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**SKY BROWN**

*GB's youngest summer  
Olympian in 50 years*

**QUIRKY  
LEAP  
YEAR  
FACTS**

**TEA FOR TWO**

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Dancing on Ice features UK's first same-sex couple

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February 2020

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# Editor's notes...



Brett Shohet, Editor

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

So, how are the New Year's resolutions going? Mine is still pretty good. I'm eating so much more healthily. I have so much more energy

and sleep so much better.

Love is all around us this time of year, with Valentine's Day upon us. Yes, it's February already. Be sure to show your loved one how much they mean to you. Why not visit your local shops to buy that bouquet of flowers, card and gift? Remember to keep your £ local.

*Dancing on Ice* contestant Ian Watkins, better known as H from Steps, and his professional partner Matt Evers are our cover stars this month. They made history recently after becoming the first same-sex couple in the UK to compete.

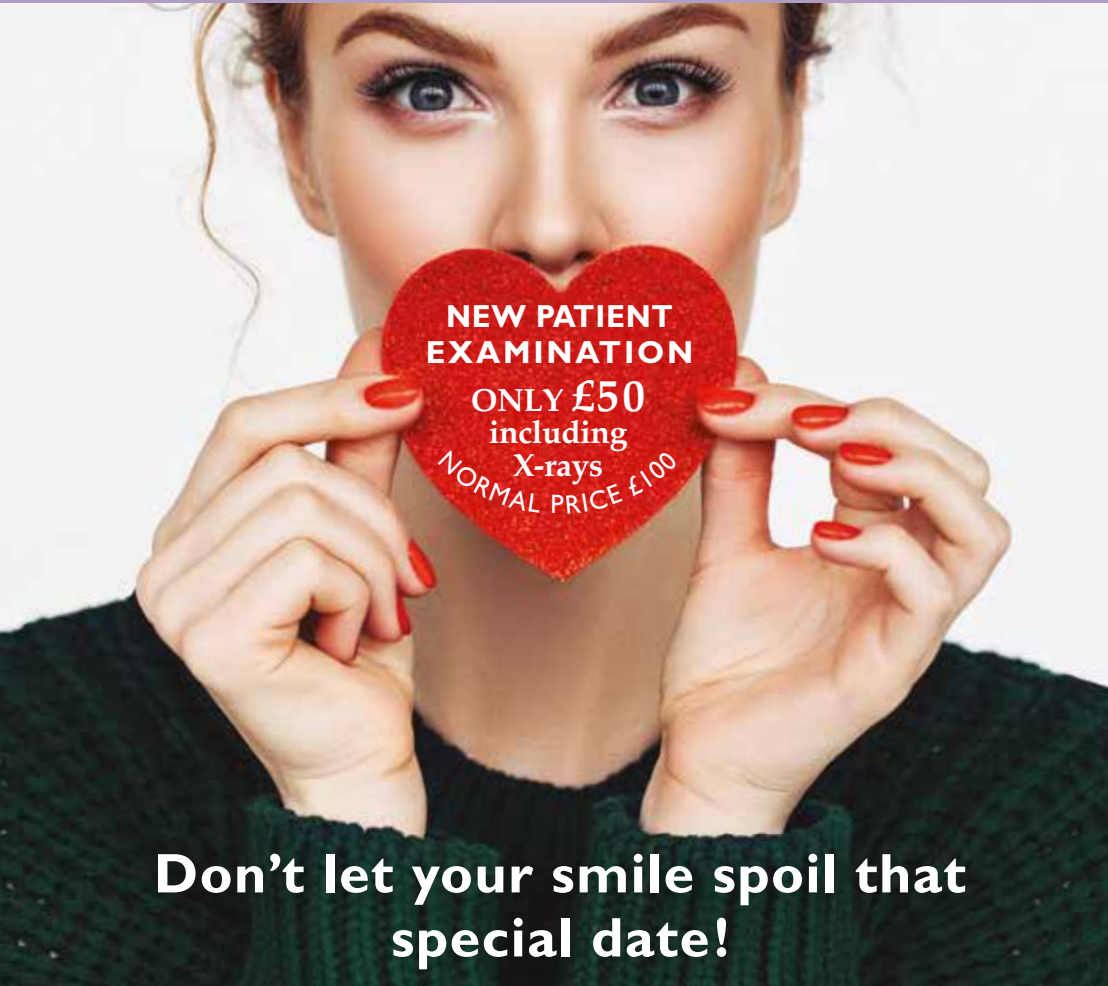
In local news, a new Lidl store is set to open, two drug dealers are jailed, young people are being asked to put themselves forward to be on the youth council and St Clare Hospice celebrates its 30th anniversary.

We welcome any of your stories for our local news pages. So if you have a story to share, please send it to [loughton@visionmag.co.uk](mailto:loughton@visionmag.co.uk)

**VISION** is your magazine for your town. I hope you all enjoy the February 2020 edition of **VISION**Loughton.

*Brett*

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# SKY IS THE LIMIT

Sky Brown, at 11 years of age, has been picked for the GB Skateboarding team, making her the youngest summer Olympian in 50 years. We look at what she has achieved thus far, and what this sensational youngster might accomplish going forward.

Sky was born in Japan – Miyazaki to be exact, on the south-eastern coast – to a British father and a Japanese mother. The pre-teen prodigy still officially resides in south-east Asia but spends the majority of her time in the United States.

Global sports giant Nike made her its youngest-ever acquisition in February 2019, and she has appeared regularly in ad campaigns with iconic female athletes, including fellow Briton Dina Asher-Smith, American artistic gymnast Simone Biles and South African middle-distance runner Caster Semenya.

At the age of eight, Sky became the youngest female to compete in the Vans US Open Pro Series. Although failing to place in the medals, she did finish higher than a number of competitors 20 years her senior.

This year, Sky clinched gold at Simple Session, a senior women's competition in Estonia's capital of Tallinn, and on a park course specifically designed for male competitors typically twice her size. It is this increased success in competition, matched with a squeaky clean image and the potential of youth, that has elevated her into superstar territory, and she is expected to become a multimillionaire long before she is even able to buy an alcoholic drink.

Dancing is another of Sky's talents and she was the winning celebrity on the US reality TV show *Dancing with the Stars: Juniors* in 2018.

While experts agree Sky's natural talent for skateboarding is without question, it was feared she may not be ready to compete at Olympic level owing to a lack of speed or power from her slight frame.

However, the decision by the British Olympic Association to invite her to compete for them – a significant 'win' given Japan's interest in her and the fact that the 2020 event is being held in Tokyo – has cemented the old adage, 'if you're good enough, you're old enough'.

And yet some commentators have queried the extent to which someone so young is able to cope with the pressure not just of high-level competition, but also of the media glare that will surely confront such a young talent. In Sky's defence, she is a youngster who exudes confidence. She practises surfing, does karate, jujitsu, dancing and singing, thrives on activity and equips herself as a modern, fearless youngster too young to have experienced the pressures that often only begin to surface in the teenage years.

"I just go about things in the way that feels natural," she says. "I am enjoying myself too much to feel the pressure and I'm keen to keep pushing forward with these opportunities that I have."

Those opportunities are probably somewhat wider than she herself appreciates. Competitive events she can handle, and media commitments are, it seems, a doddle. Yet stepping up as a cultural icon across social media, whose movements and actions are going to be lapped up by an adorning fan base spread all around the world... Sky Brown is going to have a busy few years ahead.



“I AM ENJOYING MYSELF  
TOO MUCH TO  
FEEL THE PRESSURE”

# LEAP OF FAITH

29  
FEBRUARY

This year is a leap year, with 366 days instead of 365, the extra day falling on February 29.

The extra day is traditionally when women can turn the tables and propose marriage. It also means people born on February 29 can actually celebrate their birthday on the proper day.

Here are six facts about leap year:

**1.** The leap year's extra day is vital because a complete orbit around the sun takes slightly longer than 365 days – five hours, 48 minutes and 46 seconds longer, to be exact.

At one time, people observed a 355-day calendar with an extra 22-day month every two years. But in 45bc Julius Caesar ordered his astronomer, Sosigenes, to simplify things.

Sosigenes opted for the 365-day year with an extra day every four years to use up the extra hours. The extra day is added to February because it used to be the last month of the Roman calendar.

The system was then fine-tuned by Pope Gregory XIII. He coined the term leap year.

**2.** The tradition of women proposing on leap day is thought to date back to fifth-century Ireland when St Brigid complained to St Patrick that women had to wait too long for suitors to propose.

He then gave women a single day in a leap year to pop the question – the last day of the shortest month. Legend has it that Brigid dropped to a knee and proposed to Patrick that instant, but he refused, kissing her on the cheek and offering a silk gown to soften the blow.

**3.** Others believe the tradition originates from Scotland when Queen Margaret, then aged just five, declared in 1288 that a woman could propose to any man she liked on February 29.

She ruled that men who refused the proposal would need to pay a fine in the form of a kiss, a silk dress, a pair of gloves or one pound. To give suitors fair warning – and possibly a chance to escape – a woman was required to wear breeches or a scarlet petticoat on the day of the proposal.

**4.** In Denmark, a man refusing a woman's leap-day proposal must give her 12 pairs of gloves, while in Finland it's fabric for a skirt.

One in five engaged couples in Greece avoid getting married in a leap year because they believe it's bad luck.

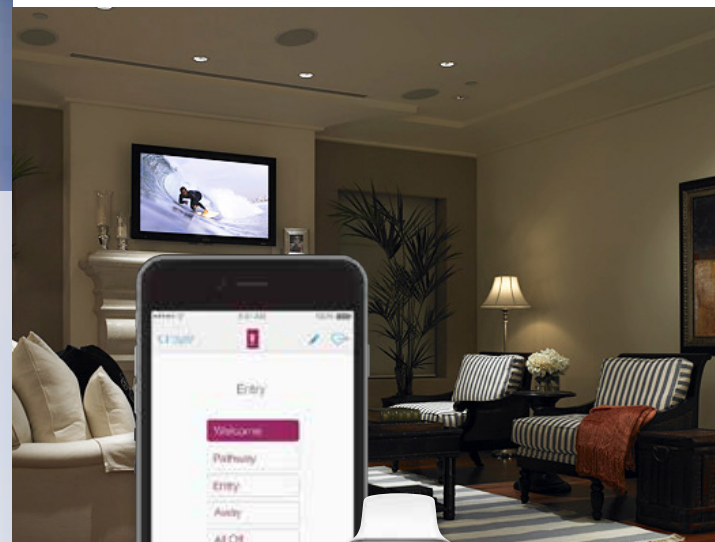
In Italy, legend has it that women are erratic during a leap year, and several proverbs warn against planning important life events in a leap year. *Anno bisesto, anno funesto* means leap year, doom year.

**5.** Workers paid fixed annual or monthly salaries essentially work for free on February 29 because wages are not usually calculated to account for the extra day. And prisoners with one-year sentences must serve the extra day if the term crosses leap day.

**6.** People born on February 29 are called leaplings or leapers. The chance of being born on a leap day is one in 1,461. There are five million leaplings around the world.

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Here are just a few staple denim pieces that men and women should have in their wardrobes, safe in the knowledge that they will never go out of style...

## THE DENIM JACKET

As practical as it is en vogue, the denim jacket will never fail you. Women, make a floral spring/summer dress edgier by teaming it with a light denim jacket. For a more casual aesthetic, go for distressed denim. For a rock chick vibe, stud detailing will be your best friend.

Men, relive the early noughties and brave the double denim like Justin Timberlake and Britney Spears at the 2001 AMAs. Alternatively, wear a dark-coloured denim jacket over a casual white shirt and chinos for a subtle nod to the trend.

## SLIM AND SKINNY JEANS

Slim and skinny jeans aren't going anywhere.

Ladies, jeans and a blouse teamed with a chic

blazer and an oversized tote is a perfect smart/casual look that will take you from office to cocktail bar with ease. Mix things up by opting for white denim during the warmer months.

And gents, dark-coloured jeans with a shirt in a bold hue – the more daring, the better – complete with your favourite loafers, are great for standing out from the crowd. Team with a crisp white shirt and a sharp blazer for a smarter aesthetic.

## BOYFRIEND JEANS

Slim fit jeans are in, but that doesn't mean their comfier and more voluminous cousins are out. Au contraire, boyfriend jeans are hotter than ever, and can be enjoyed by men and women alike. Sometimes, if you're lucky, the very same pair.

Girls, make like an off-duty supermodel and pair yours with simple tank tops, trainers and oversized sunglasses. Timberlands, flip-flops, wedges and even sky-scraping heels are all approved footwear choices.



# WHAT IS AI BEAUTY?

## IS AI BEAUTY THE FACE OF THE FUTURE?

AI, or artificial intelligence, is already an integral part of our daily lives, with many people utilising smart technologies such as Siri or chatbots; so, of course, the beauty industry is also getting in on the action.

### WHAT IS AI?

To put it simply, AI is a computer system that imitates intellectual human behaviours; basically, you provide your personal information and then the computer uses an algorithm to provide you with the service, product or solution that you need.

Sometimes, it can predict your needs before you even know about them yourself.

### HOW IS AI BEING USED IN THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY?

#### 1. A BESPOKE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

The beauty industry is completely over-saturated with products, which can make the buying process difficult. However, by completing a simple questionnaire before you shop, AI can provide you with a tailored number of products that suit your individual beauty needs. A certain make-up brand even has a custom-made foundation machine that promises to find your exact match.

#### 2. A PERSONALISED BEAUTY ROUTINE

If you have ever worried that you are applying your foundation wrongly or that you are missing parts of your face when applying creams, then AI can help you. There are now beauty tools available that use AI to let you know how to improve your make-up and skincare routine, such as a facial cleansing brush that uses skin sensors to analyse your skin.

#### 3. MORE RELEVANT PRODUCTS

If you sometimes feel that the beauty industry is just churning out more and more products to make money, then AI could signal the end of this. AI can utilise customer data to help strategically create products that are actually in demand, rather than marketers just guessing what we want.



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#### Respite Live In Care

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# Hair today GONE TOMORROW



BEAUTY

## HOW TO SLOW HAIR LOSS WITHOUT OVERLY EXPENSIVE TREATMENTS

**M**en beware, there is an enemy in our midst and, for many of us, its presence is already being felt. It resides not on the dark web, nor in damp alleyways – instead, it lives in the follicles of your hair... at least, that's if you've got any of the damn stuff left.

Since the dawn of time, hair loss in men has been an inevitable by-product of getting older. Hair leaves the scalp and instead migrates downwards to emerge out of ears and nostrils. Yet with follicle technology having never been better, and putting to one side the cheats' method of a full-on hair transplant, consider the following inexpensive treatments that, while not solving hair loss, can certainly slow it:

your hair retention but physical well-being in other parts of the body too.

### Prescribed formulas

From over-the-counter formulas (the most common in the UK being Regaine) to platelet-rich plasma (PRP) treatment, which injects centrifuged blood back into the scalp at around £1,000 a go, speaking to a health professional about regrowth for follicles that are dormant, not dead, could be a worthwhile investment.

### Shampoos

Shampooing can be harsh on hair follicles, yet using a specialised formula (such as Davines' energizing shampoo) can stimulate the scalp, while hirs shampoo's DHT-reducing product reduces the rate at which hair falls out. Consider as well protein- and caffeine-heavy products for the shower.

### Diet

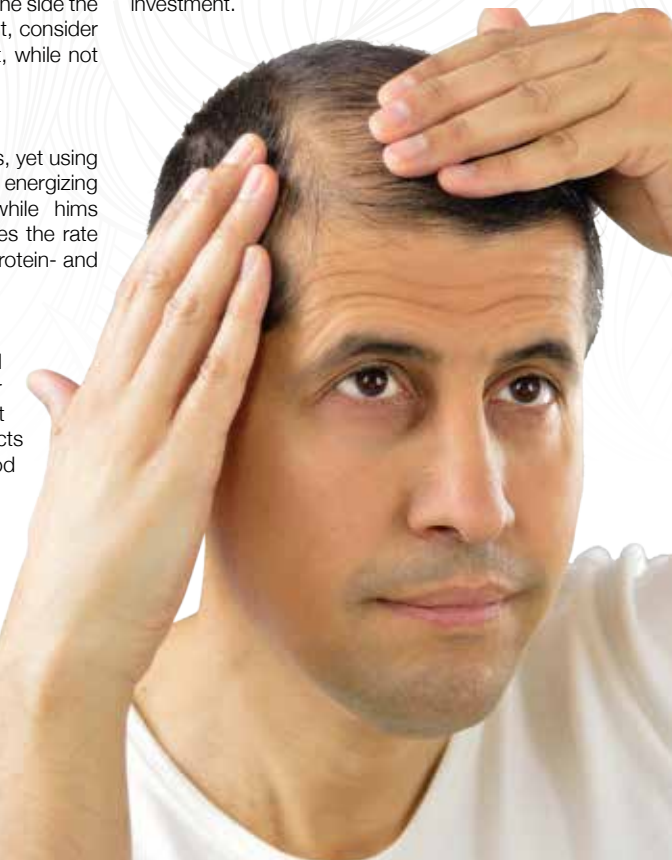
A diet rich in oils, proteins and nutrients will send positive elements to the places your body needs them most. Consider too that smoking and alcohol consumption restricts the blood vessels, thereby reducing blood flow and circulation to the follicles.

### Vitamin D

The *Journal of Dermatology* reported that people with alopecia are usually deficient in vitamin D, leading to the theory that the vitamin can help hair reset its growth phase.

### Stress

Stress is a known cause of hair loss, so cutting stress, boosting exercise and even practising meditation can improve not only





# TIME

*on your side*

HOW LIVING LONGER MAY BE AS SIMPLE AS EXERCISING FOR 30 MINUTES PER DAY

We all know the secret to long life is health, well-being and happiness, and scientists believe that as well as human interaction and diet, our inclination to exercise can have a direct bearing on our mental and physical welfare.

New research from Copenhagen suggests the key to extending our lives beyond the average – 79 for a man and 83 for a woman – could be the simple action of exercising for 30 minutes each day. Not only that, but the results were actually better than for those who had worked out for 60 minutes.

Here are six key benefits that are only a run, walk, cycle, swim, game or gym session away:

**ONE** – The heart. Exercise helps to ward off the threat of stroke, cardiovascular disease and complications borne out of diabetes.

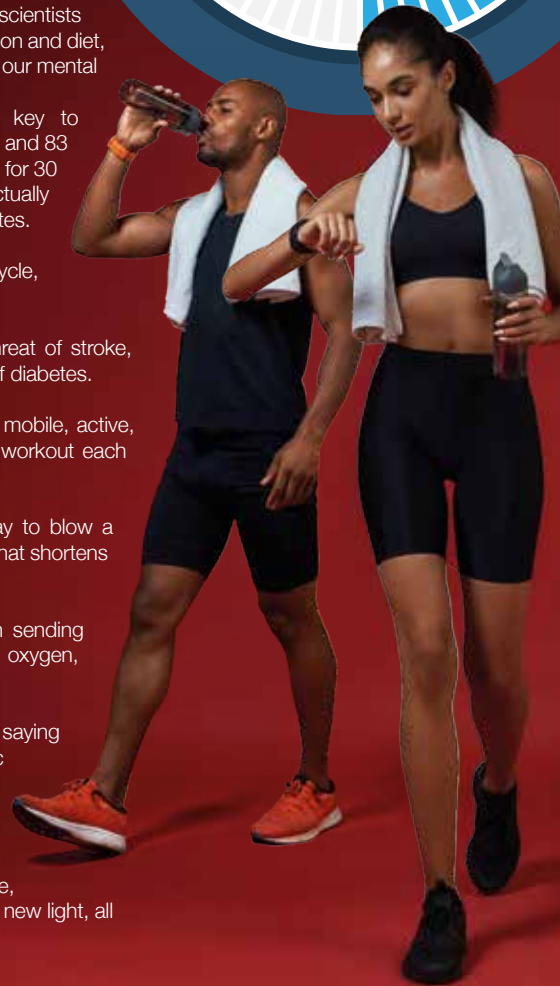
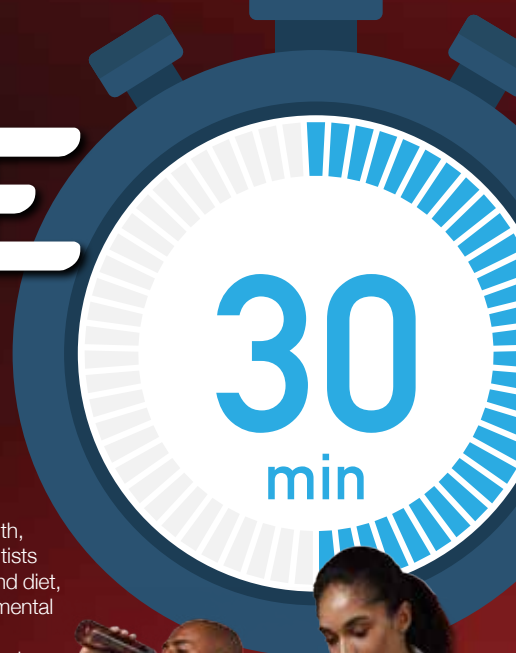
**TWO** – Weight loss. We know the value of keeping mobile, active, and preventing the build-up of fat, and a 30-minute workout each day will achieve that.

**THREE** – Stress. Getting sweaty is the perfect way to blow a breeze through worry, anxiety and the mental tension that shortens lives.

**FOUR** – Energy. It sounds strange, but rather than sending us to sleep, exercise will boost alertness by delivering oxygen, nutrients and activation chemicals around the body.

**FIVE** – Self-confidence. ‘Exercise is sanity’, as the saying goes. In building confidence and offering a dynamic sense of achievement, that half-hour investment can take you to a whole new level of belief.

**SIX** – Clarity. Exercise transports us to a place where our minds can flush away the stresses of everyday life, where we can step back and see problems in a whole new light, all the while working on new ways to tackle them.



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# MADDENING MIGRAINES

Anyone who experiences migraines will know only too well the tell-tale signs, including nausea, vomiting, an increased sensitivity to light and sound, and, of course, the unbearable throbbing pain on the side of your head.

## WHAT CAUSES MIGRAINES?

Around 1 in 5 women and 1 in every 15 men experience migraines. The exact cause of this debilitating affliction is still unknown, although some experts believe that it could be the result of a temporary change in the chemicals, blood vessels and nerves in the brain. Migraines can also be hereditary, as well as be brought on by stress, tiredness and/or specific foods and drinks.

## HOW CAN YOU PREVENT MIGRAINES?

Although there is no sure fire way to prevent a migraine from happening, there are ways that you can lower your risk of experiencing one, namely avoiding the triggers that are causing your migraines, whether that be stress or a particular food. It is also advised to lead a healthy lifestyle with

adequate sleep, exercise and ensuring that you stay hydrated. Alcohol and caffeine should be avoided.

## HOW CAN YOU RELIEVE THE SYMPTOMS OF A MIGRAINE?

Sadly, there is no miracle cure, but there are some medicines that you can take to help alleviate your symptoms, such as painkillers like paracetamol or ibuprofen, anti-emetics and/or triptans. Triptans are a specific type of medicine that are designed to reverse the changes in your brain that actively cause migraines and are normally prescribed to people who suffer from severe migraines.

Other tips that may help you feel better include:

- Using a cold pack
- Dimming the lights or sitting in a dark room
- Using a heat pad
- Practising some relaxation techniques
- Trying not to chew
- Drinking some ginger tea
- Giving yourself a scalp massage



## TEA FOR TWO?

# Why not try Kombucha?

Fermented foods and drinks have been experiencing a surge in popularity in recent years, with many people singing the praise of this refreshing, if not slightly sour, tea that is known for being rich in antioxidants and probiotics.

## How to make Kombucha at home (1L)

You will need;

1L water (dechlorinated) | 1 teabag (black tea is considered to be the best but other tea can be used) | 50–100g sugar (cane sugar is advised) | 1 small scoby (these can be bought online) | 100ml starter liquid (this will come with the scoby)

How to make;

Boil 250ml water | Add the teabag and sugar, stirring until dissolved | Brew for 10 minutes | Remove teabag | Add the rest of the cold water | Add the scoby and starter liquid | Ensure you leave a minimum of a 5cm gap at the top of your liquid to allow for fermentation | Cover the jar with a cloth and fasten with an elastic band | Leave to ferment for 6–9 days at room temperature | It's then ready for the 'secondary fermentation'

process | Remove the scoby and add additional flavour if desired | Store in an airtight bottle with at least a 3cm gap at the top | Leave at room temperature for between 5–14 days

## What flavours can I add to my Kombucha?

This is completely dependent on your taste preferences, but some of the recommended flavour ideas include;

- Berries or citrus fruits
- Dried fruits such as goji berries, figs or dates
- Frozen fruit
- Herbs such as lavender, mint or lemon balm
- Mild spices like turmeric, allspice or cardamom

## What are the health benefits?

Kombucha has the ability to:

- Improve your digestion
- Strengthen your immune system
- Reduce blood pressure
- Alleviate gout and haemorrhoids
- Improve liver function
- Fight cancer



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# DO THE RUMBA

*How this spirit went from being the preferred bounty of pirates to a premium tipple...*

**W**hen Christopher Columbus introduced the Americas to sugar cane, he couldn't have possibly realised his actions would one day lead to the creation of one of the finest drinks around: rum.

Like many revelations, the discovery of rum was a happy accident, which occurred when sugar planters in the 17th century grew frustrated at the waste product of sugar: molasses. At a loss with what to do with the thick, syrupy liquid, any molasses they couldn't give away was simply discarded, until some bright spark discovered that by mixing the molasses with water and leaving to ferment in the sun, they created a spirit – rum!

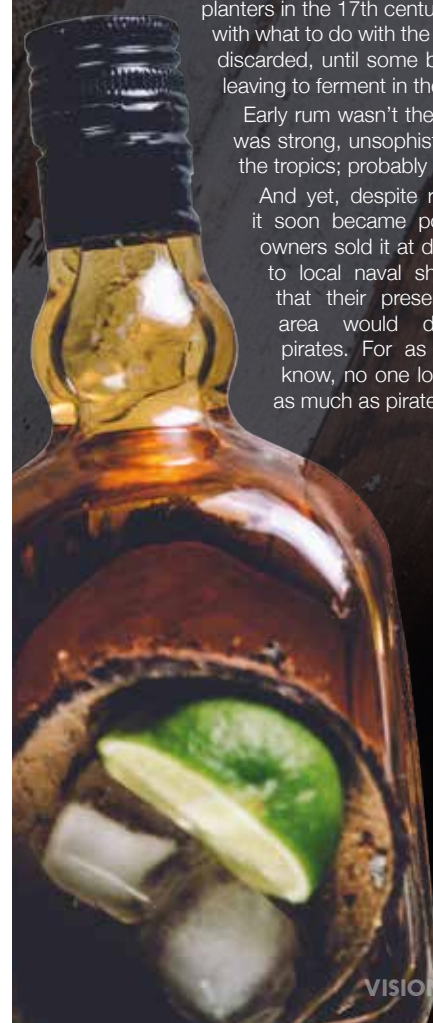
Early rum wasn't the smooth and delectable beverage we quaff these days, of course. It was strong, unsophisticated and a great cure-all for the many ills that befell those living in the tropics; probably why it was nicknamed rumbullion or kill-devil.

And yet, despite rum's more acerbic qualities, it soon became popular as plantation owners sold it at discounted prices to local naval ships, knowing that their presence in the area would discourage pirates. For as we well know, no one loves rum as much as pirates...



The glorious golden spirit continued to garner popularity, to the extent that the British Navy couldn't go without it, and in the 1730s they adopted a daily ration of half a pint of 160 proof rum, which remained (though to a diminished strength) until 1969.

These days, rum is a billion-pound industry, and there are many wonderful brands that you can happily sip neat with just an ice cube or two. So next time you're relaxing with a finger of the finest, remember to raise a toast to the sugar planters who finally figured out why you should never EVER throw molasses away. Cheers, me hearties.





Whether you want to save time in the kitchen, don't always have the necessary cooking appliances to create your favourite dishes or simply love a good hack, these four unusual tips will ensure you never look at cooking in the same way again.

**Use dental floss to cut**

Sometimes, cutting with a knife can be tricky, especially if the food you are attempting to chop up is either very soft or prone to crumbling. Dental floss is a great tool for cutting foods such as a cake or a very mature cheddar, providing more precision and less mess than a knife.

**Use cling film pouches to poach eggs**

Eggs are an easy and filling snack or meal; however, poaching the perfect egg can be a challenge. Avoid your eggs disintegrating by lining a cup with cling film, spraying with olive oil and cracking in an egg. Then tie it closed, drop it into simmering water and cook as normal.

**Place an ice cube in your burgers**

Do you often worry about serving dry burgers at your BBQs? A simple trick is to press a small ice cube into the middle of your burger patty before cooking, sealing the beef around it and then grilling or frying as usual. The result? A moist and juicy burger that no one will suspect has had an ice cube in it.

**Cook chicken in glass jar**

If you do not have a grill pan but have a craving for tender chicken kebabs, this hack is for you. Simply place your kebabs (on a wooden skewer) in a glass jar, cover with tin foil and cook in the oven until the chicken juices run clear.



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## THE MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE WHEN BOOKING FLIGHTS

**H**oliday fever... whether it's packing your case at home, arriving at the airport or stepping out onto foreign soil at the other end, vacation vivaciousness hits all of us at some point, and nothing else in the world matters.

And yet, what if you could wind back a few months to when you booked that flight and mend that badly timed departure you booked, or erase the hassles and inconveniences of connections, or just save a big wedge of cash? Here are five things you need to consider when booking flights:

to book is around a month before. Buy flights too early or too late and airlines will be charging either uncompetitively or, worse still, at a premium.

### WEEKEND WOE

Don't book flights at weekends when everyone else is online. The best new deals hit sites early in the week, and prices generally hold up better during the daytime than in the evening.

### DAYTIME DALLIANCES

It may be convenient to have a bit of breakfast then saunter to the airport, but the best-priced flights are those very early in the morning. Getting a 5am plane out will also mean more time at your chosen destination, even if you do spend the rest of the day yawning.

### FLY PAST

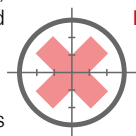
Don't just settle on a departure from your nearest airport. An extra hour in the car may save you hundreds of pounds by going to a different departure location.

### CHEAP = CHEERFUL?

Sometimes the cheapest fare will actually end up costing you more. A number of airlines offer a basic ticket with no luggage, no seat reservation and no frills. You may subsequently discover you're paying extra to check baggage in, or are adding cost at check-in to sit next to a loved one.

### FORTNIGHT FORETHOUGHT

Airfares start increasing sharply in the two weeks leading up to departure, and typically the best time



# TURNED OFF BY TECH

FIVE TORRID TECHNOLOGY FAILURES



### AMAZON FIREPHONE

An android mobile device designed to capitalise on the incredible success of the Kindle Fire eBook readers and Fire tablets, this 2014 launch was set to catapult the brand into the communications mainstream while also knitting together its retail and film elements.

The phone only lasted a year, though, as Jeff Bezos found the might of Samsung, Apple and co to be impenetrable.

### OCULUS RIFT

When Mark Zuckerberg got behind the virtual reality market, there was the expectation that technology and consumer interest would be catapulted forward, but it hasn't happened. As Oculus trips through new products – such as the Quest – a persistent lukewarm response seems to imply that headset hedonists are few and far between.



### GOOGLE GLASS

Evidence, as if it were needed, that while tech is a big part of our lives, we don't want to be imprisoned by it. The Google Glass threatened just that – 24/7 connectivity and the ability to answer stressful work emails even when relaxing in the bath. Great.

Ultimately, the failure of the 'smart glasses' came down to the fact that it was never going to be a big job to reach into a pocket and pull out a mobile phone.

### APPLE MAPS

When angling for a place in the Google Maps market, Apple launched its own cartography app, but users rapidly found the service to be inferior, with poor directional capabilities, a lack of detail on city plans and, in some cases, fictitious information. At one point, Ireland's Ministry of Defence had to warn users that a non-existent airport was showing near Dublin. Y'know, minor problems...



### SINCLAIR C5

The Sinclair C5 was a fully electric, low-riding vehicle that was meant to span the gap between car and bike. Owing to its low speed, poor battery life and the fact any encounters with buses or lorries were set to leave the rider paralysed by fear, production ceased after seven months.

Photo credit: amazon.com, Peppinuzzo/shutterstock.com, Hadrian/shutterstock.com, Steve Mann/shutterstock.com

# ADVERTISING IS

*an investment ...not a cost*



**S**ir Richard Branson always hoped 1994

would be a big one for his business. In the autumn of that year, the billionaire Brit entrepreneur launched his most brazen attempt at global domination: the release of his Virgin Cola brand.

In some ways, seeing Branson go up against the world's biggest drinks brand was the perfect boxing match. Not only did both companies personify their brand with the use of a posturing guy sporting a big, white, bushy beard, but the marketing ploy of Coca-Cola – to entrench a simple fizzy drink deep into the psyche of a global marketplace of customers – was very much from the Virgin chief's same school of thought.

What Coca-Cola mastered was the concept of subliminal advertising and low-level marketing. Consider the fact that, as customers, we're bombarded

with all manner of advertising messages – brands are desperate to hold our attention, and for the most part they do it very well. And yet, researchers have found that, in many cases, the most effective campaigns are the subconscious ones we don't even notice going on around us. That's why even a colossal brand leader such as Coca-Cola will spend £6billion globally on advertising each year.

Forget the showpiece ads, big promotions and special offers – we're talking about discreet in-store branding or billboards, simple page advertising, advertorials and TV activity with barely a bottle or a bubble in sight.

These adverts don't actually appear to be selling anything specific, yet they're embedding in our minds repetition and strengthening brand identity. That theoretical 'strength' translates into a level of comfort, familiarity and trust it's difficult to put a price on.

Branson knew this, and although he couldn't topple the world's biggest drinks company, his smorgasbord of Virgin brands – from gyms to holidays, financial services to internet connectivity – each involuntarily strengthened the others, which continues to today.

Our finest business brain saw advertising as an investment in the future, not a cost in the present... and these days he's toasting with something considerably stronger than cola.

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## What is the difference between buy-to-let and residential mortgages?

The buy-to-let mortgage revolution was one that the housing market constructed with all the speed and eagerness of a stunning detached property. It was perfectly situated (in a marketplace where rental prices were going through the roof), and as for the views, well, buy-to-let landlords could sit back for years, do very little, and watch their profits roll in.

At their peak in 2007, buy-to-let mortgage approvals hit 183,000, but increased taxes brought in by George Osborne in 2015 – amid fears buy-to-let mortgages were pushing property prices through the roof – have cut that figure back to around the 75,000 mark.

So while the trend of buying to immediately let out to tenants has waned, it should be noted that it's still an industry worth almost £250 billion a year... or, put another way, 3,800 mortgages are approved every month.

The key difference between a buy-to-let mortgage

and a residential mortgage is that, with the latter, you will live in the property yourself, rather than simply using it as an investment whereby tenants arrive from day one. As a result, with a buy-to-let mortgage, interest rates and fees tend to be much higher, while purchasers have to stump up a deposit of around 25 per cent (and sometimes as high as 40 per cent).

In addition, buy-to-let mortgages are often interest only, meaning landlords no longer profit from the likely uplift in value of a property. Naturally, with a residential repayment mortgage, an owner can walk away with sizeable equity should the market improve.

With a number of other tax changes – such as increased stamp duty on buy-to-lets, removal of a 10 per cent income tax saving owing to 'wear and tear', and an ability to offset interest paid on their own mortgage from the rental income declared to the taxman removed – the market for buy-to-let deals has become much tougher, matched with residential mortgages enjoying a three-year high last year.



BUSINESS & PROPERTY



PLANT OF THE MONTH:

# Lilies

Who doesn't love to be gifted a beautiful bunch of lilies? Among the most recognisable flowers in the UK, lilies are known for their stunning scent, their bold colours and their imposing size. And, thankfully, they are relatively easy to grow.

## When should I plant lilies?

Lily bulbs can be planted as early as autumn or winter, but they are perfectly fine to plant in early spring as long as they are in by the end of March.

## Where should I plant my lily bulbs?

Lilies will reappear year after year, so it is important that you bear this in mind when choosing where to plant them. As a rule, they like a sunny spot or an area with some light shade. However, brightly coloured lilies keep their colour better in areas with consistent shade.

## How to plant lily bulbs

Soak your bulbs in warm water for 12 hours before planting – this will save you 2–3 weeks of growing time | Plant your lily bulbs in groups of 3–5 for a more effective display | Dig a 20cm -deep hole for each group of bulbs | Spread a 5cm layer of grit over the bottom for improved drainage | Plant the bulbs pointy end up | Cover with soil

## How to protect your lilies

Lily leaf beetles are your lilies' biggest threat, with the ability to munch their way through their foliage and flowers when they are in bloom. Luckily, these beetles are easy to see and can be easily squashed with your fingers. Alternatively, spray the beetles with a mixture of olive oil and water.

## What do lilies represent?

Lilies symbolise humility and devotion and this is why they are the 30th wedding anniversary flower. They are also often used at funerals to symbolise that the soul of the deceased has had their innocence returned after death.

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# It's not ROCKERY SCIENCE

A rockery makes the perfect garden feature, adding structure and providing the ideal environment for alpine plants. Plus, you can recycle any unwanted bricks or tiles you have lying around.

## FIND THE IDEAL SPOT

Before you start building your rockery, you need to pick the perfect location that will allow plants to thrive. Alpine plants, the type you need for a rockery, need lots of light, so it is important that you choose an area that is not overshadowed by trees or shrubs.

## CHOOSE THE RIGHT ROCKS

Depending on your budget, you can either visit your local reclamation yard to pick whatever rocks you like (natural-looking ones work best), or you can utilise any broken bricks, tiles or even paving slabs that you have left over from another DIY project.

## CLEAR THE GROUND

The worst thing for a rockery is an abundance of weeds as they can weaken or damage it over the years. Therefore, you must ensure that you

thoroughly remove any existing weeds. Then you should add a layer of rubble on the ground, which will improve drainage and support the rocks. Finally, cover these with landscape fabric.

## POSITION THE ROCKS

Start with the larger rocks, creating a mountain shape, and make sure to point them in a variety of directions. Use smaller rocks and topsoil to stabilise them. Next, add smaller rocks in a horseshoe shape to create planting pockets.

## MAKE ALPINE COMPOST

If you want your plants to thrive in your rockery, then they need the right type of compost. Alpine compost should be made up of weed-free topsoil, leaf mould and horticultural grit.

## ADD PLANTS IN EARLY SPRING

Plants that love rocky ground include:

Alpine pink | Creeping thyme | Mount Atlas daisy  
Saxifraga | Fairies' thimble



GARDENING

# As BOLD as ice



**D**ancing on Ice glides over new ground as Ian Watkins and Matt Evers are unveiled as the show's first same-sex duo

.....

It's both encouraging and demoralising that ITV's dance reality show *Dancing on Ice* should court so many headlines over the decision to showcase its first same-sex couple – encouraging in the sense that prime-time television is embracing a move regarded as an industry first; demoralising in the sense that such a simple reflection of everyday society finds itself worthy of headlines in the first place.

Equality campaigners will also point to how long it has taken the terrestrial networks to reach this point, although there is still no indication that BBC big brother *Strictly Come Dancing* will follow suit.

The dancers in question are Ian Watkins – former member of Steps and better known by his stage name of H – and professional dancer Matt Evers, whose debut performance in the first week of January wowed the live audience and provoked widespread approval across social media.

The pair, who are both openly gay, have captured the imagination and admiration of the watching audience during an era in which LGBT issues are at the forefront of hearts and minds.

ITV's decision to feature the pair will almost certainly prove a ratings winner; but more

than that, it is hoped the move will set a positive precedent across other prime-time shows, reflecting the progressive values of acceptance, tolerance and respect that our nation has always found itself a world leader in displaying.

Watkins said after the first dance, "It was emotional, because I have wanted this for so long and it means so much to so many people, and the world is ready for this."

The judges – including Jayne Torvill, Christopher Dean and Ashley Banjo – were ubiquitous in their acclaim of the dancers, while John Barrowman broke down in tears in admiration of the duo.

He said to the performers, "I am emotional; it makes me happy on a complete multitude of levels, just because of seeing two men who represent someone who is like me, and to skate as well as you did... you've done it now, the nerves are out of the way."

Watkins and Evers are second-favourites to take the crown, though they have tough competition in the 2020 edition of the show, which regularly attracts viewing figures in excess of six million. Also present in the 12th iteration of the reality series are, among others, model Caprice, Paralympic sprinter Libby Clegg, presenter Joe Swash and former footballer Kevin Kilbane, with Diversity dancer Perri Kiely tipped as early favourite to lift the *Dancing on Ice* crown.

As for Evers, who is a former world figure-skating competitor, he credits both Watkins and the show's producers for taking such a positive step. "I just have to say thank you to the network, thank you to ITV and thank you to everybody at home who is accepting of this, because this is normal... this is absolutely normal. "This is my 12th series of *Dancing on Ice* and this year is special. This journey is going to mean a lot to a lot of people in this country and around the world."

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# LOCAL NEWS

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LOCAL NEWS



## No weapons found after “disturbance” outside school

Police have said no arrests were made and no weapons were found when police were called to a report of a “disturbance” outside Debden Park High School, Loughton, earlier this month.

The school alerted police at about 3.20pm amid concerns that a group of boys may have been armed with a weapon.

A police statement said: “We received a call from Debden Park High School shortly after 3.20pm to

report that a group of boys were causing a disturbance outside the establishment, and may be armed with a weapon.”

Officers carried out a search of the area and said no arrests were made and no weapons recovered.

In a statement issued last night, Debden Park High School said: “We can confirm there was an incident outside the school involving people not known to the school. Police were called and no one was injured.”

## New Lidl store set to open in the summer

Discount supermarket giant Lidl is to open a store in Loughton later this year, it's been revealed.

The new store will open for business on Church Hill, on the site of the former Homebase store, in the summer.

This will be the second Lidl store in the Epping Forest District.

An opening date for the new supermarket is still to be announced.

There are currently 760 new stores across the UK.



# Drug dealers jailed for more than nine years

Two drug dealers who took over a family home to use as a base to sell Class A drugs have been jailed for a total of more than nine years.

Chelmsford Crown Court heard how Rhys Morar (pictured left) and Shaquille Johnson (pictured right), both 27, took over the family home in Loughton in August 2017 to deal drugs in a practice known as "cuckooing".

Acting on intelligence, officers from Essex Police secured the home in Loughton in August 2017.

As officers approached the home they saw Morar and Johnson walking away from the front door, and then they both ran off.

Both were caught and searched and both were found to have mobile phones and cash.

Officers then searched the cuckooed property and found two bags of cannabis, wraps of cocaine and heroin, various mobile phones and drug paraphernalia,

including deal bags used to hold drugs and weighing scales.

Forensic analysis of the mobile phones also linked the pair to the supply of Class A drugs.

Johnson, of Caractacus Cottage View in Watford, and Morar, of Whittle Close, Walthamstow, East London, were both charged with two counts of being concerned in the supply of Class A drugs.

Johnson was found guilty following a trial at Chelmsford Crown Court, while Morar admitted the charges. Johnson was jailed for 54 months while Morar was jailed for 59 months following a hearing at Chelmsford Crown Court last month.

Following the sentencing, Detective Sergeant James Paget said: "It is the job of Essex Police to safeguard and protect the vulnerable and put drug dealers behind bars where they belong, as we have done in this case."

## Young people wanted for youth council elections

Young people aged between 12 and 17 from Loughton are wanted by Epping Forest District Council to stand in the next youth council election in March.

Successful candidates will work on the issues affecting young people in Epping Forest, as highlighted at the Epping Forest Health and Well-being Youth Conference.

Councillor Nigel Bedford, portfolio holder for community and partnerships, urged young people to apply.

He said: "If you're aged 12 to 17, care about what happens in your local community and want to give a voice to our district's young people, apply now."

"Young people are the future of democracy and our youth election 2020 is a great opportunity for them to represent their views on the issues that matter to them most. Not only will they learn about local democracy, be involved in exciting projects and make new friends, they will have lots of fun too."

To apply, go to [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/your-council/youth-election-2020](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/your-council/youth-election-2020)



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# St Clare Hospice set to celebrate 30th anniversary

The hospice that serves Loughton is set to celebrate its 30th anniversary later this year.

Since forming in 1990, St Clare Hospice has supported more than 15,000 families facing one of life's more difficult journeys.

Sarah Thompson, chief executive of St Clare Hospice, said: "30 years ago St Clare was founded by a small group of dedicated people who had the vision to support all local people facing death, dying and loss. I am proud to say that this vision remains at the heart of all we do today.

"We have grown to become a leading organisation in the field of specialist palliative care. But, looking ahead to what the next 30 years will hold for us, it is clear that

our support will be needed more than ever."

"We know that 2,900 people die each year in West Essex, and that of these, it estimated that 75 per cent would have been predictable. We also know that the number of people who die in hospital in our local area is higher than the national average – and yet the vast majority of people would prefer to die in their own home or a hospice. We will therefore need to step up to the mark and support even more people in the coming years to ensure that no one in our community faces death and loss on their own."

For more information about plans to mark St Clare Hospice's 30th birthday, visit [stclarehospice.org.uk/get-involved/30th-birthday](http://stclarehospice.org.uk/get-involved/30th-birthday)

## Primary school ranked seventh best in Essex

Hereward Primary School has been ranked as the seventh best primary school in Essex in the Real Schools Guide 2020, and the 150th best nationally.

Acting headteacher Renette Fourie said: "This is such a wonderful achievement for the Hereward community, which is deeply committed to working hard, always striving to improve and from this achieving great success. We are exceptionally proud."

The Real Schools Guide ranking system uses 44 different measures, with four main factors making up a school's overall rating:

Attainment (30 per cent) – This is based on pupils' Key Stage 2 performance, how many pupils reached the expected or even higher standards in 2019 and

how it compared to 2018.

Attainment for All (30 per cent) – This is based on how well different types of pupil at all levels of attainment do, as well as how well the school does at closing the gender gap – measuring how teachers are helping pupils do the best they can.

Progress (30 per cent) – This is based on whether all pupils, including those at different levels of attainment and from disadvantaged backgrounds, are making progress between the end of infants and the end of juniors across all subjects.

Attendance (10 per cent) – This looks at levels of absence, unauthorised absence and persistent absence at the school.

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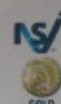
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# Recycling Rewards residents donate their prizes to charity

People living in blocks of flats in Loughton are among those who donated to charity after they came second on the Recycling Rewards leader board. Residents living in 1,500 properties across selected blocks of purpose-built flats in Epping Forest compete against each other through Recycling Rewards by taking part in activities.

Epping Forest Recycling Rewards is provided by Jump, in partnership with Epping Forest District Council, as the leading supplier of sustainability and well-being engagement programmes in the UK.

Each month the residents who earn the most 'green points' win a voucher for reducing, reusing and recycling as much as they can. Over the year, individual points all contribute to a community total,

with the top-scoring community winning the largest share of £1,750 to donate to a local charity.

Loughton residents finished in second place and donated £550 to the Epping Forest Foodbank.

Councillor Nigel Avey, contract and technical services portfolio holder for Epping Forest District Council, presented the charities with their donations and said: "It's great to see how residents in the selected blocks of flats are doing their bit to recycle more, as well as improving the quality of recycling by putting the right stuff in the right bin.

"We've seen recycling rates increasing in Epping Forest, and it's a real win-win to be generating donations for local causes while increasing the amount of recycled materials."

## Police take action to prevent disturbance

Police in Loughton gave themselves the powers to stop and search anyone in a certain part of the town after they received a tip-off about a possible disturbance involving two groups of people last month.

Uniformed officers stopped and searched anyone specifically to prevent and detect the carrying of dangerous instruments or offensive weapons under Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 Authority.

The order was in place in an area of the town including Traps Hill, Station Road, Roding Road, Oakwood Hill, Willingale Road and both Debden

and Loughton underground stations and followed concerns about people, potentially with weapons, coming to try to harm others.

Reasonable grounds for suspicion are not required to exercise a Section 60 search.

The order was in place from 3pm until midnight on January 20.

Inspector Tom Mitchell, from the Brentwood and Epping Forest Community Policing Team, said: "Loughton is a really safe area anyway but we want to keep it that way. We won't tolerate anyone coming here to commit crime or setting out to harm others and we'll use all the powers available to us to do that."





## News from THE ROTARY CLUB

of Loughton, Buckhurst Hill & Chigwell



We've had a busy start to the New Year supporting the Epping Forest Foodbank, Chigwell Riding Trust and the Youth Employment Strategy (YES).

We've also had some fantastic speakers, including Nina Goswami – LIFE AT THE BBC.

Our February scheduled speakers include:  
➤ February 6: Adele Rogers Spark (branch of Charity Worth Unlimited)

➤ February 13: Caroline Barlow, Art for All

➤ February 27: Tracy Mackness, Turning my Life Around: an Essex Bad Girl Turned Good

Our next fundraising evening is a quiz on March 20 in aid of St Elizabeth School at Tower Hamlets.

The next free monthly Memory Café in Loughton is Friday, February 14, for people with memory issues and their carers. It's an activity session with singing, a quiz, bingo and games with free refreshments. We hold it every second Friday of the month from 10am to 12pm at The Loughton Club, 8 Station Road,



Loughton, IG10 4NX.

Please contact Pesh (pictured) if you would like to get involved with Rotary in any capacity: email [pesh@londonresidential.co.uk](mailto:pesh@londonresidential.co.uk) or call 07973 166940.

## Holocaust Memorial to be established

A Holocaust Memorial is to be established in Loughton, Epping Forest District Council has announced.

The idea stems back to summer 2018, when the Epping Forest Holocaust Memorial Working Group was set up to look for the best possible location for the memorial, and the preferred option for the site is Traps Hill.

Proximity to Loughton Library and the opportunity to establish a small educational facility within the library over time, along with historical links to Holmehurst Hostel in Loughton where Holocaust survivors were sent in 1945, were key contributing factors in the selection of the proposed site.

To mark the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, Epping Forest District Museum will host an exhibition in 2020, exploring the stories of Holocaust survivors sent to Holmehurst Hostel.

Councillor Howard Kauffman, a member of the group, told councillors why the site was especially suitable.

He said: "A number of Holocaust survivors actually



came to Loughton and were guests immediately after the war in Holmehurst Hostel in Manor Road, so there is actually DNA here."

The Holocaust Memorial Trust will be consulted on the design and implementation of the memorial.

Councillors agreed to grant a 125-year lease for land outside the library where the memorial will be built.

Chris Whitbread, Epping Forest District Council leader, said it couldn't be a more fitting thing to do.

## MP is first woman to be elected Principal Deputy Speaker

Dame Eleanor Laing, MP for Epping Forest, made history last month when she became the first woman to be elected as Principal Deputy Speaker in the House of Commons.

The vacancy opened up after its previous occupant, Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP, was elected as speaker following the resignation of John Bercow.

Three Deputy Speakers are elected by the House of Commons. As chair of Ways and Means, Dame Eleanor MP will preside over March's Budget statement.

Dame Eleanor MP has the responsibility of taking the chair when the Speaker cannot. The role was created in the 19th century to cover absences of the Speaker.

Speaking in the Commons after the results were

announced, Dame Eleanor MP said she was delighted.

She commented: "Let me, on behalf of all the candidates who took part in the election, thank the clerks for the way in which they conducted it, and for the swift way in which they produced the results.

"Let me also thank all the other candidates for the courtesy with which the campaign—however short it may have been—was fought. And let me say to you, Mr Speaker, that you and I have worked very well together for a great many years, and I am honoured and delighted to be re-elected as part of your team. I know that you intend to do a lot to bring this place into the 21st century and restore faith in our democracy, and I look forward to doing all that I can to help you."

## Dentist campaign to reduce plastic pollution

Improve Your Smile Dental Practice in Woodford Green has recently become a member of the Refill scheme, a nationwide campaign to help reduce plastic pollution by making it easy for people to refill their reusable water bottles instead of buying plastic ones.

Practice manager Moona Malik is encouraging people to drop in and ask at reception for their water bottles to be refilled.

She said: "This is a wonderful scheme to help people stay hydrated, save money and help prevent plastic pollution. Refill tells us that 14 million plastic bottles will be saved each year if all the UK refill stations are used just twice a day. We are proud to be a part of this excellent initiative which will have global impact."



By downloading the app, users can search for their nearest Refill station wherever they are, or look for the Refill logo displayed at participating premises.

For more information visit [www.refill.org.uk](http://www.refill.org.uk)

# LVT FLOORING DURABLE, RESISTANT, STYLISH.

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LVT is also the perfect option for those who want a spectacular flooring design at a fraction of the cost of the real material equivalent.

**Just have a look at some of these stunning rooms...**

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HOME & DIY

## 5 uses for a PAPER BAG

If you think that paper bags can only be used for bringing your shopping home from the supermarket, then think again. These environmentally friendly carriers are ideal for a number of household tasks and DIY projects.

### MAKE DIY WOVEN BASKETS

You can never have enough storage solutions in your home, and these DIY baskets are ideal for smaller items such as keys or sewing materials. Simply cut your paper bag into long strips and then, starting with the base, start weaving. Finish with a handle if desired.

### CLEAN YOUR WINDOWS

If you have ever experienced problems in getting your windows to shine rather than streak, then a paper bag could be your saviour. Merely tear up your bag, scrunch it together and get scrubbing. You can also apply a light spray of white vinegar for increased sparkle.

### WRAP PRESENTS

With the sudden surge in nature-inspired design and décor, why not jump on the bandwagon and create some sustainable wrapping paper? Just cut up your paper bag, lay it out flat and then wrap up your item. Add some simple twine and a sprig of your favourite herb to create a unique and gorgeous gift.

### CREATE DIY LANTERNS

Whether you want to create an inviting atmosphere for your next party or just love to experiment with crafts and candles, this is the ideal project for you. Simply use silhouette stamps to create your chosen design and then pop an LED candle into your bag. Do not use a real lit tea light or candle for safety reasons as the bag is flammable.

### IN THE KITCHEN TWO WAYS

1. Ripen fruit. Place your fruit in a paper bag, seal and leave at room temperature for a few days. The result? Perfectly sweet and juicy fruit.
2. Make popcorn. Simply pour ¼ cup of uncooked popcorn kernels into a plain paper bag, seal and cook in the microwave for 2½ minutes or until the popping stops.

Photo credit: denise carbonell/Flickr/CC BY 2.0, One Good Thing by Jillee, [www.notonthehighstreet.com](http://www.notonthehighstreet.com), [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk), [www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com)



# Tranquil Dawn

Dulux Colour of the Year



Interior designers and homeowners across the country have been waiting with bated breath to discover what shade Dulux has named as its Colour of the Year for 2020.

And it couldn't be more different from last year's strong Spiced Honey shade.

## Why has Dulux chosen Tranquil Dawn as this year's Colour of the Year?

This cool-tone shade of green, which is extremely versatile, was picked to offer an antidote to an "increasingly disconnected" modern society.

## What exactly does this mean?

Put simply, Dulux believes that modern technologies have left us feeling chaotic and lost, unable to identify with what makes us human. Therefore, this calming and natural shade is supposed to remind us of our real selves and the natural world around us.

## How can you use Tranquil Dawn in your home?

What makes this colour different from other shades of green is its ability to subtly shift its tone depending on what other shades it is used with, allowing you to create many different vibes in your home.

## Design a luxurious living room

Combine Tranquil Dawn with a soft, sandy shade to create a living room that is warm, inviting and promotes positive social interactions.

## Create a calming bedroom

Jumping on the two-tone trend, paint the top half of your bedroom walls in Tranquil Dawn and the bottom in a soothing shade of bluey-grey. Not only will these make your bedroom appear more spacious, they will also bring the focus on to the bed, which should be the main feature in a room designed for restoration.

## Update your woodwork

If you don't fancy steering away from your preferred wall colours, why not paint your woodwork in Tranquil Dawn? This versatile shade has been matched with 36 other colours by Dulux so there are literally thousands of combinations you could go with.



# BACK TO THE FUTURE



FUTURISM, THE LATEST TREND IN HOME DÉCOR, TAKES ALL THE BEST ELEMENTS FROM THE PAST AND PLACES THEM FIRMLY IN THE MODERN WORLD

We may not be zooming around on spaceships just yet or wearing anti-gravity belts, but beloved 1960s cartoon *The Jetsons* certainly predicted some of the technology we now use daily. But beyond video calls and smartwatches, the futuristic family also had some very enviable décor in their Orbit City apartment, as style which is very much the basis of futurism.

Presenting a retro vision of the future, this trend incorporates many classic furniture pieces from the past – think the classic Eames lounge chair, the Thunderbird sofa and pendulum floor lamps – against a colour palate and textural backdrop that is extremely up to date.

Think stainless steel lighting fixtures and rich suede furnishings against a textural rose-gold wall, curvaceous fibreglass dining table and chairs with a huge overhanging light, and heavy granite coffee tables on textural rugs in ethereal hues.

A style that is utterly earthbound but also out of this world, it evokes all the best scenes from classic sci-fi... the *Star Trek* command deck if it had Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen at its helm, or a luxury condo on Magrathea.

So how do you incorporate a little stardust into your current home? Consider adding a little textural juxtaposition, such as natural stone sculptures or clay vases against embossed wallpaper. You can also invest in another current trend of the moment: cacti. These magnificent, verdant beauties stand out beautifully against a softer colour background and are reassuringly low maintenance as well.

In all, futurism isn't something to fear; it's to be embraced – oh, and by the way, it's here right now.





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# REWIND DESIGN

## Introducing the Laura Hodges Studio

At first glance, Laura Hodges' style sensibilities appear to originate directly from the New York mode of interior design. Consider Tribeca and Greenwich Village and you'll be close to referencing her take on a look that embraces antique excellence with clean lines, draws in comfort and durability, and closes out with more than a hint of feng shui.

And yet, not only does this visionary now operate out of Washington, but her inspirations are also more Vivienne Westwood than Val Kilmer, given that she hails from the earthy, warehouse-driven, post-industrial blueprint afforded by 1980s Manchester.

In addition, the designer has travelled to more than 30 different countries in pursuit of a mood modus operandi that has her talked about as one of the true emerging names, in a marketplace for ideas that twists and turns at every new room,

corridor or window display.

"My mother was British, my father Jamaican and my grandmother Norwegian, and with a passion for absorbing ideas from the places I have visited, you could say I have a wide realm of influences all crashing and colliding together," Laura says.

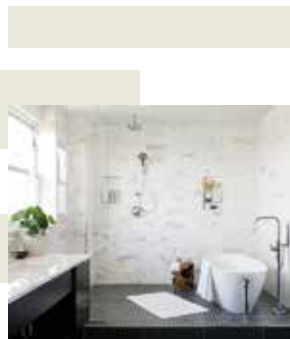
In a material sense, that produces a look that's bold and classic, using high-contrast elements that are clean and classical.

It brings in vintage, antique and eclectic, yet on a base that's flat, uncomplicated and crisp. The premise is to move art and furniture to the foreground against a backdrop that complements its lack of complication.

"People are really responding positively to such a bold, tailored and sustainable approach," she says. "There is a lot of fog in the world and to bring forward any environment that offers a bit of clarity must surely be good for the mind."

Touted as one of the stylists to follow in 2020, Hodges' studio is already attracting major clients, but with a look and image that anyone can replicate, her design is as relevant for Bolton as it is for Baltimore.

Photo credit: www.laurahodgestudio.com



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Act beyond  
Be beyond.**



KIDS

# BANISH BEDTIME BLUES

**If your little one's bedtime routine has become a living nightmare, consider sprucing up their bed so they'll never want to get out of it**

Every parent knows the perils of bedtime. The repeated calls to get pyjamas on, the never-ending stories, followed by the midnight excursions into your room which usually result in no one getting a decent night's kip. The trouble is, kids never want the fun to end, which is why turning their regular bed into a themed one could be a great way to make bedtime the final exciting event to end every day.

Deciding on your design and theme is really down to space, money and your little one's personal taste. And really, there is no need to spend a fortune when children have such vibrant imaginations. One of the cheapest and most obvious alterations is to attach wheels and a toy steering wheel to a basic wooden frame. Add a lick of red paint and you've got a racing car bed – licence not required! You can also erect a tent over the bed – because what child wouldn't want to pretend they were camping every night? Or perhaps a sail to transform it into a pirate ship?

If your little one is lucky enough to have a midsleeper (higher than a regular bed with the space underneath usually housing storage or a desk) you can afford to get really creative. You could add a slide, or even build a playhouse or cardboard castle, converting a boring old bed into a veritable playground.

But remember that, with kids, you sometimes don't need to do very much to bring magic to a dull routine. Just adding some fairy lights, glow stars or some cool new bedding can be enough to get them leaping under the covers, every single night.

Photo credit: matrixkids.com, Victoria Pearson for goodhousekeeping.com

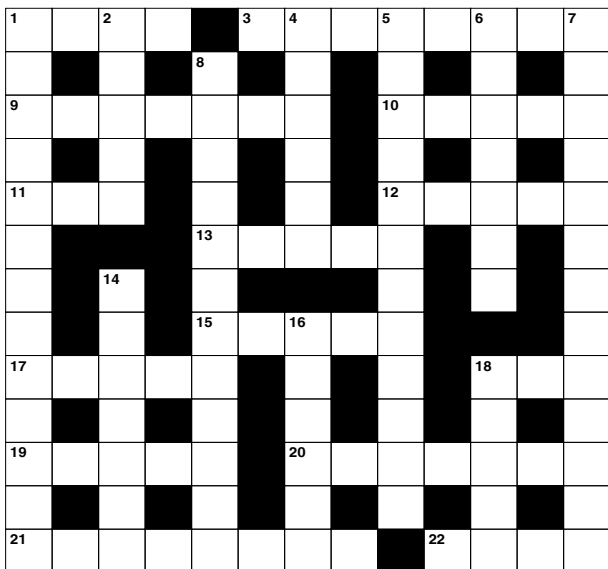


## ACROSS

- Creative disciplines (4)
- Unyielding (8)
- Shock with wonder (7)
- Happening (5)
- Cut of pork (3)
- Public square (5)
- At that place; not here (5)
- Stem of an arrow (5)
- Individual things (5)
- Popular beverage (3)
- Instruct; teach (5)
- Mark the boundaries of (7)
- Lenience (8)
- In a tense state (4)

## DOWN

- Misplaced in time or date (13)
- Motet (anag) (5)
- Small parrot (informal) (6)
- By chance (12)
- Mediocre (7)
- Wastefully; lavishly (13)
- Most perfect example of a quality (12)
- Get ready (7)
- Sour to the taste (6)
- Shy (5)



## DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ An octopus has three hearts. They need all of them to circulate blood through their bodies
- ▶ African penguins can swim underwater for up to two and a half minutes trying to catch small fish
- ▶ The cheetah is the world's fastest land mammal. It can accelerate from 0 to 60mph in three seconds
- ▶ Polar bears don't hibernate, but females enter into a dormant state while pregnant
- ▶ Dark patches around meerkats' eyes help them be effective lookouts by reducing the glare of the sun
- ▶ Unlike other cats, lions are social animals and live in prides. They can keep track of one another by roaring

## SUDOKU

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|   | 2 |   |   |   | 4 |   | 6 |   |




## Everything you wanted to know about leasing but were afraid to ask!

Leasing a new car used to be something that businesses did, and if an individual wanted a new car it would mean going to a main dealer. Times have changed along with buying habits, it is not unusual for people to shop for vehicles online without actually test driving the vehicle or speaking with a salesperson.

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For businesses, we can advise not only on the most appropriate vehicle for your needs but working alongside your accountant, if required, we can recommend the correct type of funding. For example, if you want to be able to claim your full annual investment allowance a lease purchase would be the correct finance type. If you have a limited company and you are considering a car for yourself, we can advise you on the tax costs to help you decide on whether to finance a car through a business or not and whether an alternative fuel vehicle is the right choice. For your commercial vehicle requirements, we can supply and finance anything up to 3.5 tonnes and we can also arrange for specific bespoke modifications such as racking, water tanks, drop-sides, etc... to be added as required.

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# DEALS ON WHEELS?



THE TOP 10 MOST EXPENSIVE **CARS** IN THE WORLD REVEALED

## TEN - £910,000 - Zenvo ST1

Assembled in Denmark, the Zenvo is a machine of incredible power, housing a 6.8 litre V8 engine with supercharger and turbocharger giving 1054 bhp.

## NINE - £1.1million - Ferrari LaFerrari

With 0-60mph in less than three seconds and on to 124mph in seven seconds, there aren't many quicker in acceleration.

## EIGHT - £1.2million - Pagani Huayra

Its unusual name celebrates the Incan god of wind. Unlike that god, it possesses a 6.0 litre V12 engine with two turbochargers for 620bhp.

## SEVEN - £1.3million - Aston Martin One-77

When James Bond wants to get away from or catch up with the bad guys, he should use this - 220mph top speed, 0-60 in 3.5 seconds from a 7.3 litre V12.

## SIX - £1.5million - Koenigsegg One:1

This is a Swedish megacar that looks more like a diecast model! It's low and wide and can do 0-60mph in less than 2.9 seconds, with a top speed of 280mph.

## FIVE - £1.9million - Ferrari F60 America

A stylish and classic look and bodywork, it's brutal along with its beauty - the perfect combination for a supercar. A 6.2 litre V12 gives 740 bhp and 0-60 in 3.1 seconds.

## FOUR - £2.6million - Mansory Vivere Bugatti Veyron

At last, we can hear you say - a Bugatti! Well, this one is a beast. An 8.0 litre engine, a top speed of 255mph and 0-60 in less than 2.5 seconds.

## THREE - £2.6million - W Motors Lykan Hypersport

This car appeared in *Furious 7* where it displayed its tremendous capacity and animal-like qualities. 0-60 in less than 2.8 seconds; a top speed of 245mph.

## TWO - £3.4million - Lamborghini Veneno

Possibly the most amazing-looking vehicle ever made, with a top speed of 221mph, and 0-60 in 2.8 seconds.

## ONE - £3.7million - Koenigsegg CCXR Trevita

The 1,004 bhp, 0-60 in 2.9 seconds and top speed of 254mph mean it's a shame there were only three of these ever made.



Photo credit: wsupercars.com, www.shutterstock.com - arda savasciogullari, auto-data.net, dimcars, Jia Li, PhatTai, Shaun P, Steve Lagreca, Vasilika, Zavatskiy Aleksandr



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TOKYO 2020  
THE NEW SPORTS



SPORT

## 2. SOFTBALL

In the latest instalment showcasing sports set to debut or return at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo later this year, we take a look at softball.

Five new pursuits have been added to the roster for Tokyo 2020, which kicks off on July 24. It will be the second time that the Far Eastern metropolis has hosted the Summer Olympiad... it would have been the third had the Second World War not intervened in 1940.

Softball, in essence, is a sport very much like baseball, and there will be six countries competing for the gold medal.

Last seen at the Olympics in Beijing 2008, the qualification process for Tokyo saw 2018 WBSC Softball World Champions United States, Europe/Africa winners Italy, Americas victors Mexico, and Australia as the Oceania representatives. Canada

qualified along with Mexico, while Japan is present as host.

Softball has seven innings, two fewer than

baseball, a bigger ball measuring two inches more in circumference, and a smaller bat. The pitch is also smaller than its compatriot and the pitching distance of softball is around 40ft from the plate, as opposed to 60ft in baseball. Also, whereas the ball is pitched overarm in baseball, an underhand technique is used in softball.

Returning after a hiatus of 12 years, following its removal for the 2012 Games in London, it was previously part of the programme between Atlanta 1996 and Beijing 2008.

The six countries will compete with a roster of 15 players each, with the 90 athletes helping to make up the estimated 11,091 who will compete in Tokyo.

Softball was invented in the late 19th century in Chicago as a game designed to move at a faster pace than baseball. Contrary to common knowledge, since the 1930s, the "soft" ball is actually hard... spectators beware.





Photo credit: Scott Kirkland/Fox Sports/Picturegroup/Shutterstock

# WILDER vs FURY II

**FINALLY, IN 2020, WE SHOULD SEE THE HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING BRAGGING RIGHTS DECIDED ONCE AND FOR ALL... BUT WHO IS YOUR MONEY ON?**

**H**eavyweight boxing's ability to put on an event has never been so polished nor lucrative, with each of three soldiers of the ring currently vying for the right to call themselves the best in the world.

For a long time we considered Anthony Joshua to have things tied up, but even in the course of him winning back his WBA, IBF, WBO and IBO belts from Andy Ruiz Jr in December, his claim to be the greatest is refuted by two fighters whose time in the background is finally about to change.

On February 22, Tyson Fury and Deontay Wilder square up, with a British versus American clash at the MGM Grand expected to offer all the thrills and spills of their first bout back in December 2018, when the fight ended as a controversial draw.

While the bookies appear to be coming down narrowly on the side of Fury, who has battled back

from drink and drug addiction, in Deontay there is a measured, mean and driven fighter who, in another era of the sport, would have been a worthy world number one.

The winner of that Vegas clash will have the right to meet Anthony Joshua, as the triumvirate of top-level gloved warfare finally look to answer the question we've been posing for several years now – just who is the best?

Fury will pick up a £25million purse for the February rematch and, should he win, the follow-on fight against Joshua is expected to net even more.

And yet, with the likes of Dillian Whyte, Joseph Parker, Oleksandr Usyk and Adam Kownacki all waiting in the wings, don't expect the monumental battles of 2020 to do anything other than lay the foundations for what many believe is an extended golden era of heavyweight boxing to come.



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WHAT'S ON

# WHAT'S ON

*in your area*

**Stamp Club Meeting**  
 The Dining Hall, Roding Valley High School, Alderton Hill, Loughton, IG10 3JA  
 February 11, 8pm – 10pm



Covers and postcards displayed by members.  
 Potential new members are welcome. Membership fees apply.

**Memory Café**  
 The Loughton Club, 8 Station Road, Loughton, IG10 4NX  
 February 14, 10am – 12pm  
 Enjoy refreshments, entertainment, memorabilia, informal chats, singing, bingo, etc.  
 For further information, call Pesh on 07973 166940 or email pesh@londonresidential.co.uk

**Valentines Dinner Dance**  
 Loughton RBL, 118 Church Hill, Loughton, IG10 1LH  
 February 14, 7pm – 11.30pm  
 A three-course meal and entertainment from Freddie Dean.  
 Doors open at 7pm with dinner at 7.30pm. The show will begin at 8.30pm.  
 Tickets are £30 per person. To book, call Alison on 07519 123829 or visit the bar.

**Sophie Heff Live**  
 Loughton RBL, 118 Church Hill, Loughton, IG10 1LH  
 February 16, 1pm – 4pm  
 Sophie Heff performing live from 1pm, singing songs from throughout the decades.

Booking is advisable. To book, call Alison on 07519 123829 or visit the bar.

**Wedding Open Evening**  
 Kings Oak Hotel, Paul's Nursery Road, High Beach, Loughton, IG10 4AE  
 February 26, 4pm – 8pm  
 The award-winning venue will be dressed in its wedding splendour for you to visit the event spaces.  
 The events team will be there to offer advice, tips and maybe give you a very special deal.  
 Call 0208 508 5000 to get on the guest list or visit [kingsoakhotel.com/events/wedding-open-evening-february-2020](http://kingsoakhotel.com/events/wedding-open-evening-february-2020)

**Oak-Tree Group of Schools Open Days**  
 Oaklands School, Braeside School, Coopersale Hall School  
 March 3 – March 6  
 Open events provide the opportunity for prospective families to gain a true sense of the all-round education on offer.  
 In-depth tours are guided by older pupils, who will tell you what school life is really like from their point of view.  
 Members of staff, current parents and pupils will all be available to chat informally over refreshments.  
 For specific dates and times and to book your place, visit [www.oaktreeschools.co.uk/our-schools/open-days](http://www.oaktreeschools.co.uk/our-schools/open-days)  
 If you can't attend the Open Days, contact the schools directly to arrange a personal tour.



## THE OAK-TREE GROUP OF SCHOOLS

# MARCH OPEN DAY WEEK



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## TUESDAY 3 - FRIDAY 6 MARCH

Four privately-owned local independent schools make up the Oak-Tree Group: Braeside, Coopersale Hall, Normanhurst and Oaklands. The schools are known for their outstanding teaching and excellent pastoral care. Visit the school websites for further information and to book a place at the March Open Days.

Book a place at [www.oaktreeschools.co.uk](http://www.oaktreeschools.co.uk)

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