

The Northern Echo

# ne

The lifestyle magazine  
for the North-East

JUNE 2003

IN ASSOCIATION WITH  
SIMON BAILES |  PEUGEOT

ME AND MY  
WARDROBE  
James Brass

‘My breast  
cancer was  
a blessing’

SLIMMING  
The women  
who love  
being losers



INTERIORS MOTORING GADGETS BEAUTY FASHION



CONSERVATORY SPECIAL – PAGES 4, 5, 6, 7, 10



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A MAGICAL  
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– P22

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Picture: STUART BOULTON

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CHAMELEON MIRRORS



sharon griffiths

At the best weddings, elderly aunts smile indulgently at boisterous young men...

**W**ONDERFUL occasions, weddings. But maybe they should come with a government health warning. I love weddings – big, small, grand, casual, terribly traditional or utterly mad. I totter into my posh shoes, tuck hanky and confetti into my bag and set out with a beaming good will to have a jolly time.

It's hard not to really. Brides almost always look lovely. Grooms almost always look handsome. All those people scrubbed up in their best. Posh outfits, new suits. Generally filled with a general air of benevolence towards the bridal couple in particular and young love in general.

Or old love. Some of the best weddings are those of seriously grown-ups, which are, in a way, even more cheering. Either because they are a triumph of hope over experience, or because people have been so happy in one marriage that they think it's worth a shot at another. When you see a groom in his 60s dancing with his bride's eight-year-old granddaughter, and both of them delighting in the experience, then it's hard not to feel that the world's a pretty good place really.

Weddings have become big business, major productions, often costing an amazing amount of money. So the least we can do is enjoy them. But they are almost bound to be interesting. And, in an increasingly cynical world, they always – well, usually – are suffused with this splendidly soppy and sentimental atmosphere which we all need occasionally.

Not to mention an air of relief – when parents of brides and groom realise that, yes, it's actually happening, that the major players have turned up and no one's done a runner or found just cause and impediment.

The Graduate has a lot to answer for... My two extremes include an incredibly posh Mayfair Catholic wedding where I had a bizarre conversation with Lord Longford over the chocolate profiteroles.

Seriously disconcerting to meet someone that famous and so often caricatured. Especially after a lot of champagne. Like talking to a cartoon. He was, I remember, vague but charming – especially as he was talking to this mad woman with a mouth full of cream and chocolate.

At the other extreme was the weird wedding of a hippy friend – Oxford register office, lentil burgers and candle chanting at an earnest veggie cafe for seriously spaced-out witnesses.

Even so, I thought the groom looked decidedly odd. Turned out that later that night he deliberately set fire to the bed with the bride in it. Oops.

There are more obvious flashpoints at weddings, generally involving the bridegroom's boisterous friends plus bride's elderly female relatives, plus copious amounts of alcohol.

But the great thing is that more often than not, these rows don't happen. At the best weddings, elderly aunts and grannies smile indulgently at boisterous young men, who in turn, should spend at least half an hour dancing attendance on elderly relatives, bringing them drinks, flirting with them and making them feel young and daft again.

For – unlike our European neighbours – we are a sadly ageist society and weddings are some of the few occasions you get a wide range of ages and backgrounds forced to socialise together. Reassuringly, most times it works brilliantly.

Then there are all those outfits to admire...

At one grand wedding in the bride's family's private chapel (beat that for one-upmanship), the pews were arranged like choir stalls, facing across the aisle instead of towards the altar. This meant we could all get a proper view of everyone's outfits. Very satisfying – especially as there were some seriously expensive outfits to look at.

Once – carried away by it all – I fell in love with a man I met at a wedding. In the morning he'd been a stranger in a smart suit and expensive lemony after shave I'd stood next to in the mass photo. By midnight we were drifting in a punt swearing undying love for each other.

Then, the next weekend we met up again. This time there were was no big romantic wedding as a backdrop. Instead of champagne on the lawns of a country house, we were drinking beer in a dark little pub. His after shave clashed with the vinegar on the bar meals. We never met again. And although I can remember that smell of lemons, and the pattern on his signet ring, I have long since forgotten his name.

Still, I remembered it was a jolly good wedding. Most weddings are. And if you're off to one or more this summer – enjoy them.

But it's best not get too carried away...

● Don't miss Sharon Griffiths in The Northern Echo every Wednesday and Friday

WHAT'S COOKING?

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LITTLE TITCHMARSHES



CHILDREN get an immense amount of pleasure from gardening. Ideally they want to see quick results, and growing a few packets of hardy annual seeds will achieve this. The only trouble for little gardeners is that mum and dad's tools are a little on the large size. Kids' garden helper spades and border rakes with a grip handle are all available for £1 each from Poundland.



THE Carolyn Sheffield range of co-ordinated decorative home accessories is available at The Crystal Gazer in Post House Wynd, Darlington. Botanical motifs new to the range this season are Iris and Lily of the Valley. There are four attractive new Fruit plates and mugs to match both the Tulip and Berry plates. Call (01325) 359385 for more information.



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**NE interiors** IN ASSOCIATION WITH



Conservatories offer some of the most versatile space in the home, giving an opportunity for a wide range of design approaches. **NICOLA TUXWORTH** reports



**RIGHT AND CENTRE:**  
Aidan Jackson's Gainford conservatory

## People who live in glass houses

**H**OW often do you sit in the garden in bright sunshine, but with a chilly wind rattling the newspapers and cooling your cup of tea? How frequently is an alfresco lunch ruined by plunging air temperatures, or worse, a sudden downpour?

Yes, the English summer is here again in all its glorious uncertainty. But as countless householders have discovered, instead of going out into the garden, you can bring the garden into the house by building a conservatory.

Conservatories started off much like expensive greenhouses, full of plants and naff cane furniture, but conservatory living has come of age, and these days a conservatory is much more likely to be built as a de facto extension to a kitchen or sitting room, a space to sit, play, eat and entertain in all year round. Whereas a conventional extension can make a house gloomy, these airy glass rooms let the light flood in, and modern ventilation and blind systems have put paid to the oven-like temperatures that used to plague early models.

The Barlow family in Barnard Castle have a huge, south-facing conservatory adjoining their kitchen and overlooking the garden. It was built by Darlington-based Amdega, one of the best known names in the conservatory business. "The conservatory had been added

by the previous owners, and I must admit I was worried that it would be far too hot in the summer," says mother-of-two Christine Barlow. "In fact, it's absolutely fine, the blinds and ventilation work really well."

Although a fairly major project in itself, adding a conservatory is actually a relatively simple way to enlarge the living space in your house without the hassle of a full blown brick-built extension. The room that is created is usually much more attractive, too.

Kate and Andrew Bell built a stunning conservatory onto the kitchen in their pretty Staindrop house last summer (the house is now for sale through Smiths Gore Estate Agents).

"We can't imagine how we managed without it," says Kate. "It's a fantastic space for us as a family and when friends come, I can chat to them while I cook. The kids can wander in and out of the garden and at night we can dine under the stars without freezing to death."

If you are thinking of taking the plunge and building a conservatory, there are some important issues to consider. One, obviously, is where to build it, and the direction it will face. Are there overhanging trees that might need to be removed? And try to avoid making the conservatory the only entrance to the back of the house or it will end up as a glorified porch. Another is cost. A well-built hardwood conservatory is not cheap, but it is likely to



**FROM TOP:**  
In the summer months, the boundary between living areas inside and outside becomes blurred by an assortment of pots, tables, and chairs

A conservatory designed as a large family room, with comfortable sofas close to a fireplace and a separate area for dining. It is built against the outside of the house and the old exterior wall is covered with sienna-coloured lime stucco

The painted wooden style of this country conservatory works well in its location, surrounded by trees

**From The Conservatory Book by Peter Marston (Cassell & Co, £25)**

add value to your house. A plastic DIY affair may not, particularly if it is inappropriate for the age and style of your home.

Remember to budget for blinds, heating, flooring and decoration as well as the conservatory itself. A bespoke, hardwood conservatory can cost anything from £10,000 to £100,000.

If you do decide to go ahead, you are unlikely to regret it. As one estate agent told me: "I've never known anyone move into a house and get rid of the conservatory. People love them."

*“We can't imagine how we managed without it... It's a fantastic space for us as a family and when friends come, I can chat to them while I cook...”*

▶ Overleaf: a riverside hideaway

### CONSERVATORY DOS AND DON'TS

**AIDAN Jackson, Amdega's marketing director, offers the following advice...**

**Do try to use a specialist company to build your conservatory, or ask around to find a tried and tested local builder.**

**Do make sure that your conservatory blends well with the existing structure of your house. For example, that the conservatory walls are finished in the same way as the house, and that the windows are sympathetic to the shape of the existing windows.**

**Do always show your plans to the local authority. Most conservatories do not need planning permission, but it is much better to be safe than (very) sorry.**

**Don't build a conservatory with inadequate ventilation. At the very least there should be roof ventilation with proper panels that open fully.**

**Don't rush the planning stage. Make sure you look into different heating systems, for example. If you opt for radiators rather than separate underfloor heating, remember that radiators take up quite a lot of space, and that your system boiler must be able to cope with the extra capacity.**

**Don't underestimate the amount of space you need: a conservatory is an expensive investment, and it needs to be a viable living space to make the cost worthwhile.**



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**NE interiors**



**ROOM WITH A VIEW:** Jonnie and Gill Usher relax by the river in their conservatory extension

# A river runs by it



IAN LAMMING visits the house of Usher, where the construction of a conservatory with stunning views has changed the owners' way of life

**G**OT to keep them talking. There must be more questions to ask, if not about the conservatory, then about anything at all. And all the time the stresses and strains of the day flow away like the River Tees just feet beneath the windows.

A flypast of five ducks in perfect formation catches my eye. Trees and shrubs along the banks sway gently in the breeze and small birds of various varieties flit from branch to branch. This is a special place. It's not just a conservatory, it's a hide. If I dare sit here any longer, encroaching further on the goodwill of my hosts Gill and Jonnie Usher, then I may see the foxes, deer and spawning salmon they talk about so fondly.

More than £13,000 may seem a lot for a bit of glass, stone and metal but the effect on the Ushers, countless family, friends and visitors has been priceless. The 1779 cottage has good vibes throughout. It is chocolate box stuff, behind an attractive church, by a river in glorious North-East England. It may not be good enough to eat but Turner thought it was well worth painting and the back door features in one of his works of art.

"We have been here 21 years and done a lot of work on the house," says Jonnie, a former lecturer who now works with polar explorer Robert Swan. "We've had the conservatory about two years, which is just as well – I don't think we would have got any work done if we'd had it any earlier."

It was the weather that gave the Ushers the impetus to build the conservatory on the side of their lovely home. Gill hails from Kent where temperatures are balmy, much warmer than in chilly County Durham. "I just could not believe there was no summer," she says. "I couldn't use the garden, I couldn't sit out, there were no warm springs and we seemed to have the log fires on all year round. Building the conservatory altered life beyond recognition. Now we are out here eight months of the year. The fact that there is no sun isn't a problem any more."

Jonnie dug his own foundations for the 14x12ft room, 3ft down and 2ft wide. "It was hard work and had to be incredibly precise for the conservatory to fit," he says. "It cost about £450 but would have cost about £3,000 if I'd had it done, so it was a big saving." It then took about a week for the professionals



Pictures: SARAH NICHOLSON

to construct the metal and glass structure.

The physical effect was to extend the house outwards and bring the outdoors in. "It gives depth to the existing rooms, making them feel much larger than they are. It creates a sense of space as well as actual space," says Jonnie. "It was imperative that the conservatory was double-glazed and it is very rare that it is freezing in there. It's actually made the lounge a lot warmer too."

The psychological impact has been just as marked. "We spend hours in here every day just talking," says Gill.

"If you go and sit in the living room during the day you feel like a slob," adds Jonnie. "You feel you ought to be doing something else so you don't spend as much time there. But in the conservatory it feels like you are participating in the outside and it takes all the guilt away."

It's the same when they have company: the conservatory draws visitors with its special charm. "If you have a lot of people coming through the house, if they all sit around the fire, you feel responsible for them. But in the conservatory they are responsible for themselves," says Gill. "It's terribly subtle but makes an enormous difference. Visitors just sit there happily, they are autonomous, whereas elsewhere in the house they look to you to guide them. They sit there watching the birds, the river and any animals that cross the garden."

Jonnie adds: "That's because you feel you are in the garden with bird life going on all around you. The birds happily make nests in the tit box up there unfazed by us sitting watching."

The flooring continues the indoor/outdoor theme, being made of African slate to com-

plement the shale which underpins the house. But a conscious decision has been taken to make the conservatory a room, not a greenhouse, with foliage limited to little more than one hanging basket in the corner. "A lot of people have theirs festooned with plants and raffia furniture where we have made ours into another living room," says Jonnie.

Positioning is also essential, according to Jonnie. Their conservatory faces southeast to southwest and gets the sun in the morning and evening. As a result, it doesn't get too hot, seldom exceeding 80 degrees C, where many owners have to resort to blinds or find their conservatories too hot to handle in the summer.

They believe the house was once owned by someone who sympathised with the colonialists' struggle against the British during the American War of Independence. There's a diamond etching in one of the oldest windows that reads: "May every endeavour in the support of liberty be crowned with success."

Those endeavours now stretch no further than the freedom to relax just feet away from the beautiful River Tees. And if I could have thought of any more questions to ask Gill and Jonnie, that's just what I would have liked to have done.

► Page 10: My favourite conservatory plants

## 6 OF THE BEST

### DIGITAL RADIO

**DIGITAL** radio is here, and here to stay – forget those unwanted background effects, crackle and hiss are a thing of the past, the new sound is crystal clear and sharper than one of Jonathan Ross's suits. Digital audio broadcasting, or DAB, stations are cropping up all over the UK and can now tell you the tracks they are playing, latest news and weather forecasts and much more via your LED display, so they can talk less and play more. Superb.

#### SIMPLY SUPERB Pure Evolve 1 £99.95

From the people who started it all, here is the original DAB radio. The retro-style unit looks the business with its wood surround and has sound delivery to match. It has six station presets and works from the mains only – but you would only make people envious if you took it out anyway.



#### DUAL PURPOSE

##### Goodmans GPS280 £129.95

Not a bad looking unit from the clever folk at Goodmans, who have been making this gear for so long they all have letters from the Queen. Inside this unit is a quality DAB tuner, CD player and a single cassette deck for anyone who has any stashed away in the back of a cupboard.



#### DIGITAL DANCE

##### Ministry of Sound £149.95

For the fashion-conscious clubber, comes this ultra trendy unit from the Government of Groove. Fully portable, the unit comes with earphones and has 10 station presets.



#### SEPARATE STARTER

##### Acoustic Solutions SP110D £129.95

This stylish tuner can be added onto existing stereo separates. It has the scrolling text on the front for information delivery and also incorporates auto tuning and a headphone socket just so you can experience the full-on sound if you so desire.



#### NICE AND LIGHT

##### Perstel DR101 £169.95

Take your new found sound experience out on the road with you with this handy personal DAB tuner. Use it indoors plugged into the mains or take it out for a walk and it will give you six hours playing time through your free pair of earphones.



#### ULTIMATE UNIT

##### Pure DRX701ES £249.95

This digital separates unit is aimed at those people with ultra sensitive ears who have separate hi-fi units at home. It doesn't mean the rest of us shouldn't have one – it has 99 station presets, a remote control unit and a signal strength indicator to tell you which stations are pushing the best sound your way.

Peter Jenkinson



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**NE shopping**



# A touch of class

Olivier and Adele Brizard gave up their lives in London to start a business selling wine accessories and luxury gifts in North Yorkshire. **CHRISTEN PEARS** meets them

**A**FTER ten years as a stockbroker, Olivier Brizard was becoming tired of London life. Ten-hour days and traffic jams were beginning to take their toll and he was finding it harder and harder to spend time with his family. He and his wife Adele decided it was time to quit the rat race.

Two years on, they're living in a farmhouse in Little Ouseburn, near York, where they run two successful Internet businesses, selling wine accessories and luxury gifts.

"When we were in London, we were achieving financially but we didn't achieve much personally. We sat down and thought very carefully about what we wanted to do and we decided we wanted a complete change," says Adele.

Initially, they planned to move to the south of France. Olivier, who has a lifelong passion for wine, hoped to take a

viticulture course, with the aim of setting up his own vineyard, but, after a two-week factfinding trip, they realised it wasn't what they wanted and decided the Internet could be the key to the lifestyle they wanted.

They chose Yorkshire because Adele had been to boarding school in the Dales and they have absolutely no regrets about the move. They love country life, as do their daughters, five-year-old Florence and two-year-old Ophelia.

The couple started Brizard and Co while they were still in London and spent their first year in Yorkshire setting up the website. "I go to France a lot and I used to find all sorts of unusual things like decanters and corkscrews you can't buy over here. I thought it would be a good idea to try and sell them. The Internet idea developed from there," explains Olivier.

Like many of the French, Olivier has always been passionate about wine.

"It's a totally different culture from here. People really appreciate wine. They sit down and talk about it in depth."

Interestingly, he believes the French tend to be more limited in their appreciation of wine. A lot just drink the wine from their region or even vineyard but they are extremely knowledgeable about that particular wine. They know how the wine has evolved, whether it's been affected by the weather. In France, there's usually only French wine in a supermarket but in Britain, we tend to try much more.

Olivier jokes that his job in the City allowed him to try lots of different wines while taking clients out to lunch but he has travelled extensively, visiting vineyards across the globe. He also holds a diploma from the Wine and Spirit Trust.

Customers can call and benefit from his knowledge and experience and he also holds



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NE window shopping

**PLAY ROOM**



PLAY Room is a new lifestyle mail order company specialising in furniture, bedlinen and accessories for teenagers. The first mail order

catalogue has just been launched and there will be an interactive website – [www.play-room.com](http://www.play-room.com). Play Room recognises the wide variety in teen culture with a selection of six style sets tailored to particular groups from Cool Divas to Techno Freaks. The catalogue request line is (0870) 608 0851. Pictured top, Blu Qube bedlinen set, £39; right, perspex light, £20



**FOR NIPPY NIGHTS**

**SUMMER** always evokes feelings of warm, sunny days spent in the garden relaxing and enjoying a refreshing drink. But what happens when the sun goes down and the humidity and heat turn into a nippy night? One solution is to buy a patio heater. The Sunforce Patio Heater, pictured, with tilting head, is £249.99 from Homebase.

**NOVICE GARDENERS**

HOW To Garden is a handy, easy-to-follow guide from John Cushnie, Radio 4's favourite Gardener's Question Time panellist, for all those first-time or would-be gardeners who don't know where to start, which plants to choose, and what to do with them or when. £12.99 from WH Smith.



corporate wine tasting events. "I want people to try new things. Very often, they just keep drinking what they know. It's like food. In France, we give our children everything to try and if they don't like it, they don't like it. But over here, people limit what their children eat."

Brizard and Co was followed last year by The Bacchanalian Express, which sells luxury gifts ranging from baby booties to bottles of champagne. When you order something, as well as sending an unusual gift, you can be sure it will be exquisitely wrapped, thanks to Adele's attention to detail.

After she gave birth to Ophelia, a friend sent her a beautiful photograph album but it came in a huge box, wrapped in thick, green craft paper.

"It just didn't fit with the album at all. We put a lot of thought into our packaging because we want people to know we take care. That's what the business is all about. We want everything to be the best possible quality."

The business has grown steadily and the couple know they're going to have to move somewhere bigger in the near future, but they still have the flexibility to live their lives the way they want.

"Before, I had to be in the office even if there was nothing happening," says Olivier. "If we're not busy, we can go out and take the children somewhere. The beauty of the Internet is that you don't have to be there for the orders to come in."

But for all they're happy with their new life, the decision wasn't taken lightly. Adele says: "It's very hard to give up a substantial income and change your lifestyle but we have done things we would never have been able to do if we had not set up on our own. It has been a huge learning curve but very rewarding. People think about doing something but they never get round to it for fear of failure. We have been extremely lucky."

● You can visit the websites at [www.brizard.co.uk](http://www.brizard.co.uk) and [www.bacexpress.net](http://www.bacexpress.net).

**I go to France a lot and I used to find all sorts of things like decanters and corkscrews that you can't buy over here...**

**WINES TO HAVE WITH YOUR BARBECUE**

EVERYONE has their own idea of what a 'real' barbecue is and, although there are many variations, most are based on meat grilled slowly and basted with a piquant sweet sauce. The sauces usually have a common thread of ketchup, vinegar or mustard and get their sweetness from molasses, honey, brown sugar or even fruit. Anything with these sauces is a challenge for wine pairings.

When selecting wine for barbecues, think BBQ – Big, Bold and Quaffable. Any wine of this type should have all three qualities. They should be full-bodied – minimum 13 per cent alcohol with plenty of fruit extract – bold and assertive with forward fruit flavour and good acidity. Finally, they should be quaffable – smooth, delicious and gulpable. Wines for barbecues should be able to support the succulence of the meat brought out by the slow cooking and not compete with the piquancy and sweetness of the sauce.

Here are a few suggestions...

**Rich sweet red sauce:** zinfandel

**Beef and lamb:** hearty reds – cabernet sauvignon, merlot, syrah.

**Pork (with slight undertones of sweetness and mild flavours) and most hams:** will take a fruity white, with garlic and herbs added try Chianti Classico.

**Grilled chicken without an intense sauce:** Californian chardonnay.

**Tomato-based sauces:** barbera, with its higher acidity.

**Hamburgers:** will usually take any red wine which is not too old or complex. Try Beaujolais.

The Australians are particularly fond of barbecues. They recommend Banrock Station Shiraz, Rosetto Promenade cabernet/merlot, Rothbury Estate cabernet/merlot, Tatchilla Grenache/Shiraz.

**KEN STEPHENS**

● Ken Stephens' wine column appears in **The Northern Echo** every Tuesday

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# Conservatory speaking

The Northern Echo's gardening writer, BRIGID PRESS, chooses her favourite conservatory plants

**DATURA CANDIDA (angels trumpet)**  
AN exotic climber with huge pendulous flowers and plenty of fragrance. It is usually grown as a shrub or small tree and can reach eight feet. Likes a warm, bright light with moist soil.



**STEPHANOTIS FLORIBUNDA (wax flower)**  
FAMED for the beauty and perfume of its large jasmine-like flowers. It is not easily brought into bloom, as it needs a constant temperature of 18C and hates draughts. It likes a humid environment and constant watering, especially when in full flower.



**LITHOPS KARASMONTANA (living stones)**  
PAIRS of swollen fleshy leaves, which are fused together to resemble small pebbles an inch high. The only give-away is when they throw out white daisy-like flowers. They need bright sunlight, but not particularly hot temperatures. Water sparingly.



**BOUGAINVILLEA BUTTIANA (paper flower)**  
MAKES a splendid specimen plant with its large, colourful flower bracts. They are vigorous climbers but can be pruned into shrub or tree-shaped plants. They need plenty of direct sunlight, water only when the soil dries out.



**CLIVIA MINIATA (kaffir lily)**  
STUNNING heads of flame-coloured flowers burst out of a mound of luscious green leaves. They like bright light, but not direct sunlight. The compost should be kept moist at all times. They actually grow better when confined to small pots.



**HOYA CARNOSA (wax plant)**  
A CLIMBING plant which is covered in fleshy green foliage and clusters of fragrant white flowers. The scent is strongest in the evenings. It needs a bright area, and can tolerate direct sunshine in winter, but not summer. The plant performs better when misted regularly.



**ANTHURIUM ANDREANUM (painter's pallet)**  
ORIGINATING from the tropical rainforests of South America, they are grown for their brilliantly coloured flower spathes (modified leaves) and their ornamental heart-shaped leaves. They are demanding plants, requiring constant warmth and humidity. Must be shaded from strong light.

THE house and, in particular, the conservatory can provide the right environment in which plants from all over the world can survive.

The range is broad and very varied, from short-term annuals to jungle orchids, to large leaved evergreens and long-lived succulents. Some are very easy to look after, such as desert cacti, which will tolerate both hot, bright sunshine and dull, cool corners. Others may need specialist management.

Light is probably the most crucial factor. Most need a clean, bright light, but not the heat that is generated from the midday sun through a glass window. Variegated and flowering plants tend to need a brighter light.

Air generated by central heating systems is usually just too dry. This can be remedied by grouping plants together, or through a regular misting routine. It is always best to water from beneath, into a shallow tray or saucer, and only top this up once all the moisture has disappeared.

## PLANT OF THE MONTH

**PEONY** (*Paeonia officinalis*)

A HARDY herbaceous or shrubby perennial plant which has long been a favourite in the gardens of Britain. It bears large, ball-shaped blooms in red, pink and white. The original was the double, deep crimson-flowered bush from Southern Europe. It is named after Paion, a physician of ancient Greece. They thrive in sunny borders filled with rich soil, but mustn't be planted too deep. They take up to five years to establish and flower. Superstition suggests that a peony bush should only be dug up by a dog, never a man, that the seeds ward off evil, and that an uneven number of flowers on a plant foretell of death in the family.



Brigid Press

Read Brigid every Saturday in The Northern Echo

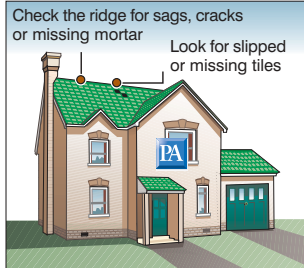
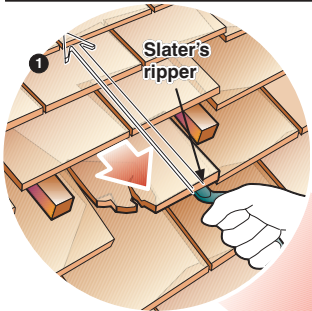


# NE d.i.y

## ROOF REPAIR

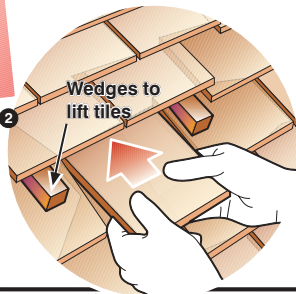
Regularly checking the condition of your roof may well save costly repairs later on

To replace damaged tiles



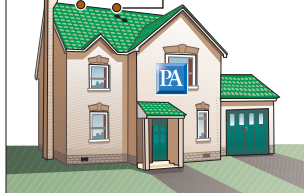
**1 Remove old tile**  
Use a slater's ripper to remove an old damaged tile

**2 Fit new tile**  
The new tile can then be easily inserted. Once secured in position remove the wedges



Also check in the loft for chinks of light, water stains or signs of infestation

Check the ridge for sags, cracks or missing mortar  
Look for slipped or missing tiles



**R**AINDROPS keep falling on my head – unfortunately, I am still inside my home. A dodgy roof can spell misery and a lot of expensive damage, so it makes very good sense to carry out regular checks and repairs.

The roof is probably the most important part of your house and needs regular looking after to maintain its weather-resistance.

It is a good idea to inspect your roof twice a year. Dealing with problems as they arise can prevent a roof having to be replaced, which is very expensive and disruptive. Roofs can be weatherproofed using a combination of slates, tiles, shingles, thatch, felt, lead and zinc.

You do not always have to climb a ladder to inspect the roof. Many can be inspected from outside using binoculars, and from the inside by taking a look in the loft.

But if you do need to climb onto the roof, be very careful. Do not walk about on the roof covering and if you are inspecting a flat roof, use boards to spread your weight. On a pitched roof, use a proper roofing ladder which hooks over the apex of the roof.

There are several things to look out for when checking outside the house. On pitched roofs check for missing, damaged or misplaced slates or tiles. Always pay special attention to the edges and to the ridge tiles at the apex of the roof. On flat roofs check for blisters and bumps, and for puddles which show that water is not draining away as it should.

The strips of felt or metal which seal the joints between roof and wall are called flashings. Check that they have not lifted or worked loose.

On chimneys, check that chimney pots and the mortar around their bases – the flaunching – are sound. Also look for crumbling pointing between the bricks and damaged or misplaced flashings where the chimney meets the roof.

If you are checking the roof from inside the house, look for chinks of daylight, which may indicate potential leaks.

One of the most important things to look

by RICHARD SPENCER

out for are signs of damp. If you think you may have a leak, make your inspection while it is raining if you can. Otherwise look for water stains on the inside of the roof and on the roof timbers. Also check for any signs of rot or woodworm.

Another important aspect of roofs is ventilation. In most pitched roofs you should be able to see daylight all around the eaves of the roof. If you cannot, the chances are that you need better ventilation.

Lastly, check the loft insulation. Make sure it is spread evenly and that it does not cover any electric cables.

If you are nervous about heights, do not attempt to carry out DIY roof repairs yourself. And even if heights don't bother you and you go ahead with repairs, never compromise on safety.

Before you start, move or protect anything that could be damaged by something falling from the roof. Keep the area below out of bounds, especially for children.

A platform tower is much safer to work on than a ladder and they can be hired at low cost. If you do use a ladder, make sure it is long enough to extend by at least three rungs above the edge of the roof, and tie it to a large hook screwed into the fascia board.

If you have a felted roof with a coating of chippings, try to pick cool weather. When felt is hot, sharp edges on the chippings can easily puncture it.

### QUICK FIX

#### Can I install a smoke detector myself?

Yes, all you have to do is screw them into place as most are battery operated.

#### How do I repair a cracked paving stone?

Lever it out and set a new slab on a bed of mortar

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# Get packing



**EXPERT PACKER:** Sarah's off again...

Working for Formula 1, Sarah French became a professional globetrotter. She shares her travelling tips with Women's Editor CHRISTEN PEARS

**M**OST of us find it difficult enough deciding what to pack for our summer holidays but Sarah French used to travel 200,000 miles a year.

Working as head of press and PR for Bridgestone Motorsport, she visited Formula 1 racing circuits across the globe and was always required to be immaculately turned out. So how did she manage to look stylish without having to pay for excess baggage on her flights?

"I've always been a traveller. I used to take huge amounts but the more you travel, the more you realise that most of it isn't worth taking, especially when you have to carry your own bags. Now I just take real basics and try to minimise the weight," she says.

"My weakness was always shoes. I used to take lots of pairs to go with different outfits but I eventually got that narrowed down to the point where I would take one pair that would have to go with everything."

During the racing season, which runs from March to October, Sarah was away every fortnight, visiting locations as diverse as Australia, Japan, Brazil, Canada and the US, as well as just about everywhere in Europe.

"It was all a bit crazy but that's the side of my job I really enjoyed. It wasn't a chore and I didn't mind living out of a suitcase."

Because she was representing the company, Sarah always had to travel in a smart suit. At the races, she was required to wear uniform but she also had to attend a lot of evening functions.

"It was all pretty formal but I always avoided taking things like blouses and shirts because I found they got really creased. Anything that needed folding, I didn't take."

"I buy my suits at Hobbs because they're wool and quite light and they travel really well. I would get off a plane after 22 hours and still look half decent at the other end. It was amazing."

The lessons she learned as a business traveller serve her well when she heads off on holiday – she's going to Peru later this month – and help her keep her luggage down to a minimum.

It may seem obvious, she says, but you have to tailor your holiday wardrobe to your destination. For example, there won't be much call for eveningwear in the middle of the Andes.

Sarah never takes her best clothes on holiday. Apart from the risk of your luggage going missing in transit, she doesn't think they benefit from being crammed in a suitcase and dribbled with sun lotion.

"It is nice to take your favourite things with you but it's so easy for them to come back damaged. It's just not worth it."

But one item, which most of us wouldn't dream of packing, is an essential for Sarah – her gym kit.

"I always take a pair of trainers and some gym gear. A lot of hotels have gyms now, which is great if you've got a spare hour."

Sarah is now public relations manager for Reg Vardy and although she does some travelling, it's mostly in the UK.







**TREAT FOR FEET:**  
Boden floral espadrilles, £29, www.boden.co.uk; flower flip flops from Bhs, £5

**PAGE 2:** luggage picture, Next holdalls, £29.99

**BELOW:** turquoise patchwork bikini top, £8.99, briefs, £8.99, sarong, £12.99, from Next

## HOLIDAY ESSENTIALS

### SARAH'S TRAVELLING TIPS

**1 Take the right luggage:** Make sure your case or bag has wheels. Sarah takes a large bag rather than a case. It's easier to handle and because it's soft, you can pack more into it. She also recommends taking a big piece of hand luggage. If you run out of space in your suitcase, you can always fit things in your hand luggage.

**2 Don't bother with a coat:** Coats are bulky and unless you're going somewhere cold, you're unlikely to need one. Take a warm woolly instead. It takes up less room and is more versatile.

**3 Lots of layers:** By layering your clothes, you're prepared for any change in weather conditions. Sarah recommends layers when you're flying as the temperature on the plane can fluctuate.

**4 Mix and match:** Take plenty of neutral colours and pieces that mix and match. That way, you can create lots of different outfits from just a few basics.

**5 No electrical equipment:** Don't bother with a hairdryer. Most hotels supply them now. Don't take an iron either. If you take the right clothes and pack cleverly, you won't need one.

**6 Mini sizes:** Don't load your suitcase down with huge bottles of shampoo. Companies such as Charles Worthington sell special travel size hair and beauty products.



**SHELLING OUT:** turquoise shell tunic, £25, Evans; flat toe-post mules, £19.99, River Island; light brown/gold flash mirror sunglasses, £19.99, www.fostergrange.co.uk



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## me and my wardrobe



For someone who's always been interested in what people wear, sales consultant James Brass landed the perfect job

**W**ORKING in a designer store provides James Brass with the perfect opportunity to indulge his passion for labels. The 24-year-old from Middlesbrough is a sales consultant at The House, the Yarm-based designer clothing and homeware store.

He developed an interest in fashion at an early age and had perfected the art of stylish dressing by the time he was 14 when he used to steal his older brother's designer gear. "I always wanted to work in fashion and working in The House means I can fulfil my designer label obsession," he says.

### How would you describe your look?

I don't really have a look as such; I tend to just throw something on.

### What's your favourite item of clothing?

My Fake Genius T-shirt. It's easy to throw on, I feel comfortable in it and I can wear it with anything.

### What's your worst buy?

A pair of Wrangler jeans when I was 12! They were drainpipes – and the height of fashion at the time – but my older brother thought otherwise and decided to torture me about them.

### What are your favourite shops?

The House and Harvey Nichols in Leeds.

### What's the most you've ever spent on an item of clothing?

I spent £1,000 on a Comme des Garçons jacket. Do I regret it? Yes! I only wore it four times then I wore it in the rain and ruined it. I haven't worn it since.

### Which celebrity's style do you admire most and why?

Jude Law. He could wear anything and still look stylish.



### CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:

**CASUAL:** Paul Smith denim jacket, Diesel StyleLab pants and Paul Smith trainers.

**DAYWEAR:** Prada jacket, Diesel StyleLab pants, Boss T-shirt and Paul Smith shoes.

**SMART:** Hugo Boss pinstripe suit with shirt, tie, cufflinks and shoes by Paul Smith.

Pictures: MIKE GIBB

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Working in The House means I can fulfil my designer label obsession



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The best way of achieving an enviable tan this summer is not to bake it but to fake it, says  
**SHEREEN LOW**

**N**O-ONE wants to be pale and interesting when the sun comes out. Instead, we want a gorgeous, golden glow. But the dangers of sunbathing – from premature ageing to skin cancer – are well documented and there's also evidence that the fake heat of the sunbed can damage the skin.

While many may be doubtful about how natural a fake glow can look, every year fake tan formulations get better and better. In the bad old days, messy creams could often turn you a streaky orange because they were difficult to apply. But now it's easy to fake it convincingly and there's a huge range of products to help you do so – from 20-second professional spray treatments to mousses, wipes and gels.

The most effective way to fake a tan is to visit a salon, where you can have a professional spray treatment. Currently a hit with celebrities such as Tamzin Outhwaite, Geri Halliwell and Tess Daly, the UV-free tan is over in minutes and you can tidy up and go immediately afterwards.

Try Spray Tan by The Tanning Shop, which contains MagneTan, a revolutionary technology that works with the body's magnetism to ensure no area of the body is covered twice, guaranteeing a streak-free and flawless tan. There are three colour levels – English roses are strongly advised to go for level 1, a 20-second blast of colour, which leaves you a glowing, healthy brown.

A single treatment costs £24.99, takes less than ten minutes in total, develops over a couple of hours and lasts for around a week. For stockists, phone (01325) 360900.

New from Australia, is Sun FX tanning system. Virtually odourless, it doesn't contain alcohol so it's ideal for sensitive skin. The treatment uses DHA as a bronzer, a sugar cane extract which is the American FDA's (Food and Drug Administration) only recommended product for self-tanning. Each tan is expected to last up to six days. For stockists around the country, call (01322) 290101, and treatments cost from £25 to £35 for a full body spray.

If you prefer applying your own self-tan rather than putting your tan into the hands of beauticians, there are several guidelines to bear in mind for a natural-looking tan. Application is the key to having that fantastic long-lasting glow.

Pick a self-tanner which matches your natural skin tone, be it fair, medium or dark. It's much easier to apply two coats of a paler shade than one dark coat, for a stronger colour and bronzed effect.

Before you use a fake tan, make sure you exfoliate well and complete any waxing or shaving that needs to be done. The smoother your skin is, the more even the tan will be.

If you are applying the product at home, make sure you slather on moisturiser before you apply the lotion as drier areas of the skin will soak up more of the formulation. For best results, allow an hour or two between applying body lotions and the self-tanner. Don't shower, swim or do any form of exercise that might make you sweat for at least six hours after application – a streaky body is a bit of a giveaway.

Warm the product in your hands and massage the self-tanner in, using long



**SHADY LADY:** it's safer to get your tan before you go on holiday

## Bronze medal performances

smooth strokes and applying even pressure with your fingertips. Don't forget the back of the neck, sides of your waist, underarms, inner thighs and backs of knees. Apply more lightly where skin is thickest: elbows, knees, toes and fingers. And be sure to wash your hands thoroughly after you finish – as otherwise it will leave tell-tale signs.

With so many products to pick from, here are some of the latest formulations that we tried and tested:

### SPRAY

#### SunFX Spray On Tan, £35

THIS has the wow factor as in "Wow, where have you been?", which is how my friend greeted me afterwards. The tan is sprayed on by a beauty therapist – the first application takes ten minutes and top-up is two minutes. It is odourless and dries quickly although colour does rub off on light-coloured clothes. I was very happy with the colour, which was golden brown rather than orange and looked pretty natural.

#### The Tanning Shop Spray Tan, £24.99

AFTER a short explanatory video, you slap on a bit of barrier cream to nails, hands and feet, then stand in a small cubicle where four smooth – and cold! – jets spray you front and back. Then you simply rub off the excess, and pop your clothes back on. Despite being

naturally pale-skinned, it left me with a natural-looking healthy, brown glow, and genuinely has no streaks or flaws at all. Impressively quick, simple and convincing.

#### Instant Tan, £35

AN all-over tan in just six seconds. Simply undress and step inside the special booth, where you will be sprayed by tanning mist. Available at selected Saks salons, including Darlington. Call 0845 6005959.

### MOUSSE

#### Marks & Spencer Self Tan Foam, £7

THIS light liquid immediately turned into foam upon application, which made it very easy to spread. It comes in one universal shade, which made me look slightly bronzed on the first application. For a stronger colour, reapply after two days. My skin was left soft and moisturised without any streaks although it had a slightly strong fragrance (not recommended before a night out). It wasn't messy and was simple to use. Also available in spray and wipes.

#### Boots No7 Self Tan Quick Dry Body Mousse, £9.50

IT only took a few minutes to apply this light, foamy formulation and within a few more minutes my skin was dry. The subtle tan which developed over the next couple of hours was an even, golden colour that looked convincing and was certainly value for money. One gripe – although I followed the instructions and washed my hands after application, I obviously didn't wash them thoroughly enough and ended up with orange palms. Next time I'll use gloves.

### ORGANIC

#### Fake Bake, £35

A NEW organic tan fresh from the States. Favoured by Catherine Zeta Jones, it contains 37 per cent more tanning agent than other self tans. Available from Saks salons.

## Diary of a make-up artist

**ALLISON MCKAY**

RECENTLY worked in a very plush five-storey house in Notting Hill, London. The photo shoot featured six wealthy ladies, one of whom was TV presenter Tania Bryer. They were organising a charity event. Designer labels everywhere!



I found myself instinctively using my designer range of hair and make-up products. I used **Touche Eclat** by Yves Saint Laurent, £21, to erase the shadows from under the eyes instead of the equally effective, **Lightening Touch**, £8, by The Body Shop. **Amplificils Full Dimension Volume Mascara**, £15.50 by Lancôme, was used to create fuller lashes instead of another favourite of mine, **Great Lash**, £4.49 by Maybelline. **Luminous Silk Foundation**, £25, by Giorgio Armani, is a weightless foundation which was smoothed over the skin to leave a very natural, yet silky finish. **Translucide**, £8.99, by L'Oréal is another lightweight foundation that leaves a luminous finish.

One product I wouldn't be without is **Eight Hour Cream**, £18, by Elizabeth Arden. It is the ultimate beauty tasker, protecting the skin and lips moisturising your driest bits. You can even use it to define the ends of your hair.

NOT only are clothes designers showing off their season's collections but so are hairdressers. A bit closer to home for me was a photographic shoot at a studio in Newcastle with photographer Eric Murphy. I was producing the shoot and directing the make-up for Toni & Guy's Darlington and Middlesborough salons.

The hairstyling reflected the new look – softly textured lengths contrasting with a heavy, blunt fringe, giving a feminine, yet slightly retro look. Two great products the stylists used were **Control Freak Serum**, which controls hair and gets rid of frizzies without product overload, and **After Party**, a soft, yet non-greasy serum to tame and shine, both by Tigi.

The make-up we applied is a key look this summer, very feminine and minimal with a sheer and shimmery finish. Here are some favourites to achieve this look: **Fresh Air Continuous Moisture Tint**, £20, by Estee Lauder, which has an SPF 15. Apply it like a moisturiser to give a hint of colour and a healthy glow; **Touch Tint** for eyes, £12, by Clinique, a range of soft, glistening eye creams with a crease-free, cream-to-powder formulation in soft pastel tones, and **Convertible Colour** by Stila, £23, which can dabbed on the apples of your cheeks and your lips.

If you are like me and end up with unattractive smudged mascara under your eyes when you get a bit hot, try **Aqua Lash**, £6.50, by Max Factor. This will not budge whatever the soggy situation, but don't pile too much on. Spider eyelashes don't work with minimal make-up...

● Allison McKay recently moved back to the North-East from London, where she was a cover girl stylist for top magazines.

WIN A MAGICAL MAKEOVER EXPERIENCE – see page 22

Showing some pluck

If you want neat eyebrows, then follow the line of the brow and gently pluck the hairs underneath the brow. Plucking between the brows gets rid of that mono-eyebrow look, but don't overdo it or else you'll resemble a rather startled bird...



# My breast cancer was a blessing

Being diagnosed with breast cancer was the best thing that could have happened to Trish Scott. She talks to CHRISTEN PEARS about how her illness changed her life and how she is using her experiences to help other people change theirs

**T**HERE are two types of people in this world: drivers and drifters. Drivers know from an early age exactly what they want to do with their lives. They are focused and ambitious, never losing sight of their goals. Drifters have no idea what they want from life. They often feel unfulfilled and frustrated but don't know what to do about it.

Trish Scott was a drifter. After leaving school, she drifted into secretarial work because she thought that was the only option open to her. Although she enjoyed her job, there was a constant nagging feeling at the back of her mind that she wasn't fulfilling her potential.

She drifted in her private life, too, into her first marriage, which failed after five years. For the last 22 years, she has been married to her second husband, Peter, and the couple have a 13-year-old son. Although she had found fulfilment at home, she says, she was still dissatisfied with her career.

But everything changed in December 2002 when she was diagnosed with breast cancer and had to undergo a mastectomy in January this year.

For the first few days, she was in a state of shock. Her mind turned to worst case scenarios; she wondered whether she would see her son grow up. But gradually, as she learned more about her condition, she began to realise the situation wasn't so grim.

"My experience with breast cancer came completely out of the blue but it gave me the opportunity to really think hard about my life and something incredibly positive came

out of it. I accepted what had happened to me and I found myself putting things into perspective. I realised I was being given another chance," she says.

"I have grown as a person and I do feel different. I'm still the same Trish but there's a lot more determination about me and a lot more focus. I was lucky in that my cancer was diagnosed and treated so early and that I had so much support from my family and friends. I know a lot of women aren't so lucky."

Trish will have to take tamoxifen, the anti-breast cancer drug, for five years, but does not need chemotherapy or radiotherapy, and while some women have problems with their body image following a mastectomy, Trish is quite comfortable. She is happy to wear a prosthesis rather than undergo reconstructive surgery.

The night she came out of hospital, following her mastectomy, Trish lay in bed, thinking about the future. She was so excited, she couldn't sleep and suddenly, it came to her – she wanted to be a life coach.

*"I knew immediately it was what I wanted to do... It took a real shock to the system for me to realise that I wasn't fulfilling my potential"*



**TRISH SCOTT:** Having cancer made her realise she needed to make changes in her life

"I have no idea where that came from but I knew immediately it was what I wanted to do. It took a real shock to the system for me to realise that I wasn't fulfilling my potential and being a life coach was a way for me to help other people do the same without having to go through an experience like that."

Sitting in the conservatory of her home in Ripon, Trish looks happy and relaxed. She has just given up her job as a business administrator at Ripon College to start her own life coaching practice.

The excitement she feels at her new venture is bubbling just under the surface. You can see it in her face, hear it in her voice. It's a big step but she says she has absolutely no doubts.

"I've never felt like this about anything before. I believe in it totally, and that is a motivating factor in itself. I am sure there will be challenges but I know that as long as I remain positive, I can deal with them."

Initially, she knew very little about life coaching but as she recovered from her operation, she carried out hours of research and signed up for training with the Coaching Academy, based in Portsmouth. Unlike many life coaching organisations, which started in America, this one was founded in the UK and is aimed specifically at the British market.

Unlike counselling or psychiatry, life coaching doesn't deal with the past but focuses firmly on the present and the future. By listening to what a client has to say and asking them a series of questions, the coach can help them understand what is holding

them back and what they can do change the situation.

As well as home study, Trish has attended a residential weekend and is now working towards accreditation as a professional life coach through the Open College Network. As she begins to work with clients, her skills are constantly evolving and she's finding her new job immensely rewarding.

"It's not about you coming up with options for clients, it's about giving them the framework to explore their options and come up with the answers for themselves. It's a wonderful feeling when you get someone to that 'A-ha' moment, when they suddenly have that revelation about their life."

Trish's own moment of revelation, her diagnosis with cancer, has transformed her life.

"My days of drifting are over. I now have a clearly defined set of goals and an unshakeable belief in my ability to achieve my real purpose in life. If there was just one piece of advice I was allowed to give people it would be this – don't wait until an earth-shattering event in your life forces you to make changes, to start living the life you want to live. Sit down, right now, and write out a list of what you want and make a conscious decision to start working towards achieving those things.

"How you live your life is your choice and your choice alone – choose to live it well."

● **For more information about how life coaching can help you to transform your life, contact Trish Scott on (01765) 608092 or email trishscott\_lifecoach@hotmail.com**



Darlington slimming club Changes celebrates its fifth anniversary this year. CHRISTEN PEARS reports

**SENSIBLE EATING:**  
the Changes team – Lynne, Julie, Mandy and June – celebrate their fifth



**F**IVE years ago, they were working as consultants for well-known national slimming organisations but ironically, they were all putting on weight. Today, sisters Mandy Drake and June MacFarlane, along with Lynne Simmons and Julie Woodcock, run Changes, the successful Darlington-based slimming club.

Formerly known as Slimfit, it is based on a sensible eating plan that doesn't involve calorie counting or weighing food. It has more than 1,200 members attending classes across the region.

"It got to the stage where it was embarrassing," says Mandy. "We had to stand up in front of a class and talk about losing weight but we were all putting it on. It just wasn't working so we decided to set up our own group."

"We had a lot of experience between us and we did a lot of research but we started out trying to find a way that would suit everybody. Some people liked to measure portions, others liked to count calories. That lasted for the first year but we found that we were giving people too much choice."

"If people weigh food and count calories, it can never be free of dieting. It becomes an obsession. That's why we came up with the Slim for Life plan, which we then replaced with Steps to Success."

The healthy eating plan has remained at the heart of the club since and is based on portion control rather than restricting the kind of food you can eat. It makes it much easier for someone who is trying to combine slimming with cooking for a family.

As well as classes around the region, there is also a postal service, which is proving extremely popular for those who don't like slimming classes or just don't have the time.

"We've also introduced

## The women who love being losers

slimming from home for those who like the group atmosphere but don't have time. This way you can slim with your family or friends, or you can do it with work with your colleagues," explains Mandy.

One of the most satisfying things for the four women is the recognition they're gaining. They've been on television several times and have been featured in all the major national slimming magazines. The key to their success is simple: the healthy eating plan actually works.

"People are always looking for a quick fix and you can get that – but the weight goes back on very quickly. We want people to adopt a healthy way of eating for life. So many of our members reach their target weight and stay at their target

weight. You only have to look at the four of us to see that."

One of Changes' many success stories has been Christine Horner. She joined the Shildon class in 1999. She had never been small, she says, but the weight had gradually crept on and she'd tried several slimming clubs and diets.

"It's something that happened over the years. I suppose you become complacent. You go for a size 14 and that feels a bit tight so you get the next size up. In 1999 I got to a size 22 and I thought enough was enough."

She spotted an advert for Slimfit's new club opening in Shildon and went along with a friend. During the first 18 months, she lost just over three stones but it took her until Christmas 2001 to lose her

target of four stones. She was 14 stone 4lbs, but now fluctuates between 10 stone 4lbs and 10 stone 8lbs.

"It's only an hour a week but I'm not exaggerating when I say it changed my life. A lot of people want a quick fix. I lost a pound a week but they want to lose three or four. You just can't do it. I lost my weight gradually and it's stayed off."

She likes the plan because there's no weighing. "Julie and the others have had the problem. They know what it's like and they know what works. They understand what you're going through but that means they also know all the excuses so there's no getting away with anything."

Now 53, she swims and goes to the gym regularly and she sticks to the plan.

"I don't worry about having a treat if I want one, like a couple of gin and tonics or a glass of wine with a meal, but the next day, I just go back on the plan, and it works."

● For more information about Changes, call (01325) 260060 or (01325) 260044 or visit the website at [www.changes.uk.com](http://www.changes.uk.com)

*It's only an hour a week but I'm not exaggerating when I say it changed my life*

### LIFE COACH

#### REFLECTION: THE SECRET FOR EFFECTIVE LIVING

**HOW often do you take time out to ask searching questions. Am I really satisfied in my job?**

**What about my relationships, partner, family, friends? What about my health? How much time do I have just for me, for enjoying myself?**

**One of the keys to effective living is to regularly stop and give your life an MOT. Ask the difficult questions and find out where you need to devote more**

**time and energy to keep things in balance and rolling along. You can find the time, things can wait, and the world won't end. Over the next month take some time out, have a good look at your life and ask what could be better, what needs attention? You'll then have a good way of assessing your life and keeping everything in balance.**

Juliette Lee



● Juliette is available at [www.sunflowercoaching.com](http://www.sunflowercoaching.com)

## NE slimming

A suggested three-course meal from the Changes team...

### COUNTRY BAKED MUSHROOMS

(Serves 4)

#### INGREDIENTS

275g/10oz large open cup mushrooms  
2 garlic cloves

Finely grated rind one lemon  
40g/1½ oz wholemeal breadcrumbs  
1 tbsp fresh chopped parsley  
One tbsp fresh marjoram  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
Frylight cooking spray  
Fresh parsley sprigs and lemon wedges for garnish

#### METHOD

Preheat oven to 190c/375f or gas mark five. Wash and dry mushrooms. Carefully remove stalks and chop finely. Crush the garlic and finely grate the lemon rind, and place in a bowl with mushrooms, breadcrumbs, herbs and 1½ tbsps water. Add the salt and fresh ground pepper to taste and then stir well.

Spray the bottom of a shallow ovenproof dish with cooking spray. Arrange the mushrooms in a layer in the dish. Divide the stuffing equally beyond them and spray with Frylight. Bake in the oven for 15 minutes. Serve hot, garnished with fresh herbs and lemon wedges.

### CHICKEN GOULASH

(Serves 4)

#### INGREDIENTS

8 boneless chicken thighs  
2 medium onions  
1 tbsp paprika  
1 tsp caraway seeds  
115g/4oz button mushrooms  
400g/14oz tin tomatoes  
½ pint fresh chicken stock (2 stock cubes)

Freshly chopped parsley for garnish  
Frylight cooking spray

#### METHOD

Remove the skins from the chicken. Heat a little Frylight spray in a non-stick frying pan and add the chicken. Cook over a medium heat for about 15 minutes until well-browned on all sides. Meanwhile, peel and roughly chop the onion. Remove the chicken from the frying pan and replace with onions, paprika and caraway seeds. Cook for about three minutes then add the mushrooms and cook for about two minutes. Add the tomatoes and stock and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat to simmer then add chicken. Cover the pan and simmer for 30 to 35 minutes until chicken is tender. Remove the lid and reduce the liquid to a sauce consistency by boiling for five to ten minutes, stirring frequently. Sprinkle with freshly chopped parsley and serve.

### CHOCOLATE ORANGE DELIGHT

(Serves 4)

#### Ingredients

1 packet chocolate flavour sugar free Angel Delight  
2 oranges, peeled and cut into small pieces and a little grated zest for garnish  
1 large tub very low fat fromage frais

#### METHOD

Pour Angel Delight powder into fromage frais and mix well. Stir in the orange pieces and serve, garnished with lemon zest.

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**The little box of  
 tricks beneath  
 my television**

The makers of hard disc recorders claim  
 they can change the way you watch TV.  
 NIGEL BURTON puts that boast to the test

HAVE just spent a month watching the future of television. It wasn't a video recorder and it wasn't a DVD machine. The little box of tricks nestling beneath the TV looked like an ordinary Sky digital receiver but it concealed a rather neat trick. This is a Sky box that can record as well as receive. It's called Sky+ and it could well be the thing to free you from the menace that is called the TV schedule. Sky+ boxes are fitted with a hard drive just like a computer. And as with a PC they write information to the hard drive which acts like a storage device - in this case TV pictures. So Sky+ allows you to store your favourite TV programmes and watch them at a time that suits you. If that sounds a bit like a video recorder, think again. Because it uses sophisticated writing software the quality of the pictures your box records is indistinguishable from the original broadcast (when was the last time you could say that of fuzzy old VHS?).

And as the Sky box has a whopping 40GB hard drive, it can store around 20 hours of footage - a bit more than a four-hour tape. Impressed? It gets better. Setting the box to record is so easy a child could do it. Simply call up Sky's on-screen programme guide, highlight your programme and press one button. That's all there is to it.

The box has other tricks up its sleeve. You can start watching a programme even before it has finished recording, you can watch one Sky channel as you record another (the box has twin tuners) and the trick frame facilities are flawless. And if you fancy archiving some of your favourite programmes, the box will switch on and record an entire season then download them to your video or other recording device.

Sky wasn't the first company to market a hard disk recorder - Tivo got there first a couple of years ago - but it is the first to make a real go of the system. Tivo pulled out of the UK market earlier this year, although its electronic programme guide service will remain.

In future you'll be able to buy boxes with larger hard disks - Tivo could be opened up and retro-fitted with twin hard drives but Sky is keeping quiet about the innards of its little beauty - and combo devices that pair a hard disk with a video or a DVD recorder. JVC already has a hard disk VHS deck on the market and Panasonic's HSR recorder pairs a

disk with a DVD-R burner. About the only downside to the Sky system is the extra £10 a month you have to pay for the electronic programme guide, although I expect this to come down as the system gains market share.

In anticipation of greater demand, Sky recently signed a deal with Amstrad to manufacture hard disk boxes in China. The Amstrad Sky+ box will join the existing line-up towards the end of the year.

Sky is also planning a new combined keyboard and remote control, to be known as the Sky Navigator. It will be sold as an upgrade option as part of Sky's new Accessory Range, a line of 11 Sky Branded products that will soon be available in more than 3,000 retail outlets across the UK and Ireland. First shipments of the Sky Navigator are scheduled for the second half of the year.

Digital satellite viewers will be able to use the Sky Navigator in conjunction with all standard digiboxes as well as Sky+. It will combine all the existing key functions from the standard Sky remote control and Sky+ remote, as well as QWERTY and numeric keypad functions.

Says Simon Sugar, Amstrad's commercial director: "As BSKyB's first and longest serving set top box supplier, Amstrad welcomes this opportunity to become a key BSKyB supplier of the Sky+ set top box. SkyB's premium product. Sky has chosen Amstrad for its long standing experience in set top box manufacture and its proven reliability and efficiency."

"BSkyB and Amstrad have been pioneering partners in this industry for the past 14 years and we at Amstrad place great importance on the successful continuation of this relationship."

Brian Sullivan, BSKyB's Director of New Product Development, says: "Since its launch, Sky+ has been the UK leader in the emerging Personal Video Recorder (PVR) category. As this market grows, it is critical that we have the suppliers to support demand."

"We also believe the Sky Navigator will be a strong addition to our Sky and Sky+ remote control range, providing an increased level of flexibility for customers' use of Sky's interactive services such as betting, text messaging, e-mail and games. It will be one of the featured products available in the new Sky Accessory range."



Chef Rosemary Shrager has moved her celebrated cookery school from the Hebrides to North Yorkshire. CHRISTEN PEARS meets her

**R**OSEMARY Shrager learned to cook in what she calls "the wrong way". Instead of enrolling on a cookery course, she spent years working in kitchens in Britain and abroad, learning her trade as she went along. The experience certainly hasn't done her any harm; she's now one of Britain's most respected chefs and, for the last four years has run the hugely successful cookery school at Amhuinnsuidhe Castle in the Hebrides. "I absolutely love cooking and I love teaching people how to cook. I would love to have had the opportunity to have been taught myself so I suppose I'm making up for it," she says.

Amhuinnsuidhe was voted one of the top ten cookery schools in *The Observer* in 2001 and it's easy to see why. Rosemary is passionate about food and cookery. Just talking about it brings a glint to her eye. Her pupils can't fail to be inspired by her infectious enthusiasm.

But she decided to move on when the owners put the castle up for sale. At first, she intended to stay in Scotland but a chance meeting with a student from Yorkshire changed her mind.

"I had absolutely loved being at Amhuinnsuidhe because it was such a magical place but this seemed to be a natural transition. I wanted to stay in Scotland and I started looking at a few castles but I couldn't find anything suitable."

Her student put her in touch with Felicity Cunliffe-Lister who, along with husband Mark, owns Swinton Park near Masham. The castle is the ancestral home of the Cunliffe-Listers and although it had passed out of the family's ownership last century, they bought it back in 2000 and opened as a hotel.

Felicity had always been interested in running a cookery school and invited Rosemary to visit. "I knew it was the place to be and we started planning at once. My family comes from Pickering and although I've never lived in, moving here felt like coming home," says Rosemary.

The cookery school is housed in the castle's 18th century stables but guests stay in the hotel and are able to enjoy all the facilities. The programme sticks to the format that was so successful at Amhuinnsuidhe – two sessions a day for five days.

A typical day starts after breakfast with a morning of cooking, followed by lunch and a trip to a local attraction or time for rest and relaxation. The second session takes place in the late afternoon.

As much as possible, Rosemary tries to use local ingredients, including herbs, fruit and vegetables from the castle's gardens. Although there are some demonstrations, the course focuses on hands-on experience for the students which, according to Rosemary, is the only way to learn. They have the opportunity to try everything from making puff pastry to sharpening knives.

"It's quite intensive but I think people really feel they're getting their money's worth. I went to a cookery school in Italy years ago and I came away with 15 recipes and a feeling that I'd been completely and utterly diddled. I remember thinking that it was no way to run a cookery school."

Rosemary wants to avoid what she calls an "academy feel", creating a much more homely atmosphere, although she readily admits to being bossy in the kitchen.

"I've been called all sorts of things, including Sergeant Major, and if someone is doing something wrong, I'll tell them to stop.



ROSEMARY SHRAGER: "If you want to get something right, you have to practise"

## Coming home to cook

"But I think some courses can be frightening. When people first come, they're so nervous because they don't know what's expected of them. It is intensive but we do get people of all abilities and they're all passionate about cooking

"You get people who are either foodies or who are not. You can learn to cook but some people have an enthusiasm that sets them apart. You need that to keep you going because cooking is actually hard work. Also, if you want to get something right, you have to practise."

Rosemary's own passion for cooking started early in life. She remembers making cakes for local fairs – and winning all the prizes. "I'm not sure how I did it but it used to upset all the old ladies who always entered."

Her love of food continued to grow and led her into a career. Her own cooking style is based on classic French methods, although she adds a modern twist of her own, and she has worked with acclaimed chefs, including Pierre Koffmann at Tante Claire and Jean Christoffe Novelli. But while she is a celebrated chef in her own right, it's her determination to introduce others to cookery that sets her apart.

She has made two TV series – *Rosemary: Castle Cook* and *Rosemary on the Road* – and although she thinks there's a danger of people being put off cookery by a glut of TV chefs, she does believe something has to be done to encourage people to cook.

"There's a generation of people growing up not learning to cook and it's important that we get them enthusiastic and teach them to cook.

"There are so many people who live off nothing but pre-cooked meals. I understand why because I've had ready-made meals myself. Sometimes you're just too busy to cook but actually, it takes no time at all to make a wholesome minestrone or a quick leek and potato soup."

● The first weekly courses are taking place this month and cost £1,275 per person. There will be also a series of day courses, starting in July and costing £75. For more information, call (01765) 680900 or visit the website at [www.swintonpark.com](http://www.swintonpark.com).

● Rosemary is also holding three-day courses at Eggleston Hall near Barnard Castle in the autumn. Call (01833) 650553 or visit the website at [www.egglestonhall.co.uk](http://www.egglestonhall.co.uk)

**NE** food

### EATING OUT

#### BLAGRAVES. BARNARD CASTLE

##### Blagrades House Restaurant, Barnard Castle

**W**HY has it taken me so long to discover this gem of a restaurant? Based in a former tavern which dates back to the 1480s, Blagrades House Restaurant is an ideal place for a very special dinner date.



The picturesque stone-fronted building is situated on the steep bank which runs down to the Tees in the heart of Barnard Castle. Parking doesn't seem a problem which was just as well on the night we went. We were able to stop right outside and dash across the road in pouring rain.

Visitors step into an old-world atmosphere, with a roaring fire, old stone fireplace and lived-in chintzy sofas. Sipping a low-alcohol beer (sadly, I was driving), we took in the impressive menu.

**Starters:** salad of locally smoked duck breast with a light hazelnut dressing, home-made soup with a freshly baked roll, roast seafood with lemongrass and coconut, salad of chargrilled Mediterranean vegetables with a light basil dressing, crab mousse with brandy and spring onion, course country terrine with juniper and wild nettle.

Being a sucker for soup, I chose the home-made mushroom. It was piping hot, strongly flavoured with a very nice creamy texture, although slightly salty for my taste. My wife went for the chargrilled vegetables which she really enjoyed. I have to praise the wonderful mixed-grain roll served with my soup.

**Main courses:** Roast fillet of sea bass with chives and prawns, grilled loin of lamb on minted gravy, roast breast of guinea fowl with goats' cheese, individual beef wellington on a rich burgundy sauce, roast peppers with spiced cous-cous and grilled haloumi in a rich hummus sauce

Never having eaten guinea fowl before, I decided to leap into the unknown. I was pleasantly surprised by the delicate but strong-tasting meat, much more interesting than chicken but not as overwhelming as duck. Again, it was cooked to perfection and complemented by a rich cheese and basil sauce. The selection of vegetables was cooked perfectly, not too hard, not too soft. My wife opted for the individual beef wellington and was full of praise for the flavoursome meat and the beautiful pastry.

To finish off a delicious meal, I had a truly memorable dish of home-made cinder-toffee ice cream while my wife had a mouthwatering chocolate truffle torte with an Amaretto sauce.

**Puddings:** other pudding choices included lemon possett with fruit compote, creme brulee, orange parfait with raspberry sauce and cheese and biscuits.

The upstairs, wooden-beamed restaurant, which has only eight tables, is a very cosy and civilised place to dine and I am sure we will be back again soon.

Blagrades has an extensive and reasonably priced wine list. We chose a delicious Pinot Noir Hawkes Bay from New Zealand, costing £17.95.

Our bill for two people came to £67.

**Blagrades House Restaurant is situated on The Bank, Barnard Castle, County Durham. (01883) 637668.**

Barry Nelson

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## NE connections

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**TEE TIME:** the golf course and one of the luxurious bedrooms



# Soaking up the view

PETA KING enjoys a stunning view over a Northumberland golf course from the comfort of her luxurious bubble bath

**P**ROBABLY one of the best views in Northumberland is from my bath at the Linden Hall Hotel. Lying back in the bubbles, I have an uninterrupted vista of the immaculate golf course and rolling acres which surround this beautiful Georgian house.

I can also see several signs dotted about the formal gardens. Later, closer inspection reveals the words: "Caution: deep lateral ditch at perimeter of lawn". Aha, the ha-ha.

Which is the more lamentable: that in these litigious times guests must be warned against their own carelessness, or that a whole generation is ignorant of this eccentric example of landscape architecture?

Linden Hall was built in 1812 by Charles Bigge, a Newcastle merchant banker and contemporary of George Stephenson. Designed by Charles Monck in collaboration with the celebrated Newcastle architect John Dobson, the house is a wonderful example of the style and opulence of that prosperous time in the North-East.

The house was later bought by the Adamson family and was lived in by the two Adamson sisters until the death of Muriel Adamson in 1962. And, despite being turned into an hotel, it retains that country house atmosphere, with family photographs, paintings and even estate account books in the hall.

Its 450-acre park – apart from the creation of an 18-hole championship-length golf course – is probably not much changed from those days and the house, hidden in mature trees down a half-mile drive a couple of miles from the busy town of Morpeth, is a haven of tranquillity.

Linden Hall, converted into an hotel in 1983 by Callers Pegasus, was recently acquired by the Macdonald Hotels group. Its bedrooms combine modern comfort and traditional style, the main hall with its breathtaking staircase is an ideal place to relax and catch up with the newspapers, or you can take tea in the charming drawing room or the original conservatory with its commanding views of the golf course.

The hotel has two restaurants: the stylish Dobson restaurant in the main hotel offers beautifully presented and innovative cuisine, while the Linden Tree, the hotel's own pub across the courtyard, offers a typical country inn menu.

The golf course completely surrounds the hotel and has panoramic views of the Cheviots, Coquet Island, the Northumberland coast... The course is designed in four loops, ideal for those who don't want to play a full 18 holes as each loop finishes close to the hotel.

There is also an undercover driving range,

putting green and a chipping and bunker practice area, a changing area and professional's shop. And with lessons and residential packages, Linden Hall has become a mecca for golf enthusiasts of all abilities.

The health and beauty spa has a swimming pool, spa bath, sauna, steam room and fitness room, and therapists offer a range of beauty treatments. A Day Guest package includes use of all the indoor facilities, a choice of beauty treatments, plus lunch.

Linden Hall Hotel is situated at Longhorsley, just outside Morpeth. It is handily placed for visits to Cragside, Rothbury, the first house in the world to be lit by hydro-electricity; Wallington Gardens at Cambo; Belsay Hall, Hadrian's Wall and the towns of Morpeth and Alnwick.

A standard double room at Linden Hall Hotel is £57.50 during the week and £67.50 at weekends. The price includes full English breakfast.

Short breaks of a two-night stay, full English breakfast and dinner at the Linden Tree, start at £64.50 per person per night. For further information and details of golf and beauty breaks, telephone (01670) 500000 or visit [www.macdonaldhotels.co.uk](http://www.macdonaldhotels.co.uk)



### WIN A LUXURY BREAK

Macdonald Hotels and The Northern Echo have teamed up to offer two lucky readers a two-night stay at Linden Hall, including breakfast, a bottle of wine in your room on arrival and the use of the hotel's leisure facilities.

Just tell us when Linden Hall was built. Send your entry on a postcard marked Linden Hall, to Features, The Northern Echo, Priestgate, Darlington, Co Durham, DL1 1NF by the end of June. Please say on your postcard if you do not wish to receive further information from Macdonald Hotels. Terms and conditions: the prize as stated must be taken before November 30, 2003 and is subject to availability. Terms and conditions apply.



**6** A bike is so much more than a mere machine: it is the extension of the male psyche, the steed of thousands of Peter Pans

– Ian Lamming, right, on his Ducati Monster



**NE** motoring

## Kings of the road

As the motorcycling phenomenon continues unabated, motoring correspondent IAN LAMMING considers its appeal to the mature man

**A**RUMBLE like thunder shatters the peace of a Yorkshire Dales town as a pack of motorcyclists pulls up outside a popular biker haunt.

The riders handle their machines with the casual air of experience of many years in the saddle. They flick the gleaming machines between parked cars, making light work of bikes that can be heavy to manhandle.

To the casual observer these are young men pursuing an extreme and exciting sport on machines capable of anything up to 200mph.

It's only when you see them dismount, cocking leather-clad legs over tall seats that you realise all may not be what it seems. As they hobble from their bikes, desperate to warm their hands around a nice cup o' tea, it's difficult to say whether the creaking is from their thick cowhide leathers or the joints that armour is designed to protect. And when the tinted visored helmets are removed, more often than not the heads are bald, grey or silver.

Motorcycling is a young man's sport that appeals to men who are young at heart. Thirty years ago, they were young. Today, they imagine they are. That's because a bike is so much more than a mere machine: it is the extension of the male psyche, the steed of thousands of Peter Pans.

DVLA statistics show that motorcycle ownership amongst men of 45 is more than 20 times higher than it is amongst 25-year-olds. A total of 21,5381 middle-aged men have a motorbike licence, compared with just 10,232 of 25-year-olds.

Psychologists attribute the sudden

interest to mid-life crisis. Life tends to be comfortable and full of routine so they look for excitement elsewhere, something to get the adrenaline flowing. Flashy sports cars are too expensive, younger women too dangerous for their health, so they resort to the safer option, a two-wheeled big boy's toy.

But what do they know? Instead of talking about the biking phenomenon these very same psychologists should experience it for themselves.

Many of the older bikers are not just turning to two wheels now as part of a fad, they have ridden continuously for more than 50 years. When they started, the humble motorbike was a cheap form of transport when cars were out of their reach. Today they remain a fun, practical and cheap means to get about. Thanks to new technology and lightweight materials big bikes have never been smaller or more manageable so there's no need to worry about straining a groin or aggravating the hernia.

The common claim about motorcycling is that it appeals so much because it gives the rider "freedom" to roam. That's true, but that feeling is not exclusive to motorcycles. The car, too, gives the same freedoms, or at least it could if the roads weren't so clogged. On a motorbike traffic barely registers mainly because the riders are more likely to use roads where there isn't any and when there is, it is easily dispatched thanks to the machine's performance, nimbleness and lack of bulk.

Having a bike taps into that part of the human soul that craves exploration. That road end you have driven past on countless

occasions becomes a welcome diversion on two wheels. And sitting so high in the saddle gives the motorcyclist a completely different perspective on the same country roads.

But there is more to motorcycling still. The actual dynamics of riding a bike are completely and utterly rewarding. It's not just the unbridled power and speed the machines are capable of producing. It's the genuine skill needed to ride them and get back in one piece.

Ever tried patting your head while rubbing your tummy? Hard isn't it? Well try operating the throttle and front brake with your right hand at the same time as the clutch with your left, while changing gear with your left foot and braking with your right, while taking in your surroundings to make sure you are not going to come off. It's quite a feat, but to the experienced rider, it's second nature.

**S**TAYING alive also focuses the mind and speeds the reactions – and doubtless gives riders a high. Choosing the right line, swinging the machine through a set of tight bends with your hips and the enhanced senses developed over the years to spot dangers on the road that a car driver would ignore give the motorcyclist the feeling of being superhuman.

Women love jewellery, shiny objects of precious stones, gold and silver. Motorbikes fulfil the same need in a man. They are beautifully made of the best materials technology can provide, tactile and shiny. Some are works of art and design, a pleasure to have in the garage, offering as much

enjoyment off season as they do on sunny Sunday afternoons.

One of the main paradoxes surrounding biking is the belief that it is an expression of individuality, yet at the same time you are part of a large motorcycling fraternity. Bikers are never alone even if their friends and family have deserted them for the weekend. Just sling on the gear and ride to a known biker haunt to chat with members of the extended family.

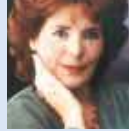
Speaking of gear, the motorcycle paraphernalia is as important as the machine. Whether it is leather or Kevlar, Cordura or reinforced denim, the average biker cares more about his "weekend clothes" than his works wardrobe.

I have an admission to make. Totting up the cost of my bike gear, the total exceeds £2,500. Italian designer leathers (one piece), Italian designer leather jeans and jacket (separates), Gore-tex winter suit (Italian, of course), dry weather gloves, wet weather gloves, paddock jacket, body armour (as used in many sci-fi movies) and a racing helmet which uses the same materials as a bullet-proof vest. Embarrassingly, my normal clothes are worth a fraction of the cost.

But the best thing of all about motorcycling is the fact that riders can leave all their troubles behind. When you are on a bike neither work, money nor family worries matter. The motorcyclist concentrates completely on riding and returns tired from his exertions but completely relaxed and de-stressed.

And it must be a winning formula – have you seen the age of many of the motorcyclists nowadays?

# YOUR STARS



by JUNE BAKER-HOWARD



**Aries (March 20-April 19)**  
The arrival of Saturn, planet of

reality, at one of the main angles of your chart, denotes the need to come to terms with the life you have created for yourself, particularly in respect of any conflicting aspirations or tendencies you possess. Meanwhile, the desire for a settled and enjoyable home life is likely to become a driving force. This is liable to prompt you to follow a course of action that involves making a number of adjustments on an emotional level.



**Taurus (April 20-May 20)**  
You have entered a

period of preparation for the ambitions that will seem all important in just over two years time. The key word at this stage is "education" because the scene is set for you to gain knowledge and

experience, sometimes when least expected. This is the perfect time to consider new ideas, new projects and ways of increasing, or improving your skills or qualifications.



**Gemini (May 21-June 20)**  
The formidable planet

Saturn enters your house of money. Saturn tends to be found in this position in the birth charts of millionaires, as well as those who are always short of cash, no matter what help is given. This implies that it could be a feast or a famine depending on whether you handle money wisely.



**Cancer (June 21-July 22)**  
The arrival of Saturn in your part of

the zodiac brings you to one of the milestones of your life, so expect clear signs of where to go from here. Indeed, a bright New

Moon, in Cancer on the 29th, confirms that you will acquire a strong sense of direction by the month end.



**Leo (July 23-August 22)**  
(As there is a social theme in your

chart, you'll not lack invitations or offers of company, yet you may start to feel trapped by circumstances or alone in some way. However, changes are inevitable because Saturn's change of signs marks the end of a long cycle of experience. In any case it is too late to alter a situation that has left its mark on you.



**Virgo (August 23-September 22)**  
Saturn's

presence, in your house of friends, reminds you that your basic need as a Virgo is to be of service to others. Fortunately, any aptitude you have to be a teacher or carer for others, or to work for

the good of your fellow man in other practical ways, should come into its own before you're very much older.



**Libra (September 23-October 22)**

What you are trying to achieve, in the way of worldly or material success, as well as the framework in which you operate, has come to the fore. If you have built on the right foundations, you can expect recognition and encouragement. Bear in mind that providence always knows what's best for us so regard any sign of being thwarted as your cue to reconsider your objectives and game plan. In the short term, travel, foreign connections and the chance to venture further afield are emphasised.



**Scorpio (October 23-November 21)**

If ever there was a right

time to roll up your sleeves and apply yourself in earnest to the task of making your dreams come true, assuming that they are not based on wishful thinking, it has to be now! In particular, look forward to a rewarding phase from the 21st, when the world is ready to open up for you in more ways than one. Your long-term goals are favoured and, in this respect, it is to your advantage to be expansive in both thought and deed.



**Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)**

The financial and emotional ties you have with others are under the planetary spotlight, and the transactions and conversations held during the next few weeks will make it very clear that you reap what you sow, even if it is not in the way expected. There will be more progress generally, which will be partly due

to the renewed efforts or interest of opposite numbers in both business and emotional situations.



**Capricorn (December 22-January 19)**

Although, by tradition, June is a work orientated month, your mind is likely to be on the state of play in your personal life, where you appear to be coming to the make or break point in a situation that has dragged its heels for far too long. Whether you are pleased or not with the outcome, the fact remains that you will know where you stand, and will be able to make firm plans and get on with the next part of your life.



**Aquarius (January 20-February 18)**

You could have a new spring in your step by the time of the fantastic Full Moon on the 14th, when you are promised

some good news or a conversation that raises your spirits. June should prove to be one of the better months of the year for you, with one encouraging event after another to spur you on. By tradition, creative expression, romantic adventures and pleasure from children are forecast for those born under your sign.



**Pisces (February 19-March 19)**  
Uranus, the

planet of sudden happenings, is in your birth sign until September, which is making this a very unsettled phase of experience. Therefore, you will probably welcome the stabilising affect that Saturn will now have on your relationships with your nearest and dearest. The real choice you face this month is whether to make a further sacrifice in the name of love.

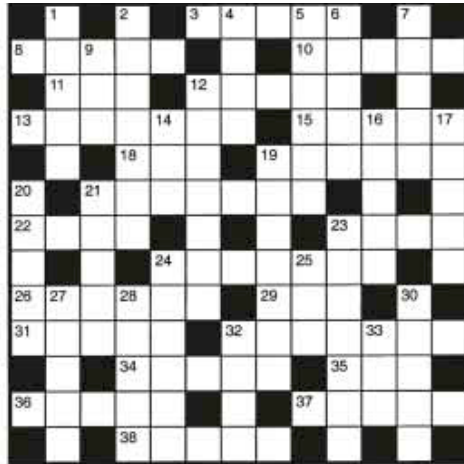
## NE easy coffee-time crossword

### ACROSS

- Walks lamely (5)
- Inspection of accounts (5)
- Yearly chronicle (5)
- Wet and soft earth (3)
- Irish policeman (5)
- Belly (7)
- Annoys, angers (5)
- Pallid (3)
- Anticipate eagerly (6)
- Infers (7)
- Rain heavily (4)
- Bird's bill (4)
- Lean or bony (7)
- Gorgonzola, e.g. (6)
- Pitch (3)
- Rabbit's cage (5)
- To disgrace or dishonour (7)
- Water lily (5)
- Trouble, afflict (3)
- Transparent (5)
- Land measures (5)
- American Indian tent (5)

### DOWN

- Cuban dance (5)
- Bereaved husband (7)
- Lendl, ex-tennis star (4)
- Army chaplains (6)
- Escargot (5)
- Stories (5)
- Squib (3)
- Not fake or counterfeit (7)
- Angry, informally (3)



30. Idler; 32. Dune; 33. Air; 35. All; 36. Clear; 37. Acres; 38. Teepee
- Barack; 24. Ashore; 25. Lag; 27. Hurles; 28. Eclat; 29. Shaker; 19. Reutures; 20. Epoch; 23. Tales; 9. Pudi; 12. Genuine; 14. Med; 16. Linger; 17. 13. Abdomen; 15. Riles; 18. Warn; 19. Reishi; 21. 3. Lumps; 8. Audit; 10. Annel; 11. Mud; 12. Gard; 13. Deduces; 22. Pour; 23. Beak; 24. Angular; 26. Cheese; 29. Tar; 31. Hutch; 32. Degrade; 34. Lotus;

DOWN

ACROSS

## NE competition

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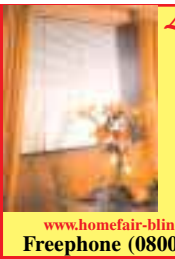


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# new horizon



## new franchise

**Simon Bailes Peugeot has just made a major investment into the Tees Valley with the acquisition of the Peugeot franchise in Stockton.**

The Stockton dealership will allow us to bring our 24 years experience and expertise of retailing Peugeot to new customers, developing a premier position serving Tees Valley, County Durham and North Yorkshire.

We are already the country's most accredited Peugeot dealership having won our 15th consecutive Peugeot Gold Lion award for service and standards in 2002 at Northallerton. This unprecedented achievement adds to a string of recent accolades including winning the equivalent of an industry oscar for Franchised Dealer of the Year at the extremely prestigious Motortrader Awards last year.

This expansion is fantastic news for the business, the staff team and our customers old and new. We are passionate about our products and have strived over the years to develop a reputation built on quality, value for money and the first class service we offer. We are delighted that we can now deliver our award winning service across the region.

***Simon Bailes - Passionate about Peugeot***

We look forward to seeing you soon!

**SIMON BAILES**

CHURCH ROAD, STOCKTON-ON-TEES 01642 612621  
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