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LOCAL LIFE

OCT | NOV 2025

Relight my Fire

...page 18

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favourite season, or perhaps autumn is my favourite season because I slow down. Either way, it is my cue to take in the things around me my busy brain too often misses. Autumn is my season for battening down the hatches, wrapping up in layers, and spending more time in the kitchen, indulging in comfort food.

This issue is packed with ideas on slowing down and getting cosy. We talk to the team at East Lothian-based Stoves & More about the most efficient ways to heat your home this winter, and we tell you how to make the most of autumn's classic colour palette to update your home.

Dressing appropriately for the inevitable colder weather can be tricky, so this autumn, we suggest taking a walk on the wild side and embracing faux fur and animal prints.

Editor's LETTER



And suddenly, just like that, there's a happy crunch underfoot. Although we're surrounded by gold and scarlet-coloured foliage, most of us will still be clinging to the last of the lingering summer days. However, it won't be long until we'll be hugged by beloved jumpers and blown swiftly, brollies open, into the arms of autumn.

I don't know what it is about autumn – the misty mornings, cool evenings, the transitioning foliage – but this season always serves as my reminder to slow down. Maybe I slow down because autumn is my

Although the days are getting shorter, it's still a great time to get out and about. The first stop on my list will be Edinburgh Cocktail Week, which takes place in early October. Closer to home, I'll be checking out the Doocots, a common sight dotted around East Lothian. And, of course, I'll definitely be embracing the Swedish tradition of fika – commonly (and loosely) translated to the art of coffee, cake and catching up – and trying out this issue's delicious chocolate-based recipes.

We've all our regulars too – from Ayurvedic yoga to what the stars have in store for you, from beauty and gardening to money matters and motoring.

Until next time, enjoy autumn, enjoy your Local Life.

Kim x

LOCAL LIFE

COMMUNITY & LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

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To advertise in the December 2025 issue please contact:
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Distributed by: Out of Hand Scotland | outofhandscotland.co.uk

Local Life is designed, edited and published by Local Life Magazines Ltd, the Lighthouse, Heugh Road, North Berwick EH39 5PX. Whilst every effort is made to ensure accuracy in the information contained in this magazine, Local Life Magazines Ltd cannot be held liable for any errors or inaccuracies. Any opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the publisher.

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FASHION

Fashion leans into its animalistic side this autumn, favouring fur and animal prints.

The Faux-Fur Takeover

Faux fur is having a major moment, reimagined across coats, scarves and even bags.



TAKE A WALK ON THE *Wildside*

Wild Prints

No single animal print rules the fashion kingdom this season – it's truly a choose-your-own-adventure. Wild!



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Shining Success

This October marks a sparkling first year for **Clare Blatherwick's Jewellery Studio** in North Berwick.

After over two decades working with some of the world's most significant jewels, including ten years as Head of Jewellery at Bonhams Scotland, Clare opened her private jewellery studio in North Berwick. Clare offers local clients something truly unique: expert, discreet advice on everything from valuations and remodelling to selling and bespoke engagement ring sourcing.

Since opening the doors to her beautiful by-appointment-only space on Station Hill, Clare has helped hundreds of clients in and around North Berwick (as well as further afield) navigate their jewellery collections with clarity and confidence. From modernising inherited pieces with deep sentimental value to sourcing diamonds with stories worth telling, every appointment is tailored and personal.

"It's a joy working here and I feel so lucky to be part of such a vibrant and supportive community," Clare says. *"There's something really special about being able to help local clients make sense of their jewellery, especially when so many pieces carry family stories or have been sitting unworn for years."*

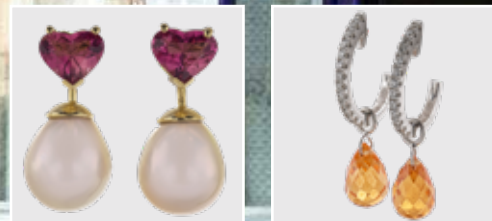
Helping clients fall in love with their jewellery again

One of Clare's most popular services is her Jewellery Box Detox. A relaxed and friendly consultation where clients bring in their own collection, often full of unworn or inherited pieces, and Clare helps identify what could be remodelled, what may be hot in the secondary market for sale, as well as which pieces should have an insurance valuation undertaken.

"It's amazing how many people say, 'I've no idea what this is, but it belonged to my granny,' or 'I never wear this but feel guilty letting it go,'" Clare shares. *"The Jewellery Box Detox is really about giving people confidence and clarity. It's never just about the jewellery, it's the emotion tied to it too."*

For those with sentimental pieces that don't suit their style, Clare's remodelling service is a favourite. She works closely with her talented

 **Clare Blatherwick**



in-house designer, Jacqui and UK-based goldsmiths to breathe new life into forgotten treasures by transforming unworn pieces into contemporary designs you'll want to wear every day.

And for those looking for something new, Clare's beautifully curated online shop is full of handpicked vintage and contemporary jewellery – each piece chosen for its craftsmanship, character and charm. From pre-owned diamond bracelets to rare vintage finds, everything reflects Clare's eye for quality and elegance. Of particular note is Clare's 'Harmony Collection' of earrings (pictured above), designed with versatility in mind. Each pair is completely unique, with gems handpicked by Clare. You can wear the studs alone, or add expertly matched drops for a change of look.

Marking a memorable first year

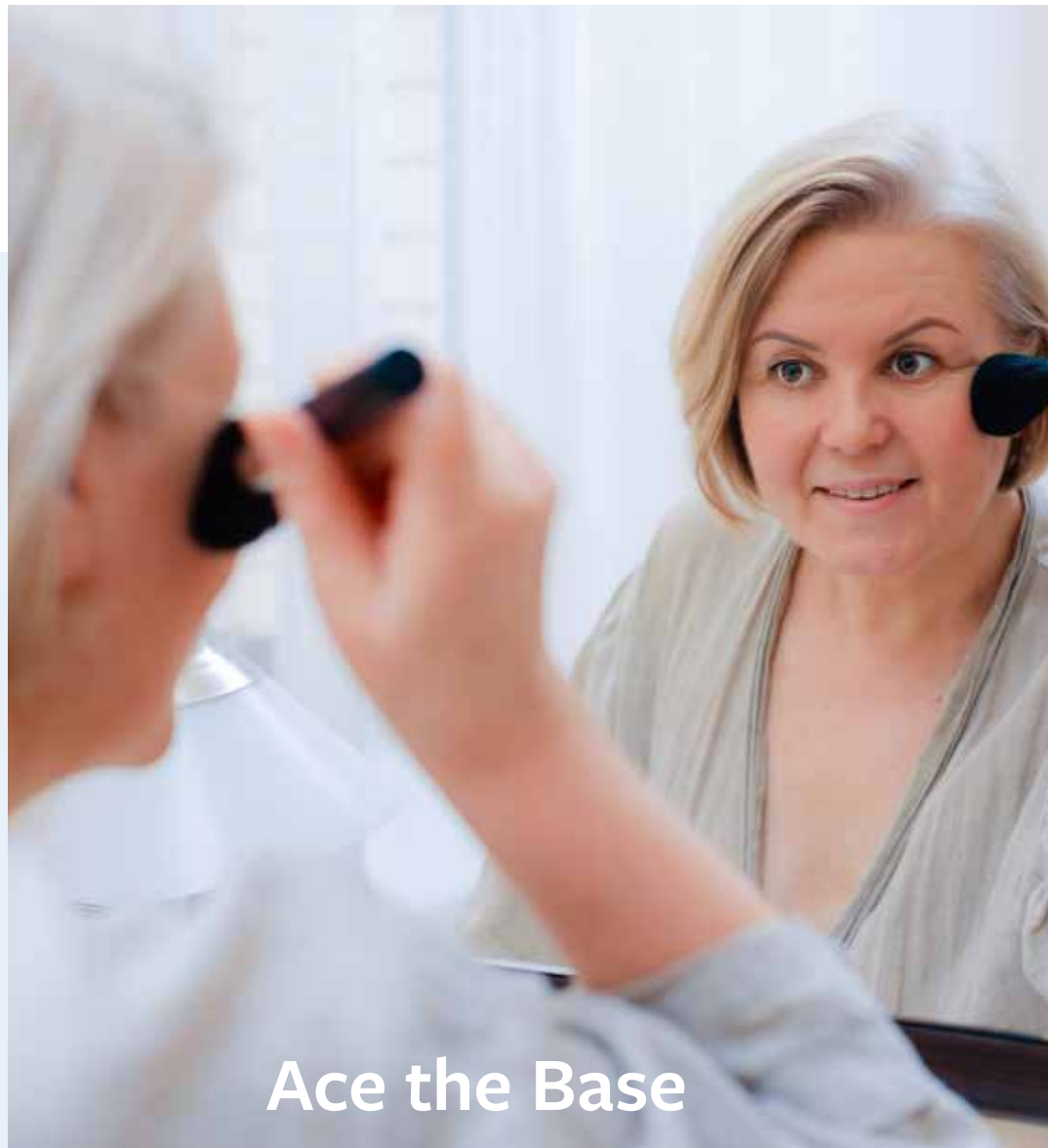
As she celebrates her first year in her studio, Clare is feeling grateful. *"I've met so many wonderful clients, and many now feel more like friends. North Berwick has been the perfect home for my business, and*

I'm excited for what's ahead – including unveiling our redesigned windows later this year too".

The birthday celebrations will be a little belated as Clare embarks on a lecture tour of New Zealand for The Arts Society. Clare has been invited to lecture across both islands on the topics that continue to fascinate her nearly three decades into her career: gemstones and jewels, and the people who wear them.

Clare works by appointment only from her studio at:
27 Station Hill, North Berwick EH39 4AS

Explore her services and curated shop at:
clareblatherwick.co.uk



Ace the Base

A guide to discovering what foundation works for you.

As the name suggests, foundation ought to be at the heart of your makeup routine, but for many of us, it can be genuinely frustrating.

First, you need to get the colour right, then consider the type of foundation and, finally, the application method. Also, do you need primer, concealer or finishing powder as well? And how much is reasonable to spend on something that's going to be on your face every day?

REGULARITY

That is, if it is going to be on your face every day. In truth, not everyone needs to wear foundation, particularly if you're still in your twenties. So, unless you're struggling with blotchy skin or acne, it's possible to get away with just a few dabs of concealer and a decent tinted moisturiser.

ACNE

For acne-prone skin, however, it's important to choose a non-comedogenic formula which won't block pores. It's also worth investing in an excellent product, one that's full of skin-boosting ingredients which offers decent anti-redness coverage as well as providing a matte finish to combat oil. This may sound like a lot to ask, but nowadays there are some incredible, scientifically formulated brands on the market.

GETTING OLDER

As we age, our complexion can change in various ways, potentially becoming drier, pigmented and blotchier. This is when you realise your once-perfect face needs a little extra help, and fortunately, there are plenty of options to re-establish that youthful glow.

You may want to consider a primer at this point, a light gel product which provides a smooth base for patchy skin. Then, apply (preferably with a brush or sponge) a medium coverage foundation which offers a dewy finish – you can add a light dusting of powder if you wish.

When we are in our forties and above, skin becomes increasingly drier, often with fine lines appearing. It may seem counterintuitive, but this may be the time to explore the world of powder foundations. These incredible formulas, often packed with minerals and ingredients that



BACK TO BASICS

When it comes to skin, it's really about how we look after it. Sun is the number one enemy, so wearing SPF every day will help delay the ageing process. Also, makeup can't fix a poor diet or lifestyle, so quitting smoking, getting plenty of sleep and drinking a lot of water will do more than any product ever can because beauty, after all, comes from within.

nourish instead of drying your skin, offer fantastic coverage without being too heavy or cakey. In fact, they create a smooth, glowing effect that is neither too heavy nor too unnatural.

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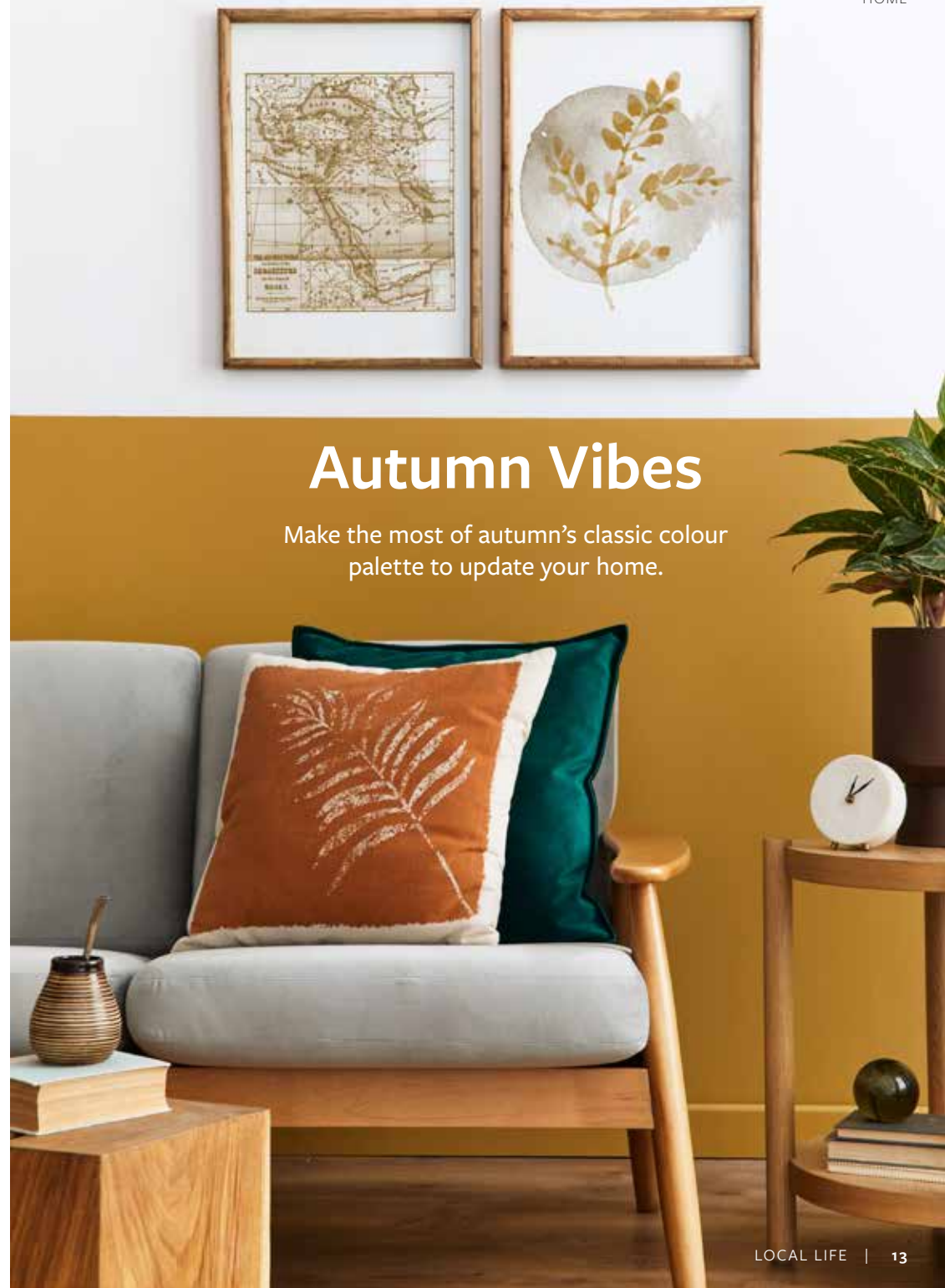
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Autumn Vibes

Make the most of autumn's classic colour palette to update your home.



All the leaves are brown, and the sky is grey..." according to The Mamas & the Papas, who clearly didn't enjoy the more traditional autumnal delights. However, as few of us have the opportunity to flee to California when the weather turns cool, there are thankfully many wonderful aspects of autumn to enjoy both outside and in.

Regardless of how gloomy the weather may be, bringing a little autumn inside your home will instantly bring cheer.

CLASSIC COLOURS

Known for their warmth and richness, autumnal colour palettes draw inspiration from the golden leaves and harvests that make this time of year so special.



From deep ochres and burnt oranges to russet reds, olive greens and warm browns, these tones not only create a cocoon of comfort, they also look gorgeous, adding a sense of luxury to your home.

WONDERFUL WALLS...

Paint is one of the boldest ways to brighten up your space, so consider creating an accent wall to introduce autumnal energy without overwhelming the space. A single wall painted in burnt orange or olive green can look stylish, especially when balanced with neutral furnishings and natural textures. As ever, sample large swatches first and observe how the colours change with the light throughout the day.

... AND BEYOND

Alternatively, if you're feeling braver, explore colour-drenching – a technique where walls, trim and even ceilings are painted in the same deep or muted shade. Try a rich ochre or warm brown for a living room, or a russet red dining room that will also be ideal for the upcoming festive season.



EXCELLENT ACCESSORIES

For a more subtle adjustment, simply update your space using accessories. Rugs, blankets, throws and velvet cushions add an instant dash of cosiness. Consider ceramic vases in ochre and terracotta, candlesticks in deep green, or picture frames with metallic finishes – such as bronze or antique gold – to mimic the gorgeous glow of an autumn afternoon.



FLOWER POWER

Rather than fresh or fake flowers, choose dried garlands and bouquets. These are becoming increasingly popular as they offer a long-lasting flower alternative that is both affordable and low-maintenance.

They are also ideal for autumn as their rustic charm evokes hay bales and harvest festivities. Ornamental gourds are also a lovely way to bring the outside magic in. Inexpensive and available in deep orange, sunshine yellows and greens, they are far classier than a Halloween lantern and look lovely alongside pillar candles on the fireplace.

Finally, add a few framed autumnal-themed posters or photographic art, and you'll have a nest so comfy, it's the perfect place for cooler weather hibernation.

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Relight my Fire

Faced with the gloom of winter and expensive heating bills, more of us are looking at returning to the comforts of the hearth. We talk to the team at East Lothian-based **Stoves & More** about heating your home this winter.



When it comes to winter, there is nothing quite like the heat of a fire to stave off the cold and keep you cosy. Throughout history, fireplaces provided both a means to cook and heat the home. However, central heating became almost ubiquitous after World War II, and fireplaces fell out of fashion. Old fireplaces were bricked up, and often their beautiful surrounds were destroyed or removed. However, with talk of energy prices on the rise again, wood-burning or multi-fuel stoves could become a fiscal necessity, beyond their obvious appeal as a sturdy style statement.

Installing a log burner, which is cheaper to run than traditional gas and electric heating systems, is more financially appealing than ever due to the rumbling fuel crisis. But what about those of us who are concerned about the impact on the environment? Our ever-expanding wealth of accumulated information means we no longer burn with reckless abandon for the sake of our health, as much as for the sake of the planet. At Stoves & More, a family-run business with over 25 years of experience in the construction industry, they fly the flag for 'green living' by supplying stoves from manufacturers such as HETA, who offer a fabulous range of contemporary and highly efficient wood-burning and pellet stoves, ensuring you can not only save money but can go greener too.

If electricity is still your only option, Stoves & More also stock a contemporary range of electric fires created to cater to a growing demand for reliable, more efficient heating appliances. With a superior flame pattern and a realistic crackling sound effect, these fires create a captivating ambience. Moreover, their energy-saving features help reduce

energy consumption without compromising on performance, making them both environmentally friendly and cost-effective to operate.

Stoves & More are more than happy to talk to customers about the benefits of fuel efficiency and control, and help you choose the right fireplace or stove for your home.



They pride themselves on the quality of their products, the professionalism of their experienced in-house installers (they undertake all of the installation work themselves with no subcontractors) and their after-sales service. Their showroom, located in The Old Primary School in Kingston, just outside North Berwick, includes live display models which allow customers to see the quality of their specially selected range.

So, when it comes to heating your home, why not join the increasing number of British homes firing up their wood-burning stoves and fireplaces this winter, keeping chilly weather at bay?

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How's It Hanging?

Macramé dates back to ancient Arabia, where artisans created intricate fringes and embellishments for clothing and household items. But, even in 2025, this easy craft looks surprisingly modern and stylish.

Macramé is a textile art technique that involves knotting cords or strings in patterns to make decorative pieces. Unlike weaving or knitting, it is done entirely by hand, using a series of knots to achieve the desired design. Though macramé has become popular in the form of hanging plant holders (a must in space-starved modern homes), you can also create wall decorations, jewellery, and clothing accessories.

MACRAMÉ MUST-HAVES

The backbone of macramé is cord: typically made of cotton, jute, or hemp. Choose a thickness based on your project. Sharp scissors are essential for clean cuts and trimming excess cords. Tape or clips can help secure your cords while you work. Finally, you'll need a wooden dowel, a metal ring or a small branch to mount your masterpiece on.

KNOW YOUR KNOTS

Square knot: One of the most versatile macramé knots. It is created using four cords – two working cords and two holding cords. With practice, this knot can form intricate patterns.

Lark's head knot: Often used to attach cords to a dowel or ring, the lark's head knot is simple yet vital. Fold a cord in half, loop it over the mounting surface, and pull the ends through the loop.

Half hitch knot: Ideal for creating spirals and curved designs. You loop one working cord around the holding cord repeatedly.

Double half hitch knot: This knot allows for greater stability and is often used to create horizontal or diagonal lines in patterns.

HOW TO DO IT

For beginners, a simple plant hanger is the perfect entry point into macramé. Here's a step-by-step guide to creating one:

1. Cut cords to the desired length. For a plant hanger, you'll need six cords, each 3 to 4 metres long.
2. Attach the cords to a ring using lark's head knots.
3. Divide the cords into pairs and tie square knots to form a pattern.
4. Create a basket-like structure by tying knots in alternating pairs to hold the plant pot.
5. Knot the ends together and trim any excess cord.

FUTURE SKILLS

Once you master the basics, you can explore advanced techniques such as layering knots and cords in intricate designs to create depth, incorporating beads to add detail, or how about adding a little extra 'wow' factor by creating fringes for the ultimate bohemian/country music dream. Yee haw.

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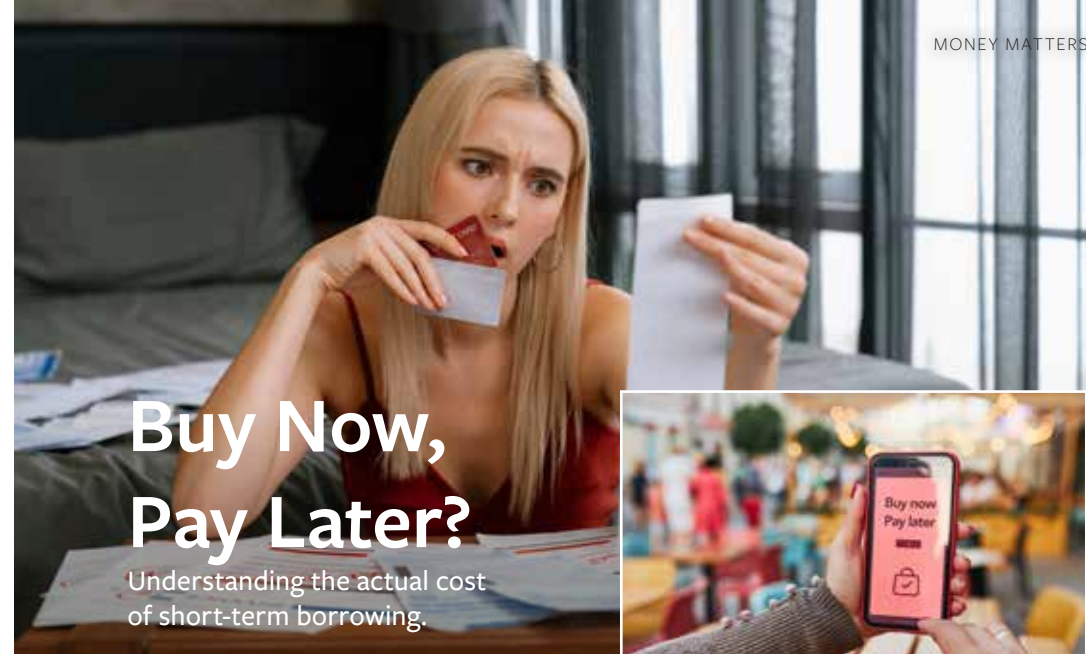
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Buy Now, Pay Later?

Understanding the actual cost of short-term borrowing.



The premise is highly tempting... you're low on funds, and you want something that, in the moment, you simply can't afford. So, you can wait until you're more financially sorted, or you can sign up to pay a little now and a little later, or you can pay nothing now and still get your goodies.

Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) schemes have gained immense popularity in recent years, offering consumers the convenience of purchasing goods without immediate payment.

These services, provided by companies like Klarna, Clearpay, and PayPal (pay-in-three), allow shoppers to split their payments into instalments. However, not all of these companies are accredited, leading to serious consequences for the unsavvy.

Financial risks

One of the most significant risks associated with BNPL schemes is the potential to accumulate debt. Since payments are deferred, it's easy to overlook the long-term financial impact of purchases. This can result in spending beyond one's means, especially if multiple BNPL transactions are made concurrently. Over time, this can lead to a cycle of debt that becomes difficult to escape.

Also, while BNPL services often advertise themselves as 'interest-free', many come with hidden fees that can surprise the consumer.

Late payment fees are common, and if you miss an instalment, providers may also impose account

maintenance fees or other administrative charges, which can increase the overall cost of a purchase.

Impact on Credit Score

When signing up for these services, it is often stated that your credit rating is not checked; however, failing to meet payment deadlines can adversely affect your credit score. BNPL providers often report late payments to credit bureaus, which can harm your ability to secure loans, mortgages, or other financial products in the future.

Furthermore, unlike traditional credit cards, BNPL schemes do not always contribute to building your credit history. Even if you manage your payments responsibly, you may not benefit from positive credit reporting, limiting your ability to establish a strong credit profile.

Limited consumer protection

BNPL schemes often operate outside traditional financial regulations, meaning they may offer fewer consumer protections compared to credit cards or loans. Disputes over faulty goods or services may be more difficult to resolve if purchases are made through BNPL providers. This, paired with the lack of transparency over fees, means that it may be worth just waiting until your actual payday comes around. After all, good things come to those who wait... apparently!

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Most hearing centres will measure the quietest sounds that you can hear and based on this will make a recommendation. Although this type of hearing test provides useful information, by no means does it provide a full picture, we hear with our ears but it is our brain that understands speech! With this in mind, we have designed our test protocol to ensure that we measure your exact individual issues.



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Ayurvedic Yoga for Autumn

words: sally jean rankin | pictures: lindsay scott

Ayurvedic yoga in autumn is all about cultivating warmth by nourishing and stoking our inner fire, deepening our intuition through introspection, journaling, or meditation, and grounding or pacifying excess Vata dosha, which becomes particularly imbalanced around this time of year. Starting your day with a mug of hot water, followed by a fresh ginger lemon tea, can help cleanse the body and stimulate your digestive system. Cooking with ghee, eating plenty of seasonal hot soups, lentil dals with warming spices, root vegetables and steamed veg will help nourish your body. Walking in nature in the morning light, fostering a stimulating daytime yoga practice as well as a relaxing evening routine, and practising pranayama, such as Nadi Shodhana, will help balance the body's energetic systems, keeping your mind, body, and soul healthy and happy during the changing months as we prepare for winter. Here are two yoga poses you can practice that will help keep you stimulated during your autumnal yoga practice.

PARIVRTTA TRIKONASANA Revolved Triangle Pose

After six rounds of Surya Namaskar A and three rounds of Surya Namaskar B, come to the top of your mat in mountain pose. Inhale and step your left foot back, turning it to a 45-degree angle, and exhale. Facing the front of your mat with your right foot straight and your shoulders and hips facing forward, inhale and take both your arms out in line with your shoulders. Backbend slightly, then exhale and fold forward from your hips, stopping when your head is in line with your hips. Inhale, take your left arm and cross it over your right leg, placing your left hand on the floor, on your ankle or on a yoga block. Exhale, look up at your right hand or to the side. Hold for five long, deep breaths. Inhale, look to your right foot, bend your right knee, root down through the feet and slowly come out of the pose. Now switch sides to bring balance to both sides of your body. This pose stretches, strengthens, opens and lengthens the body, increasing flexibility, range of motion, awareness and concentration. It is energising, stimulating and relaxing, and works with the root, heart and sacral chakras.

I've been taught that a complete yoga practice should always include: sun salutations, twists, backbends, standing balancing poses, pranayama, and relaxation. After practising revolved triangle pose, come to the top of your mat in mountain pose. Inhale, bring your hands to your heart for Anjali mudra, bring your weight to your left foot, bend your left knee, engage your core and exhale. Inhale, lift your right leg, and start to fold forward, taking your right leg back behind you. Exhale. Find a spot to focus on, keep your palms pressed together, and hold the balance for five deep breaths. If you want a challenge, lift your arms up and stretch them out by your ears. If you are a beginner, you can hold onto the wall or the back of a chair for support. Inhale, slowly bring your leg through and come back to mountain pose. Switch sides to balance the body. This standing balancing pose strengthens the muscles, building stability and improving balance. It helps improve memory, focus, concentration, and body awareness. It increases body heat and creates space to cultivate patience, introspection, calmness, inner and emotional stability and resilience.

VRABHADRASANA THREE Warrior Three Pose

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I'm Moira, founder of Moira Johnston Hypnotherapy, based in East Lothian. With a background as a qualified lawyer, I bring a wealth of life experience to my practice. Trained at the renowned Clifton Practice, I use Solution Focused Hypnotherapy to help clients from all walks of life create lasting, positive change.

Want to talk about how Solution Focused Hypnotherapy can help?

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In the Stars

Autumn is here, and as the seasons change, there are always new things to look for in the stars.



23 October – 21 November

With the sun in your sign, transformation is inevitable. Dive into the deeper mysteries of autumn by visiting a haunted house or exploring local legends. Journaling by firelight or a night of stargazing will help unlock your inner wisdom. Take a solitary walk in the woods to reflect and recharge your inner power. Consider hosting a tarot night with close friends to deepen your spiritual connections.



22 November – 21 December
Restless and ready for adventure, you're eager to roam. Try a spontaneous weekend getaway or sign up for an autumnal fun run. Nature's wild beauty recharges your spirit and sparks new dreams. Try geocaching or treasure hunts in the forest. Attend a cultural festival to satisfy your curiosity about the world around you.



22 December – 19 January
Ambitions take root in the slowing pace of autumn. Channel your energy into a creative project, such as making homemade autumn wreaths or tackling home repairs. A brisk morning walk with friends will help you clear your head and set new goals. Plan an autumn vision board to visualise your aspirations for the months ahead. Host a board game night to unwind and reconnect with those who support your dreams.



21 March – 19 April
This season you'll crave fresh starts – perhaps in work, love, or a personal challenge. Mars energises your social life; perhaps reconnect with friends over a brisk walk. Take the time to explore a new hobby that allows you to channel your boundless energy. As the nights grow cooler, gather around a bonfire to share stories and laughter – this will reignite your zest for life.



21 June – 22 July
Nostalgia tugs at your heart this season, and you may feel drawn to family traditions and home comforts. Bake an apple pie or host a movie marathon featuring classic autumn films. Revisit old photo albums and reminisce with loved ones about cherished memories. Create autumn wreaths to add a personal touch to your home's decor.



23 September – 22 October

As your birthday season concludes, host a harvest picnic or plan a road trip with close friends. Balance and beauty are your guides; soak in the colours and make memories to last. Indulge in a little self-care with a new skincare ritual inspired by autumn botanicals. Attend an art class or poetry reading – your appreciation for beauty will flourish in creative spaces.



20 January – 18 February
Your imagination soars in these reflective months. Seek inspiration in unconventional ways: join a lantern festival or try your hand at Halloween crafts. Experimenting with new traditions will satisfy your quirky spirit. Spend an evening stargazing with friends, perhaps learning the myths behind autumn constellations. Write letters to distant friends; your unique perspective will brighten their days.



20 April – 20 May
Venus urges you to create cosy spaces and indulge your senses. Host an autumn dinner party, complete with seasonal dishes. Spending time in nature collecting pine cones and acorns for homemade crafts will satisfy your earthy aesthetic. Treat yourself to a luxurious wool blanket or a new scented candle, adding warmth and serenity to your home.



23 July – 22 August
This is your time to shine, and creative pursuits flourish as you embrace the theatrical side of autumn. Organise a costume party for Halloween or volunteer at a local arts fair. Try your hand at pumpkin carving and display your masterpieces proudly. Capture the season with a spontaneous photoshoot among the vibrant foliage, and share your warmth with all you meet.



19 February – 20 March
Pisces are dreamy and intuitive, so you're attuned to the season's subtle changes. Take a meditative canoe trip on a misty loch, and let the magic of autumn nurture your soul. Start a gratitude jar, adding a note each day about something that made you smile. Attend or organise a poetry night or acoustic concert to let music and words carry you into the autumnal dreamscape.



21 May – 20 June
With Mercury's playful touch, you're inspired to learn and connect. Attend a harvest festival, or join a book club with hot drinks and mystery tales. Cosying up and sharing stories with others, will warm your twin soul. Try your hand at writing poetry inspired by autumn landscapes. Don't hesitate to organise a trivia night with friends, where your quick wit can shine.



23 August – 22 September
Virgo, this is a productive time to tidy your space and plant some seeds for winter. Try visiting a local farmer's market and preserving autumn's bounty; think spiced jams and herbal teas. Start a gratitude journal, noting the little joys that autumn brings. Organise a community clean-up day and watch your efforts blossom into a better world.



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The Mission is Not to Impress But To Express!

Mind Body Soul Columnist **Bernadette Petrie** lost her battle with cancer at the end of last year. Her husband, Dave, has graciously allowed us to keep sharing excerpts from her book for this column. This time, Bernadette reminds us that it's important to stop trying to impress those around us and instead start expressing our true selves.

The mission is not to impress but to express! This is, perhaps, an important reminder. Why? Simply, we must get out of our own way and express who we are.

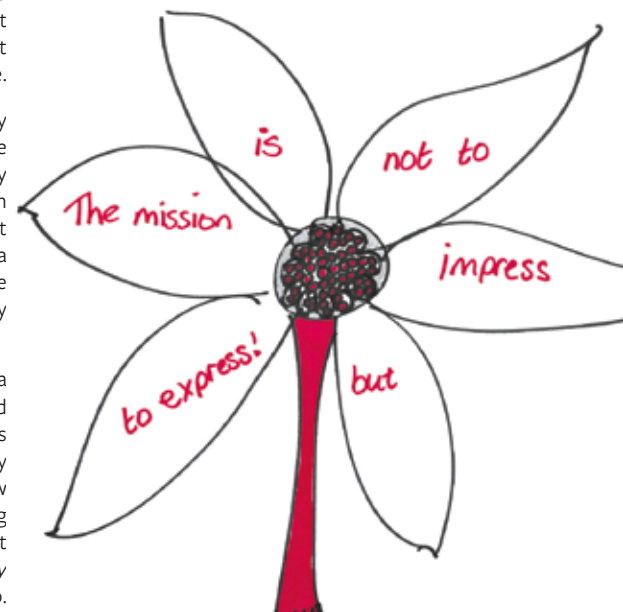
I realised this about 30 minutes into my first visit to the art therapy room at the Priory. It was, in fact, two weeks into my stay before I realised the art therapy room even existed, and ironically, the art therapist was off for the entirety of my stay. It took a while to persuade the staff to let me go there unaccompanied, but as I was persistent, they eventually agreed.

I cringe at admitting I thought I would create a beautiful seascape, with my newly awakened 'divine' awareness, and immediately impress the other patient in the room. I'd previously taken art classes, and along with my new inner joy, I felt sure I'd impress – how wrong I was! Thirty minutes later, as I looked at my seascape, I thought, "*This is totally crap*". Feeling utterly dejected, I ripped it up.

As the other patient, a lovely young woman, headed back to her room with her creation, I took the opportunity to regroup and took a few deep breaths. These words came to me: "*The aim is to express, Bernie, not impress*". I reflected on how I was feeling and considered what I wanted to express. I thought about the people I had met in the Priory who were soon to be leaving, and of my friends and family who had been sending messages to me. And, I realised I wanted to express my love and gratitude to them. I realised I was actually here to make thank you cards. I was here to express my love and thanks. The only thing that came to mind was the flower doodle I'd been drawing since I was a little girl. That flower doodle has been the 'divine's' way of trying to get through to me for years.

I grabbed charcoal and watercolours – a favourite from art classes – as well as some watercolour paper and cardboard, and spent the next hour or so painting poppy after poppy. In this factory production process, I was able to allow each layer time to dry before working on it again – impatience is a disaster with watercolours! This way, I moved on to the next, then retouched, and generally had a ball by playing and expressing. I chopped and I glued, and when I left – I left with 12 expressions of who I was, stacked in my arms.

I can still remember walking back to my room and the joy I experienced as I went on to express, in words,



the messages to those first recipients, and the effect giving those cards had on them.

That doodle flower would be drawn, again and again, over the next three years. Then, one day, I looked at it and realised I had created the symbol of my company – Barefoot Ambition. By getting out of my own way and focusing on expressing, that first flower evolved with me. It was by expressing myself that I discovered myself.

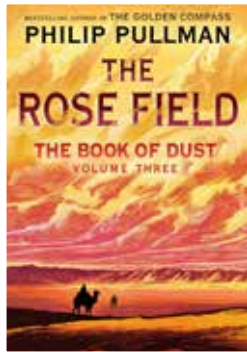
Over the years, my art has continued in fits and spurts. I often forget the valuable lesson of expressing, not impressing, and every time I do, I produce utter rubbish. It's only when I remember it is about expression that the art flows, the words flow, she flows.

What about you? What part of you is whispering to be expressed, just for the joy and benefit of revealing that part of you? Focus on the emotions you are feeling and let them out, in whichever form feels right for you. Whether it's dance, yoga, music, sports, art, or business, in anything you create, express yourself fully. By letting go of the need to impress, you might just express the real truth of who you are.

Article adapted from Bernadette's book *Permission to Shine* – Chapter 54
Buy book from: [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)

OCTOBER OCULUS

Get your eye in with one of these charming reads this month.



The Book of Dust: The Rose Field

by Phillip Pullman

Published 30 years after readers were first introduced to Lyra Belacqua in the seminal *Northern Lights*, *The Rose Field* is the breathtaking culmination of The Book of Dust trilogy and finds Lyra and Malcolm's quests

converging, as crucial answers to great mysteries are revealed and the power of the Magisterium grows ever stronger.

In *The Rose Field*, their quests converge in the most dangerous, breathtaking and world-changing ways.

They must take help from spies and thieves, gryphons and witches, old friends and new, learning all the while, and yet all around them, the world is aflame – made terrifying by fear, power and greed.

Published by Penguin Random House on 23 October



What Have I Done?

by Ben Elton

Writer and comedian Ben Elton recounts his life and uniquely varied career from his Catford childhood and being the BBC's youngest ever sitcom writer at 21, right up to the present day, with yet another hit sitcom, *Upstart Crow*.

He discusses career, love, a surprise late-life

BAFTA, plus offers unique insights into his groundbreaking work, as well as talking honestly about his personal and professional relationships, including inspiring contemporaries and managing foes!

Published by Macmillan on 9 October

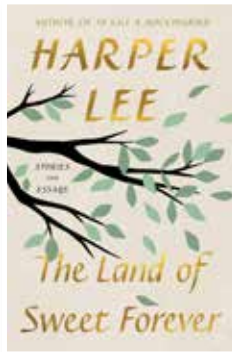
The Land of Sweet Forever

by Harper Lee

From the legendary author of *To Kill a Mockingbird* comes a remarkable posthumous collection of writing spanning both Harper Lee's short and non-fiction, which opens a truly fascinating window into the unique mind and talent of one of literature's greatest enigmas. *The Land of Sweet Forever* combines Lee's early short fiction and later non-fiction in a volume as indispensable for her many fans as it is for students of American literature.

From the Alabama schoolyards of Lee's youth to the luncheonettes and movie houses of mid-century Manhattan, from Lee's reflections on the responsible teaching of children to a delightful account of Gregory Peck and the *To Kill a Mockingbird* film set, *The Land of Sweet Forever* broadens our understanding of Lee's extraordinary talent.

Published by Cornerstone on 21 October



Always Remember: The Boy, the Mole, the Fox, the Horse and the Storm

by Charlie Mackesy

The life-affirming follow-up to mega-selling *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse*, Mackesy's exquisitely illustrated volume finds our four friends navigating both literal and metaphorical dark clouds. Far from being a book just for children, this magical tale offers hope for young and old alike during these turbulent times.

Published by Ebury Publishing on 9 October



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Louise Scammell | Hope spot 'plumose anemones'

Under the Waves

An exhibition of printmaking with artists Louise Scammell and Julia Manning opens on the 24th September at the SOC.

Printmaker and diver Louise spends much of her time exploring and sketching underwater around the British coastline. Using a waterproof sketchpad and graphite sticks, she records her encounters beneath the surface, later translating these sketches into her wonderful prints. She works with a technique called Mokulito (wood lithography), which is particularly well suited to capturing the fluid, ethereal qualities of the underwater landscape and its creatures. She describes how *"the act of diving is an intense experience, the light and colour changing in a moment. I love the anticipation of seeing something shimmering, unknown and fleeting."*

Louise sketches and dives as often as possible, relishing the challenge of working quickly in a constantly shifting underwater environment. Back in the studio, her drawings are transferred onto plywood, processed, inked, and printed on the press. Editions are small, typically just five to seven prints per plate, with each featuring subtle variations characteristic of the Mokulito process. These limited editions make Louise's prints especially distinctive and unique.

Eel conservationist Julia's series of 12 prints superbly illustrates the migratory journey of eels along the Somerset coastline and estuary. Her work shows the wonder of this remarkable migration, offering a rare glimpse into the world of these critically endangered animals. Julia's artwork highlights the growing environmental and man-made crisis to eel populations and raises awareness about the importance of protecting and improving the health of our rivers, coastline, and seas.

She employs a variety of printmaking techniques, including woodcut, lino and collagraph, often combining these processes within a single print. The result is spectacular, with rich layers of colour and expressive mark-making in each print.

24 September – 16 November 2025
Scottish Ornithologists' Club (SOC)
Waterston House, Aberlady
open Wed-Sun (10 am – 5 pm), free entry
the-soc.org.uk

Julia Manning | Life and Death

To-do
LIST

out and about in
our area...



Sip and Savour: Edinburgh's £5 Cocktail Extravaganza

Edinburgh Cocktail Week, supported by Essential Edinburgh, returns in October, once again transforming the capital into a cocktail lover's playground, with signature serves, pop-up experiences and events taking place across the city. Located on Festival Square, the Cocktail Village will once again be the spirited, social hub of the festival, with 24 pop-up bars each offering a minimum of two £5 cocktails on their menu, standout street food trucks and live music from local bands, artists and DJs. New this year is a Village Pub-themed area operated by Seamus's, where festivalgoers can enjoy a pint and traditional serves with fireside trad music, darts, and board games.

Beyond Festival Square, the festival offers an excuse to step out in style and catch up with friends while exploring the very best of Edinburgh's splendid cocktail scene at the 100-plus bars offering £5 cocktails during the festival. From grand institutions to the latest openings, internationally acclaimed speakeasies to relaxed corner pubs, there are drinks and experiences for everyone to enjoy.

3 – 12 October 2025 | edinburghcocktailweek.co.uk



Short Courses

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Exploring the Spring Garden

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Beneath the Surface with Dominic McIvor | Images and
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Discover Scotland's Coastal Wildlife this Autumn



Autumn is a fantastic time to spot wildlife along the coast as the subtle shift between summer and winter becomes more apparent. Look out for gannet fledglings, divers leaping and lunging through the waves, geese gathering in gagging skeins, and waders scuttling along the shoreline.

The month of October also marks the beginning of the grey seal pupping season. Head into the Seabird Centre to chat to the friendly team about the nationally important grey seal colonies in the Firth of Forth and how to avoid disturbance over this sensitive period. You can watch the live updates on their website webcams (and in the Centre) as the cute, fluffy pups are born on nearby Craigleith. The seal adoption packs, available in the gift shop, make lovely presents for wildlife enthusiasts and help support the Charity's marine conservation and restoration work.



Gannet and the Bass Rock © Jamie McDermaid



Birdwatching at the Seabird Centre © Jamie McDermaid

There will also be a whole host of fun events over the October school holidays, too, with a brand-new Live Science Show, rockpooling, seaweed pressing, a family-focused introduction to birdwatching, and more!

Visit seabird.org/events to find out more

Scottish Seabird Centre
North Berwick
EH39 4SS

Top image: Turnstone © Jamie McDermaid

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Weekend TIDE TIMES

OCT				NOV							
		High Water	Low Water			High Water	Low Water				
		AM	PM			AM	PM				
3	Fri		1235	0634	1844	1	Sat	1050	2305	0443	1700
4	Sat	0050	1331	0717	1925	2	Sun	1149	2359	0534	1746
5	Sun	0139	1414	0758	2005	7	Fri	0300	1527	0915	2133
10	Fri	0504	1732	1116	2337	8	Sat	0349	1613	0959	2223
11	Sat	0551	1818	1152		9	Sun	0441	1702	1043	2313
12	Sun	0644	1909	0009	1227	14	Fri	1013	2335	0408	1614
17	Fri	0012	1259	0650	1857	15	Sat	1118	2333	0510	1710
18	Sat	0110	1347	0738	1937	16	Sun		1210	0558	1754
19	Sun	0155	1425	0847	2042	21	Fri	0253	1501	0833	2053
24	Fri	0447	1657	1026	2236	22	Sat	0327	1533	0903	2124
25	Sat	0521	1729	1047	2258	23	Sun	0403	1606	0932	2155
26	Sun	0457	1704	1009	2225	28	Fri	0752	2000	0101	1334
31	Fri	0939	2200	0324	1601	29	Sat	0858	2110	0216	1457
						30	Sun	1005	2218	0336	1606

These are predicted tide times for Fidra, given in GMT and no liability can be accepted.

A castellated doocot at Saltoun Hall



Stories in Stone

Doocots

Heritage consultant David Hicks tells us the stories behind some of East Lothian's historic properties.

Phantassie Doocot



Doocots are usually fairly sturdy constructions, which is probably one reason why they have survived. Perhaps, the old superstition that anyone who destroys a doocot would suffer a death in their family within a year, has also played a part. There was a determined effort in the 1960s and 70s to preserve a selection, and some have been successfully adapted. At Athelstaneford and Prestonpans, doocots have been developed into visitor centres. Another example at Humble has been converted into a small house.

Doocots are a common sight dotted around East Lothian, purpose-built structures for keeping pigeons, as a source of eggs and meat through the winter months. I like the way they pop up in unlikely places, perched in the middle of fields, marooned in housing estates, or at the bottom of people's gardens. Doocots outlived their original use a long time ago, which does pose the question, why have they survived?

Doocots first emerged as buildings in their own right in the 1500s. The earliest types are circular and shaped like beehives, and you can explore a well-preserved example at Dirleton Castle. A slightly later version is square with one sloping roof, looking like a reading lectern. In the 1700s, a tower design developed, often reflecting the architecture of the associated main house or designed as a landscape feature.

The building had to be fairly tall to allow the birds to see any lurking predators and have flight holes large enough for pigeons but not owls or hawks. Some doocots have projecting stone cills, sometimes known as 'rat courses', to stop vermin from climbing the walls. Sturdy wooden doors kept out foxes and weasels from the ground floor. The lectern-style structures protected the pigeons from the wind, and allowed them to roost in the sun. Inside a doocot are many rows of stone nesting boxes. Fixed to the middle of the floor would have been a T-shaped revolving wooden ladder, known as a potence, to gain access to the boxes.



Nesting boxes and stone mount for a potence ladder in the doocot at Dirleton Castle

Back in the 1970s, the maverick county planner Frank Tindall experimented with re-stocking the doocot at Luffness with pigeons. He organised a conference to discuss the findings, and had a local hotel prepare a range of pigeon dishes for the delegates to try. Despite all his best efforts, the idea did not catch on, so perhaps doocots are best appreciated as simply quirky and interesting features of our landscape.



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The Swedish Art of Fika

Coffee, Cake and Catch-up is the perfect antidote to dark autumn days.



Autumn is on its way. Time to embrace your inner hermit, snuggle under soft blankets, light candles and hunker down to prepare for the next few months of crunchy leaves, chocolate treats and days when it's dark pretty much straight after lunch. It's time to embrace the Swedish tradition of fika.

The Swedish fika, like Danish hygge or Finnish sisu, is one of those curious Nordic concepts that defy perfect translation. Fika is commonly (and loosely) translated to the art of coffee, cake and catching up –

but the Swedes stress that it is so much more than that. It provides much-needed space and time to step away from the grind of everyday life, take a breath and clear the mind. Plus, it has a valuable social function, too. One doesn't fika alone; it's a much-needed chance for people to meet and hang out with friends, colleagues and loved ones, and enjoy tasty treats. These delicious chocolate-based recipes will surely be acceptable additions to your cup of coffee.

Happy fika!



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NADIYA HUSSAIN'S CHOCOLATE CARAMEL SODA BREAD

From the book *Nadiya's Family Favourites*, this chocolate caramel soda bread isn't your ordinary loaf. Just mix, bake, sit back and enjoy.

INGREDIENTS serves 12

350g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
 ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
 25g caster sugar
 ½ tsp salt
 100g dark chocolate, roughly chopped (or chocolate chips)
 300ml buttermilk
 1 tbsp vanilla bean paste
 12 chocolate-covered caramels
 1 tsp cocoa powder, for dusting
 75g dark chocolate, melted

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/Gas mark 6. Dust a baking tray with a little flour.
2. Put the flour, bicarbonate of soda, sugar, salt and chocolate into a large bowl and mix together.
3. Mix the vanilla paste into the buttermilk.
4. Make a well in the centre of the dry ingredients and add the wet ingredients, then use a palette knife to bring the dough together.
5. Drop the dough into the centre of the prepared baking tray. Using floured hands, flatten it to a square. Using a sharp knife, cut into 12 squares, making sure to cut all the way down. In the centre of each square, add a soft caramel and push down gently into the centre.
6. Bake for 30 minutes. Once baked, leave the bread on the tray for 10 minutes. Dust with cocoa powder and drizzle with the melted chocolate.

INGREDIENTS serves 15

Cakes

365g plain flour
 600g brown sugar
 120g cocoa powder
 15g baking soda
 250g butter, at room temperature
 1tsp instant coffee (or a shot of espresso)
 370ml warm water
 4 whole eggs

130ml vegetable oil
 2tsp vanilla extract
 255ml buttermilk

Icing

600g icing sugar, sifted
 300g butter, softened
 Cocoa powder, to taste

METHOD

1. Preheat your oven to 170°C. Prepare three 18 cm (7") cake tins with cooking spray or butter and line with baking paper.
2. Place the flour, sugar, cocoa and baking soda in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and mix on low to combine. Add the butter and mix on low until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs (you can also do this by hand).

MAGNOLIA BAKERY'S SIGNATURE CHOCOLATE CAKE

This rich and satisfying chocolate cake from one of New York's finest bakeries is certain to impress.

3. In a separate bowl, dissolve the instant coffee in the warm water (or just use the shot of espresso), add the eggs, oil and vanilla and mix together. Add two-thirds of the wet mixture to the dry ingredients and mix on medium-high until thick and fluffy. Add the remaining wet ingredients and mix well until combined and the batter is smooth.

4. Add the buttermilk and mix slowly to combine. There may be small chunks of buttermilk, but don't fret, this is normal. This is quite a wet batter, so don't panic if it's not thick.

5. Pour the mixture evenly into the prepared tins and bake for 30–40 minutes until a skewer or knitting needle poked into the cakes comes

out clean. Allow to cool in the tins for 5–10 minutes, then turn out onto cooling racks.

6. When cool, wrap cakes in cling film and chill for 2 hours or overnight – this will make them easier to trim and ice.

7. Beat the sifted icing sugar and the butter together with your chosen flavouring and colouring, if using, add 2–3 tbsp of boiling water to loosen and beat until smooth. Add cocoa powder to taste if you want chocolate frosting.

8. Divide the frosting for your three sections and ice by dolloping the mixture into the centre of each cake and swirl outwards with a palette knife. Repeat until adding the final layer on the top of the cake. Decorate as you wish.

A Vibrant Garden Oasis



A moment in nature is a tonic for both body and mind, writes award-winning garden designer **Lynn Hill**.

Did you see our vibrant garden oasis at Fringe by the Sea? Everyone was enjoying taking time to relax, surrounded by plants as they soaked up the festival atmosphere.

With pops of colour to lift the spirits and greenery to soothe the soul, the garden brought the wellbeing benefits of biophilic design right into the heart of the Fringe. Designed as a treat for the senses, it was a welcoming, comfortable, and versatile space.

The challenge? To create a space that was at once colourful and fun, yet tranquil and restorative.

A haven where groups of friends could sit together and enjoy each other's company; children could play and explore; and others could pause for a quiet moment of solitude, recharging amidst the buzz of the festival.

At only 7m x 7m, our little pop-up garden had to work hard, but it truly packed a punch! It filled me with joy to watch so many people enjoying it, and to share conversations about how they could transform their own gardens into spaces of inspiration and delight.



Fresh from Fringe by the Sea: Six ways to turn a small garden into a vibrant oasis

Use planters to create levels

This adds interest, and is a great way to bring year-round appeal and pops of colour.

Choose plants of different shapes and sizes

A few bold, statement specimens can instantly make a space feel bigger.

Add reveals

Create a space that cannot be seen all at once, with little gems of interest that reveal themselves as you explore.

Create a multipurpose layout

Configure the garden and its seating so it can be used in multiple ways. We included some sturdy wooden cube stools in our garden oasis, which could be moved as needed to create even more flexibility.

Pick plants that perform

Plants in a small garden have to work hard for their keep. Select some evergreens for year-

round interest, such as *Choisya*, *Rosemary* and *Fatsia japonica*. With long-flowering perennials such as *Salvia* 'Caradonna', *Erigeron karvinskianus*, and *Persicaria*. Evergreen grasses and ferns are a good addition too, with *Carex* 'Evergold' and *Polystichum tsussimense* being some of my favourites.

Book a garden design consultation

Where I will share expert advice tailored to your garden, tastes, and lifestyle. Consultations can be booked individually, with no obligation to commission a full design.

Lynn Hill Garden Design

For more information about Lynn's garden design services please contact:
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Winter Warning

The clocks go back, the drizzle sets in, and suddenly the drive to work feels more Siberian than suburban. Fear not, if you're in the market for a new or nearly-new car this autumn, a few clever features can help take the sting out of the rainy season.

Heated seats (and steering wheels)

An obvious one, but still a game-changer. Once the preserve of posh German saloons, heated seats are now common in hatchbacks and hybrids, and when winter gradually ebbs around, they will feel like a blessing. Add in a heated steering wheel, and you may think we're reaching the realms of luxury, but many more manufacturers are now embracing in-hand technology like this.

Remote start or app-controlled heating

A growing number of EVs and hybrids let you warm the cabin using your phone, so by the time you've finished your cuppa, the car is toasty and ready to go. That means no scraping, no shivering, no sitting there awkwardly waiting for the windscreen to demist, and indeed no theft danger in terms of leaving an unattended car running early in the morning while you brew your coffee!

LED headlights

With darker mornings and early sunsets, good lighting makes a big difference. LED headlights offer clearer

visibility, while auto high-beam tech adjusts oncoming glare – a welcome upgrade if you often drive on rural or unlit roads.

Heated windscreens

Heated windscreens mean no more frantic scraping with a credit card or waiting ten minutes for the vents to catch up, so consider this one of your go-to demands in time for winter.

Winter tyres (or all-season alternatives)

They're not compulsory in the UK, but winter tyres dramatically improve grip in cold and wet conditions. If you live in a rural area or drive early in the morning, they could make all the difference, albeit all-season tyres are a good halfway house.



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Looking Back

Take a step back in time with us as we explore a series of past events that have occurred in the month of November.

5 years ago

The second COVID-19 lockdown comes into effect, with people told to remain in their homes. The move remains in place for three weeks, after which local restrictions come into force.

20 years ago

Hung Up becomes Madonna's penultimate solo number one hit in the UK, spending three weeks on top of the charts. The following February, *Sorry* will also top the hit parade, while the *4 Minutes* duet with Justin Timberlake deliver Madge's final chart-topper in March 2008.

Meanwhile, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* was released in the UK. JK Rowling's epic would go on to take over £750million at the box office.

35 years ago

The worldwide web is first proposed by Tim Berners-Lee and Robert Cailliau. It would be another three years before it was launched, although most people wouldn't experience it until later in the decade.



40 years ago

The eruption of the Nevado del Ruiz volcano in Colombia leads to the Armero tragedy, killing an estimated 23,000 people.

50 years ago

Ross McWhirter, the co-founder of the *Guinness Book of Records*, is assassinated outside his home in Enfield by the IRA. He was said to have been targeted due to his public offer of a £50,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of those responsible for a series of bombings in London.

Meanwhile, Ronald Reagan defeats Jimmy Carter in the Presidential Election. He will stay in office for eight years, to the day – January 20, 1981, to January 20, 1989.

60 years ago

The British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) is established by separating the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius. The UK's primary motivation was to establish a joint UK/US military base on Diego Garcia, the largest island in the archipelago. This led to the forced displacement of the archipelago's inhabitants, known as the Chagossians – a political story that has resurfaced this year.

100 years ago

Robert A Millikan announces the discovery of cosmic rays, radiation originating from outer space.



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