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Letter from the Editor

Hello again and welcome...

Since 1990, Macmillan Coffee Morning has brought together millions of people from across the UK to have fun and raise money for a worthy cause. Coffee Morning is usually the last Friday of September each year. This year's Coffee Morning Day is **Friday September 25th**. However, you can host any time of the year, whenever suits you best.

Their first ever Coffee Morning was a small affair with a simple idea: guests would gather over coffee and donate the cost of their cuppa to Macmillan in the process. It was so effective they did it again the next year – only this time nationally! Since then, Coffee Morning have raised vital funds to support the almost 3.5 million people in the UK living with cancer.

So, on September 25th, why not catch up over a cuppa, enjoy a few gorgeous treats – and the money you raise at your coffee morning will help make sure no one has to face cancer alone. To sign up for your free Coffee Morning Kit, visit the Macmillan website at **www.coffee.macmillan.org.uk**. You will find everything you need, including posters and games to download from their top tips page, ready for you to host a brilliant get together. I hope you all have a wonderful day!

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

*"People rise to the challenge
when it is their challenge."*

Until next time...

Sheila

Inside...

- 4 a short story by alicia & murray clarke**
One for the road
- 6 home products**
Homely hues
- 8 home interiors with katherine sorrell**
Backyard bliss
- 10 finance**
Money lessons for kids
- 12 bake!**
Strawberry & Pistachio Rapeseed Cake
- 14 time of year**
Learning the lingo
- 16 motoring**
Diesel deals
- 18 travel : Europe with children**
Family first
- 20 time of year**
Bringing 1066 to life
- 22 tv stars**
Grant success
- 24 gardening with caroline knight**
Mind the gap!
- 28 coffee break**
Time for a cuppa and a biccie!

Get in touch...

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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One for the road

'Afternoon, all!' I am PC William Todd. We are proceeding down a country lane on the B6007 when, at 15.08 hours precisely, we see a car parked ahead in a layby. Leaning up against the driver's door, we observe an elderly gentleman about six feet tall, brown eyes, silver-grey hair, wearing an expensive-looking tweed suit and matching waistcoat. Swaying gently. Drinking from a bottle...

I turn to my wingman sitting beside me. *'Something's afoot, Charlie!'* I say. (Off the record: I've always fancied myself as a bit of a Sherlock Holmes. But, at my age – I retire next year – I've left it too late to join the CID. That's why my nickname, back at the nick, is: "Old Bill") Sorry... I digress. I pull into the layby and we get out of the jam sandwich – err, patrol car.

Nonchalantly, I stroll over to the gentleman, exuding, what I hope, is an air of supreme confidence.

'What is your name?' I demand, sounding like a member of the Gestapo.

The man instantly springs to attention and salutes. *'Major Julian Fitzgerald MC. Retired. At your service!'* he barks.

'At ease, major,' I order, getting into the role. Taken aback, I hesitate. (Quick – think of a question...)

'Is this your car... sir?'

'It most certainly is, officer!' he slurs. *'This beauty is a 1965 Rolls Royce Silver Cloud; 6.2 litre V8 engine,'* he replies, patting the aluminium bodywork fondly. *'My pride and joy! Goes like the clappers – top speed 120 miles per hour, don't you know!'*

The major takes a swig from the bottle. (This is outrageous! In all my years as a copper, I've never seen anything like it!)

'Is that alcohol you're drinking, sir?' I say, bending forward to smell his breath. (Stupid question – given the circumstances.)

'It certainly is, young man. A fine twelve-year old, single malt, peaty whisky – from the Hebridean island of Jura.'

'Been drinking it all morning... Fancy a wee dram, do you?'

'No, thank you, sir,' I reply apologetically. *'I'm on duty.'*

I pause. (What else can I ask him? Going anywhere nice on your holidays? Perhaps not! Later, maybe.)

'Can I see your licence, sir?' (That's a good one – very relevant.)

'Funny you should say that, old bean,' he replies. *'It expired last year.'* (Is he mocking me?)

'And don't even ask me about insurance!' he continues. (Damn! That was my next question.)

I nod and wink at Charlie who passes me a clear plastic bag with a nozzle. *'Would you mind blowing into this, sir,'* *'Looks like a balloon!'* he jests. *'Are we going to have a party?'*

(Didn't the major realise this was no laughing matter?)

We watch the scoundrel take a deep breath and puff into the bag – turning his already red face even redder.

We examine the results. *'Blimey! Take a butcher's at this, Charlie!'* The breathalyser indicates the major is almost three times over the legal limit.

'Right, you're under arrest, sir. Would you mind accompanying me to the police station.' It is not a question.

I turn to Charlie. *'You take the squad car and I'll escort this man to HQ. Get in the back of the car please, sir. I'll drive.'*

'But... but...' the major starts to protest.

At that moment, I hear a rustling sound coming from the bushes nearby. A smartly-dressed man in a neatly-pressed suit and a peaked cap, stumbles through the foliage...

Confused, I ask, *'Who is this?'*

'Kindly allow me to present to you... James!'

'James?'

'That's correct, officer,' replies the major. *'I don't know what I'd do without him... He's been err, stretching his legs!'*

'James is my chauffeur! Drives me everywhere!'





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Homely hues



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The extra-large format of these dramatic tiles shows off their marble-like patterns, in swirling shades of terracotta, caramel and espresso. Grand Canyon 60 x 120cm porcelain tiles, £67 per square metre, Baked Tiles. www.bakedtiles.co.uk ←



Bring sophisticated comfort to your dining with this carver chair featuring vintage curves, a walnut-stained frame and sustainable, velvet-like upholstery. Hallie wooden carver dining chair in caramel, £229, Cult Furniture. www.cultfurniture.com ↑



Indulgent fabric meets sophisticated silhouette for an alluring combination. French Connection Molten four-seater sofa in Molten Plain Caramel, £1,399, DFS. www.dfs.co.uk ↑

The striking stripes of this minimal, modern lamp are hand-crafted from natural travertine stone and marble, with an opaque, globe-shaped shade for soft illumination. Connely table lamp, £129, Cult Furniture. www.cultfurniture.com →



Enhance your indoors with a scented candle in a chic, coloured-glass jar. Scented glass candle by True Aroma, £3.99, The Range. www.therange.co.uk ←



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Backyard bliss

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Garden buildings

For years, we've associated garden buildings with home offices. But there's growing interest in outdoor wellness rooms. The possibilities are extensive, from Pilates or yoga studios and home gyms to reading retreats and calm relaxation areas for meditation and mindfulness, fitted with soft seating and low lighting. Even easier is a timber deck for yoga or a hanging chair in a hidden spot.



Saunas, tubs and more

Traditional acrylic hot tubs are popular, but there's an increasing market for designs that integrate more naturally into the landscape. They may be clad in timber, sunken into the ground or even made from a rugged, natural material such as cedar or stone.

Saunas are another fast-growing sector in garden design. Even in a small plot, you can fit a compact, barrel-shaped design for one or two people. It's also relatively easy to complement a sauna with a cold-water plunge pool.

A quirky option is an outdoor bath, perhaps a traditional roll-top type, which could be plumbed in or placed within reach of a hose.

Lighting

Good, functional lighting is essential. Aim for warm bulbs set at a low level and try to choose organic materials and shapes for the fittings. Hang string lights through tree branches for a pretty glow.

Water features

A gently bubbling water feature can be a soothing addition to a garden spa. Alternatively, simply add a wall-mounted or free-standing fountain, provided you can connect it to a power supply.

Practical considerations

Use hedging or tall plants to create a natural screen, or add trellis or slatted-timber screens in appropriate places. Hide a hot tub, plunge pool or bath beneath a pergola and plant climbers if you are overlooked. Check whether you will need planning permission for large structures or major landscaping and always involve a qualified electrician where electricity is concerned.

Small touches make a big difference: add a hook or two near a hot tub for robes or towels, and a table near a relaxation area for books or a glass of water.





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REMEMBER QUALITY IS AS IMPORTANT AS PRICE



It's important to help your children become financially literate.

Money lessons for kids

In 2028, England will finally add personal finance to the primary school curriculum but it's still worth giving your child real-world lessons in managing money.

As cash payments become increasingly rare, financial education is arguably more important. The most crucial lesson to teach is that money is not about numbers but about opportunity cost: if you buy one thing, you can't use that money to buy something else. It's a simple lesson but it can be hard to learn and enforce. Ultimately, your child needs to experience the trade-offs of purchasing decisions and sometimes even regret their choices.

EARLY LESSONS With younger children, start out by turning the weekly shop into a financial conversation. For example, ask their opinion on whether brand-name cereals are really better, then ask if they'd prefer to get the own-brand or economy version if that means getting a packet of sweets as well.

There's no perfect amount for pocket money or allowances, but a good starting point is just enough to let them make meaningful but low-stakes decisions. Tying some of the money to household chores can help them think harder when spending their hard-earned money.

OLDER AND BOLDER With older children, introduce concepts like savings and interest to their pocket money. Financial experts suggest a three-pot approach where you split the money equally between cash the child can spend now, cash they must save for a certain period and cash to donate to their chosen charity.

Remember that the first experience many children have of spending is in-app purchases for mobile and console games. Make sure you understand how these work and what limits apply, then ensure your child understands this is still real spending. Before giving older children unsupervised internet access, be certain they understand how to spot financial scams.

BANKING FOR KIDS As a general rule, children can usually open a bank or savings account from around the age of six. These accounts must be set up and jointly managed by the parent or guardian, who has complete access to what is happening. They don't usually have debit cards.

Many high-street banks let children open an account in their own right when they are around 11, while features such as online or app access, direct debits and standing orders have older limits. Overdraft facilities are nearly always restricted to over-18s.

Most children's accounts offer a debit card. Don't confuse these bank account cards with prepaid cards. These are cards you can "load" with money, which your child can use in most places that accept debit cards. They often carry monthly fees but some prepaid cards offer much more parental oversight via apps.

Finding lost pensions

In the past, people could work for one employer their whole working lives. Today however, it is more common for people to move from job to job; this could be due to work:life balance, wages, or redundancies.

Whatever the reason is for changing employment, auto-enrolment into workplace pension schemes was introduced by the government in 2012 and became mandatory in 2018, so working for a company for more than a few months means employees are auto-enrolled into their workplace pension scheme.

There are a vast number of workplace pension providers, (NEST, The Peoples Pension and Aviva are a few examples), so moving jobs could potentially lead to a person having multiple pension pots. Having multiple of anything can be tricky to keep track of and - over time - these pensions can be forgotten about.

1. Check old paperwork - this could have providers names or plan numbers on.
2. Contact previous employers' HR departments with dates of employment - they should be able to tell you which pension provider they were using at the time of employment.

3. Contact pension providers - providing personal details such as a plan number, name, address, date of birth and national insurance number can confirm whether you have a plan with that pension provider.

Once the pension plans have been located you can request information about the plans for example, the current value, type of plan (defined benefit or defined contribution), whether there are any guarantees such as guaranteed annuity rates, guaranteed minimum pension, tax-free cash and more.

For someone not familiar with the financial jargon involved with pensions this can become confusing, so seeking help from a qualified financial advisor can decipher the jargon, give you an understanding of the full details of a pension plan and help you decide what steps to take next. Initial consultations at Great British Finance are free and a letter can be sent out to request all information from known current and previous pension providers; this will give the advisor the information they need to help you decide your next steps.

Written by Ben Mclean



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Strawberry and Pistachio Rapeseed Cake

Delicious served with crème fraîche or clotted cream and extra strawberries, this baked treat is equally scrumptious with an afternoon cuppa.

Detail...

Serves 6-8

Preparation time 25 minutes

Cooking time 50-55 minutes, plus cooling

You will need...

- 200ml Borderfields Rapeseed Oil, plus extra for greasing
- 225g shelled pistachios
- 200g caster sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 150g fine polenta
- 1 tsp baking powder
- A pinch of sea salt flakes
- 250g strawberries, rinsed, hulled and chopped, plus extra to serve
- Icing sugar, for dusting(optional)

Method...

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C, fan 160°C, gas mark 4. Line the base of a 23cm cake tin and grease the sides with a little rapeseed oil.
2. Put 200g of the pistachios into a blender and blitz until the consistency of ground almonds.
3. Whisk the sugar and eggs together with an electric whisk until pale and fluffy. Add the rapeseed oil, whisking continuously, and then fold in the ground pistachios, polenta, baking powder and salt. Fold in most of the chopped strawberries and then carefully tip the mixture into the prepared cake tin. Roughly chop the remaining pistachios and scatter over the top of the mixture along with the remaining chopped strawberries.
4. Bake in the preheated oven for 50-55 minutes until risen and golden, and a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Remove the cake from the oven and leave to cool in the tin before transferring to a plate or cake stand. Dust with icing sugar, if liked, and serve with clotted cream or crème fraîche and extra strawberries.

For more on the Borderfields range of Cold Pressed Rapeseed Oils and Infusions, visit www.borderfields.co.uk. Recipe © Borderfields/Rachel Green (www.rachel-green.co.uk), with photography © Michael Powell (www.michaelpowell.com).

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Ever fancied being able to speak a foreign language well? Here are some tips on how to go about it.

Are you back from your holiday abroad, wishing you'd been able to communicate with more confidence? You're far from alone. A YouGov survey last year found that three-quarters of Britons who can't speak a foreign language fluently would like to; the good news is it's not too late.

Languages have a lot going for them. Some command of a foreign tongue doesn't just help us on holiday; it's also much prized by employers and has even been shown to have cognitive benefits. These include improved memory, better problem-solving and slower brain ageing.

GETTING STARTED

While it's always an advantage to begin young, many adults who don't consider themselves linguists succeed in becoming extremely proficient in a language, often because they need to use it – for work, love or to live abroad. The key is motivation.

So what's the best way to learn and stay engaged?

1. **Take a course.** The discipline and structure will help keep you on track. There's never been so much choice: evening classes, intensive courses, online learning, audio courses, teach-yourself textbooks, private tuition. There are apps such as Duolingo too, though it's often better to use these to complement more formal learning.
2. **Learn the 100 most common words.** These account for about half of all spoken communication. Learn enough grammar to make sentences with them and

keep practising. You can find common word lists online.

3. **Work at it.** Set aside time every day to drill your chosen language, whether that's out loud or in your head. Learn verbs, make sentences, have pretend conversations. There will be times when you feel you're making little progress, but don't give up.
4. **Set goals.** It can help to give yourself bite-sized targets, for example: today I'm going to learn how to introduce myself; by the end of the week, I'm going to know how to order food. This is much more manageable than resolving to be fluent by your next holiday!
5. **Immerse yourself.** If you're learning Spanish, watch Spanish series on Netflix, listen to Spanish podcasts or radio. Find YouTube videos. You'll get used to hearing the language. Try to read magazine or newspaper articles, or other material to suit your level.
6. **Keep talking.** Talk to the mirror, find a language buddy or conversation class. Better still, find native speakers locally.
7. **Use your phone.** Technology can really boost your learning. Change the operating language. Use Google Translate and online dictionaries whenever you need a word or phrase.
8. **Make it fun.** Love dogs or football? Explore topics you're passionate about in your target language. Have frequent holidays in a country where it's spoken. Ultimately, a language is to be lived and enjoyed.

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Diesel deals

BMW 3 Series

The BMW 3 Series is one of the best compact executive saloons on the market. It comes as standard with rear-wheel drive, while the precise steering and refined cabin make it entertaining to drive.

The entry-level 318D is fitted with a 2.0-litre turbocharged unit that develops 148bhp and can return a claimed 55.4mpg. The mid-range 320D boosts power to 187bhp and can still achieve around the same 55mpg, while the flagship 330D is hooked up to a 3.0-litre turbocharged engine that produces 261bhp and can manage a claimed 47.1mpg.

Secondhand prices start at £17,000 for a low-mileage 320D, while a 330D can be picked up for £28,000.



Peugeot 208

If you want a good-looking, efficient supermini, the Peugeot 208 is hard to beat. The 1.5-litre BlueHdi engine is strong and capable, developing 101bhp and 249Nm of torque. It can sprint to 60mph in ten seconds and will deliver a claimed 73.6mpg.

Expect to spend around £12,300 for a used example; a GT model can be yours for £13,300.



Seat Leon

The Leon is a practical, economical and great-to-drive family hatchback. It shares the same platform as the Volkswagen Golf, but is a sportier alternative.

There's a 2.0-litre turbocharged diesel engine pumping out 113bhp and returning a claimed 64mpg.

Look to spend £14,500 for a five-door hatchback example in FR trim, while an estate variant will cost £15,995.



Skoda Superb

The Skoda Superb packs one of the largest interior cabins of any car on the market and is effortless to drive, thanks to its light controls, refined diesel engine and smooth ride.

The 2.0-litre turbocharged engine is extremely efficient, managing a claimed 57.7mpg on average.

Prices start at around £18,000 for an estate variant in SE trim, while a hatchback is £19,000.



Volkswagen Golf

You can get the latest eighth-generation model in a frugal diesel powertrain, which uses a 2.0-litre turbocharged setup that can deliver up to a claimed 67.3mpg.

This small family hatchback delivers a comfortable and mature driving experience with nicely weighted steering, good visibility and lots of torque.

A 2022 example is £14,500, while sporty R Line cars come in at £18,240.



Volvo XC60

The XC60 is the best-selling Volvo of all time. It benefits from a premium image, a comfortable interior, lots of standard kit and safety technology.

You can pick up a secondhand example with an efficient diesel powertrain using a 2.0-litre turbocharged setup that produces 187bhp and 400Nm of torque, while doing a claimed 41.5mpg.

Look to spend £23,200 for a 2019 R-Design that's covered 33,000 miles.





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Pet-proof home

Even the best-behaved pets can wreak havoc. One survey from Novuna Personal Finance found that 75% of owners had suffered pet-related damage. Soiled carpets and flooring, chewed furniture and belongings, and torn upholstery featured high on the animal vandalism list.

NAMING AND SHAMING

Cats tend to cause chaos with their claws, with scratched and ripped furniture being a common problem. Dogs can chew your possessions or your soft furnishings, and dig in your carpet. Both can knock over ornaments.

Many mouse, hamster and gerbil owners find themselves stumping up to repair rodent damage, according to the Novuna poll. Gnawing on furniture and skirting boards, and chewing through wires can be an expensive side effect of your little pet escaping.

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

- Ensure you have pet damage cover when you take out home insurance (your pet insurance won't cover this)
- Keep prized possessions out of tail-wagging range or away from clumsy cats
- Train your pet early on
- Give dogs plenty of exercise so they don't have pent-up energy
- Don't leave dogs alone for long periods when they might get bored or anxious
- Leave the radio on when you're out, to reassure them
- Give cats a scratching post to steer them away from wallpaper or furniture
- Opt for scratch-resistant furnishing fabrics and hard floors
- Have designated areas for pets, with gates and covers
- Create a sanctuary for your pet, in a cosy corner or with a comfy bed
- Give your dog toys to entertain it and channel chewing urges.





Family first

Travelling with young children comes with its challenges, so choosing the right destination is essential. Europe is filled with family-friendly cities with attractions and activities that cater to children – from interactive museums, zoos and big green spaces to amusement parks. Here are five of the best.



VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Vienna is an often-overlooked family holiday destination. A big draw for families is the world's oldest zoo, Schönbrunn Zoo, which is one of four places in Europe where you can see giant pandas. Then there's Prater amusement park and an incredible multi-level aquarium, alongside a handful of parks – perfect for picnics.

Vienna is magical at Christmastime too, transforming into a maze of Christmas markets, ice rinks and merry-go-rounds, twinkling with fairy lights.

LONDON, UK

While London is a big and bustling city, its excellent public transport network and array of free activities make it surprisingly accessible for families. Spend a day exploring its museums, including the Natural History Museum and the Science Museum – both free to visit. On a sunny day, London's green spaces beckon. Let the kids loose in Holland Park, with its giant adventure playground, or head to Battersea Park, known for its wooden pirate ship and petting zoo right next door.

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

Safe and clean, Denmark's easygoing capital is easily walkable with the option of an excellent public

transport system. Often called the "family car" of the city, cargo bikes are also a popular way to travel with children and are available to rent.

There's plenty to keep little ones entertained, with Tivoli Gardens – one of the oldest amusement parks in the world – coming out on top. Children will also love Copenhagen Zoo, home to more than 4,000 animals and an impressive elephant enclosure.

PARIS, FRANCE

Easily reached by Eurostar, plane or ferry, Paris promises an easily accessible and stress-free city break.

A big draw for families is Disneyland Paris, a short hop away from the city. However, within Paris itself, little ones can enjoy going up the Eiffel Tower and burn off energy in its beautiful parks and gardens. The Jardin du Luxembourg is particularly popular with families, with a pond where you can rent and sail miniature wooden boats.



BARCELONA, SPAIN

Can't decide between a city or beach break? In Barcelona, you can have both. Let the kids play in the soft sand and calm waters of Barceloneta. Beach while you soak up the sunshine.

Within the city itself, a standout attraction for families is the Barcelona Aquarium. Combined with the pedestrian-friendly plazas and gorgeous Parc de la Ciutadella, you'll never be stuck for things to do. Plus, Barcelona's mild Mediterranean climate makes it easy to enjoy the outdoors all year round.

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Bringing 1066 to life

Thought to have been made in England, the Bayeux Tapestry is paying a return visit after almost a millennium.

Imagine a 70-metre comic strip, stitched in wool nearly 1,000 years ago and depicting one of the most consequential moments in English history. That, in essence, is the Bayeux Tapestry – a breathtaking embroidered panorama of the Norman Conquest of 1066. It's the medieval world's greatest surviving piece of visual storytelling.

Despite its name, it's actually an embroidered cloth and it was almost certainly made in England, probably in Canterbury within a decade or two of the Conquest itself.

The work is traditionally associated with Bishop Odo of Bayeux, half-brother of William the Conqueror, who may have commissioned it to decorate his new cathedral in Bayeux in Normandy. The embroiderers were almost certainly Anglo-Saxon women, renowned across medieval Europe for their needlework skill.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

The tapestry narrates events from around 1064 up to the Battle of Hastings. It culminates in the death of King Harold – famously shown with an arrow through his eye, though scholars still debate this interpretation – and the English running away. Across 58 scenes and featuring over 600 characters, 200 horses and countless ships, it offers an invaluable visual record of 11th-century warfare, clothing, architecture and daily life on both sides of the Channel.

Its survival is remarkable. It weathered the French

Revolution – narrowly escaping use as a wagon cover – and was hidden during the Second World War to protect it from being seized by the Nazis. The cloth has been in Bayeux since 1077, when Bishop Odo's cathedral was consecrated. It has become one of Normandy's most treasured possessions and attracts millions of visitors.

AN ENGLISH VISIT

The tapestry will be loaned to the British Museum from September 2026 to July 2027 – the first time it will have been on English soil since it was made. In exchange, treasures from the British Museum representing all four nations of the UK – including artefacts from the Sutton Hoo Anglo-Saxon ship burial and the 12th-century Lewis chess pieces – will travel to museums in Normandy.

The British government will insure the delicate cloth for roughly £800 million under the Government Indemnity Scheme, which supports public access to valuable objects that might otherwise be too costly for museums to insure commercially. The tapestry is expected to travel to London via truck through the Channel Tunnel.

The timing of this loan is partly practical: the Bayeux Museum is closing for a major renovation, and when it reopens in 2027, the tapestry will be displayed on a custom-built, inclined 70-metre-long table in a completely redesigned space. Next year also marks the 1,000th anniversary of William the Conqueror's birth.

The exhibition is expected to be one of the British Museum's most popular events ever. For anyone with even a passing interest in English history, it will genuinely be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

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Few actors possess quite the distinctive blend of elegance, sharp humour and emotional depth as Richard E Grant.

Grant success

With his unmistakable voice, expressive features and razor-dry wit, Richard E Grant has carved out a career that feels both delightfully eccentric and deeply human.

Born Richard Grant Esterhuysen in Mbabane, Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), he discovered acting and moved to London in 1982. His breakthrough role came in 1987 as the gloriously dishevelled, perpetually inebriated Withnail in cult classic *"Withnail and I"*.

What followed was a career of remarkable variety. He moved effortlessly between period dramas such as *"Gosford Park"* and *"Downton Abbey"*, comedy, Hollywood productions and independent films.

BACK TO THE BOARDS This month sees Richard's return to the West End after a two-decade gap, starring in the Noel Coward comedy, *"Hay Fever"*. The show will run for 12 weeks from 22 September at Wyndham's Theatre, London.

"I love the theatre and am thrilled to return to it," Richard said.

Most recently, Richard was seen in the BBC's ten-part period drama, *"The Other Bennet Sister"*, portraying Jane Austen's beloved character Mr Bennet from *"Pride and Prejudice"*. The plot reimagines Jane Austen's classic novel through the eyes of the middle Bennet daughter, Mary.

He reflected: *"As a father of one daughter, having five on screen was a delight. The energy is infectious."*

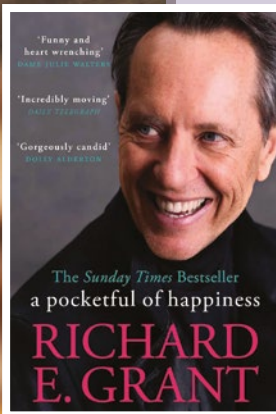
FAMILY FORTUNES The 69-year-old star has faced heartbreak off-screen. His wife of 35 years, dialect coach Joan Washington, died from lung cancer in September 2021. Richard married her in 1986 and, after the stillbirth of their first child, they welcomed their daughter Olivia in 1989. Olivia made Richard a first-time grandfather this summer.

"Three years after my wife's death, Olivia and her husband asked to come and live in our house with their cat. So, we all live together, and I'm kind of like a concierge. I do most of the shopping and the majority of the cooking because they're both very busy."

ALL OR NOTHING Richard's happy family life couldn't be further removed from his childhood. After his mother Leonne walked out, Richard's father began drinking heavily and even tried to shoot him.

Richard confesses to having an obsessive personality – *"All or nothing is what I recognise as my character"*.

He remains effortlessly stylish – often seen in sharply tailored suits and brightly patterned scarves. Whether on red carpets, in memoirs or sharing witty observations from everyday life, Richard E Grant carries himself with theatrical flair and warmth. He's proof that wit, vulnerability and resilience can coexist beautifully.



All episodes of *"The Other Bennet Sister"* are available on BBC One and BBC iPlayer. *"A Pocketful of Happiness"* by Richard E Grant is published by Simon & Schuster, £10.99, paperback. Main image © BBC/Bad Wolf/James Pardon

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TWO MINUTE TRIAL MAODNY

You have two minutes to find all the everyday words of three or more letters that can be made from the letters above. Plurals are allowed, proper nouns are not.

3 letters: 14 4 letters: 5 5 letters: 1 6 letters: 1

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What's new?

Just like clothes, gardens are subject to changing fashions. Find out what's in, what's out and whether you could be a trendsetter.

Fashions come and go. But plant choices and fashions within gardens are a little different.

Plants advance thanks to human-directed evolution. Breeding desirable traits leads to new cultivars which expand the availability of positive features. This results in appealing attributes such as bigger and brighter blooms, improved disease resistance, stronger scent, better taste or yield or more robust climate resilience. The parent plants still exist, but the successful cultivars go on to be best sellers.

In vogue

This, together with new planting trends, has led to some older plant varieties falling out of fashion and entire genera being ignored. Take the naturalistic style, for example, which mimics nature. Plants fill the soil without gaps, with blooms appearing from early spring through to autumn. This planting style has seen a huge rise in popularity over the past few years and certain species adapt very well to the concept. They include ornamental grasses, perennials and biennials such as salvias, geums and foxgloves,

and echinacea, perennial sunflowers and plants that were once viewed as weeds, including cow parsley and oxeye daisies.

This creates a great garden for pollinators but it means that some of the traditional garden favourites have fallen out of fashion, because they don't blend in with the loose, flowing design.

Fallen from favour

Take Rhododendrons (*below*), for example. When they produce their blousy blooms, usually in spring, these woody shrubs are spectacular. But they demand space, the rigid form isn't quite right for a naturalistic style and they require acidic soil, which might not suit perennials. To cap it all, their flowering season is short.

New cultivars have resulted in a wide range of sizes and flower colours, and they are still loved in regions where the soil is suitable. A walk through a Rhododendron glade during spring is difficult to beat, but there are a limited number being purchased today, compared to 40 years ago.

Heather comes with a similar story. These low-maintenance evergreens should be adored for their brilliant flower colour and their ability to attract pollinators across a wide range of seasons. By using different varieties of Erica, it's possible to have



heather in flower every month. But back in the 1970s, this sub-shrub was frequently planted in dwarf conifer gardens and then left to its own devices. Over time, they have become woody and sprawling. Stuck in a time warp, over half of Erica cultivars are said to be "at risk" because few people want them.



Chrysanthemums (*above*) flower in late summer and will keep going until the first frosts, so what's not to love? The problem seems to be that many people associate them with funerals and cheap supermarket bouquets. They have yet to stage a comeback, although some believe newer cultivars will transform their image. Incorporated into a border, they have a lot to offer. Let's hope they enjoy a popularity revival in the same way that dahlias are finding a route back into the hearts of UK garden lovers!

Comeback queens

Around 25 years ago, Hydrangeas (*below*) had fallen out of favour. But breeders concentrated on producing stout stems and colour-changing flowers and the paniculata varieties were rediscovered. Newer cultivars have improved this attractive shrub, which brings late-season interest and the most amazing flowers which vary widely in shape and colour across different cultivars. Paniculata and arborescens varieties thrive in full sun and easily fit into contemporary planting schemes, especially when used en masse.

The moral of the tale is not to undervalue older varieties of plants. You can be ahead of the next trend by reinventing the way you use plants in your garden. Before long, the neighbours might be copying you!



COMMUNITY GARDENING GROUP

DON'T KNOW ONE END OF A SPADE FROM ANOTHER?

Whether you do or not, you would be welcome at our friendly community gardening group.

Formed initially as one of Measham Medical Unit's Social Prescribing groups, we aim to offer exercise and social contact as a means to bolster physical and emotional well-being and improve our public spaces at the same time.

We currently look after 3 sites in Measham, meeting on a Monday at 10am, to work until 11.15am or so, when we head to the Age UK Cafe on Measham High St for tea and biscuits. (Own cost : £1)

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Understanding Sepsis

Cases of this life-threatening condition are rising dramatically. But what exactly is sepsis and can it be prevented?

Sepsis is common and on the increase. The condition affects around 245,000 people a year in the UK, on a par with heart attacks, according to the UK Sepsis Trust. Sadly, 48,000 people die from it annually – that's more than from breast, bowel and prostate cancer combined. But doctors argue that better awareness could save thousands of lives.

WHAT IS SEPSIS? Sepsis is a medical emergency. It's the body's extreme reaction to an infection, whether that's viral, bacterial or fungal. The immune system goes into overdrive, potentially leading to shock, organ failure and even death. Sometimes people need amputations to save their life. Others may have poor memory and concentration afterwards.

WHAT CAUSES IT? The condition always starts with an infection, such as flu, a urinary tract infection, a skin infection or pneumonia. Covid was a common cause of sepsis in the early days of the pandemic. The very old and the very young are disproportionately affected and people with diabetes or another underlying illness are more vulnerable. Pregnancy also increases the risk. But often it's not known why sepsis strikes some people rather than others.

WHY ARE CASES RISING? One reason is that more cases are being spotted, thanks to growing awareness among healthcare professionals. This gives people a better chance of early treatment and survival. Treatment often includes antibiotics and intravenous fluids. But

there are other factors behind the surging figures: an ageing population, people living longer with chronic illnesses, antibiotic resistance, and more invasive procedures carrying a greater chance of infection afterwards.

CAN YOU PREVENT SEPSIS? There no single way of avoiding it, but some measures might help protect you. Have all the jabs you're eligible for, including flu and Covid, and make sure you wash your hands frequently and thoroughly. Keep any wounds clean too. Always take the full course of antibiotics and, crucially, act fast if you suspect sepsis.

HOW CAN YOU SPOT IT? It's easy to miss the signs. They can sometimes be vague or you might just think you have flu. In adults, the signs spell out the word SEPSIS:

- Slurred speech or confusion
- Extreme shivering or muscle pain
- Passing no urine in a day
- Severe breathlessness
- It feels like you're going to die
- Skin mottled or discoloured

Children may have a fit, a rash that doesn't go away when pressed, look pale or have blueish or mottled skin, feel cold to the touch and be difficult to wake. Meanwhile, signs in infants might be persistent vomiting, not feeding or not peeing for 12 hours. Go to the GP or A&E if you notice any of these symptoms, and ask the question, "Could they have sepsis?"

Remember, early action could save a life.

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Spot the difference

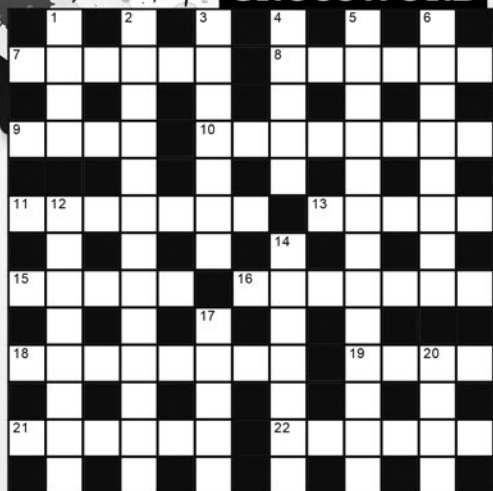
There are 10 differences between the two images below. How many can you spot?



Coffee BREAK



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 7 Absorb (6)
- 8 Worn away (6)
- 9 Wooden shoe (4)
- 10 Sailing (8)
- 11 Stealing (7)
- 13 Evil spirit (5)
- 15 Take away (5)
- 16 Ask for (7)
- 18 UK minimum voting age (8)
- 19 Chilled (4)
- 21 Well known (6)
- 22 Decorated (6)

DOWN

- 1 Herb (4)
- 2 Locale (13)
- 3 Remaining (7)
- 4 Compassion (5)

DOWN cont.,

- 5 Donations (13)
- 6 Fragments (8)
- 12 Authentic (8)
- 14 Reconciliation (7)
- 17 Stop (5)
- 20 Consumes (4)

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		

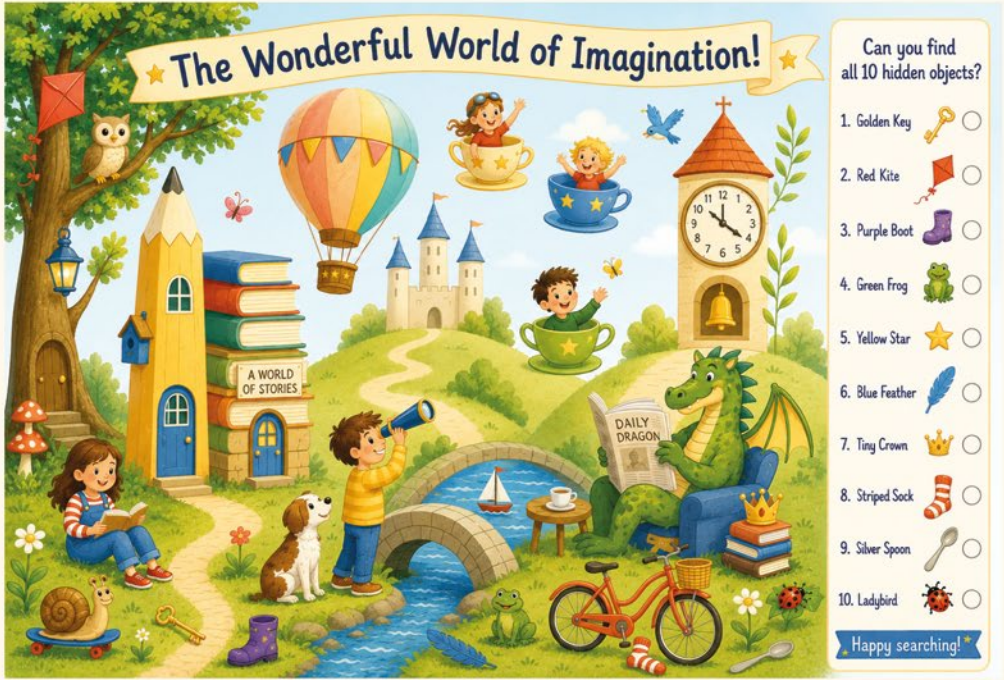
SUDOKU

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Children's Puzzle Page



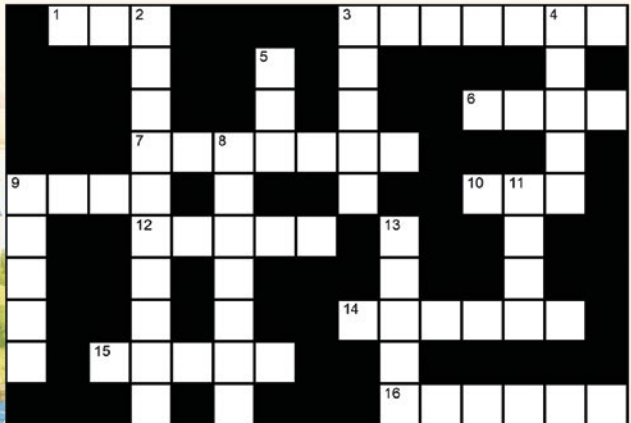
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