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TEETH
FLOTTED**

MIND MATTERS

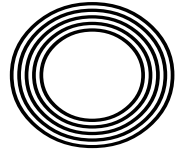
*Dr Alex George named Youth
Mental Health Ambassador*

TORVILL AND DEAN

Their greatest sporting moments

**ANT
MIDDLETON**

From Army and Royal Marines veteran to TV hardman



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Editor's notes...

MARCH 2021



Brett Shoet, Editor

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

I know we've all said it to ourselves before, but it really does feel like we are coming out the other side of this pandemic now. The Prime Minister has given us a rough plan, the COVID-19 figures are looking better and, vitally, the vaccine continues to be rolled out at a rapid pace.

Everything's starting to look more positive. Another small component to that, for me, is the weather. It hasn't helped that our darkest time as a nation came during winter - literally during short, drab, rainy days. Here we are, with light at the end of the coronavirus tunnel and our days are getting longer, brighter and warmer - it's a welcome change.

As you'll see in this edition, our news team have massively stepped up to the challenge of having no face-to-face contact with residents. They've embraced social media and Zoom interviewing to ensure that our magazines are as in-depth and localised as ever. Their attitude is one I encourage everyone to try to adopt - lockdown has created new challenges, but I assure you, business can still be done. Opportunities are still rife - we just have to be creative and driven enough to find them.

I hope you enjoy our latest edition. As always, stay safe.

Brett Shoet

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CONTRIBUTORS | Tabatha Fabray, Kathy Miller, Holly Bullen, Geraint Roberts, Lizzie Ellis

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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MORNING GLORY

HOW PIERS MORGAN AND SUSANNA REID ARE PUTTING THE 'GET UP AND GO' BACK INTO BREAKFAST TV

In many ways, the Piers Morgan/Susanna Reid combo shouldn't work. The former is an ex-red-top editor decorated in a history of salacious headlines, controversial tabloid practices and a puffed-up sense of self-importance that flits between entertaining and aggravating.

The latter is a vastly experienced journalist who, while she possesses a chipper, jagged edge, is a calming weekday morning influencer, a sympathiser and an empathiser whose delivery is effortlessly measured and reassuringly sensible.

Put mildly, Piers Morgan and Susanna Reid are poles apart.

Yet as far as breakfast television goes, there is a chaotic chemistry that links the two and, in the process, knits together perfectly two and a half

hours of early-morning chat, debate and news delivery. Perhaps not since the days of Anne Diamond and Nick Owen has there been a duo who seem so comfortable, calm and considered as our breakfast companions; and their ability to spar, speak up and fire off each other is completely borne out in viewing figures which show *Good Morning Britain (GMB)* to be making impressive moves in the breakfast TV battle.

In the latest round of figures, the ITV show has been narrowing the gap on *BBC Breakfast*, although still remains about a million viewers behind its rival.

Piers and Susanna first worked together back in 2014. It was a strange time for Morgan, the former editor of the *News of the World* and *Daily Mirror*, who was looking to revitalise a career that had

enjoyed a surprising leg-up through reality TV shows and his partnership with Simon Cowell. The 55-year-old has perhaps never looked the epitome of cutting edge, but his breathless honesty – be that in front of a Whitney wannabe on *Britain's Got Talent* or a politician crumbling under his indomitable journalistic scrutiny – wicked turn of humour and fearlessness to voice an opinion – both on TV and across social media – have earned our respect. Certainly, it all provided the perfect tonic to Reid's punchy, spiky, slightly girl-next-door approach to topical news.

Fifty-year-old Reid first came to our attention in the early Noughties when she worked for Radio 5 Live, before moving to *BBC News 24* and, latterly, *BBC Breakfast News*. The broadcaster made a controversial switch to ITV in February 2014 as *GMB*

replaced the outgoing *Daybreak*.

As a combination, you sense there is a 'good cop, bad cop' approach to getting sunrise answers the news headlines demand. There's little of the stuffy formality that decorates the styles of Dan Walker, Louise Minchin and others over on the Beeb; instead, issues are tackled using a tried and tested approach which delivers debates without holding back.

Perhaps what's best about the pair is they know how to push each other's buttons. *GMB* feels like a news programme, a lifestyle show and an episode of *Coronation Street* rolled into one. If the dynamic duo can get anywhere near to the longevity of Jack and Vera, they'll have done well, and we'll have been treated to perhaps the best wake-up call of a generation.



Photo credit: 10 Downing Street

DOCTOR'S ORDERS

THE *LOVE ISLAND* DOC HELPING US FIND A HAPPIER REALITY

Doctor Alex George is the *Love Island* contestant who wowed viewers with an altogether different take on what constitutes 'national health'. For an army of admirers, his great looks, impeccable shape, well-spoken manner and charm added up to a dream combination. He's also rumoured to be particularly good with a stethoscope. Moving away from the reality show, the doc has carved for himself an impressive career in the spotlight. And yet, unlike so many other names who have built their brand through reality TV, there is real substance behind the style.

The 30-year-old was announced Youth Mental Health Ambassador by Prime Minister Boris Johnson in February and is a passionate advocate of well-being initiatives, not least because he sees a nation struggling to come to terms with the various effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Indeed, the death of his brother, Llyr, who took his own life having suffered with depression, only reinforces a desire in the popular doc to open up channels of communication and encourage people to talk.

Alex's five top tips to boost mental health and well-being:

> ONE: Get outside

"Getting natural light and filling our lungs with air is crucial for well-being. It's uplifting and can instantly make us feel better."

> TWO: Exercise

"We've all had those times when we just can't be bothered to get out and exercise, but be it a run, a walk or a bike ride, just 20 minutes per day will boost blood flow and increase endorphins."

> THREE: Call a friend

"Lockdown has been very frustrating and a lonely experience, but staying in touch with friends is essential."

> FOUR: Eat well

"What we consume affects the way we feel, so fuel and replenish your system, and eat as much green stuff as possible."

> FIVE: Sleep routine

"Sleep is very important, but so is resting at regular times, so monitor your sleep habits and ensure you're getting what you need."

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EMBRACE YOUR

SHAPE



HOW TO DRESS FOR SPRING FOR ALL BODY SHAPES AND SIZES

Spring is on the way, so it's goodbye to oversized jumpers, and hello to skin-exposing, spring-ready pieces.

This might sound scary if you have a certain part of your body that you don't like drawing attention to, but it doesn't mean you should spend the spring/summer season covered up. Instead of focusing on a part you're conscious of, accentuate what you love with some easy styling hacks. Here are a few examples...

I'M CONSCIOUS OF MY SMALL CHEST... Adding things that draw attention to your chest is not counterintuitive, so bulk the area out with some accessories such as chokers, necklaces, and tops with intricate collar detailing | Doing all of the above will steal the show, so no one will focus on your chest if you don't want them to.

I DON'T LIKE SHOWING MY ARMS... It seems obvious, but keep the area you are conscious of covered | In warmer temperatures, avoid strapless pieces and choose three-quarter-length sleeves in a light, breathable fabric instead | If you want to brave a shorter length in the height of summer or at a formal event, don't let your insecurities stop you, but carry a bolero or jacket in case you change your mind.

HOW CAN I HIDE MY BELLY? Many dresses now come with ruched detailing around the stomach area for this very reason, so stock up on a few staples | Stick to darker colours and patterns | Prints are also another great distraction | Stay away from baggy, shapeless silhouettes, and opt for high-waisted trousers and loose-fitting blouses to pull focus from your stomach | Wear leggings or skinny jeans with longer tops that sit on or bellow your hips | Curvier shapes look great in A-line dresses | Add a belt to nip in the waist, and say goodbye to added shapewear.

HOW DO I GIVE THE ILLUSION OF CURVES? To break up the straight silhouette, try a belt on the waist or hip area | Alternatively, tuck your top inside your trousers to add some definition | Go one step further and try the French tuck, whereby the front is tucked in and the back is loose | Peplum tops and dresses add volume and drama, perfect for less-curved shapes.

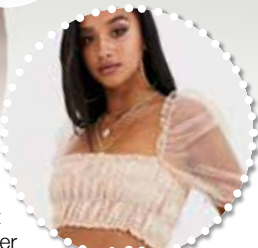


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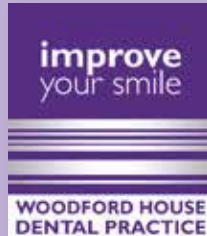
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BEAUTY

to floss or not to floss?



No, we are not talking about the dance craze that swept the nation in 2018, but the act of cleaning in between your teeth using dental floss.

Sadly, only an estimated 31 per cent of people clean between their teeth on a daily basis. This is despite the fact that the NHS recommends that from the age of 12 people should include flossing in their daily oral health routine.

at the base of your tooth, creating a C shape

- 7. Be careful not to scratch or bruise your gums
- 8. Repeat as you move from tooth to tooth
- 9. Always use a clean piece of floss for each tooth section
- 10. Do not recycle or reuse dental floss as this can redistribute bacteria around your mouth, even if you wash it first

WHEN SHOULD YOU FLOSS?

For optimal oral health, you should always floss first and brush your teeth afterwards. It is recommended that you brush your teeth twice a day and floss once, preferably in the evening.

WHY SHOULD YOU FLOSS?

Flossing helps to remove food and plaque from in between your teeth. Brushing alone cannot do this as the bristles are not able to reach deep enough. Regular flossing can result in less dental plaque in your mouth and therefore a lower risk of developing gum disease.

HOW TO FLOSS: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

- 1. Break off between 18 and 25 inches of dental floss
- 2. Wind the floss around both of your middle fingers, leaving between one and two inches for your teeth
- 3. Hold the floss taut with your thumbs and index fingers
- 4. Place the dental floss between two teeth
- 5. Gently glide the floss up and down, making sure to rub against both sides of each tooth
- 6. When the floss reaches your gum, curve the floss



Are HIGH HEELS good for your health?

Marilyn Monroe famously once said, "I don't know who invented high heels, but all women owe him a lot." A pair of killer heels is undeniably the most effective way to add oomph to any outfit, but do you know what they are doing to your overall health?

Stress on your spine: Walking in high heels causes your spine to sway unnaturally, which, in turn, results in stress on your lumbar erector spinae muscle and an increased risk of a sore lower back.

Pressure on your knees: High heels put extra weight on the inner side of your knees and knee joints. This can increase your chances of experiencing twisting injuries to the knees.

Swelling of the feet: Bunions are synonymous with high heels, but the uneven weight distribution that occurs when wearing this type of shoe can also cause blisters, calluses, pinched nerves, swollen joints and tendonitis.

Restricted circulation: High heels force your ankle to bend forward, which restricts blood circulation in your lower limbs, leading to varicose veins.

Shortening of the calf muscle: Over time, wearing high heels can cause the muscles and tendons in your calves to shorten. This can lead to stiffness, reduced range of motion and a higher risk of strains, sprains and lower-body injuries.

- Treatment & pain relief**
- > Look for cushioning in the soles to absorb the impact of your foot hitting the ground
 - > Opt for high heels with a wider toe box
 - > Carry out foot and toe stretching exercises
 - > Choose a thicker heel rather than a stiletto
 - > Treat any blisters or sores with a foot balm and use blister pads
 - > Ice your feet after wearing
 - > Take an over-the-counter pain reliever



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The skin is the largest organ of the human body. Our skin is constantly exposed daily to many free radicals that can damage our skins overall health. So, it is imperative we take care of skin concerns such as: Acne, Pigmentation, Ageing, Post cancer care, psoriasis, excema, or general skin health

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Do you need a DECHOX?

Calling all chocoholics. Now is the time to tackle your addiction once and for all. The British Heart Foundation is petitioning for chocolate lovers up and down the country to give up chocolate for 31 days this March.

Why do we love chocolate so much?

There are several reasons why we can easily stop at eating just one apple but could quite happily munch our way through a whole box of chocolates. These include:

- > Eating chocolate stimulates the brain's reward centres, triggering the release of feel-good chemicals such as dopamine and serotonin.
- > Chocolate contains theobromine, which increases the heart rate and brings about feelings of arousal.
 - > Chocolate contains caffeine, which enhances our ability to work and focus.
 - > It is high in fat and sugar, which are traditionally preferred food sources as they are calorie dense.
 - > It smells good, it tastes good and it melts on our tongues in the most irresistible way.

How can I combat my chocolate cravings?

- > Drink more water. Sometimes when you think you are hungry, you are actually dehydrated.
- > Focus on eating good fats such as avocados and nuts, as these are known for banishing sweet cravings.
- > Set boundaries. If you know you can't resist chocolate, don't have it in the house.
 - > Manage your stress levels. You may find that you reach for chocolate when you feel stressed, so try to find other ways to cope when you feel emotional or under pressure.
 - > If you desperately need a chocolate fix, opt for a low-calorie hot chocolate drink instead.
 - > Eat one piece of very dark chocolate before each meal. This has been proven to help banish cravings and promote weight loss.



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Beat

Eating disorders

Recognise the signs

Concerned that someone you know and love is suffering with an eating disorder such as anorexia nervosa or bulimia? Eating disorders can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or background, but early intervention can be life-saving.

What are the signs?

There are many symptoms to look out for that may indicate a loved one is struggling with an eating disorder. However, it is worth noting that each individual case will be different.

- > A distorted body image
- > Using stimulants or laxatives
- > Frequent weighing
- > Extreme weight change
- > Mood swings
- > Loss of hair
- > Brittle nails
- > Depression
- > Skipping meals
- > Purging
- > Anxiety
- > Insomnia
- > Skin rash or dry skin
- > Erosion of tooth enamel
- > High interest in exercise
- > Withdrawal from friends

How can I support someone?

As well as seeking treatment, your loved one will need your love and support in order to overcome their eating disorder. Ways in which you can help them include:

- > Learn about their eating disorder
- > Be honest about your feelings
- > Be a role model by eating a nutritious diet
- > Help to build up their confidence
- > Suggest activities to do together than don't involve food

Where can I get help for someone?

If you suspect that someone in your family or a close friend has an eating disorder, your first course of action should be to sit down and talk to them in a non-confrontational way. It can also be a good idea to suggest they schedule a check-up with their doctor, who can determine any unusual changes in body mass index or weight percentile.

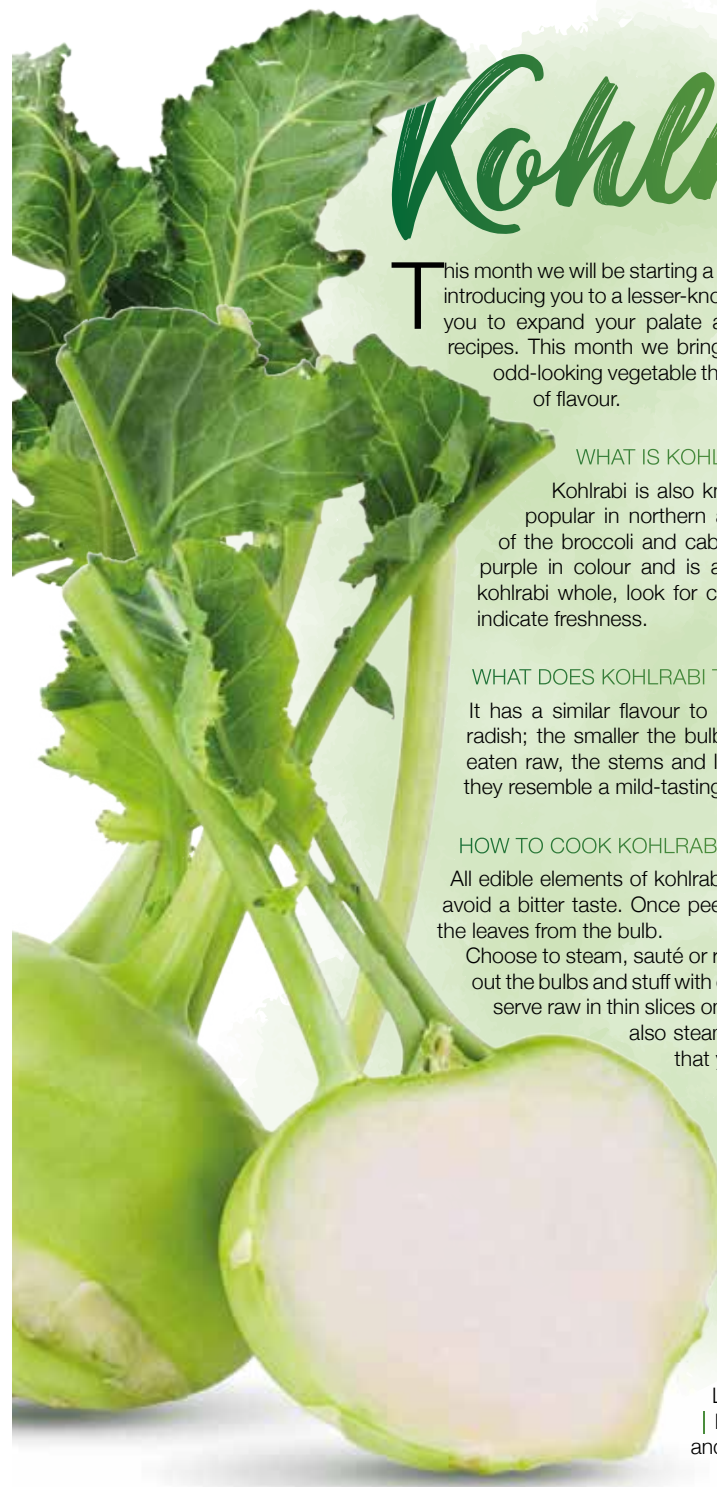
If diagnosed with an eating disorder, they are likely to be prescribed a treatment plan, which may include talking therapies and medication if they are also suffering with depression.

Charities and organisations

- > Beat: www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk
- > Anorexia & Bulimia Care: www.anorexiabulimiacare.org.uk



Kohlrabi



This month we will be starting a new regular feature: we will be introducing you to a lesser-known fruit or vegetable, allowing you to expand your palate and widen your repertoire of recipes. This month we bring you kohlrabi, an undeniably odd-looking vegetable that packs a real punch in terms of flavour.

WHAT IS KOHLRABI?

Kohlrabi is also known as a cabbage turnip and is very popular in northern and eastern European countries. Part of the broccoli and cabbage family, it can be green, white or purple in colour and is available all year round. When buying kohlrabi whole, look for crisp-looking and vibrant leaves, which indicate freshness.

WHAT DOES KOHLRABI TASTE LIKE?

It has a similar flavour to cabbage but with the spicy kick of a radish; the smaller the bulb, the milder the taste. Crunchy when eaten raw, the stems and leaves can also be cooked and eaten; they resemble a mild-tasting Swiss chard.

HOW TO COOK KOHLRABI

All edible elements of kohlrabi need to be peeled before cooking to avoid a bitter taste. Once peeled, trim the brown end and separate the leaves from the bulb.

Choose to steam, sauté or roast kohlrabi, or you could even hollow out the bulbs and stuff with other vegetables or grains. Alternatively, serve raw in thin slices on a salad or added to coleslaw. You can also steam or sauté the leaves in the same way that you would fresh kale or spinach.

HOW TO STORE KOHLRABI

A kohlrabi bulb can be kept uncovered in the fridge for up to one month. The stems and leaves should be cooked as soon as possible as they wilt within a day or two.

WHAT ARE THE NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS OF KOHLRABI?

Low in fat | High in fibre | High in calcium | Low in calories | Contains anti-cancer and anti-ageing properties

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Icing on the cake



FOOD & DRINK

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY ICE A BIRTHDAY CAKE (no matter your skill level!)

Step One: Fake it or bake it

If you aren't much of a baker, there really is no harm in buying a pre-made sponge. The benefit of this is that the layers will be perfectly proportioned, making icing easier. On the other hand, a homemade cake is hard to beat, though you will need to trim the top of your cake with a bread knife if it has domed so the surface is perfectly flat and even.

Step Two: Filling fun

Everyone loves the first peek inside a birthday cake, which is why you need to get the filling as even as possible. If you're using jam, spread that first (heat gently in a bowl sat in boiling water to make it more spreadable), before piling your buttercream in the centre of your bottom layer. Now, add your top layer and gently twist with a little pressure to spread the filling across your cakes, removing any excess icing that spills out with a palette knife.

Step Three: Oh, crumbs

Ever wondered how professional bakers achieve that flawless finish? The answer is the crumb layer – a light layer of icing to catch stray crumbs before the second layer is applied. Place a third of your remaining icing in a separate bowl and move your cake onto a turntable or cake stand. Put a large dollop of buttercream in the centre of the cake and smooth it across the top, repeating the process until it looks even. Then, do the same with the side of the cake, turning it gently to distribute the icing and using your palette knife to flatten. Place your cake in the fridge for two hours to set.

Step Four: Final touches

Repeat the icing process for your final layer, being sure to fully cover the crumb layer beneath, and finish your masterpiece with some decorations. And a final top tip: hundreds and thousands look very impressive when applied liberally.





Above the rest



Are you guilty of buying the same cuts of meat week in and week out? If yes, surely it's time to try something different?

To celebrate National Butchers' Week, we have found the tastiest, not to mention most cost-effective, meat cuts which we guarantee you and your family will love.

Beef Onglet

Also known as hanger steak, this forgotten choice is a flat cut from the diaphragm or lower belly of the cow. Great value and with an intense flavour, this meat cut is best served medium rare.

HOW TO COOK: Fry in a hot pan for 3-4 minutes on each side and then leave on a warm plate to rest for 10 minutes.



Pork Cheeks

Incredibly cheap, pork cheeks offer a leaner alternative to pork belly, plus they are mouth-wateringly moist.

HOW TO COOK: Brine in sugar and water before braising until tender. Once cooked, cut into small pieces, breadcrumb and fry.



Lamb Sweetbreads

Classified as offal, lamb sweetbreads are the pancreas and thymus glands and considered to be a delicacy in the culinary world. Providing all the B vitamins, lamb sweetbreads are creamy and tender with a delicate flavour.

HOW TO COOK: Soak in cold water for a few hours before simmering quickly. Allow to cool before trimming away any sinew or gristle. Sauté as they are or lightly breadcrumb first.



Venison Ribs

Low in fat, relatively cheap and full of flavour, venison ribs make a great alternative to pork ones. Like all wild game, deer ribs are very lean so need to be prepared with moist methods of cooking.

HOW TO COOK: Trim the ribs of fat and cut into strips. Cover the venison in brine or your chosen marinade. Bake, grill or slow cook for optimum tenderness.



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KIDS



SOLVE A PUZZLE

If you are struggling to keep your kids occupied indoors, then look no further than a good old-fashioned jigsaw puzzle. With the ability to not only provide educational benefits, this calming activity also helps to promote good mental health...

ENHANCED COGNITIVE FUNCTION

When you are doing a jigsaw puzzle, you use both the left and right sides of your brain. The right is in charge of creativity and your emotions, whereas the left is the logical and methodical side. Using both sides helps to increase cognitive function, a crucial part of your child's development.

IMPROVED PROBLEM-SOLVING ABILITIES

At its simplest level, a jigsaw puzzle is an activity of trial and error. Your child is required to try out different pieces in different places in order to find the right fit. This helps to improve their problem-solving abilities and helps them to see things from varying perspectives.

DECREASED STRESS LEVELS

If you have been worried about your child's mental health during this challenging year, you will be pleased to hear that jigsaw puzzles are a great stress-buster. In fact, when your child is doing a puzzle, there is a distinct shift in their consciousness, with their brains changing from a state of 'Beta' to 'Alpha'. The 'Alpha' state is similar to when they are dreaming and can lead to an improvement in mood, relief of stress and a lower heart rate.

INCREASED IQ

Certain studies have shown that just 25 minutes a day spent doing a puzzle can raise a person's IQ by four points. Furthermore, this activity will help improve your child's memory, concentration and reasoning skills.

OTHER BRAIN-BOOSTING PUZZLES FOR KIDS:

Word searches | Rubik's cube | Mazes | Riddles | Connect the dots

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HOME & DIY

ARE YOU READY TO

Wabi-sabi YOUR HOME?



Although it may sound like that spicy green paste that you get with sushi, wabi-sabi is actually a Japanese term that means "finding beauty in imperfection".

The perfect interior design trend for people who prefer their house to look lived in rather than like a showroom, wabi-sabi is all about embracing authenticity, flaws and all.

Showcase homemade décor

Whether you are an artist yourself or not, homemade décor items or things that you have collected over the years on holiday or at local craft fairs are ideal for creating a wabi-sabi home. Allowing you to foster feelings of warmth and originality, even just proudly displaying your children's artwork contributes to the characteristics of this Japanese philosophy.

Clear away clutter

Just because wabi-sabi values imperfection, that doesn't mean you can let your home become a cluttered and chaotic mess. To achieve wabi-sabi, your home should be a calm and peaceful place where you and your family can relax, so make sure you stick to your cleaning regime.

Embrace nature

With a focus on simplicity, bringing elements of the outside into your home is a key component of wabi-sabi. Whether you choose to put some freshly cut flowers in a vase, invest in a house plant or two, or you decide to incorporate natural materials into your home such as stone or wood, nature will always be able to lift your mood.

Be a partial minimalist

Although a wabi-sabi home is not fully minimalistic by nature, it does invite people to keep their possessions to a minimum by only allowing things in their home that offer nostalgia, beauty or utility. This means that you can keep an item that does not necessarily match the décor of your home, as long as it makes you happy.

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INTERIOR traveller



Embrace the global influence trend to cure your wanderlust

Have you tried catching a flight out to Zambia recently in order to sample the breathtaking, unique wonder of an African safari? Let's just say, your luck is out.

Of course, so much of interior design is about taking ideas and influences from around the world and incorporating those into our living spaces. With that in mind, and ignoring the fact all our planes are grounded, the trend of 'global influence' aims to embrace the charm and beauty of the world, while we remain resolutely stationed at 29 Acacia Avenue.

While 'global influence', as a term, suggests embracing interior design influences from all corners of the globe, in reality its focus is on the colours, textures and ideas you might commonly associate with African savanna safari expeditions – nature's most expansive showcase of wildlife.

Global influence takes on board woven fabrics; it focuses on earthy colour palettes, shows off cooling stone patterns and embraces natural textiles and all manner of woods, rattan and bamboo. The styles are uncomplicated, uncluttered and unpretentious.

Furniture and objects are wholesome, earthy and rugged. In matched a leather sofa, linen and perhaps some animal-themed art prints, you can truly bring the breathless elegance and simplicity of nature into your living space.

Of course, the individuality of interior design ultimately means global influence can represent whatever you may want it to. So if tropical flavours and flourishes are more your thing, why not embrace bright colours, wicker items, a beach vibe and miniature palm trees? Similarly, a Scandinavian vibe is easily put together with hardwoods, light colours and a style vision that's stripped back and simplistic.

Ultimately, whatever your individual taste, global influence is there to compensate for the fact that while we may not be able to visit these enchanting places, we can at least still sample their uniqueness.



Photo credit: nordroom.tumblr.com, myamazingthings.com, Simon Whitmore via idealhome.co.uk, Jake Curtis via idealhome.co.uk, Maria Viale via apartmenttherapy.com



CUTLERY

care guide

Whether you use stainless steel, silver-plated or silver cutlery, or a combination of all three, if you want your silverware to last and looks its best for longer, you need to take care of it.

STAINLESS STEEL CUTLERY: The most popular material choice for cutlery, stainless steel is both durable and versatile, but that doesn't mean it is completely stain-resistant.

- HOW TO CLEAN: > Rinse before placing in dishwasher
- > Never leave to soak or in damp conditions as this can lead to corrosion
 - > Remove stubborn stains using stainless steel polish and a soft cloth

- HOW TO STORE: > Store in its original canteen to prevent pieces rubbing together
- > Can be stored in kitchen drawer but may reduce lifespan

SILVER-PLATED CUTLERY: A more decadent choice, silver-plated cutlery is relatively easy to care for but does require some special care.

- HOW TO CLEAN: > Keep away from stainless steel cutlery, as contact can cause corrosion
- > Place in dishwasher, but turn off the drying cycle and dry each piece by hand to avoid staining
 - > Polish to maintain shine

HOW TO STORE: > Store in a tarnish-proof cutlery roll and then in an airtight container

SILVER CUTLERY: Ideal for use at dinner parties and other special occasions, silver cutlery is both lavish and luxurious.

- HOW TO CLEAN: > Clean as soon as possible after use
- > Wash separately from stainless steel and silver-plated cutlery to avoid corrosion
 - > Do not put in dishwasher; instead, clean by hand
 - > Do not polish too often as this can wear down the finish

HOW TO STORE: > When not in use, roll each piece of silver cutlery in acid-free tissue paper or unbleached cotton muslin and then place in a resealable plastic bag.

- > Add a piece of chalk wrapped in cheesecloth to the bag to absorb moisture and prevent tarnishing.



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HOME & DIY

DIY reed diffuser

If you want to enjoy an aromatherapy experience at home, then a scented reed diffuser is the ideal choice. However, you don't need to spend your hard-earned cash on shop-bought varieties when you can make them at home with a few simple ingredients and supplies.

WHAT YOU NEED: Small bottle or vase | 20–25 drops of your preferred essential oil | ¼ cup of baby oil | 3 tbsp of vodka or rubbing alcohol | Bamboo skewers or ideally diffuser reeds | Zest peels and herbs are optional

HOW TO MAKE: Pour the baby oil into a bowl | Add the rubbing alcohol or vodka | Carefully add the drops of essential oil and zest peels and herbs if preferred | Pour the mixture into your vase or glass bottle using a funnel until it is ¾ filled | Place five skewers into the vase | Cut the skewers to size if necessary so that they stick out roughly 4–6 inches

Top tips for your DIY diffuser

1. Check the liquid quantity monthly and top up if needed
2. Rotate the diffuser reeds once a month
3. Replace diffuser reeds after 4–6 months
4. Recycle a perfume bottle if you don't have a suitable vase
5. Cut your skewers carefully to avoid splinters

How to choose essential oils for each season

Spring: Choose fresh floral notes, such as a mix of citrus, lavender, geranium and jasmine.

Summer: Uplift your home with magnolia, bergamot and lemon.

Autumn: Embrace the cooler weather with a combination of juniper berry, cedarwood, cardamom and cinnamon.

Winter: Cosy up with a warming blend of spruce, patchouli and Douglas fir.

An alternative to reed diffusers

You can purchase an electronic oil diffuser, but make sure to do your research first as they come in different sizes. These diffusers produce a more concentrated fragrance and add moisture to the air, albeit in quite small amounts.



O, Easter tree!

Who says that decorative trees are just for Christmas? We think everyone could do with a bit of extra cheer this year, so why not have a go at creating your own Easter centrepiece tree, complete with ornamental eggs?

How to create your Easter tree:

For the tree itself, simply gather a selection of branches and place in a vase. The best tree branches to look out for include: Cherry blossom | Magnolia | Willow | Forsythia | Dogwood

How to hollow out your eggs:

Poke a small hole in the pointier side of an egg and then another, slightly larger, hole on the opposite side. Place your mouth over the smaller hole and blow out the egg. Wash the shell and leave to dry.

Marbled eggs:

Mix 1 cup of hot water with 10 drops of liquid food colouring and 1 tsp of vinegar. Submerge the eggshell in the water for two minutes and leave to cool. This is your base colour.

Next, fill a bowl with fresh hot water and add a darker food colouring and 1 tbsp of olive oil. Roll your egg around to allow it to absorb the second colour.

Egg nests:

If you favour a more natural look, these miniature nests, complete with tiny Easter egg treats, are the perfect decoration for your tree. Gently break away some of the egg shell on the front of your egg, fill with straw and then add a single mini egg to each one.

Glitter eggs:

Create a pattern across your egg using tape, apply PVA glue to the rest of the egg and sprinkle generously with glitter. Leave to dry and remove tape. Choose to paint your eggs first for more a more vibrant end result.

How to hang your eggs:

To finish, simply thread a ribbon or piece of cotton through the top hole of each egg, wiggle it until it pokes out the other side and tie a knot to secure.

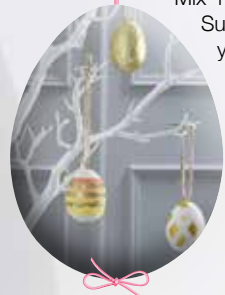


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Marvellous marble



HOW TO FAKE THE MARBLE EFFECT FOR YOUR BATHROOM WALLS

Always liked the look of the marble bathroom but baulked a little at the price tag? Worry no more. You can create your own luxurious lining with a few sure-fire shortcuts.

Wall panels: You can buy marble-effect wall panels in many different colours and styles, each offering a multitude of patterns giving off the impression of this much sought-after polished stone. The most popular choice is the calacatta – it's a word derived from the Greek language and means to sparkle, flash and gleam. The detail is in the rich and familiar graining, and that's what most people associate with marble.

Not only do panels look great and give a feel of authenticity, they're also incredibly easy to maintain – simply wipe down. Panels also remove the pain

of grouting – nor will the filled parts lose colour over time. And as for the frustration of chipped marble; well, you're covered there too. Panels are also far easier to maintain and clean.

You can also use panels as a design feature – decorating the whole bathroom, or perhaps a select area (usually in the shower cubicle).

Of course, if you've rather more time on your hands and still fear the look of marble panels is slightly manufactured, you can use a light paint effect to recreate the classic marble veining.

Begin by painting your wall a grey-white shade; then, using a small paintbrush, detail in your own marble-effect veins and streaks. It's time-heavy and labour intensive, but the added detail will have you singing your own praises in the shower.



HOME & DIY

Positivity of the MIDDLE MAN

ANT MIDDLETON'S CLIMB TO PHYSICAL AND MENTAL MAGNIFICENCE

Anyone who has watched his SAS series knows Ant Middleton isn't a guy to be messed with. Grit, steel, determination, power and a large dose of bloody-mindedness have propelled the former military man into the mainstream; and while a new career in the lens suits the 40-year-old Army and Royal Marines veteran nicely, the impact he is having on everyday folk is profound.

For a long time the various fitness, health, strength and well-being trends that have taken up countless column inches and patterned our social media feeds have needed a confident, high-energy figure to take them forward. Yes, we have various reality stars putting out fitness tutorials, and Joe Wicks is always there to advise on the best way to pull off the perfect burpee, but can they do it on a cold Tuesday night in Stoke? The answer, undoubtedly, is no.

Ant Middleton, however... let's just say he makes The Potteries look like a beach holiday in the Maldives.

So much of what this inspirational tour de force has done up to now has been about physical determination. His Channel 4 SAS: *Who Dares Wins* series is a military training show of brutal extremes, with an adventure/reality crossover that pushes participants to the absolute limits of body endurance.

While this type of programming has seen the Portsmouth-born hardman make his mark, in truth it represents only one half of what it takes to truly ascend to the next level. Thus, squaring the circle in his new project, which centres on a series of talks on the subject of positive mindset, seems the natural progression.

"We all know that physical toughness can only take you so far," says the author of the best-selling book *Zero Negativity*. "You need to have the mental strength to keep pushing on when the body says no."

"The brain can outlast and outpace anything the body can do, so training our minds to interpret, recycle, repair and renew the messages flowing through us means we can achieve things way beyond what our muscles tell us is possible."

Middleton's emergence as a mainstream player is no better exemplified than in the fact he was joined on a recent project by terrestrial TV poster boy Ben Shephard. "Ben's a good guy who has absolute determination in his career. He's a great example of someone who is a winner – we all come in different shapes and sizes."

In a streamed live event that took place at the start of February, Middleton's *Be Prepared for 2021* did exactly what the title suggested, with an unscripted, unrehearsed and unfiltered conversation designed to unpick the various roadblocks that 2020 had put in the way of so many of us.

"The past year felt like such a crushing low for a lot of people, but rather than dwell on the negativity, as a nation we need to look at the things we learned, and appreciate the positives we took out of the year," he says.

"We need to appreciate how we grew and developed strengths many of us never knew we had."

"This is the road to ensuring 2021 is a better year. We cannot change the world around us, but we can alter the way we decide to tackle its challenges."



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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood

LOCAL NEWS



Huge response to help ambulance crews

When Corinna Richards launched an appeal to help the ambulance crews of Loughton, she had no idea that she would soon need an ambulance herself.

Ms Richards, 49, of Hatfields, Loughton, realised how often ambulances were being called out and so put out a request via Facebook for donations to help the crews.

She said: "I was humbled at the outpouring of generosity; it was beautiful and amazing."

Ms Richards left a box by the side of her house for donations on a Friday and by Monday she had received dozens of donations of food and drink, as well as sundries such as hand cream and offers such

as a yoga session, for the ambulance personnel.

Then, just after her appeal, Ms Richards was struck down by COVID-19, and because she lives alone and was struggling for breath, she needed an ambulance on two occasions.

"Two brilliant crews helped me," she said.

However, they were not the same crews who took in her deliveries.

"That would have been poetic," said Ms Richards.

Ms Richards, who is headteacher at Beehive Prep School in Ilford, was so overwhelmed by residents' support for her appeal that when she has recovered from the virus, she wants to encourage children and adults to write letters of appreciation for carers.



Joey launches fund for transgender surgery

“Something clicked in my head. I didn’t know it was a real thing but knew I always wanted to do it.” So says Joey James, 22, of Roydon Close, describing the moment seven years ago when he saw a documentary about transitioning and realised that, despite having been born a girl named Courtney, he wanted to be a man more than anything in the world.

He came out as a lesbian at the age of 13, as trans at 16 and changed his name to Joey last month.

Now Joey is raising money for transgender surgery, having been on the waiting list for five years.

He said: “Waiting is awful. I feel my life depends on it.”

Last August Joey made his latest in a series of suicide attempts, brought on by years of depression

at being in the wrong body.

He explained: “I’ve been in and out of the doctor’s and CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health services) and I felt I couldn’t even succeed at suicide, let alone life.”

Joey now takes testosterone, which has boosted his confidence, and has lost weight but still suffers pain from binding his breasts.

Joey is fortunate to have the “full support” of his employer and of his girlfriend and family.

A former pupil of Debden Park High School, Joey said “the best thing” about coming out was a teacher who said he had encouraged other trans students to come out.

To donate, visit: gofund.me/81c32aed

Family is left homeless after house fire

A family has been left temporarily homeless after an accident caused a house fire in Loughton.

Firefighters were called to a detached home in Connaught Avenue on February 21 at 12.07am.

A fire service spokesperson said: “A candle had set light to net curtains in a bedroom. The occupant panicked and threw the candle out of the window and, very unluckily, it set fire to cushions on garden furniture.

“Unfortunately, the cushions were extremely flammable and the fire quickly took hold, breaking the

kitchen window and spreading to the kitchen.

“Thankfully, Loughton Fire Station is less than 500 metres from the house and crews were able to deal with the fire really quickly.

“If you are using candles, please make sure they are away from materials that might catch fire and make sure they are completely out when you leave the room or go to bed.”

The fire was extinguished by 1.47am. The family has been left temporarily homeless while the damage is assessed.



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Photo credit: Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

Man is charged with arson after a devastating fire

A Loughton man has been charged with arson after five fire crews were called to the Three Colts pub on Princes Road, Buckhurst Hill, on Saturday, February 6 to attend to a fire.

Crews rushed to the pub just before 5pm when the owner found the ground floor engulfed in flames.

James Taylor, Essex Fire Service monitoring officer at the scene, said: "Our crews worked quickly to bring the fire under control and did a great job to stop it from spreading. The ground floor of the building suffered fire, smoke and heat damage."

Officers spent more than two hours clearing the smoke and extinguishing all hot spots in the ceiling and roof areas and carried out an investigation afterwards

to determine the cause. No one was injured during the blaze.

Essex Police confirmed that Spiros Schulz, 48, was arrested in Loughton on February 6.

He has been charged with arson with recklessness as to whether life was endangered, arson with intent to endanger life and breaching a restraining order.

Schulz appeared before Chelmsford Magistrates' Court on February 8 and will remain in custody until his next court appearance, due on March 8.

Anyone with information about the incident, including CCTV or dashcam footage, should call 101 quoting incident 858 of 6 February or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Youth councillors take part in online discussion

Students from schools in Loughton joined an online meeting with Dame Eleanor Laing, MP for Epping Forest to discuss a range of local issues.

The virtual discussion between Dame Eleanor MP and Epping Forest youth councillors covered several topics, including vaccinations, online studying, campaigning for equality and quantitative easing.

One youth councillor, Bianca Nedelcu, representing Roding Valley High School in Loughton, said: "Dame Eleanor MP was glad to hear that our schools are very supportive in these unprecedented times and how they give us necessary breaks. It was a pleasure to speak to her about our achievements within the Youth

Council. Her answers were very informative and she seems like a wonderful person."

Another youth councillor, Martin Prinsloo, who represents Davenant Foundation School, said: "Dame Eleanor Laing MP reached out and connected with us; she was interested and listened. I am proud to call her our MP as she has a lot of experience and works very hard."

Dame Eleanor MP commented: "This generation of young people are having a much more difficult time than any other in recent years, but I have every confidence that they will make the best of the challenges they face and will flourish."

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Popular bank to close another branch this summer

The Loughton High Road branch of HSBC is due to close in August, a month after the Woodford branch closes.

The banking giant is set to close 82 branches in the UK as customers change the way they do their banking, particularly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The closures are part of a national trend, with some 3,770 bank and building society branches closing since January 2015.

For HSBC alone, an estimated three branches will close each week between now and September.

A spokeswoman for HSBC said: "The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasised the need for the changes that we are making. Making sure we have a sustainable branch network is essential to us, and decisions to close branches are not taken lightly."

Bank staff are expected to be redeployed to other branches and sites within 15 miles of their homes, she said.

Man sentenced for kitchen knife stabbing

A Loughton man has been jailed for eight years for stabbing another man with a kitchen knife.

Sean Thompson, 30, sent threatening messages to his victim on August 30 and demanded a meeting to discuss a family dispute.

The victim, who knew Thompson but was not related to him, went to Thompson's then home address in Colebrook Gardens.

An argument broke out between the men, during which Thompson punched the other man, before going inside and returning with a large kitchen knife.

He stabbed the victim in the chest, causing life-threatening injuries, and was arrested a day later.

On October 22, Thompson admitted wounding with

intent to cause grievous bodily harm and possession of a bladed article in a public place. He was sentenced on January 8.

Investigating officer PC Jamie Williams of Loughton CID said: "The court heard Thompson had been suffering from stress and substance misuse at the time of the attack, and had shown remorse for his actions.

"However, this is not an excuse for the violence he used that night, which could so easily have been fatal.

"I hope the sentence will give Thompson time to reflect on the consequences of his actions, which have left a lasting emotional and physical impact on his victim."



Photo credit: New Breed Bottle Shop

New shop is a dream come true for two friends

The New Breed Bottle Shop on the High Road is a dream come true for friends Neil Datta and Mikey O'Kane, who have also launched an online store.

They said: "We're delighted to be open in Loughton and are thrilled with the positive response we have received from the local community.

"Everyone has been really supportive over the past few months and we are excited to see what the future holds for New Breed.

"Don't see us as shop-owners, but fellow fans of independent, under-the-radar drinks. You won't find high-street brands at our place."

Their mission is "to change the face of drinks retail [and] celebrate independent businesses".

New Breed Bottle Shop offers a rotating mix of beers, ales and lagers, which can be taken away in

reusable glass bottles known as 'growlers'.

There are more than 200 varieties from UK breweries, including DEYA, Verdant and Electric Bear Brewing, North Brewing, Northern Monk, Pomona Island and the Glasgow-based Overtone Brewing.

London breweries supplying the shop include The Kernel, Hackney Brew, Pressure Drop and Gipsy Hill.

Wines sold by New Breed Bottle Shop come from all over the world, as recommended by wine importers who include Michelin-starred restaurants among their clients.

As well as classic wines from independent and family-run vineyards, the shop carries a selection of biodynamic wines.

Spirit drinkers are also catered for, with artisanal distillers among the shop's suppliers.

Residents reassured on Centric Parade future

Epping Forest District Council has reassured residents about the future of Centric Parade in Loughton after various social media rumours circulated about the vacant shops.

Councillor Aniket Patel, portfolio holder responsible for commercial properties, has confirmed that the council does not have any plans to knock down Centric Parade.

He said: "Even though high street economies across the country have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, our local Epping Forest high streets have stood up remarkably well under the pressure of the

lockdowns and provide important income we use to support public services.

"I assure our residents that we will do everything we can to not only revitalise Centric Parade but also support all local businesses to get back on their feet. Currently a lot of work is taking place on regeneration studies and proposals to support the economic recovery of our local towns.

"Two reports on Loughton High Road and Loughton Broadway will be prepared in the next few weeks. We want to make our local town centres busy, vibrant places to visit once again."

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LOCAL NEWS



News from THE ROTARY CLUB of Loughton, Buckhurst Hill & Chigwell



Even in the winter snow, we're open for you. Our amazing volunteers are going above and beyond to support our local communities in their time of need. We're always humbled by the support we continually receive from our friends and donors. Massive thanks to Forest Farm Shop, Urbanest (donation of 600 food packs), Loughton Leisure Centre, Frank and Sue Gardner for a van full of new clothes, and Loughton

Self Drive for its continued support with transport, treating and supporting people humanely with dignity and respect. To donate, visit our fundraising page at www.give.net/3food4u. Please contact Pesh if you would like to get involved in Rotary or 3food4u in any capacity. Email info.3food4u@gmail.com or call 01992 842642.

Concerns over Clean Air Zone

Loughton Residents Association (LRA) is at loggerheads with Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) over the latter's decision to introduce a Clean Air Zone (CAZ), which LRA believes will lead to charges for drivers and more development. They say that the CAZ, which is planned for 2025 as an Interim Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy (IAPMS), will satisfy Natural England (which oversees special areas of conservation) but permit more building in Loughton, causing just as much environmental damage. LRA members are concerned that the CAZ will impose charges of up to £12.50 per day for driving through Epping Forest. EFDC's decision to introduce a CAZ was taken on December 11 by one cabinet member and was

challenged by LRA in a 'call-in' on January 7, in which LRA was defeated. LRA member Chris Pond, who is a councillor for Essex, EFDC and Loughton Town, said that rather than target drivers, EFDC should be refusing planning applications, which pose a greater threat to the forest. Cllr Pond said: "EFDC has not given sufficient consideration to what it will do to the forest if a thousand homes are built nearby. "Our solution is to move the bulk of development away from the forest edge and from Loughton." In a statement on EFDC's website, councillor Nigel Bedford said the IAPMS will allow EFDC to clear a backlog of planning applications and "balance the needs of the environment and local people".

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MARCH BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH:

Daffodil



If you were born in the month of March, your birth flower is narcissus, also known as the daffodil. The quintessential flower of spring, the daffodil is instantly recognisable by its bright yellow petals. Perfect placed in beds and borders, daffodils will brighten up your garden every year.

WHAT DOES THE DAFFODIL REPRESENT?

Named after Narcissus, a character from Greek mythology who was so in love with himself he drowned in a pool of water while admiring his own reflection, this flower is said to be a symbol of vanity. It is also known to represent new beginnings, rebirth and rejuvenation. The daffodil is also:

- > The national flower of Wales
- > The official 10th wedding anniversary flower
- > The official emblem of cancer charities
- > A symbol of luck and prosperity during Chinese New Year

WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOUR PERSONALITY?

If your birth flower is the daffodil, you are said to be extremely creative. You are also known for being kind and welcoming to everyone you meet and dedicated to living a life of peace and happiness.

ARE DAFFODILS EASY TO GROW?

Anyone can grow daffodils in their garden and you can choose to plant your bulbs in beds, borders, grass verges, lawn edges, hedgerows and banks. Plant your bulbs between September and November in well-drained soil and aim to keep your bulbs 4–8 inches apart, as overcrowding can cause daffodil blindness – when daffodils shoot up with foliage but no flower.

HOW TO LOOK AFTER DAFFODIL BULBS FOR ANNUAL GROWTH

- > Allow the leaves to die back naturally before cutting off
- > You can lift bulbs between June and August and store in a cool, dry place ready for replanting
- > Apply a rich fertiliser to the soil once you have removed bulbs

GARDEN OF LIFE

TREES AND SOIL *socialism*

In the second of a four-part series that shows how even the most urban garden can be a haven for the wonders of wildlife and the nurturing of nature, we look at the role of trees and fungi below the surface.

We view our trees with respect and admiration – a fluttering, swaying mass of potency and life that evolves with every passing season, presenting a haven for all manner of wildlife, from insects to birds, plant-life to rodents, as well as being a valuable source of oxygen for all living things.

And yet, the true strength of a tree is not what we see above ground, but its rooted, tangled masses beneath it. At the heart of this are microbes called mycorrhizal fungi.

Once considered an enemy to plant life, in recent decades the fungi – which release hyphae, tying together tree and fungus at cellular level – have been better understood. This mycorrhiza bond links below-surface connections... a 'Wood Wide Web'.

It leads to the creation of one superorganism that looks after, supports and talks to each tree, be that a small crab apple just a few yards away, or a thundering oak several hundred metres down a ravine.

The creation of this network is for mass sustainability – the fungi have minerals that the tree needs; the tree has carbon that the fungi need – but the result is a kind of soil socialism that looks after its own.

For so long it was believed that trees and fungi were at war, both looking to snatch what they could from the ground. Now, it's believed that without the mycorrhizal fungi, trees would be toy-sized, and in the case of the 400 species of mycoheterotrophic plants that cannot photosynthesise, they would die out altogether.

So the next time you stand back and admire the beauty of a tree, perhaps take a respectful glance towards ground level while you're at it.





Why your garden NEEDS A GREENHOUSE

If you are considering getting a greenhouse installed in your garden but are not entirely convinced it's the right decision for your property, check out these seven benefits of greenhouse ownership.

1. GROW FRESH, ORGANIC PRODUCE

Arguably the best aspect of having your own greenhouse is that you can grow a wide variety of fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as plants, from the comfort of your own garden. Plus, you can change what you want to grow in it each year.

2. STORE GARDENING TOOLS

If you struggle to find somewhere to store all your gardening tools, supplies and equipment, a greenhouse can double up as a garden shed, offering quick and easy access to everything you need, all in one designated spot.

3. ENJOY CONSISTENT CONDITIONS

By growing your plants within the safety of a greenhouse, you can avoid any problems caused by extreme weather conditions and seasonal changes.

This offers you more flexibility when it comes to the plants you can grow.

4. PROTECT YOUR PLANTS FROM PESTS

As well as protecting your plants from the elements, a greenhouse can help to keep them safe from pests such as caterpillars, spider mites and locust swarms.

5. OFFER AN OPTIMUM ENVIRONMENT

Plants love warm and humid environments, which is why they thrive when grown in a greenhouse.

6. SAVE MONEY

If you spend a fortune every spring in your local garden centre, then a greenhouse can save you a lot of money. You can grow as many seeds as you want and you may even find you have plenty of plants left over to give to friends and family.

7. ENHANCE THE LOOK OF YOUR GARDEN

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GUARD YOUR *garden*



Just as people need a helping hand to combat the seasonal selections of health afflictions, so too should we be aware of the pests and disease that threaten the green goodies in our gardens.

CABBAGE KILLERS

You wouldn't think the humble caterpillar would rate high in the list of garden gremlins, but the larvae of cabbage moth caterpillars can reap havoc in a bed of well-tended crops. A simple insect-proof mesh covering should keep most of them away.

THE SLUG BUG

Your average garden slug will happily eat away at any type of vegetable it finds, and whether leaves, shoots, fruits or stems, he's happy as long as he's feeding. Encouraging hedgehogs into your garden is a great way to get a classic slug predator to help you out.

THE CUCUMBER SLUMBER

Blossom end rot sounds a lot worse than it is... in fact, it's not even rot. More precisely, the blossom end of anything from aubergines to chillis, cucumbers to squash and melons, develops into a sunken rotten area. It comes as a result of irregular water supply, so is easily fixed.

FEAR THE APHID

A sticky residue that gradually turns into a sooty mould is a sure-fire sign that your plant has an aphid problem. Sometimes barely visible to the naked eye, aphids can cause stunted plant growth and curled-up leaves, but can be warded off by good garden hygiene and natural predators, such as ladybirds.

BLIGHT

A fungus that causes leaves to shrivel and brown patches to appear on fruits, this fungus-like organism loves damp environments, and there's little you can do to halt its rapid spread, other than remove affected plants and start again. Once more, maintaining good hygiene in your plot is the best way to ensure you don't have to deal with the problem in the first place.



PEDIGREE CHUMS

HOW TO ENSURE YOU BUY A PUPPY FROM A TRUSTED BREEDER

Just as you would only buy your electrical appliances from a trusted vendor, the same ought to be true of a puppy. Unless you are getting an older dog from a shelter, it is imperative you seek a registered dog breeder, or you risk buying from a puppy farm. Puppy farms put profits over the welfare of the animals. Cramped and unsanitary, these businesses often facilitate inbreeding and overbreeding, which leads to poor health for both mum and pups. Furthermore, the babies are often separated from their mother before the recommended 10 weeks.

Remember, too, these criminal enterprises go to great lengths to appear as legitimate breeders, which is why it's important to know the signs of a farm. This will save both your pet and your family a lot of heartache in the long run.

HOW TO SPOT A PUPPY FARM:

It's too good to be true - The dogs look perfect in their advert photo, both parents are

thoroughbreds and the price is so reasonable, but your gut instinct is telling you otherwise, so investigate further.

- They have multiple ads - A legitimate breeder will often only have one litter and breed available at a time, so if there are several ads with similar wording, styles or even phone numbers, there's every chance it's a farm.
- They only take cash - Legit breeders want to make sure their pups go to good homes which means offering refunds if the buyer changes their mind. In short, they don't do 'cash and dash'.
- They want to meet at a public place - Always see your new pet in their natural habitat and meet its mother to ensure reliable provenance.
- They are already vaccinated - No dogs ought to be vaccinated until they are at least eight weeks old, so if an ad tells you otherwise, it's a scam.

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TRAVEL

THE COVER YOU'LL NEED IN PLACE WHEN TRAVELLING TO EUROPE POST-BREXIT

The very notion of overseas travel seems slightly optimistic at the moment, but as 2021 rolls on there is hope we may be able to stretch our legs on foreign shores before long. And if that's the case, it pays to know how to insure against travel pitfalls as we prepare for jaunts and journeys to EU countries in this post-Brexit world.

The first thing to ensure is that you have six months left on your passport, or you may not be going anywhere, with travel restrictions having tightened post-Brexit.

Next, there's the relinquishing of the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). You cannot replace this – we're no longer in the EU – but it is still effective until the expiry date listed. If yours has timed out, you will need to apply for a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This, like the EHIC, will cover you for pre-existing conditions, maternity and emergency care. Go without one and you run the

risk of incurring expensive healthcare treatment.

Remember, though, the GHIC is not an alternative to purchasing travel insurance, as it doesn't cover any private medical healthcare, such as being flown back to the UK in the event of serious injury.

And as part of your own private insurance, you should still take out cover for unexpected events, such as cancellations or lost luggage, just as you would have done previously.

As for other matters, you are permitted to stay in the EU for 90 days in any 180-day period (see slightly differing rules for Croatia, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Romania), with a visa required if you're hanging about for longer. Mostly, though, EU countries are keen to make the transition period as smooth as possible. It doesn't suit nationals travelling in either direction to find themselves held up or, worse still, turned away at customs; but it does pay to double-check on everything in these uncertain times.



Retro TECH

FIVE OLD SCHOOL RETRO TECH ITEMS THAT REACH DECENT MONEY ON EBAY...

do you have one?

Short of a bob or two? Get up into the loft and see if you've got any of these money-spinners gathering dust.

ANALOGUE TELEPHONE (1970)
Stylish, slick, colourful, and with echoes of art deco, this was arguably the best thing the 1970s produced when it came to fashion. Although it's only worth £40 now, that's still significantly more than a new home phone.

POLAROID CAMERA (1974)
Classic, contemporary and, at the time, sitting at the very peak of stills technology. Nowadays, the 195 is almost unusable.
However, if you've got one of these lingering around, you could be pocketing anything up to £600. Smile for the camera.

CASIO CALCULATOR WATCH (1983)
We've all been sat on the bus desperate to work out something using Pythagoras, and Casio found the

answer. Nowadays, Siri will do it for you, and you can invest the £275 it'll make you in other ways... a full-sized abacus, perhaps.

NINTENDO GAMEBOY (1989)
Where personal gaming began, the Nintendo, in both design and playability, was utterly unique.
This is one of those rare items that still has as much to offer as it did when released, but if you've got one at the back of the cupboard, you might want to cash it in for up to £250 and buy yourself a new Xbox instead.

IPOD CLASSIC (2001)
Anyone who thinks mass-storage phones have made iPods largely valueless needs to think again. This classic from 2001 was Apple's first punt at the music market, and stored what seemed, at the time, a bewildering 1,000 tracks. It's now moved into 'antique' mode and will make you a cool £150, although remember to wipe that Gareth Gates album off it first.



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Make a
wish



Are the bargains from this frequently discussed website all they're cracked up to be?

Scouring for bargains online will always present one or two sites where the deals appear to be too good to be true, but over the past couple of years, Wish, a retail platform based in China, has cemented its place as being one of the most affordable and diverse sites on the net.

While a good proportion of wish.com caters for the peculiar and the downright perverse, a huge chunk of goods appear well priced and reasonably well made. Its secret is to connect millions of shoppers with sellers all over the world. Different from eBay, sellers are registered companies, and while China and south-east Asia provides a common source for products, it may come as a surprise to hear that the site was actually conceived in Ontario, Canada, back in 2010.

By June 2020, Wish could boast 122 million visits, with almost 70 million of those being unique users. From sportswear to phones, jewellery to lingerie,

tech to trumpets, Wish's diversity is its greatest strength.

And yet, weaknesses are prevalent too. Such is the breadth of the site – it is a truly global entity – that quality control checks aren't the strongest, and waiting times for the transportation of goods can be long.

You also need to consider that regulations and guidelines for products in the UK won't be the same abroad, so with something like a child's car seat, some imported products might be substandard.

What Wish ultimately represents is another opening-up of trade, often directly between the individual and the product manufacturer and/or retailer.

The world is a much smaller place today, but while that's true, there's nothing to suggest the famous old adage 'buyer beware' isn't as important now as it ever was.





Home Home

WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN BUYING A HOLIDAY HOME IN EUROPE POST-BREXIT

It's a piece of escapism almost all of us love and crave – even just the thought of having a holiday home we might slip away to is enough to keep us going through those long, cold, monotonous months of work.

Of course, for those of us who will at some point be lucky enough to own an overseas abode, the question of how accessible and affordable that place in the sun will be has arisen recently in light of the UK departing the European Union.

Within that, perhaps the most profound impact of Brexit will be that UK

residents are only permitted to stay in the EU for a total of 90 days in every 180-day period.

As far as purchasing a home goes, British nationals will now need to undertake the same procedures as non-European residents, and while this doesn't prohibit us from investing in a holiday hideaway, it does mean an extra layer of paperwork, and in future may require applicants to apply for a visa in order to claim residency.

In time to come it may also be seen that Brexit leads to an increase in stamp duty for British buyers, while changes in the currency markets could mean that mortgage availability becomes more limited.

As it stands, though, the subsequent transition period – and with it, a large amount of uncertainty – hasn't led to any profound changes. Indeed, people who already own property in an EU country are protected by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights – the longwinded premise being a simple one, namely that whether a member of the European Union or not, individual property rights must be respected.

So if you do move forward in retaining or investing in property abroad, your little piece of homely heaven is assured.



Special Service Agents

As estate agents encounter fierce competition from faceless online facilities, **Kingsmarq Real Estate** are taking the opposite approach, providing friendly, personal service to a limited number of clients

The days when those looking for an estate agent to sell their house had only one local option to choose are long gone. Today's sellers, buyers and landlords have a wide range of choices, from high street chains to local stalwarts, and an increasing number of online agencies. Launching into the Essex area, Kingsmarq Real Estate was created to offer a fresh way of handling properties with a boutique level of service.

Kingsmarq saw how often homeowners were passed between team members who did not know their property and how this left them feeling unsupported, without experienced advice when they needed it most. There was a gap to launch an agency who could offer a bespoke service level and consistent contact.

Too many houses are on the market for much longer than they should be, owing to a lack of focus on each property that can leave them incorrectly priced and no longer front-of-mind when an agent meets a potential buyer. In response, Kingsmarq founder Sandeep Chana, sought to create an offering with lower client numbers to ensure faster transactions, with greater care and attention.

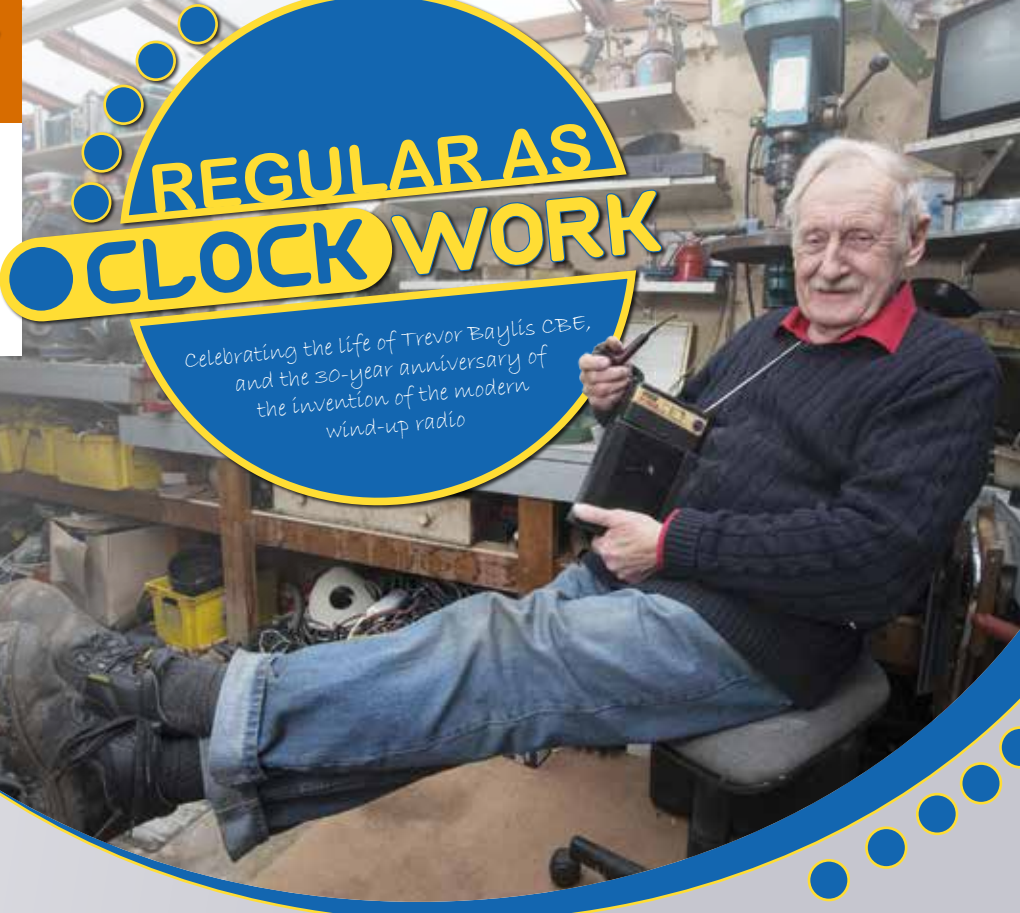
By limiting the number of properties on their books, Kingsmarq can ensure every client gets focused, boutique-style service in a friendly and knowledgeable style. Working across Essex, Kingsmarq offers a tailored service, taking the time to understand the needs of landlords, the motivations for sellers and the desires of buyers and renters. The aim is to move a small portfolio of properties along at a quick pace, while creating an experience all clients will remember and share with others.

"I truly care for my clients and am driven to achieve the best outcome." Says Kingsmarq founder Sandeep, "Whether you are buying your first home, selling a house you have lived in and loved, letting your property for the first time, or looking for a smooth transition when your previous tenant moves on, it can be daunting. I don't just handle the sales and paperwork; I offer guidance and support through the process."

With excellent customer service at the heart of Kingsmarq Real Estate's ethos, you can be assured of a warm welcome from the very first call to discuss your property needs.



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REGULAR AS CLOCKWORK

Celebrating the life of Trevor Baylis CBE, and the 30-year anniversary of the invention of the modern wind-up radio

It's now three decades since British inventor Trevor Baylis CBE came up with a prototype that was to have a profound effect on limiting the spread of AIDS across Africa. Invented in his garage, the wind-up radio took less than an hour to construct, and came about after the then 54-year-old saw a programme on the BBC detailing a devastating swathe of developing-world deaths provoked by poverty and lack of sexual education.

While radios powered by handcranked generators were, in themselves, nothing new, Baylis's modern clockwork model was free of batteries, meaning information could be broadcasted to places in Africa without electricity. A patent was granted the following year.

It wasn't the first time the eccentric inventor had stepped out of the shadows to help those less fortunate than himself. As a young man he was a brilliant swimmer – he narrowly failed to qualify for the 1956 Summer Olympics in Melbourne – and his dexterity led him into stunt work. This in turn

exposed him to the needs of disabled people, and he subsequently invented and developed a range of products for the disabled, named Orange Aids.

Wind forward to 10 years after the invention that truly made him famous, and in 2001 Baylis launched a similar energy-generating product in the form of a pair of shoes that produced electricity as people walked. He trialled the invention with a 100-mile walk across the Namib Desert, at the same time raising money for the Mines Advisory Group.

Baylis, who died in March 2018, lived on Eel Pie Island on the River Thames. His fame in later life saw appearances on *The Big Breakfast*, and he was awarded an OBE and a CBE for humanitarian efforts and services to intellectual property respectively.



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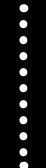
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Fan belt failure

HOW TO DIAGNOSE ONE OF THE MOST COMMON MOTORING ISSUES

The serpentine belt, alternator belt, or fan belt as it is better known, is a peculiar piece of rather essential kit as far as your car engine goes. We all know our car has one, a few of us can locate it, yet very few know what it does.

What's important is that when it does malfunction – usually through being worn out – we can get it fixed cheaply and easily.

THE SIGNS

Most people become aware of fan belt failure when they begin to hear a loud screeching or squealing sound coming from the engine. You may also discover the power steering or air conditioning isn't working, and in really bad cases the engine may overheat.

All of these effects result from the fan belt's faulty function, and that function is working with the idler, tensioner and pulleys inside the accessory drive

belt system – essentially, it provides power to key components in the engine.

A dodgy fan belt is bad news, and although the car may be driveable, you're risking a breakdown.

THE DIAGNOSIS

Fan belts can become cracked, split, grazed, misaligned or might fall off completely. Unless your amateur mechanic skills are really up to Henry Ford levels, it's probably best to take your motor to the nearest garage.

THE COST

Thankfully, a faulty fan belt won't see you off the road for too long; nor should it set you back any significant amount. Typically, a new one will cost somewhere in the region of £100–£200. It's a relatively quick job and your garage should be able to turn it around in a couple of hours.



BRITAIN'S GREATEST SPORTING MOMENTS...



Torvill & Dean

Each month we look at significant events in British sporting history. This month, it's 40 years since ice skaters Torvill and Dean were awarded MBEs, but their greatest moment was yet to come.

To an entire generation of terrestrial TV watchers, the mere sound of Ravel's *Bolero* will instantly bring about memories of Jayne Torvill OBE and Christopher Dean OBE's incredible gold-medal-winning routines at both the Olympics and the World Championships in 1984.

At both events, the duo performed a modern artistic masterpiece that captivated a generation of fans. The routine had emotion, precision and drama packed into four and a half minutes of twists, turns, lifts and pirouettes.

At the World Championships, in Ottawa, the couple received a standing ovation from the entire crowd as flowers rained down onto the ice. It was the last amateur performance of the greatest ice dancers the world had ever known, performed with such ease that it belied the incredible technicality of a routine coached by Betty Callaway.

Their score of 13 perfect 6.0s was the most ever

scored by any skaters in competition, as the couple, who had been performing together since 1975, truly went out on top of the world, having taken 11 6.0s at the Olympics two months previously.

While 1984 was ultimately the pinnacle, it's easy to forget how respected and regarded they were before then. Already prolific World and European champions, they had been awarded MBEs previously, with the 40th anniversary of their trip to Buckingham Palace being marked this year.

That these iconic skaters could still push for perfection as amateurs was the ultimate endorsement of their decision to turn professional and begin to earn a living for their art beyond grants and sponsorship. And that has been borne out in the fact that their dedication to ice skating in all its forms rolls on even today, with the pair regulars on our television screens, notably in ITV's *Dancing on Ice*.

Photo credit: Colorsport/Shutterstock

CRISTIANO RONALDO

CRISTIANO RONALDO AND THE COMPLETION OF A UNIQUE GOAL FEAT

When Cristiano Ronaldo signed for Manchester United at the age of just 19, football knew it had a real talent in its midst. Yet it's still unfathomable that the Portuguese striker would go on to create a new goalscoring world record – something the 36-year-old achieved in January when he notched up his 760th senior goal (even if his strike for Juventus versus Napoli was from just a yard out).

The feat was celebrated all over the world, and rightly so, even if there's still some conjecture regarding exactly how many goals some of his net-busting rivals have clocked up over the years.

The problem is not with CR7's total, more the tally of his contemporaries. Brazilians Pelé and Romário, for instance, both claim to have scored more than 1,000 goals, yet these totals appear to include amateur and reserve games.

Even the man whose total Ron bettered, Austrian-Czech footballer Josef Bican, who clocked up 759 strikes across a career surpassing two decades, has a claim for more goals, with the Rec.Sport.Soccer Statistics Foundation (RSSSF) claiming more than 800, in part because of missing records from the Czech second division in 1952.

Ronaldo's total is unquestionable, though – five goals for Sporting Lisbon, 118 for Manchester United, 450 for Real Madrid, 90 for Juventus (at the time of going to print), and an incredible 102 for Portugal.

Knowing Ron, the status of being the world's most successful goalscorer of all time will mean a lot to him. Though while he won't be able to completely silence the doubters who may quote other players and their respective tallies, what we can all agree on is that, over the years, he's been a handy little striker who, more often than not, has chipped in with a useful goal or two.

Photo credit: Action Press/Shutterstock

Goal-den
great

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PUZZLES

Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

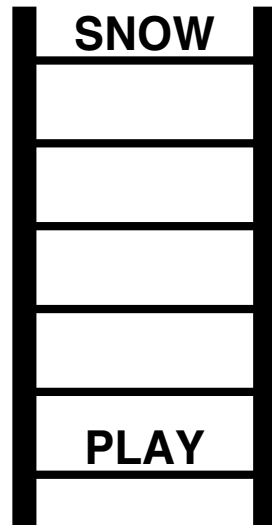
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DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Central Park in New York is one of the world's largest urban parks, covering 843 acres
- ▶ Paris has few skyscraper buildings compared to other cities owing to building height restrictions
- ▶ The Flavian Amphitheatre in Rome became known as the Colosseum because of a colossal statue that is situated nearby
- ▶ Istanbul lies in two continents – part in Europe and part in Asia
- ▶ The world's first electric traffic signal was put into place in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1914
- ▶ It's thought that Amsterdam has more bikes than people
- ▶ More chocolate is bought at Brussels Airport than anywhere else in the world

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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