Stay dry, stay confident
Be inspired every day!
GET FITTER & HEALTHIER
the easy way!
5 clever moves
Meeting my GREAT-GREAT GRANDDAUGHTER
Irresistible CAKES
The perfect Mother’s Day treat
Flattering FASHION
For every age!

Joanne Froggatt
I really care about what people think!
“Apparently brushing only cleans about 60% of my teeth. TePe helps me reach up to 100%”

– Gabby Logan

Research shows oral health is related to overall health. TePe interdental brushes help clean the 40% of your teeth that toothbrushes can’t reach. No wonder 94% of hygienists recommend them*.

*Source: A survey of 201 dental hygienists in the UK, Ipsos, (2019)
Hello!

Mum’s the word
Well we all shine on, Like the moon and the stars and the sun, sang John Lennon. It’s easy to forget that what we do in life can create fond memories that endure in others long after we ourselves have passed away.

I lost my mum a few years ago now, but not a day goes by that I don’t smile to myself about something she did or said. My children also remember their grandmother with real affection, and I’m sure their memories will persist long after I, too, have passed on the baton to the next generation. So as usual I’ll be raising a glass to Mum this Mother’s Day. Discover the history of this great institution on page 10.

Geoff

Group Lifestyle Director
geoffrey.palmer@ti-media.com

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3 of the best... Mother’s Day gifts

FLOWERS
Who doesn’t love a floral surprise? And if you choose a living plant rather than cut flowers, it’ll carry on giving!

CAKE
Giving or receiving, a cake is always a welcome gift – and the giver usually gets to enjoy it too! See page 22.

A HUG
The original gift of love costs nothing and means everything. But be warned – you may get a stronger hug in return.

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Wanderlust
Over-55s have got the travelling bug, with nearly 39% spending more than 20 days on holiday in the last year compared with 27% of under-35s*. A further 19% have spent more than a month abroad over the last 12 months! The most popular countries are the US (seeing places like New York, pictured), Japan and Canada. Where’s your favourite destination?

Bag new clothes for nothing
Update your wardrobe for free by going to a swishing (clothes-swapping) party. Just take along good-quality pieces you no longer wear and exchange them for items brought by others. Look online to see if there are any happening locally, if not, why not set up your own? There’s a video on how to at loveyourclothes.org.uk

Did you know?
Eight in 10 Brits saved money in the last decade by switching at least one financial services product, says research by GoCompare. Car insurance was the most switched product, with 56% of adults changing provider in the last 10 years. This was followed by their energy provider, with 5% of people switching.

On this day in history
On 12 March 1918, Moscow became the capital of Russia. It was a few months after the October Revolution, and the Soviet leadership decided that Moscow was more defensible than the previous capital – Petrograd. The capital’s history dates back over 800 years so it’s no surprise it’s one of the most visited cities in the world.
Fit for travel?

It looks like people with health problems are unhappy when it comes to travel. More than two-thirds of people with medical conditions feel penalised when buying travel insurance, despite 66% feeling their condition does not affect their ability to travel, according to research from AllClear. Claim costs show that a heart attack in India could cost between £10K and £30K, while a stroke in the US could cost as much as £350K.

Too busy to clean?

Given that Brits are busier than ever before, many don’t have time to thoroughly clean their home. A recent survey revealed that the microwave (81%) is the often forgotten or ignored aspect of the home that Brits most intend to clean at least once a month, according to the End of Tenancy Cleaning Company, who surveyed 1,624 British property owners/renters.

Report Facebook scam adverts

Facebook has a tool for users to report ads they suspect are scams. Access it by clicking the three dots in the top right corner of the ad on the site. Select ‘Report ad’, click on ‘Misleading or scam ad’, and on ‘Send a detailed scam report’. A team will be alerted to review info and take down any violating ad.

Knitflix... and breathe?

Hailed as a great way to embrace mindfulness and even improve mental health, knitting is having a moment. With hashtags such as #Knitflix seeing over 12.5k photos on Instagram, there’s a growing community of people reviving the craft. Send us a photo of your creations!

For your diary

The multi-award-winning epic musical following the life of Elton John, Rocketman, will be shown in concert, with a full orchestra performing its iconic soundtrack live to picture. Starting in Dublin on 3 June, the tour will also call at Birmingham, Brighton, London’s Eventim Apollo, and Glasgow, before the finale in Edinburgh. Book now at ticketmaster.co.uk

If you’re looking to eat less meat this year, you can make a saving on Meat Free Mince, made from plants, at Sainsbury’s until 22 March. Was £3, now £2.50.

Deal of the week
Where I read mine
I brought the wonderful Woman’s Weekly to Las Vegas. Here I am with my lovely Australian daughter-in-law, Jamey Moss, and her mother, Narelle Vorbach, seeing the sights after Jamey and my son Erik’s destination wedding. The happy couple now reside in Ballarat in Victoria, Australia.
Kristina Vandervoort, Canada
✦ We’d love to see where you read your copy of Woman’s Weekly. The more exotic the location, the better!

Look what I made
I knitted this from a Woman’s Weekly pattern from 1997! Plus I used wool holders, which were gifts with the magazine a long time ago. It was a challenge but I’m so proud of it.
Valerie Roscow, Manchester

A great recommendation
I love reading every bit of Woman’s Weekly, and this week is no exception, as you have reviewed the film A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood [4 February issue]. This brings back wonderful memories of the two years we spent in Florida with my husband’s job. Our then three-year-old son and I would watch Mr Rogers every afternoon. He loved it. I hope he can still remember it, as he is now 44!
Sue Wilkins, North Somerset

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**What you’re WEARING**

**Luciane Martins, 44**
Tell us about your look
I’m usually either in jeans or a floaty prairie-style dress. I also love colour and a great print. My check coat came from Topshop last season and my scarf is Missoni. My jumper is Next, my gilet is Uniqlo and my jeans are by Redew, which is an eco-friendly brand. My trainers are Valentino and my bag is Louis Vuitton. I’m happy to mix designer with finds on the high street.

And the best bit of your body?
My flat stomach!

**Ann Weston, 62**
Tell us about your look
I’d say my look is comfy, quirky and a touch edgy. I love easy layers, and to mix and match colours and textures. My jacket is Uniqlo. My tunic top is Cos. Perfect for flattering the figure! I bought my trousers in Gap last summer and my shoes are Camper. I like unusual, practical accessories. My orange bag is by Arc’teryx – it specialises in outdoor bags for hiking but I think they’re quite stylish for every day.

And the best bit of your body?
My shoulders and collarbones.

**Susan Stoddart, 70**
Tell us about your look
I found my coat in Zara a couple of years ago. I love soft colours – pale pinks, creams and powder blues – so it’s very me. Underneath I’m wearing a black knit dress with silver stud detail, and black opaque tights with heeled ankle boots from Dune. My scarf is also Dune and my bag is Ted Baker.

And the best bit of your body?
My eyes.

**Namrata Singh, 38**
Tell us about your look
I’m wearing my Punjabi suit. It’s comfortable and elegant. This is one of my favourites. The embroidery is so pretty. I usually visit India once a year and always buy my Punjabi suits at a shop in Chandigarh. I’ve added a pink jacket from Debenhams, cardigan from Next and pink shoes by Clarks. I like to keep everything tonal from top to toe!

And the best bit of your body?
I’m complimented on my nose.

**Hazel Buswell, 1977**
I’m on the left of the photo with the polo neck and blue-and-white top, and my friend Gill wore a red top. Denim flares were very on-trend. We were both 18 and at Skegness. Happy days!

เพช We’d love to see how great you looked in any era up to and including the 1980s. Please send a good-quality photo with your name, address and daytime phone number clearly written on the back, to: Fashion Dept, Woman’s Weekly, 161 Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP. Photos will be returned.
‘I wish I wasn’t SO HARD ON MYSELF!’

Joanne Froggatt on what she’s learnt about herself and the not-so-glamorous life of an actress

She may be best known for playing head housemaid Anna Bates in every episode of Downton Abbey, but 39-year-old Joanne Froggatt first found fame in Coronation Street in 1997 as teen mum Zoe Tattersall.

Now she’s back on our screens, reprising her role as teacher Laura Nielson in ITV’s psychological thriller Liar, following the success of the first series back in 2017.

But Joanne has revealed filming the new series of Liar was lacking the glamour you may expect from a prime-time ITV drama, mainly down to unpredictable British weather!

Recalling one scene, in which she and co-star Ioan Gruffudd were filming in a restaurant at the end of Deal Pier in Kent, Joanne explains, ‘There was a big, big thunderstorm and the lights went out.

‘It was quite epic, actually, because as soon as Ioan would start talking, there’d be a big clap of thunder and lightning. I was like, “Wow, you’re really on fire tonight, Ioan! You’re electric!”

‘But then the storm was just closing in all the time. At midnight, after we’d finished filming, we started walking down the pier to the shore. A bolt of lightning cracked and everyone’s hair stood on end,’ she says.

‘So I decided, “I’m getting inside, I’m leaving now, that’s it!” It certainly added to the drama.’

But that wasn’t the only time Joanne had to deal with the elements.

‘There was a scene outside a pub that was probably one of the coldest ever,’ she adds.

‘It was just the iciest wind, and Katherine Kelly and I had our final scene together. We were blue, our teeth were chattering and we had to brace ourselves to be filmed. We would inhale sharply so we could stop shaking while the cameras tried to get a take.’

Despite her stellar career, Joanne does have regrets and would love to tell her younger self to be more questioning.

‘I’d change my mindset and not be so hard on myself, and impart the knowledge that other people’s intentions aren’t always as well-meaning as my own.’

And, even now, Joanne says that her worst trait is ‘caring too much about...’
what other people think’.

Originally from North Yorkshire, these days Joanne lives in Buckinghamshire where, until recently, she lived with husband, James Cannon.

Discussing their amicable split after eight years of marriage, Joanne has said, ‘We’ve actually been separated for a little while. I’m looking to the future.’

But, as for many of us, work is undoubtedly a distraction for Joanne, and life as an actress means you never know what you’ll end up doing on set.

Her character in Liar is a keen kayaker – a skill she had to learn quickly during shooting for the first series.

She tells us, ‘I’ve spent quite a lot of time on those marshes. It is a beautiful location and it’s quite invigorating.

‘But I can kayak now. I did have a body double, who did the wide shots, who made my technique look better!’

So will she be bringing these kayaking skills to a third series?

Joanne coyly finishes, ‘It’s not my place to say, but who knows? The writers, Jack and Harry Williams, come up with all sorts of things I would never have thought of, so I don’t know, we’ll see…’

Liar is on ITV at 9pm
Love you MUM!

Find out more about this popular day of celebrating motherhood

Let's hear it for mums across the UK. From wiping away our tears in childhood to supporting us in our adult lives, they do so much to help us. So whether you’re a daughter, mother or grandmother, Sunday 22 March is the time to share the family love and take a moment to say ‘Thanks, Mum’. To get you in the mood, here are some fascinating facts about Mother’s Day.

Mothering Sunday
Since at least the 16th century, Mothering Sunday has featured in the UK Christian calendar. Originally it wasn’t a celebration of motherhood, but a time during Lent when people would return to their mother church — the main church that presided over smaller local ones — for a special service. Often they’d meet their families there too.

Ancient tradition
Celebrating motherhood goes back a long way. In their spring festival, the Greeks celebrated the goddess of nature and fertility, Rhea. Considered the Mother of the Gods, Rhea was closely associated with another mother goddess, Cybele, whom the Romans honoured.

Changing date
Mothering Sunday occurs on the fourth Sunday of Lent, exactly three weeks before Easter Sunday. It’s also known as Laetare Sunday, which was a day of respite during Lent. Because the date of Easter changes every year, so does the date for Mothering Sunday.

A visit home
In the past, many apprentices and servants would be given the day off on Mothering Sunday to visit their mothers. Usually, they would bring with them a special cake known as a Simnel cake. This was a rich fruit mixture with layers of almond paste in the middle and on top, and decorated with 11 marzipan balls to represent Jesus’ apostles — minus Judas Iscariot.

The perfect card
We spend a staggering £73 million each year on Mother’s Day, and Brits send more cards per person than any other nation, according to Amanda Fergusson from the Greeting Card Association. And while so much of our shopping is done online these days, we prefer to keep it personal on this special day, with 94% of us preferring to hand-pick a card from a shop, where we can see and feel what it looks like.
Mother’s Day treats
Whatever a mother’s age, she’ll love being made to feel special. Here are our top five suggestions:

1. A visit to the sea
Why not wrap up warm and head to a breezy beach? Try Lulworth Cove in Dorset, Mount’s Bay in West Cornwall, or Cefn Sidan in Carmarthenshire – one of Wales’ longest beaches.

2. A posh tea

3. A country day out
Enjoy a dawdle around an historic house or garden. Visit nationaltrust.org.uk (or nts.org.uk for Scotland); english-heritage.org.uk, or britainsfinest.co.uk, which is great for interesting gardens.

4. An experience
Whether it’s a balloon ride, a pampering day or a gin masterclass, you’ll find something to suit at virginexperiencedays.co.uk. Or, for a future theatre treat, check out theatretokens.com

5. A trip down memory lane
Take your mum on a trip to one of her ‘happy places’. It might be the town she grew up in, the city where she went to college, or the church where she got married. Bring along some old photos.

Sent with love
We love giving flowers – two bouquets will be delivered every SECOND across the UK on Mother’s Day, says Interflora – 15 times more bouquets than usual. While pink flowers are a favourite, vibrant colours are increasingly popular gifts for mums. Our top five picks are carnations, roses, sunflowers, gerberas and tulips.

Other countries
Over 40 countries celebrate a form of Mother’s Day, but often on a different date. In America and in many other places, Mother’s Day is celebrated on the second Sunday in May (10 May this year). Other countries, such as Russia, honour mothers on International Women’s Day on 8 March. In some countries, 21 March, or the Spring Equinox, is the chosen day.
Stay younger and PAIN-FREE

You don’t have to leave the house, or even stop watching TV, for this stretching routine to keep you fit and healthy.

**Seated Neck Stretch**

This pose is key for stretching your neck.

1. Sit on the floor, bring your feet together with your heels about 30cm in front of your groin.
2. Round and fold your upper body forwards. Rest your hands in front of you with your palms facing the sky.
3. Hold for three to five minutes, allowing your knees to release closer to the floor as your body relaxes. Exit slowly.

**Butterfly pose**

This peaceful pose releases tension from thighs and lower back. The gentle forward bend is calming if you’re stressed or anxious.

1. Sit on the floor, bring your feet together with your heels about 30cm in front of your groin.
2. Drop your chin to your chest, let your spine round and fold your upper body forwards. Rest your hands in front of you with your palms facing the sky.
3. Hold for three to five minutes, allowing your knees to release closer to the floor as your body relaxes. Exit slowly.

**Windscreen Wipers**

This flow focuses on hip mobility and feels good to practise if you’ve been sitting down a lot.

1. Sit on the floor with your legs bent and feet flat on the floor in front of you, hip-distance apart. Lean backwards and place your hands behind you for support.
2. Exhale. Drop both knees to the right, aiming to touch the floor with both kneecaps.
3. Inhale. Bring your knees back to the centre.
4. Exhale. Drop both knees to the left.
5. Inhale. Bring your knees back to centre. Repeat five to 10 times each way.

**FOR YOUR THIGHS**

**VARIATION**

Sit on a cushion to elevate your hips if your inner thighs feel very tight and your knees are higher than your hips when you come into this pose.

**FOR YOUR HIPS**

**VARIATION**

You can also practise this lying on your back with your knees bent.
Overhead Tricep Stretch
This move is good for stretching key muscles at the front and backs of your arms, as well as the shoulders and wrists. Do these poses either seated or standing.

1. Stretch your right arm overhead and bend your right elbow so your palm is touching the middle of your upper back.
2. Reach your left hand up and over your head to take hold of your right elbow and add a little pressure to gently push your right palm further down your back. Hold for five to 10 breaths and repeat on the other side.

Tree pose
This is great for improving your balance and can be practiced at other times too, such as when brushing your teeth.

1. Stand with your toes, ankles and knees together. Lift your lower belly, draw your shoulders away from your ears and bring your palms together in prayer position in front of your heart.
2. Use your right hand to bring your right foot up to rest against your left inner thigh.
3. Bring your palms back to your heart and focus on something still in front of you. Hold for five to 10 breaths and repeat on the other side.

FOR YOUR SHOULDERS

VARIATION
Want a stronger stretch? Gently rest your right palm on the top side of your head without pushing down, allowing the weight of the arm to increase the stretch. Repeat with your left hand on the opposite side.

FOR BALANCE

VARIATION
Build up to the full pose by resting your foot against your inner ankle instead of your thigh so you can touch the floor for extra support.
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You get to a certain age when everyone around you seems to be having babies, and it becomes a very lonely place. If you’re dating someone, you’re constantly asked, ‘When are you getting married?’; once you’re married, you’re asked, ‘Are you having kids?’ and even once you have kids, you’re asked if you’re thinking of having more! It’s always about the next step, and it’s even worse being in the public eye.

All through that time of my life, I was struggling to conceive and going through IVF. I went through surrogates and every single way of having a baby before I adopted my daughter, Billie, who’s now 13. And it is really difficult to be very honest about how you feel at certain times or to admit, pre-adoption, ‘I don’t know if this is the right path for me.’

But 11 years on, with my daughter old enough to understand, I felt ready to be more honest and wrote a memoir on my IVF struggles. I want to provide a hand to hold for people who are going through it – although now Billie has read most of the book she’s quite disappointed it’s more about the IVF than about her!

People always ask what the hardest thing about adopting is, but it’s just the same for any mother. You’re constantly facing new challenges and overcoming new obstacles on a daily basis. You just take it day by day.

It’s the same as when my husband, John Torode, and I started dating. We took everything very slowly and I only introduced Billie to his children six months after we started going out with each other, and even then it was only for lunch. It was slow and centred around our children being OK. It was never about us.

By the time we moved in together, it felt very normal and we’re now just one big blended family, who all laugh a lot together and all love each other.

When all the children are in the house with us, it’s the best feeling. My favourite time is when it’s breakfast and you’ve got one person boiling an egg, another making pancakes and someone else putting sausages in the oven – and all the jars of jam and chocolate spread are out on the table. It’s what I call ‘happy chaos’ – I love it.

John has four wonderful children and I’m blessed with them all.

Lisa Faulkner is Lyle’s Golden Syrup ambassador for #LylesGoldenTime campaign: 15 to 30 minutes to connect with loved ones over breakfast.

My Funny Old Week

WHERE I’VE BEEN Walking around the beautiful Trent Park.

WHAT I’VE SEEN I went to see my best friend, Angela Griffin, in The Tyler Sisters at Hampstead Theatre. She was amazing!

WHAT I’VE BOUGHT A bikini for our honeymoon.

WHO I’VE MET All my best friends and family for Sunday dinner. There’s nothing better than spending time with your loved ones around you.
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**Cardigan,** £75, and skirt, £65, both sizes 6-18, & Other Stories; **shoes,** £75, Dune London; **ring,** £35, Olivia Burton

**Jumper,** £45, sizes 6-22, White Stuff; **skirt,** £35, sizes 6-24, and earrings, £7.50, both M&S

Continued overleaf
Blazer, £25, sizes 10-32, Simply Be; jeans, £24.99, sizes 8-22, M&Co; bangles, £60 each, all Olivia Burton

Dress, £40, sizes 10-32, JD Williams; earrings, £60, and ring, £35, both Olivia Burton

Dress, £26, sizes 6-22, F&F Clothing; trainers, £69, Clarks at John Lewis & Partners

Blazer, £39.99, and trousers, £29.99, both sizes 8-20, M&Co; top, £55, sizes 8-22, Monsoon; bangle, £60, Olivia Burton

Dress, £55, sizes 6-24, Per Una at M&S; earrings, £50, bangle, £60, and ring, £35, all Olivia Burton

Denim shirt, £60, sizes 6-22, Boden; jeans, £24.99, sizes 8-22, M&Co; bangles, £60 each, Olivia Burton

Blazer, £55, sizes 6-22, Per Una at M&S; earrings, £50, bangle, £60, and ring, £35, all Olivia Burton

Blazer, £25, and trousers, £16, both sizes 8-20, Matalan; top, £29.95, sizes 6-26, Joules
Dress, £39.50, sizes 6-24, Per Una; earrings, £9.50, and necklace, £9.50, all M&S
Fabulous FIVE

As Mother’s Day approaches, one family reveals their special bond, which stretches over a century!

‘I know I’m fortunate’

Grandmother Cheryl, 43, says,

I have so many happy memories of spending my childhood with my family. My nan, Edith, now 102, loved history and would often take me and my siblings on day trips to castles around the UK. She was kind and caring, but strict – she’d quite literally wash your mouth out with soap, if you accidentally let a swear word slip.

Once, I cheated on a game of cards and she locked me outside in the rain to teach me a lesson! But we laugh about all that now. My mum, Sylvia, also loved taking us out on day trips, and we’d often go to Margate, for fish and chips, and games in the arcades.

Having two amazing women to look up to was so important when I became a mother to Lauren. For the first four months of her life, I lived at home with Mum and Dad. After I’d been awake in the early hours doing the night feeds, Mum would get up early and get Lauren washed and dressed, so I could catch up on a little bit of sleep. Having her around to help me whenever I needed her was something I never took for granted.

When Lauren told me she was pregnant and I was about to become a grandmother myself, I was overjoyed. And it seemed so fitting when she said that Cali-Sian’s middle name would be Edie, after her great-great-grandmother. Being part of five generations of amazing women is so special. I know lots of families aren’t as lucky as us, and when we all get together to celebrate Mother’s Day, birthdays and Christmas, I’ll often take a moment to look around the room and remember just how fortunate I am.
‘We talk all the time’
Great-grandmother Sylvia, 75, says,
My mother-in-law, Edith has always been such a strong, independent woman. She loves wildlife, and I have vivid memories of her taking in stray cats and feeding the birds in the garden, between making bread and baking cakes.
I’m also blessed to have a close relationship with my daughters, Cheryl and her twin sister Hilary. Cheryl and I talk all the time, and she’s very good to me – running me around on errands whenever I need her. I see my granddaughter, Lauren once a week too. Usually we’ll go shopping together. We love spending hours looking at baby clothes – we always end up coming away with something new!

‘On Mother’s Day, I like to treat us all’

On Mother’s Day, I like to treat us all to a nice meal. Edith’s not well enough to accompany us any more but we always make sure that we pay her a visit, bringing some of her favourite white chocolates and a big bunch of flowers, of course.

‘I have so much support’
Mum Lauren, 23, says,
I’ll always remember going round to my great-grandmother Edith’s house – because it was full of cats! I used to call her the cat lady. We’d play card games together, and I have vivid memories of an old-fashioned telephone she had in her lounge.
She absolutely adores my daughter, Cali-Sian, and is always saying how precious she is. The first time we introduced Edith to the youngest member of her family, the look of love on her face made all our hearts melt.
I love that my daughter has had the opportunity to meet her great-great-granny and that they have been able to bond together. I also have so much support from my nan, Sylvia, and from my mum, Cheryl. I honestly don’t know what I would do without them. Growing up, I was so close to all these amazing women in my life – I still am now – and I’m just so happy and grateful that it’s the same for my daughter.

‘The look of love on her face melted our hearts’
Lauren at her baby shower

Cheryl. I honestly don’t know what I would do without them. Growing up, I was so close to all these amazing women in my life – I still am now – and I’m just so happy and grateful that it’s the same for my daughter.
Loving cakes for MOTHER’S DAY
Say ‘thank you’ with one of these beautiful treats, which have been created by our Test Kitchen team

WHISKY WELSH CAKES
These Welsh cakes are a slight twist on the classic recipe, and are great for a Mother’s Day breakfast or afternoon tea.

MAKES 18-20

+ 45g (1½oz) currants
+ 3tbsp whisky (we used Penderyn Myth from Wales)
+ 225g (8oz) self-raising flour
+ ½tsp mixed spice
+ 75g (2½oz) caster sugar
+ 100g (3½oz) butter, chilled and cubed, plus a little extra for frying
+ Zest of 1 lemon
+ 1 egg, beaten
+ A little milk

You will also need:
+ 7.5cm (3in) biscuit cutter

1 Soak the currants in the whisky overnight, or for at least 2 hrs.
2 Put the flour, mixed spice and sugar in a bowl and rub in the butter until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.
3 Drain the currants and stir them through the flour mixture along with the lemon zest.
4 Make a well in the centre of the mixture, then pour in the egg and mix to form a soft dough.
5 If the dough is too dry, add a splash of milk to help it combine.
6 Heat a frying pan or pancake pan on a medium heat and add a small spot of butter to grease the pan. Cook the Welsh cakes for 2-3 mins on each side. They should be golden on each side and just cooked through. You may need to adjust the heat if they begin to brown too quickly.

PER CAKE
121cals, 5g fat, 3g sat fat, 16g carbs

BLACKBERRY AND ORANGE OLIVE OIL BIZCOCHO
Get a Mediterranean feel with this Spanish cake.

SERVES 10

+ 125g (4oz) natural yogurt
+ 150ml (¼ pint) extra virgin olive oil (we used Picualia)
+ 275g (9½oz) caster sugar
+ 3 eggs
+ zest of 1 orange and 2tbsp orange juice
+ 375g (13oz) plain flour
+ 1tbsp baking powder
+ 175g (6oz) blackberries
+ Icing sugar, to decorate (optional)

You will need:
+ 23cm (9in) loose-bottomed cake tin, greased and lined with baking parchment

1 Heat the oven to 180C/Gas 4. Combine the yogurt, oil, sugar, eggs, and orange zest and juice. Beat for 10 mins using an electric whisk. Sift in the flour and baking powder, and stir gently with a spatula until smooth. Gently fold in the blackberries, then tip the mix into the prepared cake tin.
2 Bake for 50-55 mins or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Cool in the tin for 15 mins before running a knife along the sides and removing from the tin. Dust with icing sugar – we used a stencil to create a striking pattern.
ROSE WATER AND RASPBERRY CAKE
If your mother’s favourite flowers are roses, this Persian-inspired floral twist on a Victoria sponge will be perfect for her.

SERVES 10
For the cake:
✣ 225g (8oz) unsalted butter, softened
✣ 225g (8oz) caster sugar
✣ 4 medium eggs
✣ 225g (8oz) plain flour
✣ 2tsp baking powder
✣ Zest of 1 lemon
✣ 60g (2oz) pistachios, chopped
For the filling:
✣ 1tbsp seedless raspberry jam
✣ 150ml (¼ pint) double cream
✣ ½tbsp icing sugar
✣ ½tsp rose water
✣ 2tsp dried rose petals (optional)

For the icing:
✣ 100g (3½oz) icing sugar, sieved
✣ juice of 1 lemon
✣ 1tsp rose water
✣ A few drops of pink food colouring

For the decoration:
✣ freeze-dried raspberries
✣ dried rose petals

You will need:
✣ 2 x 20cm (8in) cake tins, greased and lined with baking parchment

1 Heat the oven to 180C/Gas 4. For the cake, beat together the butter and sugar until fluffy and light. Add in the egg a little at a time, mixing between inclusions. Then fold in the flour and baking powder, and mix in the lemon zest and pistachios. Split the mixture between the tins and bake for 30 mins.

2 When the cakes are cooked, transfer onto a cooling rack. Once cool, make the filling and icing. Pick the least perfect cake and place upside down onto a cake stand or serving plate. Spread over the jam. Whip the cream with the icing sugar until thick, but not too firm. Add the rose water and petals, and mix through until it will hold a peak. Spread over the jam, leaving a little space at the edge. Press the raspberries into the cream, reserving a few for decoration on top.

3 Put the other layer of cake on top. For the icing, mix the ingredients together. If too thick, add a little water for a consistency like runny honey. Pour over the centre of the cake. Once the icing has settled, top with the freeze-dried raspberries, rose petals and reserved raspberries.

TIP Test the cake is cooked by pressing the centre – if it bounces back, it’s ready to take out. If not, give it a little longer in the oven.
THE SMART WOMAN’S GUIDE TO THE MENopause

152 ways to take control of YOUR HEALTH

21-DAY EXERCISE AND DIET PLAN

The truth about HRT

Life’s most liberating stage!

ON SALE NOW

Your must-have guide, available from supermarkets and newsagents
Good to know

Food
Multi-use produce bags
Worried about the packaging on your food? For your next shop, take your own reusable mesh bags. These lightweight drawstring bags are made from recycled plastic drinking bottles, weigh less than 10g and hold up to 2kg. The fabric allows produce to breathe, so it lasts longer. Onya Produce Bags, £9.99 for five, letsgoplasticfree.com

Drink
Reusable flasks
Sales of canned water may have increased because of worries about pollution from single-use plastic bottles, but the best option is tap water in refillable containers. Canowater has launched a 500ml stainless steel reusable flask. £14.99, canowater.com

Beauty
Shampoo bars
Cut down on your plastic footprint by buying solid shampoo. Lush’s Angel Hair Shampoo Bar, £8, combines rose water and witch hazel with aquafaba for strength and shine.

Travel
Hotel bookings
Tourism is a big contributor to climate change. On bookdifferent.com – a hotel-booking site that’s aiming to make the travel industry more sustainable – you can find out how more than two million worldwide hotels score on sustainability and CO2 emissions.

Health
Bamboo wipes
Hidden plastics, like those in wet wipes, are a major source of marine pollution. The Cheeky Panda range uses sustainable bamboo in place of plastic. They’re compostable, breaking down in just five weeks. From £1, Holland & Barrett

6 great green INNOVATIONS
Clever inventions that will up your everyday eco credentials

Fashion
Hosiery for all
This Scottish hosiery brand makes tights that actually fit – whatever your size – because they vary the width as well as the leg length. They’re passionate about making everything they do as sustainable and environmentally responsible as possible, and the models on their website are also all customers – thumbs up! From £5.99, snagtights.com
Muffin Top? It’s time to burn those calories.

The spicy chillies in New Nordic’s Chili Burn could help you shape up this year!

You have tried everything, you know you are eating healthily and exercising, but the last few pounds refuse to shift. So why not spice things up and try Chili Burn, the leading chilli and green tea supplement, to help you keep trim the natural way.

Each Chili Burn™ tablet contains an advanced blend of stomach friendly chilli extract, green tea and micronutrients to help your body burn calories and provide you with more energy. Working in harmony with your body the tablet combines natural extracts with key vitamins and minerals. B vitamins, magnesium and chromium picolinate, which are important factors for fat, carbohydrate and protein metabolism and helps release energy from food efficiently. It helps reduce tiredness and fatigue and contributes to normal muscle function. The chromium simultaneously helps maintain normal blood glucose levels helping you not to crave foods.

The Chili Burn™ tablet helps you burn more fat.

When is Chili Burn™ useful:
- When you get older and your muscle mass decreases, slowing down the calorie burn rate.
- When you are not getting enough exercise.
- In times when you overeat.
- When you are genetically prone to being overweight.
- When you are not getting enough sleep and putting on weight because of it.

Where to buy Chili Burn™
Chili Burn™ is available from Holland & Barrett and leading health food stores. For an information leaflet call 0800 389 1255 or purchase online from www.newnordic.co.uk

ADVICE & QUESTIONS
You are always welcome to contact our New Nordic helpline at 0800 389 1255

HOLLAND & BARRET I INDEPENDENT - Health Food Stores

Online Store
I collapsed from doing TOO MUCH

Rosie Millen, 36, from London

was walking in the park in 2014 when I suddenly felt dizzy and collapsed. I climbed into a taxi and got home. I thought I’d sleep it off and be fine. But I climbed into bed – and stayed there for three months!

I was paralysed with exhaustion. I dragged myself to my GP for tests, but they all came back normal. There appeared to be nothing wrong. Except there was.

I started researching and visited reflexologists, acupuncturists and naturopathic doctors.

I was diagnosed with burnout (adrenal fatigue). It can be tricky to diagnose because there’s no test for it. Looking back it was obvious. I was running two businesses, saying yes to everything, not eating or sleeping properly and I’d just broken up with my fiancé.

I started looking after myself. It took five years to get back on my feet. I eliminated my major stressors. It’s not easy to identify and sort them but, for me, they were a toxic relationship and financial/work stress. I got strict about bed and mealtimes so I had enough sleep and ate properly.

I say no to things, make sure I have fun and surround myself with people who lift me. I also do meditation and yoga.

I wanted to share my experience with others who are going through the same and feeling alone, so I became a burnout coach – I studied at the Institute of Optimum Nutrition so I can talk about the importance of diet as well. I’ve even written a book about it.

Burnout’s a B*tch! (£20, Mitchell Beazley), is out on 25 June

3 ways to... cut back on your meat intake

FIND A FILLING PROTEIN
Eggs, milk, yogurt, fish, nuts, beans and pulses all help you to feel full and assist your body to build tissue and muscle, and regulate hormones.

DON’T FORGET THE SAUCE
Often it’s the sauces and seasonings people miss, not meat. Make sure your meat-free meals are well seasoned and flavoured, and aren’t too dry.

TRY A NEW DISH
Find a range of great recipes at meatfree.maccmillan.org.uk as part of the cancer charity’s fundraising challenge – Meat-free March.

Newsflash
Take up tennis to ward off muscle and bone problems. Playing the sport can help prevent musculoskeletal problems in the over-50s, say experts at Liverpool Hope University. Their study found that those playing regularly (instead of going to the gym, running or cycling) had better musculoskeletal health, which helps prevent issues such as joint pain from osteoarthritis, bones weakened by osteoporosis and muscle-wasting sarcopenia.
**Coping with HAY FEVER**

Hay fever (allergic rhinitis) is an allergic reaction causing nose, throat and eye symptoms.

Hay fever is part of the atopy triad – hay fever, asthma and eczema – and is an allergic reaction to various substances, called allergens. Symptoms include sneezing, nasal itching and runny nose with nasal congestion. Post-nasal drip, itching palate, cough, snoring and halitosis also occur. Eye symptoms include itching, redness and watering. In those with asthma, hay fever can also cause chest tightness, breathlessness, cough and wheeze.

Pollens are the most common allergen. Tree pollens are released, and so cause symptoms, in early to late spring, whereas grass pollens occur late spring to early summer, mould spores in autumn.

House-dust mites are another common allergen in asthma and hay fever – symptoms are worse on waking, occur all year round but peak in spring and autumn. Animal hairs or chemicals will only cause symptoms when exposed.

Allergens prompt a chain of reactions in the blood, releasing various chemicals such as histamine, which affect cells and cause inflammation.

**Diagnostic tests**

There is no initial diagnostic test for hay fever, doctors simply rely on the clinical picture and trials of self-care and medication. However, tests can be done, especially if symptoms don’t settle. Skin patch testing, previously a useful diagnostic, has generally been replaced by immunological blood tests. These tests can easily be done to show a very wide range of possible allergens, including pollens, house-dust mites and animal dander.

There are now even more sophisticated tests that look at the molecular elements within any individual item. For example, knowing which protein in a pollen is responsible may eventually inform you as to which strain of grass or tree to avoid.

**What you need to know**

✦ Avoid grassy open spaces, or drying washing outdoors, when the pollen count is high. When coming indoors, shower, wash your hair and wash your clothes.

✦ Reduce house-dust mite contact by hot-washing bedding and fluffy toys weekly. Alternatively, freezing once a week in a plastic bag kills mites.

✦ Have wooden floors not carpets, blinds not curtains. Use a HEPA filter vacuum to reduce dust, and damp-dust surfaces. Use synthetic pillows. Wear wrap-around sunglasses.

✦ Get oral antihistamines, eye drops and nasal sprays containing antihistamines and steroids from the pharmacy to see if they help before seeing your GP.
CLEAN THE WOUND
Wash your hands, remove obvious dirt, clean, and elevate the limb, applying gentle local pressure with a clean pad to stop bleeding.

WASH THE WOUND
Use soap and water around the wound – but only use fresh water – until the bleeding stops and the wound looks clean.

DRESS THE WOUND
Use a clean dry dressing and bandage. Generally, wounds heal better if covered in a moist atmosphere rather than left open to dry out.

SEE YOUR NURSE
If you think dirt or glass shards remain, the bleeding won’t stop, the wound is large or the patient has immunity problems.

Types of treatment
The mainstay of treatment is self-care and avoidance of responsible allergens. Watch the pollen count on the forecasts and, if possible, avoid going out on those days.

Medical treatments start with antihistamines, which can be sedating to help with sleep or non-sedating to allow you to drive and work, and come as tablets, nasal sprays and eye drops. There are many different types of antihistamine and you may need to try several to see what works best for you. Steroid nasal sprays are another treatment. Used short-term only, decongestants will relieve symptoms.

Aerobic fitness is more important than strength training
FALSE. Both are important in different ways. General muscular strength and flexibility is vital as we age, maintaining core strength and reducing risk of falls, which can cause rapid decline in later life. It’s also going to prevent osteoporosis and help weight management by maintaining lean muscle mass.

Are steroids good or bad?
The steroids doctors use are corticosteroids, not the anabolic steroids illegally used to build muscles. Corticosteroids have anti-inflammatory effects and suppress the immune system. They are used in various forms such as inhalers, nasal sprays, tablets, creams, foam and injections, depending on the medical problem. For example, brown preventer inhalers for asthma are steroids; hydrocortisone and other steroid creams treat eczema and dermatitis. Steroid tablets may be given in short courses for flares of inflammatory arthritis, asthma, skin, muscle or bowel disorders, and intra-joint injection for localised joint problems. Steroids are usually very effective, but have risks if used long-term. Suppression of the immune system may help an autoimmune disease such as rheumatoid or lupus, but there is a higher risk of infection if the body can’t fight it. Similarly, depending which form you use, high-dose or long-term steroids make stomach bleeds more likely, affect mood, increase appetite, raise blood sugar, increase blood pressure, and weaken bones or thin skin.

TRUE OR FALSE?
Q Are steroids good or bad?
A
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*Subject to eligibility.
I’m tired of trying so hard all the time

Q I’m 48 and I’m tired. I was brought up to believe that I should always try my best and be as nice as I could to people, be well dressed, keep a clean home, work hard at school, university and my job, be a good wife and mother and be there for others at all times. The list is endless. But if I stop, I feel bad, and if I continue, life becomes no fun – just a series of tasks to complete and fail at.

Name and address withheld

A I’m not surprised you’re tired – trying all the time can be exhausting. It sounds like you’re spending all your time endeavouring to be both someone else and an unattainable model of the perfect woman! The sentiments behind what you were taught as a child are good and solid, and uphold the values that we all want to adhere to. However, they’re not possible to meet all the time. It is vitally important that we all include some ‘me time’ in our lives, when we can lose ourselves in self-indulgence. Trying hard to help the people around you becomes much easier when you also make time to care for yourself. Then hopefully you’ll find your happy, enthusiastic self has been there all along, waiting to be allowed to get out. I also think you’d really benefit from talking to a counsellor who can help you with this process. Try contacting bacp.co.uk or call them on 01455 883300.

I can’t bear the noise

Q My neighbour has a two-year-old who wakes early and cries, and it takes a while for the parents to go to her. She’s a grizzly child so we hear her a lot, especially if the window is open. I can’t imagine what it will be like in the summer. I know it isn’t their fault, but I’d like them to know what it’s like for us.

Laura, Nottingham

A What’s the reason you want them to know? So they can feel sorry for you – or come up with a solution? Take a moment and think about when it really causes you a problem, such as early in the morning. I’m sure they’re aware, so it won’t be a surprise. Tell them you know children cry and then ask if they could possibly keep her window closed and that you’ll do the same, unless it’s really hot. I expect she’ll soon grow out of this phase.

PHOTO (POSED BY MODEL): GETTY

I’m really not lazy!

Q My husband’s complaining that he has to always do the shopping. I’ve a bad back and, whenever I do it, I end up with a problem. I’ve suggested that we get the food delivered, but he says they choose badly and it will be more expensive. He does do a lot in the house as well because of my back and he loves to cook. I think he thinks I’m lazy, but I’m really not.

Joyce, Lincoln

A Whenever anyone says ‘I think they...’, I know they haven’t had the essential conversation to explore a problem. Talk to your husband, ask him what he’s feeling, tell him how you feel and together decide how you can manage the household chores, given your limitations. You could share the shopping and do it every other week. You order it in on your week and he could go to the shops when it’s his turn. My experience of shopping online is that, give or take, you get what you’ve ordered.
Pair subtle shades of pink, mustard and grey for this warming palette.
Nesting bears, £14 for 3, apple storage basket, £15, storage trunks, from £15, all Next

Wooden shelf, £9.99, Homesense

Patterned cushion, £16.99, Homesense

Elephant diffuser, £10, Dunelm

Geometric planter with stand, £12.99, M&Co

Mug, £12.50, Oliver Bonas

Wire table with tray top, £12, Wilko

COMPILED BY: ESME CLEMO
A taste of IRELAND

For St Patrick’s Day, try these Irish classics created by our Test Kitchen

IRISH FISH CHOWDER WITH SODA BREAD

This warming fish chowder is full of flavour and goes well with our soda bread, which is so easy to make.

SERVES 4

For the soda bread:

✣ 250g (9oz) wholemeal plain flour
✣ 30g (1oz) rolled oats (optional)
✣ 1tsp bicarbonate of soda
✣ 200ml (7fl oz) buttermilk
✣ 1½tsp honey
✣ 1-2tbsp milk (optional)

For the fish chowder:

✣ 100g (3½oz) potatoes, peeled and roughly chopped
✣ 175g (6oz) smoked haddock
✣ 175g (6oz) salmon fillet
✣ 450ml (¾ pint) milk
✣ 30g (1oz) butter
✣ 1 leek, halved and finely sliced
✣ 2 carrots, halved lengthways and finely sliced
✣ 150g (5oz) raw king prawns, de-headed and peeled

1 Heat the oven to 200C/Gas 6. For the soda bread, put the flour, rolled oats, the bicarb and 1tsp salt into a bowl. Make a well in the centre and pour in the buttermilk and honey. Mix until all combined. If it seems too dry, you can add 1-2tsp milk. Tip out onto a lightly floured surface and knead briefly. Form into a ball-like shape, place on a floured baking tray and bake for 25-30 mins until cooked. Test by tapping the bottom – it should sound hollow.

2 For the chowder, bring a pan of water to the boil, put the potatoes in and boil for 10 mins or until cooked. Drain and leave to one side.

3 In a separate pan, place the fish in the milk. Bring to the boil and turn down to a low simmer. Poach the fish until it is just cooked. Drain the fish, reserving the milk for later.

4 In a frying pan, melt the butter and fry the leek for 2 mins before adding the carrots and cooking both until softened. Add the cooked potato and break up with the back of a wooden spoon. Pour in the poaching milk and cook gently for 10 mins.

5 Flake in the cooked fish and add the prawns. Cook gently for a few mins until the prawns are cooked through. Serve with the soda bread and some butter.
**IRISH STEW**

Not traditionally made with Guinness, we have added the much loved Irish stout for a deeper flavour.

SERVES 6-8

- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 kg (2 1/4lb) mutton, diced
- 150g (5oz) bacon, roughly chopped
- 1 tbsp flour
- 2 red onions, roughly diced
- 4 carrots, roughly sliced
- 300g (10oz) swede, roughly chopped
- 2 celery sticks, roughly sliced
- 2 parsnips, halved lengthways and chopped
- 600g (1 1/4lb) potatoes, chopped (we used Rooster)
- 440ml can Guinness
- ¾ litre (1 1/4 pints) lamb or chicken stock
- 100g (3 1/2oz) pearl barley
- A few sprigs of thyme
- 1 tbsp tomato puree

1. In a large saucepan, heat the oil and brown the mutton. Add the bacon and fry for 2 mins. Scatter over the flour and coat the meat in it. Add in all the vegetables and mix.

2. Pour in the Guinness and stock, and add the pearl barley, thyme and tomato puree. Mix well.

3. Bring to the boil, cover and turn down to a simmer. Cook for 1 hr 30 mins to 2 hrs, stirring occasionally until the meat is tender and all the vegetables are cooked.

4. Serve with crusty bread or on its own.

**TIP** If you can’t find mutton, you can use lamb shoulder or stewing beef.

**COLCANNON WITH SAUSAGES**

Colcannon is often served with ham or bacon but we’ve used sausages. Regardless, the potatoes are the star of the show.

SERVES 4

- 1 kg (2 1/4lb) russet potatoes, washed but not peeled
- 1 tbsp butter, plus 100g (3 1/2oz) butter, melted
- 1 tbsp oil
- 1/2 tsp chilli flakes
- 6 spring onions, sliced
- 200g (7oz) purple kale, tough stems removed, and roughly chopped
- 8 good-quality sausages
- 75ml (3fl oz) single cream
- 125ml (4fl oz) milk
- Handful of chopped fresh parsley

1. Place the potatoes in a large saucepan, sprinkle in 1 tsp salt and cover with cold water. Bring to the boil and boil for 15 mins. Drain, place the potatoes back in the pan, cover with a clean tea towel and let them steam for 10 mins.

2. Meanwhile, heat the 1 tbsp butter with the oil in a frying pan and fry the chilli flakes for 30 secs before adding the spring onions. Fry for 2 mins then add the kale. Turn the heat down low and cook until the kale has softened. Place to one side.

3. Cook the sausages according to the pack instructions.

4. Peel the potatoes by hand and mash them well. Mix through the cream, milk and melted butter, followed by the kale mix. Scatter over the parsley.

5. Serve alongside the sausages and a sauce or gravy of your choice.

**TIP** Savoy cabbage is a great alternative to the kale.
This stunning ‘Standard’ lollipop tree explodes with pink-blushed, white and green foliage in spring! Commonly called “Flamingo Willow” for its showy pink-blushed leaves Salix ‘Hakuro-nishiki’ is a striking compact tree that will delight in any garden setting adding height to a border in patio pots or either side of a gateway!

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Please order while stocks last. © YouGarden Ltd 2020
Ruby surveyed her garden with anger and frustration. The borders should have been bursting with new life, not looking bedraggled and unloved.

It was all down to Fergus’ cat, Ada – a supercilious thing that had made itself very much at home on her property, spoiling flower beds, digging up seedlings and scaring birds. Ruby had tried everything to discourage the feline insurgent but nothing kept her out for long.

Fergus had been living next door for several months. All she knew about him was his name. He kept himself to himself. Her knocks at the door weren’t answered, the politely worded notes she put through his letter box ignored.

Ada had free rein to wreak havoc and Ruby had had enough. He needed to be spoken to, but how could she confront someone who didn’t acknowledge her existence?

Then the perfect opportunity to tackle Fergus arose when he took receipt of a parcel. She was on her way out and dashed up the drive as he was signing for it.

He stared at her, unmoved. ‘What are you doing?’

‘I need to speak to you about your cat,’ she began, sounding bolder than she felt. ‘She’s ruining my garden. It’s your responsibility to ensure she doesn’t cause damage to my property.’

‘Cats have a right to roam,’ Fergus said. ‘I’m under no obligation to curtail her activities.’

Ruby’s heart was thumping. ‘I was hoping you could perhaps keep her in a bit more?’

‘She’d become stressed. It goes against her natural behaviour. Now, please leave me alone.’

The door quickly banged shut. She stood there for a moment, nonplussed, feeling at a loss as to what action to take next. She’d bought all manner of cat-deterring plants, scattered orange peel and soaked cotton balls in eucalyptus oil, all to no avail.

‘Plastic spikes along the top of your fence,’ a colleague suggested. ‘They don’t cause cats any harm – they’re just very uncomfortable.’

It sounded a bit extreme, but Ruby loved her garden. Tending it had been crucial to her recovery from illness, providing the boost she’d needed on bad days. For it to be treated in this way was soul-destroying.

It took her all day to fit the spikes. She wondered if the sound of hammering would lead to another unpleasant exchange, but there was nothing. Several days passed with no sign of Ada. Ruby began to relax, daring to hope that her battle was won.

She realised something was amiss when she saw Fergus standing in the road late one evening, clearly agitated. Against her better judgement, she went out.

‘Ada’s missing,’ he said, gesturing helplessly. ‘She hasn’t been home for two days. It’s not like her.’

Ruby was relieved the pair had been reunited. Acknowledging her help was a good sign too – the ice had finally been broken. Hopeful that Fergus would keep tighter control, she looked forward to restocking her borders, smiling at the irony of it. The cat that had destroyed so much might just lead to the growth of a new friendship. Or maybe even something more.

THE END

Jill Stevenson, 2020
The sound of the cymbals, drums and chants filled the temple as white-robed monks started swaying from side to side while we sat cross-legged on carpets on the cool floor. Without missing a beat, the drummers executed athletic jumps and dizzying turns as the tempo gathered speed; all of them maintaining beatific smiles as they played and leapt in total harmony.

We were on Majuli, the world’s largest river island, which is home to more than 20 Vaishnavite satras, or monasteries, occupied by monks belonging to an offshoot of Hinduism dedicated to the Indian god Vishnu. Combining religion with the arts, the monks’ joyful and mesmerising dance is a unique part of worship.

Although Majuli is still in the record books for its size, since the beginning of the 20th century it has shrunk from 340 to 136 square miles due to erosion from the surging waters of the Brahmaputra River that encircle it, forcing locals to live in thatched homes perched on bamboo poles to protect them from monsoon floods.

All aboard

Indeed, our own journey was also shaped by this 2,391-mile waterway that rises in the Himalayas and snakes through India and Bangladesh into the Bay of Bengal.

We moored alongside sandbanks and joined dawn yoga classes on newly exposed soft mudflats. When the Mahabaahu moored at villages, the crew would dig makeshift steps into the bank and help us ashore with a ‘human handrail’ – two of them positioned at each end of a bamboo pole. Our ungainly ascent would invariably be observed by doe-eyed children who gathered to watch the live entertainment. Once we made dry land, they followed us around and we were warmly received everywhere we went; sometimes ushered into homes and, most notably, a school run by a headmaster who roared up on a classic Royal Enfield motorcycle.

The comfortable 46-passenger Mahabaahu, one of few tourist vessels sailing on the river, provides a wonderful floating base to explore the

Great for

SPIRITED ADVENTURERS

The autorickshaw or tuk-tuk is an authentic, fun and inexpensive way to get around Kolkata. Ask your hotel for a guide on how much to pay and negotiate the price with the driver before getting in.

You may get to see a Royal Bengal tiger
Brahmaputra and the often mysterious lands that lie beyond its banks. There was the added excitement that we were exploring a lesser-known part of India where western visitors come in handfuls rather than hordes.

On dry land
Each day we’d go ashore. One morning, we entered the incense-filled 18th-century Shiva Dol temple, said to be the highest holy place devoted to one of the most widely known and revered Hindu gods, and were blessed by a priest who tied cotton threads around our wrists. That afternoon, we enjoyed lunch at a family-owned tea estate, fascinated to learn how Scotsman Robert Bruce introduced tea cultivation to the region in the 19th century. Today, the state is India’s largest tea producer.

Another day, we bought bright silk and cotton from the Bishwanath weavers’ village, many of them transformed into dresses and tops by Mahabahu’s talented on-board tailor within 24 hours.

Wildlife wonders
The natural highlight was Kaziranga National Park, where the tall grass is home to India’s ‘big five’ – greater one-horned rhinoceros, Asian elephant, wild water buffalo, Indian bison and, if you’re lucky, Royal Bengal tiger.

We spent our last afternoon at temple-topped Peacock or Umananda Island, the river’s smallest inhabited isle, with residents that include a rare golden langur monkey. It was another unforgettable memory of amazing Assam.

Food lovers
India’s hottest chilli, the bhut jolokia – also known as the ghost chilli or red naga – is grown in Assam and sold as a sauce in bottles or sachets to take home. Try it if you dare!

Getting there
Fred River Cruises’ nine-night fully escorted Kolkata and the Mighty Brahmaputra River itinerary, from £2,799, with a two-night B&B pre-cruise stay in Kolkata and including all meals on the ship, the services of an on-board guide and naturalist, and transfers. For further details and departure dates, call 0800 021 3189 or visit fredrivercruises.co.uk/far-horizons
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Imagine crunching into a juicy apple freshly picked from your own tree... well, plant one now and you could be harvesting a crop in as little as two or three years. Bare root trees are quick to establish and less expensive than pot grown, and now is the last month to plant them. Choose specialist suppliers, who will advise on the best trees for your location.

Supporting acts
If you want to add trellises or plant supports, do it before plant growth accelerates. Fix trellises to walls or behind containers for displays of climbers, such as clematis. Or create rustic wigwams for sweet peas or morning glory – push three or five hazel or willow branches into the ground in a circle and tie at the top with twine.

3 of the best... Apple varieties

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This is an eating and cooking apple combined in one, and can be grown in a container.

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RED FALSTAFF
A heavy cropper with large fruit, this apple is easy to grow and is great for juicing.

Things to do THIS WEEK

BOOST YOUR COMPOST
If you’ve been using a wood burner this winter, add the waste wood ash, which is a natural source of potassium, to your compost heap.

SPRING-CLEAN HOUSEPLANTS
Spruce up houseplants by removing tatty or browning leaves and wiping off any dust. Mist to raise humidity.

GET SOWING!
Sow garden peas and broad beans in open ground, planting them 3cm deep and 10cm apart, and putting in supports at the same time.
Have a go at...

PYROGRAPHY

This is a slow and therapeutic craft that you can complete in an afternoon – it makes a great gift too.
YOU WILL NEED
Time to make: three hours
+ Wooden cheeseboard
+ Wood burning tool and tips
+ Pencil and tracing paper
+ Eraser
+ Craft knife
Stockists: Proppmätt beech chopping board, £3, Ikea. Pyrography wood burning tool set, £10, Hobbycraft.

1. Draw your own design on the chopping board. Or transfer our pattern using the template below, enlarged to fit your board, plus tracing paper and a pencil.

2. Screw a point tip onto the end of the wood burning tool, plug it in and allow it to heat up for approximately five to 10 minutes.

3. Begin by testing the wood burning tool on a spare piece of wood or the reverse of your board. Practise small dots first, then try dashes before moving on to longer lines.

4. With the round or ball point tip, begin working along the first stem pencil line, slowly pushing the tip into the wood until you see a little deepening of colour, before moving onto the next section. Repeat for the second line.

5. Allow the wood burning tool to cool completely. Remove the point tip and replace with the large circle tip or a leaf shape if you have one. Plug the tool in and allow it to heat up again.

6. Press the circle/leaf tip into the surface of the wood and hold flat for about four seconds until a leaf shape has been formed. Repeat along the stem line in pairs. Allow the wood burning tool to cool completely.

7. Use an eraser to remove any pencil lines leftover on the design.

8. Don’t worry if you have pressed too hard, resulting in scorch marks on the board – a swift scratch at the surface with a craft knife will remove any mistakes.
Jill had been dating Ed for five months when he first invited her to tea at his mum’s. This was a watershed moment for Jill – her own parents had long since remarried new partners and, in the case of her mother, moved to Spain. Ed had a much closer relationship with his widowed mother, Lucy, than she had her own mum, so she wanted to strike the right note from the off. Well, that was the intention, anyway.

But when he called round to update her on the details for her visit to his mum’s, and she showed him the outfit she was thinking of wearing, Ed did a double take. ‘Um – you sure about that?’ he asked nervously. ‘Why not?’ She’d teamed a swirly fringed skirt with a puff-sleeved blouse. OK, the pattern on the skirt was a bit busy, but every part of her was decorously covered. What wasn’t to like?

She could see Ed struggling to frame his objections diplomatically. ‘It’s a bit – Glastonbury,’ he managed at last. ‘You what?’ ‘You know – like you’re off to a music festival.’ Jill felt a prickle of annoyance. ‘It’s smart-casual and comfy. It’s not a job interview, Ed. I don’t have to break out the navy two-piece and sensible shoes.’ Ed held up his hands in a mollifying gesture. ‘You’re probably right. I’m sorry.

I brought it up. I suppose it’s because I’m used to seeing you in your office wear or else jeans.’ ‘I ditched the jeans in honour of visiting Lucy,’ she said tightly. ‘I got this skirt and blouse in the sales. They’re not really my thing, but I thought they would strike the right note. You said last week that my jeans were “figure-hugging”.

‘In a good way,’ he protested feebly. ‘I stand corrected. I know very little about ladies’ fashion. Forget I said anything.’ She tried to. When he saw how hurt she looked, Ed gave her a hug. ‘I am sorry, Jill. You’ll look fantastic. Anyone who begs to differ can go swivel.’ She knew instinctively that ‘anyone’ must be Lucy, his mother.

Despite his reassurances, she felt more flustered than ever about meeting Lucy.

When he came to collect her on the day of the visit, he did another double take. ‘What happened to the puffy sleeves on your blouse?’ ‘I cut them off,’ she admitted, flaunting her bare arms. ‘I felt as if I was one of those frilly scrunchy things you apply body scrub with. All set?’

When they arrived at his mother’s, Lucy opened the door wearing a puff-sleeved blouse. ‘Snap!’ said Jill instinctively, before she’d even said hello. ‘I’m wearing the same blouse!’ ‘Just about, dear,’ murmured Lucy, looking her over.

Not an auspicious start. Glancing at Lucy’s rigidly set hair and cool expression, Jill winced at the idea of having bought a ‘Lucy-type’ blouse in the first place. Still, she smiled politely and resolved to be on her best behaviour, Ed squeezing her hand in silent support.

It was still a trial, though, sitting in Lucy’s neat, ornament-stuffed sitting room as the woman herself poured tea, dabbing her mouth with a napkin after every sip of Earl Grey.

Ed, an only child, had already dropped hints that Lucy was ‘a little bit conservative’ in her views, having had him late in life. Ed himself could be a bit staid for a 33-year-old, but that also gave him a gravitas that Jill found appealing.

Now, despite his reassurances, she felt more flustered than ever about meeting Lucy.

Surely there was some way Jill could find common ground with her boyfriend’s frosty mother...
as the afternoon wore on, Jill accepted Ed’s offer of a G&T. ‘It’s OK, I’m not driving,’ she assured Lucy.

Lucy pursed dabbed lips. ‘A lady sips her drink and makes it last.’

‘Good for a lady.’ Annoyed and flustered, Jill threw down her drink in one gulp.

Then out came the photo albums. All 12 of them, featuring Lucy marrying Ed’s startled-looking dad, Ed in short trousers, Lucy winning best cake at the local fête for the fifth year in a row…

‘Do you bake, dear?’ she asked Jill sharply.

‘Er, not as much as I’d like to.’

‘Perhaps you…’ Lucy’s gaze roamed disapprovingly over Jill’s ‘customised’ blouse, ‘…make your own clothes?’

‘Afraid not. Snipping off bits I don’t like is about my limit.’

‘Young women today!’ Lucy sighed and clutched her pearls. ‘Sadly lacking in the skills my generation took for granted. We were taught to grow our own, recycle our own, do a wash on a Monday, iron on a Tuesday, bake on a Wednesday…’

‘and still have time to work 10 hours and come back in time to cook tea,’ finished Jill before she could stop herself.

In the small silence that followed, she added, ‘To be fair, your generation would be much handier than ours come the apocalypse. You know, for restarting civilisation? Don’t you think so, Ed? Ed?’

It was a fairly silent car journey home.

Jill was about to apologise for coming on a bit strong (and blame it on her second G&T), when Ed said, ‘I want to apologise, Jill. I didn’t know Mum was going to be so – waspish. It’s not all her fault. Even though she passed the 11-plus, her parents didn’t let her go to grammar school because they thought it would only “fill her head with ideas”. She sees women now getting those life chances and it must rankle.’

‘Poor Lucy,’ frowned Jill, seeing her in a new light. ‘So much for the good old days.’

Ed sighed. ‘She only ever mentioned all this once, not long after Dad died, when she was a bit less stiff upper-lipped for a while. So don’t take any of her put-downs personally.’

‘I won’t,’ said Jill thoughtfully. ‘Actually, she’s made me think about what my skills actually are. Being a call centre supervisor probably won’t count for a lot come the apocalypse!’

Ed laughed and dropped her off back at her flat.

Three days later, Jill received a magnolia-scented letter through the post, from Lucy. Aha, here was a reminder of the older, gentler virtues – probably, thought Jill as she opened it, a dig at her for not sending a ‘thank you’ note after her visit.

‘I hope it’s OK that Ed gave me your address,’ the letter began. ‘I believe I may have been unwittingly a little cool towards you. If so, I’d like to assure you that was never my intention…’

Jill detected Ed’s influence behind Lucy’s sort-of apology.

The letter ended with a polite assurance that, ‘I am looking forward to seeing you again, dear, and hope you will not judge a set-in-her-was on the fly.

‘It’s never too late to get educated about all sorts of things — on both sides’

Lips quirking, Jill went out and bought a writing pad, sending a reply containing the following info: ‘I go to the gym on a Monday, do an online shop on a Tuesday, lead a pub trivia team on a Wednesday… Unfortunately, I haven’t owned an iron since I was a student, but reckon I could find time to bake a cake if you’d like to give me a few tips?’

She took a risk and sent it. Lucy duly sent back a recipe for an upside-down tipsy fruit cake (‘the secret is steeping the raisins in Guinness overnight’) and a drawing of an iron ‘in case you’ve forgotten what one looks like, dear!’

It was the start of an old-fashioned correspondence, tongues lodged firmly in respective cheeks, which Ed only heard about on the fly.

‘What on earth do you find to say to each other in a flurry of letters?’ he asked in wonder. ‘Oh, it’s mostly notelets now, and you’d be surprised,’ said Jill airily. ‘The things I’ve learned about bleaching nets and starching collars, you wouldn’t believe.’

He laughed. ‘What does Mum learn in return?’

‘How to bleach an upper lip — and possibly other body parts.’

‘You’re not serious!’

‘Deadly,’ Jill assured him.

‘It’s never too late to get educated about all sorts of things — on both sides.’

‘Soon, she knew, she and Lucy would progress to practical demonstrations; she’d already asked Lucy to show her the basics of planting rhubarb and staking out bedding plants.

And Lucy had hinted that she’d like to supplement ‘snail mail’ with email and using the internet: ‘Ed has tried to show me about “goggling” and suchlike, but he’s not the most patient teacher. Well, he is the male of the species. LOL.’

Jill kept all the letters, tied up with sturdy string (the no-nonsense type of string Lucy said you could train plants up with), and she knew from Lucy’s scattered references to previous correspondence that she was doing the same.

There were loads of things they were never going to agree on, Jill suspected (like the merits of keeping a freshly ironed hanky up your steam-pressed sleeve), but she and Lucy had at last formed a bond.

‘You know what your correspondence is, don’t you?’ Ed smiled at her as they sat drinking wine on Jill’s patio one Saturday. ‘Love letters — sort of. I like the idea. I might start sending you the odd letter — of the more overtly romantic kind — now I know you’re likely to write back.’

Jill stared at him, her first instinct to say, ‘Love letters? Don’t be ridiculous!’

But she acted on her second instinct, replying, ‘Maybe you’re onto something. I’m getting very fond of your mother, from afar. I also look forward to receiving my first ever love letter from you. And of course I’ll write back. As your mum would be the first to tell you, it’s very impolite otherwise. Now have another slice of my upside-down tipsy fruit cake. I was up all night steeping those raisins!’

THE END

Gabrielle Mullarkey, 2020
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Berry

With only simple shaping needed, this chunky knit is super easy to make

MEASUREMENTS
To fit bust 81-86 (92-97) (102-107) (112-117) cm/32-34 (36-38) (40-42) (44-46) in.
Actual measurements 100 (108) (116) (124) cm/39½ (42½) (45½) (48½) in.
Side seam All sizes 34½cm/13½in.
Length to shoulder 73.5 (74.75) (76) (77.5) cm/29 (29½) (30) (30½) in.

MATERIALS
3 (3) (3) (4) 200g (312m) balls of James C Brett Marble Chunky (100% acrylic) in shade MC70*. Pair each of 5mm (No.6) and 6mm (No.4) knitting needles; stitch markers. Yarn is available from theknittingnetwork.co.uk.

TENSION
14 stitches and 20 rows, to 10x10cm, over stocking stitch, using 6mm needles.

ABBREVIATIONS
St(s), stitch(es); k, knit; p, purl; ss, stocking st (k on right side and p on wrong side); up1, pick up horizontal strand lying between needles and k into back of it (to increase 1 st); skpo, slip 1 st, k 1 st, pass slipped st over the knitted st (to decrease 1 st); k2tog, k 2 sts together (to decrease 1 st).

NOTE
This garment is worked sideways. The instructions for back and front begin at the sleeve edge and you shape for the sleeve and body, then work across the garment to the opposite sleeve edge. Yarn amounts are based on average requirements and are therefore approximate. Instructions are given for small size. Where they vary, work figures in round brackets for larger sizes. Instructions in square brackets are worked as stated after 2nd bracket.

Instructions overleaf
BACK AND FRONT (both alike)

With 5mm needles, cast on 46 (48) (50) (52) sts for sleeve edge.

1st rib row: K2 (0) (2) (0), [p2, k2] to end.

2nd rib row: P2, [k2, p2] to last 4 (2) (4) (2)sts, k2, p2 (0) (2) (0).

These 2 rows form rib. Rib a further 6 rows.

Shape sleeve
Change to 6mm needles.

Starting with a k row, ss 4 rows.

1st increase row: K4, up1, k37 (39) (41) (43), up1, k5 – 48 (50) (52) (54) sts.

Ss 5 rows.

2nd increase row: K4, up1, k39 (41) (43) (45), up1, k5 – 50 (52) (54) (56) sts.

Ss 5 rows.

3rd increase row: K4, up1, k41 (43) (45) (47), up1, k5 – 52 (54) (56) (58) sts.

Ss 5 rows.

4th increase row: K4, up1, k43 (45) (47) (49), up1, k5 – 54 (56) (58) (60) sts.

Ss 1 row.

Side seam
Cast on 36 sts, k to end – 90 (92) (94) (96)sts.

1st increase row: K4, skpo, k41 (43) (45) (47), k2tog, k5 – 91 (93) (95) (97)sts.

Ss 5 rows.

2nd increase row: K4, skpo, k39 (41) (43) (45), k2tog, k5 – 90 (92) (94) (96)sts.

Ss 5 rows.

3rd increase row: K4, skpo, k37 (39) (41) (43), k2tog, k5 – 88 (90) (92) (94)sts.

Ss 5 rows.

4th increase row: K4, skpo, k35 (37) (39) (41), k2tog, k5 – 86 (88) (90) (92)sts.

Ss 1 row.

Shape shoulder

Ss another 6 (8) (10) (12) rows.

1st decrease row: K85 (87) (89) (91), k2tog, k5 – 91 (93) (95) (97)sts.

Ss 5 rows.

2nd decrease row: K84 (86) (88) (90), k2tog, k5 – 90 (92) (94) (96)sts.

Ss 3 rows.

Shape shoulder

Ss another 6 (8) (10) (12) rows.

1st decrease row: K83 (85) (87) (89), k2tog, k5 – 89 (91) (93) (95)sts.

Ss 5 rows.

2nd decrease row: K82 (84) (86) (88), k2tog, k5 – 88 (90) (92) (94)sts.

Ss 3 rows.

Shape shoulder

Ss another 6 (8) (10) (12) rows.

1st decrease row: K81 (83) (85) (87), k2tog, k5 – 87 (89) (91) (93)sts.

Ss 5 rows.

2nd decrease row: K80 (82) (84) (86), k2tog, k5 – 86 (88) (90) (92)sts.

Ss 3 rows.

Shape shoulder

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1st decrease row: K79 (81) (83) (85), k2tog, k5 – 85 (87) (89) (91)sts.

Ss 5 rows.

2nd decrease row: K78 (80) (82) (84), k2tog, k5 – 84 (86) (88) (90)sts.

Ss 3 rows.

Shape shoulder

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1st decrease row: K77 (79) (81) (83), k2tog, k5 – 83 (85) (87) (89)sts.

Ss 5 rows.

2nd decrease row: K76 (78) (80) (82), k2tog, k5 – 82 (84) (86) (88)sts.

Ss 3 rows.

Shape shoulder

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1st decrease row: K75 (77) (79) (81), k2tog, k5 – 81 (83) (85) (87)sts.

Ss 5 rows.
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**Sailing from Tilbury**

<table>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>36</td>
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**Sailing from Bristol**

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**Sailing from Hull**

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<td>Marco Polo</td>
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</table>

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Roopa had been prepared for almost anything, but even she couldn’t have predicted this nightmare.

Dr Roopa Banerjee hated Mondays. It was an irrational attitude that flavoured the start of her week with a sourness that she invariably fought hard to swallow. In the long, sleepless hours of the night, she often pondered the roots of such an illogical viewpoint. Yet its cause, so far, had failed to reveal itself to her. It was, like so many other things in her currently rather disjointed mind, ‘temporarily unavailable for recovery’. Tidying her already spotless desk, she allowed herself a faint smile as the phrase ran through her head. It had become a firm favourite of hers, with its blanket covering for a multitude of cerebral transgressions. It put everything, nice and neatly, in the ‘too hard’ box. Still, it would only be a matter of time before the box required opening. She knew it. Even she couldn’t take the easy way out forever.

Her first appointment of the day was with a new patient. Although here, of course, in this ultra-modern consulting room that she inhabited for the first three days of every week, the word ‘patient’ was frowned upon. The men and women who came in through her door with their array of complicated sleep disorders were ‘clients’, mostly professional people for whom exhaustion had become the paralysing norm. Their maladies varied from common insomnia right through to narcolepsy and sleep apnoea, with more than a smattering of nightmares, night terrors and sleepwalking thrown in for good measure. The two traits they all shared were fatigued, dulled faces and deep pockets. Hope and sleep, it seemed, came at a price.

When Roopa allowed herself to think about it, this aspect was wholly unpalatable. But as her husband kept saying to her, they had two strapping lads to feed and a mortgage to pay. And a hefty one at that.

Standing, she caught a glimpse of her new client through the glass partition in the wall of her consulting room. A young woman she knew only by name – Lena James. She had one of those faces that was both beautiful and childlike at the same time. She sat hunched on the wide leather sofa of the reception area, her shoulder-length pale red hair a striking contrast to her almost white face. Here was a woman for whom sleep had obviously become a thing of the past. It was wholly unprofessional, but Roopa’s heart went out to the young woman. There were very few things more incapacitating than exhaustion. She knew that herself from first-hand experience. It ate away at you from within, slowing every response, crippling every muscle. It could quite literally turn you mad if it continued for long enough.

Opening her office door, Roopa gave a genuine smile and extended her hand to Lena.

‘Miss James,’ she said warmly, ‘it’s lovely to meet you.’

The woman stood with the slight telltale wobble of an insomniac and walked towards her. Her hand, when it reached Roopa’s, was cool to the touch. She gave a pained smiled and followed Roopa into the room. Behind the receptionist brought in both tea and coffee, a complimentary part of the client experience, and quietly left again, all before Lena James had removed her coat and rather gorgeous cashmere scarf. Roopa loved emerald green. It was a good, strong colour. And under normal circumstances, she was sure it looked striking on Miss James. Taking her seat, Roopa determined to not only cure the beleaguered young woman slowly sitting down opposite, but to like her too.

‘So, Miss James,’ Roopa said calmly, ‘start at the beginning please and tell me what brings you here.’

It was much harder than she had imagined – finding the beginning of things. And harder still to locate any words that adequately matched the feelings. Lena looked down at her hands. The ring was huge on her left hand, seemingly so much...
bigger now than it had been when he’d given it to her, which of course was impossible. Logically she knew it was simply that her finger was thinner now, the weight having dropped from her as sleep deserted her. But in her mind, the ring had become a symbol of all that was wrong. It overpowered her on a daily basis, yet she was totally unable to discard it. It was ever-present. It carried with it an inevitable finality. It represented something from which there could be no escape.

Looking up again, she stared directly into the eyes of Dr Banerjee. The room had been silent for several minutes. If she didn’t say something this would all be a complete waste of time. And money, come to that. Lena fidgeted in her seat. She had to dive in. Experts in sleep disorders weren’t that unusual, she’d discovered to her surprise when she’d begun her extensive research – ironically, most of it conducted through the hours and hours of long sleepless nights. But the likes of Dr Banerjee were rare. She was, so the internet reliably informed her, London’s only ‘dream angel’. And now Lena was sitting opposite her. She needed to speak. She had to start somewhere, even if she wasn’t sure where the beginning of it all was. She cleared her throat. She’d start with the present. It was the easiest, and most obvious, thing to do.

‘I’m getting married in August,’ she said quietly, her eyes holding the dark brown ones staring steadfastly at her own.

Dr Banerjee gave a faint nod. ‘That’s nice.’

Lena gave an automatic nod back.

‘Isn’t it?’ Dr Banerjee added. ‘Yes.’ Was it? Was it really?

Silence. This really wasn’t going to be easy. Lena sighed and let her eyes drop from Dr Banerjee’s. ‘I’ve…’ she hesitated. ‘I can’t sleep.’

Dr Banerjee’s voice was deep and reassuring. ‘A lot of people believe they aren’t sleeping, but when we invite them to stay overnight and hook them up to our monitors, they are actually getting several hours of sleep. It’s just the quality isn’t great. Could that be something you recognise in yourself?’

The doctor picked up her pen and scribbled something on a pad. ‘Getting married can be a very stressful process. It would be perfectly understandable if that was impacting on the quality of your sleep.’

‘No, she didn’t recognise that pattern in herself. That wasn’t how it was at all for her. When she said she wasn’t sleeping, she really meant it. And the reason was pretty simple – she was forcing herself not to, and by any means possible: 24-hour television; playing music all night; opening all the windows in her tiny flat, and, of course, filling her body with caffeine, the wide-awake high becoming harder and harder to achieve. No, she knew precisely how few minutes or hours she slept every night. She meticulously kept a note of them. There could be no mistake. Slowly, she slipped the loose diamond ring from her finger and laid it carefully on the desk between them.

‘This is my engagement ring,’ she said. It was.

‘That must be exhausting in itself.’

‘It is.’

She stared for a moment at the beautiful face of Lena James. It was little wonder that her features were so gaunt, the skin beneath her grey eyes baggy and lined. Her own eyes dipped to the table between them where the engagement ring sat, its faceted diamond catching the light. It was a very substantial stone. Whoever her fiancé was, he unambiguously meant to mark his territory.

‘So, Lena,’ she said, using the woman’s first name with purpose. ‘Tell me about the dream?’

Lena frowned. ‘Don’t you want to hear about the dream?’

Roopa nodded. ‘We’ll...

Continued overleaf
come to that in a moment. You chose to start with your marriage, so let’s begin there.’

Roopa watched carefully as the woman in front of
her dropped eye contact and visibly shrunk into her
oversized cardigan. Such a
reaction usually meant one
thing. But still, she needed to
hear from the patient herself
that all was not well on
the wedding front. Within
a few moments, the words
were delivered neatly to her.

‘I shouldn’t have said yes to Seth. I don’t love him as
I should,’ Lena said. Her
long, pale fingers reached
out for the ring, but instead
of replacing it on her own
finger, Lena twisted it back
and forth on the desk.

‘It’s an impressive ring,’
Roopa said.

Lena sighed and nodded.
‘It’s like a stamp of
ownership, isn’t it?’ She
 glanced up at Roopa.

Roopa shrugged, even
though the sentiment was
so similar to her own. ‘Or
a sign of immense love?’ she
offered, wondering if the
alternative vision would be
snatched. It wasn’t. Lena
shook her head slowly.

‘It’s not right. We’re not
right. I’ve always known that.
I have to break it off with
him before the wedding.’

‘That’s a huge amount of
pressure to be under, Lena.’

‘Not really,’ Lena said,
hers steely grey eyes fixing
Roopa’s. ‘What’s happening
with me and sleep, and the
dream. It’s got nothing to do
with Seth. Not really.’

‘Not really?’

Lena gave a small sigh
of what Roopa took to be
exasperation. An interesting
response, she noted on her
pad. ‘I’m stressed, yes, by
the whole Seth thing,’ Lena
continued. ‘And that might
be why the dream is
back. But not like this.
Not every time I fall
asleep. I can’t keep
going through it. I need
your help. I need to
understand what it’s all
about. I need to… alone.
Please help me. Please.’

In the 30 years or so
that Roopa had positioned
herself on the doctor’s side
of the table, there had been
just a mere handful of times
when the words of her
patients had caused her
spine to prickle. Like an
animal sensing danger.
It was, she told herself, in
moments like these that her
career became worthwhile.
Atonement was such a
biblical activity, such a
deep, human, muddled-up
way to put things right. A
pathway to self-forgiveness.
It was a word so rarely used
in her consulting room that it
struck her like a

Roopa's arms.

‘I know I need to get
inside the house, I don’t
know why.’

‘What do you do?’ Roopa
asked, her voice faltering.

Lena looked hard at
her, eyes narrowed, but
she continued. ‘I climb in
through the window.’

Was this even possible?
All these years she’d been
searching for ‘the one’ and
now here she might be, with
her cool grey eyes and her
glinting engagement ring.
Roopa took a deep breath.

‘Tell me which
window? What
does it look like?
What colour is
the door? Do
you have to open
the window?’

‘It’s the window
to the left of the
doors, as you’re
looking at the
house. The door is
blue, not a bright blue, a
dark one. And the paint is peeling.
The window I climb in through is a white sash window, and it’s already open. I…” Lena
replied, hesitating.

The deafening pulse of her
heart pounded through her
torso. Roopa closed
her eyes and jumped in, the
words spilling from her lips,
unable to contain herself.
‘You hold the frame on both
sides and slip easily into the
house.’ There was a sharp
intake of breath from Lena,
but Roopa continued. ‘The
room you enter has no

When she
said she
wasn’t
sleeping,
she really
meant it

furniture. It’s clean and
bright, but you don’t
remain there long, do
you? You head for the
stairs. Where are the
stairs, Lena?’

‘To the right in a long
hallway. How on earth do
you know all of this?’

Roopa opened her eyes
and gripped the edge of the
desk firmly with both hands.
‘I need to know precisely
what you do in this house,
Lena,’ she said forcefully.
‘Absolutely everything. You
mustn’t leave anything out.
Do you understand me?’

Lena’s face was whiter
than ever now, the ring
discarded. Their eyes were
securely locked on one
another. ‘I asked you
how you already know
all of this,’ Lena repeated,
quietly but firmly.

This sounded crazy. This
was crazy. Roopa took a
deep breath. ‘I don’t wish
to alarm you, Lena, and
I assure you this is extremely
rare. Well, in fact, it’s never
happened before. Thirty
years ago, I had a dream
for the first time that has
plagued my life ever since. I’ve been looking for
someone who’s shared a
similar experience to me all
my professional life.’ She let
the air release slowly from
her lips. ‘What you’ve just
described is not just similar
to my dream, it’s exactly
the same. That shouldn’t be
possible. I don’t know how,
and I don’t know why, but
it would seem that you and
I are both trapped in that
house together.’ She stared
hard at Lena’s incredulous
face. ‘Can’t tell you how
relieved I am to not be alone
any more, Lena. Now,
we both need to figure out
a way to get out.’

CONTINUES NEXT WEEK
Suzanne Ahern, 2020
In your
NEXT ISSUE

Flattering fashion for plus sizes!

Irresistible bakes

PLUS

Pretty toddler’s cardigan to knit

On sale 18 March

Your stars
For 11-17 March with Bracha Goldsmith
yourastrologysigns.com

ARIES 21 Mar – 20 Apr
Sometimes you are very serious, so it’s important to remember to have fun. Focus on whatever brings you joy.

TAURUS 21 Apr – 21 May
You may be making changes to your living situation. If you’re not considering a move, it’s time to refresh your surroundings.

GEMINI 21 May – 21 Jun
You may be going on a surprise trip. Have your bags ready in case you’re offered a last-minute opportunity that’s too good to miss.

CANCER 22 Jun – 23 Jul
It’s time to release past pains and open your heart once again. Do this, and your relationships will blossom.

LEO 24 Jul – 23 Aug
You may be searching for more meaning in your life. Think about your priorities and act accordingly.

VIRGO 24 Aug – 22 Sep
You may be juggling many balls this week. Fortunately, you’re adaptable. Just make sure you get enough time for rest and relaxation.

LIBRA 24 Sep – 23 Oct
It’s time to appreciate everything you have in your life. If you do this, your finances will improve, and you’ll feel good too!

SCORPIO 24 Oct – 22 Nov
Have faith in your abilities and pursue your creative gifts. You could turn a hobby into a lucrative business.

SAGITTARIUS 23 Nov – 21 Dec
Your patience may be tested if things are not moving as quickly as you’d hope. If you can let go of expectations, you’ll feel much calmer.

CAPRICORN 22 Dec – 20 Jan
Whether it’s starting a family, retiring or changing your career, everything is coming together in a wonderful way.

AQUARIUS 21 Jan – 19 Feb
Many new and exciting opportunities are on their way. This is a great time for expansion and growth.

PISCES 20 Feb – 20 Mar
Something is about to change for the better. A chance meeting, a new job offer, a lover or financial success… It’s in your stars.

ANSWERS TO 3 MARCH PUZZLES

JUMBO PUZZLE ACROSS: 11 Copied 12 Elevation 13 Monday 15 Italian
16 Conscious 17 Rest 18 Stepped 19 Alarms 20 Modern 23 Zip 24 EastEnders
25 Nectar 28 Container 29 Somehow 31 ordered 36 Hardship 37 Improved
39 Below 41 Allowed 42 Sheltered 45 Africa 47 Afternoon 49 Owl 52 Artist
53 Invade 54 Funeral 57 Lava 58 Coastline 59 Triumph 60 Severe 61 Presently 62 Senior
63 In 1 Society 2 Disappointed 3 Advised 4 Penny 5 Expensive 6 Maintain
7 Circumference 8 Union 9 Amusement 10 Introduced 14 Austria 21 Caterpillar
22 Astonishing 26 Locate 27 Eight 30 Ounce 32 Uneven 33 Opportunities 34 Apple
38 Overwhelming 40 Originated 43 Particles 44 Movements 46 Forgive 48 Realised
50 Busted 51 Fashion 55 Happy 56 Stays Answer: ADDINGTON

CROSSWORD ACROSS: 1 Nuts 3 Spat 6 Drama 10 Water polo 11 Satin
12 Pompeii 13 Harmony 14 Pair 16 Debris 18 Asp 21 Rum 22 On time 23 Style
25 Al dente 27 Improve 29 Oorate 30 Dedicated 31 Dregs 32 Dane 33 Bred
35 DOWN: 1 Newspaper 2 Totem 4 Prominent 5 Tooth 6 Distress 7 Astronaut
8 Another 9 Green 15 Immediate 17 Remainder 19 Pretended 20 Countess
25 AVOID 26 Endless 28/29 Outer space Answer: PERUSING

LINKWORDS: GARDEN, HAMMER, FLEECE, BITEN, FATHER, BALLOT, LESSON, BROKEN, PRAYER, SALTED Answer: SEISMOLGY

WORDWISE: Bemuse, bemused, blue, blowed, bluer, blues, blue, blurs, buds, bums, burl, burled, buds, buried, bus, bused, busier, demur, demure, demurs, drub, drubs, drum, drums, dubs, dule, duelles, dulem, dumb, dumpling, elude, eludes, eludes, lemur, lumbered, lumbered, lumbars, lure, lured, lures, mule, muses, mused, muser, rebus, resume, resumed, reuse, reused, rube, rude, rued, rues, rule, ruled, rules, ruble, rumble, rumble, rumble, ruse, sebume, sebum, serum, sebum, slab, Sue, slued, slum, slumber, slur, sued, sue, scrub, surd, sure, surd, sure, umbel, umbler, used, user Answer: SLUMBRED

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Tired, Heavy Legs? Puffy Ankles?

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Few people realise it but the calves act as our 'second heart', pumping blood up from the body's farthest reaches back to the heart. It's no secret that things tend to slow through ageing or being less active. After we've been on our feet for a while, at best, many of us suffer from symptoms where we find our legs feeling tired and ankles puffy.

Yet sufferers are discovering that is a thing of the past thanks to the REVITIVE Circulation Booster®, a drug-free, therapy device which actively increases circulation. It should be used from just 30 minutes daily and it won't interfere with any existing medication.

Clinical study shows

significant increase in blood flow

Researchers from Imperial College London and London's South Bank University demonstrated in a clinical study that REVITIVE significantly improves blood flow by over 50%.

PERFECT 10s FOR REVITIVE

DIABETES

I would recommend anyone with lower leg problems like I have, due to type 2 Diabetes, to give it a try.

Philip, Blackpool. 10/10

HEAVY LEGS & PUFFINESS

My feet and legs feel less puffy and some days I feel symptom free.

Babette, Hereford. 10/10

UNSUITABLE IF YOU ARE:

- Fitted with a heart pacemaker or AICD; being treated for, or have the symptoms of, an Existing Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT); pregnant.
- Unsuitable if you are: Fitted with a heart pacemaker or AICD; being treated for, or have the symptoms of, an Existing Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT); pregnant.
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NEUROPATHIC PAIN

It’s made a big difference. I feel I can stay on my feet much longer, and my legs don’t hurt as much. I still do a bit of netball umpiring, and even play a match now and then...my legs and feet don’t feel anywhere near as bad as before REVITIVE.*

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Crossword

Try the easy or cryptic clues and then rearrange the letters in the shaded squares for the answer.

Clue: Bug with loud resentment, then run away

Easy clues

ACROSS
7 Cement mixture (8)
9 Sole (6)
10 Anxiety (4)
11 Deviation (10)
12 Clothing (6)
14 General view (8)
15 Sea surrounding Malta and Cyprus (13)
17 Leave behind (8)
19 A run in tights (6)
21 Fatal __, 1987 film (10)
22 Noble, dignified (4)
23 Seafaring criminal (6)
24 Grasping firmly (8)

DOWN
1 Nottingham __, football team (6)
2 Antagonist in The Lion King (4)
3 A tie in competitions (4,4)
4 Beat (6)
5 Found in many places (10)
6 Social gathering (8)
8 Overhearing (13)
10 Attention, following loud alarm (4)
11 Turning away, Eve cringed awkwardly (10)
12 A time to wear clothes (6)
14 Story outline: pony's returning to sister (8)
15 Strangely, airman entered from Sicily, perhaps? (13)
16 Ocean nicknamed 'The Pond' (8)
18 Type of firework (6)
20 Locomotive (6)
22 Anticipation (4)
23 River Test's used in manufacturing (10)
24 Primarily great, marvellous and exciting (8)

Cryptic clues

ACROSS
7 Real trick at the home of the Minotaur (8)
9 In fun, I question individual (6)
10 Attention, following loud alarm (4)
11 Turning away, Eve cringed awkwardly (10)
12 A time to wear clothes (6)
14 Story outline: pony's returning to sister (8)
15 Strangely, airman entered from Sicily, perhaps? (13)
17 Do better than topless louts on excursion (8)
19 Left snake on climbing apparatus (6)
21 It draws in eccentric titan actor (10)
22 Long to say hello out loud (4)
23 Quietly infuriated criminal (6)
24 Primarily great, marvellous and exciting (8)

DOWN
1 Golf's warning calls by T Woods (6)
2 Cars crashing makes for permanent damage (4)
3 Departed to cook and draw (4,4)
4 Go faster than one's first U-turn at sea (6)
5 Wall-to-wall drapes in tatters after cricketing blunder (10)
6 Enjoyable action, leaving a party (8)
8 Lacking initiative, gets out – quitting spying (13)
13 River Test's used in manufacturing (10)
15 Count loses lead in significant natural elevation (8)
16 Ocean's 50% of land, intact, breaking apart (8)
18 Salad plant is to shoot up (6)
20 Extremely lacking, beginner blows up motor (6)
22 Have confidence in gardening tool, getting about cowslip at last (4)
Jumbo PUZZLE

Read down the letters in the shaded squares to spell out an Irish singer-songwriter.

ACROSS
9 Crib, baby's bed (3)
13 Inspect carefully (7)
14 Within a building (7)
15 Identical, of the same rank (5)
16 Tip up, slant (4)
17 Section of a play (5)
18 Set in the ground to grow (5)
19 Rose prickle (5)
21 Mist or gas (6)
22 House decorator's tool (6)
24 The Three __, 1960s group (7)
28 Shopping aids, leans (5)
30 Great surprise (12)
32 Inventor's spark (4)
34 Finer points (7)
35 The dodo or dinosaurs, for example (7)
36 Flow of road vehicles or planes (7)
38 Kitchen pinafores (6)
39 Feeling, huge success (9)
41 Run naked, informally (6)
44 Your mother's mother (7)
45 Comes into view (7)
47 Set of straps for a horse (7)
48 Bird's home (4)
49 Public statement, press release (12)
51 Frequently or repeatedly (5)
54 2016 sci-fi film starring Amy Adams (7)
57 Harry __, Fine Line artist (6)
58 Toddler (6)
63 Part of your hand (5)
64 Light-splitting glass (5)
65 Home of the Great Pyramids (5)
66 Song you sing on your own (4)
68 Long, narrow hilltop (5)
69 Tightness, suspense (7)
70 Failure to attend (7)
71 __, Cotton, EastEnders' character (3)
72 __ __, Monty Python member (4)
73 Likeness, parallel (10)
74 Customary (5)
75 Farm herds (6)

DOWN
1 Glastonbury, for example (8)
2 Horse's pace (6)
3 Young goat (3)
4 Tantalise, provoke (5)
5 RNLI rescue craft (8)
6 __, Cotton, EastEnders' character (3)
7 Lift up, elevate (5)
10 Feel of a surface (7)
11 Continent (6)
12 Hang on tight (5)
13 Interrogated (10)
14 Swimming-pool distances (7)
15 Lift up, elevate (5)
16 Intense feelings (8)
17 Shrove Tuesday treats (8)
18 Weekend days (9)
19 Short letter (4)
20 Distinct, alternative (9)
21 Trailing along the ground (8)
22 Lift (8)
23 Times between midday and evening (10)
24 1979 Bee Gees hit (7)
25 Acquire, profit (4)
26 Passport ID picture (5)
27 Penalties for a crime (10)
28 All people (8)
29 Gas in the atmosphere (8)
30 Gaseous (7)
35 Divisions in a boxing match (6)
36 Facet (6)
37 Quantity (6)
38 Horoscope (5)
39 __, Gear, UK motoring series (5)
40 Water vapour (5)
41 Wicked (4)
42 Employ (3)

+ The answers for 3 March are on page 55. The answers to all this week's puzzles will appear in two issues' time.
**Midsomer Murders**

**ITV**

In the new mystery, *Sting of Death*, DCI John Barnaby and DS Jamie Winter are soon called out to investigate when local doctor, Serena Lowe, is found dead on the village green, her head and neck entirely covered in bees. Griff Rhys Jones stars as local lord and famous beekeeper, Ambrose Deddington, and Imogen Stubbs is his dedicated ‘queen bee’ sister, Tamara.

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**Love Never Dies**

Packed with emotion and wonderful music, the dramatic sequel to Andrew Lloyd Webber’s *Phantom of the Opera* heads out for its first-ever UK tour. Opening at the Curve, Leicester on 26 September, the show begins 10 years after the Phantom’s disappearance from the Paris Opera House and sees the tormented anti-hero in New York, having found a place for his music, but still full of longing for his true love, Christine. With shows available throughout autumn 2020, don’t miss the chance to book your tickets now by visiting loveneverdies.com

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**Kate & Koji**

**ITV**

This new sitcom stars Brenda Blethyn as cafe owner Kate, who develops a strong but volatile friendship with asylum-seeking African doctor, Koji (Jimmy Akingbola). Although they come from very different worlds, they are similar in more ways than they realise, one of which is a complete unwillingness to back down in an argument. *The Inbetweeners’* Blake Harrison also stars.

---

**Misbehaviour** *Out 13 March*

This sassy comedy drama takes us back to the 1970 Miss World contest, where Gugu Mbatha-Raw’s Miss Grenada bids to make history while women’s libbers Keira Knightley and Jessie Buckley plot to disrupt the ceremony in London. With juicy roles, too, for Rhys Ifans and Keeley Hawes as the contest’s canny organisers, the movie captures the era’s dodgy fashions and even dodgier sexual politics with vivid gusto.
RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival

Advance tickets are now on sale for one of the premier floral events of the year, as the RHS prepares to hold its annual garden festival in the majestic grounds of Hampton Court Palace. With stunning flower displays and workshops, book now to save and ensure you get to experience the full bounty of an English summer when the event opens on 7 July. Discover more at rhs.org.uk

Relaxing

Book club

Our pick of the best reads around

Event

One Moment
by Linda Green (£7.99, PB, Quercus)
In this evocative tale of two lost souls forming a life-changing connection, Linda Green has crafted her characters with very careful attention and created a novel that really resonates. Sensitive 10-year-old Finn and 59-year-old cafe worker Kaz are strangers, each struggling in their own way, until the traumatic events that surround their second meeting bond them together forever. Tackling bullying, divorce and mental health, it’s an emotional – but ultimately uplifting – read.

You Let Me in
by Camilla Bruce (£14.99, HB, Transworld)
Nothing is as it seems in this compelling read. Novelist Cassandra Tipp has disappeared, leaving a long letter. Having already twice got away with murder, many suspect this is her clearing her conscience, but the letter is far from what they expect. A disturbing but brilliant narrative filled with faeries, drama and illusion – a rare treat.

Mum & Dad
by Joanna Trollope (£18.99, HB, Pan Macmillan)
In this absorbing drama, Joanna Trollope shines a light on the power struggle for control over a family’s future direction. When ex-pat father, Gus, suffers a stroke at his home in Spain where he lives with his wife, Monica, it’s up to his three grown-up children to step in. Only they all have different ideas about how to deal with the situation. Tender but thought-provoking.
The plot

Rosemary

‘Can you describe the person who sold the bag to you?’

ILUSTRATION: JOY GOSNEY

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- Classical Spain
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- New Zealand - Land of the Long White Cloud
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- Portugal’s Douro Valley and Lisbon
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- Sicily – Classic & Undiscovered
- South Africa
- Split, Dubrovnik & the Splendours of Dalmatia
- Split, Rab & Undiscovered Islands of the North
- Sri Lanka
- St Petersburg & Moscow
- The Blue Danube River Cruise
- The Côte D’Azur & Italian Riviera
- The Douro, Porto & Salamanca River Cruise
- The Seine, Paris & Normandy
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