



Brighter BARNSLEY

A Barnsley Chronicle Publication

Published March 2026

**Why age is just a number
for first-time pageant
entrant Nikki**

Page 14

Welcome

to the first edition of our new
Brighter Barnsley Magazine

Barnsley people hit great heights...

THROUGH my work I am constantly reminded that what makes our town so endlessly fascinating are its locals.

Barnsley is home to an intriguing cast of characters from driven creatives, fundraisers with hearts of gold, successful professionals and regular hard-working locals.

That's why we've tailored the magazine to feature real people, highlighting the stories and successes from town's best and brightest.

Introducing the star of our cover, Nikki Parkinson, a 54-year-old Barnsley Hospital worker who moonlights as a model.

Nikki has achieved the impressive feat of reaching the finals of the prestigious Miss GB competition – despite never having entered a beauty pageant before.

Her driving force for competing was to shine a light on the capabilities of older women, championing girl power in the competition's 42-plus category.

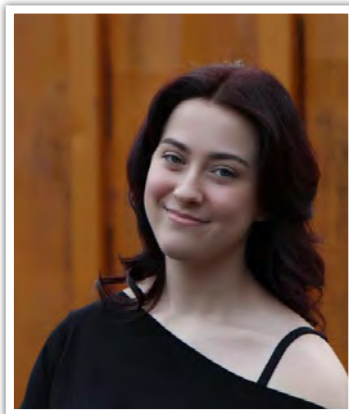
Hairdresser to the stars, Andrew Barton, told us all about his humble beginnings in Royston and his meteoric success which saw him taming the manes of the likes of Tom Cruise and Eva Longoria.

Overcoming a significant mental health battle in his teenage years, Andrew admitted that he hopes his story and advocacy can empower the younger generation.

Although they all have unique tales to tell, what unites all of our Brighter Barnsley features are their formidable spirit, which stands as proof that extraordinary can be found in every day people.

The magazine has been revamped but still contains a number of life-style favourites including tips for the garden, a very tasty recipe to cut down spending and calories and my colleague Josh Timlin is, as ever, in the fast lane with one of his unmistakable car reviews.

We will be back in July with our second edition.



Charlotte Oldroyd
Brighter Barnsley

Did you know?

Our Brighter Barnsley Magazine is also available online. Simply visit www.barnsleychronicle.com/supplements-and-features to read it wherever you are.

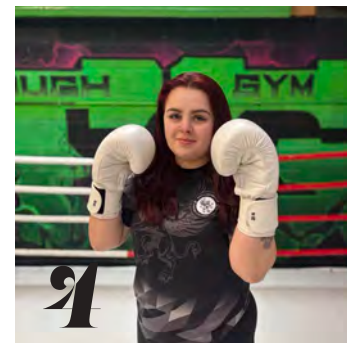
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Brighter BARN斯LEY

Inside...



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Caitlin fights back against boxing's patriarchy...

A FEMALE head boxing coach has admitted that the sport is a 'man's world', but she 'wouldn't do anything else'.

When Caitlin Coles started boxing and martial arts at just five years old, she almost immediately knew that it was her life's dream to own her own business and become a coach – and she did just that with Griffin Boxing Club.

Caitlin has invested all of her time and energy to create the amateur boxing club, which runs out of Body Tough Gym, in Royston, but it's safe to say she's had her fair share of hardships along the way.

As one of the only female head boxing coaches in the borough, dated attitudes towards sports have created challenges for Caitlin.

She said: "It's mainly the older generation and predominately men.

"Whenever some of them come in they'll go straight up to my dad or even other male members.

"Straight away my dad directs them to me and says 'No, she's the boss', he understands how hard it is.

"Sometimes I get people saying they thought I was a receptionist and apologising.

"People shouldn't assume things like that.

"I've had arguments before when I'm doing lessons, because I'll sometimes get questioned about my teaching.

"A man could do the exact same lesson and they wouldn't bat an eye at it.

"I've had people say before 'You're too little and cute to be doing this', or asking me to list my qualifications.

"Nobody would dare say that to a man.

"I've never heard anyone challenging my dad or my brother.

"It's definitely been an eye-opener that sexism still

exists in this day and age.

She credits her mature and grounded approach to coaching to her dad, Gavin, whom she affectionately called 'my rock'.

"It doesn't bother me as much as it used to but there'd be times where I'd go home crying and saying I'm not doing it anymore.

"I thought I wasn't good enough because people were questioning my ability.

"My family and my boxing family have supported me through it all.

"Ever since I was about 16 and I said I wanted to start opening my own club, my dad didn't question it, he'd say let's do it.

"I really want to get my legacy out there, this isn't something I'm doing part-time or want to pack in after a year or two.

"If it wasn't for my dad, I wouldn't be able to do this."

Caitlin has evidently proved her doubters wrong, having created an energetic community of amateur boxers.

She added: "You can notice a difference, especially with the kids, even when they're in school.

"Some of them volunteer to coach on the weekends, I don't have to approach them, they want to do it.

"It's having a real knock on effect, there's year 11s who are talking to year 7s and looking out for them in school.

"We all worked together to raise the money for new equipment, just one of our punching bags cost £375.

"We've also done it where we split the money between the club and Barnsley Hospice and the kids have helped out.

"Coaching has been so rewarding.

"I love it, I think I was born to do this, I wouldn't do anything else."



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'A joy and a pleasure' as Andrew makes return to his hometown

ANDREW Barton has revealed his journey from a humble childhood in Barnsley to becoming a mainstay hairdresser to the stars.

Adopted as a baby, Andrew grew up in Royston to a loving family, holding on to fond memories of the village. However, his childhood wasn't always picture perfect.

The hairdresser endured cruel bullying as a youngster, with his tormentors originally making fun of him for being adopted.

But Andrew's nightmare didn't end there.

Andrew said: "That's how it started, with them saying 'that's not your real mum and dad'.

"I was severely bullied as a child and that gave me inspiration to do what I do today."

Heartbreakingly, Andrew admitted that the bullying he experienced pushed him to his limits, leaving enduring mental scars.

Ultimately, the tables turned and Andrew's the one laughing now.

Sporting a glamorous career, with clients such as Tom Cruise and Cindy Crawford, the hairdresser successfully channelled his childhood pain into power.

Now, Andrew hopes to give back as an ambassador for Kidscape – a charity that aims to empower children, parents and carers to prevent bullying and protect young lives.

On February 8, Andrew successfully reached the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak.

He was joined by a team of 40 volunteers, who braved extreme altitudes, subzero night temperatures and intense physical exhaustion.

Standing at 5,895 metres, the daunting expedition was undertaken to raise funds and awareness for the charity.

Andrew's journey to becoming a celebrity hairdresser began at Barnsley College, also working as an apprentice as Moodyhair, in Darfield.

The hairstylist often returns to the college to offer advice and spend time with pupils.

He added: "I never thought when I was studying at the college that I would've been invited back as a guest speaker, it's a joy and a pleasure.

"I'm very proud of my Barnsley heritage and roots."

Andrew told Brighter Barnsley his favourite things about the town, praising local art, culture and nature.

He said: "I was about 19 or 20 when I left.

"Australia became my home for a while and now, London.

"I enjoy hiking in the Peak District and I tell everybody about how fantastic the Yorkshire Sculpture Park is.

"My brother, friends and godchildren are back in Barnsley, I do miss them.

"It's not on the other side of the world, but it is a trek up the M1 and back.

"I'm a proud advocate for Yorkshire, my friends say I haven't kept my accent, but I disagree."

The future is bright for Andrew, with him set to release his book 'Crowning Glory: All About Hair' in summer, alongside his line of signature styling tools.

On top of that, a documentary about his experiences climbing Kilimanjaro in support of Kidscape will air in Autumn.





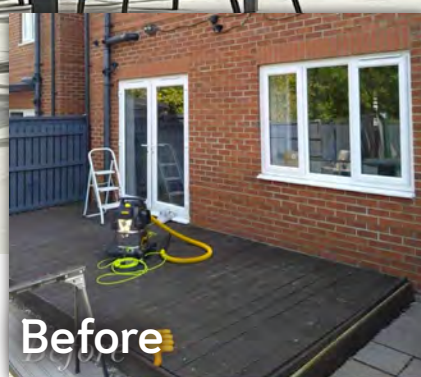
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5* Review from FM By Gabby.

I recently purchased an aluminum pergola from Bespoke Pergolas and I couldn't be happier with it. The design is sleek, modern, and adds a truly elegant touch to my outdoor space. It's not just about looks either — the build quality is outstanding. The aluminum construction feels incredibly durable.



5* Review from Ramūnas

Absolutely outstanding quality and finish. The bespoke aluminium pergola was designed perfectly to fit our space, and it's completely transformed our garden. The structure feels solid, modern, and built to last. We couldn't be happier with the result.



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Why pub's artwork is a real headturner...

YOU have seen the artwork – now it's time for the story behind the eye-catching work on the side of a Birdwell pub.

Numerous curious locals have paid pilgrimage to The Travellers Inn to see the renowned artwork.

Artist, Paul Staveley, 63, has exhibited his signature historical art style, which transports viewers into an almost three-dimensional scene from the past.

The mural depicts a woman accompanied by a dog 'step-scrubbing'.

The scene makes use of clever slights of hand to make it seem as though the scene is popping out of the building.

Some used a 'donkey stone' (a variety of sandstone), soap and water, or even furniture polish. In the past, cleaning the front steps of the house was a common practice.

It was as a sign of pride for residents and the wider community.

The practice reflects the strong work ethic and vibrant community spirit of Barnsley, with step-scrubbing often opening up opportunities for neighbours to engage in conversation while cleaning.

The practice symbolised resilience against difficult living conditions.

While less common today, the artwork serves as a nostalgic love letter to the past.

The dog pictured in the artwork has an interesting backstory itself, with Paul painting the four-legged friend into his work in memory of his dog, Morris.

The beloved pooch was part of Paul's family for almost ten years, before being immortalised in the artwork.

Paul said: The owner, Erdal, wanted a mural and we originally had the idea of doing a climbing plant up the building.

"Then, we came up with the idea of blending the mural in so it matches the stone.

"I had the thought that people from Barnsley are quite traditional and grounded so I came up with the idea if the lady scrubbing the step – like they used to do back in the day.

"While I was doing the painting, my dog, Morris, died and I was devastated. So I thought as a nice little touch I'd add him to the mural watching the lady.

"It didn't take me long to complete, maybe a couple of days.

"I've done quite of work around Barnsley, even though I'm from Sheffield, I absolutely love it here. Previously I've done some work for the New Longcar pub.

"Originally I was an illustrator, but the industry changed and people didn't want that anymore.

"When I was 21, I went to Blackpool College, which sounds a bit weird, but it has turned out some of the best illustrators in the country.

"After that I studied around the country, a year at Sheffield, two years at Birmingham and three years in Blackpool. I've also worked for night clubs, on cruise ships and for River Island before, doing my artwork.

"I'm quite well known for my work, but some people will be having a chat with me about the mural without realising I did it.

"I've had a pretty varied career but I love it and I just keep going."



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Artist Paul Staveley.

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- HOYLAND SOUTHGATE** – Bus stop / behind Town Hall
- HOYLAND COMMON** – Opposite the Co-Op
- BIRDWELL** – Working Mens Clubs
- WORSBOROUGH** – Ship Inn Vernon Road
- BARNLEY INTERCHANGE** – Stands 23 / 24



Day Trips

Date	Trip	Adult	Senior/Child
APRIL 2026			
Wed 1st	Richmond Market & Northallerton Market ♦	£17.00	£16.00
Wed 1st	Whitby	£17.00	£16.00
Thurs 2nd	Scarborough	£17.00	£16.00
Fri 3rd	Bridlington – Good Friday	£19.00	£18.00
Sat 4th	York Chocolate Festival ♦	£17.00	£16.00
Sat 4th	Cleethorpes	£17.00	£16.00
Sun 5th	Southport	£17.00	£16.00
Sun 5th	Yorkshire Wildlife Park ♦	£37.00*	£36.00*
Mon 6th	Llandudno – Easter Monday	£21.00	£20.00
Tues 7th	Skegness	£19.00	£18.00
Tues 7th	Alton Towers ♦	£20.00	£19.00
Wed 8th	Bury Market	£17.00	£16.00
Thurs 9th	Chester	£17.00	£16.00
Thurs 9th	Chester Zoo	£17.00	£16.00
Thurs 9th	Cadbury World ♦	£45.00*	£44.00*
Fri 10th	Whitby via Goathland	£18.00	£17.00
Sat 11th	Beamish Museum	£20.00	£19.00
Sat 11th	Durham	£20.00	£19.00
Sat 11th	Stratford-upon-Avon ♦	£21.00	£20.00
Sun 12th	Blackpool	£17.00	£16.00
Sun 12th	Bridlington	£17.00	£16.00
Tues 14th	Gainsborough Market & Lincoln ♦	£17.00	£16.00
Wed 15th	Liverpool	£17.00	£16.00
Thurs 16th	Cleveland Coastal Tour	£21.00	£20.00

Date	Trip	Adult	Senior/Child
Fri 17th	Skegness	£19.00	£18.00
Sat 18th	Morecambe	£17.00	£16.00
Sun 19th	Blackpool	£17.00	£16.00
Tues 21st	Boundary Outlet & Oswaldtwistle Mills ♦	£17.00	£16.00
Wed 22nd	York	£17.00	£16.00
Wed 22nd	York McArthur Glen Designer Outlet	£17.00	£16.00
Thurs 23rd	Ripon Market & Harrogate ♦	£17.00	£16.00
Fri 24th	Harrogate Flower Show ♦	£45.00*	£44.00*
Sat 25th	Whitby	£17.00	£16.00
Sun 26th	Skirlington Market & Bridlington	£17.00	£16.00
Tues 28th	Bowes Museum & Barnard Castle Town	£19.00	£18.00
Wed 29th	Kendal & Windermere Cruise ♦	£35.00*	£34.00*
Wed 29th	Scarborough	£17.00	£16.00
Thurs 30th	Imperial War Museum / Salford Quays ♦	£17.00	£16.00
Thurs 30th	Trafford Centre ♦	£17.00	£16.00
MAY 2026			
Sat 2nd	Whitby Goth Weekend	£19.00	£18.00
Sun 3rd	Whitby Goth Weekend	£19.00	£18.00
JULY 2026			
Tues 14th	The Great Yorkshire Show	£54.00*	£53.00*Senior £30.00*Child
Wed 15th	The Great Yorkshire Show	£54.00*	£53.00*Senior £30.00*Child
Thurs 16th	The Great Yorkshire Show	£54.00*	£53.00*Senior £30.00*Child

*Includes admission ♦ Barnsley Interchange only



Chester Zoo



Alton Towers



Skegness



Cadbury World



Great Yorkshire Show

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Holidays & short Breaks 2026 to January 2027

Date	Tour	Days	Price
APRIL 2026			
5th - 6th	Liverpool	2	£99.00
8th - 10th	Southport	3	£149.00
11th - 15th	Isle of Wight	5	£479.00
13th - 17th	Blackpool	5	£249.00
17th - 19th	Newcastle & Northumberland Coastlines	3	£219.00
20th - 24th	Skegness	5	£399.00
24th - 27th	Llandudno	4	£299.00
MAY 2026			
4th - 8th	Torquay	5	£449.00
4th - 7th	Cardiff Bay Cruises, Royal Mint & Castle	4	£499.00
9th - 13th	Bognor Regis	5	£449.00
10th - 11th	Lake District	2	£159.00
10th - 11th	Leicester and King Richard III Visitor Centre	2	£159.00
11th - 15th	Aberfoyle	5	£439.00
18th - 22nd	Northern Treasures Rail and Sail	5	£599.00
20th - 24th	Great Yarmouth	5	£469.00
JUNE 2026			
1st - 5th	Llandudno	5	£439.00
1st - 5th	Aberdeen, Royal Deeside & Coastlines	5	£399.00
8th - 12th	Weymouth	5	£489.00
13th - 17th	Criccieth	5	£499.00
14th - 18th	Cream of The Cotswolds	5	£599.00
19th - 21st	Longleat	3	£299.00
19th - 21st	Windsor	3	£299.00
22nd - 26th	Scarborough	5	£379.00
26th - 29th	Whitby	4	£449.00
28th - 2nd July	Newquay	5	£499.00
29th - 3rd July	Isle of Man	5	£699.00
JULY 2026			
10th - 12th	RHS Badminton Flower Show	3	£379.00
12th - 17th	Torquay English Riviera and South Devon Explorer	6	£649.00
13th - 17th	Llandudno	5	£489.00
20th - 24th	Aberfoyle	5	£469.00
27th - 31st	Steam, Crafts & Tipples of Somerset	5	£749.00
27th - 31st	Spitfire & Kent Heritage	5	£499.00
31st - 3rd Aug	Kynren	4	£389.00
AUGUST 2026			
3rd - 7th	Warwickshire	5	£399.00
7th - 9th	Liverpool	3	£199.00
7th - 10th	St. Annes	4	£369.00
7th - 10th	Glasgow & The Edinburgh Tattoo	4	£429.00
9th - 14th	Bournemouth	6	£589.00
16th - 17th	Lake District	2	£159.00
17th - 21st	Shropshire	5	£649.00
21st - 23rd	Newmarket Racing	3	£419.00
24th - 28th	Tenby & South Wales	5	£669.00
24th - 28th	Llandudno	5	£449.00
31st - 4th Sept	Inverary Castle, Fort William Wildlife & Whisky	5	£799.00
31st - 4th Sept	Isle of Wight	5	£529.00

Date	Tour	Days	Price
SEPTEMBER 2026			
3rd - 7th	Wiltshire & The Cotswolds	5	£699.00
7th - 11th	Historic Border Countries, Lakes & Hadrian's Wall	5	£659.00
14th - 18th	Torquay	5	£439.00
21st - 25th	Porthcawl	5	£449.00
25th - 27th	Blenheim Palace & Bletchley Park	3	£349.00
28th - 2nd Oct	Lake District Autumn Colours	5	£479.00
28th - 2nd Oct	Weymouth	5	£459.00
OCTOBER 2026			
5th - 9th	Royal Connections & Dreaming Spires	5	£399.00
12th - 16th	Aberfoyle & The Kelpies	5	£399.00
12th - 16th	Eastbourne	5	£399.00
16th - 18th	Coronation Street	3	£259.00
19th - 23rd	Leeds Castle & Kent	5	£499.00
23rd - 26th	Llandudno	4	£299.00
26th - 30th	Scarborough	5	£299.00
30th - 2nd Nov	Buxton	4	£339.00
NOVEMBER 2026			
2nd - 6th	Llandudno	5	£449.00
6th - 8th	North West Cities Discoverer	3	£199.00
7th - 8th	Blackpool Illuminations	2	£99.00
9th - 13th	Whitby	5	£399.00
15th - 16th	Liverpool	2	£99.00
16th - 20th	Poole & Bournemouth	5	£499.00
22nd - 23rd	Thursford Christmas Spectacular	2	£259.00
23rd - 27th	Skegness	5	£429.00
27th - 30th	Glasgow Christmas Markets & Cream Tea	4	£429.00
27th - 30th	St. Anne's Turkey & Tinsel	4	£349.00
30th - 4th Dec	Torquay	5	£399.00
30th - 3rd Dec	Dumfries House by Candlelight	4	£379.00
DECEMBER 2026			
6th - 7th	London	2	£99.00
11th - 14th	Durham Xmas Festival & Beamish Museum	4	£349.00
12th - 13th	ABBA Voyage	2	£219.00
13th - 14th	Liverpool Christmas Market	2	£99.00
14th - 18th	Folkstone Turkey & Tinsel	5	£289.00
18th - 20th	Warwickshire	3	£179.00
22nd - 27th	Torquay Christmas on the English Riviera	6	£699.00
22nd - 2nd Jan	Torquay Christmas, Twixmas & New Year	12	
23rd - 27th	Norfolk - Christmas	5	£699.00
23rd - 27th	Scarborough Christmas on the Yorkshire Coast	5	£499.00
23rd - 2nd Jan	Scarborough Christmas, Twixmas & New Year	11	£949.00
27th - 30th	Scarborough Twixmas	4	£259.00
27th - 30th	Luxury Blackpool Twixmas	4	£399.00
30th - 2nd Jan	Torquay New Year	4	£499.00
30th - 2nd Jan	Scarborough New Year	4	£399.00
JANUARY 2027			
18th - 22nd	Torquay & South Devon Early Season Getaway	5	£269.00

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Historic tower could be given a new lease of life

A FUNDRAISING appeal has been launched to support the restoration of the south tower at the magnificent Wentworth Woodhouse – and more than £300,000 is needed to secure its future.

Building conservation charity the Landmark Trust hopes to restore the tower to its 18th century heyday and create a self-catering apartment for anyone to stay in.

Wentworth Woodhouse is the creation of the first and second Marquesses of Rockingham.

Its vast Palladian-style East Front is longer even than Buckingham Palace, encasing stunningly opulent interiors.

Following years of decay, the derelict mansion was bought in 2017 by the Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust (WWPT), who have embarked on the Herculean task of restoring the place to its former glory in a multi-phase project.

The Landmark Trust are now working with WWPT to save the south tower, which sits at the most southerly tip of the building's vast frontage.

WWPT carried out urgent external repairs to the tower in 2022, yet inside this quiet hideaway, the once-opulent plasterwork is crumbling, an exquisitely decorated ceiling has been lost and an elegant staircase is undermined by dry rot.

The Landmark Trust are now poised to act – to take on a

long lease from the WWPT and develop a holiday let for two.

The parlour would become the drawing and dining room, and a bedroom, kitchen and bathroom would be created in the adjacent rooms.

Without Landmark's intervention, the south tower will linger in dangerous deterioration at the furthest reach of the building, as this elegant room succumbs to damp and decay.

This upper chamber is a rare and exciting survival of undiluted female taste in the 18th century.

Dr Anna Keay OBE, director of the Landmark Trust, said: "There really is nowhere that compares to Wentworth Woodhouse."

"This monumental Palladian palace in South Yorkshire is a miraculous survival."

"When I first saw this fascinating room a few years ago, I was struck by its combination of grandeur and intimacy, the glorious views south and west from its soaring sash windows, and by the perilous condition in which it stood."

"Two things were immediately clear: it needed urgent action to arrest its decay and if we could just raise the necessary funds it would make the most spell-binding place to stay."

More than 70 per cent of the funding has already been secured but £303,000 is still needed.

If the money is raised in time work could start next year.



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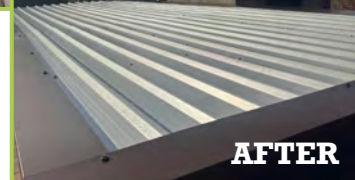
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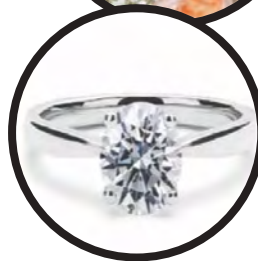
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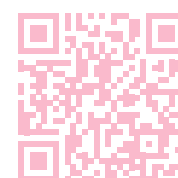
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Debutant Nikki's promising start to pageant life

A BARNSELEY Hospital worker has made it all the way to the Miss GB finals – without ever having competed in a pageant before.

Nikki Parkinson, a protective services officer at the hospital, believes that she is the 'wild card' to win the prestigious beauty competition.

The 54-year-old has no previous experience with pageants, but models part-time for New You Fashion, who are also her sponsors for the contest.

Nikki's ventures don't end there, with her also owning a dance school – Branching Out Dancing – which was established in 1990. Miss GB contestants will go head-to-head in challenges such as a dresswear, swimwear and ballgown round, alongside quick-fire questions.

Contestants also have fundraising responsibilities, with Nikki gearing up to take part in a charity fashion show that will benefit the charity Crossroads.

The hospital worker's efforts will culminate in the competition's final round, which will take place at the Athena, Leicester, in October. Here, Nikki will vie to win

against 19 other contestants to have the chance to bag the coveted Miss GB crown.

When Nikki first entered the pageant, she admitted that she had no idea about the calibre of competition she was getting herself into.

She said: "At first, I didn't realise how big Miss GB was.

"I feel like I'm a wild card, I'm really excited but I'm also really nervous. When I first applied last September, I never thought it'd go any further, but I just kept on getting through each round and now I'm here.

"I'm competing on behalf of older women, before I entered I never knew there was a category for women aged 42 plus.

"I'm confident about the modelling part, but it's the quick-fire questions I'm worried about, my mouth just runs away from me.

"Miss GB is all about supporting and uplifting women and I feel like I'm every girl's cheerleader.

"I don't have a jealous bone in my body and I love backing other women, especially in Miss GB.

"I'm six feet tall, which is rare, but I feel like I belong up there competing on the stage."



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Laying down roots can shape your garden for years

THERE is a particular magic to the garden in April

As the frost retreats and the first tentative notes of birdsong drift through the damp air, the soil begins its slow, rhythmic heartbeat once more.

For the gardener, this is the 'golden hour.' It is the final call to plant before the frantic rush of spring growth begins, and arguably the best time to introduce a new tree to your landscape.

Whether you are looking to add a vertical accent to a suburban plot or start a mini-orchard, March offers the perfect climate: the soil is warming, but the sun hasn't yet developed the scorching bite that stresses young saplings.

If you're standing at the garden centre (or browsing a nursery catalogue) and feeling overwhelmed, these five stalwarts are perfectly suited.

The Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*): An iconic British beauty. Plant it now for its shimmering white bark and airy canopy. It's remarkably hardy and provides a wonderful dappled shade that allows bluebells or primroses to thrive beneath it.

The Flowering Cherry (*Prunus*): For many, spring is the cherry blossom. Varieties like 'Kanzan' or the more compact 'Royal Burgundy' (with its deep wine-coloured leaves) can be planted now to catch the end of the dormant season.

The Crab Apple (*Malus*): A wildlife powerhouse. In March, you are planting the promise of fragrant spring blossom and a bounty of autumn fruits that birds – and jelly-makers – will adore.

The Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*): Ideal for smaller gardens, the Rowan (or Mountain Ash) is tough as old boots. It offers delicate white flowers in spring and vibrant berries later in



the year.
Fruit Trees: If you've dreamed of home-grown Braeburns or Conference pears, March is your last chance to plant bare-root fruit trees. These are often cheaper and establish more robust root systems than potted trees.

Top Tips for a Successful Start
Planting a tree is an act of optimism, but a little technical groundwork ensures that optimism isn't misplaced. Here are top tips:

1. The "Square Hole" Secret
While it feels natural to dig a round hole, many experts now recommend a square pit. In heavy clay soils, tree roots can sometimes struggle to break out of a round hole, circ-

ling the perimeter like a cage. A square hole encourages roots to push into the corners and out into the surrounding soil.

2. Mind the Depth
The most common mistake is planting too deep. Look for the 'flare'—the point where the roots meet the trunk.

This should be level with the soil surface. Plant it too deep, and the bark can rot; too shallow, and the roots will dry out.

3. The Bare-Root Soak
If you've opted for a bare-root tree (which arrive without a pot), give it a "welcome home" drink. Submerge the roots in a bucket of water for about two hours before planting.

This rehydrates the system and gives it a vital head start.

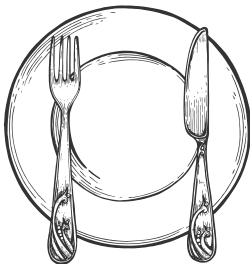
4. Staking for Success
For taller saplings, use a stake driven in at a 45-degree angle to avoid piercing the root ball. Secure it with a flexible tie; you want to support the tree, not strangle it.

5. Mulch, But Don't Touch
After planting, apply a generous layer of well-rotted compost or woodchip around the base. This suppresses weeds and locks in moisture. Crucially, leave a small gap around the trunk itself – think of it as a "doughnut" of mulch – to prevent moisture from sitting against the bark.

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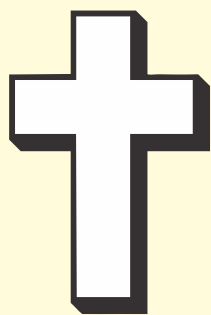
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IT is one of the most recognisable parts of the town centres and has not changed much in years.

The Victorian Arcade has had many tenants over the years and some may jog your memory from this collection of images from the Tasker Trust.





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TOURS / JERSEY / EUROPE / IRELAND / SHOWS / EVENTS

TOURS

DATES	HOTEL	PRICE
6 - 10 Apr	Eastbourne – Cumberland Hotel	£404
6 - 10 Apr	Llandudno – Four Oaks Hotel	£315
6 - 10 Apr	Scarborough – Cumberland Hotel	£334
6 - 10 Apr	St. Annes – Monterey Beach Hotel	£356
7 - 11 Apr	Isle of Wight – Trouville Hotel	£422
11 - 15 Apr	Porthcawl – Seabank Hotel	£356
19 - 24 Apr	Blackpool – Ruskin Hotel	£406
19 - 25 Apr	Isle of Wight – Shanklin Hotel	£491
19 - 25 Apr	Newquay – Eliot Hotel	£458
20 - 24 Apr	Llandudno – Chatsworth Hotel	£385
20 - 24 Apr	Paignton – Queens Hotel	£384
20 - 24 Apr	Torquay – Derwent Hotel	£365
20 - 24 Apr	Weymouth – Crown Hotel	£426
20 - 24 Apr	Yarmouth – Waverley Hotel	£348
25 - 29 Apr	Scottish Borders – Waverley Castle Hotel	£341
27 Apr - 1 May	Babbacombe – Anchorage Hotel	£320
29 Apr - 3 May	Torquay – Metropole Hotel	£357



JERSEY / EUROPE / IRELAND

DATES	HOTEL	PRICE
14 - 18 Jun	Isle of Man – Chesterhouse Hotel	£609

JERSEY / EUROPE / IRELAND (Continued)

DATES	HOTEL	PRICE
22 - 28 Jul	Killarney – Southern Ireland	£859
6 - 10 Aug	Disneyland Paris	£1125 Adult £1073 Child
13 - 18 Sept	Legendary Landscapes – Northern Ireland	£873
18 - 25 Sept	Jersey By Air	£1266
4 - 11 Oct	Italy – Lake Garda	£1103



SHOW / EVENTS

DATES	HOTEL	PRICE
Sun 5 Apr	Matilda the Musical	£107
Sat 18 Apr	Coronation Street Studios	£57
Sun 19 Apr	Queen Elizabeth II Exhibition	£60 Adult £50 Child
Sun 10 May	Harry Potter Studios	£97 Adult £87 Child
Sun 10 May	Steps 'Here & Now' Musical	£80
Wed 3 Jun	NYMR Pickering – Whitby	£41



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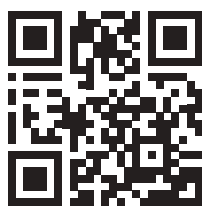
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Opting for spa chic and going vintage are in vogue in 2026

IF the early 2020s were defined by “Instagrammable” neon and the late 2020s by “dopamine decor,” then 2026 is the year homes finally take a deep, collective breath.

We are witnessing a pivot away from superficial opulence toward what designers are calling “Curated Calm.” It is a movement that prioritises how a room feels over how it looks through a lens, focusing on sensory depth, “quiet” technology, and a sophisticated reclaiming of the past.

The Palette: Beyond the Grey

The “Millennial Grey” era is officially a relic of history.

This year, walls are blushing with warmth. Pantone’s Colour of the Year, Cloud Dancer, has set the tone – a “billowy, balanced white” that provides a luminous, ethereal backdrop. But don’t expect clinical minimalism; this airy base is being paired with rich, grounding tones.

Earthy Indigos: Dulux’s hero shades for the year, including Free Groove and Slow Swing, bring a meditative, stormy depth to bedrooms and snugs.

The New Neutrals: Think sun-baked terracotta, olive green, and “Mocha Mousse” browns. These hues bridge the gap between nature and the indoors, creating spaces that feel rooted and protective.

Material Honesty and “Warm Minimalism”

We are seeing a definitive “battle of meaning versus machines.” As AI permeates our digital lives, our physical spaces are doubling down on the handmade. Tactile authenticity is the buzzword of the season.

Dark woods – specifically walnut and stained oak – have staged a major comeback, replacing the pale Scandi timbers of previous years.

These are often paired with “raw” materials like unglazed ceramics, lime wash renders, and natural stone with visible veining. The goal is Warm Minimalism: a style that remains uncluttered but swaps sharp edges for soft, sculptural curves and “fat” furniture that invites you to sink in rather than just sit.

The “Quiet Tech” Revolution

In 2026, the smartest homes are the ones where you can’t see the technology. The UK is leading the charge in Quiet Technology, where gadgets are integrated seamlessly into the architecture. We’re talking about:

Circadian lighting schemes that shift colour temperature to match your body clock.

Hidden acoustic panels disguised as art to dampen the “echo” of open-plan living.

Sustainable “closed-loop” appliances that operate in near-silence.

“The trend isn’t about having less tech; it’s about tech having less of a footprint on our visual and mental space.” – House of Dré, London

Modern Nostalgia: The Curated Story

Perhaps the most charming trend of 2026 is Modern Nostalgia. Brits are increasingly rejecting “fast furniture” in favour of heirlooms and “archival” pieces. This isn’t your grandmother’s living room, though – it’s a sophisticated remix.

Expect to see skirted sofas and decorative piping paired with sleek, polished chrome accents. While brass has reigned supreme for a decade, 2026 is the year of “cool metals.” Polished silver and brushed nickel are being used to provide a contemporary edge to vintage-heavy rooms, creating a look that feels collected over time rather than bought from a showroom floor.



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Preparation is key to eating healthier

IN the modern world, the “What’s for dinner?” dilemma is a primary source of daily decision fatigue.

By 6pm, after a barrage of emails and errands, our willpower is often depleted, leading us straight toward the expensive convenience of takeaway apps or the nutritional void of a piece of toast.

Enter meal prepping – the strategic habit of preparing some or all of your meals in advance.

Far from being a joyless chore or a repetitive ‘tupperware lifestyle’ modern meal prepping is about reclaiming your time, your budget, and your health.

The Three Pillars of Prepping

Financial Freedom: The average UK household throws away hundreds of pounds of food each year. Prepping forces you to shop with a list and a purpose. When you buy in bulk – think large bags of grains or family-sized packs of protein – the cost per portion plummets.

Nutritional Consistency: It is far easier to make a healthy choice on a calm Sunday morning than it is during a stressful Tuesday lunch break. Prepping allows you to control salt, sugar, and portion sizes without the hidden “flavour enhancers” found in ultra-processed ready meals.

The Gift of Time: By spending two hours in the kitchen on a Sunday, you “buy back” roughly five hours of your week. That is time you can spend at the gym, with family, or simply relaxing, knowing that a home-cooked meal is only a three-minute reheat away.

Three Essential Prep-Ahead Recipes

To get you started, here are three versatile recipes that bridge the gap between “healthy” and “hearty.”

1. The Morning Classic: Apple & Cinnamon Overnight Oats

The beauty of overnight oats is that they “cook” themselves in the fridge.

No pans, no mess, and zero effort on busy mornings.

Prep time: five minutes

Serves: one

Ingredients: 50g rolled oats, 120ml milk (or



Sweet Potato and Spinach Lentil Dahl

plant-based alternative), 1 tbsp chia seeds, ½ grated apple, ½ tsp cinnamon, a drizzle of honey.

Method: Combine all ingredients in a glass jar or airtight container. Shake well and leave in the fridge for at least six hours. The Prep Hack: Make five jars on Sunday night; they stay fresh and delicious until Friday.

2. The Power Lunch: Lemon & Herb Shredded Chicken Bowls

Chicken breast can often go dry when reheated, but by poaching and shredding it, you retain moisture for a perfect mid-week lunch.

Ingredients: 3 large chicken breasts, 1 litre chicken stock, 250g brown rice, 1 head of broccoli (florets), 1 lemon, 1 tbsp dried oregano, 200g cherry tomatoes.

Method: Gently simmer the chicken breasts in the stock for 15 minutes until cooked through. Remove and shred with two forks while still warm. Boil the rice and lightly steam the broccoli.

Assembly: Divide the rice, shredded chicken, and broccoli into four containers. Top with halved cherry tomatoes and a squeeze of fresh lemon.

The Pro-Tip: Keep a small pot of hummus or Greek yoghurt on the side to stir in before eating – it acts as a healthy “sauce” that keeps the chicken succulent.

3. The Reheat King: Sweet Potato & Spinach Lentil Dahl

Curries and dahls actually taste better on day two or three as the spices have time to marry.

Ingredients: 200g red lentils, one tin coconut milk, one large sweet potato (cubed), two tbsp mild curry paste, 500ml veg stock, two handfuls of fresh spinach.

Method: Sauté the curry paste, add the sweet potato, lentils, stock, and coconut milk. Simmer for 20-25 minutes until the lentils are soft. Stir in the spinach at the very end until wilted.

Storage: This freezes beautifully. Portion into microwave-safe glass containers for an instant, warming dinner.

Meal prepping isn’t about perfection; it’s about preparation.

Even if you only prep your breakfasts for the week, you’ve removed one significant hurdle from your daily routine.



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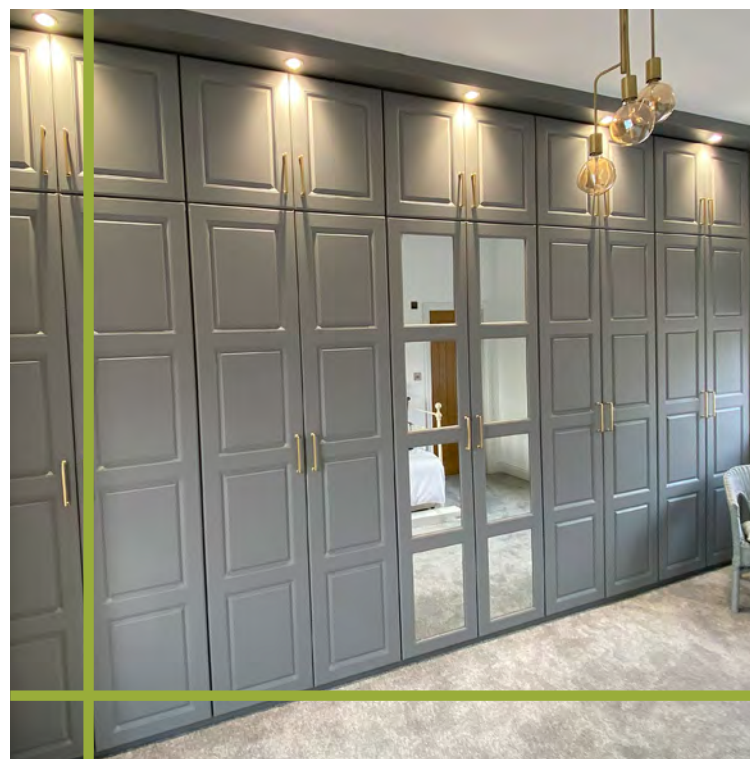
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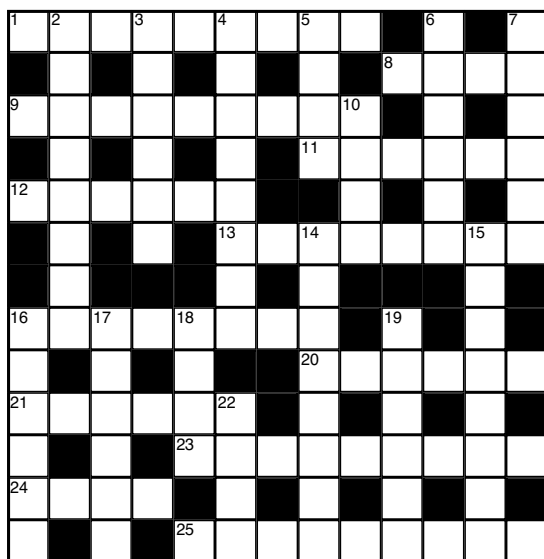


TEST YOUR BRAINPOWER

Quiz Challenge

1. The Vosges Mountains are in which European country?
2. At the 2025 Grammy Awards, which established singer finally won best album with Cowboy Carter?
3. Hair, feathers, bone and horn contain which fibrous protein?
4. What is the capital of the US state of Alabama?
5. The Southern Stars are the women's national cricket team of which country?
6. Which first name goes with the surnames of these actresses – Stone, Horgan and Tate?
7. What is the name for a beer-mug shaped like a stout man?
8. Centre Pompidou, which has the largest museum for modern art in Europe, is in which city?
9. Which famous explorer and journalist was born John Rowland?
10. A golden oriole is which type of animal?

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD



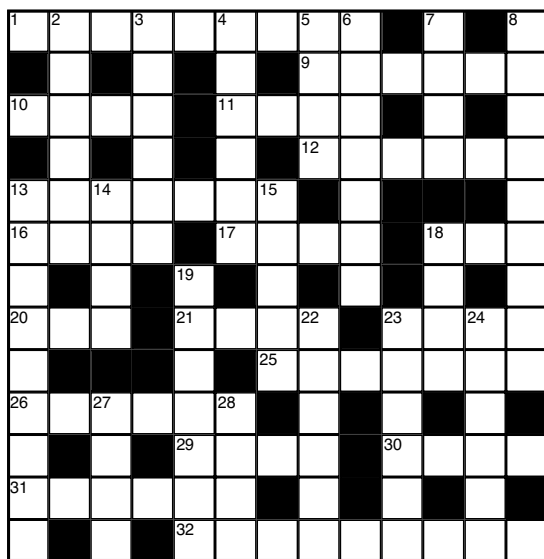
ACROSS

1. Not the brainiest, however (9)
8. Licence to proceed (4)
9. Sleeping partner? (9)
11. Vehicle overturned in the ancient country (6)
12. He and the teetotaler go round a slum area (6)
13. Turned away from tampering with cardinal virtue of a clergyman (8)
16. It is dazzling but brief to be influenced by the weather (8)
20. One retaining a cricketer? (6)
21. In France you and bishop enter a small tower (6)
23. What's left of article in aide-mémoire? (9)
24. Bath water? (4)
25. Looking north-east from a warm corner (9)

DOWN

2. See heady mixture designed to reduce effect of light (8)
3. Organise feast before end of day for protection (6)
4. Easy win in a one-horse race (8)
5. Photographed attempt at goal (4)
6. Expedition in lands afar I went on (6)
7. Also a toff (2,4)
10. Order to stop a TV doctor first (4)
14. Bird and dog are in the drink (8)
15. Say nothing after change to one's second self (5,3)
16. Common friend of Dickens (6)
17. Another trout goes round black fish (6)
18. About to ring clergyman up (4)
19. Quaker leader in touch with flag (6)
22. Bittern has to forgo small part of gull (4)

QUICK CROSSWORD



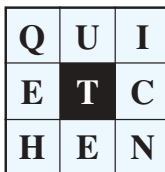
ACROSS

1. Act frugally (9)
9. Advancing (6)
10. Percussion instrument (4)
11. Spirit (4)
12. Public square (6)
13. Religious outcast (7)
16. Dry (4)
17. Hint (4)
18. Rug (3)
20. Kind (9)
21. Highest point (4)
23. Hitch (4)
25. Make ready (7)
26. Appalled (6)
29. Pulls behind (4)
30. Tight (4)
31. Release tension (6)
32. Off the peg (5-4)

DOWN

2. Angle (6)
3. Desensitized (6)
4. Tessellated design (6)
5. Liquid food (4)
6. Invigorate (7)
7. Musical style (4)
8. Benefit (9)
13. Fit for living in (9)
14. Haystack (4)
15. Cluster (5)
18. ---- Lisa, painting (4)
19. Pet rodent (7)
22. Rubbed out (6)
23. Phlegm (6)
24. About (6)
27. Horse's foot (4)
28. Sound quality (4)

NONAGRAM



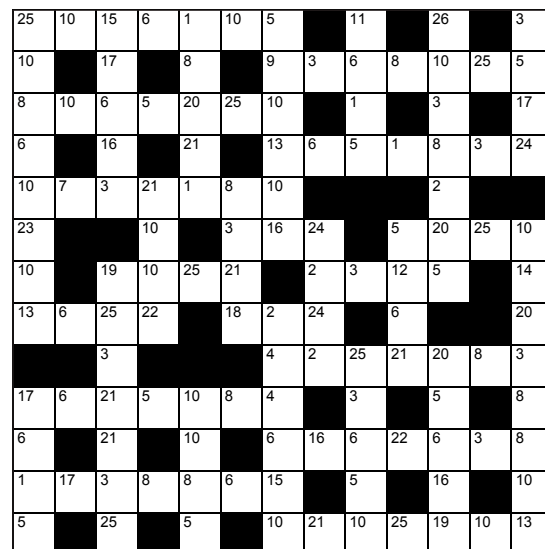
How many words of four letters or more can you make from this Nonagram? Each word must use the central letter, and each letter may be used only once. At least one word using all nine letters can be found.

Guidelines:

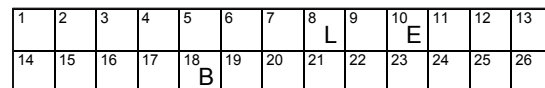
21 Good; 25 Very Good; 29 Excellent.

Any word found in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (Tenth Edition) is eligible with the following exceptions: proper nouns; plural nouns, pronouns and possessives; third person singular verbs; hyphenated words; contractions and abbreviations; vulgar slang words; variant spellings of the same word (where another variant is also eligible).

CROSS CODE



ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

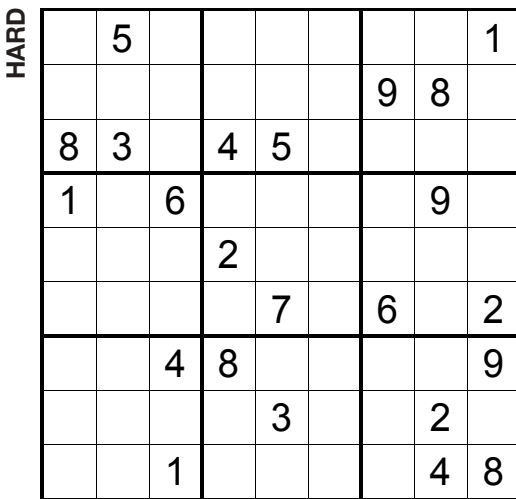
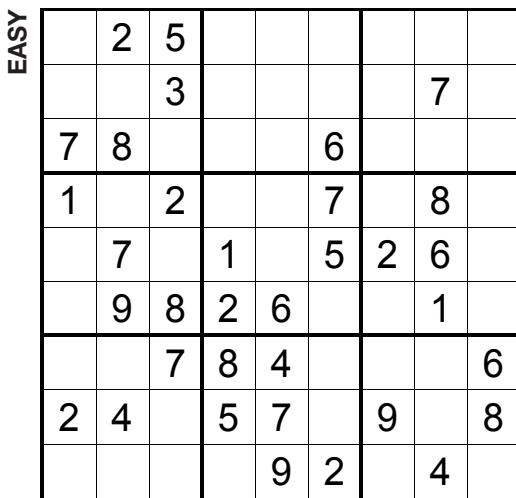


Each number in our Cross Code grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. You have three letters in the control grid to start you off. Enter them in the appropriate squares in the main grid, then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares.

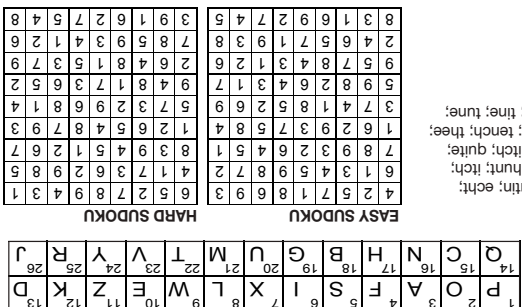
As you get the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and control grid. Check off the alphabetical list of letters as you identify them.

SUDOKU

Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9, and so must each 3 x 3 box.



SOLUTIONS



QUICK CROSSWORD: 1 France; 2 Beyoncé; 3 Keratin; 4 Montgomerie; 5 Australia; 6 Sharon; 7 Toby Jug; 8 Pans; 9 Henry Morton Stanley; 10 Bird; 11 Thrace; 12 Clockwise from top left – subtract; multiply; add; divide; Total: 3.

NONAGRAM: cent; chit; chure; cite; crite; cutie; cutting; ech; entice; etch; ethnic; etui; hint; hunt; rich; quiet; quieten; quilt; quitch; quite; tech; techn; teen; tetch; thee; the; theine; there; thence; thin; thine; tich; time; tune; turn; unt; unte; untie.

FIVE ALIVE: (1) Across – Synod; Locks; Every; Down – 2 Corner; 3 Number; 4 Mosaic; 5 Soup; 6 Enliven; 7 Jazzy; 8 Advantage; 13 Habit; 14 Risk; 15 Clump; 18 Mona; 19 Hamster; 22 Erased; 23 Sputum; 24 Around; 27 Hoof; 28 Tone.

CROSS CODE: 1 France; 2 Beyoncé; 3 Keratin; 4 Montgomerie; 5 Australia; 6 Sharon; 7 Toby Jug; 8 Pans; 9 Henry Morton Stanley; 10 Bird; 11 Thrace; 12 Clockwise from top left – subtract; multiply; add; divide; Total: 3.

Travelling in your 60s can still be a joy

THERE was a time when “interrailing” through Europe meant cramped sleeper carriages, heavy backpacks, and a diet of luke-warm baguettes.

But for the discerning traveller in their sixties, the continent has matured alongside us. Today, the modern “Grand Tour” is less about the hustle and more about the heritage, hospitality, and high-quality infrastructure.

As we look at the travel landscape for 2026, Europe has never been more accessible. Whether you're a history buff, a gallery-goer, or simply a connoisseur of a well-poured Riesling, these five cities offer the perfect blend of luxury and ease.

1. Vienna: The Imperial Drawing Room

If Europe were a house, Vienna would be the grand, sun-drenched drawing room where the finest china is kept. It remains the gold standard for senior travel, thanks to its impeccably flat geography and a public transport system that feels like a concierge service.

The Pace: Vienna operates at a civilised tempo. Start your morning with a Melange (the local take on a cappuccino) at a traditional coffee house like Café Central. There is no pressure to move; in fact, the waiters expect you to linger.

Ease of Access: The Ringstraße tram is your best friend. It circles the historic core, passing the State Opera and the Parliament building, allowing you to sightsee from a comfortable, padded seat.

2026 Highlight: The city's commitment to “Universal Design” means almost every museum, from the Kunsthistorisches to the Albertina, features lift access and plenty of rest points.

2. Amsterdam: Art Without the Effort

Forget the image of Amsterdam as a playground for backpackers. Beyond the neon lights lies one of the most sophisticated cultural hubs in the world. Because the city is built on reclaimed land, it is remarkably level – a blessing for those who prefer to keep their knees happy.

The Experience: There is no better way to see the “Venice of the North” than from the water. A private electric boat tour offers a silent, smooth glide through 17th-century canals.

The Culture: The Museumplein is a masterpiece of urban planning. You can move from the Rijksmuseum to the Van Gogh Museum without navigating a single steep hill.

Top Tip: If the central crowds feel a bit “young,” take a 15-minute train to Haarlem.



It has all the charm of the capital but with a much more relaxed, local feel.

3. Berlin: A Modern Masterclass in Mobility

Berlin is a city that has been forced to reinvent itself, and in doing so, it has become one of the most accessible capitals on earth. Its wide, paved boulevards and extensive lift network make it a dream for anyone who values space and efficiency.

The History: Most of the major landmarks – the Brandenburg Gate, Checkpoint Charlie,

and the Reichstag – are within a flat, walkable (or wheelable) radius in the Mitte district.

Green Spaces: The Tiergarten is Berlin's green lung. It's twice the size of Hyde Park and features miles of level, shaded paths that are perfect for a gentle afternoon stroll.

Travel Fact: For UK travellers, remember that while the new ETIAS system is now in place for 2026, those over 70 are exempt from the application fee – a small but welcome “senior perk.”

4. Barcelona: Mediterranean Elegance

Barcelona proves that you don't have to sacrifice style for comfort. While the Gothic Quarter's cobbles can be a touch uneven, the 19th-century Eixample district is a marvel of accessibility, with wide pavements and chamfered corners that make crossing the street a breeze.

The Sights: Gaudí's Sagrada Família is now nearer to completion than ever. Use the elevators to reach the towers for a view of the Mediterranean, then take the accessible funicular up to Montjuïc for a sunset panorama.

The Food: The Spanish culture of tapas is perfect for the smaller appetite. You can graze through the afternoon at a high-end food market like Santa Caterina, avoiding the late-night dinner rush.

5. Porto: The Douro's Hidden Gem

While Lisbon is famously the “City of Seven Hills,” Porto is much more manageable if you stay close to the Ribeira waterfront. It offers a warmth – both in climate and hospitality – that is hard to beat.

The Wine: Cross the iconic Dom Luís I Bridge (via the flat upper deck or the cable car) to the Port houses of Vila Nova de Gaia. Many, like Graham's or Taylor's, offer seated, tutored tastings in cool, quiet cellars.

The Rail Journey: For a day trip, the Linha do Douro train is world-class. It hugs the riverbank, offering views of the terraced vineyards that no car could reach, all from the comfort of a vintage carriage.

A Quick Reminder: With the EU Entry/Exit System (EES) now the standard, gone are the days of manual passport stamps. Ensure your biometric passport has at least six months' validity before you head to the airport.

Europe in your sixties isn't about ticking boxes; it's about the joy of the journey. By choosing cities that respect your pace, you can spend less time navigating hurdles and more time soaking in the heritage of the continent.





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The finest round of Golf....

Josh Timlin reviews
the Golf GTI Clubsport

THEY say that what you're brought up with in your youth – whether that's music, football, cars or whichever vice it may be – often shapes your preferences in adult life and that certainly rings true with hot hatches for me.

My dad had a few of Renaultsport's finest in my formative years and, as they also say, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Cars like the 500-off Clio 182 Trophy – which I went on to own in my early 20s – stand out from 2005, way before I'd even passed my driving test, because of its giant-killing abilities and its nonsense-free approach.

This tiny ball of Capsicum Red tenacity, despite having just 182bhp, became B-road royalty thanks to its trick suspension set-up which allowed an already good foundation

to turn into a hot hatch masterpiece which placed sheer fun in front of everything else.

Twenty years later I can vividly recall innumerable stand-out drives in the Yorkshire Dales with my dad as the little Trophy drank its way through a full tank of super unleaded, dazzling its passengers with extraordinary point-to-point pace.

In truth I think many of today's hot hatches are overly complicated – irritating lane assistance, start-stop and pre-collision warnings are par for the course these days and always get in the way; it's like having the annoying health and safety-obsessed bloke at work on your shoulder when you're behind the wheel of something that should instil excitement.

However, thankfully, there are a few hot

hatches that hark back to simpler times. Cars like the Honda Civic Type R and the Toyota GR Yaris are beacons of light and recently they've been joined at the very top of the tree by a wonderful car from Volkswagen.

As far as iconic monikers go in the hot hatch world, the Golf GTI – thanks to its almost 50-year history over eight generations – arguably sits at the very top of the pile.

While it's never been the finished article in out and out precision – aside from the original when the market was much less crowded – what it has always offered is sheer class. It's everything to everyone, a car that would look at home whether one's house is worth £150,000 or £1.5m.

In Clubsport guise, it's pretty much the

finished article in what hot hatches offer in 2026: pace, handling, quality, comfort, practicality and drop-dead gorgeous looks. This pumped-up GTI is the best-looking car in its sector, but it ain't just a pretty face.

Opt for the Clubsport and you'll get a tweaked version of the evergreen EA888 four-cylinder, 2.0-litre turbo which now comes to the party with a much healthier 296bhp and 273lb ft of torque.

There's much more, though, and recognising the Clubsport from the regular GTI is really quite easy despite it having no look-at-me badging: you'll see that the fancy front fog lights have been ditched, there's a fancy set of 19-inch alloys and you'll notice an extended rear spoiler.

It's just the right amount of extra sportiness and I quite like that it's not shouting about the fact it's the more special one – it's only ever going to be recognised by people who know.

Open the driver's door and it's pretty much standard GTI fare. That's not a bad thing, either, given just how great its interior is. The paddleshifts – as ever with VWs – are far too small, but the GTI-badged seats and the fantastic steering wheel make up for that. The interior's a class leader, oozing quality and is thoroughly modern, although its touch-sensitive controls for the heating can be slightly dim-witted and you're constantly cleaning finger-print marks.

Start it up and there's a pleasing tone, chiefly because this car is fitted with the optional – and essential – Akrapovic exhaust. The familiar engine isn't usually the most characterful so it's amazing what an exhaust can do to improve it. This fully loaded version – which costs £49,000 – also has the £1,650 Warmenau wheels (an absolute pain to clean, by the way) and the 'Performance Pack', which basically removes the GTI's 155mph limiter in favour of a 167mph top speed. Pretty pointless, but cool for bragging over a pint with your mates, I suppose.

It doesn't take long to tap into its magic – it feels alert, on its toes and keen to respond to your inputs but it's its turn of pace which is night and day difference to the regular car. Its low-down torque comes to the fore and while its mid-range is strong, it's its rev range's top end which makes the biggest impression. It's eye-opening – usually the EA888 is out of puff at 5,500rpm but the Clubsport continues to pull.

I've always been of the mindset that the GTI is the more involving car over its R sibling even in standard guise, so the Clubsport simply adds more weight to that opinion. Yes, the R is more powerful and supremely tractable thanks to its all-wheel-drive set-up but that robs the driver of a hot hatch prerequisite: involvement. While you gain all-weather security, the front-drive GTI is so much more fun. It's less polished but all the better for it, oddly, because it means the driver is more a part of the process and, in gear, a 30bhp deficit is not going to be huge, especially with the R's extra weight.

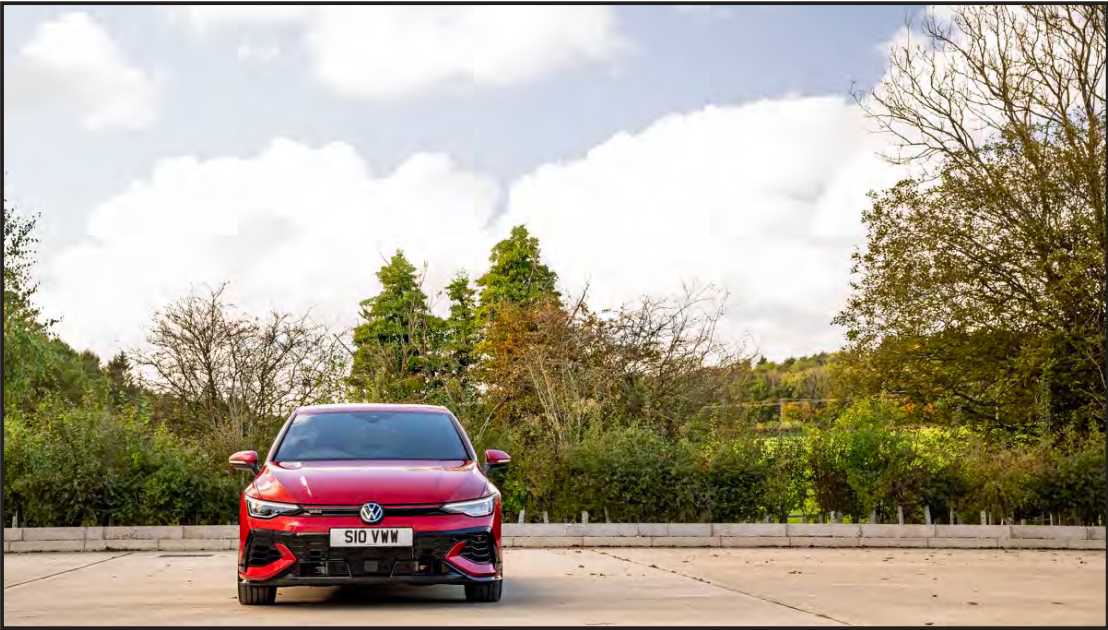
Where the Clubsport shines even more is on a twisty road and there's a lovely little stretch off the famed Woodhead Pass. If you're Manchester-bound, go over the Woodhead Reservoir's bridge, miss the right turn to Holmfirth and instead peel off towards Glossop. You'll skirt Torside Reservoir and work your way on brilliant roads up the picturesque valley before your descent into Glossop.

It's challenging, it's often poorly sighted and so a small footprint, a well-sorted chassis and trustworthy brakes are all a must.

The Clubsport – obviously – laps it up and asks for you to brake a little later, turn in keener and rely on its attributes. It's a tough stretch of road which includes hairpins, undulations and second, third and fourth gear corners – the B6105 has absolutely everything to test a car's ability and this thing just shines.

Yes, paying almost £50,000 for a Golf is a lot and unthinkable in the days of the 182 Trophy, but it's the complete package and will dazzle on whichever road it's on. Is it better than a Type R? In 99 out of 100 occasions, yes.

It might not be as sharp but as an ownership proposition, the Golf's always going to win the day.



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