

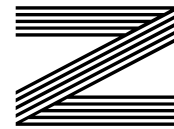
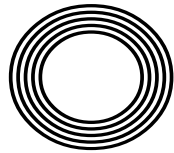
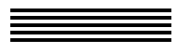
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# Editor's notes...

AUGUST 2021



Nik Allen, Editor

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

Even now things have calmed down, it still hurts to say it... Football didn't come home. The Three Lions fought, battled and impressed at almost every turn, but came up painfully short, as has been the case on so many occasions before.

Of course, as the song goes, 'We still believe', and within a day or two of that painful penalty shoot-out defeat by Italy, I couldn't help but accept some simple truths: England didn't lose a single game; we conceded just two goals in more than 11 hours of football; we played great football; we

saw the emergence of yet more brilliant youngsters; and mostly, even in defeat, even with lingering thoughts of 'what if we'd done that differently?', we will take the positives forward.

Football, and life itself, is about coming back from the challenges that confront us; it's about striving to be better than before - wiser, stronger, more equipped. That resilience is inbuilt - it's a natural human trait, and it's arguably our most inspiring. Our armoury is now hardened ahead of the not insignificant World Cup in Qatar at the end of next year.

So while we failed to make it to the ultimate destination, we are at least on the road, and the journey continues. What better inspiration than that to take into every other aspect of our lives?

*Nik Allen*

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# SPORTING INJUSTICE?

**SUE BARKER CBE'S DEPARTURE AS A QUESTION OF SPORT HOST INFURIATED AN ADMIRING BBC AUDIENCE, BUT THE PRESENTER'S CAREER IS ONE TO BE CELEBRATED.**

The ever-evolving world of sport is perhaps only rivalled these days by the BBC's drive for diversity and representation, so the fact Sue Barker CBE has managed to keep pace over the past 24 years is nothing short of commendable.

Alas, the 65-year-old former British tennis star has fronted her final show as presenter of the iconic *A Question of Sport* (AQoS). When news of her departure first broke towards the end of last year, there were clamours of resistance and dismay from every corner – after all, not only is Barker's demographic one that arguably struggles for airtime in the BBC's revised content package, but hosts with her informed, cheeky, charming aplomb are exceptionally hard to come by.

Barker certainly won't be short of new projects – she has always combined presenting duties across AQoS, BBC Sports Personality of the Year, Wimbledon, athletics and the Olympics. While many of those other engagements will carry on, the AQoS team will need to pull out all the stops to replace not just Barker, but also team captains Matt Dawson and Phil Tufnell, with personalities able to knit together format and team mechanics with such precision. It was Barker's infectious laugh, slightly mumsy approach to the captains, and an ability to keep up with the cut and thrust of fast-paced questions that saw the show strip off its slightly stuffy demeanour of the Eighties and Nineties, when it resembled a more sporty version of *Mastermind*, and become a programme beloved by so many.

---

**'The presenter has never been afraid to push forward ideas – it was that courage and confidence that put her in the spotlight...'**

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The presenter has never been afraid to push forward ideas – it was that courage and confidence that put her in the spotlight as a tennis player back in the 1970s. At the age of 17, she turned pro, and captured the hearts of the nation three years later when she won the French Open, defeating Renáta Tomanová in the final. On home soil, Barker reached the Wimbledon semi-finals in 1977, but was surprisingly beaten by Betty Stöve.

She continued to vie for titles and, at her peak, sat as the third best tennis player in the world. But injury and loss of form followed, and she retired in 1984, aged 28. Nonetheless, Barker claimed 15 singles and 12 doubles titles across her career, and her popularity was such that, on retirement, she slipped almost seamlessly into the media world, initially with Australia's Channel 7.

After three years at BSkyB, she joined the BBC in 1993, assuming the role as AQoS host four years later. While the years managing charismatic AQoS captains such as Dawson and Tufnell, plus Ally McCoist, Frankie Dettori and John Parrott, have certainly given Barker an occasionally dominant exterior on-screen, she is someone who carries herself with humility, humour and no small amount of style. Her contribution to television over the past three decades was reflected in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in June, with Barker awarded the title of CBE for services to broadcasting and charity, having previously been given an MBE in 2000 and an OBE five years ago.

The presenter, who is married to landscape gardener, Lance Tankard, and lives in the Cotswolds, presented her final show in May. The new series will be fronted by comedian Paddy McGuinness. The *Top Gear*, *Take Me Out* and *I Can See Your Voice* host said: "It's an honour and opportunity I'm certainly not taking lightly".

# A LONG TICKLE?



Celebrating 50 years of the Mr Men and Little Miss characters

It all started with Mr Tickle, a seemingly innocent, curly-armed cartoon character created by Roger Hargreaves. The illustrator was, at the time, a 36-year-old Yorkshire-raised writer and designer who, having become disillusioned with working in advertising and copywriting, developed characters to entertain his children.

The *Mr Tickle* book came first and sold a million copies in its first three years on the shelves. Perhaps it was the simplicity of the stories, perhaps the wonderful illustrations, perhaps the fun and colourful tales – whatever it was, Hargreaves had landed upon a series that was about to explode when the BBC picked it up and began broadcasting the stories, narrated by *Dad's Army's* Arthur Lowe.

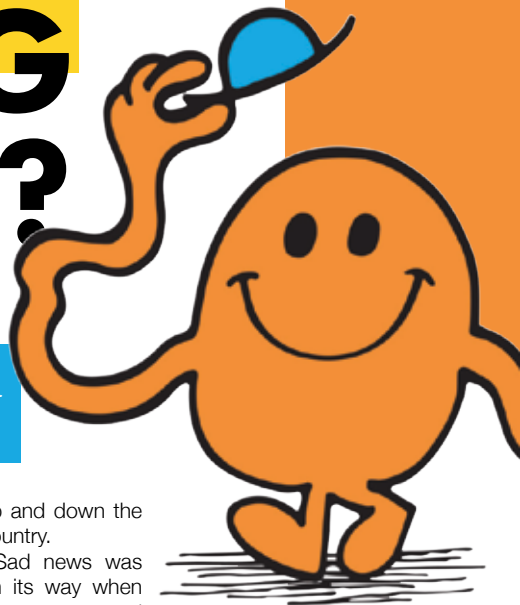
With *The Mirror* and the *Daily Mail* getting in on the act in the form of comic strips, other characters came to the fore. Now titled *Mr Men and Little Miss*, the illustrations and instantly recognisable bold capitalised font became a staple for kids

up and down the country.

Sad news was on its way when Roger passed away unexpectedly in 1988. A publishing legacy that had its roots in a father wanting to create captivating stories for his kids was suddenly under threat. It was therefore somewhat apt that his son, Adam, just 25 at the time, would take over the reins. By the turn of the century, he had developed a number of new characters for a new generation of kids whose languages, tastes, interests and fashions had moved on from those early days.

To date, the *Mr Men and Little Miss* series has developed characters based on real-life icons as diverse as the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and the Spice Girls, as well as being featured across the London Underground and on Royal Mail stamps.

Photo credit: allaboutstamps.co.uk



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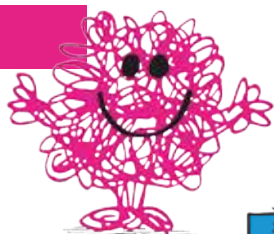
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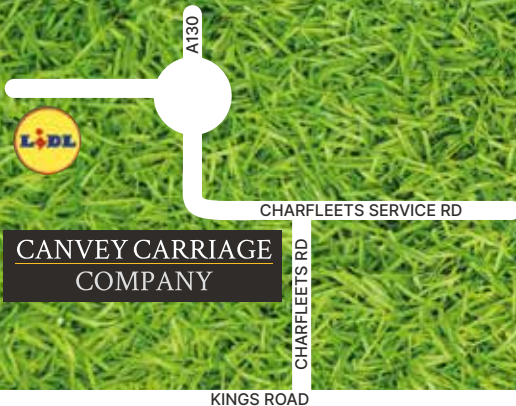
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HOME & DIY



### ARE HYBRID MATTRESSES WORTH THEIR HEFTY PRICE TAG OR IS IT A LOT OF HYPE?

First came spring mattresses, then foam, and then came the exalted combination of the two. Every reinvention brings new promise of “the best night’s sleep you’ll ever have” – along with an ever-expanding price point.

New kids on the bedding block, such as Simba, Eve and Emma, have all devoted themselves to giving you the most dream-inducing, pain-relieving eight hours of rest. But regardless of their lofty claims, it is still a leap into the unknown for those accustomed to traditional brands.

So what exactly is a hybrid mattress? Well, it’s a multi-faceted design combining layers of both pocket springs and breathable foam to create a mattress that offers mouldable, gravity-defying support AND resistant buoyancy. This means not only will you feel supported in all the right places, but also that the surface resists dipping and sagging over time. They also keep you cooler during the warmer months and are less reactive to movement – ideal if your partner tends to toss and turn.

Photo credit: city.com

Another benefit that sets these flexible beauties apart from other mattresses is that they generally come vacuum-packed in relatively small boxes. Not only does this make them ideal for top-floor flats in narrow buildings, but it is also a marvel in itself as you watch your new bedfellow expand from a tightly-packed roll into a welcoming crash pad.

Not found on the high street, these hybrid designs still remain a reasonably left-field take on the mattress concept – hence the current lack of a big name, bargain equivalent. Pioneers in the field pride themselves on the huge amount of technology and design that goes into creating each prototype, with Simba bedding even boasting ‘space-inspired’ fabric. All also offer a limited-time sleep offer in which you can change your mind – creating a second market for the refurbished rejects.

So is it worth splashing the cash? If you are perpetually unsatisfied with your sleep options, you definitely ought to give one of these a try. After all, what’s worse – counting pennies or counting sheep?

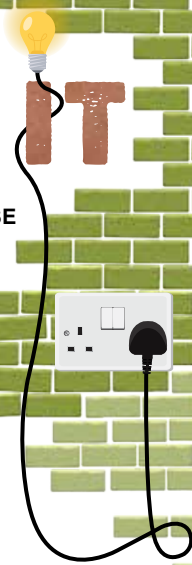




HOME & DIY

# BRICKING IT

THE SMART BRICKS THAT CAN REVOLUTIONISE HOW WE USE ELECTRICITY IN OUR HOMES



Most of us know that bricks are brilliant insulators against the cold. In warmer periods, their thermal mass qualities can mean heat is released very gradually over time – something that's perfect for maintaining the temperature of our homes.

However, advances in construction technology are set to take our desire for energy- and cost-efficient warmth to another level.

Scientists have developed a new type of brick that works more like a battery, thanks to fine strands of special conductive polymer fibres, called PEDOTs.

The new bricks, which appear a darkish brown colour instead of the standard red, are coated with an epoxy in order to waterproof them, and are then connected to a power source. The result is that the heat stored within a single brick can power a LED light for 10 minutes.

At present, the technology on offer won't allow the bricks to be used for construction purposes because they contain an acid component in their ingredients, but scientists are looking for alternative constituents that would mean safe and durable building blocks that can be used to power the very homes they act as a border for.

What's more, it's said each brick can be charged 10,000 times without losing any more than 10 per cent of its storage capacity, suggesting longevity when put into a physical, built-in structure.

At present, each brick would cost around £2 to make, though if the necessary adjustments could be made to ensure the product becomes construction-friendly, that cost would be brought down dramatically – as would energy bills.



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Vases have always been a practical necessity as something to display your flowers in. Now, it's the vases themselves that are on display.

One of the key home trends of the moment is the statement vase. With the ability to bring new life to an interior, or the perfect finishing touch to your tablescape or shelfie, having some statement vases in your home brings instant style.

From unusual textures and shapes to bold colours, this is one trend that anyone can get on board with.

Discover the statement vase trend and how to make it work in your home.

**THE QUIRKY ONES:** A cool and quirky vase is a great way to dress up your home. A bold shape draws the eye, making an excellent impression in any space. From your hallway display to your coffee table, a quirky vase will add some style interest to any home.

**THE CLASSIC VASE:** Just because something is a classic, doesn't mean it can't make a statement.

Traditional style vases, such as busts or a ceramic vase, are gracing Victorian-style homes all over Instagram and Pinterest, bringing an expensive, luxury look without the antique price tag. Choose a smaller vase for a more understated look, or go large if you want to create a bolder, more striking look.

**THE BOLD VASE:** If you want to liven up your neutral decor, or celebrate your love of colour, then a bold and bright vase is the way to go. There are some incredible pieces to choose from right now, blending vibrant colours with floral patterns to create a fashion-forward look. Keep the rest of your look simple to let the vase do the talking.

Whether you're looking for the perfect centrepiece or a dash of colour, or you want to dress up your space, there's a statement vase out there for you. Flowers or no flowers, your new vase will always have a place in your home.



Photo credit: hnm.com, Emily Dunstan/Heal's via livingetc.com

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grillo designs:

# inspiration FOR EVERY HOME

Get to know Grillo Designs, a UK-based interiors blog that has all the inspiration you need to transform your home

The internet is full of incredible home inspiration, but let's face it – not all of it is achievable. Those Pinterest perfect homes are often only possible with a huge budget and a team of professionals to pull it off.

So it makes a refreshing change when someone like Medina Grillo comes along. Medina's love all of things interiors led to her starting her own Facebook page back in 2014, and she now runs an award-winning blog, Grillo Designs.

Full of inspiration showing renters that they too can do incredible things with their homes, Grillo Designs is the style guide you've been looking for to transform your space.

Medina describes herself as "an IKEA-loving-upcycling-junkie-DIY-passionate-home-décor-crazy momma and wife", who shares her cool and unique designs with the world. A healthcare worker by day, she works with her partner, Vince, to bring her design ideas to life.

Grillo Designs has more than 174,000 followers on Instagram, while the blog has won several awards.

In addition to Grillo Designs, Medina is the voice behind #HowIRent - "a celebration of all the amazing renters out there who, in spite of it all, have managed to transform their homes into abodes of personality and style".

Medina's style is contemporary, blending muted shades with pops of yellow and creating interest through textures and patterns. With Grillo Designs, you can find all kinds of inspiration to create beautiful, stylish looks for your space.

### BRINGING GRILLO DESIGNS INTO YOUR HOME

Grillo Designs highlights fun, quirky DIY projects you can bring into your home, whether rented or owned. Here are some amazing ideas to help you transform your own space:

#### 1. CREATE A DIY COFFEE CORNER IN YOUR KITCHEN

Using some shelving, hooks and maybe a few pieces of artwork, you can create a stylish space to display your favourite mugs and coffee items and celebrate your love of the bean.

#### 2. UPDATE DATED DRESSERS TO GIVE THEM A NEW LIFE

Dresser or chest of drawers chipped, covered in scratches or just a bit dull? Give it a simple makeover. You could stain the wood, paint using multi-surface paint and add some new hardware to create a complete transformation.

#### 3. CUSTOMISE YOUR IKEA ALEX DRAWERS

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# LOCAL NEWS

*from your neighbourhood*

LOCAL NEWS RAYLEIGH



## Memorial plaque installed in honour of popular resident

A memorial plaque has been installed for the town's 'mascot' outside one of his favourite spots.

John Daines, who was commonly known as Laughing John, passed away in 2019.

Last month, a ceremony to unveil the plaque honouring the popular local figure was held outside Star Café on Rayleigh High Street.

Kevin Hadlow, who helped arrange the memorial, thanked residents for coming along to the event.

He said: "Thank you, Rayleigh, for such a great

turnout for the unveiling of Laughing John's plaque. I hope you can all take time to sit on his memorial bench and reflect on your own memories of him.

"RIP John. We will all remember you and hope this plaque will keep your memory alive."

Money donated by the community in John's memory was given to local mental health charity, South East and Central Essex Mind. A representative from the charity attended the ceremony and accepted a cheque for more than £1,300.

## Consultation takes place to improve play area

Rochford District Council launched a public consultation last month to gauge residents' views on improvements to a play area in Rayleigh.

The council's Open Spaces Team was keen to hear from users of the Grove Woods Play Space on how the park could be improved.

Rochford District Council's portfolio holder for the environment, councillor Dave Sperring, said: "We know that Grove Woods Play Space is really popular with young families, and we want to make sure the playground meets all their needs."

The consultation closed on July 12, and the council will now consider the feedback given to help shape improvements to the space.



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# MARK FRANCOIS MP



Member of Parliament for Rayleigh and Wickford



LOCAL NEWS RAYLEIGH

I was recently briefed by senior Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) officials on plans to boost employment coming out of lockdown, as part of a recent visit to Rayleigh JobCentre Plus at Crown Hill. I was hosted on this visit by Mr Dave Cope, the new boss of the JobCentre Plus network across Essex, and Ms Sandra Valentine, the manager of the Rayleigh branch. As part of this visit and tour of the facility, along with meeting the staff, I was updated on a number of new programmes designed to improve employment both in Rayleigh and more widely in Essex. This included the new Kickstart Scheme, which helps create job opportunities for young people. School and college leavers and other young people will be helped into work, with the DWP effectively paying their salary for the first six months.

We are beginning to bounce back from the impact the pandemic has had on the economy. Nationally,

the number of employees on payrolls is at its highest level since last April. While this reflects early signs of recovery in the UK economy, it also highlights the fragility of our economic position as a country – we simply cannot afford to continue this indefinite cycle of lockdowns that we have seen over the past year and a half since the pandemic began.

I am grateful to both Dave and Sandra and all the staff at Rayleigh JobCentre Plus for everything they are doing to help get our employment market back on its feet as we emerge from the pandemic. Any local employers who are looking to hire new staff would be well advised to contact them to learn about the schemes that are now on offer, to both assist their businesses and get people back into work after lockdown.

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## Club welcomes new president

Rayleigh Lions has begun a new year of fundraising, with the inauguration of David Bodimeade as its new president.

Despite being unable to fundraise in 2020 owing to COVID-19 restrictions, the club donated more than £3,000 to local good causes, including Jack's sensory log cabin, Rayleigh REC Food Bank, Rapid Response Appeal (which supports NHS workers), the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, and East Essex Hackspace.

Since its founding in 1974, Rayleigh Lions has raised and donated more than £1million to good causes in the Rayleigh, Hockley, Hullbridge and Rochford areas.

David, who took over from outgoing president, Graham Roberts, said: "I am delighted to become our new president. It has been a difficult couple of years for many people. We will continue to fundraise for local good causes, but we need new volunteers and new members.

"If anyone wants to help us, then please email [rayleighlionsclub@googlemail.com](mailto:rayleighlionsclub@googlemail.com) or call me on 07798 618226."

The club is always looking for new volunteers and members. If you are interested, email [rayleighlionsclub@googlemail.com](mailto:rayleighlionsclub@googlemail.com) or visit [www.rayleighlions.org.uk](http://www.rayleighlions.org.uk) or write to 108 Clarence Road, Rayleigh, Essex SS6 8TD.





# LOCAL NEWS

*from your neighbourhood*



## New affordable homes available exclusively for residents

Councillors have welcomed the completion of four new homes in Wickford which will be available exclusively for residents on Basildon Council's (BC) Homeseekers' register.

Sempra Homes, BC's house-building company, has completed the two-bed houses, which have parking for residents and visitors and meet national space standards.

Leader of BC, councillor Andrew Baggott, attended the site in Thackeray Row, Wickford, alongside chairman of the housing committee, councillor Andrew Schrader, on Friday, July 9.

Cllr Baggott said: "This is a smart development by Sempra on a patch of previously wasted land that adds value to the area. It's a scheme that we should be proud of."

"Sempra was set up with the aim of building high-quality and affordable homes for our residents and we are delivering. Our task now is to accelerate more housing delivery through Sempra."

Cllr Schrader said: "We are committed to building more houses to help more people from Basildon

get into high-quality homes in our borough. And not just one type of housing; we're building houses with different tenure options to give people more choice.

"These houses are a welcome addition and I am very proud that they will be made available exclusively to borough residents."

Melanie Keys, manager of Sempra Homes, added: "I am absolutely delighted to bring forward this latest Sempra Homes development for residents on the council's Homeseekers' register."

"The homes are of great quality and will make lovely places for residents to live, now and for future generations. I look forward to welcoming the residents to their new homes very soon."

Sempra Homes, which was set up by BC as an independent company, is committed to delivering properties across the borough and will provide a variety of different tenures, including affordable rent, shared ownership, market rent and market sale.

For more information on Sempra Homes, including details of their upcoming developments, please visit [www.semprahomes.co.uk](http://www.semprahomes.co.uk)

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## Donated computers make a difference to school pupils



Laptops and computers donated by the council are helping to improve pupils' education.

Basildon Council recently donated 60 computers and 30 laptops to The Bromfords School in Wickford, using Basildon company and soon-to-be registered charity, Every Child Online (ECO).

ECO clears donated computers and laptops of any data and delivers the refurbished equipment to schools in need, ensuring no pupils are left behind in their studies due to a lack of online resources.

The donated equipment will be used to kit out The Bromfords School's autism centre.

Councillor Andrew Baggott, Leader of Basildon Council, who visited the school after the donation, said: "We're very proud to be supporting ECO's pursuit to ensure no children in our borough are digitally disadvantaged compared to their peers.

"Even with kids not having to learn from home anymore, students being given these devices allows them to research for homework, revise for any exams and complete assignments. And it improves their mental wellbeing too, with the social aspect of staying in touch with friends."

## Yearly grant to councils for voluntary service increased

Basildon Council has agreed a £5,000 increase to the yearly £20,000 grant to Basildon, Billericay and Wickford Council for Voluntary Service (BBWCVS) for the next three years.

BBWCVS is a registered charity founded in 1979 and aims to promote, develop and support a thriving voluntary and community sector across the borough. The charity provides a range of services to meet the needs of voluntary and community organisations.

In addition to the yearly increase, a one-off payment of £5,000 was agreed to support the charity's work over the next year. This is in recognition of its increased workload as it helps to support the

borough's community and voluntary sector as it recovers from the pandemic.

Chairman of the Communities and Wellbeing Committee, councillor Terri Sargent, said: "The support that BBWCVS gives to community and voluntary sector groups in the borough, which support people in so many ways, cannot be underestimated – especially over the last year.

"From helping with the development of the council's community hub at the start of the first lockdown, to assisting community groups and organisations to access vital grant funding, BBWCVS has adapted brilliantly to the increased demand for its help.

"This additional funding will help it not only to maintain its service provision, but also to develop its volunteer network."

## Man among first in UK to face weapons charge

A man from Wickford is among the first in the UK to be charged with possession of an offensive weapon in a private place after specialist officers executed a warrant in the town.

Luke Connor, 28, of Riverside Place, Wickford, has been charged with possession with intent to supply cocaine, possession with intent to supply cannabis, acquiring, using or possessing criminal property, and two counts of possession of an offensive weapon in a private place.

The Offensive Weapons Act – which now makes it an offence to have a weapon in a private place as well as a public place – came into law just 25 hours before officers secured permission for the charge.

During the search of a house in Riverside Place on July 15, specialist officers seized a large quantity of cash and drugs as well as a number of weapons.

As part of the investigation, police have seized more than £200,000 in cash, about 4kg of cocaine and a quantity of cannabis.

Connor is due to appear at Basildon Crown Court on August 13.





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Filling up is the easiest way to spend money – simply holding down a lever and watching the money tick by. But could we be costing ourselves even more by having too much or too little petrol or diesel in our tank?

The quick answer is yes.

Scientists have found that driving around with low levels of fuel can be bad for the preservation of performance. At these levels, the debris and accumulated gunk in the tank has more chance of being ingested into the filter when it drops below the pump intake level.

Conflictingly, while having a full tank may give you a feeling of power and motoring potential, the weight of the fuel can end up costing you more, since that same additional weight requires more power to lug it around.

The general recommendation is to try to keep your tank above a quarter full at all times, and not beyond three-quarters. Within this range you're

protecting the cleanliness of the tank while not overloading it with excessive weight.

Of course, if you have genuine focus on optimising fuel cost and efficiency, you're probably already looking at the dawning of the greener fuels era, which could be heading to our fuel station forecourts as early as next year.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps recently unveiled plans to introduce E10 as the standard grade at pumps in the UK. The current E5 petrol contains five per cent bioethanol; by embracing a minimum 10 per cent renewable energy ratio within the fuel, it is expected we will reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 750,000 tonnes per year – that's the equivalent of taking 350,000 cars off the road. And while an estimated 600,000 vehicles won't be compatible with the fuel, these concerted efforts to continue to reduce the nation's carbon emissions have been welcomed by environmental campaigners.

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# SPACE IS THE PLACE



Photo credit: Virgin Galactic/ZUMA Press Wire Services/Shutterstock

## HOW SIR RICHARD BRANSON MADE THE ULTIMATE JOURNEY AND FIRED VIRGIN GALACTIC INTO THE ANNALS OF HISTORY

Sir Richard Branson has been the voice of countless business tomes and multiple entrepreneur tutorials, all advising success-hungry go-getters how they can flourish in the relentless world of enterprise.

And that's great, until you consider how many times he himself has come close to what we might deem ultimate bankruptcy – death.

In his second autobiography, *Finding My Virginity*, the 71-year-old self-starter lists 75 occasions when the end might have been nigh – from swimming to shore from a sinking fishing boat on honeymoon (he and first wife, Kristen, were the only survivors), to falling down a gaping gorge on Necker Island, to so many serious airborne emergencies you'd be surprised if he ever wanted to leave terra firma again... except, this is Richard Branson.

A man who has never admitted defeat, the Virgin founder has now ascended to a level of human achievement that sets him apart from anything he has achieved in an office or on a shop floor. That's because on Sunday, July 11, the daredevil journeyed 53 miles to the edge of space on his craft, Unity, ably supported by two pilots and three employees. He departed from the Spaceport America facility in New Mexico, with the intergalactic trip and re-entry completed in around an hour.

Branson said: "I have dreamt of this moment since I was a kid, but honestly nothing can prepare you for the view of Earth from space.

"The whole thing was just magical."

Branson's competitive streak is the thing that has kept him going for more than half a century in business, and the fact that he is the first to

successfully complete a space tourism venture ahead of Amazon's Jeff Bezos and SpaceX's Elon Musk didn't stop his rivals from congratulating him afterwards.

Ever the type of person to prepare a platform for future exploration, he admitted afterwards: "I've had my notebook with me and I've written down 30 or 40 little things that will make the experience for the next person who goes to space with us that much better."

While Branson's innovative endeavours in space tourism are clearly a unique first for 'everyday' humans, we are a long way from the days of the Space Race and an era where countries were driven to send rockets into space with competitive regularity. In a sense, that makes his daredevil ways even more applaudable, although it was

always destined that he would be the first. From hot air balloon near-disasters over the Atlantic in the 1980s to bungee jumping off Victoria Falls in Zambia, Branson has always put himself forward as the exemplar not just of his Virgin brand, but also of a mindset that insists everything is achievable if you have the courage and conviction.

Perhaps such a desire to explore comes from when, as a four-year-old, his parents used to drop him off on one side of Blackheath and tell him to find his way home. Perhaps his brand of risk dates back to the early days of Virgin Records when he narrowly avoided a prison sentence after illegally importing records; or perhaps this addiction to adventure is the very thing that fuels Sir Richard Branson on to future innovation and further greatness. Whatever it is, he is a unique inspiration and someone we rightly revere.



# PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

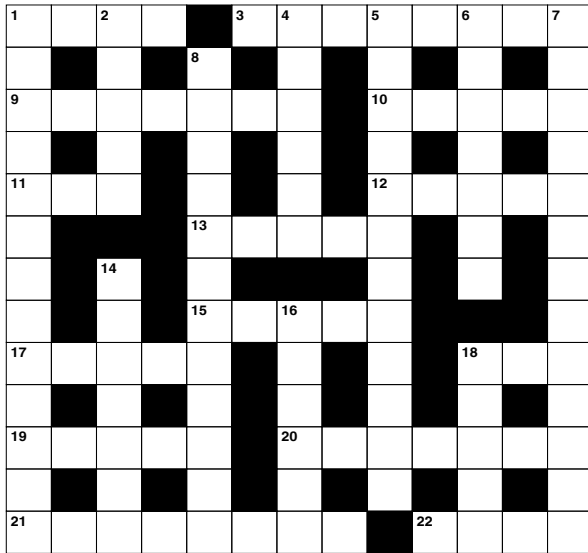
Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

### ACROSS

- 1. Bog (4)
- 3. Difficulties (8)
- 9. Settled oneself comfortably (7)
- 10. Flower part (5)
- 11. Cook in hot oil (3)
- 12. Mother-of-pearl (5)
- 13. Name of a book (5)
- 15. Drives out from a place (5)
- 17. Up to the time when (5)
- 18. Cereal plant (3)
- 19. Mental impressions (5)
- 20. Not tidy (7)
- 21. Mobster (8)
- 22. Young kangaroo (4)

### DOWN

- 1. Making (13)
- 2. Tarnished (of a metal object) (5)
- 4. Least polite (6)
- 5. Efficient (12)
- 6. Anticipates (7)
- 7. Obviously (4-9)
- 8. Decomposition by a current (12)
- 14. Among (7)



- 16. Safe (6)
- 18. Lover of Juliet (5)

### DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ As early as 250 AD, cocoa beans were once used as barter currency in exchange for food and clothes
- ▶ In 1961, Hamburger University was opened in the basement of a McDonald's restaurant in Elk Grove Village, Illinois. Graduates received a Bachelor of Hamburgerology degree
- ▶ When you eat a chilli, the burning sensation is caused by a chemical compound called capsaicin
- ▶ Cucumbers are made up of around 96 per cent water, making them the food with the highest water content
- ▶ A bunch of bananas can also be referred to as a 'hand' and a singular banana a 'finger'
- ▶ Almonds are actually seeds, although many people classify them as nuts

### SUDOKU

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

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TECHNOLOGY

## SMART HEATING SYSTEMS AND HOW THEY WILL STYLE OUR FUTURES

Like a scene from a science fiction novel, you can now control appliances and systems in your home using your voice, a sleek home hub, or even remotely via your smartphone. From doorbells and lighting to security cameras and motion sensors, it has never been easier to make your home work for you. We also now have smart heating systems, such as Hive or Google's Nest, that have revolutionised how we heat our homes.

As the names suggest, these systems are developed with your preferences, lifestyle and – most importantly – comfort in mind. Gone are the clunky thermostats of yore that were either painfully complex to programme, or frustratingly simple with nothing more than a temperature dial. Both Nest and Hive boast stylish thermostats with customisable options, and, even better, you can also download a corresponding app that gives you full control over both your heating and hot water even while away from home.

Better still, this level of control helps you save money in the long run. Going to be home an hour late from work? Simply delay your heating until you're on your way back. Concerned about a sudden drop in temperature while you're away for the weekend? Enable the frost setting via your app to protect your pipes. You can even create zones within your house by buying smart radiator valves, to reduce your overall energy output while you're at home.

Going forward, it seems likely that devices such as these will become as ubiquitous as the kitchen sink as we edge closer towards the reality of the hi-tech modern home.



Photo credit: currys.co.uk, grahamedirect.co.uk, Hive YouTube



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IF THE FIRST OFFER WAS GREAT, THEN I'LL GET EVEN MORE FOR MY HOUSE WITH THE NEXT OFFERS?

What I would say is every property and sale are different, if your property is being marketed at the right price and you have received a reasonable offer from a buyer in a good position, with timeframes and personal situations that match up with you. Don't wait for a better/higher offer, it may not come and waiting could mean additional cost and inconvenience for you.

HOUSES SELL THEMSELVES; I'LL JUST POST IT ON FACEBOOK, PUT A SIGN UP IN MY GARDEN AND IT'LL SELL?

Whilst in certain markets these methods may get you a buyer, you cannot be sure you are getting the best possible price for your home. Anyone who follows my social media will know I always talk about getting an offer as the first, quickest, and smallest part of the whole process. Progressing the sale from offer to exchange and completion is where the real work begins and where a good agent will have the knowledge and experience to deal with it.

ALL ESTATE AGENTS ARE THE SAME/THEY ALL GET THE SAME RESULTS?

In my experience, agencies operate contrastingly differently to one another. Your relationship with your agent could last from anything between 4 months to up to a year. During this time you have one permanent point of contact, your estate agent. Make sure you are satisfied that your agent will communicate with you every step of the process, puts you at ease, and gives you the type of service you want and deserve. Do your research, get recommendations, go with the agent you feel suits you best.

I'LL GET MY FINANCES IN ORDER WHEN I ACTUALLY PUT AN OFFER IN ON A PROPERTY?

This is a big one for me and I have seen many people miss out because of this idea. When you start thinking about buying a property. The very first thing you need to think about is your finances. You cannot begin to know what your budget for your new home is without checking your affordability first, this includes getting a valuation for your current property. Once you have all this you truly know what your budget is for your new home and any tweaks you may need to make to your search criteria. For more information and invaluable advice head over to my Instagram account.



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# UNUSUAL FRUIT OF THE MONTH: Kiwano

The kiwano – also known as the horned melon owing to its spiky exterior – is an exotic fruit that is native to Southern Africa. Boasting an incredibly versatile flavour, kiwano can be enjoyed in many different ways.

### WHAT DOES KIWANO TASTE LIKE?

Th flavour of kiwano has been unusually likened to that of a cucumber, a banana and a lemon/lime. Its texture is similar to a passion fruit or pomegranate, with ripe kiwano showcasing orange skin and lime-green, jelly-like flesh. The skin, flesh and seeds are all edible, although be careful when eating the horns.

### HOW TO PREPARE KIWANO

- Take a knife and slice in half – either through the middle or lengthways
- Gently loosen the pulp away from the skin using a knife
- Scoop out the pulp with a spoon or by squeezing it with both hands over a bowl
- Alternatively, slice into wedges and eat in the same way as you would an orange

### WAYS TO EAT KIWANO

- As a simple snack
- In a juice or smoothie
- In a cocktail such as a kiwano margarita or kiwano daiquiri
- Added to a tomato salsa
- Frozen into an ice lolly
- Blended into ice cream

### HOW TO STORE KIWANO

The kiwano fruit does not like the cold, so it is best kept out of the fridge and instead stored

at room temperature. An unripe kiwano can last for around 20 days at room temperature, whereas a ripe one will stay fresh for up to 10 days. Once cut, it needs to be used by the next day.

### WHAT ARE THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF KIWANO?

Kiwano is a low-calorie fruit that is high in vitamin A, beta carotene and magnesium. The seeds contain antioxidants, which can help to boost your immune system.



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HISTORY



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## WHEN THE MONA LISA *went missing*

DETAILING THE 110TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE THEFT OF THE ICONIC PORTRAIT

Stealing the world's most famous pieces of art is usually about status, spite or financial gain, yet for Vincenzo Peruggia, the architect of the theft of the Mona Lisa on August 21, 1911, it was none of these things... or so he said.

Painted in 1503, the painting ended up in France following Napoleon Bonaparte's widespread plundering of art during the Napoleonic Wars. Many of its various mysteries – the creeping smile, the haunting face, even the lack of eyebrows – can only be answered by its long-dead creator, Leonardo da Vinci.

The masterpiece had hung in the Louvre for more than a century before Peruggia, an employee at the museum on the banks of the Seine, snuck it out under his smock after having hidden in the building overnight. The gendarmerie were at a complete loss as to who stole the artwork and the theft created a media sensation, with the mystery featuring on the front pages of newspapers worldwide.

Peruggia kept the painting in his apartment in Paris for two years, then took it back to Italy. Herein lies his claim that it was removed expressly with the intention of returning it to its homeland. The thief's explanation was undermined by the fact that when contacting Florence art dealer Mario Fratelli, he placed a 500,000 lire price tag on the piece.

No sooner was the deal discussed than the prospective buyer contacted the police and Peruggia was arrested.

For his crime, the Italian received only a short prison sentence – he served seven months and was hailed a patriot upon his release. Alas, his attempts were in vain, as the Mona Lisa was returned to the Louvre, where it has been on display ever since, its notoriety merely enhanced by the theft.

Peruggia died in 1925 on his 44th birthday, leaving behind a wife and daughter.





GARDENING



# ONE MAN WENT TO MOW

**W**e cherish our gardens for the freshness, variety and life they bring to our homes, but a bit of cultivated creativity can add a whole new level of interest to your luscious lawn.

### PERFECT PATTERNS

You can achieve the most wonderful lawn patterns simply by adding a striping kit to your lawnmower. This bends the blades of grass, meaning that stripes can be achieved by leaning the grass towards or away from the eye.

### THREE OR MORE STEPS TO HEAVEN

From stepping stones to a mosaic path, breaking up your lawn with a decorative stone or wooden walkway will give it personality and depth, as well as preventing the gradual wearing away of grass marking out the path to the shed.

### SIMPLY SOLAR

Give your lawn light and radiance, even when the nights begin to draw in, with a selection of solar lights which can be inserted into the beds around the perimeter.

### WILDLIFE

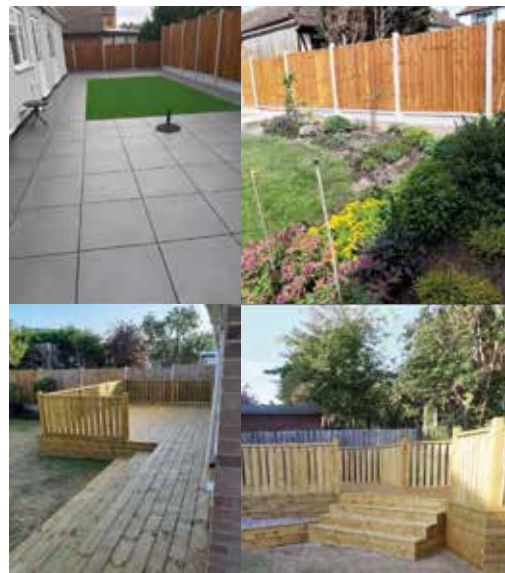
Section off a quiet part of your lawn in order to create your own mini wildflower meadow. Plants and grasses such as cowslip, red clover, hoary plantain and birds-foot trefoil can be bought from garden centres and will add a rustic feel to your garden, where plants and insects can thrive.

### MAIN FEATURE

A water feature will bring extra life to a lawn, as well as providing an audible, gentle backdrop to days spent in the garden. The hard work is in the installation, but with a variety of traditional and contemporary features, coming in all shapes and sizes, you can quickly bring extra interest to your lawn space.

### STONE THE GROWS

Finally, how about making a focal point out of large rocks, an old tree trunk or some scattered driftwood as an artistic feature on your lawn? Not only will your garden space have abounding personality, but you'll also be encouraging natural life into the various nooks and crannies.



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## GARDENING

PREP YOUR GARDEN FOR



**W**hether you love to garden or not, there are several jobs that need to be taken care of during the last few weeks of summer if you want your garden to remain intact over winter and thrive come spring.

**DIG UP ANNUAL FLOWERS**  
Although annuals are great for a single season, providing vibrant colours and stunning scents, they do need to be dug up and added to your compost heap before winter.

**ADD FERTILISER TO YOUR LAWN**  
You may not usually fertilise your lawn, but your grass needs this in order to maintain healthy growth. Typically, plants absorb nutrients through their roots, but you can give your lawn an extra boost with a good quality lawn fertiliser such as Growmore Garden Fertiliser.

**CLEAN AND COVER YOUR POND**  
If you are lucky enough to have a garden pond, you should remove any leaves and other gunk before the weather turns cold. You should also cover it with a net to protect against falling leaves and other debris.

**CUT YOUR PERENNIALS**  
Perennials will survive all year round, but they can also dominate your garden over winter if you let them. Avoid this by cutting them back to soil level and disposing of the cuttings to prevent further growth.

**DE-WEED YOUR GARDEN**  
One of the least appealing garden tasks, but if you don't get your weeds under control before winter, you face a mammoth job come spring. Always remove weeds by the root and refrain from using weedkiller near other plants.

**PROTECT YOUNG TREES**  
Young trees need protection during the winter months as they are more susceptible to damage from frost, ice and wind. Tree-guarding wraps are ideal for protecting their trunks.

Photo credit: nomorebirds.co.uk

# CAR TRAVEL *etiquette*



## THE SIX RULES PASSENGERS MUST OBEY ON LONG JOURNEYS

**W**hether setting off for a jaunt across the middle of America or simply on a work trip up the A1, it's important to recognise the hidden hierarchy that exists when it comes to car journey etiquette.

While our top six rules are all slightly tongue-in-cheek, we can all probably pick out times when we've heard the person behind the wheel pull rank.

### THE HEAT IS RISING

It's a confident – and possibly rude – passenger who starts messing with a car's climate control. Sit tight and sweat it out... it's still better than walking.

### DRIVER DJ

From the minute you leave to the second you arrive, the soundtrack of your journey is deemed to be in the hands of the person behind the wheel. If you are graced with the opportunity to "put something else on", choose decisively and wisely.

### IT'S A CAR, NOT A BIN

One for the kids – whether chocolate bar wrappers, Happy Meal toys or poorly mopped-up orange squash, there is nothing that angers a driver more than finding his or her car resembling a bin lorry at the end of a long trip.

### FREE PETROL

Contributing towards petrol is usually something that's laid out before a journey starts, but if this hasn't been discussed and you find yourself pulling up at your destination, it's usually polite to offer.

### THANKS FOR THE RIDE

Gratitude costs nothing, and a simple 'thank you' to the driver will make him or her feel that much better about themselves after suffering half an hour of you bemoaning Arsenal's recent woes.

### THE FEET TREAT

Your pinkies should always be kept out of sight and in the footwell (there's a clue in the name). Raising them to the height of the dashboard – and leaving them there – is a one-way ticket to taking the bus next time.

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# MAKEOVER

## *your mane*

Unlike women, most men seem to have an "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" approach to getting a new hairstyle. But does your current cut really complement your face? Discover the latest hairstyle trends for men based on each face shape below.

### THE TEXTURED CROP

**Best for triangle-shaped faces**

If you've got a commanding jawline that outmeasures your cheekbones, then you have the perfect face shape to rock the textured crop. Seen on the likes of Chris Hemsworth and Jake Gyllenhaal, ask your barber for some extra weight on the sides and length and texture on the top.

### THE LONG & LAYERED

**Best for oval-shaped faces**

For those with an oval face, you are in the lucky position to be able to carry off long hair à la Jason Momoa. For optimum results, go for regular trims so that your hair remains in good condition. Avoid if you have very fine hair.

### THE CHERUBIM

**Best for heart-shaped faces**

Heart-shaped faces perfectly suit a cherubim cut, which both Justin Bieber and Harry Styles have previously showcased. Best described as a grown-out bowl cut, this hairstyle is popular with men who want the versatility of length for styling and don't mind a slightly feminine look.

### THE MESSY BED QUIFF

**Best for diamond-shaped faces**

Great for showcasing length on the top and natural texture, this is an easy style that requires little maintenance. Make sure to ask for plenty of length in the fringe, getting shorter towards the back.

### THE SWEEP BACK

**Best for square-shaped faces**

If you are growing out your hair and you have a square-shaped face, you are the ideal candidate for a swept back look. Enjoying renewed interest since the series *Poldark* hit our screens, ask your barber to balance your hair for this longer style.

Photo credit: lev radin/Shutterstock.com, Tinseltown/Shutterstock.com, Curbankie/Shutterstock.com, Katy Hutchinson/Shutterstock.com, IanFavolo/eva/Shutterstock.com



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## HOW TO PERFORM CPR ON AN ADULT

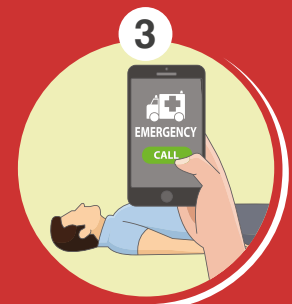
Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) could save your life, the life of a loved one or the life of a stranger. Find out how to perform CPR on an adult below.

### HOW TO DO CPR ON AN ADULT:

- > If you find someone collapsed, do not place your face close to theirs. Instead, check to see if they are responsive by asking them questions. If they do not respond in any way, they are unresponsive and should be treated as soon as possible.
- > Next, check that their airway is open and clear by placing one hand on their forehead to tilt their head back and using two fingers from your other hand to lift their chin.
- > To check if they are breathing, do not place your face close to theirs. Instead, watch to see if their chest moves.
- > If an adult is unresponsive and not breathing, ask someone to call 999 or 112 for emergency help and to find a defibrillator while you commence CPR as detailed below.
- > Place a towel or piece of clothing over the mouth and nose of the casualty to protect yourself from the risk of infection.
- > Kneel next to the person and put the heel of your hand on the middle of their chest.
- > Put your other hand on top of the first and interlock your fingers, making sure that they do not touch the ribs.
- > Keep your arms straight, lean over the person and press down hard to the depth of 5–6cm before releasing pressure.
- > Allow the chest to come back up.
- > In line with new COVID-19 guidelines, do not give rescue breaths.
- > Continue to perform CPR until emergency help arrives, the person starts to show signs of life and starts to breathe normally, or until a defibrillator is ready to be used.

**TOP TIP:**  
Use the beat of the song *Staying Alive* to keep the right speed when performing chest compressions

IN NEXT MONTH'S EDITION, LEARN HOW TO PERFORM CPR ON CHILDREN AND BABIES.



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SPORT



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BRITAIN'S GREATEST SPORTING MOMENTS...

# Super Saturday: LONDON 2012 OLYMPICS

Each month, we look at some of the most significant events in British sporting history. Proving that good things really do come in threes, we recall Super Saturday at the London 2012 Olympics.

August 4 always had the potential to be one of the defining days of the London 2012 Olympics.

Of course, Team GB had a memorable campaign anyway, accumulating a total of 65 medals, 29 of them gold. But sometimes events come together to produce a compilation of such exhilarating determination, skill and sporting endeavour, that a nation feels truly united.

And so it was at the Olympic Stadium on the first weekend of August when, within a 45-minute period, three British athletes wrote themselves into sporting folklore.

First up was Greg Rutherford in the long jump. The toiling set of leaps eventually ended with him setting a benchmark of 8.31m – one that nearest rival, Mitchell Watt of Australia, couldn't better.

Jessica Ennis-Hill then stepped up in the 800m. The Brit needed victory in the event to take heptathlon gold and led from the start. Having dropped to third by the time the final straight

emerged, she powered home to the roar of a deafening crowd, and gold was secured at 9.02pm.

Confirmation of Rutherford's gold came at 9.24pm, and with the Brit still soaking up the applause from his winning jump, Mo Farah tore past the bell on the final lap of his 10,000m run. Leading into the bend, he powered away from the pack to land the ultimate middle-distance prize – Olympic gold.

Farah's achievement came at 9.42pm. It was an evening – 42 minutes, in fact – of athletics that will never be forgotten and, perhaps, never bettered.



# Looking back on when we first met...



SPORT



## HOW GARETH SOUTHGATE'S ENGLAND HEROES CAME SO CLOSE TO ENDING 55 YEARS OF HURT

Putting to one side the sour way it ended, the UK's Euro 2020 experience was undoubtedly the tonic the whole nation needed.

While, as a country, we are certainly not alone in the mental and physical setbacks encountered over the past 18 months, the spectre of COVID-19 loomed particularly large over these shores. Even as the showpiece final played itself out at Wembley on July 11, the banks of empty seats showed that the pandemic is not over yet.

Add in economic and societal tensions, and a successful England team was the boost everyone was hoping for. And for a few weeks, we were uplifted, inspired and full of admiration for our heroes.

In Gareth Southgate, England had a manager of wisdom, yet weighed down somewhat by the

expectation of what this team should do. Making it to the World Cup semi-final three years ago became a standard to replicate, at the very least, and with home advantage for all but one game in the tournament, there was always the justified belief we should go far.

Many label the former defender a 'yes man', but his team selections clearly showed a resilient, stubborn side to his character. Blessed with an unprecedented array of attacking flair, Southgate opted for a 'safety first' strategy, nullifying the opposition's forward threat in three group games – two of which saw 1-0 wins (versus Croatia and Czech Republic), with the other an admittedly dour goalless draw against Scotland.

In the first knockout game, a 2-0 win against old rivals Germany; in the quarter-final, a totally

dominant showing as Ukraine were hit for four; in the semi-final, the courage and fortitude to come from behind (and the shock of actually seeing someone put the ball in our net) as we defeated Denmark 2-1.

Southgate's confidence in his stubborn 5-3-2 formation was upheld in every game. When he switched to a 4-3-3, we marvelled at the sudden versatility of the squad. It's this very thing that will give us the confidence to succeed at the World Cup in Qatar next year, when expectation levels will once again be incredibly high.

Regrets? Well, the horror of the penalty shoot-out came back to bite us. But apart from that, some will feel we should have been more positive going forward. In Raheem Sterling and Harry Kane, we always had matchwinners. Even with five at the

back, the wing-back play of Kyle Walker and Kieran Trippier offered attacking intent. But many will point to the lack of real opportunities for Jack Grealish, Jadon Sancho, Jude Bellingham, Marcus Rashford, Phil Foden and others, and wonder what those talented lads might have achieved with longer on the pitch.

The good news is that 'youth' is almost a byword for England now. We had the second-youngest squad in the whole tournament and, arguably, on paper, the most talented. It's been some time since we've been able to lavish such high praise on our Three Lions, even if we still find ourselves ticking the box titled 'unfulfilled potential'.

In Gareth we trust, and he will know better than anyone else how we can take that one last step forward into football folklore.

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