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& POWER

MEGHAN MARKLE
making her mark

SAY WHAT?

*The best conversations to have
with smartphone Siri*

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OLLY MURS

The popstar's unexpected rise to fame



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Editor's notes...



Nik Allen, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** Billericay.

I'm writing this the day after the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, and many others, spoke in support of the UK

holding a second Brexit referendum. I voted to leave the EU and I think it will eventually be great for this country.

That's my view and I'm entitled to it - just like the 48 per cent of people who voted to remain. If the Leave camp had lost I would have accepted it.

Calls for a second referendum are nonsense in my opinion. It's like asking to keep playing a game of football until your side eventually wins.

I realise that's a simplified view but let's say a second referendum delivers a remain vote, does that mean people who voted Leave should start asking for yet another referendum? Madness.

The public exercised their democratic vote and the majority wanted to leave the EU. I believe that should be respected, just as much as I respect the views of those who want to remain.

We voted to leave so let's get on with it.

In this month's local news, Billericay Town Council has signed up for a Community Special Constable, a community group has received a £2,000 grant and a racing driver is looking for sponsorship.

I hope you enjoy this month's magazine.

Nik



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ACROSS
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DOWN
2. REGRESS, 3. THROUGH, 4. NATIVE, 5. INDIA, 6. UNTIL, 7. VALEDICTION, 8. UNOBSERVANT, 14. PORTENT, 15. INFERNO, 17. CITRIC, 19. LIBEL, 20. SINCE

LEARNING *to be Royal*

Beautiful American actress Meghan Markle, who is marrying into one of the most famous families in the world, is now the only pupil at a unique school – learning how to be royal – before she walks down the aisle with Prince Harry in May 2018.

And the curriculum, coupled with her studies on that score, includes swotting up on information, which will get her through the UK citizenship test to make her a British subject, which takes three years. But Meghan, 36, will also retain her US citizenship.

These are “exams” that Meghan just cannot fail and given her track record she looks certain to gain an honours degree in QAC – Queen and Country.

Meghan has already been learning a lot about the Royal Family from her fiancé Prince Harry, 33, and one lesson she will need to make sure she does not screw up is whom should she dip and bob to in the social minefield of curtsying.

Meghan will be expected to become swiftly au fait with who's above, and who's beneath, her and Harry. For his part, as guide and mentor, Harry will need to take her painstakingly through the protocol.

The Queen is a definite as is her sister-in-law The Duchess of Cambridge. But it is a no to Sophie, Countess of Wessex, as she too is a commoner. However the answer changes to yes if she is with her husband Prince Edward.

Princess Anne also gets a curtsy from Meghan, as she is the daughter of a sovereign, but not Zara Tindall, Anne's daughter, or Peter Phillips.

Eugenie and Beatrice are a yes, unless Meghan walks into the room with Harry, then no because he is a higher rank.

Any royal prince also merits a curtsy.

The current rules on who curtsies to who come from a document drawn up by the Queen's private secretary in 2005 and circulated among the family and courtiers only. Entitled 'Precedence Of The Royal Family To Be Observed At Court', its purpose was to clarify Camilla's place in the firm following her marriage to Charles.

Applicants on the citizenship test must prove they have a good knowledge of English and life in the UK, with most required to sit a test costing £50, which covers British values, traditions, history and everyday life.

She has been warmly welcomed into the Royal Family and her first royal duty with Prince Harry in Nottingham shortly after the couple's engagement was announced shows that Britain is already in the grips of Meghan mania.

Meghan has already announced she is giving up the vast amount of charity of work she has undertaken. But instead she will join William, Kate and Harry in the Heads Together mental health charity. She will also increase her charity work here in the UK and is expected to become patron of a number of organisations.

Photo Credits: Kathy Hutchins/Shutterstock.com



MEGHAN'S *Royal blood?*

American actress Meghan Markle already has a strong connection with Britain's Royal Family – even before she walks down the aisle with Prince Harry.

One of her ancestors Lord Hussey, 1st Baron Hussey of Sleaford, was executed by Henry VIII – Harry's 14th great-granduncle.

He was beheaded on the orders of Henry after falling out of favour with the king.

Meghan is Sleaford's relative 10 generations down the line.

And on her wedding day, Meghan and Harry are expected to be given a royal title as a wedding present from the Queen.

They are expected to be named as the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, which will give Meghan an HRH status.

It is one of the few remaining dukedoms that is available.

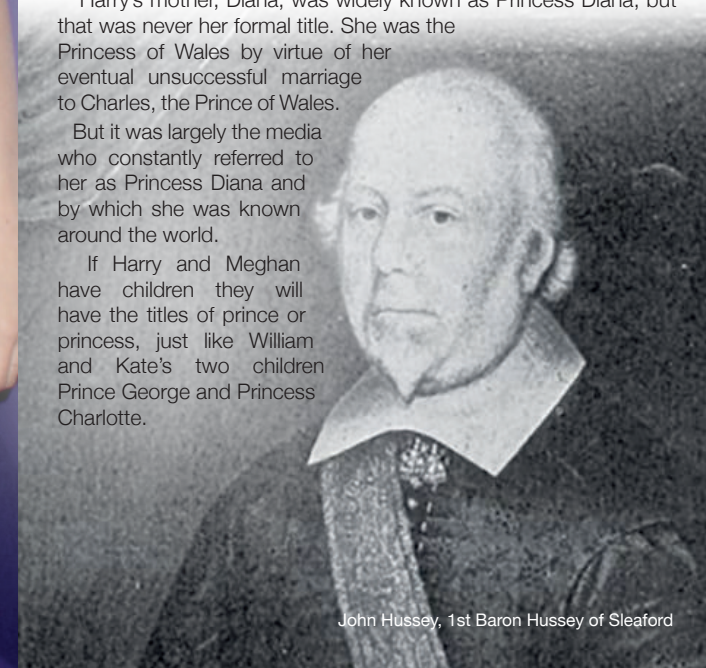
Meghan, 36, will not formally be known as Princess Meghan because she is not of royal birth. However, she will become Her Royal Highness Princess Henry of Wales when she marries Harry, whose proper first name is Henry.

Like Prince William's wife Kate, Meghan will be known as a duchess and not a princess – unless a future decision is taken to upgrade their titles to that of princess.

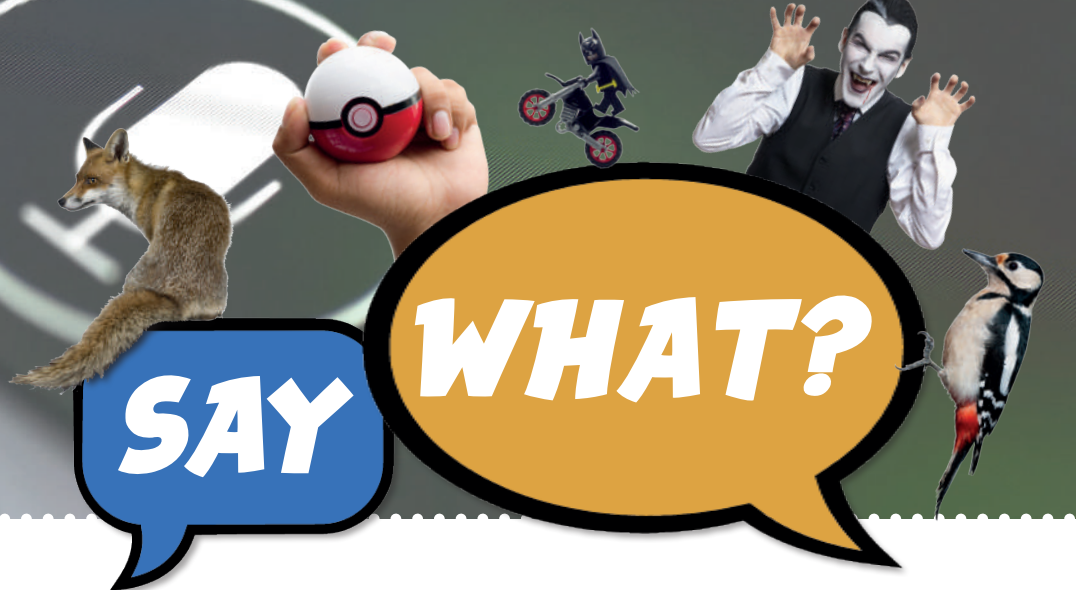
Harry's mother, Diana, was widely known as Princess Diana, but that was never her formal title. She was the Princess of Wales by virtue of her eventual unsuccessful marriage to Charles, the Prince of Wales.

But it was largely the media who constantly referred to her as Princess Diana and by which she was known around the world.

If Harry and Meghan have children they will have the titles of prince or princess, just like William and Kate's two children Prince George and Princess Charlotte.



John Hussey, 1st Baron Hussey of Sleaford



Banish loneliness with these hilarious – and sometimes insightful – questions and conversations you can have with your loyal virtual assistant Siri.

GAGS AND RIDDLES

- > Tell me a joke (keep asking for several different responses)
- > How much wood can a woodchuck chuck?
- > Why did the chicken cross the road?
- > Will pigs fly?
- > What does the fox say?

> Do you like Pokémon Go?

> Hey, Alexa

EXISTENTIAL MUSINGS

- > What is the meaning of life?
- > What does Siri mean?
- > How old are you?
- > When is the world going to end?
- > What is 0 divided by 0?

PURE ENTERTAINMENT

- > Can you sing? (ask repeatedly)
- > Can you beatbox?
- > Will you go on a date with me?
- > Do you have a girlfriend?
- > What do you want for Christmas?
- > What costume should I wear for Halloween?
- > Why do you vibrate?
- > What are you doing later?
- > I'm drunk
- > I'm naked

FILM AND TELEVISION

- > Are you her? (referring to Joaquin Phoenix's OS 'girlfriend' in the film *Her*)
- > Is Jon Snow dead? (*Game of Thrones*)
- > Have you seen *The Matrix*?
- > Hey Computer? (*The LEGO Batman Movie*)
- > What is *Inception* about?
- > Do you like *Blade Runner*?

TECHNOLOGY

- > Windows or Mac?
- > Do you follow the three laws of robotics?
- > Which is the best phone?



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FUTURE DESIGNS

Writer, broadcaster, curator and the undisputed king of European design – just who is Deyan Sudjic?

Early last year, London's Design Museum moved from its old home in the historic riverside location of Shad Thames to a new, glossily minimalist four-storey building in Kensington. Within a few weeks of opening, the museum had attracted more than a quarter of a million visitors – more or less the same number the old building managed to pull in over the course of a year.

But the newfound success of the Design Museum isn't just down to this shiny modernisation. Standing at the helm of the organisation for over a decade now has been writer and broadcaster Deyan Sudjic. And in that time, as well as releasing a hatful of academic books showcasing the length and breadth of the knowledge that has made him such a force in the world of design and architecture, Sudjic has taken the museum to new heights.

The son of Yugoslavian communists has managed to more than keep pace with the capital's fashionable design elite, all the while eschewing unnecessary pretentiousness. Having found his feet among the occasionally mismatched landmarks of London, Sudjic is determined to keep leading the way for British architecture and revolutionary design. Meanwhile, he has plenty to say about the way things are going.

"London is the nearest thing in Europe to Shanghai, the way the skyline has been utterly transformed, in a very heedless, mindless way," he told The Guardian last year. "It seems very curious that all the things that we took for granted as a terrible idea 25 years ago – like building skyscrapers in the middle of London – are suddenly seen as entirely normal. I think there are some buildings that do a lot of damage. No one, even its architect, seems to like the walkie-talkie. There are areas around Battersea Power Station that, when they're completed, the reaction's going to be shock."



Photo Credits: Ron Ellis/Shutterstock.com



HOME & DIY



HOME INVASION

The real truth about where the worst bacteria lingers in your home - hint: it's not your toilet.

KITCHEN SPONGE

Think your kitchen is clean? Think again. A recent study found that many kitchen sponges had more bacteria than the average toilet. This means that when you wipe all your kitchen counters with your trusty sponge, you're essentially swearing a neat layer of bacteria all over the kitchen. The solution? Either boil your sponges, or replace them regularly.

TOOTHBRUSH HOLDER

Ever thought about how your toothbrush holder is right by your toilet? Now factor in that every time you flush the toilet it sprays an aerosol of faecal bacterial up to an impressive six feet. Now wash your holder weekly with soap and hot water.

PET BOWL

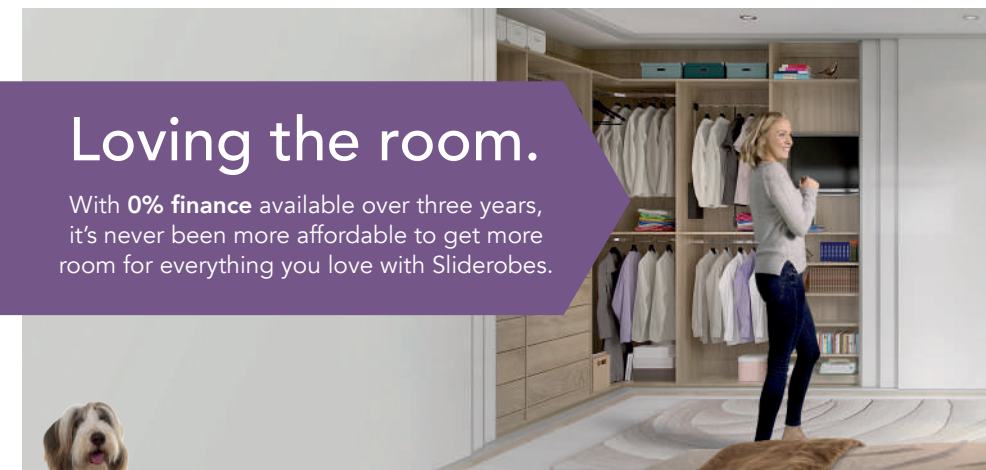
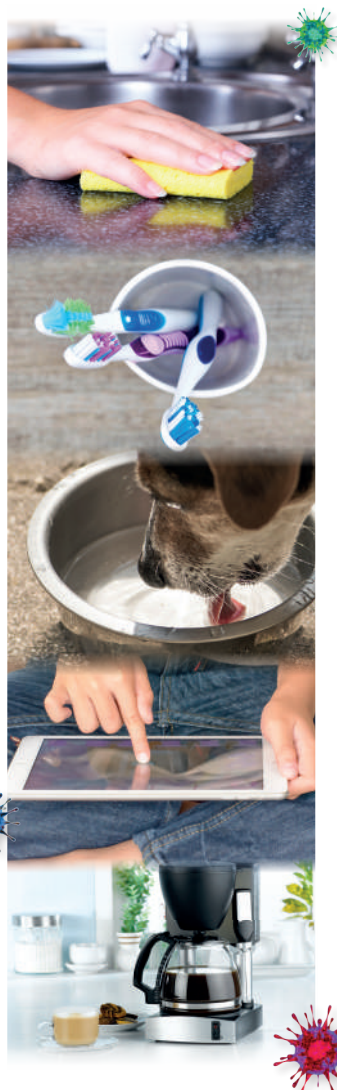
Poor poochie may have been drinking out of a veritable germ pond if his bowl has not been cleaned for a while. Studies have found bowls containing mould, yeast and coliform bacteria, so significantly improve your mutt's dining habits, and possibly the taste of his water, by banging the bowl in the dishwasher once a week.

PHONES AND TABLETS

They may be a brilliant innovation, but the constant tap tapping of sticky fingers on tablets and smartphones can foster a lively playground of pathogens. In fact, so insidious are these bacteria, that studies have shown devices harbouring everything from E. coli to salmonella, and some even had more bacteria than an average toilet seat; so wash your hands and wipe down your devices.

COFFEE MAKERS

The dark and damp water chambers of your coffee machine make a lovely home for microorganisms, which is why it's worth filling the reservoir with vinegar, which you can leave for around 30 minutes before running through. Be sure to brew a couple of lots of water before drinking though, as vinegar-flavoured coffee is almost as nauseating as the bugs that were there in the first place.



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When a flat roof is replaced there are Part L Building Regulations that the homeowner and the contractor must comply with. **Please call for free information regarding the Part L Law.** The homeowner should also be made aware that insurance companies will no longer accept any liability for any external or internal damage caused by a leaking flat roof which is over 10 years old.

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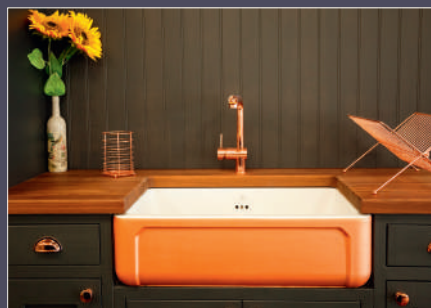
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Movers AND SHAKERS

Innovative, minimalist and timeless, it's easy to see why Shaker design is still popular

You may have noticed the recent revival of sparse and functional furniture that has become what Lawrence Llewelyn Bowen might describe as “du jour”. And perhaps you’ve given no second thought to its origins – err, the olden days? But those ubiquitous wood-panelled kitchen cabinets with round knobs, those ladder-back chairs, and even those wicker baskets you’ve been using for storage, all derived from a rather surprising place.

Founded in England in the 18th century, the Shakers were a break-off group from the Quakers (They were initially known as Shaking Quakers because of their ecstatic behaviour during worship services). At their peak in pre-Civil War America, there were around 6,000 believers, but despite these still relative conservative numbers, the Shakers have always been a source of fascination thanks to their lifelong vows of celibacy, female religious leadership, simple lifestyles, and furniture design.

Admirably unadorned, the Shakers preferred function over form, giving their designs a timeless and universal impression. This makes it easy to understand why the style has become so prevalent once again, for in a world where most things are popular for five minutes, Shaker design is essentially trend-proof. Also, as we live in smaller and smaller spaces, their innovations – such as hanging chairs on walls while they’re not being used and custom-built storage – are now regarded as ingenious modern-day interior solutions.

So if you fancy shaking it up, invest in a sturdy ladder-back chair, or wooden rocker, utilise your entry hallway with a storage bench and stylish peg rail, paint your old cabinets in a neutral grey or white palette, and get your hands on some proper handmade wicker baskets. In no time at all, you’ll be revelling in the simplicity and sense of practical peace you’ve created in your home (vow of celibacy not required).



HOME & DIY



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WALL TO Wall

Hanging wallpaper may seem simple, but with these tips and tricks you can fully ensure that every time you try, the end result is papered-over perfection.

Wallpaper is the easiest way to transform a room from bland to bold – but if you make mistakes, the end results can cause peeling or mismatching and will drive you up the wall.

Corners

Learning how to wallpaper corners is one of the trickiest parts of the process. The most important thing to avoid is making the mistake of trying to paper a corner with a single sheet. This will cause wrinkles and creases to develop quickly.

When you measure the wall, add an extra half-inch before you cut it and this excess paper will cover the corner. Then take a second sheet and paste it to the second wall, right inside the corner without overlapping. You'll need to make a cut at the right angle between the ceiling and wall – make sure the paper is as smooth as possible and the cut is as close to the corner as you can make it.

Sockets and Fittings

It's surprisingly easy to deal with electrical fittings and plug sockets when you're wallpapering. Firstly, make sure the power is switched off in the room, then paper over the fitting using your main sheet of wallpaper. Next, take a dry brush and lightly brush over the fitting.

Use a pencil to mark the centre of the fitting before drawing a line from the centre to each of the corners. Pierce a hole in the centre of the paper and cut along the lines. You will be left with four flaps. Unscrew the fitting from the wall and guide the flaps into this space, then re-attach the fitting so the paper is behind it.



HOME & DIY



LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood

Town council signs Community Special Constable

Billericay Town Council was the first to formally sign an agreement with Essex Police to fund a Community Special Constable. They became the first to sign during a meeting on December 14.

The council covered the cost of expenses of the volunteer officer – which is approximately £1,000 a year – which secured them a Special committed to policing their area.

The Community Special will be expected to carry out a minimum of 16 hours on duty a month.

They will work with the council to identify and tackle the issues in their neighbourhood.

Councillor Jim Devlin, chairman of Billericay Town Council, said: "Billericay is proud to be associated with Community Special Constables.

"We feel it is a valuable addition to the safety and security of the town and will provide residents with reassurance."

Supt Simon Anslow, who leads Essex Police's



Special Constabulary, said: "We are delighted that Billericay Town Council has become the first to sign the formal agreement to fund a Community Special Constable.

"Once recruited, the volunteer officer will be at the very heart of providing local, visible and accessible policing in Billericay and keeping their community safe."

Community group receives £2,000 grant

Billericay Community Garden was awarded £2,000 towards its development recently after the group's grant application to Basildon District Council was successful.

The grant is being used to provide tools for volunteers, equip an outdoor cooking area and install guttering and water butts.

Caroline Bannister, Treasurer of the Billericay Community Garden, said: "This money means so much to us, it's fantastic. I actually found out about the grant by attending one of Basildon Council's free funding workshops, which proved extremely beneficial.

"Our community garden is visited by young and old alike. It really is open to the whole community - whether you want to learn about gardening, share your knowledge or simply make new friends.

"The grant will make a huge difference by allowing us to recycle rainwater to improve sustainability, and install a greenhouse to support a longer planting season. I honestly can't thank Basildon Council enough."



Billericay Kitchens upsize showroom

Twenty five years ago, Billericay Kitchens was originally known as Oakland Interiors. Our business then consisted of one person – Jayson. Most of Jayson's work at the time was based in Hornchurch and Gidea Park. Naturally good at carpentry, he applied himself whilst in early education and because of his level of commitment he was installing hi-tech ceilings in London and Germany as a young man. On returning to England, for the next few years Jayson furthered his carpentry skills in kitchen installation and home projects. Jayson felt his ideas coupled with his skills would be enough to see him forward, so he gave up his kitchen installation employment and pushed forward on his own.

It wasn't long before his phone was busy and quickly his work increased. Over the next few years word of mouth eventually brought him further out to Billericay, Brentwood and the surrounding area.

It wasn't long before Billericay became our home, and shortly after, a small shop on the corner of Sun

Street became available and we took the next step. There birthed Billericay Kitchens. We had several good years at Sun Corner with many wonderful customers returning to us again and again for various projects including studies, bedrooms, bathrooms and home refurbishments. We no longer needed to advertise our business as recommendations were taking us forward.

Our work has now increased to include local builders in Shenfield, Hutton and the surrounding area. Due to this growth we have moved to a larger showroom so as to display our creative ideas in design, which also includes our 2018 products from Kuhlman German kitchens and Second Nature Kitchens. Both companies are renowned for their award-winning quality products and design and are leading the way with their vision in manufacture and engineering.

Although our business has grown we still pride ourselves on being a family run business, putting our customers and quality of works first.

Pair jailed after £100,000 of cocaine recovered

Two men have been jailed after police recovered cocaine with a value of around £100,000 and two firearms.

Officers found a kilo of cocaine in a carrier bag, the handguns, a silencer and more than 200 bullets when they carried out a search warrant in September last year.

The following month, Bradley Small was arrested in Valley Road, Billericay. Officers found a further kilo of cocaine and £35,000 cash at a property in the street and arrested Callum Zimble.

Zimble, from Billericay, was charged with possession of Class A drugs with intent to supply and possession of criminal property, relating to the money seized.

He admitted the charges in November and was recently sentenced to four-and-a-half years for the drugs and 12 months, to run concurrently, for the second charge.

Small, from Little Burstead, was charged with possession of cocaine with intent to supply, two counts of possession of a prohibited firearm, possession of a firearm without a certificate and possession of ammunition without a certificate.

He admitted the charges in December and was recently jailed for eight years in total.





Street Pastors in Billericay and Brentwood are continuing to serve their communities by being on the streets on their towns on Friday and Saturday nights looking out for anyone who is or becomes vulnerable. This can happen in a variety of ways and although sometimes it's down to life choices it isn't always. We spend a lot of time listening to people who are going through bad situations involving family life, work, finance and health. Although we don't take on our own clients, as we are not counsellors, we do signpost anyone who wants to receive further help on to specialist groups who are also ready to help.

During 2018 we will be happy to launch new initiatives in other towns that don't have Street Pastors and we are also launching new projects of School, Rail and Response Pastors. Through these additional projects we seek to help out on the railways, schools and also in communities where an incident has occurred that causes unrest or an unhappy emotion in that area. We will seek to deploy in our easily recognisable uniforms, in groups

of three, to offer a listening ear, care and help to people that may be going through emotional stress due to death or injury or for some other form of trauma impacting them and their neighbours.

We are currently very busy organising our next training schedule for those new recruits to the various teams. We train in roles and responsibilities of a Street Pastor under the Charity Ascension Trust. We also train in first aid, safeguarding children, youth, education, good news, mental health, police, alcohol and drugs. This is to equip our volunteers to stay in touch with modern day culture. All Street Pastors are over 18, in attendance of their local Christian church for at least one year, DBS checked and willing to train and volunteer to go out late at night until 3am.

We are on social media on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram or have various web pages if anyone wants to find out more about us or wants to volunteer. Why not follow us or email Billericay@Streetpastors.org.uk to organise a shadow patrol with one of our teams to find out for yourself what we do and why.

Racing driver looking for sponsorship



Photo credit: James Roberts Photography

A young racing driver from Billericay is looking for sponsorship after being given the opportunity to compete in this year's VW Cup Championship as a professional driver.

To compete, Danny Harrison needs sponsorship. Danny started racing go-karts at Brentwood Karting at eight years old. He progressed to the British Karting Championship Super 1 and Formula Kart Stars.

At the age of 16 he became the youngest on the grid of the Senior Championship. He also holds the national lap records in both karting and cars.

Danny, who is now 17 years old, has already secured £30,000 of the £55,000 required to compete in the VW Cup Championship. Different packages to support all budgets can be arranged including car graphics, race tickets, hot laps and ongoing media exposure.

To sponsor Danny please contact David or Danny Harrison by emailing dharrison_uk2000@yahoo.com or calling 07802 498989.



BILLERICAY TOWN FC

Blues go back to school

Players and staff at Billericay Town went back to school last month for another successful visit as part of the club's Schools in the Community program.

The program was put together by Billericay Town CEO Paul Webster for a number of reasons. He explained: "The main ones being the understanding that the children in Essex are our future and the staff and players at the club recognise their responsibilities as role models. The program itself involves players and senior staff going into schools in the Essex area and performing assemblies for the children. The subjects we talk about are nutrition and fitness, aspirations in life and the importance of keeping up with your education, selflessness as opposed to selfishness and bullying."

After the main session, Paul and the players opened up a question and answer session to the children where they could ask any questions to the players.

He said: "After this is finished we give tickets to the whole school and their parents to come to a game, have a stadium tour and be entertained for the whole afternoon by us. We are receiving Quilters School on January 20 for our match against Harrow Borough and will be letting 750 parents and children in free of charge."

Paul explained why he believes the program is vitally important.

He commented: "As role models we have a debt to pay to the children in the community and hopefully this gesture goes some way to repay it."

Billericay Town FC also visited Beehive Lane Primary School in Great Baddow recently.



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Spring clean YOUR GARDEN



GARDENING

Now is the time of year when things really start to get busy in the garden. The worst of the weather is (usually) behind us and the days are getting longer. Frosts and strong winds can still be a hazard, but it is time to put in lots of preparation for the months ahead.

Spring clean

Get rid of any weeds which have cropped up in recent months to ensure they don't get out of hand and dig over your beds. Also cut back overgrown and non-flowering shrubs. Deadhead daffodils and hydrangeas as the flowers finish and let the foliage die back naturally. If you have a lawn it's also time to mow it to ensure a greener, denser patch in the summer. It is an ideal time for roses to be pruned, removing any damaged, dead or diseased stems.

Prepare and plant

Once you have dug over your flower beds, add a layer of compost or well-rotted manure. Then it

is time to think about planting - if you plan it well enough you can have a continuous crop of flowers in the summer months.

Hardy annuals and perennials such as delphiniums can be sown to provide a burst of colour. It is also time to plant summer-flowering bulbs such as gladiolus, lilies and ranunculus.

Sweet peas, broad beans and first salads can be planted, but will need to be protected from mice and bad weather with cloches.

Plant out onions and shallot sets and cover with netting to prevent birds pulling them free. Plant the first potatoes.

In the greenhouse

If you have a greenhouse why not sow cucumbers, tomatoes, aubergines, celery and peppers, and plant strawberry runners in hanging baskets.



Finding his



Adored by the nation, particularly the ladies, popstar Olly Murs made his debut on ITV's *The Voice* recently.

When Olly finished second to Joe McElderry on season six of *The X Factor*, it was assumed that the show's winner would be the one to go on to have the triumphant career. And yet, eight years later it is Murs who is still wowing us, not just in the charts, but on television too where he has carved out quite the niche for himself as a chatty and charismatic cheeky chappy.

It's not hard to spot what the Essex lad's appeal is. Not only is the 33-year-old effortlessly charming, talented and extremely handsome, he also has a certain down-to-earth appeal – an ability to make everyone feel they'd quite like to be best mates with the *Heart Skips a Beat* crooner.

Certainly for his latest role as a coach on ITV's *The Voice*, his likeability and warmth will be vital as he nurtures and guides his musical proteges to success. Filling the spot of Gavin Rossdale (who left after just one season) Murs will take his spinning chair next to fellow coaches Sir Tom Jones, will.i.am and Jennifer Hudson.

Prior to making his *Voice* debut, Murs admitted to feeling the pressure, but said the team had been extremely welcoming. "When I first started I was really nervous to be the new member - it is like being in a new class at a new school with all new kids. I have got all these new people to meet and they all know each other, and they have got to get to know me. Will they like me or not? I don't know, but I have settled in brilliantly."

Having worked as a presenter both on the *Xtra Factor* and the *X Factor*, it's certainly familiar territory for Murs, though let's hope he doesn't make any howling reality 'big reveal' errors - cue like Prue Leith who last year accidentally tweeted *The Great British Bake Off* winner before the final was aired.

Thankfully, Murs is likely to exercise caution on social media following his overreaction at the Oxford Circus tube incident last November where a scuffle on a platform led to mass stampedes and panic.

"F***, everyone get out of Selfridges now gun shots!! I'm inside," posted

Murs to his seven million Twitter followers, before

adding, "Evacuating store now! F*** heart is pounding." As there turned out to be no gunshots, or any specific reason for the panic, Murs was mercilessly mocked for his overreaction, and even scolded by Piers Morgan for fuelling the hysteria.

Still, such a nervous disposition doesn't seem to have affected his appeal with the ladies, and in the last few months alone Murs has been romantically linked to Melanie Sykes, *Love Island*'s Amber Davies and Capital Xtra DJ Emma Conybeare. Rumour has it the *Dear Darlin'* singer hasn't found his true love yet, so let's hope the coming months bring huge success both on and off screen for everyone's favourite runner-up.



WHEN THE HOUSE OF CARDS CAME CRASHING DOWN

As Harvey Weinstein takes his ungracious exit from the inner sanctum of the movie world's elite, he seems to be taking many others with him – even on this side of the Atlantic – but where will this modern-day sex scandal end?

On Thursday, October 5, *The New York Times* published a story detailing decades of allegations of sexual harassment against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein.

In an official apology, the 65-year-old admitted that he had “caused a lot of pain”, but vehemently denies having non-consensual sex with any of those named. Stars of the magnitude including Angelina Jolie and Gwyneth Paltrow came forward to speak out against Weinstein and other men in power, unleashing a flood of accusations.

Those who know the film industry are not surprised, for the Hollywood casting couch is legendary. But these powerful sexual predators do not prey solely on the beautiful and famous; nor do they target just females, as actor Anthony Rapp proved when he accused Kevin Spacey, one of Hollywood's most decorated actors, of sexually assaulting him when he was just 14 years old.

The claim prompted Spacey to come out publicly as gay for the first time, sparking criticism for the inappropriate timing of his announcement as a further wave of accusations came forward from

young, vulnerable men. Some are asking why victims didn't speak out sooner, yet quickly we must remind ourselves of the shame and fear that still surrounds sexual abuse.

Mostly though, this is a story about power. Weinstein's wealth and status allowed him to hush those he hurt for fear he would do irreparable damage to their careers, and those who dared speak out were kept at bay by lawyers, often by offering thousands in compensation. Actress Rose McGowan claims she turned down a \$1million (£760,000) offer from Weinstein in return for her silence.

The red carpet at the Golden Globes was dominated by one colour – black. This was to show support of Time Up's movement, standing in solidarity with victims of sexual assault and harassment. Actresses Nicole Kidman, Angelina Jolie and Emma Stone were among those to walk the red carpet in the colour.

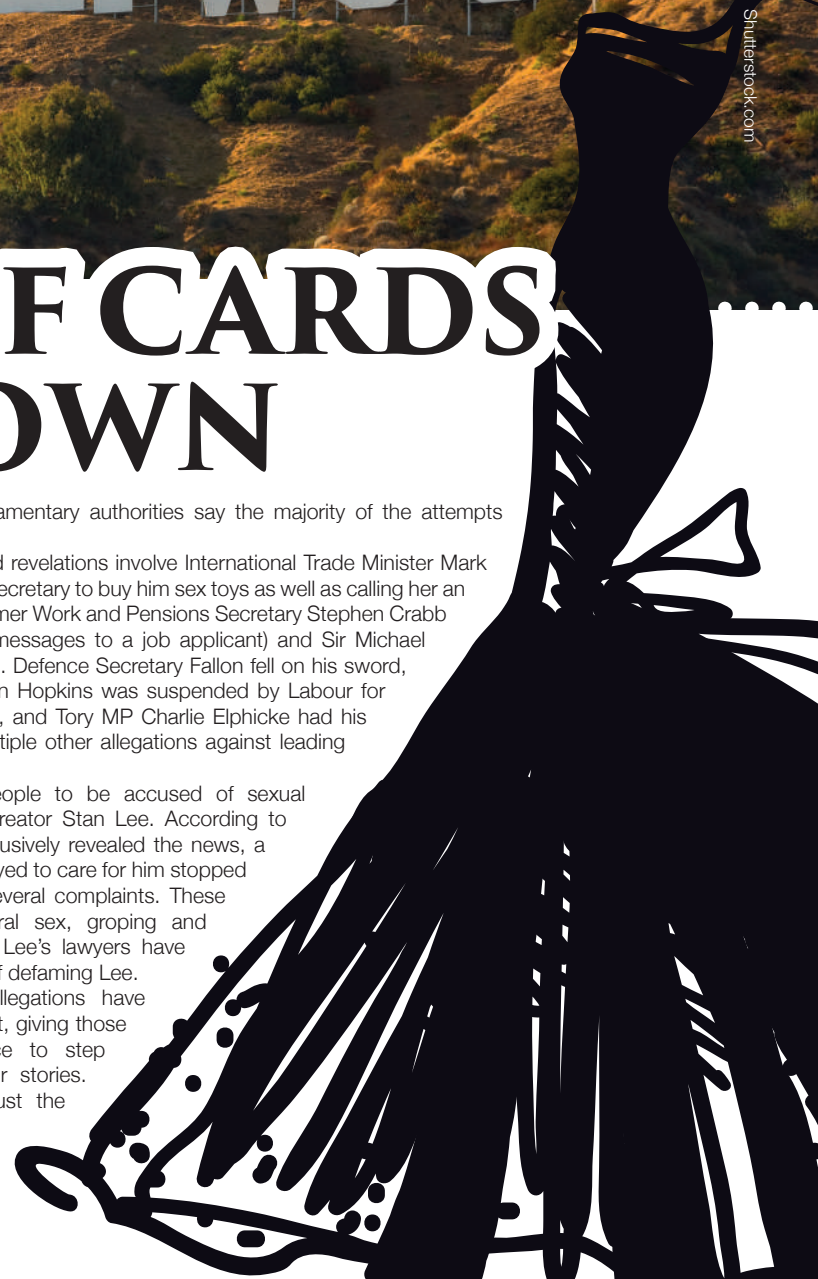
It's not just Hollywood actors who have been subject to allegations. Several MPs, including a minister, have also been accused of inappropriate behaviour towards young women. In January 2018, it was revealed under a Freedom of Information request by the Press Association that there have been more than 24,000 attempts to access pornographic websites in Parliament since the

election. However, parliamentary authorities say the majority of the attempts were not deliberate.

Some of the publicised revelations involve International Trade Minister Mark Garnier (who asked his secretary to buy him sex toys as well as calling her an inappropriate name), former Work and Pensions Secretary Stephen Crabb (who sent explicit text messages to a job applicant) and Sir Michael Fallon (multiple offences). Defence Secretary Fallon fell on his sword, Commons veteran Kelvin Hopkins was suspended by Labour for “inappropriate touching”, and Tory MP Charlie Elphicke had his whip suspended as multiple other allegations against leading political figures surfaced.

One of the latest people to be accused of sexual harassment is *Marvel* creator Stan Lee. According to the *Daily Mail*, who exclusively revealed the news, a nursing company employed to care for him stopped working for him after several complaints. These included demanding oral sex, groping and walking around naked. Lee's lawyers have accused the company of defaming Lee.

It seems the first allegations have caused a snowball effect, giving those affected the confidence to step forward and share their stories. Many believe this is just the beginning and, as recent months show, it seems that is true.





One-Pan Wonder

Chorizo & Butter Bean Stew

One-pan wonders. We all love these types of recipes, where you can create a filling sumptuous meal using only one pan. There's something incredibly satisfying about putting all the ingredients into one pan and leaving them to fuse together into a something that's bursting with flavour. This recipe is no exception a hearty and delicious one-pan wonder.

Serves 4 | 40 minutes | Easy

INGREDIENTS:

- ▶ 150g chorizo, chopped into slices
- ▶ 1 onion, peeled and chopped
- ▶ 1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
- ▶ 2tsp rosemary
- ▶ 2tsp sweet or hot smoked paprika
- ▶ 1x400g tin of chopped tomatoes

- ▶ 2 x400g tins of butter beans, drained
- ▶ 230g roasted red peppers, sliced
- ▶ Crusty bread to serve

METHOD:

Using a deep-based frying pan or a large casserole dish, fry the chorizo over a medium heat for a couple of minutes. Be careful not to overcook them. Remove from the pan using a slotted spoon, and put them to one side on a plate. Add the onion to the pan and fry until they are soft and golden.

Add the garlic, rosemary and paprika. Fry for another minute and then add the peppers, chopped tomatoes and beans. Take the tomato tin, half fill with water and add to the pan. Simmer this for 15-20 minutes until the stew thickens. Then, return the chorizo to the pan and warm through for a few more minutes while you toast the bread. Spoon the stew over the bread and dig in.

Recipe credit: Rebecca Heslop



Experience a real Mediterranean welcome

Just off from the main buzz of Billericay High Street sits this welcome new restaurant serving traditional Turkish cuisine.

What sets Mirabel apart from the other Turkish restaurants popping up across Essex is it's laid back and family friendly atmosphere. There is no stuffiness and you immediately feel welcome.

The setting is perfect for large groups as well as being intimate enough to enjoy great food and company for couples, as well as families.

Serving up large portions of all the favourite Turkish dishes including Chicken Shish, Moussaka

and Iskender, there is sure to be something for everyone.

There is an extensive drinks and cocktail menu, and the restaurant welcomes diners to enjoy the bar after their meal – where of a weekend there is a DJ and belly dancers for a real Mediterranean feel!

Mirabel would be the perfect place to treat someone special for Valentine's day, or to dine out with the family for Mother's day.



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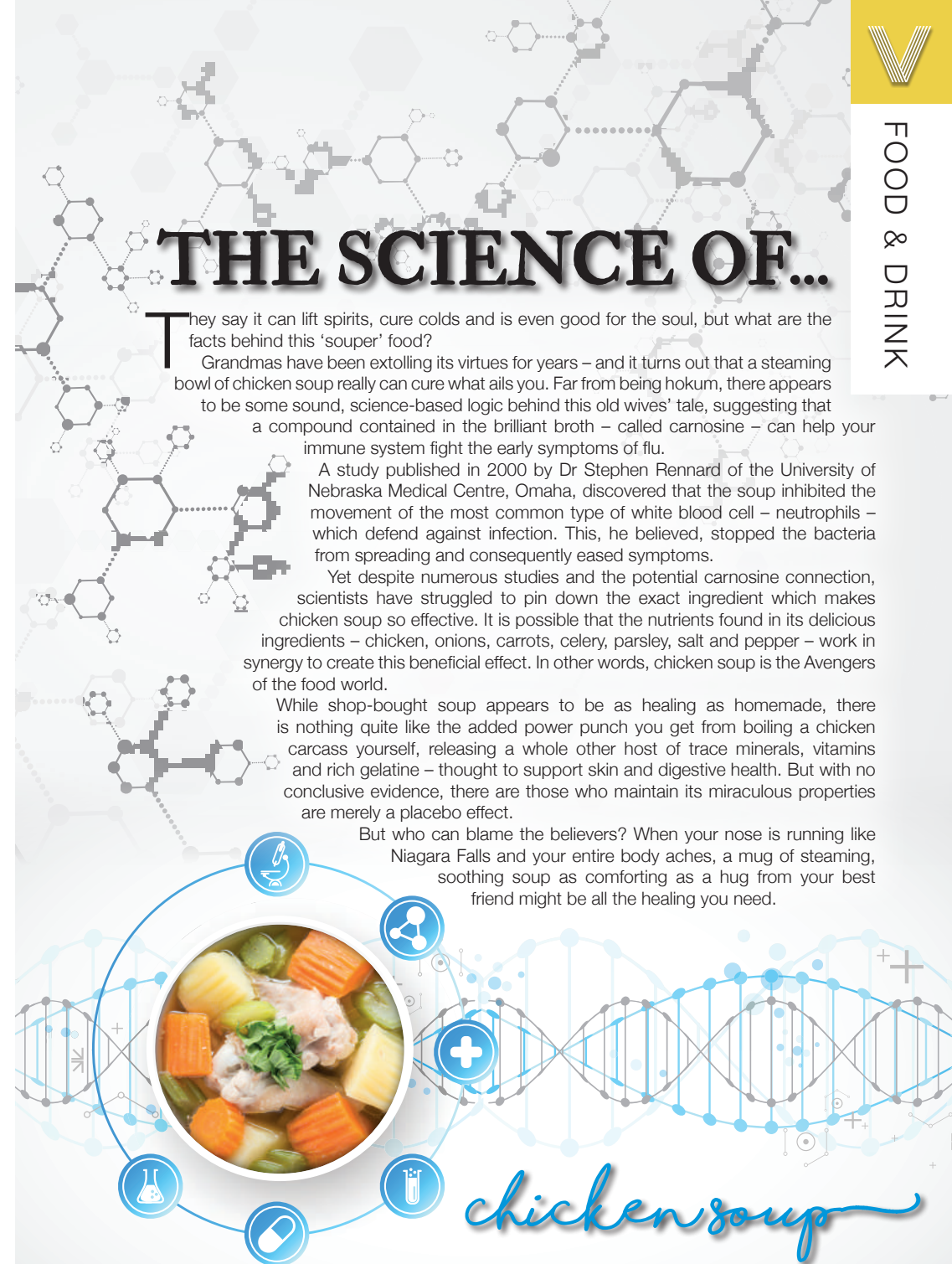
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LUNCH

A LA CARTE

SUNDAY



THE SCIENCE OF...

They say it can lift spirits, cure colds and is even good for the soul, but what are the facts behind this 'souper' food?

Grandmas have been extolling its virtues for years – and it turns out that a steaming bowl of chicken soup really can cure what ails you. Far from being hokum, there appears to be some sound, science-based logic behind this old wives' tale, suggesting that a compound contained in the brilliant broth – called *carnosine* – can help your immune system fight the early symptoms of flu.

A study published in 2000 by Dr Stephen Rennard of the University of Nebraska Medical Centre, Omaha, discovered that the soup inhibited the movement of the most common type of white blood cell – neutrophils – which defend against infection. This, he believed, stopped the bacteria from spreading and consequently eased symptoms.

Yet despite numerous studies and the potential *carnosine* connection, scientists have struggled to pin down the exact ingredient which makes chicken soup so effective. It is possible that the nutrients found in its delicious ingredients – chicken, onions, carrots, celery, parsley, salt and pepper – work in synergy to create this beneficial effect. In other words, chicken soup is the Avengers of the food world.

While shop-bought soup appears to be as healing as homemade, there is nothing quite like the added power punch you get from boiling a chicken carcass yourself, releasing a whole other host of trace minerals, vitamins and rich gelatine – thought to support skin and digestive health. But with no conclusive evidence, there are those who maintain its miraculous properties are merely a placebo effect.

But who can blame the believers? When your nose is running like Niagara Falls and your entire body aches, a mug of steaming, soothing soup as comforting as a hug from your best friend might be all the healing you need.

chicken soup

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BOXING MASH-UPS

Boxing combined with Pilates? Check. Boxing combined with Barre (ballet)? Check. Virtual boxing? Yup, thanks to Boxx Method, an online workout programme that claims to be "the world's first virtual boxing experience". Boom.

BODY WEIGHT TRAINING

This trend is all about getting back to basics as you use your own body weight to build strength. Part of the reason for its burgeoning popularity is that it requires no equipment and can be performed anywhere, meaning you can finally be that weirdo in the office.

NOVELTY YOGA

It may be one of the most ancient forms of exercise, but there are too many modern incarnations to

count. There's 'couples' yoga', said to strengthen your bond with each other; 'beer yoga' (performed down the boozer with a beer in hand, and founded in Germany); 'laughter yoga' and even 'goat yoga', which is where you practise outside with... goats. Just keep an eye on your yoga mat.

ROPES

It may sound a bit kinky to the exercise lingo layman, but working out with weighted ropes is going to become even more popular in 2018, and it's not hard to see why when you consider the health benefits. Ropes not only work every muscle in your body, they also give you a cardiovascular workout and improve co-ordination. You'll knot find a more thorough workout.

NAPPING

Napercise is already a 'class' you can take at David Lloyd Gyms, whereby you lie on a single bed in a comfortably-heated room with soothing sounds piped out. It is said to burn calories while you sleep and is, therefore, the perfect workout. Yawn...



NO SWEAT?

Understanding why we sweat and uncovering the myths behind how it aids toxin release and weight loss.

Sweating is having its moment. From Bikram yoga classes to infra-red saunas and even cardio classes in heated studios, it has never been cooler to sweat. But while devotees of these practices extol the many virtues of getting hot and steamy – which include accelerated weight loss, improved flexibility and serious detoxification – few of these claims appear to be rooted in science.

“Sweating out the toxins” is one phrase often bandied about by perspiring yogis, but while it’s nice to imagine your pores opening up and all matter of filth and unwanted fat pouring forth, the truth is that this really isn’t the purpose of sweat at all. The function of sweat is to cool your body down when it is overheated. The cause of sweat does not alter its content, so whether you’re slogging out on a 5k run or panicking prior to a big presentation, it will always predominantly consist of

water with traces of minerals.

Another belief is that sweating in excess will miraculously aid weight loss. It won’t. Weigh yourself before and after a class or sauna and you may very well have lost weight, but most of this will again just be water.

But this isn’t to say there aren’t benefits from sweating. It is still an effective way to purify pores, so providing you cleanse and moisturise properly afterwards, you will get glowing skin. Sweating also encourages you to drink lots of water, which will rehydrate your body and push blood through your organs (like your liver and kidneys, which take care of all your detoxification) – helping you to think and function better.

Finally, a heated environment does help improve flexibility and promote relaxation, meaning you are more likely to enjoy a workout class and want to return. This means that over time you will build muscle and lose weight, leading to a happier, healthier you.



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WHAT'S ON

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Billericay Methodist Church, Western Road, Billericay, CM12 9DT

February 10, 12.30pm – 1.30pm

A snack lunch and a drink for £4.50. The proceeds are going towards local multiple sclerosis therapy. There is no need to book.

The Friends of Lake Meadows Gardening Group

Lake Meadows, Redford Crescent, Billericay, CM12 0BW

Every Tuesday morning at 9.30am



The Friends of Lake Meadows is a small local charity run by local Billericay residents, working with Basildon Borough Council Parks team and Billericay Town Council, to care for our beautiful park.

We have a gardening group every Tuesday morning, who look after all the garden areas and every month we hold a working party to do other jobs in the park.

We always welcome new members and hope more park users will consider joining the Friends.

Take a look at our website www.lakemeadows.org.uk where you will also find a membership form, or contact us via secretary@lakemeadows.org.uk or ring 07843 860 135.

Connie Lush Band

Barleyland Sports and Leisure Club, Barleylands Road, Billericay, CM11 2UF

February 17, 7.30pm

Connie has been recognised as one of the finest blues singers in the UK today.

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Tickets available from www.ticketsource.co.uk/boxoffice/select/wmkLiEROEuVa

Gone Too Soon Bereavement Support Group

Reids, 66 - 68 Laindon Road, Billericay, CM12 9LD

February 19, 7pm – 9pm

Gone Too Soon is a monthly bereavement support group for parents who have lost a son or daughter. During the meetings there will be at least one counsellor to facilitate and support the sessions. For more information, please contact Linda on 07387 805406 or email lyn-currie@hotmail.co.uk

Billericay Artisan Market

WI Hall, St Ediths Lane, Billericay, CM12 9BU

March 3, 9.30am – 12.30pm



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FASHION

En Vogue

Everything you need to know about Edward Enninful, *Vogue's* new head honcho

When editor-in-chief Alexandra Shulman announced her departure from *Vogue* just over a year ago after a quarter of a century in the role, tongues were instantly wagging over who would land what is arguably the most coveted post in British fashion. Some saw it as a chance to shake up the old guard; an opportunity to move the magazine into more diverse, bold and modern territory. And when it was revealed that avant-garde visionary Edward Enninful would be filling Shulman's stylish shoes, it was clear the masses had a real personality on their hands.

The first black male editor at the magazine, charismatic Enninful was making waves before he'd even stepped into *Vogue's* offices, but one look at his impressive CV proves his appointment was nothing to do with controversy, and all to do with merit.

Having been appointed fashion director of cutting-edge culture tome *i-D* in 1991 (at the age of just 18), Enninful worked extensively with both American and Italian *Vogues* throughout the noughties, and his most recent role as creative and fashion director at America's *W* Magazine saw his stock continue to rise.

Born in Ghana, Enninful emigrated to London's Ladbrooke Grove with his parents and five siblings when he was young. A working-class background combined with the veritable melting pot that was West London in the early Seventies, were reflected in his debut edition of *Vogue* which was released last November. Starring mixed-race British model and feminist activist Adwoa Aboah on its cover, the 'Diverse' issue paid tribute to Britain's great and eclectic heritage, and featured a broad array of talent, along with high-end couture alongside urban streetstyle.

In short, if Enninful keeps things original and innovative, we can expect *Vogue* to become an entirely different animal – cooler, all-encompassing and more thought-provoking – by the decade's close.



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We can carry out basic gardening, basic cleaning, check on your home whilst you are on holiday. We can stay in for packages too if you know you will not be available for your delivery slot. Other services also include, ironing, day trips, accompaniment to appointments, picking up prescriptions as well as shopping and odd jobs around the house. We can also offer dog walking services & can check on any other furry friends you may have throughout your working day or whilst you are on holiday.

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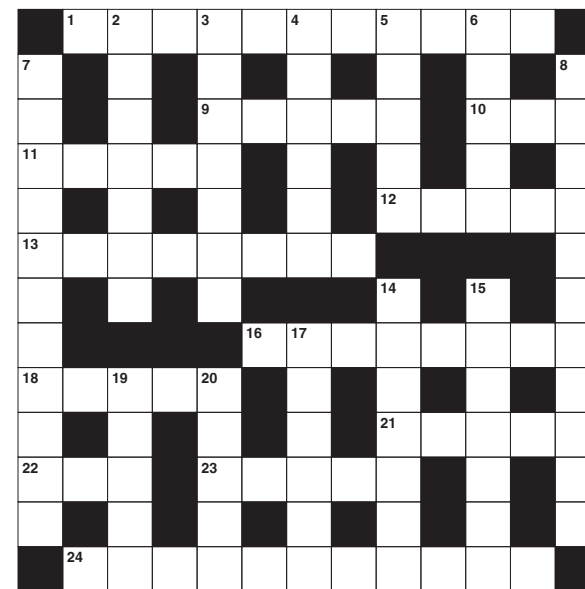
Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4

ACROSS

1. Showy (11)
9. Judged (5)
10. Net (anag) (3)
11. In a slow tempo (of music) (5)
12. Speak without preparation (2-3)
13. Made with purpose; planned (8)
16. Sailing vessel (8)
18. Speaks (5)
21. Eighth Greek letter (5)
22. Sphere or globe (3)
23. The Norwegian language (5)
24. Angry dispute (11)

DOWN

2. Return to a former state (7)
3. From beginning to end (7)
4. Indigenous (6)
5. Country in southern Asia (5)
6. Up to the time when (5)
7. Act of saying farewell (11)
8. Inattentive (11)
14. Omen (7)
15. Raging fire (7)
17. ____ acid: lemon juice constituent (6)



19. Published false statement (5)
20. From that time (5)

DID YOU KNOW

- ▶ M&M's chocolate stands for the initials of its inventors Mars and Murrie
- ▶ Iceland consumes more Coca Cola than any other country
- ▶ Nintendo first produced playing cards
- ▶ Cheerios cereal was originally called Cheerioats
- ▶ Hilton was the first international hotel chain
- ▶ Porsche also builds tractors
- ▶ The first product to have a barcode was Wrigley's gum
- ▶ There are 22 stars in the Paramount logo

SUDOKU

	4						1
				4		6	2
			3			5	7
		6	4		7		
		1		8		4	
			5		9	1	
5		7			4		
2		8		7			
6							3



KIDS

BEAT the Bugs

How to stop those nasty viruses that kids pick up at School from thriving.

It may be near impossible to stop your little one from accumulating all manner of gruesome gremlins and vile viruses while at school – unless you consider the Jake Gyllenhaal film *Bubble Boy* as a serious parenting option - but you can teach them how to prevent the spreading of germs once they've brought them home.

When it comes to kids, remember that seeing is believing. Getting a five-year-old to understand that when he or she sneezes a spray of up to 100,000 bacteria rises in the air at 100mph, is not going to be an easy task, so it's worth trying to find a fun way to help them understand the basics.

A good way to do this is to prepare some

hand sanitising gel with edible glitter or lustre dust in, then play a game telling them you've given them the dreaded lurgy (the edible glitter or lustre dust). This visual cue will help them appreciate how widespread bacteria are, and also means that when they wash their hands they must clean them really well to be rid of all the edible glitter or lustre dust.

It's also good to educate your child using books and song. *A Germ's Journey* by Dr Katie Laird and *What Are Germs?* by Katie Daynes make for clever and entertaining reads, while Carex have a great selection of hand washing songs you can download from their website for free.

Consider too really simple persuasive techniques, such as buying a hand soap which smells or looks great.

Finally, gentle reminders can never hurt when trying to get your little one into a good

habit. Teaching them to blow their own nose properly, wash hands frequently and cover their mouth when they sneeze will not only save the rest of your family from the never-ending onslaught of illness, it will also serve them well in the future.

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Naughty NUMBER PLATES

WHY THE DVLA BANNED OVER 300 NUMBER PLATES...

It must be tough for the folks at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). Not only do they shoulder the responsibility of protecting us from number plates which could be deemed offensive or salacious, they even have to employ censors who meet every six months – to coincide with the bi-annual release of new numbers – to ensure that the more creative motorist doesn't cruise around with 'PE12 VRT' emblazoned on their Maserati.

Which is why on August 25, in a bid to get ahead of the game, the Swansea-based agency released a list of 300 number plates which would be banned when the '67' vehicle registrations came into effect the following week. Among them were the more blatantly offensive configurations – like MU67 DER, BU67 GER, DO67 GER, BA67 ARD, MU67 GER, and HU67 WLY – along with more cryptic ones like NO67 DAD, NO67 FUN, NO67 MUM and NO67 SON that start with the word NO and end with another complete three-letter word (where the 67 is irrelevant).

The DVLA maintains that it has a responsibility to ensure plates do not "cause upset or offence", which is why religious words like JE55US and AL14LAH are banned too – although in June the agency admitted that JH11 HAD had "slipped through the net". But deciding what can be deemed 'offensive' is surely the hardest job of all, and in the past AD13 CTS, PR15 SON and AL60 POP have all been withheld. One thing's for sure: those poor censors will be putting in some serious overtime when the 69 registrations are released in 2020...

Understanding the lingo:

- A 6 can look like a 'G' or an 'S'
- A 7 can be read as a 'T' or an 'L'
- The number 67 can be seen by some as an 'R'

PE12 VRT

MU67 DER

NO67 FUN

JE55US

JH11 HAD

PR15 SON



MOTORING



Photo Credit: Phil Rees/REX/Shutterstock

He's the most decorated player in the history of the game, and now former Manchester United legend Ryan Giggs is getting a chance to make a name for himself on the game's biggest stage – international football – as the newly unveiled manager of the Wales national team.

When you consider Ryan Giggs' illustrious career on the pitch, it's almost impossible to envisage the Welsh winger in any other colour than the red of Manchester United. But until the age of 14, Giggs was signed to the youth academy of bitter cross-city rivals Manchester City – and could well have ended up as a club legend in sky blue.

But thankfully for Red Devils fans, Giggs' switch to Old Trafford proved the catalyst for a career that seemed to specialise in record-breaking achievements. After making his professional debut in 1991, Giggs became an integral part of the so-called 'Class of '92', alongside stars such as David Beckham, Gary Neville and Paul Scholes.

By 1999, this core of home-grown talent had proved crucial to Manchester United's most successful season to date – with Giggs, of course, scoring one of the goals of the decade with an electric, mazy run against Arsene Wenger's formerly invincible Arsenal. A goal of brilliance and perfection not matched by the goal celebration.

The treble of Premier League, FA Cup and UEFA Champions League victories won that year was a first in British footballing history, and also an indicator of the rewards Giggs' future career was to hold.

While teammates came and went, Giggs proved to be a one-club man through and through. By the time of his retirement in 2011, he was United's record appearance maker, having stepped onto the pitch a colossal 963 times for the Red Devils. Add to that becoming both the club's and the Premier League's record assist maker, with 271, his remarkable tally of 13 Premier League titles, four FA Cup wins, three League Cup win triumphs, two UEFA Champions League winner medals, a FIFA Club World Cup gong, Intercontinental and UEFA Super Cup success, plus nine FA Community Shield

victories, and Giggs is the most decorated individual ever to grace the professional pitch.

Much has been made of United's plight since the incredible reign of Sir Alex Ferguson came to an end. For his part, Giggs remained an important member of the club as assistant manager to both David Moyes and Louis Van Gaal, who both oversaw challenging transitions at Old Trafford. There was even a brief taste of the top job too, before current incumbent Jose Mourinho came to the Theatre of Dreams with his own tried and tested backroom staff.

In the meantime, the Welshman has busied himself in the world of business – most notably alongside Gary Neville with a Manchester-based hospitality company, and as a part-owner of ambitious National League North team Salford City.

Thoughts of management were clearly never far from his mind though, and the former captain's ambitions of taking up a permanent spot in the dugout were finally realised recently when he was named as the new manager of the Welsh national team, for whom he appeared 64 times. As successor to Chris Coleman, who guided Wales to the semi-finals of Euro 2016, Giggs already

has some large boots to fill. But if successful,

surely a return to the Old Trafford managerial set-up won't be far from his mind.



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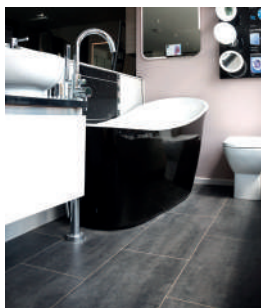
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