine departed us on November 25, football, sport and the world as a cultural sponge lost someone whose notoriety was as decorated as his talent.

In the space of four short minutes in the Estadio Azteca, in Mexico City, on June 22, 1986, Maradona showed the two sides of his character in the sort of perfect juxtaposition usually reserved for a Shakespeare play. The tragedy came first – that 'hand of God' moment that we all know, even if few of us, now, here in 2021, actually saw it happen live.

And then, the comedy, even if it was again England's footballers being derided, as a dancing, pirouetting, sauntering, bulldozing run through the Three Lions' defence rubbed salt in our wounds,

while offering up a perfect apology to that same deity for the forward's earlier misdemeanour.

When that higher force claimed the 60-year-old in November, football fans the world over began to ponder again the best ever – Puskás, Pelé, Ronaldo, Messi. Of course, Maradona would never enter into such debate.

He may have led an average Argentina side to World Cup glory in 1986, and an even flatter version of themselves to the final four years later. He may have performed miracles in guiding unfancied, unfashionable Napoli to Serie A success in Italy. And in later life as drugs, gangs, sex workers and other lurid temptations possessed a man whose only passion, really and truly, was to kick a ball, he may have lost sight entirely of those dusty, poverty-stricken streets in Buenos Aires where he grew up.

And yet, through it all he stayed true to himself: "I am black and white... I'll never be grey."

Photo credit: Carlo Fumagalli/AP/Shutterstock

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PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

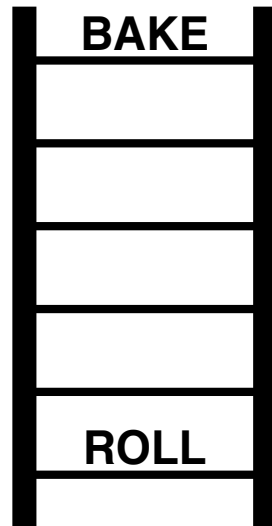
- ▶ AKBASH
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- ▶ SPANIEL
- ▶ ST BERNARD

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N	A	T	C	B	E	A	G	L	E	H	E	R	G	L
D	U	S	J	O	N	A	N	G	I	G	S	E	B	N

DID YOU KNOW?

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

WORD LADDER



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

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

DO NOT rearrange the order of the letters.

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



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