

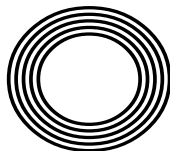
**VIOLET
FEBRUARY
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FLOWER**

**MARK WRIGHT MAKING
HIS FOOTBALL COMEBACK**

Valentine's Day traditions
FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Alisan
HAMMOND

The TV presenter emerging into the spotlight



FREE

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Editor's notes...

FEBRUARY 2021



Brett Shohet, Editor

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

I hope everyone is coping with this rather dreary start to the new year. It's not the start to 2021 we had in mind, but with the vaccine roll-out hopefully the end of this lockdown will soon in be sight.

Having said that, we can't just rely on our Fabulous NHS to fix all our problems - the worst thing we can do once the COVID-19 figures begin to fall is live our lives as if the pandemic never happened. We must continue to keep our distance and wear our masks until we are fully in the clear.

In the meantime, it's easy to go stir-crazy. My lockdown philosophy has been that, if I'm going to be living similar days over and over, I want them to be productive ones. That's why setting up a routine and structuring my days has been pivotal, and I suggest that anyone struggling at the moment tries to do this themselves.

I'm having more Zoom meetings than ever before; I've started going for longer walks and I bought a bike from a local business to add something else to the mix. Little things like these can make a huge difference.

I hope you enjoy our latest edition. If you have any queries or contributions you would like to share with us, please get in touch. And as always, stay safe.

Brett Shohet

This is your town's hyper-local magazine, delivering to homes and businesses every month.

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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

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A full-page background image of Mark Wright in a red Crawley Town football kit, captured in motion on a green pitch. The kit features a red long-sleeved shirt with white trim and a red shorts with white trim. A crest is visible on the shorts. The background is a blurred stadium setting.

The WRIGHT STUFF

HOW ONE OF OUR MOST ADORED REALITY TV STARS WENT BACK TO HIS ROOTS... GRASSROOTS

It's a fantasy that has crossed the mind of every grown man in his late twenties who has a normal, run-of-the-mill, everyday job. It's the thought, 'Perhaps it's not too late to realise every boy's dream and become a professional footballer; perhaps I can still make it.'

That reality TV star and Heart DJ Mark Wright still held those very unfulfilled ambitions is perhaps less of a surprise. He was, after all, on the books of West Ham, Arsenal and Tottenham as a youngster. When released at the age of 18, the left back was picked up by Southend United, but drifted into non-league football as the distractions of nightclub promotion and reality TV came about.

After spells in then Conference with Grays Athletic, Crawley Town and Rushden & Diamonds, the charismatic Essex-born star joined the cast of *TOWIE*. One of the original cast members, he was only with the ITV show a year, but the die was cast, and from *I'm a Celebrity...* *Get Me Out of Here!* to *Take Me Out: The Gossip*, through presenting jobs on *Mark Wright's Hollywood Nights*, *The Bachelor* and *This Morning*, the husband to actress Michelle Keegan has been a permanent fixture on our screens for a decade. And when adding in his Heart radio show duties – a gig he's had since 2012 – it's any wonder he has any spare time...

But what about those football ambitions?

"I've never got over the fact I didn't make it in the game," he says. "And despite everything I achieved elsewhere, being a professional footballer now would top it all."

In October last year, Wright set out to make one final crack at the game he loves, and a call to John Yems, his former manager at Crawley, saw the now 33-year-old invited to West Sussex to train with the club.

The presenter describes the three months that followed as a whirlwind, combining media duties with a punishing physical routine designed to get his fitness up to League Two standards. His every move has been followed by a BBC film crew, whose iPlayer series *Mark Wright: The Last Chance* has proved a huge hit.

"I never had any expectations, but I always knew I'd give it everything I had, and the welcome I got at the club was tremendous from day one."

In December, Wright's dreams moved a step closer – he signed a contract until the end of the season. And being named on the bench for Crawley's FA Cup fourth round clash with Leeds United on January 10, just two days after his brother Josh signed for the club, set up the most impossible of scenarios. Could he make the comeback of all comebacks?

Crawley strode 3-0 up against their star-studded Premier League visitors, on their way to grabbing all the weekend's giant-killing headlines. A perfect day could only be topped by a call to the bench for a substitution. And so it happened... he may have only come on in the 91st minute, he may have only touched the ball

three times, but a dream was realised on that cold Sunday lunchtime at the People's Pension Stadium.

And it doesn't stop there – the Reds are eyeing up promotion from League Two and there will be no resting on his laurels for Mark Wright... a reality star in every sense.



THE WORLD AROUND US

Part 4

In the last part of our environmental series, we look at the final key driver in the health and well-being of the planet: global warming.

The phrase 'climate change denier' has become commonplace in conversations about the gradual warming of the planet and the causes of this. Scientific opinion points to humans and our explosion of population, industry and consumption as the real effects of the Earth increasing in temperature by 1° Celsius since 1880.

It doesn't sound a lot, does it? And yet, a one-to two-degree drop was all it took to plunge the Earth into the Little Ice Age in the Medieval Period.

The platform climate change deniers have generally sees their voices amplified well beyond what they should be. The results of various studies often level out at around the same rate – namely that only two or three people out of 100 will dispute the scientists' theory that humans are the cause of global warming.

With such a large accepting consensus, the drive to combat this gradual warming of Earth has

accelerated in recent years. Equipping ourselves with data, while ensuring we have the ability to interpret it, is vital.

Temperatures across a timespan of a year, five years or even a decade might rise four degrees in one region and drop six in another (which is why anomalies occur, such as Greenland's Jakobshavn Glacier actually increasing in mass since 2016), but overall, there is trouble ahead.

The next, vital step the Earth faces is a willingness of its people to do something about it. For all the UK's action over the past couple of decades, for all the destruction global warming has already contributed, such as coastal erosion, moorlands fires, floods and more, we contribute just 1.2 per cent of the world's total emissions.

It means that, as if it were ever in doubt, a global solution requires a true global investment of action from the planet's inhabitants.



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CLEANSE ME... *quick*

Whether you are looking to remove stubborn mascara, thick sun cream or the dirt and impurities that your skin has picked up over the course of the day, a cleansing balm should be your go-to product, providing a delicate, yet effective, way to clean the skin on your face.

WHAT IS A CLEANSING BALM?

Cleansing balms are creamy and rich cleansers that gently remove any make-up, dirt and impurities from your skin without leaving it stripped of its natural oils. Unlike oil cleansers, which can be a bit messy, cleansing balms deliver oils to melt make-up, in a solidified form, meaning portion control is easier.

Furthermore, cleansing balms can be used around the eyes to remove make-up, as they are made with natural ingredients and are therefore suitable for this delicate area.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN BENEFITS?

- > They provide a deep cleanse which can help to prevent breakouts
- > They hydrate your skin
- > They are suitable for sensitive skin

- > They provide quick results
- > Many contain antioxidants
- > They are high in oils, meaning you can skip daily moisturiser if you wish

HOW TO USE CLEANSING BALMS

1. Take a 10p-sized amount of balm and warm it between your fingers
2. Apply to dry skin in circular motions
3. Once the make-up starts to break down, add warm water to your skin
4. Continue to massage
5. Remove with a warm, damp cloth or muslin

WHAT ARE THE BEST CLEANSING BALMS?

- > Clinique Take The Day Off Balm – best all-rounder, suitable for all skin types
- > ESPA Nourishing Cleansing Balm – best for dry skin
- > Pond's Makeup Remover Cleansing Balm – best for sensitive skin
- > Slaai Makeup Melting Butter Cleanser by Drunk Elephant – best for removing waterproof make-up
- > Emma Hardie Moringa Cleansing Balm – best for ageing skin

dress to impress pierre cardin

Remembering and reflecting on the life of designer Pierre Cardin, who passed away in December.

Mention the name Pierre Cardin and a modern generation of fashionistas will most likely point you to a range of smart casual shirts and t-shirts adorning the racks of retailers over the UK, from House of Fraser to TK Maxx. And yet, to think that the French clothing label should end up in such safe, formal surrounds is to besmirch the work of a designer who fairly revolutionised high-street style in the Swinging Sixties.

Cardin passed away at the end of December having cast an artistic pencil over the fashion world for more than seven decades. His passing was met with genuine sadness by a list of admirers and proteges, including designer Jean-Paul Gaultier, but his legacy is one to be admired and celebrated.

For starters, Cardin was one of the first designers to display a logo on garments, and a self-titled brand logo at that. The idea of giving a piece of clothing its own status well beyond the cuts of cotton or cashmere was something the industry had not seen before, and it led to a host of other licensed products emerging from the Paris-based fashion house, from pens to perfumes, sunglasses to food.

Cardin's idea was to bring ready-to-wear, premium-looking clothes to the everyday market, and at a price that meant people could indulge in the image and grandiosity of the catwalk. Always looking to be different, he revolutionised design with sharp edges, outlandish curves and stylings that border on architecture as much as clothing. Inspiring so many, he dressed everyone from Bardot to The Beatles, all the while satisfying his own desire to be different.

What we see in so much of today's collections is more than a little influenced by a humble Frenchman with big ideas, Pierre Cardin.



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THE REAL PiLL

Placenta encapsulation: is it gross or full of goodness?

We all know the value of a mother's placenta. A rich, nutritious, nourishing source of life that feeds, grows and sustains a baby in the womb. As the miracles of nature go, it's right up there with the best of them – in fact, we wouldn't be here without the placenta.

It follows, then, that some mothers are loath to let the placenta go, post-birth. From using it to make jewellery or picture frames to donating it to medical science, through to something rather more symbolic such as planting it, there are a number of ways to respect this incredible organ.

Of course, given its goodness, reingesting the placenta makes perfect sense too – welcome to the world of placenta encapsulation.

In this process, the placenta is put into ice then sent off to a lab where it's made into pill form. Many mums feel a physical and emotional boost when consuming their placenta as a daily supplement, saying that it helps with general well-being, limits

the ups and downs associated with those immediate weeks and months after giving birth, gives an energy boost, and helps with breast milk production.

And that all makes sense – the placenta is loaded with vitamins B6 and B12, plus iron and reproductive hormones that drop after birth. To repackage those and put them back into the body makes sense.

However, there are risks. There aren't any standards in place for the process, meaning poorly encapsulated pills may harbour bacteria. There are also environmental toxins such as heavy metals – like lead and arsenic – that accumulate in the placenta, while a theory exists that the progesterone present in the pills may actually slow down milk supply.

Placenta encapsulation remains one for the scientists to unpick, but in the meantime it continues to increase in popularity.



HEALTH & FITNESS





NO MEAN FOOT

Why our humble feet may be the lynchpin to overall body health alignment

Never underestimate just how fantastic our feet are – sure, they will get you around the house, to work, or down to the pub, but more than that, they are the lynchpin to overall body health too.

Consider 10 toes, more than 50 bones (that's around a quarter of all those in the human body), and more than 60 joints, plus more than 200 muscles, tendons and ligaments, and it's clear why your feet are the cornerstone to overall body health.

Mobility

In the most obvious sense, your feet are the tools that move you around. Essential for almost every form of exercise, health and well-being, which begins at ground level.

Back and joint issues

The way we walk ultimately affects the way the rest of our body functions, and this is no truer than in people who suffer with flat feet. This condition causes a misalignment with the ankle, which can move up

through the body into the knees, hips, spine, neck and other joints.

Balance

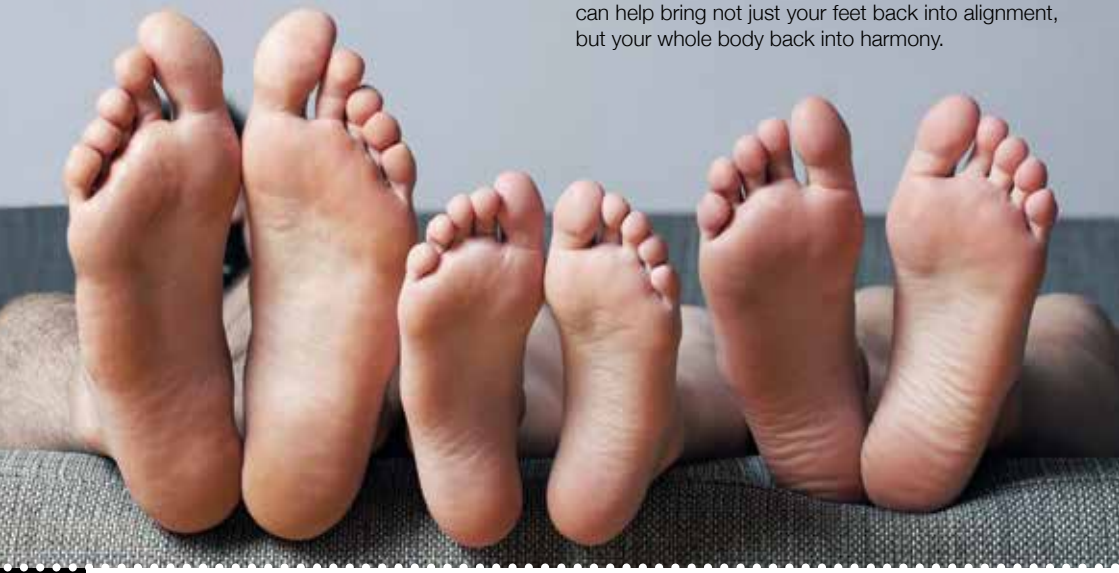
Balance in the human body is finely configured so that any imbalances can have negative effects on general health, from wobbliness through to vertigo-type symptoms.

Organs

In the most extreme cases, when the mesh of nerves and touch receptors in our feet are blocked, insufficient messages can send disruptive adjustments through the body, including into our organs.

It is for these reasons that looking after our feet is pivotal to good health. Sure, get the pumice stone out in the bath, but more than that, ensure you are wearing properly fitting shoes. That might mean accepting that narrow styles are not going to work for your wide feet, or that perhaps you will need to buy flip-flops with a little more support.

Also consider a whole variety of foot exercises that can help bring not just your feet back into alignment, but your whole body back into harmony.



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THE BEST TIMES OF THE DAY TO HEAD TO OUT TO GRAB A BARGAIN

As a percentage of our annual food bill, saving 50p on a carton of fresh soup, or picking up a pack of crumpets for an amount taken care of with just a handful of coppers, doesn't make any real imprint. And yet, that unique feeling of satisfaction that only comes with landing a bargain is something we all crave, and knowing when's best to land sneaky supermarket snips has become a fine art.

While different food retailers have slightly different rules, there are a few general trends you can follow:

The mid-afternoon discount

For items going out of date that day, you can expect a token discount (perhaps between 10 and 20 per cent) around mid-afternoon.

Supermarkets here are attempting to lure shoppers who would have purchased those items anyway into a small saving, in exchange for goods that aren't quite as fresh.

The teatime tease

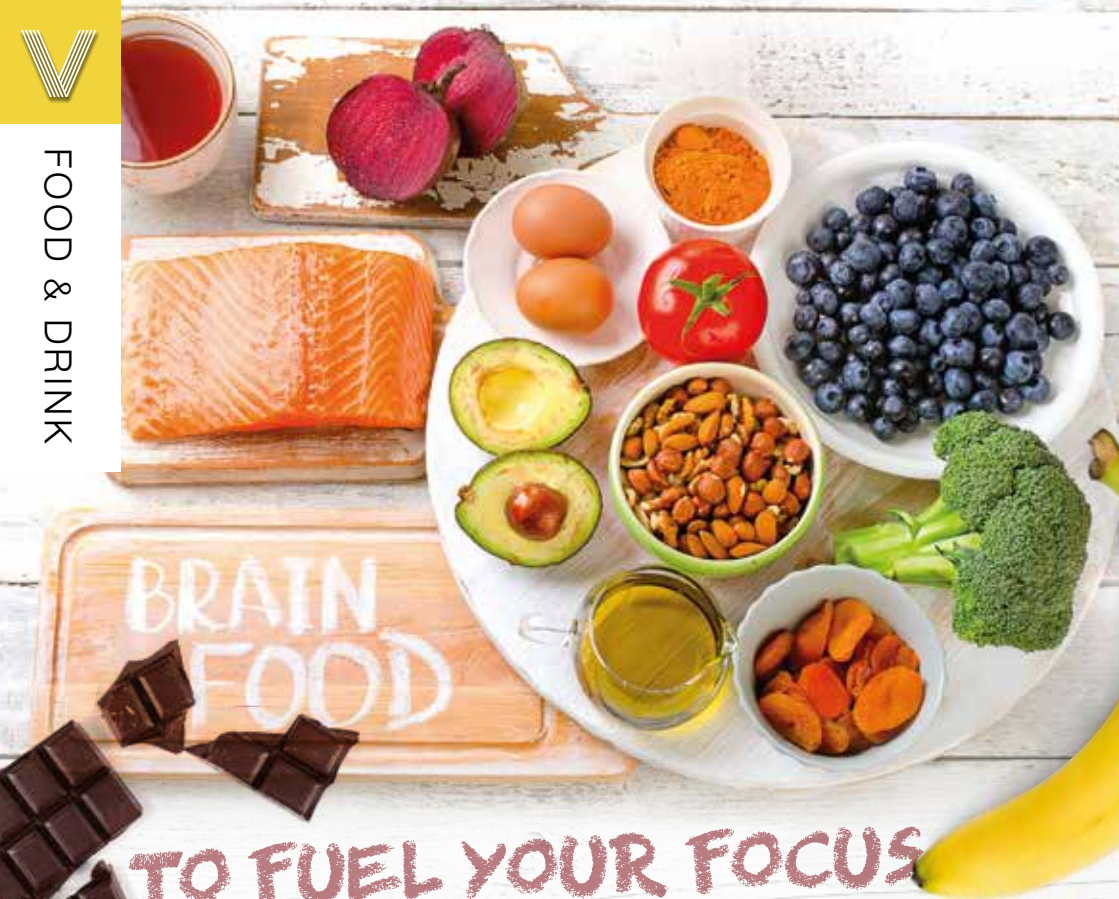
You can expect up to 50 per cent off as soon as early evening comes around. The target market is people grabbing a bargain for their dinner, or who are happy to consume something later in the week that's past its best before or use-by date.

Closing time

In the last minutes up until closing time, prices fall like water cascading out the bottom of a sieve. The major supermarkets will discount up to 90 per cent in order to save on the cost of waste disposal.

The final freebie

And for those of you who shop at the more salubrious stores – this is common for Waitrose and M&S – it's not unknown for staff to approach customers at the till to offer free items, usually immediate perishables such as fruit, veg, dairy and cheese. Yum.



TO FUEL YOUR FOCUS

If you are still struggling with getting back into a routine and could do with some help improving your concentration levels, these foods will boost your brain power and motivate your memory.

SUPER SALMON: Providing a concentrated source of omega-3 fatty acids, salmon can help to rebuild your brain cells, slow cognitive decline and strengthen the synapses in your brain that are responsible for memory.

BEETROOT: A shockingly underused root vegetable, beetroot contains nitrates that increase blood flow and oxygen to the brain, resulting in improved mental performance.

BANANAS: Cheap, filling and high in potassium, bananas are the ideal afternoon pick-me-up for times when your concentration levels are waning.

SPINACH: Spinach is known as the ultimate brain food and it's not hard to see why. Rich in folate,

lutein and beta-carotene, this leafy green has been linked to the prevention of dementia. Aim to eat three portions a week for optimal results.

AVOCADOS: Avocados are a bit like Marmite – you either love them or you hate them. Fortunately for those who fall into the former category, this fruit can fire up your brain cells and keep hunger pangs at bay.

NUTS: The best thing about nuts is that you only need a very small serving to enjoy all the benefits of this super snack. Both nuts and seeds are great sources of vitamin E, which is associated with a reduction in cognitive decline. Plus, they contain essential oils and amino acids that help you focus.

DARK CHOCOLATE: Because we all deserve a treat from time to time, dark chocolate makes a great alternative to coffee in the morning, having the ability to boost your serotonin and endorphin levels which are both associated with increased concentration.

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BRUSH UP on children's oral health

February is National Children's Dental Health month, so what better time to tackle any tooth-brushing issues your child has?

Discover the top five reasons why your child doesn't want to brush their teeth below. Plus, how you can encourage them to practise good oral hygiene.

WHY DOES MY CHILD HATE BRUSHING THEIR TEETH?

1. They are sensitive to having their teeth brushed

Some children experience a gag reflex when brushing their teeth that can be unpleasant. Others might not like the feel of the brush against their teeth or in their mouth. Sensitivities are more common in children with autism or attention disorders.

2. They are asserting their authority

If you find yourself caught in a battle with your child every morning and evening when it comes to brushing their teeth and there is no physical reason why they won't brush, they could simply be pushing boundaries.

3. They have become anxious

You may not be able to determine the initial reason why your child started to hate brushing their teeth, but if it has become a daily issue in your household, your child may now feel anxiety around this daily activity.

4. They don't like the taste of the toothpaste

It is always a good idea to ask your child if they would like to choose a different flavoured toothpaste if they do not like the one you are currently buying.

5. They are a picky eater

Children who are picky eaters are more likely to not like the texture and taste of a toothbrush and toothpaste in their mouth.

How can I encourage my child to brush their teeth?

- 👉 Stick to a routine
- 👉 Make it fun
- 👉 Provide choice in terms of what products they use
- 👉 Stand behind younger children
- 👉 Allow your child to hold a toy they can squeeze to calm them
- 👉 Offer a reward such as an extra bedtime story



KIDS



Valentine's traditions AROUND THE WORLD

Love is in the air with these beautiful, and in some cases bizarre, Valentine's Day traditions from around the globe.



SOUTH KOREA: In this country in east Asia, lovers celebrate the day of love on the 14th of every month. May 14 is the "day of rose", June 14 is the "day of kisses", and there is even a "black day" in April when couples eat black noodles together.



PHILIPPINES: Young couples in the Philippines are sponsored by the government to get married as a form of public service. Well, there are worse ways to serve your country.



GHANA: Known as National Chocolate Day, February 14 is used to increase tourism in Ghana, one of the largest cocoa-producing countries in the world.



BULGARIA: A simple yet highly enjoyable tradition, in Bulgaria, couples young and old celebrate their love by sharing a glass of local wine.



WALES: Lovers from Wales celebrate Valentine's Day on January 25, and rather than exchange cards and flowers, they



SPAIN: The day of love in Spain falls on October 9 and is known as the feast of Saint Dionysius. On this day, men gift their women a "macadora", which is a marzipan figurine.



ESTONIA: Still taking place on February 14 but with a slight twist, Estonians celebrate all relationships on this day rather than just romantic ones.



JAPAN: A country that prides itself on being unique, Valentine's Day in Japan is quite unlike anywhere else in the world. On February 14, women buy gifts for men, but men are not allowed to return the favour until March 14, known as the "white day".

HOW TO SAY "I LOVE YOU":

- > South Korea: Saranghae
- > Philippines: Mahal kita
- > Ghana: Me do wo
- > Bulgaria: Obicham te
- > Wales: Rwy'n dy garu di
- > Spain: Te amo
- > Estonia: Ma armastan sind
- > Japan: Aishiteru

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DULUX LOOKS TOWARDS SAFE GROUND IN NAMING ITS COLOUR FOR 2021

There's only one contradiction at play as far as Dulux's Colour of the Year goes – namely that in establishing a tone that speaks quietness, calmness, unassuming peace and tranquillity, the paint manufacturer is treading safe ground and not, as the shade's name implies, Brave Ground.

And yet, despite Dulux failing to state what is courageous about this tone, we can at least revel in its ability to encapsulate the mood of the world. It pleads for calm, reflection and philosophical thoughts, and offers a serenity to interiors that is very different from the intention borne out in Pantone's Colour(s) of the Year.

This warm beige shade is one that will work beautifully when matching with light woods, particularly in the bedroom or living room.

Combined with white it reclines elegantly into the

background, and as a flat shade, it can find itself offset by fabrics and furniture that offer depth and detail.

The tones of grey present in Brave Ground are also earthy enough to take interiors away from the overtly beige patterns of the 1970s that often strayed too far in the way of oranges and browns.

Consider also mixing with pastels, or sharpening the edges with blacks and greys, particularly in cushions, throws, curtains or lampshades. Ultimately, Brave Ground is a colour that will bring lightness while offering a knowing nod to dark luxury.

Indeed, perhaps in adopting a shade that is the very epitome of neutrality, perhaps in offering a platform on which we can place our existing belongings as well as bring in new renovations, Dulux is showing itself to be brave after all.



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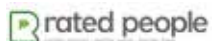


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TENCEL

Already a ubiquitous eco-fabric, Tencel is used by several major design brands linked to both interiors and fashion.

Produced by environmentally responsible processes from the sustainably sourced natural raw material wood, Tencel is not only a wonderfully soft and breathable material, it also combines beautifully with other fabrics such as cotton, silk and polyester for maximum versatility.



Econyl chairs

ECONYL

Fabric recycling has come a long way since the days of simple reupholstering that saw tired sofas and chairs less reinvented and more clumsily repurposed into something you could palm off to the kids or into the guest bedroom.

Econyl regenerated nylon is made from, you guessed it... nylon waste, and with an emphasis on closing the loop, this brilliant and innovative brand confesses to having an appetite for creating an infinite quantity of new products, but all using existing resources. In short, we've come a long way since the 1980s.

With 10,000 tonnes of Econyl raw material saving 70,000 barrels of crude oil, this fabulous fabric is being used to create everything from carpets to swimsuits.



Piñatex furniture

PIÑATEX

Piñatex is a leather alternative made from the leaf waste of pineapples. This fluff-like leaf fibre (PALF) gets mixed with a corn-based polylactic acid (PLA), undergoing a mechanical process to create Piñafelt, a non-woven mesh that forms the base of all Piñatex collections.

Coloured using natural pigments and coated with resin to give additional strength, durability and water resistance, this luxurious leather alternative is already doing its bit to lessen the environmental impact of mass leather production and chemical tanning.

HOME & DIY

making MEMORIES

Whether you are looking for a birthday present, graduation gift or unique anniversary offering, a memory quilt is the perfect choice. Allowing you to create a personalised and completely original gift, expect tears of joy when you present one of these to your loved one.

Alternatively, you can make your own personalised fabric by transferring photos onto a piece of white or coloured cotton.

Step 2: Determine the desired size of your squares and quilt. For a large quilt, use 25 t-shirt squares 5x5 – see step 4.

Step 3: Cut your fusible interlining slightly larger than your quilt to allow for cutting back later.

Step 4: Cut off the necks and sides of your t-shirts. You will be left with two squares from each one.

Step 5: Following the manufacturer's instructions, lay the fusible interlining on the back of your squares and fuse using an iron.

Step 6: Once all pieces are fused, cut to size.

Step 7: Decide upon the layout of your squares and pin together before starting to sew.

Step 8: Using your sewing machine, start to sew each row together before attaching the rows to complete your quilt top. Remove pins.

Step 9: Make a quilt sandwich using backing and batting which needs to be 5cm bigger on all sides. Fuse the batting using an iron and then attach your backing with an adhesive spray.

Step 10: Complete your quilt using the stitch-in-the-ditch technique using your sewing machine, or use free-motion quilting.

Congratulations. Your memory quilt is complete.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- > Your chosen clothing or fabric for quilt squares
- > Fusible interlining
- > Batting
- > Backing fabric
- > Adhesive spray, such as Elmer's Multi-Purpose Spray Adhesive
- > An iron
- > Scissors
- > Pins
- > Sewing machine
- > Ruler or tape measure

HOW TO MAKE:

Step 1: Gather the fabrics you want to make your quilt with. This could be t-shirts, blankets or baby clothes.

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The infectious personality of ALISON HAMMOND

The presenter who has chuckled, chortled and guffawed her way through almost two decades on camera... and we're all better off for it.

The Brummie whose laugh-a-minute approach to presenting has won her admirers across the entertainment world... and we include Harrison Ford and Ryan Gosling in that number.

As if proof were needed that Alison Hammond, while always kind, enthusiastic and respectful, does not subscribe to the idea that celebrities and film stars are unreachable demigods not worthy of our time, in a hilarious 2017 interview for *This Morning*, Hammond charmed and bewildered two of Hollywood's finest in a recording that had more than 12 million YouTube views. You could say she upstaged her two guests by laughing them into submission.

Having first appeared on our screens as a contestant in the *Big Brother* house, Hammond is another example of a reality star who has maximised the possibilities out of what is a very simple and short-lived platform.

She has swept her way through a variety of entertainment shows over the past decade, appearing in *Celebrity Fit Club*, *Celebrities Under Pressure*, *Stars in Their Eyes*, *Celebrity Ready Steady Cook* and many, many more; she has been a panellist on *Loose Women*, and made it to the seventh week of *Strictly Come Dancing* when she partnered Aljaž Škorjanec.

"I've always been someone who wants to grab life by the horns and go for a ride," she laughs. "It's very rare that I'll turn down an opportunity, and if I do it's because it's taking me too far from home and being around the people I love, and those are the ones who must always come first."

And Hammond's reputation as a brilliant reporter on *This Morning* has borne fruit in a way she wouldn't have imagined – in the middle of December 2020 it was announced that she and Dermot O'Leary would take over full presenting duties on Fridays from regular incumbents Eamonn Holmes and Ruth Langsford.

The shake-up is further evidence of a nation embracing those down-to-earth personalities who reflect our own thoughts, ideas and sensibilities.

"A long time ago I realised that to get on in the world you just need to be yourself," she says. "I think in the early days of getting TV work there was a temptation to be the person you thought people wanted to see, and when you do that you lose an edge."

"What people see is what they get, but it is all me – an uplifting, fun, sparky person who treats everyone as equals."

Indeed, geographically, Hammond, 46 in February, has stayed true to herself as well. Despite *This Morning* being filmed at Television Centre in White City, the presenter still lives in 'the second city', commuting to the capital for work. "I couldn't ever leave Birmingham behind – it means everything to me, as do the people."

"It's also my son's home, and I want him to grow up a proud Brummie like me... who likes to laugh."



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LOCAL NEWS

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LOCAL NEWS



Care manager rewarded for being a community hero

A care manager in South Woodford has won a trip of a lifetime to Florida after he was recognised as part of a campaign to celebrate individuals who have gone above and beyond to help people in their communities in 2020.

Following thousands of entries from people across the country to the Share A Smile campaign, run by Pizza Express, Frank Colley is one of thirteen people across the country being celebrated.

As well as the Florida trip, he received a year's worth of pizza.

Disney fan Frank was given the surprise of a lifetime when, while he was at work, his friend Alex Castro, who nominated him, and Pizza Express arranged for a

strategically placed billboard – which Frank could see through his office window – to pull up outside and start playing touching messages from his friends and family, sharing just how much Frank meant to them.

When the national lockdown came into force in March, Alex was in the process of buying his first home, which fell through.

Frank took Alex in, offering him a place to stay for however long he needed until he was able to move into his own place.

Alex commented: "He is one of the most thoughtful people I know; even before lockdown, he'd do the little things that help pick you up if you're down, so it's been a delight to be able to surprise him like this."



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Town bank to close in the summer



A bank in South Woodford is one of 82 branches across the country that will close later this year, banking giant HSBC has announced.

The branch at 20-21 Electric Parade on George Lane will close for the final time in July.

HSBC said the decision was taken because of the coronavirus and changing customer habits, and revealed the number of customers using branches was down by one-third, while 90 per cent of all customer contact is now remote.

It's believed the move will not result in redundancies as staff will be moved to nearby branches.

Jackie Uhi, HSBC UK's head of network, said: "The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasised the need for the changes that we are making.

"It hasn't pushed us in a different direction but reinforces the things that we were focusing on before and has crystallised our thinking. This is a strategic direction that we need to take to have a branch network fit for the future."

Vaccinations postponed at care home

The vaccination of residents at a BUPA care home in Woodford Green had to be postponed last month after an outbreak of COVID-19.

There were 16 residents at Harts House in Harts Grove who tested positive with the virus on January 19. It's believed most have not shown any symptoms and are keeping well.

Since October last year, 32 residents at Harts House have tested positive for coronavirus. Three residents who tested positive died. All had underlying health conditions and one was receiving end-of-life care before the positive test result.

At the time of writing, 13 have completed their

isolation period and returned to good health, with a further three expected to complete their isolation as VISIONSouthWoodford went to press.

Paul Torrance, regional director for Harts House, hailed staff at the home.

He said: "Thanks to the hard work of our colleagues, Harts House has been COVID clear through previous phases of the pandemic. In line with rising national figures, we have recently seen an increase in resident cases, though many aren't showing any symptoms. The team is using full PPE and ensuring everyone gets the care they need. As a result, many residents have already returned to good health."

The home is temporarily closed to visitors while staff have carried out deep cleans and are working closely with Public Health England and Redbridge Council.

No senior staff were off sick long-term and additional support was brought in.

Restaurant owner predicts bright future

The owner of a fine dining restaurant in South Woodford is optimistic about the future, despite the ongoing lockdown.

From weathering the UK lockdown restrictions to bagging the Best Fine Dining Restaurant gong at the Asian Curry Awards 2020, Grand Trunk Road has had a year that will not be forgotten.

Owner Rajesh Suri hailed the support he received from customers. He said he was pleased to be able to carry on working by offering a takeaway service.

Rajesh said: "The Grand Trunk Road takeaway service has been a fantastic success, and we will continue to offer wonderful Indian food until we can welcome everyone back into the restaurant."

The restaurant reopened after the first lockdown with safety measures and a reduced capacity, and Rajesh said he is confident the industry will bounce back as people will be keen to go out.



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Woodford and District National Trust



Clearly, all National Trust properties are closed owing to the pandemic.

The good news is that most parks, grounds and National Trust owned countryside areas are open for exercise, following the regulations, of course. The bad news is that, sadly, there are not many near us. Please check the handbook or our website for more information on this.

Readers are recommended to go to the National Trust website where there is a wealth of things to study. With members' vast experience there is valuable

gardening and cookery advice, exciting virtual tours of properties and much else.

For all it is going through, the National Trust is the guardian of a vast amount of this country's heritage, and from those of you who are proud of this, we request your continued support.

The Woodford and District Centre will get back into action as soon as circumstances allow, and does have a full programme of talks and visits ready. We are planning Zoom talks currently.

Anyone wishing to make contact, please get in touch with chairman Richard Speller on 07774 164407.

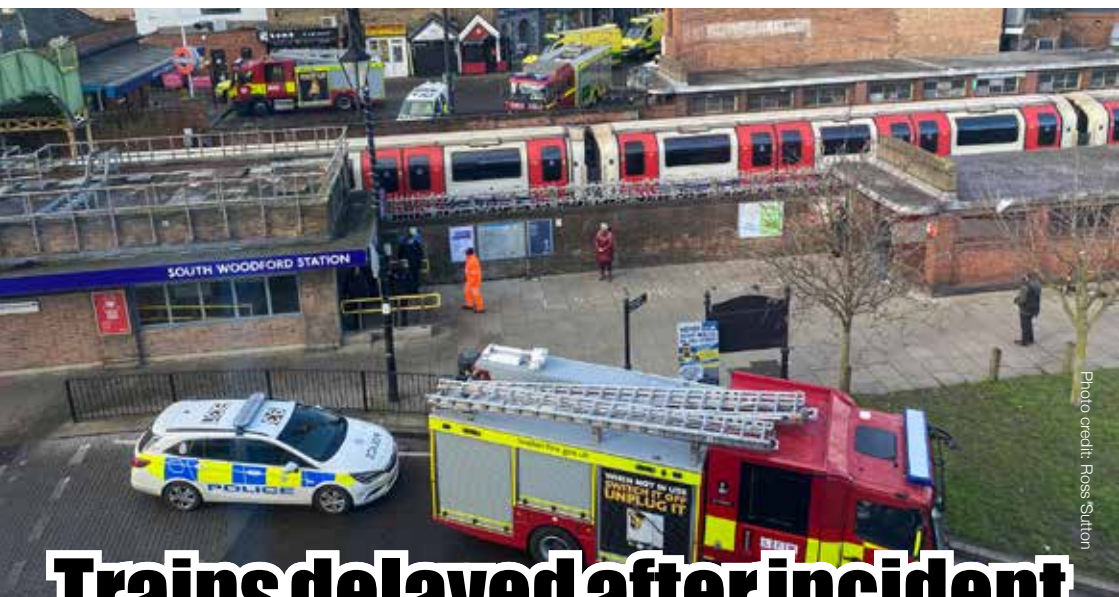


Photo credit: Ross Sutton

Trains delayed after incident

Services to and from South Woodford underground Station were hit by severe delays earlier this month after a person was reportedly found on the tracks.

Emergency services were called to the station on January 3 at around 10.30am.

Police, paramedics and firefighters were all at the scene, along with the Air Ambulance.

It's understood that the person was taken to hospital

after they were treated at the scene.

Transport for London said services between Leytonstone and Epping/Hainault were affected and the station was closed to the public while emergency services dealt with the situation.

The Central Line services were restored by 1.30pm that afternoon, although the station remained closed by emergency services.

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LOCAL BUSINESSES SUPPORTING HAVEN HOUSE



LOCAL NEWS



The next few months will be uncertain in many ways, but Haven House Children's Hospice will continue to be here to support children and families by providing 24 hours of care, seven days a week, all year round.

We want to encourage the public to complete a challenge by creatively using the numbers 2, 4 or 7 and fundraising or donating to Haven House.

The 24/7 Challenge is a great way to stay positive and motivated during this difficult time, by doing what you love and helping to raise vital funds for seriously ill children.

Families often say that caring for a seriously ill child with complex needs is 24/7 and can be exhausting and that Haven House is essential in relieving the pressures they face. We are a lifeline for these families.

The coronavirus epidemic means that our fundraising events for the foreseeable future remain cancelled – events that would normally raise such important funds for the services provided by Haven House. We need the help of our local community now more than ever so that we can continue to be here for families.

Are you sporty or arty? Do you love to bake or love to game? How about turning household chores into something rewarding?

Step up to the 24/7 Challenge and download your free fundraising pack at havenhouse.org.uk/247-challenge

Haslers celebrates seven decades

Haslers is starting 2021 with a celebration of its 70th anniversary.

The firm, which works with businesses across Essex and the South East, has been supporting companies and individuals with its proactive tax, accounting and business advice since 1951.

It has developed a strong reputation for providing exceptional services and is a specialist in a number of fields, including the finances of charities, schools and owner-managed small to medium-sized businesses.

The firm was founded by Harry Hasler, who for more than 20 years operated on his own. Then in 1973, Michael Gould joined the practice and the two of them worked from a spare bedroom in Harry's home in Seven Kings.

From humble beginnings, the firm grew, moving to larger premises in South Woodford, then Woodford Green in 1977 and then to its current office in Old Station Road, Loughton, in 2005.

Since then, the firm has merged a number of times, the latest one having been carried out during the first

COVID-19 lockdown with Gane Jackson Scott in 2020.

It now has more than 100 staff members and 10 partners and works with thousands of clients, many of whom have been with the firm for decades.

Jon O'Shea, Haslers' Chairman and Senior Tax Partner, said: "We are really proud of our long history and our ongoing success. To go from a sole partner practice to one of the region's biggest firms is a real achievement, which wouldn't have been possible without the support of our team, clients and the local community."

"Reaching our 70th anniversary is a great accomplishment and one that I hope others will celebrate alongside us. With more exciting plans for the future, I am sure we will continue to grow and support more businesses."

As well as supporting local businesses, Haslers has become well known for its charitable work via its dedicated foundation, which to date has raised and donated more than £180,000 to local causes.

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GARDENING

FEBRUARY BIRTH FLOWER OF THE
MONTH:

Violet

The February birth flower is the vibrant violet. People born in this month tend to be both modest and mild mannered, hence the popular expression “shrinking violet”. Sweet violets are regularly found in the UK in woods and hedgerows and are often candied and used to decorate cakes.

WHAT DO VIOLETS SYMBOLISE?

Violets have been around for centuries and were first cultivated by the Greeks around 500BC. According to Greek mythology, violets were created when one of Artemis’ nymphs was pursued by her twin brother Apollo. To protect her, Artemis turned her into a violet, which in turn led to this flower being known to represent modesty.

WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOUR PERSONALITY?

If you were born in February, you are said to be wise beyond your years. A private person, you are also prone to being a bit of a dreamer. It can take you a while to warm up to people, but when you do, you are fiercely loyal.

CAN I GROW VIOLETS IN MY GARDEN?

Violets typically grow in the wild, although they are decreasing in numbers owing to habitat loss, which means if you want to grow them in your garden, you need to recreate these conditions. Violets thrive in winter and spring sun but need summer shade, so their ideal spot is under a deciduous tree or shrub.

Violets will self-sow, but growing your own from seed is a challenge as the seeds need to be fresh. Instead, buy plants during the spring and plant immediately in moist but well-drained soil.

WHAT PESTS ARE COMMON TO VIOLETS?

If your violet leaves turn yellow, this could be the result of an attack by red spider mites. This pest strikes when your plant becomes too hot or dry.

The best remedy is to defoliate the plant completely.



GARDEN OF LIFE

FOX IN *the box*

In the first of a four-part series that shows how even the most urban garden can be a haven for the wonders of wildlife and the nurturing of nature, we look at the faithful fox. Whether out at night or hiding in plain sight, this sly urban dweller has adapted better than any other animal to human environments.

Perhaps we shouldn't be so surprised when we spot a fox meandering its way through the park, across a garden, or even on the pavement outside where we live. These beautiful creatures are, after all, past masters in urban environments, even if they are just as accustomed to survival in the rugged wild.

For all its impressive presence, your average fox will rarely approach humans or animals – chickens, rabbits and guinea pigs notwithstanding. This sly old foe simply wants to hunt for scraps, play, mate and return to its den to rest and tend to its offspring. Only when threatened will a fox move into offensive mode.

The fact foxes have become so much a part of our urban and suburban lives has a lot to do with the way they feed. They'll consume almost anything they find – from fruit and veg, raw and cooked meat, cheese, bread and even dog biscuits. Increasingly brave around humans, they'll often take food for storage, burying it for later consumption.

That means there's little risk in leaving food out for foxes if you're hoping to get a glimpse of these fiery nocturnal beauties, who will happily roam around in the late afternoon as well.

There is a downside, however. From fouling the garden to chewing shoes left outside, to trampling lawns and even digging up deceased pets, if you encourage foxes in, you'll have to go along with their inquisitive, playful habits.



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A MOVING STORY

Climbing the property ladder is something an estate agent will often promote and William Rose has heeded its own advice and recently moved into a swanky new office on the High Road, Woodford Green.

Previously located a little off the main drag on Woodford Green's Mill lane, William Rose estate agents have just moved to a much more prominently positioned premises on the High Road. And that's not all – they've also given their new abode a fabulous makeover, upping the ante on its precious signature navy shopfront to one that's electric blue. Inside it's all exposed brickwork and reclaimed wood, while exposed girders and vents all add to the contemporary, industrial vibe. The folks at William Rose wanted to create an office environment that was as unique as the area they service, and as you can see here, they've certainly achieved that.



Now happily settled in their new space, co-founders Adrian Sinclair and Jay Williams are getting down to serious business.

"Living and working in Woodford has been a joy for many years, but this has become even more obvious in lockdown with access to an abundance of outside spaces," says Adrian. It seems London is moving out

with areas like Woodford and the surrounding environs becoming even more popular for buyers and rents.

The level of applicants is extremely high with most of our properties going under offer in week one," he adds.

Jay, meanwhile concurs, offering "With the market in full swing again properties are selling at such a rate. In all my time in the local market I really can't remember a time like this but here we are. Along with London moving out I'm finding local sellers are also on the move to find more space.

Some of the clients we are currently dealing with I've helped move a few times now, which is always lovely as you see the families grow along with the properties.

So Jay and Adrian are encouraging others to follow their lead and "let's get you moving."

Get in touch:

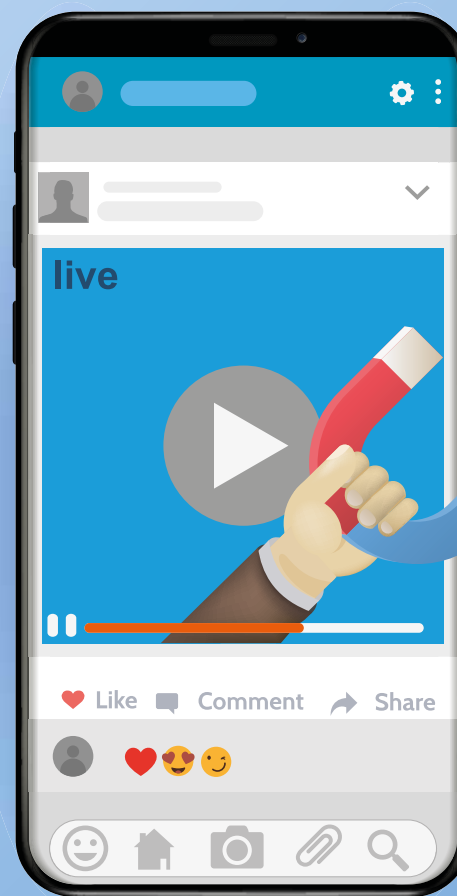
William Rose

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The Power of Social Media



memes and GIFs. Avoid overly promotional posts.

Increased interaction: Video continues to be one of the strongest social media strategies, with an estimated 78 per cent of users watching video content on a monthly basis. Ideal for grabbing people's attention, conveying your brand personality and showcasing your passion as a business. You could even try live-streaming an event.

Improved customer service: Although social media can be a blessing for your business, it can also cause a lot of damage if you don't keep an eye on it. Remember that, first and foremost, social media is a customer service channel, so you need to monitor your mentions and keep tabs on your reviews. Always respond to comments asap and deal with any problems via private messaging.

If you only implement one digital marketing technique to boost your business and build brand awareness this year, then make sure it involves social media.

Providing you with the chance to improve customer service, drive traffic to your site and even spy on your competitors, the power of social media should never be underestimated.

Enhanced engagement: Social media is the perfect technology for engaging with both your existing customers and potential new ones. Make sure you take full advantage of social capability and encourage interaction through competitions, industry news, tips and advice and humorous

The lowdown on the popular social media platforms:

- > **Facebook.** Best for generating leads and building relationships
- > **Twitter.** Perfect for businesses with a younger audience
- > **Pinterest.** Great for driving sales and for brands with visual appeal
- > **Snapchat.** Ideal for building relationships with influencers and driving brand recognition and loyalty
- > **Instagram.** The best option for e-commerce sites and for telling your brand story
- > **YouTube.** To help you get seen by Google and tap into YouTube traffic





WINDOW dressing

Tricks that will upgrade your home and help you achieve top market price

When it comes to making our homes as presentable as possible for sale, there are a few tips and tricks worth putting into practice, and no, just brewing up some fresh coffee won't suffice.

TIDY HOUSE, TIDY MIND: House viewers need to imagine their own possessions in your house, so the brighter and emptier your rooms are, the easier it will be for them to make that connection.

It may mean you need to give up a weekend or two to repaint a couple of rooms, and that mass of clutter can find a new home in the loft – or the bin – but the rewards could be huge.

TIGHT IS RIGHT: Your house needs to give off a feeling of quality – it will all add to a sense of your potential purchaser stepping up a level when they move in. With that in mind, tighten and make sparkle door handles, taps and bannister rails. No wobbles, no worries.

A MEAN CLEAN: While it sounds obvious, any appearance of dust is hugely off-putting for those looking around a home. Paying professional cleaners to really give your rooms a spruce may be one of the best investments you make.

(VERY) FIRST IMPRESSIONS: Most people think first impressions are made when someone walks through the front door, but the process begins way before that. Is the lawn mown? Is the front door wiped down? Can you convince your neighbour to move his rusty Ford Mondeo around the corner?

WEATHER WITH YOU: Try to book viewings when the sun is there to light up your home. Open windows to let heat and the breeze in, and consider delaying if torrential rain may see your potential buyers soaked through before they even enter the property.



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Even with the best will in the world, your car seats will eventually succumb to stains and spillages. Fortunately, if you care for and clean them appropriately, they can be restored to their original glory.

FABRIC CAR SEATS

- > The first step when cleaning your fabric car seats is to vacuum the upholstery to ensure the area is free from dirt and debris. If pet hair is an issue, utilise a pet hairbrush to lift the hair before vacuuming.
- > Next you need to apply your chosen cleaner or shampoo. Try not to make the area too wet – damp is best – and then gently rub in the solution with a soft-bristled brush.
- > Top tip: Concentrate on small areas and an even spread of solution to avoid water stains.

LEATHER CAR SEATS

- > Leather car seats are less prone to stains than fabric ones but they are also more delicate and susceptible to abrasions. Therefore, when vacuuming you need to be extra careful and take your time to avoid any scratches or tears. You also need to purchase a leather-specific upholstery cleaner, which often comes as a cream rather than a spray or shampoo.
- > Apply the product and gently rub the area with a microfibre towel.
- > Top tip: The more matt your leather seats appear, the cleaner they are.

HOW TO DRY YOUR CAR SEATS

It is always advisable to clean your car seats early in the day and when no rain is forecast. If you can keep an eye on your vehicle, leave your windows slightly open to prevent trapped moisture and let your seats dry naturally.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CAR SEATS

- > Condition leather seats to prevent cracks
- > Spray fabric seats with a fabric protector



MOTORING



SPORT

NEW OLYMPIC SPORT:

BREAKDANCING

THE NEW SPORT SET TO DEBUT AT THE 2024 OLYMPICS IN PARIS... BREAKDANCING!

While the postponement of the Olympic Games in Tokyo proved one of 2020's most frustrating episodes, hosting the Games this coming summer has at least given the International Olympic Committee (IOC) the chance to run its eye over prospective new sports that could be showcased.

And fans of breakdancing – a pursuit created and styled on the mean, urban streets of New York in the 1970s before being exported to a truly global audience – will be glad of the extra time, albeit the first we'll see of it will be in 2024 when Paris hosts.

A movement centred as much on music as it is dance, there are distant similarities with other performance events at the Games, such as synchronised swimming and dressage.

In the Olympic format, competitors look likely to go up against each other 1v1, as was

the case at the 2018 Youth Olympics in Argentina. The success of the event there, some significant backing by Red Bull and a desire by organisers for the Olympics to speak to a younger, more urban demographic, means breakdancing – or 'breaking', as it will be called in event terms – sailed through the trial on its way to debuting at the world's biggest sporting tournament.

It's also significant that the IOC has embraced breaking despite some of the activity's leading purveyors insisting that it needs to retain its artistic and cultural edge, and shouldn't be bracketed in with the Olympics' sometimes rather formal take on sport.

Whether breaking will inspire anyone older than the teenage market to take it up is unclear. If it does, expect sales of paracetamol to soar.



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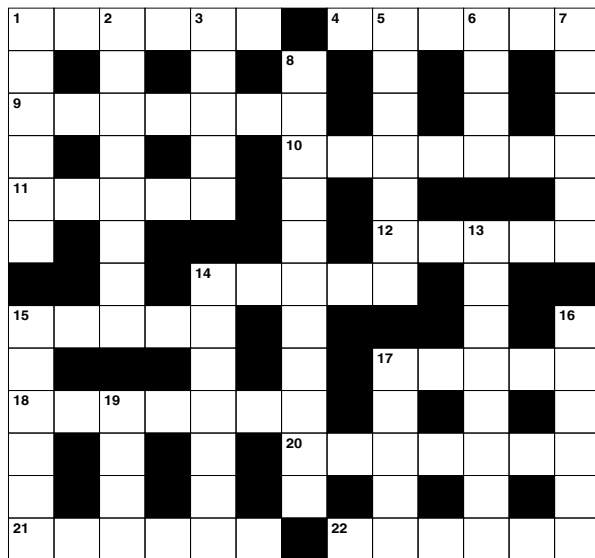
Answers: see end of The Vision Listings

ACROSS

1. Straighten out (6)
4. Vocalist (6)
9. Animal fat (7)
10. Not friendly (7)
11. Oozes (5)
12. Compassion (5)
14. Expect; think that (5)
15. Word of farewell (5)
17. Wedding assistant (5)
18. Supervisory worker (7)
20. Burdensome work (7)
21. Short choral compositions (6)
22. Entertains (6)

DOWN

1. Except when (6)
2. Musical pieces for solo instruments (8)
3. Regulations (5)
5. Annoying (7)
6. Large desert in Asia (4)
7. Make less dense (6)
8. Residents (11)
13. People with auburn hair (8)



14. Furthest away (7)
15. State publicly (6)
16. Tremulous sounds (6)
17. Deprive of weapons (5)
19. Speak in a wild way (4)

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Adélie penguins breed and raise their offspring in Antarctica
- ▶ Puffins can flap their wings up to 400 times a minute. They can fly at around 55 miles an hour
- ▶ The bald eagle, which was once on the brink of extinction, has been the national symbol of the United States of America since 1782
- ▶ Once a flamingo lays an egg, the parents take turns sitting on it to keep it warm. The egg usually hatches in around 30 days
- ▶ The ostrich is the tallest and heaviest of all the birds
- ▶ As a male snowy owl gets older, it turns whiter. Males are often whiter than females
- ▶ Red-tailed hawks can spot a mouse from 30 metres up in the air

SUDOKU

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