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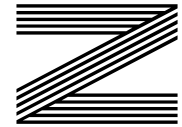
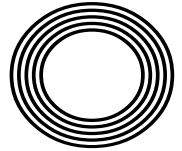
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Legendary cricketer sets his sights on World Cup victory



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Editor's notes...

OCTOBER 2023



Nik Allen, Editor

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

I'm excited to share my recent customer service encounters that have left an indelible mark on me. As the saying goes: "You don't truly appreciate good customer service until you've experienced the opposite."

On the brighter side, a recent visit to a local bookstore demonstrated the magic of outstanding service. The staff's knowledge, willingness to assist and genuine enthusiasm made my visit not just enjoyable but also memorable. It's a powerful reminder of how good service can elevate a mundane task into a delightful experience.

However, not all tales are as sunny. A frustrating experience with a telecom provider left me grappling with automated phone systems and impersonal support. It's a stark reminder that poor customer service not only erodes trust but also tests our patience.

Customer service is the cornerstone of our consumer experience. It's our privilege to bring you stories that shed light on the importance of striving for excellence. As we navigate the customer service spectrum, let's remember the impact it has on our daily lives and the potential for change it holds.

We at **VISION** strive for excellent customer service when working with local businesses.

Nik Allen

Delivered in Frinton-on-Sea, Manningtree, Mistley, Brantham, Walton-on-the-Naze and Clacton-on-Sea every month.

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SCAN ME

Sooty™

Turns Seventy-Five

In an era where a fad is lucky to last a full five minutes, the enduring magic of hand puppet Sooty must be something of a mystery to young audiences. And yet, when faced with his snuggly yellow fur, button eyes and sweet, shy demeanour, they inevitably melt with adoration as generation upon generation of children before them have done.

Discovered by Harry Corbett OBE in a joke shop on Blackpool North Pier on July 19, 1948, 'Teddy' – as he was then known – was purchased for seven shillings and six pence.

Having long harboured ambitions for the stage, Bradford native Corbett first appeared with the silent bear in a 1952 BBC TV show, *Talent Night*. The act was an instant success and Sooty soon became the star of his very own show featuring magic tricks, slapstick comedy and songs – a nod to Corbett's former ambitions as a concert pianist which were thwarted by his being deaf in one ear. Soon afterwards, he was joined by his pals: there was Sweep, a grey male dog who communicated with a squeak, and Soo, a female panda with a human voice.

After suffering a heart attack in 1975, Corbett's son Peter (stage name Matthew) took over as Sooty's friend and keeper. In the ensuing years, and with the character now a mainstay on *Rainbow*, Corbett Senior would make occasional guest appearances on spin-off *Sooty Show* (by this point now airing on ITV) until his death in 1989.

Under Matthew Corbett, Sooty and co. would enjoy enormous success. He changed the format of the show to one of a sitcom but kept the integral elements. Namely, Sooty's wand, the catchphrase 'izzy, wizzy, let's get busy', and the silent bear's enduring love of water pistols and mayhem in general.

In 1998, Corbett was succeeded by Richard Cadell. Only a few weeks into his new role, he found himself at 10 Downing Street for a special awards ceremony honouring brave children, hosted by then Prime Minister Sir Tony Blair and his wife Cherie – who Sooty dutifully squirted with his water pistol.

Sooty and Sweep were also guests at the birthday party of His Majesty Prince Charles, as he was then, in 2018 (Sooty actually being a few months older than our now King). The pair have courted numerous other politicians, musicians and celebrities and even – on the hand of Harry Corbett – shared a giggle with Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

So how is it, then, that a premise so simple remains so beloved in an age of CGI and swanky animation?

"I think the great thing with Sooty – and this is a famous Harry Corbett quote – is that he's never really been in fashion, so he's never really been out," laughs Cadell.

"It's not like one of these children's things that spike and then disappear," explains the 54 year old, who will embark on *75th Birthday Spectacular* – a special UK national tour that kicks off on October 21 at Bradford's Alhambra Theatre and runs through until April 2024.

He adds: "Sometimes the things we cherish most as children, and adults, are based in simple entertainment, and I am delighted that fact has held true despite so much else around us changing."



Photo credit: Moviestore/Shutterstock

BEHIND the scenes

Are you a complete TV addict? What would you say if we told you that there are iconic sets all across the UK that you can visit? From *Coronation Street* to *Only Fools and Horses* to *Downtown Abbey*, here are some locations from popular shows that are open for visitors today.

Coronation Street – ITV Studios, Manchester

This walking tour of *Coronation Street*, the UK's longest-running soap, is a must for any Corrie fan. Complete with an expert guide, you can take a closer look at all the iconic shops and businesses on the street, including The Rovers Return, Roy's Rolls café and Webster's Auto Centre.

Only Fools and Horses – Bristol Temple Meads Train Station

One of Britain's most-loved comedies, who wouldn't want to take a closer look behind the scenes at this legendary sitcom? The *Only Fools and Horses* three-and-a-half-hour coach tour takes you to filming spots of more than 10 episodes and includes a look at Nelson Mandela House, Sid's Café and the road where the iconic Batman and Robin scene took place.

Peaky Blinders – Central Liverpool

A gritty masterpiece, *Peaky Blinders* was filmed in Liverpool even though it is set in Birmingham, owing to this city's well-preserved Victorian industrial architecture. Hop on either the half-day or full-day guided coach tour and see the homes of Polly and Field Marshal Russell, Garrison Lane and so much more.

Downtown Abbey – Bampton, Oxfordshire

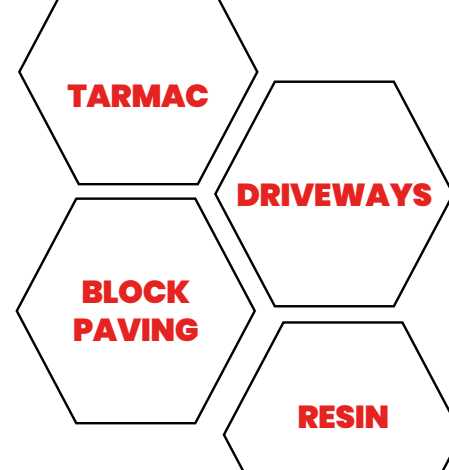
Become Lord or Lady of Grantham for the day, with the *Downtown Abbey* and Village group tour. Visit the charming village of Bampton, which fans will know as Downtown Village. Then head to Highclere Castle, where you will be able to explore the estate and the rooms within and enjoy a spot of lunch.

Bridgerton – The Abbey Hotel, Bath

Channel your inner Daphne or Duke of Hastings with a guided *Bridgerton* tour. Explore many of this popular show's filming locations during this two-hour tour, including Lady Danbury's mansion, Gunter's Tea Shop and the modiste dress shop.



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Is your hallway looking more shabby than stylish? Has it become a place to dump everything and anything that doesn't have a proper home?

Discover five simple ways to transform the entrance to your home, with inspiring ideas to suit all hallways.

1. ADD POPS OF COLOUR

If you have a small hallway, you may be tempted to stick to white paint to make the space appear bigger.

However, by adding pops of bright colours such as yellow or green, you can create visual interest and fashion a vibrant space. If you don't want to go all out with colour on the walls, why not add a few bold accessories instead, such as brightly coloured coat hooks, colourful floor tiles or a piece of bold artwork?

2. MAKE THE MOST OF MIRRORS

Dark hallways can make the entrance to your home feel gloomy and unwelcoming. Counteract this by creating the illusion of light with a few well-placed mirrors. Don't be afraid to experiment with different sizes and shapes, as this can help to make more of a style statement.

3. INVEST IN FUNCTIONAL FURNITURE

Most hallways are narrow, which means they offer little in the way of space. Therefore, if you want to add a piece of furniture, then you need to make sure it is both stylish and practical. For example, a seating area that doubles up as a storage unit. It can also be a good idea to make use of any available vertical space, for example by hanging a wall cupboard above your coat hooks.

4. EMBRACE CONSCIOUS STYLING

As a transitional space in your home, it is important that your hallway is clutter free, well lit, and, most importantly, that it is styled in keeping with the rest of your interiors. Take a walk around your home and see what design elements you can incorporate into your hallway.

5. LAYER LIGHTING

You can transform a dark hallway with the right lighting, with layered lights offering a stylish and practical way to illuminate this key space. Try combining multiple pendant lights with directional wall lights for maximum impact.



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FROM YOUR AREA



LOCAL NEWS

Church takes part in teddy bear parachute event



Photo credit: St Michael's Church

St Michael's Church in Brantham took part in a teddy bear parachute event on Saturday, September 16. Residents congregated in the church courtyard to witness the spectacle, where a team of experts launched participants' furry friends off the roof with handmade parachutes.

Some were more successful at staying airborne than others, and the longest flight time reached was more than two minutes.

Visitors to the community event also enjoyed snacks, drinks, and a walk around the various stalls.

A spokesperson for the church said: "Thank you to everyone who came along. There were some excellent parachutes and all bears were checked over by our teddy medic and returned safely to their owners!"

Pedestrianisation plans for High Street

Manningtree Town Council (MTC) is asking residents to get in touch after announcing the potential pedestrianisation of the High Street.

In a Facebook post, MTC said: "Following recent successful events and two maintenance road closures, comments have been passed about how nice it is to have the High Street traffic-free.

"People have enjoyed using the outside space safe from traffic fumes and noise and it has created a real café culture feel on the days when the High Street has been closed.

"Before we approach Essex County Council to ask (and add to our long list of traffic calming measure requests), we want to gauge public and business interest."

The post has received nearly 100 replies, some of which raised concerns over those who use the bus to visit the High Street.

One resident said: "Lovely idea apart from the fact it affects people using the bus."

Another said: "What about bus users? What about residents in the middle of Manningtree? Also, what about disabled people who need to park close to where they are visiting?"

To respond and read more comments, head to www.shorturl.at/oqsl6

First Summer of Cycling hailed a huge success

The first Summer of Cycling event in Tendring has been hailed as a huge success, as local residents enjoyed a variety of bike-themed activities across the district.

Organised by Community Voluntary Services Tendring (CVST) and Essex Pedal Power, there were 25 activities funded and supported by Active Essex, Essex County Council, Safer Greener Healthier, Find Your Active and Cycling UK's Big Bike Revival, from August 8 to September 28.

Events, which took place in a variety of venues such as Coppins Hall Community Centre in Clacton and Walton Community Centre, included bike fixing sessions with Dr Bike and learn-to-ride lessons.

A spokesperson for CVST said: "A big thank you to everyone who has come to our bike fix-it sessions over the summer. We look forward to seeing more bikes out and about in Walton."



Photo credit: CVST Becky

From Banking Hall to Curtain Call

Following the closure of Barclays Bank in Tiptree Curtain Call Interiors have taken over the former bank building and transformed the space into an inspirational home interiors showroom and new workroom.

The new space showcases a wide range of designer fabrics, curtain displays as well as home accessories including, a beautiful home fragrance range, cushions, lamps, furniture and tableware.

Curtain Call specialise in making hand finished bespoke curtains, Roman blinds and soft furnishings all made by their experienced team of curtain makers. With their new workroom located adjacent to the Showroom, it allows



owner Natalie and her team of makers and designers to assist customers in finding the right fabric and style for their decoration projects.



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SIR BERNARD JENKIN MP

Conservative MP for Harwich and North Essex




economic growth. Constituents also want to know that their taxes are being spent efficiently by the government. Take, for example, the many insulation schemes run through local authorities who bid for funding from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. Talking to people working in local government, the funding decisions often run over, leaving local authorities with little time to spend their allotted funding. Often, they return money unspent to the department. This is precisely the sort of problem which undermines public confidence. I am in discussion with our own Essex County Council about the energy efficiency of the existing building stock and the issues with this scheme. I will ensure that these concerns are raised at the highest levels of government to improve things.

The issue of cost and affordability cannot be overlooked. I will continue to press the government to ensure its environmental schemes represent the best value for money, as this is the best way to retain confidence in measures intended to protect our planet.

I am a fervent supporter of environmental conservation and a member of the Conservative Environment Network, the environmental caucus of Conservative MPs. Combating climate change is incredibly important, and since 1990, the UK has decarbonised more quickly than any other G20 country. But I understand many constituents' concerns which have been filling my mailbox about the cost of environmental policies during a period of high inflation and low

GILES WATLING MP

Conservative MP for Clacton



I wholeheartedly support the Prime Minister's call to review our net-zero commitments. We are already doing so much, and are on a clear trajectory, but we must ensure that people are not left behind or financially punished as we pursue building a Britain that is clean, green and prosperous.

I also want to reassure the many of you who have written to me regarding recent reports about the triple lock on state pensions. I am working with my team to explore the best way forward to fight to retain this vital policy that ensures that our older residents are not left behind. I will make it very clear to the Chancellor the clear damage that scrapping the lock will have.

Finally, I am pleased with recent reports that anti-social behaviour across Tendring has declined 41 per cent over the last 12 months, and have no doubts it will decline further after the £1.1million investment in Essex Police for more visible policing has been rolled out. I fought for more investment in the police through the precept, and this is the result – most gratifying.

I have had an update with the local NHS who have confirmed that our investment for new dental services is in place, and now we are just fighting a fight with the NHS to cut the red tape and get it deployed for you!





LOCAL FEATURE

From rural surroundings to entertainment icon



Photo credit: BBC Ray Burmiston

You wouldn't expect to find a buoyant behemoth of modern primetime entertainment lingering in the leafy, rural, countryside surrounds of Stanford, yet Rylan Clark-Neal's life in Essex is indeed the epitome of serenity, and a world away from the flashbulbs and entertainment excesses that pattern his day job.

Born Ross Clark and raised in Stepney, East London, the presenter we now know as Rylan got his big break when he auditioned for the ninth series of *The X Factor* in 2012. Though his singing skills may not have been the strongest among the contestants, his magnetic personality quickly captured the hearts of both the audience and assembled judges.

Finishing in fifth place, his time on *The X Factor* provided a solid foundation for his future career in television.

Celebrity Big Brother followed, with audiences won over by the star's vibrant personality and natural charm.

Presenting duties proved an obvious route for someone who, while never turning his back on his reality TV roots, was keen to explore other areas. These have included *Big Brother* spin-offs, plus daytime TV (*This Morning*), game shows (*Supermarket Sweep*), panel shows (*Celebrity Juice* and *Would I Lie to You?*) and *Eurovision*.

Rylan is openly gay, and while he uses his influence to good effect in terms of fundraising and providing exposure to minority groups – such as the LGBTQ+ community – the 34-year-old remains grounded and sincere.

The current voice of car retailer Cinch, the presenter is set to embark on a busy schedule of work in the coming months, including a rumoured *Big Brother* return.

Clark-Neal recently swapped Stanford for Brentwood, where his mother Linda lives, and remains loyal to his Essex image.

As he says: "There is no better place on Earth – the people, the places, the vibe. It's always Essex."



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WHAT'S ON

YOUR LOCAL EVENTS

EMERALD STORM

West Cliff Theatre, Tower Road,
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Friday, October 27, 7.30pm



Photo credit: Michael Porter Photography

Emerald Storm is a tale of love, rivalry, turmoil and the conflicts of human nature. Feel the immense power and thunderous rhythms as Irish dance and modern tap combine to soar into the 21st century.

This explosive show is a thrilling fusion of music and dance styles, and is co-written and co-choreographed by world-renowned tap dancer and Hollywood actor Adam Garcia.

Tickets start from £30.50 and can be bought from www.westcliffclacton.co.uk/livemusic/emerald-storm/#more-15846

AN EVENING WITH HAMMERS HERO DEAN ASHTON

Frinton Golf Club, 1 Esplanade,
Frinton-on-Sea, CO13 9EP
Friday, November 3, 6pm

Mandeville Promotions Limited is proud to present an evening with Hammers hero Dean Ashton, hosted by Tony Gale. The evening also includes a raffle and auction in aid of Prostate Cancer UK, as well as photo and autograph opportunities with the players.

Tickets cost £25 and can be purchased by visiting www.bit.ly/46BtW8

BRANTHAM BONFIRE & FIREWORKS

Brantham Leisure Centre, New Village,
Cattawade, Manningtree, CO11 1RZ
Saturday, November 4, 5.30pm

Brantham Leisure Centre is thrilled to be hosting a fantastic bonfire celebration, including music, a funfair, a barbeque, and so much more. Watch the fireworks

spectacular, enjoy a nice drink and snack, and listen to the amazing tunes of Micky P on the mic to celebrate bonfire night.

Tickets start at £3 and can be purchased by heading to www.branthamleisurecentre.com/event/brantham-bonfire-fireworks-2023

NOVEMBER MINI YOGA RETREAT

Brantham Village Hall, New Village, Cattawade,
Manningtree, CO11 1RF
Saturday, November 11, 9.30am – 12pm

Enjoy a morning of complete and utter you-time, with rejuvenating Luna yoga flow, yummy treats provided by Chestnut & Rose, and 30 minutes of yoga nidra aka yogic sleep.

Moontree Yoga & Wellbeing was born out of a desire to create a place where women can be themselves, enjoy me-time, and learn to nurture themselves.

For more information and to book your £30 ticket, visit www.moontreeyoga.co.uk/event/november-mini-retreat

COMEDY CLUB @ THE RED LION

The Red Lion, 42 South Street,
Manningtree, CO11 1BG
Thursday, November 16, 8pm – 11pm

Join The Red Lion for an evening of four fantastic comedy guests. Enjoy performances from Stella Graham, Erich McElroy and Ryan McDonnell, with headline guest Stefano Paolini (pictured below), runner-up for Channel 4's *So You Think You're Funny* award and BBC's *New Comedy Award*. Impressionist and beatboxer Stefano Paolini is now a regular headliner on the UK comedy circuit.

Tickets cost £10 and are available to buy purchase www.redlionmanningtree.co.uk/event/comedy-club-23



Photo credit: The Comedy Cellar

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BIG BEN

BEN STOKES OBE'S INCLUSION IN THE WORLD CUP SQUAD IS GREAT NEWS FOR ENGLAND CRICKET... LESS SO FOR OUR OPPONENTS!

When Durham and England all-rounder Ben Stokes OBE decided that the gruelling cricketing schedule was too much for him and his body to take, a collective sigh of relief from those who cherish the clack of leather on willow must have been heard all around the world in the sport.

It was July 2022. Stokes had spent the previous three months leading his country in Test cricket after succeeding Joe Root MBE as captain, and things in that regard had started perfectly, with four wins in a row.

However, after commenting that he felt playing all three of cricket's formats – Test, ODI and T20 – was “unsustainable”, Stokes' last 50-over tussle came against South Africa at his home ground, Durham's Riverside.

Yet a year is a long time in sport, and even longer in the seesaw nature of the Christchurch-born all-rounder's career. So roll on 12 months, and despite a huge summer Ashes series ahead, Stokes began speaking to his limited overs captain Jos Buttler MBE and coach Matthew Mott about a quickfire return to the ODI circuit.

Stokes says: “The closer this World Cup got, the more I was becoming interested in having those discussions. And when you consider that we are the defending champions, it almost feels right to want to ensure you defend that crown.

“At the same time, I had to remind myself of the original reason for choosing to retire from this format of the game.”

Return he has, with a pledge from the 32-year-old to listen to his body, perhaps better than he has in the past when the almost constant demands of the game have had an impact on not just physical abilities, but the star's mental wellbeing too.

“Let's see how this World Cup goes,” he adds, “and I'll decide then if it's my last hurrah.”

Had Stokes not chosen to return to the fold, we would have been denied his record-breaking knock against New Zealand in the third ODI at The Kia Oval in September. Coming into bat alongside Dawid Malan with England compromised on 13/2, Stokes was about to rev it up against the Kiwis.

His 15 fours and nine sixes contributed to an almost unimaginable personal total of 182, beating Jason Roy's 180 against Australia in Melbourne in 2018. His efforts saw England reach a mammoth 368 off 48.1 overs. New Zealand could only muster 187 all out and Stokes took a further leap into the echelons of iconic status.

“I need more time to get used to its rhythm, but I think I managed well this time,” he said, referencing that spectacular knock. “The announcer mentioned my record just before I was done. I didn't even know about it until then. Jason congratulated me, and I apologised to him,” he laughs.

Does Stokes feel that England can become world champions again, and in the process become only the third side to defend the title since its inception in 1975?

“Everyone recognises our team's strength, and it's not boastful to admit we have a talented line-up. We're optimistic about our chances, but in World Cup matches, it's all about handling pressure.”

Photo credit: Kieran McManus/Shutterstock

How to grow SNOWDROPS



Snowdrops are one of the first signs of spring and can make a wonderful addition to any garden. Instantly recognisable by their small, white, bell-shaped flowers, snowdrops are easy to grow and will come back year after year.

WHERE TO PLANT SNOWDROPS

Snowdrops thrive in moist but well-drained soil and in partial shade. If you plant snowdrops in soil that is too dry, you risk the bulbs drying out and failing to flower. Choose to grow snowdrops beneath deciduous shrubs or along the front of borders where herbaceous plants can provide ground cover when these flowers are dormant. They also do well planted in grass, in spring border displays and in rock gardens.

HOW TO PLANT SNOWDROPS

Dry snowdrop bulbs can be planted in autumn, but these are often hard to establish. Instead, opt to plant snowdrops in the green in January or February. Simply lift snowdrop plants just after flowering and before the foliage has turned yellow, and replant somewhere else. You can buy snowdrops in the green from your local garden centre or online.

HOW TO CARE FOR SNOWDROPS

Once snowdrops are established, they require no maintenance. Allow the foliage to die back naturally as this will help to ensure that the nutrients from the leaves are returned to the bulbs. Once every two years, divide any established clumps to avoid overcrowding.

HOW TO PROPAGATE SNOWDROPS

To propagate snowdrops, lift and divide established clumps after flowering in either March or April. Using a fork, carefully lift the bulb with the roots intact and the foliage still in place. Replant in the garden immediately and water well. The foliage may appear a little sorry, but it should look healthy by next winter.

TOP SNOWDROP VARIETIES:

Galanthus nivalis | Galanthus elwesii | Galanthus woronowii | Galanthus Armine | Galanthus Cordelia.

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Get **BALANCED!**

Did you know that National Work/Life Balance Week takes place this month, with the aim of generating awareness of the importance of a healthy balance between your professional and personal life?

If you struggle to switch off after leaving work or you find the lines between your work and home life have blurred, then we are here to help you.

Why is a good work/life balance important?

A good work/life balance involves finding a harmonious relationship between your home life and your working life. This is vital to your overall wellbeing as people need to engage in a wide range of activities, as well as rest, in order to thrive. If you work too hard or work very long hours, you are more likely to experience high levels of stress and suffer from insomnia, depression and/or anxiety.

What is an unhealthy work/life balance?

The most common signs of an unhealthy work/life balance are:

- > Regularly working long hours, including evenings, weekends and holidays
- > Neglecting your personal/family life owing to excessive work demands
- > Experiencing burnout, which causes physical, emotional and mental exhaustion
- > A lack of time for self-care, including sleep and leisure activities
- > Strained relationships owing to work commitments

How to achieve the right balance between work and home life

- 1. SET BOUNDARIES:** Make sure that you establish clear boundaries between your work and personal life by defining specific working hours and sticking to them.
- 2. FOCUS ON TIME MANAGEMENT:** Sometimes people are guilty of working hard rather than smart, which can mean they have to spend longer at the office and less time at home. Instead, prioritise the most important tasks both at home and at work.
- 3. BE FLEXIBLE:** At times, you will need to have to adjust your work schedule to accommodate unforeseen personal circumstances or emergencies, so don't feel guilty about doing this.



WORK CAREER FAMILY LIFE



TRAVEL

The GLOBAL ZOO

Animals unique to one place and how to see them

The ability of animals to explore the world is only bettered by the wanderlust of humans, yet there is still a clutch of species who have never ventured from their home continents and, in some cases, countries. While the Galápagos Islands typically take credit for the planet's most unique array of life, here are some others worth celebrating.

GELADA, ETHIOPIA

A monkey that looks like it's wearing a tuxedo, the gelada is native to the highlands of Ethiopia and has rarely strayed. While other monkey species are known for swinging from trees with reckless abandon, these are happiest on the desert floor, eating grass, seeds, roots and insects.

INACCESSIBLE ISLAND RAIL, INACCESSIBLE ISLAND

Yes, there is a place called Inaccessible Island – it's in the South Atlantic – and it requires little description. To describe the world's smallest flightless bird (which also takes the 'Inaccessible' name) is undoubtedly to make a straightforward link

to how this little creature has never made it to the mainland.

THORNY DEVIL, AUSTRALIA

This lizard looks like something out of a Marvel comic, albeit it's never been exported any further than the Aussie outback. It can drink water through its skin, which is just as well, as there is precious little of the stuff about in the summer heat of the Southern Hemisphere.

TEXAS BLIND SALAMANDER, USA

Without eyes or skin colour, this peculiar amphibian detects prey by virtue of vibrations around it. It has never made it out of US waters and you're highly unlikely to ever see one in the flesh, since it lives deep underwater in cave networks.

MANX CAT, ISLE OF MAN

Lastly, there's the famous Manx cat. Although these have been brought across to the mainland, they stand apart from other cat species owing to a rare genetic mutation that means they are born with no tails.



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BLINDS & SHUTTERS



LOCAL BLIND MANUFACTURER GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

Nantmor Blinds and Shutters has come a long way since it's inception in 1982, trading through both buoyant times and tough periods of recession, however the company continues to go from strength to strength into 2024.

The past 40 years have seen the business go from one with four friends making a few blinds in a small garage, to a business with 25 loyal and experienced staff members designing, manufacturing and supplying quality shading products to domestic, commercial and trade customers across the UK from their three factories in Clacton-on-Sea. Manufacturing their own roller, vertical and pleated blinds allows Nantmor to be in control of the quality of their own products. Using top quality hardware and fabrics from British, Dutch and German suppliers ensures that the blinds you receive not only look amazing but stand the test of time.

The business has been built with a firm focus on providing quality products at a fair price supported by excellent customer service. Managing Director Andy Finch said 'I'm passionate about both quality and great customer service and a firm believer in only manufacturing and supplying products that I would happily have in my own home.'

Nantmor are currently expanding production having just purchased a third factory at their Clacton-on-Sea base. Exciting plans are afoot for the new factory including a new manufacturing facility and a new bespoke showroom for shutters and cellular blinds. Andy goes on to say 'We are continually investing in state of the art equipment to ensure that the business continues to be one of the UK's premier independent manufacturers and at the top of our game for the next 40 years!'

'I'M PASSIONATE ABOUT QUALITY AND GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE'



In recent years there has been an influx of online based blind retailers who have come to market. These companies serve a purpose to a point, but what about the customers that want more than that, those who want a more personal service?

'Having the showroom is a real plus point. It allows our customers to come in and see our products first hand, feel the quality, see the attention to detail, but also our passion for all things blinds!' said Nantmor's Business Development Manager, Mark Minter.

Nantmor's on site showroom has over 80 different roller, vertical, day and night, cellular blinds and shutters on display. Choose from 1000's of quality fabrics and call on their friendly, knowledgeable staff to help you create your perfect blind. The showroom is open from 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday and 9.00am to 12.30pm on a Saturday. Why not pop in and see how Nantmor can help you.

SO WHAT'S GOING TO BE POPULAR IN 2024?

Prefer a home visit? No problem as Nantmor Blinds & Shutters will also come to you for a free, no obligation home consultation. Bringing fabric samples, years of knowledge and the all important tape measure as they'll do all the measuring too!

There's no doubt that we're all more aware of the rising cost of living, especially where our heating bills are concerned as we move into the colder months and 2024. So how can Nantmor help? Nantmor are one of the UK's best manufacturers of cellular blinds selling both to domestic customers in the local area, but also to their many trade customers across the country. 'We're seeing a huge surge in popularity for cellular blinds. Not only are they a versatile, stylish blind, but their excellent thermal qualities are proving to be a hit with customers. The cellular construction of the fabric creates a thermal barrier at the window, greatly reducing heat loss through the glass, so not only do they really help against heat loss in the winter, they do exact the opposite in the summer by blocking the sun's rays and keeping your rooms cooler' said Mark. Nantmor manufacture over 50 different models of cellular blinds including shapes for conservatories and the increasingly popular gable end windows.

So what's going to be popular in 2024? Well, Nantmor are predicting they'll see the continued increase in popularity for cellular blinds and shutters moving into 2024, along with external solar shading solutions such as solar screens, awnings and pergolas. We look forward to the next chapter in the Nantmor Blinds & Shutters story.



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KIDS



Incy wincy spider

Halloween provides the perfect opportunity for you to get crafty with your kids, and this spooky spiderweb doesn't disappoint. Suitable for little ones and older children alike, discover how to make your very own salt and glue spiderweb craft below.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Black paper or card | A pencil | A ruler | PVC or Elmer's glue | Table salt | Watercolour paints | A soft brush

HOW TO MAKE:

1 Draw your spiderweb design: Your child can do this by hand themselves, depending on their age and

ability, using a pencil or ruler, or you can help them with this step. Alternatively, you could print out a spiderweb template to use.

2 Trace the shape with glue: The next step is to trace glue along each line of your spiderweb. Again, young children may need help with this if they want to achieve a good spiderweb shape. To make the glue lines as smooth as possible, do not allow the tip of the glue bottle to touch the paper but instead, hover slightly above it.

3 Cover the spiderweb with salt: Fill a ramekin or small bowl with table salt and then use two fingers to pinch the salt and sprinkle it over the glue. Make sure that you cover each line and curve with enough salt. Leave the glue to fully dry, ideally overnight, before moving on to the next step.

4 Paint your spiderweb: Now comes the really exciting part: adding colour to your spiderweb. Watercolour paints are perfect for this as they spread well on dried glue and salt. Using a soft brush, plenty of water and your chosen watercolours, add a drop or two of colour to a salt line. Use a light touch and do not scrub as this may dissolve your spiderweb.

MAKE A HANGING SPIDERWEB

Take your craft to the next level by applying the glue and the paint, minus the salt, to a thin plastic sheet, gently peel it off and then fix it to your preferred surface using sticky glue dots or hang around the room with string. Make sure you allow the glue to fully dry before peeling.

Photo credit: meandmias.com, thepurplepumpkinblog.co.uk



When did you last have your gutters cleared out?

Gutter health is an often-overlooked part of your home maintenance plan, but gutters perform an important function in protecting your home.

Axa, the world leading insurance company, suggest that gutters require at least an internal inspection each year, and clearing out if they are clogged up. Blocked gutters can lead to brick damage, wood rot and even damp on internal walls of your home.

Local GutterPRO expert Adrian Seymour says "Contrary to popular belief, moss not leaves are the major cause of gutter blockages. So even if your property doesn't have trees in the immediate area there may still be a problem building up. Moss does a great job of falling from your roof when it rains and then swelling up in your guttering. The moss breaks down and provides a great medium for weeds & grass to germinate which will prevent water running freely to the drains."



GutterPRO are able to clear gutters from the ground using a powerful vacuum system and super-light carbon poles. Because of the length of the poles, GutterPRO can reach over your conservatory where it would be impossible to place a ladder safely. This means that not only is there less risk of falling off a ladder, there is less risk to your property too.

Adrian says "For your full peace of mind, we use a CCTV system that enables us to show you before and after photographs of the work we have completed for you. If your gutters are clear, then there is no call out charge. All our jobs are booked in for a timed appointment, so you know we are coming."

Recently, GutterPRO introduced a gutter washing service which removed black marks and dirt from UPVC gutters and fascia boards, giving homes a fresh new look and much improved kerbside appeal.

Adrian continues "We are seeing people getting a clear and clean before putting their properties on the market. People don't want to see grass growing from gutters, or dirty gutters on estate agents photos."



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VEGGIE vision

Most people know that fruits and vegetables are good for your complexion when eaten regularly, but not everyone knows that they can also be applied to the skin and hair to achieve amazing results. Here are four of our favourite veggie-based beauty treatments.

PUMPKIN FOOT MASK – Best for dry, cracked heels

You will need: ½ cup of pumpkin purée | 1 whole egg | 1 tsp honey
How to apply: Combine all of the above ingredients in a bowl | Massage into the feet and ankles | Cover with cling film or put on a pair of old socks | Leave for 15 minutes and then rinse with warm water

BUTTERNUT SQUASH HAIR MASK – Best for dull or dry hair

You will need: ½ large butternut squash | 3 tbsp honey | ¼ cup of plain yogurt
How to make: Peel and cook the squash until soft enough to remove the inner contents | Mash the squash | Combine with the honey and yogurt | Apply the mixture to damp hair and put on a plastic shower cap | Leave on for 20 minutes and then rinse with warm water

BEETROOT FACE MASK – Best for ageing skin

You will need: 2 tsp beetroot juice | 1 tsp yogurt | 1 tsp lime juice | 2 tsp gram flour
How to make: Mix the beetroot juice with the flour and then add the yogurt and lime juice | Mix until you have a smooth paste | Spread the mixture evenly over the face and leave for 15 minutes | Rinse off with warm water | Pat your face dry

POTATO CLEANSER – Best for acne-prone skin

You will need: 1 potato | 1 cucumber | 1 tsp baking soda | 1 tsp water
How to apply: Peel and chop the potato and the cucumber | Blend in a food processor or blender for 20 seconds | Add the water and baking soda | Apply to the face daily to cleanse and remove make-up, dirt and impurities.



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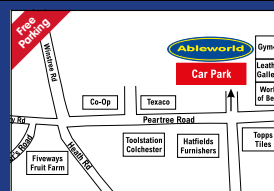
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Stacie Withers

I have been a Utility Warehouse customer for many years. My personal experience is that UW is the most ethical company that I have ever come across.

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When the cost-of-living crisis hit, several friends and I took the UW opportunity to become

independent distributors. You may not have heard of UW before – that is because they don't spend huge amounts of money on expensive advertising. Instead, they can generously pass on such savings to their customers and distributors.

UW operates chiefly through 'word-of-mouth' marketing and we all work entirely at our own pace. People from all walks of life join; my own background is in teaching. I find it very social too, with plenty of support. Honestly, the benefits are too numerous to mention here.

Whether you would like to save as a customer or earn as a distributor, please do contact me. I'll happily make an appointment to tell you more and answer as many questions as you like.



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HOW TO BUILD YOUR *own soup*

Soup is cheap, filling and the perfect antidote to the cold weather. Sadly, supermarket offerings can be both costly and underwhelming. So we thought we'd share with you our foolproof method for prepping the perfect soup every time.



- 1. CHOOSE A FAT:** Butter | Olive oil | Palm oil | Sunflower oil
- 2. SELECT A BASE LIQUID (1 OR 2):** Beef/chicken stock | Vegetable stock | Cream | Tomato purée
- 3. PICK A PROTEIN:** Chicken | Fish | Tofu | Lentils | Beans
- 4. DECIDE ON A GRAIN:** Rice | Noodles | Pasta | Barley
- 5. CHOOSE YOUR VEGGIES (UP TO 3):** Carrots | Onion | Peppers | Sweet potatoes | Parsnips | Spinach | Broccoli | Mushrooms
- 6. ADD SOME FLAVOUR:** Garlic salt | Cayenne pepper | Cumin | Basil | Thyme | Chilli powder

How to make your soup

- STEP 1:** Heat your fat and sauté your aromatic veggies, such as onion and garlic, for 3-5 minutes.
- STEP 2:** Add your chosen protein and cook until browned or softened.
- STEP 3:** Add any other vegetables and allow them to soften for 5-10 minutes.
- STEP 4:** Pour in your base (unless using a cream base; if so save this until step 6), your grain and your selected spices and mix well.
- STEP 5:** Bring to the boil, reduce the heat and allow to simmer for around an hour.
- STEP 6:** Add cream if you are making a cream-based soup.
- STEP 7:** Allow to cool, and blend if you want a fully puréed soup.
- STEP 8:** Garnish with croutons, cheese or a herb-infused oil.

Freezing your soup

You can freeze your soup, ideally on the same day you make it, in an airtight container or freezer bag for 2-3 months. Most soups freeze well, with the exception of cream- or milk-based soups, which tend to separate. Add any fresh herbs or starchy elements such as rice or pasta once thawed and reheated, not before freezing, for optimum results.

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PUZZLES

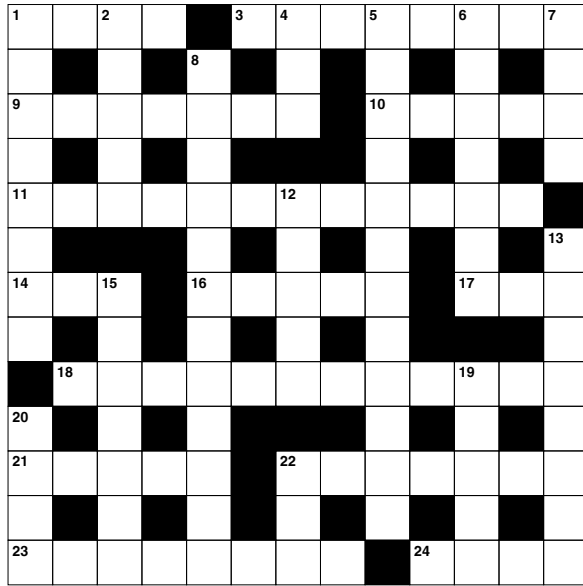
Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

ACROSS

- 1. Light blast of wind (4)
- 3. Fast runner (8)
- 9. Not tense (7)
- 10. Written agreements (5)
- 11. Opposite of amateur (12)
- 14. Decay (3)
- 16. Lacking meaning (5)
- 17. Wonder (3)
- 18. Incessantly (12)
- 21. Concerning (5)
- 22. Mound made by insects (7)
- 23. Shows (8)
- 24. Snake-like fish (pl.) (4)

DOWN

- 1. Sweat (8)
- 2. Leaf of parchment (5)
- 4. Collection of many sheets of paper (3)
- 5. Enhancements (12)
- 6. Musical composition (7)
- 7. Repose (4)
- 8. Based on untested ideas (12)
- 12. Set out (5)



- 13. Uses again (8)
- 15. Slight earthquakes (7)
- 19. Part of a church tower (5)
- 20. Edible fat (4)
- 22. Nay (anag) (3)

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ A hummingbird beats its wings up to 70 times per second.
- ▶ Hummingbirds are the only birds that can fly backwards.
- ▶ There are reportedly more than 350 known species of hummingbird, from the giant hummingbird weighing around 20g, to the bee hummingbird which measures less than three inches.
- ▶ Hummingbirds use their long, thin tongues like straws to drink nectar from flowers.
- ▶ Rufous hummingbirds migrate 4,000 miles from Mexico to Alaska every spring.
- ▶ Female hummingbirds use spider silk to weave together twigs and leaves for their nests.
- ▶ Hummingbirds have no sense of smell.

SUDOKU

2				7				
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			2		7			
		2		5		1		
	9		5			6		3
		8						9
				9				5



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