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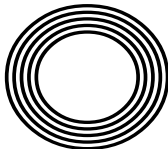
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NOVEMBER 2023

Editor's notes...



Nik Allen, Editor

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

I've heard about kids going bonkers over conkers - yet now the schools are getting in on the act too.

I'm not someone who is easily riled up, but even I'm surprised at the dismay caused by an inanimate inch-wide object. The consternation came about when my niece's school banned the seed because one mother claimed her little one had a conker allergy.

Even the NHS states (a) "conkers do not pose any anaphylactic threat" and (b) "there is no prescribed evidence that exists that horse chestnuts cause an allergic reaction".

And if the threat were real, this is not the way society works. Parents and children are very capable of going out there in the world equipped with the knowledge and tools to avoid danger when it arises. If I were this parent, I would be embarrassed. They are not helping their child adapt to real life.

To cancel the fun of hundreds for the debatable protection of one is bad; to do it without even researching the facts is sadly reflective of where we are today, and people are growing tired of it.

Until next month, take care of yourself, each other, and your conkers!

Nik Allen

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MARKING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF DOCTOR WHO – THE MAN, THE WOMAN, THE SHOW, THE MOVEMENT

Asking celebrities how they remain so youthful has become par for the course, but none has achieved as much ongoing success and vigorous relevance as the great Doctor, who at 60 is looking pretty fresh.

On Christmas Day, the Doctor's latest regeneration will be revealed, but not before some highly anticipated TV specials for the show's anniversary in November.

Making his grand return as the fourteenth Doctor, fan favourite David Tennant is set to wow once more for three anniversary episodes. The Scottish actor originally starred as the tenth Doctor from 2005 until his final episode aired on New Year's Day in 2010. Catherine Tate will also reprise her role as the Doctor's companion Donna Noble, with Neil Patrick Harris also joining the cast.

Though Patrick Harris is a newcomer to the *Doctor Who* fold, his character, The Toymaker, is not. First appearing in a now classic episode titled *The Celestial Toymaker*, from the show's third season in 1966, he was originally portrayed by actor Michael Gough.

The Toymaker is a memorable antagonist owing



to his whimsical yet sinister demeanour and his ability to create intricate and deadly challenges for the Doctor and his companions. The character's distinctive appearance and personality have made him a notable figure in the show's lore, one that aligns perfectly with Patrick Harris' dramatic and theatrical flair.

One of the greatest success stories for the BBC, *Doctor Who* began in 1963 when Sydney Newman OC, the corporation's head of drama, tasked producer Verity Lambert OBE and writer Anthony Coburn with creating a TV science fiction series. Their vision gave birth to *Doctor Who*, a show that would combine history, adventure and futuristic concepts in a unique way.

William Hartnell portrayed the original incarnation of the Doctor, a mysterious Time Lord with the ability to regenerate. The Doctor, along with his granddaughter Susan and two teachers, Ian and Barbara, travelled in the TARDIS, a time machine that looked like a 1960s British police box on the outside.

The series is listed in the Guinness World Records as the longest-running science fiction television series in the world, with Tom Baker holding the title for starring in the highest number of episodes – a whopping 178.

Despite its popularity, *Doctor Who* faced a significant hurdle in 1989 when it went on an extended hiatus. Aside from a TV film in 1996, the Doctor would not be fully regenerated until 2005.

This was the beginning of the show's modern era, helmed by writer and showrunner Russell T. Davies OBE and starring Christopher Eccleston as the ninth Doctor.

The most recent revamp of the series sees Davies return as the showrunner, taking over from Chris Chibnall who

introduced Jodie Whittaker as the 13th Doctor. Hot on the heels of his 2021 success *It's a Sin*, and with *Sex Education* star Ncuti Gatwa playing the 14th Doctor, Davies is in a fine position to return the show to its noughties glory.

The King's NEW COINS UNVEILED



SHOWCASING HIS PASSION FOR CONSERVATION AND EQUALITY

When His Majesty King Charles III was crowned, he thanked the public for their kindness and encouragement, and vowed that he and Her Majesty Queen Camilla would rededicate their lives “to serving the people of the United Kingdom, the Realms and Commonwealth”. Putting his money where his mouth is, quite literally, the edge inscription of the new £2 coin reads ‘In servitio omnium’, which means ‘In the service of all’. It was taken from the King’s inaugural speech on September 9, 2022, and chosen by him personally.

The coin is one of eight that have been unveiled by The Royal Mint, ranging from 1p to £2. Determined to distinguish his reign from that of his beloved mother, the King has also embossed them with another of his great passions: nature.

Featuring endangered species from across the British Isles, such as the puffin, the red squirrel and the bee, along with flowers and the oak tree leaf, the coins reflect His Majesty’s devotion to conservation and equality.

Here is the full list:

- **1p coin:** Hazel dormouse... which has seen its population halve since 2007
- **2p coin:** Red squirrel... expected to blend into the colour of the copper coin
- **5p coin:** Oak tree leaf... a rich habitat for biodiversity in woodland areas with a long monarchic association
- **10p coin:** Capercaillie... found in a small part of Scotland and threatened with extinction
- **20p coin:** Puffin... 10 per cent of the world population is on the UK’s coastline
- **50p coin:** Atlantic salmon... at threat from river pollution and habitat loss
- **£1 coin:** Bees... 250 species found in the UK
- **£2 coin:** National flowers – a rose (England), a daffodil (Wales), a thistle (Scotland), a shamrock (Northern Ireland)

The coins will replace those designed by Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 2008 and may be in use by the end of 2023, but The Mint has confirmed that all existing currency remains legal tender.

Photo credit: royalmint.com

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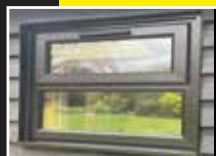
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HOW TO USE DARK PAINT WHEN DECORATING THIS AUTUMN/WINTER

As we step into autumn, interior design is turning towards the snug and inviting. One of the biggest trends making waves in the world of home décor is the use of paints in all sorts of moody hues. So if you're fed up with all those whites and pale greys, read on and discover how dark paint colours have so many advantages.

1 CREATE A COSY HAVEN

Dramatic colour doesn't have to mean stark charcoals and deep navy blues. For something more alluring, think about using warm, earthy tones like dark beige, deep terracotta or green. These nature-inspired tones will help transform your space into a cocoon-like sanctuary.

2 SEAMLESS EDGES

If you're using dark paints, why not go all in? A dark feature wall won't change the look of your room much or make it look bigger. But if you paint all your walls, woodwork and ceiling the same colour, it can look fabulous. The uniform colour blurs the room's edges, making it appear more spacious. So it's a great idea for small spaces.

3 SOFT AND INVITING

Matt paint and natural pigments will soften the overall look of your walls, making moody colours less imposing and more welcoming. For woodwork, opt for an eggshell finish to blend into your matt walls.

4 AS DEEP AS YOU DARE

Blacks can look great on walls, but many have blue undertones, which will look cool. That's perfect if that's what you're after. But for something warmer, choose a black with brown undertones.

As autumn takes hold, it's time for a paint adventure. Remember, paint can be changed if you don't like it. So unleash your inner decorator, invest in some sample paint pots, and get ready to welcome colourful warmth into your living space.



HOME & DIY



Photo credit: farrowball.com

How to make a Christmas CUTLERY POUCH

COVER your cutlery with Christmas cheer with this simple and stylish craft. All you need are a few materials and some basic sewing skills and you are good to go!

YOU WILL NEED:

A sewing machine or needle and thread | A rotary cutter or pair of sharp scissors | A ruler | Cotton fabric fat quarters in your preferred Christmas colours or patterns | 2 x pieces of festive ribbon or trim (optional)

HOW TO MAKE:

Step 1: Cut your fabric

To create your pouch, you will need two pieces of fabric in contrasting colours or patterns. These need to be cut to 38cm x 12cm.

Step 2: Decide on your layout

One piece of fabric will be used to make the inside of your pouch and the other will be used as the flap. Your cutlery will lie on the inside fabric and be covered by the outside one.

Step 3: Place your fabrics face to face

Next, place your two fabrics face to face. If the flap fabric has a pattern, this needs to be placed upside down. Using a 10mm seam allowance, stitch around the two pieces of fabric using a sewing machine or by hand. Leave a 4cm gap at the bottom for turning.

Step 4: Clip the corners

Clip the corners of the fabrics, making sure not to cut the stitches, then turn the pouch the right way in. Pop out the corners using a pencil and then iron gently to smooth out the fabrics. Sew up the gap.

Step 5: Add ribbon or trim

If you want to add ribbon or a trim, lay out your pouch and sew the pieces of ribbon or trim to the edge that will turn up to make the flap.

Step 6: Complete the pouch

Fold the flap over with a 13cm measurement and iron it in place. Carefully tuck the ends of the trim inside and pin it in place. Sew all the way around the pouch as close to the edge as you can to create a top stitch.



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TOP TIPS FOR COMBINING CONFLICTING FABRICS TO CREATE HARMONIOUS HOME DÉCOR

We're conditioned to think about our home interiors in ways that mean they match, complement and merge in the most perfect of ways.

Yet true innovation often brings about conflicting elements, so why not try these juicy style juxtapositions en route to awesome in-home ambience?

LEATHER AND WOOD

Sumptuous soft leather against solid wood is about as luxurious as you can get in a modern home. From leather cushions on a wooden bench or a walnut wood bedframe with leather panelling, the contrast between hard and soft is impossible to resist.

SUEDE AND COTTON

Both are beautifully soft, and yet the rugged texture of suede almost feuds violently with the plush softness of cotton. Ideal for brightening up bland bedding, suede cushions are the perfect foil to give your bedroom a hotel feel before removing for a restful night of sleep.

WOOL AND SILK

Wool and silk may be the oddest of bedfellows, but together they conspire to make something rather beautiful. From luxurious rugs to coveted curtains and upholstery for almost anything, the colour, quality and sheer beauty combined make this a dream duo.

TWEED AND CORD

Tweed is a very harsh material that has bundles of presence, which is why you should match it with something softer, like cord. Both have a vintage and almost classic feel, which works perfectly for a formal sitting room.

CHROME AND GLASS

Creating an almost retro/futuristic feel, the stunning mirror shine with the transparency of glass transforms an ordinary coffee table into a futuristic centrepiece.

Photo credit: naturalbedcompany.co.uk, swy/home.com, bakerandstonehouse.co.uk, furnituredox.co.uk



Whiffy WASHING

Do you sometimes forget to take your washing out of the machine and it all starts to smell a bit musty? Or perhaps your washing machine is past its best and prone to bad odours? Either way, if you want your laundry to smell amazing, try these top tips and tricks.

TACKLE MUSTY SMELLS

If you have left laundry in your washing machine for too long, it may start to smell a little musty. Fortunately, you can easily rectify this by filling your machine with the hottest water your clothes will tolerate and adding one cup of vinegar. Leave to soak for 10 minutes and then wash as usual but with the addition of one cup of baking soda. Voilà no more musty smells!

PRE-TREAT SMELLY STAINS

If an item of clothing has a bad odour owing to a smelly stain, then simply mix one tablespoon of baking soda with a little bit of water to form a paste and then apply directly to the offending spot.

Allow it to sit for 10 minutes and then wash in your washing machine on its usual cycle.

MAKE YOUR OWN DRYER SHEETS

Dryer sheets have a number of uses, such as to soften, eliminate static and remove bad odours, and you can easily make your own. All you need is a small piece of cotton fabric from an old t-shirt or sheet and 5-10 drops of an essential oil such as lavender or eucalyptus. Place in your dryer for the last 10 minutes and your clothes will smell amazing.

USE SCENTED DETERGENTS OR FABRIC SOFTENER

One of the simplest ways to make your washing smell good is to use a scented washing powder or fabric softener. However, it is worth noting that these can leave residue in your machine, which can cause mildew over time.



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INTERIOR DESIGN PROFILE

HOME & DIY

NICOLA HARDING & Co.



After five years of working with landscape designer Arne Maynard, Nicola Harding decided to launch her own studio in 2008, a move that has seen her become one of the UK's most respected designers.

Her work has a classic touch, made timeless with the right pieces and colours creating looks that are unique, but work perfectly for the spaces they're in. If you love flashes of colour and quirky features, then Nicola Harding could serve as your perfect designer inspiration.

ABOUT NICOLA HARDING

According to Harding: "Our aim is to create places rich in atmosphere, places people feel enchanted by and connected to, places people quickly feel at home in."

This comes from Harding's background of living on military bases that had a standard design, where the smallest personal touches could make a space feel more like home.

Harding's designs are full of personality, using the history of the property to create designs that work with the features, bringing them to life through the pieces and textures that then make the space feel loved and warm. From antique furniture to bespoke pieces, the result is effortlessly charming, a look that people fall in love with.

BRINGING NICOLA'S STYLE INTO YOUR HOME

What's fantastic about Nicola Harding's portfolio is that every space is unique. This makes it easy to create similar looks in your home, but with your own personality shining through. Some tips for emulating some of Harding's wonderful style include:

- > Use colour in unexpected ways. From doorways to ceilings, you can use colour in different places to add quirky accents. A dusky or pale pink on the walls keeps the space light, while vibrant blue or green furniture will add some interest. Choose a neutral shade to paint skirtings and coving to break things up and bring your colour scheme together.
- > Enhance your home's existing features. If you have archways or beautiful fireplace settings, why not paint them to make them more of a feature?
- > Consider adding furniture that's of the property's time, with antique finds providing a sustainable way to decorate your home. Keep an eye out for dressers, sideboards and lamps that have hand-carved details, as well as metallic hardware to make the look more high-end.
- > Use tonal elements to bring together different colour palettes. Using different shades of a single colour (pink and grey are popular choices), as well as patterned looks for your furniture, such as sofas and accent chairs and textiles (rugs, cushions, curtains), adds layers to the room and can quickly add interest and personality.



Photo credit: nicolaharding.com



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FROM YOUR AREA



LOCAL NEWS

Man jailed after abusing 999 emergency line



Photo credit: Essex Police

A Wickford man has been sentenced to 10 weeks in prison after repeatedly calling Essex Police's Force Control Room.

Leonard Lowe, 65 (pictured above), was arrested on June 22 after Essex Police received more than 3,000 calls from him over the course of six months.

None of Lowe's 3,007 calls required an emergency response. During these calls, Lowe would make sexually explicit comments to call handlers, report false crimes and complain about GP waiting times.

Following his arrest, he was charged on June 23 with persistently making use of a public communication network to cause annoyance, inconvenience or anxiety.

He appeared at Southend Magistrates' Court on September 21, having previously pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to 10 weeks in prison. He was also issued with a Criminal Behaviour Order which prohibits him from calling 999 unless he is reporting a genuine emergency.

He was ordered to pay £300 in compensation.

Windmill wins 'Hidden Gem' accolade

Rayleigh Windmill, a 214-year-old Grade II listed landmark, has won the Hidden Gem award in the prestigious Visitor Attraction Accolades for 2022/23.

The structure serves as both a museum and an exhibition space, offering a journey through history and also providing insights into Rayleigh Mount.

The accolades are the result of rigorous evaluation conducted through the VisitEngland Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme.

Councillor Julie Gooding, Rochford Council's lead member for leisure, tourism and wellbeing, said: "We know the windmill is a hidden gem so it's great that this has been recognised by VisitEngland. Thank you to our dedicated staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to preserve and share the rich heritage of the windmill."

Chef backs petition after brain tumour diagnosis

A Wickford chef who was diagnosed with a brain tumour is urging people to sign a petition calling for greater investment into research for the disease.

Prior to his diagnosis, John Lawson (pictured below) worked in restaurants around the world alongside the likes of Gordon Ramsay OBE and Raymond Blanc OBE, worked as a private chef for celebrity families, and appeared on a host of reality TV shows.

When he began experiencing blackouts and dizziness in December 2014, John was diagnosed with a grade 2 oligodendroglioma.

The subsequent biopsy caused him to suffer an uncommon form of stroke and he required months of intense rehabilitation, including speech therapy.

John then underwent a craniotomy, during which more than 90 per cent of the tumour was removed.

Now, he is campaigning alongside Brain Tumour Research to help its petition reach 100,000 signatures, in the hope of prompting a Parliamentary debate.

John said: "We need to bring the survival rates for brain tumour patients in line with that of other cancers, like breast cancer."

To view the petition, visit www.braintumourresearch.org/pages/brain-tumour-research-petition



Photo credit: Brain Tumour Research

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MARK FRANCOIS MP

Conservative MP Rayleigh and Wickford



Photo credit: Mark Francois MP

I very much welcome the recent announcement that the government will withdraw its planned proposals to close railway ticket offices.

As someone who has campaigned actively against these proposals, I believe that this is undoubtedly the right decision. During a debate in Westminster Hall in September, I said to the Railway Minister Huw Merriman MP the following:

"In all seriousness, I offer him and the government some genuine advice: look around. The proposals are completely unloved. They are not popular even among conservative backbenchers – quite, quite the opposite. I urge the minister to accept that a mistake has been made. It may not have been his mistake, but I say to him: take the hint, drop it, get rid of it and retreat gracefully. Do not press forward with this. The House of Commons does not want it and nor do our

constituents."

In a response to the Passenger Bodies on Ticket Office Consultation, the Transport Secretary Mark Harper MP said: "We have engaged with accessibility groups throughout this process and listened carefully to passengers as well as my colleagues in Parliament. The proposals that have resulted from this process do not meet the high thresholds set by ministers, and so the government has asked train operators to withdraw their proposals."

In summary, I am delighted that common sense has prevailed. The government has listened to the strong criticism of the proposals and responded accordingly. These plans proved highly unpopular in my constituency and so I am pleased that the government has taken this on board, not least for the benefit of my constituents, who felt very strongly about this issue.

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Exploring the expansive corners of Hatfield Forest

In west Essex on the border of Hertfordshire lies a treasure trove of natural beauty: Hatfield Forest. This enchanting forest, once a royal hunting ground, is a special place where age-old landscapes have been preserved and history echoes through every leaf and branch.

The forest, which spans more than 1,000 acres, features coppiced trees, ancient wood pasture and shimmering lake, making it a paradise for nature lovers, walkers and picnickers alike.

Hatfield Forest isn't just about natural beauty, though. It was preserved as a hunting ground by William the Conqueror and is steeped in centuries of history. It's a living, breathing relic of medieval England, and stories of past royalty and deer hunts are woven into the very fabric of the woodland.

Boundary disputes have dominated much of Hatfield Forest's past, and these dividing lines remain intact to this day, despite the fact that renowned landscape designer Capability Brown was invited to modify elements in the 18th century.

In later times, the Victorians explored agricultural use, and during the Second World War, some parts of the forest even came under military occupation.

These days, the expansive setting is carefully protected by the National Trust, offering accessibility for locals and visitors alike, who are invited to have a picnic in the open grasslands, enjoy the tranquillity of the lake, or take a leisurely walk through the ancient woods. With the latter in mind, there are a number of designated routes that can be traversed through the forest, although some of the trails can become quite muddy during the winter months.

Regardless, Hatfield Forest, which is also marked as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, provides a beautiful escape from the modern world.

To find out more about Hatfield Forest and for visitor information, including opening times, head to www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/essex-bedfordshire-hertfordshire/hatfield-forest



Photo credit: National Trust Images James Dobson



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YOUR LOCAL EVENTS

THE FATHER CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE

Marsh Farm, Marsh Farm Road,
South Woodham Ferrers, CM3 5WP
Saturday, November 18, to Sunday,
December 24, various times



Photo credit: Marsh Farm

It's time to see who is on the naughty and nice lists at the grotto. When your name is called, you'll get to meet Father Christmas himself.

Next, you'll visit The Teddy Bear Market, where you can choose and make your very own furry friend.

Your visit to the North Pole wouldn't be complete without a trip to the Toy Shop in Elfville, where you can exchange your elf money for any toy on the shelves.

Back on the farm, you can enjoy festive rides, meet the animals, indulge in treats from the special Yuletide menu and even have a go at ice skating.

Tickets start from £35 and are available to purchase from www.marshfarm.co.uk/events/father-christmas-experience

BROADWAY CLASH

The Duke, 80 High Street, Wickford, SS12 9AT
Saturday, November 25, 8pm

Broadway Clash return to where it all started, bringing together old and new faces for a night of live Eighties music.

This event is free to attend and no booking required.

STREET FAYRE

High Street, Wickford, SS12 9AQ
Sunday, November 26, 12pm – 5pm

The town's Christmas lights will be switched on this year by BBC broadcaster Dave Monk and the Deputy Lieutenant of Essex. There will also be entertainment and a Santa parade.

This event is free to attend and no booking required.

RAY GELATO & THE GIANTS

Rettendon Lodge, Burnham Road,
Battlesbridge, Wickford, SS11 7QT
Wednesday, November 29, 7pm

Ray, a wonderful sax player and superb frontman, is influenced by the likes of Louis Prima, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr, Louis Jordan and Coleman Hawkins. The Giants' brilliant horn section is made up of Andy Rogers on trombone, Danny Marsden on trumpet and Olly Wilby on saxophone. Double bass player Manuel Alvarez and drummer Stevie Rushton are always on fire together. Completing the line-up is talented jazz pianist Gunther Kurnmayr.

Tickets cost £25 and can be purchased by visiting www.belvederejazz.co.uk/gigs

RAYLEIGH CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

The Pavilion, King George V Playing Field,
Bull Lane, Rayleigh, SS6 8JD
Thursday, November 30, 6.30pm

The Rayleigh Christmas Lights will be switched on this year by singer Megan Rose and BBC Essex.

Attractions will include school choirs, Mushroom Theatre Company, Father Christmas and sleigh, hot chestnuts, funfair rides and a variety of stalls.

This event is free to attend and no booking required.

CHRISTMAS DANCE

The Mill Arts & Events Centre, Bellingham Lane,
Rayleigh, SS6 7ED

Friday, December 8, doors open at 7pm,
music starts at 7.30pm

Get ready to jingle and mingle and let loose on the dancefloor. An exciting evening is in store with a huge variety of music.

Tickets cost £18. Book via www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/christmas-dance-tickets-733358233217



Photo credit: The Melvin Beddow Big Band

A WILL WRITER'S WORDS OF WISDOM

WORRYING PROBLEMS

If a married couple dies together, and where there is no Will, the eldest is deemed to have died first, so only the family members of the surviving spouse will inherit

Unless it has a Contemplation of Marriage clause, marriage or re-marriage invalidates a Will, requiring a new arrangement

Without a Will, spouses and civil partners are NOT automatically entitled to all of the estate assets on death, and the Government could inherit your estate if

you die with no surviving traceable relatives

Without a Will, even grandparents have NO automatic Legal Guardianship of their orphaned grandchildren

A beneficiary or their spouse should not be a witness to a Will, or they will disinherit themselves

If you have no surviving parents, siblings, grandparents, uncles or aunts, then under the Intestacy Rules, the whole estate goes to the Crown or the Duchy of Lancaster or the Duke of Cornwall

PEACE OF MIND SOLUTIONS

Always appoint charities as your final beneficiaries, to avoid your estate being claimed by the Government

By the use of a Property Protection Trust, you can ensure that if you pre-decease and your spouse remarries and has more children, your own children benefit from your share of your home, and not the new spouse. BUT if Probate is not completed, the Trust Deed will not be set up and notified at the Land Registry

A Grant of Probate confirms to Executors that they have the authority to act and carry out the wishes of the deceased

If a Named Beneficiary, Executor, Trustee or Legal Guardian changes their name, e.g., on marriage or by Deed Poll, it is not necessary to amend the Will:

documentary evidence, eg Decree Absolute, is sufficient

The estates of current or retired members of the Armed Forces, fire police and ambulance services, and most rescue organisations are entitled to exemption from Inheritance Tax if they die on active service, or if their later death was caused by an injury or disease that was received or aggravated while they were on active service

A properly worded Will could ensure that half the value of your home is potentially protected against Local Authority care home fees

There is no Inheritance Tax liability if the deceased spouse has left their entire estate to their surviving spouse or registered civil partner

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Don't ask the price, **IT'S A PENNY**

In 1884, a Polish immigrant opened a stall in Kirkgate Market in Leeds, selling household goods, haberdashery and toys for a penny a pop. Back then, who could have guessed the stall would blossom into retail giant Marks & Spencer?

and shops nationwide and a turnover of £400,000 – which is worth more than £61million today.

MARKS' SON SIMON TRANSFORMED THE BUSINESS...

SO HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

Michael Marks was born into a poor Polish Jewish family in what is now Belarus. He emigrated to England when he was 23 years old to escape persecution. He settled in Leeds and got work at John Barran & Sons' garment factory.

Marks soon branched out. He started buying goods from a local wholesaler and selling them door to door. With the profits, he opened his first market stall, known as 'Marks' Penny Bazaar', and branded it with his then-famous slogan, 'Don't ask the price, it's a penny'.

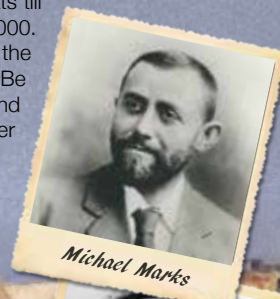
In 1894, Marks teamed up with Thomas Spencer, his wholesaler's bookkeeper. The company continued to grow. But sadly, it soon lost its two founders. Spencer died in 1905 at the age of 53, and Marks died in 1907 at just 48.

By then, the company had 145 stalls

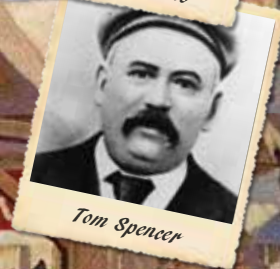
In 1926, the company was floated on the stock market and moved into clothing and food. It made its reputation by selling only British-made products. And it offered cash refunds for items, however long you'd had them, so long as you had the receipt.

Simon Marks launched the St Michael brand name in honour of his father in 1927. The name was a symbol of quality and appeared on items from ready meals to overcoats till the company rebranded in 2000.

Since the late 1990s, the company's had a rocky ride. Be that as it may, it still has around 1,500 stores and turned over £6.6billion last year.

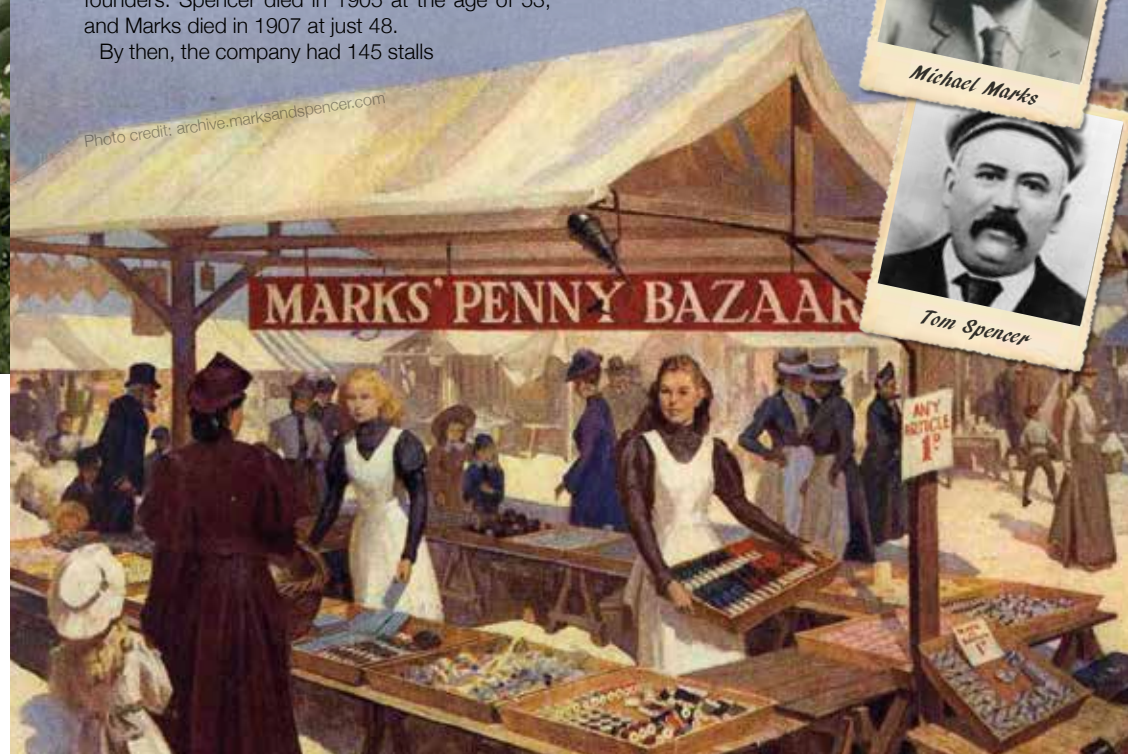


Michael Marks



Tom Spencer

Photo credit: archive.marksandspencer.com





PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

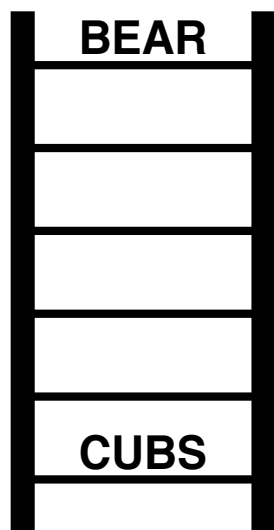
- ▶ ACTING
- ▶ ASTRONOMY
- ▶ BLOGGING
- ▶ BRIDGE
- ▶ CALLIGRAPHY
- ▶ CHESS
- ▶ COOKING
- ▶ DANCING
- ▶ GAMING
- ▶ JUGGLING
- ▶ KARAOKE
- ▶ KNITTING
- ▶ PAINTING
- ▶ PHILATELY
- ▶ PHOTOGRAPHY
- ▶ POETRY
- ▶ POTTERY
- ▶ READING
- ▶ SEWING
- ▶ WRITING

X	E	T	Y	N	B	Y	F	C	H	E	S	S	E	P
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S	G	N	I	K	O	O	C	P	E	Q	A	K	C	R

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ The earliest version of Monopoly was invented by Elizabeth Magie in 1903 and was originally called the Landlord's Game.
- ▶ The longest game of Monopoly lasted for 70 days.
- ▶ There are more than 300 varieties of Monopoly, including *Pokémon*, *Game of Thrones* and *Harry Potter* versions.
- ▶ The Monopoly Man's real name is Rich Uncle Pennybags, and he is said to be based on American investment banker J P Morgan.
- ▶ Monopoly is available in 47 languages and sold in 114 countries.
- ▶ American jeweller Sidney Mobell created a Monopoly set made of 23 carat gold, rubies and sapphires, worth £1.4million.

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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A full-page photograph of Kylie Minogue performing on stage. She is wearing a shiny, bright blue jacket over a black outfit. She has long, wavy blonde hair and is singing into a black microphone held in her right hand. Her left arm is raised, with her hand open. The background is dark with colorful stage lights, including a prominent rainbow light on the left. The text 'Kylie MINOGUE' is overlaid in the top right corner.

Kylie

MINOGUE

After a huge year, Kylie Minogue AO OBE

is revving up for the grand finale with an ITV extravaganza, *An Audience with Kylie*.

Few of us can boast of a career of more than three decades; even fewer can achieve such a feat in the cut-throat music industry, and one in a billion can do it with the grace, style and panache of Kylie.

An undisputed queen of reinvention, the 55-year-old Aussie delighted her fans earlier this year with the sizzling floor-filler *Padam Padam*. It was a track that not only launched her back into the charts (the song peaked at number eight, becoming her 52nd Top 40 single in the UK), but also flaunted her spectacular and seemingly ageless appearance in the accompanying music video.

For Kylie – who returned to where it all started this year in the well-received *Neighbours* finale – such moments have become second nature. Bursting onto the music scene in the late 1980s with her debut single, *I Should Be So Lucky*, her angelic voice, combined with a girl-next-door charm, made her an instant sensation.

Kylie continued to release chart-topping hits that solidified her status as a pop sensation. Songs like *Got to Be Certain*, *Je Ne Sais Pas Pourquoi* and *Especially for You*, a duet with

Jason Donovan, became anthems of the era. Her catchy tunes and memorable music videos created a pop culture phenomenon.

By the time the 90s rolled around, however, saccharine pop was on the wane. Rather than fade away,

Kylie retreated into her cocoon and reappeared as an indie princess, even collaborating with the master of melancholy, Nick Cave, on *Where the Wild Roses Grow*.

Another defining moment of Kylie's career came in the early 2000s with the release of *Fever*. The album's lead single, *Can't Get You Out of My Head*, became a global phenomenon. Its hypnotic beat and unforgettable hook catapulted Kylie back to the top of the charts worldwide and solidified her status as an international pop icon.

Though she is adored across the globe, her status here in the UK is one of particular reverence. So much so that Kylie, who was awarded an OBE in 2007, has spent much of the last few decades living in London and now owns an apartment in the highly coveted Hyde Park One building, alongside a house in her home town of Melbourne.

Fortuitously, her abode in Britain's capital is a short walk from the location of her ITV special, the iconic Royal Albert Hall. *An Audience with Kylie* promises to dazzle with an array of floor fillers from both her recent album, *Tension*, and her award-winning back catalogue. She will also field a bevy of questions from the floor posed by specially invited VIP guests, including celebrity Kylie superfans.

Kylie said of the event on December 1: "I'm so excited to announce that I am teaming up with ITV for *An Audience with...* at London's iconic Royal Albert Hall. I'll be performing some of my favourite tracks from throughout my career and no doubt answering some surprising questions from the audience."

The one query she's sure to bat away is talk of retirement. An icon of modern music, the industry – in all its inconsistency and fragility – is indebted to this marvellous mainstay, and her star will surely never be allowed to wane.



AUTUMN arrivals

While many might scoff at the idea of the UK being a warm winter getaway with gourmet food, it's a top holiday spot in the bird world! That's right – as temperatures drop elsewhere, large numbers of our feathery friends flock to Britain.

MAJESTIC GESE AND SWANS

Leading the parade of bird visitors is the fabulous pink-footed goose. When the temperatures dip in Iceland, and food gets scarce, the geese fly to the Faroe Islands, rest a bit, and then head to the UK. Similarly, Bewick swans head over from Siberia, while whooper swans make their way from Iceland.

VIBRANT COASTAL LIFE

Every autumn, the UK's beaches and wetlands burst into life with a big mix of wading birds from northern Europe, the Arctic, Russia and northern Canada. These include lapwings, dunlin, oystercatchers, bar-tailed godwits, redshanks, and grey plovers from the Arctic.

INLAND VISITORS

Moving inland, colourful Bohemian waxwings, with their distinctive crests, black eyeliner, and peach-tinged plumage, fly in from Scandinavia. You can sometimes spot them in large flocks in berry-laden bushes in towns, car parks and gardens. And it's not uncommon to see large numbers of dainty goldcrests with a radiant yellow stripe along the top of their heads. Despite weighing no more than a ten-pence piece, this remarkable bird journeys across the North Sea to spend its colder months with us.

Other northern European visitors you might spot in your garden include redwing and fieldfare – both types of thrush.

When spring comes, the birds fly back to their homelands to breed. Given the warming world and milder climates in their nesting territories, these winter visitors might one day no longer grace our shores. So let's all appreciate them a bit more – while we still have the opportunity.



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ROCK ON

How to create a rock garden

In recent years there has been something of a rock revival going in Britain's gardens, front and back.

A trend that came to the fore in the nineties has seen something of a revival, with an increase in sales of rocks and alpine plants. Add in pebble mulches and gravel, and it's clear we are refreshing our garden spaces to add height, texture and, dare we say it, perhaps the odd splash of cascading water.

As for how to style your perfect rock garden, a slope obviously helps. If you don't have one, fear not - you can create a display by banking rocks closely together, filling in gaps with brick, stone or rubble to create a defined ridge.

It's a good idea to look for local stone - this will add character and provenance to the garden; and while many varieties may be expensive to buy, searching locally online may well bring about cheap or even free sources of stone.

Let rocks develop a patina of age - don't clean them or they won't look authentic - and bury them about a third of the way into the ground, tilting backwards, allowing space for grass and plants to flourish around them.

Now all you need to do is pattern surroundings with what you choose - an evergreen, such as miniature conifers will create vertical interest, while smaller shrubs will keep layers of interest even through the cold winter months.

Drought-tolerant plants such as sedums and sempervivums are also a good idea, while trailers, such as creeping rosemary, creeping thyme or aubretia, will guide the eye across the structure.

Finally, for texture, add some contrasting shapes - spikes, slants, velvety leaves - plus smaller bulbs, such as wild tulips, daffodils, snowdrops and crocus.

With your work done, sit back and admire!

Photo credit: Zia Allaway via gardeningetc.com



GARDENING





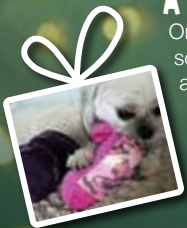
PETS

Homemade CHRISTMAS GIFTS *for your pet*

If your pet is just like another member of your family, then you will want to treat them on Christmas day too. Discover three homemade Christmas gifts for your furry friend that they are guaranteed to love.

A sock and ball toy

One of the easiest and most affordable DIY pet gifts, a sock and ball toy will provide hours of fun for your dog on a shoestring budget. Simply place an old tennis ball or two into a sock and tie in a tight knot. For a festive twist, use a Christmas-themed sock. Once unwrapped, swing the sock around, play tug-of-war or launch it down the garden for a quick game of fetch.



A cat scratcher

If your cat loves to scratch your furniture, then they are long overdue their own scratcher. All you need to do is attach a piece of rope around a piece of wood using a hot glue gun and then hang the wood on the wall within reach of your cat or glue/screw to a wooden base. Rub some catnip on the rope to make this gift even more enticing for your feline companion.



A no-sew pet bed

Stop your pet from sleeping on your bed by making them their own place to sleep with just a few basic supplies, including some anti-pill fleece fabric, a small bag of polyester fibrefill material and a pair of sharp scissors. Simply decide what size bed you want to make and then cut an extra eight inches all the way around two pieces of fleece fabric so that you have enough to cut four-inch strips to tie the bed together. Fill with the polyester fibre material until plump, and tie to finish.



Photo credit: petguide.com, thecottagearket.com, instructables.com



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Learn a language

Have you always wanted to learn a new language? Whether you want to 'hablar español' or 'parler français', these apps are just what you need to learn a new language.

Busuu

Busuu is a UK-based app which features courses in 12 different languages. This app is suitable for beginners through to upper-intermediate learners. You can download this app for free on iOS and Android, with the option to upgrade to the premium model for £5.83 per month.

Babbel

Babbel offers self-based learning in the form of short, context-based lessons. The app is user-friendly and provides courses for beginners and more advanced learners. Babbel is available to download on iOS and Android, with prices starting at £5.99 per month for a 12-month subscription.

italki

italki is a unique language learning app that involves

conversing with a tutor to learn a language. Not the best option for the timid, this app will push you out of your comfort zone and dramatically improve your vocabulary. Sessions cost around £10, but you can trial tutors at discounted rates. Available to download on iOS and Android.

Rosetta Stone

A well-known name in the world of learning languages, Rosetta Stone is one of the more expensive apps, but it does have an excellent reputation. The lessons are highly interactive, and you only learn in your target language, without English translations. Prices start at £11.99 per month with a three-month commitment.

Duolingo

Duolingo is one of the top-rated language learning apps which forgoes teachers and books in favour of gamification. With a choice of 39 languages which you can all learn for free, Duolingo is ideal for those taking their first steps in learning a new language. Free on Windows, iOS and Android devices.



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** Think carefully before securing other debts against your home: by extending the terms of the debts, you will be increasing the overall cost; Equity Release may involve a lifetime mortgage or home reversion plan: to understand the features and risks, ask for a personalised illustration*

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For more detailed information, go to the two Equity Release pages at

www.businessadvisoressex.co.uk



A landlord's guide to improving your EPC RATING

Want to attract more tenants, help the environment, and potentially increase the value of your property? Here are some top tips to boost your EPC rating.

can help you to achieve a higher EPC rating. Water-based underfloor heating systems are the most effective.

What is an EPC rating?

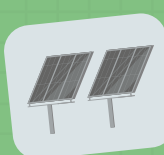
An EPC rating is a standardised indication of a property's energy efficiency. The minimum EPC rating for landlords of private domestic rented properties is E. However, the government has proposed that all rental properties will need a rating of C or above by 2028.

How to achieve a higher EPC rating



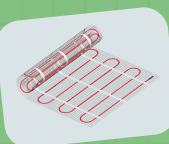
Smart lighting

Your choice of lighting contributes to your property's EPC rating, with energy-efficient light bulbs, aka LEDs, generating less heat and lasting longer. Smart LED lighting can also be automated, which means that there is no need for light switches as all the lighting is controlled via an app.



Solar panels

The cost of installing solar panels has dropped considerably in recent years, by as much as 82 per cent since 2010. However, they are still just as effective at making homes more efficient and raising your EPC rating.



Underfloor heating

Underfloor heating systems use less energy because they operate at a lower temperature. If your property has effective insulation, underfloor heating

Help from your energy supplier

If your tenants are receiving benefits such as universal credit, working tax credit or child tax credit, you may be able to get help with the cost of insulation and replacing or repairing the boiler. Your property must have a rating of E, F or G to be eligible.



The perfect ROAST CHICKEN

From how to create a classic roast dinner to carving it up to get the most meat out of it, the below will guide you through each step.

TO ROAST THE CHICKEN

You will need:

1 whole chicken | Half a lemon | Butter | Salt and pepper

Method:

- > Pre-heat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas mark 6.
- > Take the chicken and remove any giblets that may be in the cavity. You can, of course, buy whole chickens with the giblets already removed.
- > Put the half lemon into the chicken cavity and smear butter over the whole bird.
- > Season with salt and pepper.
- > Cook the chicken uncovered for 20 minutes per half a kilo, with an extra 30 minutes for good measure.
- > To make sure the chicken is thoroughly cooked, give the legs a prod to see if the juices run clear,

or cut into the breast to see if the meat is white.

TO CARVE THE CHICKEN

You will need:

A very sharp carving knife | Carving fork | Chopping board (preferably with a well to catch any juices)

Method:

- > **Remove the legs:** Use the carving fork to hold the chicken in place and cut across the skin between the breast and the leg. Pull the leg away from the breast and use your knife to cut through the joint. Repeat on the other side.
- > **Remove the wings:** Repeat the process above – pull the wing away from the breast and cut through the joint. Repeat on the other side.
- > **Remove the breast meat:** Carefully run the knife down the centre of the breastbone to cut through the skin. Run the knife down the breastbone, cutting the meat from the bone.
- > **The rest:** Pick off any remaining meat to use in a pie or soup or freeze in a container for another day.

entertainers presents THE MARVIN GAYE SONGBOOK

Wake up and let's get down tonight as the music of the Prince of Motown is celebrated with

THE MARVIN GAYE SONGBOOK...

Brand new for 2024 from hit producers Entertainers – the team behind, The Magic of Motown, Lost in Music and Fastlove!

The Marvin Gaye Songbook, respectfully recreates every magical hit, live on stage, taking you on a musical journey back to a golden era of chart-topping songs.

And we have a pair of tickets to give away as the production comes to the Palace Theatre, Westcliff-on-Sea on Friday 9 February. Simply answer the question at the foot of this article to be in with a chance of winning.

Brought to life starring West End and X Factor star **Nate Simpson** – fresh from playing Bob



Marley in hit West End musical Get Up, Stand Up! – this production will get you hot just like an oven as it pays tribute to the one and only Marvin Gaye.

Featuring all the hits, from I Heard it Through the Grapevine, Sexual Healing, What's Going On?, right through to Ain't No Mountain High Enough, Too Busy Thinking About My Baby, and many more.

Featuring a superb live band of West End musicians, it's time to say – "stop and thank you Marvin" – as

the show brightens up all of your days with two hours of pure concert magic. The Marvin Gaye Songbook has it all...

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WIN TICKETS TO SEE THE MARVIN GAYE SONGBOOK

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Marvin Gaye had a number one hit single with:

A) I Heard it Through the Grapevine B) I Heard it Over the Garden Wall C) I Heard it on TikTok

Send your answer by email to: rayleigh@visionmag.co.uk, with The Marvin Gaye Songbook Competition, Palace Theatre, Westcliff-on-Sea in the subject line.

The winner will be drawn at random. Editor's decision is final and there is no cash alternative.

This is a tribute show and is in no way affiliated with any original artists/estates/management companies or similar shows. Promoter reserves the right to alter the programme.

What's the difference between...

Whisky & bourbon

Do you like whisky but say you can't stand bourbon? If yes, you may be surprised to hear that bourbon is actually a type of whisky.

Discover the main differences between bourbon and other whiskies below. Plus, some delicious whisky and bourbon cocktails.

WHAT IS WHISKY?

Whisky is a family of distilled liquor that is made by fermenting wheat, rye, barley or corn. It is then aged in wooden barrels that are typically made of oak. This is what gives whisky its distinct brown colour and taste.

There are many different types of whisky, including Scotch (Scottish whisky), Irish Whisky, Rye whisky and Japanese whisky.

WHAT IS BOURBON?

Bourbon is a specific type of American whisky that is made from at least 51 per cent corn and aged in new charred oak barrels rather than reused ones. The name bourbon comes from Bourbon County in Kentucky, which is where this popular spirit originates from. Straight bourbon whisky has to have been aged for at least two years.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE IN FLAVOUR?

Bourbon has a sweeter flavour than other types of whisky, boasting notes of vanilla, oak, and caramel. This is owing to the high concentration of corn. Rye whisky tastes grassy and peppery with a spicy finish, Scottish whisky is malty and buttery, Irish whisky is known for being light and fruity and Japanese whisky has floral notes with hints of oak.

POPULAR WHISKY COCKTAILS:

- > *Whisky Sour* – 50ml whisky, 35ml lemon juice and 12ml simple syrup
- > *Old Fashioned* – 50ml rye whisky, 1 sugar cube, a few dashes of water and angostura bitters
- > *Whisky Highball* – 50ml whisky and 100ml soda water or ginger ale
- > *Whisky Smash* – 50ml whisky, 25ml simple syrup, ¼ lemon wedge and 1 sprig mint

POPULAR BOURBON COCKTAILS:

- > *Bourbon Sour* – 50ml bourbon, 35ml lemon juice and 12ml simple syrup
- > *Kentucky Mule* – 50ml bourbon, 15ml lime juice and ginger beer to top
- > *Bourbon Manhattan* – 50ml bourbon, 25ml sweet red vermouth and 2-3 dashes angostura bitters.

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- 10th - Hampton Court Palace & Festive Fayre
- 11th - Turkey & Tinsel on the Lee Valley Cruise
- 12th - Bluewater
- 13th - Golden Oldies 50s, 60s, 70s with lunch
- 14th - Harrods or Oxford Street
- 15th - Polhill Garden Centre
- 16th - Christmas Lights at Leeds Castle

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JANUARY

- 6th - Kew at Christmas
- 16th - Bluewater
- 18th - Essex Countryside with lunch
- 20th - Crafting at Sandown
- 23rd - Museum of the Home
- 26th - Ardingly Quilt Festival
- 27th - Norwich

FEBRUARY

- 3rd - Saffron Waldon on Market Day
- 8th - Horniman Museum
- 11th - Birmingham International Tattoo
- 13th - Gainsborough & afternoon tea
- 14th - Anglesey Abbey Snowdrops
- 15th - Bluewater shopper
- 20th - Natural History Museum

- 20th - Science Museum
- 20th - Victoria & Albert Museum
- 22nd - Tower of London
- 24th - Chippenham Park Snowdrops
- 28th - Ruxley Manor Garden Centre

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- 26th Feb - Sinah Warren - 5 days **£346**

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SEAL PUP SAFARI

Have you ever yearned to see fluffy white seal pups in their natural habitat? If so, a trip to Blakeney Point in north Norfolk could be up your street.

Blakeney Point is home to England's largest grey seal colony – and winter's a great time to visit. From the end of October to mid-January, around 4,000 pups are born – and you can't fail to spot some.

What is Blakeney Point?

Blakeney Point is a four-mile stretch of pebbly beach with a backdrop of dunes, salt marshes and mudflats. It's one of England's 220 National Nature Reserves and is looked after by the National Trust.

Can I walk there?

You can walk to the point from the car park at Cley beach. But it's not for the fainthearted. It's a four-mile walk, mostly on shingle. But if you're fit and love nature, you're in for a treat!

What's the best way to get there?

The most exciting way to get a closer view of the

seals is by boat. Several companies offer seal-watching trips from nearby Morston Quay. You can travel there by car or on the Norfolk CoastHopper bus service from places like Sheringham and Cromer.

The boat trip will take around about an hour. Just remember the boat trip is for viewing only; you can't land there.

Planning ahead

Remember to book your seal trip in advance and get there early. Places on the boats fill up quickly, and the car park can be a challenge. Even on a warm day, the sea can be chilly and might splash you. So pack some warm clothes and some rain gear. And remember your camera and binoculars!

Let's talk seals

- > Grey seals are marine mammals
- > Adult seals can weigh up to a whopping 300kg
- > Grey seals can live for 30-40 years
- > Britain has more than 120,000 grey seals – 40 per cent of the world's total.





What is a breast reduction?

Breast reduction is a cosmetic procedure to remove excess fat and skin from the breasts making them smaller, better shaped and more uplifted.

The procedure can relieve physical symptoms such as breast discomfort, neck ache, backache, shoulder pain, skin irritations under the breast fold, painful pressure from bra straps and difficulties and discomfort during exercise.

What happens during breast reduction surgery?

Text overlaid on man giving presentation: attend one of our free upcoming cosmetic surgery open events Breast reduction is performed under a general anaesthetic. It can take between one-and-a-half to three hours.

There are several different surgical procedures for breast reduction. Excess skin and fat is removed. Your breasts are reshaped, and the nipples are repositioned. All procedures result in a scar around the areola (dark area around the nipple) and each method results in additional scarring. Your surgeon will discuss each procedure with you and together you will decide which is best in your particular case. Breast reduction can also be used to correct asymmetry (imbalance) of your breasts.

Going home after breast reduction surgery

Patients often go home the same day as their procedure but may need to stay overnight. You will

have dressings on your breasts and there may be drains (plastic tubes). The drains are usually removed before you leave hospital.

You will be given post-operative pain killers and instructions regarding your dressings and any stitches you may have.

Most patients are mobile from day one and return to normal activities within six weeks. However, everyone heals differently. Be sure and discuss your return to work with your surgeon.

The results of breast reduction improve gradually over time. Your breasts should become softer and more natural as the healing continues.

Everyone heals differently so your results may vary. Every surgical procedure has a risk of complications. Be sure and discuss any concerns you might have about these risks with your surgeon.

- Specific complications following breast reduction:
- Developing a lump or swelling inside the breast
- Numbness or persistent pain on the outer part of the breast
- Loss of skin, including the areola and nipple
- Stiff shoulder
- Change of breast and nipple sensation
- Uneven shape: Your breasts will change shape after reduction surgery. There is a chance that they may end up slightly lopsided, lumpy or with uneven nipples
- Reduced ability to breastfeed



Take a second to put your health first

Book your mammogram appointment today

At Nuffield Health Brentwood Hospital you don't have to worry or delay if you want the peace of mind of breast screening.

If you're over 40-years-old, registered with a GP, and haven't experienced any symptoms or not had screening within the last 12 months, you can refer yourself for a self-pay mammogram today.



To make an appointment please call the Nuffield Health Breast Screening Centre on **0345 230 2040**



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WHAT IS FUNCTIONAL FITNESS?

As the name suggests, functional fitness is a type of physical training that is designed to make your body function better in everyday life. More specifically, functional fitness exercises help to make daily motions such as picking up your children, carrying your shopping and walking around easier and safer.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FUNCTIONAL FITNESS?

There are many benefits to practising functional fitness, including: Enhanced strength | More flexibility | Better balance and agility | Better range of motion

THE BEST FUNCTIONAL FITNESS EXERCISES

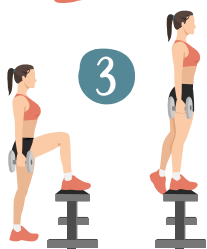
Functional fitness exercises prioritise natural movements over exercises that are carried out on a machine. For example, squats and pull-ups over leg presses and lateral pull-downs or going for a hike rather than using an elliptical trainer. Some of the most effective functional fitness exercises are:

1 BEAR CRAWL: Begin in the tabletop position on the floor | Bring up your knees so they hover above the ground | Using opposing arms and legs, take a small step forward with each limb | Return to the starting position, then repeat on each side for one minute, rest and repeat three times

2 FARMER'S WALK: Pick up a couple of weights (kgs that you feel comfortable walking with) | Keep a tight posture with your shoulders back | Take small, manageable steps back and forth across the room | Rest and repeat for two minutes

3 STEP-UPS: Step up and down from a bench | Continue for one minute, rest and repeat three times | Add weights if you want to challenge yourself | Upgrade to a box jump where you jump up and down with two feet rather than alternate feet

4 PLANK: Adopt the push-up position | Push through your hands and squeeze your body, engaging your abs | Hold for one minute, rest and repeat three times.



The *Sunshine* VITAMIN

Vitamin D makes sure our bones, teeth, and muscles stay healthy. It also helps our immune system. And some studies suggest it might even help fight low mood and fatigue.

From early spring to the end of summer, most of us get all the vitamin D we need from our skin reacting to sunlight. And you only need to be outside for around nine minutes a day if you're light-skinned and 25 minutes or so if your skin's darker.*

But what happens when you're stuck inside and summer sunshine is a distant memory?

SHOULD I TAKE A SUPPLEMENT?

The government recommends that we all take a daily vitamin D supplement in autumn and winter. There's not enough sun around, and you can't get all the vitamin D you need from food.

Some groups are advised to take a supplement all year round. This includes children aged four and under, people who can't get outside, and people who wear clothes that cover most of their skin when they're outdoors.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I TAKE?

The recommended dose for adults and children over one year is 10 micrograms daily. This is equivalent to 400 IU (International Units). Supplements vary, so choose one that contains at least this amount. For babies, ask your health visitor or pharmacist.

WHERE CAN I BUY IT?

You can buy vitamin D in pharmacies and most supermarkets. If you're part of the government's Healthy Start initiative, you can get vitamin D supplements for free.

CAN YOU OVERDOSE ON VITAMIN D?

Adults shouldn't take more than 100 micrograms (4,000 IU) of vitamin D daily, and children aged one to 10 shouldn't have more than 50 micrograms (2,000 IU). However, for some people, vitamin D could still be harmful even when taking less than the maximum recommended dose. Always check with your doctor if you are worried.

*Cancer Research Campaign UK

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Crystal Craze

BEAUTY

According to Pinterest, there has been a 110 per cent increase in searches for crystal eye make-up over the last year, with this beauty trend showing no sign of slowing down. Versatile, flattering, and oh-so-pretty, find out how to rock this statement look with our tips below.

What tools do you need to do crystal eye make-up?

To master this trend, you will need a pair of tweezers, lash adhesive, and your chosen crystals. For complete beginners, you can also buy jewels that already have adhesive on them. It is worth noting that the smaller the crystals, the harder they will be to apply.

Where to place your crystals

There is no hard and fast rule when it comes to where to apply crystals around your eyes; you can basically be as creative as you want. However, it can be a good idea to place your crystals in places that you want to draw people's attention to. For example, the inner corner of the eyes, the upper lash line and the lower lash line. Be careful when using adhesive near your eyes.

Crystal eye make-up looks to try

Crystal cat eyes: Create your usual cat eyes using black liquid eyeliner, and then apply gems to the upper lash line along the eyeliner for a mega-bling finish.

Silver gem-encrusted wing liner: Instead of the basic black winged liner, apply five or six tiny silver crystals from the outer corners of your eyes, extending upwards towards your temples.

Colour combinations: Crystals and eyeliner come in a wide variety of colours so don't be afraid to mix it up a bit. We love combining blue and silver, gold and metallic shades, and a full rainbow of crystals with any liner of your choosing.

How to remove crystal eye make-up:

Not a beauty trend for the office, you can easily remove any crystals using a cream or oil-based make-up remover. This will lift the jewels off the face without causing any irritation to the skin.



Photo credit: Maryam Maquillage via YouTube.com

Tackle that TARNISH



If your bling is looking more dull than dazzling, then these tried and tested DIY cleaning techniques are just what you need.

HOW TO CLEAN STERLING SILVER

1. Try baking soda

For severe tarnish, mix three parts baking soda with one part water. Wet the silver and then apply the paste with a soft, lint-free cloth. Work into the crevices, rinse well and buff.

2. Apply toothpaste

Toothpaste is a mild abrasive and therefore ideal for cleaning silver. Simply apply a dab to your silver jewellery and rub gently with your finger or a soft cloth. Rinse and buff.

HOW TO CLEAN GOLD (WHITE, YELLOW AND ROSE)

1. Use ammonia

Ammonia is a powerful cleaner so is best used for occasional deep cleaning rather than frequent use. Add one part ammonia to six parts water, soak your gold jewellery for one minute, rinse and gently pat dry with a polishing cloth.

2. Soak in warm, soapy water

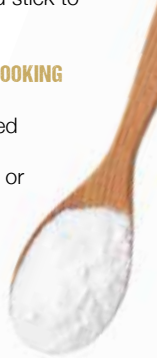
Fill a bowl with warm water, add a few drops of washing-up liquid and leave to soak for 10-15 minutes. Use a soft-bristle toothbrush to dislodge dirt, rinse and dry.

JEWELLERY TO BE CLEANED PROFESSIONALLY

Gold and sterling silver can be safely cleaned at home. However, more delicate metals, such as platinum, should be cleaned by a professional. If your jewellery contains precious stones such as diamonds, sapphires or rubies, you should stick to mild soap and water.

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- > Store your jewellery in an acid-free, closed container.
- > Do not leave your jewellery in direct heat or sunlight.
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NUISANCE NITS

Nits are the bane of every parent's life and can be a nightmare to get rid of. While over-the-counter treatments are effective, they can also dry out your child's scalp and hair. Discover four natural alternatives below.

ESSENTIAL OILS

With the ability to eliminate nits and nourish the hair, there are several essential oils that you can try, including tea tree oil, lavender oil, neem oil, clove oil and eucalyptus oil. For best results, mix 15-20 drops of your chosen oil with 60ml of olive oil, apply to the scalp and comb through with a nit comb.

RAW GARLIC

Raw garlic has antibacterial properties and can be used to suffocate nits. To use garlic on nits, crush a peeled bulb of garlic into a paste and then mix with either olive oil or lime juice. Apply to the head, leave for 30 minutes and then wash the hair as normal. No combing needed.

CONDITIONER

If you are worried about drying out your child's hair, then you may want to try applying a thick conditioner to suffocate the nits before using a fine nit comb to remove them. This also helps to make the combing process less painful for your child.

VINEGAR

Both normal vinegar and apple cider vinegar can be used to effectively kill and get rid of nits. All you need to do is mix one cup of vinegar with one cup of warm water. Distribute the mixture evenly onto the scalp and cover with a hair cap. Leave for 30 minutes and then wash with their usual shampoo. No combing needed.

MORE TOP TIPS FOR NIT REMOVAL:

- ✦ Wash all bedding and any recently worn clothing in hot water.
- ✦ Vacuum upholstered furniture, rugs, soft toys and car seats.
- ✦ Recheck the scalp every day for two weeks.



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BAD SPORTSMANSHIP:

BUTT & WARNE

on the spot

Cricket undoubtedly has universal popularity. Combine this with its intricacies, its longevity as a game, the ease of online betting and the variety of bookmaker markets, and you have the potential for foul play, on an international scale.

Take Pakistan's 2010 tour of England, for example; a series that became the centre of a sting by the *News of the World* (*NoTW*) where its reporters secretly filmed Mazhar Majeed, a British bookmaker and agent, giving bribes to visiting players ahead of the Lord's Test.

Money was offered on the proviso that two Pakistan fast-bowlers, Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Amir, would deliberately send no-balls at agreed times – known as spot-fixing. Even the team's captain, Salman Butt, was in on the scam.

The *NoTW* exposé ended with jail sentences meted out to all four, with the three players also receiving lengthy bans.

While the idea was brazen and reflective of the global gambling market, it was not the first time it had happened. Between 1994 and 1995, an Indian man referred to as 'John the Bookmaker' handed over cash to Australian stars Mark Waugh and Shane Warne in exchange for pre-match weather and pitch information.

'John' soon upped the ante, requesting team selections and tactics, but the duo refused. The Australian Cricket Board became aware of the allegations and the action taken was to fine each player privately.

In the aftermath, the Aussies claimed that Pakistan captain Salim Malik had approached them with bribes in exchange for losing matches. While their own credibility as witnesses had evaporated, the story was pursued, and former captain Malik received a life ban in 2000.

In 2023, cricket's abundant riches implies spot-fixing should be less appealing to players, yet the lure of a payday is always there.



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