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Eye-catching Iris

Iris reticulata is an early flowering iris, bearing pale blue to deep violet blooms with central yellow splashes down the middle of each petal, from late winter to early spring. It's perfect for growing at the front of a sunny border, and can also be grown in pots. For best results grow in well-drained soil in full sun. Plant the rhizomes 5-10cm apart at twice their own depth. To propagate, divide bulbs from mid-summer to early autumn.



READY TO PICK

Squash and pumpkins are colouring up beautifully now. You'll know they're ready to harvest when you knock them and they sound hollow – also the plants start dying back naturally. Cut fruits with about 10cm of stalk intact and leave in a greenhouse or sunny window for two weeks to harden the skins.

Garden notes

Autumn is a special time of year for many gardeners. Allotments are brimming with fruit and veg and the soil in your garden will still be warm enough to plant spring bulbs. It's a beautiful season, with the trees changing colour. Sometimes it may seem pointless raking, when the wind blows even more leaves onto the lawn, but just think of all the lovely leafmould you can make! It's also time to start preparing for early frosts.



Ready, steady, grow

With food prices constantly rising, growing your own fresh veg is an undeniably appealing option. For bumper crops in the coming year, right now is the time to start and here's what to plant.

Broad beans Sow your beans in a sunny spot, 5cm deep in double rows. Your beans will germinate in a week or two and will happily survive an average winter.

Spring cabbage Ideally sown in August, it's worth a punt and sowing a row or two in September.

Winter onions You can plant hardy varieties up until the end of October. Plant in a sunny spot and keep your onion patch weed free.



Dahlia tubers

Don't forget to lift gladioli and take up dahlias; store bulbs and tubers in a frost-free location where they won't be attacked by mice and other unwanted visitors. Dahlia tubers are costly to buy, so it's worth taking the time to protect them. The first severe frost will blacken the foliage, and that is your cue to cut the tops to about 15cm above soil level and carefully dig up the tubers. Rinse all the soil off the tubers, then bring them inside and stand them upside down for a few weeks to drain any remaining water from the hollow stems. When dry, lay the tubers in deep trays or boxes and cover them with a layer of dry compost.

Create a cut flower patch

Creating your own cut flower patch couldn't be simpler. Prepare the area by removing any weeds and add a mulch of garden compost to the soil surface.

You can start by growing hardy annuals ready for spring next year. If you didn't sow biennials such as sweet williams and wallflowers in the summer, you can buy young plants now in garden centres.

Over the coming months, in October and November, plant extra spring-flowering bulbs such as daffodils, tulips and alliums. Also plant primulas.



What to do in the garden now

- Repair worn out lawn patches.
- Remove dead plant material from ponds to keep the water fresh.
- Trim hedges to get them ready for next spring's growth.
- Plant perennials now so they can establish their roots before winter.
- Remove diseased leaves from roses.
- Keep watering autumn pots.
- Cut back lavender.
- Deadhead dahlias.
- Tidy up evergreen ferns by removing old fronds to improve the winter display.

It's a wrap

To store apples over winter, carefully inspect them and set aside any that are bruised or damaged. Wrap each sound apple in newspaper and arrange in a box or basket. Store in a frost-free garage, shed or basement. Check regularly for spoilage, removing any rotten apples before they spoil the rest.



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Newnham Court Shopping Village first opened in 1983 and over the last 40 years has enjoyed great success thanks to our loyal customers who visit regularly to browse, shop and socialise with family and friends. The village thrives on being innovative and forward thinking, meeting the changing needs of customers whilst retaining the trust and quality it has become renowned for.

Notcutts Garden Centre has been at the heart of the Village since the beginning and continues to appeal all year round with tools, plants, flowers and bulbs. Garden furniture and BBQ's too. A winter wonderland awaits, full of Christmas magic with displays of lights, trees and decorations. Gifts for family and friends. If Christmas gets you thinking about family gatherings, roast dinners and entertaining then **The Butcher of Brogdale** has all you need to make every occasion special with their quality meats and deli.

The Village is not short of long thriving businesses, including **Pennies Children's Nursery** and Kids Clubs where childcare is the very best in learning and fun. **Pure Hairdressing** and **Pure Beauty** offering the best in hair care, beauty treatments and sunbeds. **Cotswold Outdoor** and **Runners Need** where you'll find everything you need for outdoor adventures, top quality branded clothing and footwear, there's running shoes all backed up with expert knowledge and advice. Pets

and pet supplies have also been a consistent, **Maidenhead Aquatics** run by fishkeepers for fish, pumps and supplies, come and feed the fish. Notcutts for your pet supplies for dogs, cats, small animals and Garden Wildlife, bird tables, feeders and food.

When it comes to home improvements local trusted suppliers are of the utmost importance and **Fineline Windows Doors and Conservatories** have been installing high quality products for decades and remain one of the longest serving businesses. At Newnham Court Shopping Village. **Johnsons** are also continuously evolving their offering and today have an impressive display of garden buildings, summer houses and hot tubs.

The Coffee Corner restaurant has been at the heart of the village since the beginning. It has seen renovations and expansions and today remains a thriving and popular choice along with **Bricks Coffee House** in The Courtyard. As the 40th anniversary celebrations continue, the Village looks forward to welcoming visitors old and new to enjoy the stress-free out of town shopping experience, where you are spoilt for choice. Wheelchair and pushchair-friendly too, we look forward to seeing you soon.

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Local artist: Cathy McClymont

Cathy lives in Maidstone, Kent where she has lived for the last twenty years bringing up her four children. She loves to paint with oils acrylic and pastel.

"I like the texture of mixed media combining all mediums together, breaking the rules a bit of more traditional artists. Although the subject of landscapes and floral designs are perhaps traditional. I also love to paint the

local beautiful houses and oasts we have here in Kent. Cathy has been a professional artist for ten years now but was a qualified graphic designer working in London's Fitch and Co back in the day on brands like Topshop and Harrod. "After having my children and one being disabled I had to change my profession, and work around being a full-time carer for my daughter Kitty; so painting was the perfect escape and passion. I started selling my work along with antique furniture at The Wealden Times fairs. The paintings were so popular

I haven't looked back since. I am very busy all year round painting, exhibiting and selling my art.

Anthony at the Saward Gallery has been with me from the start. He is so professional and enthusiastic about what he does and does it with speed and accuracy.

Anthony says "Most of Cathy's paintings are framed and it's the combination of frame and painting that completes the picture. Cathy will take the frame first and then paints within the frame and paints with her imagination what suits the frame. Then applying paint to the frame layering to get the desired effect. The paintings are extremely vibrant in colour and subject. Her customers



keep coming back as her paintings are often a source of inspiration for their own home interiors.

If you are interested in commissioning a work of art please contact Cathy direct on 07763524069 or pop into Saward Gallery.

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Stardust memories

Collectors of movie memorabilia are queuing up for an auction of items from a Star Wars and horror film legend.



Collecting TV and film memorabilia is a field that's been growing in popularity – and returns! – in recent years.

Not only is it fun to have a little something that reminds you of a loved film, or an item with links to a favourite celebrity, the items are generally attractive in their own right - props, posters, stills and toys, all sprinkled with a bit of stardust.

And the value is not just sentimental. A recent study from Sotheby's revealed that auction prices fetched by props from old films had tripled in value over ten years.

As we all age, items from our childhood become 'vintage', creating demand driven by nostalgia. Add to that the fact that CGI has reduced the number of physical props in a film and the laws of supply and demand kick in. There's a record number of formerly-obsolete collectors groups now easily accessible online, boosting prices too.

But where does one start?

Memorabilia from popular TV shows or blockbuster films with mass appeal and big stars are the most sought-after, with authenticity and rareness the key.

If you want to dip your toe in the water, coming up on October 1st at the **Canterbury Auction Galleries** is a special sale of rare memorabilia from the estate of acting legend, Peter Cushing OBE (1913-1994), who lived for most of his life in Whitstable, Kent.

With a career spanning six decades, from Star Wars to the Hammer House of Horror films, Sherlock Holmes, Laurel and Hardy and even Dr Who, the highly personal items range from sketches, letters and photographs and toys, right up to a famous pair of slippers he wore on set in Star Wars and a letter informing him of a healthy bonus, bearing a very early Star Wars logo.

With some 400 lots in this special auction, there will be loads of collectible items for film buffs across the world, but the memorabilia also reveals Cushing the man, an accomplished artist.

Devastated by his wife Helen's death in 1971, he went to live with his great friend and assistant of 35 years, Joyce Broughton, and her family. After Joyce's sad death, they have now decided to release the treasures for others to appreciate his many talents.

Here are just a few items that caught our eye

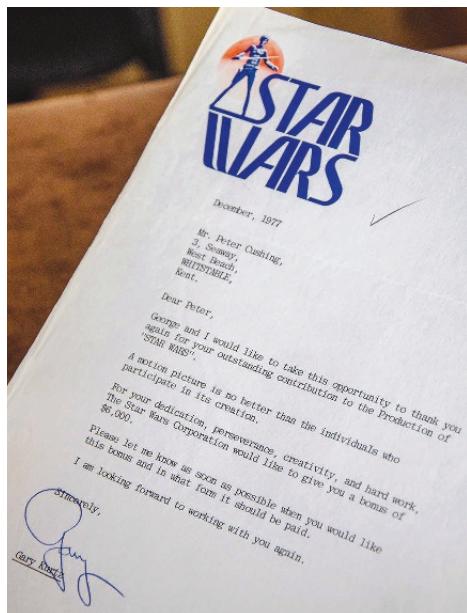


Slippers worn while filming Star Wars

Famously, while filming his role as the evil Death Star commander Grand Moff Tarkin in the first 1977 Star Wars film, Cushing's costume boots pinched his size 12 feet. He asked director George Lucas if he could wear slippers instead and be filmed from the thighs up! Lucas happily complied. Later, a costume department was reputed to have made a tiny pair for a 12ins model for Cushing as a joke. Those slippers and the model together have an estimated value of £15 – 20,000. (Lot 1791.)

Star Wars bonus letter

The 1977 film was such a success, Cushing was awarded a bonus of US \$6,000 for his "dedication, perseverance, creativity, and hard work" - around £25,000 in today's money. The rare letter, dated Dec 1977, from producer Gary Kurtz, carries a very early Star Wars logo, with



a figure wielding a light sabre. It was the first appearance of the now-familiar stacked type on the Star Wars logo. Est £4-500. (Lot 1792.)

Star Wars production story

Another gem for film buffs are fascinating production notes from 20th Century Fox about the upcoming 1977 film, explaining what is required 'for true credibility' and explaining their reasons for choosing Tunisia as a location. Included is a photocopy of a map of Tunisia with three locations highlighted. Est £2-300. (Lot 1789.)

Frankenstein contract

Cushing appeared in various sinister guises – including Baron Frankenstein – in many Hammer horror films. There are many letters and signed photos from this large portion of his career, including his contract for the 1969 film Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed. Est £100-150. (Lot 1557.)



Film posters

Cushing's films were seen worldwide. There's a great, signed poster for the French version of the 1960 film 'The Brides of Dracula', called 'Les Maitresses de Dracula'. At 14ins x 21.5ins it's estimated at £120-160 (Lot 1559.)

Watercolour art

Cushing trained with British artist Edward Seago and his talent grew. One watercolour in the sale is titled 'View of the Golf Links, Whitstable, from my studio window (before housing development hid it)'. It's signed and dedicated to Joyce Broughton and her husband. At 14.25ins x 10.75ins it's estimated at £4-600. (Lot 1567.)

Hand-painted silk scarf

In 1946 Peter was 'resting' between plays and painted his wife, Helen, a scarf. She wore it to



the opening night of a play, where it was spotted by a textile manufacturer, who invited him to learn screen-printing. He took to it and for the rest of that year became a designer and created silk scarves, notably for the Festival of Britain and the Queen's Coronation. The Queen Mother wore one of his creations when they met in 1956. This is the original scarf, signed and dated '46. It's framed with a typed note on the back, "Scarf for Helen". Measuring 28ins x 26ins it's estimated at £6-800. (Lot 1520.)

Wicked caricatures

He would often stop at Whitstable's Tudor Tea Rooms and do a newspaper crossword. In the working-out space he'd draw sharp caricatures of the tea room staff and customers. In the sale is an exercise book with a scores of sharply-drawn caricatures, cut from those newspapers and stuck in. The book, containing other sketches and notes, is signed and dated '90 and has an estimate of £3-400. (Lot 1662.)

* *The sale will be held at the Canterbury Auction Galleries on Sunday October 1. Visit thecanterburyauctiongalleries.com for the full catalogue, plus how to register and how to bid. Souvenir printed catalogues are available at £12 or £15 posted.*



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A FABULOUS FINISH

Gone are the days when painting your house meant grabbing the first pot of magnolia you could find! These days there are so many types of paint on offer that picking one can actually be quite daunting.



Annie Sloan - Satin Paint in Knightsbridge Green and Pointe Silk Piranesi Pink and Adelphi Wall Paint

Paint finishes are just as important as colour, so it's important to know your silk finish from your wipe down when choosing yours. A general rule of thumb is that matte paints are best for low-traffic areas while glosses are better for high-traffic rooms or those that are exposed to high-levels of moisture and/or humidity. The majority of shop bought paints are water based, which is by far and away the best choice for DIY jobs, as they have little to no odour and are far easier to clean up.

Choosing the right paint finishes for your home depends on what and where you're painting, but here's a quick guide:

- Satin, velvet and silk paint finishes are ideal for high-traffic rooms
- Gloss paint finishes are good for bathrooms, kitchens and high-traffic areas, as well as detail work.

- Wipe down paint finishes do exactly what it says on the tin – great for homes with pets and small children
- Bathroom paint finishes are designed to resist moisture
- Kitchen paint finishes are designed to be grease resistant
- Flat paint finishes have the least shine
- Matte paint finishes actually have a very slight sheen and are therefore more durable than flat
- Specialist textural paint finishes can create a bold feature wall.

So read on for more information...

Satin, velvet and silk paint finish

These finishes are similar enough to be interchangeable and are often described as 'mid sheen' paints. They're more durable than matte paints but have a more subtle finish than gloss.

They're ideal for painting kitchen cabinets and skirting boards in low traffic areas. They're



Dead Flat Farrow & Ball

Limewash

Limewash is a classic paint that has been used in homes for centuries. Made from lime and water, and available ready-made, it has a matte finish and can be coloured with natural pigments giving it an almost glowing look. Not only is it easy to apply, but it also has a natural, raw quality that creates a velvety, mottled effect on walls, helping to bring depth and character to interiors.



Limewash, Habitat

also a great solution for small or dark rooms as the reflective qualities play up the available light.

If you do want to paint your bathroom in a mid-sheen finish then you should be OK, but

shower rooms, where there's plenty of steam, may be a little too much for these paints.

Gloss paint finish

As its name suggests, gloss paint has a glossy

finish, with a high sheen and a reflective quality, bouncing light off the surfaces. Because of the high sheen and durability, gloss paint is the traditional choice for trim, balustrades, doors and other such areas. It's a great way to create a feeling of lightness and space in a room.

It has excellent durability, but can be a little too shiny for some people's tastes.

Wipe down, Bathroom and Kitchen Paint Finish

To cater for people who want durability without the high shine finish, interiors stores now stock a variety of specialist finishes.

Wipe down paint has been available for a while, and comes in a variety of finishes from matte to gloss. This paint is extremely tough and durable and can be cleaned, usually with soap and water (see manufacturer's recommendations for cleaning). It's perfect for muddy dogs, easily scuffed areas and artistic toddlers.

Like wipe down paint, bathroom paint is very durable, but has been specifically formulated to withstand areas of high humidity without bubbling, cracking or peeling. You can wipe down painted surfaces with a cloth after a steamy shower and the water will simply bead up and roll off. This is great for people who want a tough and durable finish but prefer a softer look.

Kitchen paint is relatively new on the market and, like wipe down paint, is tough and easy to clean. However, unlike traditional wipe down finishes, this paint has been designed to resist grease, making it ideal for going around the oven.

Flat paint finish

With the lowest level of sheen, flat paint finishes are a fantastic choice for period homes as the lack of shine hides any imperfections in centuries old walls. They are however most unforgiving of marks and stains, and can't be wiped down without streaking. As such they should be used in low traffic areas and on ceilings.

Matte paint finish

Matte paint finishes are one of the most popular choices for interior walls and ceilings, particularly in living rooms, as they have the same qualities as flat paint, but are slightly more durable.

Specialist paint finish

Of course, you aren't just limited to traditional paint finishes; there are lots of specialist paint finishes that will bring unique character to your home. From paints with glitter to add a touch of glamour, to metallic and suede emulsions for added pizazz, to blackboard paints to give the kids a worry free outlet for their creativity, there are myriad options to help you craft a statement in your home.

Distemper for older homes

Distemper is a heritage interior paint and an early form of whitewash made of water, chalk, pigment and a bonding agent like egg or casein. Highly breathable, it is a great choice of paint for older properties and has a soft, powdery finish. However, it is worth noting that distemper is not particularly hardwearing, so is best avoided in high-traffic areas.

Distemper provides a soft, deep matte finish ideally suited to bedrooms, living rooms and dining areas. It is a high opacity, low odour, chalky matte finish, that is available in a wide choice of colours.

Although there are certain paints that 'work' better in certain areas, at the end of the day, the finish you choose is down to personal

preference, so spend some time researching what's available and let your personal style shine through.



Chalk paint finishes

Chalk paint is most commonly used in furniture upcycling projects. People often think it's called chalk paint because chalk is a key ingredient, but it's actually because of how the paint looks. Its luxurious, textured finish and the depth of pigment give upcycling projects a high-end feel.

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ISLAND LIFE

The versatility of kitchen islands

Islands are the epicentre of modern kitchen design, with all other elements revolving around this central point.



Neptune.com

In today's homes, the kitchen is more than just a place for preparing meals. It has become the heart of the house, a multifunctional space where families gather, friends socialise, and culinary magic happens.

One crucial element that has revolutionised kitchen design and functionality is the kitchen island. This versatile and stylish addition has become a staple in contemporary kitchens,

offering numerous benefits that make it an excellent choice for any home.

Select your style

Once you've decided how your island will be used, think about its design and style. Do you want multilevel surfaces, specific shapes or edges, built-in seating, semiattached tables or double islands? Islands provide a smooth transition between dining and living spaces,

so both fashion and function are important. Given that an island is on display from all angles, plenty of storage is key to preventing surfaces from appearing cluttered.

Is your kitchen classic or contemporary? Farmhouse or industrial? In the case of open-concept floor plans, you'll want to integrate your island style with that of the adjacent living space.

The all-purpose island

The all-purpose kitchen island is the Swiss Army knife of kitchen design. With its open design and ample countertop space, it serves multiple purposes, making it an invaluable asset for any kitchen. From meal preparation to casual dining, the all-purpose island

effortlessly blends cooking and socialising. It provides the perfect spot for kids to do their homework while parents cook, or friends to gather around during parties, creating a seamless integration of everyday activities.

The cooking station island

For those passionate about cooking, the cooking station island is a dream come true. Equipped with specialised features such as built-in stovetops, ovens, and even grills, this island allows the chef to do their thing without being isolated from the rest of the family or guests. The cooking station island promotes interaction, as it allows the cook to be part of the conversation while preparing meals, making it an ideal set-up for entertaining.

applebygrange.co.uk





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The breakfast bar island

Busy mornings often leave little time for a sit-down breakfast. Enter the breakfast bar island, a practical solution for quick, on-the-go meals. With comfortable seating and a raised countertop, this island provides the perfect space for a casual breakfast or a quick snack. It encourages family members to start their day together, fostering a sense of togetherness even on the busiest mornings.

The storage haven island

In every kitchen, storage is a critical concern. The storage haven island comes to the rescue with its smartly-designed cabinets and drawers, offering plenty of space to organise kitchen essentials. From housing pots and pans to utensils and small appliances, this island maximises storage capacity while keeping everything within reach.



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The entertainer's island

For those who love to host gatherings and parties, the entertainer's island is a must-have. A grand and spacious design makes it an ideal serving station for drinks and appetisers during social events. Additionally, it often features a wine-rack, a sink, and ample counter space, making it a multi-functional mini-bar!

The customised island

Every kitchen has its unique layout and requirements. A customised island offers a tailored solution, perfectly adapted to the homeowner's needs. It can combine various features such as sinks, cutting boards, and even seating arrangements, catering to the specific preferences and lifestyle of the family. A customised island allows homeowners to express their individuality and style while optimising functionality.



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Materials

Kitchen islands are, of course, another way to express your aesthetic. You can use reclaimed wood for a cottagecore or period feel, or juxtapose your period property with modern plastics and resins. Marble is a gorgeous choice for an island and is hard-wearing and easy to clean. The choices are endless, so ask a designer to give you some inspiration for your home.

Considerations

It's important to make sure that your island leaves enough room to manoeuvre around the rest of your kitchen. If space is going to be a problem, you can always fake an island with a

'peninsula' – a counter that juts out from the rest of cabinetry, with just enough room to slide a couple of bar stools underneath.

Why get a kitchen island?

Kitchen islands significantly expand the available workspace, promoting efficient meal preparation and cooking. With specialised features, such as built-in appliances and ample storage, they streamline kitchen activities, making them time-saving and convenient additions.

Additionally, kitchen islands break down the barriers between the cook and the family, creating a more inclusive and interactive cooking experience. They're a great way

to squeeze extra family time into a busy schedule and, in homes with limited dining space, a kitchen island with seating acts as an alternative dining area.

Kitchen islands have transformed the way we experience and interact with our kitchens. Their versatility, functionality, and social benefits have made them an integral part of modern kitchen design.

Your kitchen island can be a welcoming gathering spot for family and friends for years to come. Given the island's central location, beautiful appearance and many uses, you'll likely end up spending much of your time

at or around it – making it the true heart of your home.

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When you own a period home, it's only right that you would want to use the very best products and services in its upkeep.

When it comes to joinery and carpentry, it's fair to say that not all companies were created equal, but one Kent based company that truly stands out from the crowd is F.J.Williams and Son.

F.J.Williams and Son was established by Frederick Williams over 50 years ago, and was taken over by his son David almost 20 years ago. Having worked with his father since leaving school, David understood that the key to a long standing business was to provide outstanding quality on every single job, with no exceptions.

Operating out of a well-equipped factory in the small village of Teynham, the company is proud to say that the majority of their work is repeat business from customers who have experienced this quality first hand.

The staff at F.J.Williams and Son believe not only in this quality of craftsmanship, but also in the quality of their customer service – a key factor in the number of referrals they regularly receive, which have kept the business thriving since the 1970s.

Only the best quality timbers and materials are chosen for projects that range from windows and doors to conservatories and shop fronts. They

never compromise on this quality for the sake of cost, and are at the forefront of the industry when it comes to bespoke offerings.

The company is proud to have staff that are passionate about bespoke joinery and deliver quality products. A big part of F.J.Williams and Son' ethos is the belief that a company is only as good as its team, and Alison (David's sister) and Julia (David's Wife) work hard in the office maintaining the rigorous standards that have put the business on the map.

If you have a Joinery project in mind or would like the team to conduct a site visit please do not hesitate to contact Alison or Julia on 01795 521650.





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WALLS AND FLOORS

the foundations of your interiors

When it comes to interior design, there is nothing more important than getting the 'bare bones' just right.



Furniture and ornaments are all very well, but ideally they should be taking second place to your walls and flooring. Get these right

and the rest of the room will come together easily.

FLOORS

As the base upon which a home is built, floors are one of the most important design aspects of any property and you should give considerable thought to how you want them to appear.

The first rule of flooring is that quality is key. When it comes to major home improvement projects, always trust the experts and look for local firms with plenty of experience.

The type of flooring you choose will be largely dependent on where it's going to go and how it will be affected by your lifestyle.

Hardwood

With many different types of wood and finish available, hardwood floors create an air of opulence and can feel both classy and cosy at the same time. Perfect for covering large areas, particularly in dining or living rooms, hardwood floors look extremely elegant with a few carefully-chosen rugs dotted around.

Laminate

Laminate is the 'easy' alternative to hardwood, as it is available in 'wood' finish as well as a range of other finishes, colours and styles. Simple to fit and spill-proof, laminate is an excellent choice for kitchens and bathrooms, especially now that it's shaken off its old-fashioned image. Although previously thought



of as 'cheap and cheerful', laminate is now far more attractive than in the past and can lend a high-quality feel to a room, making it ideal if you have small children as you won't feel bad about replacing it in a few years.

Tiles

Tiles are perfect for bathrooms, kitchens and conservatories because they're tough, waterproof and easy to clean. Available in a wide range of finishes from bright ceramics to traditional stone, tiles create a simply stunning visual effect. A tile floor can be cold, however, and it may be wise to consider scatter rugs or

even under-floor heating, particularly in bathrooms.

Carpet

Good old-fashioned carpet has been given a 21st century facelift with new fabrics that are waterproof, stainproof and easy to clean. Although bathrooms that get very wet may benefit from tiling or laminate, there is a carpet to suit most situations. Colourful, comfortable and easy to change, carpets are a great way to make a statement and provide a soft landing for little ones learning to walk.





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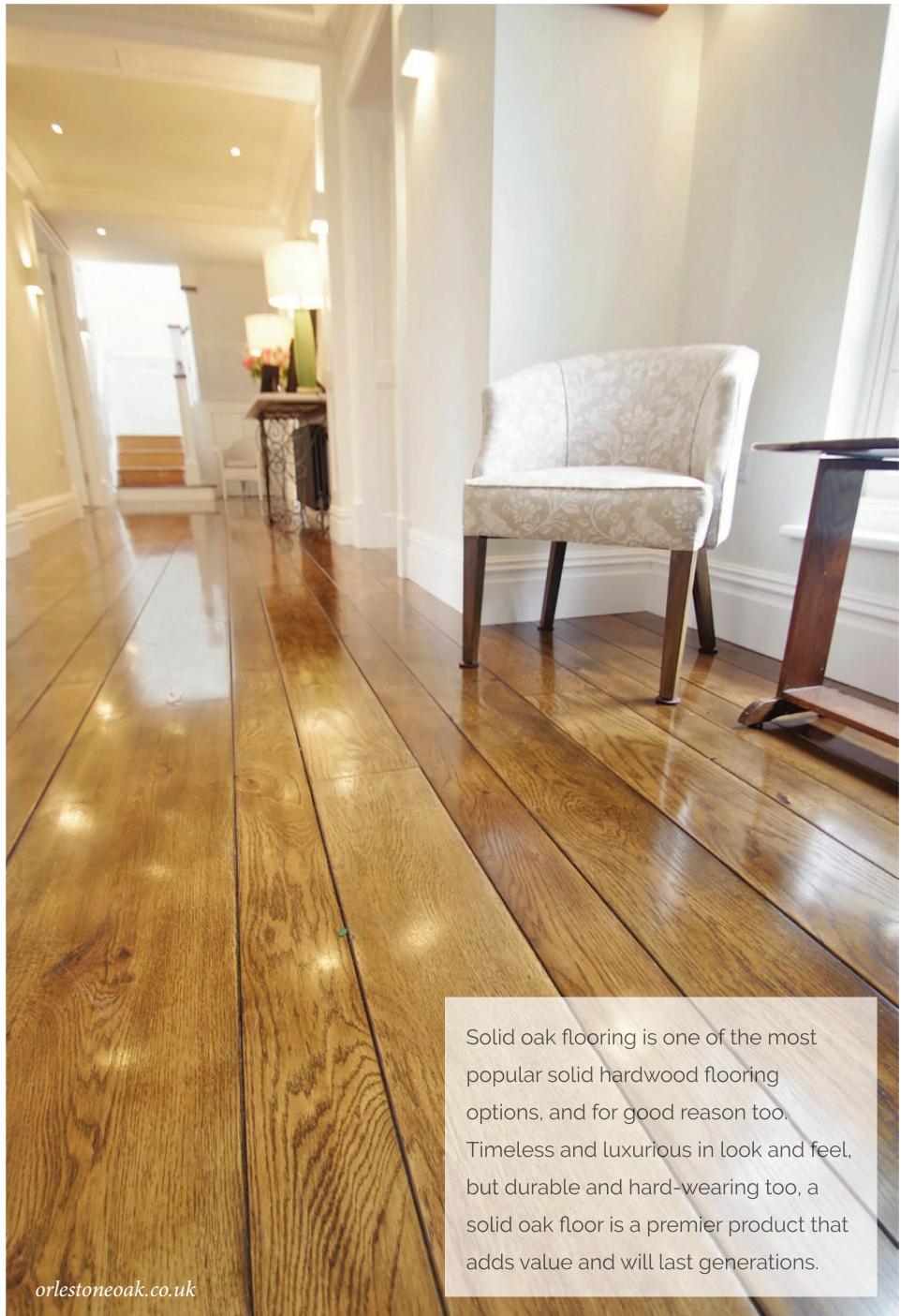


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WALLS

The walls in your period home are extremely important, as they provide the backdrop for the rest of your décor.

We've already discussed paint in this issue, but what other options do you have?

Panelling

Panelling can look absolutely stunning in a period home, particularly Georgian and Victorian models, where high ceilings and big windows make a real feature of it. Wood panelling lends an air of class but can look heavy and dark, so may not be suitable for smaller or older homes. However, panelling is now available in a range of lightweight, versatile materials, which can add depth and interest to a wall without being overbearing.

Wallpaper

Wallpaper had fallen out of favour with interior designers for a while, but is back with a vengeance and more varied than ever. A vintage design pairs perfectly with a period home and you can even get your own or specially-commissioned designs printed up to match your aesthetic perfectly. If a whole room of pattern seems a little cloying, then try creating a feature wall with a truly outrageous paper and leave the rest plain. For those who like to take things to extremes, you can even get heat-sensitive designs that change as the room warms up.

Tiles

Tiles can be harder to fit in old properties with 'wonky' walls, but a professional plasterer can put you on the right track. Tiles are, of course, perfect for kitchens and bathrooms, where wallpaper risks peeling in high humidity, plus they're easy to clean and hard-wearing just like floor tiles. Again you might even consider a feature wall with extravagant tiling, juxtaposed against a plain tile on the other walls.



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Little extras

These days many people are choosing a plain wall with added oomph, using wall art, designer shelving or even decals.

Once the preserve of kids and their bikes, decals are now an ultra-chic way to bring design flair to your walls without the effort of papering or hiring an artist. Far from looking like 'stickers', modern wall decals fit seamlessly to your walls and come in large-scale and intricate designs that might otherwise be impossible to create. What's more, they're usually pretty easy to remove, so you can change your look without calling in the decorators.



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At a later date a new set of sweeps (the Kentish name for 'sails') will be reinstated.

There is still detailed work to be done in renovating the internal grinding machinery. When this is complete, it is hoped that the Mill will be in full working order.

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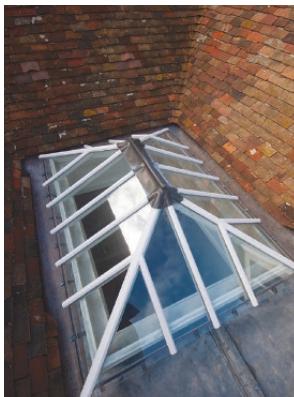


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INSULATING YOUR PERIOD HOME

The latest Government research suggests that energy efficient homes sell for around 14% more than uninsulated properties, not to mention being far more cost effective to heat.

This can be particularly significant in period homes, which are usually colder than modern properties and may have a host of other running costs associated with them.

Approximately half of all houses built before 1929 (regardless of size) have EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) ratings of E or lower, compared with just 3% of houses built in the last 30 years.

For those worried about their home's aesthetic: don't be. Whilst energy generation may be showy (solar panels, wires, cables etc) energy efficiency is mostly hidden; so much so that EPC assessors often forget to even ask about it!

Quick tip: as energy efficiency measures are hidden, you will need to make sure that you retain your certificates as proof of installation. There are a number of ways in which you can make your home more energy-efficient:



LOFT INSULATION

This is perhaps the most basic and is a simple matter of DIY-ing with materials bought from local suppliers. If your loft is large or a bit tricky, you can call in the professionals for a quick and easy fix.

The most popular method for loft insulation is spray foam, but insulating boards can also be used.

WALL INSULATION

Owners of period homes often assume that they're ineligible for wall insulation as houses built before 1920 will typically have solid rather than cavity walls. However, solid wall insulation is easily achievable even in older properties. (The exception is listed buildings, where you will need to contact the relevant authority to see what can and can't be fitted.)

Solid wall insulation, which must meet building regulations and a set U-value (a figure that indicates how quickly heat passes through),

reduces condensation as well as saving heat.

It's possible to fit both external and internal solid wall insulation, but this is overkill and can look messy on the outside. However, there are two main options for fitting internal insulation without ruining your décor.

Firstly, you can use rigid prefabricated boards or attach a timber or metal studwork frame to the wall and fill this with insulation before plastering. This is the more costly option and can add as much as 10mm to your wall, effectively shrinking the room. The other option is to hang a much thinner veneer over the insulation. Although this can be a tedious process and doesn't have the structural integrity of the previous method, it is nonetheless popular and has been praised by people in the industry.

Of course, if your property is slightly newer, then cavity wall insulation is the best option. There are three types: blown mineral fibre (strands of fibreglass or mineral wool that are forced into the cavity using compressed air), polystyrene beads or granules (either held together with resin or installed loosely), and urea formaldehyde foam (injected into the cavity where it then expands to fill the gap). Cavity wall insulation must be fitted by an expert, and your chosen company will be able to advise you on the best of these three options.



WINDOW INSULATION

Windows account for nearly 20% of the heat lost in your home, but bog-standard double glazing isn't always an option in an older property. However, thanks to rising demand, there are now a number of companies that specialise in creating sympathetic reproductions of period-style windows, with the added bonus of double glazing.

At the very least you may want to consider replacing original glass, as this tends to be far thinner than its modern counterpart – this option tends to be approved even in listed buildings (although you should always check). Older frames may also need replacing





or renovating as they can warp. Specialist companies can replace sashes with recessed brush strips as well as replace putty, and DIY draught strips are easy to fit to timber frames.

PIPE INSULATION

Pipe insulation is a foam tube wrapped around the pipes carrying hot water from your boiler to your hot water tank.

It's a simple and effective way to reduce heat loss and stop your pipes from freezing in cold weather. By keeping your water warm for longer, you'll use your boiler less. Pipe insulation is easy to fit, and the materials are available at all good DIY stores.

FLOOR INSULATION

Finally, it pays to take a close look at your floors. The floor contributes, on average, 15% of

heat loss from your property. Floor insulation works by creating an insulating layer between your floorboards and joists – a must for older wooden flooring.

It's advisable to call in the experts for this, as any sign of rot or damp under the boards must be dealt with before insulation is installed.

The three main types of floor insulation are: insulation boards/EPS sheets – durable, crack-resistant and waterproof; spray foam – like using spray foam in your roof, and provides excellent heat retention; cork, wood, or cellulose – less effective but can be used as an adjunct to other materials.

Insulating an entire house is a big job, so if you need to prioritise we recommend starting with the walls, as these are responsible for 35-40% of heat loss in your home.



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First class carriage house restoration

The Listed Carriage House at the property of Rock House that used to house the horses was anything but 'stable' but that was soon to change.



View from the top of the staircase, looking down shows the different materials used

In the course of seeking out conservation projects that will be of interest to our readers, it's always good to come across something that is a bit out of left field, that isn't the typical highly desirable country residence, or historic 'hall house' that has become the next fashionable haunt for fine dining and short stays. Here we have something that has more humble origins, but that in our eyes is equally newsworthy and also allows us to focus on, not just the building but the companies that have brought it back from the brink of collapse and repurposed it into a useful and functional space that is a beautiful combination of modern design and bygone charm, whilst retaining its character and integrity.

Bathroom



View of cobbled floor and horse stalls with staircase

The Carriage House at Chipsted in Kent, is a subsidiary building that is in the grounds of the Rock House, a Grade II Listed Building which is described as an 'irregular house largely dating back to the 16th Century' which has had many restorations and additions over recent centuries, including moulded plastered eaves that are stuccoed with incised lines, a Tudor arched traceried door with hoodmoulds and Regency painted panelling, which means it could be worthy of a whole article of its own, but maybe that's for another time?

For now, we are focussing on the Carriage House, which is also Grade II Listed, Circa 1800s and described as 'stable buildings and cobble yard to the west of Rock House, a short range of weatherboarded outbuildings with tiled roofs'. Not surprisingly its original use was for storing carriages and stabling the horses



Interior view before restoration

for the residents of Rock House, however after many decades of neglect the building was in a state of serious disrepair and had been shored up with props. If something wasn't done soon it was in danger of complete collapse.

The owners engaged the renowned specialist conservation Architects, Clague Architects. With an outstanding reputation of achieving many successful historic restoration and interior design projects over 80 years, and with 60 architects based in Canterbury, Harpenden and London, they were tasked with coming up with a rescue plan and reimagining the Carriage House's future life for the 21st century, and beyond. Once the proposal was agreed with the clients, Clague Architects sought and gained Listed consent for major repair and change of use to an office, gym and storage areas.

The team at Clague Architects, with the project lead, George Esdaile have created an inspired and imaginative plan that makes the

best possible use of the interior space, which is light, airy and largely open plan, whilst retaining the character of the Carriage House. The interiors have been detailed and finished to a high standard with Holly Cook of Clague Architects working closely with the clients to specify the varied finishes and materials. This attention to detail was echoed in the treatment and restoration of the exterior of the Carriage House and the landscaping also.

A T Palmer Ltd, a company that is highly respected as historic building, conservation

and restoration specialist contractors were chosen to carry out the works. They are a long established, multi-generational family business with over seven decades of experience. The Company prides itself in having a highly skilled workforce, covering many disciplines including key trades like: carpenters, decorators, brick workers, specialist joiners, traditional crafts persons and ground workers, so they are the ideal fit for the project.

A glance at a photo of the interior once the work had begun shows the extent to which the old building had deteriorated. Additional temporary supports were installed to allow the removal of internal claddings and rotten timbers. New foundations were dug, steel framework installed to support floors, major timberwork replaced or sensitively repaired. Great efforts were made to retain and reuse original materials where possible to respect the building's integrity and character.

On the outside there were extensive works to

be sensitively carried out as well, including major groundworks to retain the rear ragstone elevation. The roofs were strengthened throughout, and the existing slate and Kent Peg tiles were removed and re-laid, re-using most of the original tiles. This respect to the existing old building was echoed throughout the works, including the careful rebuild of an external ragstone and brickwork wall to match what was there. The before and after photos show the huge extent of the works that were needed and indeed carried out in order for the Carriage House to be useable once again; it is an excellent example of a sensitive conservation project on a listed building.

Having consolidated the old building by ensuring all that could be done to make it structurally sound again, A T Palmer's team began the painstaking work of carrying out the detailed plans for the interior, which entailed fully insulating, plastering and decorating. Their skilled joiners fitted beautiful, new woodwork and engineered oak flooring throughout, including an impressive feature staircase, this is a masterpiece with solid iroko hardwood open treads which cantilever out from a steel stringer which is hidden from view by being boxed into the wall. The treads also sit on supporting structural steels that are notched into the treads. Matte black powder coated steel spindles and structural bars echo the existing ironmongery throughout the Carriage House.



Before and after

The pièce de résistance is a graceful undulating, elliptical bespoke oak handrail.

The kitchenette and shower room have been finished with equal attention to detail, with a black and white theme as requested by the client. The black ironmongery is continued in the shower room which is also reflected in the choice of colour for the sanitary ware fixtures, with white units, and in the shower room there are white tiles throughout; hexagonal mosaics on the floor, with metro tiles on the walls, the shower niche, with wall

lighting illuminating the mirror area. The overall effect is smart, chic, minimal and luxurious monochrome elegance.

Another detail on the interior that must be mentioned is the excavation of the existing cobbles on the ground floor. These were lifted, cleaned and painstakingly re-laid, retaining the important feature of the original stable. The stalls where the horses would have been housed and the horses' hay feeders have been reinstated, a very nice touch, tipping its hat to the original use of the building.

Extensive works to the external landscaping has been carried out, with a large change in level between the front and rear of the building. To the rear, a stepped landscaped garden has been designed and formed from railway sleepers, with brickwork retaining walls, a York stone paved path, steps and a flint retaining wall at the base of the landscaping.

The finished result is a total transformation and a testament to all involved with the project – with our thanks to the clients for their kind permission to feature this stunning project, to the vision and imagination of the architects, Clague Architects and to the contractors, A T Palmer Ltd, who have made such a fantastic job of making this sensitive Listed building restoration a reality.

This is obviously a truly successful project and to conclude, here's what the clients Carol Welu and Richard Surrey had to say:

"We are delighted with the restoration of



Interior of top floor

the Carriage House and deeply appreciative of the wonderful work done by all involved, including Clague Architects, Adrian Cox (structural engineer) and AT Palmer Ltd. The structure was in a most challenging condition and we were impressed with the creativity and can-do attitude displayed in overcoming serious structural issues. We loved Clague's designs, which are striking and make maximum use of available spaces. AT Palmer Ltd worked with consistent care and remarkable attention to detail. Chris Green and his team were a delight to work with, always responsive and gave excellent advice on how to achieve a first-rate restoration, while remaining practical and cost sensitive, and they produced a superb result."

For more information go to: www.clague.co.uk or atpalmer.co.uk

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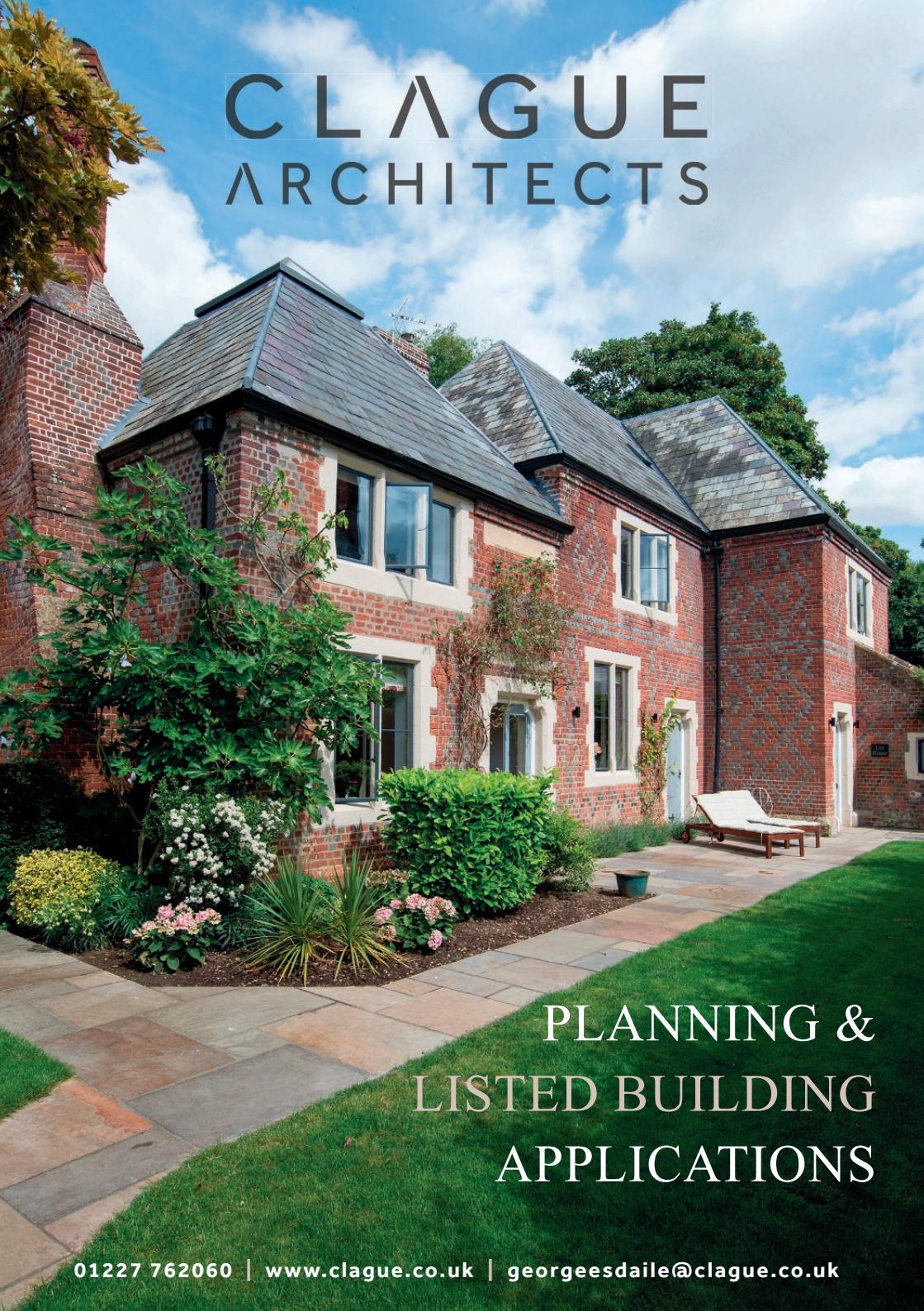
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In 2012 a giant black oak tree was discovered in a field at Wissington Fen in East Anglia. A 13.2m long section of an immense tree had been preserved deep in the peat for 5000 years. The tree is believed to have been 55 metres tall. For comparison, a present day oak tree is around 20 metres. Black oak is the nation's rarest and most precious hardwood. It was decided that this incredible discovery needed to be preserved for future generations. Over ten years a team of privately funded specialist crafts people created a stunning sculptured table known as the Jubilee Oak Table.

The black oak was discovered in the year of HM the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and was completed and unveiled in 2022, the year of HM the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The

table was dedicated to HM the Queen and is a "Table for the Nation." The table has only been on public view once before at Ely Cathedral throughout 2022.



ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL DISPLAY

Alongside the table will be panels detailing the history of black oak (or bog oak). They will also detail elements of the 10 year project to turn the wood into a functioning table.

“It is a real privilege to be hosting the Fenland Black Oak Table. A wonder of creation and the work of some very skilled hands. As the ancient cathedral builders sought to inspire, so this extraordinary table engenders its own sense of awe and gratitude. Not only in the exquisite application of design, imagination, beauty, and perseverance, but in the inspiring story that brought this sleeping giant to life bringing people together, once again, around its mighty girth. People from different continents have given time, skills, and resources freely in this truly selfless endeavour. Furthermore, it continues to involve people of goodwill. The heavenly vision of many nations and peoples gathered around a common table, eating, and drinking in the presence of God is one which at the Cathedral we will aspire to replicate over the coming year as we invite others to share in this remarkable story with genuine thanksgiving.”

Dean Philip, Rochester

HOW TO SEE THE TABLE

The table will be on display at Rochester Cathedral until 1st March 2024, and will be available to view in the Nave during general opening hours. Due to the size of the table it will be moved between the main Nave and the Nave aisle throughout the year depending on the programme.

For more information visit:

www.thefenlandblackoakproject.co.uk

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Liverton Place, Sandway

A unique and well-restored Grade II Listed country home offering six bedrooms, four reception rooms, two cellars and an abundance of character features over 3,269 square feet, in a plot of 0.549 Acres, with detached double garage and feature outdoor kitchen.

Liverton Place records date back as far as 1720 having been a former coaching inn used as a stopover point for weary travellers to change horses, then converted to three cottages and

finally to the layout you see today. The current vendors have spent time and care improving the home with new bathrooms, a new Aga, a traditional timber framed oak double garage, a wonderful outdoor kitchen along with substantial landscaping to the rear garden to create a beautifully characterful yet practical family residence.

The accommodation is arranged over four floors to include an entrance hall, two cellars, drawing room with log burner, dining room







with inglenook fire place, study, snug, garden room, kitchen/breakfast room, utility and downstairs cloakroom.

To the first floor, there is a master bedroom with en-suite bathroom, three further bedrooms and a main bathroom. Two staircases lead to the second floor in the roof offering two further double bedrooms.

Outside, the property is approached by an electric-gated gravel driveway with off road parking for numerous vehicles, leading to a recently added double oak garage with mezzanine. The landscaped grounds are predominantly laid to lawn and are ideal for entertaining/family with a fabulous outdoor kitchen and pizza oven, greenhouse and variety of mature shrubs, trees and borders.

The details

Grade II Listed Former Coaching Inn | Believed to Date Back to 1720 | Beautiful Grade II Listed Country Home | Six Bedrooms | En-suite to Main Bedroom | Kitchen and Separate Utility Room | Drawing Room & Dining Room | Study, Snug & Garden Room | Two Cellars | 3,269 sq ft of Accommodation | Plot of 0.549 Acre | Outdoor Kitchen & Pizza Oven | Traditional Timber Framed Double Garage. Offers in excess of £1,000,000 Viewing by appointment only Saddlers, Reed House, 3 Old Ashford Road, Charing TN27 0JG Tel: 01233 713127 www.saddlersresidential.co.uk



Old Barn House, Charing

A substantial and extremely handsome six bedroom country house occupying a private plot of 1.33 acres backing onto fields, situated just half a mile from the centre of the historic village of Charing. Old Barn House enjoys a place in local history having started life as a medieval barn known as Pierce Farm Barn, originally situated in a different location in Charing. It was used as the local YMCA Youth Hostel for many years before being dismantled and moved to its present location.

Subsequently extended and improved in a most sympathetic manner over the years, the property now offers extensive and very versatile

accommodation featuring a wealth of character and charm arranged over three floors.

The ground floor includes an impressive entrance hall with full height vaulted beamed ceiling, drawing room with open fireplace, dining room with feature fireplace, sitting room and pantry, study, laundry, double glazed conservatory, Smallbone fitted kitchen/breakfast room, utility room and two cloakrooms.

A heavy timbered staircase rises to an equally impressive first floor galleried landing with a seating area overlooking the extensive lawned front garden. The principal bedroom suite with a contemporary shower room and







recently added bathroom is accessed via its own private landing, a second bedroom also has its own en-suite shower room and two further first floor bedrooms are complimented by a family bathroom with a delightful view over the rear garden. A further staircase leads from the landing to the second floor where two additional bedrooms can be found.

The property is approached via a private driveway leading into sweeping lawned grounds of 1.33 acres with extensive parking space and a garage in the rear garden suitable for storing garden machinery. The grounds back onto open fields providing a real sense of space and privacy, whilst being so conveniently placed for the village and railway station.

We recommend viewing this fine property in order to fully appreciate the size and versatility of accommodation on offer.

The details

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Sarah Raven

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SERVES
6-8

YOU WILL NEED

4–5 red peppers (about 600g)
600g ripe tomatoes
1 red onion
3 garlic cloves
½ red chilli
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
Handful of basil leaves
1.2 litres good chicken or vegetable stock
Salt and black pepper
200g Greek yoghurt, to serve

ROASTED PEPPER SOUP

METHOD

Preheat a medium (180°C/gas mark 4) oven. Quarter the peppers and deseed them. Halve the tomatoes and roughly chop the onion, garlic and chilli. Put all the vegetables and basil on a roasting tray, mix the vinegar and oil, and pour it over the vegetables, making sure everything is well coated.

Roast them in the preheated medium oven, turning them from time to time, for 45 minutes. Put everything through a mouli or sieve to get rid of the skins. If you pulse it in a food processor the flavour will be less mellow, as it will include that of the skins, but it will still be delicious.

Thin the soup with the stock to the consistency you want and season with salt and freshly milled pepper. Tip into a saucepan and warm for a couple of minutes, or put it in the fridge to cool. Before serving, add a dollop of Greek yoghurt.

SERVES
8-10

YOU WILL NEED

2 tablespoons strong instant coffee powder or granules

1 tablespoon boiling water

750ml double cream

1 tablespoon caster sugar

1 tablespoon coffee liqueur, such as Tia Maria or Kahlúa

3 pieces of stem ginger, thinly sliced, plus 1 tablespoon of the ginger syrup

For the meringues

6 egg whites

180g granulated sugar

180g caster sugar

Sunflower oil

For the sauce

3 tablespoons redcurrant jelly

275ml pomegranate juice (bought or fresh)

Juice of 1 lime

1 heaped tablespoon arrowroot

Seeds of 2 pomegranates

FROZEN MOCHA AND GINGER MERINGUE CAKE WITH POMEGRANATE SAUCE

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 110°C/gas mark ¼.

To make the meringues, whisk the egg whites until very stiff and dry, and slowly add the granulated sugar bit by bit, whisking until the egg white regains its former stiffness. Fold in the caster sugar with a large metal spoon. Spoon on to greaseproof paper rubbed with a trace of sunflower oil, or 'Lift-Off' paper, or a silicone mat, and bake in the preheated oven for about 3 hours until crisp. Remove and break the meringues into pieces.

Mix the instant coffee with the boiling water, then chill it well. Whip the cream to the soft-peak stage and mix in the sugar, Tia Maria or Kahlúa and half the coffee. Fold the mixture with the sliced ginger, ginger syrup and meringue pieces. Spoon the mixture into a deep (8cm) straight-sided round cake tin, 22cm in diameter, or a loaf tin, lined with non-stick paper, and marble the top with the remaining coffee. Freeze for at least 24 hours.

To make the sauce, melt the redcurrant jelly in the pomegranate juice over a low heat until dissolved. Add the lime juice. Bring to the boil, remove from the heat and add the arrowroot (which thickens clear), already mixed with a little cold water. Put back on the heat and simmer gently, while whisking, for a couple of minutes. Then let the sauce cool. When it's completely cold, add the pomegranate seeds.

Serve the cake straight from the freezer, drizzled with the sauce.

Sarah Raven's Garden Cookbook (repackaged edition) out 31st August (Hardback, £35).





I love this pudding and it's very easy to make. Serve it with pomegranates in winter and raspberries in summer. To save time, you can buy the meringues – it doesn't matter if they are powdery and dry.

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Our outside area is perfect for a glass of wine or cold pint of local beer or why not try one of our hand crafted cocktails!

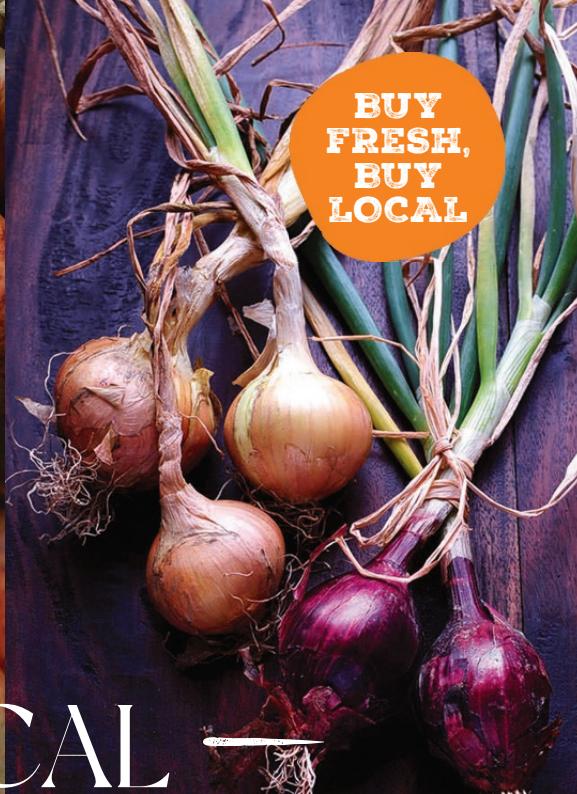
Our restaurant is open **7 days a week**, offering both inside and **al fresco** dining during the warmer months. Call us now to make your booking or stop in and say hello!

We can't wait to see you!

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— LOCAL — Farmers' markets



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SEPTEMBER

SATURDAY: 2nd

Chatham; Deal; Gravesend; Groombridge; Penshurst; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Wye

SUNDAY: 3rd

Bearsted; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Tunbridge Wells; Whitstable at the Castle

TUESDAY: 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th

Capel-le-Ferne; Hildenborough

WEDNESDAY: 6th, 13th, 20th & 27th

Rye

THURSDAY: 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th

Hastings; Rovenden; Shipbourne

SATURDAY: 9th

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells

SUNDAY: 10th

Herne Bay; Lenham; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks) Tonbridge; Tunbridge Wells

SATURDAY: 16th

Deal; Dover; Gravesend; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Wadhurst; Wye

SUNDAY: 17th

Aylesford; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Rochester; Staplehurst; Tunbridge Wells; Wateringbury

SATURDAY: 23rd

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Knockholt; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Whitstable

SUNDAY: 24th

Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Tunbridge Wells

OCTOBER

SUNDAY: 1st

Bearsted; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Tunbridge Wells; Whitstable at the Castle

TUESDAY 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th & 31st

Capel-le-Ferne; Hildenborough

WEDNESDAY: 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th

Rye

THURSDAY: 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th

Hastings; Rovenden; Shipbourne

SATURDAY: 7th

Chatham; Deal; Gravesend; Groombridge; Penshurst; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Welsw; Wye

SUNDAY: 8th

Herne Bay; Lenham; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Tonbridge; Tunbridge Wells

SATURDAY: 14th

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells

SUNDAY: 15th

Aylesford; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Rochester; Staplehurst; Tunbridge Wells; Wateringbury

SATURDAY: 21st

Deal; Dover; Gravesend; Hythe; Knockholt; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Whitstable

SUNDAY: 29th

Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Tunbridge Wells

SATURDAY: 28th

Chatham; Deal; Gravesend; Groombridge; Penshurst; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Wye

NOVEMBER

WEDNESDAY: 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd & 29th

Rye

THURSDAY: 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd & 30th

Hastings; Rovenden; Shipbourne

SATURDAY: 4th Chatham; Deal; Gravesend; Groombridge; Penshurst; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Wye

SUNDAY: 5th

Bearsted; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Tunbridge Wells; Whitstable at the Castle

SATURDAY: 11th

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells

SUNDAY: 12th

Herne Bay; Lenham; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Tonbridge; Tunbridge Wells

SATURDAY: 18th

Deal; Dover; Gravesend; Sevenoaks; Tunbridge Wells; Wadhurst; Wye

SUNDAY: 19th

Aylesford; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Rochester; Staplehurst; Tunbridge Wells; Wateringbury

SATURDAY: 26th

Bridge; Deal; Gravesend; Hythe; Knockholt; Reuthe's (Sevenoaks); Tunbridge Wells; Westerham; Whitstable

SUNDAY: 27th

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Wreaths and
Christmas
Fayre

THE PERFECT MATCH

Our wine expert suggests some tips for food and wine pairing.

Rowena Hawtin DipWset | www.discoverthewine.co.uk

Although food and wine pairing is an art that can takes years to perfect, there are a few basic tips that will help you get it right every time whether it's a mid - week meal at home or a special dinner party. The rule of thumb is about balance – you want to taste the food and the wine – so the key is not to let one overpower the other.

The Do's

WEIGHT

Try to match the weight of the food with the weight of the wine – richer, fattier food needs a full bodied wine to balance with all the elements, but it does not necessarily have to be red – a full bodied white is better than a lighter styled red for these kinds of dishes. Examples of full bodied reds include Malbec, Shiraz and Zinfandel and whites include oaked

Chardonnay and Rhone whites. On the other hand, food which is lower in fat such as pasta without sauce, poultry and lean meat are better paired with lighter styled wines such as Beaujolais and Pinot Noir for red and Chenin Blanc (from the Loire in Northern France), Vinho Verde and Gavi for white.

FLAVOUR INTENSITY

This is not the same thing as weight – flavour intensity in a wine refers to the depth of the aromas and flavours in the wine that needs to be matched with the same level of intensity in the food otherwise one will overpower the other. So a light intensity wine like, for example, a Pinot Grigio or a Cabernet Franc would be perfect for simple dishes such as noodles and white fish without a heavy sauce, but would be lost on a dish such as lamb stew as the flavour intensity is not balanced.



ACIDITY

All wines have acidity otherwise the wine would be dull and flat, but some wines are naturally much higher in acidity than others and the food needs to be of a similar level of acidity to avoid that tart, unpleasant taste on the palate. Wines such as Sauvignon Blanc and many of the Italian whites are naturally very high in acidity, which is why they are perfect partners for fish, seafood, olives and feta cheese. Red wine generally has lower acidity than white wine, but Sangiovese from Tuscany in Italy is particularly high in acidity for a red wine, which is one of the reasons why it goes so well with tomato based dishes which are very high in acid. Red wines which have lower acidity include Merlot, Grenache and Malbec and pair well with vegan and vegetarian food, but also chicken based dishes and lean meat.

TANNINS AND FAT

Tannins are found in the skin and seeds of grapes and although they are found in white grapes, they are far more dominant in black grapes. Tannins need to be ripe when the grapes are picked as unripe tannins in wine can leave your mouth feeling dry, especially around the teeth (a bit like drinking black tea) which is not pleasant at all. However, tannins in wine do complement fatty food well as they help to absorb the fat and highlight the flavour of the food. Grape varieties vary with the amount of tannins that are naturally in the skin – Gamay for example (the grape that makes Beaujolais) is low in tannins and therefore a meal lower in fat would be a good pairing, but on the other hand, Cabernet Sauvignon or Nebbiolo (the grape for Barolo) are very high in tannins and would go well with a dishes such as pork belly or even a rich, creamy pasta.

SPICY FOODS AND SWEETER WINES

Spicy food such as Thai or Indian curries pair very well with wines that are slightly sweet or off dry as the sweetness coats your tongue and counteracts the heat of the food. Examples include a medium sweet Riesling, Gewurztraminer and off dry styles of Pinot Gris – you want to enjoy the spices, but not set your mouth on fire with wine that competes for flavour. If you like to drink red with spicy food – try to stick to a lower alcohol wine – no higher than 12% or a rose such as white zinfandel would work very well as well.

MATCH THE WINE WITH

FOOD FROM THE SAME REGION

Many countries, especially in Europe have been producing food and wine in their local area for centuries and as a result, the food from a particular region will usually pair well with the wine produced. Think about Sancerre in the Loire valley in Northern France made from Sauvignon Blanc; this wine pairs beautifully with the local goat's cheese because the acidity in the wine stands up to the acidity in the cheese. Chianti from Tuscany is ideal for all those Italian pasta based dishes such as spaghetti Bolognese because of the high acidity in the food and the wine. Gruner Veltliner from Austria is perfect with sausages and sauerkraut as well as pork schnitzel – what grows together goes together!

The Don'ts

SWEETNESS AND DESSERTS

Don't have a dessert that is sweeter than the wine – your wine will taste sharp, bitter or even sour. Dessert wines are made to pair with sweet desserts – some are sweeter than others. But a Sauternes, a famous sweet wine from

Bordeaux, will go with most rich desserts and it also goes very well with a blue cheese too as salty and sweet are good partners. It is also very common to serve sparkling wine or Champagne at celebrations at the end of the meal and often with cake; our palate is already primed by sweetness and most sparkling wine is very dry and it will actually just taste quite tart, sharp and dry. Either have the Champagne toast earlier in the celebration or if you want to toast at the end - have a sweeter sparkling wine.

HIGH ALCOHOL WINE WITH SPICY FOOD

This is a no – no! Avoid wines high in alcohol with spicy food – they will fight together in your mouth and you won't appreciate the spices in the food and neither will you be able to taste the wine. Whether you choose white or red keep the alcohol content to 12% or under such as Vinho Verde, Bacchus, a medium sweet Riesling from Germany or a Chenin Blanc from the Loire valley.

TANNIC WINE AND FOODS

HIGH IN SALT

Rough tannins in a wine can be magnified by salt – if you are drinking a wine that has high tannins - avoid foods high in salt such as nuts, smoked and cured meat, bacon, sausages, sardines, burritos and pizza. Foods high in salt go better with reds such as Beaujolais, Merlot or most white wines as the tannins are much lower than for example a Syrah or Cabernet Sauvignon.

But most importantly – enjoy the food and wine and that you like and you can't go wrong.



MACKNADE

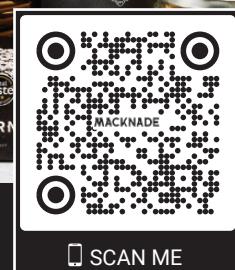
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