

june 2025 • issue 165

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Letter from the Editor

Hello again and welcome...

Speaking to a fellow magazine owner recently, he mentioned that he was using AI to find all the events happening in his area.

In case you aren't familiar with how this would work, AI (in this case, using a website called chatgpt.com) simply enables you to ask a question and get a long answer. Unlike a Google search, which gives you a list of websites that you can refer to, AI gives you a summary of the pertinent information.

So, I should be able to say, *"Tell me all the events happening in Measham in June and July 2025"*, and I'd be given a list which I can simply copy and paste into my magazine. Wow. This will save me hours of work. Except...

When I tried it myself, one of the entries needed a bit more information. So, I did a general search for that event, only to find it was not running this year. OK, let's try another. Yes, this one is happening, but not on the date that the AI had listed.

It turns out that AI is a people pleaser. Rather than saying *'I don't know,'* it fills in the gaps to give you an answer which is often a best guess.

Sometimes this is unimportant. Often, though, it's essential that you speak to a (living) expert. Health, legal or financial advice, for example, is not information you should trust if it only came from *ChatGPT* or any other AI source.

And the thought I will leave you with this month:-

*"The measure of intelligence
Is the ability to change."*

Until next time...

Sheila

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The Village Breeze is a local community magazine and business directory distributed monthly to 8,000 homes and businesses in Appleby Magna, Donisthorpe, Linton, Measham, Moira, Oakthorpe and Overseal.

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Call of the wild



Since taking part in the reality show 'Castaway' in 2000, Ben Fogle has become one of the nation's favourite presenters, with a passion for adventure and nature.

Considering Ben Fogle was a shy youngster, the TV presenter, writer, adventurer and documentary maker handles the spotlight remarkably well.

He grew up in London with his actress mother Julia Foster and Canadian father, vet Bruce Fogle, and two sisters. His mother starred in 1960s films like *Alfie*, alongside Michael Caine. Ben, now 51, would often dine at home with his mum's famous friends.

HOME AND AWAY

Ben puts his career down to a "mix of luck, opportunity and determination". His love of nature was fostered by annual summer trips to stay with his father's parents in Canada.

"Canada was my introduction to the great outdoors. I'd spend eight weeks canoeing and swimming and fishing, living the polar-opposite life to my urban existence in London," he has said.

His life changed in 1999 after spotting an advert in *The Guardian*. Out of 10,000 applicants, he became one of 36 volunteers to take part in the BBC's reality show 'Castaway'. Marooned on an island in the Outer Hebrides, their challenge was to form a self-sufficient community.

"I was in my mid-twenties, and it sounded like an amazing adventure," Ben recalled. *"I learned a lot about myself and about our relationship with the landscape."*

BRIEF ENCOUNTER

Ben met his wife Marina while dog-walking in Hyde Park. Theirs was a whirlwind romance and a marriage proposal came the day after Ben completed rowing 3,000 miles across the Atlantic with Olympic oarsman James Cracknell, which Ben calls his scariest experience. Marina's engagement ring was made from a small piece of rope – *"I didn't have time to buy a ring,"* Ben wrote later in a social media post.

The couple, who married in 2006, have two children, daughter Iona and son Ludovic. Sadly, their son Willem was stillborn in 2014.

Although renowned for his love of adventure and the wild, home is where Ben's heart lies. In 2019 he and Marina swapped life in London for a £2.2m rural retreat in Oxfordshire.

SOMETHING TO SHARE

In April, Ben completed a 24-date nationwide tour, *'Wild'*, which embraced everything he's been up to in the past 15 years, with an emphasis on his popular *Channel 5* series, *'New Lives in the Wild'*, which he has been making since 2013. It sees him travel around the world visiting people who have given up the rat race. Episodes are available on www.channel5.com.

What's next for the man whose TV credits include *'Countryfile'*, which he's hosted for nine years, *'Extreme Dreams'*, *'Lost and Found'*, *'The One Show'*, *'Animal Park'* and *'The Great British Year'*? *"I want the next few decades to be about giving back: sharing things I've learned. I hope I can inspire people not necessarily to change their lives or move to the wilderness but perhaps to step out of their comfort zone."*

Photograph © Channel 5



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How much does it really cost to buy a home?

When you buy a property, the purchase price is only the beginning. The additional fees can soon mount up. So what extra expenses might you face?

Property surveys

Mortgage lenders will carry out a basic valuation survey to confirm how much the property is worth. The price of this can start from around £150 but it can be free.

Three other types of survey are available: a RICS Home Survey Level 1, Level 2 (previously a Homebuyer Survey) and Level 3, which is a full structural survey.

Which one you choose will depend on the age and state of repair of the building. The basic Level 1 survey is only suitable for standard properties. The other two highlight potential problems and what is needed to put them right, with the structural survey going into greater detail.

The cost of these surveys can vary depending on location and property, but the most basic survey can set you back £500 or more, while a Level 3 survey is at least £700.

Mortgage arrangement fee

As well as a valuation survey fee, you will need to pay a mortgage arrangement fee, which is often more than £1,000. Lower fees tend to mean a higher interest rate. It's best to pay this fee in advance, to avoid paying interest on it throughout the term of your loan.

Conveyancing and solicitors' fees

Solicitors charge a fixed fee or a percentage of the value of the property. This could come to £1,500, with the costs of searches on top.

The searches most commonly used by homebuyers are local authority (up to £250), Land Registry (£4-£8), drainage and water (up to £100) and environmental (up to £60).

You'll also pay an electronic transfer fee of around £40 when your solicitor transfers the money electronically to your seller's solicitor.

Stamp Duty

Stamp Duty affects the purchasers of residential properties sold for over £125,000 (or £300,000 for first-time buyers). Rates are:

- £125,001 to £250,000: 2%
- £250,001 to £925,000: 5%
- £925,001 to £1.5 million: 10%
- Over £1.5 million: 12%

Removals

Removals firms generally charge from £400 but may charge more for weekend work.

Many people hire a van instead if they don't have many possessions. The cost of van hire varies according to where you live and the day you move.

Home insurance

Buildings insurance will be a requirement if you've taken out a mortgage. Contents insurance protects your belongings in the event of fire, flood, or other disaster.

Leasehold properties

If you buy a leasehold property, you'll need to pay a 'ground rent' each year, usually a nominal amount. Buying a flat within a block also attracts maintenance and service charges, which can increase annually.

What are the different types of life insurance?

Life insurance policies are designed to cover a particular scenario. These are just a couple of examples so let's look more closely at the common types of life insurance.

Term life insurance

It's the most common type of life insurance and lasts a set number of years, known as the 'term'. The most popular types of cover are:

Decreasing term life cover

You're most likely to buy decreasing term life insurance when you take out a mortgage, or another loan that you pay off over time. The policy lasts as long as your mortgage and the payout reduces in line with your mortgage as you pay it off.

Level term life cover

This is also a term cover product, but the payout doesn't reduce over time. You can choose how long you want the policy for and the level of cover which remains the same throughout the term.

Increasing term life

This one is a life insurance for a set period, but this time the payout increases during the term. The cost-of-living



increases over time (inflation) which means your money now won't go as far in the future as prices rise. With increasing term life insurance your payout increases in line with inflation but it does mean your premiums generally increase as well.

Joint life insurance

Joint life insurance covers you and a partner on one policy. It's sometimes cheaper than buying two policies and there's only one premium to pay each month.

It's worth bearing in mind that joint policies only pay the full cover amount once. After that, the policy will end and there'll be no cover for the surviving partner.

What type of life insurance do I need?

Having the right life insurance cover in place can give you peace of mind that your loved ones will be financially supported once you're no longer around. Please contact us if you wish to discuss your options.



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SPRING INTO ACTION TODAY

8 surprising facts about plants

1. You can buy young trees inoculated with truffle fungus

This means they can produce truffles when grown under optimum conditions. Many truffle species are edible and an expensive delicacy. Truffles are a type of mycorrhizal fungi, forming a symbiotic relationship with trees including hazel, oak, beech, silver birch and hornbeam. Growing wild in certain parts of the UK, truffles lurk beneath the soil like the very best hidden treasure!

2. 2,000 new plant species are discovered every year

Meanwhile, others become extinct. Highly endangered is the Western underground orchid, *Rhizanthella gardneri*, which shows no leaves or stems above the surface of the ground. One of the rarest plants is *Encephalartos woodii*. This South African native is a cycad species and only male specimens are known to exist.

3. A 'mast year' describes a bumper crop of fruit and nuts

This occurs naturally every five to ten years. One theory is it's a form of predator control. Animals such as squirrels, mice, badgers and birds eat the tree produce. During a 'mast year' they can't eat it all, ensuring that some seeds can germinate.

4. Oak trees need to mature before reproducing

English oak trees (*Quercus robur*) do not produce acorns until they are around 40 years old.

5. A banana is actually a berry

Strawberries are thought to be the only fruit to produce seeds on the outside. But these, together with raspberries and blackberries, are not berries but drupes ('stone' fruit). True berries include bananas, grapes, melons and oranges. They were named long before the precise definition was created.

In botanical terms, a berry has three layers: the outer skin, or exocarp, the fleshy interior, termed the mesocarp, and the inside layer which holds the multiple seeds, called the endocarp.

6. Sunflowers can be Teddy Bears

There are up to 70 species of sunflowers (*Helianthus*), including red and purple varieties as well as yellow. June is a great time to sow seeds directly into the ground but be wary of slugs. Not all sunflowers produce huge heads that track the sun. Some are more diminutive, including the 'Teddy Bear' variety which produces half pom-pom shaped flowers that are soft to the touch.

7. One plant can hide an elephant

Pennisetum purpureum is native to Africa and able to survive on uncultivated land where water levels and nutrients are sparse. It's known as elephant grass, because it can grow up to 4.5 metres tall and conceal an elephant.

8. You shouldn't drink cactus water

Despite tales of survival in a desert, it would be unwise to consume water stored inside a cactus leaf or stem. The liquid is extremely acidic and can damage human kidneys.



A strawberry is not a berry



Acorns are eaten by wildlife



You shouldn't drink their water



Elephant grass grows up to 4.5m



Raspberries are drupes



Birds eat tree nuts, seeds and fruits



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Driving me crazy!

BONJOUR! My name is Pierre Poirot, and I am (how you say?) . . . a driving instructor. Now, before you ask, I am French, NOT Belgian like Agatha Christie's sleuth. I should have retired years ago – but, after my divorce, I need the money!

Sometimes my learners drive me crazy! I remember Monsieur Moss well:

'So ... dis-moi, tell me, monsieur, how many lessons have you had so far? Thirty? Thirty-five? Please keep your eyes on the road ahead. Thirty-six, eh? Wow, that's quite a lot! You do want to pass your test, n'est-ce pas?'

'Now, in two hundred yards, at the crossroads, I want you to turn left. Rights. ... Err, you've just gone RIGHT! NO, listen to me, I said turn LEFT. Right? What's that? You were confused? Okay, okay, I was wrong to raise my voice. SORRY! Keep looking at the road ...'

'The cut on my nose? Thank you for asking. It's much better, merci. Yes, I know you performed an impressive emergency stop last week, Monsieur Moss. I was very proud of you. It's just that I expected you to wait for my command — not suddenly slam your foot on the

brake pedal without warning!

'ATTENTION! WATCH OUT FOR THAT CYCLIST! Yes, I realise the bike's difficult to see — not like a big lorry, as you say ... but even so ...'

'You may have noticed it's now started to rain, Monsieur Moss? The windscreen's wet? WHEN IT'S SAFE TO DO SO, pull over to the side of the road and switch on your windscreen wipers ... MIND THE CURB! Why are you flashing your headlamps? Or indicating right? Try another knob — there's plenty to choose from ... Err, I like Radio Two as much as the next person but ... Ah, you've got it, now. Well done, monsieur. So ... off we go! One last look over your shoulder. Clutch down. Into first gear and ...'

'ZUT ALORS! GENTLE ON THE ACCELERATOR — it's not a race, monsieur! Anyone would think you're Lewis Hamilton!

'WATCH YOUR SPEED! It's thirty miles an hour. THIRTY! Look at the lampposts and the street lighting. No, NOT fifty, Monsieur Moss. I know the traffic sign said fifty – but that was HALF A MILE back. We're in the town centre now. You MUST keep your eyes open ... I'm not SHOUTING at you again ...'

'Now, remember the "two-second rule". You've forgotten? Mon Dieu! HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU? In faster moving traffic, you MUST leave a gap of at least TWO SECONDS between yourself and the vehicle in front — double the distance when it's wet. See that juggernaut in front? If the driver suddenly brakes ... SACREBLEU! My nose! I think you've really broken it this time, monsieur ... 'I'll say this just more time — KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE ROAD! Stop looking at me, monsieur. Truly, I'm very flattered but ... What? No, no, no! I wasn't suggesting ...'

'Dieu merci – thank God! Your hour's almost up, monsieur. Oh, and by the way, I'm not here next week, I'm afraid ... Yes, I can see you're disappointed. On holiday. Well, for two weeks, actually. A month ... maybe longer. Moving out of the area. Other side of the country. Emigrating. Australia or New Zealand ... The Moon. Anywhere to get as far away from you as possible, Monsieur Moss ... Mon Dieu! There's no need to use language like that ...'

'DON'T SLAM THE D---! 'And bonjour to you too, monsieur. .. Oh, my poor nose!'

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Oven and carpet Cleaning

OVEN CLEANING

Every time something splashes in the oven (your roast chicken) or spills (that lovely apple crumble), what you are supposed to do is thoroughly wipe down the door, cavity and shelves afterwards.



But, honestly, who does that? Most of us will do a superficial clean and perhaps clear up the worst of the mess knowing that once the door is shut, you can't usually see how bad it's getting. It's not urgent until smoke starts coming out or the smell becomes too much.

Still, eventually it needs to be done

and then dedicate an afternoon to doing it. It's messy and tedious, and generally the result is OK but not great.

Even those with a self-cleaning oven avoid using these products because of the smell and it still doesn't get everything sparkling.

There's a better way

An oven cleaning company will do the job in a couple of hours and it's no exaggeration to say your oven will look like it's brand new. Every aspect – the sides, top and bottom, and those tricky wire racks – will be gleaming. You'll want to leave the oven door open just so everyone can see how immaculate and shiny the interior is! You can also ask for the hob and the extractor hood to be cleaned too.

CARPET CLEANING

Although hard floors are very popular these days, with our cooler climate most UK homes still have carpets in some rooms. In the living room they give better acoustics and cosiness; they provide safety and deaden sound on the stairs; in the bedroom they offer warmth and comfort for bare feet in the morning.

So we all still love carpets. But even if you try to be disciplined about removing outdoor shoes and not eating or drinking in carpeted rooms, the time will come when a proper clean is needed.

You can buy carpet-cleaning machines but they're nothing like as good as professional models. You can hire professional machines too but in either case you'd better have had some fitness training before you start using them. It's really taxing work and if you didn't have a bad back before, you probably will afterwards.

There's a better way

The industrial-strength cleaning equipment a professional

company uses is a good enough reason to employ a carpet-cleaning company in itself, as the end result will be better than anything you can do yourself. But being able to avoid the hard graft that comes with the DIY



option is the clincher – this is not a job for the faint hearted.



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Outdoor living

Whether installed on balconies, patios or lawns, well-chosen furniture makes the garden fun and functional.

When you buy new garden furniture, you want it to enhance your garden and also be practical and durable. Choosing dining sets, sofas, lounge chairs and coffee tables is an investment, so it's good to ensure it lasts and lasts through rain, cold and sun.

Are you able to store furniture over the winter? If so, less sturdy options are a possibility (especially if they fold). However, most people have to keep large items outside, making it vital to consider what they're made from and how to look after them.

So, before you sit back in the sun with a glass of something cold, consider the pros and cons of the four main materials used in making garden furniture.

METAL

Both cast and wrought iron can rust, and are usually protected with a painted or powder-coated finish. Clean and repaint it regularly, and it should last forever.

Steel furniture also needs to be sealed or painted, or left bare and galvanised. Stainless steel, on the other hand, should be more resistant to wear but be prepared to step in with rust remover if necessary. Cast aluminium is naturally rust-resistant but can corrode, so is best when painted.



Don't forget to store cushions away in bad weather.

TIMBER

All timber garden furniture wears naturally over time. The cheaper the wood, the less likely it is to last – softwoods like pine and cedar, for example, need regular attention. Solid oak is naturally long lasting, provided regular after-care is carried out, while teak and eucalyptus contain natural oils that enhance their durability.

You may need to oil and/or stain timber furniture each year; it will certainly require a clean and, if painted, perhaps a touch-up. Don't paint hardwood, though – the oils will affect the paint.

WICKER

Natural rattan is beautiful but doesn't stand up to the British climate. It must also be stored over the winter. A popular choice is synthetic rattan, which can be woven onto a lightweight aluminium frame. Quality versions look and feel natural but are completely weatherproof, needing just the occasional clean with soapy water.

PLASTIC

This can be a cheap option – but there are also more costly designer versions in sculptural shapes and cool colours, made from eco-friendly, recycled materials. Budget versions tend to be flimsy, while good-quality plastic is usually very weather resistant.

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Don't dodge your doctor

Do you avoid your GP like the plague or know someone else who does? It's very common but early intervention is always best.

Nobody really enjoys going to the doctor about a health issue, but some people put off making that appointment at any cost. In fact, studies show that around a third of us suffer doctor avoidance syndrome. Men are the biggest culprits, with one survey finding that 65% of men said they'd delay seeking medical attention for as long as possible. Younger people tend to be doctor refuseniks too, often because they prefer to look online for medical information. Middle-aged folk, especially those with an unhealthy lifestyle, also have a tendency to steer clear.

Reasons to be fearful

Why do people avoid seeing their doctor?

- **Health anxiety.** Worry about what the doctor might find.
- **Embarrassment.** Fear of discussing a problem with bowel habits, reproductive health or sexual health.
- **Phobia.** Some people fear needles, blood, pain, death or hospitals.
- **Too busy.** This is a classic male response.
- **Men should man up.** The idea that men shouldn't talk about their problems is still prevalent.
- **Don't want to waste the doctor's time.** A peculiarly British worry.
- **Can't get an appointment.** Getting through to the surgery can sometimes be a struggle.
- **It'll get better on its own.** The outcome will usually be better if something is caught sooner.

How to help

It's not uncommon for A&E doctors to see patients whose condition has become serious because they've held off seeing their GP. In some cases – for example, cancer symptoms – visiting the doctor early is crucial. Remember, even if it's bad news, bad news early is good news! Here are some strategies to support someone who's resisting going to the doctor:

- **Say the right things.** Guilt tripping and haranguing rarely work. It's better to explain how making an appointment can help than tell them what terrible things could happen if they don't. If they're nervous, reassure them it's ok to be anxious about a health issue.
- **Offer to book an appointment.** For someone who's busy or prone to delaying seeing the doctor, this is a practical way to help.
- **Go with them.** If your friend or loved one is worried about going to the GP, offer to accompany them and sit in the waiting room while they have their consultation.
- **Do something nice afterwards.** Arranging a nice lunch or a walk afterwards might make the other person happier about going to the surgery.
- **Lead by example.** Look after your own health and always seek medical help promptly. It might rub off on a doctor-averse partner, friend or family member.
- **Go to the pharmacist.** Pharmacists can advise on all sorts of health issues – they may even persuade someone reluctant to see a GP to book an appointment.
- **Get help for a phobia.** Cognitive behavioural therapy and other treatments may be beneficial.



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Focus on Fuerteventura

Blessed with year-round sunshine, gorgeous beaches and otherworldly landscapes – all just a four-hour flight from the UK – Fuerteventura is the second largest Canary Island. It goes a little under the radar compared to its popular neighbours, Tenerife and Lanzarote, and moves at a slower pace. But don't be fooled into thinking there's no adventure to be had here. Here are a handful of the island's highlights.



Immerse yourself in Corralejo's surf culture

Corralejo is a bustling resort at the northernmost tip of the island. Once a quiet fishing village, it's now a popular beach resort with a beautiful marina and trendy shops, tapas bars and restaurants. The resort attracts a surfer crowd, so on a gusty day you can see swathes of surfers, windsurfers, kitesurfers and hydrofoilers taking to the waves. Join them by renting some equipment or taking lessons at one of the many surfing schools. Alternatively, lie back on the beach and watch.

Step back in time in Betancuria

If you're travelling through the middle of the island, be sure to stop in Betancuria. This pretty little town nestled in the mountains is where Spanish colonists built their capital in 1404. It's well preserved and an easy-to-follow trail tells you about the town's history. There's also a good handful of restaurants offering authentic Canarian food, making Betancuria a great lunch stop.

Explore the island's volcanic terrain

Swap flip-flops for hiking boots and you'll

be rewarded with some of the most striking scenery in the Canaries. The Ajuy caves were created by lava 100 million years ago. They can be accessed via a gentle walk along the black sand beach. A few kilometres inland, the spectacular ravine of Barranco de Las Peñitas offers a more challenging hike. Climb to the famous Arco de las Peñitas for the best views. You might even encounter curious chipmunks!

Visit the uninhabited Isla de Lobos

A short ferry journey from Corralejo lies the nature reserve of Isla de Lobos. Walking trails criss-cross the island, offering the opportunity to spot native flora and breeding seabirds. There's also a pretty, sheltered bay that's perfect for taking a dip. The crystal-clear waters here are straight from a postcard, so bring a snorkel and search for sea life.

Make a beeline for the best beaches

There are loads of beaches to choose from, but some of the most picture-perfect stretches of sand can be found in Fuerteventura's Jandia peninsula in the south.



Cofete is a particular highlight; you can only reach this secluded beach via a bumpy dirt road, but your reward is more than 12 kilometres of unspoilt golden sand backed by dramatic mountains. This stunning landscape featured as a Star Wars film location.





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A story to tell

On 12 June 1942 Anne Frank was given a diary for her thirteenth birthday. The rest is history. Here's a round-up of some other reflections on life.



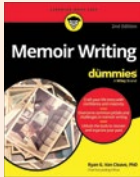
MELANIA: A Memoir by Melania Trump

An introduction to property mogul and businessman Donald Trump at a New York Fashion Week party in September 1998 changed the life of Slovenian-born model Melania Knauss. In her memoir, she reflects on her childhood, her courtship with Trump, the world of high fashion in Europe and New York, motherhood, her work and causes close to her heart, and shares behind-the-scenes stories of the White House.



ALL THAT MATTERS by Sir Chris Hoy

Olympian Sir Chris Hoy knows better than most how life can change in the blink of an eye. In 2023, he learnt he had stage 4 cancer – and that he will be living with the disease for the rest of his life. Here, the father of two reflects with exceptional bravery on the challenges he's faced, finding ways to make the most of the moments that matter.



MEMOIR WRITING FOR DUMMIES by Ryan G Van Cleave, PhD

From the 'For Dummies' series, this easy-to-follow guide shows you how to tell your life story, giving tips on overcoming writer's block, perfecting your plot, setting and characters, and so much more. There's also invaluable advice on editing, getting published and the best ways to market a memoir. You'll also find information on recruiting the help of AI and digital media.



I HAVEN'T BEEN ENTIRELY HONEST WITH YOU by Miranda Hart

This isn't just one of the nation's favourite comedians explaining her absence over the past decade; it's also an attempt to make the best of a terrible situation by coaching others who may have long-term health conditions. During her difficult decade, which can be traced back to contracting Lyme disease as a teenager, she experienced some surprising joys but also challenging lows.



UNLEASHED by Boris Johnson

Written in his inimitable style, this is an unrestrained and revealing account of the larger-than-life former PM's time in politics. We read about winning the largest Conservative majority since 1987, tackling knife crime in London and the Olympics, his role in Brexit, levelling up, the global Covid pandemic (and how he nearly died from the virus) and being toppled in a Tory putsch. Underlying everything is his view that the UK is an extraordinary country.



CHER: THE MEMOIR, PART ONE by Cher

This book by the iconic singer and actor traces her life and career from her childhood to the break-up of her marriage to Sonny Bono. Taking risks, making headlines, falling in love, Cher struggled and stumbled while trying to become her own woman. A rock 'n' roll memoir like no other.

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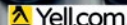
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Review : BMW 2 SERIES GRAN COUPÉ



BMW's rival to the Mercedes A-Class Saloon has been given a complete overhaul. Cameron Richards drives it.

What is it? With the introduction of a bootied variant of its popular 1 Series hatchback, BMW addresses a need for a compact saloon within its range.

What's new? Its sloping roofline gives it a sleek look. The interior is minimalist with many controls integrated into the touchscreen system and the 'M Sport' trim level is standard across the range. The 2 Series Gran Coupé is offered in a choice of drivetrains. More expensive models have adjustable dampers. These adjust the suspension according to the road surface.

What's under the bonnet? There are two engine options, with the cars badged '220' and 'M235'. For this test, we've driven the spicier M235 xDrive, which comes fitted with a 2.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine and four-wheel-drive. Its 304bhp and 400Nm of torque allow the car to hit 0-60mph in 4.7 seconds and reach 155mph (limited).

The '220' model comes with a 1.5-litre three-cylinder turbocharged petrol engine with 48V mild-hybrid technology, producing 172bhp.

A seven-speed automatic gearbox comes as standard.

What's it like to drive? The car is composed and controlled around the corners. The steering is nicely weighted and has a good feel. 'Sport' drive mode sharpens the throttle response. However, the gearbox is a little hesitant using the paddle shifts on the steering wheel. Our car's adjustable damping provides a smooth and comfortable ride.

How does it look? The A3's update is subtle. The new front end, while undeniably more modern looking, spoils the sharp, classy design of the outgoing car in our eyes. But the A3 is still a super stylish choice in the premium hatchback class.

How does it look? The sloping roofline is the main differentiation between the Gran Coupé and the 1 Series.

The rear tail lights follow the same design as the front lights. Our test car has a striking bright yellow paint job, while its two-tone diamond-cut alloy wheels and quad rear tailpipes give an aggressive look.

What's it like inside? There are lots of 'M Sport' references and the dashboard is finished off in the BMW Motorsport colours.

Build quality is superb, though there are a few harder plastics lower down in the cabin. While space in the back is compromised by the sloping roof line, legroom is good.

The M235 xDrive comes with 430 litres of boot space but the batteries for the mild-hybrid system on the 220 mean you only get 360 litres.

What's the spec like? Prices kick off at £34,915 for the entry-level 220 M Sport, which includes 18-inch alloy wheels, M Sport exterior styling and heated front seats.

Our M235 xDrive comes in at £44,435 and boasts equipment such as single zone air conditioning, sports seats and a gloss black boot spoiler.

Verdict If you want a fast, well-built and sporty coupé, the 2 Series Gran Coupé is one of the best compact executive saloons on the market.

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Browned butter and almond summer fruit cake

This cake is the epitome of summer: it's sticky, jammy, fresh and not too sweet – and it's just dreamy with a dollop of crème fraîche on top!

Detail...

Serves 8 generously

Preparation 30-35 minutes

Cooking time 1 hour 15 minutes, plus cooling

You will need...

- 250g unsalted butter
- 370g icing sugar, sifted, plus extra for dusting
- 200g ground almonds
- 80g plain flour
- A pinch of sea salt
- 220g egg whites (save the yolks for tiramisù!)
- 3 tsp vanilla extract
- 100g raspberries
- 1 ripe peach, sliced into half-moons (tinned also work well)
- Crème fraîche, to serve

Method...

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C, fan 150°C, gas mark 3. Grease and line a 21cm round tin.
2. Melt the butter in a pan over a medium-high heat and continue to cook until it starts to brown, swirling the pan and keeping an eye on it so it doesn't turn from brown to burnt. Once the milk solids have gone a nutty brown, take the pan off the heat and leave to cool.
3. Whisk together the icing sugar, almonds, flour and salt in a large bowl.
4. Add the egg whites and vanilla and stir until combined, then add the cooled brown butter and mix again.
5. Pour the batter into the tin and put the tin in the fridge for 15 minutes until the batter has slightly firmed up.
6. Sprinkle the fruit on top, pressing the berries and peach slices halfway into the batter.
7. Bake for 1 hour 15 minutes, covering loosely with foil after 50 minutes so it doesn't brown too much on top.
8. Let the cake cool completely in the tin, then serve with a light dusting of icing sugar and a dollop of crème fraîche.

Recipe extracted from
'In For Dinner' by
Rosie Kellett, out now,
published by Square
Peg, priced £27.
All photography by
Benedikte Klüver.



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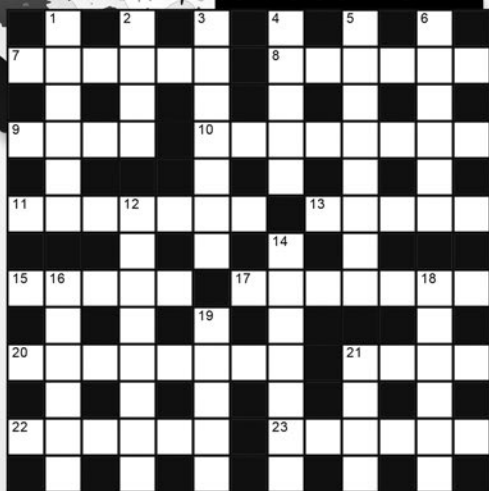
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CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 7 Eighth month (6)
- 8 Son of a monarch (6)
- 9 Knock unconscious (4)
- 10 Family member (8)
- 11 Award (7)
- 13 Strangely (5)
- 15 Begin (5)
- 17 Fun-loving (7)
- 20 Single-storey residence (8)
- 21 A long walk (4)
- 22 Obstructs (6)
- 23 A rat (6)

DOWN cont.,

- 6 Place of learning (6)
- 12 Fight (8)
- 14 Scowls (7)
- 16 Ridicules (6)
- 18 Mean (6)
- 19 Nearby (5)
- 21 Conceal (4)

DOWN

- 1 Mumble (6)
- 2 Destroy (4)
- 3 Gazing (7)
- 4 A fruit (5)
- 5 Annual celebration (8)

Each letter in this puzzle is represented by a number between 1 and 26. The codes for three letters are shown. As you find the letters enter them in the box below.

CODEWORD

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

SUDOKU

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

CROSSWORD...

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

SUDOKU...

ANSWERS...

CODEWORD...

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

CHILDREN'S PUZZLE PAGE

Why did
the roller
coaster have great
dance moves?

*It had some wicked
twist and turns.*

What
does a dentist
do on a roller
coaster?

*He braces
himself.*

Why didn't
the skeleton
ride the roller
coaster?

*He didn't have
the guts.*

ROLLER COASTER WORD RIDE

Use each clue to
write the word that is
only one letter different
from the word above it.

another word for wish

where you live

a few, several, etc.

opposite of go

ROLLERCOASTER WORDSEARCH

AIRTIME
CORKSCREW
DROP
FAST PASS
GRAVITY
JOLT
LAPBAR
LIFT HILL
LOOP
PHOTO
QUEUE
RIDE
ROLLER COASTER
SCARY
SCREAM
STATION
THRILLS
TICKET
TRACKS
TRAIN



Smart stuff...

Pretty as a picture

There's an attractive trend in the world of smart televisions this year: TVs that double as works of art. Samsung started it with its The Frame TV, which displays artworks in standby mode, and now other firms are offering similar features. At the top of the market are LG's excellent OLED sets with their Gallery Mode. But you don't need to spend huge sums: Amazon's Fire TV Stick comes with an 'Ambient Experience' mode that can display art and photos on any compatible TV.



A smarter pair of specs

Facebook's parent company Meta really wants you to wear a pair of smart glasses. Its Ray-Ban Meta smart glasses are aggressively priced at £299 and Meta frequently creates celebrity and fashion versions. Available in clear, transition and tinted versions, and featuring some of Ray-Ban's most popular frames, the Meta smart glasses have built-in cameras, Meta's voice-controlled AI assistant, music playback and hands-free telephone calls via your phone. And, of course, you can get them made up to your prescription.



Joining the fold

One of the worst-kept secrets in technology, the folding iPhone, is coming. While firms such as Samsung, Google and Motorola already offer very impressive folding smartphones, such as the Samsung Galaxy Flip 6, Apple's taking its time: the phone, which tech watchers dub the iPhone Flip, is currently expected to arrive in the autumn of 2026. It won't be cheap: insiders predict a price tag of around £2,000.



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