

## CULTURE

### Ode to the Bard

Actor Louise Jameson brings her show Shakespeare's Mistress to the Amelia

## BUSINESS

### Healing powers

Discover all about the fascinating history of Camden Road's homeopathic hub Helios

## FOOD & DRINK

### Taste maker

We sample the delicious new seasonal food and drink menu at The Warren



## GREATER CLARITY

ANDREW MANN OF CLARITY CONSTRUCTION TELLS US ALL ABOUT HIS COMPANY'S NEW DESIGN & BUILD SERVICE



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# Editor's Letter



**W**elcome to your April edition of SO magazine. Tunbridge Wells is known for its brilliant businesses and this month we meet one local entrepreneur who is going from strength to strength.

Andrew Mann of Clarity Homes and Commercial started his professional career as a carpenter apprentice but fast forward a few years and he's now running a successful construction and home design company that's just about to launch a new service. Turn to page 10 to discover all about Clarity Design which will offer clients a one-stop comprehensive service covering all aspect of home improvements and developments, from conception to completion.

Elsewhere in this issue we meet the legendary Louise Jameson (p24) who is perhaps best known for her role as Leela in Dr Who. The former Tunbridge Wells resident told us that she only played Tom Baker's sidekick for 10 months in 1976, it's by far the part she is most famous for. Extraordinary when you think she has played so many other key

characters in top TV shows such as Bergerac, Tenko and EastEnders - and also trodden the boards for the RSC over the decades. And it's this enduring love for the Bard that has seen her create Shakespeare's Mistress - a one woman show happening at the Amelia on April 23, which would have also been the famous playwright's birthday. Talking of celebrities taking to the stage, we meet The Chase's Paul Sinha on page 22 ahead of his one-off show at Benenden School's new events space Hemsted Park on April 29.

As usual we have all your favourite local contributors in this issue too, as well as a great food and drink section which includes a review of The Warren, an exceptional restaurant which sources the majority of its produce from its very own estate in Crowborough (p32).

This month we also have a fabulous outdoor living special which reveals the new show gardens launching at Corker towards the end of this month. Turn to page 57 to discover which talented designers have been commissioned and when you can visit - just in time for the warmer weather.

Hope you enjoy it.

Eileen Leahy  
Editor SO magazine

**SO**  
TUNBRIDGE WELLS

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## GET IN TOUCH

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# Culture Hub

**Martha Willetts** brings you the month's most entertaining events happening this April

## STEP BACK IN TIME Penshurst Place

APRIL 5-30

Penshurst Place is launching a charming new visitor attraction this month. Its Victorian Kitchen will finally be open to the general public from April 5 after being lovingly brought back to life. Rich in history, there is much to be learned from a tour around this historic culinary space which was

concealed for decades. Visitors can discover the specific roles held by the household staff on this beautiful country estate and find out about the importance of food and hospitality at Penshurst Place through the centuries. What's more, the period kitchen boasts over 125 copper pieces of Victorian cooking equipment which was recently discovered in the estate's attic. For more information see:

[www.penshurstplace.com](http://www.penshurstplace.com)



Photos © David Sellman



## ENJOY A CRACKING TIME National Trust locations EASTER HOLIDAYS

National Trust properties including Scotney Castle, Sissinghurst, Knole Park and Bodium Castle will all be holding fun events for all the family over the Easter period. Whether you're after a traditional chocolate egg hunt, a seasonal trail to see all the spring flowers in bloom or a pop-up market selling local goodies, you're bound to find something to enjoy at one of these historic places. See: [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk) for more details.

## POETRY IN MOTION The Forum APRIL 5

Held on the first Wednesday of every month, The Forum hosts Word Up - a night of spoken word, poetry and acoustic music organised by Hannah Gee and Dan Culmer. Visitors are welcome to bring their own stories to life and immerse themselves in this night of self-expression and creativity. Tickets are available on the door for £3 and the event is open to those aged 16 and over. For more information see: [www.twforum.co.uk](http://www.twforum.co.uk)

## DID YOU KNOW?

The earliest ballet adaptation of Cinderella was in Vienna in 1813, by Louis Duport, a French dancer, choreographer, and ballet master.

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# EASTER at SALOMONS

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## SEEING RED Spa Valley Railway APRIL 7-10

Brought to you by Radtastic theatre, Little Red Riding Hood's Easter Train Ride is a seasonal twist on the classic children's tale. The performance starts at Tunbridge Wells Station, before it's literally full steam ahead as participants board a heritage train, ready to venture on an exciting Easter egg hunt. The performance unfolds at Tunbridge Wells West station at 9.45am 12.30pm and 3.10pm, returning 75 minutes later.



Prices start from £7.50. To book in advance visit: [www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk](http://www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk)



**HISTORY LESSONS****Penshurst Place****APRIL 7**

Penshurst Place hosts theatrical troupe Historic Legacies on Good Friday as they bring their interactive show *Tudor Dynasty: The Rise and Fall*, to the estate. It follows the turbulent tales of key royal figures of the time including King Henry VIII, Bloody Mary and Queen Elizabeth I. Open your mind to the history of this famous family as their stories are retold by a group of talented actors. Story performances are at 12 noon and 2pm and are included within the cost of a house and gardens ticket, priced from £7.80. See: [www.penshurstplace.com](http://www.penshurstplace.com) for more details.

**RAGS TO RICHES****Trinity Theatre****April 12**

Trinity Theatre presents a live screening of the Royal Ballet's *Cinderella*, performed on the Royal Opera House's main stage in London's Covent Garden. In this new production of a beloved classic, you are invited to immerse yourself in the enchanting realm of fairy godmothers, missing slippers, pumpkin carriages and of course, true love! Tickets are available from £17. For more information and to book tickets see: [www.trinitytheatre.net](http://www.trinitytheatre.net)

**BLONDE BOMBSHELL**  
**EM Forster Theatre****April 13-15**

Doing it the Elle Woods way, Talentz Musical Theatre Company brings cult classic *Legally Blonde* to the EM Forster stage. The show's legendary musical theatre numbers include 'Whipped into Shape', 'Bend and Snap' and 'So Much Better' with each one sonically connecting the narrative of the fictional Elle Woods as she goes from an LA sorority girl to a successful Harvard Lawyer... As Elle says: 'what, like it's hard?' Tickets from £15. For more information see: [emftheatre.ticketsolve.com](http://emftheatre.ticketsolve.com)

**JUST FOR LAUGHS**  
**EM Forster Theatre****April 21**

Every month the EM Forster Theatre welcomes to its stage a host of top comedians as part of its comedy night and this month Ross Smith, Njambi McGrath and running and music enthusiast Rob Deering are performing. These comedy nights are always very popular so be sure to book quickly before tickets sell out. Priced at £14. For more see: [emftheatre.ticketsolve.com](http://emftheatre.ticketsolve.com)

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Six the musical first premiered at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2017, where it was performed by students from Cambridge University. It then made it to the West End in January 2019 and has toured to the States and Australia and won numerous industry awards.

**GUESS WHODUNNIT****Assembly Hall Theatre****April 19-20**

Coming to the Assembly Hall Theatre is the thrilling final novel of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes series. *The Valley Of Fear* brings to life a tale punctuated by adventure, mystery, intrigue and murder. Sherlock Holmes, alongside his trusty companion Dr Watson, follow the trail of murder and peril journeying from 221B Baker Street to an ancient moated manor house and on to the bleak Pennsylvanian Vermissa Valley. Tickets available from £16. See: [www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk](http://www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk)

**ARTISTIC ENDEAVOURS****Curious House****April 19-25**

During the latter part of April the Curious House collective is hosting a number of creative workshops. The first is on April 19 at Birchwood Studio, Flimwell Park in Ticehurst with professional photographer, Katy Donaldson, who will share tips on how to achieve incredible photography using your phone. The following day, at the same location, a four-week life drawing course begins with artist Evangeline Armstrong. On Sunday April 23, you can learn how to safely and sustainably forage for wild ingredients with Isobel Spence. Finally, on Tuesday April 25, at The Bell Inn in Ticehurst, you have the chance to lose yourself with calligrapher Lucy Berridge in the wonderfully free but stylish handwriting that will delight every time you put pen to paper. For prices see: [www.curioushouse.net](http://www.curioushouse.net)

**BRING ON SPRING**  
**Hever Castle and Gardens****April 17-23**

Take a stroll around Hever Castle and Gardens and take in its famous flowerbeds which are currently adorned with over 40,000 tulips. Standing to attention and blushed with beautiful colour, these tulips are sure to help bring a smile to your face. Visitors will also have the opportunity to discover a variety of facts about tulips as they wander through the grounds. There is also a free guided tour of the tulips for you to enjoy with one of Hever's knowledgeable gardeners. Tickets are available from £10.75. See: [www.hevercastle.co.uk](http://www.hevercastle.co.uk) for more information.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Each colour tulip carries its own significance. For instance, red tulips indicate love and romance. White tulips are the way to go if you seek to convey apology. Yellow tulips connote cheer and happiness, while purple tulips are associated with royalty.





# Grapes and grooves

**Squerryes winery** is launching its Friday music nights this month. **Paul Dunton** discovers what's on the musical menu for this exciting new venture



Over the past two years the local music scene has gradually found its feet again following an incredibly difficult post lock down period. Whilst it is sadly true that many venues have stopped putting on live music following a very difficult post lock down period, there is definitely a brighter horizon ahead and live music appears to be once again resurging across the west Kent area.

Squerryes Winery at Westerham, near Sevenoaks is set to become the latest addition to the local music scene thanks to the fact that starting this month it will be offering a varied programme of Jazz and Blues music on Friday evenings while diners feast in their stunning restaurant.

Kicking off from April 7, patrons will be able to enjoy a unique dining experience with superb à la carte offerings, fine wines and cocktails alongside the ambience of exceptional live music. The performances will initially be held in the restaurant but as the weather warms up the idea is for the weekly live music performances to be held on the beautiful terrace which overlooks the stunning vineyards and local countryside.

I recently sat down with Squerryes' owner Henry Warde, which has been in his family for nearly 300 years, and the estate's restaurant manager Sam Spennacchi and sommelier Vicki Potter to discuss the launch of the winery's new music offering and what people can expect from a visit to the vineyard's restaurant...

April 7 marks the launch of the weekly live music programme at Squerryes, please can you tell us more about this exciting new venture...

**Henry:** I have always had a deep passion and interest in jazz music. I used to play the piano but these



days running the business keeps me away from tinkling the ivories. The restaurant's ambience offers the perfect setting for our new dinner and jazz experience and we are very excited to be staging the forthcoming music nights and also to be working with local musicians.

**Vicki:** Live music is definitely something we are all really passionate about and we feel can elevate the whole experience for customers at Squerryes.

**Sam:** To accompany our à la carte menu, we will be offering a varied



range of specialty dishes. To start we will be presenting our fabulous oysters and Tomahawk steaks which will be exclusive to the music nights. We want our customers to be entertained both with our food and drink as well as the live music. After a hard week at work, Friday nights at Squerryes can be a fantastic way to unwind and relax.

Is there potential for the live music to be held outside?

**Henry:** Yes absolutely, we have a beautiful terrace which would be an idyllic setting for the live music during the summer evenings. The terrace



“Live music is something we're really passionate about and it'll elevate the whole experience for customers at Squerryes”

## WHAT'S ON THE MUSICAL MENU THIS MONTH:

April 7th - Gianna Duo

April 14th - Jennifer Maslin & John Harriman

April 21st - Paul Malsom

April 28th - Harry Whitty music!

CONTACT INFO  
www.Squerryes.co.uk/  
restaurant

Instagram  
@squerryeswinery  
restaurant

Facebook @squerryes

Tel: 01959562345

offers stunning views overlooking the vines, I believe our customers will really enjoy it.

**CAN YOU SHARE WITH US ANY OF YOUR FAVOURITE SONGS OR ARTISTS? IS THERE A PARTICULAR SONG YOU LOOK FORWARD TO BEING PERFORMED AT SQUERRYES?**

**Henry:** Miles Davis and Chet Baker are two of my favourite musicians. I love listening to Miles Davis's album Kinda Blue it's a fantastic record.


**Vicki:** it's definitely Frank Sinatra's Fly me to the Moon and Billy Paul's Me & Mrs Jones for me.

**Sam:** I have a broad taste in music and am really excited about the prospect of all the different local acts we will have performing every week. They'll offer a varied repertoire of famous and popular songs from all the different eras. Our customers will be able to enjoy listening to all time classic songs with plenty of variety.



**Paul Dunton**  
Music Editor  
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# House proud

**Andrew Mann of Clarity Homes and Commercial** tells **Eileen Leahy** about how his new venture, **Clarity Design** will further enhance his successful bespoke development and project management business...

**A**s anyone who has ever undertaken a development project will know, the path from conception to completion rarely runs smoothly.

From unexpected price hikes on materials, such as timber and tiles, to having to rethink through design plans when they don't meet building regulation requirements; these types of proverbial bumps in the road are fairly typical when it comes to building a new home.

However, one local business entrepreneur, Andrew Mann of Clarity Homes and Commercial, which specialises in providing first class project management for property developers, architects and commercial property managers across the South East, is hoping to change all of that.

The former carpenter started out as an apprentice in 2008 aged 16. He spent the next few years working extremely hard to build his business empire, before rebranding it as Clarity Homes and Commercial in 2021. Having recently launched Clarity Design, Andrew says the idea behind the new venture is simple.

"I like to think of Clarity

Design as being one point of contact for clients," he tells me when we meet at the stunning Coursehorn Barn development in Cranbrook that Andrew's recently overseen.

The original Dutch barn, overlooking a beautiful wild meadow has been transformed into three luxury four-bedroom homes, designed by Kent Design Studio Architects and Grey Feather Development.

"As a construction firm we already have trusted contractors, architects, engineers and interior designers we work with on many types of different projects, both commercially and privately."

And from growing Clarity Homes and Commercial, Andrew says he has made lots of contacts across the board which have helped him to see the bigger picture of property development.

"By doing a lot of projects for clients and making various contacts, we've seen the finer details of everything, whatever the size of the project happens to be. I guess it all comes down to the fact that there's a lot of people involved in a construction project but there's also a lack of responsibility too."



*"I like to think of Clarity Design as being one point of contact for clients, from concept to completion"*

Andrew explains that the industry is very fragmented.

"When an architect has done their job they are out of the picture. When a carpenter has finished, they too can walk away. But what happens when there are issues? Who takes responsibility then?" asks the former *Times* 'Entrepreneur of the Year'.

That fundamental question is what led Andrew to creating the Clarity Design concept and

bringing it to his business.

"We can provide everything from concept to completion. We can work on all the design elements with a client, whether they're commercial or private, and suggest the right architect, sub-contractors and interior designers. We will provide a transparent, realistic budget that delivers on time. Meaning that if there are any issues at any stage of the project, then Clarity Design is



the main point of contact.

“What happens most of the time is that a client – whether that’s an individual looking to extend a property or a developer – will get quotes from different architects, quantity surveyors and builders and then discover that what they want to do is much more expensive than their budget.

“With Clarity Design there won’t be any of that. We know exactly the type of architect or engineer to approach for a particular project and budget,” Andrew says.

“For example, if it’s a small extension we can get someone in at a better price so it’s not as expensive for the client. You also won’t have the costly process of having to get the plans redesigned should a particular issue arise, such as whether we knock down a chimney or not, as we will know what the answer should be due to our extensive experience and we will manage this ourselves. I guess the key message is by being one point of contact we can save you thousands of pounds and tonnes of time too.”

Andrew uses the Coursehorn Barn development as an example: “There were certain issues with



## CLARITY DESIGN SERVICES DEFINING AND DESIGNING YOUR PROPERTY PROJECT

As experienced construction professionals, Clarity have learned that the best projects consist of seamless collaboration with all the necessary experts, from first concepts through to final snagging. The Clarity Design service connects clients with the best property design professionals in the business – they manage the entire project to ensure it runs smoothly, reducing stress and costly delays for clients. Clarity Design prides itself on providing a comprehensive

service, with expert advice and management at every stage.

Clarity Design can advise on, engage, and manage the following specialists, depending on your specific needs:

- Architectural design
- Planning
- Quantity Surveyors
- Surveyors
- Cost consultancy



the ambitious redevelopment of the original Dutch barn. The challenge was to work with the existing steel frame of this historic barn and work out a strategy that wouldn’t eradicate its original features.

We were able to look at it and come up with a solution that saved thousands of pounds and weeks of time for the project. Normally people have to pay for that expert guidance, but we provide it as part of our bespoke service.”

Andrew is also keen to point out that it is not just Clarity’s network of skilled individuals and tailor-

made approach to doing business that puts them one step ahead. It’s the company’s clever foresight too.

“The cost of construction is going through the roof right now but we have managed to hold our prices as we bulk bought lots of materials before pricing and supply issues hit the industry. That means there is little risk with us. We ordered timber months earlier than we needed it in order to get best price as we knew it would go up by tens of thousands of pounds. It might have cost us a little bit more by doing it this way but ultimately it’s nothing like the prices we’d have to cover if we

hadn’t had the vision in the first place.

“So that’s why our prices will stay the same – there won’t be any nasty surprises with us. None of that should happen anyway if a job is planned and designed well. We are fully aware of how much things should cost and we intrinsically understand the methodology of construction. That means we can hold a client’s hand and expertly guide them through the whole process.”

“We have built a great relationship with independent and Local Authority Building control, as we have worked with them on several of our projects. Building control are there to essentially check that a construction company is abiding by the rules

of construction and in essence acts as an insurance policy – providing peace of mind for the client. At Clarity design this is something that we would deal with for the client and are more than happy to provide more information to those who would be interested in learning more!

“We use modern contracts that provide and keep both parties safe and

secure during the project. Some firms scribble quotes on a piece of paper but with Clarity you will get a detailed breakdown of what’s

“Clarity Design prides itself on providing a comprehensive service, with expert advice and management at every stage”





being done and when.”

Andrew explains this is where Clarity’s uniqueness is its strength.

“We have embraced technology and implemented the use of an app, so that clients can see in just a few simple taps how their build is progressing. As we now manage everything on our projects – both residential and commercial – we are committed to ensuring customers are up to speed with every stage. With the app we can also put schedules on and send images and clients can comment too.

“The idea for doing this came from me typing up weekly updates on a Friday night, going through costings so there was no confusion over prices but it was so labour intensive! I’ve always wanted to be clear with clients about everything and I thought there must be a software solution out there that could help.

“Most construction firms aren’t looking at how tech can help them, but we are. We had the foresight to invest in this particular app so we can bring our clients as much clarity to their project as possible.”

Andrew says that this brings Clarity Design’s ethos full circle.



“It’s about being one point of contact and making sure a development or build is cost effective and managed properly all the way throughout the construction to final completion.

And whatever the size of the project is, we can offer a fully comprehensive service, both to individuals and commercial companies. Our aim is save you time as well as money.

“Not many people want to hear the realistic costs of a build, so often they’ll go with someone

cheaper, but what they actually need to do is look at the fine detail we provide in our quotes and take a look at our previous projects as these are our calling cards.

“In addition to Coursehorn Barn, these include numerous private homes in the Tunbridge Wells area, work for commercial landlords and renovation projects in London, Sussex and Surrey.”

And if a potential client would like advice ahead of buying a piece of land to develop on then Andrew says Clarity Design

can help with that too.

“We can actually give them live costs not just ball park figures, and predict how much a job would cost up to six months in the future too. As we work both in the private as well as the commercial sector we’ve noticed that most business

Clarity aim to make construction and commercial renovation projects organised, easy and as pain-free as possible for clients, utilising state-of-the-art technology and effective communication to keep projects on track

• **Reducing your stress:** Clarity does whatever they can to reduce client stress. The firm provides both a dedicated team on site and an easily contactable and friendly team in the office.

## BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Whether you’re an architect, property developer or commercial property manager, Clarity Design’s aim is to make your life easier by providing the following:

### • **Accurate budgets:**

They provide itemised costings for every project so you can have confidence that Clarity’s quote is what you will pay, subject to the project proceeding as per the submitted drawings and subject to no unforeseen complications arising.

### • **Effective project management:**

landlords only want to deal with one person, but your average homeowner won’t necessarily know that this is possible. So we are telling people that in fact it is something they can benefit from if they commission Clarity Design.”

On average Clarity Homes and



PHOTOS BY DAVID BARTHOLOMEW



Commercial, which has its HQ in Crowborough, manages around 70 people on a regular basis across their projects, and always ensure that they have staff that they trust on site.

Andrew reveals the type of jobs the company takes on start with a budget of around £250,000 and range up to £2.5 million. But whatever the price bracket or style of the job, one common thread will be that the design and management of the project remains the same – that is what Clarity Design offers by being totally unique.

Andrew also tells me that the company, which sponsored this year's *Times* Green Business of the Year award is dedicated to offering as many eco-friendly and sustainable build options as possible.

Speaking to the *Times* earlier this year he said: "After winning the Entrepreneur of the Year award last year I was keen to sponsor a category that celebrates progressive and proactive businesses.

"The environment is something we should all be concerned about and it is something we try to address on every project as a responsible

construction company."

Andrew says Clarity has been asked to consult on a number of 'passive' and retrofit houses – another attribute that makes them original.

"There are other design and build companies out there but not many cover every single aspect of a development project or have the same commitment to green issues," states Andrew.

"Although we have only just started offering this all inclusive design and build service, we are confident that Clarity Design will be the best in the industry."

**“We know exactly the type of architect or engineer to approach for a particular project and budget”**



**“It is not just Clarity's network of skilled individuals that puts them one step ahead. It's also the company's clever foresight too”**



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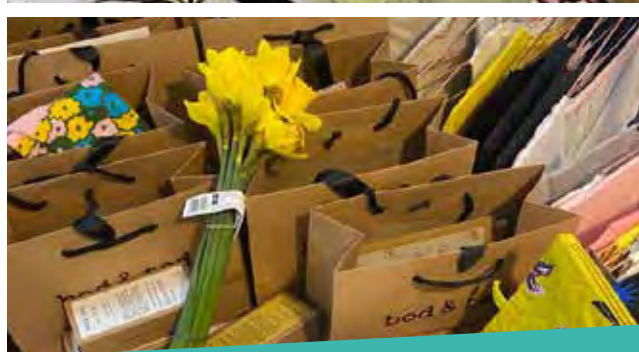


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# Passion for fashion



**R**egular clients at bod & ted fashion boutique on the High Street were treated to an exclusive sneak peek of the successful independent retailer's new collection for Spring/Summer '23.

"I think it was our busiest ever launch where we celebrated old favourites as well as the launch of 10 new brands," the shop's owner Sophie Bland told us. Labels stocked there at the Drapers award-winning style emporium include Kiri Studio, Pink City Prints, Lollis laundry, Bellerose and Rhodes.

While guests browsed the rails they enjoyed tasty gin basil smash cocktails and a variety of delicious canapés. And the first 20 through the doors last month also received a goody bag worth £60. There were also special discounts and offers on the night.

"It was so lovely to see so many of our regular customers," added Sophie.





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# Support network



ALL PHOTOS BY MORITZ SCHMITT

Last month, Wells Family Mediation brought together over 60 local professionals for a special networking event. 'Support for Separated Parents' saw lawyers, mediators, school teachers, GPs, charities, counsellors, and child therapists gather together at the Royal Wells Hotel to explore what support there is for children of separating parents and how families can access that assistance.

The event also marked the launch of Wells Family Mediation's online Separated Parenting Course hosted by UK parenting expert, Denise Ingamells. The course is available to all parents in Kent and provides bespoke personal support in how to manage communications and arrangements for children following separation.

Helen Adam, partner at Wells Family Mediation and Chair of the Family Solutions Group, told SO Magazine: "Family separation is not just a legal issue. A holistic approach is needed. As professionals, we need to work together to help families to resolve their issues and handle their separation in a way that leaves them able to cooperate as parents for years into the future, for the lasting benefit of their children."

[www.wellsfamilymediation.co.uk](http://www.wellsfamilymediation.co.uk)  
01892 506906



# “Family mediation – the future for separating families”



When families separate, there are a range of needs to be addressed. There are legal and finance issues to resolve, there may be a divorce to obtain and, for those with children, there are important adjustments to be made in children's living arrangements and in the parenting relationship.

Our current adversarial legal system can be stressful, lengthy and expensive for the separating family at a vulnerable time in their lives. Mounting costs and escalating conflict can make the challenging process of divorce even more stressful for the family. Many couples have spoken about it being a very chaotic and confusing time for them and their children, and one that can sadly leave lasting damage on family relationships.

At Wells Family Mediation, we believe there is a better way. Our aim is to guide couples throughout the entire divorce process without acrimony and rising expense. The UK government is also encouraging couples to mediate

with the Family Mediation Voucher Scheme, which provides a voucher of £500 (non means tested) for every family with children under 18. At Wells Family Mediation we are part of this scheme and are excited to report that last week the government announced that this scheme is being extended until April 2025. More and more couples are now turning to mediation

## What is family mediation?

- It is a way of helping families reach decisions about what should happen after separation or divorce
- It gives couples a safe place to resolve their differences at their own pace
- It is an alternative to the more traditional legal approach of instructing lawyers or going to court
- It gives couples the chance to speak directly to each other and explain their concerns and needs in the presence of a professional

## GET IN TOUCH:

Wells Family Mediation  
01892-506906  
[www.wellsfamilymediation.co.uk](http://www.wellsfamilymediation.co.uk)



*“The way in which issues are dealt with following a relationship breakdown will have a large impact on the parenting relationship for the future”*



mediator

- It recognises that parents are the experts about what is best for their own children
- It leaves the decision-making to the family and not to an outsider

The process is voluntary, confidential and future-focused.

At Wells Family Mediation, we help clients move on from the difficulties of the past to find their own solutions for the future.

## Legally binding agreement:

As mediators, we are neither judges nor legal advisors; we are neutral, independent, specialists who help clients to have a difficult conversation and find their own way forward.

Mediation deals with legal issues and works well when clients have legal advice from solicitors in the background. We encourage our clients to seek legal advice at an appropriate stage in the mediation to ensure they are fully informed about their position and they can use mediation as the place to discuss the issues and reach agreements. Those agreements can then be turned into a legally binding document.

## Child focused:

The way in which issues are dealt with following a relationship breakdown will have a large impact on the parenting relationship for the future. The research is clear that children are affected by parental conflict. Our aim in mediation is to support couples to resolve things in such a way that their children will experience healthy co-operative parenting for the rest of their childhood, even though the two parents will have completely independent personal lives.

There is an increasing move by all professions within the Family Justice System to hear ‘the voice of the child’. It is widely recognised that, in many situations, it is in the children's interests for their voice to be heard. At Wells Family Mediation, we offer children the opportunity to speak about their wishes and feelings in a private meeting with a specially trained child consultant.

## Separated Parents Workshop:

Wells Family Mediation have worked closely with Denise Ingamells, a leading parenting expert, to devise our own Separated Parents Workshop. This offers parents an opportunity

to meet with others in similar situations and to address a range of areas which arise following separation. The course is half a day and takes place online.

## A team of experts:

At Wells Family Mediation, we believe that family breakdown is more than just a legal issue. We work closely alongside a range of experts to guide couples smoothly through the entire process of divorce from start to finish. We take a holistic approach and provide clients with optional wellbeing support, financial support, legal advice, and parenting support alongside the mediation process.

Our aim is to take stress and uncertainty out of the divorce process by providing families with a calm and orderly environment where all elements of the divorce process are offered under one umbrella.

## Non matrimonial mediation:

Disputes between family members are not uncommon and can be deeply distressing for everyone concerned. They can lead to rifts and may result in families becoming estranged from siblings, children and parents. This could be related to:

- Arguments over wills and inheritances
- Disagreements between siblings
- Business disputes within the family
- Deeply held differences between parents and teenage or adult children
- Difficulties deciding on how best to care for an elderly relative

We are trained and highly skilled in helping families work through all sorts of conflicts and can assist in finding a way forward that seems sensible and fair and that takes account of the needs and concerns of all participants.

## Our experience:

Wells Family Mediation is run by a group of trained lawyers, child consultants and fully accredited mediators with over 70 years' experience between them of working with separated couples. They work alongside experienced family solicitors, IFAs, therapists and parenting experts to offer a full range of support from start to finish.

## Free Initial consultation:

If you would like to find out more about the benefits of family mediation and how we may be able to help you and your family then get in touch today.





# A noteworthy night



**L**ocal & Live is officially up and running for 2023. The first ever launch party for the town's biggest free annual event, which takes place in Calverley Grounds over the August Bank Holiday weekend, happened at The Grey Lady last month.

The music event's founder Paul Dunton said: "It was a fantastic success! We had an amazing turn out and it was great to see so many from the Local & Live community present as well as TWBC and BID representatives. It's the first time ever we have been able to host a launch party and it's all because Maxipay Accounting are continuing their headline sponsorship after they stepped in to save the event last year." Paul added that the launch party saw a live performance from musician Steffan James and that it was 'so great' to see so many Local & Live volunteers who work tirelessly to make the event happen.

First held in 2006, Local & Live has now grown to be a huge event for Tunbridge Wells, attracting both residents and visitors and generating a huge amount of business for the town. Paul also cites musicians such as The Who's Roger Daltrey, Bluetones' Mark Morriss and Joan Armatrading as fans. This summer over 60 artists are set to take to the stages in Calverley as well as the event's satellite venues at The Forum and The Sussex over the four-day series of concerts from August 24-28.



# Animals in the night...

**Ibiza and Tulum** are about to land on the doorstep of Tunbridge Wells.

Tulum and Ibiza vibes are coming to Tunbridge Wells on Friday 22nd April at Salomons Estate. Jaime Cooke Founder of SPN Boutique Fitness Studios in Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks, aka DJ Cookie and DJ Marcel Mendez will be hosting, what will no doubt be, THE party of the year, on our doorstep.

The theme is Animals in the Night, we can't imagine what inspiration this will conjure up in the town's fun-loving, creative, free-spirited environs, or maybe we can? The evening will feature not only International DJ's, Psychedelic visuals and Exotic animal dancers but the aim is to celebrate pure joy and total euphoria, via the music, curated by the magnificent DJ's.

"The inspiration behind this event," says Jaime "is bringing house music to the countryside." Serious beats from Tulum and Ibiza, in collaboration with Marcel,

who invites the town to 'dance your way out of hibernation and into a new wave of energy this Spring'. The event promises to be a 'wild, inclusive, magnificent night'.

"Rather than travelling to London or elsewhere, we want to bring the party to us!"

Not only will the evening be filled with seriously cool, Balearic vibes and Disco House music, the money raised both through a percentage of the ticket sales plus donations on the night, will be going to Mental Health Resource Charity. This wonderful local charity supports wellbeing by providing safe spaces and person centred mental health support in the Tunbridge Wells community.

Jen Williams, Fundraising and Marketing Manager says "we're so thankful to Marcel and Jaime for supporting our charity with their Animals in the Night event. It's



only through community support, and events such as this, that we can continue to help over 800 people every year through providing social connections, and reducing isolation in our town."

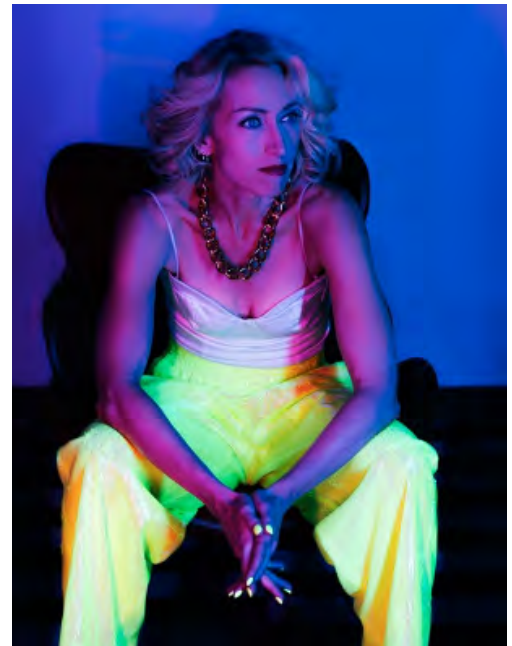
As well as founding two of the most influential fitness studios in Kent, Jaime found her home on the decks two years ago and since then has played Ibiza, Ministry of Sound and EGG LDN. She combines her love of DJ curated music with movement. She is organising and running a 'Learn to DJ' Retreat in Ibiza in May 2023 with London Sound Alchemy. Jaime's positivity, playful humour and years of instructing enables her to read a room and curate what is needed to elevate the energy in front of her.

Partnering with Marcel Mendez who is originally from Uruguay, renowned for his 'soul awakening' music. He caught the DJ bug at 12 years old when father let him use his turntable; he learned to mix the hard way, making mix tapes for his friends. He broke into the scene as one of the youngest performing DJ's in the UK. His open format feelgood DJ sets are performed

with live percussion and drawn from melodic, soulful music inspired by the South American fusion of rhythms from his roots.

"...one of the few who can play an unpredictable set, read the crowd and put a huge smile on your face" **DJ Magazine**

This promises to be an unforgettable evening so embrace your inner animal and book your tickets.



**Tickets are £35** which includes a welcome drink available to buy from; <https://www.skiddle.com/whats-on/Tunbridge-Wells/Salomons-Estate/Animals-In-The-Night/36292181/>  
5% of tickets sales go to Mental Health Resource Charity ([www.mentalhealthresource.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealthresource.org.uk)) and VIP Shuttle Bus is available from Tunbridge Wells station upon request £15 return, check website for availability.

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# DISCOVER TUNBRIDGE WELLS THIS SPRING

The days are getting longer, the birds are chirping, and the blossom is out. Yes, it's finally spring! From picturesque villages such as Lamberhurst, Brenchley and Matfield and vibrant towns like Royal Tunbridge Wells and Cranbrook to our famous historic houses and gardens, walking trails and rich heritage, Tunbridge Wells borough has so much to offer. Here is some inspiration from Visit Tunbridge Wells, to fill your weekend with fun!



Bedgebury Pinetum



Scotney Castle

## SPRING WATCH

Here in the Garden of England, spring is the time of year when our countryside is at its best! And it's not just in the countryside that things are blooming. We are lucky to be surrounded by greenspaces in the towns too, with great parks and play areas (with cafes!) perfect to keep the children happy for hours on a day out.

We are also fortunate to have two National Trust properties in our borough with award winning gardens to explore. Climb the **Sissinghurst Castle** tower to marvel over the gardens and find a new perspective on the surrounding countryside. Make the most of the free entry to the **Scotney Castle** estate which offers a perfect afternoon walk in an ever-changing woodland. Be sure to look out for the moated castle in the distance and the only working oast house in the National Trust. Don't forget to book for the car park before setting off.



Cranbrook



Spa Valley Railway

## BLUEBELLS AND RAILWAYS

Starting on **Tunbridge Wells Common**, why not walk part of the **Tunbridge Wells Circular** route going via **High Rocks** to Groombridge (approx. 90 mins walk)? Arriving at High Rocks, we recommend you explore this hidden gem for bluebell spotting. Through the main car park, into the woods, you will find a palette of blue and purple tones. After lunch, continue onto the village of Groombridge via Groombridge Place and Enchanted Gardens.

Keep an eye out for the peacocks and deer that roam the property. If you are still feeling energetic continue the trail back to Royal Tunbridge Wells or hop on board the **Spa Valley Railway** for a leisurely return! Be sure to check the Visit Tunbridge Wells events calendar for cream teas, Sunday Roast, murder mystery evenings and other themed experiences on board the steam trains.

## INDULGE IN THE GOOD THINGS IN LIFE...

Royal Tunbridge Wells is growing as a foodie destination, and I think we can all agree we have some delicious fare on our doorstep. We all have our favourites, but here is a selection to inspire your next outing, and maybe discover a new favourite (or two)? From casual dining at **Roddy Burgers** or **Plant Base** in Camden Road (the only vegan restaurant in town) to great pub grub from **The White Bear**, **The Ragged Trouser**, **The Guinea** or **The Sussex Arms** or maybe date night at **The Warren**, **Sankey's**, **The Ivy** or **The Square Peg**? As the days start getting longer and warmer, bask in the sunshine while dining alfresco at **The Compasses**, **The Mount Edgcombe** or in one of the many eateries in **The Pantiles**.

Some of the best rural beer gardens to enjoy after a walk include: **The Halfway House** in Brenchley, an award-winning real ale pub with concerts and barbecue events in their large gardens, **The Vineyard** and **The Chequers**, both in picturesque Lamberhurst, or **The Milkhouse** in Sissinghurst just minutes away from the world-famous gardens.



Chapel Place



Monson Road



The Pantiles

## UNIQUE FINDINGS

Each of the borough's towns and villages have their own character which is shaped by the community and local businesses. We have so many independent businesses which makes Tunbridge Wells a great place to find your next treasure!

In Cranbrook, you will find **Mrs T. Potts**, an old-fashioned sweet shop which is rare to find today, as well as fashion boutiques such as **Duck and Dog** and **Maisie K**. Look out too for **The Glasshouse**, a social enterprise offering people a second chance through horticultural training.

In Royal Tunbridge Wells, if you enjoy hunting through treasure troves try **Trevor Mottram**, **The Green Duck Emporium**, the newly opened **Retro Stuff** or **Jeremy's Home Store**. Some other notable independents include **Kotiki Interiors**, **Glass by Claudia**, **Fuggles Beer Shop**, **Le Petit Jardin** or **Hall's Bookshop**.

The villages also have their own treasures, in Hawkhurst you will find **'Ooh How Lovely'**, a shop that certainly lives up to its name. In Lamberhurst, **The Little Green Pantry** sells an array of local produce and handmade gifts. And so many more to discover including Brenchley, Staplehurst, Paddock Wood and Southborough to name just a few.

It's good to feel like you are supporting someone local's passion and dream, don't forget to share your new findings with us on social media...

## LOCAL HISTORY

Why not learn more about local history and take advantage of our **free audio app 'Tales of Tunbridge Wells'** which will give you a guided tour round 30 historic sights in Royal Tunbridge Wells. Go at your own pace, pause and stop off for a break in a local café or bar when you like!



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# “My show will be me having as much fun as possible”



On April 29 **Paul Sinha**, star of ITV's *The Chase*, is doing a one-off comedy show at **Hemsted Park**, Benenden School's impressive new arts venue. Here the former doctor and now successful stand-up tells **Martha Willetts** how he went from being a GP to starring on TV

*Let's start by telling us how you became of the stars of ITV's *The Chase*?*

I'd always been a keen quizzier at school, and on pub quiz machines throughout my twenties. But it was only later in life that I discovered there was a shady quiz underworld, packed with people who took it far too seriously. My kind of people. After a couple of years rising up the UK quiz rankings, ITV made it clear they were looking for a fourth Chaser and I applied. A few auditions later and I was hired.

*“The idea that people might have actively chosen to spend their evening in your company is pretty mind-blowing”*



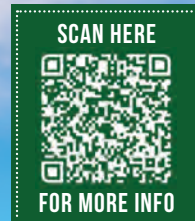
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*How did you go from working as a GP to appearing on national TV?*

I never left medicine to become a quizzier, I ended up leaving medicine because my life as a travelling comedian was becoming way too busy. Medicine was always my parents' dream, rather than my own and I consider myself incredibly fortunate to have found a way out.

*How did you get involved in the world of comedy?*

*"I'd sooner gig in Kent than in any other county in England"*

Like quizzing, I was into comedy at an early age, and watched an awful lot of student comedy as at university and then as a junior doctor in London. Eventually, I plucked up the courage to book myself for an open-mic night and basically hung around, making very-little progress for three-and-a-half years. Then in December, 1998 I was booked to do a five-minute spot at the world-famous Comedy Store. And, as luck would have it, I was offered representation by an agent the same night. From that

moment on, I could justifiably call myself 'a professional stand-up comedian.'

*Which comedians have been most influential for you?*

I find it important that comedians find their own style rather than unconsciously ape that of their comedy-heroes. Nonetheless, I've been privileged to work with many true greats. And if I take this chance to name Stewart Lee, Daniel Kitson, Milton Jones, Tim Vine, and Micky Flanagan, that would be just a small fraction of the people who've inspired me.

*What will your show at Hemsted Park involve?*

I've had a colourful life and I've ticked a number of demographic boxes. And my show will be me trying to have as much fun as possible whilst revealing a lot of autobiography.

*What do you expect the audience will most enjoy about your show?*

I don't have any preconceptions about any audience, but I'd like to think they'll be pleasantly surprised at the degree to which I'm not just 'that bloke in an ill-fitting white suit'.

*What do you enjoy most about doing your shows?*

Being any kind of entertainer is a privilege. The idea that people have chosen to spend their evening in your company is pretty mind-blowing. If there are moments when I ever feel weary of this career, I remind myself that I chose it and that not everyone is lucky enough to do a job they love and that I should just go out and make sure that I enjoy it as much as possible.

*Are you familiar with Kent, if so, what do you like about it?*

I could wax lyrical about rolling green hills, historic castles, heritage railways, and hops. But what I like most about Kent is that it borders south east London, where I live. I'd sooner gig in Kent than in any other county in England.

Paul Sinha will be appearing at **Hemsted Park on April 29th from 7.30pm**. Tickets, which are available to those aged 18 and over, start from **£25** per person. For more information or to book visit **[www.hemstedpark.com](http://www.hemstedpark.com)**



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# “I do believe if you can do Shakespeare you can do anything...”

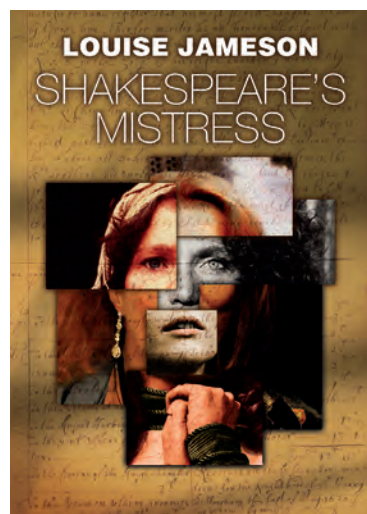
On April 23, actor and former Tunbridge Wells resident, **Louise Jameson** will perform her one woman show **Shakespeare's Mistress** at The Amelia. **Eileen Leahy** discovers more about this special one-off performance, which is a memoir of Louise's life and experiences on stage and screen, all based around her personal love of the Bard...

**L**ouise Jameson is probably best known for her impressive canon of TV work, which includes prime roles in *EastEnders*, *Tenko*, *Bergerac* and perhaps most famously *Dr Who*, in which she played Leela during Tom Baker's successful run as the doctor during the 1970s.

But when I meet the successful actor, who is currently starring in the main cast of *Emmerdale* as Mary Goskirk, she tells me that it's the stage – and specifically Shakespeare – that has always been her true love when it comes to performing.

“You know how some kids would sneak a copy of *The Beano* magazine under their bed at night to read in private? Well I did

that with the Complete Works of Shakespeare,” she smiles as we sit down to chat at The Amelia.



*“Shakespeare's Mistress has lots of my favourite Shakespearean speeches interspersed with anecdotes from my life and times in the theatre”*

“I had no idea what any of the plays meant of course, but his work moved me so much. I just loved the musicality of it all.”

We're at the town's cultural centre to discuss Louise's forthcoming one-woman show, *Shakespeare's Mistress*, which she will perform on April 23 – a date that also just happens to be the Bard's birthday.

She describes it as being along the lines of a 'Desert Island Discs' format, with lots of her favourite Shakespearean speeches interspersed with anecdotes from her life and times in the theatre.

Proceeds from ticket sales will go to DAVSS, a local West Kent charity, that supports victims of domestic abuse. Louise is its patron.

But before we talk about the

show in more detail I ask how the classically trained Louise became an actor in the first place.

“I was beguiled by drama from a very young age. When I was four I played Little Miss Muffet rather brilliantly and I remember the response from the audience was intoxicating. They were whooping because I'd done this really terrified scream at the spider and they loved it. I thought 'right, I want to do this forever'.”

This passion for performance led to Louise gaining a place at RADA drama school where one year she won the coveted Shakespeare Award for Classical Performance.

“I'd gone to RADA with a comprehensive knowledge of Shakespeare's work thanks to a genuine love for it, whereas some students hadn't even picked up a sonnet,” she laughs.

Louise, who up until recently was a long-term resident of Tunbridge Wells, tells me that after graduating from RADA, she went on to work at the Royal Shakespeare Company.

“I was mainly an understudy with the odd small part, but I was so hungry for it. I did a lot of waiting in the wings and so got to see the likes of Sir Ian McKellen, the legendary Ian Richardson and all these other amazing actors perform. I watched their way of working and had the opportunity to participate in sonnet classes and workshops – it was like another three years of training really.”

“I do believe that if you can do Shakespeare you can do anything – including soaps,” states Louise who also played the matriarchal Rosa Di Marco character in *EastEnders* for a number of years at the end of the 1990s.





"But I have to point out that it doesn't necessarily work the other way around, as alongside the obvious emotion, you also need to know Shakespeare's technique, which means knowledge of timing, vowels, consonants, rhythm and deliverance.

"This is why Shakespeare never wrote any stage directions as it's all completely inherent. You have to be a bit of a Sherlock Holmes and investigate the text and I personally love all that."

Alongside her acting career, which has seen Louise play most female Shakespearian characters including Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* and Viola in *Twelfth Night*, she reveals she's also written extensively and done many drama workshops both here in the UK and also the United States.

Louise goes on to tell me that she started writing Shakespeare's *Mistress* eight years ago.

"It started out being rather precious and worthy so I just shook it up a bit. That way I can get as informal as I can with the audience. I've been through a lot since I first wrote it. I've been in therapy for the past three and a half years, given up drinking, moved house and got the job on *Emmerdale*.

"What I've been through – coupled with getting old – has certainly influenced and helped develop the show. It's given me the confidence to be more honest and more vulnerable. I think it's actually a very strong thing to be vulnerable."

The show, which is suitable for those aged 14 years and upwards, is something Louise says she can dip in and out of.

"It's always been in my back pocket. You just need a chair and a

music stand for the notes and off you go."

She explains that it runs to 70-minute in total with no break: "I love not having an interval as I feel that if there's a break you sort of lose your audience somewhat. When you step on stage you immediately feel a collective heartbeat in the house and that's what does it for me. You know you're transporting the audience somewhere; whether that's making them happy or sad or educating them. Afterwards people should leave slightly altered and that's what drives me as an actor. You are the conduit from the writer to the audience. The easier it looks, the harder you've worked at it."

Despite her passion for Shakespeare, Louise readily admits that it is her role playing Leela in *Doctor Who* alongside Tom Baker in the seventies that has made her most recognisable as a star.

"There isn't a day that goes by when someone doesn't reference it," she says, raising an eyebrow and sure enough, right on cue, one of *The Amelia's* employees shuffles over to our table asking if she is

*"What I've been through – coupled with getting old – has certainly influenced and helped develop the show"*



indeed THE Louise Jameson.

"I'm a massive *Doctor Who* fan," he says shyly before politely asking if he can have Louise's autograph. She agrees and with that he swiftly presents a vintage *Doctor Who* annual which Louise happily signs – and makes the 'Whovian's' day.

"Isn't it incredible to think that a job I did for just ten months in 1976 still has this impact?" she laughs. "It's really quite extraordinary."

And with that our time together is almost up. I wrap up

by asking Louise why she wanted to support DAVVS by returning to Tunbridge Wells with Shakespeare's *Mistress*.

"Because it is the most extraordinary charity. Every penny goes in the right direction, but like everyone they are struggling with funds and so with my profile

being raised again due to my role in *Emmerdale* I thought I'd help them as much as possible."

Louise adds she hopes the audience who come to see Shakespeare's *Mistress*, which she has performed in small arts venues and theatres around the country since 2015, will feel liberated and inspired by the performance.

"There are sonnets and speeches reflecting my experiences both personally and professionally. It's celebratory, it's about being a woman and I'm really happy to share the journey..."



Shakespeare's *Mistress* is at The Amelia on April 23 at 7pm. Tickets start from £15 and a VIP Meet & Greet with Louise after the show, is priced at £40. All the proceeds from this meet and greet are going direct to support the work of DAVSS. To book, visit: [www.theamelia.co.uk](http://www.theamelia.co.uk)



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Clockwise from top: Fred Yates, Figures on a woodland path – £3,600 + fees. Cressida Campbell, Jacaranda in full blossom – £110,000 + fees. Platinum and seven stone diamond ring – £1,800 + fees. After Lord Frederick Leighton, bronze, The Sluggard – £10,000 + fees. Chinese Imperial blue glazed ritual offering vessel and cover – £11,500 + fees.

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# Love WHERE YOU Live



This month SO Magazine chats to **Matt Elesmore**, owner of **The Green Duck Emporium** and **The Green Duck Event Space & Bar**, both based in town, about all the places he likes to support locally. Here Matt reveals where he likes to stroll, shop and socialise....

**Where do you live?**  
I live in Tunbridge Wells.

**How long have you lived in the town and what made you decide to move here?**

I have lived here since 2016. I decided to relocate after doing panto as Company Manger at the Assembly Hall Theatre. I was born in Cornwall and Tunbridge Wells and Kent remind me so much of the West County.

**Where's your favourite shop?**  
I'd have to say Jeremy's Home Store, on Monson Road. There is everything you could possibly ever want in it!

**And of course you have your own shops now...**

Yes we have The Green Duck retail store in Royal Victoria Place as well as our Green Duck Event Space & Bar on Upper Grosvenor Road.

*"The Amelia Scott is a must-see if you're visiting Tunbridge Wells, along with The Pantiles of course"*



Fuggles Beer Café

The Amelia



Jeremy's Home Store



Kingdom, Penshurst

**Where's the best place to go for a Sunday stroll?**

I'd recommend Kingdom in Penshurst. Good walks, good food and good coffee.

**Anywhere else you'd suggest to get a decent cup of coffee?**

Anywhere that sells coffee from the amazing Tunbridge Wells Coffee Roastery, which is owned and run by Peter Sturkey.

**Where do you take people when they visit?**

The Amelia Scott is a must-see, along with The Pantiles.

**What's the night life like where you live?**

There is a lot going on in Tunbridge Wells and there are some hidden gems such as The Guinea on Calverley Road. It does particularly good cocktails!

**Where's your favourite place to eat locally?**

It has to be The Poet in Matfield. It serves absolutely stunning food and the service is amazing.

**If you're looking to relax and unwind, where's your favourite place to go?**

A walk in the woods at Pembury is a great place to get lost in for a few hours – this was a life saver during the pandemic.

**Where's the best place to meet friends and socialise?**

Where do I start? There are so many! If I had to choose a few I would say Fuggles, The Glasshouse, Sankey's Seafood Kitchen & Bar. We have a lot of amazing places in Tunbridge Wells and so it is hard to pick just one.

**What do you do when you spend a weekend or day off in the local area?**

Well I don't get very much time off because there is a lot going on at The Green Duck, but if I do then it's a night at the Hotel Du Vin. It's great for a local staycation as it's like going away but not going very far.

**Why do you love where you live?**

Tunbridge Wells is such a special place that we often take for granted. We forget what an amazing spot it is. There is so much right on our doorstep!

[www.thegreenduckemporium.com](http://www.thegreenduckemporium.com)





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## Know your future with cashflow modelling

‘Am I saving enough money?’ ‘When can I afford to retire?’ ‘How long will my pension last in retirement?’ Most of us have asked ourselves at least one of these questions.

They’re difficult questions to answer because they not only depend on your individual circumstances – your current lifestyle, your existing financial position, what you plan to do in life – but also on events that may be outside your control, such as inflation and investment performance.

It might seem like you need a crystal ball to understand your future finances, but this isn’t the case. By using cashflow modelling, a financial adviser can provide clarity over your future and help you answer these all-important questions.



## What is cashflow modelling?

Cashflow modelling is used by financial advisers to demonstrate how long your money is likely to last in retirement. Your adviser will provide you with a cashflow illustration that maps out your savings and investments, year by year.

The cashflow illustration will be completely personal to you. Your adviser will base it on things like your current finances, how much you're saving and investing, your spending patterns, your target retirement date and your aspirations for the future. They'll also take into account projected inflation and investment performance, as well as your life expectancy.

## How could cashflow modelling help me?

Cashflow modelling provides a really powerful insight into the health of your future finances. It can help you understand whether your goals are achievable and whether you might need to make any changes to your plans or saving and investing habits.

Cashflow modelling can help to answer questions such as:

- When can I afford to retire?
- How long will my savings last?
- Can I afford to leave a financial legacy for my loved ones?
- What would happen to my finances if I needed long-term care?



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## What if my plans change?

Cashflow modelling is especially useful when it comes to exploring the impact of any potential changes to your plans. Your adviser can help you to 'rehearse' your future by exploring how different scenarios might affect your financial position.

Some of the scenarios may include:

- Delaying or bringing forward your target retirement date
- Taking more or fewer holidays in retirement
- Investing a greater proportion of your money in the stock market
- Accessing your pension via income drawdown instead of buying an annuity
- Gifting money to children and grandchildren

## What happens next?

Once you have clarity over your finances and how you'd like your future to evolve, your financial adviser can create a personalised financial roadmap that sets out the steps you need to take to achieve your ambitions. Those steps could include taking on more investment risk, maximising your tax reliefs and allowances each year, or making a series of tax-efficient gifts; all of these are areas your adviser will be able to help you with.

Cashflow modelling isn't a once-and-done exercise. Your circumstances could change in the future and it's important that these changes are reflected in your financial plan. That way, you can feel sure your aspirations are still achievable.

Life may feel uncertain, but your finances don't have to be. To gain clarity over your future finances, book a consultation with one of our financial advisers today.

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The value of investments, and any income from them, can fall and you may get back less than you invested. This does not constitute tax or legal advice. Tax treatment depends on the individual circumstances of each client and may be subject to change in the future. Information is provided only as an example and is not a recommendation to pursue a particular strategy. Forecasts are not a reliable indicator of future performance.

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# Atelier de Linde:

## DESIGNING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



“  
Designing and  
building sustainably  
is a core value at  
Atelier de Linde  
”

### BEAUTIFUL AND EFFICIENT BUILDINGS

As a leading architectural practice in the South East, Atelier de Linde understand the value that thoughtful design and the internal specification can have on a home, office or public space.

“More clients are seeking a balance in eco-friendly and economical options,” says Angie Pool. “Through extensive design experience, expert knowledge and established professional relationships with industry leaders we can offer unique designs for residential and commercial projects without compromise.”

“Whether it’s a Victorian retrofit in Tunbridge Wells, or a passive barn redevelopment in the greenbelt, we can make it significantly more energy efficient with the most sustainable materials and building practices.”

Eco-friendly designs and energy-efficient buildings are trends that should be locally supported due to the increasing imperatives of the energy crisis and a global drive for sustainable industry standards. Atelier de Linde are signed up to support both residential and commercial clients in becoming part of the solution.

Award-winning architects **Atelier de Linde** have long been committed to reducing the environmental footprint of the projects undertaken or managed by their team. That’s why they’ve signed up to the ambitious **RIBA Climate Challenge 2030**. Directors **Tara de Linde** and **Angie Pool** explain how they are applying their expertise when designing sustainable – and even carbon neutral – homes, offices and commercial buildings.

### THE CONSTRUCTION CARBON CHALLENGE

The construction sector and the built environment accounts for 38% of global carbon emissions, and therefore has a major role to play in contributing to the global target of carbon net zero by 2050. The RIBA Challenge 2030 aims ‘to help architects design within a climate conscious trajectory’ by providing

clear objectives to enable the industry to reach net zero by the end of this decade. Director, Tara de Linde explains: “Sustainable design and construction is a core value at Atelier de Linde. As architects, we are acutely aware of our responsibility to explore and encourage the use of sustainable materials and innovative

technologies to reduce the carbon footprint of our designs. We are conscious that how we work has a wider impact on the environment in which we all live.

“It’s impossible to take for granted the stunning countryside in which we reside and work, so it’s vital that we play our role in protecting it.”

### TECHNICAL EXPERTISE, SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

Three elements contribute to the overall carbon footprint of a building:

- **Embodied energy:** the sum of the carbon emitted during construction, including manufacture and transport of materials to the site
- **Operational energy:** the sum of the energy required to heat, light and ventilate a building
- **Generated energy:** the sum of the energy that a building can produce, for example through solar panels, wind turbines and ground or air source heat pumps

Atelier de Linde commit to optimising any project from the outset by utilising their wider professional team to consult on the specification relating to each of these three factors. The highly effective in-house team, who have a 97% success rate in planning application, is complimented by in-house designers who use their knowledge and experience to deliver ethical and sustainable architecture.

“  
We offer efficient solutions  
without compromising the  
architecture itself.”  
”

“With both residential and commercial clients becoming more aware of climate concerns and the impact their projects may have on the environment, this empowers us to design sustainable structures that don’t cost the earth,” adds her partner, Angie Pool.



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**How has Tunbridge Wells shopping changed over the years?**

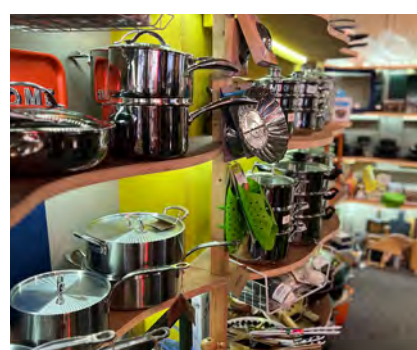
The town has changed massively over the years, but sadly not all for the better. The Pantiles certainly needs more retailers now...

**Why is it important to support our independent shops and businesses?**

Independents keep the money in the local economy. All the lovely ladies who work for me live locally and shop locally, and their children were at school locally. It's a real community.

**What is the secret to your longevity and success?**

I think it's that we always offer something new, we have a fabulous team of staff and we all work very hard to give our customers what they want.



The **TN card** is the Tunbridge Wells loyalty scheme that rewards shoppers for supporting local. This month its founder **Jess Gibson** chats to **Sarah Wood** at TN partner **Trevor Mottram**, the legendary one-stop kitchen shop on The Pantiles...

**When did Trevor Mottram kitchen shop open?**

We opened our doors in December 1975 so we have been trading on The Pantiles here in Tunbridge Wells for nearly 48 years.

**You have an astonishing range of products in the shop. How many lines do you have and what are your best sellers?**

We probably stock about 15,000 different lines – but not all of these are on our stock system yet, despite plugging away at it for two years now! It is a huge task. We are very seasonal in terms of what we sell so items change accordingly. At this time of year, heading towards Easter, our best-selling items are bakeware, cookie and cake cutters and Easter decorations. But we sell kitchen staples such as saucepans and knives all year round.

**WHO:** Trevor Mottram

**WHERE:** 33-37  
The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells TN2 5TE

**OPENING HOURS:**  
9.30am – 5.30pm,  
Monday to Saturday

**TN MEMBER  
REWARD:** 10% off  
textiles (aprons, oven  
gloves, tea towels, table  
cloths and napkins).

[thetncard.com/trevor-mottram](http://thetncard.com/trevor-mottram)

**What do you enjoy most about your job?**

I do like that fact that no two days are ever really the same. We have amazing customers and brilliant suppliers. I do all the buying for the shop and I'll admit that it's often a challenge to find new items but I greatly enjoy it all.

**In 2021 you invited the BBC's Interior Design Masters team into the shop. Have you kept any of the design changes they made to the layout of the shop?**

We have kept them all! People who watched the TV show often ask us if we changed the shop back to how it was beforehand but the truth is the back half is exactly how the programme's designers left it. The only thing we have done is bring a lot more of our stock back out after they streamlined things.

**"We are very seasonal in terms of our stock so at this time of year our best-selling items are bakeware, cookie and cake cutters and Easter decorations"**



**Jess Gibson**  
Founder the TN card





# Redefining fine dining



Having heard so much about **The Warren**, **Eileen Leahy** experiences a taste of this extraordinary restaurant, which provides its customers with some of the area's most delicious and inventive food – all from its own 650-acre estate in Crowborough...

With its iconic orangery windows, eclectic, exotic decor and adventurous gastronomic menu, The Warren has proved to be one of the most exceptional places to dine in the area since it opened in 2016. Located right at the top of Tunbridge Wells High Street, opposite the train station, it boasts an enviable location in the heart of town, but its beating culinary heart is actually located in the countryside at its 650-Crowborough Warren Estate, where so much of the fantastic produce that appears on its impressive, ever-changing seasonal menu is sourced. Everything from butchering to smoking is also done in house with every element used

to ensure zero waste.

The estate is rich in livestock, from Sussex cattle and vension, to wild boar and lamb so there is always a variety of cuts of meat to enjoy. Owners Martin Haynes and Chris Fitt opened the restaurant seven years ago to ensure the farm's fantastic free-range produce could be showcased on a menu that put hyper locally sourced goods right at its centre.

The first-floor restaurant, which is on the former site of the legendary Signor Franco's, seats more than 60 people in its three adjoining dining rooms and bar area. And during the finer weather you can escape outside to its pleasant roof terrace with a glass of something chilled.

During all my time writing food reviews for SO magazine I had never actually been to The Warren so when I was asked to go last

month to sample its menu I was very excited indeed. Did it live up to its stellar reputation? Read on...

Stepping into the establishment for the first time my husband and I were suitably impressed. Having left the Friday night drizzle behind us as we ascended the stairs up to The Warren, suddenly things became just that little bit warmer thanks in part to a roaring fire and friendly welcome.

It almost felt like we'd stepped onto the set of a Fellini movie thanks to the spectacular oversized glass chandeliers suspended from the ceiling, ornate throne-like chairs, a baby grand piano, marble topped tables, antique mirrors, and a slew of eye-catching artefacts, including a stuffed boar's head. So far, so spectacular...

The restaurant's general manager Magdalena Szczerbova showed us to our table – an intimate spot in the establishment's stunning orangery.

The atmosphere here was incredibly lively with most tables occupied; ranging from large groups of friends happily drinking and dining, to cosy couples enjoying an intimate soirée.

To kick the evening off Magdalena suggested we sample a glass of Busi Jacobsohn, which is produced at Busi's Eridge Vineyard. Bubbly and aromatic it



*“The Warren boasts an enviable location in the heart of Tunbridge Wells but its beating culinary heart is located at its Eridge estate”*

was the perfect accompaniment to the selection of homemade fresh breads which arrived with a quenelle of butter and a little amuse bouche courtesy of the chef.

First up on the menu, which has a good selection of vegetarian and vegan dishes, was a selection of ‘pre starters’ which included Maldon oysters (£3.60 each) and Dorset snails with toasted sourdough, and a choice of homemade garlic butter or blue cheese (£9.45).

We decided on a few oysters which came with a selection of Tabasco sauces, lemon and vinaigrette.

They were salty and silky and the perfect way to have commenced our epicurean



adventure at The Warren.

Magdalena then asked what might tickle our tastebuds in terms of the actual starters. And with choices such as a venison meatball with cream cheese, coleslaw and brioche (£9.95) and slow cooked pork cheek, with sweet potato purée & Port jus reduction (£9.50) and a delicate smoked salmon, avocado, crispy filo pastry & salmon caviar (£9.50) it was a tricky task.

Eventually I opted for the salmon but my husband was still quietly pondering, absorbed in the choice, so Magdalena gently guided him towards one of The Warren's signature dishes: a goose egg, from their estate, which is served with wild mushrooms, Eridge Beal's Farm Mangalita pork loin & parmesan (£12). When it arrived it was a taste triumph – a kind of super elevated bacon and eggs but ten times more flavoursome.

We enjoyed a glass of crisp white Picpoul from France with our first dishes and awarded Magdalena top marks for her wine pairing.

Next up were the main courses. Again, the choice is extensive, hearty and super tempting courtesy of plates such as duck breast with carrot & potato rosti, red cabbage, French beans & Kirsch jus (£28) and chicken supreme with wild mushroom risotto (£24). Ultimately it's the beef Chateaubriand, which you choose by the ounce, that won the day for us.

Magdalena suggested we go for the 26oz to enjoy alongside a selection of sauces which include a Marchand de Vin & Brighton Blue cheese - and just for pure decadence a lobster tail. The ultimate gourmet surf n' turf...

The meat was cooked to perfection and served with salty French fries, tenderstem broccoli, panfried mushrooms and a sticky, sweet caramelised onion

confit. Every bite was a delight and reflects how good quality produce done simply can far outclass any complicated dish overloaded with fussy ingredients any day.

With the slivers of delicious beef we enjoyed a bottle of Har'el Shiraz, which Magdalena told us hails from the Judean hills in Israel. Its oaky, vanilla character complemented the food perfectly and would also be the ideal drink if you were to choose the restaurant's cheese course which boasts Rosary Ash goat's cheese, Ashmore cheddar & Sussex Blue (£13.50) to have afterwards.

After a little sojourn post dinner, finishing our wine and watching customers starting to drift off back downstairs into the drizzly winter's evening, we took a look at the dessert menu. After a quick glance I decided I was too full, but my husband says he can squeeze in another morsel.

He choose the Affogato, an Italian style vanilla ice cream, which is served with a nip of Frangelico, and almond Amaretti & double espresso (£11.50). Totally vegan it was the perfect way to finish our hugely enjoyable dinner.

As we headed off, Magdalena kindly gifted us a box of homemade macrons which came packaged in a cute half dozen egg box, no doubt reflecting the restaurant's roots and culinary ethos of providing its customers with food that goes straight from farm to fork.

Vowing to return again soon Magdalena suggests a Sunday or weekday lunch visit next time. "We have a great fixed price express menu during the week which is great if you're looking to pop out during your work lunchtime or meeting friends."

After experiencing this wonderful restaurant, whose food is classic yet innovative, we certainly will be back for lunch – and indeed dinner – very soon.

#### CONTACT:

##### THE WARREN

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# Club Med...

**Molly Miller** swung by **The Brasserie** to sample its new menu which is inspired by the traditional flavours of the Mediterranean and is now being served to discerning diners every lunchtime and evening...

**T**hey say, ‘money can’t buy happiness, but it can buy food’. Now although I have never doubted that phrase, I hadn’t tasted food that would elicit such feelings – until now that is.

As typical British weather goes, it was a drizzly day as I made my way up a cobbled street in the heart of Tunbridge Wells towards The Brasserie. The restaurant stands proud on the corner of Chapel Place and immediately welcomes you with a feeling of warmth and relaxation, transporting you away from the typical woes of a wet and windy Monday afternoon.

Upon entering, my guest and I were welcomed into a deli-like space which is used for morning to-go customers who choose to grab something delicious from The Brasserie’s popular breakfast menu.

Part of One Warwick Park Hotel, the establishment’s interiors are elegant and chic, combining a black marbled bar with racing green walls and statement wood panelling, which seamlessly lead you into the main restaurant.

The staff have a delightful hospitality style that immediately makes you feel you’re in good hands. My guest Georgie and I were shown to our table by Deputy Operations Manager Sham, who was quick to ask if we would like any water or wine to start and ensured we were happy with our tableing, which overlooked a charming row of neighbouring shops.

We then met our waiter for the afternoon, Fenn, who greeted us with our chosen wines – a smooth, elegantly balanced Pinot Grigio rosé and a light and refreshing Sauvignon Blanc from Chile – before leaving us some time to scour the menu.

The Brasserie is headed up by up-and-coming chef Ollie Funnell, and taking a first look at the new dishes, his cooking style seems refreshingly unique. There’s plenty of choice for meat lovers, vegans, and vegetarians alike, and dishes are full of the sunshine and mellow warmth of the coastlines of Spain, Italy, and France.

Options straddle the line between classic Mediterranean favourites and more unusual options, so whether you stick to what you know and opt for the classics or want to experiment, there’s something for all taste palates.

Highlights that caught my eye included butterfly king tiger prawns in garlic red pepper butter and lobster ravioli with saffron and seafood bisque.

But it was the set menu that won us over with the promise of two courses for under £25. What with spiralling living costs, it’s not like any of us can eat out as much as we’d like to, making this a great option for value-for-money dining.

For starters, I chose the gluten-free garlic and chilli chicken skewers which were served on a bed of baby gem lettuce, spring onions and toasted sesame seeds with a side of homemade tzatziki. The portion size was generous, and the chicken was tender and full of

*“The Brasserie is headed up by up-and-coming chef Ollie Funnell, and his cooking style is refreshingly unique”*







fresh flavours.

Georgie had the cuttlefish calamari to kick off her lunch. This is not the usual seafood used for this popular starter but boy did Ollie and his team get it right. The fresh cuttlefish had a texture and taste far superior to that of squid and was light and crispy thanks to its cornflour batter.

The cuttlefish calamari was also gluten-free with plenty to go around and came served with a wedge of lemon, fresh chilli, and dill mayonnaise.

Both starters were so ornately presented we were almost reluctant to dig in, although that didn't stop us.

Dining here – whatever time of day you chose – is a stylish experience. Large smoked mirrors line the back of the restaurant, bouncing light around the modern-infused art-deco-style interiors while walls are dressed in vintage art. The restaurant's banquette-style seats are furnished with soft velvet cushions that are perfect for sinking into and staying a while.

When it came to choosing our mains, we were both pleasantly surprised with the hearty options on offer, given it was a lunchtime

set menu. I expected smaller portions or perhaps simplified dishes – but this definitely wasn't the case.

The Brasserie burger and the spiced chicken thigh orzo skillet were unapologetically huge but in the best way possible.

Having always been partial to a burger, I had high hopes when I saw it on the menu and it didn't disappoint. It arrived stacked high and boasted 100% British beef layered with Applewood smoked cheddar cheese and baby gem leaves all sandwiched between a fresh pretzel bun.

But the star of the show had to be the lashings of bacon jam. Aside from it being absolutely can't-stop-eating delicious, it added a unique flavour to my burger that was more sweet than savoury. On the side was a whopping pile of crispy fries, and a fresh, mixed salad.

Equally, the orzo skillet was met with plenty of satisfactory noises from across the table as Georgie tucked in. It was, and I quote, 'unquestionably good'.

The dish combines tender, juicy, and flavourful chicken thighs with goats' cheese, sun-dried tomatoes, fresh chilli, spring onion and red



PHOTOS BY JOHN KNIGHT

*“Highlights that caught my eye included butterfly king tiger prawns in garlic red pepper butter and lobster ravioli with saffron and seafood bisque”*

To book visit:  
[brasserie-owp.co.uk](http://brasserie-owp.co.uk)

pepper and comes plated on an epic bed of orzo – the tiny, rice-like pasta shapes.

As it was only lunchtime, we were left comfortably full from our culinary trip around the Med, so we left the dessert menu to one side, but if you are feeling indulgent there's a tooth-achingly sweet selection to choose from.

The set menu offers white chocolate and raspberry blondie, pistachio fondant, and apple tarte tatin. And if you're dining from the main menu, you'll be spoilt with chocolate fondant, passion fruit sponge pudding and the chef's recommended baked Alaska, so be sure to save room!

Of course, any restaurant

experience is about more than just the food, and The Brasserie is running a slick operation. Service is efficient but friendly, the restaurant was buzzing with hungry lunchtime diners of girlfriends gossiping and families catching up. After speaking with the Head Chef Ollie, it's clear the involvement The Brasserie has with its local community too.

Ollie continued to explain that the new Mediterranean menu precisely sources the best, freshest, seasonal and sustainable ingredients from local suppliers. My guest and I greatly enjoyed its high-quality produce and honest, authentic food – springtime dining doesn't get much better than this.



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# A welcome return...



And we're pleased to say that the food offering is also stellar, with lots of variety on offer including traditional pub classics such as fish and chips and towering burgers, to a more adventurous gourmet selection of dishes to choose from. These include pan-fried seabass fillets served with chunks of chorizo, beef brisket and double Gloucester pie and sweet potato Massaman curry with grilled chicken. But if you just want to stop by for a simple soup or a sandwich you can have that too.

We can't wait until the weather warms up a little bit more to enjoy an Aperol or glass of chilled fizz on its beautiful terrace which is sure to be the place to be this summer...

Last month saw the reopening of the popular **Hand and Sceptre** pub and restaurant in Southborough. SO Magazine was invited along to the launch and was duly impressed by the venue's stylish refurbishment and greatly improved food and drink menu...

**A**fter closing before Christmas last year, The Hand and Sceptre in Southborough is now back open and looking better than ever.

An extensive and super chic refurbishment of the venue's dining areas, bar and handful of rooms on the first floor – as well as a stylish new terrace and vastly enhanced epicurean offering – means it's back on our list of must-visit local establishments.

Whether you're after a cosy pint by one of the pub's roaring fires

*“Each of the dining areas in the period building have been beautifully appointed to ensure a stylish eating experience”*

after a walk around the common, an intimate dinner for two or a long lunch for family and friends at the weekend in its restaurant, The Hand and Sceptre, which reopened last month, hits every spot perfectly.

Each of the dining areas in the period building have been beautifully appointed to ensure a stylish eating experience. Ikat patterned chairs, plush velvet sofas, gilded mirrored tables and polished wooden tables are all hallmarks of The Hand and Sceptre's new look.







— “  
Grief is  
unpredictable  
and unique  
” —

# Looking after yourself at the most emotional time

When you lose a loved one, the grief you feel can be difficult to navigate – and different from a previous experience. It’s easy to forget about your needs and have the motivation for self-care. **Simon Welham**, Managing Director of Welham Jones Funerals and Memorials, highlights some of the ways you can look after yourself and the importance of taking the time to cope with your loss...

## The importance of self-care

In the initial stages of losing a loved one, you might find yourself having to deal with all the practicalities of notifying others, organising a funeral and supporting family. If you have dependents, the care giving often goes to them and you can easily forget about your own needs.

After the funeral is when your loss will often hit home: it might seem like everyone’s life is returning to normal, and you can be left feeling lonely and struggling with day-to-day activities, many of which might be unfamiliar to you as they were handled by your loved one. So, it’s key that you manage self-care with the basic needs of eating, drinking fluids, gentle exercise and sleeping within a regular routine.

## Avoid comparing yourself to others

It’s important to own your grief and not compare it to others’. Understanding the feeling and stages of grief is useful, but lower your expectations of how long you might expect to grieve for, as grief is unpredictable and unique.

## Ask friends and family for help

Accept help from friends and

family. They can take tasks from you, do household chores, or take you to appointments. Having their company when shopping, going for a walk or at mealtimes can help reduce feelings of loneliness.

It may seem daunting to ask for help, but do, as many people want to help but simply don’t know how to offer it. Asking gives them a clear understanding of your needs.

## Go outside for regular exercise

Getting outside can feel strange at first. The world around is still going about the daily grind, yet you can feel quite altered by your experience. Taking regular exercise will make you feel better.

A walk to a local shop, a park, walking the dog or a round of golf (if that’s your thing) can help give you a sense of purpose and grounding, and gradually it should help to reconnect with the community around you.

## Create some calm

Activities such as meditation and yoga can help relax the mind and body when under stress.

There are many online resources and mindfulness apps, such as Calm and Headspace, which



“Support groups can provide a safe environment in which you can share your feelings and memories with others experiencing a similar journey to you”

have guided meditations for those in grief. They can help your breathing when you are feeling tense, anxious or are struggling to get to sleep.

Accessing journalling, crafts like painting and drawing, or gardening can also help you to relax and process your feelings.

## Talk to your GP or a counsellor

It is understandable to feel low at a time like this. However, if you are struggling with your physical or mental health, contact your GP. They can advise on ways to help you feel better, including talking therapy.

And you might also explore private counselling. Ask us for counsellors in the area or search online for practitioners in your area at [bacp.co.uk](http://bacp.co.uk) or other associations.

## Work with your employer

Speak with your employer about their policy on compassionate leave. It is important to be honest about how you are coping and to liaise with your GP if you need time off work, or to arrange a staggered return.

## Access national helplines

Sharing your grief with family and friends can be difficult, so you could turn to a national helpline for support and advice, such as: Cruise Bereavement Support, Samaritans, The Compassionate Friends and Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide. Sands provides support for those affected by the death of a baby; The Lullaby Trust for those who have lost a baby or young child; Care For The Family offers support for any bereaved parent; and Surviving The Loss of Your World helps any parent or sibling. The Silver Line is a helpline for the elderly.

## Local support in Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge

You don’t have to cope on your own. Support groups can provide a safe environment in which you can share your feelings and memories with others experiencing a similar journey to you. Groups you can access locally include:

## Hospice in the Weald

([hospiceintheweald.org.uk](http://hospiceintheweald.org.uk)) has a good support network offering classes and bereavement counsellors for families.

## Social groups on Facebook and Meetup

are for all ages. They arrange days and nights out.

## Friends Together

([friendstogether.org](http://friendstogether.org)) offers a bereavement support group and meet ups.

## Chums

([chums.uk.com/kent-bereavement-service/](http://chums.uk.com/kent-bereavement-service/)) is for children up to 26 years old finding bereavement difficult.

## Local churches

also often offer support and activities.

## Talk about your loved one

Remembering your loved one is important, so talk about them unapologetically, as your relationship with them will continue despite their passing.



Support at an emotional time

01892 300330 | [tunbridgewells@welhamjones.co.uk](mailto:tunbridgewells@welhamjones.co.uk)  
[www.welhamjones.co.uk](http://www.welhamjones.co.uk)

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# “It’s a privilege to lead this school”

This month SO Magazine meets **James Thomas**, Headmaster of **Sutton Valence School**. Here he explains his educational experience, before revealing the learning ethos he has put in place at the co-ed independent school which welcomes pupils aged 2 to 18...



I feel very lucky indeed to be able to say that I absolutely love my job. It is such a privilege to lead a school such as Sutton Valence. We have a very special combination here of inspirational young people, a hugely supportive and proud parental body, an outstanding team of teaching and support staff all set in a beautiful physical environment. Our values of community, support and treasuring individuals can be seen in so many ways, and was underlined in our recent inspection which secured excellent grades, and from the student and parent feedback which we regularly seek.

Getting around the incredible range of things which go on here is a challenge even for me as Headmaster, but it fills me with joy watching all the children in action, whether that’s seeing or hearing

our endless creativity in music, art, drama and technology, catching a glimpse of a try from the touchline or perhaps just seeing someone having a piece of work returned on which they have worked really hard and noting their reaction can be inspirational.

A great passion of mine, and indeed a significant priority for the school, is the mental health and wellbeing of the community. We have recently recalibrated our provision, ensuring we have a great scheme of weekly sessions for all students focusing on their health, emphasising the positive and being prepared to face the challenges, self-care and care for others. We share the key information each week with parents via our newsletter, and have a number of open sessions for parents where we tackle tricky topics such as the impact of social media and the daily pressures on families. We have also started a course for students in their final year teaching them about finance, safety, driving, cooking and being ready for the world!

Another interesting recent development has been our increased focus on student leadership and contributions. Like many schools we of course have Prefects and leaders in activities such as sport, but here we also have



a number of other opportunities for young people to develop

“We’re always available to talk to the younger years if they need any advice

”

their leadership potential. Our mentoring scheme – we have a number of students who have taken a formal course in Mental Health First Aid and act as our Wellbeing Ambassadors – is having a very positive impact. Likewise, our Subject Ambassador scheme enables students

of all ages to display their passion for subjects via assemblies, student study support, competitions and working with staff to develop subject areas. Leadership is not always about being in front and being the loudest – here we celebrate it in many different ways.

Students come from all around the vicinity to us, and the Borough of Tunbridge Wells is certainly a growing market for us. We provide a number of bus services (one of which travels through Pembury and various locations) while others might take the train from Paddock Wood to nearby Headcorn (from which we operate a shuttle service.)

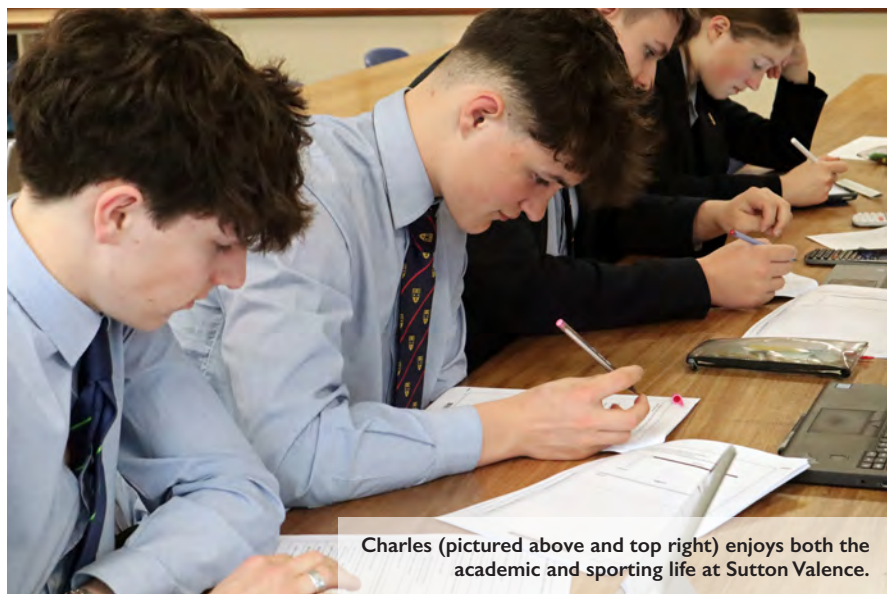
A growing number are becoming very interested in our flexible and part-time boarding options. Largely gone are the days of being given a trunk and packed off to board until the end of term, and much more popular is the approach we



now have. While full and weekly boarding is available, the prospect of staying at school for three nights a week can benefit all. For a few nights, it saves parents time and considerable fuel costs for picking up and dropping off each day, protects the fridge from being raided constantly, and conserves the energy of the daily ‘have you done your homework?’ conversations, also leaving bedtime and getting up in the morning to us! Our boarding teams and pastoral staff are superb and very welcoming indeed.

I allocate a great deal of time each week to meeting prospective parents and families, and I simply love showing people around this very special place. Do come and meet me and see for yourself!”

*James Thomas became Headmaster of Sutton Valence School in September 2021. He studied at St Paul’s School, London, and then went on to receive his undergraduate degree in Theology from Trinity Hall at the University of Cambridge.*



Charles (pictured above and top right) enjoys both the academic and sporting life at Sutton Valence.





*He holds an MA in Educational Leadership from the University of London and also the National Professional Qualification for Headship. In his early career, he was a Head of Department (Theology and Philosophy) at both Dulwich College and Wellington College, where he was also in charge of Oxford and Cambridge applications.*

*Mr Thomas then became Director of Studies at Harrow International School, Hong Kong before moving to the British School in Tokyo for seven years where he was Head of the Senior School. Beyond work, he enjoys spending time with his wife, three sons (who attend Sutton Valence Preparatory School) and his old faithful Labrador. His personal interests include music, choirs, sport, travel and debating current affairs.*

### STUDENT LEADERSHIP AT SUTTON VALENCE:

The days of Grace Bartleet, Upper Sixth, and Charles Jacques, Fifth Form, are representative of the varied and busy schedules that pupils enjoy within the Sutton Valence School community. While Grace is a day pupil, Charles is a boarder, ensuring that he experiences the added sense of comradeship amongst those who stay overnight. “It’s always nice spending time with your friends, and with boarding, you really develop close connections with people, you really understand them – and it cuts the journey in half, which I think was a big factor for



Charles and Grace are active members of the CCF.



my parents. It’s just a really good experience, and it also adds a bit of structure to your life. You’ve got two hours a day where you’ll sit down and do your homework, and you’re allowed to use the great facilities, the sports hall, the gym. And once we get into the summer term, the teachers like to get the barbecue out, and that’s always really good fun, to just sit out in the sun and socialise with other people.”

Like all students, Grace and Charles were enrolled into the School’s Combined Cadet Force in the Third Form – with divisions in the Army, Navy and RAF, and sessions taking place during the school day, rather than after school. Having both chosen to continue on in the CCF past this compulsory stage, Grace is now a Regimental Sergeant Major, leading younger students by example. She says: “I do CCF now by choice, and teach it to the Third Form, which gives me a lot of leadership experience – it’s beneficial to then put on your Personal Statement and when you’re looking further ahead than school.” Charles adds: “I think CCF is a really good option to have at the school, it’s different to sitting indoors on a Wednesday afternoon – it gets you out and able to build skills you wouldn’t in a classroom.”

Both students are challenged by the school’s strong academic focus, with Charles currently showing an aptitude for numbers: “I’m doing my GCSEs at the moment, and I quite like maths, so I think eventually I may go into accounting or something to do with that.” Alongside her school work, Grace takes on the additional and coveted responsibility of being a School Prefect.

“Prefects oversee open days and take visitors

on tours, as well as having weekly meetings with the Headmaster, Deputy Head and the Head of Sixth Form. We’re always available to talk to the younger years if they need any advice or want to approach someone less intimidating than a member of staff, giving you that relationship with other year groups that other people might not have. It’s definitely an honour to have that role within the school, there’s quite a long application process for it, and the position is taken very seriously.”

Sport also plays a prominent part in the timetables of both students, with Grace also being an accomplished musician. She explains “We’re both sporty, so that’s quite a big part of our lives here. And I do a lot of music, with the ensembles being another chance to socialise with everyone, and develop better relationships

with teachers, outside of the classroom.” Charles agrees, saying “The sport is really good at Sutton Valence School, and the opportunities you get that come with that.”



### CONTACT INFO:

Sutton Valence School is a co-educational independent school, with Prep and Senior sites. We admit children from the ages of 2 to 18, offering full and part time boarding

options from 11. To find out more about our Nursery, Prep and Senior journeys, visit [www.svs.org.uk](http://www.svs.org.uk), or follow us on Instagram and Twitter, @svs\_news



# Seeing the sunny side...

This month, **Jamie Edney** – who runs designer eyewear boutique **Edney & Edney** with his optometrist wife **Ayshah** on Monson Road – looks at the current crop of trends for über stylish sunglasses...

**D**espite a ‘white Easter’ being forecast, the short wintry days are slowly getting longer, and warmer and before you know it summer will soon be upon us – I promise!

As we look forward to those long, hot days it’s a good time to get thinking about sunglasses. We all know about the importance of UV protection for our eyes, but realistically we want our shades for an even more important reason – to look fantastic!

Spring/summer ‘23 is shaping up to be quite a season for eyewear, but I’m getting particularly excited for the sunglasses element. So this month, I’m going to talk about the collections that will be setting the trends for the summer.

I predict that the trends of this season are going to be an exaggerated

*“I predict that the trends of this season are going to be an exaggerated renaissance of eyewear of the 80s and 90s”*

renaissance of eyewear of the 80s and 90s. Extreme sizing seems to be accelerating as a trend, that is the undersized frames are getting smaller with thinner rims, and oversized are getting bigger with chunkier acetates.

Collections such as Dita are doubling down on large aviator styles, with vibrant tints taking centre stage. Gone are the days of hiding the eyes with a mirrored lens – pastel tones which reveal the eyes of the wearer are becoming more popular. Firm Edney & Edney favourite Jacques Marie Mage are introducing an explosion of colour into their range. Pastel tones, which seem to be the palette of the moment across many design industries are going to be dominating acetate frames this



year, something I am very much in support of. Our popular JMM collection is going to embrace this trend.

As always, avant-garde Belgian collection Theo is opposing the trends set by celebrities by producing completely unique, intricate, asymmetrical designs inspired by pop art. Our small collection of four limited edition frames has been influenced by four iconic artists of the pop art era and was ordered by Mrs Edney and myself on a buying trip to Paris. I am delighted to bring a small piece of Belgian high fashion to Tunbridge Wells, and I can’t wait to introduce these four amazing works of art.

As with spectacles, finding one pair of glasses to complete every style can be a tall order – your statement ‘going out’ pair may not fit your professional look – and the same goes for sunnies. My advice would be to start the sunglasses wardrobe with a classic shape. An easy to wear aviator or Wayfairer-esque shape is a suave crowd pleaser. But going outside the comfort zone with a bold colour both in frame and lens will provide the wearer with a contrasting look, excellent for holidays or even just the pub garden!

Whether or not you wear prescription glasses, sunglasses have



#### GET IN CONTACT:

[www.edneyandedney.com](http://www.edneyandedney.com)

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never provided a better opportunity to complete a look for the summer. While all of our collections feature beautiful sunglasses, we

are always delighted to convert an optical frame into a completely unique pair of sunglasses with a bespoke Nikon lens tint to your specification. Nikon’s impressive range of vibrant graduated polarised tints are like nothing else available on the sunglasses market, giving you access to a completely uniquely pair of sunnies with unparalleled visual performance. Our versatile collections from across the globe represent the forefront of eyewear fashion, and we would be delighted to recommend an incredible pair of sunglasses to you. As always, please pop in to the practice on Monson Road. We’re open Monday to Saturday, 9:30-17:00.



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# Summer-loving

This month **Charlotte Newman** from **Kitch** fashion boutique reveals why **Pitusa** is such a hot label to invest in for summer...

**P** Pitusa is one of the most popular brands we stock at Kitch. It was founded with the vision of providing colourful, comfortable and high-quality apparel, inspired by travels around the world and the diversity of different cultures.

Pitusa combines luxuriously soft fabrics and bold shades to keep your beach look effortless and stylish every day in the sun. A female-led brand founded by Clara Lago, it was created with the aim of providing comfortable and colourful resort wear for women of all ages, shapes and sizes. It's a brand that is renowned for adding a Peruvian flair to traditional Middle Eastern cover-ups, making their beachwear collection truly unique and sure to elevate your holiday style this spring/summer.

Here are just a few of their signature looks...

## RUFFLES

Pitusa's maxi dresses are perfect for a day out in the sun. Their flowy designs are ideal for staying cool in the heat and their bright



*"Pitusa combines luxuriously soft fabrics and bold shades to keep your look effortless and stylish every day"*

[@kitch\\_clothing](http://www.kitchclothing.co.uk)

colours add a fun touch to any look. Their contrast ruffle dresses are guaranteed to make you stand out from the crowd. The flowing bodices are created from delicate hand-loomed fabric that feels soft and silky against your skin and the fabric drapes and flows beautifully with every movement. The ruffled tiers add volume and dimension to the dresses, creating playful and feminine silhouettes that are both eye-catching and flattering. Whether you're attending a special event or simply want to elevate your summer style, the ruffle dresses will have you feeling confident and beautiful.

## BRAIDED DESIGN

Another great option to wear this holiday season are the braided maxi dresses which combine comfort, style and sophistication. Made from a lightweight burn-out fabric, these dresses are not only easy to wear but also have a unique texture and pattern that adds interest to the design. The delicately braided necklines are made from multicolour strands that are expertly woven together, creating a beautiful and eye-catching detail that draws the eye up towards your face. The dresses

are designed to flatter every body type, with the loose fit allowing for plenty of movement and the maxi length elongating the silhouette.

## CO-ORD SETS

The contrast ruffle co-ord set is a stunning ensemble that showcases the delicate hand-loomed fabric of Pitusa's collection. The top's loose and flowing fit creates a comfortable and breezy silhouette that is perfect for hot summer days. The shorts, with their soft elastic waistband, are designed for comfort and practicality. They provide ample coverage while allowing you to move freely and easily. The shorts also feature a contrasting ruffled hem that matches the top, creating a cohesive and stylish look. The ruffled hem adds a playful and feminine touch to the set, creating movement and volume with every step you take. Pair it with sandals or flats for a casual daytime look or dress it up with heels, clutch bag and statement jewellery for an evening out.

If you are looking to brighten up your spring/summer wardrobe, Pitusa has got you covered this season. From sunrise to sunset,



discover their collection of stylish beach cover ups and dresses in dazzling colours that can be worn everywhere, every day, by every woman.



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# Face value

This month our resident beauty queen, professional make-up artist **Natalie Piacun** from TAW Salon on The Pantiles, gives you a masterclass on how to achieve the perfect complexion

- For under eye dark shadows with a blue cast, opt for a yellow toned concealer
- For brown or yellow tints opt for a peachy toned concealer
- For red tones choose an exact colour match to your skin
- To hide dark shadows under the eye area use a light reflecting concealer in a shade that is no more than half a tone lighter than your actual skin tone
- Hide blemishes by using a slightly heavier concealer. Blend and ensure the area is the perfect colour match and unnoticeable
- Set with a light dusting of translucent powder

#### 4: Finding the perfect powder:

Powders are great when used for setting make-up for a longer lasting finish. You can choose between a loose powder or pressed powder. A light dusting of loose powder using a large soft powder brush, focusing on the T-zone, either side of the nostril and forehead is recommended when using a liquid foundation but go easy as powders can often look 'cakey' and are aging to older skin.

#### BEST FOUNDATIONS

**Best liquid foundation** for sheer coverage – MAC Studio Radiance Face and Body Radiant Sheer Foundation, £30 available from [www.mac.com](http://www.mac.com)

**Best illuminating liquid foundation** – Chanel Les Beiges Water-Fresh Complexion Touche de Teint, £51. Available from [www.chanel.com](http://www.chanel.com)

**Best foundation for oily skin** – Fenty Pro Filt'r Soft Matte Longwear Foundation, £30. Available at [www.boots.com](http://www.boots.com)

**Best foundation for light matte coverage** – Kevin Aucoin Foundation Balm, £42. Available at [www.spacenk.com](http://www.spacenk.com)

#### BEST CONCEALERS:

**Chanel's Eau de Teint** – can be applied like a concealer to target specific areas, or like a foundation over the entire face. Halfway between a foundation and concealer for a weightless fresh finish to the skin, £51. Available from [www.chanel.com](http://www.chanel.com)

**Rodial Diamond Liquid Concealer**, £39. Available from [www.lookfantastic.com](http://www.lookfantastic.com)

**BEST POWDERS:**  
**Nars Soft Matte Advanced Perfecting Powder**, £29. Available at [www.narscosmetics.com](http://www.narscosmetics.com)

**F**inding your ideal foundation, in terms of skin tone and texture is no easy feat. With a multitude of brands, colour ranges, formulas, and finishes nowadays it's no wonder so many of my clients are finding it challenging to pick the right thing.

When looking for your perfect product consider shade, undertone, coverage, longevity, blendability and performance.

#### 1. Building foundations:

Foundations come in many forms: from creams and liquids to compact powders, sprays, and even tinted moisturisers.

Cream foundations are great for normal to dry skin, helping disguise open pores and patches, and offering a good to medium coverage. They're best applied with a synthetic brush, using the warmth of your fingers or a damp cosmetic sponge. Remember to blend well as these products can look quite heavy and often ageing on the skin.

Liquid foundations are a personal favourite of mine. They are great for most skin types and all ages. These help to give an even, natural finish and are very easily applied with the warmth of your fingers or using my go-to MAC 130S Short Duo Fibre Brush (£28 available from [www.maccosmetics.co.uk](http://www.maccosmetics.co.uk)).

Compact powder foundations are good for a more oilier skin type. They contain the most pigment and have a drier chalkier texture than liquid or cream foundations and can be applied with a damp cosmetic sponge and blended out with a large powder brush. Build slowly and ensure your skincare routine is on point and

the products have settled before applying a compact.

For a very light coverage with a natural finish use tinted moisturisers, which are perfect for both men and women. Also good for teenagers as there is minimal pigment to block pores.

#### 2. Lessons in application:

• **A clean canvas** – first things first, ensure your skin is clean, prepped and well moisturised.

• **Take time to prime** – if you have open pores or an uneven surface then you may find a primer works well. Just be sure you have exfoliated and moisturised your skin before applying.

• **Make a match** – when trying on base I recommend checking your shade across your lower cheek and jawline. Now step back and look in the mirror – if you can't see the foundation, then you have your perfect match.

• **Blend, blend blend** – apply foundation to the T-Zone, under the eyes and blend out from here.

• **Dab, pat and smooth** – layer up where needed such as the nose and chin. Remembering to blend outwards, into the hairline, under the chin down the neck. No hard edges or lines should be seen so take your time with this important stage.

• **Don't forget your ears** – no one wants a flawless face with bright red ears.

#### 3. Choosing your concealer:

Concealers come in a range of textures, and it is typically best to opt for a creamy texture for under the eye area. Choose a slightly firmer product when concealing blemishes, scars and any redness as these have more staying power throughout the day



MAC Studio Radiance Face and Body Radiant Sheer Foundation £30



Chanel Les Beiges Water-Fresh Complexion Touche de Teint £51



Fenty Pro Filt'r Soft Matte Longwear Foundation £30



Nars Soft Matte Advanced Perfecting Powder £29



Kevin Aucoin Foundation Balm £42



Rodial Diamond Liquid Concealer £39





# A cut above

If you're a regular shopper at Royal Victoria Place then you'll have spotted the impressive new **Belgravia hair** and beauty salon located on the upper floor. **Eileen Leahy** meets its owner **Vesna Mclean** to discover why her business is head and shoulders above the rest...

**F**or someone who started working in their trade at the tender age of just 16, Vesna Mclean has done exceptionally well. Originally hailing from the West Midlands, Vesna is not just a talented hairdresser, but also a prolific business entrepreneur, having established her own salon, as well as a premium line of hair and beauty products – the latest of which she is launching this month. But more on that later...

When we meet for coffee at her Belgravia salon in the Royal Victoria Place, which opened last October, Vesna also tells me she has previously had a successful career in fashion design and also runs a small fine art business selling her paintings.

"I think you've always got to think outside the box," she says

as we settle down with a coffee brought to us by her daughter Taya who is now working for Vesna.

"I believe anything that's different works. If I'm doing the same as every other hairdresser in town then why would you come to me? My goal, right from when I was a trainee was to do things a little differently."

Vesna tells me she trained under the influential Rizzo Group in Birmingham over thirty years ago and learnt so much from her time there.

"They really were the crème de la crème. I remember they were the first group of hairdressers to dress all their team in black. They were pioneers and brought hairdressing to a new professional level and I really liked that."

After working her way up the ranks to that of a senior stylist Vesna then took on additional roles

*"Nowhere else in the UK has the revolutionary BV8 Bullion but after months and months of hard work we are now able to trailblaze the process here in Tunbridge Wells"*



elsewhere before opening her own salons around the West Midlands, enjoying a successful career while bringing up her two children.

When she, her husband and family relocated to Tunbridge Wells three years ago Vesna took her time to source the right space for her first salon in the South East.

"We came across this retail space and I knew it was a risk as it was just so big but ultimately I knew it could work. We gutted the whole place and worked really hard to make it look and feel as luxurious, and more importantly, as welcoming as possible and I think we've achieved that."

With its smart grey leather chairs, floor-to-ceiling illuminated mirrors, warm paint palette and flattering lighting it certainly achieves both those goals. The cute cocktail and coffee station tucked at the back of the salon, where clients can help themselves to a drink, cappuccino and some tasty treats, adds to the high-end feel too – as do the shelves of premium hair products which include Olaplex, WOW, K18 and Redken and also Belgravia's signature hair and skincare lines which Vesna is responsible for creating.

"That's something you don't





see too often – independent hairdressers creating their own brand. But like I said, I like to do things differently.”

These include the specialist BV8 Silk Flow non-sulphate shampoo and conditioner, hair wax and a glaze spray all of which complement Vesna’s latest patented product: BV8 Hair Extensions which are made from the finest quality real hair and applied in just eight seconds thanks to a clever piece of ground-breaking technology.

“We’ve named it the BV8 Bullion as it resembles a bar of gold,” smiles Vesna before showing me how the clever laser gadget affixes hair extensions swiftly and effectively – and yes, it really is all done in eight seconds as I filmed

Vesna doing it.

“We’ve always offered state-of-the-art extensions and hair tapes but I’ve been working on this idea for some time now,” she explains, adding that the eight-second application means doing a whole head of real hair extensions will now take around 40 minutes instead of several hours.

“Nowhere else in the UK has this, but after months and months of hard work we are now able to trailblaze the revolutionary BV8 Bullion process here in Tunbridge Wells!”

Vesna adds that she will soon be launching a BV8 website where other salons can buy the products or apply for training. Vesna reveals she eventually wants to set up an

**NEW LAUNCH:** Belgravia’s new BV8 Bullion range will be on sale later this month



#### CONTACT:

01892538200  
www.belgraviahairgroup.com  
@belgraviahairgroup

*“Throughout our chat the salon has been buzzing – and not just with the sound of hairdryers. This is clearly becoming a popular place in town”*

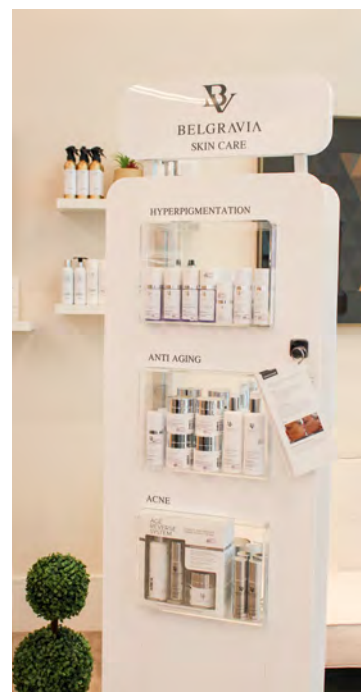
academy where her staff can offer expert guidance.

Talking of her team, she says they are all ‘amazing’ and offer clients so many added extras courtesy of their different skillset and experience.

“My colourist Kseniia for example can create all sorts of magic thanks to her knowledge and technique. What she performs here for clients you won’t get anywhere else. She is a colour genius!”

In addition to the hair side of the business, Vesna offers facials and other aesthetic procedures as well as HD eyebrows by beautician Ina.

“We are also hoping to launch a Botox offering by an aesthetician who is also a trained paramedic and offers treatments with no downtime. I’m currently recruiting for a nail technician too, as we have assigned a corner of



Belgravia for doing all sorts of gels and acrylics. Belgravia is also the only stockist in Kent that sells French premium skincare brand Thalion.”

Throughout our chat the salon has been buzzing – and not just with the sound of hairdryers. Given the amount of people having their tresses treated this is clearly becoming a popular place in town. Why does Vesna think that is?

“I think because we offer walk in appointments – which most hairdressers don’t anymore – that definitely helps the footfall. Also, we do regular promotions such as 50% off colour and 20% off hair extensions. That always catapults the business.”

As I get ready to leave, after experiencing a superb new colour courtesy of Kseniia and a stylish new bob cut thanks to Vesna, she tells me that she regularly receives positive feedback from her customers and that to her is priceless.

“I’ve had people phone me up to say how lovely or friendly a member of staff was to them while other clients say it feels so warm and welcoming when they walk in here. It really is music to my ears. It’s just those little things that make such a big difference when you’re running your own business.”







John says that since he and his wife Maya opened the doors to Helios, which he describes as a 'holistic centre', three decades ago business has gone from strength to strength.

"When we registered as a pharmacy we had a lot of support from professional bodies in the UK and because things were really growing in the homeopathic world

# Healing powers

Helios homeopathic pharmacy and clinic on Camden Road is one of our town's most successful businesses. Here its founder **John Morgan** tells **Eileen Leahy** about its fascinating history and why its mission has always been to provide its customers with expert holistic guidance...

**C**amden Road is one of Tunbridge Wells' most eclectic and everchanging roads, but one firm with a constant presence there is Helios homeopathic pharmacy, which has been serving its natural remedies to its loyal, constantly growing customer base since it first opened in 1986.

One of only four specialist homeopathic pharmacies in the UK, it has been a huge success story, helping guide and educate people both locally, nationally, and indeed all over the world, on their alternative health journeys.

In brief, homeopathy is a system of medicine developed in the 18th century by Dr Samuel Hahnemann, which uses natural substances sourced mainly from minerals and plants, to create effective, bespoke remedies to stimulate the body's natural

*"Helios comprises a sizeable in-house homeopathic pharmacy, a well-stocked specialist retail space, three consulting rooms and a specialist clinic"*

*www.helios.co.uk  
@helios\_pharmacy*



healing ability.

Over the next few months we will be running a series of features with Helios founder John Morgan in order to bring readers a broader explanation of what the essence of Helios is all about, but before we do that we sat down with

him to discuss the history of the business and discover more about homeopathic medicine...

"We were originally located in the building just opposite," explains John when we meet in one of his consulting rooms at Helios HQ, located at 89-97 Camden Road.

"But after a few years of trading it was clear we needed a bigger premises and so we moved to this building in 1991."



## WHAT IS HOMEOPATHY?

Homeopathy is a natural, gentle and effective system of medicine that works on the principle that 'like cures like'. Homeopathy treats each person as a unique individual with the

aim of stimulating their own healing ability. A homeopath selects the most appropriate medicine based on the individual's specific symptoms and personal level of health.



there was definitely space for something new. It has grown from day one and hasn't really stopped."

John adds that this was especially evident during the Covid period when people couldn't get hold of certain things such as Vitamin C and Vitamin D.

"Our staff worked their socks off during that time but I am so glad we were able to support people in so many ways. But no matter how busy we get the quality of our remedies has always been of utmost importance."

John's own homeopathic journey started when he was at university training to be a pharmacist.

"During my degree I looked at various alternative health therapies including herbalism. Then I came across homeopathy and really fell in love with it and the philosophy of creating a permanent healing model for optimum health."



*"People go on a journey with us, we are here for each stage of life and ultimately we want to get homeopathy to as many people as we can"*



He goes on to explain the key pillar of homeopathy is to achieve the 'ideal state of being free from disease on all levels'.

"It is a very high ideal but one which we strive towards and are passionate about. Homeopathy works with nature and with the powers of the mind and body to heal itself. Homeopathic remedies have the ability to stimulate the process of self-healing. It is a natural, gentle and effective

system of medicine that works on the principle that 'like cures like'.

"We launched Helios with around 50 remedies and now we have over three and a half thousand," smiles John who says he has also seen his team of just five staff expand to 80 over the years.

Helios has also quadrupled in size and is now spread over four storeys. Boasting its distinctive royal blue and gold branding, the shop now comprises a sizeable in-

house homeopathic pharmacy and a well-stocked specialist retail space which sells its own eponymous remedies as well as other known holistic brands such as Weleda, Viridian, A.Vogel and Australian Bush Flower Essences to name a few. Attached to the pharmacy is a specialist clinic where homeopathic practitioners can carry out face-to-face appointments. Helios also has a pharmacy in London's Covent Garden on New Row, which is

## HELIOS IN NUMBERS

- 50 remedies on launching in 1986 and now there are over 3.5K
- 140 countries sending products to
- No. 1 customer outside UK is the US
- 350 calls received during the day during the pandemic
- Grown 5-10% every year since 2000
- 13 different categories stocked online including essential oils and pet products
- 70 plus brands available online and also in store



PHOTOS BY DAVID BARTHOLOMEW

equally as successful, exporting products all over the globe.

As well as offering a bespoke service Helios produces a range of over-the-counter remedies, natural plant-based creams and specialist homeopathic kits, covering a wide range of common complaints and first aid situations for all the family. There are even remedies and products for your pets! Homeopathy can be used on its own or alongside conventional medicines, as they work in different ways.

"We can also prescribe remedies for things that come and go like coughs and colds or sports injuries as well as pregnancy. In fact, this is when a lot of people start their journey with us and they go on to adopt homeopathic medicines for their children."

John adds that they also have a new range of products launching later this month which will be

unveiled at an industry event at Excel in London.

So, whether it's an over the counter conversation, a chat over the phone or an in-depth consultation, the professionals at Helios have you covered.

"People go on a journey with us and that's a great feeling. We are here for each stage of life and ultimately want to get homeopathy to as many people as we can. That's been our aim from day one and always will be because we know the immense healing benefits that it brings."







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*“When anxiety is overwhelming, playing with anxiety trinkets helps you redirect nervous energy, helping your mind slow down and focus”*

attention and be much calmer for doing so than their parents.

Tics are another form of fidgeting which is outside of conscious control and indicative of emotional stress. Trying to stop tics or fidgeting habits can aggravate them by drawing attention to an unconscious reaction. For example, if you tell a nail biter to stop, they'll often be surprised because they didn't know they were doing it. And then, they'll start again the moment their attention wanders.

### **FIDGETING IS IN THE GENES**

Babies soothe with blankets and dummies, toddlers suck thumbs, chew sleeves and fiddle with fluffy bunny ears, children repetitiously bounce balls, snap rubber bands, ping rulers, flick paper. Mums sanitise everything, Tom Daley knits. We never really stop fidgeting through our lifetimes.

The need for sensory stimulation is not new. Familiar and comforting fidget gadgets like prayer beads, rosaries, Tibetan spinning rings and weighted meditation balls have existed for centuries. Restlessness and hyper-vigilance is a physical response to perceived threat which can be soothed by familiar rituals and routines. From an evolutionary perspective, fidgeting is a preparatory energy surge for the flight or fight response and has been crucial to our survival.

### **TOYS AND TRINKETS**

It's now possible to indulge our restlessness with fidget spinners, pop-its, cubes and balls, putty and magnets. And the latest fad is fidget jewellery. Anxiety rings are designed to keep your mind calm and hands busy. These pretty accessories come with multiple bands that spin or tiny beads that rotate. Fidgeting with anxiety rings can provide a distraction from unhealthy, anxious thoughts. In any situation, they are a discreet way of calming down without anyone noticing that you were stressed in the first place.

For children, there are primary coloured chewable necklaces. Anxiety calming jewellery for men and women, adults and children includes bangles, rings and pendants. Just like essential oils, crystals and natural remedies, these are harmless devices that provide comfort by tapping into beliefs which provide a sense of control. Taking action is better than no action. Distraction diverts attention away from catastrophic thoughts or anticipatory anxiety.

Research has shown that fidgeting lowers cortisol, the stress hormone, clears our heads, and improves memory by stimulating dopamine. Fidgeting with a handy, easily available object like a ring on your finger gives your brain something to focus on so that your nervous energy and thoughts are calmed. Some jewellery is designed to vibrate or hum to create a hypnotic effect and reduce overthinking.

When anxiety is overwhelming, playing with anxiety trinkets helps you redirect nervous energy. They can be used as part of a toolkit of techniques and strategies to alleviate anxiety. Meditation, breathwork, hypnotherapy and physical activity can help your mind slow down and focus. Self-care and a good support system of family and friends also reduces anxiety and its symptoms. Providing they can put up with your annoying knee jiggling or finger drumming tendencies...

**Karen Martin**  
Hypnotherapist

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



# Stress *busters*

This month our resident hypnotherapist **Karen Martin**, who runs her specialist practice at Salomons Estate, reveals how specific fidget gadgets can help you curb your anxiety and focus...

I see a lot of stressed people in my hypnotherapy practice. The first session can be nerve-wracking for those who don't know what to expect. And so, when they sit down, sitting still isn't an option. Hair twiddling, toe tapping, knee jiggling and hand wringing are all signs of the body releasing tension through repetitive movement. If they had an anxiety ring or necklace to fiddle with, they'd find it much easier to walk into the unknown.

School teachers know it's pointless to ask a class of 30 children of any age to sit still. In fact, researchers have discovered that they may pay more attention if they're allowed to fidget as this can calm anxiety and enable a busy brain to focus.

We all have little stress-busting routines and rituals which we're mostly unaware of while we're doing them. Tendencies to do things like chewing pen tops, fiddling with clothing or anything handy are common and

normal comforting behaviours. Other anxiety related habits like nail biting or skin picking are embarrassing to adults as they're regarded as being childish. There are many secret thumb sucking adults who would be mortified if they were ever found out.

### **TO FIDGET OR NOT TO FIDGET**

The line between fidgeting and hyperactivity or stress relieving habits and anxiety disorders is blurred. Nibbling on a hangnail is not the same as biting nails till they bleed. Twirling a strand of hair is very different to trichotillomania, a compulsive urge to pull hair out. Rapid, restless 'psychomotor agitation' is an extreme form of fidgeting that borders on self-harm when it involves scratching, biting, pinching or punching to cause pain.

A US study revealed that students playing with stress balls were less distracted during lessons and working

independently. Kinesthetic learners, who absorb information through movement and touch, enjoyed increased attention spans. All students showed improvements in attitude, writing abilities, peer interactions, and achievements while manipulating stress balls.

### **ASSOCIATED DISORDERS**

Unconscious fidgeting is a classic symptom of ADHD and OCD sufferers tap or count to relieve anxiety. That doesn't mean that everyone who fidgets has these issues. However, any degree of anxiety induced patterns of behaviour will only stop when the underlying cause has been identified and resolved. When I see children who can't sit still, their parents will often chastise them as not moving is seen as 'good' behaviour even though it's something children rarely do voluntarily unless they're asleep. But I'm quite happy to let them fidget and wriggle as they will often pay more





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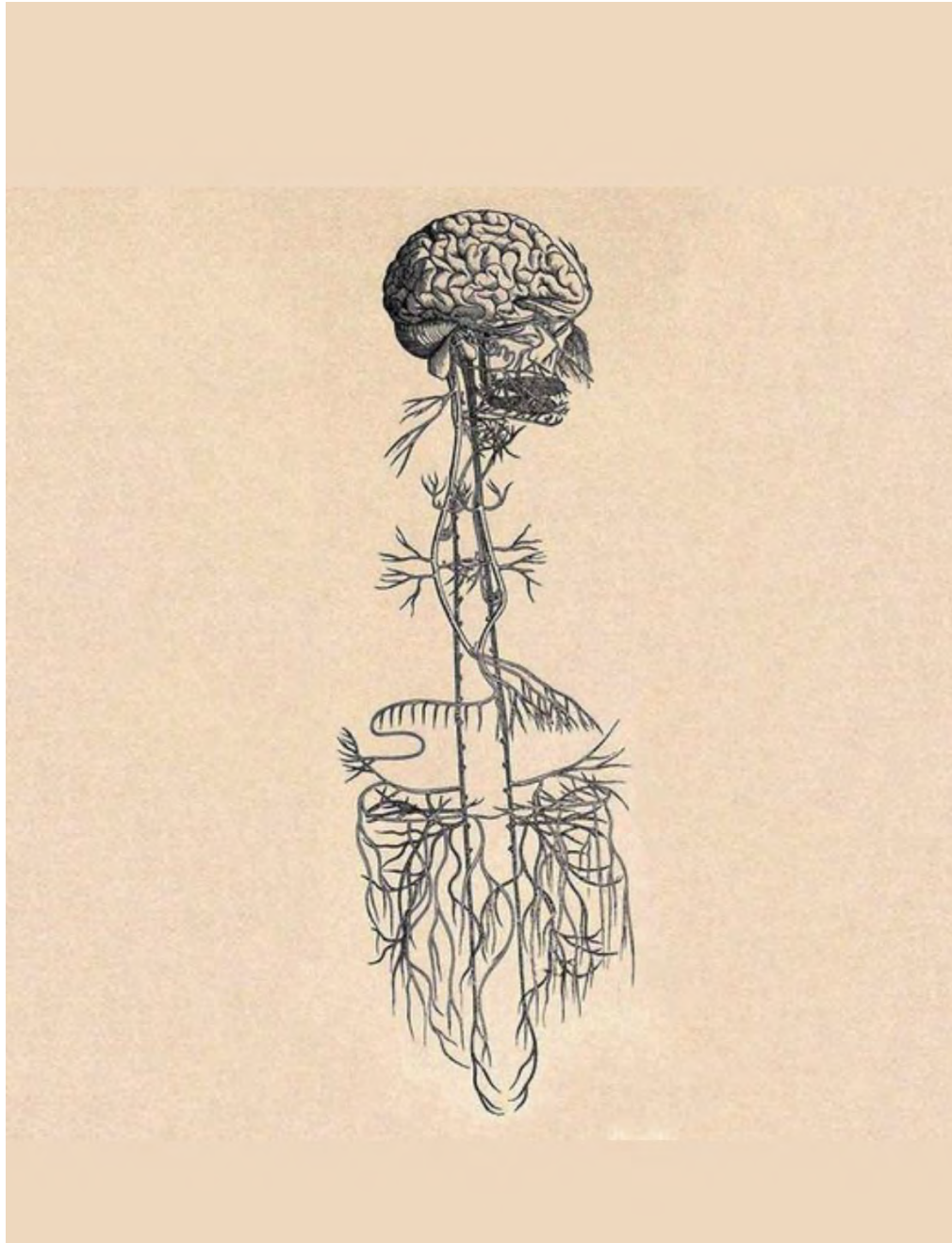
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# Gut feelings...

This month **Naomi Murray** from **Botanica Health** in Rusthall reveals how stressful situations can impact your gut health and ways you can stop this from happening...



**H**ow many times have you swallowed a feeling, rather than speaking up? It might be a moment when you wanted to say no but instead you said yes. Perhaps a friend uttered something hurtful but you didn't want to rock the boat so you kept quiet.

Or maybe you feel unappreciated but just carry on – or you just bury your emotions generally.

This type of behaviour and reaction to certain situations is often referred to as 'emotional labour', a form of emotive regulation that requires you to suppress feelings, either positive or negative, for the sake of others. Sadly however, this often results in stress, fatigue and physical health issues for the person trying not to hurt others.

But the truth is these feelings need somewhere to go and if they are not spoken out loud then they are in fact 'swallowed'.

*"The truth is our feelings need somewhere to go and if they are not spoken out loud then they are in fact swallowed"*

Gabor Maté explains in his book *When the Body Says No: The Cost of Hidden Stress*. He says: "Physiological stress, then, is the link between personality traits and disease. Certain traits – otherwise known as coping styles – magnify the risk for illness by increasing the likelihood of chronic stress. Common to them all is a diminished capacity for emotional communication."

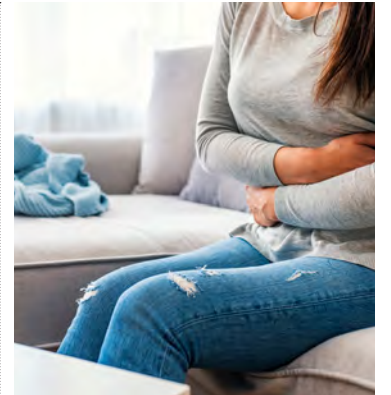
Studies show that a stressful life or more importantly how we react to stress, is associated with several digestive conditions including IBS, IBD, acid reflux, bloating and stomach ulcers. The link between emotions and physical health therefore is clear.

The majority of emotional data is in our body (not our head)

The vagus nerve, pictured here, is the best way to show how emotions impact our health. The longest nerve of the autonomic nervous system in the body, it originates in the brainstem, extending down to the abdomen.

Also known as the 'wandering nerve' it is the principal component of the 'rest and digest' parasympathetic nervous system.

Via the vagus nerve, the gut-brain axis consists of bidirectional communication, linking emotional and cognitive centres of the brain with peripheral intestinal functions.



Through this we can understand why a worrying thought or upsetting encounter can make your stomach churn and why the body relaxes when receiving a kind word or hug.

The gut, the 'second brain', has more than 100 million nerve cells lining the gastrointestinal tract from the oesophagus to the rectum. Astonishingly more neurons reside in the gut than in the entire spinal cord. And ten times more data, called afferent data is sent from the body to brain than the brain to body.

It is clear that felt emotions which are not dealt with in the right way can impact digestive health, therefore it is helpful to be mindful of this and adopt ways to reduce the negative impact these may have.

## Adopt these tips for a calmer tummy and relaxed mind:

**1.** Set healthy boundaries and speak up rather than swallowing unspoken feelings

**2.** When you feel stressed or anxious splash your face a few times with cold water. This can really dampen down the stress response

**3.** Take time out to do things that bring joy and aid relaxation. It can be a simple walk in nature where you can tune in to your surroundings

**4.** Practise deep abdominal

breathing. Hands on the tummy, filling it up on an in breath like a balloon. In for 7 out for 11

**5.** Watch your self-talk and remember to speak kindly to yourself

**6.** Avoid foods that tend to bloat or cause gas

**7.** Make sure you eat in peace, never in turmoil

**8.** Consider calming herbs like chamomile, lemon balm and marshmallow

**9.** Have a good belly laugh

**10.** Always trust your gut



**Naomi Murray**  
Co-founder of  
**Botanica Health**  
[botanicahealth.co.uk](http://botanicahealth.co.uk)



# GREEN DUCK SPOTLIGHT ON *Champagne Charlie*

With over 20 years of experience as a performer in musical theatre, Champagne Charlie is an amazing entertainer who has mastered cabaret and has become a well-liked host at several venues. Some locals may know him from his evenings at Scallywags where he performed regularly for three years, he has also played in several nightclubs up in town, most notably 'The Candlelight Club' as well as various vintage festivals.

Other highlights of his career have been performing a solo routine to Glenn Miller's Moonlight Serenade for 5000 spectators over the course of three nights at the Royal Albert

Hall on the anniversary of the Battle of Britain. With the amazing Jenny Arnold as choreographer.

He also recently performed to a sold-out crowd of 800 people at Berlin's Heimathafen Neukölln. He performed his first crowd-surf after more than 40 years in the entertainment industry while he was in Berlin, and he now want to do it at every performance! SO WATCH OUT TUNBRIDGE WELLS!

For 15 years, he led Champagne Charlie and The Bubbly Boys, a hugely popular 1920s dance band. Most recently he has been playing with the Norwegian band Swing It! "They were so enthralled by me that I am thrilled and honoured that they wrote a song called "Champagne" which was inspired by my on-stage persona."

We warmly invite this outstanding new performance to the Green Duck Event Space & Bar.

**Champagne Charlie Pops His Cork / With Accompanist Tom Carradine** @ The Green Duck Events Space And Bar  
**Saturday 10th June @ 8pm**

Join Champagne Charlie and accompanying musician Tom Carradine

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(the resident host of the popular Green Duck Cockney- Sing- along)

For a musical evening of truly decadent live entertainment that is incredibly funny and old-fashioned.

Allow Charlie and Tom to take you on a wild musical and mayhem-filled adventure in their show, which draws its inspiration from Music Hall, Variety, Musical Theatre, Pop, and the heyday of French and Weimar Cabaret. With songs by Josephine Baker, Janis Joplin, Fred Astaire, and David Bowie, they celebrate their lifelong passion for classic music.

Long after the show is



over, you'll be yelling "Champagne!" in response to Charlie's extravagant costumes and cheeky comedic banter. This is going to be a wild party that you won't want to miss, so grab a glass of bubbly wine and settle in.

"A masterclass in how to give an audience a fabulous party" – Cabaret Scenes.  
"The way you work the audience is so captivating." – Su Pollard  
"Brilliant! Your show is great." – Hugh Grant.

**Tickets £20 per person**

(Includes an Antipasti board.)

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# Moving on up...



*"If you want to feel healthy and fitter, then look at your daily activity. Walk to work, do the housework or get out in the garden – basically get your steps up and don't sit down as often"*

This month, SO's resident fitness columnist **Sarah Gorman** reveals the ways you can incorporate simple yet effective exercises into your everyday life to look and feel fitter...

**W**hen we think about fitness and exercise we often associate it with losing weight, getting leaner, building muscle, training for an event or generally getting in better shape physically. All this is relevant of course but there is also another factor to consider: Life. Taking steps to get fitter and moving more in your daily life will impact on everything from not getting out of breath when chasing your kids, walking the dog, taking a flight of stairs and dare I say it...

even your sex life!

You will feel better about yourself which leads to confidence and general self-esteem. You'll feel younger and more alive. Training doesn't have to be about getting bossed about by a personal trainer, 'killing it' at the gym or doing endless online classes. Getting fitter and finding more ways to move your body on a daily basis can be a pleasant experience for those of you who don't even like exercise!

I'm sure that you don't need me to tell you about how much muscle tone we lose as we get older and how our bones become more brittle and our joints more painful and stiff – if we don't move our bodies and keep them active and well oiled.

Think of your everyday routine and the functional movements that you do – or maybe don't do

because you struggle. I like to bring functional movement into my training and my classes because fitness and exercise is not just about the gym. If we are clever we can emulate the movements that we do in day to day life and incorporate them into our training. This means that your every day movement becomes more fluid; you will gain mobility and strength to do the everyday activities that you need to do or want to do.

Speaking of which... sex. It's all about lust and being in the moment...right? Well yes but, if your body is feeling fit and strong then you can improve your endurance, you can hold up your own body weight and you can control your own movement; slowing things down when you want and then speeding them up when the time is right. Having a sense of control within your own body is extremely empowering to yourself and to the person that you are with. To be able to have that same amount of control within your body – to be able to use your internal muscles to hold back and then let go at just the right moment is even more empowering and sensual. What's not to love about that?

But how do we do this? Well to get a fully rounded, healthy fitness routine we need to think about the cardio element, the strength and resistance element as well as the mobility and flexibility. It hugely depends on your personal goals and individual needs as to how much you do and how much time you allocate to each element.

If you simply want to start to feel healthy and fitter in daily life, then I would encourage you to

look at your NEAT (Non-Exercise Activity Thermogenesis) levels. This is the energy expended for everything we do that is not sleeping, eating or sports-related activity. It's all the 'stuff' you do in your daily life and these activities can easily be enhanced. Walk to work, walk to school, walk the dog. Housework – do the vacuuming, get out into the garden at the weekends. Basically get your steps up and don't sit down as often.

If you are looking to improve your fitness levels and start to feel and even see some physical results (obviously nutrition is 80% of the effect on weight loss) then choose to start adding in an element of each of the categories I have mentioned – again, depending on the results you want will depend on how much work you put in. But start to think of those daily activities that you do and see if you can make them a little more challenging for yourself by adding some weight to your ankles or wrists when you go for a walk. Use your desk and chair in the office or at home to do some simple stretches and get those inner thighs ready for cracking some nuts!



*"Taking steps to get fitter and moving more in your daily life will impact on everything"*

## MOVE OF THE MONTH: Shoulder bridge with progression of a single leg lift.

This exercise is great for strengthening your glutes and working your hamstrings as well as getting some much needed mobility in the hip

flexors. Adding a single leg lift to the move will test those glutes...

1. Lying on the floor on your back, place the feet on the floor; knees to the ceiling, hip width apart
2. Lift the pelvis up to the ceiling so you are creating a ski slope or bridge with the spine. Hold the position and then bring the hips

down and just kiss the floor with the bottom, lift again and repeat x16 - 20 reps x4 rounds (or until you feel the burn)

3. Hold the position at the top of the move and do small pulses with the hips using the glutes (bottom) to squeeze) x20 pulses x4 rounds

4. Progress by lifting a single leg and repeating both rounds of movement



**Sarah Gorman**  
Fitness professional  
and entrepreneur  
@sarahgormanblendfit  
sarahgorman.fit



# Set the scene...

**Sarah Coleman** of **Beyond The Table** styling business offers her creative advice on how to have a stylish Easter lunch table courtesy of beautiful blooms, a selection of natural seasonal tones and textures and some cute bunny ears...

**S**pring is my favourite time of year and heralds the ‘opening party’ of the spring/summer hosting season: Easter. This bank holiday weekend is the perfect opportunity to gather friends and family around the table and celebrate all the new season has to bring us...

When styling up a specific space, at my business Beyond The Table I always consider the setting of the particular tablecloth that’s been commissioned to ensure the whole experience is harmonious.

This year as I am hosting a



family style sharing lunch in my kitchen for Easter so I will be using a calming taupe colour palette, with gingham prints and bundles of texture. Velvet bows, rattan placemats, a ruffled linen tablecloth and seagrass baskets are my tablescape ingredients of choice in order to help me create a subtle, yet stylish nod to the start of spring.

As it’s a table for the grown-ups, I can afford to be a little more subtle in terms of my colour scheme, avoiding the more traditional tones of pastels and pinks. There are however nods to the day courtesy of foiled eggs

*“This year as I am hosting a family style sharing lunch for Easter I will be using a calming taupe colour palette, with gingham prints and bundles of texture”*

wrapped in gingham napkins and folded to look like bunny ears and placed in individual mini seagrass baskets, essential for Easter egg hunting – whatever your age! The folded napkins are completed with a luxury velvet bow and a personalised name card to finish each guest’s placement. For family and friends who you host frequently, order (or make) beautiful calligraphy name cards in a neutral colour that can be kept and re-used for the next brunch, lunch or dinner party you host.

My golden rule and styling mantra is that a tablescape should be beautiful yet functional. For a family style lunch I keep the middle of the table completely free and place ‘landing pads’ through the centre of the table for the dishes to land.

For an easy, practical and cost-effective way to add colour and intrigue to your table centre, you could place a piece of patterned wallpaper over your tablecloth to create a runner that instantly updates things and will eliminate any stains to your best white linen.

Simple, contrasting off-white and taupe crockery brings extra texture and layers to the tablescape and offers a totally hassle-free solution for the host when it comes to service.

For a plated dinner party menu, only lay a charger plate on the table to avoid awkward removal of plates when dinner is served.

To finish any tablescape – and especially for spring – flowers are a must. Here I have used foraged blackthorn blossoms mixed with soft pink silk flowers. I’ve hung them in a particular way so they descend from above bringing height, softness and freshness without compromising space on the table itself. Calm, serene and offering an elegant yet functional setting I look forward to welcoming family and friends around my table this spring.



Beyond The Table offers comprehensive dinner party planning and tablescaping services for private family events at home and on staycation for 2-22 guests. With 15 years of event planning experience, an extensive list of recommended suppliers and an in-house tableware hire service, Sarah at Beyond The Table offers a holistic solution to effortless hosting.

And for those who are looking to hone their own tablescaping skills, Sarah hosts intimate tablescaping workshops across Kent where you can learn all about the art of curating a bespoke and personal tablescape with hands-on styling and knowledge sharing.  
**TABLESCAPING WORKSHOP — BEYOND THE TABLE**





# *Outdoor Living Special*

● Corker's stunning new show gardens ● Unveiling a majestic Moroccan oasis ● Tunbridge Wells Tennis Club courts favour





# Get the outside edge...

With a whole crop of fresh ideas, what could be better than a visit to Corker Outdoor Living in Paddock Wood to see their new show gardens. SO's gardening guru **Tim Sykes** of **Garden Proud** gets an exclusive look...

**O**n Saturday April 29, from 10am to 4pm, garden landscaping specialists Corker Outdoor Living, who are based near Paddock Wood, will host a special event unveiling their new and impressive show gardens.

The family-run business has also invited each garden's designer along so visitors can have a chat as they wander around the new crop of stunning gardens. Coffee, cakes and drinks will all be served and there will also be 10% off all materials purchased on the day.

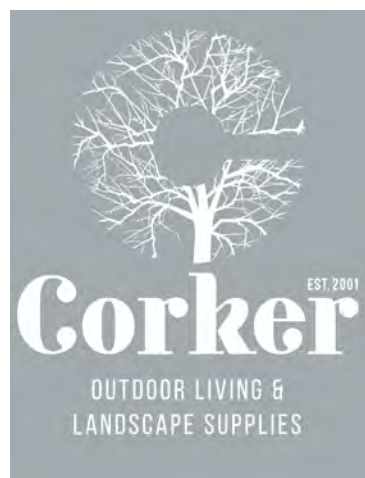
The mastermind behind the show gardens event is Oliver Corkery, Managing Director at Corker Outdoor Living.

"Since launching the original show garden concept back in 2017 we have been amazed at the way the gardens have helped inspire our customers and generate business for our designers, landscapers and of course Corker Outdoor Living.

"Perhaps one of the most important benefits to Corker has been the way the gardens have been a catalyst to creating a community of individuals and businesses that work and grow together," says Oliver who co-runs the Corker business with his father Mick and mother Alice.

It's true to say the experience of being in lockdown at the start of the Covid pandemic in 2020 made many more people appreciate their gardens – especially as the weather was so good!

In my opinion the garden, no matter how big or small, helps us find that all important time and space to reflect and take a breath. Therefore it is really important we all get all the elements of our



alfresco oasis right and there is every chance of doing just that at Corker Outdoor Living.

Having had a sneak peek at the new designs, I can reveal the show gardens for 2023 at Corker are truly inspirational. They will provide visitors with a wide spectrum of ideas that utilise many of the materials and resources that are readily available.

"As well as this, Corker's designers and landscapers also have access to a whole plethora of tree and plant nurseries, and associated trades including swimming pool contractors, garden building fabricators, electricians and plumbers, so they can provide you with a truly comprehensive solution," adds Oliver.

"Here we are only able to give you a small glimpse at the creativity and professionalism that goes into creating the show gardens," he continues.

"I'd just like to say a big thank you to all the very special people who have supported our initiative from the very start. They include Mike from All Your Garden Needs,

Sam at Beetlestone, Cameron from Cameron Trend Design, David of Cat & Mouse Landscapes, Barry from English Gardens, Jake at Fairdeck, Kane from Fairweather Construction, Jack at Your Garden Creations, George from Gardenproud, Amanda and Becca at Hopkins & Nash, Karen from Karen McClure Garden Design, Jamie at Kentish, Marlene from Marlene Lento Garden Design, Paul from Paul Woods Landscaping, Matt at Praesto Landscapes, Ryan from RTW Landscapes, Camellia at The Garden Taylor, Tim from Wealden Country Landscapes, and of course Will from Will Buss Landscaping."

So how did each of the new show gardens come about? Well each of the designers were tasked with creating an innovative garden in a very small space (just 4.8m x 5m) so the grey matter had to work overtime to provide a solution that works and also communicates key attributes of each designer and their landscape construction team.

## CORKER'S OUTDOOR LIVING NEW SHOW GARDENS AT A GLANCE:

### 'A Contemporary Kentish Outdoor Entertainment Garden'

Designed by Marlene Lento



A modern, yet timeless design that sits equally well with a Kentish farmhouse, or an urban setting. Successful gardens visually relate to the house they belong to, so the palette starts here with brick and render, which are universal to a range of architectural styles.

The central feature is a large, monolithic planter that merges into a kitchen counter. This clean, minimalist envelope sets off the warmth of the brick and the texture of Millboard used in the decking and floating bench. Black feather board cladding creates a contrasting backdrop for the evergreen planting. This mellow contemporary scheme is low-maintenance and easily adaptable to a variety of outdoor spaces.

Contact Marlene 07900 575588  
mlento@marlenelento.com

The driving force behind the Show Garden initiative; Alice, Oliver and Mick Corkery







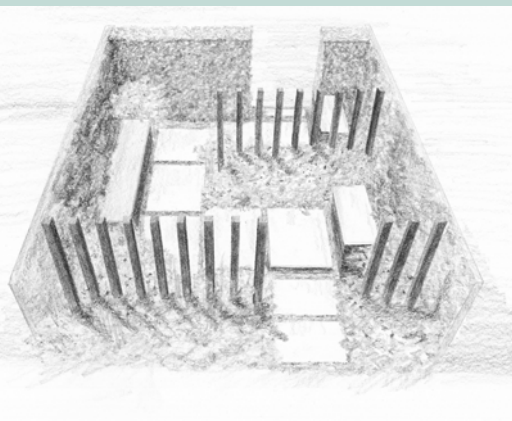
### 'A Journey through the Garden'

Designed by Cameron Trend

This garden is designed to evoke a feeling of enclosure and contemplation. The design showcases the capabilities of a small garden by taking you on a journey through the space.

As you enter the garden, stepping pads lead you through the space with benches offering opportunities to rest along the way. Stepping down into the garden creates a more intimate area and enhances a more tranquil atmosphere. Planting is textural and green to contrast against the dark structure and geometric layout by softening with frothy foliage. Materials are used in an unconventional way that experiments with texture and colour.

**Cameron Trend**  
07581 647855  
camerontrend@gmail.com



### 'A Small Sanctuary'

Designed by Camellia Taylor

I was really excited to be asked to build a show garden at Corker, especially as it is being built by 'Garden Creations' who I regularly work with. I wanted the garden to showcase the incredible craftsmanship from the team and to demonstrate what can be achieved in a small space (with a little help from a friendly garden designer!). I love plants and was keen to include as many as possible – not just because of the environmental benefits, but also to enhance the landscaping. I was thrilled to use Jura Beige Limestone (a favourite of mine) and some lovely chocolate brown clay pavers that have been recently added to Corker's extensive range of materials. Corker is very much a community and I love being part of it.

**Camellia Taylor**  
07737 615 042  
hello@thegardentaylor.co.uk



### 'The Dutch Way'

Designed by Amanda Hopkins and Becca Nash

The concept for this garden was inspired by contemporary Dutch design which explores beauty in simplicity. An emphasis on clean, uncluttered vertical and horizontal lines, putting materials and craftsmanship centre stage.

The central path has been offset and positioned diagonally across the garden to maximise length, accentuating the longest part of the garden.

A rectangular terrace, laid in softly veined grey limestone, is angled to push the boundaries of the garden away, draw the eye inwards and give a dynamic quality to the space. A bowl of water reflects light and movement into the north-facing plot.

Simple planting combinations have been used to bring all-important movement, colour and texture, as well as green interest at height.

**Becca 07912 031282**  
RTW Landscapes at 07568 510847



### 'The Little Corker Zone'

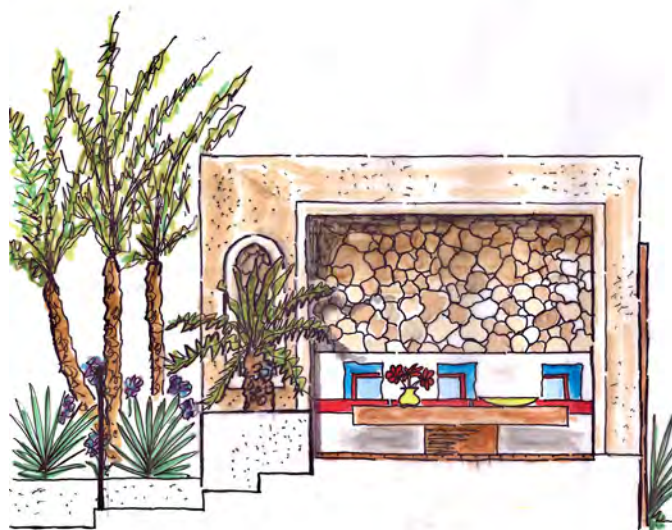
Designed by Karen McClure

Corker sought the creation of an inspired entertaining and corporate space to host key industry and public events and to demonstrate their quality range of products.

The garden features a social lounge and bar, including an outdoor cooking area, kitchen and BBQ. The stylish structure connecting the main area will enable the space to be utilised at all times, as will sensitive and subtle outdoor lighting. Restorative planting reflects a calming environment including crisp, textural foliage and elegant colour palette, enhanced by the canopies of the ornamental trees.

The Little Corker Zone will ensure that no-one, no matter how small, will miss out on the fun! Quality products will reflect the accessibility of a lifestyle outdoors and materials are chosen with the environment and sustainability in mind. The Corker Collective show garden aims to reflect the attributes of the Corker brand, an all-encompassing space for families, contractors, designers and landscapers alike to come together to create inspired-outdoor-spaces.

**Karen McClure**  
01892 263863  
karen@karenmcclure.co.uk



### 'A Moroccan Riad Courtyard'

Designed by George Sykes

Imagine the warm hues and blistering heat of Marrakech. Then think of a sanctuary you can rest in the dappled light and cool surroundings and sip a refreshing glass of green tea with mint. Well that's just what George has re-created in his new garden at Corker.

Walk past the giant *Trachycarpus fortunei*, step over the cool mosaic pool and climb the limestone steps to the Breedon gravel courtyard before finally lounging on the cushioned bench and reflecting on the day in the Marrakech-style, Balau floored garden building.

George's aim was to demonstrate his company Gardenproud's skill at building gardens, plus outdoor buildings and their ability to research and deliver themes that transcend geographic boundaries.

**George or Tim Sykes**  
07725 173820  
tim@gardenproud.co.uk

**Corker Outdoor Living hosts its new show gardens event on April 29. They are situated just off the A228 near Paddock Wood, TN12 6SD**





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## 4 TIPS TO PREPARE YOUR SPRING LAWN.

### 1. TIDY THE LAWN

Remove branches, twigs, leaves and debris from your lawn before the mowing season starts.

### 2. MOWING

In early spring your grass will have old leaves so cut it short to produce new, healthy growth. But remember to raise your blades before the next cut because cutting short on a regular basis is bad for your lawn!

### 3. RAKE

After the short cut rake, or lightly scarify, the lawn to remove any remaining thatch and debris. This will allow the grass to breathe and water to get down to the roots.

### 4. FEED THE LAWN

As the ground warms and the grass grows it will need extra nutrients. Feed a good quality Fertiliser Treatment to stimulate lush green growth and a thickening lawn.

Station Road, Robertsbridge, East Sussex TN32 5DG | 01580 880567





# Al fresco refresh



Tahiti Outdoor Cane Chair, £550, Next

A decorative, showy piece for sure, this fashionable cane chair will turn the tiniest garden into an idyllic setting. Showerproof seat and back cushions can withstand a surprise sprinkle.



STAUB La Cocotte Round Cast Iron Cocotte in Cherry Blossom, from £64.95 (Mini), Zwilling Whether it's a cheese fondue or asparagus casserole, this gorgeous new pastel shade is a must for spring entertaining.

Now is the time to think about styling your outdoor space, says **Sam Wylie-Harris**

**T**here may be an unexpected chill in the air, but it's not too soon to be thinking about a spring getaway – to your own garden.

After all, it only takes warmer-than-average temperatures to trigger thoughts of outdoor entertaining, so why not spruce up your patio space or sun deck in preparation?

Especially if you've thought

about doing it in the past – only to discover all that lovely al fresco booty has already been stripped from the shelves.

“Think of your outdoor space like an extension of your home,” says Gabrielle Anderson, outdoor living buyer at John Lewis. And this season is all about flexible living, she adds, and buying pieces you can use inside and out.

“For example, don't save your

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**Flogan Eucalyptus Bar Trolley, £299;**  
**ANYDAY Dine White Wine Glasses – Set**  
**of 4, £15; Nordlux Strap To Go Battery**  
**Outdoor Light, £90, John Lewis (trolley**  
**and glasses available mid-March)**  
Your secret weapon for effortless  
entertaining, a bar trolley ticks every box  
in the style stakes – and will look just at  
home in your kitchen.

glass and china tableware for  
inside dining only, make the  
most of your favourite pieces  
and mix and match them to  
create a colourful and eclectic  
dining table.”

Outdoor cushions are great for  
adding an extra layer of comfort  
and pop of colour to dining  
outdoors, Anderson suggests:  
“They are easily packed and  
stored away when not in use.”

Here’s how to style your space  
for those springtime socials...

**John Lewis Swirl Stripe Glass, £22; Glass**  
**Tumbler, £9; Coastal Explorer Spiral**  
**Fine China Serving Bowl, £15; Coastal**  
**Explorer Fine China Tapas Bowl – Set of**  
**4, Blue/Green, £12, and Ikat Print Cotton**  
**Table Runner – 250cm, Blue/Green, £15,**  
**John Lewis**

Swirly stripes and washes of blue signal  
coastal style and long, lazy lunches. We may  
not be there quite yet, but this tableware  
draws the eye like the Mediterranean Sea.

**Gozney Limited Edition Yellow Rocbox, £399,**  
**Gozney (available from March 15)**  
A pizza oven with panache, the Gozney Rocbox is  
available in buttercup yellow for a limited time only.



**Matchbox Seat Pads, £38.50 each,**  
**Graham & Green.** When it comes to quickie  
makeovers, a new seat cushion inspired by  
retro style matchboxes will give your patio  
chair some newfound flair.

**Hoole Cast Iron Grill Fire**  
**Pit, £39.99 (was £149.99),**  
**Gardenesque**  
Easily portable, imagine how  
the warming flame from this  
rustic-style fire pit will lend a  
cosy ambience and focal point  
for your outdoor seating.



**Brambly Cottage Sunnyside Melamine,**  
**£24.27 (was £32.79), Wayfair.**  
When life gives you lemons... this is the dish  
for a citrusy burst of happiness.



**1. Set of 2 Daisy Melamine Side Plates, £12, Next**  
Fresh as a daisy, these pretty plates have the feel-good factor.





POWDERMILLS

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# A taste of the exotic

**Tim Sykes of Gardenproud** reveals the story behind the incredible Moroccan garden he and his son George have created for Corker's new collection of show gardens...



George Sykes is building Gardenproud's Moroccan style garden, which is still under construction, as part of Corker's new show gardens

**W**ho wouldn't be inspired by the warm hues and dappled sun of Marrakech? You've only got to spend a long weekend in one of the country's delightful riads to experience their magical appeal...

And that's exactly where the initial inspiration came for the new show garden my son George has helped me create for Corker Outdoor Living as part of its new collection.

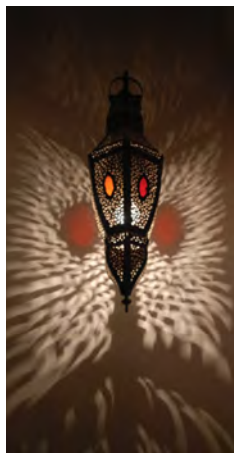
"It all started when I saw some pictures my dad took of a wonderful trip to the Medina in 2019," explains George.

"Dad's photos were amazing and captured the essence of both the light, the mottled shades of the building plasterwork and the vibrance of the tropical plants that defied all odds in the unrelenting heat."

Well this wasn't actually the only factor. A very significant influence was the time George, the young designer of this latest Gardenproud masterpiece had spent in Sydney, Australia.

The town gardens of Sydney are compact and have to work really hard to capture a client's imagination, combining form, features and planting in order to create a veritable oasis that Australians can retreat to and cherish throughout the long hot summers.

This was the starting point for his concept, tempered by the challenge of creating a garden in just 4.8m x 5m of space! No pressure then...



*"Walk past the giant Trachycarpus fortunei, step over the cool mosaic pool and climb up the limestone steps to the Breedon gravel courtyard..."*



**Tim Sykes**  
Gardenproud

The brief was to stimulate our imagination and demonstrate Gardenproud's skill at building gardens, plus outdoor buildings and our ability to research and deliver themes that transcend geographic boundaries.

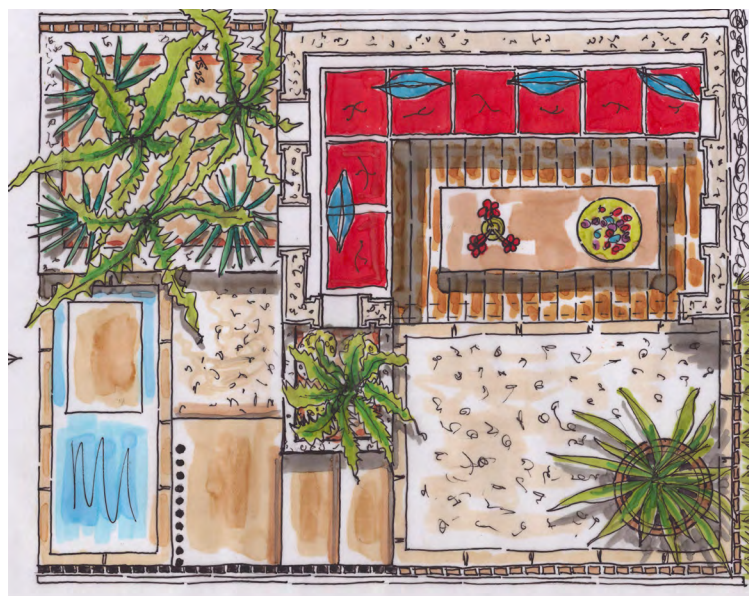
George spent nearly three years working with one of Sydney's greatest garden designers, Anthony Wyer, learning and mastering all the skills and attributes that combine to make these visions realities.

He's now brought this insight home to the UK and together with yours truly we try to inject a lot of energy, passion and creativity into our work.

His new Moroccan showpiece at Corker Outdoor Living in



Paddock Wood will open to the public this month and visitors will be able to sample all the glories of



this exotic garden.

A huge help came from the army of supporting industries who have contributed to making the garden possible.

A big thanks goes out to our great friends at Corker Outdoor Living, Provender Nursery, SCEC Electrics, The Barefaced Welder and Jordon Punyer. But there are

so many more people we need to thank, who have helped us understand how to achieve the finishes and effects you can see in the construction.

Walk past the giant Trachycarpus fortunei, step over the cool mosaic pool and climb the limestone steps to the Breedon gravel courtyard before finally lounging on the cushioned bench and reflecting on the day in the Marrakech style, Balau floored garden building. Just the folly you dreamt of to place in your garden and create that spot we are sure you'll love to escape to...

Come and visit the garden at Corker or see more about it on our website [www.gardenproud.co.uk](http://www.gardenproud.co.uk), or contact me on 07725 173820 for further information on how we can help you create your own little paradise.



# Step back in time...

Discover the historic 1066 battlefields and so much more when you stay at **PowderMills Hotel**, located in 80 acres of stunning Sussex countryside...



A charming, privately owned Georgian Grade II listed Country House Hotel, PowderMills is a beautiful 80-acre estate with lakes, gardens, woods and fields.

The hotel has a fabulous 2 AA rosette Orangery restaurant and Gunpowder Bar and the nearby village of Battle offers some great additional dining options.

The hotel is also dog-friendly and there are glorious walks to be had within the establishment's glorious grounds and surrounding countryside.

Within walking distance of the medieval town of Battle and adjoining Battle Abbey, you can also enjoy some wonderful walks on the famous 1066 battlefields from the grounds of the hotel. It really is a paradise for walkers and history lovers alike.

The once-bloody battlefield, is now a peaceful meadow filled with wild flowers and birdsong. You can stand at the very spot where King Harold is said to have died and admire the ruins of Battle Abbey, built by William the Conqueror as a penance for the bloodshed. You'll

also find tranquil gardens, historic buildings, educational displays and a year-round programme of events.

Battle's bustling historic high street is a joy to wander, with independent clothes shops, craft shops and book shops, and tiny cafés and tea rooms spilling out onto the pavements. With delicious delis, cosy pubs and restaurants, it offers everything from seafood to steak.

Just outside the town, pathways and cycle tracks take you to places as peaceful as anywhere in southern England. Visit Battle Great Wood, over 200 acres of woodland and

*"Battle's pathways and cycle tracks take you to places as peaceful as anywhere in southern England"*

heath with meandering streams and wide, well-managed paths perfect for walking and cycling.

These woodlands are home to deer, badgers, birds and butterflies. At this time of year you'll find carpets of bluebells and wood anemones. The famous 1066 Country Walk runs through the wood, marking the path William the Conqueror took after landing at Pevensey and continues on to Winchelsea and Rye, spanning 31 miles.

Why not come and discover this charming part of the world for yourself?



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