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The greatest gift you can
give someone is your time.

Rick Warren

quotation

Letter from the Editor

Hello again and welcome...

If you have ever booked a flight, you will be invited to make a donation for carbon-offsetting. This is the process of funding projects that reduce or remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Other than not flying, this is the only counter you can offer against the plane's emissions.

Or you might book tickets to an event and be prompted to contribute to the venue's building restoration fund. Again, unless you are a listed building expert, the financial contribution is the only help you can give.

So, jumping on the bandwagon, how about this idea: bad news offsetting. Let me explain.

The news over the last year has often been distressing, even when it does not directly affect our day-to-day life. As a coping mechanism, I often just shrug and say, *'nothing I can do about it.'* But as with emissions or the crumbling theatre, every time I am affected by a negative headline, I can respond by doing something positive.

The easiest offset is financial - supporting organisations that protect the planet, work in conflict zones, or help those less fortunate. Every penny makes a difference.

But it does not have to be hard cash. We can all "donate" random acts of kindness, volunteer some of our time, tell someone they did a good job, drive patiently and put that phone down and truly listen when someone is speaking to you.

Let us go into the season of goodwill, offsetting the gloom, one good deed at a time.

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

*"Sometimes the greatest gift you can give to someone,
is to simply include them."*

Until next time...

Sheila

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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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Read the magazine online at
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Mince pie toastie

Fancy a mince pie with a twist? Then ring the changes with this tasty festive toastie, using puff pastry instead of bread.

Detail...

Makes 2

Preparation time 10-15 minutes

Cooking time 5-6 minutes

You will need...

- Borderfields Lemon Infused Rapeseed Oil Spray
- 375g ready-rolled puff pastry, defrosted if frozen
- 6 tbsp good-quality mincemeat
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 100g mascarpone
- 1 tbsp whisky (optional)
- Icing sugar, to serve

Method...

1. Preheat your toastie machine. Cut the sheet of puff pastry into 4 squares, each the same size as the square in your toastie machine. Spray lightly with the infused oil spray.
2. Divide the mincemeat between 2 of the pastry squares. Use a little of the beaten egg around the edge of the pastry, then press another square on top to create a parcel.
3. Carefully place these in your toastie machine and cook for 5-6 minutes until golden brown and cooked through.
4. Meanwhile, whip the mascarpone with the whisky.
5. Serve the toasties cut in half with a spoonful of the mascarpone cream, then dust lightly with icing sugar.

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Credit crunch

Short-term borrowing can be useful if you have unexpected spending needs and cashflow problems but beware of the downsides.

Short-term loans

There's no legal definition of a 'short-term' loan but it commonly means you're scheduled to repay it within a year or less. Interest rates tend to be higher than with longer-term lending (because lenders have less time to earn interest). However, you'll often pay less in interest overall than with a longer loan.

Short-term loans are nearly always unsecured, meaning you don't put an asset (such as a house) up as collateral for the lender to take if you miss repayments. Again, this means rates tend to be higher because the lender is taking a bigger risk.

The key rule for short-term lending is that you'd be able to afford something later on but need to pay for it now, for example, an emergency cost. It's not a way to pay for something you'll never realistically be able to afford.

Payday loans

These are usually for much shorter periods, such as a few weeks. In theory, you pay them off as a single lump sum rather than in regular instalments. These loans often have high interest rates, particularly if you miss payments, along with penalty fees.

They can work for a very short-term squeeze, but they aren't a way round consistently spending more than you earn. It's very easy to get caught in a trap of taking out or extending such loans and never

catching up. A history of very short-term loans may be a negative if you apply for a mortgage, even if you have repaid them on time.

Overdraft

One alternative to a short-term loan is your overdraft. There's no scheduled repayment date and you simply pay interest based on how long and how much you're overdrawn.

Since 2020, banks can only charge interest on arranged overdrafts (the amount they authorise) rather than daily fees. An unarranged overdraft is when you attempt to spend beyond any overdraft limit. The bank can let the payment go ahead and charge you a much higher interest rate than on your arranged overdraft or refuse the payment and charge you a small fee. Arranged or not, an overdraft should only be a cashflow tool: if you're permanently overdrawn, you likely have a wider financial problem.

Credit cards

High interest rates make credit cards a bad option if you don't have a clear plan of when and how you'll pay off the balance. However, some providers offer special deals for new customers where they'll pay no interest on purchases in the first year. Others offer a long 0% period on balance transfers (where you borrow on the new card to pay off an existing card or overdraft). These can be a useful way to buy some breathing space, as long as you can clear the debt before the 0% period ends.

Why should I make a Will?

End-of-life planning is a topic which is hard to address and all too easy to put off. Many people find it challenging to make a Will or think about making a Will as it can raise some difficult issues and questions. Hopefully this guide can help you to approach the subject of making a Will by explaining the many benefits of making one.

Do I need a Will?

In short, yes. Regardless of your circumstances, it is advisable for everyone over the age of 18 to have a Will in place. You may be asking yourself if your Will needs to be prepared by a solicitor or professional Will writer or whether you can use a more 'DIY' option. Almost without exception, a professionally drafted Will is the better option. Not only can you be confident that your estate will pass according to your wishes and instructions, but you will be guided in thinking about your assets and family circumstances to ensure that all matters are appropriately dealt with.

What are the benefits of making a Will?

- giving you control by ensuring you do not die intestate—this means that your assets pass to those you intended (and are not dictated by general intestacy rules) and that your estate is administered by people you choose
- ensuring you have appointed

executors which makes it much easier and quicker to administer your estate

- ensuring that the people who matter most to you are looked after if you die—this is particularly important if you have young children or if someone vulnerable is dependant on you
- helping you focus on and think about what your assets and liabilities may be if you die—this helps you put your affairs in order during your lifetime if you need to
- ensuring your estate and what you leave behind is maximised by using tax planning and tax reliefs appropriately, particularly in relation to inheritance tax
- ensuring (either through the Will itself or in a supplementary document) that some other very important matters are dealt with, for example appointing guardians if you



have young children or detailing your funeral wishes

- allowing you to make gifts to particular people or charities/ organisations that are important to you
- allowing you to the opportunity to discuss your estate planning with your family which will significantly reduce the risk of disputes arising after your death

If you would like to talk about, review an existing Will or put in place a New Will, please contact us on 01283 819599.

By Kevin Smith



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Evergreen appeal



The value of evergreens is highlighted during winter when there are low light levels, few flowers and very little colour. At this time of year, these plants are elevated to become the stars of the outdoor stage.



Evergreens are stalwarts of structure. They create privacy, interest and texture once the garden has been reduced to a winter skeleton. These plants provide havens for wildlife at a time when there are few places to hide. From an aesthetic point of view, you can be sure that if your garden

looks good during winter, it will be great all year round.

There are some beautiful evergreen conifers, but also shrubs, grasses, climbers, ferns and perennials. Just remember that evergreen plants DO lose their leaves, but rather than shedding them all at once when the cold weather hits, they drop gradually throughout the year. And don't be fooled by the name: evergreens can be yellow, golden, orange, cream, red, pink and lime, as well as every shade of green you can imagine.

GROUNDCOVER

- Bergenia is known as elephant's ears because of its large, rounded foliage. It will survive just about anywhere, covering the ground in a cluster of colour-changing lush leaves, from which beautiful blooms emerge in early spring.
- Euphorbia myrsinites measures only a centimetre or two high. It loves sunny, free-draining soils and rock gardens.
- Others in the same family include the tall, spectacular Euphorbia characias subsp. wulfenii, loved for its huge heads of lime-green flowers in spring.
- Creeping thyme, Thymus serpyllum, thrives in gaps and cracks, helping to stop weeds from claiming difficult-to-reach areas. Its foliage releases a delightful aroma when crushed.

- Vinca minor (lesser periwinkle) is a shade-loving evergreen that will help to anchor the soil and prevent erosion, as well as fill gaps that weeds can populate.
- Creeping phlox will cover the surface of a sunny bed and give you a carpet of flowers in spring.
- Hellebores, known as Christmas or Lenten roses, produce wonderful flowers during winter.
- Evergreen heuchera (coral bells) come in an astonishing range of foliage colours.
- If you have poor, arid soil and perhaps some sea-spray to contend with, Helianthemum rock roses will perform magnificently.



HEDGING

Hedges bring style, biodiversity and environmental benefits to any scene, making beautiful boundaries whether in public parks, rambling manor gardens or social housing schemes.

If it's topiary and 'clipability' that you're seeking, look at yew. More unusual evergreen possibilities include Pittosporum, Fargesia (clumping bamboo), Choisya (Mexican orange blossom), evergreen Euonymus (spindle), Griselinia (especially for a sunny seaside location), Escallonia, Photinia, and privet.

Even leylandii (Cuprocyparis leylandii) has its loyal supporters, not least wildlife. Maintenance is key: leylandii does not need to eat up the neighbours provided it's clipped at least once a year.

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. We aim to offer exercise and social contact as a means to bolster well-being and improve our public spaces at the same time.

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Finding Christmas



IT'S the third week of December.

I climb the rickety, aluminium ladder and poke my head through the open hatch.

I am shocked by what I see. My aunt is sitting cross-legged on the bare floorboards, surrounded by a lifetime's junk. There's a hole in the loft roof where the rain gets in – buckets on the floor to catch the drips.

'What are you doing?' I ask.

Since Uncle Edward passed away, my much-loved Aunt Edith – Edie – has lived alone in the sprawling five-storey Victorian semi-nestled in the idyllic village of Appleby St. Michael. She was born in the family home over sixty years ago.

It's huge!

Five bedrooms, two bathrooms, two kitchens, lounge, dining room, snug, study and a conservatory.

And yet, there's no space!

'I'm trying to find last year's Christmas tree and decorations, Lottie,' she replies. *'I know they're up here somewhere.'*

I just can't believe how incredibly untidy the house is! Every room!

With two new arrivals expected later in the month, aunt desperately needs to declutter – and in the loft seems, to me, like a good place to start.

A single dim light bulb swings lazily from the ceiling – caught in the draught from the gap in the tiles. I can feel the thick layer of dust that covers every surface, and smell the dampness in the air. The tat should have been thrown out a long time ago! But in spite of pressure from other members of her family, nothing is ever done about it!

And spiders! I've never seen so many! Urghh! And dozens and dozens of books – their pages yellow with age. Newspapers that no one reads. Old, rusty bicycles with buckled wheels, suspended from the rafters.

'Maybe, aunty, we should begin by sorting through all this stuff you've hoarded?' I tentatively suggest.

I notice a large cardboard box without a lid – overflowing with faded black and white photographs. Childhood family pictures, no doubt. Cherished, long-lost memories. And several items of antique, wood-

wormed furniture, half-hidden under rolls of rotting rugs and carpets.

I reach for one of the rugs. Aunty turns her head, and her eyes, an attractive shade of pale blue, shoot me a warning look that says: *'Don't even think about it!'*

'I just can't bring myself to part with anything,' she explains. *'A lot of this "stuff" – as you call it – belonged to my parents.'*

At this moment, we're interrupted by the pitter-patter of raindrops on the slate roof.

'We'd better get you downstairs, aunty,' I say, kindly. *'You don't want to get wet!'*

Reluctantly, she staggers to her feet, and follows me down the ladder.

The telephone rings in the entrance hall.

'I'll get it,' I say. *'Mind the stairs.'*

I make my way to the ground floor, taking care not to catch my foot on the threadbare carpet.

'Hello? Yes . . . yes. Wait a moment, she's just coming . . .'

I pass the phone over. *'It's your daughter, aunty.'*

'Hello, Lizzie! How are you, my darling? Pardon? What did you say? I'm a GRANDMOTHER! Twin girls? Just over 5lbs each. Marvellous! And seven days early!'

A few minutes later, aunty finally ends the call, and throws her arms around me, squeezing me tightly. The excitement is almost too much for her to bear.

'How wonderful, Lottie!' she sobs, tears of joy rolling down her wrinkled face. *'I'm a grandmother – at last!'*

'That's brilliant!' I say. *'Tell me, have the happy couple chosen any names yet?'*

'Yes – Holly and Ivy!' She laughs. *'Remember, the due date was supposed to be Christmas Day!'*

Aunty peers through the window. *'Look! It's stopped raining now! No more excuses or dwelling on the past. Onwards and upwards! We need to make room, somewhere, for a nursery!'*

'But first, let's find those Christmas things, Lottie. And then you can help me sort through all that "stuff" – and throw some of it out!'

'Only SOME of it?' I laugh. *' . . . And the rest, Aunty!'*

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Boxing Day Turkey Biryani

A one-pot flavoursome family meal perfect for using up leftover turkey and any vegetables, such as parsnips, carrots and sprouts.

Detail...

Serves 4; Preparation time 20-25 minutes; Cooking time 40 minutes

You will need...

- 30g butter
- 3 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 medium onions, peeled and sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, finely crushed
- 5cm piece fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 red chilli, finely sliced
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 2 tbsp nigella seeds
- 6 cardamom pods
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 3 tbsp balti paste
- 300g easy-cook basmati rice, rinsed in cold water until clear
- 700ml chicken stock
- Sea salt flakes & freshly ground black pepper
- 350g leftover Christmas vegetables (parsnips, carrots, sprouts), roughly chopped
- 450g leftover cooked Golden Turkey, pulled into pieces
- A handful of chopped coriander, plus extra to serve
- A squeeze of lemon juice
- 4 tbsp pomegranate seeds
- 50g toasted almond flakes

Method...

1. Melt the butter and oil in a large, lidded casserole over a medium heat. Fry the onion for 5 minutes, stirring frequently, until golden brown. Add the garlic, ginger, chilli, turmeric, nigella seeds, cardamom pods, cinnamon and balti paste, stirring well. Next, add the rice and cook for a further 3 minutes, stirring frequently to coat.
2. Add the stock and bring to the boil. Season with a little salt and pepper, and cover with a lid. Reduce the heat to a gentle simmer and cook for 12 minutes. Next, add the leftover vegetables and turkey, stirring gently to combine. Replace the lid and cook for a further 12 minutes. Turn off the heat and leave to steam for 10 minutes. Using a fork, gently break up the grains and then stir through the coriander and lemon juice.
3. Sprinkle over the pomegranate seeds, toasted almond flakes and chopped coriander and serve immediately.

For more recipes using Golden Turkey, tips on cooking and carving, and information on the Golden Turkey and Traditional Farm-fresh Turkey Association, visit www.goldenturkeys.co.uk

Recipe created by Rachel Green (www.rachel-green.co.uk) with photography © Michael Powell (www.michaelpowell.com).



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Mayor's Message

Christmas is coming and alongside decking the halls with boughs of holly, we all know that the Season To Be Jolly is upon us once again.

The Christmas break comes and goes sadly all too quickly, but it does give us a brief pause to reflect. We look back on what has gone well in the passing year, both in our lives and in the wider context. We can look forward, with hope, to a fresh start in the new year. We can be close to family and friends and enjoy the pleasure of giving and receiving. We are once more reminded what Christmas stands for and that the togetherness and wellbeing that it brings are far more powerful than any discord the world might offer.

We should thank the volunteers within our community – those unsung heroes who help to make our world better. My thanks also go to the Town Clerk and the councillors of Ashby Woulds Town Council for the time and support they have invested during the year. It is our hope that our efforts have served you well.

Over Christmas and beyond, we can all be good neighbours by looking out for those who might face greater challenges. They might live on their own or have mobility issues or might just need a little help. A thoughtful gesture and a kind word can go a long way.

On behalf of Ashby Woulds Town Council,
I would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas
and a happy and healthy 2026.

Laurence Ordish
Town Mayor Councillor

Town Council Office 01283 552784
Laurence.o@ashbywouldstowncouncil.gov.uk



Remembrance Sunday

It was wonderful to see so many people attend our Remembrance events and although sadly there was no scout parade this year, we very much hope this will return in future years.



Ashby Woulds Community Hub

Our new Community Hub is open and available for hire. The Hub consists of a main room with toilets and has direct access to a functioning kitchen. WIFI, tables and chairs are available. The room can accommodate up to 50 people and there is a secure outdoor space. There is also a large car park. Regular weekly hire is available in addition to ad hoc bookings. For further details and to arrange a look round please contact the town council office.

Coffee Mornings

Thank you to everyone who attended our Macmillan coffee morning this year. A fantastic sum of £362 was raised. Well done to all involved in making the morning a great success. Our coffee mornings will take a short break over the festive period. Wednesday 17th December will be the last one before Christmas and we will re-open on Wednesday 7th January 2026.

Litter Pick

Thank you to everyone who continues to take part in the local litter picks organised by the Ashby Woulds Litterheroes. 19 bags of rubbish were collected at last month's litter pick. Thanks also to everyone who does their bit to keep the parish looking clean and tidy. Please get in touch with the office for more details if you are interested in taking part.

Office

The Town Council office will be closed from 1pm on Monday 22nd December and re-open at 9am Monday 6th January 2026.

Seasons Greetings and Best Wishes for 2026 from ASHBY WOULDSTOWN COUNCIL



The office is open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday mornings 9am-1pm and is easily accessible from the main car park.

Email: clerk@ashbywouldstowncouncil.gov.uk

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Wishing you all a



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Merry Christmas



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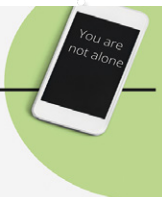
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Enjoying her prime time

CLAUDIA WINKLEMAN is probably the nation's most in-demand TV presenter but she's all too aware how quickly fame and fortune can change.

Co-host of *'Strictly Come Dancing'*, Claudia Winkelman took her own popularity to a new level when she presented *'The Traitors'*.

The hit reality show is packed with deceit and drama. Faithfuls try to out-manoeuvre the Traitors and take home the £120,000 prize money before they are picked off one by one. *"We're told to trust our guts, but 'The Traitors' suggests our guts don't know as much as we think,"* says Claudia.

More than five million watched *'The Traitors'* when it launched in 2022 – the show and Claudia were among the winners in the TV Baftas 2023 – with even more tuning in for the third series, which concluded in January. Claudia was asked if she'd be a better Faithful. Her reply? *"I think I'd prefer to be a Faithful but I genuinely have no idea if someone is lying to me. My 18-year-old told me she'd done all her homework for years."*

NOTHING IS FOREVER

Claudia, 53, has reached the pinnacle of her career, hosting three prime-time programmes. As well as *'The Traitors'*, she co-hosts *'Strictly'* – for which she and fellow host Tess Daly were awarded an MBE – and presents Channel 4's *'The Piano'*. However, Claudia is acutely aware that fame can be transitory. She revealed: *"I always touch wood because it's only down to luck – it's got absolutely zero to do with me. That's not faux self-deprecation, it's the truth."*

Born and raised in London, Claudia studied history of art at Cambridge University before going into TV and radio. She has fronted BBC TV shows like *'Comic Relief'*, *'One World: Together at Home'* and *'The Great British Sewing Bee'*. Her mother, Eve Pollard, is a former editor of the *'Sunday Mirror'*, and her father is the publisher Barry Winkelman.

Claudia has been married to film producer Kris Thykier for 24 years. They have three children: Jake, 21, Matilda, 18, and Arthur, 13.

FROM TRAITORS TO TANGO

After *'Celebrity Traitors'*, which aired this autumn, Claudia is currently helping bring the sparkle back to Saturday nights with the latest series of *'Strictly'*. It will be her last, after she and Tess Daly announced they'd be leaving together. As in previous years, the grand final is set to take place on 20 December – just a few days before the Christmas special.

When *'Strictly'* celebrated its twentieth anniversary last year, Claudia said, *"It's always felt like a snow globe of a show to me and it's basically saying, 'Christmas is coming', and this can only be a good thing in my world."*

** All episodes of 'The Traitors' series 3 are available on BBC iPlayer. Watch 'Strictly Come Dancing' on Saturday nights on BBC One and on BBC iPlayer.*

Image: The Traitors Series 3 © BBC/STUDIO LAMBERT/EUAN CHERRY



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FIRST DRIVE **RENAULT 4**



The Renault 4 offers loads of style and more space than the popular 5. Jack Evans finds out if it's worth making the switch.



WHAT IS IT?

The smash-hit Renault 5 encapsulates the compact, retro-infused look many EV buyers are after but it struggles with practicality. The Renault 4 is set to address this.

WHAT'S NEW?

The Renault 4 and 5 are very similar underneath, but the 4 offers more space. There's extra room for those sitting in the back, while the 420-litre boot in the 4 trumps the 5's 326-litre boot by some margin.

WHAT'S UNDER THE BONNET?

The Renault 4 uses a front-mounted electric motor, which brings 148bhp and 245Nm of torque. It has a 0-60mph time of 8.3 seconds and a top speed of 93mph.

Renault claims a range of up to 247 miles from a full charge and, with a top-whack charging speed of 100kW, you should manage a 15% to 80% top-up in around half an hour. Around seven hours should be enough to fully charge the Renault 4 using a standard 7.4kW home charger.

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO DRIVE?

The Renault 4 offers an easy-going driving style that'll be great around town or further afield. Its steering is light – though the low-res reversing camera seems a little dated.

We wish Renault would simplify the stalks on the steering wheel; with three of them, it's too easy to activate the wipers instead of reverse.

HOW DOES IT LOOK?

The Renault 4 does a great job of bringing some of the feel of the classic original while keeping things modern. The single piece of clear plastic beneath the headlights gives a clean look and, around the back, the long, sloping tailgate mimics that of its predecessor well.

WHAT'S IT LIKE INSIDE?

The boot's large tailgate opens to reveal a square opening, allowing larger items. You can fold the rear seats down, but they leave quite a large 'step'.

While some plastics feel a little cheap, they're hard-wearing. The seats are comfortable, with a decent level of manual adjustment.

WHAT'S THE SPEC LIKE?

The Renault 4 has recently received the government's electric car grant, which has seen its starting price drop to £25,495 after the £1,500 saving has been applied. That makes the 4 even more tempting, considering you get a 10.4-inch infotainment system, 18-inch diamond-cut alloy wheels and climate control on base models. This is more than enough equipment for most, though the range-topping Techno versions, which start from £29,495 after applying the grant, get pre-conditioning to make charging more efficient, and cool-looking houndstooth upholstery.

VERDICT

The Renault 4 feels like the kind of electric car that'll happily replace a traditional petrol or diesel-powered hatchback and, overall, it feels like a car that could eclipse the Renault 5.



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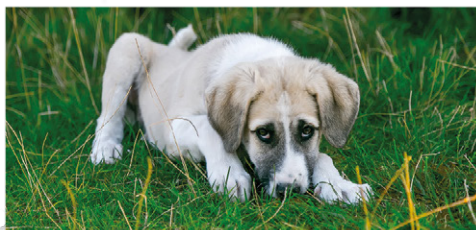


First aid for furry friends

When accidents happen, knowing the right first steps could save your pet's life while you get them to a vet.

First steps

Approach your pet carefully, as pain or fear may cause them to lash out. Keep a pen and paper handy or have someone else listen in to the call to the vet, as it can be difficult to remember instructions under stress.



Wounds

If the wound only has surface bleeding, just clean it with tepid water. If there is significant blood, apply pressure with a clean dressing. However, if you can see anything in the cut or it's down to the bone, leave it to your vet to handle.

Choking

Are they choking or coughing? If it's the former, they'll be struggling to breathe, so you need to open their mouth to see anything that's stuck. Try to avoid using your hands to remove the object, as your pet might bite, and take care not to push it further in.

Seizure

This will be frightening for both you and them. Keep the room quiet and dim the lights, and keep your pet cool. If possible, video the seizure to show your vet.

Is it urgent?

Remember, if your pet reacts or tries to resist, they should be able to wait for professional treatment.

Training courses

Pet first aid courses are widely available. Taking one is one of the best ways to ensure you'll know how to respond to a crisis with confidence.

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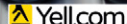
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THE ULTIMATE **HEALTHY** GIFT LIST

By Susannah Hickling

Chocolate

Research has shown that dark chocolate may lower the risk of heart disease, reduce levels of bad cholesterol and improve brain function. It's packed with antioxidants that can help protect against cell damage in the body. Keep it to a couple of squares though.



Olive oil

A bottle of great-quality extra virgin olive oil not only enhances a salad but has amazing health benefits. It's high in healthy monounsaturated fats and antioxidants, giving it anti-inflammatory properties and helping protect against conditions like heart disease, cancer and arthritis.



Gym membership

Regular workouts can improve your strength, cardiovascular fitness and bone density. Going to the gym can also boost your mood and help you lose weight. Receiving an annual membership in your Christmas stocking is a great way to get – and stay – motivated.



Journal

A gorgeous book for jotting down your feelings and experiences makes a special present. What's more, research has found that journalling can improve psychological well-being and physical health too – one study even suggested it could lower blood pressure and reduce sick days.



Air fryer

These mini-cookers are energy-efficient, popular, and a healthier way of cooking foods you'd usually deep fry. Breaded chicken, chips and the like require far less, if any, oil, making them lower in fat. Of course, fatty foods are best eaten in moderation.



Board game

There are so many great board games on the market. They'll give you lots of laughs over the festive period, which will boost feel-good chemicals called endorphins. Meanwhile, playing board games regularly can help boost memory and may help ward off cognitive decline.



Electric toothbrush

One review of 56 studies found that using a powered toothbrush for three months led to an impressive 21% reduction in tooth-decaying plaque. It also resulted in an 11% decrease in gingivitis, an early stage of gum disease, compared with a manual toothbrush.



Quality time

Spending time with loved ones won't cost the giver a penny but it's a truly precious gift. If you've found yourself rushed off your feet of late, take a conscious decision to put aside more hours to do fun things together. Plenty of time to devote to others? Consider volunteering – research has shown it improves mental and physical health.



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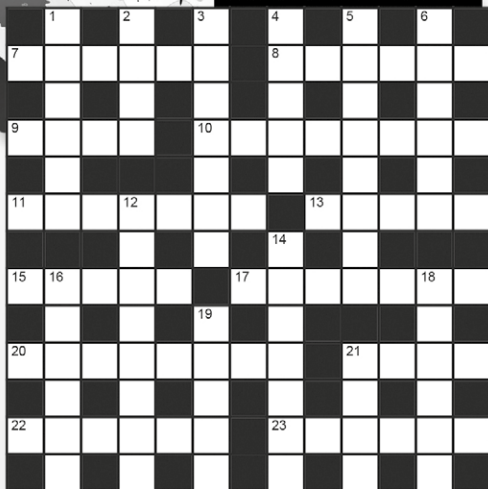
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ACROSS

- 7 Light wind (6)
- 8 Add up (6)
- 9 Not pretty (4)
- 10 Take away (8)
- 11 Tenth month (7)
- 13 Deprived (5)
- 15 Two times (5)
- 17 Remaining (7)
- 20 Booklet (8)
- 21 Assists (4)
- 22 Floats (6)
- 23 Unlocked (6)

DOWN

- 1 Horrendous (6)
- 2 Refute (4)
- 3 Childhood illness (7)
- 4 Investigate (5)
- 5 Barely (8)

DOWN cont.,

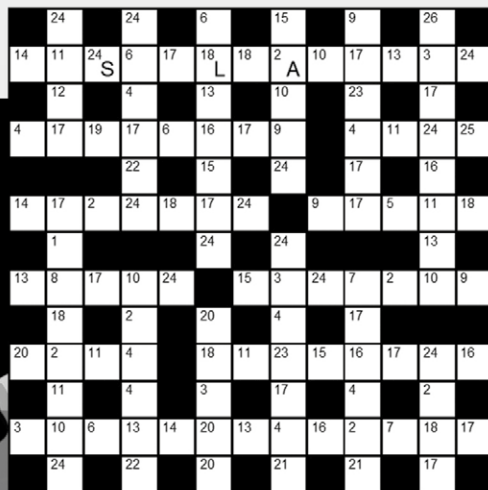
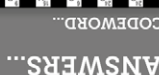
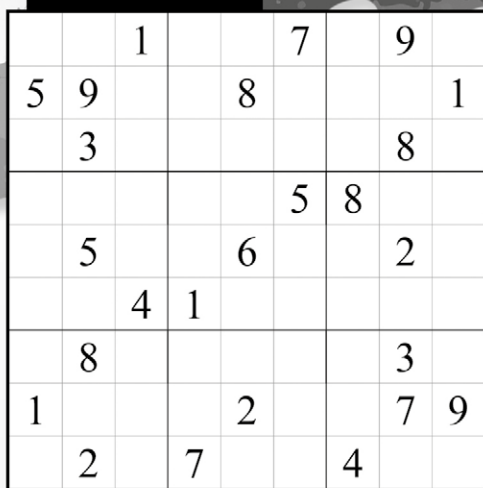
- 6 Coerced (6)
- 12 Engaged (8)
- 14 Stopping place (7)
- 16 Gun or knife (6)
- 18 Bowed (6)
- 19 Nearby (5)
- 21 Pinnacle (4)

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



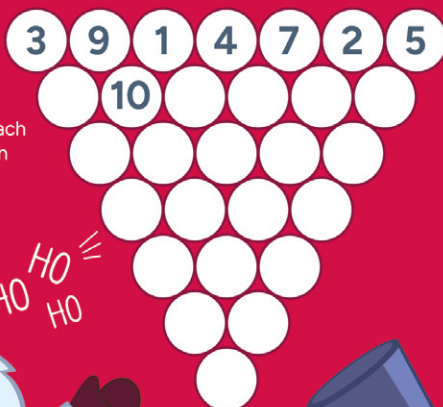
SUDOKU



CHILDREN'S PUZZLE PAGE

MAGIC NUMBER

To find the magic number, just add the numbers together that are next to each other, and put the answer in the circle below them!



What do snowmen eat for breakfast?
Snowflakes.

What happens if you eat Christmas decorations?
You get tinseltitis.

What type of photos do Elves take?
Elf-ies!



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