

# OUR PLACE *News*

The monthly magazine dedicated to help everyone over 50 get the best out of life!

DECEMBER 2022

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9 of the best gardening books to give this Christmas

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the best festive days out around the UK

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What's on • Health & Beauty • Money & Work • Leisure & Travel  
Food & Drink • Arts, Crafts & Hobbies • Home & Garden



## Letter from the Editor

Welcome to Our Place - The monthly magazine dedicated to help everyone over 50 get the best out of life!

Every month, we bring you news and features on; Health & Beauty, Money & Work, Leisure & Travel, Food & Drink, Arts, Crafts & Hobbies, Home & Garden, plus... our Charity of the Month!

Our Place was founded with a mission to connect the mature online community to a world of news, features, offers and life changing products they may have missed out on. Bring them all into one place, Our Place.

What makes us special is that we are a vibrant team of all ages, from 21 to 65 who are all passionate about living life to the fullest irrespective of age. We have built strong relationships with some of the best UK age related businesses with the aim of brokering discounted rates for our Over-50s community.

Become a Friend of Our Place and receive our exclusive newsletters. They are a great way of keeping updated with the latest news and promotions. We aim to bring a smile to your face every time you open your inbox by selecting exclusive vouchers and discounts just for you.

We welcome you and hope you enjoy Our Place.

The Editor - Our Place

*PS. Do you have an interesting story or article? If so send us an email by visiting: [www.ourplace.co](http://www.ourplace.co)*

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### Data Privacy

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**Winter Wonderland in Hyde Park**  
**18th November 2022 - 2nd January 2023**  
 Hyde Park, London.

### PRE-BOOKING ESSENTIAL

This family event features a host of festive fun and activities, including Winter Wonderland ice skating, circus shows, an observation wheel and a huge Christmas market.

### Winter Wonderland activities include the chance to:

- Skate to live music on the Winter Wonderland ice rink, the UK's largest outdoor rink.
- Discover mythical creatures made from ice and snow in the Magical Ice Kingdom's Secret Forest.
- Watch the Imperial Ice Stars' world-class skaters perform a thrilling Peter Pan on Ice.
- Marvel at the acrobatic wonders at Zippos Christmas Circus or Cirque Berserk.
- Soar into the sky on the iconic Giant Observation Wheel and see the twinkling London lights below.
- Ride a traditional carousel or brave the giant loops of nine different rollercoasters at the fairground.
- Go on an immersive cinematic adventure with The Snowman™ Experience, presented by Backyard Cinema.
- Create your very own ice sculpture at the Ice Sculpting workshops.

**Christmas at Kew**  
**16th November 2022 - 8th January 2023**  
 Kew Gardens, Richmond-Upon-Thames.

Take an enchanting journey into a glittering wonderland with Christmas at Kew at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew.

The popular after-dark Christmas event returns with its mile-long trail through the famous botanic gardens, lit up with more than 1 million lights. Get together with family and friends and follow the illuminated path around the gardens, enjoy live performances, and be treated to immersive installations and spectacular displays.

### Highlights of Christmas at Kew:

- Encounter hundreds of moving lights with the Field of Light, as you head towards the Great Pagoda.
- Venture into the Laser Garden, where darting beams of light illuminate mature trees.
- Gaze at 300 sparkling origami boats floating on the lake.
- Discover a magical trail featuring firework trees lit up with bright colours, an Instagram-worthy walkway filled with ribbons of light, and the 100m-long (328m) Cathedral of Light tunnel.
- Be mesmerised by flickering flames from sculptures in the fire garden.
- Enjoy a drink beneath a dome made from tubular lights.
- Marvel at The Great Broad Walk Borders, which are surrounded by illuminated benches and 11m-high (36ft) flower sculptures.
- See a spectacular light, music and water display in front of the iconic Palm House.
- Take the little ones to catch a glimpse of Santa and his elves along the trail, and enjoy vintage fairground rides.
- Indulge in delicious Christmas treats and warming winter drinks at the end of the trail.

### Hogwarts in the Snow - The Making of Harry Potter

**Until 15th January 2023**

Warner Bros Studio Tour, London.



Celebrate a very magical festive season with Hogwarts in the Snow at Warner Bros. Studio Tour London - The Making of Harry Potter.

Winter has arrived at Hogwarts. Glittering Christmas trees line the Great Hall and a replica festive feast including flaming Christmas puddings is laid out on the long tables; while the top section of the hall is transformed for the Yule Ball with snow, icicles and an orchestra of magical instruments. Around the rest of the studio, special-effect fires roar in the fireplaces, the Gryffindor common room is filled with Christmas treats and the detailed Hogwarts castle model is covered in a special blanket of snow. Get up close to props, costumes and models used in the Harry Potter films. Take a look around the studio's famous movie sets decorated as they were for the festive scenes. And find out how different types of artificial snow and ice were created and used in the films. You can also tuck into a 2-course meal in magical surroundings with the return of Dinner in the Great Hall this Christmas.



## Step into Christmas... the best festive days out around the UK

**Light trails, sparkly castles, pantos, vintage cinema and even a solar-powered ice rink... We pick dozens of events to get you into the spirit of Christmas.**

We all need a bit of cheer at this time of year, when nights are long and days are often dark - maybe now more than ever. Luckily, the UK's stately homes, galleries, gardens, theatres, churches and steam trains have been planning ahead and are ready with art and music, fire and ice, and mince pies with Santa. Even the most resolute Scrooge should find something to enjoy.

### Sound and light

Each year, more venues join the floodlit fun, and there are now hundreds of light shows around the country, often set to stirring seasonal music. New this year are Hatfield Park, Hertfordshire, where Elizabeth I grew up, and Leeds Castle in Kent. One of Europe's biggest city parks, Roundhay Park in Leeds, is also launching a light trail, complete with a fairy-lit tunnel and a fire garden, that winds through the trees and past the lake (various dates in Dec).

For the 10th anniversary of the fast-selling epic light trail at Kew Gardens in south-west London, there are new features, including the illusion of a watery abyss in the lake, as well as Instagrammable projections and lasers playing over the Palm House (until 8 Jan). There's a lantern walk at Wakehurst, Kew's wilder sister garden in West Sussex, along with immersive soundscapes and the UK's tallest living Christmas tree, decorated with 1,800 fairy lights (until 1 Jan).

There's a new mile-long trail round the Shugborough Estate in Staffordshire this winter, where a festoon-hung walkway leads through the after-dark gardens, lighting up natural and architectural features (until 1 Jan). In nearby Lichfield, England's only triple-spired medieval cathedral is offering a sound-and-light show called Sing, Choirs of Angels. Frederick Oakeley, who lived in Lichfield, translated the Latin carol *Adeste Fideles* into the English *O Come All Ye Faithful*. Projection artists Illuminos have based their installations on this popular carol and the story of the nativity (16-20 Dec).

There's a nativity-themed sound-and-light show in Sheffield too. The manger will be projected over the cathedral, inside and out, bathing the facade in sunset colours or spangling the columns with stars (29 Nov-4 Dec). The same team, Luxmuralis, are also creating a spectacular installation at Liverpool cathedral, called *The Angels are Coming* (2-9 Dec) and Winchester cathedral's *Star of Wonder*, illuminating the high arches and vaulted ceiling (13-18 Dec).

### Sparkly castles

Start with a bracing walk on the beach and a kipper stottie at the Lord Crewe in Bamburgh, Northumberland, then climb a sandy path through banks of ivy to the castle. Gold rings, partridges in pear trees, maids-a-milking... this year's decorations in the grand hall and staterooms, with theatrical sets and lighting, are inspired by *The Twelve Days of Christmas* (until 8 Jan).

At Windsor Castle, Berkshire, the lampposts are wreathed in evergreens, the grand staircase is garlanded, and a twinkling six-metre Christmas tree, harvested from the neighbouring Great Park, stands in St George's Hall, where local choirs will be carolling on 8, 9 and 15 Dec. With a festive menu in the castle's first cafe, opened in 2020 in the medieval undercroft, the show goes on at the new king's official residence (until 2 Jan).

The rooms inside chateau-style Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire, are decked and open to the public for the first winter season since 2019. The conservatory is full of ferns and marble statues, and the Red Drawing Room has a gold ceiling, candelabras and portraits by Gainsborough. Outside you'll find a Christmas market and a light trail through the landscaped grounds (until 2 Jan).

This year's *Kingdom of the Snow Queen* at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire involves supersized snowflakes and silver-frosted forests shimmering through the procession of staterooms. Outside, there'll be a lavish light trail (book online) and a Christmas market (until 2 Jan).

### The art of Christmas shopping

Brighton and Hove Artists Open Houses are running a winter festival on weekends until 11 Dec. Alongside prints, paintings, ceramics, they will be selling jewellery, knitted hot-water-bottle covers, lambswool gloves and more. Cards and pictures are often inspired by local seascapes or Brighton's starling murmurations, which swirl through the winter sunset over the pier.

Cockpit Open Studios in London is holding weekend sales in Bloomsbury (24-27 Nov) and Deptford (2-4 Dec) and championing the idea of sustainable slow design. The Makers Guild in Wales has a Winter Show at Cardiff Bay, with handmade decorations and stocking fillers, as well as larger works of art in glass, leather, patchwork or carved wood (until 8 Jan).

There's a Made in East Yorkshire market in the minster town of Beverley (7-9 Dec) to kick off its Festival of Christmas (11 Dec), which will fill the town centre with more than 100 stalls, fairground rides and street entertainers.

Illuminating in more ways than one, Tate Liverpool is displaying this year's Turner prize contenders (until March 2023), and there are interesting gifts in its colourful shop. There's also a free light trail circling the colonnades of the Royal Albert Dock, passing a giant yellow submarine and glowing jellyfish, with bars and cafes selling everything from fresh croissants to happy hour cocktails.

### Oh no, it isn't!

Excellence in panto is recognised at the Pantomime Awards, and Morgan Brind, who won best dame last year, is back at Derby Arena, this time as *Widow Twankey* in *Aladdin* (9-31 Dec). Winner of best costumes, Celia Perkins, is doing the designs again at Oldham Coliseum, (until 7 Jan), where it's *Robin Hood* this year, and Jonny Bowles is directing *Cinderella* at the Belfast Grand Opera House, where he scooped the choreography prize with last year's *Goldilocks* (3 Dec-15 Jan).

The Lyric Hammersmith stages the coolest pantos in London and this year it will be *Jack and the Beanstalk*, complete with skateboarding, OTT outfits and Beyoncé numbers (until 7 Jan). There's a new digital set, using LED screens for the first time alongside traditional elements, at the Swansea Grand for *Beauty and the Beast*, starring *Strictly* glitterball-winner Joe McFadden (14 Dec-15 Jan).

### Seasonal bars and cinemas



Manchester, where the UK's first Christmas market opened at the end of the last century, has some unbeatable venues. The city's Piccadilly Gardens becomes Winter Gardens, and this year sees a huge new heated double-tipi bar with a fire pit. Nearby food stalls include plant-based Panc, whose colourful vegan bratwurst was given top marks last year in the *Manchester Evening News*.

*Continued on pages 6-7...*



Escape to Freight Island, a bar and restaurant complex in an old depot near Piccadilly station, reinvents itself for the season as Winter Island with music and a rooftop ice rink (until 24 Dec). An abandoned Edwardian railway station above the site has become a new Backyard Cinema, opened in October, with giant beanbags for watching *Home Alone*, *Love Actually* and other festive films. The cinema itself is dressed movie-set-style, so visitors arrive through tree tunnels into an overgrown palace (until 2 Jan).

The original Backyard Cinema in Wandsworth, south London, has an Arctic voyage theme this winter.

Another venue in the cinema-as-experience trend, the Scotsman Picturehouse in Edinburgh, opened under the Scotsman hotel in 2019, has red leather armchairs, retro lamps and free popcorn. Pricey-but-fun festive packages mean customers can sip prosecco while watching *It's a Wonderful Life*.

For even fancier offerings, Blythswood Square in Glasgow is offering *Baubles and Brunch*: screenings of *Elf* and *Home Alone* can be followed by two courses including steak and chocolate sundaes.

The Luna Winter Cinema festival at Saint George's Hall in Liverpool has a giant screen under the columns and barrel-vaulted ceiling (10-23 Dec). And Liverpool cathedral is one of 11 venues for the Snowman Tour, where a live orchestra accompanies a screening of *The Snowman* and *Aardman's The Flight Before Christmas* for a feelgood festive show (various dates).

### Take to the ice

The ornate domes and minarets of Brighton's Royal Pavillion glow blue and purple while skaters circle the ice beside them on a seasonal rink powered entirely by renewable wind and solar energy (until 8 Jan).

Scotland's biggest seasonal rink is outside the fabulous Kelvingrove Museum in Glasgow with lights, music, a separate toddler rink and adults-only sessions after 9pm. There's also a new 15-metre-high ferris wheel for a bird's-eye view of the whirling skaters below (until 24 Dec). A short walk away, in the vaulted cloisters of Glasgow University, there's a free carol concert on 13 Dec.

Cardiff's free-to-enter Winter Wonderland has a skating rink, the city's only ice bar (tickets include iced shot and rented warm coat), and an ice walk through the castle, stretching 150 metres past the Norman keep (until Jan 8).

The bar is kept at -10C, so it and the frozen seats don't melt. Even the air-hockey table is made of ice and there are ice sculptures, this year on an undersea theme. Cardiff also has a light trail in Bute Park (until 1 Jan) and a Santa's grotto in the changing rooms at the rugby stadium (Dec 2-24).

### Santa's grotto with a twist

Thousands of Father Christmases will be donning their red coats and white beards this winter, in shops, theme parks, zoos and castles. One imaginative idea is a reverse grotto at the National Trust's Erddig Hall in Wrexham. You bring a donation for the local food bank, chat with Santa, see the 18th-century manor halls decked for Christmas, and follow a Rudolph-themed trail around the grounds. The Erddig estate's 1,200 acres have waymarked woodland walks to the castle mound and a cathedral-style avenue of tall beeches and hornbeams. Windows on one side of the house become a giant advent calendar and the restaurant is open for cake and hot chocolate (weekends only, 3-18 Dec).

There's another reverse grotto at Chirk Castle, a medieval fortress near the Welsh-English border (various dates). Winter walks in the area include the castle's oak woods, Chirk aqueduct and the Llangollen canal towpath.

A reindeer trail through the grounds of Biddulph Grange in Staffordshire leads to Father Christmas in his cottage. Biddulph Gardens, a maze of spaces with topiary pyramids, a sphinx-flanked summerhouse, Chinese pagoda and Himalayan glen, are great for kids in any season, with bridges, tunnels and terraces to explore (various dates).

Belfast's Titanic Experience has a Christmas package involving a trip to see Father Christmas via a wishing tree in an enchanted forest, a workshop for handmade gifts and a post office for Christmas letters (until 23 Dec). The Historic Dockyard at Chatham, Kent closes as usual for December, but - for the first time this year - is running *Mission Christmas*, with a visit to Santa including a submarine adventure (until 24 Dec).

### Deck the halls

*Long Live the Christmas Tree!* is the title of this year's arty winter festival at Harewood House in West Yorkshire. Ten artists and makers have fashioned new versions of traditional trees from upcycled bottles, intricate paper mobiles, botanical sculptures using leaves from the gardens, and a carnivalesque celebration called *One Love*. There's a pagan-style tree made with antlers in the Cinnamon Drawing Room, and a rotating, crystal-studded copper tree in the Music Room. People arriving car-free get half-price entry, and there are regular buses from Leeds and Harrogate. There is also 150 acres of grounds to explore, with illuminated walks, overwintering geese and bright holly berries before the drifts of lakeside snowdrops bloom again (until 2 Jan).

At National Trust-owned The Argory, in County Armagh, the theme is *Yesteryear*, with the neoclassical house decked for a traditional festive season and open at weekends. The banisters are wreathed in greenery and baubles, and the grounds are home to robins, grey squirrels and a Christmas fair on 3-4 Dec.

Visitors can make their own natural Christmas wreath, decorated with berries and leaves from the estate, at Downhill Demesne in County Derry. The workshop, with festive refreshments, takes place in thatched Hezlett House, one of Northern Ireland's oldest domestic buildings (selected dates).

### Festive tram and train rides

Illuminated heritage trams are running evening tours of Blackpool's six miles of lights, which are shining for an extended season (until 2 Jan). Originally modelled in the 1960s, the trams are shaped like steam trains or open-topped boats.

TV interior designer Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen has given Blackpool's Golden Mile an art-deco-style makeover this year. The promenade between the resort's two piers now has what Llewelyn-Bowen calls "dynamic corridors of scintillating coloured light". This season's display includes a drag-themed digital show and a seven-metre-high walk-through beach balls. Blackpool's festive village, *Christmas by the Sea*, includes a new free skating rink and artificial snow (until 2 Jan).

There's a grotto inside a decorated train carriage on the harbour at Porthmadog, Snowdonia, where the Ffestiniog railway's *Winter Wanderer* service sets off into the frosty hills. There are hot drinks and mince pies on sale at the station cafe to enjoy with the scenery (various dates).

A *Train of Lights* chugs along Dartmouth steam railway in Devon, through the 450-metre Greenway tunnel to an enchanted forest. On the way back, the town's glowing windows and street lamps will be reflected in the river Dart (until 30 Dec).

### Sculpture trails

Channel 4 first screened Raymond Briggs's *The Snowman* 40 years ago and has shown it every Christmas since. Individually painted to represent the 12 days of Christmas, giant sculptures based on the Snowman form a free trail around Hitchin in Hertfordshire (until 20 Jan).

There's also a craft fair in Hitchin's Schools Museum (3-4 Dec) and local cafes to warm up in include Molly's Tea Room, with its bay window full of teapots and teddy bears.

There's another trail of snowmen at Winkworth Arboretum in Surrey. Camellias, mahonia, witch hazel and early snowdrops flower in the winter garden and down the wooded slopes, and mist rises from the reed-fringed pond on cold days. For the festive season, there are free traditional games and a carousel. Afterwards, there are mince pies and marshmallow-topped hot chocolate in the cafe, with 25p off for those who bring a reusable cup (trail until 2 Jan).

Birmingham has a walking trail of 15 emperor penguin sculptures, a huge Frankfurt Christmas market (until 23 Dec), plus a programme of ballets, concerts and pantomimes.

*(Article source: The Guardian)*

## The trail blazer: the rewards of setting up a walking group

**Wanting to stride out into the countryside with like-minded people, our writer established Black Girls Hike in 2019 and has never looked back.**



*The Guardian* reports that I became a walking group leader by chance. In 2019, I was on a train going through the Peak District, and I watched all these hikers getting on and off. I wanted to do something new for my wellbeing, so I set up a Black Girls Hike Instagram page a few days later. I didn't want to go by myself and I wanted to feel safe and supported so I set up a group for black women.

It absolutely took off - for our first walk we had 14 people. A group is good for making connections. Manchester's quite a transient city. People move here for work, or stay on after uni, and their friends are elsewhere. It's a good way to make new friends. Everyone's on the same page - you're a group of strangers looking to meet people and do something you all enjoy. If it were a speed dating event, you'd have ticked loads of boxes already.

When I started BGH I couldn't read a map or use a compass. I've been lost - I've got the group lost, too, out on Saddleworth Moor in low visibility and horizontal rain. But through adventures you learn so much about yourself. It changes your mindset. I used to have loads of reservations about going out into the countryside, but when you actually go there and realise it's overwhelmingly positive and friendly, then you start thinking about all the other barriers you've created in your mind to trying things. It opens doors.

You do get people with old-fashioned values and set ideas about what a traditional walker is and sometimes you just have to forget about bringing them into 2022. But a lot of people are just happy to see you in the countryside.

They enjoy it, so why would they not want you to enjoy it?

A lot of people are put off by the language of hiking and the outdoors - endurance, challenging, etc - it makes it sound like you've got to up Everest, but it's just walking. If you're looking for some places to start, then coastal walks are pretty decent. You get great views and they're all signposted and only go one way, so you can't get lost. Or check out local reservoirs, they're usually flat terrains and have benches to rest on. I really love the Peak District because it's so accessible. There's a train that goes from Manchester to Sheffield that stops at all the cute little villages along the way. There's a range of hikes you can do.

Social media's a really great place to find like-minded people. Look for applicable hashtags - for me, that's things like *diversifytheoutdoors*. If you find a community, that takes the pressure off you. They'll tell you when to turn up and what to do. Do get the right equipment, make sure you've got a decent waterproof coat, because English weather doesn't love us, and some decent walking boots. Take loads of snacks and water. And enjoy it. Don't overthink it.

If you want to lead a group, check the route beforehand. I also use mapping apps like OS Maps, Komoot and AllTrails. They tell you when you go off track. Though if you're using apps, make sure you have a power bank and be mindful that you won't always have signal. If you want to set up a more official group, look for help from voluntary sector organisations. With BGH, I did everything back to front. We're only now going through our governance. If you just want to set up a meeting, just create a social media profile and engage with people. They say your tribe will attract your tribe: people will find you.

*(Story source: The Guardian)*

## Breakthrough Alzheimer's drug could be rolled out NEXT YEAR as top expert calls for cancer-like screening to spot patients who would benefit most from getting game-changing therapy

**Alzheimer's-stricken Britons could start getting a breakthrough drug that slows the progression of their condition next year, experts have claimed.**

*The Daily Mail* reports that Lecanemab's success was hailed a 'historic moment' after landmark trials showed it can halt the declines in memory and thinking among patients in the earliest stages.

The drug, given as an injection, was designed to clear a build up of amyloid - toxic plaques in the brain that are thought to cause the cruel, memory-robbing disease. Experts said the drug could be available to UK patients as early as 2023.

Professor John Hardy, a world-leading dementia researcher and molecular biologist at University College London, said: 'It depends upon regulatory authorities. 'But I would guess that we would see the first people [getting the drug] towards the end of next year.'

However, doctors have warned just one in 20 patients will benefit from the treatment because the NHS dementia service is severely under-resourced.

Professor Hardy also called for middle-aged Britons to be routinely screened for Alzheimer's, similar to current cervical cancer checks for women, to spot those who could benefit from treatment.

Almost 1 million Britons and 7 million Americans have dementia - with up to three quarters of cases thought to be caused by Alzheimer's disease.

Full trial results for lecanemab are set to be presented at a dementia conference in San Francisco.

Early highlights showed it slowed symptom progression by 27 per cent over 18 months and experienced a slower build up of amyloid levels in the brain.

The drug, created by Japanese pharmaceutical company Eisai and US biotech firm Biogen, was created for the treatment of mild cognitive impairment for patients with amyloid in the brain.

There are two ways to spot amyloid on the brain - a brain scan or biomarker test. The latter is currently done through lumbar puncture, when a thin needle is inserted between the bones in the lower spine. Both tests are expensive and there are currently long waits for them, with problems exacerbated by the record NHS backlog. And they don't necessarily prove a patient has Alzheimer's, with doctors having to make a diagnosis after a range of memory, concentration and communication tests.

While private patients and those living near to major dementia services can access these diagnostic tests, the vast majority of the public cannot, experts said.

Without big changes in NHS diagnostic services, patients initially eligible for lecanemab - who must be in the early stages of Alzheimer's - may no longer meet this criteria by the time their test comes around, they fear.

Experts expressed excitement over results from recent amyloid drug trials and said they were optimistic 'that we're seeing the beginning of Alzheimer therapies'. But they warned that using Lecanemab in the UK would be 'hard work'.

Speaking at a briefing ahead of the Clinical Trials on Alzheimer's Disease conference, Dr Susan Kohlsaat, director of research at Alzheimer's Research UK, said: 'The lecanemab results brings a renewed sense of urgency to really improve the way we diagnose diseases like Alzheimer's.'

Dr Liz Coulthard, associate professor in dementia neurology at the University of Bristol and North Bristol NHS Trust, added: 'Over the years we have, as a profession, not used the biochemical definition of Alzheimer's because we've not been able to test for it until after people have died.'

'But we've now got biomarker tests that have come into the clinical sphere the last five years or so that we can actually diagnose people accurately with Alzheimer's. 'So, if you work in a clinic where we don't have biomarkers, the diagnostic accuracy for Alzheimer's is about 70 per cent - we cannot diagnose Alzheimer's properly without doing biochemical tests.'

'That's not been a priority because there have been no molecular treatments, but now there are, we need to start doing the biochemical tests on everyone.' She added that the 'vast majority of people' do not get a biomarker diagnosis and there is an 'enormous gulf between current service provision and what we need to do to deliver disease-modifying therapies'.

Dr Mani Santhana Krishnan, chair of the Old Age Faculty at the Royal College of Psychiatrists, added: 'We need to get ready. 'It is about getting our current memory services robustly staffed and technically advanced.'

But Professor Hardy said that there was precedent for the NHS to quickly adapt to new therapies - citing the roll out of a multiple sclerosis treatment.

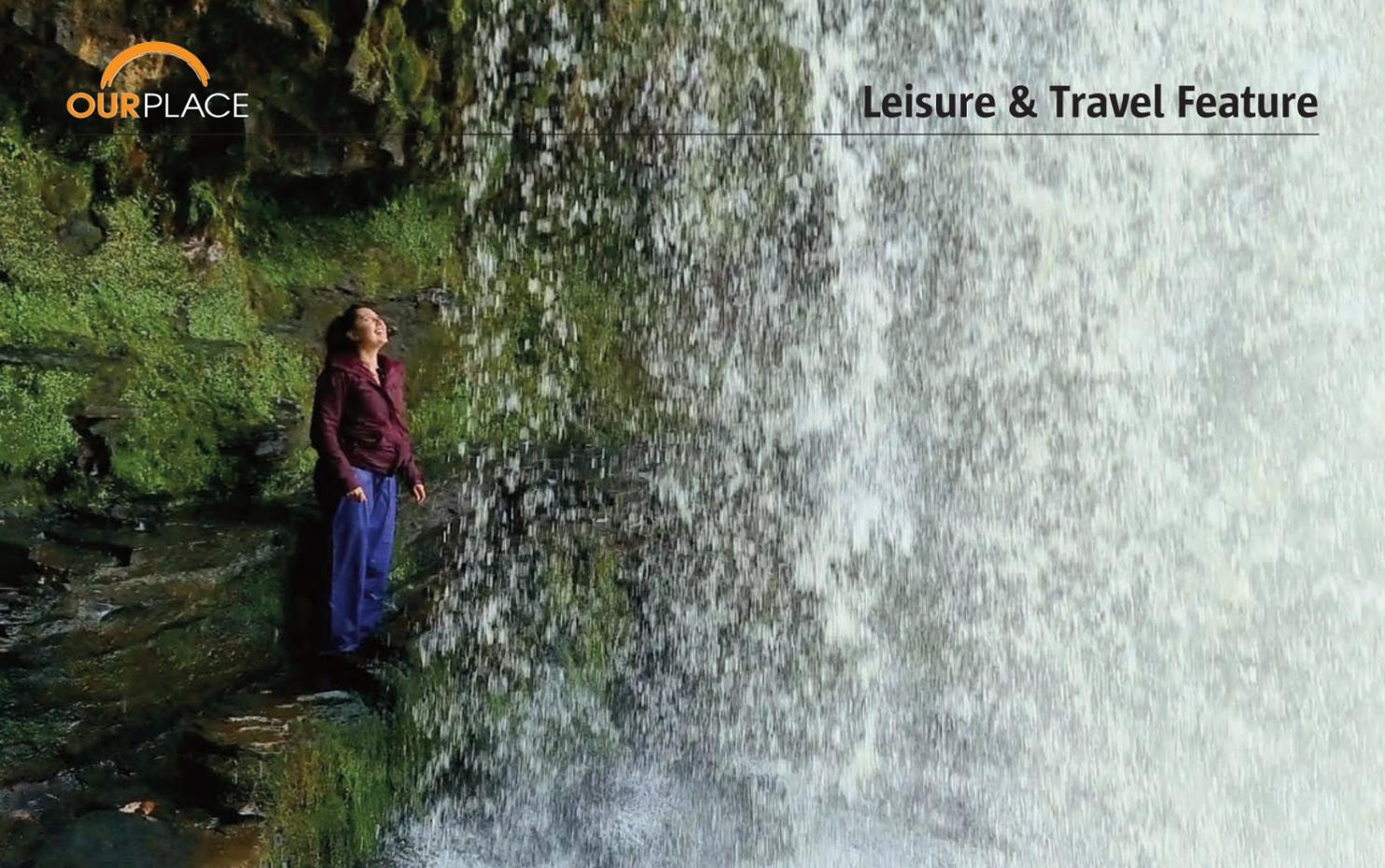
Dr Coulthard estimated that only five per cent of patients will be given lecanemab and most will have gone private to access a biomarker test. She said: 'There are a few clinics in major cities who are doing biomarker tests now. 'It will be a small proportion of those who could be eligible, unless something changes. 'Or what will happen is we'll have massive waiting times, but the trouble is people will wait beyond... I think it won't be licenced in moderate disease. 'So people will be on a waiting list and by the time they come to see us, they'll be a too advanced for the disease, which would be terrible.'

Professor Hardy said people should be called forward for a biomarker test on their 60th birthday. This would reveal those who have the early signs of a build up of amyloid and 'focus attention' for treatment on those who already have some evidence of dementia. However, Dr Coulthard warned the idea of screening middle-aged Britons for dementia when they have no signs of the disease would only 'really enter the sphere' if current trials on asymptomatic people with evidence of amyloid prove successful.

She said: 'At the moment, I think it is quite controversial, unless you know what you're going to do on the basis of that positive amyloid result, if it is asymptomatic. 'Because there's a huge psychological burden (on the patient).'

Dr Coulthard: 'Even diagnosing people at the mild cognitive impairment stage - if we get lecanemab licensed or another similar drug, there will be an imperative to diagnose people (when symptoms are mild). 'The psychological impact of that we really have to think through as well. That's a big thing for people - that's many years of life with that diagnosis.'

*(Story source: Daily Mail)*



# Waterfall weekender: My wild swimming adventure in the Brecon Beacons

**A walk amid cinematic landscapes to five south Wales waterfalls - and a cosy pub - proves the perfect substitute for a holiday abroad.**

It had been a tough month for several reasons and I needed a break. I initially thought a holiday abroad would be the only antidote. But as it turned out, a wild-swimming weekend in the Brecon Beacons in south Wales was the only medicine I needed.

My excitement at the coming trip quickly morphed into panic as we looked at the weather forecast: lots of grey cloud and big rain drops.

After settling into our cosy room in Brecon, we put on our waterproof trousers and walking boots and braved the elements. A quick drive took us to the start of the Dragons Back route in the Black Mountains whose ups and downs recall the scales of a sleeping dragon.



The constant spit of rain became cooling as we hiked up the steep grassy bank, at first trying to avoid the sheep poo, and then forgetting all about it. In fact, the weather made the landscape seem cinematic, the gaps between the low clouds revealing the next rolling hill like a curtain parting before the big screen. The air was so fresh, I felt it cleansed us of all the London grit and grime.

The only building in sight was the Dinas Castle Inn, the highest pub in the Brecon Beacons national park, so we treated ourselves to a pint of Bale lager, ate garlic bread by the fire and wondered if the waterfall we'd be swimming in the day after would be as cold as our beers.

On the day of the wild swim, the air was a cool 10C. I ran back into the hotel and threw a couple of hot chocolate sachets in a thermos of hot water - a decision I would gloat about later. We headed to the Four Waterfalls walk, taking in Sgwd Clun-Gwyn, Sgwd Isaf Clun-Gwyn, Sgwd y Pannwr and Sgwd yr Eira. This region has the highest concentration of waterfalls in the UK and we visited them all, walking on moist woodland paths lined with bright scarlet cap mushrooms.



Sgwd yr Eira was a thundering blanket of white. We walked on the tight ledge behind the falls where we could hear and feel her power. Perhaps not the one to swim in, we decided.

The surrounding forest felt alive and calming. When we eventually arrived at Sgwd y Pannwr, or "fall of the fuller", we saw a curtain of water falling over a wide staircase into an inviting pool.

I had previously labelled myself as "someone who doesn't go into UK seas" because they're too cold. So when I found myself in a swimming costume and a woolly hat at the base of a Welsh waterfall in October, I wasn't certain I was going to go through with it.

But I slowly inched myself in. After about three minutes my skin felt like it was burning. I got out and felt so euphoric that I went back in two minutes later. Drying off on a rock while sipping hot chocolate, I couldn't stop smiling.

Sunday's walks took us to find (and swim in) Nant Sere waterfall, hidden in a valley near south Wales's highest peak Pen y Fan.

Following instructions and photos we found online, we crept through low-hanging trees into a green woodland area evenly covered in a soft mossy rug. With no one else around, we dived in, our screams of excitement echoing down the gorge.

Our reward for this show of bravery was one of the best Sunday roasts of our lives at the Felin Fach Griffin pub, with its wooden beams, open fire and stone floors.



But we saved the best for last. The crown jewel of Wales's waterfall country is Henrhyd Falls, which was used as the entrance to the Bat Cave in *The Dark Knight Rises* and is the highest in south Wales. A five-minute walk from the car park takes you into a rainforest-like lair with hanging ferns.

The waterfall was in full force from days of heavy rain, making swimming ill-advised, but behind it was a roomy cavern - not quite big enough for Batman to live in, but perfect for watching the sunset and the gargantuan sheet of water frothing down in front of us.

"When we have guests here, it's amazing - their faces look completely different by the end of the weekend because they've relaxed and their muscles are doing something different," our B&B owner Kayt Cooper told me. She and her husband, Hugh, run the beautiful Coach House in the historic centre of Brecon. It's the perfect place to access all areas of the national park, and to have a hot bath and rest in between hikes.

I felt more refreshed after two nights in the Brecon Beacons than I have after many of my holidays abroad. Immersed in staggering nature and plunging into cold water, we couldn't help but be completely in the moment.

I took the natural beauty of south Wales back with me down the M4 to London, and it made the chaos of the past month feel like something I could cope with. After all, I was now the sort of person who goes for a Welsh wild swim in the rain.

Accommodation was provided by the Coach House, Brecon, and is available from £92 a night, with a minimum stay of two nights

*(Article source: The Guardian)*



# World Cup Winners! Max Halley's potato snack recipes for watching the World Cup

**Baked new potatoes with soured cream and rose harissa, curried egg mayo that's brilliant crisp-dunking fodder, and rösti with lime pickle yoghurt, peas and mint.**

Beer food, they said, for when you've got people over to watch the World Cup and stuff...

But what is beer food, beyond nuts, crisps and calling in a meat feast pizza with extra jalapeños? It's what my friend Alejandro calls "nibblings" and my dad "snackettes".

A good nibbling is a well-seasoned, often potato-based thing. It is pick-up-able, dunkable and, sometimes, slatherable with something nice and punchy, allowing for kick-back against (my) horrible habits such as smoking out of the window and other such abominations.

These recipes deliver all those things and are mostly doable well in advance.

There is only a little work involved in getting them ready, the shopping is one fell swoop of a large, high-street retailer-type thing and, vitally, there is very little effort required when it comes to eating them.

Which frees up time and, indeed, a hand for holding a beer or waving about in the air when someone scores, or doesn't, or whatever it is.

## Curried egg mayonnaise

If crisps aren't your bag, though I hope they are, use chopped raw veg such as cucumber sticks, chicory or baby gem leaves instead.

Prep 10 min  
Cook 12 min  
Serves 4

4 eggs, boiled for 7 minutes and peeled  
4 spring onions, trimmed and finely sliced (both white and green bits)  
1 heaped tsp mild madras curry powder  
2 heaped tbsp mayonnaise - Hellmann's is my go-to  
1 tbsp malt or white-wine vinegar  
Salt and black pepper  
1 big bag of crisps of your choosing, for dunking - check the ingredients if you need them to be gluten-free (a surprising number aren't)

Put the eggs in a bowl and mash the hell out of them with a fork. Add the onions, curry powder, mayo, vinegar, a big pinch of salt and some black pepper, and stir thoroughly. Serve with the crisps for dunking.

## Baked new potatoes with soured cream and rose harissa

Prep 5 min  
Cook 40 min  
Makes 20

10 new potatoes, all of a similar size  
150ml full-fat soured cream  
1 x 170g jar rose harissa - I like Belazu, which all the supermarkets now sell

Heat the oven to 200C (180C fan)/390F/gas 6. Hold a fork in one hand and cradle a potato in the palm of your other hand. Tack, tack, tack the fork firmly all over the potato, turning it around as you go, so perforating it all over - this will allow for an even evaporation of the water inside it and therefore result in a better baked potato. (This is the same thing I do with big baked potatoes.) If their width allows, arrange the little spuds on an oven rack; if not, put them on a dry, heated baking tray. They'll take about 35 minutes until they look exactly like a normal baked potato, but in miniature! (Squeeze one in a tea towel to make sure it's completely soft.) Remove from the oven and drop them one by one - do not throw them! - from a height of a foot or so on to a work surface, to break up their lovely insides.

Once the potatoes are cool enough to handle, cut them in half, arrange them on a platter, then spoon on some soured cream followed by some rose harissa; I also like these topped with that lumpfish caviar you get in little £2 jars from the supermarket, in which case ditch the harissa. You'll probably have soured cream left over, and harissa, and some raw potatoes from the bag you bought, so do the same thing tomorrow, when that other match is on.

## Rösti with lime pickle yoghurt, peas and mint

Prep 5 min  
Cook 30 min  
Makes 1 big rösti, to cut into at least 8 slices

2 medium-sized waxy potatoes  
2 tbsp olive oil  
2 tbsp vegetable oil  
10 mint leaves, to finish, or 1 tbsp mint sauce or jelly

For the yoghurt  
3 heaped tbsp thick, full-fat yoghurt  
1 heaped tbsp of your favourite lime pickle, chopped up small or blitzed smooth  
1 handful frozen peas, defrosted (petit pois are always best)

At least three hours in advance, boil the potatoes in their skins until the moment a skewer goes all the way through with little resistance, then drain and leave to cool. Once cool, grate the potatoes, skin and all, on the coarse side of a box grater and season heavy-handedly.

Get a frying pan on the heat, add a tablespoon of each oil and get it hot. Put the heap of grated potato in the middle of the pan and, using the back of a spoon, gently press it down into a rough circle about 1cm thick. A little messy is fine - it's a potato cake, not a tax return. Leave the thing to sizzle and cook for a few minutes, then shake (or, if necessary, use a spatula) to get it loose. Keep cooking the rösti, moving it about occasionally (but not turning it over), for another 10 minutes, then slide out of the pan and on to a plate.

Put the remaining oil in the pan and let it heat up. Pop a second plate on top of the rösti plate and flip over so that, when you lift the top plate, it's now fried side up (you may well be able to flip it on the plate with a spatula, but do that only if you don't think it will fall apart). Slide the rösti back into the hot pan and cook for another 10 minutes.

While the second side sizzles and turns golden (you could also have done this hours ago), roll up the mint leaves, if using, and shred finely (poncy chefs call this a chiffonade); alternatively, dig out the mint sauce/jelly. Combine all the yoghurt ingredients in a bowl and mix thoroughly. Once the rösti is cooked through and beautifully golden on both sides, slide it out of the pan, leave it to cool a bit, then cut into at least eight slices, like a pizza.

Dunk the rösti in the yoghurt (or slather it all over it) and top with your mint of choice. Then get everyone another beer.

Max Halley is owner of Max's Sandwich Shop, London N4, The Five Bells in Salisbury and The Sam Weller's in Bath. His latest book, Max's Picnic Book, co-authored with Benjamin Benton, is published by Hardie Grant at £16.99. To order a copy for £14.78, go to [guardianbookshop.com](http://guardianbookshop.com)

(Article source: *The Guardian*)



## Novel ideas: 9 of the best gardening books to give this Christmas

Anyone who loves gardening will love a gardening book, whether it offers aspirational designs, practical tips or just novel ideas for how to perk up your outside space.

Here are just some of the offerings this festive season which will make your loved one want to get into their outside space.

**The Gardener's Almanac by Alan Titchmarsh**  
(Hodder & Stoughton, £14.99)

A perfect gift for those who want a month-by-month mix of timely horticulture and Titchmarsh musings, like his thoughts on a poem, a quotation, a piece of music, or a book to read that month. It's a seasonal notebook that will be ideal for a gentle gardening read over the festive season and beyond, complete with his observations as each season unfolds and a few hints and tips along the way.

**The Modern Gardener by Frances Tophill**  
(Kyle Books, £22)

It's all about being as eco-friendly as possible right now and in this book, horticulturalist and TV presenter Frances Tophill offers a practical guide to gardening sustainably, creatively and productively.

There's an emphasis on how we can engage with the land, the plants, animals and insects as well as gardening. Her book not only shows how your garden can be visually stunning and how gardeners can select and grow plants, but also how it can encourage wildlife, reduce our carbon footprint and make our outdoor and indoor space more useful in all areas of our lives.

**RHS 50 Ways To Start A Garden: Ideas and Inspiration for Growing Indoors and Out**  
by Simon Akeroyd  
(Mitchell Beazley, £16.99)

Aimed at first-time gardeners, those in rented accommodation or anyone with limited outdoor space, this book teaches how to take stock of an environment and start a garden. With ideas for gardens, patio spaces, courtyards, balconies and interiors, these 50 easy-to-adopt ideas provide the steps to success for even the most inexperienced gardeners.

Highlights include creating a floral display with bulbs which will last all year, growing pet-friendly plants, vegetables in pots and adding height in flat spaces.

**The Indoor Garden: Get Started No Matter How Small Your Space**  
by Jade Murray  
(Pimpernel Press, £20)

Anyone who receives a houseplant for Christmas or who has not been great at keeping houseplants up until now should have a copy of this book from the winner of the RHS My Chelsea Garden virtual competition, who shows you how to create your own indoor garden, even if space is tight.

It features the most popular houseplants, from maranta and calathea to monstera and Chinese money plants, which are all pretty easy once you know what they like, to a section on 'diva plants', which can be high maintenance but with a little patience and some easy-to-follow care instructions, are still possible to grow. All beautifully illustrated with pictures which offer a myriad possible settings, this is a gem of a houseplant book.

**Venetian Gardens**  
by Monty Don and Derry Moore  
(BBC Books, £40)

This sumptuous, visual journey through the gardens of Venice will transport readers to the hidden treasures of gardens away from the tourist trail, many of them with fascinating stories.

Starting in the heart of the city and wending their way out to the Veneto, the authors relate some amazing stories, from public restoration successes to private splendours of the gardens at palaces and famous houses, displaying the heart of family, community and resilience of Venetian culture. It's a gorgeous giant coffee-table book, perfect for gifting.

**The Grove: A Nature Odyssey in 19 ½ Front Gardens**  
by Ben Dark  
(Mitchell Beazley, £16.99)

Award-winning writer, podcast favourite and head gardener Ben Dark reveals the remarkable secrets of 20 commonly found plants, all observed in the front gardens of a typical London street on daily walks over the course of a year.

He leads the reader on a journey through urban nature with a lovely blend of history and personal narrative, displaying the world from a city pavement and exploring why gardens and gardening matter.

**Hortus Curious by Michael Perry**  
(DK, £16.99)

The hit podcaster and plant expert, Michael Perry - aka Mr Plant Geek - brings us this quirky offering highlighting the unusual, often peculiar qualities which plants possess. They can be vast, minute, smelly, or spectacularly ugly. Some plants live on their own, or by growing off others; some live by air and water; some plants look remarkably like animals; while others have unusual symbolism; and some have special cultural significance.

This book is ideal for the gardener who just wants to escape the hubbub of Christmas for a few hours, quoting a few 'Did you know?' plant facts from time to time, inviting anyone who'll listen to share the fascinating facts about plants and celebrating them in all their diverse splendour.

**The Tree In My Garden by Kate Bradbury**  
(DK, £20)

"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now," says TV gardening expert, award-winning wildlife author and RHS ambassador Kate Bradbury in the foreword to her new book. She has curated a collection of 50 trees packed with information about appearance, care needs, carbon sequestration ability and the wildlife they support. "Combined, our 22 million gardens have the potential to become a wildlife reserve in their own right," she adds.

She reveals the amazing effect planting a single tree in your garden can have - combining practical gardening advice, scientific research, and accounts of how vital trees are for different forms of wildlife. This book will leave you in no doubt that every garden needs a tree.

**What To Sow, Grow And Do**  
by Benjamin Pope  
(Frances Lincoln, £22)

If your gardening friend or relative is at the planning stages, looking forward to some sowing and growing in 2023, this could be the book for them. It's an easy-to-follow season-by-season guide advising on projects and ideas to help you plan your time in the garden and inspire your planting.

The guide, which takes you through how-to tasks and checklists, also encourages the gardener to celebrate each season, highlighting wildlife, plants and changes you'll notice in the garden as the year progresses. Pope also offers practical tips on seasonal jobs, from pruning roses to planting bulbs.

(Article source: Silver Surfers)

# Please help us rescue and care for vulnerable hedgehogs - **Britain's favourite mammal**

A shocking study has revealed that hedgehogs are rapidly vanishing from our countryside, with numbers **HALVED** in the last 20 years.



I am delighted to tell you that Britain's hedgehog has won favourite mammal in a UK poll.

The UK's only spiny mammal won with 35.9% of the 5,000 votes, more than double that of the Red Fox, who came in second place with 15.4%. The Red Squirrel came third with 11.4%, out of a shortlist of 10 charismatic UK mammals.

Unfortunately, hedgehogs are rapidly vanishing from our countryside as numbers have **HALVED** in the last 20 years, a shocking study has revealed.

Henry Johnson, hedgehog officer, People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) said:

"We Brits seem to love hedgehogs for a whole range of reasons, including their cute appearance, their role as slug controllers and the way they have colonised our gardens with such aplomb. This is why it is so sad to see them decline, with one in three lost since the millennium."

Threats to hedgehogs come mostly from us. In rural areas, our farmland increasingly lacks the diversity of habitats hedgehogs need and the invertebrates they feed on. In towns and cities green spaces are lost to development, paved over or increasingly fragmented. Hedgehogs are also very prone to road traffic accidents.

This is why we have launched this special Annual Appeal to protect Britain's favourite mammal.

At Hedgehog Rescue Rehabilitation and Care Centre we respond immediately to rescue injured hedgehogs. A vet is called in straight away and the hedgehogs are monitored and cared for. Once fit and well they are released back into the wild.

Hedgehog Rescue is now conducting its Annual Appeal. Only by continuing our huge effort and long-life commitment can we give these wonderful animals a safe, happy and contented life.

We care for many hedgehogs here at our rehabilitation centre. Hedgehogs just like these:

## 'Julie'



'Julie' (pictured left) came in last Autumn, quite small, out in daylight and had ticks. She stayed a few weeks, put on enough weight, and made a full recovery. She was released back to her own territory by the finder.

## Baby Hedgehogs

These 2 hedgehogs came in as very small babies and had stayed with us a few weeks, gaining weight and giving us a chance to sort out their health issues. They had several ticks and needed worming. When they were 100% ready, we released them close to where they were found.



These hedgehogs are some of the lucky ones. Others are less fortunate.

As a friend who knows what a wonder animals can be, I hope you will support our Annual Appeal. Your kind gift will help us rescue and care for many more vulnerable hedgehogs - Britain's favourite mammal.

**To donate to Hedgehog Rescue, go to:**  
<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/hedgehogrescue>  
**or write to: Raisemore, Unit 1, Alton Road Industrial Estate, Ross-on-Wye HR9 5NB**

