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# Susan Boyle

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at the top!

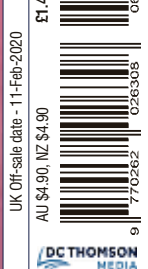
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# My Weekly

Look what's inside...



*Inspirational is a word that is thrown around a lot, but there is little doubt that Sue Cressman is worthy of the label. Since 1992, when she was diagnosed with breast cancer, Sue has endured a series of health challenges that would have defeated the hardiest of souls. Sue, however, would just not give up. Indeed, now she is fighting back. Find out more on page 36. Sue's determination in the face of adversity is something that will definitely stay with me and I hope you find her story as inspiring as I did. Have a great week.*

**Stuart** Stuart Johnstone, Editor  
myweeklyeditor@dctmedia.co.uk



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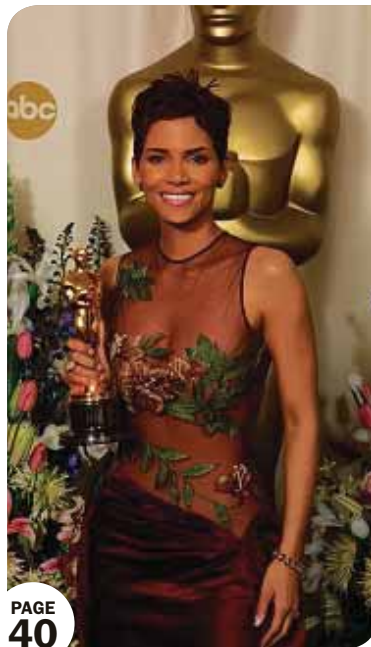
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# All About YOU!

The place to share your news, views, thoughts and dreams... and especially the photos that make you smile

## Feeling Starstruck



Hello robot

My friend Olivia took this cute photo of me meeting R2-D2, from the *Star Wars* films, at the Cineworld Cinema in Nottingham. It was so exciting to meet him as he is my favourite character from those films.

**Lucy Hill,**  
Halifax

**DÖGGÖNIT** By Anthony Smith



How dogs see shoes

Copyright © anthony smith

## PAST PICS



'50s glamour

I am 92 and thought you might be interested in this photo of our style in 1950. I am in the centre with the big hat and my friend Joan who is also still here and active like myself is on my left. It was a fellow student's wedding after we had all qualified as teachers – happy days!

**Pauline Diplock, Comber**

## LITTLE TREASURES

Scarlett (2 years old) loves to climb anything just like her Daddy who is a tree surgeon. The higher the better. Here she is at the Abergele Adventure Trail pretending to be a monkey on the tyres. We even had lots of sound effects.

**Kerryann Wray,**  
Denbighshire

Great fun!



Hidden treasure

We had the most amazing day at the Applejacks Farm in Warrington and my children Nia and Cai didn't take long to find the flag in the middle of the maze!

**Mari Drury,**  
Flintshire

Photos of children under 18 should be accompanied by written permission from a parent or legal guardian

Each week we'll print some of the comments you've sent or posted.

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## Weekend Explorers

It's easy to think the best adventures require vast amounts of money, a passport and overseas travel – but that's just not true. For the last few years, my hubs and I have chosen a city for a long winter weekend. We stay in a B&B, wrap up and explore. This year we checked out Bath; in previous years we have been to Chester, York and Warwick.

**Maria Kenny, Manchester**

STAR  
LETTER



Out and about

## MY PASSION



The *Carry On* films are my secret guilty pleasure. The cast were so good and full of household names that we love. If I have a cold winter afternoon with nothing to do I can play one of my collection and have a good laugh. Yes the jokes were predictable and cheeky but it takes me back to the days of cinema trips and great light entertainment.

**Mark Attwood, Hampshire**

## RANT & RAVE OF THE WEEK

### RANT



Last year I visited Holland, and found it impressively clean and tidy. There was no litter, no overflowing bins, no chewing gum-splattered pavements, and no fly-tipping. We really need to "clean up our act" here in the UK.

**Linda Keen, Sheffield**

I love the contrast between the ancient Tower of London and the modern glass buildings of the Shard and the Gherkin. How the surroundings have changes since William the Conqueror built the Tower. It must have been wonderful then without all the traffic and crowds of people.

**Colleen Brunton, Enfield**



### RAVE

## FROM OUR INBOX THIS WEEK

Snippets from readers' emails, Facebook and Twitter

♦ "Not that I consume them myself, but I could not believe it when someone told me that some famous coffee shop brands of coffees and caramelised hot chocolates can contain about 20 teaspoonfuls of sugar. However I Googled the different brands and sizes and found how many were indeed heavily loaded with sugar. The worst offender in a 20 ounce size does indeed contain 84 grams of



sugar. However even some of the smaller ones can contain 37 to 52 grams. Given the detrimental effect this could have on health and weight, and that not everyone may fully understand calorie content, perhaps there should be an illustration

showing the numbers of teaspoons of sugar these drinks contain on photographs or on the drinks cartons."

**Janet**

## PETS CORNER

Two hot dog sausages. My husband and our grand doggy Tilly.

**Karen Welch, Warrington**



Hot dogs!

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**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!** Share with us the photos that make you laugh, cry or cringe – we'll pay £25 for each one published and £50 for the Star choice. Write to **All About You, My Weekly, 2 Albert Square, Dundee DD1 1DD**, or email us at [allaboutyou@dcthomson.co.uk](mailto:allaboutyou@dcthomson.co.uk). Your entries should be original and should not have been submitted elsewhere. Photos of children under 18 should be accompanied by written permission from a parent or legal guardian. Only photos accompanied by an SAE will be returned.



# TIME for a CHAT

Catch up with all our latest news & views



Marvellous  
moggies

The magic of  
the movies

## We're Popcorn-munching...

More often now that we've read new academic research revealing that the cinema can have fascinating benefits on people's cognitive, emotional and physiological health. Seeing your fave flick can boost memory, focus and keep your brain in good check, plus watching a film increases your heart rate, keeping you in the healthy heart-zone for 45 minutes – equivalent to a light form of cardio! Beats the gym any day if you ask us!

## We're Loving...

This year's hottest scents, with musk, jasmine and rose topping the list of most popular perfume notes for fragrances this year, according to research released by [Showerstoyou.co.uk](http://Showerstoyou.co.uk). Look out for new Miss Dior Roses N'Roses by Christian Dior and Chloe's Nomade Absolu. Powdery, earthy violet notes are back in fashion for 2020 – try Dior's J'adore and Guerlain's Samsara, two of the most sensual violet-based classics.



## We're Feasting Our Eyes...

As well as our stomachs! Research by eyecare experts Optical Express has revealed that the trend towards veganism has benefited our eyesight as well our waistlines. Vitamin A, found in carrots, squash and spinach, is proven to increase the eyes ability to perform in low light, while a healthy, balanced diet can reduce the risk of developing age-related macular degeneration. Top veg for your eyes include red peppers, kale, sprouts and collards.



## We're Concerned...

By the latest crime figures for England and Wales which show that 58% of burglaries happen when someone is home and 39% of those happen in broad daylight. There are steps you can take to avoid being a target, says home insurance provider Buzzvault. Having effective security measures such as good locks on windows and doors, and making sure you use them when you're in, as well as keeping valuables out of sight, can help to deter opportunist thieves.

## We're Meeting The Dragon...

The end of the Chinese New Year is celebrated in spectacular style in Southampton this year when the UK Shaolin Temple brings lion and dragon dances and beautiful lit-up lanterns into the town centre. It's a visual

A colourful  
celebration





## We're Excited...

It's the purr-fect start to the year! The National Cat Awards is a joyous national celebration. Cats can be nominated in five categories, including Hero Cat for those who saved the day, and Most Caring Cat, which seeks to celebrate moggies who positively impact a person's health or wellbeing. The awards, which are sponsored by PURINA, will see the owners of the winning cats presented with their trophies at a star-studded daytime ceremony at London's Savoy Hotel on Thursday, August 6. Nominations are open now! Go to [www.cats.org.uk/national-cat-awards](http://www.cats.org.uk/national-cat-awards) for more.



feast of colour and sound which will parade along the main streets. There's lantern riddle-solving and the chance to sample delicious traditional dumplings in soup. Plus don't miss the opportunity to have your photo taken with an actual dragon! You know you want to!



## We're Celebrating...

**Holly Willoughby's 39th birthday!** Just a year away from the big 4-0, Holly has plenty of reason to celebrate the achievements in her fourth decade. Not only has it seen the birth of her three children, the presenter's career has flourished. She is Queen of daytime TV on *This Morning*, but has also gained thousands of fans doing everything from *Dancing On Ice* to *The Voice UK*. Well done, Holly!



## We ♥ Lists...

What infuriates you when you're driving? Here's the results of a survey by [Click4Reg.co.uk](http://Click4Reg.co.uk) of the most annoying driving habits. Of course everyone claims they do none of these things themselves...

- ♥ Not indicating
- ♥ Leaving full beams on
- ♥ Driving 10mph below the speed limit
- ♥ Tailgating
- ♥ Last minute lane switchers or mergers
- ♥ Bad parking
- ♥ Speeding
- ♥ Not being courteous to other drivers
- ♥ Sudden braking
- ♥ Middle lane hogging



## We're Watching...

A whole load of magic on Netflix this week. Season 1 of series **Locke & Key** begins this Friday evening and it's fab for any lovers of mystical, mystery-style shows. The horror/fantasy follows three siblings who decide to move back into their family home in Maine after the murder of their father. But who knew the house holds hidden magical keys which unlock a vast array of powers?

Don't miss this Friday's **Coronation Street**, celebrating with an hour-long episode for its 10,000th episode, making it the longest-running TV soap in history. Heading off to Blackpool for a nostalgic trip down memory lane, we see Rita and Ken head to scatter Dennis's ashes, but soon



Celebration time on the cobbles

Jenny books a coach and decides it would be a fun day out for lots of the street's residents. Tensions soon rise though and one resident realises it's time to say goodbye to Weatherfield once and for all. Meanwhile, Bethany is determined to bust Ray, David is so exhausted he crashes his car and Tracy and Peter begin their battle for No.1. Eileen decides to apply for a new job at the factory, but her heart sinks when she realises Alina is in the running, too.



# “I Carried This Dream And It Came True”

As she celebrates a decade at the top, singer Susan Boyle tells us about following her dreams and her new UK tour

When she walked out on to the *Britain's Got Talent* stage with unkempt hair and wearing a gold lace dress, nobody watching could ever have imagined that 10 years later Susan Boyle would be a global superstar.

The audience and judges looked on disbelievingly as she told them how she hoped to make it as a professional singer – but Susan had the last laugh when her touching back story and amazing rendition of *I Dreamed A Dream* had everyone on their feet in admiration.

Fast forward a decade

appearances to ensure she always looks her best.

Yet it's clear that despite the changes, Susan herself is still the same touchingly warm, modest and funny person she always was. And as she gears up for a new nationwide tour, she hopes that her incredible story will inspire others like her, who maybe haven't had the easiest of starts in life.

“I like to think I'm an example for the underdog, for those people who had a tough time in life and really had to prove themselves,” she says. “I'd like to be the beacon for that and show other people that it's

and lived alone with her cat, and after the *BGT* finals she was admitted to the Priory Clinic, suffering from exhaustion after struggling to cope with the intense attention.

She was bullied as a child and in 2012 was diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome, a developmental disability that affects how a person communicates and makes sense of the world. The diagnosis, she says, has helped her life tremendously.

“I understand myself a whole lot better now and I understand other people better too,” she explains. “It's not really something

Susan's new tour – The Ten Tour – sees her performing live around the UK for the first time in six years and will feature a special guest, 2011 *BGT* winner Jai McDowall.

“We've put together lots of new songs and routines and I'm really looking forward to it,” she says excitedly.

“I'm at my happiest when I'm performing. There'll be a lot of upbeat numbers and a lot of choreography. It'll be

## “I still get nervous, but I calm myself down with relaxation exercises”

and the Scottish singer's life has transformed beyond recognition. Her first record became the UK's best-selling debut album of all time and she remains only the third act ever to top both the UK and US album charts in the same year.

Her success has earned her an incredible £22 million and she treated herself to a smart house close to the ex-council house she grew up in in West Lothian. The untidy hair is long gone – these days Susan is neatly coiffured – and there's a stylist on hand for public

possible to have dreams and fulfil them.

“Since I was five I dreamed of being in the public eye and singing to large audiences. I didn't have an easy life, but I carried this dream and it came true. You just need to stick at it and have determination.

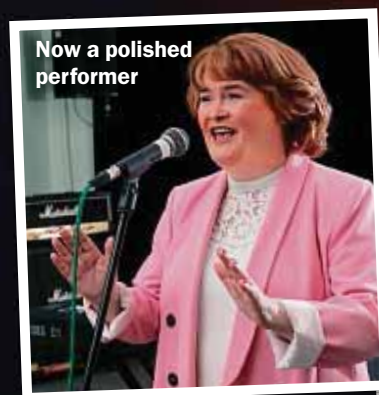
“If I can do it, then others can. I was the underdog, but the underdog had a dream.”

Susan (57) auditioned for *Britain's Got Talent* three years after the death of her beloved 91-year-old mother. She was 47, unemployed

you should be ashamed of – it shouldn't carry a stigma.

“I've mellowed over the years. I'm less likely to fly off the handle now. When you're young you tend to be a bit harum-scarum and do things you shouldn't, but when you're older you become more relaxed.

“I still get nervous, but if I can get a bit of space before a performance I can calm myself down. I do a series of relaxation exercises. I do that for about 20 minutes and it helps enormously. I do it whenever I feel tense and everything's on top of me.”



Now a polished performer



First a book, soon a film?



totally different to the shows I've done before."

There are currently plans afoot to make a film of Susan's life, based on her best-selling 2010 autobiography *The Woman I Was Born To Be*, with no less than Meryl Streep tipped to play the singer. But Susan remains refreshingly untouched by her fame.

The "posh house", as she refers to it, was quickly passed on to a relative and

she returned to the house she grew up in.

"It's got a homely atmosphere and very sentimental memories of my parents. They're golden memories and that makes me feel secure," she explains.

"My life has changed enormously over the past 10 years. When you've travelled everywhere it's easy to forget where you come from, so coming home grounds me

– I've got roots here and it's a way of keeping a healthy balance in my life.

"When I'm at home I like listening to music, watching TV, going to the pictures, playing piano and meeting friends. I have a lovely life."

If anyone deserves that, then it's Susan. **MW**

Susan Boyle's The Ten Tour is travelling throughout the UK from March 3. For more information and to buy tickets visit [www.susanboylemusic.com](http://www.susanboylemusic.com)

## New Challenges

Susan has set herself two challenges for 2020 – to learn to drive, and also to learn how to ride a bike.

"I've had a couple of driving lessons. I never learned before, I think I was a bit frightened," she reflects. "I was always saying, 'I'm going to do it,' so I've taken the plunge. It took a lot of thinking about, believe me!"



"I've bought myself a bike as well. I can ride an exercise bike, but I never learned to ride a bike as a girl. Better late than never. I've still got the stabilisers on. I'll have to take them off at some point, but I don't want to fall off and then come on stage for my tour in a cast!"

Professionally, a duet with Michael Buble remains top of Susan's wish list – she's sung with two of her other music idols, Elaine Page and Donny Osmond – and she also hopes to tour in America again. Otherwise, her remaining ambitions are refreshingly modest. "I want to take more exercise and lose weight," she laughs. "I still have the gold dress from my *Britain's Got Talent* audition, but I can't get into it!"



Duetting with Donny



Getting to know...

# Julia Bradbury

The TV adventurer reveals how she juggles being a mum of three with work trips to far-flung destinations

● **My new show on the Greek Islands is a real passion project.** My great grandparents emigrated to the UK from Chios more than a hundred years ago and I went back there to explore my roots, as well as visiting lots of other Greek islands to get under the skin of the people and culture.

● **I had so many amazing experiences.** I interviewed two brothers about their olive oil business while sitting up in the branches of a 1,500-year-old olive tree and I learned to free-dive with an expert free-diver.

● **When I'm not working, I'll curl up with a drama box set.** The danger is that I often end up watching six back-to-back! I was obsessed with *Succession*.

● **I'm happiest outdoors.** My dad inspired my love of walking when I was a little girl. I grew up in Sheffield and we would explore the Peak District together. I now run a website with my sister called The Outdoor Guide,

which compiles all the UK's best walks.

● **I try to have some time to myself every single day.** I think that's really important for your mental and physical health. Sometimes I'll go for a walk or have a tennis lesson. I also have five minutes of complete nothingness and quiet, where I try to clear my head from all thoughts.

**The Greek Islands With Julia Bradbury is on ITV at 8pm on Fridays. For information on walks around the UK, visit [theoutdoorguide.co.uk](http://theoutdoorguide.co.uk).**



## Mum's The Word

● **Filming shows abroad takes me away from my kids (son Zephyrus, eight, and four-year-old twin girls Xanthe and Zena, with her husband Gerard). It's hard, but we chat via FaceTime and I record video messages for them every day.**

● My Greek Islands show had to be fitted around my kids' first day back at school in September. As a working mum, you have to be organised. I'm constantly trying to match my responsibility as a parent with my responsibility as a worker.

But I do believe you can do both.

● **My children know that Mummy is on TV. It's funny because they think every brunette on the front of every magazine cover is me. I'm like, "No, that's Angelina Jolie."**

A long day in front of the camera



## Burning Ambitions

Growing up, I wanted to be a copywriter in the advertising industry, and in another life I'd love to be a wildlife guide in Africa.

Dream job



## Not All Glamour

People say I'm lucky to travel for my job and I really am. But it's also a lot of work. In Greece, we were up at 6am and filming until 8pm.

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# comic capers

By Lisa Allen

Tom pushed his square black-rimmed glasses up onto the bridge of his nose, and glanced at his watch. Elsie would be arriving soon. A bubble of nerves fizzed through him, as he surveyed the last of the day's stragglers, still cheerfully browsing the vast array of issues for sale in his bright and inviting comic book store.

His grandad had left the shop to Tom when he'd passed away, some years ago. They'd been partners in metaphorical comic crime for as long as Tom could remember. It was his grandad who'd introduced him to the wild adventures of superheroes and villains, the joy of escaping into a world of secret missions, super powers, crazy costumes, fantastic films and of course, comic books. They'd never tired of talking about any of it.

This shop held a special place in Tom's heart. He'd made a solemn promise to his grandad – and he was determined to keep it.

In reality, his grandad had always been Tom's real superhero.

night, Tom occasionally joked to his friends that he was master of nothing.

The irony of it had not escaped him.

Tom had always been shy, standing back slightly from life. At school, he was the boy who didn't get picked for the sports teams, and hated going to drama class. After sixth form, as his friends adventured to far-flung places on a gap year, Tom had gone straight to university; his fear of heights denying him the chance to go bungee jumping, climbing and flying. He preferred to leave the heroics to the characters in his beloved comics.

So instead, he chose to jump straight into his career studying film animation; preferring to be behind the scenes, rather than the star of the show.

Unfortunately, a few years later, his grandad fell ill. The family rallied round, and Tom had gladly helped out by offering to run the shop. Though the first few months turned into far longer.

His new job had initially taken Tom out of his comfort zone, being front of house. But spending all day enthusing about his and his grandad's favourite topic, Tom soon found his real mission in

Can shy, retiring Tom discover his bold, brave alter ego in time to pull off a daring stunt and win the girl?

The bell above the door zinged, catching his attention as Elsie sashayed in with her usual air of attitude.

Twenty-five, with thick flicks of black eyeliner, mysterious eyes and a dark, sharp haircut, Elsie was the senior stylist in the trendy hair salon next door. And, for some reason Tom couldn't fathom, she had recently taken to spending her lunch breaks in his shop, despite regularly stating that she hated comics.

She didn't mind drinking his coffee and eating his biscuits, though, he'd noticed. And passively aggressively asking him once a week whether he wasn't a bit old for comics at the age of twenty-nine?

Elsie had an opinion on everyone and everything, and wasn't afraid to share it – Tom was slightly terrified by her, but also quite impressed. If Elsie were a superhero, he thought, she'd be a pretty awesome one.

Elsie had grudgingly agreed to cover for Tom in his shop for the last half hour of trading this evening. He had somewhere important he needed to be. Looking up with a shy smile, Tom pushed a placating hot drink and plate of biscuits across the desk to her.

Elsie grinned, helping herself to a chocolate biscuit.

"You didn't say where you were going, this evening." She raised an enquiring eyebrow at Tom.

"Oh, nowhere special. Just an, err, event I'd agreed to attend."

Tom tried to break eye contact, busying himself tidying things around the till. He felt embarrassed about what Elsie might think if she knew where he was really going.

Elsie wasn't satisfied with this answer.

"What's the big secret – got a hot date or something?" She gave him a cheeky wink as he erroneously glanced up.

His cheeks flushed. "No!" He batted her suggestion away with a flourish of his overly emphatic arm.

## "Bye, Elsie." His voice trailed through the gap in the back door

In the corner of the shop, Tom could see the beginnings of a verbal scuffle over a 1976 first edition annual.

"You'll have to pay for that if you damage it," he called across, deliberately not quite loud enough for either customer to hear him. He shrank back onto his stool, behind the safety of the cash desk, and busied himself by burying his nose in the accounts book.

Tom hated confrontation.

In this, his small empire, where superheroes battled villains, day and

life. He remembered the happy times he'd spent helping his grandad out in the shop in school holidays. The buzz of the place.

Eventually the shop worked its magic on Tom again. Slowly, but surely, it brought him out of himself, boosted his confidence, and built up his self-esteem through talking to strangers, who had quickly become new friends from their shared interest.

Tom had discovered that sometimes in life, the unexpected could bring the greatest opportunities.





Elsie's brow crumpled in a bemused frown. Tom straightened up, feeling her piercing eyes on him.

"I mean, no. Err, just a boring thing at, err, a mate's..." He mumbled the last bit incoherently, not wanting to fib to his friend. Then clumsily he nearly tripped over his stool as hurriedly he gathered his things. "Oof, ow."

Elsie smirked, taking a slurp of coffee and eyeing him intently over the rim of her mug affectionately.

"You know, you could really do with a haircut. I've got a cancellation tomorrow – one of my regulars has gone down with flu. You could have their appointment."

Tom met Elsie's gaze, and returned her grin. Elsie always managed to make him smile, even when he was feeling nervous.

Though this emotion was suddenly superseded by a stronger one – anxiety – at the thought of Elsie hacking off his carefully considered mop of loose curls. He thought they made him look interesting. Like one of the characters from his treasured comic world.

"Or I could do next Saturday morning, around eleven," Elsie persisted, sensing his resistance. She swiped an index finger over her phone with intent.

Her eyes slyly slid up to meet his. She was winding him up.

His shoulders relaxed, and he shook his head, returning her mischievous look.

"Well, fortunately for me, Saturday morning is the shop's busiest part of the week. Have to pass on the haircut for now, thanks, Elsie."

She laughed, defeated. "Shame. I would've liked to get my hands on that wild mop of waves."

Tom's cheeks flushed crimson.

"Ok, well thanks for agreeing to close up the shop for me." He looked up, meeting her gaze. "See you tomorrow lunchtime, maybe?"

Elsie grinned. "Maybe."

Tom bit his lip, about to say something more, before changing his mind.

"Bye, Elsie." His voice trailed through the gap in the back door, as it swung closed after him, and he disappeared into the stock room. Elsie's voice drifted through the wall as she started chatting to a customer.

Tom sighed with relief. He would just about have enough time to get ➔



changed and leave, without Elsie even seeing him...

Just as Elsie finished serving her customer, she suddenly heard the shop's back door make a SLAM sound. Thought bubbles popped above her head – hadn't Tom left five minutes ago?

Then her curious eye landed upon a leaflet on the floor. It must have fallen out of Tom's pocket as he left. She reached down and retrieved it, her eyes scanning the eye-catching font and drawings. She smiled.

Suddenly Tom's mysterious mission all made sense.

A tall, lean figure, clad in a shiny red Lycra all-in-one, large gold Y-fronts, complete with cape flapping around his rear end, sprinted with superhuman speed along the pavements of the metropolis. Well, the local town's high street, anyway.

This masked hero weaved his way nimbly through surprised crowds waving their camera phones at him and themselves, asking him to stop for photos. He smiled into the lens, affably. His grandad would be up there in the clouds, chuckling at him right now. He could almost hear him.

The superhero figure flew around the corner of a building, in through a side door and up several double flights of stairs, in record time, without even



his face, his heart thumping through his too-tight costume, and feeling slightly nauseous. As he made the mistake of glancing down, a dizzy feeling burst out from underneath his safety helmet.

"OK, keep using your feet to bounce against the building as you lower yourself down. Just like we practised on the training course," called out one of his trusted instructors.

Tom swallowed, trying to nod, but his gaze fell down below instead. The ground looked as if it was swarming with ants, as onlookers and supporters gathered to watch infamous villains and courageous superheroes descend in hot pursuit of

see Elsie standing there, staring at his costume with a big grin. Self-consciously he peeled off his black fabric eye mask, revealing his cheeks flushing the same shade as his Lycra suit.

"Elsie – how did you...?"

"You're not the only one in this town with superpowers, you know."

Tom's brows lifted with surprise.

Elsie pulled the leaflet detailing the charity abseil event, from out of her back jean pocket, and wafted it around in the air dramatically.

They both burst out laughing.

Elsie smiled and fixed his gaze.

"Looks like I've finally discovered your true identity. Super Tom."

Tom bit his lip, as Elsie held his gaze.

"I wouldn't go that far. Just doing my bit for charity."

Elsie arched an eyebrow.

"Well, considering you've got a fear of heights, I'd say that was doing more than a bit. I watched you all the way down – it was pretty impressive."

Tom blushed.

"I promised my grandad that I'd keep pushing myself out of my comfort zone. Try and conquer my fears. This charity really helped him when he was poorly, and our family, right until the very end. I wanted to give something back. And I guess it's helped me, too."

Elsie smiled. "You should have told me before – I would have come along and joined you for moral support. I love abseiling and rock climbing."

Tom burst out laughing. "Why doesn't that surprise me?"

Elsie grinned. "So, I'm guessing superheroes still need to keep their strength up, just like us mere humans." She paused, looking almost shy herself for a second. "And lunch tomorrow is a long way away. Do you fancy going for something to eat now instead?"

Tom's heart punched the air with a Pow. Anything was possible now.

"I'd love to." MW

## Tom had never felt so scared in his life. He'd never felt so alive...

getting one gelled hair out of place.

But his heart was almost thudding out of his chest. Tom was about to face his greatest fear.

For himself. For his grandad. And for his grandad's memory.

Remember what I always tell you, Tom," his grandad had said that one last time. "Have courage and believe in yourself. You don't need a superhero costume to be brave.

"I'll always be there, cheering you on, wherever I am."

Seconds later, Tom was dangling over the side of the city's landmark building, one hundred feet high, gripping the safety ropes which secured him to the abseiling team on the roof's building.

He could feel the sweat beading across

the bag of treasure being lowered down the side of the building. This was the first year of the town's charity abseil event.

All proceeds raised were to be donated to the charity which supported Tom's grandad during his illness.

As Tom fearfully abseiled his way down the building, a million thoughts were racing through his head.

He'd never felt so scared in his life.

He'd never felt so alive in his life.

As his shaking feet finally touched the earth, Tom's eyes pricked with tears.

He'd done it. He'd conquered his fear, and he knew his grandad would have been so proud of him.

So this is where you got to, is it?" Tom's gaze followed the sound waves of the familiar voice, and was startled to

## FICTION EDITOR SUSAN SAYS...

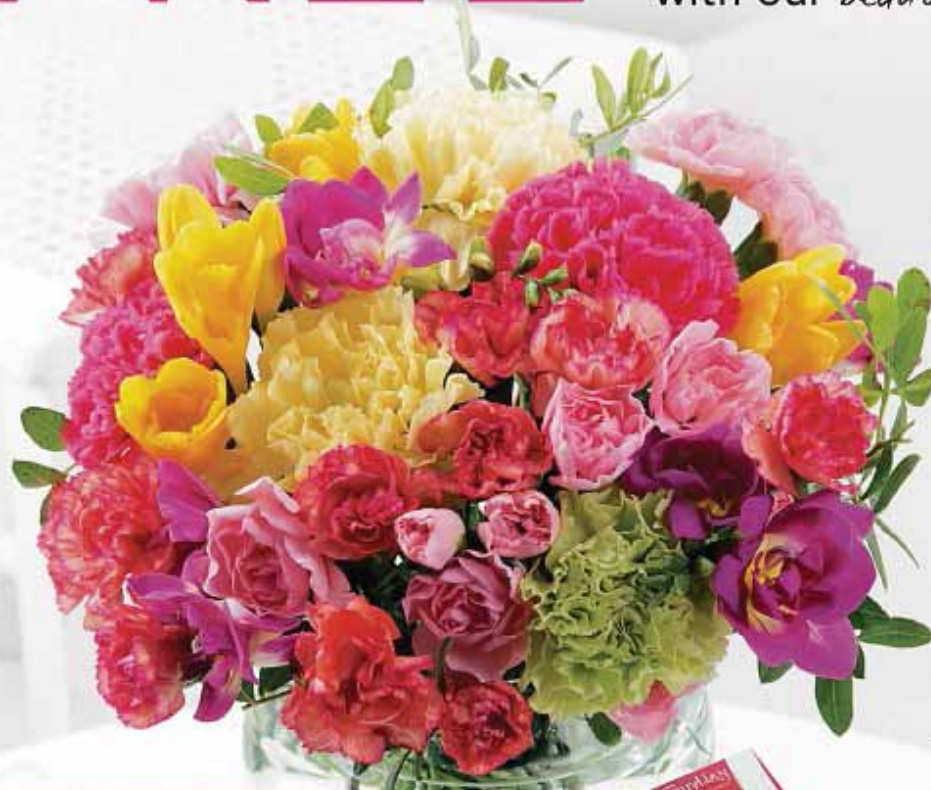
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We feel tired and grumpy. We may have lost some weight, but deep down we know it's not sustainable. Most nutritionists and diet experts agree that it's only by following a balanced plan of healthy eating combined with exercise, can you hope to engage in meaningful – and long-lasting weight loss.

This understanding led Jane Michell to develop her Jane Plan system of dieting. And it all began in her kitchen! Jane, a wife and mother, has been committed to healthy eating for years and developed her weight loss plan over a long period of refining and experimenting with food.

She started by developing meal plans for her friends with ingredients purchased in supermarkets.

Her approach became so popular that she was able to



expand, and Jane Plan came to life. By 2017, it had sold more than 14 million meals.

She said, "We deliver happy, healthy meals – breakfasts, lunches, dinners and snacks – to your door, beautifully balanced and perfectly portioned, taking the worry away from eating healthily."

"You get your own Jane Plan Nutritionist who looks after you every step of the way. That's why Jane Plan has helped thousands of people make long term changes to their lives – and lose weight, too."

For diet tips, plans and advice visit [www.janeplan.co.uk](http://www.janeplan.co.uk)



## Averil: A New Lease Of Life



Averil, before



Averil, after

After her hysterectomy, Averil started piling on the pounds and reached 14½ stone. Going up to a size 18, she was finding that no clothes would fit her and buying larger sizes felt as if she was giving up. When she went to the GP about pains in her knees the GP said, "Well, let's face it, you are not getting any younger and you're definitely overweight."

That rather frank comment became the impetus for Averil to turn things round. Following Jane Plan, Averil lost 2½ stone and got her BMI and cholesterol significantly down. Losing weight gave her a new lease of life and she decided to start a new business in dog grooming, alongside working for the Disability Information Bureau as a Mentor on New Leaf.







Jane has built her business from humble beginnings

## Jane's Top Tips

- ◆ **Breakfast gets the day off to a great start. Porridge, a slow release energy food, will help maintain blood sugar levels.**
- ◆ **Try eating regularly throughout the day, but make sure your snacks are healthy. The Jane Plan mixed nuts and seeds are an ideal snack.**
- ◆ **Avoid foods that make your blood sugar levels rise and fall rapidly, such as sugary drinks, sweets, biscuits and alcohol.**
- ◆ **Fruits and vegetables contain the minerals, vitamins and fibre we need to stay physically and mentally healthy. Eating a variety of different coloured fruits and veg every day means you'll get a fantastic range of nutrients.**
- ◆ **Cut down on the caffeine – it's a stimulant, which gives you that quick burst of energy that we occasionally need. But it may also make you feel anxious or depressed. Reducing the amount you drink can make you feel noticeably better quite quickly.**

## Two Jane Plan Diet Packages worth £249

It's that time of year when we are all looking to shift those festive pounds, but sometimes it just seems like too much work! Well how about having all the stress and strain taken out of your hands by Jane Plan? Two lucky readers will win a month's work of delicious and healthy Jane Plan meals worth £249 each to kickstart your healthy 2020. The pack contains all you need for a month of dieting – breakfast, lunch, dinner and even snacks!



To win, answer the following question – what vegetable is said to help you see in the dark?

**A. Sweetcorn    B. Carrots    C. Brussels Sprouts**

Then send your name, address and contact telephone number, with *Jane Plan* in the subject line, by email to [mwcomp@dcthomson.co.uk](mailto:mwcomp@dcthomson.co.uk) or by post to My Weekly Jane Plan Competition, DC Thomson & Co Ltd, 2 Albert Square, Dundee, DD1 1DD.

Closing date for entries is February 20, 2020.

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Do you know about this incredible Phosphorescent Algae? If you are fighting excess kilos, you will love it...

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In the aim of proving that AONORI SLIM high-strength formula capsules indisputably beat all existing similar

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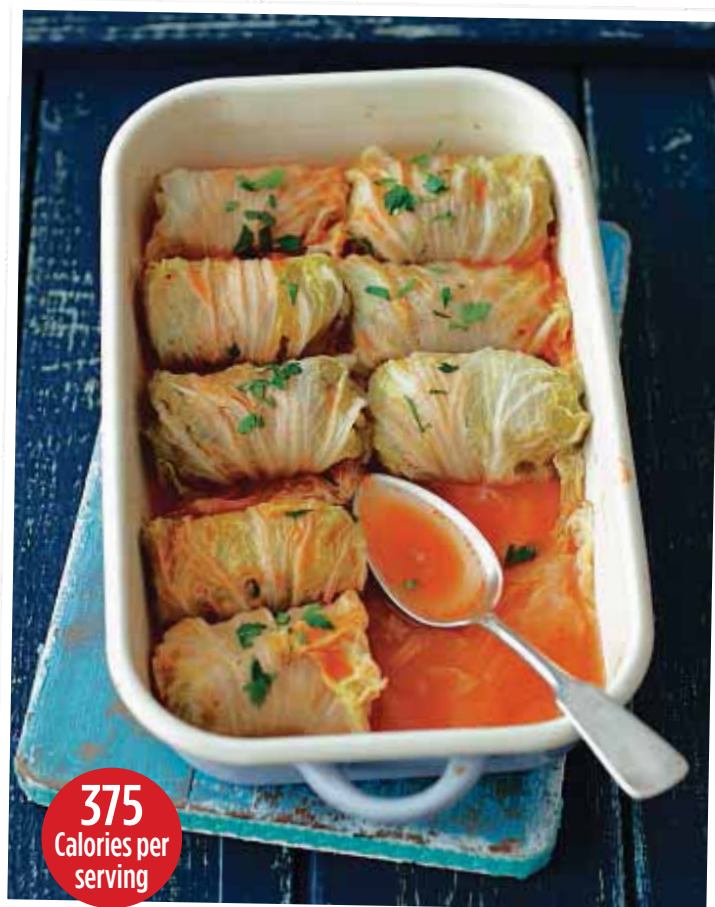
Be more adventurous with your meat and try out these tasty new meal combos!

## Chinese Stuffed Cabbage

Ingredients (Serves 4)

- ◆ 450g turkey mince
- ◆ 300g cooked pearl barley
- ◆ 2 small carrots, peeled and shredded
- ◆ 2 spring onions, sliced
- ◆ 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ◆ 1tbsp fresh ginger, peeled and minced
- ◆ 3tbsp soy sauce
- ◆ 1tbsp toasted sesame oil
- ◆ 1tbsp rice wine vinegar
- ◆ 1 large Chinese cabbage, leaves separated
- ◆ 350ml chicken stock
- ◆ 1tbsp chilli oil
- ◆ Handful fresh coriander

**1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/160° fan/gas 4. With your hands, scrunch together the turkey mince, pearl barley, carrots, spring onions, garlic, ginger, soy sauce, sesame oil and vinegar in a mixing bowl until thoroughly combined. Season.



**2** Bring a large saucepan of salted water to the boil. Lower the cabbage leaves into the water, blanching for 10secs. Remove and refresh immediately in a bowl of iced water. Working one by one, remove the leaves and drain on kitchen paper; blot with more kitchen paper.

**3** Spoon the turkey filling onto the centre of the leaves, leaving a border all the way around. Fold the sides inwards and then roll up the cabbage into tight parcels. Arrange side-by-side, seam-side down in a baking dish. Whisk together the stock and chilli oil in a jug and pour over the cabbage parcels. Cover the dish with aluminium foil.

**4** Bake until the turkey filling is cooked through and piping hot, about 30-40min. Remove from the oven and serve straight away with a garnish of chopped coriander.

RECIPES AND PHOTOGRAPHY: STOCKFOOD



## TURKEY

### Mince Pizza

Ingredients (Serves 4)

- ◆ 2 pizza bases
- ◆ 250g pizza sauce, or tomato passata
- ◆ 200g light grated mozzarella
- ◆ 1 large onion, sliced
- ◆ 225g turkey mince
- ◆ Handful thyme sprigs, to garnish

**1** Spread the pizza bases with pizza sauce and sprinkle with the mozzarella and onion. Break the turkey mince into chunks, and scatter on top.

**2** Bake the pizzas for 12-15min until the toppings are cooked through and starting to colour. Remove from the oven and stand for 5min before serving with a garnish of thyme.



# Meatballs In Mushroom Sauce

Ingredients (Serves 4)

- ◆ 450g lean pork mince, preferably 5% fat
- ◆ 1 large egg
- ◆ ½tsp garlic powder
- ◆ ½tsp onion powder
- ◆ 2tsp fresh thyme, finely chopped
- ◆ 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
- ◆ 3tbsp butter, divided
- ◆ 250ml beef stock
- ◆ 150ml double cream
- ◆ 1tsp Dijon mustard
- ◆ 150g wild mushrooms, cleaned and sliced if large
- ◆ 3 spring onions, green parts only, sliced
- ◆ salt, freshly ground black pepper

**1** In a mixing bowl, scrunch together the pork mince, egg, garlic powder, onion powder, thyme, Worcestershire sauce, and a pinch of salt and pepper until thoroughly combined. Divide and shape mixture into walnut-sized balls using damp palms.

**2** Melt half the butter in a frying pan on a moderate heat and brown the meatballs all over, about 4-6min. Pour in the beef stock, scrape any residue while it bubbles away. Stir in the cream and mustard and simmer

gently for 10min or until the meatballs are cooked through.

**3** In the meantime, melt the remaining butter in a separate frying pan on a moderate heat. Add the mushrooms and a generous pinch of salt, sautéing until golden-brown, about 6-8min. Season both the mushrooms and the sauce with salt and pepper, as needed.

**4** Top the meatballs with the mushrooms and garnish with spring onion greens, serving straight away. ➔

**397**  
Calories per  
serving





## LAMB

**418**  
Calories per  
serving



## Meatballs In Tomato Sauce

**Ingredients (Serves 4)**

**For the meatballs:**

- ◆ 600g lamb mince, less than 20% fat
- ◆ 50g fresh white breadcrumbs
- ◆ 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ◆ 1 tsp dried rosemary
- ◆ ½ tsp dried sage
- ◆ ½ tsp lemon zest, finely grated

**For the sauce:**

- ◆ 1 tbsp olive oil
- ◆ 1 red onion, chopped
- ◆ 1 clove garlic, chopped
- ◆ 400g tinned chopped tomatoes
- ◆ 225g cherry tomatoes,
- ◆ 150ml chicken stock
- ◆ 1 pinch caster sugar
- ◆ 2tbsp chopped parsley
- ◆ 2tbsp fresh mint, chopped

**1 For the meatballs:** Preheat the oven to 190°C/170° fan/gas 5. Mix all ingredients in a mixing bowl until thoroughly combined. Divide and shape into meatballs using damp palms. Arrange on a rimmed baking tray, spaced apart. Bake until brown, turning a few times, about 20min.

**2 For the sauce:** In the meantime, heat the olive oil in a sauté pan or shallow casserole dish set over a medium heat. Add the red onion, garlic, and a pinch of salt, sweating until softened, about 5min. Stir in the chopped tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, stock (or water), sugar, and a pinch of salt and pepper. Bring to the boil and then reduce to a gentle simmer, stirring from time to time.

**3** When the meatballs are ready, transfer them from the oven to the sauce. Cook for a further 3-5min until the sauce clings to them. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve straight from the pan with a garnish of chopped herbs.

## Turkish Lamb Koftas

**Ingredients (Serves 4)**

- ◆ 450g lamb mince, not more than 20% fat
  - ◆ 1 small chopped onion
  - ◆ 1 clove garlic, chopped
  - ◆ 2tsp ground cumin
  - ◆ 2tsp ground coriander
  - ◆ 1tsp ground cinnamon
  - ◆ ½ tsp ground turmeric
  - ◆ ½ tsp paprika, or
  - ◆ 2tbsp mint leaves, chopped
  - ◆ 6 wooden skewers, soaked in water for 30min beforehand
- To assemble:**
- ◆ 2 white pitta breads
  - ◆ Carton of hummus
  - ◆ 200g canned chickpeas, drained and rinsed
  - ◆ 100g light feta, cubed
  - ◆ 4tbsp olive oil
  - ◆ 2tbsp flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
  - ◆ diced cucumber
  - ◆ 1 pomegranate, seeded
  - ◆ handful mint leaves

**1** Combine all kofta ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Scrunch together with your hands until thoroughly combined. Divide and shape the mixture into six kofta kebabs. Threading on the skewers and arrange on a grilling tray. Preheat the grill to hot.

**2** Grill the koftas until cooked through and lightly charred on all sides, turning occasionally, about 7-10min. Remove from the grill and keep warm under aluminium foil; keep the grill on.

**3 To assemble:** Grill the pitta bread under the hot grill until lightly charred, turning once, about 2-4min. Remove and cut into portions. Spoon the hummus onto a serving platter. Stir together the chickpeas, feta, olive oil and parsley with some salt and pepper to taste in a mixing bowl.

**4** Spoon the chickpea salad on top of the hummus, scattering over the cucumber, pomegranate seeds, and mint. Serve with the koftas and pitta bread.



**535**  
Calories per  
serving



# Sweet Potato Burger With Avocado

Ingredients (Serves 2)

**For the sweet potato patties:**

- ◆ 4 sweet potatoes
- ◆ 2 spring onions, white part only, finely sliced
- ◆ 3 small eggs, beaten
- ◆ 60g plain flour
- ◆ 2tbsp olive oil

**For the burgers:**

- ◆ 450g lean beef mince, 10% fat at most
- ◆ 1 large ripe avocado
- ◆ 1 lime, juiced
- ◆ 1 clove garlic, minced
- ◆ dash Tabasco sauce
- ◆ 1 tomato, sliced

**1 For the sweet potato patties:** Preheat the oven to 190°C, 170° fan, gas 4. Line a large baking tray with greaseproof paper. Peel and grate the sweet potatoes into a large mixing bowl; you can also use a spiraliser for neater strands. Squeeze out as much excess water from the sweet potato as you can, using your hands. Spread out and blot with kitchen paper.

**2** Transfer to a mixing bowl and add the spring onion, eggs, flour, salt, and pepper, stirring until thoroughly combined.

Divide the mixture into four and shape into patties. Brush with olive oil. Bake in the oven until golden-brown and cooked through, about 30-40min, turning once. Cover with aluminium foil to keep warm.

**3 For the burgers:** Season the mince in a mixing bowl and mix well. Divide and shape into two thick patties. Arrange on a plate and press your thumb into the centre of each patty to leave an indent, to prevent a dome forming when they cook.

**4** Preheat a griddle pan over a moderate heat until hot and fry the patties, turning a few times, about 7-10min. Remove and keep warm.

**5** Halve, pit and peel the avocado and mash in a bowl with the lime juice, garlic, Tabasco and a pinch of salt and pepper. Spoon half on top of two of the sweet potato patties. Sit the burger patties on top, topping them with tomato slices, the remaining guacamole, and then the remaining sweet potato patties. Serve straight away. →

**BEEF**

**673**  
Calories per  
serving







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## CHICKEN

## Moroccan Chicken Kebabs

Ingredients (Serves 4)

- ◆ 600g chicken mince (see Tips)
- ◆ 2 cloves garlic, minced or grated
- ◆ 2tsp fresh ginger, peeled and minced or grated
- ◆ Handful mint leaves, chopped
- ◆ Handful flat-leaf parsley, chopped
- ◆ 2tsp ras-el-hanout Moroccan spice mix
- ◆ 4 metal skewers
- ◆ 1 large cucumber
- ◆ 150g cherry tomatoes, halved
- ◆ 1 small red onion, sliced
- ◆ 2tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- ◆ ½ fresh lemon, juiced

**1** Preheat the grill to hot. Mix the chicken mince, garlic, ginger, herbs, ras-el-hanout spice mix, salt and pepper in a large mixing bowl until thoroughly combined. Shape into oval kebabs around the metal skewers. Arrange on a grilling tray. Grill until cooked through and golden-brown, turning occasionally, usually about 7-10min.

**2** In the meantime, peel the cucumber into long ribbons with a vegetable peeler. Toss in a mixing bowl with the cherry tomatoes, red onion, olive oil, lemon juice and some salt and pepper to taste. When ready, remove the kebabs from the grill and serve with the vegetable salad.

307  
Calories per serving

**COOK'S TIPS** If you can't find chicken mince in the supermarket, most good butchers will stock it or prepare it for you on request. If not pre-prepared, ask for a mix of breast and leg meat for the best results.

672  
Calories per serving

## Fibre Plus Lasagne

Ingredients (Serves 6)

For the bolognese:

- ◆ 12tbsp olive oil
- ◆ 1 onion, finely chopped
- ◆ 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ◆ 600g chicken mince
- ◆ 100ml dry white wine
- ◆ 800g canned chopped tomatoes
- ◆ 400g canned red kidney beans, drained
- ◆ 250ml chicken stock
- ◆ 1tbsp mixed herbs

For the cheese sauce:

- ◆ 60g butter
- ◆ 60g plain flour
- ◆ 750ml semi-skimmed milk
- ◆ 100g Cheddar, grated

To assemble:

- ◆ 12-16 lasagne sheets

**1 For the bolognese:** Heat the oil in a casserole dish set over a medium heat. Add the onion, garlic and a pinch of salt, sweating until softened, about 5min. Add the chicken mince and brown well, about 4-6min. Add the wine and bring to the boil, scraping off any residue on the base of the dish, cooking until almost entirely evaporated.

**2** Stir in the tomatoes, kidney beans, herbs and stock. Bring to a rapid simmer, stirring, and then reduce to a steady simmer, cooking until the sauce has thickened slightly, about 35-45min. When ready, season to taste with salt and pepper. Take off the heat and cover with a lid. Preheat the oven to 190°C/170° fan/gas 5.

**3 For the cheese sauce:** Melt the butter in a large casserole dish set over a moderate heat. Sprinkle over the flour and whisk well to form a roux. Cook until pale golden, about 2-3min. Whisk in the milk and cook until slightly thickened, whisking constantly, about 6-8min, add the cheese and simmer until melted. Season

**4 To assemble:** Add the sauce, lasagne sheets and bolognese sauce in layers, finishing with cheese sauce and the remaining bolognese on top. Cover with foil and bake for about 1hr until the pasta is soft to the tip of a knife. Discard the foil and continue baking until golden-brown on top, about 20min. Remove from the oven and let stand for 5min before serving.



INSPIRATION  
& ADVICE

# HOME comforts

Cross 1930s art deco with 1970s glam and you get what could be the most exciting, colourful interiors trend ever...



## Ask The Expert

My old pine

kitchen table has dents, watermarks and cracked varnish. Where do I start?

Chris Moorhouse, Director for Paint, Building and Gardens at Wickes, says, "Start by giving the surface a light sand with an 80-grit sandpaper. Wipe down with a tack cloth and finish off with 120 grit paper. Fresh dents can be lifted out with steam. Place water on the affected area and cover with a paper towel. Take your iron, on the hottest setting, and move over the area in small circular movements until dry. Repeat until the dents rise up. To remove watermarks, rub the stain with petroleum jelly, let this sit overnight and wipe clean. It is then time to oil the top. Colron Refined Danish Oil (£12, Wickes) is ideal for providing a tough waterproof finish and leaving a beautiful low sheen lustre. Apply two coats with a lint-free cloth (pack of 3 for £11, Wickes)."



Glamour is back this year, with echoes of the golden years of art deco style of a century ago.

"Eclectic glamour is 2020's update to the popular retro revival trend of previous seasons," says Daniel Prendergast, design director at The Rug Seller.

"A bold, confident and sassy take on grown-up glamour, it merges 1930s sophistication with the opulence of the '70s. The trend is all about making a statement and mixing art deco references with mid-century charm.

"Luxurious textiles reign supreme with this trend. Add an instant glamorous vibe by choosing soft furnishings with piping, tassels and fringing and opt for a large rug, deep in texture and rich in colour as well as bold, glam designs.

"The colour palette for this trend is rich, including royal blue, rose and ochre, and is brought to life with metallic touches including gold, copper, brass and bronze."

Jazz age glamour is all about opulent materials and shimmering finishes; think champagne saucers on a glass and chrome



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£599, CultFurniture.com



Sideboard £649  
swooneditions.com



£275, Beaumonde.co.uk





Coffee Table £239,  
Room Divider £369,  
Cuckooland.com

## Tip!

Give your room the retro treatment by papering a wall in a geometric design, or try a stencilled decorative border on plain walls. Or try a paint effect such as ragging, popular in the 1920s and '70s, with a darker/lighter glaze applied over a base coat using a rolled-up rag to get the effect.



£699, swooneditions.com

£28.95, Audenza.com



drinks trolley and streamlined sofas with curvaceous contours.

Combining different textures, styles, colours and materials brings a relaxed feel to a room; for instance, velvet looks sumptuous and inviting, glass and metal with their polished, reflective surfaces are striking and modern, wood lends richness and warmth.

Similarly, mixing modern pieces with vintage finds adds to the eclectic charm

of this decorating style. Pattern is key for adding interest to your room. Abstract designs and geometric shapes were an integral part of art deco and mid-century decorating schemes and offer endless possibilities, from patterned wallpaper to make a bold statement, parquet flooring, an area rug with a striking cubist pattern or chevron stripes, or simply positioning a few patterned cushions on sofas and chairs.

A few accessories will reinforce the “deco-dent” look; statuettes of dancing girls, sleek black panthers, fans, flamingoes and botanical motifs such as lilies and palms typify the era. Position a frameless deco-style stepped mirror on the wall, adorn cushions and lampshades with tassels and add atmosphere to the room with large potted palms, with a tall uplighter positioned behind – it’s all about the drama. **MW**



Chair £549,  
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# beneath the chestnut tree



The roots have hidden Lady Stanley's secret for centuries. When will they yield it up?

By H. Johnson-Mack

**T**hey are coming, madam..." The panicked words pierced through her veil of numbness to galvanise Lady Katharine into action. She turned a pale but beautiful face toward her steward, her slender fingers curling into fists.

"How long?"

The steward shrugged.

"Half an hour, at most."

My lady rose from her vigil by the cold hearth and, shaking out her silken skirts, proceeded to stir the household into a frenzy. Bags were packed, all possessions but the most vital

chest, and headed for the tree in the centre of the grove.

Heedless of the maid's sobbed entreaties, she began to dig, only casting aside her trowel to bury the casket she'd cradled. She sent a fervent prayer heavenward for its preservation and that of her husband, away fighting Cromwell's troops.

Then covering the newly-dug hole with last year's leaves and detritus, she tossed the trowel into the undergrowth.

"Come, my lady," the maid urged, too anxious to feel relief when Katharine finally took her hand and allowed herself to be ushered away. "I fear we have already tarried too long."

**"Come, my lady. I fear we have already tarried for too long..."**

abandoned to whatever fate lay in store for them at the hands of those traitorous Roundheads on their way to seize this manor of Lord Stanley, staunch Royalist supporter of King Charles.

Then, singly or in pairs, they slipped away by means of a secret passage into the woods, from there to make their way to pre-arranged destinations, safe for now from the fiery torches of war.

Lady Katharine was the last to leave; even now, with the Roundheads' approaching shadow and her maid's urgent hissing in her ear, reluctant to leave her beloved home. She glided into the garden, a box clasped close to her

Lady Katharine gathered up skirts and belongings, prepared to run now her task had been completed. But perhaps it was already too late. Too close for comfort, she could hear the unmistakable approach of uninvited guests. She swallowed.

*They are coming...*

**A**lice shifted on her perch between the twisted branches of the chestnut. From her vantage point here in the cradle of Grovebury Hall's bower, she could see across the park and through the treetops, the warm mullioned, gabled façade of the house belonging to Leland Redmayne, her

closest neighbour. She could also see – oh Lord – Leland heading straight for her hiding place in the company of the lovely Miss Marianne Wright-Evans.

Instinctively, she ducked, even though the chestnut provided lush cover.

"...how thrilling if the story were true," Miss Marianne was saying as they stopped directly beneath her. Leland agreed and Alice was forced to hold her breath while they exchanged a few more commonplaces before Marianne announced she must leave.

Leland stood looking after her as she glided away to where her mama waited. Then without altering his position, he said, "You can come down now, Alice. I know you're up there."

Alice bit back an unladylike curse.

"Turn around, then," she commanded him sulkily.

He did so, hands on hips, until – impatient with the sounds of her attempting to descend – he whirled back and held out his arms.

"For heaven's sake, let me catch you before you break your neck."

Alice uncoiled her legs from the branch she was on and – holding her breath for a completely different reason – allowed herself to fall into Leland's strong arms.

"Trespassing again, madam?" he accused as he lowered her to the ground.

Alice took her time smoothing out her sprigged muslin gown before she said, "You know this place is my sanctuary. So why bring your lady to this very spot without checking first to see whether I were already here?" ➔







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"May I remind you that this is my tree, on my estate?" Leland growled, his brows converging. "And it was not my idea to walk this way," he added, rather spoiling the effect of his previous words.

Alice nodded sagely.

"'Tis the legend of the Stanleys' stash of gold, said to be buried in the bower. That always makes it seem worth a visit, lends it a special touch of romance."

She swallowed an uncomfortable constriction in her throat before she remarked, "Miss Marianne is very elegant, is she not?"

"She is, indeed, and pretty, too," Leland agreed. "But she is not my lady, despite all that. My heart lies in the hands of quite another kind of girl."

Alice suddenly found the trunk of the chestnut extremely riveting.

"Oh? And who might that be?"

"You know very well, madam." Pulling her round into his arms, Leland glared at her. "Now if you'd only stop denying me, I could make this tree yours in truth."

Heart hammering, Alice gazed up into his fiercely handsome features, the sunshine dappling through the chestnut leaves dancing across his face.

"We've discussed this. I am no heiress, and you must have money if Grovebury is to prosper."



**S**pread out the blanket, set the utensils then unpack the picnic basket. To anyone observing her, Violet's movements were methodical and controlled. Yet inside, she was a bundle of nerves, mentally exhausted after another sleepless night.

Funny how she'd managed to keep the nightmares at bay all through those lonely hours of darkness not knowing where Tom was, or even if he was still alive. Now that she knew that he'd survived the second terrible world war this century, she couldn't seem to stop her unconscious thoughts from imagining dreadful scenarios to prevent him coming home.

through her mind as Violet settled onto the blanket to gaze up at the boughs of the old sweet chestnut. She had been so hesitant in those days, hiding in Tom's shadow whenever they stayed here. It was understandable, perhaps. Amelia was so capable, and Violet was... well, not.

But in the years that followed, when Tom left for war and Amelia turned Grovebury into a hospital for wounded soldiers, she took her daughter-in-law under her wing and slowly imbued her with some of her confidence and poise. Violet would always love her for that.

She put up a hand to hide a yawn as the somnolent sounds of the afternoon wrapped around her. It was lovely to have Grovebury to themselves again, now that peace reigned.

"I used to sit upon his knee, 'neath the spreading chestnut tree..." Cushioning her head on her hands, she hummed the words in a murmur so as not to disturb the tranquillity.

There was a romantic story about this place that Tom had told her once as they'd strolled hand in hand through the gardens. It was said that the lady living here at the time of the Civil War had buried the family treasures, meaning to return and retrieve them at conflict's end.

However she had sacrificed all that, and Grovebury itself, to flee with her husband to the Continent, where they had lived – mostly on love – as a happy family for the rest of their days...

**V**iolet awakened to a touch on her arm and a familiar voice murmuring, "Vi..."

She blinked as she looked up into the face she'd dreamed of for so many nights, haloed by the swaying sun-tipped leaves above him.

"Tom?" She reached out a shaking hand, and his grave features lightened a little as he smiled.

"You're not dreaming. I'm home."

With a joyful sob, she pulled him into her arms, and then they were crying and trembling together, arms and hands familiar and yet hesitant, a fact Violet felt with a sad acceptance.

At length, she drew back, cradling his jaw in her palms.

"Let me look at you."

Yes, it was her Tom, but not quite as she knew him. There was a pallor to ➔

## The house **cradled her** in its **timeless embrace** with hope of **continuance**

His grip tightened possessively about her slender frame.

"And I have told you – you let me deal with that."

"How?" she demanded. "By unearthing Lady Stanley's lost jewels?"

His mouth curved in a sudden smile.

"Perhaps. If not, then I shall just have to rely on my commercial skills to help Grovebury thrive. And you can help me, my funny Alice, as my wife. Your bonnet is stained, by the way."

She raised a hand to her head in sudden dismay.

"Oh, Mama will be furious! It's brand new on today."

"Never mind." Slowly Leland unlaced the ribbons at her neck and removed the bonnet to reveal her braided raven hair. "I shall buy you another. Right now, this one is very much in the way."

Sighing, Alice gave herself up to the inevitable, and the glory of his kiss...

*Home.* A simple word, and yet what a wealth of meaning in it.

She glanced behind her to the lovely ruby-red Jacobean manor house, with its elegant symmetry and chimney stacks glowing in the autumn sun.

Tom had brought her here to meet his mother that first weekend after he'd proposed, and Violet couldn't have imagined then how close she'd become to Amelia. Nor how this house and grounds would cradle her in its timeless embrace, provide hope of continuance, of stability, when the rest of the world seemed to be turning on its head.

She blinked away painful memories, then realised with a start that she'd laid out two places. Perhaps unconsciously, she was hoping Amelia would change her mind and brave the outdoors to join her.

*Underneath the spreading chestnut tree, there he said he'd marry me...*

The words of the popular tune echoed



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his otherwise sun-kissed skin, a haunted shadow in his eyes as if he were elsewhere. But with time, and her love, she would bring him home, make him whole again.

He flushed a little at her prolonged examination, drew her hands down and held them.

"Is that Mother's seed cake?" he asked, his attempt at normality making her smile.

She patted the blanket beside her.

"It is. Come and have a slice. I've laid a place for you..."

The grounds of Grovebury were not as impressive as the house, Greg thought, as he and Amy made their way through the wild shrubbery. Brushing a twisting tendril of blackthorn from his face, he glared at the offending plant.

"Grace Talforth clearly spends her funds indoors rather than on gardening," he huffed. "Are we even allowed to be here?"

Amy glanced back over her shoulder and sent him her special roll-of-the-eyes look that somehow managed to be both cute and slightly maddening.

"Of course we are. Grace has commissioned me to write Grovebury's history, you know that – and as she's as interested in the Lady Stanley legend as the rest of us, she loved the idea of my hunting for her treasure.

"She even gave me pointers on where to search, from what her grandmother told her back in the day. Don't you want to dig



"Sweet chestnut," Greg supplied, nodding to the leaf and nutshell layers of seasons past that made a crunchy carpet. "You can tell by the spiky seedcases."

Amy smiled.

"The perfect hiding-place, don't you think? Oh, it's just like that old wartime song, *Underneath the spreading chestnut tree, I loved him and he loved me.*"

Greg smiled back but shook his head.

"Well, Miss Crowe, let's get hunting."

They set to with gusto, their enthusiasm requiring two sweeps of the site with the metal detector, the second much slower, before it could possibly be expected to pick up any clues beneath the earth.

"Wouldn't it be marvellous to discover something?" Amy said as she scrutinised the ground, as though keen eyes alone

and decorated casket. He glanced at Amy for permission to continue. She nodded, twisting her muddy fingers.

Greg lifted the box. After another pause, he used the chisel they'd brought to snap open the metal lock.

"Go on," he murmured as Amy sat staring. "This is the moment you've been waiting for."

With a slight tremor in her fingers, Amy slowly raised the lid.

"Oh," she breathed and Greg was surprised, but pleasantly, to see her lift out such simple but irreplaceable items as a baby's shoes and bonnet, a wooden toy, a handkerchief childishly embroidered *Mama*. "So this is Lady Stanley's famous treasure – how wonderful!"

Greg looked over the collection of precious memories spread out on the ornately carved lid.

"No real monetary value, but of great interest to a museum if Grace Talforth would care to donate them."

Amy's eyes were shining.

"This is so much better than stuffy jewels, don't you think?"

Greg raised his brows.

"Why, Miss Crowe, I believe you're a soppy old romantic at heart."

"Of course I am." Laughing, Amy leaned over to plant a warm kiss on his lips. He blinked and reddened, which made her laugh again as she moved in for another.

Some time later, when the treasures had been carefully replaced and they were lying beneath the tree, Amy resting on his chest, Greg heaved a contented sigh.

"So that's the end of our treasure-seeking adventure. Do you think Grace will be happy with your find?"

"I hope so," Amy said, watching the play of light through the swaying branches. "I certainly am. It's totally in keeping with the whole romance of the Stanley legend. It'll also make a very satisfying twist to my tale when I write it."

Greg grimaced.

"Then I hardly like to tell you this," he said reluctantly.

"Tell me what?"

"That Lady Stanley's casket is carved from tortoiseshell and ebony, and will be worth a small fortune..."

## With a tremor in her fingers she raised the lid. "Oh," she breathed

for treasure? I thought you'd be dead keen, you being a curator and everything."

Greg smiled as she waved the metal detector. She was unique, was Amy – how he wished she were his Amy – her simple pleasures and zest for life so refreshingly different from any other girl he'd met.

"Curators show artefacts, they don't dig for them," he pointed out. "But I must admit, the prospect's exciting."

"We'll start with this beauty." Amy gazed reverently at the sprawling old tree in the centre of the grove. "It was surely here in Lady Stanley's time. Look at that thick, gnarly trunk!"

Laying the detector aside, she ran her hands over the tree's whorled, lichen-tipped bark. "I wonder what it is."

could reveal centuries-old marks that would lead them to the truth.

"Remember *Lord Of The Rings* and the Ring of Power," Greg reminded her. "It wanted to be found, after being lost within the earth for centuries. Perhaps my lady's treasure wasn't meant to be –"

But even as he said the words, the detector began to beep. They both froze.

"I don't believe it," Amy whispered.

"Could it be...?"

They exchanged looks then as one, dropped to the ground, clearing the natural carpet away to make a space in which Greg could dig. With a sturdy trowel, he struck into the damp, slightly musty earth, scooping out clods to reveal, sooner than he'd expected, a small, intricately carved

### FICTION EDITOR SUSAN SAYS...

Don't miss next week's bumper selection of romantic stories, specially chosen for Valentine's Day.





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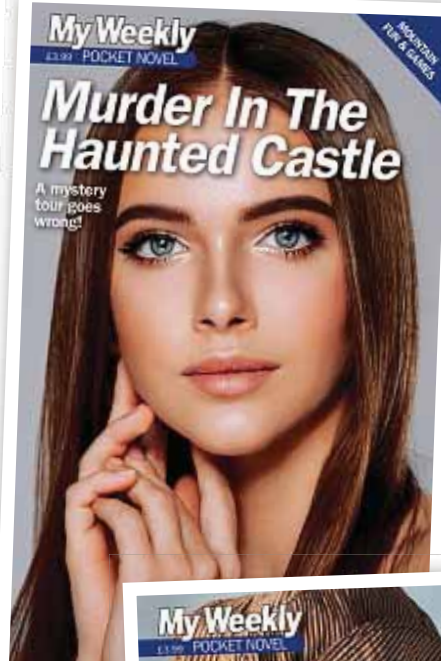
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*Maggie*

Maggie Swinburne  
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Chris Pascoe's Fun Tales

# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Chris is about to relocate – so he's learning a brand new language in preparation

**A**s mentioned in last week's column, my daughter Maya recently took up residence in Cambridge. Obviously, we'd like to be able to visit as often as possible, and with this very much in mind, we're moving to the Isle of Wight. A hundred miles and a ferry in the wrong direction.

There have been quite a few moments during my time with Lorraine when we've made inexplicable and slightly unhinged decisions, and this is definitely one of them. Another that always springs to mind was when, with a mortgage and a child to support, we decided to give up getting any money.

The conversation went... "Lorraine, I know you're going to be mad about this, but it's my dream to write books, and I want to set up a cat sitting business, so I've left my job."

"Good idea," she replied, "I'll leave mine too!"

And she did. I'm not quite sure how we survived.

This latest decision, to move south while north would be sensible, then making things even worse by living on an island, is equally stupid. So obviously we've jumped at the chance to do it.

Again, dreams have played a big part. Lorraine has always wanted to live by the sea and, on an island only



## I'll be overshooting home by four miles and a puddle

26 miles across and six miles wide, she'll more or less be in it. My family are from Portsmouth, so moving down there feels like going home. OK, I'll be overshooting home by four miles and a puddle, but it'll definitely do.

Maya is delighted. I'm hoping this isn't simply because she thinks we'll visit less, because we won't – it'll just take more doing! No, Maya's also a sea-lover,

fascinated by childhood stories of her ancestor at the Battle of Trafalgar, and also a big fan of dolphins and the like. She's looking at this as coming home from university every three months to a seaside holiday.


So, along with all the new Cambridge words previously mentioned, I now have to contend with a load of Isle of Wight and nautical ones. For instance, as a mainlander

living on the island, I'll be known as an Overner.

Mind you, this is a nice and not insulting name when you consider that native islanders refer to themselves as Caulkheads. Meanwhile, people just across the sea in Portsmouth will no doubt have worked out from my columns that I'm definitely a dinlo (idiot, basically).

Meanwhile, just along the coast and getting more insulting by the second, some Southampton dwellers refer to some Portsmouth dwellers as Skates (very dodgy origins to this that I won't go into) but that's not surprising considering those same Portsmouth dwellers refer to them as Scummers.

All these new words are best avoided by newcomers, I think. Why then, on a recent trip to Southampton and impressed with how nice the locals were, did Lorraine suddenly exclaim at the top of her voice in a crowded shopping centre, "These people aren't Scummers at all!"?

Still, hopefully we'll survive in the deep south. I'll keep you posted... 

**Our latest Fun Tales Collection, *The World's Craziest Cats & Other Stories* is available from [www.dcthomsonshop.co.uk](http://www.dcthomsonshop.co.uk) for just £7.99.**



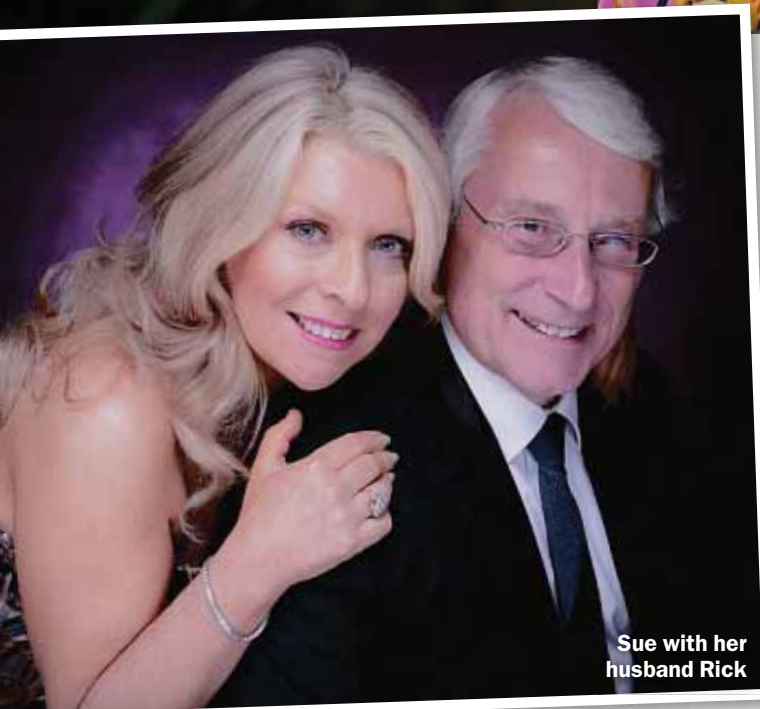
## NEXT WEEK

Chris undergoes hypnosis, with surprising results...



# With A Song In Her Heart

**She survived a broken neck and battled breast cancer, but Sue Cressman refuses to let it get her down**



Sue with her husband Rick

**A**s she rushes off to a meeting at the luxury hotel she runs with her husband, Sue Cressman looks the epitome of a successful businesswoman. With neatly coiffured hair, immaculate make-up and stylish clothes she looks like she hasn't a care in the world – that's exactly the look that Sue is aiming for.

"You have to smile, get on with it and show people you're fine," she explains. "Some use the word hell to describe what I've been through, but that's not a word I ever use. I'm actually really upbeat about everything, because hope is the only thing I can cling to.

"I look back and think, 'I

wouldn't want to go through it again.' But then, I got through it. It was part of my life and has made me the person I am, and if anything it has made me even more positive."

Sue's extraordinary battle began when she was diagnosed with grade three breast cancer in 1992. After undergoing surgery and gruelling chemotherapy and radiotherapy she was so ill she spent ten months in a hospice.

"I was very poorly, but I didn't want to show it, so I made sure I wore make-up and that what hair I'd got left was neatly styled," she recalls. "I played the piano and sang to the other patients. I knew



Gospability, a choir of survivors



from the day I was diagnosed that I would beat it.”

Sue, who lives in Solihull, West Midlands, made a miraculous recovery, but out of the blue one morning in 1999, she collapsed, after waking up unable to feel her hands and feet. An MRI scan revealed a broken neck.

“The bone had broken right

Due to complications Sue needed 15 more procedures following the initial operation. Then in 2013 there was another setback.

“I’d just said goodbye to the nurses for the last time when a driver hit my car. The seatbelt dug into the wound and caused further problems – you couldn’t make it up!”

## “I stayed upbeat because hope was the only thing I had to cling on to”

across my spinal cord and there was only a tiny bit left,” Sue says. “They didn’t know the cause.”

Surgeons used part of her hip bone to perform a bone graft and stabilise her neck. It was a year before she was well enough to return to work. Sue finally thought life was on the up when she met her partner Rick. In 2007, when Sue was 47, they wed. But just a year later, tragedy struck again.

“My fingers started to feel strange. This time another disc in my neck had split. They performed another bone graft, this time using the other hip bone,” Sue explains.

Incredibly, worse was yet to come, and in 2011 Sue was giving the devastating news that her breast cancer had returned and this time she needed a full mastectomy.

“That filled me with great dread,” she says sadly. “I’m not a vain person, but I do want to keep my femininity, like any woman.”

Over the past ten years she has raised an impressive £150,000 and bought everything from ultrasound scanners and monitors, to garden furniture to enable chemotherapy patients to have their treatment outdoors on sunny days.

“What has happened to me is extraordinary, but I prefer to

of life after what she has been through. In 2018 she was invited to audition for Gospability, a choir of survivors that sang at the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle. Despite being up against 300 other hopefuls, Sue won a place and went on to appear on TV on *The One Show*, singing live from Windsor’s Guildhall, two days before the wedding.

Now, six years on from her recovery, she is determined to squeeze every last drop from life and last year celebrated her 60th birthday with a party.

“I wanted to celebrate the fact that I’m still here.

“You’ve got to work hard to make sure that ill health doesn’t overshadow your life. My recovery has taken a long time, but I’ve always stayed positive.” **WV**

focus on helping others, then you’re not thinking about yourself,” Sue explains. “I visit every consultant I know in the area and say, ‘Right, what do you need?’”

Sue, who runs Nailcote Hall Hotel in Warwickshire, is determined to make the most

## Inspiring Hope

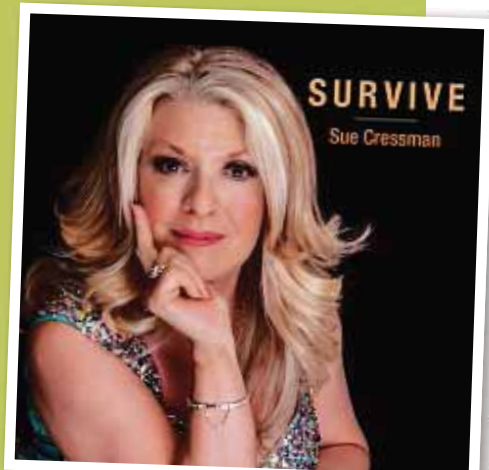
To celebrate her survival, Sue has recorded a song – aptly entitled *Survive* – in order to help inspire others.

She wrote the lyrics with her husband Rick. “He’s very good with verse, so he put it together with a few words I wanted featured, such as courage, hope and inspiration,” she says.

Friend Guy Barnes wrote the music, David Essex’s former manager offered to promote it, and Elaine Paige’s musical director Ian Wherry agreed to put together the backing track.

Sue is hoping the record will be a hit to raise further funds for life-saving NHS hospital equipment.

“The song is an anthem to inspire courage and hope in others facing any life-threatening illness,” she says.



◆ To download Sue Cressman’s *Survive* go to: [apple.co/2kpvn50](https://apple.co/2kpvn50) CDs are available on Sue’s own website: [www.suecressman.com](http://www.suecressman.com)

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# Star Buys, Best Buys

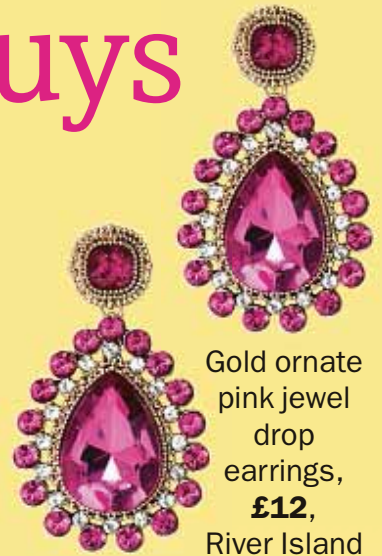
All spring blossom pink!

## Star Buy

Pastel zest blush pink velvet stool, **£7.99**, TK Maxx



Pink crackled glass egg, **£7.99**, TK Maxx



Gold ornate pink jewel drop earrings, **£12**, River Island



V by Very Pink Wash Denim Jacket, **£40**, Very



Ceramic pink vase, **£3.99**, Primark



Pink Croc Cross Body Bag, **£14.99**, Deichmann



Pink Paw and Bone Large Stainless Steel Dog Bowl, **£7.99**, TK Maxx



Pink RI monogram blocked scarf, **£22**, River Island



Pink Floral Blazer, **£39.99**, Bon Prix



Lace Trim Pink Softie, **£10**, F&F at Tesco





# Oscar Moments We'll

Remember the occasions when the drama moved from screen to stage?

## A Show Of Appreciation

Charlie Chaplin became part of Oscar history when the audience treated him to a record 12-minute standing ovation after he received his Lifetime Achievement Oscar in 1972 and donned his trademark black bowler hat in celebration. An icon of the silent movie era, this appearance marked the first return to the USA in 20 years for Chaplin since he was labelled a communist and banished from the States.



## Changing Times

Halle Berry was part of a landmark Oscar moment in 2002 when she was announced as the first black actress to win the Best Actress award for her lead role in *Monster's Ball*. In the 89-year history of the Academy Awards, only 39 awards have been given to black actors and actresses. The first, Hattie McDaniel, won Best Supporting Actress for her role as Mammy in *Gone With The Wind* in 1939.

## A Dress To Impress

Outfits have always been synonymous with the Oscars. Over the years, as well as glamorous dresses we've had everything from swan costumes to backwards tuxedos. However, one that particularly stands out is Cher's costume in 1988 when she won the Best Actress award for *Moonstruck* and appeared on stage sporting a jewel-encrusted see-through number. No one was too surprised, though...

two years earlier she'd turned up wearing a massive feathered headpiece!



## Tears Of Joy

Receiving an Oscar is an emotional moment in any actor's career. However, for some it proves to be more emotional than others – in 1999, Gwyneth Paltrow famously sobbed and hiccupped her way through her entire acceptance speech when she won the Best Actress award for *Shakespeare In Love*. Gwyneth certainly isn't alone – there have been many throughout the years who have been unable to hold back the tears including Nicole Kidman, Halle Berry and Ben Affleck.



## It's About Time!

Everyone was delighted when, in 2016, Leonardo DiCaprio finally got his Best Actor Oscar for his role in *The Revenant*. Throughout the years he's received no fewer than six nominations! Others haven't been so lucky. Peter O'Toole was nominated in acting categories eight times but never won, while Richard Burton and Glenn Close were both nominated seven times. Peter O'Toole was awarded an honorary Oscar in 2003.





# NEVER Forget...



## Twice As Good

In 1969, Ingrid Bergman made the surprise announcement "It's a tie!" when she came to reveal the Best Actress winner. The award was shared between Katharine Hepburn, for her role of Eleanor of Aquitaine in *The Lion In Winter*, and Barbra Streisand, for her debut film performance in *Funny Girl*. Katherine wasn't in attendance so it was Barbra who stole the show when she accepted the award uttering her first line in the film – "Hello, Gorgeous!"



## Selfie Storm!

Ellen DeGeneres very nearly broke the internet when she posted what was to become one of the most famous selfies of all time. While presenting the 2014 Oscars ceremony, Ellen got her famous friends to pose for a selfie which then went viral when she posted it to her Twitter account. The picture, which featured Bradley Cooper, Meryl Streep, Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, Jennifer Lawrence and Lupita Nyong'o, was retweeted more than three million times!

## A BIG Mistake

With the best will in the world, live events don't always run smoothly. Never was this more evident than when the wrong Best Picture winner was announced at the 2017 awards. Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty announced *La La Land* as the winner and the group came on stage to accept their award. Over two minutes into their speeches there was an awkward interruption, at which point it was revealed to a shocked audience that *Moonlight* had actually won Best Picture... oops!





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Stuart Johnstone,  
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# Roll Out The Red Carpet

Sue Hayward has found some fab “old school” cinemas on her trips to the movies...



WORDS: SUE HAYWARD PICTURES: ISTOCKPHOTO, ALAMY, SHUTTERSTOCK

## Travel News

For a truly relaxing trip to the Big Smoke then consider a stay at the Apex London Wall. As part of their new #warmerwelcome campaign, each bedroom now comes with a new in-room handbook full of helpful tips from wellbeing expert Celynn Morin, helping guests to rejuvenate, focus or relax and get the most out of their stay. Guests in executive rooms and above will also be able to enjoy an in-room luxury Elemis pillow spray to help aid sleep and a selection of teas such as camomile to relax or green tea for rejuvenation. Expect a beautifully contemporary Scandinavian vibe. [www.apexhotels.co.uk](http://www.apexhotels.co.uk)



I love finding old-style picture houses. It feels like opening the door to another world with old school charm as you sink back in an armchair or sofa with drinks served to your seat.

They are to cinema multiplexes what first class flying is to economy in my book. You get a totally different experience and while you might think these movie gems can be hard to find, there's plenty of them around if you know where to look!

The Odyssey is a beautiful, lovingly restored Art Deco cinema in St Albans, Hertfordshire with just one screen. No rows of seats in the stalls here, but cabaret-style small tables that seat four. How about a cheeseboard or wine served to your seat? We booked the front row of the balcony (there are also back row sofas), at just £6 a ticket for a Sunday matinee. Red plush seats, heaps of legroom and a staff member comes on stage to introduce the movie too.

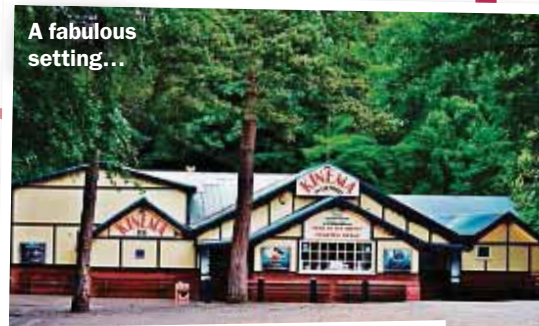


Edwardian grandeur  
in Brighton

## Kinema In The Woods

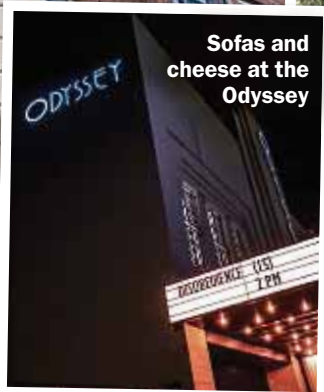
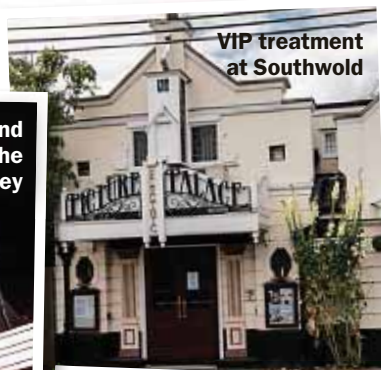
Lots of small cinemas started life in other ways and the "Kinema in the Woods" in Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire is among them. This former sports pavilion became a cinema back in 1922, opening its doors with a Charlie Chaplin film, the audience sitting on deck chairs. It's hidden away down a narrow, winding lane in the woods and once inside you'll find the foyer packed with vintage movie posters and memorabilia. The ultimate old school touch is its resident organist, who's been playing at the last film on Screen One on Saturday nights for more than 30 years. Open every day except Christmas Day.

A fabulous  
setting...



...and an  
authentic  
organ!

VIP treatment  
at Southwold



Sofas and  
cheese at the  
Odyssey

Usherettes and  
a bar at The  
Dominion




Cocktails and  
blankets in  
Notting Hill

The Dominion in Edinburgh was a total find, a tip from a taxi driver after we hopped in his cab asking for the nearest cinema to shelter from the rain. And what a gem it is!

Edinburgh's only family-run cinema, it's been going over 80 years. Stepping through the doors is like going back in time, with usherettes showing you to your seat. There's a small licensed bar and we were served by a barman in a bow tie. We celebrated our "find" with

champagne, and shared a sofa.

The Electric Cinema in London's Notting Hill is luxury all the way. Sink back and watch the movie from a double bed with cosy cashmere blankets, or relax on a leather sofa or armchair complete with footstool and side table. Want a cocktail? No problem, it's served to your seat. Prices start from £15 per person.

After the movie is over, head next door to the American-themed Electric Diner. 

## Seaside Picture Houses

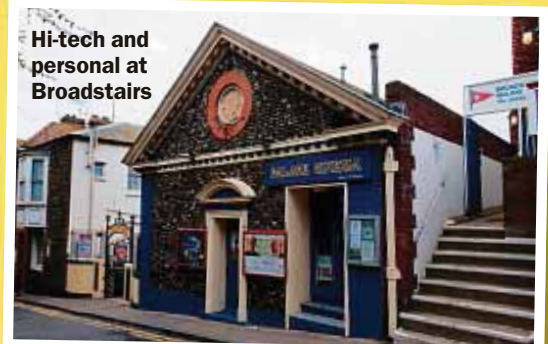
There's more cinema gems to be found in the back streets of some popular seaside resorts.

Southwold's Electric Picture Palace started life as a stable and cart shed before local architect John Bennett transformed it to a small cinema. It's VIP treatment all the way at this 70-seat cinema as a commissioner welcomes you in and usherettes show you to your seat. A Wurlitzer organ plays in the interval and they even play the National Anthem at the end!

The Palace Cinema in Broadstairs is also a single screen cinema, this time with 111 seats. Tucked away in a side street by Viking Bay, it's tiny but has top notch digital projection and surround sound, showing blockbusters and independent films, along with a silent movie once a month with live piano. Family owned, it's often hired out for private screenings including showing home movies for family celebrations. Tickets £5-£7.

The Duke of York's Picturehouse in Brighton is positively vintage. Claiming to be the oldest continually running cinema in the country, at 109 years old, it's a Brighton institution. Standing impressively in the middle of Preston Circus, it's a stone's throw from the seafront and steeped in Edwardian grandeur.

Hi-tech and  
personal at  
Broadstairs







### Kenya Grand Safari with Mombasa Beach Extension

Departs Jun 2020 – Jun 2022

Enjoy close-up encounters with some of the world's greatest wildlife on this tour of Kenya, and cap your stay with a wonderful few days of relaxation on the edge of the Indian Ocean.

#### Tour highlights

- Enjoy three game drives in the Samburu National Reserve and the Maasai Mara National Reserve
- Journey to Lake Nakuru National Park
- Visit to a Maasai village
- Fully escorted by friendly, experienced drivers and safari guide
- Travel by six-seater safari minibuses
- Four nights' all-inclusive accommodation at the Voyager Resort Hotel
- Seven nights' accommodation, in full-board game lodges on safari, bed and breakfast plus a lunch in Nairobi, a night on the aircraft, return flights and transfers



### India - Tigers & the Taj Mahal with 4 Night Goa Extension

Departs Sep 2020 – Nov 2021

Explore northern India's greatest cities in this perfect introduction to one of the world's most fascinating and alluring destinations, with a visit to Goa's white sand beaches – the perfect ending to your holiday.

#### Tour highlights

- Discover the sights of New Delhi – the Red Fort & Jama Masjid Mosque, the India Gate and the ruins of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque
- Visit Old Delhi, Amber Fort, the Taj Mahal, the 'Palace of the Winds', Chand Baori stepwell, Agra, and Vanaashrya
- Go in search of Ranthambhore's tigers
- Fully escorted by a friendly, experienced tour manager
- Four nights' half-board accommodation in Goa
- Eight nights' half-board hotel accommodation, five lunches, one night on the aircraft, return flights and transfers



### Elvis Presley's Memphis, New Orleans & Nashville

Departs March 2020 – December 2021

Discover the birthplace of Jazz and the cradle of Rock 'n' Roll, to the capital of Country Music.

#### Tour highlights

- Visit Montgomery and the fabled 'French Quarter'
- Journey through the sleepy countryside of Alabama
- Discover New Orleans, and Tupelo, Mississippi – Elvis' birthplace
- Spend two nights at the Guest House™ at Graceland, right next to Elvis' famous mansion
- Discover Nashville, world capital of Country Music
- Fully escorted by a friendly, experienced tour manager
- Seven nights' room-only touring hotel accommodation, plus one night on the aircraft, return flights and transfers



### Hollywood, Vegas & the Grand Canyon

Departs April 2020 – November 2021

Discover two of America's most famous cities, and perhaps nature's greatest wonder.

#### Tour highlights

- Spend three nights close to glittering Los Angeles, California's star-spangled Pacific Coast city
- Visit Hollywood – movie capital of the world
- Full day tour to sun-kissed San Diego
- Discover the awesome Grand Canyon is one of the most breathtaking, eye-popping sights on Earth
- A four-night stay in extraordinary Las Vegas – the most spectacular desert 'oasis' on Earth
- Fully escorted by a friendly, experienced tour manager
- Eight nights' room only hotel accommodation, plus one night on the aircraft, return flights and transfers



### America's Golden West

Departs March 2020 – October 2021

Enjoy a classic introduction to the USA, taking in California, Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon.

#### Tour highlights

- Enjoy visits to San Francisco, the 'City by the Bay,' San Diego, and Hollywood – the movie capital of the world
- Call at Steinbeck's Monterey and Carmel-by-the-Sea
- Journey south along the Pacific Coast Highway
- Spend three nights in glittering Los Angeles
- Non-stop, 24-hour Las Vegas is the world's most extraordinary desert 'oasis'
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- Fully escorted by a friendly, experienced tour manager
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# horsing around

Belinda is all work, no horseplay – maybe what she needs is a stable relationship...

By Kathryn England

My friend Sally went riding most Saturdays and was training to be an instructor. She constantly nagged me to go with her; part of her training was to assist the riding school coaches with new riders.

"There's more to life than eating, sleeping and working, Belinda," she told me. "You spend too much time climbing the corporate ladder. You need some fresh air and exercise."

"I have responsibilities," I said. After two years with a clothing superstore, I'd been given the position of assistant manager. "I have to order merchandise, meet with sales reps, organise product placement, draw up rosters. That's just the way it is."

Sally raised an eyebrow at me. "Even on weekends?"

"Well, no, I don't have to do all those things on weekends. But the rosters have to be done otherwise we end up short-staffed."

Sally nodded her head as if I'd just confessed to a crime. "Climbing the corporate ladder," she repeated.

"Well, I can't do anything at the moment anyway. My car is in for repairs."

"I'll pick you up and drop you back."

I had to admire her persistence. To shut her up, I finally agreed to give the riding a go the following Saturday.

"I'll make sure you get Twinkletoes," she said. "She's as gentle as a lamb, the smoothest ride you'll ever have."

I'll tell them we're here," Sally said after she'd parked her car. "You have a look around."

There wasn't much to look at – just horses in yards and more horses in yards. It wasn't the best day for riding either. There'd been a heavy downpour during the morning and the ground was muddy.

Because we were the same dress and shoe size, Sally had loaned me some of her riding gear. I was glad her boots fitted me. Soggy sneakers would not have been



a good start to the lesson. I put on the riding cap and adjusted the strap.

When Sally reappeared, she grabbed my elbow and steered me towards a yard with four horses. She waved to a man leaning against the railings.

"That's Matt," she told me.

The man wore a snug white T-shirt and jeans. He had a tall, trim physique and regarded us with smoky James Dean eyes.

"You're a bit of a dark horse, Sal," I commented, hoping she appreciated my pun.

"What d'you mean?" she asked.

"Oh," she said, chuckling heartily. "It's not like that."

When we got to the yard, she

introduced me to Matt. His T-shirt bore the riding school logo.

"Sally tells me this is your first time," he said with a smile as we walked into the yard. Creases at the corners of his eyes gave the impression that smiling was a favourite pastime.

"Yes," I replied. But that was all I had a chance to say because Sally led me straight over to Twinkletoes and began giving me instructions on mounting. I assumed that climbing on the horse was the easy part and that Matt would take over the lesson once I was in the saddle.

I slipped a boot into the stirrup and hoisted myself up, chuffed at how gracefully I'd performed the manoeuvre. This was too easy. ➔



"You're a natural," Matt said, confirming my opinion of myself.

"It's a cinch," I told him with a nonchalant click of my fingers.

The click flicked some sort of switch in Twinkletoes' equine brain and she took off. We were in a training yard with rails on all sides. But it was a big yard and there was a large puddle directly ahead. Twinkletoes pulled up at the edge of the puddle so suddenly I somersaulted over her head, landing on my backside.

Fortunately, thick mud softened the fall. But the jolt had caused the riding cap to slip down over my eyes. I pushed it back up and looked over my shoulder to see Sally and Matt running towards me.

Sally looked like an inebriated rag doll. I swore that if she didn't die of laughter as she flopped across the yard, I was going to kill her. I couldn't wait to hear her



As I tried to stand, the withering glare I gave her was totally wasted because when I was almost on my feet, my boots slid out from under me.

I lay spread-eagled on my back. Three heads appeared between me and the sky. Sally's disappeared when she lost it completely. Twinkletoes seemed bored with the whole thing by then and

to have a lesson. We're cousins. Didn't she tell you?"

I shook my head.

"Is it just me," he said, "or do you get the feeling that she might have planned all this?" His lips curled. "Our meeting, I mean, not your, ah, fall from grace."

So I was not the only one who could throw a pun around. I wondered if we had anything else in common.

"I think you may be right."

The wink Sally had given me had been as subtle as a backslap. He plucked at the T-shirt. "She even bought me this to get me motivated. She says I spend too much time climbing ladders."

"Are you a painter or something?" I asked.

"I'm in insurance. She was talking about corporate ladders."

"Oh, those."

"I don't suppose you'd like to have another go at this riding caper?" He raised an eyebrow. "Or has your enthusiasm been... dampened?"

I searched his eyes to see whether he was having another little joke at my expense. He was.


"I'd have to go home and change," I told him. The jodhpurs and shirt were clinging to me uncomfortably.

After we checked at the office that there was a later time available for a lesson, I let Sally know what was happening and Matt drove me home.

He found an old blanket in the boot of his car for me to sit on.

When we returned to the riding school, we had a riding lesson then went on one of the trail rides for beginners.

It seemed that both Matt and I had put our corporate ladders in the shed for a day. I felt that we had our toes on the first rung of a different ladder, one we could use to build something together.

During dinner that night we decided to take it one rung at a time. 

## FICTION EDITOR SUSAN SAYS...

**Life and the Wadhams, The Best of the 60s** featuring stories from My Weekly's favourite family is available to order, priced £7.99, from [www.dcthomsonshop.co.uk](http://www.dcthomsonshop.co.uk)



definition of "gentle as a lamb". I also intended to have a not-so-quiet word with the bright spark who had named this particular horse.

Twinkletoes stood there flicking her tail and breathing steam into the air. I so badly wanted to smack the "Gee, did I do that?" expression off her whiskery lips.

"Are you all right?" Matt asked, holding out a hand. His forehead was creased with concern but his eyes were suspiciously moist.

When she got to me, Sally tried to say something. The words were lost in hysterics. She hugged her waist and doubled over.

Determined to rise above the occasion and salvage a modicum of dignity, I pursed my lips and ignored Matt's proffered hand.

"I'm just fine, thanks," I told him.

Twinkletoes stepped into the puddle, nosed my ear wetly and snorted.

Sally sounded like a hyena. "She's never done that before. Honest." Her voice rose another octave. "Bolted, I mean. Not snorted."

wandered off, her broad rump swaying from side to side.

There was only one face left. Its owner positioned a leg on either side of me in the mud, grasped me under the arms and hauled me to my feet.

Pulling a handkerchief from his pocket, he wiped off some mud that had splashed my cheek.

Sally finally recovered her composure. "I'll just go and tell Harry what happened and that you're okay," she said.

"Harry?" I asked.

"The instructor." She pointed to a middle-aged man hurrying in our direction. "When I booked the lesson he said he'd be a bit late this morning so I told him I'd look after you and Matt until he got here." She winked at me before walking off.

I looked at Matt. "I thought you were the instructor."

A laugh caught in his throat. "I wouldn't know one end of a horse from the other. I was about to tell you it was my first time too when yours bolted. It's taken Sally ages to convince me



Are you interested  
in losing weight?

# IN HOLLYWOOD, THERE IS NO ROOM TO BE OVERWEIGHT

## NOW

Claus Hjelmбак has now lost  
12 kg with Seaweed Diet™

Like so many others, the good lifestyle had affected the Hollywood broker Claus Hjelmбак. Being overweight affects more and more Danes everyday. It also happened to Claus until he was introduced to the NEW diet pill "Seaweed Diet" which became his rescue from several years of frustration.

In Hollywood, there is no room to be overweight. Celebrities take obesity seriously and it is difficult to get through to them and be taken seriously. Claus has now lost 12 kg with Seaweed Diet™ and would love to help others lose weight and find the joy of life.

## Famous Hollywood broker has lost 12kg with the Seaweed Diet™

Claus Hjelmбак has lived and worked in Hollywood for the past 25 years. He has worked with several well-known stars, such as Britney Spears and Carmen Electra, among others.

– For the last 10 years I have struggled with my weight going up and down. I have lost weight in the past but always regained it. I think it's hard to figure out what's really healthy and what is not.

Through my friends in Los Angeles, I heard about seaweed and how it helps in weight loss along with a balanced healthy diet! And I was recommended to try the Seaweed Diet™! Today 3 months and minus 12 kg later, I am really grateful for the good advice!

– My everyday is very busy, so I don't have much time to exercise, but what I have time to do is cut down my carbohydrate intake and take the Seaweed Diet™ tablet daily. My personal experience is that my body does not absorb the same amount of fat as it did before I started with the Seaweed Diet™ tablet. That combined with my healthier lifestyle has been the right combination for me, says Claus.

## Start taking Seaweed Diet™ today

You can find Seaweed Diet™ in Holland & Barrett and Leading Independent Health Stores. For an information leaflet call 0800 389 1255 or purchase online at [www.newnordic.co.uk](http://www.newnordic.co.uk)



## BEFORE

Claus Hjelmбак before he began on the Seaweed Diet™

## WHEN TO TAKE SEAWEED DIET TABLETS?

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- When you are genetically prone to excess weight
- When you are not getting enough sleep and putting on weight because of it

## ADVICE & QUESTIONS

You are always welcome to contact our New Nordic helpline at  
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*Are you struggling to lose weight despite exercise and healthy eating habits? This new seaweed tablet with natural seaweed and herbal extracts could help you shape up.*



# Could You Be A Blood Donor?

Over 800,000 of us regularly give blood but more donors are needed. Could you roll up a sleeve to save a stranger's life?

## Do You Meet The Criteria?

To meet the constant demand for blood, NHS Blood and Transplant needs 400 new donors every day! Could you be one of these lifesavers? As long as you have not been a recipient of blood in the past, you're aged between 17 and 66, fit and healthy, and weigh between 50 and 160kg, the answer is likely to be "yes".



Donate up to every 16 weeks

## How Often?

UK rules stipulate that men can give blood every 12 weeks, while women have to wait 16 weeks between donations, because they tend to have lower iron levels and it takes longer for their blood count to return to normal. Find out more from [www.blood.co.uk](http://www.blood.co.uk).

## Special Gift

With medical advances, rare subtypes of blood are being discovered and last year Sue Olds (53), from Cornwall, learned she has one of the rarest subtypes in the world. "It's called -D- and it turns out I'm the UK's only donor, which means my blood is vital for anyone who needs it. I've been told I've already saved two babies' lives, and some of my blood is also being stored for my own use, in case I ever need it."



Sue's one of a kind

## "Blood Donors Saved My Life"

Three years ago Michaela Swallow woke from a hysterectomy to the shocking news that she was in intensive care, having nearly bled to death during her surgery. "I'd needed a huge transfusion of thirteen units," Michaela (54), from Sheffield, recalls. She has since needed further surgery – and again needed a transfusion. "Apparently some people bleed more than others, and I'm one of them!"



Michaela and Tracey

## ... Inspired To Help

Michaela soon discovered that having had a transfusion meant she would never be eligible to give blood to others. "Yet I now knew how important it was to donate. Without the kindness of donors, I would not be here to tell my story now. I couldn't donate, but my partner, Tracey Hancock (54), could. She wanted to be able to help people in the same life-threatening situation I'd been in. She'll be giving her second donation in March this year."

## Save A Life

Every blood donation could save three people's lives, says donor Diana Daniel-Dawson (57), from Essex. "I receive texts when my blood's been used, and it's good to know it's helping someone. I also give platelets – a far more complex procedure – and I'm on the register to donate bone marrow too."



Diana's donations help many





Donation staff are friendly and efficient

## Drink Up!

Fluids are your friend when you're giving blood. You'll be asked to drink 500ml of water before your donation, and a couple of drinks while you're resting after it. This will compensate for the fluids you lose with the blood you've given, helping to prevent low blood pressure and dizziness.

## What's Your Blood Type?

You may not know your blood type until you register to donate. The most common type is O positive, while AB positive and negative are the rarest of the main blood groups. If you happen to be O negative, you're considered a "universal donor" – yours is the type of blood carried by ambulances as anyone can receive it. Rare blood types such as Ro, most common in black people, are also in very high demand.

## Easy Does It...

A full donation of 470ml of blood takes just 5-10 minutes – but allow extra time to rest and enjoy a snack afterwards. "I've never found giving blood painful, but it's quickest in the summer, when my veins are warmer, helping to speed up blood flow," says **Diana Daniel-Dawson, who's given blood 120 times since the age of 17.**

## Multi-Tasker

"Your blood donation will usually be separated into different components, such as red blood cells, platelets and plasma," explains Mike Stredder, director of blood donation at NHS Blood and Transplant. "This means your single donation could treat several patients with different medical needs – you'll typically be benefiting people with anaemia, cancer and those having surgery."

## Dogs Can Donate Too!

Who knew – more than 11,000 dogs are registered with the canine donor programme helping save the lives of thousands of beloved pets. Most dogs have blood type DEA1-positive, so more donor dogs with DEA1-negative blood are urgently needed. Breeds more likely to have this blood type include German Shepherds, greyhounds, flat-coated retrievers and Old English Sheepdogs. See [www.petbloodbankuk.org](http://www.petbloodbankuk.org)



German Shepherd Jack is a donor





My Weekly's favourite GP **Dr Sarah Jarvis**  
from TV and radio writes for you



# Have Your Healthiest Holiday

If you don't have school-age children, you may well be planning to take advantage of a term-time holiday, when travel is cheaper. But to ensure you come back with happy memories, not a preventable disease or a hefty medical bill, it's important to be prepared.

If you want warm weather

in February, you may well have to travel outside the areas covered by the EHIC card – that's the EU, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Switzerland. This card entitles you to health care at the same cost as a local resident.

Importantly, the EHIC covers routine care for some ongoing medical conditions (like kidney dialysis) if you need treatment while you're away. However, for most ongoing care, arrangements must be set up by your UK hospital before you go.

Even after the official planned Brexit date, there's likely to

be a transitional period until December 31, 2020, during which EHIC cards will still be valid. However, if the UK doesn't have a final deal by then, there could still be a "no deal" Brexit. That may mean EHIC cards are invalid.

If EHICs stay in place, the amount you'll pay will depend on negotiations with individual countries, so the situation may be very different.

Recent research found almost 1 in 3 people with an existing medical condition have had problems getting travel insurance due to their condition. Either they found insurance unaffordable, or they couldn't get cover for

their condition at all. This led to more than 1 in 5 people deciding not to go on holiday.

More worrying still, almost 1 in 5 just decided to go ahead and travel outside the UK without medical cover.

Even if you're travelling to a country currently covered by the EHIC card, not taking out separate travel insurance can be a hugely costly mistake. The EHIC card gives you access to healthcare at the same cost as a local would pay; many countries don't offer free treatment to their residents. The EHIC may not cover the cost of ambulances and won't cover the cost of bringing you home if you're taken seriously ill. Then there are indirect costs like reimbursement if you have to cancel your holiday or return early, or if you lose luggage.

One of the biggest risks with travel insurance is not declaring medical conditions



“Ask your pharmacist or practice nurse if you need vaccinations, at least 8 weeks before you travel”

## FROM MY SURGERY

### CYSTITIS SORTED?

At least half of women have cystitis at some point – usually caused by a bacterial infection, it doesn't always need antibiotics and symptoms can be due to other causes. That's why doctors always check your urine before prescribing. A new smartphone test from Healthy.io means women can buy a test kit from some branches of Boots, check for cystitis and return to the pharmacist for antibiotics if they are needed.

### ANYONE FOR SOUP?

Malaria remains one of the deadliest threats to worldwide health – particularly for people living in Africa and Asia, as well as for visitors. In these days of worry about growing drug resistance, it's exciting to see that some traditional vegetable and meat broths from these countries can disrupt the life cycle of deadly malarial parasites. A modern variation on Grandma's chicken soup, perhaps?

### USE IT OR LOSE IT

We've all heard about the importance of keeping your brain as well as your body active to help ward off dementia. But did you realise this applies to the parts of your brain that process hearing as well? New research from the University of Exeter and King's College London shows that for people with age-related hearing problems, wearing a hearing aid is linked to better brain function. Wear yours proudly!





– this may mean your company won't pay out if there's a problem. The rules are complicated – you need to declare if you've ever been treated for depression or asthma; had cancer or a heart attack, even if you've had the all-clear for over 10 years; or have been treated for arthritis in the last two years.

Medical Travel Compared is a specialist medical travel insurance comparison website with a panel of 40-plus insurance providers. When you log on, you're led through a series of questions to see if you need to disclose any pre-existing conditions. This means you'll always be confident your insurance is correct for you.

I've been working with them to provide information on everything from travelling with a cold to avoiding trouble

with your medication in transit – you can find out more at [medicaltravelcompared.co.uk/](http://medicaltravelcompared.co.uk/)

Medication can be a challenge. Order your repeat prescriptions well in advance; check with your pharmacist before you travel if you need a doctor's note to confirm you can take it; always carry it in your hand luggage; carry it in its original packaging; and be aware that some drugs (even non-prescription drugs) are banned in some countries. See the country's UK foreign embassy website for details.

If you're travelling outside Western Europe, it's worth checking with your pharmacist for just-in-case medicines to take with you. A supply of antihistamines or diarrhoea medicines can save needless holiday misery.

**NEXT WEEK: Should you buy medicine online?**

## HERE TO HELP

### THIS WEEK: Eye Health

By John Dreyer, Optometric Consultant at [ContactLenses.co.uk](http://ContactLenses.co.uk)



#### Q How do I avoid deteriorating eye health?

A Change your diet – a diet high in vitamin A and lutein is great for eye health, helps maintain a clear cornea and reduces the risk of cataracts and age-related macular degeneration. Quit smoking – the habit has been directly linked to two of the leading causes of vision loss, cataracts and macular

degeneration. Wear sunglasses when the sun's rays are at their strongest. This can help protect your eyes against harmful UVA and UVB rays which can increase risks of cataracts, macular degeneration and pterygium. Lastly, ensure you're wearing the correct prescription and get your eyes tested at least every two years to prevent further damage – or spot warning signs of bad eye health early.



Have check-ups



Be a shady lady

## FOCUS ON... PAIN RELIEF

### Heat Therapy

**Thermacare Lower Back and Hip 4 Pack, £8.99** from Lloyds Pharmacy, uses heat therapy to accelerate healing and relieve pain. It does this by allowing heat to pass into the damaged muscle tissues, which increases the blood flow to the source of pain. This not only provides pain relief for the damaged area, but allows the muscles to heal at the same time.



### Relaxing Relief

**Deep Heat Muscle Rescue Neck & Shoulder Pain Relieving Heat Patch, £3.29 for 2** from Boots, gives



up to 8 hours warming pain relief for those experiencing tense, aching or painful muscles in the neck and shoulder area. The patch is odourless and shaped for a comfortable fit around the neck and shoulders, so you can forget about it and get on with your day.





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**One guide per household.** AGUK0112 MXLC20LA05C006

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Celebrity agony aunt **Helen Lederer** gives you her heartfelt advice every week



# Ask Helen

As someone who has been a social worker, mother, wife and divorcee I have been around the block a few times. I'm humbled to answer your questions and feel that if a problem can be shared it can be halved – at the very least.

## Have I Made My Move Too Soon?

**M**y husband passed away eight months ago and I couldn't go on living in our home. It was just too painful. I moved to a village near my daughter and downsized to a smaller house, but I've been here three months now and don't feel like I'm settling. I read somewhere that you shouldn't make major life decisions within a year of a loved one passing, and I'm so afraid that I have made the biggest mistake of my life.



It was too painful to stay in our home

**You are in a good position, but you do need time – start being kind to yourself**

I do sympathise. It is bad enough losing your husband without having this feeling that you have got the move wrong.

Firstly, it is generally acknowledged that a loss such as yours takes at least two years to adjust to. Time really is the most powerful element when it comes to healing. Moving away from the home you shared is part of moving forward, as well as needing to be close to your daughter.

Start being kind to yourself. You have

done nothing wrong. I suspect the grieving process is hindering you making new friends and forging a new life. This is entirely normal; it would be most unusual if you were able to bounce into a new home in a new town at this time.

The positives are there; you have a daughter close by and you have dealt with the huge upheaval of downsizing.

The grief will be informing a lot of your thinking, so why not stop blaming

yourself and start talking to a third party? Care and counselling from Cruse Bereavement Care [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk) could help you to a better understanding of how to get through. I am sure that more time will enable you to adjust not only to your loss but also to your future. You are in a good position, but do need time. And, if, after a time of reflection, you find you still want to move to a different setting, so be it. You will know when it's right to act.

Write to Helen Lederer at: Ask Helen, My Weekly, 2 Albert Square, Dundee DD1 1DD.  
Helen is unable to enter into private correspondence with readers.



## Warmth And Comfort

Would you like to save 11% on your heating bills? Well, the SpeedComfort, £49.99 from <https://speedcomfort.co.uk>, is an easy-to-use radiator fan which moves heat from the radiator into the room more quickly. This means the room is warmer faster – on average 50% faster – meaning the boiler is not running for as long, saving you money. The SpeedComfort uses less than 15p of electricity a year, so running costs are negligible, but can save you money because the increased warmth in your room allows you to lower your boiler water temperature. Suitable for radiators and convectors, the hi-tech silent fan circulates the air, meaning that warm air is distributed throughout the room more effectively and does not get trapped on the ceiling.

PICTURE: SHUTTERSTOCK



# Miniature Patio Fruit Trees

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Consumer expert **Sue Hayward's**  
savvy finance tips and advice



# Money Talk

## Sue's Guide To Cashing In On Car Savings

Keeping your car on the road can cost nearly £2,000 a year so here are five easy ways to save some money.

### Buy insurance early

You get your renewal quote and mean to shop around. But 35% of us only do it the day before our policy is up. Buying last minute costs up to £338 more as policy prices go up according to [Comparethemarket.com](http://Comparethemarket.com). Shop around and buy insurance three weeks before your policy ends to bag the biggest savings.

### Get faults fixed

Some of us are guilty of leaving niggling faults rattling around for 20 days according to [MoneySavingHeroes.co.uk](http://MoneySavingHeroes.co.uk). Engine warning lights, oil pressure and brakes are the top ones we're slow to fix. This can be dangerous and more costly in the long run.

### Add another driver

If you're an older driver, adding another experienced driver to your policy can save money. Check if adding your son or daughter brings down the price. It doesn't matter if they never drive your car, but it cuts the risk factor and can save money.

### Haggle for breakdown cover

Earlier in the year I saved nearly £150 haggling with the AA after our policy price shot up. Haggle at renewal if you want to stick with the same provider or shop around on sites like [comparethemarket.com](http://comparethemarket.com).



Drive a hard bargain

### Save at the pump

Find the cheapest fuel in your area by signing up to [petrolprices.com](http://petrolprices.com), a great website that can save up to £200 a year. And forget paying more for super fuel which can be around 10p a litre more.

### SUE'S TIPS:

- ◆ An MOT test costs up to £54.85 but some garages advertise cheaper prices.
- ◆ It's worth finding your local council run MOT centre as they won't do repairs so there's no incentive to find faults to fix.
- ◆ February is a good month for used car bargains according to the Money Advice Service. Sales are slow as buyers wait for the new plates in March.

## 3 WAYS TO SAVE

◆ A string of changes to overdraft rules mean banks are changing their charges but it's still possible to get a 0% overdraft. First Direct has 0% up to a £250 limit and Nationwide offers a one-year 0% overdraft.

◆ Swap lunch for brunch. This weekend I was in a restaurant with friends and we opted for the brunch menu as dishes were half the price of the main menu.



◆ Half-term holidays are around the corner. Book online for big savings on theme park tickets. Plus Alton Towers and Chessington promise a rainy day guarantee with free tickets if it rains!

## At Your Service

Off to the ski slopes? Check travel insurance for winter sports cover as less than 1 in 5 annual policies include this as standard according to [GoCompare.com](http://GoCompare.com).

## Dear Sue... Checking Tax Codes

**What is my tax code and how can I check if it's right?**

◆ It's HMRC, the Government department that collect taxes, who dish out our tax codes. This tells your employer how much you can earn before paying income tax and your tax code may change depending on whether you start

earning more or owe money from previous years. The easy way to check is at [www.gov.uk/check-income-tax-current-year](http://www.gov.uk/check-income-tax-current-year). Here you can check both your tax code and Personal Allowance (the amount you can earn each year before paying tax), and see an estimate of how much tax you'll pay.





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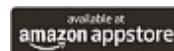
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What do you do every day that makes your life easier? Here are your **Top Tips!**



# Bright Ideas

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## Nifty Knitting

When knitting with chunky yarns, weaving in tails at the end or after joining in new balls can be difficult. For an easier, better finish divide yarn ends into two or three strands that can be quickly and invisibly woven in securely.

**Mrs C Fletcher, Essex**

## Loosen Up

Never waste time tugging at tangled jewellery again. Loosen the knot with a little baby powder and use a pin to pull it apart.

**Leona Heckman, Trefnant**



## Makes Scents

I use a lot of scented candles and there is always some left in the bottom of the holder. I scrape it all out and put it in my kitchen pedal bin before putting my liners in – the perfume is amazing.

**Hazel Dyer, Warrington**

## Deep Cleanse

I've got a really useful tip – use inexpensive cream cleansers on white trainers to keep them looking spotless. It saves on expensive cleansers for trainers and leather surfaces.

**Angela Garvin, Essex**

## Wipe Clean

I find that wet wipes are excellent for removing dust and cobwebs from the leaves of indoor decorative foliage plants.

**Shulah Clarkson, Great Yarmouth**



## Trendy Tots

Don't throw out kids' pyjamas that have gone at the knees. Cut the worn section away, and hem the remainder to make trendy shorts.

**Sian Roberts, Flintshire**



## Aggie MacKenzie's Expert Tips...



■ You know the cooked-on, sticky layer of grime that clings to the underside of your pans (particularly the frying pan)? Bar Keepers Friend can deal with that! Use a damp microfibre cloth sprinkled with BKF, some elbow grease, and you'll soon be sorted!



■ The metal teeth on zips can easily pull snags in delicate items during a wash, so before you put your clothes into the machine, check that zips are firmly shut.

■ Cleaning guttering is boring but necessary, right? Make it easier with WOLF-Garten's multi-change gutter cleaner. Its adjustable scoop plus brush, fitted on to any long telescopic handle, allows you to clean guttering without using a ladder. Available from [wolfgarten-tools.co.uk](http://wolfgarten-tools.co.uk), £44.99.





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What better way to bring warmth to your home than with one of our fragranced candles. These hand poured paint pot candles will burn for up to 14 hours.

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# Brain Boosters

Puzzles to do just for fun or to win some great prizes!

## Sudoku

Fill in each of the blank squares with the numbers 1 to 9, so that each row, each column and each 3x3 cell contains all the numbers from 1 to 9.

Turn To  
Page 65 For  
Solutions

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

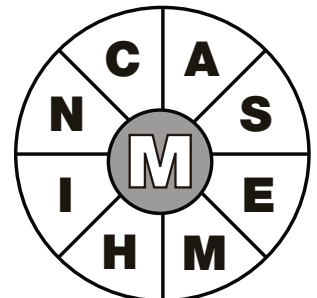
## Word Wheel

You have ten minutes to find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each word must be three letters or more and contain the central letter. Use each letter once and no plurals, foreign words or proper nouns are allowed. There is at least one nine-letter word.

**Average: 31 words**

**Good: 32-47 words**

**Excellent: 48-62 words**



## Codebreaker

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

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

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

19	5	4	4	7	8	20
	O	R	R	A		N

Each letter of the alphabet has been replaced by a number. The numbers for the first name of our pictured celebrity are given. Work out which number represents which letter in the grid to reveal which morning show Gaynor Faye guest presented back in 2011.



More  
Puzzles  
Overleaf

## Suguru

Fill the grid so that each cell in a bold outlined cluster of cells contains the digits 1 and 2, a cluster of 3 cells contains 1, 2 and 3 and so on. No same digit should appear in any neighbouring cell, not even diagonally.

		2		
4				
		5	1	



Turn To  
Page 65 For  
Solutions

# All Muddled Up

We've taken three television shows starring Claire Foy and mixed up the letters. Can you say what they are?



HALL FLOW

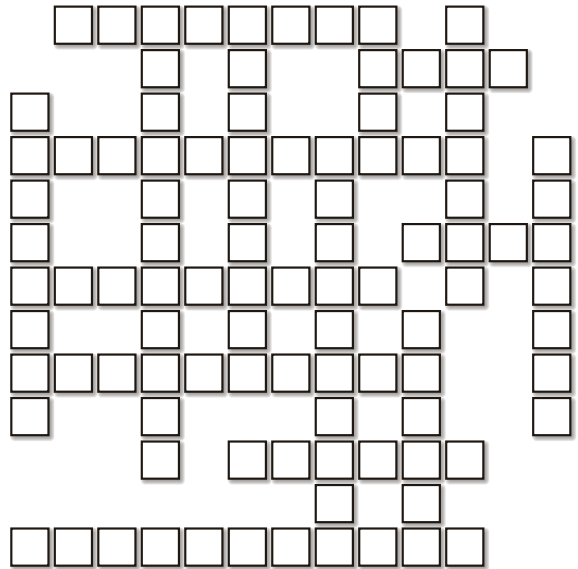
INSPIRATOR SAWDUSTS

WENCH ROT

# Kriss Cross

Try to fit all of the listed words back into the grid.

<b>4 letters</b>	LEEWAY	COUSCOUS	TIMEKEEPER
CHIN	<b>7 letters</b>	<b>9 letters</b>	<b>11 letters</b>
SCAN	DISEASE	CEASEFIRE	ADOLESCENCE
TSAR	REREDOS	CLASSICAL	TRENDSETTER
<b>6 letters</b>	<b>8 letters</b>	<b>10 letters</b>	USELESSNESS
GREASE	CAPACITY	ENCAMPMENT	



Discover the hidden word in the shaded squares and you can now enter by telephone or text

Missing Link  
No 627

## ACROSS

- 8 Tone, Trawler, Warning (5)
- 9 Audio, Vanilla, Yeast (7)
- 10 Dream, Mole, Rat (7)
- 11 Dig, Red, Structure (5)
- 12 Home, Public, Shared (9)
- 14 Around, Big, Questions (3)
- 15 Diligence, Over, Process (3)
- 16 Gold, Half, State (9)
- 19 Island, Pink, Reef (5)
- 21 Domestic, Maid, Public (7)
- 23 Almond, Peppermint, Vanilla (7)
- 24 Blossom, Chinese, Tree (5)

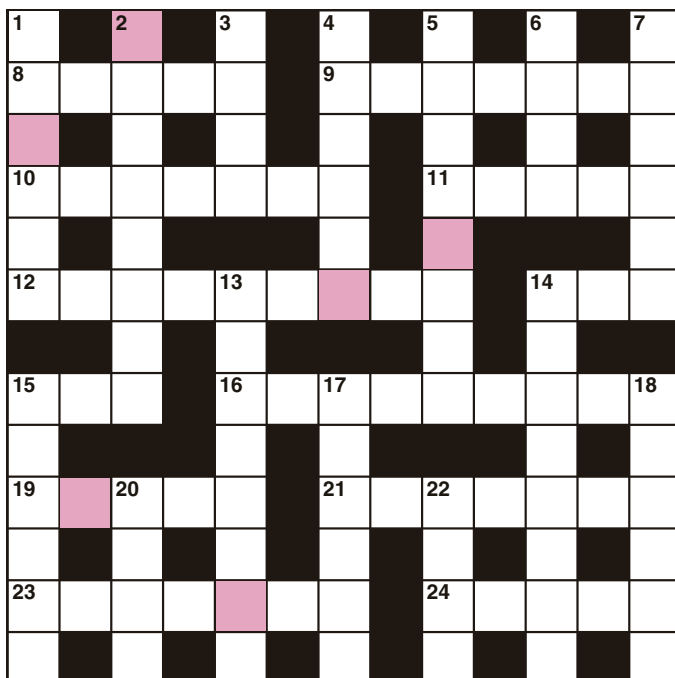
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Cheaper than  
a 2nd class  
stamp

## DOWN

- 1 Analysis, Logical, Therapy (6)
- 2 Custodial, Opening, Ungrammatical (8)
- 3 Column, Every, Half (4)
- 4 Fee, Party, Word (6)
- 5 Paint, Wallpaper, Wire (8)
- 6 Fatted, Love, Skin (4)
- 7 Counter, Dog, Panic (6)
- 13 Cattle, Leaves, Skirts (8)
- 14 Numbers, Relations, Settlement (8)
- 15 Absolute, Nisi, Royal (6)
- 17 Blood, Cargo, Seed (6)
- 18 Advance, Board, Give (6)
- 20 Easy, Home, Room (4)
- 22 Leading, Model, Title (4)

The answer to each clue is a word which has a link with each of the three words listed. This word may come at the end (eg **HEAD** linked with **BEACH**, **BIG**, **HAMMER**), at the beginning (eg **BLACK** linked with **BEAUTY**, **BOARD** and **JACK**) or a mixture of the two (eg **STONE** linked with **HAIL**, **LIME** and **WALL**).



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# GIFTS FROM THE HEART

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# guitar lessons

Is Debbie on a mid-life slippery slope? Or is her sister just being a stick-in-the-mud?

By Susan Wright

As soon as she'd taken her receipt, Debbie rushed out of the shop and dashed round to her sister's house.

"Sorry I'm late," she said when Claire opened her door. "I've been in the shops all morning, trying on jeans."

"Oh, and did you get some?"

"Yes, and they're lovely," Debbie replied happily as she held up a carrier bag and stepped into the hall. "They fit me brilliantly."

"Oh, good," Claire said. "Why did you get jeans, though? You reckoned you were too old for them a few years ago."

Debbie shrugged. "Well, I changed my mind. It's a woman's prerogative."

"OK," Claire replied, closing the front door. "You won't be able to wear them to work though, will you?"

"No, but I can wear them at home."

"Yes, and when you go to your guitar lessons," Claire said, as she led the way through to the kitchen where the lunch was laid out. "How are the lessons going? Can you play anything yet?"

Debbie smiled as she pulled out a chair and sat down. "Yes, I can, actually. I'm still not brilliant, but I've progressed beyond *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*. I would've been playing that forever if I hadn't decided to have lessons."

"Oh, I'm sure you would have learned from those books in the end," Claire said, sitting down as well.

"No, I don't think I would have done. Playing the guitar's harder than it looks – and it's painful too," Debbie said, as she inspected her sore fingertips. "Guy says my fingers will toughen up eventually, but I don't think they will."

Claire smiled as she poured them both a glass of wine. "Oh, I'm sure they will – and it sounds as if you're getting on with your teacher OK."

"Yes, Guy's nice."

"And he's good looking."

"Good-looking?" Debbie repeated suspiciously. "How do you know that?"

"I checked out his website. I was intrigued when you blushed every time you mentioned him last week, so I decided to see what he looks like."

Debbie blushed again as she played with her newly-dyed hair. "And?"

"And he's hot," Claire said as she reached for a sandwich and put it on her plate. "Have you slept with him yet?"

"Of course I haven't," Debbie snapped, feeling hot as she remembered the fantasies that had been playing in her mind when she'd tried on the jeans. "I am attracted to him though, and he kissed me last week, but..."

"And now you've bought some jeans," Claire interrupted.

"Well, yes, but..."

"Oh, you're such a cliché," Claire softened her words with a smile. "Did you know that loads of women take up an instrument when they're going through a midlife crisis?"

Debbie glared at her. "But I'm not going through a midlife crisis."

"Oh, you are. Before you bought that guitar, you kept saying that you'd felt empty and dissatisfied since the kids left home, and now you're one step away from adultery! And I don't think Stuart would be impressed if he knew you'd let Guy kiss you!"

"But it was only a kiss."

"It started with a kiss," Claire replied, quoting one of their favourite songs.

"Yes, but..."

"And it would be awful if you had to get divorced. Just think. Stuart would be devastated."

"Oh, no, he wouldn't," Debbie growled. "He hardly talks to me



nowadays. He's bored with me, Claire."

"No – he's just bored with the monotony of life. When I saw him last, he was talking about booking a holiday so he had something to look forward to."

"What? A holiday? On his own?"

Claire grinned. "No. With you, Debs. He asked me if I thought you'd fancy doing Route 66."

"Really?" Debbie's face lit up. "And what did you say?"

"I said you'd jump at the chance."

"And I would. Why hasn't he asked me?"

"He's still looking into it, but I expect he'll mention it soon, and it would be awesome, wouldn't it?"

"It would, yes."

"And you could wear your jeans," Claire said, as she picked up her sandwich. "Or you could tell Stuart you're not interested and carry on with your guitar lessons. It's up to you really."

"Yes – it's totally up to me," Debbie agreed, thinking how well her sister knew her as she held out her hand to reveal her raw fingertips.

"So how long do you think these will take to heal up?" MW

**FICTION EDITOR SUSAN SAYS...**

Don't forget there are lots more stories from our archives to read for free over at [www.myweekly.co.uk](http://www.myweekly.co.uk)





# STARRY INSIGHTS WITH RUSSELL

WEEK: FEB 5 – FEB 11, 2019

## AQUARIUS JAN 21 - FEB 19

Some news has caused distress. Give anyone who is aggressive time to calm down. Reflect before responding to a proposition later in the week.

**Astro Tip:** Listen out for new opportunities.

## PISCES FEB 20 - MAR 20

You may need to cancel plans for the sake of a new friend. Suggest compromises – there's a limit to what you can do in a day.

**Astro Tip:** Give yourself permission to take a break.

## ARIES MAR 21 - APR 20

You'll feel surrounded by exciting offers, romantically and financially. It will take all your discipline to control an urge to try something risky.

**Astro Tip:** Decide on your next goals.

## TAURUS APRIL 21 - MAY 21

You will be happy to be influenced by a friend's healthy ways. If it has been a while since you've done any exercise, start with a few simple strategies.

**Astro Tip:** Plan a holiday.

## GEMINI MAY 22 - JUN 21

It's hard to find enthusiasm for a project you eagerly began a few months ago. If someone offers to take it over, let them. Your family is supportive.

**Astro Tip:** Delegate some of your duties.

## CANCER JUN 22 - JUL 23

Gossip will seem to confirm suspicions about someone, but ask yourself if the information is actually true. Attending a big celebration will lift your spirits.

**Astro Tip:** Avoid impulse buys.

## LEO JUL 24 - AUG 23

An hour or two on your own will allow you to come to terms with developments. Your path looks brighter. Discussing plans should be fun.

**Astro Tip:** Voice your hopes and dreams.

## VIRGO AUG 24 - SEPT 23

Everyone seems to think you have time to drop everything for them. People take advantage of your kindness, so set healthy boundaries.

**Astro Tip:** Look at training and new qualifications.

## LIBRA SEP 24 - OCT 23

A massage, new scent or fine dining will deepen your sensual appreciation of life. A neighbour will make some strange suggestions.

**Astro Tip:** Organise a party for a friend.

## SCORPIO OCT 24 - NOV 22

An unexpected bill will knock your finances for six. There may be some delay in receiving resources to finance a new project, so be patient.

**Astro Tip:** Rearrange your domestic schedule.

## SAGITTARIUS NOV 23 - DEC 21

If there's a job you have been meaning to do, get it done now. Otherwise it will take twice as long. A disturbing dream will stay in your mind.

**Astro Tip:** See a person or situation through new eyes.

## CAPRICORN DEC 22 - JAN 20

Discuss family matters that need a quick decision. If you leave it too long, someone will act without consulting you and you won't be happy.

**Astro Tip:** Travel will give you inspiration.

Don't Miss Our  
Next Great Issue!  
**My Weekly**

## KATE

### A Decade To Remember



## HEART-SHAPED HAPPINESS



**PLUS** • Olly Murs tells us how happy he is on *The Voice*  
• Foods to make your heart healthy • Make your home an oasis of calm • Celebs reveal their secret childhood crushes!  
• The lowdown on lashes

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PICTURE: SHUTTERSTOCK, LIGHTHOUSE

## Solutions To Brain Boosters On Pages 61 & 62

### KRISS KROSS

COUSCOUS D  
S E A C H I N  
C A D O L E S C E N C E A R E  
P A S S F C T S A R E  
I T I M E K E E P E R G E D O S  
Y S L E E W A Y N S  
T R E N D S E T T E R

### WORD WHEEL

The nine-letter word is MECHANISM

### ALL MUDDLED UP!

Wolf Hall, Upstairs Downstairs, The Crown

### CODEBREAKER

Phrase: Lorraine

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

### SUDOKU

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

### SUGURU

2	1	3	1	3
3	4	2	4	2
1	5	1	3	1
4	3	2	4	2
2	1	5	1	3

### MISSING LINK 624

**ACROSS:** 8 Tarot 9 Another 10 Centred 11 Ridge 12 Sheffield 14 End 15 Ass 16 Awareness 19 Toast 21 Cubicle 23 Samurai 24 Issue  
**DOWN:** Sticks 2 Drinkers 3 Star 4 Handle 5 Porridge 6 Shod 7 Friend 13 Fracture 14 Exercise 15 Artist 17 Arctic 18 Stereo 20 Arms 22 Boil  
**SHADED WORD:** INSOLE

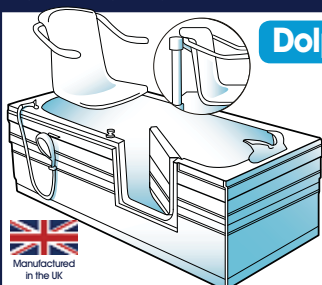
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## Miscellaneous

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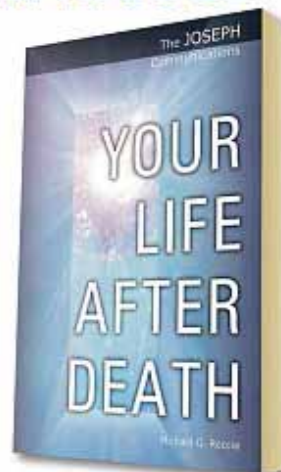
## Miscellaneous

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'Wow - amazing book!!!' Kelly Williams (Amazon UK)

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**WOW!** Before February 1957, the "Toddler's Truce" saw BBC television shut down between 5pm and 6pm so that children could be put to bed.

◆ Smoke from forest fires in Canada turned the sun blue over much of Britain on one day in 1950.



The name Orson means "bear cub"

◆ February's full moon is called the Snow Moon.

◆ Germany established its first nudist beach on the island of Sylt in 1920.

◆ The Million Lottery was the first English state lottery, launched in 1694.



◆ Kinemacolor was the first successful colour motion picture process, invented by George Albert Smith in 1906.

◆ Toothache drops for children containing cocaine were on sale in 1885.



The world speed record for a tractor is 135mph

◆ 89-year-old Anne Lorimor is the oldest woman to climb the 15,000ft Mount Kilimanjaro.

◆ A new species of wasp discovered in Mexico has been named after actor Idris Elba.



The first biscuit eaten on the moon was a bourbon consumed by Buzz Aldrin

◆ A deacon wears their stole diagonally across their chest. The ends of a priest's stole hang vertically.

◆ Rod Stewart has spent 26 years building a 1500 sq ft model railway based on Manhattan, complete with 5ft tall skyscrapers!

**WOW!** In the days when all men wore hats, Straw Hat Day marked the beginning of summer and Felt Hat Day marked the coming of winter.

◆ What a shocker! Electric eels are not really eels at all. Instead they belong to the knifefish family.



Paula, the world's oldest sloth, is 50 years old (which is 90 in sloth years)

◆ Chicken dung was considered to be a cure for baldness in the 17th century.

◆ Penny-farthings were not so called until they were rendered almost obsolete by modern bicycles. They were originally just called bicycles.



◆ When women got the vote after the First World War, it was restricted to the over-30s.

◆ Income tax was first introduced in Britain in 1799, to subsidise the Napoleonic Wars.

◆ Mark Twain was the first author to submit a book manuscript written on a typewriter.



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