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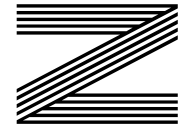
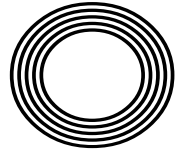
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Legendary cricketer sets his sights on World Cup victory



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Editor's notes...

OCTOBER 2023



Nik Allen, Editor

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

I'm excited to share my recent customer service encounters that have left an indelible mark on me. As the saying goes: "You don't truly appreciate good customer service until you've experienced the opposite."

On the brighter side, a recent visit to a local bookstore demonstrated the magic of outstanding service. The staff's knowledge, willingness to assist and genuine enthusiasm made my visit not just enjoyable but also memorable. It's a powerful reminder of how good service can elevate a mundane task into a delightful experience.

However, not all tales are as sunny. A frustrating experience with a telecom provider left me grappling with automated phone systems and impersonal support. It's a stark reminder that poor customer service not only erodes trust but also tests our patience.

Customer service is the cornerstone of our consumer experience. It's our privilege to bring you stories that shed light on the importance of striving for excellence. As we navigate the customer service spectrum, let's remember the impact it has on our daily lives and the potential for change it holds.

We at **VISION** strive for excellent customer service when working with local businesses.

Nik Allen

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

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Sooty™

Turns Seventy-Five

In an era where a fad is lucky to last a full five minutes, the enduring magic of hand puppet Sooty must be something of a mystery to young audiences. And yet, when faced with his snuggly yellow fur, button eyes and sweet, shy demeanour, they inevitably melt with adoration as generation upon generation of children before them have done.

Discovered by Harry Corbett OBE in a joke shop on Blackpool North Pier on July 19, 1948, 'Teddy' – as he was then known – was purchased for seven shillings and six pence.

Having long harboured ambitions for the stage, Bradford native Corbett first appeared with the silent bear in a 1952 BBC TV show, *Talent Night*. The act was an instant success and Sooty soon became the star of his very own show featuring magic tricks, slapstick comedy and songs – a nod to Corbett's former ambitions as a concert pianist which were thwarted by his being deaf in one ear. Soon afterwards, he was joined by his pals: there was Sweep, a grey male dog who communicated with a squeak, and Soo, a female panda with a human voice.

After suffering a heart attack in 1975, Corbett's son Peter (stage name Matthew) took over as Sooty's friend and keeper. In the ensuing years, and with the character now a mainstay on *Rainbow*, Corbett Senior would make occasional guest appearances on spin-off *Sooty Show* (by this point now airing on ITV) until his death in 1989.

Under Matthew Corbett, Sooty and co. would enjoy enormous success. He changed the format of the show to one of a sitcom but kept the integral elements. Namely, Sooty's wand, the catchphrase 'izzy, wizzy, let's get busy', and the silent bear's enduring love of water pistols and mayhem in general.

In 1998, Corbett was succeeded by Richard Cadell. Only a few weeks into his new role, he found himself at 10 Downing Street for a special awards ceremony honouring brave children, hosted by then Prime Minister Sir Tony Blair and his wife Cherie – who Sooty dutifully squirted with his water pistol.

Sooty and Sweep were also guests at the birthday party of His Majesty Prince Charles, as he was then, in 2018 (Sooty actually being a few months older than our now King). The pair have courted numerous other politicians, musicians and celebrities and even – on the hand of Harry Corbett – shared a giggle with Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

So how is it, then, that a premise so simple remains so beloved in an age of CGI and swanky animation?

"I think the great thing with Sooty – and this is a famous Harry Corbett quote – is that he's never really been in fashion, so he's never really been out," laughs Cadell.

"It's not like one of these children's things that spike and then disappear," explains the 54 year old, who will embark on *75th Birthday Spectacular* – a special UK national tour that kicks off on October 21 at Bradford's Alhambra Theatre and runs through until April 2024.

He adds: "Sometimes the things we cherish most as children, and adults, are based in simple entertainment, and I am delighted that fact has held true despite so much else around us changing."



Photo credit: Moviestore/Shutterstock

BEHIND the scenes

Are you a complete TV addict? What would you say if we told you that there are iconic sets all across the UK that you can visit? From *Coronation Street* to *Only Fools and Horses* to *Downton Abbey*, here are some locations from popular shows that are open for visitors today.

Coronation Street – ITV Studios, Manchester

This walking tour of *Coronation Street*, the UK's longest-running soap, is a must for any Corrie fan. Complete with an expert guide, you can take a closer look at all the iconic shops and businesses on the street, including The Rovers Return, Roy's Rolls café and Webster's Auto Centre.

Only Fools and Horses – Bristol Temple Meads Train Station

One of Britain's most-loved comedies, who wouldn't want to take a closer look behind the scenes at this legendary sitcom? The *Only Fools and Horses* three-and-a-half-hour coach tour takes you to filming spots of more than 10 episodes and includes a look at Nelson Mandela House, Sid's Café and the road where the iconic Batman and Robin scene took place.

Peaky Blinders – Central Liverpool

A gritty masterpiece, *Peaky Blinders* was filmed in Liverpool even though it is set in Birmingham, owing to this city's well-preserved Victorian industrial architecture. Hop on either the half-day or full-day guided coach tour and see the homes of Polly and Field Marshal Russell, Garrison Lane and so much more.

Downton Abbey – Bampton, Oxfordshire

Become Lord or Lady of Grantham for the day, with the *Downton Abbey* and Village group tour. Visit the charming village of Bampton, which fans will know as Downton Village. Then head to Highclere Castle, where you will be able to explore the estate and the rooms within and enjoy a spot of lunch.

Bridgerton – The Abbey Hotel, Bath

Channel your inner Daphne or Duke of Hastings with a guided *Bridgerton* tour. Explore many of this popular show's filming locations during this two-hour tour, including Lady Danbury's mansion, Gunter's Tea Shop and the modiste dress shop.



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GREAT BRITISH INTERIOR DESIGNER: LAURA HAMMETT



HOME & DIY

Laura Hammett is an award-winning design house, run by Laura and her husband Aaron since 2008. With more than 25 years of experience between them, they are known for creating contemporary interiors with classic touches, resulting in stunning elegance.

Laura Hammett's work spans the globe and even includes a private jet. You can also enjoy the Laura Hammett look with a creative approach.

A CLASSIC STYLE FOR THE MODERN ERA

When you examine Laura Hammett's style, you're instantly transported to modern London. The designs are full of light and detail, creating beautiful looks that would be right at home in any design coffee table book.

Colour palettes include lighter shades of grey and taupe, paired with darker details to add contrast. Light upholstery, rich walnut and subtle marble are some of the styles that have been used in the Laura Hammett portfolio, adding character and elegance to all kinds of homes.

CREATING THE LOOK

With these simple tips, you can transform your home with a modern luxe look the Laura Hammett way.

- > Enhance the natural light in your home by keeping walls light. Think greige, off-white and white to draw the light in.
- > Adding details such as cushions and throws in rich fabrics can make your interior look more upmarket, without designer price tags.
- > Statement light fittings and abstract wall art in your colour scheme can complete your space, helping you create some interest without filling the room with clutter.
- > Search antique shops and second-hand stores to find high-quality furniture items you can restore to their former glory.

Laura Hammett's style is on trend and attainable, a look that can you can adapt to your own home to create subtle modern elegance.



Photo credit: laurahammett.com, @laurahammettinteriors via Instagram



Is your hallway looking more shabby than stylish? Has it become a place to dump everything and anything that doesn't have a proper home?

Discover five simple ways to transform the entrance to your home, with inspiring ideas to suit all hallways.

1. ADD POPS OF COLOUR

If you have a small hallway, you may be tempted to stick to white paint to make the space appear bigger.

However, by adding pops of bright colours such as yellow or green, you can create visual interest and fashion a vibrant space. If you don't want to go all out with colour on the walls, why not add a few bold accessories instead, such as brightly coloured coat hooks, colourful floor tiles or a piece of bold artwork?

2. MAKE THE MOST OF MIRRORS

Dark hallways can make the entrance to your home feel gloomy and unwelcoming. Counteract this by creating the illusion of light with a few well-placed mirrors. Don't be afraid to experiment with different sizes and shapes, as this can help to make more of a style statement.

3. INVEST IN FUNCTIONAL FURNITURE

Most hallways are narrow, which means they offer little in the way of space. Therefore, if you want to add a piece of furniture, then you need to make sure it is both stylish and practical. For example, a seating area that doubles up as a storage unit. It can also be a good idea to make use of any available vertical space, for example by hanging a wall cupboard above your coat hooks.

4. EMBRACE CONSCIOUS STYLING

As a transitional space in your home, it is important that your hallway is clutter free, well lit, and, most importantly, that it is styled in keeping with the rest of your interiors. Take a walk around your home and see what design elements you can incorporate into your hallway.

5. LAYER LIGHTING

You can transform a dark hallway with the right lighting, with layered lights offering a stylish and practical way to illuminate this key space. Try combining multiple pendant lights with directional wall lights for maximum impact.



HALLWAY to HEAVEN

Photo credit: dailyluxinteriors.co.uk, idealhome.co.uk, idealhome.co.uk, furniture123.co.uk, BTIC via housetobeautiful.com

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HOME & DIY

Let's get ready to TUMBLE!

Did you know that there are many more uses for tumble dryer sheets than just to reduce static and make your clothes smell nice? Discover five surprising uses for the humble dryer sheet below.

TO REMOVE FOOD RESIDUE FROM POTS AND PANS

If you have forgone the washing up in favour of more enjoyable activities, then you are likely to be left with food residue that simply won't budge. To remove this with minimal effort, simply place a dryer sheet in the middle of the pot or pan, add warm water and some washing-up liquid and allow it to soak. After an hour, remove the sheet, drain the water and wipe away the stains with a sponge.

TO PICK UP PET HAIR FROM CLOTHES AND UPHOLSTERY

Does your pet leave dander all over your clothes and upholstery? When it comes to removing stubborn pet hair, nothing beats a tumble dryer sheet. More effective than a lint roller, all you need to do is rub a fresh sheet against the item and watch the dander disappear.

TO CLEAN YOUR TV AND COMPUTER SCREENS

Out of screen-cleaning wipes? Don't panic, as you can use a tumble dryer sheet with equally impressive results. Designed to reduce static cling, a dryer sheet can effectively remove dust and prevent it from resettling.

TO REMOVE RESIDUE FROM YOUR IRON

Over time, residue will start to build up on your iron, which will make it less effective at removing creases. To clean this appliance, turn it on to a low heat setting and carefully rub a tumble dryer sheet over the surface, making sure not to touch the iron plate with your bare fingers. The heat will soften the residue and make it easy to remove.

TO SHARPEN SCISSORS

About to start a new craft project or wrap a present and realise your trusty scissors are blunt? Carefully run a tumble dryer sheet against the dull blade and enjoy restored sharpness in an instant. Be sure not to touch your finger directly to the blade!





Have you TWIGGED?

If you love the current rustic vibe but not the hefty price tags, check out these easy twig projects.

SUNBURST TWIG MIRROR

YOU'LL NEED:

- > Lots of straight twigs of roughly the same size
- > A 25cm round frameless mirror
- > A 35cm circle of corrugated cardboard
- > A hot glue gun

HOW TO MAKE:

- > Glue the mirror in the centre of the cardboard.
- > Glue the twigs on the cardboard so that one end is right against the mirror edge and the other is sticking straight out, overlapping the cardboard. Layer on enough twigs so that the cardboard is completely covered.

For safety reasons, we recommend you prop your mirror on a shelf rather than hang it up.

TWIGGY PHOTO FRAME

YOU'LL NEED:

 For a 10cm x 15cm (6in x 4in) photo frame:

- > 2x 15cm twigs
- > 2x 20cm twigs
- > Twine
- > PVA glue
- > A piece of baking paper slightly larger than the photo
- > Scissors

HOW TO MAKE:

- > To form the first corner, lay a longer twig on top of a shorter twig, allowing 2.5cm of each twig to stick out where they overlap.
- > Wrap the two together so the twine forms a cross shape on top. Tie to secure.
- > Complete this step on all corners in the same way to create a rectangle.
- > Glue the photo onto the baking paper. Then glue the edges of the baking paper to the back of the frame, with the picture facing out.

JEWELLERY TREE

YOU'LL NEED:

- > A strong hardwood branch – approx. 25-30cm tall
- > A log slice about 5cm thick and 13-15cm in diameter
- > Epoxy glue (e.g. Araldite)
- > A drill and drill bits suitable for wood

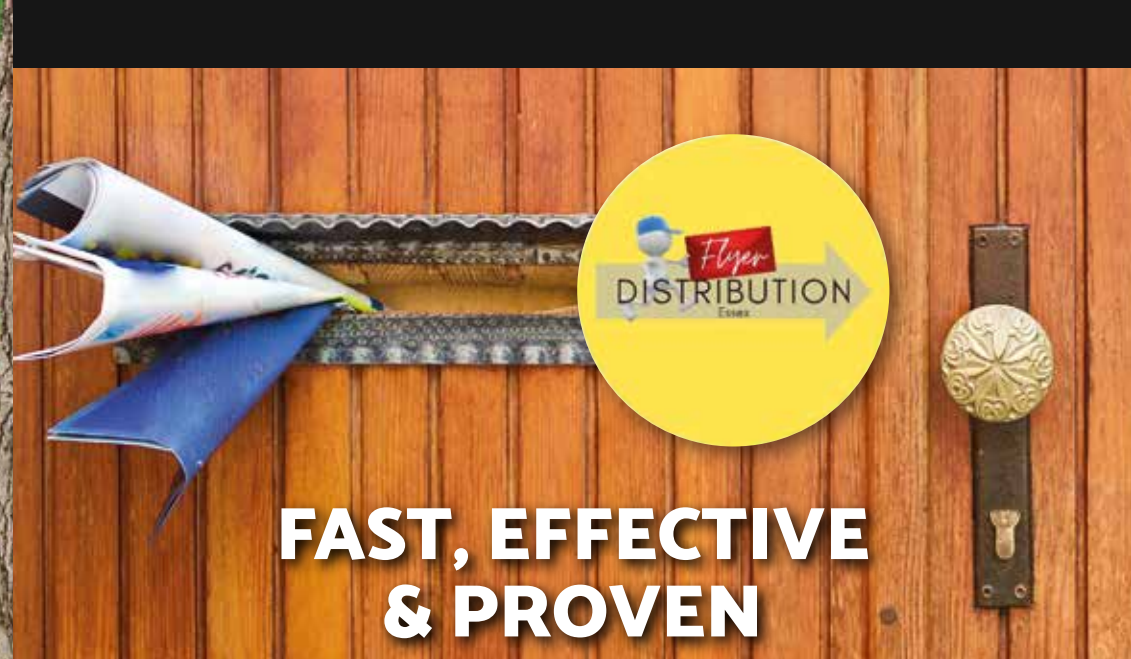
HOW TO MAKE:

- > Drill a hole in the log slice, the same width as the main stem of the branch.
- > Fasten the branch in the hole with the glue and leave it to dry.
- > Hang up your jewellery!

Happy twigging!



Photo credit: sahyoutian@shutterstock.com, doodlecraftology.com



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FROM YOUR AREA

LOCAL NEWS

Thousands cheer on pro cyclists at event



Photo credit: South-End-On-Sea Council FB

Thousands of Thorpe Bay residents lined the streets as the Tour of Britain professional men's race passed through the local area on Friday, September 8.

Crowds cheered on more than 100 of the world's leading riders from the start line on Western Esplanade, including the Mayor of Southend-on-Sea councillor Stephen Habermel (pictured above).

The route took the cyclists along the seafront via Thorpe Bay, North Shoebury and into Rochford, then commenced towards Harlow, initially running parallel to the River Blackwall and then through Ingatestone.

Councillor Daniel Nelson, Southend-on-Sea City Council's cabinet member for economic growth and investment, said: "I am delighted that Southend has successfully hosted the start of stage six of the Tour of Britain race, and seeing the people of Southend come out in force to line the streets, enjoy the event and support the riders was so great to see.

"As well as putting Southend on the world stage and showcasing the beauty of our seafront, beaches and attractions, it has boosted our economy."

Concern as 80 businesses registered on one street

In the past four months, 80 firms have registered houses on Henry Drive, Leigh-on-Sea, as their headquarters.

Fourteen of those 80 were registered in the second week of September alone.

Residents of the street have been receiving an increasing number of letters for unknown businesses registered to their addresses.

This could be due to a type of fraud where businesses register their companies to residential addresses in order to be able to apply for bank loans.

An Essex Police spokesperson said: "In circumstances such as those reported, where a resident in Essex becomes aware of or receives financial correspondence relating to their address and a business they have no knowledge of, we would recommend they contact Action Fraud.

"Action Fraud will assess such a report and ensure it reaches the right place, be it a police force, HMRC, or Companies House for further action.

"It can be reached for advice at actionfraud.police.uk or 0300 123 2040."

Residents terrified as drivers hurtle down road at 70mph

Residents say they are "living in a state of fear" as drivers have been travelling down their street in Leigh-on-Sea at more than double the speed limit.

Despite the 30mph speed limit on Marine Parade in Leigh-on-Sea, residents say drivers have taken to racing down the residential road at ridiculous speeds.

They have shared concerns that drivers who are travelling at more than 70mph "will cause a horrific crash" right outside their homes.

Multiple road accidents have occurred on the street in recent years, leading local resident Linda Catling (pictured below) to appeal for more speed limit signs to be installed.

In response to mounting concerns, local police forces were stationed on the road on September 14 to carry out speed checks.

Southend-on-Sea City Council and Essex Police have been contacted for comment.



Photo credit: Linda Catling

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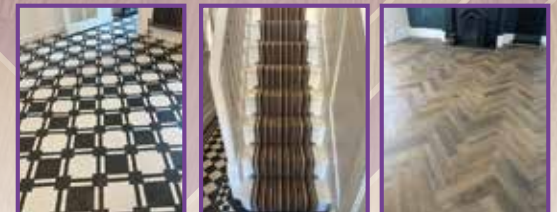
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MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING HOSTED BY ONECLINIC LEIGH

Friday, September 29, saw OneClinic Leigh open its doors to welcome local residents, healthcare professionals and supporters of Macmillan Cancer Support for its coffee morning.

The event was well attended, with a total amount of £402 raised in support of the charity.

From delicious homemade cakes and brownies to samosas and tea and coffee, all were well catered for at the new, aesthetically pleasing premises of OneClinic Leigh.

Informing curious attendees of the plans for OneClinic Leigh, pharmacist prescriber Beena Khan mentioned that the aim is to provide the finest private healthcare in a clinic setting with access to a GP, dentist, prescribing pharmacist, and health and wellness plans all under one roof.



Watch out for this state of the art and unique clinic concept opening soon in Leigh-on-Sea.



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JAMES DUDDRIDGE MP

Conservative MP Rochford and Southend East



LOCAL NEWS



Over the summer, I signed a letter, alongside 118 of my Parliamentary colleagues, calling on supermarkets to include a 'Buy British' section on their website. In less than a month, a supporting petition by the National Farmers' Union achieved more than 20,000 signatures.

We all want to know more about where the food we eat comes from. By Buying British, we support local food producers and the environment and promote better consumer choice. This simple change would help to ensure homegrown food is easy to find, and I hope supermarkets take up this voluntary initiative.

Last month, I joined councillors, business leaders, chairman of the National Piers Society Tim Wardley

(pictured above right), and my friend and Parliamentary colleague Anna Firth MP (pictured above centre) on the PS Waverley, the world's last seagoing paddle steamer, to celebrate Southend Pier becoming Pier of the Year in April.

Travelling from the end of the pier, along the Thames and out to the Maunsell Forts, I was reminded of the rich heritage along the Estuary, and I hope that the PS Waverley returns to Southend-on-Sea next year.

Finally, as ever, I'm here to help, so if you require my assistance as your Member of Parliament, then please do not hesitate to contact me via james@jamesduddridge.com or contact my office on 01702 616135.

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From rural surroundings to entertainment icon



You wouldn't expect to find a buoyant behemoth of modern primetime entertainment lingering in the leafy, rural, countryside surroundings of Stanford, yet Rylan Clark-Neal's life in Essex is indeed the epitome of serenity, and a world away from the flashbulbs and entertainment excesses that pattern his day job.

Born Ross Clark and raised in Stepney, East London, the presenter we now know as Rylan got his big break when he auditioned for the ninth series of *The X Factor* in 2012. Though his singing skills may not have been the strongest among the contestants, his magnetic personality quickly captured the hearts of both the audience and assembled judges. Finishing in fifth place, his time on *The X Factor* provided a solid foundation for his future career in television.

Celebrity Big Brother followed, with audiences won over by the star's vibrant personality and natural charm. Presenting duties proved an obvious route for someone who, while never turning his back on his reality TV roots, was keen to explore other areas. These have included *Big Brother* spin-offs, plus daytime TV (*This Morning*), game shows (*Supermarket Sweep*), panel shows (*Celebrity Juice* and *Would I Lie to You?*) and *Eurovision*.

Rylan is openly gay, and while he uses his influence to good effect in terms of fundraising and providing exposure to minority groups – such as the LGBTQ+ community – the 34-year-old remains grounded and sincere.

The current voice of car retailer Cinch, the presenter is set to embark on a busy schedule of work in the coming months, including a rumoured *Big Brother* return.

Clark-Neal recently swapped Stanford for Brentwood, where his mother Linda lives, and remains loyal to his Essex image. As he says: "There is no better place on Earth – the people, the places, the vibe. It's always Essex."

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YOUR LOCAL EVENTS

RACHAEL MCSHANE & THE CARTOGRAPHERS
 The Estuary Club, 1386 London Road,
 Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 2UJ
 Tuesday, October 17, 7.45pm



The Estuary Club presents folk singer, cellist, fiddler and viola player Rachael McShane, who rose to fame with the award-winning folk big band Bellowhead. Now performing as part of the Cartographers, McShane and her band will present a blend of traditional folk and contemporary sounds.

Tickets cost £12 for members, and new members are always welcome. For more details, call Tony Prior on 07805 641797.

MY TYPE ON PAPER SPEED DATING
 Ye Olde Smack, 7 High Street,
 Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 2EN
 Wednesday, October 18, 7pm – 10pm

Ye Olde Smack hosts a speed dating event, where every participant will meet 13 to 18 people of the opposite sex. Matches will be revealed at the end of the night.

Tickets cost £15 and can be booked by heading to www.shorturl.at/hGQX9

BACK
 The Oakwood Pub, 564 Rayleigh Road,
 Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 5HX
 Saturday, October 21, 8pm

Back will be performing a night of punk and new wave, featuring songs by the Sex Pistols, The Jam, The Clash, The Police, Dr Feelgood and Blondie.

The event is free to attend and no booking is required. Find out more via www.shorturl.at/fhBHO

SPORTS CAMP
 Thorpe Bay Lawn Tennis Club, Thorpe Bay
 Gardens, Thorpe Bay, SS1 3HL
 Wednesday, October 25, and Thursday, October
 26, 9.30am – 1pm

Thorpe Bay Lawn Tennis Club is holding two sports camps for children aged three to 16 during October half-term. A spot costs £20 for members and £25 for non-members, and prior booking is vital.

For more information and to book, contact Matt Bell on 07786 238586.

HALLOWEEN LEGO BUILDING CAMP
 Highlands Methodist Church, Sutherland
 Boulevard, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3PT
 Thursday, October 26, and Friday, October 27,
 9.30am – 12.30pm

Bricks 4 Kidz invites children aged five to 11 for two LEGO-building events, led by DBS-checked instructors.

Tickets cost £25 per session and more information is available from Nicky at 07496 808377.

HALLOWEEN-KANGOOWEEN PARTY
 Kangoo Club Southend, Thorpe Bay, SS1 3HX
 Thursday, October 26, 5.30pm – 10.30pm

Dance and fitness group Kangoo will host a Halloween-themed party featuring jumps, games, dancing and competition. Everyone is welcome to attend, but booking and Halloween-themed costumes are both essential.

Tickets cost £10 for members and £18 for non-members, and boots are provided for those who need them. More information is available on Facebook and online at www.kangooclubsouthend.co.uk



Photo credit: Kangoo Club Southend



The GLOBAL ZOO

Animals unique to one place and how to see them

The ability of animals to explore the world is only bettered by the wanderlust of humans, yet there is still a clutch of species who have never ventured from their home continents and, in some cases, countries. While the Galápagos Islands typically take credit for the planet's most unique array of life, here are some others worth celebrating.

GELADA, ETHIOPIA
 A monkey that looks like it's wearing a tuxedo, the gelada is native to the highlands of Ethiopia and has rarely strayed. While other monkey species are known for swinging from trees with reckless abandon, these are happiest on the desert floor, eating grass, seeds, roots and insects.

INACCESSIBLE ISLAND RAIL, INACCESSIBLE ISLAND
 Yes, there is a place called Inaccessible Island – it's in the South Atlantic – and it requires little description. To describe the world's smallest flightless bird (which also takes the 'Inaccessible' name) is undoubtedly to make a straightforward link

to how this little creature has never made it to the mainland.

THORNY DEVIL, AUSTRALIA
 This lizard looks like something out of a Marvel comic, albeit it's never been exported any further than the Aussie outback. It can drink water through its skin, which is just as well, as there is precious little of the stuff about in the summer heat of the Southern Hemisphere.

TEXAS BLIND SALAMANDER, USA
 Without eyes or skin colour, this peculiar amphibian detects prey by virtue of vibrations around it. It has never made it out of US waters and you're highly unlikely to ever see one in the flesh, since it lives deep underwater in cave networks.

MANX CAT, ISLE OF MAN
 Lastly, there's the famous Manx cat. Although these have been brought across to the mainland, they stand apart from other cat species owing to a rare genetic mutation that means they are born with no tails.





BIG BEN

BEN STOKES OBE'S INCLUSION IN THE WORLD CUP SQUAD IS GREAT NEWS FOR ENGLAND CRICKET... LESS SO FOR OUR OPPONENTS!

When Durham and England all-rounder Ben Stokes OBE decided that the gruelling cricketing schedule was too much for him and his body to take, a collective sigh of relief from those who cherish the clack of leather on willow must have been heard all around the world in the sport.

It was July 2022. Stokes had spent the previous three months leading his country in Test cricket after succeeding Joe Root MBE as captain, and things in that regard had started perfectly, with four wins in a row.

However, after commenting that he felt playing all three of cricket's formats – Test, ODI and T20 – was “unsustainable”, Stokes' last 50-over tussle came against South Africa at his home ground, Durham's Riverside.

Yet a year is a long time in sport, and even longer in the seesaw nature of the Christchurch-born all-rounder's career. So roll on 12 months, and despite a huge summer Ashes series ahead, Stokes began speaking to his limited overs captain Jos Buttler MBE and coach Matthew Mott about a quickfire return to the ODI circuit.

Stokes says: “The closer this World Cup got, the more I was becoming interested in having those discussions. And when you consider that we are the defending champions, it almost feels right to want to ensure you defend that crown.

“At the same time, I had to remind myself of the original reason for choosing to retire from this format of the game.”

Return he has, with a pledge from the 32-year-old to listen to his body, perhaps better than he has in the past when the almost constant demands of the game have had an impact on not just physical abilities, but the star's mental wellbeing too.

“Let's see how this World Cup goes,” he adds, “and I'll decide then if it's my last hurrah.”

Had Stokes not chosen to return to the fold, we would have been denied his record-breaking knock against New Zealand in the third ODI at The Kia Oval in September. Coming into bat alongside Dawid Malan with England compromised on 13/2, Stokes was about to rev it up against the Kiwis.

His 15 fours and nine sixes contributed to an almost unimaginable personal total of 182, beating Jason Roy's 180 against Australia in Melbourne in 2018. His efforts saw England reach a mammoth 368 off 48.1 overs. New Zealand could only muster 187 all out and Stokes took a further leap into the echelons of iconic status.

“I need more time to get used to its rhythm, but I think I managed well this time,” he said, referencing that spectacular knock. “The announcer mentioned my record just before I was done. I didn't even know about it until then. Jason congratulated me, and I apologised to him,” he laughs.

Does Stokes feel that England can become world champions again, and in the process become only the third side to defend the title since its inception in 1975?

“Everyone recognises our team's strength, and it's not boastful to admit we have a talented line-up. We're optimistic about our chances, but in World Cup matches, it's all about handling pressure.”

Photo credit: Kieran McManus/Shutterstock

How to grow SNOWDROPS



Snowdrops are one of the first signs of spring and can make a wonderful addition to any garden. Instantly recognisable by their small, white, bell-shaped flowers, snowdrops are easy to grow and will come back year after year.

WHERE TO PLANT SNOWDROPS

Snowdrops thrive in moist but well-drained soil and in partial shade. If you plant snowdrops in soil that is too dry, you risk the bulbs drying out and failing to flower. Choose to grow snowdrops beneath deciduous shrubs or along the front of borders where herbaceous plants can provide ground cover when these flowers are dormant. They also do well planted in grass, in spring border displays and in rock gardens.

HOW TO PLANT SNOWDROPS

Dry snowdrop bulbs can be planted in autumn, but these are often hard to establish. Instead, opt to plant snowdrops in the green in January or February. Simply lift snowdrop plants just after flowering and before the foliage has turned yellow, and replant somewhere else. You can buy snowdrops in the green from your local garden centre or online.

HOW TO CARE FOR SNOWDROPS

Once snowdrops are established, they require no maintenance. Allow the foliage to die back naturally as this will help to ensure that the nutrients from the leaves are returned to the bulbs. Once every two years, divide any established clumps to avoid overcrowding.

HOW TO PROPAGATE SNOWDROPS

To propagate snowdrops, lift and divide established clumps after flowering in either March or April. Using a fork, carefully lift the bulb with the roots intact and the foliage still in place. Replant in the garden immediately and water well. The foliage may appear a little sorry, but it should look healthy by next winter.

TOP SNOWDROP VARIETIES:

Galanthus nivalis | Galanthus elwesii | Galanthus woronowii | Galanthus Armine | Galanthus Cordelia.



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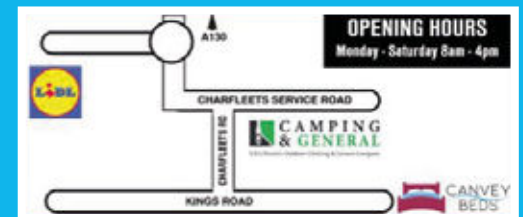
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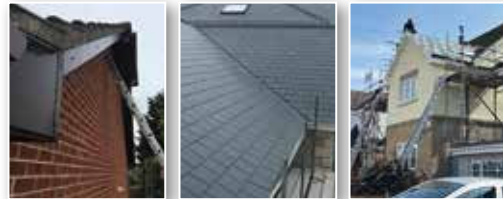
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WILD WEAR

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While gardening is a careful curation of your outdoor space, it's important not to forget the importance of maintaining your own green-fingered style.

TROUSERS

A pair of dedicated garden workwear trousers or dungarees will suit you much better than a simple pair of old jeans.

If you've gardened before, you'll know the perils of pinching waistbands, seams riding up, back-of-the-knee fatigue and general ripping or snagging; so investing in a pair of trousers that is waterproof, strong, flexible and with ample pockets on the front and sides, plus has all-essential knee pads, is a great idea.

HEADWEAR

Hats are a must when the sun comes out, and will also keep you warm when temperatures drop. Most gardeners will showcase a variety of headwear – from a nice woolly beanie hat in winter to a brimmed hat for summertime. Mix it up and keep your head in a good place.

FOOTWEAR

Footwear should be comfortable, as long hours on location can bring about foot pain and sores. From classic Crocs to garden sandals, sturdy boots to full-length wellies, your footwear will most likely match weather conditions.

Don't forget to invest in a few good pairs of socks too – in the winter, they will excel at keeping the cold out, while breathable varieties for the summer will minimise the threat of fungal infections.

GLOVES

While most gardeners are more than happy to get their hands dirty, gloves are essential for protecting your skin from sharp matter, such as rocks, stones and thorns. Switch between thicker and lighter varieties for seasonal versatility.

JACKET

Finally, as the weather changes, keep the cold out if you're committing long hours to the soil with a jacket that's breathable, a hood for sudden inclement weather, and plenty of pockets for essentials.



GARDENING



AUTUMN COCKTAILS

Just because summer now seems like a distant memory, doesn't mean that you can't still enjoy a delicious cocktail or two after work or when the kids are tucked up in bed. Why not have a go at making one of these recipes below, and warm your cockles on a chilly night?

PUMPKIN WHITE RUSSIAN

You will need: 25ml pumpkin spice Kahlua | 50ml vodka | 25ml double cream
How to make: Pour the ingredients into a glass over ice | Stir lightly and serve.

CARAMEL APPLE MULE

You will need: 50ml vodka | 15ml caramel | 30ml apple cider vinegar | Ginger beer to top | 1 apple | 1 cinnamon stick
How to make: Shake the vodka, caramel and apple cider vinegar with ice | Strain into a mule mug over ice | Top with ginger beer | Garnish with an apple fan and cinnamon stick.

SLOE GIN FIZZ

You will need: 50ml sloe gin | 25ml lemon juice | 2 tsp sugar syrup | Sparkling water | Lemon slice | Fresh or frozen blackberry
How to make: Pour the sloe gin, lemon juice and sugar syrup into a cocktail shaker and top with ice | Shake well | Strain into a tall glass with more ice | Top with sparkling water and stir gently | Garnish with a lemon slice and a blackberry.

CAMPFIRE SLING

You will need: 50ml rye whisky | 7ml maple syrup | 3 dashes of chocolate bitters | Orange peel twist
How to make: Add all the ingredients to an old-fashioned glass with one piece of ice | Stir thoroughly | Scorch a piece of orange peel over the glass to release the oils.

MULLED APPLE JUICE

You will need: 1 litre apple juice | 1 cinnamon stick | 3 cloves | Orange slices | Sugar or honey to taste
How to make: Simmer the apple juice with the orange peel, cinnamon and cloves for 5-10 minutes | Sweeten with sugar or honey | Serve with some orange slices and a cinnamon stick.



Photo credit: bbcgoodfood.com, tastingpanelmag.com

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HOW TO BUILD YOUR *own soup*

Soup is cheap, filling and the perfect antidote to the cold weather. Sadly, supermarket offerings can be both costly and underwhelming. So we thought we'd share with you our foolproof method for prepping the perfect soup every time.



- 1. CHOOSE A FAT:** Butter | Olive oil | Palm oil | Sunflower oil
- 2. SELECT A BASE LIQUID (1 OR 2):** Beef/chicken stock | Vegetable stock | Cream | Tomato purée
- 3. PICK A PROTEIN:** Chicken | Fish | Tofu | Lentils | Beans
- 4. DECIDE ON A GRAIN:** Rice | Noodles | Pasta | Barley
- 5. CHOOSE YOUR VEGGIES (UP TO 3):** Carrots | Onion | Peppers | Sweet potatoes | Parsnips | Spinach | Broccoli | Mushrooms
- 6. ADD SOME FLAVOUR:** Garlic salt | Cayenne pepper | Cumin | Basil | Thyme | Chilli powder

How to make your soup

- STEP 1:** Heat your fat and sauté your aromatic veggies, such as onion and garlic, for 3-5 minutes.
- STEP 2:** Add your chosen protein and cook until browned or softened.
- STEP 3:** Add any other vegetables and allow them to soften for 5-10 minutes.
- STEP 4:** Pour in your base (unless using a cream base; if so save this until step 6), your grain and your selected spices and mix well.
- STEP 5:** Bring to the boil, reduce the heat and allow to simmer for around an hour.
- STEP 6:** Add cream if you are making a cream-based soup.
- STEP 7:** Allow to cool, and blend if you want a fully puréed soup.
- STEP 8:** Garnish with croutons, cheese or a herb-infused oil.

Freezing your soup

You can freeze your soup, ideally on the same day you make it, in an airtight container or freezer bag for 2-3 months. Most soups freeze well, with the exception of cream- or milk-based soups, which tend to separate. Add any fresh herbs or starchy elements such as rice or pasta once thawed and reheated, not before freezing, for optimum results.



HALLOWEEN PUMPKIN LANTERNS

An Illuminating and Spooky Tale

The origins of Halloween go back around 2,000 years to a Celtic festival called Samhain (pronounced 'sow-in'). The Celts believed that when the harvest ended and winter took hold, the barrier between our world and the spirit world became blurred – and this meant that dead spirits could come back to haunt us. But why pumpkins?

Day) on November 1 – and All Souls' Day, the day after. By the 16th century, the festival was already known as Halloween, taking its name from All Hallows' Eve. And as part of their Halloween celebrations, people in Ireland carved turnips into lanterns to ward off spooky spirits.

AN ENCHANTING STORY FROM IRELAND

Stingy Jack is a character from Irish folk tales who liked playing pranks, even on the devil. One day, Jack tricked the devil into turning into a coin, so he could pay for their drinks. Jack then pocketed the coin, and the devil was trapped. Eventually, he set the devil free but made him promise not to claim his soul. So when Jack died, he couldn't go to hell or to heaven. He was stuck roaming the world with a glowing coal inside a turnip to light his way.

PUMPKINS WORK BETTER

When Irish people moved to America in the 1800s, they took their Halloween tradition with them. But they soon discovered that pumpkins were much easier to carve than turnips. In honour of Stingy Jack, the carved pumpkins became known as Jack-o'-lanterns.

LANTERNS FROM TURNIPS

As time passed, Samhain mixed with Christian traditions such as All Saints' Day (or All Hallows'

Today, as we carve our pumpkins to light up the night, we continue to honour customs that have journeyed through time, from our Irish neighbours to America – and, in the 1990s, back over the seas to Britain.



Are women suffering in silence?

Ms Seema Bagtharia, Consultant Gynaecologist at Nuffield Health Brentwood Hospital, explains.

The menopause is when a woman stops having periods. It happens when your ovaries stop releasing eggs or have been removed. Women in the UK have their menopause between the ages of 45 and 55 years, with the average age being 51 years. The time before your last period, when your oestrogen levels are falling, is called the perimenopause ("the change"), which can last from a few months to several years. Around half of all women notice physical and/or emotional symptoms during this time.

Every woman experiences the menopause differently. The most common issues are:

- periods can become erratic/ heavy
- hot flushes
- night sweats
- vaginal dryness
- low mood and/or feeling anxious
- joint and muscle pain
- loss of interest in having sex.

Some women choose to go through the menopause without treatment, while others prefer some form of treatment to manage their symptoms, by using either hormone replacement therapy (HRT) or an alternative treatment.

We offer treatment to make the menopause easier.

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT). HRT is the most common form of prescribed treatment for menopausal symptoms. It helps to replace the hormone oestrogen in your body, which decreases around your menopause. You may sometimes also need other hormones (such as progestogen and testosterone) that your body is no longer producing.

HRT (hormone replacement therapy) replaces your lost hormones

to counteract the effects of the menopause. Your consultant can discuss and recommend the right type of HRT for you. This discussion should cover both the short-term (over the next five years) and the longer term (beyond the next five years) benefits and risks for you.

There are different ways to have HRT:

- a daily tablet
- A skin patch applied to the skin
- Gel medication applied to the skin

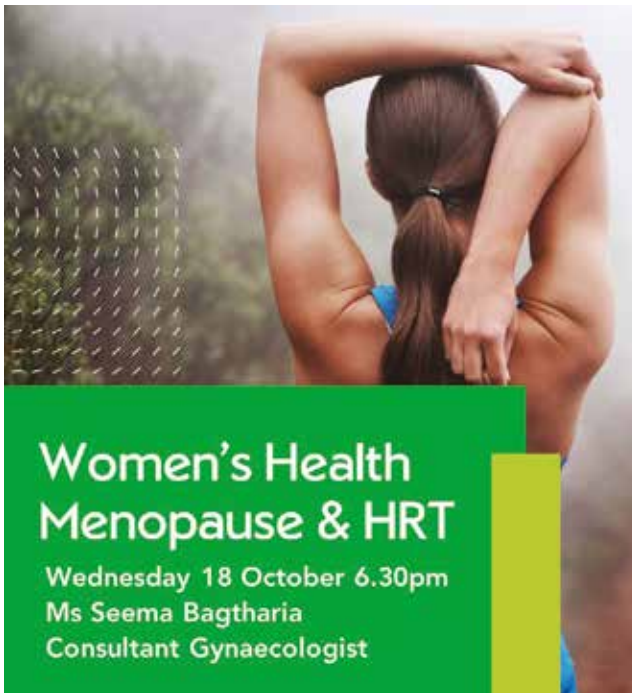
Benefits of HRT:

It is an effective treatment for:

- Hot flushes and low mood associated with the menopause.

- It can improve sexual desire and reduce vaginal dryness.
- It helps keep your bones strong by preventing osteoporosis.

Ms Seema Bagtharia is a Consultant Gynaecologist at Nuffield Health Brentwood Hospital who specialises in general gynaecology including heavy menstrual bleeding, infertility, endometriosis, prolapse, minimal access/invasive surgery, with a special interest in recurrent miscarriage, perimenopausal problems (including post-menopausal bleeding and menopausal symptoms). She also performs early pregnancy and gynaecological ultrasound scanning.



**Women's Health
Menopause & HRT**
Wednesday 18 October 6.30pm
Ms Seema Bagtharia
Consultant Gynaecologist

For any enquiries, to book an initial consultation or to request more information, please contact our dedicated hospital enquiry team at Nuffield Health Brentwood Hospital on 01702 898 036.

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with Ms Seema Bagtharia, Consultant Gynaecologist

Varicose veins

Thursday 19 October 2023 at 6:30pm

with Mr V Gadvi, Consultant Vascular Surgeon

Breast reduction surgery

Tuesday 24 October 2023 at 6:30pm

with Ms Sascha Dua, Consultant Breast Surgeon

Cosmetic surgery

Thursday 9 November 2023 at 6:30pm

with Mr V Ramakrishnan and Miss M Morgan, Consultant Plastic Surgeons



Find out more about our free events and book your space today, visit nuffieldhealth.com/hospitals/brentwood/events or call 01702 898036



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RAINCOAT *revolution*

HOW A SCOTTISH CHEMIST DEvised A FABRIC THAT CHANGED THE COURSE OF FASHION HISTORY

A TECHNOLOGICAL MARVEL

Back in the early 19th century, there were no synthetic fibres available, and keeping clothing waterproof was a constant challenge. But Glasgow-born Charles Macintosh's innovation changed all that. He created a revolutionary material that was made by rubberising cotton cloth, making it waterproof. Macintosh patented his method, and the first 'Mac' hit the market in October 1823. His Mackintosh coat became an instant sensation, and the brand became synonymous with stylish and functional outerwear loved by workers and aristocrats alike.

STRANGE SMELLS AND MELTING COATS

Early Mackintosh coats faced a few issues – they smelled strange, the fabric was stiff, and they sometimes even melted in hot weather. Thankfully, these problems were largely solved in 1844 with the patenting of another groundbreaking innovation: the vulcanising of rubber. This chemical process made the fabric stronger and less sensitive to temperature changes.

BACK FROM THE BRINK

In the 1980s and 1990s, Mackintosh faced challenges from lightweight synthetic waterproof fabrics like Gore-Tex. However, a management buyout in the mid-1990s breathed new life into the brand. It also reclaimed its status as an upmarket brand, collaborating with prestigious fashion houses like Louis Vuitton.

THE MAKING OF A MACKINTOSH

To this day, the coats are still handmade in Cumbernauld, near Glasgow, using a fabric that's very similar to Macintosh's original. Skilled craftsmen and women cut, sew and seal the material by hand, using special rubber-based glue. Each seam is also taped to ensure the coats are 100 per cent waterproof.

Now owned by Japanese firm Yagi Tsusho, the Mackintosh has weathered the storms of fashion and remains a symbol of British style and innovation. If you want one, you'll need to start saving now; a classic trench coat will set you back almost £1,000.



Photo credits: mackintosh.com



VEGGIE *vision*

Most people know that fruits and vegetables are good for your complexion when eaten regularly, but not everyone knows that they can also be applied to the skin and hair to achieve amazing results. Here are four of our favourite veggie-based beauty treatments.

PUMPKIN FOOT MASK – Best for dry, cracked heels

You will need: ½ cup of pumpkin purée | 1 whole egg | 1 tsp honey

How to apply: Combine all of the above ingredients in a bowl | Massage into the feet and ankles | Cover with cling film or put on a pair of old socks | Leave for 15 minutes and then rinse with warm water

BUTTERNUT SQUASH HAIR MASK – Best for dull or dry hair

You will need: ½ large butternut squash | 3 tbsp honey | ¼ cup of plain yogurt

How to make: Peel and cook the squash until soft enough to remove the inner contents | Mash the squash | Combine with the honey and yogurt | Apply the mixture to damp hair and put on a plastic shower cap | Leave on for 20 minutes and then rinse with warm water

BETROOT FACE MASK – Best for ageing skin

You will need: 2 tsp beetroot juice | 1 tsp yogurt | 1 tsp lime juice | 2 tsp gram flour

How to make: Mix the beetroot juice with the flour and then add the yogurt and lime juice | Mix until you have a smooth paste | Spread the mixture evenly over the face and leave for 15 minutes | Rinse off with warm water | Pat your face dry

POTATO CLEANSER – Best for acne-prone skin

You will need: 1 potato | 1 cucumber | 1 tsp baking soda | 1 tsp water

How to apply: Peel and chop the potato and the cucumber | Blend in a food processor or blender for 20 seconds | Add the water and baking soda | Apply to the face daily to cleanse and remove make-up, dirt and impurities.



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Signs you are **ADDICTED** to **CAFFEINE**

Do you love an energy drink? Can't get out of bed without your morning cup of coffee? If the answer is yes, then you are far from alone. It is suspected that as many as three out of four regular caffeine consumers are addicted to the substance.

1 You get headaches if you miss your caffeine fix: Caffeine is a vasoconstrictor, which means it makes the blood vessels narrower and restricts blood flow. This in turn relieves headaches, so if you miss your morning fix, you may develop a pounding head as a result.

2 You're bad-tempered before you get your first dose: Not a morning person? This could be because you are too reliant on caffeine. Caffeine stimulates the dopamine receptors in the brain, which makes you feel good. Therefore, if you don't get your morning hit, you are much more likely to experience a bad mood.

3 You struggle to concentrate without being caffeinated: Caffeine is known for helping you feel more alert and focused. However, if you are used to getting that boost every day, you may struggle to concentrate without the help of this popular stimulant.

4 You've built up a tolerance: Do you feel like you need more and more caffeine to enjoy the same effects? This is likely because your body has started to become immune to the effects of this substance.

5 You feel constantly on edge: Do you often get the jitters? High doses of caffeine can cause you to feel jumpy and can even cause anxiety and panic attacks.

How to reduce your caffeine intake:

- Keep a caffeine diary
- Switch to herbal teas
- Check labels for other sources of caffeine, such as fizzy drinks and chocolate
- Gradually cut down your daily intake rather than going cold turkey.





PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

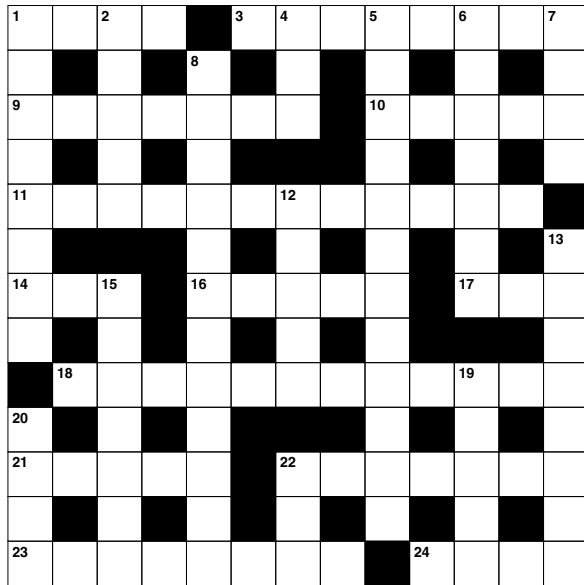
Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

ACROSS

- 1. Light blast of wind (4)
- 3. Fast runner (8)
- 9. Not tense (7)
- 10. Written agreements (5)
- 11. Opposite of amateur (12)
- 14. Decay (3)
- 16. Lacking meaning (5)
- 17. Wonder (3)
- 18. Incessantly (12)
- 21. Concerning (5)
- 22. Mound made by insects (7)
- 23. Shows (8)
- 24. Snake-like fish (pl.) (4)

DOWN

- 1. Sweat (8)
- 2. Leaf of parchment (5)
- 4. Collection of many sheets of paper (3)
- 5. Enhancements (12)
- 6. Musical composition (7)
- 7. Repose (4)
- 8. Based on untested ideas (12)
- 12. Set out (5)



- 13. Uses again (8)
- 15. Slight earthquakes (7)
- 19. Part of a church tower (5)
- 20. Edible fat (4)
- 22. Nay (anag) (3)

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ A hummingbird beats its wings up to 70 times per second.
- ▶ Hummingbirds are the only birds that can fly backwards.
- ▶ There are reportedly more than 350 known species of hummingbird, from the giant hummingbird weighing around 20g, to the bee hummingbird which measures less than three inches.
- ▶ Hummingbirds use their long, thin tongues like straws to drink nectar from flowers.
- ▶ Rufous hummingbirds migrate 4,000 miles from Mexico to Alaska every spring.
- ▶ Female hummingbirds use spider silk to weave together twigs and leaves for their nests.
- ▶ Hummingbirds have no sense of smell.

SUDOKU

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

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Incy wincy spider

Halloween provides the perfect opportunity for you to get crafty with your kids, and this spooky spiderweb doesn't disappoint. Suitable for little ones and older children alike, discover how to make your very own salt and glue spiderweb craft below.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:
Black paper or card | A pencil | A ruler | PVC or Elmer's glue | Table salt | Watercolour paints | A soft brush

HOW TO MAKE:

- 1 Draw your spiderweb design:** Your child can do this by hand themselves, depending on their age and ability, using a pencil or ruler, or you can help them with this step. Alternatively, you could print out a spiderweb template to use.
- 2 Trace the shape with glue:** The next step is to trace glue along each line of your spiderweb. Again, young children may need help with this if they want to achieve a good spiderweb shape. To make the glue lines as smooth as possible, do not allow the tip of the glue bottle to touch the paper but instead, hover slightly above it.
- 3 Cover the spiderweb with salt:** Fill a ramekin or small bowl with table salt and then use two fingers to pinch the salt and sprinkle it over the glue. Make sure that you cover each line and curve with enough salt. Leave the glue to fully dry, ideally overnight, before moving on to the next step.
- 4 Paint your spiderweb:** Now comes the really exciting part: adding colour to your spiderweb. Watercolour paints are perfect for this as they spread well on dried glue and salt. Using a soft brush, plenty of water and your chosen watercolours, add a drop or two of colour to a salt line. Use a light touch and do not scrub as this may dissolve your spiderweb.

MAKE A HANGING SPIDERWEB
Take your craft to the next level by applying the glue and the paint, minus the salt, to a thin plastic sheet, gently peel it off and then fix it to your preferred surface using sticky glue dots or hang around the room with string. Make sure you allow the glue to fully dry before peeling.

Photo credit: mesandpaeas.com, thepurplepumpkinblog.co.uk

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GOOD CARS

for

ULEZ 2023 EXPANSION






Regardless of your thoughts on the controversial expansion of London's Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), there is a wide selection of cars out there ready to help you bypass this expensive charge.

The extension of ULEZ to encompass the whole of Greater London became operational at the end of August, and not without considerable objection.

Now, petrol vehicles must meet Euro 4 standards, with even tighter Euro 6 requirements for their diesel cousins.

Entering the ULEZ with a non-conforming vehicle invites a daily charge of £12.50, so Mayor of London Sadiq Khan's £2,000 grant for Greater London residents looking to change to a ULEZ-compliant motor is appealing, as are some of the cars that fit the criteria.

For instance, for those desiring a premium touch, the Mercedes-Benz A-Class hatchback is a worthy contender, boasting advanced technology and a luxurious interior. Models from 2013 hover around the £10,000 mark.

The widely admired Ford Focus has numerous ULEZ-compliant variants. One with fewer than 50,000 miles could be yours for less than £6,000.

Or what about the iconic Mazda MX-5? The Japanese brand is revered for superb driving experience and affordability. However, look out for some older versions, as these may not meet ULEZ requirements.

Lastly, the VW Polo, particularly the 1.2 TDI BlueMotion edition of the Mk5, is famously fuel-efficient, boasting up to 91.1mpg on motorways and 67.3mpg in urban settings. With no emission zone charges and some high-mileage models available at under £4,000, it's a sound option.

While virtually all petrol cars sold after 2005 are ULEZ compliant – along with petrol vans after 2006 and motorbikes registered after July 2007 – it ultimately pays to check your vehicle, as well as the status of a potential new one, online at tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/check-your-vehicle

Photo credit: mercedes-benz.co.uk, ford.co.uk, mazda.co.uk, volkswagen.co.uk

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