

KEW
GARDENS
EVENTS IN
2024

10 KEY
SIGNS OF
BAD HEART
HEALTH

MOTHER'S DAY

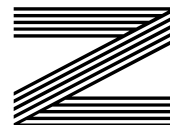
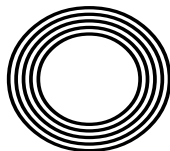
How to make a blooming lovely gift

Michelle Keegan

Actress enjoys success of Netflix show

LUKE
LITTLER

Teenage darts prodigy continues to break records



FREE

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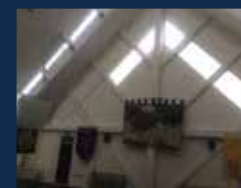
AFTER



AFTER



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER





FEBRUARY 2024

Editor's notes...



Nik Allen, Editor

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

I hope you have had a great start to the year.

I was recently shocked to learn about the Post Office scandal and the immense suffering it caused. The TV drama has helped to raise awareness of the scandal and has given a voice to those who have been affected by it.

The series recounts one of the biggest miscarriages of justice in British history, where hundreds of subpostmasters were wrongly accused of theft, fraud, and false accounting due to a defective IT system.

Since the series began airing on January 1, more than 100 new potential victims have contacted lawyers. The series has renewed mass interest in the scandal, with more than nine million viewers tuning in so far.

The government is now under pressure to overturn wrongful convictions and deal with compensation, with ex-Post Office boss Paula Vennells agreeing to hand back her CBE in response to public outcry. The series has also prompted a Parliamentary inquiry. It will be interesting to see how this unfolds over the coming weeks.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the magazine - it has something for everyone, whether you're looking for some interior design inspiration or interested in exciting new events to attend in 2024.

Nik Allen

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MICHELLE KEEGAN: NOBODY'S FOOL

MAKING THE LEAP FROM SOAPS TO SERIOUS DRAMAS IS NEVER EASY, BUT FORMER *CORONATION STREET* STAR MICHELLE KEEGAN HAS TAKEN IT ALL IN HER ELEGANT STRIDE

Most television actresses would be thrilled at winning the Sexiest Female gong at the various soap award ceremonies they are obliged to attend, but for Michelle Keegan – who was awarded the coveted title more times than she cares to remember during her stint on *Coronation Street* – the novelty had worn off.

The beautiful brunette was only 20 when she landed the role of Tina McIntyre on the iconic soap, and over her six-year tenure, became one of the most popular characters of all time. A feisty and dramatic presence in *Weatherfield*, Tina was at the centre of many pivotal plotlines, featuring everything from lurid love affairs to abortion and surrogacy. And yet, best actress awards always eluded her.

Fans of soap operas will be familiar with the tale of the celebrity who quits at their peak of primetime glory only to flounder in the larger world of showbusiness, but following Keegan's dramatic exit from the cobbled streets of *Corrie*, she has only blossomed into a bigger star.

In 2018, the Stockport sweetheart finally won her *TV Choice Awards* Best Actress gong for playing Sergeant Georgie Lane in the BBC drama series *Our Girl*, and has since wowed in comedy drama *Brassic* and BBC's *Ten Pound Poms*, which highlights British citizens who migrated to Australia following the Second World War.

However, it's her latest role as the lead in the new Harlan Coben drama, *Fool Me Once*, that

everyone is talking about. Not only is the show itself significant as the latest of the American crime writer's TV adaptations after Netflix acquired Coben's bestselling novels in a multi-million-pound deal, but Keegan herself dazzles throughout the twisty, complex thriller.

In the eight-part series, the 36-year-old actress plays Maya Stern, a military pilot suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, whose wealthy husband is murdered. That's when things start to get a bit odd – like when, for example, her dead hubby pops up on the nanny cam in her home – and Maya must work out whether she is the one unravelling or if it is part of a larger plot she must uncover.

The success of *Fool Me Once* has meant that

Keegan has gained 132,940 new Instagram followers since the series was released on January 1, and it is estimated that the actress will earn up to £33,900 per sponsored Instagram post. She now has more than seven million followers on the platform – a number that is only set to increase as Keegan's star continues to rise.

Fortunately, Keegan's personal life is blissfully lacking in drama. She has been wed to *The Only Way is Essex* heartthrob, radio DJ and former professional footballer Mark Wright since 2015. The couple recently finished work on their £3.5million dream home in Essex, where, no doubt, they are busy plotting their next foray into entertainment superstardom.

THE WORLD OF KEW

Kew Gardens, home to 50,000 plants, is just a 30-minute Tube ride from central London. But it's not all about flowers!

ORCHIDS AFTER HOURS: Selected Friday and Saturday evenings throughout February 2024

While you wander among vibrant orchid displays in the Princess of Wales Conservatory, enjoy live music and dance from Madagascar (home to 194 orchid species) and experience the local cuisine.

SOUNDS OF BLOSSOM: March 23 – April 14

To boost your wellbeing this spring, take a stroll among the blossom trees while listening to specially commissioned music from London's Royal College of Music.

KEW THE RUN: March 30-31

Run 10km or a half marathon amid the cherry blossom, past the beautiful Palm House and Temperate House. Entry includes two free adult tickets and two children's tickets to the gardens.

KEW THE MUSIC: July 8-14

Enjoy great music and conversation in a stunning setting. This year's performers include Monty Don,

Mika, Passenger, Richard Ashcroft, and JLS. More performers will be announced nearer the time.

KEW'S SUMMER CYCLE: August 1

Cycle around the site and experience an array of entertainment and fabulous food and drink stalls.

THEATRE ON KEW and **KEW THE MOVIES** will also return in August.

CHRISTMAS AT KEW: November 2024 – January 2025

Soak up the holiday spirit amid stunning light illuminations, including the Christmas cathedral and fire garden. There'll be plenty of tasty festive treats – and a visit from Father Christmas, too!

ALL YEAR ROUND

Throughout most of the year, there are organised garden walks, including specialist tours for people with hearing loss, sight loss or dementia. There are also yoga and Pilates classes, art exhibitions, gardening courses, and craft sessions.

Check www.kew.org for details on all events and how to get to Kew.

Photo credit: kew.org, raceconnections.com, kewthemusic.org, RGB Kew via kew.org, Ollie Dixon via kew.org



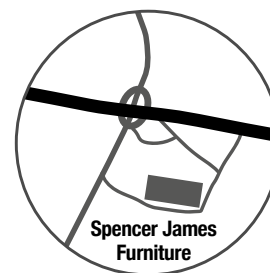
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HOME & DIY

MIRROR on the wall

WHAT NOT TO DO WHEN USING MIRRORS IN THE HOME

When used correctly, mirrors can make your home feel more light, spacious and stylish.

However, there are certain pitfalls that you need to avoid when decorating with mirrors. Discover them all below.

MOUNTING ABOVE A FIREPLACE

Although the space above your fireplace may seem like the perfect place to hang a mirror, this only works if the fireplace is 160cm or under. If you have a tall fireplace, then a mirror large enough to fill the space will reflect less desirable elements of the room such as the ceiling, door frame or a bare wall.

HANGING NEAR YOUR BED

Did you know that hanging a mirror opposite your bed can actually disrupt your sleep? A mirror opposite, above or next to your bed will bounce more light around the room, which is not conducive to a restful environment.

PLACING OPPOSITE YOUR FRONT DOOR

According to Feng Shui practices, placing a mirror opposite your front door is bad luck as it reflects the good energy of the natural world back out of your home. Instead, you should place the mirror perpendicular to your front door.

IN THE KITCHEN

If you are thinking about hanging a mirror in your kitchen, you should know that this is also considered to be unlucky. Furthermore, mirrors in this room can easily become grubby and greasy. For better results, hang mirrors in your dining room.

NOT CONSIDERING REFLECTIONS

When hanging a mirror in your home, you must always think about what it will be reflecting. Ideally, you want a mirror to reflect the natural view outside a window or a beautiful design element within your home. Remember, the purpose of a mirror is to enhance a room, not distract from it.





HYDROPONIC PLANTS

everything you need to know

Hydroponics is one of the latest indoor plant trends, providing the perfect way to add greenery to your home without the need for soil or maintenance. Find out everything there is to know about hydroponic plants, with our top picks for the best ones to plant at home.

WHAT IS HYDROPONICS?

This term refers to a method of growing plants in nutrient-rich water as opposed to soil. Enabling you to showcase the beautiful roots of your chosen plants, hydroponic plants grow quicker, require less care and produce greater yields than their soil-growing counterparts.

HOW TO GROW HYDROPONIC PLANTS

1. Choose a plant or cutting.
2. Fill a vase or bowl with spring water or tap water (room temperature) and add plant food.
3. Place the cutting in the vase or bowl.
4. Make sure only the roots are submerged in the water.

HOW TO CARE FOR A HYDROPONIC PLANT

- > Keep your plant in a bright room but out of direct sunlight.
- > Change the water every two weeks, making sure the roots are dangling in it but not fully submerged.
- > Check the water levels every few days to make sure they remain at the correct level.
- > Check the pH levels of the water using a pH tester – a range of 5.5 to 6.5 is suitable for most plants.
- > Add a small amount of nutrient solution or liquid fertiliser, such as ammonium sulphate fertiliser, boric acid or azomite powder.

WHAT ARE THE BEST HYDROPONIC PLANTS?

Spider plant | Lucky bamboo | Pothos plant | Velvet leaf philodendron | Coleus plant | Monstera plant | Peace lily | Arrowhead plant

You can also grow almost any crop hydroponically, but the most common are lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, strawberries, and herbs such as basil or mint.



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CAUTION! RISK OF FIRE!

If you often put off cleaning certain items and appliances in your home, you are far from alone. However, you may think twice about forgoing these tasks when you find out just how potentially dangerous avoiding them can be.

TOASTERS: If you do not regularly clean your toaster, crumbs will start to accumulate at the bottom of your appliance. When you use your toaster again, these crumbs could start to smoke and potentially cause a fire. Clean away any crumbs after each use.

HEATERS: Over time, dust starts to accumulate around any heaters in your home, which could ignite and spread. Dust once a week to prevent house fires caused by dust ignition.

BATHROOM EXHAUST FANS: If your bathroom exhaust fan is old and dirty, this can cause the motor to overheat and lead to a fire. Clean once a year or invest in a new fan that comes with a thermally protected motor.

UNWASHED RAGS: Oily rags (covered in oil-based paints, paint thinners or varnishes) are a common cause of fires in the home/garage and are the result of a chemical reaction between cotton and certain oil-based stains, which produces energy in the form of heat. Place any rags used for staining in a metal can filled with water and washing detergent, secure with a lid and leave to soak for three days.

CHIMNEYS: Wood-burning fireplaces need to be regularly serviced as any build-up in your chimney can be a fire hazard. Inspect your chimney for tar deposits after use and call a professional chimney sweep if needed.

HAIR DRYERS: When you use your hairdryer every day, debris, dust and hair start to build up, which can become hazardous. If you smell burning when drying your hair or your hairdryer burns or shocks you, this is a sign that it needs to be cleaned or replaced.

LAWN MOWERS: Debris and dry grass can easily get stuck in the mower deck of your lawnmower, which can pose a fire risk, especially during the warmer months of the year. Prevent this by cleaning your mower after each use.

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Photo credit: studiopeake.com

— studio —

PEAKE

HOME & DIY

Studio Peake is a London-based design studio run by Sarah Peake, where the old and new are brought together to create beautiful and surprising designs that are full of personality.

With Studio Peake, no two spaces are alike. The aim is to create a space that looks lived in, with details that could have been built up over time. This can provide you with a lot of inspiration for your own home, helping you work with your existing décor to give things a little refresh.

STUDIO PEAKE'S UNIQUE STYLING

Each of Studio Peake's designs is unique and interesting; each project is treated individually, meaning every look has its own personality. The studio says: "Bringing spaces to life involves a playful blending of opposites and an interplay between old and new – a dash of unexpected colour or detailing; that element of surprise."

From patterned curtains and panels to pops of colour, each project is designed to work with the client's personality, ensuring the space is both fun and functional.

A LITTLE PEAK AT STUDIO PEAKE'S STYLING

If you love the Studio Peake aesthetic, you'll be pleased to know it's something you can recreate easily in your own home. Some top tips include:

- > Don't be afraid to use colour in unexpected ways. The simplest of accents, from table decorations to lampshades, can help tie different elements of your space together. Muted walls in shades of sage or duck egg look fantastic with some coral red or yellow accents.
- > Bring old and new elements into your living space to create beautiful contrasts. Ornate antique furniture with modern accessories such as statement light fittings can help you blend different styles to create a visually appealing space.
- > Patterns are a simple way to add interest and bring life to your room. Consider using multiple patterns across your space, such as a wallpapered accent wall, patterned cushions and wall art, to help keep things fun and exciting. Floral patterns are an excellent way of adding a little colour without becoming overpowering.

Studio Peake's style is something that can be built up over time, so keep an eye out for new pieces you can add to your space to create an ever-evolving look that's full of life and personality.



Have you written a LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT?

Although nobody likes to think about their demise, writing a will is the only way that you can ensure your money, property and possessions go to the people or causes that you care about.

WHY SHOULD YOU WRITE A WILL?

1. To name your children's guardian
2. To ensure your children are provided for financially
3. To provide for your dependants, including stepchildren
4. To protect your partner if you are not married
5. To safeguard your family home
6. To prevent family disputes
7. To avoid paying more inheritance tax than you need to
8. To decide who you would like to settle your affairs
9. To say who you want to look after your pets
10. To support a charitable organisation

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T WRITE A WILL?

If you do not write a will, you are said to have died intestate, and this means that your estate may not go to the people you want it to.

Intestacy rules are as follows:

- > If you are survived by a spouse or civil partner and children, your spouse or civil partner will inherit all your personal possessions and at least the first £270,000 of your estate, plus half of anything above this amount. Your children are entitled to the other half.
- > If you are survived by a spouse or civil partner and you don't have children, your spouse or civil partner will inherit your entire estate.
- > If you are survived by children but not a spouse or civil partner, your estate will be divided equally between your children.
- > If you do not have a spouse, civil partner or children, other relatives will inherit your estate in a certain order.
- > If you have no surviving relatives, your estate will pass to the Crown.

HOW TO MAKE A WILL

You can choose to make a will yourself or with the help of a solicitor or will writer. There are also certain charitable organisations that provide free advice, such as Age UK.

Could you have dry eyes?

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- Your follow-up appointments will fine-tune your treatment, and if you have any questions, you can call and see us at any time!

SO, IF YOU EVER EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE DRY EYE SYMPTOMS LISTED ABOVE, PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO GIVE US A CALL!



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Comedian's rise from rural surrounds to TV screen

Discover comedian Alan Davies' unique connection to Loughton, which not only underscores his personal journey but also highlights the town's influence on his career.

Alan Davies was born in Loughton in 1966. Known historically for its blend of rural beauty and urban convenience, it provided a unique backdrop for his early life and helped shape his worldview, a factor often reflected in his humour and storytelling.

Though he spent his childhood in nearby Chingford, Davies received his primary and junior education at Staples Road School in Loughton, before attending the independent Bancroft's School in Woodford Green, achieving eight O Levels.

The educational journey continued at Loughton College, adding four O Levels and two A Levels in Communications and Theatre Studies. Subsequently, he began to dabble in stand-up comedy as he graduated from the University of Kent in 1988 in Drama and Theatre Studies. In recognition of his achievements, he was awarded an honorary doctorate in 2003.

His relatable style – combining observational comedy with personal experiences – resonated with a wide audience. In the late 1980s, Davies began performing stand-up in London comedy clubs and pubs, quickly earning a following.

That talent for humour soon attracted the attention of producers, though apart from turns as a TV funnyman he also became widely recognised for the role as the quirky and lovable Jonathan Creek in the eponymous BBC mystery crime series. His portrayal of the creative and unconventional crime solver won him critical acclaim and a devoted fanbase and elevated his status as a household name in British entertainment.

Perhaps Davies' most accomplished role is as team host on boffin panel show *QI*. He joined the production at its launch in 2003 and has appeared in every episode.

A staunch Arsenal fan, he now lives in Islington with his writer wife Katie Maskell and their three children.



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The architectural elegance of Chelmsford Cathedral

As far as cathedrals go, this country is adorned with a host of spectacular, awe-inspiring, and, in some cases, excessive displays of architectural ecclesiastical excellence.

Think of St Paul's, Westminster, Winchester, Lincoln, Ely and others, and there are presented some incredible expressions of faith through architecture.

Yet while Chelmsford Cathedral certainly doesn't compete alongside those other locations' achingly big domes, roofs and arches – nor in its age, as it was only given its current status in 1914 – it does sit as a true British architectural gem.

Originally a parish church dedicated to St Mary the Virgin, it was elevated to cathedral status at the dawn of the First World War, and perhaps the timing was fitting, as a nation found itself striving for peace.

In the way it's built, it showcases a variety of styles that reflect the changes it has undergone over the

centuries, with Norman and Victorian elements blending seamlessly with modern additions (even if it's classified as one of the youngest cathedrals in England).

Inside, Chelmsford Cathedral is more than just a place of worship – it's a beacon of history, community and spirituality in the heart of Essex. It boasts beautiful stained-glass windows, an impressive organ and a warm, intimate atmosphere.

Meanwhile, its active congregation and vibrant programme of events, from concerts to workshops, ensure it remains a hub of community life.

With around 60,000 visitors a year, in 2024 it welcomes in all faiths, all beliefs, all persuasions. This is particularly prevalent during the summer when the annual festival takes place, and at Christmas.

In everything Chelmsford Cathedral does, it reinforces customs, behaviours, support and hope, celebrating the traditions of the past and, of course, the purpose and potential of the future.

Photo credit: Rob Atterton/Shutterstock, Chris Lawrence Travel/Shutterstock, Chelmsford Cathedral – Facebook



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YOUR LOCAL EVENTS



WHAT'S ON

KNIT AND NATTER SESSION

Rayleigh Library, 132-134 High Street,
 Rayleigh, SS6 7BX
 Every Wednesday, 10am – 12pm



Photo credit: Essex County Council

Come meet other like-minded people whilst engaging in the fun, relaxing hobby of knitting. This is a free weekly event, held at the same time and same place.

There is no need to book, just turn up to the library at the allotted time. Please bring your own craft materials.

RETIRED GREYHOUNDS VALENTINE'S WALK

The Gable Racing Kennels, Borwick Lane,
 Wickford, SS12 0QA

Sunday, February 18, 10am – 12pm

This lovely walk is the perfect event for anyone with a greyhound, as it will also raise money for Romford Retired Greyhounds. Those who attend with their dog can expect free tea, coffee and bacon rolls.

There is no need to book. To find out more or donate, visit www.rgoa.org.uk/support-us

VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR ACTIVITY SESSION

Rayleigh Library, 132-134 High Street,
 Rayleigh, SS6 7BX

Monday, February 19, 10.30am – 11.30am

Aimed at children aged between three and seven, this fun session is all about *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Children are invited to listen to the story, take part in arts and crafts, and meet a special guest.

Tickets cost £5 per child plus a booking fee. Adults do not need tickets.

To book, visit www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/very-hungry-caterpillar-activity-session-tickets-794063624677

JO BANANA'S BIG PARTY

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

Thursday, February 22, 12.30pm – 5.30pm

This day out for under 10s is like no other, with activities including circus skills, games, sing-alongs, magic, party dances and so much more.

Tickets cost £12 for one child and one adult, and an extra £5 for an extra adult. To book, please visit www.tickettailor.com/events/halfterm/1082767?

HANNINGFIELD FAMILY FOREST FUN

Essex Wildlife Trust Hanningfield Reservoir
 Nature Discovery Park, Hawkswood Road,
 Wickford, CM11 1WT

Thursday, February 22, 1.30pm – 3.30pm

Suitable for any young adventures aged five years old and up, this day of fun in the forest is perfect for any child who wants to get in touch with nature. Activities include den building and exploring the woodland.

Tickets cost £7 per child. Please bring your own food. Children must be accompanied by an adult. To book, visit www.essexwt.org.uk/events/2024-02-22-hanningfield-family-forest-fun

BEYOND CONSPIRACY

The Duke, 80 High Street, Wickford, SS12 9AT
 Saturday, February 24, 9pm

Come to The Duke for a pint and some great tunes, provided by Essex-based five-piece Beyond Conspiracy, who'll be playing all your favourite rock covers. The event is free and there is no need to book.



Photo credit: Gill Bacon

Have you MICROCHIPPED your cat?

While microchipping your cat isn't currently compulsory, following the government's announcement on March 13, 2023, all pet cats in England must be microchipped by June 10, 2024, or owners face a penalty.

When should I have my cat microchipped?

From June 10, 2024, it will be compulsory to have your cat microchipped from 20 weeks of age. All cat owners will be given 21 days from this date to have their cat chipped or face a fine of up to £500. There is no minimum age to have your cat microchipped. A lot of kittens are

microchipped at the same time as being spayed or neutered, as they will already be under general anaesthetic. It is recommended to have your cat microchipped before they go outside for the very first time.

Why should you microchip your cat?

As well as being a legal requirement from June of this year, microchipping your cat gives them the best chance of being identified and returned to you if they become lost or are stolen. Microchips are completely safe, easy to implant and, unlike collars or ID tags, do not come off or put your cat at risk of injury.

How does microchipping work?

Microchipping involves the insertion of a small chip (around the size of a grain of rice) underneath your cat's skin. This is typically carried out by your vet, a local authority or a trained member of an animal welfare organisation such as Cats Protection. If your cat goes missing, the microchip can be scanned and matched to your contact details.

How much does microchipping your cat cost?

In England, you can expect to pay between £20 and £30 to have your cat microchipped depending on where you live. If you are struggling to cover the cost, local charities or cat rescue organisations may be able to microchip your cat for a reduced rate.



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WRITE AWAY

The History of the Humble Pencil



Back in the 1600s, when Henry VIII was on the throne, locals in Borrowdale in Cumbria discovered a massive deposit of pure graphite. The graphite was sawn into sticks and wrapped with string or sheepskin to make a useful writing tool.

The word 'pencil' comes from the French word 'pincel', which means small paintbrush – because that's what the 'new' writing sticks looked like. In Tudor times, English was changing, and borrowing French words was quite common.

THE FIRST MODERN PENCILS

A German cabinetmaker, Kaspar Faber, started one of the world's first pencil businesses in 1761. He was the first pencil maker to encase graphite in wood – though his pencils were still handmade.

By the early 1800s, French chemist Nicolas-Jacques Conté had developed a method of mixing graphite with clay. This made graphite much more durable. It quickly became the industry standard and remains the basis for pencils today.

THE FIRST BRITISH PENCILS

In 1832, Cumbrian entrepreneur, Joseph Hardcastle, set up Britain's first pencil factory in Keswick – just a few miles from Borrowdale and its graphite supplies. The business, which later became the Cumberland Pencil Company, is still in business today.

However, the factory moved to Lillyhall, near Workington, in 2008 because the old site couldn't cope with modern production processes. But the company's Pencil Museum is still based in Keswick and is well worth a visit if you're planning a trip to the Lake District. You'll enter the museum through a replica graphite mine, and once inside, you can feast your eyes on pencils and pencil-making throughout the ages – from primitive versions to the modern precision instruments we know today. For more information, visit www.derwentart.com/en-gb

In this digital age, most of us still love pencils. Their simplicity, reliability and eco-friendliness have made them cherished tools for creators of all ages.



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LUKE THE NUKE LITTLER

THE TEENAGE DARTS SENSATION WHO IS DEFYING AGE, APPEARANCE AND THE EXPECTATIONS OF A FERVENT DARTS FANBASE

While the popularity of darts has arguably never been greater – a sport reinvented from smoky, dusty, dirty pubs to high-octane, precision entertainment on Sky, the world's most polished sports broadcaster – it does still require the odd paradigm shift in order to keep its momentum going forward.

While Phil 'The Power' Taylor oversaw an unapologetically long period of domination as the growth of the Professional Darts Corporation (PDC) led to an acceleration in the popularity of darts, and Dutchman Michael van Gerwen assumed the mantle upon The Power's retirement, it was unclear where the next bastion of bullseye brilliance would emerge from.

That all changed over the festive period when Alexandra Palace, the annual base for the PDC World Championships, ushered in a rather unassuming 16 year old from the industrial heartland of the north. Born in Runcorn but raised just down the road in Warrington, Luke 'The Nuke' Littler picked up a set of darts at the age of just 18 months, and won the Youth Grand Prix aged 12.

His early foray into professional darts saw him clinch the Irish Open title in 2021 (when still only 14), and he has since picked up other senior titles along the way, including last year's British Open. Yet few had heard of the teenager until he began bulldozing his way through the early rounds of the World Championships; destined, as we know now, to make it all the way to the final, where he finally succumbed to new world number one Luke Humphries.

With a fanbase and global attention that has grown from a little to a lot, the now 17 year old has taken everything in his stride, approaching both the success he's had and the scrutiny of the media with effortless ease.

"I know, for a lot of people, it seems like I have come from nowhere, but in truth I've been doing this a while," he laughs. "I've pretty much had a set of darts in my hand permanently for the past seven or eight years, so it feels very natural to me to be hitting treble twenties and closing out doubles."

And while the sporting star has endured notable comments about his appearance and persona that bely his teenaged years, Littler is happy to go along with the joke. "I always have my passport in my back pocket these days as every other question is about my age!" He's also revealed the pre-match diet that helped propel his journey to success: a ham and cheese omelette for breakfast, followed by a pizza for lunch.

As if Littler's reputation couldn't have risen further following his battling 7-4 defeat in the Ally Pally final on January 3, the youngster then nailed a sensational nine-dart finish on the first leg of the first set at the Bahrain Open in the middle of January, then aged just 16. "I don't think I'll start a match like that ever again," he said afterwards... yet you wouldn't bet against it!

He went on to take the title, beating former world number one van Gerwen in the final.

As for the future, Littler has a place in this season's Premier League Darts, and his eye on securing yet more major tournament success. The bad news for The Nuke is he's still almost a year away from toasting his success with a celebratory pint!





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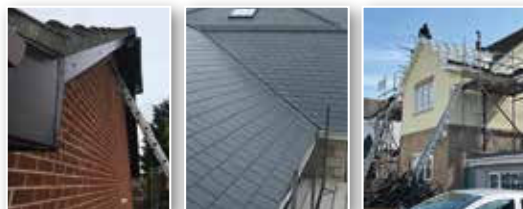
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GARDENING

Let's get PLANTING!

WHAT TO PLANT THIS MONTH SO YOUR GARDEN'S SUMMER READY

If you want to enjoy flowers in your garden as early as possible and for the longest time, you'll need to start early. The good news is that to grow these plants, you won't need any fancy equipment.

SUPER SEEDS

The easiest plants to grow from seed are hardy annuals, like **cosmos**. These are daisy-like flowers with feathery leaves and come in shades of pink, orange, red and white.

Annual **salvias** in shades of blue and mauve are a great choice, too. The small flowers, shaped like tubes, grow in a mass on tall stems.

As well as looking great in pots and flowerbeds, these two annuals are a great hit with pollinating insects and make excellent cut flowers. And best of all, they'll bloom from May right through to late autumn.

Sow cosmos and salvia seeds in peat-free seed compost in pots or seed trays. Then put them in a warm, sunny spot like a windowsill and keep them moist. Plant them out in a sunny spot when the danger of frost has passed. Make sure to keep an eye on local weather forecasts.

Sweet peas are another seed to sow indoors in February, though they need a bit more care. And don't forget **herbs** like basil, chives, coriander and dill.

FLASH BULBS

Many bulbs can survive outside at low temperatures, but they might rot if the soil is heavy and wet. To play it safe, plant your February bulbs in containers in an all-purpose or specialist bulb compost. All the bulbs listed below are stunning – and relatively undemanding.

Lilies – Asiatic varieties are the easiest to grow.

Eucomis – Their exotic pineapple-shaped flowers look stunning.

Liatris – Striking bottle-brush-shaped plants, usually in shades of mauve.

This month, you could also plant **galtonia**, known as summer hyacinths, and **agapanthus**.

Happy gardening!



Cosmos



Salvia



Sweet peas



Herbs



Lilies



Eucomis



Liatris



Galtonia



Agapanthus

WEEDS WELCOME

Although you probably spend a lot of your time trying to banish weeds, did you know that some part weeds are actually beneficial to the environment, local wildlife and the overall condition of your garden?

NETTLES: Nettles are a highly beneficial weed to have growing in your garden, helping to support a wide array of wildlife including butterflies, ladybirds, hedgehogs and birds such as blue tits and chaffinches. You can also harvest and eat nettles in the spring, using this weed to make delicious dishes such as wild nettle pesto.

SORREL: If you notice sorrel growing in your lawn, you may see it as an annoyance rather than an advantage, but this weed has lots of beneficial uses. For example, it is great for growing near strawberries, cabbages and tomatoes, acting as a diversion and drawing pests away from the plants you are trying to protect.

DANDELIONS: Dandelions grow in abundance in many UK gardens and have long since been a source of irritation for gardeners. However, these weeds provide food to many pollinators including bees, hoverflies and butterflies. Also, owing to their long taproots, they can help to loosen hard soil and bring nutrients up to the surface.

WILD CARROT: Wild carrot has historically been classed as a weed, but this perennial plant can help your garden in many ways. First, it attracts hoverflies which eat the aphids that feast on your vegetables. Second, they make an attractive addition to your outside space, with their pretty white flowers and ferny foliage.

CHICKWEED: Chickweed tends to show up in disturbed soil such as garden beds and highly tilted areas. As a beneficial weed, it attracts pollinators, helps to accumulate potassium and phosphorus which is good for your soil, and boasts edible, lettuce-like greens.



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POUR & PLANT

V
KIDS

Are you looking for a fun and simple craft project for Mother's Day? Perfect for children of all ages and abilities, these pour paint pots are guaranteed to go down a treat.

YOU WILL NEED:

A terracotta pot or several (these can be bought at your nearest garden centre or you may be able to find some for free on local social media selling sites) | Acrylic paint – various colours | Masking tape | Nylon or cotton gloves | Plastic sheet or cover (to protect work surface) | An old cooling rack | An old tray | Mod Podge (optional) – this is a water-based adhesive

HOW TO MAKE:

1. Cut a piece of masking tape (enough to cover the hole in the bottom of your pot).
2. Cover the hole with the tape on the inside and press down firmly to ensure it sticks.
3. Put down the plastic sheet or cover to protect your chosen work surface.
4. Place the pot upside down onto an old cooling rack on top of the old tray – this should help catch the dripping paint and prevent too much mess.
5. Put on the gloves. Take one paint colour at a time and carefully squeeze the paint over the bottom of the plant pot.
6. Choose your next colour and repeat the last step. You are looking to create a 'dribble' effect.
7. Keep building up different colours until you are happy with the design.
8. Leave to fully dry for up to 24 hours.
9. If you want to use your terracotta pot outside, then apply a layer of Mod Podge as this will help to protect it from the elements.
10. Remove the masking tape.

You can choose to simply pop your painted pot in a gift bag, or fill it with soil and add a couple of seasonal bulbs such as daffodils, tulips or lilies. Alternatively, you could craft your own artificial flowers using tissue paper and then place these in your newly painted pot.



Photo credit: anylaticreations.com

NUTS ABOUT chocolate

After the Second World War, cocoa was in short supply. So baker Pietro Ferrero, from Piedmont in Italy, created a recipe for a creamy hazelnut paste that contained just a hint of the precious powder. In 1964, Pietro's son Michele adapted the recipe, and the first jar of Nutella went on sale. These days, a whopping 365,000 tons of Nutella are produced every year, and the spread is manufactured in Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Italy, Mexico, Poland and Turkey. This month, why not celebrate World Nutella Day on February 5 by conjuring up one of the treats below?

Nutella Brownies (Makes 12-20, depending on size)

You will need:

100g Nutella | 5 medium eggs | 250g butter plus extra for greasing | 300g plain chocolate (broken into pieces) | 250g hazelnuts, coarsely chopped | 180g plain flour (sieved) | 340g caster sugar | A 23cm x 33cm cake tin | A sheet of baking parchment

How to make:

Grease the tin and line it with baking parchment | Preheat your oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4 | Toast the hazelnuts in the oven for 2-3 minutes | In a saucepan, melt the chocolate and butter over a very low heat, then mix in the Nutella | In a bowl, whisk the eggs and sugar together till light and creamy | Fold the chocolate mixture into the egg mixture, then add the flour and hazelnuts | Pour the mixture into the tin and bake for 20-25 minutes until set | Chill the brownies in the tin before cutting them into squares.

Nutty Nutella Bites (Makes 40)

You will need:

For the main mixture: 100g Nutella | 15g plain chocolate | 35g milk chocolate | A 450g silicone loaf tin (16cm x 11cm x 7cm)

For the coating: 500g plain chocolate | 100g chopped almonds | A sheet of baking parchment

How to make:

Preheat your oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4 | Toast the almonds in the oven for 3-4 minutes | Melt the main mixture chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a saucepan of simmering water | Add the Nutella and stir it well | Pour the mixture into the tin and chill well before cutting it into 2cm squares | Melt the coating chocolate as before, add the almonds and stir | Dip each square into the coating mixture and leave them to set on the baking parchment.



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7th - Cambridge
7th - Ely
9th - Crufts
10th - Bicester
11th - Epping on market day
14th - Mystery Tour
17th - Festival of Railway Modelling
18th - Essex Countryside with lunch
19th - Milton Keynes
20th - Hever Castle
21st & 23rd - Stitch Festival
22nd & 26th - Ideal Home Show
24th - Columbia Road Flower Market
26th - Bluewater
28th - Margate or Ramsgate
29th - Broadstairs
29th - Canterbury
30th - Brighton
30th - Leamington Spa
31st - Camden Market

FLOWER SHOWS

CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW
afternoon entry - 23rd May £80
HAMPTON COURT FLOWER SHOW
4th, 5th, 6th, 7th July £58
NATIONAL FLOWER SHOW
Hylands House - 18th May £28

WINTER/SPRING BREAKS 2024

10th March - Llandudno & Snowdonia £375
15th March - Emmerdale weekend - 3 days £275
18th March - Bournemouth - 5 days £398
18th March - Warners Lakeside - 5 days £260
25th March - Eastbourne - 5 days £445

EASTER

29th March - 1st April
Yorkshire Dales - £375

APRIL

1st - Babbacombe - 5 days £395
2nd - Daffodils & Wildlife in Scotland - 7 days £810
5th - Isle of Man - 6 days £683
8th - Peak District - 5 days £556
14th - Wartime Secret Sites - 2 days £210
15th - Skipton 'All Creatures &
Harewood House - 5 days £485
21st - Watercress Line & Monkey World -
2 days £179

ROMFORD DOGS 9th April £34
HIGHGATE CEMETERY TOUR
with lunch 16th April £62
CALL THE MIDWIFE

Chatham Dockyard 17th April £48
WINDSOR CASTLE 25th April £53
LEONARDSLEE GARDENS 27th April £39

GUERNSEY & SARK - 18th May - 6 days £987

HERITAGE OF SCOTLAND 19th May - 7 days £725

Raising the bar

for low-alcohol drinks

Low-alcohol drinks are gaining in popularity, so is this the end of Britain's drinking culture as we know it?

There has been a huge shift in drinking culture in recent years as we become more health aware, with the younger generation, in particular, turning their backs on booze.

Fortunately, as low-alcohol drinks are becoming trendier, they are becoming tastier too. Low-alcohol beer is far more than the watery, light lager offering it used to be, with much craft brewery hop-based ingenuity on offer. You can get fruity IPAs, crisp Japanese lagers, and Bavarian beers all as low as 0.5 per cent. Best of all, some of them still come by the pint.

Wine drinkers needn't feel left out by this teetotal trend. Not only are there some excellent wines that have had the alcohol gently removed, but there is also a rise in tea-based kombucha, which is a worthy substitute for bubbles given its natural fizz and acidic taste.

Finally, there is the spectacular rise of spirit alternatives. Many brands have managed to match

the mouthfeel and warmth of alcohol by using herbs, spices and roots to build layers of complex flavour, mimicking everything from the botanical depth of gin to the spicy heat of golden rum and even the bitter complexity of negroni.

For many of us, though, drinking is about more than just taste: it is a culture, a social experience. Fortunately, not only are many bars offering these tasty alternatives, but some venues are also popping up that eschew alcohol altogether.

If in Brighton's Kemptown area, why not pop in to Tøststigar ('tørstig' being the Danish word for 'thirsty'), or if in London the first alcohol-free bar has just opened in Hoxton. Also in London, head to the Coco Grill & Lounge in Tower Bridge, where you can tease your palate with delicious food as well as a variety of alcohol-free drinks. And finally, consider the perfectly named Café Sobar if heading north towards Nottingham.

Get out there and raise the bar on your social sensitivities!



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Ride the Night Riviera Sleeper

Photo credit: en.wikipedia.org

If you want to travel from London to Cornwall in style, the Night Riviera Sleeper's just what you need. Fall asleep on the train in Paddington and greet the morning in Penzance. Or, if you prefer, leave the train along the way at one of several Devon and Cornwall stations, including Truro.

You can book a sleeper cabin for one or two people, which includes a light breakfast on board and access to the first-class lounges with showers at Paddington, Truro and Penzance. Or if your budget won't stretch to a cabin, relax on one of the train's airline-style seats and use the onboard lounge, offering a range of drinks and snacks throughout the journey.

How often does it run?

The train runs every evening except for Saturday. It leaves Paddington at 11.45pm on weekdays, arriving in Penzance at 8am. On Sunday, it goes at 11.50pm and arrives at 8.49am.

How much does it cost?

This depends on the time of year, how far ahead you book and whether you want a seat or cabin.

Prices for single tickets start at £25.50 for a seat and £84 for a cabin.

Can you bring pets?

You can bring up to two pets if you book a cabin, but you'll have to pay a £30 cleaning fee.

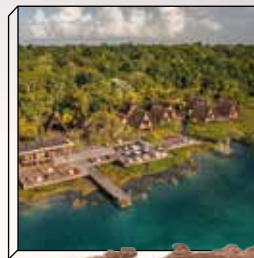
Is it suitable for wheelchair users?

There is one accessible seat and one cabin suitable for wheelchair users, though access to the lounge car is only suitable for wheelchairs less than 58cm /23in wide.

The Night Riviera is run by Great Western Railway (GWR). Book early to avoid disappointment—cabins usually get booked up months in advance! To book visit gwr.com/travelling-with-us/night-riviera-sleeper

What to do in and around Penzance

In the town itself, visit Morrab Gardens, Penlee House Gallery & Museum, and the Grade I listed Egyptian House. You can also visit the beach, swim in the saltwater pool, walk some of the South West Coastal Path – or even catch a ferry to the Scillies.



TRAVEL TREND:

FLAT PACK HOTELS

When you hear the phrase 'flat pack', a certain Swedish furniture store might spring to mind. However, when it comes to flat-pack hotels, it is budget hotel group Habitas that is the brains behind the operation. Find out more about this green tourism trend below.

WHAT ARE FLAT-PACK HOTELS?

Although the concept may sound gimmicky, 3D-printed flat-pack hotels boast deep-seated eco-credentials and are based on the principles of modular housing and prefabricated architecture. The building parts are manufactured in a factory and then flat packed and shipped to a destination to be assembled on site.

WHEN DID FLAT-PACK HOTELS FIRST LAUNCH?

The hotel group Habitas opened its first flat-pack hotel in Tulum, Mexico, way back in 2017, with the aim of offering burnt-out city dwellers a stylish yet simple place to stay and recharge. This first-of-its-kind hotel boasts 32 rooms built on elevated platforms, a thatched roof and canvas walls.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FLAT-PACK HOTELS?

There are many benefits to flat-pack hotels for the traveller, the environment and the hotel itself. Some of the most notable benefits are:

- Quicker to construct than standard hotels
- More cost-effective owing to lower labour costs
- Lower carbon footprint owing to less waste and the use of sustainable materials

WHAT IS THE FUTURE FOR FLAT-PACK HOTELS?

Not just a passing trend, Habitas has built its own factory in Mexico which can manufacture hotel parts. The parts are then flat packed, shipped, assembled on site and opened for guests in less than 12 months. Since the first flat-pack hotel, more have opened in destinations such as Saudi Arabia, Costa Rica and Bhutan.



Photo credit: ourhabitas.com



A popular staple of the 1990s, you may have noticed the return of ombré lips when scrolling through recent social media posts. A fun and easy make-up trend to try, here's how to achieve this look at home.

WHAT ARE OMBRÉ LIPS?

Ombré lips involve blending two or more standout colours on the lips. Sometimes referred to as two-toned lips, there are lots of different ways that you can experiment with this beauty trend depending on the finish you want to achieve.

HOW TO GET OMBRÉ LIPS

1 Prep your lips

Make sure that you gently exfoliate your lips using either a lip scrub or a mixture of sugar and olive oil, before applying a lip moisturiser such as a lip balm. This will ensure you have a good base to work with and help your chosen lipstick stay put for longer.

2 Apply a lip liner

Outline your lips with your choice of lip liner. This should be slightly darker than your lipstick. After tracing your lip line, shade in the corners of your lips with the pencil to add some dimension.

3 Apply a lighter lipstick

Use a lip make-up brush to carefully apply the lighter shade of lipstick in the centre of your lips for a highlight.

4 Apply a darker lipstick

Apply the darker shade of lipstick on the outside corners of your mouth that you previously shaded with lip liner during step 2.

5 Blend the two colours

Use a lip make-up brush to carefully blend where the two colours meet to create a smooth ombré effect. Do not blend too much as this can lose the effect of the gradient altogether.

OMBRÉ LIP COLOUR COMBINATIONS FOR 2024

- ✂ An electric orange with a vibrant fuchsia
- ✂ A nude with a deep brown
- ✂ A neon pink with a neutral beige
- ✂ A shimmery and matte lipstick in similar shades.

OMBRÉ IT UP!

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HEART HEALTH

10 signs never to ignore



HEALTH & FITNESS

Heat diseases kills around one in four people in the UK, yet many are ignoring some of the key signs of poor heart health. Discover the top ten below.

1 CHEST PAIN: One of the most well-known signs of a heart attack. If you have chest pains and you feel extremely unwell, you should dial 999 immediately.

2 FEELING SICK: Of course, not every bout of nausea means you are having a heart attack. However, if you are experiencing chest pain and nausea, then you need to call for an ambulance.

3 STOMACH PAIN AND/OR INDIGESTION: An indigestion-type pain or a burning sensation in your chest or stomach could indicate a heart attack or be a sign of a related heart problem.

4 FEELING SWEATY: If you feel hot and clammy without having done any physical activity and you are experiencing chest pain, this is a sign that you need medical attention.

5 LEG PAIN: A gripping, cramping sensation in your calves when you are walking could indicate that you have peripheral arterial disease. This is most common in smokers and diabetics.

6 ARM PAIN: Pain going down your arm, especially your left arm, can be a sign of a heart attack.

7 JAW OR BACK PAIN: As well as chest pain, jaw and back pain that doesn't go away can be a sign of a heart attack. This is more common in women.

8 A CHOKING SENSATION: The word 'angina' actually means choking and can cause tightness or pain in the throat.

9 SWOLLEN ANKLES: Very swollen ankles are a marker of heart failure, but they can also be caused by blood pressure medication. Make an appointment with your GP to be safe.

10 EXTREME FATIGUE: Feeling tired all the time can be a sign of heart failure. If you are experiencing extreme fatigue and your lifestyle has not changed, see your doctor.

6 WAYS TO HELP MANAGE JOINT PAIN IN COLD WEATHER



Bones and joints seasonal health help and advice

If you suffer with chronic pain or inflammation of the joints, winter can be a tough time. As the nights draw in and we start to feel the chill of winter, our joint pain can start to worsen if we aren't prepared.

In this article we explore how the cold weather and winter can affect our joints and the ways we can manage the pain and discomfort at home.

1. Keep warm
2. Staying active
3. Take regular Vitamin D supplements
4. Reduce your risk of falls and injury
5. Prioritise healthy eating and hydration
6. Ensure you are appropriately vaccinated

Why does winter make joint pain worse?

Cold weather can make your joints painful and less easy to move. A study by the University of Manchester involving more than 13,000 participants reported to have more pain on days with higher humidity, stronger winds and low pressure.

Scientists don't yet understand the exact reasons why, but more research is being carried out to better understand the reasons for such attenuated pain perception during the colder months, so that it allows us to develop effective treatments to help those with arthritis.

Possible explanations include the changes in the synovium (the soft tissues lining the joint that produce lubricating fluid) thickening during winter. Another explanation may be the drop in the barometric

pressure leading to expansion and swelling of the muscles and tendons. Others believe that seasonal affective disorder commonly known as "winter depression" due to lack of sunlight, impacting the levels of melatonin and serotonin hormones, affects our mood and sleep resulting in a lack of energy and high pain perception.

When to see a professional

- If your limbs become extremely cold, especially below the knee and alongside changes in colour, it is advisable you consult your doctor as soon as possible. This could be the initial symptoms of medical conditions affecting the blood supply to limbs (clots or stiffening of the blood vessels-peripheral artery disease).
- If you develop limb weakness, redness, and soreness in the joints along with excessive exhaustion or sweating, (especially among patients with inflammatory arthritis), it is advisable you see a rheumatologist.
- If you see any ulcers on the tips of your fingers or toes (especially among patients with severe Raynaud's or long standing diabetics), please visit your doctor for help early on to prevent infection.
- If you are feeling extremely low, sad, tearful, not unable to sleep or function normally, it may be that you are developing seasonal affective disorder. Your GP can help you with medication and counselling to help.

For any enquiries, to book an initial consultation or to request more information, please contact the dedicated hospital enquiry team at Nuffield Health Brentwood Hospital on 01268 955 035.

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GOOD FATS

VS...

While fat used to have only negative connotations, we now know that not all fats are equal. Find out everything you need to know about dietary fats.

What are the different types of fat?

There are four main types of fat in our diets: monounsaturated fats, polyunsaturated fats, saturated fats, and trans fats. The first two are 'healthy fats' as they help to maintain healthy cholesterol levels. The latter are 'unhealthy fats' as they can raise the level of bad cholesterol in your blood. Too much bad cholesterol could potentially lead to a stroke, heart attack or vascular dementia.

Examples of foods containing these four fats include...

Monounsaturated fats: Peanut butter | Almonds | Cashews | Olive oil | Avocado oil

Polyunsaturated fats: Oily fish like mackerel and salmon | Rapeseed oil | Sunflower oil | Walnuts | Sunflower seeds

Saturated fats: Processed meat such as burgers, sausages and bacon | Hard cheeses | Whole milk | Butter | Suet

Trans fats: Fried foods | Some takeaway foods | Snacks such as biscuits and cakes | Pies | Hard margarines made with hydrogenated oil

How much fat should I eat?

Roughly one-third of your daily energy should come from fat, the majority of which should be unsaturated. This is approximately 70g per day for a woman and 90g per day for a man. Saturated fat intake should be no more than 10 per cent of total daily energy and trans fats no more than five per cent. Polyunsaturated fats should be limited to five to 10 per cent of your total calories and monounsaturated fats should make up 15 to 20 per cent.

You can find out the total amount of fat and the saturated fat content on the nutritional label on most foods. Trans fats can be labelled as 'hydrogenated fats' or 'hydrogenated vegetable oils' in the list of ingredients.

BAD FATS



CHAIR YOGA

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE



Are you looking for a gentle, low-impact exercise that requires no fancy equipment and can be carried out at any time? If the answer is yes, then chair yoga is the perfect fitness trend for you.

WHAT IS CHAIR YOGA?

Chair yoga is a form of yoga that is carried out while sitting in a chair. You can do chair yoga in almost any place that provides somewhere to sit, and it is suitable for people of all ages and fitness abilities.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Improved flexibility | Increased strength | Improved mood | Better concentration | Reduced stress and joint strain

THREE CHAIR YOGA POSES YOU CAN TRY

1. THE SEATED CAT COW

- > Start with your hands on your thighs and sit up straight.
- > Exhale, round your back, pull your abs into your spine and tuck your chin into your chest.
- > Be as round in your upper back as you can, pushing your mid-back towards the chair (this is

known as the cat pose).

- > As you inhale, allow your stomach to move forward, arch your back and look up to the ceiling (this is known as the cow pose).
- > Repeat three or four times.

2. THE SEATED TWIST

- > Place your left hand on your right knee and your right arm over the back of the chair.
- > Turn to look over your right shoulder and hold for four breaths.
- > On the inhale, feel your spine lengthen and, on the exhale, feel a deeper twist.
- > Exhale back to centre and repeat the movement on the other side.

3. THE SEATED CHEST OPENER

- > Sit on the front edge of the chair and interlace your hands behind your back.
- > Inhale and slowly lift your hands up and away from your back while gently lifting your chin away from your chest.
- > As you exhale, lower your hands.
- > Repeat this motion at least twice.



CLEAN & CARE FOR SUEDE BOOTS

Suede boots are stylish and perfect for the colder months of the year, but there is no denying that it can be a challenge to keep them looking as good as new.

HOW TO CLEAN SUEDE BOOTS

You will need:

- > A suede brush
- > A suede eraser
- > A clean cloth
- > White vinegar or rubbing alcohol
- > A suede protector

How to do:

1. Place crumpled paper inside the boots: Before you start to clean your suede boots, put some crumpled paper inside so that they maintain their shape.
2. Knock off any dirt: Pick up your boots and knock the soles together to remove any dirt, dust or caked mud before it dries.
3. Use a suede brush: Remove any stubborn dirt using a suede brush. Use gentle strokes and

always brush in the direction that the suede naturally sits.

4. Rub with a suede eraser: Use a suede eraser to buff the suede. Don't be afraid to apply pressure when doing this. The suede may start to appear dull but this is only temporary.
5. Try white vinegar or rubbing alcohol: If your suede boots have a stain, the acidic components in white vinegar and rubbing alcohol can help to break it down. Dip a corner of a clean cloth into a bowl of vinegar or alcohol and apply to the stain. Dampen it rather than soak it.
6. Apply a suede protector: Although some suede boots are pretreated, it can be a good idea to add another layer of protection.

HOW TO CARE FOR SUEDE BOOTS

- > Avoid wearing them when it is raining outside
- > Store them in a dust bag in a cool, dark place
- > Use shoe trees to help them maintain their shape and prevent wrinkling
- > Take them to be professionally cleaned at the end of the winter season.

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

HAVE YOU MADE YOUR WILL?

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IS THE FUTURE

FLOATING?



Floating cities are becoming something of a buzzword in the technology sector. The latest incarnations of this futuristic idea come from Italian architects Luca Curci and Canadian architectural designer Tim Fu.

So many modern-day revolutions have been inspired by science fiction. We've had 3D printers, video calls and driverless cars. And now, another innovation is on its way – the floating city.

Of course, the concept is actually nothing new – just consider the building of Venice in the early fifth century. Yet by bringing the advancements of artificial intelligence (AI) into the design and delivery of the floating city concept, there is now a new take on the age-old idea of people living on top of the sea's surface.

In 2017, initial proposals for a floating city on the coast of French Polynesia were put in place by Californian non-profit company Bjarke Ingels Group. The development was to be called Oceanix City.

The proposals include a 100 per cent green transport system, aiming to make it a zero-

energy location. The various demands attached to urban planning, construction, and geological and commercial facilitation would be solved by AI, as would the best way to tend to the population. It is planned to be 25 acres in size.

The joint proposal description reads: "Designed to adapt to the shifting needs of several coastal cities, particularly those vulnerable to sea level rise due to their low elevation, the project of Oceanix City has the potential to expand and accommodate more than 200,000 people."

Oceanix City promises to be a fully operational city, with malls, hotels and a sporting venue, as well as hospitals, offices, schools and government buildings.

Other floating communities are well on the way in the South Asian archipelago of the Maldives, as well as floating pods being produced in Panama.

It seems our modern approach to technology may also be fuelling a modern approach to the demands of population and where we live – a synergy for the AI generation.

Photo credit: Phil Noble/WPA Pool/Shutterstock



ROB BURROW CBE

Heart of a Rhino

A Rugby League hero and devoted campaigner, Rob Burrow CBE is a testament to what can be achieved even in the darkest of hours.

Having won eight Grand Finals with Leeds Rhinos when they dominated Rugby League from 2004 to 2017, and with 20 appearances for Great Britain and England, Rob Burrow probably thought his trailblazing days were behind him.

However, since his devastating motor neurone disease (MND) diagnosis towards the end of 2019, the 41 year old has become not just an inspiration for others who suffer from the illness, but also a totem of strength and courage.

In January, Burrow was awarded a CBE for the tireless work he has done in raising awareness of MND. Presented at Headingley Stadium in Leeds by the Prince of Wales – who told the former athlete "we're all so proud of you" – Burrow was joined by his proud wife, Lindsey, and their three children.

Also recognised in the New Year Honours List 2024 is Burrow's former Rhinos teammate and

current England rugby coach, Kevin Sinfield CBE.

A great friend and fellow MND campaigner, Sinfield has completed several gruelling endeavours, including the 7 in 7 in 7 Challenge, running seven ultramarathons in seven cities in seven days. Not only did the stunt raise more than £1million for various MND charities, but the inspirational duo also won the hearts of the nation when Sinfield carried Burrow across the finishing line of the Leeds Marathon, having pushed him for the preceding 26.2 miles in his wheelchair.

Despite his diagnosis, Burrow has remained optimistic in the face of adversity, always campaigning and pushing for awareness – something that came through in the BBC documentary *Rob Burrow: Living with MND* and in his 2021 book *Too Many Reasons to Live*.

"What will be, will be," he says. "We all have to leave the world behind at some point, and I want to go not just with a legacy, but with a project that others can keep fuelling."





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This year looks set to offer an array of motoring magnificence in the form of shows and displays that will captivate motoring enthusiasts across the world. From classic car shows to high-octane motorcycle races, the year is set to be a thrilling ride.

Isle of Man TT (May 27 – June 8)

The pinnacle for motorcycle racing fans, as the world's top road racers navigate the 37.7-mile Mountain Course, a challenging circuit on the island's public roads.

Le Mans (June 15-16)

Car racing fans can look forward to the iconic endurance race in June, where top manufacturers like Ferrari, Toyota, Porsche, Cadillac, BMW and Alpine compete for what many deem the ultimate prize.

British Grand Prix (July 5-7)

Silverstone will see Formula 1 champion Max Verstappen defending his title against top British drivers such as Lando Norris and Lewis Hamilton.

Goodwood Festival of Speed (July 11-14)

This prestigious event features, among other things, the exhilarating Timed Shootout, a highlight of the 2023 festival won by the McLaren Solus GT.

London Classic Car Show (August 15-18)

The Evolution arena at Battersea Park will host the UK's largest car show for its 10th anniversary, featuring a diverse range of vehicles, including historic and iconic cars.

CarFest (August 23-25)

Created by Chris Evans, the annual event takes place at Laverstock Park Farm in Hampshire, with a mix of exhibits, races, live music and funfair rides. All proceeds go to UK children's charities.

IAA (September 17-22)

Hanover showcases the latest in German automotive design and technology for the commercial vehicle industry in its annual week-long event.

British Motor Show (TBC)

Hosted at the Farnborough International Expo Centre, the British Motor Show blends the past, present and future of motoring, featuring stunt shows, pro-drifting and a technology hall.

Motorcycle Live (November, but dates TBC)

The UK's largest motorbike show at the NEC Birmingham will provide motorcycle enthusiasts with an array of displays, live events and interactive experiences.



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PUZZLES

Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

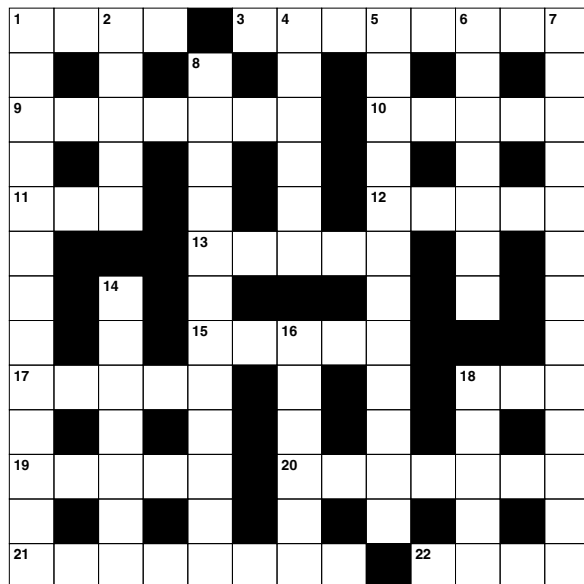
ACROSS

1. Logical division; rank (4)
3. E.g. physics and biology (8)
9. Poisonous metallic element (7)
10. Solid blow (5)
11. Sorrowful (3)
12. Wedding official (5)
13. Cuts (5)
15. Tiny pore on a leaf (5)
17. Snow and rain mix (5)
18. Excessively (3)
19. Form of expression (5)
20. Coolness (7)
21. In these times (8)
22. Refuse to admit (4)

DOWN

1. Violation of a law (13)
2. Became less difficult (5)
4. Bird; crazy (6)
5. Very eager; keen (12)
6. Defeated heavily (7)
7. In a manner that exceeds what is necessary (13)
8. Not familiar with or used to (12)
14. Trailer (7)

16. Eccentricity (6)
18. Recurrent topic (5)



DID YOU KNOW?

- Mary, Queen of Scots, was born to King James V of Scotland and Mary of Guise on December 8, 1542. Six days later, baby Mary officially became Queen of Scotland when her father died in battle.
- Mary married three times: first to Francis II of France, then Lord Darnley, and finally the Earl of Bothwell. None of the marriages lasted longer than two years.
- Mary was executed in 1587 after being found guilty of treason against her cousin, Queen Elizabeth I. At her execution, she wore red petticoats underneath her dress, as red is the colour of martyrs.
- Mary requested to be buried in France, but was instead buried in Peterborough Cathedral. In October 1612, her body was exhumed at her son's request and her remains buried in Westminster Abbey.

SUDOKU

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