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Maureen Lipman

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Hello!



38

Going wild?

“Aren't we lucky to live on such beautiful islands? The British Isles are almost unique in having such varied landscapes within a comparatively small amount of land. But whether it's the West Country's rolling hills or the Fens' haunting flatlands, the noble Brecon Beacons or the stately Pennines, Scotland's beautiful Borders and majestic Highlands, or the Mountains of Mourne that sweep down to the sea, they are all to some extent fashioned by us and our agricultural animals. Which is why rewilding can be an emotive subject when it's more than just reintroducing previously native animals. Turn to page 25.”

Geoff

EDITOR

geoffrey.palmer@futurenet.com



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FROM US TO YOU

Good to SHARE

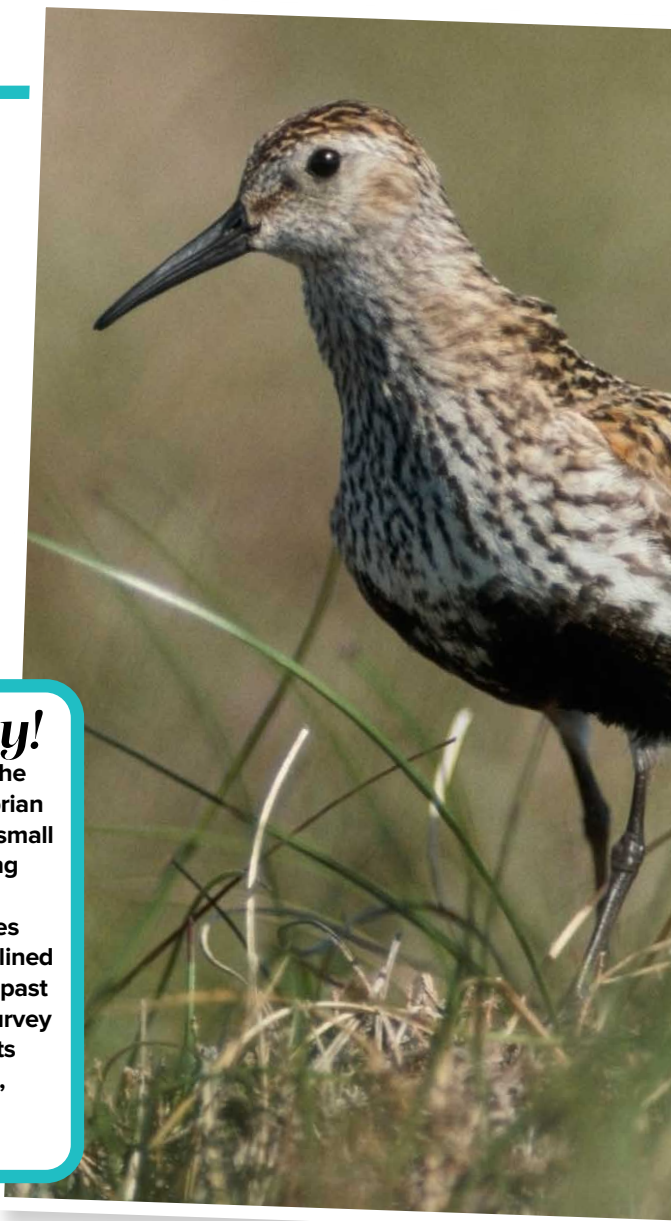
Catwalk glam, moorland's tiny treasures and the chunkiest trunk in the country!



Dunlin discovery!

A secret has been uncovered in the wild, wet moorlands of the Cumbrian Pennines – dunlin, a particularly small and rare wading bird, are breeding in this upland habitat. The bird, which migrates thousands of miles to West Africa each year, has declined by at least 20% globally over the past few decades. But a large-scale survey by the RSPB revealed dunlin nests hidden high across these hilltops, sparking hope for the future.

* rspb.org.uk



Did you know?

The prize for the fattest tree trunk in the UK goes to... the Marton Oak in Cheshire! This chunky tree boasts a girth of over 14 metres (although it's now fragmented, the centre having rotted away). About 1,200 years old, it's among the oldest oaks in Europe.



FREE FUN IN SCARBOROUGH

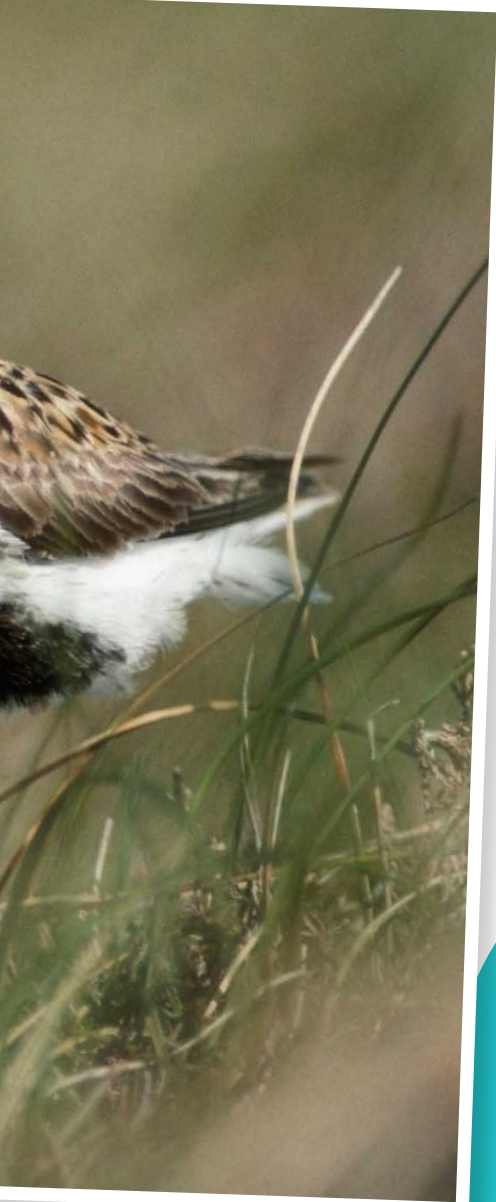
Don't miss Scarborough Streets, the joyful three-day festival in Scarborough town centre, which is on 29-31 May, 11am to 4pm. The jam-packed programme includes circus, dance, theatre, live music, with plenty of free performances and activities. There is something for everyone at this inclusive community celebration.

* Find out more about the festival at scarboroughfair.uk/streets



On this day in history

8 May 2000 Tate Modern welcomed the world's media to preview the nation's newest art gallery, before the official opening by Queen Elizabeth II on 11 May. The 'cathedral of cool' was dominated by the huge turbine hall, a reminder of the building's origins as a power station. Over five million people visited in its first year, and the gallery continues to be a huge draw.



SEALS OF SUFFOLK

There's good news from rangers at Orford Ness in Suffolk, which is fast becoming a stronghold for grey seals. There were 430 births recorded this year, which is an 88% rise on last year. The seal pups born over the winter have shed their fluffy coats and are able to swim confidently.

* Orford Ness is open on select days from 4 May to 26 September, nationaltrust.org.uk



NATURE NOTES

From Louise Midgley



I recently had a memorable walk around Windsor Great Park. By the time I headed back to my car, the light was fading fast, but there was just enough left to see an elegant barn owl swooping between the trees and gliding across open ground, in search of prey. At one point, she rested on a nearby oak tree and spun her beautiful head round to look me straight in the eye. And if that wasn't enough, dozens, if not hundreds of deer, ran across a path I was approaching. And all the time a dramatic rainbow lit up the sky.

My garden week

I'm growing a multitude of different-coloured tomatoes this year; various shades of orange, red, yellow and deep purple. What a great salad they will make.



HARE TODAY...

Keep your cheese cool by serving it on this elegant slate cheeseboard, with a cute, engraved hare by Annabel James. Perfect for summer dining. £25.95, annabeljames.co.uk



IT'S SHOWTIME!

Evolving from the glamorous salons of 19th-century Paris, the catwalk has always been at the heart of fashion. The V&A Dundee's new exhibition, *Catwalk: The Art of the Fashion Show*, celebrates 125 years of innovation, theatrical spectacle and fashion icons, including Alexander McQueen, Dame Vivienne Westwood, Chanel and Gucci.

* On until 17 January 2027, visit vam.ac.uk/dundee



Money-saving tip

Light up the night
Planning to entertain outdoors? Pop some candles or tea lights in terracotta flowerpots, and steady them with sand – a 20kg bag of play sand from Wickes is £5. They'll make lovely 'flight path' illuminations along paths. A string of solar lights inside a glass vase also makes a statement display.

Good to SHARE

We love to hear what you've been up to, so do get in touch!

Save the snails!

In the *My Garden Week* section of the *Nature Notes* column [3 March issue], the writer says she went round her garden collecting hibernating snails to stop garden pests. It should also be noted that the snails should not be left to die. They should be relocated somewhere safely, as they are needed. Snails help to produce compost in the garden and they are also food for birds. *Elizabeth Wood, by email*

Letter of the week



PAWS FOR THOUGHT

Did you say 'treat', Grandma? Here is Ted, my daughter's four-year-old cockapoo. He is a sweet little dog with many facial expressions. *Amanda Horsefield, Berkshire*

* Got a pet pic that makes you smile? We can give it a good home

GET IN TOUCH

WE LOVE LETTERS
Woman's Weekly, Future plc, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London W2 6JR.
P.S. It really helps when you put your details in capitals.
 * We do not return photos (apart from You Wore It Well) so please do not send originals.
EMAIL US
 womansweeklypostbag@futurenet.com
 Tell us your full name, address and daytime phone number, please.

LOST IN TRANSLATION

I'm a UK expat living in Spain and I've always admired how laid-back the Spanish are about beach nudity, but I didn't realise it extended to the local clinic! I was called in for a routine blood test, and when the nurse gestured vaguely at my arm and torso, I was baffled. Not wanting to be the 'prudish Brit', I didn't just roll up my sleeve; I went the full monty. I was stood there, top off, unhooking my bra, when I saw the nurse's face: she looked like she'd just seen a ghost. She didn't want a striptease; she just wanted a vein in my elbow. I spent the rest of the appointment trying to put my layers back on with one hand, while she gingerly took my blood, neither of us making eye contact. *Sonia Perkins, Tamworth*

Important! All contributions to *Woman's Weekly* must be original and NOT duplicated to other publications. £25 will be paid to the writer of the 'Letter of the week' for all rights in each letter printed. The Editor reserves the right to modify any letter. Future plc reserves the right to reuse any submission to *Woman's Weekly* in any format or medium, including social networking sites. We regret that we cannot enter into personal correspondence. Photos of children under 18 must be accompanied by written permission of a parent/legal guardian. All details correct at time of going to press.



LOOK WHAT I MADE

It's that time of the year again and our knit 'n' natter group is busy doing knitted chicks for our cancer hospital at Velindre. We also buy the Cadbury eggs to go inside to help this worthy cause. *Krys Bather, Pengam*

What you're WEARING



Geraldine Posser, 64

Tell us about your look

I like an elegant, relaxed look. My cashmere wrap cardigan by N.Peal was a birthday gift. It feels very luxe. I bought my silky trousers in Verona. I like the dusky shade of pink and my print top (bought in Lourdes) is a lucky colour match. My sandals are Russell & Bromley and my bag came from Majorca. I seem to have a lot of holiday buys!

What's your favourite thing about yourself?

I love people and I love life!



Deryn Willock, 66

Tell us about your look

My faux-suede jacket, belt and trousers are all from Zara – one of my favourite places to shop. My top is from River Island, my Coach bag is on loan from my daughter, and my shoes are Clarks. The scarf is just one of many. I love wearing neutral tones – creams, beige, tan, brown – as they're just so easy to mix and match.

What's your favourite thing about yourself?

Being a mum to my lovely daughter.



Christiane Jermy, 65

Tell us about your look

My coat is by Harris Wharf. I usually wear pink, but this is such a lovely shade of green and very spring-like. My blouse is by ME+EM and I bought my jeans at Anna Poulsen, a great boutique in Tunbridge Wells, Kent. My bag is Gucci and my trainers are old but comfy. I wore a new pair yesterday but they hurt so much they'll never to be worn again!

What's your favourite thing about yourself?

I love colour – both in fashion and interiors.



Lucinda Dashwood, 61

Tell us about your look

I like comfortable, easy separates that are feminine and timeless. My cream jeans are Gerard Darel, my shirt is by Really Wild and my cable-knit vest came from a local boutique. I also love a good tailored jacket. The one over my arm is by Sandro. My bag is Anya Hindmarch and I've had my Gucci loafers for about 20 years.

What's your favourite thing about yourself?

I'm quite sporty and I enjoy playing golf.

YOU WORE IT WELL

Beryle Eastley, 1956, sent in by her daughter Christine Rowe

Here I am aged three with my parents Beryle and Eric Eastley. I think we were at a wedding. My mother looks very smart in her floral print dress with the little bows and the hat is so chic. My dress is rather short and I'm wearing such sensible lace-up shoes!



* We'd love to see how great you looked in any era up to and including the 1980s. Please send a good-quality photo with your name, address and daytime phone number clearly written on the back, to: Fashion Dept, *Woman's Weekly*, Future plc, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London W2 6JR. Photos will be returned.

‘We’re like an ancient Romeo and Juliet!’

As she embarks on a nationwide theatre tour, Dame Maureen Lipman reveals how late-life romance has put a spring in her step

When the bride and groom have a combined age of 158, it might be assumed that the hen night is going to be a sedate affair, without much in the way of raucous partying.

But when the bride in question is Dame Maureen Lipman, all of our assumptions should go immediately out of the window.

For Maureen’s hen night not only featured a huge gang of pals, but also fancy dress, food, drink and lots of dancing.

‘I had 35 women, and they all came to my house and made kaftans, and then we all paraded to the local Spanish restaurant,

where I had a guitarist and a flamenco teacher,’ Maureen recalls. ‘It was absolutely ace!’

Sadly, there won’t be quite the same level of partying when Maureen turns 80 this month.

Not because she’s slowing down. In fact, quite the opposite.

She had already booked out an entire museum for the party, but has had to postpone the celebrations because she’s too busy.

The legendary actor has just taken on the lead role in a new comedy play, *Allegra* – her first major UK theatre

tour in 20 years. And the tour opens in Brighton, just days after her birthday.

‘I’m already committed to do a night of jazz and poetry on 3 May, and I’ll be in a right state trying to organise that, so I’ve

cancelled the party until later in the year,’ she explains.

Not only that, but the *Coronation Street* star is also currently in the middle of packing

up all her worldly goods. After her wedding last year, she moved into her new husband David’s house in north London, and is now selling the west London flat she has called home for the past 20 years.

Maureen’s first husband, playwright Jack Rosenthal, who she wed in 1973 and with whom she had two children, Amy and Adam, died in 2004. She also enjoyed a 13-year relationship with computer expert Guido Castro, who died in 2021.

She met businessman David Turner over lunch at a friend’s house in 2023. She recalls, ‘That



Newly-weds: David and Maureen



With children Adam and Amy

was it for another four months. Then I was doing a talk, and I rang him up and asked him if he’d like to come. He came and we had dinner with friends, and then we had a date. That was fun. It was in the countryside, with a map and a stile and lunch at the Bricklayers Arms!’

Since the couple tied the knot, Maureen says she hasn’t worked a great deal. ‘I’ve just been vaguely domestic; it’s probably the first time in my life,’ she laughs wryly.

‘I wasn’t rushing to go back to work, but I do think this is an important play. It’s about a woman who is relentlessly happy and a bit off the wall. In this day and age of hatred and cancellation, it’s really rather a nice play, which says, “I am what I am. I think I should be joyful and so should you.”’

The play tells the story of *Allegra*, who is full of life and joy and an irresistible urge to sing. She bursts into song in the street and in restaurants, creating chaos in her quiet

‘I am the same as I was at the age of 24’



As Evelyn Plummer in *Coronation Street*

village, and leaving her brother and carer with the difficult task of trying to keep her under control, without dimming the happiness that fills her heart.

Maureen says, 'She thinks her job in life is to make people happy, so she'll go into the Indian restaurant while everybody's having their meal and start singing *I'm Just Wild About Harry!* So, they have to report her as a nuisance.'

One of Britain's most prolific actors, Maureen's screen career began in 1968 when she appeared in the film *Up the Junction*. Since then, there have been roles in films including *Educating Rita* and *The Pianist*. She also famously portrayed grandmother Beattie in a string of iconic 1980s BT TV adverts and, more recently, she has played *Coronation Street* battleaxe Evelyn Plummer.

The tour of *Allegra* will take her around the country from May until July, but her new husband has promised to be there at every venue.

'It's been wonderful,' she smiles. 'I said to him the other night, "I didn't even know you three years ago and now we're together 24/7. Isn't it weird?" I'm about to be 80 – we're like an ancient Romeo and Juliet; it's ridiculous!'

As for her 80th, she admits it does feel like a landmark birthday. 'Both my parents died at 80, so that's significant,' she reflects before defiantly adding, 'I don't intend to!'

'I am the same person I was when I was 24, so I don't really get being 80. I probably have things wrong with me and I've probably slowed up a bit.'

She concluded, 'I have been known to take a tumble down the Tube steps, but I am the same gregarious, pushy, shy, awkward person. So why would I feel any different just because my body is getting older?'

*** *Allegra* tours the UK from 12 May. For more details and tickets, visit allegraplay.com**



Singing for SUCCESS

As Eurovision celebrates 70 years, we relive the glory days of British winners

From modest beginnings in 1956, the Eurovision Song Contest has grown year by year to become a surprisingly massive cultural sensation. Its quirky and often political voting results being seemingly half the fun – although it sometimes has serious musical commentators tearing their hair out!

This year taking place in the Austrian capital of Vienna, it will be broadcast live on 12, 14 and 16 May, with the UK represented by Look Mum No Computer, also known as Sam Battle. Let's hope his song *Eins, Zwei, Drei* has better luck than Olly Alexander's *Dizzy*, which scored



'nul points' from the audience vote in 2024. We have to look back quite a long way to find British success in the competition, but we've had five winners – and they are.



LULU BOOM BANG-A BANG

1969

A big number for a big voice, Lulu smashed it with this coy song, laden with double entendres. Looking fearless and gorgeous in a floral-decorated pink dress, Lulu emerged a joint four-way winner, sharing the title with the hosts Spain, plus France and the Netherlands in a tie.

DID YOU KNOW Graham Chapman sang a parody of the song called *Bing Tiddle Tiddle Bong* on *Monty Python Flying Circus*. He performed as Inspector Zatapathique, a forensic expert from the Monaco Murder Squad.



1967

Sandie Shaw PUPPET ON A STRING

She may have caused a sensation by singing with bare feet, but Sandie made up for her lack of footwear with a sparkling minidress, plus a revolving mirror onstage to give the audience a 360-degree view. The show was broadcast from Vienna in black and white, with colour TV arriving in the UK later that year. Sandie was the runaway winner – and the first British success of the 12-year-old contest.

DID YOU KNOW Sandie herself wasn't a fan of the song, calling it a 'cuckoo-clock tune', but Adam Faith, who discovered her, persuaded her it was worth singing. Good call, Adam!



Adam Faith and Sandie Shaw after her win



1997

Katrina and the Waves

LOVE SHINE A LIGHT

Although Katrina and the Waves had their biggest hit in 1985 with *Walking on Sunshine*, they also scored the UK's last Eurovision win with an upbeat and optimistic anthem called *Love Shine a Light* – the song was written to celebrate the work of the Samaritans. Katrina has since said that 90s Eurovision was like a 'barn dance', compared to the stadium extravaganzas we enjoy today.

DID YOU KNOW Lead singer Katrina Leskanich (left, holding flowers) was born in America, but her father was in the US air force based at RAF Lakenheath, in Suffolk.



1981

BUCKS FIZZ **MAKING YOUR MIND UP**

It was a narrow win, but a win nonetheless, as Bucks Fizz snatched victory with this upbeat song. Some said they'd squeaked the prize because of the sensational stage transformation mid-song, where the boys pulled off the girls' Velcroed skirts to reveal minis beneath. The foursome had

been brought together especially for the competition – and even today Cheryl Baker and Jay Aston still perform together as The Fizz.

DID YOU KNOW Cheryl Baker also had a TV career, including appearances on *Record Breakers* with Roy Castle.



1976

BROTHERHOOD OF MAN **SAVE YOUR KISSES FOR ME**

Perhaps the most saccharine – and with 80% of the vote also the most successful – of all our winners, this song's big reveal is that the kisses to be saved are not from a romantic partner but a three-year-old daughter. With ABBA-style costumes, the quartet's 'knee up, knee down' dance was easy for fans all over the world to copy – and launched a lasting trend for coordinated choreography. **DID YOU KNOW** The hugely popular song made No 1 in the UK two weeks before the Eurovision song contest.

The UK's scorecard

- * **TOTAL WINS: FIVE** Not bad, considering Ireland and Sweden top the listings with seven winners apiece.
- * **MOST RECENT TOP 10 FINISH** In Turin's 2022 contest, falsetto singer Sam Ryder came agonisingly close to the top spot with his stunning song *Space Man*. He finished second to Ukraine's Kalush Orchestra.
- * **TOTAL PARTICIPATIONS** The UK has been represented at 68 of the competitions (including this year). In 1957, we pitched in to the second contest with *All* by Patricia Bredin, who came seventh, and have entered every year since 1959.



Sam Ryder



Patricia Bredin

Protect your SMILE

The eight things putting your teeth at risk and what to do

1 FORGETTING TO FLOSS

Flossing should be part of your daily cleaning routine, every morning. 'When you sleep, bacteria multiply in your mouth,' says dentist Andrew Mueller*. 'If you don't disrupt that build-up between the teeth, you're missing the areas where problems start.' Your toothbrush can only reach about 60% of your tooth surfaces. The remaining 40% is where bacteria love to hide and multiply overnight. 'Think of it this way,' says Dr Mueller. 'If you only cleaned 60% of your dishes after dinner, would you consider them clean? The same logic applies to your

mouth.' And it applies if you have dental implants too. 'When bacteria and plaque accumulate around dental implants, they can cause peri-implantitis, a condition similar to gum disease that affects the tissues around implants,' he says. 'Because implants don't have the same periodontal ligament as natural teeth, the surrounding tissue responds differently to inflammation, making consistent cleaning especially important.'

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TePe Interdental
Brushes, £3.30
for six, Boots



2 USING A HARD-BRISTLED BRUSH

You might feel it gives a deeper clean but you risk damaging your tooth enamel and gums. Use a soft-bristled brush instead. 'It's gentler, reducing the risk of irritation and gum recession while still being effective by removing plaque and food debris,' says dentist Sepideh Jalal Jalali**. It's a good idea to use an electric toothbrush because you're less likely to use too much pressure and damage your teeth, and more likely – with an inbuilt timer – to clean your teeth for the full two minutes recommended for keeping them clean.

3 BAD HABITS

Everything from biting your nails to slouching can have an impact on dental health. Chewing your nails or other hard objects can lead to health problems, infections and dental damage. 'It can chip, crack and misalign teeth,' says Dr Jalali, 'with also the risk of gum disease and damage to the enamel, the protective outer layer covering your tooth.' Poor posture can have an impact too, even though it may seem unrelated to dental health. 'Poor posture such as slouching, hunching



4 EATING TOO MUCH SUGAR

Sugary and acidic foods are bad news for your teeth. 'From fizzy drinks to citrus fruits to sweets, they erode the enamel from the tooth,' warns Dr Jalali. Once you've damaged your tooth's protective enamel, it won't grow back. So protect it by limiting the amounts of these foods that you eat, and do not brush for at least 30-60 minutes after having acidic foods or drinks. Acid temporarily softens the enamel, making it easier to brush away. Limit contact with sugar and acid on your teeth by using a straw to drink acidic beverages, eating cheese or drinking milk after a meal to neutralise acidity or chewing sugar-free gum to stimulate protective saliva.

DID YOU KNOW...

One in five of us admit to not cleaning our teeth properly***.

5 EATING TOFFEES

Toffees, caramels and hard sweets are among the most damaging foods for your teeth. The chewy, sticky texture can pull out or loosen fillings or crowns, and they can stick to your teeth, prolonging your tooth's exposure to damaging sugar. Hard sweets can crack and chip teeth. But there are plenty of foods you can eat to help your teeth and gums. Eat fatty fish once a week, as omega-3 fatty acids found in fish, such as salmon, sardines and mackerel, have anti-inflammatory effects, which can help with gum disease. Walnuts and flaxseeds are also good



sources. Nitrate foods, such as beetroot and leafy greens, can boost helpful mouth bacteria, while fibre – found in fruit, veg, wholegrains, nuts and seeds – is believed to support healthier teeth and gums. High-fibre foods require much chewing, which naturally stimulates saliva, and alongside brushing and flossing, helps remove plaque from teeth. Crunchy foods – raw carrots, celery sticks and peppers – include immune-boosting antioxidants but also help physically scrub your teeth as you munch on them.

7 NOT FIXING WONKY TEETH

It's not always easy – or cheap – to consider aligners or braces but they may keep teeth healthier by correcting any problems. Straightening teeth may make them easier to clean and floss, reducing plaque build-up and potential problems in the future. Talk to your dentist about the options available.

8 AVOIDING THE DENTIST

No one really enjoys a visit to the dentist's chair but routine check-ups are a must to prevent oral problems, and maintain healthy teeth and gums. Visit your dentist every six months at least. 'They can detect early problems by treating them and cleaning teeth professionally in areas that are needed,' says Dr Jalali.



6 IGNORING TEETH GRINDING

'It can cause tooth damage, sleep disruption, jaw pain and long-term dental issues,' says Dr Jalali. Treating grinding (bruxism) will not only help protect your teeth, it will also ease pain, and protect and improve sleep quality. 'Bruxism can be treated by wearing a mouthguard, stress management and even Botox injections,' says Dr Jalali. Speak to your dentist about the best option for you.

DID YOU KNOW...

Regular physical activity is linked to lower inflammation and better oral health.

or resting your hand on your jaw causes the jaw to misalign. This can lead to major issues with the temporomandibular joint, which connects the lower jaw to your skull, causing pain in the jaw joint, uneven tooth wear and problems with your bite,' warns Dr Jalali.

WORDS: TANYA PEARBY. PHOTOS (POSED BY MODELS): GETTY. *FROM DOCTORS IMPLANTS. **CLINICAL DIRECTOR AT THE TOOTH CLUB. ***2026 RESEARCH BY TEP. IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH, SEE YOUR GP

WIN A STYLISH EGG CHAIR for your perfect summer garden



3 prizes to be won

Relax in the hot months with Cherry Lane Garden Centres

Enjoy the ultimate summer garden escape, thanks to Cherry Lane Garden Centres. Three lucky winners will have the chance to transform their outdoor space with egg chairs designed for relaxing on summer days and gorgeous warm evenings.

The first-prize winner will receive a luxurious double egg chair – great for sharing peaceful garden moments with a loved one. Two runners-up will each win a single egg chair, offering the ideal spot to unwind with a book or take a moment

to sit outdoors with a drink. Part of Cherry Lane Garden Centres' beautiful garden range of furniture, these contemporary egg chairs bring style, comfort and a touch of luxury to a garden or a patio. Whether you're hosting friends, enjoying a quiet afternoon or soaking up the long summer evenings, this prize will help you make the most of the season in style.

And why stop there? For even more perfect garden finds, take a trip to your nearest store to revitalise your outdoor space or if not, visit cherry-lane.co.uk.



Snuggle up in an egg chair, day (above) or evening

HOW TO ENTER

Just answer this question:
Which of these is not an English apple bought in the supermarket?
A Bramley B Russet C Victoria
If you know the answer, go to competitions.womansweekly.com and look for the competition. This competition is open from 9am on 6 May and closes at 11.59pm on 6 June 2026.



TERMS AND CONDITIONS Standard *Woman's Weekly* terms and conditions apply, for details go to futureplc.com/competition-rules. Entry implies acceptance to these rules.

For website rules of play, go to competitions.womansweekly.com/rules. The promoter is Future plc and Cherry Lane Garden Centres is the supplier of the prize.

UK only. In the event of a conflict between the terms and conditions in this promotional material and the Standard *Woman's Weekly* terms and conditions, the former shall

prevail. There are three prizes to be won, one first-prize winner will receive a double egg chair. Two runners-up will each receive a single egg chair.

For more fabulous competitions, register and enter at competitions.womansweekly.com

IT'S A FUNNY OLD WORLD

'Why I am adding life to my years'

THIS WEEK'S COLUMNIST Wellness author and advocate Liz Earle

“It's never too late, and you're never too old. That's the message I want to shout from the rooftops. I'm now in my 60s, and I can honestly say I feel fitter, happier and stronger than I did in my 40s or my 50s. People often ask me why I'm so optimistic about the future, and I simply tell them: why shouldn't this upward trajectory carry on? If I'm sitting here in 10 years' time in my mid-70s, I truly hope to be feeling even better.

So many women reach a certain stage and think it's 'all over' – that life is a slippery slope toward becoming invisible. We've spent decades as the primary caregivers, looking after children, parents and careers, only to find ourselves wondering where we fit in once the nest is empty. There is so little in the media that gives us a positive 'pro-ageing' message, but I'm here to tell you that this chapter can be your most vibrant. I'm certainly not a 'gym bunny', and I don't believe in a life of restriction. I even went

'Try to live as simply as possible to thrive'

clubbing in Ibiza for the first time in my 60s! These opportunities are open to all of us if we believe in living better, for longer.

We are all living longer, thanks to modern medicine, but there is a catch: while our 'lifespan' has increased, our 'healthspan' – the years we spend in good health – is decreasing. I don't think it's fair or necessary to spend our final decades in pain or losing our independence. We should be focused on adding life to our years, not years to our life.

The secret lies in looking after our 'cellular batteries' – tiny powerhouses called mitochondria. When these batteries run low, everything from our skin to our energy levels starts to flag. It sounds scientific, but the fix is pure common sense. It starts with real, whole foods – eggs, colourful veg, and my absolute superstar, extra virgin olive oil – while dodging the ultra-processed packets and excess sugar.

I also swear by chasing the daylight. We actually have a high concentration of these 'batteries' in our eyes, and getting outside into natural light first thing in the morning sets your internal

biological clock. It helps you feel energised all day and, crucially, helps you sleep at night. Try to ditch the blue light of your phone in the evening; I love using lamps or even candles to create a calm atmosphere.

Ultimately, it's about reconnecting with ancestral wisdom. Try walking barefoot on the grass for a moment of grounding, or starting the day with a bit of gratitude. If we live as simply as possible, we don't just survive – we thrive.

* *How to Age: Supercharge Your Life and Feel Better Than Ever* by Liz Earle (£22, HB, Hodder & Stoughton) is out now.

'My funny old week'

WHERE I'VE BEEN I visited the HUM2N longevity clinic and ran into Julia Bradbury. After months of Instagram interactions, meeting in person felt like reuniting with an old friend.

WHAT I'VE SEEN *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* at London's Theatre Royal Haymarket. It's a joyful yet poignant production that moved me to tears; definitely pack tissues.

WHO I'VE MET My middle son, Kit, is currently living with me. He surprised me by cooking his first-ever roast dinner. It was a wonderful landmark event!

WHAT I'VE BOUGHT I found gorgeous lacy tops at Coco, an online boutique – perfect for summer layering.



The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry



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HOW TO WEAR

A pussy bow blouse

The tie-neck detail brings a romantic vibe to this wardrobe staple



Shoes, £44, Next



Skirt, £75, sizes 6-24, White Stuff



Blouse, £27.99, sizes xs-xl, Zara



Wool-cashmere blend

Knitted vest, £90, sizes xxs-xxl, elevenloves.co.uk



Bag, £34.99, New Look



Bag, £69.99, katieloxton.com



Earrings, £12, John Lewis



Jeans, £40, sizes 6-24, M&S



Sunglasses, £22.99, Mango

Blazer, £42.99, sizes xxs-xxl, H&M



Arch support

Shoes, £150, vionicshoes.co.uk



COMPILED BY: CHARLIE BELL

The power of FLOWERS

Celebrate springtime with these beautifully scented floral-based skincare buys

Soothing rose

Arguably one of the nation's favourite blooms, roses are as beneficial in skincare as they are in our gardens. They're packed with vitamins A, C and E, which stimulate collagen production, improve elasticity and reduce the appearance of fine lines. They also provide deep hydration and serious calming benefits. Try **Holika Holika Damask Rose Mask**, **£1.80**, notino.co.uk, for an instant boost of soothing hydration. Pop on once a week for best results. Or stock up on **Pixi Rose Ceramide Cream**, **£24**, **Boots**, which is rich in antioxidants, thanks to rose flower oil, soothing, softening and boosting hydration.



Relaxing lavender

Lavender has been used as a relaxation aid for centuries, and its scent is often used to calm the senses, promote relaxation and encourage sleep. But it also has lots of incredible skincare benefits such as antibacterial properties, calming irritation and promoting healing. It's found in **Neal's Yard Remedies English Lavender Body Lotion**, **£24**, ocado.com, where it's blended with calendula and jojoba seed oils to deeply nourish and relax your muscles. Or try **Delicious Moon Moisture Drops Face Oil**, **£14.95**, **Superdrug**, which is powered by a blend of anti-ageing lavender oil, anti-inflammatory rose hip oil, and more.



Calming camomile

Found in everything from teabags to skincare products, camomile flowers promote relaxation, improve sleep and ease anxiety. Within skincare, it's found in **The Body Shop Camomile Sumptuous Makeup Cleansing Butter**, **£15**, thebodyshop.com.

A hard-working, gentle cleansing balm, it dissolves make-up in seconds, and leaves skin soft and soothed.

You'll also discover camomile in **Mario Badescu Facial Spray with Aloe, Chamomile and Lavender**, **£8**, **Boots**. The gentle facial spray calms your complexion with each misting, replenishing and balancing the look of skin.





Rejuvenating jasmine

When jasmine flowers are used in skincare products, they provide potent anti-ageing benefits. This is thanks to their high-antioxidant content, which helps boost collagen production (responsible for smooth skin), calm inflammation and balance oil production. Invest in an anti-ageing serum like **Spa Ceylon White Jasmine Day Hydrating Serum, £48, spaceylon.co.uk**, which is formulated with 100% pure precious jasmine oil, green tea and olive extracts, to firm and plump. Or opt for **Antipodes Jasmine Flower Menopause Facial Cream, £42, escentual.com**, which reduces redness, dehydration, blemishes and signs of ageing.



Restorative calendula

Renowned for its healing properties, calendula is highly effective at soothing irritation, accelerating wound healing and boosting hydration. It's widely used to treat eczema, psoriasis and sunburns, and is suitable for sensitive complexions. Try it for yourself in **Kiehl's Calendula Deep Cleansing Foaming Face Wash, £33, Boots**. The non-drying foaming wash deeply cleans without stripping the barrier, all while soothing your skin. Or stock up on **Fushi Organic Calendula Oil, £17.10, health.com**, which you can use directly on skin from head to toe, or add to your favourite face cream to calm and heal irritated skin.



Hydrating hibiscus

Hibiscus is bursting with vitamins and antioxidants that your skin loves. It works to lock in moisture, tighten skin, boost radiance and heal inflammation. It's been added to **UpCircle Hand Cream, £19.99, upcirclebeauty.com**, which provides long-lasting hydration for dehydrated hands. It's rich in shea butter to nourish and protect – plus, it smells divine! Or try **Patchology Moodpatch Happy Place Inspiring Tea-Infused Aromatherapy Eye Gels, £12, Space NK**, which are infused with coconut oil, hibiscus and lotus flower extracts to reduce fatigue and soften the delicate skin under your eyes.



WORDS: ANNIE MILROY. PHOTO (POSED BY MODEL): GETTY

Splendid ISOLATION

One woman shares her remarkable story of life in the Orkney Islands

When she accepted the job of running the school on Sanday, in the Orkney Islands, Jackie Sinclair only intended to stay a couple of years. Thirty years later, she's deeply rooted in the remote island community after marrying cattle farmer Malcolm, now 66.

As well as teaching, Jackie, now 61, has thrown herself into island life, helping on the family farm, running the only haulage company and rebuilding the island shop. More recently, she has developed a passion for renovation, transforming several properties into holiday lets to capitalise on the growing number of tourists who are visiting Orkney.

Her latest, Boloquoy, is a Victorian farmhouse, returned to an authentic 1880s state, which is let uniquely as a living museum, allowing visitors to

sample historic island life for themselves.

Jackie moved to Sanday, the largest of Orkney's northern isles, which today has a population of 500, in 1996.

'I always had itchy feet. I was always looking to move on to the next job, the next level – teacher, deputy head, deputy of a big secondary. Then I wanted to leave the city,' recalls Jackie, who grew up in Edinburgh. 'Two jobs came up – one on the west coast, and another in Orkney. I chose Orkney, as I wouldn't like the midges on the west coast!'

Sanday's school had 100 pupils, aged between three and 16, and although she enjoyed her work, Jackie already had ambitions to progress her career further.

'I only intended to stay for a couple of years – I had my eye on a nice school in the



Step back in time: Jackie in period costume

Highlands, which was being built,' she explains.

Her plans changed after meeting Malcolm, the farmer tasked with cutting the hay at her smallholding. 'It was quite funny, as he misjudged the corner of a field, hooked a gate and mangled it. He took the gate off and was driving back and forth over it, trying to straighten it as I drove up. That's how we met!' she smiles.

A friendship blossomed, followed by love, and when Jackie's dream job came up and there was a chance she could leave the island, the couple decided to marry. Their family soon grew, with first Gregor, now 31, and then Fraser, now 23, who were the sixth generation to be born in the family home on the island.

Jackie has carefully restored Boloquoy so that it's how it was in Victorian times

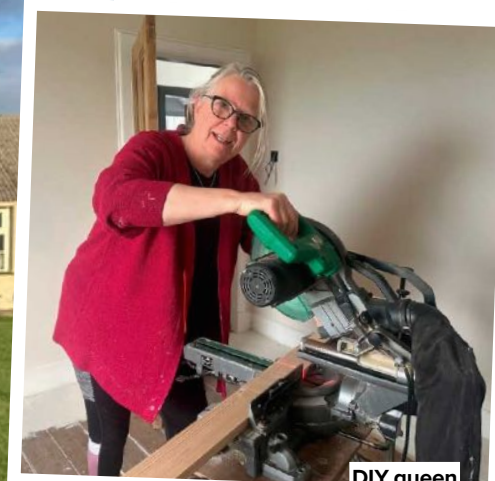
Jackie took maternity leave and renovated two properties before embarking on a new challenge. She worked as an education inspector for four years, making frequent trips to the mainland, some 100 miles away, engaging with teachers in other remote areas.

When she struggled to get enough time at home with her young family, she switched to international education consultancy work, so she wasn't away as much. Although well paid, it was less rewarding and in 2010 she left that role.

At the time, her mother-in-law Jean ran Sanday's only remaining shop – a small butcher's store – from a converted cottage, but was nearing retirement. Rather than renovate her shop, the Sinclairs invested in a new steel-framed store, at the island's heart, and secured access to a wider range of products.



With Annie the Highland cow



DIY queen

(above); and getting into the spirit of things



'It was a real gamble. People were used to going to a tiny cottage shop, but we saw the demographic change – people were coming with different expectations of what should be stocked and we made it successful,' says Jackie.

Malcolm focused on farming, while Jackie was in charge of overseeing the couple's other businesses, including the offices of their haulage company.

'I gained my HGV licences and transport manager certificates. When I worked away, I'd be getting off a plane at Kirkwall, grabbing a taxi down to the harbour, and then hitching up my skirt to climb into a HGV – it was quite weird how both worlds collided!' she laughs.

It's virtually impossible here to get tradespeople'

The shop was hard work, especially when the pandemic arrived and the store on a neighbouring island closed. It then fell to the Sinclairs to supply everyone with what they needed, which left Jackie exhausted, working

16-hour days.

Following a post-pandemic boom in visitors to the islands, Jackie turned her attention to holiday accommodation, launching Orkney Retreats, which has three luxury island farmhouses and cottages available for self-catering stays.

The latest, Boloquoy farmhouse, has been a two-year labour of love. Jackie was set on making the Historic Environment Scotland-listed farm another modern let until she found items belonging to

the Fea family, who had lived there continuously from 1762 to 2023.

'It was a hoarder's dream inside,' she says. 'Every room was full of boxes and chests. A lot was junk, but in among it, there was all this family history. Victorian clothing, china, ornaments and personal items, including letters, even unopened Christmas gifts, each belonging to a different family member. Everything had been kept.'

She's used these items to decorate the house and lets it to holidaymakers so they can experience Victorian farm life. Jackie hopes the project will be financially sustainable and fund another scheme she's determined to make her legacy – saving the island's sole surviving watermill.

'Boloquoy's been a real labour of love,' says Jackie. 'At 61, I've added joiner, roofer and mason to my skill set. I've

taught myself all these things. I've had a bit of help from friends, but otherwise done everything, except the electrics.

'It's virtually impossible to get tradespeople here; they don't want the hassle of coming to work on an island.'

Although she admits island life has its drawbacks such as unsettled weather, which can affect transport links, Jackie says it has made her more resilient, optimistic and more open to getting on with doing things herself.

'There's a lot more freedom here, you can just live your life how you want to,' she says. 'We make the best of what we have. I love the isolation and the nature. I couldn't imagine living anywhere else. It's where my family calls home. I love it.'

*** Visit boloquoy.co.uk**

PASTA *surprise!*

Three tasty new recipe combinations to try



PER SERVING
688 cals, 34g fat, 18g sat fat, 61g carbs

COOK'S TIP

If you can't find charred pepper paste, use mild harissa pesto, or a mix of jarred peppers and sun-dried tomatoes, whizzed to a paste.

Spiced lamb pasta

Swap beef bolognese for a rich, spiced lamb ragu paired with a cool garlic sauce.

SERVES 4

PREP 10 mins COOK 20 mins

- * 1tbsp olive oil
- * 400g lamb mince
- * 1 large red onion, ½ chopped and ½ thinly sliced
- * 2 fat garlic cloves, crushed
- * 2tbsp charred pepper paste (see tip)
- * 2tsp each ground cumin and smoked paprika
- * 2tbsp chopped mint leaves, or pinch dried mint, plus extra to garnish
- * Juice 1 lemon
- * 250g Greek yogurt

- * 300g small pasta shape (we used Sardinian gnocchi)
- * 50g unsalted butter

1 Heat the oil in a large frying pan over a high heat. Add the mince and fry while breaking up, until browned. Add the chopped onion and half the crushed garlic, then fry for a few minutes until the onion softens.

2 Stir in the pepper paste, cumin, 1tsp of the paprika and 100ml water. Season, then simmer for 10 mins, until reduced to a thick sauce. Stir in the mint.

3 Meanwhile, toss the sliced onion in a small bowl with half the lemon juice and a pinch of salt. In another bowl, mix together the yogurt, and the remaining garlic and lemon juice. Set both aside.

4 Cook the pasta according to pack instructions. Drain well and put on a large serving plate. Top with the garlic yogurt, then the mince mixture.

5 Melt the butter in a small pan and stir in the remaining paprika. Drizzle over the mince, top with the sliced onion and garnish with the extra mint leaves to serve.

One-pan aubergine pasta

Cooking the aubergine low and slow creates an unctuous and glossy sauce.

SERVES 4 PREP 15 mins
COOK Slow cooker: 3 hrs
30 mins; oven: 1 hr 10 mins

- * 400g small aubergines, quartered
- * 2 onions, chopped
- * 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- * 1 red chilli, thinly sliced
- * ½ vegetable stock cube
- * 2tbsp red wine vinegar
- * 3tbsp pitted black olives, chopped, plus extra, to serve
- * 2tsp capers, drained
- * 2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes
- * 200g small pasta shapes (such as trofie or orzo)
- * 2tbsp toasted pine nuts

- * Handful each chopped parsley and oregano

1 Put the aubergines, onions, garlic, chilli, stock cube, vinegar, olives, capers, tomatoes and 1 tin of water in a slow cooker and cook on low for 3 hrs. Alternatively, cook for 45-50 mins in a casserole dish in the oven at 160C Fan/Gas 4.

2 Stir the pasta into the sauce and cook for 30 mins or until cooked to your liking. Serve topped with pine nuts, herbs and extra olives.

PER SERVING
 329 cal, 10.5g fat, 1.5g sat fat, 43g carbs



COOK'S TIP

The sauce can be cooked in advance; reheat with a splash of water before adding the pasta.

COOK'S TIP

Meatballs have a tendency to stick, so use a good non-stick pan if you have one and don't move them until a crust forms.



PER SERVING
 680 cal, 13.5g fat, 3g sat fat, 86g carbs

Chicken meatballs

These are a lighter alternative to classic meatballs and are equally as tasty.

SERVES 4 PREP 20 mins COOK 15 mins

- * 500g chicken mince
- * 3 spring onions, roughly chopped
- * 25g Parmesan, grated, plus extra to garnish
- * 30g basil
- * 1tbsp olive oil
- * 2 roasted red peppers (from a jar), roughly chopped
- * 3tbsp sun-dried tomato puree
- * 600ml jar tomato pasta sauce
- * 400g pasta (we used fettuccine)

1 Put the chicken mince, spring onions, Parmesan and most of the basil in a food processor with a pinch of salt. Whizz until well combined. Divide the mixture into quarters, then roll each into 5 balls. Heat a large frying pan over a medium-high heat. Once hot, add the oil and brown the meatballs for 2 mins.

2 Meanwhile, whizz the red peppers and tomato puree together until smooth. Add the pasta sauce and whizz again. Pour into the pan with the meatballs. Cover with a lid and cook over a medium heat for 15 mins.

3 Meanwhile, cook the pasta according to pack instructions. Divide between bowls and top with the meatballs and sauce. Finish with Parmesan and basil to serve.

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Rewilding EXPLAINED

Discover the thinking behind the idea our nature needs nurturing

Headed about beavers being released into the UK's rivers? Then you've heard about rewilding. Here's your guide to what it means.

What is rewilding?

The UK is one of the world's most nature-depleted countries, largely because we were the first to industrialise, with a continuing need for more housebuilding on such a small island, and the very intensive agricultural practices brought in after World War Two. Since Brexit, the country has been able to give more support to nature-friendly agricultural practices, but rewilding is an attempt to help the situation further by spreading the

population of native species, and sometimes reintroducing those we have lost completely, but also by creating places in which nature can be left to its own devices. 'It is a form of environmental conservation focused on restoring natural processes and habitats, and, where necessary, reintroducing native species,' says Mike Budge of Rewilding Coombeshead, a 400-acre rewilded landscape project in Devon.

The answer is animals

Rewilding takes different forms, from the restoration of peatland to supporting rare chalk streams, but when land is left to go 'wild', the right animals play a big role. At the Knepp Estate in

West Sussex, a once traditional farm, the owners left it to go wild, aiming to earn income from ecotourism, sales of organic meat from free-ranging livestock and government grants instead. Among other species, they introduced Exmoor ponies to control vegetation and Tamworth pigs to turn over clods of earth as they graze, allowing insects and plants to find a home.

The sort of rewilding that involves bringing back extinct species can also provide important benefits. 'Earlier this year, we released several beavers on the Holnicote Estate on Exmoor,' says Ben McCarthy, head of nature conservation at the National Trust. 'We hope they will help transform a huge swathe of countryside, creating habitats and buffering both floods and drought.'

Concerns

Reintroductions require authorisation in the form of a wildlife licence. The release of four lynx in the Cairngorms National Park in January 2025, which was condemned by conservationists as irresponsible, was illegal. 'Debate and controversy tend to focus on large predators such as lynx, [and the even

more controversial] wolves and bears,' says Mike. 'Any reintroduction of this scale must be carefully planned.'

Rewilding land that could be used to grow food can also be controversial, but it doesn't have to be an either/or choice, argues Isabella Tree, co-owner of Knepp. 'What's more,' she adds, 'if we don't think seriously about allowing a lot more space for nature in our increasingly managed, polluted and developed landscapes, we might quite simply exhaust our land's capacity to grow food in the future.'

EAST END ADDITIONS
Rewilding happens in cities too. Later this year, white storks will be reintroduced in Eastbrookend Country Park, East London, with beavers to follow in 2027.



A beaver is released into a woodland enclosure

SEE FOR YOURSELF

You can see rewilding in action at Wild Ennerdale in Cumbria, co-run by the National Trust, as well as at Rewilding Coombeshead and Knepp. The Wildlife Trusts also has rewilding projects across the UK (wildlifetrusts.org/rewilding). To better support nature in your own garden, the National Trust has these suggestions:

- * Providing a water source like a pond, even a small one, can be a lifeline for many species.
- * Try thinking differently about your lawn: could you mow less often or leave some areas longer?
- * You don't need to be tidy: leaving areas less manicured lets species like hedgehogs shelter, breed and hibernate.



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1 BLOOD PRESSURE MONITOR Keep tabs on your blood pressure – a key risk factor for heart problems – with the easy-to-use **OMRON M2 Essential** blood pressure monitor, approved by charity the **British Heart Foundation**. **£29.99**, shop.bhf.org.uk.

2 OLIVE OIL Polyphenols act as an antioxidant and contribute to the protection of blood lipids from oxidative stress. **Odyssea Good for You Extra Virgin Olive Oil** contains Greek olives that yield a minimum 250mg of polyphenol per kilo of oil. **£8.50 for 250ml**, Waitrose.



3 RESISTANCE LOOPS Regular exercise is essential for a healthy heart. Cardio is important, but strength training is crucial too, as it helps to lower blood pressure and cholesterol. **Opti Resistance Loops**, **£10**, Argos.

MY HEALTHY LIFE



Petronella Ravenshear is a nutritionist.

My fail-safe remedy

An early night. Soaking for at least 10 minutes in a hot bath with a pound of Epsom salts, drying off and hopping straight into bed by 8pm results in the deepest, most refreshing sleep. That extra sleep before 10pm is deeply healing for both mind and body. It gives our brain's glymphatic system extra time to clear toxins, and feeds our immune system at the same time. When the immune system is working overnight, it uses our body fat for energy. We're not only thinner but more revitalised in the morning.

My favourite meal

High-fat meals leave me feeling happy and satiated, and with great energy. I love fish, and sea bass, pan-fried in extra virgin olive oil, with crispy skin is perfect, especially when combined with magnesium-rich green veg such as Tenderstem broccoli, along with homemade guacamole – avocado, chilli, tomato and garlic – and followed by a deliciously crunchy apple and a couple of squares of dark (80% minimum) chocolate. Olive oil, omega 3 fish oil, avocado and chocolate all provide deliciously healthy fats.

How I stay fit and healthy

Meditation and journaling are, for me, just as important as physical fitness. Giving ourselves peace,



and the space to process emotions, is vitally important for a happy, healthy life. I love my daily swim – a form of meditation in itself – and the energising effects (and fun) of a 15-minute mini trampoline workout. Trampolining (in a good bra!) is great for detoxification and getting the lymph moving. I avoid sugar and wheat – they sap my energy and make me bloated.

My perfect day

I'd rather have a delicious black coffee over breakfast any day. So, unless I'm doing my annual HBD Reset, my day begins with a 20-minute meditation, followed by coffee. I find getting my swim and trampoline in before lunch energises me more than in the afternoon. We like to eat at midday – fish, salad and green veg – and to eat again at 6pm most evenings – often a simple roast chicken with delicious herbs and veg.

NEWSFLASH

Sleep 'sweet spot' for a healthier life

Seven hours and 18 minutes is the 'sweet spot' for staying healthy and avoiding diabetes, says a new study*. Researchers from Nantong University in China examined data from America and found that bad, inconsistent

sleep could create a 'vicious cycle', and that overindulging in long weekend lie-ins may cause as much damage to your health as insomnia.

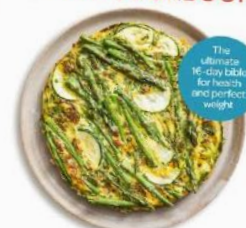


New read

THE HBD RESET COOKBOOK
(£22, HB, THORNS)

The Human Being Diet (HBD) is a three-month programme to help rebalance your metabolism and body. **Petronella Ravenshear's** book leads you through a 16-day reset as part of that plan with nourishing, easy-to-cook recipes to leave you healthier, energised and focused.

THE **HBD**
RESET COOKBOOK



Petronella Ravenshear
with recipes by Elisabeth Whiting



Doctor Gill

ADVICE FROM OUR WOMAN'S WEEKLY DOCTOR

New finding in HPV testing

Trials involving testing for human papillomavirus (HPV) in menstrual blood, collected on a standard mini pad, have been shown to have diagnostic accuracy comparable with clinician-collected cervical samples taken in smear tests. HPV infection is a major cause of cervical cancer. This finding could lead to an alternative option in future national cervical screening for those who find vaginal cervical smears too invasive.

Coping with MYASTHENIA GRAVIS

This rare and long-term condition causes muscle weakness

Myasthenia most commonly affects the muscles controlling the eyes and eyelids, facial expressions, chewing, swallowing and speaking, but can damage most body muscles.

It affects people of any age, typically starting in women under 40, and men over 60. It's an autoimmune condition, where the immune system mistakenly attacks healthy tissue involved in the communication between nerves and muscles, making muscles weak and easily tired. It's unclear why, but it has been linked to issues with the thymus, a central chest gland, which is part of the immune system. Many people with myasthenia have an enlarged thymus gland, although they will be unaware, and 10% have a thymus tumour (thymoma).

Common symptoms include droopy eyelids, double vision, difficulty making facial expressions, chewing and swallowing, slurred speech, and weak arms, legs or neck. Breathing difficulties sometimes occur. Symptoms worsen if you're tired towards the end of the day, and usually improve after sleeping. See a GP if you've long-lasting or worrying symptoms. They'll ask about your medical history then refer you to a specialist

for tests or look for other symptom causes. Tests include antibody blood tests, electromyography (an electrical test of your nerves and muscle function), and scans such as a CT or MRI to check if your thymus gland is bigger than usual.

It's linked to issues with the thymus gland'

Rarely, an edrophonium chloride injection may be used, which gives sudden but temporary improvement in muscle strength to confirm it's myasthenia. Treatments include avoiding triggering symptoms, such as stress, exhaustion, infections and certain medications, medicine to help improve muscle

Possible treatments

- * **AVOID TRIGGERS** including stress, tiredness and infections, but avoid live vaccines, such as shingles. Ask your doctor about medications that could worsen myasthenia.
- * **REDUCE RISKS** Exercise is important for muscle strength, but avoid activities that could be dangerous with sudden weakness, such as swimming alone. If you drive, inform the DVLA of your diagnosis.
- * **MEDICATIONS** Pyridostigmine tablets help electrical signals travel between nerves and muscles, to reduce weakness. Steroids may help. Immune suppressants may be needed.
- * **SURGERY** to remove the thymus gland (a thymectomy) may sometimes be recommended if you have an unusually large thymus or a thymoma (see left).



HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE NEWS

Wearable tech, such as electronic watches looking for hypertension, could offer false reassurance and shouldn't be used as a substitute for traditional blood pressure checks. A US Food and Drug Administration study, which compared the notification feature for home blood pressure monitoring, found only 41.2% of people with undiagnosed hypertension received an alert. Check blood pressure with an approved blood pressure monitor; discuss concerns with your GP.



**True
or
false?**

Most of taste is really smell

True. Approximately 75% to 95% of what is perceived as flavour is derived from the sense of smell. While the tongue detects five basic tastes (sweet, sour, salty, bitter, umami), the nose identifies thousands of aroma compounds via the olfactory nerves, which directly join the brain at the back of the nose. Odours rise from the back of the throat to the nose while chewing.

4 FIXES FOR...

Fatigue

1 COMMITTED SLEEP SCHEDULE Adults need seven to eight hours a night. Keep a regular bedtime, have a dark, cool room, and avoid screens, spicy foods or alcohol/caffeine before bed.

2 EXERCISE EVERY DAY It will give you more energy. A regular fitness routine can help build muscle strength and endurance, and reduce overall fatigue.

3 CONSIDER SUPPLEMENTS Certain herbs may help manage fatigue. Try ginseng, and aromatherapy oils, such as lavender. A vitamin deficiency may also be sapping energy.

4 DAILY MEDITATION Emotional regulation helps soothe the nervous system and encourage meaningful rest. Look online for guided breathing exercises.

weakness, and sometimes surgery to remove the thymus gland.

Myasthenia gravis is a long-term condition that typically has phases of improvement and then worsens, usually affecting most of the body, spreading from the eyes and face to other areas over weeks, months or years. For some people only the eyes are affected; very occasionally, permanent remission occurs. For most, it doesn't have a significant impact on life expectancy. Occasionally, it can be life-threatening, leading to severe breathing or swallowing difficulties, needing emergency hospital treatment.

If you have myasthenia gravis, your clinical team, with your agreement, will pass information about your diagnosis to the National Congenital Anomaly and Rare Disease Registration Service, whose scientists look for better prevention or treatments.

Q What could cause the lump by my bottom?

A Perianal swellings are common, causing significant anxiety, discomfort and embarrassment but usually not serious. Common anal skin conditions that may present with lumps include genital warts or skin tags. Haemorrhoids are enlarged perianal blood vessels that may be internal or external. Bleeding is the commonest symptom, and haemorrhoids are the most common benign cause of anal bleeding. A thrombosed pile (actually a perianal blood clot rather than a true haemorrhoid) shows as a very tender blue/black lump close to the anal edge.



Common perianal infections include abscesses, usually giving a tender, localised swelling with redness and sometimes a pus discharge, and pilonidal sinus, a red-hot tender lump between the buttocks, which can chronically drain pus. Deeper abscesses can present with perianal or pelvic pain. Anal cancer is rare but may show as an ulcerated, thickened lesion with pain, bleeding or changes in bowel habit. See your GP for a diagnosis.



Bowelbabe Fund
for Cancer Research UK

Unusual poo? That's your cue!

- Pooing more often?
- Looser poo?
- Constipation?
- Blood in your poo?

Changes to your poo or bowel habits can be a sign of bowel cancer.

If it's not normal for you, tell your doctor.

In most cases it won't be cancer, but if it is, spotting it early saves lives.

Don't ignore changes to your poo

Learn more about bowel cancer at cruk.org/bowel



CANCER
RESEARCH
UK

Cancer Research UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1089464), Scotland (SC041666), the Isle of Man (1103) and Jersey (247)



Here to help

LET COUNSELLOR KEREN LIGHTEN YOUR LOAD

Help! I can't stand the noise

Q We have lived in our house for over 40 years. The neighbourhood has changed, the houses are now expensive, and the types of people who live in the street are different. We have families with small children either side who are looked after by nannies, and they let them play noisily in the garden, kicking the fence and shouting. The noise can get impossible in the summer when they are outside more. I'm not sure what to say to the parents.

Philippa, London

A I understand it is annoying but, during the day, it is certainly all right for children to play outside in their garden, and kids have always been loud when they are having fun – I'm sure we all were at that age. I think you could raise it with the parents about them kicking the ball against your fence, and ask if they could have a goal over the other side of the garden to try to avoid encroaching on your shared property. Other than that, I think you just need to accept that this is how children are, with or without their parents being there.

I feel guilty for my blessings

Q I have a friend who's had a very difficult life. Things keep happening to her or her family that aren't hers or anyone else's fault. I have stopped talking about my life, which is going well at the moment, with her. She pointed this out to me the other day and said she felt that I was being distant. I didn't want to say I felt bad talking to her as she was having such a hard time.

Trish, Hertford

We disagree on spending

Q We are planning a once-in-a-lifetime trip next year. We're in our late 70s, so we'll probably not do this again. I want to do it comfortably, but my husband wants to do it cheaply. For example, he is happy for us to have nine-hour waits between flights as it reduces the cost, and I'd rather pay and only have to wait two hours. How do we reconcile this? At this point, I don't want to go away with him at all!

Tina, Lewes

A It is sometimes very hard to make decisions, even with our long-term partners, if our criteria and values are different. I suggest you each write a list of non-negotiables, as well as things you would like to have, and things you don't mind about. Once you



have your lists, you can agree to meet your husband's non-negotiables, as it's obviously important for him to have a good time. You can then negotiate the other columns so you both end up feeling you've been listened to, and you've arrived at an agreement that suits each of you.

Our relationship expert Keren Smedley has over 20 years' experience. Keren welcomes your letters, emails and texts, but she cannot reply to individual cases and will select correspondence at random for publication.

A It's understandable that you held back, as your life is going well and your friend's isn't. I know you didn't want to seem insensitive or make her pain worse. However, good friendships rely on honesty.

Explain that you didn't want to burden her with your good news while she's struggling. Tell her you care, and that you can see you made the wrong choice by not sharing. You can show empathy by acknowledging her difficulties while still sharing your experiences. Finding a balance where you are kind without overprotecting her may strengthen your friendship and remind her that life can improve.

Clashing views with my sister

Q My sister and I have such different memories of our childhood. Sometimes, I think I'm going mad

and I check it out with my cousins, who are similar ages and whom I was very close to while growing up. They always say I am remembering correctly. I don't know why it makes me so angry and hurt that my sister believes things were wonderful when they weren't.

Name and address withheld

A Nothing we see or remember is the absolute truth. It is *our* perception and interpretation, and it is *our* truth. This may not coincide with reality, or other people's recollections. People see the world through their own filters and then interpret it in their own way, so your sister believes that she is right because that's how she genuinely remembers things. And perhaps, if you were able to view a video of the past, maybe neither of you would have it 100% correct. If you can accept that she really does remember the past that way, whether she is right or wrong, I think you'll be less cross with her. Trying to prove her wrong means you will just get upset.



Multi lemon corkback place mats and coasters, £18 for set of four, Next



Emma Bridgewater oranges and lemons medium biscuit barrel, £15, kitchentins.com

Try the trend



Sunny STYLE

Embrace lemon yellows to recreate this Mediterranean look



Mediterranean floral ceramic oil pouter, £6, Primark



Lemon ceramic spaghetti jar, £39.50, Oliver Bonas



Green artificial orange tree in blue reactive ceramic pot, £34, Next



Lemon tin tray, £15, Talking Tables



Lemon ceramic pitcher jug, £19.99, Gisela Graham

3 OF THE BEST...

Wall art



Framed lemon print on blue Mediterranean tiles, from £49, Beach House Art



Limoni Di Sicilia beaded wall art, £35, Oliver Bonas



Framed Mediterranean garden graphic print, £59, Cult Furniture



Lemon stoneware salt and pepper shakers, £12, John Lewis



STYLE TIPS

1 ADD INSTANT CHEER Refresh a tired kitchen by painting the cabinets a mood-boosting shade of yellow. Keep the walls neutral, allowing the burst of colour to add warmth and personality without overwhelming the room.

2 PLAY WITH PATTERN This sunny look isn't just about the colour, it's about the prints too. Embrace la dolce vita with summery, Italian-inspired patterns – think citrus motifs and blue stripes.

3 SMALL BUYS, BIG IMPACT If you don't want to pick up a paintbrush, a few colourful appliances can be just as striking.

4 CREATE BALANCE When using three colours, like yellow, orange and blue, follow the colour rule of 60/30/10, where 60% of the room is decorated in the dominant colour (yellow), then 30% and 10% are given over to accent shades.

Lemon cushion, £15, tea towels, £3 each, striped oven glove, £5.50, bowls, £3 each, mugs, £5 each, chilli food cover, £7, lemon sign, £6, Sorrento place mats (hung on wall), £6 for four, lemon cutlery holder, £6, ceramic chilli bowl, £10, tins, from £6 each, olive tree in tin, £25, and vases, from £10 each, all Matalan; other items, stylist's own



Wide stripe honeydew ruffle cushion, £22, Walton & Co



Lemon enamel bowl, £15, Talking Tables



Printed ceramic mug, £3, Primark



Mediterranean floral side plate, £4, and dinner plate, £6, both Primark

Citrus double oven glove, £9.99, Homescapes Online



FLORAL *bakes*

Make a beautiful bunch of flower-inspired sweet treats



PER SERVING
694 cal, 45g fat, 23g sat fat, 59g carbs

Chocolate almond cake

Almonds add a nutty flavour and improve the texture of this easy cake.

SERVES 12 PREP 30 mins, plus chilling and cooling COOK 50 mins to 1 hr

FOR THE GANACHE

- * 400g milk chocolate, roughly chopped
- * 200ml double cream

FOR THE CAKE

- * 170g butter, softened
- * 225g caster sugar
- * 4 medium free-range eggs, separated
- * 170g dark chocolate, melted and cooled
- * 200g self-raising flour
- * 1tbsp cocoa powder
- * 170g ground almonds
- * 2tbsp almond liqueur, such as amaretto
- * Crystallised or edible flowers and icing sugar, to decorate

YOU WILL NEED

- * Deep 20cm round cake tin, greased and the base lined with baking paper

1 Warm the ganache ingredients in a pan over a low heat. Stir occasionally, until

melted and smooth. Pour on to a tray and chill for a few hours until firm.

2 Meanwhile, for the cake, heat the oven to 160C Fan/Gas 4. Use an electric mixer to cream the butter and sugar together until pale. Mix in the egg yolks and melted chocolate. Fold in the flour, cocoa, ground almonds and almond liqueur. Whip the egg whites to stiff peaks. Fold a quarter into the cake batter to loosen, then fold in the remainder.

3 Spoon the mixture into the tin and bake for 50 mins to 1 hr, until firm to the touch and an inserted skewer emerges clean. Cool for 5 mins, then turn out to cool completely on a wire rack.

4 Scrape the ganache into a mixing bowl and beat to thicken. Slice the cake in half horizontally, then sandwich back together with a little of the ganache. Spread the remainder over the top and sides. Decorate with flowers and dust with icing sugar.

Flower biscuits

These buttery biscuits with a sweet layer of icing are always a crowd-pleaser.

MAKES 30

PREP 45 mins, plus chilling and setting

COOK 15-17 mins

- * 125g unsalted butter, softened
- * 150g caster sugar
- * 1 medium free-range egg
- * ¼tsp vanilla extract
- * 250g plain flour, plus extra for dusting

FOR THE DECORATION

- * 500g coloured sugar paste or fondant icing
- * 500g royal icing sugar, plus extra for dusting
- * Food colourings
- * 1 tube of Smarties or other sweets

YOU WILL NEED

- * Flower biscuit cutters
- * Piping bags

1 Cream the butter, sugar and a pinch of salt together, until pale and fluffy. Beat

in the egg and vanilla extract, along with a spoonful of flour. Mix in the remaining flour to form a dough. Chill for 30 mins.

2 Heat the oven to 140C Fan/Gas 3.

Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface to a 4-5mm thickness, and stamp out flowers in an assortment of sizes using the cutters. Bake the biscuits for 15-17 mins on a lined baking sheet until the edges turn golden.

3 Meanwhile, knead the sugar paste or fondant icing, to soften. Roll out on a surface lightly dusted with icing sugar and stamp out shapes with the cutters to correspond with the biscuits. Press them on to the warm biscuits (see tip).

4 Make up and colour the royal icing. Pipe petal shapes on the biscuits and stick a sweet into the centre of each. Leave to set.

PER BISCUIT

214 cal, 5g fat, 3g sat fat, 42g carbs



COOK'S TIP

If you decorate the biscuits while warm, the sugar paste will stick, otherwise, use royal icing as 'glue'.

Lemon tray bake

A classic, no-fuss, all-in-one sponge with a zingy lemon icing.

SERVES 12 **PREP 25 mins, plus cooling**

COOK 35-40 mins

FOR THE CAKE

- * 225g baking spread (such as Stork), at room temperature
- * 225g caster sugar
- * 4 medium free-range eggs
- * 175g self-raising flour
- * 50g ground almonds
- * 2tsp baking powder

FOR THE ICING

- * 100g butter, at room temperature
- * 225g icing sugar, sifted
- * Finely grated zest and juice 1 lemon
- * A few drops of yellow food colouring (optional)
- * Icing flower cake decorations (or see tip)

YOU WILL NEED

- * 23x28cm cake tin, the base and sides lined with baking paper

1 Heat the oven to 160C Fan/Gas 4. Using an electric mixer, beat the cake ingredients together until soft and smooth.

2 Spoon the mixture into the cake tin and level the top. Bake for 35-40 mins, until well risen and the centre of the cake springs back when lightly pressed. Cool for 10 mins, then turn out and cool completely on a wire rack.

3 For the icing, beat the butter, icing sugar, and lemon zest and juice, with a few drops of yellow food colouring, if using, until the mixture is soft and smooth. Spread the icing over the top of the cake and decorate with icing flower cake decorations. Cut into evenly sized squares to serve.

PER SERVING
390 cal, 19g fat, 5.5g sat fat, 49g carbs

COOK'S TIP

If you enjoy cake decorating, make up extra icing and use shaped piping nozzles to hand-pipe flowers.



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The grand scheme of THINGS

After a past mistake, were Tess and Sonia back on track?



I think that's the spot we're looking for.' Sonia waved a finger ahead and to the right.

Tess was driving slowly. She was relying on Sonia for directions, and they'd had a few unplanned diversions over the last couple of days. Weary, she flicked the indicator, trusting her co-pilot, glad not to have to tackle another hairpin bend for now. The camper van bounced over rubble, stopping in the shade of a pine tree.

They were both hungry, tired and hot. It had taken days to get here. Home seemed a long way away.

Just a few weeks ago the two women had met again in a country pub after a gap of many years. The occasion was a celebration of life for Tess' late husband. Tess and Jon had been married for almost 30 years.

'Sonia, you came,' Tess said. 'It's good to see you.'

'I wasn't sure if, you know, I'm so sorry,' Sonia replied, twisting her maroon scarf around her hands. Otherwise she was top to toe in black. Tess' dress was sky blue. Jon's favourite colour.

'Look, up there!' he'd say in the garden on a summer's day, and Tess would search for what

he could see. A bird, maybe. 'The sky's so vast. We're so insignificant, aren't we?'

And she'd smile, hold his hand tight.

Breaking a moment of awkwardness, Tess pulled Sonia towards her, linking arms, as they had as girls.

'Come, I can take a few minutes out, the other guests will understand. Look, the garden's lovely. Though I think we should avoid climbing the trees.'

Back in the day, when they'd been inseparable, they'd race each other to the highest possible branch, feet dangling, giggling, sharing secrets.

Today, there was no racing.

'I truly am sorry,' Sonia said in the dappled shade of a willow. 'About Jon,' she

said. 'About everything.'

Tess was quiet. A peal of laughter reached them from the pub. Old friends sharing stories, no doubt.

Tess smiled. She was glad. Everyone was here to celebrate Jon's kindness, love of anything with moving parts, his sense of adventure...

For a few moments, the two women sat in silence on a bench.

'We made a mistake,' Sonia

finally said. 'Me and Jon, back then.'

'I know,' Tess said.

Many years ago Sonia had broken what Tess thought would now be called the 'girl code'. With Jon, her then boyfriend.

Tess didn't wish to dwell on the details, now, it was that long ago. It had taken time to rebuild trust with Jon. They had still married, but a few years later than planned. And Tess and Sonia had drifted apart, only seeing one another at the odd wedding of mutual friends.

And now, today...

'He'd bought a camper van,' Tess said. 'He always dreamt of buying one, remember?'

'I do,' Sonia replied. 'While we always longed to sit by a pool sipping pina colodas, Jon said his ideal holiday would be driving through the Sierra Nevada in Spain, where they filmed the spaghetti westerns. Though I don't remember a camper van in *A Fistful of Dollars*.'

They giggled.

'Neither happened, did it?' Tess said. 'Jon was always planning the next adventure. I loved that about him. He was such a dreamer.'

'You and I had a few of our own as well,' Sonia said. 'Earlier. Remember?'

Memories could be so hazy, Tess thought. So hard

to grasp hold of.

'There was the time we bunked off school,' Sonia continued. 'We got the bus to the seaside.'

That day came into sharp focus for Tess. There was sand stuck to their seaside rock, sand everywhere. The sky intensely blue. They both got sunburnt. They had run to catch the bus home before their parents got in from work.

Yes, they'd had adventures back then. Maybe not their last?

Now, Sonia looked out across the view... 'It's so beautiful, isn't it?' she said, shading her eyes from the sun as it began to set.

Tess nodded. 'No cowboys in sight,' she sighed, eventually. 'But, we made it. To the Sierra Nevada. In the camper van. Can you believe it?'

'Do you know what?' Sonia replied, 'I can. I see more adventures in our future too.'

Tess smiled, happy she had suggested this jaunt, knowing that her husband would have been as well.

'To Jon,' they said, holding up cans of alcohol-free pina colada.

Jon was right, Tess thought. In the grand scheme of things we were insignificant, but to each other, when there was history, love and understanding, we were everything.

THE END

Fran Tracey

Picturesque
Weymouth
Harbour



A Dorset DELIGHT

Known for its Jurassic Coast location and golden beach, Weymouth has something for all budgets

Weymouth offers a nostalgic step back in time for those in search of no-frills, bucket-and-spade seaside holidays. You can sit on a deckchair, ice cream in hand, or check out the colourful Georgian townhouses at the end of the Esplanade. But it's not just the crescent-shaped, golden, three-mile

beach and sheltered waters that bring people here. A stone's throw away is the thriving, historic harbour. It might appear quaint, with its cobbled lanes and charming, narrow, wharfside buildings, but it's also home to some of Dorset's best pubs and fine-dining restaurants.

Rock stars

Since its Victorian heyday, Weymouth has remained something of a coastal rock star. Its famously durable and beautiful off-white Portland Stone is quarried on the nearby Isle of Portland. Neighbouring Chesil Beach, an 18-mile stretch of shingle – made famous by Ian McEwan's 2007 novel *On Chesil Beach* and its 2017 film version – is a place to look for ammonites and other fossils.

And of course, you can relive childhood summers with another kind of rock: a

fiendishly crunchy, fluorescent pink stick of rock candy. Meanwhile, tribute bands (if not the actual rock stars themselves) regularly appear here, with a lively music-and-entertainment programme at Weymouth Pavilion.

Rich history

When it comes to literary history, fans of Thomas Hardy will also know Weymouth as 'Budmouth', a coastal town in the fictionalised county of Wessex, where leisure and business are hotly pursued. (It's where the morally bankrupt Sergeant Troy fritters away the family funds in *Far From the Madding Crowd*.) Of course, you don't need to break the bank with a visit here, as so many of Weymouth's attractions are free, from swimming in the safe and shallow waters of the bay to walking in nature with views over the English Channel.



The
Jubilee
Clock
Tower

Walks amid wildflowers

The two-mile Rodwell Trail will take you from Weymouth to Portland, following a former railway track over an accessible, even-surfaced pathway through a corridor of foxgloves, butterflies and bluebells. This signposted route passes the ruins of Sandsfoot Castle, built in 1539 on the orders of Henry VIII. This can be extended into a longer route via the Wild About Weymouth and Portland Legacy Trail. The Wild Chesil Centre has information on local walks and wildlife, as well as the Pebble Pig cafe, where you can take a break. The famous South West Coast Path winds behind the Fleet nature reserve and lagoon.



Portland Bill
Lighthouse

WORDS: NORI JEMIL; PHOTOS: GETTY; DETAILS CORRECT AT TIME OF WRITING



Get down to the beautiful beach



Historic Sandsfoot

On to the water

If you have time, head out on a scenic boat trip from Weymouth Harbour to see attractions such as Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door. A pelagic wildlife day out, the small-boat cruises offered by Naturetrek (naturetrek.co.uk) head offshore from Portland Marina into Lyme Bay. With marine wildlife specialist Tom Brereton as guide, you'll be on the lookout for Manx and Mediterranean shearwaters, kittiwakes and storm petrels. On the way, you'll pass Portland Bill and see the glory of Portland's stone, quarried here for 1,000 years (it was introduced to London by the architect Inigo Jones, helping to rebuild the city after the Great Fire of 1666).

Out in these rich waters, you might be lucky enough to spot Atlantic bluefin tuna breaking the silvery surface, as well as dolphins and harbour porpoises.

Ultra-fresh seafood

Head to the brightly painted Jubilee Clock Tower on the Esplanade. Built to mark 50 years of the reign of Queen Victoria in 1887, it's a good spot to grab fish and chips, and watch the sunset. Nearby, King Edwards is one of the best of many fabulous fish and chip shops in Weymouth. It has a large dining room if you'd prefer to eat inside, with an extensive menu of great-value fish suppers. If you've energy enough to walk around the headland to the lighthouse at Portland Bill, a crab sandwich at the Lobster Pot is recommended (thelobsterpotportland.co.uk). Meanwhile, the Old Fish Market's Catch (catchattheoldfishmarket.com) not only delivers on taste, with a well-deserved listing in the Michelin Guide, but its seasonal, locally sourced menu has earned it a top global sustainability rating in 2026.

BOOK IT

St John's Guest House (stjohnsguesthouse.co.uk), a boutique B&B on the Esplanade, has gorgeously appointed double rooms from £120, including breakfast. For unfettered sea views, Georgian townhouse and AA five-star Gloucester House (gloucesterhouseweymouth.co.uk) has doubles from £130, including breakfast.

Tips,
tricks
& buys

GARDEN notes

Strawberries and hardy shrubs

MINI BERRY BITES

With the risk of frost receding, it's time to plant out alpine strawberries (*Fragaria vesca*). Small and intensely flavoured, these dinky edibles look fabulous edging a sunny path or spilling from a pot. Unlike wild strawberries, they form neat, non-invasive mounds. Heirloom varieties 'Alexandria' and 'Baron von Solemacher' (H25-30cm) are ever-bearing and will provide handfuls of fruits from June to September.



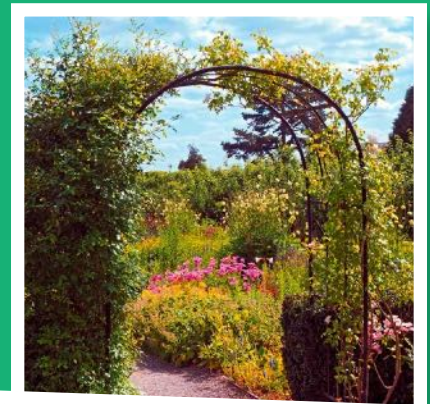
GROUND FORCE

Steal a march on weeds by planting ground-cover perennials. These useful low growers have dense canopies that rob weeds of light and nutrients, while forming a carpet of foliage and flowers. Tiarella (foam flower) is a top choice for a shady border and, come May and June, will be smothered in floral spires. Try 'Sugar and Spice' (H40cm) for striking leaves and blush white blooms.

GARDEN TO VISIT NOW

Famed as Capability Brown's final landscape, Berrington Hall, in Hertfordshire, has opened a brand-new flower garden, complete with on-trend wisteria umbrellas.

★ nationaltrust.org.uk



3 OF THE BEST...

Shrubs for heavy clay



STAR MAGNOLIA

A bushy shrub or small tree with silky buds that unfurl in spring to lightly scented blooms. H3m.



ORNAMENTAL QUINCE

This reliable performer has rose-like blooms. 'Nicoline' stands out with scarlet flowers. H1m.



SPIRAEA 'SNOWMOUND'

The arching stems of this deciduous shrub have clusters of flowers in midsummer. H2.5m.

Have a go at...

MOSAIC

Becky Paton shares her step-by-step guide to create a bold cheese plant decoration

**TESTED
BY US**
so they work
for you



★★★
Difficulty
level

YOU WILL NEED

- * **A wooden base** (I've chosen a leaf but hobby shops these days have many designs to choose from)
- * **A box of scrap tesserae in your chosen colour**
- * **A few embellishments to add to the scraps, such as glass nuggets, millefiori, glass shapes, recycled objects, mirrors**
- * **Wood glue**
- * **Wheeled nippers**
- * **Off-white jasmine grout**
- * **Mixing container and utensil**
- * **Newspaper**
- * **Rubber gloves**
- * **Cloths**
- * **Ribbon**

TIP

If this is your first mosaic and you have no 'scraps', buy small amounts of various glass shapes from online mosaic stockists (I use Hobby Island Mosaics). Many of these are small and smooth-edged, which require no tools for cutting and they fit together beautifully.



2

5

1 Gather and add any chosen embellishments to your 'bits box' of green. The more diverse the mix, the more eye-catching your mosaic will be.

2 If you have any larger shards, cut them down into smaller, workable pieces and add to your mix.

3 Apply your glue to small areas at a time, just enough for the tiles to embed but not so much that it rises above the top of the tiles.

4 Carefully gather a small handful of tiles and randomly place them in the glue, ensuring that you leave little gaps around each piece for the grout to go in later. Continue until you have covered the whole of your base.

5 Mix the grout to a firm consistency (think butter icing) and with gloved hands, gently rub it on top of the mosaic, pressing it into the gaps.

6 Leave it to settle for around 5 to 10 minutes, then start removing the surplus grout with a dry cloth, switching to a lightly damp cloth as the grout starts

drying. If you have height differences in the tiles, an old toothbrush is ideal for brushing excess grout out of crevices when the mosaic is almost dry. When each tile is exposed and all excess grout has been removed, leave to dry completely. When dry, buff up with a damp cloth to remove any residue grout dust.

7 If the base is designed to be hung, make sure you clean

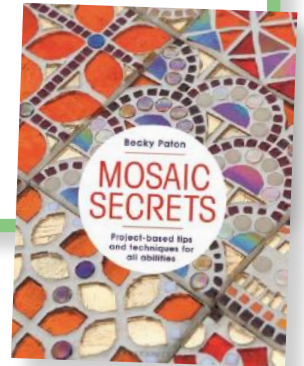
out the hole for the ribbon; this is easily missed. A cocktail stick will remove the excess grout perfectly.

8 When cleaned and dry, add your ribbon and proudly hang your 'odds and ends' mosaic in your home or garden. If outside, do be sure to varnish the back and bring it inside during bad weather, as the base probably won't be exterior grade.

MOSAIC MATERIALS

As amazing as it is to work on a mosaic project, you are always left with scrap pieces of glass or ceramic that are too good (and expensive) to be thrown away but not enough to use by themselves on a future project. The best way to tackle this problem is to create a 'bits box'.

These can be colour coordinated – greens in one container, reds in another – adding scraps as you go. The collections will eventually build up into a substantial amount of tesserae and can be used for a project in their own right.



* Taken from *Mosaic Secrets* by Becky Paton (£20, PB, Herbert Press).

4

6

BRIEF *encounter*

Isla's marriage to Tom was in a rut –
until she met a charming stranger

Barcelona?' Isla put down her coffee cup. 'But that's a city of culture, hardly the first choice for a stag do, is it?'

Her husband Tom shrugged. 'Not my choice, sweetheart. The best man's idea.'

Isla bit her lip. If it had been anywhere except Barcelona – the place where she and Tom had spent their honeymoon – she wouldn't have minded.

But she did mind. And the fact that Tom seemed unaware of its significance made things worse.

'It's just a long weekend,' he said.

Isla let the matter drop. Was she being unfair? After all, they'd both been working so hard, saving up for a house, and even though the groom wasn't really a close friend, who wouldn't be up for a weekend away?

But niggling at the back of her mind was the bigger worry that she and Tom were growing apart. Their lives seemed to have morphed into a succession of 'Must dash', 'Might be late' and 'Don't wait up'.

She called her friend, Trish. 'D'you think we might be going through the seven-year itch?' she asked.

Trish laughed. 'You've only been together for four. Look, instead of brooding, how about treating yourself to something special while Tom's away?'

'You mean a pamper day or a new haircut?'

'I was thinking of something more active like a weekend workshop in – I don't know – something creative.'

That wasn't a bad idea. That evening, while Tom was on a conference call, she researched weekend courses online. There was certainly plenty of choice – palmistry, tarot reading, Celtic woodturning...

But when she came across an option called Fiction Writing for Beginners, she knew she'd found her niche.

'The setting looks idyllic,' she told Trish. 'It's a small fishing village called Merlin Bay, and the venue is a whitewashed cottage with a thatched roof overlooking the harbour.'

Isla didn't tell Tom what she was planning, and he didn't ask. He was too preoccupied as usual.

'Gracias,' he said, when Isla reminded him to take his passport. And he kissed her goodbye.

Merlin Bay was even more beautiful than it looked in the photos. When Isla arrived, a fresh breeze was blowing off the sea, a mixture of salt, seaweed and the faintest whiff of strawberry lolly. She breathed deeply and wheeled her overnight bag up the pretty

brick path to Bluebell Cottage.

Inside, the other participants were helping themselves to pieces of lemon drizzle cake. They smiled at Isla, then went back to their conversations.

'Welcome!' Marcia, the tutor, clapped her hands. 'There's just one more to arrive, but he's a local doctor, so don't hold your breath.' She laughed.

Isla settled into an empty seat, just as a tall, dark-haired man rushed through the door.

'Ah, Ethan, glad you remembered us,' Marcia said.

'Sorry I'm late.' Ethan flashed an apologetic grin. 'Had a last-minute emergency.' Glancing around, he flopped into the seat next to Isla.

'Have I missed much?' he whispered.

'Just cake,' Isla whispered back, then flushed as Marcia swivelled towards her.

'Thank you, Isla. That lemon drizzle cake makes a neat introduction to our first topic, which is about using the five senses.'

Marcia continued. 'I'd like you to imagine cutting a fresh lemon and popping a slice into your mouth. You bite into it. Can anyone feel their mouth beginning to water?'

Isla could, and there were exclamations of surprise from other participants.

Marcia looked pleased. 'Isn't



that amazing? You just imagined that lemon, yet your salivary glands reacted as if it were real.'

Someone raised a hand. 'So, do we have to put lemons into all our stories?'

Marcia laughed. 'No, obviously taste is just one of the five senses, and they all help to create an illusion of reality. Now, pair up, go outside, and make a list of things you can hear.'

Isla usually hated that sort of task, but Ethan was already turning to her and saying, 'Shall we?' And when she hesitated, he grinned and said, 'I'm sure it won't hurt.'

Ethan was right. The listening task was fun, and Isla began to enjoy herself.

'Fancy an ice cream?' Ethan asked, after they'd logged the screech of seagulls, the swish of waves on pebbles, and a golden retriever barking at a labradoodle. 'Mine's mint choc chip. What's yours?'

Isla chose vanilla, and they sat on a bench beside some steps leading down to the beach.

'I love it when it's quiet like this,' Ethan said. 'After a long shift, I often go for a stroll along the shore, just to wind down.'

'Marcia said you're a doctor,



attendees, including Ethan, had left for home, and dinner was over, Marcia drew Isla aside.

'Don't take this the wrong way,' she began. 'But you seem to be monopolising Ethan.'

Monopolising? Isla bridled. 'We're working on the exercises together, if that's what you mean. What's the problem?'

'The problem is that Ethan has recently gone through a messy break-up. I invited him here to take him out of himself.'

'Well, he seems to be doing just that, and he's a grown man, so...'

Marcia's smile had a sad edge. 'Yes, but he's also vulnerable, and I don't want him getting hurt. You're not local, you see, and you're married, so there'd be no future in it.'

'Are you asking me to leave?'

'Of course not.'

But perhaps you could try to mix a little more.'

That night in bed, Isla tried to process her thoughts. Was there an element of truth in Marcia's

accusation? Were she and Ethan getting too close?

The following morning, she deliberately arrived late, to allow Ethan to choose a different partner. But when she entered the room, Ethan waved at her, pointing to the adjacent empty seat.

'Are you OK?' he said.

'Yes,' she smiled. 'Couldn't find my pen.'

After lunch, before the packing-up session, Ethan suggested they sit outside again with their coffee, to make the most of the sunshine. There were few people about, just a child on roller skates with a young woman on her mobile.

'You know,' Ethan said, 'I

could have sworn you were doing your best to avoid me this morning. Have I said something to offend you?'

'No, of course not,' Isla replied quickly.

'But there *is* something?' His gaze was fixed on her face.

Isla sighed. 'It's just that Marcia said I was – what was the word? – monopolising you, so I thought I'd leave you free to choose someone else.'

To her surprise, he began to laugh. 'Oh, I should have guessed. Marcia means well, but she does rather fancy herself as my personal matchmaker. She probably thought that you being married meant you weren't suitable?'

'Something like that, yes.'

'Well, that figures. Isla, for what it's worth, this weekend has been perfect. I've really enjoyed your company and your being married was a key factor.'

Isla was surprised. 'How so?'

'Because whatever Marcia thinks, I'm not ready for another relationship yet.'

I came here to relax, without any pressure. I noticed your wedding ring and thought that was probably true for you too?'

Before Isla had a chance to respond, there was a shriek of 'Poppy!' from the young woman, and they turned just in time to see the skating child topple down the steps that led to the beach. Ethan jumped to his feet and ran towards them, with Isla close behind.

'I just looked away for a moment!' the woman was saying. 'I need to call 999.'

Isla touched her arm. 'He's a doctor,' she said. 'He'll know what to do.'

And Ethan did. He came back up the steps, carrying a whimpering Poppy in his arms.

'I don't think anything's broken, but I'd like an X-ray to be sure,' he said. 'We can take her to hospital in my car. It's

just around the corner.'

Isla held back as the little trio headed off. She watched them go with a strange mixture of feelings. She'd been hoping to say a proper goodbye to Ethan, but maybe there was no need. The time they'd spent together was already perfect, in a way that only brief encounters can be.

On the journey home, Isla had time to think. She'd found the weekend inspiring, but there was something else too. Chatting to Ethan had fostered the kind of companionable closeness that was in danger of disappearing from her life with Tom. Well, that would have to change.

To her surprise, Tom's car was outside when she arrived home. He was in the kitchen, making a toasted cheese sandwich.

'I decided to come back early,' he said, and immediately Isla sensed something different about him.

'What's the matter?' she said with a flicker of alarm. 'Did something happen in Barcelona?'

'Yes.' He put down the sandwich. 'Last night, the lads and I were in this bar, having a laugh as we always do. But across the square there was this little tapas bar, and I could see a couple, holding hands...'

He came over to her then and took her in his arms. 'It reminded me of our honeymoon, and the places we'd gone and... I just knew I wanted to be there with you again.'

Isla swallowed hard. This was the old Tom, the one she'd fallen in love with. She breathed in the scent of him as if it were oxygen.

'So,' Tom said. 'I thought that maybe next weekend we could go there together. If you'd like to, that is?'

Isla's heart swelled with love. 'I would,' she said. 'I'd like that very much.'

THE END

Margret Geraghty

is that right?' Isla asked.

'Yep, paediatrician at the county hospital. It's a bit of a drive, but I prefer to live here.'

Isla saw him glance at her ring finger.

'Do you have children, Isla?'

'Er, not yet.' She sighed inwardly. She'd always wanted children, and she'd thought Tom felt the same. Now, she wasn't so sure.

She checked Ethan's finger. No ring. But of course that meant nothing. She changed the subject. 'What made you decide to enrol on this course?'

'Marcia's husband is a colleague, and I happened to mention I fancied writing a novel. How about you? Uh-oh, there's Marcia ringing her bell. Better head back.'

The rest of the day passed pleasantly, with Isla and Ethan working together on exercises in plotting and characterisation. Marcia tried to get everyone to swap partners, but Ethan said he was fine where he was, and that suited Isla. Not only was he easy company but he was a good listener too, and she suddenly realised what a novelty that was.

That evening, after the local

I noticed your wedding ring'

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Mia the MOUSE

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★ ★ ★
Difficulty
level

MEASUREMENTS

Height 25cm/10in.

MATERIALS

1 x 100g (120m) ball of King Cole Yummy (100% polyester) in each of Grey (Icicle 3479), Light Pink (Sugar Pink 3463), Dark Pink (Disco Pink 4740) and Yellow (Buttercup 5786)*. Size 6mm crochet hook; toy stuffing; pair of 12mm safety eyes. Yarn is available from theknittingnetwork.co.uk.

ABBREVIATIONS

Ch, chain; dc, double

crochet; **dc2tog**, double crochet 2 sts together (to decrease 1 st) thus: [insert hook into next st, yrh and pull loop through] twice, yrh and pull through all 3 loops; **slst**, slip st; **st(s)**, stitch(es); **tr**, treble crochet; **yrh**, yarn round hook.

NOTES

Yarn amounts are based on average requirements and are approximate. Figures in square brackets are worked as stated after 2nd bracket.

HEAD

1st round: Wind Grey around index finger of left hand to form slip ring, insert hook in ring, yrh and pull loop through, 1ch (does not count as a st), work 6dc into ring, pull end of yarn tightly to close ring – 6 sts.

2nd round: 1dc in each st to end.

3rd round: 2dc in each st to end – 12 sts.

4th round: 1dc in each st to end.

5th round: [1dc in next st, 2dc in next st] 6 times – 18 sts.

6th round: 1dc in each st to end.

7th round: [1dc in next 2 sts, 2dc in next st] 6 times – 24 sts.

Insert safety eyes between 6th and 7th rounds, 8 sts apart. Stuff as you go.

8th to 11th rounds: 1dc in each st to end.

12th round: [1dc in next 2 sts, dc2tog] 6 times – 18 sts.

13th round: [1dc in next st, dc2tog] 6 times – 12 sts.

14th round: [Dc2tog] 6 times – 6 sts.

Fasten off and sew closed, leaving a long tail.

BODY

1st round: Work as for Head – 6 sts.

2nd round: 2dc in each st to end – 12 sts.

3rd round: [1dc in next st, 2dc in next st] 6 times – 18 sts.

4th round: [1dc in next 2 sts, 2dc in next st] 6 times – 24 sts.

5th round: [1dc in next 3 sts, 2dc in next st] 6 times – 30 sts.

6th to 13th rounds: 1dc in each st to end.

14th round: [1dc in next 3 sts, dc2tog] 6 times – 24 sts.

15th round: [1dc in next 2 sts, dc2tog] 6 times – 18 sts.

Stuff as you go.

16th round: [1dc in next st, dc2tog] 6 times – 12 sts.

17th round: [Dc2tog] 6 times – 6 sts.

Fasten off and sew closed.

INNER EARS (MAKE 2)

1st round: Wind Light Pink around index finger of left hand to form slip ring, insert hook in ring, yrh and pull loop through, 1ch (does not count as a st), work 6dc into ring, pull end of yarn tightly to close ring – 6 sts.

2nd round: 2dc in each st to end – 12 sts.

3rd round: [1dc in next st, 2dc in next st] 6 times – 18 sts.

Fasten off, leaving a long tail.

OUTER EARS (MAKE 2)

1st to 3rd rounds: Work as for Body – 18 sts.

Place a pair of Inner and Outer Ears with wrong sides together, working through 3rd round of Inner Ear to join thus:

4th round: [1dc in next 2 sts, 2dc in next st] 6 times – 24 sts. Fasten off, leaving a long tail.

ARMS (MAKE 2)

1st round: Work as for Head – 6 sts.

2nd round: [1dc in next st, 2dc in next st] 3 times – 9 sts.

3rd round: [1dc in next st, dc2tog] 3 times – 6 sts.

4th to 10th rounds: 1dc in each st to end. Lightly stuff. Fasten off, leaving a long tail.

LEGS (MAKE 2)

1st round: Work as for Head – 6 sts.

2nd round: 2dc in each st to end – 12 sts.

3rd round: 1dc in each st to end.

4th round: [1dc in next 2 sts, dc2tog] 3 times – 9 sts.

5th to 7th rounds: 1dc in each st to end.

Stuff. Fasten off, leaving a long tail.

TAIL

With Light Pink, make 16 ch.

1st row: Slst in 2nd ch from

hook, slst in next 14 ch – 15 sts. Fasten off leaving a long tail.

BOW

1st round: Wind Yellow around index finger of left hand to form slip ring, insert hook in ring, yrh and pull loop through, [2ch, 2tr, 2ch, slst] twice into ring. Fasten off leaving a long tail.

SCARF

With Dark Pink, make 40 ch.

1st row: 1dc in 2nd ch from hook, 1dc in each ch to end – 39 sts.

Fasten off and sew in ends.

TO MAKE UP

Embroider a simple nose in Light Pink by stitching from the middle of the magic ring to between 1st and 2nd rounds. Slightly fold bottom of each ear to create shape before sewing to Head, using photos as a guide for position. Sew Head to Body. Use yarn tails to sew Arms to each side of Body and Legs to base. Sew Tail to back of Body at base. Wrap yarn tail around middle of Bow six times and sew in place. Use remaining yarn tail to sew Bow in front of one ear. Tie Scarf once around neck.



Pattern from *Chunky Amigurumi Crochet* by Natalie Beard, published by CICO Books (£14.99). Photo: Geoff Dann

* If you have any queries about this pattern, please contact knitting and crochet editor Sarah at sarah.neal@futurenet.com



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Her friend was in terrible trouble, but what could Carol do to help?

THE STORY SO FAR

Carol Lyons runs a vintage clothes shop in a large English town. Her busy life only has room for her mother, June, who raised her as a single mum. Then, out of the blue, Carol receives a letter from old friend Sadie Bishop, who she hasn't seen in years. Sadie, who now lives on the Caribbean island of St Adina with husband Brad, has been accused of murdering her housekeeper, Isobel. In the letter, Sadie protests her innocence and begs for Carol's help. Shocked, Carol knows that Sadie must be desperate, as she's also sent a necklace with a magpie charm. This is a reminder that the two women lost touch due to the terrible secret they share – the truth of what happened to Sadie's late father, Mike. Overwhelmed with anxiety for her friend, Carol decides to fly to Sadie's side.

Stepping off the plane in St Adina, the heat was so thick it seemed to coat Carol like a warm syrup.

She blinked in sunlight as she entered the tiny arrivals terminal. Her connecting flight from Grenada had been a 20-seater plane, and she'd felt every bump in the azure sky.

Outside the airport, she hailed a taxi. 'The Palm Frond Resort, please.'

The driver took her case. 'On holiday?' he smiled.

'Sort of,' she replied, reluctant to elaborate. She knew from her online browsing that the recent murder of Isobel Planter had cast a shadow over the island, and provoked impassioned debate as to Sadie's innocence or guilt.

Sadie's lawyer on St Adina, Rachel Costello, was aware of Carol's arrival and had forwarded her phone number, asking Carol to get in touch as soon as she'd booked into the hotel and rested.

On the taxi journey, she saw the island's beauty was breathtaking. They passed a harbour full of boats with bobbing hulls in bright colours. Then weatherboarded houses



in ice-cream pastels, shaded by palm trees.

Having devoted herself to setting up her business, Carol wasn't widely travelled. But it was difficult to imagine anything terrible happening here – let alone a murder.

Arriving at the hotel reception, she was greeted by a smiling woman on the desk. 'Welcome,

Miss Lyons. Good timing! It's not hurricane season for a while yet.'

Carol nodded, wishing she was

like any other tourist. She knew from her guidebook that St Adina, while generally humid, was also prone to short cloudbursts. But in her haste to visit Sadie, she'd never considered hurricane season.

'You've also come just before the rush we're expecting for the murder trial,' the receptionist added. 'You've heard about that? The press will book up every hotel, once the trial starts in a few weeks.'

Carol took her key card and

hurried to her room, hot and sticky for more than one reason.

She texted Rachel to say she'd arrived and was ready to meet Sadie as soon as possible.

Prison visiting time is 9am tomorrow, Rachel texted back. I'll meet you outside, so I can sign you in. I'll have an official visiting order for you by then.

Reading this text made it all so real – Sadie was on remand in prison!

To calm herself, Carol walked to a nearby beach and watched a sunset of incredible colours. But the holidaymakers around her only made her more aware of her heart-rending mission.

Returning to her room, she sipped a glass of wine on the balcony, overlooking the swaying palms the hotel was named after. And suddenly, all she could think of was the secret that bound her to Sadie – the secret of another tragedy. The death of Sadie's father.

Mike Bishop had been a successful businessman – or so everyone had thought.

She was on remand in prison!



By the time the truth emerged, Carol and Sadie were both 13 and at secondary school in the Kent coastal town of Hawkestone.

It was how the truth emerged that would have a profound effect on their friendship.

One evening in early July, before school broke up for the summer, Sadie had arranged to cycle home and change out of her uniform, then meet Carol back in town.

Sadie and her parents lived in a big house at the top of a winding cliff path.

Carol and her mum June lived closer to town. They'd settled in Hawkestone a few years earlier.

Carol was shy around Sadie's parents, although Sadie's mum Kaye was perfectly nice. It was her dad Mike that Carol had never warmed to. She'd been introduced to him at the school gates and received a curt nod. Plus, Sadie had hinted once that he had a short fuse and could be hard on her. Quickly, she'd added, 'Only because he wants the best for me.'

Then she admitted that he pored over her school report every term and exacted penalties for less-than-perfect marks in all subjects.

'What sort of penalties?' Carol had wondered.

Sadie had grown embarrassed. 'Oh, you know, taking the telly out of my room for a few weeks. Nothing awful.'

Carol had wondered if Sadie's dad might be a bully. But with June a single mum, fathers in general were a mystery to Carol. Her own father had quit the scene before she was born. Even today, as an adult, she had no interest in discovering who he was.

A travelling salesman was all June would ever say.

Carol had never wanted to pry further in case it embarrassed her mum to admit that was all she knew of him.

In Hawkestone all those years ago, June ran the local penny arcade, sometimes letting the girls have free goes on the machines. That fateful evening, Carol had cycled from school to

the arcade, planning to wait for Sadie's arrival.

Then she'd made a decision. She would cycle up to the cliffs and meet Sadie cycling down.

Near the steepest section of the quiet cliff path, Carol had dismounted, pushing her bike the rest of the way. Hearing voices, she paused, dipping down behind a bush.

Ahead, she saw Mike looming over his daughter – shouting – poor Sadie in tears beside her own bicycle. Sadie was still in her school uniform, so hadn't yet been home.

It seemed her dad was yelling because Sadie had ripped her school blazer. Carol recalled it happening accidentally that day in the playground.

'Think we're made of money?' Mike had shouted. 'All we do for you and you take it for granted. I won't have it. I...'

Fired by the urge to defend her friend, and explain about the playground accident, Carol ran

forward. In the same instance, Mike seized the sleeve of Sadie's blazer.

Carol pushed him away from her. It wasn't a hard push, but Mike lost his balance, groping for the low railing behind him. He misjudged his reach and, as the girls looked on in horror, he fell over the railing – and over the cliff itself.

On the hotel balcony, Carol shut her eyes at the memory.

Mike could still have been saved if he hadn't tried to save himself.

As both girls rushed to look over the cliff, they saw him clinging to an outcrop of rock, the sea churning far below, his feet on a narrow ledge.

'We'll pull you up, Dad!' Sadie had cried. 'We can do it together. Give us your hand.'

'Or – we can run and get help!' Carol gasped.

Mike had looked down. 'Ledge won't hold me long,' he shouted, then slapped away

Sadie's extended hand. 'You and your friend have done enough! Wait till I get back up there! I know there are footholds... did an abseiling course up here a while back and there were niches...'

Panting, he had edged sideways, pebbles skittering. 'If I can just...'

Suddenly, the ledge had given way. With a yell, Mike fell back, vanishing from view.

Both girls had stood there, gaping in silent horror as the wind whistled round the cliffs.

'I've killed him, Sadie!' Carol yelled. 'I've killed your dad!'

Sadie had turned to her, reaching shakily for her hand. 'It was an accident! You didn't mean it.'

They'd clung to each other for what seemed an age, shaking.

'As long as we stand by each other, it'll be all right,' Sadie

finally whispered. Then, with a desperate light in her eye... 'Perhaps

– we should say nothing. About

ever seeing him here, I mean.'

Carol gazed into her friend's face, numbed by what had happened, but equally desperate to escape its consequences.

Slowly, she'd nodded.

So, in the end, they never told anyone what had taken place that day.

It turned out Sadie had known that her dad was secretly bankrupt. The police concluded that Mike Bishop had either 'vanished' on purpose because of his financial situation or taken his own life. His body was never found.

Sadie's mother Kaye sold their large clifftop home and they moved into a flat near the harbour.

Gradually, Carol realised that Mike's death was a kind of release for both Sadie and Kaye, though they would never admit it. He *had* been a bully.

And there was another truth

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

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And there was another truth

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

in play. Sadie had shown a fierce loyalty to her best friend. Yet that truth was corrosive. Sadie and Carol could no longer look each other in the eye. And when Sadie left school (as soon as she could), she left Hawkestone soon after.

In time, Carol left the town herself. But could anyone ever truly leave such a dreadful past behind?

The prison on St Adina was far from the hotels and beach umbrellas. Carol met Rachel Costello outside. She was an impressive young woman with a firm handshake.

She led the way into the prison, telling Carol that she was to see Sadie alone. 'I'll wait in the car park,' Rachel told her. 'Then I'll drive you back to your hotel afterwards.'

Carol's heart was in her mouth as she entered a small room. Thank goodness it was a private one. Sitting at a metal desk, wearing a grey jumpsuit, was Sadie.

Watched by a prison guard, the two women embraced in silence.

Carol swallowed her rolling emotions as she felt Sadie's bird-like slimness.

'Thanks for coming,' murmured Sadie.

Carol gazed into her friend's blue eyes. 'I've met Rachel. She seems on the ball.'

Sadie nodded, gesturing Carol into a facing metal chair.

Then, in a low voice, she laid out the case against her. Carol already knew the outline but now she heard the awful details.

'Brad and I have a beachfront house,' began Sadie. 'Isobel, a local woman, cleaned for us three mornings a week. Meanwhile, I followed a routine of my own each morning.' She hesitated. 'Perhaps you don't know this – I'm not sure if it was in all the press reports – but I had a moped accident last year. I suffered a head injury that left me with headaches and occasional mood swings.'

'Oh, Sadie...' Carol began.

Sadie waved away her concern. 'On my doctor's advice, I've followed the same routine since I got out of hospital. Every morning, once Brad leaves for his office a few miles away, I go for a swim from the beach near our house, then dry myself off by walking to a nearby cafe for a coffee. I don't carry anything with me, but I have a tab at the cafe. Then I walk home. I never even lock the house. I leave the front door off the latch for my return, or for Isobel to get in without using her key, if it's one of her mornings.'

She frowned. 'Look at me, using the present tense! Anyway, on this particular morning, I knew Isobel would be there when I got back. As usual, I climbed the steps to the house from the beach.' She bit her lip. 'As soon as I went through the gate at the top, I saw Isobel lying next to the pool. I ran over, but it was no use. She was dead.'

Carol hardly dared to breathe. 'And the police believe she fell from the wraparound balcony above?' she said.

Sadie nodded miserably. 'I rang for an ambulance just in case she could still be saved, then I rang the police.'

This is where things get tricky for me, Carol. Like I said, I get mood swings sometimes with my headaches. A couple of days before Isobel died, I'd had a row with her that ended in a scuffle. I accused her of stealing cash from my handbag while I was out on my walk. Isobel denied it. Brad happened to be there that morning and saw everything. He urged me to give Isobel the benefit of the doubt, which I did. She agreed to stay on with us, and I agreed to say no more about it. But after Isobel's death, when the police questioned Brad, he had no choice but to tell the police about the row.'

She winced, rubbing her temples. 'The police went to Isobel's house and found the cash, along with a few pieces of my jewellery I'd yet to discover gone. When I checked over my place, I also discovered that my expensive new camera was missing, though the police haven't recovered that yet. There were no photos in it. I hadn't got around to using it. So you see,' she concluded despondently, 'I had means, motive and opportunity. The police think I returned from my walk, found Isobel going through my bag again, and snapped. They believe we had another scuffle and, this time, I pushed her off the balcony.'

'That's ridiculous, Sadie! What about witnesses who saw you walking back from the cafe?'

'Whoever did kill Isobel must have done it just before I got back,' said Sadie. 'So when it comes to timing, it could have been me.'

A chill stole over Carol. 'The killer knew your routine and framed you!'

She met Sadie's eye again, but this time, she looked away. 'Go on, say it,' urged Sadie. 'You think it could be Brad. But he's been

a tower of strength since my accident. Plus, his colleagues saw him at his office that morning, at the same time Isobel was seen walking to our house. He's in the clear.'

'OK,' nodded Carol. 'But what can I do, Sadie? Just say the word. Although what use I can be...'

'Carol.' Sadie seized her wrists. 'You're an outsider. Ask questions, make observations on my behalf. I think it was a burglary gone wrong. I'd left the front door off the latch, remember? So in a way, it was my fault poor Izzy was killed.'

'Don't say that, Sadie!'

'I feel guilty about her death



anyway, because of our earlier scuffle. I know she was stealing from me, but I'd never kill her! And before my accident, we got along fine. I do think she might've taken advantage of me a bit because of my headaches. I occasionally have memory lapses.' She pulled a face. 'Which doesn't exactly go in my favour, either.'

Carol said croakily, 'You're not a murderer. If I could take things back in my own life...'

'Shh!' Sadie muttered. 'How long are you staying on the island?'

'A week, at first. Then I'll play it by ear.' Carol didn't add... 'Or as long as my funds last.'

She looked into her friend's haunted eyes. 'I've had to tell my mum I'm here, Sadie. It was going to come out anyway because it's a growing news story. She believes in your innocence, too, and sends her love.'

Sadie nodded, anxious and distracted. 'You're staying in a big hotel, Carol. Find out what people are saying. Rachel's doing that too, and Brad is paying for a top defence. Someone, somewhere, might let slip a crucial piece of info in front of you. Otherwise...' Her eyes glistened. 'I'm never getting out of here. I'm never coming home.'

TO BE CONTINUED
Gabrielle Mullarkey

*** The Ones Who Never Left by Gabrielle Mullarkey (£2.99, Spiral Books) is out now on eBook.**

I accused her of stealing'



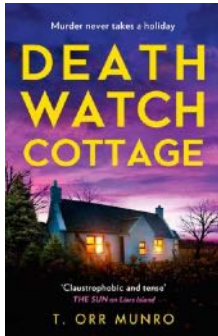
Great reads

Zoe West shares her picks for the week

Death Watch Cottage

by T. Orr Munro
(£20, HB, Harper Collins)

CSI Ally Dymond, sidelined for refusing to play office politics, investigates the suspicious carbon monoxide death of Leo Hawkins. Graffiti from a mysterious anti-tourist group adds intrigue, and when a second body appears, the stakes soar. As lies, corruption and overlooked clues multiply, Ally must chase the truth alone. Fast-paced, tense and sharply written, this compelling Devon-set crime thriller is a must for fans of rule-breaking heroines.



The Things We Never Say

by Elizabeth Strout
(£18.99, HB, Viking)

Artie Dam seems to have it all – a loving marriage, a celebrated teaching career and a quiet life by Massachusetts Bay. Yet beneath his gentle, Teacher of the Year charm lies a profound loneliness. When a revelation shatters his sense of self, he must re-examine everything he thought he knew. Written with beautiful restraint, this moving novel captures the quiet ways one person can change lives – especially those of his students, who carry his kindness forever. Tender, perceptive and deeply human, it's a poignant reminder that even the most ordinary lives hold extraordinary emotional depths within us all.



The Darkest Tide

by Peter Hanington
(£22, HB, John Murray Press)

This dual-timeline thriller masterfully intertwines Brighton's criminal past with a tense present. Arthur Cotton's struggle with dementia unlocks dangerous secrets, drawing his daughter Susan into a web of old enemies, blackmail and family peril. Hanington's depiction of Brighton – from 1960s ganglands to modern streets – paired with sharp characterisation and suspenseful plotting, creates a pulse-pounding exploration of memory, regret and the heavy cost of buried truths.



Fallout

by Eleanor Anstruther
(£12.99, PB, Empress Editions)

Set against the real-life Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp – which led to around 70,000 British women getting the UK and US governments to remove nuclear missiles from Berkshire – this pacy novel focuses first on 15-year-old Bridget, who runs away from her dead-end town to join the protest. What she finds there isn't just a camp, but a world. Her actions send shockwaves through her family – a distant mother and a fearful father with plenty to hide. It's darkly funny and intense but with a tender side too.



Sanctuary

by James Cleary
(£20, HB, Harper Collins)

A gripping, thought-provoking thriller that feels all too real, this plunges readers into a world teetering on environmental and social collapse. Billionaire John Brandt retreats to his luxurious underground bunker, but those who built it, like construction worker Tom Grady, refuse to be left behind. As cities burn and chaos spreads, alliances shift and survival demands impossible choices. Every tense chapter forces you to confront who deserves to survive – and what people are willing to do.

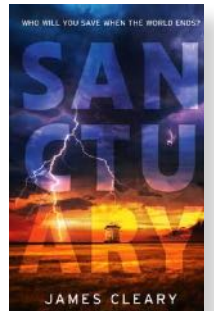


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Jumbo puzzle

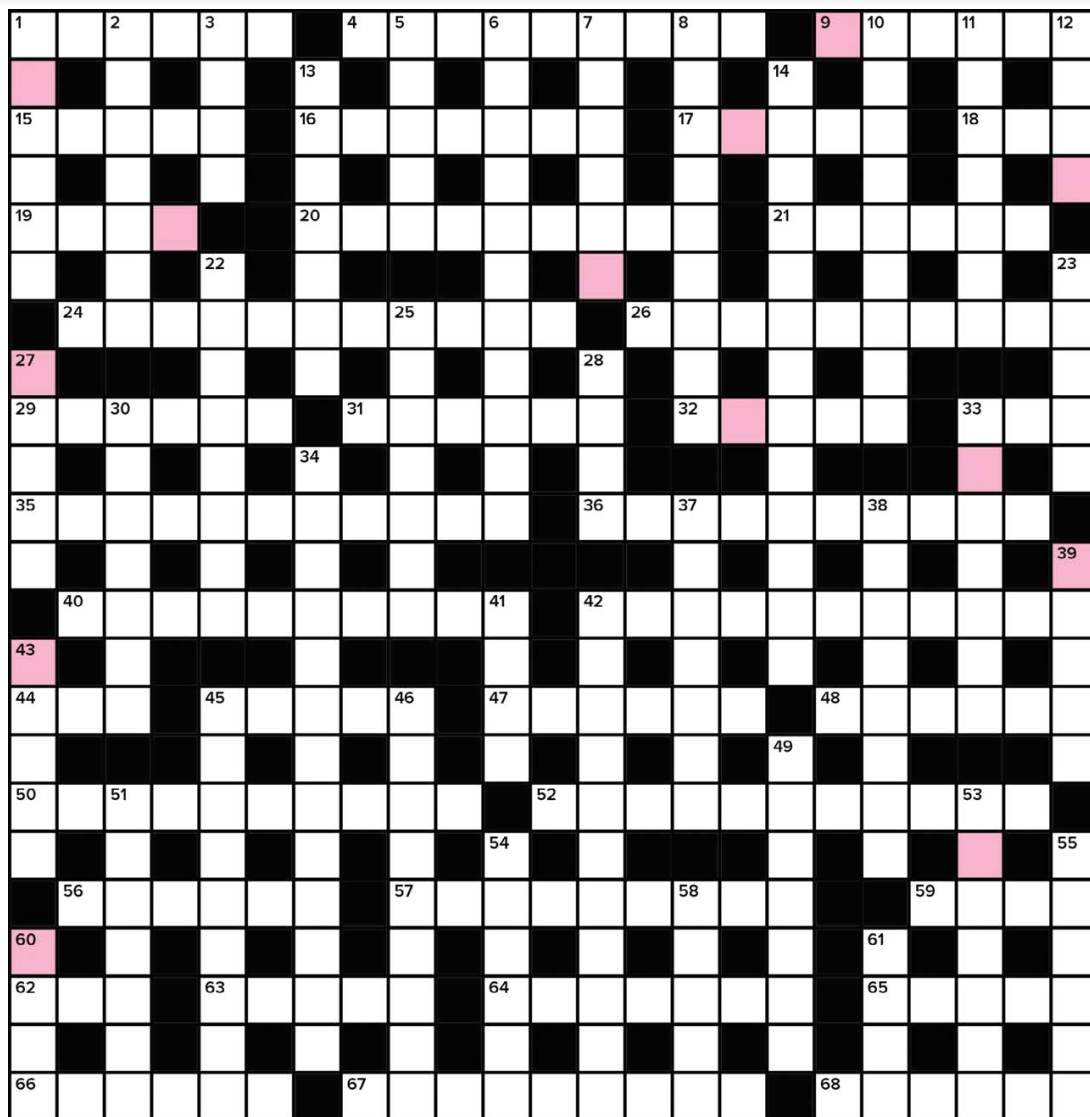
Read down the letters in the shaded squares to spell out a fragrance (6,7).

ACROSS

- 1 Hesitated (6)
- 4 Promote (9)
- 9 Gnawed (6)
- 15 Respond (5)
- 16 Rail-track support (7)
- 17 Expressions (5)
- 18 Observe (3)
- 19 Move with a spoon (4)
- 20 Lingerie (9)
- 21 Sounds (6)
- 24 Crises (11)
- 26 Kept up (10)
- 29 Pardon (6)
- 31 Clears a frozen windscreen (2-4)
- 32 Slides (5)
- 33 Baked food with a crust (3)
- 35 Symbolised (11)
- 36 Onlooker (10)
- 40 Warily (10)
- 42 Study (11)
- 44 Unit of weight (3)
- 45 Wounded by an insect (5)
- 47 Say again (6)
- 48 Verse of a poem (6)
- 50 Machine-like (10)
- 52 See-through (11)
- 56 Stringed instrument (6)
- 57 Instinctive (9)
- 59 Possesses (4)
- 62 Potato's seed-bud (3)
- 63 Most severe (5)
- 64 Open-air burning (7)
- 65 Section (5)
- 66 Drives too fast (6)
- 67 Essential item (9)
- 68 Place inside (6)

DOWN

- 1 Expression (6)
- 2 Radioactive element (7)
- 3 Bites (4)
- 5 Horror (5)
- 6 Skilful (11)



- 7 Bird (6)
- 8 The __, Anglo-Irish pop group (9)
- 10 Infirmary (9)
- 11 Film genre (7)
- 12 Stag (4)
- 13 Presupposed (7)
- 14 Manner of speaking (13)
- 22 Explore for gold (8)
- 23 Put together (5)
- 25 Makes (7)
- 27 Facial hair (5)
- 28 Exploits (4)
- 30 Army officer (7)
- 33 Share (7)
- 34 Rebellious (13)
- 37 Account for (7)
- 38 Farm vehicles (8)
- 39 Tiptoe (5)
- 41 Story (4)
- 42 Lab tests (11)
- 43 Stops (5)
- 45 Gulped down (9)
- 46 Warranty (9)
- 49 Distinct kind of organism (7)
- 51 Takeaway food (7)
- 53 Not in any place (7)
- 54 Reliable (6)
- 55 Viewpoint (6)
- 58 Contort (5)
- 60 Untidy jumble (4)
- 61 Range (4)

* Find the puzzle answers on the horoscopes page.

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Puzzle TIME

Arrow word

Which British city derives its name from the now culverted river Farset? Solve the puzzle by following the arrows and writing in your answers. Then, read down the letters in the shaded squares to find the answer.

At the present time	N	Married women		Girl's name		Place to swim		Donkey	Make an offer	TV sitcom, _ Minister	Young lion	Recover from a wound	Strange
Possess	O	W	N	Actor, _ Aykroyd		Cry loudly Used to be				Resound Not hard			
Panes of glass	W							Gave out Hatchet					
		One of the Seven Dwarfs		In the style of (1,2)				Fuss Transmit disease			Wicked		
		Soothing plant, _ vera		Flow back		Half a dozen			_ Rae Jepsen, singer		'Costs an _ and a leg'	Family origins	Plants with fronds
				Ready to be eaten	Object	Drink of the gods						Drench	
Lawsuit		Short in duration Agent						City, _ de Janeiro		Pink wine			
Planet's path						Make a mistake				Heath			
				Drawing tools							Shade of brown		
Honey-making insect	Sonnet, for example					What a child plays with				Enquires			

YOUR ANSWER:

WORDSEARCH

Finnish korvapuusti ('slap on the ear') are types of what bun? The answer is the one missing from the grid.

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

YOUR ANSWER:

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| BATH | CHELSEA | HONEY |
| BELGIAN | CINNAMON | ICED |
| BOSTON | CREAM | LONDON |
| BRIOCHE | CURRENT | PENNY |
| CHEESE | FRUIT | STICKY |

Mini crossword

	1	2		3
4				
5			6	
7				

The shaded boxes spell out a word.

ACROSS

- 1 Elegant and stylish (4)
- 5 Perhaps (5)
- 7 Corrosive substance (4)

DOWN

- 2 Dried grass (3)
- 3 Snooker player's stick (3)
- 4 _ Bunton, singer (4)
- 6 Place to sleep (3)

Shop TALK

Who will be our new manager?
Here's the word on the street



“My charity shop colleague Wendy pulled a tweed jacket from a black bin bag with all the panache of a magician producing a knotted line of coloured handkerchiefs.

She then pulled a face and handed it over. ‘Smell that and tell me what you think,’ she said.

Say what you like, but we are really on the cutting edge here. Sniffing at tweed jackets? It’s all in a day’s work.

‘Well?’ said Wendy.

‘It smells of tweed,’ I said.

‘Of course it smells of tweed, but there’s something else I can’t quite place.’

‘Mothballs?’

‘Yes, there’s definitely mothball there, but also... oh, it’s very familiar, but I can’t place it?’

I took a theatrical sniff. ‘I’d say it was a 1996 Château Margaux, probably grown on a south-facing slope near the banks of the Gironde estuary. The grapes were trodden by five teenagers, all wearing new Nike trainers.’

If anybody round here is familiar with the bouquet of Château Margaux, it is Wendy but she did not seem entirely impressed. The look she gave me could have stunned a pair of fighting stags at 50 paces.

‘I’ve got it,’ I said. ‘It’s horse. It’s blended with the other smells, but there is definitely a whiff of the stables there.’

I know this, by the way, because we occasionally babysit the horse of our neighbour when she goes off on exotic holidays. Which is quite often.

‘Oh yes,’ said Wendy. ‘I think you may be right. That’s annoying. I suppose everything else that’s in the bag will

smell of horse and mothballs now.

‘It’ll be fine. A couple of days on the line in the yard should sort it. Or if it doesn’t, we could always try a bit of baking soda.’

And so we slowly unpacked the rest of the bag, sniffing as we did so – a pair of jodhpurs, which obviously smelt of horse, a Fair Isle sweater (horse), two sweatshirts (horse), a travel alarm clock, which obviously didn’t smell of horse, a couple of books

about horses, two bobble hats. If you can imagine the worst-ever conveyer belt section on *The Generation Game*, you’ll get the rough idea.

‘So,’ said Wendy as she carefully folded the bin bag. ‘Is it true that you’ll be taking over as acting manager?’

You’ll remember that there is a vacancy now that

Mrs Protheroe has left to help her son set up a business.

‘Who told you that?’

‘Nobody in particular, but it’s the word on the street.’

To hear Wendy, who lives in an actual manor house, saying ‘the word on the street’ was like hearing the BBC Radio 4 news in cockney rhyming slang.

‘Nobody’s mentioned it to me.’

‘Nobody’s mentioned it to me either,’ said Wendy. ‘And it’s not David because I asked him.’

‘Would he tell you, though, if they’d asked him to keep it quiet for some reason?’

Wendy gave me another one of her looks (see fighting stags, 50 paces, above). ‘Oh come on,’ she said. ‘David couldn’t keep a secret if he was imprisoned in a locked room on a faraway desert island with no access to the outside world.’

I thought about this for a moment. ‘I’m not

‘Her look could have stunned fighting stags at 50 paces’

sure you’ve thought that one through,’ I said. ‘If he had no access to the outside world, how would he pass on his secret? And would there be enough food in this locked room?’

‘Don’t be silly,’ huffed Wendy. ‘The point is, David would tell us if he’d been appointed. Now, of the regulars, that just leaves your sister.’

‘Oh, Deb would tell me. If only to gloat that she’d be able to boss me about. Mind you, she does have retail experience.’

‘Sleeping partner in a bookshop? I’m not sure that counts.’

With this, the door opened and we appeared as if by magic on the shop floor. As it happened, it wasn’t a customer but David.

‘I hear congratulations are in order, Rose,’ he said.

‘Congratulations? Why, what have I done?’

‘Rumour has it that you’re taking charge of us all. Well, for the time being. Until they can find a proper manager.’

I tried to deploy Wendy’s death stare at this backhanded compliment, but it obviously takes years of training. I just looked like I was having a migraine.

‘No, that’s fake news,’ I said. ‘It’s not me.’

And then it struck me. First Wendy, and now David. They couldn’t have landed me with the job, and failed to mention it. Could they?

Rosie XX

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