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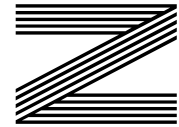
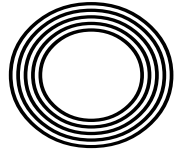
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*A tribute to the iconic actress*  
**JUNE BROWN OBE**

*Denise*  
**VAN OUTEN**

The actress and presenter marking 25 years on our screens



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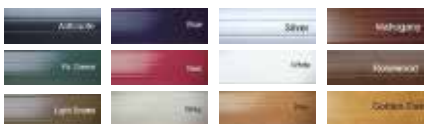
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# Editor's notes...

MAY 2022



Nik Allen, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION**RayleighWickFord. Let's cut to the chase - times are tough. We are in a post-COVID malaise, our energy bills are soaring, and you need to remortgage just to put enough fuel in the tank to get you to Tesco.

I hear the grumbles of discontent from all around, but it's worth being reminded of where we've come from.

Two years ago, the country was in panicked disarray. Furloughing, grants and an estimated total of £400billion in losses due to COVID-19, were all going to have to be paid back at some point.

So here we are, in a tight situation, and one that's being exacerbated by events in Ukraine.

Personally, I'm trying to maintain perspective - we were always going to have to bite the bullet, and I'm afraid it seems now for everything we have taken out, we may need to pay back. I am focusing on the concessions made to me. Not only did the NHS save the lives of some of my family members, but the combined efforts of all political parties and organisations steered myself and my loved ones back on course.

While nothing comes for free, it's also true that nothing lasts forever, so please keep the faith.

*Nik Allen*

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

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# Golden BROWN

## BIDDING FAREWELL TO JUNE BROWN OBE, WHO DEPARTED FOR A NEW STAGE IN APRIL

**D**ot Cotton, played by June Brown OBE, was the cigarette-smoking, crackly voiced hypochondriac who combined a hard edge with sultry soft compassion, enveloping and influencing a bounty of characters who stepped foot onto the hallowed, concrete East London streets of Albert Square.

So synonymous was the actress with the role that few would liken her to anything else on screen. She was *EastEnders*' longest-serving character, having appeared in the opening episodes way back in 1985. And after a four-year break at the start of the 1990s, she returned to the fray for a further two decades.

Alongside the likes of Dame Barbara Windsor DBE (Peggy Mitchell), Wendy Richard MBE (Pauline Fowler), Pam St Clement (Pat Butcher) and Letitia Dean (Sharon Watts), Brown represented a golden era of forceful female characters around the Square – iconic for a girl-power generation that was a world away from the pop stars and film actors the media would have us believe were fuelling the charge for equality.

And yet June Brown was about so much more than just one character. In the years after the cessation of the Second World War, she appeared at the National Theatre, and as recently as 2009 was on the West End stage in *Calendar Girls*, for which she confidently stripped for the role.

What does link Dot Cotton to the actress herself is a strength of purpose and poise.

"I have always believed in saying how I feel," she said in an interview last year. "Life is too short to hold back and I'm not sure I have long left. And I have always been this way.

---

*'I will always celebrate my life... I have been very lucky, but I have tried my hardest, always, and I hope I've made people happy along the way'*

---

"Ultimately, I think people respect you more if you are upfront and honest with them. Of course, you may offend them at the start, but honesty in the end it's admirable, and as human beings we're not cut out to agree with each other all of the time."

Such assuredness clearly enamoured June Brown to a bevy of directors, producers and casting agents. Born in Needham Market, Suffolk, she was evacuated to Leicester during the war, and joined the Old Vic company when peace was restored. Thus began an acting career that took her from Shakespeare to *Dixon of Dock Green*, TV plays through touring theatre productions, fantasy adventure as Nannie Slagg in *Gormenghast* to Lady Eleanor in the Time Warrior series of *Doctor Who*. She even had three episodes as the timid Mrs Parsons in *Coronation Street*.

Brown was awarded an MBE at Buckingham Palace in 2008, followed by an OBE in this year's New Year Honours. She is survived by five children – Chloe, William, Naomi, Sophie and Louise – from her second marriage, to actor Robert Arnold, who died in 2003. She had all her children in her forties – another daughter died in childbirth.

While *EastEnders* was the project that defined the June Brown we will remember, this was ultimately someone who gave so much across seven decades as an actress, and whose efforts touched so many.

"I will always celebrate my life," she said. "I have been very lucky, but I have tried my hardest, always, and I hope I've made people happy along the way."





# Long live THE QUEEN

**O**n February 6 this year, Her Majesty The Queen became the first British monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service. So, what is the secret to her success and her longevity? Let's take a closer look.

## REGULAR MEDICAL SCREENINGS

Of course, The Queen has access to some of the best medical care that the country has to offer, and she takes full advantage of this with regular preventative screenings and check-ups.

## LONG WALKS

The Queen knows the importance of regular exercise, and the royal family are known for their love of long walks in the grounds of Balmoral. The Queen has always been an avid walker, taking after The Queen Mother.

## MENTAL STIMULATION

The mind is just as important as the body when it comes to longevity, and The Queen is very aware of keeping herself mentally astute. Committed to staying abreast of current issues, she has previously visited Google headquarters, showing an interest in the internet and emailing her grandchildren.

## MAINTAINING A CONSTANT WEIGHT

The Queen has never appeared to be overweight and has benefited from freshly prepared meals which include vegetables, game and poultry provided by the estate. Fish is also a staple on the royal menu, and The Prince of Wales is a long-time leader in the organic farming movement.

## DAILY CUPS OF TEA

High tea is enjoyed at precisely 5pm and is a British ritual that is embraced by Her Majesty. Tea has numerous health benefits, including being antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer. The Queen is also said to credit her peachy complexion to barley water flavoured with lemon and other citrus fruits.

## THE OCCASIONAL TIPPLE

Small amounts of alcohol appear to have beneficial effects on the heart and brain, and The Queen has been honest about her enjoyment of German sweet wine, as well as gin and Dubonnet.



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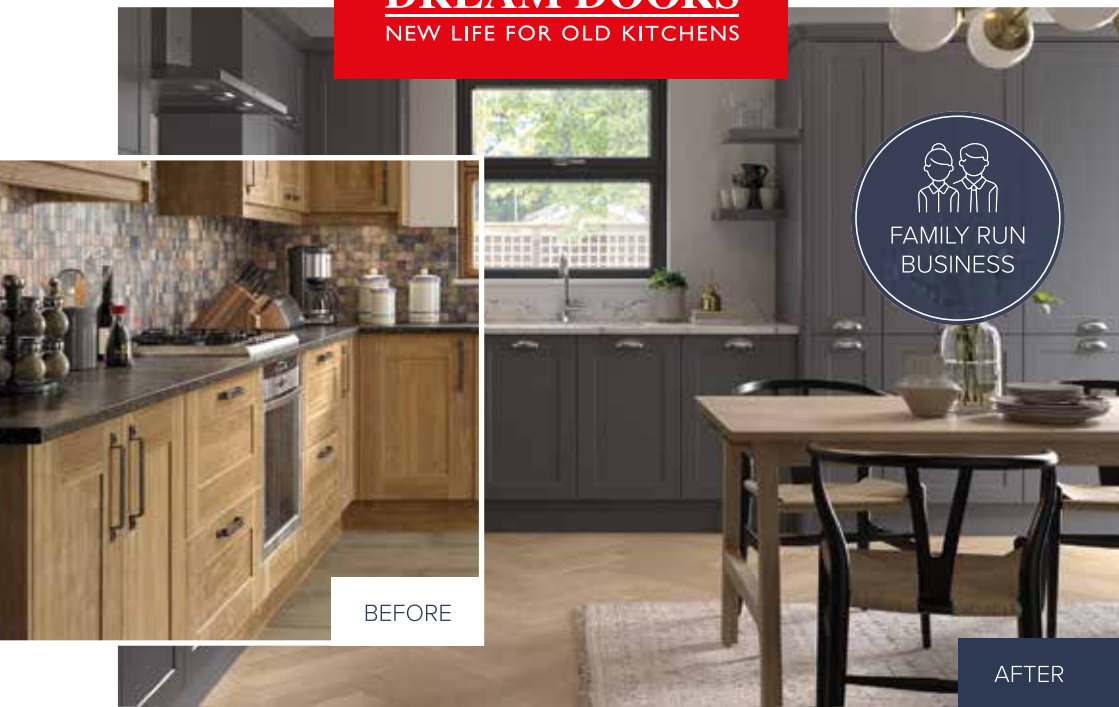




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# Bleach NO-NOS

**B**leach is cheap, cheerful and it does the job. However, it is not designed to be a multipurpose cleaner for your home and there are certain things that it should never be used on.

**× WOODEN SURFACES:** As a general rule, bleach should not be used to clean wooden surfaces or floors as it can alter the wood's natural finish. Furthermore, it is not very effective at removing mould from wood-based materials such as wallboard, ceiling tiles and wall studs as these are all porous materials.

**× MOST METALS:** Bleach contains ingredients that serve as oxidants during the cleaning process, so metals like stainless steel, copper and chrome can become corroded or discoloured when exposed to it. You should also never use bleach to try to remove rust as it can make it more resistant and harder to remove.

**× STONE COUNTERTOPS:** Stone is another porous material and can therefore also be damaged by the application of bleach, even when diluted. If you have granite, marble or quartz countertops in your home, clean these surfaces with a simple water and liquid dish soap solution.

**× FRESH PRODUCE:** Although bleach is used in commercial food production, you should not use it at home to sanitise fresh foods such as fruits and vegetables. Instead, to remove any germs or bacteria, simply rinse the produce under cold water for 1-2 minutes.

**× DRAINS:** While many people pour bleach down their drains to clean and banish odours, this is not recommended as the chemicals in chlorine bleach can kill the beneficial bacteria that the septic system needs to break down solid waste.

Never mix bleach with other chemicals and cleaners, including ammonia, rubbing alcohol and vinegar.

This can result in toxic fumes being released into your home which can cause a host of issues, including severe coughing, internal organ damage and even death.







# STEPHANIE BARBA MENDOZA *world*

EXPLORING THE ART OF CONTRASTING STYLES THAT SYNERGISE SEAMLESSLY

As a designer, finding a defined route between contemporary and classic is no mean feat. It requires vision, patience and nerve to throw energy behind contrasting, conflicting styles, before emerging with something precise and exact.

Interior designer Stephanie Barba Mendoza's ability to do this stands her apart from many of her contemporaries.

For more than 40 years, the London-based designer has toyed with vintage and modern, classic tiling and smooth walls, rich sprays of flowers and hard-edged furniture, producing a sumptuous smorgasbord of style that layers material and colour, and completing a look with an abundance of warmth.

Mendoza works with talented craftspeople to create interiors, often bringing antique items into a space to add not just visual interest, but also a feeling of provenance and purpose.

She cites influences as diverse as Freddie Mercury, René Magritte and Serge Roche, and admires others who push their boundaries to the limit.

"It all comes from a rejection of conformity for me," she says, "and when I find clients who share that idea of rebellion, it inspires me as much now as it did the first time I took to styling a space."

"We must appreciate in interior design, in art, in creativity, the fact that escapism and fantasy is as deep and wide as the imagination, and in that respect is endless."

"If we can live in a space, then we can envision anything, and it will always be correct."

The trick to replicating Mendoza's statement style is to individualise on carpets, fabrics, furniture and objects. No matter the style or era, the devil is truly in the detail, and the designer proves the sum total is most definitely greater than the parts.



Photo credit: barbamendoza.com



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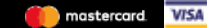
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# HOME DÉCOR TRENDS 2022



Looking to update your interior design for summer? Discover the top five home décor trends for 2022. Plus, our top tips on how you can incorporate them into your home.

**ARTIFICIAL GREEN WALL:** Going green has never been more on trend, with sales of houseplants surging since the start of the pandemic. Perfect for those who want to bring the outdoors in, you can create a faux foliage wall using affordable, artificial succulents and foliage and a basic box frame.

**VELVET FURNISHINGS:** If you love the style of the 1970s, then you'll be pleased to hear that velvet is making a huge comeback in 2022. Although this opulent material went out of fashion when minimalism dominated the interior design world, it has now returned to favour, and is bolder and brighter than ever before.

**AUTHENTIC DESIGNS:** Handmade home décor items are becoming increasingly sought after, as homeowners look for a more personalised and authentic-looking home. From bespoke furniture to heritage collections, anything made on a smaller scale is in this year. They may be more expensive, but one-of-a-kind items will transcend any trends and last a lifetime.

**ROYALCORE:** Spurred on by the likes of *Bridgerton* and *The Crown*, royalcore embodies everything ornate and aristocratic. Whether you opt for an abundance of gold, intricate detailing or rich colour schemes involving purples, blues and reds, this is one TikTok trend that isn't going away any time soon.

**SOFTER SHAPES:** Say goodbye to straight lines and sharp angles and hello to rounder, more feminine shapes. Referred to as the 'curve comeback', look for rounded chairs, tables and sideboards. Providing a natural feel, softer shapes are both more practical and aesthetically pleasing.



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# Colourwashing

THE INTERIOR DECOR TREND YOU NEED TO TRY

Colourwashing is one of the latest interior trends to explode onto Instagram, Pinterest and other corners of the internet. It's a striking paint trend that creates a rustic, vintage feel, yet looks right at home in even the most modern spaces. Get ready to explore the art of colourwashing and how to try it in your home.

**WHAT IS COLOURWASHING?**  
Colourwashing, also known as faux glaze painting, is a paint technique in which a layer of diluted paint is applied over a base colour to create a washed look. It's a modern and colourful take on a classic whitewash and is easy to create yourself.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO DO A COLOURWASH**  
To create a colourwash at home, you will need:  
> Two types of paint, a lighter and a darker shade – one serving as your base, and the other to create the wash effect. It's up to you whether or not to use the light or dark shade as your base.  
> A transparent water-based glaze. You could also use water.  
> A roller or brush to apply your base colour.

> Either a sponge or a soft brush to paint the wash.  
**HOW TO DO A COLOURWASH**  
> After prepping your wall by using sugar soap to clean the area, you'll need to paint either one or two coats of your base layer. Allow to dry.  
> Mix the colourwash using four parts glaze to one part paint.  
> Apply your colourwash in small sections using a brush or sponge, spreading quickly once applied. You can either use a swirling motion, a criss-cross pattern or random strokes to create your desired effect.  
> Leave to dry, and apply a second coat if desired.

This is one of the most basic colourwashing methods, but you could try other methods to help you achieve the desired effect. Colourwashing creates an on-trend look and is a stylish take on the classic colour block wall.



Photo credit: Brand - Zinc Textiles, Stylist - Sarah Harwood, Photographer - Alex J Curtis via www.livingetc.com



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# BEST WAY TO PAINT A ROOM

**W**hen you decide to go down the DIY route with painting, you'll want to make sure you get it right. Understanding the order to paint a room in will help you achieve the best finish, as well as make your paintwork look professional. Learn what order to paint a room in, ready for your next interior décor project.

### START WITH THE CEILING

Once a ceiling has been prepped, you can get to work with painting. Start by cutting in the edges with your desired paint. Then you can quickly roller the remainder of the ceiling with the desired number of coats.

### TACKLE THE WALLS

Painting the walls requires a little more precision. You'll need to cut in the edges, either freehand or by using some masking or decorators tape. Using a roller, you can paint the remainder of the wall. You may need a smaller roller to get to the hard-to-reach areas.

### DO THE DOORS AND WINDOWS

Take your time applying special woodwork paint to your doors and windows. This type of paint dries slowly, so you'll need to give yourself plenty of time between coats. Remember to mask your edges for a clean finish.

### FINISH WITH THE SKIRTING BOARDS

When the rest of your paintwork is dry, fill and sand any cracks between your wall and skirting, mask up the edges then apply two coats of your woodwork paint, letting it dry thoroughly between each coat.

And there you have it. Now you know exactly what order to paint a room in to get the best results.



# WAYS TO GET SUPER soft towels

**T**here is nothing quite like getting out of the bath or shower and wrapping yourself up in a big, fluffy towel. Sadly, over time, your towels can turn from super soft to super stiff. Discover five simple tricks for softening your towels below.

**WASH IN WARM WATER:** Washing your towels in warm water, ideally around body temperature, can help to keep them softer for longer. This is because it helps them to absorb the detergent better, resulting in less build-up on your towels.

**REPLACE FABRIC SOFTENER WITH VINEGAR:** Most fabric softeners contain silicon, which makes your towels repel water, meaning they will not get the best wash. Instead, add one cup of white vinegar once every six weeks when washing your towels to remove soapy residue and restore full absorbency.

**USE LESS DETERGENT:** As mentioned above, a build-up of detergent can leave your towels feeling stiff. Counteract this by adding a little less detergent when washing them so that your machine's rinse cycle can eliminate every last bit of stubborn soap.

**ADD BAKING SODA:** Another staple from the storecupboard, baking soda can help to loosen the fibres in your towels, as well as clean off any chemicals and dirt. Mix half a cup of baking soda with your normal detergent and wash as normal. Baking soda can also banish any musty odours from damp towels.

**TOSS IN A TENNIS BALL:** If you have any unused tennis balls lying in your garage or garden, toss a couple of these into your next load of towels. As they bounce around your machine, they will remove any lumps of soap and simultaneously fluff up your towels. Dryer balls can also be used.





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# LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



LOCAL NEWS RAYLEIGH



## Historic church at risk

A historic church in Rayleigh is at risk of being demolished after being put up for sale.

The 3,495 sq ft Rayleigh Evangelical Church (REC) on Eastwood Road, which dates back to the 1930s, has been put on the market owing to financial difficulties and a saturation of churches in the area.

The church is owned by the Union of Evangelical Churches (UEC) and is on the market for £1million, with the listing stating that the site could be used for residential development, subject to planning consent.

Company secretary at UEC, Howard Gardner (pictured), said: "The main reason for selling REC is that it has not proved possible to reopen it as a

viable church community, despite having tried for three years. There are many other lively churches in Rayleigh already.

"It is disappointing, of course, but we have to be realistic. Having tried for three years, the board of the UEC is now realising the value of this asset and putting that money into the other buildings it owns (15 churches throughout Essex and East London).

"The future of the church building depends on how the tender bids come in. Whether it is knocked down or converted into a different use remains to be seen. Of course, Rochford District Council will have its say as well."

## Resident wows judges with Mary P performance

A Rayleigh resident has wowed the *Britain's Got Talent* judges in the audition stage of the competition.

Bethan Marshall, known as Mary P, is a musician from the town and impressed the judges with her performance of *My Humps* by Black Eyed Peas and *Boys* by Lizzo, while dressed as the classic character Mary Poppins.

She received four yeses and will now go on to the next stage of the competition.

Bethan told **VISION**RayleighWickford: "I was so excited but really nervous. It's such a huge opportunity. Actually seeing the judges in the flesh was an incredible experience."

Bethan also runs a princess party business, Sparkle and Dream, providing parties for children in Rayleigh and across Essex. Find out more at [sparkleanddream.co.uk](http://sparkleanddream.co.uk)



Photo credit: Syco Thames





# MARK FRANCOIS MP



Member of Parliament for Rayleigh and Wickford

Sir David Amess, the former MP for Basildon and then for Southend West, was not only my Parliamentary neighbour in the next-door constituency, but he was also my best friend in politics and had been for many years. David was taken from us in tragic circumstances last October.

Now that the trial is over and all legal restrictions on commenting have finally been lifted, I can at last say what I think. This was a completely senseless act of murder, carried out by a self-confessed terrorist, who had fallen prey to a warped ideology based on violence and hatred. The man who did this was eventually sentenced to a whole life term in prison, meaning he will never be released. All this man's evil actions really achieved was to rob us of a

brilliant and highly popular constituency MP.

David was a selfless, dedicated public servant, who over his 38 years in public office helped literally thousands of constituents with their problems, supported too many charities to mention, and got several Private Members' Bills onto the statute book, including on animal welfare and fuel poverty. One of his greatest campaigns, for which he will be forever remembered, was his determination to see Southend granted city status. After David's death, this wish was approved and Southend will now be a city forever.

I once described Sir David in Parliament as quite simply "the best bloke I ever knew". Despite the tragic event that took him from us, it was really Sir David Amess who won in the end.

Rest in peace, David. We will never forget you, and everything that you achieved.

# Choir hosts Ukraine concert

A community choir is hosting a concert in Rayleigh later this month to raise vital funds for Ukraine.

Eastwood Chorale is looking for additional singers to perform during its Best of British-themed concert to raise money for the Disasters Emergency Committee Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal.

The charity concert will take place at Rayleigh Baptist Church on the High Street on Saturday, May 21, at 7.45pm, and will feature standout performances from local musicians.

Ian Walker, musical director of Eastwood Chorale, said: "I am greatly looking forward to the Best of British concert in aid of Ukrainian humanitarian relief on May 21, performed by the Chorale and friends.

"The great music will remind us of the joys of singing after lockdown in support of a worthy cause to ease suffering and deprivation."

Anyone interested in getting involved with the upcoming concert can contact the choir secretary, Joe Hayden, at joehayden999@gmail.com or visit eastwoodchorale.wixsite.com/sing for further information.

No audition is required and residents of all ages and abilities are welcome to join.



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# LOCAL NEWS

*from your neighbourhood*



Photo credit: Phillip Stallham Photography

## Council asks for £6k towards redevelopment

Basildon Council has asked for an additional £6,000 from developers for the redevelopment of Wickford Library.

Plans to knock down the library and community centre and replace them with 65 flats were approved by the council in March 2020 as part of a £11.5million scheme, which will also see a new library created at Willowdale Shopping Centre.

The council is now looking to renegotiate part of the legal agreement, asking applicant Sheet Anchor

Investments to provide an additional £6,000 which will go towards helping residents get back into work.

The developer has pledged to support local businesses by spending £1.4million on materials for the build from businesses in Basildon, Billericay, Wickford and Pitsea as part of the project.

Basildon Council and Sheet Anchor Investments have been contacted for comment.

To view the full planning application, search reference 19/00454/FULL on the council's planning portal.

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## Tenth member of crime group jailed



Photo credit: Essex Police

A Wickford man who led an organised crime group has been jailed for 11 years and two months.

Russell Hands, 44, of The Chase, Wickford, was a senior leader of the gang, which was dismantled after law enforcement agencies cracked an encrypted messaging network used by criminals.

Hands and his associates ran their drug dealing enterprise from a container within a privately owned yard in Lower Noke Close, Noak Hill.

Hands contacted importers and arranged the collection of large quantities of cocaine.

One of the messages that Serious and Organised Crime Unit officers intercepted showed the gang had paid more than £100,000 for 3kg of cocaine in March or April 2020 and sold it for £180,000.

Eleven people were arrested in October 2020 after officers carried out a series of warrants in the south and west of Essex, including in Wickford.

Hands previously admitted conspiracy to supply class A drugs and transferring criminal property when he appeared at Basildon Crown Court.

He is the tenth member of the gang to be sentenced.

## Inquest into man's death after leaving mental health unit

An inquest into the death of a man who was hit by a train in Wickford months after being discharged from a mental health unit has concluded that his "discharge should have been managed in a more professional and thorough way".

Darian Bankwala, 22, was hit by a train at Wickford Railway Station on December 27, 2020, four months after being discharged from mental health services at Rochford Community Hospital.

An inquest took place at Essex Coroner's Court

where Coroner Sean Horstead expressed concerns about a number of points in his findings.

He found that mild learning disabilities and autism were inappropriately excluded from Darian's diagnoses during treatment.

The coroner said: "Discharge should have been managed in a more professional and thorough way with clear lines of communication."

Paul Scott, chief executive of Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust, said: "We extend our deepest condolences to Darian's family, friends and loved ones at this difficult time. Since 2020, action has been taken to ensure patient risk assessments are regularly reviewed, discharge plans better reflect individual needs, and there is stronger communication between inpatient and community teams.

"Patient safety remains our absolute priority and we are committed to ensuring we learn lessons to help drive forward improvement."

## Two men jailed for more than 16 years following shooting

Two men have been jailed for a total of more than 16 years for their part in a shooting in Wickford.

Thomas Saunders, 29 (pictured left), of Arterial Road, Rayleigh, and Thomas Connors, 24 (pictured right), of Edgware, appeared for sentencing at Basildon Crown Court on March 31.

Connors was jailed for nine years and six months, and Saunders was jailed for seven years.

On September 9, 2020, the victim was woken up at his home in Hovefields Avenue by the sound of shots being fired and then had a verbal altercation with Saunders.

After Saunders left, the man went back into his home to find his living room window had been shattered. Windows had also been broken in a caravan and a car on his property.

Officers searched Saunders' home the following day. A shotgun and two other guns were recovered nearby.

Forensic analysis of a car suspected to be involved linked Saunders and Cooper to the incident.

Both men were located in a car in Twickenham High Street on October 19, 2020, and were arrested.



Photo credit: Essex Police



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# Has Rolls-Royce built the fastest electric aircraft?

The world needs some drastic changes to help combat the effects of global warming. Vehicle manufacturers are working hard to develop electric models that provide great performance, as well as being energy efficient.

While perhaps better known for manufacturing cars, Rolls-Royce also produces aircraft parts. It has recently announced that it has created the fastest all-electric aircraft, reaching a maximum speed of more than 387mph. But has Rolls-Royce truly succeeded with its bold claim? And what will this mean for an energy-efficient future?

### Spirit of Innovation

Rolls-Royce has been testing its latest project, an all-electric aircraft known as the Spirit of Innovation. During the tests, the aircraft was able to reach a speed of 345mph over a distance of three kilometres, which it believes has broken the record for the fastest electric aeroplane. It's a part of the Accelerating the Electrification of Flight project, which is being partially funded by the Aerospace Technology Institute, in partnership with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial

Strategy and Innovate UK. The data has been sent to officials for verification.

### Rolls-Royce: Making 'jet zero' a reality?

Spirit of Innovation comes just as world leaders pledged to reduce the impact of global warming at COP26. In a recent press release, Warren East, CEO of Rolls-Royce, said: "Following the world's focus on the need for action at COP26, this is another milestone that will help make 'jet zero' a reality and supports our ambitions to deliver the technology breakthroughs society needs to decarbonise transport across air, land and sea."

Using innovations such as electric aircraft, this could soon become a reality.

### What's next?

Rolls-Royce has a long history of breaking records, and it will no doubt seek to improve upon the Spirit of Innovation. As the company looks set to become net zero by 2050, there could be some exciting times ahead in the world of electric vehicle development.



Photo credit: Rolls-Royce



TECHNOLOGY



# The history of BANK HOLIDAYS



Who doesn't love a bank holiday? They offer the chance to sit back and relax and spend time with family and friends, and this year, many Brits will enjoy an extra day off to celebrate The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

But how did bank holidays first come about?

## THE BANK OF ENGLAND AND THE EXCHEQUER STARTED THE TREND

Before public bank holidays were made official, the Bank of England and the Exchequer were known for taking holidays to celebrate Christian festivals and royal events. In fact, they were believed to have taken around 40 days off each year. Unfortunately, this was cut down to just 18 days in 1830 and then down to just four in 1834.

## THE BANK HOLIDAYS ACT IN 1871

In 1871, the Bank Holidays Act was drafted by banker and politician John Lubbock, the first Baron of Avebury. This was when the first official bank holidays became law in

England, Wales and Ireland. These holidays were: Easter Monday, Whit Monday, the first Monday in August and Boxing Day.

Meanwhile, Scotland had New Year's Day, Good Friday, the first Monday in May, the first Monday in August and Christmas Day.

## ADDITIONAL CHANGES TO BANK HOLIDAYS

In the 1971 Act, New Year's Day, Good Friday and Christmas Day became bank holidays in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The 1971 Act also made January 2 and Boxing Day a bank holiday in Scotland only.

In 1978, the government made the first Monday in May a bank holiday in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

A Northern Ireland only bank holiday to mark the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne was introduced in 1926 and falls on July 12.

In 1965, the first Monday in August bank holiday was changed to the Monday following the last weekend in August in a bid to increase trade. Scotland was exempt from this.

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# WATCH OUT(EN) *Denise is about*

**CELEBRATING THE STAR QUALITY OF DENISE VAN OUTEN, WHO MARKS 25 YEARS ON OUR SCREENS**

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**D**enise van Outen is Essex's doyenne of design – a star who has risen up through the soap world and carved a brilliant niche in mainstream entertainment, plus retained a sense of dignity when things have gone against her.

In many ways, she is an exemplary example of someone who has successfully crossed over the changing face of the celebrity world. When she first appeared on our screens, as a presenter on Saturday morning kids' TV show *Massive!*, van Outen instantly caught the eye. She'd progressed through the famous Sylvia Young Theatre School and worked with the Royal Shakespeare Company before landing that debut role. While she was also seen on the mean streets of Sun Hill on *The Bill*, acting roles would quickly take a back seat when the opportunity to host *The Big Breakfast* came about in 1997.

In the post-Chris Evans/Gaby Roslin era, van Outen excelled opposite Johnny Vaughan, and the pair would reunite a decade later on Capital Radio, even if the relationship between the two was eventually to sour.

That disintegration has been one of a number of setbacks the Basildon-born star has recovered from. Her marriage to actor Lee Mead – who was victor of the *Any Dream Will Do* talent show for which van Outen was a judge – ended in 2015, although the couple had split up two years previously. They have a daughter together, named Betsy.

Most recently, the presenter was in a long-term relationship with sparky commodities trader Eddie Boxshall. She has also famously dated Jamiroquai frontman, Jay Kay.

In the interim, though, van Outen has excelled in every way. By her own admission, her autobiography, *A Bit of Me*, released in March, was a candid and poignant reminder of the successes in her life.

She said: "I actually found writing it very therapeutic – it reminded me how much I had done, and at a time when I was perhaps fixating on the things that didn't go to plan, made me think about so much that has gone well.

"I feel we should all take time to look back on positive elements of what we do and who we are. It's good for the soul and it gives us energy to move forward and be positive."

At present, van Outen is on tour with *The Masked Singer*, ITV's hit talent show on which she played Fox. The bravery to put herself in the spotlight and under pressure is at the entertainer's heart – across *Strictly Come Dancing*, *Dancing on Ice* and *Celebrity Gogglebox*, the comfort, charisma and 'girl next door' image is one viewers love.

"On television and in life, I just strive to be myself. You need self-worth and self-respect in what you do, and you need to focus on retaining and celebrating that at all times.

"The point where you feel you are losing that is the point at which you need to adjust and evolve."

While we applaud van Outen's bravery in making change, in many ways we'd like her to stay just the way she is.



# PurrFECT CATNAPS

Cats love to sleep – it's one of the things we envy the most about them. But have you ever given much thought to what your cat's sleeping position means?

**BELLY-UP CAT:** A cat that sleeps with its belly exposed and paws splayed is a cat that feels secure and comfortable in its surroundings. It's exposing the most vulnerable part of its body, showing you it feels safe in its home.

**CURLED-UP KITTY:** A curled-up cat with its tail wrapped around its body and head tucked in, means several things. This position helps it stay warm and also helps the cat protect itself from potential threats.

**IN A BOX:** Cats love to sleep in a box or any small space as it makes them feel safer than being in an open space. It's a normal behaviour that helps them feel warm and secure.

**EYES HALF-SHUT:** A cat that sleeps with its eyes half-shut is doing so to enable it to react quickly to any threat or disturbing noise. It's common in noisy

households, or for cats in new surroundings.

**LOAF OF BREAD:** The 'loaf of bread' position is where a cat sleeps with its paws and tail tucked under its body, making it look like it has no legs. Cats choose this position for comfort and to stay warm. This position is also a sign that your cat is happy and relaxed.

**SLEEPING ON YOU:** A cat sleeping on you can be for a couple of reasons. It either wants to feel added protection with a 'safety in numbers' approach, or it wants to feel close to you and benefit from some extra warmth.

**STRETCHED OUT:** A stretched-out cat is a happy and relaxed cat, who's usually in a deep sleep. When a cat is in this position, it's best to let it stay there.

**PAWS ACROSS FACE:** A cute position to witness, paws across the face can mean your cat is trying to keep its nose warm or block out the light. A cat that's hiding its face wants to be left alone, so it's best to let your cat be in this position.

Information provided by Republique of Cats. For more cat facts, visit [www.republicofcats.com](http://www.republicofcats.com)



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Kinetic sand is essentially sand that has had other ingredients added to it to create a soft and crumbly consistency, like beach sand, but is also able to hold its shape. Easy to clean and store, kinetic sand should last for several years and is great for child development and sensory play.

### HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN KINETIC SAND

#### YOU WILL NEED:

2½ cups of fine sand such as play sand (available in a variety of different colours) or decorators sand | 1½ cups of cornstarch | ½ cup of oil such as cooking, baby or mineral | An airtight container with a lid

#### HOW TO MAKE:

Pour the sand into your chosen container | Mix in the cornstarch | Slowly pour in the oil and mix well | Continue to mix until there are no oily or dry spots in the mixture | Start to play.

### HOW TO STORE KINETIC SAND

Although kinetic sand does not dry out, you should keep it clean and dust-free in a resealable bag or an airtight plastic container. When kept like this, it should last for between three and five years.

### IS KINETIC SAND SAFE?

Kinetic sand is non-toxic but is not intended for consumption. Any child under the age of three should be supervised when playing with kinetic sand.

### KINETIC SAND ACTIVITIES

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# PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

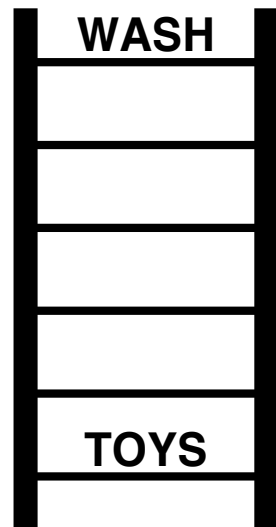
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- ▶ COCOA
- ▶ GINGER
- ▶ HAZEL
- ▶ MAHOGANY
- ▶ NUTMEG
- ▶ RUST
- ▶ SAND
- ▶ SEPIA
- ▶ SIENNA
- ▶ TEAK
- ▶ UMBER



## DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Venus travels all the way around the sun before it completes a full rotation.
- ▶ All the planets in the solar system rotate anticlockwise, except Venus.
- ▶ The moon has no atmosphere, so it's likely that footprints on it will last forever.
- ▶ The sun makes up more than 99 per cent of the solar system's mass.
- ▶ Dogs, cats, monkeys, frogs and guinea pigs have all been taken into space.
- ▶ Owing to gravity not pulling you down, it's likely you'd be slightly taller if you went to space.
- ▶ Neptune's winds are the fastest in the solar system, reaching approximately 1,600 miles per hour.

## WORD LADDER



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

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

DO NOT rearrange the order of the letters.

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

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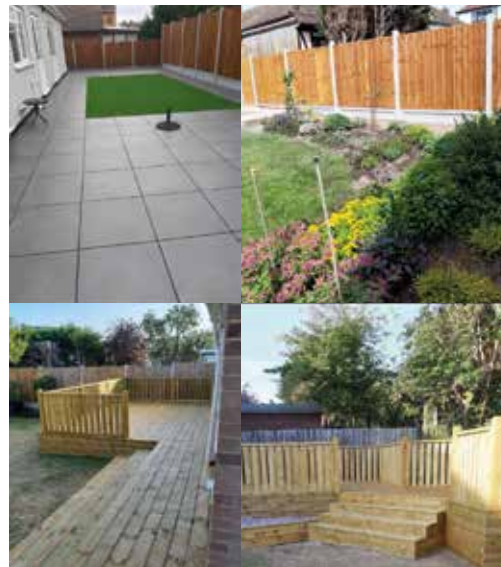
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# KNOW YOUR *knotweed*

Two little words that spark fear in the hearts of homeowners across the UK – Japanese knotweed. Known for its ability to spread rapidly, this destructive weed sets down strong roots that can cause havoc with the foundations of your property.

### How to identify Japanese knotweed in your garden

Japanese knotweed has several distinctive characteristics that can help you identify it in your garden, including:  
Zig zag stems | Lush green-coloured leaves | Heart or shovel-shaped leaves with a flat base | Bamboo-style stems | Red-tinged shoots | Often found in dense clumps | In July, look out for creamy white flowers | Between September and November, it will leave brown stems once the leaves have died back

### How to stop Japanese knotweed from spreading

Although it is not illegal to have Japanese knotweed in your garden, you are required to take steps to stop it becoming a problem in neighbouring gardens.

### Spray with chemicals

If you choose to tackle Japanese knotweed yourself, you need to make sure you are using the right chemicals to carry out the job efficiently and safely. Look for a glyphosate-based product such as Roundup Tree Stump Weedkiller that has a label recommendation for controlling Japanese knotweed. It typically takes three years to treat Japanese knotweed using this method.

### Bury it

You are legally allowed to bury Japanese knotweed at the site as long as you bury it at a depth of at least five metres, cover the plant remains with a material that does not allow the plant to grow through it (known as a root barrier) and do not bury any other waste with it. CuTex Copper Root Barrier is ideal, functioning as both a physical and a chemical barrier.

### Seek professional help

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors has worked with the Property Care Association to establish a trade body for Japanese knotweed specialists in the UK, where you can find a register of vetted consultants and contractors. Find out more at [www.property-care.org](http://www.property-care.org)



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## Create your own DIY BAR



GARDENING

When it comes to entertaining at home, there's one thing everyone needs – a garden bar. Garden bars have grown in popularity in recent years, and you can easily build your own with a little creativity and determination.

Get ready to transform your garden into your new local with these tips for building the perfect garden bar.

**HOW BIG CAN YOU GO?** Garden bars come in all shapes and sizes. From a tiki bar to your own garden pub complete with flat-screen TV and pool table, you can be as ambitious as you like. Decide on your budget and how much space you have to create the perfect outdoor bar.

**TRY DIY OR READY-MADE.** A DIY garden bar is the perfect chance to get creative. You can use recycled materials and design a space that's ideal for your needs. Alternatively, you can find ready-made garden bars in places like Argos or Etsy, or hire someone to custom build your bar.

Using a pre-existing structure, such as a shed or potting bench, your extension or garage, could also help you make the most of your garden space, and give you a good foundation for your garden bar.

**MAKE IT SHELTERED.** Some shelter is a must for any British garden bar. Whether you choose to have your bar enclosed or build a solid weatherproof canopy, having shelter will protect your bar while helping you make the most of it in any weather.

**ADD APPLIANCES AND STORAGE.** From fridges to pumps and spirit dispensers, your garden bar can have it all. Buy your equipment and get it installed by professionals to make sure the job is done safely. Don't forget to add storage.

**BUY SOME ACCESSORIES.** Some of the essentials you'll need for your garden bar include: Glasses (you could create your own labels too) | Bottle holders | Ice bucket | Cocktail shakers | Towel hooks | Bottle openers/corkscrews

**GIVE IT A NAME.** Once your bar is all in place, the last thing to do is give it a name. Name it something unique – it's your bar, after all.

Photo credit: Allen Whitbread/Liberty/Games, Future Plc/Joanna Henderson, Future Plc/Simon Whitmore, Future Plc/Tim Young all via IdealHome.co.uk





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# Planting A PALM TREE



GARDENING

A huge trend this summer, palm trees make a great addition to any garden. Although most palm trees need warmer climates, there are some that are suitable for planting outdoors in the UK.

**CHOOSING A PALM TREE:** You need to choose a hardier variety of palm tree if you want it to be able to survive the cold and frost. There are three types of palms that have a track record of growing well in the UK. These are Chusan Palm (*Trachycarpus*), Dwarf Fan Palm (*Chamaerops*) and Needle Palm (*Rhapidophyllum*).

**PLANTING A PALM TREE:** You can plant palm trees at any time of the year, although during spring or early summer is best as this will give your palm five or six months to grow strong before the first frost. Palm trees love a sunny position so are perfect for patio pots or for areas in your garden that get ample sunlight.

**TO PLANT IN THE GROUND:**

- > Dig a hole twice as wide and a few

- inches deeper than the root ball.
- > Add a handful of slow-release palm fertiliser to the centre of the hole.
- > Remove the root ball from its container and carefully straighten out any coiled roots.
- > Place the top of the root ball in the hole and fill with one-half soil and one-half rotted manure or compost.
- > Make sure that the palm trunk is not deeper than it was in its original container and that the roots are not at all exposed.
- > Water the palm tree – aim for between 10 and 20 per cent of the original container size. The soil should be wet, not soggy.
- > Apply a six-inch layer of mulch over the root zone.
- > Water again.

**CARING FOR A PALM TREE:**

- > Water your newly planted palm daily for the first two months.
- > After three or four months, apply a slow-release fertiliser for palms.
- > Wrap the trunk in the winter with water pipe insulation or heat tape.



Photo credit: palmcentre.co.uk





MOTORING



# DEATH TRAP

THE DANGERS POSED BY LOOSE OBJECTS IN YOUR CAR

We all know the dangers represented by cars and, as responsible drivers, invest time and effort in protecting the occupants of our cars from the dangers of the road. Yet what if there were a collection of hazards inside our vehicles – things that account for more than 15,000 injuries every year?

What we're talking about here is the threat posed by everyday items within a car. From a metal tissue box on the back shelf to dashboard air fresheners, from tablets and devices right the way through to cans of drink and snacks. The point is, when a collision occurs, it's not just the things on the outside of the vehicle that can cause harm.

A string of recent awareness campaigns has been designed to make motorists more aware of the risks when our vehicles are decorated with possessions. Securing items or, better still, putting

them away in door or back-of-seat pockets, or the glove compartment, ensures that if impact occurs, those possessions won't come hurtling through the air towards you.

Think carefully about luggage storage, make sure floor mats are secured in the correct positions, and do your best to keep pets secured and still.

Furthermore, if you think the threat of being hit by a loose or unsecured object in your car only comes about in the event of a road traffic accident, think again. Anything from sharp cornering to speed bumps may dislodge an item and send it on a path towards you or your passengers.

In the modern era, cars are more and more becoming extensions of our home. While that gives us the chance to adorn them with small items and luxuries, it's always smart to keep a close eye on the potential danger they might pose.

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**POTATO MILK**  
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FOOD & DRINK

**P**otato milk? As in milk from potatoes? While it may seem weird, potato milk – which is actually just starchy water that resembles milk – is packed full of nutrients and can make a great alternative to dairy milk.

### WHAT IS POTATO MILK AND WHAT DOES IT TASTE LIKE?

Potato milk is a creamy, milk-like liquid that is made from potatoes. You can find potato milk that is sweetened and unsweetened, with the latter tasting slightly salty. In terms of consistency and colour, it is more like soy milk than dairy milk and offers both the creaminess and fattiness you expect from a milk product.

### WHAT ARE THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF POTATO MILK?

- Low in sugar and saturated fat
- Contains vitamin C
- Contains fibre
- Rich in antioxidants
- Can enhance digestion
- Good for vegans and those with dairy allergies or intolerances

### WHY CHOOSE POTATO MILK?

The main selling point of potato milk as a vegan and dairy-free alternative is its sustainability credentials. Growing potatoes is twice as land-efficient as growing oats, uses 56 times less water than growing almonds, and has a much smaller climate footprint than dairy milk.

### HOW TO MAKE POTATO MILK

You can buy potato milk from some supermarkets (it can be found under the brand name DUG) or you could try making your own with the below recipe:

- Boil 1½ cups of sliced potatoes in 4 cups of water until tender but not falling apart.
- Pour the leftover liquid into a blender.
- Add the cooked potato with 1 tsp vanilla extract, ¼ cup of almonds and 2 tbsp of honey or maple syrup to sweeten, and blend well.
- Strain your potato milk through a fine-mesh sieve, cheesecloth or tea towel – you may need to do this twice.



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# Go Wild

**W**ild garlic can be enjoyed raw or cooked and has one of the longest seasons of all wild plants. The ideal vegetable for first-time foragers, this milder variety of garlic can be added to a whole host of dishes.

by its long and pointed green leaves and white clustered flowers. It typically grows in dense clumps.

**WHEN IS WILD GARLIC IN SEASON?**  
Wild garlic leaves appear in March and are best picked when young. These leaves are delicious added to soups, sauces and pesto. From April to June, the flowers start to emerge and these make a great addition to salads and sandwiches.

**WHAT TO DO WITH WILD GARLIC**  
Wild garlic pesto | Wild garlic and nettle soup | Wild garlic butter | Wild garlic chicken kiev | Wild garlic and watercress tart | Baked new potatoes with wilted wild garlic

**WHAT DOES WILD GARLIC TASTE LIKE?**  
All parts of the wild garlic plant are safe to eat, including the bulb, leaves and flowers. Wild garlic is less pungent than standard garlic cloves, delivering a sweeter and more delicate taste. If you pick a wild garlic leaf and gently squeeze it, you will instantly be met with the distinctive garlicky aroma.

**WHERE TO FIND WILD GARLIC**  
Wild garlic grows in damp woodlands and forests across the UK and throughout Europe and is often found near rivers or streams where the ground is damp. Wild garlic is recognisable

**HOW TO STORE WILD GARLIC**  
Wild garlic can be stored in an airtight container in the fridge for 1-2 days. If you want to keep your wild garlic fresh for longer, place the stems in a glass of water and place in the fridge. Wild garlic is suitable for freezing. Simply wash and dry, and then place in a freezer bag and freeze.



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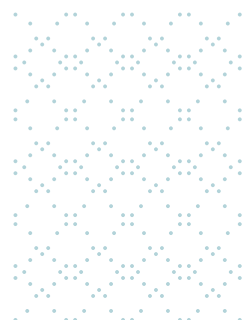
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# Sun, Sea and Sand

## THE SECRET TO BETTER HEALTH?

**W**hen the sun's out, there's one place we all want to go – the beach. A trip to the beach gives us those feel-good vibes, reminding us of holidays and childhood outings. But did you know that a visit to the beach can give you a health boost? Discover some of the health benefits of a trip to the beach.

It's harder to walk on sand than on concrete or other surfaces, so you'll burn energy as you move. You could even try running on the sand for an even bigger workout.

*It helps you get your dose of vitamin D*  
Vitamin D is known for boosting your immune system and maintaining strong teeth and bones. And one of the best ways to get it is from the sun. A trip to the beach on a sunny day can help you get a dose of vitamin D that can do wonders for your health.

If you're feeling brave, jump in the sea and enjoy a swim. A lot of people find this invigorating and great for their health. The seawater can also help alleviate symptoms of arthritis and even skin conditions like eczema and psoriasis.

*Sunlight is good for your sleep*  
Getting outdoors during the day is good for regulating your serotonin levels. This can help you sleep easier, enabling you to get into a sleep pattern to make sure you get the rest you need. Spending time outdoors is also good for your mental health, helping to reduce depression and other conditions.

*The sea air could help you relax*  
Breathing in the sea air could be just what you need to help you relax. The negative ions have a calming effect, helping to ease stress and boost your mood. The sea air has also been said to help reduce the symptoms of asthma, improve allergies and alleviate respiratory problems.

*Walking on the sand is great for fitness*  
Taking a walk on sand can be a big calorie

burner. Next time you're feeling down and in need of a quick pick-me-up, head to your nearest beach and take advantage of this natural health booster.





# GET READY TO *ice-roll*



The beauty world is currently going crazy for cold, with a massive surge in popularity for treatments such as ice baths, cryotherapy and cool sculpting.

So, what is the latest freezing fashion? Introducing ice-rolling, the new skincare technique that promises to tighten and brighten in an instant.

### WHAT IS ICE-ROLLING?

The process of ice-rolling is actually very simple and involves massaging your face with an ice-roller. This nifty gadget contains a mixture of gel and water which turns to ice once placed in the freezer. However, unlike normal ice, which when placed on the face melts in a matter of seconds, the ice within an ice-roller will stay solid for longer so you have more time to reap the rewards.

### HOW DO I USE AN ICE-ROLLER?

- For best results:
1. Roll the device in a zigzag motion up and down your forehead and then from left to right.
  2. Move down to beside your nose and lower cheek, working upwards and applying a little pressure.

3. Roll outwards on the sides of your mouth and then down under your chin.
4. Finish with your neck.
5. An ice-roller can also be used on your collarbone and upper chest if desired.

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF USING AN ICE-ROLLER?

There are multiple benefits to using an ice-roller, both in terms of the massage technique used and the application of cold. These include:

- > Boosts circulation
- > Restores radiance
- > Encourages optimum skin cell function
- > Reduces puffiness and redness
- > Reduces the appearance of broken capillaries
- > Decreases any inflammation
- > Tightens the skin

### DOES ICE-ROLLING HURT?

Although some cold therapies can be a little bit uncomfortable, ice-rolling is not one of them. However, it is recommended that you do not leave the roller on one area for too long as it will get very cold, and this can cause discomfort.



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# Flip OFF



**A** summer footwear essential for many, you may be surprised to learn just how bad this flimsy footwear can be for your overall foot health.

falling off, which could lead to dangerous driving. It is, however, illegal to ride a motorcycle while wearing flip flops.

**RISK OF SPRAINS:** Although flip flops are fine for the occasional trip to the beach, when worn all day, they can cause your feet to start to turn towards the middle of your body instead of staying straight. This can put you at a much greater risk of spraining your ankle.

**EXPOSURE TO SHARP OBJECTS:** Flip flops are not known for their sturdiness, and as they become worn down, you may find your feet on the receiving end of a sharp nail or piece of glass.

**LACK OF SUPPORT:** Flip flops provide a distinct lack of arch support, which can cause your plantar (the band of tissue in the arch of your foot) to start to pull. This can lead to a painful condition called plantar fasciitis, which may need a combination of physical therapy, anti-inflammatory medications and possibly even cortisol injections to treat.

Footwear styles that are healthier AND more stylish than flip flops: Sandals | Espadrilles | Woven slip-ons | Boat shoes | Penny loafers.

**TWISTING OF TOES:** As the name suggests, flip flops tend to be floppy, meaning you will often have to curl your toes down to stop them flying off while you walk. Over time, this can mean the toes stay fixed in this curled position, causing an affliction called hammertoe.

**COULD CAUSE DANGEROUS DRIVING:** Although there is no law in the UK that explicitly bans wearing flip flops while driving, it does put you at higher risk of an accident. Their lightweight design makes them prone to







# BITCOIN *for beginners*

The cryptocurrency market has exploded in the last few years, with everyone from Elon Musk to Snoop Dogg enjoying a slice of this highly lucrative pie.

If you think you'd like to test the cryptocurrency waters, then the below beginner's guide is just what you need.

### Choose a cryptocurrency trading programme

When choosing a trading programme, you want one that is regulated so that you feel safe in your investment. You should also look at how easy it is for you to withdraw funds. The most popular cryptocurrency trading programmes in the UK are eToro, CoinMama, PrimeXBT, and BlackBull Markets.

### Pick crypto to invest in

Most active cryptocurrency traders allocate the majority of their investment to either Bitcoin or Ethereum, as these move more predictably than smaller altcoins. That being said, you may also choose to invest in smaller mid-market cap cryptos as, although riskier, this can deliver higher returns.

### Select your strategy

If you google 'crypto-trading strategies', you will be met with nearly 110 million results, which can make the strategy process a little confusing. For those who are completely new to trading, we recommend that you book onto a cryptocurrency trading course such as 'Become a Trader' with TradeCobb or 'Cryptocurrency Fundamentals' by Udemy.

### Consider automated crypto trading

Another option for beginners is to utilise the services of an automated crypto-trading platform such as eToro or Learn2Trade. These work by using trading bots to enact a strategy that is based on your investment goals.

### Our top trading tips for beginners

- Start with a small investment
- Choose a secure wallet to keep your digital assets safe
- Research the market thoroughly first
- Set stop-loss levels and stick to them
- Don't be afraid to diversify your portfolio
- Do not let your emotions dictate your decisions.

## SELLING YOUR HOUSE? THIS IS YOUR GUIDE TO AN OPEN HOUSE

When you hear the term 'open house' you often think of the typically American version where a 'Real estate agent' opens the doors and lets anyone come in for a nosy around whilst being served drinks and nibbles and being sold the features of the property but this isn't how most UK open houses are held.

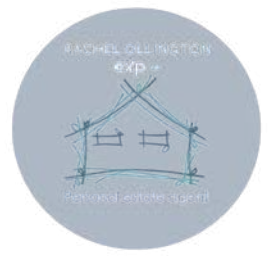
With the market being so fast paced open houses are becoming more and more popular and a great way to make sure all buyers have a fair chance at securing the property and that the seller sells to the best buyer for them for the best possible price.

Open houses are great for you as a seller in terms of hosting viewings as it will be a set day and time, so rather than having to live in a show home or have a mad dash clean and tidy every time someone wants to pop in for a 15 minute viewing you can prepare and make you home viewing ready for the one open day.

If you have an agent hosting your viewings it also helps you manage your time, instead of having to go out when you would usually be having your dinner or ready to watch your favourite programme, you can plan a nice day out whilst the agent hosts a block of viewings (this is particularly useful for getting children and pets out for viewings)

I always hold an open house by appointment only this is for the security of the property and the estate agent so you know exactly who is coming to the house and when. This also allows you to find out what position the potential buyer is in prior to the viewing.

Whilst I am a fan, I do understand like with anything there are downsides too, the open day does need to be on a day/time that is going to be most convenient for the majority which might not be for you. Some viewers may not be able to make the agreed slot so it may mean you lose out on one or two buyers. If an agent is hosting your viewings it has to be within their working hours, when they can allocate 4 hours to dedicate to your viewings.



- HIGHLIGHTS:**
- VIEWINGS BY APPOINTMENT ONLY
  - 3/4 HOURS ON A WEEKEND
  - BOOK VIEWINGS EVERY 15/30 MINUTES (DEPENDING ON THE SIZE)
  - PLAN A NICE DAY OUT



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# PICTURE Perfect



## Getting your home ready for those seller snaps

You shouldn't judge a book by its cover, but that's exactly what happens when potential buyers explore a house for sale. Those seller images have become increasingly important for putting your home in the best light and generating interest in your property.

Take a look at these tips to get your home ready for those all-important photos:

- > Put away all clutter. If it doesn't need to be there, get rid of it.
- > Clear the worktops and put accessories away; it will help to create a more spacious look.
- > Add flowers and other decorative features to give a more homely feel.
- > Make sure windows and other glass surfaces are fully wiped and dust-free.
- > Hide away unsightly items like bins.
- > Curate your toiletries so they don't appear cluttered – put out your most premium products.
- > Fold any towels neatly, and don't leave wet towels lying around.
- > Make sure curtains are properly hemmed and dust-free.
- > Make all beds and change your bedding regularly.
- > Put away all your shoes and clothes.
- > Create an ambience with a lit fire and candles.
- > Make the front of your house more appealing by keeping the lawn mowed and bins out of sight.
- > Give your garden a once-over to remove any debris.
- > Put the toilet lid down – nobody wants to look inside someone's toilet.
- > Finally, get into the habit of regular cleaning to keep your home dust-free and sparkling.

These easy tips will help your home look its best in seller photos, and will hopefully inspire someone else to make memories there.



# Penny FOR YOUR THOUGHTS



## HOW THE SIMPLE PENNY BLACK STAMP KICKSTARTED A SOCIAL REVOLUTION IN THE UK

In 2022, the Penny Black is one of the most sought-after stamps philatelists seek out. Not just expensive, it also represents a cornerstone in the world of collecting; it's something of a rite of passage to own one.

Yet for all its perceived collectable and material worth today – the first Penny Black stamp was recently listed by Sotheby's with a possible sale price of up to £6million, although it failed to sell – the name itself reveals very simple beginnings.

The stamp, impeccable in its design and rich in simplicity, and bearing the image of Queen Victoria in profile, was a communication revolution upon its launch on May 6, 1840.

Quite simply, it enabled anyone to send a letter weighing up to half an ounce to any destination in the country, for just one penny.

It opened up a platform for people in all locations and of all social classes to be able to connect with

one another – previously, the idea of sending a letter was complex and expensive, with the recipient required to pay to receive mail.

This dawning of social communication was brought about by Robert Wallace, an MP who led a commission on postal reform, and was brought to life by Sir Rowland Hill in the form of prepaid postage. As well as enabling all levels of society to communicate with each other, it led to a huge boom in business and commerciality.

In total, 68 million of these stamps were used – that's a considerable number given that the entire UK population in 1840 was around a quarter of that figure.

These days, our postal system is complex, convoluted and extremely competitive. While the Penny Black had simplicity at its heart, it also represents the kind of revolution that modern postal service providers will never be able to replicate.



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