

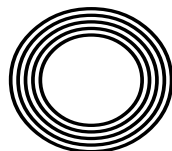
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Remembering a legend
**DAME BARBARA
WINDSOR DBE**

Lewis HAMILTON

Sports Personality of the Year racing into the record books



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Editor's notes...

JANUARY 2021



William Taylor, Editor

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

Whilst we start the year in another lockdown, I cannot help but think the news of three vaccines being rolled out is finally a light at the end of the tunnel. It's strange to think that just one year ago, none of us had ever heard the word "COVID-19". Now it's an everyday part of our vocabulary, and something we'll certainly never forget.

Of course, it's easy to dwell on the horror the virus has brought, but I also think there have been some lessons that we've all learned, and changes we've made to our lives that will be beneficial in the long run.

Hopefully it won't be long now until we start to see some semblance of normality, but in the meantime, I must reiterate the importance of supporting our local businesses as much as we can.

We've got your usual excellent blend of local news and lifestyle content this month. I'd like to give a special mention to Jules Button from Woodbridge Emporium, who has started her new book review column on page 68.

But we start with our fitting double page tribute to the national treasure and TV legend that was Dame Barbara Windsor, who sadly passed away at the end of last year.

Enjoy your latest issue, and stay safe.

William Taylor

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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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The great Dame BARBARA WINDSOR DBE

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND CAREER OF THE QUEEN OF TV

In a troublesome, traumatic year, many saw Dame Barbara Windsor's death in early December 2020 as another profound low.

An only child born in Shoreditch two years before the breakout of World War II, 'Babs' made her West End debut at the age of just 13, in the musical *Love from Judy*.

As the Swinging Sixties swung, so too did Barbara Windsor's buoyant, bubbly, effervescent personality carry forward an industry. From appearances in films *Sparrows Can't Sing* (for which she won a BAFTA), *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and *The Boy Friend*, to sitcom work with *The Rag Trade* and *Wild, Wild Women*, her acting talent was as admired as it was, at times, underplayed.

Indeed, when the slapstick comedy of the *Carry On* movies came around, while decorated in her roles, Babs became somewhat pigeonholed.

Nonetheless, she re-emerged in the 1970s to return to stage work with *Oh! What a Lovely War* and *Twelfth Night*, among others.

From high jinks to heavy drama, Babs was an entertainment icon in her own right. Never clichéd, never disrespected, she came to represent an era of British entertainment in which our output rivalled anyone else the world over.

And in accepting the opportunity to take ownership of the Queen Vic pub in Albert Square in 1994, Babs' career reinvention proved a masterstroke. A boisterous, no-nonsense, independent pub landlady, she kept a lid on Walford's most tempestuous characters, and remains the only person in *EastEnders'* 35-year history to have tempered the problematic Mitchell brothers, Grant and Phil – her sons.

Of course, Windsor's infectious persona,

effortless charm and cheeky sex appeal saw her decorated with no shortage of admirers. From relationships with Ronnie Kray and comedy sidekick Sid James, she enjoyed a lively 21-year marriage with nightclub owner Ronnie Knight. The pair shared a luxury home on Stanmore Hill. She later married chef Stephen Hollings and wed a third time in 2000, to Scott Mitchell, bridging an age gap of 27 years. She didn't have any children.

Following her passing, the tributes came from far and wide for an actress whose time in front of the camera was really only a platform to a breath-taking life in showbusiness.

The sadness of her death was calmed somewhat by the fact Babs had been in unsteady health for a number of years. In 2014 she retired from all acting duties when diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Undeterred by the darker clouds that she sensed were about to gather, and ably assisted by her husband, she leapt into a new role of raising both funds and awareness for the disease, and continued to campaign up until her death.

While still seen out frequently over the past few years, the toils of public engagements eventually proved too much for someone who had previously bathed in the decorative sunlight of press and publicity.

Slipping away quietly, as she did on December 10, was perhaps the most inauspicious of conclusions to a booming, bustling life full of big personality. And yet, while we all take away slightly different memories of Barbara Windsor, our collective recollections will surely always be of an actress who spearheaded a golden era of British entertainment, always accompanied by a warm smile and mischievous laugh.

Photo credit: Shutterstock





THE WORLD AROUND US *Part 3*

In the third part of our environmental series, we look at the key driver in the health and well-being of the planet. In this issue, it's the air above our heads.

In all the trust we place in environmentalists, activists and those passionate about preserving our planet, perhaps when it comes to air we need to invest the greatest level of trust.

On the ground, the world in which we live seems largely pleasant, and as far as air quality goes, our immediate environment is certainly much cleaner today than at any time since the Industrial Revolution, and noticeably so.

Yet in 2020 we are driven by targets – achieving a net zero greenhouse gas equation and an 80 per cent cut in emissions by 2050 being two of the biggest headline grabbers.

The problem for the preservation of air quality is that industry rolls on. We are a long way from the smoggy days of 1950s London, but air pollution still contributes to almost 10 per cent of premature deaths, while costing around £40 billion each year.

Of course, the enforced lockdown in the spring of 2020 was perhaps the greatest exemplar of

how great our footprint is. Within weeks, scientists reported a 40 per cent drop in air pollutants. It showed that protecting our personal health had a hugely beneficial effect on that of the environment.

And yet, when back at full capacity, even the healthcare systems in England will be responsible for an estimated 4 to 5 per cent of our carbon footprint, with 6.7 billion road miles each year coming from patients and their visitors travelling to NHS hospitals and centres.

Never in starker terms was it clear that the play-off between the health of the planet and the health of the people who inhabit it remains a tug of war we will continue to see.

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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood

LOCAL NEWS



Photo credit: Dignity Funerals



Probe underway after death on construction site

An investigation was launched last month after a man died on a building site in Woodbridge.

Emergency services were called to Haughgate Close at 4.30pm on December 15.

The man sustained injuries when part of a building, believed to be a wall, fell on him in the rear garden of a residential address where renovation work was taking place.

He was later formally identified as Dale Baker, aged 30, from Felixstowe, and devastated friends and family paid tribute to him on social media.

One read: "A true friend to me and my family. You done alot for us, such a young age to go. My thoughts and prayers are with ur whole family at this terrible time."

The work was being overseen by building company Hinton Wood Construction East Anglia Ltd, who

released a statement shortly after the tragedy.

A spokesman said: "Our thoughts are with the family of the deceased. We are working with the authorities to establish what happened and why. As an investigation is ongoing we are not able to comment any further."

A joint inquiry between detectives from the Joint Norfolk and Suffolk Police Major Investigation Team and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is now underway.

A HSE spokesperson said: "HSE is aware of the incident and is supporting Suffolk Police in their investigation. We cannot comment further at this time."

Anyone with information about this incident is asked to contact the Joint Norfolk and Suffolk Major Investigation Team on 101, quoting reference: 72620/20.



Sky's the limit for student and aspiring pilot

An aspiring pilot from Woodbridge School has been named runner-up in a prestigious national competition to design a cockpit of the future.

James, a Year 12 student, is a member of the RAF in the school's Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and was the only cadet to make the top five of BAE Systems Future Cockpit Design competition.

His idea was to develop a piece of software that would take Google Maps' satellite data and NASA's height maps' data to allow a pilot to view their surroundings, ground targets and objectives in 3D.

James said he was delighted with the recognition.

He added: "A piece of software such as this one is tapping into the fact that, in the future, almost all of a cockpit will be seen and accessed through the augmented reality of the Striker II helmet – the helmet that BAE Systems is currently designing.

"This will use the 'Plug and Play' approach of not having to change anything physical within the jet itself.

"I was delighted that my idea placed me fifth in BAE's national competition, and I look forward to doing more projects similar to this one in the future."

Sutton Hoo set to star on the small screen

Netflix fans may spot local areas they recognise later this month when *The Dig*, based on the famous discovery of the royal burial ship of an Anglo-Saxon King at Sutton Hoo, is released.

The film, which stars Ralph Fiennes and Carey Mulligan, tells the story of archaeologist Basil Brown who was hired by Edith Pretty to examine strange, grass-covered mounds on her land near the River Deben.

Sutton Hoo near Woodbridge is the site of two early medieval cemeteries that date from the sixth and seventh centuries. One cemetery had an undisturbed ship burial with a wealth of Anglo-Saxon artefacts.

Most iconic among the treasures is the Sutton Hoo helmet. Highly corroded and broken into more than one hundred fragments when the burial chamber collapsed, the helmet took many years' work by the British Museum conservation team to reconstruct.

Today, it is widely considered to be the face of the Anglo-Saxon period.

Most of these objects are now held by the British Museum.

The Dig is due to be released on January 29.



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News from

Councillor Geoff Holdcroft

Town Councillor for Woodbridge Riverside

Happy New Year everyone. I had hoped to be saying those words with some cheer, but with the county back in lockdown they do sound rather hollow. However, we do need to be optimistic for the future, as by the time you read this the COVID-19 vaccination programme should be in full swing, with a centre opened at Woodbridge Community Hall.

As a town councillor I was aware that NHS England had rented the hall for the first three months of 2021 and that there had been a call for people to work on the medical side as well as administrators and marshals. I have personally asked to be a volunteer and await being asked for further details.

Despite the lockdown, the work of the Council goes

on as usual, albeit remotely over Zoom; for some types of meeting, especially planning meetings, this seems to work very well as we can share documents, maps and plans more easily than if we were meeting in the Shire Hall.

One of the initiatives I have been involved with is the formation of a Youth Voice for Woodbridge. It has been great to hear the voices of young people articulating their views on the future direction of the town, and although only a relatively few young people attend our weekly virtual meetings, we are in the process of encouraging more young people to participate and, of course, hope to meet in person as soon as possible.

Photo credit: Ben Ramsey



Woodpeckers fixtures suspended

With Suffolk entering Tier 4 before Christmas, the club took the difficult decision to suspend all training and matches across all club sides and had intended that this would be reviewed again on January 21.

However, just before going to press, the government announced a national lockdown, which realistically will defer any restart further.

As a consequence, we are unsure when fixtures will

recommence, but the first team home schedule is currently as follows:

> February 3 vs Newmarket Town

> February 13 vs Wroxham

> February 20 vs Norwich United

Please keep an eye on the club website and social media pages for fixture changes.

We hope all **VISION**Woodbridge readers stay safe during this difficult time.



LOCAL NEWS


News from

Councillor Caroline Page

The County Councillor for Woodbridge

So it's a new year. Perhaps not yet a particularly happy one. Indeed, a new year that has already tested us and required our courage. Yes, there is hope – in the form of the COVID-19 vaccine – on the horizon, but we are facing yet another lockdown, this time with cold weather and dark days.

People who have not hugged, not seen their loved ones for months, are preparing to hunker down for more weeks where human contact is limited to screens, to waves through the window, to masked interactions with strangers. Others are faced with perhaps too much presence in the home as children cannot even get out to play. It would be a sad outlook if we weren't surrounded by so much courage.

It takes courage and resources to look at a business you have built up and to work out how to keep it ticking over. It takes courage and bravery to kiss your

children, put on a mask and go out to help save the lives of others. It takes courage and fortitude to say to your distant family, "Don't worry about me, I am doing just fine," as you look back to your empty rooms. It also takes courage and self-awareness to admit you are maybe a little bit scared. But, as the Wizard of Oz said, "There is no living thing that is not afraid when it faces danger. The true courage is in facing danger when you are afraid."

When Pandora opened her fateful box she let out all the evils into our world – yet the very last thing that remained behind was hope. It also takes courage, when things are seeming still so dark, to believe that hope is possible – and that after every winter will come another spring.

Remembering that courage, remembering that hope, will be something we will one day look back on and be proud of.

Sharon delighted at recognition

The co-founder of a cyber safety company that keeps children safe online said she was delighted to be awarded an OBE in the New Year Honours list.

Sharon Pursey set up SafeToNet to guide children away from risks including cyberbullying, sexting, abuse and aggression using an app that parents install on their children's mobile devices. It gives parents insights around their children's online risks without compromising their privacy.

Sharon is also CEO of the SafeToNet Foundation which exists to ensure the technology is available to those who cannot afford it.

Sharon said she was humbled, proud and delighted with the award.

She said: "The work that I do has a truly social mission. For me getting an OBE is public recognition for the work that my team and I do, and I am proud to receive it on their behalf too."

"We are driven by the belief that children have a fundamental right to safety online and our aim is to ensure that safety becomes an integral part of hardware, telephone companies, educational technology, conferencing, gaming, social media and streaming content platforms as a default."



Sharon is now focusing on the future.

She revealed: "This year I want to see big companies that allow children to access their products and services put online child safety at the top of their agendas. I also want to work to raise awareness with parents and schools so that they increase demand for safety by design products."



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Become a vaccination volunteer in the battle against COVID-19

Volunteers are needed to help with Suffolk's fight against the coronavirus.

Earlier this month, local GP practices and the Suffolk GP Federation began delivering more than 200,000 COVID-19 vaccinations at centres across Suffolk, including the Woodbridge Community Hall.

The Federation needs help to deliver the programme, including volunteers to run the vaccination centres and clinicians to vaccinate.

Induction and training for the role will be given, while all volunteers will be insured and supported by the Federation.

There are a number of volunteer roles that need to be filled, including stewards, administrators, senior stewards, immunisers, nurses, nurse supervisors and paramedics, floor managers and GPs.

To find out more information or to sign up, email vaccines@suffolkfed.org.uk

Over Christmas, COVID-19 cases in Suffolk doubled in a week, with more than 3,400 people testing positive for the virus in the seven days up to January 1.

East Suffolk, which includes Woodbridge, saw the biggest increase, with cases jumping by 130 per cent over the seven days.

Town cruising club reunited for winter walks

Members of Woodbridge Cruising Club (WCC) briefly reunited last month before the country entered a third national lockdown.

The December walks were enjoyed by members and dogs, with a stroll around Sutton, led by Neil and another walk in Great Glemham led by William.

The enjoyable ramble around Sutton Heath had great tracks over heathland and through trees and, as it was the first walk since October, there was considerable interest and enthusiasm from members and dogs. The weather was dry and members enjoyed the two-hour stroll in the fresh air.

The Glemham walk saw brilliant sunshine and blue skies and started from the village church. The walk progressed along rural footpaths, past the defunct classic Red BT telephone box, through a short wooded section, past White House Farm and the Sweffling Road.

All WCC activities are currently cancelled due to the national lockdown.

For more details, go to woodbridgecruisingclub.org



LOCAL NEWS



Glowing report for secondary school



The fastest-growing school in the local area has made a commitment to offer a place to any parent who selects it as their first choice.

Year 7 at Alde Valley Academy was oversubscribed by 16 per cent in September 2020 and is predicted to be oversubscribed by 25 per cent in September 2021 through first choice applications alone.

Headteacher Dan Mayhew said he is delighted with the school's success.

He added: "This success is built upon a culture of mutual respect and 'outstanding' student behaviour. Exam results are excellent with sustained levels of high achievement in all ability ranges.

"The Progress 8 measure is consistently positive, with both GCSE English and Maths outcomes being above national average at both grade 9-4 and 9-5. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently high across the school."

If you would like more information call 01728 830570 or book an appointment for a tour.

Support available for cancer patients with new service

People in Woodbridge who are living with cancer in their day-to-day lives are being reminded that support is available in these extraordinary times.

The message comes from the new cancer care navigator service which has been launched at Ipswich Hospital. Three cancer care navigators work in partnership with local GP surgeries to support cancer patients and their friends and family, whatever stage their diagnosis may be at.

Sarah Lawrence, one of the cancer care navigators, explained more.

She said: "Navigators can come in to help with a range of needs, including but not limited to:

finances, employment, talking to friends and family about cancer, physical activity, emotional support, befriending, support groups, spiritual support, travelling to appointments, support with practical tasks, carer support and complementary therapy.

"The team of navigators have great knowledge of services available within the hospital and extensive knowledge of services in your local area, so you can feel confident that they are aware of any relevant services that may be able to support you."

You can get in touch with the team Monday to Friday from 9am and 5pm by calling 01473 702125 or emailing cancercarenavigators@esneft.nhs.uk

Police warning after distraction theft

People are being warned to be vigilant after a distraction theft in Woodbridge town centre last month.

The incident took place on December 16 at around 4pm at a business premises on Market Hill.

A woman entered the office and distracted staff by dropping her handbag on the desk before retrieving it and in the process scooping up a mobile phone which she took with her when she left the office.

Anyone who thinks they have experienced a similar distraction theft should contact Suffolk police, quoting crime reference 37/73124/20.

You can contact police by going to suffolk.police.uk/contact-us/existing-report-update or calling the non-emergency number 101.

Alternatively, you can contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111, or via its online form at crimestoppers-uk.org/



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JANUARY 18 - 24

What better time to try to reduce your energy bills than in the week before payday when you are undoubtedly feeling the pinch after Christmas?

Plus, you don't even have to make massive changes to your lifestyle to enjoy significant savings.

Remember, all the little things really do add up.

1. Use your microwave more: Using your microwave is one of the most efficient ways to both heat up and cook food.

2. Be water-conscious: Whether you are making a cup of tea or boiling food in a pan, only use the amount of water that you need.

3. Slow cook your family meals: Cooking in a slow

cooker over a whole day only uses the same amount of energy as a lightbulb.

4. Don't use metal trays in the oven: Glass and ceramic dishes retain heat better than metal ones, making them more energy efficient.

5. Keep heating rings clean: Any food that has become stuck to your heating rings will absorb heat, making them less efficient.

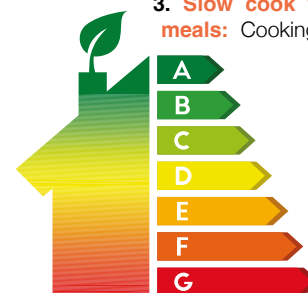
6. Wash your clothes at 30°C: 90 per cent of your washing expenditure is spent on heating the water, so by reducing the heat to 30°C when possible, you can save one-third on your washing costs.

7. Unplug any unused appliances: Unplug or switch the power off on any appliances that you aren't using. This includes charger cables.

8. Turn down your thermostat: By turning down your thermostat by just 1°C, you can save up to £80 per year.

9. Use halogen lightbulbs outside: Halogen bulbs use a quarter less electricity than incandescent bulbs without affecting their brightness, so are ideal for exterior lighting.

10. Defrost food overnight: Defrosting food typically halves the cooking time, meaning less energy used per meal.



HOME & DIY



Viva

DRIED FLOWERS

If there is only one interior design trend that you embrace this year, make it the revival of dried flowers. Cost effective, eco-friendly and, most importantly, Pinterest-approved, anyone can dry flowers and arrange a beautiful bouquet to be proudly displayed in their home.

HOW TO DRY FLOWERS

If you want to prolong the life of a bouquet of flowers that has been gifted to you, then drying it out is the perfect solution.

1. Strip off any excess foliage and cut stems to desired length
2. Find a dark and dry area, such as an unused cupboard, and hang your flowers upside down using unflavoured dental floss or string
3. Leave for 2-3 weeks until completely dry
4. Take down and spray with unscented hairspray

WHAT ARE THE BEST FLOWERS FOR DRYING?

If you are new to the flower-drying business, you may want a few ideas to get you started. The below flowers are ideal for drying, although you can dry any varieties: Pansies • Amaranthus • Artemisia • Lavender • Hydrangea • Yarrow • Eucalyptus (although not strictly a flower, this will add lovely greenery to your bouquet)

HOW TO DISPLAY DRIED FLOWERS

Once you have dried your flowers, it is time to carefully arrange them into a delightful display. Below are four different arrangements for you to try out:

- Hanging bunches – tie a few bunches together using twine and hang upside down from a branch or an interior wall
- Wreaths – create a dried flower wreath to hang on your front door
- Mini bouquets – dried posy bouquets look lovely placed in a small vase or as a gift
- Statement displays – if you are looking to create a big and bold display, tie together dried flowers, herbs, leaves and grass. Hang over your dining table for maximum effect.



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HOME & DIY

Grey DAY?

Revealing Pantone's Colours of the Year, Ultimate Gray and Illuminating

Across a year that offered so much but delivered so little, it's perhaps apt that Pantone has selected not one, but two Colours of the Year. Combined, they reflect the trials and tribulations of 12 months that have seen the very fabric of our lives ripped from under us; and yet we emerge energised, enthused and even perhaps enriched.

Pantone has chosen a combination of shades to represent these feelings. Yes, Ultimate Gray (17-5104), at first glance, appears stern, solemn and even echoes back to the styles and sensibilities of the 1980s. And yet, look closer, and it provides solidity and fortitude.

Now combine those emotions with Pantone's second Colour of the Year for 2021 – Illuminating (13-0647). At first a yellow that resonates with cheerful, sparky, spring-like abandon, it offers light, vivacity and thoughts of energy.

As a single shade, Illuminating works, but combined with Ultimate Gray the end effect is, in Pantone's own words, "A story of colour that encapsulates deeper feelings of thoughtfulness with the promise of something sunny and friendly."

It is indeed a combination that can reignite your interiors – consider a statement piece such as a grey sofa, with yellow scattered cushions. Or what about an existing white or wooden room patterned with a grey rug and yellow feature wall?

Grey and yellow, together or alone, will combine with almost any colours. There is a chic harmony that blends as much as it stands out – even in the bedroom, yellow curtains can offer a feeling of light on the drabest of days; while grey walls, white skirting boards and yellow pictures present a classy combination.

In summing up, expect the Pantone Colour(s) of the Year, Ultimate Gray and Illuminating, to drop into your consciousness, guiding you to happier and more optimistic times in the weeks and months ahead.





TOTALLY PLASTERED

get the look

HOW YOU CAN JOIN THE PLASTER EFFECT INTERIOR TREND

Lockdown saw a lot of us going back to basics, rediscovering at the same time simpler, less-complicated ways of life.

It seems that in the throes of one of the biggest cultural resets we've ever known, the lure of stripping back has extended right the way through to our interiors, with plaster effect a new design trend that relies very much on the simplicity of old.

The concept is clear – a modern, mottled, moulded, matt-effect plaster wall that looks like, feels like and responds to a stripped-back feeling of style and detail.

It uses, first and foremost, a base of plaster. For the fully organic effect, you can leave it as is, but many are embracing the idea of using chalk paint, old rags and a natural sponge to

treat, detail and add depth-driven colour to the walls.

The intention is to go rustic and to promote that unfinished look, and less is most definitely more where this is concerned, with over-decoration making the look too perfect and too polished.

A certain generation will shudder as they make comparisons to Artex, but this is a whole world away, and treated properly, even the very rawest exposed plaster can thrive as a brilliant feature.

And if paint and sponges aren't your thing, you can purchase plaster-effect wallpaper, to deliver devastating design dynamism to your walls with a simple splosh of a bit of paste.

Whichever way you go about it, the end effect is something that's detailed, bright, totally unique and great for promoting space and feelings of clarity. You'll also find your walls are incredible durable, as the look can be maintained simply with the use of warm, soapy water.

Photo credit: Annie Sloan via homesandgardens.com, George Home via goodhomesmagazine.com, Matalan via goodhomesmagazine.com



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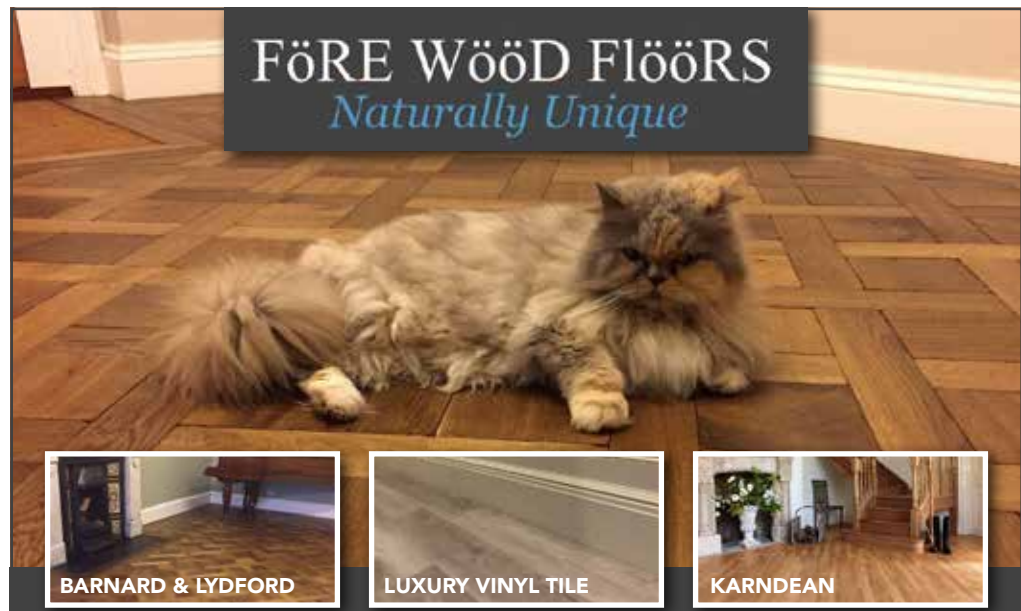
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SPICY STORAGE SOLUTIONS



HOME & DIY

Who says that kitchen storage has to be boring? Check out these super stylish and space-saving storage solutions for your spices that will guarantee you reach for some added flavour every time you cook.

TEST IT OUT

If you have a handful of trusty spices that you use regularly, then this is the spice storage solution for you. Simply purchase a set of test tubes, fill with your preferred seasonings and place in a wooden box that you could make yourself or pick up from your nearest craft shop.

STACK IT, STACK IT

For those who want a practical and attractive option, why not store your spices in mini mason jars or tins that have been labelled using chalk paint? Perfect if you love the shabby chic look. These can be stacked on your worktop or stored in a drawer.

MAGNET MAYHEM

If you want your spices within grabbing distance but you don't want them taking up valuable space on your kitchen worktop, try using magnets. You could attach metal spice pots to the inside of your cabinet doors, under your cabinets or in any other convenient location in your kitchen.

TIC TAC ON-THE-GO

Ideal for taking spices outside your home, whether on holiday or into work. Simply pour your favourite spices into old Tic Tac containers, label and you are good to go. Make sure you thoroughly clean the containers first to avoid a minty taste on all your spices.

HANG IN THERE

For another great way to utilise space underneath your kitchen cabinets, simply hang your spice jars directly on the wall using some small hooks and string. Glass storage jars work best for this so that you can easily see what spices are in each container.

Photo credit: littelbelco.com, seattlesundries.com, experthomehijps.com

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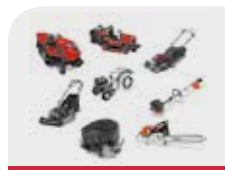
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JANUARY BIRTH FLOWER
OF THE MONTH:

Carnation

If you were born in January, then your birth flower is the delicately scented and long-lasting carnation. Commonly gifted on Mother's Day, carnations are one of the easiest flower varieties to care for.

WHAT DOES A CARNATION SYMBOLISE?

Carnations come in many shades, and each colour has a different meaning:

- > **LIGHT RED** carnations symbolise admiration
- > **DARK RED** carnations represent deep love and affection
- > **WHITE** carnations are used to convey purity and luck
- > **PINK** carnations are used to show gratitude as well as to remember the deceased
- > **YELLOW** carnations convey disappointment and rejection
- > **PURPLE** carnations stand for unpredictability

WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOUR PERSONALITY?

If your birth flower is the carnation, you are said to be fiercely loyal and have unrivalled love for your family and friends. You are also strongly motivated and will work hard to gain a position of power in your career.

HOW CAN I GROW CARNATIONS?

Carnations are relatively easy to grow, although they do need between four and six hours of direct sunlight a day. For best results, plant in drained soil that is slightly alkaline and fertilise regularly. Tall varieties may need support to hold up their stems as they grow. You can grow carnations in flower beds or in containers such as pots.

DO CARNATIONS COME BACK YEAR AFTER YEAR?

Carnations come in annual, biennial and perennial types, so depending on the amount of space you have, you are guaranteed to be able to find a variety to fit your garden.

Perennial carnation seeds should be planted in late autumn to early spring and annual carnation seeds can be sown directly in the ground from April to May or in shelter from as early as March.



GUARD YOUR *garden*

Just as people need a helping hand to combat the seasonal selections of health afflictions, so too should we be aware of the pests and disease that threaten the green goodies in our gardens.

CABBAGE KILLERS

You wouldn't think the humble caterpillar would rate high in the list of garden gremlins, but the larvae of cabbage moth caterpillars can reap havoc in a bed of well-tended crops. A simple insect-proof mesh covering should keep most of them away.

THE SLUG BUG

Your average garden slug will happily eat away at any type of vegetable it finds, and whether leaves, shoots, fruits or stems, he's happy as long as he's feeding. Encouraging hedgehogs into your garden is a great way to get a classic slug predator to help you out.

THE CUCUMBER SLUMBER

Blossom end rot sounds a lot worse than it is... in fact, it's not even rot. More precisely, the blossom end of anything from aubergines to chillis, cucumbers to squash and melons, develops into a sunken rotten area. It comes as a result of irregular water supply, so is easily fixed.

FEAR THE APHID

A sticky residue that gradually turns into a sooty mould is a sure-fire sign that your plant has an aphid problem. Sometimes barely visible to the naked eye, aphids can cause stunted plant growth and curled-up leaves, but can be warded off by good garden hygiene and natural predators, such as ladybirds.

BLIGHT

A fungus that causes leaves to shrivel and brown patches to appear on fruits, this fungus-like organism loves damp environments, and there's little you can do to halt its rapid spread, other than remove affected plants and start again. Once more, maintaining good hygiene in your plot is the best way to ensure you don't have to deal with the problem in the first place.



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Student intake for Year 7 for September 2021 has increased yet again, being oversubscribed for the second consecutive year from parents' first choices alone, despite Alde Valley Academy not being the closest school for over 40% of those students. We will expand our ever-increasing transport plan to deliver on the promise to provide cost-effective transport for all of our families.

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Isn't it funny, how a bear likes honey?



On January 18, 1882, A. A. Milne, the creator of Winnie the Pooh, a character cherished by children and adults alike, was born. To celebrate this skilled storyteller, January 18 has become known as National Winnie the Pooh Day.

As well as being fun to read, these iconic stories offer some important life lessons that resonate just as well today as they did back then.

"What day is it?" said Pooh. "It's today," said Piglet. "My favourite day," responded Pooh.

As well as teaching the importance of seizing the day, this sweet correspondence between Pooh and Piglet helps to promote resilience and encourages children to put aside their fears and do things anyway.



"Hallo!" said Tigger. "I've found somebody just like me. I thought I was the only one of them."

When children are as young as two, they start to notice that people are different, so it is important that they learn to recognise and celebrate these differences, both in themselves and in others.

"A little consideration, a little thought for others, makes all the difference." (Eeyore)

Although known for being gloomy and depressed, Eeyore does sometimes give out little nuggets of wisdom, such as the advice above. Emotional literacy is crucial in your child's development and this life lesson teaches them the importance of being kind to others.



"Pooh!" whispered Piglet. "Yes, Piglet?" "Nothing," said Piglet. "I just wanted to be sure of you."

A life lesson that most adults today could benefit from, the act of being present in your children's lives, away from the distraction of work and technology, is sometimes all they need to feel loved and connected to you.



KIDS



The ULTIMATE formula

Sir Lewis Hamilton's ascent to being the greatest F1 driver of all time

It's fair to speculate that Sir Lewis Hamilton polarises opinion, even in the midst of being unveiled as the greatest ever Formula One racer.

His victory at the Turkish Grand Prix in the middle of November ensured the Stevenage-born speedster equalled Michael Schumacher's record of seven Drivers' Championships, having already surpassed the German's race victory total in October, in another season of unparalleled dominance. By the close of the campaign in Abu Dhabi on December 13, 2020, Hamilton's points tally was 347, a colossal 123 ahead of closest rival Valtteri Bottas.

The champ said: "To all the kids out there, dream the impossible. Seven is just unimaginable, but when you work with such a great group of people and you really trust each other, there is just no end to what you can do together. I feel like I'm only just getting started; it's really weird."

He may just be correct in that statement. At 35, the Mercedes driver has time on his side – the great Luigi Fagioli was 53 when he scored his final race win at the 1951 French Grand Prix.

Certainly, it's becoming difficult to remember a time when Hamilton's grit, speed and desire wasn't present in the sport. Many believe he truly announced himself at the British Grand Prix in 2008, driving for McLaren. Although he'd already clocked up six victories, dating back to Canada a year previously, his mastery of brutally wet driving conditions to win by more than a minute after starting fourth on the grid set a precedent where he was regarded as the driver to beat.

The world title duly arrived later that year in spectacular fashion, as on the final corner of the final lap in the final race, in Brazil, he overtook Timo Glock to snatch victory from the gearbox of defeat.

After switching to Mercedes in 2014, following a fallow period, Hamilton's synchronicity with the technicians and mechanics accelerated success beyond all expectations, failing just once, in 2016, as Nico Rosberg pipped him to title glory by just five points. The German realised he would most likely never repeat that feat, and promptly retired from the sport, never to be seen again.

Wind forward, and even finding himself struck down with COVID-19 at the start of December was not to dampen the determination and drive of Hamilton, a man who now looks towards new heights, the first of which will be making up the handful of race wins required to get to that magic total of 100.

As far as being the sport's 'Marmite man', his award of the 2020 BBC Sports Personality of the Year Award on December 20, 2020, proves that public swell remains with him.

And anyway, Hamilton gives short shrift to the detractors. He will discuss his knighthood, announced as part of the New Year Honours; he'll reference all those times he's arrowed across the finish line in first position; he'll note the 84 occasions he's started on the front of the grid; and, of course those seven titles. And he'll point to the fact that he is, truly, the greatest ever.

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SPORT



Remembering DIEGO

A hero of the game, a villain to himself

The gap between hero and villain has perhaps never been better exemplified – in sporting terms, at least – than through the life of Diego Maradona.

When the Argentine departed us on November 25, football, sport and the world as a cultural sponge lost someone whose notoriety was as decorated as his talent.

In the space of four short minutes in the Estadio Azteca, in Mexico City, on June 22, 1986, Maradona showed the two sides of his character in the sort of perfect juxtaposition usually reserved for a Shakespeare play. The tragedy came first – that 'hand of God' moment that we all know, even if few of us, now, here in 2021, actually saw it happen live.

And then, the comedy, even if it was again England's footballers being derided, as a dancing, pirouetting, sauntering, bulldozing run through the Three Lions' defence rubbed salt in our wounds,

while offering up a perfect apology to that same deity for the forward's earlier misdemeanour.

When that higher force claimed the 60-year-old in November, football fans the world over began to ponder again the best ever – Puskás, Pelé, Ronaldo, Messi. Of course, Maradona would never enter into such debate.

He may have led an average Argentina side to World Cup glory in 1986, and an even flatter version of themselves to the final four years later. He may have performed miracles in guiding unfancied, unfashionable Napoli to Serie A success in Italy. And in later life as drugs, gangs, sex workers and other lurid temptations possessed a man whose only passion, really and truly, was to kick a ball, he may have lost sight entirely of those dusty, poverty-stricken streets in Buenos Aires where he grew up.

And yet, through it all he stayed true to himself: "I am black and white... I'll never be grey."

Photo credit: Carlo Fumagalli/AP/Shutterstock

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GERBILS on film



PETS

THE MOST POPULAR PETS IN MOVIE HISTORY

TURNER AND HOOC

Clumsy, slobbering and probably quite smelly too, it's no wonder that Tom Hanks' detective character, Scott Turner, is reluctant to take on a canine as a companion. Played by Beasley the French Mastiff, Hooch becomes an integral part of Turner's criminal-catching team, winning over the cynical cop's heart in the process.

BABE

The eponymous piglet in one of the most beloved children's tales, Babe single-trotteredly transformed our perception of the humble hog. Proving to be as useful as his best friend Fly, the sheepherding collie, the sweet little piglet proves to have more heart, courage and kindness than any of his human counterparts. Oink oink.

SHADOWFAX

Though there were many weird and wondrous creatures in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, it is surely Shadowfax, Gandalf's trusty steed, who is the most desirable. A majestic and wild white beauty, Tolkien's creation refuses to be bridled, carrying only the wise old wizard on his back. He is surely the bravest bronco we would all love to have in our lives.

UGGIE

If silent French comedy *The Artist* was the unexpected hit of the 2011 film season, then surely Uggie, the flick's beloved Jack Russell, was its star. Rescued from a dog pound by animal trainer Omar Von Muller, the adorable and highly intelligent Uggie became an overnight sensation, winning the Palm Dog Award at the Cannes Film Festival. Though Uggie retired the following year and sadly passed away in 2015, his legacy will forever live on in this Oscar-winning masterpiece.

Photo credit: nergisandeyond.com, imdb.com, youtube.com, canyon-news.com

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Are you addicted to

SUGAR?

Did you know that adults are advised to have no more than 30g of free sugars per day (the equivalent of seven cubes)? To put that into perspective, a single can of Coca-Cola has 35g of sugar, 5g more than your total allowance for the day. So, are you addicted to sugar? Let's find out.

AM I ADDICTED TO SUGAR?

If you are worried about your sugar consumption or you think you may be addicted to the white stuff, then you should look out for the following most common sugar addiction symptoms:

- Headaches
- Feeling tired or lethargic
- Intense sugar cravings
- Muscle pain
- Nausea
- Bloating

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO BREAK A SUGAR ADDICTION?

You will be pleased to hear that you can break a sugar addiction in as little as 10 days. This is because the more sugar you eat, the more you crave it. However, once you stop, or cut back, you will find you want it less and less each day.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF GIVING UP SUGAR?

There are many health benefits to giving up sugar, including:

- Increased energy levels
- Better ability to focus
- Enhanced mood
- Decreased inflammation
- Less stomach fat
- Better-looking skin
- Less risk of tooth decay
- Weight loss

TOP TIPS TO HELP STOP CRAVINGS AND SATISFY YOUR SWEET TOOTH...

Going cold turkey when trying to give up free sugars (sugars that are added to food, rather than naturally occurring) can be a challenge.

Fortunately, there are ways to make the process easier:

- Eat three meals and two healthy snacks a day
- Go for a run or a brisk walk
- Eat fruit in the morning on an empty stomach
- Focus on protein at every meal
- Try a fibre- and protein-rich chia seed pudding
- Chew sugar-free gum



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Eat Like An Athlete

The new healthy meal prep service that is loved by footballers, athletes and health minded locals alike.

Meal preparation services – or 'preps', as they're increasingly becoming known – are one of the fastest growing branches of the catering industry. Partly-pandemic driven, a more health-conscious nation; there's no doubt that the demand for freshly prepared and delivered meals is becoming more and more popular.

Those that cater more heavily to the fitness-minded market vary in quality and taste, but one catering company that has really started to make waves is Suffolk-based, *AMG Prep*.

The creation of Adam Gooderham – former chef at Ipswich Town FC – the business is focussed towards substantial, healthy meals. But don't expect the proverbial dry chicken, stodgy rice and limp broccoli.

No – the food at AMG Prep is fresh, delicious and exciting. Dishes such as the *Mongolian Beef Udon*, *Red Lentil Curry* and *Turkey Koftas* are more befitting of a posh modern restaurant, so it comes as a great surprise that they all come in well under 700 calories per serving.

They don't skimp on size either. Finally, there appears to be a practical solution to dieting that doesn't involve the tummy rumbling.

Preparing healthy, transportable meals has been part of Adam's life for a number of years now, catering to the strict demands of past and present footballers at Ipswich Town. As well as the current squad, he still counts Premier League stars such as Tyrone Mings and Adam Webster amongst his clientele.

Yet, it was a global pandemic that inspired him to role this exquisite food out to the public, as bookings for his bespoke catering service had to be put on hold.

The business has gone from strength-to-strength, with exciting weekly menus uploaded to his *Instagram* and *Facebook* pages. You can order 10 meals for £70 or 5 for £40 – a bargain for restaurant quality food.

At the last check, Adam was rolling out close to 500 meals-per-week. All the food is calorie and macro calculated, meaning it is ideal for all audiences.

So whether you're a fitness fanatic, or simply want delicious, healthy meals without the fuss, contact AMG Prep and place your first order.



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Are you READY TO GO SOBER?

Although January may feel like the worst possible time to try to give up your favourite tippie (isn't this month depressing enough?), you may be surprised at how great you feel after cutting out alcohol for just one month.
What to expect when you give up alcohol...

WEEK ONE

Undeniably the most challenging week in your booze-free month, you may experience some unwanted side effects in the first seven days, such as headaches and intense sugar cravings, especially if you are a heavy drinker. That being said, you will also start to see the positive effects of giving up alcohol, including: Better decision-making | More energy | An improved sleeping pattern

WEEK TWO

After two weeks without alcohol, you will continue to enjoy the health benefits listed above, as well as a few new ones, such as: Reduction in acid reflux as your stomach lining becomes normalised | Weight loss | Better mental health

WEEK THREE

As you are now past the halfway mark, the effects of not drinking will start to contribute to your long-term health, with benefits including: Improved vision | Better kidney health | A reduction in blood pressure, which can lessen your risk of future health problems, such as heart disease

WEEK FOUR

The final week of your no-booze challenge and the effects on your health will be apparent for everyone to see and will include: Better-looking skin | Reduced dandruff and eczema | Up to 15 per cent less fat in your liver

IS DRY JANUARY WORTH IT?

Although Dry January has become increasingly popular in recent years, is it really worth it in terms of your long-term health if you continue to drink for the other 11 months of the year?

According to Alcohol Change UK, yes it is, with this challenge forcing you to confront how much you drink and to take notice of the harm it can cause.



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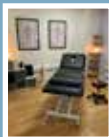
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HEALTH & FITNESS

MIDDLE OF THE LOAD

Fight the flab after 40 with these steps to prevent midlife weight gain

Cut the calories: Though you may feel as active as ever, your metabolism unfortunately is not as efficient as it once was. However, cutting between 250 and 300 calories per day is enough to keep your weight where you want it to be.

Walk it off: Burning fat only requires a slightly elevated heart rate, which means exercising for a longish period while being slightly out of breath is what you need to aim for. So ditch the gruelling runs and aim instead for a brisk walk or swim.

Use your gut instinct: Beat the bloat with healthy bacteria, best found in natural yogurts and fermented foods such as sauerkraut, kimchi and kefir.

Exercise before your eggs: Studies have shown that working out before breakfast can burn up to double the calories – ideal for those who prefer to do their sun salutations as it rises at dawn.

Go nuts: We all know that fruit and vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet, but to maintain blood sugar and control weight you need to be getting plenty of protein too. From a handful of almonds to a bowlful of lentils, or even just a glass of milk, this is one healthy habit you'd be nuts not to try.

Consider HRT: In addition to easing the side effects of the menopause, there is evidence to suggest that hormone replacement therapy can help with weight distribution, which means less fat around the dreaded middle.

Join the resistance: You might balk at the suggestion of using weights in your workouts, yet resistance training is the best way to replace muscle lost through ageing. Pilates, yoga, squats and exercises using small dumbbells are all excellent and enjoyable ways to achieve that toned look.



'90s HAIR revival

From Jennifer Aniston's boho beach waves to Victoria Beckham's bob to Winona Ryder's pixie cut, one of the biggest hair trends of 2021 will be the return of hairstyles from the '90s. Think new year, new do.

THE LIVED-IN LOOK

One of the greatest things about the '90s was the effortlessly cool and laid-back style that spread across the nation, in terms of both fashion and haircuts. Spring 2021 will see hairstyles that feel less structured and more lived-in. Whether you go short or long, ask your hairdresser for a natural-looking, low-maintenance cut.

THE BOB

Although the bob has been a strong and unwavering hair trend throughout 2020, next year will see the return of the classic '90s bob. For those with straight hair, opt for a blunt and unstructured bob that is cut to chin level and tucked behind the ear.

THE BOXY CURL

If your hair is naturally curly, then 2021 is all about short and boxy shapes for added bounce. Avoid a straight cut and instead ask for layers and a light fringe. This look is all about texture and volume so you may want to invest in a good-quality volumising spray for added oomph.

THE SUPER-SHORT PIXIE

If you are feeling particularly bold and daring in 2021, you may want to try the super-short pixie cut. Or, if you are ready to take the ultimate plunge, you could even choose a buzz-cut pixie loved by the likes of Kate Hudson and Cara Delevingne.

THE FACE-FRAMING LAYERED LOOK

This look was fairly popular this year but is only set to get stronger in 2021 and beyond. In fact, you won't be able to go five minutes on Instagram without some face-framing plaits popping up on your feed.



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BEAUTY

The best skincare ingredients for your skin

With so many lotions, potions, serums and supposed skin saviours, it can be a nightmare trying to decide what ingredients you should be looking for in your skincare products. Luckily for you, we have rounded up the best skincare ingredients for 2021 based on the most common skincare problems.

1. Cica Cream – Best for sensitive skin

Cica cream, also known as centella asiatica, was traditionally used to heal wounds, but can now be found in moisturisers and serums owing to its ability to restore skin that is affected by redness and sensitivity. Rich in anti-inflammatories, antioxidants and antibacterial properties, this cream can also help prevent future damage from external environmental stressors.



2. Salicylic Acid – Best for acne sufferers

Salicylic acid is known for its ability to deeply exfoliate the skin and keep your pores clear, so using skincare products that contain salicylic acid can dramatically help reduce breakouts. This acid is also used in higher concentrations to treat acne scars, sun damage and age spots.

3. Retinol – Best for ageing skin

Who doesn't want to wake up with younger-looking skin? Hailed by skin experts as the anti-ageing miracle worker, retinol works by increasing collagen production, as well as increasing the rate of skin cell turnover. Added to face creams, eye creams and serums, retinol can improve your skin's texture, minimise fine lines and even out skin tone.



4. Glycerine – Best for dry skin

Glycerine, sometimes referred to as glycerin or glycerol, is a naturally occurring substance that acts as a humectant to draw moisture to the skin. This skin-saving ingredient is also a great cleanser, helping to remove dirt and oil without stripping your skin.

5. Hyaluronic Acid – Best for dull or damaged skin

Becoming increasingly popular as an ingredient in face-care products, hyaluronic acid is a gel-like substance that has the unique ability to retain moisture. Skin benefits include enhanced hydration, the prevention of wrinkles and healing properties that can reduce the appearance of scars.

NB: Most active ingredients take at least two months to show results, so be patient.





CARING FOR Cashmere

Cashmere is a winter wardrobe staple for many, providing warmth without weight. That being said, it is not a cheap clothing option, so you need to make sure you show your cashmere a little TLC to prolong its life.

Shave regularly: You may have noticed that your cashmere items are prone to fuzz balls, especially under the arms or where you carry your bag. Known as piling, you can remove these using a razor blade or lint tape.

Don't over wash: Cashmere does not need to be washed every time you wear it. In fact, you should only wash your cashmere clothing a handful of times over the whole winter season. Always wash in cold water – handwashing is best – and use a mild detergent. Softener is not needed as cashmere naturally gets softer over time.

Ignore dry clean only labels: Unless your cashmere item has embellishments such as beading or metals that mean it needs to be dry cleaned, cashmere should not undergo this process as it can damage its fibres.

Lay flat to dry: Cashmere is at its most delicate when wet, so this is the cleaning stage that requires the most amount of care. Simply lay your cashmere item down on a dry towel and carefully roll it up to absorb as much moisture as possible. Never wring it. Then lay it in a shady spot to air dry.

Store away from sunlight: You should store your cashmere items inside out in a dust-free and well-aired area that is away from direct sunlight. Before storing, always ensure that your cashmere is clean and free from dust and dead skin, as these can attract moths. If you are storing your cashmere for the summer, make sure you clean, de-crease and remove any fuzz before putting it away.

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The PROPERTY Bug?

HOW COVID-19 HAS TRANSFORMED NOT JUST OUR LIVES, BUT THE PROPERTY MARKET TOO

While so much of our COVID-19 focus in 2020 was on health, employment and income, the pandemic's impact on the property market has been extreme, with further fluctuations due over the next few months as the industry reflects the variable conditions we find ourselves living under.

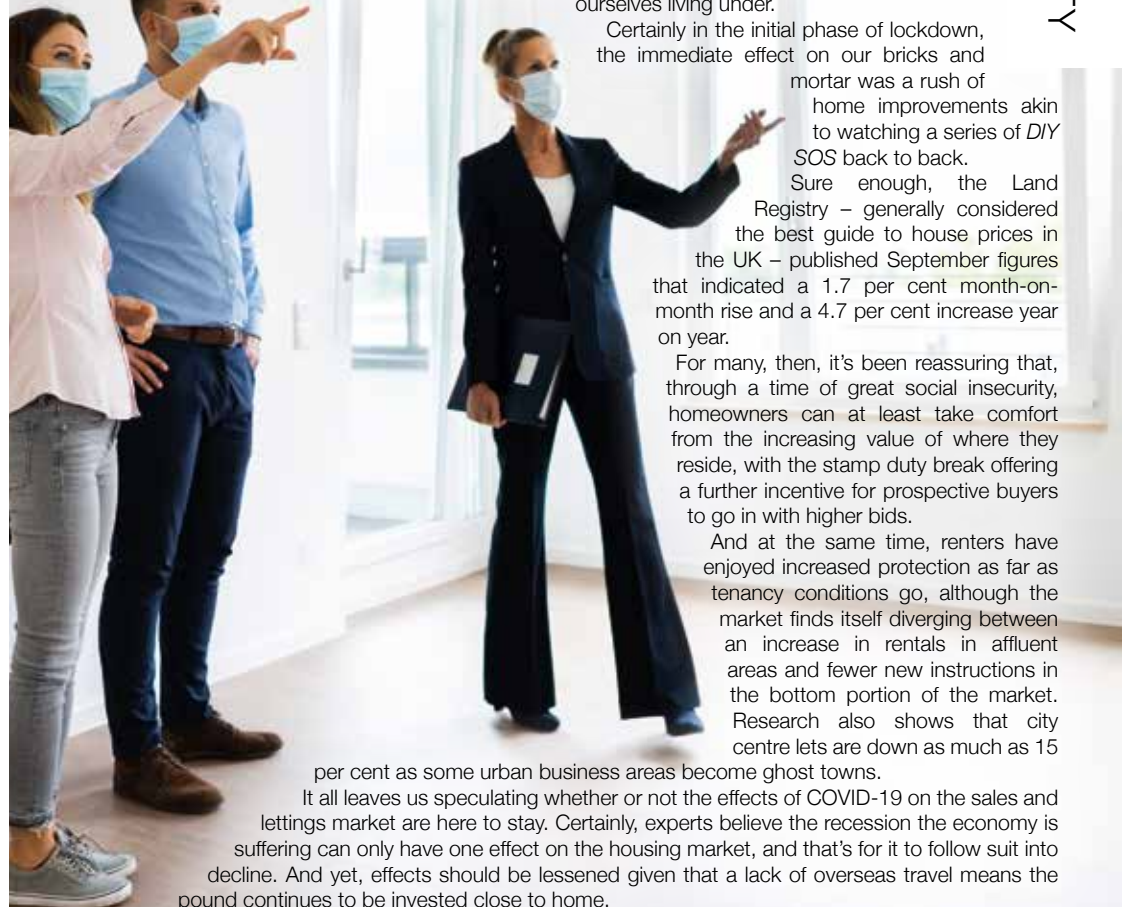
Certainly in the initial phase of lockdown, the immediate effect on our bricks and mortar was a rush of home improvements akin to watching a series of *DIY SOS* back to back. Sure enough, the Land Registry – generally considered the best guide to house prices in the UK – published September figures that indicated a 1.7 per cent month-on-month rise and a 4.7 per cent increase year on year.

For many, then, it's been reassuring that, through a time of great social insecurity, homeowners can at least take comfort from the increasing value of where they reside, with the stamp duty break offering a further incentive for prospective buyers to go in with higher bids.

And at the same time, renters have enjoyed increased protection as far as tenancy conditions go, although the market finds itself diverging between an increase in rentals in affluent areas and fewer new instructions in the bottom portion of the market. Research also shows that city centre lets are down as much as 15

per cent as some urban business areas become ghost towns.

It all leaves us speculating whether or not the effects of COVID-19 on the sales and lettings market are here to stay. Certainly, experts believe the recession the economy is suffering can only have one effect on the housing market, and that's for it to follow suit into decline. And yet, effects should be lessened given that a lack of overseas travel means the pound continues to be invested close to home.



New Year, New Goals For Your Business?

The future remains uncertain for business owners, but with restrictions comes time to reassess your plans, and perhaps plans for diversification. Clearly there will be short term actions on EU trade for some. However we encourage all business owners to consider taking time to prepare a 2021 Strategic plan.

So how do you do a strategic plan?

1. Take time to review your own personal objectives – the business is there to provide you with what you want from life, do not forget this.
2. Look at where you are now, your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Take external advice so you have a clear understanding of your position in the marketplace, the competition, your systems and the way you do things and what you are good at and what you are not.
3. Focus on where you want to be (say) in 2 years, what you want your business to look like when it is “complete” or running profitably and successfully. Then you can determine your priorities – the big issues that you need to focus on – this is the strategic plan!
4. Write down your vision and define what you must achieve and the actions you need to take. Monitor how you are doing towards your vision each month and what actions have been completed and what needs to be done to keep you moving towards your plan.
5. Allocate responsibility for taking the actions.
6. Monitor, review and adjust your regular activities to keep you on track towards your plan.

It is easier to get to your destination with a plan

If you have a vision of what you want your business to look like when it is “complete” then you are in a position to drive your business towards the vision, and you can monitor how you are doing as you go along.

If we agree it is hard to accomplish anything without a plan, let's start thinking about putting one in place. A plan looks at all the things a business could do and narrows it down to the things it is actually good at doing. A strategic plan also helps you determine where to spend time, resources and money.

MJB Avanti have the expertise, and useful tools to help you analyse where you are now, set a strategy, agree actions and monitor them. Please talk to us about how we can help you achieve your goals – we have helped many other businesses grow and succeed!

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THE RISE OF VOICE SEARCH

Did you know that 60 per cent of smartphone users have tried voice search at least once in the last 12 months, and 55 per cent of teenagers use this technology on a daily basis?

WHAT IS VOICE SEARCH?

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HOW CAN I GET MY BUSINESS FOUND ON VOICE SEARCH?

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Featured snippets are small sections of text that appear at the top of Google's search results and are designed to answer a searcher's query. If your business is the featured snippet, this is the response that will be read aloud by the voice assistant. Both blogging and detailed FAQ pages can help you get featured in the snippet.

2. UPDATE YOUR GOOGLE MY BUSINESS LISTING

Most voice searches are local ones, so you need to make sure all your company contact information is up to date on both your website and your Google My Business listing.

3. OPTIMISE YOUR WEBSITE WITH LONG-TAIL KEYWORDS

When using a voice assistant, people talk as if they're speaking to a real person. This means asking full questions and using longer phrases than they would if they were typing a search into Google. Therefore, your website needs to be optimised with longer phrases, also known as long-tail keywords.

4. IMPROVE YOUR PAGE SPEED

A simple tip, the faster your webpage loading speed, the more likely you are to appear in voice search results. You can use Google PageSpeed Insights to check the speed of your site or you can do it manually. Google recommends a page loading time of less than two seconds.



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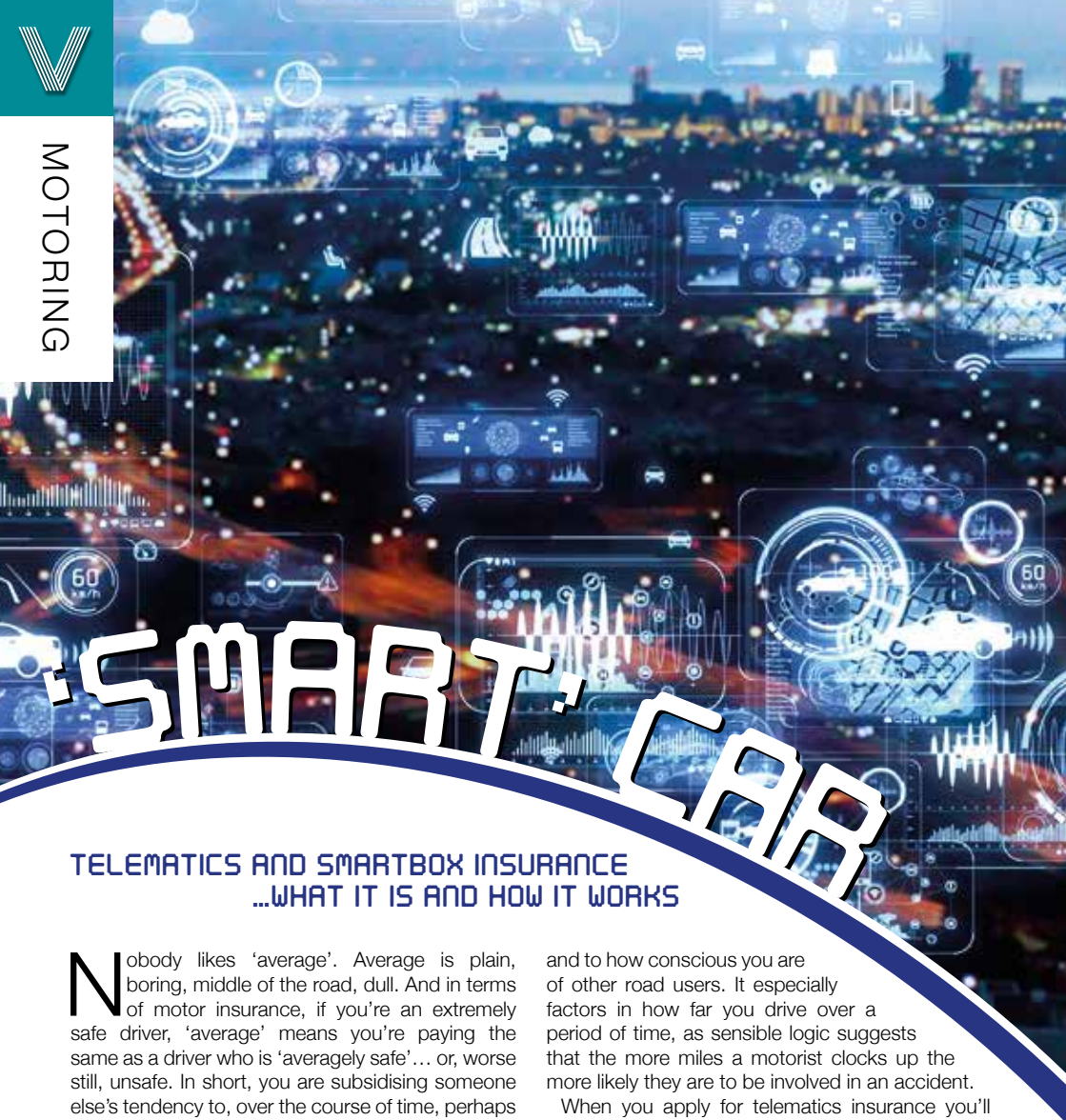
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That's where telematics insurance comes in. Using the technology found in a smartbox (actually just a small device that plugs in below your steering wheel), this clever piece of tech will measure how well you drive.

In other words, the days of having to pay premiums based on the 'average driver' are no more – what you pay is directly related to how safely you take corners, to how much you respect road conditions

and to how conscious you are of other road users. It especially factors in how far you drive over a period of time, as sensible logic suggests that the more miles a motorist clocks up the more likely they are to be involved in an accident.

When you apply for telematics insurance you'll have to provide information regarding where your car is parked, when in the day you usually drive, the types of roads you use and approximate annual mileage. All being well, you'll be rewarded with an initial monthly cost that's much lower than standard insurance.

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However, be warned: from hard braking to speeding to driving too many miles, telematics insurance may well cost you more in the long run if you fail to keep your motoring promises.

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Helping Support the Community Since 1999

A home-support charity based near Woodbridge is calling for more volunteers as the demand for their services grows.

Home Start in Suffolk, which was founded in 1999, helps to support families affected by mental health, social isolation, poverty, illness, bereavement, family breakdowns and domestic abuse.

CEO, Tara Spence, says it's crucial that the charity continues to grow its pool of volunteers to continue carrying out its essential work.

She said: "We are lucky to have an amazing network of over 250 fully trained volunteers offering regular confidential support and practical help to vulnerable families in their own homes and via the telephone.

"Our volunteers are what make our organisation special and without their dedication, valued experience and support we would not be able to provide the families with this vital service."

In the last year alone, Home Start volunteers have helped 568 Suffolk-based families, but with

as many as 33,000 children living in poverty across the county, more help is needed.

Tara added: "Our vision is to empower parents and guardians with the skills, knowledge and emotional resilience to raise children to flourish."

Monica is a long-standing volunteer with the charity and says getting involved was probably one of the best decisions she ever made.

She said: "I can truly say that I have really enjoyed my time as a volunteer and feel privileged to be part of the wonderful charity that is Home-Start.

"Who'd have thought, that by giving up a few hours a week of my life, I could make a difference to the life of a struggling mum.

"The great thing about it is that most of what I do when visiting a family are things that I really enjoy, like having a chat and playing with and entertaining babies or little children."

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NATIONAL PULL A SICKIE DAY ON



According to UK statistics, the first Monday of February is the day when employees are most likely to pull a sickie. Although excuses may be limited this time round, that doesn't mean we can't take a look at some of the more inventive reasons that people have come up with over the years. You can't make this stuff up!

"My only pair of work trousers is in the wash"

Not the best excuse, as what would you do if your employer simply told you to come in your casual clothes?

"It's my dog's birthday and I need to arrange a party for him"

Even though we are a nation of pet lovers, we can't see too many bosses accepting this far-fetched fabrication.

"My grandmother poisoned me with her ham"

Yes, somebody really did use this as a reason why they hadn't turned up for work. Although, to be honest, this might just be crazy enough to actually work.

"I'm too drunk to drive"

Although this may actually be true, we are not sure that this reason would go down too well with HR.

"I can't come in today, the show I've been watching just released a new series"

Another truthful explanation, and to be fair, we've all been there. Damn you, Netflix!

How you should call in sick to work

- > Contact your employer as soon as possible
- > Keep your reason brief
- > Be as helpful as possible
- > Make sure you speak to the right person
- > If you are struggling with your mental health, be honest and say so, but you are not required to go into details
- > Only text if your employer has previously okayed this method of calling in sick
- > Consider remote working if you feel able to



Great Books To Try This Month...

How books can help us escape negativity.

Welcome to my new monthly column with **VISION**. I'm excited to share with you all the fabulous releases each month. I find it very hard to understand, why during a lockdown, books are classified as non-essential. Madness! Books lift your spirits and help you escape reality. Books are company if you are lonely and educational for children at home, so of course they are essential. I read books to escape the negative connotations on television.

I've recently been reading *The Thursday Murder Club* by Richard Osman. I don't normally read books by celebrities, but I am glad I did! Wow, what a fun read and it really cheered me up over Christmas, with laugh out loud wit and ample red herrings. A modern-day murder mystery and a good escapism book.

My other Festive read was *The Once Upon a River* by Diane Setterfield. A mesmerising, historical mystery that reads like an adult folklore tale with a touch of magical realism. In places I found I held my breath while awaiting the outcome of events.

If books are an essential part of your life, please check out my shop.

By **Jules Button, Woodbridge Emporium. 01394 382382**



THE MARLOW MURDER CLUB Robert Thorogood, £12.99

If you liked *The Thursday Murder Club* then you will enjoy this. Fun, eccentric and a good escapist whodunnit. There is a 77-year-old amateur sleuth, a crazy dog walker and a beautiful vicars wife who become unlikely friends and help solve a murder in their town.

GAME OF THE GODS Paolo Maurensig, £11.99

Wonderfully written as a memoir as told to a journalist. This book will take you from India, to Britain and then to New York. Inspired by the unusual true story of a Chess master, it really is a curious and absorbing read. Fans of *The Queens Gambit* will enjoy this.



GOOD VIBES GOOD LIFE Vex King, from £10.99

How self-love is the key to unlocking your greatness! Instagram Guru Vex King answers questions on how to change the way you think, speak, and act. Upbeat, considerate, and easy to read. Full of positivity and wisdom. A brilliant read if you're feeling overwhelmed.

THE HOUSE AT THE EDGE OF MAGIC Amy Sparkes, £6.99

A fun, fast-paced read for middle-grade children. A cross between *Howls Moving Castle* and *Oliver Twist*. A pickpocketing orphan, who ends up befriend Eric the Troll, a Wizard and an Alchemist. Can Nine break a curse and help her new friends?



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Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

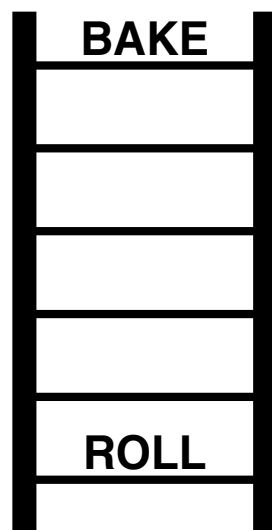
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DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Nepal's flag is the only flag in the world that doesn't have four sides
- ▶ Purple is the most uncommon colour to be used on flags
- ▶ The flag of Belize uses more colours than any other flag
- ▶ Hawaii's state flag contains the Union Jack. It is the only US state flag to include a foreign country's national flag
- ▶ There are 12 stars on the flag of Europe
- ▶ When the Queen goes to Parliament, the Royal Standard is flown from Victoria Tower
- ▶ Denmark has the oldest flag in the world, designed in 1219 and unchanged since
- ▶ South Sudan has the newest flag in the world
- ▶ The study of flags is called vexillology

WORD LADDER



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

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

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