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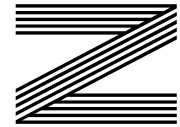
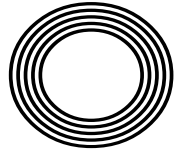
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Mental Health Ambassador*

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From left Brian Maczka, Joe Pilbrow and Sam Maczka

FAMILY OF BUILDERS LAUNCH KITCHEN MAKEOVER SHOWROOM IN LEIGH-ON-SEA

A family with more than 50 years' building experience has launched a kitchen makeover showroom in Leigh-on-Sea.

Brian Maczka and his son Sam have launched Dream Doors Southend alongside Brian's nephew Joe Pilbrow who is operations manager.

Sam said: "Dad has worked in construction for over 20 years and I've worked with him for a lot of that. Between all of us we have 50 years of construction experience.

"Working as a family is great and our customers seem to prefer working with a family rather than some anonymous high street brand.

"We all get on well and we have a laugh together as we work."

Sam added: "We're still really busy, despite everything that's happening with the Covid lockdown. We're still booking home appointments and we're observing strict Covid safe working practices.

"Our customers seem to really love the service that we offer and the fact that refacing, rather than replacing, kitchens is more sustainable.

"If you're looking for a great kitchen makeover for a fraction of the cost of a full refit, then give us a call, book an appointment and let's get started."

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Editor's notes...

MARCH 2021



Nik Allen, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** Rayleigh Wickford. I am, at the moment, planning our areas of expansion this year, in regard to the towns where we will be launching new editions of **VISION**. In a year of ups and downs so far, it would certainly be looked at as a bold move by most, especially because the last 12 months have been focused on preserving and saving what we have.

I mentioned this plan to a friend the other day and he was aghast. "Why are you expanding?" he said. "Most people I know are scaling back."

He had a point, of course. And yet I answered him by explaining that everything I've done in business and, more importantly, in life has been with a focus on positivity, expecting change, planning for it, and hitting the ground running when it comes about.

To some, planning expansion so soon after a lockdown is a strange move, but to me it says nothing more than this - we will get out of this (sooner rather than later), we will get back to normal, and those wise and brave enough to prepare for when we come out of it now will have the ultimate head start. Why not start planning your next chapter now? I believe the message will be more than ever about supporting your local high street and tradespeople. Keep supporting local.

Nik Allen

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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 Inside pages recyclable



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MORNING GLORY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

replaced the outgoing *Daybreak*.

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

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



Photo credit: 10 Downing Street

DOCTOR'S ORDERS

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

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

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

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

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

> ONE: Get outside

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

> TWO: Exercise

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

> THREE: Call a friend

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

> FOUR: Eat well

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

> FIVE: Sleep routine

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



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Embrace the global influence trend to cure your wanderlust

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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CUTLERY

care guide

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- HOW TO STORE:**
- > When not in use, roll each piece of silver cutlery in acid-free tissue paper or unbleached cotton muslin and then place in a resealable plastic bag.
 - > Add a piece of chalk wrapped in cheesecloth to the bag to absorb moisture and prevent tarnishing.

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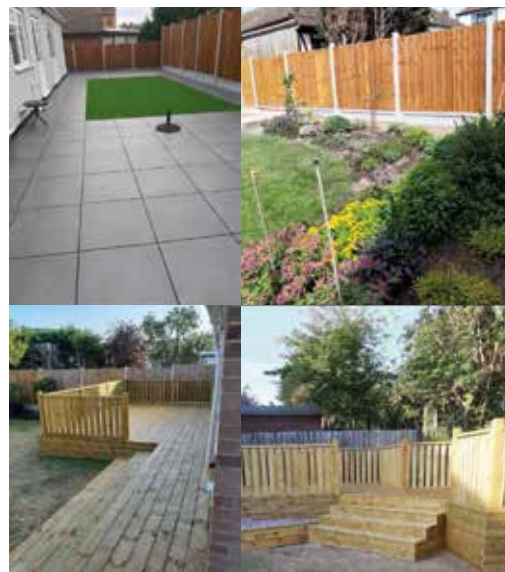
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O, Easter tree!

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

How to create your Easter tree:

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

How to hollow out your eggs:

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

Marbled eggs:

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

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

Egg nests:

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

Glitter eggs:

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

How to hang your eggs:

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

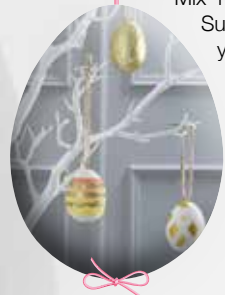


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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Petition launched to save community centre

Plans to replace The Mill Arts & Events Centre have been met with strong local opposition.

Joe Gooch (pictured), who lives locally, has set up a petition to save Rayleigh Mill Hall.

He said the community centre, which has been in the town for 50 years, was busier than ever before the pandemic.

He said: "Rochford District Council (RCC) is rushing through plans to demolish this vital community hub and replace it with flats, and a much smaller-sized hall that will not be suitable for many of the groups and events that, until the pandemic, were using the Mill

Hall's ample facilities on a daily basis.

"A smaller hall will mean live music, comedy nights, craft fairs and many other events that currently take place at the Mill Hall will no longer be able to take place, because the reduced size will mean that it will not be possible to sell enough tickets to recoup the costs of hosting such events.

"We call upon RCC to listen to the voices of residents and the groups who use this essential facility, and halt plans to demolish our Mill Hall community centre."

To view the petition, go to www.change.org/p/rochford-district-council-save-rayleigh-mill-hall

Man guilty in connection with death of boy

An electrician from Rayleigh has been found guilty in connection with the death of Harvey Tyrrell.

Harvey was killed after sitting on a pub light installed by Colin Naylor in the garden of the King Harold pub in September 2018.

It was found that the metal casing of the light was

live with electricity, having not been sufficiently earthed or insulated against water ingress.

Naylor was cleared of gross negligence manslaughter, but found guilty of failing to discharge a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act.

Naylor will be sentenced at a later date.

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MARK FRANCOIS MP



Member of Parliament for Rayleigh and Wickford



LOCAL NEWS RAYLEIGH

It is fair to say that February has been a significant month in the fightback against COVID-19. The United Kingdom has been going from strength to strength in rolling out the vaccine, with more than 15 million of the most vulnerable now inoculated against the virus, with early indications showing a reduction in cases and, even more importantly, in the number of fatalities.

In Rayleigh, the Audley Mills Surgery has been leading the way on jabbing local residents. However, February saw the opening of a new major vaccination hub at the Mill Hall in Rayleigh.

This has been established by the Essex Partnership University Trust (EPUT), the branch of the NHS that oversees the creation of vaccination hubs across Essex. This new hub, in the heart of our constituency, will now accompany the other nearby hubs at EPUT Headquarters in Runwell and at the Cliffs Pavilion in Southend.

NHS executives have asked me to stress that,

if anyone aged 70 or over has not been contacted for an appointment thus far, they should get in touch with the NHS, either via the national booking service website or, failing that, their local GP surgery. The aim is to complete the vaccination of those aged 70 and over as soon as possible, so that we can move on to the next phase and start moving through the age ranges as rapidly as we can.

This new facility, which I have been pressing NHS bosses to establish since last month, should help to speed up the local roll-out of the vaccines and allow constituents quicker access to a jab as they become available. I hope that as the vaccination process accelerates, not only will this help to protect my constituents from the virus itself but that it will also bring forward the day when we can begin lifting the lockdown and try to return to some form of normality.

Fundraising begins for Rayleigh Church

Allchurches Trust has awarded a grant of £7,500 towards the cost of replacing heating, lighting and electrics in Holy Trinity Church, Rayleigh.

The grant will kickstart fundraising for the remaining £150,000 required for the project, which is estimated to cost £500,000.

The works, dubbed 'Project 640', will revitalise the church which has served the community for more than 640 years and remained open during the recent lockdown. Upgrading heating, lighting and the interior décor will make the church more welcoming. Improved disabled access will assist those with limited mobility to navigate the interior more easily.

The Team Rector, Revd David Oxtoby, said: "The Project 640 fundraising team is thrilled to have received the generous grant from Allchurches Trust. It's a wonderful boost to our fundraising and an encouragement that Allchurches Trust shares our common vision for the development and refurbishment of our church for future generations, especially at such a pivotal point in the life of our church and wider community."



£350,000 has already been raised through bequests and gifts from The Friends of Holy Trinity.

Look for updates on the Rayleigh Parish Church – Project 640 Facebook page, or donate at www.give.net/20037477



LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood

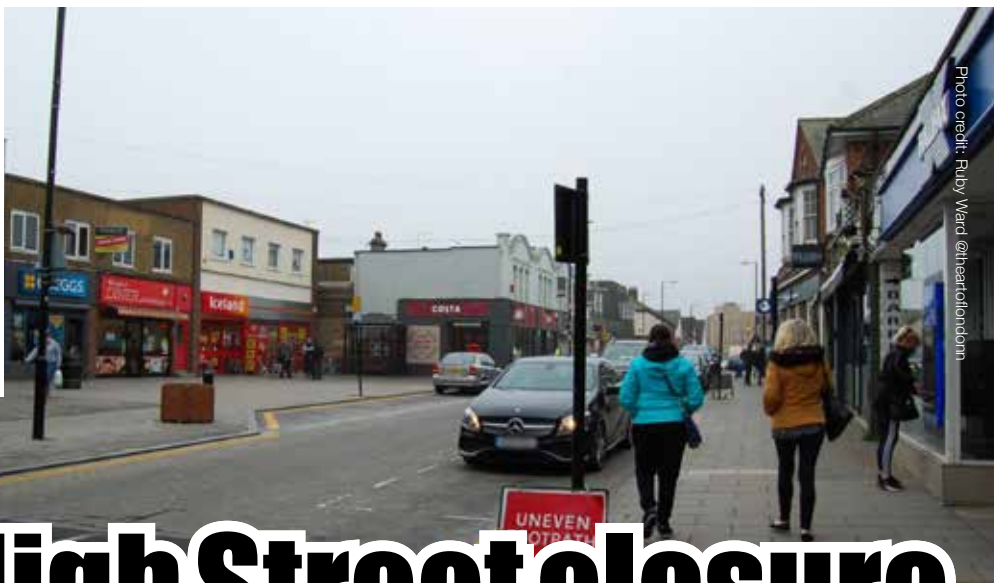


Photo credit: Ruby Ward @heartoflondon

High Street closure supported by residents

Wickford High Street will be pedestrianised every Saturday for the next six months after councillors rubber-stamped the plans.

The six-month trial period is starting at the same time as the planned launch of the new Wickford Market, although it is dependent on the lockdown.

Councillor David Harrison is chairman of the Neighbourhoods and Public Spaces Committee on Basildon Council and also represents Wickford Park.

He said: "Pedestrianising the High Street on a Saturday is supported by the High Street businesses and the residents of Wickford, and will help to generate additional footfall and create opportunities for local people, while enhancing the economic viability and vitality of the town centre."

The council undertook a survey back in January 2020 to determine the level of support from local

businesses and High Street visitors to potential road closures. With more than 400 responses, the results of the consultation found that respondents were overwhelmingly in favour of closing the road on Saturdays.

Meanwhile, **VISION**RayleighWickford readers are broadly backing the move.

Andrew Neil said: "I agree with the High Street closure but it has to be part of a plan to offer shoppers something. Having three stalls is not a solution. It needs to have a proper market with diverse stalls to attract people."

Georgette Turnbull added: "When the time is right – when there is a good amount of stalls to be had – if places like Costa and Greggs can put some tables and chairs outside, it would be lovely, but maybe only close it from Market Road to the traffic lights?"

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Robbers jailed for more than 20 years

LOCAL NEWS WICKFORD



Two robbers who violently assaulted a taxi driver in Wickford have been jailed for a combined total of 21 years after being arrested within hours of the attack. Kevin Hutchinson (left), 25, of Wickford and Roy O'Donoghue (right), 34, of Westcliff, targeted the driver in Appletree Way at 2.45am on September 12 last year.

During the attack, the victim had a cord placed around his neck as one of the men tried to strangle him. He was also punched.

The victim's iPhone was also taken. Within hours of the report, both men were in police custody after officers were able to identify Hutchinson as one of the men seen carrying out the attack. He was caught on the taxi driver's internal camera.

Hutchinson was linked to three addresses and was arrested before noon at the third address.

While there, officers arrested O'Donoghue, after noticing that his tattoos of birds matched those seen on the second man in the dashcam footage.

Both men were still wearing the same clothes as when they had committed the robbery.

The pair were sentenced last month at Basildon Crown Court.

O'Donoghue was sentenced to 11 years and four months, while Hutchinson was handed a 10-year sentence.

Wombles and council join forces to plant cherry trees

An avenue of 18 cherry trees is to be planted in Wick Country Park as part of a partnership between Basildon Council and the Wickford Wombles litter-picking group.

The total cost of the supply and delivery of the trees amounts to £2,400, of which the council will provide £2,050 from the Pollinator budget, and the Wickford Wombles will contribute the remaining £350. The

planting of the trees will be completed by the Wickford Wombles themselves.

Chairman of the Neighbourhoods and Public Spaces Committee, councillor David Harrison, said: "This is a great example of the positive relationships that can be formed between the council and groups in the community.

"The Wickford Wombles are a community group who do brilliant work in Wickford, so it's great that we're able to partner with them to plant these trees, and I thank them for their contribution."

Police close house after public concern

Police have secured a closure order on a house in Wickford following complaints about persistent antisocial behaviour.

It means no one can live at the house in Elm Road for three months. Anyone caught trying to enter the property within that time could face jail for breaching the conditions.

Police took action after receiving complaints about drug dealing and antisocial behaviour.

Sergeant Jane Childs, of the Wickford Town Centre Team, said: "We will not tolerate drug dealing or intimidating antisocial behaviour, and hope the closure order will provide some respite for residents living nearby."

Basildon Magistrates' Court granted the closure order on Thursday, February 18.

Anyone with concerns about crime and antisocial behaviour can contact police at www.essex.police.uk or use the 'Live Chat' button to speak to an online operator between 7am and 11pm. Alternatively, you can call 101.

Information can also be given to Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or at crimestoppers-uk.org



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Positivity of the MIDDLE MAN

ANT MIDDLETON'S CLIMB TO PHYSICAL AND MENTAL MAGNIFICENCE

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

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

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

So much of what this inspirational tour de force has done up to now has been about physical determination. His Channel 4 SAS: *Who Dares Wins* series, which he fronted for five years before announcing recently he will no longer be part of the show due to differences with the production company, is a military training show of brutal extremes, with an adventure/reality crossover that pushes participants to the absolute limits of body endurance.

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

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

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

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

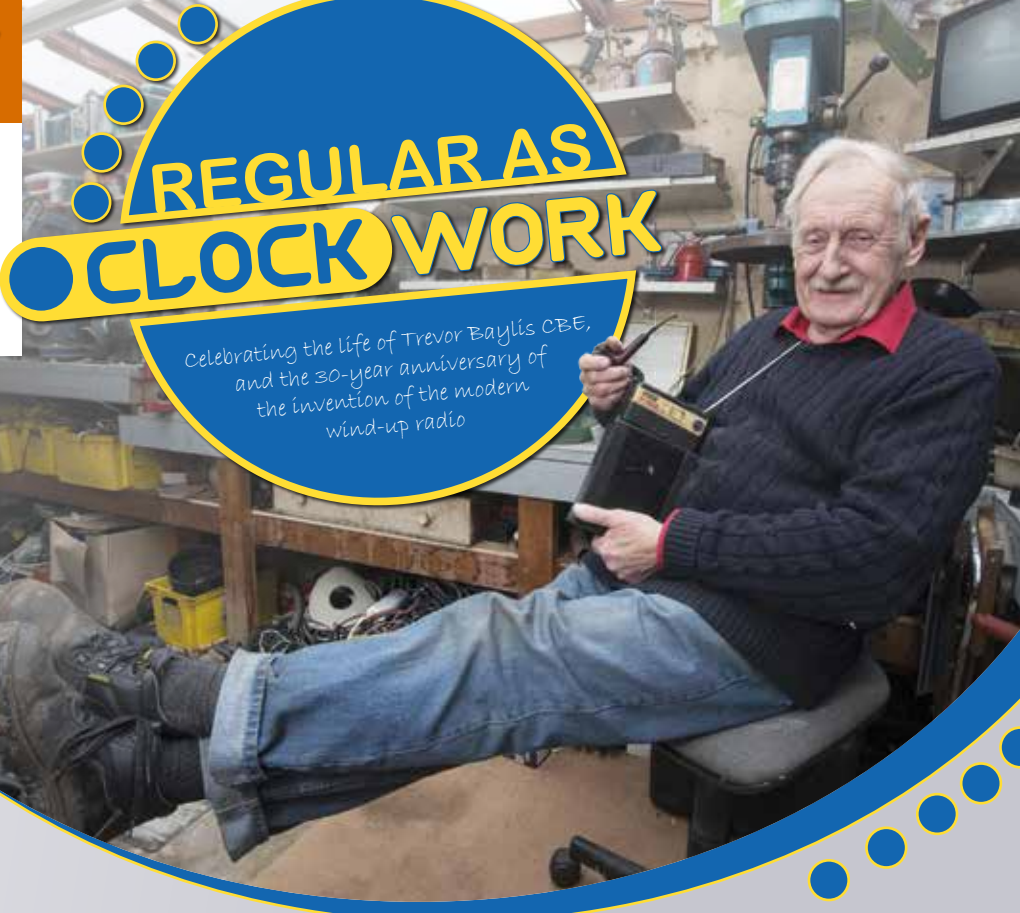
In a streamed live event that took place at the start of February, Middleton's *Be Prepared for 2021* did exactly what the title suggested, with an unscripted, unrehearsed and unfiltered conversation designed to unpick the various roadblocks that 2020 had put in the way of so many of us.

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

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

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





REGULAR AS CLOCKWORK

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

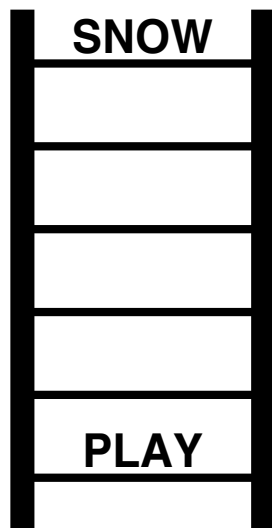
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DID YOU KNOW?

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

WORD LADDER



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

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

DO NOT rearrange the order of the letters.

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

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

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

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

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

risk of incurring expensive healthcare treatment.

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

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

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

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MARCH BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH:

Daffodil



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

WHAT DOES THE DAFFODIL REPRESENT?

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

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

WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOUR PERSONALITY?

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

ARE DAFFODILS EASY TO GROW?

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

HOW TO LOOK AFTER DAFFODIL BULBS FOR ANNUAL GROWTH

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



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GARDENING

GARDEN OF LIFE

TREES AND SOIL *socialism*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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BUSINESS & PROPERTY

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

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

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

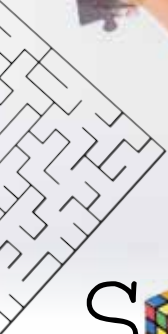
Within that, perhaps the most profound impact of Brexit will be that UK residents are only permitted to stay in the EU for a total of 90 days in every 180-day period.

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

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

As it stands, though, the subsequent transition period – and with it, a large

amount of uncertainty – hasn't led to any profound changes. Indeed, people who already own property in an EU country are protected by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights – the longwinded premise being a simple one, namely that whether a member of the European Union or not, individual property rights must be respected. So if you do move forward in retaining or investing in property abroad, your little piece of homely heaven is assured.



SOLVE A PUZZLE

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

ENHANCED COGNITIVE FUNCTION

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

IMPROVED PROBLEM-SOLVING ABILITIES

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

DECREASED STRESS LEVELS

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

INCREASED IQ

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

OTHER BRAIN-BOOSTING PUZZLES FOR KIDS:

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

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BRITAIN'S GREATEST SPORTING MOMENTS...



Torvill & Dean

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

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

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

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

Their score of 13 perfect 6.0s was the most ever

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

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

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

Photo credit: Colorsport/Shutterstock

Kohlrabi

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

WHAT IS KOHLRABI?

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

WHAT DOES KOHLRABI TASTE LIKE?

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

HOW TO COOK KOHLRABI

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

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

HOW TO STORE KOHLRABI

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

WHAT ARE THE NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS OF KOHLRABI?

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



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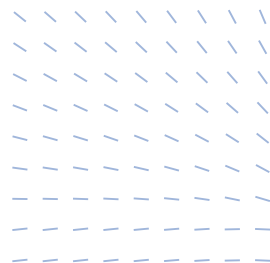
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Recognise the signs

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

What are the signs?

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

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

How can I support someone?

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

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

Where can I get help for someone?

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

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

Charities and organisations

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





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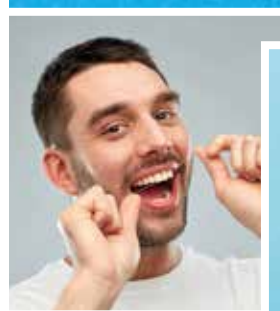
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BEAUTY

to floss or not to floss?



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

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

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

HOW TO FLOSS: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

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

WHEN SHOULD YOU FLOSS?

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

WHY SHOULD YOU FLOSS?

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



MOTORING



Fan belt failure

HOW TO DIAGNOSE ONE OF THE MOST COMMON MOTORING ISSUES

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

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

THE SIGNS

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

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

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

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

THE DIAGNOSIS

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

THE COST

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

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