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Editor's notes...

MAY 2021



Nik Allen, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION**RayleighWickFord. On April 9 we lost a true gentleman of this country. To me, the Duke of Edinburgh was a king in everything but name - a strong, brave, honest man who would shoot from the hip, press on with dignity and show character and personality in every one of his pursuits. No matter what you think of the royals, you have to respect that.

In the days that followed I was saddened by the barrage of complaints directed towards our media outlets - more than a hundred thousand complained to the BBC about its blanket coverage which

saw the usual schedule abandoned. You will never convince me that we don't have the ability to reach for the remote if there is something we don't want to watch, with the choice available to us nowadays. Did the Beeb go over the top? Possibly... it's become good at that recently. Did the Twitterati try to gatecrash Prince Philip's death by dragging out a crude selection of faux pas? Yes, sadly.

Does any of it matter? No. What counts for me is the fact that someone who devoted himself to this nation has gone. And more than that, the fact is we've lost another old-school warrior in a world increasingly overrun by woke. We need someone to step into Prince Philip's shoes... and quickly.

Nik Allen

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WILLIAM & KATE:

Ten years on

Looking back to celebrate William and Kate as they reach the milestone of their 10th wedding anniversary.

When asked, Prince William and Kate Middleton, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, would doubtless suggest their first decade together as husband and wife has been wonderfully happy, uplifting and rewarding... albeit not without its challenges.

To most couples in the early throes of wedded bliss, the faint cry of babies and the bringing on of previously untapped levels of tiredness is a challenge enough. Yet it is to the couple's unending credit that they have never swayed away from their other royal duties, while having the ambition to pursue new challenges and initiatives. They are every bit the exemplars of people wanting the best for themselves, their family and those around them.

In isolation, those challenges of early parenthood – when we saw the arrival of Prince George in 2013, Princess Charlotte two years later and, most recently, Prince Louis in 2018 – are considerable, yet in recent years family events have compounded further the complications of life. The Prince Harry and Meghan Markle spat, notably, has left a devastating scar across how we perceive the Royal Family; then there's been the controversy of Prince Andrew and his links to Jeffrey Epstein; while the recent passing of William's grandfather, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, has further shrouded the institution at a time when the rest of the nation is finally managing to pull away from the darkness.

Regardless, the April 29, 2021, anniversary reaffirms the couple as a modern inspiration. The ceremony, 10 years ago, was a typically lavish affair, albeit laced with the style and individuality that William and Kate have wanted to imprint in the way they go about their duties.

Former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams conducted the ceremony, as 26 million UK viewers watched it live. The Royal Family and the Middletons picked up the bill for almost 2,000 guests, with 300 special invitees going on to an evening dinner hosted by Prince Charles.

Naturally, the day went off without issue, and their work as a couple was only just beginning. Few would disagree now that, during an era when criticism of the royals has been fervent, William and Kate uphold the value and purpose of the Royal Family, even if others in the clan are less proactive.

Over the past decade, the prince has committed huge amounts of time to mental health issues, as well as opening up to a more mainstream audience with his love of sport; while the Duchess of Cambridge's elegant embracing of the mum role model is notable for the familiarity it has with Princess Diana and her boys.

More than anything else, William and Kate speak to the world with the shutters up. Rarely have a royal couple been so close to the people, with honesty, humility and even the ability to laugh at themselves.

It gives all of us hope that not only will the Windsors overcome this recent spate of negative events but, more than that, with William and Kate excellent exemplars, the institution of marriage – itself in decline – once again has those to uphold its values.

"We have always loved being married," says William. "I think we are more in love now than before, and we both truly feel we have found a soulmate who will be there forever."

BETTER THAN *Just O-kay*

Vernon Kay and 25 years on camera

There's something unmistakable about people from Bolton – think Peter Kay, Paddy McGuinness, Amir Khan. Perhaps it's the accent, perhaps the exuding of confidence, or maybe it's just an ability to look on life with uplifted energy.

Whatever the mechanics are, Vernon Kay, like so many of his Greater Manchester contemporaries, has them in abundance.

The husband of Tess Daly, Kay has just celebrated 25 years on screen – no mean feat for someone once described in the Nineties by Mark Lamarr as “a lanky indie kid with bad taste in clothes”.

That's ironic, given that Kay was actually first spotted at Clothes Show Live when he agreed to strut some clothes in return for free drinks. He went on to model for several years before using the catwalk as a platform to launch a TV career.

One of the many to emerge through the T4 stable, he has gone on to present *All Star Family Fortunes*, *Beat the Star* and *Splash!*, among others. Yet it was his appearance in *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here* last year that truly reacquainted the watching public with someone who has also spread his talent across radio DJing (notably on Radio 1) and even movie cameos (in *Shaun of the Dead* and *Keith Lemon: The Film*).

A father of two, Kay famously talks down his talents, but has become one of terrestrial TV's go-to faces. Most recently, his *Game of Talents* show has allowed him to rediscover some of the spontaneity so associated with those T4 days.

“A lot of entertainment is very sanitised these days and I want to bring energy and unpredictability back to it,” says Kay, who said recently he blames the sterility of autocue for ruining so much live programming.

“Having fun is difficult when you're reading words off a script, so I'd love us to get back to really immersive TV that throws off the shackles.”

The shackles are off, Vernon.

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HOW TO CLEAN YOUR Curtains

Did you know that you should be cleaning your curtains at least once a year and preferably once every three to six months? Although this may not sound like a lot, can you honestly remember the last time you gave yours a good wash? If not, don't worry. Discover below how to clean your curtains in five simple steps.

STEP ONE: Remove all the hooks and curtain weights and loosen the heading tape. If you are worried about the fabric shrinking, you may want to let down the hem. Take outside and shake well to remove any dust.

STEP TWO: Check the washing label of your curtains to see if they are machine washable. If they are made using a lightweight fabric such as cotton, they probably are. However, if they are large and heavy you may want to have them dry cleaned or wash them by hand. This is also the case for curtains made from velvet, wool, silk or chenille.

STEP THREE: If machine washable, place your curtains in your washing machine and add your usual detergent. Set the machine to either a "delicates" cycle or a cool wash with a slow spin to avoid damage.

STEP FOUR: If you want to iron your curtains, you should do this while they are still damp. Work lengthways, on the wrong side, stretching the fabric gently to prevent seams from puckering. If not, simply hang to dry either outside if the weather permits or inside until they are at least 95 per cent dry. Do not rub or wring out your curtains.

STEP FIVE: Thoroughly dust and clean your curtain tracks, windows and sills before hanging your clean curtains back up. You should also try to incorporate a weekly curtain vacuum into your cleaning schedule to keep them in tip-top condition for longer.

NEXT MONTH WE'LL TELL YOU HOW TO CLEAN YOUR BLINDS

5 alternative uses for nail polish remover

Did you know that nail polish remover is not just for nails? Oh no, it can be used for a whole myriad of other purposes around the home.

1. To shine your shoes

Although you may be wary about using acetone on your prized shoe collection, as long as you only use it on patent shoes, you are completely safe. Simply dip a piece of kitchen towel in nail polish remover and gently buff to remove unsightly scuff marks.

2. To clean your china

If you are an avid tea drinker, your china may be prone to the odd mark or two. Remedy this by scrubbing these stubborn stains with a cotton bud soaked in nail polish remover. Wash as normal before using.

3. To remove paint from your windows

Painting your windows can inject a new lease of life into the interior and exterior of your home. However, flicks of paint on your glass are a hazard of the job. Remove any wayward paint by applying acetone, letting it settle for five minutes and then rubbing away with a damp cloth.

4. To dissolve superglue

Got a bit overenthusiastic with the superglue? Don't stress. Nail polish remover will quickly and easily unglue your hands or unclog the cap of your glue. Just apply to the affected area for instant results.

5. To get rid of ink stains

Whether you have spilt ink on your fabric sofa or your child has come home from school with their shirt covered in pen marks, acetone will save the day. Mix one part nail polish remover with two parts water and dab at the stain with a soft cloth.

Other uses:

- > To sanitise your beauty tools.
- > To clean blades – dip a cotton bud in the remover, apply and rinse with soap and water.
- > To smooth minor watch scratches – drop a tiny amount onto a cloth and gently buff affected area.

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WHY BUY A beanbag?

If you are wanting to update the furniture in your home without breaking the bank, you may want to consider investing in bean bag furniture. Synonymous with comfort and cosiness, the benefits of bean bags are numerous.

1. LOOKS STYLISH

Furniture for your home needs to look the part as well as feel it. Luckily, bean bags come in a wide variety of colours and designs, meaning you are guaranteed to be able to find one that complements your home's interior. Plus, you can accessorise your bag with cushions and throws in the same way you would a sofa.

2. OFFERS PORTABILITY

If you have a small home or limited space in your living room, a bean bag is a great option as it can be moved from one room to another with ease, owing to its lightweight nature. It can also be stored away when not in use.

3. EASY TO MAINTAIN

Bean bags come in a wide variety of different fabrics, meaning you can pick the perfect one for

your needs. Choose from faux leather that is super-easy to clean, cotton that is long-lasting, and even waterproof and UV resistant material for outdoor use.

4. SAVES YOU MONEY

Even with the seemingly never-ending furniture shop sales, it is still expensive to buy a new three-piece suite for your home, with prices potentially running into the thousands. Fortunately, bean bag furniture is extremely cost efficient and you can choose from single chairs, loungers, three-seaters and more.

5. IMPROVES YOUR HEALTH

If you suffer with either muscle or joint pain, then bean bag chairs can help you by moulding to your individual shape and offering optimal support. They can also help to relieve tension headaches and correct poor posture.



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INVINCIBLE houseplants

If you are looking for a hassle-free houseplant, either for yourself or as a gift for a friend, we have got you covered. Discover the below five houseplants that are virtually indestructible, even for those with a history of plant abuse.

1. DEVIL'S IVY

Incredibly popular, this hardy houseplant is stunning to look at with its unmistakable marbled leaves, and it has the added advantage of not needing much water or light. A great choice for popping on a bookshelf to brighten up your next Zoom meeting, but make sure you keep it away from children and pets as all parts are toxic.

2. SNAKE PLANT

Also known as mother-in-law's tongue, this houseplant is incredibly forgiving and therefore ideal for beginners. In the wild, snake plants can go a long time without seeing rain so they do not need frequent watering. Available in a range of different sizes, choose to place one on your home office desk or in a more impactful position in the hallway.

3. CAST IRON PLANT

This aptly named houseplant thrives on neglect and can even be grown in the dark, making it an excellent choice for rooms that do not provide much natural light. Recognisable by its deep-green glossy leaves, unfortunately, when grown indoors, you are unlikely to see its creamy purple flowers.

4. ZZ PLANT

The ZZ plant, or zamioculcas, is used to putting up with long periods of drought and can therefore survive if given to a frequent forgetful waterer. A graceful and elegant plant, place in a white-walled room for maximum impact.

5. CORN PLANT

If you are after a commanding but undemanding houseplant, then look no further. The corn plant, aka dracaena fragrans, grows tall and strong, even without your help, and may even deliver small, white flowers.



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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Photo credit: Met Police

Man jailed for boy's death

A man from Rayleigh has been sentenced for his role in the death of seven-year-old Harvey Tyrrell (pictured inset).

Colin Naylor, 74, of Rayleigh, was sentenced to 12 months in prison for failing to discharge a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act.

David Bearman, the owner of the pub where Harvey died, was also sentenced to nine years in prison for his role in the boy's death.

Bearman, who moved to Chelmsford during the trial, was sentenced after pleading guilty to gross negligence manslaughter and abstracting electricity.

The London Ambulance Service called police to The King Harold pub in Romford in September 2018.

During the subsequent police investigation, it was

discovered that Harvey had been playing with a friend in the pub garden when he touched one of the poorly installed lights and suffered a fatal electric shock.

Officers found that Bearman had often worked on the electrics in the premises himself. His friends and family also carried out work on the pub, including his brother-in-law, Colin Naylor.

An examination of the venue after Harvey's death found 12 defects at the pub that posed a risk of injury, including electric shock, and 32 potentially dangerous defects.

It was discovered that the pub had its last full health and safety check in 2009.

Despite warnings from inspectors, Bearman failed to resolve any of the issues.

New collaboration aims to protect community

Rochford District Council and Essex Police will work together to tackle crime and protect the community in Rayleigh as part of a new collaboration.

Collaborating through use of the proposed new community centre will allow the police to adopt a community approach to reducing crime and antisocial behaviour.

The proposed new centre will replace the existing Mill Hall and will allow a space for public outreach initiatives, as well as enabling members of the public to interact with their local policing teams.

Leader of Rochford District Council, councillor Simon Wootton, said: "This will enable us to work together more efficiently for the benefit of the community."

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MARK FRANCOIS MP



Member of Parliament for Rayleigh and Wickford



LOCAL NEWS RAYLEIGH

Since last month's edition, we have witnessed the passing of His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh. On behalf of my constituents, I have extended deepest condolences to HM The Queen and the other members of the Royal Family, on the very sad loss of her husband.

Before marrying the then Princess Elizabeth, Philip served as a naval officer, including fighting to preserve our freedom in the Second World War. He is the longest-serving royal consort in British history and has always been popular with the British public, not least for his forthright style and also for his constant support to the Queen throughout her record-breaking reign. As the Archbishop of Canterbury said of Prince Philip recently: "His was a life well lived."

One of the things he will undoubtedly be remembered for will be the highly successful Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, which he founded and which has helped to develop the confidence, experience and talents of young people across more than 140 countries over many decades. Many people from this constituency will have successfully qualified for their Duke of Edinburgh's Award down the years.

Our nation has lost a highly dedicated and popular public servant and HM The Queen has lost her constant companion, whom she once famously described as her "strength and stay". Our thoughts, as a community, are ultimately with the Queen at this extremely difficult time.

May he rest in peace.

Museum celebrates anniversary

Staff at Rayleigh Town Museum reflected on its success after recently celebrating its fifth anniversary.

The museum opened on April 9, 2016, with a range of local faces in attendance, including the High Sheriff of Essex, museum patron Mark Francois MP, and the chairmen of local councils.

Although the museum team couldn't celebrate in the way they had hoped due to lockdown restrictions, there was still an opportunity to reflect on how the museum has changed over the past five years.

Chairman Mike Davies said: "It is remarkable just how much the museum has evolved during these last five years. Our Friends Group is but one example.

"When the Heritage Lottery Fund declined our initial application, one of the reasons given was an unrealistic expectation for our planned Friends Group. I told the Heritage Lottery Fund that I was confident we would easily exceed the norm of 250 members for similar independent museums. Within two months, our founder members stood at 312, and today we have 630 members."

Mike added that the museum newsletter has also grown – from just two pages of text to 12, with costs covered by advertisers.



He said: "Copies of all our newsletters are available for you to view as soon as the museum reopens, hopefully in early June. Your ongoing support, in so many different ways, plays a significant role in our success and is greatly appreciated."



LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Council to be set up after years of campaigning

A new Wickford Parish and Town Council will be established next year following years of campaigning by local residents.

Findings from a Community Governance Review for the area were recently approved by Basildon Borough Council.

This followed a public consultation sent to all households in the area, as well as an online survey, which helped enhance awareness of and engagement with the proposal.

There will be 20 councillors on the new council in three different wards: six councillors in Wickford Castledon, seven councillors in Wickford North and seven councillors in Wickford Park.

The council will provide residents with the local representation received by towns such as Billericay and Leigh-on-Sea.

The Wickford Town Council campaign group, which pioneered calls for the council, posted on its website following the decision.

The post read: "On Thursday, March 18, Basildon Council voted in favour of the creation of Wickford Town Council. The Shadow Town Council will now be in place and will work with Basildon Council and the Essex Association of Local Councils to get prepared for full elections to be held in May 2022.

"We thank you for your support and now look forward to representing the community of Wickford."



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Accidental fire destroys several garden outbuildings



Photo credit: Essex Fire and Rescue

Five fire crews were called to a fire in Wickford in which several outbuildings were destroyed.
On Sunday, April 18, at around 5.45pm, crews from Leigh-on-Sea, Rayleigh Weir, Basildon and Corringham were called to reports of multiple outbuildings on fire.
After arriving at the scene, firefighters found that six timber-framed outbuildings in multiple gardens were on fire.
Incident Commander Marc Diggory said that the crews worked together to extinguish the flames.
He said: "Crews worked extremely hard to contain the fire and stop it from spreading further.
"Access was difficult, but firefighters extinguished the fire by 7.45pm."
An investigation found that the cause of the fire was accidental.

would, by reason of its height, scale and massing, result in an intrusive addition, harmful to the character and appearance of the area, and fails to create a high-quality, well-designed development."
Julia MacKay Properties has been contacted for comment.
Basildon Council declined to comment.

Two arrests made after illegal large gathering

Two men have been arrested after they refused to leave a large gathering when asked by police.
The men, aged 26 and 51, were arrested on suspicion of breaching coronavirus legislation after refusing to leave the gathering, which took place off Pound Lane in Wickford on Saturday, April 10.
A spokesperson for Essex Police said: "We were called with reports of a large gathering in Wickford on Saturday, April 10.
"Our officers attended throughout the day to monitor the situation and to engage with the organisers of the gathering.
"Many of the attendees did agree to leave the area when we explained the current coronavirus legislation in place.
"However, in other cases we were left with no alternative but to take enforcement action, including the arrest of two men, aged 26 and 51, who were arrested on suspicion of breaching coronavirus legislation.
"Both have since been released under investigation."

Planning application for 110 new flats and shops refused

A planning application proposing to build flats and commercial space on land that has been empty for 15 years has been refused.
Plans submitted by Julia MacKay Properties were recently refused by Basildon Council over concerns surrounding the design of the application.
The application outlined plans to build 96 flats and 14 shops at 3 to 31 Runwell Road in Wickford on the empty site.
Basildon Council stated that the reason for the refusal of the application was that it would harm the character of the area.
The statement read: "The proposed development



Stock image

★ THE STORY OF ★

BONNIE & CLYDE

Two destructive lives combine to fuel a potent love story



The glamorisation of Bonnie and Clyde in modern culture is certainly at odds with the murder and robbery spree that led to the FBI pursuing them and, ultimately, effecting their fatal end in 1934.

Having first met four years earlier, Bonnie Parker and Clyde Champion Barrow had both already been on the wrong side of the law, and the signs were there of the peril they could cause to the unsuspecting, not least when Bonnie helped Clyde smuggle a gun into prison in 1930, when he was locked up for a robbery charge. He escaped but was recaptured, yet remarkably was released just 18 months later.

Their crime spree began in earnest in 1932. Joined by three other criminals, they undertook a number of robberies, escaping capture by any means possible. Indeed, by the time their criminal lives were brought to a halt, it's said they had murdered at least 13 people.

As well as seeking financial gains, the couple sought to break convicts out of jail, notably cohort Raymond Hamilton from Eastham State Prison Farm at Waldo, Texas, who was serving sentences totalling in excess of 200 years.

By the middle of April 1934, the FBI had traced the pair to a remote part of Louisiana following the couple's theft of a motor vehicle. Posters were distributed to police staff throughout various states and the hunt was on.

Intelligence suggested they were due to return to the location of a party that was held near Sailles in Louisiana two days previously. On May 23, 1934, officers from the county and neighbouring Texas converged to create an ambush on the side of a highway, concealing themselves in bushes. Bonnie and Clyde appeared in a motor car and, unable to turn and flee, were killed instantly as more than 100 shots rained through the front windscreen of the vehicle.

Photo credit: Everett/Shutterstock

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A PRINCE *among men*



CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF HRH PRINCE PHILIP, DUKE OF EDINBURGH

Meticulous, measured, majestic and more than a little eccentric... and that was just the funeral procession – HRH Prince Philip departed these strange shores just two months short of his 100th birthday, leaving behind a partner so hopelessly and publicly bereaved, and a nation of admirers wondering who could live up to the Duke of Edinburgh's lofty lovability.

Rarely is someone's passing met with almost universal solemnity and respect. It appears we all admired Prince Philip for different reasons – his faithful devotion to Queen Elizabeth II; his stolid determination to affect positive change; his humorous tendency to stray over the boundary of political correctness; or perhaps simply because he embodied so wholly that 'grandad' figure. Whatever it is, whatever it was, he had it, and in the stuffy silliness of modern media, he was exactly the antidote so many of us needed.

On Saturday, April 17, Prince Philip was laid to rest. In a ceremony he planned and choreographed himself, his coffin was lifted onto the back of a modified Land Rover Defender. Decorated in a stunning matt

Photo credit: Tim Graham/Shutterstock



Photo credit: Tim Rooke/Shutterstock

bottle green, the hearse was Philip's own creation, while various other touches clearly bore the mark of a man who wanted to slip away with energetic, original reflections of life, not the formal bleakness of most ceremonies.

There was the empty seat on the carriage, decorated with his blanket, flat cap, whip, brown gloves and pot containing a sugar cube for the ponies; then his military cap and sword on a coffin adorned with the most beautiful personal standard flag which referenced his overseas roots, family name and Edinburgh Castle. Meanwhile, various other marine references were present during the ceremony, each a nod to his cherished naval career, which came to an end in 1951.

In truth, there was so much of this special life to be celebrated. He was born on June 10, 1921 in Corfu, his family holding both Greek and Danish royal heritage. Banished from their homeland, he spent parts of his early life in France and Germany before settling in Britain.

It wasn't an easy childhood – his mother was admitted to a psychiatric institution, and he was separated from his family after landing in the UK. He studied at Cheam School before relocating to Scotland. He served in the British Navy during the Second World War, despite members of his family effectively fighting for the opposition as part of the Axis.

He denounced his Greek and Danish titles and adopted the surname Mountbatten – from his mother's side – so he could marry Princess Elizabeth in 1947 at Westminster Abbey, eight years after they had first met.

He was doted on by his four children – Prince Charles, Princess Anne, Prince Andrew and Prince Edward (Prince Edward will now take his title) – and never wavered from his role as the Queen's consort... in fact, the longest in royal history. A passionate supporter of everything she did, he also undertook his own projects, notably the Duke of Edinburgh's Award which, to this day, continues to promote youth achievement across many different disciplines.

He enjoyed polo, boat racing, piloting aeroplanes, painting and antiques, and while deteriorating health in recent years proved concerning, it was supposed he had recovered from a recent stay at St Bartholomew's Hospital; yet he slipped away peacefully on April 9, 2021 at Windsor Castle.

In total, almost 14 million of us watched the Duke of Edinburgh's funeral, and even the staunchest anti-royal must have pitied the senior Windsors being forced to display their grief in public. Such are the realities of a state funeral, and so it is conditioned that the only follow-on from a life played out in the public eye is a memorial on the same terms.

Prince Philip was born of a different time and a different generation of royalty, yet he fit so wonderfully into modern-day society and brought joy to many.

His unique, charismatic, eccentric take on the world is something we just don't see very often these days, with most public figures keeping their cards close to their chests for fear of repercussions.

His truly one-of-a-kind presence will be sorely missed by the Royal Family, the nation and the world.



PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

Answers: see end of The Vision Listings

- ▶ QUACK
- ▶ QUALIFY
- ▶ QUALITY
- ▶ QUARREL
- ▶ QUARTER
- ▶ QUASH
- ▶ QUEEN
- ▶ QUEUE
- ▶ QUICHE
- ▶ QUICK
- ▶ QUIET
- ▶ QUINTUPLE
- ▶ QUIRK
- ▶ QUITE
- ▶ QUITTER
- ▶ QUIVER
- ▶ QUIZ
- ▶ QUORUM
- ▶ QUOTE
- ▶ QUOTIENT

T	T	L	Q	O	A	T	D	Q	M	R	E	I	S	A
A	N	E	E	U	Q	Y	Y	S	U	I	H	F	C	F
Q	U	E	U	E	I	O	T	A	T	A	L	W	P	P
L	J	Z	I	T	A	N	Q	E	E	T	R	L	O	L
Q	G	U	Q	N	Q	T	T	U	I	T	P	T	E	A
H	Q	Y	U	E	P	H	Q	U	O	U	B	V	E	F
E	O	R	I	I	H	G	S	U	P	R	Q	Z	V	R
T	Q	E	Z	T	A	C	K	A	I	L	U	A	T	R
I	U	V	S	O	W	G	I	C	U	T	E	M	R	U
U	A	I	Z	U	K	C	I	U	Q	Q	T	F	R	U
Q	L	U	P	Q	K	C	A	U	Q	K	A	E	R	A
R	I	Q	G	R	L	E	R	R	A	U	Q	I	R	P
P	F	K	Y	I	U	I	Y	T	I	L	A	U	Q	A
N	Y	I	W	F	S	S	P	S	O	Q	U	I	R	K
J	B	T	P	U	T	E	T	O	U	Q	C	J	W	S

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Lots of plants are used as dyes. For example, teabags and stewed onion skins
- ▶ According to Guinness World Records, the tallest planted tree was a Eucalyptus regnans planted in Dunedin, New Zealand. It measured 82.25 metres on November 15, 2018
- ▶ Pollen from trees provides essential food for bees in the early spring
- ▶ Orange carrots were created by crossing various other colours of the vegetable
- ▶ Seeds can be dispersed in several ways. Some of the most common are the wind, water and animals
- ▶ The stem of a plant is used to transport water and nutrients to different areas
- ▶ Mushrooms have their own immune system

WORD LADDER

BACK
DOWN

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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Show your BBQ some TLC as Lockdown eases

The start of the beautiful British spring is just upon us with some great bank holiday weekends to look forward to, your BBQs will probably be getting its first airing after having been packed away for the winter. This also coincides this year with us being allowed to have another household come and join us socially in our gardens.

However, if you want to be able to eat from it safely this spring, you will need to do a spot of cleaning before you use it for the first time.

Luckily, the experts at OvenGleaners have some top tips for brilliant BBQs so that you can cook with confidence and look forward to another year without the dreaded scraping of months' old burnt on grease hindering your lovely fresh food.

'Greasy BBQ grills are as much a part of the great British spring as

the ever changing weather,' explains OvenGleaners Rob Garnett.

'They are a bit of a nightmare to deal with and rather a mess. The key to getting the very best from them each time is to show them the same love that you would give to your kitchen oven.'

1. Soak it up

Clean those racks before you start cooking on them - burnt on grease turns to carbon and then gets stuck to your lovely fresh food. Clean the racks by soaking them overnight in your bath with some washing powder, then rinse them off. Or, scrub them with washing up liquid and a wet scourer!

2. Liner time

Keep the racks clean in the first place by cooking on a non-stick oven liner. Just place the non-stick

liner on top of your usual BBQ rack and cook your food on top of that. Then, just rinse the liner under the tap with soapy water or pop them in the dishwasher once you've finished cooking.

3. Rust away

Before your first BBQ of the year, your trusty BBQ needs to be cleaned thoroughly before using it. It might seem a pain now but you'll thank me for this later! Ensure that the whole of your BBQ is completely degreased before attempting to cook on it. You really don't want last year's burnt on grease spoiling your delicious fresh BBQ meats, fish and halloumi slices!

If you'd like OvenGleaners to help with cleaning your BBQ then call Rob Garnett on 01268 833909 today.



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OvenGleaner

"Would definitely recommend Rob from OvenGleaners who went over and above even fixing one of our oven bulbs in the service he provided. If you want a top class clean Rob delivers a sparkly oven like new. Really pleased." Dawn T

"Excellent service, very clean and tidy. Recommended. Will use again." David S

"Quick and easy booking. Rob was polite, courteous and very professional. I didn't realise all the parts of the oven that you cannot get to easily and it was filthy. Rob's deep clean of my double oven was amazing!! Every nook is now thoroughly clean and sparkling and looks as good as new. Would definitely recommend for a friendly and efficient service." Laura P.

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SMART savings



TECHNOLOGY

As well as offering convenience, did you know that smart technology can actively help you to save money?

Check out the best budget-busting smart gadgets for your home below.

BLINK – The Mortgage Magnet

Launched this spring, Blink is a free fridge magnet that flashes to let you know about better mortgage deals. Simply sign up to Dashly, a mortgage comparison site with a difference, and your new magnet will alert you when a better deal becomes available.

Possible savings: £2,620 per year

LEAKBOT – The Leak Detector

Did you know that one in three households experiences a leak each year? Avoid this costly occurrence by investing in a LeakBot, a handy device that clips to your mains water supply pipe and detects leaks. If you have insurance with Neos, Aviva or Legal & General, you can get a LeakBot for free. Retail price of £149.

Potential savings: £633 per detected leak

HYDRAO – The Water-Saving Shower Head

If you love a long shower but don't like the high water bills that come with one, the Hydrao shower head is the smart gadget for you. Using water more economically than a standard shower head and with a light that changes from green to red when you've used 50 litres of water, this device costs £62.

Potential savings: £135 per person per year

DRY:SOON – The Heated Airster

For those who rely heavily on their tumble dryer, this money-saving smart device is exactly what you need. Costing just 6p per hour to run, compared to 36p per hour for a tumble dryer, the Dry:Soon heated airster has the ability to slash your drying costs. Retail price of £149.99.

Potential savings: £51 per year based on twice weekly usage

TAPO – The Smart Plug

Only £8.99 to buy, the Tapo plug allows you to remotely turn on and off appliances such as fans, electric heaters and dehumidifiers, saving you money and helping the environment.

Potential savings: £128 per year



TRAVEL



Brexit, travel and your

PASSPORT

ENSURING YOUR PASSPORT IS FIT FOR OVERSEAS TRAVEL IN 2021

We've become used to the uncertainty suffered from the drawn-out Brexit process and what our departure from the EU ultimately means for the UK; yet gradually the intricacies of us operating as an independent nation are becoming clear.

A hot topic has been the use of our passports when going abroad, although the intensity of this discussion has been held back by COVID-19 and a general inability to travel anywhere in the world.

In essence, there are two main points to take into consideration: from January 1, 2021, anyone leaving the UK needs to have six months left on their passport in order to be able to travel throughout Europe. Not only that, but your passport will need to be less than 10 years old.

The one exception here is when travelling to Ireland. Although this is still part of the EU, you

are able to use your passport any time up until its expiry date.

While these are the immediate changes when it comes to travelling to Europe, throughout 2021 we will continue to be issued with new blue passports. These are a throwback to the old-style British passports which were in use until 1988, before the burgundy EU passport came into play.

As far as visiting EU countries goes, no visas are required when travelling to mainland Europe, and stays are permitted for 90 days in any 180-day period. Again, there are some exceptions – when travelling to Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania, for instance – so it's best to check the finer details on the Foreign Office portal of the gov.uk website to ensure your deserved holiday doesn't come unstuck before you've even made it to the aircraft.



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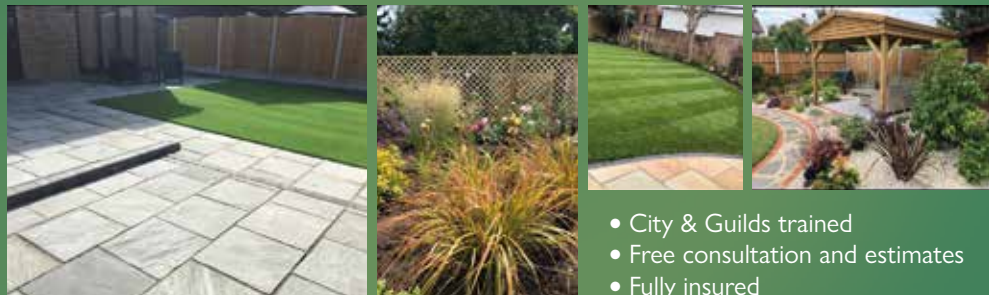
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GARDENING

MAY BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH:

Lily

The May birth flower is the delicate and sweetly scented lily. Available in a wide range of vibrant colours, each shade conveys a different meaning. Planted as bulbs, lilies are perfect for containers and flower borders, making them a great choice for small and large gardens alike.

What does the lily symbolise?

As mentioned above, the lily holds many different meanings which are dependent upon its colour:

- > Pink lilies symbolise femininity and admiration
- > Red lilies represent love and passion
- > Orange lilies convey confidence and energy
- > Yellow lilies are used to say thank you
- > White lilies portray purity and rebirth

What does this birth flower say about you?

If your birth flower is the lily, you are said to be practical, with the ability to tackle even the most challenging situations. Contrary to the toxic lily flower, you are sweet, tender and with a huge capacity to love, meaning that others always feel safe in your company.

How to grow lilies

Lilies are planted as bulbs and are ideal for placing in containers or in sunny borders. There are two main types of lily that you can choose from: Oriental lilies and Asiatic lilies. The former give off an intense aroma and are large in stature, whereas the latter are available in a wide variety of vibrant colours but are sadly unscented. Lily bulbs thrive in moist, acid soils, so if placed in a container, be sure to add ericaceous compost.

Do lilies come back every year?

Lilies are perennial flowers which mean that they will return year after year. Requiring minimal care if planted correctly, make sure you do not overcrowd your bulbs and place in full sun where possible.





GARDENING

GARDEN OF LIFE

MOISTURE *in the air*

In the final part of our 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 moisture in this wondrous ecosystem.

While we may bemoan the washing getting wet when we forget to bring it indoors, the cycle of moisture in our gardens is perhaps nature's greatest wonder of them all. Consider it – we've all gazed out across our lawns or poked around a plant on a window ledge and known that when nature either dries out or floods, the end is nigh.

On a local level, moisture in our plant soil is the difference between a flowering plant and a wilting one; or perhaps a ripe, juicy tomato and one that fails to develop.

On a national, mass-market scale then, getting the moisture content right means looking after the production of every variety of crop, for both human


and animal consumption.

And yet, controlling moisture goes far beyond even that, because the density of water in the soil is vital in regulating the exchange of water and heat energy between plants and the atmosphere, via evaporation. This leads to the production of weather patterns all across the world, and especially determines levels of precipitation.


Even on its way into the atmosphere, moisture is stabilising our climate, plus helping animal life that's dependent on perspiration to regulate internal body temperature – something that's key to survival.

It all adds up to the fact that the humble bit of soil around your petunias is, in the most minute of ways, contributing towards the maintenance and welfare of the flora and fauna and of people's lives in towns, villages and cities all across the world, whether their fear is flash floods, droughts or even potential starvation.



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GUIDE TO GARDEN GAZEBOS



Thinking about putting up a gazebo in your garden? Before you rush to your nearest DIY store to buy one, there are several factors that you first need to consider.

1. SURFACE AREA

The surface area of a gazebo is determined by its length and width and needs to be calculated before you make a purchase. As well as working out how much space you have in your garden, you need to consider what equipment and furniture you intend to place under it. Typically, gazebos tend to be at least two metres wide, although you can find smaller ones for more compact gardens.

2. FRAME MATERIAL

There are several options to choose from for the main frame of your gazebo. These include:

- > Powder-coated steel. Fairly heavy and inexpensive.
- > Aluminium. Resistant to rust and lightweight.
- > Wrought iron. Strong and durable.
- > Resin. Very lightweight and good value for money.
- > Wood. Attractive and fairly long-lasting.

3. CANOPY MATERIAL

Gazebo canopies are typically made out of either polyethylene or polyester, with the former being the most commonly used material for budget gazebos. Polyester, on the other hand, is more expensive but offers superior quality and is less permeable. You may also wish to purchase gazebo curtains for even more protection against the elements, and these are available in the same materials as the canopy itself.

4. TYPES OF GAZEBO

There are several different types of gazebos that you can choose from, including:

- > Freestanding gazebo. These typically have a metal framework that is topped with a fabric canopy.
- > Lean-to gazebo. These require a wall to lean against for support and are popular on decking.
- > Pop-up gazebo. Ideal for temporary use, pop-ups tend to be more cost-effective and basic in their design.

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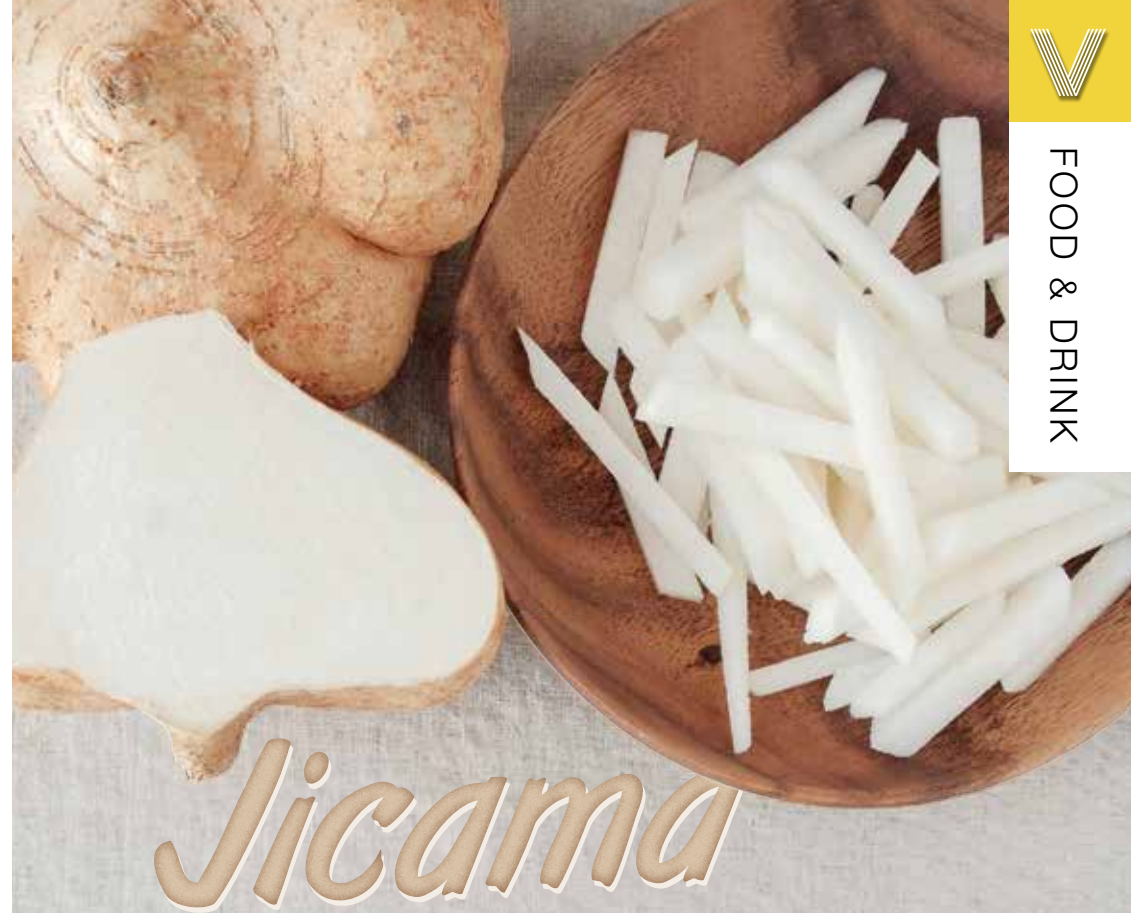
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Jicama

The jicama, also known as a Mexican yam bean, is a starchy root vegetable that is recognisable by its thick, brown skin and turnip shape. Low in calories and sweet in taste, this veg makes a great alternative to the humble potato.

Jicama plant is safe to eat, as the rest, including the beans and flowers, contain rotenone, a natural insecticide that can be toxic to humans in high doses. You should also remove the brown skin before consuming.

HOW TO USE JICAMA

- > Slice thinly and add raw to a vegetable salad or Mexican fruit salad for added crunch
- > Sauté with other veg such as broccoli and carrots
- > Use as a substitute for water chestnuts in a stir-fry
- > Bake in the oven or place in an air fryer for healthy chips

WHAT DOES JICAMA TASTE LIKE?

The jicama has been described as a cross between a potato and a pear owing to its distinctive flavour which is both nutty and sweet. Its flesh is juicy and crunchy and, because it has a fairly mild taste, it blends well with other flavours.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF JICAMA?

The perfect vegetable for people with diabetes, the jicama is naturally low in sugar but still sweet to taste. It is also high in fibre, a great source of vitamin C and low in fat and calories.

HOW TO STORE JICAMA

The most important thing to remember when storing jicama is that you must keep it dry, as any moisture can cause rot and mould. Store unwrapped at room temperature if still whole or, once cut, wrap tightly in cling film and store in the fridge for up to one week. Alternatively, wrap a whole jicama in foil and freeze for up to one year.

IS JICAMA SAFE TO EAT?

It is worth noting that only the root vegetable of the



FOOD ALLERGY

AWARENESS WEEK: May 9 - 16, 2021

An annual event, Food Allergy Awareness Week aims to raise awareness of different food allergies and to improve public understanding of what can sometimes be a life-threatening condition. From cow's milk to peanuts, eggs to shellfish, discover the most common food allergies in the UK below.

Peanuts

Peanut allergy affects around one in 50 children and has seen a significant increase in cases in recent decades. Typically developed in early childhood, symptoms of a peanut allergy usually occur within minutes of contact and can include nausea, shortness of breath and skin reactions such as hives, redness and swelling.

Cow's milk

Affecting mostly babies and young children, a cow's milk (protein) allergy is usually outgrown by the age of five. Common symptoms include swelling of the lips or tongue and breathing difficulties, and these can occur within minutes or many hours after ingesting.

Eggs

Another allergy that is much more common in young children than adults, an egg allergy can mean being allergic to all forms of egg, or only to loosely cooked and raw egg. Egg allergy symptoms include skin inflammation, sneezing, runny nose and shortness of breath and/or chest tightness.

Shellfish

The most common allergy in adults, around 60 per cent of people experience their first allergic reaction to shellfish once they have reached adulthood. Shrimp is the most prevalent shellfish allergen for both children and adults. Allergic reactions to shellfish can be unpredictable, with common symptoms including swelling of the lips, mouth, tongue, throat and face.

What is an anaphylactic shock?

Anaphylaxis is a severe and potentially life-threatening reaction to a trigger, such as an allergy. Symptoms include:

- > Feeling faint
- > Wheezing
- > Clammy skin
- > Collapsing or losing consciousness
- > Difficulty breathing
- > A fast heartbeat
- > Confusion and/or anxiety

If someone has symptoms of anaphylaxis, you should use an adrenaline auto-injector if they have one and call 999 immediately.



CHECKING IN

WHY PROTECTING THE YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND YOU MEANS INSISTING ON THE RELEVANT CHECKS

In the past decade or so, Criminal Record Checks (CRCs) have become commonplace in situations where organisations need to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. And this can be the case in everything from 9-5 employers ensuring their staff have been honest in job applications, to volunteers working for charities, right through to local sports teams safeguarding the welfare of young players.

The checks are done by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and take the form of a simple and relatively cheap process that takes a couple of weeks. The application can be submitted by the individual or an employee (but only after an offer of employment has been made – in other words, for a successful applicant, not for an interview candidate).

The request goes to the DBS, where a criminal background check will be made. A certificate is subsequently issued that lists any convictions.

The process has become an essential part of

verifying people who are in positions of responsibility where young and vulnerable people are concerned, and replaces what was previously a somewhat more convoluted process between the Criminal Records Bureau and the Independent Safeguarding Authority. By merging these two organisations into one entity, the DBS, in 2012, the government was able to streamline welfare checks, which meant not only a safer and more comprehensive system, but also one where people could begin helping and assisting youngsters without having to go through swarms of red tape.

Of course, while a DBS check will list noted convictions, organisations can and do undertake additional protection, welfare and safeguarding training. And as ever, as parents, the most effective reference to those helping our children comes through our own communication with both our loved ones and the organisation – it always pays to be vigilant.

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Hello hay, FAREWELL FEVER

As the weather gets warmer and the pollen count grows, hay fever sufferers across the nation lament. If you are already in the throes of a hay fever attack, you don't have to turn to over-the-counter medications. Instead, try one of the below natural remedies.

VITAMIN C

A natural antihistamine, vitamin C can be found in oranges, lemons and grapefruits, as well as red bell peppers. As vitamin C cannot be stored in the body, you need to offer consistent and low doses to support your nasal lining and minimise the effects of hay fever.

HONEY

If you know anyone who sells local honey, then this is the perfect hay fever remedy for you. With the ability to desensitise your body to other pollens, the bee pollen found in honey can help to significantly reduce the most common hay fever symptoms, including a runny nose and persistent sneezing.

GARLIC

Known for boosting your immune system, garlic can also act as a decongestant which can help to alleviate minor hay fever symptoms. This potent plant is also an anti-inflammatory and a good source of quercetin, a natural antihistamine.

PETROLEUM JELLY

Not just a lip saviour when the weather turns cold, petroleum jelly has been praised by hay fever sufferers for its ability to trap pollen before it enters the nose. Simply apply a thin layer inside your lower nostrils to prevent your symptoms from becoming any worse.

CHAMOMILE TEA

High in antioxidants, as well as being a natural antihistamine, chamomile tea can be drunk to act as an anti-inflammatory agent. Alternatively, choose to place cooled teabags on swollen, red eyes for an instant calming effect.

CHILLI PEPPERS

Chilli peppers contain capsaicin which, when eaten, opens up the nasal passages, helping to reduce congestion caused by hay fever.



HEALTH & FITNESS

Chris O'Donovan Photography/Samaritans



HAVE A brew-tiful DAY

Coffee lovers rejoice, your morning cuppa can not only help kickstart your day but it can also help your health in more ways than you can imagine.

ENHANCED LONGEVITY

Recent studies have found that coffee drinkers are less likely to die from some of the most leading causes of death, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes and kidney disease.

REDUCED RISK OF ALZHEIMER'S AND PARKINSON'S

Drinking two or three cups of coffee a day can reduce your risk of developing dementia and Parkinson's disease. Plus, for the latter, it can help you control your movements.

INCREASED FAT-BURNING ABILITIES

There is a reason why caffeine is found in nearly every fat-burning supplement, and this is because it has the ability to boost your metabolic rate by between three and 11 per cent and potentially increase fat-burning by up to 29 per cent.

IMPROVED PHYSICAL ABILITIES

Caffeine increases epinephrine, also known as adrenaline, in your body, which can help to improve physical performance by between 11 and 12 per cent.

DECREASED RISK OF DEPRESSION

The drinking of coffee is linked to positive emotions such as pleasure, satisfaction, calmness and happiness. In fact, a study by

Harvard found that the risk of depression in women decreased as their caffeinated coffee consumption increased.

WHAT IS THE COFFEE DIET?

Popularised by the book *The Coffee Lover's Diet* by Dr Bob Arnot, the coffee diet is based around the idea that health and longevity is enhanced by a high intake of antioxidant-rich coffee. The diet is said to help boost your metabolism, burn fat, block calorie absorption and decrease your appetite.

HOW IT WORKS

- Drink a minimum of three cups of light-roast coffee per day
- Avoid adding milk or sugar
- Replace one meal with a home-made, high-fibre, green smoothie
- Stick to 1,500 calories per day
- Avoid highly processed foods



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THERE'S NO BEATING BLACKMORE

How modest but magnificent jockey Rachael Blackmore made history

On April 10, Rachael Blackmore stood aloft Minella Times, triumphant in becoming the first female jockey to have ridden a horse to victory at the Grand National.

In 182 years of the world's most famous horse race, never before has a member of the fairer sex come home victorious, though in Blackmore, who hails from Killenaule in County Tipperary, there is a jockey of prolific character, determination and future potential.

Already 10 years on the circuit, having ridden her first winner as an amateur back in February 2011, she truly announced herself at Cheltenham in 2019 when she came home first on A Plus Tard in the Close Brothers Novices' Handicap Chase.

That year she also had her second taste of riding at Aintree and, with each passing iteration, enhanced a game plan that would help her take home the big prize.

"I think as a jockey you are always learning; and although the courses and the horses are different, every race for me has felt like a rehearsal for a big victory."

Cheltenham success this year on favourite Honeysuckle reaffirmed the jockey's status to perform when the pressure was on, though starting out at 11/1 at Aintree in the Grand National left plenty of room for doubt. Those who bet on her to bring home the greatest victory of her career needn't have worried – Blackmore rode an impeccable race as the eight-year-old horse came through in style, winning by six and a half lengths.

"It fell right for me on the day, and that's all you can ask as a jockey," she said with immaculate modesty. "I never at any point thought I had a divine right to win, and nor will I in future – I've always regarded myself as being in the right place at the right time; and I'll hopefully continue to be."

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FASHION

REACH FOR *Retro*

Forget spending a fortune on a new wardrobe this season – simply dig into your cupboards and pull out some pieces that are back in fashion.

SUPER-STATEMENT TROUSERS

Ditch your skinny jeans and leggings, because this season it is all about the high-waisted, wide-legged trousers. A huge trend in the Eighties, this is the perfect style for anyone who likes to feel comfy in their clothes while also being fashion-forward.



ALL THAT GLITTERS

If you were a huge fan of disco, then you will be thrilled to know that glitter is back! From Louis Vuitton's stunning silver suits to Balmain's super sleek sparkle dresses, the catwalk will be lit up with glitzy, glittery glam.

TOP OF THE CROPS

Not for the faint-hearted, crop tops are making a huge comeback. Best matched with a loose blazer and high-waisted skirt or jeans – ideal if you love your tum, but not your hips! – this is the ultimate throwback look for when the heat rises.



POWER PUFF SLEEVES

You may have to reach right back into your wardrobe to find this look; the ultimate symbol of Eighties glam. That's right – puffy sleeves are back, and this time they mean business. Whether summery and voluminous or structured to create that classic silhouette, this is a big, bold trend that's here to stay.



SHEER LUCK

Incredibly versatile, this is a fantastic trend for almost every body shape. Whether you want to emulate Seventies beach chic with patterned maxi-dresses and a bikini peeking through, Nineties grunge with a see-through loose layer over a tight minidress and chunky boots, or simply a semi-sheer camisole under a blazer, this is a great way to reveal a little extra flesh while still remaining modest.



Photo credit: ASOS.com



MOTORING



Buy or Lease?

The ins and outs of buying versus leasing, and which one you should choose

The trend in modern motoring, certainly where new cars are concerned, is to lease rather than buy. The advantages of leasing speak for themselves – you'll need to put down only a small amount of money upfront, your monthly payments can be configured according to the budget you set out at the start, and you have the option of upgrading the car every few years so you're always rocking about town in the latest model.

There's also the reassurance of knowing that if something goes wrong with the vehicle, you'll be covered by the manufacturer's warranty; and that fear of the unexpected, when you hear that horrible, grinding sound... well, it's someone else's problem!

You'll also find that road tax can be covered, and you may even get the vehicle delivered to your door.

The appeal of what is, in effect, borrowing a vehicle is at odds with the way we view other things in life. Home ownership, for instance, is taken as preferable over renting, yet owning a car outright is fraught with perils.

If you can afford the entire cost of a vehicle upfront you're immediately into the realms of depreciation

the moment you turn the key in the ignition – and of course any repair bills fall to you and you only.

That said, you won't have to subscribe to any mileage limitations, nor will you be dealing with broker fees. And while many pay for new cars through PCP (personal contract purchase) or HP (hire purchase) finance, you do have a potentially substantial asset ready to be cashed in when you decide you want to switch to another vehicle.

Buying over leasing very much comes down to personal circumstances – what's right for you will be wrong for someone else. As ever, do the maths and, more than anything else, drive safely!



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