

ONLY **69p**

I begged docs to let her DIE



5 July 2018 69p

Issue 27

Pick Me Up!

FULL OF GREAT PUZZLES!



Jealous fella punished me... For what HIS EX did



My triplet mystery... Why is one so much BIGGER?

CAUGHT IN A KILLER'S TRAP

Was my boy targeted?



Months left to be a mum But don't feel sorry for me



HORROR AFTER HORROR Was Beth eaten?

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You're One in a MILLION!



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This week's bouquet goes to Margaret Peters, 68, from West Ewell. Her best friend Mercedes Bell, 69, from Epsom, wrote to tell us...

Me (left) and my best friend Margaret



Margaret has been like a sister to me. We've been through so much together and it means the world to have her by my side. We've been friends for over 22 years.

Even when we both got married, it didn't stop us spending time together.

Our husbands became fast friends and the four of us began to spend time together.

Between holidays and daily chats we were inseparable.

In 2016, she lost her husband John to cancer aged 66.

And just one year later, I lost my husband Roger, then 69, to a neurological condition.

We were both there for one another and she is still my rock.

Wherever we go on holiday we take a photo of our men.

We've now had matching

tattoos on our shoulders. Each has wings and a halo with our husband's initial in.

Our grandkids think it's cool and so do we.

I'm so lucky to have a friend like Margaret.

We've shared laughs and tears together and we have so many wonderful memories and here's to many more...

I'd just like to show her how much I appreciate her.

With over 30 years' experience of helping celebrate life's special moments, FREE delivery by post and a FREE pop-up vase, a gorgeous bouquet from Flying Flowers is a lovely way to say, *I'm thinking of you*. See flyingflowers.co.uk

To nominate someone

Tell us who you think deserves to receive some lovely blooms and the reason why. See page 4 for details on how to get in touch with us.



WORDS: EMMA ROSSITER

PHOTOS: PRIME FEATURES, WALES NEWS SERVICE

Sneaky peek at this week!



Yes, the girls really are triplets p10



P50... My dog loves the catwalk!

A quick word!

£25! WIN PUZZLE 1

Unscramble our word of the week. Clue: Margaret and Mercedes share these memories. (The word is on this page!) Enter on page 45.

FROWNDUEL

Your Wild week...

Having a good one? Share your pics and get **£25 CASH**



This was just what I needed on the seven-hour journey from St Ives to Paddington. A *Pick Me Up!* on the train home!
Ella Bucknall, Lambeth



My son and I looking spiffing for Ladies Day at Aintree.
Elizabeth Williams, Llanelli



I loved seeing these cheeky apes while on holiday in Uganda. I had a tough hike to get to them, but it was worth it.
Claire Essex, King's Lynn



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My mum Karen and my kids Kieron, 12, and Paris, 10, all felt a bit green after their Colour Rush for charity.
Stacey Hill, Torquay



I don't think Ruby, 6, was a fan of feeding the animals after this cow licked her hand. Yuck!
Amy Willis, via e-mail



I finally made it here. A beautiful place but I still struggle to pronounce it. Now it's your turn!
Karen Hill, Caernarfon

My nephew Arthur does a killer impression of Freddie Mercury. 'Don't stop me now!' he yells.
Alexandra Low, Halesowen



There's always time for a quick plank. Anytime, any place, anywhere. Even in Paris, ooh la la!
Emma Matthews, Heaviley

They're hardly the real deal, but we still had a good laugh with these two at a friend's wedding.
Danielle Truby, Barnet



I was thrilled to meet one of my idols - the Olympic gold medallist in diving, Chris Mears.
Ali Williams, Anfield

Green- MONS



Paranoid:
Llewellyn

It was normal that her fella got jealous, wasn't it? Katy Theobald, 29, from Bristol, found out the hard way...

Typing a flirty message into Facebook, I clicked send. James Llewellyn, 27, was my kind of man – tall, dark and handsome. Plus, we got on really well.

A friend of a friend, he'd caught my attention the moment I saw his profile photo.

We'd started chatting after I mustered the courage to add him on Facebook.

In March 2017, after we'd been speaking for a couple of weeks, we arranged to meet at my local pub.

Heart thumping as I walked through the door, I saw him sitting at the bar.

'Katy!' he said, spotting me.

His smiling face instantly put me at ease.

After that, we'd spend all of our spare time together, having dates at the pub or snuggling on the sofa.

I saw a future with James. He said he felt the same.

And it wasn't long before he told me he loved me.

'Move in with me,' I suggested after we'd been dating for five weeks.

Quick, I know, but it felt right.

James was really protective,

always holding my hand, texting me throughout the day to make sure I was OK.

At first, I loved it.

It showed he really cared about me, I thought.

But over time, it became too intense.

If we were apart, he was always ringing and texting to find out where I was.

Who are you with? What are you doing? his messages would read.

Back at home, he'd grill me on the exact details of my day.

If he'd had a drink, his tone became more aggressive, his questions more demanding.

One day, we were sitting on the sofa and I was messaging a friend...

'Who are you texting?' he barked, grabbing my phone.

Stunned, I didn't say a word, let him see for himself it was just a pal.

'I'm sorry, I'm just insecure after my last relationship,' he admitted, handing me back my phone.

It was then he told me his ex

had left him for someone else.

Clearly heartbroken, it had destroyed James' trust in women.

Poor James, I thought.

'I'm not like her,' I said, kissing him. 'You're the only one for me.'

I meant it, too. I'd never betray James. I loved him.

Agreeing for him to look at my phone, I gave him access to my social media accounts, too.

'I have nothing to hide,' I told him.

For a couple of weeks, James seemed calmer.

Only, one evening last August, he came home drunk.

Mumbling about me cheating on him, he was getting louder.

I tried to ignore him.

But, suddenly, he flew towards me and pinned me against the wall.

'You're cheating,' he snarled. 'I know you are!'

Within seconds, he seemed to realise what he was doing and let go of my neck.

Gasping for air, I ran out of the flat and stayed with a friend.

The next day, my phone

was ringing constantly.

'I'm so sorry. I have no idea what I was thinking,' he said.

I forgave him.

It wasn't his fault. He'd been hurt. He was insecure.

So I moved back home. Tried my best to love him even more.

But, one day, he suddenly flipped again.

'You cheating slag,' he yelled.

I was devastated.

'I'd never do that to you,' I said.

Why wouldn't he believe me?

I tried so hard to make him feel loved, more secure.

Showered him with love and affection, barely saw my mates.

It was never enough.

James became more and more threatening.

'It's only because I love you so much,' he sobbed.

And any anger I felt was replaced by sorrow.

Last December, James was out and I was at home when my phone pinged with a message from him.

Have you had a man round?

What?! I thought. Where has this even come from?

No, I replied.

Saying I'd meet him where he was, I tried to ignore his unreasonable allegations.

Arriving at the pub, I could see he was drunk.

But he was being sweet, saying how much he loved me.

I assumed he'd forgotten his cheating fears.

A few hours later, we arrived back home.

'You've had someone here, haven't you?' James barked at me again.

Rolling my eyes, I couldn't

He was always ringing and texting to find out where I was

eyed STER



Beaten black and blue

James and me - it felt so right



believe he was asking me again.

But he looked angry now, pacing around the room.

'Please trust me,' I stammered.

He had no reason not to – I barely spoke to other men. I didn't dare.

But as James came closer to me, I saw the anger in his eyes.

Frightened of what he might be about to do, I staggered backwards.

But it was too late. Grabbing me by the hair, he slammed me, face first, into the wooden living-room floor.

Every part of my body shuddered with pain.

'Please, don't!' I screamed. Seeing the blood pooling on the floor, I tried to get up.

But James' fist came flying towards me, knocking me back down again.

Every time I found my feet, his foot or fist would smash into me.

Tasting blood in my mouth, I could barely see, my eyes swelling with every second.

'James, stop,' I wept, terrified he was going to kill me.

But the blows kept coming. When he hurled me down the stairs, I felt powerless.

I thought I was going to

die right there and then.

But suddenly, somehow, I found some strength.

As James turned away for a couple of seconds, I stood up and ran to the door.

In agony, I managed to stagger outside and run to a nearby pub.

Dripping with blood as I came through the door, I begged for help.

One of the staff rang 999 and I was taken to Bristol Royal Infirmary.

'You've got a broken jaw, I'm afraid,' the doctor told me after an X-ray.

And that wasn't all.

I had a smashed rib and broken eye sockets, and he'd

even knocked out one of my teeth.

I was devastated and knew

I could never go back to James.

Police arrived and

I gave a statement. And James was arrested soon afterwards.

Spending four days in hospital, I had an operation to fix my jaw.

Looking at myself in the mirror, I couldn't believe it was me. My face was black, bruised and swollen.

My heart was broken, too. How could someone who loved me do this?

This wasn't what love looked like.

I'd only ever been faithful to James, but he was too paranoid to trust.

This March, James Llewellyn appeared at Bristol Crown Court, where he pleaded guilty to causing grievous bodily harm with intent as well as assault by beating.

I had to read out my victim

impact statement to the judge – it was terrifying.

James just sat there, a smirk across his face.

The court heard about James saying he was cheated on in the past and the defence solicitor used it as mitigation.

But, thankfully, the judge saw the violent man in the dock for what he was.

A woman beater.

Llewellyn was jailed for five years and four months.

I was disgusted. And so was the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, who referred the sentence to the appeal court for being too low.

Thankfully, in May this year, the sentence was increased to seven years and six months.

Better. But still not enough. What Llewellyn did will impact my whole life. I can't go out without becoming anxious, terrified he might reappear and attack me again.

He beat me black and blue, all because his ex left him.

And you know what? I don't judge her any more.

In fact, I don't blame her one bit. We're both better off without him.


WIN
PUZZLE 2

Follow it!

£1,000!

Solve the puzzle to spell out a term related to the picture. The arrows show you where to put your answers. The answer is spelled out in the yellow squares. Enter on page 45.

PHOTOS: GETTY

	Zucchini	Part of a plant	Davis, <i>Dragons' Den</i> presenter	Ill-mannered child	German car maker (inits)	<i>Born Free</i> lioness	Small amount
	Peripheral			Keynes, Bucks town			
	Highest-ranking bishop	Peron, Madonna screen role		Be wrong	Blood relations	March over rough terrain	Flying toy
					Style of canoe	K A Y A K	
	Native of Belgrade, perhaps	Sturgeon's eggs	Absolutely all (3,4)	Wheel covering	Creative	Sorrowful	Point of discussion
Redding, <i>My Girl</i> singer	Strong in adversity (5-7)	Meat or vegetable broth		Dispatch, forward			
						M P	
	Sycophant			Assesses	Area of a church		
Spiritual teacher	See photo			Assessed		Narrow piece of wood	Large oil company
		Send a message via computer	Penniless		Coalesce	Seek damages	
For what purpose?	Basil-based Italian sauce			Malevolent	Film props and scenery	Very strong winds	
		Is terrified about	Humble	Scottish monster's nickname		Tree that grows from an acorn	Printer powders
Author of <i>Peter Pan</i>	Male relation			Trevor, TV actor	Large city on the Nile	Variety of bingo	
				Unaltered	Skin irritation		
Europe's highest volcano	Large trees			Golf aid	Came face to face with	Smelly animal	
		Chew and swallow		Purple Tweenie		Away from the wind	
Verses	Twice the radius				Jane Fonda's father		
		Once surnamed		Commotion (2-2)		Fool	

chat



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ON SALE EVERY THURSDAY

What Daisy wants DAISY GETS

Louise Bowman, 39, from Ashford, Surrey, has made her little girl's dream come true... And all her daughters have something surprising in common!



Anatural-born mummy, that was me! I loved kids so much that, after leaving school, I'd trained as a nursery nurse, worked as a nanny and as a children's outreach worker.

So when Steven and I got married at 23, starting a family was a matter of 'when' not 'if'.

After four years together, we were ready to start trying.

A couple of months passed... 'Not happening yet,' I'd say.

After six months had passed, I bought some ovulation kits

and started to track my cycle.

However, as my periods came and went, my friends started falling pregnant.

'Why isn't it happening for me?' I sobbed after a year.

'Give it time,' Steven said.

But when, six months on, nothing had changed, we went to Queen Charlotte's Hospital in London.

'You'll need IVF to conceive,' the GP explained. 'But you're not eligible for it on the NHS because you're too young.'

At that time, our local NHS Trust was only offering it to people over 35.

By now I was 28.

'I'm not waiting another six years!'

I gasped, distraught. So my mum, Cathy,

helped us pay the £7,000 for treatment at the London Women's Clinic.

There, in February 2009, they diagnosed me with polycystic ovaries.

The next month, I started taking hormone drugs to stimulate my ovaries – and at the end of April, I went into hospital so my eggs could be harvested.

'We got five,' the doctor told me afterwards.

After three days, doctors put two of the fertilised embryos back inside me, and the remaining three were put in the freezer.

Then I went home and

waited to find out if I was pregnant.

I felt so positive.

Me and Steven had stopped drinking alcohol and were eating healthy food.

Two weeks later, a test proved my instincts right... I was pregnant!

Steven gave me a hug and

we raced round to Mum and Dad's with me clutching the positive test.

They broke down in tears!

Our first scan at six weeks confirmed that there was one heartbeat – which meant that only one of the two embryos had implanted.

But we were

overjoyed – yet worried, too... *What if something goes wrong?* I fretted.

It was only after the 20-week scan that I began to relax.

On 21 January 2010, I went into labour and Steven took me to West Middlesex Hospital.

Just three hours later, I was in the birthing pool when my body instinctively took over, and our daughter was born.

Weighing a healthy 6lb, Daisy was simply perfect.

I couldn't stop looking at her little face, her shock of red hair, her tiny hands and feet.

'I can't believe you're finally here,' I smiled.

Daisy was really laid-back, just like her daddy.

She breastfed really well and

My friends were falling pregnant. Why wasn't it happening for me?

Daisy was so excited...



Her little sisters!

S

!



Three of a kind:
Scarlett, Daisy
and Connie

really try and get my head around this!' I laughed.

The sickness was crippling – but after 18 weeks, it eased. And, at 20 weeks, we broke the news to Daisy.

'Mummy's got two babies in her tummy,' I said, showing her the scan picture.

'You're going to be a big sister,' I explained.

I watched as her eyes filled with excitement.

'I want it to be two girls!' she announced.

'It could be either and we won't know until the babies arrive,' we explained.

For the rest of the pregnancy, I made the most of the time I had left on my own with Daisy.

Then, in November 2013, when I was 35 weeks pregnant, I started bleeding.

An ambulance raced me to West Middlesex University Hospital and, three days later, I had the first baby – a girl.

Weighing 4lb 6oz, she was small but healthy.

We named her Scarlett.

The second twin got stuck, so doctors had to use forceps to help get her out.

Baby Connie was a little bigger, weighing 5lb 3oz.

As I held them both in my arms, I couldn't believe how lucky we were.

Scarlett had the same nose as Daisy and lots of hair like her, although Scarlett's locks were blonde, not red.

Connie didn't look as similar – but with their little hats on, the twins were really alike.

Three days after they were born, we brought them home.

'Really, you're triplets,' we said to Daisy, not wanting her to feel left out. 'Because you were made at the same time.'

Daisy loved that idea.

And it was true – despite being born three years and 10 months apart, our girls had all been 'made' on the same day over four years earlier.

Daisy is a brilliant big sister and, with their similar features, if it wasn't for the height difference they could definitely be triplets.

Now, Daisy's 8 and Scarlett and Connie are 4, and when I take the three of them to the park, they're certainly a force to be reckoned with!

There was a time I worried that I'd never be a mum.

Now I feel so grateful we have our triplets – even if they were born four years apart!

was such a happy little thing.

When she was 11 months old, I went back to work part-time, while my mum looked after Daisy.

Meanwhile, we carried on paying the £250 a year to keep the remaining three embryos frozen.

We'd give it a few years, then have another try, we decided.

When Daisy was 2, we moved from our two-bed cottage

in Sunbury to a three-bedroomed house in Ashford.

It now felt like the ideal time to expand the family...

So, when Daisy turned 3, I got back in touch with the clinic about using the last embryos.

By now, I was 34 years old and was prescribed oral drugs to help prepare my body to have the embryos implanted, plus hormone patches to thicken my womb-lining.

Meanwhile, the embryos were defrosted.

'They're frozen together, so we'll have to defrost all three of

them,' the clinic explained.

Sadly, one didn't survive the process, so we were left with two.

When we went back at the end of March 2013, the doctor advised us to have both the embryos put back in.

'You're older now and frozen embryos tend to be less successful,' he explained.

'Well, you'd better not get me twins!' I joked.

We watched on the screen as the doctor implanted the two remaining embryos inside me and it felt strange knowing that they'd been made nearly four years earlier, at the same moment that Daisy had been.

Back home, I didn't think it would work. So I tried to prepare myself for the worst.

But just three days on... *I feel really sick*, I thought. *Am I imagining this?*

I didn't tell a soul, though. But, after a week I couldn't wait a minute longer.

'I've done an early pregnancy

test,' I blurted out to Steven when he got home from his job as an electrician.

'I'm pregnant!' I announced.

Steven was thrilled, but just before my six-week scan I began to bleed.

I was so hysterical that my best friend Kelly phoned the midwife who'd been with me when I'd had Daisy.

'Have a bath and go straight to bed and rest,' she advised.

I did, and the bleeding had slowed down a bit by the time we went along to the Early Pregnancy unit the next day.

The nurse did a scan to see if the baby was OK.

'The baby looks fine,' she told me. 'But there are actually two in there!'

'Two!' I gasped, shocked.

I'd been so worried about the bleeding that I was just glad the baby was still alive. And now there were two!

For the next six weeks, I kept saying, 'There might not be two when we go back for the next scan.'

But at 12 weeks, there were still two healthy babies.

'So now it looks like I need to

It felt strange that they'd been made nearly four years earlier...

Your Deals of the week

We've done the research - so you can save the **CASH**



Home loving

Offering everything from dining sets to lighting, furnishyourhome.co.uk is offering *Pick Me Up!* readers 10% off their entire range. Enter 'FYH10' at checkout. Valid until 12 July.



Natural choice

Cawston Press sparkling drinks are made with simple, natural ingredients, and they showcase the flavour of real fruit. The range includes Rhubarb, Cloudy Apple, Ginger Beer and Elderflower Lemonade. Their multipacks are down to £2.61 (usually £3.99) at Waitrose until 10 July.



SAVING OF THE WEEK

Bright idea!

The annual Color Run is happening on 8 July in Wembley Park, London, and it's your last chance to sign up! They're offering *Pick Me Up!* readers 20% off all team and solo tickets until 6 July. Go to thecolorrun.co.uk and enter **COLORRUNPICKMEUP** at the checkout.

OFFER OF THE WEEK

Say cheese!

Cheddar cheese is a fridge staple in most households. And you can now get your hands on a 500g block of Cathedral City Cheddar for only £2.50 at Co-op (usually £5) until 10 July.

Fine dining

Young's Gastro Signature Breaded Fish range includes succulent fish fillets wrapped in a light crumb. They're two for £5 at Iceland (usually £4 each) until 15 July. Offer includes the sweet chilli, and lemon and pepper varieties.



Beautiful bargains

Escentual.com, which sells a range of skincare, haircare, sun care, fragrances and gifts by a number of brands, is offering up to 25% off a range of French brands, including Avène, La Roche-Posay and Vichy. Offer valid 1-31 July.



Very pop-ular!

Popcorn is the perfect light snack for so many occasions, from watching a film, to serving at a party, to eating as an afternoon pick-me-up! Metcalfe's Skinny Popcorn sharing bags are only £1 at Morrisons (usually £1.60) until 8 July.



More for your money

Cantu, which offers a range of products for natural and textured hair, has a 3-for-2 offer in Boots stores and at boots.com. Offer ends 7 July.

SAVING OF THE WEEK



Your Brainwaves...

You're a clever bunch! Earn **£25 CASH** for your brilliant tips!



Top hats!

Protect your kiddies' faces in the summer heat with some unique headgear. Make a visor from card and get creative!

Fiona Ogunjimi, Barras Heath, Coventry

Top mum's tip!



Brush up

Make transporting your make-up brushes hassle free. Just reuse old sweet tubes to keep them all in one place.

Susan Wallace, Belfast

Tip of the Week



Neat idea!

Recycle empty laundry-tablet pots and turn them into pencil cases. You can tidy away paints, arts and crafts in these small tubs. Ideal for kids as well.

Julie Surtees, Gateshead



Boiling point

Prevent your pots from bubbling up by laying a wooden spoon across the top. It prevents overflow, so less mess.

Angela Garvin, Romford



Postcard hack

Before going on holiday write out all your addresses on sticky labels. Less time spent writing out postcards and more time to soak up the sun.

Carole Casan, Tiverton, Devon



Don't waste it, paste it!

Use leftover wallpaper from decorating to liven up your furniture. Not only does it protect the furniture but it looks good while doing it.

Jodie Giblin, Penarth

Hangover to H

One moment Mollie Docherty, 24, from Dundee, was enjoying a drink with her pals, the next she was in hospital...

Popping the cork from another bottle of Prosecco, I let out a cheer.

'More bubbles!' I heard one of

my mates call out from the living room.

'Hurry up, Mol,' another shouted. 'I'm dying of thirst.'

'One sec!' I replied, having a quick sip from my own glass before joining them.

I was 23, it was a Saturday night in June last year – and with my mum Sharon, 47, away in Blackpool, I had the house all to myself.

The perfect excuse for a girls' night in.

We'd spent most of the evening chatting, laughing and drinking fizz.

So when I finally managed to crawl into bed at 2am, I was out like a light.

When I opened my eyes again it was only 7am.

'Too early for a Sunday morning!' I groaned.

What's more, my head was pounding.

So I went back to sleep

and about three hours later I started to stir again.

As I climbed out of bed, my head was still sore but not pounding like before.

Result!

I felt fine, so I went downstairs to tackle the mess.

Bottles lay strewn about the place. Empty glasses by the sink and remnants of last night's takeaway balanced on top of the bin.

I got to work chucking it all into a black bin liner.

As I picked up the third bin bag I let out a yelp.

I'd felt a sharp, shooting pain down the right side of my face.

'Ow!' I said rubbing my cheek.

It was like I'd been stung. Instant pain.

I rushed to the landing mirror but couldn't see anything wrong.

Had I imagined it?

So I turned to get back to the clearing up. But as

I did, I felt my legs wobble.

Grabbing the banister, I steadied myself.

I managed to swing myself to the bottom of the stairs.

Then I sat slumped on the bottom step, holding my head in my hands.

Must be the hangover kicking in, I thought. *I'll give it 10 minutes and then head back to bed.*

But the time passed and I felt no better.

As I tried to stand up, I fell to the floor.

I couldn't walk or crawl.

I felt paralysed.

What's happening to me?

Grabbing my phone from my pocket, I punched in my then-

boyfriend's number.

I began blurting out the whole story but...

'Mollie, slow down,' he said.

'I can't understand you.'

Taking a deep breath, I started again.

Only as I heard the words coming out of my mouth, I realised why he couldn't understand me.

The words blurred together, made no sense.

I was slurring. I kept trying to explain but it was getting worse.

By now it was about 3pm.

Frustrated, I hung up on him and phoned my neighbour, Caroline Smith.

'Hi Mollie, is everything OK?'

I sat slumped at the bottom of the stairs, my head in my hands



Caroline, 18, answered.

I burst into tears.

'Stay there – I'm coming straight over,' she said, sounding alarmed.

Within moments, the door swung open.

Caroline saw me straight away – sitting crumpled on the stairs.

I could see the panic in her face as she raced out the door again.

Two minutes later, she was back with her mum Madeline and their whole family.

They carried me to the sofa, lay me down and rang for an ambulance.

Waiting for the paramedics to arrive, my mind raced.

What's going on?

The headache and the slurred speech could be linked to a hangover.

But I'd never been unable to walk before.

And it's not as if I'd had that much booze!

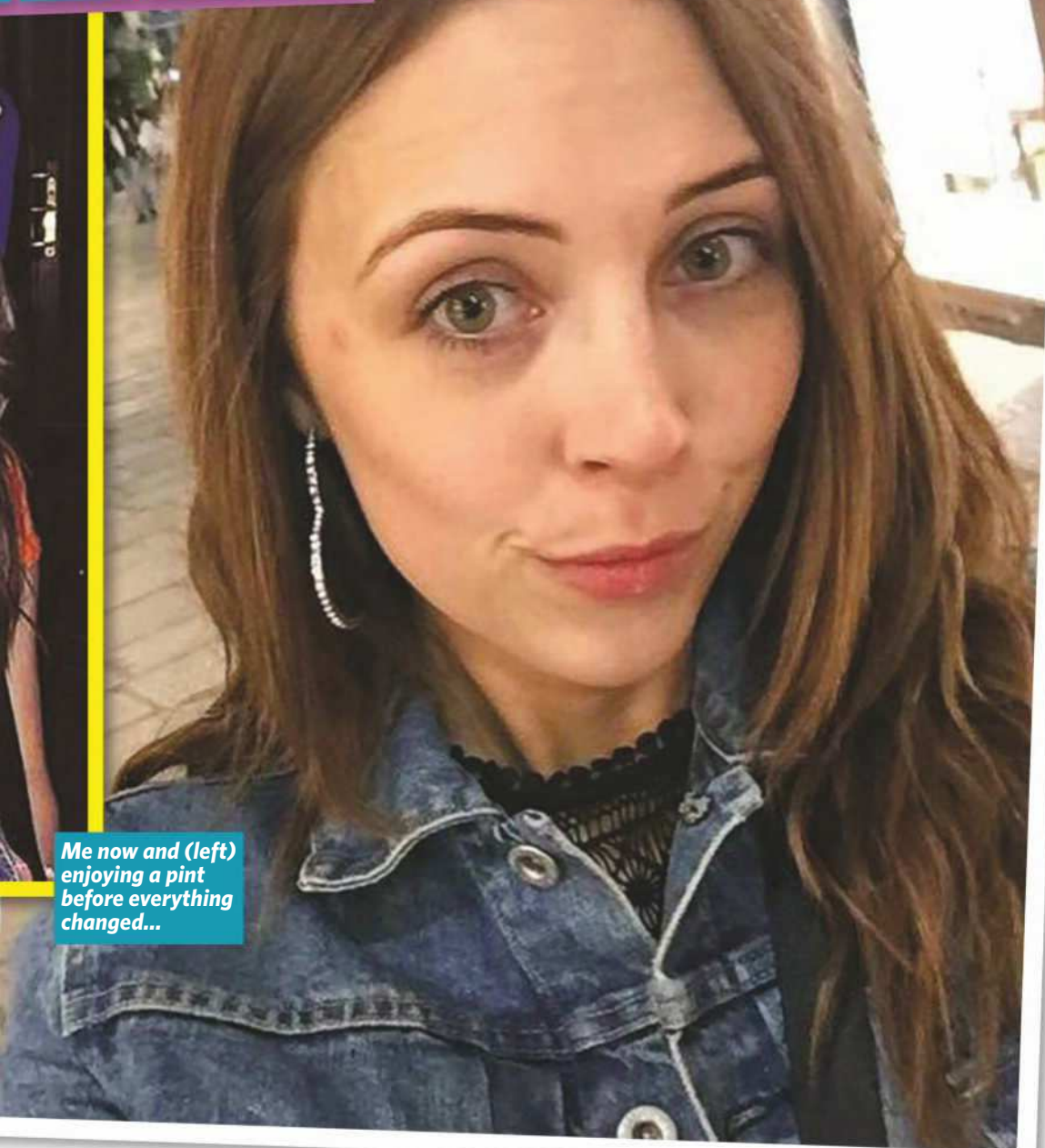
It just made no sense. I was

WORDS: EMMA ROSSITER, SARRA GRAY



I was young, fit and active

ELL



Me now and (left) enjoying a pint before everything changed...

23, fit, active and healthy.

People my age don't just collapse, I thought.

I was panicked, confused and scared.

When the paramedics arrived, they did all the usual tests. Everything seemed fine.

'She's having a stroke, isn't she?' Madeline asked.

'No, she's far too young,' a paramedic said confidently.

He phoned a consultant at Ninewells Hospital.

'He said to bring you in,' he told me.

So I was carried into the ambulance and Madeline came with me.

But what did Madeline

mean, I was having a stroke?

That was for old people, wasn't it?

At Ninewells Hospital, I was taken for an emergency CT scan.

It would take 24 hours for the results to come through, so I was admitted.

Madeline wasn't able to speak to my mum until about 8pm that night.

'She'll get the next train she can,' she said.

But Mum wasn't able to get back to Dundee until

the following morning.

The moment I saw her, I burst into tears.

Mum hugged me and said I'd be all right - and I believed her

'You'll be all right, sweetheart,' she soothed, hugging me.

And I believed her.

My CT scan came back clear, so I was taken for an MRI.

Finally, on the Wednesday, I was given the news.

'You have suffered a stroke,' the doctor explained. 'We've located the clot on the left side of your brain.'

They couldn't say why it

had happened. But I was given a course of thrombolysis - using drugs to break up the clot.

It was a relief, but still I worried.

My whole right side was numb. I couldn't move it and I still couldn't speak properly.

Two weeks later, I was transferred to a local rehabilitation centre for intensive physiotherapy.

I was signed off sick from my job as an admin assistant and, physically, I couldn't do anything.

At first, it was slow - but after two weeks, I was allowed to go home to Mum's at night and come back as an in-patient 9-5 every day.

At times, it was frustrating because I couldn't even dress myself. Things like zips were impossible.

Mum would do my hair, tie my laces and even cut up my food.

I didn't leave the house alone apart from going to rehab, and I was so angry that I didn't want to see anyone.

But Mum never gave up on me - and after three months, I had movement back in my arm and leg.

Then I could wiggle my fingers.

The following month, I could speak without stammering, too.

And after six long months, I was finally discharged from hospital.

Now, almost a year on, apart from a limp, you'd never know I'd had a stroke.

I'm back at work full-time and fully getting my social life back, thank goodness.

But I'll be on medication for the rest of my life.

It's terrifying to think that I had a stroke.

I'm telling my story to show it can happen to anyone.

I'm young, with my whole life ahead of me.

Right now, my focus is on being able to wear a pair of high heels again.

That way I'm ready for my next girls' night.

Your Health

INSTANT appointment

With Doctor Arabella Onslow



I can't sleep!

Q I find sleep very difficult, but I've heard that doctors won't prescribe sleeping tablets. Why not?

Lisa, Billericay

A Sleeping pills can be highly addictive, and they're not very effective – they reduce your fall-to-sleep time by only 20 minutes and don't improve the quality of your sleep. Please look into alternative strategies or speak to your GP if your health is affected.

What's this mark?

Q I have an annoying dry, red, scaly patch on my lower leg. It's been there for months and doesn't change much. It's not very big, but it doesn't seem to be getting better. Help!

Hattie, Cirencester

A This sounds like Bowen's disease, a very slow-growing, superficial, precancerous condition that is easily treated. Please see a dermatologist.

New mum and depressed

Q I've just given birth and I'm struggling with the baby blues. Every one tells me it's normal, but I can't seem to shake this feeling of dread. I'm pretending things are OK so people don't worry about me. When will the blues go?

Petra, Swansea

A 'Baby blues' are a transient response to the massive life event that is giving birth. But if your low mood persists, speak to your GP as you may have postpartum depression, which won't ease without support.



CONTACT US

For advice, contact us via one of the methods below. Letters and e-mails are selected randomly for publication. Sorry, Dr Onslow can't reply personally. **WRITE TO:** Pick Me Up!, 161 Marsh Wall, London E14 9AP. **E-MAIL:** pickmeup@ti-media.com

Health On Twitter Follow me @DrBellyButton



TRUE or **FALSE**

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

1 ADHD is a group of behavioural symptoms that are usually displayed as inattentiveness.

True False

2 Most cases are diagnosed when children are teenagers.

True False

3 The symptoms usually worsen with age.

True False

4 Symptoms can be treated with medication and therapy.

True False

1 TRUE Although they can also often be displayed through hyperactivity and impulsiveness.

2 FALSE ADHD symptoms tend to be noticed at an early age. Most cases are diagnosed when children are 6-12 years old.

3 FALSE The symptoms generally improve with age, although many adults still experience problems.

4 TRUE A combination of both is usually best and can make the condition a lot easier to deal with.

OUR

Danielle Hatcher, 28, from Sheffield, found herself housebound with her littl'un

Watching my 4-year-old daughter Myla play in early December last year, I noticed something a bit strange.

'Her legs look really bruised,' I told my husband Jon, 28.

We checked her over and found an unnerving number of marks on her little legs, as well as some behind her ears.

We all know kids often have bumps and bruises, but these were excessive.

'Let's get her to the doctor,' Jon said.

The GP sent us off to Sheffield Children's Hospital for blood tests.

And a biopsy showed her blood count was very low and her bone marrow was actually 'empty'.

'What does this mean?' I asked the doctor, worried.

They explained that Myla had a rare, life-threatening condition called severe aplastic anaemia (SAA).

It was stopping her body from producing enough blood cells and platelets, leaving her immune

44%

That's the percentage of Brits who treat themselves to three fast-food takeaways each week, according to a recent survey by health and wellbeing provider Benenden.

BUBBLE GIRL

system extremely low.

Without her body's defence system, even minor infections, like a common cold, could prove dangerous for Myla.

There was no clear cause for the condition.

'Her only hope is a bone-marrow transplant, but it needs to be an exact match,' the doctor added.

Jon and I were crushed, terrified for our little girl's life.

We were told a sibling might be an ideal donor.

So her little brother Rio, then 2 months, was tested, but he wasn't an exact match.

'We can't lose our girl,' I

sobbed to Jon.

We joined the waiting list for donor bone marrow.

Finding an exact match wouldn't be easy, but we had to try.

Meanwhile, with Myla's immune system out of action, leaving the house was risky.

It meant no school, ballet, gymnastics, swimming...

Even the rest of us could easily catch something and pass it on to Myla.

I was a full-time mum, but self-employed Jon had to stop going to work while Myla was still poorly.

The only times we left the house were to go to the hospital twice a week so Myla could receive a transfusion of platelets and red blood cells.

'It's like living in a bubble,' I sighed to Jon.

Being such an active child, it wasn't easy for Myla.

'When can I go back to school?' she asked after a few weeks.

She missed her friends,



She didn't complain once

SEVERE APLASTIC ANAEMIA

SAA is a rare but serious condition in which the bone marrow is unable to produce enough blood cells. It can be inherited, but can also develop for unknown reasons. Most cases occur in children or over-65s. A bone-marrow transplant and immunosuppressive therapy are the main treatments.

I told her when her long, blonde hair fell out.

On 15 March, doctors performed the bone-marrow transplant...

And, slowly, Myla's blood count began to rise.

Three weeks later, doctors confirmed the transplant had been successful.

Myla will be on antibiotics, plus antirejection and antifungal meds for a year, until her immune system improves.

But despite everything, she has never complained once.

She's not back at school yet,

but will hopefully be ready by September.

No longer living in a bubble, we can't wait to make up for lost time.

but we tried our best to keep her occupied.

We even converted our garage into a playroom, filled with toys.

Finally, after months indoors, we got a call on 13 February.

'We've found a perfect match for Myla,' a consultant said.

I was overjoyed.

The week before her transplant, Myla had to undergo some light chemo

to wipe out her bone marrow. That way, her body was less likely to reject the donor marrow.

'You're such a brave girl!'

The only times we went out were to go to the hospital



Now our Myla's nearly ready for school again!

Men's health

With Dr Arabella Onslow



Q I've been diagnosed with pre-diabetes. I used to be fit but that changed when I got an office job. What exercise is best to avoid developing diabetes? Frank, Belfast

A Doing 150 minutes per week of aerobic exercise halves your risk, and 150 minutes per week of weights reduces it by one third. But combining both reduces your risk of progressing to diabetes by almost two thirds!

Give yourself a lift



Blackcurrants

These yummy berries contain nutrients called polyphenols, which are thought to encourage fat-burning during exercise by increasing blood flow. So says a study from Liverpool John Moores University.

THE TOWN

too terrorists to talk

Everyone suspected who'd killed Beth...
So why did they keep his secret?

WORDS: HANNAH ABBOTT. PHOTOS (NOT ACTUAL HITCHHIKER): GETTY, MCLENNAN COUNTY

In the small, sleepy town of Axtell, Texas, serious crime is pretty unusual.

Murder? That's something that happens in the big cities.

That is, until August 1982, when a crime took place which shocked the

peaceful town to its very core.

Schoolgirl Beth Bramlett had just returned home from a summer trip to the bustling city of San Antonio, and was getting ready to start her senior year at high school.

On 8 August, she and her pals headed to a reservoir a few miles out of town for a back-to-school party.

Just after midnight, Beth, 17, was ready to leave and started to walk home in the dark, when a couple of her friends – a boy and girl – stopped to offer her a lift.

Beth hopped in, but then the driver realised he didn't have enough petrol to get Beth home...so she got out, saying she'd flag down a ride from another passer-by.

Beth was never seen alive again.

Two days later, a fisherman found her body, face

down on some abandoned railway tracks.

She was still in the jeans and T-shirt she'd worn to the party and there was no sign that she'd been sexually assaulted.

However, she'd been brutally beaten and shot with a .22 calibre handgun – once in the head and once in the chest.

Most gruesome of all, when the police turned her body over, it looked as if someone had chewed, gnawed or even eaten parts of her.

An investigation was launched, but the detectives were quickly stumped.

They had no physical evidence. No weapon, no vehicle, no DNA...so instead, they had to focus on eye-witness testimony.

And, as they quizzed people about what might have gone on, there was one name in particular that kept cropping up – Talmadge Wayne Wood.

He was the father of the girl in the car that'd first picked up Beth as she began to walk home.

Wood was known to be

violent and unpredictable.

He liked to boast about tying up and beating his wife – even showing people sickening photos of her restrained.

The residents of Axtell tended to steer clear of Wood, particularly after he shot at an elderly lady, attacked her son. The woman survived, but Wood was convicted of assault.

He also had a string of other charges on his record.

'People were scared to death of him,' said a police detective.

When the police looked into Wood's whereabouts on the night of Beth's murder, they had a breakthrough. Wood was at the same party as Beth.

He'd gone there to tell his daughter to come home. In front of all the partygoers, he threatened his daughter, warned that she'd better get home before he did.

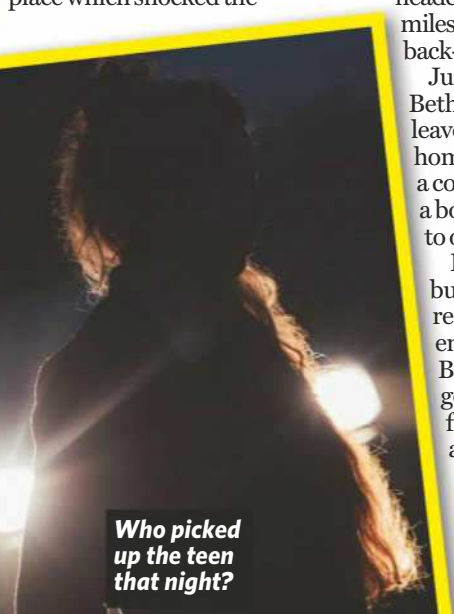
Sources told detectives that, for some unknown reason, Wood didn't like Beth Bramlett and told his daughter not to hang out with her.

But did he hate Beth enough to beat and shoot her?

Wood's daughter did as she was told and went home. But, instead of being hot on her heels, her father didn't arrive back home for hours.

A witness told the police they saw him getting out of his car at around 3.30am, covered in blood.

The police were convinced Wood had picked up Beth – who may have unwittingly flagged him down for a lift –



Who picked up the teen that night?

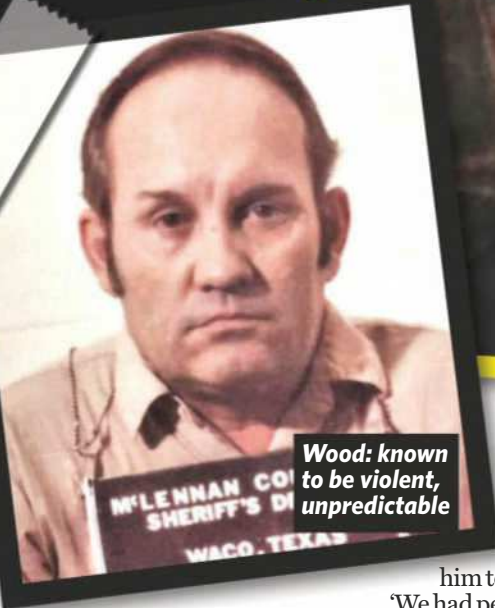
MAN sed

**CASE
CLOSED**

REAL LIFE



BETH: INNOCENT HIGH-SCHOOL GIRL



**Wood: known
to be violent,
unpredictable**

before driving her into the woods and killing her.

They knew Wood's car was a crucial piece of evidence and they hunted high and low for it, but it couldn't be found.

Convinced that Talmadge Wayne Wood was their man, the police were forced to admit they simply didn't have enough evidence to convict him.

The murder case went cold.

Would the truth about what happened to the pretty teen ever be revealed?

Almost 36 years came and went, and Beth's family were bereft, with no sense of justice.

Then a local newspaper ran a story about the unsolved case and it prompted the police to reinvestigate.

This time, one important thing had changed – Talmadge Wayne Wood was now dead.

And that meant locals

weren't afraid of him any more.

They started to come forward with testimony that linked

him to Beth's murder.

'We had people who told us that the only reason they went to his funeral in 2014 was to make sure he was dead,' the local police captain said.

'People were terrified of him and they wouldn't have talked if he was still alive.'

After going through testimony from the initial investigation, and combining it with the new statements, the police were confident that they had their man.

Wood was the only suspect seen both at the party and on the road that Beth took.

He was the only person who had the opportunity of killing Beth, and would certainly have been capable of doing so.

They claimed he saw Beth

that night and offered the teenager a lift.

They said Wood had driven past the turning to Beth's home, before finally stopping the car, beating her brutally and shooting her.

Covered in Beth's blood, Wood then dumped her body on the railway tracks.

'It is a very circumstantial case, but we believe we could take this to trial and get a conviction today,' said the Chief Deputy for the county.

So now the police contacted Beth's mum – sadly, her dad had died – and other family members.

The police told the family what they thought had happened – and that they believed they'd identified Beth's killer.

'We laid out everything – and Beth's mum said we did it,' said County

Sheriff Parnell McNamara 'After all these years, she was thankful we never gave up on the case.

'After we finished, the family

told us they were leaving 100 per cent sure that we'd found the right murderer.'

Along with new witness statements, McNamara credited new technology and the diligence of cold-case investigators for refusing to let the case go unsolved.

'It happened 8 August 1982 and it's been unsolved until now,' he said.

'This was a brutal murder of a beautiful, innocent high-school girl, and we know who did it.'

The news that Beth's murder was solved came as a relief to the people of Axtell – but many said they couldn't forget what'd happened.

A local who'd worked with Beth's father said her dad never recovered from his daughter's murder and died a broken man.

'This really ate him up,' he said. 'The murder shook this little town up.'

And, although Talmadge Wayne Wood might have died before he could pay the price for his crime, the case is finally closed.

**He had the
opportunity
to kill Beth
and was
capable of
doing so**

Genius Or TOTALLY BONKERS?

We put some truly original products to the test...

Room In A Box Cardboard Bed, £99.99, happybeds.co.uk

Eco-friendly and far easier to put up and down than an airbed, this cardboard bed base is sturdier than you'd think, and is great for anyone who moves regularly.

Verdict:

GENIUS!

Sounds crazy, but it's a great idea.

Turkish Delight Gin Liqueur, £29.99, firebox.com

It's not for everyone, but if you love the sweet taste of Turkish delight, then this might just be the rose-tinged tippie for you. It's made in Manchester, but you could be in Istanbul after a few sips!

Verdict:

BONKERS!

...but brilliant.

Bettypads Pick & Mix Box, £5.99, betty.me/pickandmix

Suitable for girls aged 8-16, these sanitary towels have been designed with smaller body shapes in mind.

Available in four different size options, they'll help young teens feel confident from their first period.

Verdict:

GENIUS!

Why hasn't anyone thought of this before?

WIN PUZZLE 3

£300!

Crack it!

Work out which letter each number represents. Once you've filled the grid, put the correct letters into the Prize Answer boxes at the bottom to spell out a word. **Enter on page 45.**

1	5	1	26	19		24	1	13	13	10		23	
11		9		14		10		14		1	23	7	8
1	13	23	16	8	14	12	14	12		2		26	
4		1		26		1		15	17	7	25	12	14
14	1	8		21	23	11	23	6				15	
		15		23		15		15	7	11	1	8	14
14	6	26	1	24	14	13		22		1		15	
	23		7				24	14	1	26	25	26	19
1	5	1	7	13	25	7				1		1	
	6		23		12		18	1	10	2	1	16	19
24	14	16	16	14	8		23		15		15		
	9			21	1	6	8	14			12	15	24
26	23	26	19	25	25		8		16		16		1
	14		15		13	2	15	7	13	16	15	7	17
25	7	23	6		25		3		14		3		14
	8		6	15	20	8	10		13	14	8	14	12

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
A	W					N			Y			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

PRIZE ANSWER

6	14	12	22	15	26	14
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Your Dilemmas

Can't make your mind up? Write to us at Pick Me Up! for good advice



Do I keep my flirting secret?

Katy, 45
Middlesbrough

Although I love my husband of 12 years, he doesn't make me feel attractive any more. I've felt like this for a few years now, but things changed when I saw an old male friend.

He's married, like me. We bumped into each other then went for a few drinks. When he was tipsy he said how attractive I was. He kissed me on the cheek and touched my hand.

I thought it was a drunken thing but we swapped numbers and his sober texts are just as flirty. I flirt back, but it's nothing overtly sexual – I like the attention. Flirting is harmless, so I don't think my husband needs to know. I would never cheat on him!

Should it remain a secret?



YES

Pick Me Up!
reader Hannah Burke says,

'There's no harm in a bit of flirting, but make sure the boundaries are clear. You're married and not looking for an affair, so make sure your friend respects that. With that in mind, everyone deserves to feel good about themselves, so enjoy it!

As long as your friendship with this man doesn't change, there's no reason it should be of concern to your husband.'

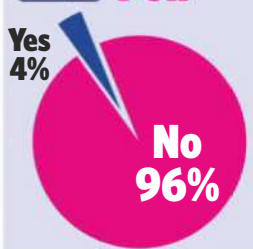


NO

Pick Me Up!
reader Marie Wyatt says, 'If

the tables were turned, how would you like it if your husband was sending flirty texts to another woman, kissing her on the cheek and holding her hand?'

f Reader Poll



You are practically already having an affair, so you should do the only decent thing and talk to your husband about how you feel.

You are playing with fire and someone will end up getting hurt.'



YES

Pick Me Up!
reader Ruth Carter says, 'I'm

not a mum as it wasn't meant to be, but I don't feel unfulfilled.

I think bringing a child into the world is great, however, not having a father figure isn't always good. It may be OK for you or other people, but nobody thinks about the child and what they miss out on.

This is a difficult decision but think all the facts through, as your desire to have a child may be for the wrong reasons.'



NO

Pick Me Up!
reader Michelle McGrath says,

'No, you shouldn't give up if it's what you want! You will regret it later if you don't.

You don't need to worry about what other people think, as this is your life and not theirs. Your happiness is important.

It might not be the best thing, in an ideal world, to be a single parent but the child will not know any different.

You can feel optimistic that the choice is there for you to make.'

ADVICE SITES

● Feel like you need to speak to someone about infidelity without consulting

a professional? Visit infidelity.supportgroups.com to speak honestly and openly to people in a similar situation.

● Conception via a sperm donor is regulated by law. See coparents.co.uk/sperm-donors-laws-in-UK.php for more information.

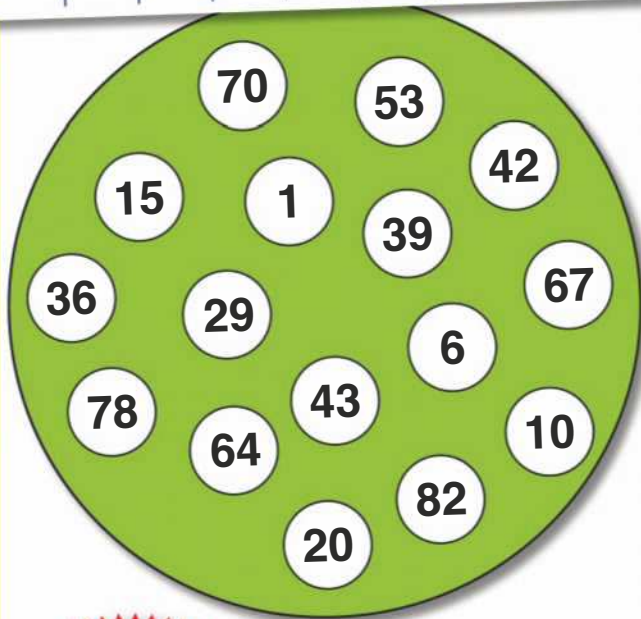
WIN £100!

PUZZLE 4

Strike it!

On your bingo card, cross out all the numbers that appear on the balls. Read the letters beside the remaining numbers on your card from left to right to spell out your answer word. To enter, complete the coupon on **page 45**.

	S	E		U	B	E		R
	9	20		33	47	53		78
A	C	R				A	N	
6	12	25				58	61	
	N		N	L		U	D	
	15		29	50		67	88	



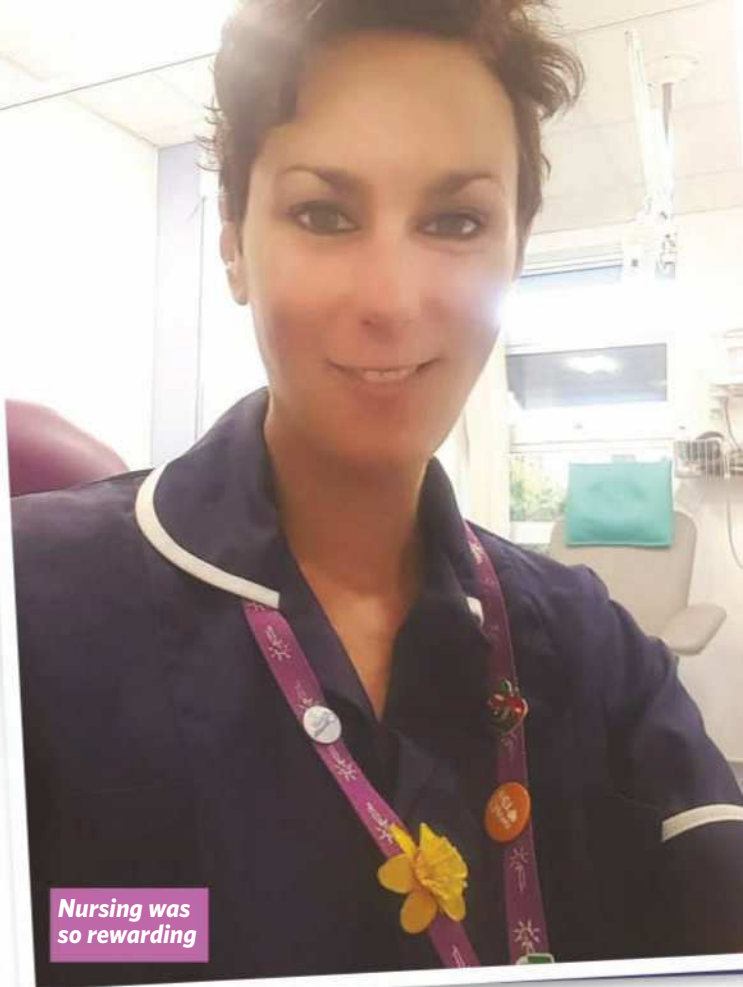
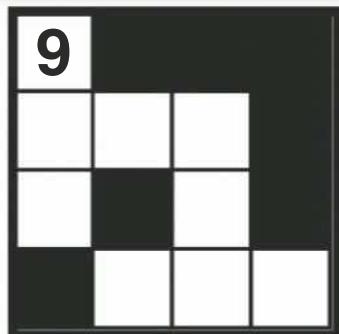
WIN £25!

PUZZLE 5

Number fit!

Which one of the listed numbers won't fit in this mini grid? **Enter on p45.**

- 719
- 917
- 790
- 970
- 901



Nursing was so rewarding

I loved my job as a cancer nurse on the Oncology unit at North Devon District hospital. But losing patients was never easy.

I'd decided to train to be a nurse after my own grandmother June had died of bladder cancer, aged 63, when I was aged just 11.

So in 1998, I'd moved from my home in Baltimore, USA, married an Englishman, and started training as a nurse.

Along the way, I had two children – Noah, now 16, and Molly, 13.

And in time, I started working as a cancer-research nurse, and soon became a cancer-nurse specialist.

My job involved caring for patients who needed more intense treatment, sitting with them through chemo and treating their symptoms. I got to know them, their hopes and dreams.

Seeing someone go into remission after the hell that they'd been through was so rewarding.

But when a patient passed away, it was just devastating. I'd feel for their family.

And it made me value my own so much more.

After my marriage ended in

2010, I started to date Paul, now 44. Life was perfect.

But in May 2016, I started to have problems with my bowels.

Most of my life, they'd been sluggish. I couldn't eat starchy foods, often suffered with constipation.

It was just something I'd learned to live with.

But now the problem was getting worse. I was bloated, lost my appetite, couldn't go to the loo – even with laxatives.

A few months later, my bones started to ache, too.

'I'm worried it's cancer,'

I said to doctors.

But I was told time and again that it was nothing serious.

'Maybe it's work getting to me,' I said to Paul.

Caring for sick people made me think the worst.

This went on for months. Then, one day in early 2017, I had severe pains in my abdomen.

Unable to get a GP appointment, Paul took me straight to hospital – the one where I worked.

There, I was given a scan. But it took longer than normal. Worryingly so.

That niggling anxiety was now impossible to ignore.

'We need to be prepared this

I was told time and time again that it was nothing serious

Don't cry FOR ME

After years caring for cancer sufferers, now Laura Harris, 42, from Barnstaple, knows what it's like from the other side



Marrying Paul: I felt beautiful



My gorgeous kids Noah and Molly

could be cancer,' I said to Paul.

Ten minutes later, we were told just that.

'You have cancer in your spine,' I was informed.

It had started elsewhere in my body. I needed more tests to find out where.

But the part I wasn't expecting was harder to take in.

'It's terminal,' the doctor said. 'But we can prolong your life with chemo and other drugs.'

I was dying?

'What are we going to do?' I said to Paul between sobs.

'Laura, we're going to get married,' he said.

I was really touched, despite everything.

But, together, we faced an

even bigger challenge – telling my children.

Coming together as a family, along with their dad and his new partner, we told Molly and Noah the details.

Hugging me, they were both distraught.

But we reassured them that all of us were there for them.

I took some time off work that January, but was determined to go back after my treatment.

I was officially diagnosed the following Friday, with bowel cancer.

And by the Monday, I began chemotherapy on my unit.

My colleagues were heartbroken to hear the news, as were my patients, who I now sat alongside.

The look of sadness in their eyes broke my heart, too.

It was so strange to be on the other side, like a weird dream.

I started strong, invasive chemo, which I'd have every two weeks, along with other drugs to try to shrink the tumours.

Though I knew what to expect, it didn't make the side effects any easier.

I lost weight, my

skin began to peel. And though I didn't lose my hair, it became so brittle it had to be cropped short.

In the May, I came off the chemo to give my body a rest – and allow time for me to get married.

Seeing Paul's face as I walked into our garden, where we were holding our ceremony, was just priceless.

I'd lost a lot of weight, so my flowing white dress with diamantes hung off me – but I still felt beautiful.

The day was filled with close friends and family, and I was so happy to finally be Paul's wife.

I went back to work as well as starting chemo again.

But this January, we found out it wasn't working.

The only drug that might prolong my life was called bevacizumab, but it wasn't available on the NHS.

And it was expensive. I needed £20,000 just for

the first round. 'Why don't we crowdfund for it?' said my sister-in-law Jo, 37.

So we told the local papers, in the hope someone may help me.

Amazingly, over a few

months, we raised £80,000. I couldn't believe people could be so kind.

In March this year, I started on the drug.

So far, it's stopped the cancer growing any further.

But doctors have said that I may not have more than six months left to live.

Before I go, I want to visit my family in America one more time – I just need to be well enough to fly there.

I've written my will, and we've decided the children will go and live with their dad permanently.

It's heartbreaking to think I won't be here to see my son and daughter grow up.

But I know they'll be in good hands.

As for the medical staff caring for me, I hope they don't shed any tears.

I've loved my life, and I'm determined to keep on living it for as long as I can.

WORDS: SARAH FINLEY, HATTIE BISHOP. PHOTOS: SWMS. FOR MORE INFO, SEE GOFUNDME.COM/LAURA-TREATMENT-FUND



The chemo made my skin peel

MENACE

to society

Elizabeth Stephenson, 45, from Guisborough, worried for her biker son, but danger isn't always on two wheels...



Jailed:
Buckworth

Seeing my lad Sonny wheelie across the field on his motorbike, I felt my stomach flip.

'Look, Mam!' he called, taking his hands off the handles.

'Be careful!' I yelled.

Sonny, 14, was bike mad. He'd started riding his first push bike at 3, ditched his stabilisers in no time.

Soon he was spending hours outside, learning tricks and riding with his friends.

He taught himself to fix up bikes, build his own ramps.

Sonny had some behavioural problems, and he was never able to apply himself in the same way at school.

He struggled to focus, so I began home schooling

him from the age of 12.

But he had a heart of gold, and was always ready to help anybody on our estate who needed it.

Whether it was picking up some shopping or keeping someone company, Sonny would be there.

Other neighbours took him fishing.

'Thank you!' he'd smile when they returned, before showing me photos of fish he'd caught.

My other kids were more reserved, but Sonny would chat to anyone.

If a new family moved onto our street, Sonny would be firm friends with them within an hour.

You couldn't live on our street and not get to know the boy with the bike!

At 13, he rode

a motorbike for the first time on a visit to an off-roading park.

Sonny loved charging around the tracks on quad and dirt bikes and, shortly after, I got him his first motorbike with a small 50cc engine.

At his age, he could legally ride a bike with that size engine without a licence.

Just as he'd done with bicycles, Sonny taught himself how to ride and do tricks with the bike – jumping or riding with no hands.

While I'd worry about him zooming around, his natural talent was obvious.

By 15, he'd outgrown the little 50cc bike, and wanted something

more powerful, so he started buying second-hand bikes on local seller websites.

He'd fix them up and sell them on – using the money for more bikes!

Even more amazing, no-one taught my clever boy how to fix them, he just worked it out!

Last summer, Sonny, then 17, bought a powerful 600cc motorbike for £140.

'You can't ride that on the road,' I told him. 'You don't have a licence!'

'OK, Mam, I'll get rid

of it,' he promised me.

On Sunday 27 August, my sister Hannah, 34, asked if I wanted to go to bingo and see an Elvis impersonator at a social club in Redcar.

When I left that evening, I told the kids, Sonny, Ambrose, then 25, Georgie, 18, and Mercedes, 8, that their nana would do their Sunday tea.

'Don't stay out too late, and don't go riding any motorbikes,' I warned Sonny.

'I won't, Mam – have a good night,' he smiled sweetly.

I put my phone on silent at 9pm for the bingo part of the evening.

When I went to the bathroom, half an hour later, I checked my phone and found loads of missed calls and texts.

Ring me ASAP, it's Sonny, read a text from my other sister Sarah, 37.

Thinking the calls were Sonny using his aunt's phone, I called back, but was surprised when I heard my eldest son Ambrose's voice.

'Sonny's had an accident!' he cried, distressed.

I felt my heart drop. He'd been on that bike, I knew it.

'I'll be right there,' I replied. Grabbing Hannah, I ran

Sonny had a heart of gold, was always ready to help anybody

WORDS: JAMES HANMAN, VICTORIA WILLIAMS. PHOTOS: EVENING GAZETTE, NORTH NEWS & PICTURES LTD



My boy in a toy car and on a quad bike





He'll never come home - my Sonny...

garage but (someone) stopped me.

Thinking the noisy bikes were down to Sonny, he lay in wait and threw a metal shovel at my son's head, breaking his skull, killing him instantly.

The passenger fell off, and Sonny crashed into some roadwork barriers before falling into a hole.

I felt sick. If this man knew who my son was, why didn't he come to me? Or call the police?

Instead, he took the law into his own hands with deadly consequences.

A vigilante bully, with a secret grudge, Buckworth was warped with petty hatred. And, because of that my son was dead.

So who was the real menace to society? Not Sonny.

I screamed in horror when the judge sentenced Buckworth to a measly six years in prison.

I couldn't believe that he was getting off so lightly.

He'd killed my child, but my family and I were given the life sentence.

We'd never see Sonny grow up, but Buckworth will get out one day and see his family.

To me, the sentence felt as if it was telling the public it was OK to take the law into your own hands.

That's why I'm sharing my story, to show the world who Buckworth really is.

Since Sonny's death, I've barely been able to eat or sleep, have been seeing a psychologist.

But it still won't sink in.

Sometimes, I still find myself thinking that Sonny will be back for his tea any minute.

Unlike his killer, my son will never again come home to his loved ones.

outside to find a family friend waiting with her car. She must've been looking for me.

We were driven to the street where Ambrose was waiting, and I was horrified to see an ambulance and police cars, their blue lights blazing.

I noticed the bike I'd told Sonny to get rid of lying on the ground, and a police tent surrounding a hole.

'I'm his mam!' I yelled, trying to get past the police line, but...

'It's too late, Mam, he's dead!' Ambrose sobbed.

The paramedics had tried six times to revive Sonny, but he was gone.

My mind racing, all I could do was scream.

Waiting at Hannah's house while the police did their work, I felt completely numb, unable to accept the horrific news.

Hours later, an officer arrived and took me and Ambrose aside.

'Sonny suffered a major head injury before he fell off the

bike,' he said. 'This is now a murder investigation.'

So it wasn't a bike accident?

I was hysterical, couldn't understand it - Sonny was harmless, who'd kill him?

All we knew was that Sonny had been on that bike with his 15-year-old friend on pillion.

The friend said that a man had come out of the darkness, and thrown a spade at them.

Soon, the police arrested a man named Matthew Buckworth.

We'd never heard of Buckworth, but he lived on the road where it'd happened.

The road where my son died...

We had so many questions as we waited for the case to come to court but first, on 4 October, we had to say a final goodbye.

Sonny lay in an open casket with a motorbike throttle in his hand - he looked as if he was sleeping, and I gave him one last kiss goodbye.

Matthew Buckworth, 34,

That man was a vigilante bully with a secret grudge

appeared at Teesside Crown Court on 18 December, charged with murder, manslaughter and attempted assault occasioning ABH.

He denied murder and was cleared of that charge, but pleaded guilty to manslaughter and attempting to cause actual bodily harm to the 15-year-old.

The court heard Buckworth was angered by frequent noisy motorcyclists riding down his road at night.

He was so angry that he'd taken to Facebook to voice his frustration.

I had a spade ready last night but it didn't come back till I got into bed, his post read, followed by three angry-faced emojis.

A WhatsApp chat revealed something even more sinister.

Buckworth claimed he'd seen Sonny *fly around on a kn*ckered old bike for the last week till silly o'clock in the morning.*

He went on, *Was gunna give him the spade out the*



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Say cheese!

Blake, 8 weeks old, is just the smiliest baby ever. Isn't he cute?!

Jackie Wilson, Basingstoke, Hampshire



Suits you, sir!

My son Theo at 3 days old - definitely the best dressed baby around.

Claire Taylor, Shrewsbury, Shropshire



My fair lady

I think Ophelia-Rose, 5 weeks old, has been perfecting her smile for the camera.

Lindsay Brown, Taunton

'Just end it NOW!'

Why did Charley Stanhope, 28, from Basildon, Essex, beg doctors to let her daughter die?

Snatching up my car keys, I glanced at the clock and sighed. 'Laila, we're going to be late!' I yelled to my 10-year-old daughter.

It was March this year, and we should have left for school a couple of minutes ago.

'Just a sec!' a happy voice trilled. I rolled my eyes.

I was a single mum, Laila my only child. And trying to get her anywhere on time?

A nightmare!

Finally, Laila raced out in a pink coat as bright and bubbly as her personality.

As she chattered all the way to school, I had to smile.

What my girl lacked in time-keeping skills, she certainly made up for in enthusiasm!

Dropping her off, I headed to my job as a security guard.

And when I went to collect Laila later that afternoon, I braced myself for the usual barrage of gossip about her day.

My best friend Rebecca Fowle was with us, had offered to drive us round to her flat for tea. Rebecca was like a sister to me and a brilliant 'auntie' to Laila.

And Laila loved her after-

school visits to Rebecca's flat. She was a right little chatterbox, always so excited.

But this time, Laila was unusually quiet.

'I've got a headache, Mum,' she grumbled.

It must have been a bad one, because by the time we got to our building, Laila had moaned so much I almost had a headache myself!

'OK, grumpy, let's get you some paracetamol,' I said.

Laila went straight up the communal stairs, bursting into Rebecca's flat.

So while Laila waited in the living room, I headed to the kitchen to grab some paracetamol.

'Mind if I raid your cupboards for some medicine?' I asked Rebecca.

Walking back in to the living room, I found Laila lying on the floor.

'Up you get,' I said placing the water and paracetamol on the table.

But to my horror, I saw she was convulsing.

'Call an ambulance!' I



My bubbly girl before...

screamed to Rebecca.

Though I suffered epilepsy myself, Laila had never had a fit before.

Thankfully, the ambulance was quick. Just four minutes later, paramedics were racing her to Basildon Hospital.

In the ambulance, I felt my heart thumping with fear.

Something, a mother's instinct maybe, told me this was more serious than a fit.

That headache...my mind kept flitting back to Laila's headache.

Oh God, please don't let it be anything serious.

At hospital, Laila was rushed off, leaving me and Rebecca pacing the waiting room.

After about 20 minutes, a doctor appeared.

'Laila has a bleed on her brain,' he explained. 'We need to blue-light her to Great Ormond Street.'

'You're lying!' I heard myself

A mother's instinct told me this was more serious than a fit

EMOTIONAL REAL LIFE



Having her back was like a miracle



Today, still in hospital



In a coma, would she ever be the same again..?

shout. Then my knees went and I fell sobbing to the floor.

By now, a friend, Frank, had come to the hospital. He drove me to London.

But as we whizzed past other cars, none of it felt real.

When we arrived, Laila was taken straight to theatre.

'We need to drain the fluid from around her brain,' I was told.

The four-hour wait for news was agonising.

'She's going to be all right,' Frank soothed.

But when Laila came out, she was in a coma. The bleed had affected two-thirds of her brain.

Looking at her lifeless body, I sobbed. Surely a bleed so large would have caused terrible brain damage?

Her little mannerisms, every little giggle and quirk would be gone. Laila without those things wouldn't be my child.

'She may not make the night,' I was warned.

Suddenly, I was

overwhelmed with grief. I couldn't face the thought of my girl being so brain-damaged she had no life.

'Just end it now!' I begged doctors. 'Let me take her home to bury her.'

Hysterical, I was convinced there was no hope, couldn't bear to see her suffer.

But Laila amazed us all. She survived the night.

And, four days on, she was still hanging on.

I was barely hanging on myself. I'd hardly eaten or slept,

friends and family bringing me food and clothes.

'Come on, Laila,' I'd whisper, holding her hand. 'Come back to me.'

Then, four days after she'd collapsed, Laila suffered a heart attack. I watched as doctors frantically tried to resuscitate her.

In that moment, I realised, no matter what her brain damage, I didn't want my daughter to die.

'Save my baby,' I bawled from the corner of the room.

But for six minutes, she flatlined. Six minutes that felt like forever.

Then the machine beeped. She was back!

Alive...just.

Four days on, though, doctors told us there was no hope. It was time to switch off the life-support.

My heart shattered into pieces as I said my goodbyes.

But then a miracle.

'Look! She's

breathing!' a nurse gasped, pointing at a monitor. 'That's her lungs, she's doing that.'

My heart soared. I could hardly believe it.

They weaned her off the machines to see what she could do. And as they removed wires and tubes, I saw Laila move.

Her foot, twitching.

I grabbed her hand, tears streaming down my face.

'I'm right here, Laila,' I said.

Soon it was her ankle, her knee, her leg, then her arm.

Now she can move the left-hand side of her body.

She's opened her eyes, too. She blinks to respond, and laughs as well. Something I've missed so much.

Doctors have no idea how long she'll be in hospital.

That's why I've quit my job. We just take every day as it comes now.

I'm not sure what the future holds, but one thing I do know is I'm so glad the doctors didn't listen when I begged them to end my daughter's life.

I should have known my bubbly, chatty daughter wasn't ready to go quietly.

So, no matter how long it takes, I'm with her all the way.



Laila before (left) and now

WORDS: EMMA ROSSITER, MOLLIE MANSFIELD. PHOTOS: CATERS NEWS AGENCY

Animal magic

Show us what your pets are up to and get **£25 CASH**

My dormice Chip and Dale are just as mischievous as their cartoon counterparts.
Catherine Feeney, Claudy



I'm a sucker for a cool drink



Sharing is caring in the eyes of my kitty. Although I'm impressed she's using the straw.
Holly Burton, Tolleby

PET OF THE WEEK



We like to veg out together

'Is that a bunny or a carrot?' asks my rabbit, Harold. Either way, I think he'd be happy.
Hannah Bradley, Ramsgate



I told my pup to keep the house safe. But this isn't quite what I meant!
David Jackson, Todmorden



Bug hats are all the rage



The look of concentration on Ruby's face... She takes her teatime very seriously.
Lisa Cawley, Carrick-on-Shannon

Hekter loves playing hide-and-seek in the leaves. Here he is saying peekaboo.
Carly Longden, Radcliffe



Pick Me Up!
Bingo



PROMOTION

I'm so happy with my

WIN!

Elaine Allen, 64, from Loughborough, couldn't believe she'd bagged over a grand on a spin!



Elaine's top tip!

'I haven't been a member of Pick Me Up! Bingo for 10 years without picking up a tip or two! My advice would be to only spend what you can afford. Set limits so you don't overspend. And, most importantly, always have fun!'

As my grandson, 21, chatted on the phone, he said, 'I've got lots of exams coming up.'

He was studying for a degree in applied sports science with management at university.

'Just do your best,' I said. And when he visited to say he'd passed, I was thrilled.

After he'd gone, I settled with my computer for a few games of bingo before bed.

I'd been a member of Pick Me Up! Bingo for 10 years.

I really love the slot games like Diamond Bonanza, Tiki Island, Winstones...

I'd had a few small wins. Then in 2013, I bagged £1,000 on one of the slot games.

I'd spoilt my three grandkids with my winnings and put the rest into savings.

I just enjoyed playing the

games and going into the chatrooms.

But this night, I played Diamond Bonanza.

I clicked Spin and watched as the reels spun and spun.

The first spin landed on a diamond. The second landed on a diamond, too. Then a third and fourth...

Soon, I was looking at five diamonds!

My jaw dropped as the screen flashed, 'Winner!' *I've just won £1,110!*

I checked my account balance and, sure enough, I'd won the progressive jackpot.

It was only when the cheque arrived in the post a few days later, that I actually celebrated.

Handing the envelope with the cheque inside to my daughter, I watched

her face as she opened it. 'What's this?' she asked.

'I won £1,110!' I said.

When it came to spending my winnings, I decided to treat myself to a fab new TV. And there was something

else I wanted to do.

My grandson was due to graduate, so I took the family for a nice meal to celebrate.

I still can't believe that I scooped the jackpot.

So I'd like to say a massive thank-you, Pick Me Up! Bingo.

WORDS: CHER HEASMER

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Pick Me Up!
Bingo

I WON £2

while getting my hair cut!

Christine Watson, 71, from Shipley, West Yorks, wanted a new hairdo – but she got a lot more!

It was January and I'd planned a cosy day in from the cold. I settled on the sofa with my laptop and a cuppa, my 4-year-old Morkie dog – a Yorkie crossed with a Maltese – Merlin, slumped on my feet.

'That's lovely and warm, Merlin!' I laughed.

I planned to buy some tickets for a game of Bingo.

A member since May 2011, I

loved playing Bingo online. I'd even won a £1,000 Full House once before in March 2014, while playing Sapphire Bingo.

I spoil my two children, Antony, now 40, and Liz, 43. And, of course, my two wonderful grandchildren!

This time, I decided to buy 20 of the 10p tickets on a 'Buy 2 Get 1 Free' offer to play 75 Ball Bingo in Bingo Lounge.

The next game was starting,

the numbers popping out.

Then I heard a knock on the door. Merlin hurried off at once to greet the guest.

It was my hairdresser – well, a girl needed to look good!

After a few hours nattering and getting my hair trimmed, I'd forgotten about my Bingo game. It was only when my hairdresser had left that I remembered about it.

Oh, well, the game will be finished now, I thought,

opening my laptop to log into my account.

Then I saw a rather large number in my balance, and my jaw dropped. My balance had shot up by £2,266!

I thought my eyes were playing tricks on me, until I got a congratulatory e-mail.

I'd bagged the progressive jackpot of £2,266!

'I've won!' I screamed,

75 BALL BINGO

Playing 75 Ball Bingo, you have a ticket with 24 numbers between 1 and 75. Each game, the numbers will be in a specific pattern, such as a Pyramid or Triangle, or a Blackout where all the numbers are marked off. The first player to mark off and complete the winning pattern or Blackout wins!

There are four 75 Ball Bingo rooms to choose from at Pick Me Up! Bingo – Bingo Lounge, Speed Bingo, Bingo 20 and Round the Clock.



2,266



I scooped
a whopper
Bingo win!

scaring poor Merlin.

He tilted his head as if to say, *what's wrong with her now...?*

'I can't believe it!' I cried to him - but he walked off. He'd had enough of my shrieking!

I rang my daughter. 'You won't believe this...' I began.

'Amazing news, Mum!' she replied. 'Now you can get a new mobile phone.'

She was right. My ancient phone had been playing up.

I rang my son, as well, who was over the moon for me.

'Let's celebrate with a big family meal!' I told him.

I ended up spoiling them both rotten,

with a huge meal for my kids and grandchildren.

Plus, I gave both of my grandkids £100 each.

To top it all off, I treated myself to a brand-new vacuum cleaner, as my old one had packed up.

Of course, I gave Merlin some treats for putting up with all of my drama.

While playing Bingo online, you see people winning all the time. But you don't think it'll be you who wins next - only, I did.

And if I can win, then anybody can!

Thank you so much, Pick Me Up! Bingo.

PROMOTION

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Leo constantly checked his appearance...

'Why did I GUESS

Her son was hiding a devastating secret, and Mel Ruggeri, 49, from south London, had no idea...

As I watched my son Leo sprinting across the rugby pitch, I almost had to do a double take.

'When did my baby grow up?' I wondered. But he certainly had.

Now 14, my eldest was broad-shouldered and 6ft tall.

He was made for rugby and had played in the school team for years. A growing lad, he ate me out of house and home.

I'd try to steer him towards healthy treats like yogurts and cereal bars, but no doubt he ate some junk, too.

Still, I wasn't worried. He burned it all off playing rugby.

Then, when Leo was in Year 10, in November 2015, he came home from school quieter than usual.

'I want to eat better,' he said. 'No more sugary stuff.'

I thought it was great that he wanted to get healthier.

Months passed and I noticed Leo's body changing.

Just shedding puppy fat, I thought.

I'd catch him glancing in the mirror, quickly pulling down his T-shirt when I'd walk past.

'Someone's getting a bit vain!' I joked.

I reckoned it was a phase he was going through. Just like those horrible baggy

T-shirts he'd started wearing.

Then, in August 2016, we went on our annual holiday to Italy, visiting family.

Normally, Leo was the first to whip off his T-shirt and jump into the water.

This time, though, he refused to get undressed and swam wearing his T-shirt and shorts.

I noticed he was constantly looking in the mirror, touching his jaw, and putting his fingers round his wrist.

Back home, Leo started tracking his food using an app on his phone.

'You're not dieting, are you?' I asked, concerned.

'No, just making sure I get

2,000 calories a day,' he reassured me.

That sounded sensible.

Only, Leo began weighing his food down to the last gram.

Breakfast was porridge with water. He came home from school with an empty lunch box, then watched over me as I cooked his dinner of fish and steamed greens.

After school, he spent an hour in the gym, lifting weights.

'He's just being healthy,' I told myself. But I was beginning to worry.

It wasn't normal to be this obsessive about looks, was it?

'Let's go to the doctor,' I said. 'To make sure everything's OK.'

'I'm fine,' he insisted.

But I put my foot down.

'Let's see what the doctor says,' I replied.

At the surgery, I spoke to the GP privately. 'I think Leo's suffering from body dysmorphia,' I explained.

I'd done my research. I'd learned it was a mental-health condition where someone spends a lot of time worrying about flaws in their appearance that others can't see.

Then Leo came in and

stood on the scales. He weighed 12st 9lb, had his BMI checked.

'You don't have to worry,' the doctor said. Given Leo's height, he was in the healthy range.

But I pushed, told him about Leo's habits – the fear of showing his body, the reflection-checking, the clean eating.

Hearing that, the doctor referred us to an eating-disorder clinic.

On 31 January 2017, we went for Leo's assessment.

It lasted five hours.

As well as a psychiatrist and counsellor observing him, several doctors spoke to Leo, ran tests, put him on an ECG

machine to check his heart rate.

I saw the look of panic on Leo's face as he was asked to remove his T-shirt.

And when he did, I held back tears.

It was the first time I'd seen him topless in a year.

His stomach was so flat...and he sucked it in further, self-conscious.

The ECG was clear. His resting heart rate was lower than average, but he was athletic. No cause for concern.

Then we were given Leo's diagnosis.

'I'm afraid your son has anorexia,' the doctor said.

'Excuse me?' I asked.

I'd heard of anorexia, of course, the mental illness where people try to keep their weight as low as possible.

But my Leo couldn't be anorexic – he still ate his meals. And I hadn't heard much

I saw the panic on his face as he was asked to remove his T-shirt



Before - he was a fit lad

dn't SS?!



My boy finally opened up to me...



His hips stuck out like knives

our holiday that summer, Leo was down to 8st 9lb. His hips stuck out like knives.

In September, Leo started sixth form, but he couldn't focus.

One evening in October, he said he needed time to get better, asked for a year's break from school.

'I need help, Mum,' he said.

Leo agreed to try one-to-one counselling, started opening up. He also started watching bodybuilding videos on YouTube.

Then, in November, as I prepared dinner, he seemed excited.

I e-mailed a nutritionist in California called Terry Placker. He's an ex-marine. I think he can help me,' he grinned.

When Terry replied a few days later, offering his help, Leo was over the moon.

I spoke to Terry, who said he'd get medical advice – but, all going well, could create a food plan for Leo.

Ten days later, Leo received the first meal plan, was thrilled.

He started following it religiously, increasing his food intake, determined to get a

muscular, athletic physique like bodybuilders he admired.

Now Leo eats five egg whites and porridge for breakfast.

For lunch, he has chicken, vegetables, yogurt, fruit.

His dinner is similar, but includes rice and potatoes.

He still watches over me, makes sure I don't add oil or salt, but at least he's eating.

We're getting there.

Every week, he checks in with Terry. He stopped going to the gym while he regained his energy, but recently went back. He's starting slowly, with help from a personal trainer, also in the US, Sahil.

At his last weigh-in, Leo was 13st 2lb. I'm so proud of how hard he's working to get better.

A couple of months ago, Leo admitted it had all started one day at school, when they were discussing BMIs and someone said to Leo that he was obese.

'After that, I threw my lunch in the bin every day,' he said.

I was fuming, disappointed that anyone could say that to him.

So irresponsible!

Leo was never obese. He was tall, athletic. With a bit of puppy fat at most.

But what matters is that he is healthy again.

Terry is planning to visit us

this summer. Leo can't wait.

He has so much respect for Terry, trusts him, and is grateful for his commitment.

As for me, I can't thank Terry enough. If it wasn't for him, I don't think I'd have my son.

Terry says, 'When Leo got in touch, I had to help. I'd never worked with someone with his health problems, but took medical advice, started sending meal plans, and recently got him back in the gym. It's a challenge, but we've built a good relationship. I try and keep him positive and realistic.'

about boys being anorexic.

I turned to Leo, who sat in silence, tears welling.

'I'm sorry, Mum,' he said.

But it wasn't his fault.

'Why didn't I guess?' I cried.

All the signs were there.

Back home, I could barely sleep, checked on Leo during the night.

We started group sessions at a clinic for young people with eating disorders. Their main focus was to get him eating well again.

But Leo struggled to follow the meal plan. It included things like full-fat milk and yogurts – things he hadn't eaten for over a year.

I encouraged him to try, but it was a losing battle.

One day in April, they showed a video of the long-term effects of anorexia – emaciated, tube-fed kids.

Leo buried his head in his hands. It was too much, so I made an excuse for us to leave.

'I don't want to go back, Mum,' he said.

I couldn't force him. But by

Now he eats five egg whites and porridge for breakfast!



Building up his muscle again

Look Amazing!

Discover the best sun protection for you



Best for tan enhancing:
Nivea Sun Protect & Bronze Tan Activating Protecting Oil SPF30, £8, Superdrug This spray contains a natural pro-melanin extract that helps stimulate your skin's natural tanning process, without self tan.

Best for city sun protection:
Wilko Suncare Lotion SPF50, £1.50
 Perfect for your handbag, hand luggage or glove box! As well as being SPF50, this cream contains vitamin E, which is a great antioxidant that helps protect against skin damage.



Best for once-a-day application:
Soltan Once Advanced 8hr Protect Suncare Lotion SPF50+, £10
 If you find applying suncream a bit of a faff, then this offers up to 8 hours of sun protection, even after just one application! Plus, it has one of the highest UVA star ratings.



Best for kids:
Lacura SPF50+ Kids Extra Sensitive Sun Spray, £1.99, Aldi
 With up to 24 hours of moisturisation, and SPF50+, this will protect even the most delicate of skin.



Best for hair:
5 Mark Hill Protective UV Shield, £5
 Don't neglect your hair on holiday! The sun can dry it out, cause dullness and affect colour. This spray protects against UVB and UVA rays.



Best for after-sun care:
Garnier After Sun Tissue Mask, £2.99
 If you've overdone it in the sun (naughty), this is ideal for soothing and hydrating red faces. Thanks to the witch hazel and hyaluronic acid, skin is left looking fresh and plump.



Best for lips:
Carmex Pineapple Mint Lip Balm, £2.79, Superdrug
 You've got your face and body protected in the sun, but don't forget your lips - they can also suffer. So pop this tasty SPF15 lip balm in your beach bag.

Your telly Pick of the week

You definitely won't want to miss these TV treats



2017 Winner:
Roger Federer



Rafael
Nadal



Johanna
Konta

**DON'T
MISS**

Wimbledon 2018, BBC1 & BBC2

The strawberries are picked and the Pimm's is on ice, as the world's tennis stars descend on Wimbledon for the start of the tournament. It's hard to see past Roger Federer or Rafael Nadal for the men's singles, but can British hope Kyle

Edmund push them? Simona Halep and Caroline Wozniacki, are strong contenders for the ladies singles and, of course, Serena Williams if she's fit. But there are wild cards that could surprise us. Can Britain's Johanna Konta do better than expected?



Keith Lemon: Coming In America, ITV2

Keith Lemon heads over to LA to wow TV bigwigs, with the hope of getting his own US chat show. Cameras follow him during this six-parter and among the stars he gets advice from are Sharon and Jack Osbourne, ex Spice Girl Emma Bunton, John Barrowman and rock star Gene Simmons.

Poldark, BBC1

There's heartbreak for new parents Caroline and Dr Dwight Enys as he reveals their baby has a heart defect and won't live long. A blasting accident leads to a disastrous flood at the Wheal Grace tin mine, so there are big heroics from Ross, Drake and Dwight. Meanwhile, the vile vicar Ossie is back visiting Rowella, and becomes determined to have his poor wife Morwenna committed to an asylum...



The Misadventures of Romesh Ranganathan, BBC2

Comic Romesh visits beautiful but dangerous places in his new three-part travelogue. Staying with locals, he's given an insider's guide to countries that are unspoilt by tourists because of their bad reputations...



To Provide All People, BBC2

This one-off drama has an all-star cast and marks the 70th anniversary of the NHS. The story revolves around 24 hours in one hospital. It reveals the lives of patients, surgeons, nurses and porters. Expect traumas and plenty of medical emergencies!



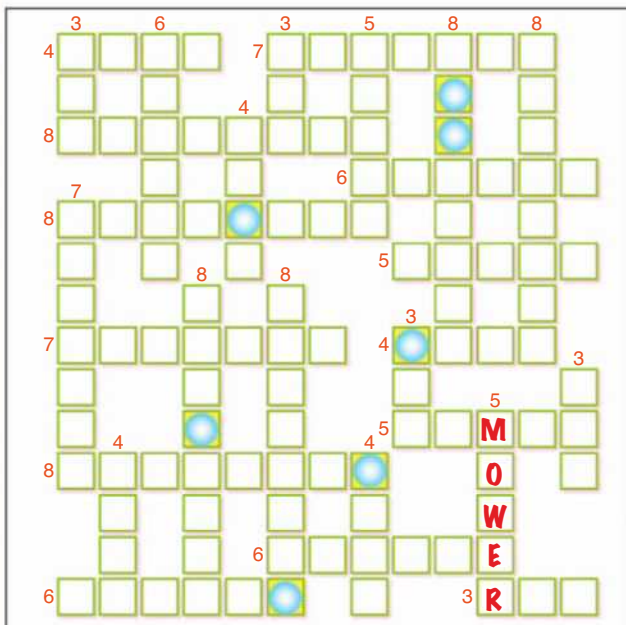
Holby City, BBC1

As Holby celebrates the 70th birthday of the NHS, Ric and Serena are caught up in a major incident that will show how the Service copes in a big crisis. Elsewhere, Abigail and Fletch face facts over their relationship and Sheilagh tells grandson Lofty how she feels about him and Dom.

WIN £25!

Cross it!

Solve the puzzle to find a word. Fit the words back in the grid and the letters in the highlighted squares spell out the answer. We've put in one word to help.
Enter on page 45.



- | | | | | | |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 3 letters | 4 letters | 5 letters | 6 letters | 7 letters | 8 letters |
| Add | Calm | Domed | Argyle | Exhibit | Aquarium |
| Cud | Ease | Flare | Grater | Taffeta | Euphoria |
| Pip | Lust | Mower | Reheat | Taverna | Placenta |
| Rot | Pogo | Trail | Tissue | | Titivate |
| Ton | Pour | | | | Treasure |
| | | | | | Wizardry |
| | | | | | Approval |

WIN £25!

Sudoku!

To solve the puzzle, each 3 x 2 box, each column and each row must contain the numbers 1 to 6. Solve the puzzle, then read down the numbers in the highlighted squares for the prize answer.
Enter on page 45.

	1			5	
		5		2	3
					5
2					
6	2		5		
	4			6	

On the pole and read

Shannon Colbear, 27, from Appleby, Cumbria, wasn't about to let a little thing like a pregnancy bump get in the way of her passion...

Lifting my weights, I let out a deep sigh. But not from exhaustion, more like boredom. It was February 2016 and I was getting tired of my workout regime.

I'd do high-intensity interval training, bursts of press-ups, sit-ups, as well as weights. A full-time mum, the routine worked well with looking after my children – Braedon, 6, Eddie, 4 and Iyana, 2.

But I wanted to try something where I could progress, rather than doing the same old routine over and over again.

Online, I found a pole-fitness class which was just an hour away from where we live.

Cumbria Pole Art classes offered a fun way to keep fit, plus the chance to learn a skill.

Pole dancing is great for core strength and increases tone and flexibility.

Days later, I went to my first lesson, leaving the children with my husband Raymond, 33.

'Have fun!' he said, smiling. Arriving at the studio, I felt nervous.

But my classmates were all

beginners like me – and the instructors were so friendly.

As we were taught the basics, gripping the pole and pulling our body weight up with our arms, I felt motivated to get as fit and strong as possible.

I loved every second, couldn't wait for the following week.

This fun, new exercise thrilled me and I felt great.

Within two months, I could climb the pole and perform all sorts of impressive moves.

'You're a real natural,' my instructor complimented me as I hung upside down!

Around this time, I was able to convince Raymond to let me install a pole in our room, so I could practise at home, too.

Well, he didn't actually take that much convincing!

My instructors also ran a special hoop class, where you can perform acrobatics



pole
dy to

Still spinning at 30 weeks!



POP!



Raymond told me to have fun!

inside a hoop which is suspended from the ceiling. My abilities improved – and last February, the owner of Cumbria Pole Art had an unexpected question for me. ‘Would you like to teach at our new studio?’ she asked. ‘Absolutely!’ I said, enthused by the faith that she’d put in me. Over the

following months, I got my insurance and qualifications to become an instructor, and I actually began teaching in July. However, juggling three kids with my five lessons a week wasn’t that easy. Me and Raymond also ran Country Campbell Duck Eggs, a free-range duck-egg business, but somehow we managed. I’d look after the kids in the day and Raymond took over at night, while I taught my class – the money came in handy! But, a month later, I started feeling tired and lethargic. *Maybe I’ve taken on too*

much, I thought. Then I had an inkling about something...so I took a pregnancy test. And it was positive! ‘Look!’ I laughed to Raymond. ‘Amazing!’ he replied, hugging me. We were so pleased to be parents for the fourth time and the kids were really excited to have a new sibling, too. Having only just started teaching, I asked the midwife if I’d still be able to keep up my pole fitness while pregnant. To my relief, I was told that there was no medical reason why I couldn’t. ‘Just don’t fall off!’ smiled the midwife. So I carried on teaching – and, in the meantime, all my scans were fine. By 20 weeks, my bump was really showing, making pole fitness much harder than before. Suddenly, I was worrying about

hitting my belly as I was spinning around the pole! But I kept on practising and made sure that I was as careful as I was determined. The extra weight on my tummy took a while to get used to – but, before long, I was spinning around the pole and standing on my head as if nothing had changed! ‘Be careful!’ my students would sometimes scold, wincing while watching me. But I had faith in my abilities and never did anything that would endanger my unborn baby. Plus I listened to my body...

If I was too tired or feeling fragile, I’d just give my classes a miss. I started posting some photos and videos of myself online, showing off my skills. ‘Wow!’ people would comment in response. ‘You’re amazing!’ said others. There were no negative responses at all, everyone was very encouraging. My kids loved it, too, and would watch me in awe when I was practising at home. Only, in early February this year, when I was 23 weeks

pregnant, Raymond started to raise some concerns. ‘Maybe you should put teaching on hold,’ he said. He was right, teaching was getting harder the bigger I got. Plus I was finding the five lessons a week very tiring. I found that, by now, I’d be telling my students how to do things far more than actually showing them. So I decided to hand my classes over to another instructor. I’ll take them back up again once I’m settled after having the baby, though! And I still practise at home when I can. If I can get the kids off the pole that is! Braedon, now 8, Eddie, 6, and Iyana, 4, love playing on the pole, and I wouldn’t be surprised if they take it up themselves once they’re old enough. Now I’m ready for our new arrival any day now... Overall, I haven’t felt as rough through this pregnancy as I did during my others. So perhaps there really is something to be said for being a pregnant pole dancer!

I worried about hitting my belly as I spun around the pole

FOLLOW SHANNON ON INSTAGRAM @SHANNON_COLBEAR WORDS: JAMES HANMAN, LUCY BRYANT

Easy eats...



Hot STUFF

Spice things up with these easy recipes... and help Tabasco celebrate its 150th year!

Ultimate Avocado Toast

Serves 2. Prep: 10 min Cook: 10 min

- 2 slices thick-cut sourdough bread
- 2tbsp melted butter
- 50g cucumber, thinly sliced
- 50g celery, diced in 1cm chunks, plus handful of celery leaves, reserved
- ½tbsp white wine vinegar
- Pinch of sea salt
- 1tsp Tabasco
- 1 avocado, sliced
- 1tbsp sesame seeds
- Black peppercorns

1 Brush slices of bread with melted butter. Lightly toast bread in a dry, nonstick pan, then set aside to cool.

2 Mix together cucumber, diced celery chunks, vinegar, salt and Tabasco,

then stir well and check the seasoning is to your taste.

3 With a slotted spoon, pile celery mixture on both slices of toast.

4 Arrange avocado slices on top in a fan, then finish with sesame seeds, salt and freshly cracked pepper. Garnish with celery leaves.

Spicy Beef Chilli

Serves 6. Prep: 15 min Cook: 1 hr, 45 min



£1.53
per
serving

- 60ml vegetable oil
- 1.5kg lean braising steak, well-trimmed and cut into 2cm chunks
- 150g chopped onion
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 3tbsp chilli powder
- 2tsp ground cumin
- 2tsp salt
- 1½tsp Tabasco
- 113g can green chillies, drained and chopped

To serve:

- 800g cooked rice
- 1 onion, chopped
- Shredded Cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese
- Sour cream

1 Heat oil over medium-high heat in a 5L heavy saucepan. In three batches, brown beef well. With a slotted

spoon, remove each batch when cooked and set aside in a separate bowl.

2 Add onion and garlic to saucepan and cook, stirring frequently, for 5 min, or until tender. Stir in chilli powder, cumin, salt and Tabasco and cook for 1 min.

3 Add 720ml water and green chillies and bring to a boil. Return beef to the pan. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, for 1 hr 30 min, until beef is tender.

4 Serve chilli over rice and garnish with onion, cheese and sour cream.

WIN £50
PUZZLE 8

Bitesize!

1	2	3	4
5			
6			
7			

ACROSS

- 1 Cook using hot water
- 5 Fierce giant
- 6 Decrease speed
- 7 Forward

DOWN

- 1 Overseer
- 2 Gape rudely
- 3 Ferrous metal
- 4 Lustful, unchaste

Read down the shaded squares for the prize answer. To enter, see p45.

Avery Island Wings

Serves 6. Prep: 15 min (plus marinating) Cook: 15 min

- 240ml soy sauce
- 120ml Dijon mustard
- 2 x 60ml bottles Tabasco
- 1 whole bulb of garlic, peeled and chopped
- 2tsp fresh ginger, peeled and chopped
- 2tbsp parsley, chopped
- 2tsp thyme, chopped
- 2tsp sage, chopped
- 2tsp rosemary, chopped
- 18 whole, large chicken wings, or 24 small wings

1 Whisk soy sauce, mustard, Tabasco, garlic, ginger and herbs together in a bowl with 120ml water. Reserve 120ml of marinade for basting and sauce.

2 Add chicken wings and remaining marinade to a ziplock bag, seal and turn the bag a couple of times to make

sure chicken is well coated. Put in the fridge overnight.

3 Heat reserved marinade in a pan to use to baste chicken while cooking, reserving some for sauce. Fire up the BBQ or heat a griddle pan to high.

4 Take chicken from sealed bag and discard marinade. If using BBQ, grill chicken over medium-low coals for 15 min, basting and turning often, until thoroughly cooked. If griddling, turn pan down to medium heat and add the chicken. Baste and turn often, until cooked through. Ensure the chicken cooks thoroughly and the glaze browns, but doesn't burn. Serve wings with remaining hot marinade as sauce.

Treat
of the
Week

£1.43
per
serving



WHY ARE OUR KIDS

DEPRESSED

More children than ever are being treated for mental-health conditions

As a parent, you know what to do if your child is poorly with a cold, a bump on the knee, even a broken arm.

After seeking medical attention, there's not a lot that a cuddle from Mum can't help.

But what do you do if you can't see what your child is suffering from?

What if their illness is not physical but mental?

It's something parents all over the country are having to face, as more kids than ever

before are being diagnosed with, and treated for, mental-health conditions such as anxiety, depression and low self-esteem.

It does sound shocking.

After all, childhood is supposed to be the most happy, carefree time of our lives.

But the number of children referred by their schools for mental-health treatment has risen by a third

in the past three years.

Research conducted by the NSPCC discovered that between 2017-2018, there were 34,757 referrals from education settings to the NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), compared to 25,140 between 2014-2015.

Shockingly, more than half

Three in four mental illnesses start in childhood

Online bullying is a big worry

of these came from primary schools, the youngest child referred for help being just 3 years old.

So why are we experiencing an explosion in childhood mental-health problems?

Ask any parent and the chances are they'll flag up one particular concern – social media, and the risk of associated bullying.

Social media can also exacerbate children's and young people's body-image worries, worsen sleep problems and increase feelings of anxiety, depression and loneliness.

Last year, a survey by the Royal Society for Public Health examined a number of well-known social-media platforms for their impact on young people's mental health and wellbeing.

Instagram and Snapchat were judged to be the most harmful, while YouTube topped the

CLUES IN PLAY

It's difficult for younger kids to use words to express themselves if they're feeling upset. The NHS advises that you can learn a lot about how they're feeling by spending time with them and watching them play.

Stressed and upset children often play fighting games. Comment on this by saying 'There are a lot of fights going on' or 'It seems pretty frightening', to encourage them to open up about what's bothering them.

If you can get them talking, gently ask what's wrong. But if the child doesn't want to open up, let the subject go, then repeat the process at another time, until they're ready to tell you what's bothering them.



Games can reveal a lot



HOT TOPIC

One in 10 children aged from 5 to 16 has a mental-health problem

table as the most positive.

Poppy O'Neill is the author of *You're A Star: A Child's Guide to Self-Esteem*, a book that combines proven cognitive-behavioural therapy used by child psychologists with simple activities to help children grow their self-esteem.

But she believes the problems facing our kids can't be blamed solely on social media.

Poppy says, 'In my opinion, the rise in mental-health problems among children is down to a complex range of reasons, including increased financial pressures on families, schools and local services, as well as pressures from technology, social media and academic testing.'

So what can parents do if

their kids are being affected negatively by things outside their control?

The first step is to know what signs to look out for.

Common symptoms of mental-health problems in kids include a child becoming withdrawn, persistent low

moods, tearfulness and irritability, as well as a loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy.

Some also have physical symptoms, such as headaches and stomachaches.

If you do discover your child is suffering, an appointment with the doctor is the next step, and they may suggest a referral to CAMHS for further help.

But as with many NHS services, money is tight.

In January 2017, Prime Minister Theresa May announced plans to transform attitudes to mental health, with a focus on children and young people.

She said the Government plan 'starts with ensuring that children and young people get the help and support they need and deserve – because we know that mental illness too often starts in childhood and that when left untreated, can blight lives'.

But there has been concern that planned investment will not reach the right places.

Dame Esther Rantzen, Founder and President of Childline, told Pick Me Up!, 'Mental health is now the most common reason young people are counselled by Childline, and for the significant numbers who tell us they have been turned away from NHS services or who need help outside school hours, it may well be their only source of support.'

Young people are telling us they are overwhelmed with mental-health issues, such as depression and anxiety, which is taking many of them to the brink of suicide. Our counsellors are literally saving lives, and it concerns us that we cannot help every

Here's what You say...

'I think social media is a platform for bullying. You can't avoid it, no matter how hard you try. I have had issues with my 11-year-old being targeted by bullies. Companies need to monitor accounts more strongly.'

Natalie Bee, Peterborough



'I blame social media, and although it's good that mental-health awareness is raised because of publicity, talking about it too much may scare kids.'

Debbie Hadden, Stourbridge



'I've always taught my children that it's important to talk about feelings. I've told them how I felt sad myself after suffering from PND and PTSD, explaining that it's OK to feel this way.'

Stacey Ann Hutchins, Oldbury



child who desperately needs us.'

While funding of services for young people with mental-health problems is undoubtedly hugely important, what can parents do, closer to home?

Poppy O'Neill offers this advice... 'Parents can help their children first and foremost by listening to them. Try to gently challenge or question when children speak negatively about themselves and when they compare themselves to others.'

'Take care to engage with your child's interests and praise them when they've tried their best. Let them know that whatever they are feeling is OK, even if it's uncomfortable, and that it will pass.'

Helplines

- **Young Minds' free Parents Helpline offers advice: call 0808 802 5544.**
- **Kids themselves can call Childline on 0800 1111 or visit the website childline.org.uk**
- **Go to nhs.uk and search 'CAMHS' for information on NHS services that work with children and young people who have difficulties with their emotional or behavioural wellbeing.**

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Puzzle entry

Issue 27, 5 July 2018 Closing date for all entries: **11 July 2018** (three working days later for postal entries)

Puzzle 1 A quick word! p3

Final answer

Puzzle 2 Follow it! p8

Final answer

Puzzle 3 Crack it! p20

Final answer

Puzzle 4 Strike it! p22

Final answer

Puzzle 5 Number fit! p22

Final answer

Puzzle 6 Cross it! p38

Final answer

Puzzle 7 Sudoku! p38

Final answer

Puzzle 8 Bitesize! p41

Final answer

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Full name _____

Address _____

E-mail address _____

Postcode _____

Daytime tel _____

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lifedeathprizes.com/win

TEXT Simply text **PMUA** followed by your answers (spaces between answers please) full name, door number and postcode to

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8 Winners may be requested to cooperate with publicity arising as a result of winning a competition.

PRIZE PUZZLE ANSWERS

Issue 25, 21 June 2018

Cross it!

```

AQUA ABODE
C U S A L
ABASHED DRAMA
L R W D R B S
FETA E I R S I
S O TRACE A I N
K A O I N
I D L A T R Y G U T
N L R T O N H
E U T O N H
A V A R I C E T
R G K F I X
M E D I A L E
Y C E N T R E E
    
```

Follow it!

```

B C P B O T T
I G L O O M T I O N
T A N T W T I S
A T A P U S H L O O S E
H H S O L O B A
M B E S S E C T I O N S
B E A U F R E A O M E A T
C L O S P U R N U S U R P M
C O V E S D I G U P P E T
D R E T R O B A R O S E
M R S P F L A S K S U N
A L O W F E D H A T E D
S M O O C H S O W R I U V
A C C H I T S E A D D O N
E T N A R I M V E I L A L E
I T E R R A C E D S E R V E
A C R E S E T T Y P O T E D
    
```

Crack it!

```

T A B O O P A P E R B
Y E R R I A G E D
P E S S I M I S M S L
E I G V I N H A L E
D U D A M A Z E A B O D Y
E M C N O B O D Y
M Y S T I F Y T L O O
O U S O M E O N E
S U N T R A P A N
T O S J A C K D A W
C H O R U S O L I
F U N I T E O A K
Q U O R U M N A X N
L E I N T E N S I V E
P L E A N L E D A
Y M U G G Y D R E A D
    
```

H E T N F M O U W Z I G J
A R P L Q V Y S C B X K D

Win without finishing!

```

O T C P A E
A U D I T O R R E D T A P E
T E N A H I
T O L D O F F U N B L O C K
F U E V U E
C O M P A T R I O T T U T U
R T R I R
A D R O P I N T H E O C E A N
E I U M D
B R A N S T E P B Y S T E P
T Q S A E P
G L A M O U R B R A V E R Y
A E A K E I
U N K N O W N V E R R U C A
E T K D E E
    
```

Sudoku! 6,2,5

Strike it! Reprobate

Number fit! 3923

Bitesize! Sane

Crack it! Purify

A quickword! Brighter

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IS YOUR NAME HERE?

Prize winners, Issue 19, 10 May 2018

£25 An Answer!
P Robinson,
Bexley.

Strike it!
N Jones,
Gloucester.

Sudoku!
J Hayward,
Bradford.

Crack it!
E Marsh,
Bury St
Edmunds

Cross it!
A Mytton,
Birmingham.

Number fit!
J Garciamarcos,
Ascot.

Follow it!
A Bedford,
Hereford.

A quick word!
C Singleton,
Kilmarnock.

Bitesize!
D Kelly,
London.

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WIN
PUZZLE 9

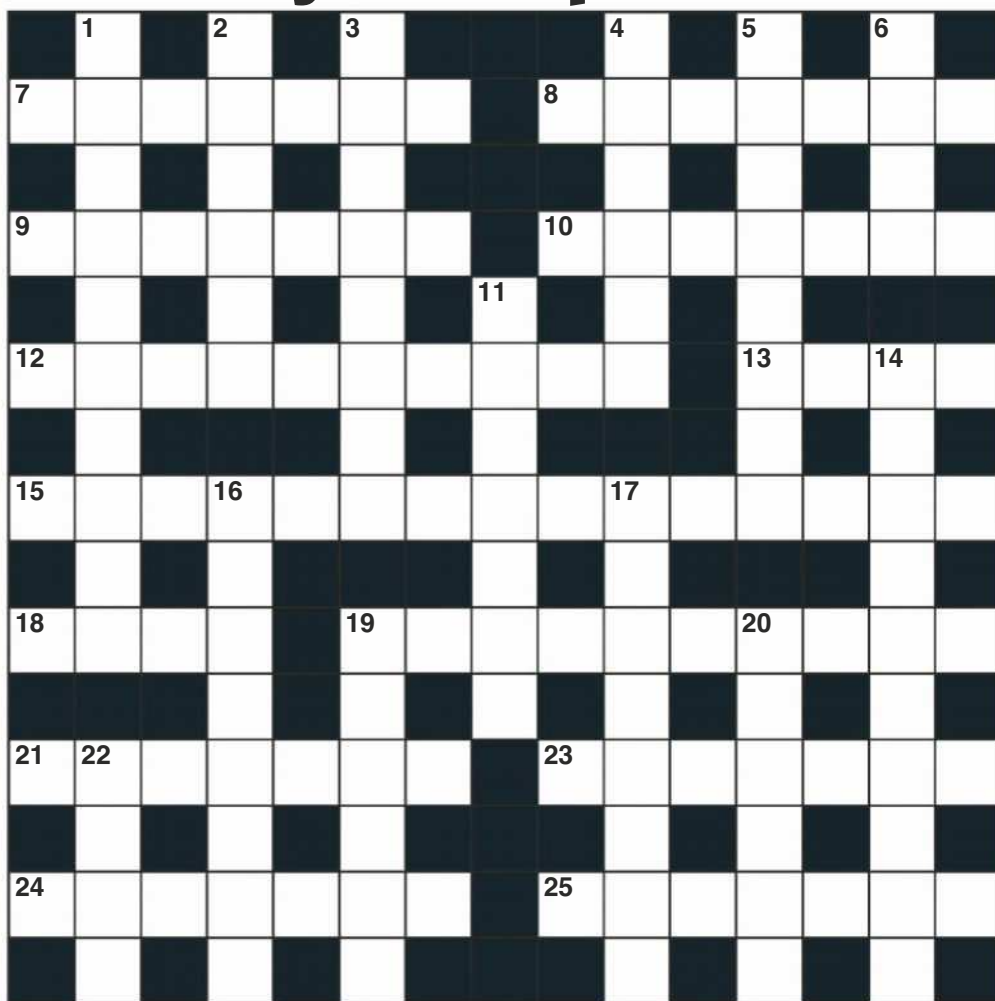
Win without finishing!

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if you complete the lot!

How this special puzzle works: If your entry is first out of the hat, you win £25 for every correct answer, and if you've correctly completed the lot, we'll make the winning total up to £1,000! Fill in the coupon overleaf and send the whole page to enter.



ACROSS

- 7 Bad guy (7)
- 8 Apparent contradiction (7)
- 9 Topic, theme (7)
- 10 Keeps (traditions) going (7)
- 12 Frailty (10)
- 13 Recording ribbon (4)
- 15 Growing vegetables for sale (6,9)
- 18 Correct, check (a text) (4)
- 19 Member of the upper class (10)
- 21 Spot, pimple (7)
- 23 Moved, changed position (7)
- 24 Dishearten (7)
- 25 Protective item for a roller-skater (4-3)

DOWN

- 1 Clock or watch part (6,4)
- 2 Winter immunisation (3,3)
- 3 Careful, cautious (8)
- 4 University grounds (6)
- 5 Denise ____, actress and TV presenter (3,5)
- 6 Frog-like creature (4)
- 11 Made from pottery (7)
- 14 Big feast before Lent (7,3)
- 16 *House of Cards* star (4, 4)
- 17 Jilting, dumping (8)
- 19 Give help (6)
- 20 Clipped round the ear! (6)
- 22 Stare lustfully (4)



The **only** prize crossword in the world you don't have to finish to win!

PRAYERS answered!

When Nadya Dicheva, 31, from Manchester, asked a saint for help, she didn't expect him to answer...



Did I have some special guidance?

As my boyfriend Dimitar took my hand, my knees went weak. A sailor, he'd just got back from six months at sea. Now, he'd said he had something to tell me.

Was he going to propose?! 'I want to break up,' he said, sighing. 'I'm sorry.'

I felt as if I'd been punched in the stomach.

It was June 2013, and Dimitar and I had been together for 18 months. I'd thought we had a future together.

Now I felt like a fool. Heartbroken, everything in my home town of Varna, Bulgaria, reminded me of him.

So I decided to take a short trip to Thrace, on the border between Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey.

Some culture would take my mind off my pain. Steeped in myth, Thrace is a melting pot of cultures and traditions, as beautiful and mysterious as ever.

After visiting some ancient sites, I visited Demir Baba Tekke – a mausoleum for a 16th-century Islamic saint.

As I approached the shrine, a man in his early 60s and dressed in dark robes like a monk, was staring at me.

Walking past, I went inside – and was awestruck.

The veneration of tombs and

cemeteries is forbidden in strict Islam.

But for the Alevis – followers of a branch of Shi'a Islam – this tomb is a sacred place where they come to pray, or ask the saint for forgiveness or help.

Although I'm not Muslim, I was struck by the spirituality of the place. It felt as if I was fated to be there.

Walking past the saint's tomb, I murmured a little prayer.

Help me find The One...

Perhaps I was imagining it, but I felt a sensation of peace.

As we left the tomb, I noticed the monk was still there.

'I was wondering, what is the

purpose of your visit?' he asked with a smile.

'I've been so unlucky in love,' I confessed. 'I came to find happiness.'

The monk thought for a moment.

'In two months, you will meet a man,' he said. 'You will be happy, you will have a serious relationship.'

'He won't be from your town, but another city.'

'Thank you,' I said politely, not believing a word.

Back home, I logged onto a dating site some girlfriends had recommended – and, immediately, one particular guy caught my eye.

His name was Dimitar, like my ex – but I didn't let that put me off!

He was intelligent,

good-looking, and seemed funny and kind.

The only trouble was, he lived in Manchester, in the UK.

He was Bulgarian, like me, but working as head chef in a swanky restaurant there.

Soon, we progressed from messaging to chatting on the phone.

'I wish we could meet in person,' I sighed one evening, after we'd been chatting for a couple of weeks.

'We can!' he said. 'I'm coming over

for five days at the beginning of August.'

Something clicked in my brain – that'd be exactly two months after I'd met the monk at the shrine. Could his prediction be coming true...?

Yes, it could! When Dimitar and I met, it was love at first sight.

We had a passionate five days, and have been inseparable ever since.

I eventually found work, moved to Manchester, and two years later we married.

When I think of the mysterious monk and Demir Baba Tekke, I have to smile.

I'd asked for help and was given more than I ever expected!

A man dressed in dark robes was staring at me...



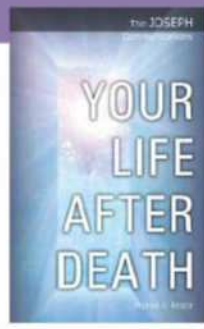
I met a monk at a mausoleum...



...and found my man in Manchester

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Your Stars

28 June - 4 July 2018

7 days of hope & happiness with Claire Petulengro

ARIES

21 March-20 April

The full moon is making it hard to know who you can trust. Think about what you want from your future, as decisions you make now can dictate where you'll live in the world. Conversations with family reveal that a guilty party was actually innocent in recent dramas...

Call: 09058 170 710*

TAURUS

21 April-21 May

Live in the moment and stop focusing on past events as that won't benefit you in any way. You're much stronger than people think. Ideas you have for new career paths put a smile on your face and give you fresh hope for the future. A flirtation which begins now may never end!

Call: 09058 170 711*

GEMINI

22 May-21 June

Full moons affect you and this weekend you confront those who've let you down. There's a more relaxed feel to your chart which sees you having the personal life you dreamt of! Venus gives you the gift of persuasion in family issues you were once told no to - so try again now.

Call: 09058 170 712*

CANCER

22 June-23 July

The stars line up to give you attitude! You've been living life at a hundred miles an hour so far. Now you can stop and smell the flowers, although close ones may try and push you to keep going at the speed you were. Say no! Life is waiting for you to savour it - so don't miss out.

Call: 09058 170 713*

LEO

24 July-23 Aug

Children will be significant and, those who've been a bit of a handful, should start to toe the line. Although it may be too late in some cases, for some this could be the last-minute reprieve you need to get your life back in order. Don't be afraid to introduce some new rules!

Call: 09058 170 714*

VIRGO

24 Aug-23 Sept

There's a sense of nostalgia this week. Your earth element brings out a need for security and you realise who you can trust. Jupiter helps you to work out an annual financial plan and, if you were thinking about asking for a pay rise, you're more than likely to get it!

Call: 09058 170 715*

LIBRA

24 Sept-23 Oct

You regret some of things you've done this year, but I recognise that you were working out how not to do things. Try to keep a sense of humour when dealing with some difficult faces in business. They're testing to see how far you're willing to be trusted my friend.

Call: 09058 170 716*

SCORPIO

24 Oct-22 Nov

It's time to restore the inner peace which you rely on for sense and order. You let an influence that isn't as strong as you tell you what to do, which left you feeling out of control. Events on Friday and Tuesday help you to understand what your sign needs to be happy in life.

Call: 09058 170 717*

SAGITTARIUS

23 Nov-21 Dec

The home is highlighted and, if you've been having a stressful time, you should begin to relax. The need to get away is in your chart and can be found by interactions which take place by chance this weekend. Dream big - as anything is possible for your sign in 2018!

Call: 09058 170 718*

CAPRICORN

22 Dec-20 Jan

It's time to rediscover your adventurous side. You've spent far too much time thinking - not doing! But a sign such as yours needs to feel their way through life's events. Surprise phone calls you received before this week will have left you with a spring in your step!

Call: 09058 170 719*

AQUARIUS

21 Jan-19 Feb

There's an arrogant feel to your chart which could see you saying and doing things you'll regret. Make a mental note of how far is too far to go. There's unfinished business in a financial issue which should be solved on Monday - if you go to the source and not a third party.

Call: 09058 170 720*

PISCES

20 Feb-20 March

Many situations have been a thorn in your side, but you learnt this week that those you thought didn't support you - do. They'll carry on doing so if you just let them know that their influence is welcome. Travel plans come your way which will change the way you view holidays!

Call: 09058 170 721*

*Starlines updated every Thursday. Calls cost 80p per min plus your telephone company's network access charge and last approx 4 mins. Callers must be 18+. You must have payer's permission. SP: Spoke 0333 202 3390.

In next week's Pick Me Up!

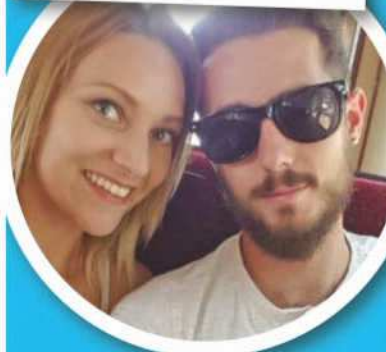
HOLIDAY HELL

A SHARK GOT MY BOY



MY MAN AND MY MATE...!

HOW COULD THEY?



WHAT WAS HIDING

IN MY PANTS?



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PHOTOS: HOTSPOT MEDIA, SWNS

Who you calling UGLY?

Chase might be bald and wrinkly, but Storm Shayler, 49, from Neath, thinks he's the handsomest hound of all!



Who's my pretty boy, then?



YOU'VE GOTTA LAUGH!

I've always been a sucker for a dog in need.

So when I heard 7-year-old pooch Chase had been living at an animal sanctuary all his life, my heart just broke.

It was September 2010 and I was attending a charity event for dogs when I'd got chatting to Fionna Ashman, owner of Lizzie's Barn dog sanctuary in Kidwelly.

'Chase is a loving boy, and would make a great pet,' she explained. 'But he's a bit, erm...unique!'

Intrigued, I arranged to visit Chase, a Chinese crested dog, at the sanctuary the following week.

Chase wagged his scraggy tail furiously and danced on tiptoes as soon as he saw me approaching his enclosure.

'He's very friendly,' smiled Fionna.

Hairless, long-legged and skinny, maybe Chase wasn't much of a looker,

but I thought he was the cutest thing I'd ever seen.

He danced towards me with his crab-like walk and gangly legs, proudly plonking himself in my lap.

As he looked up at me, flashing me a toothless grin, my heart melted.

'You're mine,' I beamed, planting a kiss on his little wrinkly, bald head.

I was head over heels in love.

'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder,' laughed Fionna.

Although not everyone was so kind...

'He's like a little goblin,' someone cried in surprise as I walked Chase in the park a few days later.

'He looks like that elf, Dobby, from Harry Potter,' laughed someone else.

I picked Chase up, held him next to me protectively and rubbed his soft little head against my chin.

He may have looked a bit odd, but he was the most loving dog I'd ever owned.

We had a close bond. He slept in bed beside me every night and I'd tuck him into a little baby sling, carrying him around on my chest wherever I went.

I'd smother him in factor-50 sun cream to protect his hairless skin, and take him shopping in the supermarket.

Sometimes people would think I was carrying a newborn baby against my top, and they'd lean in to take a closer look.

But they'd gasp, startled, when they caught sight of Chase's distorted little face!

A slab of straw-like hair adorned his out-of-shape head. His huge tongue dangled down the side of his mouth, dribbling like crazy.

But no-one dared call him ugly in front of me. He was my handsome boy, no matter what.

Anyway, Chase would soon win people over, charming them with his sweet and playful character.

Then, in March 2017, a friend



Strutting his stuff in California

sent me details of the World's Ugliest Dog competition held every year in Petaluma, California.

'I know he's not ugly,' she explained hastily. 'But he has that quirky look.'

I sent in a few photos of Chase – and, to my surprise, the competition organisers got in touch to say he'd made their shortlist.

A few months later, in June last year, Chase and I flew to America to take part in the competition.

I couldn't believe it when he won third place!

'You're not such a loser now, are you, lad?' I told him as the judges handed us a huge trophy.

Chase is 15 now and nothing fazes him. Playful and bossy, he may be small and a bit weedy, but he's definitely the leader of the pack.

As he flashed me a toothless grin, my heart melted



Model pooch!

37

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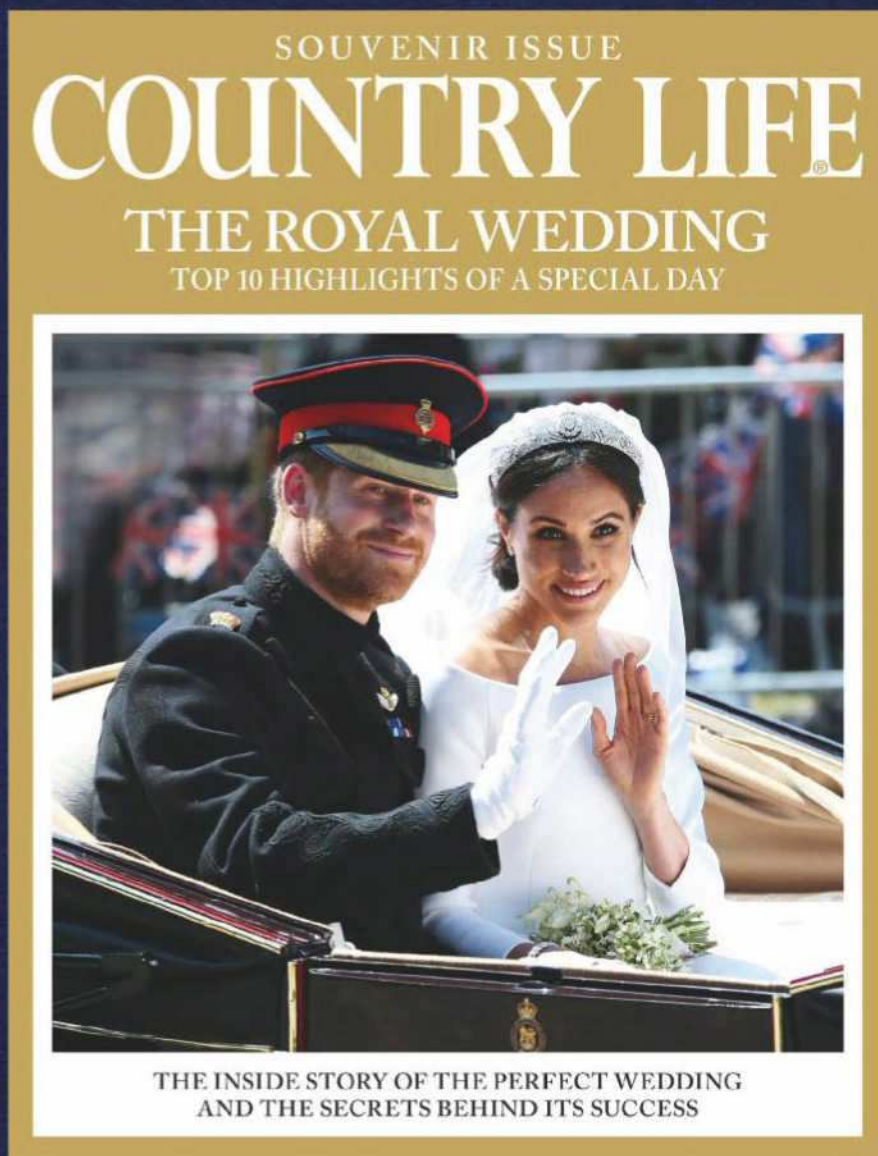
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