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ISSUE 434
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SwissMiss Cakes & Sweets

With an obvious passion for what she does, Andrea Leiter is the brains and baking creativity behind SwissMiss Cakes & Sweets. For further information, turn to page 3...

View this issue online at www.aspiremagazinegroup.co.uk



Celebrate, with cake...

Thanks to TV shows like The Great British Bake Off and the rise of the celebrity chef, home baking is enjoying a true renaissance in the UK. Research from Mintel has revealed that as many as 41 million Brits (equating to 79% of adults) bake at home, with almost a quarter (23%) of adults baking at least once a week.

Enlisting the help of a professional cake maker to make your celebration cakes ensures that you'll not only have a great tasting cake, but you'll also be free to concentrate on the planning of your celebration, as well as enjoying the celebration on the day. Professionally made cakes are hand crafted and receive personal attention, made specifically to your individual requirements, so you can rest assured you'll get the cake of your dreams, and not a homemade disaster!

If sugar runs through your veins, baking is in your blood and decorating is your desire, then Cake International - The Sugarcraft, Cake Decorating & Baking Show, which returns to the NEC Birmingham from the 18th until 20th March, is the show for you. Attracting cake enthusiasts,

renowned industry experts, plus professional cake decorators and sugarcrafters from across the globe, and offering exciting features, endless supplies, demonstrations and education, there is no better place to be inspired.

Cake International – The Sugarcraft, Cake Decorating & Baking Show is the largest show of its kind in the world, with over 60,000 people expected to attend in 2016 across two venues. The show has seen a substantial increase in visitor numbers year-on-year, with a 100% increase over the last five years alone. For further information, or to buy tickets, please visit www.cakeinternational.co.uk/birmingham/spring

Knowing our readership is passionate about baking and great looking yet tasty treats, Aspire has searched the length and breadth of the UK for our top cake bakers and suppliers; these companies go above and beyond when it comes to their cake creations, and they offer excellent customer service too. So, next time you need a cake, or supplies and/or advice for making your own, give one of them a call...

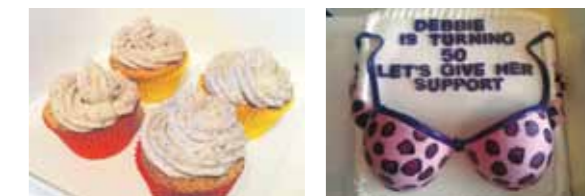
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On Our Front Cover: SwissMiss Cakes & Sweets

Founded early last year, SwissMiss Cakes & Sweets is the brain-child of passionate baker Andrea Leiter. Using her creativity and baking experience, Andrea produces bespoke cakes (and sweet treats) for an array of celebrations, from birthdays and weddings to christenings and just-because.

Andrea told Aspire: "I've always baked but it was the threat of redundancy from my full-time combined with encouragement from friends and family that I could do this professionally that led to me starting SwissMiss Cakes & Sweets. I just love doing it and I love being creative with the celebrations cakes I make, I absolutely love to bring cakes to life with special effects, like lights and movement; I'm even working on a way to use dry ice. I believe a cake should be the centrepiece of any celebration, a statement that reflects your personality."



that the quality of what I produce is affected. For me, quality in both the taste and appearance is hugely important; there's no point having an amazing looking cake that tastes bad, or a great tasting cake that looks ok. Both the look and taste must blow people away.

"As well as celebration cakes, I also make traditionally baked goods, by request, from lardy bread to other delicious bakes that are hard to find these days. I am so inspired at the moment and would really like to grow my business; I hope to enter the Cake International Show competition in the next year or two and really test my abilities. I'm proud of what I've already achieved but there's so much more left to do."

Based in Bracknell, Andrea is happy to deliver cakes to customers over the UK, for free within a 10-15 miles radius, 45p per mile outside of that. She is registered and CPD certified, and boasts a five-star food hygiene rating.

Hugely passionate about baking and providing the whole package for her customers, Andrea was kind enough to bring a sample of her cupcakes into the Aspire office.

"I'm up for trying pretty much anything, be it a decoration idea or flavour. I'm very experimental and have made a variety of unusual flavours, including Victoria sponge sprinkled with coriander and sugar, black cherry chocolate bread, or chocolate chilli cookies. I pride myself on never using readymade cake mixes therefore everything can be tailored to the individual customer, be it flavour or dietary requirements, such as gluten or wheat-free. Whatever you want, you get. I pride myself on listening to my customers and delivering whatever it is they've asked for."

"While I will take on more than one cake per week, I will never take on so many



Aspire Sales Executive, Sheetal Thakrar, said: "Andrea's cakes looked amazing; when she turned up with four different types of cupcakes I was blown away. They looked as good as they tasted. They were moist and delicious and had such wonderful flavours. My favourite was the mint chocolate chip, which came with a whole Matchmaker stick on top."

Aspire Editor, Elaine Ellis, added: "I was so impressed when Andrea brought us a selection of her cakes to sample. I loved the vanilla, but the decorations on all the cupcakes was exceptional; they'd be great for a birthday, baby shower or wedding."



Delicious & Creative: Mimi's Sweet Treats

Founded three years ago, Mimi's Sweet Treats creates bespoke and delicious cakes and cupcakes for all occasions. A registered baker with a five-star food hygiene rating, Amal Bolbol is the brains behind Mimi's Sweet Treats.

for any occasion, from engagements, weddings, anniversaries, to birthdays, baby showers, christenings and communions... basically any occasion that you can eat cake at I'll bake for."

After being made redundant whilst pregnant, Amal decided to bake to stay busy, as she explained: "I started baking and decorating cakes at home for friends, then friends of friends and it sort of snowballed from there. I've always enjoyed baking and come from a strong catering background but I got into decorating about five years ago. Everything I have learnt is from books or YouTube tutorials. I love nothing better than creating a cake masterpiece for a special celebration."

Amal won Silver in the 'wedding cake of three tiers or more' category at the 2015 Cake International London Show; she will be entering again this year and is excited to try to better her 2015 achievement, as she explained: "I think there's a little more pressure this year, because I did so well last year. I'm excited, and Cake International is such a fantastic show for everyone, not just those in the trade. The talent on display is amazing."



"I love experimenting so am open to discussing ideas with my clients; recently a couple wanted coconut incorporated into their wedding cake, so I managed to create a coconut and white chocolate cake which they adored. It's now been added to my repertoire. I'm happy to make a cake

For further information, please call Amal on 07414 034734 or email mimissweettreats@outlook.com | www.mimissweettreats.co.uk | www.facebook.com/MimiSweetTreats | Twitter: @Mimi_Treats

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Contents

- 2. Cakes International
- 4. Contents
- 6. The Perfect Day
- 8. The Photography Show
- 10. Sewing For Pleasure
- 11. Art Couture
- 12. Spring Into Action
- 14. Room With A View
- 15. Crufts 2016
- 23. Room With A View
- 24. Discover Pembrokeshire
- 25. Visit The Garden of England
- 26. The Baby Show
- 35. Professional Approach



“Going to the chapel... and we’re, gonna get married”

If you've recently taken the plunge and got engaged first things first, spread the news. Tell everyone: your friends, your family, your co-workers, even your hairdresser; hearing their words of congratulations is all part and parcel of enjoying being engaged. Once you've settled into your new role as one half of an engaged couple, it's time to get planning...

Step 1 – Decide On Your Date
Unless you're planning a long engagement, you'll need to decide upon a preferred date to tie the knot. The season in which you choose to tie the knot is extremely important as it dictates everything else, from the kind of flowers you can have to whether you chose an outdoors or indoors reception venue. The summer months are the most popular time of year to get married, so to avoid your guests possibly having to choose between your wedding and another, why not opt for spring, autumn or winter nuptials.

Step 2 – Work out your budget
With the average wedding costing around £18,500, it's easy to get carried away when planning your wedding, but by setting your budget early on, you can avoid spending more than you can afford. In order to save for your special day, it's advisable to open a 'wedding bank account' so any spare cash, other than your planned monthly wedding savings, can be put straight into this account and the cash won't get spent unnecessarily – the pounds will soon add up and you might be able to afford more than you imagined!

Step 3 – Choose your venue
The venue you choose for your wedding day all depends on the type of ceremony you'd like. A marriage ceremony is basically the same whether you opt for a religious or civil affair; it's a public declaration of your love for one another and it will give you new legal status as husband and wife. Begin by combing the area, visiting every venue that takes your fancy – after all, the venue

is an important part of your day. It will form the backdrop for your photographs, set the tone and atmosphere for the whole day, and hopefully create wonderful lasting memories with your guests.

Step 4 – Choose your wedding party
They're your A-team, your wedding day front line, your support group, so you've got to make sure you pick right! Our main piece of advice would be to think carefully and calmly about who you want by your side because once you've asked someone, you can't take it back!

Step 5 – Compile a guest list
Although this doesn't have to be finalised straight away, it is an idea to work out how many people you wish to invite, especially as these numbers will affect the size of your wedding venue. If you have your heart set on marrying in your local church but it only holds 50, you may have to rethink inviting a few of your guests.



The NATIONAL WEDDING Show
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So, whether you're planning to say "I Do", or "I Still Do" in a way that's as unique as you are, I'd love to hear from you.



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Make Unique Bags provides unique, personalised gifts for your perfect day. We carefully create and design following your personal specifications. Each bag is hand-drawn, hand-painted and embellished with bows and glitter. Only quality paint is used and then varnish sealed, to make sure the colour will last longer.

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ASPIRE'S TOP RECOMMENDATION



snaptitude

As one of the country's top wedding photographers, Snaptitude Photography's reputation has grown through referral and word of mouth in recent years. And rightly so; they're experts in finding those shots that really stop you in your tracks and make pictures that are far from the ordinary.

Your wedding day or civil partnership is one of the most moving and special days of your life; as a couple you look your very best and you're surrounded by the people you love most. Snaptitude Photography approaches each wedding with a real sense of excitement and creativity and delivers extraordinary fine-art quality photographs, which reflect the unique beauty of each occasion.

They provide an exceptionally high-level of client service and spend time with each couple before the big day to make sure that there's a fantastic relationship between the photographer and the couple so that everyone is relaxed – an absolute must to get the very best photographs on the day.

With a unique blend of reportage and formal photography, Snaptitude is able to capture the wonderful spontaneous moments, as well as documenting the details so that when you look back on your wedding day, the whole story is captured in a series of gorgeous images that you'll treasure forever.

Expect to laugh, do something silly, have fun; expect to see photographs that are unstaged, spontaneous, moving, quirky and beautiful.

They're based in Cambridge but will travel anywhere. Your story becomes their story and they can't wait to tell it with you.

You can get in touch with Jules at Snaptitude Photography to find out more on www.snaptitude.co.uk or email info@snaptitude.co.uk or on Facebook and Twitter @Snaptitude



The Photography Show

19-22 MARCH 2016
THE NEC, BIRMINGHAM



© The Photography Show

The Photography Show returns to the NEC Birmingham from 19th to 22nd March 2016 and whether you are just starting out or you're a seasoned pro, this event offers something for everybody interested in the world of image-making. Learn the latest techniques, spark your imagination, hear from the experts, find fantastic deals and get hands-on with the latest kit from over 200 exhibitors. The Photography Show is the ultimate event to inspire creativity through imagery.

Visitors will be able to try and buy the latest kit and accessories from the likes of Canon, Adobe, Nikon, Panasonic, Sony, Olympus, Fujifilm, Leica, Manfrotto, Blackmagic and Ricoh Imaging, to name but a few.

The much-loved Super Stage will return for 2016 featuring international heroes of photography across the four days, David Bailey, Chris Packham, Dan Rubin, Nick Danziger, Peter Dench, Lara

Jade, Scott Kelby, Alec Soth and Bruce Gilden, set to inspire the audience with insights from their mesmerising and varied careers.

Expect to find plenty of hands-on workshops and live demonstrations at The Photography Show on the Live Stage, Photo Editing Theatre, Mobile Photography and Filmmaker Stages focusing on everything from capturing challenging shots in different lighting and environments, right through to dark room coaching, photo-editing and learning what your mobile device can really capture.

In addition, new features including The Wedding & Portrait Stage, where experts will provide tips and tricks for taking high quality shots in a range of settings, the Turning Pro Conference, a half-day programme for those practicing a high level of photography and thinking about taking the leap from enthusiast or student, to pro, and the Product Demo Theatre.

As one of the most published photographers in history, Michael Freeman, photojournalist and street photographer will talk at the Beginner's Masterclass, a programme dedicated to photographers at the start of their journey. Freeman will provide insights into the Ten Guiding Rules, including the secrets of good composition, making a subject stand out and creating pictures with visual impact.

The Pro Conference programme will return for 2016, offering crucial business know-how to professional photographers, from copyright and commissions to agents and insurance. Also hosting a session at the Pro Conference on 22 March will be Charlie Waite, renowned landscape photographer, offering his tips to a pro audience on Developing Your Potential. His unique style and conveyance of a spiritual quality of serenity and calm throughout his images has driven Waite's international reputation; his work is held in private

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and corporate collections across the world.

New for 2016 is the Turning Pro Conference, aimed at photographers looking to make the jump from enthusiast to pro. Speakers including Wedding Photographer, Kevin Mullins, will take to the stage, sharing the skills needed to make the leap in creating a successful wedding business, and Peter Searle, Portrait Photographer, whose seminar will focus on Getting Your Business off the Ground.

Tickets to the show will be on sale NOW and visitors will have the option to add a Masterclass session to their package, priced at £10 per session.

The Live Stage will host a range of experts, demonstrating the techniques behind taking unique images in a variety of environments, from posing new-borns to capturing the illusion of magic and fun at the circus.

Renowned Food Photographer, William Reavell, is among the names to appear on the Live Stage, presenting styling tips for creating beautiful food photography and guiding visitors on how lighting can be used to enhance mouth-watering images and perfecting composition.

Other speakers include Street Photographer, Matt Hart, on photography as therapy, Fashion and Beauty photographer, Steve Howdle, on syncing flash at high speed and Vicki Churchill, on turning the everyday into the spectacular. Melanie East will also take to the stage to share her tips on the



© Kate Lloyd Equine Photography

skills behind photographing babies.

Behind the Lens will see a range of professionals lead sessions covering everything from wildlife to travel, landscape and more, appealing to all levels of photographer.

Ram Shergill, known for photographing public figures such as Amy Winehouse and Dame Judi Dench will give insight into working with designers in the world of fashion. Paul Colley will reveal the art of successful underwater photography, and

Ian Cook, will look at sports photography in the modern era.

Tom Stoddart, a photojournalist whose work includes poignant images of situation of crisis is set to tell the audience about his own photography journey and Emma Drabble will explore what makes a photograph more than just an image.

Find out more by visiting
www.photographyshow.com

KATE LLOYD Equine Photography



From a very young age Kate loved horses; she is obsessed with photography of wild horses, and horses unadorned with tack, with or without their owners.

Photographing horses, especially in a wild scenario, is quite an emotional experience and produces unique glimpses into their lives.

The Fine Art print portfolio began with a visit to the Camargue and a chance to photograph the magnificent White Horses there. Her particular favourites are the stallions in the pond, and coming out of the sea, though some of the herd pictures also make for wonderful pieces of art. You can now enjoy the results of this trip and acquire a magnificent Limited Edition print to fill that space on your wall, either in the office or at home.

Standard sizes of the limited edition prints are 20 x 16 inches as standard (unframed). These are presented with a plain white mat, or framed in white or black framing. Each has a hologram on the print inside the mat and a certificate with an identical hologram presented separately or on the back of a framed picture. Your purchase of the Limited Edition print is registered on a website which keeps track of the ownership of the numbered limited editions.

The 20 x 16 inch prints are limited to a run of 50, and the 10 x 8 inch prints are limited to a run of 250. Special orders. Larger images can be purchased by discussion with Kate.

Contact Kate on 07812 341517, by email at kate@katelloydequinephotography.com, or via the website www.katelloydequinephotography.co.uk

Mr-F Photography

Wedding & Portrait Photographer



www.mr-f.org
Email: contact@mr-f.org

Knit, Stitch, Sew



Embrace the handmade trend that is sweeping the nation by visiting Sewing for Pleasure, Fashion, Embroidery & Stitch and Hobbycrafts taking place at the NEC, Birmingham from the 17th to 20th March. With over 300 exhibitors offering the latest craft inspiration and advice, this is a must visit for any crafting enthusiast.



Sewing for Pleasure is a haven for knitting, cross stitch, dressmaking and stitching enthusiasts, offering all the very latest supplies, ideas and innovations in the stitching world. Over 150 exhibitors will be wowing the crowds with irresistible products, expert advice and a chance to get hands on with demonstrations and activities that will leave you eager to create you own haute couture outfits.

If you've got excited by the 'Make Do and Mend' and customisation trend but don't know where to start or you just need a confidence boost with sewing, then make sure you visit the fantastic Sewing Hub! Experts will be on hand in the Sewing Machine Clinic offering top tips and practical hands-on workshops focusing on basic sewing techniques.

With this new found confidence make sure you go to the Dressmakers' Pattern Bar where you will find all the latest patterns from some of the most well known brands including Butterick, McCalls, Simplicity, Style and Vogue.

Visit the Knitting lounge where you can learn the best techniques to cast on and off from the experts.



Fashion Embroidery & Stitch is a fabulous showcase of some of the finest textile art from top talents from across the UK. All visitors can get hands-on in one of the many free workshops, demonstrations and talks and with an extensive range of fabric and embellishment supplies for you to take home, this is the perfect place to perfect your craft.

Get inspiration for your latest collection at the Catwalk Fashion Shows, which will be taking place throughout the weekend. The featured collections will include some of the top UK seamstresses and colleges, offering a glance into upcoming trends and young talent in the sewing world.

Silversoles

Felted Textiles By Emma Jackson

Silversoles is the design label of award-winning Feltmaker, Emma Jackson. She creates sumptuously tactile hand felted and embroidered textiles for interiors and to wear. Her work fuses the ancient tradition of feltmaking with contemporary methods of working with wool. Each piece is unique, having been individually hand crafted using only natural fibres, including merino wool, silks, soya and bamboo fibres.

"My inspiration is drawn from organic shapes and textures found in nature, in particular plant forms, corals, bacteria and fungi. I make use of wools incredible ability to retain shapes when felted, exploring the fibres' potential to form sculptural and raised surfaces in my work. I achieve this by manipulating the wool using stitch to form permanent shapes and patterns, which echo my sources of inspiration."

Emma's work is exhibited in galleries and craft fairs across the UK. Her next show is Art in Action, at Waterperry House, Oxford, 14th - 17th July. Emma is also a respected textile tutor, running a range of workshops for beginners and beyond from her studio. You can choose from a number of feltmaking and other textile courses, or create a workshop tailored made to meet your individual or groups needs and interests.

Contact Emma via info@silversoles.co.uk or telephone 07753 366795.

www.silversoles.co.uk



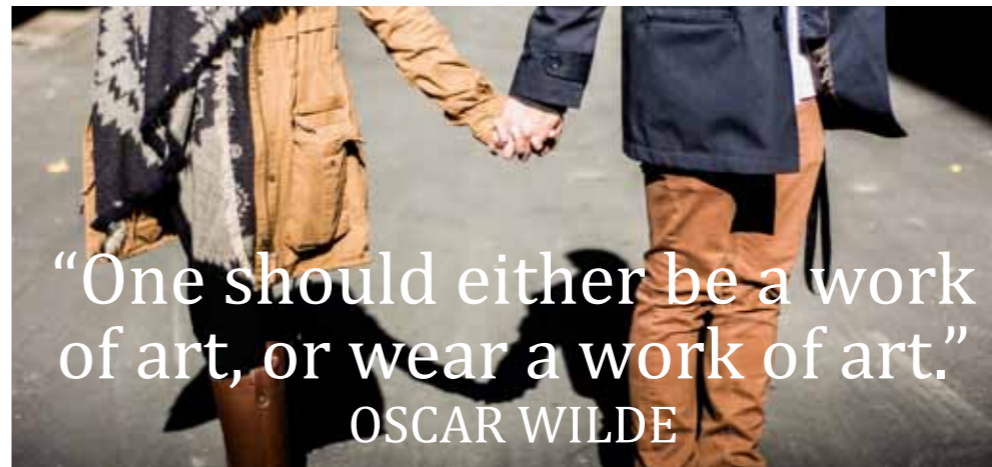
The ever popular and award-winning Hobbycrafts show will be offering top tips and advice, hands-on workshops, inspiration and an unrivalled choice of supplies for all of your crafting needs.

Get involved in one of the FREE Make & Take sessions where you'll be able to get the latest tips and tricks from exhibitors on a range of crafts including beadwork & jewellery making, stamping & papercraft, embossing & pyrography and marbling.

For further information, please visit www.sewingshow.co.uk

FOUR shows for the price of ONE
Your ticket includes **FREE** entry into **Hobbycrafts, Fashion & Embroidery and Cake International at the same venue, at the same time. (please note Cake International is open from Friday 18th - Sunday 20th March only)**

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Art has always been on display; throughout history, large and expensive works of art have generally been commissioned by religious institutions and monarchs and been displayed in temples, churches and palaces. Despite these collections being privately owned, many were made available for viewing for a portion of the public. The art collection at the Palace of Versailles in France was periodically open for 'respectable' public viewing.

In classical times, religious institutions began to function as an early form of art gallery. From the Late Medieval period onwards, areas in royal palaces, castles and large country houses of the social elite across Europe were often made partially accessible to sections of the public

in order to view collections of art. Privately established museums open to the public began to be established from the 17th Century onwards; in fact, the first such museum was the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, opened in 1683.

By the second half of the 18th Century, many private collections of art were nationalised and opened to the public. The British Museum, established in 1753 at the Montagu House as one of the earliest national collections open to the public. The Bavarian royal collection (now in the Alte Pinakothek, Munich) was opened to the public in 1779 and the Medici collection in Florence around 1789 (as the Uffizi Gallery). The opening of the Musée du Louvre during the

French Revolution in 1793, as a public museum for much of the former French royal collection, marked an important stage in the development of public access to art; The Louvre now attracts over eight million visitors each year, making it the most visited art gallery in the world. The Louvre beats the next most visited art gallery by over two million visitors; The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York welcomes over six million visitors through its doors each year, closely followed in third by The British Museum in London, which sees over 5.8 million people looking to soak up some art.

Art shouldn't just be displayed on walls in museums, art galleries and homes; it should be enjoyed and there's no better way to enjoy the art you love than by wearing it. Individually designed, handmade pieces of clothing or jewellery don't have to be expensive or 'out there'. By commissioning an artist to make something bespoke and individual for you, not only will you get something special, but you'll also be helping to support the fragile British economy, something that is desperately needed after the financial instability of recent years. There are an abundance of textile and jewellery artists across the UK making and selling their wares, particularly on Folksy. Folksy, which offers funky graphics and bold designs, has transformed UK crafts, which may have conjured up images of handmade tat for sale at fetes and church halls, but with the average price of an item on Folksy is just over £17, nothing could be further from the truth.

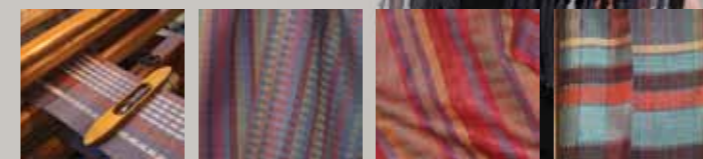
Sarah Beadmoore

Sarah Beadmoore is a handloom weaver, based in the lovely Cotswold town of Cirencester. She trained in Textile Design in Derby and moved down to the area in 1984, when she set up her studio at New Brewery Arts.

She specialises in hand weaving beautiful, unique silk scarves. She buys her yarn from a supplier in Macclesfield, a town steeped in the history of silk manufacture. It is then dyed in her studio using colour fast acid dyes. This means that her colour palette is unlimited and her studio is a riot of colour with hanks of silk waiting to be made into warps and then woven on her large Swedish floor loom.

Sarah loves colour and texture - choosing to use silk of different weights, which all adds to the softness and drape of the finished scarves. Her different designs and colour ways, mean that they are suitable for both men and women and make a unique present or special treat to complement a particular outfit.

You are welcome to visit Sarah in her studio, where she also teaches weaving on a one-to-one basis. However, if travelling any distance it is always best to check if she will be open, as she exhibits her work widely around the country.



www.beadmoorewoventextiles.co.uk



Seizing the chance to create his own brand after a long career in the fashion industry, Teddy Edward was founded by Stephen Reeds in 2015. Inspired by country pursuits and the rural lifestyle, whilst avoiding the conservative trappings of rural fashion, Teddy Edward stands to champion everything great about the countryside, adapting traditional attire for the contemporary consumer in a fashionable way.

Looking for something new this spring? How about our Quorn jacket. Styled after the iconic British hunting jacket and crafted in Birmingham, Great Britain. The Quorn is a waterproof sports jacket, the perfect mix of smart and casual. Or perhaps our Brocklesby socks, crafted in Leicestershire from an exotic alpaca wool blend.

As a proud British company, we make sure that all of our products are designed and manufactured within Great Britain, utilising the talents of the skilled local craftsmen. You will find Teddy Edward both online and at a variety of outdoor events, such as Burghley Horse Trials, Badminton Horse Trials and Countryfile Live, new in 2016.

Check out our website at www.teddy-edward.com and join the Teddy Edward family on Facebook or Twitter to keep up with our journey.



Home is where the heart is

Now that spring is in full swing and summer is just around the corner, the housing market is coming alive. With longer days and lighter skies, the spring is traditionally the time interest from both buyers and sellers peaks. According to the latest English Housing Survey, the number of people owning their own home has risen for the first time in 10 years; while the increase may be tiny - 5,000 more - it's a good sign for the housing market.

In order to help boost the housing market and enable hard-working people to own their own home, the Government has created the Help to Buy schemes:

Help to Buy: Equity Loan - the Government lends you up to 20% of the cost of your newly built home, so you'll only need a 5% cash deposit and a 75% mortgage to make up the rest. All Help to Buy: equity loan homes are on new build developments where the Homes and Communities Agency has a registration agreement with the house builder. You can only purchase from these house builders. The maximum purchase price is £600,000. You won't be charged

loan fees on the 20% loan for the first five years of owning your home; after this, fees can be paid in a single yearly payment or in monthly instalments.

Help to Buy: ISA - save to buy your first home, and the government will boost your savings by 25%. So, for every £200 you save, you'll receive a government bonus of £50. To kickstart your account, in your first month, you can deposit a lump sum of up to £1,200. The minimum government bonus is £400, meaning that you need to have saved at least £1,600 into your Help to Buy: ISA before you can claim your bonus. The maximum government bonus you can receive is £3,000 - to receive that, you need to have saved £12,000.

You can find out more about the Help to Buy schemes at www.help2obuy.gov.uk

If you already own your own home and are looking to update it this spring, it's advisable to work out exactly what you can afford to spend and stick to it. It's amazing what a fresh lick of paint can do - if you want to make the accessories stand

out, or make the scheme easy to change, opt for a neutral colour, but if you want to make a statement, choose a colour you love and complement it with natural/neutral furniture that can be used time and time again.

The Vernal Equinox - the first day of spring - takes place this month, so now is the perfect time to clean your home from top to bottom. Before you start, make sure you have everything you need to avoid unnecessary trips to the shops half way through a job; do one room at a time and make cleaning fun by playing your favourite upbeat songs to help keep you in the mood.

Every home takes years to grow, to become a personal space filled with memories, mementos and souvenirs of the people that live there, so don't force the look of any room; let it develop and grow naturally.

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Beautiful Blinds for home and business from *Countesthorpe Blinds*

With the warmer weather of spring on its way, many of us are thinking about the warm summer months and the DIY jobs we need to do at home, both inside and out, to really enjoy the (hopefully) good weather. If you've got a room that needs a new look, or a conservatory that's too cold to use in the winter months and too hot to enjoy during the summer, Aspire would like to recommend the 'tried and tested' services of Countesthorpe Blinds.

Based in Countesthorpe but covering the whole of Leicestershire, Countesthorpe Blinds have the solution, thanks to their full range of conservatory roof and window blinds. With over 25 years' experience in the industry, they can cover any window, door or oddly shaped roof, even ones that other companies have deemed impossible to cover.

As well as conservatory blinds, Countesthorpe Blinds also offer homeowners blinds to suit any room. From Venetian and Roman blinds to Velux blinds and wooden plantation shutters, whatever window covering you want to complement your chosen room, Countesthorpe Blinds can help. They also offer an unrivalled range of patio awnings, comprising of manual, electric remote control, automatic inc the new

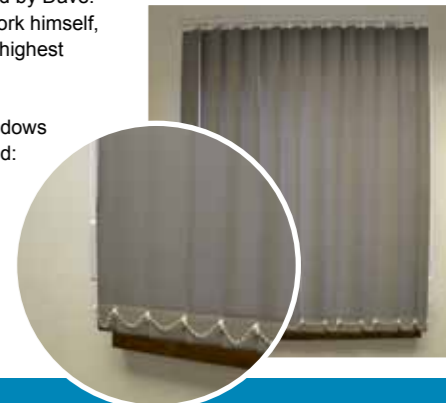
vibration sensors for safety and now with the option of lights too. They also do pergolas with integrated awning covers, which are ideal for extending your living area outdoors, or for covering hot tubs.

Owner, Dave Bennifer, is happy to visit your home to measure the area, discuss your specific needs and create a solution specifically for you. Both commercial and private customers are welcome, and with a made-to-measure service, even awkward spaces can be conquered by Dave. From measuring to fitting, Dave carries out all work himself, ensuring each and every customer receives the highest standards of care and personal attention.

Dave recently installed Vertical blinds on the windows in the Aspire office. Aspire MD, Claire Tipton, said: "The quality of Dave's blinds is second-to-none. I've used him before so he was my first port of call when Aspire moved to Meridian Business Park in August last year. Not only is the quality of the blinds exceptional, Dave is friendly yet professional; I would highly recommend him to anyone."



Vertical blinds from Countesthorpe Blinds installed in the Aspire office.



For more information, or for a FREE no obligation home survey and quotation, please call 0116 2776749 / 07718 337048 or email enquiries@countesthorpe-blinds.co.uk. To see examples of Dave's previous work, please visit www.countesthorpe-blinds.co.uk. 'Like' on Facebook: www.facebook.com/countesthorpe.blinds

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Based in Leicester, CloudScape Connect offers a host of communication and internet services. Founded in April 2014, CloudScape Connect is the creation of experienced businessmen Robert Harrison, Alan Ramsey and Stuart Hex. With over 30 years of experience in this sector, CloudScape Connect offers some of the best internet speeds across the East Midlands.

Whether you require a single phone line, broadband, email, hosting or a dedicated server, CloudScape Connect aim to keep customers happy. They can offer home owners fast and reliable broadband from as little £12 per month, with Fibre and Super-fast Fibre connections available from £20 per month. Robert told Aspire: "In order to offer the most competitive range of services, we have partnered with a number of Tier 1 providers (including the

rural networks) to ensure all our customers benefit from the latest technology advances and product releases, as well as the lowest possible prices. Because we are a local company, we can offer faster speeds at lower prices. Typically, we can increase service users' internet speed from what they get currently with TalkTalk, Sky and BT, for a lower price. Our fibre network is one of the fastest in the UK and with 1:1 contention and no speed throttling or packet shaping, you get the fastest possible speed at any time of day or night.

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shop for all your communication needs. We even handle the handover from your existing company to us; we'll take care of everything.

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ROOM WITH A VIEW

Escape

If you're fed up with the usual holiday by the sea and are looking for a location with something different to offer, you may want to consider a break in the British countryside this summer. Instead of lazing on the beach, being in the countryside will encourage you to get out and about. Waking up in the middle of luscious, green fields and breathing in all that country air, will not only give you a boost for the day, it will improve the circulation of oxygen around the body and give you more energy for those holiday activities.

Britain's first National Park, The Peak District is the perfect location for fun, family-friendly activities not far from home. Covering the most beautiful areas of Derbyshire, Cheshire and Yorkshire, the Peak District boasts breath taking scenery, beautiful listed buildings and a staggering 50,929 hectares of moorland, all just waiting to be discovered. Perhaps the most frequently enjoyed outdoor activity in the Peak District is walking. With an unrivalled variety of scenery, including steep sided limestone dales and dramatic high moorlands, as well as routes to suit all levels of ability, including the long distance 268-mile long Pennine Way National Trail, the Peak District National Park is THE place to enjoy a walking holiday at any time of year. Unsurprisingly, the Peak District boasts some of Britain's most quaint, picturesque and charming towns and villages, making it an ideal place to potter, browse and explore. The region's bustling market towns not only boast a great market and friendly locals, they're also home to cobbled courtyards with quirky independent shops and specialist antique dealers – perfect places to hunt for that special bargain or unusual souvenir.



© Buckstone Coach House

Situated in Gloucestershire, the Forest of Dean offers a great place to enjoy a relaxing long-weekend or a full blown holiday. Forming a roughly triangular plateau bounded by the River Wye to the west and northwest, Herefordshire to the north, the River Severn to the south, and the City of Gloucester to the east, the Forest of Dean has great activities to keep all ages amused. Explore the Forest's trails on foot, by bike or by horse, or for those who are a little more adventurous, there's always caving, abseiling and the thrill of the zip-wire to experience. With canoeing and kayaking, golf and fishing lakes, the list is endless.

However, for many of us, a holiday isn't a holiday without feeling the sand between our toes, the salty breeze on our skin, or the sounds of the waves crashing. Situated off the west coast of mainland Scotland, the Isle of Skye is the largest island of the Inner Hebrides, at 50 miles long. Skye is an excellent holiday destination for anglers, watersports lovers, divers, sightseers, birdwatchers and even those who love a good fish dish. As the influence of the sea is never far away, Skye is an excellent holiday destination for anglers, watersports lovers, divers, sightseers, birdwatchers and even those who love a good fish dish. Wildlife cruises sail from various locations and you might be able to spot seals, lovable otters, great golden eagles or even rare and mighty sea eagles. If it's dolphins you really want to see, there is a group of around 35 that move around the waters from Skye down to the Kintyre peninsula. There are numerous day trip possibilities when holidaying on Skye; for example, you could travel north to the stunning Quiraing mountain pass and enjoy a spectacular walk through some of Skye's extraordinary geological scenery, or you could go over to Neist Point for a walk out to the lighthouse that is the furthest point west on Skye. Alternatively, you could take a step back in time at Dunvegan Castle, ancient ancestral seat of the Clan McLeod, or even trace the roots of Whisky making at Talisker Distillery. Whatever you want to do on holiday, the island of Skye has an abundance of opportunities.

Buckstone House Coach House

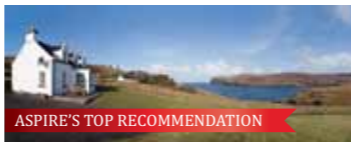


The Buckstone House Coach House overlooks the owners' lovely garden and guests have access to their tennis court and, during the summer months, to the outdoor swimming pool. Wonderful walks start at your doorstep through The Forest of Dean or down to the River Wye.

The accommodation is a delightful combination of antique furniture, tasteful furnishings and the comforts of modern living and consists of two double bedrooms, two bathrooms, a small but well-equipped kitchen, and large airy living room. There is Wi-Fi in The Coach House and the pub, a short walk away, serves excellent home-made food.



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An Creagan is a beautifully appointed luxury self-catering cottage in the village of Glendale, overlooking Loch Pooltiel on the northwest coast of Skye. An Creagan offers guests modern amenities in a traditional crofters cottage. This self-catering accommodation stands out with its peaceful setting and breathtakingly unspoilt views.

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Four-legged fun at Crufts 2016

Britain has always been a nation of animal lovers and the benefits of owning a pet are enormous; they can help to keep you happy and healthy both physically and mentally. If you want to boost your health by sharing your home and life with a dog, it's essential you do your research first. This will give you a better idea of what breed will fit best into your family.

It can be difficult to know where to look for the perfect pet, but buying from a reputable breeder can ensure your animal will be healthier. Good breeders are dedicated to producing the finest litters and select only the best and most suitable parents, ensuring the offspring is also the best in terms of health and temperament. Another plus of buying from a reputable breeder is that they can offer help and assistance once you've purchased your new family member.

This March (10th - 13th), Crufts celebrates its 125th anniversary. Started by just one man, in

1891, it is now one of the biggest indoor events in the UK and the greatest dog show in the world.

Named after its founder Charles Cruft, Crufts has evolved from a modestly successful, specialist dog show, into the greatest in the world, with more than 22,000 dogs and 150,000 visitors attending the event each year. It is televised nationally and streamed all over the world. Crufts is perhaps most famous for its Best in Show winners, but it was not until 1928 that the Best in Show title was introduced, with 74 dogs claiming the title since then. However, people come to compete for a range of titles with their dogs in competitions such as flyball, agility, rally, Eukanuba Friends for Life and Scruffts.

Due to external factors, there have been a number of years that Crufts has not taken place: from 1918-1920 Crufts was suspended following WWI and again from 1940-1947 during and after WWII. In 1952, Crufts was almost cancelled

following the death of King Edward IV a few days before the event took place, and didn't take place in 1954 due to strike action by the Electricians Union which resulted in electricians refusing to disconnect the stands from the



previous show held at Olympia. In 2001, the show had to be postponed for two months due to an outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease.

In 1950, Crufts was watched in living rooms around the country as it was first aired on television, and now people can watch Crufts on Channel 4 and More 4 in the UK, or stream it from the Crufts YouTube channel from anywhere in the world.

In 2013, Crufts made headlines as it began hosting the popular crossbreed only event, Scruffts, with many believing that this was the first time crossbreeds were able to take part at the show. However, it was back in 1955 that Crufts first began welcoming crossbreed dogs in the Obedience Championships, and the introduction of agility in 1978 and then flyball in 1990 presented further opportunities.



Crufts has taken its prominent position seriously and the event has been used to highlight canine health and responsible ownership for many years. In 1994, the Discover Dogs area was created to help dog loving visitors at the show find out more about the different breeds and how they may fit into their lifestyle. Then, in 2009 the event introduced a specific area dedicated to dog health, with experts providing information and advice about breed health and scientific advances.

For further information or to buy tickets to Crufts 2016, please visit www.crufts.org.uk

All images courtesy Crufts

Delightful Dachshunds

With over 30 years' experience of the breed, Katherine Herrington is a passionate Dachshund owner.

Katherine says: "I grew up on a farm in North Yorkshire, so I was always surrounded by animals, particular Fox Terriers and Sheep Dogs. In 1971, four years after I got married, we bought our own home and a year later, whilst on holiday in Torquay, we met our first Dachshund in a pub. After buying some books and researching the breed we decided it was the one for us, so in October 1972 we welcome Lucy, a standard Smooth Dachshund, into our family. Lucy lived for ten years and I was devastated when she passed. She inspired me to learn as much as I could about Dachshunds so not long after she died, I decided to quit my job and get seriously into owning Dachshunds.

"In 1983, I bought two Miniature Smooth Haired Dachshund litter sisters, Katie and Becky, from Jean Lamb, who also encouraged me to start showing. My first show was in The North Eastern Dachshund Club Open Show in April 1984 and we won Best Puppy in Breed with Katie. I decided to breed from Katie in December 1985, and registered my affix of 'Kathington' in 1986. I kept one of Katie's puppies and won more shows and

championships with her than I did with Katie. I joined all the clubs I could and read everything I could about the breed and the breed standard.

"I learned so much, so it was wonderful when, in 1984, I was invited to be a Committee Member of East Yorkshire Dachshund Club in 1984. I have since been Treasurer of the Club for 20 years, and Chairman for the past 15. I am a founding member of the Smooth Haired Dachshund Club and have been Treasurer since conception in 2001; I am also Secretary of the Club and have been for the past two years. If that wasn't enough, I am also Treasurer of the Dachshund Breed Council. Over the past 34 years I've met so many wonderful people and I've learnt so much; I have been rewarded for my dedication and passion for this wonderful breed and I just want to give and educate others about Dachshunds."

Katherine, who started judging Dachshunds in 1987, awards CCs in all six Dachshund varieties;



she has made such a name for herself that she has been invited to judge the Miniature Smooth Haired Dachshund at Crufts in 2018. Before then, she will be travelling to Australia to judge The Dachshund Club of NSW (New South Wales) Show.

"Dachshunds are such little characters," Katherine explained. "They're loyal and make good family pets, however, they're not noted for their obedience. But, with patience and persistence, they can be trained. I don't breed big and never have; I have six at the moment but the most I've ever had at any one time is 13. I just love them. They're a fantastic little dog. My Dachshunds are always and have been family to me, whether big winners or not they stay with me till they pass on, and they have all helped in research for any health issues within our breed."



For further information, please call Katherine on 01904 761903, email katherine.herrington@yahoo.co.uk or visit www.kathington.co.uk

Llaremeth Boston terriers awarded Aspire Crystal trophy



Photos courtesy of Wendy Thompson

A friendly, strong, lovable and laid-back dog with an unforgettable personality, Boston terriers are wonderful companion animals. Dawn and Tim Rathmell are passionate about this beautiful breed, having owned, shown and bred these dogs for a number of years, after previously owning, showing and breeding Rottweilers and Basset Hounds.



Based in Huddersfield in West Yorkshire, Dawn's showing career began over 30 years ago with Rottweilers, as Dawn explained: "I started with ring training and someone suggested I was good enough to enter some shows and the rest is history. The older I get the smaller the dogs get though, as I've gone from Rottweilers to Basset Hounds and now Bostons. I had a friend who lived in Scotland who would travel down to shows near me with her Boston and I fell in love. I've only bred one litter of them in the past four years so don't consider myself a breeder, but I am a fan of the breed."



As well as Boston terriers, Dawn is also active with Basset Hounds. She co-owns (alongside Adrian Hili) INT CH/MLT CH/JNR CH Yogi Bear dos Sete Moinhos, who is enjoying success in the showing ring.

"Bostons are a lovely little dog; they're full of fun and are people-orientated. They're mischievous but loving and they love nothing better than being curled up on your knee, although they will walk miles once they're mature. I would note that Blue, Red, Champagne, White Splash are NOT recognised Boston colours. Bostons are a great, all-round companion dog."

"I currently have six Bostons, including two-year-old Landan, whose full name is American Champion/Maltese Champion Forever's A Walk To Remember. I imported him from America after a lot of toing and froing with his breeders, and despite his young age, he had a successful 2015; we're looking forward to an even more successful 2016."

"We also have Yakee Special Brew who is four years old, and the front cover star of this week's Aspire. He came from well-known Boston terrier breeders Burt Easdon and Philip Martin; I've had four dogs from them over the years and their excellent breeders and really nice people." As Bostons suffer from hereditary cataracts, potential owners must ensure any puppies they buy have been tested and are hereditary clear of the juvenile type. Dawn added: "We keep at the front of our thoughts the fact that most puppies are much loved family pets, so therefore a sound temperament is always our aim when breeding. It's important for Bostons to be tested from two years old for late-onset cataracts."



Aspire would like to reward Dawn and Tim's dedication to the Boston terrier breed by awarding them with our Crystal Trophy for Breeder of Distinction 2016. On hearing the news, Dawn said: "Thank you, Aspire. This is a lovely surprise and a fantastic reward for all our hard work. I would encourage anybody looking to bring a Boston into their family to not only do their research into the breed, but also to find a registered breeder through the Kennel Club or breed club."



Certificate of Recognition for Best of Breed awarded to HAVALAG HAVANESE

An affectionate, intelligent, and outgoing dog, the Havanese is the breed of choice for experienced breeder and show competitor, Philip Grocock, winner of our Certificate of Recognition for Best of Breed 2016.

Eastern Europe, including Telazaro Blaze of Glory from Serbia, but our bitch Layla is coming up to three years old so I think it's best to mate her; so, hopefully we'll have a litter of puppies due later this year.

Bitch. Jessica has competed at Crufts a number of times already and was once one of only a very few Champion bitches in the UK.

Philip's love and admiration for this breed dates back to the mid-1990s when the breed first made its way to British shores. Philip told Aspire: "Sadly we were unable to get our hands on a Havanese until 1999, when we welcomed Floyd into the family. We got him from a friend who had a bitch who had puppies and in 2000 we added our first bitch, named Janet Clark, to the mix. We began breeding a couple of years later when she was mature and haven't looked back; the Havalag affix was created in 2009.

"Glory was entered into her first show just a week after arriving in the country where she won 'Best Puppy in Breed', followed by at least five other awards in the latter part of 2015. We're looking forward to a successful show year with Glory in 2016. I qualified with seven dogs for Crufts, but will be only be taking five, including my ten-year-old Jessica, who is being entered into Veteran

"With every dog I breed, my aim is to breed and exhibit the best dogs that we possibly can, focusing on health, temperament, type, correct size and the desired silky coat. Although the breed is relatively healthy, all our dogs of breeding age have the necessary health and eye checks, and all our puppies have eye checks carried out at nine weeks. We breed for quality NOT quantity."

Philip currently has 15 Havanese dogs. To reward his commitment to the breed, Aspire recently presented him with a Certificate of

Recognition for Best of Breed 2016. On hearing the news, Philip said: "I am delighted; thank you, Aspire. It is an honour to receive this Certificate of Recognition and it's such a surprise. Let's hope it's the first of many awards in 2016."

We've imported dogs from all over the world in order to improve the gene pool, which is pretty small. We weren't planning to breed this years because we've only recently imported five puppies from



If you'd like to know more about his dogs, or about the breed, please call 01945 450923 or email pgrocock7@gmail.com. Alternatively, please visit www.havalag.com

CHEERY & CUDDLY: LABAYAMESA HAVANESE



Dr Andrea Akkad and her husband, of Labayamesa Havanese, are passionate about the Havanese, a companion dog originating from Cuba. Having fallen in love with their first puppy, Lulu, in 2009, they decided to get another, a friend for Lulu, and so Coco was welcomed into the family in 2010.

excellent forever homes, but we take an interest in their lives and have an excellent relationship with their families."

Andrea told Aspire: "Lulu turned out to be so adorable that we couldn't resist getting her a friend. Then, when Coco came along and was equally as adorable and fabulous, we decide to embark on a show career with her. Coco's breeder, Jill Richards of Chazard Havanese in Eastwood (the current President of the Havanese Club of GB), became a mentor to us in both showing and breeding. Our dogs are first and foremost our family members, but we feel that our Havanese have a great potential to contribute to the genetic pool. We had our first litter in 2013, under the Labayamesa affix, followed by another in 2015 and we have puppy plans for later this year. When we do decide to breed a dog or a bitch, it is because we are confident that they have a lot to offer towards the improvement and development of the breed as a whole. We will always value quality above quantity."

A member of the Bichon family of breeds, the Havanese is an affectionate small dog with a great temperament and full of mischief. Being very intelligent, the Havanese is easily trainable, and enjoys stimulating activities such as agility. Havanese are friendly, outgoing dogs, who have no other purpose than to provide companionship for humans; that is why they were bred originally in Cuba. For that reason, they don't do well being left alone or kept outside. They need human contact and interaction. They're often referred to as Velcro dogs, because they're so attached to their humans. They're also one of the more sturdy small dogs making them ideal pets for families with children. While they do have a fantastic coat, they do take a lot of grooming; younger dogs must be groomed daily, but adult dogs with more stable coats can get away with being brushed several times a week.

Andrea and her husband are both doctors and the health of the dogs is hugely important to them: "The breed is generally healthy, but as with most small dogs, they are prone to luxating patella, cataracts and retinal dysplasia. At Labayamesa, we have dogs tested annually under the BVA Eye scheme; I would recommend all Havanese are tested. As a member of both the Havanese Club of Great Britain and the Kennel Club Assured Breeder Scheme, we work to continually expand our knowledge and keep up with the latest developments, particularly in breed health and genetics. All of our Havanese are fully health tested and bred for their health and temperament," Andrea added.

"HAVANESE ARE FRIENDLY, OUTGOING DOGS, WHO HAVE NO OTHER PURPOSE THAN TO PROVIDE COMPANIONSHIP FOR HUMANS..."

Andrea added: "We currently have four permanent furry residents, who live with us and are used to being spoilt: Lulu, Coco, Yero and Foxie. We also co-own two of the lovely puppies we've bred. They live in

Andrea is enjoying show success with both Yero, who is an International Champion, and Irish Champion Foxie, who won Best Reserve Bitch at Crufts 2015; she will returning in 2016 to compete in the breed open class.

For further information on Labayamesa Havanese, please call 07525 069870 or email labayamesa@btinternet.com Alternatively visit www.labayamesa-havanese.com

Paparottsie Papillions

CH FIN CH Paparottsie
Painted Lord



Champion Paparottsie Painted Lady was our first home-bred and from here we got CH FIN CH Paparottsie Painted Lord. He went out to Finland in 2013 and was Top Papillion in Finland where he sired, at the moment 10 champion puppies which are in America, Russia and Finland.

His first puppy to be sired in the UK is Afterglow Heaven Help Us a.k.a. Mr Gibson, who has been to two shows and has had two Best Puppies In Breed and he won Puppy Stakes to qualify for Puppy Of The Year and Reserve CC. He is owned by Isherwood and Schoville and is only eight months old.



Afterglow Heaven Help Us

Contact: Pat & Tom Urwin on 01228 593178 or 07990 932937
E: geordiegirlurwin@btinternet.com
www.paparottsie.co.uk

Sharon Benton
PHOTOGRAPHY
Capturing the moment



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Eriksfjord was the home of 'Erik the Red' the Viking my first Vallhund Erik was named for. Erik came to live with me at 12 years of age from the RSPCA, a year later I saw an advert in a local paper for Swedish Vallhund puppies and chose Trixi (Valshep Annelise of Eriksfjord).

In 2011 Eriksfjord won the puppy pack competition run by The Kennel Club. This competition was open to all Assured Breeder Scheme members and the prize was an amazing trip to Florida. Eriksfjord competed in the KC Breeders competition and made the final at Crufts in 2013, 2014 & 2015.

In 2012 'Rocky' IR CH Eriksfjord Chilled Bunny for Jarlalfvin was Top Puppy in the UK and Top Vallhund in Ireland in 2014. In 2014 Teddy CH Starvon Wishful Thinking (co-owned with his breeder Ada West) was Top Vallhund in the UK.

Vallhunds love to do different activities and there are Eriksfjord Vallhunds doing agility, obedience and heelwork to music. First and foremost all Eriksfjord Swedish Vallhunds are beloved pets - luckily for me some of them enjoy my hobby of dog showing. Vallhunds are intelligent, fun, easy to live with and once you've had one, you'll never want anything else.

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Cheinban Lancashire Heelers



The Lancashire Heeler is a native breed of the United Kingdom originating in the County of Lancashire, hence the name. He is the smallest dog in the Pastoral Group, this group comprises of dogs who were used to herd cattle and sheep since the early days of man's close association with dogs. I have owned Lancashire Heelers since the early 1960s, the first one being a black and tan dog we named Ricky. Then in 1967 we bought a bitch, Ginny, who I took all over the country with me in the course of my work; she lived to be 14. Others followed, and in the summer of 1984 I bought a lovely black & tan puppy bitch, also named Ginny, from the Tapatina Kennels of Mrs Pat Taylor, who was a founder member of The Lancashire Heeler Club in 1978. The following year I bought a puppy dog, Tyson, who was a real little character, they lived to be 17 & 19. Lancashire Heelers are long living, healthy dogs.

In 2004 I bought my dog Buseuits from the late Mr Norman Johnston of the Doddsline affix. I also inherited Duffy from Norman, and Cate from the Hotpot Kennels, and I have spent many lovely days attending countrywide dogs shows. Now once again it is nearly March and we all look forward to attending Crufts, the world's greatest dog show.

Contact Audrey Bancroft on 01254 398771 or email audreybancroft@talktalk.net
www.lancashireheeler.biz

Beautiful Bernese from Trish Goodyear/Harvestbank

Good-natured and self-assured, Bernese Mountain Dogs make excellent family pets. One of the most beautiful of Swiss dogs, the Bernese is a kind and courteous, well-mannered and affectionate, obedient and easily trained companion for the whole family, especially children. Trish Goodyear has loved these striking dogs since welcoming her first, Biggles, into the family in 1996.

Trish told Aspire: "I grew up surrounded by dogs because my father had trained racing greyhounds. When my husband and I first saw a Bernese in our local pub, we fell in love. We spent some time chatting with the owners of the dog, one of whom was actually Secretary of the Southern Bernese Mountain Dog Club, which I am now Secretary of, and learnt all about the breed. Once I'd seen them on TV at Crufts, it was settled and we welcomed Biggles into the family in April 1996, buying him from Helena Turner.

Bernese live past nine years old. I currently have a nine-and-a-half-year-old bitch called Holly, who I will be showing a Crufts, along with Flo. I'm very fortunate to have qualified dogs for Crufts every year since 1999. I have owned four champion dogs over the years, two of which I bred myself."



"Two years later we got a dog puppy from Biggles' sister and began campaigning him on the show circuit. I started breeding in 2004 when my first litter of puppies was born on 31st August 2004. This date was already significant to our family as we'd moved in to our home on this date in 1990, so I took the street name, Harvestbank, as my affix.

"I only tend to breed when I want a puppy to keep myself, so I have no litters planned for this year but I may decide to breed a bitch later on in the year. I've had six litters since 2004 so am by no means a big breeder, however I am passionate about the breed. I breed for temperament, type and conformation and all my dogs are bred, handled and very much loved. Sadly, cancer is one of the biggest health concerns for Bernese; you're doing well if you have a



Bernese Mountain Dogs have an impressive appearance with an imposing stature and striking tricolour markings. They're loyal, intelligent and kind natured dogs, making them ideal family pets. If you'd like to know more about the breed, please call Trish on 07766 880162 or email goodyear685@btinternet.com



Relaxed & refreshed at Ringehay Cottages




Surrounded by spectacular scenery and located within easy reach of numerous award-winning visitor attractions, Ringehay Farm Holiday Cottages offer the opportunity to relax and unwind on a luxurious self-catering holiday in the Peak District.

An idyllic base from which to explore Britain's first National Park, The Barn, The Granary and The Dairy are owned by Darren Pearson and Nita Bainbridge, who purchased the farm in 1998. The properties were extensively renovated from their derelict state, welcoming their first visitors in April 2009.

Offering superb holiday home accommodation for a family of four, The Dairy is a four-star gold rated cottage with two en-suite bedrooms, which can either be set up as two doubles or one double and one twin. The large airy kitchen boasts a dining area, while the open-plan lounge benefits from a 42 inch Freeview plasma TV with DVD player and games console. The lounge enjoys a stable door straight out into the garden, where guests will find a private garden with patio.

With flagstone floors and underfloor heating throughout the ground floor, as well as exposed pine floorboards upstairs, The Barn offers modern luxury while retaining the charm of original features. Sleeping six, The Barn has three bedrooms: two first floor en-suite kings, and a ground floor wheelchair accessible twin or super-king bedroom with adjacent wet room. As with The Dairy, The Barn's lounge boasts a 42 inch Freeview plasma TV with DVD player and games console. The kitchen is well-equipped and the dining area can accommodate up to ten people, ensuring everyone can dine together when The Dairy and The Barn are hired together.

A beautifully appointed, luxury self-catering detached stone barn sleeping up to six guests, The Granary was newly converted for the 2015 season. Offering three spacious en-suite bedrooms (one super-king and two twins), The Granary is ideal for a family or for a small group of friends. The property combines charm and character with up to the minute style and comfort thanks to flagstone floors with underfloor heating throughout and central heating on the first floor.

A welcome pack, of freshly baked bread, quality jam or marmalade, butter, fresh free-range eggs courtesy of the farm's hens, (when laying) fruit juice and milk, and of course a pack of Staffordshire Oatcakes is provided on arrival. All bedding, linen and quality towels are provided, and there is a laundry room

onsite. The cottages also have free Wi-Fi throughout.

All three properties have access to the farm's Swedish style larch hot tub. A unique experience, the hot tub offers guests an indulgent journey to relaxation, which will delight the senses and leave you feeling totally rested, refreshed and rejuvenated. Pre-booking is essential, as the hot tub is heated by log burner.

Set within 38 acres of unspoilt meadowland with private fishing pools, these three self-catering holiday cottages boast breathtaking views over the surrounding Derbyshire and Staffordshire countryside. Just 14 miles from the M6 at Stoke-on-Trent, Ringehay Farm Holiday Cottages offer easy access to picturesque market towns including Bakewell and Buxton, the rich industrial heritage in and around Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent, and more modern attractions, such as Alton Towers Theme Park.

Nita told Aspire: "We're one of the few four and five-star Quality and Tourism rated properties that are dog and family friendly, making us a great destination for the whole family to enjoy a relaxing and rejuvenating Peak District break."





For further information, prices and specific availability, please visit www.ringehaycottages.co.uk
Alternatively, please call 01538 360251 or email stay@ringehaycottages.co.uk

Picturesque & Perfect

With more award-winning beaches than skyscrapers, more national park than suburban sprawl, more breathtaking views than taxi queues and more people wandering the 186 miles of coastal trails than hurrying for the train home, Pembrokeshire offers a rural escape from the hustle and bustle of city living.

One of the biggest draws for tourists visiting this spectacular corner of Wales is the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and Coastal Path. Walking the 186 miles (299km) of Coastal Path is the perfect way to see the beauty of Britain's only coastal national park. It's a strenuous undertaking that'll take 10 to 15 days to complete. Luckily there is a bus service for one-day hikes or for linking multi-day walks together.

Walking the Coastal Path isn't the only way to enjoy Pembrokeshire; its stunning coastline offers safe, sandy beaches for families, it's a haven for outdoor adrenaline junkies and wildlife enthusiasts.

With more blue flags and award winning beaches to choose from than any other county in the UK, no holiday to Pembrokeshire is complete without a visit to the beach. Probably the most iconic seaside town in Wales,

Tenby is a quaint and charming traditional bucket and spade destination. In fact, Tenby was awarded a Silver award for the best UK coastal resort at the British Travel awards in 2014, and offers ample opportunities for watersports with kayaks, jet skis and motor boats for hire.

St Davids Peninsula has some of the most magnificent coastal scenery in Pembrokeshire. Named after the patron saint of Wales, St Davids is the smallest city in Britain, awarded city status in 1995 although the roots of St Davids go back to the fourth Century when Saint David himself lived there. Built from a local stone with a beautiful pink and grey colouring, St Davids Cathedral is a remarkable place, built in 1181 on the site reputed to be that of St David's sixth Century monastic settlement. Situated a few miles from St Davids, Solva is a delightful village split into two separate areas: Upper Solva and Lower Solva. Lower Solva occupies the narrow river valley at the end of Solva Harbour, while Upper Solva is home to most of the modern development in the town.

For more information on visiting Pembrokeshire, please visit www.visitpembrokeshire.com



Ty Gwilym Holiday Cottages
Ty Gwilym Holiday Cottages in St Davids are set in the heart of the city, close to the Cathedral, restaurants and shops and yet, within ten minutes walk of the coastal path and five minutes' drive from the Blue Flag beach at Whitesand Bay.

Ty Gwilym has three lovely holiday cottages: Bwthyn Gwe, Bwthyn Lil, and Ty Gwilym, sleeping up to two, four or six people. We now have The Boathouse, which has garage parking and sleeps two. The have been carefully restored to a high standard and retain many original period features. They benefit from a sunny, secluded courtyard and garden, which overlook the Cathedral Bell Tower and surrounding countryside. There is good off-street parking and free Wi-Fi.



Contact: Hamish Elvidge
www.tygwilymholidaycottages.co.uk

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Stunning & Spectacular



© Visit Britain / Daniel Bosworth & Kent Tourism Alliance

Thanks to its abundance of fruit-growing and hop gardens, as well as a fragrant landscape of gentle hills, fertile farmland and cultivated country estates, Kent is known as 'The Garden of England', making it a fantastic year-round holiday destination.

Kent's unspoilt countryside is studded with more than 60 nature reserves, parks and country parks and the county is actually home to two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; the Kent Downs and the High Weald. Covering almost 880 square miles, the Kent Downs AONB stretches from the White Cliffs at Dover and Folkestone to the Surrey Border. The AONB roughly follows the southeast's outcrop of chalk and greensand, the two ridges running parallel with each other to the coast. With its characteristic dip slope and dry valleys, the chalk ridge has great wildlife importance, while the well-wooded greensand ridge supports heathlands and acidic woodlands.

A historic land, walking in the High Weald AONB will transport you back in time, exploring a landscape that has barely changed since medieval times: an eclectic mix of sandstone ridges, clay valleys, colourful heaths, small woods and irregular-shaped fields. The Seven Wonders of the Weald are a cluster of tourist attractions based around seven settlements in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Goudhurst; Biddenden; Chiddingstone; Penshurst; Northiam, Tenterden and Horsmonden. All within easy reach of one another you can pick and mix from a range of different outdoor attractions.

For some, the lure of the coast is just too great to resist and as Kent is home to one of England's most famous natural landmarks - the White Cliffs of Dover - why would you want to go anywhere else?

Located eight miles northeast of Dover, Deal is a former fishing town. Deal was once the busiest port in England but today is a lovely seaside resort with quaint streets, an excellent range of independent shops, three weekly markets, two castles built by Henry VIII and now maintained by English Heritage, wonderful architecture, and a fantastic pier; it has something for everyone, young or old. The town centre is pedestrianised and flat, making it ideal for disabled visitors and pushchairs. Deal is also home to two top quality golf courses and plenty of places to cycle. There are also opportunities for

not only sea fishing from the pier and beach, but course fishing on lakes. Deal came first in the Telegraph's '10 top spots to lay your beach towel' as well as being recommended in The Times 'Where to Cycle by the Sea' feature.

Like no other town by the sea, Whitstable offers traditional charm, a strong arts culture, and a rich maritime history. Known for its oysters, which remain an intrinsic part of this sea town's character and are celebrated every July at the Oyster Festival, Whitstable enables visitors to enjoy many delicacies from the sea at local restaurants and pubs, or at home from the fresh fish market at the harbour. The town is also home to an array of independent craft and gift shops, galleries, delicatessens and fashion shops, all trading side by side with butchers and bakers. Whitstable even has a pub on the beach!

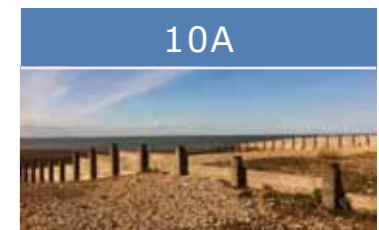


© Visit Britain / Kent Tourism Alliance

A major pilgrimage site in the Middle Ages, Canterbury is a cathedral city steeped in history and tradition, whilst offering something for the cosmopolitan city visitor. Canterbury is home to the stunning Cathedral, as well as the ancient ruins of St Augustine's Abbey and Canterbury Castle; however, luxury hotels, fine restaurants and independent retailers offer a completely modern experience.

With an abundance of fruit-laden orchards, it's no surprise that Kent could also be described as the beer garden of England; it produces the world-renowned Kent hops and some of the country's finest ales and wines from its vineyards.

For more information, visit www.visitkent.co.uk



10A

10A Whitstable, is a stylish apartment within a characterful Victorian property and the perfect seaside retreat.

Sleeping up to four people (two on a restful sofa bed), 10A has all the comforts of a modern home, which has been lovingly decorated to a high standard throughout, making it a fabulous retreat throughout the year.

The garden is an escape from it all, with Mutley's Hut as an extension of the house and part of the tranquil experience.

Whitstable is a unique seaside town, with a fabulous dog-friendly beach and amazing restaurants.

We look forward to welcoming you!



T: 07774 968896 / 07778 158515
E: info@whitstable-apartment.co.uk
www.ownersdirect.co.uk/accommodation/p8147271

SEA & SECLUSION AT THE OLD COACH HOUSE

Surrounded by stunning Pembrokeshire countryside, 10 minutes' drive from St Davids, the Old Coach House offers clean, cosy and comfortable self-catering accommodation for holidaymakers looking to enjoy the abundance of peace and tranquillity that can be found in Pembrokeshire National Park.

Set in five acres of garden and woodland, the Old Coach House can accommodate at least eight people, in two double and two twin bedrooms. The house also benefits from two full bathrooms and three toilets. The kitchen is furnished to a high specification and boasts a fridge freezer, dishwasher, eight hob and two oven electric range. There is also a separate utility room, home to a washing machine, tumble dryer and drinks fridge. With stunning high-ceilings, the living and dining room is a superb space with beams and a large wood burning stove, widescreen TV with Sky (including Sky Sports), a Blu-ray player, a multi-media player and a Wii, as well as a piano. The garden room enjoys sea views, a Webber barbecue and outdoor shelter, as well as a pool table, traditional games and beach equipment for guests to use. There is Wi-Fi throughout the house.

A former family home, the Old Coach House is owned by Helen Fox and her brother, Jonathan Tite. Helen and Jonathan moved to Solva with their parents in 1974 when their father Iain left the RAF. He and his wife, Kathy, took the opportunity to purchase two derelict barns in extensive grounds near Solva, which they converted into a spacious house, the Old Coach House. Over the

years the house has been extended and improved. Helen told Aspire: "Jonathan and I have fond memories of growing up in Solva, surfing, cliff jumping and sailing and swimming with our friends in the harbour where one year we befriended a dolphin. In order to keep the house in the family, we decided to renovate it and to maintain it as a holiday let. The house can accommodate guests with limited mobility and the pond cover & fire-guard make it safe for children. All linen is hotel standard and we can provide a camp bed and travel cot, if necessary. Logs and coal are provided free of charge for the wood burner and guests are welcome to help themselves to the seasonal produce grown in the garden. Many guests have remarked upon how quiet it is at night and the night sky is spectacular, being devoid of light pollution."

The village of Solva, with its pubs restaurants and cafés, is within walking distance. The harbour is a place for crabbing, jumping off the quay wall or learning to sail. The beaches in Pembrokeshire are probably some of the most spectacular in the whole of Wales. Whitesands, a sandy beach suitable for surfing and swimming, is a 10-minute drive away, while Newgale beach with its rugged, sweeping vista is also only 10 minutes by car. The Old Coach House is situated right next to the Pembrokeshire Coast Path, which provides excellent scenic walks for all the family. There is an incredible amount of wildlife to observe whilst walking the coast, or you can take a boat trip to visit Skomar or Ramsey islands where you will see puffins, seals and dolphins.



For further information, prices and availability, please visit www.oldcoachhousesolva.co.uk. Alternatively, please call Helen on 01373 301172 or email helenfox64@hotmail.co.uk

Gilly's Custom Design Frames



Are you struggling to find the perfect photo frame?
Do you want one to match your décor, or as a gift for a loved one but can't seem to find what you want?

Then look no further Gillys Custom Design Frames could be just what you need. Based in East Peckham, we handcraft photo frames for all occasions, we even offer a custom design service where you can design your own frame.



To find out more please contact Gill at gillygiftshop@gmail.com
www.gillysgifts.co.uk
Gillys Custom Design Photo Frames

The Baby Show is back at the NEC, Birmingham



Exciting news! The Baby Show (which first launched in 2002) is returning to the NEC in Birmingham from Friday 13th until Sunday 15th May (9:30am until 5pm daily). Now in its fourteenth year, the Show will be home to around 200 exhibitors showcasing their latest products with amazing discounts especially for NEC visitors.

The journey into parenthood is a truly exciting and memorable time, a whirlwind of discovery, learning, exploring, testing and trying. You're bound to have all sorts of questions – at The Baby Show, we hope to provide answers to them all. Covering a range of pregnancy and parenting topics, our superb team of experts, along with leading brands such as iCandy, Stokke, Chicco and Mothercare, will be on hand to offer their invaluable advice, experience and techniques to help reassure and guide you at this important time for you and your family.

As usual the main stage with MadeForMums will play host to the best parenting experts in the UK so whether you need help with your babies sleeping habits or you're struggling to get to grips with breastfeeding, there's an expert for you.

Highlights of The Baby Show at the NEC, Birmingham will include:

- Over 200 trusted brands (including iCandy, Joie, Cosatto, Maxi-Cosi, Quinny, Stokke,

Mothercare, Tommee Tippee, Mamas & Papas, Chicco and Aldi Mamia) offering visitors the chance to thoroughly test and try before buying.

- Exclusive show offers and competitions from top parenting brands.
- Catwalk shows with all the latest fashions in maternity, baby and toddler wear.
- A complimentary crèche where parents can drop off their little ones and enjoy the show knowing they are being cared for.
- The Baby Show Stars' themed competition where the show's cutest babies will win £100 each day.
- Dedicated baby facilities ensure visitors have a hassle-free time, including the feeding area where parents will be able to take advantage of heating and sterilising equipment, complimentary baby food and a comfortable and private space for breast feeding.

At the UK's leading pregnancy and parenting event, The Baby Show, we want you to get the most out of your day:

- Take time to browse and compare products
 - See demonstrations
 - Make informed buying decisions
 - Enjoy unbeatable savings
 - Listen to the expert speakers
- ...and generally have a fab day out!



That's why The Baby Show is dedicated to providing a superb shopping experience with essential facilities for mum, bump and baby. There's also a FREE 'Shop & Drop' and 'Collect-by-Car' service, so you don't need to worry about carrying lots of bags around. Many of the retailers also offer delivery services for the larger items.

Organised by Clarion Events, The Baby Show is home to superb shopping, expert advice, exclusive offers from top parenting brands and family-friendly fun. It is held three times a year – at the ExCeL London (February), the NEC in Birmingham (May) and Kensington Olympia (October).

Head over to www.thebabyshow.co.uk to buy your tickets at Early Bird rates and save up to 40%.



The Blue Coat School
Founded by the Church of England in 1722



Inspiring
your child



The Blue Coat School Birmingham

As first-time parents, we read up and research as much as we can to prepare ourselves for this momentous change in our lives. Inevitably, as most new parents will find, the first few months become somewhat blurred between feeding, changing and trying to grab some sleep in between!

So how in the middle of all this can anyone have the time to think about childcare? Is it really necessary to start thinking about schools when your baby is not even out of nappies? Surprisingly, it is the right time, and, better still, parents are doing their research even before baby is born.

"It's never too early to think about schooling, as many young parents are finding out to their peril!"

Birmingham has a wide offering of nurseries and schools to choose from, but what is a mystery to many is the need to put their child's name down early in order to get their school of choice. The most popular day schools and nurseries are already over-subscribed and have waiting lists growing daily. With increasing interest in the independent sector, with the benefits of small class sizes and a rounded curriculum, places at schools such as The Blue Coat School, Birmingham, are increasingly hard to secure.

At Blue Coat, children can join Buttons Nursery from the term after their second birthday but they will also need to be registered for entry to the school at the age of 3 years. Over recent years, the trend has been to see waiting lists for up to three years ahead, as parents register their child within the first few months of their life, for a future place at the age of 3. This in turn has meant that those unaware of the need to register early, have been calling up to enrol their child when they are 2 years, only to find out that they have missed the boat.

Set in an expansive 15-acre campus just two miles from the city centre, Blue Coat is one of the oldest co-educational schools in the country. Founded by The Church of England in 1722, The Blue Coat community of today is vibrant and dynamic. Children grow to be confident contributors to society and have a breadth of skills and interests to take with them as they move on to Senior School. This early foundation begins in the Buttons Nursery, where a love of learning is nurtured within a purpose-built setting. Children progress up the school and are well prepared for the competitive 11+ examinations to grammar and independent schools. Blue Coat's track record of examination success is long standing. A good number of scholarship offers and places at the region's leading senior schools are awarded annually to our Year 6 pupils.

Nevertheless, results alone do not tell the whole story, and so we encourage you to visit and see for yourself why our pupils have a great start in life. Consider all the options before you make a decision on schooling and don't leave it too late. A school should fit a child, and not vice versa, so be sure that you are choosing the school that will grow your child not just academically but as a whole person. With registrations already being taken for entry in September 2019, the danger is you might miss out on a wonderful opportunity!

Telephone **0121 410 6807** to find out more, or visit The Blue Coat School at our **Open Morning on Saturday 7 May 2016, 10am to 12.30pm.**

thebluecoatschool.com

THE BLUE COAT SCHOOL BIRMINGHAM LTD, SOMERSET ROAD, EDGBASTON, BIRMINGHAM B17 0HR
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“Baby” noun

A little piece of heaven
sent down to earth



© The Baby Show

There are few more important moments in life than bringing a new person into the world. Having a baby is a momentous occasion and one that will change your life, and the way you look at the world forever more.

During your pregnancy, it's vital to take care of yourself, so eat a healthy diet, aiming for five portions of fruit and veg, as well as a range of dairy products, dark green leafy veg, beans, pulses and wholegrain cereals for their zinc, b vitamins, folic acid and calcium. However, don't eat for two – it's a common mistake to consume more than you need to because you're pregnant, but you actually only need an extra 300 calories maximum during your third trimester (after week 24).

Vital products for your child include nappies, a cot, a Moses basket, feeding bottles, bibs, clothes and finally, blankets to not only keep your newborn warm, but to comfort them as they adjust to life outside the womb. When your time is limited, buying products online rather than travelling to town – parking, queuing and then paying – is a great way to free up a few hours to spend some quality time with the newest member of your family. Similarly, in those last couple of months before the birth, you may not feel much like fighting your way down the crush of the High Street, so shopping online is a time-saving, and feet-saving, option.

Making a birth plan is another essential way to ensure everything runs smoothly when the time comes. Taking your partner or someone you trust with you to anti-natal classes will increase your confidence when you get into the delivery room as well as ensuring they can provide you with the most effective help during labour.

The hard work really begins when your baby arrives, but the worry doesn't end when the seemingly endless cycle of feeding, sleeping and nappy changing does. This is when it becomes increasingly important to not only provide for your child, but also to look after yourself as their mum. It's important for your mental well-being to get as much sleep as you can and to also get out of the house and meet fellow mums who can sympathise with the sleepless nights and dirty nappies!

It is always difficult to trust other people to look after your child once you're ready to return to work, but there are many companies out there with excellent reputations. A revealing study, which tracked the development of 3,000 children over the course of seven years, discovered those with the longest exposure to nursery education performed better in tests at the age of seven. Children of all social classes were found to be four to five months ahead of their peers in terms of education and scooped better results in national reading, writing and maths tests.

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Leading professors from Oxford, London and Nottingham universities also noted that children with three years nursery education benefitted further, by being 10 to 12 months ahead of children who were brought up entirely at home. This evidence is a great boost to working parents, who can often feel guilty for sending their child to nursery, and they can now feel confident that their little one has a bright future ahead of them.

Mr Alan Browning, Headmaster at The Blue Coat School Birmingham says: "The right school and nursery can make a big difference to the foundations laid for your

child's learning, so don't leave it too late to consider options. Places at Blue Coat are filling fast and more and more families are making these choices during pregnancy, as well as in the first few months of their baby's life. Do come and visit us to find out more. Each year I am delighted to learn of the exam success of our Year 6 pupils, who are then ready to move on to their next step in education, all with plentiful skills and pleasing attributes gained during their Blue Coat years. It seems like only yesterday that we were welcoming them to our Buttons Nursery at the tender age of two!"



TringPark
School for the Performing Arts



Tring Park School for the Performing Arts is one of a tiny handful of residential and day schools in the UK that stand at the forefront of specialist performing arts education.

Talented young people from 8-19 can specialise in Dance, Drama, Musical Theatre or Commercial Music, whilst gaining excellent academic qualifications at GCSE, BTEC and A level.

Tring Park provides young ballet dancers who perform in Nutcracker and Le Corsaire with English National Ballet at the London Coliseum. Pupils have also played the part of Billy in Billy Elliot and joined the cast of Matilda.

www.tringpark.com

On-the-go fun for your little ones with The PlayBag Company



NEW SPRING COLOURS NOW AVAILABLE

Created to make life as a parent easier, the PlayBag is a practical toy bag which quickly transforms into an enchanting play mat – perfect for keeping little ones entertained whether you are at home or away. Impressed with the ingenuity and ease with which The PlayBag is transported, unfolds, and folds away after play, Aspire have awarded creator and mum of two, Debbie Jilbert our Crystal Trophy for Design and Innovation 2016.



Debbie says: "I'm delighted to receive this Trophy from Aspire. It's fantastic to have my hard work rewarded, as well as have my belief in The PlayBag confirmed. Thank you, Aspire for this award and the support you've given me. As well as the new spring colours, I am also in the process of designing new ranges, which will be released over the course of 2016.

"Since the creation of the first PlayBag for my son Peter when he was three years old, the PlayBag has accompanied us on many outings, and saved my sanity on many occasions! His teenage sister is a keen competitor, and this means that we are constantly hanging around training halls and competition arenas, these are not always so much fun for an active five year

old – the PlayBag ensures that he also has something to keep him happy and engage his imagination!"

The PlayBag comes in three main styles:

- The PlayBag Baby (which start at £45) - colourful and extremely tactile
- The PlayBag Maxi (which start at £40) - perfect for holidays, visiting family and friends or for use at home
- The PlayBag Mini (which start at £28) - smaller and more compact version, making it ideal for travel or for when space is limited

Debbie makes each and every PlayBag by hand using high quality fabrics. She keeps a limited number of ready-made PlayBags on the website, however she is also happy to discuss custom PlayBags to incorporate any design or theme that your child would like. All PlayBags are machine washable and have been CE tested, which means that they have undergone rigorous tests to ensure their safety as a toy. The PlayBag Baby and Maxi have long handles and six sets of sturdy popper closures; the Mini has shorter handles and four sets of poppers to make them easier for children to manage on their own. All you need to do is add toys, children and some imagination.



To buy your little one a PlayBag, or for further information, please visit www.theplaybagcompany.co.uk or call Debbie on 07958 807189.





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Contact: Louise Rainsley Tel: **07879 237 491** Web: www.circleoffriends.org.uk
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Vision Blinds are the designers choice. Allowing Vision through the blind when it's down giving privacy as well as vision but can be fully closed for total privacy and retracts neatly into its own cassette when not in use.

All options are available from Countersthorne Blinds Ltd
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Based in Shepshed, this is a fantastic indoor soft play area for your little ones to play, learn and have fun. A great place to meet other parents and enjoy something to drink and eat, while your child plays safely in our three-storey play structure. Special area available for the under twos.

Open Monday to Saturday 9am to 5.30pm
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Free Wi-Fi. Card payments now accepted. Party Plan available please contact us for details. Please note, there is a height restriction of 4ft 9in / 145cm on the play equipment.

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www.facebook.com/noahsarkindoorplay



The object of Tiny Tim's Children's Centre is to provide as many free treatments to all children who need them. The charity has continuously provided therapy free of charge to children with disabilities and special needs since 1997. Initially, the charity only provided remedial massage, neuromuscular massage and touch therapy.

We have now extended our services to include, Bowen therapy, Reflexology, Bio-cranial touch therapy, therapeutic play, Physiotherapy and more recently Occupational therapy. There has been a steady increase in demand for our services; the charity now provides over 4,300 treatments and 2,000 therapeutic play sessions per year, which has resulted in us recently adding a Saturday morning overflow service to keep up with the demand.

Tel: **02476 228 254** | Email: tinytims@outlook.com

www.tinytimcentre.co.uk

TINY TIM'S CHILDREN'S CENTRE, WHITEFRIARS LANE, COVENTRY CV1 2DT

ASPIRE'S TOP RECOMMENDATION



Conveniently located in a leafy suburb of Edgbaston, we provide a 21st Century education based on traditional values. We are a lively, happy, caring community in which every girl aged from 2½ to 18 is valued as an individual: every facet of her abilities and talents is carefully considered and developed.

In a purposeful atmosphere for learning, personal and academic growth are enhanced by the richness of opportunity offered through a broad and progressive curriculum and stimulating extracurricular programme. We strive to provide every opportunity for this from Nursery through to the Sixth Form. We want girls to be so stimulated and challenged during their time here that they not only meet, but exceed expectations.

In Westbourne, pupils may join at any stage - in Nursery aged 2½, Kindergarten at 3+ or Reception at 4+. We have a superb purpose-built Nursery with specialist play areas, ICT provision and dedicated reading areas. Parents are encouraged to register their daughters early as places are often over-subscribed. Every class has a fully qualified teacher and classroom assistant. A warm, caring environment is created and close links with families are quickly established. The curriculum follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidelines but many girls are working well beyond national levels. A good balance is created between learning through play, indoors and out, and subject-focused work.

We recently received an excellent Inspection Report conducted by the Independent Schools Inspectorate which you can view on our website (below) or the ISI website. Please scan the QR code.



EDGBASTON
HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS



To take a look at our facilities, why not come along to our Open Day on Thursday 5th May, 9.30am to 3pm or our Open House Morning on Thursday 16 June, 9.30am until 11.45am. Please telephone 0121 454 5831 to receive further details or visit our website: www.edgbastonhigh.co.uk

Aspire Magazine sponsored by Swiss Miss Cakes & Sweets 07896 310215

welcome to the world of **Teeny Beanies**
Personalised Beanies for Babies & Children

Teeny Beanies create UK made-to-order personalised products for babies and children.

There are 14 fun characters available in the form of Bean Bags, Cushions, Nursery Bags, Toys and Wheat Hotties. They can be personalised with your child's name. We also offer personalised Baby Bunting in various colours and our Bunny Hamper range with personalised sleep suits and blankets make great Christening or New Baby gifts. We can even gift wrap and send them directly.

If you would like to place an order with Teeny Beanies you can online or call us on 01952 405721 Quote ASPWEB25 for 25% off www.teenybeanies.co.uk

Ready Steady GYMNASTICS

Founded in 2015, we pride ourselves in getting children fit, active and introduced to Gymnastics as early as walking!

Physical development is a key aspect in your child's development and getting them active now can have a lasting effect in years to come.

Having been a Gymnast for over seven years, which I started at age four and then ended up competing at national level, all of my sessions are non-competitive so each child can master new skills and meet new challenges in a positive environment.

I encourage the children to do their best, without needing to always be the best.

Contact us on 07398 491471
E: readysteadygymnastics@yahoo.com
www.readysteadygymnastics.co.uk

Love Learning

Finding the right school is the next step; it can also be one of the most important choices you'll ever make. Our school days are supposed to be the best days of our lives, so finding the right school for your child is extremely important.



A 2014 Populus survey of 2,057 adults commissioned by the Independent Schools Council (ISC) discovered that more parents than ever would choose to educate their child at an independent school if they could afford it. The survey found that nearly six out of ten (57 per cent) of parents would send their child to an independent school if they could afford to. Only 25 per cent would not. This is the highest favourable response in the survey's history: in 2002, 48 per cent said they would and 42 per cent said they would not.

Unprompted, better standards of education remains the key reason parents would opt for the independent sector (51 per cent). Seven in ten of all adults agree that independent schools provide good university and employment prospects for pupils, as well as giving them opportunities to fulfil their potential.

The public strongly believe that independent schools have higher educational standards than state schools (59 per cent), with only six per cent believing they are lower and 23 per cent saying they are about the same. The view that independent schools offer a higher standard of education has been growing stronger over the past decade from 49 per cent in 2002 to 59 per cent in 2012; by contrast, the proportion believing independent school standards to be lower has hardly changed, falling from nine per cent in 2002 to six per cent in 2012.

Choosing the right establishment to educate your child can be a difficult decision. The most important factor to take into consideration is your child's welfare: Will they be looked after sufficiently during their time there? Does the environment cater for their specific needs? And do the teachers seem the encouraging, dream-following kind?

Many schools may appear similar on paper, so find out when open days are occurring and make the time to visit the schools personally. Look at how pupils interact with each other and how well teachers seem to know the children. Ask yourself, is there a friendly, welcoming and caring atmosphere, and do you think it's suitable for your child?

It is essential that once you have seen and approved the school, you take your child along. This will establish if they like the look and feel of the place as much as you do, after all, they'll be the ones spending the best years of their life there.

At the end of the day, choosing the school in which your child will spend the best years of their life should be a joint decision; so once you've decided on a shortlist of schools, visit them with your child. This will enable you to see how they react to the surroundings and if they'll be happy there.

You don't have to leave your baby to go back to work... Do you hate the thought of having to leave your baby to go back to work?

There is an alternative that many smart new mums are turning to - a different lifestyle that can give them freedom to be at home with their children while building a successful part-time business.

We're looking for brand ambassadors for our fabulous beauty products. Join a fantastic and supportive team where you can work for yourself but not by yourself.

Do you love social media and would you like to extend your network of friends?

We have a fast-growing team of amazing young mums who are doing just that, working with one of the world's top ten direct marketing companies which is also a world leader in health and wellbeing research. Despite this there is absolutely no cost involved in joining us and no pressure to achieve targets.

This may or may not be right for you, so get in touch to find out more.
Tel: 01926 844004 or 07967 467442
Email: wendy@oakslade.net
www.oakslade.net





Tuition and Training Services

Tuition and Training Services caters for children whose basic skills of English and Maths require help, attention, and confidence building.

Assessments in reading and spelling are given to determine ages against chronological ages allowing the right programme of work to be followed.

Schools can contact the service should they require pupil assessments for this business has assessment tools followed by a report and recommendations. Some children benefit from one-to-one tuition as they feel comfortable in the home. Confidence grows and skills develop.

GCSE is upon us in May and June. Help is available for years 10 and 11 in Maths and English to ensure grades of C and above. Ages below may also be in need of help.

One student has moved on to gain a Ph.D. Students have become teachers and some have moved

on to university to follow their chosen profession. Some students have joined independent schools.

Personal statements can be written for university and teachers in training may receive guidance for essays by checking and editing.

Tuition and Training Services can provide companies with basic skills training, communication skills and English language help.

Talks to groups are offered on a wide range of subjects.

Education opens the door to numerous opportunities, possibilities and exciting careers. Education creates a wealth of knowledge, develops interests, skills and helps with intellectual growth.

Education and inspiration coupled with subject enhancement help the mind to develop, the individual to feel

empowered and ambitions to be achieved.

Britain has had a long and fascinating path from the 1870 Education Act, drafted by Liberal MP William Forster, after campaigning by the National Education League. It was one of the Elementary Acts 1870 to 1893.

Prior to this, the annual funding allocated for schools by Parliament, in the 1860s exceeded £800,000. There was growing pressure for the State to provide schools in areas where none existed.

In 1880 a further Education Act finally made school attendance compulsory between the ages of five and ten. In 1901 300,000 children played truant due to the fact that parents could not afford to give up income earned by their children.

There have been subsequent Education Acts since then. In 1988 the General Certificate of Education was replaced by the

GCSE which we all recognise. In 2017, England will revert to the GCE.

Education must raise standards in a highly competitive world.

Education both at home and in school should provide a broad and balanced curriculum where pupils are motivated, stimulated, encouraged and assisted to be competent in thought-provoking subjects, imaginative in writing skills and have an understanding of a captivating history of mathematics, theories we owe to the great Greek mathematicians.

Let Tuition and Training Services help your child to reach his/her potential.

A Summer School, during July and August will prepare students for the new academic year, Common Entrance and build up confidence.

RESERVE YOUR PLACE NOW. TUITION AND TRAINING IS A SERVICE THAT IS AVAILABLE ALL YEAR ROUND.

Why not call: **07800 765090** or email: **slb7_sba@hotmail.com**
WWW.TUITION-TRAINING.CO.UK

Make your business bloom



With the end of the Fiscal (financial) year fast approaching, now is the time to stop and take stock of exactly how your business is doing. March is the perfect time to get your accounts and paperwork in order, as well as assess numerous areas of your company, including identifying where you can cut back on expenditure while increasing efficiency, enabling you to significantly improve your business.

Every company experiences financial difficulties at one time or another, but the worst thing you can do is ignore it. Aspire would like to make a few suggestions to help you and your business ride out any financial storms...

• **Get Organised** – make sure financial records are robust and up to date

• **Monitor Employees** – recognise the essential members of the team, to ensure your workforce is running at optimum levels

• **Price Properly** – don't overreact to market conditions by bumping up prices; understand whether demand is price-sensitive, so you don't give profits away

• **Delegate** – if you're in demand as the big boss, delegate unessential tasks to employees further down the chain, or to an outside agency

• **Act Now** – don't wait for things to get really bad before putting plans in place

As we've slowly started to recover from the 2008 recession and subsequent economic turmoil, small to medium sized businesses (who struggled

most of all) have survived by focusing their business on meeting the needs of their individual customers and offering a personal, bespoke service that you just don't get in a larger chain.

With businesses across the Aspire region thriving, we've searched high and low in order to bring our readers and business owners the best professional services available. Whether you need a book keeper, accountant, financial planner or business consultant in order to grow your company, these businesses have been hand-picked by Aspire. They offer a high quality, professional service combined with a warm and friendly approach, taking away the stress of pay roll, banking and even completing your tax return, leaving you to focus on what you do best – serving the customer.

Tidy Numbers: for all your back office needs

Founded in July 2011 by Simon Neath, Tidy Numbers is a firm of Accountants based in Northampton, offering accounts, bookkeeping, taxation, business finance advice and support services to businesses small, medium and large across the UK and internationally.



Simon told Aspire: "I spent 30 years working for commercial corporations, running the day-to-day financial management of these companies, so I have a wealth of experience not just in completing tax returns, but in bookkeeping, budgeting and forecasting, accounts, and management reporting, and much more. I'd always had ambitions to own my own business so when I was offered voluntary redundancy from my job in 2011, I decided that the time was right. I looked into joining a bookkeeping franchise, but in the end decided it'd be better in the long run to set up alone; ok, my start up may be

slower, but the work would all be mine. I'm happy to say that from starting as a one-man band four years ago, I now employ one full-time member of staff, and two part-time bookkeepers."

Tidy Numbers are not your average accountants; they offer a comprehensive range of services, from simply completing your annual tax return to being on hand as your virtual financial director, and everything in between. "Most accountants tend to produce your Year-end Accounts and remain in the background but we are different," Simon explained. "We know that accounts aren't just for HMRC, that they can be used as tools to grow your business and we can help you do just that by getting in the trenches with you, supporting you all the way. We treat our clients' businesses as if they were ours and never take our clients' faith in us for granted, whether they want us for half a day a week or one day a month, or a few hours a quarter.

"In order to provide the best service for your business, we use Xero, a cloud-based, secure accounting system. Xero is currently used by approx. 1300 UK accountancy practices, but cannot

be purchased 'off-the-shelf'; it's only available to registered agents, like Tidy Numbers. In fact, I am a silver partner in Xero; it's an accounting product made by humans for humans. It's recommended for its security, functionality and simplicity.

"As well as my extensive experience and access to Xero, I can also offer an extensive collection of business contacts through attending networking events; it gives me such pleasure to introduce client A to client B for their mutual benefit."

Simon's clients range from a company that trades industrial machinery, worldwide to a local beauty salon. To get a feel for Tidy Numbers, why not browse the website: www.tidynumbers.co.uk

Alternatively, give Simon a call on **07712 449033** or email simon@tidynumbers.co.uk to arrange a FREE consultation meeting.



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Will you outlive your money or will your money outlive you?

This is the question Rajesh Modha at Finance Lab wants you to ask yourself.

If you cannot answer this question with any level of confidence then he suggests you need to review your financial plan. Why? Because this is the fundamental question in relation to your financial future.

Unlike the majority of financial advisers, the team at Finance Lab don't believe they have the right to talk to you about your money until they understand you. So they have a conversation about your lifestyle and how you wish to live over the next 10, 20, 30 years. Only then can a strategy be formulated as to what (if any) financial products are required.

Founded since 2002, Finance Lab is a father and son team (Rajesh and his father, Neil) who provide business owners; senior executives and retirees a retirement based on independence and dignity. "It's our sole aim to ensure you and your family live your ideal lifestyle – for the rest of your life, and beyond – without the fear of ever running out of money," Rajesh told *Aspire*. "Our clients usually meet with us because they are unsatisfied with their current adviser – either because the returns that were promised

haven't materialised, or they are no closer to knowing what their financial future looks like. Clients want clarity, and this is what we provide. For us, wealth management is about using your amalgamated assets to provide the life you want, which is why, five years ago, we transformed our business processes to meet those client's needs. We are confident that there is no better way to offer financial advice. Clients now have the confidence to have an honest conversation to discover exactly what it is they want and whether they currently have the means to make their dreams a reality. It's sad because our approach is seen as alternative amongst out fellow financial advisers, but, for us, it's common sense."

Once they have determined what you want out of life, Finance Lab can start to help you plan your finances. Using the latest technology, they will map out what your financial life looks like. The conversation is then centred on providing the most tax efficient solution for each individual or family from the full tool box of financial products available – as Finance Lab are also

independent financial advisers and mortgage consultants.

"Our service doesn't end there," Rajesh explained. "In order to ensure you're on track, you will have unlimited access to your adviser, as well as an annual review, which includes a discussion on any necessary amendments. Many financial advisers will offer you advice and lots of facts and figures, but it rarely means anything to you as the client. Our approach is different; we will be able to indicate when you can retire based on your current lifestyle; we assist business owners in calculating the number which they need to sell their business for; we can incorporate long-term care costs for those who wish to do so, and all under the umbrella of protecting your wealth for future generations.

"I am a nerd by trade and I'm proud to be; I love the mechanics of it and I love making a difference. I have a job that enables me to not only provide for my family, but to also help others provide for theirs. There's nothing better."

To arrange for a no obligation second opinion on your financial circumstances, give Finance Lab a call today on 0116 3195877 or email info@finance-lab.co.uk

Alternatively, visit www.finance-lab.co.uk for more information.