Let's Talk

April 2020 Issue 211

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What it takes to bring Les Mis to Norwich

HOW HILL
Sharing Norfolk's nature for 50 years

DON'T PANIC!
How Dad's Army van was saved for Thetford

PETS SPECIAL ISSUE

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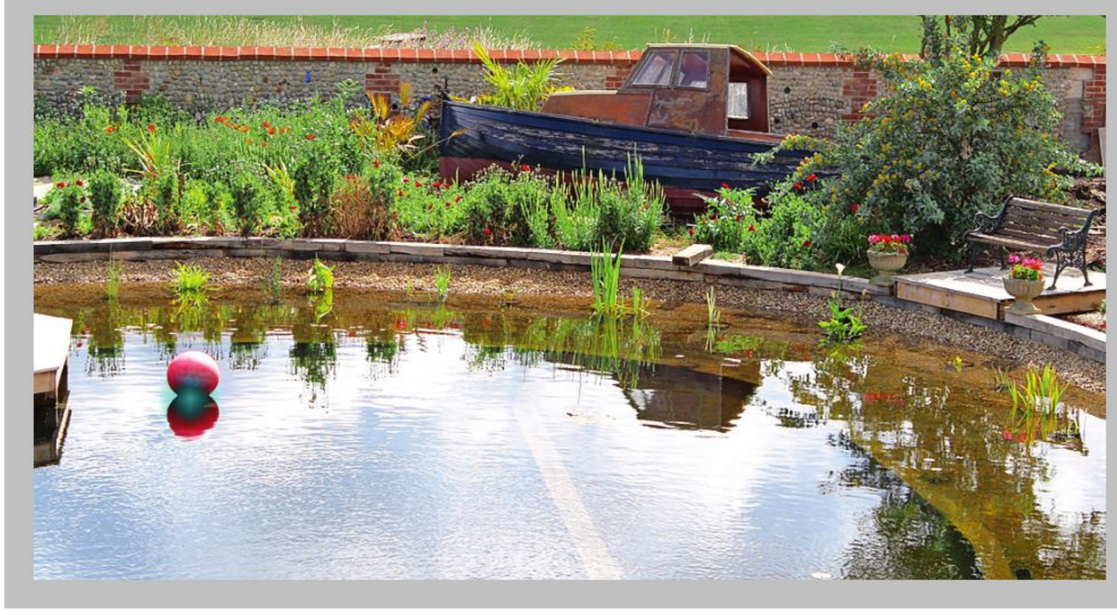

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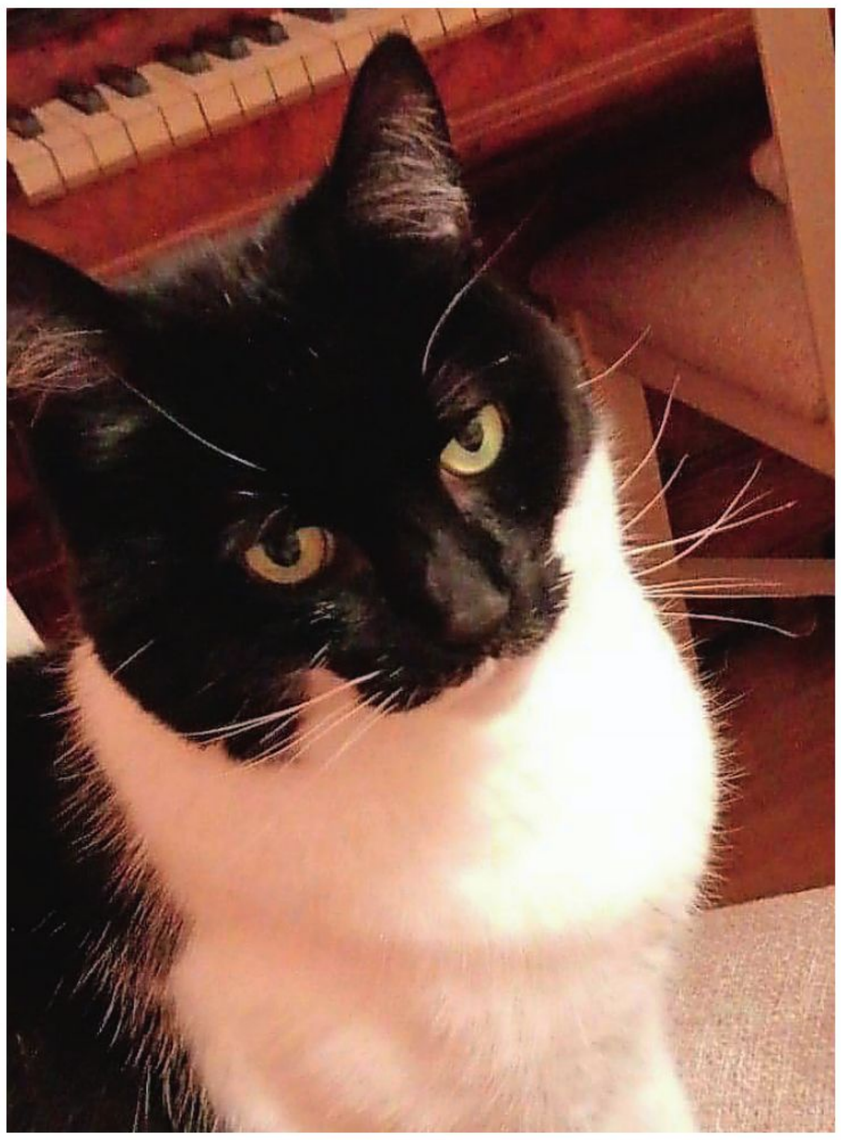
Pampered pets have got us well trained

I was waiting in the supermarket queue the other day when the women behind me started to put her shopping on the conveyor belt. Cucumbers, just cucumbers. One, two, three, four – she had an armful of them . . . five, six, seven – they just kept coming until she had put down 10 cucumbers to be scanned. I had to ask . . . "Tortoises," she told me. "My tortoises love them – and watermelons and strawberries."

It reminded me of my daughter's old rabbit Chanel, though often known as Chive Bunny for her preference for herbs. She had her own, rather middle-class corner of my shopping list each week that included fresh chives, curly kale, celery, an apple (to be sliced and served over the course of the week), as well as all the usual rabbity fare from the pet shop.

Our cat, Moo also has an increasingly long list of requirements as he develops a taste for various gravies, sauces, treats and sprinkles to supplement his favoured pouches of unrecognisable meats in jelly. He noses into the shopping bags when I get back from the store to check that his order hasn't been forgotten. Of course I could buy in bulk – but that, of course, would be the signal for him to switch his brand loyalty and swear allegiance to another, no doubt far more expensive cat food. How do they know?

Moo is a cat of routine, from the 6am wake-up call to commence his three breakfasts finished off with a smidgen of Cheddar just before he slopes off to bed, to his evening of exercising us humans . . . "Oh, you've sat down? But I want to go out of this door, or maybe that door, no definitely the other door."



Moo has trained Let's Talk editor Angi Kennedy to be at his beck and call.

He has us wrapped around his furry little paws, and I know many of our readers feel the same about their own cats and dogs. That's why we've decided to give this month's magazine a pets theme, with some lovely stories about the joy that they bring us. So whether you are a cat person or dog person – or even a tortoise person – we hope you enjoy this pet-packed Let's Talk. LT

A GREAT GIFT

With Mother's Day and Easter, spring is the perfect time to have a nice treat. So we have put together a special offer for those signing up to a Let's Talk subscription this month. Turn to pages 60 and 61 to find out how you can get 12 issues for just £18 PLUS a lovely free organic gift set.

Terry Redhead
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Angi Kennedy
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CONTENTS

Issue 211 April 2020

REGULARS

WELCOME
Introducing our pet special theme 3

POSTBAG
Your views in pages of letters 7-12

LET'S COOK
Simple yet tasty recipes for springtime family get togethers 42-43

WI UPDATE
Recycling ideas and the story of an inspirational WI member 58-59

CHECK OUT THE NAMES
Derek Palgrave discovers the origins of more readers' surnames 76-77

BOOKS
Bruce Kemble-Johnson takes a look at what's new on the bookshelves 82

SHORT STORY
Another Spring by Irene I'Anson, life and nature entwine 83-85

BRAIN WORKOUT
Puzzles to test your brain 124-129

COMPETITIONS/OFFERS

BEAUTIFUL SUBSCRIPTION GIFT
Subscribe to Let's Talk and get a lovely organic beauty gift 60-61

WIN A DVD
Your chance to win a DVD of TV crime series The Brokenwood Mysteries 123

SPOT THE PICTURE
Win a special mystery prize 126

GIANT PRIZE WORDSEARCH
Win a National Trust day pass 128

FEATURES

PETER PURVES
The TV presenter on his pets and life in Suffolk 14-16

DOGS TRUST
Finding forever homes for four-legged friends 18-19

KEEPING UP WITH BERTIE
Life with a lovable young dog keeps Derek James on his toes 20-21

NATURE KNOWLEDGE
Half-century of Broadland lessons at How Hill 24-25

A NEW CHALLENGE
In search of our birdlife 30-31

IZZY WIZZY
Sooty is bringing mayhem and fun to Hunstanton 32-33

WEI WEI WONG
Remembering the talented dancer, actress and TV hostess 34-35

ON THE RECORD
Dawn Basham of Kentwell Hall reveals her favourite music choices 40-41

BEAUTY
Q&A with a Norwich hairdresser who has launched a product range 48-49

24
Learning is fun at How Hill

32
Sooty, Sweep and Soo!

40
On the record

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14
Peter's pets

HELP AND ADVICE

MENTAL HEALTH
The signs to watch out for in controlling behaviour **88-89**

HEARING
A special offer for Let's Talk readers **91**

CITIZENS ADVICE
How Brexit wil impact on some **96**

BUYING THEIR FIRST HOME
Advice on how to help your children on to the property ladder **92-93**

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

GARDENING
Charlotte Philcox's top tips for successful perennial planting **38-39**

LET'S WALK
Rambling in the Nar Valley **98-99**

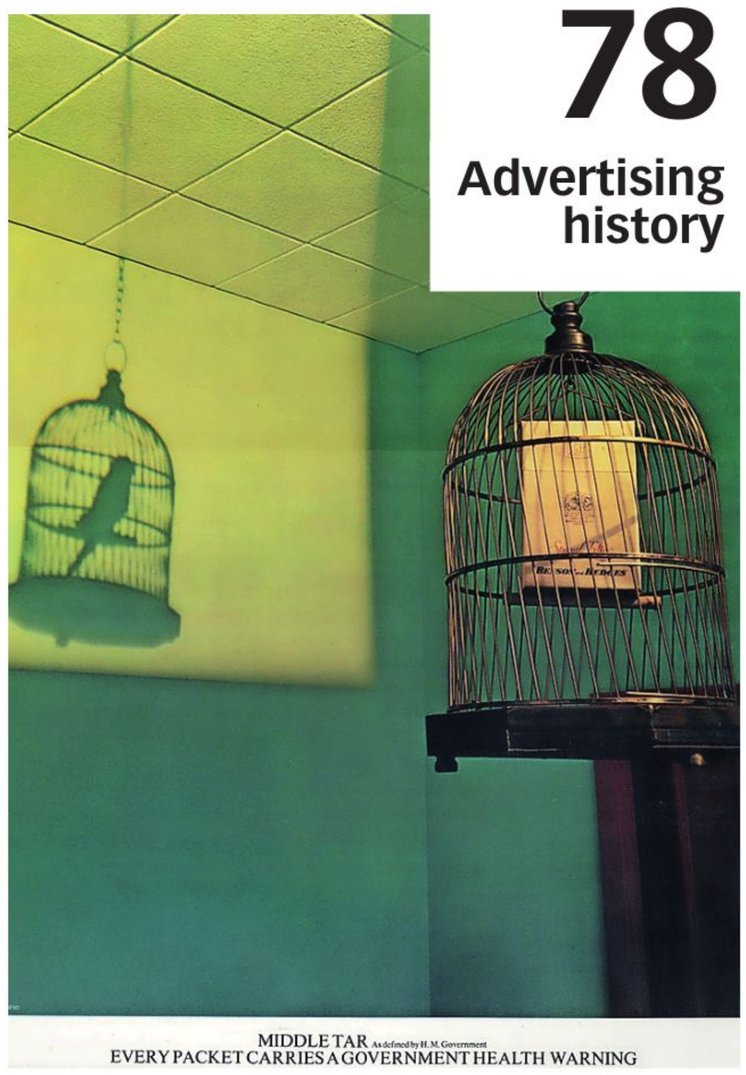
NATURE
How the common cranes returned to East Anglia **100-101**

IT'S IN THE STARS

STAR TALK
Let's Talk's astrologer Claire Manion on an all action spring **45**

MOTORING

MOTORING WITH DAVID CLAYTON
Saving the Dad's Army van **53-55**



78
Advertising history

COMMENTARY

THE LAST WORD
Neil Haverson's DIY phone success is long forgotten **130**

OUT AND ABOUT

DIARY DATES
Les Misérables, shows for little ones and plenty of events to enjoy **103-109**

DREAM DESTINATION
Exploring the Maldives **111-113**

MONTENEGRO AND MORE
Escape the tourist hotspots **114-115**

NOSTALGIA AND HISTORY

MEMORY LANE
Archive pictures and stories **62-71**

ANTIQUES
Souvenirs of holidays and history **74-75**

ADVERTISING HISTORY
Benson & Hedges' groundbreaking adverts **78-79**

100
Success story of common crane

106
Les Misérables at Norwich

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REMEMBERING HAPPY DAYS ON THE ESTATE

I grew up on Plumstead Estate in Norwich. It was a small estate and so everyone more or less knew everyone else.

My parents moved there when the houses were first built in 1932, and I was born in 1938 and lived there until 1971.

When first built, the houses were palaces compared with many of the houses in the city, as we had three bedrooms, a living room with large window, and a bathroom and a lavatory in the porch outside the back door. There were large back gardens as many people were used to growing their own vegetables and this was even more necessary during the war when everything was scarce. We kept chickens so had eggs and used to preserve some for when the hens were not laying. The rent man used to call every week and enter payments in the rent book.

I started school at Wellesley Avenue Infants in September 1943 when almost five years old. I remember that some of the children, who were younger than I was, used to have a sleep in the classroom in the afternoon on little camp beds. The head mistress was Miss Chapman and other teachers I remember were Miss Day and Miss Simmonds. I remember this as a happy time although it was during the war. We only had the basics and even at Christmas it was difficult to provide much for a party.

There was a lavender hedge at the school and in summer we used to pick little bunches of lavender and sell them for a penny. The School Board man used to visit any children who didn't attend school regularly and we had the nit nurse, Miss Hannent, check our hair regularly.

After three years, in 1946 we moved to Thorpe Hamlet Junior School in Marion Road but only the girls; the boys moved to the Crome School in Telegraph Lane. This was because the original school in Marion Road had been bombed and there wasn't room in the replacement Nissen huts for the boys and girls. The teachers at Thorpe Hamlet were Miss Webb, headmistress, Miss Chettleburgh, Miss Middleton and Miss Thomas. The huts were heated by a large 'Tortoise' coal stove and those sitting near it were always hot whereas the rest of the class quite cold.

We experienced the very cold winter of 1947 and had lots of fun sledging down the hills in Wellesley Avenue wood and on Mousehold.

Looking down on the Plumstead Estate in Norwich in this photo from 2001. Wellesley First School and Thorpe Hamlet Middle were in the foreground, and Plumstead Road and Plumstead Road East stretch up to the left of the picture.

The men on Plumstead Estate mainly worked at Laurence and Scott, Barnards wire netting, shoe factories or Boulton and Paul, where my dad worked. They would all go to work on their bicycles and no one on the estate had a car or a telephone. The telephone box was in Morse Avenue, as was Doctor Woolstone. Later, when two police houses were built in Pilling Park Road, we used to ask them to make telephone calls for us if urgent. Some of the mothers worked, but not so many as now.

We were lucky to have Pilling Park and Lion Woods to play in and make dens. There were some swings in the woods and there were several places that I found where violets bloomed every spring. We also used to play in the roads, as there was no traffic to worry about. All the children would join together and play rounders using the trees as posts.

We used to go to Sunday School at the Methodist church, which was held in the library on Plumstead Road as the church had burned down. The church was later rebuilt in Heartsease Lane where it is now. I used to borrow books from the library and was always looking for the latest Enid Blyton Famous Five adventure.

Other than Christmas, two other dates always stood out during the year. On Valentine's Day we had fun knocking on people's doors and running off or hanging unusual items on their doors. Bonfire Night was great. Prior to November 5, you would see children in the streets with their home-made 'Guys' asking "Penny for the Guy" and use any money obtained to buy fireworks. We often had a few fireworks in our garden, such as Catherine Wheels and rockets placed in milk bottles, which are not allowed now. Then we would go to St James' Hill on Mousehold where there was a big bonfire. Sometimes the bonfire would be set alight ahead of Bonfire Night by vandals and then the soldiers, based in Britannia Barracks nearby, would build it up again for us.

There is a Facebook page for Plumstead Estate where old and new residents post old school photographs and other interesting items.

Norwich City Council used to hold a competition in the summer for the best kept council house gardens. My parents were keen gardeners, with my dad growing the vegetables and my mum growing summer bedding plants from seed in the greenhouse. They often used to win a prize in this competition.

Myra Hawtree, By email

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PHONE: 01603 772464 **EMAIL:** letstalk@archant.co.uk

A child's eye view

Whenever I walk down Magdalen Street in Norwich now, as an adult, it never fails to bring back fond memories of my numerous trips there as a child in the 1950s.

We lived off Aylsham Road and in those days you used to walk just about everywhere. Even as a child you had so much more freedom to come and go as you pleased without supervision. I used to walk the whole length of Aylsham Road so I could get to Magdalen Street where all kinds of treats and adventures lay – or so it seemed at the time.

I remember the old Odeon Cinema with what seemed like palatial steps leading into it. The next amazing thing I would come across on my journey was 'The Dolls' Hospital'. What ideas were conjured up in my young mind as I stood outside; what ghastly things were happening to all those treasured, injured dolls and toys? The mind boggled as I never dared to go in.

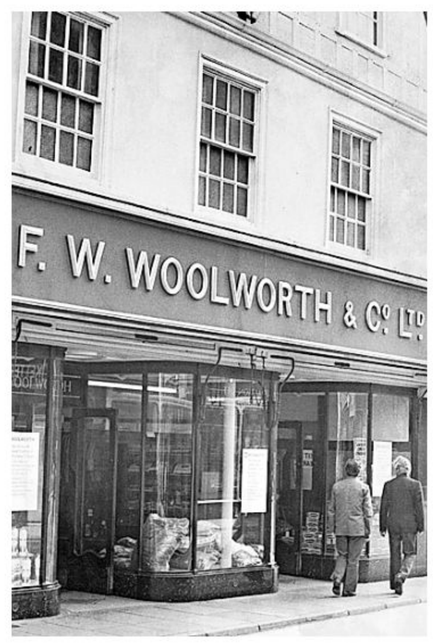
Further along was the Looses Department Store, which is now an antiques emporium. This was filled with what seemed to be hundreds of illuminated glass cabinets filled with hundreds of colourful, exquisite crockery and glass items. They seemed to go on forever and there were more upstairs!

Magdalen Street looking away from Norwich city centre in about 1960.

Next – the highlight of my journey – was what we always used to refer to as 'Little Woolies' (as the 'Big Woolies' was in the centre of Norwich). As I entered, it always came across as being a bit creepy, almost haunted, as it was quite dark with many wooden counters with shelves above. There was everything you could wish for, all sold loose – no plastic bags – carefully counted out by the assistant. What really sticks in my mind about Little Woolies was the very dark wooden gangways that creaked as you walked on them, adding to the mystery in a small child's head! I think it is now an Indian restaurant or the like.

All seems like yesterday, yet so many things have changed. But it is lovely to recall happy days of a part of Norwich that I will always love.

Pat Copley
Wymondham, Norfolk



'Little Woolies', as Pat Copley remembers the Woolworths store on Magdalen Street, Norwich, which ceased trading in 1975.

Benefit of busking

Tracy Sharpe's very generous words regarding the work undertaken by Trianon Music group for Music in Our Bones and the developing link between the two organisations is just a small part of the charity outreach undertaken by Trianon over its 60 years of existence.

Over £2,000 was raised recently for charities in the Coventry area as a result of members of Trianon and its partner choir, the Anglia Singers, visiting that part of the west Midlands in late October 2019 and giving concerts.

Members of the Trianon choir and orchestra busking at the Ipswich Corn Exchange.

Now Trianon is supporting another charitable venture. The Ipswich Corn Exchange organ is a valuable asset to that building and the result of diligent work by some of my late friends in the 1970s just before the Ipswich Corn Exchange was re-opened.

The organ is now in need of restoration work and Trianon and the Suffolk Organists Association together with Ipswich Arts Association have teamed up to support the pursuit of that work which needs funding.

The concert Trianon gave on January 11 was one small attempt to help that work, with members of the choir and orchestra (including using the organ) busking before the concert started.

Chris Green
Artistic director
of Trianon Music Group

We are happy to receive your letters by email. Send them to **letstalk@archant.co.uk** and mark them ***'Letters to the editor'.***
When writing please keep your letters to a maximum of **350 words**.

Post Bag pages really work!

Regular readers of the Post Bag pages of Let's Talk will recall the insertion of a letter of mine, explaining the camaraderie of those who had served in the Royal Navy. I explained that this could be re-lived at the various reunions held around the country and that these were listed on the www.rnshipmates.co.uk site under 'Reunions'.

Well, thank you to all of the magazines like yours and to the local newspapers; you have certainly scored and made a lot of ex-Servicemen think back again. They have emailed me on royalnavyreunions@gmail.com and the secretaries of various associations have contacted me. The consequence? A lot more reunions have been held and a lot more old shipmates have been reunited and re-lived their past experiences.

Reunions are again on the agenda, therefore could I ask reunion organisers and secretaries to let me have details of your reunion for listing. This is a free service and can be done by themselves on www.rnshipmates.co.uk site under 'Reunions' or by emailing the details to me on royalnavyreunions@gmail.com

Mike Crowe
RN Shipmates
www.rnshipmates.co.uk

Remembering the kindness of the Brennens

I was interested to see Michael and Margaret Drake in Let's Talk. The connection with singing can only mean this was the couple who lived two doors away from my family on North Walsham Road. I feel sure that Michael was a TV announcer.

They may well have purchased the house from the Brennen (or Brennan?) family. I lived at number 145; I think the Brennens' house would have been 141.

I was good friends with Colin Brennen and his father was Bob, the well known footballer. My late mother, Doris, became very good friends with Mrs Brennen and this continued after they moved to Collingdeep Lane.

I was extremely well treated by the Brennen family. Mr Brennen was only a part-time footballer and I think he worked as a car salesman. I recall he had various vehicles available and they would take me out. I would have been about 10 or 11 years of age at the time.

It was a long time ago, but I think Colin went back to his parents' city, Belfast, to attend university there. If anybody has more details of the Brennens I would love to know, they were lovely people. Likewise, if anybody from school would like to contact me by post at the address here I would be very pleased to learn how their lives have turned out.

Trevor Deary
6 Inman Road, Sprowston, Norfolk NR7 8JT

RELIGIOUS HABIT

Regarding Neil Haverson's Last Word in the February 2020 issue of Let's Talk, about being creatures of habit, our United Reform Church at Southwold attracts about 25 or so regulars every Sunday, who always sit in the same pews. Woe betide any stranger, who might arrive early one Sunday, and have the audacity to sit in one of our seats.

John Butler
Reydon, Southwold

HUNTING THE THIMBLE ON HOLIDAY AND AT HOME

Picture: FreedomMaster / iStock / Getty Images Plus

With reference to Ann Dunning's letter (Selling thimbles in Woolies) in the January edition of Let's Talk, this reminded me of my grandparents. My Nanny Barbara used to love collecting thimbles. When we used to go on coach trips to Bury St Edmunds, Clacton or Norfolk Lavender, she would always bring back some thimbles as a souvenir. It was easy to know what to buy her for presents each year!

Also I remember family get-togethers where all the family would play games. When we ran out of games to play, my Grandad Russell suggested 'hunt the thimble', which to this day has become a family tradition.

Marcus Moore
Sprowston, Norwich, Norfolk

A KEY MEMBER OF STAFF

Don Cullum has helped to identify one of the men in this Memory Lane photo. Do you recognise any of the others?

Reference photo 13047 in the Norfolk Memory Lane pages (Let's Talk, February 2020), the man presenting the keys is Frank McNally who was sales manager at Norwich Motor Co. of Prince of Wales Road, Norwich. He is farthest left of the picture.

Don Cullum, By email

Email letters to: letstalk@archant.co.uk

A shilling for her memories

My first memories of a home were rented rooms on Grove Road, Norwich. My dad was away in the army and we lived there with Mum.

After the war we were eventually moved to a spanking new council house, set back from the Ipswich Road which were referred to as Steel Houses – the bottom half being brick and the upper corrugated steel (I believe I have that the right way round). It was massive compared to our previous home. I had my own bedroom and a nice garden to play in. We now had a neat lawn and vegetable plot.

My brother and I were attending Willow Lane School at the time, but as our family increased by two the distance became too great for us to walk alone. My brother would run ahead and leave me as my little legs couldn't keep up with his fast pace. We eventually moved to Cavell School which was somewhat nearer.

However my dad, thinking the rent too high, decided to exchange for a cheaper, older council home, and we found ourselves moving to Lionwood Road on the Plumstead Estate when I was almost seven. The nearest school on Wellesley Avenue would not take me, but Thorpe Hamlet Infants on Maid Marion Road did and I spent many happy years as a pupil in the junior school there.

Our days of council house living ended when I was 13. Dad found an even cheaper place, an old terrace house owned by the brewery next to the pub on Goldwell Road. Rather a come-down for us, with no facilities at all.

I eventually met my husband, who lived in a council house on Margaret Paston Avenue, Mile Cross, having moved there from Junction Road. My nan and aunt lived just around the corner, on Oxnead Road – a luxury for them, having previously lived in one of the cramped yards in the Magdalen Street area. I think most of my friends lived in council houses or rented terraces, as owning your own home in my circle was unheard of.

Money was tight and poor Mum with four growing children found it hard to manage, as Dad was always in and out of work. I don't recall her having tins to sort our her money each week, but I know in later years my sister-in-law did.

One thing that sticks in my mind was when the light would suddenly go out and there was a frantic search for a shilling for the meter. We children would be sent to a neighbour or the shop to swap a handful of change for one. Just imagine how far that shilling would go these days with our houses full of electrical goods; I daren't think of it! Youngsters unable able to charge mobile phones, computers or we, cordless appliances, etc . . . how would we cope?

Ann Ramsbottom
Little Plumstead, Norfolk

A FILM WORTH SEEING

Picture: Havana1234 / iStock / Getty Images Plus

The movie 1917 is a stunning piece of First World War history that has opened my eyes to what my father and his two brothers went through. Outstanding moving camera scenes and the sepia colour helped make this period so realistic.

Trench warfare with horrors attached – no man's land with no tops left to any standing tress; mud and craters full of water, with young men blown to bits.

My dad told me much about the rats and how they chewed at your pockets of your overcoat at the uneaten biscuits while you slept.

My father and his two brothers went over the top, charging the German line – bullets cutting down thousands of England's finest youth. All of my three uncles ran right through this hail of bullets without a scratch. They gathered together running into the arms of a British officer. "Where have you come from soldiers?" he asked. "From The Somme, Sir." To which he answered: "Poor boys, poor boys."

After this battle they were granted leave, arriving home with lice-free uniforms. They sat in their mother's front best room.

Dad said: "Mum went to make us three a cuppa. She came back with her tray saying, ' When are you going back boys?'" Dad said they looked at each other, realising that their parents had no idea what they had been through. The media kept a lot of the horrors of the First World War out of the home news.

Movies like 1917 helped me understand more about what my uncles suffered, and why my Pop's health suffered after the war.

Terry Basson, By email

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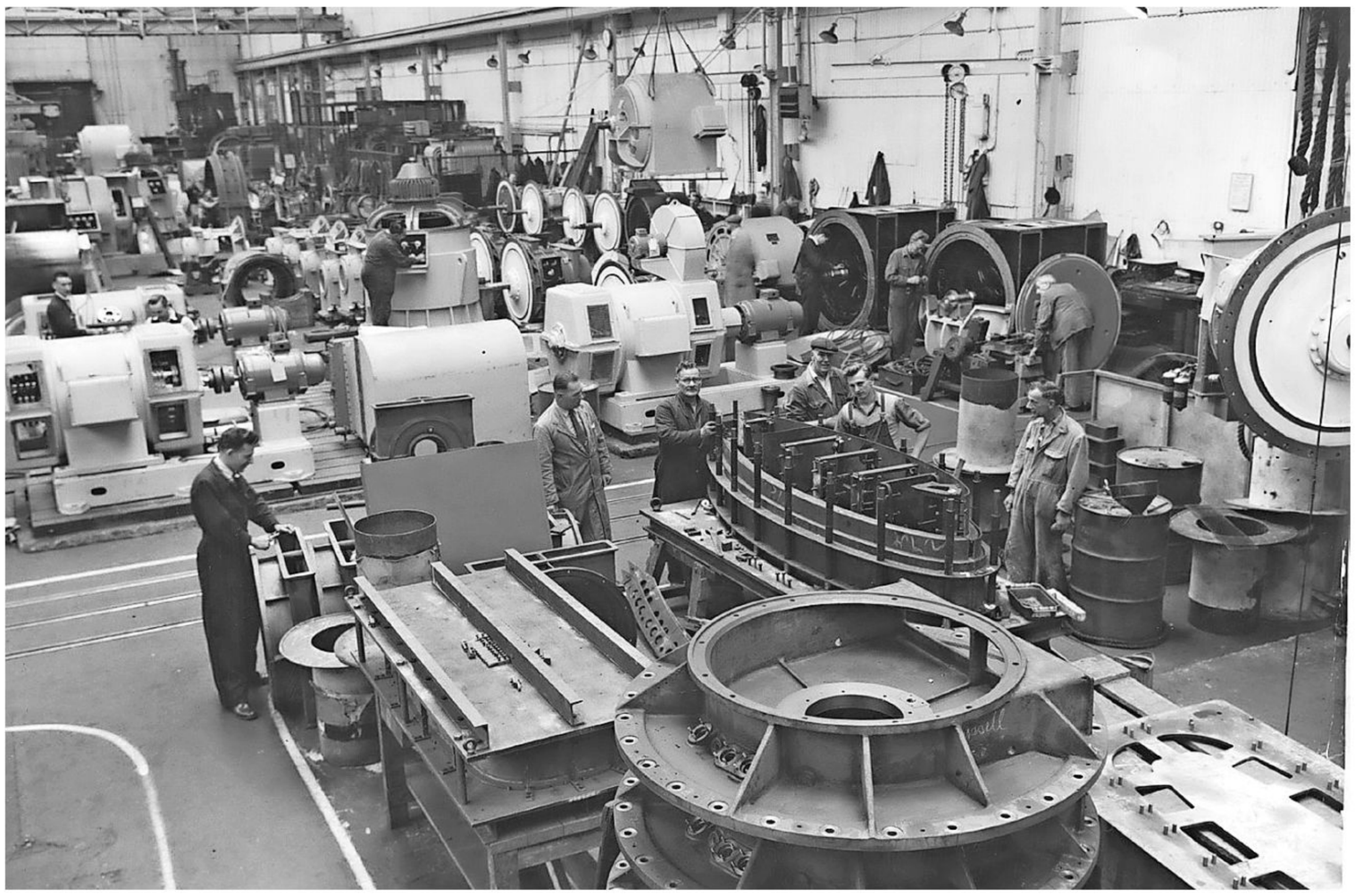
STARTING LIFE TOGETHER WITH A COUNCIL HOUSE



Remembering what life was like for the young men and women who worked at Laurence, Scott & Electromotors in Norwich. Here's a view of the workshop in 1959.

If any of the younger generation reads Derek James' latest stories about the building of Norwich's council houses in the 1950s and 1960s, some of them might think he is exaggerating the numbers that were built. But as someone who lived through that time, his figures can be taken as true.

I was an apprentice at Laurence, Scott and Electromotors from late 1958 to late 1963, and throughout that time and beyond everyone who needed a council house, especially young engaged couples and older couples with children, had one offered to them after a very short waiting period.

The young men working at LSE then who were seriously courting or engaged always more or less followed the same pattern. At the time working there was Harry Perry, who in his time was leading political Labour figure in the city as a councillor and later became the Lord Mayor of Norwich. At work he was the leading union representative, and more or less knew the working of everything in the city. When people working there were at the stage of a relationship with their girlfriend where marriage was being talked about or engagement, and they wanted a house to live in after getting married, they went to see Harry, who gave them all the information on how to get one, including the paperwork (a paper showing your wedding day booking at a church or City Hall was a big plus) and the trip both of them had to make to the appropriate City Council housing department to get your name down for a house, which was a flat for a childless married couple or a house if you could produce a child.

Waiting time was usually a few weeks, up to about a little over six months if you were fussy where you wanted to live (many young girls who were to get married wanted a house near their mother).

People who read this who are desperate for a house today and face obstacles at every point will find this story hard to believe, but houses and flats were being built at break-neck speed all over the city – not like today, when building sites are sometimes empty for years before any houses are completed. There was no sizeable influx of people from outside the city looking for a house, plus nearly all the houses being built were unlike today for renting out at a sensible rent for working people.

Young couples then started in a council flat and if they had children applied and got a house without a long wait. Today, our plans on building houses have gone backwards with the emphasis on building houses ordinary people cannot afford, and at a number that will never solve today's housing shortage.

David M Coe
Norwich, Norfolk

Lasting Bonds

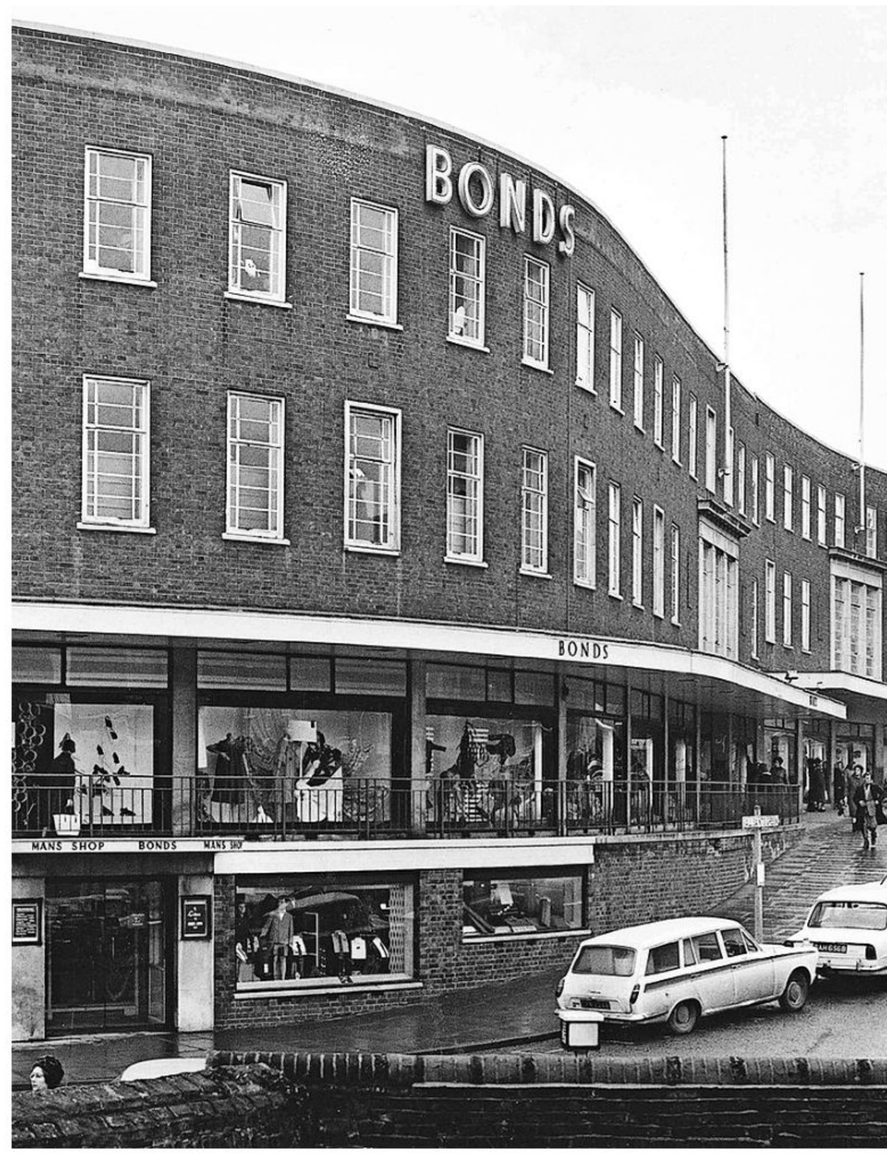
Your article about Bonds of Norwich (John Lewis) brought back happy memories for me as, at the age of 16 in 1976, I left school and began work in the accounts office on the top floor with my friend from school, Debra.

I began working at the customer accounts service desk, where I would take weekly or monthly payments of those customers who held an account. After three years I progressed to cashing up the money from the tills in the store, then later worked up to assistant to the chief cashier.

Mrs Rose Pallant was the cashier when I joined Bonds, and when she retired Vivienne Bull stepped into the role. The staff were one big happy family, everyone knew everybody else's name, right down to basement and depot staff.

The shop closed on Thursdays, but office staff still worked every other week. If it was our Thursday to work then we had the Saturday off and, of course, the shop never opened on Sundays. Happy days.

Julie Foster
Norwich, Norfolk



Memories of Bonds – now John Lewis – in Norwich.

Email letters to: letstalk@archant.co.uk

CONTACT US
WRITE: Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 1RE
PHONE: 01603 772464 **EMAIL:** letstalk@archant.co.uk

Support and advice

The next meeting of the PMRGCA (Polymyalgia Rheumatica and Giant Cell Arteritis) East Anglia support group will be held on Thursday, April 23 at Needham Market Community Centre, School Road, Needham Market, Suffolk IP6 8BB.

The hall will be open for refreshments and socialising from 10.30am, and at 11am a short AGM will be followed by a presentation with question and answer session. Simon Hardman Lea, consultant ophthalmologist, will talk about the structure of the eye, visual problems, eye care and treatment, particularly with respect to PMR and GCA.

Everyone is welcome to join us to listen to the talk and to meet others who suffer from these conditions. Entry costs £1, it is not necessary to be a member of the organisation to attend.

For more information, contact 07909 530311 or pmrgcachair@btinternet.com

Sandra Waspe
PMRGCA East Anglia

Remembering the Kelsale boys

Recently my brother in law, Basil Lowe, came across these photos from the 1950s . They were taken of the local village lads at Kelsale, near Saxmundham.

Basil is a regular reader of Let's Talk, and loves the old pictures sent in by readers. I hope that these are of interest to other readers, who may be able to name some of the young players.

Paul Grimwood
Halesworth, Suffolk

Basil Lowe found these photos of the boys of Kelsale in the 1950s.

Basil and Paul would love to know if any readers recognise any of the boys.

A sad day

On reading the letter on memories of George White School in your March issue, it brought back some of my own.

My earliest memory is from the late 1940s, when I remember being taken as a young toddler to a large, well-lit room with chairs around the wall on which were seated lots of young mothers. In the centre was a large table on which stood some scales with a basket on top in which the nurses were weighing babies. I well remember standing by my seated mother's knees watching the proceedings.

Later, in the early 1950s, I attended school there. I remember being one of the pirates in a school play, and flicking cigarette cards in the playground. The one whose card ended nearest to the wall took the rest. It wasn't too fair as some used thicker cards from weighing machines, such as the one in little Woolies in Magdalen Street. These were easier to aim.

A sweet shop nearby sold White Owl ice-cream, a brand long gone. We used to play rough-and-tumble games on a nearby piece of sloping grassy wasteland, during which I broke my arm. Then on returning to school with a plaster cast, some days later, I found that the older boy, who had accidentally given me the damaging push, was now on crutches with a plastered broken leg. I somehow felt sad over this.

My most outstanding memory occurred when I was in my first class at the school. One lunchtime, as we were waiting for our teacher to dismiss us, a girl came into the room and handed her a piece of paper. On looking at the note the teacher looked quite serious. Then, in due course, she dismissed us. As we left the classroom to go home for lunch, we heard from other children what were the contents of that note. Our King, George VI, had just died. I will always remember walking down the lane to my home as groups of children were running past shouting, "The King is dead, the King is dead". A sad lunchtime.

Barry Harvey
Hellesdon, Norwich

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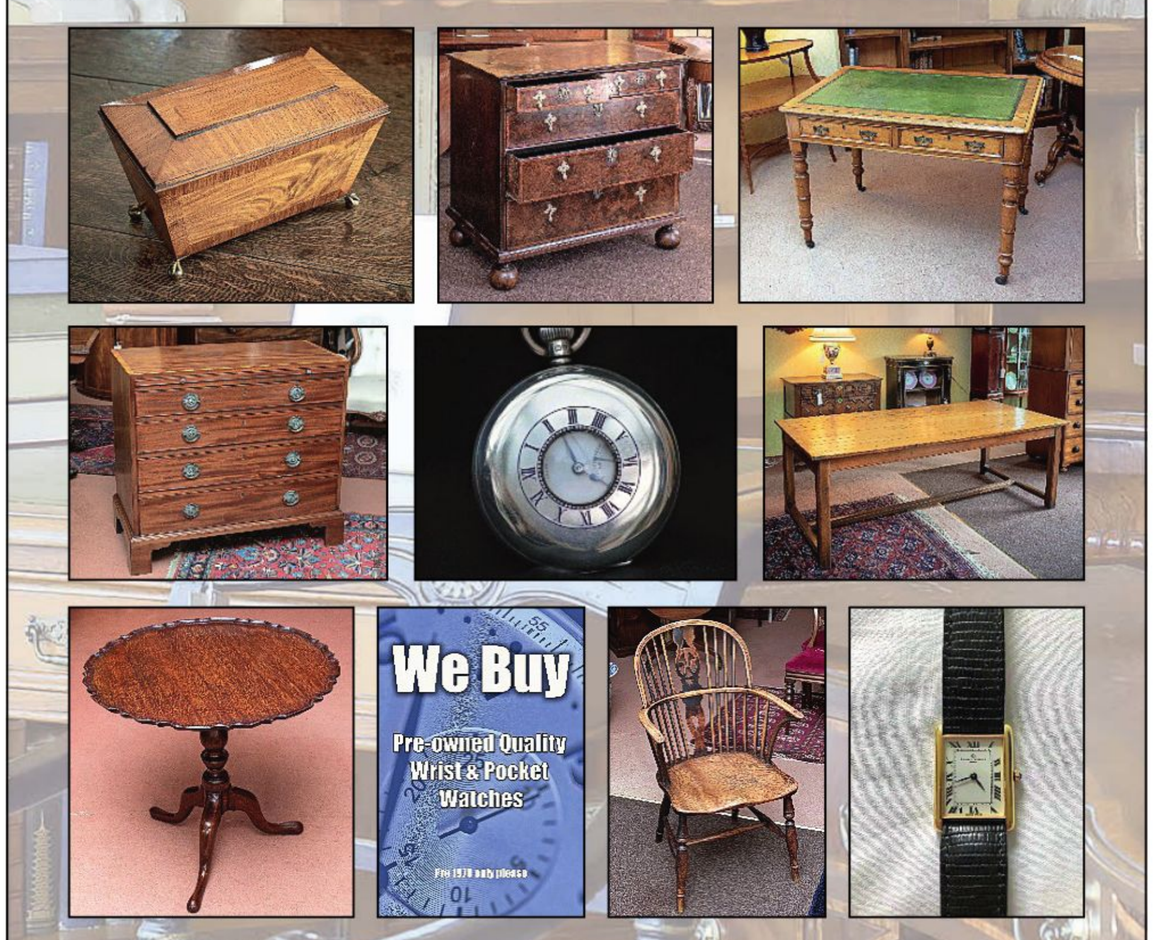

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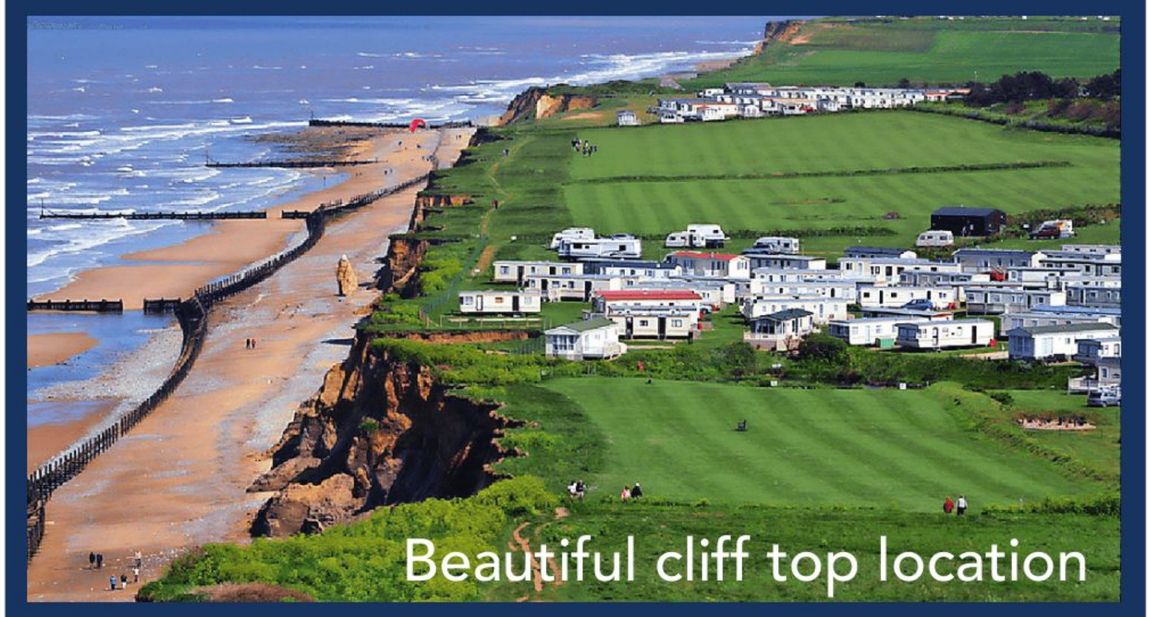

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Re-united with Petra, at Salford Quays in 2018.

Peter's passion for pooches

Who better to interview for our special issue about pets than TV presenter Peter Purves? He was commentator at Crufts for 41 years and has four dogs of his own. Peter, who lives in Suffolk, talks to **Rachel Banham**.

Peter Purves speaks with a knowledge and passion for dogs that comes with having worked with them professionally for more than 40 years and having had many as pets.

Yet Peter, who was an actor in Doctor Who before he started work on BBC's Blue Peter, recalls that he wasn't really a dog person until he joined the children's programme. There, he was famously teamed up with Petra, a five-year-old border collie/German shepherd cross.

"She'd been brought into the programme as a surrogate pet for the nation – it was a brilliant idea. That was before I joined the show, so she'd been on the show for five years when I joined," Peter recalls.

"But she never really liked the studio very much and the editor Biddy Baxter, whose idea it had been in the first place, after I'd been on the show for about three or four months said: 'Look, Petra seems to like being with you on the set, she doesn't seem to mind that too much, would you like to take her on as your pet?'

"Well, I had to think about it. As an actor you can't have a pet because you can't give them the time. It's very unfair. If you can't give a dog lots of time, then you shouldn't have one.

"But then suddenly there was this option of having a dog at home which came to work with me, because she came to the studio every day, and if I was going filming in the UK she used to come with me – so it was very practical. And so that's how I took her on."

Peter and Petra were together for 10 years. Petra died in 1977 and today a bronze statue of her stands outside BBC's MediaCityUK at Salford.

Peter met his wife, Kathryn (Kate) in 1978. She had always kept a Pekingese dog, as her mother had at one time bred them.

"When we got married we got another Peke. Eventually we had three Pekingese, so those were our first three dogs," he says.

When they moved out of London in 1987, they bought two Newfoundlands.

Peter recalls that when they

“To be honest, it feels quite empty in the house with just four.”

Teddy and Dottie.

looked after a standard wire-haired dachshund of friends while they were on holiday they fell in love with her. They bought one of her puppies and named her Hattie. They then got another dog and named him Woody.

“They mated and we had a litter of seven standard wire-haired dachshund puppies,” Peter says. “It was a very joyous time. At one time when the puppies were just born, we had 12 dogs in the house, but we had to let five go. And that was the hardest thing.”

Today, the couple have 12-year-old standard wire-haired dachshund Teddy, as well as Bertie, a three-and-a-half-year-old miniature wire-haired dachshund and two Pekingese, Lillie and Max.

“It’s a small brood now. To be honest, it feels quite empty in the house with just four,” Peter says.

“When we had lots of dogs here – we had seven for quite a while – we had a sort of moving floor. Everywhere you looked there was a dog.

Peter’s current brood, from left, Teddy, Bertie, Max and Lillie.

“Dogs are companions. They’re certainly not human and some are brighter than others. But dogs have different functions.”

The Kennel Club recognises more than 200 different breeds in this country, divided into seven groups.

“And those groups are very distinctive because they describe the function of that type of dog,” Peter says.

“You’ve got to be careful about the kind of dog you go for and if ▶

you know that then you can have a very happy relationship with your dog. Not every dog is right for everybody."

Explaining why dogs are so special to him and his family, he says: "You're there for them and they know that. They're very reliant on human company. They like people.

"It's nurture not nature, you know, with them. Because there are no bad dogs, if you look after them well it's very rare that the dogs turn out to be anything other than lovely."

Peter has lived in Suffolk for the past 20 years.

"I love living in rural Suffolk. We've made good friends here and we're very happy living here," he says. "It's a wonderful county. It's not too flat, it has rolling countryside, the views are fantastic. The people are nice. It's just lovely."

He has filmed in the county many times, including for Blue Peter.

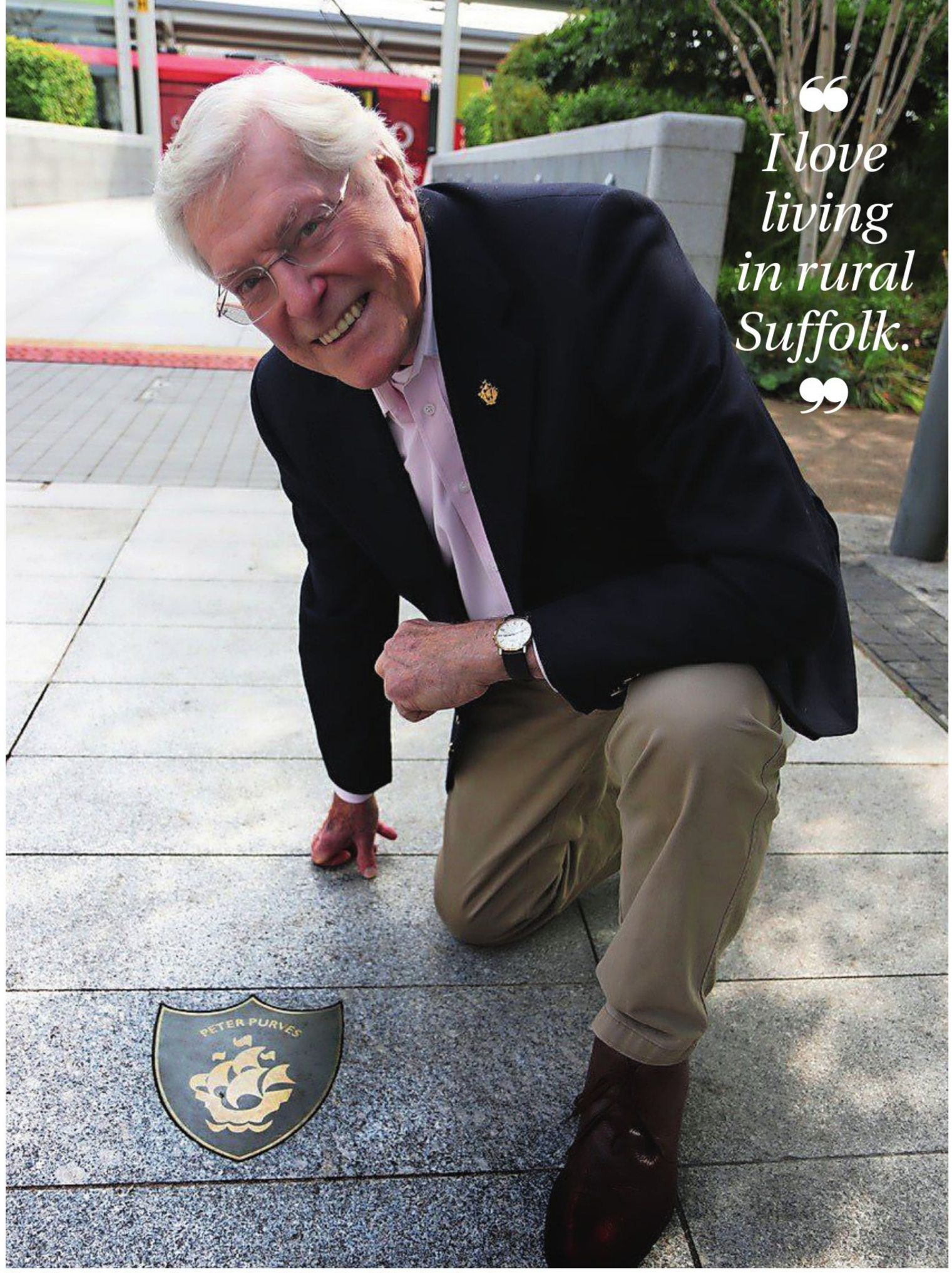
"I did a big thing on Minsmere when they were trying to persuade the avocet to come back, and of course the avocet is now the emblem of the RSPB."

Peter recalls how he filmed with former newsreader Robert Dougall, who was then president of the RSPB.

He adds: "I've filmed in Saxmundham, I've filmed in Framlingham Castle, I've filmed at the docks, filmed on the Orwell Bridge. I've done quite a few films in this area. I've also done stuff on the Broads. So it's a place I've always had a leaning towards and we like it here."

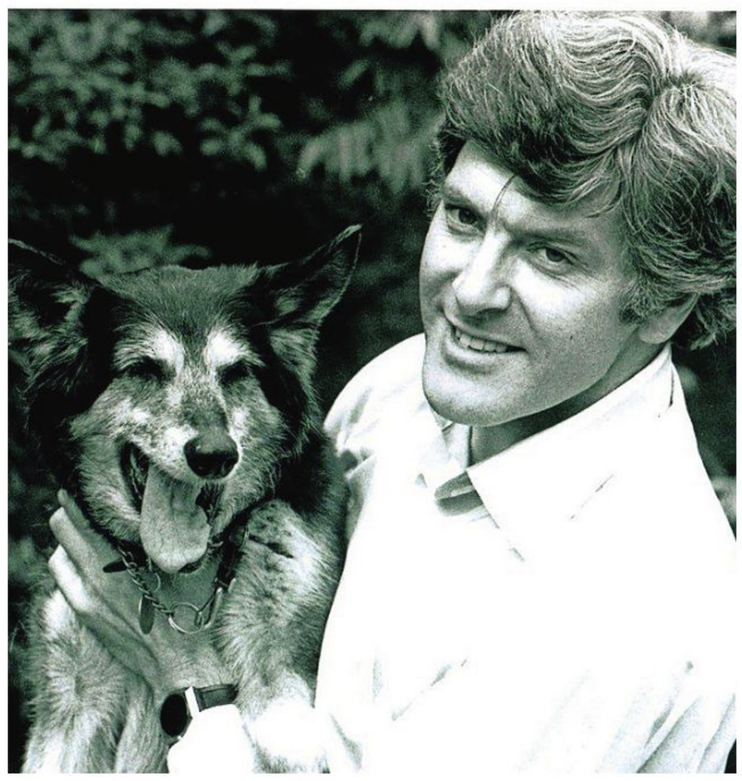
Most recently, Peter has been seen on ITV's This Morning, in his mini-series Peter's Perfect Pups, spotlighting the work done by rescue centres.

"I've done four films for them," he says. "And I'm hoping that there will be more coming up later in the year." LT



"I love living in rural Suffolk."

On the Gold Badge Walk at Media City, Salford.



Another lovely shot, with Petra in 1977.

VOICE OF CRUFTS

Peter's voice has long been synonymous with Crufts, and many were shocked when it was announced he would not be part of the team this year.

He says: "I'm very disappointed with Channel Four's decision to drop me from the commentating team. It's been a joy – I mean, for 41 years I've been going to Crufts and I've watched the show grow."

However, Peter was planning to be at Crufts this year, which is on from March 5 to 8. "The Kennel Club have asked me to present the best in show trophy this year to the winning owner and dog," he says. "So I'm quite proud of that."

Hattie at five months.

■ Visit Peter's website at: www.peterpurves.net

■ Peter has also recorded various audiobook novelisations of Doctor Who stories. Find out more online at: www.bigfinish.com

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In dogs we trust

Looking for a canine companion? A dog will change your life. **Derek James** recommends a visit to the Dogs Trust at Snetterton in Norfolk.

PEPPER

Pepper is a sweet but sensitive lurcher who enjoys her food, especially tasty treats. She loves toys and will play happily and carry them around with her. She enjoys being with similar sized canines, however she isn't suitable to live with small dogs or other small animals. Pepper walks nicely on lead and will make a loyal companion. Pepper will suit a home that can teach her some new things to help build up her confidence. Ideally she would like a secure garden to run about in and burn some energy,
She could live with children aged 14 years or older. She can be built up to being left for up to four hours.

The training hall at the Dogs Trust at Snetterton.

Right. Let's get this straight. Be warned.

Imagine you have been thinking about how you would like to share your home with a friend who is looking for a "fur-ever" home.

If so then I recommend popping along to the wonderful Dogs Trust, off the A11 at Snetterton in Norfolk, near the race track. But the chances are you will fall head over heels for one of the dogs you will see – well, probably far more.

BLUE

Blue is a gorgeous, kind-natured three-year-old lurcher who loves a cuddle with people he knows and soaking up attention from those around him.
Once he feels comfortable around you, Blue is a friendly boy who enjoys being sociable and has made lots of human friends at the centre.
He is a chilled-out boy who loves spending time curled up somewhere comfy or playing with toys.
He would love someone to join in his games in his forever home.
Blue gets very excited about going out for adventures, but he walks well on the lead.
He would be a great companion to someone who enjoys long and varied walks.He would suit a home where he is the only pet but would benefit from socialising with other dogs on his walks.
He could live with live with teenagers aged 14 or older and would love a quiet space on his own to chill out at time.
Blue can be worried by men and may take a little longer to get to know any males visiting the home.

It may well change your life so be prepared . . . one look could melt many a heart.

The dogs are looking for someone who will give them the love and attention they deserve – and that could be you.

Today, the Dogs Trust is the UK's largest dog welfare charity and cares for 15,000 dogs across its network of 20 re-homing centres in the UK and one in Dublin.

The trust is devoted to looking after the dogs it receives for a number of reasons. Maybe their owner is no longer able to care for them or they may have been taken in by the dog wardens. Then there are the former greyhound racers, lovely dogs.

Some will have had a tough life and deserve better. Far better. They may have suffered at the hands of humans. Now we need to show them not all people are cruel and uncaring.

Formed back in 1819 during the first Crufts Show, it was called The National Canine Defence League – you may remember the name.

The rehoming area at the Dogs Trust at Snetterton.

Its mission was to campaign against vivisection, unnecessary muzzling and prolonged chaining, as well as providing care for stray dogs. It was re-named the Dogs Trust in 2003 and its work continues to grow. It is an organisation which does such brilliant work.

I have been chatting to Paige Pope who is the support relations officer at Snetterton, which has more than 40 kennels and looks after about 50 to 60 dogs.

"We have about 25 people working full and part-time. Three live on the site, where there is always someone there. We also have a wonderful network of around 60 volunteers," says Paige.

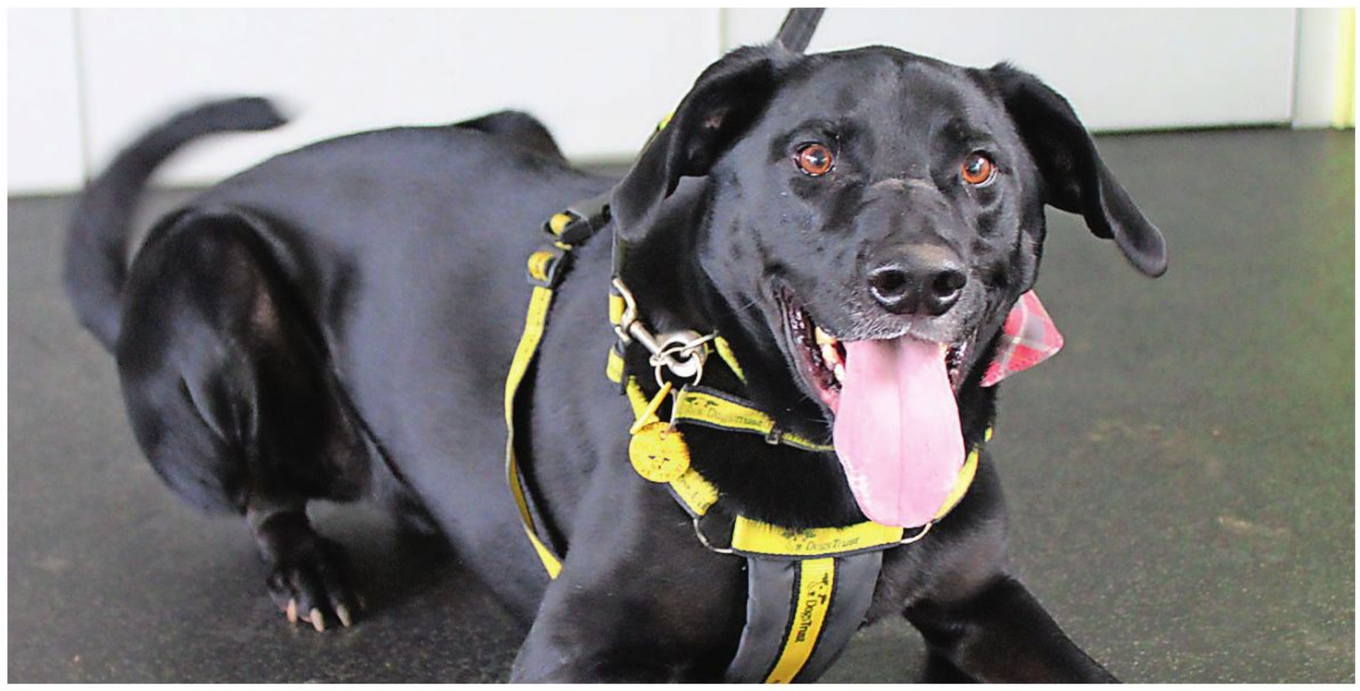
Even if you can't give a home to a dog, the trust needs and deserves our support in many different ways. Perhaps some fundraising, or even donations of towels and blankets or food and treats. Even a toy or two.

The charity is working towards the day when all dogs can enjoy a happy life, free from the threat of unnecessary destruction. LT

For more details about the work of the Dogs Trust, go online and search: www.dogstrust.org.uk Or you can ring 01953 666888 or 498377 for information about the trust.
Get in touch with the trust about any of the dogs we have featured here and so many more. And please, let us know how you get on!

REX

A bouncy Labrador-cross with lots of energy, Rex loves fetch and other fun games.
He enjoys treats which will come in handy as an incentive for any future training.
He's a lively lad who's full of beans and loves keeping active. There's never a dull moment when this boy is around! He is looking for an adult-only home where he is the only pet, and a secure garden to run about in.
Rex has lots of potential and could be the perfect addition to an active family who can keep this fun-loving boy entertained.



Puppy days are keeping Derek busy

We are in danger of turning into "that couple with that black and white dog". **Derek James** gives us an update on life with Bertie, the Tibetan terror, sorry, terrier.

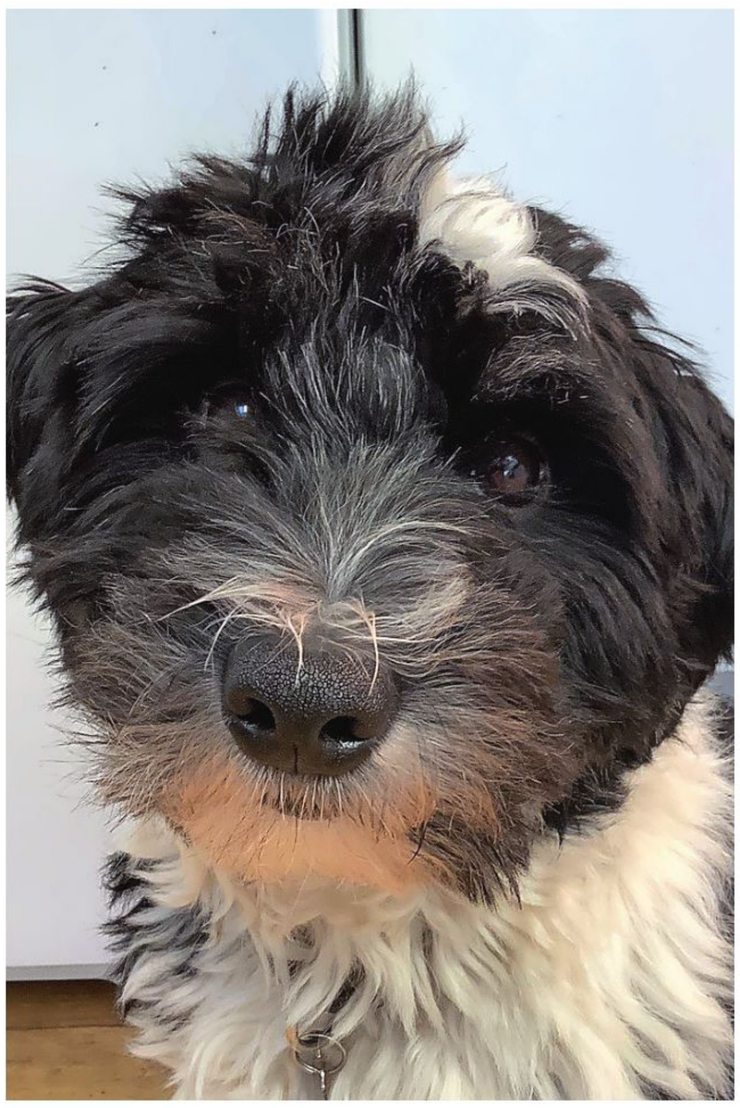
Bertie is now a handsome 14 month old chap; we feel 10 years older since he arrived last year.

Several pairs of glasses, goodness knows how many socks, gloves, papers, pens, pencils, tissues (a favourite), even a credit card. The boy Bertie loves to chew them all, and when you shout "NO!" and "DROP" he hides under the kitchen table where he is just out of reach.

And then comes the ritual when we take him – or rather he takes us – out for walks.

There are a couple of places near to where we live where he can have a good run and how he loves to play with other dogs. To say Bertie is a friendly little fellow is something of an understatement. He loves romping about with canine chums and (we are still trying to stop this) jumping up at other people. Not so good with messy paws.

Ready for the off...Bertie out for an adventure.



Bertie gives one of his heart-melting looks.

Mind you, he is getting better at coming back (the experts call it recall). I didn't realise that my wife Bridgette had quite such a loud voice. In fact, you may well have heard her shout "BERTIE!", as we walk the Norfolk countryside.

Phew! It can be hard work sharing a home with a dog.

During our half century (almost) of married life we have never been without a dog – and some cats. Oh, and hamsters. And rabbits.

The master of mischief, Bertie.

It was last summer when I first introduced Let's Talk readers to Bertie the puppy. Well he is now Bertie the boy. Excuse me – the postman has just been and I need to get to the letters before Bertie does . . . Just made it.

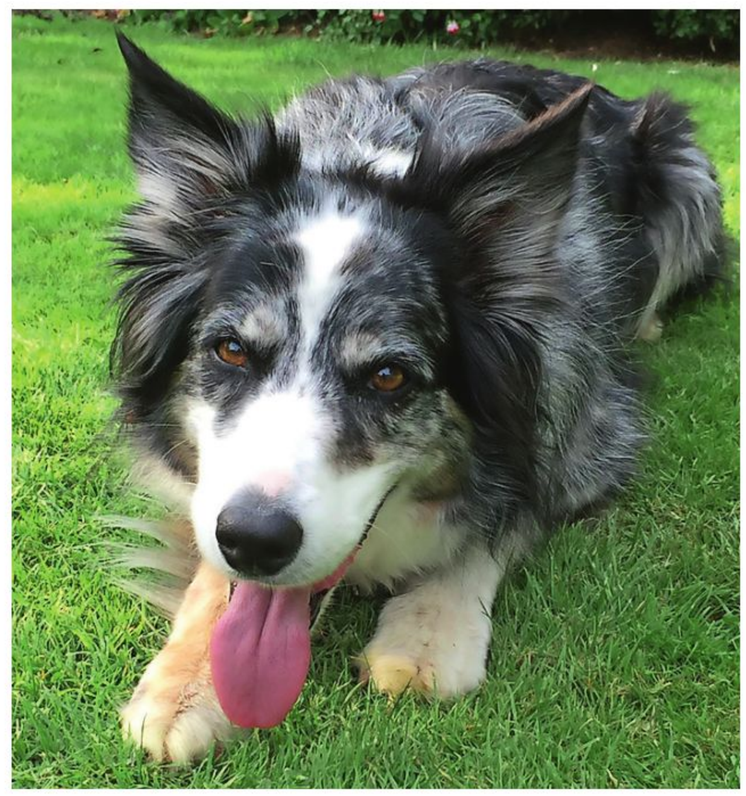
When I was growing up in Diss in the 1950s we had two dogs, Snookie and Brinnie. Bridgette's family – they were the Wilbys – had so many animals (no less than 14, ranging from a lizard to a pony – the three girls were photographed by Ivan Underwood for a piece in the local press).

Excuse me – "Drop it, Bertie!"

Anyway along came Toby, Harry, Betsy and Doris, and now Bertie is running our lives.

Relaxing after a day of play.

YOU AND YOUR PET



- Do you have a pet you share your home with?
- Have you a dog or cat from a rescue home?
- What makes them so special?
- What difference do they make to your life?

We would love to hear your stories and see your photographs.

Please write to us at Let's Talk, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich, NR1 1RE, or email us at letstalk@archant.co.uk

We thought long and hard about getting another dog after we lost dear little Doris, but the house seemed so empty without one. Then Bertie arrived.

We've moved on from Puppy Perfect classes – he wasn't – but he is starting to behave himself a little more.

And he keeps us on the move. Up first thing to take him for a walk. A longer walk during the day and then one last thing at night.

He has learned to sit on the back door mat and waits for us to wipe his paws when we get home.

We meet lots of people with their dogs. Bertie is often described as a "little character" as he races here, there and everywhere.

Oh no – he has just run past with a pair of my best socks in his mouth . . .

Slowly but surely he is calming down, and when he cuddles up for some attention and gives you one of 'those looks' our hearts melt.

He is a dear little chap and we both love him . . . most of the time! LT

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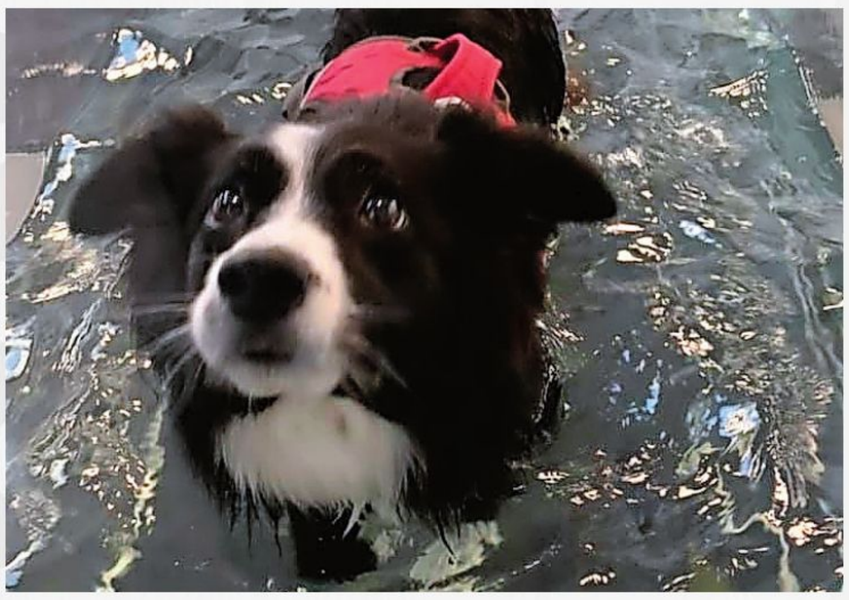

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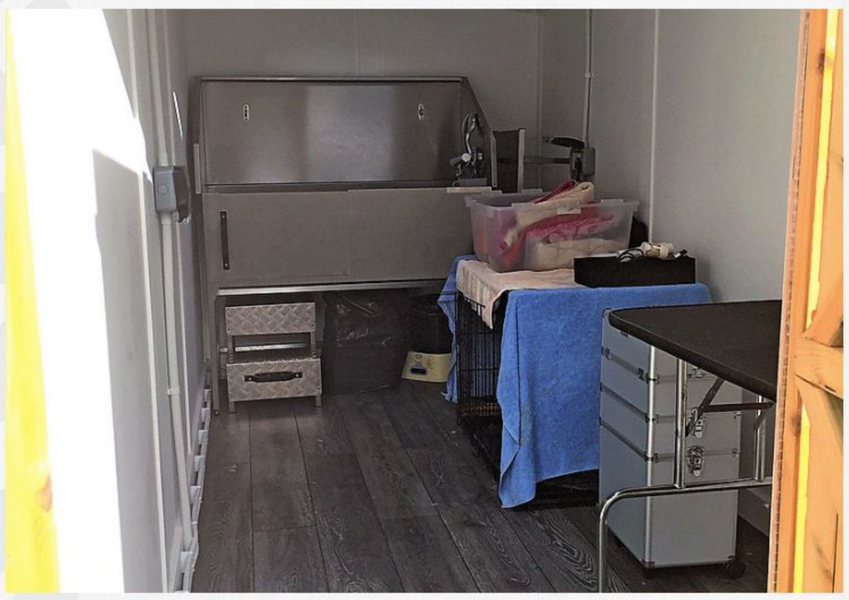

Philly's Dog Grooming

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Pet of the month

We love our pets and we know you do too. Some of our readers have been in touch to ask if we could bring back our popular Pet of the Month feature, and we are happy to oblige. So it's over to you – send us a photo and your little darling could be our Pet of the Month.

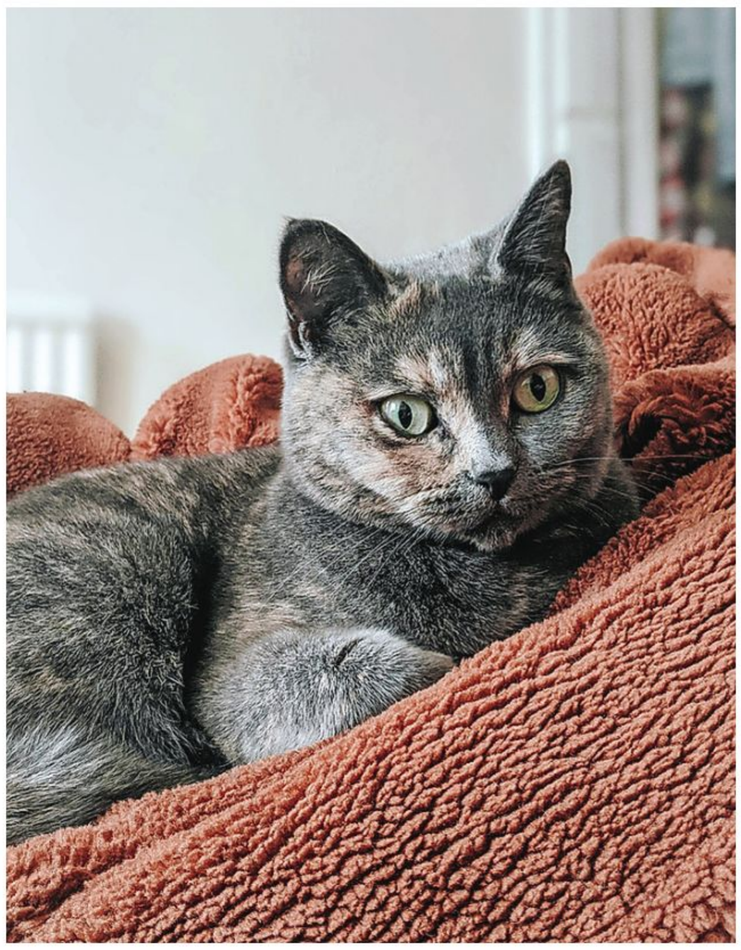
Her name is Lola – from the song by The Kinks – and she is the much-loved and very chatty cat of Let's Talk's advertising executive Lily Stroud-Li-Rocchi.

Lola is about two-and-a-half years old and is a half British short-hair. Her father was an apricot cat, hence her eye patch, markings and round face.

Lily says: "She's absolutely tiny. I got her at about six months and she hasn't really grown much since, except maybe outwards! But she's a big foodie and always likes to have a look at what we're having for dinner and will happily help herself if she gets a chance.

"Lola loves to sit at the windowsill and watch the world go by. She chirps at birds and has three male cats from next door that like to sit outside the window and talk to her. She's super chatty and she will happily meow back to any questions I ask her – she has even been known to back-chat when she's been told her off!

"Her favourite time to get up and zoom around the house is 3am. But she's an absolute angel and I wouldn't change any of it for the world!"



Lola, our first Pet of the Month.

DO YOU HAVE AN ADORABLE PET?

We would love to feature your dog, cat, rabbit, bird or other animals in our new Let's Talk Pet of the Month column. Just send us a photo and a few words about your pet and what makes him or her such a character to us at Let's Talk, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 1RE or send an email to letstalk@archant.co.uk

Out and about with your four-legged friend

We certainly don't go short of lovely places to take our dogs for a walk in Norfolk and Suffolk. And this year there are plenty of events where dogs are especially welcome, so your pup can have a great day out too. Here's a few coming up this spring:

■ Framlingham Country Show and Dog Show on April 4 and 5 at Framlingham College, in Suffolk, includes charity fun shows with the Festivals of Dogs. The following weekend, April 12 and 13, it is the East Anglian Festivals of Dogs at the Elveden Estate, near Thetford. This charity event includes dog shows, demonstrations and plenty for dogs and owners to get involved with. Find out more about both events online at: festivalsofdogs.co.uk

■ On Sunday, April 19, join in The Great British Dog Walk at the Blickling Estate, Norfolk, for a fun-filled dog walk and activities in aid of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. You may get to meet a hearing dog and find out more about what makes these such special companions. Entry is £12 for adults, with under 16s going free, and you can ask people to sponsor your dog for the walk too. For information and to get cheaper online tickets, take a look at: www.hearingdogs.org.uk

■ Strutt Your Mutt takes place on Sunday, June 14, at Benacre Estate, near Beccles, Suffolk. Hosted by Wangford Veterinary Clinic, this great fundraising event is in aid fo Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, and includes dog walks, demonstrations, a dog show and more. Find out more about what's on at: struttyourmutt.co.uk

■ And make a date in your diary for the dog show and family fun day at Holkham Hall, Norfolk, on July 12, and All About Dogs at Norfolk Showground, Norwich, on August 30 and 31.

Picture: Halfpoint / iStock / Getty Images Plus

Nature and nostalgia at the house on the hill

For half a century How Hill on the Norfolk Broads has been giving children the chance to experience and enjoy nature, as **Richard Batson** reports.

Den building is great fun. Photos: How Hill Trust

Boat trips to explore the Broads.

Dyke dipping fun.

The Boardman twins Humphrey and Stuart exploring the waterways.

Childhood days spent at a Broads landmark leave nature lessons deeply rooted in the heads – and hearts – of its young visitors. For 50 years How Hill has been temporary home to generations of pupils who learn about the creatures, plants, people and history of Norfolk's famous waterland.

The country house overlooking the River Ant near Ludham has hosted them for day trips and overnight stays in its role as an environmental study centre, which began in 1968.

Activities include dyke dipping for bugs, nature trails, listening for birds, identifying trees and making dens. Youngsters even try their hands at the timeless craft of thatching – with their work tested for waterproofing by sitting behind it and having a bucket of water thrown over the reed!

That is the kind of lesson that sticks in the memory, and also draws people back to the 'house on the hill' when they are grown-ups.

Elanor Nicholls, a teacher at How Hill for 14 years, says: "We get so many adults here on family fun days who fondly remember their childhood visits. They particularly

SAMPLE HOW HILL'S DELIGHTS AT THESE 2020 EVENTS

Spring Birds – boat and minibus trips, talks and accommodation: April 3-5.
Writing Norfolk – creative writing session inspired by How Hill: April 18.
Family fun days – nature activities: July 29, 31. August 4, 6.
Open air theatre – Sherlock Holmes by The Pantaloons: August 23. Book via Jeanne Flett, 01692 678500.
Broadland Heritage – stay for a week and explore How Hill's heritage and landscape with tours, talks and boat trips: August 24-27.
Tea room – open weekends May 23 to August 30, daily in half term May 23-31 and summer holidays July 18-August 30, 11am-4pm.
Secret Gardens – Open daily. Guided tours by arrangement.
Wherries – Hathor at the staithe, May 3 to September 29. Sailings with lunch on May 30, June 17, July 11, August 11, September 9. Week-long wherry experience with sailing, September 1-5. Also luxury sailings on Ardea. More details on 01692 678555 or online at: www.howhilltrust.org.uk

remember the boat trips – and for some it was their first. They also loved dyke dipping, the gardens, which some say seemed like a maze, and sleeping in the dormitories."

During 2019 How Hill had 1,466 children on residential visits, 1,454 on day trips from schools mostly in Norfolk and Suffolk but also as far away as the East Midlands.

But it is also a place for adults, hosting about 2,000 last year on courses such as wherry sailing, garden tours, events including outdoor theatre, Christmas lunches, private functions and some behind the scenes tours.

How Hill's educational work is set on a landscape dating back to an Ice Age glacier which formed the mound on which it stands, and the flooding of the peat quarries which formed the Norfolk Broads.

The house itself has a much shorter but fascinating history, going back to the early 20th Century. It was built as a holiday home by architect Edward Thomas Boardman, whose firm shaped some of the county's most iconic urban landmarks including London Street and the old Norfolk and Norwich Hospital.

He and wife Florence plus children Joan, Christopher, twins Humphrey and Stuart, and Michael moved in during 1905. The youngsters enjoyed an idyllic childhood there exploring the river, fishing, and learning to sail. The family had close ties, through Florence, to the influential Colman and Cozens-Hardy families, putting them firmly among the Norfolk 'great and good' of the time, and making How Hill a popular spot for glitzy social gatherings.

In the 1960s, following the parents' deaths, the house went up for sale. Locals feared it would be snapped up by a developer and turned into marinas or a holiday camp. But it was bought for £37,000 by Norfolk County Council education committee, renovated and opened as a residential education centre in September 1968, when naturalist Ted Ellis said it would provide a "slice of paradise" for the children of Norfolk.

Edward, Florence, Joan, twins Humphrey and Stuart, and Christopher Boardman in 1905. Old photos: The Boardman family

Another 'crisis' loomed in 1982 when cost pressures led County Hall to close it and there were moves to sell it as a private convalescent home. But a drive to save How Hill for the public was successful thanks to the intervention of the then Norwich Union insurance group – forerunner of Aviva. The company leased, then gave, the house to a new charitable trust which was formed on April 1, 1984, and still runs it today, supported by a Friends group formed in 1988.

It has hosted VIP visitors from royalty to politicians. But its most important visitors are the children who learn to love Norfolk and its nature during visits which last only days but linger for a lifetime. LT

Adult visitors enjoying the view.

Frank Price was a store that valued its customers

It was 135 years ago that 'Granny' Price set up a tiny shop in Norwich which grew to become one of the best-loved and forward-thinking stores in the whole region. **Derek James** reports.

They would come from far and wide. Country folk mingled with city dwellers at the big shop, which was torn down in 1963 because it stood in the way of 'progress'.

The Frank Price department store was one of the many properties which were bulldozed to make way for the Magdalen Street flyover and the Anglia Square development in Norwich during the 'planning madness' of the time.

But the memories remain across Norfolk and Suffolk and we hope these photographs will help to bring back even more of this wonderful old shop where I went as a boy. There was even a hospital shop which operated all over the two counties.

Alice Jane Price, known to one and all as 'Granny' Price, opened her haberdashery shop in Magdalen Street in 1885. Husband Frank was a commercial traveller, making his way around Norfolk and into Suffolk with his pony and cart. When he realised she was making more money than him, he joined her. She welcomed him but made him pay her rent for it!

> *"Who remembers that cash railway network with the little wooden balls full of money?"*

Members of the Price family continued to run the shop as it

Smart old frontage of the Frank Price shop.

Off on a summer trip, some of the staff from the store. Can you spot anyone you recognise in the group?

I was delighted to hear from Rosemary Shimmens, of Spixworth, near Norwich, who worked in the glove and hosiery department at Price's in the 1950s.

Rosemary recalls: "I had to wear a dark green uniform. Lady floor workers wore black suits. Gloves came in astrakhan, fur-backed leather, washable chamois, fairisle knitted wool, and elbow length net gloves for brides and bridesmaids.

"At this time the first fashion colours came in sage green, tan and maroon, but shoes and handbags didn't match the gloves like today. Stockings (not tights) came in wool, lisle, silk, silk and rayon and fishnet. Nylons were only just available and made by Morley, Cooks of St Paul's, Bear Brand, Pretty Polly, Wolsey and Brettles."

And she also remembers an iron lung being demonstrated in the shop because tuberculosis (TB) was still rife.

Some of the young women from the shop in days gone by.

"Our toilets were upstairs in part of the stock room. No toilet paper, just carbon copies of customers' bills. You could sit and read what customers had bought, but you did have to mind nobody had left a pin in the corner!" adds Rosemary. Ouch!

flourished and grew over many years. It was a success because it reached out to the people and made them feel part of the store.

Roy (Mr Roy) Price was the last member of the family to run the shop, and I remember him as a true gentleman. When it closed, he went on to have a wool shop nearby.

The shop on Botolph Street was a handsome one with a wrought iron staircase, a mahogany balustrade with iron fittings, a parquet floor in the basement and oak panelling. It had more than 30 different ▶

The Frank Price shop in Botolph Street, Norwich, in 1963.

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All the buildings seen in this picture of Magdalen Street from December 1960 were demolished to provide space for the flyover built in 1971. Botolph Street is seen leading off to the left. The facing building is a branch of Barclays Bank and behind it was the departmental store of Frank Price whose shop ran through to the continuation of Magdalen Street just off the right hand side of the picture. The store also occupied buildings on the left hand side of Botolph Street. The gable ended building on the left was known as the Dolls Hospital, being a shop that repaired all types of dolls, teddy bears, etc. Photo: C3819

departments and at its height employed 200-plus people.

And who remembers that cash railway network with the little wooden balls full of money?

But it was the way the shop and its staff treated their customers which made the Frank Price department store so special.

This part of 'Norwich Over the Water' was not the richest, and for many people money was tight. At the Price shop you could pay in cash, set up a monthly account, have interest-free hire purchase or there was the draw . . . It worked like this, there were 600 agents in the region who lived on their commission. They collected the amounts from customers on their round each week for whatever they wanted to pay. A ticket would be drawn each week and whoever won got £5 to spend at the shop. When the shop closed there was no less than £40,000 in the kitty.

Members of the Frank Price Fire Patrol in Norwich.

And the business was also out and about in the community. There were about 20 people in two vans running a hospital shop. People would phone in with their orders and the vans would head off to hospitals across Norfolk and into Suffolk, including Ipswich. They would also set up a counter in the hospitals where patients and staff could come and browse.

The Price men and women also ran fashion parades in social clubs, when orders for the garments on show would be taken. There was a profit-sharing scheme for the staff and an open forum where they could come up with their own ideas for bettering the business.

How the people loved Frank Price and indeed felt part of it. It was a large department store which never lost its family feel. It employed more than 100 people when it closed and the memories live on. LT

Do you remember the Frank Price store or perhaps the hospital shop? We would love to share your thoughts about this store and others that have disappeared from our high streets in recent decades. Drop us a line at Let's Talk, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich NR1 1RE or email us at letstalk@archant.co.uk

Many years ago Roy Price told me of the time he was a little lad watching the balls on the cash railway network in the shop.

"I remember thinking that my father's name was Price and my name was Price, so that the money belonged to me. I opened one of the balls and took the money out. I received the biggest telling-off I have ever had," said 'Mr Roy'.

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Winging their way on wildlife challenge

Readers will know **Barry Madden** as the writer of our delightful monthly Nature pages. Barry and his wife Denise are about to embark on an extraordinary year.

Let's Talk's nature writer Barry Madden and his wife Denise.

His nature articles entrance us each month, connecting us to some of the beauty and wonders of our East Anglian wildlife. And in recent months, Barry Madden has introduced us to the flora and fauna of Argentina, the Falkland Islands and Brazil. His words and photos bring an insight into the natural world and inspire us to take a walk with nature ourselves.

Now Barry is about to embark on a personal challenge that will see him dig deeper into the wild and wonderful world of Norfolk and Suffolk's birds, butterflies and moths – as well as travelling across

the globe in search of even more fascinating and far flung creatures. His challenge, WingSearch2020, has an ultimate aim too of helping to educate the region's young people about conservation and nature.

Barry explains: "Wildlife in East Anglia, the wider UK and across the world is suffering dramatic declines in species numbers and abundance. There are many reasons for this, but a sure way to protect the environment from future harm is through education.

"Opening the eyes and ears of young people to the wonders of nature and connecting them to the natural world brings significant long-term physical, mental and emotional benefits. It is with this in mind that WingSearch2020 has been formed."

WingSearch2020 is a self-funded project being led by Barry and his wife Denise, who live

in Norwich, and which aims to raise £15,000 for Norfolk-based conservation charities. All money raised will be used directly on educational projects that promote access to nature and sustainable conservation.

The idea behind the project is that Barry and Denise will be attempting to see 2,020 different species of bird, butterfly and moth during the period April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021.

"The majority will be in Norfolk and Suffolk," explains Barry. "In Norfolk, if we really tried, we might be able to get 250 bird species in a year – 300 if we branch out further. There are probably 40 butterflies, and if you saw every species of moth, you'd be looking at maybe 700 big, 1,000 small. But to do that you would have to be out all day and night all through the year. So we are going to supplement it by our own trips abroad when we will also be looking for birds, butterflies and moths."

In a series of trips, which they are funding themselves, the Maddens will be visiting Trinidad, Panama, the Spanish Pyrenees, Africa and Mexico during the next 12 months. "It is going to be tight, but I hope that it captures people's imaginations and that they will want to get involved too. It would be lovely if we could encourage people to let us know what they have spotted and where.

"We have unique habitat in East Anglia, like the Broads, Brecks and a long coastline, lowland heathland and the claylands area south of Norwich."

Barry and Denise Madden, who are embarking on a year-long wildlife spotting challenge.

Barry, who took early retirement when he was 50 having worked for the government for 30 years, volunteered and worked for the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and volunteered with the RSPB. He will be documenting all the butterflies, birds and moths he and his wife see during the year, and will be regularly updating the WingSearch2020 website, as well as keeping us posted of his progress in Let's Talk.

Barry has a target of £15,000 which he plans to raise through a combination of crowdfunding and sponsorship for a number of events, such as long-distance walks, community bird watches, nature walks and talks and moth trapping events.

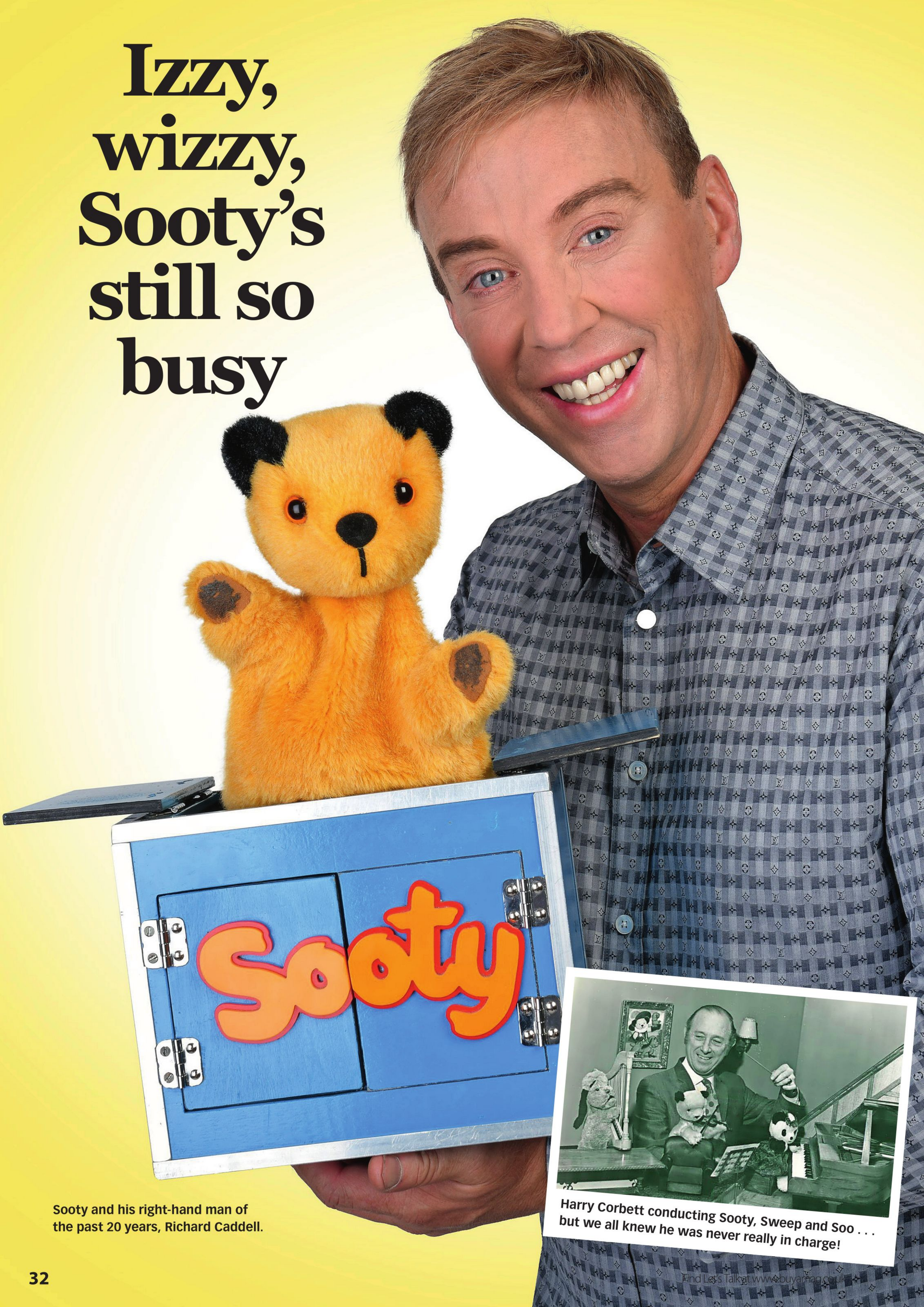
"A key element of the project is to involve as many local people as possible in nature-themed activities, either by direct participation and/or by following progress via regular blogs, articles and bulletins on social media," says Barry.

"I'm very pleased to be helping local charities with their programme of engagement and I'm looking forward to the challenge ahead.

"Let's Talk has been a great champion of my nature-themed articles and I'm grateful for its continuing support. It's going to be 12 months of hard work; it's going to take a lot of my time, money and effort. But it should also be fun and the outcomes are so worthwhile. I hope you can all come along with me and enjoy the ride." LT

Further information about the project, its planned outcomes, supporting charities and fund-raising events can be found at www.wingsearch2020.com If you would like to make a donation towards WingSearch2020 (any amount however great or small will be very gratefully received), follow the link on www.wingsearch2020.com

Izzy, wizzy, Sooty's still so busy



Sooty and his right-hand man of the past 20 years, Richard Caddell.

Harry Corbett conducting Sooty, Sweep and Soo . . . but we all knew he was never really in charge!

Find Let's Talk at www.buyamag.co.uk

He is the whispering little bear we took to our hearts. **Derek James** heads down memory lane to remember Sooty.

Photos: **Steve Ullathorne**

"Izzy, wizzy, let's get busy . . ."

And if you remember that and would like to give the younger members of your family a real treat, then head for Hunstanton on April 5. Because, the star of the show at the Princess Theatre will be the one and only Sooty – not forgetting his puppet pals Sweep and Soo.

The Richard Cadell's Sooty Magic Show has had rave reviews, and Richard is the man keeping Sooty alive and squeaking to delight a whole new generation of fans.

Now aged in his 70s, Sooty – he hasn't changed much – is still a great magician, now with a flying car, while Soo has a singing unicorn and Sweep a levitating sausage.

How I, and I suspect many of you, loved the small yellow bear and his friends

Remember Harry Corbett? He bought the glove puppet for seven shillings and sixpence from a toy shop in Blackpool – a real bargain.

Harry was a part-time magician and pianist, and he went professional after winning a talent show.

The BBC spotted Sooty, offered Harry a TV series in 1952 and five years later they were joined by Sweep and the puppets became a hilarious double act.

Once our parents got black and white television sets (ours was rented), we were hooked. The show was a highlight of the week.

Harry, who was paid £10 a week in the early days, went on to introduce us to Kipper the cat, Butch the dog and my favourite, Ramsbottom, the snake with a northern accent.

Sooty-mania spread across the country. It became one of television's longest-running programmes and Harry was reported as insuring his fingers for £20,000.

He was the straight-man letting his puppets take over, and was fairly regularly soaked with water or hit over the bonce with one of Sweep's sausages.

Even, Prince Philip got a watery welcome from Sooty and Sweep!

Harry left the BBC in 1968 and moved to ITV. In 1975 he suffered a heart attack and his son Matthew took over and also did a wonderful job. And we shouldn't forget that Harry, who died in 1989, did a lot of work for various charities, especially the National Children's Homes.

Today, Sooty and his pals have been given a 21st Century facelift and are delighting a whole new generation of young, and young at heart, fans thanks to Richard Cadell.

As worn-out Harry would say at the end of the show, "Bye, bye everybody. Bye bye". LT

Sooty's Magic Show is at the Princess Theatre, Hunstanton, Norfolk, on Sunday, April 5 at 11am and 2.30pm. For tickets and details take a look at the website: www.thesootyshow.com

A BEAR'S LIFE

Sooty – and his right-hand-man Richard Cadell – have had a busy past couple of years.

To celebrate 70 years of entertaining children, in 2018 Sooty returned to Blackpool North Pier where he was discovered by Harry Corbett, to host a free birthday party and celebrate in style, with a special live performance of The Sooty Show., with all proceeds from the performance going to local charities and Sooty's long-standing charity partner, The Royal National Institute of Blind People.

There was also a brand new television series of The Sooty Show on ITVBe, which marked 50 years since The Sooty Show first appeared on ITV in 1968.

Alongside all this, in November 2018, Sooty helped his contemporary Prince Charles celebrate his 70th birthday. They joined the Prince of Wales and a host of magicians and comedians at the London Palladium as part of ITV's 'We Are Most Amused and Amazed', a celebration of comedy and magic for Prince Charles, in aid of The Prince's Trust Charity.

Last year saw Richard and Sooty on tour as well as back on TV with appearances including Strictly Come Dancing during the customary Blackpool week; on a celebrity version of Bargain Hunt for Children in Need; appearing on Michael McIntyre's Big Show and as contestants on a pantomime special of the popular TV quiz Celebrity Pointless.

Sweep is entertaining a new generation of children.

Sooty is still up to his old tricks.

A wave from Soo.

Memories of Wei Wei Wong

She was a familiar face on our TV screens in the 1960s and '70s, and her talented daughter has followed in her footsteps. **David Clayton** remembers the dancer and actress Wei Wei Wong.

Actress Wei Wei Wong.

Back in the early 1960s it was brave for a 16-year-old girl from Hong King to travel right around the world to train as a ballerina. But that's what Wei Wei Wong did.

You won't recall her as a ballet dancer, but you will remember her as a part of the Young Generation, who were all over our TV screens in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As the head-dressed, sequinned, high-kicking showgirl dancers fell out of fashion, the young, trendy dance troupe, put together by choreographer Dougie Squires, perfectly caught the mood of the swinging '60s.

After three years training to be a ballerina in London, Wei Wei saw an advert to recruit this new group of dancers. She was planning to head to the USA to further her ballet studies, but stopped in her tracks, bowled over by this new style of modern dance.

Dougie Squires was bowled over too, by the response. He saw about 300 dancers, many more than he expected. "It was a nightmare, I had to split the auditions into two parts," he says. He had a disco section and a lyrical section. Wei Wei was in the latter. "She was so feminine and had a lovely technique," he remembers.

TV producers loved the Young Generation and they were on pretty much every BBC variety show back in the day, appearing with the likes of Shirley Bassey, Val Doonican and Lulu.

Wei Wei, with her oriental looks, stood out and quickly became a favourite with the viewers. Dougie recalls: "She had beautiful long hair, but I thought it might be a change to have her with short hair, so for one show we put her in a short wig. We got hundreds of complaints!"

She went on to be a TV star in her own right, as a hostess on TV's 'The Golden Shot', memorably hosted by Bob Monkhouse. She also had a part in the James Bond film 'The Man with the Golden Gun'. Wei Wei recorded and released records too. Although not a hit, one novelty offering was called 'The Ping Pong Song'. She even popped up on

television advertising Typhoo Tea.

The Second Generation succeeded The Young Generation and danced all over the world, including a season at Hong Kong's prestigious Excelsior Hotel. So Wei Wei was back home, and her proud parents hired a junk boat to take the troupe out around the bay. On YouTube there's an impressive video of the dancers in New York taking part in a tribute show honouring impresario Sir Lew Grade.

Wei Wei's daughter followed her into showbiz and I've just met up with Nancy again after many years. Wei Wei and her husband Tony lived in the Norfolk village of Cantley, then Thorpe, near Norwich, until her untimely death in 1999 at the young age of 51. So, it was something of a catch-up with a young woman I'd known since she was a toddler. She went to school in Brundall with my son.

Was it inevitable that Nancy would follow in her famous mum's footsteps, I wondered.

"You know you don't have to do this," is what Nancy remembers being told. But she was smitten and did do it, going off to the Doreen Bird Performing Arts School at 16, but sadly just after her mother had died.

Nancy went on to work in the West End, which must have felt like a second home because her parents would take her to London regularly, mostly to enjoy musicals.

"They were huge enthusiasts. People knew me as Wei Wei's daughter," says Nancy. She remembers meeting up with Una Stubbs, Lesley Joseph, Christopher Biggins and a 'who's who' of showbiz names.

When Nancy graduated in 2002, she went off to appear in 'Thoroughly Modern Millie', 'Hair', 'Singin' in the Rain', 'Fame' and 'Mamma Mia'. She was building a career for herself and used the middle name Wei in her showbiz billing as a rightful nod to her mother's fame and reputation, not to mention, influence.

Inevitably the desire to settle down and start a family took over. With her architect husband, Chris, from Wymondham, in Norfolk, she did just that and now has two beautiful daughters, Isobel and Clara, and lives in Kent from where Chris commutes into London to work. Just like her mother did in Norfolk, Nancy runs dancing classes for youngsters and teaches the performing arts.

Nancy's dad, Tony, is steeped in showbusiness too as a theatrical company manager, which is how he met Wei Wei. "I didn't have Mum's advice, so I used Dad. He was a huge help," Nancy says. They still talk on the phone every day.

It's sad that Wei Wei never saw her talented daughter perform in the West End. "Every show had an emotional moment for me. Mum would have been so proud." Yes, Nancy, she would. LT

Wei Wei was such an elegant stage and screen performer.

Wei Wei pictured with Nancy and David Clayton's son James, in an old photo from the family album.

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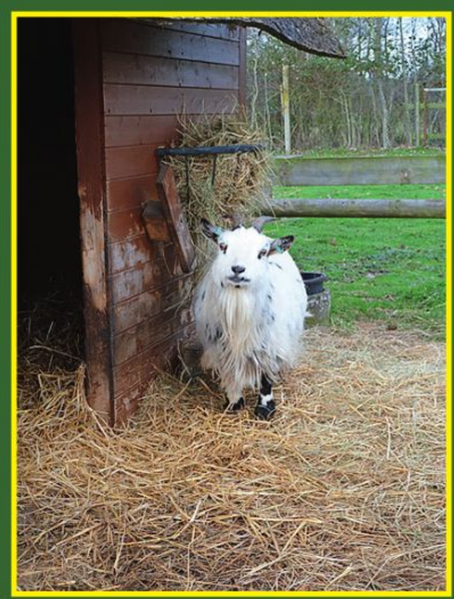

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Creating a wild and wonderful pond

Brad Abbott has been the owner of Aquamaintenance for 17 years – a family-run business specialising in all types of aquatic landscaping, from design to construction, reconstruction or on-going maintenance.

As a life-long fish keeper, I never imagined having equal enthusiasm for building a pond that isn't designed to house fish. However, over my career, I have come to appreciate the benefits that wildlife ponds can make to our environment and wildlife.

I may be biased, but I think an area of water – whether that be a lake or a small water feature – brings a garden alive. I love the sound of running water and the way the sun dances over the surface when I'm relaxing or working in the garden. And I'm not the only one: our wildlife loves water too, and more importantly, needs it for survival. Sadly, over the past century, more than 70% of ponds have disappeared from the UK countryside.

So, what can we do?

You don't need a vast pond to support your local wildlife – most pond-dwelling creatures prefer a maze of underwater plants in which to hide, breed and hunt. An old tin bath sunk into the ground with a few aquatic plants can make an attractive feature. To make a welcome haven for wildlife, just add a few modifications, such as a stone or wooden ramp in one corner among the plants.

Building a wildlife pond from scratch can be equally as satisfying, and with a bit of hard work, you can create a small wildlife pond in days. A few tips before you start:

- Minimise waste when digging out your site by keeping the best soil for a small rockery.
- Consider a good quality EPDM rubber for your liner – worth the extra pennies as it's more supple and UV-resistant.
- Please resist the temptation to use old carpet or sand as underlay; they're not puncture-resistant and will rot down, leaving your liner exposed to the underground elements.
- Create planting shelves, like steps, down to the deepest part to allow for a range of plants – 450mm/18in is an ideal width per shelf. Making the deepest section at least 600mm/24in helps regulate the temperature of a pond, providing shelter in winter, or a cooler area in summer. Lilies thrive best in depths of 600-900mm/24-36in; the pond doesn't need to be any deeper than that – even for mature lilies.

Photo: Wendy Aiken

Attract wildlife into your garden with pond.

I'm often asked: "Do you need to maintain wildlife ponds?" Yes, you do.

Allowing a small amount of sediment to build up in the bottom can be perfect for mud-dwelling creatures; left unmaintained, it builds up to form a toxic environment. Cutting back dead plants prevents further waste from going in the pond and tidies the area. This routine is best undertaken in autumn; tadpoles have matured and are independent, the breeding season is over, and you are not disturbing winter-hibernating creatures. LT

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It's that perennial problem

They look so colourful and bright in the garden centres, but do your perennials wilt away when you plant them? Let's Talk's gardening expert **Charlotte Philcox** has the advice you need to make a success of your planting this year.

Picture: Ben-Schonewille / iStock / Getty Images Plus

Through the years, I've seen so many gardeners bemused by flowering perennials which fail to thrive. It's a common problem, and one which we're often too embarrassed to own up to.

Usually, it's due to having bunged something into the soil at the wrong time, in a hurry, or in the wrong place. Whatever the reason, the result will almost inevitably be disappointment when those poor plants, which looked so lovely in the garden centre or nursery, give up the ghost.

But it's not too late for enthusiastic gardeners to mend their ways, and with so many beautiful perennial plants to choose from, the months of March, April and early May are a good time to be setting out new arrivals. Given a little care, anything purchased now should thrive, with plenty of time to establish a good root system and put on some growth before the really hot weather comes along.

It's common sense that all plants will do better if they go into soil which already contains a good natural reservoir of water from winter rains, as this makes it easier for their roots to extend into the surrounding area. If roots aren't properly established before the heat arrives, the plants will easily lose more water than they can take up, which leads to wilting, and in the worst case, complete collapse. Add on to this the fact that plants which haven't had time to develop good roots will be weak, making them prone to attack by pests and diseases, and you can see why a bit of care at planting time is so important.

To get your perennials off to a good start, make sure you prepare the soil well by adding plenty of well-rotted compost across the area where they are going to be planted. This will add useful nutrients and beneficial micro-organisms and help the soil retain moisture. A scattering or 'top dressing' of fish, blood and bone meal will also help, and for most plants, a further sprinkling of this forked into the planting hole will provide a natural, slow-release source of

SOME OF CHARLOTTE'S FAVOURITE EASY PERENNIALS

Anemone x hybrida 'Honorine Jobert' (good in shade),
Anthemis tinctoria 'E.C. Buxton', Aster novae-angliae 'Andenken an Alma Pötschke', Astrantia 'Roma', 'Hadspen Blood', 'Ruby Wedding', Calamintha nepeta 'White Cloud', Campanula persicifolia, Cephalaria gigantea, Erigeron karvinskianus, Gaura lindheimeri 'Whirling Butterflies', Geranium clarkei 'Kashmir White', Geranium pratense 'Mrs Kendall Clark', Geum 'Totally Tangerine', Helianthus 'Lemon Queen', Helenium 'Moerheim Beauty', Knautia macedonica, Kniphofia 'Ember Glow', 'Beth's Apricot Sundae', 'Percy's Pride', Leucanthemum x superbum, Phlox 'Mount Fuji', 'Blue Paradise, 'Bright Eyes', Polemonium 'Lambrook Mauve', Rudbeckia fulgida var. sullivantii 'Goldsturm', Salvia x microphylla 'Hot Lips', Salvia nemorosa 'Caradonna', Salvia x sylvestris 'Mainacht', Scabiosa caucasica 'Blausiegel', Verbena bonariensis, Verbena bonariensis 'Lollipop', and Veronica austriaca subsp. teucrium 'Crater Lake Blue'.

Picture: joel-t / iStock / Getty Images Plus

goodness. If you've prepared the area properly, the soil should have an 'open', crumbly structure and be easy to work with a trowel.

Water your new plants thoroughly, before setting them out on the surface of the soil in their pots, until you are satisfied with their positions. Then dig one planting hole at a time, making this slightly bigger than the container.

Remove the plant from its pot as gently as possible, by spreading your fingers around the 'crown' (the base of the top growth) to hold it all in place, and carefully turning the pot on its side against your hand. With a gentle shake, the plant should drop out, so that the whole thing rests against your fingers.

Use your other hand to tease out any roots which have started to grow around the outside of the container, leaving as much of the original compost undisturbed as possible. Then carefully pop the plant into the soil, making sure its top or crown is at the same level as it was in the original pot, firm in gently, and water well.

I've often seen plants put in far too shallow a hole, with the tops of their roots showing above ground, or even mounded up after planting, so they look as if they are sitting on top of little molehills. This will cause rapid drying out of the roots. Likewise, many people bury their plants too deep, allowing moisture to sit on top of the growing shoots, which can cause the crown to rot.

Picture: PaulWaguire / iStock / Getty Images Plus

Picture: Pauws99 / iStock / Getty Images Plus

"The plants that provide us with lots of colourful flowers through late spring, summer and early autumn."

Hardy perennials are, of course, the plants that provide us with lots of colourful flowers through late spring, summer and early autumn, before their surface growth naturally dies back during the winter.

They're good value for money, and given proper care in the early stages, their fresh, new shoots should appear again the following spring. LT

On the record

At the turntable to answer our questions On The Record this month is **Dawn Basham**, historical events manager at Kentwell Hall, Long Melford, Suffolk.

1 WHAT'S THE FIRST SONG YOU CAN REMEMBER FROM YOUR CHILDHOOD?
I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing by The New Seekers.

2 WHAT WAS THE FIRST RECORD YOU BOUGHT?
Kajagoogoo's Too Shy.

3 WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN LISTENING TO MOST RECENTLY?
Foo Fighters.

4 WHAT WAS THE FIRST CONCERT YOU WENT TO?
Duran Duran.

5 WHO WAS THE BEST ARTIST OR BAND YOU HAVE EVER SEEN?
Steeleye Span, when they performed at Kentwell Hall.

6 DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE SINGER?
Bruce Springsteen.

7 WHICH GENRE OF MUSIC DO YOU ENJOY THE MOST?
Rock.

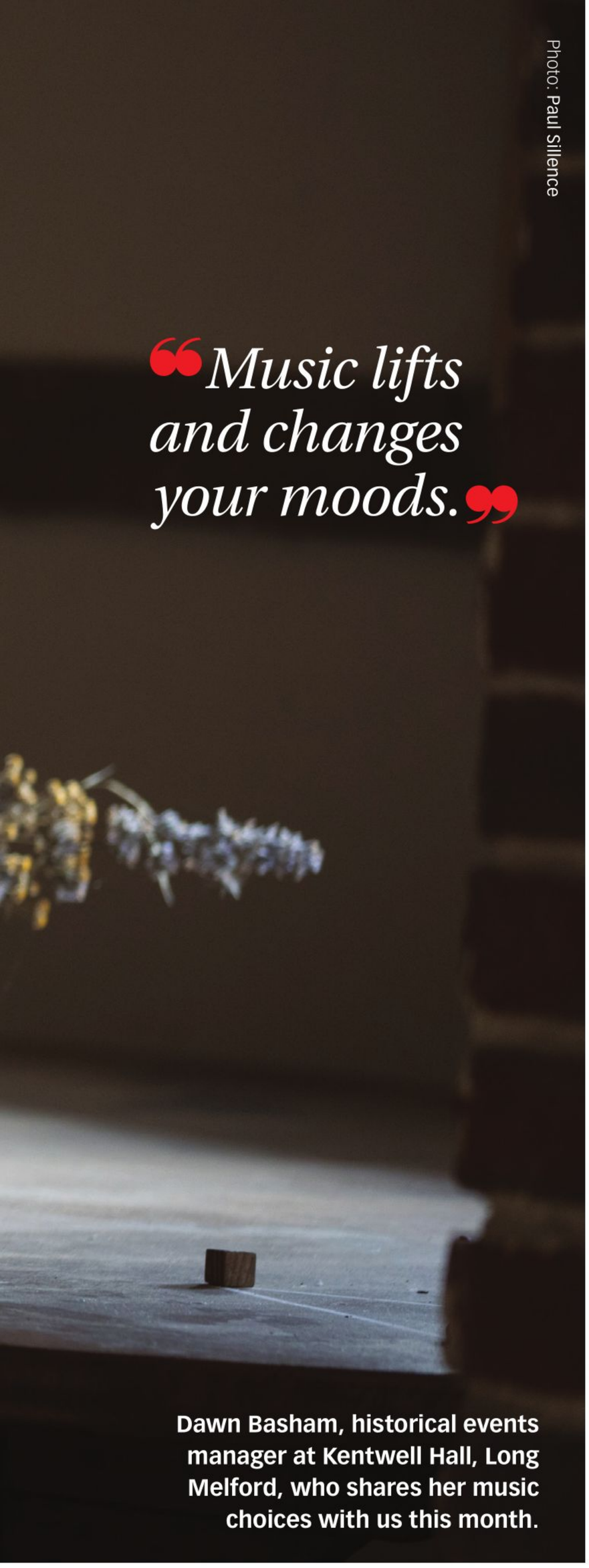
8 WHAT'S YOUR MOST TREASURED ALBUM?
An original Glenn Miller.

9 CAN YOU SING OR PLAY AN INSTRUMENT?
Bones, bodhran and kazoo.

10 IF YOU HAD TO CHOOSE JUST ONE, WHICH IS THE FAVOURITE SONG OF YOUR LIFETIME?
Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue.

11 AND WHICH IS THE SONG YOU WOULD TURN OFF IF IT CAME ON THE RADIO?
Anything screechy or shouty!

12 FINALLY, HOW IMPORTANT IS MUSIC TO YOU?
Very – music lifts and changes your moods.



Dawn Basham, historical events manager at Kentwell Hall, Long Melford, who shares her music choices with us this month.

Photo: Gavin Mills

The gardens in spring are a beautiful sight at Kentwell Hall in Suffolk.

Spring at the hall

With a history that spans over 500 years, Kentwell Hall in Suffolk is a super day out for all the family. For the past 50 years the hall has been owned by Patrick and Judith Philips who embarked on a major restoration of this beautiful building and gardens, which had been requisitioned by the army during the Second World War.

For more than 30 years now, Kentwell Hall has been staging popular Tudor domestic living history events. It has a busy programme of events again this year and coming up in April is Eastertide, which takes place at Kentwell Hall from April 10 to 13.

The downstairs rooms in the house will be brought to life by Kentwell's living historians, and the Moat House will be buzzing with bakers, dairymaids, ladies in the stillroom and needlewomen. The alchemists will be at their hut in the woods and Tudor villagers and crafts will be in the outbuildings.

Huge wooden eggs will be hidden in the gardens – and it will be a challenge to crack the code to find out what they reveal. The gardens will also be a springtime delight with daffodils, cowslips, primroses, violets, forget-me-nots and much more.

Visitors will be able to see this year's lambs on the farm and meet Kentwell's horses and miniature Shetland ponies.

Tickets can be booked online at a discount or bought at the gate, with prices: Adult £11.95 online, £13.95 gate; senior (over-64) £11.45 online, £13.45 gate; five-to-15-year-olds £6.50 online, £8.50 gate; under-fives free; family ticket (two adults and two children) £32.90 online, £40.90 gate. LT

For more details, visit the website at: www.kentwell.co.uk or ring 01787 310207.

We will be bringing you more On The Record next month – and remember we would love to hear what your answers would be to our 12 questions. Let us know by writing to Let's Talk, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 1RE or email us at letstalk@archant.co.uk

Photo: Mike Player

Learning and laughing are all part of a great day out at Kentwell Hall in Suffolk. Dawn Basham is pictured here at one of the re-enactment events.

I am often asked, I want to sell my vinyl records, I must get rid of my old records or how do I sell records online, who buys vinyl LP's or records?

Talk to Better On Vinyl

...And if you want to know where to sell your old vinyl records, please phone Better On Vinyl and ask for Chris, **07956 194599** and tell me what albums you have to sell.

www.betteronvinyl.co.uk/pages/sell-your-records

Taste of the season

For a Mother's Day treat or an Easter family meal, try one of these fabulous spring recipes that are surprisingly simple but packed with flavour.

French shallot, Toulouse sausage and borlotti bean stew

Serves: Four to six
Preparation time: 15 minutes
Cooking time: 30 minutes

Ingredients

12 shallots, peeled and left whole
8 Toulouse sausages or spicy/Lincolnshire sausage
2 cloves of garlic, cut into slivers
2 tbsp olive oil
1 medium carrot, peeled and diced
400g borlotti beans, drained
400g can of tomatoes
150g shredded Savoy cabbage
1 tbsp chopped parsley
500ml chicken stock
100ml red wine
Black pepper and sea salt
Bay leaf

Method

- Heat the olive oil in a heavy-based sauté pan or saucepan and add the shallots and sausages and sauté for four to five minutes, browning them all over.
- Add the carrots and sauté for a further three minutes, not colouring them too much. Add the garlic and cook for a further 30 seconds, then add the tomatoes, beans, half the wine, stock, bay leaf, and season well with sea salt and black pepper.
- Bring to the boil and simmer for a further 15 minutes on a low heat. If soup becomes too thick, add a little more stock,then add finely shredded cabbage, parsley and the rest of the red wine.

UK shallot, Toulouse sausage and borlotti bean stew

- Mix well and cook for a further five minutes, until the cabbage is just cooked.
- Slice the sausages into three, place in a bowl, and pour over all the bean soup.
- Season to taste. Serve with crusty bread and chopped parsley.

Recipe courtesy of ukshallot.co.uk

GRIDDLED ASPARAGUS AND SHALLOTS WITH SALSA VERDE

Serves: 4 + 1 small jar
Preparation time:
5 minutes
Cooking time:
15-20 minutes

Ingredients
½ garlic clove
2bsp red wine vinegar
4 anchovies (in oil not salt)
30g flat leaf parsley, just the leaves
30g basil, just the leaves
Zest of a lemon
2tbsp capers
150ml olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 echalion shallots
500g asparagus
1 burrata cheese

Method
Place the garlic, red wine vinegar, anchovies, parsley, basil, lemon zest, capers and olive oil into a hand-held blender and blitz until combined but still coarse. Check the seasoning and add salt and pepper if needed. Chop the echalions lengthways into four quarters and drizzle with a little olive oil. Place in a smoking hot griddle pan to cook until they are soft and slightly charred, but still hold their shape. Set aside.
Cut the woody ends off the asparagus and lightly oil them, then place in the griddle pan for two to three minutes until charred but still tender.
Arrange the asparagus and echalions on a plate, top with the burrata cheese before spooning over the salsa verde.
Recipe courtesy of enjoyasparagus.com

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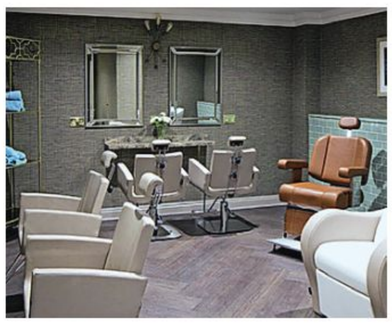

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Time for something new

It's the season for action . . . even if that means reaching for the Easter eggs, says **Claire Manion**, of Broadsky Astrology in Norfolk.

It's April and Easter; the celebration of rebirth is almost here and all around us there are signs of new life.

Have you ever wondered why Easter moves and how you can work it out? Easter is the first Sunday after the full moon after the spring equinox. This year, the spring equinox was on March 20 at a waning moon and the full moon is on Wednesday, April 8, making Sunday April 12 Easter Day.

Have you stocked up on Easter eggs yet? I know that they have been in the shops for ages. I'm hoping the Easter bunny will visit us; I am very partial to a bit of chocolate.

Astrologically, April starts with the sun marching through assertive Aries, the first sign of the zodiac. Spring is a time of action, and Mars, the planet of action, is in free-thinking Aquarius, suggesting this is a good time to break out of your comfort zone and start something new.

However, with Jupiter, planet of expansion, and Pluto, planet of endings and beginnings, joining forces in cautious Capricorn, it is wise to look before you leap. Earthy Capricorn is the sign associated with rules, structures and tradition. Jupiter expands all it contacts, and when it is up close to secretive Pluto, don't be surprised if secrets and even hidden treasure are uncovered. Worn out structures are starting to crumble and give way, leaving space for the new. This allows fresh ideas to develop, so new, improved systems can grow.

Picture: Sasilstock / iStock / Getty Images Plus

Therefore, before you power ahead, look at your long-term objectives and decide how you can reach them in a realistic and economical way.

The full moon is in balanced Libra on April 8, opposite the sun in Aries; these two are both proactive cardinal signs. Aries is about the self, and Libra is about the other, so weigh up your options and decide whether you need to work alone, or in a partnership. Whatever you choose, any action will be easier and more effective with a little patience, cooperation and consideration.

On April 11, Mercury, planet of communication, moves from vague, dreamy Pisces into direct, fiery Aries, encouraging us all to walk our talk.

On April 19, the sun enters determined Taurus, lending some sticking power to enable us to continue what we have started.

Looking skywards, April starts with the moon at first quarter, rising later and getting larger each day, culminating with the full moon on April 8.

Poetic names for this full moon include 'sprouting grass moon' and 'egg moon', both indicative of this season of growth. This is also the second consecutive 'supermoon' of 2020, occurring when the moon is closest to the earth in its orbit. LT

CLAIRE MANION, NORFOLK ASTROLOGER

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www.facebook.com/Broadskyastrology

"I absolutely love my role," says Bounce and Rhyme volunteer Kim Russell.

Learn a new skill and keep old talents alive

Volunteering really is a win-win way to keep your mind active, improve your health and help the community, says Norfolk County Council's 'Still young enough to . . .' healthy ageing campaign.

Experts highlight that keeping our minds active, as well as our bodies, can help improve our health in later years – and that it's never too late to try something new.

The reminder comes as part of Norfolk County Council's public health campaign 'Still young enough to…' which is encouraging Norfolk residents to be proud of their later years. The campaign shows how, by staying healthy, active and involved, they can enjoy independent and fulfilling lives for longer, and is pointing people to the wealth of activities available in Norfolk to support healthy ageing.

Learning something new, like a new language or skill, and maintaining hobbies to keep your hard-won skills sharp really can keep the mind and brain working, delivering good potential health benefits into our older years. Evidence is also emerging that community involvement, particularly through volunteering, can help people's health and wellbeing.

Alan Hopley, chief executive of Voluntary Norfolk, says: "Volunteering is a fantastic way of

increasing self-esteem and giving people a sense of purpose. There's some evidence for specific health benefits for those who receive positive feedback from their voluntary work, such as a lower likelihood of suffering depression – and even longer life.

"Above all, volunteering enables people to continue to put the skills and knowledge they've achieved throughout life to good use, as well as continuing developing them – not to mention the benefits of maintaining friendships and minimising the likelihood of loneliness and isolation which can have significant effects on people's health.

"There is a wealth of opportunities for volunteering in Norfolk, and whatever your age, you can be sure that you're still young enough to have a go at it."

Ceri Sumner, community, information and learning director at Norfolk County Council, adds: "The Five Ways to Wellbeing public health model, which is the mental health equivalent of the five-a-day diet advice, says that people who challenge themselves with learning can improve their confidence, mental health and wellbeing.

"The studies even show that the good mood people experience as a result of this kind of improved wellbeing can push back the likelihood of stroke by six years and of cardiovascular disease by 10 years

"Norfolk offers an incredible choice for continuing learning, whatever your interest. From participating in formal language, music, arts and creative skills courses, to rediscovering old interests and even learning how to cook your favourite food – all of these can help to improve health outcomes, particularly for older people.

"People want to enjoy living independently for as long as possible and we want to help them achieve this by supporting them to lead a healthy lifestyle." LT

For information and ideas about adult learning and volunteering opportunities, go online to: www.norfolk.gov.uk/stillyoungenough

VALUABLE VOLUNTEERING

KIM RUSSELL is a retired teacher who has been volunteering as a Bounce and Rhyme session leader at North Walsham and Stalham Libraries since 2015.

"I absolutely love my role and it gives me a such a great sense of achievement to see the little ones develop – not to mention the interaction I have with their parents and carers. Doing this makes me feel that I'm part of the community and it's wonderful seeing so many familiar faces on the high street."

RICHARD RACKSTRAW is a retired electrician who has been volunteering on the farm at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse Museum of Norfolk Life for the past 15 years. Training and experience now means he can turn his hand to all sorts of tasks, from helping with the running the static steam engines to feeding and cleaning the pigs, sheep and fowl, although his favourite is to help look after and work the Suffolk Punch horses.

"Every day is different in this role and it's so rewarding. My training has covered such a variety of tasks – and even includes ploughing, as part of my responsibility for working the horses. You have to really concentrate and it's hard physical work, but what a sense of achievement you get when you look back and see a nice straight furrow!

"Volunteering gives me real sense of inclusion and usefulness. It's allowed me to remain in the workplace, exercise my wider life skills and put my mental dexterity to the test. Not to mention a social platform.

"I know some people might feel a bit nervous to try volunteering, but there's no need. You'll be welcomed with open arms and made to feel part of an organisation. Give it a go – there's nothing to lose!"

"Volunteering gives me real sense of inclusion and usefulness," says Richard Rackstraw.

ADRIAAN KRAAIJESTEIN, who had worked in the NHS, also volunteers at Gressenhall on the farm and with the landscape conservation team.

"I didn't do much for the first two years after retirement, and that was tough as I really missed the interaction with people that I'd experienced all my working life. Volunteering has kept me in touch with the public, as well as giving me the chance to learn great new skills like hedge laying, horse grooming, charcoal making. It's opened up a whole new world for me – and a useful one too."

"It's opened up a whole new world for me - and a useful one too," says Adriaan Kraaijestein.

Five minutes with my hairdresser

Our fashion and beauty editor **Corinne Tuddenham-Finn** puts her hairdresser in the salon chair for a chat about cutting, styling and the need to keep evolving. www.corinnetuddenhamfinn.com

Photo: Shane Finn Photography

From the Barry Alan photoshoot at the Sainsbury Centre. INSET: Barry and Corinne.

The one thing about my look that's guaranteed to get complimentary comments is my hair . . . I never walk away from the hairdressing salon with the 'same old, same old' – I've always got a new toner and a tweak to my existing cut.

So who is the genius behind my style? Meet Barry Wright, senior creative and Master Colour director at Barry Alan Hair Salon in Norwich Lanes.

CORINNE: "Barry, how long have you been a hairdresser?"
BARRY: "I started my career about 25 years ago. My passion for art and creativity has always perhaps been my inspiration for taking hairdressing to another level. I earned my International Masters Diploma in Hair Cutting at the Sassoon Academy in London and I'm now a Master Colour Expert. So when you walk into the salon for your appointment with me, Corinne, I'm planning the tweaks we're making to your hair to create a style that constantly evolves. And the new shapes allow us to formulate toner colours that accentuate and highlight the cut, making your style more fluid and exciting."

C: "I'm thrilled with this hairstyle – so many different styles from one creation! I'm used to having a lot of different products used on my hair by other hairdressers for when I'm on the catwalk, to keep my hair very firmly in place for a show, but they leave a harsh residue and it's difficult to wash them out. But you have your own range of products that are gentle on the hair, so tell me about those."

B: "I wanted to use products that were functionable and I needed products that were going to be very high shine but with a weightlessness to them. Unfortunately there are a lot of products on the market that are quite gungy and make your hair quite vertical, and can be quite sticky and tack the hair up. Because the Barry Alan brand is very much colour, cut and blow-dry, we wanted to design some products that were going to facilitate the blow-drying process, but that weren't used to style hair."

C: "But I thought that's what styling products were supposed to do, Barry, hold the hairstyle in place?"
B: "We believe that the style is the shape in which it's cut into, so our products are really the icing on the

cake as opposed to being such a heavy part of the styling process."

C: "So, it's the cut that does the work and not necessarily the products . . ."
B: "Exactly!"

C: "And how do you get your products from creation to the shelf?"
B: "I located a chemist in East Sussex, and I send him any products that I like the feel of. He's able to analyse how that product was made and what's gone into it, to give us a basic jumping-off point to design products that we want, for what we want them for. It's got to be 'form follows function', so they're functional products but they need to work in harmony with the shape in which the hair has been cut into."

C: "What's in the range?"
B: "We've got a wonderful range of products, such as shampoos and conditioners that are designed for various hair types and we're proud to say they're not tested on animals. We've got superb conditioners, which you'd use in conjunction with the shampoos, and then we have a styling range. We have a very lightweight spray product, it gives the hair a small amount of hold and lots of shine, but you don't have a sticky result like you can get with some mousses. We also have Argan Oil Hair Treatment, for either long-haired clients or clients with quite fragile, coloured hair.
We have an amazing product called Elements, a wearable treatment which has three different oils to condition the hair and it also has a setting agent in it. So you don't need any mousses or blow-dry products; it's both a leave-in treatment and a blow-dry product. If you have got somebody with extra-porous hair or bleached hair, you can mix it with the argan oil and that also gives you a good result.
Prices start at around £8 and our gorgeous leave-in treatment is £8.80, so they're all very nicely pitched in a competitive place in the market."

Behind the scenes of the photoshoot.

C: "Sassoon is a brand associated with quality hairdressing; what's your link with it?"
B: "All the education that my team and I have undergone has been through Sassoon. We've become an extension of Sassoon in Norwich, so we're a Sassoon partner salon, giving us access to all the Sassoon education and support. I think it keeps our work quite modern really, it keeps the work-load progressive – and that's what we're renowned for, being progressive."

C: "You certainly are progressive! Your latest project was superb – a photoshoot and film showcasing a new collection of hair creations, inspired by the architecture of The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, at the University of East Anglia, in Norwich – lots of curved strong lines and steely tones."
B: "We used the 'Curved Corridor' (a location for the Marvel film Avengers: Age of Ultron) as the ideal backdrop to reflect the salon's creative geometric haircuts, bold fringes and colour choices. We're really proud of the results."

C: "So grey isn't just for the over-50s then! We're going to be focusing in the coming weeks on cuts and colours for our Let's Talk readers, especially for those looking for a fresh new hairstyle or a bold new colour. I'll be calling on you to explain to us how we can embrace the grey or 'make the stray' with some clear professional advice."
B: "I look forward to it, Corinne!" LT

Barry Alan Sea Salt Spray

Barry Alan Argan Oil Hair Treatment.

Barry Alan Blow Drying Spray.

Barry Alan Colour Conditioner.

Elements contains three different oils and a setting agent.

Barry Alan Firm Hold Hair Gel.

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All dressed up

A wedding. The races. Who needs an excuse for a new dress, says Let's Talk's fashion editor **Corinne Tuddenham-Finn**. www.corinnetuddenhamfinn.com

I never need an excuse to pop into Dreams Bridal, in Norwich, to try on the new season's offering. And colour is definitely the order of the day for this season – with vibrant mixes of strong colour-ways, we can look forward to the spring and summer months in style!

Dreams Bridal, 1 Wendover Road, Rackheath Industrial Estate, near Norwich, NR13 6LH; phone: 01603 722340; website: www.dreamsbridalwear.co.uk

STYLE ON THE AIR

Listen out for Corinne on BBC Radio Norfolk's Chrissie Jackson show for lively chat about the fashion topic of the day

All dresses available at Dreams Bridal. Prices correct at the time of going to press.

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EDITOR'S CHOICE

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LIZABELLA BLUE AND WHITE CAP-SLEEVED DRESS

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Picture: Povareshka / iStock / Getty Images Plus

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Lance Corporal Jones would be so proud!

Having a butchers at Corporal Jones' van

It played its part in the wonderful Dad's Army TV series, and is still delighting die-hard fans of the show. Let's Talk's motoring writer **David Clayton** takes a look at the iconic van.

There are many memorable scenes from Dad's Army but one of my favourites, and it could be yours too, is when the Walmington-on-Sea platoon is practicing a manoeuvre using Corporal Jones' butcher's van.

Through portholes cut into the side of the vehicle, they poke their rifles out to threaten the imaginary enemy, shouting in unison, "Open-two-three. Out-two-three. Bang-two-three. Bang-two-three. Bang-two-three. In-two-three. Shut!" It's still funny just reading it!

The van is real. It still exists and thankfully belongs to the Dad's Army Museum at Thetford, but I've ▶

The butcher's van in service with the Dad's Army Museum at Thetford.

just been up close and personal with it at David Wall's garage, near Wroxham. It has been undergoing some important restoration work.

Stuart Wright is the chairman of the Dad's Army Museum and told me something of the van's history. He says a BBC props man spotted it in a London back street in 1969 and could see its potential for the TV series. It was about to be scrapped but lived again on TV, appearing many times as the platoon's usual form of transport.

The last Dad's Army programmes were made in 1977 and, after its starring role, the van found its way to a motor museum in the Birmingham area. Eventually the exhibits were sold, and the Thetford museum got wind of the fact it was coming up for auction at Bonhams with a guide price of £20,000 to £30,000. It was a fortune for the small museum founded in 2007, but they went about trying to find the money and fortunately two Thetford families bankrolled the purchase, allowing the museum to pay them back when they could.

That was fortunate as the price rose steeply, with the hammer coming down at £63,000. Stuart wasn't at the auction but was following it online. DJ Chris Evans was at Bonhams, no doubt because of his interest in classic cars, and was as enthusiastic as the Dad's Army Museum that the van was, in a sense, coming home to where so many scenes were filmed. The next morning, he told a few million BBC Radio Two listeners all about the purchase, which resulted in more welcome donations.

Over the years work has been done on the vehicle, including a replacement engine. Inevitably such an old vehicle suffers from oil and water leaks, so it needs a good bit of TLC to keep it running.

At one point it went back to Ford's Dagenham factory, where it was built in the 1930s, was given an extensive service and make-over by some Ford apprentices ahead of the 2016 Dad's Army feature film. There was no charge, which prompted someone from the Dad's Army Museum to point out gratefully that it could be the longest manufacturer's warranty ever.

However sound the van is, it travels by low-loader for longer trips, as it did to David Wall's workshop where some important structural work has been done to the van body.

When I went to see Corporal Jones's butcher's van, it was about to go back home to Thetford with the work completed. The issue had been about structural solidity at the back.

David tells me about the vehicle: "It's a Ford BB two-ton van from 1935 and typically would have been sold originally as just a chassis. A body would have been built separately to suit the customer."

This is where taking it apart has revealed a few things, because along the inside panels are

Don't panic! David Wall standing, John Wright kneeling.

Inside the Dad's Army van cab.

Gun porthole detail.

It is 10 years since the Captain Mainwaring statue was unveiled at Thetford.

wooden rails which suggest it might have been a baker's van.

"The way it has been constructed I doubt it would have transported anything really heavy," says David. "I think something like wooden bakers' trays were slid in on rails. It was built to carry volume, not weight."

In truth, the van would have been rather large for a small-town butcher like Corporal Jones, but it suited the homely comedy of Dad's Army to have a makeshift, whimsical solution to moving about the Walmington-on-sea Home Guard.

John Wright, who has been working on the van at David's workshop, thinks the body might have been older than the chassis by some of the old wood he's had to replace. David says that wouldn't be unusual for the time. The van body would be taken off an old chassis, which had served its purpose and done loads of miles, then fitted to a new chassis.

One thing that John and David have been able to put right is down to the BBC Props department who were probably responsible for cutting the portholes for the rifles to poke out of. One of them cut right through a main wooden structural support on the nearside rear panel. Strangely not on the other side because the portholes are off-set. David Wall marvels at the military logic of this: "Because it would give the men more room. They wouldn't be exactly opposite each other in the back of the van."

John has re-fitted and strengthened the woodwork around the port hole.

Stuart Wright will be pleased to have the van back, more solid than ever. It lives at the nearby Charles Burrell Museum, in Thetford, simply because of its size, but it does make regular outings and is an instantly recognisable ambassador for Thetford's Dad's Army attraction.

He tells me it'll be part of an important anniversary later this year. "It's 10 years since we unveiled the Captain Mainwaring statue in Thetford and we're marking that on June 20 with a big day of events. The van will be there."

The Dad's Army Museum in Cage Lane, Thetford, is run by volunteers and you can find out when it's open by visiting the website: dadsarmythetford.org.uk

Details are there of events when you might see Corporal Jones's butcher's van.

Also, take a look on the Charles Burrell Museum webpages to see when it is open too, at www.thecharlesburrellmuseum.com if you would like to see the van on display there.

Stuart says the van is all paid for now and it's the museum's biggest asset, especially when it's out and about. The 80 episodes are still being re-run and the affection for the David Croft and Jimmy Perry creation seems as strong as ever. LT

Helping hands for halls

In the second of our features on village halls, we spotlight two success stories and discover the help available. **Rachel Banham** reports.

When Westleton Village Hall, in Suffolk, was officially reopened recently, it was the culmination of many years' hard work.

In 2012 the community voted through its parish plan to improve the village hall. Anne Ingram, trustee and fundraiser, says: "We started by asking our community about its needs and wishes. A plan was hatched and over two years planning approval and funding was secured, and in 2019 our appointed consultants and contractors delivered our vision.

"The 2012 Parish Plan set out to establish the needs of the community. With an ageing population and being remote from any conurbation, the key issues were bound to focus around rural isolation and the results reinforced this.

"The wish-list prioritised a drop-in coffee area and foyer, a radically improved kitchen, more secure parish archives and display, more activities and, overall a warmer, more welcoming heart for our community."

The Big Lottery made a provisional grant offer which the hall team would need to match-fund to secure. A community fundraising programme was launched. Pledges came from Heritage Lottery, Garfield Weston and, with the help of Community Action Suffolk, local funders were also secured.

Jayne Vaughan, development officer – governance and community buildings, at Community Action Suffolk, says: "We offer a range of services to support village halls and local community buildings, from building management; safety and security; access to funding; to training and one-to-one advice and guidance, as well as an annual conference. Community Action Suffolk has helped bring in over £140,000 to the county to pay for improvements to village halls, from the Village Hall Improvement Grant, managed by Action With Communities in Rural England (ACRE) on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). One of these halls is Westleton Village Hall, who received funding to go towards an extension and improvements to their existing hall."

Light and bright, the new Westleton Village Hall extension. Photo: Tony Ingram

Photo: Nick Santon

Lord Gardiner, Chris Wood and Ken MacGladrie.

Facilities now include a refurbished main hall with surround sound, new lighting and heating and a cushioned vinyl floor. There is a small consulting room, an archive room to keep the village records, and a foyer, providing a multi-use space. The total capital building cost was £719,000.

Lord Gardiner of Kimble, parliamentary under secretary of state for rural affairs and biosecurity, recently visited the hall. LT

For support and advice on village halls and community buildings in Suffolk, contact Jayne Vaughan on 01473 345317 or at: jayne.vaughan@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk Website: www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk To find out more about Westleton Village Hall, or to hire it, visit: www.westletonvillagehall.co.uk

Photo: Nick Santon

Lord Gardiner tries his hand at one of the activities at Westleton Village Hall, watched by Therese Coffey, Jean Murrell, Kate Corfield and Margaret Branton.

WORDY WESTLETON

The fundraising continues for the Village Hall, with an event on Friday, April 24 at 7.30pm. In Our Own Words is an evening of poetry by local writers Elizabeth Bracken, Fiona Ireland, Ivor Murrell and Barbara Strangward. Poems will be read by the four and there will be three musical interludes by flutist and harpist Kizzy.

Tickets for the event at Westleton Village Hall, The Street, Westleton, IP17 3AD, are £5 (under-16s free) from Westleton Village Stores. The poets are donating their time, and all ticket sales go towards Village Hall funds.

Go to www.westletonvillagehall.co.uk for more information.

Photo: Gordon Candler

Celebrating the Lottery Funds Award outside the old village hall at Wereham.

Photo: John Millard

The new Wereham Village Hall.

HELPING TO MAKE IT A REALITY

Community Action Norfolk has been providing support for people who manage village halls and community buildings in Norfolk for more than 25 years. One of the halls to benefit from its expertise is the new Wereham Village Hall, near Downham Market, a Passivhaus that has a rigorous standard for energy efficiency in a building, reducing its ecological footprint. A structural inspection carried out in 2009 concluded that the First World War wooden building used as Wereham Village Hall was structurally unsound and beyond economic repair.

In 2012, two mothers committed themselves to launching a funding bid to the National Lottery. A project team and management committee were formed. With planning permission on a new site in place, funding was applied for. In mid-2017, with all the necessary funding secured for the £1,000,000 project, the build began. The new hall opened for the first time in June 2018.

Victoria Gray, of the Wereham Village Hall management committee, says: "Community Action Norfolk were vital in our project's success and were with us every step of the way from enabling the trustees to get our charity 'funding ready', to guidance on which funders to approach, from training on securing funding to providing supporting evidence. They were the key to our project's success."

Clare Fiander, engagement officer at Community Action Norfolk, says: "We aim to be a one-stop-shop for voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations – including village halls – and provide a range of services including support with finding and securing funding; governance advice and training, from trustee training to helping to understand their governing document: development support to help them run as sustainably as possible, converting unincorporated charities to incorporated charities; policies and procedures, including village hall information sheets created by ACRE."

Call Community Action Norfolk on 01362 698216, email: office@communityactionnorfolk.org.uk, or visit: www.communityactionnorfolk.org.uk

To find out more about Wereham Village Hall, or to hire it, visit: www.werehamvillagehall.co.uk

Reduce, re-use, recycle is a mantra for today

We can learn a lot from our ancestors in how to recycle, says **Maggie Gallop**, vice-chairman of the Norfolk Federation of WIs.

Recycling. It's nothing new, archaeological studies of ancient waste dumps show, it was being done in the 4th Century BC. How they can prove such things is beyond me, but t'internet says so, so it must be true.

I recall the 'dustman' calling weekly, for what was then mainly ash from fires; this was used in the brick industry. During the war there was the 'National Salvage Campaign' urging us to donate metal, paper, rags and rubber as a matter of patriotism. And do you remember taking the empty glass bottles back to the shop and getting 3d refund? It's all recycling.

Today we are encouraged to reduce, re-use and recycle. I suppose we all try to do our best, but do we really understand what and why we are doing it?

Save the planet, climate change and greenhouse gasses are words that are thrown about every day, but how many of us understand what they all mean? I do not intend to research all these terms – I will leave you some homework – but I have checked out a couple of ideas that we can all contribute to.

Paper is something we all use, and tons of it are disposed of on a daily basis. For £20 you can buy a piece of equipment that turns your newspapers, copy paper and light cardboard into bricks for use in wood-burning stoves and the like. Each 'brick' will burn for two hours and produce very little ash (which can be dug into your garden), therefore saving both wood and money.

Something that particularly interests me is used fabric, such as clothing, bedding and curtains that are no longer good enough for their intended reasons. I teach rag-rugging and make patchwork quilts. Both of these hobbies need fabric, and I find a particular pleasure in making something for nothing (even when 'him indoors' says, "How many quilts do we need?")

We are all now used to the weekly collection of our waste and take pride in separating out the paper, compostables and regular waste into their green, grey and brown bins . . . but we can all do more. My only problem with this is the frequent refrain: "What colour bin goes out this week?"

In our Federation Office at 45 All Saints' Green, Norwich, we have boxes that members (and others) can use to dispose of unwanted broken jewellery and electronic devices such as old laptops, gaming gadgets and mobile phones. In this small way we prevent these items going into landfill.

I've just remembered the rag and bone man . . . what did he do with the bones? LT

GET INVOLVED

March 17: Mah-Jong, at the Federation Office, Norwich.
March 20: Advanced Driving Day, at Cringleford Cricket Pavillion, £12.
April 4/5: Centenary Salver Competition, Bawdeswell Village Hall, free entry.
April 19-23: Holiday in Cumbria £475.
April 24: Celebrity Lunch, New Buckenham Village Hall, £20.
Contact 01603 624580 for more details.

Living life with enthusiasm

Following on from our features on village halls, **Kate Peacher,** Suffolk East Federation WI trustee, meets a WI member who has helped transform the fortune of her local hall.

Wendy Mendham, pictured with her dog Tess and a poster for the Burns Night event at Holton and Blyford Village Hall.

Enthusiasm comes from the Greek 'enthousiasmos' meaning 'possessed or inspired by the gods', and while my interviewee this month is not possessive at all, her inspiration know no bounds. In fact, you could say Wendy Mendham, never misses an opportunity to inspire others!

She admits she does "need to rein in my thoughts and creativity at times, and learn to sit on my hands . . . But then I wouldn't be me if I did!"

Wendy is currently president of Wenhaston WI, and has belonged to the organisation since 1973. She lives in Holton, near Halesworth, a village which comprises about 400 houses. There is a thriving primary school and St Peter's Church, which has the tallest round tower in Suffolk.

The original village hall burned down in 1983, but the fire presented the opportunity to re-build on land gifted 35 years ago by the family of farmer Bob Stephenson. It is looked after by trustees and a working committee, which Wendy and her husband John sit on. At an AGM four years ago, those attending were presented with a dilemma which affects similar committees up and down the country. The building was falling into disrepair, annual maintenance was rapidly becoming unaffordable and the community needed to use the facilities or the hall would be lost.

Wendy rose to the challenge and has galvanised others in the community to join her on a crusade to turn things around, so that the hall is used regularly, providing funding to meet the running costs and the refurbishment work. In fact, Wendy raised more than £11,000 in the first year.

Her experience in sales and also as a local and county councillor helped the committee secure grants from various financial sources, and she and others have worked their way through endless form-filling, as every donation counts. The hall, to date, has had new double glazed windows, a more secure front entrance, eco-insulation and a revised central heating system. Disabled facilities and updated health and safety issues are paramount as work continues.

Four garages on the car park have also been updated and are now rented out, generating a regular annual income. Shops in Halesworth, and the community at large, have helped to equip the kitchen with fridges, a dishwasher, crockery and glasses as a successful 'pop-up pub' runs once a month.

The need to raise income has provided villagers and visitors alike with plenty of events. Each spring and autumn sees a craft fair of 20-plus stalls accompanied by a café. Christmas markets and jumble sales are also well supported.

Father's Day is celebrated with a Classic Car Day with upwards of 170 cars for dads to admire. This is coupled with an art exhibition in the hall and stalls, music and games for children. This spring sees a Mother's Day afternoon tea, while Burn's Night had Wendy's team providing a traditional three-course menu for 90-plus guests.

Regular weekly events have also become popular, including bingo, yoga classes, an art group, the U3A ukulele band, and pop-chorus choir, and of course private hire for parties and family events are welcomed. LT

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SEA OF FACES: Can you spot any faces you know in this lovely group photograph from April 1983 when pupils gathered to celebrate Wroughton Junior School's 25th anniversary at Gorleston, near Great Yarmouth? We'd love to hear from you if you can put any names to these young faces. Photo: 21337

Norfolk Memory Lane

RECIPE IS A REAL WINNER: Mundesley villagers cooked up a winning recipe for pensioners – nosh and a natter. Tuesday Lunches, founded by the rector of Mundesley, the Rev John Randall, and organised by Beryl Bowskill, was a self-financing exercise which catered for 60 pensioners on a three-weekly cycle. Three teams of four people took it in turn to prepare the food in the church rooms on Cromer Road, and volunteer Stan Barrett took the pensioners there in a North Walsham Lions' Club minibus. In our photo Winifred Jeffries (centre) and other pensioners enjoy their visit to the lunch date. Photo: 149837

RECOGNISE ANYONE?

Welcome to this month's bumper selection of nostalgic photographs from the picture archives here at Let's Talk. Enjoy your trip down Memory Lane and, as ever, we will be delighted if you tell us that you have spotted yourself, friends and loved ones or familiar places and events in the photos published here. Please let us know by writing to Let's Talk, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 1RE or by email to letstalk@archant.co.uk

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A CLEAN SWEEP: Mary Howard and her family gave Tilney All Saints church a spring clean in March 1978. Mary, who was born opposite the church, decided a particular effort by her family might encourage more volunteers to come forward to back up the cleaning done regularly by a 75-year-old woman parishioner. Photo: 53966

PRESENTING CHRISTINE: It's an interesting and varied life as a TV presenter, you never know where you will find yourself next and what you will be asked to do. But former Anglia TV star Christine Webber threw herself into the challenge of a twirl on the dance floor when she visited the Bailey School of Dancing in Sheringham, in March 1987. Photo: 149840

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LIONS' ROARING SUCCESS: Aylsham Lions' appeal for a community bus was going well in March 1987. Launched the previous year, the appeal had topped £4,000 thanks to a concert staged by the town band. The appeal, which had a target of £10,000, was to buy a minibus capable of taking wheelchairs and which would benefit the whole community of Aylsham. Pictured here accepting a cheque of £84 raised by the concert is the club president Clive Taylor (left) with band members Ray Duffin, Len Spinks and Shirley Frostwick. Photo: 149844

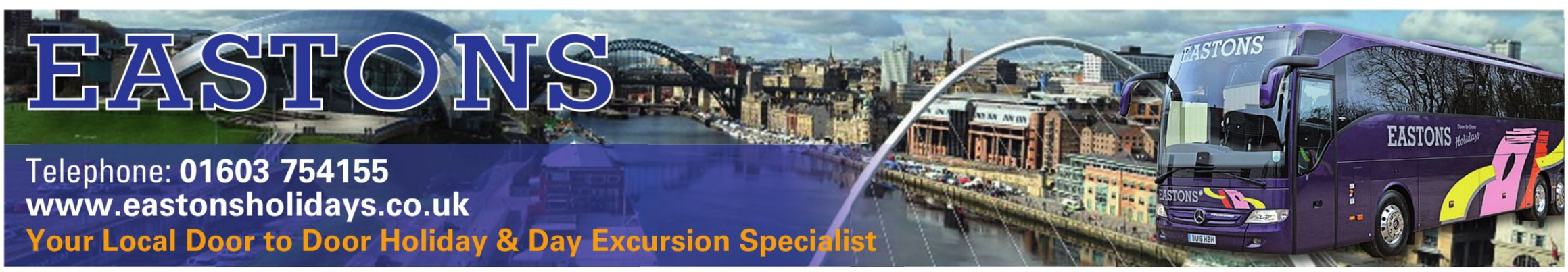
FLIPPING GREAT: Traffic came to a standstill as a large crowd gathered to watch eight pancake-tossing competitors sprint the length of Dereham Market Place in March 1987 in time honoured fashion. The traditional pancake race, saved from possible extinction in the town by local solicitors Hood, Vores and Allwood, was hailed a success by organiser Susan Notley. Our photo shows the line-up from Hood, Vores and Allwood – do you recognise any of the faces? Photo: 150096

SCHOOL'S OUT FOREVER: Meryl Dees, deputy head of West Earlham First School (left) and Doris Ellis, who were retiring from teaching at the school, were pictured in April 1973 with some of their pupils. The children presented them with retirement gifts. Meryl had been at the school for 25 years and Doris for 15. Do you or your children remember being taught by them? Photo: 21206

BEEHIVE ON THE CATWALK: Models showed day and evening wear from Beverley House Fashion of Attleborough and Rodney Williams' Men's Shop of Watton to an audience of more than 170, at the Dereham Boys' Secondary School fashion show organised by Dereham Rotary Club in April 1973. A cheese and wine party followed in the dining area. Do you recognise the model or any of the audience here? Photo: 21218

GREATEST STORY: Many a dressing gown and tea towel were put to good use for this production telling the Easter story by pupils at Poringland County Primary School in April 1973. Photo: 21243

WORTHY WINNERS: The chairman of the West Norfolk Sports Council, Eric Dodds, presented winners with their trophies at the West Norfolk Sports Awards in March 1978. They were (from left) basketball player Jackie Brennock, sportswoman of the year; swimmer Wade Bostock, sportsman of the year, and Roy Boxall, the Nick Bean Award winner. Photo: 53810



TEL WAS IN TOWN: Entertainer Terry Wogan arrived by helicopter to open Currys' new electrical store at Great Yarmouth Market Place in March 1978. Pictured with Terry while he met fans and signed autographs is 'Miss Anglia' on the left. Photo: 53870

BONNY BONNETS: Enjoy these shy smiles from youngsters of Elm Class at Brandon's Forest School as they took part in an Easter bonnet parade in March 1978. The show, which was watched by 200 parents, raised £34 for the school's centenary fund. Photo: 53863

FAREWELL TO FIREMAN: Retained leading fireman Raymond Daw (centre) is pictured here in March 1980 receiving a carriage clock from Divisional Commander Donald West at his retirement presentation after 31 years in the fire service. Leading fireman Colin Bowley (Left) also presented Raymond – who was known affectionately as 'Joe' and who lived at West Newton – with a toaster and kitchen clock on behalf of his colleagues at Sandringham where he had also been the foreman of the estate grounds for the previous 11 years. Photo: 70821

GROWING GROUP: A group of enthusiasts started the Breckland Succulent Plant Club, which met for the first time at the Thetford Staniforth School in March 1978. The chairman of the new club was Victor Graham from Southburgh, and members had joined from Thetford, Norwich, Bury St Edmunds, King's Lynn and Spalding. Photo: 53858

FAMILY GATHERING: Few Mother's Day celebrations would have equalled that at Swaffham in March 1980 when four younger generations gathered around 96-year-old Frances Smith. Frances, of Sporle, posed for pictures with the newest arrivals in her five-generation family – month-old Samantha Rand and Richard D'Souza – and other members of the family spanning the ages in between. Frances had six children, 11 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren and six great-great-grandchildren, and many of them had travelled from around East Anglia to spend the afternoon together. Photo: 70839

SHOPPING DAYS: Who remembers S Cole of the Curls store in the centre of Norwich? He is pictured here looking very smart on the shop floor in May 1968 on the day of his retirement from the much-loved department store – which, of course, became a branch of Debenhams. Photo: M8024

FOND FAREWELL: This must have been a special moment for Margaret Neal, as her career was celebrated at her retirement presentation at Northgate Hospital in Great Yarmouth in March 1980. Do you know anyone in this picture? Photo: 70860

FIRM ROOTS: This happy photo dates from March 1967 when members of the Norwich Business and Professional Women's Club planted a tree in the grounds of Norwich Castle. Who can you spot among the women and men here? Photo: M4877

LOOKING BACK: Piecing together the 14th Century pottery that they found on an archaeological dig at Gaywood in 1968 are (left to right) Eric Talbot, recorder for the archaeological survey of King's Lynn, with Heather Lowe, 16, and Edwina Daines, 17, students who were helping out on the dig. Photo: M8106

THE PLAYERS' PLAY: Rehearsing in this photo from March 1967 are members of Blofield Players, who were in a production at the Brundall Memorial Hall of 'Man About the House' by Francis Brett Young. They are (from left) Terry Dabbs, Herbet Hall, Stella Thouless, Arthur Rhodes, Edna Yaxley, Joan Greenacre and Goward Clarke. Photo: M4808

HIP PLACE TO BE: Norwich's reputation as a great centre for surgery was given a further boost in May 1968 when a new replacement joint surgery section was opened at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. Mr H Osmond-Clarke, senior orthopaedic surgeon at the London Hospital, opened the centre, describing it as "quite superb". He declared the work of Mr G K McKee, the senior consultant orthopaedic surgeon at the hospital, and his colleagues the biggest breakthrough in his lifetime and one which had transformed the whole outlook on hip surgery. The centre provided 20 extra beds to deal with the increasing demand for surgery, which was very successful in relieving the pain of arthritic hips. Photo: M8042

NUMBER ONE MEN: Can any of our readers help to put names to these men who were the Norwich Number One Round Table council members in March 1967? Photo: M4831

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Mind your step . . . you're being watched

With another holiday season on the horizon, broadcaster and columnist **Keith Skipper** reflects on being part of the East Anglian coastal scene.

When does the watcher become the watched? That intriguing question follows me around as Cromer and kindred coastal spirits stage useful rehearsals for another defiant summer production.

I'm loitering on the edge of a 32nd successive holiday season as a resident of the sort of resort too often dismissed as a quaint little left-over waiting for the tide to go out for good. It's only tough economic conditions delaying the inevitable. Old-fashioned virtues are not enough.

While my serious misgivings persist over too many visitors arriving together at the same time to do the same things in the same places – bank holidays and peak weeks degenerate so easily into dive-for-cover operations – I refuse to yield all native ground to the tourism charabanc.

That cussed Norfolk streak announces: "I'll still be here when they've gone home". Presumably, stolid locals display similar fortitude in the Lake District, Stratford-on-Avon, York Shambles and Edinburgh at festival time.

However, they must admit locations clinging to the waves clog up much quicker simply because there's less room in which to manoeuvre. Parking cars on beaches has yet to find favour, even though most bathing machines have gone to nautical museums.

I have watched seaside tastes change drastically since childhood outings to Hunstanton and Great Yarmouth from the late 1940s opened up worlds way beyond our fields of cattle and crops.

I collected a telling close-up of chameleon Yarmouth in the mid-1960s as a young press reporter, when gas and oil exploration threatened to eclipse fishing survival and holiday adventures in the headline stakes.

Photo: Trevor Allen

It won't be long until the Cromer seafront is filled with holidaymakers once more.

I have maintained close links with rest of the briny brigade from a north Norfolk base where the "Road to Nowhere" line can still be used as a gentle inducement rather than a shrill indictment of an area refusing to move unquestioningly with the times.

I have lost count of the number of envious folk encountered on cultural missions inland who want to turn an occasional Cromer call into a full-time occupation. "It's one of our favourites … and we saw you waiting to cross the road last time we visited. And we'll give you a helping hand, old boy, when we move in," they pledge.

Suddenly, my esteemed role as mildly jaundiced observer of the Norfolk scene is overtaken by clear evidence I could be part of the problem I go on about.

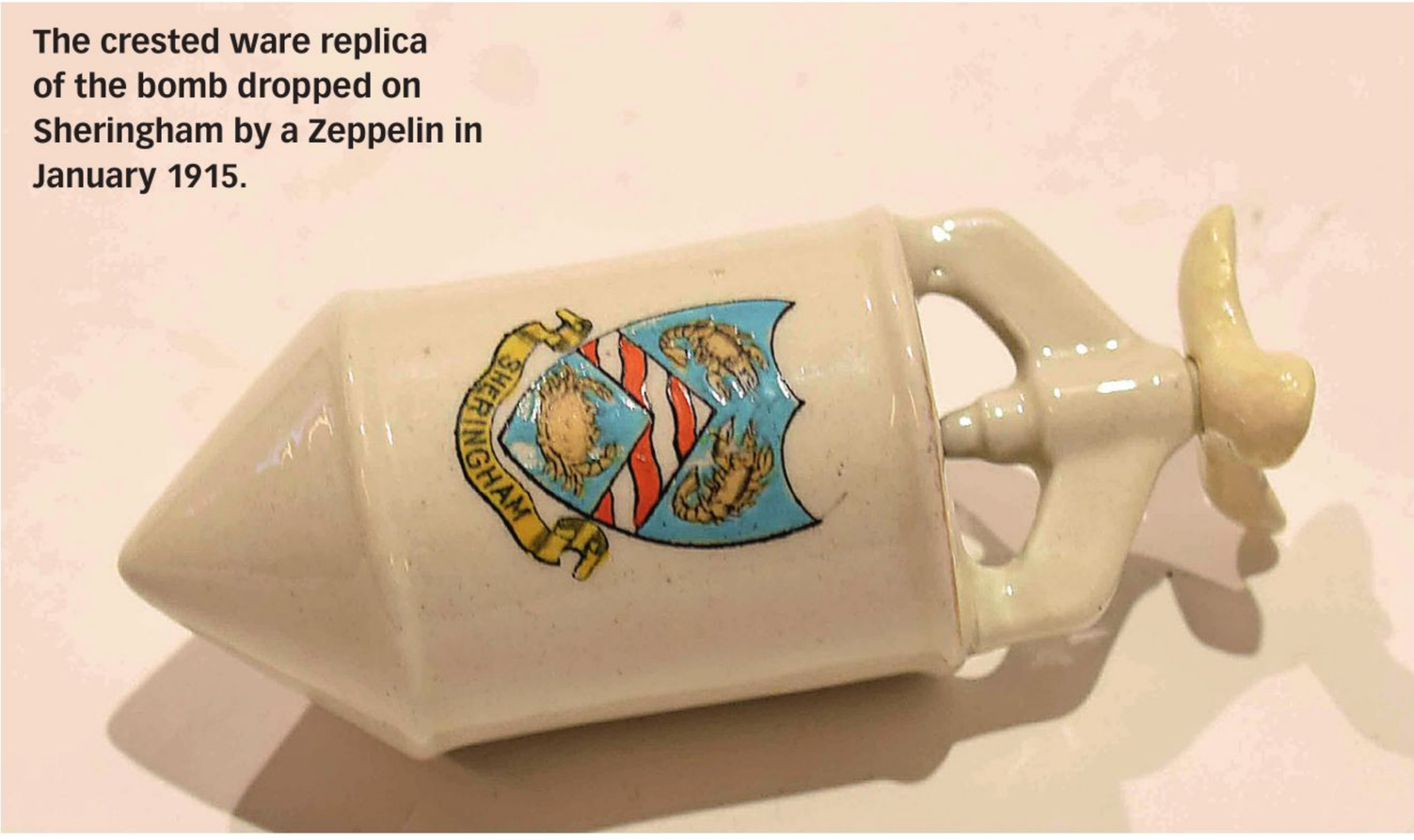
The watcher is being watched, albeit briefly from a passing vehicle or a packed other side of the street, a helpless pawn in the congestion game.

It appears to carry little weight that I live in Cromer, support town centre shops, enjoy strolling here or along the seafront and chat to as many cheerful people as possible. Perhaps I could wear one of those 'I'm a local' badges frustrated natives flaunt in some holiday hot-spots.

Still, some might consider that a selfish step too far down the slipway to parochialism. Extra care is needed when the watcher becomes the watched.

Memories good and bad recorded in crested ware

We have loved bringing home holiday souvenirs for generations, and some of the early examples are now collectable items, explains our antiques expert **David Broom** of Keys Fine Art Auctioneers, at Aylsham, Norfolk.



The crested ware replica of the bomb dropped on Sheringham by a Zeppelin in January 1915.

A collection of crested ware, including pieces celebrating Norwich and Aylsham.

First World War items in crested ware.

From household items like a clock, to wildlife, such as these birds, and local landmarks like Norwich Cathedral, crested ware gave a reminder of places visited and holidays enjoyed.

In an earlier issue we looked at how the popularity of Cromer – 'Gem of the North Norfolk Coast' – grew in the 19th Century as the railway network expanded.

People began to have at least modest amounts of disposable income and the growth inspired late 19th Century artists in watercolour and oils to paint views of Cromer and the surrounding area.

The tourist trade grew at the beginning of the 20th Century. Working-class people began to enjoy holidays, days by the seaside became increasingly popular, and many people understandably wanted to buy something as a souvenir or a memento of their holiday or visit to the coast.

Local retailers, recognising this demand, worked with a number of ceramic manufacturers to produce crested ware, which were often replicas of popular tourist items with the crest of the relevant town or seaside resort, such as Cromer, Great Yarmouth and other destinations.

These were manufactured by companies such as W H Goss, Carlton Ware and Arcadia China. The objects included First World War items, such as money boxes modelled as tanks, machine guns and even the first bomb dropped on Sheringham by a Zeppelin in 1915.

The vast quantity of crested ware items produced sparked an interest in these items as an area for collectors and they became increasingly popular, and consequently increased in value, although interest in recent years has declined.

However rare items, such as the replica of the bomb dropped on Sheringham, continue to make good prices at auction. LT

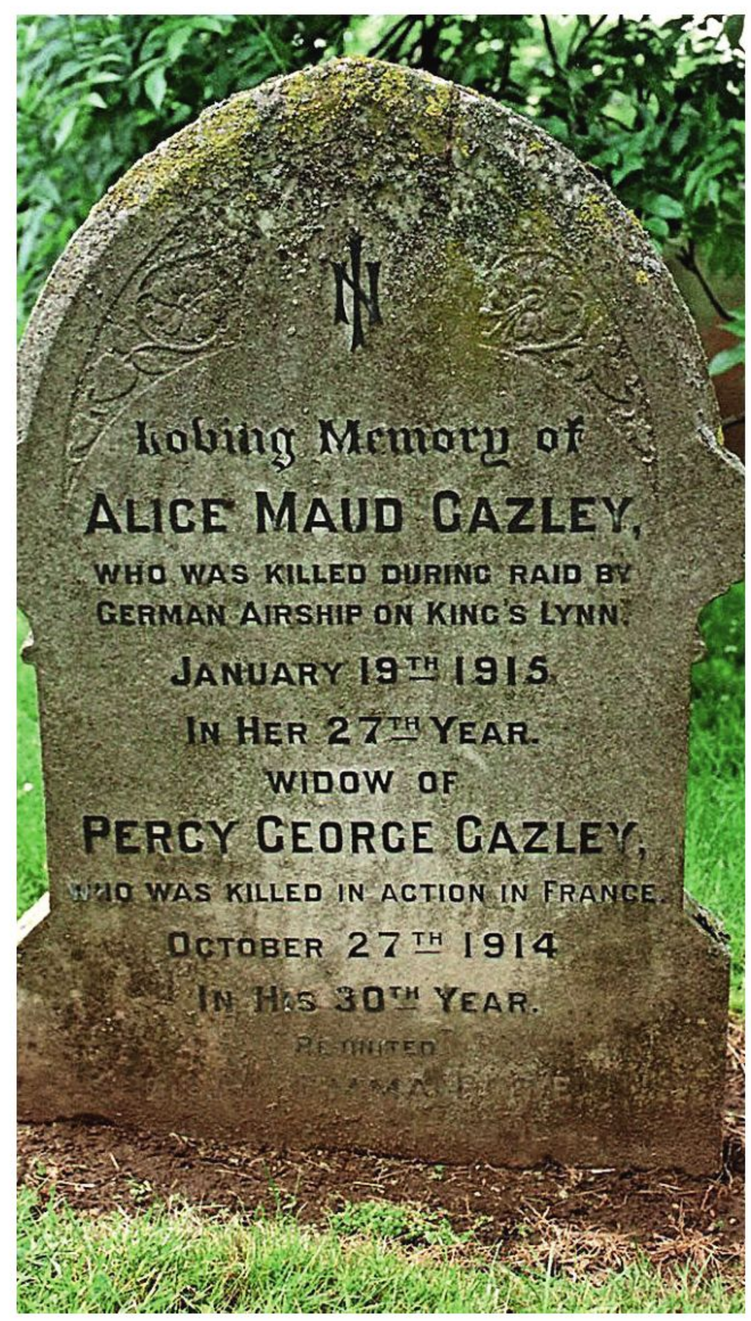
WHEN THE ZEPPELINS CAME

A German Zeppelin dropped two incendiary bombs on Sheringham in the evening of January 18, 1915, the first to fall on British soil from an airship.

This was part of a raid by two Zeppelins, which caused destruction of many buildings around the Norfolk coast and the deaths of four people – 72-year-old Martha Taylor and shoemaker Samuel Smith, 53, at Great Yarmouth, who were the first people to be killed in an air raid on British soil, and at King's Lynn 14-year-old Percy Goate and Alice Maud Gazeley, a 26-year-old widow whose husband had recently been killed while serving in France.

A German propaganda 'picture' purporting to show the January 1915 bombing raid, the first-ever on Britain.

A blue plaque marking the site in Great Yarmouth where Samuel Smith and Martha Taylor were killed by the bomb dropped by the Zeppelin.



Alice Gazley's gravestone in the Hardwick Road Cemetery at King's Lynn, recording the fact that she was killed during the Zeppelin raid.

Picture Thomas_Zsebok_Images / iStock / Getty Images Plus

When your family tree is an oak

Our surnames expert from Suffolk, **Derek Palgrave** sets his sights on four more readers' names as he uncovers their roots and some notable people who share them.

HARRIS

This derives from the personal name, Harry. Some early bearers of this surname include Willelmo Harries (1379, Wiltshire Poll Tax); William Harrys (1406, Oxon Cartulary); Lawrence Harryes (1468, Herts Fine Rolls); John Harys (Kent Parish Registers).

At the time of the 1881 Census its distribution was very widespread, however its presence in East Anglia at that time was quite minimal.

One of the most famous bearers of the surname was Sir Arthur 'Bomber' Harris, who in the Second World War was Commander-in-Chief of British Bomber Command.

John Harris (1666-1719) was an English writer, best known for his editorship of the Lexicon Technicum in 1704, which was the earliest English encyclopaedia. He was also one of the earliest members of the Royal Society.

Joel Chandler Harris (1848-1908) was an American author who created the folk character Uncle Remus.

William Torrey Harris (1835-1909) was a public school educator, philosopher and prolific writer in the United States. Also in the USA, George Washington Harris was a humourist in Tennessee who was a storyteller who loved the Great Smoky mountains.

OAKLEY

This surname derives from the place-name, referring to oak tree(s) in a field. In the late 19th Century it was quite widespread. Among early bearers of the surname were Hervey de Ocle, 1199 (Staffs Assize Rolls); Ansell de Acleie ,1202 (Suffolk Feet of Fines); Philip de Ocle 1246 (Gloucs Inquisitions Post Mortem); Walter de Okele, 1293 (Wilts Inquisitions Post Mortem); Richard de Okeley 1327 (Leics Subsidy Rolls); and John Okle 1379 (Wilts Feet of Fines). Annie Oakley was the United States markswoman who starred in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. She was born Pheobe Ann Moses in

IN THE CAN

Women at work at the former Morton's canning factory at Lowestoft in Suffolk, shortly after the Second World War.

Morton's canning factory in Lowestoft was once the biggest herring cannery in the country. It was part of a business started in 1849 in Aberdeen by J T Morton to provide preserved foods for sailing ships. The company grew and by the 1850s had its head office in London. Some of its employees went on to set up Millwall Football Club in 1885. The business was bought by Beecham in 1945, with its production of tinned vegetables at the Lowestoft factory. In 1986 it was sold to Hillsdown Holdings and the factory on the Suffolk coast closed two years later.

Picture: Matt_Gibson / iStock / Getty Images Plus

Sir Arthur 'Bomber' Harris was Commander-in-Chief of British Bomber Command.

1860 (the picture below shows how her Wild West style is replicated in costumes still today).

More recent people to bear this surname include the film actor and producer Tom Oakley and the actor Simon Oakley and Hong Kong-based chef James Oakley who is known for his international culinary expertise.

'Henry Oakley' is the name of a Great Northern Railway locomotive constructed in Doncaster and now preserved in honour of its namesake, a very senior former general manager. Oakley also refers to a range of specialist eyeware.

Picture: Comstock / Stockbyte

HOLYOAK

This, quite literally, means 'Holy Oak' which historically refers to an oak tree situated on a parish boundary from which a Gospel reading was delivered on Rogation days.

Early bearers include Godric de Haliac (12th Century Book of Seals in Suffolk); Peter de la Holyok 1300 in Lofvenberg (Worcs); Johanned Halyok in Rutland Poll Tax 1377; Thomas Holyoak in St Martin in the Fields Parish Register 1695.

Francis Holyoake (1567-1653) was a lexicographer who published a dictionary in 1633. George Jacob Holyoake (1817-1906) was a tinsmith in Birmingham but, having joined the Birmingham Reform League in 1831, he became a political agitator and newspaper editor; he invented the terms 'secularism' and 'jingoism'.

Henry Holyoake (1657-1731) was headmaster of Rugby. Sir Keith Holyoake was the 26th prime minister of New Zealand and the 13th governor general.

MORTON

This surname is derived from the very widely occurring placename, Morton, which means 'settlement by a moor'. Early bearers of the surname include Robert de Mortone (1130 Wiltshire Pipe Rolls); William de Moreton (1218 Oxford Feet of Fines); Robertus Mortune (1379 Yorkshire Poll Tax) and Thomas Morton (1432 in Surrey Feet of Fines).

In the 17th Century, Charles Morton was rector of Blisland, but went to America where he became first minister in the church at Charlestown in 1686. He approved prosecutions for witchcraft at Salem.

Andrew Morton was a 19th Century portrait painter who exhibited at the Royal Academy, and George Morton was a geologist who formed a valuable collection of fossils in the 19th Century. John Morton was Archbishop of Canterbury in the 15th Century and was responsible for the building of Morton's Dyke in the Fens.

Nicholas Morton was a fellow of Trinity College Cambridge in the 16th Century when he was Papal agent. Richard Alan Morton (1899-1977) was a biochemist and professor of biochemistry at Liverpool, who carried out a great deal of research into vitamins. LT

YOUR NAME

Would you like Derek Palgrave to look into the history of your surname? Write to him at Let's Talk, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 1RE or email letstalk@archant.co.uk

Smoke and mirrors

When the law tightened up on advertising cigarettes, Benson & Hedges took a surreal approach to promoting its products, as **Eve Read** of The History of Advertising Trust explains.

The 1978 Benson & Hedges Special Filter 'sardine can'.

MIDDLE TAR As defined by H.M. Government H.M. Government Health Departments' WARNING: CIGARETTES CAN SERIOUSLY DAMAGE YOUR HEALTH

The Benson & Hedges brand was launched in the UK in 1960 as a luxury king-size product and the advertising account was acquired by the newly formed Collett Dickenson Pearce (CDP) agency.

Their initial 'Pure Gold' campaign for B&H ran from 1962-1977, but by the mid-1970s the brand had to adapt to new and increasingly stringent Code of Advertising Practice (CAP) codes, issued by the Advertising Standards Authority. These prohibited aspirational connotations and overt claims to social success or status in tobacco advertising.

The CDP agency responded with the revolutionary 'surreal' series of press and poster advertisements in which the gold pack itself became the star of the advertisement. The campaign swiftly acquired a cult following as the public, intrigued by the mystery of the surreal images, looked out with interest for new additions in the series.

Alan Waldie, art director at CDP, declared that: "The harder they were to understand, the longer the people would stand and look at them, which is the result you want from any ad."

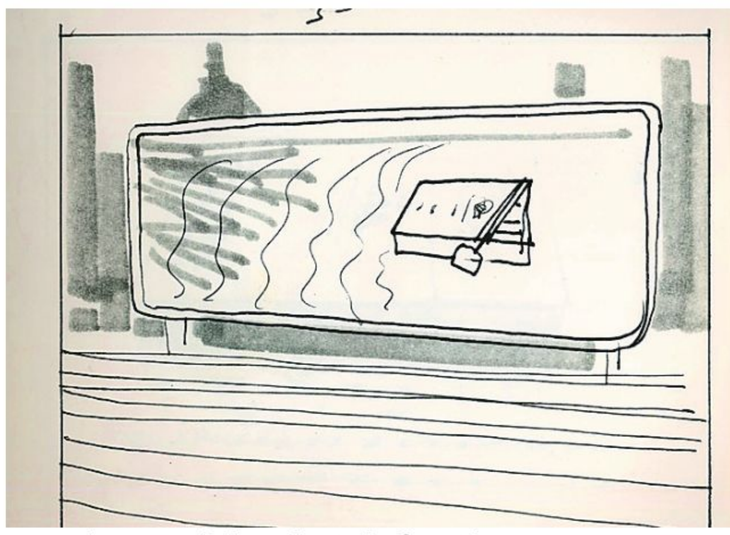
He also noted of his inspiration: "I was thinking of Dadaism and decided to combine many of these elements in a surrealistic way . . . But in the days before computers we had to construct it all." (The 100 best TV commercials, B Kanner, p45.)

The next step was to create a suitably impressive cinema commercial to continue the campaign's momentum. Waldie decided that the approach should be to translate the surreal style of the B&H press and poster ads directly on to film and the idea began with his recent 'sardine can' poster. He drew up a storyboard featuring the key elements he had envisaged – an iguana, a rattlesnake, a swimming pool and a giant cigarette box carried by a helicopter. There was no narrative or dialogue (or indeed logic) and the film therefore had to be driven by the stunning visuals and score.

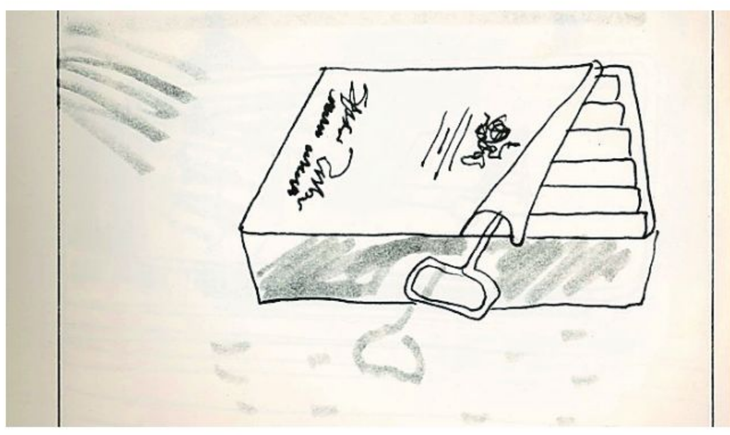
The artistic Hugh Hudson was brought into direct and selected Death Valley in the Arizona desert as the perfect location for the shoot. Hudson was initially shown just five frames from Waldie's storyboard and developed the concept from there. The film climaxes with the gold box being dropped into a desert pool to be opened by a diver with a giant sardine can key and then pans out to reveal the B&H 'swimming pool' poster outside Battersea power station.

The resulting commercial, which broke all previous advertising budgets, was suitably epic in scale and featured a driving score by Godley & Creme of the band 10CC. The film was regularly applauded by the public when shown in cinemas and also feted

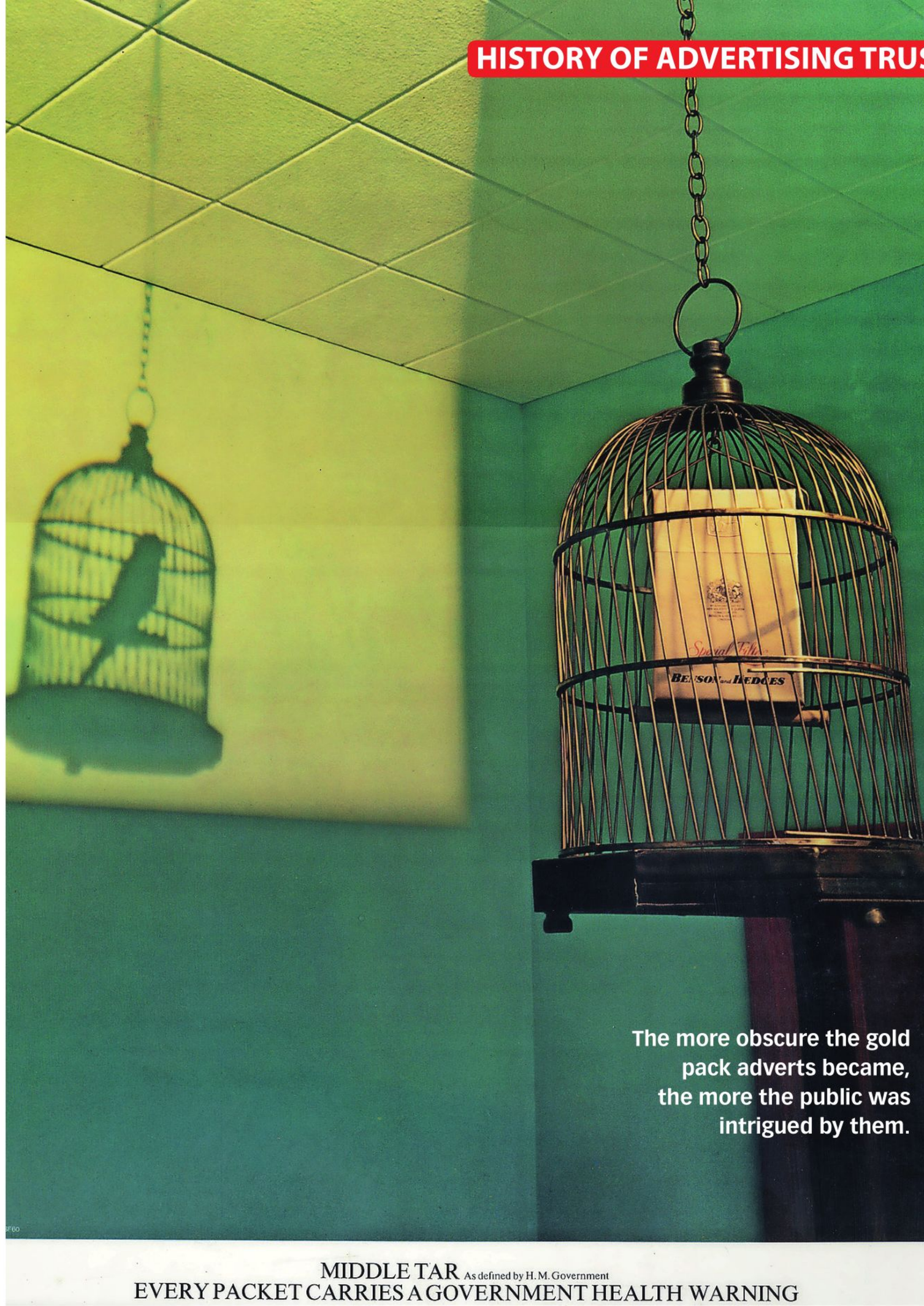
The surreal approach to advertising Benson & Hedges in the late-1970s.



An Alan Waldie sketch for the Benson & Hedges swimming pool advert.



The 'sardine can' floating in the pool is opened to reveal the Benson & Hedges cigarettes.



The more obscure the gold pack adverts became, the more the public was intrigued by them.

by the advertising industry, being awarded a rare 'Gold Pencil' at the prestigious D&AD (Design & Art Direction) awards in 1979. Hugh Hudson went on to direct 'Chariots of Fire' a couple of years later.

The CDP agency's archive was donated to HAT in 2000 and the Alan Waldie Archive, received in 2012, includes hand-drawn visuals, notebooks, awards and photographs from the legendary creative's career. The collection contains Waldie's original D&AD Gold Pencil film advertising award for 'Swimming Pool'.

HAT's new podcast series 'Inspiring Minds' includes interviews with film director Hugh Hudson and CDP's managing director Frank Lowe which provide fascinating insights into the making of 'Swimming Pool', including the revelation of a delighted Hudson being shown the original B&H swimming pool sketches from the Waldie archive at HAT. Have a look online yourself at: https://www.hatads.org.uk/learning/inspiring-minds

HAT also makes available to researchers the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) Collection, through which the changing legislation governing the industry can be studied. LT

The History of Advertising Trust (HAT), based at Raveningham in Norfolk, is the largest archive of British advertising in the world. The collections range in date from 1800 to today and feature many of the most iconic ads of the past. If you would like to visit the archive as a researcher or as part of a group tour, take a look at the website www.hatads.org.uk or send an email to enquiries@hatads.org.uk or by phone on 01508 548623.

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What a grand story to share

Reading together can strength the bond between grandparents and grandchildren, and brings hidden benefits for health too, explains **Helen Stirrup**, occupational health adviser at Stannah.

Getting stuck into a good book is such a satisfying feeling, at any age. And when you're sharing it with your grandchild or another young relative then it is extra special.

A recent survey of 1,600 over-60-year-olds found that nearly all (91%) of us use some if our free hours to curl up with a book. Reading transports us to another world and a great story can make us smile, laugh, cry, feel gripped or relieved. Better yet, reading doesn't just boost our mood – it offers other cognitive health and social benefits too.

Boosts brain power

Just like the muscles in your body, your brain needs exercise to stay healthy. Cognitive stimulation helps to slow the progress of conditions, such as dementia. Reading keeps our brains active and engaged, strengthening short-term memory and reducing cognitive decline. In fact, our research further showed that nearly half of over-60s read every day and still enjoy learning something new. The health benefits don't stop there – one study even found that reading books can extend our longevity.

Keeps you calm

Getting lost in a novel can be a huge stress reliever. For this reason, books can be prescribed as therapy – known as bibliotherapy. This can be invaluable if you struggle with anxiety, firstly as a form of escapism, but ultimately because it's proven to keep your heart rate steady and ease muscle tension. The recent Stannah survey also found that almost a quarter of respondents carry either a book or e-book with them at any given time, which is worthwhile if you need a little time to relax.

Picture: Getty Images Europe

Broadcaster Dr Miriam Stoppard is Stannah's health and wellbeing adviser.

Strengthen social skills

Further research has shown that reading fiction increases feelings of empathy and strengthens social skills – useful traits to have when forming friendships where it's important to be proactive. Reading for pleasure can also help us feel more connected to the wider community. You might find a local book club near you using a website like Meetup, or perhaps you're one of the 31% of over-60s who use the traditional library to find books and meet like-minded people.

Bond with grandchildren

Being a bookworm can bring such joy, so why not spread the love? Almost half (45%) of grandparents spoken to for the Stannah survey said that reading with their grandchildren is one of the best things about growing old. With a trusty hardback (and even an audiobook), it has never been easier to consume stories. Have fun putting on voices and get their imaginations whirling – as well as yours! There is nothing better than getting stuck into a page turner to make you feel better, spark your curiosity and provide hours of entertainment. LT

READING TOGETHER

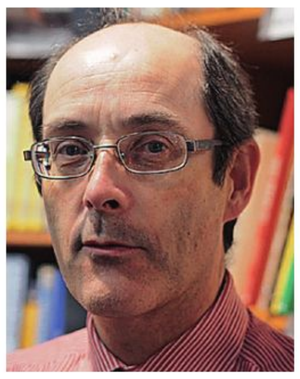
Dr Miriam Stoppard, TV doctor and Stannah's health and wellbeing adviser, is pictured at a reading of 'Oliver Twist' at the Charles Dickens Museum, in Dickens' old home where he wrote the famous novel.

This event took place to celebrate the relationship between grandparent and grandchild, and how reading together can strengthen this bond. The Stannah's Silver Census survey, which inspired the event, found that four out of 10 people aged 60-plus enjoyed reading their favourite tales with their grandchildren. The classic Oliver Twist novel ranked in the top 20 books older Brits believe children should read.

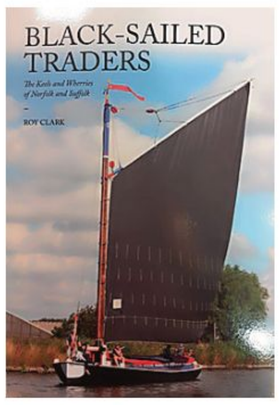
Picture: Getty Images Europe

Dr Miriam Stoppard enjoys sharing a book with a young reader.

Books of the month



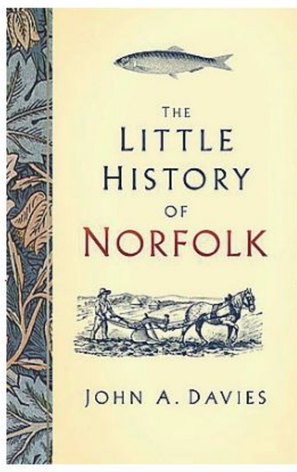
Bruce Kemble-Johnson of Jarrold takes a look at what's new on the bookshelves.
You can order all these books online at www.jarrold.co.uk Order line: 01603 660661



Black-Sailed Traders; The Keels and Wherries of Norfolk and Suffolk

Roy Clark, £22.50, Peacock Press, 9781912271443

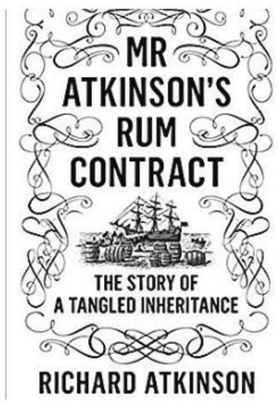
After 40 years this classic book has been re-issued – a volume about the famous wherries that this region was known for that traded up and down our rivers bringing prosperity to towns, villages and communities. The author made a vow on the D-Day beaches that if he survived he would do something for his native county, and this and the Wherry Trust were the result. With full social history, builders, owners and black and white photographs plus memoirs, it's fantastic that this highly respected volume is now back in print.



The Little History of Norfolk

John A Davies, £12, History Press, 9780750985765

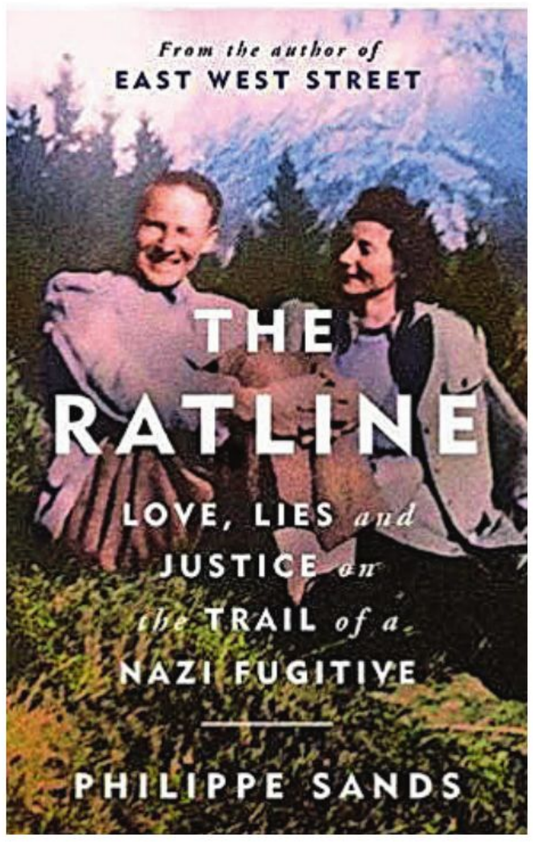
A companion volume to Suffolk History, this is a pocket journey from early man to recent times, and is packed with informative facts and interest. From Romans and good Queen Boudica, Tudors and Stuarts, Victoria and the 20th Century we can read about changing landscapes and farming practices, religion, crime, arts, travel and all manner of historical doings. This is an interesting volume to dip into, suitable for pleasure and leisure and perfect for a little study time.



Mr Atkinson's Rum Contract; The Story of a Tangled Inheritance

Richard Atkinson, £20, Fourth Estate Books, 9780007509249

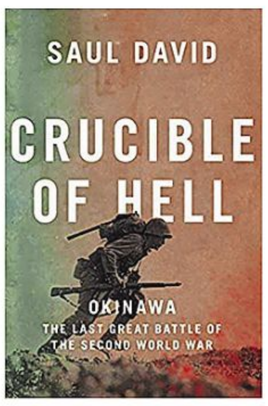
Have you ever wondered about a lost inheritance? Well, the author found a cache of 18th Century letters and their contents set him off on an emotional worldwide journey. From finding his ancestral weather-worn house in Cumbria to the ruins of Jamaican sugar estates, this is an emotional discovery of lost ancestors and the meaning of family, history and the mysteries that lie hidden in our attics.



The Ratline; Love, Lies, Justice on the Trail of a Nazi Fugitive

Phillipe Sands, £20, 9781474608121

From award-winning writer Sands comes this follow-up to his acclaimed East-West Street, all about the Nazi governor of Galicia who is mentioned in the first book. This man, Otto von Watcher was responsible for murdering hundreds of thousands of Jews and Polish people in the occupied territory that he was in charge of, including the author's grandfather's family. Using the Vatican 'rat run' that enabled many Nazi fugitives to escape to Argentina, Watcher took refuge in Rome. A fascinating story about a Nazi family, their son and the author.



Crucible Of Hell: Okinawa: The Last Great Battle Of The Second World War

Saul David, £25, Collins, 9780008342487

Published to coincide with the 75th anniversary of the devastating battle in the Far East, this book investigates the ferocious engagement as the Americans and their Allies gained a foothold on the land of the Japanese Imperial Empire. The men of the Far East are the forgotten heroes who endured hell in infamous camps and had to die for every inch of 'sacred' ground as they fought the Japanese. Okinawa was the crucible to victory and vast numbers of soldiers and civilians perished by shell, flame and suicide attack.

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ANOTHER SPRING

by Irene I'Anson

LOVE OF NATURE AND BRAVERY OF FRIENDS INSPIRES IRENE

The writer of this month's Short Story is a regular and successful entrant to our annual competition – Irene I'Anson.

Another Spring is a beautifully observed piece, and Irene explains: "The theme of and inspiration for my story is a combination of several things. There has been much talk recently of the health benefits both physical and mental from spending quality time in a garden. My love of wildlife and the natural world and my concern at deforestation and destruction of the rainforests was another factor.

"I have friends and acquaintances sadly battling unforgiving illness and disability. Their bravery and positivity is both humbling and inspiring, a fact I wanted to weave into my story.

"I was so pleased to hear that my short story 'Another Spring' was to be published in Let's Talk magazine this year. For me, one of the best things about the magazine – although there are many – is the opportunity to write a story and, maybe, have it published. With a word count and deadline it focuses one to just get writing, I would urge anyone who thinks they may have a story in them to give it a go."

Irene, a retired office worker, has lived in Norfolk for about 20 years, just over five of those at Holt.

She says: "I can honestly say that life is never boring. We are always busy, indeed I wonder where the time goes!

"I belong to the U3A, a craft group, where much time is spent putting the world to rights over tea and biscuits, the class agree we could sort it all in a fortnight given the chance . . . Then I try to see as much of family and friends as I can.

"I have always loved to write and as a child I would get good marks for my essays and composition. Being an only child, which can be lonely, my nose was always in a book, plus I had a very fertile imagination. I must now put my thinking cap on for this year's competition!"

Picture: colimachon / iStock / Getty Images Plus

It was early spring when we had my diagnosis; a time of snowdrops, primroses and early daffodils, the first flush of young buds and bird-song. A blackbird practicing his new song, puffing out his chest and vying with other birds to be the very best, he filled my sad heart with joy.

About the same time as the diagnosis we were hoping to move house, to a beautiful cottage just up the road. The combination of these two factors coming together was overwhelming and too much to take in. Consumed with shock, rage and despair, I questioned, why me? A phrase I swore I would never, ever use – after all, why not me? Numbness and self-pity consumed me and I descended into a very dark place.

Scary words said so dispassionately, clinically, by someone who knew the score, an expert in his field. I forgot about commonsense, which told me I was not alone, that conversations like this happened every day. Instead thoughts scurried around my brain like a rat in a trap, niceties flying out of the window and far from being a mature, balanced and postive woman, overnight I forgot all of that and negativity became my middle name. I did feel sorry for Ray though, my poor husband, who throughout all of this was my rock and an absolute hero to boot.

However, despite everything, matters did improve. As late spring gave way to early summer, glorious in its gentle warmth, I began to feel more positive. My treatment had ▶

started; okay, not a fun time to be sure, but I could feel that, at last, something was being done. I spent time researching how best to help myself, wanting to control my own destiny, not sit back and leave it to others. I couldn't let my life slip away without a fight. Besides, my birthday was at the end of June, I would focus on that if only for Ray, the children and my grandchildren who expected, demanded even, Grandma's big day to be all about cake, balloons and bunting.

My birthday came and went, Ray, the children and grandchildren making it very special and a birthday to remember. However I tried not to think that it could be my last.

Then July came sauntering in, warm, heady; in the garden borders were ablaze with colour. We also heard our offer had been accepted on the cottage. I fancied it had been waiting for us, my heart told me we were meant for each other.

The suddenly it was August. Already! It came in blowsy, hot and humid, vibrant colour splashed as with a paintbrush throughout the garden. It was about this time we had such good news that my problems took a back seat. Oh joy of joys, our daughter was expecting a baby – her first, an event she had longed and prayed for. It was totally unexpected and wonderful, surely a good omen for us all.

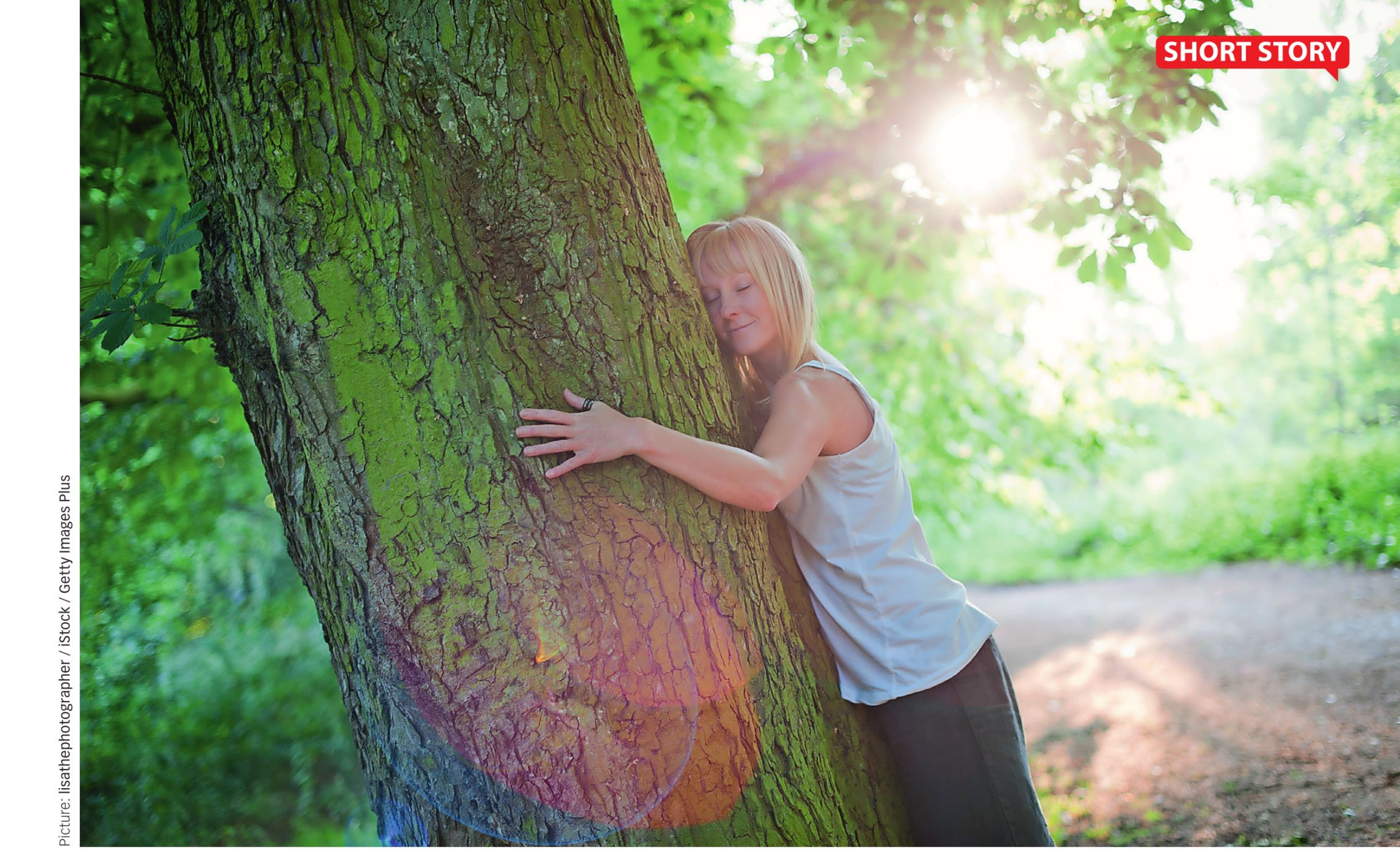
The future which had looked so bleak and desperate suddenly looked brighter, full of promise, recovery and new beginnings.

More good news, we should be moving very soon. The property in question is close to our current home. For months as I'd passed the cottage I craned my neck to get a good view, totally smitten with its knapped flint frontage, white picket fence and stout, heavy wooden door. I'd been consumed with envy. Oh, how I'd coveted that cottage, so old and quirky with such beautiful gardens. The front garden especially was long and wide, colourful shrubs and fragrant flowers spilling over on to a red brick path. Climbing roses and wisteria festooned the mellow walls and rampaged up a wooden pergola. In the middle of a verdant lawn stood a mature, gnarled old tree, the large canopy creating a green, peaceful haven of shade. Could it have spoken, what tales and secrets would it tell of past inhabitants of the cottage and history of the village? They were beautiful and majestic – the cottage and the tree came as a pair – it was instant love for me.

I'd become so fixated on the cottage that in my head it was the answer to all my problems; everything, all my most pressing needs, which of course was unhealthy and untrue, but it did stop me dwelling on my illness. It was the home of my dreams and I was convinced that if it were mine I would be well again. It could all have gone so badly wrong, but no, pushing all negative thoughts aside, we seized the moment and commenced packing, hoping that time would be on my side.

At last we were in and late summer beckoned me outside, where spring's promise had set the scene for summer and autumn's bounty. Borders and hedges were full of life, with jewelled butterflies, nodding cosmos and cabbage roses growing in wild profusion, jostling for attention in the hot sun. Furry bees in striped football jerseys buzzed and bustled in and out of majestic trumpeted foxgloves. I hugged myself delightedly, living here I could watch and enjoy the sonsons as they came and went, watch the effect they had on the garden and my beautiful tree every single day. I was feeling confident,

Picture: Paul Bradbury / OJO Images



Picture: lisathephotographer / iStock / Getty Images Plus

and so life went on.

My chemotherapy continued, our daughter blossomed and the excitement of the forthcoming birth took the sting out of my poor efforts to stay in control, focused and positive. Autumn, still warm outside with yellow, gold, brown and red, vibrant colours threading through tree and hedgerow as the garden changed yet again. Summer had been kind, a few flowers clinging on like blowsy prima donnas past their prime. I breathed in the faint, fading scent of late roses and sweet peas trailing on the new pergola Ray had erected outside the kitchen window. This was a task carried out willingly so that we might enjoy autumn's golden glory before Jack Frost and winter's chill shrivelled leaves and petals, turning them to dust, or compost as Ray said, looking on the bright side.

Meanwhile some good news. My treatment had come to an end for the time being and the results thus far were very promising. In remission, they said. Feeling buoyed up and full of hope I dared to look ahead; so far I had been too frightened to look any further than my next treatment. Now I ventured to think about Christmas, snuggling up in front of a log fire, and then New Year with so much promise of hope and new life to come.

Winter came in with a bang, brown shrivelled leaves slyly sneaking through the door in the blustery wind, the tree bare and skeletal. However I was pleased to note that a few berries were still clinging bravely on to branches and much appreciated by a variety of birds.

Christmas! With log fires, present wrapping, happy hours festooning a small pine-scented fir tree with old, familiar decorations from long ago. Running my fingers over each precious, slightly dusty bauble, several rotund Santas and one threadbare fairy, I savoured each precious memory they conjured up, remembering Christmases past, so many happy, smiling faces sadly long gone passed through my mind's eye, I rubbed moist eyes with grubby hands, leaving dusty streaks across flushed cheeks.

New Year brought first footing; with a Scottish grandfather this was a must. Our son obligingly filled the role of first footer, with much giggling and jigging about from small people.

January, February passed in a moment, and March, a month filled with family celebrations, focused my mind on the important things in life. Suddenly it was April and the year had turned full circle.

We had a new grandson, a small, adorable bundle of joy. I was in remission and on the tree new leaf buds were forming. I was in a good place and the future looked bright. Each day I awoke I counted my blessings, no longer taking anything for granted.

Wrapped up warmly, I ventured into the garden. There was a faint luminous mist hovering over bushes, trees and shrubs. I turned my face towards the sun, but it held little warmth and power, it was too early in the year. Yet there was much promise of things to come, to see and enjoy, and although chill, the air was invigorating.

I turned my attention to the tree, encircling my arms about the thick trunk then, as I rested my cheek on the rough bark, I could feel its power, its life force. It coursed through me, sharing its energy and power. It was then I knew, in my very bones, that everything was going to be all right. LT

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Let's Talk about

health and help for you

It's a natural thing to want to help your children get on in life. If we can, many of us lend a hand when our sons and daughters buy their first home. But there is plenty to think about to ensure that any financial help is given in the best way for you all now and in the future. Michelle Collins from Cozens-Hardy shares her expertise in this area in this month's Let's Talk help and health section – certainly worth reading if this is something your family is considering.

In her regular column, Amanda Jayne, our Norfolk-based psychotherapist and counsellor, discusses the reasons behind controlling behaviour, how it can manifest itself and how it can be managed.

We find out about the importance of keeping family involved when a loved one moves into a care home. And David Potten of Norfolk Citizens Advice tackles the subject of Brexit and what it means for people of settled and pre-settled status. LT

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Are you a control freak?

Control issues can affect all sorts of relationships and can have their roots in childhood stress or trauma, as west Norfolk based psychotherapist and counsellor **Amanda Jayne** explains.

Are you a control freak or do you know someone who is? Control issues manifest in varying degrees from having to keep everything ordered and tidy to controlling people around you.

Some people have major control issues they are not even aware of. Subconsciously may be they are a controlling partner or parent who has to micro-manage, or in more extreme and destructive ways, they use subtle tactics which demean and diminish others into submission. It can be something you are not aware of until it starts to seriously affect relationships or you go into therapy.

The need to control can stem from childhood. If there has been a disruptive childhood in any way, this can have an effect on a person's ability to feel 'safe'. They therefore develop methods in order to feel safe and these methods continue into adulthood if disruptions are not addressed properly as a young person. They however won't be aware that they are using these methods, which will feel perfectly justifiable to them.

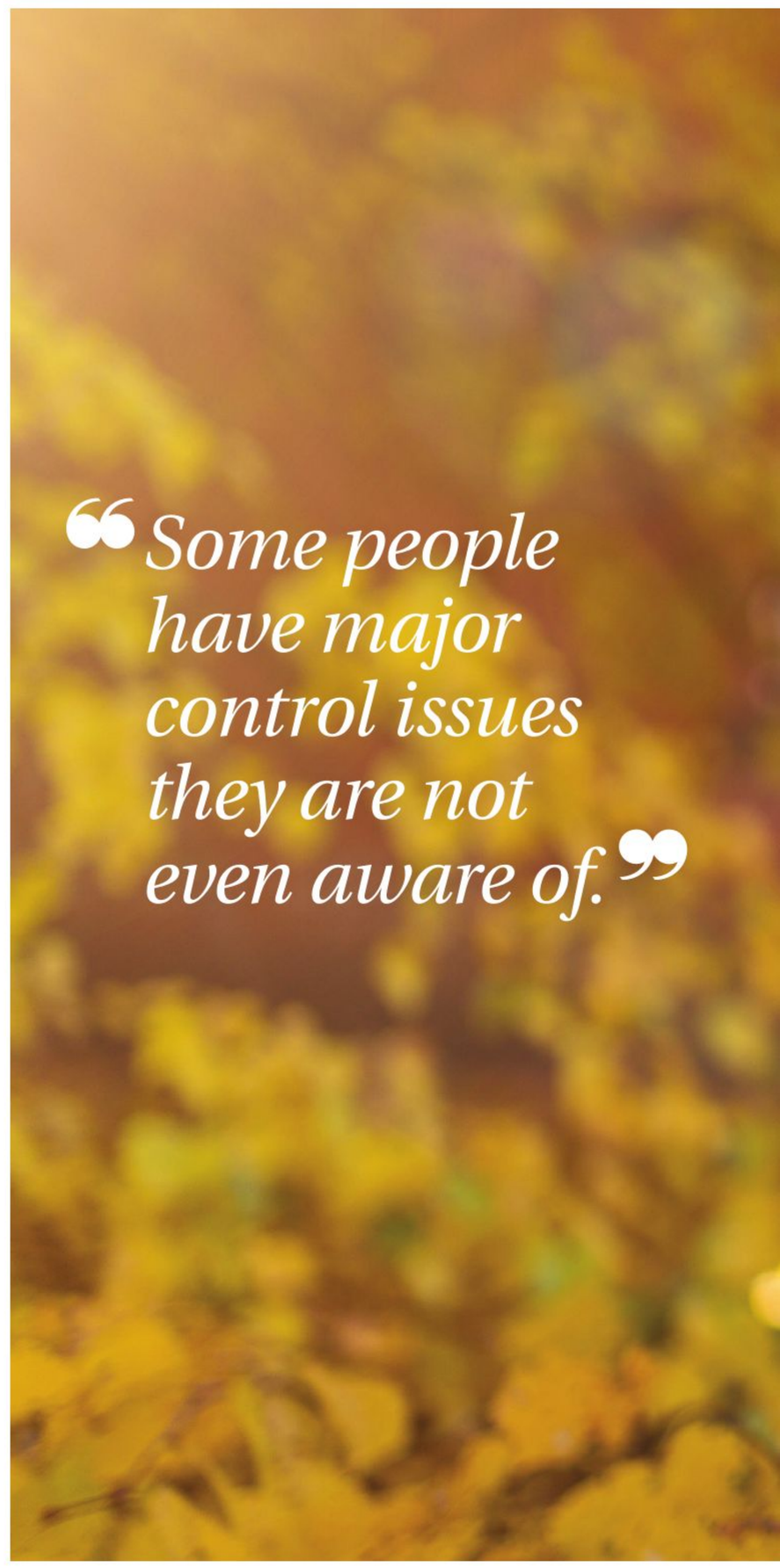
Picture: fizkes / iStock / Getty Images Plus

A disruptive childhood may include:

- Divorce/separation
- Abuse either to the child or abuse that the child witnesses
- Continuous conflict in the home, rarely resulting in resolution
- Witnessing a parent leave, not knowing where or why they have gone
- Sudden changes of address or changes of school or repetitive changes in address/school
- Changes in address or school at a crucial age (teenage years)
- A death or loss of some kind
- Parents who behave inconsistently (one minute you are good, the next you are bad)
- Volatile or unpredictable environments

Controlling behaviour may include:

- Needing a timetable of events and finding spontaneity very difficult
- Needing the environment to be very ordered and controlled
- Excessive tidiness
- Controlling oneself by being a perfectionist and getting very upset when that (inevitably) cannot be achieved



Controlling behaviour which is especially difficult and badly affects relationships may include:

SILENCE.

This is a powerful punishment tool. If you are ever on the receiving end of silence or a refusal to talk, you know that it is extremely painful; frustrating; confusing, and destroys any good feeling you may have towards that person. The silent one may have had to use this to survive in a volatile situation in childhood and may retreat automatically when things get too difficult. They won't be conscious of this but it doesn't take away how painful this is to be on the receiving end of.

WITHOLDING FEELINGS/ ANSWERS/INFORMATION

Picture: PIKSEL / iStock / Getty Images Plus

The more you ask, the less you are likely to be told.

IGNORING/BLANKING/ STONEWALLING

If you have ever tried to ring someone knowing they are there but they won't pick up the phone, then you know how this feels! Or maybe your texts are not being answered. Most of us have done this from time to time, but in conjunction with other controlling behaviour this means there is an issue. If the other person knows you are distressed or angry, they may use this to manipulate you to the point of giving in.

SUBTLE BUT CONTINUOUS CRITICISM, SOMETIMES DESCRIBED AS 'JOKES'

This is more of a narcissistic method of trying to control someone by making them feel silly/inadequate/mad/bad/wrong in some way.

Maybe you recognise some of these as your own behaviour. Ask yourself when you felt out of control in your life. Ask what you needed at that time and didn't get: understanding, empathy, a hug, reassurance . . . Then gently explain to your partner/parent/child/friend where you think it comes from and ask them to help you feel safe. Help yourself feel safe in those situations by being kind and understanding, and imagining giving the child that was you what they needed.

If you are on the receiving end of a control freak, find out their background. Gently point out to them how that behaviour makes you feel.

If the behaviour is extreme, the chances are they won't admit to it or even see they are doing it as it will not be deliberate. All you can do then is gently give them instances and tell them the emotional impact on you and suggest they have some therapy or you have therapy together.

Sometimes it is necessary to exit that particular relationship. Especially if you find yourself constantly battling without resolution, feeling upset and frustrated and losing your temper. LT

Harley Street Psychotherapy will be running a Self-Development Retreat in north Norfolk at the end of April. To find out more, email: harleysttherapy@gmail.com

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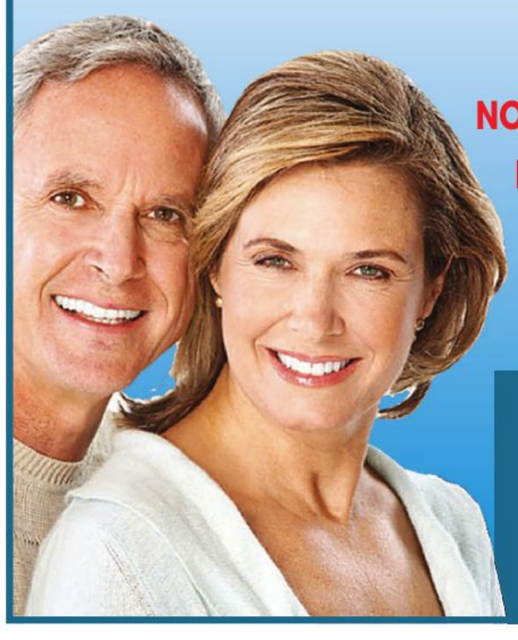

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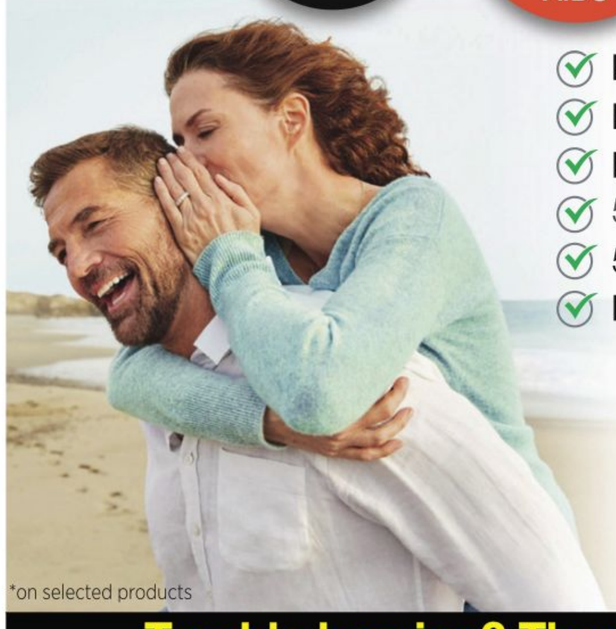

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Early intervention is key

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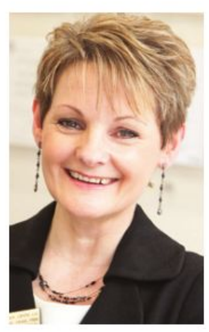

World Hearing Day 2020 is the perfect reason to book a hearing test, says **Karen Finch**, managing director and lead audiologist for The Hearing Care Centre which has a special offer for Let's Talk readers.

March 3 marked the annual celebration of World Hearing Day, a campaign organised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to raise awareness of the importance of hearing health.

This year the theme it is focusing on is 'hearing for life', highlighting how timely and effective interventions can ensure that people with hearing loss are able to achieve their full potential at all life stages.

For me this is a hugely powerful message. Think back to your most treasured memories throughout your life, how would a hearing loss have made them different? Your first job interview, nights out with your friends, getting married and hearing the words 'I do', watching your children grow up . . .

The sounds we hear fill in colour to the world around us and add another layer to our rich experience of life. As we get older, our hearing will naturally deteriorate but we will always be creating these memories. You may now have grandchildren who are speaking their first words and fascinating you as they experience the world for the first time. Imagine not being able to hear their every word and be included in these special moments.

As I have been for many years, the WHO is encouraging anyone who believes their hearing may not quite be what it used to be to take appropriate and timely interventions to facilitate communication and interaction within daily life. It is recommended that those aged 55 and above should have a hearing assessment every two years; this will ensure you are always reaching your maximum hearing potential.

Take a moment to think about how valuable your hearing has been throughout your life so far. Enable yourself to continue making these special memories by making regular hearing assessments a priority.

When was the last time you visited your local audiologist? If the answer is 'I can't remember' or 'I've never been', use World Hearing Day as your motivation to check your hearing and book a hearing assessment. It could be as simple as being told that you do not need to worry, or alternatively you could be recommended a hearing system which will bring back the sounds you did not even realise you were missing. Either way it's an incredibly easy and hugely beneficial step. LT

HELP FOR YOU

Free hearing tests across Suffolk and Norfolk

To mark World Hearing Day, Karen and her team would be delighted to offer Let's Talk readers a complimentary hearing test (usually £30) if booked by March 14, 2020.

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Michelle Collins is a married mum of two who lives in Great Melton. She is also partner and head of the 'private client' department at Cozens-Hardy solicitors in Norwich. Michelle and her team specialise in Wills and probate work, powers of attorney, trusts, capital tax planning and complex estates.

Picture: monkeybusinessimages / iStock / Getty Images Plus

Helping your child on to the property ladder

Your child wants to buy their first home and you want to help them. But what's the best way to help financially? **Michelle Collins** of Cozens-Hardy shares some useful advice.

It has never been easy to get on to the property ladder, but more and more first time buyers are turning to 'the bank of Mum and Dad' for financial support. Here's what you need to know before you help your child buy their first home:

Can I gift money to my child to help them buy a home?

A sum of money can be given to fund part or all of a house deposit; this may boost borrowing power or even help your child secure a cheaper mortgage deal.

The majority of mortgage lenders accept gifted deposits but may request written evidence confirming the gift has been made and that it does not need to be repaid. The main reasons for this are to ensure your child can afford the mortgage repayments without the need of repaying another loan, and to ensure you do not have any interest in the property if the worst happens and the house is repossessed.

What are the tax implications of gifting money?

The giver and the receiver of the gift will not have any immediate tax liabilities to declare. However later down the line, there may be some Inheritance Tax (IHT) implications.

An individual has an allowance of £3,000 to give away every year before any IHT becomes payable. If you have not made any gifts in the previous two years, you could use last year's allowance and gift £6,000 without any IHT liabilities.

If you are thinking about gifting a larger sum of money, then you may be liable to IHT if you were to pass away within seven years of making the gift. This is because HMRC would consider the gift to be part of your estate for IHT purposes.

How does my child protect their deposit if they purchase with a co-owner?

A Declaration of Trust can be prepared to record the deposit contributed by your child, and

when it is to be repaid. This agreement can be prepared at any time but if it is prepared at the same time as the purchase, the title documents can make reference to the agreement.

Who can enter into a Declaration of Trust?

Any number of people can enter into a Declaration of Trust, but it is normally entered into by co-owners who have contributed unequal amounts to the purchase price. Alternatively, parents can enter into a Declaration of Trust to record their financial contribution as an investment rather than an outright gift to their child.

What information is recorded in a Declaration of Trust?

- The deposit amounts given by each party.
- Arrangements for paying the utility bills / mortgage payments.
- The amount of equity to be repaid to each party; this can be expressed as a fixed amount or a percentage.
- Arrangements for getting the property valued or how a co-owner can be bought out.

What are the drawbacks to a Declaration of Trust?

- The validity of the Declaration of Trust may be affected if your child chooses to marry their co-owner.
- A Declaration of Trust is a personal agreement; your child and their co-owner will still have a joint responsibility to pay the mortgage regardless of any other agreement recorded.
- If you decide to declare a financial interest in your child's property instead of providing an outright gift to them, and are not registered as the legal owner, it may be difficult to withdraw your investment. This is because legal owners only have the power to decide when the property is sold or re-mortgaged. Declaring your financial interest in the property using a Declaration of Trust may also trigger additional Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) or Capital Gains Tax (CGT) liabilities.

What are the alternatives to gifting?

Entering into a joint or guarantor mortgage is an alternative; it goes without saying that you should consult a mortgage broker to discuss your available options, and consider the impact a mortgage, or second mortgage would have on your standard of living. In this situation, there would be additional SDLT liabilities and/or CGT liabilities to consider. LT

Before helping your child get on the property ladder, it's very important to explore your options and review the tax implications that may arise. If you would like any advice on the areas I have talked about in this article, I can be contacted by telephone on: 01603 724637 and by email at: macollins@cozens-hardy.com

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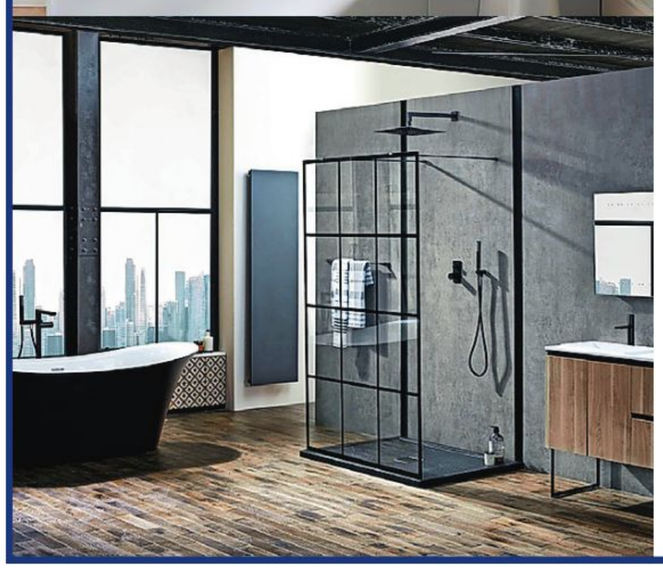

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Family ties

Having a relative in a care home can be difficult, but there are ways you can remain involved. By **Alisha Davis**

In some instances, it might be inevitable that a beloved relative will need to be placed in a care home. They may be suffering with a combination of physical or mental health issues, which require intense or prolonged care and specialist nursing, and you simply can't cope. It's an incredibly difficult decision and many people struggle with the idea – and some even suffer from guilt of placing family members into care homes.

Choosing the right care home for your family member can be incredibly stressful, but the most important thing to do is to research your chosen care homes very carefully. There are signs that you can look out for when it comes to your choice. Make sure you are regularly asked for your views about the quality and choice of the food and other aspects of the home, and give relevant feedback to ensure the care given is appropriate to your family member. One key aspect, though, is discovering how much you can be involved with the care home.

Maintaining a close relationship with your loved one is vital, so the care home should allow you free rein when it comes to your visits. Many care homes give family members the opportunity to take relatives out for trips – something as simple as a trip to a coffee shop and a short walk can do wonders for their wellbeing, especially when it comes to holidays such as Christmas and Easter. Spending time with family can help with the transition of moving into a care home and some even offer themed dinners that families are invited to attend.

Join relatives for tea and a chat

Getting out and about is key

One thing that is important is developing a relationship with the care home staff. This is helpful because they can keep you updated with any changes, or needs that your family member might require help with. It will also make it easier to mention any feedback or slight improvements you might feel will help your family member's lifestyle, and will undoubtedly make it easier to talk about tough subjects when needed.

Seniors still need an advocate to make sure they are receiving quality care, and as family that falls on you. They need visits from family to feel loved and important, and occasionally, they will need a hand when it comes to eating a meal or obtaining the personal items they want to make their lives in the home that much more comfortable and home-like.

The main priority here is that you keep a close relationship with your loved one; having them in a home doesn't change what they mean to you or what you mean to them.

Just remember, they are in the best place and getting the best possible care, but it's important to remain a part of their lives and go on this journey together. LT

Photos: KatarzynaBialasiewicz/ doble-d/ Getty Images/iStockphoto

How does Brexit affect you?

Now that the UK has left the European Union, what happens next? **David Potten**, from Norfolk Citizens Advice, explains some of the changes ahead.

The United Kingdom left the European Union (EU) on Friday, January 31, 2020. How does this affect those living in Norfolk and Suffolk ?

As the UK is no longer a member of the EU and any of its political institutions or agencies, we will no longer have any representatives in the European Parliament. The three MEPs (members of the European Parliament) who represented the East of England no longer do so.

Most other aspects of life will not change during 2020. The government will be involved in trade talks with the EU for the 11 months that follow our leaving, the 'transition period'. During this time the vast majority of things will remain the same. There could be more significant changes after January 1, 2021.

There will however be some changes this year. New passports will be blue and gold, instead of EU burgundy. There will be a new 50p coin to mark Brexit.

The most important changes relate to immigration. Any citizen of a European Union, European Economic Area (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) or Switzerland who is living in the UK and who wishes to stay after January 1, 2021 must apply for settled or pre-settled status. This also applies to family members who are citizens of these countries.

So, if you are a citizen of one of these countries or you know anyone who is, taking action during 2020 is very important. If you have lived in the UK for more than five years you can apply for 'settled status'. If you have been in the UK for less than five years you can apply for 'pre-settled status'.

Both settled and pre-settled status allow you to work in the UK, to use the NHS for free, to enrol in education, to access public funds such as benefits and pensions and to travel in and out of the UK. Pre-settled status can be converted to settled status once you have five years' continuous residence in the UK.

There is a lot more information about the details of the EU Settlement Scheme on the gov.uk website (just search for EU Settlement Scheme). This website also can be used to apply for settled or pre-settled status. Most people find it easy to apply, provided they have a computer and a smart phone. The website tells you what you need to apply. LT

If you or someone you know wants to apply for settled or pre-settled status and needs help, you can contact Citizens Advice. Call us on 03444 111444 or visit the Citizens Advice website at www.citizensadvice.org.uk or you can call in to one of the offices – you can find the Norfolk offices at www.ncab.org.uk.

If you are in Suffolk, you can call the Adviceline on 0300 3301151.

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Flooded land near the River Nar.

Into the valley

A delightful ramble along the Nar Valley is a great way to enjoy the emergence of spring, says **Graham Cann** who brings us this month's walk.

NARBOROUGH
Three-and-a-half miles
Postcode: PE32 1UY
PARKING: Along main road near River Close

'Oh to be in England now that April's there.' Browning's poem captured the essence of spring with all the promise of a new life-giving season. So it is that we head west for a quiet, relaxing river walk taking in some fine views and evidence of Norfolk's commercial past en route.

1 Enter River Close and veer right to the end and follow the Nar Valley Way footpath sign leading to the River Nar itself. What follows is a glorious ramble along a long stretch of river bank. Keep an eye out for all sorts of flora and fauna, especially kingfishers. Continue for about one-and-a-half miles with delightful views over water meadows, and passing Narborough Bone Mill partly restored by a Lottery grant. It was built in the 1830s by the Marriott Brothers. Bones came from a number of sources, including whales through the port of King's Lynn and local slaughterhouses, and were ground down for fertiliser. But over the course of 60 years, the demand lessened for phosphate fertilisers and so the mill closed. You can still see the old lock and restored watermill in place today. When you reach a wooden river bridge, turn left along a wide, open track and continue for about half a mile until you reach a blue-topped post and footpath marker.

2 Keeping to the left of the hedge, you'll come to a gate and a bridge over a drainage ditch. Carry straight on. Where the track veers right, carry on in a straight direction towards a belt of fir trees, keeping to the path until you come to a T-junction of paths where you turn right. When you get to the road, turn left along a path between two paddocks and follow round to the right, heading towards some bungalows. Keep to the footpath along the backs of these properties and eventually to All Saints Church on your right. Once at the road, turn left back to the start of the walk. LT

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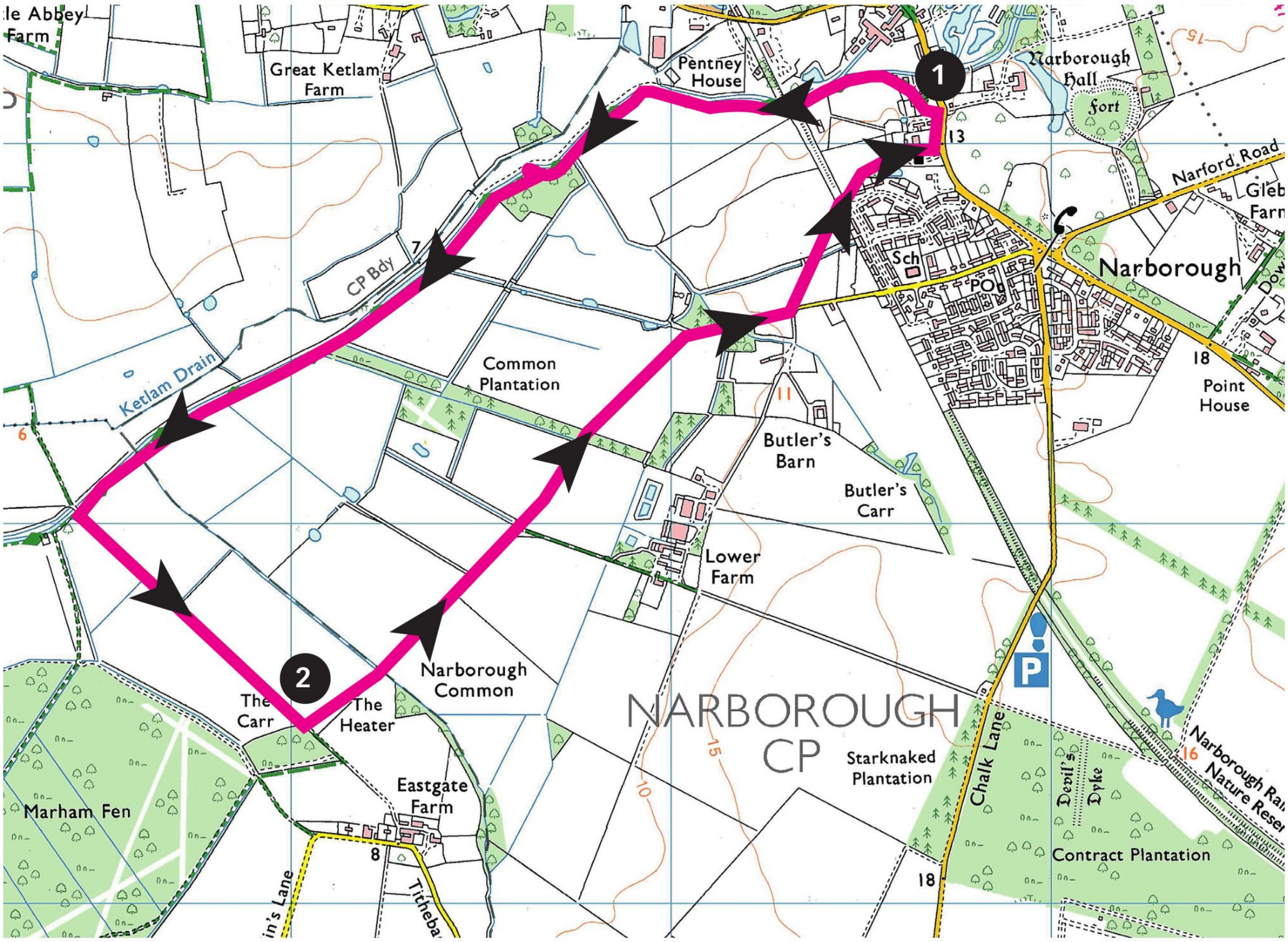

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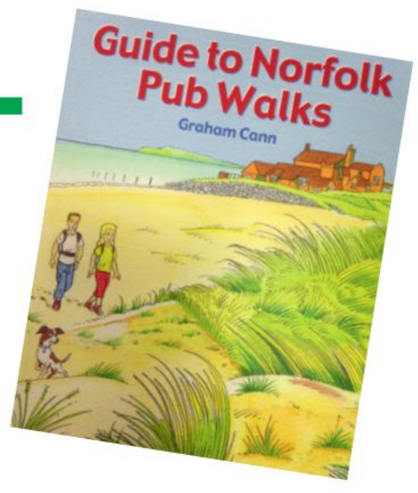
The River Nar.

The restored water mill.

WALKING WITH GRAHAM

Graham Cann, who writes our Let's Walk series, is the author of the pocket-sized Guide to Norfolk Pub Walks, published by Countryside Books, which contains 20 circular walks centred on a variety of pubs recommended for thier good food and warm welcome.
The book is available from Jarrold, WH Smith and online through Amazon, at £5.95.



Efforts pay off to give the common crane a home here

The story of the common crane in East Anglia is one of hope for the region's wildlife, as Let's Talk's nature writer **Barry Madden** explains.

Whether common cranes were ever actually common in East Anglia is open to debate.

Circumstantial historic evidence indicates they may well have been a widespread and abundant breeder in our marshes and fens in centuries past, or used the region as a wintering ground, but there is little concrete proof in support of this. The documentary evidence is sparse with an allusion to a 'Pyper crane' being contained in a document dating from 1543, but this could just as easily have been a colloquial reference to a grey heron or some such. There are other references to cranes featured as illustrations in manuscripts or listed as components of medieval feasting, but if it was once to be encountered gracefully striding across our soils, its evocative bugling cries echoing across our flatlands we will never know for sure.

What we do know and can justly be proud of is that common cranes did take up residence in Norfolk in 1979 and have been here ever since, slowly building a breeding pool that when joined by non-breeders and migrants now number some 70 birds county wide.

The story of their return began in September 1979, with a phone call received by John Buxton of Horsey Hall from an estate farmer who excitedly reported he had just seen "the biggest bloody herons". The birds turned out to be a pair of common cranes that were joined by a third bird later that autumn.

This trio spent the winter in the Hickling/Horsey area of Broadland feeding in potato fields and amongst stubble. These birds left the area the following April, no doubt attempting to return to their native Scandinavia to breed. Perhaps deterred by the long sea crossing they abandoned this migration attempt and returned to Norfolk a couple of weeks later. There they remained with the original pair eventually settling down to breed during the spring of 1981. That pioneering breeding attempt proved unsuccessful, but the birds tried again the following year with greater success, rearing a single chick to the fledging stage. This represented the first known common crane to be reared in the UK since perhaps the 16th Century, marking a red-letter day for all concerned with the bird's welfare and conservation.

Being large and obvious ground-nesting birds, crane nests and chicks are very vulnerable and open to predation. The recolonising birds had a tough time of it over the next 20 years, but eventually reached the stage where numbers outgrew their original Horsey home. In 2003 they began nesting at the Norfolk Wildlife Trust reserve at neighbouring Hickling, and in 2007 began to

Picture: Budanatr / iStock / Getty Images Plus

spread further afield when a pair nested at the RSPB's reserve at Lakenheath Fen in Suffolk following an influx of continental migrants into the region. Since then the birds have spread naturally as far afield as Yorkshire and Scotland.

During the period 2010-2014, the RSPB together with the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and Pensthorpe Conservation Trust released about 90 captive bred cranes into the Somerset Levels. The Great Crane Project had the purpose of securing the future of common cranes within the UK and was greeted with publicity and media attention, in my view somewhat detracting from the decades of dedicated conservation effort that took place here in East Anglia to nurture a viable natural recolonization.

It would be quite wrong to forget the magnificent efforts of John Buxton, his estate employees, RSPB staff and volunteers who acted as guardians for this vulnerable species throughout the critical first few years of its precarious tenure. Without the efforts of this dedicated band, it is doubtful whether the cranes would have been left undisturbed by egg collectors, farming activity and well-intentioned but ultimately disruptive sightseers.

Happily, the full story of how common cranes came to once again reside in eastern England has been documented in a marvellous book entitled 'The Norfolk Cranes' Story', co-authored by Chris Durdin, a Norwich-based conservationist who runs Honeyguide Wildlife Holidays. Chris worked with John Buxton to fully detail the trials and tribulations of these enigmatic birds as they slowly regained their place as a UK breeding species. I can thoroughly recommend the work which was first published in 2011 and is now available in paperback. It will have special resonance with anyone who loves the wild open spaces of East Anglia. If you feel in need of an uplifting read, visit www.norfolkcranes.co.uk for details of how to buy your copy.

One of the best places to see common cranes is during winter from the Stubb Mill raptor watchpoint at Hickling. The birds often come to roost among the wide expanse of marsh and fen, together with many marsh harriers and occasional hen harriers. It is an amazing sight and we should all be proud that we are, once again, able to witness these majestic birds sweeping across wide East Anglian skies. LT

For more of Barry Madden's brilliant nature musings and artwork, take a look online at: www.easternbushchat.blogspot

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Diary Dates

Compiled by: Sally Halverson

If you have an event that needs publicising, send details to Diary Dates, Let's Talk, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 1RE, or email the information (with pictures in jpg format if possible) to letstalk@archant.co.uk. Please supply a telephone number and, if applicable, an email address.

POP-UP HARMONIES

Come on a journey of song with a choir of Woodbridge singers created specially for this one-off concert; joining them will be guests Scunsulata from Norfolk. These two groups, together with choirmaster Chris Rowbury, will present a performance of enchanting harmony singing, drawing on musical traditions from around the world. Thrill to rhythmic songs from Africa and uplifting gospel from the US; sink into sumptuous harmonies from Eastern Europe and swoon to the sweet exotic sounds of the Pacific.

The concert will take place at St Mary's Church, Market Hill, Woodbridge, Suffolk, on Saturday, April 4, at 7.30pm and there will be a retiring collection for the charity WaterAid. Tickets are now on sale: £8 (£3 under-16s) from www.chrisrowbury.com or phone Chris on 01394 610486.

SPRING SINGERS

The Central Baptist Church, Duke Street, Norwich, is the venue for the Spring Concert by the Framingham Earl Singers on Saturday, April 4, at 7.30pm. The conductor for this evening is the Singers' new musical director, Daniel Wright, and the accompanist will be Neil Ricketts. The programme includes Fauré's Requiem, Mendelssohn's Organ Sonata and other works by Tallis, Rameau and Bruckner.

This popular and versatile choir was formed in September 1994 and is always happy to see new members. Tickets are £10 in advance from www.framinghamearlsingers.co.uk or £12 on the door, with children under-16 free.

SPARKLING SEASON

Sheringham Little Theatre is celebrating six decades of summer drama this year and a special diamond anniversary season will feature five plays, from the 1960s to the 'noughties', including Season's Greetings by Alan Ayckbourn, Out of Order by farce-master Ray Cooney and Stags and Hens by Willy Russell, who wrote Educating Rita. The venue is also planning anniversary extras, including a brand new drama by up-and-coming playwright James McDermott. This year's panto will be Aladdin and the youth musical group is rehearsing Guys and Dolls for Easter. For more information about the theatre and its upcoming events, go online to www.sheringhamlittletheatre.com

James Backway and Leona Allen in a scene from Holes, which coming to the Theatre Royal Norwich. Photo: Manuel Harlan

DIGGING DEEP

Coming to Norwich Theatre Royal this month is Holes, an inventive and creative new stage show, bringing a thrilling and offbeat family comedy adventure to audiences from April 15-18. A multi-award-winning novel by Louis Sachar and then a blockbuster film, Holes tells the story of Stanley Yelnats who was born into a family cursed with bad luck, so it comes as no surprise when he finds himself accused of a crime he didn't commit. Sent to a labour camp as punishment, he is tasked with digging one hole, five foot wide by five foot deep, every day. He's told it is to build 'character'. But the tyrannical warden is definitely hiding something, and Stanley and his fellow inmates have to deal with her demands, her two cronies, plus the fearsome rattlesnakes and yellow-spotted lizards as they try to unearth what's really going on. The show is perfect for adults and children aged eight and upwards. For more information or to book online, visit the website norwichtheatre.org or call the box office on 01603 630000.

FROM A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY

On display at the Time and Tide Museum of Great Yarmouth Life, from March 28 until September 13, May The Toys Be With You is an exhibition of more than 300 Star Wars toys, original cinema posters and memorabilia, and is an absolute must-see for fans of all ages; a celebration of classic toys and collectables but also of the iconic design and artwork of the Star Wars films through the past 40 years.

In 1977, the first Star Wars film broke box office records. But nobody could have predicted that the merchandising would end up earning more than the film itself.

Star Wars toys became the playthings for an entire generation, with an estimated 300 million action figures sold between 1977 and 1985.

Check the website for more information, times and admission: museums.norfolk.gov.uk/time-tide or ring the museum on 01493 743930.

Photo: Norfolk Museums Service.

Star Wars figures feature in the May The Toys Be With You exhibition at the Time and Tide Museum of Great Yarmouth Life.

© Nick Butterworth

PERCY IN RESIDENCE

Until November 22, the Blickling Estate is celebrating the 30th anniversary of the much-loved children's character, Percy the Park Keeper. There will be a host of interactive trails and events taking visitors on adventures through the house and gardens, all based on Nick Butterworth's classic books. This ties in with Blickling Hall's own nature themes around the estate and its nationally important book collection, the largest and most significant to be cared for by the National Trust. Normal admission applies but NT members are free.

For more information, take a look online at: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/Blickling

HOP TO THE HALL!

There's plenty to get your paws stuck into this Easter at Holkham Hall in north Norfolk, with performances of the classic children's tale The Velveteen Rabbit at the hall, storytelling in the walled garden, and a special cuddle corner where children can meet rabbits, skinny pigs and other cute creatures. The fun doesn't stop there though, there will be trails and games for the whole family and a crafty souvenir to make and take home with you.

Hop along from April 10 to 13, 10am-5pm. Admission prices vary; for enquiries or to buy tickets contact 01328 713111 or online: www. holkham.co.uk/visiting/details/book-online

FAMILY HISTORY HELP

Keen to research your family history but don't know where to begin? Want some assistance with work you've already done? Experienced members of the Alde Valley Suffolk Family History Group will be at Leiston Library, Old Post Office Square, Main Street, Leiston, Suffolk IP16 4ER, on the first Tuesday of each month to offer practical guidance.

The sessions will run from 2-4pm and are completely free. You don't need to make an appointment, just drop in and they will do their best to help.

RETAIL THERAPY

Cancer Research UK is holding a shopping day in Lavenham, Suffolk, on Monday, April 27, from 10am-3pm. The venue is the village hall in Church Street and parking is free; the attractions include Hotfooted shoes and sandals, collections of women's clothes, jewellery, fashion accessories, gifts, plants and more. There will be lots of lovely things for all ages and everyone is welcome. Entrance is £3, refreshments and light lunches available. Full details are on the Facebook page: www.facebook.com/charityshoppingday

PERIOD ART ON SHOW

The Sainsbury Centre, at the University of East Anglia in Norwich is presenting two major exhibitions this year. From now until 14 June, Art Deco by the Sea explores how the Art Deco style shaped the modern seaside during the 1920s and '30s. Through some 130 works, including paintings, posters, drawings, photographs, fashion, furniture, ceramics and textiles, the exhibition explores sports, activities and amusements of the seaside between the wars.

Opening on 29 March, and on until 13 September, Art Nouveau – the Nature of Dreams examines the spectacular, and controversial vision of art practice that raged across the Western world from the end of the 19th Century. Featuring more than 150 works from the likes of Edgar Degas, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, William Morris, Alphonse Mucha and Gabriel Dante Rossetti, it will be a sumptuous array of artwork and objects representing the pinnacle of Art Nouveau style.

Admission charges apply. For more details, go online to sainsburycentre.ac.uk or call 01603 593199 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm).

Summer by Thomas Martine Ronaldson 1928 Oil on canvas ©Manchester Art Gallery, purchased from the artist in 1929

OFF TO SEE THE WIZARD

For one day only, on Sunday, April 5, follow the Yellow Brick Road to the King's Lynn Corn Exchange for a fantastic all-new Easter pantomime version of The Wizard of Oz.

Starring Bobby Davro as Scarecrow, join Kansas farm-girl Dorothy and her pet dog Toto on this magical adventure, which is suitable for all ages. Packed with brilliant dance routines, well-known pop songs and lots of audience participation, there'll be plenty of laughter for all the family. To book, telephone 01553 764864 or go to the website: www.kingslynncornexchange.co.uk

FROM COLMAN'S TO CANADA

Rob John first came across the story of Norwich's Canada Boys in the Eastern Daily Press.

It told the story of how famous mustard manufacturer J & J Colman Ltd was concerned by rising unemployment in the city, so gave some of its workers a chance to start new lives as farmers in Ontario. There was a photo of the volunteers proudly posing in their Sunday best before setting off from Norwich on a train to Liverpool. The following day, less than a month after the Titanic sank, they crossed the Atlantic on the SS Montreal.

"I know nothing more about those 18 men, but their story fascinated me," says Rob. "Were they brave, idealistic, naive or maybe just bored with mustard making and desperate for an adventure?"

Rob started reading about emigration to Canada at the beginning of the 20th Century, trying to imagine what might have become of these factory men turned farmers.

"I couldn't pin them down. They seemed lost to me. Then, in Norwich Library, I came across an archive relating to J & J Colman and began reading about this progressive company and its massive workforce at the start of the last century. Immediately the Canada Boys started to come to life. The central characters, brothers Eddie and Jack Craske, are fictional, but their lives as Colman's men are, I hope, historically plausible."

The Canada Boys will be at The Garage in Norwich on March 19 and 20.

The Canada Boys, presented by fEAST Theatre, visits The Garage, Chapel Field North, Norwich, on March 19 and 20 at 7.30pm. Tickets, costing £12.50 (£10 concessions), are available at www.thegarage.org.uk or by calling 01603 283382.

■ The fEAST Theatre production of The Canada Boys continues its tour after The Garage with: March 21 – The Cut, Halesworth; March 26 – Beccles Public Hall; March 27 and 28 – Sheringham Little Theatre; March 29 – St George's Theatre, Great Yarmouth; April 2 – Sedgeford Village Hall; April 3 and 4 – Wells Maltings; April 8 – Old Buckenham Village Hall; April 9 – Corn Hall Diss; April 10 and 11 – Aylsham Town Hall; April 17 – Westacre Theatre; April 18 – Southwold Arts Centre.

Making every night a first night with epic Les Mis

With its sweeping theme and epic nature, Les Misérables is a must-see musical for millions. Ahead of its arrival at Norwich Theatre Royal, John Bultitude meets some of the cast and explores what makes it such a theatrical phenomenon.

There is no doubt that theatrical impresario Cameron Mackintosh and his creative team have the enviable ability to transform a story into a true stage masterpiece. And the success of the Les Misérable speaks for itself, with thousands of performances worldwide during its 35-year life.

This latest touring production has enjoyed sell-out performances, positive reviews and audience acclaim throughout its run, and comes to Norwich from March 4.

For Dean Chisnall who plays Jean Valjean, it also marks a dream coming true. The actor, who has starred in a host of successful West End and touring shows, had always hoped he would win the part and cannot believe he has finally fulfilled a long-held ambition.

He is also conscious of the heritage and love around the production. He says: "It is not a role, it is a privilege, and I have always thought of my work like that. With this one, it is the ultimate privilege. It doesn't get any better. There is no greater feeling and no greater responsibility.

"You are always aware of it. The wonderful thing about being in Les Misérables is you still get to come in and put your own take on it, but you never lose sight of what an honour it is to appear in it. Those two are very different things but run parallel to it. When the orchestra strikes up, you are very aware of the honour and privilege and history of the last 35 years."

Also in the cast for the Norwich run and, like Dean, reprising his role from the show in the West End, is Felix Mosse who plays Marius. For him, the amount of preparation that goes into each performance is also incredible.

> *"We should never lose sight of how important it is for the audience"*

He explains: "Like so many jobs in the world, unless you are intimately familiar with it, it is almost impossible to comprehend just how much work goes into the products you have paid money to see on stage.

"Every aspect of the production from end to end, whether it is crew, wigs, make-up, creative, cast, any form or aspect of the show, has had hours and hours of time, effort, sweat and tears put into it. It is so fulfilling to finally bring it all together."

This is all brought into sharp focus by the number of people who work on the show. As well as the stage manager, there is also a deputy stage manager, two carpenters, an automation operator, a lighting board operator, two sound operators working backstage, one sound operator front of house, up to five working in wardrobe, four in the wigs department, six more backstage crew, two fly men to raise and lower scenery, an additional lighting operator from the Theatre Royal, four people to operate follow-spot-lights to highlight performers, and seven dressers to help the company in and out of costume.

And, while the depth of audience reactions may vary, everyone who sees it shares in the emotion. Nic Greenshields, who plays Javert, says: "When we went to Dublin,

Photo: Helen Maybanks

The Barricade from the Les Misérable tour.

Photo: Matthew Murphy

Expect a moving and memorable experience from this Les Misérable production.

they treated the show like a rock concert. Once the first bit of music was played, the place went wild. They were just up for it and were excited it had come to their city. It hadn't been there for 20 years. Up north they can be a bit more lively, I would say. Down south people are a bit more reserved."

Whatever the reaction, all the cast are determined that everyone in the audience should leave a performance of Les Misérables with some incredible memories.

Felix says: "We should not forget that seeing the show is a big event for people and we should never lose sight of how important it is for the audience. It may be our 400th show but it could be someone else's first." LT

Photo: Helen Maybanks

Nic Greenshields as Javert.

Les Misérables is at the Theatre Royal, Norwich, from Wednesday, March 4 to Saturday, April 4 at 7.30pm, with Thursday and Saturday matinees at 2.30pm. (There is no matinee on Thursday, March 5 and no Sunday performances.)
Tickets are from £10 to £66.50, with discounts available for Friends, Corporate Club, over-60s and under-18s. Book online at the website: norwichtheatre.org or call the box office: 01603 630000.

Generation games at The Garage

Have you taken your grandchildren to the theatre yet? Whatever their age, it's a lovely part of being a grandparent – especially when the shows are tailor-made for all the family, says **Wayne Savage** of The Garage in Norwich.

Photo: Andi Sapey

Fun and music in Rapunzel at The Garage.

Daniel Burgess remembers riding rollercoasters and watching live shows at Pleasurewood Hills with his grandmother when he was a little boy, but not all youngsters these days are so lucky.

As the cost of childcare continues to rise, Britain's growing grandparent army has stepped up to help. Yet a Family Arts Campaign and YouGov survey found just one in three grandparents to those aged 12 and under spend quality time with them at least once a month when not babysitting.

It also discovered only 10% would take them to an arts event or museum. Daniel, of Norfolk-based theatre company All-In Productions and co-creator of the My First series of shows for birth to seven-year-olds, thinks they're missing a trick.

"A big part of creating the series with Adam Taylor at The Garage in Norwich and composer Lloyd Gorman was that it should be about families playing together, that inner child being released. Make-believe is part of children's every-day existence and they embrace it. Adults lose that as we become stressed, boring and old," he laughs.

"My grandmother tells the story of me going to her mother's one day and pretending to be a conductor of an orchestra. It was the first time in her life she'd seen her own mother – who wasn't far removed from Victorian times – play. There's an importance to play, for well-being, for bonding, for making memories."

Visitors to The Garage agree. One brought her four-year-old grandchild to last year's panto, describing it as another "precious memory, especially as the birthday girl got to dance with Rapunzel".

Photo: Andi Sapey

The My First series is a great way to introduce young children to theatre, such as this production of Midsummer Night's Nap.

The My First series is staged at The Garage in Chapel Road North, Norwich.

Another grandmother shared how her daughter had loved being in shows growing up. She said it was natural her grandchildren would want to try the acting classes, "it was a joint idea and mum and grandparents funded them. They both had such fun".

That suspension of reality one gets through performance is something that resonates with Daniel when he looks not just back at his childhood but at his new nephew's future.

"My sister just had her first child. She brought him to see My First Panto: Rapunzel when he was eight weeks old. My parents and my granddad came, so there were four generations.

"Our granddad loves theatre and always watches My First out of support for me. But this Christmas was the first time he got actively involved. It was really fun to watch him messing around, pretending to cook and banging pots and spoons.

"I don't know whether he was doing that for himself, for us or because there was a baby in our party. My nephew won't have a memory of that, but that performance will stay with me because I was sharing it with my family.

"I had my GoPro ready to actively capture that moment for him and the rest of the family to have and share. We started talking about 'he'll be this age come My First Play, My First Circus' and how much he'll be able to get involved because our shows aren't the 'sit down, lights out, be quiet and just watch' kind.

"It's a precious time for families, so I want them to savour the experience. I think it's interesting to see what that escapism can do for everyone. Whoever comes, those who have the best time are the ones who can regain that ability to play."

The next My First show is After The Storm – A Retelling of The Tempest, at The Garage in Chapel Field North, March 25 to April 9. Stranded on a desert island along with wizard Prospero and his daughter Miranda, can you find your way home in this musical adventure about the importance of teamwork?

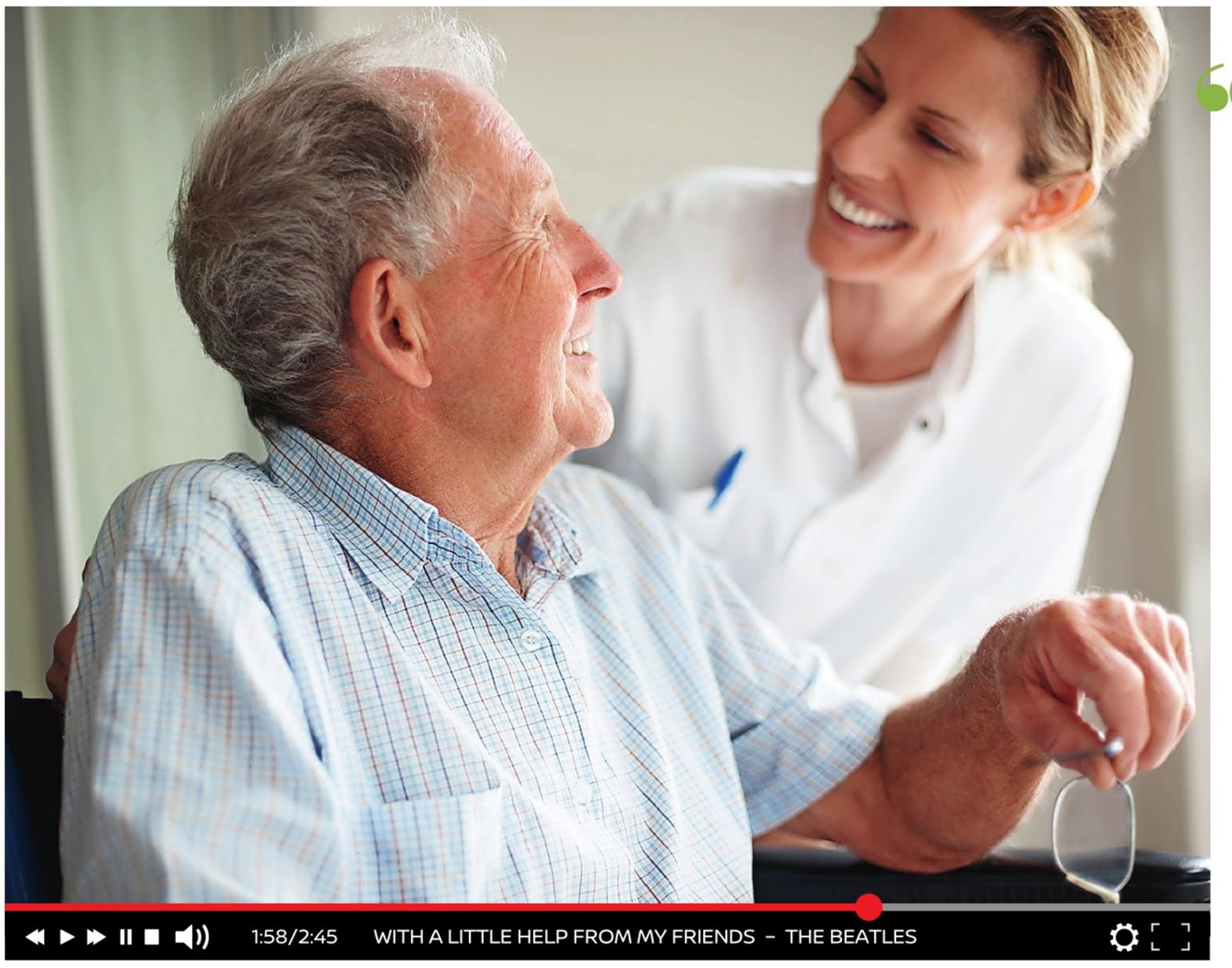
It's followed by My First Circus: Lessons of The Jungle Book from July 16 to August 2, created with Norwich-based Lost In Translation Circus. The jungle is turned upside down by the arrival of the man-cub Mowgli, who needs your help to stay safe.

My First Panto: Goldilocks and The Three Bears runs November 27 to January 10. Mummy Bear, Daddy Bear and Baby Bear live happily in the middle of the forest, until Goldilocks brings havoc to their door. LT

Find out more about each show at www.thegarage.org.uk
Buy tickets to My First Circus: Lessons of The Jungle Book and My First Panto: Goldilocks and The Three Bears and get your tickets for My First Play free. The Garage, which is on Chapel Field North, Norwich, also has a range of creative classes for ages three-months to 50-plus, including dance, theatre, music and fitness.

Photo: Andi Sapey

Excitement for all with the My First Play Littlest Mermaid show.



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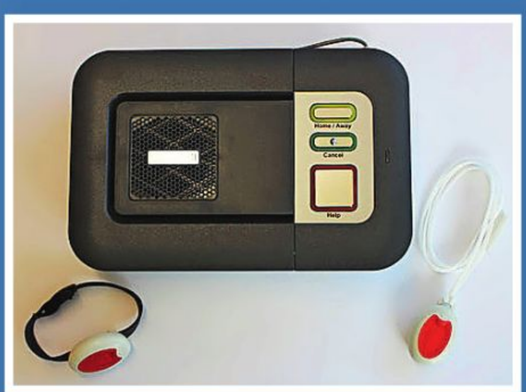

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A true taste of paradise

Kate Morfoot, leading travel writer and founder of www.LoveToEatToTravel.com, island hops in the Maldives and discovers paradise and the underwater world.

Photos: Stuartcoxphoto.com & Reethi Faru

The sea calls to you in these beautiful Maldivian resorts.

A place to relax and recharge.

A very stylish way to say hello to new guests!

Be assured the Maldives are utterly stunning.

It's hardly surprising. It boasts the best beaches in the world, a beautiful year-round climate, warm crystal-clear sea and an enthrallingly rich and diverse underwater world. The sand really is white and powdery, the sea really is the colour of emeralds. It's a destination of envy, a place where most people dream of taking a glorious holiday and it's the top destination of choice for a honeymoon.

With more than 133 resorts to choose from, how do you select one over the other? Other than the price, what ticks the boxes to make the final decision on where to holiday when the resorts are all located in this perfect paradise destination?

I made the 10-hour direct flight from Gatwick with British Airways to the Maldives to find out how two resorts place themselves in the market and operate to offer you the holiday of a lifetime.

To get to Noku Maldives I took a seaplane from mainland Male. It's just a 45-minute flight with TMA (Trans Maldivian Airways) from the international airport to Noku, situated on Kuda Funafaru in Noonu Atoll. In my view this is an incredibly glamorous way to island hop and it gives you a superb bird's eye view of the atolls below.

Noku Maldives is a luxury boutique resort on an island sanctuary of calm. It's a perfect resort for those who want to be peaceful and relax. Expect nothing apart from luxury on this barefoot island. 'Take your time, no rush' is their motto.

The menu is changed daily and caters for all dietary requirements. Taking into consideration that the island is in the middle of nowhere, it is undoubtedly world-class restaurant quality. Fresh fish are caught daily, so depending on the catch you can enjoy tuna, reef fish or snapper.

Noku Maldives has 30 over-water villas and 20 private beach villas. My beach villa was beautifully appointed, with high ceilings and spacious rooms, just steps from the white sandy beach. The super king-sized bed was situated opposite ▶

“This is an incredibly glamorous way to island hop.”

Imagine yourself relaxing here!

the French doors. There was a roll-top bath with luxury sea salts, an indoor shower and outdoor rain shower with access outside to the sun deck with sun loungers, an outdoor table and a hammock.

The island is focussed on being plastic-free; no plastic bags, straws or bottles to be seen. It is also active with its coral growing programme and buys produce where possible from the local farm islands.

Things to do? Apart from relaxing by the infinity pool or on the pristine beach, there’s Sub Oceanic at Noku Maldives. Noku’s five-star PADI dive centre has a friendly and professional team boasting brand new scuba equipment. It has an excellent dive boat ‘dhoni’ to take you out to the best diving locations in the area.

The resort location in Noonu atoll is right in the middle of a thriving marine ecosystem which is surrounded by rich and beautiful house reefs. I explored some fascinating dive sites in my quest to become an Advanced Open Water PADI diver.

One site is called ‘Shark Point’ with tremendous shark spotting. On my dive at Orimas Thila I saw many white-tipped reef sharks, sea turtles, shoals of trumpet fish and many brightly coloured fish and corals. At Bodurah Gaa Giri we found sleeping nurse sharks, stingrays in caves, shrimps and families of lionfish, not to mention snapping moray eels! On another dive I was fortunate enough to scuba with dolphins and a passing turtle and spotted eagle rays.

Paddle boarding and kayaking are available to explore the island shores as well as catamaran sailing, fishing or kite flying. Sunset and dolphin cruises are offered as well as an island excursion. With average sea temperatures of about 26 degrees, it’s fantastic to enjoy the sea and lovely sunshine.

What can you expect from Noku Maldives? Five-star personal service, space, tranquillity, luxury, privacy, safety, nature and above all, deliciously fresh food served with a smile in true paradise. LT

Clownfish are among the wonderful sights to be seen underwater at the Maldives.

NEXT STOP, TROPICAL LUXURY

The Maldives is made up of an archipelago of 1,192 islands set in 26 natural atolls, so expect to have to travel to get to your resort either by speedboat, a seaplane or a charter flight. To get to my next destination at Reethi Faru, I took a 20-minute domestic flight from mainland Male to Dharavandhoo with Flyme, and from there a 40-minute speedboat ride.

Reethi Faru Resort is a newly-opened resort on the island of Filaidhoo in Raa Atoll. It has a wonderful choice of accommodation, including 20 garden villas, deluxe beach villas, some with Jacuzzis and pools, and deluxe water villas and suites. Reethi was designed to utilise and coexist with the natural surroundings. It is a stunning tropical eco-resort with a focus on sustainability and nurturing its precious natural environment that bans plastic straws, bottles and bags.

I stayed in a luxurious water villa where the king-sized bed had a view to the sea.

The Maldives is under severe threat from global warming. In the event that seawater levels rise due to the warming of the atmosphere, these atolls – no more than about two metres above sea level – will be vulnerable.

Reethi Faru prides itself on being a guardian of the island and a leader in sustainability. It has the latest photovoltaic panel technology, harnessing sunlight, which gives Reethi Faru up to 80% of its power. Waste heat is harnessed for the other 20%, warming water for the entire hotel complex. Food waste is processed through an on-site biogas plant to power the kitchens. There's a hydroponics system designed to grow herbs, salads and edible leaves, as well a mushroom farm and a plant nursery, plus a desalination and bottling plant powered by solar energy, providing water for the entire island.

A warm welcome awaits in the Maldives where the diving is amazing.

The stunning Reethi Faru over-water villas.

Reethi Faru has been awarded prizes for its water sports centre and is one of the top 10 in Asia, with its offering including dolphin and sunset safaris, island visits, jet packs, parasailing and sailing.

There are plenty of dining options, where you are spoiled for choice between the six restaurants and bars. The resort's main restaurant, Vakaru, serves buffet-style meals and, for those not on the inclusive option, the restaurant menus are reasonably priced.

Set amid coconut groves, the Coconut Spa has nine treatment rooms. There is a steam room, a sauna and a jacuzzi. It's the perfect place to cast away any lingering work stress and relax with heaps of options for facials and massages all expertly delivered by professional therapists.

Reethi Faru resort captures the essence of a luxury eco tropical hideaway. It has so much to offer the active holidaymaker, as well as those of us who prefer a relaxing and romantic high end beach holiday with picture-perfect sandy white beaches draped with palm trees set against the crystal clear emerald coloured ocean.

If you have an Instagram account, you can follow more of Kate's trip @ love2eat2travel

HOW TO GET THERE:

Parking with Airport Parking & Hotels: 01342 710071; www.aph.com/gatwick-airport/parking

- Kate flew direct from London Gatwick to Velana International Airport with British Airways.
- Book via the NOKU Resort: www.nokuhotels.com
- Book Reethi Faru online: www.reethifaru.com
- Low Season: May to September:
- Water Villa for two adults – $5,110 for 10 nights' all-inclusive package.
- Deluxe Beach Villa for two adults – $3,632 for seven nights' all-inclusive package.
- High Season: October to April:
- Water Villa for two adults – $5,980 for 10 nights' all-inclusive package.
- Deluxe Beach Villa for two adults – $4,227 for seven nights' all-inclusive package (Room rates are subject to change.)
- Internal transfers (from Male to the resort, return) costs are separate.
- Green tax US$6 per peson per night will be additional.

SCUBA DIVING: Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) is the world's largest diver training organisation with more than 6,600 dive centres and resorts and over 137,000 professional members worldwide. PADI Travel is an online travel resource for divers and adventurers, with information and online booking for 300-plus dive destinations.

- An InsureandGo annual Worldwide (excluding USA, Canada, Mexico and Caribbean) Budget insurance policy starts from £40.99; www.insureandgo.com

For more information online: visitmaldives.com

Falling under the spell of Montenegro

There are plenty of beautiful and fascinating places in stay in Europe which are not jam-packed full of tourists and offer good value for money. **Derek James** recommends a country and great little islands.

Herceg Novi in Montenegro.

Boasting dramatic scenery, fascinating history, delicious food and a welcome from the locals as warm as the weather, that's Montenegro.

Opening its doors in May 2020, the deluxe Ananti Resort, Residences & Beach Club on the Budva Riviera provides the perfect hide-away for a relaxing break, far from crowds yet close to all that this country has to offer.

And that is quite a lot . . .

Spectacular scenery

Montenegro, which translates as 'Black Mountain', is located on the Adriatic and boasts majestic snow-capped mountains, thick forests and mesmerising lakes, all within easy reach.

The nation's Tara River canyon is the deepest and longest in Europe and is just one example of the sights which pepper the Montenegrin countryside. Perfect for getting back to nature.

Stay in style

A member of the exclusive Leading Hotels of the World, the elegant Ananti Resort, Residences & Beach Club offers the ultimate base for a peaceful getaway in stunning surroundings.

Tucked into the wooden mountainside of the Budva Riviera coastline and overlooking the Adriatic Sea, the resort offers guests breathtaking views from each of the 14 seaview suites and eight seaview luxury villas, each complete for a private pool. There is also a Wellness and Renewal Spa and a private beach club.

This hotel is top-notch and perfect for that special occasion.

Step inside a real life fairy tale

Montenegro is home to several enchanting castles where it feels like time has stopped. There are some of the oldest settlements on the Adriatic coast, highlighting a rich and long history.

And then, well, I think you should

SPECIAL INSIGHT INTO GREEK ISLANDS

It is a respected travel company some of you may have already travelled with.

Celebrating 50 years of specialist holidays this year, family-run Sunvil has tailor-made holidays to Greece since 1975, priding itself in putting less-known locations on the map, while supporting the local economy and building trusted relationships.

Its knowledge of Greece, its destination expertise and its sheer passion for all that the country has to offer is unrivalled.

Now it is featuring four new Greek islands – Tinas, Syros, Elafonissos and Pserimos – each with its own unique charm and each providing an enchanting insight into the relaxed and stress-free local way of life.

■ Tinas: Under the radar to holidaymakers, it couldn't be more different from its glitzy sister Mykonos. Often bypassed by tourists unless on a religious pilgrimage, it is an island perfect for those who love walking in lush countryside.

■ Syros: Historically rich, it features two towns built around two hills – one Greek Orthodox and the other Catholic – although today they can be viewed as one, Syros is the unsung hero of the Greek islands. Architecture, culture, sandy beaches and, of course, mouth-watering food.

■ Elafonissos: For Caribbean-like stretches of long, white sand and clear blue sea, look to this little-known island – a speck just off the south-eastern shores of the Southern Peloponnese. The perfect place to unwind, it has just one taxi and one village. Pure relaxation.

■ Pserimos: Nestled between Kos and Kalymnos, this rocky islet is home to more goats than people. Small and quiet, it has a rustic charm that takes you back in time. There are a few tavernas, a couple of cafes, a small shop and a church plus some villas to stay in. You may not want to ever leave.

For all the details, advice, costs (they offer good value), flights and transfers etc, call the experts of Sunvil on 020 87584758 or visit www.sunvil.co.uk

Peaceful Pserimos.

Tinos town at night.

go and have a look for yourself. This land has so much to offer with its air of majestic calm, pristine landscapes and tranquil pace of life. Less busy than neighbouring Croatia, it is the kind of place to sit back, or if you prefer lie back, and just enjoy yourself.

Four nights at Ananti Resort, Residences & Beach Club start from £449 per person, including accommodation in a Seaview Suite with a chef-prepared breakfast daily, return flights with EasyJet from Gatwick to Tivat International Airport, travelling on May 14 2020. Call 0207 7497260 or book online at: www.kernwoodtravel.co.uk You can discover more about the hotel online at: www.ananti.me

An Adriatic Villa at the deluxe Ananti Resort, Residences & Beach Club in Montenegro.

A two-bedroom deluxe suite at the Ananti Resort, Montenegro.

Photo: Aleksandar Jaredic

ENJOYED YOUR TRIP?

Don't forget that as part of the Let's Talk family we want to hear your holiday stories – from an around the world cruise to a couple of days on the Norfolk or Suffolk coast. Do you know of a place you could recommend to others? Share your holiday news with us at letstalk@archant.co.uk or write to us at Let's Talk, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich NR1 1RE.

The iconic Strand Palace Hotel in the heart of London.

A capital transformation

If you are London-bound this year and wondering where to stay, **Derek James** has a suggestion that combines heritage and style.

It would be hard to think of a hotel in a better location to enjoy the sights and sounds of London – and it has been welcoming guests for more than a century.

The Strand Palace is surrounded by the best the capital has to offer and is the perfect place to stay to enjoy your time in our most famous city.

And now the hotel has been given a multi-million pound transformation, giving the rooms and facilities a major and impressive refurbishment.

Located at 372 Strand, it is one of London's most iconic hotels and is steeped in history, having first welcomed guests in 1909.

As part of the works the reception, concierge, restaurant and bar areas have been completely transformed along with the 785 guest-rooms and public spaces. It has also opened a brand new Art Deco restaurant and bar at the hotel, Haxells Restaurant and Bar, which marks a new era in dining at the hotel.

The 240-cover restaurant is an all-day dining affair, serving guests breakfast, lunch and dinner – with a quintessential afternoon tearoom and private dining room.

The prices are very reasonable for this grand and welcoming landmark hotel with a major 21st Century facelift, so take a look at wwwstrandpalacehotel.co.uk or call 020 73794737 to find out more about the latest offers.

Photo: Simon John Owen, Wonderhatch

The new-look Strand Palace in London.

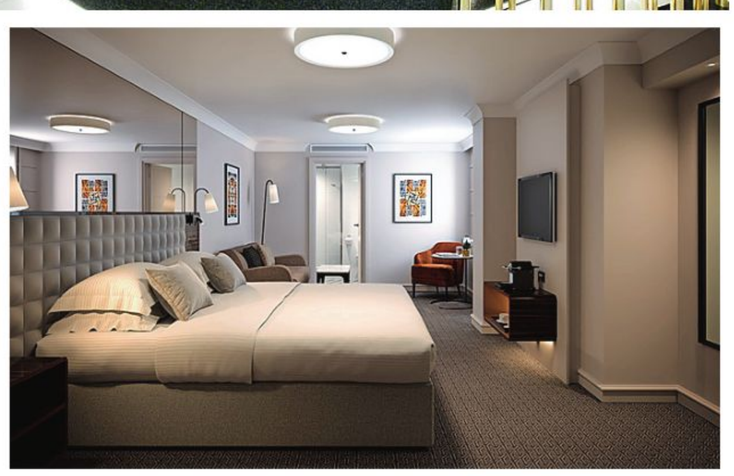
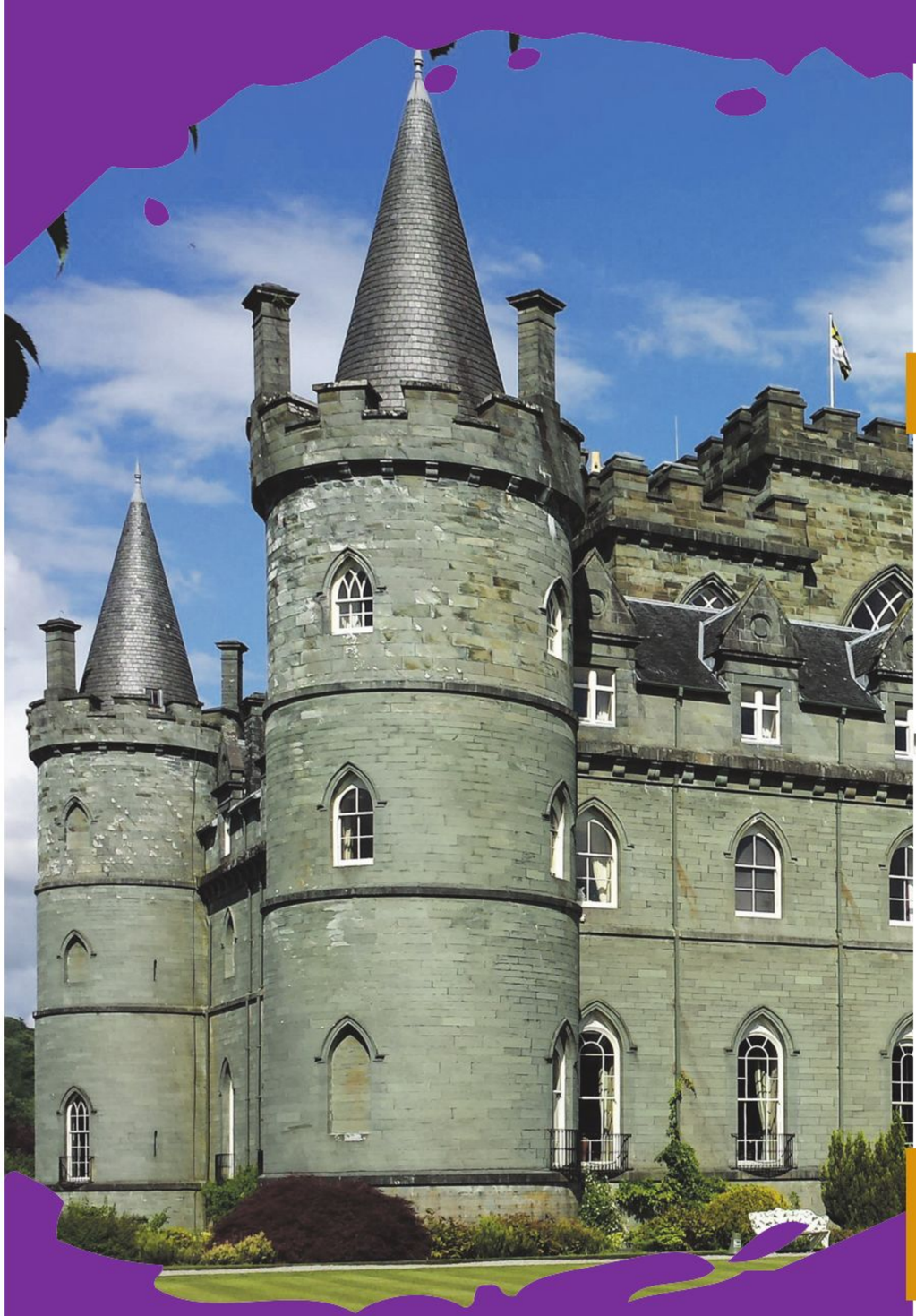


Photo: Foundation CGI

A deluxe studio at the Strand Palace Hotel in London.



OBAN & THE ISLE OF MULL

Sat 2nd - Sat 9th May 2020

8 Days - £919

The Royal Hotel ★★★ Oban

The hotel stands in the centre of town close to the harbour. It's central position makes it ideal for visiting the West Coast of Scotland, and provides traditional Scottish hospitality with comfortable accommodation, lounge bar and relaxing quiet lounge. All bedrooms are en-suite and have television, telephone, hairdryer, lift access and tea making facilities.

Price Includes

Day 1: Following your home taxi collection, we make our way to the overnight hotel in Dumfries.

Day 2: We continue our journey after breakfast travelling through glorious countryside, before reaching the Royal Hotel in Oban for our five-night stay.

Day 3: Today we travel by ferry to the magical Isle of Mull. Upon arrival we drive North to Tobermory, famed for cheerfully painted waterfront buildings and the yachts bobbing in the natural harbour. We continue our day on Mull with a drive South to Duart Castle. Following our visit here we rejoin the ferry for the return sailing to Oban.

Day 4: This morning we enjoy dramatic mountains, rare beauty and haunting history in the heart of the Highlands as we drive through Glencoe. We pause at the Glencoe Visitor centre to learn about the glen, its wildlife and the families who lived here. We continue our journey to Fort William. Later we make the short journey to the Ben Nevis distillery for a tour, before returning to Oban.

Day 5: Day at leisure to explore Oban.

Day 6: This morning we visit Inveraray Castle, a romantic fortress and the one-time ancestral seat of the Dukes of Argyll. There will also be free time in Inveraray in the afternoon where you may like to visit the award winning jail attraction where costumed characters portray prisoners from bygone days and act out trials and punishments! (jail entry not included & subject to individual cost and payment).

Day 7: After breakfast, we bid farewell to Oban and make our way to our overnight hotel in Dumfries.

Day 8: After breakfast, we make our way back to Norfolk, where our door to door service will be waiting to return you home.

- 7 nights dinner, bed & breakfast
- Luxury executive coach travel
- Return door to door taxi service

COUNTRYSIDE CASTLES IN THE GARDEN OF ENGLAND

Monday 4th - Friday 8th May

5 Days - £624

Single Supplement: £nil (limited availability)

Tudor Park Marriott Hotel & Country Club ★★★★ Maidstone

Our four-star hotel is set in hundreds of acres of lush parkland with sweeping views of the picturesque Kent landscape. The en-suite rooms feature a TV, safe, iron & ironing board, hairdryer, lift access and hospitality tray. The hotel also has an extensive leisure centre.

Price Includes

Day 1: Following your home taxi collection, we make our way to Saffron Walden, before continuing to the Marriott Tudor Park Hotel for our four-night stay.

Day 2: We visit Leeds Castle, described as 'the loveliest castle in the world', to discover 900 years of history and enjoy the beautiful views over a serene lake & parkland. After lunch, we travel to Hever Castle & Gardens, the childhood home of Anne Boleyn. Experience 700 years of history at the romantic double-moated castle and the award-winning gardens, set in 125 acres of grounds.

Day 3: This morning we visit Ightham Mote. A romantic 14th century moated manor house, garden & estate. Described as "the most complete small medieval manor house in the county". Later we make our way to Scotney Castle. Here we explore the Country house, romantic garden and the 14th century moated castle – all set in a beautiful wooded estate.

Day 4: We visit Emmetts Garden, which showcases an amazing variety of flowering plants & exotic trees with sweeping views of the Kent countryside. After lunch we travel to Sheffield Park for a return journey on the Bluebell Railway, through the peaceful Sussex countryside.

Day 5: We pause in Lavenham before returning to Norfolk, where our door to door service will be waiting to return you home.

- 4 nights dinner, bed & breakfast
- Luxury executive coach travel
- Return door to door taxi service

LONDON'S EAST END DELIGHTS

Thurs 7th - Monday 11th May

5 Days - £550

Single Supplement: £nil (limited availability)

Clarendon Hotel ★★★ Blackheath

The finest Georgian Hotel in South East London, the Clarendon is ideally situated overlooking parkland on the edge of fashionable Blackheath Village. The hotel's Meridian Restaurant is well known locally and offers excellent fayre. Room service is available. After your day, out the Chart Bar offers you the chance to unwind or you may prefer the quieter cocktail bar. All rooms are en-suite, and have satellite TV, radio, hairdryer and tea & coffee making facilities.

Price Includes

Day 1: Following your home taxi collection we travel to Blackheath, making suitable stops en-route, arriving late afternoon at the Clarendon Hotel for our four-night stay.

Day 2: This morning we head a short distance to Greenwich where we have the day at leisure. Greenwich has a lot to offer the visitor including The Cutty Sark, Greenwich Park with the Meridian Line, Old world pubs, including the riverside Trafalgar Tavern, antique shops, markets and more, including the superb National Maritime Museum.

Day 3: Today's excursion takes us West along the Old Kent Road to Southwark and Lambeth. In Lambeth we visit the Imperial War Museum London. This astonishing and thought-provoking museum and its ground-breaking galleries tell the stories of people whose lives have been forever impacted by conflict, from the First World War to the present day There is opportunity for a drink and a bite to eat. Later we return to the hotel.

Day 4: Our day begins with a drive South to Eltham. Here we visit Eltham Palace and Gardens. Originally a Royal Palace from 14th to 16th century, Henry VIII grew up here. In 1933 restoration began and the Courtauld family built the house next to the palace. The house is a magnificent creation of 1930's Art Deco style and glamour, with a fabulous entrance hall and dining room. Wander around the lovely gardens and later enjoy refreshments at the tearoom.

Day 5: After breakfast we depart our hotel and make our way back to Norfolk, making suitable stops en-route, where our door to door holiday will be waiting to take you home.

- 4 nights dinner, bed & breakfast
- Luxury executive coach travel
- Return door to door taxi service

A TASTE OF LUXURY IN LAKE GARDA - BARDOLINO (ELITE TOUR)

Thurs 4th - Friday 12th June

9 Days - £1405

Single Supplement: £240

Parc Hotel Gritti ★★★★ Bardolino

This outstanding lakeside hotel is surrounded by beautiful grounds and gardens and is a 10 minute walk from the old centre of Bardolino. The hotel has a modern style and the facilities of a first class 'self-contained' holiday resort. All bedrooms are en-suite with TV and hairdryer. There is a large outdoor swimming pool with a sun terrace, sun beds, pool bar and the large restaurant overlooks the gardens. There is also an indoor swimming pool, gym and fitness centre. The hotel has a lift. Please note that not all continental hotels have tea and coffee making facilties in the bedrooms.

Price Includes

Day 1: Following your home taxi collection, we make our way to South for our channel crossing to Calais. We then continue on to our overnight in time for our evening meal.

Day 2: We depart after breakfast and continue to Italy to arrive at our hotel for the next 6 nights with dinner, bed and breakfast.

Days 3 – 7: We have included 3 excursions and two days at leisure during your resort stay:

Included Excursions

Borghetto sul Mincio & Mantua

Today we head South following the River Mincio to one of Italy's loveliest villages – Borghetto sul Mincio. We have time to stretch our legs and enjoy a cappuccino overlooking Borghetto's scenic weir and river before we continue to the stunning city of Mantua. Lesser known than Verona, Mantua boasts a fine medieval centre which is easy to walk around and is home to one of the finest Ducal Palaces in Italy

Wine Tasting, Salo & Olive Oil Mill

This morning we drive into the beautiful Valtenesi countryside until we reach Cantine Redaelli De Zinis where we indulge in some delicious wine tastings plus a brief visit to the cellars. From here we continue to the delightful lakeside town of Salo, which boasts the longest promenade in all of Lake Garda. We enjoy free time for lunch before travelling back through the scenic Valtenesi region, where we visit an authentic olive oil mill. We visit the olive garden and olive oil press before enjoying tastings of extra virgin olive oil, olives and red/white wine.

Sirmione & Lunch

This morning we visit the 'jewel in the crown' of Lake Garda – the peninsula of Sirmione with its lovely moated castle and medieval centre. From here we travel into the countryside, where we discover the small chapel at San Martino della Battaglia which pays homage to this epic period of history before we continue into the hills to Trattoria da Arturo for lunch. We enjoy some of the best handmade pasta we will ever taste, 'bigoli al ragu', with some superb grilled meats washed down with a plentiful amount of homemade wine – a relaxing and authentic Italian experience!

On your two days at leisure in lovely Bardolino, you can enjoy its scenic medieval centre teeming with bars and cafés. Why not take a ferry to nearby Lazise – a hidden gem of a beautiful historic walled town, and perhaps enjoy lunch at the Trattoria 'Da Oreste', a charming lakeside restaurant. (suggestions subject to individual cost and payment, and not included in your holiday price).

Day 8: Sadly, we bid farewell to our hosts and make our way to our overnight hotel.

Day 9: After breakfast we depart the hotel and make our way to Northern France for our mid-afternoon departure to Kent, we then continue to Norfolk arriving late evening, where our door to door service will be waiting to return you home.

- 8 nights dinner, bed & breakfast
- Onboard courier
- Luxury executive coach travel
- Return door to door taxi service

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Wills month

May 2020

What will you do today for the future?

Start planning for **your future** and make an appointment to **create a will** with one of our friendly solicitors or will writers. They will **write your will** and invite you to make a **suggested donation**.

Your gift could blossom into a vital legacy for the hospice, helping local people now and in the future.

Suggested donation

Single will	£125
Mirror / Double will	£165
Codicil	£50

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St Elizabeth Hospice
Reg Charity No. 289154

For more information, please visit: **stelizabethhospice.org.uk/willsmonth**

This month's winning picture is a photograph that calls you to look closer to study the wonder of nature that is a barn owl. It was taken by Brian Shreeve, of Hemblington, near Norwich, in Norfolk, and is this month's winning picture. Brian tells us: "On a visit to the Bure Marshes I had a close view of this beautiful barn owl. It didn't seem to mind my presence, and it was amazing for me to see the details of this beautiful marshland hunter."

Picture this

Nature inspires us all but photographers especially so, as the entries to this month's Readers' Photos competition highlights. We have received a super selection this month that includes glowing sunsets and freezing icicles. Do keep sending in your pictures as it is such a treat for us to be able to share them – and your talents – with our readers.

One of the wonderful things about living in East Anglia is our glorious sunsets and big open skies. And Georgina Brown of Lowestoft has perfectly captured that in this month's second placed photo. She says: "Just as you think the sunsets cannot get any better, they usually do . . . a beautiful sunset at Oulton Broad recently."

What an unusual phenonemon captured here by Bob Copping of Bramford, near Ipswich, Suffolk. Bob explains that he took the photo at Haughley Park after a hard nightly frost. "A sprinkler was putting nutrients in the grass for sheep - every rotation, another layer of icicles."

3RD

There's another great showing from Oulton Broad this month, with this photo from Janice Tillett, who says: "The sunsets at Oulton Broad are fantastic. Every one is different. I think the yacht and swans make the picture."

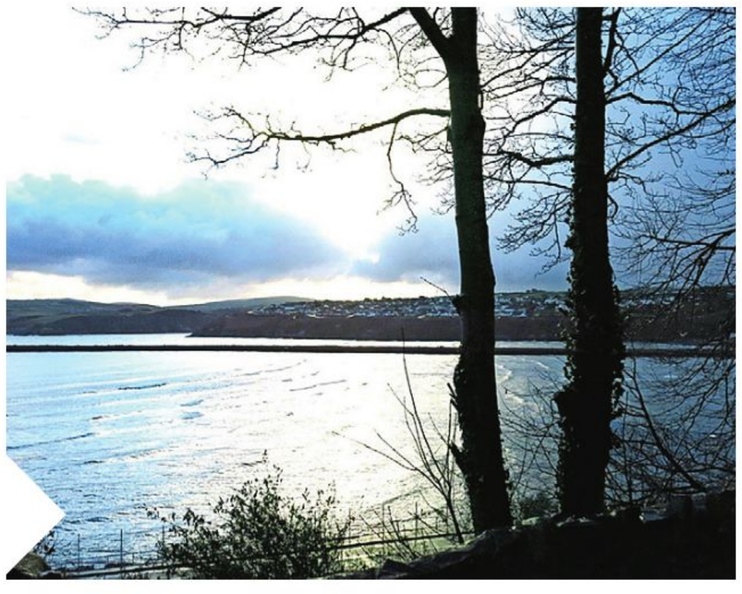
Sylvia Bettsworth sent in this interesting photograph, telling us: "It's like a graveyard for boats at the back of Felixstowe boatyard, near Winkles Restaurant." We love the way that nature seems to be reclaiming the old boats.

This delightful photo comes from Rosemary Howard, who says: "A squirrel in the woodland, feeling the cold." Hopefully it will be bouncing around in the spring sunshine very soon.

"We had a lovely afternoon dog walk at Bunwell, watching the the winter sun sinking behind the trees," explains Richard Harrison of Attleborough, who sent in this beautiful photograph. "What a lovely county Norfolk is to live in!" We agree with you there, Richard!

Marcus Leeder of Brandon, in Suffolk, opted for a black and white shot here to turn a photo of a road at Thetford Forest into an interesting picture filled with shadows and shapes.

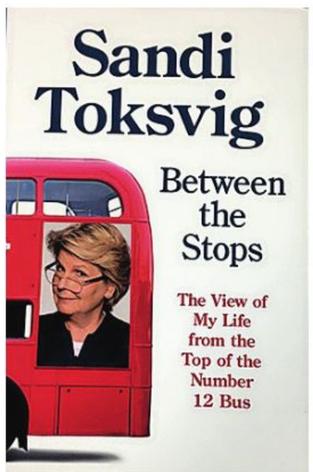
They know a thing or two about snow in Canada . . . Let's Talk readers Helene and Bruce Tofflemire, who live in Emsdale, Ontario, sent this photo they had taken from their driveway. "We just had a good snow fall and were digging ourselves out," they write. "We have had about 30cms of snow up till now - January 24 - actually not as much as other years by this time. From January 16 to 20 the overnight termperatures were -28C to -20C, and daytime termperatures were about -10. A taste of winter northern style."
Bruce and Helene add: "Our friend Dan who lives beside us is now hooked on to your magazine!"



Patricia Lesley Stammers of Botesdale, near Diss, in Norfolk, sent in this lovely photograph taken at dawn at Fishguard Bay in Pembrokeshire.

Please email pictures you would like to share with our readers to letstalk@archant.co.uk or send prints to our usual address. There is a maximum of three entries per person per month. Please make sure the file size is at least one megabyte and remember to include your name, address and daytime telephone number. It helps if you can give us a little background about the photograph, such as where it was taken, when and why. If you send prints and want them returned, please include a stamped addressed envelope.

COMPETITION RESULTS, February edition (issue 209)

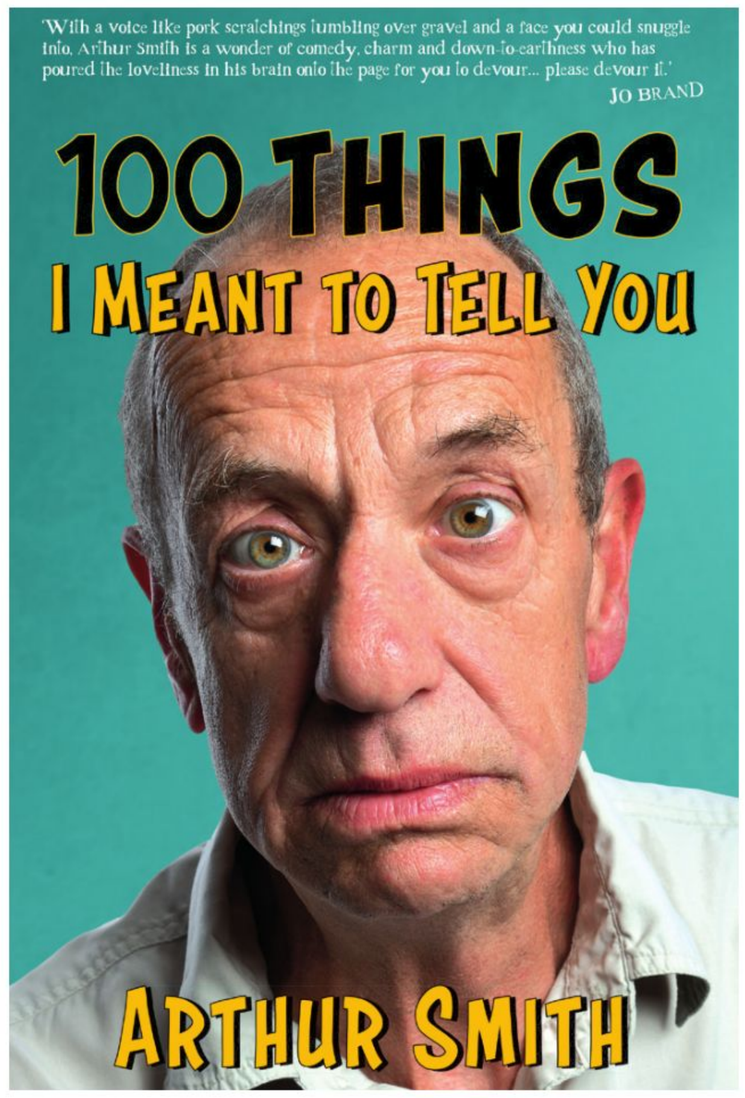


Between the Stops book competition

The winner of our competition to win a copy of Between the Stops, by Sandi Toksvig is Joanne Spencer of Scarning, near Dereham, Norfolk. The answer was National Trevor.

Spot the Picture competition

The winner of our Spot the Picture competition, who wins a book called Live A Litte, by Madeleine Reiss, is Angela Taylor of Elm, near Wisbech, Cambridgeshire. The answer was page 21.



The Arthur Smith book competition

The winner of the copy of 100 Things I Meant To Tell You, by Arthur Smith is J Rice of Bacton, near Stowmarket, Suffolk. The answer was the University of East Anglia.

The 8 Days DVD competition

The three winners who will each get a DVD of the 8 Days TV series are: Peter Frost of Ipswich, Suffolk; Michael Sayer of Diss, Norfolk and K C Bull of Thorpe St Andrew, near Norwich, Norfolk. The answer was Physics.

Giant wordsearch competition

The winner of our giant wordsearch competition to win a National Trust property admission pass is: Julie Foster of Norwich, Norfolk.

Wordplay

Wordsmith **Sandra Smith** has another selection of unusual words to test your vocabulary this month. Can you identify the correct explanations for each of these? For more about Sandra's world of words, take a look at her website at www.TheCurrentMrsSmith.co.uk

Among the benefits of self-publishing is the freedom to choose your subject, style and genre without constraints from agents or traditional publishers. But no matter what your novel, always make it the best it could possibly be, free from spelling and grammatical mistakes or continuity hiccups. I offer a proof-reading and/or editing service, so do get in touch before your work is printed.
Meanwhile, if you fancy a break from writing the next bestseller, have a go at this month's trio of unusual words.

1 Cyanometer

a. Instrument for measuring poison levels
b. Instrument for measuring chemical balance of soil
c. Instrument for measuring blueness of sky or ocean

2 Stegophilist

a. Political activist who modifies beliefs
b. Teacher who complements hands-on learning with detailed written explanations
c. Person who climbs buildings for sport

3 Epizoon

a. Animal living on the surface of another animal
b. Circus act in which a member of the troupe is planted among the audience
c. Cartoon combining lifelike images with unattainable physical feats

How did you fare?
Answers: 1 c. 2 c. 3 a.

Murder lurks in unlikely places in The Brokenwood Mysteries

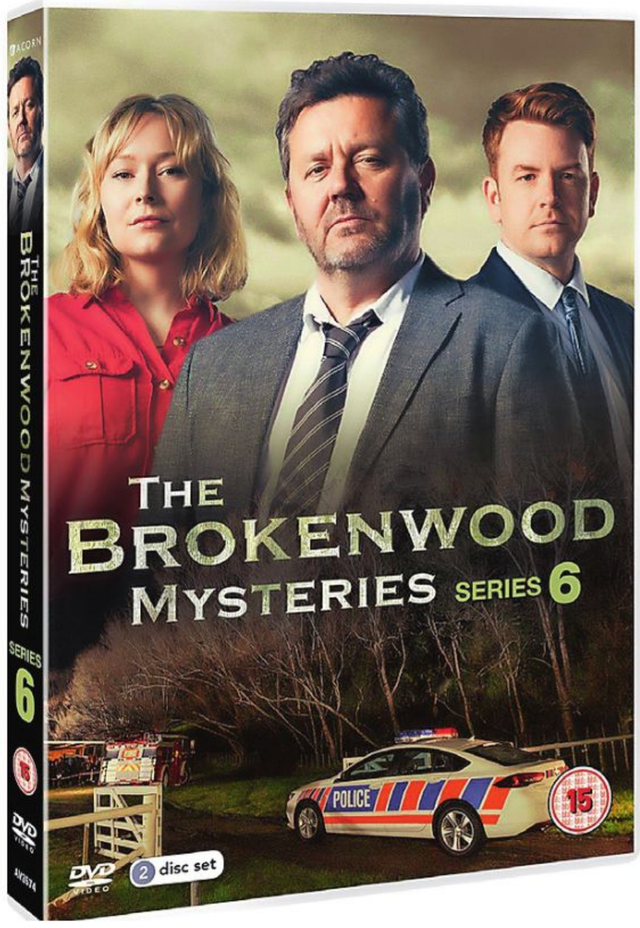
Your chance to win a crime drama DVD with a great soundtrack

Brokenwood, New Zealand. Population: 5,000 and declining – slowly, one by one, or two by two, depending on the murder rate that week.

Series Six of the hit New Zealand crime drama The Brokenwood Mysteries recently aired on UKTV's Drama Channel, and is now available on DVD, courtesy of Acorn Media International. Let's Talk has three copies of the Series Six DVD to give away and it's a great prize for anyone who enjoys a crime show with a catchy soundtrack and great characters.

Four times divorced, country music loving, big city cop Detective Inspector Mike Shepherd (Neill Rea – Go Girls) has settled into the rural town of Brokenwood. He was first brought in to solve the case of a dead farmer suspected of foul play, and never left . . . but there's no rest for the wicked and the crimes keep on coming.

Along with his by-the-book young partner Detective Kristin Sims (Fern Sutherland – The Almighty Johnsons), Mike delves into the quaint community's dark underbelly, where shadows lurk beneath the surface.



A murder at a Victorian dress-up Steampunk event; a renowned crime author falling victim to a killing right out of his books; an animal activist found dead on the first day of duck hunting season, and run-ins with some familiar faces as they are called in to investigate a suspicious suicide at Brokenwood Women's Prison – can Mike and the team get to the bottom of these gruesome goings-on?

Joined on the cases by green Detective Constable Sam Breen (Nic Sampson – The Luminaries) who looks up to Mike, the department's pathologist Dr Gina Kadinsky (Cristina Serban Ionda – Filthy Rich), a Russian with a dark sense of humour, and invaluable resource for local gossip Jared Morehu (Pana Hema Taylor – Spartacus), the best in the business are on hand to solve these mysterious murders.

Featuring a soundtrack of Mike's favourite soulful country music to match the rural setting, Series Six contains four gripping stand-alone, feature-length stories.

The DVD (Certificate 15) has some special features, including cast and crew interviews, and is on sale now, priced £19.99. LT

WIN a Brokenwood Mysteries DVD

Let's Talk has three DVD sets of The Brokenwood Mysteries series six to give away. Simply answer the question on the entry form here and send it to Brokenwood DVD, Let's Talk, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 1RE, to reach us by **Friday, April 24, 2020.**

Question: In which country is The Brokenwood Mysteries set?

Answer .....

NAME .....

ADDRESS & POSTCODE .....

.....

.....

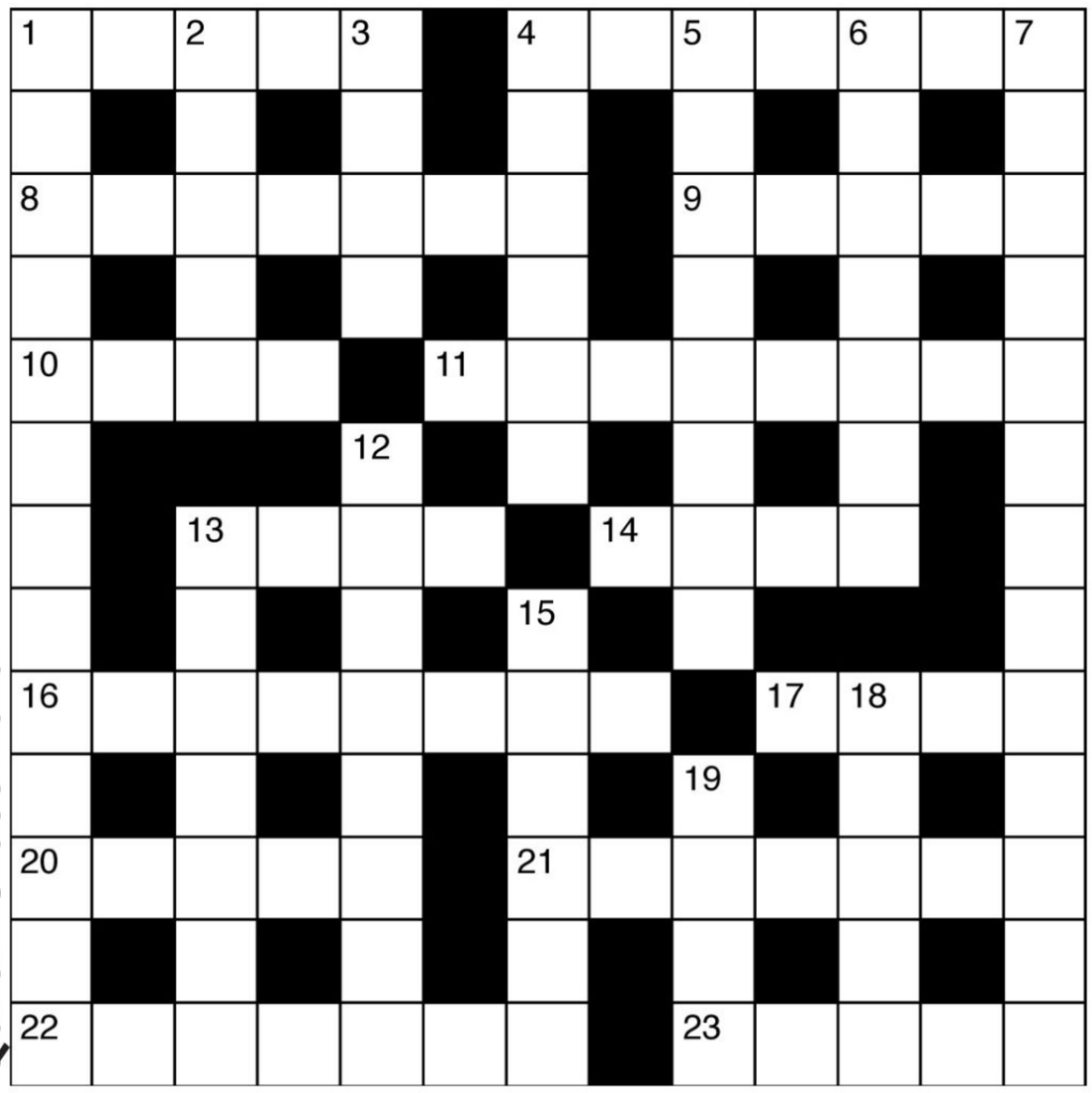
DAYTIME TELEPHONE .....

EMAIL .....

Normal Archant competition rules apply. The editor's decision is final.
Unless you have chosen to receive other information from us, Archant Community Media Limited will solely use the data you provide for the purpose of running the competition, including contacting winners and the distribution of any prize.

Brain workout

Quick Crossword



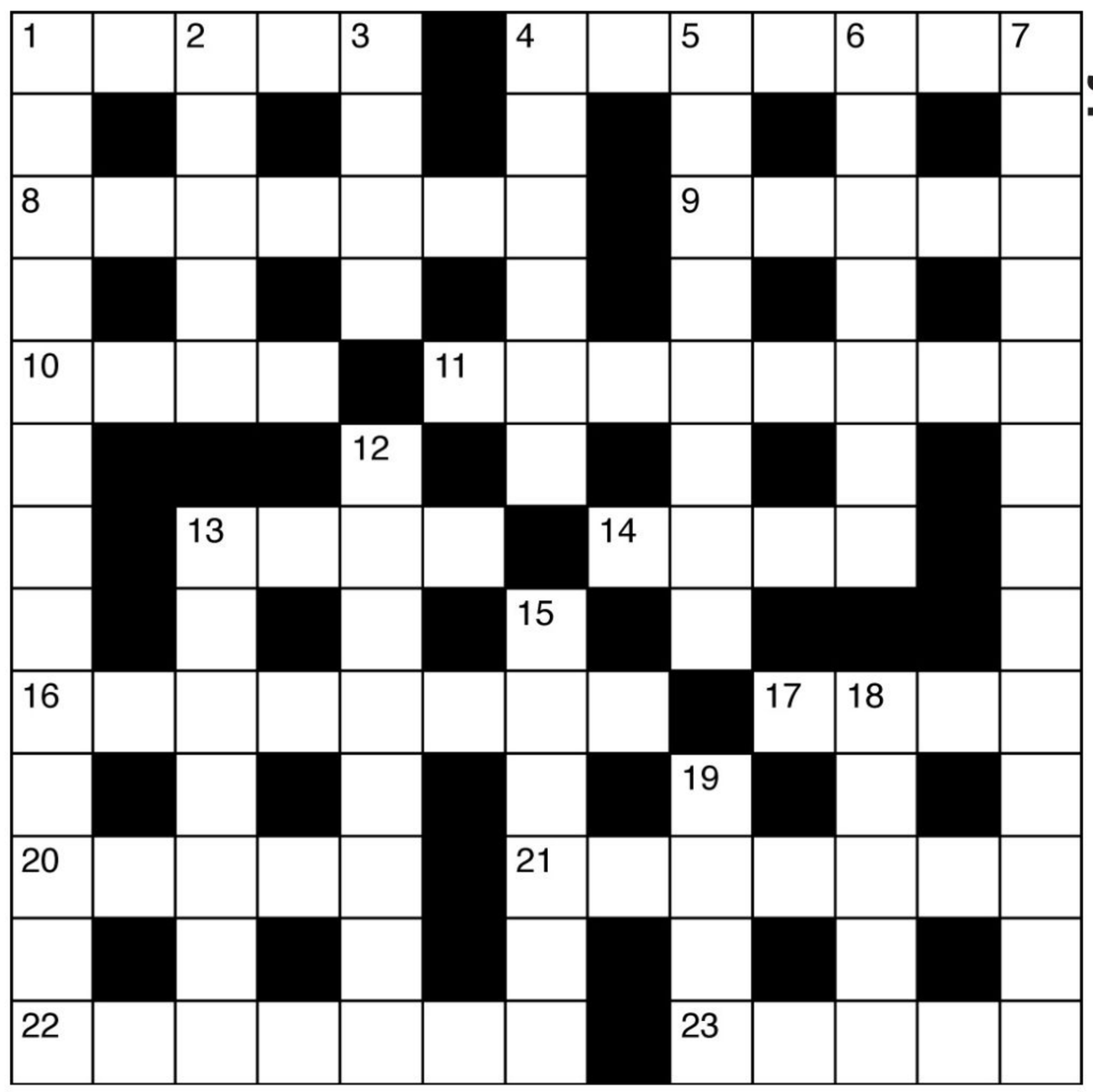
ACROSS

1. Sea (5)
4. In addition (7)
8. Stress (7)
9. Zest (5)
10. Fall short (4)
11. Aeroplane (8)
13. Cook (4)
14. Let it stand (4)
16. Maintain (8)
17. Desist (4)
20. Fatuous (5)
21. Lever (4-3)
22. Beg (7)
23. Mix (5)

DOWN

1. Rusty (3-2-8)
2. Boredom (5)
3. Claw (4)
4. Outlaw (6)
5. Wisdom (8)
6. Far (7)
7. Irascible (5-8)
12. Disparage (8)
13. Vanity (7)
15. Sweet (6)
18. Schedule (5)
19. Grave (4)

Cryptic Crossword



ACROSS

1. Go to the other side, being vexed (5)
4. Lodger goes on ship? (7)
8. The fellow is no disruption of the house 97)
9. An excursion for the girl (5)
10. Tuneful affectation? (4)
11. A dolly is out to be unfaithful (8)
13. Foreboding that the workers will get nothing (4)
14. This metal takes the first place (4)
16. Give too high marks to the number of balls bowled? (8)
17. Quarters taken by the couple (4)
20. A 50 to one chance of being on one's own (5)
21. Small bet causes a flap? (7)
22. Some of the next remedies will be drastic (7)
23. Trees with pitch (5)

DOWN

1. Sympathetic emotion at having the company take me round (13)
2. Egghead worn out, being the possessor (5)
3. Spoken of as a port (4)
4. The outlaw sounds as if he Wouldn't have it (6)
5. The sailor found the answer and was acquitted (8)
6. Held up non-professional, indeed (7)
7. Defence arm has kingly bearing and power (5,3,5)
12. Ever ripe, in a way, for a pardon (8)
13. Unfold nothing when the writer is not at home (4,3)
15. Is left to suffocate (6)
18. He takes part at work (5)
19. Barely equitable (4)

Scribble pad

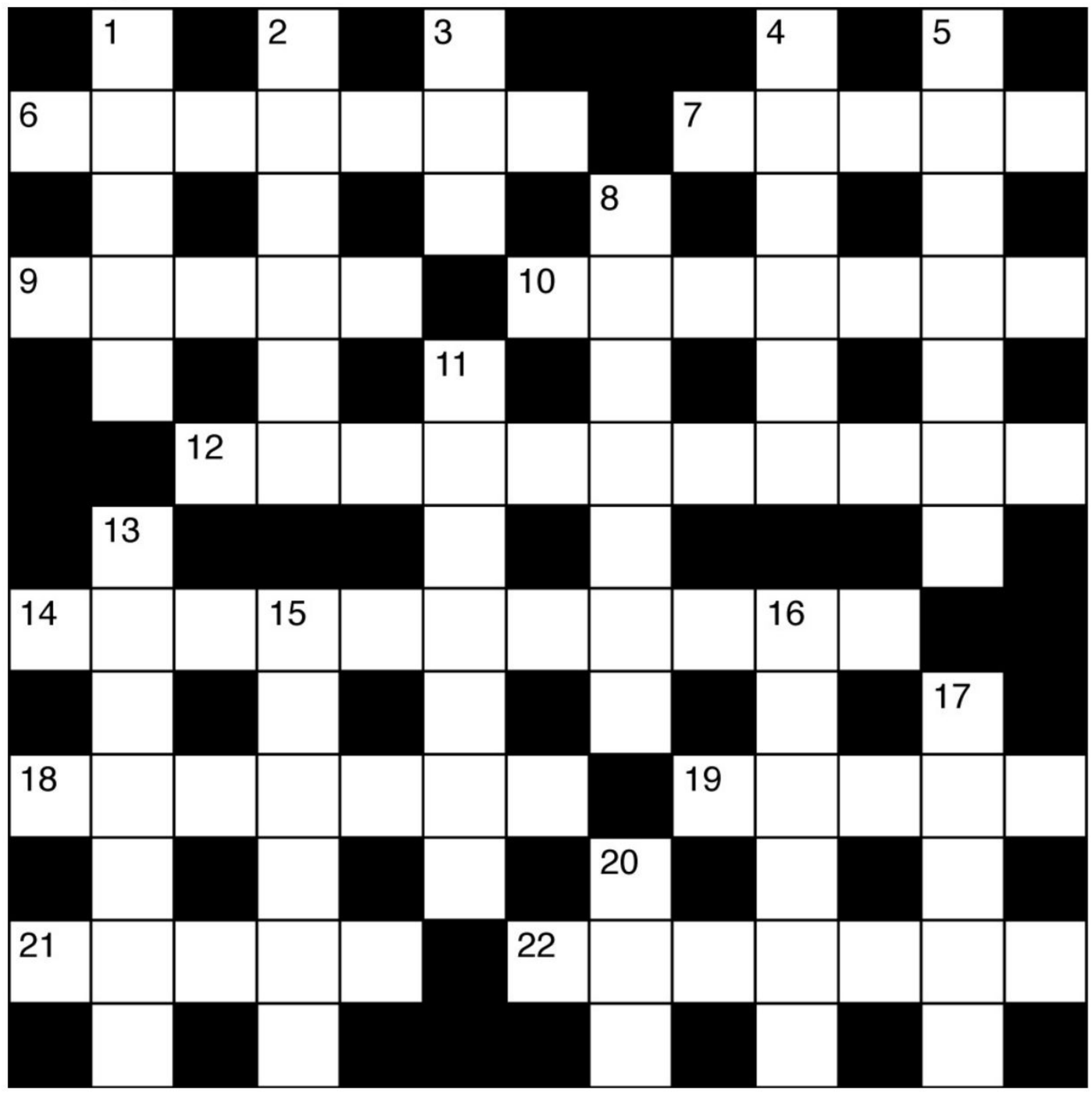
still young enough to...

Norfolk County Council

learn a new skill

for inspiration and ideas visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/stillyoungenough

General Knowledge Crossword



ACROSS

6. South American republic whose administrative capital is La Paz (7)
7. Enver, Prime Minister of Albania 1946-54 (5)
9. Rex, author who created private eye Nero Wolfe (5)
10. A 1975 novel by E L Doctorow (7)
12. The 1968 Olympic men's 400m hurdles champion (5,6)
14. In Greek legend, container of all the evils (8,3)
18. In bullfighting, a horseman who pricks the bull with a lance to weaken it in the early stages of a fight (7)
19. River which flows through Rome (5)
21 & 22Ac. The 1983 US Open men's singles tennis champion (5,7)
22. See 21 Across.

DOWN

1 & 13Dn. Musical play by Oscar Hammerstein II, Joshua Logan and Richard Rodgers adapted from a James Michener novel (5,7)
2. The outer of the two bones between the knee and ankle of the human leg (6)
3. The 1988 Tom Hanks film directed by Penny Marshall (3)
4. Weaver in Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream (6)
5 & 17Dn. The 1956 novel by Hammond Innes about a ghost ship (3,4,5)
8. Resinous extract of the dried flower tops of the female hemp plant (7)
11. Male character from French pantomime with a whitened face (7)
13. See 1 Down.
15. "The -- Bums", 1958 book by Jack Kerouac (6)
16. Poetically, another name for east (6)
17. See 5 Down.
20. The female of the deer (3)

Poem **of the month**

This month, in a change from our usual Word of the Month, we have four short pieces by **Martin Caseley**, inspired by Wymondham Abbey, in Norfolk. Martin lives in Wymondham and his poetry and essays have appeared in PN Review, Agenda, and The Countryman. He contributes book reviews to the International Times and Stride Magazine websites.

Photo: Denise Bradley

Early spring sunshine at Wymondham Abbey.

ABBEY AFTERNOONS

Outside: waves of tussocky grass,
ivy consumes a tomb-shape,
ragged clouds race
across the January afternoon.

The long scrape of an army jet
outrages no blackbirds;
they perch high up, disconsolate,
swaying dripping branches
onto flagstones beneath benches.

Inside, scandalous discussion
about the diocese, pattering children,
a handful of visitors, then
the silence is elbowed out;
it will reassert itself, no doubt.

II

All is quiet this afternoon.
Outside the world slips by.
Excited sparrows flirt in the graveyard
firs; they sense that Spring is near.
Soon, daylight will lengthen, skies will
clear.
Outside, everything is focused and sharp,
and a brisk step takes you further.
Time to go; the locking-up is here.

III

Delicate little flurries of snow
whirl around me;
although it's early afternoon,
the sky speaks a kind of matt
twilight and each brick of the tower
holds
a sharp and clear mass.

Bare tree-branches are drawn
upwards, towards summer, counting,
pacing,
waiting in the wings, thorough
as the crows working their way across
the fields.

Early Spring: the short afternoons do not discourage the lone visitors; they appear, light candles, trudge off home. The fields and trees seem still but life continues: movement, sudden rustling sounds, changes in the sky. The Abbey doors seem grey in the gathering gloom, but all around is an expectant clarity, waiting.

Codeword

Codeword is the crossword puzzle with no clues. The number in each square corresponds to a letter. You have to work out the words in the grid, using the two letters provided. Fill in these known letters first, then use your skill and judgment to work out the remainder.

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

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

Cross off the letter used

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

A word in time

With Mothering Sunday on March 22, **Angi Kennedy** finds some good quotes about mums and motherhood.

■ A mother's arms are made of tenderness and children sleep soundly in them – **Victor Hugo**.

■ God could not be everywhere, and therefore he made mothers – **Rudyard Kipling**.

■ Motherhood: All love begins and ends there – **Robert Browning**.

■ Biology is the least of what makes someone a mother – **Oprah Winfrey**.

■ A mother's arms are more comforting than anyone else's – **Princess Diana**.

■ My mother had a great deal of trouble with me, but I think she enjoyed it – **Mark Twain**.

■ I remember my mother's prayers and they have always followed me. They have clung to me all my life – **Abraham Lincoln.**

■ God invented mothers so someone in this house would know where everything is – **Anon**.

Picture: monkeybusinessimages / iStock / Getty Images Plus

Spot the picture Competition

Tell us what page this image is on in this month's magazine, and you could win a prize.

This is a picture used elsewhere in this month's Let's Talk. Tell us which page it is on, and you could win one of our mystery book prizes. Send the correct answer to: **Let's Talk April Spot the Picture Competition**, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 1RE, before Friday April 24, 2020.

Sudoku

Puzzle 1

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

Puzzle 2

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

Puzzle 3

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

Puzzle 4

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

Sudoku solutions

Issue 210 (March)

1

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

2

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

3

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

4

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

Giant Prize Wordsearch **April** Entry Form

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

Don't forget to send the whole page

To enter the competition, please send this entire page (provided you've completed the wordsearch and filled in the details below) to: Giant Prize Wordsearch April, Let's Talk, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 1RE, before Friday April 24, 2020. The first correct entry drawn after that date will win.

NAME .....

ADDRESS & POSTCODE.....

.....

.....

DAYTIME TELEPHONE & EMAIL .....

Normal Archant competition rules apply. The editor's decision is final.
Unless you have chosen to receive other information from us, Archant Community Media Limited will solely use the data you provide for the purpose of running the competition, including contacting winners and the distribution of any prize.

Giant Prize Wordsearch

WIN:

A National Trust day pass for a family of four (two adults and two children) to any property in the UK

With our pet special theme to this month's magazine, we've set you 20 words associated with dogs to find in the grid on the left-hand page. For a chance to win our prize, find all the words, highlight them in the grid and send it off to us. Good luck!

Picture: Olezzo / Royalty-free / iStock

AIREDALE
AKBASH
AKITA
AUSSIESPOM
BASSET HOUND
BEAGLE
BICHON FRISE
BLOODHOUND
BORDER COLLIE
CHORKIE
COCKAPOO
COCKER SPANIEL
CORGI
DACHSHUND
DALMATIAN
EURAISER
FOXHOUND
GREAT DANE
GREYHOUND
KELPIE

Solutions

Issue 210 (March)

QUICK
Across: 3 Precedent; 8 Trip; 9 Grotesque; 10 Avenue; 11 Throb; 14 Flour; 15 Tear; 16 Dress; 18 Send; 20 Cream; 21 Dense; 24 Bright; 25 Allowable; 26 Less; 27 Extempore.
Down: 1 Steadfast; 2 Hidebound; 4 Rare; 5 Catch; 6 Despot; 7 Nous; 9 Guard; 11 Theme; 12 Beleaguer; 13 Dramatist; 17 Score; 19 Depose; 22 Sharp; 23 Flex; 24 Flex; 24 Blur.

CRYPTIC
Across: 3 In the pink; 8 Iron; 9 Spineless; 10 Sedate; 11 Bench; 14 Noose; 15 Yale; 16 Roast; 18 Hake; 20 Order; 21 Sides; 24 Legion; 25 Confessor; 26 Here; 27 Realising.
Down: 1 Sits on the; 2 Road works; 4 Nape; 5 Hinge; 6 Policy; 7 Nest; 9 Steer; 11 Brass; 12 Hard lines; 13 Sea-ranger; 17 Tower; 19 Eiffel; 22 Eases; 23 Come; 24 Loan.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE
Across: 1 Café au lait; 7 Aires; 8 Porthos; 10 Dabchick; 11 Paul; 13 Ottawa; 15 Emilio; 17 Ovid; 18 Lacrosse; 21 Yttrium; 22 Trout; 23 René arnoux.
Down: 1 Carob; 2 Fish hawk; 3 Alpaca; 4 Lark; 5 Ishmael; 6 Cardiology; 9 Silhouette; 12 Amoretto; 14 Thistle; 16 Palmer; 19 Sioux; 20 Dime

CODEWORD
1=Z, 2=P, 3=S, 4=D, 5=V, 6=B, 7=M, 8=X, 9=I, 10=A, 11=R, 12=T, 13=E, 14=C, 15=K, 16=L, 17=Y, 18=O, 19=N, 20=Q, 21=U, 22=F, 23=J, 24=W, 25=G, 26=H

Quiz Test your **general knowledge**

1 What word could be a slight movement and a container for arrows?
2 Name Peter Rabbit's three sisters.
3 Which city hosted the 2004 summer Olympics?
4 How many gallons of beer are in a firkin?
5 Which is the biggest island in the Caribbean?
6 Who created the animation for Monty Python?
7 What type of goat produces mohair?
8 Which early sit-com was a spin-off from The Army Game?
9 Paprika is the predominant spice in which Hungarian meat and vegetable stew?
10 How many seconds are there in three hours?

Picture: EcoPic / iStock / Getty Images Plus

Quiz compiled by Angi Kennedy

1 Quiver; 2 Flopsy, Mopsy and Cottontail; 3 Athens; 4 Nine; 5 Cuba; 6 Terry Gilliam; 7 Angora; 8 Bootsie and Snudge; 9 Goulash; 10 10,800.

Hanging on the telephone

In a rare piece of DIY brilliance, **Neil Haverson** put in a phone extension . . . but his electrician skills have gone to waste, as the retired Let's Talk editor explains.

Picture: Daisy-Daisy / iStock / Getty Images Plus

It starts at the front door, goes up the wall and through the ceiling. Along the eves into a bedroom. Here it follows the skirting to a junction box beside the bed.

It's a length of cable for a bedroom phone extension. The phone is no longer connected, but I haven't removed the cable. It bears testament to a rare event. Something I did that actually worked.

I installed it several years ago – and it was not easy. I struggled a bit with the fiddly job of connecting the cable to the master socket. Going up the hall wall and through the ceiling was straightforward. But it is a chalet, so in the bedroom above there is a small hatch into the eves. I had to thread myself through it into a narrow and dark tunnel, then crawl on my chest across joists like an SAS soldier on manoeuvres, clutching a torch and dragging the cable. When I came to the end, I pushed the cable through a hole I'd drilled in the back of a fitted wardrobe in the master bedroom.

Then I had to shift into reverse, wriggle back across the joists and perform a hernia-inducing manoeuvre to exit backwards through the hatch.

Back to the master bedroom, pull the cable through and tack it to the skirting; finally connect it to a junction box beside the bed I had installed earlier. Then came the acid test. Plug in the phone.

Hallelujah! There was a dialling tone.

It wasn't worth the effort. We had so few calls that required us to answer the extension that it has long since been taken out. But the cable remains, like a monument to a victory against all odds in some past battle.

When we were first married we didn't have a telephone. It was off to the phone box with a pocket full of 10p pieces. And yes, I do remember going to the phone box with my four pennies – and always press button B, just in case.

Eventually we took the momentous decision to have a phone installed. It was one of those Trimphones. Remember them? They warbled rather than rang. Ours looked neat but it was so lightweight, that when we dialled, we chased it around the table. Eventually we had to stick it down with Blu Tack.

When we moved house we inherited a phone on the wall in the hall. It developed a fault. An engineer called and fitted a new-fangled push-button instrument. It was this that inspired me to fit the extension.

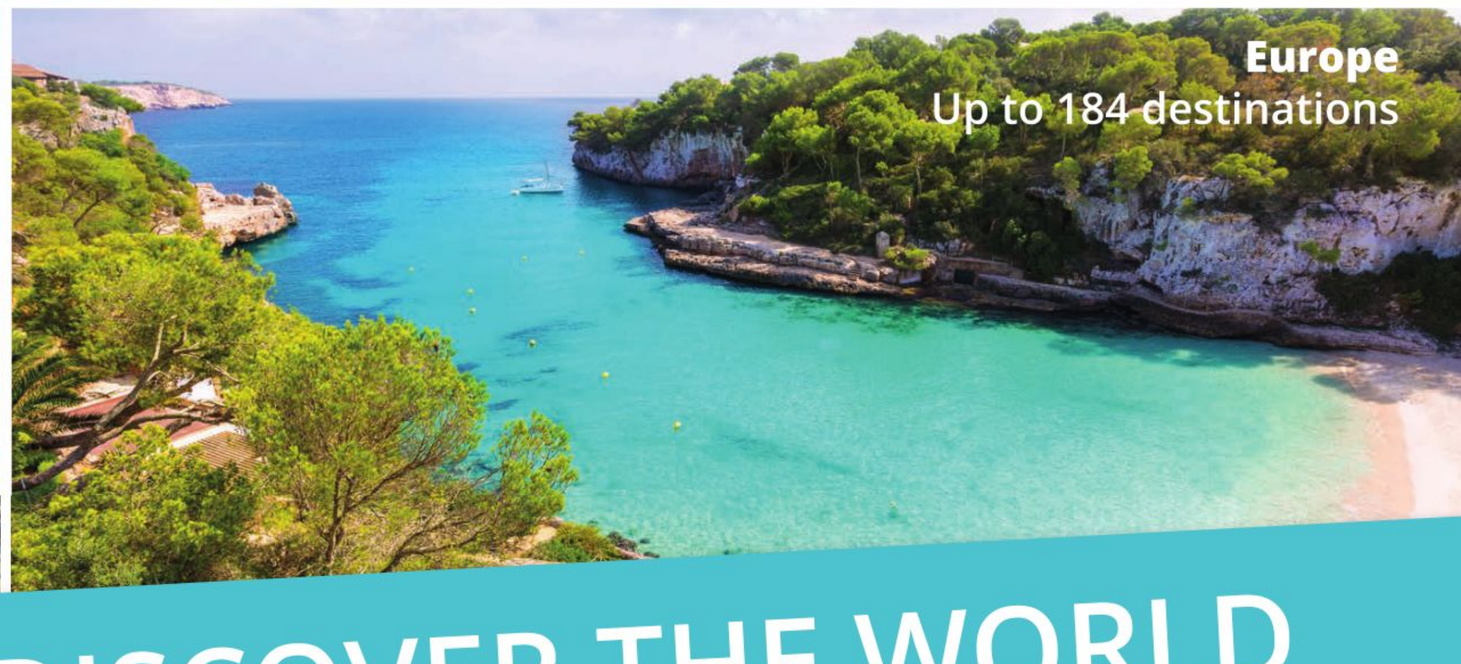
Then along came the cordless phone. You could take a call anywhere. Gone were the days of standing in the hall tethered to the base by a length of flex. You could talk to your bank manager and he would have no idea you were sitting on the loo.

Next mobiles arrived; they've morphed into mini-computers. Most of us have one, and I wonder how long it will be before the traditional landline disappears altogether. Our children have a landline for the internet, otherwise everything is done on the mobile.

When Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876 he revolutionised communication. But he could never have foreseen how much it would evolve; SIM cards, pay-as-you-go, texts and those annoying ringtones.

With a mobile there's no need for an extension in the bedroom. At night I have mine beside the bed, but I must admit, these days it's turned off. In the early hours one morning it woke me with a couple of joyous pings. It was a text from The Royal Mail telling me a parcel would be delivered between the rather precise hours of 7.13am and 11.13am. I could not get back to sleep.

Mr Bell, you have an awful lot to answer for. LT



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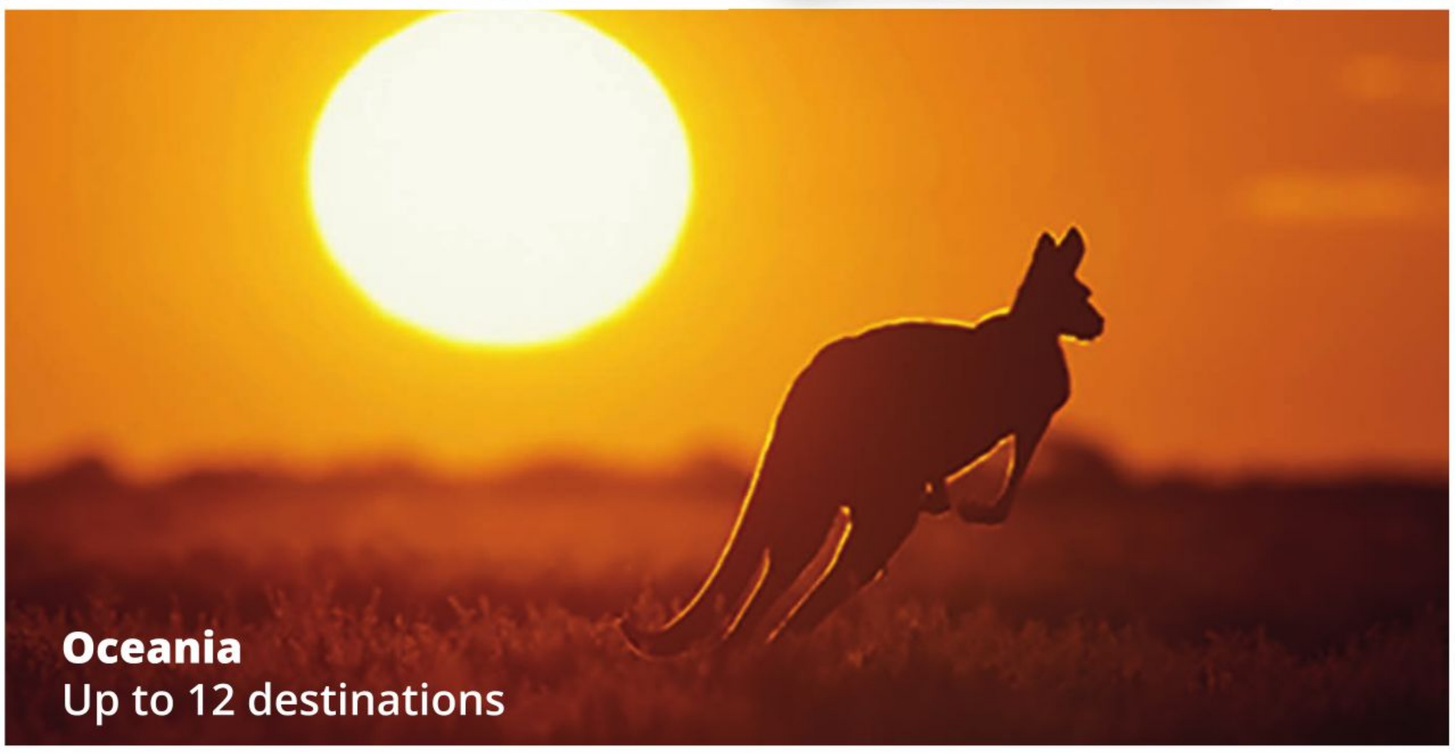

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