

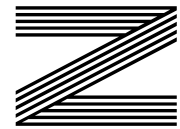
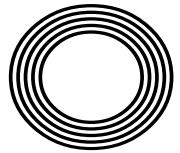
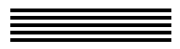


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Dancing Queen
50 years of ABBA world domination



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Kate
WINSLET CBE

Award-winning actress returns to the small screen



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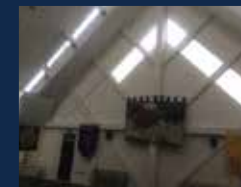
AFTER



AFTER



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER





Editor's notes...

APRIL 2024



Nik Allen, Editor

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

I recently read the story of Chris Kanizi, who runs an award-winning fish and chip shop in Greenwich. Of Cypriot descent, his family moved to this country in 1977 and has embraced one of Britain's culinary staples for two decades. Yet he's been told the 8ft Union Jack mural on the outside of his restaurant must go because both the mural, and the words 'A Great British Meal' are "inappropriate for the area"!

How? Why? In what version of Britain are we living in that we cannot proudly display our own flag? In fact, how many times have you been in an

Italian, Spanish, French, or Turkish restaurant, or visited the US or Canada or Australia, and welcomed the fact that they openly embrace the colours, flavours and flags of their country?

We have lost our minds if the lunatics at Greenwich Borough Council force through the order for Kanizi to paint over a mural that portrays the love, gratitude and respect he has for this nation. It can't be allowed that Kanizi, or me, or anyone else, cannot fly their flag. It's enough to send a man doolally with disgust.

Until next month, take care of yourself, each other, and fly your flags with pride!

Nik Allen

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GIMME!GIMME!GIMME!

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

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

WHO WAS IN ABBA?

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

THE BIG SPLIT

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

BACK TOGETHER AGAIN

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

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

A RESOUNDING TRIUMPH

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

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

50 YEARS ON

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

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

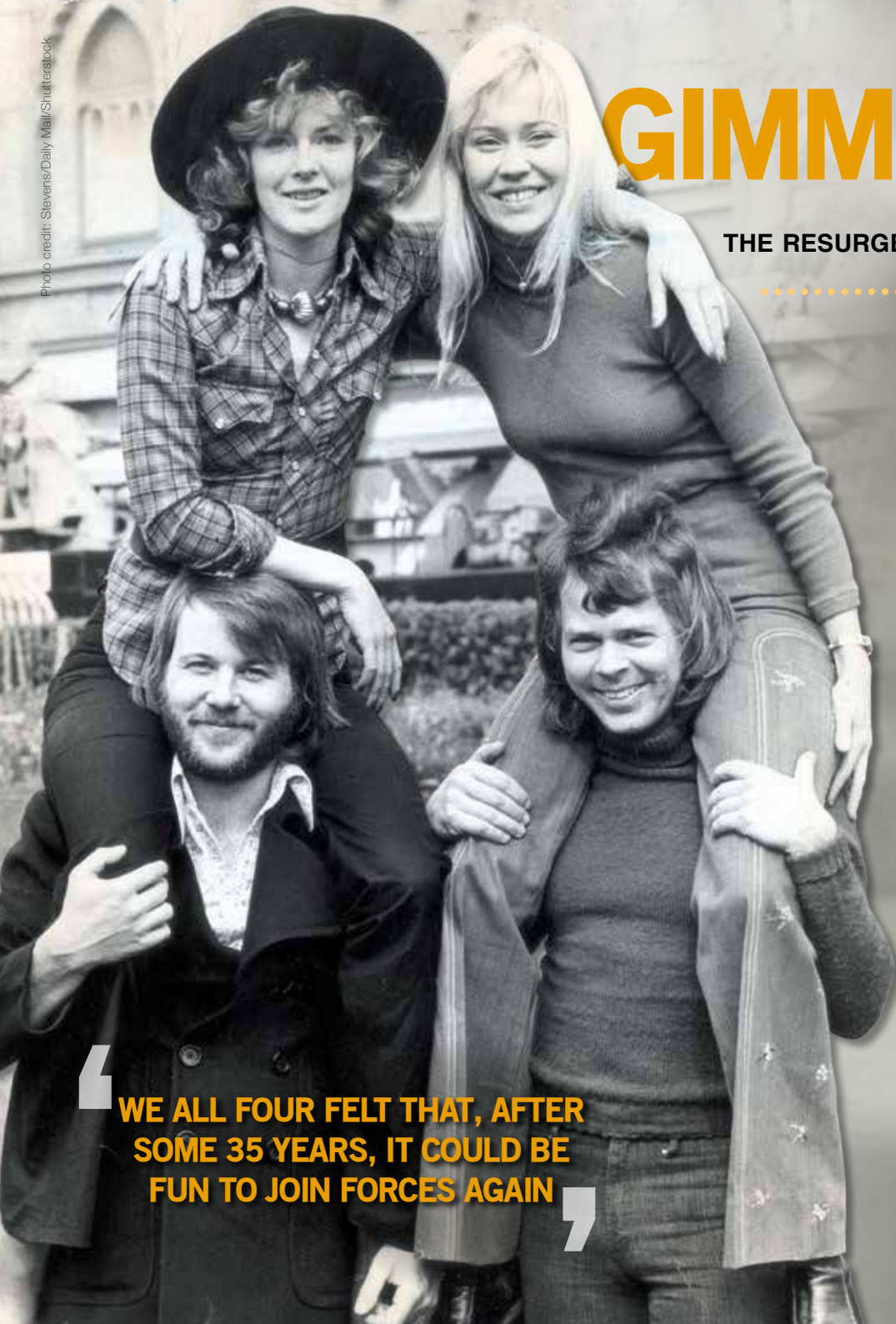




Photo credit: Ken McKay/ITV

a new morning

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

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

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

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

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

game show *Tipping Point*.

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

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

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

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

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



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INTERIOR DESIGN PROFILE

STUDIO IRO

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



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

A CLOSER LOOK AT STUDIO IRO

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

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

easy to recreate in your own home.

CREATING THE LOOK IN YOUR HOME

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

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



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How to CLEAN PAINT ROLLERS



HOME & DIY



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

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

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

YOU WILL NEED:

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

WHAT TO DO:

Step 1: Remove any excess paint

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

Step 2: Remove the roller from the frame

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

Step 3: Wash the roller

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

Step 4: Rinse the roller

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

Step 5: Dry the roller

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

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



Photo credit: thespruce.com

MAKE YOUR OWN OTTOMAN

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

HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN OTTOMAN

You will need:

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

How to make:

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

CUSTOMISATION TIPS

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

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



SCREEN SHOCKER

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

- > How are your eating habits?
- > Are you sleeping okay?
- > Do you get any physical exercise?

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

How much time are people spending on screens?

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

What problems are associated with too much screen time?

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

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

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

- > How often do you leave your house and socialise?

How screen time adds up over one year

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

How to manage and reduce screen time

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



PUPPY play!

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

Give a kiss

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

Roll over

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

Spin around

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

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

Shake paws

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

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



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Sports legend celebrates community links

Though not a native of Brentwood, legendary British boxer and former world champion Frank Bruno MBE's significant association with the area packs a punch.

During his 14-year boxing career, which started in the 1980s, Frank Bruno MBE was known for his exceptional punching power and dynamic resilience. It led him on the path to becoming a national hero in Britain, as a nation celebrated not just his sporting achievements, but also his unique personality.

His connection to the Brentwood and Ongar area was also something that became greatly aligned with his professional journey. It began during the peak of his career after he moved to the area, as he found the environs a serene contrast to the intense and brutal arena of boxing.

His presence also helped to raise the profile of the region, drawing attention to its community and cultural offerings, as he engaged with local events and charities and endeared himself to residents, becoming a beloved local figure.

It showed in his career as he eventually fought 45 times, winning 40 bouts - 38 of which were by knockout. His most notable victory came against Oliver McCall in 1995, when he won the WBC heavyweight title - a significant moment for both British boxing and Bruno's status as a UK icon.

After retiring, Bruno willingly discussed his own battles with mental health and wellbeing, becoming an advocate for raising awareness of such issues, particularly among men. His openness has been instrumental in helping to reduce stigma.

His autobiography, *Frank: Fighting Back*, chronicles his life, career and struggles, offering an intimate examination of the life of a sports legend. His ongoing association with the local area highlights the enduring bond between the public figure and the community he chose to call home.

Frank Bruno's story is one of hardiness, community engagement and the power of sport to unite and uplift.



Photo credit: Northcliffe Collection/ANL Studios/Corbis

LOCAL FEATURE





LOCAL FEATURE

The stunning Elizabethan mansion – Hill Hall

Among Essex's many notable buildings, one in particular offers visitors a glimpse into England's rich past.

Hill Hall was originally constructed for Sir Thomas Smith during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, covering approximately 50 hectares. Enveloped by an 18th-century landscaped park providing dramatic vistas atop a high ridge, with grounds descending in every direction, it offers breathtaking views across the rolling landscape.

The gardens, designed by prominent architects Reginald Blomfield and Philip Tilden, retain features from the late 17th century and are nestled within the parkland for which Humphry Repton, a renowned landscape gardener, created a design in 1791.

Located southeast of Epping – near Junction 27 of the M25 – its approach is through a carriage drive lined with young lime trees, leading directly to the hall's gates. This path closely follows the original drive of the house, despite various modifications over the centuries.

The hall itself was built between 1569 and 1575. Adorned with terracotta and cut-brick dressings, it features a north front with mullioned windows and central Elizabethan entrance arch under a Tuscan portico.

The garden to the south displays nine bays with outer three-storey towers, while the east front – remodelled in 1714 – boasts giant half-columns and a family coat of arms. Despite numerous alterations by the Smith family, the original Elizabethan layout remains largely intact.

A blend of historical and modern landscaping, surrounding gardens to the east, south and west of the hall feature a late 19th-century flagstone terrace, mature trees and remnants of 17th-century formal gardens.

Later, it briefly became a women's prison hosting, among others, Christine Keeler, the model involved in the Profumo affair, who was jailed for perjury.

Hill Hall has now been divided into private houses, but parts remain open to the public for pre-booked tours on Wednesday afternoons.



Photo credit: Heritage Image Partnership Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo

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YOUR LOCAL EVENTS

WHAT'S ON

COASTING FORAGING: SPRING
Leigh Marshes, 58 Kent Avenue,
Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3HE
Sunday, April 21, 10.30am – 1pm



Photo credit: SOS Wild Food via Facebook

Join host SOS Wild Food for a foraging walk around the coastal pathways of Leigh. You'll learn which plants are edible and how to forage sustainably. The walk will finish off with a cuppa and a slice of cake.

Tickets are available on a pay-as-you-can basis via www.shorturl.at/mtCT7

LEIGH-ON-SEA SWAP SHOP

The Broker Freehouse, 213-217 Leigh Road,
Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 1JA
Saturday, April 27, 10am – 12pm

Bring along pre-loved items that you no longer wear and exchange them for a whole new outfit, courtesy of your neighbours. Please bring along up to 10 items of womenswear in good, clean condition. Free tea and coffee will be supplied by The Broker.

Tickets to the Swap Shop cost a £5 donation to the Samaritans, which organisers will collect on the door.

SOSLAM TAKEOVER

Leigh-on-Sea Brewery, 35 Progress Road,
Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 5PR
Saturday, April 27, 1pm – 10pm

Come on down to the annual SoSlam taproom takeover, hosted by your local brewery. Each hour will feature a different music artist, with snacks from

Stoked Vegan BBQ and Bardown BBQ. All proceeds will go to the artists.

Tickets cost £5. Under-16s go free. To book, visit www.shorturl.at/gwxGQ

SHANG-A-LEIGH-ON-SEA

Leigh-on-Sea Constitutional Club,
118-122 Elm Road, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 1SQ
Friday, May 10, 8.30pm – 11.30pm

The Constitutional Club is hosting a 70s glam rock night with a live band playing all your favourites.

Tickets cost £5 and can be bought on the door.

OLD LEIGH SHANTY FESTIVAL

Various locations in Old Leigh-on-Sea
Friday, May 17, to Sunday, May 19,
various times

Shanty musicians from all corners of the country will be performing at locations across Old Leigh, in the highly anticipated return of last year's Shanty Festival.

Please visit www.shorturl.at/zGLQ3 where more details will be uploaded over the coming weeks.

ST PHILIP LADIES NIGHT

Thorpe Hall Golf Club, Thorpe Hall Avenue,
Thorpe Bay, SS1 3AT
Saturday, May 18, 6.30pm

St Philip Lodge is hosting a Ladies Night, traditionally held to give members of the Freemasons a chance to bring their wives along to the Lodge. In the present day, everyone is allowed to come, and all funds raised will go towards the Golden Goose charity. Come along for a three-course meal and an evening to remember.

The first course will be served at 7pm.

Tickets cost £60. To book, contact johnengledrew@me.com or secretary@stphilip4221.com



Photo credit: Thorpe Hall Golf Club



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Kate WINSLET

Photo credit: David Fisher/Shutterstock



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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GARDENING

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO
Pineapple lily

Eucomis, aka pineapple lily, makes an impressive addition to any garden with its exotic-looking blooms and tufts of vibrant leaves. However, despite their show-stopping appearance, they are relatively easy to grow, making them perfect for beginners.

What are the different varieties of pineapple lily?

- 1 **Eucomis comosa:** A tall variety that grows up to 75cm, with large leaves that boast a slightly wavy edge.
- 2 **Eucomis autumnalis:** Produces a long, thin flower spike that is topped with a small rosette of leaves.
- 3 **Eucomis bicolor:** A two-tone variety that has pale green flowers with maroon edging.
- 4 **Eucomis pallidiflora:** Known as the giant pineapple lily, this variety can reach up to 2m when in flower.

Where to plant pineapple lilies

Pineapple lilies are tender plants that need plenty of sun to thrive. Choose the warmest and brightest spot in your garden and make sure the soil is well drained. You can plant pineapple lilies in either borders or containers.

How to plant pineapple lilies

If growing pineapple lilies in your garden, plant bulbs 15cm deep in fertile, well-drained soil. Keep the plants well watered during growing season (April to early October).

If growing in containers, plant bulbs in a wide, shallow pan, if possible, but a normal flower pot will do. Use a loam-based compost (a mixture of clay, sand and silt) with added sharp sand to improve drainage. Allow at least 7.5cm between bulbs and make sure the top of the bulb is just below the soil's surface. Just like plants in the garden, water well during growing season.

How to care for pineapple lilies

Keep pineapple lilies well watered during the summer but dry in the winter by either digging up the bulbs or moving pots indoors in autumn. Remove any dead leaves and spent flowers at the end of each growing season.





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GARDENING

REACH FOR THE sky

Climbing vines are great for all-sized gardens, adding visual interest and acting as a highly effective disguise for any eyesores without taking up too much room. Discover the best climbing plants for your garden.

BEST CLIMBING VINES FOR STUNNING SCENTS

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

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

BEST CLIMBING VINES FOR EARLY BLOOMS

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

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

BEST CLIMBING VINES FOR SHADY SPOTS

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

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



Photo credit: treesandshrubsline.org, longfordgardencentre.com



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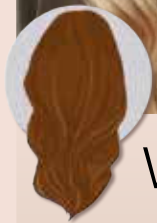
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Balayage VS HIGHLIGHTS



BEAUTY



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

What is balayage?

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

Why choose balayage?

Ask your hairdresser for balayage if you want:

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

How long does balayage last?

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

What are highlights?

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

Why choose highlights?

Ask your hairdresser for highlights if you want:

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

How long do highlights last?

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



Photo credit: netulique.com, mykacooltop.com



NATIONAL STRESS AWARENESS MONTH

APRIL IS ALL ABOUT LEARNING TO REDUCE STRESS

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

WHAT CAUSES STRESS?

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

HOW DOES STRESS MAKE YOU FEEL?

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

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

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS OF STRESS?

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

HOW TO REDUCE STRESS

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



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FASHION

PEPLUM perfection



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

WHAT IS A PEPLUM PIECE?

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

HOW TO WEAR PEPLUM IN 2024

Pair a peplum top with wide-leg jeans or trousers

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

Ease in with a mini peplum

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

Try a monochrome fit

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

Fake it with a belt

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

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



Photo credit: ASOS.com



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DIFFERENT GRAVY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Photo credit: MOPix-Shutterstock



YOU rock(et) MY WORLD

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

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

How to grow rocket

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

1. WILD ROCKET

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

2. SALAD ROCKET

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

How to store rocket

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

How to use rocket in cooking

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

Some of our favourite rocket recipes include:

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

How to make rocket pesto

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

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KIDS

SPEAK UP

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



TALK TO THEM

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

READ TOGETHER

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



USE SIGN LANGUAGE

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

AVOID BABY TALK

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

LIMIT SCREEN TIME

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





Bluebells

The Sweetest Flower

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

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

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

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

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

There are also dazzling bluebell displays at:

- > Hatfield Park and Garden, Hatfield, Hertfordshire
- > Whippendell Wood, Watford, Hertfordshire
- > Norsey Wood, Billericay, Essex
- > Blake's Wood, near Danbury, Essex

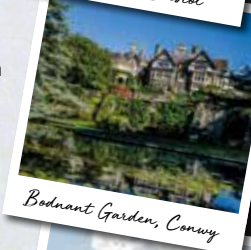
Fun Bluebell Facts

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

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



Leigh Woods, Bristol



Bodnant Garden, Conwy



Blickling Estate, Norfolk



Mount Stuart, Bute



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8 th - Ham House	£42
9 th - Hastings & Rye	£27
9 th - Mississippi Paddle Boat, Norfolk Broads	£35
11 th - St Albans	£24
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15 th - Sutton Hoo	£38
15 th - Whitstable	£25
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16 th - Hampton Court Palace	£47
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NISSAN PROPILLOT CHAIR: This autonomous chair, following Nissan's Intelligent Parking Chair, offers a solution for those weary of standing in lines. It follows a pre-set path, mirroring semi-autonomous vehicle technology, and has been tested in Japanese restaurants for customer convenience.

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

AUDI R18 CHAIR: A collaboration with Clemens Weisshaar and Reed Kram, this stylish chair combines carbon composites and high-strength aluminium, and weighs just 4.9lb.

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

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

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

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

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PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

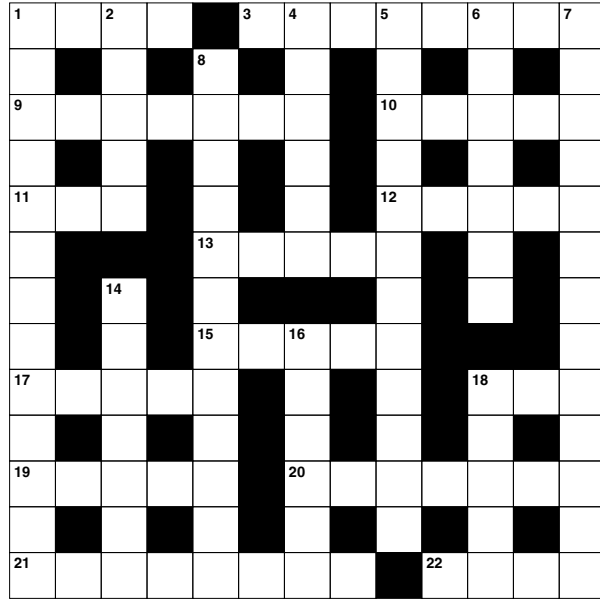
Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

ACROSS

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

DOWN

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

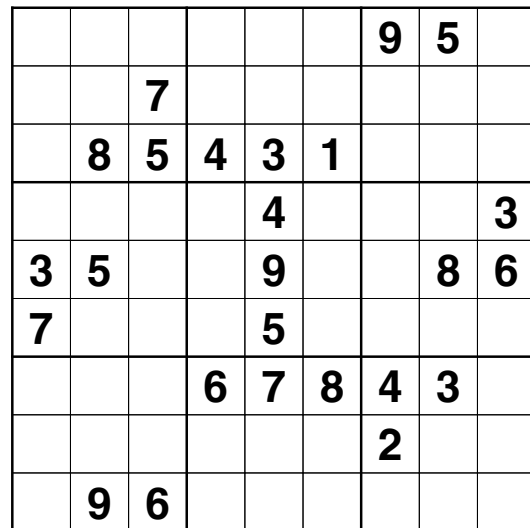


- 16. In slow tempo (of music) (6)
- 18. Large body of water (5)

DID YOU KNOW?

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

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