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Your **BUMPER** festive issue!

5 DEC 2019  
ISSUE  
48-49

REAL LIFE, PUZZLES & MORE

# chat



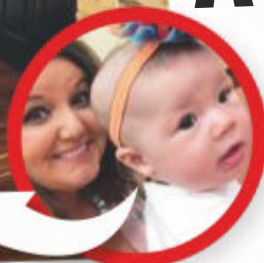
**TRUE EVIL**  
Sick Santa's  
grotto of  
shame

**He killed  
our angel...**  
What he did next  
was so despicable



**Shock under the tree!**

A stranger  
**GAVE** us  
her baby



**Would a  
sex toy ruin  
my boy's  
Nativity play?**



Feeling  
sheepish!

**Tangled family Christmas**

**Hubby  
got my  
son's ex  
PREGNANT**

**Now I'm raising her little boy**

**THAT'S CHRISTMAS SORTED!**

**IMPRESS  
FOR LESS**  
with festive  
treats



**GLAM**  
party looks



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pressie  
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# Come on in!

## Welcome to this week's *Chat*...



p14

**O**ur bumper festive issue of *Chat* is stuffed with real-life stories. Amber spent last 25 December under the knife. Find out why she's celebrating now (p47). After two tragic Christmases Jake is hoping this year his family's luck will change (p66). And Helen felt sheepish after buying her son a cringey Nativity costume (p61). Plus we've got all you need for the best Christmas yet, from



p66



p54



p47



p61



p64

party looks (p14) to gift ideas (p54) and food to impress (p64). Maybe you'll win a festive bonus with our prize puzzles? Have a fab one!

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# Picture perfect

## Another fun-filled week in Chat land

On a visit to London, my mum Loraine couldn't resist having her photo taken in a royal carriage. We only spotted her carrier bag on display later. Not very regal!  
*Lorna Ridgway, Milton Keynes*

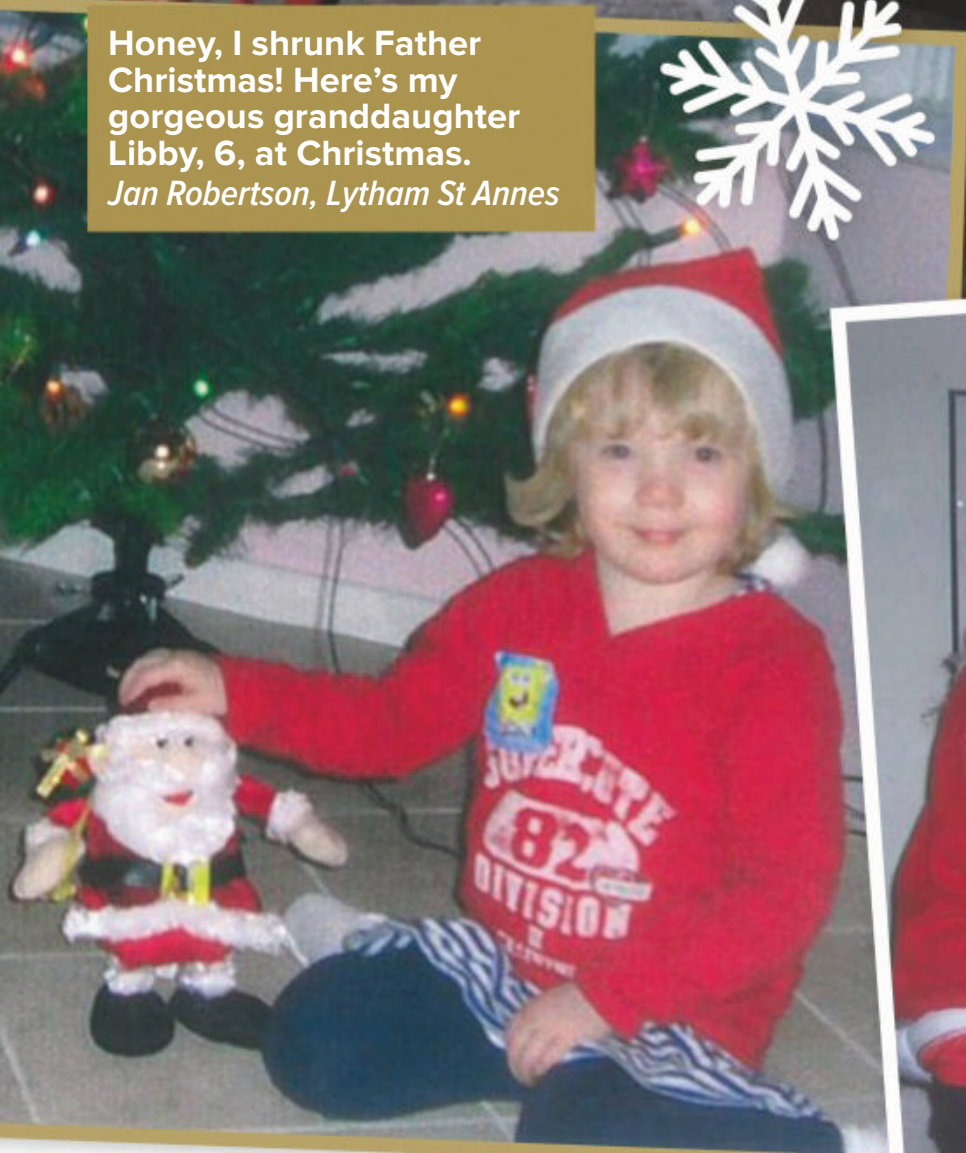


The kids were so excited waiting for Father Christmas on Christmas Eve! From left to right, Sofia, 3, Millie, 9, Noah, 7, and Ella, 11.  
*Rachel Fleet, King's Lynn*



Peggy needed a rest from her elf duties from Santa. Isn't she adorable?  
*Jay Arrowsmith, Daventry*

Honey, I shrunk Father Christmas! Here's my gorgeous granddaughter Libby, 6, at Christmas.  
*Jan Robertson, Lytham St Annes*



I was really surprised to meet Santa at our Halton Housing party last year, and hope to see him again this year. He even gave me a present. You're never too old, at 82, to believe in Santa!  
*Una Gahan, Runcorn*







My daughter Charlotte, 12, dressed the part for an *Elf* family photo!  
Sarah Jefferson, Burnley

When my daughter Sienna, 12, was younger, we didn't have much snow so made the most of it when we did. We couldn't find any stones for the eyes, so used chocolate buttons!  
Catherine Molineux, Wadhurst



I can't wait for our first Christmas with my new great-granddaughter Emmie. She's most definitely *picture perfect*!  
Shiela Seymour, Doncaster



As you can see, my dog Rio just loves celebrating Christmas!  
Cassie Tahiraj, Manchester



Here's some of my family – a combination of my kids, grandkids and in-laws – posing together in our festive pyjamas last Christmas. I'm in the front, second from the left, and love nothing more than being surrounded by loved ones!  
Pauline Wheeler, Upholland

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# Gone in an instant



I was so close to my sister

**My fun-loving sis was the light of our lives**

Becca Gow, 32, Belfast

**B**ouncing into the kitchen in pink unicorn PJs, with an eye mask on her head, my sister Lisa did a twirl. Struck a pose as I snapped a pic on my phone. ‘Ta-dah!’ she grinned, flicking her glossy dark hair. *So dramatic!*

‘You’re 32-going-on-12,’ I giggled.

It was Christmas morning 2017, and Lisa was just as excited as she’d been when she was a little girl.

I was only 14 months younger than her. Growing up we’d been as thick as thieves, playing tricks on our big sister Kelly-Ann, 36.

But me and Kelly-Ann were tomboys and Lisa was the girly girl.

*Little Lady Lisa.*

Her birthday was 19 December, so Christmas was her favourite time of year. In November, she’d deck her house in tinsel and lights.

This year, as usual, we

were staying with our mum Agnes, 62, and dad Peter, 64.

There were also Kelly-Ann’s two children, Mason, then 8, and Charlie, 4, and Lisa’s two, Olivia, 8, and 6-year-old Tyler.

A right squeeze!

But some family traditions never die. Like alcopops at midday and staying in our PJs until mid-afternoon.

Then we’d pile into the living room to watch the kids open their presents. Lisa loved playing with their toys almost as much as they did!

She lived for Olivia and Tyler.

*Such a fun mummy.*

Running round the park with them, crawling down the slides at our local soft-play centre...

She didn’t care what other people thought!

And this Christmas was the same, dancing around the room to festive tunes, a big smile on her face.

But a few months later, in April 2018, I went to visit Lisa one afternoon and

found her down in the dumps.

She’d been decorating, just had new carpets fitted.

‘Everything’s chaos,’ she sighed. The stress was getting to her.

‘It’s going to look great in no time,’ I soothed.

But Lisa’s face crumpled. ‘There’s so much to do,’ she sniffed as I grabbed her a can of cola from the fridge.

Lisa rarely cried in front of the kids. Didn’t like upsetting them.

Next thing we knew, Olivia poked her head round the kitchen door.

Then she came padding in with a note in her hand. She’d written it herself.

*We love you so much, Mummy, please don’t cry.*

With a smile, Lisa brushed away her tears.

Pulled her girl on to her lap for a cuddle.

*So cute.*

The next day, I was busy working in my retail job when a notification from the local paper popped up



Us girls. L-R: Kelly-Ann, Lisa, Mum and me

on my phone screen.

There’d been a big accident on the main road just round the corner from Lisa’s house. Something about a police chase.

*Have you seen this?* I texted Lisa, sending her a link.

But she didn’t reply.

I could see she’d not logged on to Facebook for a couple of hours, too.

*Busy decorating,* I thought.

I talked to my colleagues about the crash. Apparently, the police had been chasing a joyrider in a stolen car at around 11am. He’d ploughed onto the pavement and a woman had been killed.

*Tragic.*

When I read in an online

**This was her favourite time of year**





**Lisa and Olivia**  
– her children  
were her world



**She was such a big kid on 25 December!**

news update that the victim had been in her 20s, I couldn't help feeling relieved. *Not Lisa.*

Although she'd always looked young for her age...

So I texted her again.

*Still no answer.*

On my lunch break, I called Dad.

'Have you seen what's happened on the main road?' I said.

'Some poor family will be getting a knock at the door this afternoon,' he replied.

'You don't think it's our Lisa, do you?' I gulped, my stomach suddenly churning. But Dad batted away my concerns.

'You're such a worrier,' he soothed. 'Mum spoke to her earlier and she was going to have a nap after the school run.'

'OK,' I sighed, reassured.

Only, as I went back to work, I couldn't get the crash out of my head.

Kept checking my phone for a reply from Lisa.

Then, half an hour later, at 2pm, my phone

suddenly lit up... *Dad.*

And as soon as I heard his voice, I knew...

'Becca,' he choked. 'The accident...it was our Lisa.'

'No!' I cried.

My legs felt like jelly.

Falling to my knees, my workmates rushed over.

'I need to go there,' I wept.

A friend drove me to the scene of the crash. A van was lying horizontal in the road. Car parts were strewn around.

On the pavement, a white tent had been erected to hide Lisa's body.

I found my mum hunched in the back of a police car.

'Mum!' I wailed, wrapping my arms around her as we both sobbed uncontrollably.

A police family liaison officer came over.

'Was it instant?' I wept.

'Judging by her head injury, yes,' she nodded.

*Thank God*, I thought, closing my eyes.

I couldn't stand the thought of my sister being in pain.

Police drove me and Mum

home, where Dad was waiting with Olivia. Tyler, 6, had gone to his dad's.

But Olivia, 9, was howling in anguish.

'Mummy's gone to be with the angels now,' I whispered as she clung to me, sobbing.

We were all utterly devastated, in shock.

The next days were a blur as we stayed with Mum and Dad.

Lisa's friends came to give their condolences.

'How can she be gone?' one wept. 'She was always so full of life.'

The liaison officer came round with the belongings Lisa had on her at the time of the crash.

'We found this in her pocket,' she said, handing me the note Olivia had given her a few days before.

*We love you so much, Mummy, please don't cry...*

**I wrapped  
my arms  
around  
Mum and  
we sobbed**

**Our family's pain  
is made worse**



# Snoozing KILLER

*How dare he nod off in the dock – after what he'd done?*

**W**e tucked that letter into Lisa's coffin when we buried her a few weeks later.

Meanwhile, police arrested the driver of the car that had killed her.

Martin Nelson had over 200 previous convictions to his name and had only just got out of prison.

On that fateful day, he'd broken into a house and stolen the keys to an Audi.

Then he'd driven recklessly through Belfast at speeds of up to 117mph, with a police helicopter hovering overhead.

He'd jumped lights and driven on the wrong side of the road, flying through residential areas at over twice the speed limit.

We'll never know why Lisa was walking along the Ballysillan Road, beside the leisure centre, as Nelson sped towards her. We think she'd just popped to the corner shop.

Nelson was driving at over 60mph when he

smashed into a parked van, then ricocheted onto the pavement where my sister was walking.

*Horrifying.*

That December, on what would have been Lisa's

33rd birthday, we put flowers on the pavement where she'd died.

Let off paper lanterns into the night sky.

And a week later, on

Christmas Day, we all rallied round for the kids.

But nothing was the same without Lisa. Even with the kids, the house seemed quiet.

'Let's say a prayer for our

**11 years?  
They should  
throw away  
the key**

*Me and Olivia – her mum is forever in our hearts*



*Our Christmas angel Lisa*

Lisa,' said Dad, choked with emotion, as we sat down for our Christmas dinner.

This July, our entire family packed into Belfast Crown Court to see Martin Alexander Nelson, 40, admit a string of offences, including causing death by dangerous driving.

When they played the CCTV footage of Lisa's death, recorded by the police helicopter, we all left the room.

'I couldn't bear to see her suffer,' I wept.

I was disgusted when Nelson was allowed to leave the court room, too.

'He should face up to what he did,' I muttered.

During the hearing, Nelson threw us yet another

painful blow.

His head dropped forward, eyes closed. 'He's falling asleep,' hissed Dad.

Disgustingly, Nelson fell asleep several times.

*How could he?!*

The prison officer beside him kept nudging him with his elbow.

The judge jailed him for 11 years, but they should've thrown away the key.

'Rot in hell!' Mum shouted as they led him down.

This Christmas, we'll be putting on brave faces for the sake of Olivia and Tyler.

We'll put up the tree, snuggle in our PJs, and raise a toast to Lisa.

Our Christmas angel watching over us.

But, deep down, our hearts will always be broken.

We're sharing Lisa's story to make everyone think twice when they get behind the wheel.

Watch your speed, wear your seatbelt, and never drink and drive.

Cars in the wrong hands become deadly.

Please stay safe on the roads this Christmas.

**The family are donating the fee for their story to Autism NI.**

*Jailed: Martin Nelson*





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# Win! £500 cash!

## NUMBER JIG

A letter to Santa was found in a book donated to a charity shop how many years after it was written?

Fit these numbers into the grid. One number doesn't fit. This is the prize answer.

### 3 digits

104  
120  
231  
265  
274  
461  
506  
515  
565  
634  
685  
876  
900

### 4 digits

1538  
1770  
1840  
3216  
4757  
6287  
6662  
9381  
9520

74342

74363  
81985

### 6 digits

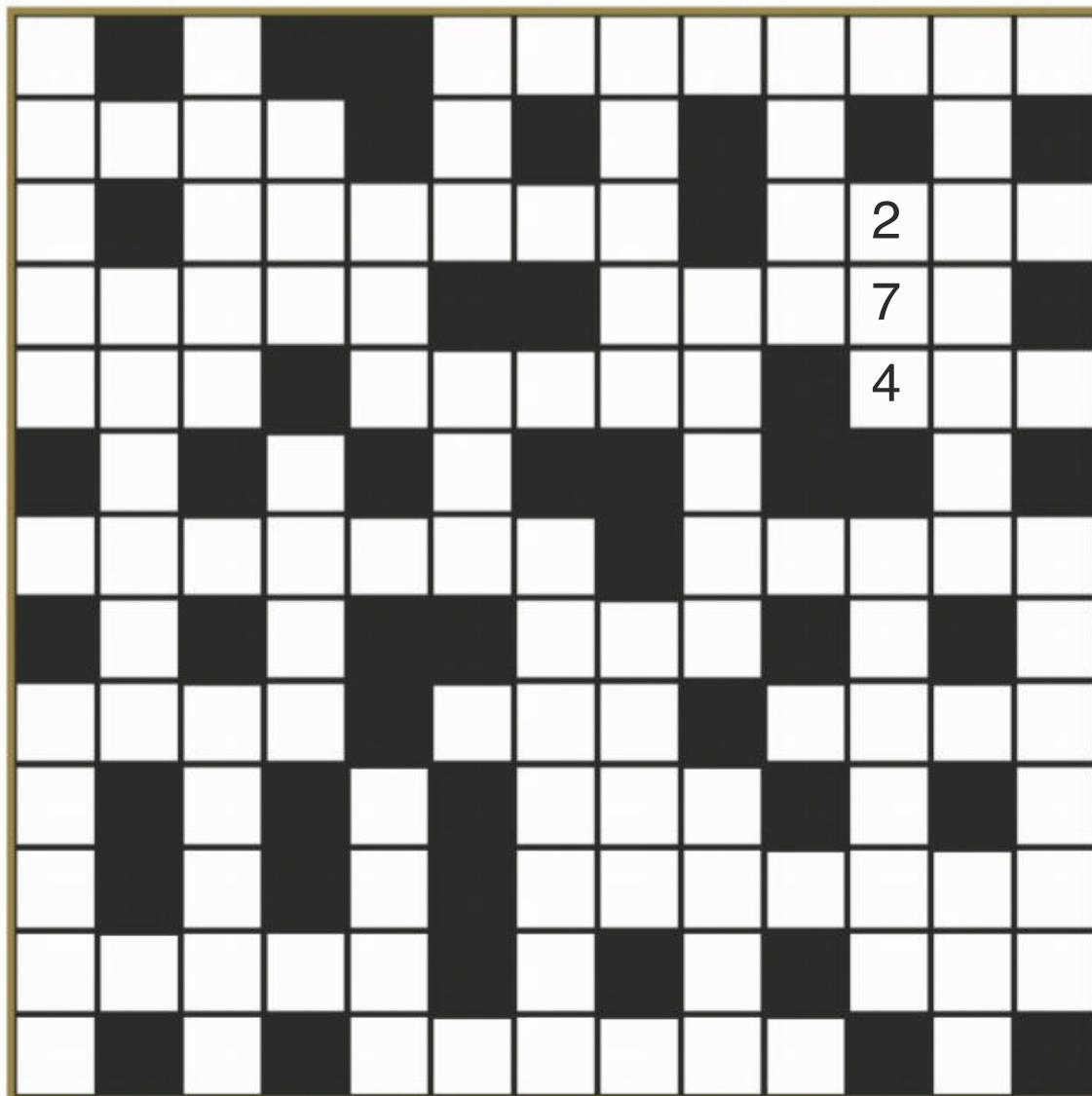
168707  
303861  
321424  
731301  
932051

### 7 digits

3582521  
4080686  
4715163  
5885652

### 8 digits

93506848



**WIN**  
**£250**  
Puzzle 1

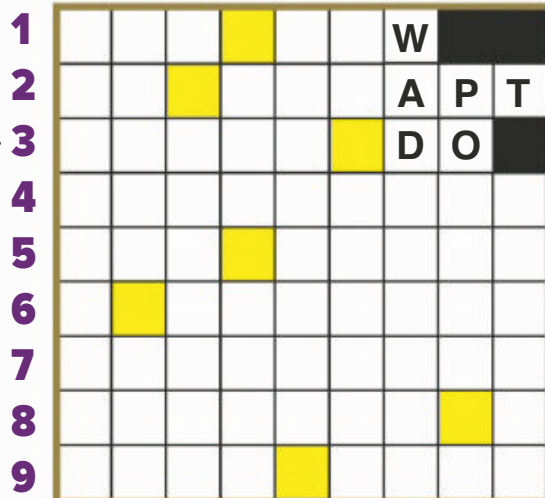
Your answer:

## PIECEWORD

The supermarket chain Iceland installed what type of entertainment in one of their stores last Christmas?

The number next to the clue tells you which line the answer's in. We've put a section in to start you off! There may be two Across answers in one line. Down words fill themselves in. The shaded squares spell the two-word prize answer.

E	R	I	N	E	C	U
E	N	D	A	A	S	S
D	R	P	E	P		
W	R	L	I	S		
A	P	T	E	S	I	C
D	O	O	K	E	T	O
D	A	T	E	S	A	N
V	L	T	R	U	N	
V	I	C	S	E	D	E



- 1 Muscular power
- 2 Latin 'thus'
- 3 Aquatic missile

- 4 Facts given • headland
- 5 Score in cricket
- 6 Gripping tool • Exploited

- 7 More twisted
- 8 Chump • Bring to a close
- 9 Prodded

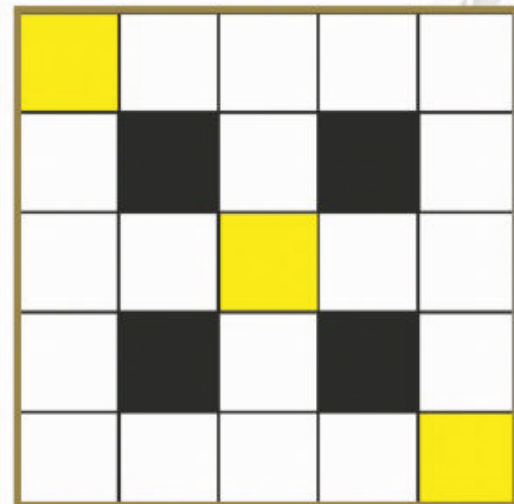
**WIN**  
**£150**  
Puzzle 2

Your answer:

## TAKE THREE

Running up to St Nicholas Day in early December, children in the Netherlands traditionally leave out wooden shoes filled with carrots and what else?

To find out, solve the puzzle... The three answers in this puzzle read the same across and down. The clues are given, but not in the right order. Read down the shaded squares to spell the prize answer.



**BEE'S**  
**PRODUCT**  
**COMMON**  
**LAND**  
**ANOTHER**  
**TIME**

**WIN**  
**4x**  
**£25**  
Puzzle 3

Your answer:



# Keeping it in the family

*When my hubby moved out, he didn't need to look very far for his next partner*

*Nicola Adams, 37, Birmingham*



*Trevor and I finally found time to wed*

**M**y hand flew to my mouth in shock as my son Shaun's news sank in.

'You're going to be a grandma,' he smiled.

It was December 2013, and Shaun was only 16.

'But you haven't sat your GCSEs yet,' I said tearfully.

'We'll make it work,' Shaun shrugged.

I knew he wasn't ready to be a dad – he was too young.

Me and his father Trevor, then 32, knew more than anyone just how tough it could be.

Childhood sweethearts, we'd had Shaun when we were young, too.

We'd gone on to have two more boys and two girls.

Life wasn't perfect, but we'd managed.

Sixteen years on and we'd

only just started to enjoy a bit of freedom again.

Squeezing in the odd drink at the local between school runs, work, cooking and cleaning.

Trevor and I hadn't even had time to get married until the August just gone, when we'd finally tied the knot.

This was our time now.

Besides, I'd never really taken to Shaun's girlfriend Joanne, then 19. She was older.

But Trevor had much more time for her.

'Give her a chance,' he said as we lay in bed that night. He was right – especially now that there was a baby on the way.

So, as Joanne lived alone,

I invited her to move in.

We turned Shaun's room into a nursery, bought a cot.

Then, as we all gazed at the monitor, crying happy tears at Joanne's 12-week scan, we bonded.

We'd all love this baby, that was all that mattered.

From then on, Joanne

would ask advice about the birth and we shopped for baby things together.

By the time my grandson was born in May 2014, I was

totally smitten.

He was the apple of his granny's eye.

Only, Joanne and Shaun struggled. I helped as much

as possible, changing nappies, sterilising bottles in the dead of night.

'I'm exhausted,' I groaned to Trevor one evening that October.

'I was going to suggest a film,' he said hopefully.

Poor Trev – I'd hardly had any time for him lately.

'OK,' I yawned, before nodding off on the sofa.

Meanwhile, Shaun and Joanne were always bickering and eventually split up.

Joanne moved back into her old flat nearby, leaving the baby with us.

'I'm sorry, son,' I told Shaun. He was really cut up about it.

In December 2015,

**Poor Trev – I'd hardly had any time for him lately**





Shaun and Joanne had a baby together

with Joanne's blessing, I was granted a child arrangement order through the courts. My grandson would live permanently with me. I had a lot on my plate, supporting Shaun and the other kids, and cracks began to show between me and Trevor. We argued lots, he'd stay out until all hours. *It's just a bad patch,* I told myself.

So I was heartbroken when he announced he was moving out that same month, after 19 years together.

'Maybe I'm better off,' I sobbed to Shaun.

Whenever Trevor visited the kids, he was distant.

Then, one day in January 2017, we heard a weird rumour from a friend.

Trevor and Joanne were an item.

I laughed. Shaun laughed, too.

'Dad and Joanne? As if!' he said, rolling his eyes.

We both knew what the rumour mill was

like around our way, people stirring up trouble. Besides, Trevor wouldn't do that to me, or to Shaun.

Then, a few weeks later, my neighbour popped over for a cuppa.

'What do you think about Trevor and Joanne?' he said.

'Not this again,' I sighed, changing the subject.

But my heart raced. *Maybe this was more*

*than just silly gossip?*

Later, lying in bed, I played it over in my mind.

Surely Trevor couldn't have started a relationship with our son's ex – his grandson's mother.

*Could he?*

I shuddered, the thought was just too much to bear.

And how would Shaun cope with the news? He idolised his dad, the pair of them had always been as thick as thieves.

*He'll never forgive him,* I thought.

And neither would I.

As I was plucking up the courage to confront Trevor, my neighbour sent me a photo of Trevor and Joanne waltzing down the street together.

Joanne was grinning from ear to ear, and when I looked closer, my stomach churned.

'She looks pregnant!' I gasped, shocked.

I dialled Trevor's number.

'What's going on?' I demanded, voice shaking.

'What do you mean?' he mumbled.

But I could hear the fear in his voice – he'd been caught out.

'You and Joanne!' I boomed.

He hung up. I felt sick – my husband was dating my son's ex-girlfriend, the mother of his grandson.

And now she was pregnant!

*How long has it been going on?*

I texted Trevor.

He didn't reply.

*Well, I hope you're both very happy,* I texted, tears streaming.

Later, when I told Shaun the sickening truth, his face went pale.

'I don't want anything to do with him!' he yelled, storming off to his room.

For days, I was so angry, I couldn't

even think straight.

How could Trevor do it? Not just to me, but his son, too.

Afterwards, Trevor avoided coming to the house. He got the children to go to his.

When Trevor and Joanne's baby was born, I felt numb.

But poor Shaun was totally devastated.

'I'll never forgive him, Mum,' he said, as we

flicked through photos of their new baby on Facebook.

That baby was Shaun's half-brother, but his son's half-brother, too.

It was wrong.

But we had to move on, and slowly, we did.

Shaun eventually met someone else, and my kids got me through the bad days.

Trevor and Joanne went on to have another baby, but I've heard they've since split up.

I'm not surprised.

I refuse to waste a moment's more heartbreak on that pair.

My beautiful grandson, now 5, still lives full-time with me. And he's still the apple of my eye.

He's the only good thing to come out of this whole, sorry mess.

## 'IT'S DISGUSTING AND WRONG!'

Shaun says, 'I never thought Trevor would sink that low. It's just disgusting and wrong. I don't have a relationship with Trevor at all.'

## 'I FEEL BAD'

Trevor says, 'Yeah, it's all true. I feel bad about everything that's happened. It shouldn't have happened, but it did happen. It is how it is. Shaun and I have spoken. I can understand how his attitude is towards me. It will take some time but I will get my son back. I know I've betrayed Shaun.'



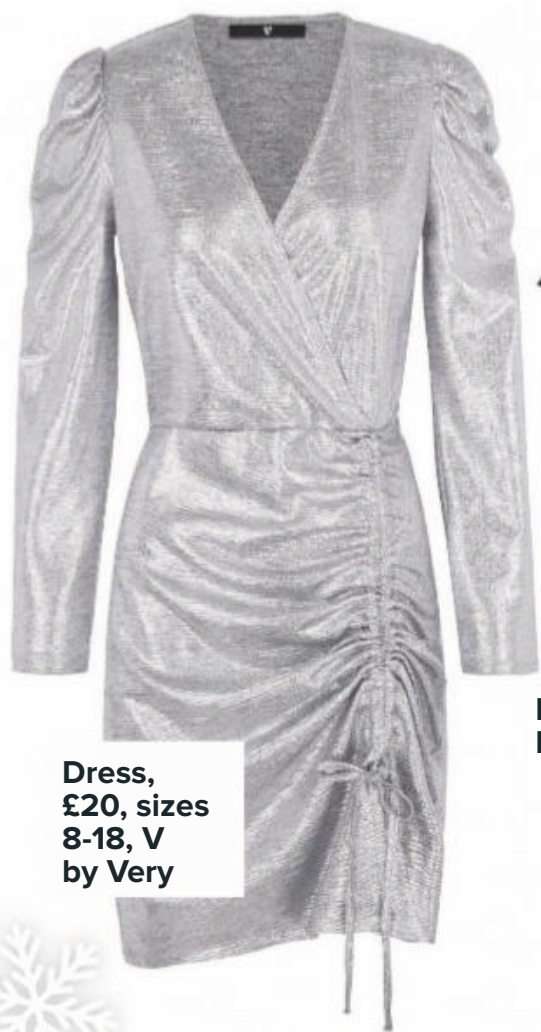
Shaun and I are moving on



# GET READY TO PARTY

## BACK TO BLACK

*'Tis the season to sparkle and shine!*



Dress, £20, sizes 8-18, V by Very



Top, £28, sizes 6-22, Next



Shoes, £24, Lipsy at Next



Skirt, £25, sizes xs-l, boohoo.com



Jumper, £25, sizes 6-22, F&F Clothing



Shoes, £39, Wallis



Top, £13, sizes 8-20, Primark



Earrings, £12, Monsoon



Jacket, £35, sizes 16-24, boohoo.com



Dress, £34.99, sizes 8-18, Quiz Clothing



Bag, £14, boohoo.com



Shoes, £29.99, Zara



# TY

**£40**  
**AND UNDER**



Blazer, £39, trousers, £39, bag, £24, top, £35, skirt, £39, all sizes 8-20, M&Co; shoes and jewellery, models' own



Dress, £35, sizes 4-18, Topshop



**FAUX  
LEATHER**

Trousers, £24, sizes 4-22, H&M

**Turn over for more  
festive looks**



# GOING FOR GOLD

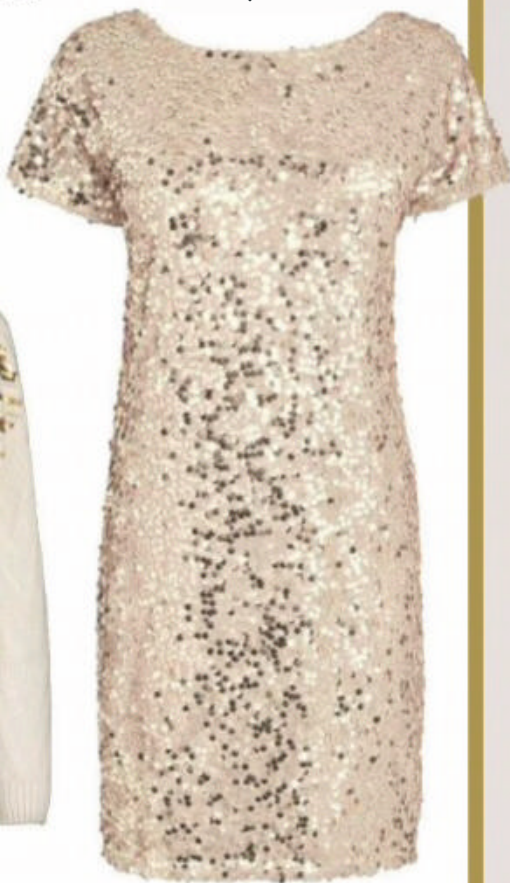
**Mix and match light gold and bronze tones for a fabulous tonal outfit**

Dress, £26, sizes 6-22, Next



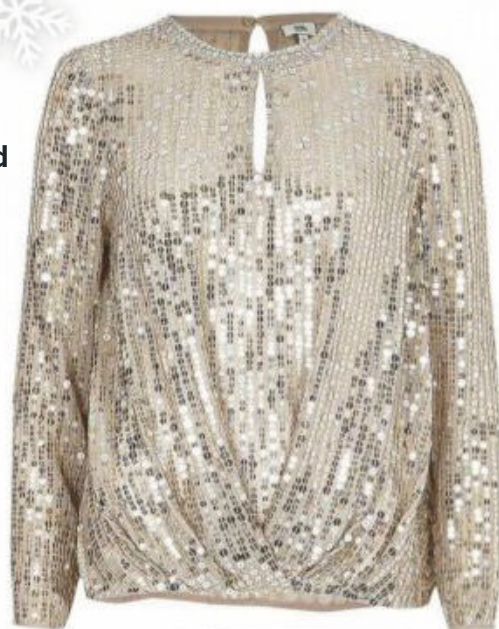
Top, £25, sizes 6-24, M&S

Jumper, £25, sizes 6-22, F&F Clothing



Shoes, £29.99, Zara

Top, £40, sizes 6-18, River Island



Bag, £33, Head Over Heels



Earrings, £9.99, H&M



Trousers, £30, sizes 10-20, Roman

Shoes, £13, Dorothy Perkins



Skirt, £30, sizes 6-22, F&F Clothing



Dress, £40, sizes 6-22, shoes, £19, both F&F Clothing





Skirt, £40,  
sizes 6-18,  
Joe Browns



Earrings,  
£10,  
Next

Top, £30,  
sizes 6-22,  
Next



Shoes, £39,  
Faith at  
Debenhams



Bag, £28, Skinnydip  
London



Dress,  
£27.99,  
sizes  
6-18,  
New  
Look



Bag, £30,  
Monsoon



Dress,  
£35,  
sizes  
8-18,  
Quiz  
Clothing



Earrings, £12.50, Topshop

Top, £28,  
sizes 8-20,  
M&Co



Top,  
£26,  
sizes  
8-20,  
M&Co



Top, £24, trousers,  
£28, both sizes  
6-22, hair clip,  
£8.50, bag, £25,  
all Dorothy Perkins

# JEWEL TONES

*Velvet and satin fabrics  
in rich shades are made  
for the festive season*



# Too soon for GOODBYE

## Our family has just one wish for next year

Jasmine McCaffery, 24, Blackpool

Applying my mascara, I glanced at the pregnancy test beside me. Three minutes had passed – and in a few moments, I'd know if I was going to be a mummy again. Taking a deep breath, I turned it over and saw one distinct line.

And one that was faded. Unsure what that meant, I threw the test in the bin.

Tried to put it out of my mind and enjoy what was left of 2018.

Just to be safe, though, I wouldn't drink tonight.

'But it's New Year's Eve!' my partner Kyle, 22, protested.

'I'll drive instead,' I smiled.

Besides, I'd not drunk last New Year, either.

See, in December 2017, I'd been seven months pregnant with our son, Lucas-Jay.

At first, the pregnancy had been fine.

But at the 19-week scan,

the sonographer noticed something wrong.

'He has hypoplastic left heart syndrome,' she said, explaining that it was a birth defect preventing the left ventricle from developing properly.

Sadly, that meant his chance of survival was just 50 per cent.

*Devastating.*

Still, we clung to the hope that he'd make it and we'd be able to bring him home to meet his sister Hallie-Mae, then nearly 2.

As soon as he was

born at St Mary's Hospital, in Manchester, on 20 February 2018, Lucas-Jay was whisked away and put on 100 per cent oxygen.

But that's when doctors discovered one of his major heart valves was blocked.

It meant that heart surgery was far too risky, there was no way he'd survive.

There was nothing else doctors could do.

Heartbroken, Kyle and I agreed to take Lucas-Jay off his machines.

But first we cuddled him, took

photos and arranged for Hallie-Mae and our family and friends to say their hellos and goodbyes.

And at 9 hours old, as we cradled him in our arms, Lucas-Jay passed away.

My heart shattered.

Even after we buried him, in a tiny coffin, it wasn't like we

**My heart shattered. We were consumed by grief**

could move on.

At home, there were constant reminders. Teddies he'd never play with. Tiny sleepsuits he'd never wear.

We were consumed by grief – and for a few months, we were convinced that we'd never have another baby.

But, deep down, we dearly wanted a sibling for Hallie-Mae.

So, in July 2018, we asked our doctors about the risks.

They assured us that it was unlikely to be a genetic issue, and said that there was only a two per cent chance of our future children developing the same condition.

So, nervously, we decided to try again.

And up until New Year's Eve 2018, we'd had no luck.

One negative pregnancy test after another.

That night, my mind was on what 2019 would bring for our family.

And in the morning, I took another test, waited the eternal three minutes and...

'I'm pregnant!' I told Kyle, jumping into his arms.

Seeing our bundle on screen at an early seven-week scan, I smiled for the first time in months.

'Our rainbow baby,' I beamed.

*A miracle.*

At 14 weeks, we learnt that we were having a girl.

Two weeks later, at another scan, I asked



We'd lost our darling Lucas-Jay



Pregnant with Ivy-Rose



r



*I want lots more precious cuddles with Ivy-Rose*



*Hallie-Mae and Kyle at Lucas-Jay's graveside*

doctors to check her heart...

That's when we found out that her heart was missing the lower left ventricle.

'This can't be happening again,' I sobbed.

Doctors explained that, this time, there was a 75 per cent chance of survival.

But then, at 20 weeks, another scan revealed that our baby's pulmonary vein was obstructed.

*Like history repeating itself.*

So, at 28 weeks, we were referred to Evelina London Children's Hospital, to see if anything could

be done. And an MRI revealed our baby girl had a problem with her lungs called lymphangiectasia.

It meant that, again, surgery was out of the question.

And that it was likely our baby wouldn't be born alive.

On 6 September this year, I was induced and delivered Ivy-Rose in a Bereavement unit of the delivery suite.

Doctors checked on us

regularly, told us to spend as much time with Ivy-Rose as we could.

I sat by her cot for hours. 'Mummy loves you,' I'd

whisper, wishing things could be different.

When she was 2 days old, she was moved to Claire House Children's Hospice, Wirral.

Kyle, Hallie-Mae and I moved into a family room with her.

We did our best to make memories and be a

**We see our baby girl fighting, and that gives me hope**

family. But we were constantly on edge, expecting her to fade away.

Yet, as days went by, Ivy-Rose grew stronger.

She started feeding from a bottle, breathing for herself.

*Incredible!*

And when Ivy-Rose was 3 weeks old, we were able to bring her home.

For a few days, we had some level of normal family life.

'Do you want a cuddle with your baby sister?' I'd ask Hallie-Mae, and she'd eagerly reach out her arms.

But at the start of October, Ivy-Rose's condition deteriorated and she was moved into Brian House Children's Hospice, in Blackpool.

Now she's back on feeding tubes, and oxygen when she needs it.

We see her struggling but we also see her fighting, and that gives me hope.

Kyle and I have had tests which have ruled out a genetic link to the condition.

Still, we're too broken-hearted to contemplate ever trying for another baby.

It's all just a terrible twist of fate.

The truth is that 2020 might be the year we lose Ivy-Rose.

Our precious rainbow baby.

But we're not ready to give in yet – and this New Year, we're praying for another miracle.



# In the LINE

*Who fired the bullets that killed Officer Hawkins?*

**A** police officer had just finished Christmas Eve dinner with his family when he got the call.

Aubrey Hawkins, 29, received a report of a suspected robbery at a nearby sports shop on 24 December 2000.

He'd been with Irving Police Department, Dallas, for just over a year. Was a devoted family man and a dedicated police officer.

'I'll see you in the morning, honey, I love you,' he told his wife Lori and 9-year-old son as he raced away from the restaurant where they'd been eating with relatives.

But as he reached Oshman's Super Sport USA minutes later, he came under a barrage of gunfire in his police car.

He was shot 11 times.

The gang robbing the shop were prisoners who'd broken out of a Texas prison two weeks earlier, after storming

a guard tower and driving off in a prison truck with stolen weapons.

Now they'd turned those weapons on Officer Hawkins.

As he lay wounded in his police car, they pulled him out. Ran over his body, dragging it at least 10 feet, before they sped off in a getaway vehicle.

## **Manhunt launched**

When Officer Hawkins' wife Lori heard a knock on her front door later, she thought it was carol singers.

Instead, the authorities had come to tell her that her husband had been killed, that Christmas Eve.

The gang had escaped with over \$70,000 (around £55,000) and 44 more guns they'd seized from the shop.

A manhunt was launched. But it was a month before the gang was apprehended – more than 1,500 miles away in Colorado Springs.

They'd been holed up in a remote woodland caravan

park since New Year's Day.

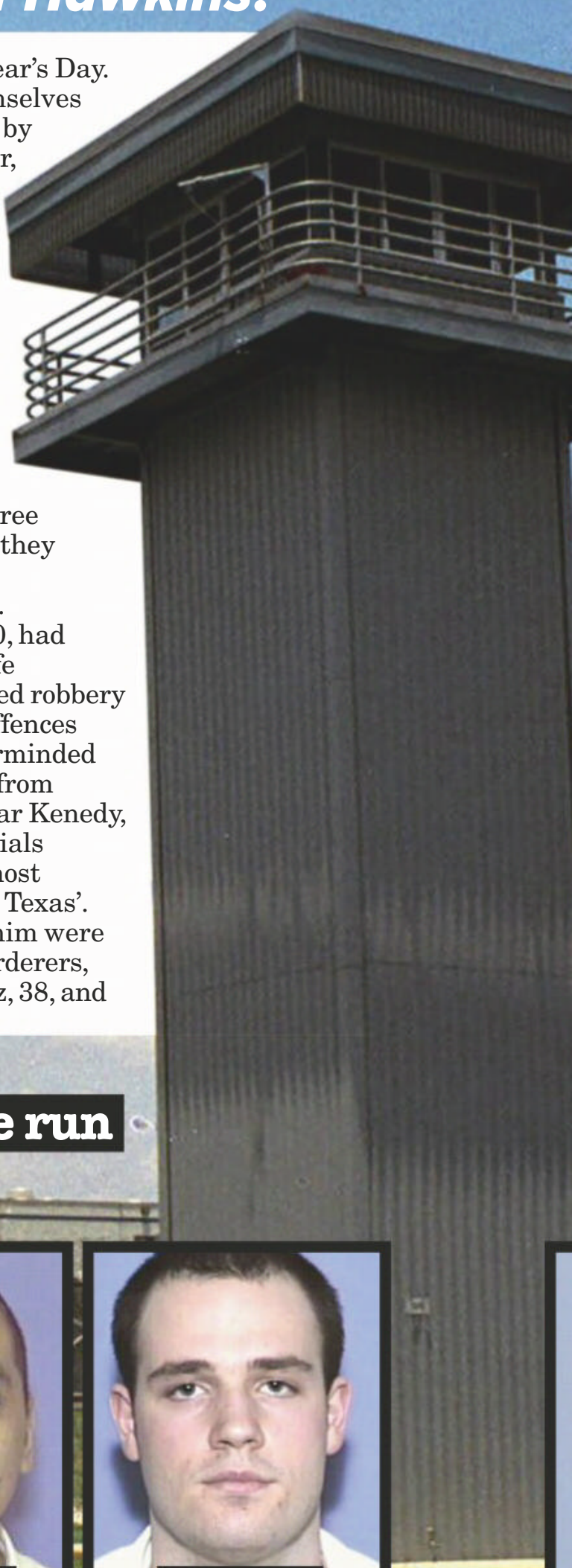
Disguising themselves with hair dye and by growing facial hair, they'd posed as a group of devout Christians.

But one of their neighbours tipped off the authorities after seeing their mug shots on TV show *America's Most Wanted*.

Police caught three gang members as they ventured out to a convenience store.

George Rivas, 30, had been serving 17 life sentences for armed robbery and kidnapping offences before he'd masterminded the gang's escape from Connally Unit, near Kenedy, South Texas. Officials dubbed him 'the most dangerous man in Texas'.

Captured with him were two convicted murderers, Michael Rodriguez, 38, and



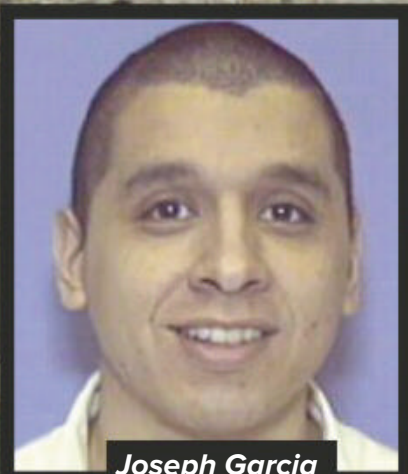
## **Escaped convicts... On the run**



George Rivas



Michael Rodriguez



Joseph Garcia



Randy Halprin



# EDUTY

Joseph Garcia, 29.

Within hours, cops caught a fourth man, Randy Halprin, 23, who'd originally been jailed for injuring his girlfriend's child.

A fifth gang member, convicted rapist Larry Harper 37, shot himself to death in the gang's motor home as police surrounded it.

The two remaining gang members, Donald Newbury, 38, and Patrick Murphy, 39, were later cornered at a motel.

## Facing trial

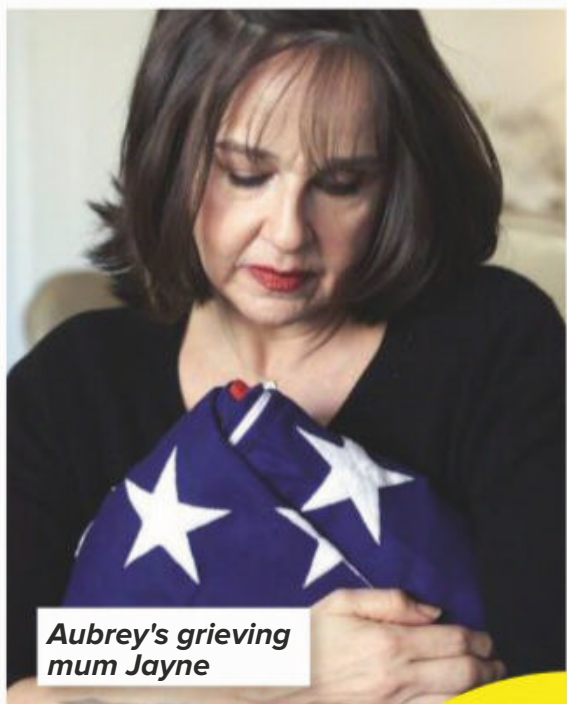
After his capture, ringleader George Rivas reportedly expressed remorse for having shot Officer Hawkins.

Months later, in August 2001, Rivas was the first of the gang to face trial.

The court heard he'd been dressed as a security officer when he led the robbery, which was planned like a 'military operation'.

The escaped convicts were each armed with two pistols.

After raiding the shop, they tied up the employees and were leaving when



Aubrey's grieving mum Jayne

Hawkins showed up.

The officer was shot 11 times, with six bullets hitting him in the head.

'He drove right into an ambush,' prosecution lawyer Toby Shook told the court.

In a 21-page confession made after his capture, which the judge ruled the jury could hear in court, Rivas admitted firing at least five shots. He took responsibility for the robbery.

But his defence team told the jury he wasn't guilty of

**YOU'RE THE JUDGE!**

murder, as they said he never intended to kill Officer Hawkins.

Defence lawyer Wayne Huff said Rivas took care with the robbery plan because he didn't want to cause injuries that would attract more press attention.

'The last thing they wanted was more heat,' he told the court.

'They could have shot and killed those employees if they had wanted to.'

Huff said Rivas had simply been attempting to disarm Hawkins when the other convicts had suddenly started firing at the police officer.

Rivas himself

claimed that, as he neared Hawkins' vehicle, he thought he saw the officer reaching for his gun.

## Bulletproof vest

'Please forgive me but I shot through the windshield and hit his right shoulder,' Rivas said in his confession.

He claimed he opened fire on the officer again in response to what he thought were shots fired by the policeman – and that he'd directed at his upper body because he knew he'd be wearing a bulletproof vest.

He also said he hadn't realised Officer Hawkins had been run over until he heard the evidence in court.

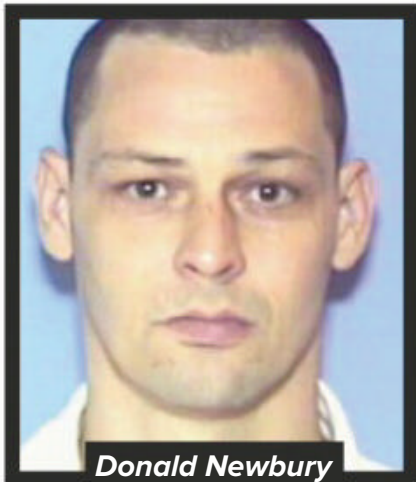
So would George Rivas – and the other gang members – be found guilty of intentionally killing the police officer and family man..?



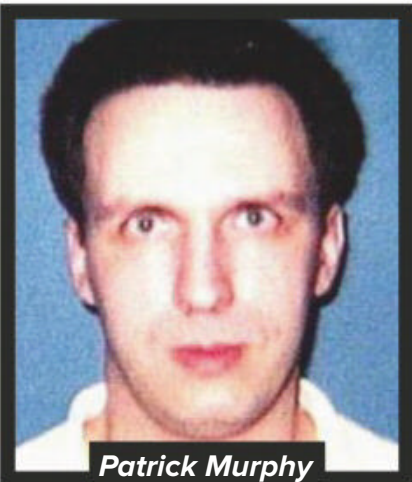
Officer Aubrey Hawkins



Larry Harper



Donald Newbury

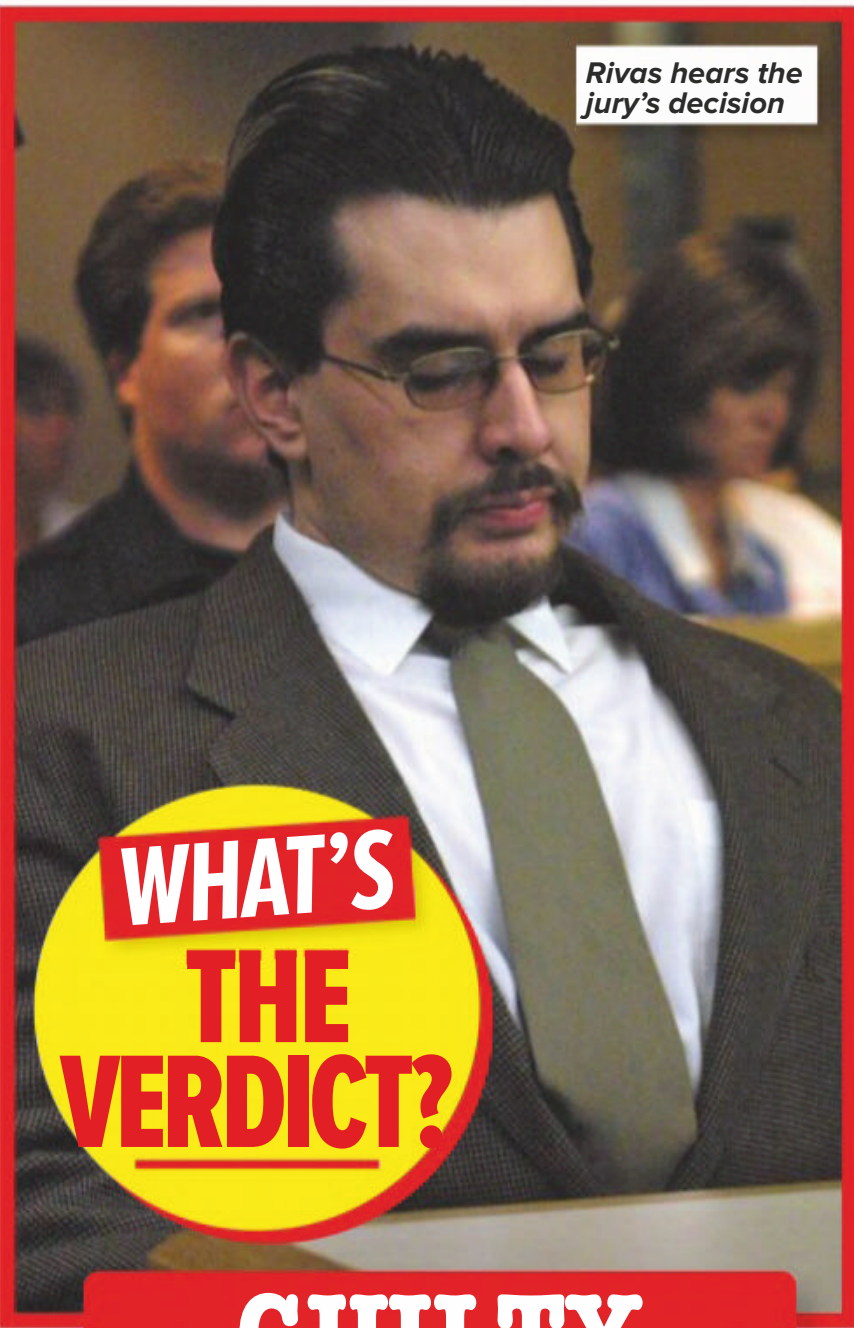


Patrick Murphy

**Guilty or not? Turn to find out**



# THE Q CHRIS



Rivas hears the jury's decision

**WHAT'S  
THE  
VERDICT?**

**GUILTY**

**O**n 21 August 2001, George Rivas was convicted of murdering Officer Aubrey Hawkins.

During his sentencing hearing the following week, Rivas blamed his life of crime on a childhood blighted by abuse.

But forensic psychiatrist Dr Richard E Coons testified that Rivas was a career criminal who continued 'business as usual' after killing Officer Hawkins, and said that he could not be rehabilitated.

After being sentenced to death and put on death row, Rivas was executed by lethal injection in

Huntsville, Texas, on 29 February 2012.

Looking at his wife through a glass screen, he mouthed 'I love you' as the lethal drugs began working through his system just after 6pm.

Rivas was the second gang member to be executed for his part in the murder.

The other gang members were all convicted in separate trials, with Michael Anthony Rodriguez executed in August 2008. Donald Newbury was executed in February 2015 and Joseph Garcia in December 2018.

Randy Halprin, now 42, and Patrick Murphy, now 57, remain on death row.

**1** ● Two much-loved Christmas films were released – *Love Actually* and *Elf*.

● Comedy show *The Office* came to an end with a two-part Christmas special.

● *EastEnders*' favourites Alfie and Kat tied the knot on Christmas Day in the Queen Vic.



**3** ● Girl band Little Mix triumphed on *The X Factor*, beating Marcus Collins in the final.

● It was the year that the little boy from the John Lewis ad couldn't wait to give his parents a present, with a soundtrack by The Smiths.

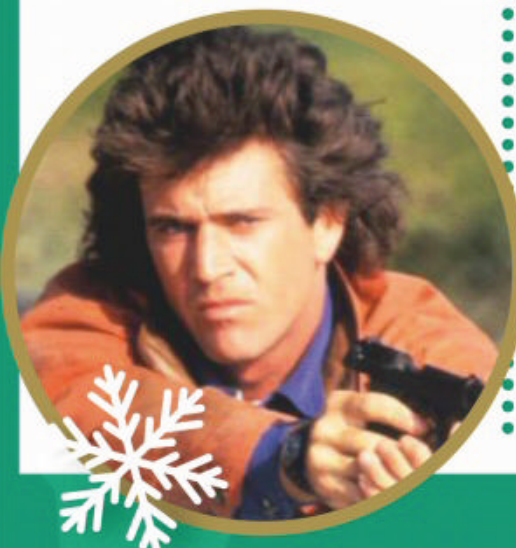
● *Arthur Christmas*, an animated film about Santa's son, hit cinemas.



**2** ● The festive Corrie episode where Hilda Ogden left the Street attracted an audience of over 26 million.

● *Sylvanian Families* topped kids' Christmas lists.

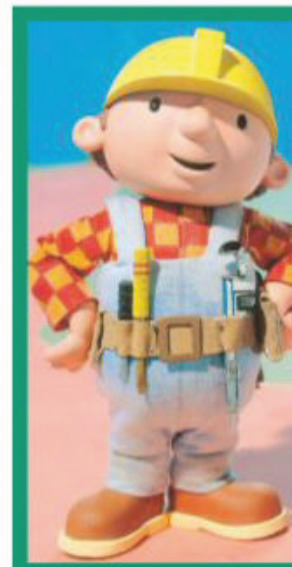
● *Lethal Weapon* was released and became an action-packed Christmas classic.



**4** ● Bob the Builder's *Can We Fix It?* became the Christmas number one.

● Nicolas Cage starred in *The Family Man*, as a finance whizz whose life is transformed on Christmas Eve.

● HRH the Prince of Wales made a surprise appearance in a live episode of *Corrie*.





# QUIZ OF CHRISTMAS PAST

Can you guess the Chrimbo years from these toy, film, music and telly moments?

**5** ● Cliff Richard's single *Saviour's Day* bagged the Christmas number-one slot.

● *Home Alone* was released, and stayed box office number one for another 12 weeks.

● Teenage Mutant Hero Turtle figures appeared in millions of stockings on Christmas morning.



**7** ● Blobby, Blobby, Blobby! Branded one of the worst Christmas number ones ever, *Mr Blobby* topped the charts twice this year.

● Tim Burton's animated film *The Nightmare Before Christmas* became an instant Christmas classic.

● Barbie with her Dream Motor Home became the top-selling Christmas toy.

**8** ● Sainsbury's released an advert recreating the World War I Christmas truce.

● TV presenter **Caroline Flack** lifted the *Strictly Come Dancing* Glitterball Trophy.

● Ben Haenow won *The X Factor* and took the Christmas number one spot with *Something I Need*.



**9** ● *EastEnders'* Tiffany Mitchell was mown down by Frank Butcher at the stroke of midnight this New Year's Eve.

● *Goodbye* became the Spice Girls third consecutive Christmas number one.

● The Furby robotic toy topped every kids' Christmas list this year.



**11** ● Children everywhere were asking Father Christmas for a BMX bike.

● Seasonal favourite *The Snowman* aired for the first time this Christmas, with its iconic theme tune *Walking in the Air*.

● The Queen delivered her 50th Christmas message, from Windsor.

**10** ● Moz the Monster was the star of the John Lewis Christmas ad.

● Georgia 'Toff' Toffolo was crowned Queen of the jungle on this year's *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!*

● Ed Sheeran had the Christmas number one with his romantic hit *Perfect*.



**12** ● Joe Swash was named King of the Jungle on *I'm a Celebrity...*

● The *High School Musical* dance mat was the top-selling Christmas gift.

● Alexandra Burke got the Christmas number-one spot singing a cover of Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah*.

**6** ● In Albert Square, Archie Mitchell was murdered by Stacey Branning, using a bust of Queen Victoria.

● Sweary single *Killing in the Name* by Rage Against the Machine became an unlikely Christmas number one.

● Fuzzy mechanical Go Go Pet Hamsters were the festive season's hottest toy.



Answers 1 2003 2 1987 3 2011 4 2000 5 1990 6 2009 7 1993 8 2014 9 1998 10 2017 11 1982 12 2008



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Prosecco  
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Organic  
Sparkling  
Grillo

£6.99

75cl



Organic  
Cava Rosado

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75cl

Sparkling  
Blanc de  
Blancs

£5.49

75cl

Fleurs De  
Prairie French  
Sparkling

£5.99

75cl

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Magnum

£13.99

1.5 litres

PUT ON AN  
**AMAZING SHOW**  
THIS CHRISTMAS.



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drinkaware.co.uk for the facts  
Please drink responsibly

In Scotland, in store alcohol prices may be higher and alcohol may not be sold before 10am in accordance with Scottish laws. Sparkling Blanc de Blancs 75cl, £5.49 per 75cl. Costellore Prosecco 75cl, £5.99 per 75cl. Prosecco Magnum 1.5 litres, £7.00 per 75cl. Organic Cava 75cl, £6.99 per 75cl. Organic Sparkling Grillo 75cl, £6.99 per 75cl. Veuve Monsigny 75cl, £12.49 per 75cl. Organic Cava Rosado 75cl, £6.99 per 75cl. Fleurs De Prairie French Sparkling 75cl, £4.99 per 75cl. Costellore Prosecco Frizzante DOC 75cl, £4.99 per 75cl. Products and prices may vary in Scotland and in Aldi Local. Subject to availability. Whilst stocks last.



# Just Genius

Your tips are the tops!



## Reuse your ribbon

I save all my leftover hanging ribbons from clothes and use them to decorate Christmas gifts.

**Beccy Gross, Cullompton**



**£25**  
For every  
photo tip that  
we print

## Christmas with kids

My boys' cards, framed and hung on the wall, make a lovely addition to our festive decorations.

**Katie Gooding, Tidworth**



## Get fruity

Try your hand at this impressive centrepiece by filling a large plate with clementines. Cut off the top of the centre one and push a gold or silver candle into it. Not only does it look good, it smells great too, and you can enjoy the fruit for dessert!

**Matthew Read, Grays**



## Shoes away

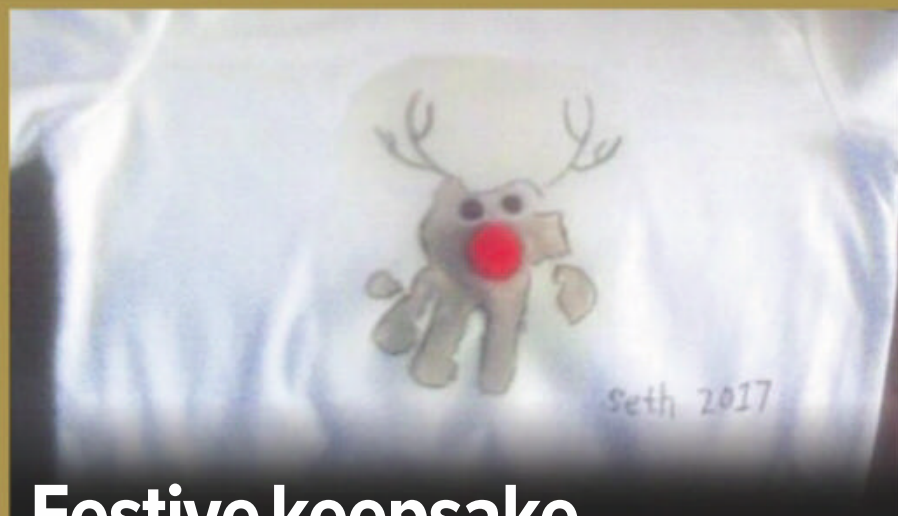
I don't have room for a shoe rack, so bought this wine rack and use it to store my shoes and umbrella. It does the job, and takes up the minimal amount of space.

**Patricia Way, Portsmouth**

## No more tears

Peeling onions under running water will stop your eyes watering and becoming uncomfortable.

**Sandra Beales, Wallsend**



## Festive keepsake

When my 4-year-old nephew Seth made a picture of Rudolph at nursery using his hand dipped in paint, a red pom-pom and googly eyes, I loved it so much I made a transfer and ironed it onto my T-shirt, carefully peeling it off when it was cool.

**Susan Lowery, Blackburn**

**£25**  
A LETTER

Tips must be your own idea, and not appear in other mags. If published, we pay £25 for tips with photos. Send tips, photos, name and full address to: Tips page, **Chat**, 161 Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP, or e-mail us at [chat\\_magazine@ti-media.com](mailto:chat_magazine@ti-media.com). Remember, these are YOUR tips – we haven't tried them ourselves



# Health

The advice you need

## An unwanted guest

*Last December, I wasn't in the mood to celebrate*

**Kate Taylor, 53, Southampton**

True-life  
**PATIENT  
CASEBOOK**

**W**hat do snowmen have for breakfast? my little girl Elsa, then 11, read aloud.

I looked around the table at my family, all sitting at the dinner table wearing wonky paper crowns. We all shrugged.

'Snowflakes!' Elsa smiled, to a collective groan.

A typical Christmas Day.

But as we all tucked into our turkey dinner, I was distracted.

You see, two months before, in September 2018, I'd found a tiny lump in my left breast. Thinking it was a cyst, I'd ignored it.

But when it had ballooned a few weeks later, I'd gone to the doctor.

Referred to Princess Anne Hospital, I was given a mammogram and biopsy.

And just two weeks before Christmas, I had been given the devastating news.

'You have stage-3 breast

cancer,' the consultant had said.

All I could think about were my kids Elsa and Josie, 13.

*How many more Christmases will I be here to spoil them?*

Doctors needed to act fast to stop the cancer spreading.

'The earliest we can

schedule your surgery is January,' my consultant had explained.

Phil and I had known we couldn't hide it from the girls.

We decided to tell them that day.

There'd been tears as we held them tight.

'But I'll be OK,' I'd smiled. 'I'll have the op in the new year.'

So, I'd tried to carry on as normal. Still wrapped presents, put them under the tree.

And now, here we were, in the

midst of the festive joy.

But I was struggling to feel excited or merry.

*Will I be here next year?*

Cancer was an unwanted guest but I desperately tried to put it to the back of my mind.

I did my best to enjoy the dinner, the gifts and the games.

And as others counted down to New Year, I counted down to surgery.

On 2 January 2019, I finally had a lumpectomy.

Surgeons removed the tumour and some tissue surrounding it.

In March, I started chemo, then radiotherapy. Sick and exhausted, I hated my kids seeing me so weak.

Thankfully, all the gruelling treatment ended in August.

I was relieved.

Yet, as we moved into the autumn, I just couldn't relax. I feared

the treatment

hadn't worked, that I might still have cancer.

But as we approach Christmas 2019,

**This year will be different**

**Treatment over!**

**Having chemo**

I'm in remission. After last year, I'm determined to make this year's celebration special. There will be no distractions.

I'll listen as Elsa reads out bad cracker jokes.

I'll join in as Josie sings along with Slade.

And I'll smile as Phil proudly carves the turkey.

This year, I'll be thankful for it all.

Last Christmas, I had cancer.

This year, I'm sharing my story to remind women everywhere to be vigilant.

Check your breasts regularly – because it might just save your life.

**More info?**

For more information, visit [cancerresearchuk.org](http://cancerresearchuk.org)



## Women's confidence peaks during their 50s



### Health S.O.S

According to research, **82% of the population think that tinned tuna is an oily fish when it isn't.\***

**Salmon and sardines count, as do anchovies, pilchards, mackerel, herring and trout, which are all options often overshadowed.**

**Aim to have a portion of oily fish once a week.**

### Swap and see

**High cholesterol? Swap your Cheddar for Lo-Col (£2.30, Waitrose & Partners).**

**This mature cheese alternative has been proven to reduce bad cholesterol (LDL) by up to 12%.**

**Plus, it has 75% less saturated fat than the regular stuff!**



**A** study has shown that women are most confident during their 50s\*\* – so much so that they feel more self-assured than men during this time.

As well as reaching key life milestones, such as owning their own home, women in particular listed a number of experiences that helped them grow in confidence over time, including stopping caring what other people think of them (31%) and no longer letting little things knock their confidence (32%).

As families grow up, the pressure on parents lessens and they can spend a little more time indulging themselves again.

Men and women in their 50s are more confident making their own decisions (46%) and feel respected (22%), both of which contribute to feeling good.

'The research reveals that

*Wiser and happier*

men gain confidence much earlier than women, by almost two decades,' says behavioural psychologist Jo Hemmings.

'Women don't peak in confidence until their 50s, when

it spikes quite significantly. This would imply that women tend to underestimate their achievements more than men, who perhaps overestimate theirs!'

## Pets passively smoke over 3,000 cigarettes a year

**R**esearch has found that pet owners who smoke are harming their pets' health, as they are passively exposed to nine cigarettes per day, or more than 3,000 a year, on average.\*\*\*

'Cats that live with smokers are about twice as likely to develop a malignant lymphoma, and dogs that live with smokers are 60% more likely to develop lung cancer,' says vet surgeon Dr Robert J White-Adams.

However, 68% of owners said it would encourage them to give up if their smoking



*Quit for my sake!*

made their pet ill.

'We urge pet owners to avoid smoking around their pets or inside their home to reduce their exposure to second-hand smoke,' says Andrew Moore, Director of Pet Claims at More Than.

### surprising STAT

# 44

**Research says we spend this number of days on the sofa each year, which is causing back problems.\*\*\*\***

'It's sustained postures that tend to lead to back pain, so as long as you get up regularly, change position and exercise often, your risk of developing back problems from sitting on the sofa drastically reduces,' says physio Lyndsay Hirst.

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We'll pay cash, or mention a charity of your choice, if we print your health story. Write to Your Health, **Chat**, 161 Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP or phone 020 3148 6150. You can send your story or email the Doc at [chathealth@ti-media.com](mailto:chathealth@ti-media.com). Always consult your pharmacist or GP before using any over-the-counter or prescription remedies, and read the packet carefully.

**Turn over for more health**





# ASK Dr Martin

Dr Martin Edwards is a family GP whose advice you can trust

## How can we prevent his bed-wetting?

**Q** My little boy is 7 and still wets the bed. We're staying with friends at Christmas – is there a way to guarantee a dry night?  
*Giselle, Derby*

**A** It's possible that sleeping in a strange bed might actually keep him dry, as he'll sleep more lightly and is more likely to wake for a wee. And you can reassure him that around one in 10 children still wet the bed at this age.

But your best bet is to ask your GP for desmopressin. This drug mimics the action of a natural hormone, ADH, which cuts the amount of urine that your kidneys produce, and a tablet at bedtime will usually ensure a dry night.

He should stop drinking at least an hour and a half before bed, and avoid fizzy drinks or caffeine. You can also try waking him for a wee when you're on your way to bed.

Have a happy – and dry – Christmas!

## It's my least favourite time of the year!

**Q** I dread Christmas. I feel anxious, miserable and alone. If I'm invited out, I escape home as soon as I can.  
*Marie, Bermondsey*

**A** Christmas can be intense, and if you're stressed or depressed, the idea that everyone else is having fun makes it harder.

Parties or family get-togethers can be difficult. It might help to find someone with whom you can share your feelings – they're more common than you think! But if there are



social events that you can't face, don't feel guilty about saying no.

If you're organising Christmas for family or friends, ask them to help. If you're going to be alone, ask friends if you can spend time

with them – it's the season of goodwill, after all!

Plan treats for yourself, but don't rely on alcohol. And help is always available, including from the Samaritans on 116 123.

## My sore head

**Q** How can I avoid a hangover, and why does my husband never get one no matter how much he drinks?  
*Tracey, St Austell*

**A** People will tell you that hangovers are caused by dehydration, and that drinking water before bed helps prevent them, but this seems to be an old wives' tale.

Your liver breaks down alcohol by converting it to other

chemicals, some of which are probably responsible for your morning-after misery.

Around a quarter of people claim never to suffer hangovers, probably due to their genes, which mean they break alcohol down more efficiently – though it seems that they may often drink less overall.

Prevent hangovers by drinking less, try a soft drink between every alcoholic one, and stick to clear tipples.

If you do suffer, painkillers and bed are your best remedy.



## Mixing meds with booze

**Q** I've started antibiotics for a chest infection and I'll be taking them over Christmas. How dangerous would it be to have just a sip of alcohol?  
*Vanessa, Falkirk*

**A** The idea that alcohol is dangerous with antibiotics is almost entirely a myth. It may come from the earliest days of penicillin, when the drug was so precious that doctors collected the urine of patients who'd been

given it, in order to recover the penicillin to use for someone else. Alcohol interfered with this recovery process, so patients taking it were asked not to drink.

However, there are a few antibiotics, such as metronidazole, which do react with alcohol, so check the information leaflet, or ask your GP or chemist.

Of course, overdoing booze isn't a good idea, anyway, especially if you're ill. But you should be able to enjoy a drink with your turkey!





# Win! £500 cash!

**WIN  
£500**  
Puzzle 4

## THE BIG QUIZ

The answers to all but one of these quiz questions can be found hidden in this wordsearch grid, reading forwards, backwards, up, down or diagonally. To help you, we'll tell you that the answers are in alphabetical order in each section. However, one answer can't be found in the grid. This is your prize answer.

### THE SILVER SCREEN – CHRISTMAS FILMS

**1** Who starred in the 2000 film *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*? (3, 6)

**2** What word completes the title of the 1993 film,

co-directed by Tim Burton, *The ... Before Christmas*? (9)

**3** Which 1988 film starring Bill Murray was based on the Dickens novel *A Christmas Carol*? (8)

### WHERE IN THE WORLD?

#### SNOW

**4** In which US state is the town of Snowflake? (7)

**5** The Snowy Mountains are the highest range in which country? (9)

**6** In which English county is the National Trust property Snowhill Manor? (15)

**Your answer:**

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

the cold weather and snow on the feast day of which saint? (7)

### ROBINS

**10** What's the two-word nickname of Batman's sidekick Robin? (3, 6)

**11** What completes the title of the 1987 film starring Robin Wright in the title role *The ... Bride*? (8)

**12** Who originally presented *Question Time*? (5, 3)

### BELLS

**13** Which fruit is traditionally used in a Bellini cocktail? (5)

**14** In which story does the character of Tinker Bell appear? (5, 3)

**15** Which communication device was first patented by inventor Alexander Graham Bell? (9)

5. Where are the Snowies?

13. What's the fruit in this?

### CAROLS

**7** What are the cattle doing in the carol *Away in a Manger*? (6)

**8** Which word completes the title of the carol *Once in ... David's City*? (6)

**9** Good King Wenceslas and his page brave

1. Who's that Grinch?





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She only popped in for Christmas pudding\*

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## MULTI-MILLION BANK HEIST

**O**n 20 December 2004, a gang stole the equivalent of £26.5m from the headquarters of Northern Bank in Belfast.

The night before, armed-gang members had taken the families of two senior bank officials hostage, ordering them to go into work as usual the next day, and to let them into the offices that evening.

Despite various arrests, the case remains unsolved, with just one man convicted of money-laundering charges in relation to the stolen cash. The Police Service of Northern Ireland has claimed the paramilitary organisation the IRA were responsible, but it has denied any involvement.



Forensics  
hunted for clues



**Christmas  
IN  
CRIME**

## PREGNANT & MURDERED



Mum  
of two,  
Nicola

**D**rug-fuelled James Hutchinson stabbed his pregnant partner Nicola Woodman, 39, to death on Christmas Day 2016.

NHS worker and mum Nicola suffered 102 injuries in the brutal attack, after Hutchinson tied her up in the living room of her Bradford home.

Hutchinson, then 43, was found guilty of murder and sentenced to life in prison.



Hutchinson

## CHRISTMAS-EVE KILLING

**A**fter chatting on a dating site, teacher Katie Locke, 23, met Carl Langdell (right) on Christmas Eve 2015. He'd told her he was a lawyer with his own firm.

The pair went to Theobalds Park Hotel in Hertfordshire, where Langdell strangled Katie to death and sexually assaulted her. Katie's body was dumped in a bush near a skip, in the grounds of the hotel.

Katie had been unaware that Langdell had spent the previous two years suffering from worsening mental illness.

In 2016, Langdell, then 26, pleaded guilty to murder and was jailed for 26 years.



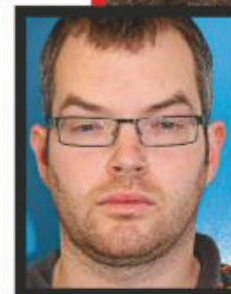
Victim Katie

## DEVASTATING DISCOVERY

**O**n Christmas Day 2010, Joanna Yeates' body was found beside a country road. Joanna, 25, a landscape architect living in Bristol, had vanished after a night out on 17 December.

In January 2011, her 33-year-old neighbour, Dutch engineer Vincent Tabak (above right), was arrested. Ten months later, a court

Joanna had  
gone missing



heard he'd strangled Joanna in her flat, then dumped her body. Tabak was sentenced to a minimum of 20 years for her murder.



## CHRISTMAS CRIME IN NUMBERS...

In 2012, assault and domestic murders increased by

**25%**

over the festive season.

**15,000**

In 2016/17, thefts in the UK rose to more than 15,000 during the Christmas period.

**23%**

Burglaries in London rose on average 23% over Christmas last year.

More than

**5,500**

people were caught drink-driving in December 2017.



# Win! £1,001 cash!

## THE BIGGIE

### WIN £1,001 Puzzle 5

**W**hat did TV personality Kris Jenner make to celebrate Christmas last year? To find out, solve the crossword then read down the shaded squares to find the two-word prize answer.

#### ACROSS

- 11 Taking no notice of (8)
- 12 Less uncertain (5)
- 13 Get off a vehicle (6)
- 14 A twelfth of a foot (4)
- 15 Middle points (7)
- 16 Making wagers (8)
- 17 Brown furry pet (7)
- 18 German porcelain (7)
- 19 Eyelid movement (4)
- 21 - - - Firth, *The King's Speech* star (5)
- 23 Extreme unkindness (7)
- 24 Party decoration (7)
- 28 Items for hanging up washing (4)
- 29 Day before a festival (3)
- 30 Soft felt hat (6)
- 33 Toady, yes-man (7)
- 35 Old - - -, famous theatre (3)
- 36 Susanna - - -, TV presenter (4)
- 38 Gulp straight from the bottle (4)
- 39 Honours system award (inits) (3)
- 40 Count as part of (7)

- 42 Nearer (to) (6)
- 43 In days gone by (3)
- 44 Refuse to admit (4)
- 48 Guided weapon (7)
- 50 Expressionless (7)
- 51 Complex board game (5)
- 54 Chief in the workplace (4)
- 56 College pupil (7)

- 57 Make - - -, gain ground (7)
- 60 Removal from text (8)
- 61 - - - Crowe, *Man of Steel* actor (7)
- 63 Final word of a prayer (4)
- 64 Providing with weapons (6)
- 65 - - - Evans, *Endeavour* star (5)
- 66 Pinches or crushes (8)

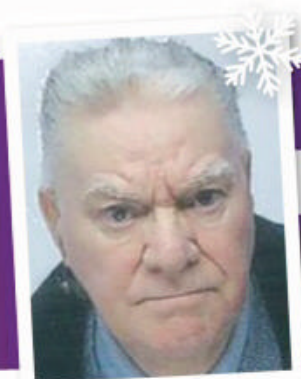
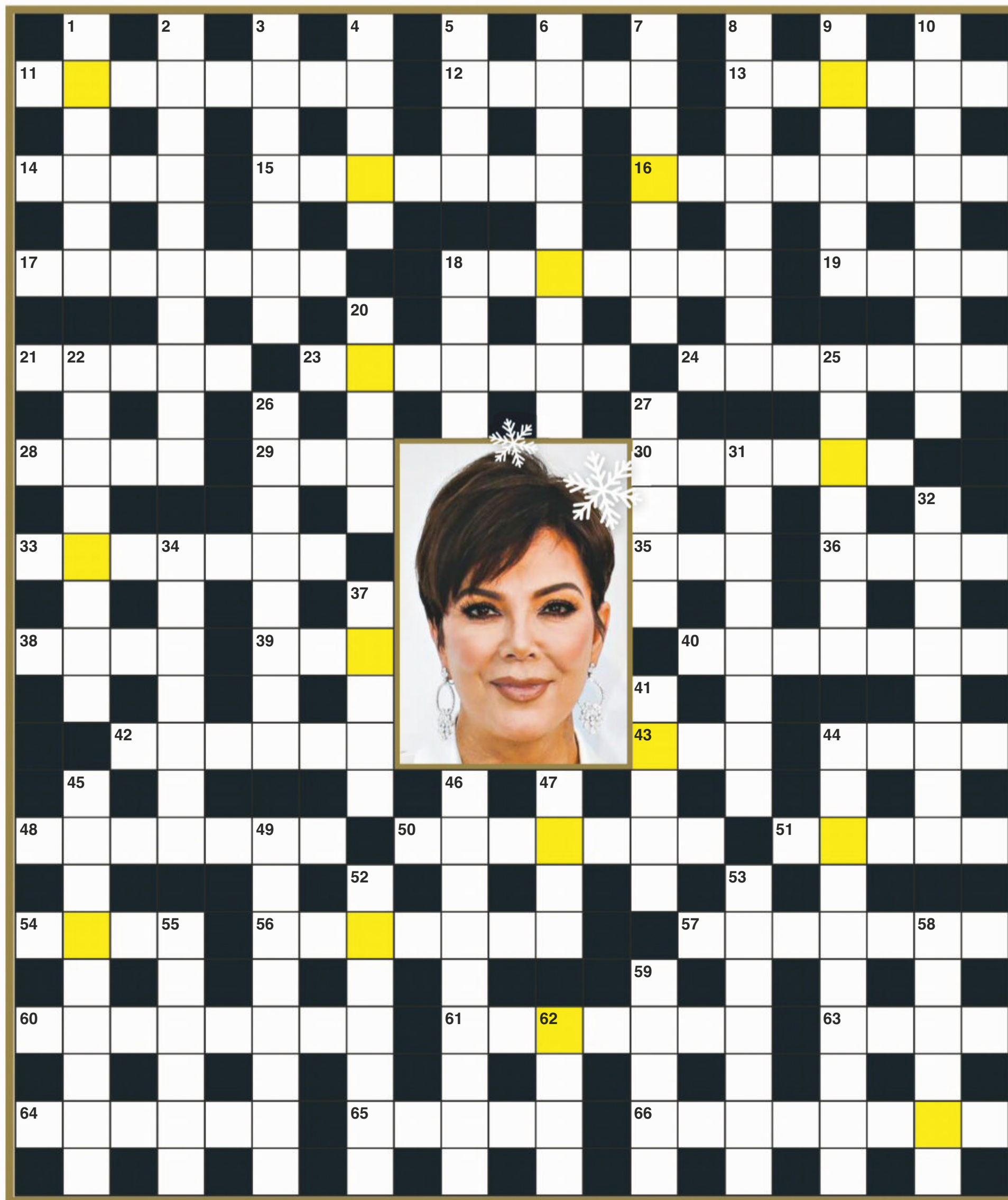
#### DOWN

- 1 Meeting's programme (6)
- 2 (Praise) enthusiastically (2,3,5)
- 3 Chef's workplace (7)
- 4 - - - aunt, problem adviser (5)
- 5 Consumer or operator (4)
- 6 Curved streets (9)
- 7 Army unit (7)
- 8 Aussie state (8)
- 9 Surge out (6)
- 10 Losing your hair (4,2,3)
- 18 Animal like Bambi (4)
- 20 Concise (5)
- 22 A few (3,2,3)
- 25 Generous (7)
- 26 Evolves (8)
- 27 - - - McFadden, Phil Mitchell in *EastEnders* (5)
- 31 (Travelling) as a group (2,6)
- 32 Results (of an inquiry) (8)
- 34 Shakes, flutters (7)
- 37 Facial-hair growth (5)
- 41 Artificial waterway (5)
- 44 Lacking body fluids (10)
- 45 Metric distance (9)
- 46 Practice for a play (9)
- 47 Correct or improve (text) (4)
- 49 TV - - -, schedules of programmes (8)
- 52 Equip (a house) (7)
- 53 Dead keen (7)
- 55 Beautiful to look at (view) (6)
- 58 School exam, usually at the age of 17-18 (1,5)
- 59 - - - rarebit, cheese on toast (5)
- 62 Completely sensible (4)



**Your answer:**





**£1,000 winner**

Issue 30 25 July 2019

Absolutely wonderful! I have been a subscriber of *Chat* for quite some years and didn't really believe it possible to ever win a big prize. No idea as yet what to spend the money on.  
*Joseph Hughes, Middlesbrough*

**TO ENTER** Turn to page 88 for details or visit [lifedeathprizes.com/win](http://lifedeathprizes.com/win)



**Top tip**

Freeze the uncooked dumplings and the chilli separately. Once all is defrosted, add the dumplings to the chilli, cover and simmer for 15-20 mins.

# Feasts with the family

Get ready for the festive season with these satisfying prep-ahead dishes that will make entertaining for a crowd easy!

## Beef chilli casserole with cornmeal dumplings

Delicious with rice or jacket potatoes, this chilli will warm you from the inside out!

**SERVES 8**

**PREP 10 MINS**

**COOK 3 HOURS 45 MINS**

- 2tbsp rapeseed oil
- 1kg diced stewing steak or brisket
- 3 onions, roughly chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and roughly chopped
- 2tsp ground cumin
- 2tsp sweet smoked paprika
- 1-1½tsp chilli powder, to taste
- 3 sprigs of thyme

- 2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes
- 1½tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 large green pepper, deseeded and chopped
- Lime wedges, large handful of coriander leaves and chopped jalapeño chilli peppers, to serve (optional)

**For the dumplings:**

- 200g self-raising flour
- 90g polenta or cornmeal
- ½tsp caster sugar
- 90g cold butter, grated

**1** Preheat the oven to 160C/Gas 3. Heat 1tbsp oil in a casserole over a medium heat and brown the beef in 3 batches; set aside. Heat the rest of the oil in the casserole and cook the onions for 5 mins. Add the carrots and cook for 4 mins more. Add the cumin, paprika and chilli, and mix well. Add the thyme, tomatoes and 2 cans of water. Return the beef to the pan with the Worcestershire sauce. Bring to the boil, then cook in the oven, covered, for

3½ hours, or until tender. Add the green pepper for the last 4 mins of cooking.

**2** To make the dumplings, mix the flour, polenta, sugar, butter, ¼tsp salt and 8tbsp water to make a thick, sticky dough. Roll it into 24 balls.

**3** Set the dumplings on top of the casserole, cover with a tight-fitting lid and cook on a fast simmer for 15 mins. Serve with lime wedges, coriander leaves and chopped jalapeños.



# WHAT IS AVAXHOME?



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## Tangerine-glazed gammon

The boozy marinade will get everyone in the festive mood.

**SERVES 12**

**PREP 10 MINS**

**COOK 2 HOURS**

- 2.5kg smoked gammon joint
- 1 onion, quartered
- 1 carrot, halved
- 2 bay leaves
- Few sprigs of thyme
- Few black peppercorns
- 500ml cider

**For the glaze:**

- Grated zest and juice of 1 tangerine
- 4tbsp redcurrant jelly
- 1tbsp runny honey
- 1tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tangerine, sliced
- Bay leaf, to garnish

**1** Put the gammon in a very large pan. Add the onion, carrot, bay leaves, thyme and peppercorns. Pour over the cider and add enough cold water to cover the

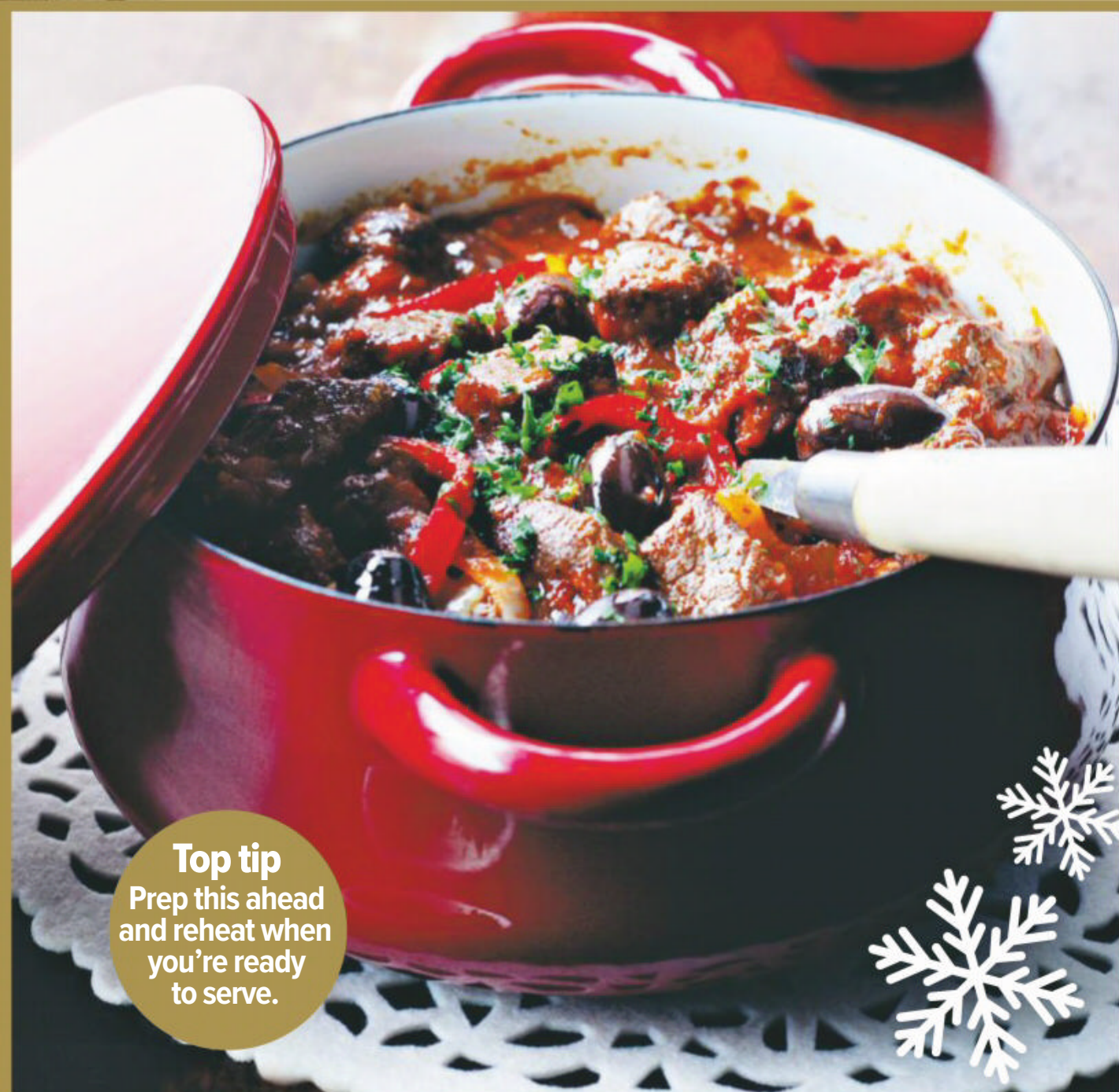
gammon. Bring to the boil and simmer, covered, for 1 hour 45 mins (allow 30 mins per kg plus 15 mins). Turn off the heat and leave the gammon in the cooking liquid for a few hours (this will make the meat lovely and moist as well as easier to handle).

**2** Preheat the oven to 200C/Gas 6. Lift the meat into a roasting tin. Peel away the rind and score the fat in a diamond pattern.

**3** To make the glaze, combine the grated tangerine zest and juice, redcurrant jelly, honey and mustard in a pan. Heat to melt the jelly, then smother over the fat. Roast the joint for 20 mins. Arrange the tangerine slices on top and roast for a further 10 mins, until golden. Garnish with a bay leaf.



**Top tip**  
Leftovers are delicious in a bagel with a poached egg!



**Top tip**  
Prep this ahead and reheat when you're ready to serve.

## Smoky lamb one-pot

This is a big bowl of comfort food that's best served with mash or crusty bread.

**SERVES 4**

**PREP 10 MINS**

**COOK 1 HOUR**

- 2tbsp oil
- 800g lamb fillet, cubed
- 1½tbsp flour
- 1 onion, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- Pinch of dried chilli flakes
- Pinch of sweet smoked paprika
- 1tsp dried oregano
- 400g can tomatoes
- 300ml lamb stock
- 290g jar roasted peppers
- 125g black olives, pitted
- Fresh parsley leaves, finely chopped, to garnish

**1** Heat the oil in a large casserole. Toss the lamb in the flour and fry in batches until browned all over. Remove from the pan and set aside.

**2** Add the onion, garlic, chilli flakes and paprika to the pan. Fry for 5 mins, then return the lamb to the pan with the oregano, tomatoes and stock.

**3** Bring to the boil and simmer uncovered for 45 mins. Drain the peppers and olives and add to the pan. Cook for a further 5 mins to heat through. Garnish with the chopped fresh parsley and serve.



## NO-FUSS FOOD

### Roasted vegetable lasagne

Bursting with colours and flavour, this is a veggie dish everyone will love tucking into.

**SERVES 6**

**PREP 10 MINS**

**COOK 1 HOUR 10 MINS**

**For the roasted veg:**

- 3 peppers (1 red, 1 yellow and 1 orange), deseeded and chopped
- 4 courgettes, cubed
- 2 aubergines, cubed
- 2 red onions, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- Few sprigs of oregano, plus extra, to garnish
- 2tbsp olive oil

**For the cheese sauce:**

- 60g butter
- 60g plain flour
- 600ml full-fat milk
- 100g vegetarian Parmesan, grated
- 200g Cheddar, grated

**For the other layers:**

- 125g fresh lasagne sheets
- 350g jar whole cherry tomato and basil pasta sauce (we used Saclà)

**1** Preheat the oven to 220C/Gas 7. Put the peppers, courgettes, aubergines, onions and garlic in a roasting tin. Season and sprinkle with some of the oregano leaves. Drizzle with oil and roast for 30 mins, until the vegetables are tender.

**2** To make the cheese sauce, put the butter, flour and milk in a non-stick pan and season to taste. Heat and whisk the mixture together until it is thickened and smooth, then stir in half of the Parmesan and Cheddar cheeses.

**3** Cook the lasagne sheets according to the packet instructions. Reduce the oven temperature to 200C/Gas 6.

**4** In a 2.5-litre shallow lasagne dish, layer up the roasted vegetables, tomato and basil sauce, lasagne sheets and the cheese sauce. Sprinkle with the rest of the Parmesan and Cheddar. Cook for 40 mins. Finish with oregano to garnish.

#### Top tip

Freeze the assembled lasagne before cooking. Defrost and cook for 40 mins.

### Mushroom, chestnut and greens pie

Colourful, comforting Christmas flavours...

**SERVES 6**

**PREP 20 MINS, PLUS CHILLING**

**COOK 1 HOUR 30 MINS**

- 500g shortcrust pastry
- 15g dried porcini mushrooms
- 1tbsp rapeseed oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 sprigs of thyme
- 2 leeks, sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 800g mixed mushrooms (we used chestnut, closed cup and chanterelle), roughly chopped
- 200g bunch of spring greens, trimmed and sliced
- 180g pack cooked and peeled chestnuts, roughly chopped
- 1½tbsp polenta
- 1 small egg, beaten

**1** Grease a 2kg loaf tin. Cut 2 sheets of foil, 1 the length of the tin and the other the width, both with overhang. Fold each over to make thick strips about 5cm wide. Set them into the tin to make a cross, to help lift out the pie.

**2** Roll the pastry out to about 1cm thick and line the tin, leaving a little excess pastry over the sides. Cut out extra strips about 2cm to go around

the edge. Cut out a rectangle of pastry for the lid, about 4cm wider than the tin. Use any excess pastry for leaves to decorate. Chill for 30 mins. Preheat the oven to 200C/Gas 6. Line the pastry with foil and fill with baking beans; blind-bake for 15 mins. Remove the beans and cook for 15 mins.

**3** Soak the porcini mushrooms in enough boiling water to just cover them; set aside. Heat the oil in a frying pan and cook the onion for 5 mins. Add the thyme, leeks and garlic. Cook for 5 mins; set aside. In the same pan, cook the mixed mushrooms for 5 mins, or until soft; place in a colander over the sink for 10 mins to drain. In a bowl, cover the greens with boiling water for 4 mins, then drain and rinse. Drain and chop the porcini mushrooms.

**4** In a large bowl, mix the greens, all the mushrooms, the leek mixture and chestnuts. Season well. Sprinkle the polenta in the pastry case and add the filling. Brush the sides with egg and stick the pastry strips round the edges, brush with egg, add the pastry lid and pierce 2 holes in the middle of it. Pinch around the edges to seal. Stick on the pastry leaves and glaze with egg. Chill for 30 mins. Bake for 30 mins.

#### Top tip

For a non-veggie twist, try adding chopped, fried smoky bacon to the filling!



### Top tip

Make this a week ahead and freeze. To cook from frozen, just add 15 mins to the cooking time.



## Sausage roll wreath A show-stopping centrepiece that's sure to go down a storm!

**SERVES 12**

**PREP 10 MINS, PLUS CHILLING**

**COOK 35 MINS**

- 500g all-butter puff pastry
- 3tbsp wholegrain mustard
- 1 egg yolk, beaten, to glaze
- 8 pork sausages, skins removed

- 1tbsp mustard seeds, lightly crushed
- Rocket leaves and cherry tomatoes, to garnish

**1** Roll out the pastry to a rectangle about 90cm x 20cm – save the trimmings to make decorations. Spread the mustard in a strip down the centre. Brush

around the edges of the pastry with egg yolk, then put the skinned sausages in a straight line along the mustard. Roll the pastry around the sausage strip, then shape into a circle, using a little egg yolk to secure the ends. Transfer to a baking tray.

**2** Brush the pastry with egg yolk and decorate with

shapes made from any pastry trimmings. Chill in the fridge for 30 mins.

**3** Preheat the oven to 200C/ Gas 6. Glaze the pastry again and sprinkle over the mustard seeds. Bake for 35 mins until golden. Serve warm or cold with rocket leaves and cherry tomatoes piled in the middle.



# Win! Cash!

**TRUE-LIFE** FOREVER AFTER

# The gr gift



**Life just wasn't the same without the pitter-patter of paws**

Lynda Allen, 48, York

Stringing tinsel around the tree, I hummed along to carols on the radio.

It was December last year and Christmas was just around the corner.

But something was missing. The pitter-patter of great big paws.

I'd had Dobermanns before, but it had been 18 months since I'd last had one. My heart ached for walks and cuddles.

Christmas had only intensified my sense of loneliness.

Still, I hadn't looked for a new dog.

I put on a brave face through Christmas and New Year.

Then, in April this year, I got a call from my friend Helen, 37.

'I've spotted a Dobermann on the RSPCA website,' she said.

'Really?' I said, unable to resist logging

on and finding out more.

And Dobby's story utterly broke my heart.

He'd been found neglected and in a terrible state in Hull just before Christmas – on 14 December 2018.

He had a wound on his head and bleeding sores on his body.

The pictures online showed he'd been skeletally thin, his waist so small you could wrap your fingers round it.

Thankfully, he

was now being cared for at the RSPCA centre in Hull.

The staff there had washed away the compacted faeces on his legs and paws, fed him up and lavished him with love and attention.

On Christmas Day, they'd given him a toy meerkat dressed as Santa. Dobby doted on it, took it everywhere.

There was a picture of him posing proudly with it!

Adorable!

Like other animals on the RSPCA site, Dobby

**I had to find out more – and Dobby's story broke my heart**

Last December, the RSPCA received 59,121 calls – 2,536 in one day (10 December) – and 74,450 calls in January. To help the charity continue to care for animals, visit [rspca.org.uk/giftofkindness](http://rspca.org.uk/giftofkindness)

## SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

A B C D

1

2

3

4



A B C D

1

2

3

4

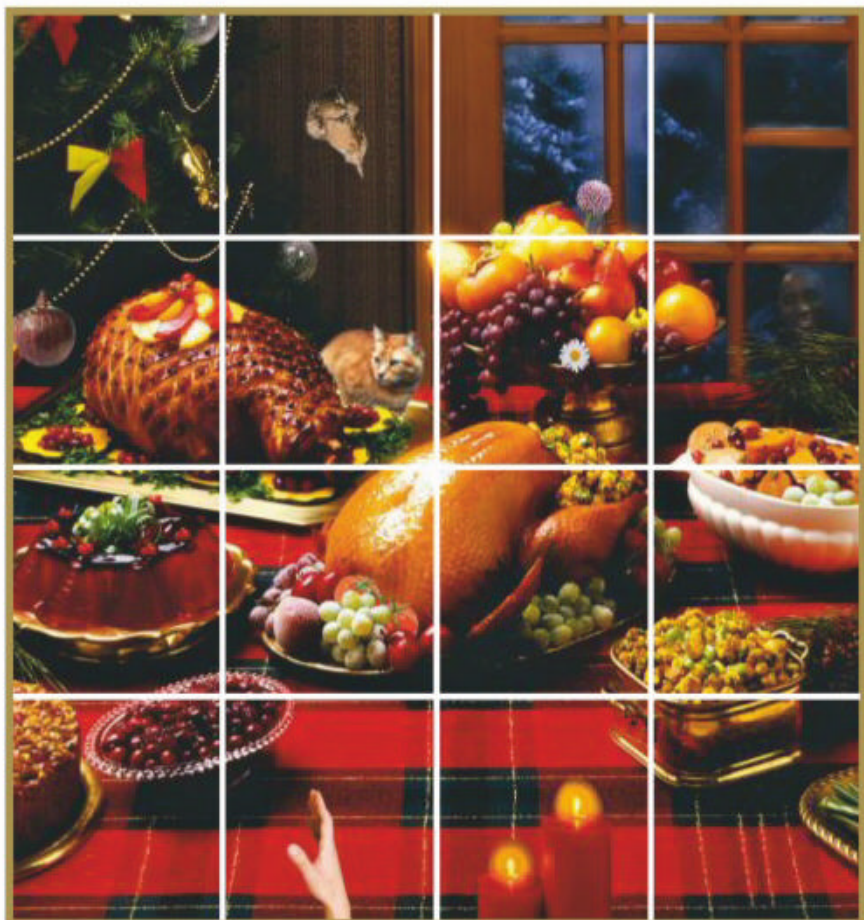


PHOTO: GETTY

**WIN**  
5x £30  
Puzzle 6

Look closely at these two pics – there's a difference in almost every square. Only one has no changes, the grid reference (eg, 1A) is your prize answer.

Your answer:



# Deatest



He'd been painfully thin



The RSPCA fed him up

was up for adoption, and it amazed me he hadn't been snapped up.

So I called the RSPCA. Asked to meet Dobby.

They invited me there that afternoon.

As I soon as I walked in, we hit it off. He sat happily as I stroked him, gazing up at me with big brown eyes.

And in that moment, I was certain.

*You're my dog,* I thought.

I put the wheels in motion – and a fortnight later, I brought Dobby home.

He jumped straight on

the sofa and made himself comfortable!

He stuck to my side like glue and made the place his own.

'This is your forever home,' I smiled.

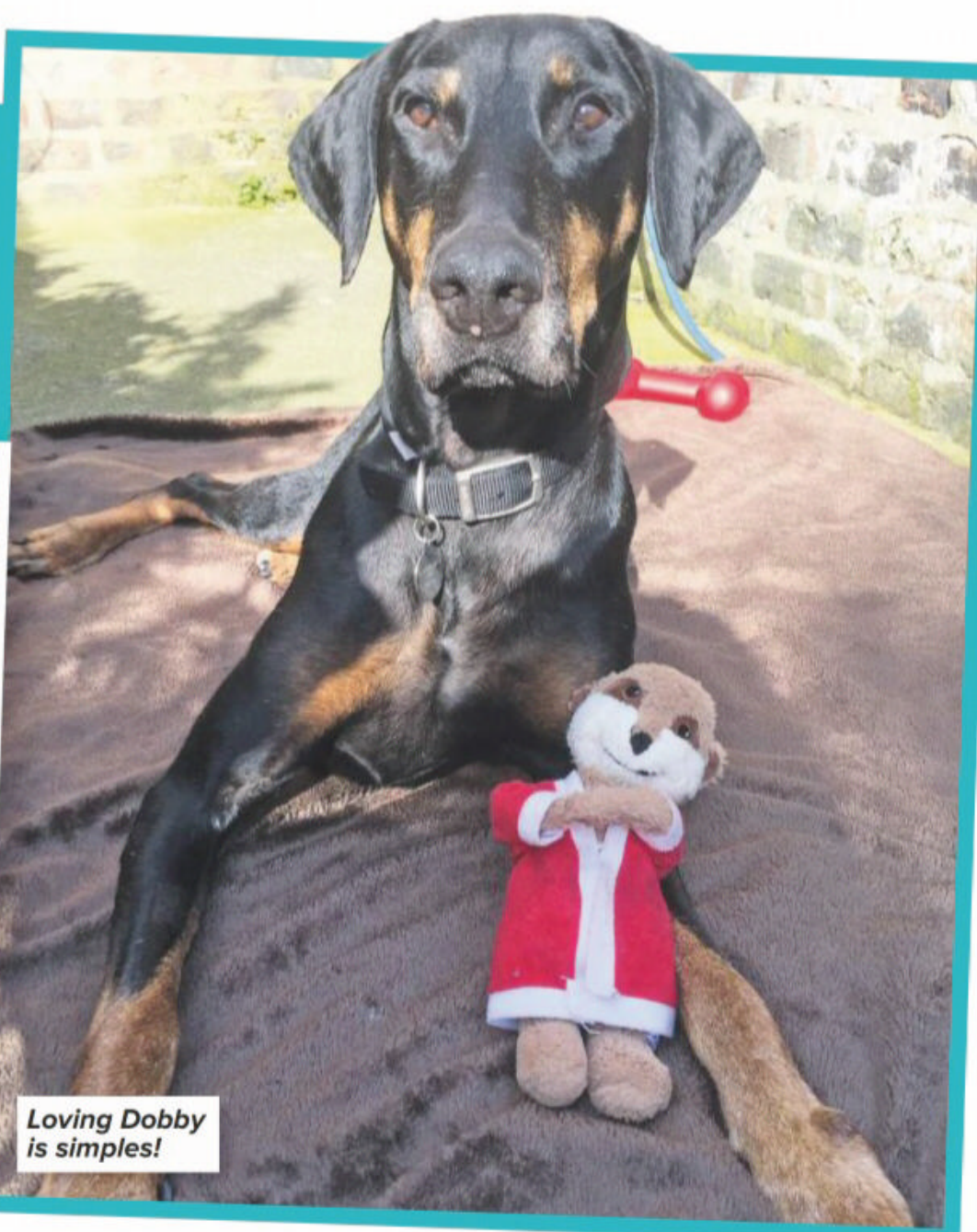
And didn't he know it?!

Dobby sleeps downstairs, and when I open the living-room door each morning, he jumps up to say hello.

Touches his nose to mine.

Then he turns his attention back to his beloved meerkat!

Knowing how much he



Loving Dobby is simple!

loves that toy has made me determined that our first Christmas together will be special.

I've wrapped up some daft presents – balls and chew toys – to put under the tree.

I'll help Dobby open them on Christmas morning.

Then I'll dish him up a

special dinner – salmon and eggs.

And we'll have lots of cuddles and treats.

Last Christmas, we were both alone. But now we've found each other.

Having Dobby around makes every day feel like Christmas.

## COULD YOU ADOPT A DOGGY?

**All these gorgeous pups are looking for their forever homes...**



### Rogue

Underweight, flea-ridden and suffering with skin tumours, Rogue (left) was in a terrible state after being found abandoned, in March this year. But thanks to some TLC from the staff at RSPCA Millbrook Animal Centre, she's now happy and healthy.

Rogue, an older brindle boxer, loves a bit of fuss and attention. She has done basic obedience training and adores her favourite toys.

Now she's looking for a home where she'll feel safe, loved and well looked after.

Visit [rspca.org.uk/findapet](http://rspca.org.uk/findapet)



### Tucker

A dog isn't just for Christmas, as Tucker's former owners discovered. He was just a pup when they took him in but, after realising how much time and attention he'd need, they placed him in RSPCA care.

Tucker (below), a rottweiler cross-breed, has grown quite a bit since then, but he's still a playful pup at heart.

He's been waiting over 200 days for his forever home and would love to start the 2020 with owners who can give him the care he deserves.

Visit [rspca.org.uk/findapet](http://rspca.org.uk/findapet)



### Blue

Poor Blue (left) was one very quiet pup when he was rescued by the RSPCA, having been found shut up in a yard. This gorgeous Siberian

husky-cross kept to himself and found the kennels noisy and stressful.

However, once he was moved out to a loving foster home, he came on in leaps and bounds. Now he's a much happier hound!

Loyal and intelligent, he adores his foster carers – but, sadly, he can't remain there forever and needs an owner who'll stay by his side long-term.

Visit [rspca.org.uk/findapet](http://rspca.org.uk/findapet)



# Win! £1,110 cash!

**WIN  
£1,000  
Puzzle 7**

What did a woman use to decorate her garden that annoyed her neighbours last Christmas? Solve the puzzle by following the arrows and writing in your answers. Then read down the letters in the shaded squares to get the prize answer.



## ARROW WORD

Food list	↓	Kingdom	↓	Dark beer	↓	Bad actor	TV breaks	↓	Group of three	↓	Aid (a criminal)	↓	Fibber	↓
						H	Sink fixture		Jewish leader				Insolvent	
Under		Ship's diary		Cereal grains	→	A			Female deer		Epoch Scottish tribe	→		
				Actress Ms Thurman	→	U	M	A	Surgery worker	→				
Male ox	Fail to mention	→					Go to next page (inits)	→			Solitary person		Eye droplets	Tom ... , diver
			Operatic solo	→	Allow to borrow		Wireless	→	Connected	→				
Human limb	Opposite of 'cold'		Jessica ... , actress	→				Large rodent		First number			Rim (of a vessel)	
							Flow away	→			Every	→		
In that place		From Delhi?	→						Spooky	→				
Warty amphibian	→				River mammal	→					Foreign agent	→		

Your answer:

## SUDOKU

To solve the puzzle, each 3 x 3 box, each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9. Solve the puzzle and the numbers in the highlighted squares are the prize answer.

**WIN  
£60  
Puzzle 8**

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

Your answer:

## WORDSEARCH

**WIN  
£50  
Puzzle 9**

An eatery in Hitchin caused a stir by offering which food with the flavour of pigs in blankets? The answer is the one item missing from the grid.

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

BREAD  
CAKE  
CHEESE  
CHOW MEIN  
HAGGIS

ICE CREAM  
KEBAB  
PASTA  
PICKLE  
PIE

SAMOSA  
SANDWICH  
SCONE  
TOFFEE  
YOGURT

Your answer:



WE LOVE HOME

# THE BEST CRACKERS

To help your Christmas Day go off with a bang



£6

Racing Santa, set of six,  
Tesco

£8

Glitter tree shape, set of six,  
George Home

£14.99

Red and gold, set of six,  
Very

FAMILY  
FUN

£12

Nutcrackers, set of six,  
Paperchase

£22.99

Reindeer, set of six,  
Marie Curie

TOTAL  
LUXE

£3

Prosecco with truffles,  
Dunelm

£12.99

Silver snowflake, set of six,  
studio.co.uk

£5.99

Pet cat and dog, each cracker  
Marie Curie

£12

Unicorn, set of six,  
Paperchase

£15

Charcoal and bows,  
set of six,  
Tesco

ULTRA  
GLAM

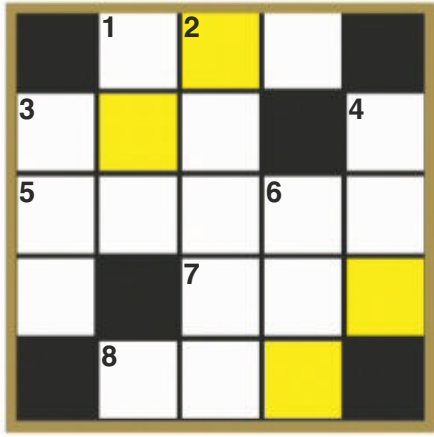
FEATURE: ESME CLEMO



Win!

LITTLE ONE

Researchers have found that packaging makes up how much of a box of Christmas chocolates? Solve the crossword, then read down the yellow squares to spell out the prize answer.



- ACROSS**
- 1 Slang for 'tea' (3)
  - 3 ... Paulo, city (3)
  - 5 No..., road sign (5)
  - 7 Moray ..., fish (3)
  - 8 Fairy (3)

- DOWN**
- 1 Am able to (3)
  - 2 Boarding house (5)
  - 3 View, look at (3)
  - 4 Olive ..., Popeye's cartoon girl (3)
  - 6 Match official (3)



Your answer:

TO ENTER  
Turn to page 88 for details or visit [lifedeathprizes.com/win](http://lifedeathprizes.com/win)

TRUE-LIFE SELFLESS SPIRIT

# Doing it for Daddy

*My son would be so proud of his big-hearted girl*

Lyn Bradley, 66, Levenshulme



Piling woolly hats and gloves into a bag, my son Daniel had never made me prouder. Hand in hand with his little girl Lucy, then 4, they made for the front door.

Dusk was setting in, the wind snarling as the temperature dropped. It was a freezing evening in December 2016.

'Keep warm,' I said, waving them off.

But Daniel and Lucy weren't worried about themselves. By handing out thick clothes, they were on a mission to keep the homeless of Manchester warm during Christmas.

I was brimming with admiration. Always had been when it came to Daniel. He'd been my rock, even caring for me when I had uterus cancer in 2011.

Soon after I was given the all-clear, we'd had more good news.

'I'm going to be a dad,' Daniel had beamed.

Lucy became Daniel's world from the moment she was born in August 2012.

He had a brilliant job in the Department of Education, was in a band,

and loved combat sports.

But all that went on the back burner when he became a father.

Though he split from Lucy's mum in spring 2016 and moved back in with me, he still saw his girl every weekend and at least once during the week.

Never let her down.

At the beginning of 2017, plans were already forming for that Christmas.

'We need to start collecting hats and scarves again,' Daniel told Lucy.

Seeing him helping her draw pictures or hearing about the newest Disney toy he'd bought her, I could watch them for hours.

'Two peas in a pod,' my daughter Kimberley, 31, laughed.

But, though Daniel was at his happiest when he was with Lucy, he was battling something beneath his smile.

You see, he'd been diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, aged 8. Since then, he'd needed insulin injections four times a day.

He had Addison's disease, too, a condition affecting the

adrenal glands.

He lived off a cocktail of medication and steroids.

But Daniel never complained, at 8 or at 35 – he always saw the positives in his life.

His infectious laughter echoing through the house, no matter what he was going through.

It's why he felt compelled to reach out to those less fortunate than himself, especially at Christmas.

On 4 May 2017, Daniel arrived home from visiting Lucy. As always, when he'd seen his daughter, he was beaming, telling me about a new pink towel he'd bought her for their swim that weekend.

'I'm off to bed, Mum,' he said a few hours later, kissing my cheek.

The next day, I called up the stairs to wake him for work. Usually, he'd moan it was too early.

Only, this time, my calls

**He was battling something beneath his smile**



# or



Lucy was her father's world



With Auntie Kimberley – and Daniel's generosity shines on



were met with silence.

'Daniel?' I called again, straining my ears for the sound of footsteps or the quilt shuffling.

But there was nothing.

Climbing the stairs, I knocked on the door.

*Silence.*

As I opened the door, my eyes fell on my darling boy

sprawled out on the floor. It was clear Daniel was dead.

Holding him in my arms until paramedics arrived, my mind whirled.

My son had gone to bed his normal self, excited for another weekend with Lucy.

Now he was dead at 35. He'd died from rare complications of diabetes.

Lucy's mum broke the news to her, but she was so young.

As she laid an orange

rose – Daniel's favourite colour – on his coffin during the funeral, my heart crumbled into pieces.

But I knew I couldn't lose myself in grief.

I had to keep his bond with Lucy strong, ensure he lives on in our memories.

'Nanny, can we still help the homeless?' Lucy asked a few months after Daniel's death.

She was only 4, but her maturity and generosity shone brightly.

We'd found a stash of warm clothes Daniel had started saving specially, in his room.

Holding back tears, I agreed we'd carry on Daniel's mission.

So, weeks before Christmas 2017, we visited the many people living on Manchester's city-centre streets.

In doorways, under cold

bridges and at bus stops.

'Your daddy would be proud,' one man said when we'd told him about Daniel and handed him a coat.

And he really would.

Last year, with help from Kimberley collecting donations from friends and

family, we went out again to deliver some warm clothes and toiletries.

This Christmas, we'll be doing the same.

I see Daniel in Lucy, now 7, every day.

She's got her father's quick wit I miss so much.

But she's also got his kind heart, the generosity to help others in need.

And I know Daniel will live on in Lucy forever.

**She was only 4 but showed such maturity**

**The charity Crisis is working to end homelessness in the UK. Find out how you can get involved at [crisis.org.uk](http://crisis.org.uk)**



Me and Lucy, busy collecting for those in need





# CALLING ALL MINCE SPIES

## **RULES OF THE GAME**

***Are you as sneaky as Santa's elves? Cut out these challenges and pop them into cards, gifts or crackers. Can family and friends complete their missions without getting caught or driving everyone round the bend?***

Once all the presents are unwrapped, start a snowball fight using the ripped wrapping paper.

Sneakily pinch one item from everyone around the table. Start with a fork, then a cracker gift, a hat or joke, etc.

Convince someone to sing a carol with you, then 'forget' all the words on purpose so they have to sing it as a solo.

Take some Christmas selfies with your friends and family but use your hat/reindeer antlers to block out their faces.

Start up a chat with someone about your Christmas dinner and get them to say 'turkey' 10 times.

Sneak a Brussels sprout from your plate to someone else's without them, or anyone else, noticing. Keep going until you're sprout-free!

Every time someone says 'Merry Christmas', you must shout 'Ho ho ho!' Don't stop until someone guesses what you're up to.

Whenever someone unwraps an item of clothing, ask to look at it and then...try it on, even if it's not your size. Don't say why though!

Get someone to recite the names of all the reindeers. But try convincing them that there is definitely one called Rodney...





# CASH SMART

*We help you make savvy choices so your hard-earned goes that bit further*

## 3 ways to...

### slash your Christmas shopping bill!

As we prepare for the holiday season, many of us end up shelling out more than we mean to on presents. Here's how to stay on track.

#### 1 Set a budget

Work out how much you can afford to spend on gifts first, then decide how much



of your budget to allocate to each person. Write a list and tick off as you buy, keeping track of how much you've paid for each item.

#### 2 Quick savings

Think about how you can reduce costs. You could make presents, anything from bath bombs to chocolate truffles. Plus, do you have any gifts stashed away that you don't want? Then regift them.

#### 3 Pay less

When you're shopping, always compare prices at different retailers online to find the cheapest. And for extra money off, search the web for discount codes. If you download the free browser plug-in Pouch ([joinpouch.com](http://joinpouch.com)), it will search for voucher codes when you visit thousands of websites and display them on your screen. And don't forget to check websites like TopCashback ([topcashback.co.uk](http://topcashback.co.uk)) and Quidco ([quidco.com](http://quidco.com)) to see if you can

## Avoid #easymoney scams

Social media users have been warned by Santander to beware posts designed to lure them into becoming money mules. These are people who let criminals use their bank accounts to



transfer cash associated with illegal activity. They're usually promised payment in return but it's a crime that could land them in jail. The bank says fraudsters are using hashtags like #RealMoneyTransfers, #UkFlips, and #EasyMoney to try to recruit people. Its research found 10% of Brits have been approached on social media about becoming a money mule – and of those, 18% went ahead with an illegal transaction.



get any cashback on your festive purchases if you buy them via cashback sites too. Also, if you're planning to use Amazon for Christmas shopping, consider signing up for a free trial of Amazon Prime, which promises benefits, including unlimited one-day delivery on millions of items. For more info and T&Cs, visit [amazon.co.uk/amazonprime](http://amazon.co.uk/amazonprime). Just make sure you cancel it in time if you don't want to continue, to avoid being charged once the free trial ends.

**SAVING OF THE WEEK**

### BEAUTY offer

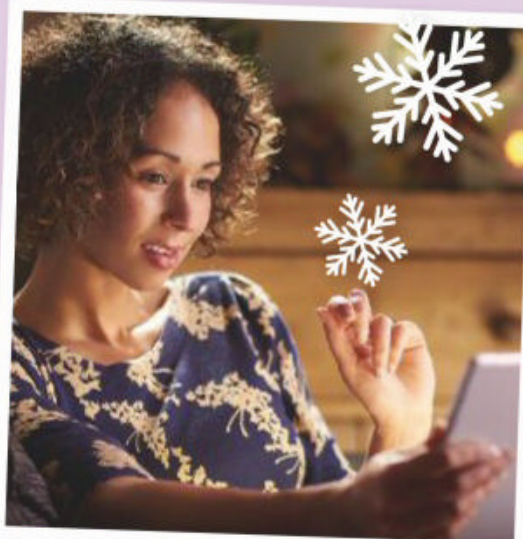
Improve your oral

health and leave your mouth feeling fresher by snapping up the Waterpik Cordless Plus Water Flosser – which claims to be up to 50% more effective than string floss for improving gum health. There's a third off its price at Superdrug – it was £54.99 and now it's £38.49. This offer ends 2 January 2020.



## Have you heard?

Night-time online shopping rose by almost a quarter last year, with one in 15 online purchases now being made between midnight and 6am, according to data from the John Lewis Partnership Card. Spending at night is done more by women, who account for two-thirds of customer purchases, according to the research. But the men who do shop at night spend slightly more, shelling out an average of £37 each compared to £34 for women.



### Did you know?

Some 26% of students are using payday loans while at university, this is up from 11% a decade ago, according to research by money supermarket.com.

## TOP TIP

To avoid overspending at the supermarket put back five items once you've finished your shop. It can be a good way to work out what's essential and what's not.



# Win! £200 cash!



**WIN  
£100  
Puzzle 11**

Something that you are given, without asking for it, on a special occasion? Solve the puzzle by following the arrows and writing in your answers. Then read down the letters in the shaded squares to find the prize answer.

**Your answer:**

## FILL ME IN

Havana's island		Plug, promote		Egyptian city		Is allowed to		Firmly against		Mary — Moore, actress
				Pesters, makes angry						
Dock		Biblical boat		Enjoyment		Beauty in Greek mythology		Hawk-like bird		Comedy sketch
					Long walks, rambles					
Acorn tree	Way, course						Vex, gall			
			Plaything emporium (7)		Go off the point		Known details		US spy group (inits)	
Milk pudding	Mission, task	Bovine sound		Fault, or switch allegiance						
								Pull hard		Arrange again
Rob —, Scottish hero				Illegal ticket seller		Sear				
									Crusted dish	
Stretched out		Weeding tool				Drains away				
Votes to accept		Expel					Compete			
						Units of length				

## CIRCLE TIME

A chip shop in which Scottish town made the news for offering a complete deep-fried Christmas dinner? Fit the words into the grid, then read down the letters in the shaded circles.

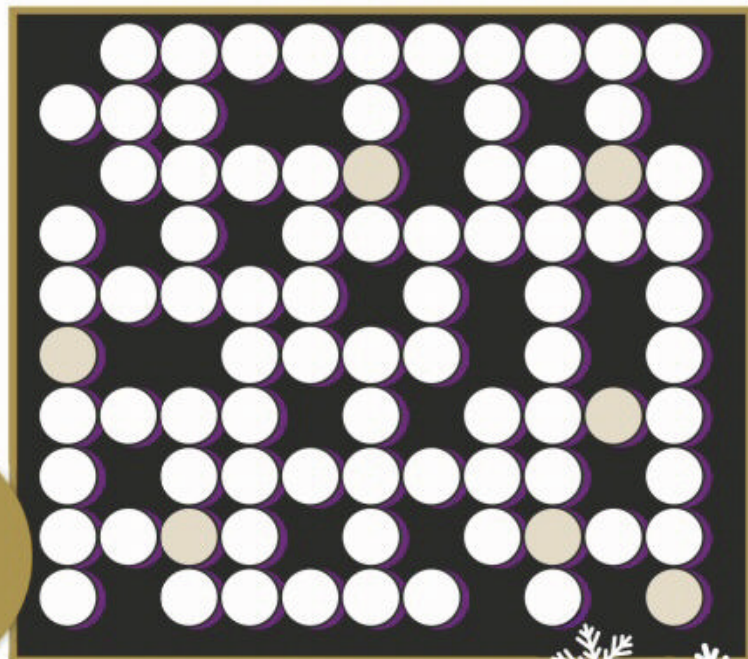
**3 letters**  
BOA  
HIP  
LAY  
SOT  
**4 letters**  
ABUT  
ACER  
ARTY  
AVER

**CREW**  
GOAL  
HAKA  
LIDO  
PLIE  
**TACK**  
THUD  
**5 letters**  
AGAPE  
PARKA

**TREAD**  
TROUT  
WALTZ  
**6 letters**  
PAKORA  
**7 letters**  
COLLIDE  
MANTRAP  
ROBOTIC

**8 letters**  
BINNACLE  
TERRACED  
**10 letters**  
SPOTLIGHTS

**WIN  
£100  
Puzzle 12**



**Your answer:**



# My LAST Christmas?

*I should have been wrapping up gifts – but, instead, I was fighting my biggest battle...*

**Amber Toon, 25, Burton on Trent**

**S**tanding in the queue, with a couple of Christmas jumpers folded over my arm, a familiar feeling of sickness washed over me.

Abandoning my shopping, I grabbed my son, Alfie, 3, and went straight home.

It was 18 December 2018 and, after discovering I was pregnant four months earlier, I'd suffered morning sickness for the first few months.

I'd felt OK recently. I'd even managed to do some Christmas shopping, and put up tinsel and decorations at home.

But, now, I felt awful again.

My partner, Mike, 27, was in France with his mates.

So, that night, I stayed with my mum Deborah, 52, and she helped me get Alfie into bed.

'Now, you rest, too, love,' Mum smiled.

'Good idea,' I replied, crawling under the duvet.

Next day, I felt much better.

Mum offered to let me practise new festive designs on her nails.

Working part-time as a beauty therapist,

I'd been inundated with client requests for Christmas manicures – trees, snowflakes, even Father Christmas!

But it was proving more than a little tricky.

My vision was blurred and I felt

light-headed.

'I can't see a thing,' I squinted, trying to paint a tiny snowman on Mum's thumbnail.

'You need to get checked out,' Mum frowned.

At 20 weeks pregnant, I knew I couldn't take risks.

Only, my doctor suggested an eye test.

So, the next day, I dropped Alfie at nursery and headed

to my local optician's.

But, halfway through, the optician stopped.

'We need to get you to hospital,' she said.

'Why?' I gasped.

She said she'd noticed a mass behind my left eye – and that I shouldn't drive.

So I rang my dad, Richard, 51, who came and drove me to Burton Hospital.

It was four days before Christmas and I'd been looking forward to celebrating as a family.

But, now, I was panicking. *What's going on? Is my baby OK?*

At the hospital, after a CT scan, a consultant held up the images.

There were large black dots covering my brain.

'It's fluid,' she said.

'What's causing it?'

Dad gulped, but the consultant wasn't sure.

Feeling afraid, I texted Mike, who was still away. Worried, he promised to get back as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, Mum, not

wanting to scare Alfie, just told him Mummy was poorly.

The next day, I was taken to the Brain Tumour unit at Nottingham University Hospital, for an MRI scan.

There was a large tumour growing in the centre of my brain. Although it wasn't cancerous, it was causing dizziness, nausea and problems with my vision.

And that wasn't all...

'We need to act quickly or this could kill you,' I was told. Apparently, my brain was 'drowning' in the fluid being blocked by the tumour.

If I didn't have it drained and the tumour removed, I'd be dead in months.

But the complex procedure involved drilling into my skull. Then there was the risk to my baby, as I'd need a general anaesthetic.

Meanwhile, Mike was trying desperately to get a flight home.

Finally, on Christmas Eve, he made it to the hospital.

'I love you,' he whispered.

'What if I don't make it?'

I murmured, heartbroken...



*Praying I'd be OK...*



*Massive op*

**She had noticed a mass behind my left eye**



*Mike, me and my baby bump*

**You should SEE ME NOW**



Continued from previous page

# Time for a MIRACLE

**M**y condition was so critical, surgery was booked at once – it was Christmas Eve.

I should have been hanging up Alfie's stocking, leaving a mince pie for Santa.

Instead, I was stuck in hospital, unsure whether I'd see my son again.

Alfie was now staying with his dad – my ex-partner – and we still hadn't told him how ill I was because he was too young to understand.

As nurses strung tinsel around my room, Mike and my parents gathered at my bedside with presents.

Mum had wrapped me up a bottle of fancy gin.

'I'll save this,' I smiled.

Mike got me Jo Malone perfume, my favourite.

That night, we said tearful goodbyes before I was wheeled off for surgery.

I prayed it would work.

Hours later, I came round, groggy and disorientated.

It wasn't until the early hours of Christmas Day that I managed to speak to the nurses.

'Is my baby OK?' I asked, hands fluttering to my bump.

'Everything's fine,' a nurse reassured me.

Later, I felt the baby kick and I cried as relief washed over me.

*A miracle.*

The next few days passed in a blur.

I was drowsy and had severe headaches.

My head had been partly-shaved for surgery, and I now had a 6cm-long scar



Happy Christmas from me and Freddie!

snaking right across my scalp.

Mike and my parents co-ordinated their visits so I was never alone.

But I missed Alfie desperately, and I couldn't wait to get home.

I hadn't wanted him to see me in this state.

Finally, on New Year's

Eve, I was allowed home.

'Mummy!' Alfie grinned, clambering onto my bed for a cuddle.

He wanted to show me all his new toys.

'That's nice, love,' I smiled weakly as he rolled his truck across the bed.

The next day, with Mike's help, I made it to Mum and Dad's for a roast dinner.

I couldn't eat much, but it was lovely to be able to join in the celebrations.

'You haven't had much of a Christmas this year, have you?' Mum said sadly.

'I'm just grateful to be here,' I smiled.

Over the next weeks and

Our new happy chappy

months, I slowly began to recover.

Mum, Dad and Mike all made sure I was getting plenty of rest.

I had regular hospital checkups and the docs were pleased with my progress.

Thankfully, my pregnancy went well, too.

'We'll get through this together,' I'd whisper to my growing bump.

In April this year, I gave birth to baby Freddie, who weighed 6lb 5oz.

'I wasn't sure this day would ever come,' I sobbed, holding him tight.

Now, my little bundle is 8 months old.

He's a happy chap – and Alfie dotes on him.

We're looking forward to sharing our first Christmas as a family of four.

And that's down to the amazing medics who saved my life.

Without them, I wouldn't be here with my boys, excited about visiting Santa's Grotto, hanging our stockings and opening our gifts under the tree.

Last Christmas, I didn't know if I would live or die.

So this year, I reckon it's time to open that bottle of gin that Mum bought me.

We certainly have plenty to celebrate.

**I didn't know if I would live or die**

Me and Mike: so thankful





# Win! £600 cash!

## CODE CRACKER

**S**inger Mariah Carey began her Christmas celebrations last year with a pyjama party followed by a what?

To find out, solve the puzzle...

Fill in the grid. Each letter of the alphabet has been replaced by a number from 1 to 26. When you've completed the grid, the shaded squares will spell out the two-word prize answer.

We've given you five letters to start you off.



Your answer:

**WIN  
£500  
Puzzle 13**

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

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

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
A	E	T			N					G		

## WORD JUMBLE

**W**hat plant is the basis of a traditional Jamaican Christmas drink?

Unscramble each group of letters to discover a plant, herb, spice or vegetable. Now fit them across the grid and you'll spell out the answer to the question.

- 1 PLAYERS
- 2 IS AMMO
- 3 FOR FANS
- 4 BEER RAG
- 5 WEEDS
- 6 SLOW PIC

1	P						
2	M						
3	S						
4			G				
5			S				
6	C						

**WIN  
£100  
Puzzle 14**

Your answer:



# YOU LITTLE BEAUTY



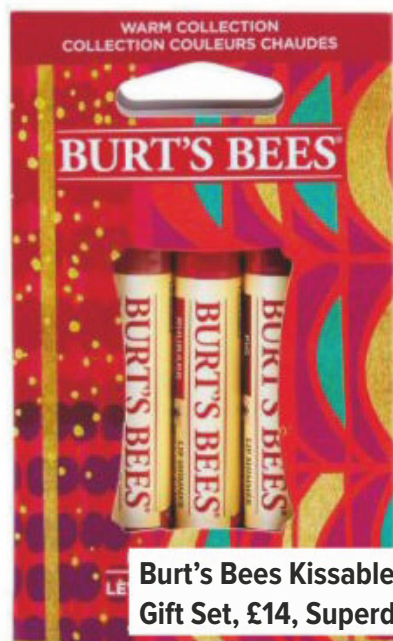
Nivea  
Soft Lips  
Gift Set,  
£6.50,  
Wilko



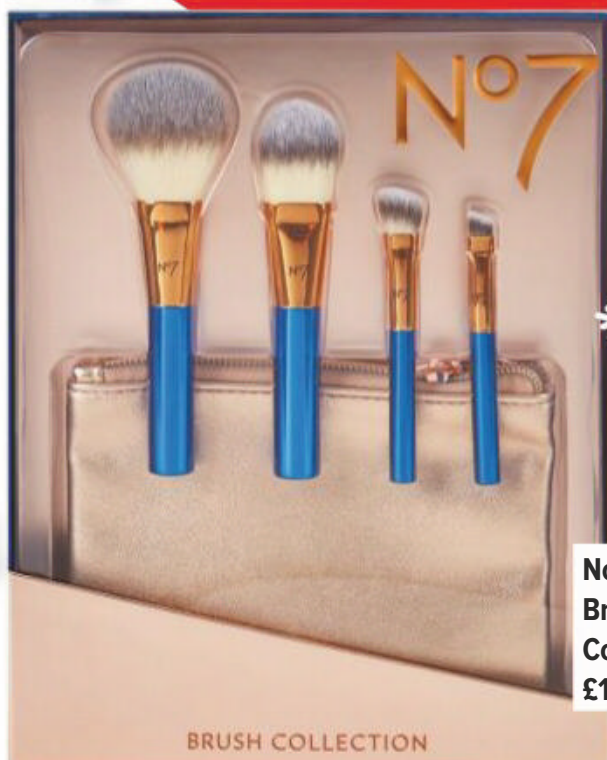
Festive Hand  
Cream Trio, £15,  
The Body Shop



Neroli and Lime  
Leaves Moisturising  
Shower Gel, £7.50,  
heathcote-ivory.com



Burt's Bees Kissable Colour  
Gift Set, £14, Superdrug



No7 The  
Brush  
Collection,  
£14, Boots



Vintage & Co  
Manicure Set, £8,  
heathcote-ivory.com

**ALL £15  
and under!**  
From stocking fillers to sets,  
these gifts will earn you plenty  
of brownie points





Soaper Duper Creamy Deluxe Shea Butter Gift Set, £10, Boots



Impulse Free Spirit Mini Trio Gift Set, £5, Asda



Arbonne Spearmint Lip Salve Ornament, £11, arbonne.com



Soap & Glory Mask Force Five, £13, Boots



Baylis & Harding The Fuzzy Duck Cotswold Collection, £10, Sainsbury's

Avon Christmas Speak Out Gift, £13.50, avonuk.com



10% of every purchase goes to Refuge

We Love All-Over Duo, £8, Superdrug



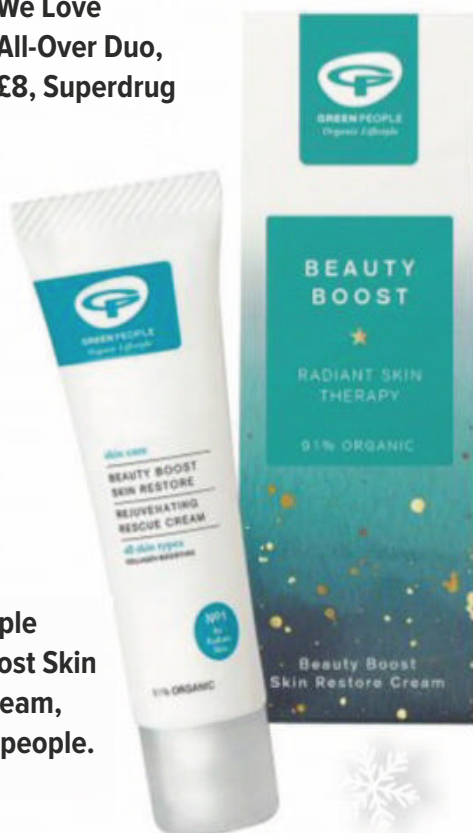
Sanctuary Spa Rosey Hand Duo, £12.50, Boots



Neom Home Mist in Christmas Wish, £15, neomorganics.com



Green People Beauty Boost Skin Restore Cream, £10, greenpeople.co.uk



Bloom Diffuser Set, £15, Superdrug



Spongellé Body Wash Infused Buffer in Sugar Plum, £8.50, nailpolishdirect.co.uk





# EVIL IN



Pardo: bitter divorcé

***Santa is meant to be a symbol of joy. But these twisted monsters dressed as St Nick to carry out a sackful of truly sick crimes...***



His Santa costume

## NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

**T**he house in Covina, Los Angeles, USA, was alive with the buzz of old friends and family, hugging and catching up. It was Christmas Eve 2008. Just like every year before, a celebration was underway at the home of retired couple Joseph and Alicia Ortega.

Their daughter Sylvia was in dire need of some festive cheer. Her two-year marriage to Bruce Pardo, 45, had recently ended in a bitter divorce.

Amid the festivities in Covina, a group of 25 family and friends, including the kids, called a group of 35 relatives in Mexico. The huge group chat was a family tradition.

Moments after the call ended, there was a knock on the front door. Was it someone

else come to join in the celebrations?

With a smile on her face, the Ortegas' granddaughter Katrina Yuzefpolsky, 8, opened the door.

It was Santa, his red suit enough to light up any child's face.

But excitement turned to horror.

For Santa had two semi-automatic guns...

Shooting the child in the face, he stepped over her and barged into the party.

The monster in the costume was Bruce Pardo, Sylvia's ex-husband. Intent on 'revenge', he sprayed the room with bullets.

Panic ensued, with people smashing windows to get out and cowering behind furniture.

One girl, 16, was shot in the back, while a woman, 20, broke her ankle when she jumped from a window.

Neighbour Jan Gregory saw a teenage



DIY flame thrower

boy fleeing, shouting, 'They shot my family!'

Moments later, the house was on fire, with flames shooting 50 metres in the air. Pardo had torched the home with a DIY flame-thrower.

Fire crews raced to tackle the inferno, rescuing any

survivors they could. But, tragically, they found nine bodies – Sylvia, Alicia and Joseph were among the dead.

Hours later, Pardo's body was found at his brother's home, 40 miles away. He'd shot himself after suffering third-degree burns.

Pardo had carefully planned the attack, even rigging his car with ammunition

to explode on Christmas Day.

Through his actions, Bruce Pardo had killed nine people, and left 13 young children either orphaned or bereaved that terrible Christmas Eve.



Nine lay dead...



# A RED SUIT

## EVIL GROOMING IN THE GROTTTO

**W**ith open arms, he'd welcome children into his twinkling grotto at the shopping centre.

Pensioner Ronald C McDonald had played Santa for more than 25 years.

Posing for photos and handing out gifts, he was well-known in Lake Forest Park, Washington, USA.

With his white hair and wire-rimmed glasses, children called him Santa all year round.

He'd walk down the street with kids thronging around him.

But, as the festive season approached in 1997, the neighbourhood was rocked by the news he'd been arrested.

He was accused of twice raping a little girl, 6, in his home.

McDonald immediately confessed – said he'd also abused seven other children

over several years. Claiming remorse, he admitted using his work in Santa's grotto to groom victims.

'Please God, why didn't I see anything?' asked one neighbour, who'd trusted him enough to name him as guardian for her children in her will.

**He'd abused children over several years**

In court in November 1997, McDonald, then 71, and his family requested the longest sentence possible. He was given 26 years, six months.

Later, he confessed to abusing a total of 45 children since 1937, but he was never convicted of further offences.

McDonald died in prison in 2011.



McDonald in court

## BLOODY DEATHS WHILE GATHERED AROUND THE TREE



Gunman Yazdanpanah

**O**n Christmas Day 2011, a young woman tapped out a text message: *We just got here and my uncle is here, too.*

*Dressed as Santa. Awesome.*

Sara Fatemeh Zarei, 22, was celebrating with her parents Zohreh, 58, and Mohamad, 59, her aunt Fatemah, 55, and cousins Nona, 19, and Ali, 14.

No one expected Fatemah's ex Aziz Yazdanpanah, 56, to appear at the apartment in Grapevine, located between Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas, USA.

Yazdanpanah and Fatemah had separated nine months earlier. Since, she'd found jobs at spas – after years of not working, at her controlling husband's insistence.

Shortly after her first text, Sara typed another about her uncle: *Now he wants to be all fatherly and win father of the year.* Then,

as the family gathered to exchange gifts, suddenly Yazdanpanah, still dressed as Santa, pulled out two guns.

At 11.34am, the police received an emergency call from inside the apartment. A man's voice told the operator 'I'm shooting people', while cries of 'Help, help!' could be heard in the background.

Arriving, the police found dead bodies around the Christmas tree. Yazdanpanah had shot his entire family before killing himself.

Family friends suggested he'd been jealous of his wife's success without him. Just hours before the killings, the Zarei and Yazdanpanah families had hosted a Christmas Eve party. The dozens of loved ones enjoying the party with them couldn't have imagined it would be the last time they'd see them alive.

**Still dressed as Santa, he pulled out two guns**



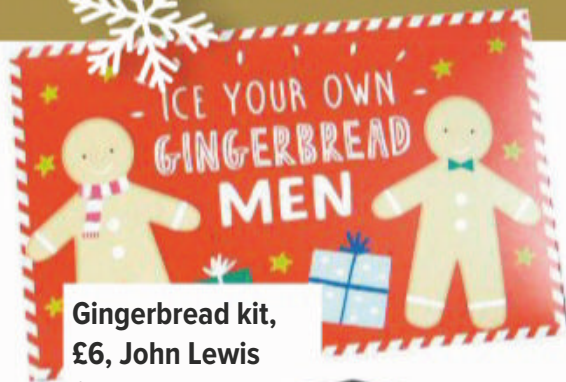
UNDER  
£10



Cheeky Elf,  
£5.38,  
Thorntons



PlayStation mug,  
£8, Tesco



Gingerbread kit,  
£6, John Lewis  
& Partners



Chilli oil  
set, £5,  
Tesco



Llama  
Powerbank,  
£8, B&M



Twerk Pong!  
game, £9.99,  
studio.co.uk



Minnie Mouse  
slippers, £8,  
Primark



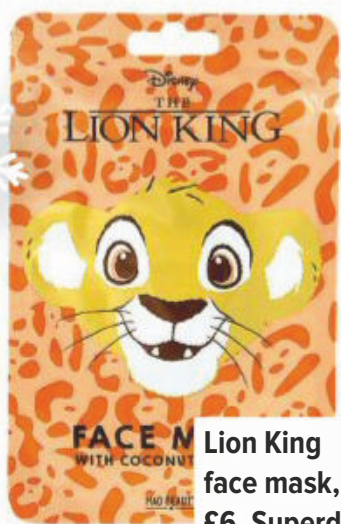
Planet purse,  
£6, Sainsbury's



Dinosaur socks,  
£6 for set of  
two, Dunelm

Fantastic gifts for all  
the family – pick from  
our guide of over 100  
presents for under £20

YOUR  
CHRISTMAS



Lion King  
face mask,  
£6, Superdrug



Peaky Blinders  
wash bag set,  
£7, B&M



Passion fruit  
Martini mixer,  
£6.99,  
Tipplesworth



Oval brushes  
in bag, £9.50,  
M&S



Hot Cloth  
Cleanser Set,  
£7.99, Aldi



Knotted  
headband,  
£8, Very

Votive candle  
gift set,  
£7.99, Aldi



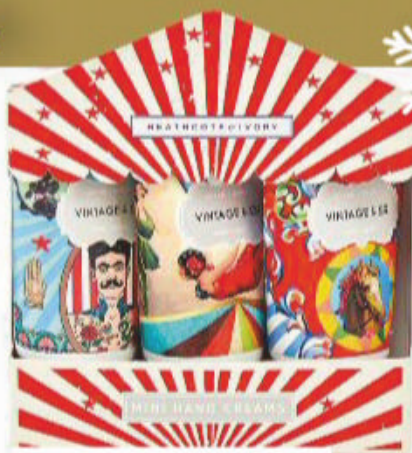
Dream sleep  
collection,  
£8, Wilko



Grow your own chilli, £8, Matalan



Steering wheels for  
Nintendo Switch,  
£7.99 for 2, Amazon



Heathcote & Ivory  
circus mini hand cream  
trio, £6, Daisy Park



Personalised Buzz  
Lightyear poncho,  
£6.99, studio.co.uk



Bobble hat,  
£5.99,  
British Heart  
Foundation



Dog beer  
and treats,  
£6, Matalan



Spider-Man  
plush toy, £9.95,  
Amazon



Selfie Light,  
£9.50, M&S



Eyeshadow  
palette, £8,  
Primark

# ULTIMATE GIFT GUIDE



Football  
Quiz Book,  
£6.99,  
Marie Curie

Cuteitos, £7.99 each,  
Smyths Toys Store



Disaronno  
cracker, £7,  
Waitrose



Alphabet cosmetic  
pouch, £7 each,  
Superdrug



Four-inch  
feisty pet,  
£9, Argos



Cadbury  
Heroes tin,  
£9.99, all major  
supermarkets



Handy  
Tool Kit  
set, £5,  
B&M

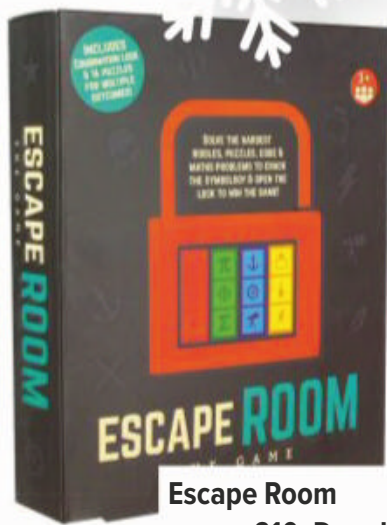
Blending  
sponges set,  
£8, Next



TURN OVER FOR MORE GIFTS



UNDER  
£15



Escape Room game, £10, Dunelm



Sloe Gin bubble bath, £12, Baylis & Harding



Sequin dog, £10, Asda



PopSockets doughnut phone grip, £10, Vodafone



LOL Surprise! boys, £10 each, Tesco



Poopsie Unicorn Crush, £10, Tesco



Gloves, £12, M&Co



Pomsies Bubbles, £14.99, Very



Emoji bike bells, £10 each, Halfords



Reese's milkshake kit, £12, Matalan



Crochet hat and mittens, £14, M&S



Rocket hot water bottle, £10, Argos



Eau de toilette tin, £12 for set of 6, Next



Star Cross Body Bag, £10, Sainsbury's



Teddy bear, £14.99, British Heart Foundation

Gin mug, £12.50, John Lewis & Partners







Star earrings, £12.50, Next



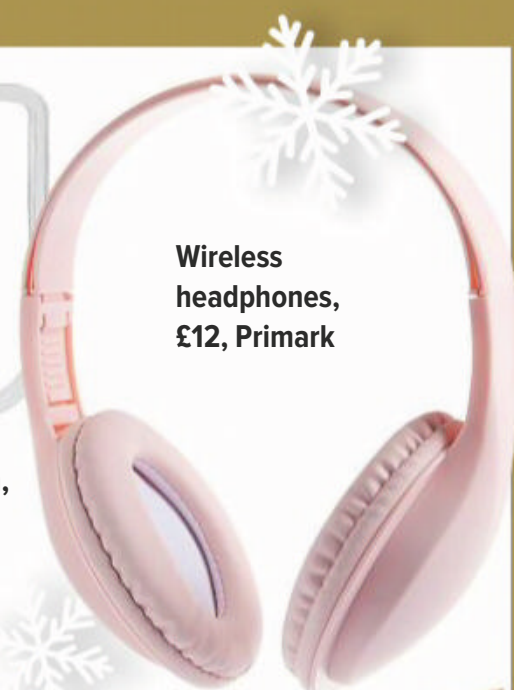
Peacock bra, £12, and briefs, £6, F&F



Totes slipper socks, £14, Boots



Game of Thrones stein, £10, Argos



Wireless headphones, £12, Primark



Glitter hipflask, £10, Sainsbury's



Baby Shark pyjamas, £14, M&Co



Card holder, £12.50, Oliver Bonas



Harry Potter Dobble card game, £14.99, Amazon



Hot chocolate set, £10, Debenhams



Make your own cheese set, £12, Dunelm



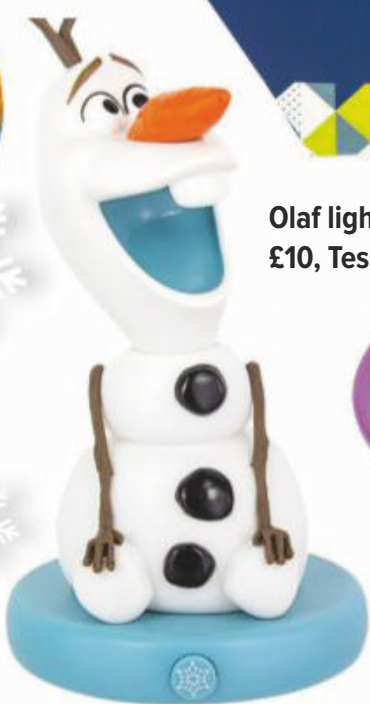
Kids' baking set, £11.99, Lakeland



Dinosaur toy, £10, Dunelm



Man's scarf, £14, M&Co



Olaf light, £10, Tesco



Aladdin trinket dish, £12, Argos



Cat scratcher set, £12, Sainsbury's



Woollen headband, £12, Next



Rudolf jumper, £10, M&S



UNDER  
£20



Nando's sizzler set, £18.50, Debenhams



Woody 3-in-1 pencils, £18 for set of 10, Stabilo



Monster truck and controller, £15, Flying Tiger



Air football game, £15, Flying Tiger

Disco Ball Karaoke Speaker, £16, B&M



So Slime DIY, £19.99, Very



Pet jumper, £16, Joe Browns



Panettone, £17.95, Carluccio's



Star pyjamas, £18, F&F



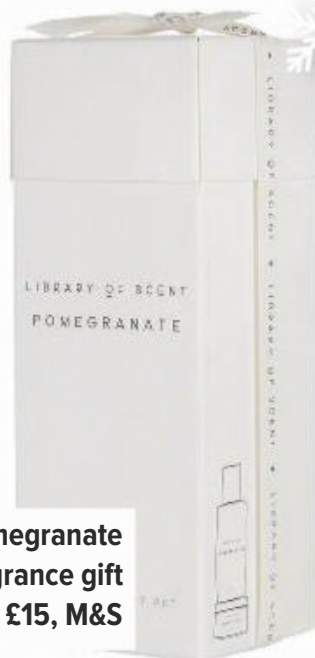
Men's sneakers, £19.50, M&S



Star bottle, £15, Accessorize



Children's play guitar, £18.99, Amazon



Pomegranate fragrance gift set, £15, M&S



Jurassic lava lamp, £18, Argos



Space helmet dress up, £18, Argos



Boppi the Booty Shakin' Llama, £19.99, B&M



Bicycle repair kit, £15, White Stuff



Nails Inc set, £15.99, Very



Lion toy, £15, Argos

Charm necklace, £16, Next

Stamp 'n Top Pizza Oven, £19.99, Very

Kid's glitter watch, £15, River Island

Shaving set, £16.95, Hawkins & Brimble

Men's slippers, £16, M&Co

Big Chef, Little Chef apron set, £15, John Lewis & Partners

Bottle opener, £15, River Island

Build your own synth, £18, Debenhams

Hair slides, £15 each, Oliver Bonas

Robozuna Mangle Flash-welder, £19.99, The Entertainer

Jack Daniel's BBQ sauce set, £16, Boots

Leopard onesie, £16, Tu

Velvet boxy bag, £16, F&F

FlaGingo Pink Gin, £19, Amazon

Spot dressing gown, £15, M&Co

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# Win! £375 cash!

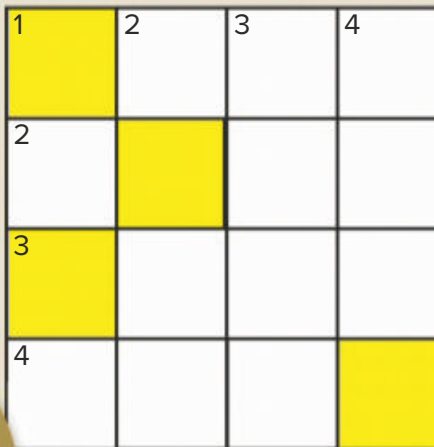
## OVER TO YOU

Can you set a puzzle in this format? Send it, with a photo of yourself, to the address on p3. There's **£20** for every one we use!



This week's puzzle was compiled by **Linda Keen, Sheffield**

**WIN**  
5 x  
**£25**  
Puzzle 15



### ACROSS

- 1 Sharpen (your appetite)
- 2 Strongly dislike
- 3 Flatten out creases
- 4 --- up, kept back emotion

### DOWN

- 1 Lash for punishment
- 2 Large rabbit type animal
- 3 Posh college
- 4 Shelter when camping

Your answer:

## SKINNY ONE

Which breed of dog was dressed in festive costume for a gathering in Hyde Park?

**WIN**  
**£50**  
Puzzle 18

To find out, solve the puzzle... Add a letter anywhere in each of the boxed-off words to fit the clue, eg, Variety of beet = CHAR + D = CHARD. Write the added letter in the space provided. Read down the added letters to spell out the prize answer.

CHAR

Variety of beet

MEND

Change

PATH

Eye cover  
Combination of notes

CORD

TORE

Keep for the future

IRIS

Celtic language

TAPE

Shade of brown

LUGE

Pounce

ROSS

Waste matter



Your answer:

PHOTOS: GETTY

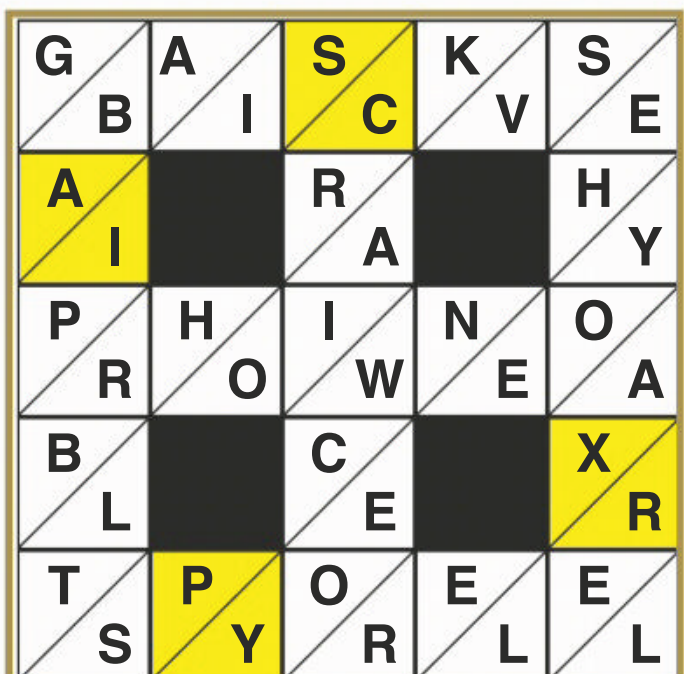


## HALF & HALF

Which fish is traditionally the centrepiece of a Polish Christmas Eve meal?

Cross out a letter in each square to get a grid filled with words. The uncrossed out letters in the shaded squares give the prize answer.

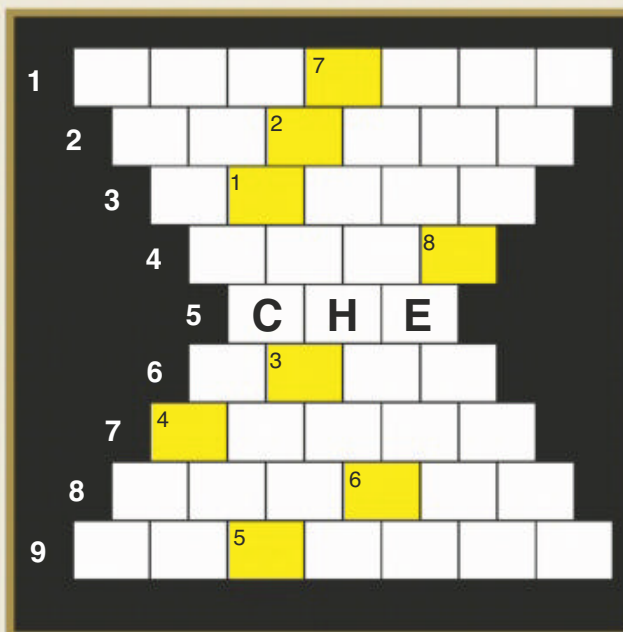
**WIN**  
**£100**  
Puzzle 16



Your answer:

## BRICK TRICK

Which flower, often grown indoors for Christmas, shares its name with a variety of the mineral zircon? To find out, solve the puzzle... Enter the answers to the clues in the grid. Every word is an anagram of its neighbours, plus or minus a letter. Read the shaded squares in number order for the prize answer.



1 In outline only (7)

2 Old reaping tool (6)

3 Large solid box (5)

4 Inscribe with acid (4)

5 Argentine revolutionary, --- Guevara (3)

6 One and all (4)

7 Hoard (5)

8 Likelihood (6)

9 Winding racetrack section (7)

**WIN**  
**£100**  
Puzzle 17

Your answer:



# WOOL I never!

## My boy's Nativity costume left me feeling sheepish...

Helen Cox, 46, Cambus, Clackmannanshire

**T**apping away on my laptop, I found just what I was looking for.

'Perfect!' I smiled to my husband Chris, 47, pointing to a kids' fancy-dress outfit online.

It was November 2018 and our little lad Alfie, 5, had landed the role of shepherd in his school Nativity play.

'Why can't we just put him in a dressing gown with a tea towel over his head?' Chris sighed.

'He's got a main part,' I insisted, confirming my order. 'And it's only £16.99.'

*Bargain!*

It came with a free inflatable sheep, too – our shepherd would really

look the part.

A few days later, the outfit arrived.

'He's going to be the star of the show with this,' I smiled to the ladies in the school reception, handing them the unopened package.

Alfie started rehearsals, and I busied myself with my list of other Christmas tasks.

Shopping, wrapping, hanging decs...

A week later, I picked up Alfie after school.

'How are rehearsals going?' I asked.

'Really good,' Alfie grinned.

Then he paused, reached into his bag.

'But my teacher said I had to bring this home,' he said.

Alfie took out the semi-inflated sheep that had come with his outfit.

Only, as he held it up, I gasped.

'Oh no!' I cried.

To my horror, I realised the sheep not only had red pouty lips and long eyelashes, but it also had a huge hole in its bum!

*It was a sex toy!*

I'd unknowingly given my son a sex doll to take to his school Nativity!

'Mummy, will you finish

**It had pouty lips, long eyelashes, and more..!**

*Maybe I should have stuck with Alfie's dressing gown!*

blowing it up for me?' Alfie grinned, totally unaware.

'Erm, I'm not sure that's a good idea,' I smiled, distracting him with the promise of some sweets.

Only, Alfie was desperate to play with his new toy.

'What's this for,' he asked, pointing to the large hole.

'Erm, the sheep's toilet paper,' I said, thinking quickly.

That night, Alfie slept with his beloved sheep next to his bed.

So, after confessing to Chris, I snuck into Alfie's room and grabbed it.

Stuffed it in a cupboard under the stairs.

Then I went back online, did some research and found the exact same sheep was also on sale as a *stag night bonkin' sheep*.

'How will I face his teacher?' I groaned to Chris.

'I thought it looked pretty

sheep and nasty,' he chortled. Only...

'Where's my sheep?' Alfie wailed the next day.

'The Elf on the Shelf took it,' I lied, wide-eyed.

Alfie accepted my story.

And a few weeks later, the day of his Nativity play finally arrived.

'It was a genuine mistake,'

I sheepishly explained to his teacher, my face burning.

'These things happen,' she smiled.

But after the play, I sighed with relief.

I couldn't wait to get the flock outta there!

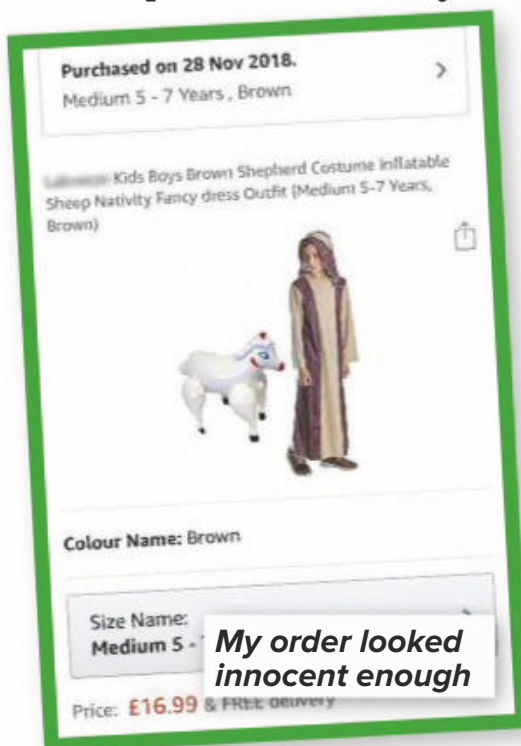
The sheep is still in the cupboard under the stairs. I thought I'd keep it to show Alfie when he's older.

I'm sure he'll find it funny.

And at least now I can laugh about it.

Accidents wool happen, after all...

**How on earth would I face his teacher?!**





# This week's TV

Our top telly picks – you'll kick yourself if you miss them

## Paul Goes to Hollywood

### FOOD NETWORK

In this four-part series, *Bake Off* judge Paul Hollywood combines his passion for cinema, motorbikes and baking when he sets off on an American road trip from New York to Los Angeles. Along the way he will sample some of the best food that the States has to offer, take in the incredible scenery, relive some of his favourite movie moments and meet up with a few famous friends, including *Friends* star Lisa Kudrow and *Desperate Housewives*' actress Teri Hatcher!



Paul meets up with Lisa and Teri (right)



DON'T MISS!



## My Grandparents' War

### C4

To mark the 80th anniversary of the start of the Second World War, this four-part series follows British actors Carey Mulligan, Kristin Scott Thomas, Helena Bonham Carter and Mark Rylance (above, clockwise from top left) as they retrace their grandparents' footsteps during the six-year-long conflict. From the beaches of Dunkirk to the PoW camps in Asia, they will learn about the decisions their grandparents faced and explore how the war not only changed Britain, but the lives of their families, too.



## The Mallorca Files

### BBC1

This daytime crime drama centres around British detective DC Miranda Blake (Elen Rhys) and her German counterpart DC Max Winter (Julian Looman), who have very different approaches to policing, but prove to be the perfect partnership when solving crimes in sunny Mallorca.



Hot cops Miranda and Max

## The Irishman



Scorsese brings in the heavy mob

### NETFLIX

This epic drama from Martin Scorsese tells the story of organised crime in America through the eyes of the Second World War veteran Frank Sheeran, who becomes a top hit man for the mafia. The cast includes veteran stars such as Robert De Niro, Al Pacino and Harvey Keitel.



## Merry Happy Whatever



Will they still be smiling on Boxing Day?

### NETFLIX

Available as a box set, this eight-part comedy series follows a family over the festive season. Dennis Quaid stars as strong-willed dad Don Quinn, who struggles to cope when his youngest daughter Emmy (Bridgit Mendler) comes home for Christmas with a new boyfriend...

## Upright



Lucky hits the road

### SKY ONE

This touching comedy drama stars Tim Minchin as gifted but broke pianist Lucky Flynn, who sets off on an epic 4,000km road trip across the Australian outback to see his dying mother – with a battered upright piano in tow! Milly Alcock stars as a fellow misfit who joins the musician in his quest.

## Servant



Rupert Grint plays Julian

### APPLE TV+

This 10-part psychological thriller tells the story of Philadelphia couple Dorothy (Lauren Ambrose) and Sean Turner (Toby Kebbell) who cope with the loss of their baby by getting a therapy doll and then hire a nanny to look after it! *Harry Potter* star Rupert Grint plays Dorothy's brother, Julian.

## Michael McIntyre's Big Show

### BBC1

Comedian Michael McIntyre returns with his fun-packed Saturday-night show. Filmed in front of a live audience at the London Palladium, the entertainment extravaganza will once again feature celebrity guests, musical performances and a few extra surprises along the way.

Michael makes it big

# Soap world

## Coronation Street

### Roy's brotherly love

Roy recently discovered he had a half-brother, but his new-found sibling Richard isn't a well man because he's got a debilitating lung condition. After seeing how tough things are for Richard and his daughter Nina, Roy does his best to help, but makes things worse when his interfering leads to Richard's carer quitting her job! What can he do to put things right?



Roy just wants to help

## EastEnders

### Wife Swapping in Walford!

Mick's planning a competition that will see several Walford women temporarily swapping homes and families. But as he tries to make sure everything runs smoothly, his wife Linda is arrested for drink-driving!



Will Linda (right) wreck Mick's plans?



## Emmerdale

### Will Liam and Bernice tie the knot?

There was a time when it looked like Bernice and Liam were over but now they're back together and due to get hitched, but will they make it down the aisle? At Bernice's hen do, she's having too much of a good time to notice missed calls on her phone, but



All off? Liam and Bernice

after her daughter Dee Dee takes a call, a shocking revelation is made that could change everything...

## Hollyoaks

### Ollie's big baby dilemma

Ollie wants to be with Brooke, but he also wants to keep the baby that his girlfriend has agreed to hand over to Sienna and Brody when it's born. Ollie must decide whether to stay with Brooke or end their relationship and look after the baby himself.



Will Brooke and Ollie split?

**DON'T MISS your favourite programmes!**

[whatsontv.co.uk/tv-guide](http://whatsontv.co.uk/tv-guide)





## FOOD & DRINK

### SIP-SIP-HOORAY

#### 1 TRIFLE FLAVOUR CREAM LIQUEUR, 70CL, £15, MARKS AND SPENCER

Trifle can be a divisive dessert, but we think this delicious sherry trifle-flavoured cream made with fresh dairy cream from the Ballyrashane Creamery is sure to be a crowd-pleaser.

#### 2 COMTE DE SENNEVAL CHAMPAGNE BRUT, 75CL, £11.49, LIDL

This award-winning champagne is amazing value and has lovely citrus and biscuit flavours. It's perfect for celebrating with family and friends and tastes very good for its price point.

#### 3 THE INFUSIONIST SMALL BATCH CARAMEL + HAZELNUT RUM LIQUEUR, 50CL, £9.99, ALDI

Serve straight over ice and sip or try in a coffee for a delicious adult-only drink!



# Tried and test festive

Our pick of some of the tastiest bites and tipples to indulge in this Christmas



### FANTASTIC FINGER FOOD

#### 1 EXTRA SPECIAL BAKING CAMEMBERT WITH GARLIC AND HERB WREATH, 450G, £5, ASDA

This tear-and-share wreath is the perfect centrepiece for your festive buffets. You can't beat the indulgence of gooey, melted cheese and soft warm bread. Available from 21 November.

#### 2 FILO PRAWN ROSES, 180G, £5, TESCO

These delicate hand-wrapped filo pastry prawn roses are filled with sustainably sourced king prawns coated in a chilli and sesame sauce – a huge hit in our taste test!

#### 3 TEMPURA SPROUTS, 300G, £2, ICELAND (Price subject to change)

These were a hit during the annual taste test. Crisp batter with slightly bitter sprouts – you'll either love them or hate them, they're great when dipped in the Heinz Truffle Mayo above!





## FOR THE FEAST

### 1 TWO METRE LONG PIG IN BLANKET, 750G, £4.99, ALDI

No, your eyes aren't deceiving you. Aldi really is offering a two-metre long pig in blanket for under a fiver and it's officially the longest in the UK. By twisting the sausage into a wheel it saves space in your oven and it looks impressive on your table, too.

### 2 CHRISTMAS ALL WRAPPED UP, 510G, £3.50, MARKS AND SPENCER

Your favourite Christmas flavours combined in a neat parcel. If you haven't got room in the oven for pigs in blankets and stuffing, this is a great compromise. An outdoor-bred pork sausage wrapped in a pork, cranberry and sprout stuffing and smoked streaky bacon, served with a mulled cranberry glaze.



### 3 HEINZ SERIOUSLY GOOD TRUFFLE MAYO, 260G, £3.99, TESCO AND OCADO

It might seem a little unconventional to serve mayonnaise with your Christmas dinner, but when it's laced with truffle why not break all the rules?



1



2

# ed treats

3



## SWEET SATISFACTION

### 1 GIANT JAFFA CAKE DESSERT, 650G, £13, WAITROSE

Every yummy mouthful of this indulgent dessert is pure chocolate and orange joy. At just £1.30 a serving, it's a fabulous crowd-pleaser and it's easy on your bank balance, too.

### 2 PAVLOVA STACK, 430G, £4.99, ALDI

What's better than one layer of melt-in-your-mouth meringue? Three!

This indulgent raspberry and white chocolate Pavlova stack is filled with raspberry sauce, white chocolate cream and is hand-finished with raspberries and white chocolate shavings.

### 3 LUXURY FIVE GOLD RINGS, 675G, £8, ICELAND

(Price subject to change) This exquisitely bitter dark chocolate shell is filled with a whipped chocolate mousse and salted caramel sauce and has a dark chocolate cookie base. The hot chocolate pouring sauce is bound to bring a little theatre to your dinner table this Christmas.



1



2



# I thought it was just man flu

*Will this year finally be a happy Christmas?*

Jake Clift, 30

**C**linging on to a squirming, furry little creature, I shouted to my young daughter. 'Eyes closed?'

'Yes!' Willow, then 3, shouted out.

Giving my sister Chloe, 25, a knowing smile, I placed a final Christmas present in Willow's lap.

As she opened her eyes, she gasped.

'A guinea pig!' she shrieked. 'Thanks, Dad!'

A quick hug for me – and that was the last we saw of Willow for the rest of the day!

Her new pet Freckles had

her complete attention!

It was Christmas 2017 and, just like every year, the whole family was at my mum Debbie's house.

After sharing gifts and scoffing turkey, we were all ready for bed by 9pm.

Falling straight asleep, I was ready to recharge for another day of celebrations.

Only, opening my eyes the next morning, I felt as if I had the flu.

I had a splitting headache and a dodgy tummy.

I tried to power through breakfast, but it wasn't long before I crawled back to bed.

'I think I'm dying,' I joked to Chloe when she brought me up a hot drink.

'Not another case of man flu, is it?' she winked.

I didn't even have the energy for a comeback.

Staggering to the loo, I felt so dizzy.

The next thing I remember is being sprawled out on the floor, with Chloe looking over me.

And then my memories are a little bit sketchy.

Being taken back to bed...carried to the car...I have a



*My limbs turned black...but Willow wasn't fazed*

vague recollection of being strapped to a stretcher...

Then darkness.

Opening my eyes again, I could make out photos of my daughters Willow and Matilda, then 1, by my bedside.

But it wasn't a bed I knew, and the noises around me were unfamiliar.

Turning over, I realised I was in hospital.

*But why?*

Chloe and Mum, then 52, hovered around, a look of panic on their faces.

'What happened?' I asked.

A few hours later, a doctor explained it all.

'Your family rushed you to hospital,' he said gently.

They explained I'd developed a purple rash.

My organs had started shutting down.

'You had meningococcal W strain, which is

meningitis and septicaemia,' the doctor finished.

It's a more violent strain of meningitis.

In need of intensive care, I'd been taken to Royal Perth Hospital, here in Australia.

And now I was just waking up from a coma.

'You've been asleep for 10 days,' Chloe explained.

It was 5 January 2018.

*How can that be true?*

But looking down at my body,

the truth was undeniable.

A purple rash plastered my chest. My arms from the elbow, and legs from the knee, were jet black.

'You were swelling up quite severely, so we had to slice your calves and forearms open to relieve the pressure,' my doctor said.

I felt sick at the thought. Then a gut-wrenching



*Me with my girls, before...*

**At first they said it'd only be my fingers and toes...**





*I was in a coma from Boxing Day until 5 January*

realisation struck me hard.

*I'll need my arms and legs amputated*, I thought.

And I was right.

At first, they said it would just be my fingers and toes.

But as the weeks passed, the weight of my charcoal-coloured limbs told me everything. I was half-dead.

In February 2018, I was transferred to Fiona Stanley Hospital for surgery.

'I'm so sorry, son,' Mum cried.

All my family were devastated.

But I knew I had no choice, that it was my limbs or my life.

And I had to be strong for my daughters.

'OK, let's just get on with it,' I said, sternly.

When Willow and Matilda came in to the ward to see me, I hoped they wouldn't be scared.

Matilda was a bit wary at first, but as Willow looked from my face, down to my

black limbs and bandages, she smiled.

And after the surgery, Willow was still an angel.

'Time for dinner,' she'd say cheerily, hopping on to my bed and spoon-feeding me hospital grub.

Chattering away about the tricks she'd taught Freckles as if nothing had changed!

She gave me the mental

strength I needed to carry on.

After 12 different operations, I started rehab in March 2018.

I learnt how to use a wheelchair, how to get myself around without my arms and legs.

It was exhausting and very painful.

Mum and Chloe were trained by nurses to change my bandages.

They were given tips on how best to adjust the house for my ease.

But I was terrified of becoming a

burden, and I felt like a child again.

'I'll be back to doing things myself as soon as possible,' I vowed.

'We'll help you out, whether you like it or not,' Mum promised.

By April, I was finally back at home.

My life had been so different the last time I was living there.

Now, I needed help with eating and washing myself.

But in October 2018, a prosthetic arm made everything easier.

I didn't need to bother Mum or Chloe to pick up the TV remote or open a door.

When the girls came to stay, I was able to play a bit more with them, too.

I was feeling positive.

I hoped that, by Christmas, we could all start making fresh, happy memories.

But, sadly, we lost our Pops, my grandad, on Boxing Day.

Two years of awful, devastating luck.

But just like always, our family rallied around one another.

And somehow we pulled each other through.

Now, I'm getting stronger every day.

Once I get my prosthetic legs fitted, nothing's going to stop me.

I just hope this year will be the best Christmas yet.

But that doesn't mean getting mountains of presents or spending hundreds of pounds.

More importantly, we'll be sitting around the tree as a family.

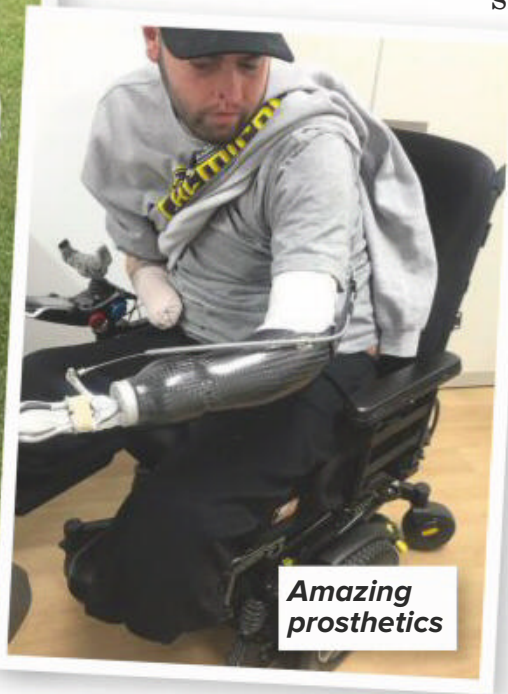
Traipsing through the wrapping paper on the floor or laughing at Willow, now 5, and Matilda, 3, chasing Freckles around the garden.

They're the moments we've been missing.

And Christmas 2019 is our chance to start afresh.



*With my kids by my side, I can do anything*



*Amazing prosthetics*





# ASK Auntie Nelly

Our Antonella tells it how it is

## I married the wrong man!

**Q** I got married last Christmas, but already want a divorce.

Our families are close friends, so when my husband proposed after a few months, I said yes, because it seemed what everyone wanted.

Now, I've no idea what I saw in him. He drinks too much, never wants to go anywhere or do anything exciting.

All the romance has gone, we're never intimate and I lie in bed at night wondering what the hell I've done.

But if I leave him, he and our parents would be absolutely

devastated. I feel trapped, and sick with worry. Help!

*Aimee, 23*

**A** If you really feel you married this man to please everyone else, then you need to tell him – gently – and walk away.

Your family probably got swept up, and it may come as a shock to them at first, but all they'll want is for you to be happy.

Think of your husband, too – if you're not happy, he's not going to be, either.

Start the New Year on the right foot – without your old man!



## Lonely this Christmas

I'd treat a girl like a queen.

Where am I going wrong?

*Rhys, 25*

**Q** All I want is to meet someone special. I'd love to get married and settle down, but nearly every time I ask a girl out, I get rejected.

The girls I do manage to date always say they're not ready for a relationship.

With Christmas approaching, I feel lonelier than ever.

I have a good job, my own car, savings in the bank, and

**A** I'm afraid there's no right or wrong in love, flower, although sometimes it can seem very unfair.

It sounds as if you're ready to commit, but you're asking the wrong girls out, as they're not ready for a relationship.

Join a dating website to meet people looking to settle down, broaden your social circle and love will come in time.

Then, get the mistletoe ready!

## Should he be jingle jailed?

**Q** My son is a heavy cannabis user, but recently things came to a head when he borrowed £1,500 I'd saved for Christmas pressies and food, and didn't pay it back.

I also discovered he'd stolen from friends and relatives, and I have taken on extra shifts at work to pay them back.

Ashamed, I begged them not to call police as I don't want him to spend Christmas in jail.

However, I'm now thinking

that maybe it is the only way to get through to him?

*Ruth, 56*

**A** Bless you, you must be so worried. But you do need to give your son a short, sharp shock.

He's a grown man and must face the consequences of his actions, especially if he's breaking the law.

Apologise to your friends and family and stop covering his back.





## Gift wars

**Q** On Boxing Day last year, my husband left me for another woman.

I've picked myself up and got a job to support our three children, but my salary just covers rent and household bills.

I know my ex will spoil them with the latest gadgets and loads of gifts this Christmas, but I just can't afford it.

We don't have an amicable relationship at the moment, so how do I possibly compete?

Melissa, 32

**A** Don't! Or you're just setting yourself up to fail, pet.

When your children are grown up, they'll remember putting up the tree and the decorations, silly Christmas hats



and best of all, quality time spent with their mum.

They won't remember what presents they opened, or the

latest gadget they received.

Buy only what you can afford and make sure your Christmas Day is full of love and daft giggles. That's all kids want and need.

## Sprout overload?!

**Q** My New Year's Resolution last year was to stop eating meat and go vegan.

No one thought I'd manage, but I've stuck to it and I'm not looking back.

Trouble is, my nan doesn't understand why anyone wouldn't eat meat and is cooking turkey with all the trimmings for the family this year.

Everything will be dripping in goose fat and I'm worried I'll

just end up with a plate of sprouts! What should I do?

Kate, 28

**A** Give your nan a call! Tell her you love her cooking, but will have to resist her feast this year.

If she can cook a big Christmas spread, I'm sure she won't mind whipping up a vegan-friendly dish, too. Or offer to bring your own – I reckon she'll just be happy to have her family around her.



## He's got rude rellies

**Q** I'm seeing a wonderful man and we're talking about moving in together.

Only, his family are rude! They disagree with everything I say, criticise my cooking and even tell me my clothes are ridiculous.

They say it's a joke, but it's wearing very thin.

We're supposed to be spending Christmas with them, but I can't bear the thought as their behaviour is so hurtful.

Yet my boyfriend loves them, so what do I do?

Alisha, 31

**A** Right then, let's not forget you chose your fella, not his blinkin' family.

All you can do is be courteous and polite, and if they choose not to accept you, bah humbug to them!

Tell your boyfriend how you feel and that you love him, but are happy not to be included in family occasions unless they can accept you.



## Nelly's Chrimbo comebacks

**C**hristmas is all about family time, which is lovely...except when it's not! If an annoying aunty corners you with one of these prying questions, Nelly's got the perfect reply...

You're looking well, have you put on weight?

I'm glad you asked, I'm feeling so much better for it!

Are you two not married yet?

I've been meaning to ask you, actually, are you willing to pay for it?!

Why haven't you had a baby? Tick tock, time's running out...

I do like kids, I just couldn't eat a whole one.

Where's that nice gentleman who was here for Christmas last year?

And you call yourself a good judge of character? Nice gentleman indeed!

Is that another tattoo?

Yes, I've got four more on my bum. Do you want to see?

Do you really need that second helping of Christmas pud, darling?

I do, but not a third as I'm saving room for Mum's cheese and biscuits.



6 of the best...

# Winter sun destinations

*Chase the warm weather with great value getaways this winter*



*Sun, sand and peace and quiet*

## Barbados

**1** Things simmer down in Barbados come early January as Christmas and New Year revellers go back to the daily grind, but that doesn't mean you have to! In fact, the first month of the year is the perfect time to go for sun, sand and peace and quiet. This stunning Caribbean island has all kinds of picturesque bays, hidden inlets and Instagrammable beaches, and the local food is a must-try. If you're taking the little ones, kid-friendly attractions include pirate ship the *Jolly Roger*, and submarine tours. **What it costs:** Seven-night packages, departing from London Gatwick in January, start from £572pp.

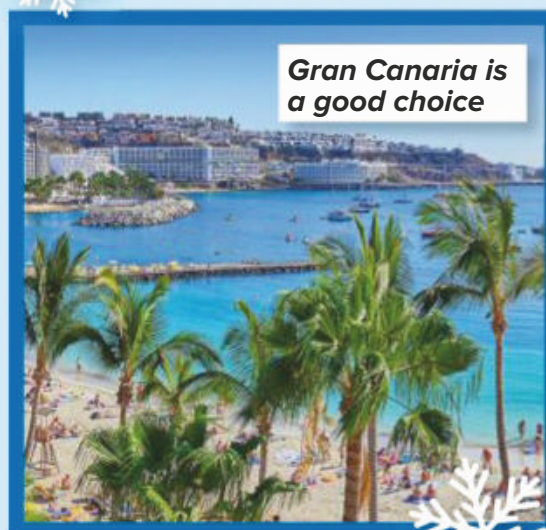
## Dubai

**2** January is Dubai's coldest month, making it the best time to visit. Temperatures in the city's 'winter' months hover around 25C, compared to the scorching 41C summers. While the hotels and resorts own most of the waterfront, you can visit Jumeirah Open Beach and the white sands of Al Sufouh Beach for free.

**What it costs:** Seven-night packages, including flights and accommodation, start at £457pp from airports in the South East or at £500pp from Manchester.



*Take a break in Dubai's winter sun*



*Gran Canaria is a good choice*

## Gran Canaria

**3** Seeking short-haul sun? Then the Canary Islands are your best bet. Gran Canaria is one of the sunnier options in January, but stick to the south of the island for consistent weather and warmer waters. Maspalomas is a good choice – all-inclusive holidays are a steal this time of year. Got some cash to burn? Nearby Meloneras is a shopper's dream.

**What it costs:** Seven nights start at just £204pp from East Midlands, Manchester, Leeds Bradford or Stansted.





## Cape Verde

**4** There's never a bad time to visit this African archipelago! Even in January, you can expect temperatures around 24C. Sal is Cape Verde's most popular island and is well-connected to the UK, so it's the one to choose for a wallet-friendly, all-inclusive getaway. This time of year is relatively quiet compared to other winter-sun faves.

**What it costs:** Prices start at £370pp departing from Gatwick and at £389pp departing from Manchester for seven nights in January, with flights and accommodation included.

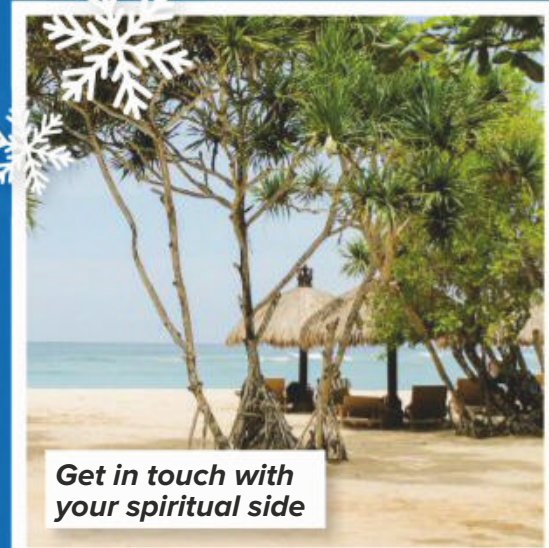


*Cape Verde is great value*

## Cancún

**6** While January is peak season in this popular resort city (a pleasant 28C), you can still bag a bargain. Downtown Cancún is cheaper than the pricey hotel zone, and you'll also get a taste of authentic Mexico, with family-run stays and inexpensive eateries at your fingertips. The stunning turquoise waters and white sand beaches are in reach, too.

**What it costs:** Prices including flights from London Heathrow and accommodation, start at £535pp, for 10 nights.



*Get in touch with your spiritual side*

## Bali

**5** With pristine beaches, clear waters and fewer tourists at this time of year, Bali is pure paradise come January. It's rainy season, hence the bargain prices, but there's still plenty of fantastic weather to enjoy. The island's cultural centre is Ubud. Here you'll find lush greenery, endless rice terraces and the famed monkey forest. It's also perfect for getting in touch with your spiritual side at one of its many temples.

**What it costs:** Packages including flights and hotel, start at £622pp for 14 nights from London Heathrow or Gatwick.



*Enjoy the white sand beaches of Cancún*



# What's that under the tree?

**Every year, our boy asked for the same special present...**

*Stacey Lindsay, 43*

**W**atching our son Owynn open his gifts beside the twinkling tree, I exchanged a look with my husband Adam.

It was Christmas 2015. Everything should've been perfect. But something was missing.

'When will I be a big brother?' Owynn, then 8, asked later, between mouthfuls of turkey. 'I want to make snow angels with my baby brother or sister.'

How could I tell him we were doing everything possible to make his dream come true? Adam, then 40, and I had been trying for another baby for six years.

After meeting in January 2004, and marrying one year on, we'd wanted a big family. I was from a family of 14!

First time around, I'd fallen pregnant easily, and Owynn was born in July 2007.

In December 2009, we'd

started trying for another.

When I still wasn't pregnant two years later, we saw a specialist, who found my tubes were blocked. So I had minor corrective surgery.

By December 2011, I thought our prayers had been answered. On Christmas morning, I left Owynn and Adam playing with new toys, as I sneaked off to the loo to do a pregnancy test.

Two lines appeared. *A Christmas miracle!*

'I've got a special gift for you,' I whispered to Adam.

'Oh my!' he said, pulling me close.

We didn't tell Owynn, though.

Snuggling on the sofa, watching *Elf*, Christmas felt extra special.

But at an eight-week scan, in January 2012, our world crumbled.

There was no heartbeat. *Devastating.*

I knew how much Owynn

wanted a sibling.

In August 2012, I watched him tenderly kiss his doll.

'My baby sister,' he chirped, and my heart ached.

Over the next two years, I had three more miscarriages – the last time with twins.

'I can't do this any more,' I sobbed to Adam in January 2015. All our friends were having babies – and I was becoming bitter and angry.

Every bedtime, Owynn prayed for a baby sister.

As time went by, he'd ask why his prayers hadn't been answered. Even put it on his list to Santa in December 2015. It was heartbreaking.

In early 2017, we investigated other options – surrogacy, fostering, adoption.

Then, in May 2017, I was chatting to a friend when she said she knew a pregnant teenager

who was considering giving up her baby for adoption.

We passed on our details, and soon heard from Jazmyn, 20. Next day, she came over with her sister

*Best Christmas ever, Owynn..?*

Kendra, 16, who was four months pregnant.

Hearts pounding, we left Owynn, then 9, playing video games in another room. We didn't want him knowing anything.

Due in December 2017, Kendra explained she had no relationship with the baby's father. Didn't feel ready to be a mum.

Over the next few weeks, we spent more time together.

We made sure we never pushed her into a decision.

Two weeks after we met Kendra, she gave us a photo from her eight-week scan.

'This is your baby,' she smiled. We were so emotional.

'We'll support you the whole way,' I said tearfully.

We contacted lawyers here in the US, and prepared adoption papers.

But Owynn still didn't know. He thought Kendra was just our friend.

I accompanied her to every medical appointment and, at her 20-week scan in August

**He'd ask why his prayers hadn't been answered**





2017, we learnt she was having a girl. Just as Owynn had dreamed.

But as I put up Christmas decorations, and Kendra's due date approached, I fretted she'd change her mind. After all, this was her life, her choice.

On 5 December 2017, Kendra went into labour.

My sister Michelle looked after Owynn, and I drove Kendra and Jazmyn to our local hospital. Held her hand through contractions.

Adam was there, too, but when it was time to start pushing, he left the room.

After 16 hours of labour, at 8.55pm on 6 December, Naylee was born, weighing 7lb 6oz. Holding her, I felt my heart overflow.

For the next two days, Naylee stayed with me and Adam in our own hospital room. We fed her, changed her, bonded with her.

Still, we felt so sad for

Kendra. Understood the sacrifice she was making.

'I want Naylee to have a good life, you'll give her that,' she said tearfully, signing the adoption papers.

But Owynn still didn't know Naylee existed.

**Then  
he spotted  
her...and  
stared in  
disbelief**

'Do you want to be there when he meets her?' I asked Kendra.

She nodded.

As we took Naylee home, I had an idea.

Gently placed her

on a blanket under the Christmas tree. She looked adorable in a red and white onesie with *Little sister* on it.

'Look under the tree,' I told Owynn, then 10, when Michelle brought him home from a day out.

He gazed at the decorations and tinsel. Then he spotted Naylee...stared in disbelief.

'What's that?' he asked.

'Your Christmas present,' I grinned.

Owynn was speechless, his eyes filled with tears. When



we explained she was a gift from Kendra, not Santa, he threw his arms around her.

'Thank you!' he cried.

Holding Naylee for the first time, he didn't want to put her down.

Weeks on, we had our first Christmas as a family of four.

'Look at the lights on the tree, Naylee,' Owynn whispered, gently picking her up and singing carols to her.

*Just magical.*

Since then, our family life

is blissful. We're enjoying every moment together.

Owynn knows Naylee has a different birth mother to him. But it doesn't faze him.

As for Naylee, we'll tell her everything when she's older.

Now Owynn's 12, and Naylee, 2. He still adores her.

This Christmas, he'll wake her up and help her unwrap her presents.

Our family is complete – thanks to Kendra's special gift. We'll be forever grateful.

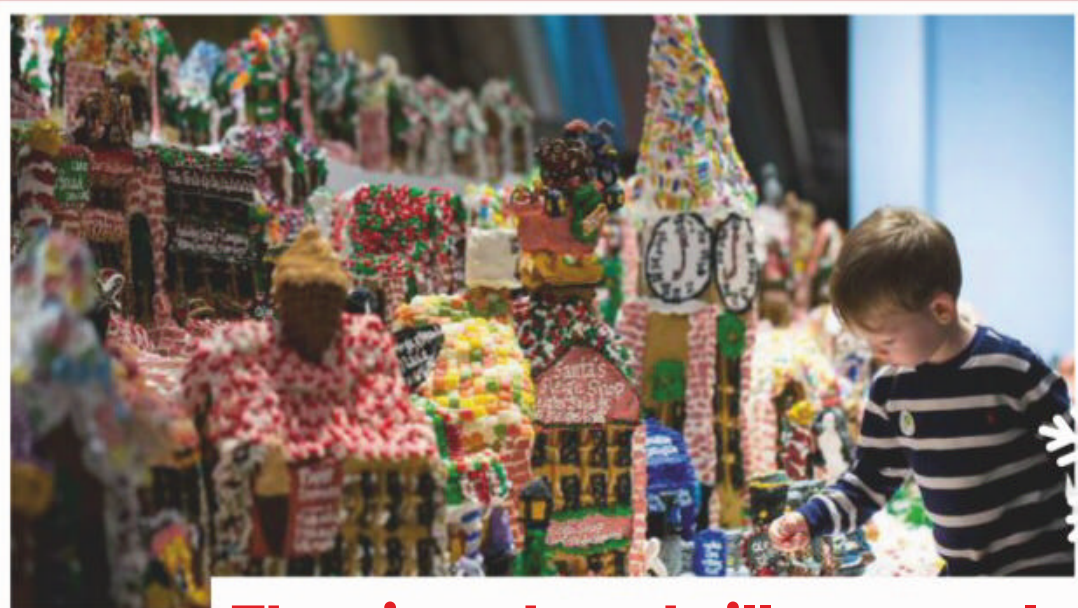


# Sleighin' it

**Elfin' hell! Who holds the Chrimbo Guinness World Records? Here's the biggest and the best from across the globe...**

## Looks a bit Claus-trophobic

It's difficult to spot Jean-Guy Laquerre among his impressive 25,104-strong festive hoard. In November 2010, he earned the world record for the biggest collection of Santa Claus memorabilia. He's been collecting since 1988.



## The gingerbread village people

We wonder what the gingerbread population is in the world's largest gingerbread village. Jon Lovitch built 1,251 buildings and displayed his new community at the New York Hall of Science in Corona, New York, in January 2017.

## A wrecking bauble

Yule need a bigger tree if you fancy hanging this enormous bauble in your living room. The largest ever Christmas bauble hung in the Dubai Mall in December 2018 and was a huge 4.6m – that's 15ft 4in – in diameter!



## Glowing record

It's been 10 years since the world record was scooped for the most lights lit simultaneously on a Christmas tree. A glowing 194,672 were illuminated in Malmedy in Belgium on 10 December 2010. Treemendous!



## Munching home for Christmas?

We hear they're still munching their way through the largest ever gingerbread house. It was built by the Traditions Club in Texas in November 2013 and had an internal volume of 1,110.1 sq m [39,201.8 sq ft].





## Give a round of Santa-plause

Ditching their sleighs for the day, 4,983 Father Christmases gathered in Virginia Beach in December 2016, to make it the largest ever Santa Claus run. The record was achieved by the J&A Racing group.



## Merry Kissmas

A lip-smacking 448 couples smooched under our favourite festive plant to make the record for most couples kissing under the mistletoe in a single venue. They had a good old egg-snog at the Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Centre in aptly named Kissimmee, Florida on 7 December 2017.

## Snowbody does it better

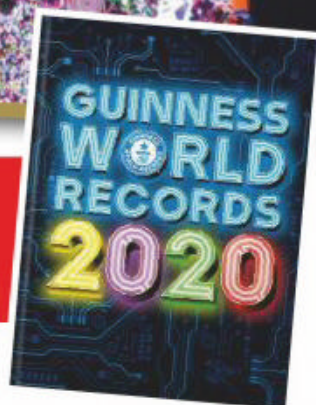
Wendy Suen is snowing everyone how to win a world record, after she collected the largest amount of snow globes ever. She has 4,059 of them in her home in Shanghai, China and earned the record in November 2016.



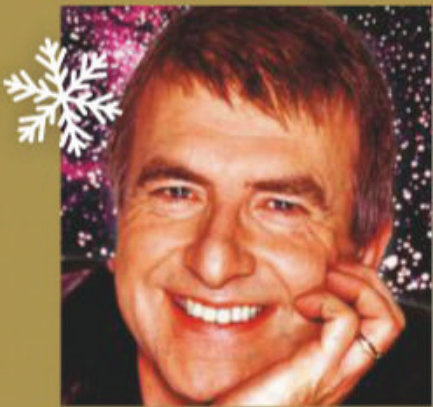
## Top of the tree

It was a truly amazing sight as a staggering 580,806 lights adorned an artificial Christmas tree at Universal Studios in Japan in October 2018, making USJ LLC the record breakers.

**Guinness World Records 2020 Edition is out now**







# YOUR Stars

21 Nov-4 Dec 2019

Chat  
astrologer  
Bernard  
Fitzwalter  
reads your  
weeks ahead

## Aries

21 March-20 April

Two planets combine now to push you forward with twice the force you're used to. Things will happen very quickly, so pay attention to what's going on.

● Call 0905 817 0690\* for more

## Taurus

21 April-21 May

Is this the best thing ever? You think so. Maybe it's a place, maybe a person, but whatever it is, it goes right to the core of you and lights you up from within.

● Call 0905 817 0691\* for more

## Gemini

22 May-21 June

Hard work for high reward sounds good – as long as you can walk away with the money in your pocket when the job's done. It all looks good at the start, but beware.

● Call 0905 817 0692\* for more

## Cancer

22 June-23 July

Seems you've been avoiding certain legal procedures or paperwork because you were unsure of what to do. This week you sort it all out. Well done.

● Call 0905 817 0693\* for more

## Leo

24 July-23 Aug

There's likely to be a fond goodbye to someone who was, and will remain, a good friend. Sweet memories of what might have been and with no bitter aftertaste.

● Call 0905 817 0694\* for more

## Virgo

24 Aug-23 Sep

Every offer you make is eagerly accepted by someone. Unless the other person is giving you equally helpful things in return, you're being taken for a ride.

● Call 0905 817 0695\* for more

## Libra

24 Sep-23 Oct

Doing anything for the first time is always scary, and even if it all goes well on the day, you still wonder whether you've done the right thing. Don't worry, you'll be fine.

● Call 0905 817 0696\* for more

## Scorpio

24 Oct-22 Nov

To get to the future you want, you have to make a break with the past. At the moment you're trying to have both. Keep hold of one, and let go of the other. Simple!

● Call 0905 817 0697\* for more

## Capricorn

22 Dec-20 Jan

Two chances to do things you've always wanted, plus two separate little financial bonuses, makes you wonder whether the flow of fortune is giving you a new destination.

● Call 0905 817 0699\* for more

## Aquarius

21 Jan-19 Feb

When you were offered a new position at work a few weeks ago, you said no. It seems that wasn't the answer certain people wanted to hear. But your answer's the same.

● Call 0905 817 0700\* for more

## Pisces

20 Feb-20 March

What do you do if someone asks you for a dance just as you're getting your coat to go home? Give it a try. You never know, it might turn out better than you expect.

● Call 0905 817 0701\* for more



## Sagittarius

23 Nov-21 Dec

Did you ever go to see Santa, and worry there might not be anything for you in his sack of gifts? You may have had to wait a while, but it's here and it's definitely worth having.

● Call 0905 817 0698\* for more



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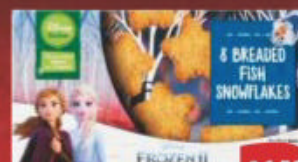
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## PROMOTION

**Chat**  
Bingo.com MAG

# My £2,572 jackpot win!

I won playing Session Bingo

## I was thrilled to share with my family

Tina Partington, 58, Tadcaster

I've always been a huge fan of bingo. Going down to my local bingo hall is something I've loved to do in my free time.

Then, in 2009, a friend suggested Chat Mag Bingo.

'It's fun! Plus you can play from your own home,' she said.

So, I gave it a go. There were lots of bingo rooms to choose from. I was so impressed with how simple the games were to play. I loved relaxing with a game and a cuppa.

And in the 10 years I've been a member, I've even won a few small jackpots, too.

Then, in January 2019, on a day off work, I was on my way to Bradford to visit my mum Margery, 78, with my daughter Julie, 35.

Before Julie picked me up,

as I like to play the morning game of Session Bingo, I bought a bundle of tickets where you pay one price for 15 games. The games would last for an hour. I waited for the 10am start.

Soon, Julie picked me up and we set off. But at 10.20am, I saw I had a notification on my mobile.

I was stunned when I saw my bingo balance.

It had shot up by £2,572!

'Goodness, Julie! Guess

what,' I said. 'I've just won over £2,000 on the bingo!'

'That's amazing, Mum!' she replied.

I was on cloud nine.

What a fantastic way to start my morning!

But I waited for my big cheque to arrive so I could surprise my partner Jem, 57, with it.

'I can't believe it!' he said.

Quickly, I got thinking about what I'd do with my win. There were so many possibilities...

But I knew at once.

My son Jamie, 33, got married in March. So I

gave him a little something to take on holiday after the wedding.

It was such a great day, and knowing I could treat him made it that bit more special.

I also treated my Julie by

buying her new clothes and some kitchen appliances for her home.

But what Jem and I really looked forward to was our holiday to the Isle of Wight later in the summer.

We go every year, and I used some of the money on our accommodation.

We love spending time on the island. It's so charming, which is why we make the effort to go there regularly.

Looking back, I'm so happy with how I have shared my big win. My son had a fantastic wedding, and we had a really wonderful holiday.

I'd definitely recommend Chat Mag Bingo. The games are fun, easy to play and a great way to enjoy a friendly bingo experience. You never know what could happen when you give it a go!

**75, 80 and 90-ball BINGO!**

There are so many fun bingo games to play at Chat Mag Bingo! We've got 75-ball bingo, where you play in patterns, as well as the more traditional 90-ball, where you can win cash prizes on one line, two lines, or a Full House. Or try our latest 80-ball, where you cover all 16 numbers on your bingo card to win. Whatever your game, you can sit back, join in the fun and let us dab off your numbers for you.

**STAGGERED BY MY BINGO WIN!**  
Read my story overleaf

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# My shock

# £4,680

# Bingo win!

## ***Staggered as I'd only joined the month before***

**Deena Dunne, 56, Oldham**

**A**s I poured hot water from the kettle into the mug, I picked up my mobile phone from the kitchen counter.

*Time for a game of bingo, I thought.*

It was July 2019 and I'd signed up to Chat Mag Bingo a month or so earlier.

I'd always enjoyed bingo, and my daughter Theresa, 29, and I would often go to our local halls to play.

But there was nothing quite like a warming cup of tea and your own sofa for playing in comfort, especially when my schedule didn't always match up with Theresa's.

Tapping on the app on my phone, I decided to select Session Bingo and bought a bundle of tickets for £5.

It meant I got 15 different games for one price, and they would all play out in

the dedicated Session Bingo room for an hour, between 10am and 11am.

I had plans later in the day, so this was perfect.

And in any case, it meant I'd have some time to have

a catch up with the other bingo players in the chatroom.

That was one of my favourite things about playing bingo from home – you could still have a natter.

I loved the camaraderie, and sometimes the host in the chatroom would offer us all a free game.

We would play against each other in the room and have a laugh. Sometimes, there'd even be a cash prize.

*Morning all, I wrote.*

*Morning* a reply came back straightaway.

Everyone was so nice and

friendly, and I loved seeing people celebrate their wins.

Settling on the sofa, I continued to make chatty conversation.

I was in the middle of typing when suddenly, a winner's message flashed up on the screen.

Before it could register, I started getting a stream of messages directed at me from the other players.

*Well done!*  
one wrote.

*Brilliant win!*  
another said.

Intrigued, I looked up at my balance. Then, I let out a squeal of shock when I saw the number.

*It had shot up by £4,680!*  
I was stunned.

*I can't believe it!* I typed.  
*I've only gone and won not just the Full House, but the Jackpot too!*

Thrilled by my win, I couldn't stop grinning.

I'd been so busy talking, I hadn't been watching the game play out and missed the winning ball call.

I was completely

shocked. I'd only joined the month before and was taken aback by such a big win so soon.

Picking up the phone, I couldn't wait to tell my son Kyle, 31, and his partner Selina, also 31, all about it.

*'I want to take you all on holiday,' I said.*

I loved treating my family, and I knew my grandchildren – Kyle's three kids – would love the idea too.

As a family, we didn't get a chance to go away much, so it would make a nice change.

But as I started to dial Theresa's number to tell her the good news too, I stopped myself.

*I'm going to surprise her,*  
I thought.

All I told her was that she had to take a couple of days off work and that she would need to pack a bag.

In August 2019, our family set off for a relaxing week's holiday in a lovely little log cabin set in the middle of Sherwood Forest. It was beautiful.

Theresa was speechless

**A winner's message flashed up on the screen!**





I too won playing Session Bingo

when I told her that the holiday was on me.

Then I revealed all about my big bingo win.

We had the best week, going on walks in the beautiful countryside as a family and spending some quality time together.

The log cabin even came with its own hot tub, which the kids loved.

'Thank you so much, Mum,' Kyle smiled when our holiday had come to and end. 'It's been the

most perfect week.'

But I didn't need him to thank me. I was more than happy to share my win and to do something special with my Chat Mag Bingo win.

It made the summer very special for me and my family.

It's a holiday none of us will ever forget.

# chat MAG Bingo.com

## WHAT'S ON?

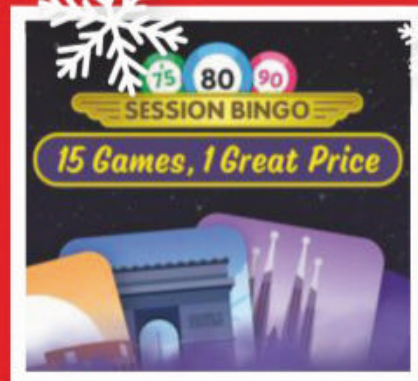


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### Session Bingo

'Tis the season to try Session Bingo, where you buy a bundle of Bingo tickets for 15 different games for one price! The games play out over a fun-filled hour in the dedicated Session Bingo room, with a mix of 75, 80 and 90-ball games to enjoy!



### Play Off Palace

When you win one line, two lines or a Full House playing Sapphire Bingo or certain Session Bingo games, you will not only scoop your cash prize, but also six free tickets to play bingo in exclusive Daily and Weekly games in Play Off Palace. Your free tickets could be another winner!

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6 of the  
**BEST...**

# Christmas markets

*Twinkly lights, wooden huts and artisan gifts will put you in a seriously festive mood*

*The finest  
local produce*



## Bath

**1** Every year, Bath's pretty Georgian streets are transformed with over 200 chalets full of Christmas gifts. The market prides itself on bringing local products to its patrons, and foodies will want to check out chalets like Taste of Bath, which sources hampers of artisan produce from within 15 miles of the city. Bath's a compact, walkable city, so check out the nearby Bath on Ice festive ice rink or pop into the Abbey Hotel's pop-up Apres-Ski Bar for mulled wine and hearty cuisine. Visit [bathchristmasmarket.co.uk](http://bathchristmasmarket.co.uk).

## Edinburgh

**2** Edinburgh's imposing architecture provides a stunning backdrop for one of Scotland's longest-running markets. Princes Street is festooned with fairy lights, and you can buy hot food, mulled wines, crafts and gifts with a distinctly German feel from quaint wooden stalls in its gardens. For more traditional Scottish goods, such as whiskies, haggis and crafts, head to the Scottish market in George Street. There's also a children's market in nearby St Andrew Square, where you can buy a wide range of toys. Visit [edinburghschristmas.com](http://edinburghschristmas.com).



*Fairy lights on  
a grand scale*





## Belfast

**3** Belfast's famous City Hall and its beautiful gardens provide the setting for the city's Christmas Market. In a vibrant Continental village, shoppers can buy produce from over 30 countries – such as Italian nougat, Belgian chocolates and French tarts, as well as festive German fare, such as giant bratwurst sold from a traditional Schwenkgrill. Those with more adventurous appetites can try exotic and rare meats from around the world, including alligator, impala, kangaroo and wild boar. Visit [visitbelfast.com](http://visitbelfast.com).

## Winchester

**4** Winchester in Hampshire was once England's capital and now claims to be 'England's Christmas capital'. Its buzzing Christmas market gives it a strong claim. Gift hunters can choose from the wares of jewellers, painters and glass makers, while gastronomes will head for the chalets selling mulled wine, bratwurst, mince pies and stollen. Do find time to visit the Cathedral itself to listen to the festive choral music during the many services and concerts, and admire the Gothic architecture. Visit [christmasinwinchester.co.uk](http://christmasinwinchester.co.uk).

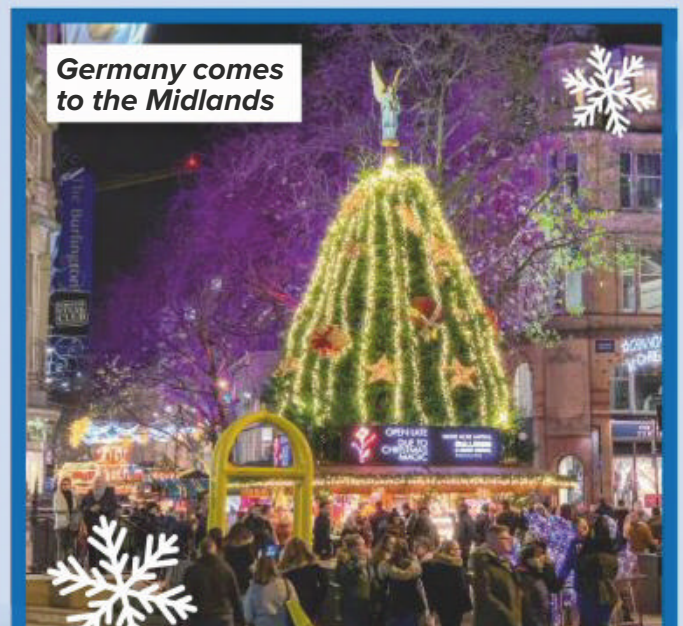


## Manchester

**5** Manchester's Christmas Markets wind through its city centre, with over 300 festive stalls and chalets. In all, there are nine market locations, each with its own character, and this year, the main market hub will be based again in Albert Square, right in front of Manchester Town Hall. All of the markets are in walking distance of each other for most people, though there are plenty of transport options available if required. The family friendly site in Manchester's Cathedral Gardens also has its own ice rink. Visit [visitmanchester.com](http://visitmanchester.com).

## Birmingham

**6** Birmingham has been twinned with Frankfurt since 1966, and each year, 'Brum' hosts the largest German Christmas market outside Germany and Austria. The market is now in its 20th year and, with the nearby Christmas craft market, there are over 180 stalls to choose from, selling handcrafted wooden decorations, delicate glass baubles, leatherwork and Russian dolls, plus goods from around the world. The market also boasts a Victorian carousel, ice rink and big wheel. Visit [germanchristmasmarketbirmingham.com](http://germanchristmasmarketbirmingham.com).



Historic Winchester



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pumping blood up from the body's farthest reaches back to the heart. It's no secret that things tend to slow through ageing or being less active. After we've been on our feet for a while, at best many of us suffer from symptoms where we find our legs feeling tired and ankles puffy.

Yet sufferers are discovering that is a thing of the past thanks to the REVITIVE Circulation Booster®, a drug-free, therapy device which actively increases circulation. It should be used from just 30 minutes daily and it won't interfere with any existing medication.

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Philip, Blackpool. 10/10

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Sheree, Telford. 10/10

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# From missing to MURDERED

## The pretty teenager went out to celebrate Christmas and never came home

**O**n Christmas morning 1995, Robert and Gillian Smith should have woken up to a morning of opening gifts with their son Richard, 20, and daughter Louise, 18. Then they'd planned to head off to celebrate with relatives nearby.

Instead, Robert and Gillian awoke to every parent's worst fear.

The door to Louise's room ajar, her bed still made. She'd not come home.

The night before, Robert had dropped his daughter, an office worker, at a friend's house before she'd gone on to party with pals at Spirals nightclub in Bristol.

She'd been due back home hours ago.

Gillian suggested that Louise may have stayed over at a friend's house – but when this was ruled out, panic set in.

None of her friends had seen her since the early hours.

Louise was a quiet, shy girl who still cuddled up to Gillian during nights in at home. There was no reason why she might have run

away – especially at Christmas time.

The anxious Smiths called the police.

And, instead of opening presents and sharing Christmas greetings, they watched in horror as officers searched their home.

When no clues were

turned up, an urgent investigation was launched.

Spirals' security camera had captured Louise leaving, alone, at 2am. Afterwards, there was an hour-long wait for taxis in the freezing cold.

So, Louise had decided to walk the 10 minutes home.

It was a route she'd taken many times before. Yet, this time, she'd just vanished.

Days later, Louise's father and brother gave a press conference, pleading for witnesses.

As days passed with no word, a volunteer

army of 10,000 people aided the police with the search.

Missing posters showing Louise with her smiling face and auburn hair covered the local area.

Officers went to Spirals nightclub during the New Year's party, stopping revellers to appeal for witnesses.

But it seemed that no one had any information.

Then, seven weeks after Christmas, on 17 February 1996, Louise's family got the news they'd dreaded.

Two teenage boys had found a body, hidden on a slope halfway down disused Barnhill Quarry.

It was just half a mile away from the family's home.

Forensic tests confirmed it was Louise. It appeared she'd been raped and strangled.

Gillian broke down, crying, 'No, it's not my Lou!'

Louise's funeral was held at the end of March, and St Mary's Church in Yate was packed as hundreds came to say their goodbyes.

Afterwards, she was buried in the churchyard.

When the grieving Smiths visited Louise's grave, they yearned for answers.

Pictures of Louise were still all over town – only now, the posters said *Murdered*.

During the investigation, the police visited 10,500 homes, interviewing more

**Louise had decided to walk the 10 minutes home**



Louise leaves the nightclub



# THE BIG CRIME BEHIND THE BIG CRIME D THE B BEHIND THE BIG CRIME



*Louise, 18,  
had vanished*



*David Frost: his  
DNA matched*

than 14,800 people.

DNA samples – mouth swabs – were carried out on 4,500 men. It was one of the largest DNA investigations undertaken by a police force at the time.

A sample was requested from student David Frost, who'd been staying at his parents' house in the area for Christmas.

Frost – a student at the University of Surrey – had spent Christmas Eve drinking in a pub.

Later, at 1am, he'd been turned away from Spirals nightclub as being too drunk.

Frost agreed to give the police the requested DNA sample, but then didn't turn up to the appointment.

Shortly afterwards, he left the country, travelling to South Africa to work for

an engineering company.

It was weeks later when police officers caught up with him there.

Finally, he consented to give mouth-swab samples. The result?

A match to DNA found on Louise's body.

As Frost arrived back at Heathrow Airport, he was arrested and charged with murder.

In police interviews, Frost claimed that he had approached Louise on her way home on Christmas Eve.

He said that he persuaded her to walk with him

to the quarry, where he took off her clothes and had sex with her. Afterwards, he said she began to get upset.

'She was crying louder and louder, and I tried to calm her down, reasoning with her,' he told detectives.

'Then I put my hand on her mouth and tried to stop her screaming. She went silent.'

Frost told the officers that, after killing Louise, he'd then panicked and dragged her body to the edge of the 200ft quarry pit –

where he'd played as a child.

She was wearing only her shoes when she was found.

Her clothes, jewellery and handbag had been left nearby.

At first, Frost, 22, denied murder.

But,

soon, he changed his plea, sparing Louise's parents from having to sit through a trial.

A charge of rape was allowed to lie on file.

David Frost was jailed for life in 1998.

But Louise's family were disgusted that, due to Frost's age at the time of the killing, and the apparent remorse he expressed in court, his sentence was set at a minimum of 14 years, meaning he might be free by the age of 36.

They were also dismayed after the 4,500 DNA samples collected in Louise's case, at a cost of £250,000, were destroyed, rather than being used in other investigations.

Believing that it was a waste of police time and resources, the couple lobbied politicians.

In 2001, the Government passed a change in the law, allowing the

police to retain DNA samples collected during investigations, with the person's permission, to create a database.

Louise's parents Robert and Gillian won MBEs for their tireless campaign.

Yet nothing could bring back their daughter – or truly ease their suffering.

For the Smith family, it isn't only Christmas Day that will never be the same again.

● This story recently featured on *Crime+Investigation's Murdertown*, available now on catch-up.

**Her parents  
received  
MBEs for  
their tireless  
campaign**



*Gillian – Louise's  
devastated mum*



# Chat PUZZLES 48/49

CLOSING DATE FOR ALL ENTRIES IS 17 DECEMBER 2019 (Three days later for postal entries)

<b>PAGE 11</b> Puzzle 1	£250 CASH	<b>PAGE 42</b> Puzzle 10	£50 CASH
<b>PAGE 11</b> Puzzle 2	£150 CASH	<b>PAGE 46</b> Puzzle 11	£100 CASH
<b>PAGE 11</b> Puzzle 3	4 x £25 CASH	<b>PAGE 46</b> Puzzle 12	£100 CASH
<b>PAGE 29</b> Puzzle 4	£500 CASH	<b>PAGE 49</b> Puzzle 13	£500 CASH
<b>PAGE 32</b> Puzzle 5	£1,001 CASH	<b>PAGE 49</b> Puzzle 14	£100 CASH
<b>PAGE 38</b> Puzzle 6	5 x £30 CASH	<b>PAGE 60</b> Puzzle 15	5 x £25 CASH
<b>PAGE 40</b> Puzzle 7	£1,000 CASH	<b>PAGE 60</b> Puzzle 16	£100 CASH
<b>PAGE 40</b> Puzzle 8	£60 CASH	<b>PAGE 60</b> Puzzle 17	£100 CASH
<b>PAGE 40</b> Puzzle 9	£50 CASH	<b>PAGE 60</b> Puzzle 18	£50 CASH

Name .....

Address .....

Postcode .....

Daytime tel no (optional) .....

## HOW TO ENTER

### TEXT

Simply text CHATC followed by a space and your answer/s (spaces between answers please) full name, door number and postcode to

**84988**

Texts cost 50p plus standard network charge (maximum 160 characters per text). When you enter by text, you may in future get SMS marketing messages from TI Media Limited and Chat.

If you want to receive these, please end your text with TIOPTIN.

### Texting tips

- Don't put any spaces in an answer that has several words: eg: **CHATISTHEBEST** not CHAT IS THE BEST.
- If the answer is a name, you need only give the surname: eg: **CLOONEY** not GEORGE CLOONEY.
- You can use capitals or small letters, but don't use any commas, etc.
- Leave out answers you don't wish to enter.

### INTERNET

Join our Chat Comp Club now and enter your puzzle answers directly online at our website address

**lifedeathprizes.com/win**

Existing puzzlesandprizes members may need to re-register, just click on the 'Join now' button once you are on the website.

### PHONE

Simply call

**0906 470 7002**

For every call to our competition Lucky Line, we'll donate 10p to Rainbow Trust Children's Charity.

- Calls cost 65p per min plus your telephone company's network access charge. Call durations will vary between 1 and 7 minutes depending on the number of answers submitted.

Please ensure you provide your full name and address details as incomplete entries may be charged but not entered.

SP: Spoke 0333 202 3390

### WRITE

To reply by post, fill out the coupon left with your answers and contact details and send it to,

**Chat Puzzles No 48/49, PO Box 502, Leicester LE94 0AB**

Don't miss out on this week's online competitions on the **Chat** website. Go to **lifedeathprizes.com/prizes**

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## Lucky Key!

Check out our lucky charm... Put a right-hand finger on the key, close your eyes and the luck could flow. We can't wait to hear if it works!



For back issues of **chat**



# WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

Solutions to **Chat** issue 44 (31 October 2019)

**Puzzle 3** Bra  
**Puzzle 4** 1D  
**Puzzle 5** French and Russian  
**Puzzle 6** Rope  
**Puzzle 7** Sand  
**Puzzle 8** Alter ego  
**Puzzle 9** Self-taught

**Puzzle 10** Sherry  
**Puzzle 12** Grey  
**Puzzle 13** Garden  
**Puzzle 14** Cornwall  
**Puzzle 15** Hate  
**Puzzle 16** Tennessee  
**Puzzle 17** Potato  
**Puzzle 18** London

## WE WON!

**Chat** winners issue 35  
 (29 August 2019)

**£1,001 CASH**  
 E Swinnerton,  
 Broseley.

**£1,000 CASH**  
 G Jenkinson,  
 Billingham.

**£500 CASH** B Pownall,  
 Doncaster; J Roxburgh,  
 Portsmouth.

**£250 CASH** B Hall, Mosborough.

**£150 CASH** C Barker, Derby.

**£100 CASH** J Plant, Hull;

J Maggs, Maesteg; P Knox,  
 Merthyr Tydfil; H Sutherland,  
 Cowdenbeath; P Pryke, Maldon;  
 E Falvi, Hartlepool; A Tibbs,  
 Glasgow; J Fox, Yardley.

**£60 CASH** C Cook,  
 Stratford-upon-Avon.

**£50 CASH** C. Daley, Lincoln;  
 B Ford, Cheshire; A Wright,  
 Oakham; G Gallagher, Coventry;  
 J Edwards, Andover.

**£30 CASH** A Bhranain, Armagh;  
 L Crawford, Stirlingshire;  
 A Hutching, Didcot; D Gibaut,  
 St Helier; S Fowles, Chester;  
 C Collins, Sidcup; A Collier,  
 Stockport; J Clemo, Belper;  
 B Hopcutt, Maesteg.

**£25 CASH** R Bartlett, Poole;  
 L Heaton, Huddersfield;  
 J Millington, Northwich;  
 J Daddow, Troon; K Phipps,  
 Lairg; M Gordon, Dunfermline;  
 R Walsh, Warrington; J Cody,  
 Vale of Glamorgan; L Brown,  
 Callington.

Anyone  
 from your  
 town in the  
 list this  
 week..?

### Chat PUZZLE 1 321

2		1		8	0	6	8	6	6	6	7
8	3	0	3		8		8		4		3
2		5	1	9	4	5	1		1	1	5
8	6	5	4	1			4	3	4	1	6
9	8	2		7	4	3	3	5		5	5
4		8		0			7				4
4	1	6	7	2	1	4		1	3	3	4
2		1			7	1	7		1		3
2	4	2	3		4	6	1		5	4	2
4		8		3		3	2	9		5	1
0		8		2		5	4	7	2	0	2
5	2	6	0	0		1		7		5	0
4		6		6	8	7	2	3	3		5

### Chat PUZZLE 2 ALASKA

E	Y	E	L	A	S	H	E	S
L				I	M	P		K
S		S	E	P	A	L		I
E	E	L				A	R	M
		M	O	D	E	S	T	Y
C	U	T				C	E	P
R		S	O	U	T	H		I
I			A	R	E			K
B	E	A	R	N	A	I	S	E

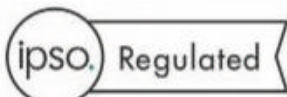
### Chat PUZZLE 11 287

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

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# In our next BUMPER ISSUE

chat



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A letter to...

# My hero

*My incredible organ donor,*

**L**ast year, I imagine you didn't know that you were celebrating your last Christmas. As you battled round the crowded shops and laughed at festive specials on the telly, you didn't realise you'd never do those things again.

I'm deeply sorry about that, you know.

You still had one more gift to give, though.

To me – a perfect stranger. You see, last Christmas I barely managed to crawl off the sofa to join loved ones for turkey.

I'd been feeling breathless all December.

I'd put it down to a chest infection, and when I

suffered from vomiting and diarrhoea, too, I assumed I'd picked up a stomach bug.

By mid-January I'd been admitted to Eastbourne District General Hospital, my skin grey.

Then, the next morning, the consultant woke me up with terrifying news.

'You have heart failure,' he said.

I was 28, fit, and barely drank alcohol. Yet my heart had given up on me.

'You might need a transplant,' he added.

Later, when my mum



*I'm unbelievably grateful to you*

Suzanne, then 54, visited, we both cried.

I was transferred to a heart and lung hospital in

London for specialist care.

Slowly, I got stronger – and by March, I was well enough to go home.

But it didn't last. Two weeks later, I was sicker than ever.

Doctors told me I needed to go on the transplant list.

For the next six weeks, I thought about you.

Waiting for someone to die so I could live, well, it's as awful as it sounds.

And then, one day in May, my hospital room buzzed to life.

I was being prepped for surgery, a heart had been found.

*Your heart.*

The days after the op are a blur, but Mum tells me I got my colour back within hours.

And when I listened to my new heart for the very first time, it sounded so

strong in my chest.

Since then, I think about you every day. Even though I know nothing about you, or how you died – I'm sorry you did.

But I promise I'll look after your heart as best I can.

I'm unbelievably grateful to you – and your family – for being an organ donor.

You have given me the greatest gift.

This Christmas, as I celebrate, it'll be you I have to thank.

From the bottom of our heart.

**I'll look after your heart as best I can**

*Love,  
Hannah x*

**Hannah Sharma, 28,  
Mayfield**

From spring 2020, organ donation in England will move to an 'opt out' system. That means all adults in the UK will be considered to be an organ donor when they die. If you want to sign up to the organ donor register before then, visit [organdonation.nhs.uk](http://organdonation.nhs.uk)

*Last New Year. And here's to the next one...*





# LET'S



**WE WANT  
WOMEN  
JUST LIKE  
YOU TO  
APPEAR  
IN OUR  
MAGAZINE,  
EVERYONE  
IS INVITED!**



# GET



We've been listening to your comments about how you'd like to see more real women in our magazines, and, like you, we want to change the way women are portrayed – but we can't do this without your help. Help us to empower women through our pages and make a real difference, stop being invisible and get noticed for all the right reasons!



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You will need to upload two current photos taken standing against a white wall or similar – one full-length, one head shot. Please wear minimal make-up and simple clothes. We will need your email address, daytime phone number, date of birth so we can contact you. Email [real@ti-media.com](mailto:real@ti-media.com) with any queries.

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