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ISSUE 141
FREE

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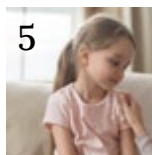
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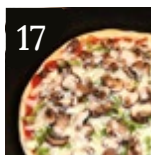
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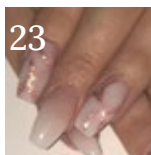
5



15



17



23

ISSUE 141

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Dear Readers,

We hope this edition finds you safe and well!

Since our last issue, face masks have become mandatory in shops. We hope this hasn't put you off shopping and supporting local businesses as they need your continued support. Some of the hardest hit businesses are those operating in the leisure and hospitality industry. One such business is *Claypot Lounge*, a local Indian restaurant who are part of the government's Eat Out to Help Out Scheme, and on page 9 you will find some dine-in offers. Hurry though, as these expire on the 31st August! If you are looking for some pampering, why not enter our competition on page 23 for the chance to win a £50 voucher from *Sculpted by Rose*, a nail and beauty technician based in Anslow.

We hope you enjoy this edition. Please continue to stay safe!

The **LOCAL LINKS** team



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Wed 16th September

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BACK-TO-SCHOOL TIME: IS YOUR CHILD EMOTIONALLY PREPARED?

Over the past months, our children have had to adapt to events which they are likely to remember for the rest of their lives. While some of us may tell tales of walking miles to school in icy conditions, or times when we had to stay home because we were very ill, the quarantine and school closures will be the stuff of legend for a whole generation of children.

For some kids this has been like an extended school holiday, either because they are naturally happy-go-lucky, or because they've been having a lot of fun at home. For others this has been a difficult time as they have been faced with a lot of complex issues which they've been expected to understand and adapt to quickly. Plus, there are the pressures that some of us have faced with working from home or being a key worker - not all of us have had the time to create comprehensive homeschooling programmes.

We've all pulled through as best we can, in the hopes that our children remember this as a time when the family worked together in the face of uncertainty.

The next challenge we face is preparing our children to return to school. How hard this will be will vary from child to child. Some will be desperate to get back to the classroom (and the playground!), but for some, there are important conversations to be had and we have some tips for topics to raise with your kids before the new term starts.

Though there are attempts to roll out national guidance, each school is going to be trialling different things and these are going to take some getting used to. If you haven't heard from your child's school already, check their website or give them a call to see if they have any specific guidelines. Talking these through with your child will give them the chance to raise questions which you can work through together.



Whatever challenges have been thrown your way in the lockdown, there are likely to be families who have experienced completely different ones. Encourage your child to think about the kinds of things their classmates may have gone through and how they've felt about them. If your child is feeling positive about going back to school, think together about why other children may have a hard time adjusting to a structured day and how they can be sensitive about that. Perhaps they may need others to show them compassion too, which can be a great place to start the conversation.

The most important thing is that we allow our children to raise their concerns and take them seriously. They will be well prepared to face the new term if they feel that they always have a loving support base at home when times are hard.





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ESCAPE ROOMS HAVE GONE ONLINE BY SARAH DAVEY

Do you like escape rooms? Have you always fancied having a go at one but never got around to it?

Escape rooms have become popular over the past few years with families and friends who like a challenge. Kind of like The Crystal Maze (remember that?) in concept, where you have to solve puzzles as a team to 'escape the room'.

As physical escape rooms have had to close, so these businesses have been quick to adapt and take the experience online. You can play as a family or with groups of friends as a social experience.

There are many online; some are free and some are paid for. The free ones are a good way to try the experience to see if you enjoy it.

Hogwarts Digital Escape Room was created by an American librarian in Pennsylvania. It's loosely based on Hogwarts and the puzzles are fun. My family enjoyed it but found it quite easy and we were finished very quickly. But we discovered we enjoyed the concept and signed up for others which are more involved.

Trapped In The Web is a game you can play solo or

with a team to complete tasks that will take between one to two hours. It's reasonably priced at around £8 per person.

There are five themed rooms to choose from: *Space Race*, *Cabin Fever*, *A Night at the Theatre*, *School's Out*, and *Out of Hours*. There is a different storyline attached to each one and different clues to collect and puzzles to solve.

These family-friendly escape rooms will get you started, but if you find you've got the bug you can find many more complex versions online.

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This month, farmers are busy harvesting what seems to be a variable crop. Large machinery will be moving about the lanes so please be patient. We've tried a few different crops over the years such as Triticale (grain), field beans and peas. We used peas as protein for our livestock and the resulting straw was much loved by goats.

In last year's August *By the Barn*, when talking about

the aim of agriculture to be net zero by 2040, I wrote that the biggest impact would be the taking away of cars and planes and how this would never happen! How wrong I was, as we saw industry and transport brought more-or-less to a halt by Covid-19. Suddenly the air was much cleaner, views seemed much sharper and more birdsong could be heard. And, yet, farming continued pretty much as it always had!

In our wild bird seed plot we can see red clover - much loved by bees, and white clovers cover the grass fields helping the soil retain nitrogen whilst providing

nutritious grazing for our animals.

The lambs are being weighed and wormed. We have had some late-born lambs, probably due to the inclement weather we had last autumn and winter. Snails and slugs love humid weather too and one of their predators is the hedgehog. Mainly active at dusk, it moves and feeds quite noisily. Many meet a sticky end on our roads, many are predated on by badgers. Where predator control is practised, it has been shown that hedgehog numbers improve.

Follow Angela on twitter: @bythebarn

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The 21st century desire to constantly do better and be better has somehow intensified over the past few months - this shouldn't be surprising and yet it is.

We are in the midst of a global pandemic. A totally 'unprecedented time' (everyone's favourite phrase at the moment) and a frankly devastating moment in modern history. And yet, chasing success and maintaining a level of productivity is presented in the media as a priority equal to PPE and social distancing.

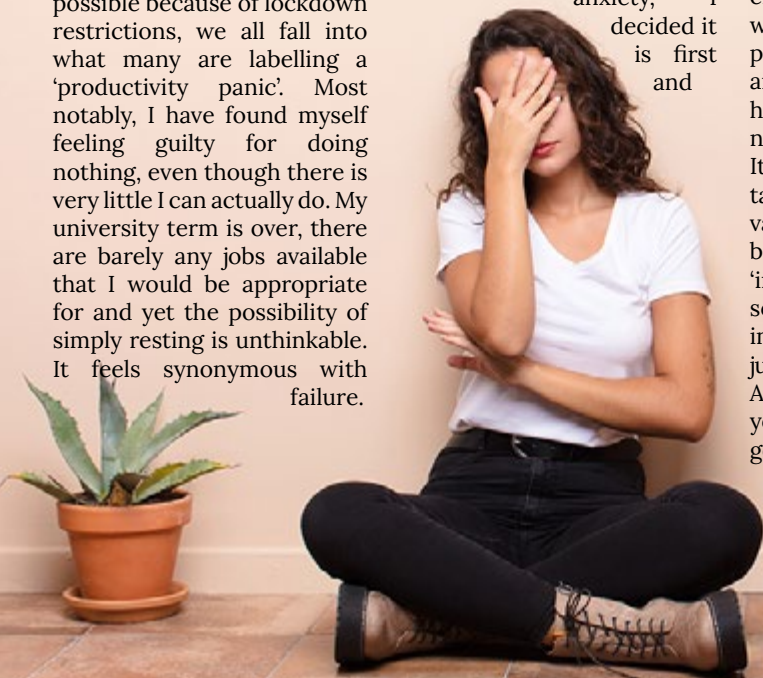
We are so used to filling every second of every day with a plan, a chore, a purpose, that when this is no longer possible because of lockdown restrictions, we all fall into what many are labelling a 'productivity panic'. Most notably, I have found myself feeling guilty for doing nothing, even though there is very little I can actually do. My university term is over, there are barely any jobs available that I would be appropriate for and yet the possibility of simply resting is unthinkable. It feels synonymous with failure.

I'm sure I speak for many people when I say that a huge source of motivation in life is feeling like you have a purpose. This could be as simple as a checklist of what you want to achieve in a day or an extensive bucket list for the next 10 years. Both are about looking ahead and being driven by the possibilities of the future but, most importantly, both are attached to a desire for order and stability. So, to have this ability to plan and control our everyday lives thrown headfirst into the socio-political hurricane that is COVID-19 has been unsettling to say the least.

Upon reflecting as to why this crisis has led to so much anxiety, I decided it is first and

foremost because there is no real end in sight. As a student with exams or deadlines, I can pinpoint the exact day when the worry will stop. Yet this current situation is totally unique in that, I, like the rest of the world, have no clue what will happen in the next week let alone the next year. That thought in itself is overwhelming and I have found myself wallowing in self-pity and secretly wishing I could sleep until this is over. But, without some serious safety concerns, that option isn't possible, so instead we must adapt and be kind to ourselves.

The media is overflowing with articles on 'making the most of lockdown', encouraging super-human workout routines, massive projects like writing novels and flaunting rose-tinted highlight reels of the 'new normal' metropolitan life. It is concerningly easy to take such content at face value and immediately feel bad about your comparative 'inadequacy'. It is true that some people will be thriving in this time, but others will just be working on surviving. And that is okay. However you cope, know we will get through this and that just existing right now is enough.



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THE NATIONAL BREWERY CENTRE ARCHIVES ARE NOW LIVE!

Information and images from a unique collection of historic items from Britain's brewing and pub companies will be accessible online for the first time from 27th July 2020 via The National Brewery Centre Archives: www.nbcarchives.co.uk

Creation of the online National Brewery Centre Archives has been supported by the National Brewery Heritage Trust (NBHT), a charity run by volunteers. The archives give access to an ever-developing catalogue of items covering 250 years of brewing in Britain. Currently, just 5000 of around 500,000 of these items are on public display at the National Brewery Centre in Burton-on-Trent. But now beer lovers and history enthusiasts can access many more via this online archive, which includes a substantial and growing number of digital images of adverts, pub and brewery photos, books and records.

The Archives tell the history of the UK brewing and pub industries and their impact on the UK's economy and way of life. Archive users can explore collections covering all aspects of beer and pubs including advertising, farming, brewing in

wartime and transport as well as search for information about brewing industry personalities and famous British brewing and pub companies. Closer to home researchers can seek out historic photos of their own local pub or brewery, as well as social and family history.



Some of the images from the archives.

Top: Royal Ales Outside Box (Landscape)

Middle: Interior view of Abbey Inn

Restaurant, Burton-on-Trent

Bottom: Colour Postcards

© The National Brewery Centre Archives

Harry White, NBHT Chairman: "Our aim is accessibility so we're delighted that we've been able to start cataloguing our unique collection of

brewing and pub heritage and opening online access for people to use for research, education and general interest. We've started by digitising many of the more popular items in the collection, such as photos of historic pubs, breweries, brewing equipment, packaging and advertising, but this is a work in progress and more records and images will be added to the catalogue day by day."

The project has taken two years so far and will cost over £50,000. Generous grants were awarded by organisations including the Consolidated Charity of Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire Community Foundation, the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) and the Brewers' Research Education Fund. In addition, funds were raised from corporate and individual donors as well as via a crowdfunding campaign.

For images or further information about the National Brewing centre Archive or NBHT contact: Dr Harry White, Chairman on **07519 102404** or email: fhw@btinternet.com.

Or contact Lesley Allman, volunteer press officer on **07808 095803** or lesley@allmancommunication.com.



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BASE

500g Strong white bread flour (but if you have any Italian 00 flour, even better)

1½ tsp dried active yeast. I did not have any and used rapid dried yeast instead. I found that the rise time was quicker (2 days vs 4 days) so this might actually be a bonus.

1 tsp table salt

1 tsp sugar

TOPPING

1 400g tin chopped plum tomatoes

1 pack buffalo mozzarella

1 bunch basil

Extra-virgin olive oil, to drizzle

Plain is great but you can add any toppings you like.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix the flour, yeast, salt, and sugar then stir in 325ml water to a smooth dough. Cover and put in the fridge for two to four days. Remember, rapid yeast will activate faster and may only require two days or even one if you're in a hurry.

2. Tip onto a lightly-floured surface. Divide into four roughly equal portions, shape into balls, cover and leave for two hours.

3. While the dough is rising, take the cheese and toppings out of the fridge so that they come to room temperature.

4. Empty the tomatoes into a saucepan over a medium heat and simmer for about 30 minutes, until they form a thick sauce. Season this to taste with salt and a pinch of sugar.

5. Once the dough has proved, flatten it into pizza bases

to fit your pan. Heat the cast iron frying pan or skillet over a moderate to high heat. It's ready when you drop a little water into the base and it instantly hisses and bounces. Preheat the grill to between moderate and high.

6. Lightly flour your hands then stretch the dough into a rough round, keeping the edges a bit thicker. Cook in the pan until the top starts to dry out then add some tomato sauce and mozzarella. Wait a minute before adding any other toppings. Leave in the pan until base begins to char. When you're happy with the bottom, switch the pan to under the grill until the cheese bubbles and the edges brown. Finish with a few basil leaves.



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Are you worried whether your pre-existing child arrangements that were put in place for you and your ex-partner prior to the Covid-19 crisis still apply?

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10 SURPRISING USES FOR APPLE CIDER VINEGAR BY CASSIDY FERRARI

Apple cider vinegar has been popping up more regularly in health food shops and on supermarket shelves over the last few years. It's not often we see a product sharing shelf space with both salad dressings and multivitamins, so it can be a bit confusing to work out what exactly we're supposed to do with it! Here are 10 ideas:

1. FOOD PRESERVATION

People have been using vinegars for thousands of years to preserve food, and apple cider vinegar can hold your home-made pickled onions just as well as the more well known variations.

2. SALAD DRESSINGS

For a quick and easy dressing you can combine apple cider vinegar with olive oil and dijon mustard, or you can experiment with additions such as maple syrup. If you're trying to cut down on oil then you can use tahini as a base instead for an even lighter salad accompaniment.

3. KEEPING YOUR SKIN CLEAR

Apple cider vinegar has anti-inflammatory properties which makes it a great option for homemade facial toner. You only need to combine it with two parts water and you're

ready to gently massage it into your skin with a cotton pad as part of your skincare routine.

4. MAKING YOUR HAIR SHINE

Many shampoos are high in alkaline which can cause your hair to become dull or brittle over time. Apple cider vinegar's high acidity makes it an excellent antidote, so you can use it as a post-shampoo rinse to get back your shine.

5. HOUSEHOLD CLEANING

Simply mix with two parts water for an efficient DIY cleaning product which is both anti-bacterial and great for tackling streaky mirrors and other shiny surfaces.

6. KEEPING YOUR PETS FLEA-FREE

Help prevent fleas from being attracted to your pet by spraying their fur with a diluted solution of apple cider vinegar, rubbing in gently and repeating on a weekly basis.

7. CLEANING YOUR FRESH PRODUCE

If you like to give your fruit and veg a scrub before use, apple cider vinegar's antibacterial properties make it an excellent DIY alternative to chemical options.

8. LOOKING AFTER YOUR GUT

As a fermented product, apple cider vinegar is full of probiotics which are

vital to good gut health. Adding it to your meals and even drinking a little a day can improve digestion and boost your immune system.

9. MAKING YOUR TEETH SHINE

To make an all-natural toothpaste you can combine two parts apple cider vinegar with one part baking soda, which you can then rub directly onto your teeth before rinsing with water. Add this to your routine a few evenings per week and you will begin to see whiter teeth without using any harsh chemicals or expensive products.

10. REPLACING EGGS IN BAKING

More of us are following a plant-based diet and one of the challenges this can pose is adapting our favourite bakes to be egg-free. Combining 1 teaspoon of apple cider vinegar with 1 teaspoon of baking soda will create a mixture equivalent to 1 egg, which you can use to get that perfect cake batter consistency.



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THE SHORT GUIDE TO SHORTS FOR MEN

BY TOM HANCOCK

The shorts season is, well, short, which means we don't get a lot of practice styling them. Here's a helpful guide:



CHINOS

In a neutral stone or navy, they go with almost everything. They're smart enough to wear with a short-sleeved shirt to more casual offices but relaxed enough to wear with t-shirts. Look for a zip fly and button closure, a just above knee length, minimal pockets and details, and a mid-weight cotton twill material. Use a woven belt or a plaited leather belt and wear with sandals (no socks), or lightweight minimal trainers, deck shoes or espadrilles with trainer socks if you prefer.



TAILORED SHORTS

If your office is hot and you want to be cool and look smart, these are the shorts you need. Tailored shorts have pleats and tucks that help them sit neatly and look elegant. Look for the same things you'd look for in tailored trousers: a good fit, a zip fly with a flap closure, thin belt loops and a sharp crease or pleat down the front of the leg. Wear them with crisp short-sleeved shirts, a lightweight blazer, slip-on summer shoes or even brogues (use trainer socks though).



SWIM SHORTS

For maximum versatility (especially when packing for a holiday) choose swim shorts that look like normal shorts. Look for a zip fly; length that hits just above the knee; a solid colour; and fabric that's not too shiny. Shorts which have a drawstring closure or loud pattern are fine for swimming but won't double as normal shorts. They go with t-shirts, polo shirts or a linen shirt. Dress them down with flip-flops for the beach but if you go out for dinner choose shoes that are a little smarter such as canvas shoes.

In summary, plain is best and if you only invest in one or two pairs, chinos are the most versatile.

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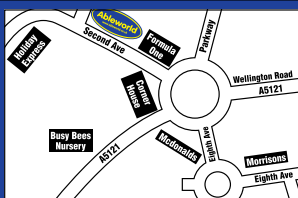
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To find out more about

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To enter this month's competition, all you have to do is put your name, address and daytime telephone contact number on a postcard and send it to:

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Alternatively, you can e-mail your details to:
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The closing date for entries is the 8th September and the winners will be announced in our October edition. Good luck to everyone who enters!

* Vouchers not valid in conjunction with any offer. No change given. Not refundable. Booking essential.

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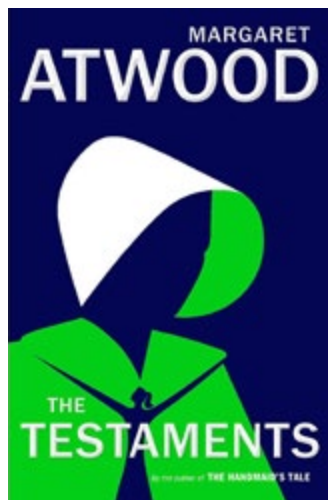
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THE TESTAMENTS BY MARGARET ATWOOD

Coming 30 years after her best selling *The Handmaid's Tale*, readers certainly had a long wait for this sequel.

For those not familiar, the original novel told the story of America in the not-so-distant future, where a totalitarian state called Gilead has been established in the east of the country after a civil war. Women's rights have been taken away from them and are subjugated in this patriarchal society.

This sequel tells us what happened next from the perspective of three women: Aunt Lydia, Agnes and Daisy. We learn something of how Gilead came to be in flashback accounts from

Aunt Lydia, how the outside world sees Gilead, and the life-changing decisions that are made for young girls in Gilead by society.

As a fan of the original, I found this to be a gripping read that did not detract from the power of the 1985 novel. Is it a satisfying ending? Is everything resolved with the end of Gilead? I'll leave it up to you to make that discovery.

THEATRE SHOES BY NOEL STREATFEILD

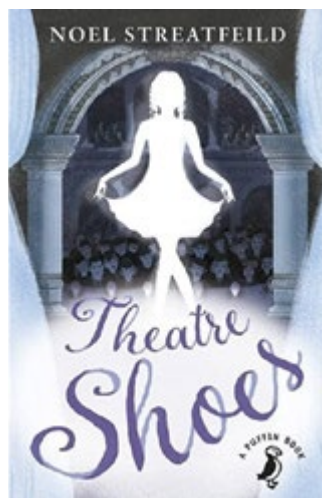
If you have a child who loves to perform – dancing, singing, acting – then this is the book for them! Noel Streatfeild is best known for her novel *Ballet Shoes*. Whilst it may not have the classic status that *Ballet Shoes* does, this is still well worth reading.

Originally published as *Curtain Up*, this follows the story of Sorrel, Holly, and Mark. After the death of their mother, and the disappearance of their father whilst serving in the Navy, the siblings are sent to wartime London to stay with their grandmother who they have never met. They find themselves in a world they have never experienced as they discover that their grandmother (and their mother) used to be a famous actress. She seems keen that the children follow in the

family tradition, even though they have no experience, and they find themselves enrolled at Madame Fidolia's Academy of Dancing and Stage training. Fans of *Ballet Shoes* will recognise this as the stage school attended by the Fossil girls.

Sorrel soon discovers a passion for performing, starring as Ariel in a production of *The Tempest*. Mark is determined to join the Navy like his father – despite being a talented singer – whilst Holly shines at dancing. Readers of *Ballet Shoes* will notice a similarity with the paths of the Fossil children, and they do indeed make cameos.

Ultimately, this story is about coming to terms with loss and discovering an extended family, albeit with the smell of greasepaint and a pirouette or two.



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The dictionary defines hobby as "an activity done regularly in one's leisure time for pleasure."

Ah yes, hobbies - I remember those, just about. I just about recall these concepts from days gone by, of something called 'leisure time' and something else called 'pleasure'.

And then we had kids.

So, my fond memories of reading, photography, playing the drums, swimming, cycling, making jam and chutney, and going to Scrabble club are becoming more distant as I now replace them with washing, serving up endless

snacks, picking up dirty socks, home-schooling, refereeing disputes and general crowd control. Not much leisure, not much pleasure, and certainly not much time!

So, hobbies seem to fill the gap left when you've done everything else you need to do, a gap which I don't feel is very big right now. Maybe in a decade's time I can pick up that book and swim a few lengths again. Until then, I'll try to create the space for some other, smaller people to develop their own hobbies. Maybe I won't tell them that they might only have a few years to enjoy

them until it's their turn to wash the socks.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I just have to go and chop fruit into small pieces, wash up, stick some washing on and then get dinner going. Then wash up again, run the bath, police the twice-daily rigmarole of teeth brushing and stay in a dimly-lit room until a small person falls fast asleep. Then when I creep out of the room, I look at my watch and consider what hobbies I can squeeze into the short time before my own bedtime.

But then, doesn't that beeping sound mean that the washing machine has finished?

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PET TOP TIPS - TREATS

Scarsdale Vets practice nurse Hollie Azzini RVN shares her tips for ensuring your pet's treats are both tasty and safe!

Human Food

Check before giving your pet human food. Many foods can be high in fat and cause tummy upset or even toxic and irreparable damage to their organs. Even healthy food like fruit and veg isn't always safe.

Dental treats

Keeping your pet's teeth clean is essential for their health, however dental treats aren't always the best way to do this. They often contain a lot of fat and can add to your pet's waistline. Use sparingly!

Puppies and Kittens

Young animals have very different needs when it comes to treats. Ensure treats are soft and suitable for puppies and kittens.

Dairy

It is very common for people to give their pets yogurt or milk as a treat. Unfortunately our pets are not able to digest dairy very well and it can affect their digestive system, giving them stomach ache or diarrhoea. It is better to avoid dairy altogether and buy specific dog or cat milk instead.

Excessive treats

It is important to ensure we don't give too many treats - some pets will eat all their treats as well as their regular meals and start to gain weight.

Training

Using treats when training is important but use small breakable treats or ones they can lick so they still get a reward but it is smaller in volume.

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COMPETITION WINNERS

Congratulations to our June Magazine **TLC Foods** competition winners, who have each won a £50 voucher:

Rebecca Ellerton, Tatenhill

Becky Roberts, Lichfield

Mrs W. Brown, Stretton

Janelle Jones, Barton-under-Needwood

Look out elsewhere in **LOCAL LINKS** this month to win a £50 nail and beauty voucher from **Sculpted by Rose**.

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