

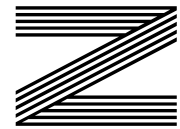
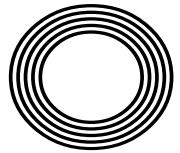
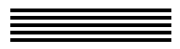


**TIPS TO
MANAGE
SCREEN
TIME**

**SPRING
BLUEBELL
BEAUTY
SPOTS**

ROCKET RECIPES
Make your own rocket pesto

Dancing Queen
50 years of ABBA world domination



FREE

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Kate
WINSLET CBE

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Editor's notes...

APRIL 2024



Brett Shohet, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION**Hertford. Preparations are progressing for our upcoming business exhibition in the autumn. The inaugural event last year was a great success, showcasing a variety of businesses and welcoming hundreds of visitors. We're eagerly anticipating this year's edition, which is once again sponsored by London Stansted Airport. To find out more, visit bsmb.co.uk

As I write this, I'm looking forward to my first holiday of the year. It's going to be such a joy to take my young nephew on his first overseas holiday to Spain - even if sorting out the paperwork has been a bit of a nightmare! I hope we can create some fantastic lasting memories during our time away.

I've also had some sad family news recently, as my nan is currently in hospital following a fall. It's during such difficult times that families really come together, and often start asking questions they might not have been brave enough to ask before. It's never too late to ask those questions, and find out more about your heritage and where you come from - but more on that in next month's edition!

We can now look forward to lighter evenings and warmer weather, hopefully in time for the upcoming bank holiday weekends!

Brett Shohet

This is your town's hyperlocal magazine, delivering to homes and businesses every month.

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GIMME!GIMME!GIMME!

THE RESURGENCE OF POP ICONS ABBA – 50 YEARS SINCE THEIR EUROVISION WIN

Fifty years ago this month, a Swedish pop group called ABBA wowed the Eurovision stage with their catchy hit, *Waterloo* – even though the UK gave them precisely ‘nul points’. This victory launched the band into legendary status in the world of pop music. But what have they been up to since then?

WHO WAS IN ABBA?

ABBA was made up of two couples: Agnetha Fältskog and Björn Ulvaeus, and Benny Andersson and Anni-Frid Lyngstad. The group enjoyed worldwide success throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s with pop classics like *Dancing Queen*, *The Winner Takes it All*, and *Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! (A Man After Midnight)*. They had nine UK chart-toppers and sold up to 385 million records worldwide.

THE BIG SPLIT

In 1982, the pop world was shocked when the group announced they were breaking up. Around the same time, each couple within the group also parted ways. But the band members kept busy. Agnetha and Anni-Frid both released solo albums, and Anni-Frid devoted herself to charitable work. Björn and Benny forged individual careers, but also continued working together on shows like the award-winning musical *Chess* and the *Mamma Mia!* stage show.

BACK TOGETHER AGAIN

Fast forward to 2016, and the group shocked the world once again with the announcement of their reunion. They were going to appear as virtual avatars in a groundbreaking entertainment experience called *ABBA Voyage*.

In a joint statement, the members expressed their joy at reuniting after more than three decades apart, saying: “We all four felt that, after some 35 years, it could be fun to join forces again and go into the recording studio. So we did. And it was like time had stood still and that we only had been away on a short holiday.”

A RESOUNDING TRIUMPH

The show featured super-realistic avatars of the band, looking just like they did in the late 1970s. They played a mix of new and old hits, and the show was a massive hit. In May 2022, all four members attended the premiere in London and the newspapers had a field day.

In November 2021, ABBA released their ninth and final studio album, *Voyage* – their first release in 40 years. The reviews might have been mixed, but fans loved it. It soared to the top position in the UK charts, earned four Grammy nominations, and brought the group’s music to a new generation of fans. And, of course, it will help to make sure the *Money, Money, Money* continues to roll in!

50 YEARS ON

This May, BBC One is showing a special documentary called *ABBA: Against The Odds*, commemorating the 50th anniversary of ABBA’s Eurovision triumph. The programme will coincide with the 68th Eurovision Song Contest, where Years & Years singer Olly Alexander will be representing the UK. Coincidentally, this year’s show is being held in ABBA’s own country – in Malmö, Sweden, on Saturday, May 11. The documentary promises to unveil the untold story of the iconic supergroup, showcasing their remarkable journey to global fame.

“WE ALL FOUR FELT THAT, AFTER SOME 35 YEARS, IT COULD BE FUN TO JOIN FORCES AGAIN”

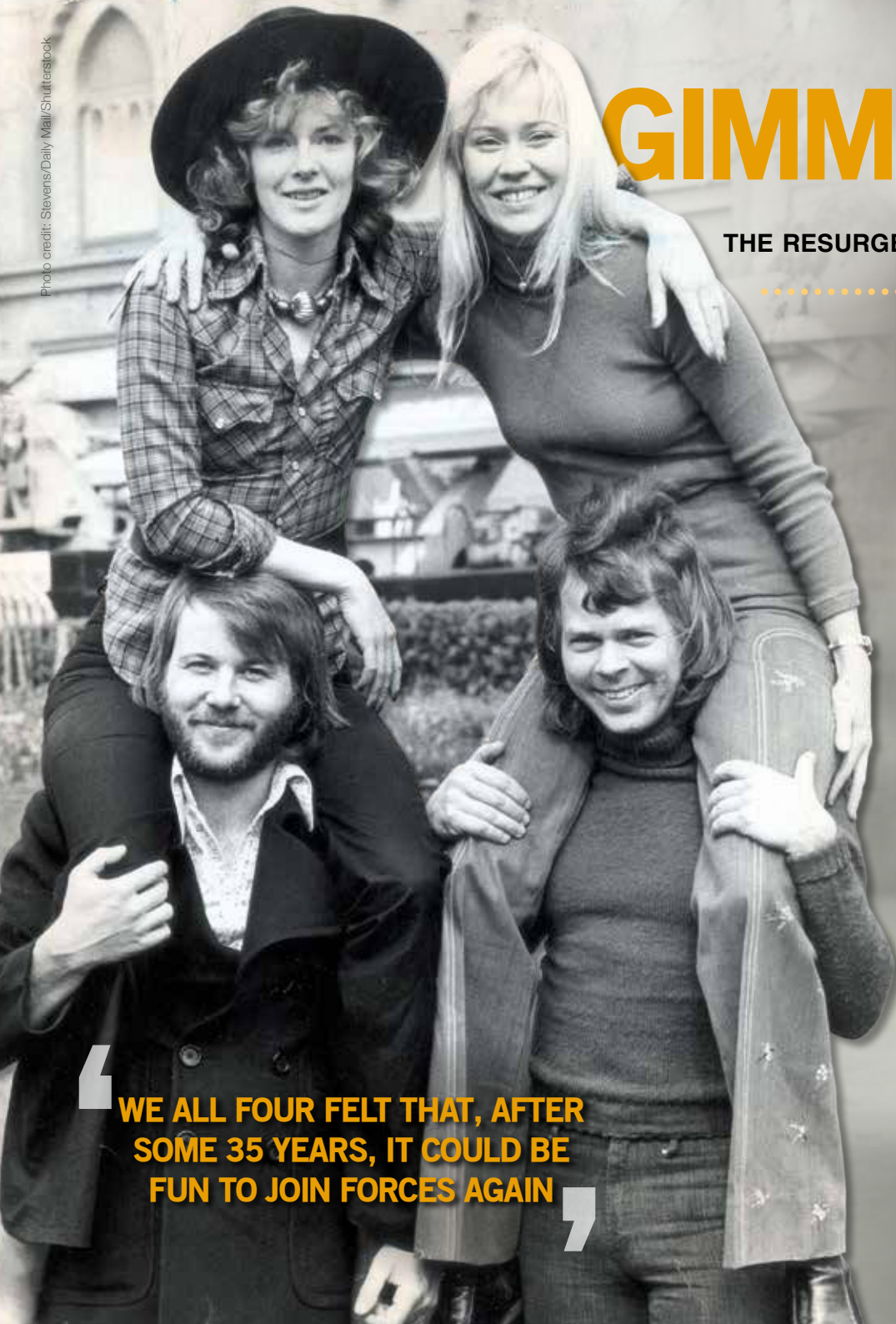




Photo credit: Ken McKay/ITV

a new morning

WITH TV PRESENTERS BEN AND CAT TAKING OVER AS THE NEW HOSTS

Following a challenging few months for the show, ITV bosses have pinned their hopes on Ben Shephard and Cat Deeley to take forward the continued renaissance of *This Morning*.

Having stepped in during a turbulent interim period, the charismatic pair are now the permanent hosts for the Monday to Thursday slots, succeeding Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby, who departed the show in May and October respectively.

Both new presenters are veterans of British TV. Deeley rose to prominence as the host of *SMTV* alongside Ant and Dec. She also gained recognition by earning an Emmy Award nomination for her role as the host of *So You Think You Can Dance?* in the United States.

As well as previously hosting ITV's *Good Morning Britain*, Shephard, who started his career on Channel 4's *The Bigger Breakfast*, has also held presenting gigs for *T4*, *The Xtra Factor* and *Ninja Warrior UK*. He also previously stood in for Schofield on *This Morning* several times, and currently fronts the

game show *Tipping Point*.

The 49 year old said: "I get a bit longer in bed, so I am grateful for the opportunity!

"*This Morning* is such a prestigious show and it's a real honour to be taking my place on the sofa."

With such experience and long-time popularity with UK viewers, it is not surprising that the photogenic pair have been trusted to reinvigorate what is considered to be a British institution.

Also, given the show's failure to win at the audience-voted National Television Awards in September 2023 (for the first time in 13 years), Deeley and Shephard will have their eyes on a very specific prize in 2024!

In recent months, *This Morning* has featured an ever-rotating line-up of presenters, including Andi Peters, Sian Welby, Mollie King, Josie Gibson, Craig Doyle, Emma Willis, Christine Lampard and Rylan Clark. Alison Hammond and Dermot O'Leary, who have previously presented the show throughout the week, will continue to co-host the show on Fridays.



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FASHION

PEPLUM *perfection*

A fashion must-have in the 1980s, peplum is set to make a huge comeback in 2024 and we couldn't be any more excited! Although it can be hard to get this look right, when you do, the results are remarkably flattering and super stylish.

WHAT IS A PEPLUM PIECE?

To the uninitiated, peplum is a style piece where the garment in question is taken in at the waist and flares out at the hips. Perfect for creating the illusion of an hourglass figure – even if you are not blessed with curves – peplum can be worn for both casual days out and more formal events.

HOW TO WEAR PEPLUM IN 2024

Pair a peplum top with wide-leg jeans or trousers

For a relaxed vibe, opt for a casual peplum top and pair it with wide-leg jeans or trousers. Creating a long and elegant silhouette and clearly defined waist, this look is great for fuller figures.

Ease in with a mini peplum

If you're unsure about this bold trend, why not ease yourself in with a mini peplum? With lots of variations to choose from, a top with a little kick hem offers the perfect way to dip your toes in. This style is best for a straight body shape.

Try a monochrome fit

Make a statement at the office or your next big occasion with a monochrome peplum outfit such as a peplum dress or peplum top and skirt. For spring 2024, fiery red or hot pink are both great options. A good choice for all body types.

Fake it with a belt

Not ready to invest in peplum? Fake this fabulous look by cinching a belt over a loose shirt, dress, top or jacket. Just make sure it has some flow to it so that the fabric below the belt drapes nicely over your hips. Perfect for pear shapes.

DO NOT pair peplum with skinny jeans à la 2010 – this is one style that belongs firmly in the past!



Photo credit: ASOS.com





BEAUTY

Balayage VS HIGHLIGHTS



Want to lighten your hair in time for summer? Find out the difference between balayage and highlights, plus how to choose the right lightening method for your hair.

What is balayage?

Balayage is a French word that means 'to sweep'. In the world of hairstyling, this phrase refers to a hair colouring technique in which highlights are hand-painted or swept onto the surface of random sections of the hair without the need for aluminium foil. Balayage offers a natural, sun-kissed glow to your hair.

Why choose balayage?

Ask your hairdresser for balayage if you want:

- Colour that blends seamlessly into your natural hair colour
- A sun-kissed glow
- A new colour that is just a few shades lighter than your natural colour
- Hair that gets lighter towards the ends

How long does balayage last?

Balayage lasts longer than regular highlights because of the seamless application. You can go many months without the need for a top-up if your hair is already naturally light.

What are highlights?

Traditional highlighting offers a more conventional way of lightening your hair colour and involves using aluminium foil to help saturate individual strands of hair from root to tip. This results in a more pronounced contrast between your base colour and the lightened hair.

Why choose highlights?

Ask your hairdresser for highlights if you want:

- A stark contrast between your lighter highlights and darker, natural hair
- A more structured pattern of lightened hair
- Evenly coloured hair from root to tip

How long do highlights last?

Highlights tend to last between one and two months before your root colour will start to show through. The greater the contrast in colour from your natural hair, the more frequently maintenance will be needed.



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Abbot Care Home is situated amongst peaceful open parkland and features beautiful, landscaped gardens. The people who live here enjoy a comfortable environment and benefit from the home-from-home atmosphere.

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To find out more about Abbot Care Home and book in to view our newly opened Jubilee Suite, please get in touch

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NATIONAL STRESS AWARENESS MONTH

APRIL IS ALL ABOUT LEARNING TO REDUCE STRESS



Do you suffer with stress? If yes, then you are far from alone, with one in 14 adults admitting to feeling stressed every single day and more than one-third feeling stressed at least once a week.

WHAT CAUSES STRESS?

Sometimes stress is caused by one big event or situation in your life, or it might be an accumulation of lots of smaller things. People often feel stressed if they are under a lot of pressure, are facing big changes in their life or are worried about something. You may also feel stressed if you feel like you don't have control over a certain aspect of your life or you have responsibilities that you find overwhelming.

HOW DOES STRESS MAKE YOU FEEL?

Stress can affect your emotions, your body and how you behave in many different ways. Some of the ways stress can make you feel include: Feeling irritable, angry or impatient | Feeling overwhelmed | Feeling anxious or depressed | Not being able to enjoy yourself | Not having a sense of humour | Feeling uninterested in life | Feeling neglected or lonely | Existing mental health problems getting worse

In severe cases of stress, some people may also experience suicidal thoughts.

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS OF STRESS?

Difficulty breathing | Panic attacks | Trouble sleeping | Muscle aches and headaches | Fatigue | Chest pains and high blood pressure | Sweating | Changes to your menstrual cycle | Existing physical conditions getting worse

HOW TO REDUCE STRESS

There are many techniques that you can try to reduce stress, including: Being more active | Eating a healthy diet | Avoiding unhealthy habits such as drinking alcohol and smoking | Practising meditation | Laughing more | Connecting with loved ones | Getting sufficient sleep | Seeking counselling | Limiting your time on social media | Working smarter, not harder.





Nice to MEAT YOU

Italian cured meats are the flagship of Italian traditional cuisine and can be enjoyed in a number of different dishes, both hot and cold. Find out all about our favourite varieties below and how to pair them with other foods for some unbelievable taste sensations.

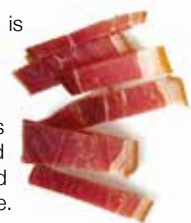
SALAMI: Salami is one of the oldest Italian cured meats and is made from ground pork and seasoned with garlic, salt and spices. It is stuffed into casings and then hung to cure, ferment and dry. Do not cook with salami but instead add it to a sandwich or charcuterie board with cheeses such as pecorino or provolone.

PROSCIUTTO: Prosciutto is made from the whole hind leg of a pig and is one of the most popular Italian-style cured meats. Slice very thinly and add to salads or wrap around freshly sliced cantaloupe melon for a tasty snack or delicious canapé.

SPECK: Speck is a cured meat that is produced from the pork leg and is first smoked and then cured. It is typically flavoured with spices such as nutmeg, juniper berries and bay leaves. This Italian cured meat is delicious in a risotto, as a cold appetiser or roasted on skewers with apple.

BRESAOLA: Bresaola is a type of cured beef that is made from the leg of the cow and infused with spices such as garlic, pepper and juniper during the drying process. It is rich in protein and low in fat, making it ideal for those watching their weight. Drizzle with olive oil and fresh lemon on an antipasto platter or enjoy with salty cheeses like parmesan.

MORTADELLA: Mortadella is instantly recognisable by its strong scent and pink colour. Mortadella is composed of cured pork and pistachios, and spiced with black pepper and myrtle berries. This cold cut works well with other meats, cheeses, bread and condiments such as mustard. Alternatively, add to cheese-based pasta dishes or stuff in ravioli.



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YOU rock(et) MY WORLD

A GUIDE TO GROWING, STORING AND COOKING WITH THIS CLASSIC SALAD GREEN

Used in salads since Elizabethan times, rocket has a distinct peppery flavour that people tend to either love or hate. Easy to grow and prepare, find out everything there is to know about this leafy salad green right here.

How to grow rocket

Rocket can be sown either indoors in containers filled with multi-purpose compost or directly into the soil. A sunny spot is best for spring sowings, whereas mid-summer sowings are best in a cooler spot in light shade. There are two main types of rocket you can grow:

1. WILD ROCKET

This is a perennial plant that is robust and easy to grow even in poor soil. It produces long, deeply divided leaves that have a strong peppery flavour.

2. SALAD ROCKET

This is an annual plant that has a shorter life span and produces dark, delicate leaves that offer a milder taste.

How to store rocket

Rocket should be stored in the bottom part of your fridge, known as the salad drawer, in either a brown paper or perforated bag. Consume within two days for optimum freshness. If you would like to freeze rocket, make sure you chop up the leaves first and then place them in an airtight container as whole leaves do not thaw well.

How to use rocket in cooking

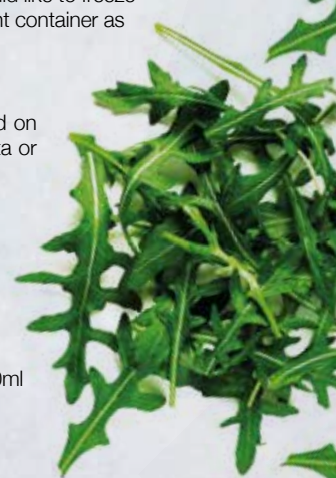
Rocket can be mixed with other salad leaves to add a hint of spice, scattered on a pizza or used to garnish pasta dishes. It can also be wilted directly into pasta or eggs; just make sure you add it at the last minute to retain its flavour.

Some of our favourite rocket recipes include:

- Rocket pesto (see recipe below)
- Prawn, fennel and rocket risotto
- Ricotta and rocket lasagne rolls
- Slow-roasted tomatoes and rocket

How to make rocket pesto

- Combine 50g pine nuts, 100g rocket, 50g parmesan or vegan alternative, 150ml olive oil and 1 garlic glove in a blender.
- Season with salt and pepper and blend to a paste.
- Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to five days.



MAKE YOUR OWN OTTOMAN

Ottomans are stylish, practical and perfect for storage, but there is no denying that they can be expensive to buy. But what if we told you that you could easily make your own with just a few basic supplies and a bit of DIY know-how?

HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN OTTOMAN

You will need:

- A wooden crate | Castor wheels | Dark wood wax | Short wood screws | Standard wood screws | Plywood | 2 x wood battens | Upholstery foam | A piece of fabric | Spray adhesive | Wadding | A staple gun

How to make:

1. Apply furniture wax to the crate to make it look more rustic and aged.
2. Fix the castor wheels to the base of the crate using short wood screws.
3. Measure the top of the crate and then cut a piece of plywood to these measurements.
4. Cut two battens of wood, one inch shorter than the width of the plywood lid.
5. Cut a piece of upholstery foam the same size as the lid.
6. Stick the foam to the back of the plywood lid using the spray adhesive.
7. Cut a piece of wadding that is large enough to wrap around the foam and then cover the lid with it, and secure it with the staple gun.
8. Cut your chosen fabric so that it is big enough to wrap around the lid.
9. Cover the lid with the fabric and use the staple gun to secure it to the underside.
10. Add the battens of wood to the underside of the lid using two standard wood screws. These will stop the ottoman lid from sliding around.

CUSTOMISATION TIPS

- > For a child's bedroom, stencil their name onto the side of the crate.
- > For a nautical theme, attach rope for handles.
- > For a retro feel, cover the lid with an old pair of jeans or a vintage dress.

Photo credit: Gracie Oaks viawayfair.co.uk, August Grove via wayfair.co.uk, canarystreetcrafts.com, pillarboxblue.com



CELEBRATING A CENTURY!

WOOD BROS FURNITURE CELEBRATES ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Wood Bros was started in a Bethnal Green stable in the East End of London by a small team of furniture makers. Through the Roaring 20s, with its flappers, jazz, Charleston, the general strike, and the Wall Street Crash, with the boom and bust affecting everyone. Wood Bros moved down the River Lea to the current factory in Marsh Lane, Ware and it was here that the founder HW Wood created the well known 'Old Charm' oak range of traditional cabinet furniture. Inspired by history and tradition, Wood Bros continues to be a thriving family business today, blending heritage, design and fine craftsmanship. Some of its classic designs have remained unchanged from the originals of more than fifty years ago.

Wood Bros has also evolved beyond its cabinet roots with the creation of a large upholstery collection. The sofa range continues to develop stylistically to include a variety of contemporary and traditional designs, with an emphasis on tailoring, comfort, and style. They have collaborated with Abraham Moon and Harris Tweed among other UK fabric manufacturers, and are proud to offer designs and styles for all interiors.

Wood Bros offers a wide range of home accessories from cushions and throws to lampshades and fabric-by-metre. Our workshops of skilled craftsmen are on hand for refurbishment projects and are experienced in re-upholstering and restoring sofas



and cabinets alike", explains MD James Sheffield. "Come and visit us in our extensive Ware showrooms and meet the friendly and knowledgeable team!"



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a little BIT OF LUCK

Are you looking for a new indoor plant for your home? Lucky bamboo is easy to take care of, provides great visual appeal, and is said to bring luck, wealth and good health to its owners.

HOW TO CARE FOR LUCKY BAMBOO

Lucky bamboo is known for being virtually indestructible, making it a great indoor plant for beginners and those who don't have a lot of spare time.

1 LIGHT

Lucky bamboo thrives in bright but filtered sunlight. Avoid placing it in direct sunlight as this may scorch the leaves. It can also tolerate light shade but will grow larger when kept in a bright room.

2 SOIL

Plant in well-drained, rich potting soil for best results. Also, lucky bamboo does well when housed in pebbles or a vase filled with water, as long as it has an inch of standing water at all times.

3 WATER

Lucky bamboo is sensitive to chlorine and other chemicals found in tap water. Therefore, it is better to use bottled or distilled water or tap water that has been allowed to sit for 24 hours to allow the chlorine to evaporate.

4 TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY

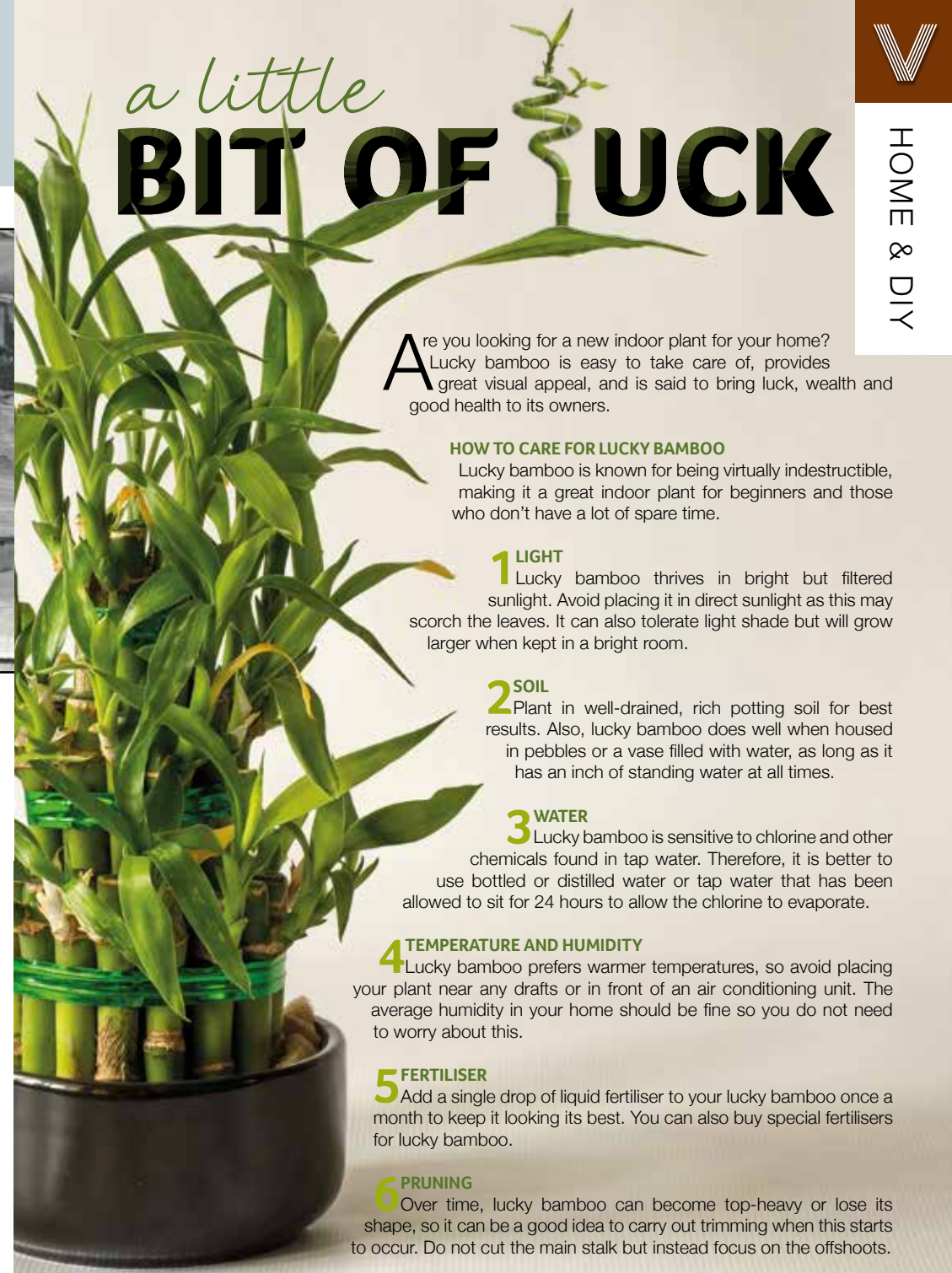
Lucky bamboo prefers warmer temperatures, so avoid placing your plant near any drafts or in front of an air conditioning unit. The average humidity in your home should be fine so you do not need to worry about this.

5 FERTILISER

Add a single drop of liquid fertiliser to your lucky bamboo once a month to keep it looking its best. You can also buy special fertilisers for lucky bamboo.

6 PRUNING

Over time, lucky bamboo can become top-heavy or lose its shape, so it can be a good idea to carry out trimming when this starts to occur. Do not cut the main stalk but instead focus on the offshoots.



HOME & DIY



How to CLEAN PAINT ROLLERS



A step-by-step guide to cleaning your paint rollers



Paint rollers are a must-have tool for painting your home, but they can be a nightmare to clean. If you are guilty of throwing away paint rollers after each use, then this guide is just what you need.

HOW TO CLEAN A PAINT ROLLER (WATER OR LATEX-BASED PAINT)

YOU WILL NEED:

A bucket | A putty knife | A stiff-bristled brush or old rag | A pair of rubber gloves | Washing-up liquid

WHAT TO DO:

Step 1: Remove any excess paint

Paint rollers are highly absorbent, so you first need to remove any excess paint. Use a putty knife to gently scrape off any excess paint back into the paint can.

Step 2: Remove the roller from the frame

Put on a pair of rubber gloves and then slide the roller off the frame. Place some warm water and a few squirts of washing-up liquid into a bucket. Submerge the frame in the bucket and clean using a stiff-bristled brush or an old rag. Leave to air dry.

Step 3: Wash the roller

Submerge the roller in the bucket and use your hands to massage the paint out of it. Make sure you clean every surface of the roller. If the paint has already dried, leave the roller in the water to soak for 30 minutes before cleaning.

Step 4: Rinse the roller

Fill the bucket with fresh water and then rinse the roller. It may take several minutes of rinsing before it is completely clean. Shake off any excess water.

Step 5: Dry the roller

Never place a roller on its side to dry as this will flatten the fibres. Instead, place it upright on its end or slip it over a trouser hanger.

NB: If you have used oil-based paint, follow the same steps but replace the washing-up liquid and warm water with mineral spirits. You will also need to wash the roller for 5-10 minutes in the solution rather than 1-2 minutes.

Photo credit: thespruce.com



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INTERIOR DESIGN PROFILE

STUDIO IRO

THE INTERIOR DESIGN STUDIO TEACHING US TO EMBRACE IMPERFECTION...



Studio Iro is the design studio of founder Lucy Carrell, whose work is inspired by the Japanese practice of Wabi, where beauty is found in imperfection. Studio Iro's portfolio contains understated designs that have subtle details to create warm spaces that leave a lasting impression.

A CLOSER LOOK AT STUDIO IRO

Studio Iro creates styles that are eclectic and beautiful, bringing together a range of influences to create looks that are always unique. From antique furniture to colour blocks that add interest and style, you should expect the unexpected and watch it all come together perfectly.

Studio Iro uses textures and original features of properties to create looks that are unique to each space. Colour pops through art, textiles and accessories add fun elements to looks that are

easy to recreate in your own home.

CREATING THE LOOK IN YOUR HOME

Lucy describes her designs as "soulful and warm", and this is a theme you can easily recreate in your own space. Some Studio Iro-inspired tips include:

- > Imperfections should be embraced, such as bricked walls, adding their own beautiful touch to your project. Not everything needs to be flawless.
- > Keep an eye out for antique furniture, like a sideboard and armchair that can add some character to a more contemporary home.
- > Use abstract or fine art and decorative wallpaper to lift your spaces and bring in some patterns and textures.
- > Embrace florals and greenery to add further detail to your space and make it look more homely.



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The company, based locally, offers homeowners the opportunity to maximise their storage space with a loft ladder, 50sqft of boarding and a light - all fully fitted in less than a day from just £444! But it's not just the affordability of the package that makes Home Counties Loft Ladders stand out, as manager Jamie Oakley explains: 'Our

Integrity in that we will turn up at the time we say and make sure the house is spotless when we leave, and value in that we offer our services at a price people can afford.

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Kate WINSLET

Photo credit: David Fisher/Shutterstock



She was the prim beauty who won our hearts on the doomed deck of the *Titanic*. Wind forward almost three decades and Kate Winslet CBE wows again as a ferocious female leader who makes grown men quake in their boots.

Once upon a time in Hollywood, there were two unspoken rules: first, glamorous film stars generally played the roles of glamorous women; and second, a jump to television often meant your career was in terminal decline!

Thankfully, like most things in Tinseltown, neither of these caveats remains true.

Take Kate Winslet in HBO's *Mare of Easttown*, for example a critically acclaimed 2021 miniseries in which her character Mare Sheehan – a detective sergeant and lifelong resident of Easttown – is tasked with investigating a local murder while also dealing with personal and professional challenges. The show was lauded for its gritty realism, encapsulated by Winslet's Mare, a downtrodden, frumpy and dishevelled woman who is a far cry from the actress's usual splendour.

"It's always been good to step outside who I really am," the *Titanic*, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *Hamlet* and *Avatar: The Way of Water* actress begins. "Some actors like the security of a certain type of characterisation, but for me that feels boring. My contentment actually comes in taking risks; and of course, some work, and some don't!"

Most for Winslet have worked, thankfully; so much so that rather than push her daughter away from the emotional perils of the entertainment industry, as so many parents do, she has encouraged her to carve out a niche. In 2022, the Reading-born beauty starred in *I Am Ruth*, a deeply moving film for Channel 4 which explores the ruptured relationship between Ruth (Winslet) and her teenage daughter, Freya, played by Winslet's own first-born child Mia Threapleton, whose mental health is becoming increasingly compromised by her mobile phone.

"I've always kept my children away from the media and that part of the industry. And in the case of Mia, not only has this protected her, but I think also kept the idea of acting and performing pure and wholesome, and that's really important."

Indeed, with her lookalike daughter embarking on her own acting career, 48-year-old Winslet could consider early retirement, especially considering she's already won an Oscar, two Emmy Awards and numerous BAFTAs, as well as being awarded a CBE by Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 2012 for services to drama.

Instead, she has delivered one of her finest performances yet in six-part satire, *The Regime*.

Created by *Succession* alum and *The Menu* cowriter Will Tracy, the Sky Max series features Winslet as the manicured and manic dictator of an imagined European state.

Primarily filmed at the picturesque Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna, Austria, with additional scenes shot in the baroque rooms of Wentworth Woodhouse, near Rotherham, *The Regime* is a fever dream that simultaneously terrifies, baffles and entertains viewers.

"You've got to keep pushing in this industry. As they say, standing still is going backwards!"

Push she does, something aided by a happy private life and marriage with Edward Abel Smith. The couple contentedly exist in the rural confines of West Wittering on the Sussex coast, turning away from the red carpets and flashbulbs. "Of course I will do what I can when promoting projects, but outside that, I've never been too fussed about the scene.

"I've never missed it, and I don't think it's ever missed me!"



Home is where the Herts is for Alesha Dixon



She's considered a modern-day national treasure, but Alesha Dixon remains faithful to her humble Hertfordshire upbringing.

Born to a Scottish mother and Jamaican father in Welwyn Garden City, the young Dixon had her eyes set on stardom from an early age. She was a pupil at the local Monk's Walk School, but it was while attending dance classes at Dance Attic in Fulham that she met her future bandmate, Sabrina Washington.

Along with Su-Elise Nash, the talented trio became Mis-Teeq, releasing their debut single, *Why?*, in 2001. Over the next few years, they established themselves as one of the leading girl groups on the UK music scene.

However, it was after Mis-Teeq disbanded in 2005 that Dixon came into her own. She released her debut solo album, *Fired Up*, in 2006, which spawned the hit single *Lipstick*. She followed up with subsequent albums, including *The Alesha Show* (2008) and *The Entertainer* (2010).

In addition to her music career, Dixon has established herself as a television personality. A contestant on *Strictly Come Dancing* in 2007, she sashayed and foxtrotted to victory and ultimately won the competition. Having also won the hearts of *Strictly* viewers watching at home, Dixon then transitioned into a role as a judge, serving on the panel from 2009 to 2012.

Her television career further expanded when she joined the judging panel of *Britain's Got Talent* in 2012, replacing Michael McIntyre. She has remained a fixture on the show, earning praise for her insightful critiques and warm rapport with contestants and fellow judges.

When tasked with where to raise her own family, it seems there was only one place for the 45 year old. With her husband Azuka Ononye and their daughters, Azura and Anaya, she currently resides in a breathtaking mansion located in Hertfordshire. It seems that home is where the Herts is.

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BEFORE



AFTER

A building steeped in history and tradition

Discover the story of the Hertford Corn Exchange where, in the times before some of the most legendary music acts played there, it served a very different purpose.

The Corn Exchange in Hertford stands as a testament to architectural revival, having been transformed from a dormant trading hub into a bustling live music venue. This revolution exemplifies the rebirth of a historic plot, breathing new life into an old structure.

A building is steeped in history and tradition. Initially serving as a trading centre for corn, as its name suggests, this structure was once the heartbeat of the town's agricultural commerce.

Today, the Corn Exchange thrives as a world-

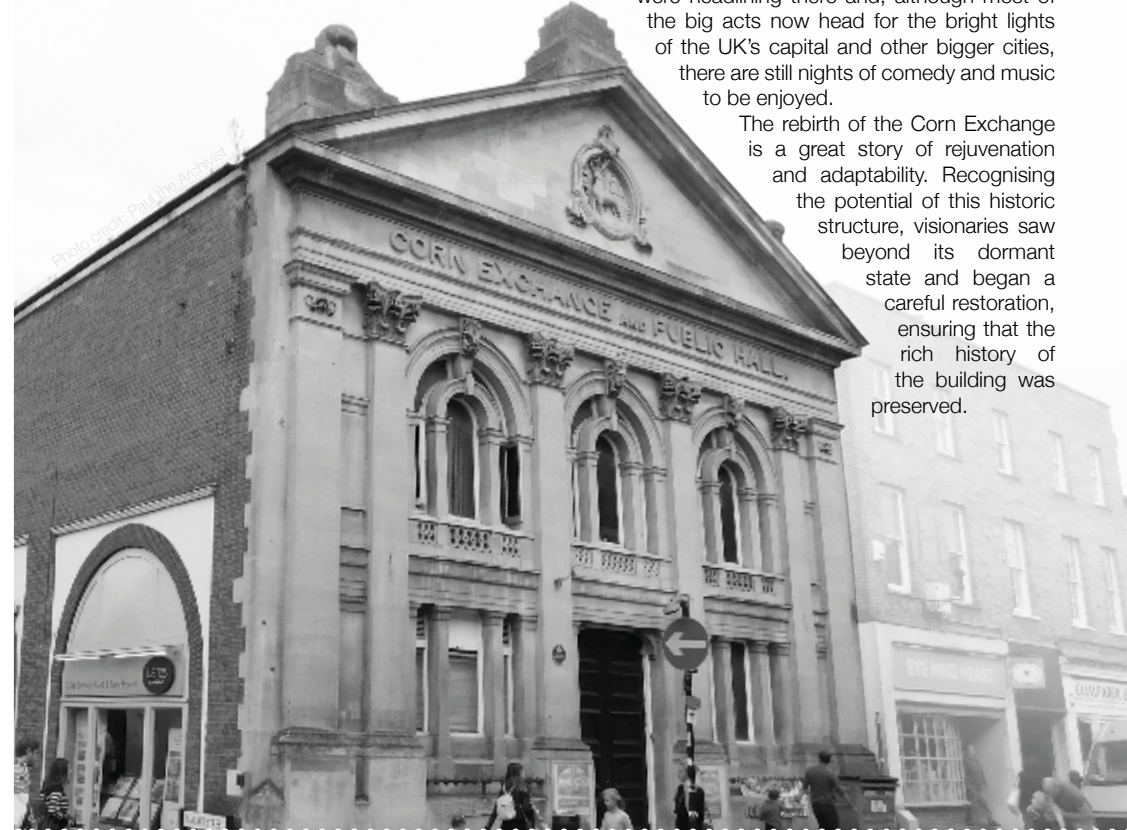
class venue, attracting a range of artists and audiences. Its walls, imbued with history, now resonate with music and life.

The current building was constructed in 1859, designed by the Leeds architect William Hill on a site that had previously been a butcher's market in the 1700s, then a gaol. The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 brought a boom, but the bust was on the horizon with the great depression of British agriculture in the latter part of the 19th century.

By the start of the First World War, it was being used as a billet for recruits. The first play, *Of Mice and Men*, was staged there in 1919.

By the mid-1960s, The Who and The Kinks were headlining there and, although most of the big acts now head for the bright lights of the UK's capital and other bigger cities, there are still nights of comedy and music to be enjoyed.

The rebirth of the Corn Exchange is a great story of rejuvenation and adaptability. Recognising the potential of this historic structure, visionaries saw beyond its dormant state and began a careful restoration, ensuring that the rich history of the building was preserved.



LOCAL FEATURE



YOUR LOCAL EVENTS

NIGHT AT THE MUSICALS DANCE MASTERCLASS

Foxholes Farm, London Road, Hertford, SG13 7NT
Friday, April 26, 7pm



Photo credit: Nu You Pilates

Dance instructor Hannah from Nu You Pilates will lead a fun-filled dance class for adults set to musical theatre classics. This is an opportunity for anyone who's interested to try something new or to rekindle an existing passion.

Tickets cost £12.50 from www.shorturl.at/fBS57

WOMEN-ONLY SELF-DEFENCE WORKSHOP

Krav Maga Elite, Unit 5, Dicker Mill Industrial Estate, Hertford, SG13 7AA
Saturday, April 27, 12.30pm – 3.30pm

In this three-hour workshop, participants will learn how to spot and avoid potential threats and how to de-escalate conflict. Women will walk away from the session understanding different types of violence and the skills to maintain distance when in threatening circumstances.

The workshop is suitable for any fitness level and no prior experience is needed. Tickets cost £29 and are available from www.shorturl.at/jpruB

HERTFORD SOCIETY OPEN EXHIBITION

Cowbridge Hall, Cowbridge, Hertford, SG14 1PQ
Saturday, April 27, to Sunday, May 5, various times

One of the most prestigious open exhibitions in southeast England returns to Hertford this month. Amateurs and professionals are welcome to hand in their work at a price of £3 per entry, plus a flat fee of £5 to become a member of the society, between

8.30am and 10am on Saturday, April 20. Each work will then be up for sale, with guests invited to view the exhibition on a drop-in basis throughout the week.

The exhibition will feature mixed media, paintings, ceramics, sculptures and other artistic mediums.

The exhibition is free. Find out more information at www.hertfordartsociety.co.uk/index.html

HERTFORD COMPANY OF ARCHERS: BEGINNERS COURSE

Bayford Park, Bayford Hall Farm, Hertford, SG13 8PR

Saturday, May 4, to Saturday, May 25, 9.30am – 12pm

Hertford Company of Archers is holding a four-week course to provide new players with an introduction to the sport of target archery. Participants will work towards a qualification which will allow them to join any club registered with Archery GB.

Archers will learn how to set up a recurve bow, barebow and freestyle techniques, as well as receive a grounding in range safety.

Tickets cost £85 from www.shorturl.at/ARV39

RADICALS, REBELS AND DISSENTERS

Starts at Salisbury Square, Hertford, SG14 1BE
Monday, May 6, 2pm – 3.30pm

Hertford Town Council offers the opportunity to explore the rich history of religious dissent and radical politics on this guided walk. For an hour-and-a-half, walkers will be transported back to bygone days, meeting Quakers who risked prison for their beliefs and mutineers from the Civil War. Come along and find out about the little-known connection between the Magna Carta and the siege of Hertford Castle.

Tickets cost £7 and can be bought from the Hertford Town & Tourist Centre on The Wash.



Photo credit: John Hall via Flickr

GOING THE DISTANCE

A brief history of the London Marathon, in advance of this year's event on April 21

While we have the Ancient Greeks to thank for the world's most recognised long-distance running event (it's named after the 25-mile route from Marathon to Athens, embarked on by a Greek messenger who announced victory over invading Persians in 490BC, then promptly collapsed and died), the modern incarnation of the challenge is a very British creation.

Indeed, from a standardised 25-mile distance, the challenge was extended by a mile and 385 yards ahead of the 1908 Olympic Games in London, with Queen Alexandra requesting the race start on the Windsor Castle lawns and finish in front of the royal box at the Olympic Stadium.

The random boost in mileage stuck, and the marathon has evolved to become one of the toughest (yet at the same time perfectly achievable) endurance challenges.

Globally, there are thousands of official marathons that take place every year, yet of them all, no one has ever run one quicker than Kelvin Kiptum, who was tragically killed in a car crash in his native

Kenya on February 11 of this year. His time of two hours and 35 seconds (and a barely believable mile pace of four minutes and 36 seconds) at the 2023 Chicago Marathon is an incredible legacy to leave.

The London Marathon is arguably the world's favourite. Conceived by Chris Brasher and John Disley in 1981, it has men's, women's and wheelchair variants. At the first event, there were 6,255 finishers, with Dick Beardsley and Inge Simonsen crossing the finish line first hand-in-hand.

Kiptum holds the current London Marathon record (2:01:25), the fastest of more than one million entrants across the past four decades. More than £1 billion pounds of sponsorship has been raised for good causes during that time.

With nearly 580,000 applicants in 2024 – an almost fourfold increase compared to a decade ago – the London Marathon has never been more popular. Beginning in Greenwich Park, it finishes on The Mall, and almost 99 per cent of runners who start will finish.

If you feel inspired, entries will soon open for the 2025 event. And even if you decide not to run, it's still a great event to witness as a spectator, with a lively atmosphere and community spirit as crowds come together to cheer on the runners.



Photo credit: Ted Blackbrow/Daily Mail/Shutterstock





TRAVEL

Bluebells

The Sweetest Flower

As April arrives, bluebells emerge in woodlands, parks and gardens across the country, reminding us that spring is most definitely here. For centuries, these delicate blue flowers have captured the hearts of poets, artists and nature lovers. But sadly, they're not in bloom for long – usually from mid-April to early May. So get out and enjoy their beauty before it starts to fade. These are some of the best places to see dramatic displays of bluebells this spring.

Leigh Woods, Bristol: Admire a sea of bluebells against the dramatic backdrop of the Clifton Suspension Bridge.

Bodnant Garden, Conwy: Spanning more than 80 acres, Bodnant Garden is especially beautiful when the bluebells take over the Old Park.

Blickling Estate, Norfolk: Visit the Great Wood and Temple Walk at the birthplace of Anne Boleyn to see one of the country's best bluebell displays.

Mount Stuart, Bute: Visit this Victorian gothic mansion to see bluebells take over the stunning woodland below thousands of mature trees.

- There are also dazzling bluebell displays at:
- > Hatfield Park and Garden, Hatfield, Hertfordshire
 - > Whippendell Wood, Watford, Hertfordshire
 - > Norsey Wood, Billericay, Essex
 - > Blake's Wood, near Danbury, Essex

- Fun Bluebell Facts**
- > The UK is home to more than half of the world's bluebells.
 - > The UK has two types of bluebells: the scented native English bluebell and the unscented, more upright Spanish bluebell. The Spanish bluebell was originally an ornamental plant and many see it as a threat to our cherished native species.
 - > It's a criminal offence to uproot wild bluebells.
 - > Other names for bluebells include cuckoo's boots, wood hyacinth, lady's nightcap and witches' thimbles.

Remember to tread gently when visiting bluebell woods so we can all help to preserve their beauty for future generations.



Leigh Woods, Bristol



Bodnant Garden, Conwy



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SPEAK UP

New figures show that 20 per cent of toddlers are not meeting their expected development levels because they were prevented from learning communication and play during the pandemic. If you are worried about your child's speech, then these talking tips are just what you need.



TALK TO THEM

If you are guilty of scrolling through your phone or leaving your toddler to play alone for long periods of time, then this can affect their speech development. Instead, make an effort to talk to your toddler throughout the day; tell them what you are doing and point out objects in the home.

READ TOGETHER

One of the most important things that you can do for your child is to read to them every day. In fact, reading just one book per day to your toddler can mean that, by the time they reach pre-school age, they are exposed to 1.4 million more words than children whose parents don't read to them.



USE SIGN LANGUAGE

While you don't have to become an expert in sign language, just teaching your baby or toddler a few signs such as 'more' and 'milk' can help them learn how to express themselves at a much younger age. It can also boost their confidence levels, which can in turn create a better environment for learning to speak.



AVOID BABY TALK

It is much better to talk to your baby using proper words than with baby talk, however adorable it may be. If your baby or toddler gets a word slightly wrong, do not point out their mistake but simply repeat it back to them correctly.

LIMIT SCREEN TIME

The less time your toddler spends on a screen, the better, as it is interactions with others that help with language development. Even programs that are designed for babies and toddlers are no substitute for human communication.



PUPPY play!

One of the best things about getting a new puppy is being able to teach them tricks. Once you have mastered the basics of puppy training – sit, down, come, and stay – you can move on to more fun ones!



Give a kiss

Who doesn't want to be on the receiving end of a big, wet kiss from their new best friend? A great trick for kids to teach, all you need to do is place a little treat on your cheek and then add the command "kiss". Repeat until mastered. This is also good for preventing unwanted licking.



Roll over

To get your puppy to roll over, they first need to be able to lie down and stay. Once they are lying down, hold a treat between your first two fingers, a few inches above their nose. Bring the treat over to their side, luring your puppy to roll over. When they are lying on their side, reward them with the treat and verbal praise. Repeat until mastered.



Spin around

A trick your puppy will love. To get them to spin around in a circle, say "spin" or "twirl" as you move your hand (with a treat in it) in a complete circle.



Reward your puppy as soon as they complete a spin. Make this trick more difficult by issuing different commands for spinning clockwise and anti-clockwise.

Shake paws

Would you like your dog to greet your friends more formally when they arrive? An easy trick to teach, first tell your puppy to sit. Next, keep a treat in your closed hand and wait for them to sniff or paw at it. Reward them, and repeat. Eventually, your puppy will paw at your hand every time and this can then be turned into a paw shake.

NB: Once each trick is mastered, you no longer need to provide them with a treat every time they complete a task.



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BEST CLIMBING VINES FOR STUNNING SCENTS

JAPANESE WISTERIA: Boasting fragrant flowers in shades of purple-blue and white, Japanese wisteria needs a lot of space and support, as well as twice-yearly pruning. Allow this plant to grow up an established tree or a house wall.

ROSE CLIMBERS:

Roses are beautiful to look at and stunning to smell, making them the perfect climbing vine for creating a scent-filled garden. These can be grown up a trellis or up and around arbors to create an intimate area in your garden.

BEST CLIMBING VINES FOR EARLY BLOOMS

WINTER JASMINE: Winter jasmine produces fragrant yellow flowers in the depths of winter before its dark green leaves appear in spring. Its stems do not like twine so they need support from a trellis secured to either a wall or fence.

JAPANESE QUINCE:

One of the first shrubs to flower each year, the Japanese quince bears red, pink or white blossoms along its bare branches. This vine can be trained to grow up against a wall or a fence.

BEST CLIMBING VINES FOR SHADY SPOTS

SAUSAGE VINE: Sausage vine is a frost-hardy evergreen climber that grows to around 6m high. With pale pink blooms in April and May, this climbing vine will grow in the shade, making it ideal for a dreary corner. Grow in a wall-side border for the best results.

CHINESE VIRGINIA CREEPER:

A deciduous climber that attaches itself to walls and fences with little sucker disks, the Chinese Virginia creeper produces masses of growth each season and is one of the few climbers that actively thrive in shady areas.

Photo credit: thesandsinbostonline.org; longfordgardencentre.com



SCREEN SHOCKER

Do you know how many hours a day you spend glued to your mobile phone? How about your kids? Are they more likely to be seen staring at a screen than playing with their toys?

How much time are people spending on screens?

The average screen time for people aged 16-64, across different platforms and devices, is an estimated six hours and 37 minutes per day. Mobile devices account for most of this, with users spending an average of three hours and 46 minutes on their smartphones, with desktop computers not far behind at two hours and 51 minutes.

What problems are associated with too much screen time?

Too much screen time can cause a whole host of problems for adults and children alike, including: Obesity | Sleep disturbance | Depression | Anxiety | Hyperactivity | Poor language development | Inferior social development | Low moods | Headaches/eye strain | Light sensitivity | Shorter attention span | Frustration and less impulse control

How to know if you are spending too much time in front of a screen

If you are unsure whether or not you are spending an unhealthy amount of time in front of a screen, ask yourself the below questions:

- > How often do you leave your house and socialise?
- > How are your eating habits?
- > Are you sleeping okay?
- > Do you get any physical exercise?

If you are not happy with your answers, then it may be time to look at reducing your daily screen time.

How screen time adds up over one year

1 hour	→	15 DAYS	a year
2 hours	→	30 DAYS	a year
3 hours	→	45 DAYS	a year
4 hours	→	61 DAYS	a year
5 hours	→	76 DAYS	a year
6 hours	→	91 DAYS	a year
7 hours	→	106 DAYS	a year

How to manage and reduce screen time

- > Create tech-free zones, such as mealtimes and bedtime
- > Set and enforce daily/weekly screen time limits
- > Consider using an app that controls the length of time your child can use a device
- > Eliminate background TV from your home
- > Try to spend more time outdoors as a family
- > Set clear work boundaries.



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How to MANAGE your EMAIL INBOX

TOP TIPS TO KEEP YOUR EMAIL INBOX UNDER CONTROL AND MORE ORGANISED

Do you struggle to keep on top of your emails? If yes, then you are far from alone, with the average professional spending a whopping 4.1 hours each day responding to work messages. Furthermore, more than one-third of office workers state that 'email fatigue' has made them want to quit their jobs.

day or once a week to remind yourself of any projects that are still pending.

1. ONLY KEEP EMAILS THAT REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION IN YOUR INBOX

Although this may seem a little extreme, keeping only emails that require your immediate attention in your inbox can make this tedious task feel a lot more manageable. Move all non-urgent emails to relevant subfolders. Aim to have 25 emails or fewer in your inbox at the end of each day.

3. MAKE SUBFOLDERS OR USE A LABEL SYSTEM
If you receive hundreds of emails a day, then subfolders are a must. These can be used to group together important email chains so that you can easily reference something when you need to.

2. CREATE A WAITING FOLDER FOR ACTION-PENDING EMAILS

For any emails that require an action from someone else before you can respond, a waiting folder is a great idea. This way, they are not taking up space in your inbox and you can simply take a look at the end of each

4. USE YOUR CALENDAR TO TRACK EMAILS
For emails that require more than just a simple reply, we recommend that you add them to your email calendar with a reminder of when a follow-up email is required. You can also use an appropriately coloured follow-up flag to easily identify emails that require further attention.

5. CREATE TEMPLATES FOR GO-TO RESPONSES

Tailoring a reply for every email is time-prohibitive, so stock responses, can be a real life saver. Save a few different generic responses and tweak accordingly.





I CAR-NT BELIEVE IT

THE WEIRDEST THINGS BIG CAR COMPANIES MAKE... THAT AREN'T CARS



Automakers are talented, skilled and enterprising across different types of technology, so it follows that, on occasion, their creations may go beyond simply four wheels.

LEXUS HOVERBOARD: Branded as Slide, Lexus's hoverboard embodies futuristic dreams with its spindle grille design and bamboo material. It's a functional hoverboard, representing a blend of imagination and Lexus's automotive style.



NISSAN PROPILOT CHAIR: This autonomous chair, following Nissan's Intelligent Parking Chair, offers a solution for those weary of standing in lines. It follows a pre-set path, mirroring semi-autonomous vehicle technology, and has been tested in Japanese restaurants for customer convenience.

HONDA UNI-CUB: The UNI-CUB, a personal mobility device, features a unique omni-directional driving wheel system and balance control technology.



AUDI RIB CHAIR: A collaboration with Clemens Weisshaar and Reed Kram, this stylish chair combines carbon composites and high-strength aluminium, and weighs just 4.9lb.

BMW BOBSLED: BMW's carbon fibre bobsled, developed for Team USA, contributed to an Olympic bronze in Sochi. It showcased BMW's expertise in weight distribution and sleek design, mirroring its automotive approach.

LAMBORGHINI IXOOST ESAVOX: This speaker boasts authentic Lamborghini parts, including an exhaust, and stands out in the realm of lifestyle products. It features high-quality audio components and the brand's signature design elements – a fusion of luxury automotive style and sound.

TOYOTA KIROBO MINI-ROBOT: Priced around \$400, this robot offers portable companionship and conversation, reflecting Toyota's strides in AI, at the same time as catering to Japan's social needs.

ASTON MARTIN RESIDENCES: The manufacturer has ventured into real estate with its showpiece 66-storey building in Miami, a collaboration with Argentine developers, which features bespoke lobbies, fitness centres and a spa.



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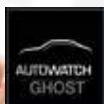
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WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO AVOID LOOKING LIKE A TURKEY AT THE UPCOMING WORLD GRAVY WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

We all know the popularity of gravy up north, but for nearly two decades, a group of Lancashire locals have been intent on taking things a step further by hosting the World Gravy Wrestling Championships.

First held in 2007 in the small Lancashire village of Stacksteads, Rossendale, the championships take the form of two-minute bouts. Competitors, adorned in fancy dress, wade into a pool of the aromatic stuff, grappling and grabbing their opponent. They are scored on wrestling ability, fancy dress and the level of entertainment provided. Firefighters are in attendance ready to hose down competitors in between bouts.

Held on August bank holiday at the Rose 'N' Bowl pub, the event attracts large crowds and a bevy of soon-to-be drenched competitors. While the competitive wrestling features adults, younger

gravy aficionados can have a go after the main event, and there's never a shortage of applicants, with numbers increasing each year.

In the early days, the key constituent was bona fide Lancashire Gravy. Yet after the event became besieged by wasps who found the unique recipe rather too irresistible, an alternative mixture of caramel and cornflour was devised.

The World Gravy Wrestling Championships also raises significant funds for local charities.

Having taken a short hiatus during COVID-19, the championships roared back to popularity after the lockdowns with the most successful contests yet. And while meat stock is very much the order of the day, the fact that the event is held at a pub means competitors can always knock back something afterwards that offers slightly more punch than a watery beef or chicken accompaniment!

Photo credit: MCPX/Shutterstock



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ACROSS: 1. URGE, 3. ACQUIRED, 9. REVENUE, 10. ELVES, 11. CAR, 12. POKER, 13. REBEL, 15. ITALY, 17. ROAST, 18. OFF, 19. BORNE, 20. GENTEEL, 21. EJECTION, 22. ONLY, 23. DOWN, 1. UNNEGOTIABLE, 2. GIVER, 4. CHERUB, 5. UNEMPLOYMENT, 6. REVOKES, 7. DISGRACEFULLY, 8. INTERMITTENT, 14. PRAIRIE, 16. ADAGIO, 18. OCEAN



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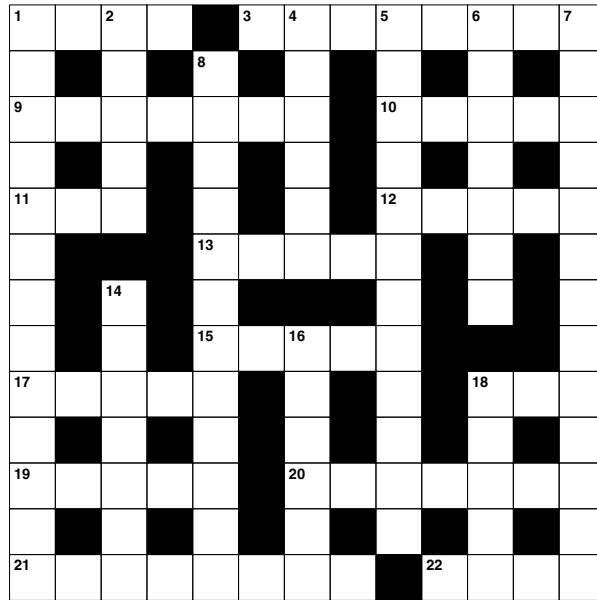
Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

ACROSS

- 1. Spur on (4)
- 3. Came into possession of (8)
- 9. Income (7)
- 10. Sprites (5)
- 11. Four-wheeled road vehicle (3)
- 12. Card game (5)
- 13. Insurgent or revolutionary (5)
- 15. Where one finds Rome (5)
- 17. Cook meat in the oven (5)
- 18. Not on (3)
- 19. Brought forth (5)
- 20. Respectable; refined (7)
- 21. Expulsion (8)
- 22. Solely (4)

DOWN

- 1. Irretrievable (13)
- 2. Donor (5)
- 4. Winged child (6)
- 5. Joblessness (12)
- 6. Officially cancels (7)
- 7. Shamefully (13)
- 8. Sporadic (12)
- 14. Open area of grassland (7)



- 16. In slow tempo (of music) (6)
- 18. Large body of water (5)

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Feng shui, meaning 'wind and water', is an ancient Chinese art of arranging spaces to achieve harmony and balance.
- ▶ The aim of feng shui is to balance the life force of chi. In the Taoist belief, chi is said to inhabit everything.
- ▶ To protect against negative chi, feng shui practices include making sure to always keep the bathroom door closed and to throw away wilted flowers immediately.
- ▶ In feng shui, every colour has a meaning. For example, black signifies contemplation and wisdom, while purple is connected to power and prosperity.
- ▶ Feng shui has influenced the design of a number of landmarks around the world, including the glass pyramid at the Louvre Museum in Paris and the Sydney Opera House in Australia.

SUDOKU

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		7							
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3	5			9			8	6	
7				5					
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						2			
	9	6							

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