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Hello!

Jumper joy

“ We’re big fans of natural fibres in our family, and most of our clothes are either cotton or wool. Some might find that a touch obsessive, but we just feel things created by nature alone are healthier to have against your skin. However, these days you have to work pretty hard to discover what a garment is made out of, involving a forensic hunt along the inside seams for the telltale label, as synthetic fibres are so affordable, popular and widely used. But living as we do, in a draughty and tumbledown old building, my favourite fabric of all has to be wool, because a warm jumper is worth its weight in gold! ”
See page 10.

Geoff

EDITOR

geoffrey.palmer@futurenet.com



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FROM US TO YOU

Good to SHARE

A fine flower show, an eggy encounter and the welcome return of a butterfly



Chelsea in bloom

The sheer scale of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show is part of its appeal, but alongside the famous show gardens, it is also divided into more manageable themes, such as Balcony and Container Gardens, offering achievable inspiration to us all. Held in the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea, tickets sell fast and can be pricey, although it's cheaper to buy a 'late' entry for after 5.30pm. This year's show includes a garden designed for Tate Britain, floral art and news on GreenSTEM scientific innovations.

* 19-23 May, rhs.org.uk



Did you know?

Some visitors to Hothfield Heathlands wildlife reserve have attempted to stroke grazing Highland cattle, which is dangerous for all concerned. Kent Wildlife says visitors should stay 10m away from livestock, keep dogs on a short lead and must not feed or touch the animals; kentwildlifetrust.org.uk.



BUTTERFLY-ING BACK

It hasn't been seen in the UK for several decades, but the Large Tortoiseshell butterfly has been spotted in southern England once again, delighting conservationists who feared it may have become extinct. The butterflies emerge from hibernation in spring, and are thought to have flown over from Holland, where there are healthy numbers.



On this day in history

16 May 2001 Protester Craig Evans threw an egg into John Prescott's face during the deputy PM's visit to North Wales. Prescott hit back and a scuffle ensued. Evans was taken into custody, while Prescott was interviewed by police, but claimed that it was an act of self-defence. Neither man was charged. It led to Prescott being dubbed 'Two Jabs', a play on his previous 'Two Jags' nickname.



DIRTY DANCING IN CONCERT

Hands up who wishes Patrick Swayze had been their dance teacher? Relive the magic of *Dirty Dancing* with a live band and singers performing the music from a movie that never grows old.

* From 24 May in Manchester, then Edinburgh, Glasgow, York, Sheffield, Liverpool. Ends 1 June in Birmingham; dirtydancinginconcert.com



LET'S TAKE THIS OUTSIDE

A new series of five brightly coloured cushions from RubyBela includes this pretty Bow and Lotus design. The lightweight cushion measures 45x45cm, and is perfect for outdoor use.

* £29, rubybela.com



SOCIETY WEDDING

Helen George and Felicity Kendal star in a new production of Cole Porter's musical, *High Society*. Wealthy socialite Tracy Lord is about to marry, but her ex-husband is scheming to win her back...

* At the Barbican, London, 19 May to 11 July, then Helen George tours the UK and Ireland, opening at the Wycombe Swan on 16 July; highsocietymusical.com



Money-saving tip

Bright blooms Keep down the cost of filling hanging baskets by choosing long-flowering plants like petunias and geraniums. Buying plug plants in bulk can also save you up to 50%. Gardening retailer J Parker's has a double-trailing petunia tumbelina mix for just under £1 each for 20, compared with £2 each for five; jparkers.co.uk.

NATURE NOTES

From Louise Midgley



Bracket fungi play an important role in woodland ecosystems by breaking down dead or dying hardwood, making the recycled nutrients available for new plant growth. They also provide a valuable food source for small mammals and insects.

Two types of bracket fungi (also known as polypore fungi) are fruiting enthusiastically this month; these two are called Chicken of the Woods and Dryad's Saddle (pictured above). While both are considered to be edible*, it's worth remembering that they may not agree with everyone's constitution. They are at their most flavoursome when young, but should always be cooked. If found growing on or around a poisonous yew tree, they are best left well alone.

My garden week

I cut the flowering stems of my phlox and sedums back by around a third this week to make the plants bushier and more floriferous, albeit with slightly smaller blooms.



WORDS: JANE KEMP. PHOTOS: DEFINING STUDIO, GETTY, GRAHAM HUBBARD, KENT WILDLIFE TRUST, LOUISE MIDGLEY, MICHAEL WHARLEY, SARAH CUTTLE ©RHS, SHUTTERSTOCK. *NEVER FORAGE OR EAT WILD FUNGI IF YOU ARE NOT CERTAIN OF THEIR IDENTIFICATION

FROM YOU TO US

Good to SHARE

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



PAWS FOR THOUGHT

This is Ollie, my daughter's rescue cat from Felines 1st in West Sussex. She adopted him when he was six months and he's now four years old. He's absolutely adorable, loves tummy rubs and enjoys practising yoga in the garden.

Christina Long, Billingshurst

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

Keep dancing!

In April 2003 you published an article about my story being a Morris dancer with the Milltown Cloggies in Greater Manchester. I was 53 at the time, and the story explained the fun we had dancing all over the country and abroad. There was a picture of me and a friend dancing at an event. I wanted to let you know that I am now a great-grandma of 77 and still enjoying dancing at festivals far and wide! The style of the dresses has changed, but the thrill and excitement is the same. We have lots of younger dancers and musicians, and all enjoy keeping the tradition of clog dancing alive.

Judith Isherwood, by email



Letter of the week

LOOK WHAT I MADE

This pattern was featured in a previous issue. It's my fave jumper now!

Kathleen Miller, by email



WHAT YOU'RE WEARING COMPILED BY ANNE HARTNETT

GET IN TOUCH

WE LOVE LETTERS

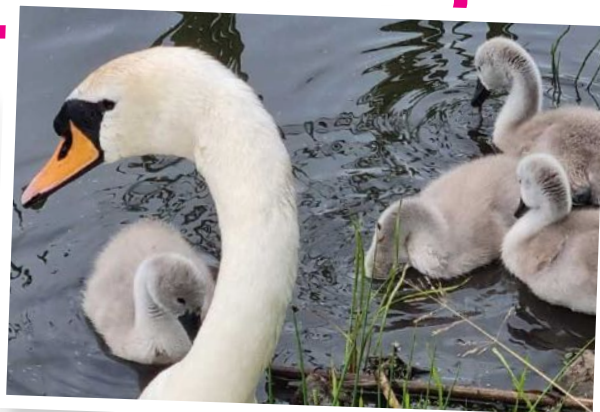
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* We do not return photos (apart from You Wore It Well) so please do not send originals.

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CAPTURING THE NEXT GENERATION

Here is a heart-warming photo I took recently of a mute swan and her cygnets in Towyn, north Wales.

RF Smith, Rhyl

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.

What you're WEARING



Emma Thomas, 55

Tell us about your look

I don't really have a plan when it comes to clothes shopping. I buy things I like and then outfits just seem to happen! You could say my style is quite eclectic. I found my jumper at a local store in Cornwall, my blouse is Levi's, the trousers are from TK Maxx, the boots from a boutique in Cheltenham, and my Lulu Guinness bag was a gift from a friend.

What's your favourite thing about yourself?

My loyalty.



Denny Chadwick-Healey, 51

Tell us about your look

I love a great jacket. I found this one – in a beautiful lightweight wool – in Madrid. My T-shirt is Uniqlo and the jeans are Massimo Dutti, with Golden Goose trainers. My bag is by Season. I like to mix and match modern classics, although I do get more adventurous in summer!

What's your favourite thing about yourself?

I volunteer for a charity called Smart Works, which helps unemployed women get the clothing, coaching and confidence to secure a job.



Elinor Charlotte, 30

Tell us about your look

My look changes every day depending on my mood. Today I'm wearing my dream dress by Sister Jane. I love that it's so nostalgic and feminine. My jacket is an old one from Zara, my Mary Jane flats are by Flabelus, and my silver bag is by Hvick. I've added some soft toy bag charms for fun.

What's your favourite thing about yourself?

I feel like I'm quite an honest person.



Laurenza Harnett, 56

Tell us about your look

It's quite casual and relaxed, although I do like to add a little bit of interest with a print, a pop of colour or accessories. My flowery top is from Carraig Donn (bought online), worn over a long-sleeved T-shirt and jeans, both from Dunnes Stores in Ireland. I found my bag at a stall in Ballybunion, County Kerry, and my green trainers are Vans. I love the colour.

What's your favourite thing about yourself?

My freedom to wander!

YOU WORE IT WELL

Nancy Young, 1953

I thought you might like to see this photo of myself and my two friends Nancy and Thelma, taken during our last year at Junior school. The sundresses and bolero jackets were all made by hand.



* 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.

'I think life is a pilgrimage'

Hermione Norris on spirituality, self-discovery and slowing down

Cold Feet star Hermione Norris can't wait to turn 60 next year. It's an unexpected statement to hear from someone working in a youth-obsessed industry like showbiz, but Hermione seems to possess a zen approach to life that leaves her unruffled in the face of adversity.

'I'm looking forward to being 60,' says Hermione. In person, she's warm and thoughtful, and chooses her words with care.

'I think the whole alchemy that happens with the transitional period of menopause and going to the next phase of life can be quite confronting and quite painful, and I'm looking forward to being on the other side and just being a crone!'

'Because then I can just be,' she continues. 'I won't be transitioning any more. I haven't enjoyed parts of my 50s because of the menopause, because you're raising children

and mothers die.' The actor's mother, Helen, died nearly two years ago. She raised Hermione and her three siblings as a single parent after Hermione's father left when she was young.

'There's a lot going on for us during that period,' she says. 'I feel like I'm different from how I was when I was 40. It feels like, until then, all of your life is on the outside, and then you hit a certain time, and all masks drop and it's just like an internal journey. That's where I am now.'

Losing loved ones has influenced her attitude to getting older. 'I think ageing is a privilege,' she says. 'I lost a friend recently and she made me realise that. I think you get beyond a certain age and it becomes sniper's alley. Losing people is not uncommon once you hit a certain age.'

Hermione is in a particularly reflective mood because we're meeting to talk about *Pilgrimage: The Road to Holy Island*, the eighth series of the BBC2 programme about spirituality that aired at Easter. Hermione took part in a trek from Whitby to Lindisfarne with other famous people of all faiths, including actor Patsy Kensit and Diversity's Ashley Banjo.

'The whole experience of *Pilgrimage*, of being with a group of people I'd never met before, with no script, just to hand yourself over completely to an experience, it makes me feel quite emotional to think about it.'

Hermione considers herself a very spiritual person, but 'I don't subscribe to any religion,' she says. 'I believe in love and

'I believe in love, peace and tolerance'

connection, and peace, tolerance and inclusivity. My faith is experiential – it's how I experience love, with the love of my children, my family, and relationships with people.'

Making *Pilgrimage* also took her back to her *Cold Feet* days – she played Karen Marsden



With husband Simon Wheeler

in all nine series, from 1997-2003 and from 2016-20.

'I shot an episode of *Cold Feet* on Lindisfarne and I recall it as somewhere that had a power and energy, and I felt slightly like I was being called back,' says Hermione. 'I am in the autumn of my life now and I think life is a pilgrimage, isn't it?'

But certain things Hermione is definitely not going to change. I asked if she's undertaken any health kicks or given up any foods to improve her health and she laughs. 'I don't intend to give anything up, ever!' she says. 'Just find joy wherever you can, and if it makes you happy, carry on.'

Some things have definitely changed, though. It's been over six years since the revival of *Cold Feet* concluded and, since then, Hermione has worked only sporadically – she made 10 episodes of the Australian drama *Between Two Worlds*, and has occasionally guest-starred



The *Cold Feet* cast (left); and on *Pilgrimage*, with dancer Ashley Banjo and comedian Hasan Al-Habib





THE
**Woman's
Weekly**
INTERVIEW

in shows like *Death in Paradise* and *Silent Witness*.

'It's definitely just a fact that after 45, for female actors, the work drops off,' shrugs Hermione. 'But you don't go to the butcher's shop to buy a loaf of bread, do you? I'm nearly 60 and I'm an actor, so what did I think was going to happen?! And it's fine. It is what it is.'

'I've done bits and pieces, but nothing has crossed my desk where I've been inspired to think, "I really, really want to do that." I think you get to the age of 50-plus and think, "What do I want?" The only thing in your bank of knowledge is familiar, and I just don't want to go back,' she tells *Woman's Weekly*.

'I don't want to be running around in high-heeled shoes six days a week, saying really difficult lines. I think you have to just keep letting go and move forward. And I'm in a privileged position of being able to choose.'

The greatest role of Hermione's life has been motherhood, she says. 'Being a mum has been the best thing in my life, no question,' she says. But she's had to endure the flip side of that – her children have left home in the last year. Son Wilf is 21 and living in France, and daughter Hero is 18 and has gone travelling, leaving Hermione and her husband, Simon Wheeler, a TV producer and writer, on their own.

How was it when they left? 'Hero went travelling and we went to Vietnam about a week later for a long holiday,' says Hermione. 'And I was worried. I thought, are we going to have anything to talk about? Are we going to like each other? And I'm pleased to say we actually found our space together. I think that's what a good relationship is – being able to take your space and do whatever you need to do within that unit. So I'm hopeful for the future!'

* *Pilgrimage: The Road to Holy Island* is on BBC iPlayer now.



Bec loves the stillness that spinning brings

Wonder-wool WORLD!

Meet three women creating handmade happiness



Jem delights in the spectrum of shade variations



'A dye day still feels like play'

Jem Arrowsmith, 48, is a yarn dyer and knitting designer. She lives in Cambridgeshire with her husband and four cats.

I came to yarn dyeing through knitting design. I was designing shawls and accessories, but I quickly realised that if I wanted to make it sustainable as a business, I needed to offer more than just the pattern. So, I started dyeing the yarn to go with my designs and completely fell in love with it.

What I adore about hand-dyed yarn is its individuality. Even if I dye the same

colourway twice, no two skeins will ever be identical. That variation is the magic! A dye day still feels like play. I might be working with colourways I know well, but I'll always experiment, perhaps by layering shades,

'Some of my favourite shades came from happy accidents'

adding speckles or responding to a photograph a customer has sent for inspiration. It's always exciting waiting to see how the yarn will turn out, as when it's wet the colours look darker, and you can't quite see what you've made until it dries. Some of my favourite shades have come from happy accidents!

The best part is when a customer shows me what they've knitted with my yarn. It's always incredible to see what the yarn drying in my kitchen for hours has become.

* undertheolivetreeknits.com



A checked weave in progress; above, hand-woven tea towels

WORDS: MICHELLE ROWLEY. PHOTOS: AISLING MAGILL, EMMA BAKER, JEM ARROWSMITH

'My customers can select wool from their favourite sheep!'

Bec Briar, 46, is a hand spinner who lives in west Somerset with her husband and their flock of primitive sheep.

I was knitting so much that I questioned whether it would be cheaper to buy some sheep rather than all the wool I was buying. It turns out it's absolutely not! Spinning wool from my own sheep has become about the special connection between the animals and the end product. It's incredible to be part of the whole process, from selecting the sheep, deciding which ram goes with which ewe, watching lambs being born, naming them, getting them sheared, the wool carded and then finally running the fibre through my fingers at the wheel.

At the wheel, with my foot treadling and my hands steady, my mind quietens and it's one of the



With Vita, a Shetland ewe in Bec's flock

few things that keeps me still.

I love to see the transformation of raw, slightly greasy fleece become

beautiful strong yarn.

Slow crafting demands

patience. I've spent

three months spinning

for a single piece. I'll

never earn properly for

those hours, but that's

not really the point.

The value is in the story, the sheep and their care. My customers get to know my sheep and can select wool from their favourite one!

* thewovenbriar.co.uk

I've spent three hours spinning for a single piece'

'The rhythm of weaving is so absorbing'

Emma Baker, 57, is a hand weaver from Wiltshire. She makes scarves, shawls and snoods, and teaches others to weave.

Due to my love of knitting, about 10 years ago, my husband bought me a second-hand spinning wheel to produce my own wool, and I started spinning so obsessively that my knitting couldn't keep up!

With a build-up of hand-spun yarn, weaving felt like the natural next step. I bought a loom. Then another. Then another. Now I work on both a rigid heddle and a large floor loom, and weaving is the craft I return to most. I'm captivated by colour, and it's exciting to see what new shades will be created where the warp

and the weft threads intersect. I think it's a kind of magic that other crafts can't replicate.

It's definitely a slow craft.

Setting up the loom alone takes a day and a half, and it takes around five hours to weave just one scarf, but that slowness is its gift. The sound of the shuttle and the rhythm of the weaving is so mindful and absorbing.

When teaching, it's wonderful to watch someone's amazement at what they've created, and when I see someone wearing one of my scarves, it's amazing to think that every thread of it has passed through my hands.

* **Discover more at** emmabaker.org

'It's a kind of magic that other crafts can't replicate'



CELEBRATING BRITAIN

FLUSHED *with style*

We turn the spotlight on Britain's best loos – the one facility everyone needs!

After many years of being ignored, closed or neglected, public lavatories are suddenly back in fashion. As an example, Westminster City Council in London is turning its tired public toilets into absolutely fabulous facilities.

The first opened on Victoria Embankment in March 2025, boasting a sphinx in beautiful tiles by artist James Lambert at the entrance. Even the metal cubicle doors have an anti-fingerprint finish to keep them looking lav-erly. We pay a visit to some of the other stylish places around the country.



Ladies (of letters)

Fans of the Brontë sisters had a century-long wait for the WC at their famous home-turned-museum in Haworth, West Yorkshire. When Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë lived at the Parsonage, they used potties and outside privies. As a museum, visitors had to rely on council loos in a nearby car park until the Brontë Parsonage Museum unveiled stylish 21st-century toilets, thanks to funding from Bradford City of Culture 2025. Awarded a 2026 Loo of the Year Diamond award, you can now enjoy the classics *and* a timely relief!

A solid gold toilet worth £5m was stolen from Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire, in 2019. Two men were jailed for stealing the 18-carat object by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan, but the loo has never been recovered.

LOO WITH A VIEW

Answering the call of nature in Manchester's highest watering hole comes with a bird's-eye view. The restaurant and cocktail bar 20 Stories is actually on the 19th floor of a sleek modern building in Spinningfields. Naturally, the designer destination also boasts state-of-the-art loos. So, as you wash your hands and check your lippy, you can enjoy a panoramic view of the cityscape.



WORDS: SHARON WRIGHT. PHOTOS: ALAMY, BEVAN COCKERILL, GETTY, HENRY BATEMAN, INSTAGRAM @VICTORIABECKHAM, NINETY-FIVE PRINTS/SUNNIE NEWBY/HARRIET PALMER, THE EVOLVY COLLECTION



Art loo-veau

The Grade II-listed loos in Nelson Street, Hull, are celebrating their 100th birthday. They opened in 1926 with art nouveau features. Having a Ladies as well as a Gents in the same building had been unusual until near the end of the Victorian age, as the earliest public toilets were for men only, but by the 1920s, things were more egalitarian. Visiting them is a step back in time to the Roaring 20s, with creamy tiled walls, moulded architraves, frosted windows and brass finger plates.

WHERE THE IN-CROWD GOES

And the over-the-top toilets award goes to... Annabel's, the fashionable private club in London's Mayfair. Designer Martin Brudnizki has created a riot of rainforest chic, including four million pieces of mosaic glass and a basin carved from a huge slab of green onyx. Let's hope they don't let it all down by running out of loo roll.

The origin of the word 'loo' is disputed, but perhaps the most popular theory is that it evolved from the French 'gardez l'eau', meaning 'watch out for the water'. In less glamorous days, Brits used to yell 'gardy loo!' before emptying a potty out of the window.

TIMBER TOILETS

The people of Ledbury, Herefordshire can pop into a Grade II-listed building at their convenience. Former 17th-century outbuildings in Church Lane in the historic town centre are now home to public toilets with antique touches. Tastefully installed, the timber-framed facilities have an old, tiled roof and leaded-paned window. But don't worry, you don't have to put up with 1600s-style plumbing – they have a thoroughly modern flush!



The toilets at Annabel's club in London – approved by Victoria Beckham



Fit for a queen

People enjoying a riverside stroll in Surbiton, south-west London can now pop into a snazzy new toilet block. Queen's Promenade Friends is restoring the Victorian prom to its former glory, with heritage features and planting schemes. The community group persuaded Kingston Council to replace the grungy old toilets along the River Thames, while keeping the original tile roof. Local artists decorated the conveniences with splashes of colour, and the official opening included a trumpet trio, which played Handel's *Water Music*, of course.



The 6 most common signs OF DEMENTIA

How to spot them, and what to do if you see symptoms in yourself or loved ones

FORGET ME NOT

This June, Alzheimer's Society is encouraging the nation to wear a Forget Me Not badge in honour of someone special, and to stand with the thousands of families affected by dementia. Donate at alzheimers.org.uk/forgetmenotappeal

We all have forgetful moments – lapses in memory when we forget names or the reason why we've walked into a room. But when does being absent-minded become a cause for concern, a sign that something more serious is going on?

There are currently around one million people living with dementia in the UK, but more than a third are living in the dark without a diagnosis*. 'This means that thousands of people are missing out on access to the vital care, support and treatment they need,' says Dr Simon Wheeler, senior knowledge officer at Alzheimer's Society.

'Dementia affects everyone differently. The symptoms are often difficult to spot, particularly in the early stages, and can differ based on the type of dementia. But there are some common early signs of the condition that everyone should be aware of.' These are the six common signs, and Dr Wheeler's advice about spotting them and seeking support.

1 MEMORY PROBLEMS

If you're finding it hard to do everyday tasks by yourself because your memory is getting worse, this might be a sign that something is wrong. Many of us forget things more as we get older or as life becomes busier. But the difference is that, with dementia, these memory problems happen much more often and get worse over time.

A common sign is asking someone the same question again and again, such as 'What time are we leaving?' because you can't remember the response from a few minutes earlier. You might also find that it's getting harder to remember important dates or find things around the house.

2 CONFUSION ABOUT TIME OR PLACE

Dementia can cause a lot of confusion, particularly in relation to where you are, and what time, day or even year it is. You might suddenly wonder where you are, how you got there or what you're supposed to be doing. It can be disorienting and stressful.

During the early stages of dementia, this kind of confusion can be fleeting and may only last for a few seconds or minutes before you find your bearings again. But as the condition progresses, it can happen more frequently and have more serious consequences, such as getting lost and not being able to get home.



4 DIFFICULTY CONCENTRATING, PLANNING & MAKING DECISIONS

This is a common sign across most types of dementia. You might find it increasingly difficult to solve everyday problems or make plans. For example, you might struggle to follow conversations with friends or family, or put off dealing with household bills or things that need fixing because they're too complicated. As time goes on, this can start to have an impact on your life and those around you.



6 CHANGES IN MOOD OR BEHAVIOUR

It's completely normal to experience changes in mood from day to day or week to week, but if you – or someone you know – are starting to become more irritable, sad, frightened or withdrawn, this could suggest that something is wrong. Feelings of anxiety and depression don't necessarily mean that you have dementia, of course, but it can sometimes be part of the condition.

Dementia can also cause people to increasingly behave in ways that seem out of character, such as becoming more impulsive or obsessive, or being less able to see things from other perspectives. Some people may find that their sense of humour has changed from how it used to be.

5 PROBLEMS WITH VISION

People often don't realise how much brain power is needed to make sense of what we see. Much of our brain is dedicated to taking what our eyes see and processing this information. This allows us to perceive objects, colours, patterns and distances. When this part of the brain is affected, it can cause problems with vision, such as misjudging distances, having trouble reading or seeing things that aren't really there.

3 ISSUES WITH LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

Dementia can affect the way we talk to others. The most common problem is struggling to find the right word. We all do this to some extent, but with dementia, it's a consistent problem that affects most conversations. You might find yourself using filler words and phrases more often, such as 'thingy', in place of the words you're trying to find.

As with other dementia symptoms, it's more about how things have changed over recent months and years, as opposed to whether they've fallen below a certain standard. If you notice that it's getting harder for you to have a conversation where you can express yourself clearly without lots of effort, then it could be a sign that something is wrong.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

'If you're concerned about yourself or a loved one, you should speak to your GP as soon as possible,' says Dr Wheeler. 'A dementia diagnosis can be life-changing, but we believe it's better to know. No one should face dementia alone.'

Research into dementia – prevention and treatment – is ongoing, and there is support available through organisations

such as Alzheimer's Society, which provides advice and practical support for what to do next and where to get help. It's also important to talk to loved ones where you can and lean on those around you. 'Both receiving a diagnosis yourself and caring for someone with dementia can be lonely, but talking to loved ones can help more than you know,' says Dr Wheeler.



Alzheimer's Society's dementia symptoms checklist is a helpful first step in starting a conversation with your GP. You can also call the Dementia Support Line on 0333 150 3456.

NOBODY'S FOOL

Quiz hard. Lie harder.



itv

WATCH FROM
23rd May

'Retirement doesn't interest me'

THIS WEEK'S COLUMNIST **Broadcaster and author Melvyn Bragg**

I've always had an optimistic disposition. I don't like what's going on in the wider world and it must be appalling to be in the middle of it, but that's another thing. My optimism comes from the fact I had very, very, very good parents, even though my father was away for four or five years in the war. I had good friends – we came from the same sort of background in the small town of Wigton in Cumbria. I was in the church choir, the town choir, the school choir, the Anglican Young People's Association, the Cubs and the Scouts, and I played rugby, so it was a good childhood. I had a bit of a bad time in my early teens, but otherwise I stabilised myself again.

When I went to Oxford, I was one of the only working-class kids, but I didn't find it all that different. I'd been brought up in a pub, so I was used to meeting all sorts of people. I played rugby in my first year, so that's 15 friends immediately, and I was in a choir, so that's another bunch of friends. Curiously enough, one thing about Oxford is that it

is quite levelling. Unless you're a fool, you don't go around saying, 'Oh, he's superior because he did this or he has that.' You wait and see what people are like at that moment. Of course there was snobbery; it's England. I just didn't take any notice of it.

My disposition helps me now because there's nothing to be said for getting older whatsoever. I've been unwell lately [Melvyn has battled prostate cancer and melanoma, among other ailments], but I'm feeling better.

I'm very happily married and I've got good children and good friends, so I'm fine.

And I'm still working. Retirement doesn't interest me. This year marks my 65th year in broadcasting and I feel good about that.

I started at the BBC in 1961.

Last year, I stepped down from presenting *In Our Time* on Radio 4. I started that 27 years ago when it was awarded the death slot [9am on Thursday mornings] because the BBC thought it was such a non-starter. But I had an idea of what I wanted to do, which was to concentrate on academics who had been sidelined in the other talk programmes.

A friend I have coffee with, a very great film director, said to me about the show, 'You've got a terrific job. You know nothing, and you talk to people who know everything.' He's right. I was very sad to leave, but I'd talked to my wife and we agreed I had to leave sometime. Better go now and not wait to be pushed!

I'm doing a new series for the BBC – I can't talk about it, but it's going to be great. I like doing what I do, so why should I retire?

I'm generally working on and off most of the day. Sometimes I get up very late, but the great thing about being a writer is you can lie in bed and say, 'Look, I'm working because I'm thinking!'

'I work on and off most of the day'

* *Another World – The Oxford Years: A Memoir* by Melvyn Bragg (£22, HB, Hodder & Stoughton) is out now.

'My funny old week'

WHERE I'VE BEEN I haven't been at all well, and I've been to the hospital a few times. One of the great blessings of my life is that there's a hospital at the end of our street in London.

WHO I'VE SEEN Howard Goodall, the composer and his wife [Val Fancourt]. They came round with an old friend of mine, Anthony Paggieri, and his wife Kathy. We ate, drank and talked. We make a good sextet.

WHAT I'VE BOUGHT Some milk from the corner shop. It's good to go for a little walk.

WHAT I'VE SEEN I'm a big rugby fan and I watch it regularly on television. I also watch football to some extent, and cricket I like to read about.



To the RESCUE

Three women share the work they do giving animals a loving home when they need it most

'You're doing something for the greater good'

Paula Hill, 53, is head of communications at an NHS trust. She lives in Winchester with her husband Chris, 55. They have two grown-up children, Izi, 25, and Gabe, 23.

I've fostered 64 cats over the last 10 years – I always loved them and had cats throughout my childhood.

When I had my own family we fostered Spike, a big black greyhound, after his racing days were over. After his death, we didn't have pets for a few years. We enjoy travelling, and it was inconvenient and expensive using kennels.

Then, 10 years ago, I took a sabbatical. I fostered spaniels, poodles and cockapoos in training for them to become Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. When I got my NHS job, this couldn't continue, as I couldn't leave the dogs home alone. I looked into other options and found the Blue Cross, in Southampton, where I inquired about fostering cats.

Someone visited our house to see how suitable

it was, and we were quickly approved. Elsa and her kittens, Echo and Elphaba, were our first cats. They stayed two months while they were being weaned on to solids before going to their forever homes.

We've had abandoned kittens, short-term fosters who need assessing in a home environment to monitor their behaviour, and elderly cats looking for a forever home. After a stressful day at work, it's lovely having an elderly cat come and snuggle up on your lap, as I always tell my friends. Kittens are huge fun too.

Fostering is joyful. You get a sense of doing something for the greater

good, while doing something positive to help animals. It fits around my schedule and there's no outlay, as the charity provides everything. I just take the cats into the centre for appointments and vet checks.

We foster a couple of times a year. I have a deal with my husband Chris – we don't have cats at Christmas because of the tree, and not in the

height of summer, as the cats can't go outside, so we can't open windows and doors.

It can be tough; I've had tears when it came to saying goodbye. Purracy was my all-time favourite. He was a 14-year-old big black fluffball with questionable breath, but he was the most affectionate cat!

There's a genuine sense of helping the cats find a forever home as well as helping with their formative development – that sense of fulfilment is lovely. I would recommend it to anyone.

*** Visit bluecross.org.uk/volunteer-pet-foster-carer**

'We foster a couple of times a year'

A tender moment between Purracy and Paula



Val with rescue
Border collie Icey,
who flourished and
appeared at Crufts

'There's always another animal to help'

Val Phillips, in her 70s, is chief executive of Valgrays Border Collie and Animal Rescue. She lives in Surrey.

In 50 years of animal rescue, I've seen it all – the good and the bad. The UK is in crisis with so many unwanted dogs. My heart has been torn many times. Special dogs that have come in and stayed leave a massive impact on me.

I've loved animals since I can remember. My parents had dogs and Mum was a well-known Samoyed breeder. I was six when I asked for my own dog, and was delighted to be given a Border collie. From then I was hooked on the breed!

I worked as a veterinary nurse and became involved in rescuing unwanted animals. One of the first Border collies I took in, George, was badly emaciated and behaved terribly. I worked on him and he became a top-class agility dog. Then I took on another dog, Meg, and eventually ended up with six.

I founded Valgrays in the 1970s. The name is a combination of mine and my big brother Gray's names. We're a registered charity and, over the years, we've helped thousands of dogs, not just Border collies, other breeds too.

We work closely with dog wardens and the police, but animals come to us from all situations, including bereavements. Other cases include behavioural problems, or someone decides they shouldn't have bought it. I've put up kennels at my home, and have volunteers who care for and help rehome the dogs. We also have nine horses who've ended up with us after being neglected or dumped.

We do our best to find new homes for our animals. We've had some really bad cases that have turned out beautifully.

As a charity we have to fundraise; I've also used a lot of my own money. One of the biggest expenditures is vet bills

– they're astronomical. All our dogs are spayed or castrated, vaccinated and chipped before they leave. We give full rescue back-up. All potential new homes are visited and checked. We're very careful where our dogs go.

'We're a small charity, with a big heart,' I tell people. After 50 years, I keep thinking it's time to stop, but there's always another animal that needs help.

* valgraysbcrescue.org.uk or search **Valgrays Border Collie and Animal Rescue** on Facebook.

'We're very careful where our dogs go'



'It's one of nature's most incredible sights'

Helen tends some of her many hives

'I noticed so many beehives hidden around'

Helen Rogers, 48, is a commercial beekeeper in north London, where she lives with husband Pete, 50, and their children, aged 18 and 14.

'It's like *Ghostbusters!*' my kids joke as I take another phone call, before loading the car with my swarm-collecting gear and rushing off.

I've kept bees for 13 years. I was a structural engineer before, and couldn't help noticing how many beehives were hidden around London. They were everywhere and really caught my interest.

When we moved and got a bigger garden, my husband Pete surprised me with a hive. Now I have 45 across the city and run my own business, Highgate Honey.

I rehome bees that people have lost interest in if they themselves have become ill, too old or just bored. I collect the whole hive. Those giving them to me know they'll be looked after properly.

The other way I rehome them is slightly more exciting and happens in spring, when they swarm and colonies build up. The old queen and half the bees leave to set up elsewhere.

It's one of nature's most incredible sights, seeing 30,000 bees in the air – the noise is

unbelievable! They form a ball, usually on a branch, and stay a few days until they decide where they're going next. That's often when I'm called, when the swarm arrives in someone's garden. People panic seeing all these bees, but they're at their most gentle when swarming.

I collect the bees into a hive or a box. They're looking for a new home, so they usually settle quite quickly. It's easier if you can pick out and move the queen first, then the others follow. I leave the box in position until it's dark – bees can't see well in the dark – when I return to collect them.

It gets interesting when bees make a new home in a chimney or cavity wall. I've helped pest controllers remove a colony from inside a wall, where honeycomb had built up and honey was seeping through. The bees won't harm anyone, but it's not good for the building. It's fine when they swarm in the countryside, but in the city it can cause problems.

Bees are important pollinators. We rely on them for a third of all our food, so it's important that we protect them.

* highgatehoney.com

BEST FOOT forward

Step into summer with feet you're proud to show off

Buff up

The quickest way to achieve smooth soles is to use a hard-working foot file. Go manual with **Truyu Ceramic Foot File, £5, amazon.co.uk**. Take the file and buff it into the bottom of your feet to remove rough skin and calluses until they feel smooth and look rosy pink. Or try **Bare Feet Electronic Callus Remover, £35, barefeetandhands.co.uk**, which does the hard work for you, leaving skin silky soft in seconds.



TOP TIP

To avoid damage and cracks, always use a foot file on dry skin, never wet.



Nice creams

The single best thing you can do for your feet is to apply moisturiser regularly. It will reduce hard skin build-up, and keep soles looking fresh and healthy. **Lotil Nourishing Foot Cream, £5.99, lotil.co.uk**, keeps up the hydration for 12 hours. If hardened heels require a little more welly, try an intensive treatment like **Footsie Heel Yeah! Cracked Heel Balm, £7, Boots**.



Soak and scrub

Follow with a scrub to exfoliate areas the foot file cannot reach. Spike a warm bowl of water with **Margaret Dabbs Hydrating Foot Soak, £24, margaretdabbs.co.uk**. It smells like a spa, and provides relief to aching, puffy feet. Next, work **No7 Beautiful Skin Softening Foot Scrub, £9.95, Boots**, into wet skin, concentrating first on the heel and ball of the foot, and then between the toes and the tops. Rinse with lukewarm water and dry thoroughly.





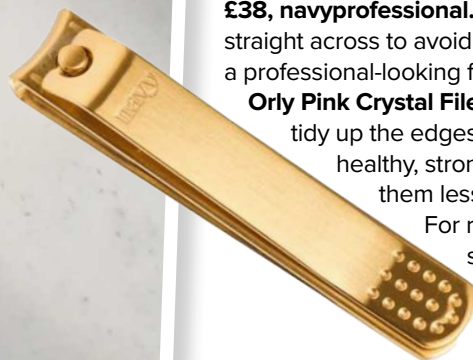
Quick fixes

Want minimal effort? No worries. Slip your feet into **Coconut Foot Socks, £2, Superdrug**, and kick back and relax for 20 minutes. The nourishing ingredients revive dry, rough and cracked skin, so feet emerge softer and smoother. For an instant pick-me-up to tired, heavy-feeling feet, try a quick spritz of **Cooling Foot Spray, £3.99, Boots**. Antiseptic mint and witch hazel will help to revive and deodorise, so you're sandal ready.



Nail essentials

While feet are dry, trim nails with **Navy Professional Beryl 2.0 Nail Clipper, £38, navyprofessional.com**. Cut and file straight across to avoid ingrown nails. For a professional-looking finish, go over with **Orly Pink Crystal File, £10, Superdrug**, to tidy up the edges. Crystal files promote healthy, strong nails and make them less prone to splitting. For ridges and yellowing, swipe a block buffer back and forth across the surface if needed.



Summer shades

Pretty polishes to finish off your flawless feet.



OPI Icons Nail Lacquer in Sunny Bunny, £15.60, opi.com

Bio Sculpture Gemini Nail Polish in Coral Crush, £15.50, biosculpture.co.uk

Orly Nail Polish in Dream Catcher, £12.99, orlybeauty.co.uk

Townhouse Flawless Polish in Paprika, £12.50, townhouse.co.uk

Dior Vernis Nail Polish in Minty, £30, dior.com

Nails Inc 1-Step Gel It's Topless Polish in Paloma, £8.99, nailsinc.com

PS Gel Effect Nail Polish in Hot Pink, £1, Primark

Polka DOTS

TIMELESS
CLASSICS

Shirt, £34.99,
vest, £17.99, and
trousers, £39.99,
all sizes 10-28,
Damart; shoes,
bag and jewellery,
stylist's own

Give the season's biggest print trend a try

ESSENTIAL CARDIGAN

Just one playful piece like this baby blue cardigan will easily pep up understated basics to lift your whole outfit.

Jeans, £45, sizes 8-22,
Cotton Traders



Cardigan, £69,
sizes xs-xl,
Nobody's Child



T-shirt, £9, sizes
6-24, M&S



Shoes, £37.99, linzi.com



Coat, £38, sizes
6-24, George
at Asda

CUTE CO-ORD

A matching duo requires minimal styling effort, but offers maximum impact. Pair with suede pumps on casual days.



Skirt, £79, sizes 8-18,
albaray.co.uk



Top, £65, sizes 8-18,
albaray.co.uk



Sunglasses, £28,
Oliver Bonas



Shoes, £69, John Lewis



Bag, £35,
Accessorize



FLATTERING FROCK

Occasionwear season calls for a statement dress, and polka dots are ideal for making an entrance. Top off with a blush pink headpiece.

Dress, £85,
sizes 8-22,
Kaleidoscope at
freemans.com

Fascinator, £55,
Accessorize

Bargain
buy

Bag, £11,
Primark

Earrings, £28,
orelia.co.uk

Shoes, £36,
Friends Like
These at Next



VERSATILE TOP

For a subtle pop of print, try layering a top under a suit jacket or blazer. Pastel shades are the perfect complement.

Bag, £39,
Paradox London
at John Lewis

Chic
look

Top, £19.99, sizes
xs-xxl, Lindex

Trousers, £40,
sizes 6-24, M&S

Shoes, £30, M&S

Jacket, £60,
sizes 6-24, M&S



'JJ has taught me that the smallest things bring you joy. Cherish these moments,' says Debbie



Learning from MY DAUGHTER

From finding joy in small things to not judging others, Debbie Nevin shares how her Down's syndrome child has taught her valuable life lessons

There's no doubt that pregnancy can be stressful for many women. However, when Debbie Nevin, now 58, discovered she was having a baby in 2011, she was prepared for the challenges of being an older mum.

'Patrick and I met at a friend's wedding in 2002, and there was an instant attraction. When you know, you know,' says Debbie, from Gloucester. 'From there, our relationship moved quickly, and we were engaged

six months later on Valentine's Day. In 2003, just a year after we met each other, we got married. Before we tied the knot, Patrick and I talked about having a baby. However, both of us felt it would happen when the time was right.'

Debbie was 43 when she fell pregnant with Jennifer, her first child, and was delighted with the news, as was Patrick, a project manager. But Debbie knew there was a risk the baby might have Down's syndrome because she was an older mum.

'I decided to have the amniocentesis test, which assesses whether a baby has a genetic or chromosomal condition. The positive result around five months into the pregnancy wasn't a total shock, and it helped me be prepared when my daughter arrived in June 2011,' says Debbie.

As Jennifer, who everyone calls JJ, was growing up, Debbie didn't have another sibling to compare her to, which she says in hindsight was a blessing. JJ, who's now



Having the amniocentesis test helped Debbie prepare

14 years old, has done things when she's ready.

'My daughter didn't walk until she was three years old, and that was fine. It's usual for children with Down's syndrome to hit certain milestones more slowly than children without



Debbie says that

caring for a Down's syndrome child can be exhausting...



...but having a glass-half-full attitude helps her see the positive side of life



additional needs. Every time my daughter achieved a new skill, such as holding a spoon or grabbing a table leg to stand up, it felt like a huge success,' Debbie adds. 'The first time JJ went to Brownies, she was eight, a year later than usual, but I was so proud when I dropped her off at the village hall. My daughter has taught me that the smallest things can bring you joy. Cherish these moments,' says Debbie, smiling.

'I've also had to learn true patience, another lesson. It's easy to get pulled into the mindset of "do it now", but if your child has Down's syndrome, everything takes a little longer – like getting dressed to leave the house. You learn to plan for extra time and not rush.'

There was never any question of a termination, but Debbie says she had to let go of the idea of having a perfect baby and embrace the reality of a child with Down's syndrome. The sad fact is that many relationships break up under

the pressure of parenting a child with additional needs.

'Patrick and I have gone through this journey side by side, and we're still together now all these years on. That's another lesson my daughter has taught me: my marriage is really strong,' says Debbie.

Even so, Debbie is open about the fact that looking after a child with Down's syndrome, and being an older mum, can be exhausting. Plus, it can be difficult to carve out time for yourself or as a couple.

Debbie's younger sister, Lorraine, now 56, has been amazing, and often looks after JJ so she and Patrick, now 59, can have weekends at Center Parcs or dream holidays to places like Hawaii.

'We always come back from our breaks recharged, which helps us to create a loving, stable environment for our

daughter. That's another lesson JJ has taught me, if you have a child with additional needs, the support from your family really matters,' says Debbie.

Work-life balance also plays an important role in creating harmony. Debbie works from home as an IT systems manager, which gives her extra flexibility. Prior to this, Debbie held a fundraising role for a day centre for vulnerable families

Every time JJ learnt a new skill, it felt like a huge success'

and saw first-hand the difficulties facing many people.

'Not everyone chooses to go ahead with the pregnancy of a child with Down's syndrome, and this is their choice. It's not for me to judge others' life decisions, which is another lesson,' she says. 'Having a child with additional needs is tough, but the rewards can be huge. I'm constantly surprised by JJ in unexpected ways. For example, we've been taking her to the local pool since she was 18 months old, and JJ is now a stronger swimmer than some children her own age. Then, last month, she joined the Gloucester Gang Show through Guides and sang onstage at

a variety performance; she was brilliant. Thanks to JJ, I've learnt never to underestimate someone with a disability.'

Debbie and Patrick continue to encourage anything that fosters their daughter's independence. Only a couple of months ago, JJ wanted to make cupcakes, but she needed some help, and the icing came out wobbly. Rather than seeing the finished result as a mess, Debbie felt pleased that JJ had wanted to make this treat, which she proudly took into school to share with her friends.

'The cupcakes might not have been perfect, but they still tasted good,' she says. 'Having an attitude of the glass being half-full rather than half-empty helps you to see the positive side of life; it's less draining than constantly focusing on the negative. Positivity goes hand in hand with love, and until JJ, I never knew that I had such a capacity for love. I feel so protective of my child. My aim is to give JJ the best life that I can, and bring her joy, happiness and independence.'

*** For more information, visit the Down's Syndrome Association at downs-syndrome.org.uk**

PICNIC *perfect*

Easy food to prepare, pack and enjoy al fresco

PER SERVING
540 cal, 43g fat,
26g sat fat,
27g carbs



Goat's cheese tart

Serve this delicious tart warm or cool, and topped with a salad garnish.

SERVES 8

PREP 40 mins, plus chilling

COOK 40-45 mins

- * 2 red peppers, thickly sliced
- * ½tbsp olive oil
- * 25g butter
- * 2 banana shallots, thinly sliced
- * 2tsp thyme leaves
- * 130g goat's cheese, sliced
- * 3 medium free-range eggs
- * 300ml double cream
- * 2tsp Dijon mustard

FOR THE PASTRY

- * 250g plain flour
- * 125g chilled butter, cubed

YOU WILL NEED

- * 23cm tart case, baking beans

1 For the pastry, pulse the flour, butter and 1tsp salt in a food processor until crumbly. Add 4tbsp cold water; whizz until the mixture clumps. Shape into a disc and chill for 10 mins. On a floured surface, roll the pastry to a 3mm thickness. Line the tart case and prick the base with a fork. Chill for 30 mins.

2 Heat the oven to 180C Fan/Gas 6. Toss the peppers with the oil and season with salt. Roast, cut side down, for 30 mins. Line the tart tin with baking

paper and fill with baking beans. In the same oven, bake for 15 mins, then remove the beans and paper, and return to the oven for 10 mins. Reduce the heat to 160C Fan/Gas 4.

3 Meanwhile, melt the butter in a medium frying pan, add the shallots and thyme, then gently fry for 10 mins. Scatter over the base of the tart. Arrange the cheese and peppers on top.

4 In a jug, beat the eggs, cream, mustard, salt and black pepper until smooth. Pour into the case and bake for 40-45 mins until set with a little wobble. Cool for 10 mins and serve warm or cool in the tin.

COOK'S TIP

To garnish, toss shaved asparagus and salad leaves with olive oil, salt and pepper, to tumble over the tart.

Waldorf salad riff

The crunchy celery avoids limp lettuce alternatives, and the mustardy/tarragon dressing is much nicer than shop-bought.

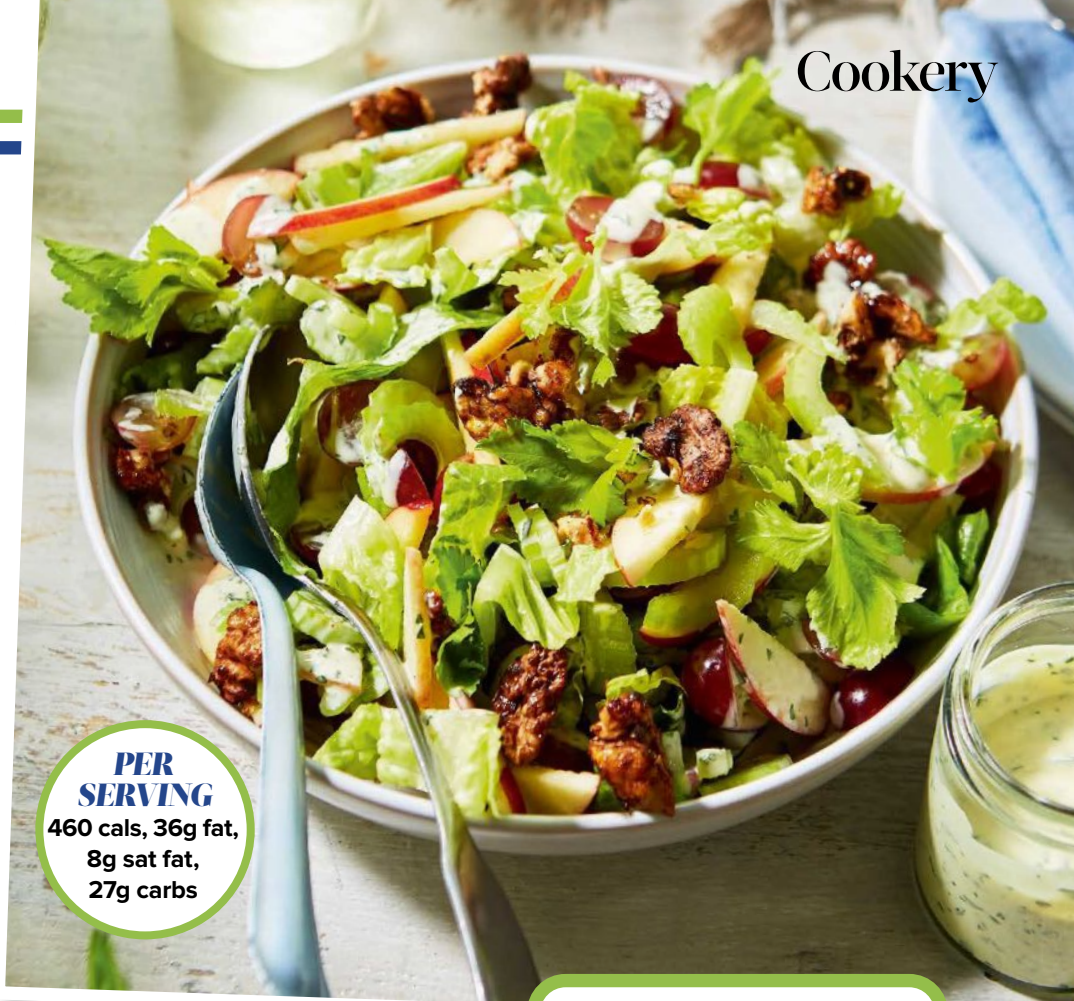
SERVES 4 PREP 15 mins COOK 10 mins

- * 100g walnuts
- * 1tbsp dark brown soft sugar
- * 1tbsp balsamic vinegar
- * 2 apples, cored and finely sliced
- * 1tbsp lemon juice
- * 3 celery sticks, finely sliced
- * 1 small head romaine lettuce, shredded
- * 250g red grapes, halved or quartered

FOR THE DRESSING

- * 4tbsp mayonnaise
- * 4tbsp crème fraiche
- * 1tsp English mustard
- * 1tsp apple cider vinegar
- * Squeeze lemon juice
- * 1tbsp each chopped tarragon, flat-leaf parsley and chives

- 1 Heat the oven to 180C Fan/Gas 6. Put the walnuts on a lined baking tray, and toss with the sugar, balsamic vinegar and a pinch of salt. Roast for 10 mins. Cool then pack in a small container.
- 2 Toss the apples in lemon juice to stop them browning; mix with celery, lettuce and grapes. Pack in a sealed container.



PER SERVING
460 cals, 36g fat,
8g sat fat,
27g carbs

- 3 In a jar, mix the dressing ingredients with 1-2tbsp cold water. At the picnic, toss everything together, drizzle over the dressing and top with the walnuts.

COOK'S TIP

Assembling the salad at the picnic, although not essential, will keep it tasting its best.



PER SERVING
525 cals, 32g fat,
5g sat fat,
35g carbs

Mackerel pasta salad

This fresh salad is packed with fibre and omega-3 fatty acids.

SERVES 4

PREP 10 mins COOK 15 mins

- * 200g wholewheat pasta
 - * 150g green beans, trimmed and halved
 - * 1 avocado, cut into chunks
 - * 2 x 115g tins mackerel fillets in olive oil (save the oil for the dressing)
 - * 40g rocket
 - * ½ red onion, sliced into thin wedges
- FOR THE DRESSING**
- * ½ bunch each dill and basil leaves, roughly chopped
 - * 1tsp wholegrain mustard

- * 30g walnuts, toasted and chopped
- * 6 pitted green olives
- * 2tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- * 1tbsp apple cider vinegar

- 1 Cook the pasta according to pack instructions. Add the beans for the final minute. Drain and rinse under cold water.
- 2 Meanwhile, reserve some of the herbs to use as a garnish, then whizz the remainder in a processor with the other dressing ingredients, 2 chunks of avocado, 1½tbsp oil from the mackerel tins and seasoning.

- 3 Toss all the ingredients, pasta and beans with the dressing. Decant into tins or transportable containers and top with the reserved herbs. >>

COOK'S TIP

To reduce the chance of the salad wilting, take the dressing separately in a jar and dress just before eating.



PER SERVING
(for 6)
338 cal, 26g fat,
15g sat fat,
7g carbs

COOK'S TIP
For a more traditional affair, spread the dip in sandwiches with smoked salmon or sliced cucumber.

Antipasti platter

Grab some meat and deli buys, and whip up a quick dip for an impressive picnic spread.

SERVES 4-6

READY IN 15 mins

- * 200g cured meats, various
- * 100g radishes, trimmed
- * 2 carrots, peeled, cut into batons
- * 100g sugar snap peas
- * 1 green chicory, leaves separated

FOR THE CHEESE DIP

- * 300g soft goat's cheese
- * 8tbsp soured cream
- * 1tsp white wine vinegar
- * 1tsp Worcestershire sauce
- * 1tbsp freshly snipped chives

TO SERVE (OPTIONAL)

- * Breadsticks, crackers, cornichons, pickled onions, green olives, artichokes, slow roast or sun-blushed tomatoes

1 For the dip, put the goat's cheese and soured cream in a food processor and whizz until just combined. Stir in the white wine vinegar, Worcestershire sauce and chives, then season. Transfer to a container or jar and chill in the fridge.

2 At the picnic, simply assemble the meats, crudités and cheese dip on a board and let everyone dig in.



Raspberry spritz

A sweet and refreshing drink that's perfect for long summer days.

MAKES 300ml cordial

READY IN 15 mins, plus cooling

- * 300g raspberries
- * 300g caster sugar
- * 1tbsp white wine vinegar
- * Sparkling water, ice and lime, to serve

YOU WILL NEED

- * Sterilised bottle with leakproof cap

1 Put the raspberries, sugar and vinegar in a pan. Cook on low, mashing with a fork, for 8 mins or until syrupy.

2 Sieve, discard the seeds and rinse the sieve. Mix the raspberry pulp with 300ml water, then sieve again back into the pan. Boil for 1 min. Pour into the bottle and seal. Store in the fridge.

3 To serve, dilute in a jug or glass with ice, fizzy water and lime wedges.

COOK'S TIP
If you fancy, serve the cordial with prosecco to make a cocktail.

**PER ROLL**

194 cals, 8g fat,
4g sat fat,
23g carbs

COOK'S TIP

In a deep tin the buns might not brown. You can sit the base on top of a smaller tin to raise the level.

Spinach and mozzarella scrolls

Proving that shop-bought pizza dough creates an effortless, fluffy bread-like bake.

MAKES 16 rolls

PREP 20 mins, plus proving

COOK 50 mins to 1 hr

* 4 frozen pizza dough balls, defrosted
(we used The Northern Dough Co.)

* 40g butter, melted

FOR THE FILLING

* 240g bag spinach, blanched, excess water squeezed, and roughly chopped

* 4 spring onions, thinly sliced

* 3tbsp cream cheese

* Good grating nutmeg

* 1tsp garlic granules

* 30g pack basil, chopped

* 2tbsp toasted pine nuts, chopped

* 125g ball mozzarella, chopped

* 5tbsp freshly grated Parmesan

YOU WILL NEED

* 23cm cake tin, fully lined with baking paper

1 Combine the filling ingredients and season well.

2 Working one at a time, roll out each dough ball to 22x20cm. Divide the filling between each, spreading evenly.

Roll each up from the short end (filling on the inside); cut into 4 equal pieces. Put in the tin, cut side up. Leave a little room for them to rise. Cover with cling film, then set aside in a warm place to prove for 1 hr or until the dough is springy and has risen.

3 Heat the oven to 170C Fan/Gas 5.

Brush the scrolls generously with melted butter and bake for 50 mins to 1 hr until golden brown. Cover with a tea towel while they cool to keep soft and fluffy, or wrap immediately, while warm, to take on your picnic.

Pizza PARTY!

Making this Italian classic from scratch is easy with our foolproof recipes

Overnight pizza dough

A long, slow, overnight proving gives this dough a great flavour with almost no effort.

MAKES Dough for 6 x 20cm or 4 x 23cm pizzas

PREP 10 mins, plus overnight proving

- * 500g double-zero '00' pizza flour or strong white bread flour
- * ¼tsp instant dried yeast
- * 1tbsp fine salt
- * 1tbsp olive oil
- * Fine semolina flour or plain flour, for dusting

1 At least 1 day before you want to make your pizzas, put the flour, yeast and salt in a large mixing bowl. Add the oil and 350ml tap water. Mix with clean hands to form a rough dough, scraping down the sides to make sure all the dry ingredients are incorporated (it will look quite 'shaggy' at this stage).

Cover the bowl and set aside at room temperature overnight, or until the dough has doubled in size.

2 Tip the dough on to a well-floured surface and divide into either 6 or 4 separate portions as required. Shape each piece into a ball, then cover with a clean, damp cloth and leave to rest for 1 hr on a flour-covered surface.

3 Shape 1 ball at a time; on a lightly floured surface, starting from the centre, use clean fingers to press and stretch the dough outwards into a flattened disc. Pick up the dough and pinch around the edges, letting gravity stretch the dough further, to the required size. Add your toppings and cook as per the recipe.



COOK'S TIP

To keep them fresh for up to 3 days, wrap and chill the dough balls. Remove from the fridge 2 hrs before shaping.



PER SERVING
664 cal, 38g fat, 13g sat fat, 102g carbs

Peach and prosciutto pizza sandwich

Stuff with your favourite fillings for the best sandwich you will taste this summer.

SERVES 6

PREP 5 mins **COOK** 10 mins

- * 1 quantity of pizza dough, shaped into 6 balls
- * 150g shop-bought fresh pesto
- * 3 x 150g balls burrata, torn into pieces
- * 100g rocket leaves
- * 12 slices prosciutto cotto or Parma ham
- * 2-3 peaches, cut into wedges

1 Heat the oven to the highest temperature with

a heavy baking tray or pizza stone inside.

2 Shape each dough ball into a 20cm disc.

Spread 1tbsp pesto over each one, then fold in half to make a half-moon shape.

3 Bake on the hot tray/stone for 10 mins until puffed (do this in batches if needed).

4 Fill each pizza pocket with some torn burrata, rocket leaves, prosciutto and peach wedges. Then drizzle over the remaining pesto and season well before serving.

COOK'S TIP

Alternatively, cook in a pizza oven according to the manufacturer's instructions (1-2 mins), turning as needed.

Margherita pizza

Recreate classic Neapolitan-style pizza without the need for a pizza oven.

MAKES 4 x 23cm pizzas

PREP 10 mins **COOK** 7-9 mins

* 1 quantity of pizza dough, shaped into 4 balls

* 250g mozzarella or fior di latte, drained and torn into pieces

* Chilli or garlic oil, or chilli flakes, to serve (optional)

FOR THE SAUCE

* 400g tin good-quality whole plum tomatoes, drained (reserve the juice for another recipe)

* Handful fresh basil leaves, chopped,

plus a few extra leaves, to garnish

* Pinch of sugar

YOU WILL NEED

* 25cm cast-iron skillet

1 Heat the grill to high. For the sauce, pulse the tomatoes and basil in a food processor until mostly smooth. Add the sugar and season with salt.

2 Shape a dough ball into a 23cm round pizza and put into the cast-iron frying pan. Spread 2-3tbsp tomato sauce over the pizza, then top with mozzarella.

3 Cook on the hob over a high heat for 2-3 mins, until the underside of the pizza is crisp and a little charred. Transfer to the hot grill and cook for a further 5-6 mins, until the cheese is melted and bubbling, and the edges of the pizza dough are puffed and charred in places.

4 Slide the pizza on to a plate or board, then top with a few fresh basil leaves. Slice and serve hot, with a drizzle of chilli or garlic oil, or chilli flakes. Repeat with the remaining dough and toppings.

PER SERVING

667 cal, 18g fat,
9g sat fat,
98g carbs

COOK'S TIP

Using a cast-iron skillet is a great substitute for a pizza oven. You could also use a pizza stone, if you have one.



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Maureen Leckey, Online review



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Inspecting GADGETS

These low-tech items make life easier for us all

The word gadget often implies something complicated and high-tech. But we've chosen six handy items that are both simple and useful, and will make your life easier.

Head lights

While most phones now have a built-in torch, if you've ever dropped something under the sofa, then you'll know it can be helpful to have both hands free. This is where a head torch comes into its own. Similar to a bike light that you wear as a headband, the beam always points where you are looking.

HANDY HANDLE

Another gadget you'll question how you ever lived without is a long-handled

They're great for when you're rummaging in awkward places or on early morning and late-night dog walks. One with 300 to 500 lumens is ideal, preferably with a rechargeable battery and a red-light mode to preserve your night vision.

Arm extension

Even if you can see into awkward places thanks to your head torch, you may not be able to reach the item you're after. In this scenario, you need a set of claw grabbers.

Also known as litter pickers, this classic gadget has so many uses beyond getting empty

shoehorn. Whereas the classic shoehorn is only a few inches long, the long-handled version is around a foot and a half (50cm), so there's far less bending down to use it. While metal ones are more durable, the plastic versions are lighter and more flexible.

crisp packets from inside your front hedge, giving easy access to items that are high up, low down or simply out of reach. Available in lengths from two feet plus, you'll wonder how you ever managed without them.

Silicone mats

There's nothing worse than putting items on a tray rather than trying to carry them all, only to find you're making a mess because they're sliding around on the tray.

Try putting anti-slip silicone mats underneath plates, mugs or anything else in danger of moving about as they stick to surfaces without leaving any residue behind. Available from stores including Dunelm and Lakeland, they come in different sizes, and can be used in drawers and on counters too.

Get a grip

While you're in the kitchen, make the task of opening any jar easier by using jar grippers. These come in various forms, including devices that look like

BATTERY BOOST

Mobile phones are helpful for allowing access to everything from maps to tickets, all in one place. But that means you get anxious when the battery runs low. Finding a place to charge your phone when you're out can be stressful and time-consuming. Portable battery packs solve the problem by charging your phone without the need for a plug socket. The smallest ones cost a few pounds, but will likely only deliver one top-up before it needs a recharge. More expensive packs come in at around £30-40, but hold more power and need recharging less often.



Liven up your LOVE LIFE

Is your sexual self in a rut? Take this fun quiz to help spice things up a bit

Put a spring in your step this May by getting steamy under the covers. For lots of people, their love lives can dwindle, because of a lack of variety, says sex therapist Alice Child. 'Many couples describe losing "the spark", but what they've lost isn't desire for each other, just the knowledge of how to trigger it.'

Try our fun tantaliser test for some sultry suggestions on how to relight the fire between you – no matter how long you've been together.

THE QUIZ

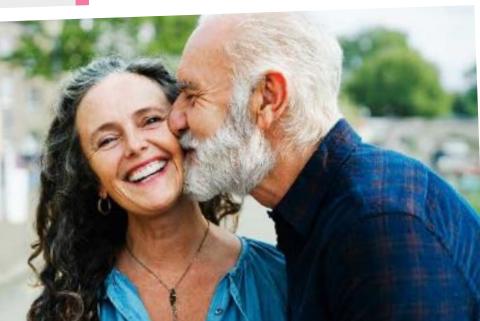
Rate how you honestly feel about the following 10 questions, on a scale of one to five – where one would be 'Ew, no thank you!' and five would be 'Yes, yes, yes!'. Then add up your scores and read below for some suggestions of ways to help get that spark back.

- 1 How important is foreplay in your relationship?
- 2 Do you engage in oral sex together?
- 3 Would you like to try some new positions?
- 4 How do you feel about public displays of affection?
- 5 How do you feel about talking dirty?
- 6 How keen are you to use a sex toy?
- 7 Would you like to try new locations for sex?
- 8 How do you feel about erotic role play?
- 9 Does dressing up do it for you?
- 10 Would you like to give or receive a sensual massage?

Now add an extra one point for each year you've been in your current relationship. So if you've been with your partner for 10 years, add 10 points.

DID YOU KNOW?

Having great sex in later life could help keep your brain healthy, according to researchers. Men and women aged 62-74 years with active love lives were found to have better cognitive health scores. It's thought it might be due to the stress-relieving and feel-good-hormone-releasing benefits of sex.





26-40 POINTS *Focus on foreplay*

Take things beyond the bedroom, outside of your sexual interactions. Kissing, cuddling and touching are all great areas to explore, as well as oral sex and masturbating together. Sexting and phone sex can be good ways to build anticipation, but keeping a connection in daily life with gestures and the way you interact with each other is hugely important to maintain desire.

'Compliments are a big part of keeping attraction alive,' says Alice. A touch of the hand, a kiss on the neck or stroking of hair can all help someone feel desired. A simple 'You look gorgeous!' can go a really long way to boosting your partner's self-esteem.

*** Not in the mood? Try a massage. It's a great way to help ease those aches and pains, and adding oil can increase sensations. We rate Oh! Strawberry Massage Oil, from £5.99 for 30ml, lovehoney.co.uk.**



41-55 POINTS *Focus on variety*

'Novelty and newness are huge aphrodisiacs,' says Alice. Think about where you're having sex, as well as different positions and scenarios. And don't forget sex toys. 'They're great for building excitement,' adds Alice. 'They can be a very healthy, happy part of a relationship, and we should start seeing them as a teammate rather than a rival. We need to get away from the thought that bringing a toy into the bedroom means your partner's not doing something right.'

Are you jetting off on holiday? Make the most of the change of scenery and quality time to try something new. Talk to your partner about the sort of things they – and you – might like to explore.

*** Have a browse online for some of the sex toys available these days to keep things fresh – there's a growing number that are women focused. Try Min mini wand vibrator, £45, shespot.co.uk.**



HOW DID YOU SCORE?

10-25 POINTS *Focus on talking*

This doesn't mean just dirty talk before and during sex, but having frank conversations about your likes and dislikes afterwards. 'Couples who are able to talk about things are more likely to have ongoing happier sex and intimacy,' says Alice. 'A simple way to start is, after any intimacy with your partner, get into the habit of both saying what your favourite bit was.'

'What was your highlight? What was particularly exciting about that? And what does it make you want to try next time? None of us are mind readers, so we need to talk about this to keep the spark alive.'



*** Sexy lingerie or role-play costumes can help imagination flow. Bralette, £12, sizes xs-l, and briefs, £10, sizes 6-24, both annsummers.com**



56 POINTS + *Focus on yourself*

Exploring yourself sexually is a great way to discover what really turns you on – knowledge that you can pass on to your partner. 'Start by focusing on your clitoris,' says Alice. 'Not many people realise, but about 85% of women need some form of external clitoral stimulation in order to reach orgasm.'

Don't let a busy calendar relegate your relationship and sex to an afterthought. 'Schedule physical intimacy,' says Alice. 'People worry this will take the spontaneity and eroticism out of it, but it absolutely doesn't have to.'

Take time to build attraction, desire and arousal.' And stop having tired sex when you're both not fully present. Try a morning or middle-of-the-day romp.

*** Use a clitoral stimulator, such as the new Durex Play Vibe & Tease, £29.99, Boots.**



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Your wellbeing

LATEST HEALTH SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR MIND AND BODY

3 WAYS TO...

Cut your stroke risk

1 Get an extra 11 minutes of sleep each night. This cuts your risk of stroke and heart attacks by 10%, according to a new study published in the *European Journal of Preventive Cardiology*.

2 Walk five minutes more every day. This produces a further 10% reduction, says the study, which looked at data from over 53,000 middle-aged adults in the UK.

3 Add an extra serving of vegetables to your supper. Again, this produced the same reduction. Overall, the survey found that those who followed the healthiest lifestyles had a 57% lower risk of heart attacks and strokes.



QUICK TRICKS TO INSTANTLY ZAP STRESS

Suzy Reading is a chartered psychologist and the author of a book called *How to be Selfish*.

The stress response is something our nervous system decides for us – it's not in our conscious control. But there are things we can do to help us deal with stressful situations. If our nervous system detects a threat, our initial response is fight or flight – with an increased heart rate and breathing, and tense muscles to help us flee or fight back. If we do neither, we can go into 'freeze or flop', where we check out and don't fully process what's happening because our bodies are trying to protect us from experiencing the pain in that situation.

The problem is that our nervous system can't tell the difference between a threat to our physical safety, like an assailant, or a terse email – both trigger the same physical response. What we want to do is to override this natural reaction to stay calm and clear-headed, and respond as needed.

Practices involving touch – somatic holds – can instantly calm us. Try firmly pressing your hands into your thighs, or if standing, rocking slightly to feel



the grounding of your feet. Movement can help too – try the shrug and sigh. Squeeze your shoulders up to your ears while breathing in. Then breathe out while relaxing your arms back down. Validate your fear by acknowledging that you're feeling anxious, but ask yourself, 'Is there really a threat?'

People can often get stressed about things that aren't actually happening, so ask yourself, 'Is there something I can do now to help?' If yes, then take action, but if not, don't waste energy or worry about it. Bring your attention back to what lies within your control, and focus your energy and attention there.

NEWSFLASH

Daily multivitamin pill could help slow the ageing process

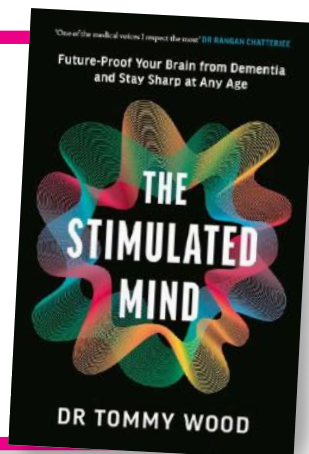
Taking multivitamin tablets every day in later life could help slow the signs of ageing, says a study published in the journal *Nature Medicine*. Researchers* found that multivitamin pills may help plug gaps in nutrition, which can have an impact on biological age.



New read

THE STIMULATED MIND
(£22, HB, VERMILION)

Boost your mental sharpness today and safeguard your cognitive prowess tomorrow with this book full of science-backed strategies to help extend your brain's longevity. Neuroscientist Dr Tommy Wood introduces his 'three S' model – stimulation, sleep and nutrient supply – to biohack your brain for a healthy future as you age.



*AT MASS GENERAL BRIGHAM IN BOSTON AND THE US NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH. IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH, SEE YOUR GP. CONSULT YOUR GP OR MEDICAL EXPERT BEFORE TAKING NEW SUPPLEMENTS

WORDS: TANYA PEAREY. PHOTOS (POSED BY MODELS): GETTY



Doctor Gill

ADVICE FROM OUR WOMAN'S WEEKLY DOCTOR

Update to the Disabled Persons Railcard

If you have a disabled person's bus pass, a Blue Badge, can't drive on medical grounds or receive certain benefits, you may now qualify for a Disabled Persons Railcard. This entitles the holder and an adult companion to one-third off most train fares across England, Scotland and Wales. Until now, the Disabled Person's Railcard was available to those receiving certain benefits or with some medical conditions, but it now covers more visible and non-visible disabilities.

Coping with BEREAVEMENT

Grief affects everyone in different ways, and there's no 'normal' way to grieve

Generally speaking, there are five stages of bereavement or grief, though you may not experience them all. Denial includes feelings of shock, disbelief, panic and confusion. Anger covers emotions such as blaming yourself or others. Depression involves feeling tired, hopeless, isolated and helpless. Bargaining involves guilt, such as thinking 'if only I had done more'. Acceptance means that although you are still grieving, you begin accepting your loss and contemplate moving forward. Life may seem chaotic and out of control, but these feelings become less intense.

Grieving is a natural and normal process. It's not an illness, although it can make you feel ill. It won't last forever, although there are times when it seems as though the pain will never end. There's no 'right' way to grieve; everybody reacts to grief in their own unique way. At first, it can seem like you're in shock. You are feeling numb, but carrying on as if nothing has changed. This is because it can take a long time to process what has occurred.

You may feel disoriented, as though you've lost your purpose in life. It's important to know that all these feelings are normal. The death of someone close to you is the most devastating experience that happens to us. It can be very painful, frightening and upsetting.

It's completely normal to feel angry when someone dies – either at the person who died, at others or

Ways to cope

*** TALKING HELPS** Talk about your feelings to a friend, family member, health professional or counsellor. Contact bereavement support organisation Cruse (cruse.org.uk or helpline 0808 808 1677 for one-to-one support or local support groups).

*** PRACTICAL INFORMATION** The gov.uk website has information about what to do after someone dies, such as registering the death and planning a funeral. Your GP surgery will also advise.

*** OTHER SUPPORT** If you're struggling to sleep, get sleep tips from Every Mind Matters (nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-health-issues/sleep). Find peer support from Mind at mind.org.uk.

*** BE GENTLE ON YOURSELF** Don't try doing everything at once – set small, easily achievable targets. Don't focus on the things you cannot change. Remember, you're not alone, and there is lots of support available.



GP RECORDS TO BE SHARED WITH RESEARCHERS

Data from over three million patients will be shared with three national studies to improve the treatment and prevention of major diseases. Patients not participating in these trials will not have their GP data shared. Around 2.5 million UK adults volunteered for Our Future for Health, 500 000 in UK Biobank and 85 000 in Genomics England's '100 000 genomes' project.

It can take a long time to process what has occurred'

even angry at yourself for things that you did or didn't do while they were alive. Guilt is another common reaction to grief. You might feel directly or indirectly to blame for their death, especially if you had a difficult

relationship with that person. Try not to be too hard on yourself. You may feel depressed or anxious after losing someone



**True
or
false?**

Passive smoking worsens cognitive impairment if you are vitamin D-deficient

True. A study of non-smoking participants aged over 60 found that vitamin D deficiency was associated with increased risk of cognitive impairment, but exposure to second-hand smoke increased this in both men and women. The effect on cognitive impairment was greater among those who are overweight or obese.

4 FIXES FOR...

Indigestion

1 DIETARY HABITS

Cut down on tea, coffee, cola or alcohol. Avoid rich, spicy or fatty foods; don't eat three to four hours before going to bed. Losing weight helps too.

2 SLEEPING HABITS

Raise your head and shoulders at night by using wood blocks or books under the bedhead legs. This helps prevent stomach acid from coming up while you sleep.

3 MEDICATION

Don't use ibuprofen or aspirin, unless prescribed, as they can make it worse. Speak to a pharmacist or GP if you take these medicines.

4 SEE A PHARMACIST

They will recommend medicines to ease the burning feeling or pain, including antacids, alginates and proton pump inhibitors. If indigestion persists, see your doctor.

close, feeling as though nothing matters, or even that you don't want to go on living. If you start to feel that you might act on suicidal thoughts, talk to someone such as the Samaritans on 116 123. Contact 999 if it's an emergency. Your GP will also help you find mental health support.

People sometimes think they hear or see the person who's died – this is your brain trying to process their death and accept that it's final – this is also totally normal. It's common to feel physically ill after someone dies – the pain of grief is often felt as much as a real pain, affecting every part of your health. The healing process arrives slowly, but it does eventually come. Although nothing can replace the person who has died, gradually over time, most people find they can continue with their life, while still remembering those who have departed.

Q When is it normal to start periods? My daughter is 11

A Most girls start their periods at about age 12, sometimes as early as eight, so discuss them now to ensure they are prepared. Use TV ads for tampons or buying period products to start the conversation, or simply chat about puberty. Don't be embarrassed to respond to questions. Use clear language, emphasising that periods are part of growing up. Boys also need to learn about periods, so talk to them about the biological reasons, the physical practicalities and the mood changes.

Starting periods is a sign that her body is now able to have a baby, so talk about pregnancy and contraception. Puberty changes include growing underarm and



pubic hair, and developing breasts – typically, she'll start her periods two years later. Possible reasons for delayed periods include being underweight, intense exercise, stress and a hormone imbalance. See a GP if periods haven't started by age 15 (13 if there are no other signs of puberty). Your GP may suggest a hormone level blood test.

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Here to help

LET COUNSELLOR KEREN LIGHTEN YOUR LOAD

My partner has commitment issues

Q I am in a second relationship, after my husband died and my partner's wife left him. We have been together for 10 years and lived together for five. I'd like to get married – it would make me feel more secure if one of us falls ill. But he says he isn't ready to marry again. It makes no sense to me. I want to stay with him, but I wonder if he really feels the same.

Lisa, London

A There are lots of reasons why someone might not want to get married, and it may not be about commitment. I suggest you have a chat and ask him what his reasons are for not wanting to marry, sharing your insecurities and why it's important to you. Of course, you both know from experience that marriage doesn't ensure there won't be a breakdown in the relationship. I expect he had a difficult end to his marriage when he divorced, and is keen to avoid that again. Helping him to see that this time is different may enable him to agree. If it becomes an issue, you may benefit from a few counselling sessions.

I don't want her to go abroad

Q My daughter has decided that she wants to study outside of England. Her father is American, she has a US passport, and she also has her aunt, uncle and grandparents living over there. I am not sure it is a good idea, for lots of reasons, and I want to say we won't support her. My husband says she is over 18 and it is her choice, and we should allow her to follow her dreams. What can I do to convince her?

Andy, London

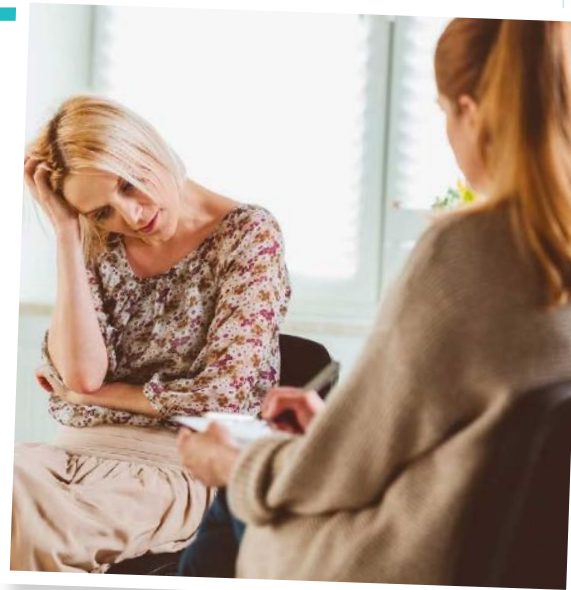
I feel abandoned

Q I have been seeing a therapist for three years, and it has recently become difficult. I told her that I wanted a break and that I'd see her in three months' time. We both confirmed the date, but she didn't try to stop me and simply let me go. I feel abandoned by her and think she should have helped me stay. Now I want to see her, and I am angry.

Name and address withheld

A Therapy is for the client, not the therapist. A good therapist will always be guided by their client's wishes.

Your therapist listened to you and honoured your request. Your decision to take a break may no longer be the right one for you, but I wonder what is stopping you from asking for an earlier session? You can then



discuss with her your feelings of abandonment and anger, and work through these issues. You may find they may resonate with earlier experiences. I'm sure she'll be happy to recommence with you now, or whenever you feel ready to return.

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 Your husband is right: it is her decision. As parents of adult children, all we can do is advise,

explain our concerns and then allow them to make their own informed decisions. I understand it wouldn't be your choice, but she will be choosing what's right for her. Whatever their age, children want to know their parents are there for them and will help them achieve their goals. Once you've said your piece, let her decide and then support her in whatever way she needs. It will be lovely for her to spend time with family, who will also be there for her.

Is it fair to give him money?

Q I have four adult children. Three are doing well and earning good money. Two are married, so they

have double incomes. The fourth is in the arts and is really struggling to make ends meet. We live in a small village, so he can't move in with us as he wouldn't find work here. We want to help him financially, but my husband says that we can't just give to one if we don't have the money to give to all four.

Geraldine, Dorset

A I think it's more about when you give them money, rather than choosing one over the other. Your son needs support now, so he can pursue his life, while the others don't. I wonder if you have a will – if you don't, now would be a good time to make one. Tell your fourth child he can have his share now, and be clear that the others will get the same amount of money when you and your husband are no longer alive. Whatever you decide, you will need advice from a legal professional before you follow your chosen path.

Water under THE BRIDGE

They were two hearts parted long ago –
was there any way back?

Millie?’ Russ
Howard stared in
amazement at the
black-and-white
Border collie tied to a post
outside the stationer’s. She
pricked her ears and wagged
her tail immediately, and licked
his hand as he bent down to
check the name on her collar...
Millie – phone 745 66770.

But it couldn’t be his Millie. She’d be – what – 20 years old by now? This dog was much younger, although identical in every way to the dog he’d left behind with Helen. She even had the same floppy ear. How odd that she had the same name as well.

He straightened up and looked around. The village of Hamworth hadn’t changed much in 12 years, although there was a coffee shop where there had been a butcher, and now a small supermarket instead of the dry-cleaner.

Helen had worked at the dry-cleaner on Saturdays, he remembered, saving her wages towards going to London.

Going to London was all the two of them had talked about when they were at school, once they discovered they shared the same ambition.

They were sitting against the fence next to the netball field, doing last-minute homework at the time.

‘I’m going to study fashion design,’ Helen said. ‘And when

I’ve got my diploma, I’m going to join a big fashion house.’

‘You’d have to be good to work for someone famous.’

‘I’m going to be brilliant! I’ll hammer down their doors and make them look at my portfolio. And I’ll open my own fashion studio and make stunning things for all the top people.’

Russ grinned. ‘Confidence is all! I’m also going to London, to be a journalist.’

‘But shouldn’t you work on a small paper first? Like the *Hamworth Chronicle*?’

‘No point in wasting time. I want to join one of the big national dailies and be where the action is. Work my way up to being a foreign correspondent.’

‘You’re very good at writing essays,’ she said critically. ‘I think you’d have a chance.’

‘And I’m sure you’re great at designing clothes,’ he said politely.

What a couple of innocent dreamers we were in those days, Russ thought now. It all seemed so simple then.

Millie whined softly and he grinned and bent down again, obligingly rubbing her tummy. It was uncanny how much she resembled his old dog.

He and Helen had heard the pup yelping in a drain one wet afternoon on the way back from

school. Russ had wrapped the dog in his blazer and taken her home. Helen had sadly admitted that her mother would never allow her to have a dog in their small flat.

‘We’ll share her,’ he said generously. ‘What shall we call her?’

‘She looks like a Millie,’ said Helen.

He had dried her off, and fed Millie warm milk and minced meat, and she grew into a friendly, intelligent animal that learnt to come at a whistle and sat when she was told to.

Walking Millie in Betley Wood became a routine for Russ and Helen, throwing sticks for her while they discussed everything under the sun.

They usually went as far as the oak tree that grew next to a little stream, and ate the sandwiches

that Helen brought, sharing them with Millie.

‘My favourite spot in the whole world,’ said Helen one afternoon, leaning back against the trunk of the oak.

‘You haven’t seen much of the world yet,’ laughed Russ. ‘There’ll be other good places in London.’

‘Nothing will ever be as pretty as this.’

The two of them had become inseparable and most of their school friends referred to them

as Rus ’n’ Helen.

Only, one afternoon, in their final year, Helen seemed unusually quiet.

‘Dogs are so lucky,’ she suddenly burst out. ‘They don’t have to worry about what they’ll do with their lives.’

‘I thought you’d applied to three London design colleges already? One of them is sure to accept you.’

‘I can’t go, Russ. My mum says she just can’t afford it.’

‘Couldn’t you try for a scholarship or something?’

She shook her head. ‘Anyway, I’m not good enough. Mum says designing should just be a hobby.’

‘Don’t be silly,’ he said, hugging her. ‘You’re the best. That dress you made for the disco was fabulous.’

Her lip trembled. ‘Mum wants me to go a typing course, said I could be earning money within six months. She’s not well, Russ, she can’t keep supporting me forever.’

‘But you can’t give up your dreams like that!’

‘I have to,’ she said quietly. ‘Not everything works out the way you want it.’

Russ was discovering that for himself. He’d applied for a job at every national newspaper and, after being ignored, had tried the smaller ones too, without any luck.

*‘You can’t
give up your
dreams’*



'My dad says I should go to uni and apply after that.'

'That's a good idea, really. Why don't you?'

He shrugged. 'Study for another three or four years... impossible! I want to start living in the real world.'

She gave him a watery smile. 'Maybe you should jump on a ship and sail away to China or somewhere!'

'Maybe I should,' he said soberly. 'Then I could become a travel journalist.'

In the end, that's almost what he did. His father knew someone who was sailing to Australia and was willing to take Russ along as a member of the crew.

'I'll have to work darned hard,' he told Helen. 'Learn to sail and navigate and everything. It's going to be amazing.'

'You'll have a wonderful experience. I'm going to miss you so much.'

They were sitting under their oak tree at the time, Millie's eyes alert for any crust from Helen's ham sandwiches.

Russ hugged Helen fiercely. 'It's only for six months. We sail

down the west coast of Africa and stop off at Cape Town, then sail to Sydney. I'll get some sort of casual work there and earn an air ticket home.'

'Six months is such a long time,' she said miserably. 'I'm happy for you, but sad for me. Who will I talk to while you're away?'

'Millie, of course,' he said. 'Could you look after her for me? Now that you and your mum have moved home?'

'Oh, Russ, yes!

Well, I'm sure she'll agree. The garden's pretty small but I'll take her for a walk every day.'

'Remember, I'll be back to claim her by July.'

'Promise to write to me often,' she said.

'I'll keep a diary, then post it back to you from Cape Town. And I'll write an article about my trip. Sell it to one of the big dailies...'

'I'll keep your diaries safe,' she said, her head on his shoulder. 'Our children can read them one day and see their

dad had wonderful adventures before he settled down.'

'Good idea.'

The day before Russ left, Millie moved in with Helen. Her basket, blanket and rubber ball went along with her, and were installed under the stairs in the tiny cottage.

And when Helen wet Millie's thick coat with her tears after Russ had kissed his final goodbye, she seemed to understand her misery and licked her hand in sympathy.

As Russ suggested, Helen had addressed her letters to *Poste Restante, Cape Town. To Await Arrival.*

When they tied up in Cape Town, Russ collected four letters from the main post office there and read them as he walked back to the boat. He was surprised to find that Helen, Millie, his parents and everything in his home village was already like another, very distant world.

Sailing down the coast in the company of four other men had been exciting. Even life-changing.

Russ had discovered the thrill of sailing before the wind, with huge swells and high winds making each day a battle of strength and skill. Crossing the equator, the wind had dropped,

and they'd drifted for a couple of days, their sails flapping uselessly. They were circled by a school

of dolphins, which swam and leapt in front of their bow, and flying fish had landed on the deck. At night, the sea seethed with florescence, covering the waves in sparkles beneath the huge, black sky ablaze with a million stars, brighter than any he'd ever seen.

'Wait till you get to Australia,' said the skipper. 'It's a great place. You've no need to rush

back home, so why not visit the outback and see the stars there? They're unbelievable.'

After the first day out of Portsmouth, Russ hadn't had time to write a diary, so he tried to write a long letter to Helen.

But it was impossible to put his feelings down on paper and the letter he wrote was stilted and dry, so he tore it up and tried again.

'Some travel writer I'd be,' he thought ruefully.

In the end, he bought three bright postcards and sent them to her with a few sentences on each...

Great place. Fantastic trip. Will write properly from Sydney, he scrawled. No time now. Lots of love and a hug for Millie.

And when they reached Sydney, his life seemed to take off in a hundred different directions. He met someone who was going to dive at the Great Barrier Reef so he joined him for a month. Then he heard that good money was to be earned shearing sheep, so he hitched a lift in a truck to a sheep station and worked there for two months.

He wrote to Helen at first, short letters that told her what a great time he was having and that he would stay a bit longer than he'd planned.

At the sheep station, it was impossible to post anything, so when he joined a group of Americans in their 4x4 heading for Darwin he sent her a note from there...

Not sure where I'll be heading next, he ended. I'll write when I get there! Give Millie a hug from me.

Four months later, when he'd met a girl called Sally and they were picking grapes together on a huge wine estate near Perth, he decided he'd explain when he saw Helen, next year some time.

Australia, New Zealand and America. Driving trucks, crewing

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

The letter he wrote was stilted and dry



on yachts, delivering parcels and just drifting around. For seven years he worked at whatever came his way, until finally he'd stopped in a town in Missouri in the US and landed a job as a copywriter in an advertising company.

At last he'd found the right job. He stayed in Logan Creek for eight years, writing copy for advertisements. He had a good life with a smart apartment and made some wonderful friends, but always felt something was missing. He'd met some nice girls too, but the image of Helen stayed in the back of his mind like a half-forgotten fairy tale, and no one he met measured up to his memory of her.

One night, alone in his room, he began to realise that he was never going to meet anyone like Helen. No one understood him the way she had, no one was as sweet and gentle and funny. He had a tremendous urge to talk to her, to explain how he felt and ask her forgiveness for letting her fade from his life. Beg her for a second chance.

'I was totally thoughtless and self-centred,' he thought bitterly, 'and being only 19 was no excuse.'

But Helen would probably never speak to him again, and he could hardly blame her. She

would be married by now, anyway, with children, and she most likely would have moved away from Hamworth.

So why was he back here, walking the streets of the village, hoping to catch a glimpse of a ghost from his past? It was pure nostalgia, and the sooner he had a cup of tea and drove back to London, the better.

He stopped rubbing Millie's tummy and stroked her head.

'Bye, Millie,' he said. 'You're a beautiful girl, aren't you?'

'Yes, she is,' said a clear voice behind him.

He spun round and looked into the bright blue eyes of the woman behind him. Helen.

'How nice to see you again, Russ.' Her voice was polite.

Russ couldn't breathe. He felt as if someone had punched his chest and his mouth went dry.

'I didn't think I'd meet you ever again,' he croaked, when he could finally speak.

'Why ever not? I haven't moved,' she said.

He swallowed. 'I – I've wanted to see you for so long, Helen. I wanted to explain. I'm sorry I didn't write.'

'Yes? Well, water under the

bridge,' she said briskly, busying herself with untying Millie's leash. 'I was sorry too, but I expect your exciting new life made it easy to forget. Your parents said you'd decided to stay in Australia for a bit.'

This was awful. Helen was like a stranger. Russ searched for something to bring them back to their old footing.

'Millie?' he said, looking at the dog, who'd sprung up at Helen's arrival and was leaning against her legs, golden eyes fixed on him.

'Oh. Yes. Our Millie died five years ago, I'm afraid.' Her voice grew gentle. 'She was 15. A good age, the vet said. I buried her in the woods where we used to walk, under our – the oak tree.'

'Thanks.'

'This is Millie's granddaughter, actually. She had a litter of pups soon after you left and I found homes for all of them, then when one of them produced puppies... I – I couldn't be without a dog.'

'And you called her Millie.'

'She's exactly like our Millie. She has a lovely temperament.'

'I have missed having a dog. I've missed going for walks.'

He wanted to add, 'I've missed you,' but Helen didn't look as though she wanted to hear that.

'You know, almost no one in America walks anywhere?'

'You've been in America?'

'Eight years. I'm a copywriter.' 'I didn't know.'

'And you, Helen? Did you become a secretary, after all?'

'Me? No!' Her eyes sparkled. 'I hated it. Actually, I'm running my own business. That's me, across the road.'

'Chez Helene? Exclusive Fashions?' he read out.

'People like the French touch, even though they know it's only me,' she smiled. 'I design the dresses, and I've five girls sewing for me.'

'That's wonderful! Really. So you made your dream come true.'

'It's not exactly London, but it will do,' she said. 'I'm very happy here.'

He glanced quickly at her left hand. No ring. She followed his gaze.

'Only Millie to answer to,' she said. 'As long as she gets her walk every afternoon, she's happy.'

'Dogs are lucky,' he said. 'They don't have to worry about what they're going to do with their lives.'

She acknowledged the memory with a little smile.

'They don't make the wrong choices,' he added.

'Everyone makes mistakes,' she said. 'Especially when they're young. Well, nice talking to you, Russ, I must be off. Back to the shop.'

'Helen, what time do you walk Millie?' he asked desperately. 'Do you think that I could come along with you?'

'You need a walk?' She was smiling more openly now and Russ sensed a faint crack in the cool wall of her reception.

'Yes, I do. A walk and a talk. With you.'

'What d'you say, Millie? Shall we let him come with us?' She addressed the dog and Millie thumped her tail.

'I'll take that as a yes,' he grinned in relief. 'Five o'clock? Betley Wood?'

'Five o'clock is fine.'

'See you then. And, well... thanks, Helen.'

It wasn't much, but he had to start somewhere, he thought. He couldn't expect her to just take up where they had left off. They were different people now, 12 years later. They would have to work at learning to know each other all over again.

And he intended to take it slowly, because this time, it was going to be forever.

THE END

Ginny Swart

*He glanced
at her
left hand*

Stroke of GENIUS

When it came to art, Sarah had a unique touch

Putting down her brush, Sarah held up the wet painting.

'What do you think, Leo?' The cat stretched and looked away.

'Can't say I blame you.'

She'd done her best to capture the view from the lounge window but failed miserably. The graceful silver birch, which stood in the middle of the lawn, looked more like a giant cactus, but it was too late to do anything about it. She'd spent most of the term working on it and the last thing she wanted was to put her picture on display, but she couldn't back out now. As soon as it was dry she had to hand it to her tutor.

It had all started when her friend Laura had persuaded her to join a local art group, 'Do come along. You already know some of the others – Dot, Joy, Cathy.'

Laura had run through a list of the friends she'd made since moving to the village.

'But I'm no good! I've not done any painting since leaving school,' she'd protested.

'That doesn't matter, we're mostly beginners, and anyway Gill – the tutor – is a great instructor. You'll find it relaxing.'

Relaxing sounded good. Sarah had had a stressful few months at work and eventually had been made redundant. Although she now had a job in the village shop, she needed something enjoyable to occupy her leisure time. Someone had

suggested Pilates or tai chi, but before she could commit herself, Laura had introduced her to Gill and the art group, and she'd found herself attending her first class.

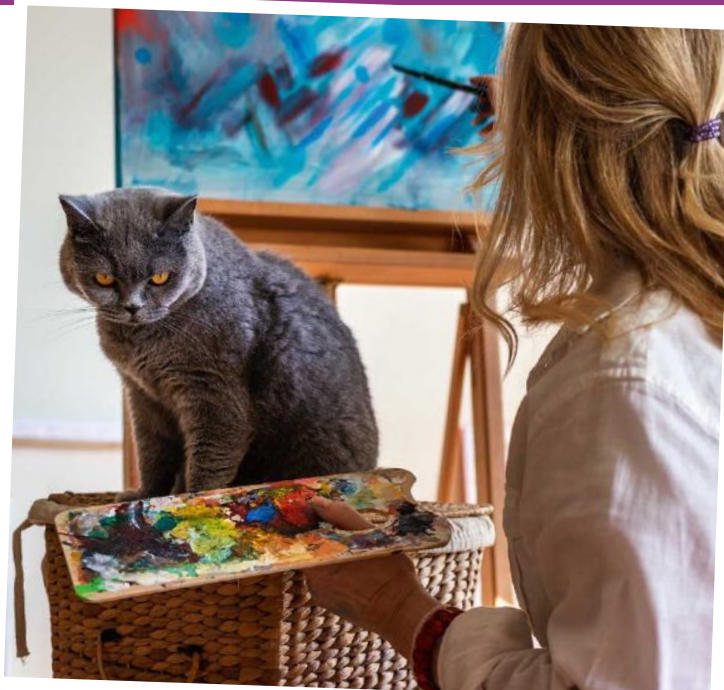
She had to admit she'd been pleasantly surprised. They'd made her welcome, and after the class, they'd invited her to coffee at the tea rooms on the high street.

The group really were mixed in terms of ability but Laura had already warned her about Beattie, known to the others as 'Queen Bee', who seemed to regard herself rather highly. However, Sarah acknowledged that 'there's always one' in every group and she wasn't going to let it put her off.

Towards the end of term, Gill surprised them all by announcing, 'You've all produced such good work over the last few weeks, I think your paintings deserve a wider audience. The tea rooms would be happy for us to mount a display on their back wall.'

Everyone was flattered, none more so than Beattie. The trouble was that by the following week, Gill had gone further and persuaded Basil Baker, a local art lecturer, to award a prize for the best painting. The judging would take place at 2pm on Saturday.

As she cycled over to the exhibition, Sarah realised she hadn't noticed which of



Beattie's paintings had been chosen for display. Perhaps one of her flamboyant abstract works or maybe her *Still Life with Butterfly*. That was a much safer option, and she'd been working on it for weeks.

Unfortunately, Gill seemed to be intimidated by Beattie's overconfidence and hadn't dared to tell her that the butterfly was completely out of proportion. It loomed menacingly over the bowl of fruit where it appeared to be

about to devour a grape.

In the tea rooms, Sarah joined Laura and a few of the others who were early and listening attentively to Basil Baker discussing the merits of *Red Tulips in Willow Pattern Vase*. He was explaining the use of light and shade. They all nodded thoughtfully.

'What's that meant to be?' asked Dot, as Basil turned his attention to the next canvas.

'It's Joy's landscape,' said Laura.

They all looked closely at the huge swirls of grey and white.

'It says it's *The River in Winter*,' said Sarah.

Dot sniffed. 'On a foggy day.'

As the clock struck two, Gill clapped her hands and said to Basil, 'Put us all out of our misery and announce the winner.'

Sarah noted a hopeful Beattie edging closer to Basil.

He thanked everyone for their efforts and said what a fine standard of work he'd seen. Then, to Sarah's amazement, he walked along and stopped in front of her painting. She was too overcome to hear all he said, but there was something about the 'importance of texture' and the 'wonderful use of etching and scratching in the foreground'.

After a smattering of applause, Sarah stepped forward to receive her prize. She looked around and smiled enigmatically. This was no time to explain that when she had gone to pick up the dried painting, her cat Leo had been asleep on it. Her efforts to disengage him had resulted in the impressionistic and interesting stippled effect that had so impressed the judge.

Sarah thanked Basil warmly and, as she cycled home, she made a mental note to have a go at tai chi next term.

THE END
Diane McKay

'Put us all out of our misery'

The History GIRLS

They were women united – and it was time for the revolution to begin

In the village of Barton Burnish, three women were feeling thoroughly fed up. Fed up with being spoken over at every meeting of the local history society and fed up with having their ideas dismissed out of hand. But if Maggie, Angela and Olivia – the three women in question – had anything to do with it, their voices wouldn't be silenced for much longer.

One Tuesday evening in late spring, society secretary Maggie Dawson walked down Long Lane towards the village hall, clutching her mother's old attaché case as if it contained the Crown Jewels. And in a way it did. Inside were careful plans to plant the first flag in their campaign for change to village life, which had seen decision-making in the hands of just a few for far too long. A change that her own mother had hoped for, but hadn't lived to see.

Such was her focus on the task ahead that Maggie – a keen gardener – barely glanced at the prize-winning alliums in the vicarage garden.

Angela Whitby, who had been waiting by the door of St Peter's church hall, gave Maggie a wave. 'Thought we'd go in together,' she mouthed. 'He's here.'

She pointed to an e-bike that was standing nearby, which everyone knew belonged to Sir Ralph Lockstone, history society

chairman and resident of the grand Lockstone Hall.

Inside, Ralph was alone at the head of the long trestle table. As he acknowledged Maggie's presence with a nod, he twiddled his father's signet ring.

Maggie glanced at the large black stone. Ralph's family had lived at Lockstone Hall for centuries, owned acres of farming land and treated the village like they owned that too. Leading the history society, as well as the parish council, had just become an extension of his position at the top of the village hierarchy. No one had ever questioned it.

But that was about to change, Maggie mused, glancing at Ralph's haughty profile as he busied himself with paperwork.

She smiled as Angela and Olivia took their seats between herself and Ralph.

Angela, a local historian, had an encyclopedic knowledge of every Barton Burnish scandal that had happened since 1823.

Next to her was retired schoolteacher Olivia Monkton, who had kept meticulous records on the village's flora and fauna for the past 40 years. She leant her walking stick against the table, arranging her notebook and pens before her.

The remaining six committee

members were men – among them naturalist Jonny Logan, and Clive Sweet, who, as the local postman, was the village's best source of gossip.

'Right,' Ralph began, looking around the group over a pair of half-moon spectacles that wouldn't have looked out of place in a Dickens novel. 'I'm sure, members, that you've all seen the minutes of the last meeting, so we'll begin with a vote.'

He gestured at Olivia. 'All in favour of Mrs Olivia Monkton's proposal to let the village-hall garden go wild, raise your hands. Personally, I find the whole idea a bit woke, as they say.' His mouth twitched and there were sniggers from further down the table. 'But members, this is a democracy.'

He gestured at Olivia. 'All in favour of Mrs Olivia Monkton's proposal to let the village-hall garden go wild, raise your hands. Personally, I find the whole idea a bit woke, as they say.' His mouth twitched and there were sniggers from further down the table. 'But members, this is a democracy.'

'This proposal is really important for wildlife,' she said, looking with exasperation at the male committee members, all of



whom were attempting to avoid her eye. 'It has proved a great success in Little Burnish. You all know this, and surely you must agree, Mr Logan, being such a nature lover?'

Blushing to the roots of his scant ginger hair, Jonny Logan muttered something that sounded like 'Yes, that's true', before a glance from Ralph made him shrink back into his chair.

'Three for the motion and seven against,' said Clive Sweet, glaring at Jonny.

'Motion denied,' Ralph declared. 'And please make a note, Maggie, that in my opinion, this kind of childish nonsense shouldn't even be discussed under the auspices of the history society.'

At this, Olivia, who had consulted the society's constitution and found that the village-hall grounds were indeed part of its remit, opened her mouth to object, but Ralph cut across her. 'Next on the agenda...'

'No!' said Maggie. 'This ridiculous decision is the final straw.' She nodded to Angela and Olivia, who both smiled grimly. As one, they rose to their feet.

Everyone turned to stare, and someone muttered, 'Sit down.'

'This decision is the final straw'



Olivia interrupted. 'But that ends as of today.'

'Men are more than welcome to join the History Girls as associative members if they wish,' Maggie went on. 'And with us, every application will be considered on its merits. You only admitted Angela, Olivia and myself to this society because our late husbands were members. And we have never been taken seriously. Angela and Olivia

know more about the history and genealogy of this region than any of you, but you have never once asked for their input.'

It was during the silence which followed this statement that Maggie extracted several pieces of paper from the case. The first was a carefully researched timeline of the society's meetings, highlighting all the moments when the women's suggestions had been totally ignored.

As the men stared at them open-mouthed, Angela picked up a second document – a list of important local artefacts missing from the public archive on display at the community centre and known to have been kept at Lockstone Hall for generations.

Tapping the list with her pen, Angela said, 'You will return these to public view and we will make them accessible to everyone.'

Ralph's face darkened. 'You can't – you have to abide by society protocol!'

'The national association disagrees, Ralph. And in my view, protocol often only benefits the privileged.'

'We're done with just sitting on the sidelines,' said Olivia.

Within weeks, the History Girls group became a force to be reckoned with. They held meetings that were attended by new as well as established residents, and once the missing historical items had been returned – more than even they had imagined – Maggie set about photographing and digitising them.

Olivia organised lectures on women's roles in village history that drew attention from local papers. Angela ran workshops in local genealogy and historical documents, which had been kept locked away at Lockstone Hall, and revealed vivid insights into village life down the ages.

The men of the original society could only look on as the History Girls' meetings overflowed with interest from both sexes. Even Ralph's elderly father expressed admiration for their organisational skills

– much to his son's disgust – and insisted on a front-row seat at the History Girls' meetings.

To add insult to Ralph's perceived injury, Jonny Logan had been the first to sign up as a volunteer when Olivia set up birdwatching walks.

On one particularly glorious Tuesday evening in midsummer, the growing History Girls' committee, led by Angela, hosted a lecture entitled 'The real history of Barton Burnish'. This took in the moving and sometimes amusing stories of women who had lived in the community, from the little-known washerwomen's guild in the 19th century to female academics who had influenced government policy.

Angela was thrilled to see how many children had been brought along – thanks to Olivia drumming up support at the primary school – and when she

opened the floor for questions, nearly every hand in the room went up.

But for Maggie, the highlight of that evening was seeing Clive Sweet and Ralph Lockstone lurking at the back of the lecture. When Ralph, still wearing his bike helmet, stalked out after 10 minutes, she noticed Clive taking a seat next to Jonny and couldn't resist a grin of triumph.

At half-time, when the tea and custard creams were being distributed, Maggie popped outside for a breath of fresh air. Turning, she felt someone tap her arm and was surprised to discover it was Ralph, attempting an ingratiating smile. When he asked her to consider forming a joint committee with the original society, most of those inside could hear the laughter which came in reply.

A year later, Maggie, sitting in the vicarage garden with Angela and Olivia, reflected on what they had achieved in Barton Burnish. The sun glistened on the rosemary and mint, and the alliums stood proudly in the beds. She could almost hear her mother's voice, pleased and approving of what they'd done together.

The women clinked glasses. 'We did it,' Maggie said softly.

'And we will keep doing it,' Angela replied. 'The question is, what shall we tackle next, the all-male cricket club?'

'Why not?' said Olivia. 'I'm certain I can drum up some support for a girls' team.'

The women grinned at each other. They were far more than just a society. They were a movement – a reminder that a quiet revolution often begins with a few determined, like-minded women and something as mundane as an old attaché case.

Their work was far from over, but the village of Barton Burnish had never felt more alive.

THE END
Sam Hendley

'We've never been taken seriously'

Candid CAMERA

An old school pal helped Rachel to see things differently

Rachel! Is it really you? I turned around, but didn't recognise the tall, good-looking guy. 'It's Daniel, from school! Dan Simpson.'

'Of course!' I stared into his deep brown eyes, remembering that I'd had a bit of a crush on him. 'How are you, Dan?'

'I'm fine. Been away at uni, but I've got a job back here. How about you?'

'I work at Hayfields. But I'm living with Mark now, Mark Webster.'

I was taken aback by Dan's response. 'Mark? Surely not! You can't be...'

'Hey, he's all grown up now!' I giggled. 'He was a bit of a nerd at school, but he's changed a lot. I guess we all have.'

'I suppose so,' he muttered.

'We should all go for a drink sometime,' I said. 'Mark's working this afternoon, but... Got your mobile? I'll give you my number, and Mark's. He'd love to see you again.'

'Yeah, I bet he would!' Dan said, rather sarcastically.

I wondered why Dan acted so strangely when I mentioned Mark. They had been in rival groups at school. But that was years ago – surely they could let bygones be bygones?

When I got home, I felt sad that Mark was at work on a Saturday. That often happened.

Mark was eager for promotion, so when his boss said, 'Jump', he jumped.

After lunch I got a call from Dan. 'You said Mark was working this afternoon,' he began. 'So I wondered if you'd like to visit the local history museum, near the park. Have you been there?'

Was this a come-on? Or was he just being friendly because he knew I was on my own?

'Er... no, I haven't been there. It's very kind of you, Dan, but...'

'Well if you've never been, there's something you really must see!' he enthused. 'And it'll be perfect, on a sunny afternoon like this. Do come!'

I must say I was curious. What was this mysterious thing he wanted to show me? I'd once asked Mark to go to the museum with me, but he'd said that history was boring.

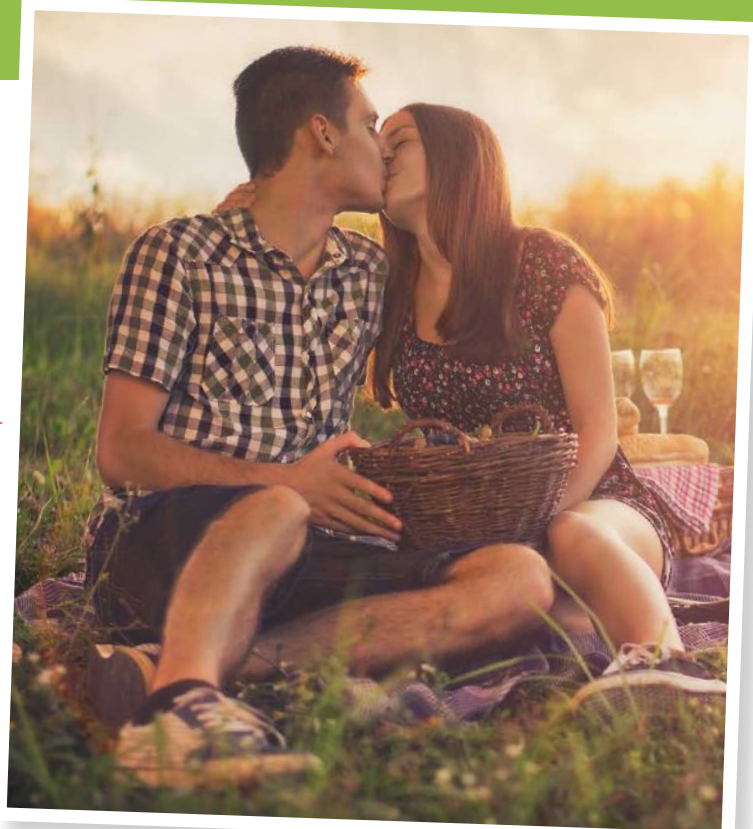
'All right. But I must get back by four o'clock, in time to cook Mark's dinner.' 'That's fine. I'll meet you at the park gate in half an hour, OK?'

As I approached the park, I could see Dan waiting. He did look good, in his jeans and open-necked shirt. He gave a gorgeous smile as I approached.

'Rachel, I'm so glad you came. And I think you will be too.'

'I'm intrigued!' I admitted, as we walked towards the Victorian building.

'You deserve someone better'



Dan led me up the grand staircase to the top of the museum, into a small dark room. There was only one thing there – a round table, on to which images were projected through a periscope, from what Dan called the 'lantern' in the roof. There were scenes that changed as you turned a handle.

'This, Rachel, is a camera obscura,' he explained. 'The Victorians were crazy about them. What you see here is an exact reflection of what's going on outside.'

'I can see the path we came up!' I exclaimed. 'And that big oak tree, and the rose bed...'

As my eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, I could see moving figures. A man throwing a stick for his dog, two boys riding bikes...

Dan started turning the handle. 'Look over here,' he said, pointing to the right. 'See that couple having a picnic on the grass...'

Something more than just curiosity gripped me. I gasped in horror as the man's image grew more recognisable. He had his arm around the girl and, as I stared incredulously

at the shadowy scene, they shared a passionate kiss.

'It's Mark!' I exclaimed, horrified. 'He's supposed to be at work! And who is *she*?'

'Marianne, my sister,' Dan said, his voice filled with sympathy. 'I'm so sorry, Rachel. I was going to tell you, but I thought you wouldn't believe me unless you saw it with your own eyes. Marianne knows nothing about you, Rachel. She thinks Mark loves her!'

The dark room, with its cruel slideshow, was hateful to me now. I wanted to run home and cry my eyes out. I made for the stairs, but Daniel's strong arms pulled me close.

'You deserve someone better than Mark,' he murmured. 'A man who will never cheat on you like that.'

He took my hand and led me towards the stairs. 'Come on, Rach, let's get the squidgiest cream cakes we can find. Nothing like comfort food at a time like this, is there?'

'Now there's a man after my own heart!' I smiled weakly.

His eyes lit up. 'Yes, I think I probably am!'

THE END
Viv Doyle

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The Blue Danube - Vienna, Budapest & Salzburg

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Woman's Weekly

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Puzzle

Code cracker

American actor Katie Holmes once revealed she used skincare products containing which product? Each letter of the alphabet has been replaced by a number from 1 to 26. When you've completed the grid, the shaded squares will spell out the two-word answer. We've given you five letters to start you off.

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

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

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

TIME

Wordsearch

The German word for psychiatrist or psychotherapist, **seelenkempner**, translates as a what for the soul? The answer is the one missing from the grid.

- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| BED | GARDENER | MOP |
| CONFESSOR | HOLIDAY | PLUMBER |
| DECORATOR | JUDGE | SEWER |
| FARMER | MASSAGE | SPA |
| FLUSH | MECHANIC | WINDOW |

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

Sudoku

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

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

Big quiz

The answers to all these general knowledge questions – except one – are in the grid in various directions. Work out which answer is missing. The answers in each section are in alphabetical order.

The silver screen: Queen

- 1 What is the title of the recent movie about the rock group Queen, starring Rami Malek as Freddie Mercury and whose title is one of their iconic songs? (8,8)
- 2 What is the surname of the British actor Olivia ..., who received an Oscar for her performance as Queen Anne in 2018 movie *The Favourite* and who plays HRH Queen Elizabeth II from season three of *The Crown*? (6)

- 3 Which acting Dame played Queen Elizabeth I in *Shakespeare in Love* and Queen Victoria in both *Mrs Brown* and *Victoria & Abdul*? (4,5)

Where in the world? King

- 4 Which south eastern US state, whose capital is Atlanta, was named after the British king who reigned from 1727 to 1760? (7)

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

- 5 The capital of which Caribbean island, due south of Cuba, is Kingston? (7)
- 6 King's Lynn, named in 1537 after Henry VIII, is in which East Anglian county which also includes Norwich and Great Yarmouth? (7)

Duke

- 7 What was the surname of the great jazz pianist, composer and band leader whose first name was Edward

- but who was known to all as Duke ...? (9)
- 8 Which Hollywood actor, known for his cowboy roles in movies such as *Stagecoach*, *The Searchers* and *True Grit*, was nicknamed Duke? (4,5)
- 9 Royals Harry and Meghan are the Duke and Duchess of which county? (6)

Count

- 10 According to the well-known proverb, which animals should

- you not count before they are hatched? (8)
- 11 What is the name of the monstrous Count ... created by author Bram Stoker for his 1897 Gothic horror novel? (7)
- 12 Royals Edward and Sophie are the Earl and Countess of which region, whose name is taken from an old Anglo-Saxon kingdom? (6)

Baron

- 13 What two names complete the name of the comedian and actor Sacha ..., who created the comic characters Ali G and Borat? (5,5)
- 14 In which sitcom did Lynda Baron first play the character Nurse Gladys Emmanuel, opposite Ronnie Barker's Albert Arkwright, before reprising the role in the sitcom's sequel? (4,3,5)
- 15 What 'Baron' was the name given to the World War One German flying ace Manfred von Richthofen, who was shot down by Snoopy in a 1960s novelty song? (3,5)

Circle time

Scientists have discovered that which part of the human body is now 10% smaller than it was 20,000 years ago in the Stone Age? Fit the words into the grid, then read down the letters in the shaded circles for the answer.

- | | | |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 3 LETTERS | ISN'T | 6 LETTERS |
| ALE | NEAT | KIDNEY |
| CAD | ODES | 7 LETTERS |
| LAP | OWED | ABDOMEN |
| NET | SPAN | DENTATE |
| 4 LETTERS | 5 LETTERS | KNUCKLE |
| ACRE | BRAKE | 8 LETTERS |
| ARAB | DECOR | NECK BONE |
| BUST | NACHO | PANCREAS |
| EARN | OPERA | 10 LETTERS |
| EKES | SYNOD | COLLARBONE |
| EPEE | | |



Puzzle TIME

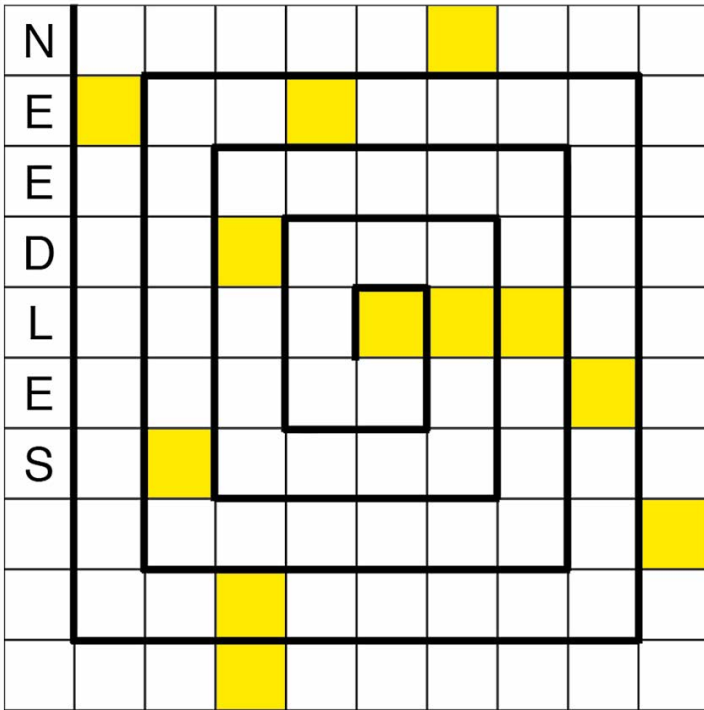
Spiral xword

In 1952, what was the first toy ever to be advertised on TV?

The answer to each clue (apart from the first) begins with the last letter of the preceding answer. The shaded squares will spell out the three-word answer.

- 1 Pine tree 'leaves' (7)
- 2 A church's picture-window material (7,5)
- 3 Head-over-heels roll (10)
- 4 Great victory (7)
- 5 Sleeping through winter (11)
- 6 G&T, spelt out (3,3,5)
- 7 French brandy (6)
- 8 Queen of Egypt who had an affair with Julius Caesar (9)

- 9 Genuine, real (9)
- 10 Sweet ..., conker-like food, used in stuffing (8)
- 11 Hand-held percussion instrument with cymbals around the side (10)
- 12 Worker who helps sell your house? (6,5)



Fill me in

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. **Clue: Tough band of fibrous tissue, serving to connect a muscle with a bone.**

YOU CAN WORK IT OUT...

* There are more puzzles to tackle on pages 90-92.

Second Greek letter	List of food options	Prickly desert plants	Hen's produce	Authentic	___ Kent, Superman's alias
		Water noise			
Limited amount	Curious	Make a request	Mountain ash	Sea dogs	Unit of length
			Second attempt		
In the ___, eventually	Dancing club			Alias (inits)	
		Terrible trials	Offends, disgusts	Small dots of land	Spike of corn
Abridges	Animal lead	Pensive poem	Elevated		
State further		Fall into water	___ Stone, Dutch model	Came up	Take on as your own
					Tell fibs
Stay the night (5,4)	Without exception		Variety of whist		
Snack item	Disinclined			Drink daintily	
			Encounter		

Half and half

On which UK island is there a pub that never closes?
Cross out a letter in each square to get a grid filled with words. The uncrossed out letters in the shaded squares give the answer.

YOU CAN WORK IT OUT...

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

Answers

Big quiz CHICKENS

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

Fill me in TENDON

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

Word search PLUMBER

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

Code cracker SNAIL SLIME

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

Spiral xword MR POTATO HEAD

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

Half and half LUNDY

G	L	E	N	S
I		N		U
L	I	N	E	N
D		U		N
S	H	I	N	Y

Sudoku

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

STYLE *for less*

Shop the latest looks and buys from your favourite stores

MORRISONS



Daffodil printed
fleece throw, £5



Spring Days rabbit
cushion, £10



Daisy embossed glass
tumblers, £7 for two



Mini handled
ceramic
vase, £6



Daffodil Meadows
candle, £8



Ditsy floral
bedspread, £18

Daisy dinner plates, £4 each,
side plates, £3 each, pasta
bowls, £4 each, cereal bowls,
£3 each, dip bowls, £2 each,
rattan tray, £10, blush ribbed
vase, £10, mango wood
bowl, £20, floral oven glove,
£5, and tea towel, £5 for a
set of three, all Morrisons



Stacey Solomon hydrangea towels, from £5 for a hand towel, soap dispenser, £6, green stem vase, £9, soap dish, £4, tumbler, £5, and bath mat, £12, all George Home



GEORGE HOME

Ducks bath mat, £12



Hydrangea throw, £15



Flower side plate, £4



Blue artificial florals in cream vase, £6



Duck mug, £3



Duck-shaped cushion, £12



Cushions, from £50 each, Leon quilted bedspread, £144, and washed linen bedding in Denim and Pink Clay, from £40 for pair of standard pillowcases, all John Lewis

JOHN LEWIS



Rocella hand-painted table lamp, £160



Mini stoneware vases, £35 for three



Triangle geo indoor/outdoor cushion, £18



Banco bedding set, from £65



Pillar one-drawer bedside table, £129



Mini check throw, £50

Mrs Hinch photo frame, £1.99, faux bouquet, £6.99, candles, from £3.99 each, blue fringed throw, £19.99, and cushions, from £12.99 each, all Home Bargains



HOME BARGAINS

Noughts and crosses shell decoration, £2.99



Vases, from £3.99 each



Duvet Day diffuser, £4.99



Mrs Hinch natural fringed throw, £19.99



Shell storage box, £4.99



Mrs Hinch wooden styling board, £7.99

Daggsalvia bedding set, from £15, Fjunktlocka cushion cover, £4, Hornmal throw, £13, Tånebro side table, £17, and Talkning bench with storage, £129, all Ikea; other items, stylist's own



IKEA



Strandlummer bedding set, from £15



Tofsand lantern, £5



Morkulla scented candle, £3



Fjällfryle cushion, £19



Djurtränare basket, £10



Doftrips vases, £7 for three

COMPILED BY: ESME CLEWY



VERY



120cm real touch olive tree in cream pot, £75



Round woven place mats, £12 for four



Large casserole pan, £65



Concrete candleholders, £28 for two



Lindley compact sideboard, £169



Small rattan table lamp, £50

Mikah three-seater sofa, £899, texture stitch cushion, £17, Eleanor woven cushion, £14, Liesl cushion, £22, Mikah footstool, £349, ribbed table lamp, £90, molten vase, £22, and marble wood tray, £55, all Michelle Keegan for Very

Lovely LOAF CAKES

Make an easy sweet treat for the long weekend

**PER
SERVING**
637 cal, 34g
fat, 21g sat fat,
82g carbs

Orange drizzle loaf with blueberries

This easy all-in-one cake is a breeze and has a light yet fudgy texture.

SERVES 8 PREP 20 mins

COOK 50 mins to 1 hr

- * 200g caster sugar
- * 200g salted butter, softened
- * 200g self-raising flour
- * 150g natural yogurt
- * 3 medium free-range eggs
- * ½tsp cinnamon
- * 100g blueberries, plus extra to serve

FOR THE DRIZZLE

- * Juice 2 oranges
- * 50g caster sugar

FOR THE BUTTERCREAM

- * 100g salted butter, softened
 - * 200g icing sugar, sifted
 - * Finely grated zest ½ orange
- YOU WILL NEED**
- * 2lb/900g loaf tin, fully lined

1 Heat the oven to 160C Fan/Gas 4. Using an electric mixer, mix the sugar, butter, flour, yogurt, eggs and cinnamon. Fold in 75g blueberries. Spoon the mixture into the tin, then poke the remaining 25g

blueberries on top. Bake for 50 mins to 1 hr, or until a skewer comes out clean.

2 For the drizzle, mix the orange juice and sugar. Use a skewer to poke holes in the top of the hot cake and douse it with the drizzle. Cool in the tin.

3 For the buttercream, cream the ingredients until smooth. Spread on top or serve alongside the cake.

COOK'S TIP

If transporting, take it sliced and serve the buttercream on the side.

PER SERVING
480 cal, 29g fat, 15g sat fat, 47g carbs



Caramel swirl pecan cake

This sumptuous loaf cake is laced with delicious surprise pockets of caramel sauce.

SERVES 10

PREP 20 mins

COOK 45-50 mins

- * 175g butter, softened
- * 175g golden caster sugar
- * 3 large free-range eggs
- * ¼tsp vanilla extract
- * 1-2tbsp milk
- * 100g ground almonds
- * 125g self-raising flour
- * ½ x 397g tin Carnation Caramel

FOR THE TOPPING

- * 250g full-fat soft cheese
- * 80g light soft brown sugar
- * Toasted pecans, to decorate

YOU WILL NEED

- * 2lb/900g loaf tin, fully lined

1 Heat the oven to 160C Fan/Gas 4. Cream the butter and sugar together

until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in the eggs, then fold in the vanilla extract, milk, almonds and self-raising flour.

2 Spoon the mixture into the tin, intermittently adding spoonfuls of caramel. Drag a knife through the mixture to swirl. Bake for 45-50 mins until well risen and springy to the touch. Cool in the tin.

3 For the topping, mix the soft cheese and brown sugar together, and spread over the top of the cake. Top with toasted pecans.

COOK'S TIP

For a fruity effect, swap the caramel for spoonfuls of jam.

Olive oil rosemary loaf

Bursting with flavour, this is the perfect companion loaf to a cheeseboard.

SERVES 4 PREP 20 mins

COOK 50 mins

- * 200g gluten-free white bread flour
 - * 1tbsp fine sea salt
 - * 1tbsp baking powder
 - * 284ml buttermilk
 - * 3 medium free-range eggs, lightly beaten
 - * 2tbsp olive oil
 - * 25g green olives, pitted and sliced
 - * 1tsp chopped rosemary leaves, plus 1 sprig, leaves removed
 - * 2tbsp grated Parmesan
- YOU WILL NEED**
- * 2lb/900g loaf tin, fully lined

1 Heat the oven to 160C Fan/Gas 4. Put the flour, salt and baking powder in the bowl of a stand mixer.

Add the buttermilk, eggs and oil, and mix with the dough hook or beater, to make a smooth batter.

2 Add the olives, chopped rosemary and half the Parmesan. Pour the mixture into the tin, and sprinkle over the rosemary leaves and remaining Parmesan. Bake for 50 mins, until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack.

COOK'S TIP

The buttermilk can be replaced with soya milk, and the Parmesan can be omitted to make this loaf vegan-friendly.

PER SERVING
349 cal, 14.5g fat, 4g sat fat, 42g carbs

Gluten free



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Towel DAY

How had she become the coolest grandma in town?



Although 25 May had dawned bright and sunny, there was a decided nip in the air. I had been running late to meet my granddaughter Sophie, so it was only when I reached the bus stop that I realised I'd picked up a towel instead of my cardigan! Having lots of things in my favourite shade of turquoise isn't without its dangers.

Tempted as I was to go back, being on time for coffee with Sophie was more important. Her confidence is currently low. Looking like she'd been stood up wouldn't help.

The book club ladies might be amused by my unusual accessory when I met them later, but I wasn't worried. It wouldn't be the first time I'd accidentally given someone a laugh.

Sophie grinned when she saw me.

I was expecting a question regarding the towel draped over my arm. Instead she said, 'You're so cool, Gran!'

'I do my best.' Not knowing the reason for a compliment is no reason not to accept it.

My instinct was to compliment her in return, but her outfit briefly made it difficult to think of anything positive to say. The garment had a frilly

neckline, puffy sleeves and what I believe is a bubble hem. It was as though the manufacturer wanted to use up as much material as possible. Maybe they really had that intention, as the striking design wouldn't be to everyone's taste.

Over coffee, Sophie said, 'I wish I took after you.'

By then I'd recovered from the sight of her dress. 'I've always thought you did. You're pretty and charming, and a nice person! I'm not biased – she really is.'

'You're all of those things, Gran. I've got your beautiful eyes, but I'm not like you in lots of ways.'

Clearly something was bothering her, so I invited her to elaborate. 'Oh?' 'I'm fat.' 'You are not! You're curvy and would look lovely in a nice shift dress.'

'Instead of what I'm actually wearing? Yeah, it was stupid of me to buy this just because it's fashionable.'

Finally, I understood the odd choice of clothing. I had read 'voluminous' was the latest trend, but had fortunately not encountered it in the wild.

'It wasn't stupid, just not the best choice for you. Sophie, love, I wish you wouldn't

keep running yourself down. If you're not careful, you'll start believing it.'

So that was what was behind her loss of confidence. Well, it probably wasn't just Sophie doing the running down. Teenage girls weren't always kind to each other.

'You're a lovely young woman who needs to concentrate on her good points. If you see them yourself, then others will. If you look for negatives, you're likely to find some.'

'I don't need to look very hard. I'm...'

I cut her off before she could list her perceived faults. 'Whatever you feel your flaws may be, you don't need to bring them to other people's attention. Either try to fix them, or ignore them. Or better yet, turn them into a positive.'

'Easy for you to say. You're slim and elegant and cool.'

'You don't think I'm a skinny old lady who wears boring clothes and is overly concerned about what people think?'

'No, of course not!'

She looked thoughtful for a moment. 'I see what you mean. If I was to lose weight, the mean girls might call me skinny instead of slim.'

'That's quite likely.'

'And I guess you've learnt which clothes suit you and stick with those styles, rather than wearing fashionable stuff that doesn't suit you?'

'I like to think so, yes.'

'You're not overly concerned, just prepared for things,' Sophie continued. 'Taking an umbrella isn't pessimism that it'll rain, just determination not to let bad weather spoil the day.'

If only she saw herself in the same light as she viewed me! 'Why did you say I was cool when we met?'

'Because you're carrying a towel on Towel Day.'

'But I have no idea what Towel Day is.'

'Oh! It's a tribute to the author Douglas Adams. He wrote *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, which is amazing. His fans carry around a towel on 25 May.'

'And the towel thing is in the book, is it?'

'Yeah. I'll lend you my copy – if I can borrow your towel?'

As she sauntered away from the cafe, with the towel over her arm, I could see her confidence was back. I almost wished I'd picked up two towels that morning, so I could arrive with one and impress the ladies at the book group.

THE END
Patsy Collins

**Something
was
bothering
her**

Swiss wine WANDERINGS



Stroll through the vineyards of Lavaux

Chris Morley follows delicious trails through sun-drenched vineyards

This is the area of the three suns,' says guide and winegrower Gundi, who, with an energetic sweep of her arm, takes in sinuous rows of neon-green vines clinging to the slopes around Lake Geneva. 'The first is the sun in the sky, the second is the light reflected from the lake and the third is the warmth from the stone terraces in the vineyards,' she explains.

I'm standing on a hill above Chexbre village, a 15-minute

train journey from Montreux. Called the 'balcony of Geneva', this is the heart of Lavaux, a UNESCO World Heritage wine-growing area. We're walking part of the Great Wine Trail (Route des Grand Crus), linking medieval wine villages from Saint-Saphorin to Lutry. The path wends through family-run plots, many no bigger than a garden, with entrances flanked by roses. Like a canary in the coal mine, these blooms flag up to wine-growers which pests are prevalent.

Ancient terraces

Lavaux is as beautiful as it is productive, and the walk has many resting points where you can take in the spectacular lake and alpine scenery. Information boards share details about the area – for instance, the terraces were dug and planted by monks in the 12th century and have since been maintained by 40 generations of growers.

The beauty of the wine routes is that you can walk as much or as little as you fancy. You are never far from public transport

or a hospitable cave to dive into for a tasting. Waving goodbye to Gundi, I swap sharp inclines for a smooth cruise, boarding a Belle Epoque paddle steamer at Cully quayside. Taking a seat in the wood-panelled dining room, I watch the views roll past as I sip wines grown in the vineyards I've just passed – a light, almondy Chasselas and velvet-smooth D ezaley.

Chateau d'Aigle

My cruise ends back in Montreux, but my wine



The Chateau d'Aigle is now a museum of wine



Go wine-tasting at one of the many small vineyards near Ollon



Take a paddle steamer
across Lake Geneva

wanderings are far from over. Keen to explore how different landscapes shape the flavours in my glass, I take a short train ride to Aigle. The town's centrepiece is a stone bastion, the 14th-century Chateau d'Aigle, which served as a prison and poorhouse before becoming a museum of wine. Within its thick-walled rooms, a series of galleries uncovers the region's wine-growing history, and the complexities of growing and blending. From there, you can peer out on a sea of vineyards lapping the surrounding foothills.

Around the corner from the castle, I join a group visiting Veillon au Cloître (veillon-aucloitre.ch). Its convivial manager, Mark, shows us around the organic vineyard that fans out from a 17th-century villa. Mark makes around 30,000 bottles a year, sold to local restaurants and private customers. In the cool fermentation room, we see the huge barrels where the grapes are processed and aged.

The tour has whetted my appetite, so we decamp to the tasting room to sample a selection of wines, including a rosé and a sparkling. Tastings take place here every week, with a few different wines for around £14 per person. And if there's something you like, you can buy it directly – you won't find these wines anywhere else.

Ollon village

From Aigle, follow the yellow signs for the Vineyard Trail (Sentier des Vignes) that leads to Ollon. The path is less than 5km long and passes through

the undulating Vaudois Alps. At Ollon, I meet fifth-generation grower (and former Swiss wrestling champ) Harald, who heads up Domaine de Trécord (trecord.ch/home-en). On his small plot, he experiments with different grape varieties, partly to create something new and special, but also to outwit the natural forces that assail winegrowers here. Last year, the April frost destroyed many grapes, while mildew and a new enemy, the Japanese beetle, also threaten a good harvest.

We sit in a snug, pine-clad tasting room or *carnotzet* – 'a place to sit and rebuild the world', says Harald. Before us are plates of flutes (pastry twists), wafer-thin ham and a Jenga tower of Gruyère cheese. Sipping glasses of Chasselas and Gamereau, under the photograph of Harald's moustachioed grandfather, a police officer-cum-winegrower, the world really does seem a better place.

BOOK IT

* Swiss flies directly to Geneva; swiss.com. From there, Montreux is a little over an hour's train ride or drive.

* Double rooms at Hotel Mona cost from £243, including breakfast; mona-montreux.ch

* Double rooms at Hotel Viu in Villars-sur-Ollon cost from £185, including breakfast; hotelviu.ch

Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, South Africa

On the eastern side of Cape Town's iconic Table Mountain, the area around Kirstenbosch has been inhabited for more than 2,000 years, though it only became a national botanical garden in 1913. Remnants from an historic farm were combined with newly planted cycads, protea and an arboretum, with local stone incorporated into the landscape. A wander around its 1,305 acres is the ideal way to spend a morning, before scaling Table Mountain by cable car to compare the wild fynbos landscapes.

* **Entry £11, sanbi.org. Nine-night Cape Town holidays from £915 per person, including flights and accommodation; onthebeach.co.uk**



GARDEN adventures

Been inspired by the RHS Chelsea Flower Show or a simple local garden display? These getaways are bloomin' marvellous

Grenada

The 'spice isle' of the Caribbean is known for its tropical gardens. Wrapped around a century-old home, the Tower Estate (thetowerestategrenada.com) has guided tours through vibrant heliconias, bougainvillea, ginger lilies and bromeliads. A regular exhibitor at the Chelsea Flower Show, its most impressive specimens are found in private gardens, accessed by tour operators. Time your visit with the inaugural Grenada Flower Festival in November, and you'll get floral installations, specialised workshops and one-off culinary experiences.

* **11 days, including hotels, some meals, activities, transfers and international flights, from £3,695 per person; brightwaterholidays.com**



See pink ginger flowers (right) at the Tower Estate, Grenada



Alhambra, Spain

Recognised by UNESCO with roots dating back to the 12th century, the world-famous Alhambra, as well as its adjoining Generalife palace and garden complex, is a plant enthusiast's dream. With reflective pools and shady corners, trim hedges and sculpted fountains – plus draping palms and benches for

WORDS: ALICIA MILLER. PHOTOS: ALAMY, GETTY, TOURISM WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

Wander round the botanical gardens under Table Mountain



Japan

Filled with moss-covered rocks, elegant teahouses, koi ponds and cherry blossom, Japan's gardens are as unique as they are beautiful. Enjoy a holiday taking in the country's three famous 'great gardens' with expert guides who can explain every last detail. With origins in the 17th century, Kenroku-en in Kanazawa is defined by its immaculate flowering trees and variety of unique water features. Kairaku-en in Mito is carpeted by more than 3,000 plum trees, making it especially beautiful in



Take in the water features of Kenroku-en or the cherry blossom at Ryoanji (inset)

late winter and early spring. Koraku-en in Okayama, meanwhile, has spacious lawns, tea and rice fields, and even an aviary. Don't miss Ryoanji in Kyoto, either – Japan's famous

rock garden presents a pristine scene adjacent to a Zen temple. *** 13-night Gardens of Japan trip, including accommodation and transfers, from £3,334 per person; insidejapantours.com**

Around the world!

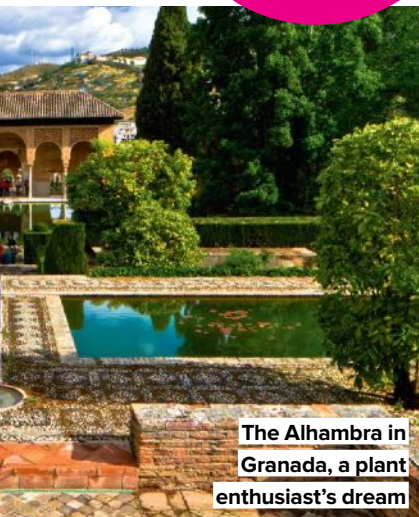
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Eden Project, Cornwall

Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, the Eden Project wows with its vast transparent domes, home to tropical and temperate plants from around the world. Visit now, and you can catch the 100,000 spring bulbs planted to celebrate the landmark anniversary, a quarter-century since the site was transformed from a disused quarry. There are also guided tours, regular cultural and art events, and the chance to find thrills on a zip wire that sails over the lush grounds. If that's not a garden adventure, what is?

*** Entry £35.50 (includes a year of unlimited access and daily tours); edenproject.com**

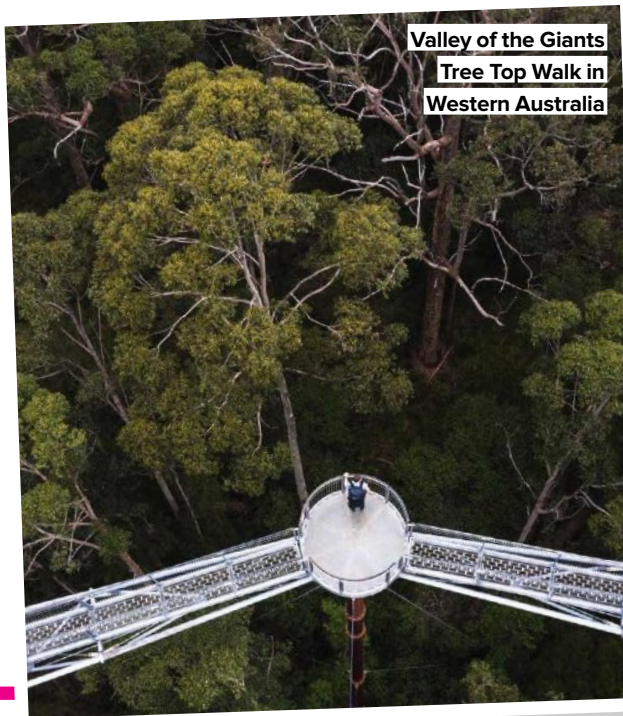
Enjoy an adventure at the Eden Project, which turns 25 this year



The Alhambra in Granada, a plant enthusiast's dream

kicking back in the sunshine – there's enough to explore here to fill the better part of a day. Then return to Granada, where you can be inspired by historic orchard gardens such as Carmen de la Victoria or Carmen de los Mártires.

*** Seven days Classical Spain, including accommodation, flights, transfers and guiding, from £1,149 per person; trailfinders.com**



Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk in Western Australia

Indian Pacific Railway, Western Australia

If you feel virtually whisked away by designer Max Parker Smith's Chelsea Flower Show display this year, entitled Journey Beyond the Tracks: Adelaide to Perth, then why not experience the real deal? Max found inspiration for this year's garden while travelling through Western Australia and riding the scenic Indian Pacific Railway, which takes three days and two nights, cutting through some of the state's most remarkable, richly biodiverse landscapes. Keep eyes peeled for local botanical delights, including red and green kangaroo paw, banksias, rare orchids and hundreds of different species of acacia.

*** Three days, including food, drinks and experiences, from £1,449 per person; journeybeyondrail.com.au**

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Tips,
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GARDEN notes

Tasty toms and best blossoms

NEW TOMATO

Plant breeders have been busy developing the first cherry tomato with virtually no seeds or skin. Tomato 'Meltaway F1' is described as having a melt-in-the-mouth texture and a sweet taste. Perfect for snacking, it may tempt those tomato-dodgers who find skins too chewy and the seeds annoying. Available in a 9cm pot, ready to plant out (after last frosts), £9.99, thompson-morgan.com.



LEAF POWER

Now daffodils and tulips are going over, resist cutting off their leaves. Although they can look messy, they're vital for replenishing a bulb's energy for next year's display. Give them a helping hand by snapping off faded flowers and feeding with liquid fertiliser around the base. Bluebells can be dug up and divided while still in growth. After replanting, water to help settle in roots.

GARDEN TO VISIT

In Denbigh, in north Wales, The Laundry Garden is holding an open weekend for charity on 23-25 May. Spread over three acres, there is a woodland, orchard and Georgian walled garden. * thelaundrygarden.co.uk



3 OF THE BEST... For May blossom



HAWTHORN

Known for its clouds of scented flowers. *Crataegus 'Plena'* is a compact variety. H8m.



WEDDING CAKE TREE

From May to June, *Cornus controversa* 'Variegata' is smothered in white flowers. H8m.



LILAC

Little beats this flower's perfume, whether 'Firmament' (above) or white 'Maud Notcutt'. H4m.



SHADY but superb

Making the most of a sun-challenged plot



Hostas are a great option where there's little sun



Maidenhair spleenwort

Cool space

There's no denying that shady gardens have their problems. Neighbouring buildings, tall fences and trees may cast deep shadows, and result in a sparse

lawn, dark corners and weak blooms. Yet there are practical ways to improve light levels, which – when combined with selecting greenery that suits the situation – will turn a gloomy outlook into a tapestry of foliage and beautifully subtle colour.

Light work

Careful pruning can greatly reduce the shade cast by trees. Crown-thinning (removing one or two main branches) and raising (taking out lower branches) will allow dappled light to reach the ground. This kind of pruning calls for skill and sensitivity, so it's always best to find a recommended tree surgeon who will do the work without spoiling the tree's natural height and shape.

If tall fences are blocking the light, consider swapping

GRASS STRUGGLE

Lawns rarely do well in full shade, and can be riddled with moss and algae. A prettier option is to pave the area for seating or to show off potted shade dwellers, like hostas. Soften paving by dotting low-growing evergreens, such as maidenhair spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*) or baby's tears (*Soleirolia soleiroliae*) between the slabs. Raised beds lift plants closer to the light and allow more scope for planting.

solid panels for slatted ones or those topped with trellis. Painting fences or walls a pale shade will help bounce light into the garden, as will a couple of well-placed outdoor mirrors.

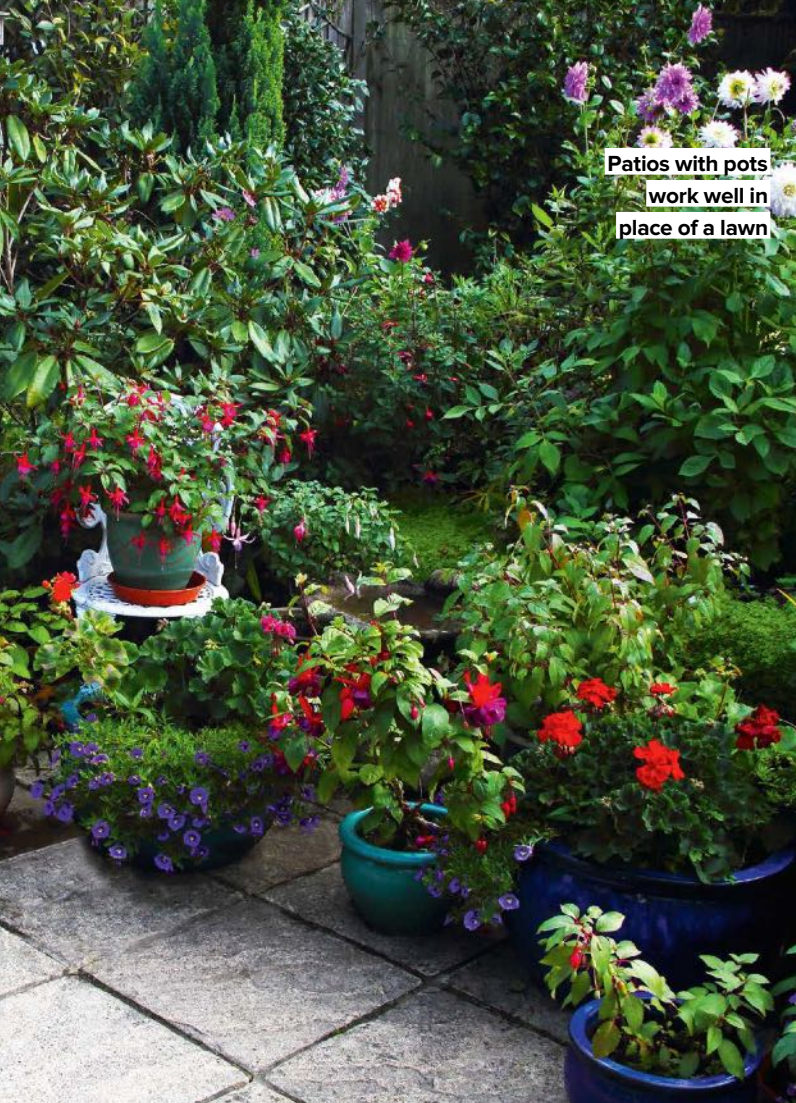
Gloom be gone

Plants with silver- or gold-splashed leaves will leap out of the shadows. For partial shade, try Holly 'Silver Queen' (*Ilex aquifolium*, H8m), golden privet 'Aureum' (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*, H4m) and *Astelia nervosa* 'Westland' (H1.5m) – its silver-bronze, sword-like leaves are dramatic and alluring. Meanwhile, spotted laurel 'Crotonifolia' (*Aucuba japonica*, H2.5m) is a true shade stalwart. Glossy leaves also catch the light, so try *Fatsia japonica* (H4m) or, in a sheltered garden, the less hardy *Pseudopanax laetus* (H8m). Pale blooms are luminous in low



Bergenia in bloom

WORDS: CHRIS MORLEY. PHOTOS: GETTY



Patios with pots work well in place of a lawn



Gaps in fencing let light through

light. Try the shrubby fuchsia 'Sharpitor' (H1m), which has pendant flowers in palest pink/lilac, and hydrangea 'Beni-Gaku' (H1m), with lacecaps of white, pink and blue.

Tough calls

It can be tricky to grow anything around the base of trees and hedges. As well as casting

shade, the roots rob the soil of moisture and nutrients. Spadeful of organic material, like rotted manure, garden compost and leaf mould, dug into the top layer will improve moisture levels and give plants a fighting chance. Try toughies such as periwinkle (Vinca major), hardy geranium, bergenia and Japanese spurge (Pachysandra terminalis).

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Stitch & SOW

This gardening set makes the perfect gift for a green-fingered friend

☆☆☆
Difficulty level

TESTED
BY US
so they work
for you

Handy apron

Expandable pockets make this half-pinny all the more useful for carrying tools, seeds and even your shed keys!

YOU WILL NEED

- * 200cm length of 25mm-wide cotton webbing (adjust the length depending on your waist measurement)
- * 40x100cm floral cotton fabric
- * 50cm square of striped cotton fabric
- * 50cm square of plain blue cotton fabric
- * Medium-weight iron-on interfacing
- * Pair of D-rings
- * Lobster-clasp key ring
- * Matching sewing thread
- * Sewing machine
- * Scissors and pins

CUTTING OUT

For the main apron Cut two 40x50cm pieces from the floral cotton. Fuse interfacing to the reverse of one of the pieces for the apron front.

For the larger pocket Cut a 18(L)x24(W)cm rectangle from the striped cotton and a 20(L)x24(W)cm rectangle from the plain blue cotton. Fuse interfacing to the

reverse of the striped piece.

For the smaller pocket Cut a 18(L)x21(W)cm rectangle of striped fabric and 20x21cm of plain blue cotton. Fuse interfacing to the reverse of the striped piece.

For the key-ring loop Cut a 8x10cm rectangle from the striped fabric. Fuse interfacing to the reverse.

1 Pin and sew the two larger pocket pieces right sides together with a 1cm seam allowance and bottom edges aligned. Clip the corners, turn right sides out and press. Fold the top edge over by 1cm, then another 1cm and topstitch in place to create the contrasting edge at the top of the pocket. Fold the pocket sides towards the plain side by 4cm and press. Fold the sides back on themselves by 2cm to form the side gussets.

2 Position in the centre of the apron front, 10cm from the bottom edge and 18cm in from either side. Pin the sides of the pocket in place, making sure the gusset section of the pocket isn't pinned down. Refer to the photograph as a guide. Topstitch the sides, 5mm from the edge.

Now pin and sew the bottom edge, catching the gusset sections, 5mm from the edge.

3 Repeat steps 1 and 2 for the smaller pocket. Position on the right side of the apron, 10cm from the bottom edge and 2cm to the right of the larger pocket.

4 Pin and sew the two apron pieces right sides together with a 1cm seam allowance, leaving a 10cm gap open along the top long edge for turning through. Clip the corners, turn right sides out and press. Turn the open edges under by 1cm and press. Topstitch all the way around the apron, 5mm from the edge.

5 For the key-ring loop, fold the fabric in half lengthways with wrong sides together and press. Open out the fabric, then fold the edges in to meet the



fold line. Press again. Topstitch along the sides. Thread the key ring with lobster clasp on to the loop of fabric, then topstitch the ends together to secure.

6 Position the loop approximately 4cm from the top of the apron and 5cm in from the left side. Pin the webbing along the top edge of the apron, approximately 3cm from the top edge, making sure to cover the edges of the key-ring loop, with an 10cm overhang on the left side for the

D-rings. Topstitch the webbing in place, approximately 5mm from the edges.

7 Slip the pair of D-rings on to the left side of the webbing, then fold the excess to the back of the apron and pin in place. Stitch over the end several times, as close to the D-rings as your sewing foot will allow. Turn the raw end of the webbing under and stitch in place. Fold over the other end of the webbing twice to hide the raw ends and topstitch in place. >>

Comfy kneeler

Stitch this simple garden helper that rolls up for easy carrying and storage

YOU WILL NEED

- * 50x72cm floral cotton canvas fabric
- * 50x72cm foam interfacing
- * 40cm length of 25mm-wide cotton webbing
- * Stuffing
- * Air-erasable marker
- * Ruler
- * Matching sewing thread
- * Sewing machine
- * Scissors
- * Pins or fabric clips

1 From the canvas, cut two 37x50cm pieces. From the foam, cut two 34x50cm pieces. Cut the cotton webbing into two 20cm lengths for the straps.

2 Lay out a piece of foam interfacing with a canvas piece on top, right sides up. Then place the other canvas piece on top, right sides down, followed by the other foam piece. There should be a 1.5cm fabric overhang on both of the long sides.

3 Pin or clip, then sew the two short sides together with 1cm seam allowances. Turn right sides out and press. Using a ruler and air-erasable marker, draw a line on the canvas 8cm in from one short side. Repeat every 8cm, until you have five lines total.

4 Topstitch down each line, leaving 2cm unstitched at each end. Fill each channel with a little stuffing, making sure not to fill the channels at either end. Turn the overhanging



fabric edges under by 1.5cm, sandwiching the fabric between the foam layers. Pin or clip the sides together, then topstitch 5mm from the edge.

5 Position each webbing strap centrally along each short side, 2.5cm in from the edge. Pin in place, then topstitch the ends of each strap with a square and diagonal shape, following the photograph as a guide.



TIP
Roll up the garden kneeler for storage, using a piece of ribbon or webbing to secure.



Seed set

These personalised gardener's pots and seed packets make gorgeous gifts

YOU WILL NEED

- * Variety of seeds
- * Small brown-paper envelopes
- * Alphabet stamps
- * Red ink pad
- * Striped ribbon
- * Heart wax seal
- * Wax sealing gun and red wax
- * Ceramic plant pots
- * Paint in white, grey and blue
- * Paintbrush
- * Wooden plant markers
- * Jute ribbon
- * Jute twine
- * Double-sided tape

STOCKISTS Heart seal wax stamp, £5, Hobbycraft; Rust-Oleum premium craft paint in Mineral Grey, Powder Blue and Still, £8 for 250ml, B&Q

1 Begin by stamping the envelopes with the name of your chosen seeds. Distribute the seeds into each envelope. Gather the envelopes together and tie with a ribbon. Use a wax sealing gun to apply melted wax to the top of the ribbon ends. Apply the stamp on top and allow to cool before removing.

2 Pretty up the small pots with paint – use one colour for the first layer, then dry-brush with another colour for a decorative effect. Allow to dry, then finish with bands of ribbon and hessian using double-sided tape.

3 Add lettering to a plant marker with alphabet stamps and an ink block. Assemble as shown, tying the plant markers to the plant pots with jute twine.



A new SPRING

The joy of life was returning to the garden – and perhaps to Elizabeth as well

Elizabeth often found herself watching Monty, wondering what her new neighbour could be finding to do. Like his namesake Monty Don, he seemed to spend most of his waking hours in his garden. Such a contrast to the previous owner, who was never home, and only ever gave the occasional wave of recognition.

At 70, she wanted a better relationship with her neighbours, and sensed that it might be possible with Monty.

He didn't seem to have a job, judging by the many hours he was occupied in his garden. Her Tom was like that. Forever planting, digging and making compost. She still missed him five years later, and always would. And she missed the fresh herbs and vegetables he'd proudly present her with. Roses for her vases. Apples and damsons to cook. Chives and parsley to add to her soups and salads.

Seeing Monty beavering away every day brought back happy memories. Reminding her of the seasons of life and the bearing of fruit over time.

Gardens also experienced loss through no fault of their own. Heatwaves, flooding, insect pests, hungry deer – all wreaking havoc. But then spring would bring new leaves, buds.

She sipped her cup of tea thoughtfully. From her vantage point among the apple trees,

she had an uninterrupted view of Monty as he dug out his vegetable patch. On the red wheelbarrow beside him she could make out punnets and greenery. What was he going to plant? Perhaps lettuce, cucumber and tomatoes for salad. Or herbs. Tom had always planted basil and chives in spring. And he liked to grow French marigolds among the herbs. Said they attracted beneficial insects.

As she watched, Monty straightened up and stretched his back. She could relate to that. Then he looked across at her. A friendly smile lit up his face as he waved in her direction.

This is my cue, she told herself, knowing it was time to introduce herself properly. There had been a quick hello and exchange of names a few weeks ago, as she'd hurried past to catch the bus into town.

But Monty felt like someone who could become a real neighbour. Which meant her plucking up the courage to go over and shake his hand and make an effort. If not today, when?

So she walked over towards the fence.

'I see you're a gardener,' she began.

His brown-green eyes regarded her in a friendly manner. Up close, she could see a little stubble on his face

A friendly smile lit up his face



and his hair was a lovely silver-grey colour. He looked around her own age, perhaps a few years younger.

'It's my passion,' he said. 'Now that I've retired, I've got nothing to hold me back.'

That was the sort of thing that Tom would have said.

He looked around her garden. 'Did you do all this? Your garden's been designed by someone who knew what they were doing.'

'My Tom was a landscape designer,' she said. 'He worked on a big estate nearby.'

He blinked, curious. 'You don't mean the National Trust property by the lake, do you?'

'Yes, he was one of the team there.'

Monty shook his head slowly.

'Now that's a coincidence. I worked there when I was at university.' His eyes crinkled in thought. 'Was Tom Harrison your husband?'

She felt her eyes moisten. 'Yes,' she replied, her voice so soft she wondered if he could hear her. 'He went there straight from high school.'

'He was something of an institution,' Monty said. 'He taught me a few things. I always wished he'd written a book.'

She nearly said, 'He did.' But he hadn't, had he? You couldn't call his folders and charts a book. Tom wrote down what he learnt in his gardening diaries.

He would often refer to his notes to see how to deal with different problems. But putting it all together into something coherent had felt too big a project. It always slipped into the 'one of these days' category whenever she'd tried to suggest it to him.

Now it was too late. The box of Tom's jottings had sat in the corner of the greenhouse long enough to gather dust.

But not long enough to be forgotten. Should she mention it to Monty? She hated the thought of her son throwing it all away one day. Sam was an artist and lived in Barcelona with his partner. Neither of them had shown any interest in gardening.

And yet she didn't feel ready to share this precious part of Tom's life with someone new. Even someone he'd apparently



known and who was a dedicated gardener.

'Have I said something wrong?' Monty asked, looking concerned.

Elizabeth realised that her cheeks were wet and wiped them with her hand.

The ringing of her phone saved her from answering. It turned out to be a spam call. When she looked back over the fence, Monty had turned away and was planting his seedlings. She realised he was trying to respect her feelings and give her privacy.

Tom had never mentioned anyone called Monty. She would have remembered. He had always talked about the promising ones. Over the years there had only been a handful. There was a Henry, a Donald, and more recently a Joanne, who had all shown special talent. Donald had moved to Italy and was working on a magnificent estate outside Florence. Joanne was a well-known florist, who grew all her own flowers and greenery. She had no idea what had become of Henry.

Perhaps Monty might have heard of him?

But it hardly seemed likely they would have a conversation where it felt natural for her to ask. Or would they? She sensed possibilities.

The idea of a neighbour she could talk to about real things made her feel optimistic. She was glad she had overcome her natural shyness.

While she was in her garden, she had a good look around. What would Tom's priorities be? Or was it time for her to formulate her own?

Spring was evident everywhere. Her climbing rose was putting on a spectacular display. Seeds were beginning to sprout in the herb garden. She had stopped cultivating it when her back started playing up a few years ago, but the Italian parsley proved resilient,

self-seeding. Tom always called these bonus plants 'volunteers' and allowed them to stay, even the ones that grew among stones in the path. He never had the heart to pull them up.

She couldn't bend down to weed, but perhaps she'd hose. It hadn't rained for the past week and the garden looked thirsty.

It was lunchtime before she went inside. The unexpected warmth of the sun and the exercise made her drowsy.

After scrambled eggs on toast, she sat in her favourite armchair. Which is where she woke an hour later.

It didn't take long to realise someone was knocking on her front door. She ran her fingers through her hair to tame the curls and padded down the hall.

Monty was holding several long sprigs of rosemary. 'You might like to use this in your cooking. Or just keep it in a vase.'

She felt an instant sense of warmth deep inside.

'Thanks. That's lovely of you.' Breathing deeply, she added,

'I'm just putting the kettle on if you'd like a cuppa.' She was rewarded by a smile.

As Monty followed her back to the kitchen, she had a qualm, but told herself Tom wanted her to get on with her life. Wasn't that the purpose of spring? To instil life with freshness and new growth?

'You might like to look at Tom's gardening books and magazines while I make the tea,' she suggested. She showed him the small bookcase in the hallway where Tom's well-thumbed library was kept.

Returning a few minutes later with tea and Madeira cake, she found Monty immersed in a volume about pruning. It had been a parting gift from Henry and was full of bookmarks and notes from Tom.

'Let's sit outside,' she said.

It felt more relaxed. Only, sitting overlooking her garden, she couldn't help feeling conscious of all the jobs she hadn't got around to doing. Either because of her back, or simply because she hadn't really given a lot of thought to the garden. It had been Tom's domain. She'd never really made it hers.

For the first time in five years, she found herself wondering what might be possible.

'The layout of this garden is the work of a master,' he said. 'But it must be difficult to manage on your own.'

She sipped her tea. 'I always loved having organically grown vegetables, but with my back, the veggie patch isn't sustainable.'

They both looked at the four long beds that she'd covered with mulch.

'Raised garden beds might be worth a try,' he said. 'I'd be happy to help you set them up.' Somehow at his words she felt a sense of panic. Had she gone too far? Did he think she was asking for help?

She immersed herself in eating a slice of cake without responding to his offer.

He seemed to sense the change. Finishing his tea, he stood up.

She felt remorseful. 'Would you like to borrow that book?' she asked, relieved when he accepted her offer.

As she lay down that night, she started wondering for the first time how she would like the garden to look. And what she could realistically manage on her own. She hadn't considered raised beds. Maybe they would enable her to grow salad vegetables and herbs.

She didn't see much of Monty over the next few days. Just his silhouette in the greenhouse.

That weekend she dusted off Tom's box of gardening notes and drawings, and laid it all out on the kitchen table. It seemed to fit naturally into different topics – design, soil composition, propagation, seasonal planning... The biggest section comprised notes on plants and seeds of every description.

There was enough material for several books. She could understand why Tom hadn't known where to start.

The doorbell disturbed her thoughts. It was Monty, holding a posy of pansies.

She felt herself relaxing. 'Would you like to look at Tom's gardening notes?' she asked.

Monty's face lit up, the smile spreading to his eyes. 'I'd find that very interesting.'

He handed her the book on pruning. 'I'm glad to see that Tom read this. I remember giving it to him.'

'But it was Henry...' she began. 'Yes, that's me. Henry Montgomery Barnes. Everyone calls me Monty now.'

Elizabeth smiled as she turned on the kettle and gazed out across the garden. She decided to accept this gentle man's offer of help with raised vegetable beds.

THE END

Glynis Scrivens

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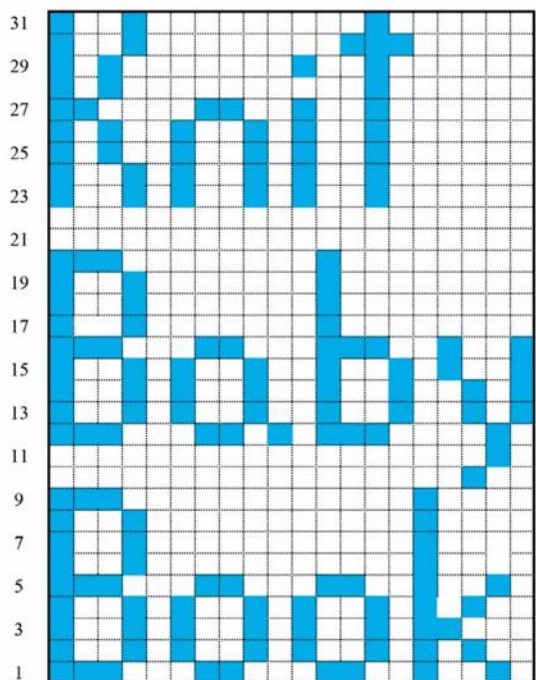
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Babies will love the colourful, tactile pages of this knitted book

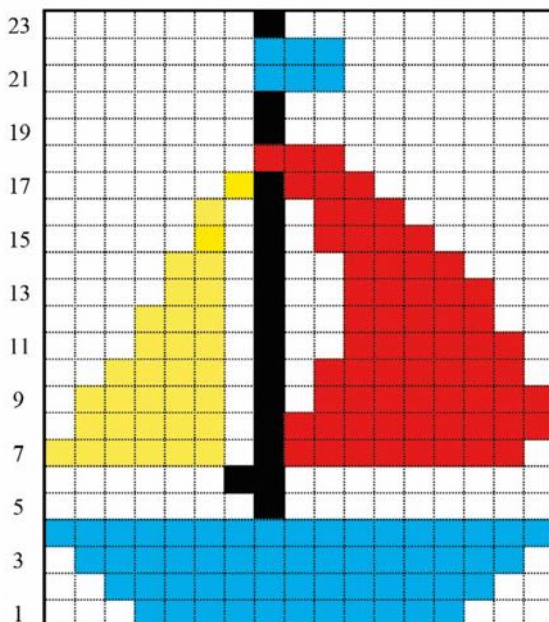


Instructions overleaf

TITLE CHART



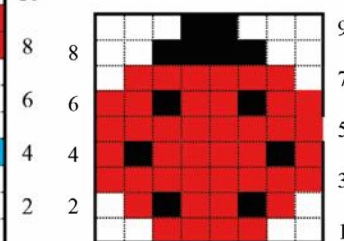
BOAT CHART



KEY TO ALL CHARTS



LADYBIRD CHART



MEASUREMENTS

15 x 15cm/6 x 6in.

MATERIALS

1 x 50g (140m) ball of Sirdar Stories DK (60% cotton, 40% acrylic) in each of Pink (Bestie 841), Blue (Surf 818), Yellow (Summer 813), Red (Fierce 840), Green (Matcha 848), Grey (Sky Bar 837) and Black (Silent Disco 839), and 1 x 50g (100m) ball of Sirdar Snuggly Snowflake Chunky (100% polyester) in Fluffy Brown (Rusk 203)*. Pair of 4mm (No. 8) knitting needles; small amount of toy stuffing; 1 button. Yarn is available from theknittingnetwork.co.uk.

TENSION

22 stitches and 28 rows to 10x10cm, over stocking stitch, using 4mm needles.

ABBREVIATIONS

K, knit; **p**, purl; **psso**, pass sl st over; **sk2po**, sl 1, k2tog, psso (to decrease 2 sts); **skpo**, sl 1, k1, psso (to decrease 1 st); **sl**, slip; **st(s)**, stitch(es); **tog**, together (decrease by working as many sts together as stated); **up1**, pick up horizontal strand lying between needles and k

into the back of it (to increase 1 st); **wrap1**, take yarn between needles to front of work after k st and to back of work after p st, slip next st on to right needle, take yarn back to original position then place slipped st back on to left needle. Next time you reach wrapped st, lift loop surrounding st and work it together with wrapped st; **wyif**, with yarn in front.

NOTES

When working from charts, right side rows are k rows and worked from right to left. Wrong side rows are p rows and worked from left to right. For Title Chart, strand yarn not in use loosely across wrong side of work. For all other charts, use separate small balls of yarn for each coloured area, twisting yarns together on wrong side at joins to avoid making holes. Motifs can be swiss darned afterwards if preferred. Yarn amounts are based on average requirements and are approximate. Figures in square brackets are worked as stated after 2nd bracket.

FRONT PAGE

With 4mm needles and Pink, cast on 33 sts. K 6 rows.

Next row: K3, p27, k3.

Next row: K to end.

Continue in Pink, placing Title Chart thus:

1st row (wrong side): K3, p2, p across 1st row of Title Chart, p5, k3.

2nd row: K8, k across 2nd row of Title Chart, k5.

3rd to 31st rows: Continue as set, working across 3rd to 31st rows of Title Chart, and then continue in Pink only.

Next row: K to end.

Next row: K3, p27, k3.

K 6 rows. Cast off.

CAR PAGE

With 4mm needles and Yellow, cast on 33 sts.

K 5 rows.

Continue in Yellow, placing Car Chart thus:

1st row: K3, k across 1st row of Car Chart, k3.

2nd row: K3, p across 2nd row of Car Chart, k3.

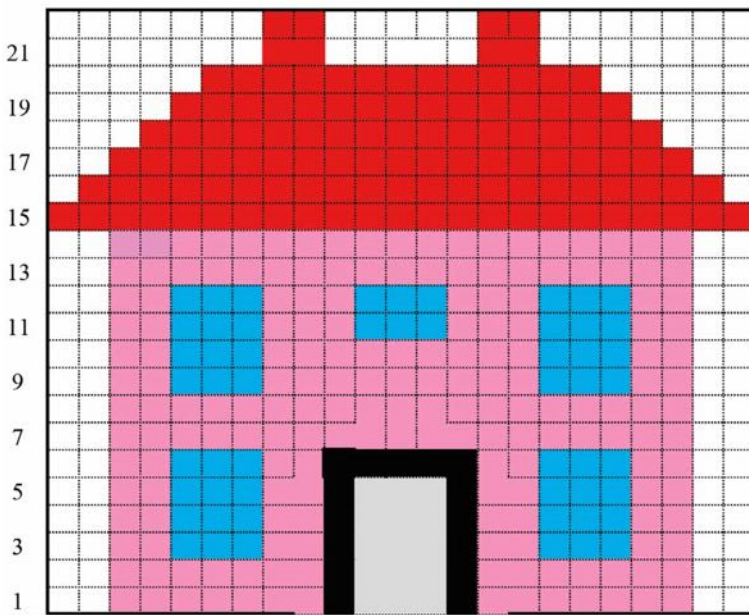
3rd to 35th rows: Continue as set, working across 3rd to 35th rows of Car Chart, and then continue in Yellow only.

Next row: K3, p27, k3.

K 6 rows. Cast off.



HOUSE CHART



TEDDY PAGE

With 4mm needles and Red, cast on 33 sts. K 6 rows.

Page: Next row: K3, p27, k3.

Next row: K to end.

Repeat last 2 rows, 17 times more.

K 5 rows. Cast off.

Teddy motif: Ears (make 2):

With 4mm needles and Fluffy Brown, cast on 16 sts. P 1 row.

2nd row (wrong side): K2, [k2tog] 6 times, k2 – 10 sts. P 1 row.

4th row: K1, [k2tog] 4 times, k1 – 6 sts. Cast off.

Fold cast-off edge in half and join. Fold sides of cast-on edge to inside and secure.

Head: With 4mm needles and Fluffy Brown, cast on 37 sts.

P 1 row.

2nd row (wrong side): [K4, k2tog] 6 times, k1 – 31 sts.

P 1 row.

4th row: [K3, k2tog] 6 times, k1 – 25 sts. P 1 row.

6th row: [K2, k2tog] 6 times, k1 – 19 sts. P 1 row.

8th row: K1, [k2tog, k1] to end – 13 sts.

9th row: P1, [p2tog] to end – 7 sts. Cut yarn, thread through remaining sts, pull tight and fasten off. Join row ends.

Muzzle: With 4mm needles and Grey, cast on 16 sts. P 1 row.

Next row: [K2tog] to end – 8 sts. Cut yarn, thread through remaining sts, pull tight and fasten off. Join row ends.

Sew Muzzle to Head, stuffing

lightly. With Black, embroider nose and mouth on Muzzle, and eyes on Head. Sew Head and Ears to Page, stuffing Head lightly.

BOAT PAGE

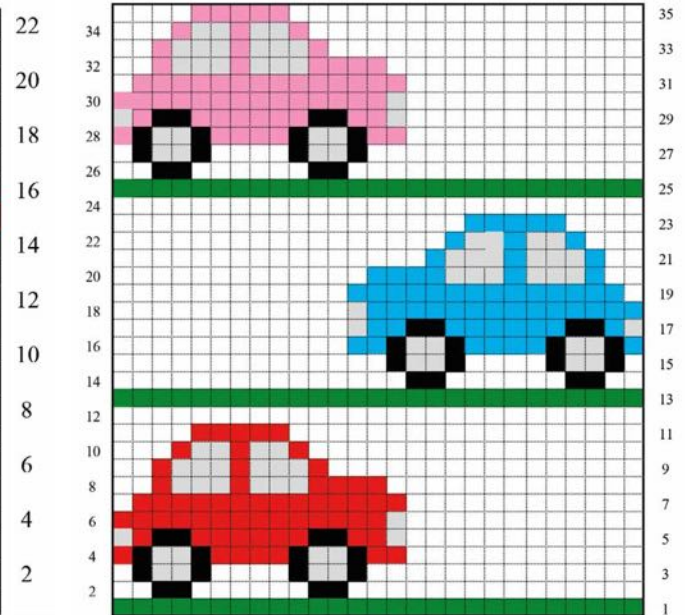
With 4mm needles and Grey, cast on 33 sts. K 6 rows.

Next row (wrong side): K3, p27, k3.

Next row: K to end.

Repeat last 2 rows, twice more.

CAR CHART



Continue in Grey, placing Boat Chart thus:

1st row: K3, p5, p across 1st row of Boat Chart, p5, k3.

2nd row: K8, k across 2nd row of Boat Chart, k8.

3rd to 23rd rows: Continue as set, working across 3rd to 23rd rows of Boat Chart, and then continue in Grey only.

Next row: K to end.

Next row: K3, p27, k3.

Repeat last 2 rows, twice more. K 6 rows. Cast off.

FLOWER PAGE

Page: With 4mm needles and Green, cast on 33 sts. K 6 rows. Complete as Page for Teddy.

Flower: With 4mm needles and Yellow, cast on 9 sts. K 1 row.

2nd row (right side): P1, [up1, p1] 8 times – 17 sts. K 1 row.

4th row: P1, [up1, p2] 8 times – 25 sts. K 1 row.

6th row: P1, [up1, p3] 8 times – 33 sts.

Change to Red. P 1 row.

Next row: K1, [k next st winding yarn twice round needle, k2] 10 times, k next st winding yarn twice round needle, k1.

Petal row: K1, *dropping extra loop, work ([k1, p1] 5 times, k1) all into elongated st, k2, repeat from *, 9 times more, dropping extra loop, work ([k1, p1] 5 times,

k1) all into elongated st, k1.

Next row: Cast off, working [skpo, k9, k2tog] 11 times as you are casting off. Join seam. Sew Flower to centre of Page.

FISH PAGE

Page: With 4mm needles and Blue, cast on 33 sts. K 6 rows. Complete as Page for Teddy.

Fish motif: With 4mm needles and Yellow, cast on 13 sts.

1st row: K1, p1, wrap1, turn.

2nd row: K1, p1.

3rd row: K1, p1, k1, wrap1, turn.

4th row: P1, k1, p1.

5th row: [K1, p1] twice, wrap1, turn. **6th row:** [K1, p1] twice.

7th row: K1, [p1, k1] twice, wrap1, turn. **8th row:** P1, [k1, p1] twice.

9th row: [K1, p1] 3 times, wrap1, turn. **10th row:** [K1, p1] 3 times.

11th row: K1, [p1, k1] 6 times.

12th row: P1, k1, wrap1, turn.

13th row: P1, k1.

14th row: P1, k1, p1, wrap1, turn.

15th row: K1, p1, k1.

16th row: [P1, k1] twice, wrap1, turn. **17th row:** [P1, k1] twice.

18th row: P1, [k1, p1] twice, wrap1, turn. **19th row:** K1,

[p1, k1] twice.

20th row: [P1, k1] 3 times, wrap1, turn. **21st row:** [P1, k1] 3 times.

22nd row: P1, [k1, p1] 6 times.

23rd row: [Skpo] 3 times, k1,

CONTINUED OVERLEAF





[k2tog] 3 times – 7 sts. P 1 row
25th row: K1, up1, [wyif sl1, k1] to last 2 sts, wyif sl1, up1, k1 – 9 sts.
26th row: P to end.
 Repeat last 2 rows, once more – 11 sts.
Next row: K1, [wyif sl1, k1] 5 times.
Next row: P to end
Next row: K1, up1, k1, [wyif sl1, k1] 4 times, up1, k1 – 13 sts.
Next row: P to end.
Next row: K2, [wyif sl1, k1] 4 times, wyif sl1, k2.
Next row: P to end.
Next row: K1, [wyif sl1, k1] 6 times.
Next row: P to end.
 Repeat last 4 rows, once more, then 1st of these again. K 1 row.
Next row: K1, skpo, k7, k2tog, k1 – 11 sts.
Next 2 rows: K to end.
Next row: K1, skpo, k to last 3 sts, k2tog, k1 – 9 sts.
Next row: K to end.
 Repeat last 2 rows, once

more – 7 sts.
Next row: K1, skpo, k1, k2tog, k1 – 5 sts.
Next row: K to end.
Next row: K1, sk2po, k1 – 3 sts.
 Cut yarn, thread through remaining sts, pull tight and fasten off.
 Sew Fish to Page. Embroider eye with Black and mouth with Red.

HOUSE PAGE

With 4mm needles and Yellow, cast on 33 sts. K 6 rows.
Next row (wrong side): K3, p27, k3. **Next row:** K to end.
 Repeat last 2 rows, twice more. Continue in Yellow, placing House Chart thus:
1st row (wrong side): K3, p2, p across 1st row of House Chart, p2, k3.
2nd row: K5, k across 2nd row of House Chart, k5.
3rd to 22nd rows: Continue as

set, working across 3rd to 22nd rows of House Chart, and then continue in Yellow only.
Next row: K3, p27, k3.
Next row: K to end.
 Repeat last 2 rows, 3 times more. K 5 rows. Cast off.
 With Black and backstitch, embroider window panes and work French knot for door knob.

BACK PAGE

With 4mm needles and Blue, cast on 33 sts. K 6 rows.
Next row: K3, p27, k3.
Next row: K to end.
 Repeat last 2 rows, 5 times more, and 1st row again. Continue in Blue, placing Ladybird Chart thus:
1st row: K13, k across 1st row of Ladybird Chart, k12.
2nd row: K3, p9, p across 2nd row of Ladybird Chart, p10, k3.
3rd to 9th rows: Continue as set, working across 3rd to 9th rows of Ladybird Chart, and then continue in Blue only.
Next row: K3, p27, k3.
Next row: K to end.
 Repeat last 2 rows, 6 times more. K 5 rows. Cast off.
 With Black, work backstitch lengthwise along centre of ladybird motif.

BUTTON LOOP

With 4mm needles and Green, cast on 30 sts. Cast off.

TO MAKE UP

Fold Button Loop in half and stitch ends together for 2cm.

Place joined ends halfway up on wrong side of Back Page and stitch in position. Place pages together in pairs with wrong sides held together and use contrasting colour to work blanket stitch around outer edges of each pair. Make a twisted cord approximately 90cm long from 3 strands of yarn and tie at one end. Place pages in order in a pile. Starting halfway up and working over 2 or 3 stitches at a time, thread folded end of cord in and out through all pages along garter stitch edge to top end. Take cord between Front Page and first page, bringing out at bottom. Thread cord in and out along remaining half of book bringing end out at centre. Even up ends of cord and tie folded end, leaving a tassel. Trim tassels and tie cord into a bow. Sew on button.

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



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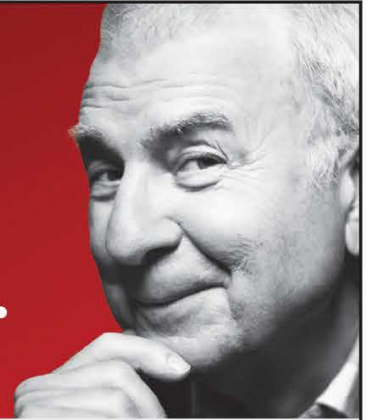
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Never TO BE TOLD

Carol couldn't believe she was asking herself if her friend was capable of murder

THE STORY SO FAR

Carol Lyons runs a vintage clothes shop. Her life only has room for her mother, June, who raised her as a single mum. Unexpectedly, Carol receives a letter from an old friend. Sadie, who lives on the Caribbean island of St Adina with husband Brad, has been accused of murdering her housekeeper, Isobel. The letter contains a necklace with a magpie charm, a reminder of how the two friends lost touch – as schoolgirls, they never revealed they were both present when Sadie's bullying dad Mike fell to his death from a cliff. Carol flies to St Adina and visits Sadie in prison. Sadie experiences mood swings, having suffered a head injury a year earlier. The police think that she lost her temper with Isobel after finding the housekeeper stealing. Sadie begs Carol to try and unearth the truth, before it's too late.

Leaving the prison, Carol looked up at the blue Caribbean sky. She had promised Sadie she would return as soon as another visit could be arranged.

Collecting her bag from a guard, she brooded on a few intriguing words in that letter Sadie had sent her, along with a magpie necklace.

Referring to her marriage to Brad, Sadie had written, *I suppose we've been happy.*

Those words had snagged in Carol's mind. She'd meant to ask Sadie about them just now, but somehow, the opportunity had evaded her.

Was that oddly worded phrase about her marriage evidence of the head injury Sadie had sustained from her moped accident? Which gave Carol an unsettling, disloyal thought – could the accident have altered Sadie's personality enough to make her capable of murder, even in just a moment of fleeting rage?

She dismissed that thought as soon as it arrived. The Sadie she'd just met in prison was the one she'd always known, incapable of a vicious act.

Outside the prison, Sadie's



lawyer Rachel waved from a car parked nearby.

Carol hurried over. She'd taken a taxi to the prison from her hotel but Rachel had offered to drive her back.

'How did you find her?' asked Rachel, as Carol slid into the passenger seat.

Carol sighed. 'She seems to be holding up. But it's such a mess!' she exclaimed passionately. 'Somebody murdered poor Isobel, but it wasn't Sadie. They both deserve justice. Sadie has asked me to be her eyes and ears, bring an outsider's perspective to the case. But...' She bit her lip, 'I won't be able to stay indefinitely. When's the trial?'

'In three weeks,' replied Rachel, driving out of the car park. 'The authorities have moved it up the case list because it's so high profile. Listen, Carol,' she added, 'the evidence against Sadie is pretty strong. She'd had a row previously with Isobel, and she returned to the house close to the time Isobel died. Your best bet is to provide a glowing

character reference, as the friend who knows Sadie best. You can leave a written statement to that effect with me, unless you're able to stay for the trial and appear as a witness for the defence in court.'

Carol listened in heartsick dismay. 'But surely you don't believe she's guilty?'

Rachel said quietly, 'It only matters how it will look to a jury. We may need to go for a deal so she gets a reduced sentence by pleading guilty. Her medical history, like her previous good character, would be crucial to any plea for leniency.' She glanced at Carol. 'Her parents are both dead and she's an only child. You're best placed to vouch for her character over the years.'

Carol gulped. 'Prior to this tragedy, Sadie and I hadn't seen each other for years. The prosecution might argue that I don't know her well any more.'

'Hmm,' frowned Rachel. 'We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. As for being Sadie's eyes and ears, keep a low profile. You don't want to do



anything that would prejudice the case. Or..'

'Or what?'

Rachel took a deep breath. 'Or get you noticed by the real killer,' she added bluntly. 'Meanwhile, Brad is paying for a defence that will leave no stone unturned. Leave it to us to represent Sadie as best we can.'

'I hear that Brad Nolan has a stone-cold alibi,' said Carol, equally matter-of-factly. 'Do you know much about him and his relationship with Isobel?'

'Brad seems above board,' replied Rachel carefully. 'We've looked into it and he'd have no reason to kill his housekeeper. Plus, he was several miles away at the time, at the office of his property development business. Be patient,' she added. 'Jumping to conclusions won't help Sadie. And helping Sadie is our top priority, right?'

Carol asked Rachel to drop her off some way from The Palm Frond Resort hotel where she was staying. She had spotted a quiet beach where she could walk and think.

Rachel nodded, clearly understanding her need.

As Rachel drove off, Carol crossed a rope bridge to reach the white sand beach, then sat down, replaying everything in her head.

Rachel had admitted that she'd yet to broach the plea deal idea to Sadie, claiming, 'I don't want to dent her morale further. But unless we find a smoking gun soon, it's worth considering.'

Which meant that, even with judicial leniency, Sadie would serve a lengthy sentence and be branded a murderer.

Taking her map of the island from her bag, Carol saw that she was only half a mile from Sadie and Brad's beachfront home. Rachel had told her it was no longer a crime scene.

On impulse, she headed for the house, looking at her watch. It had gone 11am. Would Brad be at home?

A short time later, she glimpsed the red-tiled roof of a house overlooking the sea. A flight of sandy steps led up from the beach to a wooden

gate set into a wall. Several people were mooching about there, clutching cameras.

'You can't see much from here,' a man said. 'You can go through the gate, but no one answers at the house when you ring the bell. Are you press or an interested bystander?'

'Neither,' replied Carol curtly.

She climbed the steps and opened the gate, aware of the rubbernecker below. A shorter flight of blue-tiled steps led to the garden, a path winding towards a solid front door.

The house was rendered in blinding white – and there was the upper-floor balcony that Isobel must have fallen from.

Shuddering, Carol skirted a teardrop-shaped pool and pressed the doorbell.

'Clear off, you vultures!' called a male voice with an American accent. 'I've got someone coming later to padlock that gate!'

'Mr Nolan? I'm Carol Lyons, a friend of Sadie's,' she called back. 'I've just been to visit her in prison. I thought... Hang on! What had she thought? I thought we'd have a word,' she finished lamely.

She heard footsteps inside, glimpsed someone's silhouette scurry past a rear window, followed by the slam of a door. Had Brad done a runner out the back way?

But then the door opened and a tall man in a baseball cap looked down at her.

'Yeah, Carol, I heard you were coming,' he said, flashing a nervous smile. 'I'm Brad, as you surmised. Excuse my rudeness just now. Come in.'

Carol followed him into a hallway cooled by an overhead fan. 'So you're going to stop randoms coming to the front door?' she asked, glad to escape the heat.

Brad pushed his cap to the back of his blond head. 'Yeah. Never been a problem before. Sadie and I liked the openness here, the idea that we were part

of the community and not shutting ourselves away. But now...'

He shrugged. 'I'm lying low, best I can. There's a way out on to the main road from the back,' he added, jabbing his thumb over his shoulder, towards the rear of the house. 'The postman and deliveries come to the house that way.'

Carol nodded.

'Anyway, to get to the point,' Brad carried on, 'Sadie only told me the other day that she'd written to ask you to come. She thought I wouldn't understand her need for emotional support, seeing as that's *my* role.' He scratched an ear. 'But I do get it. I visit her all the time, but I stepped back today, to let you go instead. You're her oldest friend. And friends come through for each other in a crisis, right?'

His blue eyes rested on Carol and her face burned.

**'Clear off,
you
vultures!'**

Supposing Sadie had told him, or even dropped a hint, about how her father, Mike, had died? Didn't married couples tell each other everything?

Then she dismissed the idea. Sadie had written in her recent letter, *The past that binds us together remains the past*. Words that made explicit that the reason for their bond remained a secret.

Brad asked if she wanted a glass of water. She thanked him and followed him into a huge kitchen.

'Look,' he said, 'I had to tell the police about Sadie's row with Isobel a couple of days before Izzy was found dead. Money had gone missing from Sadie's handbag. Now that the cash and other valuables have since been found at Isobel's house, we know that Sadie was right all along to accuse her of theft. Unfortunately, that gives Sadie a whacking great motive to lash out at Isobel on the day she died.'

Carol took the glass of water

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

he handed her. ‘As Sadie’s just told me,’ she said, ‘the police think she returned that morning from her walk and caught Isobel red-handed going through her handbag. The accusation is that they had another row, and Sadie flipped.’ She paused. ‘I know you know this. I’m just going over what Sadie said.’

Brad leant back on the marble worktop, anxiety creasing his face. ‘Isobel’s prints were found on the handbag and even inside it. Apparently, Isobel sometimes went into Sadie’s bag to fetch Sadie’s headache pills if she asked for them.’

Sipping her water, Carol said, ‘But even with these mood swings caused by her head injury, why would Sadie murder Isobel? It’s too extreme. You’re well set up here. Sadie wasn’t going to miss a few quid. The most she’d have done is sack Isobel, surely?’

Brad stroked his chin. ‘Sadie places a high value on loyalty.’

Those blue eyes were boring into her again.

‘What will you do if Sadie goes to prison?’ she asked abruptly.

‘Cross that bridge when I come to it,’ he frowned, clearly finding the question distasteful (it was, she belatedly realised). ‘All my focus is on getting her off the hook.’

‘Off the hook?’ echoed Carol. ‘So you reckon she could be guilty?’

‘Of course not!’ Brad looked shocked. ‘I’m thinking about how it looks to the police. Listen, you and I probably shouldn’t even be meeting, since we could both be called as witnesses.’

Carol handed back her glass without revealing how long she’d be on the island or that she’d already been asked to provide a character reference for Sadie. She’d leave Rachel to deal with all that.

‘Perhaps you’re right,’ she said. ‘Was someone else here when I arrived? I thought I saw a silhouette, just for a second.’

‘Nope, just me,’ he said, eyes wide and candid. ‘Listen, Carol, I love my wife. Yeah, she’s not been herself since the moped accident, but people don’t change at a fundamental level. That’s what we’ve got to get across to the police – and the jury. Am I right or am I right?’

Back at her hotel, Carol wondered what to make of Brad. He’d seemed so open. And yet, something was missing. What was it?

She’d got it! Why didn’t he seem more devastated? Why wasn’t he shaken to the core? OK, he’d had time to get used to the idea of his wife...

‘You a friend of Mrs Nolan?’

Carol started when a man plucked her elbow as she crossed the lobby. He was holding up a digital voice recorder. ‘Carol Lyons, right? You were outside the prison this morning and drove away with the accused’s lawyer. What can you tell us about the housekeeper killer?’

He dropped his voice as Carol gazed at him in horror. ‘My paper would make it worth your while to give an exclusive interview. Even more money if you could persuade Mrs Nolan to grant us an interview.’

‘That’s enough!’ A uniformed figure loomed up between Carol and the man. ‘Leave this guest alone.’

The man frowned at the policewoman who had intervened. ‘I’m in a public place.’

‘I’m not interested in talking to you,’ said Carol shakily. ‘Please go away.’

‘That good enough for you?’ snorted the policewoman. ‘Next time you want an update on the case, come to the official press conference. If I see you harassing a guest here again, I’ll be less lenient.’

Carol turned to her rescuer as the man scuttled off. ‘Thanks.’

‘Don’t mention it.’ The woman was young and pretty, her

short-sleeved uniform pressed and gleaming. She nodded over at the receptionist. ‘I’m afraid everyone has their price when it comes to revealing confidential details about guests.’

The receptionist suddenly looked busy, and the young policewoman sighed. ‘I’m Officer Marigold Sterling. I’ll leave you a card with the police station number in case of further... issues.’

‘That won’t be necessary, but thanks again,’ Carol replied.

Officer Sterling nodded. ‘Just keep your wits about you.’ ‘I will.’

‘The housekeeper killer’. What an awful phrase – as disrespectful to the victim as it was dismissive of Sadie.

Carol was back at the prison the following afternoon, Rachel having arranged another visit.

Presumably, Brad had stepped aside to let Carol go ahead of him again.

Sadie looked as wan as ever. ‘Not much to report,’ Carol murmured, hugging her friend. ‘I went to see Brad.’

Sadie blinked. ‘How’s he coping?’

‘He’s distraught, as you’d expect,’ Carol said tactfully.

Sadie nodded.

‘It’s been tough for him, and bad for his property business.’

‘Tough for him?’ echoed Carol disbelievingly, then sighed. ‘He told me how important loyalty is to you...’

Sadie got the gist straightway. ‘Carol, I’d never talk about our past, yours and mine.’ Her eyes widened in dismay. ‘I need you to believe in me without reservation!’

The despair in her voice cut Carol to the quick. ‘I do believe in you, Sadie.’

Besides, it wasn’t as if she and Sadie had killed Mike. He’d fallen. True, Carol had given him an initial shove, acting instinctively to protect Sadie



from his bullying anger.

It was a scuffle that others might have concluded had ended in violence, she realised uneasily – just like the current accusation against Sadie.

Leaving the prison an hour later, Carol felt exhausted.

This time, she asked Rachel to drop her off near the harbour. The walk would do her good.

Once Rachel had driven away, Carol started to stroll aimlessly, pausing under a palm tree. Ahead, she saw foot passengers queueing to board an outgoing ferry.

Among them was a figure she recognised – Officer Marigold Sterling. This time the policewoman was wearing a sundress, so she was clearly off duty. She had a pink rucksack on her shoulders and was looking around almost furtively.

The ferry was soon to depart.

Noting Marigold’s body language, Carol felt the hairs on her arms tingle.

She watched Marigold step aboard, then came to one of her famously impulsive decisions.

Once she was sure that Marigold wasn’t looking, she hurried down to the harbour to buy her ticket at the ferry gangplank. Then she boarded the ferry and waited for its departure.

TO BE CONTINUED

Gabrielle Mullarkey

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

Keep your wits about you



Great reads

Zoe West shares her picks for the week

Good People

by Patmeena Sabit (£16.99, HB, Little, Brown)

The Sharaf family arrived in the United States as refugees, and built a life of wealth and success, their children attending elite schools. But when eldest daughter Zorah dies in a sudden tragedy, whispers and rumours threaten to unravel their carefully constructed world. Told through multiple perspectives, including those who knew her best and strangers with opinions, the story unpacks the secrets, rivalries and misunderstandings that shape their lives, keeping readers guessing about what really happened.



The Secret Lives of Murderers' Wives

by Elizabeth Arnott (£16.99, HB, Penguin)

Set in 1960s California, this compelling novel follows three women whose husbands turned out to be notorious killers. Beverley, Elsie and Margot navigate guilt and societal judgement, eventually undergoing their own personal reinventions and forming a fierce, unexpected friendship. When a new murderer emerges, the three women refuse to be dismissed and take matters into their own hands. With vivid characters, suspenseful plotting and a deft balance of wit and darkness, this story celebrates resilience and the courage it takes to reclaim one's life after an unexpected tragedy.

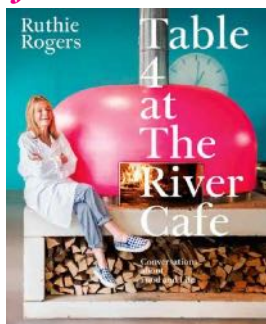
Woman's Weekly LOVES



Table 4 at the River Cafe

by Ruthie Rogers (£25, HB, Ebury)

Ruthie Rogers serves up a sumptuous feast of conversation in this elegant companion to her podcast, *Ruthie's Table 4*. Through candid interviews with the likes of David and Victoria Beckham, Stephen Fry and Paul McCartney, she reveals how food – the preparation and enjoyment of it, in particular – draws out deeply personal stories. With lush photography and thoughtful design, this book is a visual treat and a soulful reminder that sharing meals connects us all. A perfect gift.



Our Deadly Summer

by Emer McLysaght and Sarah Breen (£18.99, HB, Bloomsbury)

The summer of 2001 was supposed to be unforgettable for the two best friends, but a run-in with a dangerously bad man ends with a buried body and years of silence. Dee and Laura go their separate ways, their lives shaped by secrets and regret, until an unexpected email reconnects them decades later. Packed with chaotic summer jobs, romantic misadventures and a cast of absurdly flawed men, the story is hilarious, tense and deeply nostalgic.



Fireflies in Winter

by Eleanor Shearer (£20, HB, Headline)

Set in wintry 1796 Nova Scotia, this tale follows Cora, an orphan newly arrived from Jamaica, and fugitive Agnes, as they forge love and refuge in the wilderness. Cora, unaccustomed to the bitter cold, discovers tracks in the snow that lead her to Agnes, who has learnt to survive alone. Deep among the cedars, they find a fragile sanctuary, but danger and the past threaten their freedom. Tense, tender and atmospheric, this is a powerful story of survival, courage and love against all odds.



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Puzzle TIME

Wordwise

You have 15 minutes to find as many words as possible using the letters in the grid. Each word must contain four or more letters, one of which must be the central square. No proper nouns, plurals or foreign words are allowed. There is one nine-letter word in the grid, for which the clue is: **System administrator.**

S T W
R **B** E
E A M

Average = 20
More than 40 = well done

LINKWORDS

Fit 10 words into the grid so that each links with the end of the word on its left and the beginning of the one on the right. Then unscramble the letters in the shaded squares to make a word.

CLUE: Undergo a change in velocity.

BLACK										BREAK
SNOW										PHONE
SO-										OFF
ACTION-										LUNCH
SITTING										PRACTICE
GOLD										UP
RESEARCH										FEELING
VEGETABLE										BONE
INDEX										FOOD
ROMAN										WAX

Crossword

Try the easy or cryptic clues, then rearrange the letters in the shaded squares for the answer.

CLUE: Prepare snorkellers to overcome fear at last – they're on the rails (5,7).

EASY CLUES

Across

- 7 Vehicle's light (8)
- 9 Courageous (6)
- 10 Village event (4)
- 11 Disputant (10)
- 12 Prepare for exercise (4,2)
- 14 Court session (8)
- 15 Make certain (4,2,7)
- 17 Awful (8)
- 19 Ennui (6)
- 21 Job (10)
- 22 Gentle (4)
- 23 Undertaking (6)
- 24 Portal (8)

Down

- 1 Swiss-French lake (6)
- 2 Lacking occupation (4)
- 3 Cooking vessel (8)
- 4 Hot pepper (6)
- 5 Uttered (10)

- 6 Obliquely (8)
- 8 Prank (9,4)
- 13 Atone (4,6)
- 15 Mexican pancake (8)
- 16 Remedy (8)
- 18 Let down (6)
- 20 Release (6)
- 22 Lunch, eg (4)

CRYPTIC CLUES

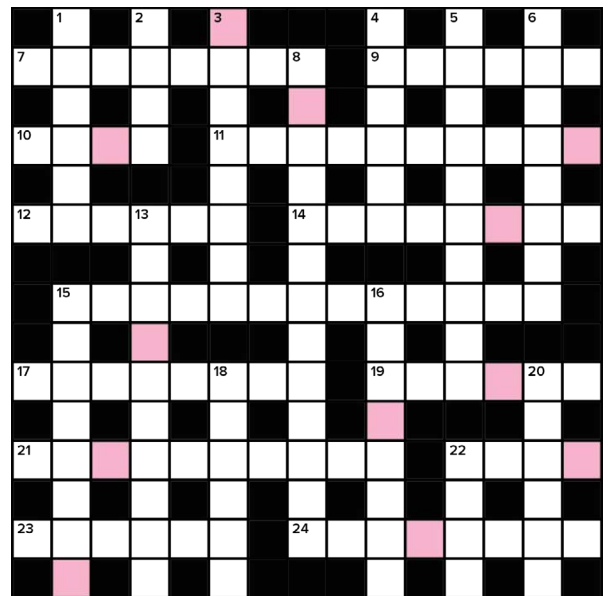
Across

- 7 Note politician in pursuit of leading light (8)
- 9 Fearless choir performed around edge of war zone (6)
- 10 Auditor's appointed lot in outdoor function (4)
- 11 Large room in church endlessly infuriates competitor (10)

- 12 Heat of battle starts to make us panic (4,2)
- 14 Hearing test involves sweet treat (8)
- 15 Avoid certain Monopoly squares to play it safe (4,2,7)
- 17 Terrible doctor regularly demands four lagers to start with (8)
- 19 Poor diet precedes hesitation and boredom (6)
- 21 Had olive oil thrown out, without a source of income (10)
- 22 Wild, flipping top – the opposite? (4)
- 23 Promise primarily provides projection (6)
- 24 Opening delight (8)

Down

- 1 Avenge criminal in part of Switzerland (6)
- 2 It's said someone who's 9 is lazy (4)
- 3 Chopped pecan with a US cooking utensil (8)



- 4 It's hot and cold in the ear (6)
- 5 Said to be very noticeable (10)
- 6 Team's adopting method indirectly (8)
- 8 Trick that's slick ultimately adopted by handy man (9,4)
- 13 Bring morning to a close with starter of soup to remedy (4,6)

- 15 Everyone and I walk quickly back for Mexican food (8)
- 16 Doctor to detain cure (8)
- 18 Unsuccessful and in last place, chef repelled Delia (6)
- 20 Open sun block, removing both lids (6)
- 22 Time allocated to eat this? (4)

Jumbo puzzle

Read down the letters in the shaded squares to spell out a **British-American rock band (9,3)**.

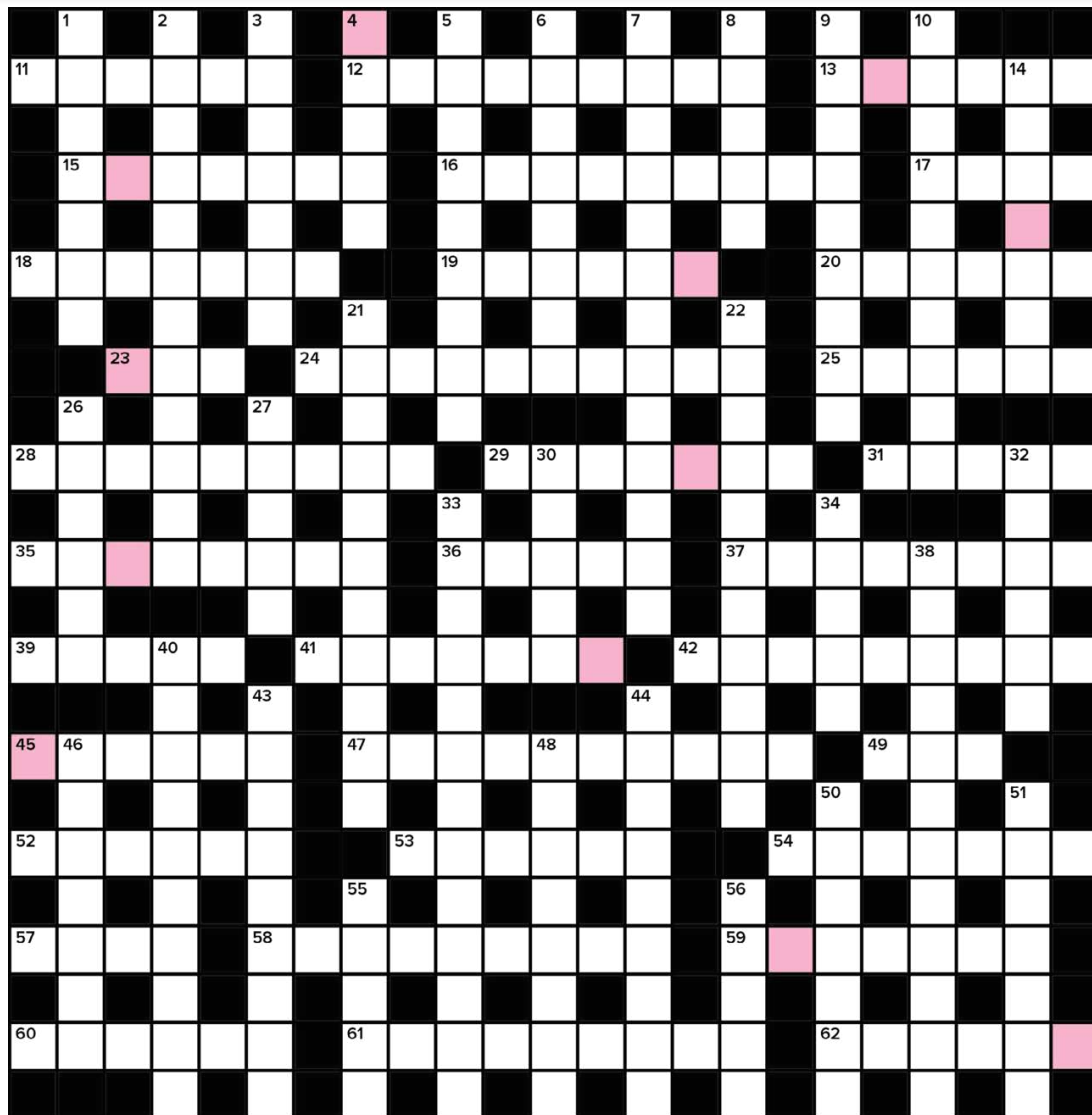
ACROSS

- 11 Wellness (6)
- 12 Large water tank (9)
- 13 Most senior (6)
- 15 Protection (7)
- 16 Lotions (9)
- 17 Jealousy (4)
- 18 Rubbing out (7)
- 19 Young child (6)
- 20 Go back (6)
- 23 Humour (3)
- 24 Set in the past (10)
- 25 Orbit (6)
- 28 Artworks (9)
- 29 Cardboard containers (7)
- 31 Edition (5)
- 35 TV executive (8)
- 36 Snapshot (5)
- 37 In a curt manner (8)
- 39 Legends (5)
- 41 Twisted (7)
- 42 Catherine wheels, say (9)
- 45 One who belongs to a club (6)
- 47 Pre-evenings (10)
- 49 Vegetable (3)
- 52 Mettle (6)
- 53 Involve intensely (6)
- 54 Refer to (7)
- 57 Facts and figures (4)
- 58 Sea margin (9)
- 59 Tropical birds (7)
- 60 Goes in (6)
- 61 Displayed (9)
- 62 Stationary (6)

DOWN

- 1 Chiefs (7)
- 2 Dated (3-9)
- 3 Calling (7)
- 4 Liberated (5)
- 5 Link (9)
- 6 Handover (8)
- 7 Message (13)
- 8 Incorrect (5)
- 9 Build (9)
- 10 Bold exploits (10)
- 14 More than a few (7)
- 21 Spiced cake (11)
- 22 Orchards (11)
- 26 Moderately (6)
- 27 Tar-like substance (5)
- 30 Solo (5)
- 32 Dissimilar (6)
- 33 Chances (13)
- 34 Moisture remover (5)
- 38 Expert (12)
- 40 Sleeps over winter (10)
- 43 Fault-finding (9)
- 44 Motions (9)
- 46 Describe (7)
- 48 Became aware (8)
- 50 Sightseer (7)
- 51 Vintage (7)
- 55 Cheerful (5)
- 56 Digging tool (5)

* Find the puzzle answers on the horoscopes page.



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Puzzle TIME

Arrow word

Insam is the Korean name for what cultivated foodstuff? 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.

Bubble _ type of sweet	The Sixth _ film	Actor, _ Whishaw	Largest continent	Tavern	Pale	Doctor _ TV show	Type of tree	Cry of woe or despair	Heavy weight
Utilise		'It takes _ to tango'	Novel, fresh			Warmth Its capital is Lima			T
Refer to			Monster		Greek god				O
	Not switched on	Armed conflict		Undivided Body parts			Adult male	M A N	
	Capital of Italy	What a bird lays	Edible fish		Actor, _ Keaton	Farm animal	Dodge		Slushy rain
			Greases	Decorates a cake	Make less			A long time	
At liberty	Leaving Limb				Untruth	The _ cricket ground			
Sorcery				In the style of (1,2)		Hourly pay			
		Bending to one side					Scottish river		
To each	Untidy jumble			View		Compass direction			

YOUR ANSWER:

WORDSEARCH

Which of these swimmers is also a group leader and ambassador for their national Scouting association? The answer is the one missing from the grid.

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

YOUR ANSWER:

- | | | |
|---------|----------|----------|
| DIAS | LONG | SPITZ |
| EVANS | OTTO | THOMPSON |
| HACKETT | PHELPS | THORPE |
| LEDECKY | POPOV | TORRES |
| LOCHTE | SIMMONDS | ZORN |

Mini crossword

1		2		3
		4	5	
6				
		7		

- The shaded boxes spell out a word.
- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 Clever (5) | 1 Backbone (5) |
| 4 Chart (3) | 2 Confess (5) |
| 6 _ Armstrong, astronaut (4) | 3 Highest point (3) |
| 7 _ Danson, actor (3) | 5 Ginger _, soft drink (3) |



Your stars

For 13-19 May with Bracha Goldsmith
yourastrologysigns.com

ARIES 21 MAR – 20 APR

Stop spending and start saving. This is a time to be conservative and careful with resources. You will reap the benefits in time.

TAURUS 21 APR – 21 MAY

The fewer expectations you can have of others, the better. This will take the pressure off your relationships and facilitate an easier flow.

GEMINI 22 MAY – 21 JUN

Physical activity and regular exercise are of paramount importance. Prioritise this life area and you'll see fast results.

CANCER 22 JUN – 23 JUL

Making space for you may prove a challenge this week. Be prepared to say a firm no to any further commitments.

LEO 24 JUL – 23 AUG

You're going through a period of intense change. Do your best not to resist it. In the long run you'll feel the benefits.

VIRGO 24 AUG – 23 SEP

You're in need of new inspiration. A short trip away would be very helpful now. Even half a day away will recharge your system.

LIBRA 24 SEP – 23 OCT

Don't be too concerned about what others think. What matters is that you learn to trust yourself and your actions.

SCORPIO 24 OCT – 22 NOV

Your social life may be changing dramatically. You are ready for new encounters and more stimulating company.

SAGITTARIUS 23 NOV – 21 DEC

This is a time of intense activity and productive outcomes. The extra effort you make now will be worthwhile.

CAPRICORN 22 DEC – 20 JAN

Deep introspection and quiet time is extremely important now. You're going through a re-evaluation period that needs your full attention.

AQUARIUS 21 JAN – 19 FEB

This promises to be a fast-paced week filled with many exciting encounters and experiences. Your feet will hardly touch the ground.

PISCES 20 FEB – 20 MAR

Travel is under positive stars now. Even a day trip will energise you and offer a new perspective on your life.

PUZZLE ANSWERS



ARROW WORD ANSWER: GINSENG



WORDSEARCH ANSWER: SIMMONDS



ANSWER: ROME

MINI XWORD

- WORDWISE** Abet, abets, amber, bare, bares, barst, barn, bars, base, baser, bast, bastes, baster, bates, bats, beam, beams, bear, bears, beast, beat, beater, beats, beer, bema, berate, berates, beret, berm, beset, besmear, best, bestrew, beta, bets, beware, brae, brat, braw, bream, breams, breast, brew, brews, ember, rebate, rebates, sabre, stab, swab, tabs, weber, webs
- ANSWER: WEBMASTER**
- LINKWORDS** COFFEE, MOBILE, CALLED, PACKED, TARGET, PLATED, FELLOW, MARROW, FINGER, CANDLE
- ANSWER: TRAIN DRIVERS**
- CROSSWORD ACROSS:** 7 Headlamp 9 Heroic 10 Fete 11 Challenger 12 Warm up 14 Tribunal 15 Take no chances 17 Dreadful 19 Tedium 21 Livelihood 22 Mild 23 Pledge 24 Entrance
- DOWN:** 1 Geneva 2 Idle 3 Saucapan 4 Chilli 5 Pronounced 6 Sideways 8 Practical joke 13 Make amends 15 Tortilla 16 Antidote 18 Failed 20 Unlucky 22 Meal
- ANSWER: FLEETWOOD MAC**
- 51 Classic 55 Happy 56 Spade
- DOWN:** 1 Leaders 2 Old-fashioned 3 Phoning 4 Freed 5 Associate 6 Transfer 7 Communication 8 Wrong 9 Construct 10 Adventures 14 Several 21 Gingerbread 22 Plantations 26 Fairly 27 Pitch 30 Alone 32 Unlike 33 Opportunities 34 Drier 38 Professional 40 Hibernates 43 Criticism 44 Movements 46 Explain 48 Realised 50 Tourist
- JUMBO PUZZLE ACROSS:** 11 Health 12 Reservoir 13 Oldest 15 Defence 16 Ointments 17 Envy 18 Erasing 19 Infant 20 Return 23 Wit 24 Historical 25 Circle 28 Paintings 29 Cartons 31 Issue 35 Producer 37 Photo 37 Ably 39 Myths 41 Crooked 42 Fireworks 45 Member 46 Afternoons 49 Pea 52 Split 53 Engage 54 Consult 57 Data 58 Coastline 59 Parrots 60 Enters 61 Presented 62 Static 65 Transistor 7 Communication 8 Wrong 9 Construct 10 Adventures 14 Several 21 Gingerbread 22 Plantations 26 Fairly 27 Pitch 30 Alone 32 Unlike 33 Opportunities 34 Drier 38 Professional 40 Hibernates 43 Criticism 44 Movements 46 Explain 48 Realised 50 Tourist

IN YOUR NEXT ISSUE

EASY WAYS TO BOOST YOUR ENERGY



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AFFORDABLE GARDEN REFRESHES



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ON SALE
20 May

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The pothole LADY

In which I discover why a roads
campaigner isn't called Daphne



“When I came home after taking the dog to the woods, there was a lady in the road outside our house with a professional-looking tape measure.

I stood on the pavement and watched her. You know, just in case she needed any helpful advice.

'I'm measuring the potholes in this road,' she explained. Her voice, by the way, sounded as if she might be the headmistress of a particularly unruly girls' school.

She wore her hair in an efficient bun, and had a yellow high-vis jacket that was at least two sizes too large. A large notebook was stuffed in one of the pockets.

'As you can see,' she continued, 'this one is three and half feet by about two feet. Not the biggest today, but very far from the smallest.'

'Do you do much of this?' I wondered, peering at the pothole, which seemed only polite.

'I'm from Daff,' she said. 'DAPH. We're Drivers Against Potholes.'

'Very good. What a pity you couldn't manage the full DAPHNE.'

'We did think of that.' Of course they did. 'We did wonder if we should be Drivers Against Potholes (National Emergency), but we're really only a local group.'

'Are there many of you?'

'Half a dozen, but it's mainly just me, I'm afraid. The others are too old really to be out on roads in all weathers. They tend to do the admin work.'

'What do you do when you've measured the potholes?'

'We send the information to the council.'

'And do they take any notice?'

She took a little time to consider this, as if I'd asked her to list the political consequences of the Hundred Years' War.

'Not really,' she said eventually.

After that poignant reply, there was nothing to do but stare at the pothole again.

'Would you like a cup of tea?' I asked at length.

'Oh gosh,' she said. 'I could murder a cup, but I really ought to carry on. I'm only a quarter of the way down the road.'

'I can bring it to you.

How do you like it?'

After her reply, I felt like a teenage waitress who had just asked The World's Pickiest Eater if they had any allergies.

Mrs Pothole would only drink decaffeinated Earl Grey. She liked it with semi-skimmed milk, and rather weak, if that's not too much trouble.

'If you're going to get that pothole filled in, nothing's too much trouble. Oh, and just leave the mug on the gatepost when you've finished.'

In the house, I found Mr Dear with cobwebs in what passes these days for his hair. This is a sign that he has been up in the attic. Which is a sign that he is having a clear-out.

Mr D has become slightly obsessed with the idea that we will one day move house, but that when the time comes we will be too old to cope with all the clearing up.

So he's decluttering bit by bit. Imagine Marie Kondo in corduroy trousers and a brown gardening jumper and you'll get the idea.

'We don't really need this, do we?'

*Imagine
Marie Kondo
in corduroy
trousers'*

He was holding a small remote-controlled helicopter, and the control box that makes it fly. 'I put in some new batteries, and it doesn't seem to work.'

'In that case, get rid of it. Where did it come from anyway? I don't seem to remember the children getting a helicopter? Oh, wait a minute. Didn't you bring it home and fly it in the kitchen? And you managed to knock a mug full of coffee off the sideboard?'

'Yes,' he replied, slightly shamefaced. 'That was when you banished it to the loft. Now, what about these?'

He produced two wooden tennis rackets, which were probably last used when Edward VII was on the throne. Another few years and we'd be standing in front of an expert from *Antiques Roadshow* in the grounds of some manor house and saying, 'Really? As much as that?'

They went the same way as the helicopter. You have to be ruthless in the decluttering business.

When I went out to fetch the mug from Mrs Pothole, it was nowhere to be seen. And neither was Mrs Pothole.

It did occur to me that I'd been the victim of a sophisticated gang of mug thieves, stealing from mugs like me.

And then I spotted it – on a gatepost three doors down.

Let's hope Mrs P's pothole spotting is better than her grasp of who lives where.

Rosie XX

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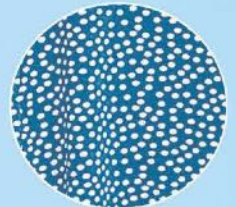


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