

# OUR PLACE *News*

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

JUNE 2023

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Earth's last great wilderness

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## 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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## Glastonbury Festival 2023

Wednesday 21st - Monday 26th June

Worthy Farm, Somerset

This year's Glastonbury Festival begins on Wednesday June 21. Most acts have already been announced and they include established names, including Elton John, Guns N' Roses and the Arctic Monkeys - and that's just on the Pyramid Stage.

In fact, Elton John is a source of particular excitement as his Sunday-night headlining slot is billed as his final ever UK performance on his final-ever tour.

Elsewhere on the Pyramid's bill, Rick Astley will be making his first Glastonbury appearance, joined by Maisie Peters and Sophie Ellis-Bextor.

There's also a mysterious band known as The ChurnUps who, given that they have no presence online and the prominent Friday sunset slot, are presumed to be major incognito stars - Pulp, Blur and Red Hot Chilli Peppers have been suggested.

Meanwhile in the Woodsies tent - the erstwhile John Peel stage - further enigmas abound: two big acts, on the Friday and Saturday nights, are still TBA. Yet the new music-specialising venue has already announced Hot Chip, Rina Sawayama and Christine and The Queens.

You can also catch Queens of the Stone Age on the Other stage, the festival's second-biggest venue, as well as Manic Street Preachers, the Lathums and supergroup Generation Sex, which features Billy Idol and Tony James of Generation X, with Sex Pistols guitarist Steve Jones and drummer Paul Cook.

Further afield, the Chemical Brothers will headline the Arcadia's stage, watched over, as ever, by a giant fire-breathing arachnid.

Glastonbury 2023's line-up, then, is teeming and eclectic as ever.



## Horse Racing: Royal Ascot 2023

From 20th - 24th June 2023

Ascot, Berkshire

Britain's most popular race meeting attracts the world's finest racehorses, jockeys and trainers for five days of top-class racing. The racing highlights include the Diamond Jubilee Stakes, the Queen Anne Stakes and the Gold Cup. It is Britain's most valuable race meet and prize money for the week totals millions of pounds.

### The history of Royal Ascot

You'll have the chance to spot members of the Royal Family, including the Queen herself who often attends the event, which is steeped in unique tradition, heritage and pageantry. Founded by Queen Anne in 1711, the event features a daily horse-drawn procession from Windsor Castle to Ascot Racecourse led by the royal carriage. The Queen has also enjoyed considerable success at Royal Ascot over the years, having owned many winners including Estimate, which won the Gold Cup in 2013.

### Tickets for Royal Ascot

There are four levels of tickets for Royal Ascot:

- Windsor Enclosure tickets are the cheapest tickets. There is no formal dress code, so it's a great way to catch all the racing action on a budget.
- With Village Enclosure tickets you can enjoy the race as well as pop-up restaurants, cocktail bars and all-day entertainment including DJ sets and live bands.
- Queen Anne Enclosure tickets give you access to excellent facilities and entertainment, including military bands and a traditional sing-along after racing each day.
- Access to the Royal Enclosure at Ascot is restricted to those who have been sponsored for membership. Overseas visitors may also apply to their embassy or high commission for badges.



# The ocean: Why we need to respect Earth's last great wilderness

**There are plans to harness our seas to help tackle the effects of the climate emergency. But without understanding and respect a life support system for our planet could be trashed.**

The real payoff from the Apollo missions had nothing to do with the moon. The prize was travelling far enough out into space to look back properly at planet Earth.

Those two unforgettable images - Earthrise and Blue Marble - showed us our fragile and precious planet, defined by its blue.

Since then, we've talked proudly about our "blue planet" but without thinking any further about what that blue actually is. We talk about fish and whales, plastic and pollution - the things that are in the water - but not the water itself.

The great ocean engine has just kept turning while we scurry about near its surface, only caring when its churning causes something dramatic that we can see - an algal bloom or a giant swarm of jellyfish.



More than 50 years after Apollo, the ocean is starting to get more attention, but a growing slice of the discussion is based on the assumption that it is there for us to use, a resource to be exploited, a great volume of "nothing" that human inventiveness is going to turn into "something".

And this is incredibly dangerous. Unless humanity starts to see the ocean for what it really is - a critical part of our planetary life support system - we risk sleepwalking into destruction.

Things are starting to change. The ocean was formally mentioned in the Paris climate agreement of 2015, but it was only in 2019 that an "ocean and climate change dialogue" became part of the UN's climate COP processes.

We're hearing about the importance of the sea for the Earth's carbon cycle, and possible changes in ocean circulation due to polar ice melt.

But alongside all that, there's a detectable assumption that the sea is available space to expand into. We've filled up the land with our buildings, infrastructure and agriculture, and just look at that vast expanse of water, waiting for humans to give it a purpose!



The two most obvious examples of this are schemes to use the ocean to take up more carbon from the atmosphere, and to mine critical minerals from the deep sea.

Carbon dioxide removal schemes do not allow us to keep burning fossil fuels - the focus must be on rapid decarbonisation - but they will be necessary in a few decades' time to reach our current climate goals and maybe even reverse some of the damage.

Some of the proposed technologies involve using the sea as a carbon sink, and advocates for scaling them up often give the impression that all this blue is just a giant pond to be exploited, ignoring the fact that the 3D ocean engine is intricately structured and that its living components are already under considerable stress.

You can't "just" fertilise the ocean, or change its alkalinity, or park huge new farms there, or dump billions of tonnes of biomass into the deep sea without affecting the existing ocean physics, chemistry and biology.

I have frequently heard engineers and businesspeople state that they have two aims - to restore a pristine ocean and to make the ocean do the clearing up for us by taking up carbon, producing vast quantities of seaweed as a material resource, or whatever this week's scheme is.



That betrays an ignorance of just how intricately woven together the ocean's systems are, and how interlinked the whole thing is. It is also the language of control dressed up as concern for everyone else's welfare.

Of course, restoring ocean ecosystems is beneficial for lots of reasons, and it will have climate benefits, but we need to focus on the restoration, not manipulating the ocean environment to do stuff for us before we fully understand how it works now.

Tracking the long term net effect of these ocean carbon uptake schemes is incredibly difficult, because it's hard to predict how much carbon they will move from the atmosphere to the ocean and whether it will stay there.

We don't yet have the science (known as "measurement, reporting, and verification", or MRV) to be sure that any of these interventions in the ocean would work. And it ignores what the sea is already doing for us.

Before the industrial era, it was a small source of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere, but now it takes in around 25% of all our carbon emissions.

That's 10bn of the 40bn tonnes of CO2 we emit every year. When it comes to removing carbon from the atmosphere, the ocean is already doing us a gigantic favour, and we are still working out whether we will continue to benefit from that favour in the future.

Back in 1858, the Great Stink of London finally convinced the politicians of the day to find a way to pay for Joseph Bazalgette's sewer system, as they accepted that the Thames was overwhelmed with human waste, the slop from abattoirs and tanneries, and the general dross of a huge and dirty city.

But the language of the time talked of the Thames itself being the problem, rather than recognising that this tidal estuary had been quietly disposing of London's disgusting mess for centuries.

*Continued on pages 6-7...*



If anything, the Thames was due an enormous thank you for allowing the city to ignore its excesses for so long, and an apology for being biologically ruined in the process.

We are guilty of this same attitude with the sea all the time - the assumption that it's a place called "away", which makes pollution vanish, and that access to this convenience is a natural right rather than a failing of our own systems.

We've used the sea as a dump for years - not just for sewage, but for toxic materials, space junk, unwanted munitions and far more - and it's high time we stopped.

Dismissal of the idea that the ocean matters is apparent in a different way with deep-sea mining. There are vast areas of the deep sea floor that are covered with "polymetallic nodules" - potato-sized lumps rich in manganese, nickel, copper and cobalt.

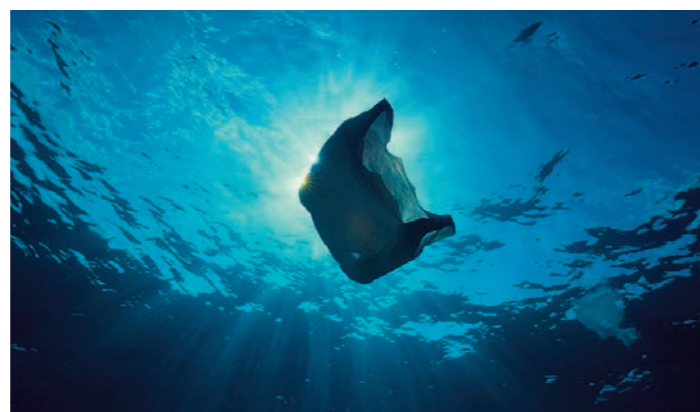
The nodules take millions of years to form in this incredibly calm environment. These plains are home to a phenomenal array of strange life that drifts and crawls across the nodules, secure in the darkness and the quiet.

The advocates of mining these nodules give their investors the impression that there is nothing there that matters so the mining is consequence-free.

But of course that's not true. These are delicate ecosystems that are difficult to study, and we're still picking apart the basics.

Two things are clear: any mining would generate huge plumes of sediment that would have great effects downstream, and monitoring the mining carefully enough and for long enough to check for the full environmental consequences and compliance with regulations would be extremely hard to do.

Society needs to have the debate about the pros and cons of this - maybe the eventual decision will be that it is a necessary trade-off - but you can't start from the assumption that the ocean isn't doing anything of value down there already.



I'm not saying that we shouldn't have any ocean infrastructure. Offshore wind is going to be a critically important energy resource, and there may be places where tidal and wave energy generation is the best option.

But even these projects should start from the recognition that there is already a physical fluid engine and an ecosystem there, and we should understand that and minimise our influence on it as we stamp our mark on the sea.

The ocean of salty water that surrounds our planet has layers, currents, an intricate structure and a very dynamic existence. Life is woven through the physical engine, its locations and abundance dictated by the character of water produced by the swirling, flowing patterns generated by a liquid engine on a spinning planet fed with solar energy.

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Life in the sea is different from life on land. On land, a tree is our model for the best of the natural world: huge, decades or centuries old, stationary, a reliable feature in a fixed landscape. In the sea, about 60% of the biomass is too small for us to see with the naked eye, and it has rapid, fleeting lives with no long-term storage of resources.

These living passengers form the foundation of the ocean food chain, and there is almost as much photosynthesis in the sea as there is on land (although it's not true that the ocean generates half the oxygen we breathe, because almost all of the oxygen produced in the ocean is consumed in the ocean). The dolphins are lovely, but to think that sea life is all about such charismatic megafauna is to miss the point.

It is time to move on from this language and this mindset. What if we could look at the remains of Earth's last great wilderness and have some humility in how we approach it?

The first deep sea explorer, William Beebe, travelled into the depths in a small metal sphere with tiny windows, which he described as "dangling in a hollow pea on a swaying cobweb a quarter of a mile below the deck of a ship rolling in mid-ocean".

He knew his place: a visitor to an alien world, there to look and admire, not to plunder or conquer or modify. We need to shift our view of exploration from drawing maps to understanding processes.



And we need to shift our expectations for our activity in the sea from creating our own processes to fitting in with the ones that are already there.

Our planet is defined by its ocean, and therefore so are we. We cannot afford to speak of the ocean as though it is simple or empty or worthless.

We have to see this dynamic engine as a critical part of our existing planetary life support system, in whose shadow we are privileged to live. Instead of seeing the ocean as a "solution" for climate change, we need to see it as a test of a new attitude to our planet, one that doesn't treat it as a combination of universal rubbish bin and exploitable resource. Ask not what the ocean can do for you, but what you can do for the ocean.



**Blue Machine: How the Ocean Shapes Our World** by Helen Czerski is published by Torva (£20).

(Article source: *The Guardian*)

# A new start after 60: backpacking in the Himalayas, I found the courage to change my life

**After two decades of work, work and more work, Ann Halloran decided it was time to leave her comfort zone. And it all began with a broken walking stick.**



*The Guardian* reports that one day last September, Ann Halloran made her way to her nearest bus stop in Hove, East Sussex, with a 15kg rucksack. She had done plenty of travelling but, at 65, was setting off alone on her first backpacking adventure. Somewhere between her first stop in Turkey and her final destination - a yoga retreat in Mazunte, Mexico - she found a new perspective.

In Nepal, climbing the 5,400m (17,575ft) Gokyo Ri in the Himalayas, Halloran broke her walking stick. She has osteoporosis, which makes bones more likely to break, so the stick was an essential piece of trekking kit in the mountains. Losing it was a blow, but she found reserves of inner strength: "I challenged myself," she says.

The setback was surmountable, a new stick was found. "It gave me confidence that at my age I could go up to that height." Now, she says: "Whenever I get scared, I think of myself on top of that mountain, looking out over Lake Gokyo - and beyond that, Everest. I say, if you can do that, you can do anything."

Halloran's career in HR has enabled her to pick up tools for personal growth. "I always told my kids about the comfort zone," she says. "You've got to keep stretching it all the time. As you get older, that's even more important because you get more fearful, and I want to fight against that."

Now 66, Halloran has loved mountains since she was five or six, when her mother took her to Ireland, to visit family in County Kerry during the summer holidays. They lived overlooking Annascaul lake on the Dingle peninsula. "It's a lovely viewpoint. I used to sit there as a child. I loved the freedom of going up the mountain alone, when I was nine or 10. I cried for days going back to London because I felt I was in a rabbit hutch."

At 23, she moved to Bellharbour, County Clare, where her uncle had a farm "on the side of the mountain". She worked in Galway, "where the multinationals were just setting up", and began to specialise in talent management and leadership programmes. In the evenings after work she would climb up the mountain.

It was around this time that Halloran met her husband, a farmer, and they married a few years later before starting a family. Life settled into a comfortable rhythm. But then their four-year-old son died in a car accident; six years later, her husband died.

Halloran was 42, and her children three, five and seven. Looking back, she can see that she took refuge in work. After the loss of her son, she "became a workaholic."

The week he died, I went back to work. I started at 5am, and worked until eight in the evening. I'd put the kids to bed, then go into the office at 10pm and work till 2am. It was my stability."

She worked as a self-employed HR consultant so that she could take two months off every summer to travel with the children. She took them to France, Spain, Seattle, New York and Vancouver.

Since the backpacking adventure, she understands more fully the role that work played in her life for so long. "Work was reliable. I knew what I was doing. I'm a workaholic to this day," she says. "I've just realised on this yoga retreat that I have to let go of all that. The penny is dropping for me now."

It was in Mazunte, where Halloran was one of 35 people on the yoga retreat, that one of her fellow participants suddenly became ill with a rare and potentially life-threatening condition. Halloran busied herself during meditation sessions by evaluating the centre's systems.

"I wanted to sort it all out," she says. Then she realised that no one else was thinking about the practicalities - and it was a revelation.

"All these people around me were so in touch with their emotions - and I was thinking about policies and procedures. They were feeling the emotions of this person. I knew I had (the capacity), but it was buried. It was interesting to watch myself," she says.

Along with the sudden insight, she felt a growing self-awareness "which I've never had before". It was always: "Make enough. Bring up the children. Get enough in the pension."

Meditation presented a different sort of challenge: she has had to slow herself down.

"I don't regret it," Halloran says of the work ethic that carried her through life for so long. But, as she has travelled and met new people, most of them under 40, and made plans to reconnect on subsequent trips, something has changed. "From now on, in the few years I've got left, I want to shift. Shift a bit," she says. "I feel as if I've washed up on the shore and it's a new venture."

*(Story source: The Guardian)*

# How music classes and choirs benefit those with dementia

**Music has an unparalleled ability to touch our souls, evoke emotions, and create lasting memories.**



*Silver Surfers* reports that it is a universal language that transcends cultural barriers and resonates deeply within us. Beyond its entertainment value, music has proven to be a powerful tool in promoting health and well-being.

In particular, those living with dementia stand to benefit immensely from engaging with music, whether through attending choirs or music classes.

### Unleashing the Melodies of Joy

Dementia, a condition characterized by cognitive decline and memory loss, can be isolating and emotionally distressing. However, music has the extraordinary ability to unlock memories and emotions even in those who may struggle with communication or expression.

Neurological research suggests that music stimulates various regions of the brain associated with memory and emotion, thereby bypassing cognitive impairments caused by dementia.

Listening to familiar tunes from their past can evoke vivid memories, spark conversations, and rekindle a sense of self-identity that often gets overshadowed by the progression of the disease.

### Enhancing Cognitive Function

Engaging with music has shown promising results in enhancing cognitive function in individuals with dementia. Research has demonstrated that structured musical activities can improve attention, focus, and memory recall.

Whether it's learning to play an instrument, participating in a choir, or attending music therapy sessions, these activities provide mental stimulation, challenge cognitive abilities, and promote neuroplasticity.

Regular involvement in music classes can potentially slow down cognitive decline, preserve mental acuity, and enhance overall cognitive functioning.

### Emotional Well-being and Mood Elevation

The emotional impact of music is undeniable. For people with dementia, who may experience heightened anxiety, depression, or agitation, music can serve as a soothing balm.

The harmonies, rhythms, and melodies can evoke positive emotions, reduce stress, and create a calming atmosphere. Singing or playing an instrument releases endorphins, the brain's "feel-good" chemicals, leading to an uplifted mood and improved emotional well-being.

Music can also act as a bridge between caregivers and individuals with dementia, facilitating communication and emotional connection even when verbal expression becomes challenging.

### Fostering Social Connectedness

Music has the remarkable ability to bring people together, fostering a sense of community and belonging. Participating in choirs or music classes creates opportunities for people with dementia to engage with others, build relationships, and combat social isolation.

Music transcends language barriers, enabling people to connect on a profound level, irrespective of cognitive decline. Singing in a choir, for instance, encourages collaboration, teamwork, and a shared sense of accomplishment, fostering a supportive and inclusive environment.

### How to get involved

One platform that has recognised the profound impact of music on the well-being of individuals with dementia is Goldster.

As an online wellness club catering to the over 50s, Goldster offers a range of engaging music classes designed to be enjoyed from the comfort of home.

With sing-along music classes and dedicated choir sessions, Goldster provides a supportive and inclusive environment for everyone to actively participate in music activities.

Through their interactive online platform, Goldster fosters a sense of community, encourages social connection, and promotes the therapeutic benefits of music.

By embracing the joy of music, Goldster empowers individuals to harness the transformative power of melodies and create memorable experiences that enrich their lives.

*(Story source: Silver Surfers)*



## The perfect blend: How coffee farms in Costa Rica are mixing wildlife, agriculture and tourism

**A new crop of farming co-ops are finding ways to safely open up untouched landscapes and exotic wildlife to visitors - and grow superb coffee.**

At the beginning I thought we were in a Bob Dylan song, one of his epic Latino ballads. We drove down gravel roads where the only other traffic was cowboys on horseback, across iron girder bridges covered in rust and the webs of giant spiders.

A caracara falcon stood in the centre of the road pulling a dead iguana apart. But then we left cattle country and crossed a desert made of pineapples.

Darkness fell. After the shop where a mule was tied up, there were no more lights and the track clambered into the jungled hills. Eventually we pulled up at a gateway marked by a weird metal sculpture. Jovino, the driver, shrugged: "This must be it."

"You never brought anyone here before?"



He shook his head. This was Costa Rica, but outside the usual tourist areas, in an area called Biolley close to the Panamanian border.

We set off down a long winding drive, the sweeping headlights unleashing sudden random vignettes: a frog armada hopping across the road, an owl swooping into clouds snagged on a bamboo forest, waterfalls, more of the strange sculptures. This is not Dylan, I thought, it's Dalí.

Costa Rica has a great tourism industry. It pulls in a lot of people - about 3 million a year pre-pandemic - with a strong message on the environment. The country has a lot of protected land.

It has enlightened attitudes to wildlife: you won't see monkeys on chains here, nor macaws in cages pretending to be "rescue" birds. The headline parks deliver: they have fantastic fauna and stunning scenery. Not only that, but this small demilitarised Central American state has free healthcare, honest police officers and high literacy rates.

So that's all fine, is it? Well, not quite. Outside the main parks, there is another Costa Rica, one where intensive industrialised agriculture in bananas, sugar cane, palm oil, pineapples and coffee is the main source of income for many people.



And in these areas, any community that wants to protect its natural environment from the agrochemical intensity of monocultures can struggle to get noticed. Finding those projects and people could benefit the environment, and your trip.

Tropical fruit growing on a colossal scale is not a pretty sight. When the heavily sprayed fields are finally exhausted, they are blitzed with herbicides, ploughed up, then rebooted with artificial fertilisers and cloned plants.

Sadly, this is the business model of a lot of farming the world over, Britain included. But whereas we have grown used to our depleted countryside, even fond of it, in a region blessed with off-the-scale biodiversity it can be a shock. After all, this small country, half the size of Iceland, has about 5% of all the Earth's known species; many visitors come just to see wildlife rarities such as the resplendent quetzal or harpy eagle.

Jovino and I come to the end of the long track. There are lights up above us on the hillside, and using our phones as torches we stumble up, pushing through bushes.

Then we emerge on a terrace where there is a perfect little coffee shop: a roasting oven behind a counter laden with cakes and packets of coffee and - I inspect closely - tea made from coffee flowers. And now, finally, I meet the couple at the heart of this dreamlike jungle empire, Gonzalo and Fanny Hernández.

"It's late for coffee," says Fanny, "but try some coffee blossom tea." It proves to be delicately delicious.

Gonzalo pulls up chairs and we are soon into a debate on his favourite topic, coffee. "Most coffee grown on Earth is from a single variety of a single species," he says,

"And like all monocultures, it is vulnerable. One pest can destroy an entire crop almost overnight. With climate change that danger increases. Monocultures must adapt. They need biodiversity. That's what I'm trying to prove here."

Gonzalo had a career in the coffee trade before deciding to buy land and build Coffea Diversa, a botanical collection of more than 600 coffee tree varieties from around the world. "We don't rip out jungle and spray everything. We work with the forest. I'll show you tomorrow."

My bed, I discover, is inside one of the metal sculptures. It is one of the most bizarre hotels possible and unexpectedly comfortable. At dawn I wake to a magnificent panorama of jungle and agroforestry.

Toucans are swooping over my head and the hillside rings to the strange liquid song of oropendolas, a large crow-like bird. Hummingbirds cut past my ears like magical little strimming machines. Gonzalo is waiting.

"The toucans eat the coffee berries. Most coffee farmers hate them, but we welcome them." He takes me to a line of coffee bushes laden with red berries, then points underneath. "See? We collect these."

The toucans, he explains, select the most perfect coffee berries to eat, then poop out the beans. Gonzalo and his team collect them.

I ask if he will follow those south-east Asian coffee producers who cage civet cats to force-feed them coffee berries, creating the famed, and valuable, kopi luwak. He is appalled. "Never. Besides, treating wild creatures in such a way is totally forbidden in Costa Rica."

On this remarkable farm, Gonzalo is proving that tourism, agriculture and diverse nature can coexist. I watch the toucans all morning. Today they are busy with the guarumo trees' wild fruit; Gonzalo leaves them to grow among the coffee, the toucans' heads turning and tipping slowly as they inspect the branches.

*Continued on pages 12-13...*



Then they delicately pick with that huge bill. No human could manage such a degree of harvest precision. Next day, I hike the area's beautiful waterfalls with José from Asomobi, a cooperative society that helps local farmers develop projects in tourism, organics and agroforestry.

Days later and a few miles north, I discover another kind of coffee farming. San Jerónimo is a wild, hilly jungle area uninhabited until pioneer settlers arrived from Panama after the second world war. They cleared land and planted *Coffea arabica* trees. They scraped a living, but never a fortune. To this day, their coffee berries are sold cheaply.

I meet Ken Gallatin, who came here as a Peace Corps volunteer in the 1980s and stayed. "There were no cars here when I arrived," he tells me. "Only horses and mules." Even today the presence of the outside world is lightly felt. "We don't have a police station or a policeman."

Most families farm coffee, but their style of small plantations dotted around the jungle is under pressure. "By the 1990s I could see people needed help," says Ken. Together with a handful of farmers, he proposed tourism as a revenue source.

"People laughed. They couldn't see that their home area would be interesting." But Ken's group persisted. "We explored the jungle, discovering peaks no one had ever visited, new waterfalls and viewpoints."

Twenty years later, Aturena is a cooperative that shares out tourism between 76 local families (two-thirds of the community). Visitors are sent to homestays, including me. I find myself with Don Freddy and family, occupying a wonderful cabin perched on a wooded ridge deep inside their coffee farm.

The birdlife is stunning, and so are the meals that I take in their kitchen. Aturena runs a fire service that protects the jungle areas - the region used to suffer badly from wildfires - and its members act as guides and porters, taking visitors up local mountains.



Ken accompanies me on a three-day hike through the cloud forest and páramo (moorland) to Chirripó, Costa Rica's highest peak. All the jobs and profits are shared, the value in preserving such a spectacular environment obvious. "Wildlife and forest have become a valuable source of income, rather than an impediment to more farming."

Leaving San Jerónimo and crossing the Cerro de la Muerte, the mountain of death, I leave the Pan-American Highway and drop down on dirt tracks through the cloud forest. I have a rented electric car and cannot believe how well it is coping with mud, rain and gravel.

At about 2,000 metres altitude, having seen no sign of habitation, I suddenly arrive in Providencia. This idyllic little settlement is poised on a hillside inside a great swathe of virgin forest. Mass tourism doesn't come here - the coaches cannot manage the roads - but for independent visitors the benefits are significant.

Eladio Salazar is my guide on the first morning. He used to be a farmer, but since becoming a wildlife guide has been an inspiration to local people. "Our forest is very special," he tells me. "The community are starting to realise its value as an untouched environment."

There is a lot here that is unknown. Eladio has been part of a team investigating a new type of wildcat. "Initial DNA tests make it likely we've found a new species." Jaguars and pumas are common, though rarely seen. "We find footprints."

We walk through the cloud forest to a cleared area, part of a small upland cattle farm. The steep pasture is dotted with wild avocado trees. Eladio inspects them carefully with binoculars and smiles. When we are a little closer, I also spot what he sees.



Sitting quietly on a high branch is a glittering cascade of feathers, a resplendent quetzal, a bird that ornithologists can spend weeks searching for. And now I look around, we have six. "They come for the aguacatillo fruits," says Eladio. "I knew the fruits were ripe here."

Back in 1545, when the first Mayans were paraded before Philip of Spain, they gave him a gift of 2,000 quetzal feathers, the greatest treasure they could imagine.

Back down in Providencia, I visit Armonia, a lovely organic coffee farm and hostel started by visionary couple Noire and Orlando Mora. "Back in the 80s," says Noire, "I realised our diet had become processed food, our farming was becoming industrialised, the river was becoming dirty."

Our quality of life was falling." With incredible energy she set about inspiring others, then transforming the area. They cleaned the river, introduced recycling, and started organic farming.

"The community used to make three products: passion fruit, cheese and cheap coffee. Now we make 126 different things. And there is so much more wildlife."

Her son Dario can attest to that. He is a keen naturalist, still buzzing from seeing a jaguar on a recent night walk. There are, however, new pressures. From their veranda, he points out a bird. "That is a yellow-throated toucan."

They are new here. We think climate change is pushing them up the mountain. The problem is that they will kill quetzal chicks." As a keen birder, he is seeing other changes: species moving in, others retreating. Rainfall is getting less predictable and heavier. The family are doing what they can: planting trees and managing erosion.



We walk around the farm and I get my final, most wonderful, treat of this trip. Hidden in a patch of jungle on a steep hillside is a little wooden stage, the start of a zipline that zooms me out to a human-made crow's nest 45-metres up a jungle giant, an oak tree that is decked in orchids and bromeliads.

And there I lie on a netted platform, face down, gazing into the dizzying depths of biodiversity: crimson flowers sprouting from tree trunks, a blur of hummingbirds, fruits and fungi, and I'm thanking the gods for people like Noire and Orlando.



Kevin was a guest of Sumak Travel, 020 3642 4246, which organises tailor-made trips to eco projects and environmental organisations across Latin America. A private 10-day tour including Chirripó hike, Biolley and Providencia starts at £1,245pp, including accommodation, guides, transport and some meals. Excludes international flights.

(Article source: *The Guardian*)



# Wake up! It's time for breakfast: The best cafés and restaurants to start your day

Surf shack, vegan café or city terrace? Here are the top 32 places for a tasty start to the day.

## Pellici's Café, London E2 (pictured right)

A quintessential Italian postwar café with a primrose art deco facade and marquetry inside, Pellici's is Grade II-listed. Have the Lot (Full English, meat or veggie), served at Formica tables in this epic family-run Bethnal Green greasy spoon. (epellici.co.uk)

## Pritchard + Ure, London NW1

A curated space for book lovers and epicures. The small, seasonal breakfast menu in this rarefied bookshop-cum-dining destination above Camden Garden Centre includes wild and field mushrooms with wild garlic pesto on sourdough with shakshuka and dukkah. (pritchardandure.com)



## Albert's Schloss, Manchester

Cracking cruffins and kronuts, great decor, Alpine crêpes, Turkish eggs and German sausages draw in a loyal crowd at Albert's Schloss, Manchester's Bavarian bier palace. (albertsschloss.co.uk)

## Hullabaloo Vegan Café, Ipswich

This local gem in the Saints area of Ipswich, a community of indie shops, cafés and restaurants close to the waterfront, was the town's first plant-based café and has built up a loyal following thanks to its small seasonal menu of locally sourced ingredients. Go for its legendary Capel mushrooms on homemade sourdough in a Madeira cashew crème, stay for its gluten-free waffles with seasonal rhubarb and a side order of scrambled tofu and spinach. (@hullabalosuffolk)

## Birchwood Restaurant, Ticehurst

A seasonal all-day breakfast menu, including duck leg with crumpet or pastrami cured sea trout, awaits at bucolic Birchwood Restaurant. Ingredients are locally sourced or foraged and the vast raised terrace sits in 46 acres of woodland. (birchwoodrestaurant.com)

## Rockwater, Hove



Seaviews! Crab Benedict! Rockwater is a vibey clubhouse hotspot on Hove's Western Esplanade. For sea dippers and early risers, its Love Shack (opens 7.30am) on the beach serves tasty breakfast brioche rolls. (rockwater.uk)

## Crwst, Cardigan

Brunch is the ticket at this bright, trendy Cardigan craft bakery. The Full Welsh Brekkie includes Crwst's signature beans and a cockles and laverbread gratin, the halloumi is made locally, and the blow-out Sausage & Egg McDoughnut is filled with melted cheese. (crwst.cymru)

## Jubilee Pool Café, Penzance

It's filled brioche buns all the way after a swim in the salt water or geothermal pools at Penzance's sublime art deco Jubilee Pool Café. (jubileepool.co.uk)

## Turtle Bay, Birmingham

Soak up the limitless prosecco and cocktails with Caribbean specials, such as scrambled ackee and sweet-fried plantain or a soft bara roti stack with fried chicken at Turtle Bay Brindley Place's bottomless brunch. Outside tables available. (turtlebay.co.uk)

## Teuchters Landing, Edinburgh

This dockside bar in Leith offers kedgeree by the mug, Loch Creran Argyll oysters and carnivorous and vegan versions of the Big Breakfast, which includes delicious black pudding, haggis and tattie scones. (teuchtersbar.co.uk)

## Gin & Juice Mumbles, Swansea



Live it large with parmesan and truffle eggs in Gin & Juice Mumbles's spectacular rooftop conservatory. Overlooking the genteel Mumbles seafront, sip your Nutella latte and take in the winning views of Swansea Bay. (ginandjuice.com)

## Fallow, St James's, London SW1

Sustainable, plant-loving, high-end and glamorous, Fallow's veggie full breakfast includes crushed courgette and pea spinach with confit garlic. Its talk-of-the-town mushroom parfait features in the Mushroom Royale, one of four signature brunch-tastic croissant rolls. (fallowrestaurant.com)

## The Cabin Beach Café, Penzance

A breakfast special on the South West Coast Path offering sensational views of Mount Bay from the terrace. Serving big fry-ups, the café is dog-friendly and a much loved pit-stop for campers and walkers. (thecabinbeachcafe.co.uk)

## The Temple Café, Isle of Harris

Reward a swim off Scarista's sandy beach with fresh pastries, on-site roastery coffee or botanical-infused soft drinks at the Temple Café, a new version of an old stone temple with unparalleled views across the bay to the deserted isle of Taransay. (templeharris.com)

Continued on pages 16 -17...





## Whelk Coppers Tearoom, Norfolk

Everything is fresh and local at Whelk Coppers, an old-school tea room with fairytale iron gates allegedly designed by Walt Disney. Serving French toast and a full English, the former fisher's cottage is bang on the promenade overlooking Sheringham's Blue Flag beach. (whelkcoppers.com)

## Café Sobar, Nottingham

If you're hankering after a trad breakfast, you're in safe hands at the relaxing and friendly Café Sobar. At this social enterprise for recovering addicts, the filled morning rolls and the plant-based bacon, sausage and cheese muffin spectacular are local favourites. (doubleimpact.org.uk)

## Midge Bite Café, Achnasheen

The great British caff lives on in Norman's Café, with a no-frills fry-up and beans on toast with Red Leicester the order of the day in this stylised hipster hang-out. (normanscafe.co.uk)

## The Factory Kitchen, Newcastle

The Factory Kitchen in the Biscuit Factory, Newcastle's imposing modern art superstore, has a huge roof terrace for brunch. Highlights include Middle Eastern Baked Eggs and the All Day Brunch served with a stottie from local bakery Big River, a social enterprise providing employment access opportunities. (thebiscuitfactory.com)

## Finzean Farm Shop, Banchory

Popular with hungry hikers and cyclists, this idyllic Aberdeenshire farm shop serves Stornaway black pudding, Scottish pancakes, freshly baked bacon rolls and granola with local yoghurt and honey. The terrace looks on to the glorious Feugh valley and Clachnaben tor. (finzean.com)



## Olives, Norwich

Famous for its barbecue breakfast and vegan special, featuring vegan black pudding and chickpea scramble, Olive's new range of Gorillas cheese toasties includes the King Kong with pulled pork. Put a tune on the free jukebox and tuck in.

## Akub, Notting Hill, London W8

Kick off brunch at this Palestinian restaurant with a Zaatar Bloody Mary. Follow with cauliflower and coriander fritters and Arabic coffee French toast with sweet labneh. (akub-restaurant.com)

## Culloden Estate & Spa, Belfast

Whiskey-infused porridge, Ardglass kippers, or a full Irish breakfast served with potato and soda bread in Culloden Estate and Spa's traditional hotel restaurant will set you up for a brisk walk around the former palace, with views overlooking Belfast Lough. (cullodenestateandspa.com)

## Six, Pier Point, Roker

The best place for breakfast in the whole of Sunderland, according to its fans, Six, Pier Point sits on Roker's sandy beach. Two sea-swimming groups take a dip year-round before filling up on crab on sourdough or whipped cream cheese on toast. (sixpierpoint.co.uk)



## Norman's Café, London N19

The great British caff lives on in Norman's Café, with a no-frills fry-up and beans on toast with Red Leicester the order of the day in this stylised hipster hang-out. (normanscafe.co.uk)

## Café Lucca, Bath

After a day's sightseeing, make for the sunny terrace at Bath's Café Lucca where the Belgian waffles with maple syrup and vegetarian breakfast wrap steal the show. (caffelucca.co.uk)

## Black Dog Deli, Walberswick

Grab one of the few coveted tables in the tiny outdoor terrace at the Black Dog Deli, a breakfast hero in Suffolk's picturesque Walberswick that bakes on the premises. Sausage rolls, fresh pastries, filled rolls and excellent coffee make for a perfect breakfast. (theblackdogdelis.co.uk)

## Mooch Café Bar, Hebden Bridge

A laidback café in the middle of Hebden Bridge that's a retro find - who could resist dipped egg and soldiers at £3.50 or eggy bread with bacon or banana and syrup at £5.50? There's a pretty walled garden, and dogs are welcome, too. (moochcafebar.wordpress.com)

## The Quarter, Liverpool



The much-loved Quarter is beautifully situated between the two cathedrals in Liverpool's Georgian quarter. Enjoy a mimosa and pancakes with berry compote at one of the outdoor bistro tables on cobbled, historic Falkner Street. (thequarteruk.com)

## Csons at the Green Café, Ludlow (pictured top left)

Promising "proper breakfasts" for the super-hungry, even the vegan breakfast at Csons punches above its weight, featuring veg pakhora and gunpowder! The café's setting by the weir on the river Teme, with the castle in the distance, is enchanting. (csons.uk)

## Elder Press Café, London W6

In a quaint lane off the Thames near Hammersmith, the sustainably minded Elder Press Café's patio garden is a pretty spot to power up with porridge with rhubarb, apple berry compote and homemade almond butter, or kimchi fried rice with tofu and pickled ginger. (theelderpress.co.uk)



## Claridge's Hotel, London W1

Irresistible pastries on the breakfast trolley, Japanese tamagoyaki eggs, Chinese pork gyoza or good old baked beans with your veggie full English, breakfast in Claridge's art deco Foyer & Reading Room is international and utterly glamorous. (claridges.co.uk)

(Article source: The Guardian)



“There’s a clear message about sustainability and environmental factors in an aesthetic way. There’s a loss about actually, what is a garden supposed to do?” he says. “Right across the show, the inference is that nature’s taking control... maybe that it’s OK to let weeds grow and let things get a little bit ruinous.”

“But at the end of the day, people like a lawn, they like to look after a space - that’s part of being in a garden - and it’s time that we need (to address) that controversy,” Duff adds.

Reflecting on the topic, Matthew Pottage, curator of RHS Garden Wisley, says: “We are having a climate crisis. We do need to garden environmentally sensitively. Is this the place to be showing that? It’s arguably the world’s best flower show, so this is the place.”

**5 highlight gardens from this year’s RHS Chelsea Flower Show**

**Centrepiece Garden**

Love it or hate it, this garden is likely to cause a stir with its partly demolished house, so-called ‘weeds’ and a fallen tree. Designer Cleve West has admitted it’s a ‘Marmite garden’ - people will love it or hate it.



“There’s a sense of abandonment, which is so clever. Cleve West has done a partly demolished ruined house with the idea of nature taking over,” Duff observes. “He’s saying it’s a metaphor for what it is to be young and homeless. There are nettles and dandelion seedheads. It’s really going to question what beauty is in a plant - and I think we need to have that discussion.”

**Memoria and GreenAcres Transcendence Garden**

Designers Gavin McWilliam and Andrew Wilson’s garden aims to deliver an uplifting spiritual space, reflecting the emotional experience at the end of life (it’s going to a bereavement site after the show).

“Controversially, they’ve used concrete, but with the idea that this concrete is going to be around for hundreds of years,” says Duff. “It’s not a single use concrete.”



“It has a simple palette of planting, is cool and calm and you immediately feel rested. The minimal use of materials and colour palette was really special and a moment of calm in the entire show. It was a relief to get to it,” Duff adds.

**Nurture Landscapes Garden**

If you’re looking to take home some plants with you, be inspired by the beautiful Benton irises in rich shades of pastels and deep yellows which you’ll see in designer Sarah Price’s Nurture Landscapes show garden, inspired by the artist and plantsman Cedric Morris.



**Myeloma UK - A Life Worth Living Garden**

Top designer Chris Beardshaw’s garden has a much more traditional garden feel, with a structured order in the colourful planting against a backdrop of clipped yew, including peonies and salvias, plus inspired woodland planting.



(Continued on pages 20-21...)

# Sustainability, wildlife and weeds: Highlights and trends from RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2023

**This year’s show gardens let nature do the talking, as gardening editor Hannah Stephenson discovers.**

Gardens featuring more weeds and less formality have taken centre stage at this year’s RHS Chelsea Flower Show, placing more emphasis on letting nature take control.

Native plants and trees, nettles, dandelions and a predominantly green palette of planting feature in many of the 36 show gardens, along with salvaged and upcycled materials. Elsewhere, huge bursts of colour remain in the Great Pavilion, while first-time exhibitors include mushroom growers the Caley Bros.

This year’s show is likely to spark controversy, reckons garden designer Andrew Duff, co-chair of the Society of Garden Designers and managing director of the Inchbald School of Design.





## Reclaimed and reused (pictured left)

Crushed concrete, piles of rubble, bare sand, re-used bricks and other recycled material dominate many of the show gardens' pathways and form decorative features in several gardens. There's a message to get gardeners thinking about how they might reuse materials, which formerly headed for the skip.

"All the gardens have a destination, which is really important," says Pottage - the show gardens are all being relocated after the show.

Award-winning designer Tom Massey, who has this year designed The Royal Entomological Society Garden, predicts: "Reuse of waste materials is going to be a big thing."

He uses crushed construction waste in his show garden, including crushed bricks and concrete to create a textured, aesthetic backdrop for the planting along with deadwood. "These waste materials are really good habitat for insects," he points out.

## Plants



People will be encouraged to grow native plants, from hazel to cow parsley, while those seeking colour may go for irises, which are prevalent at this year's show. There's also a resurgence of common yew (*Taxus baccata*) and other familiar plants including a cloud pine, *Eleagnus 'Quicksilver'*.

Drought-tolerant plants are also being pushed - some 55% of perennials in the show gardens are drought-tolerant, almost double that of last year, including fennel, salvia and cistus.

## Weeds

Dandelions and other weeds feature in some of the gardens. Chelsea gold medallist Cleve West notes: "People get their knickers in a twist about weeds but they are the pioneer plants that stitch everything together."

"It's just getting people to understand that all the things we kill with herbicides and pesticides can look quite beautiful," West adds. "Just be more tolerant, and if you have a space where you can let nature take its course, it's got to be good for wildlife and insects."

Massey adds: "Dandelions are an early source of pollen and nectar for bees - and insects are in mass decline, so we need to be more considerate in the way we manage and maintain our gardens."



## Sculpture

"We are seeing nature becoming the sculpture," says Duff, citing designer Sarah Price's Nurture Landscapes Garden Mediterranean cloud pine. There are pillows of yew in the Memoria and GreenAcres Transcendence Garden.

Nods to the Royal Family abound, from bronze bust of the King in A Garden of Royal Reflection and Celebration, which features some of the Windsor family's favourite plants including roses and camassia, plus several crowns featuring flora and fauna.

Standing at just under 7m is the biggest driftwood sculpture ever displayed at Chelsea, a Wyvern dragon perched on a tree, the centrepiece of sculptor James Doran-Webb's exhibit.

And paying homage to the unsung heroines of horticulture at The Monument is the 'Women in Horticulture' exhibit honouring the likes of Janaki Ammal, Beth Chatto and Gertrude Jekyll.

## Bigging up small spaces

Guy Barter, chief horticulturist for the RHS, says people are likely to be planting bigger trees on their balconies and also using drought-tolerant species. "This year there's a pollinator section, a wildlife bath, and drought-resistant plants."

*(Article source: Silver Surfers)*

## Horatio's Garden

Putting wheelchair access at the forefront of their design, Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg (Harris Bugg Studio), have created the eighth garden for the eponymous charity, which builds gardens to improve the lives of people with spinal cord injury.



The wheelchair-accessible space, influenced by the ways of seeing from a bed or a wheelchair, features tactile stone cairn and a table water feature to encourage wildlife, while a garden pod provides a cocooning place for physical and emotional shelter. After the show it will be relocated to Sheffield's Princess Royal Spinal Cord Injuries Centre.

"There's an incredible depth of planting, which is mind-blowingly beautiful, and beehives of warm cut stone which kind of replace topiary - they've made topiary out of stone," says Duff.

## Top trends

These are some of the key gardening trends to emerge from this year's event.

## Wildlife

"Unsurprisingly, there's going to be the awareness of wildlife-friendly planting," says Pottage. "There's lots of habitat in gardens, but hopefully showing that can be beautiful as well. There are lots of logpiles, lots of water, lots of native plants, but also lots of gardenesque planting."



# 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



**HEDGEHOG RESCUE**  
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