



## ROMANTIC GETAWAYS

IT'S TIME TO GET AWAY IN THE UK FOR A ROMANTIC TRIP FOR TWO

**GOING HIKING**  
EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO  
GET HIKING READY

**VALENTINES DAY**  
STAYING AT HOME THIS  
VALENTINES DAY MADE EASY

**HALF TERM CRAFTS**  
ENJOY THE WARMTH WITH  
SOME AT HOME CRAFTS

**2023 SIX NATIONS**  
EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO  
KNOW ABOUT THE RUGBY

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## WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION

We got through January, which is always one of the hardest months, but now we're into February and the days are getting longer and we can start to see spring on the horizon.

This month, for those looking to move this year, we look at the best ways to get your home ready to sell in Spring. Obviously, it's the month of love with Valentines Day on the 14th, so on pages 4&5 we look at romantic getaways in the UK, while on pages 8&9 we look at how to treat that special someone without leaving the house.

It's also time to start thinking about putting away those winter clothes, and getting ready for Spring, but we're not there just yet, which is

why on page 7 we have a fashion guide for the gap between. And on page 6 we look at all the gear you need to get hiking this month.

Half term is just around the corner, and on pages 12&13 we look at ways to keep the children entertained such as craft and baking ideas. We also have a usual monthly gardening feature on pages 10&11, and finally, on pages 14&15 we preview this year's Rugby Six Nations.

So, grab a drink, enjoy watching the stunning sunsets at this time of year, and settle down with this month's magazines.

**Jonathan Wheatley**  
Editor



It's a long and important process—let our brief guide get you on the right track. Now we've had time to get settled into 2023, there's a chance you've looked around and decided it's time for a change. Believe us when we say we thoroughly understand the stress associated with selling a home, especially if this is your first time moving. It feels like there's always something else that needs to be done, and there are countless moving parts throughout the process.

You will need to make some important decisions, which could save you some big money and mental energy. Organisation is key here—as long as you know what needs doing and when, you will be just fine. It's impossible to fit all the advice we have in one article, so here are some introductory tips to get you set up and ready to sell.

## DOCUMENTS

This is one of the most important—if the least interesting—steps to take when you first begin the selling process. There are a lot of documents you will need to have collected in order for the sale to go smoothly, and gathering them all as early as possible will save a lot of waiting around in the future. First of all, you will need an in-date proof of identity and proof of address. The former can be a passport or driving licence, and the latter a full driving licence or an energy bill that's less than three months old. Next, you'll need your Land Registry title documents which prove you own the property, and an Energy Performance Certificate (which you may already have if you bought your house in the last ten years). Also needed will be electrical and gas checks, as well as documentation for replaced windows, planning permission and relevant



# GETTING READY TO SELL YOUR HOME

documents for newbuild homes. A full list of necessary documents can be found on the HomeOwners Alliance website.

## FINANCES

It will start feeling daunting at this stage, but don't worry—with some time and attention to detail, you will be able to stay on top of your financial situation during the move. This is not the place to give mortgage advice, so please seek out one-on-one help for advice on your personal situation. We can, however, outline some things you'll need to do. Firstly, you'll want to get a FREE valuation on your home in order to see how much money you'll be working with. While this is in the works, you can be figuring out the logistics of taking (porting) your mortgage to the new home or switching to a different lender. It is also a very good idea to total up additional costs like estate agent fees, moving vans and conveyancing, so you aren't caught off guard later down the line.

## CURB APPEAL AND VIEWINGS

It's all well and good being prepared with all the admin, but you need to make sure that your house is as attractive as possible to potential buyers, so you can have the best chance of securing a deal. Curb appeal refers to the appearance of your house from the outside, as if you were standing on the curb. Does the front of your house look well-maintained, is the garden neat and is the driveway in good condition? These are all things that will influence the opinion of a viewer, so they're important to get right. HomeOwners Alliance have found out that the most important factors are well-maintained windows, roofs and gardens.

When the time comes to welcome viewers inside the home, there are some tricks you can use to make it more appealing. By removing bold or stand-out artwork and furniture, you prevent your viewers from getting distracted by those and cluttering their opinion of the home. What a viewer wants is a blank slate—an interior in which they can imagine all of their own belongings. For this reason, it's best to remove family photos as well.

Smell is a big factor to consider—different sellers swear by different things, but as a baseline it's good to have a professional deep clean of your house to eliminate any odours that you might have gotten used to. From there, you could add liquid air fresheners, incense burners or you could even bake some bread or cookies to give the whole house a homely feel.

Finally, it's important to go around each room and check the door handles—viewers are put off by wobbly handles, even if they don't realise it. A sturdy handle when they enter a room for the first time will give your house a strong and safe first impression.



# ROMANTIC UK GETAWAYS

Spending some much needed time with that special someone can make a world of difference



You do not have to travel too far to experience a romantic getaway for two

Following the turn of the new year, many of us will be looking for things to get excited about over the next 12 months.

There are few things that leave us counting down the days like having a holiday booked.

While big family getaways are fun, those breaks with just that special someone in our life can feel incredibly relaxing and romantic.

Many of us may be weary about travelling abroad this year, as we all try to tighten the purse strings.

Luckily, you do not have to travel too far to experience a romantic getaway for two and there are plenty of options without even leaving the United Kingdom.

Whether you fancy a few days near a stunning English seaside or want to explore a historic city, here are a few of our recommendations.

## SLOW DAYS ON THE ROSELAND PENINSULA, IN CORNWALL

Cornwall as a whole boasts many different options for holiday goers and is regularly a hotspot for those on a staycation due to the calm atmosphere and beautiful seaside towns.

For those looking for landscape scenery and coastal beauty, then look no further than a break stay at The Roseland Peninsula.

This section of Cornwall is bordered by the Fal Estuary to the west and has St Austell Bay to the east.

There are plenty of wide open beaches that are rarely crowded and a visit on the right day will leave you thinking you are the only people on earth.



Secluded coves and wooded countryside can equally be explored, with the area also great for swimming, sun bathing (weather dependent) and rock pooling.

### WAKE UP TO SERENITY IN THE LAKE DISTRICT

Sticking in England for another suggestion as we head North for the Lake District.

This is a popular spot for honeymoons in the UK, so it must make for a romantic holiday.

The true selling point of the Lake District is the breathtaking natural beauty across the entire area. Fans of outdoor activities are in luck, as you can walk, cycle, swing in the trees and splash about, while equally spending time wrapped up with your loved one in one of the many holiday lettings available.

There are plenty of spots which are earmarked as perfect for a romantic afternoon or evening, such as Ennerdale Water, Colwith Force and Glencoyne Bay.

### CITY BREAK IN STYLE IN EDINBURGH

Leaving England now, we head into Scotland for a very different type of getaway.

These days, holidays do not just mean sun and beaches, another great way to spend a few days off is to experience a city break.

While you could jet off to all manner of popular European cities, there is no need when a truly historic and atmospheric city is right on our doorstep - Edinburgh.

Couples can enjoy tranquil walks on the cobbled streets, such as along the Water of Leith, or take in a fine dining

experience at one of the many unique and romantic restaurants across the city.

One delightful date idea for an evening in Edinburgh is to head along a guided ghost walk, to hear fascinating, and spooky, stories about the city's past.

### BELFAST IS KNOWN AS A CITY 'MADE FOR TWO'

Another stunning United Kingdom-based city that is well worth a visit with your partner is Northern Ireland's Belfast.

The city is very easy to navigate around, either by foot or by bike, while there are also plenty of public transport options to unlock all that is to offer.

There are a number of historic sites, museums and an infamously lively pub culture to form a memorable and cosy break for you to share with your partner.

### MAKE A BREAK AROUND A BUCKET LIST WALK UP SNOWDON

Heading over to Wales now, where a trip to climb Mount Snowdon could be turned into so much more.

Walking up the highest mountain in Wales is a feat which features on many people's bucket lists, so the area attracts plenty of visitors each year.

However, the surrounding Snowdonia National Park is a breath-taking area of the world and is one that deserves more than just a passing visit.

Many people will book a stay in accommodation or a hotel before or after the night of the hike anyway, so why not consider extending your stay to make the most of the Welsh beauty on offer.



# ALL YOU NEED FOR HIKING

Going hiking? There is perhaps more gear required than you might think

Ah, the great outdoors! And what better way to experience it than through hiking? Unlike extreme sports like skydiving, for instance, hiking is a more savouring, more sumptuous experience of everything the outdoors has to offer. In comparison, it's like fine dining. You can take it all in, the sights, the sounds, and sometimes even the utter silence of nature. So, if you're planning on doing more hiking in the new year, this is what you'll need.

## THE CORRECT CLOTHING

Let's get the basics out of the way first. What you wear is fundamentally important to how comfortable or uncomfortable your hike goes.

**Boots** – It's important to get hiking boots specifically, not just any old boot or strong-looking trainer. Hiking boots are usually much sturdier and more durable than walking shoes, usually with reinforced extra padding and sometimes even with metal bars in the soles to increase sturdiness. All of this provides plenty of foot support and also reduces the chances of strain or bruising when hiking over rocky, rough or uneven terrain.

**Trousers** – One of the main priorities you should be considering when it comes to what trousers to wear on your hike, is to ensure they are of durable, quick-drying fabrics such as spandex or nylon, especially

if you expect any drop in temperature or heavy vegetation along the trail.

**Torso** – A thin, quick-drying, and/or breathable shirt would be ideal, as there will be plenty of perspiration for the fabric to soak up. A moisture-wicking fabric would be perfect for this, as it's a material that dries rapidly to prevent sweat from saturating the fabric. As for the overcoat or jacket, usually something waterproof works well to be safe, and if it has a hood then that's a bonus. As for the head, a cap would work brilliantly in a sunny environment, whereas a beanie could be excellent for colder temperatures.

What you wear is fundamentally important to how comfortable or uncomfortable your hike goes

## HIKING POLES OR STICKS

Hiking poles are not to be underestimated. By having four points of contact on the ground (your two legs, and the two poles) you'll have much better balance and increased stability. Hiking poles come in especially handy if there is uneven terrain, steep ascents or descents, water crossings and treks over loose rocks, wet trails, and/or snow.

### Any additional equipment you might need:

- Depending on the amount of sunlight expected, sunglasses could literally be a lifesaver.
- Backpack, in which to contain various supplies.
- Food and water (though don't forget about the weight you'll be carrying).



Jeans, chinos, and khakis are all popular winners, but there are some other alternatives to consider for the colder weeks that still linger



# STYLE TRANSITION WINTER TO SPRING

Winter is melting away, and the new season is beginning to spring into life, and so should our clothing

As the weather begins to warm ever so slightly, so do our change in preferences in what to wear. No longer do we need the thick winter-warmers we've been snuggling into over the past few weeks, but clothing that's that little bit lighter will begin to creep in before long. Now is the time to be changing around your wardrobe, and breaking out the thinner threads (but not too thin!), and we have the perfect guide for you here.

## TORSO

Light layers are typically crucial for transitioning your wardrobe from winter to spring, but thicker clothing can still work providing its suitable for the general temperature. Light layers include sweaters, cardigans and knits that aren't too heavy, whereas thicker items could include jumpers and even bomber jackets.

Other items to think about for inspiration:

- Statement jackets are perfect for a transitioning attitude between the seasons, and also lend themselves really well to layering underneath.
- Chunky sweaters can provide you with all the warmth and casualness you could ask for in such temperatures, and, for women, can be great for topping off those spring dresses and blouses.

## LEGWEAR

During the winter to spring transition, it will still be more cool than warm, so trousers are still very much

welcome for this time of year. Jeans, chinos, and khakis are all popular winners, but there are some other alternatives to consider for the colder weeks that still linger.

Other items to think about for inspiration:

- Fleece or even hiking trousers can be especially warm, and perfect for those windy and/or rainy days.
- Early spring can be one of the best times in the year to wear tights. Unlike winter, where knitted and opaque tights are a must, spring calls for sheer tights to keep us comfortable during slightly warmer spring days.

## FOOTWEAR

Generally, you can't go wrong with a pair of canvas shoes for early spring. Cotton shoes are lightweight and breathable. Since the early spring brings both chilly and warm weather, it's important to keep your feet covered from the wind, and yet breathable from the hot sun rays.

Other items to think about for inspiration:

- Ankle or Chelsea boots are not just for pairing with jeans, they can look great with bare legs too (providing the weather and temperatures are suitable for it).
- If the weather has started to become warmer than expected, it might be worthwhile to consider some breathable trainers, or perhaps knitted sneakers.



# VALENTINE'S DAY AT HOME

Make this special day even more romantic, without leaving the house!

Valentine's Day is a surprisingly polarising entry on the calendar. Some people argue that you and your partner shouldn't need one specific day to show your appreciation, because you're meant to do that every day of the year! However, we see it a little differently. While it's true that healthy relationships will see you and your partner share romantic moments all throughout the year, the modern lifestyle can really get in the way of things. With one—or both—of you working, it can be very difficult to find time to spend with each other, so it can be beneficial to dedicate Valentine's Day to taking time out of the schedule to just be with your partner. The celebrations don't need to be fancy, expensive or time-consuming—some of the best Valentine's Days are spent in the home! With that said, here are some ideas to help you craft the perfect day from home this February.

## MEALTIME

Perhaps the most integral part of a Valentine's Day celebration is the special meal. Given that this year's Valentine's is on a Tuesday, there's a chance that this is the only thing you get to do upon coming home from work. For that reason, it's important to make it a good one! There are two different ways to go about creating the perfect Valentine's meal—the romantic and the sentimental. Let us explain:

### **Sentimental:**

Cook or order your collective favourite meal. Since this day is about you and your partner, it seems only fitting that you consider having your favourite meal. Whether you both have the same taste or your hearts belong to different cuisines, there'll always be a way to have both of you enjoying an all-time favourite meal. Maybe you live in



delivery range of the first restaurant you ever visited together, or perhaps there's a happy memory or funny story attached to a classic fish and chips—our brains remember food very well, so ordering in or cooking up a taste of the past might be a really nice way to connect with your partner.

**Romantic:** Work together on a fancy dish. The secret to a successful home-cooked Valentine's Day meal is disguised simplicity—taking slightly fancier ingredients and preparing them in a simple manner. Jamie Oliver has some great Valentine's meal ideas on his website, and they all seem to follow this formula. Meats like duck, lamb and seafood are chosen as a special centrepiece for the dishes, and they are served with a variety of different sides, from pad-thai style vegetables to creamy bean stews. The meat is presented with care, delicately sliced and placed on the plate, but these dishes are really not much more effort than you usually put in. This is why they're great for this day; you can enjoy a special, fancier meal without the added stress of preparing a complex dish. The last thing you want on Valentine's is a kitchen-fuelled argument!

**Setting the table:** No romantic meal is complete without a little love being put into the table! Try to find some red napkins to nicely fold alongside your best crockery, and place some candles or flowers near the centre to create the atmosphere of a restaurant. Just make sure you can still see your partner across the table!

## ACTIVITIES

Now your plans for food are sorted, it's time to consider what you will actually do. It might be both relieving and daunting to

hear that there is no right answer—you and your partner can do absolutely whatever you want on Valentine's! Anything that you both enjoy doing together is fair game, but let us give you a few ideas to kickstart the planning process.

## MOVIE NIGHT

If you and your partner are big on movies, why not simply cuddle up on the sofa and watch some? Whether they're old favourites or films from your to-watch list, there's few better ways for movie-loving couples to enjoy a relaxed and romantic Valentine's Day.

## BOARD GAMES

If friendly competition is your thing, get the board games out the cupboard! Classics like Scrabble and Trivial Pursuit are always good, or perhaps you're big fans and have some independent games to try out. It's always a good time, and a tried-and-tested Valentine's activity.

## MUSIC

However you choose to spend your day, it will always be elevated by music. If you're fortunate enough to own a record player, picking out some vinyls and enjoying the classic sound is an excellent way to relax with your partner.

Failing that, making a Spotify playlist with lots of favourite and meaningful songs would also be a fun activity! There are also plenty of ready-made Valentine's playlists on Spotify and YouTube.

The secret to a successful home-cooked Valentine's Day meal is disguised simplicity



# FEBRUARY GARDENING GUIDE

Your top jobs to prepare for spring

**F**ebruary is the month where signs of life finally start to show in your gardens, and with our guide, we can help ensure you have the best blooms this spring and summer.

## SOW SEEDS

It's still early to sow flower seeds outside, however, if you have a sunny windowsill or a greenhouse there are plenty of flowers that you can sow now.

## COSMOS

Cosmos are easy to grow annuals that look great in any border or meadow during the summer, and there are hundreds of varieties to choose from in a wide range of bright colours. To sow, simply scatter seeds on top of some compost in a tray and prick them out when large enough to handle.

## SWEET PEAS

It's not too late to sow sweet peas, and you won't regret it if you do. With the heady summer scent and vigorous growth, these plants will keep on flowering throughout summer as long as you keep picking the scented flower heads. To sow, simply place individual seeds in biodegradable pots in a sunny windowsill or greenhouse.

## SALVIAS

Salvias are a great plant to add height and structure to your borders and come in a wide range of colours and scents. Once established, these perennials will come back year after year, just check whether you have a tender perennial or a hardy perennial to find out how to overwinter them. To sow, simply scatter the seeds on top of some compost, finely cover and keep warm and moist.



## PRUNING

This month is an important month for pruning fruit trees, winter-blooming shrubs, and other plants to ensure spectacular growth during the spring and summer.

## FRUIT TREES

Most fruit trees will appreciate a prune at this time of year including pear, apple and plum trees as well as raspberries. For large trees, such as pear, apple and plum, the best advice is to cut any branches that cross each other and an easy way to tell if you have gone far enough is to just imagine whether there would be enough room for a medium-sized bird to fly through the branches. Raspberry canes can be cut out now to ensure a good harvest this summer. Simply find the stems that carried this year's fruit, (they are usually brown and still have fruit stalks) and cut them right at the base of the plant.

## GARDEN PREPARATION

With spring on the way, now is the perfect time to finish any prep in your garden. It is still cold outside, especially in the evenings, so don't get too carried away, however, you may be able to do the first cut of the lawn (if we have a mild February), you can clean pathways of rubbish and leaves, you can divide and pull up and daffodils or snowdrops and replant them and you can also get your veg beds in perfect order ready for the new season.

To prepare your veg beds, give them a thorough weeding, add in a fresh layer of compost and cover with fleece or tarp to help the borders warm up faster for the season.

## VEGETABLES

February is a great time to sow chilli peppers and tomatoes. These two vegetables are some of the easiest to grow and by following simple steps you can't go wrong. To sow, simply choose the varieties you want, we would recommend San Marzano 2 for tomatoes and Jalapeno for chillies (you can of course grow more than one variety) and sow the seeds in a warm windowsill on top of a bed of compost and then lightly cover. Keep moist, not wet, and give them plenty of light and warmth. When they have germinated, prick them out and into their own individual pots when they have their first true leaves.



# CHILD-FRIENDLY BAKING IDEAS

Keep the little ones entertained in the holidays with a cost-friendly and fun activity for the whole family

With the school holidays comes another pressure for parents and carers to find new and unique ways to keep little ones entertained.

When you have started running low on family members to visit or parks to play at, you may start to look inside the house for fun activities.

Start to look inside the house for fun activities

Look no further than the kitchen for an afternoon of baking and making sweet treats, which is a fantastic way to keep your children entertained, while also getting a yummy cake or plate of biscuits out of it.

## STAINED GLASS WINDOW BISCUITS

One fantastic way to level up some standard biscuits is to add a “stained glass” look to the centre.

Before you place biscuit dough shapes into the oven to cook, consider cutting a shape out of the middle and placing a boiled sweet into the hole, then pop it into the oven.

Once you remove this, the hard boiled sweet would have melted and flattened down to fill the shape, creating an amazing glass effect that will leave your children amazed.

## NO-BAKE RECIPES

One of the more dangerous parts of baking is the hot oven, which can put some parents off this activity for little ones.

However, there are ways to craft delicious and sweet treats without even switching the oven on.

The internet is filled with bake-free alternatives of fudge, brownies and other dessert recipes, which simply require preparation and being left to set or solidify, but with all the same flavours.

## GIVE THEM FREE REIGN TO DECORATE THEMSELVES

If you are handling two or more children, then you could turn the decorating section of baking into a competition between them. Rather than setting a theme for decorating, allow their imaginations to direct them. Make sure they have plenty of sprinkles, icing, colours, chocolate and an assortment of sweets to make a masterpiece for themselves.

When they are finished, channel your inner Paul Hollywood and Prue Leith and have them talk through their decisions before offering your feedback (in a positive way, we hope!)

# HALF TERM CRAFT IDEAS

Half term is approaching, so why not enjoy the warmth and comfort that crafting at home can bring?



The colder weeks are just beginning to thaw, but it's still a lot colder outside than it is inside, and doing craftwork with your kids and creating magical wonders in the comfort of your own home is one of the most fun and stimulating things you can do with your children while they're off from school. Here are some of the easiest and fun methods for crafting creations.

## WALL ART AND DÉCOR

Perhaps one of the simplest crafting activities around, the wonderful thing about this kind of crafting is that anything and everything goes. You literally begin with a blank canvas, and the world is your oyster from then on. Once your art is finished, you can fix it into a frame and hang it onto your wall for all to appreciate.

## YARN WEAVING

Weaving yarn is more often used in loom weaving and tends to be more durable than knitting yarn. It is typically used for weaving rugs and tapestries rather than garments because it is thicker and not as soft as knitting yarn. Traditionally, this yarn was made of animal fur or wool, but modern yarn can also be made of cotton, synthetic fibres, and blends. Yarn weaving is a very old craft but has evolved over the years to be more accessible and easier to practice. Combining

different fibres and textures to make unique woven pieces will add an extra element of charm to any home.

## EMBROIDERY

Embroidery is the craft typically consisting of decorating fabric using a needle to apply thread or yarn, and can also incorporate other materials such as pearls, beads, quills, and sequins. Caps, hats, coats, overlays, blankets, dress shirts, denim, dresses, stockings, scarfs, and golf shirts all tend to be subject to such craftsmanship, and can be a lot of fun once you get comfortable with the process. With many modern embroidery patterns to choose from, including many variations on floral arrangements, there really is an endless supply of stimulation with such an activity. It's low-cost when compared to the likes of knitting, and is also much easier to learn.

Fun and stimulating things you can do with your children while they're off from school

Here are some additional crafting ideas to think about practicing with your kids:

- Caned vases.
- Customised wallpaper.
- Dip-dyed candles.
- Handmade coasters and mats.
- Paper flowers.



# THE 2023 GUINNESS SIX NATIONS

The immensely popular Six Nations competition is only just around the corner and rugby fans will be licking their lips ahead of the spectacle.

This is an annual competition held between the home nations, England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, as well as France and Italy, as the six teams battle it out for the Six Nations title.

It is a competition which is always entertaining and regularly throws up surprise results that send shockwaves across the rugby world.

But who will win it this year?

## HOW THE LAST COMPETITION UNFOLDED

It was France that won the competition in 2022, which was a competition that was full of intrigue and drama.

Ireland finished second, just four points off France, followed by England, Scotland, Wales and Italy, in last. France secured a grand slam victory, as they did not lose a single game throughout the competition, having finished second in the two editions prior.

In fact, France were so dominant in this competition that they only trailed for 13 minutes across all five games, which came in the first half of the opening game against Italy.

Prior to 2022, Italy had recorded 36 losses in a row in the Six Nations, however broke this thanks to a dramatic late victory over Wales. Ireland, who were runners-up, won the Triple Crown for the sixth time, thanks to victories over England, Scotland and Wales.

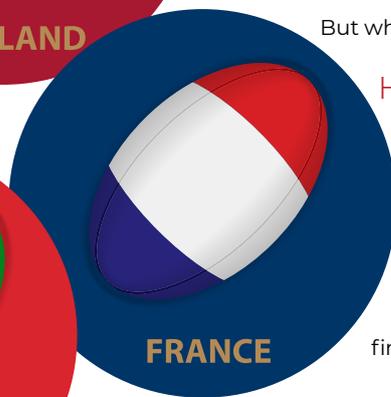
## HOW THIS YEAR'S CHAMPION WILL BE DECIDED

Each team will face each other in a round robin style to decide on the champion.

Four points are awarded for a victory, while two points are awarded to both teams for a draw.



ENGLAND



FRANCE



WALES

It's a competition which is always entertaining and regularly throws up surprise results

## Everything you need to know about the competition that every rugby fan looks forward to

If a team scores four or more tries in a game, they are awarded a bonus point, while if the losing team is within seven points at full time, they will also receive a bonus point.

There is no host nation for this competition, so each team will play in their home stadium at least twice.

### WHO ARE THE FAVOURITES?

France are being backed to retain their crown and win the competition once again.

However, many bookies are similarly expecting Ireland to provide firm competition.

England are currently third favourites, followed by Wales in fourth.

Both Scotland and Italy are not expected to fare too well, however could make a name for themselves if one or two results go in their favour, as is the fascinating nature of this tight competition.

### HOW ARE ENGLAND EXPECTED TO GET ON?

England fans will be having some hopes of performing well in the competition, despite the bookies predictions.

However, few are sure of what to expect from the Red and Whites, following the recent sacking of head coach Eddie Jones after seven years in the job.

Former Leicester Tigers head coach Steve Borthwick has been appointed in the role to lead his country forward, but it remains to be seen how this change will impact England's playstyle and overall performance in the upcoming tournament.

England will start the Six Nations at Twickenham Stadium, in London, against Scotland on February 4.

They will then face Italy at Twickenham on February 12, followed by an away game against Wales at the Principality Stadium, in Cardiff, on February 25.

The fourth round will see England face holders France at Twickenham, on March 11, with a trip to Dublin's Aviva Stadium to take on Ireland in the final fixture on March 18.

### WHERE WILL GAMES BE PLAYED?

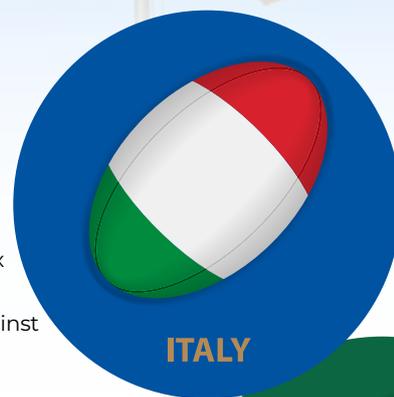
As already stated, England's Twickenham Stadium, with a capacity of 82,000, will host fixtures, alongside the 81,338-seated Stade de France, in Saint-Denis, Edinburgh's Murrayfield Stadium, with a 67,000 capacity, the Stadio Olimpico in Rome, which seats more than 73,000 spectators and Cardiff's Millennium Stadium, with 73,000.

The smallest venue to host fixtures is Dublin's 51,700 sized Aviva Stadium.

### HOW YOU CAN WATCH MATCHES FROM HOME

The opening fixture between Wales and Ireland will be broadcast on BBC on February 4, with the final game between Ireland and England on ITV on March 18.

Both the BBC and ITV will share broadcasting responsibilities throughout the six weeks of action to ensure those at home do not miss a second of the blood-pumping action.



ITALY



IRELAND



SCOTLAND

Necton, Swaffham

Guide Price £550,000



Superb, substantial five bedroom detached house formally the village Library and Church reading room situated with Church views in the popular village of Necton. This fantastic, spacious property offers three reception rooms, garage, gardens, garden office/studio, off road parking and much more!

SWAFFHAM - 01760 721389 - [info@longsons.co.uk](mailto:info@longsons.co.uk)

Swaffham - 01760 721389

Watton - 01953 883474

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## Necton, Swaffham

£365,000



Extremely well presented, link-detached three bedroom house with garage, situated in the well serviced popular village of Necton. Built in recent years by the much respected Hopkin Homes, the property boasts an en-suite shower room, kitchen/diner and enclosed rear garden. Viewing highly recommended

SWAFFHAM - 01760 721389 - [info@longsons.co.uk](mailto:info@longsons.co.uk)

## North Pickenham, Swaffham

£375,000



Very well presented, detached three bedroom bungalow situated in the Norfolk village of North Pickenham. This spacious property boasts three double bedrooms, good size lounge, kitchen/dining room, garage and two driveways providing ample parking. Viewing highly recommended.

SWAFFHAM - 01760 721389 - [info@longsons.co.uk](mailto:info@longsons.co.uk)

## Courtfields, Swaffham

**OIEO £375,000**



A very well presented detached three bedroom bungalow situated within easy reach of Swaffham town centre. This superb property offers kitchen/dining room, garden room, en-suite WC, good size gardens, garage, parking for several vehicles, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing.

SWAFFHAM - 01760 721389 - [info@longsons.co.uk](mailto:info@longsons.co.uk)

## Mileham, Kings Lynn

**£400,000**



Extremely well presented, modern recently built detached three bedroom house situated in the popular Norfolk village of Mileham. This superb property offers open plan living to the ground floor, en-suite shower room, garage, parking and well presented gardens with open fields to the rear.

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## Watton, Thetford

**Guide Price £400,000 to**



Beautifully presented, spacious detached four bedroom house situated on the popular award winning Abels Hares Green development. This superb, recently built property offers double garage, en suite shower room, solar PV, triple glazing and 'A' rated energy efficiency.

WATTON - 01953 883474 - [watton@longsons.co.uk](mailto:watton@longsons.co.uk)

## Shipdham, Thetford

**OIEO £350,000**



Superb, very well presented semi detached four bedroom house situated in the popular, well serviced village of Shipdham. The property is located with open paddock views to the rear along with two reception rooms, kitchen/breakfast room, shower room and bathroom, garage, gardens and parking!

WATTON - 01953 883474 - [watton@longsons.co.uk](mailto:watton@longsons.co.uk)

## Shipdham, Thetford

**£600,000**



Well presented, very spacious detached six bedroom house including a self contained annexe. The property offers very flexible accommodation and well suited to multi generational/ extended family living and boasts two en-suite shower rooms, conservatory, two kitchens and open countryside views to rear

WATTON - 01953 883474 - [watton@longsons.co.uk](mailto:watton@longsons.co.uk)

## Brandon Road, Thetford

**OIEO £340,000**



A well presented extended four bedroom detached property situated in the popular market town of Watton. The property offers lounge, kitchen/dining room plus garden room along with two ground floor bedrooms and two first floor bedrooms, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing.

WATTON - 01953 883474 - [watton@longsons.co.uk](mailto:watton@longsons.co.uk)

Swaffham - 01760 721389

Watton - 01953 883474

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Watton, Thetford

Guide Price £400,000 - £425,000



Superb, extremely well presented spacious three bedroom detached house with garage, situated within an exclusive development of just four properties and conveniently located just a short distance from Watton town centre. Property benefits include high spec kitchen and bathrooms new brickweave drive.

WATTON - 01953 883474 - [watton@longsons.co.uk](mailto:watton@longsons.co.uk)

Swaffham | Watton

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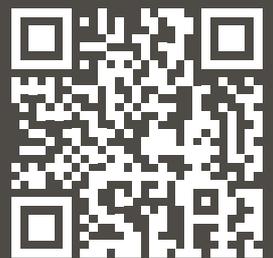
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**HOW MUCH  
IS MY  
PROPERTY  
WORTH?**



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



So where should you start?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Genuine Clutter:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Top Tips!



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



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



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



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





## Your step-by-step guide to the conveyancing process

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

### Seller's solicitor's steps

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

### Between exchange and completion

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

### Completion date

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

### Upon completion

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

## Buyer's solicitor's steps

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

## Between exchange and completion

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

## Completion date

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

## Upon Completion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Moving house?

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

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

## Eight weeks - Research

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

## Six weeks - Removal companies or do it yourself?

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

## Four weeks - Notify utility companies

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



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

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

#### Two weeks - Confirm all details

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

#### 24 hours - Final check and walk round

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

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

#### Moving day

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

#### You have arrived at your new home!

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

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

## Checklist

### Eight weeks

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

### Six weeks

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

### Four weeks

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

### Two weeks

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

### 24 hours

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

### Moving in

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

### On arrival

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



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

# Removal company or brave it yourself?

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

## Removal companies

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

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

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

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



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

### Getting quotes

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

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

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

## Top tips for packing

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

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

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

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

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

Start your  
**JOURNEY**  
with us...



...and create memories that will last forever.

[longsons.co.uk](http://longsons.co.uk)

Talk to us now about how we can get you moving.

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