

PROPERTY NEWS



SCREEN FREE GETAWAYS

TAKE SOME MUCH NEEDED FAMILY TIME WITHOUT THE TECHNOLOGY

SELLING YOUR PROPERTY
MAY IS THE BEST MONTH TO
SELL YOUR PROPERTY

FITNESS ACTIVITIES
BEST UK HIKING SPOTS FOR
NATIONAL WALKING MONTH

MAY DISHES
FANTASTIC DISHES USING
IN-SEASON INGREDIENTS

HORSE RACING
TURF SEASON IS SET TO
START THIS MONTH

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May holds a unique allure for homeowners contemplating the sale of their property

WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION!

Spring is now in full swing, with right now being one of the most optimal times of the year to get your property on the market; on pages 2&3 we look at why this is and what sellers can do to help them sell their home. Meanwhile, on pages 4&5 we look at some ideal holiday ideas to tie in with screen-free week this month.

Spring is indeed a time for outdoors, so on page 6 we look at how best to prepare your garden for the summer, and page 7 we conduct our guide to hammocks to both complement your beautiful garden and to honour Better Sleep Month. On pages 8&9, we stay outside as we look at the UK's very best hiking spots.

After all this outside activity you deserve some rest, so why not put your feet up to some fantastic TV and movies, without

even leaving your own home? On pages 10&11 we take a sneak peek at the most anticipated shows and films set for release this month.


Pages 12&13 will tickle those tastebuds as we explore the versatile beauty of the humble potato, one of the prime ingredients in season during Spring. Whilst finally, pages 14&15 preview the horse racing and the tennis French Open.

So grab a glass of something, sit in your brand-new garden hammock showcasing perfect views of your summer-ready haven of bloom, and enjoy this month's magazine.

Daniel Evans
Editor



WHY MAY IS ONE OF THE BEST MONTHS TO SELL YOUR HOME



This month offers a number of benefits for house sellers because spring has arrived in full force and the housing market is usually active. Here are some of the reasons why May is one of the greatest months to sell your house, from favourable weather to increased buyer activity.

SPRINGTIME SPLENDOUR

Across the UK, the landscape becomes a vibrant sight as April rains give way to May blooms. This is the best time of year to have a well-kept garden since it increases a property's curb appeal and draws in potential buyers. A home's overall appeal may be greatly increased by the vivid background of blossoming flowers and lush vegetation, which will appeal to potential buyers.

OPTIMAL WEATHER CONDITIONS

May is a great month to visit houses since it usually has more daylight hours and cooler weather. May offers pleasant temperatures that enable potential buyers to walk out and investigate different houses without encountering major weather-related obstacles, in contrast to the unpredictable weather patterns of winter or the intense heat of summer.

INCREASED BUYER ACTIVITY

In the property market, spring is usually a busy time of year since many purchasers want to close on their deals before the summer vacation. As a result, May sees an increase in buyer activity as driven people aggressively look for their ideal houses. By selling their homes in May, sellers may take advantage of this increased demand and increase the likelihood that they will draw in prospective buyers and get competitive bids.

SCHOOL CONSIDERATIONS

When the new school year begins in September, families with school-age children usually want to finish their property deals before the school year begins. Sellers can meet this deadline by offering their properties in May, giving the buyer enough time to complete the transaction before the summer vacations start. This tactical move broadens the pool of possible buyers for properties posted in May by appealing to a sizable portion of the buying market.

OPTIMISTIC MARKET SENTIMENT

The optimism and sense of rebirth that springtime brings may have a favourable impact on the attitude around the property market. During this period, buyers

can feel more hopeful about their future, which could boost their confidence and encourage them to make decisions about what to buy. By showcasing their homes in the best possible light and taking advantage of the optimistic market vibe that permeates May, sellers may take advantage of this favourable situation.

FAVOURABLE TIMING FOR MOVING

Moving preparations are only one of the many logistical details that must be coordinated when selling a house. Sellers can expedite the transfer process by marketing their properties in May and arranging the sale to coincide with their desired move-in dates. May's extended daylight hours also mean that there is more daylight for viewings and moving, which makes the process go more smoothly and effectively for both buyers and sellers.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

May's favourable market conditions and increased buyer activity might provide sellers with a competitive edge when it comes to obtaining several bids and obtaining desired sale prices. Buyers may feel compelled to move fast and make aggressive bids in order to get their chosen properties during this period due to the combination of strong demand and limited inventory.

PEAK GARDEN BEAUTY

In the spring and summer, gardens take on a dramatic metamorphosis as they fill with colourful greenery and blossoms. Gardens during this time of year seem even more beautiful for a variety of reasons. For instance, warmer temperatures foster favourable development and flowering conditions for plants. The warmer temperature is ideal for plants, which produces healthier specimens with more robust foliage and blossoms.

There are several advantages available in May for homeowners who are thinking about selling. With the gorgeous backdrop of springtime blooming, increased buyer activity, and positive market sentiment, this month offers the best conditions for exhibiting houses and drawing in prospective purchasers. Sellers may increase their chances of completing successful property deals and confidently start the next chapter of their housing journey by taking advantage of May's benefits.

UNPLUGGED FAMILY HOLIDAY IDEAS FOR SCREEN-FREE WEEK

A digital detox can have significant advantages, such as increasing energy levels, encouraging creativity, and enhancing general wellbeing

A week without screens is crucial for a number of reasons. First of all, studies have connected excessive screen usage to a number of detrimental outcomes for both mental and physical health, such as reduced attention spans, obesity, and sleep disruptions. Families should prioritize activities that foster connection and well-being by setting aside time for screen time. Second, families are encouraged to have meaningful talks and face-to-face interactions during screen-free week. Our ability to spend meaningful time together might be impaired as devices frequently take up our focus. Families may create memories, fortify friendships, and improve relationships by unplugging from technology.

A week without screens also encourages imagination, creativity, and discovery. Adults and children alike are encouraged to find alternate ways of self-expression and amusement when they are not constantly stimulated by screens. This might be playing outside, doing crafts, or taking up a new hobby. All things considered, screen-free week acts as a reminder to strike a balance between technology use and in-person interactions, promoting healthier routines and closer family ties.

Families may easily find themselves captivated to screens in today's technologically savvy environment, whether they be computers, tablets, or smartphones. On the other hand, setting aside a week to avoid electronics might result in deep bonding moments and priceless memories. Here are some interesting and rewarding things to think about if you're organizing a family vacation without screens.

NATURE RETREAT

Take your family on a camping vacation or a stay in a rustic cottage and spend time in the great outdoors strolling through beautiful paths, swimming in natural lakes, and stargazing over a campfire. Your kids will learn how to recognize plants, monitor wildlife, and survive basic skills.





BEACH GETAWAY

Take a leisurely beach holiday by heading to the seaside. Make seashell collections, splash in the waves, and construct sandcastles. Enjoy picnics with views of the ocean, stroll leisurely down the shore, and engage in seaside sports like beach volleyball, snorkelling, and paddleboarding.



FARM STAY

Make reservations for a stay at a farm stay lodging to get a taste of life on a working farm. Participate in routine tasks including milking cows, gathering produce, and feeding animals. Children have a great chance to learn about agriculture, animal care, and sustainability.

CULTURAL IMMERSION

Select a place with a lot of history and culture if you want an immersive experience. Investigate historic sites, go to museums, and take in regional celebrations or artistic events. Take part in practical activities such as pottery-making, learning regional dances, or taking traditional culinary workshops.

ADVENTURE EXPEDITION

Set out on an exciting journey that promises heart-pounding thrills. Among the options are multi-day mountain treks, whitewater rafting, and zip-lining through the canopy of the forest. These exercises promote bravery, resiliency, and teamwork.



NATIONAL PARK EXPLORATION

Take a week to discover the delights of a national park. National parks provide countless chances for adventure and discovery, whether it's trekking to breath-taking overlooks, seeing animals, or soaking in the beauty of natural wonders like waterfalls and canyons.

CREATIVE RETREAT

Take your family on an arts and crafts-focused getaway to unleash their creative side. Rent a cottage in a lovely environment and spend your days painting, sketching, sculpting, or handicrafts. Encourage your family members to express themselves creatively, and at the conclusion of the week, present their works.

ROAD TRIP ADVENTURE

Take to the highway and set out on an amazing journey by car. Make travel plans that will take you to picturesque areas, quaint villages, and oddball roadside attractions. Take a chance, let your path lead you, and enjoy the liberty of discovery.



To sum up, a family vacation without screens provides a priceless chance to re-establish relationships with one another, the natural world, and culture. Every family may find a variety of unplugged activities to fit their interests, whether they are looking for adventure, leisure, or enlightenment. Thus, disconnect, relax, and enjoy every minute of your screen-free week.

PREPARE FOR SUMMER

In order for your garden to flourish throughout the warmer months and provide you a lovely outside area to enjoy, you must prepare it for the summer

CLEAN UP

First things first: clean up any trash, leaves that have fallen, or dead plants from the previous winter. In order to keep weeds from taking over your garden in the summer, get rid of them.

PRUNE AND TRIM

Retrim any overgrown trees, bushes, or shrubs to promote good growth and preserve a tidy look. Additionally, pruning promotes better airflow and sunshine penetration, both of which are critical to the health of plants.

INSPECT AND REPAIR

Look for any winter-related damage to garden structures, fences, or walkways. To maintain the safety and attractiveness of your garden, fix any damaged paving stones, trellises, or fence panels.

SOIL PREPARATION

Use a tiller or garden fork to loosen the soil in preparation for planting. Compost or well-rotted manure are examples of organic matter that may be added to increase soil fertility, drainage, and structure. To provide your plants the best growth circumstances possible, test the pH of your soil and make any required adjustments.

PLANTING

Select herbs, veggies, and summer-flowering plants that are appropriate for your climate and soil type. To add some colour to your landscape, think about adding bedding plants, annuals, and perennials. Plant heat-loving veggies later in the season, such as cucumbers, tomatoes, and peppers, for an abundant yield.

MULCHING

Mulch the area surrounding your plants to retain moisture, keep weeds out of the way, and control soil temperature. Over time, organic mulches like wood chips, straw, or shreds of leaf litter decompose and release nutrients into the soil.

WATERING

Create a regimen for watering your plants so they stay hydrated during the sweltering summer months. To promote drought resistance and deep root development, water sparingly yet thoroughly. To reduce water wastage and provide water directly to the root zone, think about using soaker hoses or a drip irrigation system.

PEST AND DISEASE CONTROL

Keep an eye out for indications of pests and illnesses in your garden, such as slugs, aphids, or fungal infections. To handle pests without endangering pollinators or beneficial insects, use organic pest management techniques like companion planting, insecticidal soaps, or handpicking.

MAINTENANCE

Maintain your garden by doing routine maintenance chores like picking ripe fruits and vegetables, deadheading wasted blooms, and removing fading leaves. Keep an eye out for pests and weeds and take quick action to fix any problems to stop them from getting worse.

Compost or well-rotted manure are examples of organic matter that may be added to increase soil fertility, drainage, and structure

HAMMOCKS

Garden hammocks are a lovely way to decompress outside, offering a cozy and peaceful area for reading, resting, or just taking in the scenery

TYPES OF HAMMOCKS

Classic Hammock: Traditionally, hammocks include a bed made of fabric or rope that is hung between two anchor points, usually hammock stands or trees. They are made of cotton, polyester, and weather-resistant materials and are available in a range of sizes.

Hammock Chair: A comfortable place to relax or recline, hammock chairs are strung from a single point. They're perfect for sitting back and relaxing in little outdoor areas.

Stand-alone Hammocks: These hammocks have a structure of their own that supports them, so you may place them wherever in your garden without the need for trees or other anchors. They are ideal for patios, decks, and balconies since they are practical and adaptable.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT SIZE

Think about how big your yard is and how much room you have for your hammock. To make sure the hammock stand will fit properly, measure the space between any possible anchor points or the location of the stand.

Traditional hammocks are usually available in single or double sizes; the double hammocks provide additional room for reclining and unwinding.

MATERIALS AND DURABILITY

Choose hammocks that are constructed from sturdy, weather-resistant materials, particularly if you want to leave them outside over prolonged periods of time. Fabrics resistant to weather, such as polyester or Sunbrella, provide defence against mildew, mold, and fading.

When selecting a hammock, especially if you'll be sharing it with others, take into consideration the weight capacity. Generally speaking, double hammocks can support more weight than single hammocks.

HAMMOCK ACCESSORIES

To increase your level of comfort and enjoyment, think about spending money on items like blankets, hammock cushions, and mosquito netting. If you want to attach your hammock to anchor points safely and without damaging trees or other buildings, you'll need hammock straps or ropes.

For ease of transportation and storage, hammock stands sometimes have wheels or carrying bags, which makes them practical for outdoor activities like camping.

SETTING UP YOUR HAMMOCK

Pick a level, secure spot for your hammock, making sure it's free of obstructions and away from any possible dangers like hanging branches or sharp items.

Use tree straps or rope to shield the bark if you want to use trees as anchor points to avoid damaging them. When using your hammock, hang it at a comfortable height that permits a small dip in the middle.

To set up a hammock with a stand, according to the manufacturer's instructions, making sure that all of the parts are correctly attached and adjusted.



BEST UK HIKING SPOTS FOR NATIONAL WALKING MONTH

During National Walking Month is the perfect time to go hiking, and we've found the perfect places

May is National Walking Month, a time to celebrate walking and encourage physical fitness, mental health, and environmental sustainability. This is why it's so important to celebrate walking for a whole month.

Promoting physical exercise, mental health, environmental sustainability, and inclusivity are all greatly aided by National Walking Month. This yearly event seeks to increase community health and happiness while cultivating a deeper awareness for the advantages of walking by encouraging people to embrace walking as a safe and accessible form of exercise.

The UK is a hiking enthusiast's paradise since it has some of the most beautiful and varied landscapes. Every skill level of hiker may find something new to discover, from untamed coasts and undulating hills to breathtaking mountains and historic forests. These are a few of the UK's top spots for hiking.

LAKE DISTRICT, ENGLAND

The Lake District is well-known for its breathtaking lakes, craggy fells, and attractive valleys. It also has some of the best trekking in the United Kingdom.

Scale England's highest mountain, Scafell Pike, or take a leisurely stroll along the picturesque paths that round Buttermere and Derwentwater.

Take on the demanding but worthwhile walk along the Cumbria Way, which stretches the whole length of the Lake District.

SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS, SCOTLAND

The stunning vistas of the Scottish Highlands, which include enormous lochs, towering mountains, and old forests, are well known.

Set off on the 96-mile West Highland Way, which meanders past ancient castles, through secluded glens, and next to magnificent lochs.

The Munros, or Scotland's summits exceeding 3,000 feet, provide hikers with experience with unmatched views and a sense of achievement.





SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK, WALES

Snowdonia National Park, home to Snowdon, Wales' tallest peak, provides trekking possibilities and stunning views.

There are other pathways to pick from, such as the well-liked Llanberis Path climb to Snowdon or the more strenuous Snowdon Horseshoe route.

As you hike through this breathtaking national park, discover tranquil lakes, scenic valleys, and historic sites.

PEAK DISTRICT, ENGLAND

The Peak District, which is located in the centre of England, is distinguished by its dales of limestone, undulating hills, and quaint towns.

Traverse the Pennine Way through the untamed landscape of the Peak District, passing by well-known sites like Stangage Edge and Kinder Scout.

Uncover undiscovered treasures such as Mam Tor, nicknamed the "Shivering Mountain" due to its precarious slopes, and Dovedale, with its limestone ravines and glittering river.

PEMBROKESHIRE COAST PATH, WALES

This 186-mile long route provides varied fauna and spectacular views of the water while along the gorgeous Pembrokeshire coastline. As you go along this officially recognized National Trail, take in the stunning harbours, golden beaches, and craggy cliffs.

Keep an eye out for seabirds, seals, and dolphins while traveling this breathtaking coastal path.

ISLE OF SKYE, SCOTLAND

Hikers looking for stunning scenery and challenging terrain will find heaven on the

Isle of Skye, which is known for its surreal vistas.

Explore the surreal Quiraing landscapes or go to the Old Man of Storr for panoramic views of the surrounding coastline and mountains. Don't pass up the chance to visit the Cuillin Mountains, which offer strenuous scrambles and amazing views.

YORKSHIRE DALES, ENGLAND

The Yorkshire Dales, with its undulating hills, pavement made of limestone, and charming villages, provides a trekking experience that is very English.

Aim to complete the renowned Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge, which includes climbing Pen-y-ghent, Wharfedale, and Ingleborough peaks in a single day. Wander through this quaint national park and discover hidden waterfalls, historic ruins, and vast moors.

BRECON BEACONS, WALES

Some of the greatest trekking in Wales can be found in the Brecon Beacons, with its expansive views, craggy peaks, and serene reservoirs.

Climb Pen y Fan, the highest point in South Wales, for breathtaking vistas of the surrounding national park, or stroll down the Four Falls Trail to see the quaint waterfalls. Take a moonlit stroll to witness the Brecon Beacons' nocturnal splendour, where you can stargaze beneath some of the UK's darkest sky.

For hikers of all ages and skill levels, the UK has an abundance of hiking options, whether your goal is a strenuous climb up a mountain top or a leisurely stroll through scenic countryside. So grab your hiking boots, stuff your backpack, and head out on an incredible trekking journey across the breathtaking scenery of the United Kingdom.

THE BEST TV SHOWS TO LOOK OUT FOR

Here are a few of the newest TV series that are worth viewing this spring now that May has officially arrived

DR WHO SEASON 1

In May, Ncuti Gatwa and Millie Gibson will return for their first full season of Doctor Who, which will follow the Christmas Special. You may be wondering why season 14 is now being referred to as season 1, but Russell T. Davies, the showrunner, explains that it's a new beginning for everything Who. Though Davies and the ensemble have provided some hints, we still don't know a much about the foes the two will be facing in the upcoming season.

Dr Who Season 1 premieres 11th May on BBC One and BBC iPlayer

BRIDGERTON SEASON 3

Get ready for more shredded bodices. When the newest season of Bridgerton, which centres on the romance between Penelope and Colin, airs on television, The Ton will be in full swing. It will take a lot of work to win Colin back over after he made fun of her in front of the other guys in the season finale. Ahead of the sexiest program on television, which Netflix has revealed would debut as a two-part series in May and June, brace yourselves for more of the same: gowns, balls, and hazy notions of Regency England.

Bridgerton Season 3 Part 1 premieres 16th May on Netflix

THE BIG CIGAR

In a six-episode miniseries based on the actual tale of how the Black Panther leader escaped to Cuba to avoid being apprehended by the FBI, André Holland plays Huey P. Newton. Bert Schneider, a Hollywood producer, is portrayed by Alessandro Nivola. A crazy true-story caper where a producer of movies is involved? If Argo seems a little familiar, that's because Joshua Bearman, who wrote the source material for Argo, also wrote a magazine piece on which The Big Cigar is based. Jim Hecht is the creator of the series adaption (Winning Time).

The Big Cigar premieres 17th May on Apple TV+



THE BEST MOVIE RELEASES TO SEE ON THE BIG SCREEN

THE FALL GUY

Action choreographer Colt Seavers, who is worn out and past his prime, gets hired to work on a movie set alongside Tom Ryder, a well-known actor, for whom he used to double. Colt's ex-girlfriend Jody Moreno is directing the movie when Tom disappears, and it looks like it would be shut down. Colt offers to find Tom and preserve Jody's first feature picture.

In UK cinemas from 2nd May

IF

IF, a film by writer and director John Krasinski, tells the story of a girl who goes on a fantastical quest to reunite lost IFs with their children after learning she has the talent to see everyone's imaginary friends. In the film IF, a cast of exceptional actors, including Ryan Reynolds, John Krasinski, Cailey Fleming, Fiona Shaw, and the voices of Phoebe Waller-Bridge, Louis Gossett Jr., and Steve Carell, embody the remarkable potential of a child's imagination.

In UK cinemas from 17th May

KINGDOM OF THE PLANET OF THE APES

Ape civilizations have developed from the oasis to which Caesar led his fellow apes, over 300 years after the events of War for the Planet of the Apes, while human society has regressed into a wild, primitive state. Noa, an ordinary chimpanzee, sets off on a terrifying adventure with a young human named Mae to discover the fate of both humans and apes when Proximus Caesar, the ape king, twists Caesar's teachings to subjugate other tribes in quest of relics of human technologies.

In UK cinemas from 24th May

THE GARFIELD MOVIE

The well-known, lasagna-loving, Monday-hating indoor cat Garfield (played by Chris Pratt) is going on an exciting outdoor excursion! Garfield and his dog companion Odie (Harvey Guillén) are compelled to leave their lavishly furnished lives and join their unkempt father Vic (voiced by Samuel L. Jackson) in a funny, high-stakes robbery following an unexpected meeting with their father.

In UK cinemas from 24th May



@bbcgoodfood



PREP: 30 Minutes



SERVES 5



COOK TIME: 30 Minutes

POTATO CURRY WITH LIME & CUCUMBER RAITA

INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp vegetable or sunflower oil
1 tbsp brown or black mustard seeds
3 long dried red Indian chillies
12-15 curry leaves
2 onions, sliced
2 tsp ground coriander
2 tsp garam masala
2 tsp turmeric
500g tomatoes, quartered
800g potatoes, peeled and cut into very large chunks
400g can coconut milk
Chapatis, rotis or naan bread, to serve

FOR THE RAITA

150g pot natural yogurt
Zest and juice 1 lime
½ cucumber, deseeded and coarsely grated
Small handful coriander leaves, roughly chopped

METHOD

Heat the oil in a large pan and fry the mustard seeds, chillies and curry leaves until the seeds start to pop. Add the onions and fry until softened and starting to brown. Stir in the spices, add the tomatoes and fry for five minutes.

Add the potatoes and stir to coat. Pour in the coconut milk with 200ml water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the potatoes are just tender.

To make the raita, mix all the ingredients together with some seasoning.

If the curry looks a little too saucy, scoop out the potatoes with a slotted spoon into another dish, then boil the sauce until reduced a little. Then stir the potatoes back in to heat through and season well (give it a good sprinkling of salt). Serve with warmed Indian bread and a dollop of raita!

This recipe features seasonal asparagus with feta cheese, absolutely perfect for this time of year since asparagus and potatoes are currently in season, and is ideal served warm or cold as a side dish.



PREP: 10 Minutes



SERVES 4



COOK TIME: 25 Minutes

@houseandgarden

SUMMER POTATO SALAD WITH ASPARAGUS & FETA

INGREDIENTS

750g (1½lb) small waxy new potatoes, scrubbed
Olive oil
2 bunches (about 500g/1lb) asparagus, trimmed
2-3tbsp fresh mint, chopped
4 spring onions, finely sliced
½ small red onion, finely sliced
100g (3½oz) feta, crumbled
12 mint leaves

FOR THE RAITA

3 tbsp olive oil
1tsp Dijon mustard
Grated zest and juice of 1 lemon

METHOD

Heat the oven to 200°C (gas mark 6). Cut the potatoes in half and place in a roasting tray. Drizzle with olive oil and toss well. Roast for 30 minutes, tossing the potatoes occasionally.

Brush the asparagus with a little oil and then add to the potatoes in the roasting tray. Return to the oven and cook for a further 15 minutes, or until the asparagus and the potatoes are tender.



Place the potatoes and asparagus in a large bowl with the chopped mint, spring onion, red onion and feta and season well with salt and pepper.

Place the dressing ingredients in a screw top jar and shake well to combine. Pour the dressing over the salad and toss gently to coat. Allow to stand until most of the dressing has been absorbed.

Transfer to a serving dish and sprinkle over the mint leaves. Serve warm or at room temperature.

A HORSE RACING CERTAINTY

Turf season gets off to a classic start this month

While May traditionally brings the business end of the winter sports calendar, so it signals the start of a multi million-pound blue-chip industry which has existed for centuries and generates billions for the economy.

Horse Racing on the Flat has been around since the 17th Century, and while it is now a year-round sport thanks to the advent of reliable artificial surfaces, the real superstars do not generally set a hoof on the turf until the spring.

And the first stop for the elite is the Rowley Mile at Newmarket, home of the QIPCO Guineas Festival. This two-day showpiece at racing's headquarters is staged over the May Bank Holiday weekend and features the first two Classics of the season, the 2000 and 1000 Guineas for three year-old colts and fillies respectively.

These are the opening legs of the five British Classics - an historic series encompassing the Derby and Oaks at Epsom and the St Leger at Doncaster - and, along with the trial meetings at Chester and York later this month, are the early indicators of whether the anticipated golden generation have wintered well and are ready for the stiff tests to come.

Because none are more daunting than what awaits at Epsom in early June. The 1mile 4furlongs trip for the Derby and Oaks is over a

course that first rises, then dips sharply before rounding the iconic Tattenham Corner and heading towards a steep incline with a brutal camber that unsettles all but the perfectly-balanced horses.

Should owners and trainers decide their charges are not suited to such a rough, roller-coaster ride they may head to Ascot for the prestigious five-day Royal meeting later in June, the Flat's glitzy equivalent of National Hunt's Cheltenham Festival. Previously renowned for the often-bizarre hats and fashion of its well-heeled gallery, the attention has thankfully reverted to the four-legged aristocrats on the other side of the running rail.

From then on, the high-value meetings and racedays arrive at a gallop: the Coral-Eclipse Stakes at Sandown; the July Festival at Newmarket's intimate July Course; the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes back at Ascot; Glorious Goodwood; the Ebor Festival Meeting at York and finally, to wind up the summer, the St Leger Festival at Doncaster in early September.

Established in 1776, the St Leger is long in both history and distance, it's 1mile 6furlong journey making it the stumbling block for the winners of Guineas and Oaks or Derby bidding for the elusive Triple Crown that was last achieved by the great Nijinsky in 1970.

Doncaster gives way to the Western Meeting at Ayr in late September before autumn's big two - Future Champions' Day at Newmarket and the richest day in the racing calendar, QIPCO Champions' Day at Ascot - ease the season towards its close.

By then we will know if City of Troy is as good as we think he will be, and King of Steel is the best of the older crop.





ANYONE FOR TENNIS?

It's one of the fortuitous knock-ons that a major triumph for one of the country's front-line sport teams or stars produces a significant take-up at grassroots level. For instance, England's triumph in the 2003 Rugby World Cup caused a tsunami of interest that was reflected in the almost immediate surge in kids wanting to be the next Jonny Wilkinson. Similarly, the England Lionesses' success in the 2022 European Champions was a timely accelerant for the nationwide development of women's football.

Tennis, however, has bumped along, retaining a steady level of interest and participation, despite Andy Murray ending generations of disappointment when he finally won the Wimbledon men's singles title in 2013 – a year after the first of his two Olympic gold medal winning campaigns.

Even Emma Raducanu's sensational march to the US Open crown in 2021 produced a minimal upsurge instead of a wave of new wannabes rushing to local parks and indoor courts in a bid to mimic her achievements.

Perhaps its because tennis has always had that consistent level of popularity, thanks to the world-famous Wimbledon championships, the oldest in the world. Or perhaps it is still seen as upper-class, a barrier the governing bodies and a dour, Scottish kid from Dunblane have tried hard to break down. Yet while official figures show recorded participation is still less than a million players a year on just 7,200

courts, the appetite for watching tennis is at an all-time high. Wimbledon set a record 532,651 spectators over the 14-day tournament last year, while the BBC revealed more than 15million watched the epic men's final between Carlos Alcaraz and Novak Djokovic – the highest since Murray won his second All-England crown in 2016 – while there was a digital record of 54.3million streams.

It's all good news for the French Open, which starts on the clay surfaces of Roland-Garros in Paris later this month, particularly as the old favourites are starting to fade away – indeed, 14-time champion Rafael Nadal will miss the tournament for the first time in 19 years because of a hip injury and will follow all-time great Roger Federer into retirement this year.

With Murray also hinting at a last hurrah, only Djokovic remains to fly the flag for the Old Guard against an exciting new generation led by Alcaraz and Daniil Medvedev.

The women's singles, however, had seen a changing cast of champions until Iga Swiatek threw something of a stranglehold on the tournament, winning three of the last four editions. Such outright domination has not been seen for a while and this year she will attempt to become only the fourth woman in history to win four French Open titles, the others being seven-time champion Chris Evert, Steffi Graf (6) and Justine Henin.

The French Open runs from May 20th to June 9th

Melbourne House, Bailey Street

£550,000



Recently sympathetically refurbished throughout to a high standard, retaining many features providing a character finish. The property has much to offer with three double bedrooms, kitchen/dining room, utility room, ground floor shower room, bathroom, garden, parking and double glazing.
CHAIN FREE!

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Meadow Sweet Road, Swaffham

OIEO £260,000



Very well presented modern semi-detached three bedroom house built by the much respected Abel homes. This fantastic property has much to offer and includes integrated kitchen appliances, en-suite shower room, cloakroom with WC, triple glazed windows, garage, gardens and parking.

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North Pickenham Road, Swaffham

£400,000



Substantial, very well presented, spacious four bedroom end terrace house situated on the outskirts of Swaffham. This fantastic property enjoys far reaching views to the rear and offers large gardens, parking for numerous vehicles, modern kitchen/breakfast room, bathroom & shower room.

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Cart Lodge, Chequers Road

£535,000



Absolutely stunning, detached modern, although full of character, three bedroom single story property situated in the popular well serviced village of Grimston. This superb property has much to offer and includes vaulted ceilings, log burner, en-suite. Viewing highly recommended to fully appreciate.

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Mileham Road, Litcham

OIEO £475,000



A stunning Grade II period property oozing character throughout situated in the sought after, well serviced village of Litcham. This unique property built circa 1860 offers spacious accommodation with three reception room, courtyard garden with workshop and original features throughout.

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Byfords Way, Watton

OIEO £250,000



A very well presented, three bedroom modern end terrace house situated on a popular development in Watton. The property offers modern kitchen with integrated appliances, en-suite shower room, cloakroom, garage, parking, gardens, gas central heating and double glazing.

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Field Maple Road, Watton

Offers Over £280,000



A very well presented three bedroom detached house situated in the popular Norfolk town of Watton. The property boasts fitted modern kitchen, two reception rooms, conservatory, cloakroom, ample parking, well maintained private garden, UPVC double glazing and gas central heating.

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Richmond Road, Saham Toney

OIEO £500,000



Substantial, very well presented, spacious detached modern five/four bedroom house situated in Saham Toney. This fantastic property offers double garage, ample parking, en-suite shower room, bathroom, utility, two/three reception rooms, gas central heating, gardens and UPVC double glazing.

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Hunters Oak, Watton

£300,000



Situated in the popular market town of Watton, Longsons are delighted to bring to the market this three/four bedroom detached house. The property boasts, two reception rooms, ground floor cloakroom, utility/breakfast room, en-suite to bedroom one, fully enclosed rear garden, garage, driveway providing off road parking, UPVC double glazing and gas central heating.

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Dye Road, Watton

Guide Price £350,000 - £360,000



Extremely well presented spacious, detached, four bedroom house situated on a popular development in Watton. The property boasts; a spacious kitchen/dining room, ground floor cloakroom, en-suite, garage, parking, gardens, gas central heating UPVC double glazing, and two years NHBC warranty remaining.

WATTON - 01953 883474 - watton@longsons.co.uk

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HOW MUCH
IS MY
PROPERTY
WORTH?



Present your house for sale by de-cluttering...

Maximise your home's potential and create spacious rooms enticing potential buyers – simply by de-cluttering!

“ De-cluttering allows you to... maximise your space, emotionally prepare you to move, and will allow you to focus your buyers on what is important ”

If you are looking to sell your house, or have had your home on the market for a while now, then you probably want to get the maximum sale price in the quickest time. There are a few things you can't control – but the one thing that is in your control, is the look and feel of the interior and exterior.

While it's worth spending time fixing and cleaning your house before potential buyers come and view, it's also important to de-clutter. This creates spacious rooms and also allows you to decrease and organise your personal items before you move yourself. Of course it's understandable that you don't to want spend money, time and energy on a home you are about to leave, however, a lot of people are looking for a house in which they can move straight into. Maintaining your

property might even save you thousands of pounds; it could even reduce added expenses of living in your home whilst waiting for a sale. And it might even help avoid possible reductions in the asking price.

The main reason in which people move house tends to be because they lack space in their current home. They want a home that is spacious and in which they can grow into. If a potential viewer comes to your home and sees that there is lack of space, then this will turn them away.

De-cluttering allows you to remove any unnecessary items in an untidy or overcrowded place. It will help maximise your space, emotionally prepare you to move, and will allow you to focus your buyers on what is important.



So where should you start?

You need to create a great first impression and focus on the rooms themselves. You will notice that the first things you see in each room are personal items. Where possible you want to create the look of a

them into things you want to keep and things you want to get rid of. You may even find that you have collected a cupboard full of paper work. Get yourself organised! Don't just throw it all away, but file it and go through it thoroughly. This will also make it easier when you move.

De-personalising can also be a great way to de-clutter. Too many personal effects can be distracting to buyers. They want to see a house in which they can make their own memories rather than seeing yours. Again, personal items can be stored away. Remember

“ Where possible you want to create the look of a lifestyle that the potential buyers want ”

lifestyle that the potential buyer want. This usually has a 'show home' feel, rather than a 'lived in' feel. Minimising your things is the quickest way to do this: you want to ensure that potential buyers can do simple things, like, open any doors easily, ensuring that there are no obstacles.

So, what do we mean by clutter? There are two types: genuine clutter, and items that you want to keep but don't work for the sale of your property.

Genuine Clutter:

You need to go through the space and sort out each item, categorising

You also want to focus on little things like DVDs, books and trinkets. These items may have some small value so sell them or donate them to charity. Get rid of any old shoes and coats that are lying about in your porch or hallway. You might want to hide away the coats and shoes you do currently wear. Store them in your wardrobe, while you have viewings.

Items that you want to keep but don't work for the sale of your property:

You may want to consider putting some items in storage while you sell your home. Sometimes items are too large or even too small for some spaces and can make the room look odd. If you want to keep these particular items, then store them until you move into your new home.

that this is only a temporary way of living and hopefully it won't be for long! If you find you are keeping more things than you are throwing out, then think about whether or not it's in the right room or do you even need it now?

As previously mentioned, you can attempt to sell some of the things you have acquired over the years. Use sites like eBay, Gumtree and social networking sites to try and sell items. You may want to even hold a house sale for the remaining items that you can't sell. Failing that, why not donate to charity.

The end goal is still the same and it's important to help potential buyers envision your house as theirs. So remember, de-cluttering will make your home more spacious and entice potential buyers!

Top Tips!



If you are throwing away paperwork, shred anything that is confidential



De-clutter before agents come and take photos of your property. This will help attract more potential viewers online and get that first good impression



Don't spend too long on certain items and don't get distracted. Keep yourself motivated and race against the clock!



Make it fun! Play some music or watch TV while you de-clutter





Your step-by-step guide to the conveyancing process

Once a sale has been agreed and is in the hands of your solicitor, it will go through the following stages. Sometimes additional work will be needed – for example, if the property is leasehold or is yet to be registered with the Land Registry. It is also important for buyers to discuss the availability of their deposit with their solicitor early in the transaction, and we strongly recommend that you contact your solicitor regularly so that they can keep you fully up-to-date with the progress and the latest timescales.

Seller's solicitor's steps

- Obtain a copy of the Title Deeds (or office copies if the title is registered)
- Obtain a copy of the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) (if applicable)
- The seller(s) will return a completed Property Information Form and a Fixtures, Fittings and Contents Form to the solicitors
- Copies of the above documents, plus a draft contract – this is known as an 'Information Pack' – will be sent to the buyer's solicitor
- Answer the buyer's solicitor's additional enquiries (for example, specific questions about fixtures and fittings) and obtain copies of any planning consent documents
- Agree the contract and arrange for the sellers to sign it in readiness of the exchange (below)
- All parties agree completion dates and the contracts are exchanged

Between exchange and completion

- Obtain redemption figures from the mortgage lender and reply to requisitions on title
- Approve the transfer and arrange for the seller(s) and buyer(s) to sign
- Receive the agent's fee account and seek the seller's consent to settle this out of completion funds

Completion date

This is the date the ownership of the property passes from the seller to the buyer, and it follows the successful transfer of funds. It's the date that the whole process works towards.

Upon completion

- Receive completion funds and (only when this has been completed) instruct your estate agent to release the keys to buyers. Redeem mortgage and forward the financial statement. Forward any surplus funds (unless these are being used to fund an onward purchase). Ensure all outstanding bills are paid
- Forward transfer documents and deeds to the buyer's solicitors
- Forward evidence of 'discharge of mortgage' to the buyer's solicitors

Buyer's solicitor's steps

- Obtain the Information Pack, including a copy of the EPC (if applicable) from the sellers' solicitor and raise any additional queries
- Initiate any specialist searches (for example: a coal search). Submit local, environmental and water searches and a chancel check. This takes about 10 working days in total, and enquiries are then usually raised from the results
- Approve the contract when all enquiries are satisfactory and complete. (At this stage, a mortgage transfer deed will need to be signed and witnessed)
- Receive a mortgage offer and instructions from the lender and deal with any conditions set out by them. Make sure that life cover and buildings insurance is being arranged
- Request the deposit, report back to the buyer, and arrange for the contract to be signed. Place buildings insurance and life cover in force
- All parties agree completion dates and the contracts are exchanged

Between exchange and completion

- Raise 'requisitions on title' and prepare the draft transfer deed
- Report on title to mortgage lender and obtain funds for completion, including Stamp Duty (if appropriate)
- Prepare accounts, obtain signature to mortgage deed and undertake final Land Registry and Land Charges searches

Completion date

This is the date the ownership of the property passes from the seller to the buyer, and it follows the successful transfer of funds. It's the date that the whole process works towards.

Upon Completion

- Forward to the seller's solicitors the balance of funds - it is only then that they can authorise the release of the keys. Receive from the seller's solicitors, the transfer document deeds
- Stamp the Transfer Deed, register the buyer's ownership with the Land Registry and forward the deeds to the lender or client (where appropriate)

Contract - The agreement that sets out the main terms that have been agreed - for example: price, address, names, etc. Two copies are drawn up, and each party signs one in readiness for the exchange of contracts.

Deposit - The part of the purchase price (usually 10%) which the buyer pays on exchange of contracts.

Exchange of contracts - The swapping of signed contracts by the solicitors (together with the buyer's deposit). After this, the contract is binding.

Energy Performance Certificate - This contains information on energy use, energy performance, carbon dioxide emissions, and fuel bills.

Land Registry - The Government department that records who owns what land, and under what conditions.

Local Authority Search - A list of questions that are specific to the property and intended, for example, to discover if there have been any planning applications on the property, if the road to the house is maintained by the council, etc.

Mortgage Redemption Figure - The amount required to repay the outstanding capital/ interest of a mortgage.

Property information form/fixtures, fittings and contents form - Standard forms about the property that the seller answers for their solicitor (for example: what will be left behind, details of guarantees, etc.)

Title Deeds - Legal documents that prove ownership of land/buildings, and the terms on which they are owned.

Transfer of Title - The document that passes the ownership from the seller to the buyer.

Stamp Duty for buy to let investors and second home owners - An additional tax, paid by the buyer purchasing an additional property that is not their main residence. It includes buy to let landlords and those buying second homes and holiday homes. The higher rates will be 3 percentage points above the current rates of duty shown below.

Requisition on title - An enquiry relating to the completion arrangements.

Seller's Pack - This comprises a Property Information Form, a Fixtures, Fittings and Contents Form, a copy of the title deeds and the draft contract.

Stamp Duty - Currently, the Stamp Duty threshold for residential properties is £250,000. For first-time buyers you can claim a discount and won't pay Stamp Duty up to £425,000 on the purchase price and after that you will pay only 5% between £425,001 to £625,000.

However, how much you pay is also dependent on whether you already own another property or if you're a non-UK resident.



Moving house?

From meter readings to removal companies, there's so much to remember when moving house. Here's our checklist of what to do and when

First of all, congratulations on your new home! The excitement has probably now kicked in but moving home can also be one of the most stressful and emotionally draining things you can do. However, careful organisation and planning can help decrease the stress and anxiety of moving. This comprehensive and essential checklist will help you do just that.

Eight weeks - Research

Ideally, you want to start packing away any non-essential items as early as possible. This includes any items stored away in the loft, garage and shed. If you are not using it, pack it. Looking into your new area is also important, try to do this around eight weeks before you move. You might need to think about transferring your children to different schools and ordering new uniforms too. At this point, ensure you are also documenting all your important information away: that includes contact details, dates, contracts and information regarding your solicitor.

Six weeks - Removal companies or do it yourself?

Now would be the perfect time to decide on a local removal company. Or if you don't have too much to move, you may want to do it yourself. You could even look into different van hire companies. At this point you've probably started packing away some bits, but if there is anything you decide not to take, then look into selling these items or donating them to charity. This will also give you an idea on the volume of items you have to move.

Four weeks - Notify utility companies

This would be a good time for you to notify utility companies and inform them about your move to switch over. This includes gas and electricity, council tax, internet, phone rental and TV. You should also consider changing any car insurance, tax, memberships, phone contracts and inform your bank about the move. Now's the time to also arrange a date to have your new house cleaned before you move



“ It will be worth packing a night bag each to help everyone settle in, which means you won't have to rummage through everything to find your toothbrush! ”

in, and start ordering any new furnishings for your new property. Start packing away more items, that being, out of season clothes, books, dvd's and even bulky items, like TV's that aren't used often.

Two weeks - Confirm all details

Confirm your move with your removal company or van hire, estate agents and schools. If possible, try to organise someone to look after your pets and children for the day of your move, as this can also be a stressful time for them too. If your removal company doesn't disassemble any furniture or sort out the un-plumbing for the washing machine, then now would be the ideal time to organise these. Remember to also cancel any local services you receive: this could be window cleaners, gardeners and newspaper deliveries. You should now also think about re-registering to vote and getting your post re-directed after your moving date. Continue packing away more furnishings, kitchen appliances and crockery that you won't be using for the next couple of weeks.

24 hours - Final check and walk round

You now have only 24 hours before you move, so double check that everything is packed away and ready for transit. It will be worth packing a night bag each to help everyone settle in, which means you won't have to rummage through everything to find your toothbrush! You may want to create an inventory of your boxes and

furniture to help you keep track of what you have and to help you ensure it doesn't go missing.

Moving day

Today is the day! You need to be ready for when your removal company comes. Ensure that you let them know if there are any fragile boxes that need extra care when handling. If you're moving yourself, then pack up your car or van and work out how many trips it may take. Before you leave, also take note of your final meter readings and send these off to your provider. Don't forget to leave your keys for the new owners!

You have arrived at your new home!

Give your removal company instructions of which boxes go in which rooms and make sure you are happy with everything that has arrived. Ensure you check for any damage before the movers leave. Read your new utility meters and send your readings of to your supplier. Taking photos of them will also ensure you have the correct reading if you need them again in the future. Unpack your essentials such as bed linen and clean towels. Don't worry about the rest, it isn't going anywhere! Order a takeaway, have a cup of tea and enjoy your first night with your family.

Right, so now you're all moved in, it's time to settle down, unpack and enjoy your new place. Remember, planning is essential to ensure your move runs stress free.

Checklist

Eight weeks

- Pack non-essential items
- Research your new area (transfer schools and order new uniform)
- Keep all important documents

Six weeks

- Decide on a local removal company
- Clear out any unwanted items
- Keep packing

Four weeks

- Notify utility companies
- Start preparation for your new house
- Keep packing

Two weeks

- Finalise all details
- Organise pet and child care
- Cancel local services
- Keep packing

24 hours

- Check every room and ensure everything is packed
- Pack a night bag so everything is to hand
- Collect your new keys
- Make sure your phone is fully charged so you can get in touch with the estate agents or removal company

Moving in

- Prepare for the arrival of the removal company and give them directions/your contact details
- Ensure everything is ready to move
- Record meter readings

On arrival

- Give removal company instructions of what goes where
- Check for any damage before they leave
- Read your new utility meters and send them off to your supplier
- Check if the previous owners have left anything behind
- Unpack essentials
- Order a takeaway and sit back and relax!



Want to treat yourself to a proper removal company for your next move or are you prepared to do it yourself

Removal company or brave it yourself?

You're excited about your new home and location but the process of packing, organising and actually moving all of your items is something no-one really ever looks forward to. Not only that but you also have to contact utility companies, maintain a job, keep your children happy and clean your entire house. You do have super powers, right?

Removal companies

Unless you live in a small property or flat, it could be worth hiring a professional removal company to help relieve some of the stress on the day. They have many skills and experience and some of the services they can provide include packing and

unpacking, dismantling and assembling furniture, loading your belongings quickly and securely, including those fragile and specialist items. They can even supply you with packing materials.

Hiring a removal company will also allow you the time to collect the keys to your new home. You also won't have to worry about the exhausting physical side of things, that being carrying boxes back and forth. Some services are great if you don't have much time to plan and get these done yourself; however these do often come at a premium and may not be suitable for those on a budget. When choosing a removal company

You also won't have to worry about the exhausting physical side of things, that being carrying boxes back and forth



its key to look at those which have good recommendations and reviews, as you need a company you can rely on. You can use comparison sites, such as comparemymove.com and reallymoving.com, to help find you the best deals.

Getting quotes

You should aim to get at least three quotes from removal companies, preferably from firms which will come out to your property rather than those who just estimate the cost over the phone, as you don't want any nasty charges later on. Plus it will give the company an accurate idea of any restricted areas in your home, if they can park a van or lorry, and how many

items you have. You should also ask for the price to be broken down so you can see just how much you are paying for when it comes to certain aspects like insurance, packing, an hourly rate, mileage and any storage costs.

Once you have found a removal company, it can be useful to send them a briefing sheet that includes information about any items which need to be specially packed, any difficult or large items, plus any carpets and curtains which need moving. Finally, it can also be helpful to send them a floor plan of the new property so they can unload efficiently.

Top tips for packing

When packing, ensure you don't overload your boxes with heavy items, as these will be difficult to lift and could cause a back injury.

Fill any empty gaps using old newspaper, clothing, socks or even tea towels. This will help secure any items when they are being moved.

Create an inventory and label all your boxes and write the contents on each box with a marker. That way you will know which room each box is to go in. And if you are super organised, you could even colour code each room!

Pack heavier boxes on the bottom. This might seem like common sense but it will ensure that any of your fragile items won't break.

Pack a survival box. These are the things that you will need first and should include paper towels, bin bags, cutlery, the kettle, some mugs, tea, coffee, milk, sugar and finally, some toilet paper!



Purr-fect partner



Partner up with **Longsons** to have all your property needs covered. From **FREE**, no-obligation valuations to innovative marketing, we'll get you moving.

Contact us to book a free property valuation today.

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