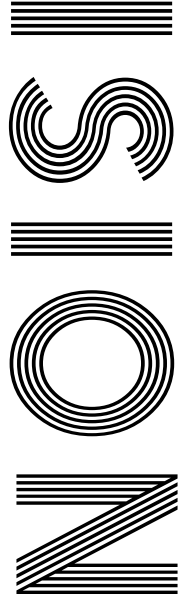


2020
VISION

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TOUCHING
TRIBUTE
to Dame Vera Lynn

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE
200 years after her birth



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RICKY GERVAIS

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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.

I hope you are all safe and well and looking after our independent and local businesses.

It's so nice going out and slowly seeing things getting back to

normality. It's strange, people seem to be a lot friendlier and accommodating, having time for a chat and a catch-up (obviously keeping our distance). Long may it last.

It's going to be a little strange at first. But we will get through this and be stronger on the other side. I know **VISION** will be.

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.

Over the next two months, **VISION** breaks into Hertfordshire with the launch of two areas: **VISION** Hertford and **VISION** Bishop's Stortford. We are also launching a further edition in Essex with **VISION** Chelmsford Beaulieu. Get in touch if you require any information.

We welcome any of your stories for our local news pages. So if you have a story to share, please send it to woodford@visionmag.co.uk

I hope you all enjoy the July 2020 edition of **VISION** SouthWoodford.

Brett



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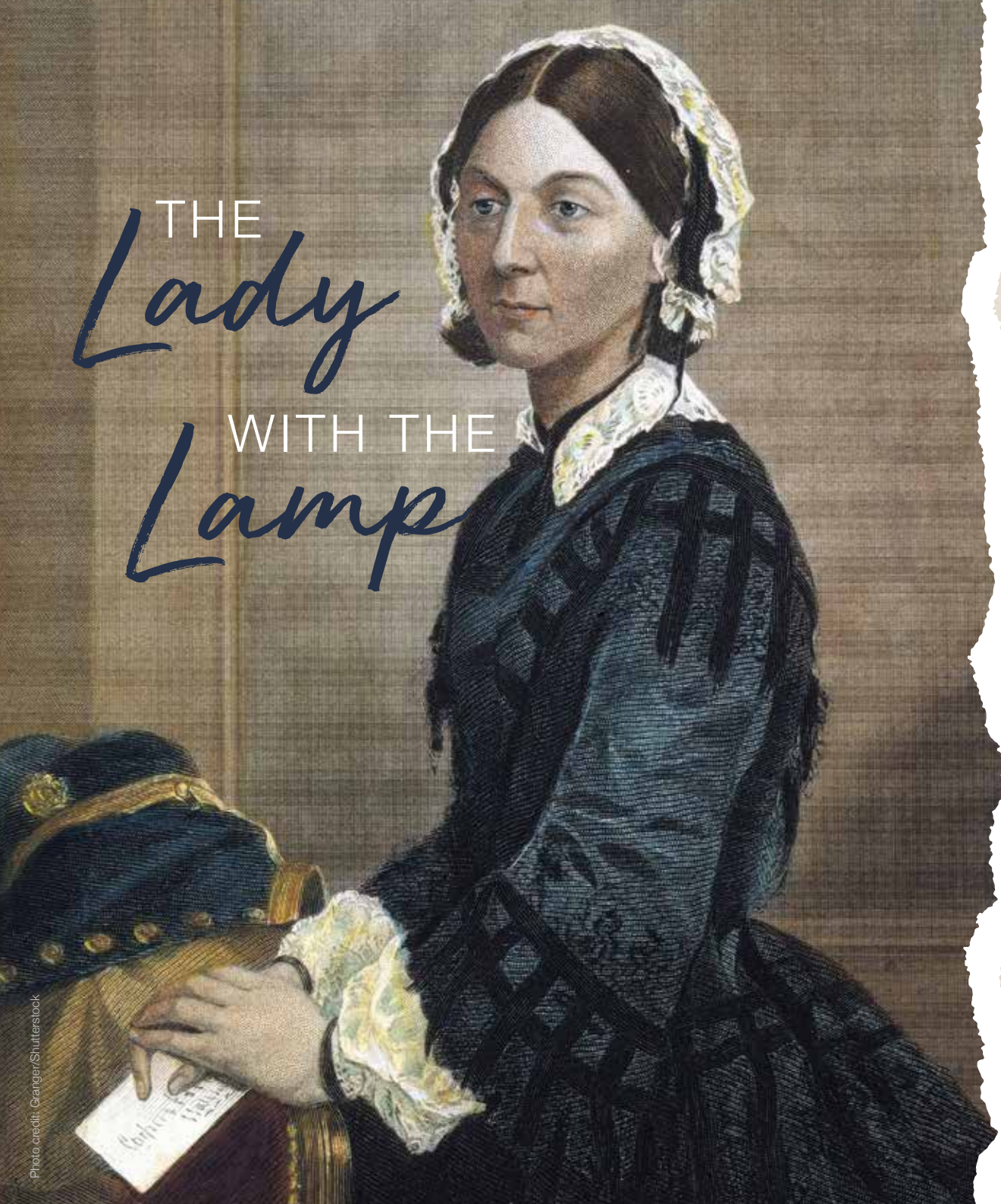


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How much do we really know about Florence Nightingale, as celebrations marking the 200th anniversary of her birth continue?

THE Lady WITH THE Lamp



We are living through a period where those in all corners of the National Health Service are experiencing acclaim, admiration and no small amount of empathy in ways rarely seen before.

True, it may have taken a global pandemic for the universal admiration of our healthcare heroes to fully be appreciated. However, as the spectre of COVID-19 continues to sink further into the background, so now we should ensure those doctors, nurses, consultants, paramedics, porters, reception staff, phonenumber operators (and everyone else in the mould of Florence Nightingale) will always be appreciated.

Nightingale, born in May 1820, is regarded as the pioneering force in modern nursing, and yet the iconic nature in which her image is celebrated – the Lady with the Lamp, going round at night tending to those wounded in the Crimean War – only actually tells half the story.

That's because while, first and foremost, Nightingale was a nurse working on the ground in then the most desperate of conditions, she was as well a woman of strong mind and powerful opinion. From an upper-class background, and well travelled prior to exploring nursing as a career, she was a brilliant mathematician, an organiser and an advocate for statistics.

Having such an analytical mind transformed a rather unstructured, 'make do' and manual process of caring for the sick into a slick, regimented process where structure could be directly linked to saving lives.

From graphs to pie charts and even infographics, Florence Nightingale's take on the duties that lay in front of her were revolutionary. Indeed, she is credited with the invention of the polar area diagram, and would work these and other visual explanations into nursing reports. As a result, in 1859 she became the first female member of the Royal Statistical Society, and 15 years later was announced as an honorary member of the American Statistical Association.

With every new study there was an even more expressive method for understanding and acting upon the statistics in hand, from accompanying the British Army in India in the 1850s, where she slashed mortality rates caused by drinking toxic water, to returning home to promote literature and feminism in a way that was scientific and exacting.

That feminism link is slightly at odds with her opinions on the fairer sex. She was, at times, brutally disparaging towards women, and even referred to herself in masculine terms, as "a man of action" and "a man of business".

In her defence, Nightingale was perhaps just rallying against a world in which men had the upper hand. To consider what she achieved then, it's interesting to think how much impact she might have now, in an era when equality, technology and innovation are key parameters in healthcare.

To celebrate what our medical key workers have achieved now is, ultimately, to thank Florence Nightingale for setting up, styling and steering modern-day nursing to what it is today... something we are all proud of.



WHEN THE Bluebirds FLEW AWAY

Celebrating the life of the 'Forces Sweetheart', Dame Vera Lynn

When news came in the middle of June of Dame Vera Lynn's death, it was a case of reflecting on, rather than mourning, the life of someone so intrinsically linked to those courageous troops who led us to victory in World War II.

That the singer, songwriter and entertainer was in her 20s when her iconic ode to our soldiers, *(There'll Be Bluebirds Over) The White Cliffs of Dover*, became such an emotional and inspirational marker for the war effort, shows the longevity she achieved right up to her passing.

Born in East Ham, Dame Vera's performing debut came with the famous Joe Loss Orchestra in 1935. By the time war broke out four years later she was signed to Decca Records, and agreed to venture deep underground to sing with those sheltering in tube stations from the danger of German air raids.

Her *Sincerely Yours* radio programme in 1941 was a vehicle for messages to be sent out to

troops on the front line, and she soon joined the Entertainments National Service Association – which hosted open-air concerts – with whom she travelled to Egypt, India and Burma.

Post-war, Dame Vera's popularity stuck, with extensive TV performances, a star talent at the Royal Variety shows, and countless live concerts.

A dedicated philanthropist, she continued to raise money via her self-titled children's charity right up until her death on June 18, at the venerable age of 103.

What Dame Vera would have made of the recent furore concerning Winston Churchill's statue is unclear – we suspect, in embodying all the same spirit, resilience and fortitude of the wartime, of which she was a crucial part, she would have simply diverted her attention to those fallen heroes again.

"Not a day goes by when I don't think of those brave men, and what they gave to this country... and one day we'll meet again."

Photo credit: Evening News/Shutterstock

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GLASSES

TO FIT YOUR FACE SHAPE

V
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If you have just found out that you need to wear glasses, or even if you have worn them for years but feel like you have never found the perfect pair, keep reading to discover the ideal frame to fit your face shape.

Oval Face Shape – a well-balanced face with a slightly wider forehead than jaw and cheekbones. If you have an oval face shape you are in the lucky position of being able to suit most styles of glasses, so you can simply choose whatever shape you prefer.

Top pick for men: Hugo Boss, Boss 1129

Top pick for women: Kylie Minogue Never Too Late

Rectangle Face Shape – a deeper forehead with a long nose and strong jawline. Pick a deep, square shape that will complement your angular features.

Top pick for men: Tom Ford FT5584-B 56

Top pick for women: Karen Millen KM 111

Square Face Shape – a broad and deep forehead with a wide jawline and square chin. To create more length, go for narrower styles that will offset your strong features.

Top pick for men: Ray-Ban RX5154

Top pick for women: Ted Baker Lyla

Heart Face Shape – a small chin coupled with a broad forehead and wide cheekbones. Opt for frames that are a little wider than your forehead to offset the natural wideness of the top half of your face.

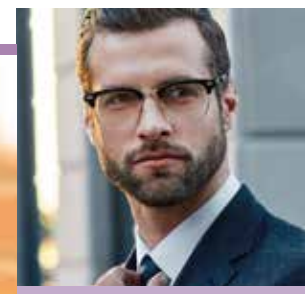
Top pick for men: Ted Baker Grover

Top pick for women: Love Moschino LM21

Round Face Shape – full cheeks and a round chin, often with a wide forehead. Choose rounder frames rather than angular ones to complement your round, soft facial features.

Top pick for men: Tom Ford TF5485

Top pick for women: Will.i.a.m W10V Gold





THE LATEST SKIN CRAZE UNVEILED

Are you always eager to try the most recently hyped-up beauty treatments? If yes, then you need to check out Gua Sha, a facial scraping technique that promises amazing results in a short period of time.

WHAT IS FACIAL GUA SHA?

Facial Gua Sha is a treatment that involves scraping either a flat jade or a rose quartz stone across the skin to relax your muscles and promote tissue drainage. Unlike a standard Gua Sha massage, this method will not leave any bruising or marks on your face.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF GUA SHA?

If you are looking for a more youthful complexion – and let's be honest, who isn't? – then you definitely need to try this ancient Chinese technique. Facial Gua Sha works by moving the lymphatic fluids in your face, improving blood flow and reducing puffiness. It also encourages your skin to naturally purge dirt and oils that can cause spots.

HOW TO CARRY OUT GUA SHA AT HOME

Another benefit of this skin treatment is that it can be carried out at home with only one piece of equipment: a Gua Sha facial massage stone (these can easily be purchased online).

- Prep your skin with a facial mist or oil
- Start at the neck area and work your way up
- Use upward and outward strokes across all areas of your face
- Sweep across the cheeks and press gently under the eyes and across the eyebrows
- Finish with upward strokes to the hairline

HOW OFTEN SHOULD GUA SHA BE DONE?

If you are looking for a significant change in the appearance of your skin, then you should carry out this treatment daily. However, once you have the desired results, you can switch to a weekly maintenance schedule.



Facial GUA SHA



Bad Booze

FOUR WAYS ALCOHOL AFFECTS THE APPEARANCE OF YOUR SKIN

Most people are already aware that alcohol has a dehydrating effect on the skin. Anyone who has woken up the morning after the night before will be all too familiar with the tell-tale signs of boozing, including sallow skin, sunken bloodshot eyes and a bloated face. However, you may not know that even just a few daily drinks can have a detrimental effect on your complexion.

ALCOHOL CAUSES DEHYDRATION

If you regularly drink two or more drinks in one day, then your skin will become dehydrated. In fact, you may not know this, but alcohol actively takes all the fluids out of your skin, leading to a dry and parched complexion, as well as one that is more prone to ageing.

ALCOHOL CAUSES INFLAMMATION

Do you ever notice how your face becomes flushed or red after a few too many drinks? This is because alcohol inflames your skin tissues. Although your skin will go back to normal once the alcohol is out of

your system, prolonged drinking can lead to permanent facial redness.

ALCOHOL CAUSES BREAKOUTS

Whether you suffer with the occasional spot or actual adult acne, drinking alcohol can lead to more skin breakouts. All alcohol contains sugar, with some boozy beverages containing more than others, such as cocktails and white wine. Furthermore, the high levels of sugar in alcohol can lead to less plump skin cells and, in turn, a duller complexion.

ALCOHOL CAN AGGRAVATE SKIN CONDITIONS

If you suffer with an ongoing skin complaint such as eczema, psoriasis or rosacea, alcohol will only exacerbate these issues. This is because alcohol has the ability to reduce the healthy bacteria in your gut that helps to regulate your immune system.



SICK OF WICKS?

Five other fitness influencers you need in your life



If the recent lockdown has taught us one thing, it's that, as a nation, we can't get enough of Joe Wicks. But even where health and well-being are concerned, familiarity may eventually breed contempt, so why not mix it up with some other leading fitness influencers:

KAYLA ITSINES – She may favour a fitness selfie a little too regularly, but the camera never lies where Aussie fitness influencer Kayla is concerned, and nor does the £15million revenue earned from her fitness app launched in 2016.

Largely down to earth, and obviously favouring the female fitness market, Kayla's 12.5 million Instagram followers are testament to her success.

RACHEL BRATHEN – Self-styled 'yoga girl' isn't your typical Instagram fitness fiend. She's a mum, caters for the midlife market as well as strapping young specimens, and is unapologetically bolshie and ballsy in getting the job done.

It's a combination that works for her 2.1 million followers.

TALLY RYE – Finally, a personal trainer who looks like a normal person, Tally doesn't believe in diets and instead focuses on the positive elements of following a fitness plan that compensates for a love of food.

Refreshing and honest, Tally is one of a new wave of all-inclusive coaches.

SIMEON PANDA – For muscle mass, fat-burning, power and poise, Simeon leads the way in the UK as far as the male market goes, with a hard-line approach to achieving the ultimate body while stretching, crunching and straining his way through daily routines.

Any guy with an interest in strength should check out Simeon's social offering.

MARIO SCHAFZAHN – Boasting an Instagram Health Score of 97 out of 100 means you must be doing something right, and in the case of Austrian Mario Schafzahl, this trainer, online coach and cover model has it all going his way.

If GQ-esque style is as much part of your fitness incentive as protein shakes, Mario is your man.

Photo credit: womenshealthmag.com, naturalhealthmagazine.co.uk, britisrowing.org, simeonpanda.com, Thomas H Lind via maroschatzki.com



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DIFFERENT Yolks for DIFFERENT Folks

HEALTH ADVICE THAT SUGGESTS EGGS ARE NOT SO GOOD FOR US AFTER ALL

Eggs have had a chequered history... or should that be speckled? For so long a staple of British life... across boiled, poached, scrambled and more, with soldiers, in a quiche, or even as an omelette as we matured our tastes to rather more continental blends. Heck, we'll even work it into a drink – eggnog or a whisky sour, anyone?

In the 1990s the negative press around battery hens and the salmonella crisis took the glow off this most delicious of foods, and while the humble egg's resurgence has been welcomed, recent evidence suggests we may have overstated the positive benefits while underestimating some potential health problems.

Mostly, these come in the form of worries over cholesterol. We all know how bad the build-up of this liver-produced fatty substance is, and recent research from the US states that for every half-egg per day consumed, the increase in heart disease is six per cent, with an eight per cent increase in the risk of mortality.

Contrast this with boffins who suggest eggs can protect against Alzheimer's disease. What's more, we've also been told they're good for heart health

– even as recently as 2018, a study in China found that those who ate eggs every day had an 18 per cent lower risk of death from heart disease and a 28 per cent lower risk of stroke (compared to those who didn't). What's more, the lutein found in yolks can improve eyesight.

And while gobbling down multiple eggs isn't advisable, research suggests that having an egg with salad actually increases the vitamin E we absorb from the leafy matter.

As with most things, our bodies all experience different effects from the same food; moderation and 'food intelligence' appear to be pivotal.





4 common INGREDIENT SUBSTITUTIONS

If lockdown has taught us anything, it's how we can cope without restaurants, takeaways and other quick food fixes. In fact, 38 per cent of Brits have said that they are now cooking from scratch, but what do you do if you can't get hold of a key kitchen staple?

Baking soda & lemon juice for yeast

Yeast has been quite difficult to get hold of in recent months, but thankfully two other common store cupboard staples will ensure the same effect.



Ground flaxseed & water for eggs

If you need eggs to emulsify a set of ingredients, the below will work just as well. Alternatively, bananas and apple sauce can be used to add moisture, although they will not have a raising effect.



Baking soda & cream of tartar for baking powder

For those who love baking, it can be incredibly frustrating to find that you have run out of baking powder, but quite often you may have other ingredients that will do the job.



Alternatively, if you have a little bit of baking powder left, yogurt or buttermilk can help your rations go further.

Vegetables for pasta

Whether you have run out of pasta, noodles or rice, or you are simply looking for a healthier alternative, there are so many vegetables that you can use in their place.

Why not try eggplant lasagne sheets, cauliflower rice, spiralised courgette spaghetti or celeriac couscous?

Other helpful substitutes

Cracker crumbs for breadcrumbs | Lemon juice for vinegar | Plain flour and baking powder for self-raising flour

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The rise of AUSTRIAN WINES

When you think about countries that produce flavoursome and exciting wines, Austria probably doesn't feature near the top of your list. However, this relatively small European country now produces wines that are highly prized by wine experts and wine lovers across the globe.

WHAT TYPES OF WINES DOES AUSTRIA PRODUCE?

Although most Austrian wines are dry white varieties, the country does also produce some high-quality sweeter white wines. Around 30 per cent of its wines are red.

Grüner Veltliner is Austria's flagship white grape and covers around one-third of all of the country's vineyards, but it also produces some excellent Austrian Riesling, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.

In terms of red wines, some of the best varieties on offer include Saint Laurent, Blaufrankisch and Zweigelt.

HOW IS AUSTRIA PRODUCING SUCH GREAT WINES?

In 2018, a record high of €170million of Austrian wine was exported, a figure that is set to rise to €227million by 2024. This is because Austria has

many cool climate regions that boast higher altitude vineyards.

WHAT AUSTRIAN WINES SHOULD I TRY?

Kurt Angerer Kies Grüner Veltliner – a spicy white wine; pair with flavour-rich Asian food.

Rab Schenkenbichl Riesling Reserve – a very dry white; pair with seafood or a simple vegetable dish.

Heinrich Hartl St. Laurent – an elegant red, similar to a good Pinot Noir, serve with meats such as lamb or venison.

Barossa Ink Shiraz – a red wine with a rich berry flavour and a hint of chocolate; serve with Italian ragu.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR IN 2020 FROM AUSTRIAN WINES

One of the wine trends for 2020 is the increasing popularity and availability of Austrian sparkling wine. Move over Prosecco, there's a new fizz in town. Look out for Schlumberger Blanc de Noirs Brut Reserve and Graf Hardegg Rosé Brut.



Staycate IN STYLE



Just because you may not be able to go abroad this summer doesn't mean that you can't still enjoy the holiday experience. Why not save money and still have fun by staycating within the confines of your own home?

GO CAMPING

In your own garden, of course, or your home if you don't have sufficient outdoor space. Simply get out your camping gear or borrow a tent from a friend or neighbour, toast some marshmallows, tell a few ghost stories and finish off with some traditional campfire songs.

while on holiday abroad, why not throw a selection of themed food nights? Mexican, Indian, Spanish, Italian, Japanese: the choices are endless. If you are feeling particularly creative, you could go the whole hog and plan a multi-course meal complete with authentic beverages and decorations.

SPOIL YOURSELF WITH A SPA DAY

If you love nothing more than indulging in a luxury spa break to recharge your batteries, you will be pleased to know that you can recreate this experience at home. All you need are a few high-quality face masks, some mani-pedi supplies and a selection of scented candles. You could even fill your paddling pool with warm water and bubbles and enjoy an outdoor spa experience.

HOST A FESTIVAL

Whether you are a music lover or a film fanatic, hosting your own festival creates fun for the whole family. Invest in a projector or a new set of speakers, lay out some deckchairs or blankets, hang some fairy lights and set out some snacks. Don't forget, you must socially distance if you invite anyone from outside your household.

FEAST LIKE A FOODIE

For those who love to sample the local cuisine

TOP TIPS FOR A STAYCATION

- > Ban household tasks
- > Let go of your usual routine
- > Disconnect from technology

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EASY AS 1, 2, 3

$$2 \times 2 = 4$$

How to stimulate your kids into learning their times tables

To see someone reeling off apparently confusing multiplication sums can provoke in kids a look of genuine awe, yet reciting times tables is something that, as adults, becomes second nature.

For our youngsters, the process reaches deep into parts of their brains they've never before needed to access, so making the learning of these numbers easy and attractive is important. Here are some top tips:

POSTER PERFECT

Repetition is known to be the best stimulus for children, so having a poster of times tables (up to 10) on a bedroom wall, playroom noticeboard or even perhaps just stuck to the fridge will give kids the opportunity to go back to their sums multiple times throughout the day.

PRACTICALITY

Use examples around the house or when out and about that show kids the real value of learning their times tables. It could be the number of sweets they are allowed at the shop, pieces of Lego or perhaps just grains of rice when cooking. Whatever the subject of your multiplication, show how learning numbers translates into real life.

QUICK QUIZZES

Construct quizzes between your child and yourself, or perhaps a sibling, to

add a challenge element into the process. While methodical learning of processes and numbers might not be the most stimulating things in the mind of a six-year-old, the incentive of getting one over on an older brother or sister may well spark the interest.

REWARD

Like anything, a child's stimulus often comes down to the reward mechanism, so ensure you have stickers, a chart and any other planned payback that incentivises your kids to learn their numbers.





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WEAR AND CARE



From wood to leather upholstery, here's how to take care of the fabrics and surfaces in your home.

LEATHER

One of the priciest options for your sofas or chairs, leather is expensive because it's so hardwearing and easy to maintain, making it a great option for anyone with kids. In fact, one way you can really damage it is by using products that are too harsh, so it's best to keep things simple.

Day-to-day upkeep needs nothing more than a quick Hoover and a wipe with a slightly damp cloth.

However, when it comes to stains, you need to be aware of which kind of leather you are dealing with. Aniline leather is soft, buttery and absorptive, so blot off any stain quickly before dabbing with a moist cloth. Use the same process for treated leather, but with the addition of a mild detergent.

POLISHED WOOD

Despite what adverts would have you believe, your

wood isn't hungry, and nourishing polishes and oils are largely pointless. However, after wiping your furniture with a damp cloth and mild detergent (use an old toothbrush for any crevices) you can use a soft wax paste to buff up to the original shine.

UNSEALED WOOD FLOORS

If you have an older house, it's more likely you will have an unsealed wooden floor. These look great, but are more susceptible to staining and warping. Your best approach is regular sweeping and vacuuming to keep it clear of dirt and dust, and then a weekly mop with a white vinegar solution (one gallon of water, half a cup of vinegar).

STAINLESS STEEL

Clean off grime with a cloth and washing-up liquid (avoid using steel wool as this can scratch the surface), then apply glass cleaner to remove streaks, wiping in the direction of the grain. Dry thoroughly with a towel to avoid water spots.





HOME & DIY

CELINE INTERIOR DESIGN

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Photo credit: celininteriordesign.com

From the Middle East to middle England, Noor Charchafchi's unique design palate

Given that Noor Charchafchi, the owner of London-based interior designers Celine Estates, hails from the Middle East, it's unsurprising to find such dedication to bright, clinical, uncomplicated styles of design.

In an interiors world that often tries to complicate the equation, either in creating a menagerie of conflicting ideas or in going the other way with a perplexing excess of contemporary nothingness, the 39-year-old attempts to tread a sensible line between Arab air and lightness and the reflections of a childhood in London – it all offers design values that are based in both tradition and heritage.

"I must admit I've always been a bit nervous about new ideas and experiments," she admits. "Design comes very much from the heart, and while no one could ever tell me I was wrong in what I was attempting – because we are all correct in the sense of what we feel works – my designs aren't to everyone's tastes."



The key elements are:
> WHITES AND BEIGE... celebrating subtleties of shade is very important, with harmony and heavy fabrics complemented with wooden or stone floors. Neutral is seen as a positive thing, where other colours can bed in around it, rather than being in conflict.

> BEADING AND TRIM... framing furniture, bedsteads or tables in bevelling and added detail is a great way to draw the eye to a piece, as well as adding detail.

> FOCAL POINTS... each room should have a key point where the attention is centred. For the bedroom, it's the bed, and everything should be created around it. For the front room, perhaps a table, sofa or fireplace.

> CURTAINS AND DRAPES... to enhance the idea of air and flow, curtains are pivotal, not an after-thought.

With customers ranging from Far Eastern royalty to millionaire footballers to Asian celebrities, the Celine Estates team are clearly hitting the right tones.



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Sales of hot tubs have soared since lockdown began, with Brits splashing out on this luxury item to make the most out of their outdoor space.

But is this ultimate indulgence the right choice for you and your home?

PROS:

Relaxation

If you have had a stressful day there is nothing quite like a quick dip in a hot tub for melting away your troubles. Just imagine the soothing warm water and muscle-relaxing bubbles. Plus, if you suffer from a chronic illness or persistent injury, you will find that your body reacts favourably to the heat.

Entertainment

Although you may not be able to share your hot tub with your friends and family at the moment, this investment piece will act as a great source of entertainment for many years to come. Think themed parties and late-night soaks under the stars.

Year-round use

Unlike a paddling pool, you can use your hot tub all year round. Simply invest in a gazebo and you can experience the heat and bubbles even when it's raining. Plus, owing to its smaller size, it can be heated quickly.

CONS:

Expense

A hot tub is an expensive purchase. Even if you opt for a second-hand, soft, inflatable one, you are still looking at between £300 and £800. You also need to think about the cost of the upkeep, which will include cleaning chemicals and a higher energy bill.

Installation

If you are wanting to invest in a hard-shell hot tub, you need to make sure that you have the space available to accommodate an item of this size. You also need to check to see if the installation is included in the price as you may require a crane to lift your purchase into place.

Rub a dub tub



BACHELOR

Pad Style



You're suave, independent and effortlessly cool. How do you go about creating the bachelor pad to match the perfect eligible bachelor image?



It would be churlish to suppose designing the ideal bachelor pad should start off with the bedroom, but given that we spend one-third of our lives in one, it's actually a strong consideration. A bloke's bedroom should have white sheets and luxurious, stylish bedding, with simple and inviting artwork reflecting intelligence, travel and the odd hint of romance.



Just as important is the first impression when you enter the house or flat, and with the male penchant for a 'man drawer', a hallway should have sensible space for stylish storage of jackets, keys, cash and all those other essentials guys have. Rather than hide these away, make a statement of the fact (a key and cash bowl is a great idea), with metal, wood and greenery all combining well for a big welcome.



For the main living space or lounge, a statement piece of art will express more in one picture than a hundred words. A leather sofa looks great against anything, with lamps and throws a must.

Consider as well your everyday items – cutlery, cups, pots and pans. Pulling out an old Stella pint glass procured from the pub in 2014 won't look good – think clean, white, matching, statement-like pieces that show you don't need anyone else's rejects.

And the bathroom space should be similarly masculine. Matching towels, sparing wash items, aftershave and moisturiser, and certainly not a hint of leftover Head & Shoulders.

The ultimate allure for any bachelor pad is cleanliness. Relaxing in your own company or inviting someone else in should be a reflection of homeliness and health. Keep windows shiny, the music classy and even invest in a hotel-level air freshener, and your bachelor pad is ready to impress.



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HOME & DIY



Perfectly pitched dining room ideas that bring out the nuances of neutral



A dining room is arguably the most traditional room in the house – where simple shades give way to the colours and echoes of food, family and fun. For that reason, we've always looked on this very special room with a neutral, inoffensive palette, but that doesn't mean you can't still push on with some clever and cool design ideas:

BRING BACK THE BRICK

While the idea of something being 'beige' used to be taken as a derogatory term, consider the exposed brilliance of brick, and how this classic, classy look brings out not only its own unique shade, but also the neutrality of simple shades around it, in perfect unison.



COOL CORNERS

A corner unit bench not only provides a wealth of different spots to perch and read the paper, but offers ample storage space beneath as well. Shades will reflect the light coming in from bordering windows to bring uplifting brightness into the room.



GREY IS OKAY

Past trends may have labelled grey a dull and unimaginative colour. These days it's a base for matt style, and complements everything from wood to concrete to woven fabrics.



GAZING AT THE GALLERY

White on white? You wouldn't imagine it could work, but the neutrality of matching a wall with similarly coloured frames and prints brings out so much – shape, style, form and finesse, as well as offering a variety of subtle colours on the canvas that might be lost on a wall of any other colour.



WOOD YOU DARE?

With echoes of Scandi style to echoes of lighter shades from the 1970s, light- and neutral-coloured wood offers a perfect platform for tables, chairs and stools.

THE STRIPE IS RIGHT

And finally, adding a dash of colour across a neutral background can transform an area, a wall or an entire room.



DIY Macramé

PLANT HANGER



Photo credit: ftd.com, lifeanddecor.com



Loop knot



Square knot



Half square knot

Do you remember the 1970s' trend that was macramé? If not, you are in for a treat. This simple yet highly visually attractive knotting technique can be used to create many beautiful items for your home. In this article, we are going to show you how to make a macramé plant hanger.

YOU WILL NEED:

8 pieces of 15ft cotton cord | A 2-inch brass ring
2 pieces of 5ft string

HOW TO MAKE:

- > Take all 8 pieces of 15ft cord, fold in half and loop through the ring
- > Using your 5ft long pieces of string, tie a loop knot directly below the ring
- > Take 4 strands and tie a square knot
- > Repeat this last step 6 times
- > Repeat this pattern with the next group of four cords and repeat for the remaining cords
- > Leave a 2½-inch gap and tie a half square knot
- > Repeat the half square knot until you have created a 5-inch spiral
- > Repeat for remaining knot groups
- > Leave a 6-inch gap and create a crossover square knot using the 2 right cords from your first group and the 2 left cords from the adjacent group

- > Repeat the process for the remaining knot groups
- > Leave a 6-inch gap and create another crossover square knot by alternating the cords from the previous step
- > Leave a 3½-inch gap and tie a loop knot
- > Cut off any excess cord to create a stylish tassel

The above requires a basic knowledge of three different types of macramé knotting techniques: a square knot, a half square knot and a loop knot. You can find simple tutorials for all of these online.

DECORATING IDEAS:

- > Dip-dye
- > Embroidery floss
- > Silk or leather instead of cotton cord
- > Fill with fresh flowers, succulents or a battery powered candle



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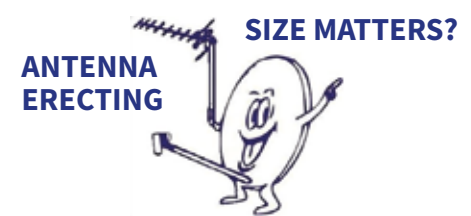
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Tricky RICKY

HE'S THE CELEBRITY THAT CELEBRITIES AVOID,
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In many respects, Ricky Gervais is a pretty bad version of a celebrity. He looks like someone who works in a hardware store, has been fiercely loyal and faithful to partner Jane Fallon for the past three decades, doesn't live in a 15-bedroom mansion, and couldn't undertake a spate of brazen virtue signalling if he tried.

There's also the small matter of him calling out other celebrities for their greed, corrupt dealings, bullying, two-facedness and hypocrisy at any available opportunity. A habit that began when he started naming and shaming the great and the good during his debut hosting of the Golden Globes back in 2010 – remarkably, they keep inviting him back! – has now extended fully into everyday discourse.

And at the start of the recent coronavirus lockdown we were treated to a brilliant display of Gervais bashing a bevy of film stars, musicians and models who felt the need to take to social media to inform us just how tough life was.

"After this is over I never want to hear people moaning about the welfare state again; I never want to hear people moaning about nurses again, or porters," he said.

"These people are doing 14-hour shifts and not complaining. Wearing masks, and being left with sores, after risking their own health and their families' health selflessly. But then I see someone complaining about being in a mansion with a swimming pool. And, you know, honestly, I just don't want to hear it."

Gervais's 'man of the people' status is, of course, nothing new. From his early breakthrough days in the late 1990s as a segment host on

ITV's *The Sketch Show* and on Channel 4 hit *The 11 O'Clock Show*, he has always led with an aura of honest and normality. There was the addictive 9–5 banality in *The Office*, then *Extras*, with its ground-breaking parodying of the movie industry, featuring A-list contributions from Kate Winslet, Ben Stiller, Patrick Stewart and Samuel L. Jackson.

Success followed with *The Ricky Gervais Show*, then the snappy *Life's Too Short*, comedy reality series *An Idiot Abroad*, bittersweet Netflix part-funded drama *Derek* and the rather darker, touching undertones of *After Life*.

The one thing that permeates everything Gervais touches is his unapologetic honesty. Whether discussing the "scourge" of religion or the majesty of the natural world, whether calling out nationalities, races, genders or persuasions, Gervais takes offence at people being offended.

"It's a disease that's getting worse," he says. "It's not healthy and it's not even real. Most of the people who claim to have taken offence at a statement someone made on Twitter are actually some of the most offensive people I have ever encountered," he laughs.

Some regard him as a national treasure, others a national disgrace. Either way, it's hard to avoid the magnitude of Ricky Gervais.

A one-time aspiring singer and band manager – he looked after indie outfit Suede back in their earliest incarnation – Ricky is the type who is always working on the next project. Whether self-penned or tagging on to big-budget comedies – *Ghost Town*, *Night At The Museum*, *The Invention of Lying* and *The Muppets* – he accepts the industry and its unpredictability.

"Nothing is a given. You just have to keep trying, keep things original, keep the creative processes rolling, and stay ever so slightly controversial."



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Cake trail receives outpour of support and smashes fundraising target

South Woodford resident Michelle Vanlint (pictured far left) usually raises a fantastic £8,000 a year for Haven House children's hospice from her cake sale, but she almost trebled that in June.

In order to follow the social distancing measures in place, Michelle set up a stall outside her home and was happy to find that other people started to join after she posted it on a local Facebook group.

The event took place between Friday, June 13 and Sunday, June 15, and Michelle even had some friends from Australia and the USA take part.

She said: "I was just inundated with messages after posting it online; it just went absolutely nuts. To be honest I was only hoping to raise around £1,000 with everything going on, but I was just blown away with the response it got.

"There were no bad reactions to anything, and it was

all really positive. A lot of people who took part this year said they are keen to do it again next year."

Michelle volunteered for Haven House when she moved back to England in 2003 and has tried to help out ever since.

Michelle added: "I am just so glad that we were all able to support Haven House, and it allows them to continue to be able to provide much-needed care."

After the event, Haven House took to social media to thank everyone for their support.

A tweet read: "We are blown away by the hugely successful Cake Trail organised by dedicated volunteer Michelle.

"Her outdoor cake trail raised a massive £21,609. Thanks to all the cake makers, dishwashers, businesses, fruit choppers, Pimms makers and all the cake eaters. You are all incredible."



Vicar sets record straight after phone mast rumours

The vicar of Holy Trinity in South Woodford said suggestions that the church will benefit from a proposed 5G mast are incorrect.

Abi Todd said she felt compelled to set the record straight about the mast which, if it is permitted, will be installed on the pavement near the church.

She wrote: "I just wanted to reassure anyone who has heard this that the church has nothing to do with the proposal and is not benefiting financially from the mast. The proposed mast is outside our grounds, so we have the same opportunities as others to comment

on the application."

Rev Todd said the church had not been consulted about the application, and she had written to Redbridge Council to register her disappointment at this.

She said: "I have written to the council to note that we were not consulted about the mast and to remind them that there is a preschool that meets on our site, as well as the Scout hut. It's proposed for the pavement and I have written to the council to express concern about the proximity to the church and its grounds."

Synagogue member joins in mask-making

Members of a South Woodford synagogue joined in on a virtual mask-making session with comedian Hugh Dennis.

Jewish charity Mitzvah Day held the session, which was open to local people of all religions on June 16.

Some 250 people joined the Zoom meeting, including seven-year-old East London and Essex Liberal Synagogue (ELELS) member Sam Lorinc-Young (pictured).

Sam said: "I made a mask for my grandparents because they are going to make a barbecue for my birthday on Friday (June 19), and I will see them for the first time since the lockdown so I wanted to show my love for them."

To watch clips of the video, go to Mitzvah Day's Facebook page.



Photo credit: ELELS



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Police investigation opened following unexplained death

The unexplained death of a man from South Woodford is being investigated by police.

Melvin Trotman, 35, died in hospital on May 29, two days after police officers found him unconscious in Cross Road, Woodford Green (pictured).

The police found him after they received reports of a fight at a Chadwell Heath home on the evening of Wednesday, May 27.

He was taken to hospital in a critical condition and died on Friday, May 29.

A 25-year-old man was arrested at the scene on

suspicion of attempted murder. He has since been released on bail pending further enquiries.

It is believed the deceased and the arrested man were known to each other.

Detectives from the Met's Specialist Crime Command (Homicide) are investigating and asked for any witnesses or anyone with any information to call police on 101 quoting CAD 9563/27MAY.

To give information anonymously, contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or online at crimestoppers-uk.org

Fire at block of flats sees residents evacuated



Dozens of residents had to be evacuated last month after a fire at a block of flats on Liston Way in Woodford Green.

More than 30 firefighters and five fire engines rushed to the building at 2pm on June 11. Fire crews from Hainault, Leytonstone, Woodford, Chingford and Ilford fire stations attended the scene.

Part of a room in a flat on the ninth floor was damaged in the blaze.

Two men left the property before the Brigade arrived. A further forty people in the block were also evacuated before crews arrived. One man was treated on the scene by London Ambulance Service crews and taken to hospital.

The Brigade's fire investigators believe the fire was caused by cooking that was left unattended.

A London Fire Brigade spokesperson said: "Cooking is one of the most common causes of fire in the home.

"We would like to remind the public to never leave cooking unattended – if you have to leave the room or the house, turn the heat off."

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Woodford and District National Trust



We are hoping to get together as soon as possible. We need a meeting and an AGM to put last year to bed and to kick off a new session of talks, etc, and were hoping this October would see a chance. Indeed we have a gathering ready for then, but the opportunity to have a mini AGM followed by the arranged talk on Waltham Abbey Church does seem a way off still.

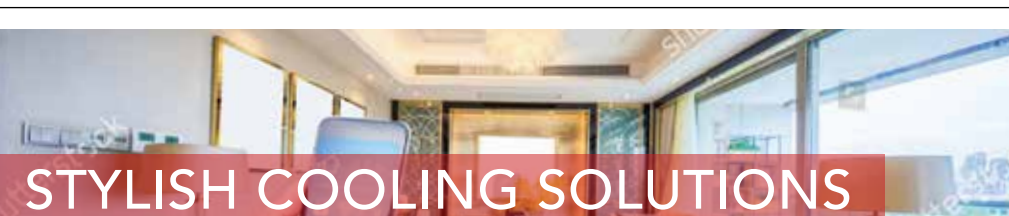
Whether you are a National Trust member or not, everyone is welcome to join us at our series of local talks, outings and even holidays. Meetings take place at Memorial Hall, South Woodford, and All Saints Church Hall, Woodford Green.

Further details from Richard Speller on 07774

164407 or email speller643@btinternet.com

This is our upcoming programme... we hope:

- > Tuesday, October 13, at 10.30am at the Memorial Hall, South Woodford. Historic Waltham Abbey Church by Greville Welch.
- > Wednesday, November 11, at 2.30pm at All Saints Church Hall, Woodford Green. East Anglian Families of Influence – the Essex and Norfolk connections by Peter Lawrence.
- > Monday, December 7, at 10.30am at the Memorial Hall, South Woodford. The History of Ongar High Street by Anne Padfield.



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BEFORE



AFTER



Map confirms more lives lost

While VISION SouthWoodford reported that COVID-19 had been less deadly in South Woodford than in surrounding areas in March, new statistics for April and May are less pleasing.

An updated Office for National Statistics (ONS) interactive map shows the number of deaths in different postal areas in the UK from the beginning of March to the end of May.

The map shows that there were seven confirmed deaths in South Woodford High Road during this time, while there were 12 in Woodford Wells, five in

Woodford Green and six in Woodford Bridge.

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

The coronavirus was first confirmed in the UK at the end of January, but the number of daily confirmed cases and related deaths only began to increase significantly mid-late March.

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

Photo credit: ONS



NEWS FROM

THE 100 CLUB

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Children's Hospice Week (June 22 to June 28) celebrates the amazing children and families we support, our care staff and the supporters who have been working so hard during the coronavirus crisis.

The theme of the campaign is 'This is...', and at Haven House we would like to share some heart-warming stories showing the work we've been doing to continue to offer lifeline care to the seriously ill children and their families we serve.

During the week we shared our new film, *This is Haven House* which gives a bright and colourful snapshot of who we are and what we mean to families.

Eileen White, director of care at Haven House, said: "The world of children's hospices can seem daunting and unfamiliar – we want to take away that element of uncertainty and introduce people to what they're really like. Haven House is a place where families feel safe and supported and where they can access specialist care, when there is really nowhere else to turn.

"We know that we cannot change a child's diagnosis, but we can make it easier by being here for day and overnight stays and reaching out to families at home."

We will all be missing the annual Haven House



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Slavery links to be examined

Links between Redbridge and slavery are to be examined after the statue of Winston Churchill in Woodford Green was vandalised last month.

Police increased patrols in the area and the statue was cleaned the morning after the attack.

Councillor Jas Athwal, the leader of Redbridge Council, said the appropriateness of local monuments and statues on public land and council property will be reviewed after protests across the country last month targeted monuments to controversial figures with links to the slave trade.

Cllr Athwal said the work will be carried out in consultation with the local community and said he was incredibly proud of the diversity in Redbridge.

He added: "The Winston Churchill statue in Woodford was subjected to vandalism but was immediately cleaned and restored. While we understand this is a very emotive time and feelings are running high, we would please urge people not to take matters into their own hands. We need to take a considered, measured and pragmatic approach towards this sensitive matter, rather than acting in anger and haste. That is what we intend to do with the forthcoming review."



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BLACK LIVES MATTER



Students stand in solidarity to support victims of racism

Staff and students at a school in Woodford Green stood in solidarity with those who expressed outrage over the murder of George Floyd in May.

Jo Pomeroy, headteacher at Woodford County High School, invited staff and students to take a knee as part of the Stand Up To Racism campaign last month and said she was proud of the courage and integrity of students in exercising a right to make their voices heard.

On the school's website, Ms Pomeroy said the school is planning for further support, teaching and learning opportunities in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion so staff and students can all be actively

anti-racist and speak out against racism. Individual students were invited to document participation with a photograph which could be used in further equalities work.

After discussions with the school's educational psychologist, students will be offered the opportunity to explore and express their feelings on the matter and to contribute to planning for positive action on the promotion of equality.

Ms Pomeroy's statement ends: "Communities across the world are coming together in solidarity on this matter. Woodford students, parents and staff value the opportunity to do the same."

Crisis Project coming on in leaps and bounds

A former Woodford Green student who set up a project where residents can send tailor-made letters to key workers is super thrilled with the impact it has had.

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 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 praise can sign up to receive letters from letter-writing volunteers.

The project has gone from strength to strength in the past month. Andrea Land, from Fable Films, put

together a short film about the project which gained plenty of traction, and the project now has around 1,000 volunteers writing letters.

Soumya said: "It's been so exciting. I really love the video - it's everything I expected and more. It's great that Andrea managed to show the recipients in it as well. The fact that key workers were able to contribute means a lot.

"The whole project is going fantastically, with our soon-to-be 1,000 volunteers writing letters for key workers. We're planning on launching another project soon where we'll be sending letters to care homes.

"I want The Crisis Project to continue well after lockdown, though."



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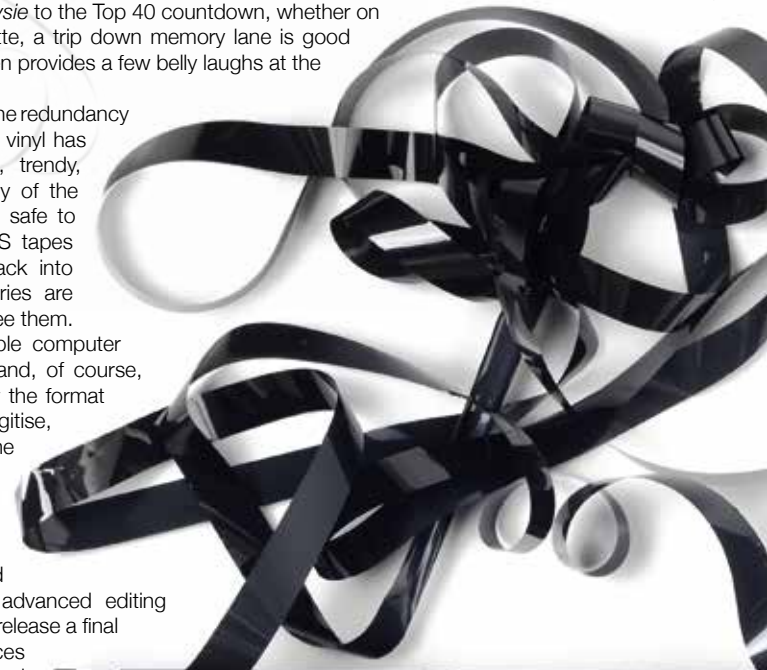
As technology advances, so we find many memories left in the past... or more accurately, left in a box in the loft. From weddings to old episodes of *Saint and Greavsie* to the Top 40 countdown, whether on VHS or audio cassette, a trip down memory lane is good for the soul, and often provides a few belly laughs at the same time.

What holds us back is the redundancy of so many formats. While vinyl has reinvented itself as a cool, trendy, left-field product that's worthy of the investment in a turntable, it's safe to say audio cassettes and VHS tapes are never going to come back into fashion, meaning our memories are locked away unless we can free them.

Thankfully, with downloadable computer software, a couple of leads and, of course, the required hardware to play the format in the first place, we can digitise, unveil and even improve the quality of content that may not have seen the light of day in decades.

A decent software programme will cost around £40, and most come with advanced editing suites, as well as the ability to release a final file on respected storage sources such as Google Drive, iCloud (for Apple users), or Dropbox... or head straight to YouTube or Vimeo if you believe your Year 6 *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* recital is worthy of a wider audience.

The alternative, of course, is to leave the technical matter to an expert. There are countless businesses who can take your raw material through the post and digitise it for you - prices start from as little as £10, but you'll need to know exactly what's on that three-hour VHS tape before you hand it over.



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HORTICULTURE HEROES:

Joe Swift

Joe Swift, the gardener, designer and TV personality best known for presenting *Gardener's World*, is also revered as someone who cares a lot about allotments.

Joe Swift takes a hands-off path to gardening that many of us will endorse.

"To be honest, I'm more of a designer than a doer," he chuckles. "I hide behind a computer and let others do the real work."

Typically understating his imprint and knowledge on modern gardening, Swift is famed for his love of container planting, and permanently has an eye on DIY.

"Some of the ins and outs of plants, trees, flowers and ecological intricacies are beyond me, but if you're looking for a platform or a plan on which to construct your garden, then that's where I'm at my best."

Joe's 'best' serves as a reminder to every gardener that DIY and hardware is a pivotal part of every plot. "Really, the greenery in your garden is just the final layer of the plan, and I always encourage gardeners to think of a garden like they would a front room or a bedroom. Plan out every corner, every view, every comfort, then finish it off with furnishings... or, in this case, plants, flowers and the like."

The popular gardener's admiration for allotments has also been a defining part of his appeal. He fronted the series *The Great Allotment Challenge*, and says a simple, manageable space is the best way to get started. "Allotments are brilliant value for money; even mine, at £65 a year, is one of the most expensive, and that's less than a cup of coffee a week.

"I made all my beds out of plant pallets, made a compost heap and found a second-hand shed on eBay for £20.

"Everyone on allotments is fairly frugal. You can recycle lots of things – every time you drive past a skip, it's always worth a look! What you get in return is a creative space like no other."



Photo credit: Mark Thomas/Shutterstock



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HAWAII FIVE OH!



GARDENING

You may not be able to enjoy the usual beach experience this summer, but with these fabulous outdoor furnishings and lighting tricks you can certainly create that same blissed-out vibe.

While they're not entirely out of bounds, the restrictions surrounding trips to the coast have numbed somewhat the appeal of the seaside.

Sure, you may struggle to recreate a vista of rolling waves and painful pebbles underfoot in your humble back garden, but there are a number of outdoor effects – beyond the basics of a sun lounger and umbrella – that can bring the breathless brilliance of the beach to your home.

Shelling out

It's perhaps the simplest move of all, but a few handfuls of shells and pebbles, and perhaps a stray sprig of seaweed or a sprinkle of sand, can instantly give your garden space a neat, nautical feel.

Remember, though, removing beach matter (stones, sand) is in fact illegal, so please source your props responsibly.

Wicked wicker

Nothing shouts 'beach' like wicker windbreaks,

umbrellas and mats. As a fabric it's versatile, cooling and good to look at, and wrapping your yard in this light material will soon have you dreaming of the Mediterranean or Caribbean.

A win on the pools

For those of us lucky enough to have a swimming pool (either permanent or foldaway) to cool off in, consider adding sandy banks and trails leading into it or immediately as you step into the water. A sand gradient will remove harsh, clumsy edges while offering a water feature that blends in perfectly with the beach vibe.

Amazing ambience

When the sun begins to set, there is no nicer feeling than settling down to watch the day fade away. And with some clever string lights, you can bring about a seaside ambience that will chill you out as well as light up the night.





Delphinium

JULY BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH

For those born in the month of July, your birth flower is delphinium. A striking flower that is available in several colours, although most notably a deep bluish-purple, delphinium is associated with openness and positivity, making people who were born in this month as charming as they are humorous.

WHAT DOES DELPHINIUM SYMBOLISE?

The Greek name Delphinium is derived from the shape of its flower buds, which are similar to a dolphin, and its intense blue colour makes it a very special flower indeed. In romanticism, the blue flower was said to be a symbol of yearning and ardent attachment.

However, a pink delphinium conveys contrariness, a white one means happiness and a pure purple flower is said to signify first love.

WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOU?

If you were born in July, you are a natural entertainer, always wanting to be seen as the funny one. Your

charm and sense of humour make others feel both welcome and appreciated. You also value family above all else.

HOW TO GROW DELPHINIUMS

Although you can grow delphiniums from seed, this can be quite challenging, so you may want to start off using cuttings instead. This flower enjoys moist but well-drained soil in full sun and, as it grows tall, does best at the back of a sunny border.

HOW TO HELP DELPHINIUMS THRIVE

Delphiniums are hungry plants and need a liquid fertiliser applied every couple of weeks to encourage strong growth. It is also a good idea to use canes or a frame so that the plants can grow up through them. Delphiniums only flower for a short amount of time, but by cutting back the spikes you can encourage further growth.



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BUSINESS & PROPERTY

Virtual

VIEWINGS



WILL VIRTUAL TOURS OF PROPERTIES REVOLUTIONISE THE MARKET?

There are many instances where enforced change has altered for the better the methods by which we live. Certainly, as far as consumer feedback goes, the early indications are that virtual house viewing may be something that's here to stay.

Whether renting or buying, for too long consumers have found themselves at the whim of agents' rather creative use of adjectives in their attempts to lease or sell properties. On other occasions, that age-old ability to stretch a photo beyond any reasonable credibility can leave us deflated.

Up until now, the realisation that the apparently spacious flat we're looking round may actually only be big enough to house a family of small rodents has only come to light when we're in the property. However, thanks to the need for social distancing and some tremendous, high-tech 360-degree videography, we can get a real inside track on a plot with a virtual tour.

Of course, on the subject of rodents, only a viewing

'in the flesh' will give you the opportunity to take a scrutinous eye to nooks, crannies and the like. And yet, a virtual tour will at least let you sort the wheat from the chaff without having to slog around town or hover outside a property waiting for the agent to excavate the correct door key from their pocket. And as we know, there's nothing more off-putting when considering a new area than being slammed with a parking ticket courtesy of 10 minutes looking around a property.

Even for the agents, the virtual tour removes the much-reviled time-waster, while existing tenants or owners can eradicate the inconvenience of having to repeatedly get a property presentable and ready for visitors.

For a market desperate to recover momentum in light of the COVID-19 downturn, our willingness to use virtual viewings – and the accompanying tech that facilitates it – could not have come at a better time.



Default DANGER



What are the real consequences of not being able to pay a loan or credit card?

In the past few months, many of us may have strayed closer than we would want to financial trouble. Money worries put more stress on us than anything else in life, though often our tendency is to fear the worst when we needn't.

The truth is that lenders – be that in the form of loans, credit cards or mortgages – are regulated to work with you, not against you, when it comes to ensuring your commitments are affordable. And, contrary to what you may see on reality television programmes, falling behind on payments won't suddenly land you with a bailiff at the door.

Below is a 'typical' debt timeline (note: not a definitive outline), based on being unable to make repayments:

- > **MONTH 1:** Failure to pay loan or credit card.
- > **MONTHS 2-4:** Creditor makes contact and will usually agree to hold charges and interest, effectively freezing the account (although this will mark your credit score).
- > **MONTHS 4-6:** Either resume payments or the

creditor may sell the debt on to a collections company.

- > **MONTHS 6-9:** New 'owner' of the debt will make contact to attempt to agree with you a new (interest-free) repayment plan – they will work with you to check you are prioritising key commitments (such as utilities) and they need to accept any reasonable offer (which could be as low as £10/month).
- > Your account will be reviewed regularly but you will have a new agreement in place going forward.
- > Only if you default on this new agreement will the prospect of a court order or CCJ come about, and only failing that provokes bailiff action.

If you are worried about debt, speak to charity stepchange.org

The most important thing is to address the issue, be upfront with those you owe money to and keep communicating at every stage.

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CONOR the MANN



WHY CONOR MCGREGOR'S THIRD RETIREMENT FROM COMPETITIVE ACTION WILL BE HIS LAST

Unlike the two previous occasions when Conor McGregor announced that his days in the cage were over, when the mixed martial arts (MMA) supremo tweeted his retirement on June 7, fans got the sense that this time the 31-year-old Irishman, who has transformed the sport since picking up his first world Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) title in 2013, meant it. MMA owes Conor McGregor a huge amount. The Dublin-born fighter has single-handedly moved this Marmite entertainment form into new realms, displaying a brand of bold, brash, uncompromising spirit both in competition and away from the fight. It is a sport sold on ego and confidence, and McGregor has both in abundance, always capable of flicking a switch between charisma and out-and-out combat. He is someone whose personality has engaged fans the world over, the type of character you either love, or love to hate – either way, the box office riches flow.

And yet, McGregor's biggest battle across a 12-year professional career has been in managing ambition versus ambivalence. His latest retirement came accompanied with a typically cursive glance at the current state of play with UFC.

The fighter stated: "The game just does not excite me, and that's that. All this waiting around. There's nothing happening.

"I'm going through opponent options, and there's nothing really there at the minute. There's nothing that's exciting me."

It's not the first time a perceived lack of a real challenge has led McGregor to throw in the towel. Upon his first retirement, McGregor said he wanted to explore new challenges, and promptly set up a landmark boxing contest with five-times world champion Floyd Mayweather, in August 2017.

Although McGregor was overpowered by the legendary US boxer, his intention to push, to innovate and to mix things up was clear, and when he came out of retirement just over a year later it was clear he was returning to the stage not just as a fighter but also as a showman for the sport. That enabled him to present both the good – this year's 40-second knockout of Donald Cerrone at UFC 246 was McGregor back to his ruthless best – and the bad – the warrior courted publicity after attacking a tour bus in 2018, smashing a fan's mobile phone in March last year, and being involved in an altercation in a Dublin pub six months later.

His string of recent misdemeanours also confirms a disenchantment with the sport, and he has repeated last year's retirement with one now that will surely hold.

The coronavirus pandemic and a lack of clarity over when MMA will return to any semblance of normality has surely hastened his withdrawal, as it has those of respected rivals Jon Jones and Jorge Masvidal. Combined with the countless media opportunities that are certain to present themselves, plus an estimated war chest approaching £100million, it's time for his next move.

After all, for a man who has forged incredible wealth, success and recognition out of less than one hour in professional combat across 12 years and 26 fights, you sense that whatever Conor McGregor does next, success is guaranteed.



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MOTORING

THE DRIVE OF YOUR LIFE... WHY NOT TO TAKE
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As if you didn't know it were true, drinking and driving are completely incongruous. Not only has it been illegal to be over the limit when behind the wheel of a car since the Road Safety Act was introduced in 1967, it's also insanely dangerous, to yourself, passengers and other road users.

The issue with drink-driving is that, in many people, the confidence, bravado and bullishness that alcohol provides actually reinforces a belief that it is okay to 'push the limits' a little; and yet, the guidelines are set, the recommendations realistic and the punishments severe.

- > Get stopped in England and your limit is 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood, and that allowance drops to 50mg in Scotland.
- > In real terms, everyone's tolerance and reaction to alcohol varies, and can be additionally affected by weight, sex, metabolism, food and stress; but for men, two pints of medium-strength lager (four units), or two small glasses of wine (two units) for women, will see you over the limit.

- > The only published safe advice is to avoid alcohol altogether.
- > Remember as well, if you've been drinking heavily the night before, there's a reasonable chance you'll still be over the limit the following morning.

And if you were in any doubt as to just how profound those punishments can be, it's up to 10 years for manslaughter, should the worst happen. You can even be arrested for being inebriated and sleeping or resting in a car even without the key in the ignition.

The frightening thing is that many of us still aren't learning the lessons. Around one in eight road deaths is still alcohol-related, and when you add in injuries, that's around 9,000 per year.

In an era when calling a taxi has never been simpler, there is no excuse to risk the lives of others, so enjoy yourself and get home safely.





eco

EXCESS



HOW LEAD LED THE WAY IN A MOTORING REVOLUTION

The motoring industry sees itself as one of the true pioneers for a better, cleaner, more eco-friendly environment; and quite right too given the estimated 1.4 billion cars on the road across the planet.

With a move towards carbon neutrality, the acceleration of the sector is visible as much on blueprints, bar charts and graphs as it is in getting its latest models from 0 to 60, but how much cleaner are vehicles now compared to their older counterparts?

Unleaded petrol only went on sale in the UK in 1986, but within 15 years it was the only option other than diesel. Rightly so, as at its peak we were pumping 3,000 tonnes of the stuff into the air. The results? Brain damage in children; hypertension, high blood pressure and heart attacks in adults.

Levels of lead in the air decreased by 94 per cent between 1980 and 1999 – a huge proportion of that pollution having been caused by cars, with

almost 0.9g of the toxin in a litre of petrol in the 1970s. The permitted level is now 0.01g/l.

Add in better engine efficiency thanks to systems such as air injection and catalytic converters, plus the development of better diesel systems – even if manufacturers such as Volkswagen were found to have overstated efficiencies – and car output efficiency has moved into levels we could only have dreamed about in the 1970s and 1980s.

It's not all good news, though. Over the past five years the industry has seen demand switch back towards bigger, premium vehicles, despite conscious government moves to make such vehicles less appealing at the fuel pump.

It has caused a seven per cent increase in carbon dioxide output in the year up to 2018, with cars accounting for just over 18 per cent of total UK emissions.

The evidence suggests that while our desire to be green is genuine, the need for comfort and convenience is still the biggest 'driver' in our lives.

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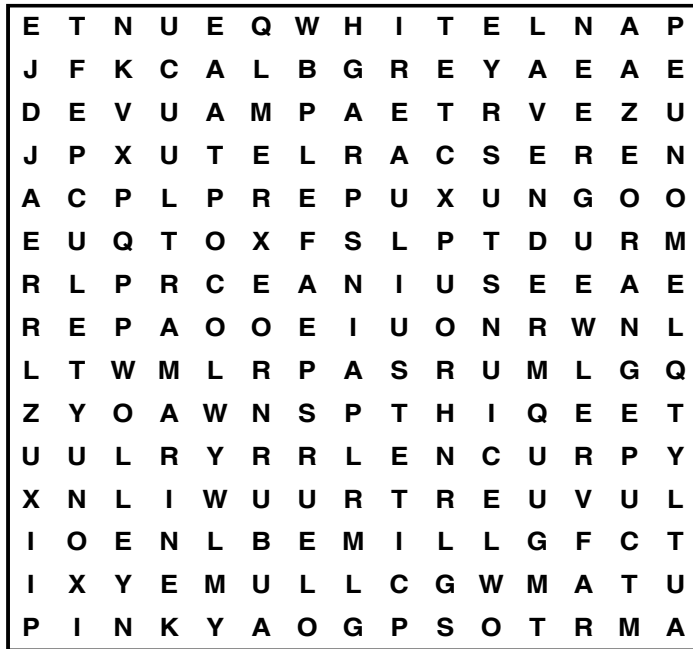


PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4

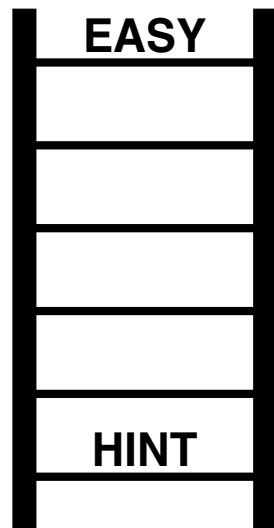
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- ▶ MAUVE
- ▶ MINT
- ▶ ORANGE
- ▶ PINK
- ▶ PURPLE
- ▶ SCARLET
- ▶ TURQUOISE
- ▶ ULTRAMARINE
- ▶ WHITE
- ▶ YELLOW



DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ The killer whale belongs to the dolphin family
- ▶ Some animals sleep standing up, including horses and elephants
- ▶ Elephants are the only animals to have four forward-facing knees
- ▶ Tigers are the largest wild cats in the world
- ▶ Female kangaroos have a pouch on their belly to transport baby kangaroos, called joeys
- ▶ There are three different species of zebra, which are all native to Africa
- ▶ A male reindeer's antlers can grow up to 1.4 metres in length
- ▶ Butterflies can taste with their feet

WORD LADDER



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

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

DO NOT rearrange the order of the letters.

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



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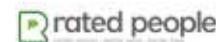
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