

april 2026 • issue 175

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## Letter from the Editor

Hello again and welcome...

Isn't it lovely to see the beautiful daffodils in full bloom? A sure sign of better things to come not forgetting of course the April showers! Spring is the time of year when it is summer in the sun and winter in the shade. I am ready for the flip-flops, warmer weather and the sound of the birds singing, whilst sitting on the terrace with a long cold drink in my hand with those I love to share my time with. Spring is nature's way of saying .... Let's Party!

Easter is upon us with all things cute. New lambs, bunnies, baby chicks and for those of you with a sweet tooth its chocolate time. Remember it is when you crack open an Easter egg, that smiles emerge. So go on indulge yourselves, you know you want to.

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

*"When flowers bloom  
So, does hope."*

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

[www.thevillagebreeze.co.uk](http://www.thevillagebreeze.co.uk)

# Pilgrims' progress

The concept of people longing to go on pilgrimages in April is famously introduced in the opening of Geoffrey Chaucer's 14th-century book, *The Canterbury Tales*. He wrote that a group of pilgrims from all walks of life gathered in Southwark to travel to the shrine of St Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral, telling stories as they went. Now, over 600 years later, pilgrimages are once more in vogue.

## TRAVELLING TODAY

Today's pilgrims are heading off on walks in the UK and abroad that offer a chance to reflect, refresh, and challenge themselves physically. Numbers making their way along the ancient Camino to the tomb of St James the Apostle at Santiago de Compostela have rocketed; around 530,000 are thought to have completed it in 2025.

In the UK, around 390,000 people visited the British Pilgrimage Trust website in the first half of last year. Alongside journeys that take in religious monuments and traditional shrines, the Trust advises on non-religious paths and historical landmarks, even pagan sites.

## MEDIEVAL MEANDERINGS

The heyday of the pilgrimage was between the early eleventh and early fifteenth centuries. The aim was to seek repentance or pray for healing. It was also an opportunity to get away from the hard grind of everyday life. The wealthy would go to Jerusalem, Rome or Santiago, but there were plenty of destinations back home accessible to all.

The most popular was the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk, where an 11th-century noblewoman, Lady Richeldis de Faverches, built a replica of the house in Nazareth where the angel Gabriel had greeted the Virgin Mary after seeing it in a vision. Other important places of Christian pilgrimage included Canterbury, Durham and Glastonbury.

While some people embarked on gruelling journeys by foot or horseback, staying in monasteries or hospices, their route marked by wayside crosses and chapels, others undertook a short trip to a local shrine. Pilgrimages became big business, from feeding the hordes to selling souvenirs.



All that came to an end with Henry VIII and the split from the Catholic Church. The great monasteries and shrines that drew pilgrims were destroyed.

## HISTORY REPEATING ITSELF

In today's stressful world, we once again value the concept of travelling mindfully to a destination. The appeal of rambling through glorious countryside and connecting with our religious, natural or cultural heritage has grown. These are wellness walks for the modern age. The most popular Pilgrimage Trust routes of 2025 mix the religious and the mystical. In England it was St James' Way from Reading to Southampton, the start of the Camino de Santiago in Britain; meanwhile, pilgrims in Wales favoured the North Wales Pilgrims' Way, and top spot in Scotland went to Iona to St Andrews. Bereavement pilgrimages, walks with dogs and one-day micro-pilgrimages are being added to the Trust's ever-lengthening list.

A change is as good as a rest, they say. A pilgrimage, short or long and whatever your motivation, certainly offers that.

For more information, visit [www.britishpilgrimage.org](http://www.britishpilgrimage.org).



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# Food, glorious food!

Chefs, gastronomy and lifestyle are hot topics. Here, we serve up a selection of food-inspired reads and other media morsels...



## BOOK - 150 Restaurants You Need to Visit Before You Die by Amélie Vincent

Finding the ultimate dining experience can be challenging and sometimes disappointing, but here the founder of *The Foodalist* dishes up an exclusive bucket list of international restaurants that each have a unique story to tell. It's the perfect read for every gourmet traveller.

## BOOK - Sweetbitter by Stephanie Danler

An international best-seller, this novel follows Tess, 22, as she starts her restaurant journey in New York City, landing a job as a waitress. As her appetites for food, drink, knowledge and experience awaken, she becomes helplessly drawn into a dark, alluring love triangle.



## BOOK - New Larousse Gastronomique (part of a series by Editions Larousse)

Originally created by Prosper Montagné in 1938, this is the world's classic culinary reference book. This edition contains over 900 new colour and black-and-white photographs, all chapters have been read and edited by field specialists, and 85 biographies of chefs have been added.

## BOOK - A Woman's Place is in the Kitchen by Sally Abé

Described by Michelin-starred chef Angela Hartnett as "*an insightful, honest account of a young cook's journey to an inspirational chef*", this is the powerful memoir of Great British Menu star Sally Abé's rise from Midlands girl who cooked herself instant mash to one of the most successful fine-dining chefs of our day.

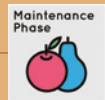


## BOOK - Chefwise: Life Lessons from Leading Chefs by Shari Bayer

To become a great chef or run a top restaurant, you need to learn from those who have been there and done it: the chefs. The author of this unique book has collected wisdom from culinary stars, offering inspiration, advice and life lessons – both in and out of the kitchen.

## PODCAST - Maintenance Phase

Debunking the junk science behind health fads, wellness scams and nonsensical nutrition advice, the show often explores the history of anti-fat bias and how corporate or political interests skew public understanding of health.



## YOUTUBE - James Hoffman

British barista Hoffmann makes videos about anything and everything to do with coffee, occasionally food and sometimes business and entrepreneurship. You really don't have to be mad about the beverage to enjoy his highly entertaining shows.

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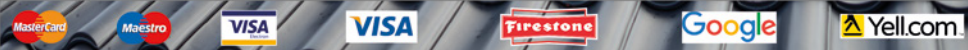
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# Feelgood interiors

**Texture is the new luxury. Introduce materials that invite touch and bring comfort and variety to your home.**

In 2026, interiors are moving towards greater sensory richness, blending the natural, the hand-crafted and the gently worn with the sleek precision of finely finished, contemporary materials. These textural contrasts bring a room to life and help a home feel both welcoming and calm in a fast-paced world.

**Use neutrals and naturals** When you choose natural materials in gorgeous, neutral tones (think driftwood lamp bases, wicker chairs or sheepskin throws), a soft, sophisticated palette will come together easily.



**Choose upholstery for comfort** Simple, woven seating fabrics have a relaxed feel, while velvet, chenille and leather introduce richer tactile qualities. Layering cushions in complementary finishes – perhaps embroidery against plain weave, or velvet edged with satin – adds depth and interest.

**Bring contrasting materials to life** Carefully place floor and table lamps, uplighters or angled spotlights to highlight grain, weave and other delicate surface variations, and to reveal the subtle beauty of materials.

**Introduce accessories** Simply layer in differing materials, such as woven baskets, faceted glassware, pom-pom-trimmed cushions or waffle throws, to add personality, informality and indulgence.



**Create a textural foundation** Floors, walls, upholstery and window treatments form the base layers of a scheme. Create a calm, coherent backdrop – the ‘quiet’ textures of a room – with features such as a polished timber floor, linen curtains and softly upholstered seating. Walls can be covered in a chalky matt paint, wood panelling, ceramic tiles or a subtly textured wallpaper.

**Look down** The large surface area of a floor sets the scene for everything else. Carpet brings instant softness, while natural fibres such as sisal, coir and jute add a subtle irregularity and character. For added comfort, a deep-pile wool rug offers plush warmth.



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# Key Tax changes from April 2026



While many people won't see a big difference in their day-to-day tax position with the changes taking effect in April, there are some areas worth having on the radar:

### Dividend Tax Rises:

Basic rate & higher rates for tax dividends are increasing to 10.75% & 35.75%, respectively. The dividend additional rate remains at 39.35%.

### Tax Thresholds remain Frozen:

The tax-free personal allowance & income tax thresholds all remain frozen until 2030/31, which will continue to pull more people into higher rates of tax.

### Working from home allowance removal:

This has been used to allow employees who were required to work from home to claim a weekly deduction of £6 for costs associated with this, without the need for a receipt.

### Capital Gains Tax (CGT):

Business owners thinking about selling or restructuring should be aware that capital gains that are subject to business asset disposal relief or investor's

relief will be taxed at 18% for 2026/27, an increase from 14% in 2025/26.

### Inheritance Tax – Agricultural and Business Property relief Changes:

These were previously unlimited, but from April 100% relief will be capped at £2.5 million of combined agricultural and business assets. Thereafter, the relief reduces to 50%. Unused amounts can be passed to a spouse or civil partner.

### Making Tax Digital (MTD) for Income Tax:

April 2026 is the start date for

Making Tax Digital (MTD) for Income Tax for self-employed individuals & landlords with a qualifying gross income (not profit) over £50,000 (reducing to £30,000 from April 2027). MTD requires affected taxpayers to keep digital records & submit quarterly summaries to HMRC via compatible software, replacing the single annual return.

If any of the changes affect you and you have questions, it's always worth speaking to a professional such as an accountant or potentially a Financial Adviser depending on your query.



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SPRING INTO ACTION TODAY

# More power to your pedals

**Thinking about getting an e-bike? Here's what you need to know.**

Electric bikes have grown rapidly in popularity over the last couple of years. The technology has improved and prices have come down. Whether used for commuting, recreation or running errands, e-bikes are an enjoyable and practical way of getting about.

## **Boosting motivation**

With an e-bike, you'll probably ride far more often than you ever would on a regular bike. It's good fun and quiets that inner voice that says, "not today", even when your energy or enthusiasm is low. Instead of pedalling on a monotonous stationary bike at the gym while staring at a wall or a TV, you're outside, moving – and actually enjoying yourself.

## **Suitable for all**

Electric assistance allows riders of varying fitness levels and ages to cycle comfortably. Hills, headwinds and longer distances become far more manageable, encouraging even biking avoidants to give it a try. This can be especially valuable for older adults, people recovering from injuries or beginners. Riders still pedal, so e-bikes provide exercise, but with adjustable power that reduces strain and fatigue.

Even if you're a seasoned cyclist, don't dismiss the idea. You can keep the power in "eco" mode, which maintains

it at a low level and just helps you up the hills. You can still benefit from a really good workout, but you can travel further and go faster.

## **How will you use it?**

If you're considering getting an e-bike, there are several important factors to bear in mind. First, think about how you plan to use it. If you're going to ride it to work, you need to prioritise range, reliability and comfort. But for recreation, weight and handling will be more important. You could get a cargo e-bike for carrying shopping or children, or even a folding model if storage space is limited.

The battery range also needs careful consideration. Most models can travel around 20 to 70 miles on a single charge, depending on battery size, terrain, rider weight and level of assistance. You might think bigger is better when it comes to the battery, but this will add weight and cost. It is also worth checking how long it takes to recharge the battery and whether you have somewhere to store the bike while it's topping up.

## **Avoid a costly error**

Comfort, fit and safety should not be overlooked. You need to choose the right frame size, good brakes, sharp lighting and durable tyres, all of which will make your riding experience safer and more pleasurable.

Although prices are now much lower than a few years ago, all the different options mean you could easily waste your money if you choose the wrong model. A bike shop will be able to advise on all these factors and let you try different models to ensure you find one that meets your needs.



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# Cloud Cuckoo Land

Hindsight is a wonderful thing! I was fast asleep – cocooned in my cosy hotel bed. The telephone call, just after midnight, changed all that!

For the past two days, I've been attending a mind-numbing conference: "ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR ACCOUNTANTS - DO THE NUMBERS ADD UP?" This annual convention of "number crunchers" like me, is taking place, this year, in Manchester – a two-hour drive from my hometown of Floriapol in Derbyshire.

I recognise the anxious voice on the other end of the line, instantly.

*'Leo,' she gasps. 'My waters have broken!'*

*'Oh my God!' I am fully awake now.*

My wife, Isla, is eight and a half months pregnant – expecting our first child. What was I thinking of, leaving her all alone at home? I offer some "husbandly" advice – urging her to *"calm down and take a few deep breaths".*

*'Hang on – I'm on my way. Be with you as soon as I can ...'*

I dress in a panic. Toss my clothes into the suitcase. Dash down the stairs. Into the hotel carpark. Start the car engine, and like a gangster in a crime movie, spin the rear wheels and disappear in a cloud of dust down the road. Homeward bound.

In the inky darkness, the hundred-mile, cross-country journey is hell! Narrow, twisty lanes, blind bends, patchy mobile signal. The quicker I get home the better ...

*'What the heck!'*

An ominous, black figure suddenly looms ahead – caught in the glare of my headlights. Standing in the middle of the road. Horrified, I swerve, brake hard and skid to an abrupt halt.

Too late. I hit the apparition a glancing blow and it tumbles silently into the ditch. However, after a thorough search, I find no body.

Is it my imagination? Understandable, in the circumstances. I'm struggling to stay awake. Shaking with fear, I climb back into the car and cautiously continue my journey.

I switch on the radio to try and

steady my nerves: *"Baby Love"* by The Supremes. My grandpa's favourite song. It does nothing to settle me – only reminds me of the urgency of my mission.

A few minutes later, I see a shimmering bright light in the sky – hovering above me like some kind of alien spaceship. Getting closer. I shield my eyes as the intensity of the glow increases.

To make matters worse, the car engine begins to splutter and, in a few metres, the vehicle rolls to a stop. Out of petrol! I close my eyes and wait – filled with terror. There is no escape ...

But before anything happens, my eyes spring open. I'm struggling to catch my breath. Rays of dazzling sunshine stream in through a narrow gap in the curtains. And onto my bed.

The hotel phone buzzes.

*'Hello,' I grunt, reaching clumsily for the receiver.*

*'Good morning, Mr. Thompson. It's seven o'clock. Your early morning call, sir.'*

My first thoughts are of my pregnant wife. Now fully awake, I grab my mobile and ring home.

Isla answers immediately: *'Good morning, darling!'* she says, sounding remarkably calm and chirpy.

*'Any news?'* I ask.

*'About what?'*

*'Our baby. Am I a daddy yet?'*

She laughs. *'No, 'fraid not! Still waiting.'*

*'But I thought ...'*

*'You know our bundle of joy isn't due for another two weeks, silly.'*

*'But, you phoned me ...'*

Isla is clearly enjoying this. *'Have you had another of your nightmares, Leo? Or, has someone been playing tricks on you? Believe me, it's nothing to do me with me!'*

*'Even though it is April Fool's Day!'*

## FOOTNOTE:

*Sorry, but there is no village in Derbyshire called FLORIAPOL – or anywhere else. The name is an anagram of "April Fool".*





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# BYD ATTO 2



**BYD's smallest SUV has gained a plug-in hybrid variant. Cameron Richards has been driving it to see what it's like.**

## WHAT IS IT?

Chinese electric vehicle firm BYD is now offering hybrids and plug-in hybrids. The Atto 2 is its smallest SUV and the new, more affordable plug-in hybrid variant (PHEV), the Atto 2 DM-i, comes equipped with an efficient 1.5-litre petrol engine mated to an electric motor and 18kWh battery pack.

## WHAT'S NEW?

This second powertrain option offers ultra-low running costs and electric car-like credentials. All models come with loads of standard equipment, while a few tweaks make it more engaging to drive.

## WHAT'S UNDER THE BONNET?

The Atto 2 DM-i produces a total of 209bhp and 300Nm of torque, and can hit 60mph in 7.3 seconds. BYD claims this variant does 56 miles on electric power alone. It uses the firm's 'Battery Blade' technology.

## WHAT'S IT LIKE TO DRIVE?

The Atto 2 in electric guise felt unpolished in some areas. The

steering is still numb. Around town, the petrol engine is refined and quiet, but it begins to scream under hard acceleration. The ride is smoother, while all the controls are nice and light. However, it tends to lean in the corners.



## HOW DOES IT LOOK?

With its curved front end, this PHEV model looks identical to the electric car apart from some subtle tweaks, such as different alloy wheel designs and a lower radiator grille.

## WHAT'S IT LIKE INSIDE?

The Atto 2's dashboard and door panels feel plush to the touch. Abundant storage includes a large cut-out under the centre console, a deep compartment beneath the centre armrest and wide door bins. Our test car even comes with a 50-watt wireless smartphone

charger. There's lots of rear head- and legroom too. However, the lack of physical buttons makes it difficult to operate functions on the move.

The Atto 2 DM-i offers 425 litres of boot space, 1,335 litres with the rear seats down.

## WHAT'S THE SPEC LIKE?

There are just two trim levels. Prices are yet to be confirmed, but it's anticipated they will kick off at £25,000, rising to £28,000 for the top-of-the-line model.

The entry-level Active comes with metallic paint, 16-inch alloy wheels, LED headlights, rear parking sensors, adaptive cruise control and a 12.8-inch infotainment screen. We're driving the flagship Boost, which boasts 17-inch alloy wheels, a 360-degree camera, electrically adjustable heated front seats, a panoramic sunroof and rear privacy glass.

## VERDICT

Adding a plug-in hybrid powertrain to the Atto 2 range is a smart move, as it really does make this SUV better. If prices are accurate, the Atto 2 DM-i will represent extraordinary value for money when it arrives in Britain.



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# Oh my, go Thai!

**With world-class cuisine, postcard-worthy beaches, glistening temples, jaw-dropping landscapes and welcoming locals, Thailand has it all. To help you narrow down your travel choices, here's a round-up of the best experiences the country has to offer.**



## Embrace island life

Fringed by white-sand beaches, swaying palms and turquoise shores, Thailand's islands are the stuff of dreams.

Phuket is the largest and most visited, making it a convenient gateway to other islands in the archipelago – including Ko Khao Phing Kan ('James Bond Island'). Fans of the movie 'The Beach' might also want to stay on the Phi Phi Islands to soak up the scenery from nearby Maya Bay, reopened in 2022 after a period of ecological recovery.

Thailand's islands aren't just for sun-worshippers. Coral reefs teem with marine life, making islands like Koh Tao and Koh Lipe prime spots for diving and snorkelling.

## Take a tour of the temples

Buddhism is deeply woven into Thailand's culture and traditions, and nowhere is this more evident than in its temples. There are over 40,000, but Bangkok houses some of the most famous. These include the majestic Grand Palace and Wat Pho, where you can find the gold-plated Reclining Buddha.

Then there's Chiang Rai's dazzling contemporary Wat Rong Khun – otherwise known as the White Temple.

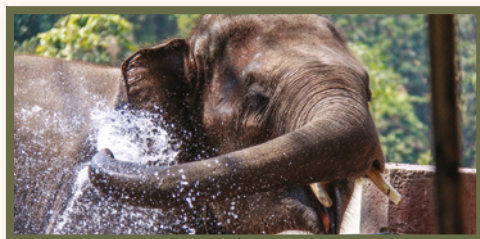
## Discover Thailand's wildlife

From elephant experiences and jungle safaris to birdwatching, Thailand offers plenty of opportunities to get close to its wildlife. While it used to have a poor reputation for elephant encounters, the country now offers ethical sanctuaries that focus on rescue, rehabilitation and conservation. Stay in Chiang Mai or Chiang Rai to watch elephants roam freely, while learning about their care and helping with feeding.

## Get out in nature

Thailand's northern regions are ripe for adventure, carpeted with lush, forested mountains and enjoying a cooler climate than the south. Blessed with stunning mountainous scenery, hot springs and waterfalls, the small town of Pai in Thailand's Mae Hong Son Province is perfect if you're looking for a slower pace of life.

If you're staying further south, take a trip to Pran Buri Forest Park, south of the resort town of Hua Hin. Families will love its kilometre-long boardwalk, which takes you through mangrove forests and pine trees.



## Go market mad

Thailand's colourful and chaotic markets sit at the heart of everyday life. If you're in Bangkok, don't miss the Chatuchak Weekend Market. Packed with more than 15,000 stalls, it's one of the largest in the world, offering everything from vintage clothing and handicrafts to exotic plants and antiques. When hunger strikes, head to Yaowarat Road in Bangkok's Chinatown, where the air is thick with the aroma of sizzling woks and charcoal grills.

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# Talking tax

The new financial year starts on 6 April, bringing a host of changes to rules covering the money we earn and spend. Here's what you need to know.

## Dividends and savings

There's a shake-up for many forms of income, such as dividends and savings interest. The rate you pay, and any tax-free allowance, depends on which income tax bracket you're in.

For basic-rate taxpayers, the new rates are 10.75% on dividends (up from 8.75%) and 22% for savings (up from 20%). For the higher rate, it's 35.75% for dividends (up from 33.75%) and 42% for savings (up from 40%). For the additional rate bracket, the dividend rate is unchanged at 39.35%, with the savings rate rising from 45% to 47%.

## Property income

Income from property will now come under a separate category rather than being treated as ordinary income. This new category covers any income from land and buildings, including parking spaces and caravan rentals. The rates will initially match those for savings income. The governments of Wales and Scotland will have the power to set their own rates for property income.

Landlords may need to watch out for the Making Tax Digital rules. These will apply to anyone with revenues of more than £50,000 per year from self-employment and/or property income, such as rent. Those who qualify will need to report their revenue quarterly rather than annually and must use approved third-party software to prepare and file tax returns and accounts. The threshold will drop to £30,000 in 2027 and £20,000 in 2028.

## Working from home

There's one big change to income tax for workers, affecting employees who are required to work from home. At the moment, if employers choose to cover costs such as heating or internet subscriptions, the payment is tax-free. If employers don't pay, the worker can get tax relief (meaning their taxable income is reduced) either by giving receipts to HMRC to show the actual costs or by claiming a fixed rate of £6 per week.

From April 2026, there's no tax relief available. The only way to get the money back is by the employer choosing to reimburse the worker; this will remain tax-free.

## Travelling

Two separate changes are on the way for fuel duty. In principle, the duty automatically rises by the rate of inflation every year, but this rise has been frozen since 2011. Separately, the level was "temporarily" cut by 5p in 2022.

The current plan is to reverse the 5p cut from September 2026, then go back to an annual inflation-based increase from April 2027. To soften the blow, the Government will start forcing all petrol stations to report prices to a central "Fuel Finder" database that makes it easier to shop around.

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# Beautiful boundaries

Anticipation is sprouting in the garden. The scene from the window changes every day as plants burst into bud. Blossom is already billowing and bulbs are bringing colour back into our lives. You will see daffodils, hyacinths, fritillaries, lily of the valley, Camassia and even bluebells later in the month.

However, garden boundaries are often ignored. Although basic fences might provide security and privacy, they're rarely pretty and can create the effect of a cage. This is particularly noticeable if the garden is fairly small or bare of plants. But boundaries can become integral to the attractiveness and style of the outdoor space.



If your property already has a perfectly good fence, the trick is to disguise it, unless it's a design feature in itself. Shrubs and climbers are the key. Your garden will feel bigger as it's not so obvious where it ends. Just one fence panel can have the potential to offer up to four square metres of green space, so count up your own panels and you will see the exciting possibilities.

## TOP CLIMBERS FOR FENCES

**Clematis** is hard to beat when it comes to flowering potential. The evergreen

*Clematis armandii* 'Apple Blossom' is beautiful in early spring, as is *Clematis* 'Frankie', a cultivar with blue flowers which blooms in April and May. Many of the *C. montana* (Himalayan) varieties flower in May and June. *Clematis viticella*, including 'Polish Spirit' and 'Etoile Violette', wait until mid to late summer to reveal their beauty. There are winter-flowering *Clematis* too, including those from the *C. cirrhosa* group such as 'Wisley Cream', 'Freckles', and 'Jingle Bells'.

Take care to give these plants what they need. Many *Clematis* like full or partial sun.

**Honeysuckle** There are many climbing *Lonicera* varieties from which to choose. It's important to consider the vigour of the plant, as some

honeysuckles grow to heights of around 12 metres, which will probably be too much for your fence. The flowers also have a delectable aroma, particularly varieties such as *Lonicera* 'Heaven Scent' and *L.* 'Sweet Sue'.



**Ivy** is an evergreen climber that provides huge benefits for wildlife. Some varieties have variegated leaves, bringing colour and interest to a vertical surface all year round.

**Passion flower** is a great choice for a sunny, sheltered fence. One of the most reliable is *Passiflora caerulea*, with large white flowers and contrasting central filaments. It can quickly cover fences and should flower from July to September.



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# When the sneezing isn't easing



**What do you do if hay fever makes your life a constant misery?**

## **What is hay fever?**

Hay fever, or seasonal allergic rhinitis, to give this inflammation of the nasal lining its medical name, is caused by an allergy to pollen. Symptoms include itchy, runny or blocked nose, sneezing, coughing, irritated, red and watery eyes, headache and tiredness.

Common triggers are tree, grass, and weed pollen, which, together, give a hay-fever season potentially lasting from March until September, although symptoms tend to be milder from July onwards.

## **How is it managed?**

Over-the-counter treatments help many sufferers. Antihistamines, which block the allergic response, are best for mild symptoms. You can get them as tablets, capsules, liquids, nasal sprays, and eye drops – which you take depends on preference and the area affected. Nasal sprays tend to work faster. Second-generation antihistamines, such as fexofenadine, cetirizine, acrivastine and loratadine, are usually preferable to first-generation antihistamines, because they don't make you drowsy, though both work well.

You can also get corticosteroid nasal sprays from your pharmacist. These reduce inflammation and are better for more severe symptoms. Allergy experts usually recommend fluticasone. Simple saline nasal sprays help remove pollen from your nasal lining, while applying a nasal allergen barrier balm around your nostrils can help catch pollen before it enters your nose.

## **What if these don't work?**

Unfortunately, not everyone finds these methods relieve their symptoms. However, following a few dos and don'ts might make all the difference.

## **Don't:**

- Take two antihistamines together, as you may have side effects, such as headache, dizziness and nausea.
- Exceed the recommended dose.
- Use nasal decongestants for hay fever. They can make symptoms worse and don't treat the inflammation.

## **Do:**

- Take hay fever treatments regularly, and not just when you're worst affected.
- Use nasal sprays correctly. Find out how at [www.bsaci.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/How-to-use-a-Nasal-spray-PIL.pdf](http://www.bsaci.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/How-to-use-a-Nasal-spray-PIL.pdf).
- Start using them two to three weeks before the hay fever season is likely to begin.
- Drink plenty of water. This will keep mucus membranes moist, reduce irritation in your nose, throat and eyes, and relieve congestion.
- See your GP if you have ongoing severe symptoms.

## **How can your GP help?**

Your GP can prescribe stronger or potentially more effective drugs than you can buy over the counter, including nasal sprays that combine an antihistamine and a corticosteroid.

Seeing a doctor will also give you access to allergy testing if your hay fever seems to be triggered by something other than pollen, such as animal dander or dust mites. Testing is performed by a skin prick test or a blood test.

If you continue to suffer badly, you might be a candidate for immunotherapy. This involves receiving regular doses of the allergen extract over a period of time, ideally three years, to improve your tolerance.

For more information, go to [www.allergyuk.org](http://www.allergyuk.org).

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For more details visit [ashbyu3a.co.uk](http://ashbyu3a.co.uk)

## TWO MINUTE TRIAL

# A D M E T P

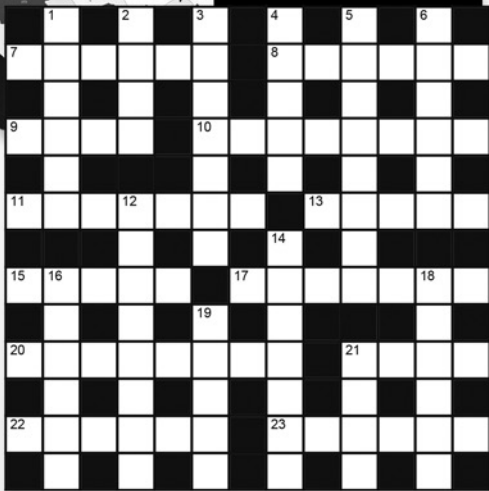
You have two minutes to find all the everyday words of three or more letters that can be made from the letters above. Plurals are allowed, proper nouns are not.

3 letters: 18 4 letters: 15 5 letters: 5 6 letters: 1

# Coffee BREAK



## CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

- 7 Buff up (6)
- 8 Equality (6)
- 9 Throw (4)
- 10 Used by trains (8)
- 11 Tangled (7)
- 13 Dizzy (5)
- 15 Frighten (5)
- 17 Laughed (7)
- 20 Fuel (8)
- 21 Applaud (4)
- 22 Light wind (6)
- 23 Hug (6)

### DOWN

- 1 Pillar (6)
- 2 Cash register (4)
- 3 Agitated (7)
- 4 Ruin (5)
- 5 Fighting (8)

### DOWN cont.,

- 6 Remained (6)
- 12 Revenue (8)
- 14 Without sound (7)
- 16 Seats (6)
- 18 Authorise (6)
- 19 Repaired (5)
- 21 Surrender (4)

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

## CODEWORD

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

## SUDOKU

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



CROSSWORD...

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

SUDOKU...



CODEWORD...

## ANSWERS...

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

# CHILDREN'S PUZZLE PAGE

## DOG BREED PUZZLE

Can you unscramble the letters to reveal eight popular dog breeds in the UK?

- 1 edloop
- 2 uahhahicu
- 3 rokshyhire rertier
- 4 robladra
- 5 dchuhasdn
- 6 rodbre ellioe
- 7 reokcc napslei
- 8 hcrfen godulbl



How do snakes sign their letters?  
With hugs and hisses.

What is a rabbit's favourite type of music?  
Hip-hop!

Which animal makes the best pet?  
A cat... because it's purr-fect.

## PET WORDSEARCH

- |            |            |
|------------|------------|
| ALPACA     | GUINEA PIG |
| ANTS       | HAMSTER    |
| BUDGIE     | HORSE      |
| CANARY     | IGUANA     |
| CAT        | LIZARD     |
| CHAMELEON  | MOUSE      |
| CHINCHILLA | PARROT     |
| DOG        | PONY       |
| FERRET     | RABBIT     |
| FROG       | SNAKE      |
| GECKO      | TARANTULA  |
| GERBIL     | TORTOISE   |
| GOLDFISH   | TURTLE     |



# Still stealing scenes

From schoolboy productions to the West End, from the big screen to the small, Nigel Havers has plenty of stories to tell about his five decades in showbiz.

Actor Nigel Havers hails from a legal family. He's the son of late Lord Chancellor Michael Havers and last spring he starred in ITV's historical drama, *"A Cruel Love: The Ruth Ellis Story"*, as his grandfather, High Court judge Sir Cecil Havers, who sentenced to death the last woman to be hanged in the UK.

Nigel, now 74, recalled filming the series as an emotional experience. *"I felt very sorry for my grandfather because he was extremely upset. He wrote a letter to the Home Secretary at the time and said this woman must not be hanged, and the Home Secretary ignored it."*

He explored his roots on the BBC's *"Who Do You Think You Are?"*, where he also reflected on his somewhat emotionally distant upbringing. He went to boarding school in Suffolk at the age of six. While there, he discovered his passion for acting, going on to *The Arts Educational Schools* in London.

## ROLE CALL

While Nigel has appeared in panto and TV soaps such as *"Coronation Street"* and *"Benidorm"*, he is well known for period dramas, including ITV's *"Downton Abbey"*, and films like *"Chariots of Fire"* and *"A Passage to India"*. He has had a successful stage career too, appearing in productions such as *"The Importance of Being Earnest"* and *"Private Lives"*.

He has also hosted BBC daytime antiques show *"The Bidding Room"* since it first aired in 2020. Series 7 is available on BBC One and BBC iPlayer, while series 8 is confirmed for 2026.

## FINDING LOVE AGAIN

Nigel lives a quiet life with his third wife Georgiana Bronfman and their dog Charlie, with homes in Chelsea and Wiltshire. He had a daughter with his first wife Carolyn and was married to his second, actor Polly Williams, for 15 years before her death in 2004.

Speaking about his marriage to Georgiana on the *"White Wine Question Time"* podcast, he said, *"We are very good at being together and on our own. We don't need to go to see anybody else really."*

## SELL-OUT SHOW

Another passion is horse racing. *"I don't gamble unless I actually go to the races, so I'll just do an imaginary bet – and I'll normally win,"* he revealed ahead of his first-ever live show last March, *"Talking B\*ll\*cks!"*

Such was the tour's success that Nigel is back with it this spring until 5 April and in the autumn. He says, *"Of course, there'll be behind-the-scenes gossip, tales of triumph (and disaster), moments of sheer madness, and a fair bit of talking b\*ll\*cks!"*



PHOTOGRAPH © BBC/Mitch Collins/Ricochet. For venues and to book tickets for Nigel Havers Talking B\*ll\*cks, visit [nigelhavers.live](http://nigelhavers.live).



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