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the village Breeze



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Letter from the Editor

Hello again and welcome…

As the nights draw in and November arrives, communities across Britain prepare for one of the country's most recognisable traditions: Bonfire Night.

On November 5th, families and friends gather to watch spectacular fireworks illuminate the sky, warm themselves beside crackling bonfires and, most importantly, spend time together. Bonfire Night is a treasured part of autumn, combining history, celebration, and a keen sense of community. Yet the tradition also comes with responsibilities. Fireworks can be frightening for young children, pets, and wildlife, while bonfires can pose serious risks if they are poorly managed. Attending an organised display is often a safer way to enjoy the evening.

Bonfire Night has changed over the centuries, but its ability to bring people together remains. Whether watching fireworks from a crowded village green or enjoying a small family gathering, the evening offers an opportunity to celebrate responsibly and appreciate a tradition that has become part of British cultural life.

So, as the first fireworks burst across the November sky, we should remember that the best Bonfire Night is not simply the loudest or brightest. It is one that is safe, considerate, and shared with the people around us.

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

"It is the simple things in life.
That mean the most."

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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Editor
Sheila J. Bethell

General enquiries
0753 441 3055

Advertising enquiries
01283 814214

Drop us an email
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Read the magazine online at
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How to make things happen



Think your community is boring or looking a bit run-down? Here are some ideas for getting involved and making your neighbourhood more vibrant.

We're often all too aware of what isn't going well in our communities. But it's possible to help your town, village or street become a more positive, fun and cohesive place. Often, it just takes a bit of enthusiasm and organisation – and a dash of creativity.

Start an online group for your street

If there's nothing connecting you and your neighbours, how about setting up a Facebook, WhatsApp or Nextdoor group so that everyone can stay up to date with local issues and events?

Set up a community project

Enhance your local area with a street art project or start a community garden (liaise with your council first). Projects like this bring people together and give residents pride in their surroundings.

Green your neighbourhood

How often do you hear people moaning about litter or overgrown footpaths? Organise a group to clear vegetation or cut verges. You'll need to talk to your local council. Or mobilise residents for a litter pick – Keep Britain Tidy (www.keepbritaintidy.org) has a wealth of information on this.

Walk the talk

Walking is good for your health and can combat isolation. Get a group together for a regular ramble or a power walk.

Fundraise for your community

Does the park need a new piece of play equipment? Would it be nice to have a bench by the river? Quizzes, cake sales, raffles – there are lots of simple ways to fundraise. As with all community ideas, social media is your friend when it comes to promotion. Look online for grants too.

Hold a local photo exhibition

An exhibition of photographs by local people, on a theme – the more local, the better – will get residents involved and boost community spirit. Pictures can be displayed in a local hall or even people's windows.

Set up a cinema club

Bring movie lovers together with a community cinema or film society. Cinema For All (www.cinemaforall.org.uk) supports film fans who want to do this.

Use your skills

Good at art? Set up an art class. Passionate about singing? You could start a community choir. If you love books, channel your enthusiasm into a street library or book exchange. A dab hand at building websites? Create a community site.

Stand up and be counted

We all know of keyboard warriors who criticise but don't contribute. But for real change to happen in your community, you need to vote in local elections, report issues to the council and contact local elected officials with your ideas for improvements. You could even stand for election to your parish, town or district council yourself. And back local businesses and events you love by writing glowing online reviews.



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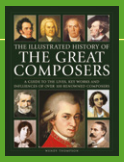
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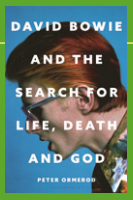
From Beethoven to Bowie – meet the maestros who defined how sound has changed over the generations.



BOOK - The Great Composers by Wendy Thompson

This beautifully illustrated history provides an impressive guide to more than 100 of the most influential composers of classical music – from the pre-eminent Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, continuing up to modern composers such as Carter, Boulez and Stockhausen. It covers the life and times of each one, listing their most important works and placing them in their historical context.

BOOK - David Bowie and the Search for Life, Death and God by Peter Ormerod



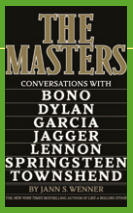
Taking readers from a choirboy childhood to Tibetan Buddhism, this illuminating biography of pop music's shapeshifting genius focuses on Bowie's perpetual search for spiritual enlightenment. Taking his spiritual explorations and faith seriously, Ormerod shows us how this quest for meaning propelled Bowie through his darkest moments and biggest successes, lending his music a timelessness and depth that has spoken to so many people across the world.



BOOK - Respect : The Life of Aretha Franklin by David Ritz

This is the definitive life story of one of the greatest talents in all American culture, who time and time again stubbornly found a way to triumph over her troubles. Franklin began life as the golden daughter of a progressive and promiscuous Baptist preacher. She went on to leave her sons and her native Detroit for New York to start her quest for fame.

BOOK - The Masters by Jann S Wenner



Over 50 years, Jann Wenner conducted a series of interviews that are now regarded as among the most important historical documents of rock. Subtitled Conversations with Dylan, Lennon, Townshend, Garcia, Bono, and Springsteen, this is a must-have volume about the artists who changed history. "The Masters" includes stunning photographs and a never-before-seen interview with Bruce Springsteen, and intimately profiles the extraordinary musicians who dominated rock and roll.



BOOK - Part One - The Legend of Luna Bell Forest by Sam Higgins

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BOOK - With a Little Help from Their Friends by Stuart Maconie



Four lads from Liverpool have taken their place alongside Shakespeare as one of our key cultural exports to the world. Here Maconie pays tribute to the extraordinary cast of supporting characters who helped raise the Fab Four to superstardom.

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Neat for Noël

How to minimise clutter ahead of the festive season, ensuring your home is calm, organised and looking its best.

If you're entertaining this Christmas, you'll need room for mingling, as well as capacity in the kitchen. For overnight guests, clearing a bedroom and preparing the bathroom will be a priority. Your hall needs to make an inviting first impression too.



Sort through your stuff

First, get rid of as much clutter as possible. Prepare boxes or bags labelled rubbish, recycle, donate, sell, mend, move. Then aim to tackle one room a week or try ten minutes a day.



Look for efficient storage solutions

Seek out every nook and cranny that can be used to organise your possessions neatly. Can you invest in some hidden storage heroes, such as underbed boxes, behind-the-door hangers and stackable pantry containers? If your storage will be on show, look for attractive solutions like baskets, vintage trunks and lidded pots.

Make an entrance

Now focus on making your hallway welcoming. Move as many of your shoes, bags and coats away from the entrance as you can. Consider a slimline shoe rack, a storage bench or extra wall hooks, or even an all-in-one unit that holds everything.

Find space for entertaining

From serving mulled wine to neighbours to hosting a family Christmas lunch, a little extra space will help a lot. Tidy children's toys away, hide cables and everyday clutter, and empty side tables for snacks and glasses. Ensure serving platters, table linen, napkins and any special tableware are clean, usable and accessible.





Organise the kitchen

To free up space for all those festive goodies, go through your pantry and your fridge, discarding expired ingredients and anything you're unlikely to use.

Get bedrooms guest-ready

Tuck complete bedding sets inside one pillowcase so they're easy to grab. Two great options for spare bedding are a large blanket box or, less expensively, a jumbo vacuum storage bag. You may wish to make room in a wardrobe and drawers.

Blitz your bathroom

Clear away everyday toiletries into a lidded basket. Provide somewhere for guest towels – perhaps a portable towel ladder or an over-radiator rail. For more long-term organisation, look for wheeled carts, hanging caddies or tall, narrow cabinets.



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DIGNITY

Gunpowder, Treason and Plot

MAY 20th. 1604: At the Strand in London, The Duck and Drake is heaving – packed to its oak-beamed ceiling with drunken revellers. No one is taking a blind bit of notice of the five plotters sitting alone in a dingy, private room as they swear the Oath of Secrecy on a prayer book.

It is the first of several clandestine meetings, which, if successful will, eighteen months later, change the course of history; restore Catholicism in England and install the king's nine-year-old daughter, Elizabeth, as head of state.

Robert Catesby, tall and good-looking and a dab hand with a sword, is the ringleader – the brains behind the operation. Another man, Guy Fawkes, with thick reddish-brown hair, a bushy beard and long, flowing moustache, boasts ten years of military experience. What he doesn't know about explosives isn't worth knowing!

Catesby is speaking: *'As a matter of urgency, gentlemen, we must lease a small house next to the House of Lords Chamber . . . and start making a comprehensive list of everything we'll need for our mission.'*

'Aye, aye!' pipes up Francis Tresham, one of the conspirators.

Other heads nod in agreement. Catesby takes a sip of his strong ale. *'Thomas Percy – that's a job for you,'* he says, delegating.

Over the next few months, other conspirators are recruited until there are thirteen – unlucky for some! In March 1605, an underground basement is rented beneath the House of Lords and they begin to transfer gunpowder from Percy's house. However, in late August, horror of horrors, they discover that the gunpowder has decayed, and needs to be replaced. A bitter setback.

October 25th. 1605: An extract from a letter sent by Francis Tresham to his good friend and brother-in-law, Lord Monteagle:

"My lord, you know how I care for your preservation. If you value your life, I most strongly urge you to devise some excuse NOT to attend the State Opening of Parliament – instead to retire yourself safely to the country. I can say no more. Burn this letter, I pray you. Your loving brother-in-law, Francis."

Monteagle reads, but does not destroy the letter, and the correspondence consequently falls into the hands of James I himself.

It is the night of November 5th. In the basement beneath the House of Lords, Guy Fawkes, wearing his trademark hat and cloak, crouches in the darkness. All alone. Concerned for their own safety, his cunning cohorts have retreated elsewhere. In his trembling hands Guy clutches the matches, and the fuse that winds its way across the mud floor to thirty-six barrels of gunpowder neatly stacked in the corner.

If that lot goes up, they'll be a hell of a bang!

Suddenly, he is alerted to the sound of footsteps behind him. Too late, he turns. There is a brief scuffle and it's all over. Guy is arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London for his part in the plot to blow up The Houses of Parliament.

He is subsequently tortured and tied to "The Rack" – a terrifying wooden contraption with rollers and handles that . . . well, let's just say, the wretched man ended up a few inches longer! No wonder he eventually confessed and revealed his true identity and those of his co-conspirators!

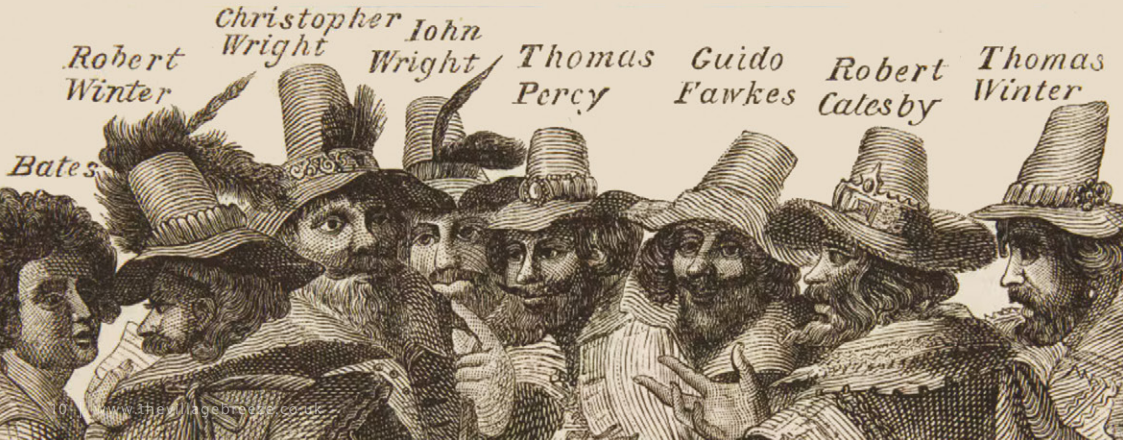
He is sentenced to death by hanging; to be drawn and quartered. To avoid the last part – extremely painful – he leapt off the gallows, and that was that!

A gruesome tale! But look on the bright side: If it hadn't been for Guy Fawkes, we wouldn't now be celebrating Bonfire Night every November 5th:

The effigy on the fire; the amazing colourful array of fireworks emblazoned across the sky. Such an annual delight for the whole family to enjoy!

Guy's failure is our gain!

Have a safe one, everyone!



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Chocolate chip cookie cake

A cross between a cookie and a cake, this is great served warm with ice cream.

Detail...

Makes **1x 24cm cookie cake**

Preparation time **20-25 minutes**

Cooking time **30-35 minutes**

You will need...

- 175g unsalted butter, softened, plus extra for greasing
- 60g soft light brown sugar
- 60g caster sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 egg, beaten
- 125g plain flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- A pinch of salt
- 200g chocolate chips (try a mix of milk, dark and white) and broken chocolate, or just use chocolate chips

Method...

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C, fan 180°C, gas mark 6. Grease and line a 24cm round cake tin or ovenproof frying pan with baking parchment.
2. Using an electric whisk, beat together the softened butter, sugars and vanilla extract in a mixing bowl until combined. Add the egg and then stir in the flour, baking powder and salt. Do not overmix. Fold in the chocolate chips.
3. Spoon the batter into the prepared tin or pan, pressing it to the edges, and bake in the preheated oven for 30-35 minutes until golden brown.
4. Leave to cool. When cool, remove from the tin or pan and cut into wedges to serve.



Top Tip...

"We cook our cookie cakes in foil baking trays, making them easily transportable for cake sales or parties".

Recipe from "John and Lisa's Midweek Dinners" by John Torode and Lisa Faulkner, published by Quadrille, price £25, with photography © Dan Jones.

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Buy-now-pay-later services seem to be everywhere these days, particularly online. Here's what you need to know.

Pay later think sooner

Buy-now-pay-later, legally known as deferred payment credit, is when a third-party lender pays the retailer when you make a purchase. You then repay the lender.

The best-known version is a "pay-in-three" format where you pay a third of the price up front, another third a month later and the final third a month after that. Another variant has no up-front payment, with the full balance due a month later.

This is different to a credit card facility or overdraft as it covers one specific purchase. However, it's still a form of debt.

Most forms of buy-now-pay-later have no interest charges or fees to use the facility, but some charge fees if you miss a payment. Make sure you understand when these fees apply and what happens if you miss multiple scheduled payments or go significantly past a deadline.

CREDIT CONSIDERATIONS Some services will stress that using the facility doesn't affect your credit record, which is technically true but somewhat misleading. You must formally apply and get approval to use the facility, which involves a "soft" credit check. That means the lender can access your credit record, but your record won't show you made the application.

Missing a payment absolutely can affect your credit record, however. It will usually stay on your record and potentially reduce your credit score for up to six years. That means it could be harder to get loans or credit in future and, if you are approved, the rates may be higher.

TIME IS MONEY Buy-now-pay-later is more of a time-management than a money-management tool. You should only really use it if three things apply: you don't have the money to pay for the purchase now; you genuinely can't wait until later to buy it; you know for certain when and where the money is coming from to pay for it.

If you can afford to pay for something now, it's usually best to do so. Even if you repay on time, your use of buy-now-pay-later services will show up on your bank statements. If you then later apply for a mortgage, potential lenders may treat it as a sign you've been living beyond your means.

NEW RULES The rules on buy-now-pay-later changed significantly in July 2026. Services are now regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, lenders must give you complete details of the repayment schedules and fees, and they must also run basic affordability checks to stop users taking on excessive or unaffordable debt. They must refer people in difficulty to a debt advice service. You can also now complain to the Financial Ombudsman Service about any rule breaches.

Advertisement Feature

Can AI help me find a home?



While the use of AI is increasing in many areas & the number of platforms is growing on a seemingly daily basis, this month we are taking a look at whether AI can help you in your property search and how to get the best out of it.

How AI can improve your property search:

Conversational queries: Instead of using rigid filters like bedroom counts, you can describe your ideal new home to AI platforms just as you would describe it to a friend – for example you can specify that you would like a 3 bed home with a big garden, near to good schools and in a specific area.

Advanced keyword scanning: Major portals like Rightmove and Zoopla use AI keywords to scan listing text and photos for unique features, such as exposed brick or granny annexe.

Virtual staging & visualisation: Certain platforms offer 'Style with AI' features, so you can digitally remove furniture, change interior styles or adjust lighting in listing photos to see a property's potential.

While the use of AI can be helpful in your search, it is worth remembering that it does still have limitations:

Verification is required: AI can misinterpret data or miss critical legal and structural details, so we would always recommend verifying facts with estate agents, surveyors, solicitors and mortgage advisors.

Adoption is still growing: While some industry surveys suggest buyers expect AI to reshape searches, most platform still offer AI as a supplementary tool rather than a full replacement.

It is only as good as the data: A good estate agent can keep a look out and contact you when they know something is going live that may interest you. AI can't do this.

So, while we are excited to see how AI can help homebuyers in their search, it cannot replace experienced agents who have local knowledge & expertise. If you are searching (with AI or not) for your next move, you need someone with a deep local knowledge and a commitment to exceptional service. With a host of 5* Google reviews, Cadley Cauldwell will guide you seamlessly through your next property move in Swadlincote and the surrounding areas.

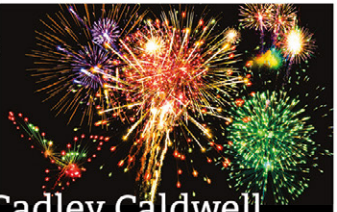
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FIRST DRIVE

AUDI SQ5



The SQ5 has always been seen as the "everyday" high-powered SUV, but is that still the case? Jack Evans finds out.

WHAT IS IT?

The Q5 has been a core part of Audi's SUV line-up for decades. And, for nearly as long, there has been the SQ5, bringing heightened performance but with all the practicality of the regular model.

For this latest model of the SQ5, Audi has opted for petrol power with a little help from a mild-hybrid system to boost efficiency.

WHAT'S NEW?

The latest SQ5 still aims to combine an upmarket driving experience with the practicality that families need, albeit with more technology. Its exterior has been sharpened up and it has a 475-litre boot.

WHAT'S UNDER THE BONNET?

The SQ5 uses a 3.0-litre turbocharged V6 engine, firing 362bhp and 550Nm to all four wheels via Audi's famous quattro system. All cars get a seven-speed automatic gearbox, with steering-wheel-mounted paddles to take manual control.

The 4.2-second 0-60mph time is more than respectable, and the car has a 155mph top speed. It's also nice that the latest SQ5 gets "proper" quad exhaust pipes – those on previous iterations were simply trim pieces.

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO DRIVE?

It delivers quite an old-school driving experience. The V6 engine brings wonderfully smooth performance and, on the motorway, it's refined and quiet. Around town, the SQ5's suspension feels on the firmer side. Thanks to the mild-hybrid technology, it'll also creep at slower speeds on electric-only power, making around-town driving a little quieter.

The steering isn't the most communicative, but it's more than accurate enough. Plus, you get a nicely elevated view of the road.



HOW DOES IT LOOK?

While the SQ5's latest design is impactful, there's nothing too outlandish about it. Of course, being an Audi model means that there's plenty of scope for customisation, with a wide choice of exterior colours and alloy wheel designs.

WHAT'S IT LIKE INSIDE?

We like the large door bins and well-sized central cupholders, though It's a shame so much gloss black plastic has been used, as it's a nightmare to keep clean. There were even some light scratches on our test car already. The window switch panel also feels a little flimsy.

But space is definitely just right. Those in the back do well in terms of headroom and legroom, while the boot is easy to access.



WHAT'S THE SPEC LIKE?

Prices for the SQ5 currently start at £72,905. Black Edition specification kicks off the range of trim levels, bringing standard features such as 21-inch alloy wheels, a Bang and Olufsen sound system and Audi's high-performance Matrix LED headlights. The large central screen is packed with features, and it's easy to operate. We like that a standard row of heating and ventilation controls remains a permanent fixture on the display, too.

Upgrade to top-tier Vorsprung specification and that price rises to £79,655, while adding features such as digital OLED rear lights and a panoramic sunroof. However, the standard car is so well equipped that it seems to be the better choice.

VERDICT

The SQ5 continues to offer the classy and well-executed experience you'd expect from a premium SUV. There's enough performance to keep things interesting, but this car will still come in handy day-to-day.

It's expensive, yes, but the SQ5 comes with a level of equipment that helps it deliver good value compared with rivals.

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Spend time in a spa

While many hotels feature an in-house spa these days, certain destinations across Europe take spas very seriously. Often built around thermal hot springs and steeped in centuries-old traditions of wellness and natural healing, these spas are designed to soothe both body and mind. Their waters are known for possessing healing properties, making a visit a curative as well as a pampering experience.

Here are five of Europe's best spa destinations, designed for rest, relaxation and rejuvenation.

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

With a spa culture that dates back to Roman times, Budapest isn't known as the "City of Spas" for nothing. The city boasts two dozen bathhouses, all of which use naturally heated, mineral-rich water from more than 100 nearby springs. These are far grander than your average spa; Budapest's bathhouses are places to socialise and an important part of daily life for Hungarians. It's not unusual for people to visit to admire the architecture alone, with some bathhouses dating back to the Ottoman era.

Széchenyi is one of the largest spa complexes in Europe, and probably Budapest's most popular. Rudas Bath, built in 1566 but renovated far more recently, is also a good choice. Don't miss a dip in the rooftop hot tub overlooking the River Danube.

BADEN-BADEN, GERMANY

Nestled at the edge of Germany's Black Forest, the charming town of Baden-Baden has a longstanding reputation for wellness. It was discovered by the Roman emperor Caracalla, who stumbled upon its natural spring waters almost 2,000 years ago. Often visited by European royalty and aristocrats, it remains one of Europe's premier wellness destinations.

The town's famous Friedrichsbad Spa blends Roman and Irish bathing traditions in a 17-step ritual designed to relax muscles and improve circulation. For a more modern experience, head to Caracalla Spa to wallow in its expansive thermal pools and saunas. Baden-Baden is also blessed with beautiful parks, a handful of museums and photo-worthy architecture, offering plenty to explore after you've bathed.

BATH, UK

Named after the Roman Baths that were erected about 43 AD, Bath was built around natural hot springs. While you can't bathe in the original Roman Baths, you can take a dip in the same water at the nearby Thermae Bath Spa.

The city is also recognised globally for its extraordinarily well-preserved architecture, especially its Georgian buildings. Spend the day exploring Bath Abbey, Royal Crescent and Pulteney Bridge, and top it off with a twilight dip in the Thermae Bath Spa's rooftop pools.

MONTECATINI TERME, ITALY

Montecatini Terme may be small, but it's one of Italy's leading spa towns. Nestled in the heart of Tuscany, the town wasn't officially built until the 1800s but its thermal waters were discovered and used by the Romans long before.



Many of Montecatini Terme's spa complexes, including Terme Tettuccio, Terme Excelsior and Terme Redi, blend beautifully preserved Art Nouveau and Neoclassical architecture with spectacular spa facilities. These offer everything from thermal pools and mud therapies to massages and beauty treatments. After a day of pampering, take a trip up the Funicolare di Montecatini Terme – a historic funicular railway dating back to 1898 – and absorb the panoramic views over the Tuscan countryside.







KARLOY VARY, CZECH REPUBLIC

Known as "Vary" to the locals, this historic spa town is one of the Czech Republic's most popular – and for good reason.

Admire the grand 19th-century spa architecture as you sip on the town's health-restoring sulphurous waters. The town prides itself on its beautiful colonnades, of which there are five in total. One of the most visited houses an impressive hot spring geyser, called Vřídlo, which shoots steaming hot water 12 metres into the air!

There are several spas to choose from. The Saunia Thermal Resort is a good all-rounder, offering multiple pools, a sauna resort and a rooftop pool with natural spring water.

TechTalk



SEE NO EVIL

Has Samsung solved smart glasses' privacy problem?

Many tech firms are hoping smart glasses will be the next big thing – and many privacy advocates hope they won't. This is because there have already been multiple cases of people using smart glasses to surreptitiously record other people without their consent.

Samsung may have the solution. Its forthcoming smart glasses feature multiple safeguards, such as disabling video recording when the glasses aren't being worn or if the recording status light, which lets people know the camera is rolling, is covered up. The glasses are expected to go on sale this winter with a predicted price of around £500.

Picture credit: Samsung



NEW HUE

How a joke turned into reality.

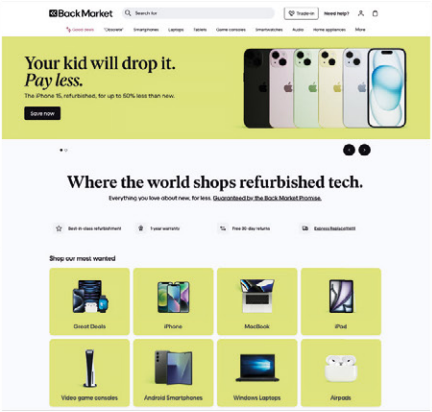
Last year, a convincing April Fool's joke persuaded lots of people that Philips Hue was going to make a giant bowl-shaped light called the Hue Go XXL that you could use as a coffee table. This year, it's an actual product. The Hue Go XXL has appeared in several places: as an icon in the official Hue app, in a promotional video by Hue's owner Signify, and in the photograph you see here. It looks fantastic but don't expect it to be cheap – the Hue Go portable lamp, which is only 15cm wide, is £79. The Go XXL appears to be three or four times larger, so it's likely to be considerably more expensive.

REACH FOR REFURB

Cut the cost of Christmas tech by opting for pre-owned devices.

One of the unfortunate results of the AI boom is that the cost of electronics such as computers and accessories has rocketed. If you're thinking of buying something electrical or electronic for Christmas, one way to save money is to shop for Certified Refurbished products.

Refurbished products have previously been sold and returned; any faults have been fixed and you usually get a warranty too. eBay has an entire Certified Refurbished department, while firms such as Apple and Dell have their own refurbished stores, and retailers such as Back Market provide a safe marketplace for buying pre-owned goods.



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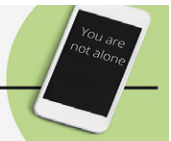
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Strictly adorable

From ballroom favourite to bestselling novelist, Anton Du Beke has proved that genuine charm never goes out of style.



Few television personalities have remained as effortlessly popular as Anton Du Beke. For more than two decades he has been part of the fabric of Saturday night television as the quintessential gentleman in *"Strictly Come Dancing"*.

This autumn his nationwide *"Steps in Time"* theatre tour concludes in Sevenoaks just as his memoir, *"Steps in Time: The Music, Memories and Moments that Made Me"*, launches.

GROWING UP His journey began in Sevenoaks, Kent, where Anthony Paul Beke, now 60, was born to a Spanish mother, Ascensión, and a Hungarian father, Antal.

Anton began dancing at 14. He had gone to collect his younger sister from her dance class and reportedly was encouraged to join, there being only one other boy.

While his mother encouraged his hobby, his relationship with his alcoholic father became ever more difficult. One Boxing Day his father stabbed him in the leg and stomach and Anton spent three days in hospital. His father was cleared in court of wounding his son but the incident created a permanent rift.

PURSUING A DREAM Anton left school at 16 to follow an amateur dancing career. At 17 he decided to specialise in ballroom. While he danced during the evenings and at weekends, he had a day job as a bed salesman.

The aspiring dancer soon changed his name to Anton Du Beke, saying: *"I wanted to leave what went before behind, and move on with the rest of my life. I just wanted to be me."*

Talent, determination and practice eventually led him to become one of Britain's finest ballroom performers, along with long-time professional partner Erin Boag.

Anton has been with *"Strictly Come Dancing"* since its launch in 2004, partnering everyone from opera stars to politicians, always bringing humour, elegance and encouragement to the dance floor. As a judge, he has become a constructive, knowledgeable and reassuring voice..

OFF SCREEN He became a dad aged 50, when he and his wife Hannah Summers welcomed twins, George and Henrietta, in 2017. He often says fatherhood is his greatest achievement.

Anton has quietly built an impressive writing career, publishing bestselling historical novels inspired by the glamour of the ballroom. *"The Winter Ball"* (released in paperback this September) was the eighth instalment in his Buckingham Hotel series.

The 24th series of Strictly is on our screens this autumn, with the final on 19th December and the Christmas Special on Christmas Day. All episodes are available on BBC One and BBC iPlayer. "Steps in Time: The Music, Memories and Moments that Made Me" by Anton Du Beke is published on 5 November by Bonnier Books Ltd, price £22 (hardback). Photograph © BBC.

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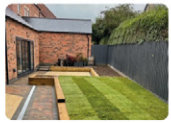
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Autumn's final flourish

Enjoy November in all its surprising glory while preparing for next year's spectacular show.

November brings mist, long nights and some chilly days, but it can be a magnificent month. Golden, orange and red leaves adorn borders where stems and berries are showcasing the benefits of certain shrubs. It's a great time for planting, so bring some of those visual delights to your own garden if it's lacking.

Light is in short supply, making it vital to go outdoors whenever you can.

True colours

Some of the brightest interest at this time of year is provided by berries on shrubs such as Pyracantha (firethorn), Cotoneaster and Ilex (holly). They provide a winter larder for many birds. The colourful stems of Cornus (dogwood) add dazzling red, orange, lime green and yellow radiance to borders throughout the winter, especially if they were pruned down to the ground back in early spring. They can be as spectacular as any flower border when planted in bold, contrasting groups.

Gather fallen leaves into heaps and cover them with something heavy to squeeze out the air. Within a couple of years, you'll be rewarded with wonderful leaf mould which could be described as the caviar of compost.

Top tips for November

- Plant as many tulip bulbs as you can squeeze into your pots and borders so that you will be able to anticipate a joyful spring show. If squirrels tend to dig them up, pop a bunch of holly leaves into the planting holes so that the rodent rogues receive prickles whenever they nibble.
- You can tidy your borders a little and move things around, including splitting and replanting herbaceous perennials while there is warmth in the soil.
- Cover your beds with a generous mound of home-made compost or mulch, remembering to give tender plants such as Agapanthus (African lily) and Kniphofias (red hot pokers) an extra layer of padding. It will help protect their shivering roots. Tucking up your beds for the winter seals in the cosiness so that your plants will emerge fresh from dormancy.
- Prune roses to help prevent wind-rock, then give them some mulch to act as winter fuel.
- Avoid cutting spring-flowering shrubs during winter; you're likely to cut off the flowering buds.
- Don't prune stone fruit trees now, as they are susceptible to diseases like bacterial canker and silver leaf.
- Clear leaves from ponds, paths and lawns but not from borders where they will provide food and



habitat for wildlife.

- Leave your seed heads and fading blooms intact; they'll be appreciated by birds and bees at a time they're most needed.
- Purchase and plant bare-root shrubs and trees now.
- Add mycorrhizal fungi to planting holes. It forms a mutually beneficial symbiotic relationship with roots, which helps the plants for their entire life.







- Water newly planted trees and those still establishing from last season. Their roots take time to grow and, if it's dry, they're unlikely to be able to access enough moisture.
- If you are still mowing the lawn, raise the cutting height so that the grass sward is longer. This will help protect the roots during frost.
- Use horticultural fleece to wrap tender plants, and those that tend to suffer in cold wind.
- Raise your outdoor pots and containers off the ground, using pot feet. It will help prevent waterlogging.

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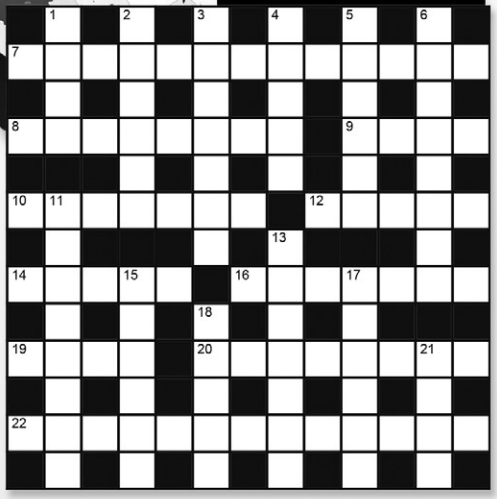
Coffee Break



SUDOKU

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

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

7 Companies, corps., (13)
8 Thin layer, film (8)
9 Large stringed instrument (4)
10 Places of education (7)
12 Cinders (5)
14 Crustaceans (5)
16 Roads (7)
19 Chemical element, Zn (4)
20 Courteously (8)
22 Relaying of messages (13)

DOWN

1 Vacant (4)
2 Strong Asian grass (6)
3 At last (7)
4 Enclosed (5)
5 Desires (6)

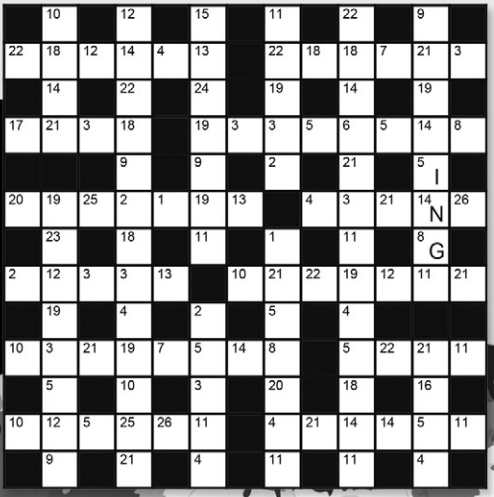
DOWN cont.,

6 Most furious (8)
11 Passageway (8)
13 Slanted letters (7)
15 Turn into (6)
17 Manor (6)
18 Unlocks (5)
21 King of the beasts (4)

CODEWORD

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.

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		



ANSWERS...

CODEWORD...



SUDOKU...

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

CROSSWORD...

ACROSS: 7 Organisations, 8 Membrane, 9 Harp, 10 Schools, 12 Ashes, 14 Crabs, 16 Streets, 19 Zinc, 20 Politely, 22 Communication.

DOWN: 1 Free, 2 Bamboo, 3 Finally, 4 Caged, 5 Wishes, 6 Angriest, 11 Corridor, 13 Italics, 15 Become, 17 Estate, 18 Opens, 21 Lion.

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Children's Puzzle Page

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Can you find the path through the maze to the centre of the Moon?



What do astronauts use to keep their trousers up?
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Why did the astronaut break up with the Moon?
Because it needed some space!

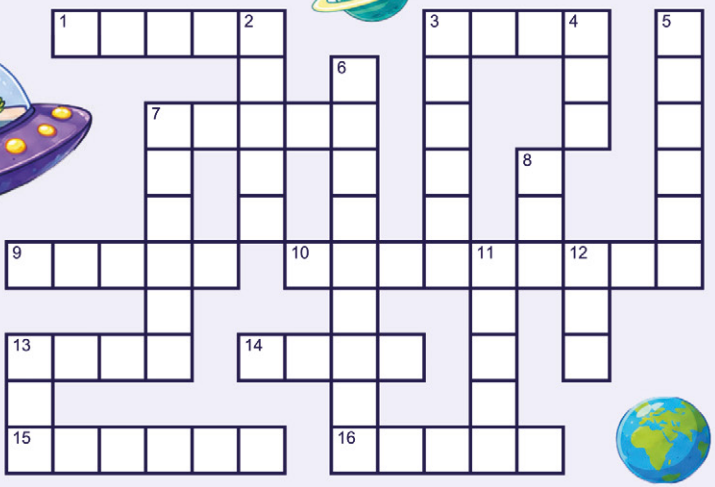
What kind of music do planets listen to?
Neptunes!

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