



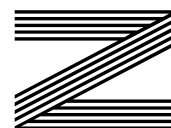
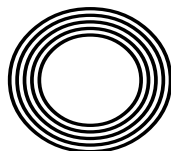
**TOP 5
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IKEA
HACKS**

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FISH AND CHIPS DAY

How to make the perfect fish and chips



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Editor's notes...

MAY 2024



Brett Shohet, Editor

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

Last month, I wrote about how important it is to ask questions of your older family members to find out more about where you come from.

Recently, I was surprised at how much new information I was able to find out from my family. My dad came to England from Cairo, where he was born, with his mum. Somehow it never occurred to me before to wonder where my grandmother was buried, but it turns out her grave is in Stepney - not far away at all. As well as giving me the impetus to go and visit her grave, it also made me want to go to Egypt to visit my grandfather's grave.

On my dad's birthday earlier this year, he came to visit and brought a photo of his dad with him. On the back was the logo of the shop where the photo was printed. My dad then revealed that his dad had worked in the printmaking industry. I found it amazing that I'm now working in a similar industry to my grandfather, and I'd had no idea!

So my task for you this month is to talk to your family members and ask them the questions we tend to leave until it's too late. How many of us can say we know what our grandparents or great-grandparents did for a living? There's no time like the present to unravel your family mysteries!

I hope you enjoy this month's edition.

Brett Shohet

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

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A DATE TO REMEMBER



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS SINCE THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE CALENDAR THAT TO DATE HAS RAISED MORE THAN £6MILLION FOR BLOOD CANCER RESEARCH

It happened 25 years ago – a funny, unconventional and cheeky method (in more ways than one), to honour a cancer victim at the Rylstone and District branch of the Women's Institute.

Wind the clock forward and the brilliance of these Yorkshire women has raised millions of pounds, as well as sparking a Hollywood blockbuster.

The story began when Angela Knowles' husband, John, was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma in February 1998.

The devastating diagnosis sparked an interesting idea from Angela's daughter-in-law, who suggested they give those close to them a sunflower plant in the hope that when the flowers bloomed, John would be in remission.

Sadly, he died a mere five months later at the age

of 54, on July 22, 1998.

Amid her grief, Angela was looking for something positive to put her energy into. Her friend and fellow Yorkshire Ladies Women's Institute member, Tricia Stewart, suggested they find a fun way to raise money for a new sofa on the ward where John was treated. They settled, as you do, on a Pirelli-style nude calendar!

A suggestion that started as nothing more than a joke had suddenly become serious. With all profits going to Blood Cancer UK (Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research as it was then), a growing party of ladies was ready to take part.

The women tastefully posed nude for the calendar, each covering themselves strategically with items related to their interests or the Women's Institute,

such as baked goods, flower arrangements and knitting. Each picture also included a sunflower, which became the emblem for the Calendar Girls.

The initial plan was to print 1,000 calendars to be sold for £5 each, but the minimum print run was 5,000. Just as well, because by the time the calendar first became available on April 12, 1999, the publicity was so enormous that the first run was soon snapped up. Eventually, they shipped 56,000 calendars, raising £322,000.

The Calendar Girls' story gained more popularity when it was adapted into a successful film in 2003, directed by Nigel Cole and starring the great Dames Helen Mirren DBE and Julie Walters DBE.

In 2012, Gary Barlow OBE and Tim Firth began writing songs for a musical based on the tireless

fundraisers. *The Girls* opened at the Leeds Grand in 2015 and toured across the UK, receiving widespread acclaim. The show hit stages across the country again earlier this year.

Over the years, Angela and her gal pals have released several more calendars (including a 10-year anniversary edition in 2010), and even presented calendars to Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

The story resonates with many because of its portrayal of ordinary women doing something extraordinary for a good cause, and certainly John would have been immensely proud of his wife and her friends. A terrible illness, which stole a beloved husband in five months, has been transformed into 25 years of hope for millions.



UK's SMALLEST PUB

Photo credit: J. M. Ritchie/Shutterstock.com, L. Z. Oughlan/Shutterstock.com, Claudio Divizia/Shutterstock.com

WHY DOES SIZE MATTER WHEN YOU'RE DEALING WITH BRITAIN'S SMALLEST PUBS

They say a pint of beer is the perfect representation of something that's small, yet perfectly formed. Extending that idea to the immediate surroundings is the name of the game when it comes to searching out (and getting into) the UK's smallest pubs.

That ultimate accolade goes to The Nutshell in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. Measuring 15x7ft, this is a boozer that can only accommodate 15 people at a time (although there is outside seating space). The Victorian pub is plastered with memorabilia and quirky ephemera and is a true gem.

The Nutshell takes the crown because of the off-season closure of The Signal Box Inn in Cleethorpes. No prizes for guessing what clever use has been made of an outdated relic from the golden era of our railways. At just 8ft x 8ft, the knocking of someone's pint with a stray elbow is less a possibility and more an inevitability.

Another challenger is The Lakeside Inn on Southport promenade. This place did hold the official record for the UK's smallest pub back in 1989, but has since been trumped by the aforementioned tiny taverns.

A little closer to home, The Rake in Borough Market is miniscule, while if you're ever in Surrey, venture to Claygate to sup a pint at Platform 3, a pub converted from an old station waiting room.

Elsewhere in the capital, The Euston Tap on Euston Road and The Dove in Hammersmith also feature in the top 10.

The seismic achievements of Britain's smallest pubs are a shot (in the arm, and of the alcoholic nature) to the continued popularity of pubs in the UK. At the last count, there were 27,650 small pubs welcoming adventurous lovers of alcohol – albeit for the establishments on this list, it's strictly one-in, one-out!



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FIBROMYALGIA

Fibromyalgia Awareness Day 2024 is Sunday, May 12, so this month we're looking at the symptoms, causes and treatments. Fibromyalgia is a chronic condition that causes extreme tiredness and widespread pain. While there is no cure for fibromyalgia, you can manage your symptoms with the right treatments and therapies.

WHAT IS FIBROMYALGIA?

Fibromyalgia, also known as fibromyalgia syndrome, is a long-term health condition that causes pain all over the body. Other symptoms of fibromyalgia include:
Increased sensitivity to pain | Extreme fatigue | Muscle stiffness
Difficulty sleeping | Problems with memory and concentration, known as fibro-fog | Headaches | Irritable bowel syndrome

WHAT CAUSES FIBROMYALGIA?

While the exact cause of fibromyalgia is unknown, it is thought to be linked to abnormal levels of certain chemicals in the brain and changes in the way the central nervous system processes pain messages.

While fibromyalgia can also be inherited through your genes, in many cases, the condition appears to be triggered by a traumatic event, such as:

An injury or infection | Childbirth | An operation | The breakdown of a relationship | The death of a loved one

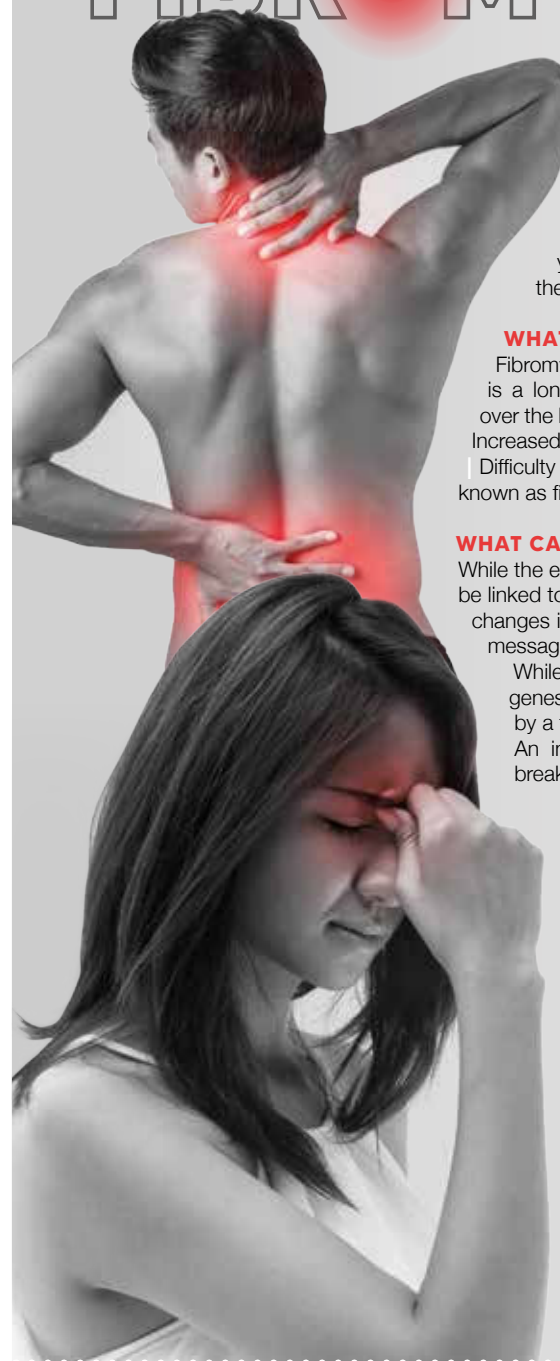
WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED?

Anyone can develop fibromyalgia, although this condition is seven times more common in women than it is in men. It most typically develops between the ages of 30 and 50 but can occur in both children and the elderly. An estimated one in 20 people is affected by fibromyalgia in the UK, but this is only a rough estimate as this condition can be hard to diagnose.

HOW IS FIBROMYALGIA TREATED?

As mentioned, there is no cure for fibromyalgia, but it can be managed with the right treatments. These tend to be a combination of:

1. Medicines such as antidepressants and painkillers.
2. Talking therapies, including cognitive behavioural therapy and counselling.
3. Lifestyle changes such as exercise programmes and relaxation techniques.



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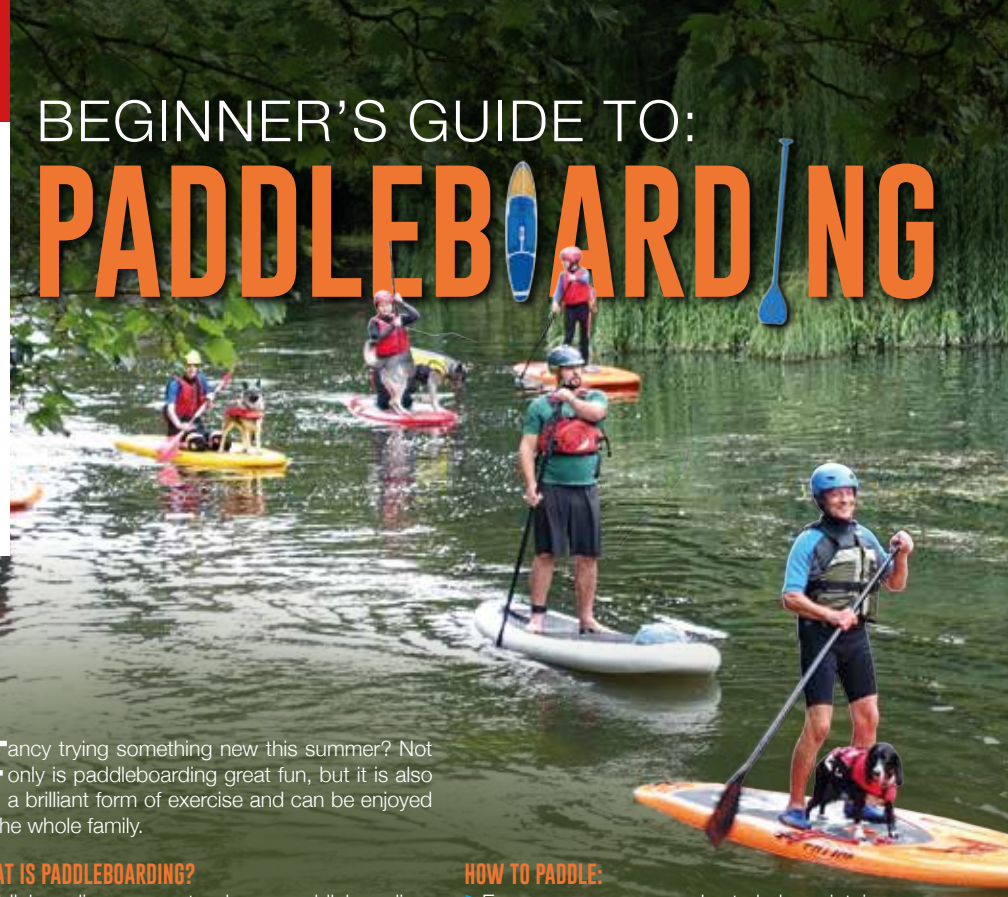
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BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO: PADDLEBOARDING



Fancy trying something new this summer? Not only is paddleboarding great fun, but it is also a brilliant form of exercise and can be enjoyed by the whole family.

WHAT IS PADDLEBOARDING?

Paddleboarding, or stand-up paddleboarding, is a water sport that enables you to enjoy and explore various waterways such as lakes, bays, rivers and even the sea. Unlike canoes or kayaks, paddleboards are completely flat and you can choose to stand, kneel or sit on them.

HOW TO STAND ON A PADDLEBOARD:

You need to learn the proper paddleboarding technique if you want to be able to control and manoeuvre the board and get maximum enjoyment and physical benefits from it.

- > Stand next to the board in shallow water.
- > Place your paddle down on the board horizontally.
- > Attach the ankle leash if there is one.
- > Place your hands firmly on the paddle and kneel on the board just behind its halfway point.
- > When you feel like you have a good balance, slowly stand up.
- > Position yourself so that you are standing at the centre of the board which should be completely flat on the water.
- > Your feet should be facing forwards, about hip-distance apart with your knees slightly bent.

HOW TO PADDLE:

- > Engage your core muscles to help maintain balance.
- > Keep your arms straight as you extend the paddle forward for each stroke.
- > Make 4-5 short and close strokes on each side of the board and then switch sides, reversing your hand position.
- > To turn your board, keep paddling on one side (paddling on your right will make you turn left and vice versa).

WHERE TO PADDLEBOARD IN THE UK:

- > Chichester Harbour, West Sussex – Best for nature lovers
- > River Fowey, Cornwall – Best for stunning scenery
- > Saunton Sands, Devon – Best for slow waves

Remember that coastal waters are tidal so always check out the tide times before you set out. Slack tides are best for beginners as this is when the tide is moving at its minimum. Always wear a lifejacket when paddleboarding and, if you are worried about safety, choose a beach or other waterway that has a lifeguard present.



A GUIDE TO CHOOSING THE RIGHT BELT FOR YOUR BODY SHAPE

Do you struggle to find a belt that does the job and looks good? If yes, then we feel your pain. Fortunately, the below guide to belts for all shapes and sizes is just what you need!

BEST FOR PETITE: Thin and monochrome

If you are a petite woman, then you need a belt that is going to elongate your figure and streamline your silhouette. For best results, look for a skinny belt that matches the colour of your whole outfit.



BEST FOR TALL: Wide

Taller ladies will benefit from a wider belt that will complement the natural proportions of your body. Don't be afraid to go big and bold with colour; your statuesque frame can handle it!



BEST FOR PLUS SIZE: Loose fit and contrasting colours

If you want a belt that hides your problem areas and makes the most of your curves, then opt for a loose fit design that rests lightly on your waist. For even more sass, match a bright belt with a contrasting coloured outfit.



BEST FOR HOURGLASS: High and wide

For those with glorious curves, you need to pay close attention to the positioning of your belt. Ideally, you should pick a medium to wide belt and place it slightly above your natural waist. This will emphasise your body shape without digging into your hips.



BEST FOR SHORT WAIST: V shape or chain

Make your upper body appear longer by drawing the eye downwards using a v shape or chain belt. This is especially important if you are wearing a midi-length skirt or dress.



BEST FOR BOYISH: Super slim

Create the illusion of hips with the narrowest belt you can find and wear it over an oversized dress or jumpsuit. Make sure you place the belt at your belly button and ruff up the fabric to add even more volume.



BEST FOR LONG WAIST: Big buckle

If you have a long waist, you can handle a bold buckle. Just make sure that you place your chosen belt higher up on your body to avoid adding any further length.



Photo credit: naxos.com, ASOS.com



BEAUTY

TO PLUCK or not TO PLUCK?

When you see hairs popping up on parts of your body where you definitely do not want them, it can be all too tempting to reach for the tweezers and give them a good old pluck. However, there are certain areas of the body where you should not use this hair removal technique.

X NOSE HAIRS: You should never pluck your nose hairs as these are there to prevent bacteria and infections. Instead, if you have very visible hairs growing out of your nose, it is a much better idea to simply trim them.

X HAIR ON MOLES: If you have hairs growing on or around any moles on your body, then you should not pluck these as this can lead to inflammation and can also increase the risk of the area becoming infected.

X INGROWN HAIRS: Ingrown hairs can be both unsightly and uncomfortable, but that doesn't mean you should go at them with a pair of tweezers. A much safer and more effective solution is to use a combination of steam, scrubs and exfoliation.

X SENSITIVE AREAS OF SKIN: Areas of skin such as under your arms, around your nipples and your bikini line should not be plucked. This is because the skin is incredibly sensitive in these areas and can easily become irritated or scarred.

HOW TO PLUCK EFFECTIVELY:
You can safely pluck other areas of your body, such as your chin, upper lip, eyebrows, toes and knuckles, using the below top tips:

- ✓ Always sterilise your tweezers before use or use a brand-new pair.
- ✓ Pull out the hair at an angle, following the grain of the hair.
- ✓ Pluck after showering for best results.
- ✓ Apply aloe vera lotion after plucking to soothe the skin.
- ✓ Take an over-the-counter painkiller 45 minutes before plucking to decrease discomfort.



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FOOD & DRINK

The cherry N THE CAKE

What fruit announces summer better than glossy and ripe British cherries, often grown on family farms or orchards in the south of England, particularly in Kent?

Cherries may be small, but they're also scrumptious – and pack a big nutritional punch. They're one of your five-a-day and packed with vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. This includes vitamins A and C, vital for your skin and immune system, and potassium, essential for heart health and regulating blood pressure.

Cherries, particularly tart cherries, are also great to snack on if you're struggling from sleep disorders. Sweet cherries are high in melatonin, a sleep-inducing hormone, so try eating some around an hour before you go to bed.

If you're looking for a sweet treat for your next BBQ, or feel like making a celebratory bake for any

other special occasion this summer, why not indulge in this delectable cherry cake?

YOU WILL NEED:

250g plain flour | 2 tsp baking powder | ½ tsp salt | 115g unsalted butter, softened | 200g granulated sugar | 2 large eggs | 120ml milk with 1 tsp vanilla extract added | 400g fresh cherries, pitted and chopped | Icing sugar to decorate (optional)

HOW TO MAKE:

Preheat the oven to 175°C/150°C fan/gas mark 4 | Grease a 23cm/9in diameter round cake pan | In a medium bowl, stir the flour, baking powder and salt together | In a large bowl, beat the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy | Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each one | Gradually add the flour mixture to the butter and sugar mixture, alternating with the milk and vanilla, and mix until just combined | Lightly toss the cherries in flour – this will stop them from sinking during the baking process | Pour the mixture into the cake tin and lay the cherries across the top | Bake for 35-40 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the centre of the cake comes out clean | Cool for 10 minutes before removing it from the tin | Dust with icing sugar before serving if you wish.





HOW TO COOK THE PERFECT FISH & CHIPS

THE HOMEMADE WAY TO ENJOY NATIONAL FISH AND CHIP DAY



To celebrate National Fish and Chip Day on Thursday, June 6, we're sharing the ultimate fish and chips recipe so that you can enjoy this popular national dish from the comfort of your own home.

YOU WILL NEED:

- > 650g skinless cod, haddock or hake, cut into 4 pieces
- > 50g self-raising flour
- > 50g cornflour
- > 1 egg white
- > 125ml sparkling water
- > 600ml sunflower oil for frying
- > 800g unpeeled, even-sized Maris Piper or King Edward potatoes
- > 2 tbs olive oil
- > Salt and pepper to season

HOW TO MAKE THE CHIPS:

1. Cut the potatoes into 1.5cm thick chips.
2. Add to a saucepan of water, bring to the boil, lower the heat and simmer for 4-5 minutes.
3. Drain, pat dry and leave to cool.
4. Heat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/gas mark 7.
5. Place a large, shallow roasting tray in the oven

with 1tbs olive oil and heat for 10 minutes.

6. Mix the chips in a bowl with 1 tbs olive oil and then add to the roasting tray.
7. Bake for 5 minutes, turn them over and bake for a further 8-10 minutes until crisp.

HOW TO COOK THE FISH:

1. Place 1 tbs flour on a plate and coat each piece of fish.
2. Pour the sunflower oil into a heavy, non-stick wok and heat to 200°C.
3. Mix the rest of the flour, cornflour and seasoning.
4. Pour the sparkling water into the flour mix and gently whisk.
5. Whisk the egg white until frothy.
6. Add the egg white to the flour mix and lightly whisk. Try to retain as many bubbles as you can to keep the batter light.
7. Fry 2 pieces of fish at a time, dipping them in the batter to coat and then lowering them into the oil using a slotted spoon.
8. Fry for 5-6 minutes, turning the fish halfway through to ensure it is golden all over.

Serve your fish and chips with some peas, mushy or normal, and a wedge of lemon.

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1 FLOATING HALLWAY STORAGE

If you are always losing your keys and other essential items, then you need this Ikea hack in your home. To make this, all you need to do is mount an Ikea floating shelf to your chosen wall and then attach a few Ikea magazine holders underneath.



2 RATTAN PENDANT LIGHT

Designer lighting can be expensive, but it doesn't need to be with this super-stylish and affordable Ikea hack. Simply take a round Ikea rattan basket, remove the lid and attach it to your chosen ceiling light fixture.



3 CONTEMPORARY CAT TREE

Fed up with your feline friend scratching your sofa? Just take four Ikea wall shelves, cover them with Ikea's faux sheepskin fabric, and then mount them on your chosen wall. Hey, presto; a cosy corner for your cats to climb and play.



4 WALL-MOUNTED CHARGING STATION

If you and your family are always losing your phone chargers, or worse, fighting over whose turn it is to use them, then this DIY charging station is just what you need. To create, attach an Ikea Hultarp rail to the wall and then hook on a matching Hultarp basket or container. Add an indoor plant or two to the rail for enhanced visual appeal.



5 DIY DESK

Need somewhere to work but don't have space for a home office? Take two Ikea three-drawer dressers and place an Ikea worktop on the top. For a more upmarket look, cover the drawer fronts in wood-look laminate and replace the knobs with sleek handles.



Photo credit: instructables.com, Mini Nip via housebeautiful.com, Aaron Bengtsson via housebeautiful.com, hometalk.com, Mike Garten via goodhousekeeping.com

5 REASONS TO ADVERTISE

Why do businesses benefit from hyperlocal advertising?

1. Targeted advertising

Hyperlocal advertising allows companies to target customers who are within a specific geographic area, making it easier to reach the right audience and increase the chances of converting them into paying customers.



2. Cost-effective

Hyperlocal advertising can be cost-effective because it is focused on a specific local area, meaning that businesses can reach their target audience without wasting money on broader marketing campaigns that may not be as effective.



3. Increased engagement

Hyperlocal advertising can lead to increased engagement with customers because it is focused on the local community and the interests of the people living in that area. By targeting customers with ads that are relevant to their interests and needs, companies can build a stronger relationship and increase their chances of repeat business.



4. Improved search engine optimisation

Hyperlocal advertising can improve a business' search engine optimisation because it targets customers who are likely to be searching for businesses and services in their local area. By optimising their website and other online presence for local search terms, businesses can improve their visibility and attract more customers.



5. Better return on investment (ROI)

Hyperlocal advertising can lead to a better ROI because it is focused on a specific area and customer base. Targeting customers who are likely to be interested in their products or services, can increase conversion rates and revenue.



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HOME & DIY

How to keep your plant LEAVES CLEAN

Are the leaves on your indoor plants looking a little dirty and dusty? Do you wish they would return to their original shine?

While it can be a tedious job, a clean houseplant is happier, healthier and better equipped to improve the air quality in your home.

✓ DO be gentle

When cleaning the leaves of your indoor plants, you need to make sure that you do so gently so that you don't damage them. Use a damp cloth or paper towel to carefully remove any dust and then allow to air dry.

✗ DON'T buy expensive sprays

You don't need to buy expensive cleaning sprays to clean your plant leaves. Just add a squirt of liquid washing detergent to a bowl of lukewarm water and gently clean as detailed above. Alternatively, try lemon juice or vinegar for more stubborn residues.

✓ DO dust the leaves

As well as washing the leaves when you notice a build-up of dirt, you should regularly dust them. For plants with large leaves, use a feather duster to remove dust. For smaller-leaved plants, a soft make-up brush works well.

✗ DON'T put your plants in direct sunlight

Although you may be tempted to place your plants in the sun after cleaning to make them dry quicker, this can damage the leaves. This is especially true if you have used any cleaning products that contain chemicals.

When should you clean the leaves on your houseplants?

The best time to clean the leaves on your houseplants is towards the end of the day when the sun is starting to go down. In terms of frequency, the best way to determine when to clean the leaves is by rubbing your fingers gently along them or by looking for signs of dirt and dust.





A GUIDE TO

FLUTING



Fluting is enjoying a revival in modern home décor, offering a simple way to add texture to a room, as well as a little glamour. Essentially a series of shallow grooves that run across a surface, there are lots of great ways to incorporate fluting into your home.

Fluted panel walls: Fluted wall panels can be used to add texture and visual interest to pretty much any room in your home. These can be installed vertically or horizontally, and the size of the spacing can be adjusted to achieve the desired effect. Fluted wall panels can be made from wood, metal, MDF or PVC.

Fluted design furniture: Fluted design furniture such as a fluted sofa or fluted cabinets provide the perfect way to create a focal point in a room, drawing the eye directly to the piece. When choosing fluted design furniture, pay close attention to the material and colour as these need to complement the rest of the room.

Fluted light fixtures: Light fixtures that feature fluted glass shades or grooved metal bases are bang on trend, adding a touch of elegance to any room. For a dramatic look, consider installing a fluted light fixture on a fluted wall.

Fluted design accents: Smaller fluted accents are ideal for anyone who wants to try out this design trend but doesn't want it to overpower a space. Fluted vases, candle holders and other fluted decorative items can be placed around your home to create specific areas of interest.

Fluted wall partitions: A fluted wall partition can be used as either a statement piece or as a subtle accent to separate spaces and zones in a room. It can be made from a variety of different materials including wood, metal and even glass. These are highly effective when used alongside fluted lighting for a more cohesive look.

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IT'S A FARMER'S LIFE

THE THIRD SERIES OF *CLARKSON'S FARM CROPS UP SOON*, BUT WHY IS THE CONCEPT OF A PETROLHEAD PARADING IN AMONG THE PIGS SUCH A RATINGS WINNER?



Known more for his career in automotive journalism, Jeremy Clarkson's pivot to rural life has not only been educational and entertaining, but also a true transformation of someone who has reinvented himself away from the high-octane heat of *Top Gear*, *The Grand Tour* and more.

Set in Chipping Norton, in the Cotswolds, the debut series of *Clarkson's Farm*, from 2021, lured viewers in by showcasing the former motoring broadcaster getting to grips with machinery of an altogether different kind – from tractors to milking contraptions and more.

Backed by his charismatic, witty and occasionally serious take on modern agricultural complexities, the series delved into the significant challenges facing the farming industry – extreme weather conditions, skyrocketing inflation, crops and the daunting economics of keeping a farm afloat... no better referenced than the meagre £144 arable farming profit he made in year two!

Clarkson is aided on-site by a host of typically rural characters, yet it has been his unexpected and somewhat charming friendship with farm worker Kaleb Cooper that has endured.

Their relationship, marked by banter and mutual respect, sees 25-year-old Kaleb often act as a foil to Clarkson's novice enthusiasm and grandiose plans, bringing a grounded perspective to some typically outlandish ventures.

From a local young farmer to a national celebrity, Kaleb's journey highlights how dedication and knowledge can bring about unexpected opportunities. "It has been a rollercoaster ride and the best thing to ever happen to me," he says. "I don't think anyone in agriculture has ever believed their work would court celebrity circles, but if there was ever a reward for hard graft then this is certainly it."

In addition, the success of the series has driven energy and enthusiasm into the same rural communities so used to seeing younger folk depart for the city lights.

Of course, current *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* host Clarkson is still the skilful schemer he always was. In August 2022, the 62 year old was ordered by West Oxfordshire District Council to close the restaurant attached to the farm after being denied planning permission.

Despite his claim of exploiting a "delightful little loophole" to open in July, the council issued an enforcement notice. "The loophole is no more," he quipped.

Season three sees the unlikely pair tackle various new challenges, such as attempting to profit from unused areas of Diddy Squat Farm, inventive projects involving woodland and hedgerows, and ventures into raising different livestock and crops.

It will be split into two parts of four episodes each – 1-4 available from May 3, and 5-8 commencing May 10. "I had no idea where this project would take me when I started it," says Clarkson, "though I can safely say it's been one of the most rewarding things I've done in my whole life.

"Really, farming and agriculture remains the heartbeat of this nation. We should all take time to think about it, about the environment, about where our food comes from, and the real costs associated with producing it.

"I would like to think the series is a tribute to the trials, triumphs and essential truths of farming life – and the incredible hard work that goes into it... sometimes even by me!"



The history behind the oldest building in Hertford

Boasting a history spanning 800 years, and as one of two active churches in the Parish of Bengoe, St Leonard's Church was constructed shortly after the Norman Conquest.

It functioned as the main parish church until 1855, when the larger Holy Trinity Church designed by Benjamin Ferrey took over the role. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Bengoe was home to as many as five churches.

The other churches were Christ Church, serving what's now known as Lower Bengoe and decommissioned in 1968; Saint Mary's Chapel of Ease, catering to the Tonwell community and since integrated into the local church school; and Saint Michael's in Waterford, which became its own parish around 100 years ago.

When Holy Trinity assumed its lead role in the mid-19th century, St Leonard's was deprived of its furnishings and remained vacant and neglected for several years. The Gosselin family, residents of nearby Bengoe Hall, hired John Thomas Micklethwaite to renovate and refurnish the church between 1884 and 1894.

Constructed from flint and accented with stone, the church roof is covered in tiles. The southern side entrance was established in the 12th century and is complemented by a Georgian-era porch made of brick, with a 14th-century door, while the bellcote at the western end is made of wood and accommodates a bell from the year 1636.

The presence of an apse is distinctive in the fact that it's shared with only two other medieval churches in Hertfordshire: St John the Baptist in Great Amwell and St Mary's in Great Wymondley.

Interestingly, William Weir, the Scottish architect who specialised in the repair of ancient structures, revealed medieval wall paintings during his 1938 restoration. One of the paintings, likely to be from the 13th century, depicts Jesus being taken down from the cross prior to his burial.

With such an image serving to inspire church-goers in their devotions, St Leonard's is now back in the heart of the community – it hosts Sunday services and serves as a venue for exhibitions and concerts.



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BEFORE



AFTER

Simon Cowell's path from village to luxury villa



LOCAL FEATURE

Born in Lambeth on October 7, 1959, TV and music mogul Simon Cowell was raised in Elstree, giving him a somewhat fortuitous local foundation on which he could construct plans to become a towering figure in the entertainment industry.

Best known as a judge on popular TV talent competitions *Pop Idol*, *Popstars: The Rivals*, *The X Factor*, *Britain's Got Talent* and its counterpart across the Atlantic, *American Idol*, Cowell's sharp critique – often laced with a dry, unapologetic wit – has made him one of the most memorable personalities on television.

His education started at Radlett Preparatory School, though the young, impressionable Cowell wasn't academically minded and left school with one O Level in order to pursue a career in the record industry. Carrying with him a nagging persistence – both as an employee at EMI and through his own E&S label, whose first hit was Sinitta's *So Macho* – he ascended the ladder to become a leading artists and repertoire

executive, where he perfected a knack for recognising up-and-coming talent.

His achievements in the industry are numerous, including the formation of Syco Entertainment in 2002, and the sparking of successful music careers for acts such as Westlife, One Direction, Susan Boyle, James Arthur and Little Mix.

Away from his professional endeavours, 64-year-old Cowell's personal life has been a constant in newspapers and online. Engaged to Lauren Silverman, with whom he shares 10-year-old son Eric, Cowell is a dedicated father, whose influence extends beyond entertainment and into philanthropic efforts. It's also evident in his contributions to his former home county of Hertfordshire, not least the famous Elstree Studios, chosen as a base for *Britain's Got Talent*.

"It's a home from home, and will always feel like home to me," said the music maestro upon returning to the place where he was raised.



Photo credit: DFree/Shutterstock.com



YOUR LOCAL EVENTS

DIAL 'M' FOR MILD

The Black Horse, 29-31 West Street, Hertford, SG13 8EZ
Tuesday, May 21, 8pm



Photo credit: The Black Horse Hertford

The annual Hertford get-together celebrating traditional British beer dark mild is back. Once the most popular beer in Britain, dark mild was slowly replaced by bitter as the nation's pint of choice but, in recent years, it has seen a fantastic revival in Hertfordshire.

This pub crawl will take beer connoisseurs from the Black Horse to the White Horse and then on to the Old Barge and the Old Cross Tavern.

Entry is free. Find out more at www.t.ly/_5ibA

HERTFORDSHIRE FESTIVAL OF MUSIC COMMUNITY BAND CONCERT & PICNIC

All Saints' Parish Church, Queen's Road, Hertford, SG13 8AY

Monday, May 27, doors open at 12.30pm for a 1.30pm start

Come along to this free concert and picnic, featuring a holiday programme ranging from classical pieces to film music.

The concert will start at 1.30pm at the church, but revellers are invited to bring snacks and sit on the grass at St John's Hall beforehand.

HERTFORD THEATRE WEEK

Ayckbourn Theatre, Haileybury College Campus, Haileybury, Hertford, SG13 7NU

Monday, May 27, to Saturday, June 1, various times

The 61st annual Theatre Week is coming to Hertford this May, featuring a different play every night. This

popular event is recognised as one of the leading full-length drama competitions in the country. The programme features six productions: *Life X 3* by Yasmina Reza, *The Revlon Girl* by Neil Anthony Docking, *The Laramie Project* by Moises Kaufman, *The Invisible Men* by Laura Ilinca, *Lilies on the Land* by The Lion's Part, and *Hansard* by Simon Woods.

Each show costs £16 or purchase a season ticket to all six for just £54. For more information or to book, head to www.hertfordtheatreweek.org.uk

CARS AT THE CASTLE

Hertford Castle, Hertford, SG14 1HR

Sunday, June 2, 12pm – 4pm

Cars at the Castle is one of the largest free car shows in Hertfordshire, with more than 50 cars and motorcycles displayed within the picturesque grounds of the castle. Alongside the motor display, there will be live music and food and drink stalls, and the castle itself will be open for the public to explore.

To find out more, see www.hertford.gov.uk/events-listings/cars-at-the-castle-4

MAC'S BEER & MUSIC FESTIVAL

McMullen's Brewing & Pubs, 26 Old Cross, Hertford, SG14 1RD

Saturday, June 15, 5pm – 10pm

Come along for the sixth annual Mac's Beer & Music Festival. With a range of contemporary beers accompanying many heritage ales, beer buffs will have plenty to sip on as they tune in to a selection of live rock, jazz and soul.

This is a fundraising event for Isabel Hospice, a local charity providing free palliative care. Tickets cost £10 plus a booking fee from www.shorturl.at/elnVZ and there will also be a limited number available on the door. Last entry is at 8pm.



Photo credit: McMullen's Brewing and Pubs

BBQ SAFETY

tips for pet owners



BBQ season is upon us, with households up and down the country enjoying sizzling sausages, succulent burgers, and finger-licking kebabs. However, if you have any pets, the BBQ area can be a real danger.

1 Keep the BBQ area safe

With the sight, not to mention the smell, of food cooking on a hot grill, your pets are highly likely to make a beeline for your BBQ area. To keep them safe, make sure you:

- > Keep the BBQ on a flat surface to avoid any tipping accidents.
- > Keep skewers away from your pets, as if ingested, these can cause internal damage.
- > Keep lighter fluid, insect repellent, and other chemicals away from your pets.
- > Dispose of charcoal and ashes safely as these can be harmful if ingested.

2 Have designated pet-free/friendly areas

To avoid accidents and to prevent your pets from knocking over the BBQ or getting burnt, it can be a good idea to set up a physical barrier around your grill. You may also want to create

a pet-friendly area in your garden where they have access to shade and water.

3 Be vigilant of any leftovers

With so much food and drink lying around, you need to ensure that your pet is protected from food poisoning and other potential health problems.

- > Avoid feeding your pet scraps such as cooked meat as these may contain spices, onions, and garlic which are toxic to pets.
- > Keep any alcoholic drinks away from your pets as even small amounts can be toxic when ingested.
- > Dispose of leftover food safely as bones pose a choking hazard.

4 Monitor your pet's behaviour

Watch out for any signs of distress or discomfort as well as symptoms like excessive drooling or panting and whining as these may indicate that they have ingested something they shouldn't have. If you notice anything worrying, give your vet a call.



PUFFIN PARADISE



Looking for a great place to visit during the May half term? Consider exploring the Farne Islands, a group of 28 islands a few miles off the Northumberland coast.

WHAT CAN I SEE?

May and June are special in the Farne Islands because that's when puffins come here to have their babies, known as pufflings. There are 37,000 breeding pairs of puffins on the islands – more than anywhere else in the UK. The birds are drawn to the safe nesting sites on the islands' cliff edges and a plentiful supply of sandeels – their favourite food. These are actually a type of fish, not eels.

GETTING THERE

The best way to see the Farne Islands is to take a boat trip from Seahouses, a small village on the coast. Several companies organise the trips, but it's best to book in advance. You can sail around the islands and, weather permitting, land on one of them, usually Inner Farne.

WHO LIVES THERE?

Nobody lives on the Farne Islands all the time. But some National Trust workers stay there from March to October to care for the birds and seals. They

also make sure the islands are safe for people to visit.

PUFFIN FUN FACTS

- ▶ They're often called 'sea parrots' because of their colourful bills.
- ▶ They can live a long time – more than 20 years and sometimes even more than 30.
- ▶ They're great swimmers, using their wings like flippers to propel them through the water.
- ▶ They can dive up to 60 metres.
- ▶ They nest in burrows in the ground.
- ▶ They lay one egg, and both parents help to keep it warm.
- ▶ They're faithful and often return to the same partner every year.

The Farne Islands offer a fantastic chance to see nature in action – without even leaving the UK. There's always something incredible to spot. So, grab your binoculars and set off for an adventure you won't forget!



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Animal buns



Have fun in the kitchen with your little ones while making these super-simple and super-cute pig and frog burger buns that you and your kids will love creating!

You will need:
100g spinach (frogs) or 100g cooked beetroot (pigs) | 150ml warm milk | 500g strong white bread flour | 10g fine sea salt | 1 sachet dried yeast | 50g unsalted butter, melted and cooled | 125-150ml warm water | 2-3 black pitted olives | Extra milk for glazing

- How to make:**
1. Blend the spinach or beetroot and warm milk in a blender until smooth.
 2. Add the flour and sea salt to a bowl and dry whisk with a fork.
 3. Add the yeast and whisk again.
 4. Gradually mix in the coloured milk, melted butter, and 1/3 of the water.
 5. Bring the ingredients together with your hand until you have a shaggy dough.
 6. Tip the dough out and knead for 10-12 minutes until springy and shiny.
 7. Divide the dough into 12 pieces and roll 11 of these into tight balls.
 8. Place on a baking tray, making sure to leave space between each ball as they will double in

- size while baking.
9. To make the frogs, use the remaining piece of dough to make googly eyes and place a pair on each roll.
 10. For the pigs, make little blobs for ears and larger blobs for the noses, use a skewer to mark out holes on each, and place them on each roll.
 11. Cover loosely with oiled clingfilm and put in a warm place to prove for 30-45 minutes.
 12. Preheat your oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas mark 6.
 13. Add the details to each roll – slivers of olives for the frogs’ eyes and tiny pieces for the nostrils, and two tiny eyes for the pigs.
 14. Bake for 12-15 minutes until risen and lightly golden.
 15. Leave to cool. Slice and add your filling of choice.
 16. These can be kept in the freezer for up to three months. Wrap tightly with plastic and then cover with tin foil to seal in moisture and flavour.

Other animal buns ideas:
Turtle brioche buns | Hedgehog bread rolls | Octopus soup bowl.



THE STORY BEHIND THE Railway Children



May 2024 marks the centenary of the death of writer E. Nesbit, best known for her children’s books. Nesbit’s own life was full of ups and downs, much like the tales she wrote. Edith Nesbit was born in London in 1858 and had a tough start. Her father died when she was just four years old. Her mother then moved the family of six children around Europe in search of a climate more suitable for Edith’s sickly older sister, Mary.

A WAY OF ESCAPE: At first, writing was a way for Edith to escape her difficult life. Later, it became a way for her to make money when her husband, Hubert Bland, couldn’t provide for his family. Hubert wasn’t faithful, and Edith ended up supporting not just their three children, but also two children from Hubert’s other relationships.

BREAKING THE MOULD: Before Edith’s books, most children’s literature was about make-believe or teaching moral lessons. Nesbit changed that. She wrote about children having adventures in places that could be just around the corner.

THE RAILWAY CHILDREN: *The Railway Children* tells the story of three siblings, Roberta, Peter and Phyllis. They move to a house near a railway after their father is falsely accused of being a spy and sent to prison. Their friendships with the local people and their adventures eventually lead to proving their father’s innocence and his return home. In 1970, the story was made into a film, making a star of Jenny Agutter OBE, who played Roberta.

Nesbit didn’t just write for children. She also wrote novels and poems for adults. These aren’t as famous now, but they show she was adept at writing for different audiences. Her children’s books continue to enchant readers to this day, marking her as one of the most significant writers of the 20th century.

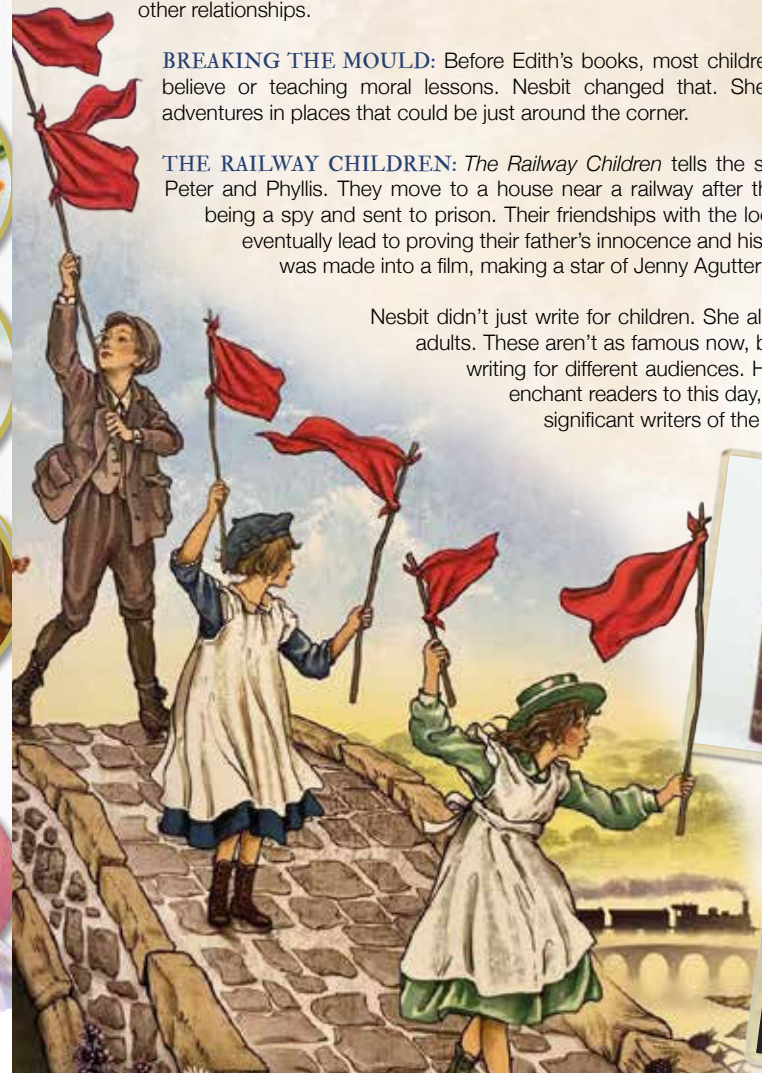


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GARDENING



PRUNING climbing PLANTS

Following on from our guide on how to choose the right climbing plants for your garden, we are exploring how to prune these varieties, with simple steps that are easy to follow.

HOW TO PRUNE IVY: Ivy does not need to be pruned for its health, but as a vigorous plant, you will probably need to prune it at some point to prevent it from outgrowing your space. For best results, prune English ivy in spring.

- > Trim back any excess growth.
- > Remove any leaves that feature dark spots as these may have a bacterial or fungal infection.

HOW TO PRUNE JASMINE: Some jasmine varieties flower in summer and others in winter – both need to be pruned after they have finished blooming to avoid damaging any flower buds.

- > Start by pruning out any dead, diseased or damaged stems.
- > Next, trim out any long, straggling shoots that are growing away from the plant's support.
- > Finally, shorten the stems to the nearest strong side shoot to keep your plant's shape.

HOW TO PRUNE VIRGINIA CREEPER: Virginia creeper should be pruned annually (in winter) to

keep growth in check. This is especially important if you are growing this plant up the side of your home.

- > To start, cut back older or overcrowded stems.
- > Trim back any growth from the gutter, windows and downpipes.
- > Remove dead or diseased vines that have been affected by pests or caused by overwatering.

HOW TO PRUNE JAPANESE QUINCE: Ideally, you should prune this plant in late April or early May, right after spring blossoming. If you prune any earlier than this, you risk losing many of its flowers.

- > Examine the shape of the plant and then select approximately one-third of the branches for removal (make sure these are divided evenly over the shrub).
- > At the same time, remove any dead, diseased or damaged branches.



GARDENING

PERFECT Spring PLANTING

Just because spring is already upon us doesn't mean that it is too late to inject some colour into your garden. These beautiful blooms make the perfect pairings and guarantee to brighten up any outside space.

Roses and lavender: You can add structure and beauty to your garden by planting shrub roses surrounded by scented lavender. While the tops of roses are lush and plentiful, the bottoms can become leggy and sparse, which is where lavender can come to the rescue.

Trilliums and ferns: Trilliums are perfect for adding to borders in light shade and combine very well with other woodland plants such as ferns, which look simply stunning when they unfurl in the spring and into the summer months.

Muscari and feather grass: Muscari, also known as grape hyacinths, are very easy to grow and look great when combined with other spring bulbs and also with fine grass such as feather grass. Bear in mind that muscari tend to spread so, if this is an issue, plant them in pots rather than directly in the ground.

Daffodils and wallflowers: Daffodils are synonymous with spring, making them a welcome addition to any garden. For the ultimate display, pair them with wallflowers, which are not only vibrantly colourful but also give off a rich and sweet fragrance.

Tulips and euphorbia: Tulips and euphorbia are a match made in heaven. The acid yellows and greens of the latter combine perfectly with most shades of tulips, but especially white and purple varieties, which will really pop among the lush greenery. Plant in a sunny spot for best results.

Heathers and hellebores: Winter heathers flower well into the spring, making them ideal for use in pots and container displays. Combine with an array of brightly coloured hellebores, and irises if you have any, for an eye-catching display.



Photo credit: www.gardenersworld.com, www.gardentalk.net

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- BUDGET WISELY:** Calculate how much you can afford to borrow based on your combined income, expenses and financial goals. Be realistic about your budget and ensure that your monthly mortgage payments are manageable.
- GET MORTGAGE SAVVY:** Familiarise yourself with the various types of mortgages available in the UK, such as fixed-rate, variable-rate and interest-only mortgages. Choose the one that suits your financial situation and future plans.
- SEEK PROFESSIONAL ADVICE:** Consult with a mortgage adviser or a financial expert who can provide guidance on mortgage options, interest rates, and the best lenders for your specific situation.
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- SAVE UP:** Most lenders in the UK require a deposit, typically around five to 20 per cent of the property's purchase price. Saving for a deposit can help you secure a more favourable mortgage deal.
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A-LIST RACERS IN THE LE MANS CHALLENGE



With the engines checked and ready to go ahead of the 92nd instalment of the world's most famous 24-hour race on June 15 and 16, here is a selection of the Le Mans race's most recognisable celebrity entrants.



MICHAEL FASSBENDER: Growing up in Ireland, Fassbender was obsessed with Formula 1. At his first Le Mans last year, the actor had a disagreement with a tyre wall, but was able to restart his Porsche 911 RSR-19 and finish.



CHRIS HOY MBE: The only competitor on this list to compete in elite racing as a profession, albeit on two wheels, Chris Hoy MBE boasts six Olympic golds and one silver. The cyclist competed at the 2016 Le Mans in a Nissan-powered Ligier and, despite issues attaching the steering wheel, his team eventually finished 17th overall.



FABIEN BARTHEZ: The 1998 French World Cup winner made his Le Mans bow in 2014, before setting up a team with ex-F1 driver Olivier Panis in the LMP2 category two years later. They subsequently finished 12th overall and 8th in their own class.



PATRICK DEMPSEY: The *Grey's Anatomy* star competed four times at Le Mans between 2009 and 2015, picking up a podium finish. It led to the actor toying with the idea of quitting his day job for good in favour of taking up racing, although the small screen won that challenge. He also raced at Daytona in the GT class in 2014 for Rolex 24.



NICK MASON CBE: Legendary Pink Floyd drummer Nick Mason CBE has long been obsessed with fast cars, making five appearances at Le Mans between 1979 and 1984, earning podium places in his first and second races in a Lola T Ford. The 79 year old is said to have one of the biggest car collections in the world.

PAUL NEWMAN: Newman made one only Le Mans appearance, but finished first in class and second overall in his Porsche 935 in 1979. In 2016, the car sold for more than £4million.

Photo credit: newswire.porsche.com, Nissan PR, Eddy Lemaitre/EPA/Shutterstock, Malcolm Greig/Alamy Stock Photo, Koopai/Shutterstock



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UNUSUAL SPORTS:

LAWN MOWER Racing

Unsurprisingly, the sport of lawn mower racing was dreamt up while large quantities of beer were being consumed; although the UK's drink drinking laws now require all participants to prove their sobriety!

Indeed, it's just as well competitors keep a clear mind when climbing aboard these machines. While top speeds of 8mph may not have Lewis Hamilton and his Mercedes mechanics cowering with fear, competition is fierce. The roots of the sport – which originated in West Sussex in 1973 – have now spread worldwide.

The ethos behind lawn mower racing is simple – speed, competition and large amounts of fun. It came about when a group of racers adapted their home lawn mowers after finding themselves unable to afford the considerable set-up costs of traditional motorsports.

By removing the cutting blades, beefing up engines and, in some cases, lowering the riding position, they quickly discovered an affordable way

to experience the thrill of the throttle.

Lawn mower racing rapidly ascended to the point where its own governing body – the British Lawn Mower Racing Association – was set up to oversee events and competitions. Races generally take place in the spring and summer between May and October with British, World, Endurance and 12-Hour Endurance championships pitting the very best against each other.

Celebrity names, including Derek Bell MBE, Phil Tufnell, Chris Evans and Guy Martin, have all pursued arable acceleration on the track, with the late, great Sir Stirling Moss OBE a British champion in the 1970s.

The rapid growth of the sport has led to thousands of new riders getting involved each year. With numerous events listed throughout spring and summer, riders all over the country can sample the thrill first-hand. Competitors must be 18, brave and fast – no grass seed required!

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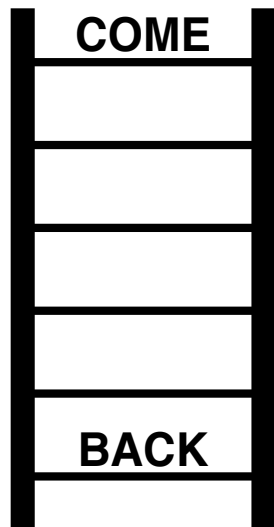
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DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ The month of May is named after Maia, the Greek goddess of nursing mothers.
- ▶ Athena is the Greek goddess of war and was said to have been born from Zeus' forehead, wearing full armour.
- ▶ Dionysus is the Greek god of wine-making and is also known in Roman mythology as Bacchus. The festivals held to celebrate him were known as the Bacchanalia.
- ▶ The common emblem for medicine of a snake entwined around a staff is known as the Rod of Asclepius, named after the Greek god of medicine.
- ▶ Hades is the Greek god of the underworld. He rules with his queen, Persephone, and they are aided by the three-headed dog, Cerberus.

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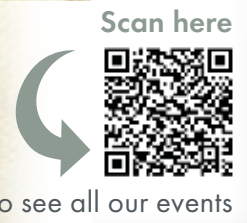
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