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Editor's notes...



Nik Allen, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION**Billericay. It's a special edition this month as it marks our first birthday. It seems like only last week when I was ringing around potential advertisers telling them about a great new free monthly magazine for people in Billericay. I'm absolutely delighted the way the magazine has been received by readers and advertisers. Going into any new venture is always nervy (I also got married last year) but I'm a big believer that hard work and doing the right thing always pays off. The feedback we get is usually positive and I think that's testimony to the hard work we put in. I'd like to thank all of our readers for getting involved with the magazine and sharing their news, views and opinions. Of course, a massive thank you goes to our advertisers who made this magazine possible and whose ongoing support has helped **VISION**Billericay thrive.

In local news this month, Billericay First Responders are raising money to install more life-saving defibrillators, two men have been jailed for the rape of a 12-year-old girl and we hear from the Street Pastors.

I hope you enjoy reading this month's edition of **VISION**Billericay.

Nik

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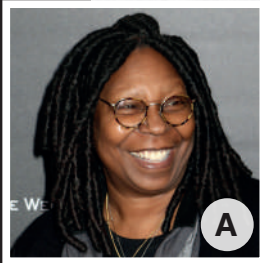


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DOWN
1. ALPHA AN DOMEGA, 2. MUNCH, 4. RUSSIA, 5. DETERMINABLE, 6. CHAINED, 7. SELF-EVIDENTLY, 8. CHEERFULNESS, 14. INFLAME, 16. POTATO, 18. REESE

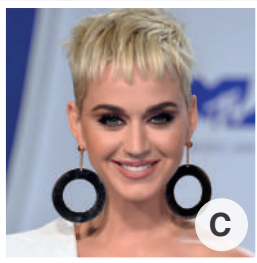
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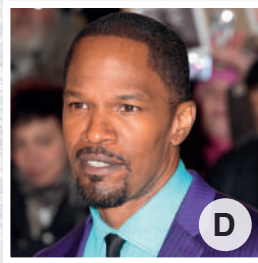
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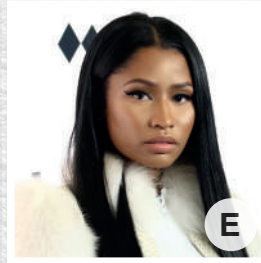
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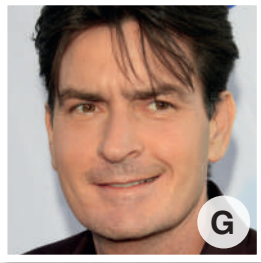
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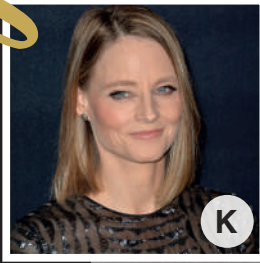
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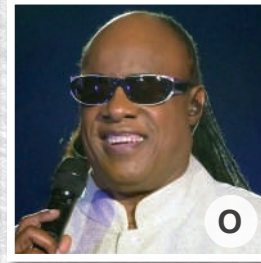
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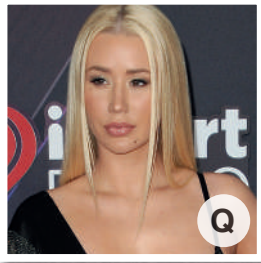
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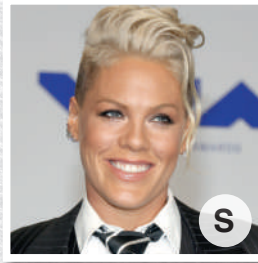
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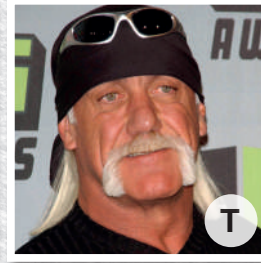
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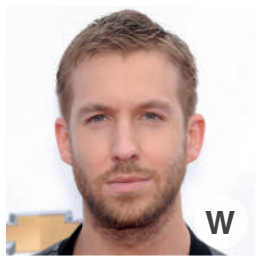
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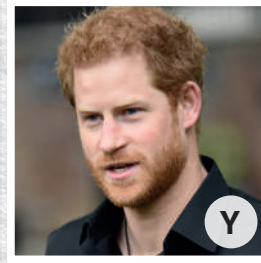
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W



X



Y

Guess the celebrity's real name...match the letters with the numbers.

1. ___ Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta
2. ___ Stevland Hardaway Judkins
3. ___ Reginald Kenneth Dwight
4. ___ Terry Jean Bollette
5. ___ Henry Charles Albert David
6. ___ Destiny Hope Cyrus
7. ___ Amethyst Amelia Kelly
8. ___ O'Shea Jackson Sr.
9. ___ Allan Stewart Konigsberg
10. ___ Paul David Hewson
11. ___ Krishna Pandit Bhanji
12. ___ Kathryn Hudson
13. ___ Adam Richard Wiles
14. ___ Alecia Beth Moore
15. ___ Peter Gene Hernandez
16. ___ Ilyena Lydia Mironoff
17. ___ Alicia Christian Foster
18. ___ Onika Tanya Maraj
19. ___ Patrick Chukwuemeka Okogwu Jr.
20. ___ Mark Sinclair Vincent
21. ___ Eric Marlon Bishop
22. ___ Caryn Elaine Johnson
23. ___ Carlos Irwin Estevez
24. ___ Rachel Meghan Markle
25. ___ Maurice Joseph Micklewhite

ANSWERS
1.D, 2.O, 3.M, 4.T, 5.F, 6.B, 7.C, 8.P, 9.N, 10.I, 11.H, 12.K, 13.W, 14.S, 15.R, 16.Y, 17.K, 18.E, 19.U, 20.H, 21.D, 22.A, 23.G, 24.X, 25.H

Going Solo

The recent troubles experienced by Ant McPartlin have offered the world a scenario once thought impossible – the sight of Dec presenting alone. We look at some famous duos to see whether parting ways brought solo success or whether they should have stayed put.

LAUREL AND HARDY

The biggest comedy duo in the era of classic Hollywood, Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy made waves for two decades up to the Second World War with their iconic brand of slapstick humour. With decades of TV comedy under their belts, the pair couldn't garner any attention as solo artists, preferring instead to remain dual performers until Hardy's death in 1957.

VERDICT: *Better Together*



FRENCH AND SAUNDERS

These two much-loved comediennes paved the way for a generation of female entertainment when their show was given one of the biggest budgets in BBC history. Jennifer Saunders went on to win an Emmy Award, and star in *Absolutely Fabulous*. Dawn French, meanwhile, fronted *The Vicar of Dibley* series, and even became the voice of Terry's Chocolate Orange for a time.

VERDICT: *Solo Success*



THE TWO RONNIES

Ronnie Barker and Ronnie Corbett wrote themselves into the pantheon of British entertainment greats with their sketch show. Ronnie Barker embarked on successful solo projects in the form of *Open All Hours* and *Porridge*, to rich acclaim, but the consistency of The Two Ronnies remained until Barker's passing in 2005. Corbett followed him to the comedy convention in the sky two years ago.

VERDICT: *Better Together*



AMY POELHER AND TINA FEY

This pair of Transatlantic funny-women first found fame on *Saturday Night Live*, co-anchoring the now famous Weekly Update segment. Following that, they worked both separately and together, on films such as the Fey-penned 2004 cult hit *Mean Girls*, 2015's *Sisters*, and won a Golden Globe each for Fey's *30 Rock* and Poelher's *Parks and Recreation*.

VERDICT: *Solo Success*



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5 different ways to use... ...plastic bottles



We are constantly asked to recycle our plastic, especially plastic bottles. They are polluting our oceans and becoming an eyesore when littered. Here are five easy ways to reuse and recycle your plastic bottles, showing you just how adaptable and useful they can really be.

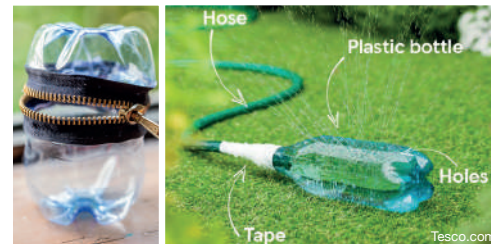
1. Planter

Make fun and creative planters from old plastic bottles. You can use them to plant flowers or grow your own cress or herbs. Simply cut the bottom third of a two-litre bottle, paint the bottle a colour of your choice, use the rest of the bottle to cut out ears and draw features on.



2. Bird feeder

Bird feeders are a great way to bring nature into your garden. Simply cut out a rectangle from each side of the bottom and fill the bottom of your bottle with seeds. It's best to use a five-litre bottle as most of the lids come with a handle for you to easily hang.



3. Sprinkler

Kids love running through the garden while the sprinkler is going, but these can be very expensive. Simply poke holes in a two-litre bottle and screw it on to your hose pipe.

4. Painting

Create a masterpiece with just a plastic bottle and some paint. Simply paint the plastic bottle to make it look like whatever animal you like – we love the owl.



5. Money pot

You will need two plastic bottles of the same size, a zip and a needle and thread for this activity. Simply cut around the bottles about a quarter of the way up from the bottom. Then, sew the zip around the edge of the cut bottles. You can then make a slit in the top bottle, or just use the zip to put your money in and out.



THE BEDROOM BRIGADE

FIVE HOT DÉCOR TRENDS THAT WILL MAKE YOU STAY IN THE BOUDOIR

SENSUAL LIGHTING

Let's be honest, glaring bright lighting has never set the mood for bedroom time, sleep or otherwise, but this latest trend moves beyond your standard lamps and dimmer switches as we combine texture with light. Think feathered pendants which omit a soft glow, side table lamps with velvet shades, and strategically placed candles in Moroccan lanterns.

RICH AND BROODING TONES

Forget your pastels and primroses, the bedroom colour palette has gone seriously luxe. Emerald greens, rich violets and sumptuous midnight blues add a warmth and richness which is always alluring, but never sombre.

WICKER FURNITURE

For those who can recall all too well the shabby woven home furnishings of the 1970s, which always included an impractical and clunky willow bucket chair, the news that wicker is back may cause offence. But natural textures and rattan pieces are proving to be a huge hit once more.

From lightweight and discreet rattan desks, to a bold handwoven bed frame, the new wicker is sleek, sturdy and very stylish.

FABULOUS FLAWS

Want the picture-perfect bedroom? Then stop seeking perfection. Think crumpled French bed linens, piles of mismatched pillows and shelves stacked with an assortment of books, keepsakes and picture frames. After all, your bedroom is your own personal retreat, not a museum.

SACRED SPACE

As we become ever more aware that tech is taking over our lives and the dangerous health implications of that, more and more people are seeking to make their bedroom a gadget-free zone so that they can get in touch with their more contemplative side. This can include just banning electricals such as phones and TVs, or going as far as creating a corner of the room specifically designed for reflection and meditation. Either way, it's time to reclaim your bedroom for you.

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HOME & DIY

La vie VELVET

Velvet is THE fabric of the season, but like all interior trends, it's important you get the perfect balance for your home.

Velvet is officially in... which is great news. Soft and sensual, it adds a warmth and luxuriousness to your home, and is cheaper as an upholstery than leather. However, there is a fine line between opulence and gaudiness. After all, one's home ought to feel comfortable and stylish, but go overboard and your humble abode can start to feel more like a nightclub, or even worse, a brothel.

So how do you keep the trend on the right side of chic? Colour is very important. Too much scarlet or purple velvet and you might feel trapped in some eternal cabaret; but lilac, midnight blue, forest green and mustard add sophistication and warmth. You also need to be practical about your choice, so people with kids and pets ought to stick to the darker end of the spectrum.

Those who have been dying to get a little luxury in their life can go all out with this trend. Always wanted a velvet sofa? Go for it. In fact, why stop there? Velvet bed frames and banquettes are available in some very modern styles, and add a real touch of class to the bedroom (again, when in the right shade). But you can also play around with flashes of the fabric here and there, either with curtains or lampshades, or even just a very subtle velvet trim.

You could also combine the look with the current texture trend. Think leather sofas with velvet cushions, wooden beds with linen sheets and velvet throws, or a stone mantelpiece adorned with quilted photo frames. In the end, it's really down to personal preference, and how far you want to go.

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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood

LOCAL NEWS



Help fund life-saving equipment

Billericay First Responders are calling for the community to help to fund life-saving equipment for the town.

Initially, they were raising funds to help replace the defibrillator batteries for the two pieces of equipment in the High Street as they last four years, even if they're not used.

The batteries needed to be replaced in December to continue to provide life-saving treatment if needed.

Each time they are used the pads also need to be replaced, costing £45 per set.

This cost is currently met by the community first responders but they didn't have enough funds to also

cover the cost to replace the batteries.

Dan Bunce, coordinator for Billericay First Responders, who has set up a Go Fund Me page, said: "These are life-saving pieces of equipment and need to be kept available to the public.

"I would like to keep going and raise enough to be able to install three more defibrillators and cabinets around the town at a cost of £1,800 each."

After raising enough money to replace the batteries, Dan is hoping to raise extra funds to be able to purchase more defibrillators.

To donate, please visit uk.gofundme.com/new-defibrillator-batteries

MP speaks out following air strikes

A local MP has expressed views that Parliament should have been consulted before Britain carried out air strikes on Syria last month.

John Baron, MP for Basildon and Billericay, who is an ex-soldier, said: "Whilst Prime Ministers must continue to have the latitude to use military force in emergencies, I would have preferred Parliament to have been consulted before our Armed Forces went into action.

"As with all aspects of policy, scrutiny by Parliament

tends to improve decision-making and enhance accountability.

"Given the litany of errors in our handling of previous interventions since 2003 and in Syria, it should come as no surprise that many in Parliament believe the government of the day should be more thoroughly scrutinised before plans are executed."

The United Kingdom, US and French air strikes were in response to an alleged Syrian chemical weapons attack.



Street Pastors continue to patrol the town centres of Brentwood and Billericay every Friday and Saturday night. We are all volunteers from local Christian churches. Although we are all people of faith we do not preach at anybody when we are out. We only patrol in an effort to do our bit to help, care and listen for anyone who needs help or becomes vulnerable for any reason.

At the moment we are heavily into our training cycle. We train all our volunteers in a number of subjects in order to try to stay relevant to the issues that are impacting our communities at this time. We also stay up to date with current affairs that affect us locally like the planned increase in housing, changes in licensing hours, any crime issues and stories of public unrest or confusion.

We don't judge anybody at all as we only seek to help, guide and signpost to relevant counselling groups if required. We fully support the work of the local Samaritans due to the fact they help us train for patrol on the rail lines and also support people with longer-term issues around health and wellbeing and will continue to listen and care after any suicidal thoughts have lessened.

We are very excited to be launching Schools Pastors later this year and hope to be able to use this mode into our secondary schools. Again, we



will train and equip our volunteers to be appropriate and support the local school in its ambitions and also to offer pastoral support which sometimes get squeezed when finances are tight. We are also part of the National Curriculum in that we are part of Religious Education modules to show how the local church cares for the community. I had the opportunity of sharing with eight Year 9 classes at Mayflower School this term about us and our values and it seemed to go down well.

We have also started our Rail Pastor patrols on the GA route between Shenfield and Colchester. We are hoping to build up relationships with anyone who uses the rail network and hope that we can help in any intervention work that maybe able to save a life.

If you require any further information or are interested in what we do, then why not email Billericay@streetpastors.org.uk or follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

News from the local policing unit

Responding to the most recent local community meeting in Billericay, there were two main areas raised; lack of police visibility and anti-social behaviour within the High Street and surrounding areas.

District Commander Sam Smith said: "My Community Policing Team continues to increase visibility in Billerica wherever possible. We have been well supported by both the Special Constabulary and Active Citizens."

"The team has been engaged in proactive patrols in the town centre which has seen two offenders identified and interviewed for both anti-social behaviour (ASB) and shop thefts.

"Whilst we wait on a CPS charging decision we are optimistic in securing convictions and will utilise

Community Protection Orders to prevent further anti-social behaviour in the area.”

Inspector Steve Parry said: "Anti-social behaviour through vehicle usage is another area being addressed. Use of dispersal orders and other ASB legislation has hopefully reduced concerns of residents. Further plans are afoot to involve the community in local initiatives targeting vehicle nuisance."

The next Billerica Local Community meeting is Wednesday, June 20 at 7pm in Waitrose Café, High Street, Billerica. Please come along and speak to us. Also, watch out for dates in Billerica this summer where we are introducing 'Coffee with Cops'. We will be in Billerica at notified locations and times for you to pop in and talk to one of the team.

BILLERICAY TOWN FC



Cup run over for mighty Blues

Billerica Town were celebrating a cup double last month as they retained the Isthmian League Cup title with a hard-fought win against the Met Police a few weeks after lifting the Essex Senior Cup.

At 3-1 down with just three minutes remaining, you would have forgiven many of the Billerica fans for contemplating an early exit. But up stepped Billy Bricknell to write his name into the history books.

The Blues went in front after just 12 minutes when Jake Robinson found the back of the net. But, far from being overawed, the Met Police were level 12 minutes later when Tom Bird made no mistake from the spot.

With the scores level until half time, the game sprang into life just before the hour mark when Met striker Jonny Wright fired home from Shaquille Hippolyte-

Patrick's pass. He repeated this feat just four minutes later, giving the Met Police a two-goal cushion.

But Town striker Bricknell wasn't finished yet. A volley quickly gave the Blues hope and, deep into injury time, the forward brought Glenn Tamplin's men back onto level terms and sent the game into extra time.

Six minutes into extra time, Bricknell sent the favourites back in front and registered a hat-trick before Danny Waldren made sure just three minutes later. The victory meant Billericay won the cup for the second season in succession, becoming the first side in 30 years to achieve this feat.

The game also saw Bricknell add another match ball to his collection after his treble against Tonbridge Angels in last season's showpiece.

Billericay Town crowned champions

As **VISION**Billerica went to print, Billerica Town FC were crowned champions of the Bostik Premier League following their 2-0 win at home against Harlow Town. See next month's issue for a full report on their league title success.



#TogetherWeSailAsOne



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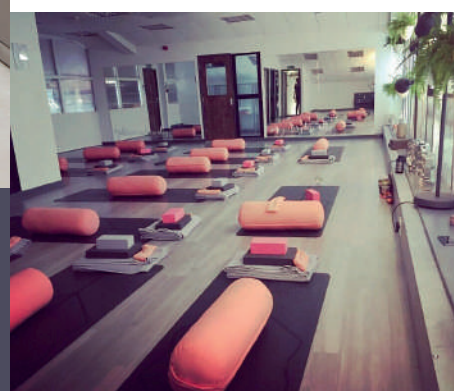
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Pilates and Yoga studio have their TV debut



LOCAL NEWS



A Yoga and Pilates studio in Billericay had its TV debut recently after appearing on *The Only Way Is Essex* (TOWIE), causing people to ask what's RokCore?

RokCore Studio opened its doors in September 2017 and very quickly became popular with the locals for its unique style and calming environment. This Boutique Studio offers a range of both Pilates and yoga classes such as beginner courses, Hatha, Vinyasa and Pregnancy Yoga, Cardio Pilates and even one-on-one pilates reformer sessions. They also hold varied workshops such as Yin Yoga and Gong Baths every few weeks bringing something a little bit different to Billericay.

Convenience and quality are key selling points for the studio, being only a four-minute walk from Billericay train station, and boasting a huge car park makes getting there super easy; and don't worry about bringing anything to class as it is all there.

Each student is welcomed by a friendly host who will soon know you by name, and will be on hand to help you book your classes, and to answer any questions that you might have. A high-end "Liforme" Yoga mat will be laid out and ready for you in the studio, and you will have a room full of cosy meditation blankets, colour coordinated eye pillows, straps, blocks and just about any other prop you can think of, to choose from, to enhance your practice.

RokCore's philosophy is simple, 'live, love, learn'. They opened with the intention of bringing a calm and serene space to Billericay, somewhere where people can switch off from the outside world, and focus on some "me" time. The idea of bringing a dedicated yoga and Pilates studio to the area was to enable classes to focus more on the mindfulness and spirituality of yoga and Pilates, and to allow people to enjoy the journey of the practice instead of focusing solely on the exercise aspect.

With this in mind they also made it easy to join the RokCore classes. All classes are bookable online either as one-off sessions, six weekly blocks or the most convenient and cheapest option is the monthly subscription. There are three levels of subscription, one class a week or two classes a week, both of which any missed classes carry over. Or for a fully immersive yoga and Pilates experience there is even the gold "unlimited classes" package. Follow them on Instagram for all the latest happenings in the studio @rokcore_studio or visit their website for more information.

Please see RokCore yoga and Pilates information and contact details in the Yoga & Pilates column in the **VISION** Listings on page 49 in this month's edition. **VISION** readers are also given one free class. Use the word "**VISION**" at checkout to claim yours. So whether you are beginning your journey or continuing it, why not give RokCore a try.

Men jailed for rape of 12-year-old girl



Two men have been jailed for a total of 13 years after being found guilty of raping a 12-year-old girl in Watford.

Patrick Brooks, 22, previously of Billericay, and Tommy Connors, 21, formerly of Kent, were found to have arranged to meet and have sex with the girl. She was under the legal age of consent and also was considered vulnerable by police.

Concerns were raised with police after sexualised messages were found on the girl's mobile phone.

A police investigation found that the men had initially made contact with the girl via social media.

They had then messaged the girl and arranged to meet her for sex in January 2015, travelling in from outside Hertfordshire.

Brooks and Connors were found guilty on April 5. They were sentenced to seven years and six years in prison respectively the following day.

A third male, aged 19, was found not guilty.

Investigating officer, Detective Sergeant Alexandra Buzas, said: "I would like to pay tribute to the girl for her bravery throughout the investigation. I hope this sentencing brings some form of closure to her and her family."

Little Mix on tour near you



The world's biggest girl band Little Mix are playing a run of UK summer shows throughout July 2018 as part of the group's *The Summer Hits Tour 2018*.

Kicking off in Hove on July 6, the run of 15 live shows ends in Inverness on July 29.

The shows will see Little Mix perform their greatest hits, including *Touch*, *Shout Out to My Ex*, *Black Magic* and *Wings*.

The show in Colchester has already sold out, however people from Billericay can still catch the girls in Earlham Park, Norwich on July 21.

On sale information is available from www.little-mix.com or www.facebook.com/LittleMixOfficial

Stars attend RiZE Festival

Miles Kane has announced that he will be joining the line-up for the first ever RiZE Festival in Chelmsford this August.

Liam Gallagher and Stereophonics have also been announced to headline the festival which will take place at Hylands Park in Chelmsford on August 17 and August 18.

RiZE Festival brings together an exciting mix of the best music and new upcoming talent across four stages.

This new local festival promises to bring an incredible weekend of live music plus a hub of the best food and drink on the festival circuit.

Alongside headliners rock 'n' roll icon Liam Gallagher and one of Britain's best live bands Stereophonics, the new outdoor festival also features a host of highly acclaimed live artists.

These include Platinum debut record singer-songwriter James Bay, iconic national treasures Manic Street Preachers, indie pop idols Circa Waves, Grammy award-nominated rock group Bastille, British alt.rock veterans Maximo Park as well as Craig David's world famous TS5 show.

Also performing are major UK artists Years & Years, Plan B, Rag'n'Bone Man, Dave, Rita Ora, Example & DJ Wire, Tokio Myers, MNEK, Disciples, Sinead Harnett and The Manor. Some of the hottest emerging talent joining the bill are Lewis Capaldi, Tom Grennan, Raye, Tom Walker, Nina Nesbitt plus Jacob Banks. Many more acts will also be announced across four stages.

Tickets are priced from just £59.50 +booking fee and are on sale now. Please visit www.rizefestival.co.uk for official outlets.



Royal Weddings THE WINDFALL



Prince Harry and his new wife Meghan Markle are expected to boost Britain's coffers by £500million on their wedding day.

Experts predict the cash will come rolling in as thousands of visitors are expected to flock to the UK for the ceremony at St George's Chapel, Windsor, on May 19, while millions more around the world will watch on TV.

Brands Finance says the increase in tourism, combined with sales of royal memorabilia and the knock-on effect of spending in Britain's shops, bars and restaurants will be huge.

Chief executive David Haigh said the biggest chunk will come from tourism.

He said: "We think approximately £200million will come from tourism, travel and hotels."

Mr Haigh also estimates that royal wedding parties will generate about £150million and souvenirs will, he believes, rake in about £50million. Another £100million at least will be generated in free advertising for UK PLC.

Major royal events are always big money spinners. In 2012, the Diamond Jubilee celebrations boosted tourism by £390million.

Harry and Meghan's wedding also means a windfall for local residents, who look set to cash in on the worldwide interest generated by the wedding.

Airbnb, which provides an online marketplace for people to let out their homes on a short-term basis, says Windsor residents will earn an average of

£353 by leasing their homes when the couple tie the knot.

Maidenhead homeowners could be in line to make an average of £162 while those in Slough could make £141 by offering up their homes to tourists from May 18 to May 20.

James McClure, general manager for Airbnb, said: "The royal wedding has provided a welcome tourism boost, putting the UK in the spotlight once again."

Listings on the Airbnb site include a three-bed Windsor townhouse in Helena Road with an asking price of £1,000 per night and a four-bedroom property in Clewer priced at £1,750 a night.

The company says guest arrivals for the May weekend have risen by 362 per cent in Maidenhead compared to the same period last year.

Arrivals in Windsor are also up by 194 per cent while neighbouring Slough has seen a staggering 1,438 per cent rise, the research revealed.

It does not stop there though with the British fashion and magazine industry raking it in because of the popularity of Meghan and her soon-to-be sister-in-law, The Duchess of Cambridge, for at least the next 10 years.



The Dame WHO DARES



British icon Dame Helen Mirren reveals her thoughts on ageing, her inability to resist a juicy role and why you should never call her a movie star.

.....

There's no stopping Dame Helen Mirren. Smart, sexy, and outspoken, the actress is still revelling in the career renaissance that began at age 46 when she began playing *Prime Suspect's* DCI Jane Tennison. Born in London to an English mother and Russian father, Mirren has long been a feminist trailblazer who occupies iconic status today among Hollywood's hopeful young starlets.

Her performances have inspired generations of women - distinguished by a palpable intelligence and steely determination whether playing a military commander (*Eye in the Sky*), royalty (*The Queen*), or a Mossad agent (*The Debt*). If ever there was an archetype of an actress suited to playing strong women, it would be her.

Currently, the formidable and iconic actress is appearing in *The Leisure Seeker*, directed by acclaimed Italian filmmaker Paolo Virzi, and co-starring Donald Sutherland. A compelling romance that depicts the interactions between a woman with terminal cancer and her husband, who's suffering from Alzheimer's. And while the elegant star undoubtedly looks fantastic for her 72 years, she is characteristically candid about the inevitable pitfalls of ageing. "If I have to be honest, there is nothing that pleasant about growing old. You learn to accept your age and all the faults that come with it and you console yourself by believing you are wiser," Mirren says sagely.

"When you're a teenager it seems impossible to think of becoming old. But then you learn to accept it and renounce many things that seemed so important before, like plunging necklines and miniskirts," she adds with a laugh.

Over the years, her sharp wit, cutting humour and boundless talent have earned her 'national treasure' status. Mirren is also incredibly humble, and despite her extensive back catalogue and slew of awards, she refutes the suggestion of being a 'movie star'. "No, I've never thought of myself as that, never considered myself anything close. I'm a working actress, who's been fortunate and lucky, and sometimes the stars align in a certain way," she says, firmly.

Her life off-camera is also admirably straightforward. Mirren has never had children, stating in the past that she has "no maternal instinct whatsoever", and has spent the past 32 years together with Hollywood director Taylor Hackford (*Ray*, *An Officer and a Gentleman*). They were married in 1997 and currently divide their time between homes in Los Angeles and the village of Tiggiano in Puglia, Italy.

Even she admits it would be easy at this point to while away the days soaking up the wonders of Italy, but unfortunately for Mirren, she has one terrible weakness. "I can never find the willpower to say 'no' to a very good part when one comes along," she confesses.

"I often tell my husband, 'I've done enough, I'm not going to keep pushing myself.' But he's so used to hearing me say that he doesn't even pay attention to me anymore when I make that kind of a declaration. The terrible truth is that I simply cannot resist a good role."

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Royal Weddings THE FLOWERS

Meghan Markle's wedding bouquet is certain to contain a sprig of myrtle, a tradition for royal brides dating back to 1840 when Queen Victoria married Prince Albert. The myrtle for royal brides is almost always cut from a bush at Osborne House, Queen Victoria's residence on the Isle of Wight.

Myrtle symbolises hope and love.

Meghan and Prince Harry have chosen to work with London-based florist Philippa Craddock. For arrangements in St George's Chapel and St George's Hall, she will be using branches of beech, birch and hornbeam, along with white garden roses, peonies and foxgloves.

There is speculation that Meghan will pay a tribute to her late mother-in-law Princess Diana with her bouquet as the Duchess of Cambridge did in 2011.

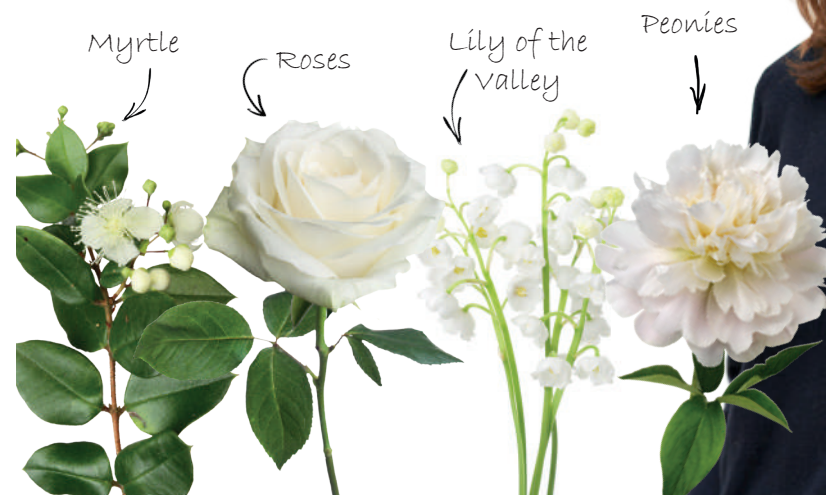
While Catherine's small, simple bouquet served as a stark contrast to Diana's enormous cascading collection of blooms, both featured lily of the valley. Other British royal brides who have incorporated the local flower in their bouquets are Princess Margaret in 1960, Princess Anne in 1973, and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, when she wed Prince Charles in 2005.

Meghan is also expected to carry peonies down the aisle. They are said to be her favourite flower as are roses. But royal bouquets tend to be white.

For her marriage to Prince Philip, the then Princess Elizabeth had chosen an all-white, free flowing wedding bouquet. It included three types of rather exotic looking orchids: cattleya, cyripedium and odontoglossum – all British-grown – and of course myrtle.

Following their weddings, it is also customary for royal brides to leave their bouquets on the grave of the unknown warrior in Westminster Abbey, a sombre tradition that was started by the Queen Mother in 1923, who left her flowers on the memorial in honour of her brother Fergus, who was killed in the First World War I in 1915.

While Meghan and Harry will be married at St George's Chapel, not Westminster Abbey, she will likely still send her bouquet to the church, following in the footsteps of Sophie Rhys-Jones, who wed Prince Edward at the chapel back in 1999.



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DIY FATHER'S DAY Flowerpot



Are you fed up with buying the same generic Father's Day presents for your children to give to their daddy year in and year out? Why not try something different this year and help your child make their own DIY gift? This simple homemade flowerpot is the ideal gift for any green-fingered daddy or grandad and is guaranteed to take pride of place in your garden.

You will need:

- ✿ 1 x Terracotta clay pot (big enough to fit your child's handprint on)
- ✿ Acrylic paint in various bold colours (green is a must)
- ✿ Paint brushes
- ✿ 1 x ice cube tray

How to make:

- ✿ Lay down some newspaper or an old sheet to protect your floor.
- ✿ Fill your ice cube tray with your preferred colours (be sure to include green for the stem and leaves).
- ✿ Place your pot on the newspaper/sheet.
- ✿ Paint the rim of the pot in your chosen colour (younger ones may need some help with this).
- ✿ Leave to dry.
- ✿ Help your child paint their hand and tilt the pot slightly to allow them to press their handprint onto it.
- ✿ Repeat around the pot in as many different colours as you would like.
- ✿ Take a brush and paint on a green stem and two leaves below each of the handprints (as per the image above).
- ✿ And voila. You have your homemade handprint flowerpots.

Optional:

You can also personalise your handprint flowerpot by writing 'Happy Father's Day, love from {insert your child's name here}' around the rim of the pot.

Or you could even go one step further and fill your pot with compost and their father's preferred plant or herbs.

The beauty of DIY gifts is that you can be as creative as you like, so let your children's imagination run wild.



PollenPROOF

Hay fever sufferers rejoice. We have some great tips for helping you survive the season; and yes, you can even go outside.

Keep an eye on the pollen count

Warm and dry days generally have a higher pollen count, whereas thanks to the rain washing pollen out the air, wetter days have less. So, keep an eye on pollen forecasts and stay indoors as much as possible when it's really high. Certain times of day also bring about an increase in pollen, usually early morning (7am to 10am) and late afternoon (4pm to 7pm).

Protect yourself when outside

You can't live like a hermit just because the sun is out, so apply barrier balm around your nostrils (Vaseline works too), and buy a peaked hat and some wraparound shades.

Remove allergens daily

Hay fever sufferers know that feeling of being bombarded by pollen, and unfortunately there is no way of stopping it getting to you entirely. Saline

spray is a really effective way to wash out all the allergens clinging to your nostrils, so carry one with you. Showering (including hair) and changing your clothes when you get home on high pollen day also helps.

Protect your home

Keeping windows closed on high pollen days is an obvious place to start, but pollen can also sneak in on pets that have been outside, and line-dried clothes. So, avoid snuggling up to poochie, and buy an indoor drying rack.

Limit time in the city

Despite usually having a lower pollen count than the countryside, all the pollution in urban areas irritates your respiratory tract, making it harder to cope with other allergens.

If all else fails, head to the seaside

Not that you need another excuse for that weekend in Southend, but you'll be pleased to know that the sea breeze blows pollen inland, making seaside resorts a veritable paradise for hay fever sufferers.



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Royal Weddings THE CAKES



A LOOK AT THE CAKES OF ROYAL WEDDINGS PAST

Prince Harry and his bride to be Meghan Markle have decided they don't want to get fruity on their wedding day and have bucked tradition of not having a traditional fruitcake.

Instead they have gone for a much more modern style - an organic lemon elderflower wedding cake.

The couple have turned to pastry chef and food writer Claire Ptak, below, owner of Violet Bakery in east London, to make the cake, which will be covered with buttercream and decorated with fresh flowers.

His brother Prince William and wife Catherine chose a multi-tiered fruit cake was made by baker Fiona Cairns, and while the decorations were pretty traditional - it featured edible flowers including an English rose, Scottish thistle, Welsh daffodil and Irish shamrock - they also had a chocolate biscuit cake by McVitie's.

Prince Charles has had two bites of the wedding cake. When he married Camilla in 2005, bakers

Sophisticake from Lincolnshire had just four weeks' notice to bake one.

The finished cake weighed in at 17 stone, took around 130 hours to coat and decorate and was made with 20 bottles of brandy. The firm also had to make 2,500 additional slices to fill special commemorative tins.

For his wedding to Diana in 1981 the official wedding cake was a fruitcake with cream cheese frosting. It was five-foot high, weighed 18 stone and was made by David Avery, the head baker of the Naval Armed Forces.

McVitie and Price Ltd, using ingredients given as a wedding gift by the Australian Girl Guides Association, made the official wedding cake at the Queen's wedding.

It was an enormous, ornate affair and stood nine foot tall and was covered in intricately carved cathedral-like designs. It is said to have been cut using Prince Philip's sword. It even had its own nickname - the 10,000-mile wedding cake.



The Queen and Prince Phillip's cake

Prince Charles and Princess Diana's cake

Prince William and Kate Middleton's cake

Claire Ptak of Violet Bakery

Photo credit: John Stillwell and www.royal.uk www.hellomagazine.com



Cut ABOVE



It's a vital part of your daily routine, but what are the experts saying about the biggest hair trends for men this summer? We take a look at some of the latest examples of cutting-edge follicular fashion.

JOIN THE CREW

For maximum impact with minimum fuss, make this the year you finally follow the likes of Ryan Reynolds and go bold with the hair clippers. Grade one back and sides, with a grade six on top, ideally getting your barber to scissor-cut the top to that length so you can get a little more texture into it, rather than leaving it too rounded, gives you a simple style for the 9-5. Just remember to book back in with your barber every week to 10 days, or risk losing those sharp lines.

BLONDE AMBITION

Looser, chopped fringes dyed bleach blonde have been popularised by everyone from footballers to popstars - with the chameleonicly coiffured Zayn Malik offering a masterclass in dyed hair almost every other day. It's a bold and stylish look, but also one worth forking out a bit for. Home dye jobs are the grooming equivalent of playing with fire (and you'll certainly feel the burn if you get it wrong), but if you're brave enough, give it a try, and remember to use a deep conditioner once a week whilst investing in some purple shampoo to stop that bright white mellowing to a yellow.

PLAYING IT LONG

Longer-haired lads may be looking to ditch the man-bun and opt for something a little sleeker and refined. We've come a long way from the glam-rock hairdos of the 1970s, while stars like Brad Pitt and Jared Leto have popularised the shoulder-length slicked-back look. It's just a case of ditching layering in order to maximise length and chic sleekness.

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Royal Weddings THE DRESSES



FASHION

Stunning Meghan Markle has already looked fabulous in a wedding dress.

She certainly had the whoa factor as her character in the US TV series *Suits*, Rachel Zane, dressed up in a gown for her wedding to Mike Ross.

She wore a traditional white wedding dress with lace detailing and sparkles, so will she deviate from this incredible look?

No one knows at the moment, as it has not been revealed who is the designer.

But of course the divorcee has walked down the aisle once before in her 2011 wedding to film producer Trevor Engelson.

She then opted for a white bohemian-style, strapless, floor-length gown with a notch neckline. The plain dress was complete with pleats at the front and an embellished belt, which added a touch of sparkle. There was no intricate lace detailing, no plunging showstopper back and no long train or veil.

It is understood that her friend, stylist Jessica Mulroney, was flown over from Toronto, Canada, in January and spent four days with Meghan - helping her choose the perfect dress.

Norman Hartnell designed the Queen's wedding dress and she had to buy the material for the dress using ration coupons. It was made with soft Damascus Prokar, featuring a high neckline, tailored bodice and a short train.

Her sister Princess Margaret also had a wedding dress designed by Norman Hartnell, made from silk organza. He designed it so that the crystal embellishments and beading were kept to a minimum, to suit Margaret's petite frame.

Princess Anne wore a Tudor-style dress designed by Maureen Baker when she married Mark Phillips.

Probably the most famous royal wedding dress is that of Princess Diana designed by David and Elizabeth Emmanuel. It spawned a decade of meringues and featured a 25ft train and 10,000 hand-sewn pearls and sequins.

The Duchess of York opted to design her own bridal gown - it featured a 17ft train and an embroidered letter 'A'.

Camilla shunned the traditional white gown in favour of a cream silk chiffon dress hemmed with vertical rows of Swiss-made appliqued woven disks, and a matching oyster silk basket weave coat. Robinson

Valentine designed the outfit, and she wore accessories by L.K.Bennett and Philip Treacy.

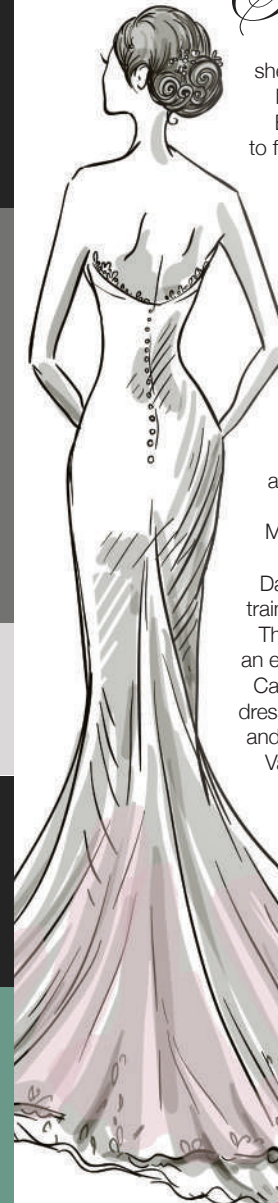


Photo credits: www.theculturetrip.com & www.royals.uk



WHAT'S ON

in your area

Wacky Races at Barleylands

Barleylands, Barleylands Road, Billericay, CM11 2UD

May 5 – May 7



Back by popular demand are the hilarious Wacky Races this May Bank Holiday weekend – so it's on your marks, get set, go for this season's Chicken Run, Hilly Billy Goat Race and Lamb National.

From farm animals big and small to majestic birds of prey as well as the region's largest collection of reptiles, there's something for all the family – plus we have a host of fantastic indoor activities and play areas so there's lots to do even if the weather isn't so good.

Billericay Model Railway Group Railway Exhibition

Galleywood Heritage Centre, The Common, Galleywood, Chelmsford, CM2 8TR

May 5, 10am – 5pm

Models and layouts from N through OO to 5" gauge. Trade stands and demos. Entry is £5 for 18 and over. Under 18 £3. Concessions £4.50. Five years and under free. Visit www.facebook.com/events/2063021180393625/ for more information.

Charity Lunch

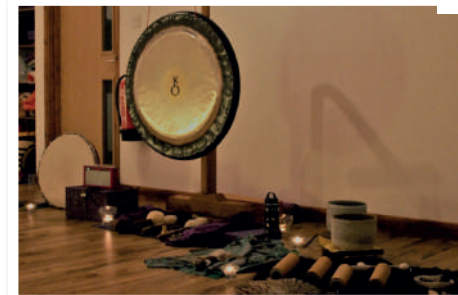
Billericay Methodist Church, Western Road, Billericay, CM12 9DT

May 12, 12.30pm – 1.30pm

A tasty two-course snack lunch and drink for only £4.50. This month the proceeds will be going to Transforming Lives for Good, bringing hope and a future to struggling children and families across the UK. There is no need to book. Call 01277 622297.

Gong Bath

RokCore Studios, 30 Radford Way, Billericay, CM12 0DX
May 25, 8pm



A gong bath has many therapeutic benefits including relaxation of nervous system, calming of the mind, improved night's sleep, clearing of subconscious emotional issues, releasing of negativity and time for yourself.

Essex Sausage and Cider Music Festival

Barleylands Farm, Billericay, CM11 2UD
May 25 – May 27

This year at Essex Sausage and Cider Music Festival and Country Show we have more activities than ever before.

At Barleylands Farm, this year you will see a new outdoor country show arena, new comedy tent and celebrity chef tent with cooking demonstrations.

Enjoy your time in between the music by watching camel racing, pig racing, dog and duck show and motorbike stunts. Come along to our 2018 festival with a themed weekend, '80s Friday, '90s Saturday and '00s Sunday.

Spring Craft Fair

Barleylands, Barleylands Road, Billericay, CM11 2UD

May 27

Free to attend and with plenty of parking, there will be many craft studios, shops and boutiques to explore, as well as crafting demonstrations, extra exhibitors and plenty of activities going on.

Visit www.barleylands.co.uk/events/ for more information.

PART OF THE

Family

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT PET FOR YOUR HOME

Pets are considered to be one of the family and can genuinely enrich our lives. However, when deciding on which animal to buy, it is vital to select the right breed for you based on finances, time and accommodation. For example, buying a Great Dane when you live in a small, third-floor flat and have very little free time to walk it is not going end well for either you or your beloved new friend.

For those living in small homes with little or no garden, it is wise to choose an animal which isn't going to take over. Budgies and parrots are a charming but low maintenance option, while cats make great companions and their desire for independence means they are happy to make a life of their own outside - though you will need to ensure your home is accessible, so they can come and go as they please, and be aware of any big roads directly near you.

Large and energetic dogs are likely to bring chaos to a modest abode,

so go for a small, calmer breed like a poodle or shih tzu. But remember that ALL dogs need regular walks.

Small, furry animals like hamsters and gerbils make a great first pet for kids, but they can also bring great joy to adults who seek company but have little time or space. Fish are another option for those looking for a more self-sufficient addition to their family - bear in mind that tropical fish can be considerably more expensive than the cold-water variety due to their need for a heated aquarium.

Finally, if you've got a sizeable house and garden consider anything from rabbits to a tortoise, to big, boisterous pooches. But don't forget that all animals need a great deal of love and attention, so when choosing, don't just consider the size of your home, but the size of your heart too.





DIRECT *only*

Qantas made history recently after they launched the first 17-hour non-stop flight from Perth to London Heathrow.

The 14,498km service is now the fastest way to get to Australia – eliminating stops in the Middle East to re-fuel or change planes which can add hours to a journey.

The first flight, carrying more than 200 passengers and 16 members of crew, pushed back just before 7pm on Saturday, March 24 and landed in London at 5am the following day.

The flight reduces total travel time by removing stopovers and taking advantage of the winds when choosing a flight path.

Technology has come a long way, especially aviation. In 1947, it took four days and seven stops to travel from Australia to the UK with the original 'kangaroo route'. It also cost around £525 when the average wage was a mere £7.

Nowadays, the journey is both quicker and more

affordable with the average Australian weekly wage at \$1,600 and a return fare from Perth to London costing less than \$1,300.

Athletes competing at the Commonwealth Games would have had to set off days before they were due to compete just to complete the gruelling journey. But nowadays, they can hop on a plane and be at their destination within 24 hours.

In 1962, Prince Philip travelled to Perth to open the British Empire and Commonwealth Games. Travelling by boat, he set off several weeks before he was due to open the event.

The land down under is now easier to access than ever before. With the new development, tourist numbers are sure to increase with people from Britain taking advantage of the journey.

4 days & 7 stops ↗ 17 hours



Qantas-Dreamliner-Emily-Kame-Kngwarreye. Photo Credit: www.qantasnewsroom.com.au

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THE POWER

of peace



Relations between Russia and the West are at such a low that we are now on the brink of a new cold war.

The poisoning of former Soviet spy Sergei Skripal, 66, and his 33-year-old daughter in Salisbury from the nerve agent Novichok has led to mass expulsions round the world of Russian diplomats.

Despite denials of the attack on March 4, Russia is firmly in the dock. Russia Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has made the ludicrous suggestion that it was Britain itself that carried out the attack on the double agent because the UK Government has found itself in a difficult situation, unable to fulfil promises it made about Brexit.

There is a clear comparison of present-day tensions to the bitter ideological and military rivalry that existed between the Soviet Union and the West from the 1950s to the end of the 1980s.

One man who has vivid memories of those days

in the Sixties is Gary Powers Junior, 50, whose dad, also named Gary, was a pilot who worked for the CIA and who had been captured when his U2 spy plane had been shot down in 1960.

It was the catalyst for a nerve shredding two years when the world was brought to the brink of nuclear war.

The story was a central point in the film *Bridge of Spies* starring Tom Hanks as attorney James Donovan, the man who masterminded the spy swap which saw Gary return to the US.

The New York lawyer was the man who worked tirelessly behind the scenes as the fingers of US President John Kennedy and Russia's Nikita Khrushchev hovered over nuclear buttons during the Cuban crisis of 1962. It was the closest the two super-powers have ever come to war.

It was Donovan's negotiations which led to a dramatic peace deal.

He walked across a frost-covered bridge in Cold War Berlin. By his side was British-born KGB spy Rudolf Abel - a man ironically the lawyer had saved from the death penalty at his trial.

On the other side of the Glienicke Bridge in Berlin - the so-called Bridge of Spies, as other spy swaps would take place in later years, was Gary Powers.

Years after his father was shot down and captured there lingered the suspicion that he might have been a traitor who had deliberately crashed his plane. Gary Jnr was technical consultant on the film.

He says he was thrilled by the film.

"So much has been written and said about my father that has not been fair to him but this film does set the record straight," he said.

"The film shows that he was a hero to our country. Steven Spielberg has done a fantastic job and the family are thrilled with *Bridge of Spies*.

"Not only have they recaptured the Cold War

era perfectly, but he has been able to convey the tension and uncertainty that surrounded all those events."

Based on his father's diaries and talks they had before his death about the U2 incident, he was able to give the director and his team an accurate account of what took place.

On May 1, 1960 Powers took off from Peshawar in Pakistan for what he thought was a routine nine-hour mission codenamed Grand Slam.

"Four hours into the flight a missile exploded near to the tail of the U2 as he flew over Sverdlovsk," said Gary.

In the split seconds Powers had to bail out he was unable to reach a self-destruct button that would have blown up the U2.

Almost two months after his capture he was convicted of spying and sentenced to 10 years in jail, including seven years' hard labour.

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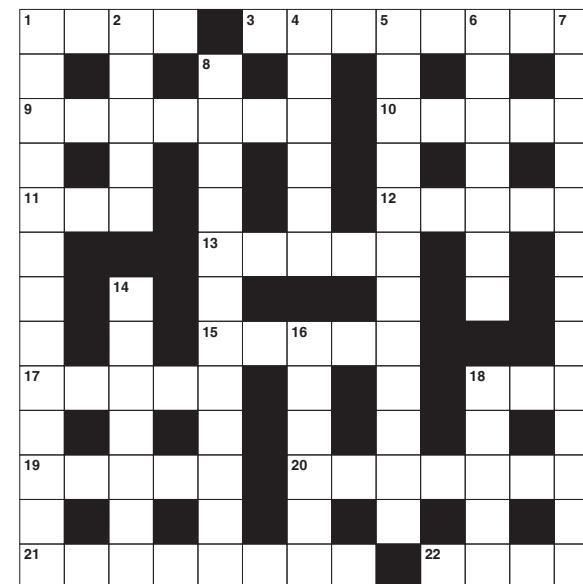
Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4

ACROSS

1. Military unit (4)
3. Manufactures (8)
9. Hits with the fist (7)
10. Fishing net (5)
11. Exclamation of surprise (3)
12. Wash with water (5)
13. Kingdom (5)
15. Unfasten (5)
17. Bits of meat of low value (5)
18. Cereal plant (3)
19. Fill with high spirits (5)
20. Illness (7)
21. Repugnance (8)
22. Wet with condensation (4)

DOWN

1. The first and the last (5,3,5)
2. Eat steadily (5)
4. World's largest country (6)
5. Resolvable (12)
6. Linked together (7)
7. Obviously (4-9)
8. Optimism (12)
14. Catch fire (7)



16. Edible tuber (6)

18. ___ Witherspoon: actress (5)

DID YOU KNOW

- ▶ Each time you look at the moon you always see the same side.
- ▶ Earth is the only planet not named after a god.
- ▶ A full moon is nine times brighter than a half moon.
- ▶ Every year the sun loses around 360million tons.
- ▶ All the planets in the solar system could fit inside Jupiter.
- ▶ From space, one of the brightest man-made places is Las Vegas.
- ▶ If you could drive to the sun at a speed of 55mph, it would take around 193 years.
- ▶ The centre of the sun is approximately 15 million degrees centigrade.

SUDOKU

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

THE STUDENT BECOMES...

The Master



SPORT

This year's Masters at Augusta saw a reigning champion fall from grace spectacularly, while a controversial competitor rose to take the coveted green jacket...

It was on the Friday of this year's Masters Tournament when the current champ, Sergio Garcia, lined up his second shot on the 15th hole. At two over, his was certainly still in the running to defend his title – even if his performance had failed to offer the usual flash and pizzazz we've come to expect of him. But from the moment his lofted attempt over the water hazard guarding the green landed near the hole, only to spin back down the steep slope and disappear into the murky depths, the death knell sounded, and we knew we were in for a new winner.

Four more submerged shots later, and Garcia had equalled the worst score for a hole in the tournament's history – 13 on a par five.

While the Spaniard struggled, one fellow pro was making a concerted effort to inherit the soon-to-be-vacated trophy. But it wasn't Rory McIlroy – so desperate to achieve his first Masters win – or Jordan Spieth or Rickie Fowler, though both the latter made big gains on the final day to just miss out on top spot. Instead, this year's inductee into the roll-call of golfing green jackets – his first major tournament win – was Texas-native Patrick Reed.

Reed's -16, one-stroke victory, was an impressive statement from a man more used to making his name in his home country with Ryder Cup and Presidents Cup wins – victories that have earned him the moniker 'Captain America'. It was strange, then, that even as Reed made his way into the lead, the crowd's overwhelming response was to lavish support on competitors McIlroy et al.

Even when 27-year-old Reed had confirmed his place among such former champs and golfing greats as Tiger Woods, Nick Faldo and the indomitable Gary Player, the tone was still lacklustre. Why was it that in spite of this being the American's greatest day, there was none of the usual adulation that follows a Masters winner in the immediate aftermath of his triumph?

Perhaps it's because, for years, Reed has been somewhat of a controversial figure both on and off the green. In 2014, he described himself as "one of the top five players in the world", in spite of being just 23 at the time, and having never even played in a major tournament, let alone won one. The same year, at the Ryder Cup, Reed trash-talked his vice-captain Tiger Woods. Later, countryman Jordan Spieth would reveal that the usually mellow Woods quipped back at the brash upstart, saying: "Don't worry, Patrick, you only need 74 more wins and 14 more majors..."

These days, Reed's fellow golfers have become accustomed to his antics, which include the 'drinking offences' that Reed said made him leave Georgia State University, or the oft-denied but enduring allegations of cheating and stealing from the locker room that have also arisen from his time at UGA.

Then there's the messy relationship with his parents that culminated in his wife reportedly escorting Mr and Mrs Reed from the US Open course in 2014. Neither came to see their son's Masters triumph, despite actually living in Augusta.

So while Patrick Reed may well have finally laid his hands on the major tournament win he has long believed was due, it remains to be seen whether his past will ever allow him to be taken to the hearts of golf fans.

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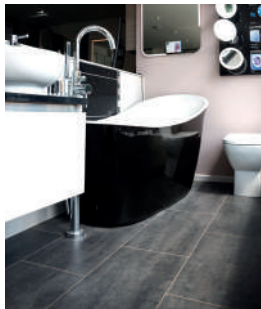
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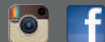
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