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Welcome to the Yorkshire Reporter

Now in our 8th year of bringing you the largest independent, free to pick up monthly newspaper in West Yorkshire, we are confident that inside you will find local news and stories relevant to you and your community, along with a wide range of interesting columns and features.

As a family owned business, we pride ourselves on supporting local community groups and businesses. With our team, you can be certain of a personal and professional service, so if you have something going on in your community that you want to shout about, or are thinking of advertising with us, please get in touch.

From all the team, we wish you a Merry Christmas!

Lesley Ann, Editor

What's inside your paper

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Image © People in Pictures

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Former CEO Of Carers Leeds, Val Hewison Receives Prestigious Leeds Award

The long-time advocate for unpaid carers across Leeds, Val Hewison has received one of the city's highest civic honours.

In recognition of her dedication, in working with and supporting unpaid carers across Leeds, Val Hewison was presented with the prestigious Leeds Award by the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Councillor Asghar Khan.

Val has recently retired from her role as CEO of Carers Leeds, where she led the organisation to national and international acclaim as a beacon of best leadership and support to unpaid carers.

The Leeds Award formally recognises those who have made an enormous contribution to the city, with their names proudly displayed on the wall in the antechamber of Leeds Civic Hall.

The Lord Mayor of Leeds, Councillor Asghar Khan, speaking at the event said: "It is an absolute honour to be able to present the Leeds Award to Val. Her work championing unpaid carers across Leeds is a true inspiration for all those looking to do good across Leeds."

The Leeds Award was designed to honour those people that have made an enormous contribution and achieved so much in their respective fields, and there is no better recipient than Val, who has worked tirelessly to champion our city."

Val Hewison said: "I am incredibly honoured, very humbled all mixed in with amazement to receive the fantastic Leeds Award."

"I never expected such an honour, and my enormous gratitude goes out to Leeds City Council along with all my colleagues especially across the third sector for their unstinting support and for being on the same page in believing in me and my work supporting unpaid carers across the city."

"I wholeheartedly thank everyone on Team Leeds who have contributed to me receiving this Leeds Award. And those thanks go out to every unpaid carer who have really been my inspiration to keep doing the job."

"I loved my work! I hope I've made a difference."

The Leeds Award is a prestigious honour that

recognises that there are many people, groups, organisations and teams that bring great credit to the City through their exceptional hard work and dedication.

It has been established by Leeds City Council to formally recognise those whose outstanding contributions are a credit to the City and its people.

It is viewed as a lasting tribute to those contributions that make a real difference to the city.

Recipients of the Leeds Award will have their name inscribed on the 'wall of fame' located in the Ante Chamber of the Civic Hall.

A panel comprising of one Member from each Group is responsible for assessing nominations for the award and making recommendations to full council.

Criteria for granting the Award:

- Awarded to those who change the life or lives of the people of Leeds.
- For those who perform an exceptional service to their community
- Normally precluded from the Leeds Award if previously recognised for the same service by a national award, within the last 15 years.
- A person/team/group/organisation may not nominate themselves and, where appropriate, letters of support in addition to the nomination may be required
- If an individual is nominated by a family member, another independent nomination or letter of support must be received

The Leeds Award is not for:

- Councillors
- Services that have their own recognition system
- Person who is in a leadership/chairing role by deed of appointment or election, e.g. Chair of a local Leeds in Bloom group who also have to be able to demonstrate a significant environmental improvement

Unsuccessful nominations may be re-submitted after a period of two years.

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Leisure Centres Across Leeds Receive Green Boost

Leeds City Council leisure and wellbeing centres will soon house some of the greenest gyms and pools in the city, thanks to more than 10million pounds of investment in low carbon upgrades.

With work at several key Active Leeds leisure centres across the city already crossing the finishing line, local residents and leisure centre users are already enjoying buildings and pools powered mostly using low-carbon heat and renewable energy.

Leeds City Council have partnered with energy and regeneration expert EQUANS to fit 3154 solar panels enough to cover 21 tennis courts, and district heating specialists Cenergist will install 22 heat pumps across the sites.

In total, the scheme will result in 1487 metric tonnes of CO2 being saved by leisure centres every year. The benefits don't stop there, with the work to install the upgrades helping to create skilled green jobs based in Leeds.

The upgrades will ensure that the city's leisure centres will continue to play their vital role supporting communities and developing the next generation of athletes, from grassroots through to Olympians, without contributing to climate change.

To allow for the next stage of the work, the swimming pools at both Kippax and Rothwell leisure centres will close between the 16 December and 10 January, allowing for vital preparation work to take place safely.

The rest of the centres and all other Active Leeds sites will remain open, except during the normal Christmas closing times. Residents can find their nearest alternative leisure centre online.

Once completed, the work at Kippax and Rothwell leisure centres will see the installation of four heat pumps and 822 solar panels, leading to combined savings of 332.8 metric of CO2 a year across both sites every year.

Councillor Salma Arif, executive member for public health and active lifestyles, said:

"Leeds' community leisure centres have played a key role in the city's sporting success. We are proud of the way they inspire and train the next generation of sporting stars, as well as helping residents to live healthier, more active lifestyles.

"This multi-million pound investment demonstrates our commitment to improving community leisure centres and making them fit for a cleaner, greener and more energy secure future."

Sean Corcoran, regional director at EQUANS, said: "We're delighted to bring our expertise of delivering low carbon solutions to this project and to be making a real difference to people in Leeds. Creating cleaner, greener environments is vital as we all work collectively to address climate change.

"We're proud to be working with forward thinking partners such as Leeds City Council to help achieve their zero carbon ambitions and we are pleased to highlight the important work underway to decarbonise homes and public buildings."

Leeds City Council Secures Future Of Kirkstall Nature Reserve

Leeds City Council have agreed to purchase the Redcote Lane site in Kirkstall from National Grid for £1. The 32-acre site, which was part of a former power station, is currently used as a nature reserve by The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. The purchased land includes an urban green Corridor running along the River Aire between Armley and Kirkstall. As well as Armley beach, a network of footpaths and wild flower meadows.

Nicola Slater, Portfolio Manager for National Grid said: "National Grid has a nationwide programme to reduce land holdings that do not support its core business activities. As part of this programme, we are delighted to be able to gift this land to Leeds City Council for a nominal sum so it can remain in public use for many generations to come."

Councillor Debra Coupar, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member of Resources at Leeds City Council said: "This nominal purchase will secure the future of the nature reserve, saving a well-used and loved green space for local people to continue to enjoy in the future. I would like to thank National Grid for agreeing to gift the land directly to us and the Council looks forward to the continued use of the site as a nature reserve."



New Consultation Launches To Improve Lawnswood Roundabout

A new consultation has started to deliver improvements at the junction of the A6120 Outer Ring Road and A660 Otley Road, in north Leeds.

Connecting Leeds revised plans will improve safety for all road users and improve facilities for walking and cycling across the Lawnswood junction. The plans also want to make bus services quicker and more reliable on Otley Road.

Lawnswood roundabout is one of the busiest junctions in north Leeds, with over 60,000 vehicles passing through it each day. The A660 corridor also has high volumes of cyclists, pedestrians and bus users. The junction lacks adequate crossing facilities and is a major barrier for walking and cycling, especially given the proximity to Lawnswood school.

The junction also suffers from a poor safety record, ranked third on Leeds City Council's recent Sites for Concern report. Between 2015 and 2019 there were 29 personal injury collisions, with 14 involving cyclists. Seven of these 29 collisions resulted in serious injuries.

The revised design includes introducing the following at Lawnswood roundabout:

- Making it a signalised roundabout.
- Signalised pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities.
- Segregated cycle facilities on the approaches.
- A 24-hour southbound bus and cycle lane on Otley Road on the approach and prioritisation of buses at the new traffic signals.

The congested conditions experienced on much of the A660 corridor

means there needs to be attractive alternatives to private car use, as modal shift towards public transport, walking and cycling will help to make more efficient use of road space. Making bus journeys more reliable along this route will offer people better choices for their journeys.

The consultation which closes on 19 January 2022 is seeking feedback on these revised plans to make it safer and more attractive for walking and cycling, signalling the junction to improve safety for all users and introducing some bus priority measures.

Leeds residents can have their say and read more about the plans at: <https://lawnswoodroundabout.commonplace.is/>.

Feedback to the consultation will be used to inform the next stages of development. Public consultation drop-in events are taking place at the following times and venues:

8 December 2pm to 7pm St Chad's Parish Centre, Otley Road, Far Headingley, Leeds, LS16 5JT.

11 December 11am to 3pm Weetwood Hall Estate Hotel and Conference Centre, Otley Road, Far Headingley, Leeds, LS16 5PS

Connecting Leeds carried out two rounds of public consultation in 2018 using different designs. Some respondents last time highlighted the benefits for walking, cycling and bus users. However, many responses were negative, and focussed on the impact on trees and the character of the area.

The costs of the revised scheme is expected to be between £8 - £10 million and funding is being sought from the City Region Sustainable Transport Fund.

Improvement Project In Holbeck

A street improvement scheme is setting the scene for residents in a Leeds neighbourhood to live healthier, happier and better connected lives.

Leeds City Council's Streets for People scheme will see £900,000 being spent on transformational changes to the built environment in the Recreations area of Holbeck.

Plans include widened footpaths, enhanced green space, tree planting and segregated cycle facilities as well as traffic calming measures and junction closures.

It is hoped the changes will mean a reduction in both car usage and air pollution, encouraging people living in the Recreations – which is one of the most deprived parts of Leeds – to lead more active lifestyles by getting out and about on foot or by bike.

The scheme is also designed to strengthen the area's sense of community – and help break its pattern of short-term tenancies – by making the local streets safer and more attractive places for children to play and residents to spend time with each other.

In addition, it aims to give people in the Recreations easier access to employment and education opportunities in the city centre by linking in with two major infrastructure projects – the recently-completed Elland Road cycle superhighway and the Ingram Distributor cycling and walking route, which is currently under construction.

The project also complements a programme of repairs and upgrades to hundreds of homes in the neighbourhood over the last five years, with more than £7m being spent on measures such as the provision of new windows, roofs and doors and improved external wall insulation. Work is now due to get under way in January, with a view to completion in the spring.

The area earmarked for the changes covers a number of streets near Ingram Road Primary School, including Brown Lane East, Cleveleys Avenue and Crosby Road as well as the Recreations themselves.

Councillor Helen Hayden, Leeds City Council's executive member for infrastructure and climate, said:

"This scheme is a great example of our efforts to make sure Leeds is a compassionate and caring city with a strong economy that benefits all its residents, and it will be hugely exciting to see it taking shape in the early part of next year.

"The residents in the Recreations will hopefully love the changes that are coming their way, with more greenery on their doorsteps and attractive new spaces where they can meet and interact with their neighbours. We want to give people of all ages an environment where they feel relaxed and happy about doing things – like walking and cycling – that will help their health and wellbeing.

"By reducing the current dominance of motorised traffic in the area, we will also be supporting our net zero ambitions together with our aim of making Leeds a city where you don't need a car."

Funding for the project was allocated to the council under the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Healthy Streets programme, which seeks to provide a framework for putting people and their health at the heart of improvements to transport networks and places. The scheme also delivers against the Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy's theme of creating healthier streets, spaces and communities.

The plans have been further informed by the results of a wide-ranging consultation that highlighted concerns among local residents regarding issues such as narrow footpaths, speeding traffic and a lack of green space. Engagement with residents' groups, community organisations and businesses will continue throughout the delivery of the scheme.

Forty per cent of residents in the Recreations are classed as income deprived, while levels of coronary heart disease, diabetes and obesity are above the Leeds average. Many properties in the area do not have a garden or other type of private outdoor space, with its narrow footpaths not being seen as conducive to walking as a social activity.

Leeds Kirkgate Market New Online Shopping With Local Delivery Service



Steeped in tradition, Leeds' iconic Kirkgate Market has created a new online market shopping experience in the city. The market has teamed up with Good Sixty, an online marketplace for independent and artisan food producers, to provide a sustainable local delivery service powered by zero-emission electric vans.

Customers can browse and order from as many participating traders as they wish including Neil's Greengrocers, Malcolm Michaels Butchers, Whitaker's Farmhouse Eggs & Cheese, Ramsden's Fishmongers, Firth & Payne and Bluebird Bakery as well as Brown's Sweets, Adam & Eco and Panda Refills for a single delivery fee. Once the order is placed, Good Sixty will compile the produce from the market traders at its designated hub, and deliver them to customers' doorsteps.

Councillor Kayleigh Brooks, Leeds City Council deputy executive member with responsibility for markets, said:

"We are excited to be partnering with Good Sixty to offer a delivery service for customers direct from our fantastic traders here at Leeds Kirkgate Market. During the pandemic, shopping habits have changed with a huge increase in online shopping. Teaming up with Good Sixty brings Leeds Kirkgate Market traders' top quality food straight to customers' doorsteps, and supports our traders in having access to a wider customer base. Launching just before the busy Christmas period, we know our traders have been working on special deals and offers that will be made available via the Good Sixty website. We look forward to the start of something great which will make it easier than ever before to shop local and support independent Leeds businesses."

Good Sixty was founded in Bristol in 2017 and it currently operates similar services in London, Stroud, Exeter, Oxford, Bristol and Bath.

Chris Edwards, Founder and Managing Director, Good Sixty said:

"We are absolutely thrilled to be working with Leeds Kirkgate Market. The quality and provenance of the produce is outstanding, as is the traders' passion for what they do. The new service has been designed to reflect these qualities online, giving users real insight into each stall and the individuals behind them. And what is more, the service will make the market accessible to many more, opening it up to those who love shopping there but don't always have the time to explore it on foot."

Orders can be placed via the website;

www.goodsixty.co.uk/leeds-kirkgate-market

Delivering in Leeds city centre and surrounding areas including LS1, LS2, LS3, LS4, LS5, LS6, LS7, LS8, LS9, LS13, LS16, LS17* & LS28.

*Partial coverage

Key Moment As Historic Leeds Town Hall Organ Pipes Down For Major Revamp



Expert engineers have literally been pulling out all the stops as work to secure the future of Leeds Town Hall's historic organ finally got underway.

The once-in-a-lifetime project, which technicians say is among the biggest the country has ever seen, will see the huge instrument carefully deconstructed and then rebuilt and reconfigured, 163 years after it was first played for Queen Victoria at the building's opening ceremony.

Pipe organ specialists from Nicholson and Co. Ltd set up in the building's magnificent Victoria Hall where they began erecting a complex network of scaffolding around the 50ft high organ before getting to work on the painstaking process of dismantling its impressive pipes and intricate inner workings.

Over the coming months, much of the instrument's ageing existing mechanism, including its soundboards, wind supply and console will be replaced, with the aim of giving it a fuller and more integrated sound during future performances.

Originally built by Gray and Davison of London to designs by William Spark and Henry Smart in 1853, the decades have begun to take a severe toll on some of the organ's features, meaning the work is vital to make sure it can be played for future generations.

But given it is one of the largest of its kind in Europe at 47 feet wide and almost 70 tons, working on the musical heavyweight is no easy task.

Andrew Caskie, managing director of Nicholson and Co. Ltd, said: "This is certainly a huge and highly specialist job but working with such an incredible and historic organ in these stunning surroundings is a genuine privilege.

"We'll carefully disassemble the organ before replacing many of the pipes and all of the internal mechanism while keeping the beautiful façade and casework.

"The result will be the perfect combination of new and old, with important heritage aspects preserved whilst we also create an instrument fit for the future.

"Once that work is complete, we're sure the audiences at Leeds Town Hall will notice a massive difference and the organ will entertain audiences in Leeds for generations to come."

Earlier this year, The National Lottery Heritage Fund pledged a grant of £249,810 toward the project to restore Victoria Hall and rebuild the organ.

The project will see the magnificent performance space's decorative features given some much-needed care as artists strip back layers of dirt, dust, and urban pollution to reveal an earlier artistic vision for the hall.

The scheme is part of wider efforts to refurbish and restore Leeds Town Hall over the next two years, taking care of a Grade 1 listed public asset whilst also ensuring the building can host large-scale events and concerts which generate significant income for the council and the city.

A fundraising campaign will also actively be seeking grant funding, sponsorship and donations to support the organ project while the refurbishment is ongoing.

More information on the Town Hall including upcoming events and how you can support the building by making a donation and being part of fundraising can be found at: www.leedstownhall.co.uk/support-us



HM Revenue & Customs Warns Customers About Self Assessment Tricksters

As HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) issues emails and SMS to Self Assessment customers, the department is reminding them to be on their guard after nearly 800,000 tax-related scams were reported in the last year.

Fraudsters use Self Assessment to try and steal money or personal information from unsuspecting individuals. In the last year alone, HMRC has received nearly 360,000 bogus tax rebate referrals.

The Self Assessment deadline is 31 January 2022 and customers may expect to hear from HMRC at this time of year. More than 4 million emails and SMS will be issued to Self Assessment customers pointing them to guidance and support, prompting them to think about how they intend to pay their tax bill, and to seek support if they are unable to pay in full by 31 January.

However, the department is also warning customers to not be taken in by malicious emails, phone calls or texts, thinking that these are genuine HMRC communications referring to their Self Assessment tax return.

Myrtle Lloyd, HMRC's Director General for Customer Services, said:

"Never let yourself be rushed. If someone contacts you saying they're from HMRC, wanting you to urgently transfer money or give personal information, be on your guard.

"HMRC will also never ring up threatening arrest. Only criminals do that.

"Scams come in many forms. Some threaten immediate arrest for tax evasion, others offer a tax rebate. Contacts like these should set alarm bells ringing, so if you are in any doubt whether the email, phone call or text is genuine, you can check the 'HMRC scams' advice on GOV.UK and find out how to report them to us."

Criminals use emails, phone calls and text messages to try and dupe individuals, and often mimic government messages to make them appear authentic. They want to trick their victims into handing over money or personal or financial information.

Customers can report suspicious phone calls using a form on GOV.UK; customers can also forward suspicious emails claiming to be from HMRC to phishing@hmrc.gov.uk and texts to 60599.

HMRC has a dedicated team working on cyber and phone crimes. They use innovative technologies to prevent misleading and malicious communications from ever reaching the customer. Since 2017 these technical controls have prevented 500 million emails from reaching HMRC's customers. More recently, new controls have prevented 90% of the most convincing SMS messages from reaching the public and controls have been applied to prevent spoofing of most HMRC helpline numbers.

HMRC is also reminding Self Assessment customers to double check websites and online forms before using them to complete their 2020/21 tax return. People can be taken in by misleading websites designed to make them pay for help in submitting tax returns or charging to connect them to HMRC phone lines. Customers who are in any doubt about whether a website is genuine should visit GOV.UK for more information about Self Assessment and use the free signposted tax return forms.



Whatever the situation, Angela is here for you! Speak to venue staff and 'ASK FOR ANGELA' for discreet help when out in Leeds.



The 'Ask for Angela' campaign has been launched across Leeds. The scheme was originally developed by Lincolnshire County Council and is now being adopted as a localised initiative in Leeds to help keep people safe while out in the city. The campaign aims to help prevent and reduce violence and harassment, particularly in hospitality settings.

It is inclusive so that anybody visiting venues such as bars and clubs can ask for 'Angela' to discreetly signal to staff that they feel unsafe or uncomfortable and require assistance. Staff can then offer to help out without too much fuss, for example by calling a taxi or providing a safe space.

Leeds City Council has been working closely with partners such as Safer Leeds, Women Friendly Leeds and West Yorkshire Police, as well as with Bobbi Rae (@bearcubs), a local artist who has designed the colourful campaign artwork.

Currently, over 500 venues across the city have signed up to participate in the scheme. To view the venues on a map visit;

www.womenfriendlyleeds.org/ask-for-angela and look out for posters and stickers while you are out in Leeds.

Ask for Angela is part of Leeds City Council's wider ambition to promote night-time safety and address violence against women and girls. Councillor Debra Coupar, Leeds City Council Executive Member with responsibility for Safer Leeds, said:

"I am very pleased to see the Ask for Angela scheme being embraced by so many venues across Leeds, helping to make our vibrant city as safe as possible. It is important that everybody can enjoy the hospitality of Leeds without feeling unsafe or uncomfortable. I strongly encourage anybody who may find themselves in an unsafe situation while out in Leeds to reach out and Ask for Angela."

For more information about the Ask for Angela campaign, visit; www.womenfriendlyleeds.org/ask-for-angela

If your venue is interested in signing up for the scheme, please email AskForAngelaLeeds@leeds.gov.uk for more information and all the campaign materials needed to help you get started.

Beware Of Unsafe Christmas Toys

The Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI), the British Toy and Hobby Association (BTHA) and ROSPA are raising concerns about online purchases of toys this Christmas. In what looks like a return to a lockdown-free Christmas, CTSI warns the public to be cautious when purchasing toys, particularly online, with Statista reporting that online market revenue in the UK is expected to reach almost £90bn by the end of 2021. While, in October, BTHA raised concerns about the safety of toys purchased through third-party sellers on online marketplaces such as Amazon and eBay in its Still Toying with Children's Safety report.

The BTHA research revealed that nearly half of the toys purchased from third-party sellers via online marketplaces were unsafe for children. Out of the 255 randomly selected toys inspected and tested, 88% were illegal to sell in the UK, and 48% were unsafe.

Head of Public Affairs at BTHA, Kerri Atherton, said: "It is not acceptable that unsafe toys are allowed to enter the UK market, putting children at risk of serious injury. Following our investigation, we are calling for urgent changes to the law to prevent the sale of dangerous toys. In the lead up to Christmas, we would advise people to exercise caution when purchasing via an online marketplace by researching into the third-party seller, as often they are not held accountable for the safety of their products. We invite the public to take a look at our consumer tips guide on the BTHA website."

Trading standards professionals working among import teams are busy inspecting products entering the country during the Christmas holiday period. This time last year, teams seized and destroyed millions of unsafe PPE items during the height of the pandemic. This year, trading standards teams reported several instances of hazardous products entering ports in Scotland and the south of England. A common example of this includes toys containing phthalates of a type that are banned. Phthalates are used to make plastic more durable, but their toxicity can damage the liver, kidneys, lungs, and reproductive system at higher levels.

In October, an American study found that approximately 100,000 deaths a year in the United States can be attributed to phthalates in food packaging. In most instances, these products are destroyed at the border, and shopping platforms are ordered to take the product listings down.

Chief Executive at CTSI, John Herriman, said: "It sickens me that unscrupulous manufacturers are using dangerous materials in products

popular with children, especially phthalates which cause serious toxic effects and even death.

"Many people are especially looking forward to these Christmas holidays after the unprecedented challenges of the past 18 months that the pandemic brought. They don't want the threat of unsafe toys entering their households.

Trading standards professionals across the country focus on protecting our children from harmful toys, especially during the holiday period. They are destroying unsafe and illegal products at the border, and trading standards authorities are doing their utmost to get dangerous products delisted and removed from online retailers. This work is enormous and ongoing due to the sheer amount of products sold on the global marketplace, and I applaud their efforts.

"The public must remain vigilant and check the safety information and origin of the products they purchase. Above all, they should report instances of dangerous products to the authorities as it helps paint a complete picture of the scale of this issue."

Public Health Adviser at RoSPA, Ashley Martin, said: "As more and more of us decide to shop online, many of us may be unaware that online platforms are not always the seller of the products on their websites, but often act as an intermediary between an independent company and the buyer.

"Before you buy online, ask yourself the following:"

- are you buying directly from an online platform or is it a third-party seller?
- what do you know about the seller's reputation for selling safe goods?
- is the seller based in the UK?
- does the seller provide a name and address for you to contact?

For consumer advice or to report unsafe products in England and Wales, please call the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0808 223 1133. Welsh language speakers can call 0808 223 1144.

If in Scotland, contact Advice Direct Scotland on 0808 164 6000, or if in Northern Ireland, contact Consumerline on 0300 123 6262

CTSI, on behalf of the Department for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), has updated their "Selling goods via online platforms" guidance. Businesses can learn more about their legal obligations when selling online via a third-party website by visiting Business Companion.

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Children With A Plan For Adoption Waiting Too Long In Care, Charity Warns

Adoption UK warns that the increasing amount of time children with a plan for adoption are waiting in care could add to their trauma and affect their ability to settle with permanent families.

Three quarters of adopted children suffer abuse, neglect, and violence in their birth families. Most are placed in care before being adopted.

The latest official statistics reveal the average time that children wait, from entry into care to being adopted has gone up by two months compared to last year. The average wait is now two years and two months, 10 months of which is the time it takes for an adoption to be completed once the child has been granted an adoption order.

Adoption UK's chief executive, Sue Armstrong Brown, said: "For children with a plan for adoption, the quicker we can move them out of care and into a permanent family, the better. Waiting in care can mean multiple moves to different homes and a high level of uncertainty. This can pile trauma on top of trauma."

The Department for Education figures also shows that the number of children adopted from care in England is down by almost half (46%) compared to six years ago. The number of looked after children who were adopted dropped to 2,870 in the year leading up to the end of March 2021, down from a peak of 5,360 in 2015. The number of children leaving care through adoption fell by 18% in the last year alone, continuing the downward trend.

This sits against a backdrop of a rise in the number of children being placed into the care of local authorities – up by 1% this year, to an all-time high of 80,850.

Some children wait longer than most, and this year's data shows that the situation has hardly improved for these groups. Black children, those with disabilities, sibling groups and children over five wait longest in care. Adoption UK is part of the government funded #YouCanAdopt campaign, which seeks to help adoption agencies recruit the right families for the right children.

Dr Armstrong Brown continued: "To get the best outcomes for children who wait the longest in care, we need courts who are confident the right families can be found, social workers who are confident about making good matches and adopters who are confident they will be well supported after they adopt. There are challenges at all these levels, which the government's new National Adoption Strategy needs to help address."

Alongside a decline in the number of adoptions, there has been a sustained increase in the number of Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) up 2% on last year to 3,800.

Special guardianship is an order made by the Family Court that places a child or young person to live with someone other than their parent(s) on a long-term basis. The person(s) with whom a child is placed will become the child's special guardian.

Most SGOs were to relatives or friends – 88%. The remainder were largely to former foster carers – 10%. Adoption UK is campaigning for parity of support for SGs, including on parental leave allowances and access to the Adoption Support Fund (ASF).

AdoptionUK
Together we're family

Author And Charity Volunteer To Donate Profits Of New Book

Gill Belchetz, an author, NHS nurse and volunteer at St. George's Crypt, has had a book published that is inspired by her experiences at the Crypt, and the inquisitive nature of her granddaughter. She is planning on donating all the profits to support the work of St. George's Crypt.

Gill lives in Wetherby, is married and has grandchildren. On a visit to a pantomime in Leeds, her grand-daughter, Clara, asked her a searching question: "Why do some people not have houses and sit in the street asking for money?" In an attempt to answer this, and inspired by the residents and staff at St. George's Crypt, Gill decided to write her first children's book.

Gill started writing fourteen years ago and, while nursing part time, did a BA in English at Leeds University as a mature student. It was a module in Creative Writing that Gill admits had her 'hooked.'

"It really was a joy to discover how much I enjoyed writing and when I followed up with an MA in Writing for Performance and Publication, I knew I wanted to spend more time composing stories'. Since retiring, Gill has been able to do just that. 'I feel very lucky,' she says. 'Lockdown during Covid was tough for so many people. I returned to the NHS and worked as a phlebotomist and also carried on volunteering at St. George's Crypt. I undertook a short course in how to write for children and am thrilled that Fisher King Publishing were keen to publish CLARA'S GENI-OUS PLAN. The book has been well received by children and head teachers alike.'

Deborah Kenny Headteacher of Manor Wood PS and Exec Principal of Primley Wood PS, Leeds, said, 'No story corner is complete without



a copy of "CLARA'S GENI-OUS PLAN" by Gill Belchetz. This beautifully written and engaging little book teaches children about homelessness through the characters of Clara and Moosie, her favourite toy. Children will not only love the story as it has all the right ingredients including "prickly plans," snow, great illustrations and a sprinkling of magic, but they will also be able to explore the importance of kindness, understanding and empathy towards others less fortunate than themselves. Attributes we should all aspire to!



CLARA'S GENI-OUS PLAN is available from [Amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk) and from Booths Supermarkets, for £6.99.



Morrisons Helps Food Banks And Community Groups With Christmas 'Giving Tree'

Morrisons is giving customers a new way to help those in need during the festive period, by installing a Christmas 'Giving Tree' in all its stores.

Customers looking to donate to a local food bank or community group nominated by their store can pick a bauble and take it to the checkouts along with their shopping. Each bauble has a barcode on the back for the checkout colleague to scan, and add £1, £2 or £5 to the customer's bill.

Since the start of the pandemic, Morrisons has worked closely with food banks and communities across the UK and donated more than £12 million pounds to groups across the UK to ensure no one is left behind.

Morrisons will also continue offering their popular food bank 'Pick Up Packs' in stores throughout the festive period as well as its Gift Donation

Stations where customers can donate new gifts. Donated items are passed on to local good causes and charities in the local community.

Rebecca Singleton, Community Director at Morrisons, said:

"Christmas can be a challenging time and food banks are a lifeline for many people in the UK. We want to make it easier for our customers to donate in whatever way they can to help those in their local community get the items they need. The Giving Tree will give customers a unique and festive way to support local food banks and community groups."

The Giving Tree initiative is part of Morrisons drive to stock Britain's food banks and continue feeding the nation and will feature in Morrisons stores until the 24th December.

The Room On The Broom Adventure Trail, Anglers Country Park Named UK's Best Walk For Little Ones



Research shows that children experience profound and diverse benefits through regular contact with nature. In fact, spending time outdoors improves children's physical and mental wellbeing, motivation, and confidence with 83% of children agreeing that being in nature made them very happy, according to a Natural England survey.

Charles Clinkard, family shoe fitter and retailer with stores across the UK, believe all children should have the opportunity to learn about and explore nature in daily life and family walks are a great opportunity to do so.

With this mind, they have researched the best walks Great Britain has to offer and created a Family Walk Index, rating the walks for a number of factors including:

- Accessibility- pram and wheelchair access, parking and toilets
- Distance and walking time
- Children's activities
- Cost

No matter how eager your little ones might be, their legs will probably only take them so far. To avoid any tears (and having to carry them) they analysed the data to find out the best family walks for smaller children, based on length, accessibility, baby changing facilities, plus extra fun activities for your little ones to enjoy.

The Room on the Broom Adventure Trail at Anglers Country Park came out as the top-ranking walk for little ones. It's free to enter and has free parking for up to two hours (with a small charge if you're planning on staying longer). This walk also has toilets, baby changing facilities, and is accessible by pram or wheelchair.

Plus, it has plenty of activities to keep your little one entertained such as finding sculptures, looking for animal footprints and tracing rubbings. The trail is a circular route around the lake and is accessible by foot, cycle, pram or wheelchair.

Commenting on the rankings, Rachel Clinkard, Ecommerce Director from Charles Clinkard said:

"We're really lucky to have such amazing walks

right on our doorstep. From fantastic coastal walks to exciting nature trails, we really do have it all!

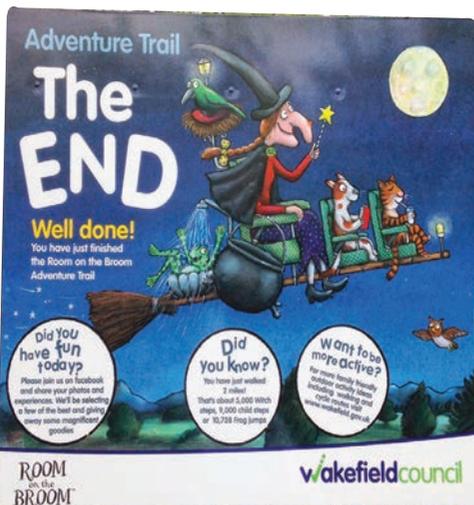
"Getting outside and exploring nature is a great way to boost your child's development. Not only can they learn more about the world around them but investigating wherever they can helps improve their fine motor skills. Plus, getting outside and enjoying a bit of exercise can help give everyone's mood a little boost too.



"Some of the country's favourite walks aren't necessarily family-friendly. Many are quite challenging, and others don't have all the relevant facilities such as toilets, baby changing, and accessible paths. For families with children, it can be difficult to know exactly which walks are best. That's why we put together our list of 40 family-friendly Great British walks."

To see the full list visit:

www.charlesclinkard.co.uk/blog/2021



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Barbara Taylor Bradford OBE To Become Patron Of The Leeds Library



■ Barbara Taylor Bradford OBE. Photographer-Caroll Taveras. Copyright - Bradford Enterprises.

The Leeds Library, the oldest membership subscription library in the country, has announced that the international bestselling author Barbara Taylor Bradford OBE has accepted an invitation to become a patron of the Library.

Barbara Taylor Bradford OBE was born in Upper Armley in Leeds and began her career as a journalist for the Yorkshire Evening Post. She then moved to London to work on Fleet Street and continued on to America to pursue her writing career. An author of 38 novels, all of which have been international bestsellers, Barbara has sold over 90 million novels and is one of UK's most commercially successful authors of all time. Her 39th novel, *A Man of Honour*, published in November.

It is anticipated that to mark her role as patron, the Leeds Library will set up an annual lecture in the name of Barbara that will coincide with International Women's Day, as well as an annual literary prize that will aim to champion women's writing both regionally and nationally.

Martin Staniforth, Chair of the Trustees of The Leeds Library, said:

'We are honoured that Barbara Taylor Bradford OBE has agreed to support the Library as a patron. As a charity that has championed the work of local writers over a number of years it seems fitting that Barbara, as the most successful author ever to come from Leeds, should be a patron. We are looking forward to working with her over the coming months and years to help establish both an annual lecture and literary award which we hope will inspire more people from the city to take up writing.'

Barbara Taylor Bradford OBE said:

'It is a huge privilege to be asked to be a Patron for The Leeds Library, an organisation that shares my commitment to celebrating and supporting creative writing in all of its forms as well as promoting literacy. I am really looking forward to working with everyone at the Library on a number of initiatives that will take place in a city that will forever be special to me.'

Barbara will join Poet Laureate Simon Armitage, writer Caryl Phillips and arts historian Nima Poovaya-Smith as patrons of the Library, which was founded in 1768, has a collection of over 140,000 items and, as a charity, is committed to ensuring that the Library is a thriving, individual library and much-loved cultural institution of Leeds, which is an inspiring and valued home and resource for lovers of books, writing and creativity.



Snuff Boxes Come Home

An exquisite collection of antique gold snuff boxes has returned home more than 40 years after being stolen from a Leeds mansion by a mystery thief.

The seven beautifully ornate, late 18th Century containers arrived back at Temple Newsam House, the latest twist in a decades-long whodunnit which staff at the historic house dubbed The Fulford Thefts.

The boxes had joined the house's collection at the outbreak of the Second World War, when they were part of a generous donation by noted local art collector, entrepreneur and laxative magnate Frank Fulford.

Dating from as early as 1770, the boxes are a mix of French, Swiss and German craftsmanship, each featuring intricate gold metalwork and delicate, decorative enamel designs.

Originally displayed in Temple Newsam's stunning Chinese Drawing Room, the precious objects were pilfered in 1981, vanishing without a trace and with a culprit never identified.

They were thought to have been lost forever until earlier this year, when a determined team of experts from the Art Loss Register, who track down stolen art and antiquities and work to return them to their rightful owners, discovered them for sale at auction.

After completing a formal accession process, representatives from the Art Loss Register and the objects' insurers visited Temple Newsam to hand over the boxes, which will once again become a cherished part of the Leeds Museums and Galleries collection.

Adam Toole, keeper at Temple Newsam House, said: "We're absolutely thrilled to see the boxes return home to Temple Newsam and are immeasurably grateful to the Art Loss Register for all their work and diligence in getting them back to us, which has kindly been offered on a pro-bono basis.

"The disappearance of these beautiful boxes was a great loss to Temple Newsam and to the city, so we're delighted that these treasures are in our collection once more.

"It's extremely rare to find objects which have such a captivating combination of classic artistry and modern-day intrigue and we can't wait to share this remarkable story with our visitors."

Centuries ago, the boxes' original owners would have used them to hold snuff, a type of powered tobacco which was snorted.

Snuffing became a hugely popular trend in France and Britain in the late 18th Century, with ornate and expensive snuff boxes made using exclusive materials including gold, silver and diamonds produced as status symbols for the super wealthy.

The elaborate accessories became part of a very specific ritual of snuff taking in France, which consisted of 14 separate stages.

James Ratcliffe, director of recoveries and general counsel at the Art Loss Register said: "We are delighted that it was possible for the Art Loss Register to identify them in our work and thus secure their recovery, which has been facilitated through the generosity of both the insurers, Municipal Mutual and the unfortunate individual who found himself innocently in possession of the boxes.

"It is always satisfying to see how effectively the due diligence carried out by art market participants through the Art Loss Register can result in returns like this, which are so significant to the original theft victims."

The recovered boxes will now be carefully conserved by experts at Temple Newsam before they go on display again next year.

Young Curators Make History With Another Top Award Win



A group of determined young curators who stuck together during the pandemic to work on a series of socially-conscious exhibitions and innovative digital displays has scooped a top award.

Leeds City Museum's Preservative Party travelled to London's British Museum, where they were named joint regional winners of the prestigious Marsh Award for volunteering.

The British Museum and the Marsh Charitable Trust have been working in partnership for the thirteenth year of the 'Volunteers for Museum Learning' award, which recognises the hugely important contribution that volunteers make to help museums engage with their visitors.

Made up of history-lovers all aged 14-24, the Preservative Party has been working with Leeds Museums and Galleries for more than a decade, planning and curating a series of eye-catching exhibitions at Leeds City Museum.

Despite the difficulties they all faced, the group's commitment to museums and to each other saw them keep in regular contact during the pandemic, coming together for regular meetings where they planned for online activities and future exhibitions.

By continuing to share their ideas and experiences, the group produced a virtual mental health exhibition, did outreach sessions, wrote and produced powerful animations about isolation and body image, and started social media campaigns about mental health.

Esther Amis-Hughes, Leeds Museums and Galleries' community engagement manager, who works with the Preservative Party, said: "Like all of us, this group of young people has faced some enormous challenges over the past 18 months which have massively disrupted their day-to-day lives.

"To see the way they collectively took the decision to channel their experiences into something positive, creative and beneficial to others was genuinely inspiring.

"All of us who have worked with the Preservative Party are so immensely proud of them and what they've achieved and we hope this award gives them some well-deserved recognition."

Previously, the Preservative Party has worked on displays about the armed forces and the First World War, a nostalgic look at life as a teenager in Leeds and a time capsule which was installed at Leeds Town Hall.

As well as this award win, their efforts have seen them win the 2015 Marsh Volunteer Award for the Yorkshire region, and the 2019 Volunteer of the Year award for City Development at Leeds City Council.

For more information about the Preservative Party, visit: www.museumsandgalleries.leeds.gov.uk/tag/the-preservative-party



David Cartwright

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GARDENING

A Time For Cheer And Laughter Too, A Happy Christmas From Me To You

As autumn drifts into winter the pace of work in the garden slows considerably, although there are still tidying up and repair jobs to do in order to be ready for spring. Our thoughts are less about finding jobs to do and more about celebrating the season of year and spending time with friends and family. Christmas is looming and all that goes with it are demanding our attention and time. Nurseries and garden centres are welcoming visitors who are looking to inject a little seasonal cheer, with potted plants and bulbs. Poinsettias, cyclamen, hyacinths and narcissus are specially grown to brighten the gloomy winter days. Choosing carefully will help ensure that your seasonal displays will stay fresh well into the new year.



Poinsettias are perhaps the most purchased pot plant at this time of year, and the traditional red cultivars have been joined by a ever increasing range from white, through lemon, pink and burgundy and even variegated, so there is bound to be one to suit our constantly changing colour and decoration tastes.

How well they survive depends on a number of quite important points, When purchasing it is just as important to consider how they are being kept and displayed as how healthy they look.

Buying a plant that has or is sat on a trolley outside the shop, or left on a draughty shelf with little light reaching the plant are key factors in why plants fail when you get them home. They may seem fine for a day or so but then the leaves begin to wilt, so your instinct is to water and the waterlogged compost then encouraged fungal attack which starts to kill the roots, wilting leaves turn yellow and very soon all you are left with is a few green sticks with a whorl of red bracts(modified leaves) on top.

Ideally try purchase a plant that is growing alongside other poinsettias in a greenhouse where they have the ideal light and draught free conditions and aftercare. Ask for the plant to be wrapped in paper or film to protect it on the journey home. Once home check that the compost is damp but not waterlogged and place in a saucer or dish with 1.5cm (3/4inch) of fine gravel, in a room that is not too warm. The gravel and saucer will make it easier to water. It can be placed in a more prominent position when you have family and friends round, but returning to a slightly cooler room will keep them going longer. If positioning on a windowsill, move to a table if you draw the curtains at night.

Poinsettias prefer a temperature of between 55-60°F (13 - 15°C), so not too warm, and good light but not in direct sunlight or draughts.

As for keeping them for future years, my advice is that it is quite tricky and even if you keep it going throughout the following months, they never seem to produce as good a display as previously. Commercial growers start a new crop every year from cuttings, which in themselves have a unique vigour. Developing

the grower's specialist skills and providing the controlled environment necessary to encourage healthy well coloured bracts is quite frankly more trouble than it is worth.

It may seem a waste but the best place for the poinsettia once it has lost its appeal is the compost heap and whilst this may seem a little harsh, it will eventually end up as well rotted compost to mulch and feed your garden.

Why is it that most fresh Christmas trees are an awkward shape? What I mean is that younger trees tend to be almost as wide at the bottom as they are in height, making them difficult to fit in the average room. Also the top can be thin and spindly creating problems when trying to create the typical pyramid display. When Christmas trees were first used as a seasonal display they were hung upside down, which some how makes them seem less awkward, sadly the process of trying to achieve this is perhaps more of a challenge.

When buying a Christmas tree we have a dilemma, do we buy early to get the best looking or leave it until Christmas eve and bag a bargain? Both have their drawbacks but there are a few things you can do to help make them last a little longer before the needles drop. As for no drop trees, whilst they may last a little longer inevitably the needles or at least some of them will drop. If you do buy early and are not ready to bring it into the house cut about 7.5 cm (3 inches) off the bottom and stand in a large bucket filled with water, outside in a sheltered place. These trees have grown through several winters so are quite hardy, and providing they are able to draw water they should be fine. On mild days you can spray over the foliage with water to help reduce water loss if it has been a little windy or dare I say it warm.



Dropping needles is probably the most annoying thing about fresh Christmas trees, and whilst I cannot guarantee they won't drop there are a few things you can do to reduce this. With cut trees, place them in a container that will hold water and top up every few days. There are some very good tree stands with water reservoir on the market. Ideally place the tree away from direct heat and strong sunlight, well away from radiators and other heat sources. Turn the heating down a little and buy a Christmas jumper. Led Christmas lights are not only more energy efficient but do not generate as much heat so do not dry the tree as quickly. Finally place a sheet over the floor a little larger than the width of the tree to catch needles, its much easier to clear up afterwards.

If you do not have space to accommodate a tree or don't fancy the challenge of clearing up all the needles then a few carefully arranged branches of an evergreen shrub, such as holly, in a tall pot filled with sand can offer a great alternative to a Christmas tree. If you can find some with berries on then thats a bonus. Just decorate as you would your tree.



BY MARTIN S WALKER

Top Tip - Tree-Cycle?

The last thing on our minds at the moment is what to do with the fresh Christmas tree once all the celebrations are over, often thrown into the garden after a frustrating ten minutes trying to negotiate the doors or windows without the remaining 6 million needles dropping onto the carpet. Often vowing never to buy a fresh tree again, although in reality, the smell of fresh pine is as much about celebrating Christmas as is a banquet of delights.

So what to do with that tree? Well, I can't help with the needle problem although if you placed a mat or cloth under the tree before decorating, then this will catch most of the drop, a careful but firm shake once all the decorations are removed will dislodge most of the needles. A good tip is to remove the lower branches whilst it is still in position, use loppers rather than a saw as it's much easier. These can be placed in a bag or old bedsheet to transport them out into the garden.

The same is true of the tree, a large bedsheet wrapped around the whole tree will hopefully avoid scratching the paintwork and the final needle drop.

Once outside then what to do? Well I'm from Yorkshire and one thing we are famous for is recycling (and being careful with money), so what can we do with a defunct Christmas tree? The lower branches even devoid of needles make great plant supports, cut the stem at an angle, it makes it easier to push in the ground, trim off about 15cm (6ins) of the lower side shoots and hey presto you have a plant support, two or three of these pushed into the soil around straggly perennials will give the plant support as it develops and reduce the risk of it flopping everywhere. Any needles left on the tree will drop in time and be disguised by the developing plants.

As for the remainder of the tree, again cut the bottom of the stem at an angle or better still trim like a tree stake. Then remove the bottom 30 - 45cm of branches, (these can make more smaller plant supports). If the bottom of the tree is still quite wide, trim the branches back a little to create a column like ladder arrangement. The intention is to have a single stem with branches sticking out for plants to climb up.

What you have now is a perfect structure that can be pushed into the soil in a space in the border to grow climbing annuals, like sweet peas, or in the vegetable garden to grow peas or climbing beans.

The Christmas tree's natural shape is quite attractive and rather than buy expensive obelisks, using them as plant supports does much the same thing. You may get a couple of years out of them after which they can be cut up and disposed of on the compost heap, or burnt on bonfire night.

Any needles you collected during its stay indoors can be placed directly on the compost heap or directly onto the garden. They will slowly rot down and who knows, they may deter slugs too.

Have a very relaxing Christmas and be ready for New Year gardening.

Martin

Next month, check on climbing plants and vines, planting fruit bushes and cutting back perennials.

Is The UK's Largest Real Decorated Indoor Christmas Tree At Castle Howard?



Knowing what height of tree you'll fit into your living room is a challenge many of us face, but what happens when the space you're filling includes a large floorspace with a huge galleried dome up above? You go for the largest tree you can – and this year's Christmas tree at Castle Howard is a whopping 28 ft tall – their tallest ever!

The tree is one of the centrepieces of Castle Howard's Christmas in Narnia event, and this year's decoration marks a significant departure from the tree's usual colourful appearance.

"A big part of the Narnia story is the idea that the kingdom is frozen by the White Witch, and the Antiques Passage which leads you to the Great Hall will be an icy wonderland of twigs and the statues depicted as frozen enemies of the self-proclaimed Queen of Narnia. When you arrive in the Great Hall, the Christmas tree sits centrally in the room, like it is growing out of the floor and reaching towards the decorated dome up above," explains baublographer, Adrian Lillie, who leads the team decorating the tree. "We've even brought in specialists to cover the tree in 'snow' – an amazing process in which the tree was cocooned in tarpaulins and then a paper-based snow flocking is sprayed, creating a snowstorm within the enclosure to make the way it lands on the branches look very natural and realistic."

After the snow was added, the scaffold gantry was left around the tree to enable the team to hang over 2000 icicles and snowflakes. As the tree is larger than any that have been displayed at Castle Howard before, additional lights were requisitioned, with 1500m of lights carefully wrapped to make sure the tree sparkled from every angle.

Actually getting the tree into the Great Hall through the existing doorway on the North Front was a challenge in itself. As a listed building, the tree has to be squeezed through double glass doors, before it was raised into position and a supportive base built in situ.

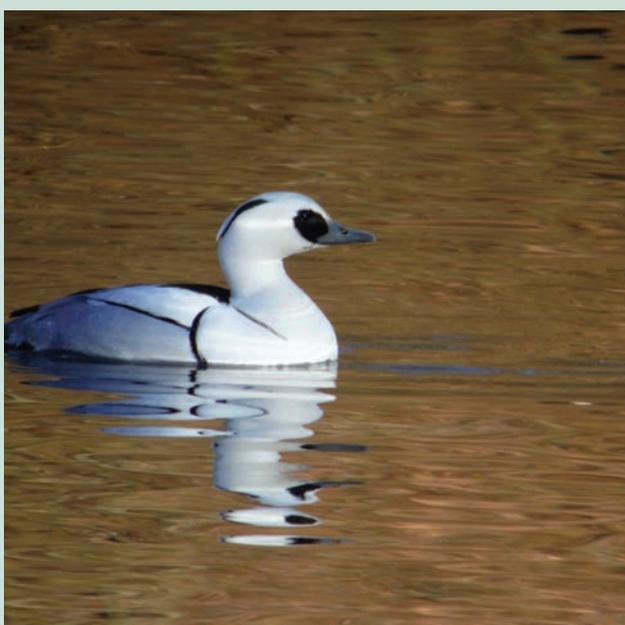
"We believe that this is the largest real indoor Christmas tree in the country, standing around eight feet higher than the impressive tree normally installed in Buckingham Palace," comments the Hon Nicholas Howard, the current guardian of Castle Howard. "It is certainly the largest we have had, both in terms of height and width at the base, which has a huge footprint in the Great Hall – but thankfully leaves a gap on either side for visitors to walk right around it."

The tree will require constant attention over the coming weeks to keep it looking fresh. A water reservoir will keep feeding the tree so it will remain verdant until 2 January, when the Christmas experience ends.

Tickets to Narnia at Christmas are priced from £19.50 for adults and £12.50 for children off-peak, and £25.00 for adults and £15 for children at peak times. To book, or for more details, please visit www.castlehoward.co.uk. Tickets include timed access to the house, full access to the gardens and adventure playground.



The World Of Birds Love The One You're With



— BY LINDA JENKINSON —

One of the questions I get asked the most as a birdwatching guide is "what's your favourite bird?". Despite spending a whole session answering questions about ornithology and bird identification, I find this the most difficult one to answer when I'm out in the field. Ask me the same question when I'm at home and I'd say immediately that it's a drake smew, a tiny diving duck related to our resident goosander.

The smew's breeding population spreads across Europe and Asia with wintering birds moving south of their breeding range, our closest

winter population being in the Netherlands. When temperatures fall on the continent, most will travel further south but about 100 individuals will travel across the North Sea and spend the rest of the winter in the UK. Where they will turn up is uncertain, but individuals tend to be faithful to particular patches, returning to the same place each year. Luckily, we usually get at least one bird on my local patch in the lower Aire valley.

Like goosanders, male and female smew look very different and females, commonly referred to as redheads, are seen more often than the males. It's sometimes possible to see more than one female at a time but males are usually alone. The sight of their strikingly beautiful plumage, and charismatic behaviour, is an experience worth waiting for and I think it's their general absence that makes my heart grow fonder as the years go by. Watching one displaying with goldeneye is a sight to behold.

So why do I struggle to answer the question about my favourite bird when I'm out in the field? Well, I think it's because, as a birdwatching guide, I'm so privileged to see most species in great detail through my high-powered telescope. I'm watching the seasons come and go bringing a range of different species in a variety of different plumages and observing extraordinary behaviour on a regular basis. I'm constantly in awe by being surrounded by the natural world and at times it can be overwhelming. During classes, when I'm asked to suddenly bring to mind my favourite bird, my mind is awash with thousands of wonderful images and action replays. It's hard to make a choice. I usually say that I'm generally loving the one that I'm with at the time. Very Crosby, Stills and Nash - "if you can't be with the one you love, love the one you're with".

Recently, my inability to choose my favourite bird when asked again, made me wonder why it is that the robin outcompetes every other species, in every British survey.



The robin is undoubtedly Britain's favourite and was also chosen in a recent (but sadly, unsuccessful) campaign to become our national bird. Thinking back to my personal experiences and the reasons for my indecisiveness, I'm convinced that it's the confiding nature of the robin, and the ability to see it in great detail, that makes it a favourite of so many. Throughout the year they appear before us as we dig our garden. They sit beside us in a tree as we refill our bird feeders, singing gently. They're more likely than other birds to take mealworms from our hands if we're quiet and patient. How could we not love robins?

During December, the robin becomes an even more familiar sight in our homes as we display our Christmas cards filled with fond wishes from friends and family. Perhaps the images and the sentiments inside create and even stronger association between robins and feelings of wellbeing. Enjoy your robins this Christmas time and I wish you health and happiness over the festive season.

Linda Jenkinson teaches people about birds in and around Leeds. For details of indoor and outdoor classes email linda@startbirding.co.uk or call 07778 768719. Visit www.startbirding.co.uk or Start Birding on Facebook and Twitter.

Langlands

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Visit Langlands this Christmas



Enjoy the magic of Christmas this year at Langlands Garden Centre. Our spectacular displays are sure to get you in the festive spirit with four themes to explore! Santa will also be joining us in our Christmas department this year so why not pay him and his cheeky elves a visit? With fun for all the family, Langlands is the perfect place to visit.



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MUSIC

Image © People in Pictures

70's - The Golden Era Of Christmas Hits!
By Stuart Glossop

The 1970s was undoubtedly and indisputably the Golden Era of the Christmas Hit Single. Of course there had been Xmas hits before then, stretching back to Bing Crosby's "White Christmas" in the 1940s and then courtesy of Dean Martin and Nat King Cole in the 1950s and Brenda Lee and the Ronettes in the 1960s. However Christmas time in the 1970s saw an "avalanche" of Christmas hit singles, the like of which we have not witnessed before or since!!

It all started quite innocuously in 1972 when **John Lennon and Yoko Ono** released "**Happy Xmas, War is Over**", which ostensibly was an anti Vietnam War song. Little did the arch innovator Lennon know what he was unleashing. For the following year 1973 saw **Slade** release "**Merry Xmas Everybody**" and **Wizzard** "**I Wish it could be Xmas Everyday**", which were fantastic feel

good songs, the perfect antidote to the Miners' Strikes and resulting misery in the UK caused by power cuts and blackouts and the industrial three day week!!

In 1974 **Mud**, having seen the success the previous year of fellow Glam Rockers Slade, matched them by holding the Christmas No1 with "**Lonely this christmas**", spot for four weeks. From then onwards throughout the rest of the decade, it became almost mandatory for the leading pop acts to release a festive ditty!! For me, the best Christmas hit song came in 1975, when quite unexpectedly **Greg Lake** of Prog Rock band Emerson Lake & Palmer found himself a wise man's camel hair's breadth from being the Christmas No1 with "**I Believe in Father Christmas**". He was only denied the rare achievement and status of "One Hit Wonder No1" by the equally

sublime song "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen.

Paul McCartney's "Wonderful Christmastime" which ended the decade might be the most divisive Christmas song in existence. To some, the twee keyboard tune sounds like twinkling Tannenbaum lights; to others, it is the sound of cold shivers up and down the spine. But there is one thing about the 1979 single that we can all agree on — it gets a lot of airplay around the holidays. No wonder, Paul is a Beatle, after all. Still, it got us thinking about less often heard Christmas songs that are overlooked from the decade in general when it comes to Christmas classics. And they are these gems;

Roberta Flack - "25th of Last December"

Not every Xmas tune needs to be merry and bright. In fact, melancholy and blue is a nice change of pace. Flack's mellow acoustic number is for those who appreciate the sentiment of Elvis' "Blue Christmas" but want a little more ice and soul.

Elton John - "Step Into Christmas"

How could you not love a single that comes bundled with a B-side called "'Ho, Ho, Ho (Who'd Be a Turkey at Christmas)"? Considering how big it was in 1973, this giddy, galloping B-Side is hardly ever played

Dana - "It's Gonna Be a Cold, Cold Christmas"

The Irish crooner might have easily been mistaken for the Carpenters of Captain & Tennille in 1975. She later became a Member of the European Parliament.

Kate Bush - "December Will Be Magic Again"

In 1979, Kate Bush hosted her very own baroque and delightfully bonkers Christmas special on television. This was the standout number from the showcase, as the 21-year-old sang of "Bing Crosby," "mistletoe," "mystery" and "magic."

Chris De Burgh - "A Spaceman Came Travelling"

First released in 1975, this track gained far more popularity a decade later on the heels of De Burgh's breakthrough "Lady in Red." He turned the Christmas tale into something extra-terrestrial, but the big hook here is the catchy "Na Na Na Na Na Na Na Na" in the chorus.

George Harrison - "Ding Dong, Ding Dong"

We shouldn't be surprised that George remains overshadowed by Paul's "Wonderful Christmastime" and John's "Happy Xmas (War Is Over)" when it comes to holiday classics. To be fair, this single off his underrated album Dark Horse is technically a New Year's anthem, but with its chiming bells and upbeat mood, it merits a spin every time the big ball drops at midnight.

PANTO/SHOWS

Beauty and the Beast:
The Rock 'n' Roll
Panto City Varieties
Music Hall

You'll be wowed by this breath-taking production which mixes traditional elements of audience participation and corny gags with a jukebox full of classic rock anthems and chart-toppers, all performed live on stage by our ultra-talented cast of actor-musicians.

Ticket Info;
Fri 26 November 2021 – Sun 9 January 2022 *Tickets: from £14 (*inclusive of booking fees) Call the Box Office on 0113 243 0808 or visit www.leadsheritage theatres.com/whats-on

Disney's Bedknobs And Broomsticks
Grand Theatre

Enter a world of magic and fantasy as Disney's classic movie Bedknobs and Broomsticks makes its world premiere as an exciting new stage musical. With the original songs by the legendary Sherman Brothers (Mary Poppins, The Jungle Book, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang), including Portobello Road, The Age Of Not Believing, The Beautiful Briny, and new music and lyrics by Neil Bartram and book by Brian Hill; Bedknobs and Broomsticks will be brought to life by award-winning theatre-makers Candice Edmunds and Jamie Harrison.

Disney's Bedknobs and Broomsticks stars Dianne Pilkington who is playing Miss Eglantine Price, the role immortalised on film by Angela Lansbury, and Charles Brunton who plays Emelius Browne.

Ticket Info;
Wed 8 Dec 2021 – Sun 2 Jan 2022 *Tickets: from £19 (*inclusive of booking fees) Call the Box Office on 0113 243 0808 or visit www.leadsheritage theatres.com/whats-on

Wakey Wakey!
Alhambra Theatre
Sleeping Beauty

Starring Billy Pearce (King Billy), TV doctor and presenter Dr Ranj (The Royal Doctor), Liz Ewing (Carabosse), Brogan McFarlane (Princess Aurora) and Sabrina Alouche (The Good Fairy).

Ticket Info;
Saturday 11 December 2021 – Sunday 16 January 2022 Relaxed Performance - Tuesday 11 January 2022 at 6pm *Tickets: from £16.50 (*inclusive of booking fees) Call the Box Office on 01274 432000 or visit bradford-theatres.co.uk

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drinkaware.co.uk for the facts
TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY. OVER 18S ONLY.



ENTERTAINMENT

TV/Festive Specials

Christmas Eve - Worzel Gummidge: Saucy Nancy - BBC One

Christmas Eve - Reindeer's First Christmas - Channel 4

Christmas Day - Call the Midwife - BBC One

Christmas Day - 'Death in Paradise' Christmas special - BBC One

Christmas Day - Strictly Come Dancing - BBC One

Christmas Day - The Great Christmas Bake Off - Channel 4

Christmas Day - Britain's Got Talent at Christmas - ITV



■ The Great British Christmas Sewing Bee

Boxing Day - The Great British Sewing Bee - BBC One

DATE TBC - The Larkins Christmas Special - ITV

DATE TBC - Top Gear - Driving Home For Christmas - BBC One

DATE TBC - Celebrity MasterChef Christmas Cook-Off - BBC One

DATE TBC - Beauty and the Beast: A Comic Relief Pantomime for Christmas - BBC Two

DATE TBC - The Ranganation Christmas Special - BBC Two



■ The Hairy Bikers Go North For Christmas

DATE TBC - The Hairy Bikers Go North For Christmas - BBC Two

Movies



■ It's a Wonderful Life

Available Now - It's a Wonderful Life - Sky Cinema - U

An angel is sent from Heaven to help a desperately frustrated businessman by showing him what life would have been like if he had never existed.

Stars: James Stewart, Donna Reed & Lionel Barrymore

Available Now - A Boy Called Christmas - Sky Cinema - PG13

In this origin story of Father Christmas, an ordinary boy (with a loyal pet mouse and a reindeer at his side) sets out on an extraordinary adventure to find his father who is on a quest to discover the fabled village of Elfheim.

Stars: Maggie Smith, Isabella O'Sullivan & Joel Fry



■ Shaun the Sheep: The Flight Before Christmas

03 December - Shaun the Sheep: The Flight Before Christmas - PG

Shaun's seasonal excitement turns to dismay when a farmhouse raid to get bigger stockings for the Flock inadvertently leads to Timmy going missing. Can Shaun get Timmy back before he becomes someone else's present?

18 December - Last Train to Christmas - Sky Cinema - PG13

Followed by Tony Towers, he's a local celebrity, a successful nightclub manager and he is engaged to a younger woman, Sue. Things get a little strange when he embarks upon the 3:17 to Nottingham for a Christmas family reunion.

Stars: Nathalie Emmanuel, Cary Elwes & Michael Sheen



■ The Snowman

Christmas Day - The Snowman - Channel 4 - U

On Christmas Eve, a young boy builds a snowman that comes to life and takes him to the North Pole to meet Father Christmas.

Stars: Peter Auty, David Bowie & Raymond Briggs

GAMES TEMPLE

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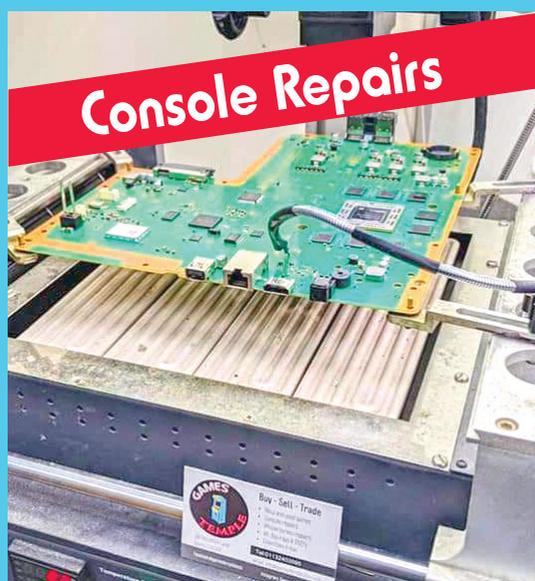


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Antiques With Gary Don



Good evening Mr Gary Don,
 Hope you're keeping well!
 I saw your article in the Yorkshire Reporter and hoped you could give me some information on this old coin I've had for some time please.
 I look forward to hearing back from you.
 Kind regards,
 Anita
 Dear Anita,
 Thank you for your email.
 This coin is a reproduction of a Roman Empire sestertius made during the reign of Caligula,

with Agrippina Sr, Julia Livilla, and Julia Drusilla (his three sisters) depicted on the back. Caligula is known as a selfish and capricious ruler blamed for weakening the Roman Empire during his brief 4 years reign.
 The coin was originally struck in Rome during Caligula reign (circa 37-38 AD).
 I can tell that yours is a reproduction due to its fine condition and it also has a modern silver hallmark .925. You can purchase these replicas for under £50.
 An original Caligula coin in good condition can sell for several thousand pounds
 Looks like it's back to digging in the garden!

Quiz

As it's the Christmas season, I thought we would swap roles.

Your turn to value these items. Good luck and thank you for all the wonderful valuations I have received from you. Keep them coming in the New Year email;

antiques@yorkshirereporter.co.uk

1 - How Much Did A 1920'S German Father Christmas On Reindeer Sleigh With Pointseater Crackers Sell For?



A £22 B £220 C £2200 D £22,200

2 - How Much Did This Bordeaux Chateau Petrus 1997 Sell For?



A £4000 B £1400 C £1000 D £400

3 - How Much Did This Mouseman Mouse Sell For?



A £13 B £13,000 C £1300 D £130

4 - How Much Did This Painting By Helen Bradley Sell For?



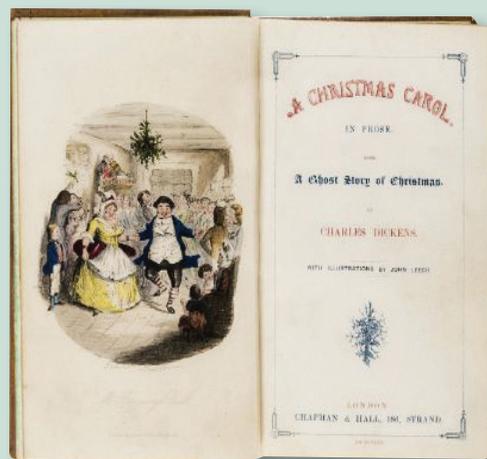
A £115 B £1500 C £115,000 D £5000

5 - How Much Did This Black And White Signed Photo Princess Diana Christmas Card 1995 Sell For ?



A £10,200 B £2,200 C £4,500 D £6,500

6 - How Much Did This Charles Dickens A Christmas Carol, First Edition Second State Sell For?



A £10,500 B £5,500 C £1000 D £8500

*Merry Christmas!
 Gary Don*

ANSWERS: 1C, 2B, 3B, 4D, 5B, 6D

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contact@garydon.co.uk www.garydon.co.uk

It's Christmas Time!



This Christmas is set to be very special at Christopher Brown Jewellers in Seacroft. Our recently rebranded store has a new extended range of beautiful jewellery and watches that will make this Christmas very special.

Our store is lovingly decorated with garlands and fairy lights and you will be treated to free mulled wine, glass of sherry or a warming cup of coffee and a fresh mince pie while you browse our extensive jewellery and luxury watch collection.

You won't be disappointed with the prices either. We have extended our HALF PRICE MANAGER'S SPECIAL range to include a whole collection of sparkling natural diamond jewellery including rings, bracelets stunning gemstones including sapphires, emeralds, rubies and tanzanites that will make any lucky lady's face light up this Christmas.



For those looking to invest in a luxury timepiece, Christopher Brown Jewellers in Seacroft has an extensive collection of ROLEX, Cartier and other precious watches all priced to match the best online retailers offers.



When you are spending many thousands of pounds on a watch you really need to see and feel the watch and have the reassurance that it is the genuine article with a warranty and after sales service that you can rely on. All our luxury watches carry a 2 year warranty and are fully serviced and guaranteed that will give you the peace of mind you are buying from a trusted family jeweller.

For a festive experience that will produce magical memories that you'll never forget, come to Christopher Brown's at Seacroft and experience the true magic of Christmas.



If you are unable to travel to Seacroft you can visit any of our 8 stores including York, Shipley, Pontefract, Batley, Stockport, Prescot and Toxteth or shop online on our new website www.christopherbrownjewellers.co.uk and do your shopping from the comfort of your own home, although you will miss out on free mince pies!

The Christmas Diary Of A Pawnbroker

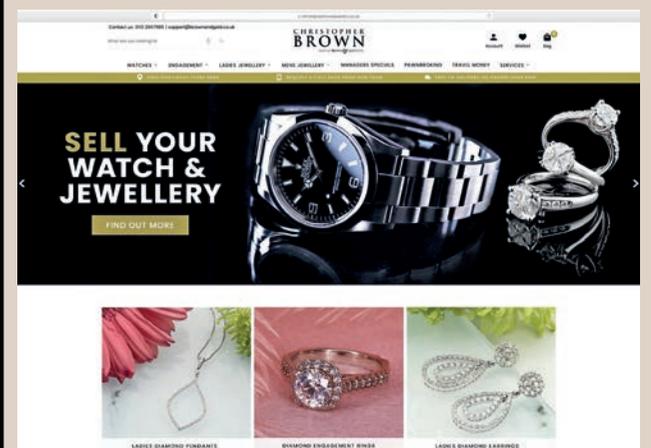
Many people know that Saint Nicholas, otherwise known as Father Christmas, is famed for his generosity to the poor and for secretly leaving gifts for people in need. Historians recount how he saved a poor man's daughters from being sold as slaves by throwing three bags of gold into their father's window at night.

However did you know that St. Nicholas is actually the Patron Saint of pawnbroking, and that his three bags of gold have been thought to represent the symbol of pawnbrokers, the three gold balls that hang outside our stores?

Christmas is an expensive time for all of us so be reassured that we are here to help and we can provide an instant loan against your jewellery, gold or luxury watch. Everybody needs a little financial help at times to let us help you when you need it most whether it's Christmas shopping, supermarket or energy bills!

Brown & Gold, also trading as Christopher Brown Jewellers, are regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and we aim to provide a cost effective solution to the need for instant cash. It's not just families needing an instant loan either. Many business owners use our service to help pay wages and meet cashflow needs as the winter season kicks in and workers need the cash in their pockets in time for Christmas.

So whether it's a business loan or just some extra cash for Christmas, call in and see us at any of our 8 stores including Seacroft, York, Shipley, Pontefract, Batley Stockport, Prescot or Toxteth as Father Christmas may be a little bit busy this December!



To find your nearest store and find out more visit; www.browngold.co.uk or www.christopherbrownjewellers.co.uk

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www.Christopherbrownjewellers.co.uk

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Echo Show 8
£119.99 from www.amazon.co.uk



With an 8" HD touchscreen, adaptive colour and stereo speakers, bring entertainment to life. Make video calls, ask Alexa, enjoy films, music and much more on this multi-functional high tech gadget.

This is Silk Hair Towel Wrap
£35.99 from www.thisissilk.com



This hair towel wrap is made from pure silk. It dries hair without the friction of a cotton towel, meaning thicker, smoother hair. Perfect for curly girls or boys!

Hadleigh Jacket
£87.50 from www.TOG24.com

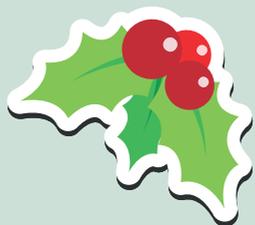


This is a super warm coat for the worst of Yorkshire winters. The thermal filling is made from recycled plastic bottles. The fixed hood and long length combined with a Yorkshire Rose badge mean you will be toasty and stylish!

Cashmere Socks
£59 from www.loopcashmere.co.uk



A gift of luxury, these exquisitely soft socks are made from 100% sustainable cashmere by this Yorkshire company. Available in a range of different colours and fully machine washable.



The World of Whittard Gift Set
£35 from Whittard stores & www.whittard.co.uk



A beautiful selection of tea, coffee, and hot chocolate. Perfectly crafted for delicious drinks, choose from Whittard classics as well as festive favourites such as Mulled Wine tea.

Aura Carver Frame
£149 from Amazon & www.auraframes.co.uk



Stylish and minimalist design in a variety of colours to suit all homes. Share your photos easily on this impressive HD 10.1in display, you can even share photos with family across the world!

British Wool Christmas Jumper
£119.95 from www.glencroftcountrywear.co.uk



Yorkshire company Glencroft produce luxury 100% British wool products for the whole family. This Dales Sheep Aran jumper features a cute sheep and uses environmentally friendly water-based dyes.

Lily & Rabbit Soap
£6.50 from www.lilyandrabbit.co.uk



This lime and coconut soap is vegan and suitable for sensitive skin. Made from coconut milk and coconut oil on a North Yorkshire farm to gently cleanse and nourish without drying the skin.

Christmas

Buff Energise and Uplift Candle
£16.95 from www.dancewearcentral.co.uk



This vegan soya and rapeseed wax candle provides an uplifting blend of Lemon Eucalyptus, Spearmint, Rosemary and Cedarwood scents in an amber glass jar for an ambient glow.

For Teens

BaByliss Hot Air Multi Styler
£59 from AO.com



The ultimate hair styler to create looks as versatile as you are! Comes with a 38mm barrel for big waves, curling wand, drying nozzle and blow dry brush. 1000 watts of power, 2 heat settings and ionic frizz control makes hair styling easy.

VEX Gift Card
£various from www.vouchereexpress.co.uk



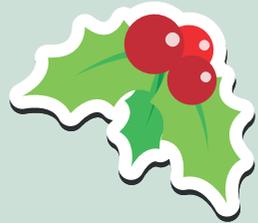
Solve the problem of not knowing what to buy someone with this gift card. You don't even have to gamble on the wrong store as the recipient can choose from 150 brands to redeem their voucher!

PMD Clean skin cleansing device
£89 from PMD Beauty, Harrods & online retailers



This uses over 7000 vibrations per minute to deeply remove skin impurities by breaking down dirt and oil from within pores. Use for cleansing and massaging, perfect for teens!

Gift Guide



Fragrance Gift Sets

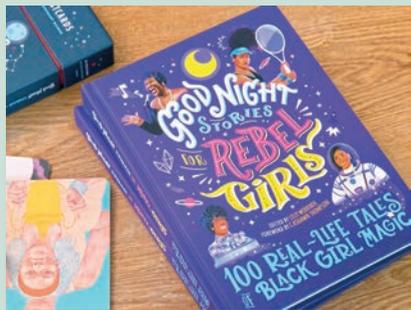
Various from www.perfumedirect.com



Choose to gift their favourite fragrance in a stylish gift set. We love Hugo Boss The Scent for him which includes 50ml Eau de Toilette and shower gel, and Paco Rabanne Olympea for her which includes 50ml Eau de Parfum, body lotion and 6ml EDP.

Goodnight Stories for Rebel Girls: 100 Real Life Tales of Black Girl Magic

RRP £25 from [Waterstones](http://Waterstones.com) & [Amazon](http://Amazon.com)



This beautifully illustrated hardback book celebrates the achievements of black females from around the world, ranging from the well-known to the little-known.

Wax Melts and Whipped Soap

£3.20 & £7.95 from www.sassyshopwax.com



The wax melts are available in some great seasonal scents including Winter Morning or Warm Gingerbread. The air whipped soaps are brilliantly perfumed and can be used as a handwash, shower gel and bubble bath.

For Kids

Baked In Junior Baking Club

£33 for 3mths from www.bakedin.co.uk



A letterbox friendly surprise every month, each kit contains a step-by-step recipe card and all the dry ingredients weighed out to bake delicious treats. For ages 5-11.

Let's Glow Studio & Shoot the Poop

£24.99 & £21.99 from [Smyths Toys](http://SmythsToys.com)



Let's Glow Studio is a creator kit of reflective fashion accessories. Use the LED clip on any smartphone or tablet to light up your selfies! Shoot the Poop is a funny talking toilet game which develops fine motor skills. Sink your last floater to win!

Nap Mat

£29.99 from www.bloomsburymill.com & [Amazon](http://Amazon.com)



Available in five cute designs, the nap mats are perfect for on the go and at home naps. Snuggly and comfortable with a secret pocket for your little one's favourite toy.

3 in 1 Scampsuit

£75 from www.muddypuddles.com



This planet friendly scampsuit is made from recycled plastic bottles. Super stylish and warm it is perfect for winter outdoor adventures whatever the weather.

Art Lab Pouring Art Studio

£21.99 from [Smyths](http://Smyths.com), [The Entertainer](http://TheEntertainer.com), [Argos](http://Argos.com) & [Very](http://Very.com)



For budding artists, this studio contains everything you need to create miniature canvas masterpieces by mixing, pouring, and tilting your acrylic paints.

Eco Friendly Mini Builds

RRP £9.99 from www.buildyourownkits.com



These mini builds made from 100% sustainable cardboard and paper allow you to create your very own honeybee, ladybird, stag beetle or dragonfly. Be creative, have fun and learn about nature.

Active Snap

£4.99 from [Amazon](http://Amazon.com) & toy stores



Snap is an age-old card game that kids love to play. Active Snap puts a twist on the original by making the players that are too slow to shout snap carry out the activity on the card. Great for getting kids moving!

For Pets

Reversible Harness, Lead & Collar Bundle

£43 from www.cocopuplondon.com



These stylish sets for your pooch are comfortable and made from durable fabric. You can also get a range of matching accessories for your dog and you!

Calming Pet Blanket

£17.99 from www.mikkipet.com



This cosy fleece blanket is great for providing comfort at home and when travelling. Ideal for holding familiar smells to keep your pet reassured.

Christmas Competitions Galore!!



WIN! Wilsons Large Family Pork Pie



Provided by Wilsons Butchers
www.wilsonsbutchers.co.uk

38 Austhorpe Road, Crossgates LS15 8DX Tel 0113 264 5448

To enter simply send 'WILSONS LARGE FAMILY PORK PIE' along with your contact details including tel number to competitions@yorkshirereporter.co.uk

WIN! Christmas Tin of Baked Treats & Yorkshire Talk of the Town Bauble From The Great Yorkshire Shop



The Great Yorkshire Shop hand pick fine goods exclusively from local independent makers, artists and designers of Yorkshire including cards, gifts, foods, art, homeware, beauty and men's products.

All are unique items not found on the high street!

www.thegreatyorkshireshop.co.uk

Terms & Conditions – Entries must be in by the 18th December 2021. The winner will be contacted by phone or email and may be required for a photoshoot of them receiving their prize. Yorkshire Reporter's decision is final and no cash alternative will be offered.

NOVEMBER EDITION COMPETITION WINNERS

The Great Yorkshire Shop competition - Tineke Orridge & Anne Millett Copy Of 'Bess Of Hardwick (In Simple Terms)' - Pamela Davies

Copy Of 'Champion Jump Horse Racing Jockeys: From 1945 To Present Day' - Jo Corrado

SLADE tickets - David Stringer

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To enter simply send 'EISBERG ALCOHOL FREE WINE' along with your contact details including tel number to competitions@yorkshirereporter.co.uk

WIN!



3 different DIY kits for those who love DIY. Fix & Create – ideas for repairs and repurposing. Rebel Tech – fix, adapt and customise gadgets. Home Hacks – practical projects and creative DIY ideas. We have three kits to giveaway but if you are wanting to purchase them they are available from www.sugru.com priced £10.99.

To enter simply send 'SUGRU STARTER KITS' along with your contact details including tel number to competitions@yorkshirereporter.co.uk

Recipe Of The Month - Delicious Turkey Pie

By Langlands Garden Centre
Chef Damian Gates



Christmas and the traditional turkey dinner is a favourite with many, but even those that enjoy their meal followed by the turkey sandwiches begin to think they can't face more. The left overs always tend to be plenty so Boxing Day can be a struggle with more to get through but using it to make a delicious tasty pie could not be easier, follow the recipe and enjoy!

Ingredients

- Cooked turkey meat torn into chunks
- 2 Bacon rashers (optional)
- Chicken or vegetable stock
- 2 tablespoons of plain flour
- 1 egg
- Any vegetables you would like in the pie e.g. carrots, leeks
- Salt & pepper to season
- Oil
- Puff pastry

Method

- Pre heat the oven to 190°C
- Put your bacon (optional) in a frying pan and fry off for a few minutes. Add your vegetables with some olive oil and salt & pepper. Turn down the heat and leave to cook, stirring every 5 to 10 minutes.
- When everything is softened, add your turkey meat, and stir. Now add the flour and mix well then pour in your stock of choice and mix. Bring to the boil and add more seasoning if needed.
- Turn off the heat and start rolling out your pastry. You will need a deep baking dish, roll out the pastry so it's big enough to cover the top of it.
- Spoon the turkey mixture into the dish and spread out evenly, lay your pastry on the top and tuck in. Gently score with a knife and then beat your egg to use as an egg wash over the pastry.
- Put your finished pie into the oven for about 40 minutes or until golden brown.
- Serve with gravy.

SAGARS 365, KEEPING CONSERVATORIES WARM IN WINTER AND COOL IN SUMMER

Many conservatory owners have installed additional heating but become concerned about rising energy bills. They may have considered a solid tiled roof but been put off by the cost – this is where Sagars 365 can help.

The family-run Yorkshire based company use their revolutionary insulation system to turn conservatories into rooms that can be used every day of the year by minimising condensation, reducing noise in bad weather, reducing heat loss in winter by over 90% as well as keeping the heat out in summer. The cost is less than

you might expect. Typically costing 75% less than a solid tiled roof. A polycarbonate roofed, lean to conservatory starts at just £1,899 including VAT.

With interest-free credit you could spread the cost over 6 or 10 months (subject to approval). The work is typically completed in one day and you can choose either a tongue and groove PVC or premium plastered finish.

Sagars 365 is a company that you can trust - they have an overall 'Excellent' rating on Trustpilot, they're a Which? Trusted trader and offer a 10-year guarantee.



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MOTORS

Third Of Motorists Believe Their Driving Is Worse In Winter

Millions of motorists in the UK believe that they are more at risk of minor accidents and collisions in the winter months because, to their own admission, their driving gets worse in dark and wintery conditions – according to a new survey by MotorConnect.co.uk.

33 per cent of drivers questioned claimed that their driving noticeably worsens between November and March because the dark, difficult weather conditions and increased glare from headlights makes them less confident behind the wheel.

A quarter of drivers surveyed admitted to having previously been in a minor collision or bump in the winter months – 47 per cent of accidents were due in part to headlight glare; 23% not being able to see objects properly in the dark and 17 per cent was due to glare from artificial lighting.

Four out of ten of those surveyed claim that they avoid driving in the dark in winter if they can – 30 per cent have cancelled social plans because they did not want to drive and one in ten have been late for a night time event because they have taken a longer, but more well-lit route.

Adjust Your Eyes To The Dark Before Driving

Give yourself a few minutes in the car to allow your eyes to adjust to the lower light level before you start driving. Low light levels cause the pupil of the eye to become larger and this can accentuate any focusing errors – no matter how minor – causing blur. Low-light levels can similarly lead to a reduction in the contrast of objects.

At night it's also more important than ever to wear a pair of spectacles or contact lenses with an up-to-date prescription. It's a legal requirement that your vision meets standards for driving.

Keep Your Distance

It is more difficult to judge distance at night-time so allow extra space between you and the car in front as this gives more time to react to situations ahead of you.

Use Anti-Glare Glasses Lenses

Specially developed lens coating can reduce glare and reflection by up to 90% compared to a lens that has no anti-reflective treatment. This can help to remove distractions from glare caused by streetlights, traffic lights and headlights from other cars.

Keep Windcreens Smear-Free

While not only making sure the outside of a front and back windscreen is clean and streak free, ensuring washer fluid is good quality and always topped up, keep a microfiber cloth in the glove box to clear any condensation and smears on the inside. And while you're at it – give your glasses a wipe with a clean cloth or spectacle cleaner, so they are smear free and clear. Scratched or smudged glasses will reduce image quality.

Regularly Check And Adjust Mirrors

Advice on safe night driving includes regularly adjusting rear view mirrors to reduce glare from behind. Some newer vehicles come with self-dimming rear-view mirror functionality, which is worth looking out for to help reduce glare.

Be Visible

Headlights not only help drivers to see better but are an important safety feature to be seen. Regularly check that all lights are in full working order. It is illegal to drive at night without fully-functioning headlights and police officers will stop vehicles that don't comply with the guidelines.

Dip Don't Dazzle

While taking steps to be safe from the dazzle of other driver's headlights, it's important that all drivers are taking the correct steps in their own vehicles. Adjust car headlights if you're carrying varying loads and check that they are aligned properly. Headlamp aim forms part of a vehicle's MOT, but ask your local garage to inspect that they are aligned properly whenever your vehicle goes in for a service. Also, always dip headlights when facing oncoming traffic.

Slow Down Or Stop

Rule 237 of the Highway Code states that if you're dazzled by bright sunlight 'slow down or if necessary stop'. The same applies for being dazzled at night. If your vision is in any way causing concern, pull over in a safe place and take the necessary steps to try and improve vision (clearing a windscreen or adjusting mirrors).

Get Your Eyes Tested

Ensuring your eyesight is up to scratch when driving in winter is also crucial. Most people over the age of about 45 will need some vision correction to see in sharp focus, and everyone should have their eyes checked by an optician at least every two years as your sight can change without it being obvious.

FOUR-IN-10 DRIVERS FORCED TO CUT SPENDING DUE TO RISING FUEL PRICES

More than four-in-10 drivers (46%) say they'll be forced to cut other household spending as a result of petrol and diesel prices continuing to rise beyond their current record high levels while a third (33%) are already driving less because of the high costs at forecourts, new RAC research has found.

The survey of nearly 2,500 UK drivers also shows that 61% are worried about the high prices as they depend on their vehicles so heavily, while half (48%) are concerned because the rising costs are coming at a time when household gas and electricity bills are also increasing.

A third already say they are driving less because of the record petrol and diesel prices, with a further quarter (25%) saying they'll be forced to if prices keep going up. And while just under a fifth (17%) say they'll get about by other means such as walking or cycling as the car becomes less affordable, a much greater proportion (44%) say they'll simply suffer the higher fuel prices and drive just as much as before. Alarming, 5% of drivers are worried they'll be unable to keep running a car at all if prices keep heading north.

With one-in-four respondents (25%) stating that the cost of driving accounts for a large proportion of their monthly spending, the research paints a chilling picture of the impact of the current record petrol and diesel prices on UK households. Both fuels hit all-time high levels as of

the end of October and have risen still further since the start of November, with petrol already up more than 2p a litre.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, nearly seven-in-10 drivers (69%) want to see the Government intervene over high prices although the prospect of this happening given the Chancellor only recently delivered the Autumn Budget seems unlikely. A cut to fuel duty – which currently makes up nearly 58p of the cost of every litre of petrol or diesel sold – is most popular among drivers (75%), followed by a pump price cap akin to that which already applies in the domestic energy market (58%). Half (51%) would like to see a reduction in VAT applied to fuel, which currently accounts for around 24p of the cost of a litre.

But the record high prices may also have the effect of changing behaviour in some other interesting ways. While a third (34%) say they would switch to a zero-emission electric vehicle (EV) tomorrow if only they could afford it, a fifth (19%) still believe the high fuel costs will act as a catalyst for getting more drivers to go electric.

Anyone who drives 9,000 miles a year and is in a position to switch to an electric car could save themselves around £1,500. The RAC is helping to make the switch easier with its leasing service which helps drivers to get into an EV from around £230 a month.

Visit www.rac.co.uk/electric-cars/leasing for more information.



FORD NEXT-GEN RANGER

Ford Motor Company has revealed the much-anticipated next-generation Ford Ranger pick-up.

Ford has reimagined, redesigned and reengineered the Ranger to be the smartest, most versatile and most capable Ranger ever for customers in more than 180 markets around the world. Ford conducted more than 5,000 interviews and worked with hundreds of pick-up owners, in dozens of workshops across the globe to find out how owners used their trucks, what they liked, what they wished it had and what experiences mattered the most to them.

This customer-centric approach helped Ford design and engineer solutions with the next-generation Ranger that customers wanted and would appreciate.

The Sportiest Multistrada Ever

The Multistrada V4 Pikes Peak takes life around the excellent Multistrada V4 platform: where performance, smoothness of operation and reliability offered by the V4 Granturismo engine, together with the contained weight, the ease of handling, the comfort for rider and passenger alike, state-of-the-art equipment and electronics are part of the cornerstones of the Multistrada V4 family. Starting from these solid foundations, the new V4 Pikes Peak was developed by introducing significant changes in terms of chassis set-up, premium ergonomics, electronic controls as well as numerous dedicated components, which give the bike a distinctly sportier attitude compared to the Multistrada V4. Ducati, once again, promises to delight a wide range of riders looking for the purest performance within the dual bikes universe.

The design work behind this new project develops starting from the peculiar elements of the Multistrada V4 family, integrating them with the two elements that mainly identify this Pikes Peak version from an aesthetic and functional perspective, namely the 17" front wheel and the single-sided swingarm. The racing soul of the bike is intensified by the dedicated "Pikes Peak" livery, faithfully inspired both in colours and graphics by that of the Desmosedici GP '21.

With the aim to further emphasise its sporty-oriented attitude the new Multistrada V4 Pikes Peak comes with a wide range of components made of carbon fibre in addition to the Akrapovič titanium and carbon silencer (road-approved). Others distinctive aesthetic elements are the low smoked plexi, Öhlins front fork anodised gold legs, two-tone Black and Red rear saddle embellished with the V4 logo and the Ducati Corse badge.

"As designers, we engaged with customers much earlier in the process, spent more time with them and got more insights than ever before", said Max Tran, Chief Designer, Ranger.

"Interestingly, we found that no matter what market, our customers are doers. They like solving their own problems, and they like to feel confident in their truck ... not just the way the vehicle functions but the way they feel when they're driving it."

With a rugged new look, and a host of new features that boost productivity, capability and versatility, the next-generation Ranger is designed to go more places, work harder and offer more comfort and refinement than ever before.



The Multistrada V4 Pikes Peak is a technologically advanced motorcycle, designed for those who love the thrill of sporty riding, especially on mountainous twisties or between the kerbs of a race track.

The bike will be available at the Ducati dealers network from this month in the Radar trim, which is fitted with both front and rear radar system.



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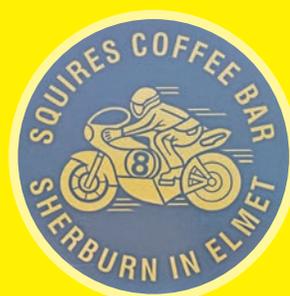
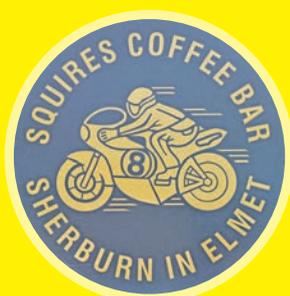
The monthly Japanese car meet (evening) £2 entry per car

Sat 11th - Yorkshire Blacksmith meeting

The Yorkshire Blacksmith group meet at Squires on the 2nd Saturday of each month between 11am and 3pm. If you are interested please come down and join in.

XMAS DAY & BOXING DAY - CLOSED

Visit www.squires-cafe.co.uk for more details



WAGGING TALES!

Mucky Pups: How To Keep Your Dog Clean



— EDITORIAL PROVIDED BY TAILS.COM —

For many dogs, baths aren't top of the list when it comes to things they enjoy – but unfortunately for them, they are often unavoidable. So how often should you wash your dog?

So, if your dog hasn't managed to cover itself in mud or something worse, how often should you wash them? Well, the truth is that you don't really need to wash your dog on a regular schedule. Your dog's coat has evolved to clean itself of the basic day-to-day grime, and given that they can't sweat, they won't be producing any BO in the way we would define it.

That being said, we are all aware of a certain funk that can build up on our dogs if they haven't been washed or groomed for a while. For many owners, this isn't an issue, but for those who find themselves sat with a stinky pup, we would advise that you wash your dog no more than once per month – less if you can.

Too much washing can actually cause your dog some problems, as they have very sensitive skin. What's more, if you use any flea or worming treatments that are applied to your dog's coat, these will be washed out with each bath leaving your pet vulnerable to those parasites. So wash them rarely if you feel you must.

Don't Wait Around

Whether your dog has been splashing in muddy puddles, or even rolling about in animal poo, if your pooch returns home as a mucky pup, it is important that you wash or wipe them down as soon as possible. Cleaning your dog at the earliest opportunity gives the dirt less time to set in, which is better for both your dog and your home.

Keep A Regular Routine

For owners with dogs that don't tend to get dirty very often, it can be hard to know how often to clean your pet pooch during the wet months. Fortunately, your dog's fur has evolved to be self-cleaning, which keeps out most of the day-to-day dirt. However, we all know that even the proudest pups can get a little smelly after a while.

It's recommended that your dog only needs to be cleaned just once a month, so try setting a date each month that works for you and your four-legged friend and stick to it.

Use The Right Shampoo

It is essential that you avoid using human shampoo on your dog. The chemicals that we put onto our hair are no good for keeping your dog's fur clean, and can potentially be harmful to their coat and skin.

There are plenty of quality and affordable dog shampoos available on the high street and online, but if you are not able to find dog shampoo, then a small pinch of baby shampoo will do as these tend to be mild and won't contain any harmful chemicals.

Avoid Over-Washing

Keep your dog's dates with the bathtub down to just once a month. Too much washing can actually cause your dog problems, as their skin is a lot more sensitive than ours. Additionally, if you have applied any flea or worm treatment to your dog's coat then these will be washed out by excessive bathing, leaving them vulnerable to parasites.

Aside from the fact that your dog is mostly self-cleaning, there are plenty more ways to keep on top of your hound's hygiene. There are also plenty of 'waterless' cleaning products on the market like dry dog shampoo and waterless cleaning mitts, to help keep your dog smelling and looking clean without getting them wet.



Plan Your Route

Be wary of where exactly you are walking your dog and try to avoid the puddles if you can. If your pup has a tendency to stray towards muddy puddles, then it might be an idea to keep your pup on a lead during the autumn and winter months, when the ground is wet and boggy.

Extendable leads are useful to keep control of where your dog walks, whilst still allowing them the space to stretch their legs.

Protect Their Paws

As the temperature drops and the weather turns to snow, it is worth considering how sensitive our pet's paw-pads are to icy conditions and grit on the road. Regularly tending to your dog's paws with warm water and a moist cloth will not only be soothing for your dog but help to clean up one of the main areas that spread dirt around your home.

During autumn, it is extra important to keep checking your dog's paws after a walk, as bits of debris and leaves can get stuck between their paws and cause irritation.



Feed Them Right

You can help keep your dog's coat glossy and healthy by ensuring that they are eating the right food. Your dog's coat relies on protein, so feeding your pooch a good, balanced diet maintains their healthy glow on the outside as well as on the inside.

Tailoring your dog's diet keeps them looking and feeling great, and limits the time and effort you spend cleaning them.

Brushing Is Best

Brushing your dog frequently is the best way to keep their fur clean from anything that they might pick up while out and about. Jumping through piles of leaves is a great source of fun for your pup, but it is also a really easy way for them to pick up fleas and ticks.

Thoroughly brushing at least once a day will help to comb out any unwelcome visitors and keep your dog's coat looking and feeling smooth. Brushing your dog is still perfectly fine during the winter months, as they naturally have enough fur to keep them warm all year round.

Stay Allergy Alert

Autumn can be a tough time for pets who are susceptible to allergies - one in five of our four-legged friends are said to suffer from them. There are certain plants that thrive during the autumn months and combined with the number of falling leaves, there is quite a substantial amount of pollen around at this time of year.

It is worth finding out what allergies your dog might be suffering from. Tell tale signs to look out for are sneezing, watery eyes and coughing. You should seek advice from your vet if you believe your pooch is starting to display these symptoms.



Wear Waterproof

Investing in a good quality, waterproof dog coat will keep your dog dry during the wet winter months. Even on days where the rain is not falling down, the colder climate means that muddy patches and puddles linger around for much longer - and we all know, our pups are drawn to them.

The best features to look out for when picking out a new coat for your dog are waterproofing, durability, double-lining, adjustability and affordability.

Visit www.tails.com for more tips and advice.



UK-First Radiation Therapy Service For Pets

Award-winning animal hospital Paragon Referrals has become the first veterinary centre in the UK to launch a pioneering superficial radiation therapy (SRT) service for pets.

Paragon's renowned medical and radiation oncology specialist, Dr Rodney Ayl, has been the trail-blazer for the new service and says it will transform the way the Yorkshire hospital can treat skin cancers, dermatological disorders and some other common superficial conditions.

Linnaeus-owned Paragon has invested £150,000 to install the country's first Xstrahl 100 superficial radiotherapy system after the successful use of the therapy by Dr Ayl in the USA, adapting its use from humans to animals.

Dr Ayl said: "This is a very exciting development for us and our clients because Xstrahl systems have been used so successfully in human medicine for many years.

"This prompted us to explore adapting the SRT system for veterinary use in the UK and we hope to collaborate with Colorado State University, which has a similar unit, to develop protocols for pets.

"We believe this will be a significant advance in the treatment and care of animals and we're delighted to be at the forefront of introducing this new service.

"It is the only one of its kind for pets in the UK and there are very few units like this anywhere in the veterinary industry, so it really is an important move forward."

Dr Ayl says Xstrahl radiotherapy systems have been used by leading clinicians and specialists around the world to care for humans and are specifically designed for the treatment of skin cancer, dermatological disorders, certain types of benign disease and some palliative care.

He said having adapted the SRT system for animals will transform not only their treatment but also the logistics and cost of getting radiation therapy for superficial skin conditions.

He added: "Superficial radiotherapy is particularly useful for treating some types of skin cancer where it may be preferable to surgery as it can deliver excellent non-invasive outcomes with curative or palliative intent.

"The treatment is less stressful from the outset and, thanks to its mechanism of action, it is also pain-free.

"Its use of different size cones, directly over the lesion, minimises effects on healthy skin and the fast treatment means a large reduction in time and impact on the patient's day-to-day life, while providing a highly-effective treatment.

"The machine's flexibility also makes it particularly suited for treating multiple lesions that are difficult to access, such as the head and neck, without changing patient positioning.

"The Xstrahl 100 system will help us to respond to the growing demand for radiation treatment and we can treat these patients on an outpatient basis, helping us to reduce surgical and hospitalisation costs.

"The technology is a real winner. It is easy to use and helps us to deliver safe and effective radiotherapy to our animal patients.

"It provides a quicker, easier, cheaper and non-invasive alternative for superficial tumours, especially in geriatric patients where surgery is not always an option. We're looking forward to seeing the positive results here at Paragon."

Paragon's multi-disciplinary care includes anaesthesia and analgesia, cardiology, dermatology, diagnostic imaging, internal medicine, neurology, oncology, ophthalmology, orthopaedics and soft tissue surgery.

For more information on Paragon Veterinary Referrals, visit: www.paragonreferrals.co.uk

Letter From PDSA

Help Give Pets A Fighting Chance This Winter

Dear Editor,

PDSA is appealing for help this winter so that it can continue to be here for pets, like they've been here for us throughout the pandemic – providing comfort, companionship and love during these uncertain times.

The charity provides free and low cost vet care for those who struggle to pay treatment costs for their sick and injured pets. It's vital that pets and their owners can access our life-saving services and get the treatment they deserve, when they have nowhere else to turn.

Pets have done so much to improve our health and wellbeing, but now they are at increased risk - with 2.9 million more people claiming Universal Credit than before the pandemic and the cost of living crisis squeezing household budgets, we know that many pet owners will be unable to afford essential veterinary treatment.

Since the first UK lockdown began, we've already seen an overwhelming increase of additional enquiries from pet owners who have hit hard times. Our dedicated vet teams have carried out more than one million phone consultations, performed over 37,000 emergency operations and 76,000 x-rays for pets in desperate need since March 2020.

With 388,000 pets treated in 2020, by keeping our 48 Pet Hospitals open, we can be there for the thousands of pets that need us across the UK every day. Every pet deserves a fighting chance. Please donate today and help save pets' lives – www.pdsa.org.uk/pdsa-chance

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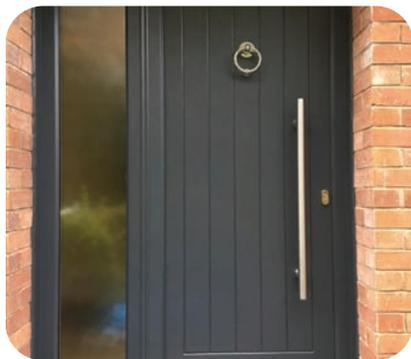
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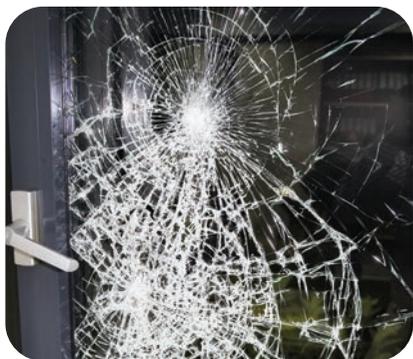
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Guiseley Care Workers Win Top Regional Award

Two care workers at a Guiseley Extra Care housing scheme have triumphed at the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Finals of the Great British Care Awards 2021 which recognise excellence across the care sector.

Victoria Longbottom and Lois Simpson from Anchor's The Laureates Extra Care housing scheme on Shakespeare Road were named as the winners of the Home Care Coordinator Award and the Frontline Leader Award at a Regional Final ceremony hosted at the National Railway Museum in York. Judges concluded that they demonstrated clear vision, passion and dedication to the people in their care, as well as their families and worked well with their colleagues at Anchor's The Laureates and will now go on to represent the whole of the Yorkshire and Humber in their categories in the National Finals taking place in March 2022.

Claire Reed, Manager, Anchor's Extra Care - The Laureates said: "This is a wonderful achievement by Victoria Longbottom and Lois Simpson and fully deserved recognition of their passion and ability."

"They're both a delight to work with, loved by our residents and are a credit to everyone at Anchor's The Laureates! They really do live up to Anchor's principles of Accountability, Respect, Courage and Honesty."

Victoria Longbottom, Care Worker commented on her win, "I'm delighted! It hasn't quite sunk in yet; it was wonderful just to be nominated but I'm really honoured to have won Home Care Coordinator Award in the whole of the region!"

Lois Simpson, Care Worker said: "I'm absolutely blown away, not only to be nominated for this but to have won the Frontline Leader Award! I am very grateful for my team at The Laureates, without them this wouldn't have been possible."

"We would like to thank everyone who nominated and supported us and want to congratulate all the other regional finalists as well. Roll on the National Finals in March, we hope we do Anchor's The Laureates proud and bring back a national award to the Yorkshire and Humber!"

To find out more on Anchor's The Laureates, please contact; 0800 731 2020

Letter From West Yorkshire Health And Care Partnership Asking For Your Support As We Go Into Winter

Health and care services across West Yorkshire, which includes hospitals, GPs, the ambulance service, councils, mental health, community services and social care providers have come together to ask for your support as we head into what is likely to be the busiest and most challenging winter the sector has faced.

At the current time we are seeing pressures across the entire system and this is only likely to increase as we move further into the winter period.

All our health and care services are seeing unprecedented increases in the number of people needing help. This means most of our services are dealing with a huge increase in the numbers of people accessing care whilst operating with significant staff shortages.

With restrictions eased and young people back in schools, anyone can be forgiven for thinking the worst of the pandemic is behind us. The reality is very different, and the months ahead are going to be very challenging.

COVID-19 infection rates across our area remain high with significant numbers of people requiring hospital treatment. This winter, flu and respiratory illness are back with us and are likely to be extremely infectious after last year's lockdown as our immunity will be much lower.

Here are seven simple steps we can take together so we can face and overcome a winter like no other.

1. Health and care services are here to help. You can save time by booking appointments and seeking medical advice online by downloading the NHS App or contacting your GP using the online form available on each practice website. There is a Health A-Z at www.nhs.uk/conditions/ with useful information and advice on common conditions. You can also visit your local council website to find out more about how you can receive the early help or care you need.
2. Talk before you walk by going online to www.111.nhs.uk or calling NHS 111 if you do not have internet access. Sometimes you know something doesn't feel right, but you know it's not life-threatening and you can't get to your GP practice or your local pharmacy is closed.

3. Health needs that are not a life-threatening emergency but are urgent include severe pain, suspected broken limbs and stomach pains. If you are experiencing any of the above symptoms, the friendly team at NHS 111 will be able to advise you on the best way of getting the help you need.

4. Jabs + testing = our way out. Life-saving vaccines and regular testing are the best way to protect everyone from COVID-19. It's not too late to receive a vaccine. Please have your second dose as two doses are needed for full protection, get a booster and flu jab when offered.

5. Get a COVID-19 test if you have symptoms. Please don't visit a healthcare setting (GP practices, pharmacies, accident, and emergency) if you have symptoms.

6. If you are concerned about your or someone else's mental health you can get help through 0800 183 0558 in Leeds, Wakefield, Calderdale, and Kirklees and 0800 952 1181 in Bradford, or contact our NightOWLS service for children and young people on 0300 2003900. People who are Deaf can text the NightOWLS service on 07984 392700. If you are worried about a vulnerable child or adult, you should contact your local council.

7. Continue to be kind to our staff and each other. This includes helping us by socially distancing where possible and wearing a face mask in healthcare settings.

We want to thank our colleagues, volunteers who continue to work hard during the busiest time on record and to everyone living across West Yorkshire for your patience and kindness.

Thank you

West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership

West Yorkshire
Health and Care Partnership



Urgent Eye Care At Home Frees Doctors For Emergency Departments



People with urgent, emergency eye care can use the CUES service instead of going straight away to the Accident Emergency department or their GP.

CUES - COVID-19 Urgent Eyecare Service – is free for all, including children. It is designed to reduce pressure on busy emergency departments and GPs.

An optometrist from CUES will offer a telephone or video consultation so people don't need to leave their home, although in more complex and severe cases they will see people face to face.

An eye problem is urgent if it is red, sore/painful eye, if there are flashes or floaters (for example small dark spots, squiggly lines, rings or cobwebs), specks of dust, a wood chip, a metal shaving, an insect or a piece of glass), or the person's vision changes suddenly.

Dr Jason Broch, GP and Clinical Chair at NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "The sooner treatment can be provided the better the chances of your eye health recovering. Despite pressures due to the coronavirus pandemic, the NHS is still here for you when you need us. Don't leave your eye problem to chance as this can have a serious impact on your long-term eye health - in some cases sight loss."

Participating optometrists are listed on;

www.primaryeyecare.co.uk/find-a-practice

Other routes to the service are through a referral by your optician, GP, or phoning NHS 111 or online at www.111.nhs.uk

For more information, watch this explanatory video;

www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0SBOhDhlm4

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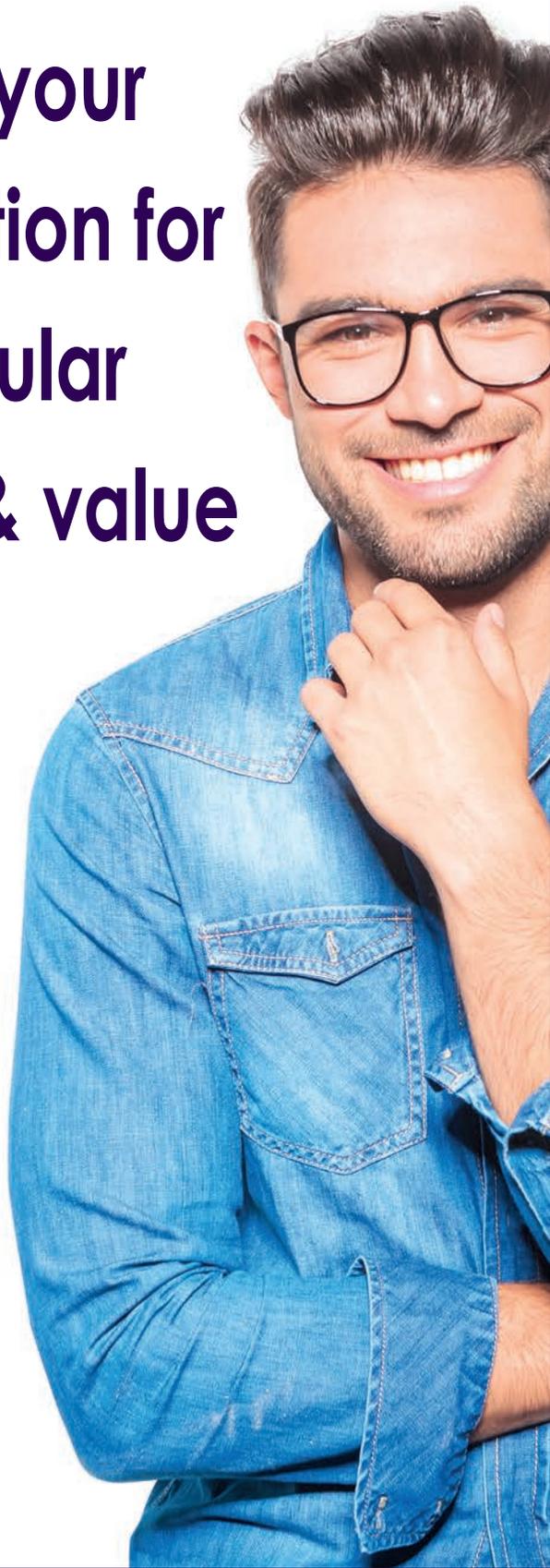
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PARKING

Scientists Develop Single Blood Test To Measure T-Cell And Antibody Response To SARS-CoV-2

A test to measure both the T-cell and antibody response to SARS-CoV-2 in a single blood sample has been developed by scientists at Cardiff University.

The unique approach can also be used to measure the immune response brought about by vaccination and previous infection.

It was developed in collaboration with Wales-based biotechnology company ImmunoServ Ltd and is outlined in a study published in the journal *Immunology*.



■ Dr Martin Scurr

Dr Martin Scurr, a research associate at Cardiff University's School of Medicine and lead author on the study, said: "COVID-19 infection rates remain alarmingly high – and it is clear infection even after vaccination is an issue. To help control future outbreaks and identify at-risk individuals, it is important to understand the exact make-up of the immune response to COVID.

"Our test accurately detects both the T-cell and antibody response to the virus in one blood sample. Together these indicators represent a powerful measure of immunity from COVID-19.

"The test can be made widely available, is easy to employ and cost effective, and should play a very useful role in monitoring this pandemic, for instance by identifying individuals at greater need of booster jabs."

Antibody testing was seen as crucial to easing lockdown during the pandemic – but antibodies are just one arm of the body's immune response and in some individuals this response is weak and short-lived. Scientists believe T-cell immunity plays a much greater role in protecting people from future infection, however large-scale testing has proven more challenging.

In this study, the researchers took a small sample of blood from individuals of all ages, 68 with underlying cancer and 231 healthy donors. They stimulated T-cells with small pieces of the virus called peptides; the T-cells recognise these peptides if the individual has been previously infected (or vaccinated) and produce chemicals named cytokines which can be easily measured.

The study also monitored the size of the T-cell and antibody responses in a group of

individuals tested before, during and after the UK's COVID-19 vaccination campaign. While both vaccine doses were required to maximise the T-cell response against the virus, the study found previously infected individuals required only one dose to achieve comparable immune responses.

The test proved most useful in monitoring immune responses in patients considered more at risk from COVID-19, even after vaccination. The study found the second vaccine dose was essential for cancer patients. Among cancer patients recruited from Velindre Cancer Centre in Cardiff, two doses induced T-cell and antibody responses to equivalent levels as healthy donors.

However, it is clear that in some cancer patients there is a dramatic fall of immune responses at three months, not seen in healthy controls, and highlights the importance of monitoring these responses.



■ Prof. Andrew Godkin

Professor Andrew Godkin, co-senior author from Cardiff University and the University Hospital of Wales, said: "Without this sort of information there is uncertainty around whether repeated booster vaccinations will be required in future, and who in particular will need them. This data is crucial for understanding how and when to offer re-vaccinations to different groups."

The research team will also monitor whether T-cell and antibody responses induced by vaccination can protect against SARS-CoV-2 mutant variants, including the Delta variant that is currently the most prevalent in the UK.

Danny Altmann, Professor of Immunology at Imperial University, said: "This study is important in both demonstrating the ease of measuring immune responses using a whole blood approach, but also the importance of monitoring susceptible individuals and healthy controls for differences in vaccine response and future potential loss of protection. Long-term monitoring will be crucial to understand and quantify this problem."

The research was funded by UK Research and Innovation as part of its response to the pandemic, along with the Medical Research Council and Cancer Research Wales.



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At the end of life, every moment together is precious

We can't give a person more time at the end-of-life. But we can make that time better – by allowing them the choice of where to spend their last days, providing expert, compassionate care, taking away the pain and the struggle and supporting their loved ones every step of the way.

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A gift of £21 pays for an hour of essential end-of-life care, helping fill a family's final days with love.

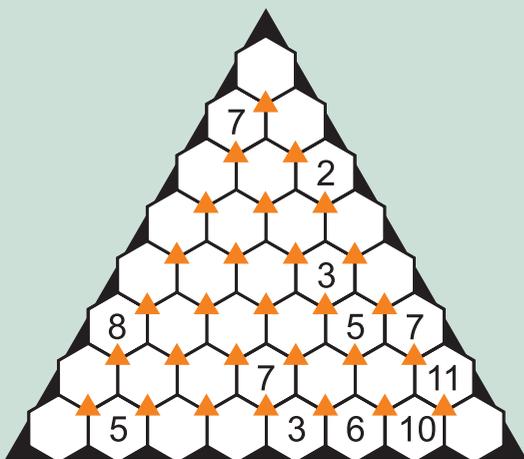
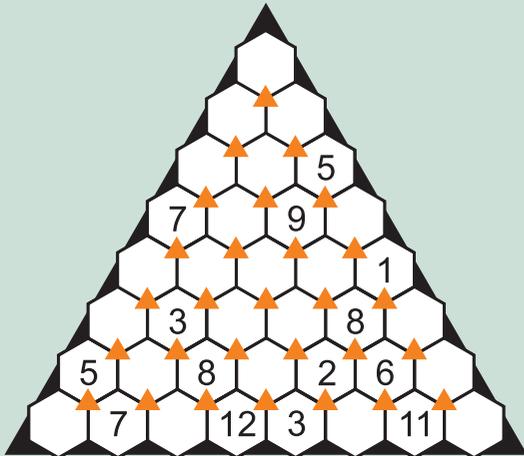
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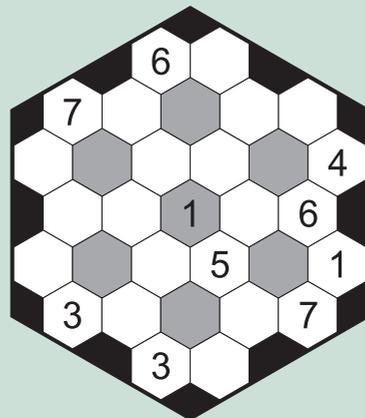
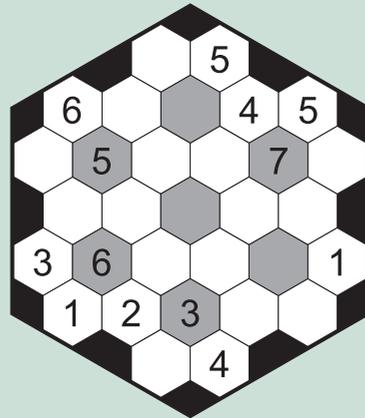
Subaddo 3D

Each orange triangle connects a set of three numbers. Two numbers must add or subtract to equal the third. All numbers must be between 1 and 12 and no number can be repeated in a horizontal row or diagonal row.



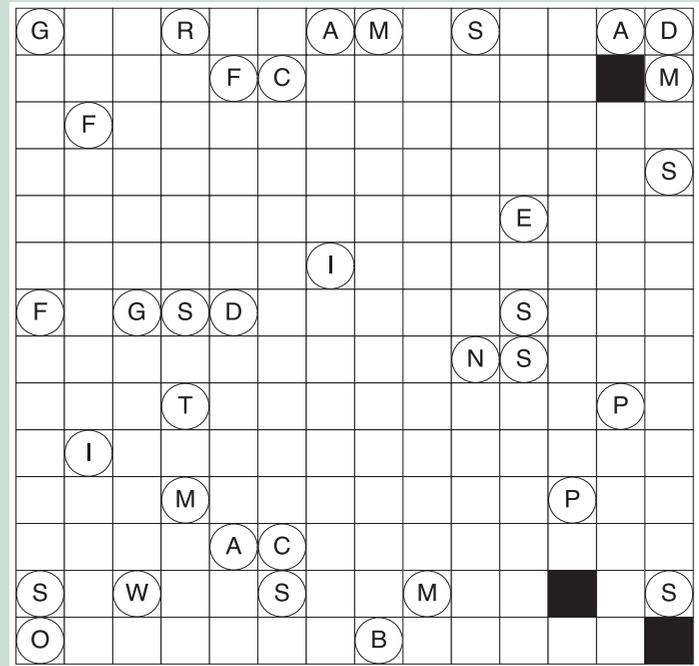
Rosetta

Fill in all 7 Rosettas with each number between 1 and 7 in no particular order while also ensuring that no number is repeated in a horizontal row and each number from 1 to 7 are represented in the 7 grey colored hexagon cells



Reverse Wordsearch

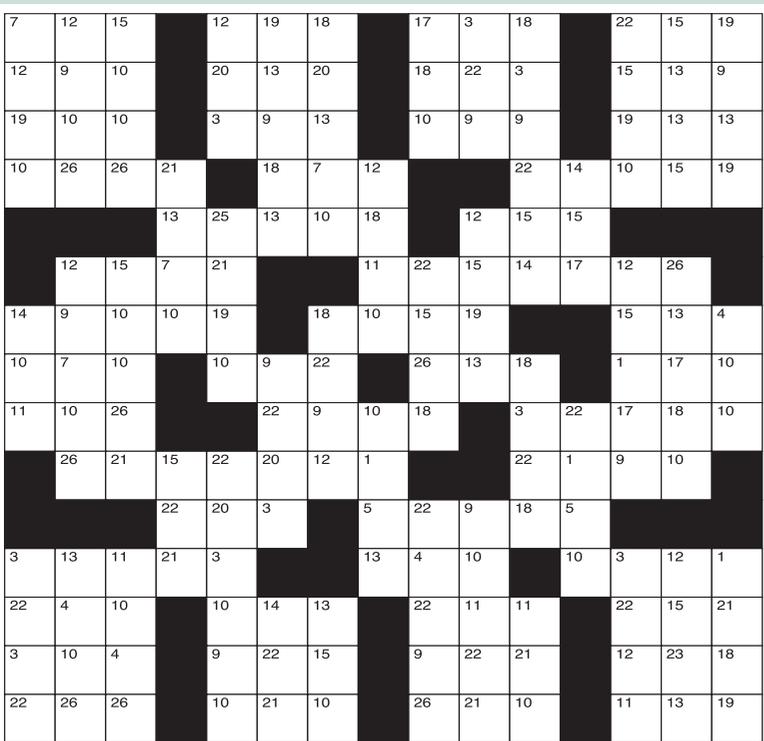
A bit more challenging than a regular word search puzzle. Build the grid up until every single empty square is filled, and all words are placed. The first letter of every word is given and circled to get you started. Note that more than one word might start on the same exact letter! Good luck!



- | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|-----------|--------|
| Administrative | Firming | Preyed | Tonic |
| Analogue | Gourds | Privately | Widens |
| Appeals | Guide | Psychic | |
| Avocado | Idols | Retards | |
| Burst | Inner | Salaries | |
| Civility | Mason | Sheriff | |
| Colonials | Microorganism | Silken | |
| Damps | Miscarry | Slews | |
| Doily | Mitts | Snout | |
| Errors | Molts | Soapy | |
| Federalists | Noodle | Steer | |
| Feign | Opera | Summits | |

Clueless Crossword

Think of a Clueless Crossword as a mix between a regular crossword puzzle and a cryptogram. Unlike many crossword puzzles, this grid is filled only with common, everyday English-language words - no abbreviations or other special "crossword" spellings are allowed. Each square in the grid is numbered 1 through 26, and each number corresponds to one (and only one) letter in the alphabet. Your goal is to completely fill in the crossword grid by gradually uncovering the letter that belongs to each number. We've given you three "giveaway" combinations - fill those into the solution grid and into any corresponding boxes in the crossword grid to get started. It helps to cross out each letter in alphabet as you use it in the grid, since no letter can be used more than once. Note that not all letters of the alphabet may be used in any given puzzle. If a number isn't used in the puzzle, it is greyed out in the solution grid.



SOLUTION GRID

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	N/A				N/A	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
N/A						
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	N/A					
22	23	24	25	26		
	N/A					

GIVEAWAYS

- #10 = E
- #3 = P
- #20 = M

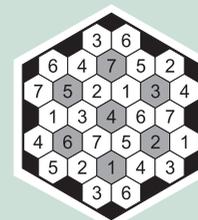
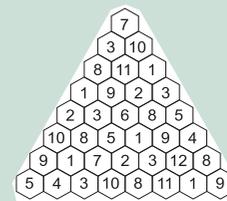
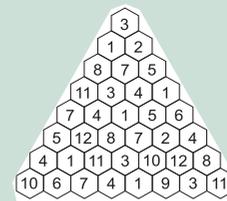
A B C D E F G
H I J K L M N
O P Q R S T U
V W X Y Z

Word Scramble

Can you solve these word scrambles?
Each word is taken from this month's edition.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 - MREYR THRASMSCI | 6 - UARA ARCVER MRAFE |
| 2 - CRAITHMSS NIIVGG RTEE | 7 - NIOJRU BNKIAG ULCB |
| 3 - TNEOIATSPI | 8 - MNCIAGL EPT BAEKLN T |
| 4 - TACELS DWHORA | 9 - XBDUAOER AAECTUH USRTEP |
| 5 - TEAK BHSU | 10 - ANATS SLAUC |

November edition answers



- Word Scramble;
- Christmas Shoppers
 - Chamber Of Commerce
 - Fieldfare
 - Alison Ratcliffe-Williams
 - L.O.L. Surprise
 - Schleich Horse Club
 - Delicious Mince Pies
 - Mouseman Ashtray
 - Dodge Challenger
 - Purr And Mutt



Monthly Horoscopes By Russell Grant

ARIES March 21st - April 20th

Turning your dreams into reality will be easy at the beginning of December. The New Moon on the 4th could attract an opportunity to write, study or travel; a prestigious organisation will be happy to cover the bill. Don't be intimidated by a long application; you'll get the funding you need. Business discussions could take up a great deal of time during the middle of the month; emphasise your leadership ability when applying for a job or negotiating a raise. Good news will reach your ears on or directly after the 19th, courtesy of an uplifting Full Moon. Beware of mixing friendship with finance in the second half of December. Spiritual pursuits could assume a greater importance as the year comes to an end.

TAURUS April 21st - May 21st

A stalled dream could be revived in the opening days of the month. On the 4th, the New Moon will deposit some additional money in your account from an inheritance, royalty payment or legal settlement. Use this windfall to advance your career or professional profile. The Full Moon on the 19th brings more good news on the financial front; don't be surprised if you're awarded a lucrative job after a lengthy interview process. Don't let the thought of assuming heavy responsibilities cause you to turn down this opportunity; you're overdue for a big career challenge. Getting paid to exercise your imagination will give you an extremely attractive glow. Your social life will burst into flower in the final days of December.

GEMINI May 22nd - June 21st

Work will become much more rewarding in December, when you're given a chance to interview for your dream job in the opening days of the month. On the 4th, the New Moon opens the door to an enticing partnership. Giving your heart to an adventurous flirt or entering an alliance with a seasoned expert are among the exciting possibilities. Towards the middle of the month, you will struggle to achieve a healthy balance between your personal and professional lives. Try to be fair. The second half of December warns against getting embroiled in legal battles. It's better to settle out of court than get dragged into a protracted struggle. Opportunities for professional advancement will abound during the last week of 2021.

CANCER June 22nd - July 23rd

Stalled educational or travel plans could finally move forward at the start of December, much to your delight. If your energy has been flagging, launch a fitness regimen on the 4th, when the New Moon will prompt you to be more attentive to your body's needs. Improve your diet and exercise habits. In mid-month, you will enter a partnership that relieves you of heavy responsibilities. A spiritual revelation will arrive on the 19th, courtesy of the enlightening Full Moon. Getting romantically involved with a friend could be serious cause for regret in the second half of the month; keep things platonic. Pursuing an advanced degree or writing a book will uplift and inspire you in the final days of the year.

LEO July 24th - August 23rd

The New Moon on the 4th could pave the way to a passionate romance or rewarding creative project. An experienced partner will give you the courage to take some risks that are incredibly fulfilling. Hard work will be a theme in the middle of December; you could be putting in long hours for the sake of a demanding project. If you're unemployed, you may plunge into a rigorous interview process. The Full Moon on the 19th marks the conclusion of a stimulating group project. You'll miss your colleagues, who have become integral members of your social set. Try not to take out your frustrations on your romantic partner or work associates in the second half of December; they're just innocent bystanders.

VIRGO August 24th - Sept 23rd

A dream relationship could take off like a kite in the opening days of December. Whether you are single or attached, this should be a delightfully romantic time. The New Moon on the 4th finds you devoting more energy to domestic pursuits. If you've been thinking of moving, this is an ideal to time to search for a place to live. You could find excellent interest rates on home loans. On or around the 19th, the Full Moon could find you getting a raise, promotion, or professional award for a job well done. Beware of confusing passion with love in the second half of the month; the two are not interchangeable. Spend the final days of 2021 cuddling or condoling with your favourite person.

LIBRA Sept 24th - Oct 23rd

Sharing your expertise with an appreciative audience will be a welcome trend at the beginning of December. Starting on the 4th, the New Moon could find you teaching an online course or record some instructional videos. The pleasures of home will call your name at the middle of the month; take time out of your busy schedule to connect with friends, relatives and neighbours. Hosting a big party will be very rewarding. The Full Moon on the 19th could bring pleasing results for an exam or application. Arguments about the division of money or labour could shake up a romance in the second half of the month. Get a jump start on New Year's resolutions by starting a fitness program in the final days of December.

SCORPIO Oct 24th - Nov 22nd

An additional source of income could arrive on or around the 4th, courtesy of an enriching New Moon. Any job that allows you to work from home will be fulfilling, stable and lucrative. Lengthy business negotiations could begin towards the middle of the month. Be patient and supplement proposals with reliable facts and figures. By the time the Full Moon rises on the 19th, you'll see a financial windfall in the form of an inheritance, legal settlement or tax refund. The second half of December could be stressful, due to a business or romantic partner's erratic behaviour. Establishing firm ground rules for your interactions. The final days of the year could find you floating away on a cloud of love, thanks to an attentive admirer.

SAGITTARIUS Nov 23rd - Dec 21st

Spending more time at home can soothe your fiery energy during the first of the month. You'll be back in the public eye on the 4th, thanks to a fame enhancing New Moon. Don't be surprised if you are put in charge of a community or educational project; people respond well to your upbeat energy. Your financial situation should improve before the end of the month, especially if you take it upon yourself to negotiate a higher salary. On the 19th, the Full Moon will bring a fruitful partnership to a satisfying conclusion. Your health might be delicate in the second half of December, so avoid overindulging in food and drink. Moving to a spacious and beautiful place near the water is a distinct possibility at the end of 2021.

CAPRICORN Dec 22nd - Jan 20th

Solitary pursuits can bring tremendous pleasure at the start of December. On the 4th, the New Moon will urge you to take yourself off to a quiet place where you can hear yourself think. A spiritual epiphany could inspire you to devote more time to the activities and relationships you most value. You should use the power of your increased magnetism to promote your personal and professional agendas before the year ends. The Full Moon on the 19th may find you reaching a personal best regarding your health; give yourself a handsome reward for having worked so hard. Don't let a financial shortage cause you to panic in the second half of December; you can find some creative and inexpensive ways to have fun at year's end.

AQUARIUS Jan 21st - Feb 19th

The New Moon on the 4th is ideal for joining a society or group devoted to your favourite subject. You're sure to meet some accomplished people through this association. Spend the middle portion of the month attending to administrative tasks and paperwork. This will leave the second half of December free for more pleasurable pursuits. On the 19th, the Full Moon will bring news of an engagement, marriage, or creative achievement. Enjoy the round of parties that ensue from this happy event. Don't discourage a relative from pursuing their dreams as the holidays approach; your approval will pave the way to their success. The final days of the year will bring at least one extraordinary earning opportunity. Ring out 2021 in style.

PISCES Feb 20th - March 20th

Dedicate yourself to leading your best life at the beginning of December. If you can conceive it, you will achieve it. On the 4th, the New Moon will deliver a fantastic professional opportunity. A position involving publishing, higher education or travel could bring much-needed financial stability. Put your creative talent on display at work towards the middle of the month; it's a great way to gain distinction. The Full Moon on the 19th could find you leaving one home for one that is more spacious. Beware of making angry posts on social media in the second half of December or you could regret it. You'll command the spotlight in the final days of the year; this is a great time to launch a website.



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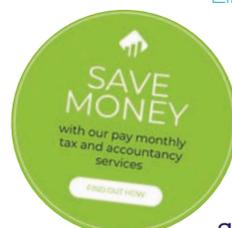


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