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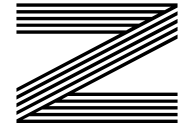
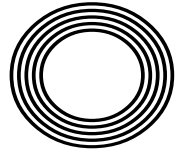
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**SIR CLIFF RICHARD OBE**  
A look back at his career as he turns 80

*Kirsty*  
**GALLACHER**

Presenter celebrates her return to the limelight



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

# Editor's notes...



Nik Allen, Editor

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

We continue to ride the choppy waves of 2020 that have been riddled with restrictions and unprecedented times. We know things are still far

from normal, so it's never been a better time to check in with our friends and family.

I had a chat with a friend recently who said he hadn't spoken to his brother for years and couldn't really remember why, to which I replied, "Life's too short to hold grudges or have any negativity with anyone, whether they did you wrong or not. Be the bigger person and just pick up the phone and give them a call. You never know, they may need you now more than ever."

I've had this too, over the years. Relationships I've had with friends just become distant and we blame life for getting in the way - usually work or starting a family being the excuse.

But although it's harder to meet face to face at present, we are in a world now where it's never been easier to get in touch by phone, text, FaceTime or social media.

Just pick up the phone and say, "How are you?" You never know, it might be the call you and they both need more than ever.

Have you got a story for our Local News section? Please don't hesitate to get in touch. Email us at rayleigh@visionmag.co.uk

I hope you enjoy this month's edition.

*Nik*

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# YOU'RE THE VOICE

AS SIR CLIFF RICHARD OBE PASSES 80, HIS STAR IS STILL CHARTING HIGH

Let's begin with a stat: for a long while, Sir Cliff held the record for scoring number one songs in consecutive decades in the UK. He'd hit the top spot twice in the 1950s and on seven occasions in the 1960s. The following decade he left it late, with *We Don't Talk Anymore* his solitary chart-topper in the summer of 1979.

Reinventing himself for the 1980s, spoof track *Living Doll* hit the heights in 1985, followed by *Mistletoe and Wine* in 1988; before *Saviour's Day* in 1990 and *The Millennium Prayer* in 1999 ensured he preserved a most unique chart first.

"I became aware of the run back in the 1970s but it was never an intention to churn out tracks just to keep it going," he says. "I think if you focus too much on that it becomes a bit of a vanity project and you're losing sight of the music itself; but while it went on, it was fun."

These days, the charts aren't for the likes of Sir Cliff. In 2020, they are almost solely the domain of youngsters, both in terms of the record-buying public and the artists themselves.

"Obviously the internet has created major change in the record industry and revised entirely how everything operates.

"It's a shame the charts don't represent the excitement of old when new releases would move around and we'd all follow their progress at home on our radios. I know a lot of people are sentimental about the change that's happened, but as long as people are out there making good music, that should be enough."

---

**'YOU WORK HARD. YOU DO YOUR BEST. AND YOU JUST WANT  
SOME PEACE: AND THAT'S ALL I WANTED'**

---

For Sir Cliff these days, new music often takes the form of festive tracks.

"I have inadvertently built a reputation for putting Christmas music out there," he admits. "It really all started with *Mistletoe and Wine*.

"Do I mind the association? Of course not – it's such a magical time of the year."

Of course, recognition solely as a musician does a disservice to so many other things Sir Cliff has become renowned for in a celebrated career that began way back in 1958 as lead singer of British group The Drifters. As his pop career exploded, film roles also came his way (famously in *Summer Holiday*) and, beyond that, a passion for wider showbiz projects, faith, philanthropy and a clean-living bachelor lifestyle, even though he came close to marrying on more than one occasion (notably to former British tennis number one Sue Barker).

A proud, kind-hearted and sincere exemplar of a golden age of British entertainment, Sir Cliff found himself in the news for the wrong reasons in 2014 when the darkness surrounding Operation Yewtree began enveloping a number of well-known names.

Almost immediately it became clear that there was no story to be had, and he successfully went on to sue South Yorkshire Police and the BBC for their parts in the media pursuit that followed.

"You know, you get to the point, especially after all these years, where you just want a quiet life," he says. "You work hard, you do your best, and you just want some peace; and that's all I wanted."

Whether Sir Cliff gets peace as he passes 80 is unclear. In socially distancing terms, he will, but as a worldwide base of adoring fans continues to follow his every move, it's clear this is someone who will stay in our admiring consciousness for quite some time yet.



# THE WORLD AROUND US *Part 1*

In the first of a new four-part environmental series, we look at the key drivers in the health and well-being of the planet. In this issue, it's animal life, and in particular, the humble cow.

It's not easy being a cow. While farmers are eyeing you up for a trip to the abattoir, those on both sides of the eco debate are ready to slap the blame tag on a little embarrassing flatulence.

Scientists believe the average cow releases between 70kg and 120kg of methane per year. A greenhouse gas, like carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide, methane forms a dangerous blanket around the planet.

A molecule that lasts a decade, in real terms what it contributes to the atmosphere can be equated to little more than two cups of water inside a swimming pool, yet its chemical shape is remarkably effective at trapping heat, thus it has a big impact on how much, and how quickly, the planet warms.

And with 1.5 billion cows on the planet, it's clear there's real environmental interest in reducing the emissions of these animals, who can also lay claim to being the source of two-thirds of all

ammonia in the atmosphere.

In 2019, an experiment in New Zealand saw cows given a vaccine to rid them of certain gut microbes responsible for producing methane. Further development of this could drastically reduce cows' impact on the planet, while still allowing our ravenous consumption of meat and dairy foods.

In the UK, farmers mainly use grass-based silage. By changing to a maize compound, a one-tenth drop in methane production could be achieved.

As ever, environmental aims must be balanced with commercial sense. The UK agricultural industry is worth £25billion per year, yet it's clear less-fibrous diets, further vaccine research and other subtle changes – such as introducing seaweed and higher-quality constituents into the food mix – can lead to more refined systems... and less windy livestock!



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# CANCEL CULTURE

The BBC TV licence – do you need to pay?



The BBC has never felt pressure like it: a new director general looking to shake things up, accusations of political and social bias, and the move to begin charging over-75s for TV licences – it has left 'Auntie' scratching about for relevance in a changing world where digital and premium channels are taking our attention... and our money.

While the BBC remains one of our country's finest institutions, and excellent value for those who regularly enjoy its diverse range of programming, there have been recent moves to defund the organisation – a Twitter campaign rapidly gained 100,000 followers and continues to apply pressure across social media.

This has led to many looking at the criteria for paying the licence; namely, whether you do indeed need to pay the £157.50 annual charge (£53 for a black and white TV). The answer is yes, if...

> ... you watch or record live TV as it is being transmitted, on any channel

> ... you watch or stream programmes live on an online service (such as ITV Hub, All 4, YouTube, Amazon Prime Video, Sky Go, etc)

> ... you download or watch programmes on iPlayer And the above applies to use on any device, from television to computer to games console.

The good news is that the BBC's brilliant range of national and regional radio is exempt.

If you believe you don't need a licence, the process for opting out is simple – simply declare to TV Licensing via its website and cancel any direct debits. That will stop what many describe as a barrage of threatening letters. However, the onus is, of course, on you to reapply for a licence if your watching habits change.

What's clear is that in a changing world the BBC's stranglehold on compulsory payment may well be coming to an end – even more so if Prime Minister Boris Johnson's move to decriminalise non-payment continues to gather pace.



HOME & DIY

Photo credit: Willy Barton/shutterstock.com



# DUST *be gone!*

**D**o you know your microfibre from your feather? Your vacuum from your air compression? If not, you are not alone. We too have been guilty of using whatever fabric we have to hand to remove dust from our home, whether that be a tea towel, a cloth or even an old pair of pants. However, using the right duster for the job is vital if you want optimal results.

## FEATHER DUSTERS

Commonly associated with maids in stately homes, feather dusters are best for cleaning delicate or expensive objects such as artwork, figurines or jewellery.

**Pros of feather dusters:** Will not scratch surfaces, objects or furniture | Offer non-invasive contact

**Cons of feather dusters:** Not the best at collecting dust | Unethical as feathers are plucked from live animals

## MICROFIBRE DUSTERS

Becoming increasingly popular in recent years, microfibre dusters are great for general cleaning and dusting wooden furniture, tile counters and any other hard surfaces.

**Pros of microfibre dusters:** Excellent at picking up dust and dirt |

Hypoallergenic | Environmentally friendly and sustainable

**Cons of microfibre dusters:** We couldn't find any!

## VACUUM DUSTERS

By attaching the dusting piece to your vacuum cleaner, you can enjoy fast and effective cleaning of larger surface areas in your home or to clean up after building work.

**Pros of vacuum dusters:** Ideal for concentrated areas of dust and areas that are hard to reach | Dust can be disposed of easily

**Cons of vacuum dusters:** Handheld vacuum dusters are not very powerful | Can be expensive

## COMPRESSED AIR DUSTERS

This type of duster is used to remove dust from electronics, plug holes and other small, inaccessible areas. Perfect for dusting your keyboard if you are working from home.

**Pros of compressed air dusters:** The best option for all computer accessories, electronics and office equipment

**Cons of compressed air dusters:** Can be expensive



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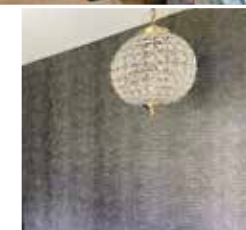
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# BEST UK HOTELS FOR INTERIOR DESIGN LOVERS

S taycate in style with these hip UK hotels that offer inspiring interiors and decadent designs. Choose from chic and contemporary, rustic and rugged or something a little bit quirky. Whatever your preference, you are guaranteed to come away with your creative juices flowing.

## ARTIST RESIDENCE, LONDON

Based in the diverse Pimlico area, this unconventional hotel mixes vintage chic with a modern twist. Ideal for those who want a bit of luxury, enjoy its stunning roll-top baths and tin ceiling tiles. It is owned by stylish couple Charlotte and Justin Salisbury, who also have three other hotels which can be found in Cornwall, Brighton and the Cotswolds, with another in Bristol opening in November.

## THE PIG-IN THE WALL, SOUTHAMPTON

With 12 unique bedrooms, deli-style dining and plenty of cosy corners to relax and unwind in, THE PIG-in the wall is quite unlike any hotel you have been to before. In terms of interior design, enter with an open mind and take in the eclectic range of rooms that boast original wooden beams, slanted ceilings and walk-in monsoon showers.

## STRATTONS, NORFOLK

If you hate generic hotels, you will love Strattons. Located in a quiet lane in a conservation area within the town, this family-friendly hotel prides itself on offering luxury, comfort and inspiring interior design. With 14 individual rooms, expect open fires, original period features, a free-standing bath at the foot of the bed and even mermaid mosaic.

## CRAZY BEAR, BEACONSFIELD

Flamboyant and luxurious, Crazy Bear combines dramatic architecture with never before seen features such as the copper bath that is filled directly from the ceiling. Perfect for leather lovers, more than 50 different types were used to create its unique atmosphere, with leather featuring on the upholstery, walls, ceiling and even the doors.

Photo credit: artistresidence.co.uk, thepighotel.com, strattonshotel.com, crazybeargroup.co.uk

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Even though you know you should take them with you when you go shopping, somehow you always seems to forget and come back with even more plastic bags.

Fortunately, there are several other uses for these non-biodegradable land fillers.

### Protect your plants

If you worry about your delicate plants over winter, you can easily protect them from frost by gently tying a plastic bag around them. The bag will not only safeguard them from the wind, but will also trap warm air inside, ensuring their roots stay insulated. Plastic bags can also be used to protect your outdoor taps and your car's wing mirrors.

### Make a skipping rope

Yes, this can be done. Simply cut off the handles so you are left with just rectangles and cut 12 long strips. Take six strips and tape them together, then tape to the back of a chair and start braiding. Repeat with the second strip of six and then twist the two braids together to create your

skipping rope. Use duct tape to add handles.

### Create a textured paint surface

If you are wanting to create a textured effect on your walls, there is no need to buy any special paint. All you need to do is cover a clean paint roller with a plastic bag, roll it in your chosen colour and apply it to the walls.

### Stuff cushions

Instead of buying traditional stuffing when your cushions start to look a little flat, simply fill them with plastic bags for a similar effect. This money-saving trick can also work wonders for pet beds.

### Other quick uses

- > Line your bathroom bin
- > Car sickness bags (check the bag doesn't have air holes)
- > Parcel padding
- > To prevent paintbrushes from drying out

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# LOCAL NEWS

*from your neighbourhood*

LOCAL NEWS



## Wolsey Park estate to have extra 222 homes built

The huge new development at Wolsey Park in Rayleigh is to be even bigger than planned.

The controversial development, which is currently being built having started in May 2019, was already set to have 500 homes, but now updated plans mean that it has grown by almost 50 per cent to 722.

Some residents strongly opposed the original proposal by Countryside Properties, with concerns raised about its size, the subsequent impact on the town and the amount of traffic it would cause.

The developer says that more than 1,800 people have expressed an interest and that most of those

come from the local area, including Rayleigh.

The developer also says at least half of the huge site will remain as open space.

A spokesman commented: "These updated plans would provide the right mix of housing on site, thereby benefiting younger families and first-time buyers in particular, while protecting the parkland setting of Wolsey Park."

"The new homes would also help to alleviate housing pressures within the district by delivering much-needed new homes on a site which is already being developed."

## Traveller encampment finally moves on

A traveller encampment finally moved on after pitching up and staying in Rayleigh Leisure Centre car park for almost two weeks last month.

Resident James Cox told **VISION**Rayleigh: "They cause so much worry for local residents and always leave a huge amount of rubbish and destruction."

"I know it's difficult to stop sometimes but it is not acceptable that they have been able to return twice."

If they think Rayleigh is an easy place to set up camp then they will keep coming back."

A spokesperson from Rochford District Council, said: "The council has worked together with Essex Police who monitored the site and Essex Countywide Traveller Unit who, on behalf of the council, were able to remove the travellers from this location in accordance with the parameters of all due process."





# MARK FRANCOIS MP



Member of Parliament for Rayleigh and Wickford



One of the most controversial issues in Rayleigh over the last decade has been the proposal by Countryside Properties, an Essex-based developer, to build around 500 properties on the land between London Road and Rawreth Lane. As a resident at that end of Rayleigh, I should declare an interest in mentioning this in my article.

On the one hand, we need more homes for people, particularly those still living at home with their parents, to live in. On the other hand, what are the effects of our local infrastructure of yet more housing development on already very busy roads and on public services that are under pressure as it is?

In the end, as your local MP, I objected to Countryside's proposals, as I did not think they were offering enough back to the community financially (in what is known as a Section 106 agreement) to

compensate for the infrastructure pressures they were likely to cause. Anyway, Rochford District Council (RDC) eventually approved the application and the houses are currently being built.

However, Countryside has now submitted a revised planning application to cram another 222 houses onto the same site, without, as far as I know anyway, offering any specific increase in its Section 106 contributions. It is, though, apparently deleting two originally proposed junior football pitches, partly to make way for the additional houses.

We should call this out for what it is – greed. As your local MP I will object again but, as I do not sit on RDC's planning committee, I do not have a vote on the application either way. I just think it is a great shame when property developers abuse local communities in this way, particularly when they are headquartered in our very own county.

## Woman admits fraud offences



A woman who conned elderly and vulnerable people out of money in Rayleigh is due to be sentenced this month after admitting fraud offences.

On several occasions in July and August this year, 38-year-old Nicola Collins stopped people in Rayleigh and Rochford, claiming her car had broken down, and asked them for money for petrol.

Many of the people Collins stopped were elderly or vulnerable. Officers in Rayleigh investigated seven reports of this behaviour and Collins, of Southend, was arrested on September 10.

She was later charged with seven counts of fraud by false representation and eight counts of breaching a criminal behaviour order (CBO).

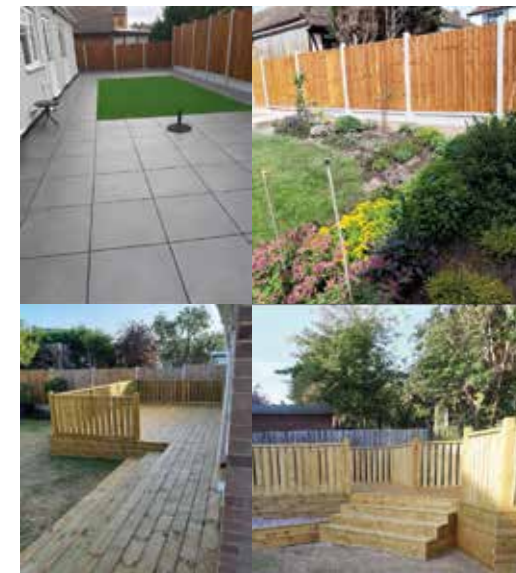
She pleaded guilty to these charges at Basildon Magistrates' Court on October 6 and is due to be sentenced at Southend Magistrates' Court on November 11.

Investigating officer, PC Leigh Stevenson, said: "I am absolutely delighted that this individual has been caught and convicted."

"Targeting the vulnerable and elderly is despicable and Nicola Collins preyed on their charity and good nature."

"Our priority is to protect people and keep vulnerable people safe from crime, and Collins' conviction will no doubt do that."

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## NEWS FROM RAYLEIGH TOWN MUSEUM

*Ain't Misbehavin'* and *Shakin' All Over* in Rayleigh in the 1960s...

The Crown Hall, which later became a bingo hall, was at the rear of The Crown pub. Many famous bands played at the Crown Hall. Shane Fenton (Alvin Stardust) sang *Five Foot Two and Eyes of Blue*. Mike Berry and the Outlaws (*Tribute to Buddy Holly*), Tommy Bruce (*Ain't Misbehavin'*), and Johnny Kidd and the Pirates (*Shakin' All Over*).

Local bands supported these artists. The Sundowners were a local band whose drummer, Peter Trout, still lives locally. Another local band supporting the stars was The Paramounts. They later evolved into

Procol Harum (*A Whiter Shade of Pale*).

This was the era of the rockers and later the Mods. Many believe the word 'teenager' was first used in the late 1960s, but it is believed that the first use of the word was in *Popular Science* magazine in 1941. Bill Haley (*Rock around the Clock*) coined the term 'teenagers' in 1957. Suddenly war babies raised on rationing and the welfare state were overnight reclassified as teenagers.

If you have any Rayleigh music posters, please contact the museum chairman Mike Davies by emailing chairman@rayleightownmuseum.co.uk

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## Delight as crossing made safer

The deputy leader of Rochford Council says she is "delighted" that a dangerous crossing in Rayleigh has been made safer.

The zebra crossing outside Sainsbury's on Eastwood Road now has traffic lights installed to help reduce the chances of someone getting injured or worse.

It follows several incidents in the last three years which have seen six people hit by cars.

The upgraded safer crossing followed a three-year campaign by the deputy leader of Rochford Council, councillor Cheryl Roe.

The concerns centred on the number of near misses, but also the proximity of the supermarket, the crossing

and the alleyway from Wyburns Primary School.

The crossing has cost the highways department at Southend-on-Sea Borough Council £150,000.

Cllr Roe told **VISION** Rayleigh: "I am delighted that the crossing has finally been improved. It has been a concern for several years with too many incidents and near misses. The lighting and the markings weren't brilliant. They tried resurfacing it, but it's such a busy road, it just wore away again."

"Half a dozen people had been hit there in under three years and there have been a lot of near misses. Hopefully this will solve those problems."

"You can't be putting a cost on someone's life."

Photo credit: Ruby Ward @thefactofmum





## News from THE ROTARY CLUB

Rayleigh Mill

COVID-19 restrictions have meant the members of the club have not been able to have their normal sociable Monday evening dinner meetings since the end of March, and the members have been discussing ways they could get together in pleasant surroundings that meet the COVID-19 guidelines.

With the reopening of golf clubs at the end of June, the club seized the opportunity to stage a couple of golf competitions – the Paul Wellman Trophy on August 23 and the annual club Golf Championship on September 21. Both competitions were held at Three Rivers Golf and Country Club. John Culwick came top of the field in the Paul Wellman Trophy, with Andrew Shackleton and Martin Hodson sharing the prize for the longest drive, John Cuthbertson taking the prize for nearest the pin and Chris Chorley taking the prize for the top-scoring guest.

The Club Championship was won by Andrew Shackleton. The runner-up was Martin Hodson, and George Henson took the prize for the best guest. Rob Kitchen won the longest drive and Jackie Wellman took the prize for nearest the pin.

The competitions were a welcome opportunity for the golfers among the members to get together, enjoy a game of golf and a little bit of the usual club camaraderie, all within the COVID-19 social distancing restrictions.



Jackie Wellman's unwanted bike collection continues to go from strength to strength. Jackie and her fellow Rayleigh Mill Rotarian helpers have now conducted six collections and have collected 275 unwanted bicycles that have been delivered to the Colchester-based charity Re-Cycle. There they are refurbished and then shipped to rural communities in Africa where they completely change the quality of life of the recipients.

There is an ongoing need for these unwanted bicycles. If the numbers justify another collection, the Rotary Club of Rayleigh Mill will arrange more collections in the New Year. If you have a bike that you want to donate, please get in touch with the Rotary Club of Rayleigh Mill at [president@rayleighmillrotary.org.uk](mailto:president@rayleighmillrotary.org.uk)

## Town remembers Battle of Britain

Rayleigh Town Museum has opened its doors for the first time since March. The museum on the High Street had a visit from the chairman of Rochford District Council (RDC), councillor Robin Dray, on October 2 to mark the occasion.

While museums have been able to open since July, Rayleigh Town Museum opted to remain closed to ensure it was COVID secure, and to maintain the safety of all visitors.

The museum first opened in 2016 and welcomed its 30,000th visitor in March, just before the pandemic caused its doors to close.

Displaying a wide range of Rayleigh-related artefacts, from postcards to maps and books, the museum is free to visit.

Cllr Robin Dray said: "The work that Mike Davies and other volunteers have done during the pandemic to ensure that Rayleigh Town Museum is a safe venue to visit is fantastic. As a resident of Rayleigh, and chairman of RDC, I feel that it is important for us all to get to know a little bit more about the local history, and the historic significance of Rayleigh."



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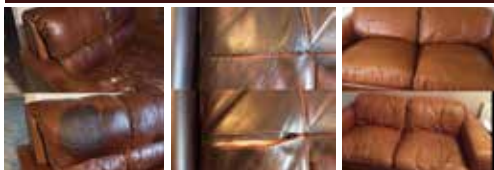


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Kirsty Gallacher



## ...A GOOD SPORT

From fashion undergraduate to Sky Sports presenter, it was a curious career trajectory for Kirsty Gallacher, who seemingly had the world of light entertainment at her feet. That was, until a series of events knocked the Edinburgh-born beauty off track.

Her recent return to the limelight is tribute to the strength and perseverance of the 44-year-old, but also a marker for us all in these difficult times.

The die was cast relatively early for Kirsty, as the daughter of Scottish Ryder Cup champion Bernard Gallacher, with a career in sport seeming the obvious choice. In reality, however, the presenter endeavoured for the cut and thrust of fashion, even when, still a youngster, the family upped sticks and moved to Wentworth to help her father's golfing ambitions.

Swapping Scotland for Surrey, Kirsty came to count Bruce Forsyth as a neighbour when growing up. And with a golf star for a dad, she was hardly unfamiliar with larger-than-life personalities popping in for coffee.

"I think maybe there was a pressure for me to do something grand," she begins, "but for many years that wasn't really me. I guess in the end I fell into it, but there was no nepotism going on – I was just lucky."

Kirsty recalls the time as a broadcaster with BSkyB when, having climbed to the position of editorial assistant, there came the opportunity to do a screen test.

"I was horribly nervous, but I've always been of the mind that once you are offered something you should always give it a try. Plus, back then, there was still a sense of adversity from traditionalists who didn't believe in women fronting sport, although that has clearly changed now."

Her time on *Sky Sports News* led to onward recognition as she went on to front shows including *Kirsty's Home Videos*, *Kirsty and Phil* and *Soccer Extra*.

So for someone so happy, it was perhaps surprising to see Kirsty's light fade in the midst of her father's poor health, and a painful divorce to ex-rugby pro Paul Sampson, her partner of 13 years, of which they were married for five.

"There were some tough things to process, though rather than take some time off to regroup and look after my boys, I threw myself into work, into new ideas and new projects."

A stint doing *Strictly Come Dancing* saw Gallacher looking desperately thin, and when a drink-driving incident saw her lose her driver's licence for 18 months, the star had hit a new low.

"It's actually really interesting how just when you think you are calm and settled, the carpet can be swept from beneath you," she admits. "It was horrific at the time, truly horrific – but at least now I can see that it was just a few life events colliding together. We are human beings for our ability to ride the rough waves and emerge out the other side stronger, and that's what I've done."

Her focus these days is on celebrating a return to the front line of presenting duties. Her successful podcast, *Stripped Back Sport*, is back on our screens at prime time, and even in a few short years she has witnessed a real evolution in television.

"As far as gender goes, it's definitely played out on more of an equal footing now," she says. "Broadcasting has really undergone a fantastic change over the past 20 years and British television remains the very best in the world. From a purely selfish perspective, it's so great to be back."



NOVEMBER BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH

# Chrysanthemum

For those born in November, your birth flower is the cheerful chrysanthemum. Often referred to as just “mums”, these beautiful blooms have a long and rich history. One of the most popular autumn garden flowers, chrysanthemums are easy to grow and will come back year after year.

## WHAT DOES THE CHRYSANTHEMUM SYMBOLISE?

Native to Asia, the chrysanthemum is considered by both Japan and China to be an emblem of youth. The flower is also said to help prevent grey hairs, and a single petal placed at the bottom of a wine glass is believed to aid longevity.

When presenting the chrysanthemum as a gift, the colour you choose conveys a particular meaning:

- A red or pink chrysanthemum means “I love you”
- A white chrysanthemum symbolises innocence and purity
- A yellow chrysanthemum represents unrequited love

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

If your birth flower is the chrysanthemum, you are said to be friendly, cheerful and loyal. Although at times you may appear tough on the outside, you are a compassionate person who is fiercely protective of your loved ones.

## HOW CAN I GROW CHRYSANTHEMUMS?

If you love these vibrant flowers, you will be pleased to hear that they are relatively easy to grow. They thrive in moist but well-drained soil, so choose a sheltered and sunny spot and add plenty of compost or well-rotted manure. However, chrysanthemums do tend to break at the base, so they will need staking. Once they finish blooming in autumn, mulch them with straw to protect them from frost.

## ARE CHRYSANTHEMUMS POISONOUS TO PETS?

Unfortunately, chrysanthemums are toxic to pets, and to cats, dogs and horses in particular. If your animal does ingest the flower, they may experience vomiting, skin inflammation and hyper-salivation.



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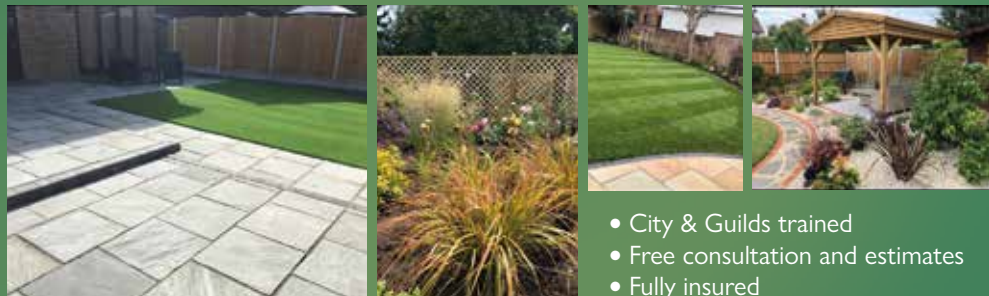
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HORTICULTURE HEROES:

# Frances Tophill



GARDENING

It speaks volumes when someone who has ascended the horticultural heights of Alan Titchmarsh tips you to become the next big thing in green-fingered greatness; though to her credit, Frances Tophill hasn't yet allowed the praise to go to her head.

Tophill, a regular on *Gardeners' World*, offers a fresh, young, dare we say stylish take on the earthy, sometimes grubby surrounds of our lawns, beds and shrubbery. She is a presenter who articulates and conveys a sense of calm, with a modus operandi that is always to embrace anything that comes her way. That is, after all, how she got into gardening in the first place.

"I was 19 years old and desperate really just to reach out and do anything. I'd never given gardening a second thought, nor did I know much about it, but I saw an apprenticeship advertised and, when I read up further, quickly fell in love with everything to do with the outdoors."

Frances' energy on screen is infectious.

"My advice to people is just to get out there and enjoy yourselves," she says. "Get some dirt under your fingernails, perhaps pull up some weeds, or even just lie down on a lawn and soak up what it feels like to be in a pure, green space."

"Our gardens are very different environments to our local parks, and for the most part are private spaces where we can create our own world. I think that's what excited me the most, and once I realised how much was there and available, I never really looked back."

That brand of enthusiasm and endless excitement has seen her move to the top table of terrestrial gardening.

"I am the example of someone making it up as they go along, and we all know that's the secret to great gardening."

Photo credit: Pinterest





# Nasty Niffs

HOW TO KEEP CATS (AND WHAT THEY LEAVE BEHIND) OUT OF YOUR GARDEN

For those of us lucky enough to have an English country garden, the greatest joy is being surrounded by the many delights of nature. However, some of the guests that wander through our outdoor spaces are prone to leaving smelly little surprises in their wake. While there are chemical aids that can be used to deter these funky felines, these natural alternatives are equally effective...

**SHARP OBJECTS:** No one likes finding poo in their flower beds, which is why you need to make these secluded, cosy spots a little less appealing to Felix. Egg shells, branches and holly cuttings are a simple way to deter the defecator, without disrupting your plants.

**MOTION-ACTIVATED SPRINKLERS:** Cats hate getting wet. Fact. And while this may not be the cheapest option, it is incredibly effective and a sure-fire way to protect your wildflowers from being watered by other people's pets.

**CERTAIN SCENTS:** Cats have keen noses and a natural dislike for some smells. Lavender, citrus and mint are among these, which is ideal as lavender and mint plants make glorious additions to your herb garden. Alternatively, you could try simply spritzing these particular fragrances about the place, though this requires constant maintenance.

**ULTRASONIC SOUNDS:** Like a feline burglar alarm, these motion-activated devices emit a high-pitched sound when disrupted, which is very unpleasant to cats.

**LION POO:** Want to keep away the small cats? Then why not use the mighty power of the big cats? Fortunately, this organic and efficient method of repellent doesn't require you to trek around the Savannah with a pooper scooper as it's available as a natural fertiliser. And yes, it contains authentic lion whoopsies.



Photo credit: www.gardensense.co.uk

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# Return TO YOUR ROOTS *part 2*

Last month we celebrated the carrot, praised the parsnip and tackled the turnip. Now it's time to explore the culinary delights of three more tasty and nutritious root vegetables.

## BEETROOT

Instantly recognisable by its bright purple hue, the beetroot often gets a bad rap as some believe that it tastes a little too much like the soil in which it is grown. However, it is worth sampling for its health benefits alone, with this root vegetable being rich in antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.

**HOW TO STORE:** Place beetroots in a perforated plastic bag in the vegetable drawer of your fridge. Lifespan: 3 weeks.

**HOW TO COOK:** The most famous beetroot dish is borscht, an eastern European winter warmer. Alternatively, roast in olive oil and cumin seeds.



## JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE

Full of iron, potassium and vitamin B1, the Jerusalem artichoke is reported to be both an aphrodisiac and a natural digestive. In season from November to March, choose artichokes that are firm to touch and pale brown in colour.

**HOW TO STORE:** Keep in the fridge or in a cool, dark place. Lifespan: 1-2 weeks.

**HOW TO COOK:** Cook Jerusalem artichokes in the same way that you would a potato or parsnip: roasted, sautéed, dipped in batter and fried or puréed into a soup.



## SWEET POTATO

Seen as a healthier alternative to potatoes, this root vegetable contains iron, calcium, selenium, vitamin A and C, plus it's full of fibre.

**HOW TO STORE:** Avoid storing in the fridge as this will result in an unpleasant taste; instead, place in a dry, well-ventilated container away from heat. Lifespan: 3-4 weeks.

**HOW TO COOK:** Although baking sweet potatoes will result in a richer taste, when boiled they have a low glycaemic index (GI).



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- ▶ Vatican City is the smallest country in the world
- ▶ The Gotthard Base Tunnel in Switzerland is the longest rail tunnel in the world
- ▶ E is the only vowel not used as the first letter in a US state name
- ▶ Russia is the largest country in the world
- ▶ The African continent has three deserts: Sahara, Kalahari and Namib
- ▶ Peninsulas are surrounded by water on three sides, for example Spain and Portugal
- ▶ Angel Falls in Venezuela is the world's largest uninterrupted waterfall
- ▶ Canberra is the capital city of Australia
- ▶ The Trafalgar Square Christmas tree is donated by Norway every year

## WORD LADDER

**KICK**

**BALL**

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.





# Are you getting enough VITAMIN D?

**A**fter enjoying an unseasonably warm and sunny spring and a pretty typical British summer, people's thoughts are now turning to the cold, and probably wet, winter ahead. Yet have you thought about how you are going to get sufficient vitamin D into your body during the months when sunlight is sparse?

## Why is vitamin D important?

Vitamin D helps to regulate the amount of calcium and phosphate in the body, both of which are needed for maintaining healthy teeth, bones and muscles. It is also known for improving brain development and reducing inflammation.

A vitamin D deficiency can lead to a loss of bone density which makes you more prone to fractures and osteoporosis. In children, it can cause rickets.

## How much sunlight do I need to get sufficient vitamin D?

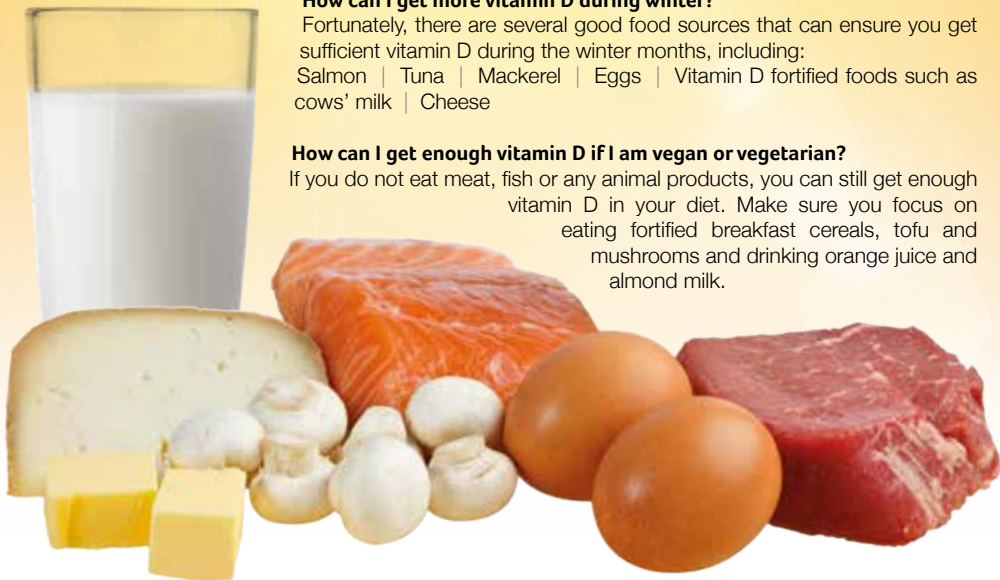
The main source of vitamin D for our bodies is the sun, yet in winter in the UK we do not get sufficient sunlight to meet our daily requirement of this vital vitamin. In the summer months, a mere 15 minutes of sun at midday is enough exposure, although people with darker skin, such as those of African or South Asian origin, may require a little longer.

## How can I get more vitamin D during winter?

Fortunately, there are several good food sources that can ensure you get sufficient vitamin D during the winter months, including:  
Salmon | Tuna | Mackerel | Eggs | Vitamin D fortified foods such as cows' milk | Cheese

## How can I get enough vitamin D if I am vegan or vegetarian?

If you do not eat meat, fish or any animal products, you can still get enough vitamin D in your diet. Make sure you focus on eating fortified breakfast cereals, tofu and mushrooms and drinking orange juice and almond milk.



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With the Christmas party season fast approaching, even if this year it is looking to be a bit more virtually festive, what better time to learn how to create the perfect eyeliner flick? Especially as your eyes are the one part of your face that is not covered by a mask!

#### THE NATURAL FLICK – Best for all eye shapes

Ideal for those who want an understated look, the natural flick should be subtle and slightly smudged. It is best created using a pencil eyeliner.

#### THE ALL-AROUND FLICK – Best for upturned or hooded eyes

Slightly more dramatic and perfect for an evening occasion, as the name suggests, this flick goes all around your eyes. Best achieved with a pencil eyeliner.

#### THE LONG FLICK – Best for small eyes

If you are wanting to look elegant, yet edgy, this long line flick is the look for you. Best for those who feel confident in their flicking abilities. Use a precise gel liner.

#### THE FISTAIL FLICK – Best for round eyes

A more futuristic flick, this look requires clean and precise lines, so you need to bring your make-up-applying A game. Opt for a skinny gel liner and practise until perfect.

#### THE REVERSE FLICK – Best for almond eyes

Who says that the perfect flick has to be on the top of your eyes? Become an exotic goddess with a reverse flick that is subtle, yet seriously sexy. Make sure you add lashings of mascara to your top eyelashes to avoid looking tired.

#### TOP TIPS FOR ACHIEVING THE PERFECT FLICK

Use a hairpin for more precision | Create a dot sequence if you struggle to draw a fluid line | Use a magnifying mirror | Prime oily eyelids first | Use a combination of pencil and liquid liners | Be bold with colour – blue eyes suit greens and brown eyes look great with navy.



Photo credit: Maybelline.co.uk



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\*1. A free video consultation is not a clinical diagnostic tool, its function is to support the discussion of treatment options and suitability. Subsequent clinical examinations, diagnostic tests and any associated costs will be discussed prior to treatment commencing. 2. Consultations subject to availability.

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**FASHION**

Whether you live in your trusty trainers or you favour a more sophisticated leather shoe, caring for your chosen footwear can be a bit of a nightmare. Fortunately, we are here to help.

**Suede & Leather**

The first thing you should do if you buy a pair of leather or suede shoes is to treat them with a specialised spray protector, as this will help preserve them for longer.

In terms of cleaning, suede should be gently brushed with a suede brush to remove any dirt or dust without damaging it.

Leather is best cleaned with shoe polish as this will not only clean but also moisturise it, which helps to lengthen the lifespan of the shoes.

If your leather shoes get caught in the rain, place them upside down on dry paper (not newspaper) and leave to dry naturally.

**Canvas & Fabric**

Slightly easier to take care of, most canvas shoes can be washed in the washing machine, although be sure to let them air dry and never place them in the tumble dryer as this will ruin their shape. If there is only one spot of dirt on your fabric or canvas shoes, simply brush it off with a toothbrush or wash with a sponge dipped in soapy water.

**Trainers**

Some trainers can be washed in the washing machine, although always check their label before doing so. It can be a good idea to place your trainers in a pillow case before washing and to wash them with a few towels to avoid your footwear banging around and becoming damaged. Liquid detergent is preferable as powder can get stuck in your trainers.

**Signs your shoe soles need replacing**

- > The centre of your soles feel weak or spongy
- > They start to feel thinner in some areas
- > You notice a circle emerging



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# SEO 101

## A beginner's guide

To the uninitiated, SEO, or search engine optimisation, can seem like a daunting task, and enlisting the services of a professional can be expensive. However, there is no reason why you can't learn to master the art of SEO yourself.

### SEARCH FOR KEYWORDS

The foundation of any SEO campaign, keywords are ideas and terms that describe what your content is about and they are designed to help increase your visibility online. You can come up with the right keywords for your business by:

- > Brainstorming with your team
- > Checking out your competitors' sites
- > Using Google Ads Keyword Planner

### OPTIMISE YOUR TITLES AND META DESCRIPTIONS

This is where it gets a little bit more technical. Once you have your list of keywords, you need to optimise your page titles using these keywords in as natural a way as possible. Page titles and meta descriptions are shown in search engine results and therefore these need to clearly convey what each page is about. You can optimise these via your content management system or in your SEO plug-in.

### OPTIMISE YOUR PAGE CONTENT

Your next step is to add your keywords to your website text. These include your header tags (your headings and subheadings) and the rest of the text on the page. Again, try to do this in as natural a way as possible and don't overstuff your content with keywords as both Google and searchers are put off by this technique.

### BUILD LINKS

If you want your site to get on that much-coveted first page of Google, you need to focus on getting high-quality backlinks, i.e. hyperlinks from other websites to your own. There are several techniques that you can use to build backlinks, including:

- > Be active on social media
- > Write competitive content
- > Create an infographic
- > Write testimonials for other websites







*Getting back to*

# BUSINESS

*The unexpected upturns coronavirus brought about for small businesses*

One has to be careful with any mention of a global pandemic in some way being good for business. Clearly what enveloped the world over the course of 2020 was a set of circumstances and outcomes we would never want repeated, and they carry on today. Yet while COVID-19 called time on the legacy of thousands of businesses, for others it has provided new vision, renewed focus and a world of opportunity.

Most of these have come in the form of directors, managers, sole traders and other decision-makers having a rare opportunity to step back and reassess.

In the early days of the lockdown, so profound were the circumstances around us and so urgent was the need to strip back, downgrade and economise, that businesses reverted to skeletal structures just to survive.

So when the UK began to emerge out of the famine of lockdown, many owners realised they could survive on these new,

low levels of efficiency. From reverting to four-day weeks to cancelling direct debits for subscriptions, software and other resources we actually didn't use; from encouraging working from home, embracing tech such as video conferencing, right through to enriching staff by asking them to adopt fresh ideas, tackle wider tasks or embrace new skills in order to get additional jobs done, there was a new take on what we needed.

In total, we found that COVID-19 brought about a need for transparency none of us could pull a curtain across. Unequivocally, it changed our attitudes towards everything from money to socialising to personal space, but also altered our perception of business – what it is, how we utilise it and, in some cases, how little we need the bells, whistles and fanfare. We are a simpler, more efficient nation because of coronavirus, and once we're out of the woods that will surely help us to flourish again.



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SPORT

# The PARTEY IS OVER



Arsenal's decision to lay off club mascot Gunnersaurus on the day they splashed £45million on midfielder Thomas Partey has furthered the debate of just how connected our Premier League sides are to the real world.

The decision to release the Gunners' iconic mascot, who has been parading around home games for 27 years, was announced at the start of October. That meant lifelong fan Jerry Guy would have to find something else to do on matchdays.

In the club's defence, it was accepted that dressing as a dinosaur and parading around the pitch in front of empty stands was probably a waste of time; but Arsenal, just like so many other clubs who have cut back in the wake of coronavirus, have scored a spectacular own goal in their failure to see the bigger picture.

From north London neighbours Tottenham Hotspur to Premier League champions Liverpool, an insistence on micromanaging rarely ends well when we are, as a nation, looking for togetherness and unity as we are during the time of this pandemic.

When players' astronomical wages are paid in full yet staff on the minimum wage are furloughed and, in some cases, made redundant, you wonder if the disconnect can ever be bridged.

When a 126-year-old club such as Macclesfield Town, who played in the Football League last season, are allowed to be wound up for the sake of less than two weeks of Arsenal midfielder Mesut Özil's wages, surely we've lost sight of the game.

Speaking of Özil, who hasn't played competitive football for the club in seven months but continues to pick up his full wage, the German did at least begin to repair his reputation with Gunners fans perennially underwhelmed by his energy and application, by offering to front up Gunnersaurus's wage himself.

It's troubling that a player has to make that move, and that his employers cannot see that abandoning the little man – or in this case, dinosaur – is a PR faux pas that becomes far more costly.

Photo credit: Javier Garcia/BPI/Shutterstock



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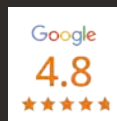
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MOTORING

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Jaguar  
I-PACE

What's the furthest you can go in an electric car without recharging?

The concept is great – cleaner, cheaper, some may even say smoother driving. Electric cars have given us a new way of getting from A to B, but for many considering investing in one of the greenest advancements ever conceived, the need to recharge at such regular intervals has been a major stumbling block.

And yet, improvements in technology have meant the range of our electric vehicles is better than ever. Take this year's Tesla Model S, for instance. Elon Musk's pioneering vehicle brand is ripping up the rule book and this shimmering, humming piece of tarmac tech will take you 402 miles on a single charge... that's right up there with petrol and diesel vehicles. The only downside is the £75,000 price tag.

And if you fancy a hybrid of electric and traditional fuel, check out the 2018 Toyota Camry LE. This will get you an almost mind-boggling 689 miles – that's the equivalent of driving from London to Amsterdam... and back.

If you want to go for a purely electric car without needing to remortgage the house – in other words, steer clear of Teslas, who occupy four of the top five positions for range, with their X (351 miles), 3 (322 miles) and Y (316 miles) models – then have a look at the Chevrolet Bolt EV. You'll be looking at around £30,000 for a car that will take you well over 250 miles on one charge.

Hyundai (the Kona Electric also hits 250 miles) and Kia (the Niro Electric will take you 230 miles before you plug in again) both represent good value, and 2018 models can be picked up second-hand for around £15,000. For those seeking a bit more status, there is of course the ever-popular Jaguar I-PACE. Up to 300 miles in a car that balances eco and image perfectly... what's not to like?



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