

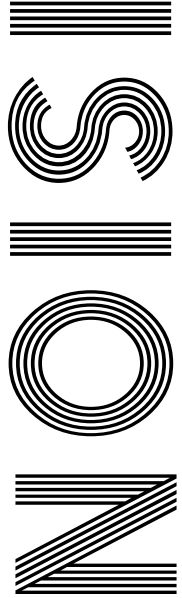


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At the time of print all content in **VISION** was relevant and up to date according to COVID-19 government guidelines

# Editor's notes...



Brett Shohet, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** SouthWoodford. So, how is everyone? I am sure it has been a strange and difficult time for all. However, as mentioned in my last comments, we will get through this and it looks like that will be quite soon.

It may not be the same as before, but change is not always a bad thing. Over the last few weeks, I have had to adapt how I operate my day to day, including how I communicate with friends, family and clients. But I have enjoyed it.

There has been a lot of sadness out there, with loved ones being affected and businesses closing. Please know that at **VISION** we are here for you.

When I speak to potential clients, I would never expect them to invest in their company with **VISION** if we did not believe and lead by example. What this means is we are investing more in **VISION** even in these strange times. Why? Well, I believe this is the time to do what others may not think of doing so we come out even stronger on the other side.

In July, **VISION** breaks into Hertfordshire with the launch of two areas over the space of two months - **VISION**Hertford and **VISION**Bishop'sStortford. There will also be a new edition in Essex - **VISION**ChelmsfordBeaulieu. Get in touch if you require any information.

*Brett*



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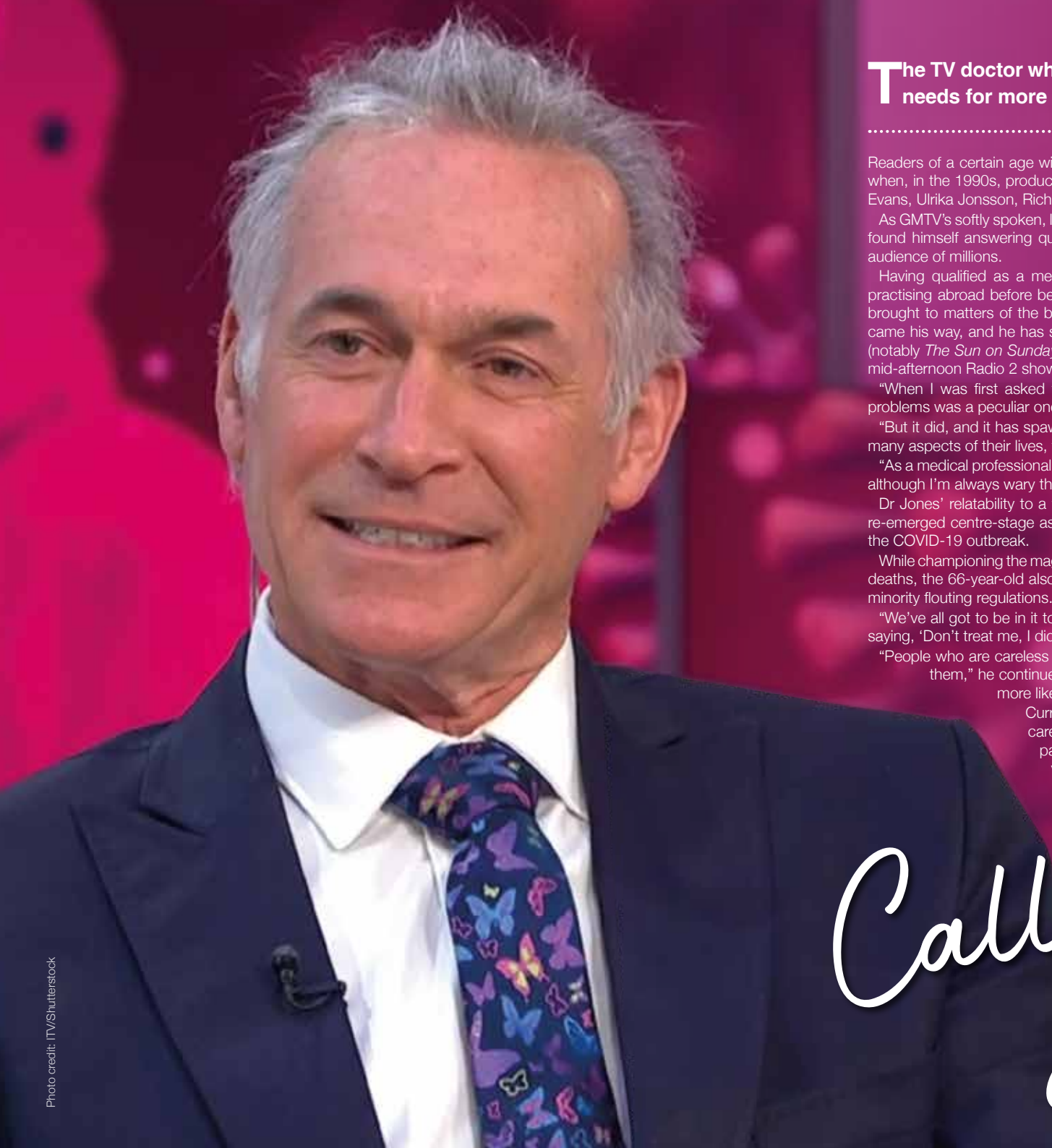
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**The TV doctor whose finger has been on the pulse of the nation's health needs for more than three decades.**

Readers of a certain age will best associate Dr Hilary Jones with the so-called golden era of daytime TV when, in the 1990s, producers presided over formats that would cement the careers of the likes of Chris Evans, Ulrika Jonsson, Richard and Judy, Nicky Clarke, John Torode and Gino D'Acampo.

As GMTV's softly spoken, likeable and, to some, slightly lusty healthcare pro with all the answers, Dr Hilary found himself answering questions on everything from puberty to piles in front of a watching television audience of millions.

Having qualified as a medical doctor at the Royal Free Hospital in London in 1976, he spent time practising abroad before becoming a junior doctor, then GP, in Basingstoke. The charisma and calm he brought to matters of the body and mind meant it was only a matter of time before the media spotlight came his way, and he has since spent a career supplementing TV appearances with magazine columns (notably *The Sun* on Sunday pull-out *Fabulous*) and radio appearances (he is a regular on Steve Wright's mid-afternoon Radio 2 show).

"When I was first asked to appear on television, the concept of people phoning in to discuss their problems was a peculiar one, and no one was quite sure if it was an idea that would take off," he says.

"But it did, and it has spawned a huge range of regular shows that encourage people to open up about many aspects of their lives, their bodies and their minds.

"As a medical professional, it can only be a good thing to see people being honest about what's going on, although I'm always wary that we don't want to cheapen the issues as this is real life."

Dr Jones' relatability to a wide demographic has certainly come to the fore in recent weeks as he has re-emerged centre-stage as one of the leading mainstream voices offering support and advice in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

While championing the magnificent efforts of the public in the nation's fight to stem increases in coronavirus deaths, the 66-year-old also showed his tough side in the first week of May, when he took umbrage to a minority flouting regulations.

"We've all got to be in it together. Are those who refuse to self-isolate going to wear a t-shirt to hospital saying, 'Don't treat me, I didn't participate'? I don't think so.

"People who are careless are endangering not just their own lives but also the lives of so many around them," he continued, explaining that his colleagues on the frontline of hospital care are 12 times more likely to contract the virus than ordinary members of the public.

Current issues aside, the thrice-married TV personality has carved an impressive career out of his time at medical school. He has had six books published, participated in the fifth series of *Dancing on Ice*, and even appeared on a celebrity version of *The Chase*.

"I've had a lot of fun along the way, but the nuts and bolts of what I do will always come back to helping people get well and stay well – that's what I'm really passionate about."

Calling  
Dr Jones



# THE *Positive* *Pandemic?*

## REFLECTING ON COVID-19'S SILVER LINING

While for an entire nation, the world around us has changed in ways more dramatic than we ever thought possible, there have been a couple of unexpected upsides to the terrifying global pandemic.

Firstly, we've seen society return to a much simpler way of life. Many work pressures – right down to the morning commute – have been removed, and with it, the hourly anxieties of jobs, tasks and duties lifted.

Children have enjoyed quality time with parents, and we've caught up with old friends more frequently than ever before, albeit online.

From bike rides to DIY, crafts to baking, health, relaxation and endless spurts of creativity and community spirit, the impact on us, as people, has been profound.

And yet, that is only half of the story. With our physical footprint on the environment lessened, we have seen nature reclaim great swathes of the country.

Car journeys have been minimised, meaning fewer harmful pollutants in the air (carbon dioxide levels have dropped 25 per cent); and there were 67 million fewer flights in the first three months of 2020 compared to the same period last year. Indeed, researchers at Stanford University estimated that improvements in air quality have saved the lives of 20 times the number of people killed by the virus.

Consider too that pollution levels in rivers are down – we all saw the pictures of the crystal clear canals in Venice – and even by Greta Thunberg's own admission, the Climate Crisis is "on hold".

While the positive environmental effects of coronavirus may only be temporary, perhaps the pandemic has opened our eyes to the very real impact we have on the world. And perhaps that, in turn, will ensure that while our investment in community, social distancing and hygiene is forever changed, so may we just give that little bit extra to the natural world too.

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## Personal STYLIST



FASHION

### HOW A PERSONAL STYLIST CAN HELP YOU FIND YOUR TRUE STYLE PERSONALITY

You don't have to be a celebrity to employ the services of a stylist; it is a savvy investment which will save you money long term. By learning about your true style personality, what suits your body shape and what colours work with your skin, eye and hair colour, you can avoid costly fashion mistakes.

A personal stylist will work with you to understand your style personality and how you like to express yourself through clothes.

There are six style personalities. You may find that you fall into more than one, depending on your mood and the occasion you are dressing for:

**CREATIVE** – Loves to dress with an artistic edge and has a quirky sense of style. She likes to push the boundaries in what she wears and will mix and match different prints and looks within an outfit.

**DRAMATIC** – Likes to make a statement when she walks into the room, she is eclectic in her wardrobe choices and enjoys a statement print, bold colours and accessories. She is happy to experiment with the latest trends.

**ROMANTIC** – Adores pretty, feminine details such as lace, embroidery and ruffles. She will put a lot of effort into her appearance and enjoys dressing up.

**CLASSIC** – Enjoys being neat and tidy and doesn't like to buy into the latest trends. She likes her wardrobe to be functional and timeless in style.

**NATURAL** – Has a casual sense of style and likes her clothes to be comfortable and breathable. She likes her style to be a good balance of relaxed and minimalistic, with low maintenance and natural fabrics.

**CHIC** – Very 'put together' and always looks immaculate. She enjoys a simple yet elegant style of clothing, tending to invest in her wardrobe rather than buying into current fast-fashion pieces.

Alex Standley is a Personal Stylist with 15 years' experience in the Fashion Industry. If you'd like to find out more, please visit [www.luxeopardlifestyle.co.uk](http://www.luxeopardlifestyle.co.uk) or get in touch at [alex@luxeopardlifestyle.co.uk](mailto:alex@luxeopardlifestyle.co.uk)



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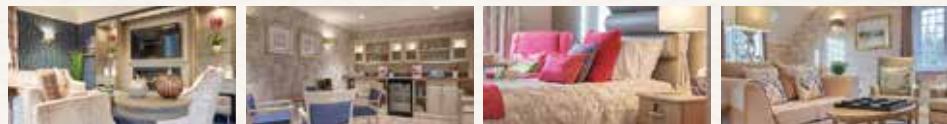
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BEAUTY



## Heavenly HOME-MADE HAND CREAM

Ensure your hands are silky smooth, no matter how many times you wash or sanitise them, with this simple and nourishing DIY, non-greasy hand cream recipe.

- > Use whenever your hands feel dry or in need of a moisture boost
- > Also use on rough patches of skin on your feet, knees and elbows

### YOU WILL NEED:

- > 3oz shea butter – although both avocado and mango butter are good alternatives
- > 1 tbsp sunflower oil – organic if possible
- > 10 drops of essential oils – we love eucalyptus and lemongrass, but you can use whatever you have in the cupboard

### HOW TO MAKE:

- > Add the shea butter and sunflower oil to a small pan
- > Gently heat until melted
- > Pour into a non-reactive bowl
- > Stir in your preferred essential oils
- > Place in fridge for 30 minutes to harden
- > Whip mixture with a hand mixer for 30 seconds until cream is fluffy and doubled in size
- > Do not overwhip as the mixture will turn stiff
- > Transfer cream into a sterilised jar

### WHAT MAKES THIS HOME-MADE HAND CREAM SO EFFECTIVE?

Shea butter is the nirvana of skincare ingredients, having the ability not only to nourish your skin but also to heal it as it contains vitamins A and E. Plus, unlike coconut-oil-based moisturisers, shea butter will not leave your hands feeling greasy, just super smooth.

Sunflower oil is known for its calming effects on the skin, making it ideal for hands that are feeling sore and irritated from frequent sanitising.

Depending on what essential oils you choose to include, you can expect to experience a whole host of benefits. We recommend lemongrass for its ability to relieve stress and combat insomnia, and eucalyptus which can help heal sores, cuts and any other abrasions owing to its germicidal qualities.

# Kitchen spa

Why spend a fortune on fancy beauty products when you can raid the kitchen cupboards to make salon-quality treatments at home?



## Brown sugar buzz body scrub

Mix brown sugar, leftover coffee grounds, olive oil and a drizzle of honey. Rub generously onto body and shower off.

Benefits: Olive oil moisturises, sugar exfoliates, honey is healing and ground coffee has been shown to reduce cellulite over time.



## Papaya punch face mask

Blend half a ripe papaya with fresh lemon juice and honey. Apply to face for 15 minutes, then wash off. Benefits: Papaya is packed with vitamins A, C and E, and also contains alpha hydroxy acids which exfoliate and brighten, while honey moisturises.



## Brunch bunch hair mask

Mash half an avocado with two egg yolks, apply to wet or dry hair and leave for 20 minutes before shampooing thoroughly.

Benefits: Egg is pure protein, which is key to rebuilding and restoring hair, while avocado is full of vitamins and fats that will help hair shine.



## Coconut massage bars

Give coconut oil a quick blast in the microwave, then add your favourite essential oils – grapefruit and bergamot to invigorate; cinnamon, sweet orange and vanilla to relax – pour into silicone moulds to set, then rub over body post-shower (while wet) for super-soft skin.

Benefits: Coconut oil moisturises while fragrant essential oils help you to relax.



## Brilliant bath bombs

Mix one cup of baking soda, half a cup of citric acid and half a cup of Epsom salts then separately mix three teaspoons of olive oil, two teaspoons of essential oil, one teaspoon of water and food colouring. Add wet mixture slowly to dry until you have a sandy texture you can pack into moulds, then leave to dry before using in the bath.

Benefits: Epsom salts soften skin, oils relax and baths generally make your day better.

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Fancy burning off some self-isolation boredom by popping to the local gym? Your luck's out. COVID-19 has ensured our time posturing and perspiring in the company of others is postponed indefinitely, but that doesn't mean you can't still get in shape.

**RUNNING:** It's the go-to exercise that we all come back to in the end – it's free, requires no expensive equipment, is endless in its range, and the more you do it the easier it gets. From pavement plodders to sparky park speed merchants, is the simple 'run' the best exercise option of them all?

**FRONT ROOM WORKOUT:** Joe Wicks may have cornered the market with his lithe lounge routines, but right back to Rosemary Conley on TV-am we were stretching, straining and sweating to workouts in the confines of our front rooms. There's never been a better time to take up the challenge.

**TOUR DE UK:** The bike succeeds where so many other forms of exercise fail by allowing its rider the rare pleasure of easing off the gas when things get tough. A venture out on your bicycle is not only pleasurable, but will also give your limbs a deserved rest whenever you can locate a downhill section.

**THE WEIGHT IS OVER:** Free weights at home can quickly boost muscle mass, and in the comfort of your bedroom, kitchen or garden, you can ensure absolute privacy where no unsuspecting audience will witness eye-popping strains akin to an episode of *World's Strongest Man*.

**YES TO YOGA:** If you feel your exercise regime is more of the mind than the body, start with a simple yoga or Pilates tutorial. You can ease yourself into positions you never previously thought achievable, while politely backing out at difficult moments or when you decide it's 'Pimms O'Clock'.



HEALTH & FITNESS



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# STAYING FIT & HEALTHY AT HOME



Looking after yourself has never been more important, yet, sadly, it has never been more difficult. Fortunately, there are several ways that you can ensure you stay fighting fit and healthy at home.

## EMBRACE #HOMEWORKOUTS

Missing your motivational gym classes? Fear not, social media is awash with free workouts that you can carry out from the comfort of your own home. Whether you fancy some stress-busting yoga or something a bit more hardcore, such as Peloton indoor cycling classes, there truly is a training session for everyone.

## STEP UP YOUR CLEANING REGIME

Doing housework burns a lot more calories than you might think. Half an hour cleaning your windows? 150 calories. Digging up some weeds? Up to 200 calories per 30-minute session. Simply pop on some of your favourite tunes and get to work. The more effort you put in, the better the results.

## FOCUS ON FEEL-GOOD FOODS

Nutrition is just as important as your activity levels if you want to stay fit and healthy at home. Try to incorporate foods that are rich in minerals like iron, zinc and selenium which will release 'happy hormones' and make you feel physically and mentally strong.

## DO NOT BECOME TOO SEDENTARY

Understandably, most of us will be spending more time sitting rather than moving at the moment, but long periods of inactivity can have long-lasting effects on your body. Combat this by alternating periods of sitting with standing if you are working from home, running up and down the stairs a few times every hour and taking full advantage of your allowed outdoor exercise time each day.

## OTHER FUN WAYS TO KEEP FIT IN YOUR HOME INCLUDE:

- ♥ Dancing
- ♥ Playing with your dog
- ♥ Skipping
- ♥ Playing games such as It and hide and seek with your kids



## A message from Dr Amjad Malik

OUR DOORS are reopening on 10th June and we are delighted to be serving our community once again. During lockdown, our whole team has been very busy behind the scenes so you can feel fully confident returning to us for your next appointment.

We have upgraded our clinical hygiene procedures to an even higher level than before. Our staff have received additional training and, as always, we are fully supplied with personal protective equipment. A new air purification system has been installed, which eliminates 99.99% of airborne respiratory viruses including the coronavirus.

We've also been caring for our patients by telephone and video consultations. A number of these patients have needed urgent attention which will be prioritised when we reopen. A new safer system for appointments is in place and before you next come to see us, we'll explain how the new system will affect your visits.

Meanwhile – a big **THANK YOU** to all our patients for the understanding and loyalty you've shown us during this difficult time.

**See you again soon!**

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# GINGER *Genius*

No, we're not talking about Ed Sheeran or Paul Scholes, but rather about the creeping perennial with thick, tuberous underground stems and an ability to grow up to a metre in height. That's right, Zingiber officinale, or ginger as it's more commonly known, is in fashion, revered more than ever before as both a culinary and medicinal marvel.

Fresh, dried, powdered, crystallised, pickled or as a tea: ginger comes in many forms. Native to South East Asia, India and China, this radical root has, for centuries, been a friend to both chefs and medicine men alike, and now you too can discover what makes this terrific tuber much, much more than just a simple seasoning.

Firstly, know how to store your ginger. With fresh ginger – and it's always advisable to get fresh over dried due to the superior flavour and higher levels of beneficial components – you can store the roots in the fridge for up to three weeks unpeeled. If you go with dry ginger, keep it in a sealed container in a cool, dark place for no more than six months.

So what makes ginger such a fantastic food?

## DIGESTIVE DELIGHT

Ginger has been used throughout history to soothe stomach pain and alleviate digestive discomfort. It is an excellent carminative, meaning that it promotes the elimination of excessive gas from the digestive system and calms the intestinal tract in order to combat conditions such as colic and dyspepsia.

## NO MORE NAUSEA

Ginger root reduces the symptoms of motion sickness such as dizziness, nausea, vomiting and sweating. It is also beneficial for pregnant women, and can be used to treat morning sickness.

## GLORIOUS GINGEROLS

The active components of ginger are gingerols, which are powerful anti-inflammatory compounds. People who suffer with osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis have even been found to be able to lessen the pain and gradually improve their mobility with the regular consumption of ginger in all its various forms.

## I HEART GINGER

New research suggests that ginger may also contain anti-diabetic properties and compounds that can combat the effects of heart disease, with just two grams of ginger powder being found to lower fasting blood sugar by 12 per cent.



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## ANY GIVEN SUNDAE

Home-made sauces and ideas for superb summer treats



Let's be honest, we're all going to be spending a bit more time than we've been used to in the kitchen this summer.

While recreating that true summer vibe somewhere exotic may appear a pipe dream as things stand, that doesn't mean our limited outside space can't host a daring and dazzling array of summer treats, so here are some sauce ideas to get you going:

### NUTELLA NICETIES

Perhaps the simplest sauce of them all – just melt three tablespoons of Nutella in a pan, adding a bit of water to keep the mixture moving.

When your sauce is smooth, runny and hot, add nuts, hundreds and thousands or any other textured topping and serve with ice cream or over some sliced banana pieces.

### RASPBERRY SALTED CARAMEL SAUCE

This one takes a bit more effort but is well worth it. Take a cup of water and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of sugar and mix in a heated pan until it boils and the sugar turns brown.

Then add  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of cream and the same quantity of raspberry purée, having first strained it to remove the seeds. Whisk, add 3 tbsp of butter, remove from the heat and add  $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp of sea salt.

Use immediately for a thin sauce or refrigerate overnight for a thicker topping that's a belter on chocolate brownies.



### COFFEE SALTED CARAMEL SAUCE

For a more adult twist, adjust the ingredients to create the perfect coffee sauce that's great on cakes, cookies, muffins and more. This time it's one cup of sugar,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of water (and a further  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup to make your coffee), then  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of cream. Butter increases to 5 tbsp but sea salt reduces to just  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp.

Make in much the same way, adding the  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of coffee where you'd previously introduced the raspberries, with  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp of vanilla extract which is the final touch to set the whole thing off in a smoky, dreamy, saucy complexion.



FOOD & DRINK





# The Lunch Bunch

**S**end your kids back to school in style with lunch ideas they'll never get bored of.

## Go bento

Bento is a great way of not only making your little one's lunchtime more exciting, but also keeping it fresh, as all the separate foods come in their own little compartments. To create your own, you may want to invest in a specially-designed bento lunchbox, but you can also just place cupcake papers in a traditional Tupperware variety. Include things like a sandwich or wrap, carrot sticks with a separate hummus dip, boiled eggs, chopped fruit or berries, and a small cake.

## Make it fun

Brighten up their lunchtime with a fun surprise stowed in their box. For example, if your child likes pirates, give their lunch a theme and make fruit kebabs on plastic swords, or include a treasure map. Make them giggle with smiley faces drawn onto boiled egg shells and cut their sarnies with heart cookie cutters, or reward them for finishing their lunch with a sweet note hidden underneath the food.

## Sneak in veg

Ensuring your children eat a balanced diet is hard, especially when they're out to school every day. The trick is to smuggle the good stuff into snacks they love. For example, if your child loves muffins, make a batch packed with fruit or bake savoury ones with spinach and goats' cheese. If they love pasta, make a batch of tomato spirals with hidden veggie goodness, or make oat bars loaded with fruit and seeds for an extra nutritional boost.

## Mix it up

Kids love diversity, so don't feel the need to stick to sarnies and crisps. Savoury tarts, frittatas, couscous salads and sausage rolls are all yummy served cold, and can be made in bulk at the start of the week.

Ultimately, you know your child best, so what better way to give them a boost throughout their school day than with a lunch that's personal, tasty and full of goodness?



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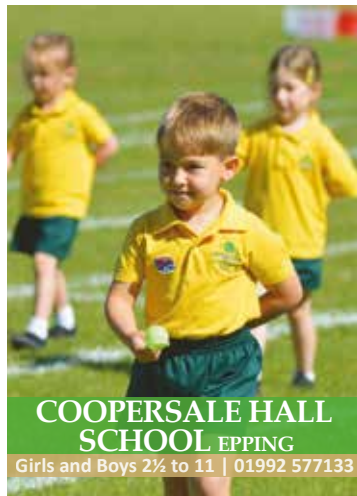


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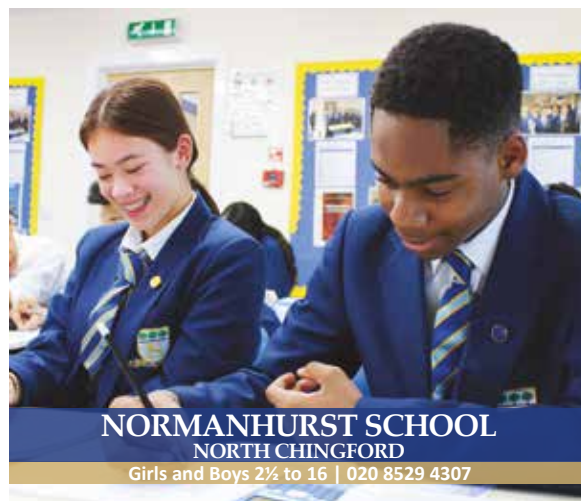
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# secondskin

Why building up your baby's skin layers with creams and moisturising is so important

It's true to say the best moisturiser a baby will ever have is its own. It's called vernix and is the creamy white coating it is born with. Yet past the first couple of months, helping a baby regularly coming into contact with a variety of surfaces and air elements can really protect it going forward.

### Non-soap cleanser

Traditional soap dries out skin, so following your baby's daily bath – which shouldn't exceed 10 minutes – apply a mild cleanser. Best bought from the pharmacy, these are great moisturisers.

Avoid bubble bath as it removes natural oils from the skin, while antibacterial and perfumed soaps may irritate too.

### Post-bath moisturiser

When out of the bath, smear over a thick, pH-neutral moisturiser. Not only will your baby love the massaging feel, but he or she will benefit from the enriching of pores that a quality applicant can provide.

Thicker creams and ointments are more effective than lotions, and you should avoid anything that contains plant or food products.

### Barrier creams

For nappy rash or eczema, the process of constant changes and reapplying of cream is really important. For each baby it's different, but barrier creams, usually containing zinc, are a great way to prevent fabrics and clothes from irritating the area further.

Try to limit the use of baby wipes, don't use talcum powder, and let the baby go nappy-free for as long as possible, as allowing air to get to any sore area is the best thing for it.

### Sun protection

Any baby below the age of one should be kept out of the sun. Past that, look for a SPF above 30 and smother your little one in protection. A hat, sunshades and light clothing will suit them well, and remember to reapply cream every two hours.





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## WHY WE HAVE BECOME A NATION OBSESSED WITH DOING UP OUR HOMES

While it's clear the year 2020 is set to be a disastrous one for the sales departments of estate agents, the trend for doing up rather than shipping out is one that began long before coronavirus changed our financial and lifestyle habits.

The lure for people to take what they have and improve on it has a lot to do with the growing escalation of the housing market. Across the UK, prices have increased, on average, by around five per cent each and every year over the past decade. While that doesn't sound much, it means a house bought for £200,000 in 2010 is now valued at £325,000.

That increase means it is unaffordable for many people to enter the market, while others who already own are happy to keep riding the wave in respect of prices continuing to rise, before considering selling as the curve lessens.

Of course, that tailing off could well happen by the end of the summer. The UK housing market is in something akin to cold storage at the moment, at a time when business is usually booming.

This COVID-19-driven change is enhanced by a 'stay at home' premise that is actually encouraging people to tend to all those home and DIY jobs that have typically been left. Sure enough, the more we 'mend this, change that, fix them', the more we paint, restyle, upcycle and redo, the less tendency we have to want to 'up sticks' and move somewhere else.

Put another way, an enforced and prolonged period of isolation could well make us one of the most creative nations in the world in terms of interior design and tending to our gardens. Now where are those *Amazing Spaces* and *Ground Force* books?





# USE YOUR *pool noodle* in the home

## FIVE WAYS TO USE A POOL NOODLE IN YOUR HOME

If you have children and they like swimming, then chances are you have a fair few pool noodles lying around the house, because even though they are fairly big and noticeable items, you never seem to be able to locate one when you need it.

Thankfully, there are ways that you can upcycle these popular pool aids.

### *Help your boots keep their shape*

Lovers of knee-high or thigh-high boots rejoice: you no longer have to worry about them losing their shape in the bottom of your wardrobe. Simply cut an old pool noodle down to size, insert a piece into each boot and voila. Your boots will retain their shape indefinitely.

### *Child-proof your home*

If you have an explorative toddler on your hands, then you will be keen to protect them from any dangers in your home. Pool noodles make the perfect protective covering for corners as they are soft and shock-resistant. Just slice down the middle and place on any sharp edges.

### *Use for press-painting*

Most little ones love to craft, but the constant trips to Hobbycraft can become expensive. Luckily, your children can enjoy a fun messy play activity using just a pool noodle and some paint. All you need to do is cut your noodle into small circles and let the press-painting commence.

### *Prevent trousers from creasing*

If you tend to overcrowd your wardrobe, you may find that your clothes, especially trousers, become easily creased. Fortunately, a humble cut of pool noodle inserted over the bar of a hanger can solve this problem.

### *Use as a hose alternative*

How often have you struggled to fill a big bucket in your sink? Avoid this issue by simply attaching a pool noodle to your tap and then placing the other end in your bucket.

Photo credit: practicallyfunctional.com, Montana Prairie Tales via dply.com, paper-and-glue.com, findlocal.com, topbuzz.com



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# Banish BACTERIA



HOME & DIY

**D**id you know that bacteria can live for several months on surfaces within your home, as well as on other areas that you may not even have considered?

## Handle the hotspots

When trying to keep their houses germ-free zones, people often forget crucial spots that everyone touches, such as doorknobs and tap handles. Spray these hotspots with a disinfectant, leave for 5-10 minutes and wipe clean.

## Banish bed bacteria

With many spending more time in bed than usual, it is important that you wash your bedding on a more regular basis. To completely kill all bacteria, wash your sheets and pillowcases on a hot wash and dry on an antibacterial cycle.

## Focus on your feet

If you have been heading out for your daily exercise, you could be bringing unwanted germs into your home. Take off your shoes before entering and wash the soles with hot, soapy water. Cleaning your doormat is also advisable.

## Tackle technology

How many times a day do you touch your phone or your tablet? Probably more than you care to admit. Cleaning your technological devices with antibacterial wipes throughout the day is crucial if you want to stop the spread of bacteria.

## Clean your cleaning equipment

Cleaning equipment such as mops and cloths are often overlooked when it comes to disinfecting items in your home. However, a failure to do this can lead to you spreading germs rather than eliminating them. Wash in hot, soapy water with a few drops of bleach for added oomph.

## Home in on your home desk

Did you know that your home desk could contain up to 400 times more bacteria than your toilet seat? Prevent these germs from getting transferred to your hands by consistently wiping down any surfaces you work on with a disinfectant that contains at least 70 per cent alcohol.





Whether you are concerned about contributing to the supply shortage, are worried about the additional expense or perhaps you just fancy getting crafty, making your own face mask could not be simpler.

### SEW OPTION

#### YOU WILL NEED:

2 of 10 inches x 6 inches rectangles of fabric – tightly woven cotton is recommended | 2 of 6 inches pieces of elastic or rubber bands | Sewing machine | Needle and thread

#### HOW TO MAKE:

Stack the two rectangles on top of each other | Fold over the long sides ¼ inch and hem | Fold the double layer of fabric over ½ inch along the short sides and stitch down | Run a piece of elastic through the wide hem on each side of the mask using a large needle | Fasten the ends tightly together in a knot | Gently pull the elastic so the knots are tucked inside the hem | Adjust to fit your face

#### DIY FACE MASKS SHOULD:

- ✓ Fit snugly and always be secured over the face
- ✓ Include multiple layers of fabric
- ✓ Allow you to breathe without restriction
- ✓ Be washed regularly

#### DIY FACE MASKS SHOULD NOT:

- ✗ Allow too much light to filter through the fabric
- ✗ Need to be adjusted continuously
- ✗ Be used as a replacement for social distancing and good hygiene practices

### NO-SEW OPTION

#### YOU WILL NEED:

A bandana or square cotton cloth (22 inches x 22 inches) | Rubber bands or hairbands

#### HOW TO MAKE:

Take the fabric and fold the top and bottom into the centre | Fold the sides towards the centre and loop the rubber bands around the fabric | Tuck one end of the fabric into the other | Lift the mask to your face and loop the bands over your ears | Adjust as needed, ensuring that your nose and mouth are fully covered

Photo credit: www.sarahmaker.com



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# The truly inspirational SIR TOM MOORE

THE STORY OF THE WAR HERO WHO WAS CERTAIN HIS DAYS OF NATIONAL DUTY WERE BEHIND HIM

When social media is bad, it can be the source of an intense amount of ill-feeling, frustration and negative conjecture; but when it's good, it is life-changing, charming and the most wonderful reflection of the human spirit.

Ultimately, as the story of the newly knighted Sir Tom Moore unfolded towards the end of April, it was shown to be the latter, and how...

Here was a former British Army Officer who performed heroics in the India and Burma campaigns of the Second World War. Retiring from combat in the 1950s to become an instructor at the Armoured Fighting Vehicle School down in Dorset, his return to civilian life only once saw him raise his head above the parapet as a guest on the late Terry Wogan's 'Marmite' celebrity wordplay game show *Blankety Blank*, and even that was some 37 years ago.

So when the then 99-year-old decided to take on 100 laps of his back garden – 10 laps per day at 25 metres per lap – to raise money for the organisation NHS Charities Together, it was one of the very simplest and yet most precious gestures the father of two had made in an impressively rewarding life.

Hoping to raise £1,000, the fundraising project soon caught the imagination of social media, and, as with all things that go viral, a simple act grew to a magnitude that someone of any age, let alone a centenarian – a landmark Sir Tom reached on April 30 – would struggle to fully comprehend.

Surging onwards and having

broken the £39million barrier by the second week in May, Sir Tom's efforts have personified the heroic spirit the nation is witnessing and applauding in wake of the COVID-19 outbreak.

And sure enough, his rewards have been a delight for several million admirers to bask in. The inspirational role model was named an honorary Colonel, was rewarded with an RAF fly-past, and enjoyed a personal greeting from Prime Minister Boris Johnson, as well as, of course, receiving the obligatory telegram from the Queen marking his 100th birthday.

Sir Tom, who contracted skin cancer aged 98, said, "Reaching 100 is quite something. Reaching 100 with such interest in me and huge generosity from the public is very overwhelming.

"People keep saying what I have done is remarkable; however, it's actually what you have done for me which is remarkable.

"Please always remember, tomorrow will be a good day."

Sir Tom's immediate 'tomorrows' may still be spent trying to answer some of the 150,000 birthday cards he has received; while he may at least be consoled that the demise of *Top of the Pops* means he doesn't have to venture to Elstree to perform his duet *You'll Never Walk Alone* with Michael Ball, after their version leapt to the top of the singles chart.

But perhaps in the greatest tribute of all, Sir Tom was awarded a knighthood, an award fast-tracked through the walls of power.

As an exemplar for ordinary people performing extraordinary things, the veteran is the first to deflect praise towards others; but in troubled times a nation needs figureheads, focal points and friendly faces in order to make our collective efforts feel real, and in Sir Tom Moore we have all that and so much more besides.

# LOCAL NEWS

*from your neighbourhood*



## Nine-year-old author Riku having first book published

A nine-year-old member of the South Woodford Young Writers Club is having his endearing debut book published.

Riku Fryderyk Borowczyk's book, titled *The Witching Hour*, has been picked up by Pegasus publishers. Riku's aim is to help children who are afraid of the dark "think about it in a different way".

Riku's mum, Agnieszka, sent the manuscript to the publishers shortly after he'd written it, and said Riku was thrilled when they decided to take him on.

She said: "Riku's constantly writing stories and when he wrote *The Witching Hour*, I looked up Pegasus and saw that they accepted stories regardless of age, which is unusual. They also only publish about 10 per cent of books they are sent, so this is a big deal for Riku."

Explaining the book's premise, the name of which was inspired by *The BFG*, Riku said: "I don't want to give too much away, but it's written for children who, like me, are afraid of the dark."

"It's about the dark time during the night, and realising that you don't have to be worried, as everything you're scared of is in your imagination. But your imagination can also create something beautiful in the dark."

Agnieszka added: "It's all about perception and how you interpret things – the book shows how everything is within your imagination."

Riku, who wrote the book when he was eight, said it was "always my dream to have a book published", but he couldn't have expected it to happen so soon.

At the time of writing, Pegasus is having the book illustrated and edited.



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# Pupils and staff do their bit to support NHS workers

Pupils and staff from a South Woodford school have been making and donating PPE to help the NHS and front-line workers.

Woodbridge High School teamed up with other schools to make and donate thousands of items of PPE.

Some was science equipment the schools already owned, while new PPE was also made.

At Woodbridge High School they made hundreds of visors which have gone out to NHS and key workers across Redbridge.

They used equipment at school to cut the three parts of a mask/visor, and the staff's technical expertise

managed and maintained the process.

Steven Hogan, headteacher at Woodbridge High School, said: "We are really happy to be able to make this small gesture to help out our colleagues in the NHS at this difficult time. It is a privilege to do what we can."

"I am very grateful to our science and design technology departments for their quick action in getting these things together in recent days."

"We wish all colleagues in the NHS and in the wider care sector the very best and thank them from the bottom of our hearts for what they are doing for our country and society."

# Artist creates astonishing Prince portrait



The fourth anniversary of Prince's death was marked by an unveiling of an incredibly detailed pencil portrait by South Woodford-based artist Kelvin Okafor.

The portrait took 600 hours to complete, split into 300 hours of research and 300 hours of drawing.

Kelvin said: "I connected so deeply on a spiritual level with Prince that I ended up doing something rather special."

"Originally my intentions were to strongly reference the late legendary photographer Herb Ritts' photograph of Prince with his eyes closed."

"Halfway through the portrait the pandemic hit and, after a very vivid dream, I felt inspired to open up Prince's eyes to highlight a state of alert presence, to be in the now and to be fully aware of our surroundings as a subconscious response to the current events we are facing on earth."

"With more than 300 hours of pencil to paper and countless hours of the initial study and research, I feel the portrait has transformed my ability as an artist to a whole new level."



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## Residents can write or receive heart-warming letters

A former Woodford Green student has set up a project where residents can send tailor-made letters to key workers during the pandemic.

Soumya Krishna Kumar, 19, originally set up The Crisis Project, a non-profit social enterprise, as a reaction to the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela and as a hub for small-scale projects.

When the COVID-19 crisis began, the teen decided to launch 'Letters For The NHS', a project in which key workers in need of encouragement can sign up to receive letters from letter-writing volunteers.

Soumya, who's a volunteer for Redbridge Mutual Aid, explained: "I thought, 'What can anyone get involved in and do from home?' I realised that even a letter can really make someone's day. So, the idea is

that we have key workers sign up to receive letters – we don't give out their full details or full name, mainly just their first name, and we have them describe the kind of work that they do.

"We then pass on that information to one of our writing volunteers, who puts together a very personal letter just for that person and sends it back to us. We then pass it on to the key worker."

Just one week after Soumya's first post about the project, more than 100 volunteers had signed up and between 50 and 70 letters had been sent to key workers, with plenty more waiting to be distributed.

Soumya added: "I never expected this kind of reaction, it's unbelievable."

To sign up, go to [www.thecrisisproject.com/](http://www.thecrisisproject.com/)

## Sisters set plans to help deaf community

Two sisters from South Woodford are fundraising so they can transform an old caravan into a food truck to help others who are deaf.

Coco Briden and Mandy Docke hope to raise £5,000 so they can get the project off the ground by next year.

The food truck, which would be called The Deaf Chef, would provide not only sustenance for those in the deaf community who need it but also a safe space and a learning centre.

The sisters said: "As members of the deaf community we have identified that there is a social need for a deaf food truck that provides a safe space, and learning centre, for the deaf community.

"With the staff being qualified in British Sign Language (BSL), this will allow an exciting and educational space for the community to learn in a natural environment.

"The Deaf Chef will be more than a food truck; it's a social hub, a home, a sense of belonging."

To find out more and to donate, visit [www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/thedeafchef](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/thedeafchef)



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## Woodford and District National Trust



LOCAL NEWS

The genesis of the Woodford and District Centre of the National Trust was a coffee morning held on December 7, 1967 at 30 Snakes Lane when it was decided that membership of the proposed Centre would cost five shillings.

The first full meeting of the Centre was held on March 16, 1968 at Woodford County High School and subsequent AGMs are numbered from that date. Starting with between 20 and 30, membership had increased to 252 by the end of the year.

By 1974's AGM, membership had climbed to more than 500, and in that May an Open Day was well supported, with £400 sent to the National Trust HQ. Throughout the 1970's and 1980's membership steadily rose, to a peak of 1,010 in 1985. Consequently, the Centre's activities became more varied and adventuresome, with up to three holidays a year being customary.

Some highlights in our history include hosting of the Annual Regional Conference at the Woodford Moat House in 1992 when Chairs and Secretaries of the Centres and Associations in the region attended for one day. Memorable speakers include John Julius Norwich, Lord Chorley and Dame Jennifer Jenkins. Our May Fair became a regular event, beginning in May 1991 and taking place every other year until 2009.

Largely as a result of the success of the fairs over the years, we raised well over £100,000 for Operation Neptune. In the course of our 50-year history, the Centre has contributed well over £200,000 to the National Trust.

So why not come and join us?

The programmes for the following months will be:

- > October 13: 'Historic Waltham Abbey Church' by Greville Weltch – Memorial Hall, South Woodford
- > November 11: 'East Anglian Families of Influence – the Essex and Norfolk connections' by Peter Lawrence – location to be confirmed
- > December 7: 'The History of Ongar High Street' by Anne Padfield – Memorial Hall, South Woodford



## Choir rocks during 24-hour charity event

The leader of Wanstead and Woodford Rock Choir took part in a 24-hour fundraising event which has raised more than £40,000 in aid of Mental Health Awareness Week.

Nicola Cain, who looks after the choirs in Woodford and Wanstead as well as many others, led some live sessions as part of a round-the-clock Rock Choir held on May 19.

Rock Choir, which has 32,000 members nationally, streamed the non-stop event on Facebook with the performance including dynamic singing sessions, themed musical events, songs and social musical events plus much more.

Following the 24-hour effort, Rock Choir thanked those who supported it.

It said: "Thank you to everyone who took part, contributed or donated. Such a massive family Rock Choir team effort."

Mark Rowland, CEO of the Mental Health Foundation, said: "I want to say a huge thank you to the rockies who helped raised more than £40,000.

"They have inspired people to give to our work, showing what kindness looks like and what can happen when we come together.

"We are going to put the money and the hope into our work all across the country."





Photo credit: Claudine Hartzel Photography

Haven House is a lifeline for hundreds of children and families and they need us now more than ever. As the hospice in Woodford Green continues to cope with the COVID-19 crisis and the difficult times that follow, it is looking to the local community for support.

Haven House Chief Executive Mike Palfreman said: "Haven House remains on the frontline in providing care for some of the most vulnerable children in our local community.

"We are determined to play our part and support the NHS at this critical moment and are working closely every day with our NHS colleagues. We continue to provide a range of critical emergency care services to our children and families who are isolated and particularly vulnerable at this time."

The charity has been forced to cancel its fundraising events and its seven retail shops remain closed until further notice. In April, the hospice, which cares for seriously ill children, welcomed some funding from the government – lifeline support that was necessary to fill part of the sudden drop in income for the short term.

Mr Palfreman continued: "I would like to thank our supporters who have responded to our call for help over the past weeks. Thank you for holding us in your hearts. This support is so essential and we will continue to need it now and into the future."

To support Haven House, visit [www.havenhouse.org.uk](http://www.havenhouse.org.uk)

## Dental practice helps patients for free



Improve Your Smile dental practice in Woodford Green has been doing everything in its power to help patients deal with urgent oral problems during lockdown.

Despite a "complete lack of leadership and direction" from the government following the decision to close dental practices at the end of March, Improve Your Smile arranged free video conferences with patients and anyone else who needed advice during the pandemic.

Practice manager Moona Malik (pictured) explained: "We did everything we could to look after not only our own patients in need of urgent care, but also non-patients. "Taking patients from GPs was vital for our small team, because by doing that it saved the patients having to call the NHS 111 line, which has been so pressurised during the pandemic. We were just happy to take some of the pressure off them.

"Of course, it was incredibly difficult having our hands tied with non-emergency patients, but we did absolutely everything in our power to help."

Mrs Malik added that she was shocked the government had already announced it hoped hairdressers would reopen in June, yet gave no guidance to dentists.

She said: "The good news is that we've been ready to reopen from the minute we had to shut. We have a highly trained team and patient safety has always been our priority, so only minimal tweaks have had to be made to accommodate the pandemic. We've had to spend £50,000 on PPE though – the cost of face masks in particular has skyrocketed since the pandemic began, which is really quite awful."



Photo credit: [www.improveyoursmile.co.uk](http://www.improveyoursmile.co.uk)



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LOCAL NEWS

## Fundraisers rally for charity

Fundraisers went the extra mile for Haven House Children's Hospice during the 2.6 Challenge.

More than sixty children and adults ran, cycled, danced, bounced, baked and walked their way to completing the 2.6 Challenge, raising an incredible £19,738 for the charity in Woodford Green.

The 2.6 Challenge was an initiative that replaced the London Marathon after it was postponed because of the coronavirus – participants across the country were urged to take part in 2.6 or 26 themed challenges to raise money for their chosen charities.

Here are some of the unique challenges fundraisers undertook: Claire Wheatman (pictured) and Kevin Lalley did the 'Tour de Lounge', cycling and running for 12 hours straight in the comfort of their flat.

Paula Fairlamb completed 26.2km – some 32.5

running laps around her neighbourhood.

Cyclist Stephen Jones picked one of the steepest hills in North London to complete his 2.6 challenge, while the Williams family all did different physical challenges.

The West Essex Under 13 squad turned their love of football into a 2.6 kick-up challenge, completing 26 'keepy-uppies' each.

Ex-boxer Michael Barratt decided to do a 26-minute circuit, and brother and sister duo Jasmia and Arjan and six-year-old Luca set themselves the task of working through a list of 26 activities in one day.

Several of the charity's volunteers also sprang into action, along with seven local families who completed a series of fitness and well-being-inspired challenges.

For more information, visit [www.havenhouse.org.uk](http://www.havenhouse.org.uk)

## Map confirms amount of lost lives in district



COVID-19 has been less deadly in South Woodford than in surrounding areas, according to the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

The ONS' interactive map which can be found at [www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/dvc811/msoamap/index.html?from=timeline](http://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/dvc811/msoamap/index.html?from=timeline) shows the number of deaths in different postal areas in the UK between March 1 and April 17.

The map shows that there were two confirmed deaths in South Woodford during this time, while there were five in Woodford Green and four in Woodford Bridge.

Elsewhere, 90,232 people died in England and Wales between March 1 and April 17, of which 20,283 were from coronavirus.

At the time of writing, the UK now has the highest official death toll in Europe and the second highest in the world.

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**JUNE BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH:**

# Rose

**F**or those born in the month of June, your birth flower is the rose. Roses are known for being the flower of love, and people born in June are said to be true romantics. Easy to grow, available in an abundance of colours and with a heavenly sweet scent, roses are a great addition to any garden.

**WHAT DOES A ROSE SYMBOLISE?**

Although roses are most commonly associated with love, beauty and devotion, each colour can be used to convey a different message or emotion.

The red rose means, "I love you." The pink rose symbolises happiness. White roses are used to convey innocence and purity. And a yellow rose symbolises friendship but can also be used to express jealousy.

**WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOU?**

If you were born in June, you are definitely a sucker for romance, plus you are more likely to get on well with others and adjust to new situations with ease.

Style-wise, you favour a classic and timeless look and can make elegance appear effortless.

**HOW TO GROW ROSES**

Roses crave sunlight, so you need to pick a spot that offers at least six hours of sun a day. Try to choose soil that is rich and well drained to ensure your flowers bloom.

The ideal time to plant roses is in early spring, and you can pick between a bare root variety or container-grown plants.

Water directly to the soil using a soaker hose or drip irrigation – do not water the foliage.

**WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON PESTS FOR ROSES?**

Aphids and caterpillars are the most common pests for roses and can be removed by hand in the early stages. Alternatively, the insecticide Rose Clear is highly effective.

**GARDENING**



# Tree-lined



## SIMPLE TREE IDEAS FOR GARDENS OF ANY SIZE

**W**e all know the majesty of trees – decorative, oxygen-giving, protecting, privacy-offering and effortlessly evolving over time; they are perhaps the friendliest of nature's plants for the variety and variance they offer to both the biggest and the smallest spaces.

That means, whether you have a sprawling field out the back of your property or a simple back yard, clever use of trees can really shape a space.

### PYRUS CALLEYRANA

An upright, tear-shaped tree that is perfect for gardens that have light up above, though perhaps are restricted in terms of square footage.

The green spread casts light down and the tree will self-maintain through all seasons.

### ACER GRISEUM (PAPERBARK MAPLE)

This is a tree recently voted the most beautiful for gardens, given its characterful grey trunk and a spray of leaf colours that blend and weave into any foreground. Slow-growing, it won't consume the space.

### MAGNOLIA GRANDIFLORA

A tree that bows out at the top to provide the perfect cover for something you wish to hide, like a street lamp or neighbour's basketball hoop. And of course, with a spray of white flowers that emerge as the year progresses, this is a variety that takes on an evolving personality.

### CRAB APPLE TREES

So often the tree of our childhoods; as kids we contemplated whether to eat the apples that dropped from the tree. In garden terms, these small and perfectly formed beauties can be used to shield street-side windows from prying passers-by.

They won't grow to any extreme height, and flower attractively too.

### BONSAI TREES

Of course, if space is really at a premium but you still crave the lure of a plant that has the rigidity of bark and the personality of a tree, bonsai are the way forward. While we mainly associate them as being very small, bonsai can grow well above head height.



Photo credit: gardening.com

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HORTICULTURE HEROES:

# Dan Pearson

GARDENING

## THE GARDENER GOING BACK TO THE SOIL

It's fair to describe Dan Pearson as someone who never tires of experiencing the thrill of nature's rustic wholesomeness.

Dan is a horticulturalist of the highest regard, who has trained at the UK's greatest botanical institutions, written newspaper columns for more than two decades and even been dedicated an exhibition at the Garden Museum, London. To Dan, gardening represents an absorbing, encompassing experience that reconnects him with something spiritual.

"Being outdoors and seeing nature, in its simplest form, growing and flourishing around you is the most amazing thing," he says. "It's something we can all enjoy – whether that's rich sprays of colour or the simple green bounty of plants interacting and intersecting with each other."

Our ability to grow and flourish in our natural surroundings is something even the most modest gardener can do.

"My advice is to start with something small – even just a window box. Choose plants that interest and excite you, learn about them and go from there."

"I think that horticulture has an enormous amount to give back to a world that needs this connection with greenery and things that you eat: knowing where your food came from, and knowing how to go about growing it while still preserving space."

"That means the gardens are never static; they are always changing and always adapting."

Pearson says the crucial step in effective gardening is to have a plan – to structure a project from the start, to set goals and to follow through on them to the end.

"It really doesn't matter what you decorate your garden with – you should go with what feels right. However, what I would say is it's so easy to get distracted, and I am testament to the fact you can end up with four or five unfinished jobs unless you plan properly, so that would be my best tip."

Photo credit: Heathcliff O'Malley/Shutterstock





# SOMBRE VE CELEBRATIONS

*for our departed heroes*

**T**he street parties were present, Vera Lynn's eclectic harmonies piped out of speakers, while generations paid emotional, wistful tributes to departed heroes, and yet VE celebrations this year took on a rather unusual feel.

That a nation still came together to commemorate and lay thanks on May 8, the 75th anniversary of VE Day, typified the fortitude and spirit that guided us to victory all those years ago. While we took seriously the distancing limitations of coronavirus, people across our county refused to have their tributes quelled by a modern pandemic.

Britons also encountered another challenge this year, and one that had nothing to do with the two-metre rule – millions of diaries and calendars were published with this, one of the key dates of the year, being wrong. It was as a result of the early May Bank Holiday moving back four days to mark those World War II celebrations. With the switch only being finalised in June last year, an estimated 30 million diaries and calendars were incorrectly printed.

While events this year weren't allowed to feature mass gatherings, special events or the participation of pubs, perhaps it was fitting that on such a landmark anniversary people were offered the chance to make rather more sombre, personal tributes to those who fought for their country between 1939 and 1945. It's a far cry from when hundreds of thousands of people marked the end of the bitter war with celebrations centred in The Mall, London, outside Buckingham Palace, as King George VI and Queen Elizabeth stood on the balcony to wave to the cheering crowds.

Missing on that day was a young Princess Elizabeth – one of the rare times that the future Queen slipped incognito to join in the revelries of her future subjects, as she and her sister, Margaret, accompanied by a 16-strong group of trusted members of the royal household, slipped out of the palace to sample first-hand the celebrations.

Recalling the event in an interview a few years ago, the Queen said: "I think it was one of the most memorable nights of my life."

It was also memorable for one 15-year-old boy from Harrow, Ronald Thomas, who told his family how he had danced with the future Queen. For years he had trouble getting people to believe him.

This year, the Queen paid tribute to those fallen heroes, as well as referencing the profound challenges 2020 has brought, in an emotive speech, delivered in her usual impeccable style.

"Today it may seem hard that we cannot mark this special anniversary as we would wish. Instead we remember from our homes and our doorsteps.

"But our streets are not empty; they are filled with the love and the care that we have for each other.

"And when I look at our country today, and see what we are willing to do to protect and support one another, I say with pride that we are still a nation those brave soldiers, sailors and airmen would recognise and admire."







# zooming INTO FOCUS

## WHY THE VIDEO-CONFERENCING TOOL IS 2020'S BIG SUCCESS STORY

When it became clear the COVID-19 pandemic's presence was going to have a profound effect on society, speculating traders quickly went on the lookout for an investment stock that would pay big... after all, as the saying goes, there is money to be made out of a crisis.

Any who included video-conferencing tool Zoom in their portfolio may now be laughing all the way to the bank – or at least they will be when the banks reopen – after the Silicon Valley-based corporation announced triple-digit growth over the past three months.

Zoom is, of course, the perfect method for homebound people – and at the last count that's the vast majority of the population – to stay in touch with friends, family and work colleagues. It's not unique – rivals include

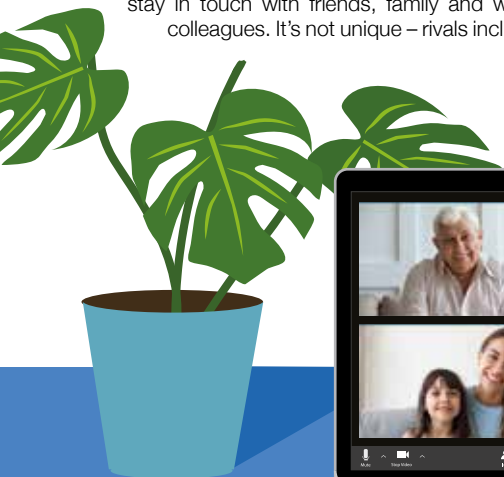
WebEx, BlueJeans, TeamViewer, Microsoft Teams and even Google Classroom – but what Zoom has thrown behind its product in a way rivals haven't are innovation, simplicity of function and a serious amount of reinvestment.

It's all led to first-time installations increasing five-fold in March, and an increase in the stock price of well over 100 per cent.

In reality, though, Zoom and the other video-conferencing tools cannot rest on their laurels. They may well be making hay while the sun shines given the restrictions placed on our physical interactions, but when these regulations are lifted, the danger for these firms is that the public will forget the software just as quickly as they downloaded it, and return to past habits.

The only way the tech boffins can prevent what will be an inevitable crash in user numbers is if their accompanying marketing team can convince us to change our habits long term, where speaking over an internet connection is preferred to face-to-face meetings.

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## GETTING A GRIP ON OUR CONTACTLESS SPENDING

**W**e are a society increasingly surging towards apparent glorious cashlessness – and an increase in the allowed spending limit to £45 per transaction was greeted by a record number of card payments in April.

Of course, the government's drive to limit the possible spread of coronavirus germs via the exchange of physical cash has been a defining factor in the latest spike, continuing an upward trend of contactless payments that was already up 16 per cent year on year. And yet, even before the pandemic, the ease with which we got used to the purchase of goods and services with a simple tap on a card reader means we are edging ever closer to a time when, in some situations, cash may become totally redundant.

Contactless payments offer a raft of benefits with very few downsides. There's the time-saving element – an average of seven seconds are saved per transaction versus chip

'n' pin, and 15 seconds on cash, according to research by Barclaycard. Then there's the removal of the need to carry heavy, dirty coins, or to head to the cashpoint to withdraw notes.

There's also the convenience of having a digital record of all transactions, and even the option to pay using a phone or watch.

And yet, while the drive towards convenience suits most of us, it does not apply to everyone – there are still 1.3million people in the UK who do not have a bank account. Consumer groups have also noted the dangers of people idly 'tapping' away without any real thought about the money they are spending. And while fraud accounts for only 2.5p in every £100, the ease with which someone can spend on a stolen card is considerable.

What's certain is that as much as the powers that be may want to encourage our spending habits towards a certain way, as with most things, it is the consumers who will decide.





# ALWAYS ONLINE

*Does the era of 'live chat' actually mean you're talking to a robot?*

Any kind of online web chat experience has the potential to go sour – we've all ended up speaking to someone many thousands of miles away wondering if we'd be better off writing a strongly worded letter instead.

While the experience of speaking to someone in a call centre in a faraway land isn't always the best, the attempt at a pleasant exchange is usually flawless, and the reality that we are speaking to a real person is something we've grown to take for granted.

Yet the new era of customer service often means we're not talking to a human... not in London, Glasgow, nor Islamabad. Instead, while it may not be evident in the initial exchanges, we're conversing with a chatbot.

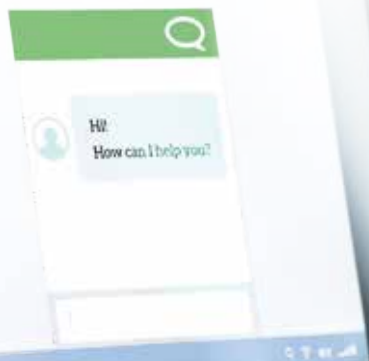
The technology that powers these computers has moved on in waves over the past decade or so. Intelligent, polite and immediate, these chatbots offer customers the chance to source answers and direct enquiries rather than having to endure the frustration of searching or waiting around for a real person to enter the chat.

Companies like chatbots because they are low cost and highly productive, though there are, of course, limitations to this latest wave of AI. Consumers can feel they are being fobbed

off and there is a good chance complex enquiries are just moved on to a real person anyway, in which case the process actually takes longer, and it's only really relatively simple queries that can be solved by a robot.

The jury is still out, particularly as it's difficult for companies to judge feedback – after all, satisfied customers will tell, on average, nine people about their experience, while for dissatisfied customers that number is 22.

Either way, just remember the next time you engage in a web chat, you might want to hold off on pleasantries about the weather... the robot you're conversing with really doesn't care.



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**TOKYO 2021**  
**THE NEW SPORTS**



SPORT

## 5. CLIMBING

In the final instalment showcasing sports set to debut or return at the now postponed Tokyo Olympics, we take a look at climbing.

Climbing's debut in Tokyo reflects our growing love for strength-based pursuits that also require precision, strategy and focus.

That the sport has, over the past two decades, accelerated itself from the most basic of human endeavours to a physical challenge enjoyed both outdoors and indoors by participants of all ages, is testament to the number of activity centres that now provide walls to scale. Many have felt it was only a matter of time before the IOC opened its doors.

A dynamic challenge, the Olympic format will be split into three disciplines – Speed, Bouldering and Lead.

In Speed, it's a straight two-competitor race to the top of a 15-metre wall, in a set-up that is expected to excite spectators most, and, for a certain generation, will undoubtedly offer echoes of an ITV *Gladiators* finale.

In Bouldering, it's a more challenging 4.5-metre wall, while in Lead, it's a case of

getting as high as possible in a set time.

Every competitor will take on all three formats, with the best overall performer being crowned Olympic champion.

As ever, the vertical walls offer handholds and footholds, as well as shapes, sizes, positive sections (slabs) and those with negative aspects (steeps or overhangs), meaning competitors will need to be at their best from the off.

Safety ropes are allowed, though the best competitors will try to limit any lost time and will be harnessing flexibility, skill and no small amount of mental decisiveness in tackling a new Olympic sport expected to thrill at every grab.

Photo credit: Miko.g/Shutterstock.com





# PARK LIFE

## PENALTY CHARGE VS PARKING CHARGE – WHEN TO PAY AND WHEN TO PLAY

The scourge of the modern motor car is arguably not the cost of petrol, the maintenance or insurance premiums – it's the fact that once we've paid out for all of those elements that keep it on the road, there's actually nowhere to park the damn thing.

But millions of motorists are paying excessive, unfair and exploitative parking charges in the belief that they have committed an offence, when in reality all that's happening is they're being presented with an invoice. Welcome to the vagaries of a penalty charge versus a parking charge.

A penalty charge is a ticket issued by your local authority – usually the police or the council. Chances are you've committed a genuine offence, such as overstaying parking or showing an invalid permit. In these instances you're banged to rights and, while appealing is a decent option in asking for leniency, in most cases the penalty stands.

A parking charge, on the other hand, is something issued by an independent parking operator – perhaps you've parked in a private car park, in a space adjoining a building, or even in a leisure park. This issuer actually has no authority to issue a ticket – all you're being given is an invitation to pay what amounts to an invoice.

Sure, it's an invoice that looks very much like a penalty charge, and intentionally so; and the wording will have you believe dire consequences will follow if you fail to pay.

The reality is that virtually no cases ever get to court, and these unscrupulous businesses profit only from those who respond. So the next time you get a parking charge, search for the issuer online and check carefully exactly what it is you have in front of you. Motorists are now getting smart to filing these charges where they belong – in the bin – and saving millions in the process.

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# PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

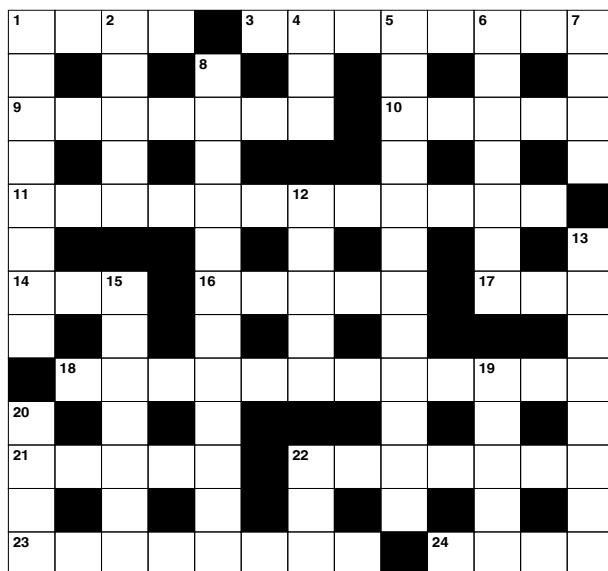
Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4

## ACROSS

1. Pretty (4)
3. Battered (8)
9. Act of turning up (7)
10. Arboreal primate (5)
11. Directions (12)
14. Silent (3)
16. Scale representation (5)
17. Be unwell (3)
18. Vehemently (12)
21. Female relatives (5)
22. Circular hall (7)
23. Comes into flower (8)
24. Type of wood (4)

## DOWN

1. Personal magnetism (8)
2. Conditions (5)
4. Entirely (3)
5. A large number (12)
6. European country (7)
7. Mend with rows of stitches (4)
8. Excessive stress (12)
12. Military trainee (5)
13. Reproduce recorded sound (4,4)



15. Keepsake; reminder (7)
19. Spear (5)
20. Young sheep (4)
22. Strong spirit (3)

## DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ When cranberries are ripe, they will bounce like rubber balls
- ▶ Pound cake got its name from the ingredients – you typically use a pound of flour, butter, sugar and eggs
- ▶ Fruits such as apples, pears and apricots are all part of the rose family
- ▶ Apples can float because they are made up of around 25 per cent air
- ▶ The word potato came from Spanish patata
- ▶ Bananas grow in large hanging bunches
- ▶ Grapes explode when you put them in the microwave
- ▶ A strawberry has an average of about 200 seeds and a pomegranate can contain up to 1,000 seeds

## SUDOKU

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



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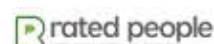
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