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## Letter from the Editor

Hello again and welcome...

When I published the first edition of *The Village Breeze* back in 2011, the internet was in its infancy and businesses would promote themselves in the *Yellow Pages*, *Thompson Local*, or newspapers.

I was entering a crowded market then. However, I could change a business's advertising each month and the distribution was very local (*Yellow Pages* and *Thompson* were annual and covered a wide area). Furthermore, unlike a newspaper, people kept hold of their little magazine until the next month, so I was able to offer something different.

All the same, the doomsayers were ready to knock me down and, as the internet's presence grew, so did the doubters. And yet... it's 2026, and you are currently reading a publication that defies the odds.

So print is far from dead; indeed, you might be surprised to know that printed books still outsell e-books for example. But why?

Well, the feel of a book or a magazine and the act of turning the page is a sensory experience, free from popups and notifications. Furthermore, many people still perceive print media as more a trustworthy and credible source of information and advertising compared to online content.

Of course, you might think, "*Well, you would say that - this magazine is what you do*". But you only have to see the local traders and service providers in each edition and the news sent in by local community groups to realise they must get a response, or they would not keep doing it.

In summary, thanks for reading and see you next month!

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

*"Never wrong a writer  
They get their revenge in print."*

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.

### Deadline for next issue

15th May, 2026

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### Read the magazine online at

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



# Ready to ramble

**What better way is there of exploring the great outdoors, connecting with nature and clearing your mind than going on a leisurely walk?**

## TRAVELLING TODAY

Slower and less intense than hiking, rambling is more about the journey than the speed. It is not about steps counted, calories burned or records broken. A ramble begins when you leave behind the idea that walking must achieve something and instead allow it to just “be” something.

Unlike a hike, a ramble welcomes distraction. You might stop to watch sheep negotiate a gate with unexpected intelligence or linger beside a stream when the water’s doing something interesting with the light. The route can change on a whim: “That path looks promising” is reason enough. Getting a little lost is not a failure but part of the pleasure.

Historically, rambling has always been more than a pastime. In Britain, especially, it carries a quiet defiance. The right to roam was not freely given; it was demanded by people who believed the countryside should not be reserved for the privileged few. To ramble, then, is to participate – gently, almost unknowingly – in a tradition that values access, freedom, and shared land. Every footpath walked is a reminder that the landscape is not just something to admire from a distance but something to move through and belong to.

## SOCIABLE STROLL

Walking in the open air can be an extremely sociable activity and can improve our sense of community too. Group walks can also be an effective way to improve our fitness while strengthening bonds with family and friends.

You can set up a social walk yourself by planning to meet with friends and finding a route that suits you all. Alternatively, you can join one of the many walking groups in the UK. They cater for people who lack the knowledge and confidence to plan walks that tick all the boxes.

There are more than 500 Ramblers groups across Britain – and there’s probably one (or more) near you – hosting 50,000 Ramblers group walks every year, all guided by a walk leader. To find out more, visit [www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)

## HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Walking is free, easy to do and has a host of benefits – and many of these are just as important for our mental health as for our physical health. It can boost your mood, alleviate stress, clear your mind and help you feel more relaxed.

A good ramble ends not with triumph but with contentment: tired legs, a clearer head, and the subtle sense that something has been put back into balance. You return home muddier, maybe, but lighter too. And often, before the boots are even dry, you find yourself wondering where the next path might lead.



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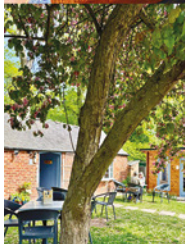


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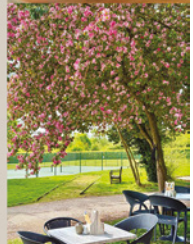
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# How to pick your first pet

**An animal can enrich a child's life enormously, but it's important to select the right one for your family.**

## WHY HAVE A PET?

Make the right choice and your child's first pet can become a best friend, bringing joy and sometimes even comfort to a young one. Some children confide in their pet, knowing they won't be judged.

A companion animal also offers an important lesson in taking responsibility and learning how to care for a living creature. Keeping a pet can help develop empathy. And, although it's not pleasant to think about when you're embarking on your first-pet journey, it also teaches about loss.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU CONSIDER?

First, you need to be sure your child really does want a pet. Sometimes they can get carried away with the idea, but be less enthusiastic about looking after it. If that happens, you will have to be prepared to step in. So an important factor in the kind of animal you acquire is how much time you have available for pet-care duties.

Find out what your child is looking for. *Is it entertainment? Something to cuddle? A reassuring presence? A creature to care for?* Knowing this will help inform your choice.

Consider life span. You don't want a young child to be heartbroken too soon. Hamsters live about two years, for example, while a small dog could survive for up to 15. Does anyone in your family have allergies? This might make you reconsider something furry. Think about how much space you have available – rabbits and guinea pigs need large enclosures, for instance.

Another important consideration is cost, both to buy and to maintain a pet.

## WHAT MAKES AN IDEAL FIRST PET?

Experts' recommendations include:

**Fish:** They're inexpensive and can be relaxing to watch. But do your research on tanks and maintenance, and be aware that goldfish can have health issues.

**Hamsters:** These creatures are cute, take up little space and are cheap. On the downside, they are short-lived and are also nocturnal, so your child might not find them very active during the day.

**Guinea pigs:** Guinea pigs are furry and enjoy being handled, though need space to exercise and should be kept with at least one other guinea pig.

**Rabbits:** Bunnies should also be kept with another rabbit and can be shy with humans. They need space too. The good news is they're relatively long-lived – up to 12 years – and can be house trained.

**Gerbils:** These are friendly, active animals, suitable for a child who will enjoy watching their antics, though their wriggleness can make them tricky for a young child to handle. They need to be kept with another gerbil.

**Cats:** Cats are independent, often affectionate, and low maintenance. But some people are allergic.

**Dogs:** Canine companions are loyal and can teach children about responsibility. However, they are costly and need regular walks.



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**DIGNITY**

# Moira Canal Festival

**Moira Canal Festival returns on Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 May 2026 at Moira Furnace Museum and Country Park, promising a fantastic family weekend full of entertainment, heritage and community spirit.**

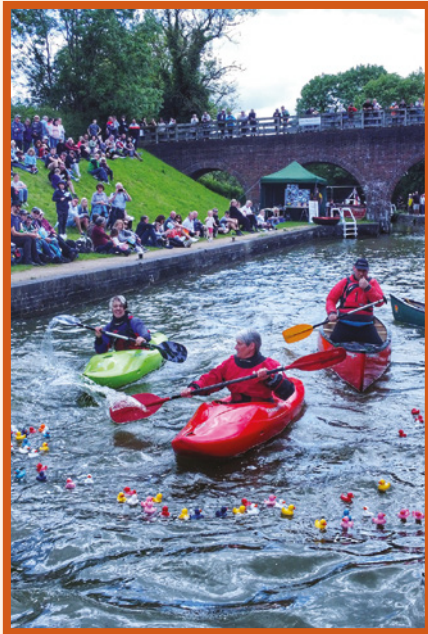
Set against the historic backdrop of the furnace and canal, the festival is one of the area's best-loved annual events and helps raise funds to support the restoration, extension and ongoing maintenance of the Ashby Canal.

Visitors can look forward to a wide range of attractions across the weekend, including live entertainment, Morris dancers, classic cars, boats, craft and trade stalls, children's activities, great food and drink, and the ever-popular duck race. There will also be plenty of interest for those who enjoy local history and traditional canal heritage, making it a brilliant day out for all ages.



The festival has built a strong reputation for its friendly atmosphere and variety, with something to enjoy whether you come for the live entertainment, to browse the stalls, keep the children busy, or simply soak up the setting.

A Battle of Britain Memorial Flight flypast is also planned, subject to operational conditions, with further details to be confirmed.



Tickets are available on the gate. Admission is £7 for adults, £3 for children, and under 5s go free.

For more information, visit [www.moiracanalfestival.com](http://www.moiracanalfestival.com) or find **Moira Canal Festival** on Facebook.



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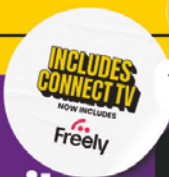
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# Where do you get Independent Mortgage advice from these days?

With the closure of many banks off the high street, many people will spend hours searching the internet to find independent mortgage advice, not sure if they are actually speaking to a real person or an AI generated one or a call centre in outer space!

One of the biggest problems is the rise of the scammers that target vulnerable people. In many cases they are successful, leading to consumers being very guarded when discussing money matters.

Until recently, you could pop down to your local bank and feel confident and assured that you were receiving honest face-to-face advice that would benefit you and your family. Unfortunately, those resources have become very limited.

Bespoke financial solutions are becoming a thing of the past; you now just need to tick a couple of boxes and receive the relevant advice that the internet can provide you with. This may not be the most suitable advice for your personal situation or to suit your long term planning.

## So, where do you go?

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SPRING INTO ACTION TODAY

# Seasonal veggie pizza

Make one large pizza, bursting with flavour and crunch, or four smaller ones – just divide the dough accordingly. A large one may take longer to cook.

## Detail...

Serves 4

Preparation time 20-25 minutes plus proving time 30 minutes

Cooking time 12-15 minutes

## You will need...

- 500g strong white flour, plus extra for dusting
- 1 tsp easy-blend yeast
- 1/2 tsp caster sugar

## For the toppings...

- 300g Jersey Royals, sliced thinly
- 75g asparagus spears, woody ends trimmed
- 250g ricotta cheese
- 75g mangetout
- 75g peas, defrosted if frozen
- 100g grated mozzarella
- 15g Parmesan cheese, freshly grated
- Olive oil, for drizzling
- 50g fresh pea shoots

## Method...

1. In a large bowl, combine the flour, yeast and sugar with 1/2 teaspoon salt and 400ml tepid water. Mix into a dough, tip it out onto a work surface and knead for 5 minutes until smooth and elastic. Return to the bowl, cover loosely with a tea towel and leave to rise in a warm place for 30 mins or until doubled in size.
2. Bring a pan of water to the boil, add the potato slices and simmer for 5-6 minutes until just soft. Add the asparagus for 1 minute, then drain and refresh in cold water. Beat the ricotta smooth.
3. Preheat the oven to 220°C, fan 200°C, gas mark 7 and dust a couple of baking trays with a little flour.
4. Divide the dough into 4 portions (if making separate pizzas) and roll out or hand-stretch as thinly as you can. Spread with the beaten ricotta, then top with the potato, asparagus, mangetout and peas. Scatter over the mozzarella and Parmesan and bake in the preheated oven for 12-15 minutes until golden and the base is crisp. Serve hot, drizzled with olive oil and with the pea shoots scattered over.

For more information and recipe inspiration, visit [www.jerseyroyals.co.uk](http://www.jerseyroyals.co.uk)



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# Knowing the score

**When you want to borrow, it's good to understand what counts in your favour – and what might go against you.**

Credit reports and credit scores play an important role in borrowing money, but they are often misunderstood. A credit report is a set of facts about you, usually combining publicly available details and your financial history. A credit score is simply a number produced by running those facts through an algorithm.

Potential lenders often use credit reports and scores in three ways: to decide whether to offer a loan or credit facility at all, how much money to lend you, and what interest rate to charge. It's entirely up to the lender how to use a credit score and they will usually look at your full credit history rather than just rely on the number.

## NUMBERS GAME

Most lenders use credit scores produced by one of three main credit reference agencies. Each has its own algorithm and score range, so the scores are not directly comparable. Experian scores go from 0 to 1250 (with 861 or above classed as "good"), Equifax from 0-1000 (531 for "good") and Transunion from 0-710 (604 for "good"). Credit reference agencies don't reveal exactly how their algorithms weight different factors but they use broadly similar principles. For example, the biggest negative impacts usually come from court rulings and other formal financial events, such as bankruptcy, a county court judgement, an individual voluntary arrangement or a home being repossessed.

A lot depends on your pattern of making or missing scheduled repayments on existing credit and loans. Your score will also take a meaningful hit if you withdraw cash on a credit card or take out a payday loan. That's because lenders suspect this is a sign you can't cover your regular spending, increasing the chance you'll miss repayments. The average age of your financial accounts contributes to the score, as does the percentage of the total available credit you're using.

## WHAT COUNTS?

Other lesser factors are how long you've been on the electoral roll at your current address and how many "hard searches" lenders have made on your credit history. A hard search only happens when you've actually applied for a loan or credit. "Soft searches" happen when you are simply asking for a quote,



comparing prices or checking your own report. They don't affect your score.

Perhaps surprisingly, being turned down for a credit application doesn't appear on your credit history or directly affect your score. Instead, it can have a knock-on effect if you immediately apply elsewhere, as this bumps up the frequency of your hard searches.

Your score isn't affected by anyone else just because they live or used to live at your address, or are related to you. Other people only affect you if you have a financial relationship through a joint account or mortgage. If you no longer have this financial relationship, you can ask to be "dissociated" from them on your credit report.

You have the right to access your report with each credit reference agency without a fee. If you spot an error, you can ask for a correction and the agency must add a note to the report acknowledging your request. It then has 28 days to decide whether to make the correction. If it refuses, you have the right to add your own note.

## BOOST YOUR SCORE

Improving your credit score is mainly about establishing a long-term pattern of reliable repayments, but there are some quick fixes. Specialist schemes offer free and paid options to have records of your rent payments made available to credit report companies, which will then count as evidence in your favour if you don't miss payments. Meanwhile, Experian offers a free "boost" service where they will track payments such as Council Tax, digital subscriptions and regular savings deposits, which aren't normally included in credit score calculations.

If your score is low because you've never borrowed before, it can be worth applying for a credit card with a low credit limit. Using it and paying the balance in full every month via direct debit can build up a record of regular payments and raise your score. Be wary of supposed specialist cards promoted under names such as "credit builder", as these often carry high interest rates and fees.

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# Electric avenue

With plug-in hybrids going further on electric power than ever before, which ones have the longest ranges?

Plug-in hybrids – or PHEVs – have been rising in popularity. They offer the ability to run on electric-only power for a portion of the time while having a combustion engine to fall back on when you need to go further afield. We're seeing more complex models that can travel on electric-only power for longer and longer. Which ones rank highest?

## Chery Omoda 9: 93 miles

This Chinese newcomer offers the best possible electric-only range of up to 93 miles. It means you can take it on bigger trips without needing to call the 1.5-litre petrol engine into use too often. The huge 34.46kWh battery helps this large, comfortable SUV deliver good levels of efficiency overall.



## Chery Tiggo 9: 91 miles

Like the Omoda 9, the Tiggo 9 gets a big battery to help it bring up to 91 miles of electric-only range. Meanwhile, a maximum charging speed of 71kW makes for a 30% to 80% top-up in 18 minutes.

## BYD Seal 6 DM-i: 87 miles

At 87 miles, the Seal 6 DM-i from China-based BYD offers a respectable distance, while top-spec Comfort cars can be charged at speeds of up to 26kW for a 15% to 100% charge in 23 minutes.



## Skoda Superb iV PHEV: 84 miles

The first non-Chinese entry in this ranking is Skoda's Superb PHEV, coming in with a decent electric-only range of up to 84 miles. The Superb's great refinement and large, spacious cabin – and boot – also make it an excellent long-distance model.

## Volkswagen Passat eHybrid: 81 miles

It's not much of a surprise to see Volkswagen's Passat PHEV coming after the Superb – the two share a platform and many key technologies. Like the Superb, the Passat is a large, spacious and comfortable cruiser and, in PHEV form, one which can deliver up to 81 miles of electric-only range.



## Mercedes GLC300e: 78 miles

The Mercedes GLC300e occupies a handy space between the smaller GLA and larger GLE models. It gets a 2.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine linked to a 31.2kWh battery, which can help it deliver up to 78 miles of electric-only range. Plus, it can charge at speeds of up to 60kW, meaning a full charge in just over 30 minutes.

## Audi Q3 e-hybrid: 73 miles

Audi's new Q3 might be compact but in e-hybrid form, it's impressively electrified, offering up to 73 miles on a single charge. The latest Q3 is by far the most tech-packed to date, too.





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# China uncovered

China is a land of contrasts, where skyscrapers and high-speed trains nudge shoulders with imperial palaces and archaeological wonders. Whether you're looking to lose yourself amid the bright lights of Beijing or walk in the footsteps of merchants along the ancient Silk Road, here's a breakdown of China's unmissable sights.



## EXPLORE A SECTION OF THE GREAT WALL

Weaving haphazardly across mountains, valleys and deserts for over 13,000 miles, the Great Wall was built to protect China from invasion and to guard its Silk Road trade, with sections dating back 2,000 years.

Extending from the Gobi Desert in the west to the Bohai Sea in the east, the wall passes through 15 Chinese provinces. Badaling, just outside Beijing, is one of its most famous segments but, for fewer crowds and equally scenic views, travel a little further to the Mutianyu or Jinshanling sections.

## BE DAZZLED BY BEIJING

If you only have time to visit one of China's captivating cities, let it be Beijing. The city's top sights include the crown jewel of China's imperial palaces, the Forbidden City – the seat of Ming and Qing dynasty emperors for over 500 years. The lakes, pavilions, palaces and bridges that make up the Summer Palace are also worth exploring.

Sample Beijing's street food and wander the hùtòngs, narrow residential lanes that offer an insight into how the locals once lived.

## MARVEL AT XI'AN AND ITS TERRACOTTA ARMY

The eastern starting point of the Silk Road, Xi'an is most famous for housing one of the world's most spectacular archaeological marvels: the Army of Terracotta Warriors. Commissioned by China's first emperor, this staggering collection of life-size ceramic soldiers, chariots and horses was created to protect him in the afterlife. While there are roughly 8,000, many remain underground, with excavations continuing to discover new figures.

## MEET GIANT PANDAS

The only wild populations of China's rare giant panda live within its Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu provinces. In Sichuan, the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding is the best place to catch a glimpse of these endearing creatures, alongside the red panda. Conservation initiatives such as these have improved the giant panda's status from endangered to vulnerable.



## DISCOVER OTHER WORLDLY LANDSCAPES

China's landscapes have inspired artists and poets for centuries. Some, such as Zhangjiajie National Park in China's Hunan province, need to be seen to be believed. Its towering sandstone spires inspired the scenery in the "Avatar" franchise. Heaven's Gate, a natural arch at Tianmen Mountain, can be reached via 999 steps or one of the world's longest cable-car rides.

Further south in Guangxi, Yangshuo and Guilin offer similarly outstanding views, and the karst landscapes along the Li River feature on the 20 yuán banknote.

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# Pie in the sky

Do you believe in Aliens – unknown creatures from Outer Space? Or UFOs – Unidentified Flying Objects? Leon Allen does! He's even taken out a comprehensive insurance policy to protect himself and his lovely wife, Alison, from . . . "ABDUCTION BY ALIENS". I mean, honestly! The chances of THAT happening are practically ZERO! Right? Nevertheless, Lloyds of London were more than happy to take his money – at a modest annual cost of around £150. Apparently, over 20,000 policies covering "unauthorised space kidnap and probing" have been sold by the insurers to gullible clients. However, they do require "credible evidence of an abduction" such as "a signed declaration from one of the aliens themselves." The first five years were uneventful. Then, on the evening of Sunday, May 31st . . . IT HAPPENED! Leon had rustled up an authentic Italian meal for them both – washed down with a nice bottle of chilled white wine. Later, about ten o'clock, Ali yawned. 'I'm off to bed, dear,' she announced. 'Got an early start in the morning.' Her husband nodded. 'Mind if I stay up a bit longer? I fancy a nightcap.' After a kiss, Leon walked outside into the cool night air – clutching a bottle of his finest cognac. It was a beautiful, moonlit evening. He gazed thoughtfully at the "Blue

Moon" hanging silently in the sky – the second full-moon that month. Plonking down on a patio chair, he poured himself a large brandy. One drink led to another . . . and another. Before long, Leon was feeling a little worse for wear. He stood up, staggered forward, tripped over a concrete gnome lying on the ground, and tumbled headlong into the rockery. How long he'd lain there, Leon couldn't tell. But slowly, he became aware of mysterious noises around him. And bright, flashing, coloured lights. 'ALIENS!' he slurred. Two dark shapes suddenly materialised beside him – backlit and seemingly almost transparent. Leon's heart missed a beat. He felt his body being elevated and transported towards the blinding lights. Then he passed out. His journey into the unknown had begun – hurtling through space and time to a planet in a galaxy far, far away. When he finally opened his eyes, Leon surveyed his surroundings. Where was he? A narrow ray of light shone on him from above. In the background, a low hum and intermittent beeps. Was he a prisoner inside some kind of alien spacecraft? And who were – what appeared to be – three bald-headed figures with black, almond-shaped eyes grouped around him? 'How-are-you-feeling?' demanded a high-pitched voice.

'W-Where am I?' stammered Leon, his eyes straining in an attempt to identify his captors. 'Don't worry. You are safe with us,' came the reply. Leon hesitated. 'H-have I been abducted by extra-terrestrials . . . from another planet?' They all laughed. 'We've been called a lot worse!' joked the Tall One. 'You've been asleep. In a coma. For five days,' said the Short One, before adding, 'It was necessary to detect any neuronal dysfunction after your traumatic brain injury.' Leon recoiled in horror. 'Where are you taking me? What's our destination? The Moon? Mars? Tell me.' 'You really are confused!' said the Short One, and smirked. 'Another few days, and we'll return you home,' said the Tall One. 'In the meantime, you must remain with us.' 'Here, take this when you leave,' said the Other One, passing Leon an official-looking sheet of yellow A4 paper. 'All the details are there,' added the Tall One. 'Everything you'll need for the Insurance Claim. And I've signed it. You'll have no problems. I'm Grey, by the way . . . Doctor Grey. You're at Queen's.' 'Queen's?' 'Yes. Queen's Hospital in Burton-on-Trent. You were brought here last week by the paramedics – suffering from concussion,' he explained. 'You'd been drinking. Fell and hit your head on a rock. Remember?'

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# CHILDREN'S PUZZLE PAGE

## SPOT THE 5 DIFFERENCES



What do sea monsters eat?  
Fish and ships.



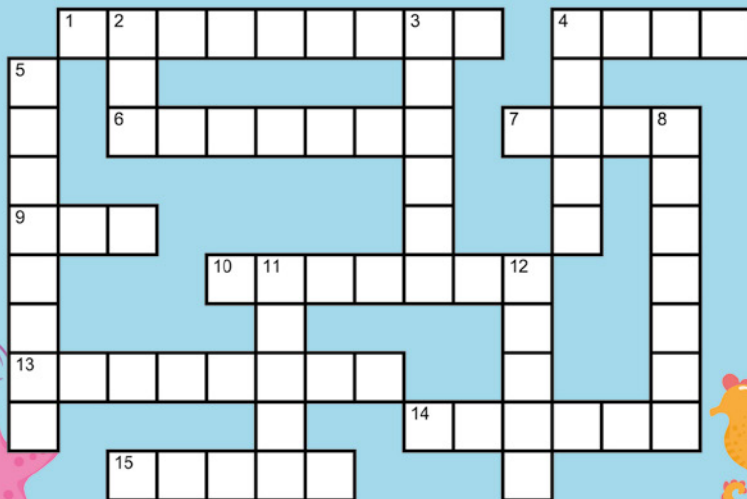
What did the magician say to the fisherman?  
Pick a cod, any cod.



How do you make an octopus laugh?  
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RAY TURTLE  
SEAHORSE WHALE





# Grow, sow and mow...

This month, gardeners are racing to keep up with all the growing, sowing and mowing.

This month marks the transition from spring into summer and in most parts of the UK the threat of frost passes around the middle of the month. If you're certain the ice maiden has retired, you should be able to plant out tender varieties to fill gaps and pots.

## GROWING FAST

It's now possible to spend entire days in the garden. But with the joy comes a bit of pressure! Everything is growing, including weeds. Fresh new foliage is abundant and there are blooms-a-plenty. If your soil is slightly acidic, you'll be enjoying blousy flowers of Rhododendrons and Azaleas, with exotic Camellias, bright tulips and vivid blue Camassias. Poppies and lupins are now peeping through the greenery and bluebells form scented carpets in shady wooded areas. Wisteria drapes walls and pergolas with its pendulous racemes of lilac, purple, pink and white.

Some say that if a garden isn't looking good in May, it won't get any better during the rest of the year. But improving an outdoor space is all part of the fun.

## MOW – OR NOT TO MOW?

Lawns are enjoying a growth spurt and it's a great time to feed your grass if you like a traditional lawn. If, however, you are nurturing an annual wildflower meadow, or encouraging your grass to turn wilder, you need to let it grow. You can put away your mower until the end of summer.

No Mow May offers a compromise for those who want to give wildlife and biodiversity a bit of a boost.

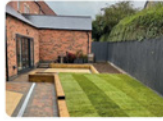
This conservation campaign encourages people to stop mowing this month. It will allow wildflowers to bloom, creating nectar habitats for pollinators. Then raise the mowing height after the month ends, to allow the grass sward to be longer throughout the rest of the year.

## JOBS IN THE KITCHEN GARDEN

- Young tomato plants, courgettes and pumpkins can be planted out once the risk of frost has passed.
- French and runner beans, cucumbers and squash seeds can be sown into prepared outdoor beds.
- Cauliflowers and purple sprouting broccoli can be sown for harvesting in winter.
- Transplant Brussels sprouts now.
- Thin out the shoots on raspberry canes.
- Place mesh over your carrots to prevent carrot root fly from entering.
- Add bird protection to soft fruit.
- Protect brassicas and peas from predators such as pigeons.
- Earth up potatoes as the shoots grow, to prevent green tubers.
- Erect supports for peas and beans.
- Remove suckering shoots from around the base of fruit trees such as apples.
- Ensure that bees and pollinators can reach the flowers of anything housed under cover.

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# Flex appeal



## Feeling stiff as a board? Find out what causes it and how you can ease those aches and pains.

Stiffness and inflexibility in muscles and joints affect most of us at different times. But the good news is that you can often loosen up and become more mobile.

### Muscle stiffness

Stiffness in muscles is extremely common. But what are the likely causes?

#### Too much exercise

This is something many of us are familiar with – overexert yourself and you'll feel it afterwards. The treatment? A warm bath, NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs), such as ibuprofen, and rest will offer immediate relief. In the long term, stretching and a proper warm-up usually help to keep this kind of stiffness at bay.

#### Too little exercise

Conversely, a sedentary lifestyle can lead to stiffness and inflexibility. Sitting in one position for prolonged periods can make you feel creaky when you get up. Over time, your muscles will weaken – and may even become shorter and tighter – if you don't move enough. Build frequent movement into your daily routine, including doing a few stretches several times a day, and consider an activity such as Pilates, which focuses on improving flexibility.

#### Dehydration

You might be surprised to learn that not drinking enough fluids can lead to aching muscles. Monitor your fluid intake especially as you get older, since your natural sense of thirst tends to decline with age. It can also help to include water-rich foods in your diet, such as cucumbers, watermelon, and tomatoes.

While we're on the subject of eating and drinking, a diet rich in calcium and magnesium will boost

muscle health too. Think bananas, avocados, nuts, dairy products, dark leafy greens, fatty fish and fortified cereals.

### Some medications

A minority of people suffer muscle aches as a side effect of certain prescription drugs. These include statins for high cholesterol, beta-blockers used to treat high blood pressure, isotretinoin for acne, bisphosphonates for osteoporosis and corticosteroids, which are prescribed for conditions like asthma, arthritis and autoimmune diseases. If you think your meds are causing ongoing stiffness and pain, see your GP, who might be able to change you to another drug.

### Joint stiffness

Sometimes it's our joints that feel rusty, especially knees, hips, fingers, feet, ankles and neck. The stiffness may come and go or be fairly constant. What provokes this?

### Osteoarthritis

By far the most common cause of stiff, inflexible joints after the age of 45 is osteoarthritis, when the cartilage which cushions your joints breaks down. Previous injuries, being overweight and family history can all play a part. Regular exercise actually helps rather than aggravates arthritis and might minimise your risk of developing it in the first place. Physio, acupuncture and massage can also bring relief.

Lose weight if necessary and prioritise posture. Strengthening your abdominal and back muscles will help with this. Choose comfortable, supportive shoes.

### Rheumatoid arthritis

This is much rarer. It's a painful autoimmune condition characterised by flare-ups. Unlike with osteoarthritis, morning stiffness doesn't go away when you start moving. Medication can help reduce inflammation and delay joint damage.

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## ASHBY u3a

Ashby u3a is very pleased to welcome Danny Wells with his talk '**Florence Nightingale - The Lady with the Lamp - Her life and achievements**'. Danny is a qualified history teacher, having an MA in Architectural History from Keele University. He comes from Stepney in the East End of London and now lives in the Peak District, both places acting as an inspiration for his talks and writing.

**We meet on 26th May, at  
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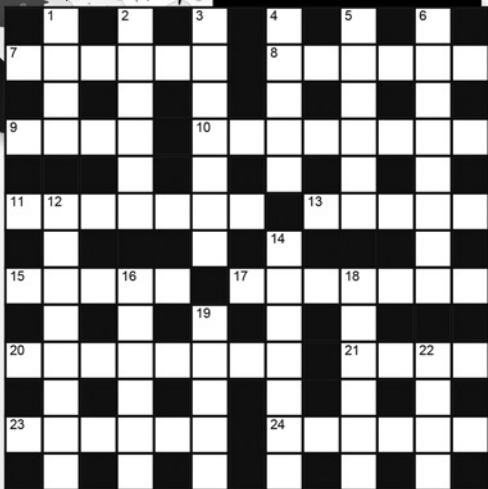
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# Coffee BREAK



## CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

- 7 Starchy vegetable (6)
- 8 Keep hold of (6)
- 9 Dish (4)
- 10 Quickly (8)
- 11 Modified (7)
- 13 Shell (5)
- 15 Swivel round (5)
- 17 Type of sword (7)
- 20 Semi-darkness (8)
- 21 Serene (4)
- 23 Jail (6)
- 24 Idea (6)

### DOWN cont.,

- 6 Local languages (8)
- 12 Toward a lower place (8)
- 14 Fastenings (7)
- 16 Dash of liquid (6)
- 18 Find (6)
- 19 Extreme pain (5)
- 22 Stolen valuables (4)

### DOWN

- 1 Single handed (4)
- 2 Hit very hard (6)
- 3 Bragged (7)
- 4 Star sign (5)
- 5 Artist's workroom (6)

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

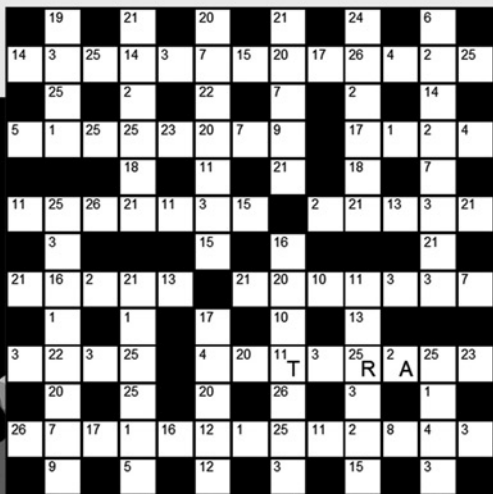
1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24
25	26		

## SUDOKU

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



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# Timeless Talent

**Jenny Agutter is one of Britain's most versatile actresses, with a career spanning more than six decades.**

Born in Taunton, Somerset, the daughter of a British army officer, Jenny

Agutter lived in many different countries as a child. The first place she remembers is Singapore. The family also moved to Cyprus. She recalled, "I loved it. We were a small family and spent idyllic holidays in the Troodos mountains or sailing in our homemade boat."

She adored ballet, and her parents sent her to Elmhurst Ballet School. But she realised she lacked the dedication to become a dancer. "When I was 16, I took a lead role in three films, instead of getting on with exams, and left school with no qualifications," she said. "So, I just had to continue with the profession I enjoyed and had fallen into."

**Early days** In fact, Jenny Agutter had made her acting debut aged 11, when she appeared in "East of Sudan" alongside Anthony Quayle and Sylvia Syms. Her first major break came in 1970 as Roberta (Bobbie) in "The Railway Children".

In 1972, she won an Emmy for Outstanding Supporting Actress for her role as Fritha in the BBC TV film of "The Snow Goose". She subsequently won a BAFTA for "Equus" in 1978.

Jenny turned to the stage to broaden her experience.

Aged 21, she joined the National Theatre to play Miranda in Sir Peter Hall's production of "The Tempest" with Sir John Gielgud, before heading across the pond.

**International star** Starring in "Logan's Run" in 1976 introduced her to Hollywood stardom. However, Jenny never fully abandoned British film and television, starring in films such as "An American Werewolf in London" and "The Parole Officer". Her small-screen work has included hit espionage drama "Spooks" and, of course, the BBC's award-winning "Call the Midwife".

She has been with the show since it began in 2012, playing Sister Julienne, the sister-in-charge at Nonnatus House. This fictional east London convent was inspired by the real-life St Frideswide's Mission House in Poplar.

Jenny's husband Johan Tham, a Swedish hotelier, died in 2025 aged 81. They had been married since 1990 and had one son, Jonathan. Awarded an OBE in the 2012 Birthday Honours for her charitable services, Jenny gives her time to several organisations, including Cystic Fibrosis Trust and St Giles Trust.

**Constant presence** Jenny has aged on screen with grace, embracing parts that reflect maturity, wisdom and moral complexity.

*"I am lucky to have had some good roles in television and classic films, but I don't attach myself to their success. When a job is finished, an actor is always looking for the next role to play."*

*All episodes of series 15 of "Call the Midwife" are available on BBC One and BBC iPlayer. Railway Children, Call the Midwife still © BBC/Neal Street Productions/ Luke Ross*



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