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JUNE 2022

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Next time, make sure we're ready



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In This Issue...



Welcome to our special Platinum Jubilee issue, celebrating the remarkable legacy of the longest-reigning

British monarch and

longest-serving female head of state in history, Queen Elizabeth II.

On p54, we revisit a 1945 *Life* magazine article profiling the young Elizabeth before she became the queen. Written at the end of the Second World War, it's a fascinating insight into how the public viewed this ambitious young woman on the cusp of entering an extraordinary lifetime of duty.

On p114, you'll find a Jubilee baking special—your guide to making the tastiest celebratory treats; and on p118, we take a look at a dynamic new documentary on the Queen, bursting with meticulously researched archive footage and special guests.

Eva



As people across the world fight to combat the damage we're doing to our planet, solutions to the environmental crisis are being found in surprising places. We explore one of these on p54 with the story of Canadian cattle farmer Joe Dorgan. Joe, whose farm includes coastal paddocks, was amazed to discover that the bovine residing by the ocean yielded more milk, had fewer udder infections and produced less greenhouse gas emissions than the cows in other fields. The reason? They were eating seaweed! And so a new kind of cattle-feed was discovered with the potential to change the world.

Have you discovered ways to make your life more eco-friendly? We'd love to hear about them. Email readersletters@readersdigest.co.uk with your story.

Anna

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I felt my stomach was going to explode!



Jane started to have embarrassing stomach problems. She tried many treatments and sought advice, but it kept coming back. Then she tried dida™.

"It started little by little. At the beginning I thought it was something I had eaten. But I realised that no matter what I was eating I had the same awful problems. It was the eating itself! My stomach reacted at once, getting bloated and I was plagued by wind. I felt as if there was yeast in my stomach!

Sweets and carbs

It was as if sweets and other things like biscuits, cakes, pasta and potatoes made the problem worse. I really felt quite ill and my friends said I looked pregnant!

Lack of energy

I was constantly tired and in low spirits, all energy had been drained away and always this craving for sweets!

I tried dida™

Then I happened to come across an article regarding a new tablet named dida™.



So, I purchased a pack to try. After about 3 weeks I felt dida™ was starting to work. My stomach did not become so bloated after eating and the flatulence decreased. What joy to be able to eat normally without worrying about your stomach and what to wear to conceal the bump".

This is why dida™ is so good!

Are you affected by discomfort in your stomach? Many of us live with the problem for years without recognising the cause – often this can be caused by something people commonly know as the "yeast syndrome". An Imbalance in the stomach can affect your whole body. It can take hold and influence your day - to - day well-being. New scientific research shows that cinnamon and other well known spices and herbs have a positive influence on your health and any imbalance in your stomach.



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Over To You

LETTERS ON THE *April* ISSUE

We pay **£50** for Letter of the Month and **£30** for all others

LETTER OF THE MONTH

I totally agreed with Roger Black's suggestion to launch a buddy-up system for young and old to reduce isolation from the "If I Ruled The World" feature in your April magazine.

When I worked at a charity for the elderly, we arranged a few intergenerational tea events between elderly people and school children and the benefits for both young and old were clear to see.

The smiles between both generations while chatting, and the interest shown in each other was deeply moving, especially the hugs and laughter throughout the day. Each generation can stand to learn a lot from each other, and I think that regular intergenerational events in our schools and communities would be a great thing too, as social isolation is sadly spreading through all age groups.

Older people have such good stories to tell and such wisdom to learn from, which we should embrace, before they are gone and it is too late.

GERALDINE SYSON, *Glasgow*



CHUFFED FOR CHESTER

I was born in Chester and I visit whenever I can—I lived there for 39 years. So I enjoyed your article "My Britain: Chester" as it brought back many lovely memories. I used to think it was a privilege to live within the city walls and I was intrigued to learn more facts about one of my favourite places. Chester is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful cities in the UK. It's been praised as a place which continues to thrive 2,000 years on from its Roman origins. It rightly deserved to be crowned the second best place to live in the North West by the *Times* in 2018 (my mother still proudly, tells everyone this fact).

JASON DAVID,
Hertfordshire

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND

I was surprised reading “From Here To Eternity” by exactly how many choices after death there are nowadays, far from simply being laid to rest in a churchyard. Anthropologists laud the common human practice of burying our dead as one of the hallmark traits that set us apart from other primates. Town planners, on the other hand, must lament it.

The dilemma is that most of our graveyards and cemeteries are nearly full, yet people have a nasty habit of continuing to die.

My family have spoken about death quite openly and we have all agreed that we want to be



cremated and then have our ashes spread in the ocean or up mountains. But I liked these other new options too—combining ashes into a vial of tattoo ink, donating yourself to science, getting shot into space, floating out in a Viking boat, becoming a coral reef...

These other options certainly all beat the idea of lying for all eternity in an overcrowded cemetery.

RYAN GEORGE, *Denbigh*



HANGING ON THE TELEPHONE

“A Century Of Change” (April 2022) reminded me of the thrill that I felt on arriving

home from school one afternoon to discover that my parents had had a telephone installed.

There it sat on its own little table in the hall with a brand new directory alongside it and I couldn't wait to make

my first call. The problem was that none of my friends were “on the phone”, as we said in those days, so I ended up dialling the number of a girl in my form whom I barely knew. When she answered, all I could think of was to ask a question about our maths homework. She didn't know the answer but seemed pleasantly surprised to hear from me and we became good friends after that.

MAGGIE COBBETT, *Rippon*

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Include your full name, address, email and daytime phone number. We may edit letters and use them in all print and electronic media

Just Cycle And fold away

There's no excuse not to get on your bike this Spring. Get your indoor cycling fix and feel the benefits.

Great for general cardio fitness, exercise bikes can be a brilliant way of training at home. However, choosing the right bike is incredibly important, which is something that Roger Black and his team recognised when creating the Roger Black Folding Exercise Bike.

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Anna, Farnham



Roger Black is offering a 10% discount on the full www.rogerblackfitness.com range of home fitness equipment for all Reader's Digest readers. Please use discount code **DIGEST10** at checkout. Standard T&Cs apply.





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SEE THE WORLD...

turn the page →



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...DIFFERENTLY

A snow-white beach as far as the eye can see! Shell Beach stretches for more than 40 miles on the west coast of Australia. The name says it all, because what is sparkling in the sunlight here is not sand but billions of tiny shells in a layer up to ten metres thick. They all come from a single species of mollusc, the Shark Bay cockle. In the past, these were pressed and cut into blocks to build houses in the nearby town of Denham.

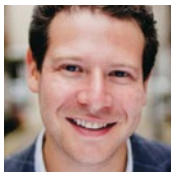
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A Pot To Pee In

Olly Mann goes head-to-head with the ultimate parenting challenge—potty training

SMALL CHILDREN CAUSE amnesia. Ask anybody who possesses a car seat to hold forth on their current phase of child-rearing, and they'll wax lyrical about warming up milk bottles, or baby-proofing the house, or teaching phonemes, or which holiday camp is best. Ask them three months later—when their kid has moved on to the next stage of life—and they'll draw a blank. They'll have no idea. They will literally not remember the very issues that, just a few weeks earlier, had been the bread-and-butter of their parenting.

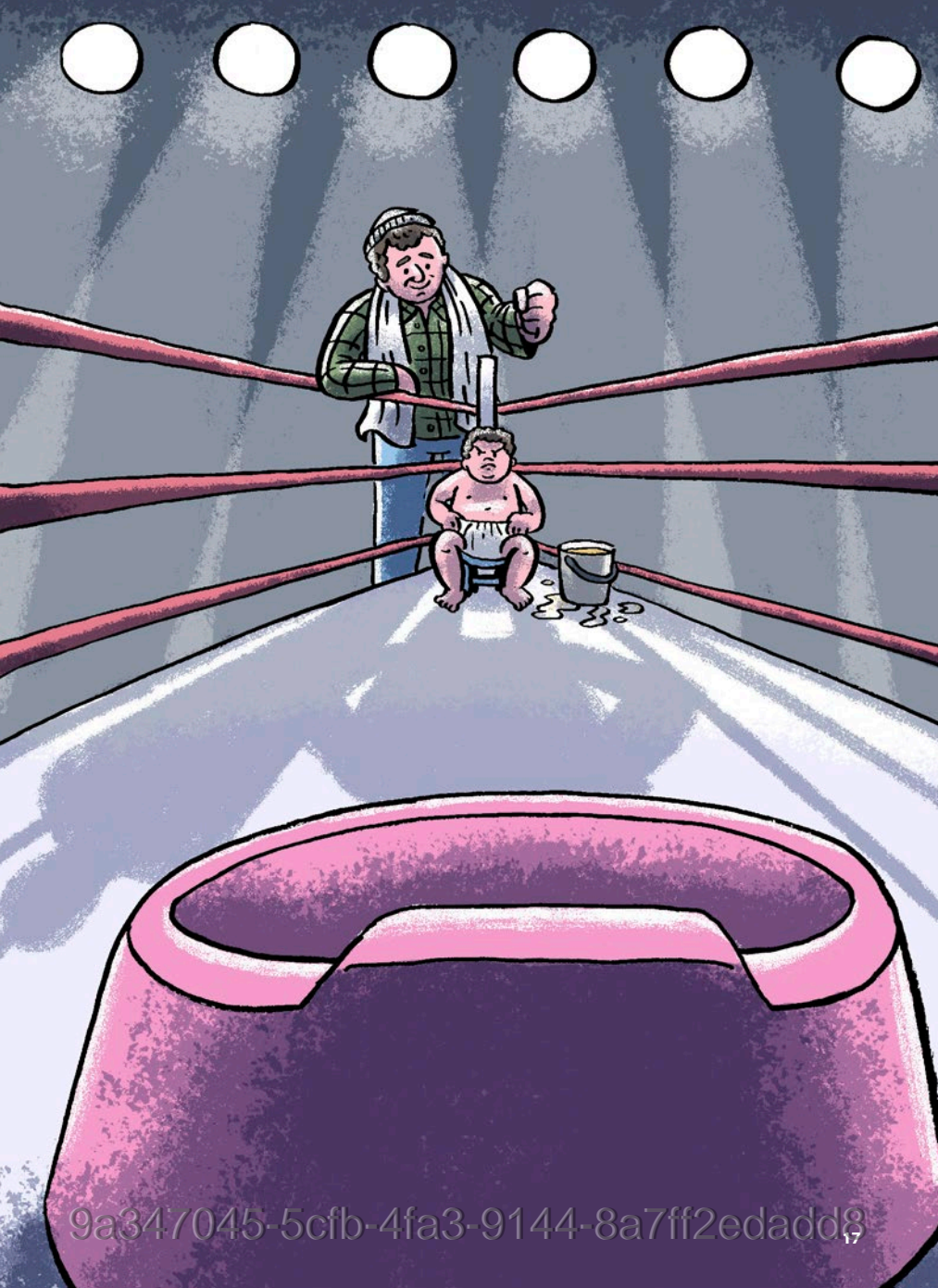
So it is when it comes to potty training. I've already been through



Olly Mann presents *Four Thought* for BBC Radio 4, and the podcasts *The Modern Mann*, *The Week Unwrapped* and *The Retrospectors*

it once—well, twice, if you include my own personal transition to drier bedsheets—and yet I simply cannot remember the details of how it's achieved. My eldest son, Harvey, now six, can take himself to the loo, aim his appendage with precision and wipe his bum like a champ, but I have no recollection of how it all happened. I just know that he used to be in nappies, and now, three years later, he isn't, and, presumably, at some point in-between, we worked it all out.

This presents a challenge, because the time has come for our second son, Toby, to be inducted into the defecatory Hall of Fame. Selfishly, I determined the timeline for his urinary conversion around our holiday schedule: I insisted upon waiting until after Easter, because we were in Cyprus, and I couldn't face queuing for the Easyjet lavs with wee running down my arm. And we're off



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to the South of France in July, and I don't want to be changing nappies in the heat either. So, the time is now. Frankly, after nearly three years wrapping Toby's soiled paper pants into scented plastic bags and chucking them into landfill, we've punished the planet enough.

One thing I can recall from our first crack at potty training is that I had a guidebook: *Oh Crap!* by

Jamie Glowacki, self-proclaimed "Pied Piper of Poop". She has somehow churned out 295 pages of wisdom on this insalubrious topic, and—although her book does include a patronising two-page "Cheat Sheet" for dads (which assumes mums do the donkey-work)—I found it to be highly useful advice.

So much so, in fact, that I lent my copy to my friend Ben, who then lent it to a mate of his, but now can't remember whom. Glowacki has, cannily, paywalled her most pertinent advice online, but I refuse to buy another copy—I'll be damned if I'm going to spend another £9 learning how to poo.

So, I've had to cobble Toby's programme together, but I did remember Glowacki's Step One: to psychologically prepare your toddler

a few days ahead of time, eg, "next week we're throwing away your nappies", "only a few days now until we say bye-bye to nappies!", etc. I can recommend this as a way of adding poignancy to otherwise plebeian proceedings: as the cupboard door swung shut and Toby waved farewell to his Pampers, it was as if the curtains were closing at a crematorium.

TOBY
IMMEDIATELY
BONDED WITH
HIS BRIGHT
PINK POTTY,
CARRYING IT
EVERYWHERE,
LIKE A GUCCI
MAN-BAG

Next, approximating Glowacki's soft-soap psychological techniques, I took Toby to "choose" his potty. The pharmacy only had one in stock, and it was bright pink. By nature, Toby is more of a diggers-and-dinosaurs kinda guy, but he immediately bonded with it, and started carrying it everywhere, like a Gucci man-bag.

Then, he and I spent a day at home (yes, my wife was at work—take that, Glowacki!); he naked, I constantly placing him on the potty, he continually peeing all over the floor. Not just the floor, but the rug, the stairs, the doormat, a basket full of toilet rolls, a selection of his brother's Hot Wheels, and—in what I am calling his *Piss De Resistance*—over half a dozen chocolate eggs on the window

ledge (we have a window-seat. A tractor drove by. He got excited).

Following the laws of stopped clocks and typewriting monkeys, Toby did actually manage to wee in the potty itself a couple of times, though no intention seemed to lie behind the achievement. Number Twos, luckily, were a cinch: I wasn't even involved. "Poo coming, poo coming," he had shouted from the living room, as I towelled off yet another of his sprays from the freezer door. I grumpily entered the lounge expecting a scene from *Pulp Fiction*, but there it was—a brown globular gift from the gods, sitting in the potty I had left on a plastic sheet, more in

hope than expectation.

After three days of chasing him round repeatedly asking, "Do you need a wee?" like a mantra, the message on Number Ones now appears to be cutting through, too. Today I was awoken by my wife's celebratory whooping as Toby climbed upstairs, proudly and precariously balancing a potty full of pee.

Tomorrow, another milestone: he's off to nursery in his "big boy pants". So, I reckon we're about four days away from him having mastered self-initiation.

Just don't ask me about it in three months' time. I won't remember. ■

A love story both raunchy and heartfelt

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Juliette Binoche

On Her Path, Passion And Parenting

By James Mottram

The French cinema icon opens up about her early days as a student, career breakthrough, and why, with more than 60 films under her belt, “she’s not a workaholic”

THE DAY BEFORE we meet, Juliette Binoche was in the French Alps. Today, she’s reclining in a suite in Berlin’s Hotel Marriott, dressed in scarlet trousers, a white blouse and eye-catching silver platforms. “We arrived last night at 12,” she says, casually brushing off her hectic schedule. It’s been this way for four decades now, ever since she blew up at the Cannes Film Festival as a 21-year-old, starring in 1985’s *Rendez-vous* as—guess what?—a would-be actress. The film was a sensation and “La Binoche”; as the French call her, was born.

“Before that, people didn’t know me,” she reflects now. “I had roles here and there—with great directors, of course—but they didn’t really take

off. You have to have the role in order to take off.” And take off she did. Almost immediately, people were fascinated with this enigmatic raven-haired *ingénue*. “After *Rendez-vous*, when I started, somebody asked me about doing an autobiography of my life... when I was 21!” she reveals, incredulous at this preposterous notion. “Some people actually thought about it.”

Instead, Binoche concentrated on an unassailable rise through the ranks of world cinema, working alongside Daniel Day-Lewis (*The Unbearable Lightness of Being*), Jeremy Irons (*Damage*) and Ralph Fiennes (*The English Patient*)—the film that would win her a Best Supporting Actress Oscar in 1997. Rather than succumb to Hollywood’s



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Daniel Day-Lewis and Juliette Binoche in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1988)

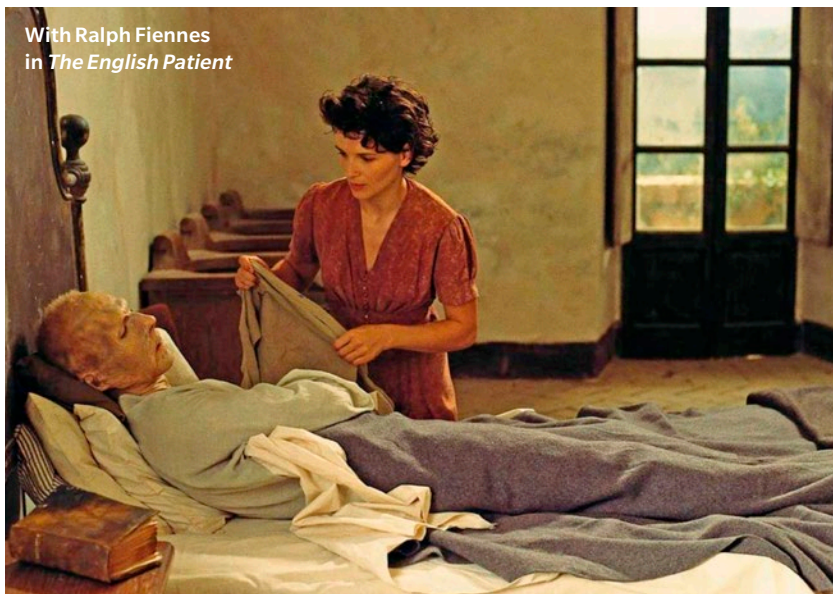
lure, bar the odd blockbuster, Binoche simply continued working with celebrated filmmakers from around the globe, cultivating a reputation as a risk-taker.

“For me, the risk is to repeat myself or get into a comfort zone that is not opening my horizons,” she says, sipping from her mint tea. In person, she’s friendly, playful even (a previous encounter of ours ended with her throwing a cushion at me)—a stark contrast to the tragic characters, like her grief-stricken musician in *Three Colours: Blue*, she’s embodied on screen. Yet she’s not above self-mockery; see her in the French show *Call My Agent!* where she is trying on a tight-fitting,

feathery outfit. “I’ll lose five pounds before Cannes,” she snaps. “Then put on ten.”

Now 58, there isn’t much this artist extraordinaire hasn’t done. On stage, she starred with Akram Khan at London’s National Theatre in dance piece *In-i*. “When you’re not a dancer, then you see that you need courage, you need trust and you need an alchemy that is inside you that is going to take place,” she says. She also sang in the show *It’s Almost Nothing*, a tribute to Monique Andrée Serf, and “would love” to film a musical. Which one? “I would never answer that,” she smiles. “A film is a connection of different people.” In other words, it’s about creative alchemy.

With Ralph Fiennes
in *The English Patient*



“YOU’VE GOT TO BELIEVE IN YOUR OWN PATH— NOBODY IS GOING TO BELIEVE BEFORE YOU”

Rarely does Binoche rest on her laurels. When we meet, she’s flown in from the Alpine set of Christophe Honoré’s autobiographical film *Le Lycéen*—“I’m playing his mother,” she grins, patently aware of what a minefield that is—to attend the premiere of *Both Side of the Blade*, a Parisian-set marital drama by Claire Denis. Before either of those hit these shores, though, Binoche can be seen in *Between Two Worlds*, a riveting take on journalist Florence Aubenas’ non-fiction best-seller, *The Night Cleaner*.

Emmanuel Carrère, the director of *Between Two Worlds*, calls her “tenacious” and it’s hard to disagree. The film casts her as Marianne Winckler, a fictionalised take on Aubenas, who went undercover in northern France to investigate the brutal world of cleaning staff, working in dehumanising conditions for a pittance. In the film, Marianne befriends several other women, who relentlessly clean ferries that cross between France and England, enduring gruelling night shifts.

When Binoche arrived on set, she

*Between
Two Worlds*



had little time to prepare—with her sculptor father Jean-Marie Binoché desperately ill at the time (he later died, in July 2019, aged 86).

“I was in a state of exhaustion. I was sick. I was losing my father. It was a combination of being in a sort of tunnel. And I thought that was the best state in a way. As they’re running around, walking kilometres to go do two hours’ work, or working very early in the morning before the light appears, or working very late at night... they’re in a state of urgency and exhaustion.”

Co-starring with non-professionals, all too familiar with this world of zero-hours contracts, Binoché was taken by

the descriptions in the book of these service industry folk who felt invisible, ignored, overlooked.

“They’re like cupboards,” she says, simply. “Not existing for others.” With passers-by barely paying them a glance or a kind word, “something human”, she wanted to show just how demoralising this can be. “That really was my need to make this film,” she says. “We de-humanise ourselves very quickly if we’re not paying attention.”

Binoché’s own bourgeoisie background may be light years away from her co-stars, but it was an upbringing that gained her great empathy for others—surely, one of



the most essential tools as an actor. Born in Paris, she and her sister Marion were initially sent to a Catholic boarding school by her mother, actress Monique Stalens, who'd split from Binoche's father when their daughter was just four. She later attended a specialised arts school in Paris, before winning places at the National School of Dramatic Art of Paris and, later, the Paris Conservatoire.

Better yet, she found her independence early. "As a student, you've got to believe in your own path and creation as an actor," she says. "Nobody is going to believe before you. Of course it was worrying my parents, me being an actress,

because it was very uncertain. And being in theatre, they knew how much of a struggle it was. I had a little bit of help the first year, as a student, from my mother. She gave me some money to pay for my theatre class, so at least that was done. And my first boyfriend was Italian, and he was very generous as well. So I didn't have to find a place to live because I was living with him."

After that "it was a struggle", with Binoche scraping by a living working as a cashier in the department store BHV. Then she struck gold—a role in *Hail Mary*, a film by celebrated French director Jean-Luc Godard. "I had to see the head of the BHV



*Between
Two Worlds*

and try to convince her to let me go. And she wouldn't. She said, 'You've started, and in a few years, you can go up in the shop and be a very important person.' And I tried to say, 'This is my passion. Working with Jean-Luc Godard, it's quite something as an actor.' So she said, 'Good luck, but I'm just warning you, it's a difficult job and you never know what you're going to get!'

Maybe it's why Binoché never stops, though she denies that she's forever bouncing from one film to the next. "Not at all," she insists. "I don't see myself as a workaholic. I see myself as passionate. That's a different take on it. Creating gives you energy. And when you think you're going to rest, [that's when] you get tired!" Yet even she had to switch

gears during the pandemic, which slowed down her prodigious work-rate. "The first year I went back to my stove!" she chuckles. "I had the kids at home, so I tried to be the best mother I could."

Raphaël, 28—her son with professional scuba diver André Halle, and Hannah, 22—her daughter with actor Benoît Magimel—are both grown up now, but doubtless relished the chance to spend some quality time with their mother. "[It's] important for me to allow those relationships that are challenging," she says. "Children know how to push you and they have no fear of getting the truth, or of their own needs, and that's a challenge that is always interesting and pushes you to



Juliette Binoche
on the red carpet

“BEING PAID FOR NOT DOING VERY MUCH? IT NEVER HAPPENED TO ME!”

your limits...but that’s how you grow.”

As soon as she could, Binoche got back to the grind, heading to Mississippi to shoot upcoming film *Paradise Highway*, playing a truck driver who must smuggle a teenage girl to save her own brother. Co-starring with the legendary Morgan Freeman (“I was very excited!”), it’s a very different take on a traditional tale of love, she estimates. “My love for this little girl was a love story,” she says. “The love is what takes you [on the journey] in a way.”

She’s also coming up in *The Staircase*, a juicy true-crime drama starring Colin Firth as Michael

Peterson, who was accused of murdering his wife. Binoche plays Sophie Brunet, one of the editors on the Netflix docu-series of the same name that originally chronicled the case. For her, it’s a rare opportunity to work on an American-made limited TV series. “I had a lot of free time, which I never have usually. That was a big discovery! Wow, you’re being paid for not doing very much? It never happened to me!”

Juliette Binoche taking it easy on set? Now that’s a first. ■

Between Two Worlds is in cinemas across the UK from May 27

Andy Hamilton, 67, is one of our most famous comedy writers. With partner Guy Jenkin he's written *Drop the Dead Donkey*, *Outnumbered* and *Kate & Koji*. He looks back at finding his feet in comedy and explains why he refuses to carry a mobile phone

1998-ish *Revolting People*: Andy, Jay Tarses and James Fleet



I REMEMBER...

Andy Hamilton



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MY BEDROOM WINDOW OVERLOOKED A BOMB SITE.

Because my dad was a returning prisoner of war, he got our house in Fulham at a controlled rent. Out of my window I could see the remains of about six houses overgrown with weeds, but with lots of ghostly staircases and features still there. My brother, Pete, who's seven years older than me, and I were warned



never to play on the bomb site because of the possibility of unexploded ordnance. Still, on Bonfire Night a massive bonfire would be built there and our windows would get so hot that they'd actually start to bend and move. It usually ended with the fire department being called.

I WAS BORN WITH SCOLIOSIS [A CURVATURE OF THE SPINE] AND I'VE GOT THE THUMB MISSING

ON MY RIGHT HAND.

They're just congenital things. I've not got dwarfism, which some people think because some of the vertebrae in my neck are fused and left me with a short neck. I'm five foot three—I used to be five foot four, not that I'm sensitive about it! I used to go to hospital regularly for clinical photographs. There was some worry that during puberty I would grow really fast and that would cause problems with my neck, but luckily I didn't, so there was no need for medical intervention. As a kid I was conscious of being one of the smallest in the school, but I don't think I was bullied any more than the standard level of bullying in a boys' school. I never felt singled out.

MY DAD'S EXPERIENCES OF THE WAR PROBABLY AFFECTED HIM.

He'd been a prisoner of war for five years and he was not an easy man in some ways. He was a maintenance man for an insurance company, very hardworking and capable of being very social, but also of being very distant and quite moody. We had sticky patches in our relationship. But there was no shortage of love. My mum, Sylvia, was very loving and good-natured. She worked for the Ministry of Defence and I remember her coming home at the height of the Cold War with a pamphlet telling her to stock up on

Andy with
Sylvia, Lona
and Edwin
Hallstatt, 1983



canned goods and to discreetly whitewash the windows to prepare for a nuclear war. Hard to do without arousing suspicion!

I WAS A CHOIRBOY FROM THE AGE OF SIX.

I had a decent treble voice and they would push me out in front at Christmas to sing “Away in a Manger.” It was a good choir, St Luke’s on Redcliffe Square, and we won lots of competitions. I had no religion in me at all, but I loved the music, and I still like to wander into churches and look around. I went to a direct grant grammar school called Westminster City, not Westminster School, which is a public school. Academically, I was

reasonably good. I had a tendency to be a bit lippy and argumentative.

I REMEMBER BEING ALLOWED TO STAY UP LATE TO WATCH HANCOCK.

Galton and Simpson, who wrote *Hancock’s Half Hour* [1954-61] and *Steptoe and Son* [1962-74], were a huge influence on me in terms of comedy, and the *Monty Python* lot. My dad, Jim, was quite funny in an impish or practical joke kind of way: he didn’t do verbal jokes quite so much. My uncles and aunts were funny. I think it’s a sort of working-class London thing that the way you express affection for people is by winding them up. So as a family we were all quite good wind-up merchants.

Family holiday in Scotland, 1999; (Below) with Giant MacAskill, Skye, 2004



I FELT A BIT LIKE A FISH OUT OF WATER AT CAMBRIDGE.

It was mostly because there'd been a coup in the English department the year before and it was very different to what I expected. My

friends were mostly bright Welsh kids from Methodist schools, because the rest of the college did seem to have a huge number of public school boys. I didn't join Footlights [comedy troupe] because I joined Cambridge University Light Entertainment Society [CULES]. I suppose I was quite happy being a

larger fish in a smaller pool. I joined to meet girls, principally. We did shows in old people's homes, children's hospitals and prisons, to people who couldn't get away, basically.

I THOUGHT I'D DRIFT INTO TEACHING AND BECOME SARCASTIC AND DISAPPOINTED.

But while I was at Cambridge we took shows to Edinburgh in 1975 and 1976. We were performing in an old Bovril factory and luckily for me a man called Geoffrey Perkins, then a trainee producer in comedy [later a legendary comedy producer] came to see a show, then came backstage and asked, "Who wrote that?" and when I said I had, he said, "Have

DTDD party with
Jeff Rawle and Guy
Jenkin, 1998; Sylvia's
birthday, 2002



you thought about doing it for a living?" I put the performing on hold and started writing for radio and the TV sketch show *Not the Nine O'Clock News* [1979-82].

I'VE HAD GREAT COMEDY COLLABORATORS.

In the early days there was a lot less interaction between writers and performers, but I'd already worked with Griff Rhys Jones on radio so I knew him a bit on *News*, and Mel Smith was equally brilliant. So when they started their own show, *Alas Smith and Jones* [1984-98], I wrote a fair amount for them. I also worked with Jay Tarses, a top American comedy writer who'd written for Bob Newhart and Mary Tyler Moore,

when we were both working for Hat Trick Productions. Jay and I did *Revoltin' People* [2000-06], a radio show which co-starred James Fleet. It was a very happy show. I'm currently working with the wonderful Brenda Blethyn on our sitcom *Kate & Koji*.

GUY JENKIN HAS BEEN MY WRITING PARTNER FOR 40 YEARS NOW.

I'd met him at a show by CULES in Cambridge after I'd graduated. He'd written the show and wanted to come to London, so I helped him find a place to stay—basically in a windowless room at the top of the house I was living in in south London—and comedy writing work in London. We ended up working on a lot of the same shows and started writing sketches together. We're not sure how we came up with the idea



for *Drop the Dead Donkey* [1990-98], but that was our first hit. We liked the idea of a newsroom—and of filming episodes the night before transmission so they were really topical—and knew we could write well under pressure.

OUR COMEDY *OUTNUMBERED* [2007-16] WAS A HYMN TO BAD PARENTING. By the time we started writing it, my kids [Pip, 34, Robbie, 32, and Isobel, 30] were grown up. But Guy's kids were younger and he was living through it, so between us, we had a pretty good handle on all that daily chaos. At the time, Guy was cheesed off with all the parenting manuals out there and we saw *Outnumbered* as the antidote to that: as long as there's love in the house, you muddle through. We co-directed *Outnumbered* as well, which was less common back then,

for writers to be so involved in production, but it worked well for us. We're not directing *Kate & Koji* but we go on set and deliver performance notes to the actors.

WITHOUT MY WIFE, LIBBY [ASHER], I WOULDN'T HAVE SUCCEEDED AT

ANYTHING. I got contacted a while back to do one of those reality shows where they put celebrities on a tropical island and see if they can survive. It was bewildering to be asked, because the reality is, if Libby leaves the house for more than a couple of hours, I'm probably at risk. She's an organised and dynamic person and that's what I need because I'm not either of those things. In a work context I can be organised, but not in a life setting. I don't carry a mobile phone, because they're a bit tyrannical or too fiddly.

I'M NOT A RECLUSE, BUT I DO LIKE TO BE ABLE TO SIT AND THINK. I also worry that a mobile phone would impinge on my ability to daydream. I do it when I'm strolling around. I think stuff is happening. I'm sure all writers are the same—that at any given



moment, there are lots of ideas drifting about inside their brains, and gradually the ideas acquire solidity. And that is how daydreaming is work, although, of course, it's quite hard to convince people it's not random thinking. It's a form of play, really.

**THERE IS NO LOVELIER
SOUND THAN OF A FULL
THEATRE, LAUGHING.**

That's why I've kept my hand in performing. I've performed on and off for decades, I do panel shows like *Have I Got News for You*, and



Andy with Guy; *Have I Got News For You*

since the late Nineties I've gone out, just me and a microphone. It's great to meet your audience—I'm presuming that most people come because they like my work and my style. That's why I'm going on a short tour this summer. I'll be talking about the topics of the day and I'll often leave a bucket onstage at the interval for audience members to put questions in, so we interact. It is really great fun to meet your audience. ■

As told to Vicki Power

Andy's comedy tour starts in Nottingham on June 8. For tickets, visit tincatentertainment.co.uk/news/andy-hamilton-tour

NEW HELP *For* HEARING LOSS

Today's solutions not only reunite you with easy conversations, they also reduce your chances of having a fall, becoming depressed, and more

BY *Susannah Hickling*

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“You’re coming through my hearing aids!” laughs Lynne Kingston as she enthuses on the phone about the little devices that have changed her life.

The 57-year-old from Kent had been aware of her deteriorating hearing for at least 15 years, from as young as her early forties. She constantly asked people to repeat themselves. Noisy restaurants, parties, and the telephone were a nightmare for Kingston, who runs a student accommodation rental business. “I do most of my work on the phone,” she says. “I had to put it on speakerphone, which meant everyone else could hear.”

About ten years ago she consulted a hearing specialist and tried basic hearing aids, but soon gave up. While they amplified all the sounds around her, she still couldn’t make out the ones she needed to hear. “I was in denial,” she says. “I thought, *I’m not that deaf!*”

But she was. Eventually, pressure from her children and a friend who wore hearing aids made her think again, as did buying her son and daughter trendy wireless Bluetooth earbuds for Christmas. “If people can have these white things sticking out of their ears, why would I be bothered about wearing a hearing aid?”

So in the summer of 2020, Kingston did some research and

was amazed at the improvements in hearing technology. She went to an audiologist to check out the different aids available, and chose ReSound One models from Danish manufacturer GN, a widely available option. She was attracted by the device’s three microphones—two in a tiny unit worn behind her ear and another mic inside the ear. These give more natural sound quality and filter out unwanted background noise. “I’ve got an app on my phone and depending on the environment I’m in, I can adjust the sound,” she says.

When Kingston put the hearing aids in, she finally realised how much she’d been missing. “I thought, *What’s that noise?*” she recalls. “It was my flip flops!”

Kingston can finally communicate normally on the phone and face to face. She is able to route television audio as well as phone conversations through her hearing aids. They are comfortable and discreet, and her self-esteem has risen as a result.

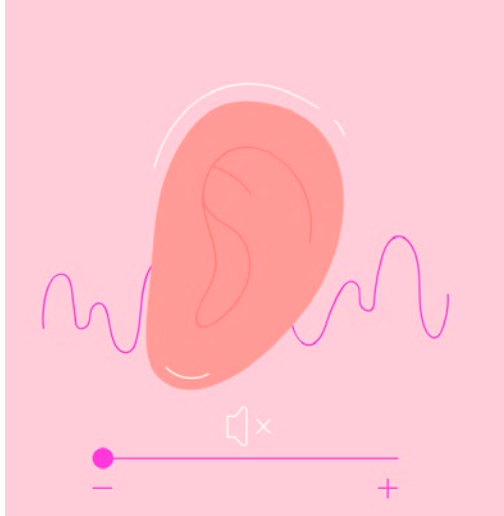
LYNNE KINGSTON IS one of around 48 million people in Europe with disabling hearing loss, according to Hear-It, a Brussels-based

organisation dedicated to raising awareness of the issue. This means they struggle in normal conversation. Yet, unlike Kingston, two-thirds have not had their hearing corrected; Hear-It estimates this costs the European Union (EU) some 55 billion euros a year in lost productivity. A 2020 survey from three different European hearing organisations found that a little more than half of people over 65 admit to having impaired hearing.

Around 90 per cent of hearing loss is due to wear and tear in the inner ear, sometimes as early as in our forties, with 40 per cent of over-fifties having some level of hearing loss. When vibrations come through the ear, tiny hair-like cells change them into electrical signals that are sent through the auditory nerve to the brain, which then interprets the sound. Once dead, these cells don't renew themselves.

After age-related hearing loss, the next biggest cause is long-term exposure to excessive noise, which can start in your teens. Working in factories or with firearms can damage hearing, as can listening to loud music either through headphones or live at a concert or club.

Viruses can play a part, too. Kingston believes contracting measles in her twenties might have caused her hearing loss. Some medical conditions, such as Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and high



blood pressure, are also thought to increase your chances of losing your hearing. Other risk factors include a family history, head injury, smoking, and some medications, including the antibiotic gentamicin and some chemotherapy drugs.

Not Just an Inconvenience

THE EFFECTS GO far beyond missing out on conversations. Hearing loss has a profound impact on mental health. "Hearing is our primary communication sense and losing it leads to social isolation," says medical physicist Birger Kollmeier of the University of Oldenburg, Germany. He is president of the European Federation of Audiology Societies and head of the German research group Hearing4All, a cluster of experts from three German universities. Researchers have found that a hearing problem doubles the risk of depression.

And that's not all. Hearing loss contributes to the likelihood of developing dementia by up to eight per cent—and is the highest modifiable risk factor for the disease, according to a *Lancet* Commission on dementia in 2020. When you can't hear well, "your brain is not stimulated enough," says Dr Paul Van de Heyning of Antwerp University Hospital in Belgium.

There are clear signs that hearing aids can guard against dementia. One 2018 study of nearly 4,000 people conducted over 25 years by French health research organisation Inserm showed that uncorrected hearing problems led to increased risk of disability and dementia, whereas people who wore hearing aids had the same chance of remaining independent as those with normal hearing. And based on data from the more recent PROTECT online longitudinal study, researchers from the University of Exeter and King's College London, believe hearing aids can reduce the risk of cognitive decline by up to five years.



**"MY HEARING AIDS
HAVE MADE ME FEEL
BETTER ABOUT
MYSELF. IT'S AN
INVESTMENT IN ME"**

—Lynne Kingston

Surprisingly, perhaps, hearing loss is important for physical health, too. Even mild loss can lead to a three times higher risk of falls, which can prove fatal for older people.

The Latest Technology

THE LATEST HEARING-AID technology can be a huge help. "The quality has improved massively in the last 20 years," says audiologist Francesca Oliver of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID). "They can be programmed for the individual's hearing loss." An algorithm determines how much amplification at different frequencies is required.

But one of the most exciting developments is the ability to connect your hearing aids to your smartphone via Bluetooth. Using your phone like a remote control, you can adjust the volume and switch between different modes, such as restaurant settings, meetings, or live music.

Previously, hearing aids did not have connectivity to smartphones, so you had to

physically turn up the volume on the device. "Vast progress has been made with respect to connectivity with communications devices, also including public address systems," according to Kollmeier.

Shown here are two popular hearing aids: The ReSound One from Danish manufacturer GN (left) and the Lyric from Swiss company Phonak (right)



What's more, all this amazing tech is often contained in much smaller devices. There's even one—the Lyric, which is widely available—that can be worn unseen inside the ear canal for several months at a time. “You can't feel it, and you can sleep and shower with it in,” says audiologist Paul Checkley, clinical director of Harley Street Hearing in London. “It's like a contact lens for the ear.”

Most hearing loss is bilateral, and in those cases, two behind-the-ear devices are better, such as the one Kingston purchased. There is a wireless interaction between them, giving the wearer a better idea of where the sound is coming from—replicating what our own ears do. Coming next, Checkley believes, are “hearables.” “Some manufacturers are putting hearing technology into ‘smart’ earplugs,” he explains. These microcomputers, which are similar to earbuds to listen to music, use wireless technology, allowing your personal hearing data to be input to enhance your hearing.

With hearing aids, the sooner you get them, the better. “Research

shows that people wait about ten years before seeking help,” says RNID's Francesca Oliver. Why? It's not just the stigma associated with going deaf; it's also because hearing loss is gradual and people are often unaware it's happening. “Age-related hearing loss affects the higher frequencies first, which means people can hear vowel sounds but miss consonants,” says Checkley. “They can be fooled into thinking their hearing is normal.”

But don't wait until you can't hear a thing. “Start early with any intervention, because the brain tends to forget your central hearing abilities if they are not properly activated anymore,” says Kollmeier. Neglecting the problem means it takes longer to get used to hearing aids.

Cochlear Implants

WHEN HEARING AIDS are no longer up to the job, there's a surgical solution that can revolutionise lives. Cochlear implants can allow for improved speech perception in up to 98 per cent of people who, even when wearing aids, can't have a

normal conversation, according to University Hospital Antwerp's Dr Van de Heyning.

"Eighty per cent of people who get a cochlear implant can make a telephone call again," he says. And for people who are unfortunate enough to have tinnitus as well, he says the noises in their head abate by 50 to 80 per cent when using the implant.

A cochlear implant has two parts. One is worn behind the ear and the other is surgically implanted under the skin of the scalp with a wire leading through the ear to electrodes in the cochlea, the "hearing" part of the inner ear. An external microphone on or near the ear picks up sounds, which are analysed by a chip and sent as code into the

implanted electrodes. These send currents to the auditory nerve. "It replaces the work of the hair cells," says Dr Van de Heyning, clarifying that there is no brain surgery involved in the procedure.

In fact, the risk of complications and the failure rate are low. Implants are suitable for people whose hearing loss is caused by inner-ear issues—the vast majority—and age is no object. "The only barrier is severe dementia," says Dr Van de Heyning. These patients don't have the cognitive acuity needed to interpret the initially unfamiliar sounds that they hear.

Still, awareness and uptake remain low across Europe. In high-income countries, less than ten per cent of people whose lives could be improved by a cochlear implant actually have one. Why so few? "That's a good question!" exclaims Dr Van de Heyning, who says that even ear, nose, and throat (ENT) specialists often seem unaware of the advantages, and which patients would benefit from surgery. "Ideas persist that you have to be completely deaf to benefit." You don't.

Jacques Verdière, 88, from Perros-Guirec in Brittany, France, is proof that cochlear implants can restore hearing even when you're elderly. After years of ear infections, the retired librarian went completely deaf in his left ear. When his ENT surgeon suggested a cochlear implant, he was

CLUES THAT YOU HAVE HEARING LOSS

- ◆ You set your TV volume higher than other people need.
- ◆ You keep noticing yourself asking people to repeat themselves.
- ◆ People seem to be mumbling, and you mishear what people say.
- ◆ It's difficult to hold a conversation in restaurants and bars, or at parties.
- ◆ It's difficult to hear when you're on the telephone.
- ◆ You feel tired or stressed from having to concentrate while listening.

initially hesitant. "But my daughter, a nurse, persuaded me," Verdière says. In 2016 he had a cochlear implant, followed by a second the following year when he lost the hearing in his other ear.

While Verdière had rehabilitation after the first implant to retrain his brain to understand the metallic sounds produced, he required no help adjusting to the second. "I could hear perfectly. It was marvellous."

INNER-EAR HEARING LOSS has always been considered irreversible, but science may be about to debunk that idea. Particularly exciting is a new drug being trialed in the UK, Greece, and Germany. "This drug treatment aims to regenerate inner-ear hair cells that are lost as hearing loss progresses," says ENT surgeon and hearing researcher Dr Anne G M Schilder of the Biomedical Research Centre of University College London Hospitals, where the research was done.

Dr Schilder headed the EU-funded trial, dubbed REGAIN. In people with mild to moderate hearing loss, an ENT specialist injects the drug, a

gamma secretase inhibitor, into the middle ear, from where it diffuses into the inner ear to make new hair cells. Dr Schilder believes this and other innovative treatments capable of reversing hearing loss could be available in five to ten years' time.

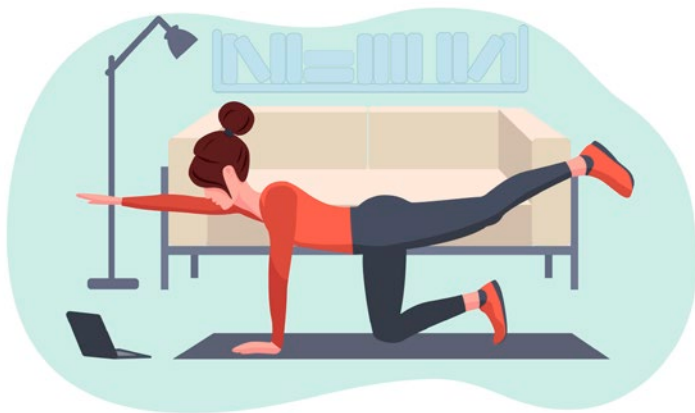
But right now it's important to prevent, as much as possible, damage to those crucial hair cells. "There are very good quality, reasonably priced ear plugs you can buy that filter out harmful sounds but won't detract from your experience," says Francesca Oliver. When listening to music, consider noise-cancelling headphones, don't turn the volume up too high, and don't listen for too long. Take a break of at least five minutes every hour and, if you're at a concert, every 15 minutes. Many audiologists believe you should have regular hearing tests just as you do for your eyesight.

After all, why suffer in silence? While you may have to pay for some or all of the cost of state-of-the-art hearing aids, Lynne Kingston thinks it's more than worth it. "They've made me feel better about myself," she says. "It's an investment in me." ■

Lost And Found

Two "stolen" notebooks written by Charles Darwin were anonymously returned to Cambridge University, nearly 22 years after they went missing. The notebooks include the scientist's famous Tree of Life sketch and were taken in November 2000

Source: BBC News



All About The Abs

*Want a flatter stomach
and a stronger core, but
prefer to steer well clear
of the gym?*



Susannah Hickling
is twice winner of
the Guild of
Health Writers Best
Consumer Magazine
Health Feature

Don't expect miracles

Only the very lean, who have no abdominal fat at all (and that's not many of us), are likely to be able to achieve a washboard stomach. But the important thing is to make your ab muscles strong enough to support your back and to enable you to turn, twist and lift without any issues. Just aim to be a healthy weight and do some well-targeted exercises.

Zip up an imaginary pair of jeans

For example, when you're walking for fitness—you should be aiming at 150 minutes of moderate exercise a week—imagine you have a zip along the midline of your abdomen. Visualise yourself zipping up a tight pair of jeans, and feel your torso lengthen and your abdomen firm up. Keeps your abs zipped and your bottom tucked under for the entirety of the walk. This will strengthen your core.

Check your posture

Set the alarm on your phone and do the same zipping exercise once an hour, even when you're not walking.

Stand on one foot

Here's an easy one. When you're in a queue, lift one foot off the floor (not too high obviously if you don't want to draw attention to yourself) and try to balance. You should feel your back and abdominal muscles coming to your aid to help you keep your body stable. Alternate your feet. At home, this is something you can do when you wash up or clean your teeth.

Always use your abs when you warm up

Rather than walking or marching to warm up for a workout, spend five to ten minutes working on your abs instead. It will warm you up just as well and build muscle at the same time. Try this NHS-recommended abs workout: [nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/10-minute-abs-workout](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/10-minute-abs-workout)

Do a Pilates class

While you might not be keen on doing weights and machines in the



AT HOME, THIS
IS SOMETHING
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WHEN YOU
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TEETH

gym, a Pilates session once a week will benefit your abs and core, as well as your legs and arms. A class with a certified instructor will give best results. Then follow up at home with a Pilates video—there's an endless selection of tutorials on YouTube.

Try a handbag (or briefcase) side bend

Stand upright with your bag in your right hand, your palm turned in and your feet shoulder width apart. Slowly bend to your right, allowing the bag to drop down your right leg as low as you can, until you feel a stretch along your left side. Keep your body

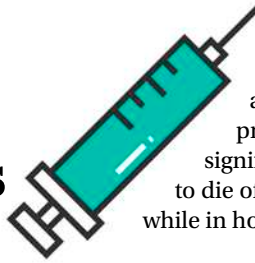
facing forward. Slowly return to upright, repeat between ten and 20 times and then switch hands.

Exercise in front of the box

During TV commercial breaks, sit on the edge of your chair and lift your feet off the floor, bringing your knees up to your chest. Lower and repeat the exercise up to 15 times. ■

For more weekly health tips and stories, sign up to our newsletter at [readersdigest.co.uk](https://www.readersdigest.co.uk)

Good News About Vaccines



and against pneumonia were significantly less likely to die of heart failure while in hospital.

With so much focus on the COVID vaccine, it's easy to forget about other exciting developments in the world of immunisation

Cervical cancer A vaccine against HPV, which causes most cases of cervical cancer, was first offered to teenage girls in the UK in 2008. A recent study from King's College London and the UK Health Security Agency found a reduction of nearly 90 per cent in cervical cancer cases among vaccinated women.

Other cancers Experts at Rush University Medical Centre, Chicago, found that if they injected tumours in the lab with flu shots, the cancer became more recognisable to the immune system. This could pave the way for immunotherapy, which uses the immune system to treat cancer cells.

Scientists in Australia have already developed a vaccine they hope may be able to activate the immune system to fight a number of different cancers, including leukaemia, breast, lung and pancreatic cancers.

Heart failure A study of nearly 3 million Americans found that people who had been inoculated against flu

Alzheimer's disease Once again, these two jabs are punching way above their weight. Other studies have suggested they can cut risk of dementia. In one, at least one flu jab was associated with a 17 per cent drop in risk, while, in another, vaccination against pneumonia between the ages of 65 and 75 reduced the risk of Alzheimer's by up to 40 per cent.

Urinary tract infections Could it be goodbye to the pesky UTI? Scientists at Duke University, North Carolina hope so, after a vaccine injected directly into the bladders of mice cleared up E. Coli bacteria. These bacteria, which cause water infections, are often resistant to antibiotics.

Multiple Sclerosis A study of American servicemen who had been diagnosed with MS found the risk of this disabling neurological condition increased 32-fold in those who'd previously had Epstein Barr Virus (EBV), which causes glandular fever. This discovery could lead to a focus on finding a vaccine for EBV, which could hopefully prevent MS in the near or distant future. ■

Ask The Expert: *Moles*



Dr Hayley Leeman is a consultant dermatologist and dermatological surgeon at The Mole Clinic, Harley Street, London and The Royal Free NHS Trust

How did you become an authority on all things moles?

I did five years of medical school and eight years of training to become a consultant dermatologist. Skin cancer surgery is clear cut—I like that you can diagnose, remove the mole there and then and give a management plan. Anyone can call themselves a dermatologist, so make sure to always check on the GMC website that they have completed specialist training in dermatology. This should set you at ease before an appointment.

When should you seek medical advice on a mole?

If anything is new or changing. Take the ABCDE approach. Is it A—asymmetrical? Does it have B—an irregular border? Has C—the colour changed or are there several colours? D—diameter—is it getting bigger? E is for evolution—is it changing in size, shape or colour?

Are some moles more likely to turn cancerous than others?

The most common sites for skin cancer are the trunk for men and legs for women.

Who is most at risk from developing skin cancer?

People with red hair and freckly skin are most at risk, but people with a more olive skin can get skin cancer too. It's a myth people with darker skin can't develop melanoma—Bob Marley died of melanoma of the toenail. People who live in countries where they have significant UV exposure or who use sunbeds—we see that a lot. Having a blistering sunburn increases the risk.

What can you do to protect yourself?

In order of importance, avoid direct sunlight between 11am and 3pm, wear protective clothing, including a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses, and wear SPF 50 sunscreen which is also rated 5* for UVA. Remember to apply it to the tops of the ears and, for men, the scalp. Wear an SPF lip balm. Check your skin for moles at least twice a year when you get out of the shower and take photos and measurements for comparison. There are also mole monitoring apps. ■

For further information, go to themoleclinic.co.uk

Inconvenient Truths

When it comes to dementia, honesty is not always the best policy, says Dr Max



ONE OF THE basic expectations the public have of doctors is honesty. But what would you think if I told you that research has shown that 70 per cent of doctors admitted to lying to their patients? It is inexcusable, surely? Grossly unprofessional and uncaring; a clear breach of the doctor-patient relationship. Some of the lies told included reassuring patients that their wives or husbands were still alive, when in fact they

were dead. This seems unimaginable but, if I am honest, I have told exactly the same lie to several patients whose spouses had died. Mrs Walton was in her eighties and desperate to see her husband. She'd been in hospital after a fall and was in pain. She called out for him frequently and couldn't understand why he wasn't there to comfort her. She was becoming more and more distressed and would try to get up to find him, despite being at risk of falling again.

"He's on his way, don't worry," the nurses would say and this would calm her down. I confess I said the same thing to her. She'd smile and roll her eyes and say how he was



Max is a hospital doctor, author and columnist. He currently works full time in mental health for the NHS. His new book, *The Marvellous Adventure of Being Human*, is out now

always late for things and tell the same story about him being late for their wedding nearly 60 years ago. But he wasn't on his way. It was a lie. He'd died two years ago. The truth, if I can use that word, is that it is a kindness to lie sometimes.

Part of the natural history of many of the dementias, in particular Alzheimer's disease which is what Mrs Walton had, is that the sufferer loses their short term memory and the memory of recent events, but retains memories

from the distant past. Sufferers are trapped forever in a bewildering past that many realise bears little connection to the present, but are at a loss to explain. It is acutely distressing and tormenting and

many of the behavioural difficulties that I have encountered in those with dementia relate to them feeling upset, scared and confused that they are in a strange place, surrounded by strange people, even when they are in their own homes surrounded by their family, because they have regressed back to decades ago.

They look at their adult children bemused and wonder who they could be because they think their children are still toddlers. How does one deal with this? I have had countless families break down in

tears in outpatient clinics or on wards, not knowing what to say or how to react as their loved one moves further and further away from them back into their distant past and they are left behind in the present. And how, as the doctor or nurse caring for these patients, does one manage the anger and outbursts of distress that comes with having no knowledge of your life for the past ten or 20 years? The lies that doctors, nurses, carers and families

tell these patients are not big, elaborate lies—they are brief reassurances intended to pacify and allow the subject to be swiftly changed.

Colluding with them about this false reality they find themselves flung into is not heartless or unprofessional—it

is, when done in the right way, kind and compassionate. That's not to say that lying to patients with dementia unnecessarily is right or defensible or that there are not times when of course they have the right to know the truth. But what compassionate person would put another human being through the unimaginable hell of learning, for the first time again and again, repeatedly throughout the day, that they have been bereaved. It would be an unthinkable cruelty.

Sometimes, surely, honesty is simply not the best policy. ■

SEVENTY PER CENT OF DOCTORS ADMITTED TO LYING TO THEIR PATIENTS

The Doctor Is In

Dr Max Pemberton

Q: These symptoms haven't felt bad enough to go to my doctor but I'm starting to worry that I could have gallbladder problems. I have a dull ache under my right ribs, am constantly gassy and I have a slight ache in my shoulder. There's no severe pain so I am not sure whether to get checked out.

- Thomas

A: A simple answer to your question is, yes, you could be right, the ache under your ribs could be down to gall stones. The pain caused by gall stones is called biliary colic and the pain can sometimes spread to the shoulder blade or upper back. The pain happens when a gallstone blocks the bile duct, which is a tube that drains bile from the gall bladder to the small intestine. If it is gall stones causing this symptom and if it is not treated, the gall bladder can become very inflamed, a condition called cholecystitis. Gall stones are usually treated by removing the gallbladder through keyhole surgery. However, having said all this, there's something else that I wanted to briefly mention. It's really common for

patients to think that they don't want to bother their doctor with relatively minor complaints or concerns, especially things like dull aches which aren't troublesome enough to really impinge on someone's life but does cause niggling concern. Please listen to these niggles and go to see a doctor about them. While this is likely to be gallstones, some other, very serious, conditions have similar symptoms. Cancers often go undiagnosed because patients dismiss their symptoms because they "don't want to trouble the doctor." Please, trouble us: it's our job. I remember one patient who thought she had gallstones having diagnosed herself over Google and so dismissed the ache in her stomach and shoulder and it turned out to be pancreatic cancer. I don't say this to alarm you but rather to urge you, and readers, to go to the doctor if they are worried about something. If something serious is going on, you're likely to have it caught sooner and this means better outcomes. ■

Got a health question for our resident doctor?
Email it confidentially to askdrmax@readersdigest.co.uk





My sleep solution!

Problems had been accumulating over time. Life for me had turned into a state of near-permanent panic as I obsessed about all the problems facing me.

I couldn't sleep, I lost my appetite and I often suffered from migraines, brought on by stress, poor eating and the lack of proper sleep. Burn out was looming. I knew that I desperately needed a good night's sleep.

After reading about Melissa Dream™ an natural herbal supplement, I decided to give them a try and ordered a supply online. After only two days of taking the tablets, I noticed that I felt calmer and more positive because I was sleeping properly. I was relaxed in a way that was totally different to how I had been for ages.

I've been taking Melissa Dream™ for a month now and because I'm getting a good night's sleep, I'm so revitalised and full of energy that I know I can deal with anything life may throw at me. My husband, family and friends have all noticed the difference – I'm back to my normal self and it feels great!

- Wendy.



The secret behind getting a good night's rest.

You'll spend almost one-third of your life sleeping, but while you're asleep, your brain remains amazingly active, creating memories and storing information. Some even think that our dreams can help us make sense of our lives. But that's not the only thing that sleep can help you do. Your physical health, mood, cognitive abilities, and even your body weight depend on the quality of your rest. Here is the secret to getting the good night's rest you've always dreamed of.

Many sleep and nutrition experts recommend checking that your vitamin and mineral intake meets your daily needs. Melissa Dream™ tablets from New Nordic™ are a Scandinavian herbal-based tablet with extracts and vitamins that will work to help maintain a restful sleep that lasts all night long.

They can help you feel refreshed when you wake, without making you feel sluggish like prescription sleeping pills can sometimes do.

In addition, Melissa Dream™ contains green tea with L-theanine, magnesium and B-vitamins. Just two tablets before bedtime will provide the correct nutrients for both nerve and brain functioning. These will accumulate in your body over time and make drifting off a lot easier (and quicker).

Where to buy

You can find Melissa Dream™ in Holland & Barrett and Leading Independent Health Stores. For an information leaflet call **0800 389 1255** or purchase online at www.newnordic.co.uk

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Embrace Your Memory Mistakes

Faulty recollections can be extremely revealing, says our memory expert, Jonathan Hancock

THE HUMAN MEMORY is phenomenally strong. It also has a habit of getting things badly wrong.

Just last week, for example, my wife and I were discussing how we'd chosen our youngest son's name. I had a vivid memory of us writing out a list of possible names, but stopping after just a few because we'd spotted one we both loved.

My wife disagreed. In her memory, we'd had a much longer list, and gone back and chosen one from the middle of the list.

So we dug out the piece of paper we'd used—and found that we'd actually done something completely different to choose Nate's name.

Memory mistakes happen on a larger scale, too. The “Mandela Effect” is when lots of people have confident recollections that turn out to be wrong. It was named by researchers who were discussing their strong memories of Nelson Mandela's death in prison—when he actually lived for 23 years after his release.

There are plenty of other examples of this phenomenon. If you're sure that you remember seeing the

Monopoly Man wearing a monocle, for instance, or hearing a wicked queen say “Mirror, mirror on the wall,” you've experienced it yourself (he doesn't, and she says, “Magic mirror on the wall” instead).

So what's going on? Well, for starters, memory often works by association, and similar bits of information can overlap in our brains. We're also good at “filling in the blanks” with details that are logical but untrue. What's more, whenever we rehearse a memory, we make it stronger—including any bits that were wrong.

But there's plenty of good news here, too.

Everyone misremembers. We shouldn't be too hard on ourselves when we make mistakes.

The mental associations that sometimes lead to errors can also help us to find elusive information. If you're struggling with someone's name, try thinking of things you associate with them, and see if your brain gets the nudge it needs.

Discussing your memories is great mental exercise. It highlights strengths and weaknesses, and lets you learn tips from others.

Comparing memories often builds a much more accurate picture. That was certainly true for my wife and me.

Make sure to remember that remembering is a creative process: mind-blowingly powerful, and also prone to mistakes. ■

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Princess Elizabeth
writing at her desk
in Windsor Castle in
May 1944. She had
just turned 18



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When She Was Princess

*A 1945 perspective of the woman who
would become Queen Elizabeth II*

BY *William W White*

CONDENSED FROM THE PAGES OF *LIFE*. PUBLISHED IN
READER'S DIGEST IN NOVEMBER 1945 AS "PRINCESS ELIZABETH"

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In 2022, people of the British Commonwealth are celebrating the Platinum Jubilee: 70 years since Queen Elizabeth II ascended to the throne in 1952 at the age of 25. It was the start of the longest reign of any British monarch in history; in April, the Queen turned 96. This article was written in 1945, at the end of the Second World War, and two years before Elizabeth married Prince Philip

PRINCESS ELIZABETH ALEXANDRA

Mary Windsor will someday claim the allegiance of 489,000,000 of the world's population when she takes her full title: Elizabeth II, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Queen, Defender of the Faith and Empress of India.

She recently saw her sceptered isle go through the turmoil of sudden political change when Winston Churchill lost the election in July, just two months after he declared VE Day. Her one recorded comment when she learned that her good friend had been snowed under an avalanche of leftist votes was, "Oh, bother."

This is not to say that the events of the day were altogether lost on Elizabeth. She has been educated to think very seriously while saying very little.

At 19 she is already carefully coached and acutely conscious of the duties, dignities, and limitations of a throne—especially the limitations. The British have whittled away at the powers invested in the Crown so diligently since four centuries earlier—when Queen Elizabeth I said to an over-presumptive minister, "I will have here but one mistress and no master"—that there is not much left. What is left is the power of creating peers, a never-used veto as head of the Privy Council, and

the rather dubious honour of naming a Prime Minister who has already been chosen by the British electorate.

At present, as heiress presumptive (as long as her father lives, it is presumed he may have a male heir) Princess Elizabeth has no powers, no royal duties of state, and no constitutional functions. When she becomes Queen her most vital contribution will be that of a symbol of continuity. Governments may fall, parties may dissolve, but the Crown goes on forever. In that fairly certain knowledge the British find an unconscionable pleasure. The Crown remains one of the few expenses the British bear without grumbling.

SO FAR, ELIZABETH HAS SHOWN every prospect of living up to a prediction made recently by one of Britain's elder statesmen: "She has

**THE KING RULED
THAT SHE COULDN'T
JOIN THE WOMEN'S
AUXILIARIES. "BETTS"
HAD OTHER IDEAS**



The two sisters outside Windsor Castle in April 1942: Elizabeth, left, 15; Margaret, 12

intelligence, personality, and charm. She will be a good Queen. She may even be a great one." Good Queen or great, she will be an attractive one. Mannequin height (5 feet 6 ½ inches), Elizabeth has inherited from her Hanoverian antecedents an ample figure, a lovely rose-and-cream complexion, good white teeth, and a sturdy constitution. Unfortunately, she is not photogenic because her chief attraction lies in her colouring. Her regal bearing reminds old-timers of her grandmother, Queen Mary.

Less lighthearted than her attractive 15-year-old sister Margaret Rose, whose superb mimicry of

visiting dignitaries has more than once caused gales of laughter at the royal dinner table, Princess Elizabeth has already shown traits which indicate she has a mind of her own. A year ago when, like her subjects-to-be, she became due for national service, the King ruled after long deliberations with his councillors that her training as a princess outweighed the nation's increasing manpower problems and that "Betts" should not join any of the women's auxiliaries (known as the Auxiliary Territorial Service, or ATS). But Betts had other ideas, and not long afterward the Palace made a straight-faced announcement that the King "had been pleased to grant an honorary commission as second subaltern in the ATS to Her Royal Highness the Princess Elizabeth."

Elizabeth passed her driving course in two days less than the prescribed time, after attending lectures and getting her hands greasy dismantling engines. Most of the students finish this ATS driving course by driving to London for the experience. It was ruled that Elizabeth should not, since the risks of a smash involving the heiress



While in the women's branch of the British Army in 1945, young Elizabeth learned how to service military vehicles

presumptive would be too great. But while the wheels of government were churning out that ponderous decision, Elizabeth was driving a camouflaged army vehicle up to London from the country. She arrived at the Palace after making two complete circuits of Piccadilly Circus in the rush hour "to get in as much traffic as I could."

When the princess embarks on a venture it completely dominates her life. Thus, while she was at the driving school the royal dinner-table conversation was centred around

IT WAS A COLD, GREY DAY, BUT ELIZABETH CONFESSED, 'I'M TOO NERVOUS TO FEEL THE COLD'

spark plugs and engine performance. Currently the major topic of conversation—as far as Elizabeth can guide it—is horses. She hopes to have her own stable in a year or so and race against her father.

AT DANCES IN MAYFAIR PRIVATE houses, which Elizabeth frequently attends accompanied by her lone lady in waiting—and from which she has been known to return as late as 3 am—she dances with many different young gallants and favours no one in particular. But the names of several young peers keep recurring constantly. Handsome, blonde, 29-year-old Lord Wyfold, the young Earl of Euston, or the good-looking Duke of Rutland are the usual three. Elizabeth is bound by the provisions of the Royal Succession Act to marry only with the consent of her father in council and not to marry outside the Protestant faith. If and when she marries, her husband, on her accession to the throne, would not be king but prince consort, like Victoria's Albert of Saxe-Cobourg. The number of eligibles who would



Princess Elizabeth playing tag with Navy officers en route to South Africa with her parents and sister in early 1947

care for this subordinate role is problematical.

Elizabeth's first official public tour after her father became king was in Wales. Instead of appearing in the stately setting of an evening Court at the Palace, the Princess made her debut in the orange glow of furnace fires in a Welsh tin-plate mill. Since then she has made many appearances with her family and by herself; she has done two radio talks and made a dozen speeches.

Her most important engagement so far was the launching of Britain's



On honeymoon with Prince Philip in late 1947

newest and greatest battleship, *HMS Vanguard*. Although it was a cold, grey day and she confessed to a nearby official, “I’m too nervous to feel the cold,” she went through the ceremony without a flaw. Only later did she show she was more woman than princess. She had been presented with a beautiful diamond brooch and while the chairman was labouring through a ponderous speech of welcome, Elizabeth sat quietly turning the Rose-of-England-shaped brooch over and over in her hands, admiring it for all she was worth.

ELIZABETH’S TRAINING HAS been arduous. “Grandmamma England”—Queen Mary—seems to have had a firm hand with young Elizabeth, and she got in return more respect

from little Betts than from her other grandchildren. The two Lascelles boys, Gerald and George, when very young, had a terrifying habit of rushing into a room and attacking Queen Mary’s ankles. She was often obliged to put up a spirited defence with her famous parasol. Happily, Elizabeth was less boisterous.

Queen Mary taught the child the art of talking intelligently to the various visitors at Court, and young Elizabeth early learned her most difficult lesson—that she must appear to be enjoying the talk, however dull. So that she might be well-informed or curious about many subjects her grandmother trotted little Elizabeth through the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Royal Mint, the Bank of England, the Science Museum in South Kensington, the Tower of

BY THE TIME ELIZABETH WAS 12, SHE HAD A SUBLIME DISTASTE FOR MATHEMATICS

London, Westminster Abbey, and the National Gallery.

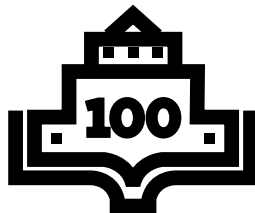
Since she was six, Elizabeth's formal education has been supervised by an able young Scotswoman, Marion Crawford—"Crawfie" to everyone in the royal household. If young Betts found it easier, as indeed she did, to absorb history while lying on her stomach on the floor of Crawfie's room, Crawford had no objections. By the time Elizabeth was 12 she had shown a marked aptitude for history and languages and a sublime distaste for mathematics. At that point her education became a matter on which the Cabinet had to be consulted.

Elizabeth's mother wanted her to go to a girls' school so she could meet more of her contemporaries, but the choice of a school and the specialised curriculum necessary for a royal person were difficult, so it was decided she should have a staff of tutors as Queen Victoria had. Her historical background includes the study of constitutional changes

from Saxon times to the present as well as the history of British land tenure and agriculture. She is also well versed in US history, and speaks French fluently. To what would in Victorian days be called "the accomplishments"—she plays the piano and sings agreeably—Elizabeth added completely 20th-century arts. She swims, drives a car, likes American dance music, has the "good hands and pretty seat" of an accomplished horsewoman, and is a good shot.

When she was very young, Elizabeth was asked what she would like to be when she grew up. Without a moment's hesitation, she answered, "I should like to be a horse." Time has served to modify that ambition. Whether anyone would genuinely like to lead the antiseptic and rather empty life of a modern queen may be a matter for doubt. But Elizabeth will have that duty. That being the case, her ambition is to be a good queen. If she, like the earlier Elizabeth, reflects and encourages the contemporary spirit of her people, she may occupy a position in history of similar importance. The first Elizabeth built the British Empire. The second, by gentler means, may keep it together.

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To celebrate the 100th anniversary of *Reader's Digest* we've relaunched our much-loved 100-word-story competition with prizes of up to £1,000 to be won



The adults category is now closed, but you can still submit your stories for the children's categories until May 20.

The entries have flooded in during the past few months but only a select few can come out on top. The three best stories in each category will be posted online at [readersdigest](https://www.readersdigest.co.uk).

[co.uk/inspire/100-word-story-competition](https://www.readersdigest.co.uk/inspire/100-word-story-competition) on June 1. You can vote for your favourite, and the one with the most votes will win the top prize. Voting will close on June 30 and the winning entries will be published in our September issue. Don't miss the chance to have your say!

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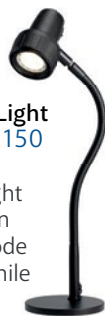
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My Britain: Oswestry

By Anna Walker

The history of Shropshire's old market town of Oswestry dates back to its origins as an Iron Age hill fort some 3,000 years ago. Known as the town where England meets Wales, it's perfectly nestled just five miles from the border between both countries, offering the opportunity to explore the cultures of both sides of the border in one spot.

Surrounded by historic castles, spectacular industrial heritage and pretty countryside, it also encompasses the Unesco World Heritage site of Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and is known for its heritage steam railways. We spoke to residents of this characterful town for a flavour of life in Oswestry.



SOPHIE DILLON

Sophie Dillon, 49, is the business owner of Old School House



Though I was born in Oswestry, I was itching to live a city life from the age of 18, and I did just that, living in Liverpool, Manchester, London, Melbourne and Perth. At some point I yearned for my home town and to be near my family again.

Oswestry is so pretty, we have beautiful walks and cycle routes, and it's got a big attitude for a little town! There are some great independent businesses here, and they are growing. Being an Oswestry resident brings a lovely support network of friendly locals who enthusiastically support small businesses in the town. There are lots of activity groups who run, cycle, play tennis, knit, and even just drink coffee together.

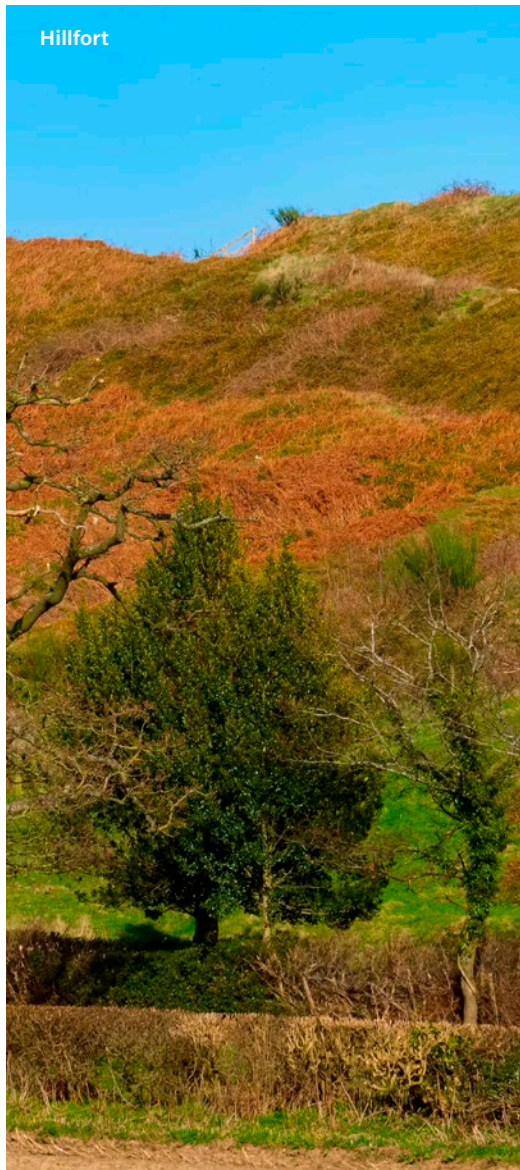
JOHN HAYWARD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

My business, Old School House cafe, restaurant and bar, resides in the second oldest grammar school in the country, Oswestry School, established in 1407 by David Holbache. It oozes character and charm with its beamed walls and ceilings, wonky timber floors, and stunning south-facing walled courtyard. In its time, it has been a school, a toy museum, four residential cottages, and home to a tourist information centre. I took it over in 2021 and opened a fully licensed café/restaurant/bar, offering contemporary food menus (day and evening), craft ales, a lovely wine list, award-winning coffee, homemade cakes, locally-produced gelato and much more! We grow our own fruit and vegetables on-site, all of which gets used in the restaurant, and we are a registered Sustainably Run Restaurant of which we are very proud.

Oswestry is my home town, I had a strong connection to the Old School House building as I went to Oswestry School myself. There are plenty of discerning residents in the town who I was confident would appreciate the quality and quirkiness that the Old School House brings.

I have a few favourite spots in Oswestry. Pont Duncan where the road goes over the river at Morda, is one. I have so many childhood memories of summer days, picnics, bike rides, and rope swings over the river, also up on the Hillfort, where the views are really spectacular.

Hillfort



ROB, MELISSA & HANNAH LUCKS

Rob, 61, Melissa, 60, and Hannah Lucks, 34 are owners of Chilton House B&B

Rob: My parents bought a hotel in 1979 while I was studying hotel management at college. I came back from college to help out at weekends and on holidays and stayed on.

Melissa: I came to work here and stayed in the hotel, met Rob and then we got married!

Rob: We worked with the parents for over 20 years but when Pops was ready to retire, we were ready to do our own thing and opened a restaurant in the town centre. After that we wanted to take a step back a bit and decided to transform our home into a B&B. Our daughter Hannah was born here. She has a very unusual syndrome and being so close to the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital meant that, in her early years, she had access to specialist care and support at this world famous hospital. Oswestry is such a safe, friendly and bustling town. There is so much happening for such a small place. Oswestry is one of those places that people come to by accident but once they arrive, they don't want to ever leave.

JOHN HAYWARD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



Chilton House was our home before we turned it into a B&B. It's a large Victorian house, a few minutes' walk from the centre of town. There are lots of original features and we wanted to celebrate that but add some quirky décor too. There are just three rooms for guests and each is completely different. It's the fantastically interesting people we meet that make running a B&B in Oswestry special. Once they get to know the town, people usually want to return. They arrive as guests but always return as friends.

On a sunny day, there is nowhere better than our large garden and we love entertaining guests out there. It's so peaceful even though we are so close to the town centre and it's a real sun spot.

Oswestry is one of those places that whenever you walk into town you usually meet someone you know and they have time to stop and chat. It may be the second largest town in Shropshire but it has that small town feel. Oswestry is a real market town that has lots of independent shops and the market is a great attraction. The pub scene is really good too. There used to be over 100 pubs which is a lot for a small town! There aren't so many now but what we do have is an eclectic mix of independently owned, traditional pubs. Having a local brewery and distillery on the edge of town means there are pubs that specialise in real beer but others do pub grub and there is a really vibrant music scene building again now the pandemic is ending.



A trader smiles in the market

ROB WILLIAMS

Rob Williams, 42, is the chairman of Cambrian Heritage Railways



I can't think of any reason to leave Oswestry. It's a small town and, when you are there, you usually recognise someone—friends or family. It's a Welsh town in England and has the best of both cultures. I love that it is not only a market town but also a railway town. Our history has been shaped by both those things.

For me, being an Oswestry resident is very much being a part of the culture of the town. My interest in the heritage railway goes back to my teens and I enjoy that the railway history has created the modern town.

The Oswestry spirit has been forged by the border connection. It has been confrontational in the past but now it celebrates the mix of the two lands. We're good at getting things done, like the railway re-opening. It has taken a long time but there was always the determination and perseverance to make it happen.

I am chairman of Cambrian Heritage Railway and have been involved since 1996. The railway was once the biggest independent railway in Wales and yet its headquarters were in Oswestry in Shropshire, England. The railway

changed the face of Oswestry when it was built, doubling the size of the town.

It has been a privilege to be part of the group of volunteers that have re-opened the first one and three quarter mile track to run trains since

1966. In 1860, they said that no other town in England benefited from the arrival of trains as much as Oswestry. We are hoping that the re-opening of the railway will emulate that and bring a new generation of visitors to the town and that they will want to see more and stay longer.

We now have not only a regular train service at weekends but also a fascinating museum of railway heritage, the original booking office and waiting room at Oswestry and the new station down at Weston Wharf. Every ticket is a day rover so visitors can come and go all day if they want to. The railway is a real community asset and we want locals and visitors alike to enjoy it.

I am a great people watcher and there are so many spots in the town centre that I enjoy. Festival Square, with the Borderland Farmer statue, is one and the town centre park with its beautiful flower displays is another.

For more information head to visitshropshire.co.uk



If I Ruled The World

Steve Vai

The renowned guitarist, singer-songwriter and three-time Grammy winner is back on the airwaves with his tenth studio album, *Inviolate*

I would ban opinionated news.

All world news outlets would not be allowed to offer opinion—only vetted, demonstrated facts. Within one generation the face of social media and its messaging would dramatically change as a result. Opinionated news is the enemy of the world.

Propaganda would be considered a crime against humanity, because, simply put, it is.

I would completely rehabilitate the educational curriculum. A “conscious think tank” (the CTT)

comprised of the world’s most inspired and accomplished people from various fields would be brought together to create a mindful approach to a thriving educational curriculum. The foundation would be based on empowering children by helping them to find and cultivate their unique interests and authentic skills and using them to creatively bring their “gifts” into the world in an enthusiastic, co-creative way.

There would be no grading in this curriculum, which is another unconscious attack on the psyche of a child.

They would be taught how valued

they are as an individual and how vital their contribution to the world is, whatever it may be. They'd also be shown the great value in appreciating the “gifts” of others. They would be constantly reminded of the fact that they are free thinkers and that they are worthy of joy in life. Children can understand these things, unlike most conditioned adults who have been taught victimhood much of their life.

I would instill the value of reaching real solutions. Children would be taught that a real solution always results in a win-win for all involved, where there is no loss, only gain, and if a real solution was not found, the problem would keep repeating itself in different forms, and that's just called history.

They'd be taught that a real solution is arrived at when there is an authentic desire for one. This is all that's required (but nothing more), for the mechanics of a real solution to start showing itself. Most people authentically want an “I win, you lose” scenario, so the problem will keep repeating itself in their life until the dysfunction becomes unbearable and collapses. “The ego has a built-in self-destruct mechanism and it's called deep suffering”—Eckhart Tolle.

Government as it is today would be dismantled. The contemporary function of global government

infrastructures would be labelled as dysfunctional and systematically dismantled. This would happen organically within several generations if rules 1-4 took place. Income tax around the world could perhaps be a happily paid four per cent of all income and the function of a very small government would be in serving the people.

We would have digital voting.

Technology would be developed, if it isn't already, for inviolate, instant digital voting from a person directly to the source count. This paper ballot s**t has got to go. People would be able to make their decisions on things that affect them based on unbiased information in real time.

We'd have infinite clean power. The innovation of free, instant, endless and clean power would be cultivated for the world. The wise “CTT” is aware that the moment an individual decides that it's possible to find this source, and they are determined to find it, it must and will happen.

It's interesting to ponder how things might transpire if this list of lofty idealistic “rules” were acted on. I might assume that within 200 or so years the currency of the future would be appreciation. ■

Steve Vai's new album *Inviolate* is out now. He is touring the UK and Ireland between June 4-11. For tickets visit vai.com

TEAM

RACERS WITH



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BRIT:

SUPERPOWERS



Meet the car racing team who have overcome life-threatening accidents and health conditions to compete in the most prestigious championships in the world

BY *Simon Button*

SETTING HIS SIGHTS ON THE 24 HOURS OF LE MANS ENDURANCE SPORTS CAR RACE IN

2024, Team BRIT founder and CEO Dave Player explains: “If you’re a mountain climber, you want to climb Everest eventually and if you’re an endurance racer, you dream of competing in the Le Mans 24 Hours. It’s a legendary, historic event that every racing driver sets their sights on.”

IF THE TEAM GETS TO

compete in what is widely judged to be the world’s most gruelling endurance race, they’ll also enter the history books as the first all-disabled squad to do so. It’s something they have to work up to, with all the drivers needing the requisite experience and suitable cars, hence the two-year time frame.

Other disabled drivers have taken part, but

Dave Player



only through a wild card, non-competitive scheme.

"We don't want that," Dave, 54, insists. "We want to compete on a level playing field, as a statement that even as disabled racing drivers we belong on a world stage. We want to earn our place, not have it given to us."

A wheelchair user since he dove into a lake and broke his neck at 23, Dave set up the charity KartForce in 2010 as a way for injured veterans to use karting for rehabilitation and recovery, then founded Team BRIT in 2015—creating a set of hand controls that could be installed in racing cars to enable drivers with disabilities to compete side by side

with able-bodied contestants.

Based at Dunsfold Park (also home of the *Top Gear* test track near Cranleigh) it is a competitive, sponsorship-supported racing team. Ranging in age from early-twenties to mid-forties, drivers from the ten-strong squad have already competed in such endurance challenges as the Fun Cup and the BMW 116 Trophy in the UK, the Spa Francorchamps in Belgium and on Le Sarthe Circuit at Le Mans at the Aston Martin Le Mans Festival.

Two of the team's fastest drivers, Bobby Trundle and Aaron Morgan, are this year competing in the British GT Championship, with Bobby



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Aaron Morgan (L),
Bobby Trundley (R)

saying: “It’s a massive milestone, not only for me but also for the whole team, competing in what is the pinnacle of GT racing in the UK. It’s an amazing opportunity.”

Bobby, 22, from Wokingham, was diagnosed with autism when he was four and took up go-karting six years later, recalling: “As soon as I put the helmet on I felt safe in my own little world and when I got behind the wheel of the kart and started driving out on the track I felt in control for the first time in my life.”

He went on to compete in various events before joining Team BRIT four years ago and finds racing is a release. “It’s changed my life. Mentally it’s like relaxation and also I love the thrill. When I’m behind the wheel, most of my issues with autism don’t turn

against me. In fact I consider it to be a super power of mine.”

For example, he’s able to make quick decisions if there’s oil on the tarmac. “I can make minor calculations and get the max out of the car whereas other drivers might take longer to adapt to the conditions. My autism has its hindrances; I can be very socially awkward in person and my anxiety levels are very high. But when I’m behind the wheel it has its perks.”

Aaron Morgan, 31, from Basingstoke, is a paraplegic after breaking his back in a motocross accident when he was 15 years old. He spent nearly four weeks in a coma, followed by a long spell in a spinal injuries unit, and recalls: “It was devastating and also quite confusing. My mum took a photo diary during

my hospital stay and there are pictures where I'm clearly awake and clearly there but I don't remember them at all."

His father told him that after the accident he stopped breathing for nine minutes. "And that put it all into focus. I was now paralysed but I'd come so close to dying; and from that moment on I very quickly set myself goals in terms of returning to college and reintegrating myself back into 'normal' life. I could have sat around moping and feeling sorry for myself but ultimately that's not going to get you anywhere."

Instead, Aaron returned to his studies and went on to achieve a 2:1 in sports science at Brunel University. Now working in IT, he has deftly channelled his need for speed into Team BRIT, noting: "The hand control technology means that I'm able to carry out all the functions that I need to do as well as any able-bodied driver. With the team there's a constant hunger for improvement, whether that be car set-up or tweaks to improve the line or speed, and it's incredibly motivating in terms of your own improvement."

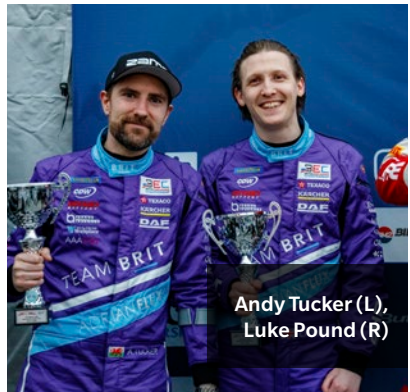
Through KartForce, Dave Player asked Nottingham University to do a clinical study into the benefits of racing for drivers with physical injuries and he was surprised to learn about the upsides for those with PTSD and mental health issues.

"When you have issues like depression or anxiety you spend all day thinking about them but if you have something to look forward like a race it's exciting and it gives you a

WHEN YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO LIKE A RACE IT GIVES YOU A NEW FOCUS

new focus. Your mind is occupied with positive thoughts rather than negative ones, then when the race comes it's a massive adrenaline rush and that buzz lasts for days afterwards. [GT racing] reignites a fire in people."

Andy Tucker was 24 when he was left with a range of injuries



Andy Tucker (L),
Luke Pound (R)

—including scoliosis and spondylitis in his spine, limited movement in his right shoulder and a twisted right ankle—after a motorbike accident.

He also now suffers from PTSD, depression and anxiety, so he was intrigued when he discovered the Nottingham University study online. Having done karting in his younger years, he enrolled in the Team BRIT racing academy, was later offered a place through its rookie development programme and sees it as a life-changer.

“It’s pure therapy for my mental health,” says the 34-year-old from Llandevaud. “It’s got me back into the world of motorsport and it’s also given me the opportunity to show others that whatever you’ve been through you can still push on, live as normal a life as possible and have some amazing fun along the way.”

Andy has also been able to come off mental health medication. “I was on some 34 pills a day and I used to rattle when I walked,” he laughs. “Now motorsport is my medication. There’s no feeling out there like it—the pure adrenaline rush you get from it and the camaraderie in the pit, because nobody in the pit looks at us as disabled. We’re treated equally.”



WHATEVER YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH YOU CAN PUSH ON—AND HAVE SOME AMAZING FUN ALONG THE WAY

Anji Silva-Vadgama, 32, took up racing last year after seeing a television documentary about Team BRIT. She got in touch with Dave, who invited her along to a track day and was impressed with her skills as a first-time racer, inviting her to join



Anji Silva-Vadgama

Her grandfather was a rally driving champion in Kenya and her father is a mechanic. “So I’ve always been around cars but don’t ask me what’s under the hood,” she laughs.

the rookie development programme.

She was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2018. “And it was a shock to the system but it was great to know what was causing the numbness in my body and why I was so tired. I’m still learning what I can or can’t do and my life now is either with a walking stick or, especially on colder or wetter days, a wheelchair.”

Anji, who lives in Kettering and works in business development for a software company, adds: “I like to stay positive. Don’t get me wrong; I do have negative days. But I’ve always been a glass-half full kind of person.”

Racing and cars are in her blood.

“When I found out I had MS I stopped driving for a while because my confidence had gone but Team BRIT has helped me build that confidence back up again.”

Currently Team BRIT’s only woman driver, she has practised in simulators and on tracks at Silverstone and Donington. “It’s amazing to show that we may be disabled but when we’re in the car you can’t even tell,” Anji says of going up against able-bodied racers. “It’s really exciting to have that level playing field.” ■

For more information visit teambrit.co.uk

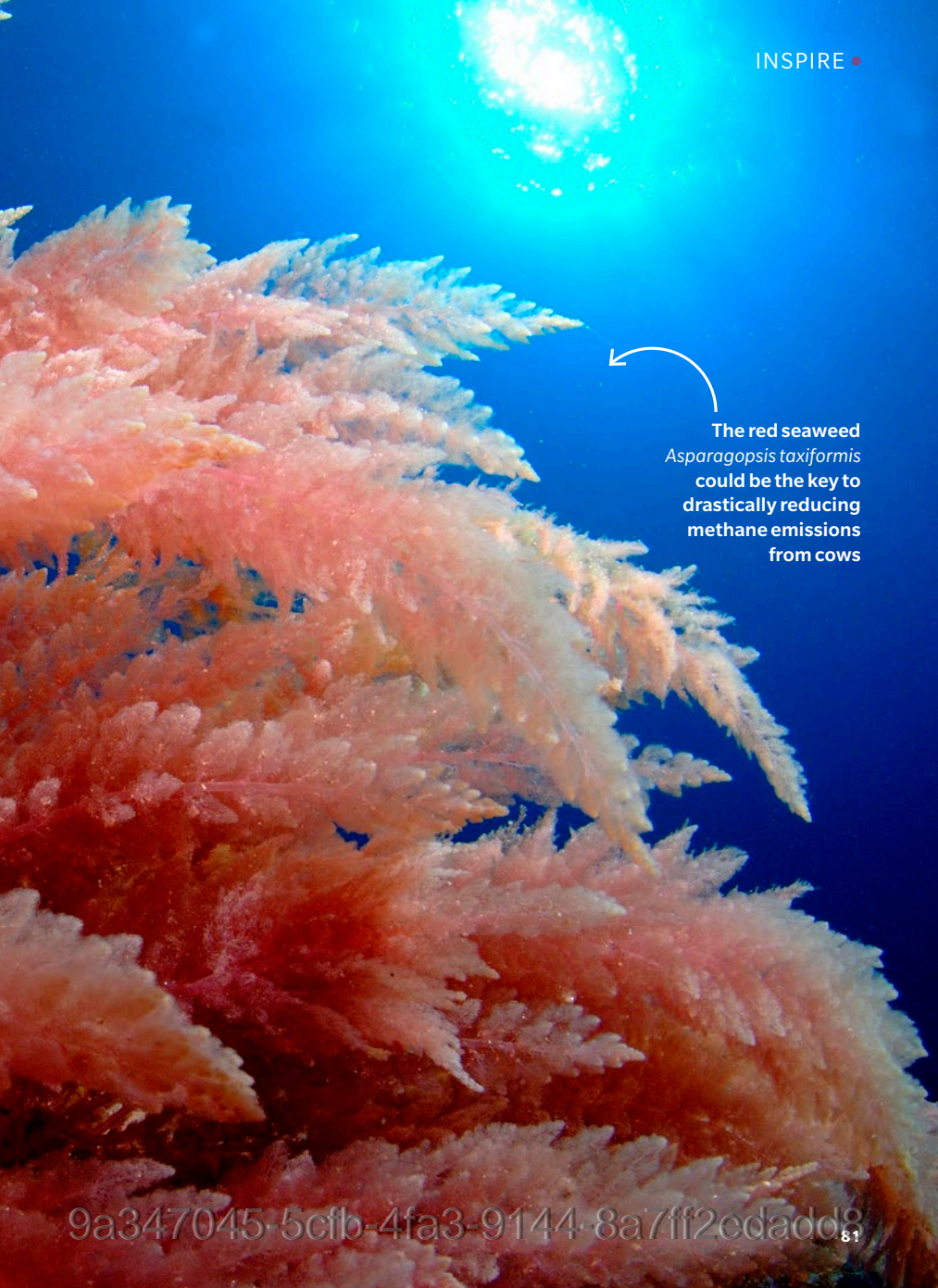


THE SEAWEED SOLUTION

A new kind of cattle feed
could change the world

BY *Diane Godley*

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The red seaweed *Asparagopsis taxiformis* could be the key to drastically reducing methane emissions from cows

SOME 15 YEARS AGO, in the picturesque Canadian province of Prince Edward Island, an organic farmer from the aptly named area of Seacow Pond split his dairy cows across two paddocks, one of which had beach frontage. Over time, Joe Dorgan noticed that his cows by the ocean were in better shape than their fellow

bovines; they were producing more milk, had fewer udder infections (so, health costs decreased by one-third), and were highly reproductive. They seemed to be all-around happier animals. The only difference he could see between the two herds was the more content ones had access to the beach and were eating seaweed.

On a hunch, Dorgan dragged seaweed across the road for his land-locked cattle to see if it would make a difference. Before long, those bovines were catching up with their seaside chums. So he sold his farm to start a new enterprise, North Atlantic Organics, selling organic sea plant products to local farmers.

He knew he was on to something big. But he had no idea that what he had noticed about his cows' new diet was about to give the world a potentially significant weapon in the fight against climate change.

IN TIME, DORGAN learned that although he could feed his own cattle seaweed and even give it away, he needed approval from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency before he could sell it commercially. To get the agency's go-ahead, he required data, so he approached two agriculture scientists at Dalhousie University in the neighbouring province of Nova Scotia. Their focus was on animal nutrition and alternative feed additives to enhance productivity and environmental sustainability.

One of the scientists, Rob Kinley, was also researching ways to reduce greenhouse emissions in livestock by tinkering with their diet. For cattle to digest grass, they need microbes in their guts to help break down the cellulose. And it is these microbes that release copious amounts of global-warming methane. On

average, one cow can emit the same amount of greenhouse gas as one car. Approximately 15 per cent of global greenhouse gases are made up of methane from livestock. With Dorgan's seaweed mix in hand, Kinley started measuring emissions from the cows. What he discovered was an 18 per cent reduction in methane emissions compared with non-seaweed-eating cattle.

It was a lightbulb moment, and

a global search for an even more efficient seaweed began.

AN AUSTRALIAN DISCOVERY

BY 2013, KINLEY was en route to Australia via the Netherlands, where he was working with probiotics and feed inoculations. In Australia, he contacted colleagues at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and James Cook University

Research scientist Rob Kinley holding red seaweed that has been freeze dried



PHOTOS: (PREVIOUS SPREAD) BIOSPHOTO/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO. (THIS SPREAD) PHOTO COURTESY OF CSIRO

who specialised in seaweed and livestock, and they began screening seaweeds off the coast of Queensland state. But they weren't just randomly choosing the seaweeds.

"We knew what the chemistry of the seaweeds needed to be, and we knew what potential impact certain things could do in the rumen [stomach] of cattle, so we selected the seaweed based

on their bioactive contents and chemistries," says Kinley.

Taking their top seaweed candidates, they started reducing the amounts in the cattle feed until it got to about five per cent. "We virtually lost the effect of nearly all of them, except for one," says Kinley: the red seaweed *Asparagopsis taxiformis*. Results were so dramatic that Kinley thought the lab equipment was faulty. However, retesting confirmed that supplementation as low as just 0.5 per cent of the total feed mix yielded roughly 80 per cent less methane.

With escalating global greenhouse gas emissions and increased pressure to manage climate change, Kinley powered on to try to achieve even better results. By the time he

SEAWEED STARTUPS ARE SURFACING ALL OVER, INCLUDING THE UK AND SWEDEN



and his co-authors published the feedlot study "Mitigating the Carbon Footprint and Improving Productivity of Ruminant Livestock Agriculture Using a Red Seaweed" in the *Journal of Cleaner Production* in 2020, they had the seaweed supplementation down to 0.2 per cent and were eliminating 98 per cent of methane.

With those kinds of numbers, if just ten per cent of the world's

farmers used the seaweed ingredient it would have the equivalent effect of taking approximately 100 million cars off the road. And that would give governments that are inflexible on climate policy no reason to leave agriculture out of their 2050 zero-emissions targets.

Methane emissions stay in the atmosphere for around nine years, a shorter period than carbon dioxide (CO₂), but it has a global-warming potential 86 times greater when averaged over 20 years. Removing the methane that cattle produce means the animals can become carbon negative—contributing to an overall reduction in greenhouse gases.

Another positive result? Milk or meat output is higher, because



Left: *asparagopsis taxiformis*, seen here growing in a tank, is likely to be a game-changer for beef and dairy producers. **Right:** a cow in CSIRO's research centre enjoys her seaweed-supplemented feed

when the methane that cattle emit is reduced or eliminated, they are able to increase the fatty acids produced in their bodies.

As a result, beef cattle could grow faster, says Kinley. That means they could produce the same amount of meat with much less feed; or, the ultimate goal, produce more meat with less feed.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

THE POTENTIAL FOR the seaweed supplement to reduce the world's greenhouse gas output is massive, and the hope is that cattle will be consuming FutureFeed—the commercial product developed by CSIRO, Meat and Livestock Australia,

and James Cook University—by the end of 2022.

But first, large amounts of cultivated seaweed are needed—a new industry and a secondary benefit of the “super weed.” When FutureFeed was awarded the Food Planet prize from a pool of more than 600 entries in late 2020, judges noted the product's other positive impacts, stating: “The technology could have indirect benefits including filtering detrimental nutrients in ocean water and creating alternative incomes in developing countries where fisheries are in decline.”

FutureFeed is already working with several industry growers,

including First Nations groups in Queensland, to propagate the seaweed on a large scale. But startups are surfacing all over the planet, including in the United States, here in the United Kingdom, and Sweden.

Others are dipping their toes in the water, says Kinley, and with many aquaculture businesses such as oyster and mussel farms decimated by disease, some are looking to make the switch to growing seaweed since they already have the infrastructure in place.

Initially, FutureFeed will only be able to reach beef and dairy cattle in feedlots (as opposed to grazing cattle). When you take into consideration that dairy cows eat around three times as much as beef cattle, “That’s a lot of emissions,” says Kinley.

The supplement could start rolling out in Australia, Europe, and the United States by the end of this year. And because the micronutrients in the seaweed would replace some of the expensive additives traditionally put into the feed to provide a balanced diet, costs should be reduced. According to Kinley, with efficiencies in processing, the price will drop as time goes by.

BEYOND METHANE

AS THE FOOD Planet judges pointed out, another environmental benefit

ANOTHER ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT OF GROWING SEAWEED IS THAT IT CLEANS OCEAN WATER



of growing seaweed is that it cleans ocean water.

Seaweed, like all photosynthetic plants, gobbles up CO₂, which is responsible for the proliferation of ocean acidity that softens calcium-based shells and corals. The gas is found in runoff from agricultural lands and can cause algal blooms that can be toxic to humans, livestock, and fish. Therefore, seaweed grown on a large scale will act as a biofilter and turn pollution into clean ocean water.

According to a 2017 study published in *Nature Geoscience*, seaweeds could sequester an estimated 173 million tonnes of carbon each year, which is approximately equal to the annual emissions of the state of New York.

Of seaweed’s potential, says Kinley, “there’s a long chain of wins with this.” ■

THE INNOVATION IS SPREADING

FUTUREFEED HAS PARTNERED

with companies across the world to expand the use of *Asparagopsis taxiformis* seaweed as a feed ingredient to cut down on methane emissions.

◆ **Volta Greentech**, a Stockholm-based startup, is working to grow the red seaweed sustainably, in vertical bioreactors. The company is currently building its second factory, which is slated to become the world's largest red seaweed factory. It recently announced the results of a pilot project on a commercial cattle farm. In line with some of Kinley's early testing, the red seaweed feed supplement reduced methane emissions by 80 per cent.

◆ The Hawaiian startup **Symbrosia** is currently using a red seaweed supplement commercially on three farms—one in New York state, one in Washington state, and one in Hawaii—and has seen a 90 per cent reduction in methane emissions. It is one of three companies recently awarded the Blue Climate Initiative's \$1 million Ocean Innovation Prize.

◆ Late last year, **Blue Ocean Barns** released the findings of the first commercial trial of a red seaweed supplement on a dairy farm in the US Methane

emissions of 24 cows in California were measured four times a day. Levels dropped an average of 52 per cent and as much as 90 per cent over seven weeks. During that time, the equivalent of five tonnes of CO₂ emissions were averted.

SCIENTISTS ARE ALSO exploring other avenues to help reduce methane:

◆ A research project at **Queen's University Belfast** is evaluating the qualities of brown and green seaweeds native to the UK and Ireland (as opposed to red seaweed, which grows in warmer climates). The project is teaming up with the supermarket chain Morrisons and will be adding the seaweed to fodder for dairy cows in Northern Ireland this year.

◆ Logistics are top of mind for the Australian project **Greener Grazing**. Large-scale cultivation and production of red seaweed will be needed to reduce methane emissions in a significant way, so the researchers are focused on producing, recovering, and seeding spores used in cultivation. They've also developed a modular ocean-based farming system using submerged tube nets for cultivation.



TRAVEL & ADVENTURE



NICK BRUNDLE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

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The Ella to Kandy
Diesel train
locomotive winds
through tea
plantations near
Nuwara Eliya

Journeying from Kandy to Ella by train

Sri Lanka's Hill Country

BY Nicola Venning

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I peered at the vast wooden timetable in Kandy's colonial-era railway station. There was a row of large clocks, each with a different departure time next to a destination in Sri Lanka's hill country. My husband and I were catching the 8.47am to Ella, a small and increasingly hip mountain town surrounded by tea plantations and jungle forests. And about a 163km-long train ride away. Our blue "express" was already 20 minutes late, but that was part of the charm: tourists and local Sinhalese gathered excitedly on the busy platform, itching to start this renowned train journey.

Sri Lanka's 19th-century railway line was originally built to connect the remote tea country with the coastal ports of Colombo and Galle. We were taking the central section which is generally considered to be one of the most scenic train journeys in Asia: we would be passing lush green jungle, rugged mountains, misty cloud forests and verdant tea plantations.

As the train lumbered out of Kandy, the scruffy suburbs soon gave way to caterpillar-green rice paddies. We crossed the wide brown Mahaweli

river, the longest in Sri Lanka and the rice paddies grudgingly gave way to dense dark jungle. Every 20 to 30 minutes the train stopped at villages with small smiling Buddha shrines and pastel pink or faded orange stations where the platforms had pots of exuberant ferns and palms, and once, a fish tank with bright orange goldfish. Gruff stationmasters in starched white uniforms would patrol as families hurriedly boarded. When the station master wasn't looking, unauthorised food sellers would sneakily creep on, calling



Clockwise from top left: a station master in his starched white uniform; Kandy timetable; a Buddhist shrine at base of large tree near Ella; enjoying train ride from Ella to Kandy among tea plantations in the highlands



“wade, wade, wade” (a spicy chickpea doughnut), or selling bottles of water, “chai” (sweet white tea), nuts or fruit.

We were travelling on a Friday which along with the weekend, is one of the busiest times that you could make the journey. It was also Independence Day—a national holiday to commemorate Sri Lanka’s independence from British rule in 1948. It was clearly a very popular long weekend: our train was rammed.

We had decided to reserve seats (having no wish to stand for hours!) and therefore had to buy tickets in advance. However, the extra demand due to the public holiday made these very hard to obtain. Tickets cannot be bought online and only become available from Kandy’s ticket office in person, roughly a month before the travel date. They tend to be bought up in bulk by agencies and touts and then sold on.

This, combined with Sri Lanka’s two-tier pricing system (foreigners always pay more), meant that our tickets which had a face value of 800 LKR for two (about £4) had suddenly become substantially more expensive. Our hotel manager managed to “obtain” third class reserved tickets, for the rip-off price of 1, 6193 LKR—about £60.00 (normally the foreigners’ price is roughly £20.00 for two).

We had no choice but to pay.



However, Third Class Reserved was arguably one of the best places to sit: our carriage had wide open windows with lots of fresh air (helpful in these post-pandemic times), and was relatively uncrowded at the back of the train, far from the noisy, smoky engine at the front.

Our immediate companions were a Polish couple who smiled a lot and a Sinhalese family who smiled even more. All of us wore face-masks as this was still mandatory in public places. However, with the windows and doors wide open (the train is very, very slow and many people like to sit in the doorway for the view), we did not feel unduly worried.



Left: a street vendor sells fried shrimp and wade at Talawakele railway train station. Above: schoolchildren at Demodara train station near Ella. Right: a tea picker at work at the St Clair Tea Estate in Talawakele

As the train continued to climb, the jungle scenery gave way to grassy hills that looked like little green dumplings. These were eventually replaced with small emerald shrubs that heralded tea plantation country. They were so close to the track, you could pick their leaves. The fields of tea shrubs were dotted with small trees that looked like green lollipops and a few tea pickers—often small gnarled women in bright saris. Most were descendants of the Indian Tamils who had been brought to work as indentured labourers on the tea plantations when the British controlled Sri Lanka. In the distance there were rows of tea-pickers' huts and small homes. Sometimes, these rough and ready dwellings were near the line often with brightly coloured red and orange saris and other clothes drying outside them.

We stopped at villages and market centres with tongue-tying, impossible to pronounce names such as Nawalapitiya or Talawakele. Instead of Buddha, the village shrines now featured the Hindu god Vishnu alongside an occasional Christian church. Sacred cows often grazed by the line, and once or twice sauntered down the station platforms, correctly confident that no harm would come to them.

A row of school children in white clean uniforms made their way down orange dusty tracks, holding umbrellas against the sun and headed to a white Victorian-looking school building.

There are over 20 stations between Kandy and Ella, and one of the busiest stops is at Nanu Oya, about half way through our journey. Here

many people disembarked to visit Nuwara Eliya, a small town in the tea country hills otherwise known as "Little England". It was popular with British tea plantation owners because of its cooler temperate climate and is renowned for its classic English architecture and smart hotels.

We, however, continued on our journey to Ella. We were joined by a group of French teenage girls who were travelling with a Sinhalese

“THE ENGINE GAVE ONE BIG WHEEZE, A SPURT OF STEAM, AND PROMPTLY PACKED UP... WE HAD BROKEN DOWN!”

guide (many tourists hire guides, though we had decided to go independently and had encountered no problems).

The train continued to slowly climb and loop round the hills, which was great for the French girls who all took selfies of themselves hanging out the door.

The small farms and meadows gradually gave way to more alpine scenery and pine forests. When we finally groaned up the track to reach Pattipola, we were 6,226m high and

1897.5m above mean sea level: the highest point of the journey.

The mist was rolling in and the distant hills were barely visible; as we slowly chugged down the line, and emerged from the cloud forest we could still make out rocky escarpments and waterfalls, which meant we were not far from Horton Plains National Park which is popular with hikers. Sadly the elephants that used to roam here, were killed off during British rule.

We passed another station and entered a long tunnel. The engine gave one big wheeze, a spurt of steam, and promptly packed up. Only three stops from the end of our journey in Ella and we had broken down! There was nothing to do but wait for the engine to cool.

While Europeans fretted, the Sinhalese sat back phlegmatically. Clearly this happened a lot! A thumping drumbeat started in the carriage ahead. One young man was carrying drums and soon all the Sinhalese travellers were singing and clapping along. If only that happened on the London underground...

Eventually the engine cooled down enough for our train to limp on to the next station, Bandarawela where it promptly broke down again. Buckets of water were passed along the platform in a human chain and poured over the steaming



View of Ella Rock and the
Ella Gap from the Ambiente
Guest House, Ella

locomotive. By now it was late afternoon and as we stretched our legs, we admired the view as the soft, round hills slowly disappeared into the dusk.

It was all stunningly beautiful but we had been travelling for 9.5 hours and were tired. Ella was only half an hour away but we had no idea if we would make it; and within half an hour it would be dark.

Many of the Sinhalese passengers disembarked here—women carrying bags of rice on their heads, husbands carrying suitcases and small children; the young crowd of the Sinhalese travellers with the bongo drums all walked down the track behind the train and disappeared into the leafy countryside, or jumped into waiting tuk tuks.

Finally to our huge relief, the

train started again. By now it was pitch black and when we arrived in bustling Ella, there was little to see other than taxis.

We snatched a late night swim in the hotel pool, ate a great curry and collapsed onto our big, comfortable bed. Next morning when we pulled back the curtains, we gasped.

There in front of us, was the deep, V-shaped valley of Ella Gap, crisscrossed with green hills and Ravana Falls waterfall, a milky stream in the distance. Colourful birds flitted past our terrace and higher up the hills, we could see tea plantations.

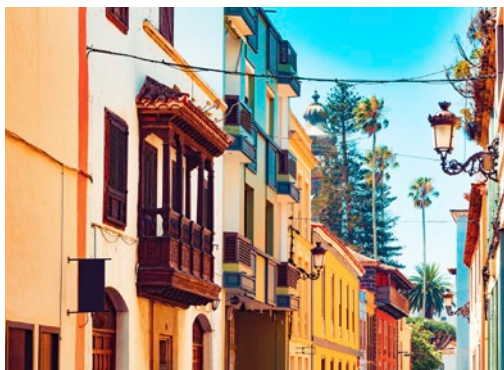
It was all stunning and a fitting end to a wonderful journey that revealed as much about Sri Lankan culture and its welcoming people, as it did its beautiful scenery. ■

My Great Escape:
**A Trip Like
No Other**

*Reader Sharon Haston
experiences Tenerife
like never before*

TWO YEARS AGO, we stepped off the plane for a holiday in Santa Cruz, Tenerife. When we boarded for the return journey, the world had changed beyond recognition. We'd decided to go to the capital for a change and a bit of culture. Of course, we'd heard of coronavirus, but weren't really concerned about it.

We sampled delicious *Gambas Pil Pil* and *Albondigas* washed down with local wine. After marvelling at the colourful fresh produce at the market, we spent a lazy afternoon in the picturesque Cesar Manrique Water Park. Continuing the lazy theme, we spent a day at the sandy Teresitas beach. We practised our menu in Spanish with the waitresses at the beach café and taught them some Scottish words too. So far, so normal.



Until we heard the Irish woman on the lounge next to us telling her husband, “[then Irish Minister for Defence] Varadkar has closed the schools.” Yikes, we thought. That sounds serious.

The next day we travelled to La Laguna, the former capital. We loved its traditional buildings and



bustling squares. But we noticed people wearing masks in trams which smelled of hand sanitiser, the drivers bumped elbows, and people in shops and museums wore gloves.

On our last night the city was eerily deserted. Waiters told us they were going into lockdown the next day. "Good job we're getting out tomorrow." Sitting on the balcony, enjoying the last of the sunshine before our coach pick up, I read that planes had turned back halfway to Tenerife. The airport was bedlam with everyone trying to get home. We were put up for an extra night in a hotel. We decided to try to relax and make the most of things.

Strolling down for a last look at the sea, we expected everything to be closed. But no, Costa Adeje was having a last hurrah! Everywhere was open and busy. We sat down at a beach bar, listened to live music, and in the distance, someone set off fireworks. It felt like a party for the end of the world as we knew it.

Two years later, we returned to Costa Adeje for some winter sunshine. What a difference! Yes, people were still wearing masks, but bars and restaurants were full. We enjoyed an emotional toast to normality. Long may it continue. ■

.....
Tell us about your favourite holiday (send a photo too) and if we print it, we'll pay £50. Email excerpts@readersdigest.co.uk

JUBILÄUMSWARTE

Vienna

HIDDEN
GEMS

Hidden in the Wienerwald, or Vienna Woods, is one of the Austrian capital's finest lookout points.

Found, more specifically, in western Ottakring, Vienna's working-class 16th district, this is the eye-catching *Jubiläumswarte*, or Jubilee Tower. Already 449 metres above sea level, its 31-metre-high viewing terrace is accessed by an al fresco spiral staircase. Trudge up all 183 steps and you'll be rewarded with panoramic views, back over the forest to Vienna itself and up into the Limestone Alps. Key sights are marked out for visitors.

The Jubiläumswarte has endured a stop-start history. A wooden predecessor was first constructed here in 1889 to mark the 50th anniversary of Emperor Franz Joseph I's reign and showcase the region's commercial and industrial might. Alas that didn't go very well, as storm damage quickly demanded a steel-enforced replacement.

This had decayed beyond repair by 1953. The current version launched three years after, now including an adjacent inn. The early 1980s saw an extensive, expensive renovation; now dilapidated, that inn then closed for good a decade later.

Starting from Hütteldorf's U-Bahn station, bus 52B stops beside the tower three times a day. Alternatively and more easily, get the 46A bus from Ottakring's S and U-Bahn station to Savoyenstraße and walk 20 minutes uphill through forest along the 4a hiking path, perhaps including a picnic en route. Plenty of people will be around, many walking dogs, so it shouldn't feel dangerous.

The tower closes from December to March, and can be windy at all times. It's open 24 hours a day and free to enter. ■

By Richard Mellor



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Keep Entertained On A Budget

We're all cutting costs to keep up with increasing prices, and often one part of spending that gets cut is entertainment. But if you shop smartly, you might be able to pick up the same tickets, channels and more for less. Here are some of my favourites

Decide what you'll see on the day

If you're flexible about what shows you see, and are willing to miss out on the most in-demand productions, then a great way to save at the theatre is to go for reduced "stand by" tickets.

These are generally made available on the day. Quantities can vary from a handful that have been deliberately held back, through to all available tickets. Though these might not be the best seats in the house, you might get a VIP ticket for a fraction of the price. I recently picked up a top level seat at the Old Vic that was listed at £125 for only £15.

Some theatres will sell these tickets directly from their box office or website, but many in the West End will use an app called TodayTix instead.

Be a seat filler

A similar way to save on plays, but also comedy shows, gigs and



Andy Webb is a personal finance journalist and runs the award-winning money blog, *Be Clever With Your Cash*

occasionally sporting events, is to be a "seat filler". Websites such as ShowFilmFirst and Central Tickets give away tickets for only a small admin fee.

The idea is you'll fill out the crowd if they're a bit thin so there's more of an atmosphere for paying audience members, or perhaps spread the word of mouth if you enjoyed it. However, the big rule is you don't tell anyone where you got your ticket or how much you paid.



Borrow your books and more

It's easy to forget that libraries exist! But for the budget conscious reader they will be essential. You can order books that aren't

held locally for a small fee, and get on waitlists for the most popular titles.

You'll also be able to get free access to online magazines, newspapers and even family history resources at many libraries. Check your local library to see what extras are on offer.

Become a member

Memberships can be a huge waste of money—if you don't use them. But signing up for unlimited entry for a year with the likes of English Heritage, National Trust, RHS or a

local attraction can also be fantastic value for money. Just be sure you'll get the most out of it.

Go midweek

It's often the case for events that they're cheaper Monday to Wednesday than at the weekend, and that's especially true for cinema tickets. Not only might they be priced lower, but you can get two for one tickets via Meerkat Movies so you pay even less. To get this you need to take out an insurance policy via Compare the Market, but a trick where you buy a one-day UK travel insurance policy (you don't need to use it) means this will cost you just £1 for a whole year.

Ditch satellite and cable TV

It might be a surprise that the majority of channels watched by those with Sky and Virgin are ones they could be watching for nothing via Freeview or Freesat. So if you're out of contract and can do without the premium channels you'll save



**IF YOU'RE OUT
OF CONTRACT
AND CAN DO
WITHOUT THE
PREMIUM
CHANNELS
YOU'LL SAVE
HUNDREDS
OF POUNDS
EACH YEAR**

hundreds of pounds each year.

For the ones you still want to watch, consider NOW, Sky's sister streaming service. You'll need decent broadband but you'll have the power to pay only for the months you actually want to watch.

Mix and match streaming services

Sticking with streaming, it's common for households to have additional services like Netflix, Disney+ and Prime Video. There are some fantastic programmes and films

available, but it's near impossible to get full value out of more than one each month. So focus your viewing on one at a time.

Make the most of what you already have

If you've amassed a collection of CDs, DVDs, and books over the years, now is a great time to revisit these. Challenge yourself to only buy new ones once you've worked your way through them. ■

On The Money

Andy Webb

Q: I've recently opened a SIPP with a company who add on 25 per cent tax relief to any manual contributions I make to my pension. I'm a little confused, as when I'm reading online, it appears it should only be 20 per cent?

I also have a workplace pension that I pay into via defined contribution where my pension is deducted off my final pay before I pay tax and then my employer pays in as well. So my gross pay is after my pension contribution has been deducted.

Are you able to assist me and keep me right? Should it be 20 per cent tax relief?

-Calum

As you say, paying into a pension comes with tax relief—which is a great way to put extra money away for the future without it actually costing you more.

How much tax relief you get does depend on your income. If you're a basic rate taxpayer, that's 20 per cent, but if you're a higher rate taxpayer, it's 40 per cent.

So 20 per cent is the correct figure for you. But that doesn't mean 20 per cent added is wrong. In fact, in your example, both 20 per cent taken before tax and 25 per cent added after a

contribution are actually the same. It's all about when exactly the tax relief is calculated.

Let's say you contribute £100 to your workplace pension. Twenty per cent of this will be the tax relief and paid to your pension separately. You'd only actually pay £80 yourself from your salary.

But with a private pension, if you added £80 upfront, you'd need another 25 per cent of this to reach that £100 figure in your pension. So it's added on after. In both cases the amount of tax-relief is exactly the same at £20. ■



Snappy Straps

A stylish and easy way to up your camera game

AS A CRAFT blogger, I spend a lot of time taking photographs. I have several professional cameras in my collection—but I've always found the neck-straps that come with them to be pretty dull and boring. So, for each one, I've made my own neck-strap. Much more fun!

You will need

- Decorative fabric ribbon (minimum 1.5cm wide)
- Black fabric ribbon (same width as your decorative ribbon)
- Double-sided iron-on fusible interfacing
- 15cm strip of soft leather (optional)
- Adjusters (you can reuse the ones on the strap that comes with the camera)
- Iron and ironing board
- Fabric scissors



There are three main parts to my DIY camera straps. A fabric ribbon (for strength), a decorative ribbon (to make it look cool) and a leather strip (to feel comfortable on your neck). They're all joined together with fusible interfacing, so it's completely no-sew.

What to do

1. Drape one of your ribbons around your neck and determine how long you would like it to be. Make sure it will allow the camera to hang in a comfortable position. Once you're happy, measure how long your ribbon needs to be. To give you a rough idea, mine was 85cm.
2. Cut your decorative ribbon to the length you've determined. Similarly, cut your fusible interfacing to the same length and width as your decorative ribbon.
3. Cut your black fabric ribbon 20cm longer than the decorative ribbon (to



allow extra for the adjustable section of the strap).

4. Lay one end of your black fabric ribbon flat onto your ironing board. Approximately 10cm from the end, place the fusible interfacing and decorative ribbon on top of it, in that order (so the interfacing is sandwiched in the middle). This will leave you with 10cm of uncovered black ribbon on the other end.

5. Using the settings recommended for your fusible interfacing, iron the three layers together to permanently adhere them. Work your way along the full length of ribbons, until you get to the other end.

6. (Optional) Cut a 15cm strip of soft leather (the width should be the same as your ribbon). Cut an identical sized piece of fusible interfacing. Place the leather suede-side down onto your ironing board, then place the fusible interfacing on top. Locate the centre of your glued together ribbons. Place the centre of the ribbons on top of your leather strip and interfacing, so the black fabric ribbon is face down (and the decorative ribbon is face up). Using your iron as earlier, fuse the leather to the layers of ribbon. This will form a comfortable area of suede that will rest on your neck.

7. Finally, thread the ends of your strap (that were not fused with the decorative ribbon) through your strap adjusters. Attach to your camera and adjust to fit.

I love the tape measure fabric I've used in this latest neck-strap (it's even mathematically accurate... the craft geek in me was very excited when I realised that!). Although of course, you can use any ribbon that suits you. They'd make great gifts for photography-loving friends too. ■



Mike Aspinall runs one of the UK's most popular craft blogs, The Crafty Gentleman, where he shares free DIY tutorials



Pack Smart, Not Light

How to streamline your suitcase and pack for a stylish holiday with limited luggage space

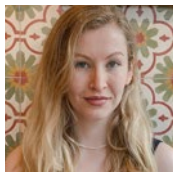
AS WE GEAR up for the summer holidays, it's time to talk packing. It's an often dreaded task. Luggage restrictions and a lack of storage space make organising outfits, toiletries and everything else required for your trip away awfully tricky. But, there's a solution to streamlining your suitcase without having to compromise on style.

It's not about packing light; it's about packing smart. So, whether you're heading abroad for the trip of a lifetime or exploring the shores of the UK on a mini-break, packing

for a stylish holiday simply needs a little organisation and an easily interchangeable wardrobe to make it pain-free, no excess baggage required.

First things first, consider upgrading your luggage. Packing smart starts with the right bag and a beaten-up suitcase that's falling apart at the seams isn't going to do the trick. Look for a sleek, stylish case with built-in compartments for underwear, socks and laundry. *Away's* selection of suitcases come with a water-resistant laundry bag, making packing and unpacking easier than ever.

And a spacious carry-on with room for a book, sweatshirt, chargers and all the other miscellaneous bits needed for a seamless journey is vital. Luckily, supersized tote bags are one of the biggest accessory trends for Spring/Summer 2022 after being spotted on the runways of **Jil Sander**, **Tom Ford**



Bec Oakes is a Lancashire-based freelance journalist with particular passions for fashion and culture writing

and **Salvatore Ferragamo**. They're equal parts stylish and practical; the perfect travel companion.

Then, instead of just throwing random pieces of clothing into your suitcase and hoping for the best, make a plan of the outfits you'll want to wear while you're away. Make a list in the Notes app of your phone or use **Whering**—a digitised wardrobe platform—to really visualise your outfit choices.

When planning your outfits, think what and where. Consider what you'll likely be doing each day and evening and pack accordingly. For example, a day of walking and exploring requires comfortable footwear. A fancy dinner at a nice restaurant, on the other hand, may need a more elevated look. Pick items that cater to each scenario and skip anything that doesn't have a specific use.

Also, try to pack items based on the fact that they will work with lots of other items and in multiple outfits throughout your trip. This means you won't end up lugging loads of things you'll barely wear. Look to multi-tasking pieces that can be easily transformed between noon and night. For example, wide-legged trousers are perfect for both daytime adventures and evening drinks with a simple change of shoe. Choosing complementary colour palettes makes this even simpler. My wardrobe for my most recent travels to the US consisted mostly of black, white and shades of

blue—each piece going with multiple other pieces in my suitcase.

And your travel hero-piece is undoubtedly the do-it-all dress. A summertime perennial, it's the perfect piece to throw on and go, no matter what your travel plans happen to be. But don't be tempted to stuff your suitcase with every sundress available on the high street. With the right care, one dress can last up to three days. A portable steamer helps keeps your clothes crease-free, a lint roller effortlessly removes any fluff or hairs and there are even products such as **The Lab Co.**'s Sports Mist, which are designed to leave your clothes feeling fresher in between washes, using essential oils to neutralise unpleasant odours.

Lastly, put your best foot forward when packing shoes. Wear your chunkiest pair of shoes while travelling to cut down on wasting much-needed space in your case. And, a ratio of one pair to every three or so outfits should suffice. I've been known to pack up to six pairs of shoes for a holiday but on my most recent trip, a pair of trainers, leather flip flops and a heeled mule were more than enough. Once again, pick items that will work hard and that will go with multiple outfits throughout your trip.

This holiday season, eschew the hard and fast rules of travelling light in favour of packing smart with an organised and easily interchangeable wardrobe. ■

Starch & Shine

*Could the secret to strong hair be in the kitchen cupboard? **Jenessa Williams** investigates the beauty benefits of rice water*

What is it?

Dating back to the ancient days of the Heian period, Japanese women often claimed that the secret behind their floor-length hair was rice water. Quite literally the water that is left after rice is soaked or cooked, it has been used in Asian beauty rituals for centuries, thought to encourage hair growth and retention. Wanting to get in on the action, western haircare companies have been marketing rice water as a key ingredient for a little while. But as a post-lockdown restorative, it has really boomed.

What are the benefits?

Inositol, a carbocyclic sugar sometimes referred to as vitamin B8, plays a key structural role in your body's cells. It affects chemical messengers of serotonin and dopamine, and influences the behaviour of insulin, the hormone essential for blood sugar control. Inositol is also found in rice water, and



by applying it to hair or skin, it can penetrate damaged follicles, helping to repair them from the inside out.

Rice also contains up to 80 per cent starch, washed off when rice is soaked or cooked. In this starchy water, many vitamins and minerals may be present; amino acids, antioxidants, vitamin E and B, all popular elements of haircare.

Does it really work?

Early academic research does note that rice water may help to increase hair elasticity and reduce friction, but is in need of further corroboration before any notable miracle claims can be made. However, there is no real harm in trying. Mix up some rice in a bowl with water and allow to grow cloudy over 12-24 hours at room temperature. Apply after washing and conditioning. If the water smells sour, discard and start again. Let sit in the scalp for a couple of minutes, and then rinse. Some claim that they can feel the effects right away, but it will likely depend on your hair type. ■

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checkout to redeem.



Founded by professional rugby players **George Kruis** and **Dom Day** back in 2019, fourfive was created to bring premium wellness products to anybody looking to stay healthy, happy and active.

Throughout their professional rugby careers George and Dom had become no strangers to long term injury. Whilst both recovering from yet other surgery in 2018, they reflected on the impact this could have on their long term health and fitness.

They had both witnessed other players struggling in the years post retirement and after many years in a contact sport they knew that rugby was ageing their bodies at an accelerated rate but were determined to remain active long after their sports careers ended.

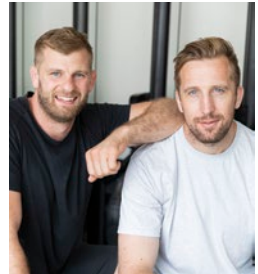
They began to look more closely at the relationship between wellness, nutrition and long term health and realised they had underestimated the value of quality supplements on their ability to stay active for longer.

Fourfive launched in 2019 and have continued to go from strength to strength, with their Informed Sport tested nutrition range launching in 2020.

Their selection of core nutrients created with industry leading specifications, began to attract

the attention of high performing sports teams. In 2021, fourfive announced Official Wellness Partnerships with Premiership Rugby Team Leicester Tigers and all three elite Saracens teams at the StoneX Stadium which includes the Men's and Women's Rugby and the Mavericks Netball teams. In addition to this, fourfive's star studded list of fans includes International Rugby Player Jack Nowell, Head of Yoga at Virgin Active Charlotte Holmes, TV presenter Angela Scanlon and actress Suranne Jones.

Staying active as we age is important to all of us and fourfive are proud to provide a premium range of quality, trusted wellness products that easily fit into your day to day routine. So whether it's rugby, golf, gardening or yoga we have something to keep you performing at your best for longer.



 **fourfive**

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A TASTE OF
HOME



INGREDIENTS:

Serves: 2

- 2 medium eggs
- 100ml (3½fl oz) milk
- 1 tbsp golden caster (superfine) sugar
- 4 stale slices of blueberry, orange and honey plait, around 2.5cm (1in) thick
- 20g (¾oz) butter

For the figs

- 150g (5½oz) fresh figs
- 50g (1¾oz) blueberries
- zest and juice of ½ orange
- 2 tbsp honey

To serve

200g (7oz) Greek yogurt

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Jack Sturgess

Blueberry French Toast

With Macerated Figs And Yogurt

We used to call it “eggy bread” but these days we’re a little more classy! Weekends for our little family can sometimes be busy but on the off chance we have nothing on, breakfast becomes an event and that often means dressing gowns and French toast. When I was a kid there would be three topping options; sugar, syrup

or both and I always remember what a treat it would be. The base of this dish brings real nostalgic vibes for me, and the macerated figs are a little nod to my chef career since.

Here I have used slices of homemade blueberry and honey bread, but you can use any fruit bread really or even brioche.

METHOD:

Macerate your figs ahead of time

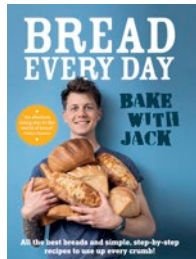
1. Trim the stalky tip from your figs and discard. Cut them into quarters and place them in a large mixing bowl. Cut your blueberries in half and add them to the bowl too, along with the orange zest and juice and honey. Gently mix everything around to coat, and tip the mixture into a small container or re-usable food bag. Squeeze all the air from the bag and seal, then leave in the fridge for two hours or overnight.

For the French toast

2. In a baking tray, beat your eggs and milk together with the sugar. Dip in both sides of your bread slices and leave them in there to soak.

3. Warm the butter in a large heavy frying pan (skillet) until foaming and place your soaked bread slices into the pan. Cook gently for around 2½–3 minutes on each side until golden.

4. Divide your toast between two plates, top with a generous amount of yogurt and a few good spoonfuls of your figs and blueberries. Finish with a drizzle of the fig juice.



Extracted from *Bake With Jack* by Jack Sturgess (Ebury Press, £22)

Photography by Andrew Hayes-Watkins

World Kitchen

Korea:
Bibimbap



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Bibimbap (*bibim* meaning “mixing rice” and *bap* being a noun for “rice”) is one of Korea’s most iconic and popular dishes due to its simplicity, low cost and delicious taste. A dynamic mixture of textures and colours, the dish consists of warm white rice and a variety of toppings, including vegetables, meats and sauces. It came from early rural Koreans using leftover vegetables for quick and nutritious meals. The true beauty of bibimbap is that it’s incredibly versatile, and you too can use any bits that need to be used up to create this beloved Korean staple. Spinach, minced beef, pickled radish or Korean cucumber would make perfect substitutes for any of the ingredients below!



Method:

1. Rinse the rice in cold water and cook according to packet instructions.
2. While the rice is cooking, julienne your carrots, courgettes, cabbage, lettuce and nori leaves. Cut the mushrooms into thin strips.
3. Put a frying pan on medium high heat and add a few drops of oil. Once the pan is hot, cook each vegetable one by one, stirring it occasionally for 1-2 minutes, until it begins to soften but remain firm. Set aside.
4. Fry the egg sunny side up in a pan with a few drops of oil. Set aside.
5. To make the bibimbap sauce, put the gochujang, soy sauce, sesame oil, garlic and sugar into a bowl and mix well until combined.
6. To assemble your dish, place the drained rice at the bottom of a bowl, then neatly arrange each vegetable on top of it, and place the fried egg in the middle. Drizzle a few scoops of the bibimbap sauce over the top.

Note: The ingredients are stirred together thoroughly just before eating, but make sure you snap a picture of your beautifully arranged dish before you do!

Serves: 1

Cooking time: 45 mins

Ingredients:

- 250g short grain rice
- 30g carrots
- 30g courgettes
- 2 cabbage leaves
- 3 gem lettuce leaves
- 3 nori (crispy dried seaweed) sheets
- A handful of shiitake mushrooms
- 1 egg

Gochujang sauce

- 2 tsp Gochujang (readily available in most supermarkets’ world foods section)
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- ½ tsp brown sugar



This cake is a twist on the classic *Delizia al Limone*, the individual dome-shaped sponge cakes filled and covered with lemon cream that are so popular in pastry shops along the Amalfi Coast. It's really quite simple to make yet it looks really effective—perfect for a special occasion like the Jubilee. For the lemon concentrate, I use my *Lemon Concentrate* recipe. Otherwise, use lemon extract.



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Gennaro Contaldo

Torta Delizia Al Limone

Creamy lemon cake

Recipe from
Gennaro
Contaldo's *Limoni*
(Pavilion Books)



METHOD:

1. Preheat the oven to 160°C fan/180°C/gas mark 4 and lightly grease a baking tin, approx. 36 x 36cm (14 x 14in)—or you could use a large Swiss roll tin, a roasting tin or the fat tray from your oven/grill. Line with baking parchment. Separate the eggs into large bowls. Lightly beat the yolks and set aside. Whisk the whites until stiff, then fold in the caster sugar, lemon zest and lemon concentrate.

2. Gradually fold in the egg yolks, followed by the oil and then sift in the flour. Pour into the prepared baking tin and bake in the oven for 10–12 minutes until golden.

Meanwhile, make the lemon cream. Whip the cream until stiff and combine with the yogurt, lemon zest, lemon concentrate and sift in the icing sugar.

3. Remove the sponge from the oven, turn out onto a wire rack and allow to cool before carefully removing the baking parchment. Place on a board or work surface lined with a clean sheet of baking parchment and cut into nine 4-cm (1½-in) strips—keep the strips together for now.

4. Put the ingredients for the syrup in a small saucepan over a medium heat and stir until the sugar dissolves. Remove from the heat and brush the hot liquid all over the strips.

5. Once absorbed, spread some of the cream on the first strip and carefully roll it up. Place the roll upright in the centre of a serving plate. Spread cream on the second strip and roll it around the ready-rolled strip on the plate. Continue doing this until you have used up all the strips.

6. Cover the whole cake with the remaining cream—you could also put some cream in a piping bag and decorate the cake if you wish. Decorate with lemon slices and fresh mint. Keep the cake refrigerated for a couple of hours before serving.

INGREDIENTS:

Serves 8

For the sponge

- 5 free-range eggs
- 70g (2½oz) caster sugar
- zest of ½ unwaxed lemon
- 2 tsp lemon concentrate or extract
- 70ml (2½fl oz) mild olive oil
- 50g (1¾oz) plain flour

For the cream

- 500ml (18fl oz) double cream
- 250ml (8½fl oz) natural yogurt
- zest of ½ unwaxed lemon
- 3 tsp lemon concentrate or extract
- 60g (2¼oz) icing sugar, sifted

For the limoncello syrup

- 2 tsp limoncello
- 2 tsp water
- 1 tsp caster sugar

To decorate

- 1 lemon, sliced thinly into half moons
- fresh mint leaves

INGREDIENTS:

Cupcakes

- 285g butter
- 285g self raising flour
- 285g caster sugar
- 5 eggs
- 2 tsp vanilla bean paste
- 2 tsp baking powder

Buttercream

- 150g butter
- 500g icing sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla bean paste

Decorations

- 1 tube red, white and blue sprinkles
- 20 mini Union Jack flag cupcake toppers



Jubilee Cupcakes

To make these delicious cupcakes, preheat your oven to gas make 4. Line 2 x 12 hole muffin tin with 20 muffin cases. Using an electric whisk, whisk together the butter and sugar for 2-3 minutes until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs one at a time, then add the vanilla bean paste and stir well. Add the flour and baking powder to the egg mixture and beat well to combine. Divide the mixture evenly between the muffin cases and bake for 20 minutes until they spring back when

touched and a skewer inserted comes out clean. Cool in the muffin tins for 5 minutes, then transfer to a cooling rack to cool completely.

To make the buttercream, beat the butter until soft and creamy then stir in the vanilla bean paste. Gradually sift and beat in the icing sugar. Place the buttercream in a piping bag fitted with a swirl nozzle. Pipe pipettes of icing on each cupcake, then sprinkle the sprinkles on top of each and top with a mini flag before serving.

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who matter
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ELIZABETH: A PORTRAIT IN PARTS

THE QUEEN IS arguably the most famous person on the planet. She's the subject of some 50,000 news articles a month, not to mention the endless Google questions from all over the world ("Why is the queen so important?", "Does she eat swans?", "Watch *The Crown*?"). Yet despite the public's persistent fascination and curiosity, Elizabeth II remains an enigmatic figure and even the smallest nuggets of information are a precious luxury to be cherished and savoured. This new documentary, then, is a bona fide royal feast.

Directed by the late, great Roger Michell (*Notting Hill*, *My Cousin Rachel*), *A Portrait in Parts* is a plenteous, visually rich and committed chronicle of the 70-year reign of the longest-reigning British monarch. True to its title, the documentary collates hundreds of hours' worth of footage into very particular, niche categories: Elizabeth in the saddle; receiving flowers; in portrait, and so on. It's a colourful, buzzing mosaic that reveals a more whimsical, human side of the Queen (she's no stranger to self-deprecating humour and partial to a game of tag

with young sailors), lets us in on the mind-boggling rules around etiquette and ceremonies but perhaps, most importantly, reminds us of the gravity and grace with which she has carried out her duties through some of the country's most tumultuous times.

The footage is interweaved with sporadic interview snippets with everyone from Paul McCartney who admits the Beatles had a crush on the “babe” that was Elizabeth, to the Queen's stand-ins who have the odd job of pretend-meeting the world's dignitaries in rehearsal for big ceremonies (and rather enjoy it). And when the time comes for the real deal, the Queen's dignified, unwavering charisma—whether she's meeting Winston Churchill or Marilyn Monroe—is a sight to behold.

A Portrait is not without its flaws; some narrative blanks are filled with ill-fitting Hollywood movie scenes, and the numerous controversies and problematic events are glossed over with a chaotic, three-minute montage. It's a flimsy attempt at nuance that clearly doesn't belong on the “Best Of” compilation that this film is. It's an unashamedly adulating ode to the country's number one matriarch and a rousing reminder of her resolute commitment to the role she calls “her fate”.

***Elizabeth: A Portrait in Parts* is out in cinemas across the UK on May 27 and streaming on Prime Video on June 1**

By Eva Mackevic



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WOMEN'S STORIES HAVE long been integral to television, but rarely have they been so well-resourced. After Netflix axed much-loved wrestling dramedy *GLOW* in 2020, showrunners Liz Flahive and Carly Mensch simply switched channels to make AppleTV+'s new draw *Roar*. Drawing on Cecelia Ahern's short-story collection of 2018, this eight-episode first season tours the globe while placing the fairer sex squarely upfront. Nicole Kidman's stressed suburban homemaker hits the road with muddled ma Judy Davis; Meera Syal returns her careworn husband to the shop; the great Merritt Wever falls for a smooth-talking duck. As with every anthology show since *The Twilight Zone*, the quality fluctuates, but its best instalment is a hall-of-fame half-hour: a funny-sad-joyous fable, gorgeously directed by So Yong Kim, in which model-turned-trophy wife Betty Gilpin finds herself literally



left on the shelf.

Roar is what follows when executives commission TV 'About Women': it's honourable, but also somewhat dutiful about addressing certain issues. *Hacks* (Prime Video) and *Shining Vale* (Starz, via Prime) are what happens when creatives set about making great TV; their feminism is folded in like the strawberry sauce in a sundae. The former, loosely informed by the fraught relationship between stand-up legend Joan Rivers and her younger gagwriters, won those few of this year's Emmys that weren't scooped by *Ted Lasso*, and you can see why: superbly written and played, it's that rare show about comedy that manages to be blisteringly funny. *Shining Vale* sees co-creator Sharon Horgan exporting her recurring thematic concerns to the US: Connecticut, to be precise, where Courteney Cox's messy author is possessed by murderously frustrated spirit Mira Sorvino. Rude, irreverent fun that spirals like a demon.



Retro Pick:

Nurse Jackie S1-7

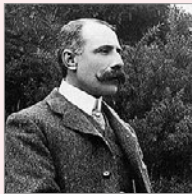
(Prime Video) Flahive and Mensch apprenticed on this gripping medical morality play, in which a post-*Sopranos* Edie Falco excels as a high-functioning addict in scrubs.

Music For Royalty



Zadok the Priest
by George Frideric
Handel

One of Handel's best known, most arresting works, *Zadok the Priest* was originally composed for the coronation of King George II in 1727 (during which the Westminster Abbey choir accidentally sang it in the wrong part of the service) and has been sung prior to the anointing of the sovereign at the coronation of every British monarch since. And with its sumptuous build-up of regal strings leading to an explosive climax—we can see why.



**Pomp and
Circumstance
March No. 1**
by Edward Elgar

An instantly recognisable classic, March No. 1 was composed by Elgar in 1901 and was so well received that the very next year Elgar was encouraged to include it in his coronation ode for King Edward VII. It was then that poet AC Benson set the middle part to a patriotic text, and the hymn "Land of Hope and Glory" was born. The title "Pomp and Circumstance" was taken from Shakespeare's tragedy, *Othello*.



**"I Vow to Thee,
My Country"**
by Gustav Holst

This poignantly beautiful patriotic hymn was born when a poem by Sir Cecil Spring Rice was set to the music from the "Jupiter" movement of Holst's major spine-tingling orchestral suite *The Planets*. It is popularly sung at Remembrance Day services; and has been performed at the funerals of Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher, among others. In 2019, it was voted as UK's sixth favourite hymn in a poll by BBC's *Songs of Praise*.



Crown Imperial
by William Walton

A majestic and triumphant orchestral work epitomising Great Britain, *Crown Imperial* was originally commissioned by the BBC on the accession of Edward VIII in 1936. Written by Walton in less than two weeks, the composition was ultimately used at the coronation of King George VI in 1937 when his brother renounced the throne. It's said to have been modelled after the *Pomp and Circumstance* Marches by Elgar.

June Fiction

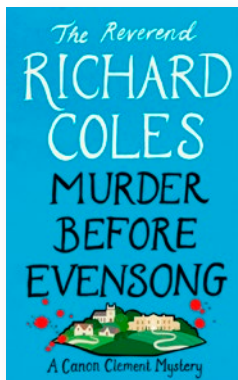
The first novel from the much-loved Reverend Richard Coles is our June fiction pick

Murder Before Evensong
by **The Reverend Richard Coles**
(W&N, £16.99)

THE FIRST NOVEL by The Reverend Richard Coles—whose somewhat unusual CV includes being a radio presenter, a former popstar, a *Strictly* contestant and a country vicar—begins on a note of deep drama. Not the murder of the title, but the plan by Daniel Clement, rector of Champton St Mary, to install a toilet at the back of the church. The trouble, you see, is that there's never been one before, so the new loo represents something that the parishioners especially fear: change.



James Walton is a book reviewer and broadcaster, and has written and presented 17 series of the BBC Radio 4 literary quiz *The Write Stuff*



Then again, they haven't had much practice in dealing with it. As the novel makes clear, Champton prides itself on its continuity. The year may be 1988, yet this is still a place where the lord of the manor remains a figure of feudal authority and there's a strong sense of social rank. For many locals too—certainly the ones we meet here—the Anglican church maintains a central role.

Coles writes about all this with a winning mix of affection, amusement and just a faint edge of exasperation. The rhythm of village life is beautifully captured, and he handles a large and varied cast with sharp-eyed sympathy.

Like the man himself, the novel is never remotely pious—but nor does it shy away from reflecting on what it means to be a vicar, and on Christianity more generally.

So, you may be wondering, what about that murder? As it transpires, this is a fair question. Not until page 100 does the killer strike—and though the death is said to throw Champton into turmoil, it doesn't really. Instead, both village life and the book resume their quietly alluring rhythms for another 100 pages or so, before a second murder takes place. Only then does Coles snap into proper whodunit action, serving up a series of cunning twists and eventually a solution that's undeniably ingenious if not perhaps terrifically plausible.

And, in the end, this rather confirms the feeling of where his heart really lies here: not so much in the crime story itself, but in the beguiling picture of rural England for which it acts as a neat framework. ■

Name the character

Can you guess the fictional character from these clues (and, of course, the fewer you need the better)?

1. He's regularly voted the best dad in fiction.
2. He works as a lawyer in the United States: Maycomb, Alabama.
3. His creator was Harper Lee.

Paperbacks

And Away... by Bob Mortimer (Gallery UK, £8.99). One of the bestselling—and best—showbiz autobiographies of recent times. Funny (of course) but often moving too.



A Slow Fire Burning by Paula Hawkins (Penguin, £8.99). A boy found on a houseboat kicks off the most exciting thriller so far by the author of *The Girl on the Train*.

Berkmann's Cricketing Miscellany by Marcus Berkmann (Abacus, £9.99). Father's Day alert! A hugely entertaining collection of cricket facts, presented with Berkmann's usual wit and keen eye for arresting detail.

No Such Thing as Perfect by Emma Hughes (Penguin, £7.99). Let's face it, not that many rom-coms are both properly romantic and properly comic. Here's one that is.

Did Ye Hear Mammy Died? by Séamas O'Reilly (Fleet, £9.99). Wonderful, touching and somehow joyous memoir of growing up in rural Derry as one of 11 children, whose mother died when Séamas was five.

READER'S DIGEST RECOMMENDED READ:

Suspicious Minds

The mysterious gift of premonitions is explored in this stranger-than-fiction true story

THE PREMONITIONS BUREAU might sound like an organisation straight out of a science-fiction movie. In fact, it was a serious scientific endeavour set up in the 1960s by two intellectually respected men. One was Peter Fairley, the science editor of London's *Evening Standard* newspaper, who later presented ITV's moon-landing coverage. The other was John Barker (1924-1968), a reforming psychiatrist at the badly outdated Shelton mental hospital in Shropshire.

But along with his day job, Barker had a deep interest in the psychic abilities of the human mind. After the 1966 Aberfan disaster, when a coal tip infamously collapsed on the town's primary school, he persuaded Fairley to appeal in the *Standard* for anybody who'd had a premonition

of the catastrophe. Seventy-five people replied and, after a spot of sifting, the Premonitions Bureau was born: partly to see if some people really could foresee terrible events, but partly too with a view to preventing them.



Its two biggest stars—often to their own discomfort—were Miss Middleton, a London piano teacher, and Alan Hencher, who worked for the Post Office. Between them, they seemed to predict the Torrey Canyon oil spillage, the death of a Russian cosmonaut, Robert Kennedy's assassination (see sidebar) and a fatal train crash in London. By 1968, the two were also predicting Barker's own death...

Sam Knight tells the whole astonishing story with impressive calmness, acknowledging the possibility both of coincidence and of something rather more mysterious. He also uses it as

springboard to explore wider questions of how the mind works.

This edited extract begins—coincidentally or not—the day after Barker had been warned by his sceptical superiors at Shelton to disassociate himself from the Premonitions Bureau or risk losing his job:

“The bureau got its first major hit in the spring of 1967. At 6 am on 21 March, the phone rang in Barker's dining room. He came downstairs and answered. It was Alan Hencher.

‘I was hoping not to have to ring you,’ Hencher said. ‘But now I feel I must.’

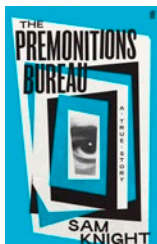
Hencher was coming off a night shift and was calling to predict a plane crash. Barker made notes on a piece of Shelton hospital letterhead. Hencher was upset. He had a vision of a Caravelle, a French-built passenger jet, experiencing problems soon after take-off. ‘It is coming over mountains. It is going to radio it is in trouble. Then it will

cut out—nothing.’ Hencher said there would be 123 or 124 people on board and that only one person would survive, ‘in a very poor condition.’ Hencher couldn't tell where the crash was going to happen but he had had the feeling for the last two or three days. It was as if someone on the aircraft was trying to communicate with him. They were trying to make peace. ‘While I am talking to you, I have a vision of Christ,’ Hencher told Barker.

Barker passed the prediction on to the *Evening Standard*. In the subsequent weeks, he made no effort to curb his extracurricular research or to stop drawing attention to himself. On 11 April, he and Fairley appeared on *Late Night Line-Up*, a chat show on BBC2, to publicise the bureau. Nine days later, a turboprop Britannia passenger aircraft carrying 130 people attempted to land in Nicosia, Cyprus, during a thunderstorm. The plane was on its way from Bangkok to Basel, carrying mostly Swiss and German holidaymakers. It was on its way to its penultimate stop, in Cairo, when the pilots were advised the airport was closed because of heavy rain. The flight plan suggested Beirut as the back-up option but the captain decided to make an unscheduled landing in Cyprus, despite the bad weather.

By the time the plane reached the island, the captain and his

**The
Premonitions
Bureau: A True
Story** by Sam
Knight is
published by
Faber at £14.99



co-pilot were almost three hours over their time limits at the controls. At 11.10pm, the aircraft was cleared to land at Nicosia, but came in a little high. Muller requested permission to make a circuit of the airport and try again. The control tower glimpsed the plane, its landing lights flashing through the low cloud, before it wheeled to the south and clipped a wing on the side of a hill, rolled over, broke into pieces and caught fire.

'124 DIE IN AIRLINER', the *Evening Standard* reported on its front page the following morning. (The final death toll was 126; two people who survived the initial impact were taken to a nearby UN field hospital, where they died.) Fairley and Barker noticed the similarities with Hencher's prediction immediately. The *Evening Standard* published an account of Hencher's premonition alongside the news coverage. 'The Incredible Story of the Man Who Dreamed Disaster,' the headline read. ”

Answer to Name the Character:

Atticus Finch—who defends a wrongly accused Black man in Lee's

To Kill a Mockingbird. He now has his own monument near the old courthouse in Monroeville, Alabama (which was the model for Maycomb).



THE PREMONITIONS BUREAU

The 1968 US Presidential Campaign: More From *The Premonitions Bureau*

"Late in the morning, while he was being jostled and grabbed by a crowd in Chinatown, in San Francisco, a firecracker exploded near Bobby Kennedy. There was a string of loud bangs. His entourage cowered. He carried on shaking hands. The next day, Miss Middleton was frantic. 'Another assassination and again in America,' she wrote to Barker. She called the Premonitions Bureau three times on 4 June, warning that a killing was imminent. That afternoon, at the beach in Los Angeles, Kennedy's 12-year-old son, David, got into trouble in the undertow, and he dived in to save the boy. He was shot in the head shortly after midnight, as he cut through the kitchen of the Ambassador Hotel, minutes after declaring victory in the California primary. 'Everything's going to be okay,' Kennedy whispered, as he lay dying on the floor. Barker described it as Miss Middleton's best prediction yet. 'You were insistent,' he wrote."

Books

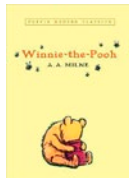
THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

Scottish crime maestro Stuart MacBride is the *Sunday Times* No 1 bestselling author of the Logan McRae and Ash Henderson novels. His new novel, *No Less The Devil* is available now (£20.00, Transworld)



Winnie-the-Pooh by AA Milne

This is the book that lives deep in the heart of me—the one that made me realise, all those years ago, that reading is *flipping brilliant*—kicking off a lifelong love affair with books and stories. I don't think anyone has ever captured the sparkling imagination of small children as well as Milne and his little fuzzy bear with a serious honey addiction. In a serious lapse of judgement, I agreed to do *Celebrity Mastermind* a few years ago and Milne was my specialist subject. Even after going through that particular horror, I still love the stories. Best. Book. Ever.



Hard Frost by RD Wingfield

Most people have heard of the TV show, *A Touch of Frost*, but very few have actually read the books. Which is a shame, because they're so much better. Wingfield's DI

"Jack" Frost is a far more complicated and layered character and he's at his best in this intricate tale of kidnap, cynicism, and revenge. He's crude, he's irascible, he's kind, he's funny, he makes mistakes, he's human. He's also surrounded by a supporting cast that make this an absolute joy to read. *Hard Frost* is the book that opened my eyes to what crime fiction could, and should, be.

The Four Great Novels by Dashiell Hammett

I discovered this omnibus edition of Hammett when I was 13 and it changed everything. Previously I'd been into a much softer kind of crime fiction: the Hardy Boys, Poirot, Holmes, Scooby-Doo... and now here I was with a bumper collection of hard-boiled noir: *The Dain Curse*, *The Glass Key*, *Red Harvest*, and *The Maltese Falcon*. The grit and darkness of Hammett's work couldn't have been further from what I was used to, and I loved it. His novels are taut, often brutal, where life is cheap and the bourbon cheaper, in a world made dark by unscrupulous men.



Broken Windows

James O'Malley explains why Microsoft's future doesn't need its famous operating system

FOR THE LAST 35 years, Microsoft Windows has been synonymous with computing. This is for good reason too: in January, Microsoft revealed that 1.4 billion people around the world are currently using Windows 10 or the company's newest release, Windows 11, on their computers. That's a lot of people. But here's the strange thing: Windows may not be long for this world.

In fact, though Microsoft is still one of the largest companies in the world, over the last decade it has undergone a transformation, and Windows is no longer the most important thing the company does.

The story starts with a failure. Despite Windows dominating desktop computing, when smartphones arrived, Microsoft was late to the party. Apple's iPhone first launched in 2007, and Google created its own mobile operating system called Android in 2008, which today runs on virtually every other non-iPhone today. Microsoft had been making its own mobile operating

system for some time, called Windows Mobile, but it failed to keep pace with Apple and Google—so the company ended up losing out as our phones became the most important computers in our lives.

It was a kick in the teeth for then Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer, who had taken over from Bill Gates. His big idea for the

company was “Windows everywhere”—the goal of creating a world where Windows is at the centre of our digital lives: everyone would use Windows Mobile phones, Windows Tablets, and even Windows video games consoles (in the form of Microsoft's Xbox), in addition to their Windows computers. But once the company lost out on the mobile revolution, it was clear the idea was never going to work.

And this is the moment that Microsoft changed forever. In 2014, Microsoft engineer Satya Nadella took over the company and made a critical decision: Microsoft would no longer care whether or not you use Windows. Instead, the company would work with the rest of the tech industry, and



would make its other products, like Word, Excel and Outlook, work on other systems.

The most dramatic example of this came in 2015 when a Microsoft executive appeared on the stage at Apple's biggest annual event, to announce that the company was now making Microsoft Office for iPad. Peace had broken out between what were once tech's fiercest rivals.

This "agnostic" approach to computer platforms means that today Microsoft aims to make sure that its products work with everything. In fact, you don't even need to download Microsoft Word anymore, as you can just edit documents inside a web browser. It was also from this point that Microsoft changed its entire business model: instead of trying to sell you a new version of Office every few years, it would encourage you to pay a monthly subscription to use Office, on whatever device you want. Microsoft's new mantra is that it doesn't care if you're using an Apple Mac, Google Chromebook or a Samsung phone, it's just happy to take your money every month either way.

The company has launched similar services aimed at technical users too: Its biggest money maker is Microsoft Azure, which is today a major part of the hidden "cloud" technology that keeps the internet running. Like Office, this isn't Microsoft selling

computers or software, but instead charges cloud users a monthly fee based on how many cloud computing resources they use.

Microsoft has even taken this subscription approach to video games. Though it still makes Xbox consoles, it is now much more interested in selling gamers a Netflix-style package that lets you play big-budget 3D games on your console, PC, or even your phone for a flat monthly fee.

Though you may not have noticed it happening, collectively these changes mean that Microsoft is virtually a different company from what it was 15 years ago.

The strategy has paid off too, as Microsoft is today worth around four times as much as it was a decade ago. But what about poor old Windows? Despite once being the most important part of Microsoft's business, today it is responsible for just 16 per cent of Microsoft's income. What's more, this income is mostly from the sales of new PCs, who pay Microsoft a cut to use Windows—and this is a market segment in decline as people move to phones and other devices. In other words, Windows is a much less essential part of Microsoft's business.

So as strange as it may seem today, it is conceivable that one day in the future Microsoft might make another dramatic decision, and decide to stop bothering with Windows altogether. ■

£50 PRIZE QUESTION

FRIENDS?

What do the following words have in common?

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NAVIGATE
SCRIBE
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My birthday was coming up so I went to the card store and asked my daughter (aged four) if she wanted to pick a card for me. I tried not to look but I couldn't help but notice she was looking at one after the other and making a mess of the display. When I asked her what she was doing, she replied, "I'm looking for one with money in it for you, Mummy."

LEONIE SCOTT, *London*

When I was a child, a nearby restaurant's presence was proudly heralded by the huge yellow and red "Happy Eater" sign that was ubiquitous at the sides of roads in the 1980s and 90s. The primary colours were so striking and the sign so large that it would have been impossible to misread. It was something of a mystery to me, therefore, how a very good friend of my father's had failed properly to process it on his weekly visits to our house to play snooker.

One July day he burst in, clearly a

little agitated, saying, "I do wish they'd get rid of that Happy Easter sign up the road—they really should have sorted it out by now!"

TOM AUSTIN, *Cambridge*

While out walking with my eight-year-old granddaughter, I was asked to name a certain tree.

"That's an oak tree," I said, "You can tell by its leaves."

"No, Grandpa," she said, "That's a dog tree—you can tell by its bark."

I walked on an older but wiser man.

MERVYN SAUNDERS, *Merthyr Tydfil*

My granddaughter, a "city girl", got her first teaching job at a primary school in a small village deep in the countryside where the majority of the pupils lived on farms.

During a mental arithmetic lesson, she asked the class if there were seven sheep in a field and someone left the gate open, and two sheep escaped, how many would be left.

Young Tom, a farmer's son, answered, "None, Miss."

"Are you sure?", she asked.

"Yes, Miss—sheep are stupid animals; when the first two went, the other five followed."

JOHN ROBERTS, *Conwy*

I've never been interested in food and drink and definitely don't know as much as the average person about it. Everyone thought it was hilarious when I got my first job in a café.



"MA'AM, THE JUBILEE HAT LOOKS GREAT"

Within the first week my boss asked me why I was taking so long to make a customer a white coffee and I explained it was because I couldn't find the white beans... I didn't last long and thankfully found a job much more suited to me. I still get teased about it over 20 years later.

YVONNE LANG, *North Yorkshire*

I was helping my grandparents to clear their attic as they were moving to a new house.

While rummaging, I found an old rifle. My grandparents had forgotten about it and didn't know what to do with it.

I rang my dad to ask for advice. He told me to take it to the police station. A few minutes later he rang back and in urgent tones commented, "But ring ahead first!"

SUZANNE ROSWELL, *Norfolk*

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IT PAYS TO INCREASE YOUR

Word Power

This month we look at how language can help us be sneaky. Whether you're playing a game, turning life into a game or trying to game the system, here are some words to keep up your sleeve

BY JOAN PAGE MCKENNA

1. palindrome—A: word or sentence that reads the same backwards and forwards. B: long-term strategy. C: surprise manoeuvre.

2. alibi—A: Ironman triathlon ability. B: equally adept on land and in water. C: excuse.

3. gambit—A: ploy. B: winning point scored just as time runs out. C: repetitive chant at sporting event.

4. spooring—A: reading inappropriate meanings. B: teaming up with unlikely allies. C: tracking by following a trail.

5. jobbery—A: well-executed sleight of hand. B: corruption in public office. C: fast-moving con.

6. subterfuge—A: online troll. B: deception. C: noble adversary.

7. pawky—A: sly sense of humour. B: given to practical jokes. C: off-colour joking.

8. roister—A: back opponent into a corner during a boxing match. B: shake down for money. C: engage

in noisy revelry.

9. red herring—A: puzzle. B: decoy. C: difficult problem.

10. conundrum—A: symbol for infinity. B: puzzle that uses pictures to represent words. C: problem.

11. kangaroo word—A: word that has paired vowels. B: contains another word that is its synonym. C: only appears as a plural.

12. eccedentesiast—one who A: fakes a smile. B: cheats at everything. C: can beat a lie detector test.

13. cipher—A: witty retort, thought of too late. B: nonentity. C: gypsy mind reader.

14. aleatory—A: dependent on chance. B: hypercompetitive. C: imaginative.

15. phantasmagoria—A: menacing sounds. B: famous Disney movie. C: series of bizarre images.

Answers

- 1. palindrome**—[A] word or sentence that reads the same backwards and forwards; Bad at small talk, Vida yelled “*Palindrome!*” when the client said “Stats.”
- 2. alibi**—[C] excuse; After working late to set up his brother’s surprise birthday party, Chan needed a good *alibi*.
- 3. gambit**—[A] ploy; Releasing the computer virus was the only *gambit* they had that had a hope of breaching the firewall.
- 4. spooring**—[C] tracking by following a trail; The park rangers taught the kids *spooring* by helping them spot a bent-down blade of grass.
- 5. jobbery**—[B] corruption in public office; Accused of *jobbery*, the once-popular mayor saw his approval ratings plummet.
- 6. subterfuge**—[B] deception; To trick kids into eating broccoli, learn the art of *subterfuge*—smother the vegetable in grated cheese.
- 7. pawky**—[A] sly sense of humour; Liam’s *pawky* wit made him a favourite at dinner parties.
- 8. roister**—[C] engage in noisy revelry; If we win the big game, forget sleep: fans in our neighbourhood will want to *roister*.
- 9. red herring**—[B] decoy; Agatha Christie had a gift for creating a *red herring*—a character that diverted attention from the true killer.
- 10. conundrum**—[C] problem; My sister and her boyfriend are vegans, so making meals everyone can eat is a real *conundrum*.
- 11. kangaroo word**—[B] word that contains another word that is its synonym; “Splotch” is a *kangaroo word* containing “spot.”
- 12. eccedentesiast**—[A] one who fakes a smile; Come to my family’s Christmas dinner, and you’ll see a room filled with *eccedentesiasts*.
- 13. cipher**—[B] nonentity; Supporters were worried. For all his charisma, their candidate was still a *cipher*.
- 14. aleatory**—[A] dependent on chance; My sensible father never joined us for poker nights. The *aleatory* nature of the game put him off.
- 15. phantasmagoria**—[C] series of bizarre images; Last night, my dreams consisted of a *phantasmagoria* of human-like animal faces.

VOCABULARY RATINGS

7-10: fair

11-12: good

13-15: excellent

TRIVIA

BY *Beth Shillibeer*

- Which Chinese festival is celebrated with rice balls and boat racing?
- Round, waggle, and sickle are all dances performed by what animal?
- According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which American author coined the terms “wicked” and “T-shirt”?
- What nation made the decision in 2021 to stop all new oil and gas exploration within its territory?
- NASA launched what project on Christmas Day 2021, to look back toward the earliest events of our universe?
- Where can you stroll through the longest underwater tunnel in Europe?
- Sidney Poitier, who died in 2022, won the Academy Award for Best Actor for what 1963 film?
- Which Caribbean country developed five COVID-19 vaccine candidates and has one of the highest vaccination rates?
- Chaturanga*, played in seventh-century India, led to what major strategy game?
- Whose scientific journal did Bill Gates buy at auction in 1994 for \$30.8 million, making it one of the world’s most expensive books?
- What is the main competitor against Netflix, according to its CEO?
- What is the only bird species that can fly backwards?
- New fossil evidence shows that Australia’s arid central desert was once what type of landscape?
- The Platinum Pudding Competition encouraged anyone eight years old and up to create a new dessert in honour of what 2022 event?**
- Jockey Lester Piggott has won what famous horse race nine times?

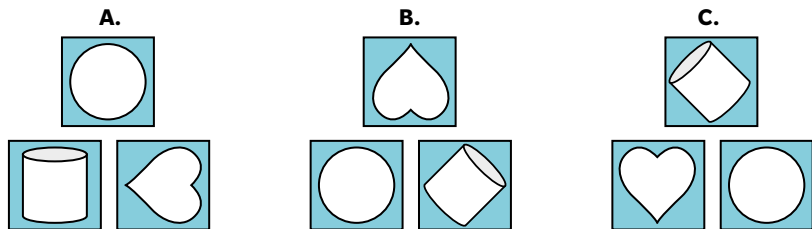
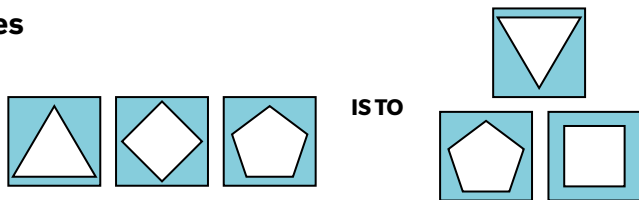


Answers: 1. Dragon Boat Festival (*Duanwu Jie*). 2. Bees. 3. F. Scott Fitzgerald. 4. Greenland. 5. The James Webb Space Telescope. 6. In Valencia, Spain, at the *Oceanogràfic*. 7. *Lilies of the Field*. 8. Cuba. 9. Chess. 10. Leonardo da Vinci’s journal (*Codex Leicester*). 11. Sleep. 12. Hummingbird. 13. Rainforest. 14. Epsom Derby. 15. Queen Elizabeth II’s Platinum Jubilee.

BRAIN TEASERS

Shapes

EASY



Duty Calls

MEDIUM It's Sophie's first term of university, and her dad wants her to call home on a regular basis.

"I want you to call on every day of the month that's divisible by three," her dad says.

"No way!" Sophie replies. "That's far too often."

"All right," says her dad. "Then how about you call on every day that's a prime number?"

"Fine," Sophie says. She knows a prime number is greater than one and is divisible only by one and itself. She figures they must be pretty rare.



Who got the better deal?

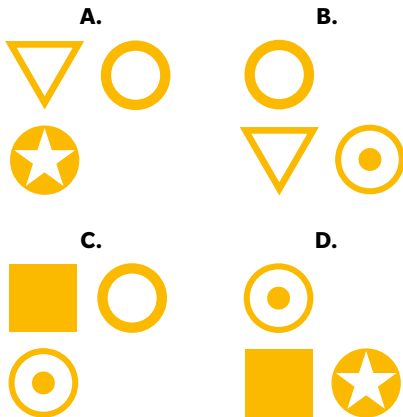
Play Your Card Right

MEDIUM The cards below have been sorted into three groups according to a particular rule. In which group should the nine of hearts go?



Odd One Out

EASY In the following four sets of symbols, one set does not belong. Which one is it?



Missing Middle

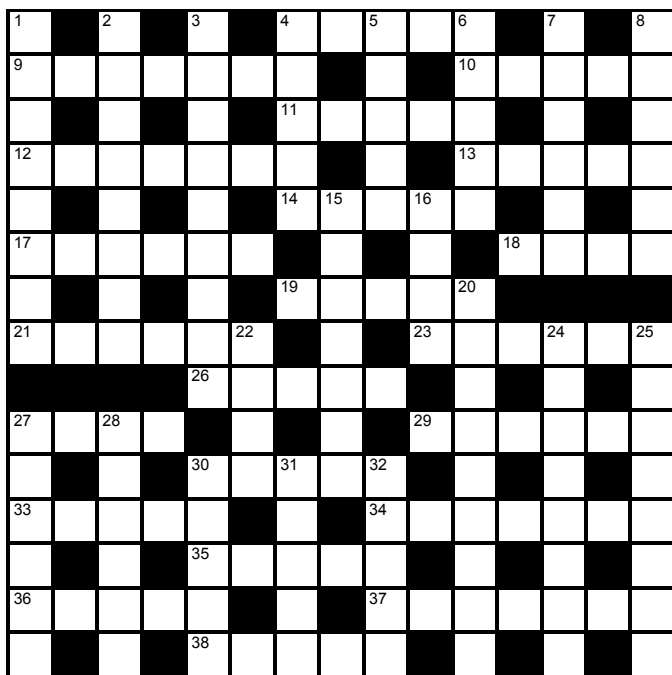
DIFFICULT Using the rule that these grids all follow, what number should go in the centre square of the fourth grid?

2		5
	21	
4		1

8		9
	72	
7		3

12		2
	94	
1		34

9		21
	?	
14		7



CROSSWISE

Test your general knowledge. Answers on p142

ACROSS

- 4 Thick slices (5)
- 9 Greyish-fawn (7)
- 10 Result (5)
- 11 Efface (5)
- 12 Recover (7)
- 13 Path (5)
- 14 Common people (5)
- 17 Type of gum (6)
- 18 Cried (4)
- 19 Wet (5)
- 21 Elephant (6)
- 23 Swiss city (6)
- 26 Vends (5)
- 27 Bog (4)
- 29 Bitter conflict (6)
- 30 Armed strongholds (5)
- 33 Thank you (French) (5)
- 34 Type of bath (7)
- 35 Cowboy display (5)
- 36 Metal spikes (5)
- 37 Diviners (7)
- 38 Adjusted (5)

DOWN

- 1 Invariable (8)
- 2 Natives of eg Venice (8)
- 3 Calming medicines (9)
- 4 Doze (5)
- 5 Diminish (5)
- 6 Prophets (5)
- 7 Guarantee (6)
- 8 Forsake (6)
- 15 Notice (7)
- 16 Stopper (4)
- 20 24 hours ago (9)
- 22 Make over (4)
- 24 Qualified (8)
- 25 Purple quartz (8)
- 27 Instant (6)
- 28 Vile (6)
- 30 Being before all others (5)
- 31 Radioactive gaseous element (5)
- 32 Offered oneself for election (5)

BRAINTEASERS ANSWERS

See page 136.

Shapes

B. The first shape rotates 180 degrees. The second shape rotates 45 degrees and moves to the bottom right. And the third shape moves to the bottom left.

Duty Calls

Sophie's dad. There are ten multiples of three and ten prime numbers from one to 30 (2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29). So, in a 30-day month, he gets ten calls. But in a 31-day month, Sophie calls an 11th time—31 is prime.

Play Your Card Right

Group B, which has cards whose ranks contain four letters (group A's cards all have three letters, and group C's cards have five).

Odd One Out

D, the only group without an empty symbol

Missing Middle

15. The number in the centre square of each grid is found by adding the numbers in the corners, then reversing the digits.



BY *Jeff Widderich*

		7	5	4	3			
						6		
9		8						
2				1		5		3
		3	9		6	8		
6		5		2				4
						4		9
		1						
			4	8	2	7		

To Solve This Puzzle

Put a number from 1 to 9 in each empty square so that:

- every horizontal row and vertical column contains all nine numbers (1-9) without repeating any of them;
- each of the outlined 3 x 3 boxes has all nine numbers, none repeated.

SOLUTION

1	3	7	2	8	4	6	9	5
9	6	2	5	8	4	1	7	3
6	9	8	4	7	3	2	1	5
4	7	1	9	4	8	5	3	2
4	1	3	9	5	6	8	7	2
2	7	9	8	1	4	5	6	3
3	5	6	3	2	8	6	7	1
5	4	2	9	8	6	1	7	3
1	6	7	5	4	3	9	2	8

Laugh!

WIN £30
for every reader's joke we publish!

Go to readersdigest.co.uk/contact-us
or facebook.com/readersdigestuk

Putting an S on the end of an athletic event can sometimes create a new word. Discuss.

Comedian OLAF FALAFEL

It's actually very bad luck to say MacBook inside an office. You have to call it "The Scottish Laptop".

NATHALIE KERNOT, via Twitter

Me: What do you know about atoms?

Friend: Very little.

Me: Besides that?

Comedian ADAM CERIOUS

French bakers who have "do not squeeze the baguettes" signs in their shops: I feel your pain.

Comedian GLENNY RODGE

Fact: emperor penguins have no real power, the title is purely ceremonial.

ALEX NEVIL, Via Twitter

When the moon hits your knees, And you mispronounce trees, Sycamore.

Submitted via Twitter

"Thank you for calling Brian Blessed's phone, I'm afraid it's currently experiencing very high call volumes.

Comedian T'OTHER SIMON

I get very nostalgic on the internet. After I fill in a form online I often think to myself, *I remember when all*

When life gives
you melons,
**YOU MIGHT
BE DYSLEXIC!**

Submitted via Facebook



this was just fields.

Comedian SEAN PATRICK

My therapist says that I have a tendency to blame my problems on others. Which I'm pretty sure I get from my dad.

WILLIAM STONE, via Facebook

My uncle had a terrible accident and fell into a smoothie maker.

It wasn't long after he turned to drink.

Comedian GARY DELANEY

Petrol pumps are so much faster than they used to be. It used to take me two minutes to reach 50 quid but now I can do it in 30 seconds.

Well done garages! *Seen online*

I thought that I'd bought a bonsai tree, but when I got it home I realised it was just a stick insect formation gymnastics team.

Comedian OLAF FALAFEL



Hide And Peek

THESE PUPPIES AREN'T
QUITE THE MASTERS OF HIDE
AND SEEK THAT THEY THINK
THEY ARE...

[via boredpanda.com](http://via.boredpanda.com)



Any idea what “idk” stands for? I’ve asked lots of people but nobody seems to know!
@LOVESHIVXX, via Twitter

New research into human longevity shows that eating dark chocolate and drinking red wine can significantly increase your chances of enjoying yourself while you’re still here.
Comedian PAUL BASSETT DAVIES

Why not confuse future archaeologists by burying your favourite pets in elaborate military uniforms?
Seen on Twitter

Sure, Rose could have saved Jack at the end of *Titanic*, but they would probably have drifted apart anyway.
Comedian GARY DELANEY

Who decided to call the streaming service Disney+ and not Vault Disney?
Seen on Twitter

I woke up this morning and my pillow case was covered in sticky crumbs.
 I shouldn’t have gone to bed with my hair in a bun.
VIVIENNE CLORE, via Twitter

It was nice to see the Queen on TV last week. I’d forgotten what she looked like as I don’t have money anymore.
Seen on Twitter

From Hero To Zero

Twitter users share ideas for alternative superheroes

@GolobAdam: Crypto-Man! He’s the most powerful superhero in the—oh wait—never mind, not now... wait, he is again! No, my bad... not now.

@RyanBartholomee: The Dad Joker.

@ChefDisney: Captain Sloth... he’ll get to it when he gets to it.

@Sparaga: Captain Canada! He’s the most respectful superhero on the planet.

@Joanie2772: The Hot Flash.

@AmericanKiwi: Captain Make America Great again.

@MunkerGirl: Superflo—she turns up every month with a vengeance!

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

Across: 4 Slabs, 9 Oatmeal, 10 Ensue, 11 Erase, 12 Salvage, 13 Route, 14 Plebs, 17 Arabic, 18 Wept, 19 Rainy, 21 Tusker, 23 Geneva, 26 Sells, 27 Moss, 29 Strife, 30 Forts, 33 Merci, 34 Turkish, 35 Rodeo, 36 Nails, 37 Oracles, 38 Tuned

Down: 1 Constant, 2 Italians, 3 Sedatives, 4 Sleep, 5 Abate, 6 Seers, 7 Assure, 8 Desert, 15 Leaflet, 16 Bung, 20 Yesterday, 22 Redo, 24 Eligible, 25 Amethyst, 27 Moment, 28 Sordid, 30 First, 31 Radon, 32 Stood

Beat the Cartoonist!



Think of a witty caption for this cartoon—the three best suggestions, along with the cartoonist's original, will be posted on our website in mid-June. If your entry gets the most votes, you'll win **£50**.

Submit to captions@readersdigest.co.uk by June 7. We'll announce the winner in our July issue.

APRIL WINNER



Our cartoonist's caption, **"I hope you're not going to do an April Fool's Day joke?"** failed to beat our witty reader Lucy Pesaro this month, who won the vote with her caption, **"I told you I wanted a romantic gesture—not jester."**

Congratulations, Lucy!



If I Ruled The World Sheila Hancock

The world according to a stage and screen legend



PILGRIM ROUTES

From St Patrick's to St Olaf's way—there's more to pilgrim routes than Camino de Santiago

+ Senior Cohousing

Could it be the solution to major old-age-related problems?

A Century Of Change

As we continue our centenary celebrations, we look at how the world of football has changed in the last 100 years...

IN 1922, when the first *Reader's Digest* hit the shelves, Liverpool FC won the English Football League, then for the third time. The League is incidentally the oldest such competition in world football, having been launched in 1888, and it currently stands one tier below the Premier League, which formed in 1992 when 22 top ranking clubs withdrew to take advantage of a lucrative Sky television rights deal.

The world's very first international football match took place in Glasgow a while before in 1872, a match that drew 4,000 to watch England draw 0-0 with Scotland.

Despite the fruitless outcome, the quality of play was widely praised in the press, with the Aberdeen based *Press and Journal* heradling it as "the best game ever seen in Scotland".

Much has changed since 19th and early 20th century football. For one, sponsorship branding has become ubiquitously associated with certain teams, and the number of national and international football competitions has ballooned.

In 2026 the World Cup will feature 48 teams for the first time, up from

the 32 that have played since 1998, while the Euros are likely to be expanded from 24 to 32 teams in 2028.

From the size of stadiums and size of crowds, one (much publicised) aspect of the game has also changed: footballers' pay packets.

In 1961, top-flight footballers were lucky to make £20 a week (while the average person made £14 a week).

Now Premier League players make an average of £60,000 in a single week, with highest paid star, Cristiano Ronaldo, taking in over £26 million a year.

But these eye-watering figures still pale in comparison to the size of exclusive media licensing deals—for example, in 2021, the Premier League sold broadcasting rights to Sky, BT and Amazon for a sum of £4.8 billion.

The money made in football is a testament to its almost universal level of popularity; it's a sport that has seen its fanbase explode throughout the past century and there is evidently no sign of that popularity waning in the next one. ■

BY MARCO MARCELLINE



IGNITE CURIOSITY - WHAT DOES YOUR CURIOSITY ALLOW YOU TO DO, FEEL, OR ACCOMPLISH?

The Box and My Trouble Getting It

is a gripping adventure story of a man working in outer space.

The Box and My Trouble Getting It follows the story of Joneb who started in a space colony on Deneb, the other side of the Milky Way. For him, space travel was a way to escape from the everyday humdrum existence on his planet, even if he missed his family. However, that's another story. Joneb has a variety of adventures some more exciting than others. The last one was particularly harrowing and Joneb was rather glad to sign on with an interplanetary freighter, the Star Struck; then he commences a more exciting adventure.

"Suddenly, I found myself being sucked up toward the cargo bay doors, so I grabbed hold of the nearest steel tie ring on the floor. The tie rings looked to be about two inches in diameter. I struggled, trying not to get sucked up through the opening cargo bay doors. I was hit in the leg by a box, which almost made me lose my grip on the floor ring. I kicked the box away; it struck the floor and flew open."

- text from the book.

Books are
available at
brucetryon.com



True courage can be tested when you are afraid. No matter how hard the challenges are, one must be strong to confront them and continue the quest.

The Box and My Trouble Getting It
Bruce Tryon

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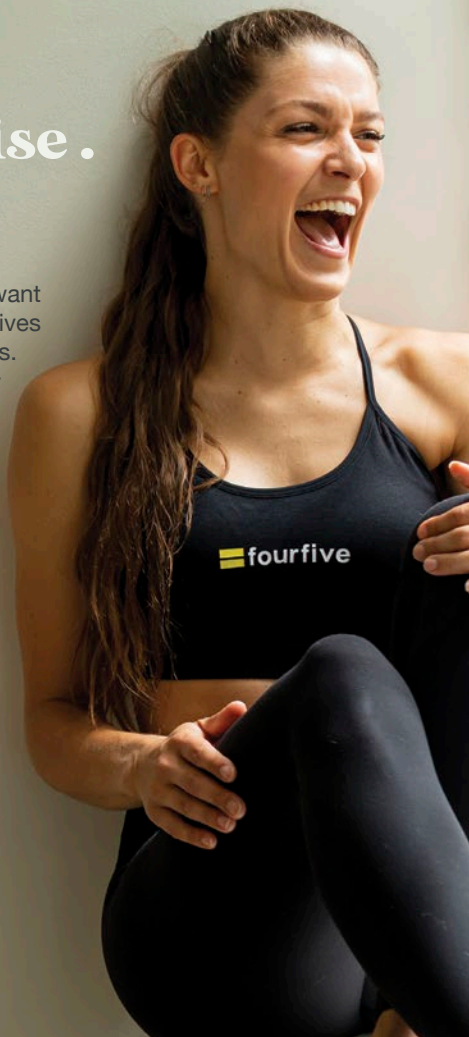
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