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### December 2020

6 BIDEN: HIS TIME

- 8 THE WORLD AROUND US 2
- 11 HOME & DIY

19 LOCAL NEWS

- 26 SIR SEAN CONNERY
- 29 GARDENING
- **30** PUZZLES
- 33 BEAUTY
- **34** HEALTH & FITNESS
- 38 KIDS
- 41 FOOD & DRINK
- 42 BOXING DAY GIFTS
- 43 BUSINESS & PROPERTY
- 45 SPORT
- 46 HISTORY
- 48 MOTORING
- 50 THE VISION LISTINGS

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# Editor's notes...



Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION**Leigh-on-Sea. We're now entering the final chapter of 2020, a year with many 'unprecedented' times. In fact, that word 'unprecedented' I have

heard more times this year than ever before.

The message has certainly become more positive recently, with the hope of a vaccine being close to being rolled out. It really does feel like the positive ending to a Hollywood style 'disaster' movie, and hopefully it's the positive news we all need to end 2020 and write it off as a year most would want to forget.

For me, I'm taking the positives (as always). We've made a lot of changes in business and in our personal life, and some of the old ways (pre-COUID) I don't want to go back to. I've certainly enjoyed the flexible working from home more; in fact, my team and I have found that we are more productive than working in an office at times.

In our personal life, we've enjoyed more walks as a family exploring the beautiful Essex countryside we have on our doorstep. At home we sometimes get caught up in the day to day, and weeks go swooshing by, but these months of lockdowns and more time at home certainly make me appreciate the little things in life that are most special.

However your year's gone, let's look forward with positivity to 2021. Wishing you all the very best.

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DOWN: 1. DISGRACEFULLY, S. CAN DO, 4. HYENAS, 5. PREMEDITATED, 6. APPROVE, 7. HALF HEARTEDLY, 8. DELICATESSEN, 14. PRO RATA, 16. ENSIGN, 18. ABATE

ACROSS: 1. DECK, 3. WHIPLASH, 9. SINCERE, 10. EXPEL, 11. RHO, 12. EPOCH, 13. CASED, 15. TWEET, 17. FROZE, 18. ACT, 19. LEAKED, 20. ICELAND , 21. YEARNING, 22. DENY t 77 years young, Joe Biden's journey to the White House has been a long one, but the US Presidential Election winner won't delay in attempting to bring back together a fractured nation.

After a tumultuous four years as the most powerful man in world politics, it perhaps shouldn't have come as too much of a surprise to find Donald Trump refusing to go quietly in the aftermath of a US Presidential Election defeat that left Democrat Joe Biden at the door of The White House... albeit without a set of keys.

Republican Trump's assertion of ballot box fraud in light of what, admittedly, even his fiercest critic would deem a farcical voting process, will mean the intricacies of the November 3 election will play out in the Supreme Court. And yet, where US politics is concerned, we shouldn't be surprised – four years ago all similar accusations of malpractice were shot across the bow by those same Democrats who are now up in arms over Trump's claims. His suggestion was that thousands of new voting papers were added to the mix, that some were in the name of people long deceased, and that many duplicated votes were received after a chaotic postal vote system that allowed individual states to decide their own rules.

When the dust settles, however, 77-year-old Biden will be inaugurated as the leader of the free world. A lifetime ambition, the Pennsylvania-born former lawyer has been at the forefront of politics for well over five decades, having become a senator in January 1973. Re-elected six times, he was vice president to Barack Obama for eight years, and considered running in 2016, but made way for Hillary Clinton.

He is a passionate advocate of raising the minimum wage and investing in green energy, notably in rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement that Trump controversially left. He promotes criminal justice reform and grants for minority communities, and will also look to expand Obamacare, enlarge the free college system, and challenge China's questionable environment and trade practices. And, most notably, he brings with him to the top table of world politics Kamala Harris, America's first female, first black and first South Asian vice president.

Here in Britain we will look on with interest to see if prime minister Boris Johnson can configure the same buoyancy, trust and commercial parallels he enjoyed with Trump. Our long-term alignment with the States on corporate, social and political levels has been essential for the economy, and now more than ever before the government will be seeking reassurance that this can continue under a new regime.

Despite a desperately narrow winning margin, Joe Biden will enter The White House having achieved the most votes ever for an incoming president – more than 77 million. And yet those celebrating the supposed new dawn of American politics should be wary. Putting aside the somewhat ambitious legal claims that will fill the scrolling new tickers over the coming weeks and months, it remains the case that, even in defeat, Trump's vote total was more than any other elected president in history, Obama included. The brand of confrontational, partisan politics that he popularised continues to resonate with America, and with the Senate still under the control of the Republicans, Biden knows he'll have to fight hard to steady the United States' uneasy global reputation.

## THE WORLD AROUND US Part 2

In the second of our environmental series that looks at the key drivers in the health and well-being of the planet, we're looking at the legacy of our rainforests.

At the end of the 1980s, the realisation that the world's rainforests were being removed at an alarming rate truly propelled a green revolution – one that continues to thrive today.

Where eco awareness and the preservation of our planet are now a part of everyday life, the way we embraced the saving of the Amazon rainforests had never before been seen.

The realisation that deforestation was claiming an area the size of 20 football pitches every minute – for the acquiring of timber and repurposing of land for cattle ranching – was profound, but the deafening screams of those early environmentalists are now just faint murmurs. So what has happened to those green expanses?

Sadly, the problem still exists. A quarter of the Amazon has disappeared, probably never to return, while some speculation suggests the remainder may be felled within 50 years if tighter restrictions are not forthcoming.

Globally, one in four people depends directly on forests for their livelihood, and as many as 120 prescription drugs worldwide are derived directly from rainforests.

And yet, there are two sides to every story. Many South Americans will point to the economic necessity of monetising a natural resource, just as the UK has done with oil and gas. Even the Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro has called the destruction of these plant- and animal-rich expanses "cultural"; and in a country that has more than 20 million people living in poverty, it's not difficult to see why resistance is strong.

To conclude, it seems that while the days are gone where almost every other charitable programme was driven towards preserving these incredible habitats, it's simply a case of having our attention diverted to other ills. Three decades after we first reached out to our rainforests, the battle to save them lives on.

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f you spend all day every day in the winter months longing to return to the comfort and cosiness of your bed, then you may be interested to find out what the best bed sheets are for winter warmth.

From fleece to flannel, cotton to silk, keep reading to discover what fabric you should choose for your winter safe haven.

*Cotton:* Although you may think that cotton is more fitting for the summer, if you are the type of sleeper who ends up kicking off your covers halfway through the night, then cotton might be the ideal material for you all year round. A natural fabric, cotton is known for its moisture-wicking abilities, meaning it is great for regulating your overall body temperature. If you have sensitive skin, opt for organic cotton sheets which are both breathable and good for the environment.

*Hannel:* Synonymous with warmth, flannel is one of the most popular choices for winter bedding. A cross between cotton and fleece, this fabric is soft, airy and breathable, making it the perfect choice for anyone who loves a bed that is warm but not overwhelmingly so.

*Heece:* Arguably the warmest material you can choose for your bed sheets, fleece is a synthetic fabric that is ultra-soft and built for insulation. Often used in winter sports gear, fleece is designed to insulate heat in even the coldest conditions, meaning it is ideal for those below-freezing winter nights.

*Silk:* This may be the last fabric that you would think of when it comes to choosing winter bedding, but silk has the unique ability to retain heat while at same time remaining lightweight and smooth to touch. Opt for pure silk bedding if possible as this has moisturising properties; something that your parched winter skin so desperately needs.

f

THE RETURN OF SHABBY CHIC AND HOW TO PULL IT OFF

he revolving circle of décor and design has, over the years, gripped a nation of amateur interior designers. Shabby chic, a style that first came to prominence in the 1980s, is making a concerted return to prominence.

Its invention was as a rebellion to the hard, shiny, ultra-modern, clean-cut image of three decades ago, when yuppies and electronica ruled the roost. The term 'shabby chic' was thought up by fashion journalist Min Hogg.

And the concept hasn't strayed too far since – from distressed furniture to unmatching fabrics and colours, a rustic, rugged essence that's based on comfort and quantity, rather than image and minimalistic posturing.

To achieve the shabby chic look really is to open your imagination, either by pooling existing items or exploring flea markets, thrift stores and antique shops.

Many people think repainting and running a grooved spatula across an old set of drawers is the sum total of shabby chic, but it's about much more than that. Soft background colours flatter furniture and make items the focal point of a room, so think about using whites, beiges or even light greys.

Pastels – baby blues, pale pinks, grainy greys and warm yellows – work best, while that base of brightness means retro, darker shades of wood can match and contrast, be that on tables or chairs. Meanwhile, wicker and throws soften edges and enhance comfort, and wrought iron provides structure.

As far as the walls and surface tops go, flowers, mirrors and pictures using worn frames will assist you in topping off the perfect shabby chic room, with knick-knacks, signs and cushions adding to the mix.

Past that, the only limit is your imagination. And the best thing about shabby chic is that it needn't cost the earth – adding wear and tear to your own items is cheap, if not free. Would you like an honest, dependable & AFFORDABLE police checked \* cleaner to clean your home? Pretty The four fully inc. TIME FOR YOU DOMESTIC CLEANING

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CHASS Q

### YOU WILL NEED

- > Multipurpose, water-based craft paints (small pots) in your preferred colours
- > Masking tape
- > Glue gun
- > 1 glass picture frame
- > Paint brush soft acrylic or watercolour brushes work well

### HOW TO MAKE

- > Ensure the glass within the frame is secure; if not, use a glue gun to stick it in place
- > Allow the glue to fully dry before continuing
- > Mask the edges of the frame and use a clean, dry cloth to dust the glass
- Decide upon your design you could use your initial, a flower or a simple inspirational quote
- If using a stencil, position your chosen design under the glass or go freehand
- > Paint your design in layers, allowing the paint to dry between each coat
- > Once your design is fully dry, remove the masking tape and display proudly on your chosen wall

### TOP TIPS FOR PAINTING ON GLASS

- > Always clean the surface before painting
- > Handle the glass carefully to avoid fingerprints
- > Choose the right brush synthetic brushes can create visible brushstrokes, whereas natural hair brushes allow for more paint to be applied in one stroke and provide a smoother coverage
- > Do not apply too much pressure with your brush
- > Avoid overworking the paint
- > Always blot your brush after rinsing it to eliminate any excess water
- > Clean away imperfections while the paint is still wet, using a wet brush, toothpick or paper towel
- > When the paint has dried, use a razor blade to scrape or trim off any imperfections

### OTHER IDEAS FOR DIY GLASS ART:

> Use markers to write out your favourite quotes

> Press flowers (two pieces of glass required)

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HOME

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f you are lucky enough to have a wood-burning fire in your home, then you probably can't wait to start torching some timber and heating it up. However, where are you supposed to keep all your lovely logs?

7. Fill any gaps: If you have supporting pillars of wood, or you are using a partial dividing wall to separate two rooms, why not take advantage of any hollow spaces or gaps and fill them with logs? Not only does this look stylish, but it is also a great way of using up an otherwise wasted space.

2. Pile high: For those who want to make a statement with their logs, this big and bold solution is for you. Effectively building a feature wall of firewood, you can utilise any unused alcove in your home to create this eye-catching display. This is not advised if you have young children owing to the risk of injury.

*3.* **Create a cubbyhole:** If you have a wood-burning stove rather than an actual fireplace and you are looking to build a surface for it to sit on, you should remember to factor storage into your design. This multitasking brick stage includes both room for both logs and kindling.

*4.* **Go rustic**: One of the simplest ways to stylishly store your logs is to use a large, country-style basket. Make sure you pick one that is big enough to fit all your log-burning supplies and is both sturdy and strong. Alternatively, for a more contemporary look, opt for a metal design.

*5.* **Be sneaky**: If you have an outdoor storage area for your logs, you only need to display a handful in your home, so look for unused space in your property, such as under the stairs or eaves where you can create a bespoke storage space.















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# **LOCAL NEWS**

from your neighbourhood

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NEWS



# **Double delight as restaurant** and café win prestigious award

Arestaurant and a café in Leigh-on-Sea are Celebrating after winning prestigious Good Food Awards (GFA).

Stop the World Café, on Broadway, and Calypso restaurant, on London Road, were announced as winners of the 2021 awards at the start of November.

Calypso, which is a Caribbean restaurant, deservedly won its award after judges praised the quality of its food, service and value.

The restaurant told **VISION**Leigh-on-Sea: "It is truly amazing to have won a GFA, the second award we have been given for our food quality and atmosphere.

"We strive to give our customers top quality Caribbean food in a friendly atmosphere, and it is because of them that we received these awards.

"We're trying to change people's perceptions of

what a Caribbean restaurant is like and the type of food they will be served.

"We aim for quality, and anyone visiting for the first time can expect to be transported to a little piece of the Caribbean thanks to the tasteful décor, music, food and drink."

Meanwhile, Stop the World Café, which first opened in 2007, was recognised for its high-quality service and food.

Speaking about the café, GFA said: "Stop the World Café has demonstrated exceptional levels of food guality, service and value when compared to our industry benchmarks in its category."

For more information on Stop the World Café visit www.stoptheworldcafe.com and for the Calvpso restaurant visit www.calypsorestaurant.co.uk



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### **Barber confirms he's not** breaking restrictions



Aleigh-on-Sea barber has confirmed that he has closed during the latest lockdown after rumours he was defying the restrictions.

Russell John Mannering, who runs #Russ Barbers on Rayleigh Road, disagrees with the latest lockdown which has forced barbers and hairdressers across the country to close.

He put a sign in his window saying "not cutting and not closing", which was misunderstood by some to mean #Russ was continuing to operate.

However, the barber has since cleared up the confusion.

In a series of updates on social media, Russell said: "My business is closed, I am having a silent protest.

"I'm not cutting and when I say 'I'm not closing,' I mean I am fighting to keep my business open.

"I have sent a seven-day notice to the small business commissioner and to David Amess MP."

### Man pleads guilty to causing death by dangerous driving

Anotorcyclist will be sentenced in January after Admitting to causing death by dangerous driving in Leigh-on-Sea.

James Williams, 24, of Chichester, appeared at Basildon Crown Court on Monday, November 9, where he pleaded quilty.

It followed a fatal collision in London Road at around 4.50pm on April 2, 2019.

Williams was riding a motorcycle as he collided with Maria Ansell, a 90-year-old grandmother from Leighon-Sea. Maria was treated by paramedics but sadly died at the scene.

Williams is due to be sentenced on January 7, 2021. Several tributes were paid to Maria following the incident.

In May, her granddaughter, Katie Benn, spoke on behalf of the family to praise "wonderful" Maria.

She said: "In memory of our gorgeous 'Yiayia', the most wonderful grandmother and great grandmother

Joy as stranded puppy rescued

anyone could ask for and who doted

"Her mission in life was to make everyone

"She was fit and healthy and we are all

truly devastated to have lost our 'rock' in

tirelessly on her entire family.

such tragic circumstances."

else happy.

The owner of a puppy has praised the emergency services after their "amazing efforts" helped save her dog.

Pepper the Dachshund-cross-Jackapoo went missing on October 24 in Leigh-on-Sea, which sparked a remarkable rescue effort.

The coastquard, RNLI, Essex Fire Service and local volunteers spent hours trying to catch the puppy as she ran between the mudflats.

In total, Pepper was missing for six hours.

Pepper's owner, Harriet Weaver, said: "We know we are so lucky and can't thank everyone enough for their amazing efforts.

"We're planning to raise some funds for all those who helped bring our puppy home safely."

HM Coastguard Southend said: "It was reported the puppy had gone out onto the mud and Leigh marshes and could not be coaxed back.

"The puppy was seen 200 yards offshore on the mud and running back and forth between Chalkwell and towards Two Tree Island, so the RNLI Southend Lifeboat launched the Southend Hovercraft to help with the search for the puppy.

"After two and a half hours chasing the puppy back and forth, the Southend Hovercraft got close on the marshes, but it then disappeared for another three hours.

"After a chase we were able to snatch the puppy with minutes to spare from the incoming tide, which was due to cover the area the puppy was trapped on."





LOCAL NEWS

later.

support another one.

Cince my last article, we have experienced

Oanother lockdown, with all the nuisance

that it brings. I share everyone's frustration at

the situation and will take a lot of convincing to

The news about the vaccine is, of course,

to be welcomed. The challenge will now be

to ensure that all those people who want it get it as

quickly as possible. This really would seem to be the

only immediate way to continue with any sort of quality

of life and I intend to make sure that the vaccination

is made available to local residents sooner rather than

As we approach Christmas. I very much appreciate

the frustrations felt by everyone at a time that is

### SIR DAVID AMESS MP

thin.

or via email.

better new year.



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community-spirited resident is continuing to help Atidy Leigh-on-Sea and the surrounding area with the help of volunteers.

Lesley Winterflood is a volunteer in the Southend BeachCare Group and also independently does litter picking in the Belfairs Woods and surrounding green areas, which are well-known spots for litter.

Southend BeachCare encourages communities to maintain and enhance the local area, including through litter picks.

During peak season its volunteers pick four times a week, but currently only solo picks are allowed owing to the pandemic.

Lesley's recent tidy-up was on November 8, when she collected several bags of rubbish in Leigh.

normally of real celebration, centred on family and

friends. People have been more than tolerant up until

now, but I do realise everyone's patience is wearing

I very much hope that any resident who has an

issue regarding the impact of coronavirus on them or

their family's life will contact me by emailing amessd@

My next constituency surgery will be held on Friday.

December 18, at St David's Church, 400 Rayleigh

Road, SS9 5PT. Appointments are available between

10am and 1pm and can be booked over the phone

I do wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a far

parliament.uk or calling 020 7219 3452.

She said: "We live in a beautiful part of Essex and it saddens me to see such disrespect for public places, our wildlife and the environment. Putting rubbish in a bin or taking it home is very simple.

"The local community are supportive of the litter picking that I do, but most say I shouldn't have to do it.

"To tackle littering I think we need more posters, TV campaigns, bigger bins and fines for persistent offenders, especially those fly-tipping."

Anyone interested in joining a litter pick can contact Southend BeachCare via its Facebook page.



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# Leigh-on-Sea TOWN COUNCIL

Despite lockdown 2.0 we have still been busy at Leigh Town Council.

The council runs a Community Transport Scheme, providing outings for elderly residents in the town. Although we haven't been able to run trips this year, we have still tried to support our members. Our latest initiative is to send our members a short publication every few weeks with news, local history, things to do and advice. We plan to continue the magazine beyond lockdown.

We have been working with the Leigh Partnership Group and Totally Locally Leigh-on-Sea on creating a list of all independent businesses in Leigh. If you run a business in Leigh and would like to add your details, please fill in the form at form.jotform. com/203133044920038

The council runs a Grant Award Scheme which is in place to support community groups and projects around the town. We are pleased to be supporting Friends of Leigh Library Gardens with a grant of £500, the newly formed Friends of Love Leigh Cliffs with  $\pounds500$ , Leigh Lymphoedema Support Group with  $\pounds500$ , Parents of Estranged Adult Children (PEACe) Support Group with  $\pounds200$  and  $\pounds162$  for the Continuity of Carer Midwife Team.

During the first lockdown, a group of neighbours started to gather long-life items for local food banks. It started with food donations being left on walls or driveways that someone from each road would go and collect. Now it has become so popular that the overwhelming number of donations are being stored by us at Leigh Community Centre. You can get involved by visiting www.tinteams.org

This year we are running a virtual Christmas Farmers' Market where you can buy all your usual locally sourced delicacies in time for Christmas. Join the Facebook group Leigh-on-Sea Christmas Farmers' Market \*VIRTUAL\* to see all the latest offers. The group will be open until December 21.

# **Council leader calls for new marina**

The leader of Leigh Town Council is playing a key role in a campaign for a new marina to be built. The marina would be in Shoeburyness, and councillor Paul Gildon is playing a key role as he feels it would "rejuvenate" the area.

Essex has one of the longest coastlines of any county in the UK, and now plans have emerged for a huge Brighton-style marina near the beach.

If the plan is approved, water could be dredged inland, and the small town could be converted into a docking bay for yachts and sailboats from all across Europe. A similar proposal was made in 2015 but it didn't materialise, with the latest plan still in the development phase.

Cllr Gildon, who is also a RNLI lifeboat volunteer, said: "Doing nothing is easy, and finding reasons to do nothing is very easy.

"Southend is ideally suited for a marina – it is close to Europe and very close to London. Rail, air and road links are there, ideal for a weekend trip across the North Sea. It would rejuvenate the area and we need to take people away from the two routes to the seafront. The road improvements would also



encourage businesses to come to the east of the town.

"This development would provide new work opportunities with the extra buildings, hotels and restaurants. All would encourage tourists to the area, spreading out the Southend experience and spending money." As film icons go, there are few to rival James Bond; and as Bond actors go, there are none to rival Sir Sean Connery. In a year that has been unkind on so many levels, fans of film perhaps felt an added sense of injustice at the end of October when it was announced that Sir Sean Connery had passed away, at the age of 90.

Of course, in many respects, the actor's work was done. Connery was the smooth-talking, sumptuously styled Scot who legitimised, developed and truly delivered 007 into the golden era of film. The first man to step into the secret agent's shoes, with 1962's *Dr No*, Connery, a former bodybuilder who finished third in Mr Universe in the early 1950s, proved to author lan Fleming that he had the fervour and finesse to carry off the role, having previously been dismissed as "an overgrown stuntman".

It seems perverse that someone who would go on to become so decorated in the indulgence and luxury of 1960s cinema may have been cast aside before it even began, but it's fair to note that the actor's previous engagements had been in rather less salubrious guises, notably in crime drama *Hell Drivers*, fantasy adventure *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* and outward-bound action flick *Tarzan's Greatest Adventure*.

That, within a decade, Connery would have elevated his worth from tracking the movements of a man swinging through the jungle to starring in iconic movies such as *From Russia with Love*, *Goldfinger*, *Thunderball* and *You Only Live Twice*, is remarkable.

What made Connery's sumptuously smooth portrayal of Bond so impressive was that, unlike the modern-day 007s, he interspersed international espionage with an array of other lead roles. Seventeen movies were made across the nine years he portrayed Bond, a sequence that ended in 1971 with *Diamonds are Forever* (although he did agree to reprise the character in 1983's *Never Say Never Again*).

"I got to the point where I felt I had nothing left to prove as far as Bond was concerned," said Connery. "It was a delightful run where the evolution of 007 and everything around him had gathered such pace with every new movie; yet in myself I thought I had probably evolved as much as I had wanted, and it was time to let someone else have a go."

Away from Bond, twice-married Connery flourished in the likes of *Murder on the Orient Express, A Bridge too Far, Highlander, The Untouchables, The Hunt for Red October* and as Indiana Jones' father in *The Last Crusade.* 

There are the ones that got away too – he turned down the role of Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings* despite being offered a \$30million bounty; he also rejected playing Architect in *The Matrix* trilogy. The truth is, Connery, who was knighted in the year 2000, was always focused on how he saw himself – as an actor, and as a person... how else can you explain turning down a direct invitation to join Manchester United by legendary manager Sir Matt Busby.

F

"I was 23 at the time and although I had the contract offer in front of me, I had long decided that football would take a backseat to acting. I felt I had more chance of doing something special, something unique, in the acting world; I felt I could give more and put smiles on more faces, my own included." Sir Sean, you succeeded.

# innate Boog

007

f you were born in the same month as Christmas, your birth flower is the festive holly. A popular plant for the season of winter, holly is instantly recognisable by its prickly leaves and ruby red berries. Plus, it's easy to grow and is great for garden security.

### What is the symbolic significance of holly?

OF THE MONTH

In ancient Čeltic cultures, the Druids regarded holly as a symbol of fertility and believed it to have magical powers. Today, holly has been adopted as a symbol of Christmas by Christians, with the sharp leaves said to symbolise the crown of thorns worn by Christ and the berries representing his blood.

### What does this birth flower say about your personality?

Those born in December are said to be fiercely protective. Not a fan of criticism, you are naturally defensive and are not afraid to stand up for yourself when required. You also love to make a home feel warm and inviting, both your own and those of your friends and family.

### How to grow holly in your garden

The holly plant is fairly easy to grow and will thrive in both sun and partial shade, although it prefers moist but well-drained soil. You

can choose to grow holly on your lawn, in a shrub border or even to make some hedges. Holly does not require much pruning, although if you want to cut some as a festive decoration, do so in early winter before its berries are eaten by birds.

### Interesting facts about holly

- 🐦 It is evergreen
- \* It can be grown in pots and containers for up to five years
- The berries are mildly poisonous
- > Legend says that holly protects from thunder, lightning and witchcraft
- ▶ Real holly plants bloom scented flowers in spring



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### ACROSS 1. Set of playing cards (4)

3. Neck injury (8) 9. Genuine (7)

10. Kick out (5)

13. Enclosed (5) 15. Bird sound (5)

18. Statute (3)

17. Turned to ice (5)

11. 17th Greek letter (3)

12. The beginning of an era (5)

20. Country whose capital is

- PUZZLE S **ISWERS** Car found on Contents Page
  - Revkjavik (7) 21. Longing (8) 22. Refuse to admit (4)

### DOWN

- 1. Shamefully (13)
- 2. Showing a willingness to
- achieve results (3-2)
- 4. Doglike mammals (6)
- 5. Planned in advance (12)
- 6. Sanction (7)
- 7. Unenthusiastically (4-9)



8. Food shop (12) 14. Proportionately (3,4) 16. Banner or flag (6)

# 18. Lessen (5)

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Hummingbirds are the only birds that are able to flv backwards

▶ The short-horned lizard squirts blood from blood vessels around its eyes when defending itself. This is because the blood vessels rupture under pressure

A giant panda will typically eat for around 12 hours a day

Elephant ears help to keep the animals cool by radiating heat

▶ Young jaguars are blind at birth. They learn to hunt by living with their mother for two years or more

Wolves can go for more than a week without eating

► A fox can communicate with other foxes by using its tail

The bald eagle has a wingspan of around eight feet

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1	8			2		5		
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	7	4					8	
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# WAYS TO JAZZ UP YOUR Christmas beard

hether you have designer stubble or a fullon Santa beard, there is no excuse not to get festive when it comes to your facial hair this Christmas. From baubles to bells, sweets to knits, check out these six fantastically festive beard decorations.

**1. Beard Baubles:** If you want a weird and wacky Christmas beard design, then look no further. Mini baubles hanging from your whiskers will ensure you start trending on social media sooner rather than later.

### 2. Beard-Glitter: A simple

yet highly effective idea, a glitter beard will ensure you are the centre of attention for all the right reasons. Simply apply some glitter glue to your beard and then sprinkle with your chosen glitter. Why not use multiple colours for even more oomph?

3. Beard Candy: If you or your kids love candy canes, then this

is the festive beard design for you. Best for bushy beards, all you need to do is adorn your beard with canes and you are good to do.

4. Beard Jingle Bells: For those who don't mind being heard before they are seen, beard bells provide a fun and frivolous way to jazz up your face. Ideal for Christmas carolling.

> 5. Seard Kuts: Does your mum love to make you an annual Christmas jumper? If so, why not ask her this year to knit you a beard warmer instead? It's festive and perfect for keeping out the winter chill.

BEAUT

6. Beard light: Last but definitely not least, it wouldn't be Christmas without some well-placed fairy lights, and what better location for these colourful decorations than on your face? Just make sure you buy a clipon set to avoid a terrible tangle in your bristles.

# Christmas plants that care and cure

There are several plants that are synonymous with Christmas, from the decorative poinsettia, to the "kiss me quick" mistletoe, to the evergreen holly and ivy. However, did you know that each of these plants has its own healing properties?

**Holly:** Often used to decorate your table for Christmas dinner, in terms of medicinal use, you should only use the leaves of the holly as the berries are poisonous. Holly leaves have been known to treat digestive issues, rheumatism, fever, bronchitis and high blood pressure.

HOW TO TAKE: Dry out your holly leaves, crush and add a few teaspoons to a cup of hot water.

**Mistletoe:** Either a blessing, or a curse depending on who you are standing in close proximity to, mistletoe has been used for centuries to treat medical conditions such as epilepsy, hypertension, headaches and the symptoms of menopause.

HOW TO TAKE: Only use the leaves and stems as the grains are poisonous. Steep in cold water for 12 hours, strain and drink up to three times a day.

Poinsettia: The perfect plant to decorate your home over Christmas, the poinsettia is known for its ability to clean air, and in particular, to remove formaldehyde from insulation, plastic bags and other household items.

HOW TO TAKE: Simply place a poinsettia in your home and let it work its magic.

**Ivy:** The leaves of ivy are both anti-inflammatory and antirheumatic, plus they contain antioxidant properties. Ivy is also said to help settle your stomach, boost your immune system and increase oxygenation of the body.

HOW TO TAKE: The leaves of ivy can either be consumed or applied topically. To make ivy tea, simply soak 4 fresh ivy leaves or 2 tbsp of crushed dried ivy in 1 litre of cold water, bring

to the boil and then filter immediately.

# Ever wondered why so many people are doing Pilates?

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Sam and Glenn worked in Britain's oldest and most prestigious dance company Rambert Dance Company, dancing nationally and internationally performing the world's most visionary dance creator's choreography. It was here that they began to develop their expertise in Pilates, Sports Massage and Corrective Movement. For them it's not enough that they provide you with an experience that's welcoming, positive and enjoyable. but also an environment that listens to its clients first, and delivers a movement programme that produces fast results while educating you about the benefits of correct exercise in relation to your particular postural eccentricities.

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If you want to make your body stronger from your core and your objective is to be a fitter happier you, then try Pilates, it definitely works. Thanks guys!!" Maggie Dennis

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### Bob's story -Knee replacement surgery

Bob McLintock had knee replacement surgery at the Nuffield Health Brentwood Hospital after 10 years of pain in his left knee.

Bob McLintock has been involved in sport as a participant, teacher, coach, facility manager and event organiser for over 50 years.

Bob, former chief executive of Brentwood Borough Council, is currently chairman of the Active Brentwood Bob McLintock sports partnership.

10 years ago, Bob's left knee was beginning to limit his opportunities to participate in physical activity. By the end of 2019 he was restricted to a

15-minute walk only. In January 2020 he came to the Nuffield Health Brentwood Hospital and met with consultant orthopaedic surgeon and knee specialist, Mr Sunil Kumar, Bob was immediately seen for x-rays which identified the problem as severe bone on bone arthritis.

Mr Sunil Kumar

He was told that a total knee replacement would be the best course of action to get him back to his old self. Bob was offered physiotherapy during his time at the hospital and was given a tailored exercise

surgery. Bob saw his surgeon, Mr Sunil Kumar, daily during his three day stay in hospital, and saw him for two follow up appointments to check his progress after. He undertook a month-long programme of physiotherapy and an on-going recovery exercise programme.

programme to support him back to fitness after

Post operation, Bob experienced some pain but exercised regularly, as instructed by the Nuffield Health physiotherapy team, to restore the maximum movement. Eight months later, Bob is delighted to say "I have the same range of movement in my new left knee as I have in my



right. I am exercising and walking without pain and can play football with my grandsons".

Nuffield Health

Mr Sunil Kumar is a consultant orthopaedic surgeon at Nuffield Health Brentwood Hospital. He specialises in all aspects of knee surgery including minimally invasive partial and total knee replacements, cruciate ligament surgery reconstruction, cartilage surgery and sports iniuries.

Mr Kumar is just one of a number of specialist consultants at the hospital who between them have countless years of experience in orthopaedics, general surgery, men's and women's health, children's services and cosmetic surgery.

Brentwood Hospital offers a wealth of exceptional clinical services for both patients who have private medical insurance and the self-pay market.

Tracey Howson, Brentwood Hospital director, said: "Our Hospital has established itself as one of the leading not-for-profit providers of private



healthcare, looking after people for more than 60 years from Brentwood and the surrounding areas."

"Today, we continue to put people before profit, working in partnership with the NHS to benefit the community. We put customers at the heart of everything that we do."

"With excellent patient satisfaction rates, we are proud of our reputation for clinical excellence and outstanding care. Many of the most experienced, skilled consultants and healthcare professionals in the region choose to practice at our hospital."

For further information or to book an appointment with Mr Sunil Kumar, contact Nuffield Health Brentwood Hospital on 01702 898036 www.nuffieldhealth.com Physiotherapy appointments can be booked by telephone on 0345 0454845





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# Ageless Aims

### ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL ENTERTAINMENT IDEAS FOR FAMILIES WITH KIDS OF VERY DIFFERENT AGES

aving children across a broad age spectrum can often be taxing when it comes to keeping them all amused and happy, but here are a few ideas that work right across the board, from tiny toddlers to troublesome teenagers.

### Cooking up a treat

Whether baking a cake, preparing a stew for dinner or simply working together to get a few sandwiches on plates, the kitchen has always been a staple for family life (and the odd party).

Cooking creates a true bond among children, not least because they can enjoy the fruits of their labour afterwards.

### Scooters, bikes and trikes

From balance bikes to mountain bikes and any sort of wheeled machinery in between, venturing out on a ride is a great way of connecting our kids with the outdoors. Follow an established route, explore a new area, set up a treasure hunt or simply go off-piste into wooded areas – getting outdoors is great fun.

### An English country garden

What better way to embrace the best playground of them all than by getting the kids involved in tending to the garden? From mowing the lawn to planting, clearing out the shed or even trimming back the bushes, the view from your window will be all the better for a family afternoon in the vard.

### Paint it black

Whether it's throwaway pieces of art on paper or a more serious dollop of paint on canvas to be hung on the wall, being creative makes a fantastic family bond. And because art is subjective, you can tell your competitive brood with absolute sincerity that those Pollock-like splashes of colour that come from your two-year-old are in no way inferior to the Picasso-esque portrait painted by your eldest, the art student.









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### FOOD FINESSE WITH POPULAR CHEF JAMES MARTIN

hen James Martin bade an extremely tearful farewell to his Saturday Kitchen colleagues in March 2016, it was imagined the chef would be turning his hand to new projects after 10 years fronting the popular BBC weekend cookery show.

UP A Tre

Of course, as these things often materialise, the popular Yorkshireman reappeared less than six months later fronting a copycat culinary conflab over on ITV.

Regardless, the 48-year-old's switch to commercial TV has also spawned a run of cookerv series, reaffirming his place as one of the most popular chefs on television.

Of course, life on the small screen is already a secondary career for Martin, who excelled with wooden spoon in hand from a young age. Indeed, he was almost asked to leave a cookerv class at the age of 12 for serving flambéed chicken and mangetout while his prepubescent classmates struggled to create fairy cakes. He went on to study catering at Scarborough College, coming

Photo credit: Ken McKay/ITV/Shutterstock

top of his class for three consecutive years, and was then offered a job working in London with Antony Worrall Thompson, one of the judges for his final exam.

His accomplishments, however, weren't served up to him on a plate - as a Yorkshireman, Martin was taught from birth that "you don't get owt for nowt". The hard graft paid off, it seems, as he was made head chef of the first Hotel du Vin in Winchester when he was just 22.

Two years later, he began to appear on our screens in shows such as James Martin: Yorkshire's Finest and Ready, Steady, Cook - his affable nature and dry, self-deprecating humour making him an instant hit with viewers.

From weekend shows to cooking adventures at home and overseas, the chef's fascination with food is unrelenting, as evidenced in his recent return to our screens for Saturday Morning with James Martin.

"It's been a great ride so far," he says, "and the stove is still warm."

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# Bring thank you on Bring bays

### THE ORIGINS OF BOXING DAY, DECEMBER 26, EXPLAINED

ur appreciation of Boxing Day in the modern era is, it's fair to say, somewhat different from how it would have been played out by our forefathers. Nowadays it's a date for hangovers, sporting events, ridiculously early opening hours at clothes retailers and furniture stores, and the continuation of a blizzard of relatives... some welcome, others less so.

Boxing bay Boxing

The reason we call it Boxing Day remains somewhat shrouded in mystery. It has been celebrated for almost as long as records go back, and certainly the giving of Christmas 'boxes' has a large part to play in the provenance.

One popular theory dates back to the Middle Ages, when churchgoers would collect money for the poor in alms boxes. These were opened in honour of Saint Stephen, whose feast falls on December 26.

Other records reference Roman tributes to the day, though in the 19th century the tradition

Boxing

V42

of looking after those less fortunate over the festive period certainly came to the fore. The term appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1832, taken on by the Victorians who embraced the giving of gifts and the looking after of established tradespeople, employees and other service providers, as atonement for a driven and at times brutal regime focused on self-preservation and self-improvement.

Boxing

What can be certain is that Boxing Day is very much a British tradition. It's unsurprising to see the event celebrated similarly in Australia, Canada and New Zealand, but elsewhere, the US included, it's largely regarded as a second day of Christmas rather than a named day in its own right.

This Christmas, perhaps when it's good for us to reflect on what has been a challenging year, perhaps the pure, selfless, charitable tradition of Boxing Day should return to the fore... but remember to go about your goodly deeds with a glass of something warming.

Boxing Boxing

Day

Boxing BO

Boxing .

# 

Why the Help to Buy: Shared Ownership continues to create homes out of houses

or all its speculation, criticism and conjecture, the housing market represents one of the most stable industries in the UK. Only amid the perils of negative equity in the 1990s did the bricks and mortar of people's fortunes really begin to crumble; yet for large periods outside that time, investment in property has largely been deemed a safe one.

Of course, as a result of this, the market has become much more competitive, and the growing difficulty with which first-time buyers, in particular, are able to get on board means the government's introduction of Help to Buy schemes has gone a long way to guiding people along the footpath to realising those dreams.

The concept is simple – if you cannot afford the mortgage on what would be 100 per cent of a home, Help to Buy: Shared Ownership will allow you to buy a share of the property, which could be anywhere between 25 and 75 per cent of its value.

You would effectively pay rent on the remaining share. This means the initial deposit is smaller and mortgage finance more accessible. On the plus side, owners still enjoy a decent proportion of true investment and, along with that, benefit from rises in market price over time.

BUSINE

SS & P

ROPERTY

The criteria to get involved is sensible. Those applying need to earn less than £80,000/year (£90,000/year in London). Furthermore, you would need to be a first-time buyer, or have owned before while being unable to buy now; or perhaps are in an existing shared ownership arrangement and are looking to move.

Variations to the rules exist for the over-55s and disabled applicants, but for the most part the success of the scheme, which is being repackaged and relaunched for 2021, is evident in the millions of people who have stepped onto the property ladder since its launch four decades ago.





# THE MOTHER NATURE OF ALL JOBS IS ON YOUR DOOR STEP!

FIRST DIVISION - DECEMBER 26, 1963

1–5	CHELSEA	SPO			
6–1	MANCHESTER UNITED	R-			
10–1	IPSWICH TOWN	Π			
2-0	EVERTON				
6–1	STOKE CITY				
3–3	Sheffield United				
3–0	BOLTON WANDERERS				
4_4	Tottenham Hotspur				
2–8	BLACKBURN ROVERS				
3–3	ASTON VILLA				
	6-1 10-1 2-0 6-1 3-3 3-0 4-4 2-8	6-1MANCHESTER UNITED10-1IPSWICH TOWN2-0EVERTON6-1STOKE CITY3-3SHEFFIELD UNITED3-0BOLTON WANDERERS4-4TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR2-8BLACKBURN ROVERS			

# 'tis the football SEASON TO BE JOLLY

### BOXING DAY 1963 - WHEN FANTASY FOOTBALL BECAME REALITY

f there's one thing that's characterised the opening exchanges of the new Premier League season, then it's goals. It seems defence-minded football has been banished to the substitutes' bench and instead our teams are simply aiming to outscore each other.

Though even the likes of Harry Kane, Raheem Sterling, Mo Salah and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang will have to go some if they are to match the achievements of the rugged footballers of old who trotted out onto veritable mud baths of pitches on December 26, 1963.

They wouldn't have known it at the time, but these old-school soccer stars were about to take part in a day of festive football goal gluts, and an afternoon that's gone down in sporting folklore.

In total, 66 goals were scored across the 10 First Division matches. Six sides shared six goals as Chelsea triumphed 5-1 at Blackpool, while Nottingham Forest and Sheffield United drew 3–3, as did Wolves and Aston Villa.

West Brom and Tottenham trumped that with a 4–4 draw at The Hawthorns, while both Liverpool and Burnley romped to 6–1 home wins, against Stoke City and Manchester United respectively.

Pity those poor fans at Filbert Street and Hillsborough who saw their Leicester City and Sheffield Wednesday sides win by relatively normal 2–0 and 3–0 scorelines (against champions Everton and Bolton Wanderers respectively).

But on a day on which it appears it wasn't just the supporters unable to shake off the large amount of Christmas Day merriment, Blackburn Rovers hit a magnificent eight away from home at West Ham United; and Fulham arguably snatched the ultimate plaudits from a festive flurry of worthy contenders with a magnificent 10 at home to poor Ipswich Town. Jürgen, Pep, Frank, José... over to you.

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Channel

8.500 years ago

Mala ball

£5.7m

1 million

ttle since it opened (cars, motorcycles, camper vans, coaches, trucks and m<sub>ore).</sub>

EUBOTUNNEL

A WONDER OF THE MODERN WORLD

13.000

€138bn

55 metres and a

depth of 68 metres

that's even ore than the Eiffel Tower t is a piece of engineering that many thought impossible, some considered economically unfeasible, and a few even purported was largely unnecessary; and yet, three decades after contact was made between English and French engineers deep under the sea, the Channel Tunnel continues to celebrate linking and uniting the UK with mainland Europe.

It is estimated that more than 400 million people have ventured deep below the channel, either as a first step towards business or pleasure on mainland Europe or as venture in the opposite direction.

The idea was first conceived way back in 1802, where oil laps would light the route for horse-drawn carts to make the dark, dank descent under the sea. But it wasn't until 1987 that some significantly updated plans saw the first boring of the tunnel.

In connecting the UK and France, the engineers were finally doing away with outdated and overstretched ferry and boat services across the channel. Indeed, it's now the case that 30 per cent of all goods traded between the UK and continental Europe go through the 'Chunnel', worth more than £150billion each year.

It was on the night of December 1, 1990, that one of the 11 mighty boring machines carving a way through rock, which last saw the light of day during the Jurassic period, finally broke through. In doing so, it linked Britain to mainland Europe for the first time in more than 50,000 years, dating way back to before the English Channel swamped the deep valleys that intersect our two great nations.

In that moment, a project that cost £18billion, the most expensive construction project ever attempted, and a unique three-way 25-mile rail link (for Eurotunnel Shuttle, Eurostar and freight trains), moved a step closer to becoming reality. Engineers Graham Fagg and Philippe Cozette shook hands through a 30-inch hole some 50 metres below the seabed, celebrating a unique act of engineering unity.

Now, some two and a half decades after it opened to passengers, it's still natural to wonder at the design (which is actually three large cavern pipes, one in each direction and a service tunnel in the middle). It all means that, whether departing Folkestone in an old banger or London St Pancras in first class, mainland Europe is never more than an hour away.

It has transformed not just our ability to holiday on mainland Europe, but also our perception of travel as a whole – an island nation finally connected to its continent.

As time has gone on, the Channel Tunnel – one of the seven wonders of the modern world – has only ever felt its reputation enhanced. Perhaps it is the ease with which we can board a train to France, effectively without even leaving our car; perhaps it is the relatively low cost (a one-way trip can be taken for as little as  $\pounds$ 60); perhaps it is simply the customer-friendly approach adopted by Eurotunnel – namely that if you miss your allocated crossing you can simply hop on the next one – or the salubrious pleasure of boarding Eurostar.

Or perhaps it's simply the case that no matter what other emotions have been stirred up through Brexit and our nation's desire to return to a more independent existence, we will always embrace our European cousins and the adventures that lie beyond the tracks.

# BLINDED BY THE LIGHT

SHINING LIGHT ON GOOD HEADLAMP ALIGNMENT WHEN DRIVING ABROAD

aving just made the crossing to France and finding ourselves out on the expansive French motorways, many UK drivers would have experienced the strange sensation of a succession of drivers on the opposite carriageway flashing their lights frantically.

No, this isn't a friendly welcome from our continental neighbours, nor is it some kind of automobile backlash resulting from failed Brexit negotiations. Instead, what's happening is that you are blinding other road users with your incorrect headlamp alignment.

In the UK, headlamps are configured to shine to the left, towards the edges of the road and away from the middle. This is to guide motorists away from curbs and ditches, while preventing oncoming drivers from being blinded by our lights.

That means in France, or any country that drives on the right, that same light is actually being shone directly into drivers' faces.

With various advancements in headlamp

technology over the years, new cars are often fitted with a switch control that automatically redirects the headlamps for driving abroad. However, many cars still don't have this function, therefore it pays to know what to do when driving abroad, for both your own safety and that of others.

If manual headlamp realignment cannot be done from the control panel of your car, the most common solution is to buy a set of headlamp unit lenses (or glasses). These deflectors are attached and block out a small amount of your beam, thus keeping light away from other drivers.

These days, it's not a request that headlamps are configured properly, it's the law. 'Do it yourself' beam deflectors - the sort your dad might have made out of black sticky tape in the 1970s - are no longer legal, and deflectors must be operational as soon as you head off the ferry, even in daylight hours.

It's not worth taking the risk when driving abroad... be safe at all times.

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