

the village *Breeze*

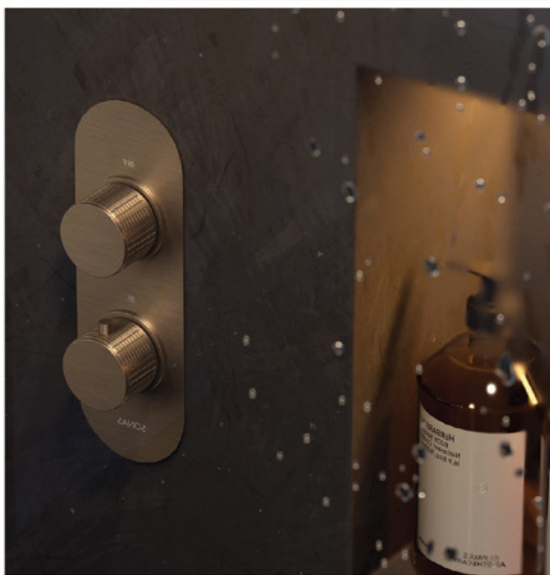


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Letter from the Editor

Hello again and welcome...

My nephew recently celebrated his 30th birthday. I knew I had a particularly quirky photo of him as a baby, so I popped it in his card for a bit of fun. Of course, back in 1995, we were still printing photos, so I had to dig out a large box of snaps. However, as I'd only kept hold of the good ones, it didn't take long to find what I was looking for.

On the other hand, finding a great shot from just five years ago on my mobile? Impossible! There are thousands to sift through, with many that should have been deleted long ago.

It's a similar story when you're searching online. The information you find might be years out of date, or the business you're researching may have closed long ago while its website still lingers. With limitless digital space, nothing ever gets tidied up.

Of course, it has its advantages - I love the internet and cannot imagine life without it. But print still has its place. Back in August, *Waterstones* announced they were opening 10 new stores in the UK. Rather than online media replacing print, the two are co-existing very happily.

As your local magazine, we see that ourselves and really appreciate the positive feedback we get from residents. Readers know that they are delivered fresh content every time. All the businesses advertising are still active, and every article was written within the last couple of weeks.

And, in the office, when I need to check something in a past issue, I know exactly where the physical copy is—unlike the elusive electronic version. Sometimes the best search engine is still a shoebox in the cupboard!

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

*"I welcome change.
As long as nothing is altered or different."*

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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The Café Lady

I pretend to peruse the menu. A young blonde girl appears from the corner of the kitchen – a cute white cap covering her blonde hair, and an apron with red love hearts tied around her waist.

"I am a Café Lady," she announces, cheerfully.

"What is your name, Café Lady?" I ask.

"Cinderella," she replies, smiling. What beautiful blue eyes she has!

"That's a lovely name."

"No! I am Lucy!" she says, suddenly changing her mind.

"Would you like a drink? Tea or coffee?"

I scratch my head, thoughtfully.

Finally, I say, *"Tea, please, Lucy."*

"Or we've got coffee with sugar?" she suggests. *"Or black tea, mint tea? Or turkey tea?"*

I grin. *"Normal tea will be fine, Lucy. With milk, please."*

"Thank you."

"No problem. Wait there."

I make a show of checking my watch. *"Don't be too long – I have a train to catch in half an hour!"*

"Don't worry," she assures me. *"I'll be back."* And she gives me a little wave.

The waitress turns to go. *"Do you want anything while you're waiting? A bread roll and butter?"* Where on earth had she heard that? This is a café – not a posh restaurant! I shake my head in amusement.

A minute later, Lucy returns with a tiny plastic blue cup and saucer.

I feign disappointment. *"Haven't you got a tea cup a little bit bigger?"* I ask, politely. *"A mug, perhaps?"*

"We've not got mugs. Sorry." And then, as if remembering where we are, she adds:

"Would you like something to eat?"

Burgers, pizzas, chips with red sauce, hot dogs, broccoli, fish without heads, ice cream ...?" She takes a deep breath before continuing ... *"Chicken with legs, carrots, yellow lemons, burnt toast, strawberries, spaghetti, beans with red sauce, cupcakes ...?"*

I interrupt Lucy in mid-sentence: *"Wow! Spoilt for choice!"* I laugh.

"Err, I'd LOVE a pizza!"

"What kind of you like?"

"Err, have you got Pepperoni?" I challenge her. She looks puzzled.

"Quattro Stagioni, maybe?" She screws up her little nose.

"I don't know what that is," Lucy replies, bewildered.

Suddenly, as if seized with divine inspiration, I say, *"Do you know what I'd really, really fancy, Lucy? A pizza with tomatoes and cheese!"*

Her small face lights up.

"I've had one of them – it's called a Margaret!"

"You mean a Margherita!" I suggest.

"Yes – a Margaret," she confirms. *"Would you like a hot dog – with a sausage?"*

"Mustard and onions?" I reply, hopefully.

"We've not got onions. How's about red sauce?"

I pull a long face. *"Just a hot dog, please – with a sausage and mustard."*

"No problem. Wait there." The waitress turns to go.

"Will you be long?" I ask again. *"I don't want to miss my train."*

"Don't worry about it!" she smiles sweetly.

I slowly sip my tea, making outrageous slurping noises. Lucy laughs hysterically and goes to fetch my food.

Soon she returns, balancing a pizza and a hot dog on a yellow plastic plate.

"There you go!" she says with a smile.

"Oh, very yummy!" I say, licking my lips.

"Thank you. You are a very nice Café Lady."

"And you are a very old man!" Lucy giggles.

"WHAT!!!" I cry, in mock horror. *"How can you say that? And you are a very cheeky young lady!"* I tease, tickling her mercilessly in the ribs. She squeals in delight. *"Remind me, Lucy, how old you are?"*

"I am three and three-quarters," she announces proudly. *"But my Mummy says I will be four next birthday."*

I scoop my adorable little granddaughter up into my arms and give her a great big hug.

"Gosh! Look at the time! Grandpa's missed his train!"

Fancy sharing one of your deedlicious cupcakes

with me? After that, we can get you into your witch's costume – ready for tonight's Halloween party.

"What do you say. . . Café Lady?"



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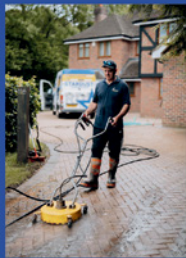
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Permission Accomplished

In England and Wales, most external alterations to your property need approval through the planning permission process. Understanding how it works can make your project much less stressful.



Who decides?

Your Local Planning Authority (LPA) is your area's decision-making body for planning. Usually, this is composed of employed planning officers and elected councillors at your local district, borough, unitary or city council but arrangements vary around the country (for example, for National Parks). Most decisions are made by officers, with contentious proposals going before a committee of councillors.

Do you even need it?

If you're only updating the inside of your home, planning isn't required – an interior designer or builder might be all you need.

But for anything that alters the exterior, it's best to start by speaking to an architect. They'll help you shape your ideas into a design and produce the necessary plans. In some cases, a modest and well-designed project might even fall under 'permitted development', which will avoid the need for a planning application altogether.

Bigger works

You will need to make a planning application to your LPA before you start any work. Your architect will normally be able to handle the submission for you, though you can do this yourself, if you prefer, through the online planning portal. If you

think you're in for a challenge, however, you should engage a specialist planning consultant to act for you.

Applications often need supporting documents such as surveys or assessments. For example, replacing an old roof might require a bat survey, while a garden outbuilding usually won't. Your LPA's website will list what's needed.

Waiting game

Once submitted, the LPA has eight weeks to assess your application, consult neighbours and other stakeholders, and reach a decision. While 95% of householder applications are approved, delays are common because of workloads.

If it's a no

If your application is refused, you can appeal through the Planning Inspectorate at no cost. However, success rates are low (one in three), so you should pay for professional representation for the best chance of success.

If it's a yes

After gaining permission, your project can begin. Conditions attached to the approval must be followed carefully. Typical conditions include adhering to the approved plans, but some may require further details to be agreed with the LPA before work can start. Your architect can help develop detailed designs for building regulations, and then it's time to bring in a builder.

Ready to go

While planning permission looks at the impact of your project on the local area, building control ensures your structure is safe, sound, and energy efficient. Checking building regulations, and getting approval, if required, can be done through one of two types of building control body – your council or an independent approved inspector.

Remodelling your property can enhance your home, adding value and space. But to be sure of being able to sell it down the line, you'll need the proper permissions.



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Enjoy the show!

While we can't do anything about the changing seasons, we can alter the way we look at them. Most people feel a little sad that summer has passed but now is the time to appreciate one of the greatest performances staged by nature – completely free of charge.

While we humans add on a few layers of warm clothing, plants do the opposite. They cast off their seasonal mantles. This means we are privy to some wondrous colours, improving in intensity as October progresses. Leaves are a type of food processing factory and as they wind down, they shed layers. First to go is the outer chlorophyll and when it fades, we can see yellow, orange and red anthocyanin.

Star performers

Some of the best autumn colour comes from Japanese maples. In fact, most of the Acer family excel at this time of year, offering gold, red, orange or scarlet hues. The Juneberries, or Amelanchiers, and Liquidambar, known as the sweetgum tree, also put on a great display.

It's a good time to note your favourite trees and shrubs, as the planting season looms. Perhaps you have room for just one more?

There is still some flowering interest in October, including Nerines, with bright pink blooms, autumn crocus (*Colchicum autumnale*), Asters, Chrysanthemums and Dahlias.

Jobs for October

Before the clocks go back on Sunday, 26 October, there are tasks to tackle.

- Plant spring-flowering bulbs and remember that flowers in casual groups are far more effective than singles or straight lines. Plant as early in the month as possible, so that the soil is still warm and roots have a chance to sprout. Don't be tempted to plant tulips just yet, however. The warm, wet soil conditions that can be normal for October mean that the risk of fungal disease is high.



- Divide perennials that are outgrowing their space and exchange interesting clumps with friends.



- Prune back shrubs that look too large or untidy, bearing in mind that winter seed heads are invaluable for birds. Take care not to prune anything that might be a bit tender, because frost gains access through new cuts.
- Prune roses now, so that they don't rock in the winter winds, which can loosen their roots.
- Scarify and aerate the lawn to get rid of dead grass and open up the airways.



- Set the lawnmower blades high and give the lawn a final trim.
- Aim to achieve contrast with evergreens, placing maroon and dark-leaved shrubs next to variegated or yellow-leaved specimens. We are about to enter the season when foliage comes first.

Enjoy this month of transition; it can be a magical time.

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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)

Some members also tend an allotment in Appleby Magna — organic, zero air miles, fruit and veg!

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Spiced Beef Bourguignon

A traditional French dish of slow-cooked beef in a red wine sauce, this stew is the ultimate comfort food– and well worth the wait!

Detail...

Serves 4-6; Preparation time 25-30 minutes; Cooking time 2 hours 15 minutes

You will need...

- 1 kg diced braising steak (or chuck steak)
- Sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp plain flour, seasoned
- 4 tbsp Borderfields Gold Infusions Aromatic Thyme Cold Pressed Rapeseed Oil
- 200g smoked streaky bacon lardons
- 6 small shallots, peeled and diced
- 2 leeks, trimmed, washed and diced
- 6 cloves garlic, crushed
- Half a bulb of garlic, cut in half horizontally
- Half a 750ml bottle of Merlot red wine
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 750ml rich beef stock
- 1 sprig of fresh rosemary and thyme, leaves chopped
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 star anise
- 200g wild and chestnut mushrooms, chopped

To serve...

- Chopped fresh parsley
- Creamy mashed potato

Method...

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C, fan 150°C, gas mark 3.
2. Season the beef well with salt and pepper and toss in the seasoned flour.
3. Heat half the oil in a frying pan and fry the beef in batches over a medium-high heat until browned on all sides, turning now and then. Once browned, using a slotted spoon, transfer to a large flameproof casserole.
4. Add a little more oil to the pan and fry the bacon lardons for 2-3 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to the casserole.
5. Add a splash more oil to the pan and cook the shallots and leeks over a low heat for 3-4 minutes, stirring until softened. Add the garlic and half garlic bulb (face-side down) and cook for a further minute.
6. Transfer to the casserole, pour over the wine and stir in the tomato purée, stock, herbs and star anise. Bring to a simmer, stir well, cover with a lid and cook in the oven for 1½-1¾ hours.
7. Add the remaining oil and mushrooms to the frying pan and cook for 2-3 minutes over a high heat until golden brown, turning often.
8. Remove the casserole from the oven, stir in the mushrooms, return to the oven and cook for 25-30 minutes more until the sauce has thickened and the beef is completely tender. (If the sauce is too thin, add a little cornflour paste and simmer for another couple of minutes.)
9. Scatter over some chopped parsley and serve immediately with some creamy mash.

For more recipe inspiration using the Borderfields Cold Pressed Rapeseed Oils, visit www.borderfields.co.uk. Recipe created by Rachel Green (Rachel-green.co.uk) with photography by Michael Powell (www.michaelpowell.com).

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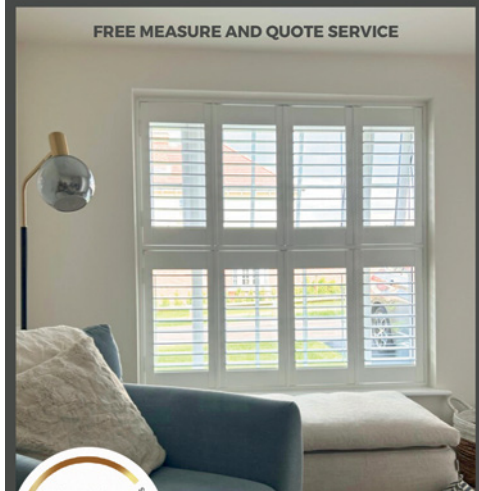
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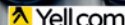


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Drive now, pay later

Financing is a popular way to buy a car, but which method is right for you?

Many people throughout the UK currently finance their cars. It's a simple way of ensuring you get a new or nearly new car while avoiding the elevated running and maintenance costs associated with an older car.

If you have plenty of spare cash, paying for your car upfront is the cheapest way, as there's no interest. Otherwise, there are four main methods of financing a car:

1. Personal Contract Purchase (PCP)

PCP finance lets you get your hands on a new car for an initial deposit (usually around 10%) and a series of monthly payments. You don't own the car at the end of the agreement, though you do have the option of buying it outright in return for a final – or 'balloon' – payment.

The monthly amount will depend on the size of your deposit, the cost of the car, the interest rate offered and how much the dealer expects to be able to sell the vehicle for at the end of the agreement. The annual mileage you can do is often limited but this way of financing a new vehicle can be good for people who like to change their cars quite frequently.

2. Hire Purchase (HP)

With Hire Purchase, after you've put down a deposit, a finance company will loan you the money for the rest of the car's worth. You'll then

pay this back in monthly instalments, though these tend to be higher than with a PCP.

However, there are no mileage conditions and there's no large final payment, because, once you've paid off the sum of the agreement, you'll own the car.

3. Leasing (Personal Contract Hire)

Leasing a car is a little like a long-term car rental. You'll pay a sum initially, followed by monthly payments. Once the payment term is over (you'll agree this with the dealer), you won't own the car, nor will you be able to purchase it via a final payment.

You'll also have to stipulate how many miles you'll cover, as well as the amount you'll pay each month. When it comes to the deposit, this is more rigid than with other finance plans – it's usually determined by adding together three, six or nine months' worth of payments. If you like to change cars regularly, leasing could be for you.

4. Bank loan

A traditional bank loan could make getting the keys to a brand-new car a little easier compared with a PCP or lease deal. It will also mean that you'll own the car outright from the start, so you could sell it whenever you wanted without having to pay charges for leaving a finance agreement.

However, the onus is on you to shop around and get the best deal – different banks will, of course, offer different rates.



The way tax is paid depends on the kind of pension you get, and whether you have any other income.

If you get the State Pension and a private pension

Your private pension provider will usually take off any tax you owe before they pay you, including any tax you owe on your State Pension. If you get payments from more than one provider i.e. from a workplace pension and a personal pension, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) will ask one of your providers to take the tax off that you may owe from your State Pension. At the end of the tax year you'll get a P60 from your pension provider showing how much tax you've paid.

Tax on your State & Other Pension Income

What If the State Pension is your only income

If you go over your Personal Allowance and you have tax to pay, HMRC will send you a Simple Assessment tax bill, detailing how much you owe and how to pay it. If your income is below your Personal Allowance, you usually will not need to pay tax.

If you're working and getting a pension

Your employer will usually take any tax you owe off your earnings, including any tax you owe on your pension.

If you're self-employed you must fill in a Self-Assessment

tax return at the end of the tax year. You must declare your overall income, including the State Pension and money from private pensions, for example your workplace pension.

If you have other income

You must let HMRC know about any income you receive that is not from an employer or a pension. You might have to fill in a Self-Assessment tax return to report this.

The HMRC contact number is 0300 200 3300 they are open Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6pm. I've always found it best to call them as early as possible.



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FIRST DRIVE : BYD Dolphin Surf



Has BYD cracked the affordable electric vehicle sector? Cameron Richards finds out.

WHAT IS IT?

The Chinese firm BYD only arrived in the UK in 2023 and has previously focused on big saloons and SUVs. However, with its smallest car, the Dolphin Surf, it's chasing after the Dacia Spring and Leapmotor T03 at the budget end of the EV market.

WHAT'S NEW?

The Dolphin Surf has a new body and interior, and sits on BYD's e-Platform 3.0 architecture, allowing a choice of battery packs.

The firm's Blade Battery technology uses fewer precious metals and is claimed to be stronger and tougher than standard lithium-ion units.

WHAT'S UNDER THE BONNET?

This compact city car comes with either a 30kWh or a larger 43.2kWh battery pack. Our test car has the latter, plus an electric motor that pumps out 154bhp and 220Nm of torque. The car manages 0-60mph in 11.9 seconds and 93mph.

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO DRIVE?

The Dolphin Surf slips through gaps in traffic, while the tight turning circle makes manoeuvring a doddle. The steering is nicely weighted and the electric motor is peppy enough. It's also very efficient, with our test car averaging 4.9 miles per kWh. It's only let down by a fidgety ride and ineffective-seeming regenerative braking.

HOW DOES IT LOOK?

The rather tall and boxy design is accompanied by sharp lines and edges that run down the side profile, with black plastic wheel arch mouldings and more black plastic across the front bumper.

At the back, the C-pillars feature black trim that runs seamlessly into the back window, creating a floating roof effect.

WHAT'S IT LIKE INSIDE?

The interior is more than acceptable. All cars come with a rotatable touchscreen, which is easy to use on the move; it's a pity the climate control settings are buried within the screen.

The hard plastics feel cheap, but it still feels more upmarket than a Dacia Spring.

Space in the back is where this little car excels, with lots of head- and legroom. However, the two rear seat belts make it a strict four-seater.

Boot space stands at 308 litres or 1,037 litres with the rear seats folded down – roomier than a Leapmotor T03 and on par with the Spring.

WHAT'S THE SPEC LIKE?

It has three trim levels and all models come with a decent amount of standard equipment. The entry-level Active model is priced from £18,650 and there's a 10.1-inch rotatable touchscreen infotainment system and rearview camera.

The Boost starts at £21,950 and boasts extras such as 16-inch alloy wheels and rain-sensing windscreen wipers.

Flagship Comfort models come in at £23,950, with toys such as a 360-degree camera, wireless smartphone charger and heated front seats.

VERDICT

Judging by the Dolphin Surf's upsides – good around town, funky exterior, efficiency and ample interior space – BYD has undoubtedly cracked the budget EV market.



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Call of the wild

Bumping across the savannah in a 4x4 is a dream for many, offering a window into the world's most majestic landscapes and creatures. Here are some of Africa's top safari destinations.

KENYA

Best for: shorter safaris

Kenya is most famous for the Great Migration, which sees millions of wildebeest and zebras cross from southern Tanzania into Kenya's Masai Mara. This draws



in predators, so you have a good chance of spotting cheetahs and lions too.

You could couple this with a trip to Amboseli National Park. With guaranteed elephant sightings and over 370 bird species, it's set against the staggering backdrop of Mount Kilimanjaro.

TANZANIA

Best for: a longer trip

Tanzania's star attraction – the Serengeti – is nearly ten times bigger than Kenya's Masai Mara, offering a greater variety of wildlife.

It's home to all the Big Five (lions, leopards, rhinos, elephants and buffaloes) and, like Kenya, offers sightings of the Great Migration. There are 22 national parks to explore, covering 15% of the country. The Ngorongoro Crater, only a short drive from the Serengeti, is a great spot for lions, elephants and black rhinos.

NAMIBIA

Best for: otherworldly landscapes

Namibia houses the world's oldest desert and Africa's largest canyon.

Etosha National Park's dried-out clay pans and waterholes attract hordes of wildlife during the dry season, including elephants, giraffes, lions, leopards and the endangered black rhino.

But Namibia also has lesser-known desert predators like bat-eared foxes and honey badgers.

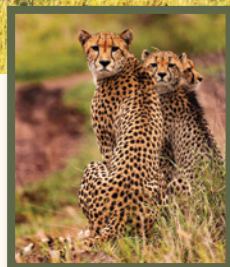
Soak up the towering red sand dunes of Sossusvlei or head to the rocky deserts of Damaraland to track the largest number of free-roaming black rhinos in the world.

SOUTH AFRICA

Best for: first timers and families

Largely malaria-free, South Africa is a great choice for a family-friendly safari. Kruger National Park is an easy yet rewarding destination for first timers, with a high likelihood of Big Five sightings, as well as cheetahs, giraffes and hundreds of bird species. You can drive the park's paved roads yourself if you're on a budget.

South Africa also has the highest number of endemic bird species in Africa, and the Cape is particularly good for bird watching. Add in a trip to Cape Town to see Boulders Beach's protected colony of African penguins.



BOTSWANA

Best for: water safaris

Botswana is perhaps best known for the Okavango Delta. Between late April and August, water floods in, transforming the Kalahari Desert into a lush paradise teeming with wildlife. Explore on a boat safari or by traditional mokoro to see crocodiles, hippos, birds and bathing elephants.

Meanwhile, Chobe National Park is home to the world's largest concentration of elephants, as well as big cats, buffaloes, zebras and wild dogs. Cruise the Chobe River to view them.



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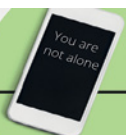
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Lenny's legacy

Funnyman Lenny Henry co-founded Comic Relief 40 years ago but life hasn't always been a barrel of laughs.

Little could 16-year-old apprentice factory worker Lenworth George Henry from Dudley have imagined what his future would hold when he made his TV debut on the talent show *'New Faces'* in 1975 – and won! He appeared in the children's TV series *'Tiswas'*, but it was *'The Fosters'* in 1976 that gave him his first regular TV role.

NATIONAL TREASURE

Lenny has forged a remarkable career as a comedian, actor, writer and campaigner. He was also the co-founder with Richard Curtis of *Comic Relief*, which since 1985 has raised more than £1 billion to tackle poverty and inequality.

It was in 1980, when Lenny teamed up with the *Comic Strip*, that he met comedienne Dawn French. The couple married four years later and in 1991 adopted their daughter Billie. They divorced in 2010 and Lenny is now dating theatre producer and casting director Lisa Makin.

ARISE, SIR LENNY!

Lenny was awarded a CBE in 1999 for his services to drama and charity. Then in 2015 he was knighted. He said, *"Huge respect to everybody who has ever had anything to do with my progress really. It's a wonderful honour and it's for them – the people of Dudley and my family."*

Sir Lenny, who turned 67 in August, starred in the *Netflix* thriller series, *'Missing You'* in January. Then, in May, Alison Hammond uncovered the man behind the accolades for her *'Big Weekend'* on BBC. They shared memories of his revered mother Winnie, who would demand doorstep impressions from her son before allowing him in for dinner. (All episodes available on BBC iPlayer.)

HARSH TRUTH

His mother came to Britain in the second wave of Caribbean immigration in 1957 and settled in the Midlands before having an affair. Lenny was named after Dr Lenworth, who delivered him. When he was ten, his mother sent him to earn pocket money doing chores for his "Uncle" Bertie. Eighteen months later, he discovered Bertie was his real father, not Winston, with whom he'd grown up.

In a *'Guardian'* interview, Lenny revealed he now wants to "own" the truth, after once being ashamed of it. *"My story is of people moving from one country to another and forming new links, new family and new relationships. And that's just what it is. It's not illicit, it's not salacious in any way. It's a life thing."*

LEARNING CURVE

This July, Sir Lenny closed the 15th Festival of Education at Wellington College in Berkshire. He said, *"Education gave me the chance to imagine a bigger life, then gave me the tools to go and build it. But I also know what it feels like to sit at the back of the class and not see yourself in the books, the teachers or the future you're told to aim for. We've come a long way but there's still work to do."*

Image © Comic Relief - Jake Turney

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Grape Britain

As temperatures rise, so does the importance and the quality of English wine.

It's a fine Sunday in October and I'm standing, secateurs in hand, gazing down a gently sloping row of vines to the verdant pastures of the Somerset Levels beyond. A few soft white clouds hang lightly in a vast blue sky. I'm one of 30 or so volunteers picking grapes for a local winemaker and I can't help thinking how strange it is to be joining a grape harvest in the West Country. Yet, increasingly, English wine is becoming part of our economy and way of life.



According to Wine GB, the national association for the English and Welsh wine industry, last year the UK counted 1,030 vineyards, representing a 9.2% increase in a year, and a 123% increase in the area under vine over the past decade. At the same time, sales of English and Welsh wine grew 10% in two years to reach 8.8 million bottles. While England produces the lion's share, there are 30 vineyards in Wales too.

We're doing it more and we're doing it better. No longer do the French snigger at our terrible plonk. In blind tastings between 2015 and 2020, sparkling

wine from the Hambledon vineyard in Hampshire outperformed champagnes like Veuve Clicquot and Taittinger, and this year, English wines picked up 15 gold medals at the International Wine Challenge. Trophies went to Devon's Lyme Bay Winery and West Sussex-based Nyetimber.

English wine is nothing new. The Romans introduced vines to Britain around 43AD, and later, vineyards were attached to large monasteries. But from the Middle Ages, English producers couldn't compete with French wine, largely because of our cooler, more uncertain climate.

It's hard to think of many beneficiaries of rising global temperatures, but English viticulture might be one.

"I always wanted to make wine but assumed I'd have to move to France, Italy or Spain to plant a vineyard,"

says former wine trader Guy Smith, owner of award-winning Smith and Evans, whose grapes I'm picking: *"But with global warming and changes in winemaking techniques, we realised that potentially you could make something world class in England."*

Originally, this country was best suited to sparkling wines, with still wines needing more heat and sunshine, but that's changing along with the climate. There's a risk of Burgundy becoming too hot to produce the top-quality wines it's famous for. England, however, now has the right climate.

Making wine boosts the British economy and allows us to consume locally. It's

important for communities too. It's a tough time for agriculture, and Guy Smith finds farmers are interested in his brand of diversification. A key part of his business is wine tours and tastings.

The English and Welsh wine industry is projected to support 30,000 jobs by 2040 and several big champagne producers have planted vines here. *"Wine growing in the UK is here to stay,"* confirms Guy Smith. I'll raise a glass of English fizz to that!

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INJECTING HOPE Emergency vaccination programmes are thought to have reduced deaths by around 60% between 2000 and 2023, according to a pioneering study. It's also believed that rapid vaccine rollouts have prevented a similar number of new infections and saved around \$32 billion. The researchers, funded by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, examined 210 outbreaks of five diseases – measles, cholera, Ebola, yellow fever, and meningitis – in 49 countries.

SEEING RED According to Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels, a project led by the Scottish Wildlife Trust, public sightings of red squirrels have significantly increased in Aberdeen. Meanwhile, only one grey squirrel was captured during the first half of 2025 – down from six in the whole of 2024. This decline in the invasive grey population, which pushes out its red cousins and kills trees by stripping their bark, is a major win for native red squirrel conservation in the city.

SOUNDS AMAZING You can now experience some of the world's most iconic sites by listening to the sounds that give them their unique atmosphere. Sonic Heritage is a project led by Oxford-based sound artist Stuart Fowkes, offering free access to an online library of sounds from 270 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Recordings include temple music from Angkor Wat in Cambodia and tour guides in the Colosseum in Rome. Hear more at www.citiesandmemory.com/heritage.



Arthritis-friendly fitness

Many people believe that exercising with joint problems is a bad idea, but science suggests otherwise. What are the best activities for you?

When you're in pain and feeling more than a little creaky, exercising probably isn't top of your wish list. But the right kind of physical activity can help reduce arthritis pain as effectively as paracetamol and ibuprofen, according to the charity Versus Arthritis. It can also strengthen joints and might even slow down the progression of arthritis.

The best form of exercise will depend on how arthritis affects you and your level of fitness. Here are some research-backed activities, though, if in doubt, speak to your GP first.

HOPPING A 2022 UK study found high-intensity impact training – in this case, hopping – improved bone growth and cartilage development in older people with osteoarthritis and could help prevent further musculoskeletal decline if you have hip problems. A Finnish study found that jumping improved knee cartilage quality.

YOGA This mind-body form of exercise is considered safe for people with knee osteoarthritis. It can reduce pain and stiffness and improve function in the joint. A University of Pennsylvania study found that yoga can also help alleviate hand osteoarthritis. Iyengar yoga, with its emphasis on gentle movements, is often recommended.

TAI CHI The ancient martial art of Tai Chi has been shown in research studies to lessen pain and stiffness in people with knee osteoarthritis. It's also recommended

for people with arthritis of the hip. Other benefits include improved strength and balance, as well as reduced pressure on joints, muscles, and bones.

TREADMILL WALKING Chronic inflammation contributes to joint pain and joint damage, especially if you have the autoimmune condition rheumatoid arthritis. One study found 20 minutes of moderate exercise on a treadmill was enough to produce an anti-inflammatory effect. Otherwise, regular, straightforward walking can strengthen muscles, reduce pain and improve knee flexibility.

WATER AEROBICS Exercising in water, even if it's simply walking or jogging, can help relieve the pain and stiffness of a bad hip or knee if you have osteoarthritis. Different studies have also found that water-based exercise, including swimming lengths, can be beneficial for individuals with an inflammatory form of arthritis, such as rheumatoid or spondyloarthritis, which often affects the spine.

CYCLING Pedalling gives you a good workout while going easy on the joints. It also strengthens muscles that help support the knees, ankles and feet. So it's suitable if you have knee problems, while research has also suggested it's good for hip osteoarthritis.

RESISTANCE TRAINING Researchers at Versus Arthritis concluded that resistance training is one of the most effective ways to reduce arthritis pain. Using resistance bands, which can be easily done at home, can also help build strength and flexibility. For best results, combine resistance training with stretching exercises.


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Joint health for pets...

Joint pain can significantly affect your pet's mobility and quality of life. It's more likely they'll develop a condition in their later years but, at any age, genetic conditions and old injuries can cause lifelong pain and increase the risk of arthritis.

PREVENTION For puppies and kittens, it's important to avoid over-exercising while their bones and joints are still developing. Carrying excess weight also puts extra strain on joints, so maintaining a healthy body condition is essential.

Look for high-quality pet food that includes ingredients like omega-3 fatty acids, glucosamine and chondroitin, which support joint health and mobility.

RECOGNISING THE SIGNS Your pet might become withdrawn, unusually sensitive when touched or have trouble sleeping.

But the most obvious signs of joint pain are physical. They include difficulty jumping or using stairs, limping after exercise and generally being slow to move.

TREATMENT A visit to the vet is the best first step. Your vet will perform a physical examination to check for stiffness, swelling or pain. In cases of significant discomfort, they may prescribe anti-inflammatory medications.

HELPING THEM ADAPT While rest is important, don't stop exercise altogether. Gentle movement helps prevent joints from becoming too stiff.

Some small changes at home will help: Use a ramp to make it easier to access furniture or vehicle. Put a rug or a mat on slippery floors to prevent falls. Ensure their bed is low, accessible and supportive – memory foam beds are a great option.



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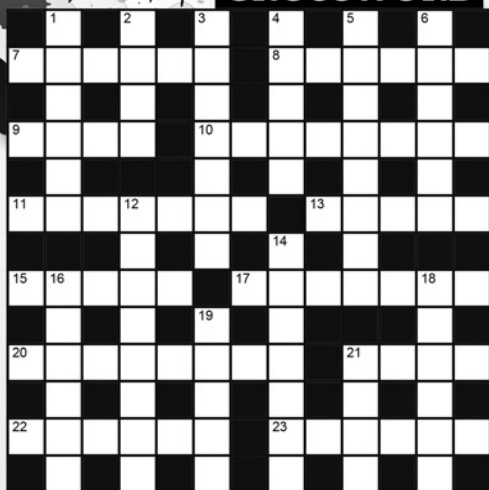
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ACROSS

- 7 Brave (6)
- 8 Keep back (6)
- 9 On top of (4)
- 10 Loudest (8)
- 11 Small rivers (7)
- 13 Looks at (5)
- 15 Perfect (5)
- 17 Laughed (7)
- 20 Confuse (8)
- 21 Consumes (4)
- 22 Light wind (6)
- 23 Inn (6)

DOWN

- 1 Type of cloth (6)
- 2 Not wealthy (4)
- 3 Financial resources (7)
- 4 Own up to (5)
- 5 Hitting (8)

DOWN cont.,

- 6 Puzzle (6)
- 12 Inspected (8)
- 14 Shake (7)
- 16 Gloomy (6)
- 18 Goes into (6)
- 19 Trimmed (5)
- 21 Jealousy (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.

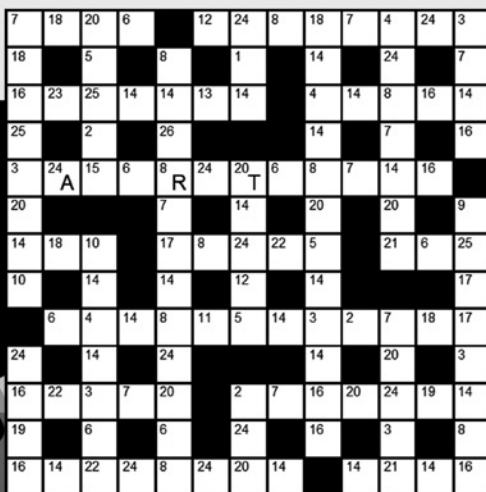
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Twick or tweet.

Why didn't
the skeleton go
to the party?
He didn't have any
"body" to go
with.

What do ghosts
give out to trick or
treaters?
Booberries!

Can you help the Trick-or-treater find the right path to the haunted house?

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MASK
MONSTER
PUMPKIN
SKELETON
SKULL
TREATS
ZOMBIE



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