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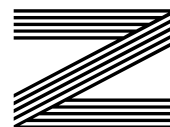
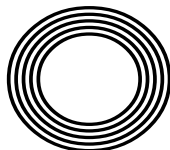
Pantone Colours  
of the Year 2021

Most bizarre  
excuses  
**FOR PULLING  
A SICKIE**

*Remembering a legend*  
**DAME BARBARA  
WINDSOR DBE**

# Lewis HAMILTON

Sports Personality of the Year racing into the record books



FREE

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# Editor's notes...

JANUARY 2021



Brett Shohet, Editor

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

I don't know how many of you are like me, but every new year I like to jot down my targets for the year ahead and what I'd like to achieve.

Looking at my 2021 targets I can see that, owing to the disruption from the 2020 global pandemic, most of them are identical to last year's. Having said that, I certainly wouldn't label 2020 a 'throwaway' year - rather, it was a year for us to slow down and be grateful for what we already have, rather than looking to build on it. I'm pleased to say that, despite this, we did branch out to more areas in Essex and Hertfordshire.

In hindsight, it was an important year, but one I'm glad to have left behind. I can't wait to see friends and family as normal, as well as hold face-to-face meetings for business. I'm looking forward to having that sense of connection back, which was definitely missed last year.

It was a huge source of pride for **VISION** to support businesses through their most difficult points in 2020 - equally, we appreciate the support, trust and belief that our clients showed in us.

I wish everyone a happy new year and, as always, thank you for reading.

*Brett Shohet*

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At the time of print all content in **VISION** was relevant and up to date according to COVID-19 government guidelines

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# The great Dame BARBARA WINDSOR DBE

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND CAREER OF THE QUEEN OF TV

In a troublesome, traumatic year, many saw Dame Barbara Windsor's death in early December 2020 as another profound low.

An only child born in Shoreditch two years before the breakout of World War II, 'Babs' made her West End debut at the age of just 13, in the musical *Love from Judy*.

As the Swinging Sixties swung, so too did Barbara Windsor's buoyant, bubbly, effervescent personality carry forward an industry. From appearances in films *Sparrows Can't Sing* (for which she won a BAFTA), *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and *The Boy Friend*, to sitcom work with *The Rag Trade* and *Wild, Wild Women*, her acting talent was as admired as it was, at times, underplayed.

Indeed, when the slapstick comedy of the *Carry On* movies came around, while decorated in her roles, Babs became somewhat pigeonholed.

Nonetheless, she re-emerged in the 1970s to return to stage work with *Oh! What a Lovely War* and *Twelfth Night*, among others.

From high jinks to heavy drama, Babs was an entertainment icon in her own right. Never clichéd, never disrespected, she came to represent an era of British entertainment in which our output rivalled anyone else the world over.

And in accepting the opportunity to take ownership of the Queen Vic pub in Albert Square in 1994, Babs' career reinvention proved a masterstroke. A boisterous, no-nonsense, independent pub landlady, she kept a lid on Walford's most tempestuous characters, and remains the only person in *EastEnders'* 35-year history to have tempered the problematic Mitchell brothers, Grant and Phil – her sons.

Of course, Windsor's infectious persona,

effortless charm and cheeky sex appeal saw her decorated with no shortage of admirers. From relationships with Ronnie Kray and comedy sidekick Sid James, she enjoyed a lively 21-year marriage with nightclub owner Ronnie Knight. The pair shared a luxury home on Stanmore Hill. She later married chef Stephen Hollings and wed a third time in 2000, to Scott Mitchell, bridging an age gap of 27 years. She didn't have any children.

Following her passing, the tributes came from far and wide for an actress whose time in front of the camera was really only a platform to a breath-taking life in showbusiness.

The sadness of her death was calmed somewhat by the fact Babs had been in unsteady health for a number of years. In 2014 she retired from all acting duties when diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Undeterred by the darker clouds that she sensed were about to gather, and ably assisted by her husband, she leapt into a new role of raising both funds and awareness for the disease, and continued to campaign up until her death.

While still seen out frequently over the past few years, the toils of public engagements eventually proved too much for someone who had previously bathed in the decorative sunlight of press and publicity.

Slipping away quietly, as she did on December 10, was perhaps the most inauspicious of conclusions to a booming, bustling life full of big personality. And yet, while we all take away slightly different memories of Barbara Windsor, our collective recollections will surely always be of an actress who spearheaded a golden era of British entertainment, always accompanied by a warm smile and mischievous laugh.

Photo credit: Shutterstock





# THE WORLD AROUND US *Part 3*

In the third part of our environmental series, we look at the key driver in the health and well-being of the planet. In this issue, it's the air above our heads.

In all the trust we place in environmentalists, activists and those passionate about preserving our planet, perhaps when it comes to air we need to invest the greatest level of trust.

On the ground, the world in which we live seems largely pleasant, and as far as air quality goes, our immediate environment is certainly much cleaner today than at any time since the Industrial Revolution, and noticeably so.

Yet in 2020 we are driven by targets – achieving a net zero greenhouse gas equation and an 80 per cent cut in emissions by 2050 being two of the biggest headline grabbers.

The problem for the preservation of air quality is that industry rolls on. We are a long way from the smoggy days of 1950s London, but air pollution still contributes to almost 10 per cent of premature deaths, while costing around £40billion each year.

Of course, the enforced lockdown in the spring of 2020 was perhaps the greatest exemplar of

how great our footprint is. Within weeks, scientists reported a 40 per cent drop in air pollutants. It showed that protecting our personal health had a hugely beneficial effect on that of the environment.

And yet, when back at full capacity, even the healthcare systems in England will be responsible for an estimated 4 to 5 per cent of our carbon footprint, with 6.7 billion road miles each year coming from patients and their visitors travelling to NHS hospitals and centres.

Never in starker terms was it clear that the play-off between the health of the planet and the health of the people who inhabit it remains a tug of war we will continue to see.

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# CARING FOR Cashmere

**C**ashmere is a winter wardrobe staple for many, providing warmth without weight. That being said, it is not a cheap clothing option, so you need to make sure you show your cashmere a little TLC to prolong its life.

**Shave regularly:** You may have noticed that your cashmere items are prone to fuzz balls, especially under the arms or where you carry your bag. Known as piling, you can remove these using a razor blade or lint tape.

**Don't over wash:** Cashmere does not need to be washed every time you wear it. In fact, you should only wash your cashmere clothing a handful of times over the whole winter season. Always wash in cold water – handwashing is best – and use a mild detergent. Softener is not needed as cashmere naturally gets softer over time.

**Ignore dry clean only labels:** Unless your cashmere item has embellishments such as beading or metals that mean it needs to be dry cleaned, cashmere should not undergo this process as it can damage its fibres.

**Lay flat to dry:** Cashmere is at its most delicate when wet, so this is the cleaning stage that requires the most amount of care. Simply lay your cashmere item down on a dry towel and carefully roll it up to absorb as much moisture as possible. Never wring it. Then lay it in a shady spot to air dry.

**Store away from sunlight:** You should store your cashmere items inside out in a dust-free and well-aired area that is away from direct sunlight. Before storing, always ensure that your cashmere is clean and free from dust and dead skin, as these can attract moths. If you are storing your cashmere for the summer, make sure you clean, de-crease and remove any fuzz before putting it away.

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# The best skincare ingredients for your skin

With so many lotions, potions, serums and supposed skin saviours, it can be a nightmare trying to decide what ingredients you should be looking for in your skincare products.

Luckily for you, we have rounded up the best skincare ingredients for 2021 based on the most common skincare problems.

## 1. Cica Cream – Best for sensitive skin

Cica cream, also known as centella asiatica, was traditionally used to heal wounds, but can now be found in moisturisers and serums owing to its ability to restore skin that is affected by redness and sensitivity. Rich in anti-inflammatories, antioxidants and antibacterial properties, this cream can also help prevent future damage from external environmental stressors.



## 2. Salicylic Acid – Best for acne sufferers

Salicylic acid is known for its ability to deeply exfoliate the skin and keep your pores clear, so using skincare products that contain salicylic acid can dramatically help reduce breakouts. This acid is also used in higher concentrations to treat acne scars, sun damage and age spots.

## 3. Retinol – Best for ageing skin

Who doesn't want to wake up with younger-looking skin? Hailed by skin experts as the anti-ageing miracle worker, retinol works by increasing collagen production, as well as increasing the rate of skin cell turnover. Added to face creams, eye creams and serums, retinol can improve your skin's texture, minimise fine lines and even out skin tone.



## 4. Glycerine – Best for dry skin

Glycerine, sometimes referred to as glycerin or glycerol, is a naturally occurring substance that acts as a humectant to draw moisture to the skin. This skin-saving ingredient is also a great cleanser, helping to remove dirt and oil without stripping your skin.

## 5. Hyaluronic Acid – Best for dull or damaged skin

Becoming increasingly popular as an ingredient in face-care products, hyaluronic acid is a gel-like substance that has the unique ability to retain moisture. Skin benefits include enhanced hydration, the prevention of wrinkles and healing properties that can reduce the appearance of scars.

**NB:** Most active ingredients take at least two months to show results, so be patient.





# Are you **READY** TO GO **SOBER**?

**A**lthough January may feel like the worst possible time to try to give up your favourite tippie (isn't this month depressing enough?), you may be surprised at how great you feel after cutting out alcohol for just one month.

What to expect when you give up alcohol...

### WEEK ONE

Undeniably the most challenging week in your booze-free month, you may experience some unwanted side effects in the first seven days, such as headaches and intense sugar cravings, especially if you are a heavy drinker. That being said, you will also start to see the positive effects of giving up alcohol, including: Better decision-making | More energy | An improved sleeping pattern

### WEEK THREE

As you are now past the halfway mark, the effects of not drinking will start to contribute to your long-term health, with benefits including: Improved vision | Better kidney health | A reduction in blood pressure, which can lessen your risk of future health problems, such as heart disease

### WEEK FOUR

The final week of your no-booze challenge and the effects on your health will be apparent for everyone to see and will include: Better-looking skin | Reduced dandruff and eczema | Up to 15 per cent less fat in your liver

### IS DRY JANUARY WORTH IT?

Although Dry January has become increasingly popular in recent years, is it really worth it in terms of your long-term health if you continue to drink for the other 11 months of the year?

According to Alcohol Change UK, yes it is, with this challenge forcing you to confront how much you drink and to take notice of the harm it can cause.

### WEEK TWO

After two weeks without alcohol, you will continue to enjoy the health benefits listed above, as well as a few new ones, such as: Reduction in acid reflux as your stomach lining becomes normalised | Weight loss | Better mental health



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# MIDDLE OF THE LOAD

*Fight the flab after 40 with these steps to prevent midlife weight gain*

**Cut the calories:** Though you may feel as active as ever, your metabolism unfortunately is not as efficient as it once was. However, cutting between 250 and 300 calories per day is enough to keep your weight where you want it to be.

**Walk it off:** Burning fat only requires a slightly elevated heart rate, which means exercising for a longish period while being slightly out of breath is what you need to aim for. So ditch the gruelling runs and aim instead for a brisk walk or swim.

**Use your gut instinct:** Beat the bloat with healthy bacteria, best found in natural yogurts and fermented foods such as sauerkraut, kimchi and kefir.

**Exercise before your eggs:** Studies have shown that working out before breakfast can burn up to double the calories – ideal for those who prefer to do their sun salutations as it rises at dawn.

**Go nuts:** We all know that fruit and vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet, but to maintain blood sugar and control weight you need to be getting plenty of protein too. From a handful of almonds to a bowlful of lentils, or even just a glass of milk, this is one healthy habit you'd be nuts not to try.

**Consider HRT:** In addition to easing the side effects of the menopause, there is evidence to suggest that hormone replacement therapy can help with weight distribution, which means less fat around the dreaded middle.

**Join the resistance:** You might balk at the suggestion of using weights in your workouts, yet resistance training is the best way to replace muscle lost through ageing. Pilates, yoga, squats and exercises using small dumbbells are all excellent and enjoyable ways to achieve that toned look.



## TOUT IT

Simple daily stretches that will transform both body and mind

Stretching is perhaps one of the simplest actions we make as humans, often without even thinking about it.

While great for suppleness, alertness, injury prevention and a break from long hours in a car or at a desk, it can even work as a weight-loss tool, and will immediately set you en route to daily calorie deficit. Here are five stretches that can transform body and mind:

### FOR THE TORSO

The so-called Cobra Stretch is a simple push-up that elevates the torso from a lying start. By extending your top half and raising your neck, chest and head as high as possible, you're creating great elasticity through the body.

### FOR THE STOMACH

Many of us have performed this knee-to-chest exercise, which serves the purpose of getting the legs on the move and the knee joints bending (or cracking).

### FOR THE SPINE

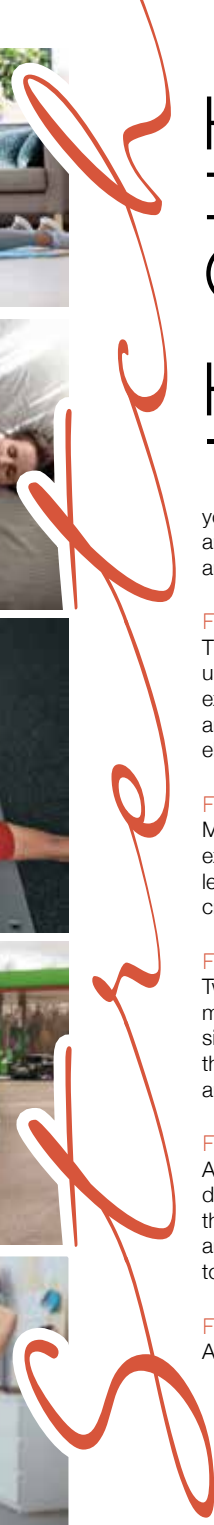
Twisting the spine to promote flexibility and movement is key, and is done by lying on your side. A good spine twist is great for strengthening the vertebrae, as well as firming up muscle mass around your stomach.

### FOR THE BACK

A simple back stretch can make us feel a million dollars, with the energy coming from the middle of the back. Extend the stretch by moving onto tiptoes and pushing your hands and fingers upwards towards the heavens.

### FOR THE NECK AND SHOULDERS

And to complete an extremely effective set of manoeuvres, combine neck stretches – which use a hand on the head to gently pull the sides of the neck tight – with a shoulder movement, linking one arm under the other in order to feel a tight, satisfying strain across the back.



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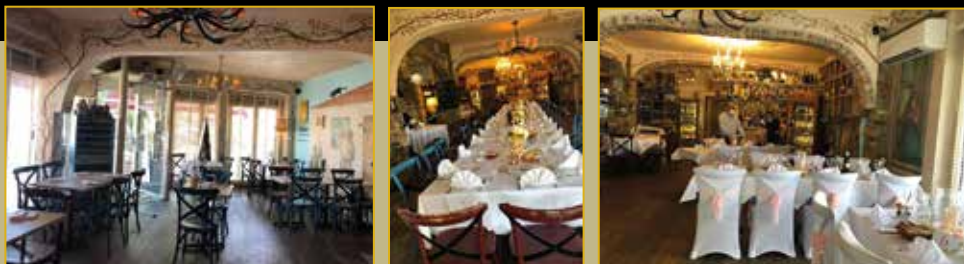
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*Are you addicted to*

**SUGAR?**

**D**id you know that adults are advised to have no more than 30g of free sugars per day (the equivalent of seven cubes)? To put that into perspective, a single can of Coca-Cola has 35g of sugar, 5g more than your total allowance for the day. So, are you addicted to sugar? Let's find out.

**AM I ADDICTED TO SUGAR?**

If you are worried about your sugar consumption or you think you may be addicted to the white stuff, then you should look out for the following most common sugar addiction symptoms:

- Headaches
- Feeling tired or lethargic
- Intense sugar cravings
- Muscle pain
- Nausea
- Bloating

**HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO BREAK A SUGAR ADDICTION?**

You will be pleased to hear that you can break a sugar addiction in as little as 10 days. This is because the more sugar you eat, the more you crave it. However, once you stop, or cut back, you will find you want it less and less each day.

**WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF GIVING UP SUGAR?**

There are many health benefits to giving up sugar, including:

- Increased energy levels
- Better ability to focus
- Enhanced mood
- Decreased inflammation
- Less stomach fat
- Better-looking skin
- Less risk of tooth decay
- Weight loss

**TOP TIPS TO HELP STOP CRAVINGS AND SATISFY YOUR SWEET TOOTH...**

Going cold turkey when trying to give up free sugars (sugars that are added to food, rather than naturally occurring) can be a challenge.

Fortunately, there are ways to make the process easier:

- Eat three meals and two healthy snacks a day
- Go for a run or a brisk walk
- Eat fruit in the morning on an empty stomach
- Focus on protein at every meal
- Try a fibre- and protein-rich chia seed pudding
- Chew sugar-free gum



FOOD & DRINK



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## Surprisingly FREEZABLE foods

**W**hether you are trying to save money, visit the local supermarket less or you are simply fed up with wasting food, you may be surprised to find out just how many different foods you can freeze.

### Bananas

A firm favourite in many households, bananas are cheap and cheerful, yet sadly they do not last very long. Luckily, over-ripe and fresh bananas can be frozen, either with or without skin, and used at a later date.

### Potatoes

If you buy your potatoes in bulk to save money but you are often left with half a bag of "sprouters", then you will be pleased to hear that you can freeze the humble potato. Simply peel, blanch in boiling water for five minutes, put in a bowl of iced water and leave to cool. Then freeze in airtight bags.

### Milk

If you hate waking up in the morning only to realise you've run out of milk, then buying extra and freezing it is the ideal solution. However, milk does expand when frozen, so make sure you decant it into a larger container first. Once defrosted, mix it and consume within three days.

### Cheese

You may not want to freeze cheese that you plan to serve with crackers as it can become crumbly. However, cheese cut into chunks or grated, placed in airtight bags and frozen, is perfect for sprinkling on dishes that will be heated, such as lasagne or cauliflower cheese.

### Avocados

Avocados are extremely nutritious, yet they can be expensive. Fortunately, if you see them on offer, you can buy several and freeze to consume at a later date. Cut into pieces or mash them before squeezing lemon juice on the flesh to retain colour and placing in resealable bags. Best for use as an ingredient rather than eaten raw as freezing can change the texture.



FOOD & DRINK



# GO NUTS!

With Shrove Tuesday fast approaching, what better time to discover a new tasty topping for your pancakes?

Check out our own version of a well-known hazelnut cocoa spread which is half the calories, vegan and packed full of healthy fats and vitamins.

### Super Healthy Homemade Hazelnut Spread

#### WHAT YOU NEED:

- 240g raw hazelnuts | 1½ tbsp pure vanilla extract | ¼ cup cocoa powder | ¼ cup pure maple syrup or unrefined sugar | ¼ tsp salt | ½ cup vegan milk (or normal milk if you do not need a vegan recipe) | 2 tsp oil

#### HOW TO MAKE:

- > Set oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6
- > Roast hazelnuts for 6–8 minutes
- > Leave to cool slightly and then rub off skins
- > Blend the nuts in a food processor until they are the consistency of butter
- > Add all the other ingredients and blend until smooth

Not just for pancakes, try using your homemade hazelnut spread in these yummy

recipes that the whole family will love.

### Hazelnut Hot Chocolate

All you need to create this dangerously addictive hot chocolate is cocoa powder, milk and some hazelnut spread. Simply mix all the ingredients together and pop in the microwave for 2 minutes.

### Caramel Cream Nutty Chocolate Lollies

The perfect little treat for tiny hands, simply dissolve 70g of hazelnut spread in a pan over boiling water and set aside half. Pour a thin layer into small, round silicone moulds and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Take out and place a hazelnut-sized piece of salted caramel cream in each mould and cover with remaining spread. Place a lolly stick in each and refrigerate for a further 5 hours.

### Nutty Iced Biscuits or Cake

If you are bored with your usual icing, why not use some hazelnut spread instead? Just warm some of the nutty mixture in the microwave for 10–20 seconds and then gently spread over biscuits or cakes. It makes a great cake filler too.



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# Isn't it funny, how a bear likes honey?



**O**n January 18, 1882, A. A. Milne, the creator of Winnie the Pooh, a character cherished by children and adults alike, was born. To celebrate this skilled storyteller, January 18 has become known as National Winnie the Pooh Day.

As well as being fun to read, these iconic stories offer some important life lessons that resonate just as well today as they did back then.

"What day is it?" said Pooh. "It's today," said Piglet. "My favourite day", responded Pooh.

As well as teaching the importance of seizing the day, this sweet correspondence between Pooh and Piglet helps to promote resilience and encourages children to put aside their fears and do things anyway.

"Hallo!" said Tigger. "I've found somebody just like me. I thought I was the only one of them."

When children are as young as two, they start to notice that people are different, so it is important that they learn to recognise and celebrate these differences, both in themselves and in others.

"A little consideration, a little thought for others, makes all the difference." (Eeyore)

Although known for being gloomy and depressed, Eeyore does sometimes give out little nuggets of wisdom, such as the advice above. Emotional literacy is crucial in your child's development and this life lesson teaches them the importance of being kind to others.

"Pooh!" whispered Piglet. "Yes, Piglet?" "Nothing," said Piglet. "I just wanted to be sure of you."

A life lesson that most adults today could benefit from, the act of being present in your children's lives, away from the distraction of work and technology, is sometimes all they need to feel loved and connected to you.

Photo credit: catwalker/Shutterstock.com



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# NATIONAL PULL A SICKIE DAY ON



According to UK statistics, the first Monday of February is the day when employees are most likely to pull a sickie. Although excuses may be limited this time round, that doesn't mean we can't take a look at some of the more inventive reasons that people have come up with over the years. You can't make this stuff up!

### “My only pair of work trousers is in the wash”

Not the best excuse, as what would you do if your employer simply told you to come in your casual clothes?

### “It’s my dog’s birthday and I need to arrange a party for him”

Even though we are a nation of pet lovers, we can't see too many bosses accepting this far-fetched fabrication.

### “My grandmother poisoned me with her ham”

Yes, somebody really did use this as a reason why they hadn't turned up for work. Although, to be honest, this might just be crazy enough to actually work.

### “I’m too drunk to drive”

Although this may actually be true, we are not sure that this reason would go down too well with HR.

### “I can’t come in today, the show I’ve been watching just released a new series”

Another truthful explanation, and to be fair, we've all been there. Damn you, Netflix!

### How you should call in sick to work

- > Contact your employer as soon as possible
- > Keep your reason brief
- > Be as helpful as possible
- > Make sure you speak to the right person
- > If you are struggling with your mental health, be honest and say so, but you are not required to go into details
- > Only text if your employer has previously okayed this method of calling in sick
- > Consider remote working if you feel able to



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# Grey DAY?

Revealing Pantone's Colours of the Year, Ultimate Gray and Illuminating

Across a year that offered so much but delivered so little, it's perhaps apt that Pantone has selected not one, but two Colours of the Year. Combined, they reflect the trials and tribulations of 12 months that have seen the very fabric of our lives ripped from under us; and yet we emerge energised, enthused and even perhaps enriched.

Pantone has chosen a combination of shades to represent these feelings. Yes, Ultimate Gray (17-5104), at first glance, appears stern, solemn and even echoes back to the styles and sensibilities of the 1980s. And yet, look closer, and it provides solidity and fortitude.

Now combine those emotions with Pantone's second Colour of the Year for 2021 – Illuminating (13-0647). At first a yellow that resonates with cheerful, sparky, spring-like abandon, it offers light, vivacity and thoughts of energy.

As a single shade, Illuminating works, but combined with Ultimate Gray the end effect is, in Pantone's own words, "A story of colour that encapsulates deeper feelings of thoughtfulness with the promise of something sunny and friendly."

It is indeed a combination that can reignite your interiors – consider a statement piece such as a grey sofa, with yellow scattered cushions. Or what about an existing white or wooden room patterned with a grey rug and yellow feature wall?

Grey and yellow, together or alone, will combine with almost any colours. There is a chic harmony that blends as much as it stands out – even in the bedroom, yellow curtains can offer a feeling of light on the drabest of days; while grey walls, white skirting boards and yellow pictures present a classy combination.

In summing up, expect the Pantone Colour(s) of the Year, Ultimate Gray and Illuminating, to drop into your consciousness, guiding you to happier and more optimistic times in the weeks and months ahead.

Photo credit: designer.com, diegoibanki.com



# BIG ENERGY SAVING WEEK...

- CHECK
- SWITCH
- SAVE

## JANUARY 18 - 24

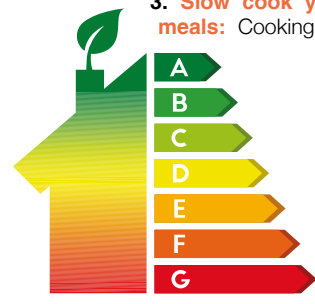
What better time to try to reduce your energy bills than in the week before payday when you are undoubtedly feeling the pinch after Christmas?

Plus, you don't even have to make massive changes to your lifestyle to enjoy significant savings.

Remember, all the little things really do add up.

1. **Use your microwave more:** Using your microwave is one of the most efficient ways to both heat up and cook food.
2. **Be water-conscious:** Whether you are making a cup of tea or boiling food in a pan, only use the amount of water that you need.

3. **Slow cook your family meals:** Cooking in a slow



cooker over a whole day only uses the same amount of energy as a lightbulb.

4. **Don't use metal trays in the oven:** Glass and ceramic dishes retain heat better than metal ones, making them more energy efficient.

5. **Keep heating rings clean:** Any food that has become stuck to your heating rings will absorb heat, making them less efficient.

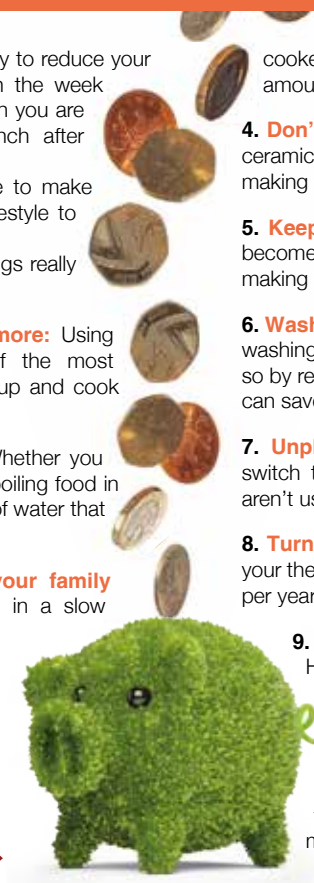
6. **Wash your clothes at 30°C:** 90 per cent of your washing expenditure is spent on heating the water, so by reducing the heat to 30°C when possible, you can save one-third on your washing costs.

7. **Unplug any unused appliances:** Unplug or switch the power off on any appliances that you aren't using. This includes charger cables.

8. **Turn down your thermostat:** By turning down your thermostat by just 1°C, you can save up to £80 per year.

9. **Use halogen lightbulbs outside:** Halogen bulbs use a quarter less electricity than incandescent bulbs without affecting their brightness, so are ideal for exterior lighting.

10. **Defrost food overnight:** Defrosting food typically halves the cooking time, meaning less energy used per meal.





# Viva

## DRIED FLOWERS

If there is only one interior design trend that you embrace this year, make it the revival of dried flowers. Cost effective, eco-friendly and, most importantly, Pinterest-approved, anyone can dry flowers and arrange a beautiful bouquet to be proudly displayed in their home.

### HOW TO DRY FLOWERS

If you want to prolong the life of a bouquet of flowers that has been gifted to you, then drying it out is the perfect solution.

1. Strip off any excess foliage and cut stems to desired length
2. Find a dark and dry area, such as an unused cupboard, and hang your flowers upside down using unflavoured dental floss or string
3. Leave for 2-3 weeks until completely dry
4. Take down and spray with unscented hairspray

### WHAT ARE THE BEST FLOWERS FOR DRYING?

If you are new to the flower-drying business, you may want a few ideas to get you started. The below flowers are ideal for drying, although you can dry any varieties: Pansies • Amaranthus • Artemisia • Lavender • Hydrangea • Yarrow • Eucalyptus (although not strictly a flower, this will add lovely greenery to your bouquet)

### HOW TO DISPLAY DRIED FLOWERS

Once you have dried your flowers, it is time to carefully arrange them into a delightful display. Below are four different arrangements for you to try out:

- Hanging bunches – tie a few bunches together using twine and hang upside down from a branch or an interior wall
- Wreaths – create a dried flower wreath to hang on your front door
- Mini bouquets – dried posy bouquets look lovely placed in a small vase or as a gift
- Statement displays – if you are looking to create a big and bold display, tie together dried flowers, herbs, leaves and grass. Hang over your dining table for maximum effect.



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HOW YOU CAN JOIN THE PLASTER EFFECT INTERIOR TREND

Lockdown saw a lot of us going back to basics, rediscovering at the same time simpler, less-complicated ways of life.

It seems that in the throes of one of the biggest cultural resets we've ever known, the lure of stripping back has extended right the way through to our interiors, with plaster effect a new design trend that relies very much on the simplicity of old.

The concept is clear – a modern, mottled, moulded, matt-effect plaster wall that looks like, feels like and responds to a stripped-back feeling of style and detail.

It uses, first and foremost, a base of plaster. For the fully organic effect, you can leave it as is, but many are embracing the idea of using chalk paint, old rags and a natural sponge to

treat, detail and add depth-driven colour to the walls.

The intention is to go rustic and to promote that unfinished look, and less is most definitely more where this is concerned, with over-decoration making the look too perfect and too polished.

A certain generation will shudder as they make comparisons to Artex, but this is a whole world away, and treated properly, even the very rawest exposed plaster can thrive as a brilliant feature.

And if paint and sponges aren't your thing, you can purchase plaster-effect wallpaper, to deliver devastating design dynamism to your walls with a simple splash of a bit of paste.

Whichever way you go about it, the end effect is something that's detailed, bright, totally unique and great for promoting space and feelings of clarity. You'll also find your walls are incredible durable, as the look can be maintained simply with the use of warm, soapy water.

Photo credit: Annie Sloan via homesandgardens.com, George Home via goodhomesmagazine.com, Matalan via goodhomesmagazine.com



# SPICY STORAGE SOLUTIONS



Who says that kitchen storage has to be boring? Check out these super stylish and space-saving storage solutions for your spices that will guarantee you reach for some added flavour every time you cook.

### TEST IT OUT

If you have a handful of trusty spices that you use regularly, then this is the spice storage solution for you. Simply purchase a set of test tubes, fill with your preferred seasonings and place in a wooden box that you could make yourself or pick up from your nearest craft shop.



### STACK IT, STACK IT

For those who want a practical and attractive option, why not store your spices in mini mason jars or tins that have been labelled using chalk paint? Perfect if you love the shabby chic look. These can be stacked on your worktop or stored in a drawer.



### MAGNET MAYHEM

If you want your spices within grabbing distance but you don't want them taking up valuable space on your kitchen worktop, try using magnets. You could attach metal spice pots to the inside of your cabinet doors, under your cabinets or in any other convenient location in your kitchen.



### TIC TAC ON-THE-GO

Ideal for taking spices outside your home, whether on holiday or into work. Simply pour your favourite spices into old Tic Tac containers, label and you are good to go. Make sure you thoroughly clean the containers first to avoid a minty taste on all your spices.

### HANG IN THERE

For another great way to utilise space underneath your kitchen cabinets, simply hang your spice jars directly on the wall using some small hooks and string. Glass storage jars work best for this so that you can easily see what spices are in each container.



Photo credit: littlebalco.com, seattlesundries.com, experthometips.com



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# SQUEAKY SCREEN

Nobody looks forward to having to clean their screens, and you may leave this frustrating task until you literally can't handle the smudges and streaks any more.

However, screen cleaning doesn't have to be so stressful.

### TV SCREENS LCD PLASMA

These delicate screens should never be wet cleaned; instead, you should dust them with a soft, dry microfibre cloth. For stubborn smudges, use a pre-moistened wipe that is specifically designed for use on electronics. Make sure you don't miss the dust caught in the vents at the back of your TV.

### MOBILE PHONE SCREENS

The screen of your mobile phone can get very dirty so it is important to clean it regularly. Start by removing your phone from its case, powering it down and then polishing it with a microfibre cloth. Rub gently with a wipe that is safe for use on electronics – for example, Lysol – to remove any germs and leave to air dry. Polish again using your cloth. It can also be

a good idea to polish and wipe down your phone case before reattaching.

### COMPUTER MONITOR SCREEN

For general cleaning, use a soft, lint-free cloth to remove dust from your computer screen. To remove stains, slightly dampen your cloth or a sponge and softly rub the screen, making sure no excess liquid gets on it. Leave to naturally air dry. Avoid using alcohol or an ammonia-based cleaner on your laptop screen as this can damage it.

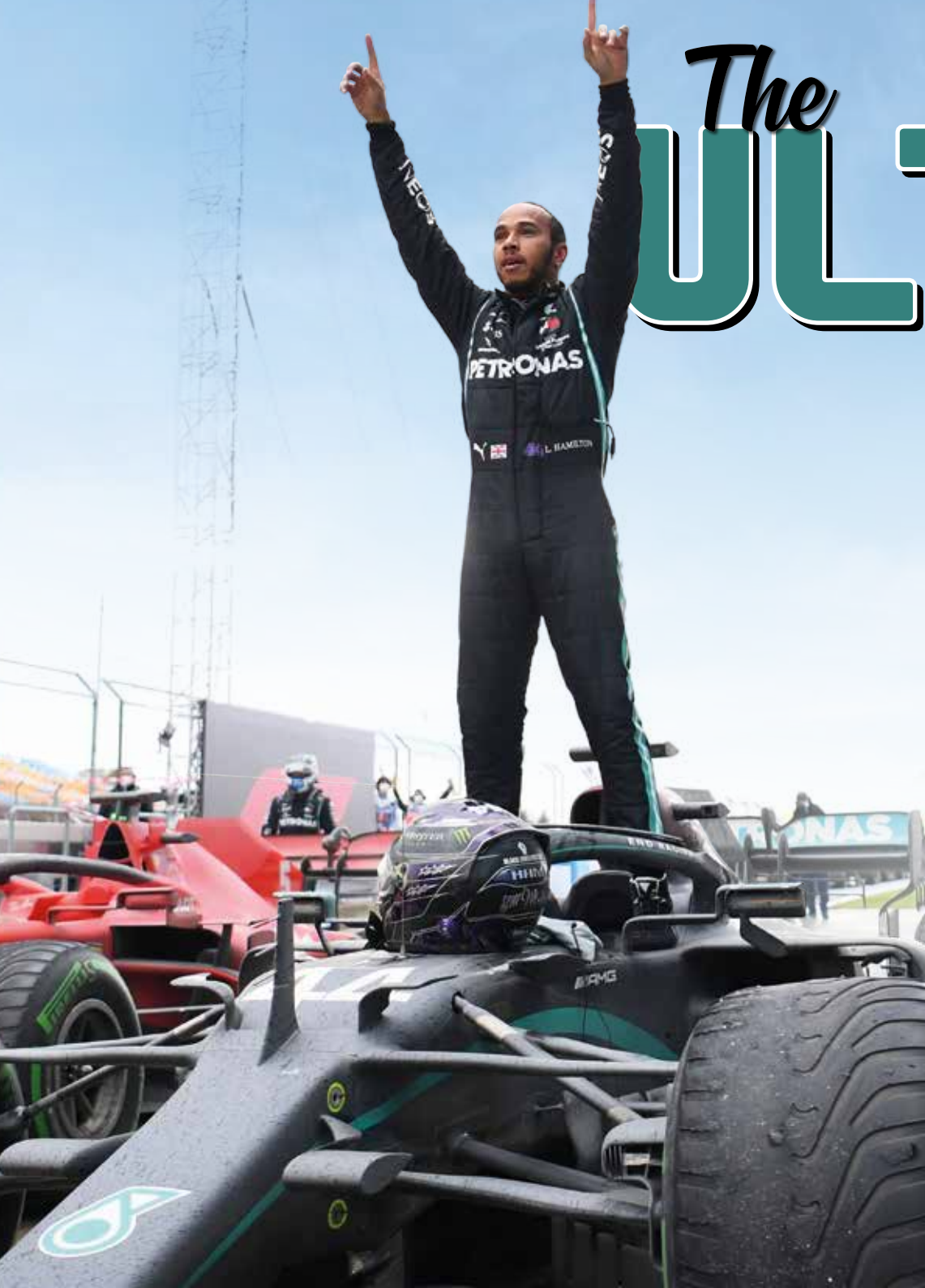
What **NOT** to do when cleaning any screen

- > Use aerosol sprays or solvents
- > Spray liquid directly onto the screen
- > Use your fingernail to scratch off stubborn stains

### NATURAL CLEANING SOLUTION FOR SCREENS

If you prefer to make your own natural cleaning solutions, this DIY spray is suitable for most screens. Simply mix equal parts vinegar and water, dab your microfibre cloth into the liquid and gently wipe the screen.

Photo credit: Chayaphon pond/Shutterstock.com



# The ULTIMATE formula

Lewis Hamilton's ascent to being the greatest F1 driver of all time

It's fair to speculate that Lewis Hamilton polarises opinion, even in the midst of being unveiled as the greatest ever Formula One racer.

His victory at the Turkish Grand Prix in the middle of November ensured the Stevenage-born speedster equalled Michael Schumacher's record of seven Drivers' Championships, having already surpassed the German's race victory total in October, in another season of unparalleled dominance. By the close of the campaign in Abu Dhabi on December 13, 2020, Hamilton's points tally was 347, a colossal 123 ahead of closest rival Valtteri Bottas.

The champ said: "To all the kids out there, dream the impossible. Seven is just unimaginable, but when you work with such a great group of people and you really trust each other, there is just no end to what you can do together. I feel like I'm only just getting started; it's really weird."

He may just be correct in that statement. At 35, the Mercedes driver has time on his side – the great Luigi Fagioli was 53 when he scored his final race win at the 1951 French Grand Prix.

Certainly, it's becoming difficult to remember a time when Hamilton's grit, speed and desire wasn't present in the sport. Many believe he truly announced himself at the British Grand Prix in 2008, driving for McLaren. Although he'd already clocked up six victories, dating back to Canada a year previously, his mastery of brutally wet driving conditions to win by more than a minute after starting fourth on the grid set a precedent where he was regarded as the driver to beat.

The world title duly arrived later that year in spectacular fashion, as on the final corner of the final lap in the final race, in Brazil, he overtook Timo Glock to snatch victory from the gearbox of defeat.

After switching to Mercedes in 2014, following a fallow period, Hamilton's synchronicity with the technicians and mechanics accelerated success beyond all expectations, failing just once, in 2016, as Nico Rosberg pipped him to title glory by just five points. The German realised he would most likely never repeat that feat, and promptly retired from the sport, never to be seen again.

Wind forward, and even finding himself struck down with COVID-19 at the start of December was not to dampen the determination and drive of Hamilton, a man who now looks towards new heights, the first of which will be making up the handful of race wins required to get to that magic total of 100.

As far as being the sport's 'Marmite man', perhaps it's Hamilton's £40million annual salary; perhaps it's envy at the showbiz lifestyle he has garnered for himself from somewhat simple beginnings; perhaps it's a generic perception across the sport that racers are only as good as the cars they ride in.

In reality, Hamilton gives short shrift to the detractors. He will discuss his knighthood, announced as part of the New Year Honours; he'll reference all those times he's arrowed across the finish line in first position; he'll note the 84 occasions he's started on the front of the grid; and, of course those seven titles. And he'll point to the fact that he is, truly, the greatest ever.



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# LOCAL NEWS

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LOCAL NEWS



Photo credit: Everything Epping Forest

## Man found guilty of manslaughter of 12-year-old

A 52-year-old man has admitted killing a 12-year-old boy after deliberately driving into a group of people outside Debden Park High School in December 2019.

Almost a year to the day after the death of Harley Watson, Terence Glover, 52, of Newmans Lane, Loughton, appeared at Snaresbrook Crown Court on November 30, 2020.

Glover pleaded guilty to one count of manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility and to 10 counts of attempted murder.

He was due to be sentenced as **VISION**Loughton went to press.

Harley Watson, 12, died after the hit-and-run incident outside the school, where he was a Year 8 pupil, on December 2, 2019. Several other people were also injured, including teenagers.

Investigating officer Heather Apen said: "I want to

pay tribute to the immense courage Harley's parents have shown throughout this investigation and, even though nothing will bring their son back, I hope [the] result will help them, and the other victims of this terrible crime, to try to rebuild their lives."

The school marked the anniversary of Harley's death with a special assembly and started a petition calling for school entrances to be protected by bollards to prevent cars from mounting the kerb.

A sculpture of three friends, in memory of Harley, was unveiled at the school by artist Heather Downing. It was installed at the entrance to the school's artificial pitches to reflect Harley's love of football.

A two-minute round of applause was also held in Harley's memory.

To sign the petition, visit [petition.parliament.uk/petitions/553305](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/553305)

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# Cricket club recognised as Team of the Year at awards

South Loughton Cricket Club has received the Team of the Year Award in Epping Forest District Council's (EFDC) Civic Awards 2020.

The honour, which was presented by councillor Richard Bassett in the gap between lockdowns after the last match of the season, is in particular recognition of the coaching given to some 100 boys and girls, aged from five up.

Cllr Bassett said: "Apart from a very skilful and accomplished side, I was impressed by all the members of the club. It takes lots of people to help run these clubs and it is a tribute to all their hard work."

"Having been a sport coach in the past, I know achievement does not just happen but requires lots of dedication, enthusiasm and passion from volunteers and coaches."

This year, the Under-12s team won the Essex-wide Brian Taylor Trophy, which means they will now represent the county in the England and Wales Cricket Board's National Under-13s championship.

Eight members of the club's Under-12s have also played in sides representing Essex and London, while other junior teams reached four of the Metropolitan Essex District Cricket Board finals in 2019.

# Veterinary student takes on Three Peaks

A veterinary student from Loughton has started to run 5km every day to get fit and raise money for an animal welfare charity, her designated cause for the National Three Peaks Challenge 2021.

Maisy Howson, 20, is in her third year at the Royal Veterinary College near Potters Bar, where she is part of the college's Raising and Giving (RAG) group.

Together with her flatmates, she is braving the cold and wet on her daily run in a bid to raise the sum required to participate in the 2021 Three Peaks, which she will take on in aid of the Born Free Foundation.

The animal welfare charity (originally called Zoo Check) was founded in 1984 by husband and wife

Virginia McKenna and Bill Travers who, as actors, starred in the 1966 film *Born Free*. The film had a profound effect on McKenna and Travers, who, with their son Will Travers, devoted much of the rest of their lives to animal conservation and welfare.

Maisy said: "Born Free is a great charity which promotes animal safety and rescues animals from captivity. My friends and I have a heart for animal welfare but I'm not usually a keen runner, so running 5km every day in all weathers is a real challenge for me."

To donate to Maisy for Born Free, visit [justgiving.com/fundraising/maisyspage](http://justgiving.com/fundraising/maisyspage)



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# New gloves let young boxers get back in the ring

After Club KO community boxing gym had to throw away its gloves for COVID-19-related hygiene reasons, Buckhurst Hill Parish Council (BHPC) awarded it a grant of £500 to buy 20 pairs of boxing gloves for children who cannot afford a new pair. Husband and wife team Noel and Penny Tierney, who run Club KO, have introduced an eight-week boxing course to help young people whose emotional or physical health has suffered during the pandemic. "The course will be running throughout the year and

we hope to reach as many children as possible," said Mrs Tierney. Essex Youth Service and Essex County Council have funded, respectively, 20 half-price places and 10 places for vulnerable children on the course. BHPC chairman Mrs Smruti Patel, who presented the club with a cheque for £500 on Monday, December 7, said: "It's a great cause and they do amazing work there." For course details, email [nptierney@sky.com](mailto:nptierney@sky.com)

# Lottie takes on marathon month of baking



A nine-year old-girl from Loughton is undertaking a month-long baking fundraiser in memory of her beloved grandmother in aid of the local hospice that cared for her. Lottie Rayner and her mother, Keeley Rayner, began the baking fundraiser for St Clare Hospice when her grandmother, Sue Rayner, was admitted to the hospice's Inpatient Unit. Sue died on Tuesday, November 24, 2020, but Lottie decided to continue baking and fundraising up until December 24. Lottie baked gingerbread angel biscuits and managed to raise £900 in less than 48 hours. Her new target was to raise £2,000 by Christmas Eve. Keeley said: "Lottie spoke with her nanny the day before she passed away to proudly tell her that she had managed to raise more than £900 for St Clare's. Sue was so proud of Lottie, and what she was doing for the hospice." Keeley was full of praise for the hospice. She said: "Although it was difficult because of COVID-19, and having to limit visitors, the hospice was amazing because it meant that Sue was cared for with such dignity and her family and friends could spend precious time with her." You can donate to Lottie's fundraiser at [paypal.com/pools/c/8uxTe7sj17](https://www.paypal.com/pools/c/8uxTe7sj17)

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## Community Service medal for firefighter



A Watch Manager from Loughton Fire Station was presented with a Community Service medal by Epping Forest District (EFDC) Councillor Richard Bassett.

Bradley Reynolds, who has worked at Loughton Fire Station for more than 20 years, was praised by Cllr Bassett for "making a significant and dedicated safety contribution to the community he both protects and calls home".

Presenting the medal as part of EFDC's Civic Awards 2020, Cllr Bassett paid tribute to "the oldest fire service traditions to save life, prevent injury and render humanitarian services [which] are clearly at the fore of Bradley's commitment to serve and protect our community".

Waltham Abbey Fire Station Manager Steve Wintrip said: "Brad reflects the best values and standards of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and continues to be motivated, enthusiastic and, most importantly, a professional, capable firefighter."

## Students rise to the challenge

Eight students from Debden Park High School succeeded in turning £50 into £3,200 as part of the Haven House Enterprise Challenge in partnership with Galliard Homes.

The challenge was to raise as much money as possible in 14 weeks for Haven House Children's Hospice, starting with £50.

Calling themselves the Debden Dragons, the students organised doughnut sales, chocolate raffles and a day where pupils were encouraged to wear a colour representing Haven House.

Deputy director of sixth form Laura Sandland-Jones said: "We had many ups and downs along the way. "The ups were the enthusiasm from the students and

their imagination. The downs were events having to be cancelled owing to unforeseen circumstances, but the girls rallied round and changed their approach to make sure that the money was raised."

Lara Dibbin and Eloise Judd won, respectively, the Mentor's Award and a week's work experience with Galliard Homes.

## Prosecution for under-age knife sale

A store owner in Loughton pleaded guilty to the sale of a knife to an under-age customer recently.

Hardip Hundal, owner of Valley Hill Builders Merchant, was sentenced to a 12-month conditional discharge and ordered to pay £750 costs, at Southend Magistrates' Court.

The conviction followed a test purchase carried out by Essex Trading Standards (ETS) officers in July 2019, one of several such operations made in the area in conjunction with Epping Forest District Council and Essex Police.

On July 16, 2019, ETS officers carried out a test purchase at the store with a 16-year-old volunteer, following a previous test purchase of a knife in May 2019.

After the first under-age sale, Mr Hundal and a store employee received a written warning from ETS and were advised on how to comply with the law in future.

Essex County Councillor Susan Barker said that the sentence "sends a clear message to individuals that continue to break the law".

Cllr Barker said: "The importance of protecting young people, in ensuring that retailers do not sell knives to those under the age of 18, cannot be overstated. To achieve this, effective enforcement is absolutely key."

A statement from Essex County Council said: "Essex Trading Standards take a graduated approach, and when advice and guidance is found to be ineffective, then it becomes necessary to act resolutely against those who make illegal sales of knives."



Photo credit: JimjOwill/Shutterstock.com



LOCAL NEWS



## Youth council launches well-being project

LOCAL NEWS



Epping Forest Youth Council (EFYC) has been given the green light to deliver workshops, produce a film and create a website to help build young people's emotional resilience, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project, to be known as MiLife C19, will include workshops to secondary schools, a film and a website offering advice on supporting young people's health and well-being throughout the Epping Forest area.

MiLife C19 has been devised from the findings of #YourSay, an EFYC survey into health and well-being, which the young council members presented to Epping Forest District Council's (EFDC) Cabinet in October 2020.

EFDC Cabinet member Councillor Holly Whitbread said: "This new well-being section will be a great addition to the MiLife project.

"I'm so thankful to the youth council for bringing the mental health and well-being of our young people to our attention, and proud of them for developing their own questions and concerns around well-being to create various tools to support their peers across the district."

## Nominate buildings for Design Awards 2021

There is just a few weeks to go to send in nominations for Loughton Town Council's (LTC) Building Design Awards 2021.

LTC is calling on individuals, groups, architects and developers to suggest the new buildings, or alterations to existing buildings, that they think are noteworthy for their quality, innovation, attractiveness and sustainability.

The aim of the awards is to give public recognition to recent building schemes that make a positive contribution to the local environment and enhance the town.

The projects must have been completed in the last two years and can include residential, community, educational or commercial buildings, as well as extensions, conversions and restorations.

Previous awards have gone to the Crate Business Centre, Borders Crescent and Staples Road Primary School, among others

The closing date for nominations is January 31.

Nomination forms are available from: [www.loughton-tc.gov.uk](http://www.loughton-tc.gov.uk)

## Pupils rise to the challenge to support children's hospice

Young entrepreneurs at a school in Woodford Green have raised nearly £2,000 for a children's hospice.

At the start of the autumn term, Year 6 students at Avon House Preparatory School were challenged to come up with a community enterprise idea to enable them to turn £10 into £150 to donate to charity.

After analysing existing business ideas and choosing projects that were realistic and achievable in the current climate, pupils wrote business plans and came up with project ideas that could be started with £10. They included personalised bookmarks, second-hand clothing sales, photo editing and storytelling.

The total proceeds from across the year group was £1,784, and this will be forwarded to Haven House who help children with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions.

Maria O'Donnell, marketing communications lead at Avon House, said: "We are very proud of our entrepreneurial Year 6s and we hope they found the project a useful exercise in developing their future business skills."



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News from

## THE ROTARY CLUB

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LOCAL NEWS



Teresa Watts, Redbridge Pearly Queen, visited our Loughton hub recently with a person in need from Redbridge, because they don't have anything like the non-judgemental service we provide. No assessment or referral needed; just drop in. It exemplifies our ethos of treating people humanely with dignity and respect.

Teresa said: "I met Pesh, the founder of 3food4u today. Families are asked their name at the door and are made to feel welcome; the hall is set out like a shop and families are assisted on each table by a smiling volunteer. The families are able to make a choice on what food they take; they have fresh and dry produce, bakery, items for personal care and a clothes section. They also have a table full of sandwiches and cooked packaged food made by chefs who volunteer their time.

"If families are looking for coats, etc, sizes are taken and they are given to them the following week, including equipment for kids. On the way out they are given a choice of flowers from M&S. Parents were clearly overwhelmed and given reassurance from the volunteers.

"What an amazing contribution to our society. 3food4u will help families from outside the borough and need no referral.

"Well done to everyone involved. I was humbled to see the difference you are making to people's lives."

To donate, visit [www.give.net/3food4u](http://www.give.net/3food4u)  
Please contact Pesh if you would like to get involved with Rotary or 3food4u in any capacity. Email [pesh@londonresidential.co.uk](mailto:pesh@londonresidential.co.uk) or call 07973 166940.

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## Jimmy's Contact Centre closes

A centre that provides a 'safe space' for estranged families to meet is to close after 25 years.

Jimmy's Contact Centre, which was based at St James' URC Church, Buckhurst Hill, was run by volunteers.

The centre was founded by former church elder, Ros Mills, who wanted to provide a space where a non-resident parent could meet his or her children, often the only time they were able to do so.

Some 300 families used the service, which welcomed mainly fathers on a monthly basis, enabling them to maintain contact with their children after a family break-up.

Rory Worthington, a volunteer with Jimmy's, said:

"We are indebted to St James' URC for providing space for the centre to open two afternoons a month, not charging for heating or lighting [and] paying our annual fees."

Mr Worthington explained that without the church's support, the centre would not have survived for so long and that the demands of getting re-accreditation meant that "a useful service to distraught families" has come to an end.

He said: "A decision to close [has been] made, as the numbers of families were diminishing, owing to lack of legal aid, and most referrals were self-referrals, which could only work if both parties were willing to come to a contact centre.

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# JANUARY BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH: *Carnation*

If you were born in January, then your birth flower is the delicately scented and long-lasting carnation. Commonly gifted on Mother's Day, carnations are one of the easiest flower varieties to care for.

## WHAT DOES A CARNATION SYMBOLISE?

Carnations come in many shades, and each colour has a different meaning:

- > **LIGHT RED** carnations symbolise admiration
- > **DARK RED** carnations represent deep love and affection
- > **WHITE** carnations are used to convey purity and luck
- > **PINK** carnations are used to show gratitude as well as to remember the deceased
- > **YELLOW** carnations convey disappointment and rejection
- > **PURPLE** carnations stand for unpredictability

## WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOUR PERSONALITY?

If your birth flower is the carnation, you are said to be fiercely loyal and have unrivalled love for your family and friends. You are also strongly motivated and will work hard to gain a position of power in your career.

## HOW CAN I GROW CARNATIONS?

Carnations are relatively easy to grow, although they do need between four and six hours of direct sunlight a day. For best results, plant in drained soil that is slightly alkaline and fertilise regularly. Tall varieties may need support to hold up their stems as they grow. You can grow carnations in flower beds or in containers such as pots.

## DO CARNATIONS COME BACK YEAR AFTER YEAR?

Carnations come in annual, biennial and perennial types, so depending on the amount of space you have, you are guaranteed to be able to find a variety to fit your garden.

Perennial carnation seeds should be planted in late autumn to early spring and annual carnation seeds can be sown directly in the ground from April to May or in shelter from as early as March.





# Horticulture Heroes:

There's nothing quite like learning building knowledge from the ground up, and for a young Ellie Harrison, the wildlife, ecology and wide-open spaces of Zimbabwe provided a fertile and expansive canvas on which to construct her career.

From kids' TV to wildlife programming and on to the BBC, stopping off along the way at the Chelsea Flower Show, the now-43-year-old's focus has always been in the embracing of the natural world, even in home surroundings.

"I'm not sure where the phrase 'wildlife gardening' came from, but it requires little explanation," says the presenter and broadcaster. "As much as I admire the ingenuity and craft so many of us invest in our green spaces at home, I sometimes feel it is a look that can be a bit too contrived and planned.

"Wildlife gardening is really about embracing living landscapes. It doesn't matter if you're talking about

a 100ft lawn or something as simple as a flower bed, the point is that our spaces have all the life and variety that nature and the countryside provide."

At the heart of it is having the right platforms for birds, bees and insects. That will stimulate the impact of genuine wildlife in an area that might be bereft of anything noticeable.

"It's a case of making natural and organic decisions to decorate your space. Instead of using a dull wooden fence, invest in a living boundary that can feature bamboo, twine, flowers, scent and berries."

Similarly, a pond can be used to harvest natural life such as newts, tadpoles, frogs, toads and insects, rather than fish imported in from the local pet shop.

"The exciting thing about wildlife gardening is the creation of a world that grows and evolves in front of you, and all by itself. The phrase 'how nature intended' never seemed so pertinent."

Photo credit: bbc.co.uk

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### TURNER AND HOOCH

Clumsy, slobbering and probably quite smelly too, it's no wonder that Tom Hanks' detective character, Scott Turner, is reluctant to take on a canine as a companion. Played by Beasley the French Mastiff, Hooch becomes an integral part of Turner's criminal-catching team, winning over the cynical cop's heart in the process.

### BABE

The eponymous piglet in one of the most beloved children's tales, Babe single-trotteredly transformed our perception of the humble hog. Proving to be as useful as his best friend Fly, the sheepherding collie, the sweet little piglet proves to have more heart, courage and kindness than any of his human counterparts. Oink oink.

### SHADOWFAX

Though there were many weird and wondrous creatures in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, it is surely Shadowfax, Gandalf's trusty steed, who is the most desirable. A majestic and wild white beauty, Tolkien's creation refuses to be bridled, carrying only the wise old wizard on his back. He is surely the bravest bronco we would all love to have in our lives.

### UGGIE

If silent French comedy *The Artist* was the unexpected hit of the 2011 film season, then surely Uggie, the flick's beloved Jack Russell, was its star. Rescued from a dog pound by animal trainer Omar Von Muller, the adorable and highly intelligent Uggie became an overnight sensation, winning the Palm Dog Award at the Cannes Film Festival. Though Uggie retired the following year and sadly passed away in 2015, his legacy will forever live on in this Oscar-winning masterpiece.



Photo credit: nedsandeyland.com, imdb.com, youtube.com, canyon-news.com



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# The PROPERTY Bug?

HOW COVID-19 HAS TRANSFORMED NOT JUST OUR LIVES, BUT THE PROPERTY MARKET TOO

While so much of our COVID-19 focus in 2020 was on health, employment and income, the pandemic's impact on the property market has been extreme, with further fluctuations due over the next few months as the industry reflects the variable conditions we find ourselves living under.

Certainly in the initial phase of lockdown, the immediate effect on our bricks and mortar was a rush of

home improvements akin to watching a series of *DIY SOS* back to back.

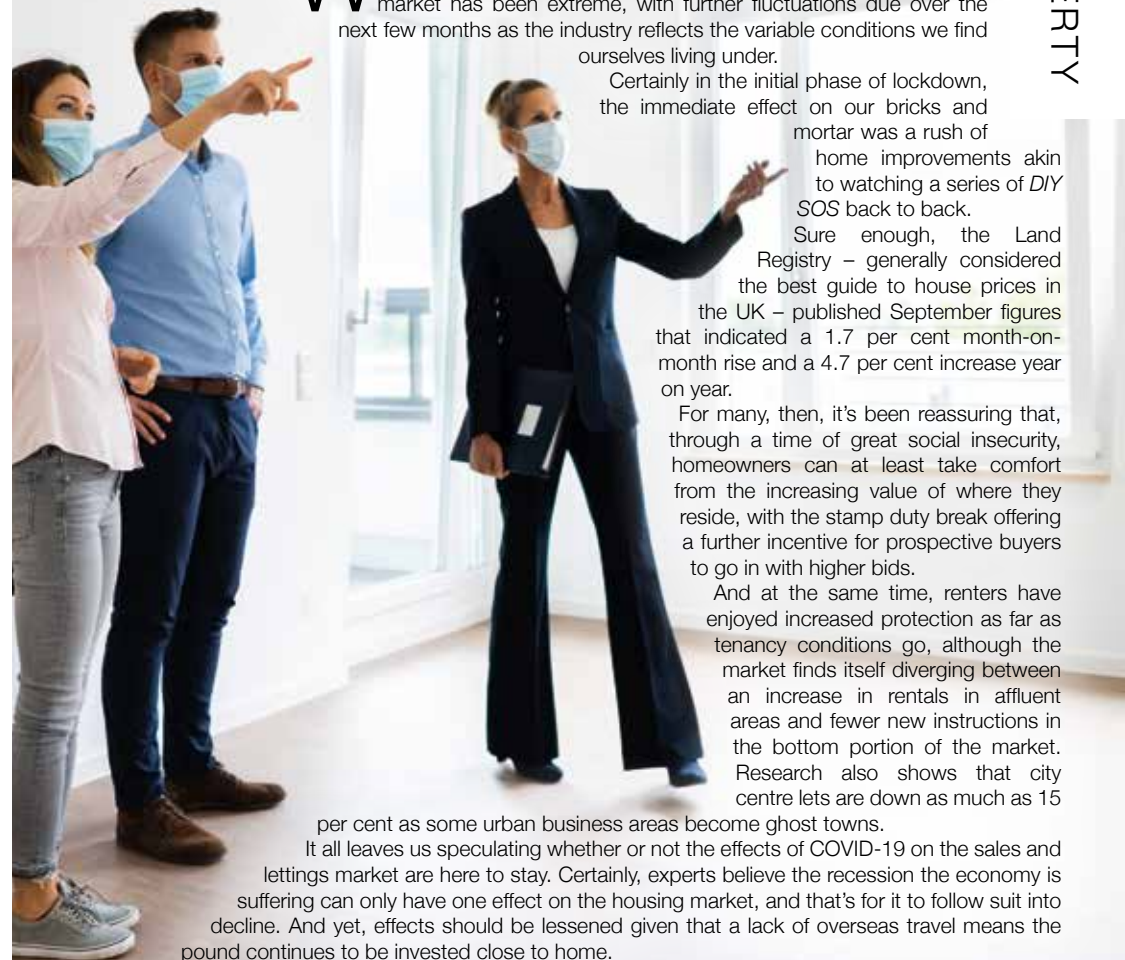
Sure enough, the Land Registry – generally considered the best guide to house prices in the UK – published September figures that indicated a 1.7 per cent month-on-month rise and a 4.7 per cent increase year on year.

For many, then, it's been reassuring that, through a time of great social insecurity, homeowners can at least take comfort from the increasing value of where they reside, with the stamp duty break offering a further incentive for prospective buyers to go in with higher bids.

And at the same time, renters have enjoyed increased protection as far as tenancy conditions go, although the market finds itself diverging between an increase in rentals in affluent areas and fewer new instructions in the bottom portion of the market. Research also shows that city centre lets are down as much as 15

per cent as some urban business areas become ghost towns.

It all leaves us speculating whether or not the effects of COVID-19 on the sales and lettings market are here to stay. Certainly, experts believe the recession the economy is suffering can only have one effect on the housing market, and that's for it to follow suit into decline. And yet, effects should be lessened given that a lack of overseas travel means the pound continues to be invested close to home.







# THE RISE OF VOICE SEARCH

Did you know that 60 per cent of smartphone users have tried voice search at least once in the last 12 months, and 55 per cent of teenagers use this technology on a daily basis?

## WHAT IS VOICE SEARCH?

Voice search is an innovative technology that allows internet users to perform a web search by verbally asking a question on their smartphone or smart device, rather than by typing it in to a search box.

## HOW CAN I GET MY BUSINESS FOUND ON VOICE SEARCH?

**1. BECOME THE FEATURED SNIPPET**  
Featured snippets are small sections of text that appear at the top of Google's search results and are designed to answer a searcher's query. If your business is the featured snippet, this is the response that will be read aloud by the voice assistant. Both blogging and detailed FAQ pages can help you get featured in the snippet.

## 2. UPDATE YOUR GOOGLE MY BUSINESS LISTING

Most voice searches are local ones, so you need to make sure all your company contact information is up to date on both your website and your Google My Business listing.

## 3. OPTIMISE YOUR WEBSITE WITH LONG-TAIL KEYWORDS

When using a voice assistant, people talk as if they're speaking to a real person. This means asking full questions and using longer phrases than they would if they were typing a search into Google. Therefore, your website needs to be optimised with longer phrases, also known as long-tail keywords.

## 4. IMPROVE YOUR PAGE SPEED

A simple tip, the faster your webpage loading speed, the more likely you are to appear in voice search results. You can use Google PageSpeed Insights to check the speed of your site or you can do it manually. Google recommends a page loading time of less than two seconds.



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# Send & Receive

## New Email

Send

From: Ray Tomlinson

To: BBN Technologies

Subject:

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the first ever email

Meet Ray Tomlinson – he is the man who transformed your life; he is the man who changed the way you interact with other people, and while he was at it, he revolutionised the business world too.



To explain, Ray was the man behind the first ever email. It was sent by the computer engineer from a machine at BBN Technologies in Massachusetts, to a different computer positioned less than 10 feet away.

While the distance covered may have been small, the action was mindbogglingly big. The then-30-year-old, through the simple action of putting a message in a file directory on a different computer, accessible when the user logged in, had provided the catalyst for connecting the whole world in a way never thought imaginable.

In the split second it took the email to arrive at its new location, the manual, functional, time-consuming and expensive way in which we conducted our business and personal lives had changed forever.

While we consider email a modern tool, it's startling to think this all happened 50 years ago. Indeed, one of the first people to send an email in the UK was the Queen, way back in 1976. It was only through the embracing of home computing in the 1980s and 1990s, and the adaption of technology that went with that, did email messaging come into the mainstream. As soon as it did, we were hooked, for life.

No more letters sluggishly sent through the post or sports journalists having to file match reports in a phone box; to fully appreciate what this technology has done for us, just consider the world without email.

These days there are almost four billion email accounts, with 300 billion messages sent every day. Ray passed away five years ago, but his legacy – and his emails – live on.

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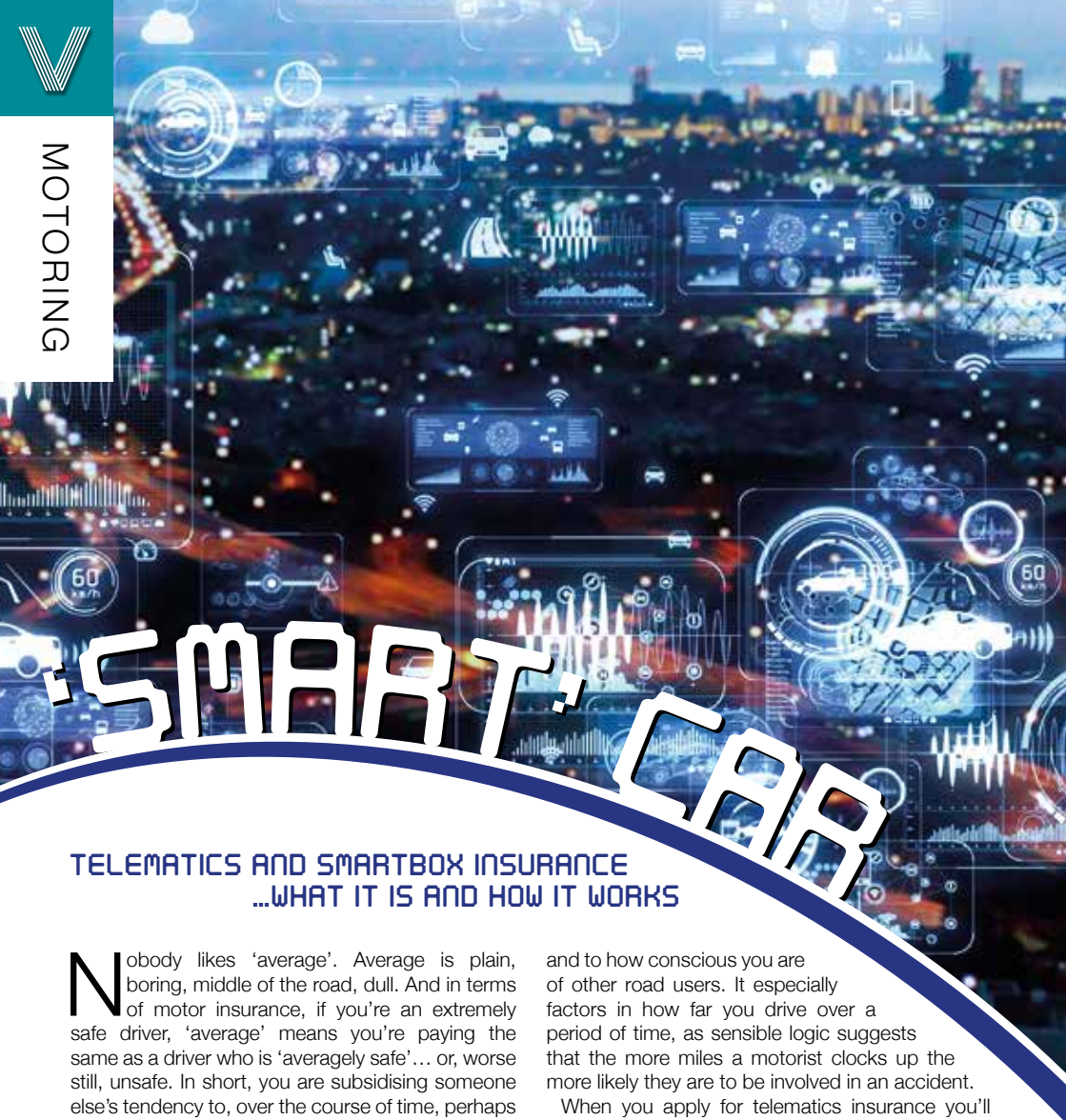
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# SMART CAR

## TELEMATICS AND SMARTBOX INSURANCE ...WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT WORKS

Nobody likes 'average'. Average is plain, boring, middle of the road, dull. And in terms of motor insurance, if you're an extremely safe driver, 'average' means you're paying the same as a driver who is 'averagely safe'... or, worse still, unsafe. In short, you are subsidising someone else's tendency to, over the course of time, perhaps break the speed limit, undertake, be aggressive, and all the other things that lead to accidents which, in turn, lead to car insurance costs being as high as they are.

That's where telematics insurance comes in. Using the technology found in a smartbox (actually just a small device that plugs in below your steering wheel), this clever piece of tech will measure how well you drive.

In other words, the days of having to pay premiums based on the 'average driver' are no more – what you pay is directly related to how safely you take corners, to how much you respect road conditions

and to how conscious you are of other road users. It especially factors in how far you drive over a period of time, as sensible logic suggests that the more miles a motorist clocks up the more likely they are to be involved in an accident.

When you apply for telematics insurance you'll have to provide information regarding where your car is parked, when in the day you usually drive, the types of roads you use and approximate annual mileage. All being well, you'll be rewarded with an initial monthly cost that's much lower than standard insurance.

You'll encounter few problems if you stick to your promise of driving safely and stay within your mileage quota.

However, be warned: from hard braking to speeding to driving too many miles, telematics insurance may well cost you more in the long run if you fail to keep your motoring promises.



# Remembering RAY

## Bidding farewell to former Liverpool, Spurs and England keeper Ray Clemence

There's something unique about goalkeepers – they have spirit, longevity and a sense of bravery that far outweighs any other player on the pitch. It's also commonly known that they're rather daft... how else can you explain wanting to have footballs fired your way at more than 100mph?

And yet, Ray Clemence was as close to normal as you could get. The former England stopper, who passed away on November 15 at the age of 72, was a scholar of the game – his MBE for services to football bore evidence to that. In more than 1,000 career appearances, more than half of which were for Liverpool in a golden era for the club, he clinched five league titles, three European Cups, three UEFA Cups, two FA Cups and a host of other trophies.

He took his knowledge, guile, influence and experience to the next level with management and coaching projects – he oversaw Barnet as joint manager and tutored the keepers at Tottenham as part of the club's coaching staff.

Yet it was as the national team's goalkeeping coach under Glenn Hoddle, Kevin Keegan, Sven-Göran Eriksson, Steve McClaren and Roy Hodgson that he truly excelled, with multiple World Cup and European Championship campaigns.

Also employed as the FA's Head of Development, Clemence's involvement with the game continued right the way through to his death, and most recently he had been back working with Spurs.

An initial prostate cancer diagnosis arrived in 2005. He lived with that for 15 years, but finally succumbed to the illness in November. His passing was marked by a flood of tributes, as one of the greatest-ever England goalkeepers hung up his gloves for the final time.



Photo credit: Colorsport/Shutterstock



SPORT

# Remembering DIEGO



## *A hero of the game, a villain to himself*

The gap between hero and villain has perhaps never been better exemplified – in sporting terms, at least – than through the life of Diego Maradona.

When the Argentine departed us on November 25, football, sport and the world as a cultural sponge lost someone whose notoriety was as decorated as his talent.

In the space of four short minutes in the Estadio Azteca, in Mexico City, on June 22, 1986, Maradona showed the two sides of his character in the sort of perfect juxtaposition usually reserved for a Shakespeare play. The tragedy came first – that ‘hand of God’ moment that we all know, even if few of us, now, here in 2021, actually saw it happen live.

And then, the comedy, even if it was again England’s footballers being derided, as a dancing, pirouetting, sauntering, bulldozing run through the Three Lions’ defence rubbed salt in our wounds,

while offering up a perfect apology to that same deity for the forward’s earlier misdemeanour.

When that higher force claimed the 60-year-old in November, football fans the world over began to ponder again the best ever – Puskás, Pelé, Ronaldo, Messi. Of course, Maradona would never enter into such debate.

He may have led an average Argentina side to World Cup glory in 1986, and an even flatter version of themselves to the final four years later. He may have performed miracles in guiding unfancied, unfashionable Napoli to Serie A success in Italy. And in later life as drugs, gangs, sex workers and other lurid temptations possessed a man whose only passion, really and truly, was to kick a ball, he may have lost sight entirely of those dusty, poverty-stricken streets in Buenos Aires where he grew up.

And yet, through it all he stayed true to himself: ‘I am black and white... I’ll never be grey.’

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# PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

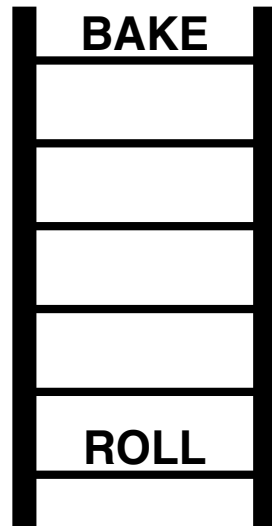
- ▶ AKBASH
- ▶ ATHLETICS
- ▶ BEAGLE
- ▶ BULLDOG
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- ▶ HOKKAIDO
- ▶ HUSKY
- ▶ JONANGI
- ▶ KING SHEPHERD
- ▶ MUDI
- ▶ POINTER
- ▶ POODLE
- ▶ ROTTWEILER
- ▶ SAPSALI
- ▶ SCHAPENDOES
- ▶ SPANIEL
- ▶ ST BERNARD



## DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Nepal's flag is the only flag in the world that doesn't have four sides
- ▶ Purple is the most uncommon colour to be used on flags
- ▶ The flag of Belize uses more colours than any other flag
- ▶ Hawaii's state flag contains the Union Jack. It is the only US state flag to include a foreign country's national flag
- ▶ There are 12 stars on the flag of Europe
- ▶ When the Queen goes to Parliament, the Royal Standard is flown from Victoria Tower
- ▶ Denmark has the oldest flag in the world, designed in 1219 and unchanged since
- ▶ South Sudan has the newest flag in the world
- ▶ The study of flags is called vexillology

## WORD LADDER



THE AIM: Change the word at the top of the ladder one letter at a time to make the word at the bottom.

HOW TO: Change one letter on each step to make a new word. By the time you reach the end, you should have created the new word.

DO NOT rearrange the order of the letters.

TIP: There is usually more than one way to solve this puzzle.



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