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June 2013

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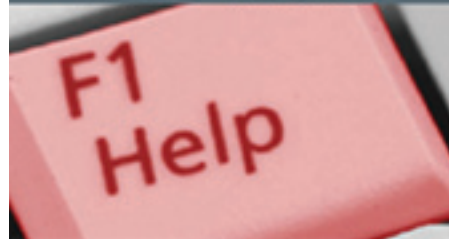
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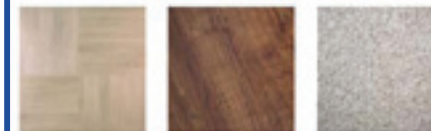


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# Gardening: Chocks away...

The horticultural afterburners are lit and we've finally got clearance to lift off out in the borders! Time to strap in, switch to 100% oxygen to clear the senses, arm the heat-seeking missiles and blast our way out of one of the most extraordinarily bad winters I have ever encountered and straight into the heart of spring. The trouble is that the velocity we've reached means that spring this year is going to be more of a shock and awe campaign – over in an explosive splash of colour and rampant growth before summer arrives a month later.

Regardless of how short the gardening spring is going to be, we should enjoy every single minute of it because it undoubtedly represents the very best season in the garden. The splashes of colour from daffodils, crocus and tulips, softened by the soft greens of emerging leaf buds and new plant growth, knocks summer's often frazzled and exuberant display for six. It's like chalk and cheese as far as I'm concerned but, then again, my bias is centered on my interest in some of the smaller gems of the plant world which are at their very best right now. To be fair, they aren't for everyone as they don't represent the best value (both financially and aesthetically) as far as garden plants are concerned and they also need a modicum of TLC which can be tiresome, unless you are a bit of a plant geek such as yours truly.

So what do I consider a gem? Well, without wishing to bore you all with Latin names, I would include the following: coydallis, sternbergias, primulas, ranunculus, narcissus, erythroniums, crocus and violets – all of which deserve a closer look either on bended knee or a position in a raised bed near the back door. Most of them rarely get above a few centimeters high (apart from the bigger narcissus which I have excluded from the accolade of gem!) and most are available locally from good garden centres. The more scarce varieties (true gems) have to be tracked down through careful and diligent searching on the



internet and by attending specialist flower shows with fellow geeks – although this can lead to a trainspotting-like addiction and madness if not carefully controlled!

Take, for instance, the violet. Normally a bit of a scruffy little plant with a smattering of small, violet coloured (funnily enough!) flowers at this time of year. Just what I used to think before visiting Grove's nursery in Bridport, Dorset last week where I was met with what can only be described as an aromatherapeutic overload from the vast display of violets they had on display. This garden center is the national violet collection holder and has every colour, size and variety available today – which amounts to hundreds of species and hybrids – most all of them blessed with an intoxicating scent of, believe it or not, violets!

Suffice to say, I am now the proud owner of yet more little gems; this time they are exotically named French hybrid 'parma' violets – well worth a few hundred miles drive to collect them??? I must be mad – or is it just Spring Fever?!!

**Jonathan Wild**

Leisure Gardener and Slightly Bonkers...

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# Fork It

By Angela Boobbyer

Obviously it depends to an extent where you live in the UK, but according to a gardening pundit, everything is about a month later than it should be. Nature has a wonderful way of catching up however, so it may be that by the time this magazine hits your doormat, all the plants may be just a couple of weeks behind. Even so, I suspect that my mixed flower borders will end up looking their best much later than I'd hoped – probably some time in August when I am away on holiday!

I always grow cosmos bipinnatus in the borders and the cutting patch, as they are reliable germinators and will happily keep flowering for several months. The TV gardener Sarah Raven says that her 1m x 1m patch can produce 2 buckets of flowers a week from late June to October – that's very good value from a couple of packets of seed. It is possible to buy some varieties of cosmos as bedding plants from a garden centre, but I avoid them as they tend to be the compact types which just get lost in my borders! I have therefore always grown them from seed and have found the white cosmos "Purity" and the bright pink "Dazzler" to be the best. Not only are they prolific flowerers, but they also produce lots of nectar and pollen making them attractive to bees and butterflies. Last year the cool wet summer meant that the cosmos put on a lot of growth and reached nearly 5 feet and while the flowers didn't appear until late August, they looked spectacular until late October and the first frosts. As with all annuals, it is better if you can deadhead them, but I have noticed that they perform just as well if I don't and towards the end of the season you can save the seed and try sowing it next year.

Another annual that loved last year's rains were the sweet peas that produced vases of flowers for weeks. I go for fragrance over colour or size, so I prefer varieties such as the small bicour "Matucana" or the dark purple "Lord Nelson". It is important to keep cutting sweet peas so that they carry on producing flowers – once you start to see any pods, they

are starting to set seed and will put their energy into that rather than flower production. So even if you have filled all your vases, keep cutting and give them to friends – you'll be very popular.

Another favourite annual is amaranthus caudatus or Love-lies-bleeding. It produces drooping panicles of dark red blooms – giving rise to its dramatic name – and for extra drama I have always planted the dark red/purple foliage variety. In fact I find that it plants itself as it obligingly self-seeds every year. As it can grow to over 3 feet it will need to be staked, as the drooping flowers can drag it over. Again, last year's cooler, wetter weather produced whopping plants that flowered until October – not bad for freebies!



Sweet pea - Lord Nelson



Cosmos bipinnatus



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## Property: Character Properties – are they becoming hard to sell?

For a long time the perceived wisdom has been that character properties such as Georgian townhouses and Victorian villas sell at a premium to comparable size modern properties; in some areas that premium is as much as 20%. Looking at the current market, in my area at least, this still seems to be true but what I'm also noticing is that character properties are taking longer to sell. In one town which has a fair proportion of 18th and 19th Century properties, out of 6 houses that have been on the market for more than 6 months, 5 of them are character properties.

I have a theory about this. Character homes have a lot to offer such as period charm, well-proportioned rooms and often a good deal of interior space. What they tend to lack are modern amenities such as garages, utility rooms and the plethora of bathrooms that everyone takes for granted these days. They are also badly insulated, expensive to heat and require a lot of upkeep and maintenance. For all these reasons, for a period home may well not be the

best option for a family or a first time buyer.

The present market conditions of static or even falling house prices actually favour those who are looking to upsize; yes, they get less money for the house they are selling but they save proportionately more on the house they are buying. But character properties are often bought by retirees or families where the children are about to leave home to go to university. Effectively, these people are often downsizing and they have a strong incentive to sit tight and wait for the market to improve. This is why character properties are proving slow to sell at the moment.

If you are trying to sell a period home and it is proving heavy going, my advice is to be patient; the right buyer will come along eventually.

**Craig Brown**



## A Spring Revamp

A few warm and sunny May days, is all it takes to remind me that summer does exist, and is indeed on its way. I am immediately inspired by the garden and feel a strong desire to bring the colour and the freshness inside.

I did actually finally get around to a long overdue wardrobe declutter. I emptied everything out, painted the back panel a gorgeous colour, covered all of the shelves in beautiful paper, and then I put back the only things I actually wanted, and gave away the rest. Needless to say, there was quite a lot more space afterwards, and I feel a little surge of pleasure every time I open the wardrobe door – it looks so lovely – and spacious!

In the living room, the onset of summer can be marked with a couple of bright cushion covers, throws, lampshades, picture frames, or a few candle holders. Choose one, or a few accent colours, and then pick out those colours in the various items that you change. It only takes a little touch here or there to make a dramatic difference.



In the kitchen, a new tablecloth, napkins, or tea towels and oven gloves serve to add splashes of early summer very effectively and inexpensively. I don't even run to a new tablecloth, but instead, I find a roll of really sweet wrapping paper and use it as a table runner.

If you would like some help with your Interior design - Nicky Barclay runs Shoestring Style in and around Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells and can be contacted on 07771 522235 [www.shoestringstyle.co.uk](http://www.shoestringstyle.co.uk)



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# The Local Residential Property Market



At last Spring is here. The weather is warmer and people appear more positive and cheerful. So if you have been contemplating a move, the next few months are likely to be the "best time to sell" for several years. (Probably since the Northern Rock saga in September 2007.

Mortgage finance has eased. Government schemes of first buy and help to buy will increase demand. The residential property market is very traditional with buyers and sellers coming out of hibernation after winter. Seek Professional, Qualified and Independent advice with regard to the value of your property.

Your property is likely to be your most valuable asset, so seek experienced and professional advice.

We are, in most instances back close to the peak of values in the summer of 2007. In the present market correctly priced property will find a buyer within the first six to eight weeks of marketing. Remember prices are relative, if you have to drop 5% on your existing property, the likelihood is that you will be able to negotiate 5% off your purchase. The average sale in this area takes at least quarter of a year. Active buyers live on the Internet when searching, my firm subscribes to all the major property portals, e.g. Rightmove, Zoopla, Prime Location, Findaproperty, TEAM etc. So seek a Free Market Appraisal/Valuation, place your property on the market and only search in earnest once you have a buyer. Searching before you have a buyer can prove to be very frustrating for all parties concerned. As my first boss stated "tell them not

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# Keeping fit – Beacon Badminton

Badminton takes its name from Badminton House - home of the Duke of Beaufort in the English county of Gloucestershire. Though the estate is now better known for horse trials and hunting, it is credited as the formal birthplace of the racquet sport but badminton's roots date back thousands of years.

Sports played with a shuttlecock and racquets probably developed in ancient Greece around 2000 years ago but are also mentioned in India and China.

In England a children's game known as "battledore and shuttlecock" in which players used a paddle - a battledore - to keep a small feathered cork - a shuttlecock - in the air as long as possible - was popular from medieval times.

Versions of the game had been played for centuries by children in the Far East, and were adapted by British Army officers stationed in Pune (or Poona), India in the 1860s. They added a net and the game became a competitive sport called "poona", with documented rules in 1867.

In 1873 the sport made its way back to England and gained its current title after guests at a Badminton House lawn party held by the Duke of Beaufort introduced it to their friends as "the



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Badminton game". It was credit to its popularity that in 1877 the first set of written rules were laid out by the Bath Badminton Club. A national organising body followed 16 years later with the setting up of the Badminton Federation of England, which in 1899 held the first All England Championships.

Badminton's popularity grew dramatically in the 20th century and it soon became a major racquet sport worldwide with the establishment of the International Badminton Federation in 1934.

### Modern Badminton

The game is now an international and Olympic sport. No longer a game of gently lobbing the shuttle backwards and forwards over the net, (garden style badminton!) it is now a high speed, high power, sport which combines strength and agility. Modern racket technology using Kevlar and Carbon reinforced plastics has made it possible to play shots at a speed and with a power that would be inconceivable using the old wooden rackets.

### Benefits of Playing Badminton

Badminton is a great way of keeping fit generally, because the running and stretching keep the body supple. The high speed of the game hones players' reaction speeds and improves overall hand/eye co-ordination.

One great thing is that, unlike many sports, it is good for all age groups. Kids can start learning to play from about 10 years old and by the time they are 14-15 they can be brought into adult clubs to develop. Usually they become fully competent within 12-18 months and give the adults as good as they get!

At the other end of the scale we know several players in their 70's who can still play a good game. Their love of the sport is undoubtedly what has kept them in such good condition!

If you want to know more about local badminton go to <http://www.beaconbadminton.com/>

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# Opinion: Let's get down to business

There's a lot of noise coming from the media about the recent changes to the welfare system. These are portrayed as either a brutal attack on some of the most vulnerable people in society or some long overdue and wholly necessary reforms, depending on where the relevant part of the media stands on the political spectrum. There is also a lot of controversy about rich people avoiding paying their fair share of taxes. I could hold up Jimmy Carr as a shining example but he makes me laugh, which is what comedians are supposed to do, so I won't. The current political battleground is real income levels, which are continuing to fall and show no sign of stopping. Yet in among all of this, the only time businesses are mentioned is when some American mega-corp is found to have avoided paying any corporation tax in the last five years, or some banker pays himself a colossal bonus. I think it's about time that someone stood up for businesses and I'm putting myself forward for the job.

Virtually all the revenue which the government uses to pay for so many things (including welfare benefits) comes from taxes. Let's look at these taxes in order of the amount of revenue they generate. First up is income tax which accounts for 30% of the revenue pie. Income tax is generated by businesses because they create the jobs which pay the wages which are then taxed. Businesses also collect income tax because they deduct it from your wages and pass it on to the treasury. Next up is National Insurance which contributes 19% of the total. NI is really income tax by another name so businesses both generate and collect it, but the big difference is that over 60% of NI contributions are actually paid by businesses – effectively a tax on employing people. Then you have VAT, 17% of the total, which is generated by businesses because they add it to everything they sell and collected by them too. Fourth on the list is corporation tax at a mere 8% of the total; generated by businesses and paid by businesses, it is a tax on making a profit. Of the remaining quarter of the pie, 5% is accounted for by business rates which are both generated and paid by businesses.

If you look at the total amount of dosh the government has to spend, excluding what it

borrows, 79% of it is generated by businesses, 63% is collected by them and 24% is actually paid by them. You would think that the government would be very solicitous to the people who own and run businesses but, as one of those people, I can tell you that they are not. Times are tough in business; the lack of economic growth means it is hard to increase your turnover and harder still to grow profitability. All the big banks flatly refuse to lend money to businesses, not because they don't want to but because the rules they operate within dictate that lending money to businesses is so risky as to be suicidal. Worse still, HMRC are becoming ever more diligent and aggressive when it comes to collecting taxes from businesses. Hefty fines for late payments or late filing of returns have been introduced across the board and HMRC now employs debt collection agencies to harass businesses.

I really can't understand the government's approach. Surely if businesses were given more support they would be able to do what they do best, grow their turnover and profits, generate more revenue for the government, create more jobs and, ultimately, make the economy grow. I think I know what the problem is; businesses don't vote. Although the next election is still two years away, all three main parties are busy electioneering. Any policy that wins votes is a good policy and it is too easy to characterise business owners as tax avoiding, employee exploiting rich people. In the words of the Stranglers, "Something Better Change!"

**Howard Clemmow**



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## Rant of the Month

### SOMETHING FOR NOTHING !!

It's so nice to know that people read my articles in the Town Crier as I sometimes get feedback, so thank you.

I'm always happy to hear what you think so please do contact me if you have a comment.

Now, just read back over the last two sentences and drink in the words in bold. It may be some time before you see or hear them again!!!

Politeness costs absolutely nothing and it isn't very often you can say you get something for nothing these days.

I was in a shop in town recently, standing (as we British do) in a queue and the chap in front of me marched up to the counter, unceremoniously dumped his items and shoved a note at the lady serving him. She rang the goods up, told him how much and gave him his change. He snatched the money, picked up his purchases and left without one word being spoken. To say she was gobsmacked is an understatement and she just stared after him in disbelief.

I was also dumfounded so when I stepped up to the counter, I smiled sweetly and said "Thank you so much for relieving me of my cash to pay for my goods".

She looked at me in amazement, then realised I had noticed the chap before being so rude as to not say please or thank you. So she said "You're very welcome. It's my pleasure to take

your money!" I paid, said thank you very much and went out of the store, leaving her chuckling to herself.

Did that few words of politeness cost me anything? No, it did not! But it made her day!!

Please and thank you are very rare these days, as are courtesy and consideration. Holding doors open, moving out of people's way..... sorry, we've been down this road before - don't mean to sound like a broken record.

Wouldn't it be nice to walk around town seeing people with happy faces, not an expression which looks like a slapped backside? To see someone smile at a stranger, not glower? To hear a cheery word, not the usual string of swear words? And even, dare I say it, mums and dads being polite to their children, not yelling at them across a store with "NO" being the only thing you hear.

Don't scowl and tut at a small child which, in your eyes, appears to be throwing a wobbly. Have you thought that maybe there could be an underlying problem which is driving the mum or dad to distraction, but isn't actually tattooed on the child's forehead???? Just walk away if it annoys you, don't stand and stare.

Thank you for any consideration you can give whilst out and about and please remember the above.....

Joan Hamilton Smith



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## The Horder Centre

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## Rotary event provides blood pressure figures for Crowborough

Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland (RIBI) celebrated 10 years of supporting stroke prevention across the UK with the Stroke Association by giving free Know Your Blood Pressure tests to over one hundred people in Crowborough. It was one of hundreds of free events attended by 30,000 people across the UK to raise awareness about the risks of high blood pressure which is the highest risk factor for stroke.

There are 152,000 strokes in the UK every year that works out at one every five minutes. 16 million people in the UK have high blood pressure yet many of them don't know it. If left untreated, high blood pressure can increase your risk of having a stroke.

Jon Barrick, Chief Executive of the Stroke

## Health: Vitiligo

Vitiligo is a common condition affecting 1% of people in which areas of the skin lose their normal pigment and, therefore, become white. It is painless and not contagious; it affects men and women of all races equally, but is more evident in dark skinned people. Around 20% of people with vitiligo have a family member with the disease but the children of sufferers will not necessarily inherit it. There is currently no known dietary cause.

Skin gets its normal colour from a pigment called melanin which is made by melanocyte cells. Although the cause of vitiligo is not yet fully understood, it is thought that in vitiligo sufferers the body makes antibodies to its own melanocytes and thus destroys them, so the skin is then unable to make melanin properly. After diagnosis, some doctors may check for thyroid disease and for other autoimmune conditions that are more common than usual in people with vitiligo.

Vitiligo commonly affects the most exposed areas such as hands and face and is also seen



Association said; "These events are so important, many people are still unaware of high blood pressure and the risk of stroke. Thanks to the great support of Rotary clubs we have helped over 200,000 people learn their level of risk and take action if necessary. If you are concerned about your blood pressure and missed your local Know Your Blood Pressure event, visit your GP to have yours checked."

Steven Tester, President of the Rotary Club of Crowborough added; "The Know Your Blood Pressure events have prevented thousands of strokes over the last ten years. This year quite a lot of people were found to have high blood pressure, but we were able to provide advice and support on how they could reduce their risks. Learning your blood pressure is high can be worrying, but simple steps will help keep it under control. Healthy eating, stopping smoking and taking regular exercise will all make a difference."

For more information on stroke, call the Stroke Association helpline on 0303 30 33 100 or visit [www.stroke.org.uk/kybp](http://www.stroke.org.uk/kybp)

around body openings such as the eyes, nostrils, mouth and genitals. It can also be seen in body folds, around pigmented moles or damaged skin. The hairs growing out of a patch of vitiligo may keep their normal colour or may turn white too so, if the scalp is affected, it may prematurely grey the hair. Vitiligo can begin at any age, but half of sufferers are affected by the age of 20. Progression is usually slow; the patches gradually change their shape and size, but with periods of stability which may last several years. Sufferers may become embarrassed or depressed by the condition.

Very occasionally, some pigment will return to the affected patches, but rarely completely. Some treatments may slow progress but there is currently no known cure. Prescribed corticosteroid creams may slow the spread in some cases when used under medical supervision. Protopic cream is unlicensed for vitiligo but may be prescribed by some GPs. PUVA treatment, carried out at a hospital, may help re-pigment the affected areas but this may not be permanent.

For further details visit [www.vitiligosociety.co.uk](http://www.vitiligosociety.co.uk) or [www.britishtskinfoundation.co.uk](http://www.britishtskinfoundation.co.uk)

**Phoebe Hodge**

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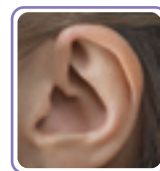
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## Edward Frisby Howis: A man who helped establish Crowborough

By Michael Taylor - Crowborough

The 'ignorant and heathenish people of Crowborough' may have received salvation from Sir Henry Fermor's construction of a church, but it was a different man who rescued the town's industrial soul.

Edward Frisby Howis, an entrepreneur in the oil business, purchased the Crowborough Warren in 1809. At this stage, Crowborough was an improving area, but this was mainly socially. As far as commerce and modernising were concerned, Crowborough was lagging behind.

Howis was one of the primitive property developers of his era; rich men based in London who saw a gap in the market for developing 'up and coming' areas between London and the burgeoning coastal towns. They would build fashionable mansions, buildings to rent, or facilities solely for leisure purposes. Howis turned his attention to Crowborough and chose to turn the Warren into a profitable farm as well as erecting buildings to sell and rent.

His plans attracted workmen, builders and labourers to the area, created employment and a demand for accommodation that had not been seen before. One of his finest achievements was the construction of two water mills with five large ponds. These generated income as they were rented out for business; indeed, one of the mills ground the flour for Queen Victoria's wedding cake. A Crowborough resident transported the flour to the London-based confectioner, Gunter's of Berkley Square. Interestingly, the middle name of Howis's son was Gunter, suggesting a family link secured the honour of providing the flour.

Howis also planted a large amount of woodland that changed the character of the Warren, as well as adding Crowborough Warren House, entrance lodges and the farm, which greatly improved the notoriously weak Ashdown Forest soil. He managed to keep developments moving by overseeing the progress of his plans personally. Described as "a man of great abilities, fine independence of character, and possessed of virile, versatile mind", Howis was also one of the first commuters, riding on horseback from Crowborough to London in around three hours. He would rise early, collect his post at Forest



^ Warren Road



> The New Mill - Crowborough

Row, eat breakfast in Godstone and then arrive in Piccadilly to start the day.

His London business diversified over time, from oil to mineral water, then to groceries and wine. Due to his London work, absences from Crowborough were sometimes necessary and, on one occasion, he returned to his house – Crowborough Lodge – to find his labourers engaged in uproar. Workers from Mayfield and Rotherfield had visited and caused disruption about rates of pay. Howis collected a large selection of beer and offered it to the rioters. After they were sufficiently 'pacified', Howis requested they leave and either through drunkenness, gratitude or respect, they departed with no further trouble.

In another example of his ingenuity, The Squire, as Howis became known, purchased 12 donkeys in order to transport raw materials to his own sites. The procession pulled sacks of chalk from Shortbridge, near Uckfield, to the Warren three times a week and saved the businessman trouble and money.

Edward Howis never saw the culmination of his development, as he died at the age of 58 in 1830. He was buried at the church of Withyham, overlooking his friend Jack Turner's farm. Howis requested a vent be built into his grave so that his spirit could easily travel to visit his friend.

Crowborough Warren changed hands several times and was sold to the Fielden family, after whom a number of roads are named to this day.

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## Film Review

### Trance (15)

**Director: Danny Boyle**

During an art auction heist, inside-man Simon (James McAvoy) is hit on the head, erasing his memory of the day's events. After brain surgery and months of rehabilitation, he is released from hospital only to be kidnapped by his co-conspirators. After discovering he can't remember where he hid the painting, they turn to hypnotherapist Elizabeth (Rosario Dawson) in an attempt to unlock his memories.

When reviewing the basic narrative thread of Trance – a psychological heist film – one comparison comes to mind ahead of any other. However, where Inception (2011) introduced the rules of its universe slowly, methodically guiding its audience through its levels of complexity, Trance throws the watcher in at the deep-end and provides no relief until the game is almost up. To say that Trance has a twist in the tale would be doing the complexity of the events that unfold a disservice. The film begins with a simple plot and objective before spiralling out at exponential speed into truths the opening merely

hinted at in retrospect.

McAvoy pulls off a performance that feels like it's been dragged through the mud – no insult – there are few film 'stars' that can really imbue believably negative traits into the characters they create. Dawson is also fine, doing as much as she can with a role that forces her to subdue her reactions to the chaos unfolding around her. It is Vincent Cassel however, as gang leader Franck that really steals the show. He is ice cold, cool and collected, but utterly human in a role that expands far beyond what is normally required from such a seemingly minor part.

There are a few bum notes, a couple of musical interludes that jar with the tone of the overall film, and the climax is overly melodramatic, mitigating what could have been a poignant and powerful ending rather than just a satisfactory one. However, Trance is smart and capable, and a solid advert for quality British film.

James Warren | My Rating \*\*\*\*



## Book Review

### Hawthorn and Child by Keith Ridgway

This book is like the literary equivalent of a Salvador Dali painting; to the casual observer, it just doesn't make any sense. For a start, it doesn't fall into the usual plot of a detective novel, never focusing on any protagonist for too long or following the investigation through to the tumultuous unveiling of some wild eyed, mustachioed, cackling villain. If you want that sort of book, you're best off reading a Marple. The main characters, if they can be called that, are two London detectives on the case of a shooting, the victim claiming to have been shot by someone in a vintage car.

Throughout the course of the novel we meet a cast of characters who may or may not be linked to the investigation, but always with their own story. There's the art loving daughter of the Chief Inspector with a whole chapter all to herself, the unnamed driver of the local dodgy dealer secretly informing the two detectives, and

Hawthorn himself, who can't seem to stop crying for no reason.

The story flits from character to character, all casually observing and taking an interest in the stories of the others, showing us that we all may as well be characters in someone else's story – we try to find patterns or links between everything that happens where there aren't any to be found in the first place. The combination of a narrative that only occasionally makes sense and Ridgway's imaginative writing makes this book one you won't easily forget.

It takes a while to figure out the book has no plot; where the detectives try to see patterns in an investigation there are none and the case... well I'll leave that out. It is not very often that you find a book trying not to be a book, let alone one so cryptically and brilliantly written - Ridgway's style is at once beautifully strange and strangely beautiful, making it one hell of a read for anyone who dares to try.

Grace Ray

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# Recipe **Lambs Kidney & Bacon on Toasted Sour Dough with mustard cream**



**Serves 4**

- 4 lambs Kidneys, sliced and deveined
- 2 slices smoked back bacon, cut into strips
- 50g butter
- 4 eggs
- 50ml white wine vinegar
- 4 spring onions
- 1 small loaf of sour dough bread
- 100ml double cream
- 100ml reduced chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon English mustard

Add about 3 tablespoons of vegetable or sunflower oil to the pan, then add the kidneys and the bacon strips and cook until well coloured (this should take about 1 minute on each side) then add the spring onion, butter, jus, double cream & mustard. Once this has all come to the boil, cook for just 2 minutes, then remove from the heat and allow to cool for 5 minutes. You are in effect resting the meat, but the juices will run out into the sauce so that when you reheat the kidneys they will suck up the pan juices. Now toast 4 slices of sour dough bread, reheat the eggs for 2 minutes in boiling water and check the kidneys for heat; they may just need to be brought back to a simmer. Finally put the kidney and bacon mix on the toast, top with the poached egg and serve.

**Danny Jimminson | Restaurateur**

**Poaching the eggs in advance**

Have a bowl full of ice water on the side ready. Add the 100ml of white wine vinegar to 500ml water and bring to a rapid boil. Drop the eggs in one at a time, turn the water down to a simmer and leave to cook for 3 minutes. Now fish the eggs out and plunge into the iced water and allow to cool for at least 10 minutes. Remove from the water and set aside.

**The rest of the dish**

Heat a heavy bottomed frying pan until very hot.

# Sudoku competition



To enter, just complete the Sudoku, fill in your details below and send in the entry form to Town Crier at 5 Broadwater Rise, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5UE. Entries in by 12th June 2013.



**Good luck!**

May Winner: Sue Wilson, Rochdale Rd, Tunbridge Wells Kent

Wins a £20 Waterstones book token.

Winner picked at random from correct entries.

Name.....

Telephone.....

Address.....

Address.....

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

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## Musings of a Mediocre Mother

We recently attended a black tie do, a fund-raiser for one of the sports clubs my son plays for. This is not an everyday thing for me, but rather a once-a-year event. (On that note, how unfair is it that my husband 'has' to attend black tie do's and client lunches regularly? For him it's a bit of a bore, well he'll get no sympathy from me; posh nosh, champagne – my heart bleeds!) I was really excited at the prospect of going despite the fact that it was a local do, not a night in London. I've always been easily pleased and a relatively cheap date.

This night out represented the opportunity to take time over getting ready, put on a posh frock, play around with my hair, perhaps even shave my legs! I already had the dress and shoes somewhere in the back of the wardrobe, along with some reinforced underwear, and a wrap to cover the bingo wings, so I was pretty much

good to go apart from the 'body shaper' tights which were duly purchased.

The day of the ball itself turned out to be like any other in that by the time I had fed and watered the kids and tidied the house for the baby-sitter, (naturally I can't let my 16 year old sitter think I live in a house that is anything but perfect), I only had an hour or so to transform myself.

Now, I've always loved make-up, as a child I used to try and colour my face with crayons which only resulted in sore skin and eyes. Nowadays of course I rarely get the time and if I've got a lick of mascara on for the school run, it's a good morning. So, on this particular night I set out to administer the works; lips, eyes, and cheeks. Hair-wise, I used my recently purchased tongs to try and create a tousled look. I wriggled and jiggled my way into the various body controlling garments and as long as I didn't eat, breath or move, the overall shape wasn't bad. In fact I was pretty pleased with the finished look, apart from the fact that the curls were a bit more Shirley Temple than Marilyn Monroe, but never mind, they'd drop.

Half way through the meal I popped to the loo. I looked in the mirror to be met by a reflection that I hadn't left home with. Who was this pantomime dame? Unused to wearing so much make-up, my eyes had watered creating black streaks and smudges reminiscent of the rock band Kiss. My hair, rather than dropping, had taken on a pubic frizz in the damp night air. My body shaping tights had rolled down to beneath my tummy, creating an indent there, with another at my waist from my underwear. I looked like badly tied black pudding. Ah, but what the hell, with quite a bit of wine inside me, I hitched everything back into place and repaired what I could – Gorgeous! Besides, I thought, once the dancing starts, and I'm doing my hands in the air clubbing moves circa 1995, who's going to notice? I just hope my tights will allow me to do a bit of Beyoncé...

Mediocre Mother



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"Oh Dear Grandma. I think you've overdone the botox"

# Travel: Corfu – still the best place for your family and other animals

Twenty five years ago, during my final year at university, I set off with some friends and an InterRail ticket to see Europe. We headed south following the sun and somehow found our way to Corfu where we whiled away an idyllic fortnight on the beach in Benitses, living in a scruffy overcrowded guesthouse and surviving on Gyros kebabs and Mythos beer. It was undoubtedly one of the best holidays of my life, but for some reason I have never been back until now.

My son, Ben, turned 17 last year so we reasoned that it would probably be his last family holiday before he started taking the kind of drink fuelled trips to Magaluf that you see on Sun, Sex and Suspicious Parents. My daughter, Jenny, was 15 so we needed a holiday that had something for everyone and I decided that Corfu would be perfect. There were going to be no scruffy guesthouses with four backpackers squashed into every room this time round; I'll let the kids try that out for themselves in a few years' time. Instead we settled on a hotel called Mitsis Roda Beach Resort. As the name suggests, it is a package holiday destination with many of the guests on an all-inclusive deal, although we opted for half board. My thinking was that the kids would find other teens to do teenage things with while we could slope off to a local taverna each evening. The hotel was very impressive with spacious, nicely furnished rooms (ours had a sea view), no less than 4 restaurants and bars at every turn. The pool was huge as well, practically a saltwater lagoon.

Roda itself is a very relaxing resort with a decent beach which is refreshingly free of both watersports and touts. There are plenty of restaurants and bars but very few nightclubs, a fact I approved of but which didn't go down so well with Ben. We hired a car for a week which enabled us to run Ben and Jenny to the nearby resort of Acharavi which has all the things teenagers love – jet bikes, a water park and vertical drinking establishments! It also gave us the chance to see the rest of the island. Corfu is only 40 miles long but it is surely the most beautiful of all the Greek islands; in my view it is

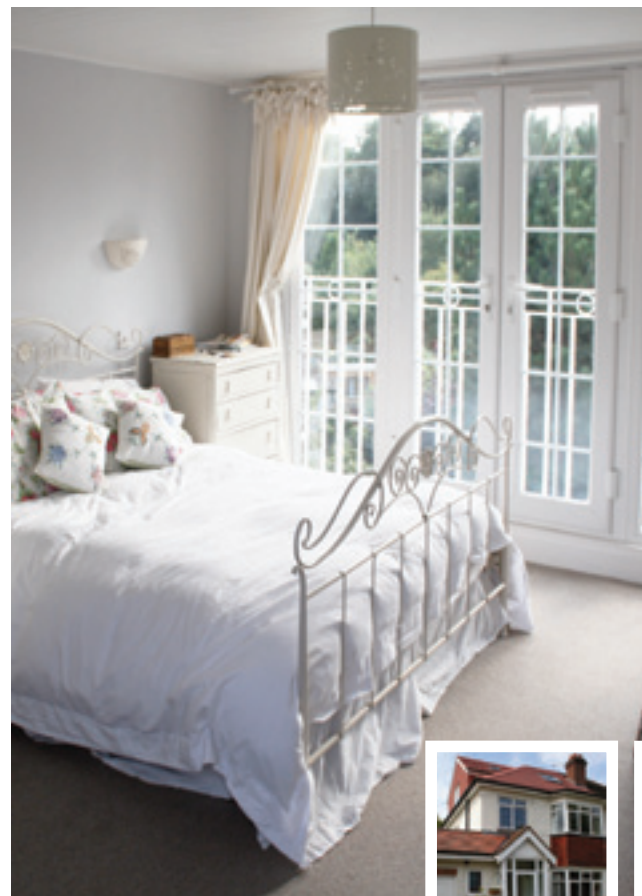


one of the most beautiful places on earth. The mountains in the north provide some stunning scenery and there are some amazing beaches; one day we dived off the road following a sign to a taverna and had a wonderful lunch overlooking the most ravishing bay I have ever seen.

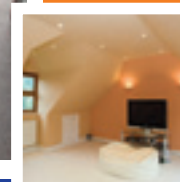
Corfu was part of the Venetian empire for a long time and this is reflected in the architecture with many of the buildings being hundreds of years old. Nowhere is this more true than in Corfu Town which is well worth a visit. The whole town was once a walled fortress and the Old Town is a rambling maze of cobbled streets and alleyways. On an artificial islet lies the Old Citadel, a partially renovated fortress with contributions from both Venetian and British overlords. It is easy to spend a day wandering around Corfu Town and you can also congratulate yourself on getting your fill of holiday culture. We also visited Benitses to see if I could recapture that golden two weeks from my youth. There has been a lot of development over the years and it is no longer the backpacker heaven I remember – everything changes, I suppose.

There is no doubt that Greece and the Greeks are suffering more than their fair share of hardship at the moment but this doesn't seem to have affected Corfu too badly. There are a lot less Germans about and many of the bars are quieter than they would like to be, but the people are resolutely cheerful. A holiday in Corfu is all things to all people; I can't understand why I left it 25 years to come back.

Jane Becker



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## Technology: Is it time to say goodbye to the QWERTY keyboard?

In this age of touch screens, mouse pads and voice control, it is surprising to know that by far the most common way of interfacing with your computer is still the good old QWERTY keyboard. The QWERTY keyboard layout was invented in the 19th century for the earliest typewriters and enables a typist to use all their fingers and thumbs on the keyboard at the same time. The most commonly used letters are arranged to lie closest to the dominant fingers and this allows a trained typist to easily top a typing speed of 100 words a minute. Even an untrained casual user will average 60 words a minute.

The problem is that a QWERTY keyboard is usually a sizable thing, big enough to cover with both hands. The touch screens that are found on smartphones and tablets still offer the QWERTY layout but they are naturally much smaller which means that the typist is normally utilising just the two thumbs or even one index finger. Because of this, the average typing speed on a touchscreen drops by two thirds to just 20 words per minute. A Doctor at St Andrews University feels this has trapped tablet and smartphone users in a "suboptimal text entry interface." To combat the problem he and his team have developed a new keypad layout designed to be used solely with two thumbs, dubbed the KALQ keypad. This consists of a 4x4 grid on the left containing 15 letters and a 4x3 grid on the right containing 11 letters. Extensive research has been carried out so that the most commonly used letters are located in the places that the brain naturally gives precedence to. It is hoped that this arrangement will push average typing speeds back to the kind of level achieved on a full size QWERTY keyboard.

On the face of it this is a good idea but, straight away, I foresee a couple of problems. One of the main things that slows down text entry on a touch screen is the need to keep toggling back and forth between the main keypad and a second one containing the punctuation symbols and numbers. One of the main advantages of the Windows 8 operating system is that the touchscreen keypad exactly resembles the

one found on a typical laptop; you can even display a numeric keypad.

Of course, Windows 8 is only available on tablets, not smartphones. The other issue is that, if you're anything like me, you'll have spent decades of your life working out where everything is on a QWERTY keyboard and the thought of having to learn a new layout from scratch fills you with horror.

In reality, neither of these things represents an insurmountable obstacle. It would be simple to put the most common punctuation symbols, full stop, comma, apostrophe and question mark at the bottom of the right hand grid and maybe a row of numbers across the top. Then you could have a second screen for everything else. Also, one of the great beauties of a touchscreen is that, unlike a conventional keyboard, it can display whatever keys you like. It would be extremely simple to set up the operating system so that users can select which type of keypad they want to use.

This is the great thing about technology, particularly IT. There's always someone beaver away in the background trying to make something better, faster, stronger – someone trying to build a better mousetrap. I remember years ago watching my teenage niece sending a text message on her old fashioned mobile phone; using one thumb and twelve keys she managed to type a message more quickly than I could have done with both hands on a proper keyboard. In years to come we'll probably see kids able to display blinding fast typing on both a QWERTY and a KALQ keypad, whichever takes their fancy. And Dr Per Ola Kristensson, the man who developed the KALQ keypad layout, will probably be hailed as a pioneer of computing.

Graham Iek | IT Consultant



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# What's on in June 2013

Date	What's on
Every Monday	The Vine Cafe now open at The Oasis (formally The Christchurch Centre) every - coffee, cake and a chat. Everyone welcome. <b>10 – 12pm</b>
Tues and Frid	White waterfall spectacular at Sheffield Park Gardens <b>Contact directly</b>
Various	Golden Arrow Pullman Dining Train on The Bluebell Railway <b>Contact for details</b>
Every Thurs	Relaxed social/business networking - Tweetup @ The Wheatsheaf <b>8pm onwards</b>
Every Sat and Tues	Heathfield Market – a regular weekly market on Tuesdays and Saturdays throughout the month <b>6 am – 1pm</b>
Every Thurs	Crowborough Arts Workshops – Millbrook Garden Centre. Tickets at £20 include lunch – book at the Greencafé. <b>10 – 3pm</b>
Fri 31st to 2nd June	Exhibition & sale of original paintings, prints & by Crowborough-based artists, Sandie Donaldson & Wendy Edge at Millbrook Garden Centre, Jarvis Brook sponsored by Crowborough Arts. <b>10am – 4pm each day</b>
Wed 29th – 1st June	Tunbridge Wells Cricket Festival at The Nevill Ground – Kent v Lecestershire <b>11am start</b>
Sat 1st	Crowborough Summer Fun Day in the High Street – join in the summer fun day, music and entertainment for everybody. French Market, local charities to support. Free entry. <b>9 – 5pm</b>
Sat 1st	Nearly New Sale - St Mary's Nursery, Crowborough. <b>10 – 11.30</b>
Sun 2nd	Tunbridge Wells Cricket Festival at The Nevill Ground – Kent v Northants <b>1.45pm</b>
Every Thurs	Jazz on the Pantiles - Al fresco music on the Pantiles...please donate <b>7.30pm</b>
Frid 14th – 16th	Special Rose Weekend at Pashley Manor Gardens <b>11 – 3pm</b>
Sat 15th	Keep It Local Craft Fair – Handmade Crafts from Kent, Sussex & Surrey - Community Centre, Free, all welcome. <b>10 – 3.30pm</b>
Sun 16th	Annual Sussex Day Celebrations - Chapel Green, Crowborough.
Frid 21st	Paloma Faith at Bedgebury <b>Gates open 6pm</b>
Sat 22nd	Crowborough Farmers Market – New Road Car Park <b>9 – 1pm</b>
Sat 22nd	Matchbox Opera takes Tosca on Tour – St Richard's Heathfield in aid of National Talking Newspapers. 01892 522672 matchboxopera@gmail.com <b>7.30 for 8pm start</b>
Sat 22nd – 23rd	The Tunbridge Wells Town & Country Show – Dunorlan Park. All day entertainment including birds of prey, working dogs, food marquees <b>10 – 5pm</b>
Tues 25th	"The effect of Climate Change on Gardening" by Dr Mick Lynn - Crowborough Horticultural Society - Community Centre. Visitors welcome. <a href="http://www.crowboroughhorticulturalsociety.org.uk/">http://www.crowboroughhorticulturalsociety.org.uk/</a> <b>7.30pm</b>
Frid 28th	Matchbox Opera takes Tosca on Tour – Burrswood, Groombridge in aid of Burrswood. Box Office 01892 522672 matchboxopera@gmail.com <b>7.30 for 8pm start</b>
Thurs 27th	Wealden Neighbourhood Policing team Police Surgery at the Town Council Offices. Opportunity to talk (last about issues that matter to you and receive crime prevention advice from the team. <b>10 – 11am</b>
Thurs every month)	
Tues 11th June -	Leading hospital The Horder Centre invites you to meet their physiotherapists for free advice on 'Keeping your joints healthy'. The event opens at 6.30pm with healthy living market stalls, with informative presentations starting at 7.30pm. Book your free place by calling Will Thomas on 01892 601472 or email will.thomas@horder.co.uk. The Horder Centre, St Johns Road, Crowborough TN6 1XP
Saturday 15th June	10-11:30am St Mary's School, Crowborough
<b>Parent and toddler groups in Crowborough – term time only</b>	
Monday & Friday	'Little Fishes' Parent and Toddler group - United Church - 0 – 3 yrs <b>9.30– 11.30am, £1.50</b>
Tuesday	Little Stars, St Richard's Church, Fermor Road – run for carers, child minders and grandparents. Tel Sarah Bell 01892 661235 <b>10 – 12pm £1 per family</b>
Thursday	Hide 'n' Seek, St Richard's Church, Fermor Road – for everyone. Contact Pam Calvert 01892 668163 <b>10 – 12pm £1 per family</b>
Thursday	First Steps, Forest Fold Baptist Church, London Road – for pre school and their parents/carers. <b>£1 per family 1.15 – 3.15pm</b>
Thursday	Hickory Dickory, St Michael's Church, Jarvis Brook – for pre-school children and their parents/carers. Tel 01892 661565 <b>10 – 12pm £1 per family</b>

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#### Summer Evening Wine & Dine – Saturday 8th June 2013

Enjoy canapés and a 3 course dinner with coffee whilst travelling through the Wealden countryside from Eridge on hopefully a gloriously balmy summers evening.

The menu includes vegetarian options, but if you have any further dietary requirements please advise us at time of booking.

Tickets for non-dining trains are available on the day at all our stations in the old-fashioned way!

#### Meet Timmy from Timmy Time - Sunday 9th June 2013



For the first time, "Timmy" the mischievous lamb from TV's Timmy Time will be visiting the Spa Valley Railway to meet his fans.

Timmy will meet all the trains arriving from Tunbridge Wells. Normal fares apply and the timetable for the day will be published shortly.

**PLEASE NOTE: Due to Network Rail engineering work, ERIDGE STATION IS CLOSED on this day, and no Spa Valley Trains will serve Eridge. Trains run from Tunbridge Wells, High Rocks and Groombridge stations.**

#### 15th June, A Steamy Affair -The Spa Valley's Cocktail Train!

The Spa Valley Railway is proud to announce its first Cocktail Evening

Starting at 6pm for a 6.45pm departure from Tunbridge

Wells West, the night includes two round trips to Groombridge, a bar and some fine local musicians. A range of cocktails, beautiful Wealden scenery, and music from local artists Sean De Burca and Kay Hazelden. What more could you ask for?

#### 22nd & 23rd June Steaming through the 40's



One of the major events in our calendar! Experience the 1940s on the Railway, Army vehicles and personnel, '40s cooking, dancing and a variety of linked attractions.

#### 30th June, The High Weald Belle Dining Train



Board your train at 12:20 for departure from Eridge at 12:30. Your three-course roast chicken dinner will be served as the train makes a return trip through the beautiful Wealden countryside to Tunbridge Wells.

#### A date for July

13th July- Gilbert & Sullivan Day  
Following the outstanding success of last year's event, we are delighted to announce the 2nd Annual Gilbert and Sullivan Day!



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# Theatre Guides and Cinema Listings

**Assembly Hall Theatre Crescent Road**  
**Ticket office - 01892 530613/01892 532072**

Bes Fri 7th **Counterfeit Stones**

Thu 13th **Shaolin Warriors**

Sat 15th **That'll Be The Day**

Sun 16th **RTW Choral Society**

Tue 18 – Thu 20th **Dora the Explorer**

Fri 21st **Dirty/DC, plus Masam**

Wed 26th **We'll Meet Again**

Fri 28th **Buddy and the Killer**

Sat 29th **Upbeat Beatles**

**Trinity Theatre - Church Road. Ticket office – 01892 678678**

Guide to Trinity Theatre listings

Sat 1st **Oz: The Great And Powerful 2 / 7pm**

Sun 2nd **The Place Beyond The Pines 4/7.30pm**

Tue 4th **Ariadne Auf Naxos 7pm**

Wed 5th **Shell 8pm**

Thu 6th **Caesar Must Die 11am/2pm/8pm**

Fri 7th **Teechers 8pm**

Sat 8th **Breakfast At Trinity's 10.30am**

Sat 8th **Comedy Café 8pm**

Sun 9th **Aesop's Fables 2.30pm**

Sun 9th **The Look Of Love 5pm/ 8pm**

Tue 11th **Love Is All You Need 11/ 2pm | 8pm**

Wed 12th **BAFTA Shorts 2013 8pm**

Thu 13th **Kindly Leave The Stage 8pm**

Fri 14th **NT Live: The Audience 7pm**

Sat 15th **Jo Christie Showcase 7pm**

Sun 16th **Jo Christie Showcase 2.30pm**

Sun 16th **Me And You 8pm**

Tue 18th **Promised Land 11am/2pm/8pm**

Wed 19th **Good Vibrations 8pm**

Thu 20th **Falstaff 7pm**

Fri 21st **The Hound Of The Baskervilles 7.30pm**

Sat 22nd **Breakfast At Trinity's 10.30am**

Sat 22nd **Local & Live Sessions 8pm**

Sun 23rd **Kent Chorus 4pm**

Tue 25th **In The House 11/ 2pm | 8pm**

Wed 26th **The Servant 8pm**

Thu 27th **Cinderella 7.30pm**

Fri 28th **The Last Of The Red Hot Lovers 8pm**

Sat 29th **Twelfth Night 7.30pm**

Sun 30th **The Tales Of Peter Rabbit And Benjamin Bunny 2.30pm**

Sun 30th **I'm So Excited 5pm/8pm**

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**Knights Way, Knights Park, Tunbridge Wells TN2 3VW - 0871 224 4007**

**Uckfield Picture House, High St, Uckfield, TN22 1AS Tel: 01825 764909**

Due date	Film title	Category	Rating
Friday 7th June 12A	After Earth	Action, Adventure, Science Fiction	
	The Last Exorcism	Horror	15
	The Iceman	Thriller, Drama	15
	The Company you keep	Thriller	15
Friday 14th June	Stuck in Love	Drama	15
Friday 22nd June	Despicable Me 2	Family, Animated	PG
Friday 28th June	This is the End	Comedy	15

# YOUR PHOTOS

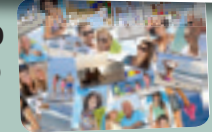


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# Horses Mouth – Lady Ophelia d’Knight answers your questions



At Town Crier, we occasionally get letters from readers seeking advice on all manner of personal situations. They could be questions of etiquette, social faux-pas or family matters. We are always happy to help and so we have enlisted the help of a local stalwart who in her own words has seen it all and

calls a spade a gardener. Lady Ophelia d’Knight, (Offa to her friends, but we’re allowed to call her lady d’Knight), will be happy to answer any of your queries in future issues.

*Dear Lady d’Knight*

My daughter is completely besotted by the boy band One Direction, and in particular Harry Styles. There’s not an inch of her bedroom walls left uncovered by pictures of him and she spends hours on the internet looking for snippets of news and pictures. I spent a fortune on tickets to see them at the O2 hoping that it might make things better but I can hardly get her to talk to me let alone do her homework. Do you have any advice for me?

**WM**

*Dear WM*

I remember it was the same in my day. My friends and I were all in love with Liberace; the showmanship, his musical talent, the costumes and his beautiful bouffant hair. I thought I would die if I never met him. Of course I didn’t, I just grew out of it. We now know of course that even if I had, he would not have been interested in me but rather my male friends. I still find it hard to believe that he was gay. We just thought he took a lot of pride and interest in his appearance, much like the pop stars of today who are buffed, waxed and coiffed to within an inch of their lives, but nobody questions it.

Every generation has their pop stars who break hearts. Just be pleased that she’s not mooning about over a ‘real’ boy, one that she could get her hands on and vice versa. This is an innocent

love and one that you can rest assured will remain unrequited, it will eventually fade to be replaced, I’m sure, by another.

As for you, however, I think you should think about how much time she’s allowed to spend on the internet. Remember, you’re in charge.

**Lady d’Knight**

*Dear Lady d’Knight*

My husband and I have been married for 5 years and I am now 35, the age at which according to both sets of parents, my biological clock should be counting down to having a baby. Neither my husband nor I particularly want kids and have tried to say as much but our words have fallen on deaf ears. How can we make our relatives understand our decision?

**CF**

*Dear CF*

I think you are both wise and unselfish. It is a brave couple who say they like their lives as they are and perhaps in doing so, acknowledge that they wouldn’t be the best parents. Although a mother myself who has had countless moments of joy watching my children playing with the nanny, I can see the reasons for not having them which perhaps you should point out to your relatives:-

- 1) They’re expensive
- 2) They’re killing the planet, overpopulation drains the natural resources
- 3) They’re time consuming, finding the right nanny can take days
- 4) They can be a strain on a relationship, I don’t need any help in that department
- 5) And actually you don’t want them

Your parents will have to come around to the idea; you are not there just to provide grandchildren after all.

**Lady Offa d’Knight**

# SUMMER: TIME TO BARE YOUR SOLES

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