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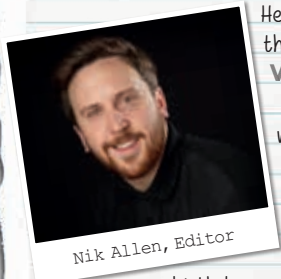
CONTACT US

www.visionmagessex.com
 rayleigh@visionmag.co.uk | 01268 955027

@visionmagessex @visionmagessex
 Vision Magazine Essex

FOUNDER | Nik Allen CREATIVE DIRECTOR | Misha Mistry
 CO-ORDINATORS | Rebecca Fryer, Amy Pollard
 CONTRIBUTORS | Tabatha Fabray, Dean Shaw, Amelie Gregory

Editor's notes...



Nik Allen, Editor

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

Whoever said 'time flies when you're having fun' probably had kids in the vicinity.

Our firstborn, Max, just celebrated his first birthday, and marked the occasion by 'rearranging' various shelf items, throwing water over the floor and chewing on the remote control.

In fact, come to think of it, he's been 'celebrating' like that for the past few months.

The pleasures of parenting have certainly become a central part of the Allen household, and I'm excited to announce another little person arriving next year.

While growing a family offers a flurry of new milestones to celebrate, it also makes you realise how quickly life moves on.

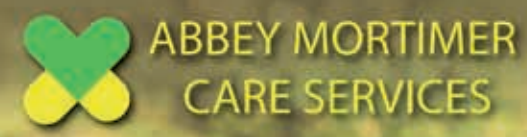
With that in mind, festive plans are coming together quickly, and there's plenty of evidence of that in this month's bumper edition – just don't leave your **VISION** magazine on a low shelf or it may not be there when you get back.

In local news, we take a look at the candidates vying for your votes in the General Election, a parking company says it will cancel a number of fines at Rayleigh Station and a sports star from the town has been nominated for a well deserved award.

I would like to wish all our readers and advertisers a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Thanks for reading,

Nik



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Suited AND BOOTED



If you thought it was just modern-day society that's taken in by the strength of marketing, think again. Here's the story of how Christmas was stolen not by the Grinch, but by the soft drinks brand.

He's arguably the most iconic and most easily recognised person on the planet, but even Santa is a Coca-Cola marketing team's plaything, and the evidence is staring us right in the face. That's right – that trademark red-and-white suit that we have come to know, love and welcome into our homes on Christmas Eve is a brand team's creation that's straight out of the marketing textbook.

Before Coca-Cola sidled up to the most travelled man on the planet, Saint Nicholas could be seen in all manner of colours, clothes and designs. Pictures exist of him dressed in a tan-coloured suit; others show him wearing shades of light and dark blue; while in some pictures he comes across as a somewhat sinister elf-like character dressed in green as he dots from house to house.

It was only natural then that, as the power of the media grew in the lead-up to World War II, so too should a universal image of the great man emerge. And siding with the world's biggest-selling soda – and its red-and-white livery – well, it was a match made in heaven... or, at least, Lapland.

And that, boys and girls, is the story of how Santa's red-and-white suit was created by the guys at Coca-Cola.

Or is it...?

While the tale of Santa taking on the colours of the world's leading drinks brand is a water-cooler classic that has done the rounds for years, it is only actually half-true.

That famous fluffy livery was actually to be found on pictures of the great man going back into the nineteenth century. It was cartoonist Thomas Nast who truly popularised the use of red and white with his hugely successful sketch series in the 1870s. And some believe Coca-Cola wasn't even the first drinks brand to popularise the figure, with carbonated water producers White Rock using him in adverts from the early 1920s.

However, where Coca-Cola can take credit is in capitalising on the big guy's popularity. Consider White Rock had 90 per cent of the fizzy water market back in 1920s America, and with imitation being the greatest form of flattery and all that, logic follows that the brand Coca-Cola adopted its own version of Santa (holding a bottle).

With the help of illustrator Haddon Sundblom, it evolved the big man into an even stronger caricature of himself. This served to vanquish the various other images of Father Christmas who back then could still be found dressed in such variant colours, all the while subconsciously linking the drink to a figure representing kindness, generosity and happiness in the minds of youngsters (and a few adults).

Put it this way: try finding a festive Coca-Cola image that doesn't feature its brand ambassador, and you'll appreciate that while the American drinks giant may not have chosen the colours for Santa, it has certainly ensured he's staying dressed in his perfect red-and-white suit, and we'll all drink to that.



Photo credit: www.solosophie.com



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THE CROWN

NEW SERIES, NEW DECADE, NEW CAST – THE RETURN OF *THE CROWN*

As new series of prime-time drama go, *The Crown* has been a long time in coming. It's been two years since Claire Foy stepped aside as Queen Elizabeth, and in the intervening passage of time we've had a real royal wedding (Harry and Meghan), royal births, the Windsors taking a national newspaper to court and all manner of rumours regarding the seedy and nefarious actions of some in lofty positions. If all this were to be wrapped into a 10-part Netflix drama we'd probably suggest it was too far-fetched.

As it is, we're about to be treated to something rather more palatable, surely, as Olivia Colman CBE steps into the role of HRH for the first time.

The 45-year-old's long-awaited debut reflects the true evolution of an actress. Beginning at the much-renowned Footlights Dramatic Club at Cambridge University, she shared the stage with the likes of David Mitchell, Richard Ayoade and Peter Serafinowicz, before excelling in *Rev*, *Broadchurch*, *The Night Manager* and *The Favourite*.

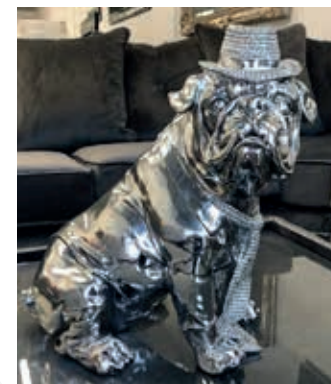
Her landing in such a major Netflix product feels perfectly timed, having just been awarded a CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for her services to drama.

The new series also welcomes Helena Bonham Carter (Princess Margaret), Ben Daniels (Lord Snowdon) and an entirely new cast, with a storyline that builds from the 1970s, broaching the Queen and Prince Philip's tumultuous relationship.

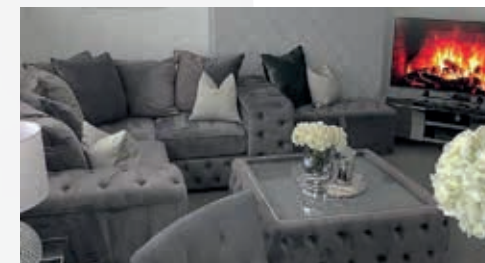
As for Colman CBE, her pursuit of creative endeavour is as premium fuelled now as at any time in the past.

"Working makes me happy and I do struggle to say no," she admits. "I've an inherent fear of being pigeon-holed, and I think as a result of that I reach out in as many different ways as I can."

The good news for fans of *The Crown* is that given the series are shot back to back, season four will be along very shortly. Set in the 1980s, it will deliver Margaret Thatcher (Gillian Anderson) and Emma Corrin (Princess Diana)... and no doubt a yuppie or two.

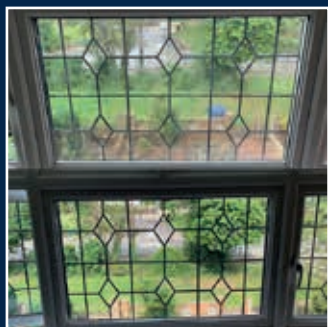
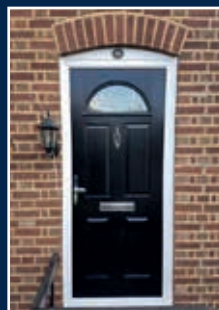


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DESIGN FOR LIFE
 DAVID LINLEY AND INTERIOR DESIGN'S MISSING LINK



HOME & DIY

Talk about interior design, architecture, design and craftsmanship, and so much of what you hear revolves around the intentions, desires and whims of the designers themselves. It's almost as if they are going to be the ones living in the spaces they curate.

Clearly, in most cases they're not, and that's where the Linley stable of designers and architects takes a different approach towards creating artistic excellence.

At the heart of Linley is the intention to style a client's own vision before anything else. Sure, the Belgravia-based experts, who have been a major player in working with upmarket clients for more than 30 years, can extol the virtues of custom-made and tailored cabinets, furniture and kitchen spaces, but unless it has client direction, a project won't begin.

When bespoke designs are brought forward, Linley designs favour a few simple rules: items are sleek and sharp, utilising



whites, greys, blacks and browns, with references to art deco, 1970s elegance with polished tones. They are happy to juxtapose styles and periods to create rooms with distinction and flair, but the celebration of eras is without brazen, shouty, disturbing colours. In short, subtlety is key.

Small item collections are often in glassware or polished wood (such as boxes, desk items and picture frames), with a fascination for intensity, detail and perfect lines.

A Linley home is one to be viewed from many angles, with interiors that are to be stroked, brushed and admired; although the attention to detail demanded of everything, from intricate objects to sweeping units that glide into the distance, come with price tags to match, so beware.



Photo credit: blog.davidlinley.com

urban hype

OWN A HOOVER AND A RUBBISH BAG? You've already qualified as an urban minimalist

Talk of urban minimalist design brings about notions of wealthy Docklands apartments littered with little more than a table candle, a coffee cup and a laptop.

And yet the achieving of a clean, clear, space-driven home isn't out of reach, yuppie living or not. Ultimately, where urban minimalist design succeeds, it's in the understanding that you are defined not by your possessions, by your furniture.

Wind back a decade or so and minimalism would have sat much more on the side of brutalism, with polished concrete floors, conflicting wood and terracotta, and sleeping arrangements that appeared more akin to a night in the cells.

These days the rules are relaxed, and urban minimalism dives further into the human need for comfort, warmth, colour and texture, without the clutter, chaos and disharmony of possessions

ruining streamlined furniture, geometric design and perfectly judged angles.

In terms of colours, the warmth of wood is a key asset. Patterned against white walls, urban minimalism allows a return to the perfect white offset, while hard floors, matched rugs and boxed rooms allow styles to merge without them spilling out into corridors or hallways.

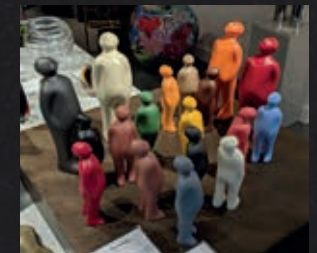
The secret to the look is to be regimented in your approach to everyday clutter. Storage space is not a secret or an embarrassment to those wanting to pull off this look, but clearly, practical solutions need to be sought in order to maintain what is a devoted approach towards cleanliness.

Nail the ability to hide away the knick-knacks of life, and urban minimalism enables homemakers to celebrate the ultimate pleasure derived from space and shape.



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diy Christmas Gifts

What could be better than giving someone you love a handmade gift? Not only does it show that you have put a lot of thought and effort into it, but it can also save you money – and who knows, you might even enjoy it!

Festive Bath Bombs... you will need:

300g bicarbonate of soda | 100g citric acid | Food colouring
Essential oils – orange, cinnamon and peppermint all work well
A misting bottle | Bath bomb moulds | A muffin tin for storage

how to make

- Mix the bicarbonate of soda and citric acid together.
- Add 2–3 drops of essential oil.
- Gradually add the food colouring.
- Add water, stirring as you go – be careful not to add too much.
- Your bomb is ready when the mixture holds together in your hand.
- Add the mixture to the moulds, one half at a time, then press together.
- Carefully remove your bombs and store in tin.

Merry Mugs... you will need:

Plain white mugs | Oil-based Sharpie pens in festive colours
Alphabet letter stickers

how to make

- Create a phrase using your stickers on your mug – this could be someone's name or something festive such as "Joy" or "Happy Xmas".
- Draw polka dot shapes around the stickers in your chosen colours, then leave to dry. Be sure to cover around all the edges and in between the letters.
- Remove stickers and bake the mug in an oven at 220 degrees Celsius for 30 minutes – put in a cold oven and then turn temperature up.

Alternatively you can create any design or pattern you like, even write a message on the mug. You can also decorate with acrylic paints, nail polish and glitter.

Christmas Coasters... you will need:

4 x 4.25" square ceramic tiles | 4 old Christmas cards | Minwax Polycrylic
Mod Podge | Hot glue | Felt

how to make

- Cut each card into a 4x4 square.
- Spread Mod Podge onto each tile and apply a card to each one.
- Use a credit card to smooth out the card, then leave to dry for 2–4 hours.
- Coat each coaster with Minwax Polycrylic, then leave to dry.
- Stick a 4x4 square of felt to the bottom of each tile to protect surfaces.



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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Residents set to have their say in the General Election

Residents in Rayleigh are set to go to the polls on December 12 as they vote for their next MP.

There are four candidates to become the new Rayleigh and Wickford MP.

Mark Francois MP (Conservative), pictured left, will try to get re-elected having been Rayleigh's MP since 2001. He will be up against David Flack (Labour), pictured centre, Paul Thorogood (Green) and Ron Tindall (Liberal Democrat), pictured right.

We introduce the candidates for the main parties.

Mark Francois lives in Rayleigh and is involved with a number of local charities and voluntary organisations.

He is the patron of the Rayleigh Branch of the Royal British Legion and was very supportive of the campaign to establish the refurbished war memorial on the edge of Wickford Memorial Park.

Mark is also an associate member of the Rayleigh Branch of the Royal Naval Association.

The Conservative candidate also serves as the president of various local organisations and charities.

He is also president at the Wyvern Community Transport, Rayleigh Conservative Club on London Hill

and Rayleigh Town Museum.

David Flack says: "I am a retired headteacher and former Essex County councillor, Rochford District councillor and group leader.

"I led the successful campaign to save the Southend Cancer Unit which resulted in the Calman report on radiotherapy treatment changing government guideline and preventing the closure of a number of other cancer units nationwide.

"I have also campaigned on housing with tenants to protect their rights and to prevent the transfer of council to housing associations. My primary interests are Education, the NHS, mental health and housing."

Ron Tindall is an experienced councillor who has worked closely with Simon Hughes, the popular former MP for Bermondsey.

Ron told **VISION**Rayleigh: "I voted for Remain in the referendum and, in the absence of a People's Vote or confirmatory referendum, I am standing by my principles in this General Election. I firmly believe that it's in the best interest of our country to stay in the EU."



Inspirational Great Britain star nominated for sports award

An inspirational Great Britain para ice hockey, rugby and basketball player from Rayleigh has been nominated for the Active Essex Sports Awards.

Freya Levy, who has previously won Rochford District Sports Personality of the Year, has been shortlisted for Sports Personality of the Year 2019.

As well as representing team GB in the Women's Para Ice Hockey team, she is also a member of the GB Wheelchair Basketball U25 team and she is currently the only female on the England Wheelchair

Rugby Sevens team.

When she's not competing, Freya spends her time working with a range of community organisations including the Panathlon Challenge, which helps to deliver sport to over 22,000 disabled and special needs children in the UK.

Talking about her latest award nomination, Freya said: "The support from my local community means the world and definitely helps on those raining Monday mornings getting out of bed for training."

Historic windmill moves into final

A venue in Rayleigh has made the finals of the Essex Wedding Awards 2020. The finalists in the Essex Wedding Awards 2020 have been revealed with Rayleigh Windmill making the grade.

The intimate location has been recognised in the Historic Wedding Venue of the Year category, thanks to its rich heritage which helped makes it stand out.

The winners of the awards were announced at a special event after VISION Rayleigh went to print.

Rayleigh Windmill is a 210 year-old Grade II listed building, which is also an award-winning tourist attraction recognised by Visit England, and offers a ceremony room perfect for intimate occasions with seating for up to 20 guests.

The Old House in Rochford also made the final.

Rochford District Council's portfolio holder for community, councillor Mike Webb, said: "We are incredibly lucky in the Rochford District to have such unique, historic wedding venues, and I'm delighted these have made the final of the Essex Wedding Awards 2020.

"The walls of the Old House, in Rochford, tell so many interesting stories of local history through the ages, which act as talking point for your guests. The Windmill is such a distinctive landmark that it will be forever etched in your memory, if you choose this venue to celebrate your big day."



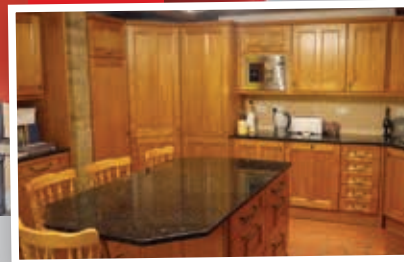
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Swimming teacher is the best in the country

A swimming teacher from Rayleigh has been crowned the best in England.

Jo-Jo McQueen, who teaches in Rayleigh, has been crowned Swimming Teacher of the Year at the Swim England Awards.

Jo-Jo says a passion to impact the lives of children led to her being named Swim England's Swimming Teacher of the Year for 2019.

As a child herself, Jo-Jo was told to avoid swimming due to the potential health and safety risks associated with her physical disabilities. Thankfully, she received valuable support from a teacher – an experience which has inspired her career in the swimming industry.

Now the swim coordinator at Clements Hall Leisure

Centre, visits local schools to promote the benefits of learning to swim.

She said: "My school teacher at the time got me to join a club and things escalated from there. I ended up competing internationally, so I saw the huge difference that teaching and coaching can have on an individual – not just their sport but their whole life.

"To be on the other side of that now means the world to me. It's fantastic to have now succeeded on the other side.

"Even if it's not been a great day, you just think about the massive difference you can be having on the children's lives and the parents.

"You think about the positive things that can happen from the way you're teaching them."

Warning to residents after distraction burglary

Residents in Rayleigh have been advised to be vigilant after a suspected distraction burglary.

On November 13 a man tried to steal from a home in Philbrick Crescent after posing as an energy technician.

A spokesman for the Castle Point and Rochford Policing Team said: "A male knocked on the door of a property and stated that he was from Scottish Power and that he needed to come in and take a meter reading, whilst in the property he asked the occupant to go and get the latest meter readings for him.

"The occupant felt uneasy about the male and believed his intention was to be alone so he could

steal items from within the home, the male was asked to leave the property.

"Our PCSOs attended and completed some house to house enquiries and were made aware from a number of residents that on the date of the incident a female had knocked on properties, stating to residents, 'Don't be alarmed if you see people going in to properties, we are completing loft insulation in the road as it is part of a neighbourhood watch area'.

"It is likely the two incidents are linked."

Police are urging residents if they get a visitor they don't believe is genuine to call Essex Police on 101 or report online using the best description possible.

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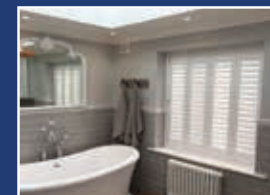
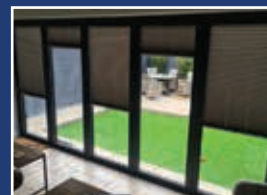
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Have your say in future of fire service



Residents in Rayleigh are being encouraged to have their say on the future priorities of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS).

The consultation runs until Friday, December 13 and sets out the priorities for ECFRS by asking residents to agree or disagree on what they feel is a priority, as well as give the opportunity to share their opinions on the focus of the fire and rescue service.

The questions asked in the consultation include points around road safety, home visits, staff training and keeping vulnerable people safe.

All of the priorities prepare the service for a future with reductions in incidents, an increased focus on prevention and a commitment to become financially sustainable as reductions in funding continue.

Chief fire officer and chief executive, Jo Turton, said: "Our service recognises the voices of our residents are paramount in creating a transparent and effective fire and rescue service.

"This is the ideal opportunity for anyone who has ideas or views about their fire service to be involved in shaping our future."

To have your say on the options visit www.essex-fire.gov.uk/irmp — if you would prefer a hard copy email irmp@essex-fire.gov.uk or call 0300 303 0082 Monday to Friday between 10am and 2pm.

Faulty camera leads to fines being cancelled

A parking company have said they will cancel a huge number of fines after they incorrectly handed out tickets.

The car park at Rayleigh Station, run by parking firm NCP, handed out a number of fines between July 1 and October 13 after "technical issues" led to fines incorrectly being handed out.

NCP say all tickets will be cancelled or refunded after cameras failed to correctly log when people had arrived or departed the station car park.

The faulty cameras also led to motorists being

finned just for dropping people off at the station, despite using the correct area of the car park.

A spokesman for NCP said: "This matter is limited to Rayleigh Station car park and the number of incidents were isolated and infrequent.

"NCP would like to assure customers that we are taking all necessary steps to rectify the situation and, in the interim, will be suspending the issue of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) at this particular site.

"Customers who have been affected by this matter need take no further action as our processing team will automatically refund or cancel notices as appropriate to the individual case.

"Any customers who have not heard from NCP within the next two weeks should contact us directly at GaAppeals@ncp.co.uk

"Finally, on behalf of NCP I would like to offer our sincere apologies for any inconvenience caused by this unfortunate matter."

Polling station changes

Residents in Rayleigh have been advised that the polling stations they are used to using may have changed ahead of the General Election.

The polls will be open on December 12 and this year there will be some venue changes to a small number of polling stations.

Voters who previously used Rayleigh Lodge will now be able to vote at Oak Tree Family Hub at Grove Wood Primary School, Grove Road.

Voters who previously used The Travellers Joy can now vote at Grange Free Church, London Road.

Each polling station will be open from 7am until 10pm on election day.

Each poll card will include details of each voters named polling station.



LOCAL NEWS

THE LIONS CLUB

of Rayleigh

Rayleigh Lions has raised more than £1million for good causes in Rayleigh, Hockley, Hullbridge and Rochford since 1974.

This includes some recent donations:

- > £15,000 to Hockley Day Centre minibus
- > £8,000 to breakout area at Fitzwimarc
- > £5,000 to classrooms for hearing impaired pupils at Sweyne
- > £3,000 to Southend Hospital scanner
- > £2,700 to Essex Air Ambulance.

Lions Clubs of Rayleigh, Southend, Eastwood, Leigh & Castle Point gave £10,500 to prostate cancer treatment trial at Southend Hospital. This new treatment was made available to all in July 2019.

We need your help to run events - we need volunteers. If we can't run events we can't raise money.

If you can help, please leave details with a lion, email rayleighlionsclub@gmail.com or write to 108 Clarence Road, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 8TD.



Brave Megan skydives for Aoife

A brave woman has skydived to raise funds for a charity set up in honour of a Rayleigh toddler who died of germ cell cancer.

Megan Mansell took to the skies to raise money for Aoife's Bubbles, which aims to raise funds in the fight against germ cell cancer.

Aoife's mum, Eilish, is fighting to make changes in her daughter's name. As part of that fundraising family, friends and the community have also taken on a variety of challenges for Aoife's Bubbles.

Megan told **VISION** Rayleigh about her skydive and why the cause means so much to her.

She said: "I decided to do the skydive in memory of Aoife as my daughter, Poppy, went to play groups with Aoife and I am good friends with Aoife's childminder.

"It really hit home as Aoife was the same age as my daughter and so in her memory I wanted to raise vital awareness for this wonderful charity as her death

could have easily been prevented and Aoife should still be here today.

"I previously did a skydive in 2010, which was to raise funds for Muscular Dystrophy as I work with children with this condition, although that skydive was just as important to me, I found this skydive to be a lot more emotional and I put a lot more pressure on myself as I so desperately wanted to help Aoife's bubbles.

"I was more worried about not raising enough funds than I was of the actual jump as I can see how much this charity means to her family and how many other families this will help in the future.

"While circulating in the plane and on jumping I was very emotional thinking of Aoife. Once we had landed, I just wanted to see Eilish, Aoife's amazing mum who I knew was watching."

To donate to Megan's fundraising visit www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/skydivingforaoife

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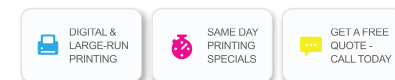
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News from THE ROTARY CLUB

Rayleigh Mill

In recent years all service clubs have found difficulties in recruiting younger members. We believe that there is a wish for young people to participate in communities and to form lasting friendships with like-minded people but, with changes in lifestyle it is increasingly difficult for young people to commit to the perceived strictures of the service clubs.

Rotary International is aware of the problems and has, in recent years, relaxed many of the requirements for membership. Meetings no longer have to be once a week, the meetings do not need to be the formal events that they once were, there is no qualification requirement. In short, if people want to make a difference, give something back to both their own communities and people in need throughout the world, the members can set their own rules.

We strongly believe that young people are increasingly aware of the issues that we encounter in modern life and are more than willing to try to alleviate the consequences of these concerns.

If you want to make a difference, get together with like-minded people and enhance your social life, perhaps Rotary is the place to do it.

The Rotary Club of Rayleigh Mill is investigating setting up a new Satellite Club especially for younger members. If you are interested, please contact the club's Membership Chairman at membership@rayleighmillrotary.org.uk or visit our website at www.rayleighmillrotary.org.uk

As the festive season approaches, the club's activities



tend to become more social than fund-raising or serving the community. The members have, since the last edition of **VISION** Rayleigh, enjoyed two events: a Pauper's Supper and an evening of entertainment at the Genting Casino in Southend.

The Pauper's Supper was held at Squires Coffee shop in Rayleigh. This is a regular feature in the club's calendar when the members partake of a "frugal" meal which, due to the good offices of the proprietor (and club member), Carl Watson, results in a monetary surplus which is donated to the Rotary Foundation charity that funds humanitarian projects all over the world.

The second event was purely social with the members enjoying an excellent meal, listening to a Bob Marley tribute band and a few even managed to make a profit at the gambling tables at the Genting Casino on the evening of November 8.

Investigation launched after cyclist dies

A police investigation has been launched after a cyclist died following a collision with a lorry.

Emergency services were called to Rawreth Lane in Rayleigh, at about 10.30am on November 5 and a man in his 60s was confirmed dead at the scene.

A 55-year-old man from Leicester was being questioned.

Essex Police said: "The driver of the lorry has been arrested on suspicion of causing death by careless driving and failing to stop at the scene of a collision.

He is currently in custody."

An Essex Police spokesperson added: "We need to speak to anyone who saw the collision or has dash cam or CCTV footage to come forward.

"In particular we need to speak to anyone who saw a white, silver curtain-sided lorry in the lead up to the collision or afterwards and how it was being driven."

If you have any information call Essex Police on 101 quoting incident 327 of November 5 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

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LIFE AND TIMES OF *Mr Kipling*

"Through one of the marvels of modern science, I am enabled, this Christmas Day, to speak to all my peoples throughout the Empire.

"I take it as a good omen that wireless should have reached its present perfection at a time when the Empire has been linked in closer union. For it offers us immense possibilities to make that union closer still."

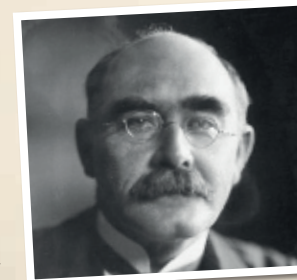
These 62 words were spoken by King George V in 1932 in the first ever Christmas broadcast to the nation on the radio.

Historians see it as one of the great speeches of the twentieth century and it is catalogued in the British Library. The majestic words, which were widely acclaimed, were written by one of the greatest British authors, Rudyard Kipling.

He was born in Bombay, India, on December 30, 1865. In 1870, Kipling was sent to England to stay with a foster family in Southsea and then went to boarding school in Devon.

In 1882, he returned to India and worked as a journalist, writing poetry and fiction in his spare time. Books such as *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888) gained success in England, and in 1889 Kipling went to live in London.

In 1892, Kipling married Caroline Balestier, and the couple moved to Vermont, USA, where they had their two daughters. In 1894 Kipling wrote his most famous book, *The Jungle Book*. In 1896, a quarrel with his wife's family prompted Kipling to move back to England and he settled with his own family in Sussex. His son John was born in 1897.



Other books followed, including *Kim* (1901) and *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906). *The Just So Stories* (1902) were originally written for his daughter Josephine, who died of pneumonia aged six.

In 1902, Kipling bought a seventeenth-century house called Bateman's in East Sussex where he lived for the rest of his life. He travelled a lot, including repeated trips to South Africa in winter.

In 1915, his son, John, went missing in action while serving with the Irish Guards in the Battle of Loos during First World War. Kipling had difficulty accepting his son's death – having played a major role in getting the chronically short-sighted John accepted for military service – and subsequently

wrote an account of his regiment, *The Irish Guards in the Great War*. He also joined the Imperial War Graves Commission and selected the biblical phrase inscribed on many British war memorials: *Their Name Liveth For Evermore*.

Despite his personal friendship with King George, Kipling declined most of the many honours that were offered to him, including a knighthood, the Poet Laureateship and the Order of Merit, but in 1907 he accepted the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Kipling died on 18 January 1936 and is buried at Westminster Abbey.



JOE WICKS

THE MAN FROM THE STICKS

*The man who built fitness fanaticism
from rural Surrey*

Joe Wicks is the marvellously built man-mountain whose drive towards health and well-being has inspired a nation of fitness fans, all keen to supplement their daily sweat by investing in sensible, supplementing food solutions.

In an era where we're being bombarded with influencers, energisers and "body-makers", the 34-year-old has carved for himself an attractive niche that relies on plain talking, sensible planning, ambitious targets and a small amount of humility thrown in along the way. For evidence of that, take his approach to running.

"We all know how important proper cardio is and running is arguably the best way of really getting your whole body primed to increase strength and fitness... but it doesn't mean you have to enjoy it.

"I regard myself as fit – I eat well, exercise a lot and I'm strong – but when I did the London Marathon I quickly learned the difference between power and endurance, and while I was quick enough over the first half of the course, it was a really painful and slow experience by the end... and that's okay, because we're all growing and learning together."

Wicks, whose popularity comes out of being one of the original Instagram fitness kings, has recently been throwing that (muscle-bound) frame behind breaking his own world record for the number of people he could get attending a single 30-minute High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) class.

Having previously gathered 3,804 people in Hyde Park, Wicks ventured to Dubai to try to go one better, as well as embracing the health ambitions of the world's fastest-growing economies. During his time there, the fitness guru – who is a best-selling

author having made millions from his *Lean in 15* and *30 Minute Meals* books, among others – also conducted a workout session at a Dubai school, with 450 kids involved, and got his running shoes back on for a half-marathon challenge.

"For me it's always been about mixing up ideas and getting fitness going in different environments," he says. "When getting in shape falls into the same old routine, that's when it becomes dull, and that's what I want to steer people away from, because it's a killer for motivation."

Wicks, who recently created a series of YouTube videos offering "seven days of sweat" to encourage people to get fit and motivated before Christmas, got married over the summer to Rosie, and in the new year will welcome his second child into the world (baby Indie was born in September 2018).

And that world record attempt? Well, although huge numbers attended the Skydive Dubai field at Dubai Marina, the team fell agonisingly short of their target. Typically, Wicks sought out the positives from the experience.

"Failure is all part of building towards success in the future," he said. "I actually embrace those times when things don't go my way, because it makes me even more determined to find the right answer in future, and whether that's not managing to bench press as much as I'd like, or not hitting a treadmill PB or simply giving in to a treat occasionally, moving forward is always about failing in the past, so we get up the next day and go for it all over again."

Photo credit: Ken McKay/ITV/Shutterstock



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Berry nice INDEED

Warming those winter garden vistas with some bursts of festive colour

We all know the colours and the coldness of winter when it comes to gardening. Many of us regard it as a season reserved only for planning the dawning of spring, when luscious life can return to our outside spaces.

And yet, winter can be about much more than greens, browns and greys where gardens are concerned. Certainly in the use of berries, your outside space can quickly adopt all the sprigs and spray of summer. With that in mind, then, here are some plants that will help keep things colourful:

SORBUS

In white, pink, yellow, red, blue and quite the most stunning copper tones, the berries from this deciduous tree will bring breathless colour to even the darkest corner.

HOLLY

A festive favourite, holly combines a burning red berry with that intensely detailed, beautifully curated leaf, with a combination of greens that offsets its radiant bedfellow with a flourish of frosty finesse.

VIBURNUM TINUS

In its prime between the months of December and April, just when you think the golden pink buds of this characterful plant can't offer anything more, the ends burst open, offering a spray of white flowers. One of the first risers for spring's sumptuous season of colour, the Viburnum Tinus will soar in prominence just as the temperatures begin to do likewise.

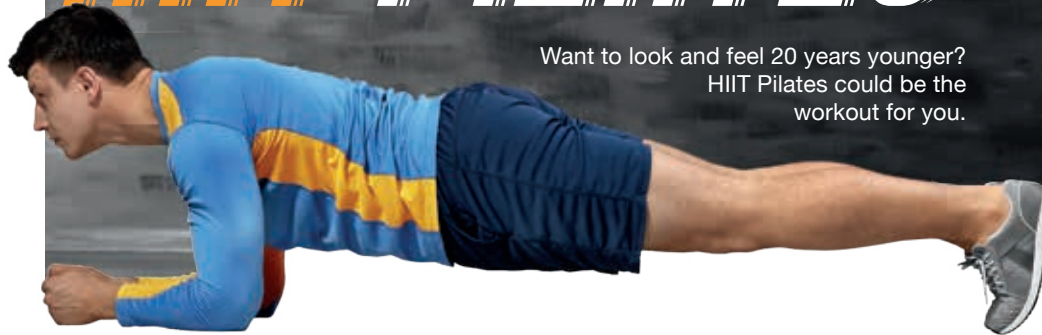
CALLICARPA

This shrub has purple, jewel-like berries that look as if they've come straight from a safe deposit box in Hatton Garden. An intensely rich shade, the plant goes into overdrive in autumn and winter, offering colour to even the gloomiest garden.

And if the beauty of the winter rebels isn't a pleasure enough to see, the range of birds they will attract to your garden will only serve to delight you further.



HIIT PILATES



Want to look and feel 20 years younger?
HIIT Pilates could be the workout for you.

WHAT IS HIIT PILATES?

HIIT stands for High Intensity Interval Training, which involves short periods of intense anaerobic exercises with very short amount of rest periods. You can expect lots of leg-dominant exercises such as jumping lunges, squat jumps and burpees. HIIT Pilates, on the other hand, focuses on core strength, which is so important in standard Pilates, as well as getting your heart rate up.

CAN ANYONE TRY IT?

Yes, unlike with standard HIIT, this combination workout puts less pressure on your joints and instead focuses on ensuring you engage all of your muscles, resulting in a more effective but less strenuous workout. That being said, it is still a full body training session that will challenge your body.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

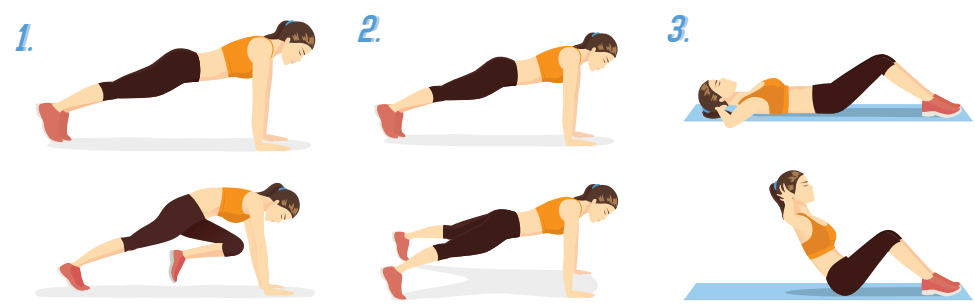
- > Burns more fat than with regular cardio
- > Faster results
- > Strengthens your core muscles

- > Keeps your heart healthy
- > You will lose weight, not muscle
- > You will feel stronger, leaner and more flexible
- > Suitable for all ages and fitness levels

WHAT TYPES OF EXERCISES CAN I DO?

- 1. Mountain Climbers:** Start in the plank position, pull one knee in towards your hands, then extend back to the plank. Repeat with the other knee.
- 2. Plank Jacks:** Start in the plank position, holding your abs tight. Jump your feet outwards into a 'V' position and immediately back to your starting position.
- 3. Triple Crunchers:** Lie down with your feet flat and your knees bent. Support your head with your hands, elbows out wide, and then lift your shoulders off the floor in three gradual movements until you are sitting upright. Keep your abs tight.

Carry out all of the above for one minute, rest for one minute and repeat twice more.



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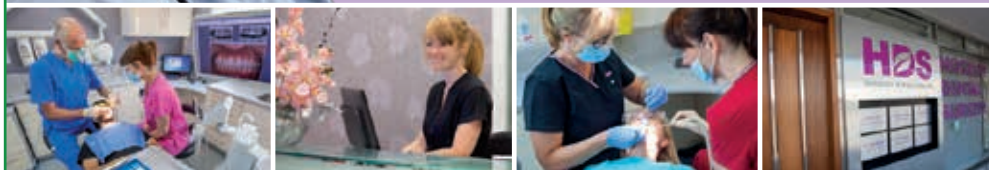


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Goodnight sweetheart

HEALTH & FITNESS

Moving away from screens earlier, therefore, seems the best way to maximise the efficiency of sleep, but remember as well the need to moderate room temperature, dim lighting and remove excess noise within or around your bedroom.

Sure enough, most of us can reel off a good number of the benefits of sleep – sharpness, mood enhancement, lowering of blood pressure, better immunity, improved memory, stress reduction and even maintaining of body weight – so it's not as if we don't know it's good for us.

Doctors recommend a trial week of "regular as clockwork" bedtimes, with long rests and the adoption of healthy habits. They then invite people to see if they feel improved in all those physical and psychological aspects. If the answer is yes, it goes to show why getting your head down may be the best thing you can do, not just for your health and well-being, but for your sanity too.

Getting adequate shut-eye is more important than any vitamin, mineral, food or workout, so why are we so blasé about sleep?

Eat sensibly, rehydrate, breathe in clean air – we take all these for granted as being good for our health. And yet the thing that, on average, will occupy one-third of our lives – sleep – is messed about with, interrupted and at times completely abandoned.

There is nothing more natural than sleep, and an interrupted pattern of rest can be linked to immune system weakness, body cell deterioration, depression and anxiety, not to mention an inability to concentrate.

Yet the answer isn't simply to go to bed earlier – you'll need to consider what's around you. Numerous studies have shown that smartphones and device usage is on the increase, and it's the "blue light" emissions from these that can delay the release of sleep-inducing melatonin, as well as resetting the body's internal clock (circadian rhythm).

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POLYCYSTIC OVARIAN SYNDROME

Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) is a common condition that affects how a woman's ovaries work.

It has three main features:

- > **irregular periods** – your ovaries fail to release eggs (ovulation)
- > **excess testosterone** – having high levels of “male hormones” in your body, which can result in acne and excess facial or body hair
- > **polycystic ovaries** – your ovaries become enlarged and contain fluid-filled sacs that surround the eggs

If you have any two of these three features, you may be diagnosed with PCOS. It's thought to be very common, affecting about one in every five women in the UK, but not everyone gets the symptoms such as weight gain, thinning hair and oily skin.

PCOS is also associated with an increased risk of developing other health problems, such as type 2 diabetes.

What causes PCOS?

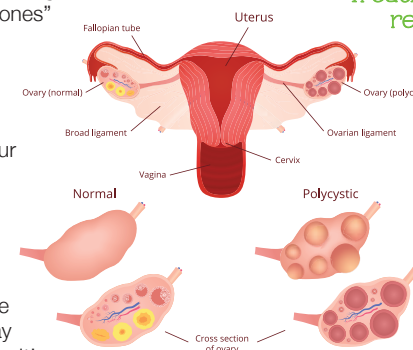
The primary cause is having persistently high levels of insulin, the hormone that controls sugar levels in the body. This raised insulin leads to the increased levels of testosterone. While PCOS is associated with being overweight, it is not caused by it.

Treatment for PCOS – can it be reversed?

If you have PCOS (whether or not you're overweight), reducing your insulin levels and avoiding spikes is key. This is where the ProLongevity service can help, because by avoiding sugar spikes you'll keep your insulin low and slow. This also explains why a standard treatment for PCOS is metformin, which we usually think of as being a treatment for type 2 diabetes. Just as all roads lead to Rome,

so all aspects of metabolic syndrome lead to raised insulin.

Visit www.prolongevity.co.uk or contact Graham Phillips at ProLongevity: call 07768 275802 or email graham.phillips@manorpharmacygroup.co.uk





FACING THE DAY

'Tis the season of late-night shopping and dazzling festive soirees, but every night staying up late looking fabulous is followed by a gruelling early morning where you look and feel tired. Fortunately, there is plenty you can do (or NOT do) in order to appear as fresh as a winter morning.

THE DOS

✓ DO take your daily vitamins. Sleep is the best way to replenish body and mind, but on nights when you know you're not going to get enough shut-eye, slathering on a moisturiser rich in potent vitamin C can be the next best thing.

✓ DO use a shade lighter. It might seem counterintuitive to highlight your shadows, but using a concealer one tone lighter on your under-eye area is actually a great way to brighten your eyes, giving the impression of vitality.

✓ DO be generous with mascara. Want to look bright eyed and bushy tailed? Then open up those peepers with lashings of mascara.

THE DON'TS

✗ DON'T overdo it. Tempting though it might be to cover up your evening antics with make-up, you might find yourself looking even more fatigued. Youthful skin glows, so stick to products that are light and illuminating, rather than heavy, powdery ones that are prone to settling in skin creases.

✗ DON'T skip your cleansing routine. Washing your face may be the last thing you want to do on a dark, cold morning, but the only way to rejuvenate a dull complexion is to remove the dead cells. Use products that are gentle but powerful to effectively brighten the skin.

✗ DON'T load up on caffeine. Coffee might make you feel better in the short term, but too much is going to frazzle your mind and dry out your skin. Instead, drink plenty of water.



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TUMBLE DRYER

DON'TS

How did we ever exist without the humble tumble dryer? It's quick, efficient and, most importantly, not dependent on the unpredictable British weather. But it can cause chaos to your clothes if not used correctly.

1. Bras

The main job of a bra is to provide support, but by tumble drying this item you risk the elastic becoming stretched and out of shape.

2. Leather items

Leather, suede and faux leather should always be air-dried as heat can cause these materials to crack or become distorted.

3. Delicate fabrics

Silk, lace and sheer net items should never be tumble dried as the high temperature will set in wrinkles.

4. Gym wear

Activewear is made from man-made fibres which are designed to keep you cool and supported, but they will not keep their shape in the dryer.

5. Athletic shoes

Shoes that are made from leather, canvas or the latest high-tech performance fabrics should not be tumble dried as the heat can cause the soles to fall off.

6. Knitted jumpers/cardigans

Tumble drying knitwear can cause the items to lose their shape by causing the fabric to shrink or stretch.

7. Fur items

Real fur can crack in the dryer, whereas faux fur can melt or become tangled.

8. Swimwear

Costumes, bikinis and swim shorts should be washed or rinsed after each use, but avoid tumble drying as this can ruin the fabric.

9. Ugg boots

Although super cosy, Ugg boots are not the best footwear to get caught in the rain in, and when they do get wet it can be tempting to throw them in the dryer. Don't. Sheepskin will shrink in the heat.

10. Tights/stockings

Even a few minutes in the tumble dryer can cause irreversible damage to hosiery: think tangles, knots and even runs.





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TRAVEL

Things to consider for a NEW YEAR BREAK on a budget

Whether you fancy some winter sun or a romantic city break, booking a last-minute New Year break on a budget can be a challenge, to say the least.
But fear not – it can be done.

Take the risk of booking last minute
Most people like to have their New Year's Eve plans set in stone at least a few weeks before the big event, if not more, but one way of finding a super-cheap deal is to wait until the very last minute. Yes, this is risky, and you may not have a lot of choice in terms of your destination, but if you can't be spontaneous on New Year's, when can you be?

Choose a less-popular destination
Certain areas of the globe are known for their New Year's Eve party extravaganzas – think New York, Las Vegas and Sydney – but if you don't want to be paying off your New Year break for the next 12 months, consider going to a less-popular destination such as Budapest or Prague.

Compare prices
You may think it would be cheaper to book a budget package deal with flights, accommodation and transfers included, but that is not always the case. It is advisable to shop around to get the best deals.

Consider going en masse
If you have a large group of friends who enjoy going away together, look into the option of renting a house rather than staying in a hotel. For those who don't have their heart set on going abroad, there are some great deals to be had on shared accommodation in the UK – you could even rent out a castle.



TRAVEL



HOW TO OCCUPY YOUR KIDS ON THOSE LONG CAR JOURNEYS OVER CHRISTMAS

What is the most dreaded phrase that children typically say on long car journeys? Yes, you guessed it, it's "Are we nearly there yet?"

This innocuous-sounding question is often uttered within minutes of leaving the house and turns even the most patient parent into a bad-tempered tyrant.

Check out our free car games and eliminate boredom for good.

1. TRAVEL BINGO

Think of 5 or 10 things to find that can be seen from your car window. Create a bingo card with these items listed and then simply let your kids find them and cross off throughout your journey.

2. I'M GOING ON A PICNIC

This is a great memory game for children aged 5 upwards and can have as many players as you like. The first player says "I'm going on a picnic and I'm bringing...", followed by something that begins

with A. The second player repeats what the first player said and then adds something beginning with B, and so on.

3. 20 QUESTIONS

An oldie but a goodie, this guessing game can be enjoyed by children of all ages. Player one thinks of a person, place or object. Then the remaining players take turns to ask questions which must be answered with only yes or no. After each answer the questioner may have a guess.

4. WHO CAN STAY QUIETEST THE LONGEST?

If you really can't take any more of your children complaining and bickering, this is the game to turn to. Engage their competitiveness and enjoy five or hopefully more minutes of blissful silence.

5. ELECTRONIC DEVICES

If all else fails, you know you can always turn to the iPads and smartphones for a quick boredom fixer.



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THE Perfect Turkey

The turkey is the centrepiece of most traditional family Christmas dinners. Ensuring that it is cooked to perfection is one of the most important, not to mention stressful, tasks that you can undertake this holiday season.

Should you soak it overnight? Should you baste it? To wrap or not to wrap? These truly are the questions.

Soaking your turkey overnight

There is no set-in-stone way to prepare your turkey, but some swear by brining your bird overnight. This involves soaking your turkey in a salt-and-water solution to keep it moist. You can also add herbs and spices such as peppercorns, juniper berries and bay leaves.

Get your timings right

You need to weigh your bird so that you can ensure that you roast it for the correct length of time. Once you know how much your

turkey weighs, follow these below cooking times to ensure cooked yet moist meat.

Heat your oven to 180 degrees Celsius or 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

> 4–5kg – cook for 2 ½ hours

> 5–6kg – cook for 2 ½ to 3 hours

> 6–7kg – cook for 3 to 3 ½ hours

Then add half an hour for each additional kg.

Rest your turkey

You should rest your turkey for between 1 ½ and 2 hours. It is also advisable to take your turkey out of the fridge before roasting for a minimum of half an hour to prevent shrinkage.

Basting and covering

If you place your turkey on a bed of vegetables, then there is no need to baste it; plus, you will have the added benefit of a delicious gravy. To ensure a crisp skin but to not dry out the meat, it is advised to cover your turkey loosely with foil for the first hour.



THREE extravagant edible CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Who doesn't like something a little bit naughty at Christmas, whether that be your favourite festive tippie or a boozy chocolate liqueur? And what could be better than receiving one of your preferred indulgences as a gift?

So, why not create a personalised edible treat for a loved one this festive season?

CLEMENTINE CHRISTMAS GIN

You will need:

One bottle of London Dry Gin • 4–5 clementines • 200g caster sugar • 1 piece of fresh ginger • 2 star anise

How to make:

Slice the fruit into segments (skins attached) • Add to a sterilised jar with the other ingredients • Seal and shake • Leave in a cool spot for two weeks • Shake occasionally to infuse the flavours further • After two weeks, strain your liqueur • Pour into an attractive bottle and finish with a ribbon



CRANBERRY & CHILLI JAM

You will need:

2 red onions • 4 cloves of garlic • 3–4 fresh red chillies • 500g cranberries • 150g sugar • 40ml red wine vinegar

How to make:

Peel and finely chop the onions and garlic • Deseed and slice the chillies • Sweat the above in a large pan for 10 minutes • Add cranberries, vinegar, sugar and 50ml water • Simmer for 20 minutes • Mash the mixture slightly and cook for a further 15 minutes • Season to taste • Add to sterilised jars



CHRISTMAS BOOZY TRUFFLES

You will need:

300g quality dark chocolate pieces • 300ml double cream • 50g unsalted butter • Your preferred liqueur – Grand Marnier, coconut rum, whiskey • Your chosen coating

How to make:

Gently heat cream and butter in a saucepan • Remove from heat and add chocolate • Stir until you have a smooth mixture • Add your chosen liqueur • Chill for a minimum of four hours • Shape your truffles using a melon baller and place on greaseproof paper • Immediately coat your truffles • Store in the fridge in an airtight container





PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

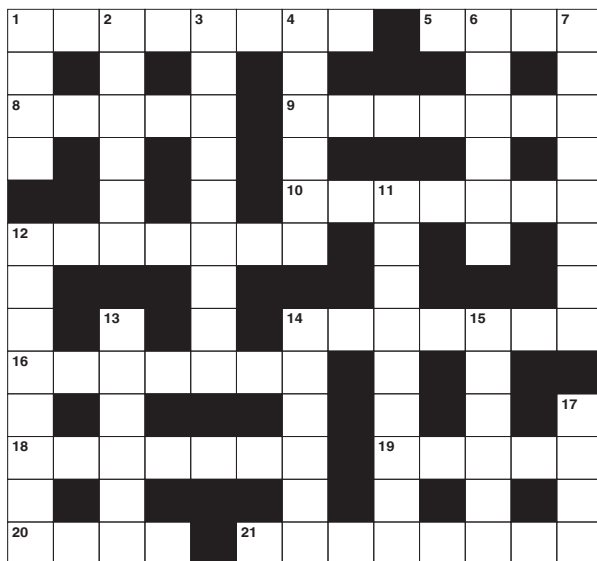
Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4

ACROSS

1. Very small African parrot (8)
5. Mire (anag) (4)
8. Criminal (5)
9. Beyonce ____: singer (7)
10. Strongly influencing later developments (7)
12. Enhance a photo (7)
14. Degree of eminence (7)
16. Boring (7)
18. Set up (7)
19. Gemstones (5)
20. Opposite of won (4)
21. Small falcons (8)

DOWN

1. Hoist (4)
2. Closely woven fabric (6)
3. Using both eyes (9)
4. Having a jaunty appearance (6)
6. Alyssa ____: US actress (6)
7. Determined (8)
11. Clumsy (9)
12. Fitting (8)
13. Love affairs (6)
14. Smear or blur (6)



15. Action of making use of something (6)
17. Poses a question (4)

DID YOU KNOW?

- Mastercard was known as Interbank from 1966 to 1969 and Master Charge from 1969 to 1979
- Porsche also makes tractors
- The first product to have a bar code included was a packet of Wrigley's gum
- Nokia was named after Nokianvirta, the Finnish river, where the business first began as a paper mill in the 1800s
- There are 22 stars in the Paramount logo, although the original has 24
- Hilton was the first international hotel chain
- The values on the Monopoly board game have been the same since 1935
- Cheerios cereal was originally called Cheerioats

SUDOKU

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

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From NETWORK to NETWORTH

The concept of network marketing may be nothing new, but the rewards of time and financial freedom have never been greater... providing you do your homework first.

Those of us of a certain age will remember the Avon lady coming round and selling her beauty wares on weekday nights. For this journalist at least, it was a first initiation into network selling (not that anyone had thought of such a snazzy name for it back in the 1980s).

With the advent of the internet and a surge in the number of people registered as self-employed in the UK, the concept of embarking on a business model that promotes person-to-person selling, often with home as an office, is an appealing one.

From a consumer perspective, the concept works best and gleans the most trust from a single-tier network – in other words, being sold to by one person, be that sponges and make-up, food, computer equipment or anything else. It's the most basic form of selling, with one person selling

products to another having acquired stock from a supplier, even if that includes an initial set-up fee.

Where network marketing's reputation becomes sullied is when multiple tiers come into effect, and where the premise is to recruit other salespeople further down the chain. While in some instances this may be legitimate, the set-up of this begins to lean towards a pyramid scheme, where exploitation of those lower down the chain is compounded by the risk that the structure will collapse completely.

If you've been attracted by network marketing, here are a few things to tick off before pursuing:

- ✓ Is the company reputable?
- ✓ Are you responsible for selling tangible products rather than recruiting others to sell for you?
- ✓ Are you enthusiastic about the products?
- ✓ Is there a clear and quick path towards you making money, with little or no investment? If so, your business awaits...



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Fuelling THE THEORY

IS PREMIUM FUEL REALLY WORTH THE EXTRA INVESTMENT?

We've all seen those suffixes at the petrol station – "Super", "V-Power", "Premium", "Nitro+", or "Ultimate" – luring you to the more expensive pump as you prepare to dole out anything up to £100 to fill up your tank.

For some of us, whether it's petrol or diesel, simply filling up is enough of a financial chore, without wanting to contemplate voluntarily spending more on jazzed-up fuel. For others, premium denotes performance and longevity, but does the added investment pay back? In the long term, the answer is, surprisingly... yes; but don't bother if you're driving a Nissan Micra.

In short, if you own a high-spec vehicle, then filling up from the premium pump could be a sound move. The fuel's higher-octane rating means it works better with engines of a higher compression, so that leads to increased performance and more-efficient maintenance of your system.

The downside is cost – on average, performance fuel will cost you around 10p per litre more. Spin that out over the course of a year's motoring and you've added on a fair whack to your road bills, but on the plus side your car will be running more efficiently, and for longer. There's also the prevention of "engine knock" to consider – that's where unburned fuel pre-ignites in a vehicle's engine, damaging interior components.

But all this largely only applies to premium vehicles, where higher-octane motors mean higher-octane fuel. For what you might describe as "everyday cars", go for the cheaper option. Your little run-around will have a standard octane rating of 95, meaning that the electronics are configured so that the vehicle will run in a satisfactory way on the regular fuel.

Put another way, there's a good chance upgrading your fuel will make little noticeable difference... except to your wallet.

Photo credit: Lutsenko, Oleksandr/Shutterstock.com

RACING LINE

LEWIS HAMILTON WINS SIXTH WORLD TITLE TO CLOSE IN ON MICHAEL SCHUMACHER'S RECORD

He may have lost "the battle" in failing to fight off a late rally by his Mercedes-Benz team-mate Valtteri Bottas, but Lewis Hamilton won the war by finishing second to secure his sixth world Formula One championship title in Texas at the start of November.

The Stevenage-born driver needed to be within seven places of the Finn to clinch the drivers' title, and even though he started fifth on the grid, Hamilton came within four laps of sealing the championship win with a race victory.

But in the end, Bottas' DRS overtake was irrelevant, such was the Briton's advantage on the season leaderboard. This latest crown took him past Juan Manuel Fangio's five titles and within one of Schumacher's tally.

The 2019 renewal of the championship has had it all – dull and one-sided races, intriguing battles and unexpected results. Hamilton, by his own admission, won the "boring races", often leading from the first corner to the chequered flag.

Germany's Hockenheim circuit saw his only uncharacteristic mistake, as he exited with 11 laps remaining in treacherous track conditions. At the time he

commented that it was his "worst day at the office".

Winning more than half of the 19 races is one big reason why Hamilton has topped the table for the third straight season, not to mention the fifth time in six years, and yet there are still two immediate records in the racer's sights.

He currently equals his own highest seasonal points total of 408, so any scoring finish in either of the last two races will see him surpass that. In addition, his 10 GP wins this season leave him just one short of his previous best.

The sign of a true champ is one who keeps on winning despite his success, and Hamilton this season has once again embodied that unrelenting spirit.

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in your area

Christmas dinner

**The Rayleigh Lodge, 70 The Chase,
Rayleigh, SS6 8RW
December 14, 6pm – 9pm**



The South East Essex Social Group are planning on holding a three course Christmas dinner. Formerly known as The Rayleigh Social Group, the South East Essex Social Group are a friendly group open to all ages, singles and couples that hold a variety of local social events.

To attend, it will be £20 with a deposit of £10. To find out more contact www.meetup.com/Rayleigh-Social-Networking-Meetup

Festive laser tag

**The Megacentre Rayleigh, 7 Brook Road,
Rayleigh, SS6 7UT
December 18, 5pm – 7pm**

Megazone is equipped with the latest state-of-the-art laser packs providing the very best experience for our users.

The Megacentre is offering two hours of unlimited laser tag spread over two floors of 6,000 square ft of arena space, milk and cookies, Christmas music, custom game modes and a free Christmas gift.

Tickets are £10, to get involved, call 01268 77910.

The Big Sing Christmas Tour

**Rayleigh Baptist Church, High Street, Rayleigh,
SS6 7QA
December 20, 7pm – 9pm**

Why not join the Big Sing in action on their Christmas Tour? They have 10 live Christmas shows, travelling around Essex and finishing in Rayleigh, to get you in the Christmas spirit.

Come and see the community choirs, soul school choirs and little sing choirs in action as they celebrate

Christmas the Big Sing way. You'll leave feeling uplifted, inspired and stepping into Christmas.

Standard tickets are £8 and concession tickets (over 60 and under 18) are £6. For tickets, visit www.billetto.co.uk/e/the-big-sing-christmas-tour-rayleigh-tickets-394629

Christmas party time

**The Rayleigh Club, Hullbridge Road, Rayleigh,
SS6 9QS
December 20, 7pm – 12am**

The perfect way to kick off the Christmas celebrations with an all-inclusive luxury three course meal followed by entertainment from a house DJ, house beer, wine and spirits flowing throughout the evening.

Tickets are £65 per person with a £20 per person non-refundable deposit. Put together by the Rayleigh Club, they are able to cater for dietary requirements if they are notified four weeks before event.

For further information and to book, contact reception direct on 01702 232377.



Rolling Stones tribute comes to town

**The Mill Arts & Events Centre, Bellingham Lane,
Rayleigh, SS6 7ED
December 28, 7.30pm – 11pm**

Revered by Stones fans for their authenticity, the show is allegedly the best tribute to The Rolling Stones.

Join them for a spectacular two-hour show focusing on the early part of the Stones' career from 1964 to 1969 including *Jumping Jack Flash*, *Paint It Black*, *Not Fade Away* and *Satisfaction*.

Keith Richards' mother, Doris, described the band as 'outstanding' and fit to 'stand in for the Stones'.

For tickets, visit www.rollinstoned.com

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