



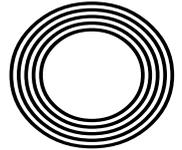
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Editor's notes...



Nik Allen, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** BillericayShenfield. Happy New Year to everyone. Sometimes, I have to remind myself to do nothing, to stop. Don't worry, it's not some medical condition. It's actually to take a moment to reflect.

It's healthy to see where you are and how things have changed, and over our shutdown period between Christmas and New Year I considered how well 2019 has gone.

Our portfolio has never been in better shape. We're now printing more than 50,000 magazines a month, launching new titles, and the feedback we receive from our advertisers has been really positive.

This success speaks to me in multiple ways. It tells me I have a great team, it rewards the long, painful, grinding hours I have put into my passion for publishing, and it confirms to me that the hard work does pay off.

It also reminds me that it's okay to fall off the horse. There have been some years where I've looked back with disappointment, frustration and a feeling of failure; but I've got back up, battled hard, and I am the evidence that if you want it, you can get it.

If you've had a great year, well done. If you're looking back feeling disappointed I sympathise, and empathise, but it's time to start again. Your horse is standing there waiting; now up you get.

Enjoy reading the January edition,

Nik

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THE STORY OF BEN STOKES' CLIMB FROM ZERO TO HERO

The history of sport is filled with tales where triumph has emerged out of failure, yet very few have tasted both sides in such quick succession as England cricketer Ben Stokes.

The 28-year-old was the standout winner of the BBC Sports Personality of the Year Award in December, a fitting culmination for a sportsman who had been forced to reach deep into mental and physical reserves of strength in order to drag his career back from the depths.

Just two years previously, Stokes' fracas outside a nightclub in Bristol had seen the all-rounder arrested, splashed across the front pages, removed from a lucrative New Balance sponsorship deal and facing the very real prospect of his cricket career being brought to a premature end. In the aftermath of a police prosecution that dragged on for some 11 months, the Durham-based powerhouse may eventually have been exonerated of blame, but he'd missed the England Ashes tour down under, and was facing a huge climb back into national team contention.

Perhaps it was the catastrophic way the national team performed in their 4-0 drubbing in the Southern Hemisphere that necessitated Stokes' acceleration back to the front line, but the person who returned was not only smarter and wiser, he also brought with him a calmness and humility, qualities that immediately began permeating through to his teammates.

No better was this seen than in our World Cup campaign of 2019. In the opening match he scored 89 against South Africa and claimed two wickets, as well as taking what was labelled one of the greatest catches of all time in dismissing Andile Phehlukwayo. And yet, after surprise defeats to Pakistan and Sri Lanka, with two matches remaining, England were faced with the prospect of seeing off India and New Zealand in order to guarantee a semi-final spot.

The mercurial Stokes stepped up with a 79 against India to help guide his side through to the knock-out finale, where they effortlessly brushed aside the Aussies in the semis.

And then the final. To seasoned, age-old watchers of the sport, the way Stokes constructed an imperious 84 not out, the way he batted through a 15-run super-over to lead England to World Cup



glory was breathtaking; and to a new generation switching on for the first time, his contribution will be felt going forward in the tens of thousands of kids picking up a cricket bat for the first time.

As if his efforts in the short-form version of the game weren't indelible enough, just a month after his Lord's heroics, he brought England's 2019 Ashes challenge back from the dead with a stunning 135 not out in the third test at Headingley, where his side recovered from being bowled out for 67 in their first innings to pull off an almost inconceivable run chase of 359 in the second innings to level the series.

In the past, where victories in cricket were often long-fought, hard-grafted, attritional battles, Stokes has invigorated a sport that is more modern, engaging and aspirational than ever before. More than that, he has proved to a watching world that even in a generation of computers, social media and digital lives, true heroes are made on the outdoor tracks, pitches and greens, and he is truly one of ours.

What's the score?



Introducing

THE NEW £20 NOTE, COMING TO A BANK NEAR YOU... SOON!

As far as physical currency goes in the UK, everyone continues to talk about the perfection of the polymer. Once just a thing of curiosity when taking a trip to Australia, the polymer note is now a key component of our money stocks, and its versatility and durability – it lasts two and a half times longer than a paper note – will again be on show when the new £20 note is launched in February.

It was back in 2016 that JMW Turner was announced as the face of the new note, and some four years on – and, more pertinently, 221 years after the painter was born – he'll be rolled out across the UK on February 20.

The featured quote, "Light is therefore colour", originates from a lecture he gave in 1818, and is a reference to his innovative use of light, shade, colour and tone.

The note has all the usual bells and whistles we associate with the note denominations, from a security window that reads "Twenty" on one side and "Pounds" on the other to a metallic image over the main window that appears grey, before switching to blue and gold on the reverse.

With other effects, such as the Queen's image showing through, a number that shows up under ultraviolet light, silver and purple foil patches and raised print on both sides, this purple-themed £20 note is surely the most decorative and high-tech yet.

Attributing the note to Turner is a fitting and somewhat belated way for us all to give something back, after the artist left a number of paintings in his will "to the nation".

While he'd certainly be proud of this little piece of art, you can pick up your very own Turner original for just 20 quid.

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HOME & DIY

BACK TO BLACK

WHY DARKER SHADES FOR YOUR INTERIORS ARE GOING TO BE ALL THE RAGE IN 2020

In decades past, the use of black for interiors was strictly the domain of goths, emos, moody teenagers and nightclub owners.

But 2020 may well be about to turn all of that on its head, with dark shades set to stand up for themselves as slick, stylish and luxurious layers in the coming year.

Here's your five-step guide to using black:

BLACK ISN'T ALWAYS BLACK

Our perception of the colour "black" is pretty ubiquitous, but for the purposes of interior design, you should experiment with an array of different shades, from medium greys right the way through to the inkiest, flattest black.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

The majority of colours really shine when they're used in contrast, and dark shades are no different. For a look that embraces polar opposites, try black and white; while for something slightly more considered, opt for wood shades as a way of offsetting your base colour. Light greys,

reds, yellows and light blues work equally well in providing the contrast that sets a room off.

A WINDOW TO A NEW WAY OF THINKING

A dark grey or black room will only work if you can show it off with light, preferably natural light, so choose a room that will display your daringly dark style by splashing it with natural niceness.

TEXTURE OVER TONE

Visual satisfaction goes well beyond the colour itself, so using a textured finish (perhaps a mottled or bevelled wallpaper, or wood panelling that offers a glorious three-dimensional take) with clever lighting can produce an array of shades, tones and shadow that's a world away from a basic black.

COMPLEMENTING YOUR TASTE

And, of course, using an array of fabrics and fashions in terms of furniture, cushions, lampshades, carpets and rugs will add to the intensity of detail that only black can provide.





THE DESIGN IS MINE

The work of Thomas Heatherwick, revealed

HOME & DIY



Thomas Heatherwick is the sort of designer whose work you know without ever really knowing it.

Consider the iconic cauldron that was on display at the London Olympics in 2012, muse over the renovation of the Hong Kong Pacific Place, even scoff ever so slightly at the cancelled Garden Bridge which was intended to flourish over the River Thames in all its green glory.

In reality, whether successful or not, whether well received or otherwise, Heatherwick Studio has been dabbling with the brilliance of design innovation since its formation, by Thomas Heatherwick, in 1994.

It was eight years before the Terence Conran-mentored Royal College of Art graduate hit gold with his Rolling Bridge design at Paddington Basin, yet the variation in work styles that followed – from monastery renovation to bespoke sculptures and quirky furniture through to the commercialisation of the old freight depot north of Kings Cross station – proved that Heatherwick's appetite for reinvention has never been sullied by his critics.

Perhaps his most famous creation of all has been the modern Routemaster bus. A design that has influenced everyone in the capital and plenty more outside it, its tribute to the original proves the designer has not just the vision to create, but also the modesty to respect a classic.

In interviews, Heatherwick, 49, speaks of design being a single discipline, three-dimensional creation, rather than something that is multi-faceted, and insists all good work must be likened "to solving a crime... the answer is there, and your job is to find it".

Where Heatherwick's work will head to next is unclear, but whether on pavements, across skylines or simply in the form of interiors that amaze and enchant, the studio has played a major role in leading us to ask incredible and intense questions of our everyday surroundings.

Where Heatherwick's work will head to next is unclear, but whether on pavements, across skylines or simply in the form of interiors that amaze and enchant, the studio has played a major role in leading us to ask incredible and intense questions of our everyday surroundings.



Photo credit: www.heatherwick.com



HOME & DIY



Oven cleaning hacks

If the recent festivities have left your oven looking a little grubby (to put it lightly), then these three chemical-free, and budget-friendly, home remedies are exactly what you need. Say goodbye to grease and hello to a squeaky-clean cooker.

Easy Peasy Lemon Squeezy

Lemon is a natural bleaching agent as well as having the ability to degrease. Simply:

- Take two lemons and cut them both in half
- Squeeze the juice into the baking tray and place the rest of the lemons on the tray
- Fill the tray halfway up with water
- Place the tray in the oven and turn on to 120 degrees
- Leave for 30 minutes
- Remove the tray, turn off the oven and wait for it to cool slightly
- Scrub your oven and rinse



Baking Soda Saviour

This store-cupboard staple is abrasive, plus it naturally absorbs grease, making it the ideal ingredient for cleaning your oven. Simply:

- Remove the oven racks
- Make a paste with ½ cup baking soda and 3 tsp water
- Apply to the inside of your oven wearing gloves
- Leave for a few hours and overnight if possible
- Use a damp cloth (or spatula if needed) to wipe off the paste
- Optional – spray oven with white vinegar and wipe clean again to remove any leftover grease



Salt and Vinegar (solution, not crisps)

Common table salt can act as an abrasive, whereas white vinegar is great for removing stubborn stains. Simply:

- Turn on your oven to 65 degrees to heat
- Sprinkle a thin layer of salt onto the bottom of the oven
- Put on gloves and scrub the bottom with a sponge until the grease starts to lift
- Spray white vinegar into the oven
- Use a wet rag to remove the rest of the grease and dirt





JAPANDI

WHAT IS IT?

It's the interior trend everyone is talking about for 2020, but are you brave enough to pull it off?

There are some brave, peculiar and ambitious interior trends that evolve over time, with many originating out of our ability to combine established styles. In new designs that echo and reflect traditional designs, we link cultures, embrace originality and, in the case of Japandi, create a bridge between Scandinavia and Asia... and that's no mean feat.

Japandi is a combination of Scandi and Japanese styles. This hybrid combines Japanese minimalism, which defines the simplicity, space and clarity of the platform, with the warmth, comfort and select colour of Scandi design. The effect is a look that has space but detail.

A bedroom would therefore showcase plain walls and bedsheets, in bright tones, and be complemented with wooden furniture, classic shapes and a hint of nature, where functionality is important but cleanness prevails.

A dining room would again combine bright, white walls with a statement piece of wooden furniture, with detail coming as much from the sparsity of a look as from the objects within.

Darker tones are allowed to prevail, providing the key echoes of feng shui are abided by, with chairs positioned with the intention of inviting someone to sit, relax and reflect on their surroundings; while the use of large windows and exit points – both practically and visually – into outside space patterns perfectly a Japandi style that aims to bring the outdoors into our living spaces.

Rather than drawing in styles, it seems the year 2020 is set for interior reinvention, the like of which we've never seen before. Regional design standards have never been so exposed to a global market, and with that comes a dynamic merging of ideas, and you sense Japandi will be the first of many.



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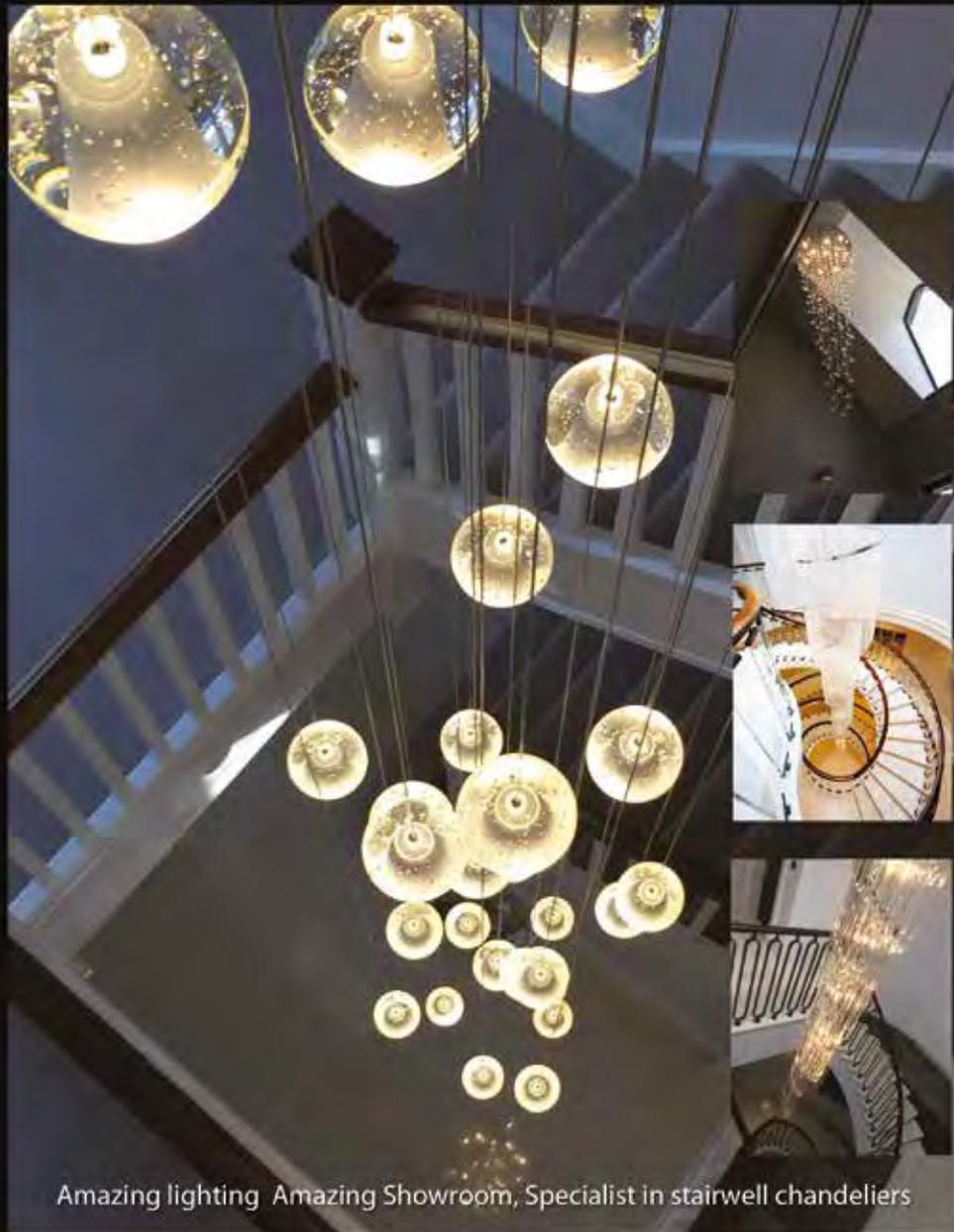
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DIY bed canopies



HOME & DIY



If you want to bring a touch of elegance to your bedroom while at the same time creating a cosy focal point, then look no further than a bed canopy.

Bed canopies are fairly expensive to buy, but incredibly cheap to make. If you decide to do one home DIY project in the new year, this should be it.

CHOOSE THE CANOPY FABRIC

With canopies being available in a wide variety of materials, colours and textures, the world really is your oyster. For a luxurious vibe, opt for velvet or silk, or if you favour a more laid-back look, opt for linen or mesh.

CHOOSE THE CANOPY HANGING ELEMENT

Arguably the easiest way to hang your canopy is with an embroidery hoop; simply unscrew the hoop, pass the fabric through it, ensure it is even and reseal the hoop. Alternatively, you can utilise copper pipes to create a larger canopy that cascades

around your whole bed.

Or, if you are wanting a more natural vibe, you could even use a simple (but sturdy) branch which can be hung from the ceiling with a few chains and basic hooks.

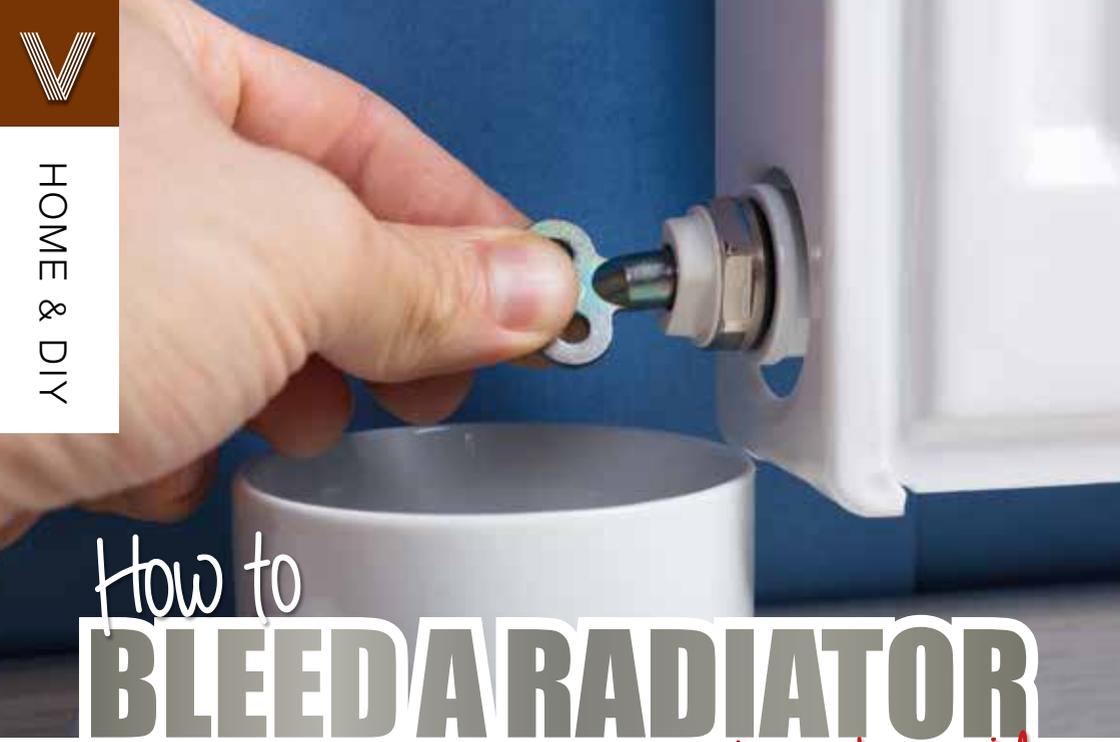
INSTALL THE HOOKS & HANG THE CANOPY

As a bed canopy will be hanging above your head, it is important that all the screws are secure; drywall anchors are a good idea and will ensure that your bed canopy does not fall down. Enlist a helper when attaching the fabric to ensure it is hung evenly.

ADD SOME CREATIVE TOUCHES

Once your bed canopy has been installed, you can personalise it with accessories to ensure that it matches the décor of the rest of your room. Fairy lights are a great idea for a child's room or even for adults who want to feel like they are sleeping under the stars. Curtain tie-backs are another popular option.





How to BLEED A RADIATOR

A step-by-step guide

Be honest. How often (if ever) do you bleed your radiators? This household maintenance task is vital if you want to ensure your home stays warm without costing you a small fortune.

STEP ONE: Turn on your central heating so that all your radiators have warmed up before you begin the bleeding process; this will ensure that there is sufficient pressure in your radiators to push out any trapped air.

STEP TWO: Check each radiator for signs that it might need bleeding; this includes any cold spots in your radiators or clucking sounds that they are emitting. If a particular radiator takes longer to heat up than the rest, this could also be a sign that it needs bleeding.



STEP THREE: Turn off your heating so that you do not burn yourself or create an unwanted flood in your home.

STEP FOUR: Put some old towels underneath the radiators that you are planning to bleed; discoloured water may flow from your radiator and you do not want to stain your carpet.

STEP FIVE: Take your radiator bleed key and insert it into the bleed valve; this can be found at the top or bottom of the radiator and looks like a round hole with a square inside. Turn the valve anticlockwise; you should then hear a hissing sound as the trapped air escapes.

STEP SIX: You only need to turn the eye about halfway round as the valve does not need to be fully open to successfully bleed the radiator. Wait until you can no longer hear air and then turn the bleed valve clockwise to reseal.

STEP SEVEN: Re-pressurise your heating system; if the needle gauge in your boiler is on yellow, not green, you need to do this.



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Hair stylist named as Barber of the Year

A Billericay hair stylist won a prestigious award at this year's Salon Awards recently.

Jim Shaw, from Billericay Essensuals and Essensuals Men salons, was named Barber of the Year at the event held at Five Lakes Resort in Colchester.

The award-winning salon director and barber won several accolades in 2019 alone but mentions that the Barber of the Year award holds an extra special place in his heart.

He explained: "I've had a really good year. I've swept the board this year. I won International Hairdresser of the Year in February, which was amazing, and then I won Best Collection of the Year with another competition. And most recently, I won British

Hairdresser of the Year.

"It's been an absolutely amazing year, but it's really special and lovely to win the Essex one, because I like to put Billericay on the map, so winning Barber of the Year was the icing on the cake."

Jim has already been announced as a finalist for the Best International Men's Commercial Collection at the International Hairdressing Awards® 2020, being held in Madrid on February 16.

If he wins, he will be the first hair stylist to win the award two years in a row.

He also hopes to pass on his award-winning skills by mentoring people, in the hope that they too can one day enjoy the same success.



Wood benefits from power workers' tree planting

Electricity workers channelled their energy to support the conservation work of Norsey Wood Nature Reserve in Billericay.

Members of UK Power Networks' engineering design team planted more than 200 trees between them, over the course of a single day at the Essex site.

The mixed tree saplings, mainly consisting of oaks, mountain ash, alder, hazel, hawthorn, poplar, sycamore, horse chestnut, silver birch and a few wild roses, will help restore and manage the wood.

For their day jobs, the UK Power Networks team members are responsible for the design of substations and cable routes in Greater London to enable growth.

The team has undertaken additional awareness training to ensure electrical infrastructure projects

are delivered with the greatest respect to local communities and the environment.

Norsey Wood attracts around 60,000 visitors a year and is a habitat for species such as dormice and pipistrelle bats.

Andrew Carr, who led the volunteer team alongside fellow organiser Piotr Stasiuk, said: "We were scheduled to plant around 150 trees, but ended up doing about 220 in the end. The trees absorb a lot of carbon dioxide so there is a huge environment benefit to planting the next generation of woodland to help protect the wildlife who have made it their home."

UK Power Networks, which delivers electricity to homes and businesses across the East, South East and London, gives staff two days paid leave each year to volunteer or fundraise in their local community.

Baron re-elected as town MP

John Baron MP is to continue as Billericay MP after the Conservatives held the Basildon and Billericay constituency in last month's General Election.

Mr Baron MP, who has been MP since the seat was created for the 2010 General Election, won a comfortable victory with 29,590 votes. Andrew Gordon, Labour, was his nearest challenger, with 9,178 votes. Edward Salisbury, Liberal Democrat, won 3,741 votes; Stewart Goshawk, Green, got 1,394 votes and the Social Democratic Party's Simon Breedon got 224.

After Mr Baron MP's victory, the Basildon and Billericay Conservatives took to social media to celebrate their victory.

A Facebook post read: "We are delighted that our Member of Parliament, John Baron, has been re-elected as the MP for Basildon and Billericay, with an increased majority from 13,400 (in 2017) to 20,412. We thank all the residents in the constituency who have voted for John and placed their faith in the Conservative Party."





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BILLERICAY TOWN FC

LOCAL NEWS BILLERICAY

Photo credit: Nicky Hayes Photography



The Blues head into the new year with optimism

Billericay Town FC kick off 2020 optimistic that this year could be one to remember as manager Jamie O'Hara shapes his team.

Sitting mid table of the National League South, the Blues are likely to remain in the division, which gives O'Hara a chance to build for next season.

However, Town do have hopes of lifting silverware this term as they face Grays Athletic, of the Isthmian League North Division, in the Quarter Finals of the Essex Senior Cup.

Billericay Town Ladies also go into the new year full of optimism as they are firmly in the race to become champions of the FA Women's National League – Division 1 South East.

Their closest competitors for the title are likely to be Ipswich Town, AFC Wimbledon or Leyton Orient.

FA Cup glory is also on the agenda as Ricay kick off the year at home to Actonians in the third round.

Off the pitch the club is also moving forward with the board taking shape as Rob Dawman joined the ranks.

He said: "Both of my sons

have played for the Colts and I managed one of the youth teams for a number of years. It was during this time that I got to know Nick Hutt and got to see the inner workings of the football club and see how many fantastic people give their time and work so passionately behind the scenes.

"It is an absolute privilege to now have the opportunity to work alongside these people and the other consortium members in taking the club forward.

"We all share the same vision for the club and appreciate the responsibility we have to the community to not only drive forward as a sustainable football club but also build on the fabulous platform left by Glenn Tamplin.

"Glenn's legacy at Billericay Town is there for all to see and we should all be very grateful for all he did.

"Ultimately, my passion for football was the driving force behind getting involved. Football-wise it's a very exciting time at the club. Jamie is doing an amazing job with the first team.

"The team has a real identity and it's really clear how the manager wants them to play."



#TogetherWeSailAsOne



ON PATROL WITH... THE PASTORS



Street Pastors continues to develop through its associated projects of Rail and School Pastors in the local area and also across Essex.

We had a busy month and enjoyed helping at several local events and continue to patrol the night-time economy in the area.

and Mayflower Schools with pastoral care to the students, and we enjoyed going on a trip as volunteers to the Sikh and Muslim temples in North London.

Our Rail Pastors continue to patrol on all the Greater Anglia Rail Network and this month we have had very significant conversations around mental health and suicide with several passengers. We have intervened when one young lady had come to the rail network to take her life. We spent a lot of time with her and managed to get her to a place of safety where she can continue her journey to a healthy life.

We will continue to volunteer like this and would encourage anyone that wants to know more to join our Facebook and Twitter groups. You can also email Billericay@streepastors.org.uk to find out more and maybe join in this great work.

We helped out at Remembrance Day parades, keeping people safe, handing out the song sheets and providing First Aid cover. We also provided the lost child cover for the Billericay fireworks in consultation with Billericay Round Table, and we really enjoyed hosting a stall at Billericay Christmas Market with Rotary so that everybody in attendance could see what we do. We enjoyed giving out free reflective arm bands provided by Essex Safer Roads Bureau. Our Schools Pastors continue to support Billericay

Statue to be built to celebrate Mayflower

Residents have welcomed a decision to build a statue in Billericay to mark a pilgrimage that happened 400 years ago.

The statue, which will commemorate the Mayflower, will be two metres in height, made of bronze and built in the high street.

The Mayflower was a ship that transported pilgrims to the New World, later to be known as the United States of America, in 1620.

The ship has become a cultural icon in the history of the USA, with several of those on board from Billericay.

The statue is expected to be in place later in 2020 and will cost around £13,000.

Resident Tom Ingleton, 42, said: "I think it's

important we recognise Billericay's role in history.

"It's amazing to think 400 years ago people from this town made the brave decision to set sail across the ocean and play such an important role in the United States' history. I hope we do more to celebrate our past and successes."

The statue is being created by sculptor John Doubleday.

Jim Devlin, chairman of the town council, said: "We are very pleased about this; we didn't think there would be any worries about the council agreeing this.

"It's going to be a focal point in the town and high street.

"John Doubleday has completed some very well-known works so we are very lucky to work with him."

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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Apprentice star misses out on a place in the final

A former Shenfield cricketer who got within touching distance of the final stage on BBC show *The Apprentice* has opened up about his experience.

Dean Ahmad, 20, finished sixth in this year's series having narrowly missed out on a place in the grand final, which sees five contestants compete for a £250,000 investment from Lord Sugar.

Dean, who is a keen cricketer and previously played for Shenfield, returned to his old school, Brentwood School, to share more about his experience.

He had earned a place in the 2018 series following an audition but he felt his business wasn't ready. He tried again this year and was again successful, and this time he accepted the offer.

He said: "It was a rigorous application process across all aspects of life, not just your career, but that's what it has to be when 75,000 people apply for only 16 places.

"Once I got the phone call to say I was in the 2019 series, I knew I was ready, and it's hands-down the best thing I've ever done.

"I started up my business while I was actually at Brentwood School and tried to get my sports merchandise into the school shop.

"At 15 years old, I would say I was naive and very cheeky, but I've always been ambitious.

"Jump forward five years and I still work within the sports industry, but I now run my own sports agency which focuses solely on cricket professionals.

"The tasks on *The Apprentice* are intense. We all stayed in the house for the entirety of our time on the show; no one got to go home in between tasks or anything.

"You'd get the chance to make one five-minute phone call a week, so I faced the decision of checking in on how my business was doing without me or talking with my family for moral support.

"During the process, we worked 14-hour days most of the time and tasks were pretty much back to back with very few down days.

"I'd say I walked into the show as a typically cheeky, sometimes cocky, 20-year-old Essex boy. I thought I'd love pitching and wouldn't get nervous, but I was wrong.

"I found out I was actually mediocre at pitches in comparison to some of the other candidates and so I came away with a bit more humility and maturity. I think I'm a lot more refined."

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Tories hold on to seat



Photo credit: Alex Burghart

The Conservatives held Brentwood and Ongar in the General Election last month with Alex Burghart MP being re-elected to the seat he first won in 2017.

Mr Burghart MP, who also represents Shenfield, won a resounding victory, getting 36,308 votes, 77.3 per cent of all votes cast. His nearest challenger, Labour's Oliver Durose, received 7,243 votes.

Mr Burghart MP took to social media after the result was announced.

He said: "My thanks to all whose votes mean I am returned as your Member of Parliament for Brentwood and Ongar."

David Kendall, Liberal Democrat, received 7,187 votes; Paul Jeater, Green, got 1,671 votes while Robin Tilbrook, English Democrats, got 532.

Turnout was 70.4 per cent.

Family recovering after terrifying ordeal

Police are hunting a group of men who broke into a home in Shenfield and threatened the couple who live there with knives and a bat.

The group of men forced their way into a house in Rochford Avenue, Shenfield, at around 8.15pm on November 23 and stole jewellery and electrical items.

The victims were unhurt, but were left very shaken. The men are all believed to be in their early 20s. They all wore dark clothing and had their faces covered.

Police want to speak to anyone who saw a group of men acting suspiciously in the area before the burglary or saw them afterwards.

They are also keen to speak to anyone with CCTV or dashcam footage from the time of the incident.

Contact Brentwood CID on 101 quoting reference 42/186307/19.

Alternatively, contact the Crimestoppers charity

100 per cent anonymously on 0800 555 111 or use the anonymous online form at Crimestoppers-uk.org

Driver left with serious injuries after being attacked

Residents in Shenfield have backed a coach driver who suffered serious injuries after being attacked by four teenagers.

The driver, who wishes to remain anonymous, was set upon by youths on November 23 who reacted angrily after they were asked to leave the station.

The driver, who was working for SBC Coaches as a rail replacement driver, suffered concussion and a fractured nose and foot.

The damage to his head was done by a glass bottle.

The teenagers were arrested on suspicion of assault causing actual bodily harm. Three of them, 18, coming from Leigh, Rayleigh and Westcliff, while a 17-year-old also from Leigh was also arrested by Essex Police.

The incident has shocked local residents, including commuter Lisa Russell, who said: "It is totally unacceptable that a group would target someone just doing their job."

"I didn't witness the incident but it makes you worry about how safe it is to be at railway stations late at night.

"I hope the driver makes a full recovery and those responsible get the punishment they deserve."

A spokesman for SBC Coaches said: "It was a very nasty attack. He no longer wants to do rail replacement work because of what happened."

"He won't be able to work for the near future after the concussion."

An Essex Police spokesman added: "We were called shortly before 11pm on Saturday with reports a man was assaulted near to Shenfield railway train station in Hutton Road."



Photo credit: Google Maps



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THE QUEEN VIC

The life and times of one of our strongest monarchs

V
HISTORY



You may have missed it, but the middle of 2019 marked what would have been the 200th birthday of Queen Victoria.

The May 24 milestone came and went without too much commotion, probably because the five-times great-grandmother to Prince George, Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis – who now reside in the palace where she was born – died way back in 1901.

Regardless, her influence on modern London and the world beyond is nothing short of remarkable, from the underground Victoria Line and the V&A Museum, to a spectacular lineage that sees five of her direct descendants currently sitting on thrones overseas.

Victoria's name was actually Alexandrina Victoria, and she wed her first cousin, Albert, at the age of just 20. During her lifetime she had nine children. She was fiercely strict, and admitted to hating being pregnant.

Her strange habits included having all windows open, even in winter, as well as insisting on proposing to husband Albert, in a break from tradition.

She stood just 5 feet tall, and was a widow almost twice as long as her marriage lasted (Albert died in their 22nd year wedded), and during Victoria's lifetime she survived eight assassination attempts. None of those occurred on the royal train – she was lucky enough to come to the throne at a time of significant technological and industrial advancement and was the first royal to take the new mode of transport when in 1842 she travelled from Windsor to Slough.

While Queen Victoria went through life ticking off a number of "firsts", there is one she can no longer claim as her own, and that is the amount of time spent as the longest-reigning monarch. Previously she held the record with a total reign of 63 years and seven months, but Queen Elizabeth II broke that record in 2015 and continues to add on the years.



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The ultimate WINTER SURVIVAL guide for pets

YOU MAY NOT LIKE WINTER AND THE COLD WEATHER THAT IT BRINGS, BUT FOR YOUR PET, THIS TIME OF YEAR CAN BE DEADLY

1. DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PETS OUTSIDE UNATTENDED

When it is particularly cold your dog should not be left outside unattended as it could quickly develop frostbite or hypothermia. The same goes for cats: if the temperature drops too much, try to keep your feline friends indoors. Rabbits and guinea pigs should be moved to the shed if the weather is particularly bad.

2. INVEST IN A DOGGY JUMPER

If you have a short-coated breed of dog, then consider purchasing a jumper or coat to keep it warm when out and about. It is also worth noting that if your dog keeps lifting its paws or stopping walking, it may be because the ground is proving too cold for it.

3. CHECK THAT YOUR CAT FLAPS DOES NOT BECOME FROZEN SHUT

If your cat is still going outside, make sure you check that the cat flap does not become frozen shut. It is also a good idea to have a litter tray inside for your cat during the colder months.

4. COLD PETS NEED MORE SUSTENANCE

You need to ensure that your pets are getting sufficient calories to keep themselves warm, especially if they are outside often. You should also keep them hydrated and check that your guinea pig's or rabbit's water bottle has not frozen.

QUICK PET PROTECTION CHECKLIST:

- ❄️ Wear reflective clothing (you and your dog) when walking in the dark.
- ❄️ Fit your cat with a microchip.
- ❄️ Check your garden for foxes/badgers.
- ❄️ Keep anti-freeze products out of reach.
- ❄️ Be vigilant of cats under cars.



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PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4

- ▶ ANNIVERSARY
- ▶ BARBECUE
- ▶ BIRTHDAY
- ▶ CHRISTMAS
- ▶ DINNER PARTY
- ▶ ENGAGEMENT
- ▶ FATHER'S DAY
- ▶ GOING AWAY
- ▶ GOOD NEWS
- ▶ GOODBYE PARTY
- ▶ GRADUATION
- ▶ HALLOWEEN
- ▶ MOTHER'S DAY
- ▶ NEW JOB
- ▶ OFFICE PARTY
- ▶ OPENING
- ▶ PROMOTION
- ▶ SAINT'S DAY
- ▶ WEDDING
- ▶ WELCOME PARTY

R	K	L	G	O	O	D	B	Y	E	P	A	R	T	Y
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O	W	L	T	Y	R	A	S	R	E	V	I	N	N	A

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ A male ostrich can make a roaring noise, similar to a lion's roar
- ▶ Annually, cows kill more people than sharks do
- ▶ Butterflies taste with their feet, as their taste senses are located there. They can taste by standing on food
- ▶ Wolves can go for more than a week without eating
- ▶ Under their fur, polar bears' skin is black
- ▶ A fox can use its tail to communicate with other foxes
- ▶ A typical panda eats for half the day
- ▶ Cheetahs are the only big cats that can't roar

WORD LADDER

DUCK
BIRD

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

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

DO NOT rearrange the order of the letters.

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



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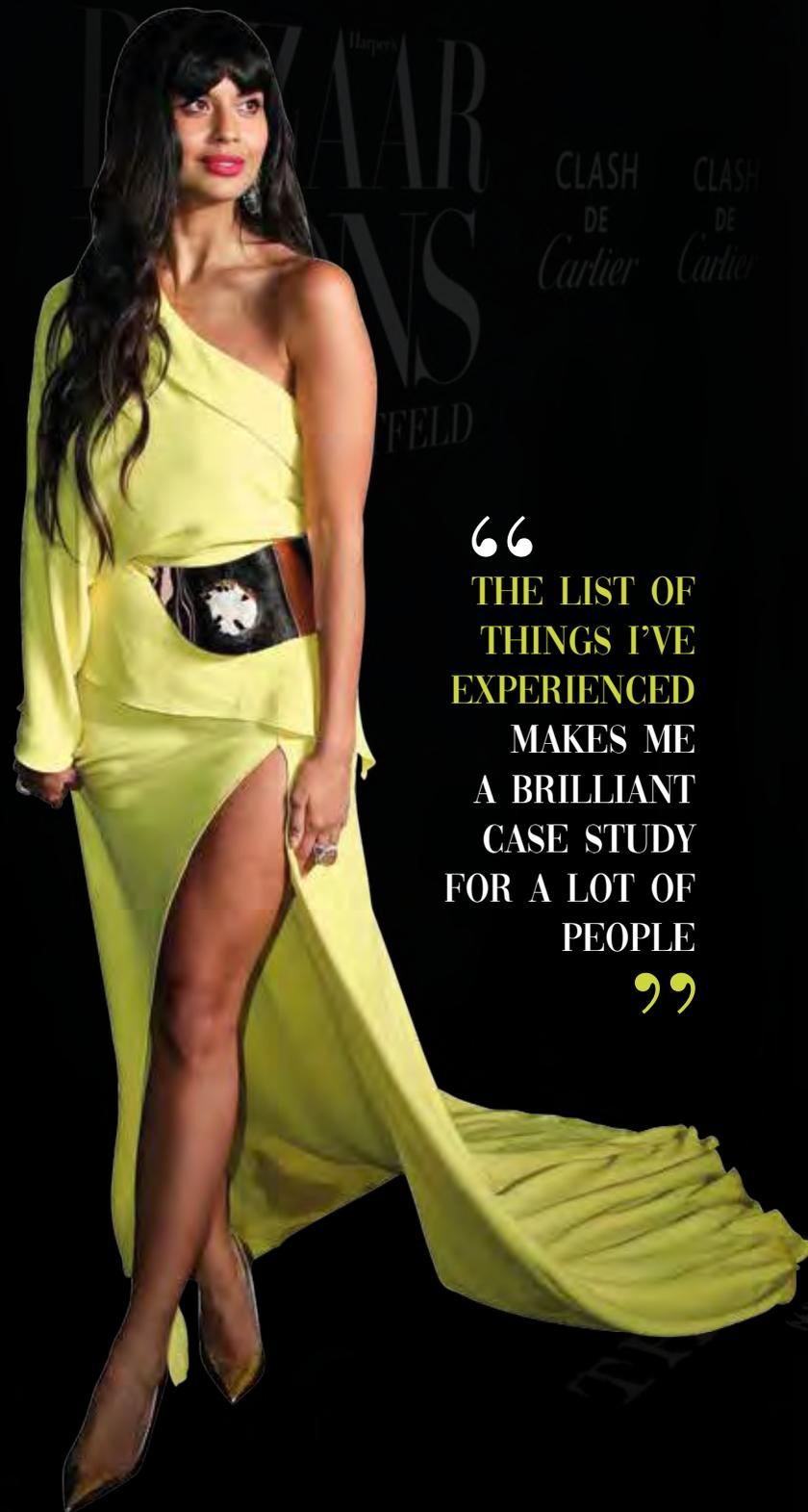
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“
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PEOPLE
”

Jameela Jamil

It’s unusual for a radio or TV star to have such a handle on the more sensitive issues relevant to the fast-paced generation we live in today, but Jameela Jamil’s evolution from model, photographer and fashion scout to someone speaking out over abortion, cancer, eating disorders and mental health is rapidly making her one of our most important ambassadors.

Ask where Jameela Jamil’s passion for tackling the tough questions in life has come from and the 33-year-old Londoner is left in no doubt. “It all started for me as a journalist and a broadcaster – it has been about a passion I have for interviewing people and asking questions,” she says.

“In the early days that was all about fashion and socialising, and looking into other people’s lives. But then, I think the older you get, the more you really want to scratch below the surface, and if you do that with other people, you need to be prepared to look inwards as well.”

Jameela believes that although the internet has helped in making private problems public, we could still be doing more to help each other. “We walk past each other in the street and really have no idea what is going on under the surface, and through my own personal experiences I have found being open is one of the best therapies available. If I can encourage other people to do that, and it has even 10 per cent of the positive benefit I have taken from sharing my issues and worries, we’ll be able to overcome even greater challenges.”

For Jameela, those challenges began in earnest quite soon after she broke through on the E4 show *Music Zone*. Discovering she was pregnant, the presenter took the decision to have an abortion. She has said since, “It was the best decision I have ever made... both for me and for the baby I didn’t want, and wasn’t ready for, emotionally, psychologically and financially.”

Since then, she has been a stolid ambassador for hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, a genetic disorder causing loose joints, joint pain, stretchy skin and abnormal scar formation; has beaten cancer twice, and recently spoke up about eating disorders, something she encountered in her early 20s.

Jameela also revealed that she survived a suicide attempt in 2013, and has suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder.

“The list of things I’ve experienced makes me a brilliant case study for a lot of people,” she laughs. “No matter what you have, no matter what you look like, we all struggle, and we all need help from time to time.”

Indeed, as far as style and appearance goes, Jameela – who is in a relationship with musician James Blake – believes we are slowly finding ourselves capable of ignoring some of the unrealistic icons splashed across the internet.

“We all have things we want to change and we can all work towards that. We are all self-critical – I absolutely hated my height for a long time... it was a real challenge to my mental health as I felt so exposed.

“What I’ve learnt over time is you shouldn’t let any part of your shape influence you negatively, only positively. If I only wore flat shoes or trainers then I’d be running away from my height.

“Instead I want to embrace it, and everything else I need to change about myself. That’s got to be the right way to go.”



THE WINTER warmers warbling IN YOUR GARDEN

HOW TO BEST LOOK AFTER YOUR FEATHERED FRIENDS THIS WINTER

There's nothing that connects us with nature better than seeing the resplendence of birdlife active and happy in our front and back gardens. And yet, while these brilliant breeds are more than adept at dealing with the cold commotions of the winter months, a helping hand never did a house sparrow or a hawfinch any harm, right?

SUPER SEEDS
You can pick them up in your local pet shop or even make your own, but a ball of seeds, perhaps bonded with high fat suet, will help guide your fluffy friends through cold times.



GOING NUTS FOR PEANUTS
Crushing some peanuts and putting them in a bird feeder will provide an excellent snack.



WATER GOOD IDEA
Remember, frozen water isn't drinkable and you definitely can't clean yourself in it, so keep a check on birds' ability to get hydrated and stay fresh when the temperature really drops. Simply leave water from the tap out when things are freezing outside.

BOXED OFF
Put a birdhouse or nest box out nice and early so that your visitors have somewhere to bed in before the cold snap arrives. Boxes should be placed away from the sun and with a clear flying line into them to ensure their residences will be taken up.

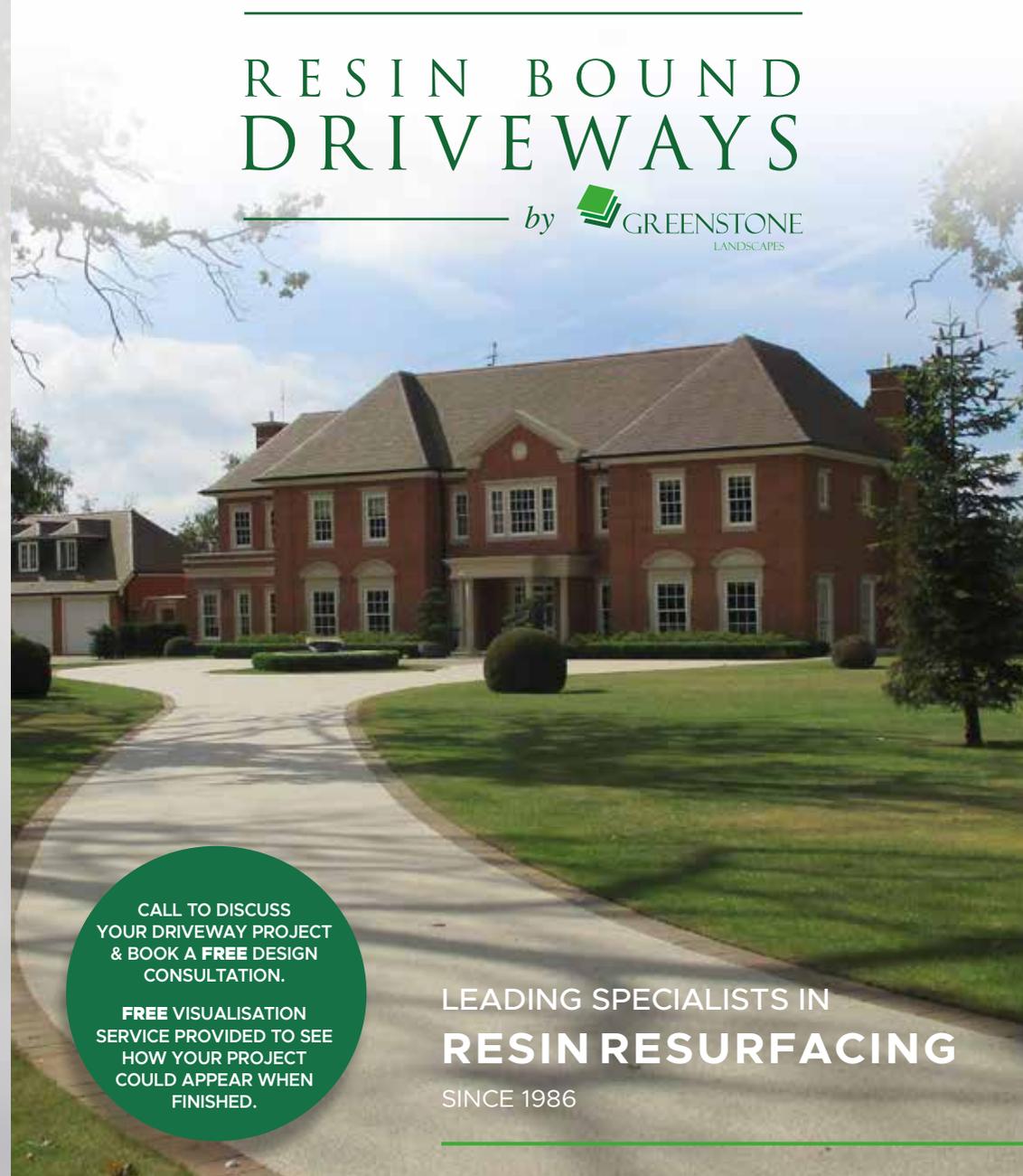
PROTECT AND RESPECT
While respecting the habitats of other garden dwellers such as cats and foxes, ensure your birds are kept well away from predators.

SORRY FOR SOGGY FOOD
Keep a close check on soggy or slushy food, as birds won't be able to digest this. That means removing anything that comes into contact with rainfall or perhaps even melting snow.

If you can master these top tips for birds, your garden will be awash this winter with colour and song — a perfect paradise for winged wildlife.

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GARDENING

Fire it up

Easy steps you can take to create your very own garden firepit

Nothing says “family and friends” quite like gathering round an open, glowing fire in the garden; yet the days of this sort of event only ever occurring in the summer, and with a sausage or two turning on a barbecue, are long gone.

Nowadays, firepits provide a practical, attractive and interesting focal point for people to socialise around, and, far from being just the domain of those long, lounging evenings of July and August, you can even fire one up in the winter months. Here's how:

1. LOCATION

Create a firepit in an area of your garden away from plants, overhanging bushes or trees, and where children typically won't be playing nearby.

2. SHAPE

Firepits are almost always circular. This gives maximum access around the edges and prevents any angled or sharp edges that people could trip over.

3. MATERIAL

This is where firepits get exciting – use stone blocks, concreted lumps of stone, terracotta plant borders or concrete blocks. Better still, if you're keen on upcycling, consider using an old washing machine drum on legs for a brilliant pot that looks sensational. Similarly, you could pick up the rim of a tractor wheel, or any other metal object that will hold heat.

4. BASE

Your base will mainly consist of a hard surface covered with gravel or sand.

5. GRILL

A simple grill suspended over the base gives you a platform on which you can cook food, or remove altogether for a simple fire by throwing on tinder, logs and any other flammable bits and pieces to give your firepit the fuel for winter warmth.



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PLANT OF THE MONTH:

Raspberry Canes



V
GARDENING

January is one of the few months of the year where you might think there is nothing to be done or grown in your garden, but that is not the case. Raspberry canes are suitable for planting in the colder months, as long as the ground is not frozen, and will result in plump and juicy berries come the summer.

- Do not plant autumn- and summer-fruiting varieties next to each other as they have different maintenance and pruning needs.
- Alternatively, you can plant your canes in a raised bed with plenty of organic matter.

WHAT TYPE OF RASPBERRY CANES TO BUY?

There are two types of raspberry canes available: summer-fruiting varieties and autumn-fruiting varieties. Summer-bearing raspberry canes produce just one crop in May/June, whereas autumn ones can produce one or two crops each year, often in early summer and then again in late summer/early autumn.

HOW TO PLANT RASPBERRY CANES:

- Look for well-drained soil that also retains water well. Avoid heavy, clay soil.
- Choose a position that is partly shady to avoid full sun on the hottest days of the summer.
- Plant your canes 20 inches apart, with each row being around 5 feet apart to avoid overcrowding and for access.

WHY GROW YOUR OWN RASPBERRIES?

Raspberries are sweet, delicious and versatile; however, they are also expensive to buy in the supermarkets. Why? Because raspberries do not continue to ripen once picked, so they are a bit of a nightmare for commercial growers. But for growing in your own garden, they are ideal.

ARE RASPBERRIES EASY TO GROW?

The plants themselves are low maintenance, and, as long as they have the right growing conditions, will provide enough fruit for your family all summer long, making them ideal for introducing children to the joys of growing your own produce.



BEAUTY

Skin: DEEP

THE BEST GADGETS FOR GREAT SKIN

We've never cared more about our skin, nor felt our dermis, epidermis and hypodermis were quite so much in demand.

Looking after our outer shell these days really is a skin-deep exercise, and luckily there are a number of gadgets on the market that make our complexions a considerable pleasure to maintain:

FOREO IRIS

A strange-looking contraption that's held to the eye. It vibrates gently, gradually stimulating the lymphatic system so that puffiness around the area is reduced. It also feels quite nice.



ZIIP BEAUTY

If you're au fait with nano-currents, you'll know that these little impulses are renowned for burrowing into the skin and aiding the increase in collagen and elastin production. Collagen is the most abundant protein in our bodies, and aiding its supply will strengthen your bones and add structure to your skin.



REVIVE LIP THERAPY

While "a moment on the lips, a lifetime on the hips" may be a rather crueler reflection of putting on weight, we should at least glory in our perfect pouts. While going down the Leslie Ash route could be deemed a step too far, the ReVive Light Therapy Lip Care tool will send a ray of infrared light onto your mouth, promoting collagen growth for thicker, fuller lips.



DRx SPECTRALITE

FACEWARE PRO LED FACE MASK

It's got a Freddie Kruger-type look that's as off-putting as its long-winded name, but this somewhat sinister-looking face mask can do wonders to your entire visage. It fires almost 200 red and blue lights onto the skin, zapping acne-producing bacteria, reducing redness and stimulating collagen... and it does it all in three minutes, so your hammer horror look needn't be taken out in public.



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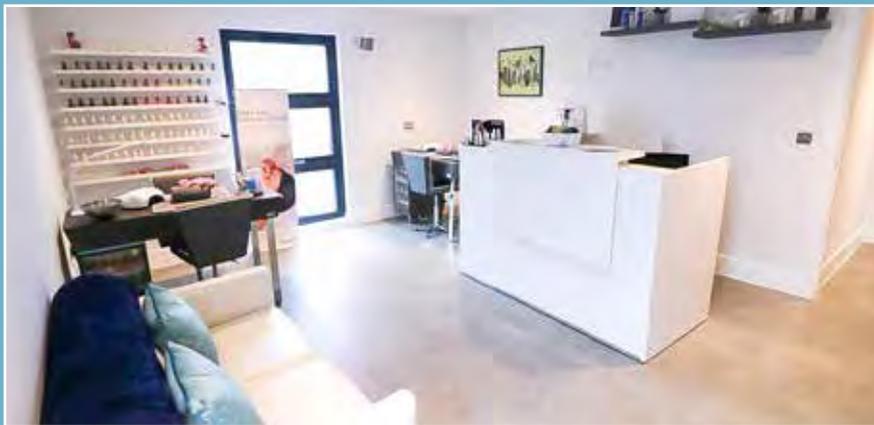


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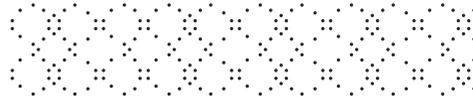
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STRESSED!
who's stressed?

You can be forgiven for feeling a tiny bit stressed in the New Year, with Christmas only just behind you, the dreaded return to work looming, not to mention the little matter of debt that you may have accumulated over the last few months of overspending (and, let's be honest, overindulging as well).
 Thankfully, there are several techniques that can help relieve this stress.

Some of the most soothing scents include lavender, bergamot, sandalwood, ylang ylang, orange blossom and chamomile.

AVOID ALL STIMULANTS

If your heart is already racing owing to stress or anxiety, the last thing you need is caffeine. Avoid, or at the very least limit, your coffee, tea and energy drink intake.



FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

Whatever the reason for your anxiety, it is not helpful to become fixated on the problem. Instead, try to focus on things that you are grateful for and elements of your life that bring about feelings of positivity.



LAUGHTER REALLY IS THE BEST MEDICINE

You may not feel like laughing, but this free activity is brilliant for improving your mental well-being and for reducing stress. When you laugh, your muscles relax, plus, in the long term, it boosts your immune system.



EMBRACE THE OUTDOORS

You may be tempted to join a gym in the New Year, but getting outside in the fresh air is much more beneficial to both your physical and your mental health. Exercise lowers your body's stress hormones and boosts your serotonin levels (the happy hormone), and fresh air has the added benefit of increasing the amount of oxygen in your body, lifting your mood and energising you from within.



SPLURGE ON SOOTHING SCENTS

Burning a candle or using essential oils is a great way to calm your mind, improve your mood and diminish any anxiety you are feeling.





Good Shot

The sight of a shot glass may send minds racing back to Friday nights in Ritzys. However, on this occasion, the end result is health, not a hangover, with "shots" and "shots" rapidly gaining in popularity for those who want to cram as much goodness into a thirsty thimble.



The Antioxidant

To reduce the risk of infections, diseases and cancer

INGREDIENTS

½ cup apple cider vinegar (120ml) • ½ cup filtered water (120ml) • 1 inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled • 1 tbsp honey • ¼ tsp Ceylon Cinnamon

PREPARATION

Combine the apple cider vinegar, water, ginger, honey and cinnamon in a blender and blitz until smooth • Divide among four shot glasses



The Daily Wellness Wonder

To boost immunity and aid alertness

INGREDIENTS

¾ cup filtered water (180ml) • 3 cups fresh kale (195g), chopped • ½ cup fresh parsley (15g), loosely packed • 2 large carrots, chopped • 2 cloves garlic

PREPARATION

Combine the water, kale, parsley, carrots and garlic in a blender and blitz until smooth • Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into a liquid measuring cup. Discard the solids • Divide among four shot glasses



The Anti-inflammatory

To limit the prospect of pain arising from inflammation and swelling

INGREDIENTS

2 oranges, juiced • 2 lemons, juiced • 1-inch piece fresh turmeric, peeled • ½ tsp black pepper • ¼ tsp cayenne

PREPARATION

Combine the orange juice, lemon juice, turmeric, pepper and cayenne in a blender and blend until smooth • Divide among four shot glasses

Photo credit: inspireidra.com

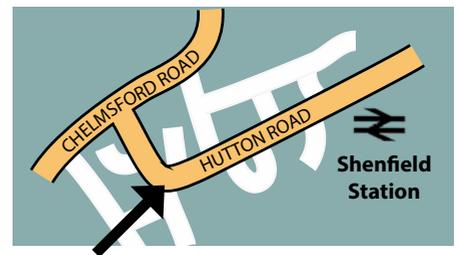


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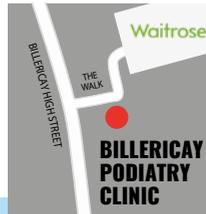
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THE FUTURE OF FASHION is fluid

Gender-free fashion is set to become even more popular in 2020, with well-known high street brands such as H&M and ASOS showcasing their gender-neutral fashion collections as well as more high-end designers such as Chanel leading the way in this fashion forward movement.

WHAT IS GENDER-FREE FASHION EXACTLY?

Gender-free fashion, in a nutshell, is clothing that can be worn by all genders: male, female, transgender and any other type of gender that a person may class themselves as.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF GENDER-FREE FASHION?

> Gender-free fashion is more sustainable.

Gender-free fashion garments can be shared among the sexes, meaning an item has more chance of being reused and recycled rather than ending up in landfill.

> Gender-free fashion can help put an end to stereotypes.

Gender-free fashion strives to eliminate common stereotypes by creating clothes that can be worn by anyone; no more delicate fabrics that are only for girls or strong lines that are designed exclusively for men.

> Gender-free fashion is all inclusive.

You may have always coveted one of your boyfriend's shirts, but chances are it just doesn't fit you properly. Gender-free fashion provides both women and men with the opportunity to wear all styles regardless of their gender.

HOW CAN I WEAR THIS STYLE OF CLOTHING?

- > Shop around online and check out gender-neutral fashion on Instagram to see what you like.
- > Start by adding just one gender-free item to your outfit.
- > Don't be afraid to experiment with different styles.
- > Women – opt for a loose-fitting boiler suit in a neutral colour or an oversized dress shirt paired with unisex trousers.
- > Men – take it slow and steady with a handbag, or be bold with a lace top or pussy-bow blouse.



FASHION

Photo credit: H&M

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in Case of Theft



Thankfully, long gone are the days when losing a mobile phone potentially meant opening your contacts, data and stored information up to the prying eyes of a thief.

Decent insurance policies mean landing a new phone can be quick and inexpensive, and stolen handsets can be rendered virtually useless to a thief given that there is a range of security settings in place to block them... but only if you've taken the time to set them up:

PIN

It's the simplest deterrent out there, and setting up a PIN or biometric authentication pass (such as fingerprint or facial recognition) is the quickest and most effective way to keep criminals at bay.

LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION

While police do not recommend embarking on your own Bergerac-like pursuit of a stolen mobile, a remote tracking service can tell you where your phone is in the event it's simply lost or has been picked up by mistake.

DROP AND LOCK

By logging in to another connected device, you can lock your handset and wipe data in seconds.

FACTORY RESET... WON'T RESET

Perhaps the best deterrent of all for a thief is the disabling of the factory reset function until additional authorisation has been provided.

From all the leading mobile phone manufacturers, these security processes come as standard the first time you turn on the mobile. However, in the rush to start using a new handset, it's common for us to skip parts of the process, so every now and again it's recommended you go back through to check your security settings.

Of course, the best way to prevent possible theft of your mobile is to keep it away, out of sight and in a zipped pocket or bag whenever you're not using it.



TECHNOLOGY

Go bonkers for beetroot

If you have not already embraced the 'purple trend', now is the time to do so. Incorporating more beets into your diet this January is arguably the easiest way to improve your health, both physically and mentally.

Why try beetroots?

Beetroot is an incredibly underrated and underused vegetable; it is versatile, tasty and, when in season, which is right now, it is great value for money. Not to mention the fact that this purple root vegetable is packed full of nutrients and minerals including iron, folate, magnesium, betaine and other antioxidants that help protect your body from free radicals.

Beets are also known for:

- Lowering blood pressure
- Preventing dementia
- Preventing constipation
- Lowering cholesterol
- Improving performance when exercising

The history of beetroots

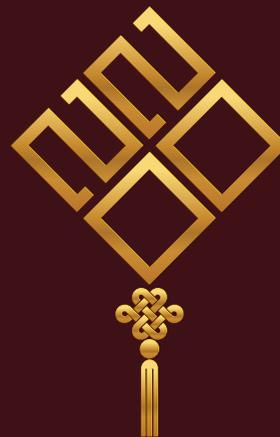
Beets were first cultivated by the Romans and soon became popular owing to their ability to be converted into sugar, as well being used as an aphrodisiac. Nowadays, beetroots are more associated with central and Eastern European cooking; most famously in borscht, a delicious beetroot soup.

How can I eat beetroots?

Another great thing about beetroots is the myriad of ways that you can eat them: raw, dried, pickled, roasted, boiled, pureed or juiced – you can even use beet leaves on a salad. Roasting is arguably the most popular method, though, as it is extremely simple to do and produces sweet and tender beetroot that can be eaten warm right away or later when cooled on a salad. Simply trim your raw beetroot (no need to peel), drizzle with olive oil, salt and pepper and roast at 200 degrees for 45 minutes.

Inspirational beetroot recipes you can try at home:

- Beetroot and pear puree
- Red velvet beetroot cake
- Beetroot, goats cheese and walnut salad
- Risotto with beetroot greens



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Jumping for JOY!

Veganuary is upon us once again, and for the carnivores among us, the thought of going meat-free (not to mention all the other tasty animal products that we are asked to forgo) can be an unsettling thought.

However, what if there were a vegan ingredient you could cook with that mimicked the meat-eating experience?

What is jackfruit?

Jackfruit, also known as jack tree, is a relative of the fig, mulberry and breadfruit family. Originating in southwest India, this bulbous fruit is most famous for its ability to imitate pulled pork or other meat-based meals.



Jackfruit Curry

YOU WILL NEED:

- 1 onion
- 1 tsp ginger
- 3 garlic cloves
- 2 tbsp curry powder
- 1 tbsp flour
- 1 cup vegetable stock
- 1 can coconut cream
- 1 can tomatoes
- 1 can jackfruit – drained and rinsed

HOW TO MAKE:

- Cook onion until soft
- Add ginger, garlic and other spices
- Lower heat and add flour
- Pour in stock, cream and tomatoes, cook for 3 minutes
- Add jackfruit
- Cook for 20–25 minutes
- Shred the jackfruit



BBQ Pulled Jackfruit

YOU WILL NEED:

- 1 red onion
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp cumin
- 2 tsp smoked paprika
- 2 tsp chipotle Tabasco
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 4 tbsp BBQ sauce
- 1 can chopped tomatoes
- 2 cans young jackfruit in salted water

HOW TO MAKE:

- Cook onion until soft
- Add spices
- Add Tabasco, vinegar and 3 tbsp BBQ sauce
- Add tomatoes, jackfruit and 200ml water
- Simmer for 30 minutes (lid on), stirring to break up jackfruit
- Remove lid and cook for a further 10 minutes
- Shred jackfruit and add 1 tbsp BBQ sauce



Jackfruit (no tuna) Sandwich

YOU WILL NEED:

- 1 can young jackfruit in water
- ¼ cup finely chopped red onion
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 4 tbsp Veganise (vegan mayo)
- Relish

HOW TO MAKE:

- Rinse jackfruit and pat dry
- Shred with a fork
- Mix with all other ingredients
- Season to taste



Photo credit: www.veganjournal.com

Giggling Squid

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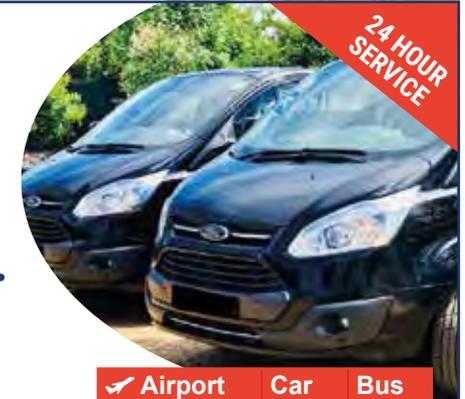
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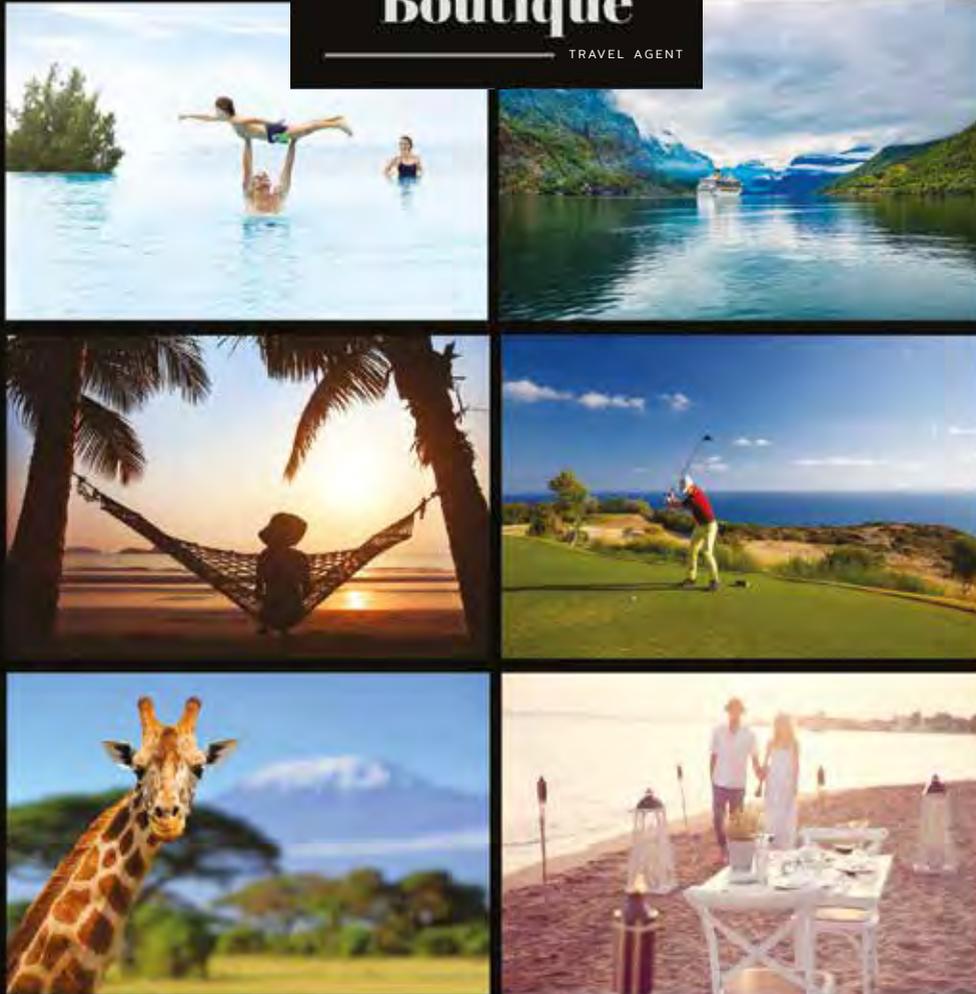
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YORK MINSTER, York

One of the world's most magnificent cathedrals, it has been drawing advocates of faith, solitude and mind-blowing architecture since the 7th century. Put another way, when the foundations were laid at Paris's Notre-Dame, York Minster had already been welcoming people in for 500 years.

In 2020 it offers multi-sensory services, exhibitions, events and open days in a celebration of contemplative contentment.

ROYAL ARMOURIES MUSEUM, Leeds

A £42.5million purpose-built museum constructed in Leeds dock, the Royal Armouries looks at the passages and processes of war across the globe, with weaponry, artefacts, re-enactments

and tributes to those who have fought for their principles. And, as with all national museums, entry is free.

TROPICAL BUTTERFLY HOUSE, Sheffield

Whoever thought York would become renowned for its blend of tropical animals, from lizards to tarantulas, birds to snakes? Add in otters, owls and creepy-crawlies... oh, and a few thousand butterflies, and the Tropical Butterfly House in Sheffield – which also doubles as a falconry centre – is a natural world wonder. Last year it celebrated its 25th birthday.

THE BOTANICAL GARDENS, Sheffield

Situated very close to the city centre, Sheffield's Botanical Gardens are every bit the paradise of calm and serenity we associate with the likes of Kew or the Eden Project. The 19-acre site slopes majestically, offering wonderful views from green spaces, tree-clustered woods, bespoke gardens and spectacular Grade II-listed glass pavilions. With music, theatre, art shows and Christmas events, this is truly an all-year-round attraction for open-air enthusiasts.

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A Depending on what kind of cover you're after, insurance can provide a safety net against a variety of risks you face on a daily business. Insurance can be the difference between your business running smoothly or going under. The difference between your delivery vehicle being off the road for months or days.

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A Whether combining multiple risks on to a single policy or simply looking at your cover levels, there's plenty of ways you could save money on your insurance. Why not get in touch with us and see if we can save you money?

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WHAT'S THE DEAL

with Deborah?



How has Deborah Meaden achieved cult status in the reality business show that has inspired a nation of entrepreneurs?

We've all seen it – the idea, the pitch, the raised eyebrows, the fluttering of notebooks, the casual panning of the camera across wads of cash, the inquisition, and finally, a handshake... or two, or more.

Since *Dragon's Den* first leapt onto our screens in January 2005, the format of the show has remained largely the same, with Deborah Meaden present in seat four since series three.

"Of course, at its heart, it's a television show, and we shouldn't look too far beyond that," says Meaden. "Yes, it would be lovely to think cash is handed over in the green room and new business partners retire to a local hostelry for a celebratory pint, but the rigours and demands of production schedules mean relationships on the day are brief and incredibly hands off, with even those successful deals.

"It is a strange concept for a few reasons,"

continues Meaden. "In real life, you would rarely shake hands on a deal just 20 minutes after first meeting someone, and the level of due diligence that is liberally cast aside during negotiations makes it a peculiar way to do business.

"However," she states, "real deals do get cut, and on occasions the format really does permit the instinct and desire to 'take a punt' over applying rational business sense, and I do feel we all need a bit of that from time to time."

Certainly, there has been nothing conventional about the 60-year-old's own path to an estimated wealth of £40million. Even today, she sleeps in until 8.30am then walks around her Somerset garden bare-footed in order to establish a feeling of being grounded.

In the past, the holiday park queen of the south-west took on all manner of jobs while working her way up, building finances and embracing the value of experience that accompanied roles as diverse as a bingo caller, pony ride supervisor and salesroom model.

"I'll never look back on any experience and say it

was a waste of time," she says.

"We build knowledge all the time, and learning on the job is by far the most valuable of all."

As for Meaden's advice for those either setting out for the first time or looking to inject renewed vigour into their business lives, she has the following five tips to consider:

ONE: You are the boss – the organisation will behave as you do, so be driven at all times.

TWO: Don't be distracted – only focus on the elements that will take your business forward.

THREE: Adapt your plan – be flexible and willing to change your way forward.

FOUR: Believe the dream – be passionate, authentic and optimistic at all times.

FIVE: Forgive yourself – you don't have to get everything right.

"The thing is, whether we are in a television studio at Salford Quays shooting *Dragon's Den* or sat in an office in Canary Wharf, what we're talking about is, essentially, all the same thing – business involves real people, these are life ambitions and livelihoods at stake, and there are few things more fulfilling in life than cutting a deal."

Photo credits: Cam Nguyen/Shutterstock

ON YOUR RADAR – KEY PERSONAL FINANCE TIPS

Taking the time to tune in to a few key pointers can really benefit your finances, helping you plan and manage them effectively.

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The ISA allowance for 2019-20 is £20,000. Don't miss this opportunity to save or invest tax-efficiently. We can help you choose the right ISA for your needs.

KEEP TABS ON YOUR PENSIONS

If you've moved jobs a few times, it's likely you've paid into several pensions. It's important to know what your entitlements are; we can advise you whether you'd be better off consolidating them.

YOUR STATE PENSION AGE AND ENTITLEMENT

If you're not sure when you'll receive yours, you can check the date and get a forecast of the amount you'll receive on the government's website: <https://www.gov.uk/check-state-pension>

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insurance company reduce your payout. It may be time to increase your sum insured in line with the value of your contents.

YOUR MORTGAGE RATE OF INTEREST

With the monthly mortgage repayment often a family's largest outgoing, it's important to review your mortgage, as there may be a better deal to be had by remortgaging, especially if you're currently paying interest at your lender's standard variable rate.

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The value of investments can go down as well as up and you may not get back the full amount you invested. The past is not a guide to future performance and past performance may not necessarily be repeated.

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Got your NUMBER

WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF AN ELECTRIC CAR REVOLUTION, BUT WILL GREEN NUMBER PLATES REALLY KEEP SALES RISING?

If you consider all the benefits of purchasing an electric car, screwing on a green number plate would probably be well down the list, except environmental boffins believe otherwise.

In a scheme that could come into effect as early as next year, a lairy green registration may be another step towards convincing people to swap petrol for electric power. That's because local authorities may allow green-plated vehicles to drive in bus lanes, or perhaps to park for free in otherwise paid-for bays.

However, in response to the plans, less than a quarter of drivers supported the idea, suggesting the real incentives to go green should come in the form of a more plentiful supply of charging points, better incentives for existing car owners and cheaper entry-level vehicles.

Some also warned that priority being given

to cars with green number plates may harbour resentment and possible road rage, particularly in busy city centres.

It was also claimed that to let green cars use bus lanes would slow traffic in those areas, thus encouraging public transport users to abandon buses and return to using their motors.

Regardless, with more than 25,000 electric vehicles registered in the UK last year, our adoption of green travel initiatives is clearly on the rise. It's a positive response for the government, who continue their pledge to hit their 2050 target of net zero emissions.

For that to happen, a few more of us will have to adopt electric cars, and with consumers receiving £3,500 towards the cost of a new vehicle, many more are considering leaving petrol and diesel vehicles in the slow lane.



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SPORT

UEFA EURO2020: England Expects



Whisper it quietly, but England are the tournament favourites to win the Euros in 2020, and here's why.

Way back in 1996 we were waiting for football to come home, and some 24 years later the train is yet to pull in at Wembley Central. Yet what Gareth Southgate couldn't do as a player he may just achieve as a manager, if the bookmakers are to be believed.

Having qualified for the summer's pan-continental European Championships in sumptuous fashion, the Three Lions have every chance of clinching a major trophy for the first time since the 1966 World Cup, with semi-finals and final to be held at Wembley.

As UEFA delegates and bigwigs conducted a typically pompous draw in Budapest at the end of November, England's group became clear, as did the reality that they will perhaps never have a better chance to win a major tournament.

England were drawn in Group D along with Czech Republic, Croatia – who beat us in the World Cup semi-final in 2018 – and either Scotland, Israel, Norway or Serbia.

Not only does that line-up look palatable, but only eight teams of the 24 entrants bow out at the group stage, meaning it's arguably more difficult to exit the tournament than qualify in the initial knockings.

That said, other groups already look somewhat foreboding, with Germany, France and Portugal all locking horns in Group F; and even Spain perhaps not relishing the threat of Poland and Sweden in Group E.

- > **Group A:** Italy, Switzerland, Turkey, **Wales**
- > **Group B:** Belgium, Russia, Denmark, Finland
- > **Group C:** Ukraine, Netherlands, Austria (plus one team TBD March 2020)
- > **Group D:** **England**, Croatia, Czech Republic (plus one team TBD March 2020)
- > **Group E:** Spain, Poland, Sweden (plus one team TBD March 2020)
- > **Group F:** Germany, France, Portugal (plus one team TBD March 2020)

England have never been favourites to win a major tournament... until now. In Southgate's young lions we trust.

Photo credit: Pix/Hound/Shutterstock.com

UEFA EURO - Group D (March 2020)		
England	19/20	4/0
Croatia		

UEFA EURO - Group D (March 2020)		
England	18/20	20/0
TBD		

UEFA EURO - Group D (March 2020)		
Czech Republic	19/20	20/0
England		



SPORT



TOKYO 2020 THE NEW SPORTS



1. SKATEBOARDING

In the first of a new series, we look at five sports preparing to debut at the Tokyo Olympics in 2020

Considering that, over the course of the last 120 years, the Olympics have embraced such bizarre sports as tug of war, rope climbing and pistol duelling, it seems somewhat perverse that it's taken until the year 2020 for organisers to have put in an order for some halfpipes and knee pads.

Better late than never, skateboarding debuts in Tokyo in 2020, with a watching world keen to see what the quirky pursuit will do for the reputation of such an iconic global tournament. And therein lies the rub – that while the IOC is keen to expand its reach into sports that resonate so readily with people all across the globe (and let's be honest, you'd be hard pressed to find someone who hasn't stepped onto a board at some point), the professional skateboarders are reportedly nervy about appearing under the somewhat formal, mainstream, structured Olympic tag.

With that in mind, it will be

interesting to see how the Japanese present the sport, which will debut from July 24. There are 80 spots open to competitors – 38 men and 38 women from outside nations, and two each for the hosts.

Judges will rate boarders on speed, difficulty, timing, stability and the overall flow of the performance, while special attention will be paid to the performers' ability to suspend in mid-air.

Qualifying for the Olympics continues right up until June, which means an intensive period of competition, with the male and female winner staking the kudos of being their country's sole representatives.

At the moment, the British number one is Sam Beckett from Norfolk (pictured), although with a global ranking of 92 he'll have to go some to get in the medals, in a sport typically dominated by the Americans.



Photo credit: skateism.com

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WHAT'S ON

WHAT'S ON

in your area

Photofold Camera Club
The Billericay Fold, 72 Laindon Road,
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Tuesdays, 8pm



Photo credit: Photofold Camera Club

Are you interested in photography? Whether a beginner or experienced, you are welcome to join the Photofold Camera Club at the Billericay Fold at 8pm on Tuesday evenings.

Member evenings are designed to entertain and educate so that you can get more from your hobby.

For information visit photofold.org.uk or call Chris on 07341 835879.

Councillor Surgery
Billericay Library, 143 High Street, Billericay,
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January 18, 10.30am – 12pm
Billericay borough and county councillors will be holding their monthly surgery.

Pop to see them and discuss any issues. No appointment necessary.

Holocaust Exhibition
Main Hall, Brentwood County High School,
Seven Arches Road, Shenfield Common,
Brentwood, CM14 4JF

January 25, 2.30pm – 6pm
A Holocaust Exhibition suitable for all ages, featuring Nicholas Winton, British Kindertransport rescuer, and Corrie Ten Boom, who hid Jews in Holland.

Refreshments available for a small charge.
Free admission (everyone welcome), but donations welcome.

Meeting of Commemoration for Holocaust Memorial Day

Main Hall, Brentwood County High School,
Seven Arches Road, Shenfield Common,
Brentwood, CM14 4JF
January 25, 6.30pm

Meeting of Commemoration for Holocaust Memorial Day with speaker Ernest Simon followed by Lighting of Memorial Candles for the six million victims of the Nazi Holocaust.

Free admission (everyone welcome). Freewill offering will be given in the meeting.

Know the Basics Photography Workshop
Essex Wildlife Trust, Hanningfield Reservoir
Visitor Centre, Hawkwood Road, Downham,
Billericay, CM11 1WT

January 26, 10am – 4pm
Daniel Bridge is running a one-day workshop designed to help you get the most from your camera. Baffled by ISO, aperture, P, A, S and M? All these and more are covered during the morning session, with a slideshow and discussion guiding you through the main controls common to all cameras.

After a break for lunch, you will go out for a walk to put your new-found knowledge to good use, trying out the controls on the cameras and seeing the differences you can make to your photos.

All this for just £60 per person, with a maximum of 10 participants.

For more information, call the Essex Wildlife Trust Visitor Centre at Hanningfield Reservoir on 01268 711001 to book your place.



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