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Editor's notes...



Nik Allen, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** BillericayShenfield. Happy New Year.

2018 I'll always remember with great fondness as my first child, Max, was born. It's a funny thing, this parenthood lark. Even though Max has been with us just two months, in many ways it feels like he's been here forever.

Mrs A is taking to being a mum superbly and I'm really proud of both of them.

I've got a real good feeling about 2019. Yes, I know there is a lot of uncertainty around but all aspects of life are wrought with uncertainties. We never know when a phone call, or an incident or something beyond our control will change our lives.

But the thing we can be sure of with absolute certainty is how we respond to the trials, tribulations, triumphs and indeed tantrums life sends our way. We can choose our attitude.

From a business perspective we are expanding our company. The **VISION** group will welcome two new Essex publications this year. This is due to the great success we've had over the past two years. We want to build on this and give as many local companies as possible a platform to promote themselves to local audiences.

We also want to keep producing magazines which are interesting, insightful and entertaining. Finally I would like to wish all our readers and advertisers a Happy and Healthy New Year 2019.

Nik

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DOWN: 1. CONVALESCENCE, 2. GAMMA, 4. ONE OFF, 5. FISH AND CHIPS, 6. APELIKE, 7. ENLIGHTENMENT, 8. INFECTIOUSLY, 14. TRESSES, 16. STRESS, 19. LINGO

NINE DECADES OF Disney

Celebrating the 90th anniversary of Disney's iconic Mickey Mouse, we look at the history behind the most famous kids brand of them all.

They say longevity in the kids' entertainment market is the most difficult thing to crack, and sure enough, very few brands achieve the sort of long-time status that enables them to survive. For every Ken and Barbie there is a Tamagotchi; for every Lego there is a Budgie bike.

The reality is, fashions come and go, and the market for kids is ficker than most. So it's therefore even more incredible that Disney has circumnavigated different eras, different trends and the evolution of technology in such a way that it thrives just as much now than ever. And as for its fans, well they cross over multiple generations, to the extent that parents often enthuse as much about a trip to any of the magnificent Disneyland resorts as much as the kids.

Although Walt Disney had toyed with basic animations going back to 1923, the true foundations of the corporation were laid in 1928 when Mickey Mouse made his debut appearance in the animation *Steamboat Willie*.

By 1932, United Artists had agreed to look after distribution, and in the same year *Flowers and Trees* became the first Technicolour cartoon and first animated short to win an Academy Award. *Three Little Pigs* reached the same heights the following year, with *The Tortoise and the Hare* scooping the gong 12 months later. The die was cast.

A first feature film – *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* – was released in 1937; and with the company going public, animated classics *Fantasia*, *Pinocchio*, *Dumbo*, *Bambi*, *Cinderella* and *Alice in Wonderland* all arrived over the course of the next decade.

Disney continued to mix animation with traditional film-making, and it is surely still a marker to the brilliance of animated classics such as *Lady and the Tramp*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *101 Dalmatians* and the original *Mary Poppins*, that we are still talking about them over 50 years after their release.

And even after Walt Disney's death – from lung

cancer in 1966 – this bevy of creativity continued to grow, with the unveiling of the Walt Disney World Resort in Florida five years later surpassing the already-opened California theme park a decade previously. Metropolises in Tokyo, Paris, Hong Kong and Shanghai have followed, along with a number of smaller spin-offs.

But mostly, the evolution of the brand now encompasses the world's very best animators, CGI experts, actors, entertainers and creative visionaries.

From humble beginnings, Disney is a buzzword for mass-market success, with 11 theatrical releases in 2018 (including *Black Panther*, *Avengers: Infinity War*, *Ant-Man and the Wasp*, *Incredibles 2* and *Christopher Robin*) and a number of other films and TV series engaging and delighting kids like never before.

Now a succession of blockbuster remakes and reinventions are in the offing – *Mary Poppins Returns* is released at Christmas, with *Dumbo*, *Aladdin* and *The Lion King* following in 2019 before, in November, every parent's worst singalong nightmare, *Frozen 2*.



Photo credit: Disney/Kobal/REX/Shutterstock



The Letter of the Law

What do the codes on your letterboxes mean, and why are they here? In these days of digital mail, affordable courier services and our ability to message people via our phones at any time of day in, seemingly, any place, it should come as a relief that in every neighbourhood the post box still remains.

In some ways, this bright red, glowing beacon is an icon for a bygone era, where a letter was at one point the only form of long-distance communication. In other ways, its presence is a reminder that the most British method of communicating is still afforded the most regal of vehicles. But look closer at post boxes and you'll find they are adorned with a variety of different letters; what each reveals is quite startling.

VR post box

This is a Queen Victoria era post box, from between 1853 and 1901.

ER VII post box

An Edward VII post box, first in service between 1901 and 1910.

GR post box

A George V post box, from between 1910 and 1936.

ER VIII post box

An Edward VIII post box, put in its position between January 20, 1936 and December 11, 1936, before the controversial king abdicated the throne to marry Wallis Simpson. Subsequently, this box is very rare.

GR VI post box

A George VI post box, put up between 1936 and 1952.

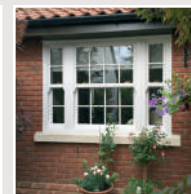
ER II post box

Finally, an Elizabeth II post box, placed in its spot between 1952 and the present day.

The subject of post boxes in Scotland is an interesting one, given that Elizabeth II is actually the first Elizabeth north of the border. In days gone by post boxes with ER II on them had been vandalised and blown up by nationalists. Subsequently, since the 1950s, any new Scottish post boxes (and phone boxes) bear only the emblem of the Scottish crown although you can still find post boxes both with and without the II after ER.

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HOME & DIY



A wine spill doesn't have to spell disaster. Follow the below tips and your carpet will look good as new.

1. ACT FAST

Whether you have spilt champagne, white wine, or the dreaded red variety, it is vital that you act immediately. The longer the liquid is left untreated, the more it can soak into your carpet and the harder it will be to remove.

2. SOAK UP EXCESS

Using a cloth or towel (preferably white for a red wine stain), attempt to soak up as much as the liquid as possible. The more you can remove with this process, the less you will have to try and remove later.

3. APPLY A STAIN REMOVER

For white wine or champagne spillages, you should now apply a commercial stain remover or diluted solution of washing up liquid or laundry

detergent. For red wine you should apply a baking soda paste consisting of three parts water to one part baking soda.

4. BLOT, NOT RUB

Once the stain remover has been applied, blot the stain with a clean cloth. Never use a rubbing motion as this will push the liquid further into the carpet fibres. There is no need to blot the red wine stain.

5. LEAVE TO AIR DRY

Leave areas to air dry; do not try and speed up the process with a hair dryer. Vacuum up any excess baking soda from the red wine stain.

RED WINE STAIN MYTHS:

Sprinkling salt will remove the stain. This will in fact help fixate the colour.

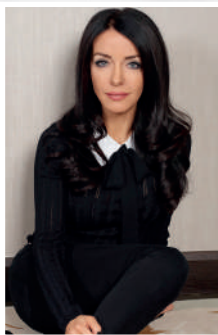
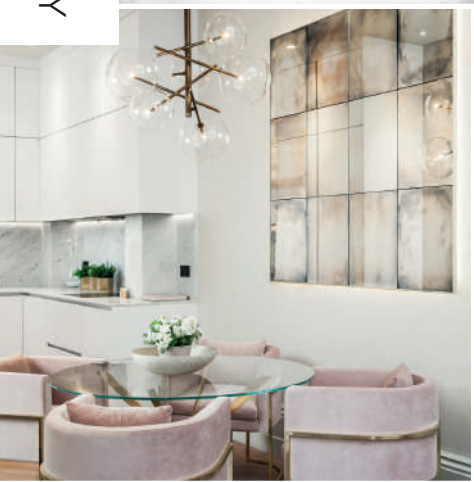
Pouring white wine will cancel out red wine. All that you will achieve is diluting the red colouring of the stain.

Applying vinegar will help the stain disappear. Vinegar has a very low PH level which can discolour your carpet further.



JO HAMILTON'S *Colour Hues*

WHY DESIGNER JO HAMILTON IS
LEADING THE WAY IN INTERIOR INTELLIGENCE



Asking the brilliant Jo Hamilton the things she craves most in any kind of interior designer project and she'll say: "colour and sleek sophistication, and not a lot more".

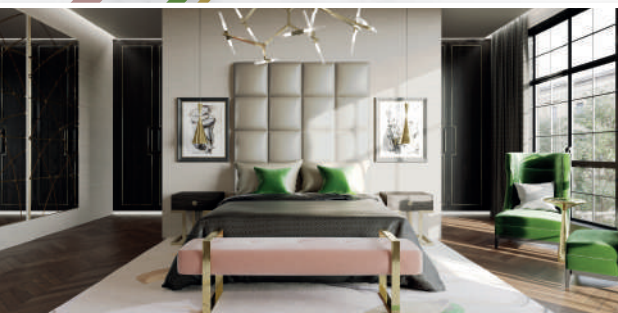
Through hard work, dogged determination and an eye for style, Hamilton has carved a niche for herself at the top table of home style. The 49-year-old mother of three is a natural – down-to-earth, innovative and keen to demystify the world of interior design, and always the first to encourage people to put their own stamp on the home. From her breakthrough in 1995, it has often been Hamilton's keen eye and knack for mixing vintage with the new that results in an eclectic mix that's warm, elegant and accessible.

"I think a lot of people struggle with how to use colour in their homes," she continues. "Lots of people love colour but are worried about how to pick the right one, what's right for their home and what's right for the property itself."

"The same goes for fabrics, and generally speaking we're a bit more experimental on that front because there is less permanence about them, but I think sometimes people still tend to stay on the safe side".

"I guess it's always been my mission to want to encourage people to mix and match," continues Hamilton, who runs hugely successful design courses from her offices in London's opulent Belsize Park. "There's nothing worse than an interior that's just been ripped out of a fabric shop."

And her favourite room in the house? "Surprisingly, it's the kitchen," she laughs. "It has grown and developed more than any other room in the house, from a functional space to the central area of life, conversation and innovation. If the humble kitchen isn't worthy of a makeover, I don't know where is".



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HOME & DIY

LET'S GET PLASTERED

THE QUICK ROUTE TO MAINTAINING YOUR CRUMBLING WALLS

In a country that has wildly fluctuating weather, and with our passion for the preservation of history, something that we extend right down to the buildings we occupy, it's fair to say we ask a lot of the plaster in our walls. And anyone who has ever undertaken DIY in the form of bricks and mortar will be familiar with the sensation of crumbling plaster cascading down walls and onto the floor.

Yet the solution isn't to start ripping walls down. Instead, get smart, and get repairing.

should extend out 8" in each direction. Apply a sheet of fibreglass mesh and plaster over the top.

POPPED PLASTER

This unsightly bulge comes about when plaster 'pops' or comes away from the lath (basically any type of backing material in the wall itself). The best way to correct this is to drill holes in the affected plaster, apply adhesive glue, inserting screws as temporary support until everything dries. Sanding back the popped area and applying a skim coat of joint compound or plaster will finish the job nicely.

HOLES

Whether from an impact (such as a doorknob hitting the wall) or just old, crumbled plaster, repairing holes means removing all affected material right the way back to the lath. Follow the same method as when repairing cracks, but ensure to get all the bad stuff out, or your problem may return sooner than you expected.

CRACKS

Most cracks come about when humidity stresses the walls and, ultimately, the plaster. You can disguise cracks with plaster patching compound, which



LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Photo credit: The Fun Walk Trust

Fun Walksurpasses £1million raised since 2002

A bonus of £40,000 was awarded to participating charities at a presentation ceremony recently after the Billericay Fun Walk 2018 helped the total raised since 2002 surpass £1million.

John Baron MP and other trustees of The Fun Walk Trust awarded bonus pot cheques to charities and good causes which took part in the 2018 event.

Because of the generosity of local businesses and individuals, each project receives a bonus more than what they raise themselves in sponsorship on the day.

This year, for every £100 raised by projects in sponsorship, the bonus pot added £65.

The total monies raised both by the projects and bonus pot sponsors came to £100,000 – bringing the total monies raised for local causes to £1,064,000 since the Fun Walk started in 2002.

The MP took the opportunity to thank all those who had helped over the years to make this initiative a success, including previous bonus pot sponsors.

Mr Baron MP said: "The 2018 Fun Walk has been another huge success and brings the total monies raised for good causes since 2002 to over £1,000,000.

"Our thanks go to all who have helped along this journey."

Women's Institute supports shoebox campaign

The Billericay Mayflower Women's Institute has once again supported charity Harambee Schools Kenya (HSK) campaign putting together shoeboxes filled with gifts for the children in rural Kenya.

They smashed their target of 100 boxes, donating more than 140 overall, with another 600 from the local community. They also had donations of books from

Quilters Primary School and bags of gifts.

Amie Willenberg, committee member at the WI and CEO of HSK, said: "All thanks to a little idea and a huge amount of support from the residents of Billericay.

"Also, a big thank you to Billericay Self Storage. They've been incredibly supportive in helping us store and the pack the boxes."

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ON PATROL WITH... THE PASTORS



As Street Pastors reflect on a busy 2018, we are grateful for all that has happened.

We have seen more volunteers from local Christian churches join our different projects around the county and have been blessed to receive a lot of public support and affirmation by way of personal messages and financial support.

As I write, we are excited to hear of more interest in our Schools Pastor projects which are already supporting certain senior schools with pastoral

support. We only seek to help, listen and care for our schools including students, staff, teachers and governors. We will continue to recruit more volunteers in the New Year.

Our Rail Pastor project is expanding across the Greater Anglia route between Harlow and Cambridge.

We are training all our volunteers again from February so if you are interested in joining any of our teams across Essex then get in touch - Billericay@streetpastors.org.uk or follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

News from the local policing team

Basildon Community Policing Team have continued to address the issues raised by Billericay residents to tackle anti-social behaviour and drug dealing within the town.

The team, along with Essex Police's Op Raptor team, have executed a warrant under the Misuse of Drugs Act in Billericay, where they arrested a male for Possession of Class A drugs with intent to supply. The male has been released under investigation while enquiries continue.

Acting Inspector Rob Maile said: "The team have responded to information supplied by the community. We urge people to come forward with information

either directly to us or through Crimestoppers."

The team also attended the Billericay Christmas Market. Well done to the Rotary Club and partners for a fantastic event enjoyed by many.

We are increasing our foot patrols in the area, so keep a look out for us and please say hello. This includes the High Street, Lake Meadows and many of the residential areas. If you know of areas you feel can do with visible patrols please let us know.

If you would like to raise issues or concerns, come and speak to us on our community patrols around Lake Meadows or at the next Coffee with Cops event at the BP on Radford Way on January 22.

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Greenwoods Hotel & Spa win big at awards ceremony

Every year over 7,000 couples choose Essex as the perfect place to get married, and this year, Greenwoods Hotel & Spa has won Wedding Venue of the Year at the Essex Wedding Awards 2019.

Competition was fierce between the top 10 wedding venues being shortlisted as finalists, which included Hylands House, Forresters Park and High House.

Unique to Essex, the Essex Wedding Awards focus totally on the couples, venues, services and supplies involved in organising weddings within the county.

A total of 21 awards were presented on the night, which was co-hosted by award organisers Chris Milton and Andrew Maxwell.

Included in the awards was Wedding Florist of the Year which was won by Stock Florist, Greenwoods Hotel & Spa's resident florist.

Wedding coordinator Shannen Lentell said: "We are absolutely delighted to have won this award and trophy.

"It's been an amazing journey since we launched our garden suite venue which holds up to 220 for a sit-down reception and, as an exclusive wedding venue, we've enjoyed every one of the very individual weddings we've hosted this year."

Winning the award has been the icing on the cake for what's been a very exciting year for the venue who already hold an AA rosette for Ellis' restaurant and two nationally organised awards for the spa.

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BILLERICAY TOWN FC

LOCAL NEWS BILLERICAY



Photo credit: Nicky Hayes Photography

'Yes, Glenn is still involved'

Rumours that Billericay owner, Glenn Tamplin, is about to sell the club have been dismissed by manager Dean Brennan.

Speaking to BBC Radio Essex, Dean confirmed that Glenn is committed to the club and that they speak every day.

He said: "Yes, Glenn is still involved, I speak to him every day, he's just not in the country at the minute. But we speak on the phone every day, he loves it. He is a great guy, he's good company and we get on really well."

Dean has been left feeling frustrated with the impact that these rumours have had on potential incomings at the club.

He said: "The owner has gave me everything that he said he would do at the start. The support we have at our football club has been excellent. It is frustrating, because we are looking to sign a few players and because of some articles they have questioned it."

Dean outlined that he wants a group of young, hungry players at the club so they can achieve the goal of

winning the title.

He said: "Instead of buying players, we have to start selling players. We have a good wage bill, but we don't need 26 players, I want 19."

"This was supposed to happen in the summer, so I made the decision that it needs to happen now. I didn't feel that with that group of players, we wouldn't have won the title and that's on the evidence that I have seen in the time that I have been here."

This comes after the news that, The Blues midfielder, Jamie O'Hara, has left the club after his 18 month spell at The Lodge.

Dean has admired the structure and the running of top spot rivals Torquay, and has set his eyes on matching their squad's average age.

He added: "If you look at the average age of their squad, it is very young, it's in its low twenties and that just shows you what can happen if you get the organisation and the footballing structure right you can bring success."

"They're the team we have to chase down, like Woking, they've got a young side and at the minute it's the three of us fighting for that top spot."



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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Photo credit: Andy Boulton

Residents gather to save library

There was a big turnout to a consultation to discuss the potential closure of Shenfield Library. Following the meeting, which was held on December 12, Alex Kensit set up a Save Shenfield Library group which has been gaining support.

Speaking about the meeting, Alex said: "Unfortunately, there was absolutely no representation from Essex County Council (ECC) apart from two people who worked for library services. No ECC councillor."

Louise McKinaly, councillor for Hutton, was present, although they were unable to answer a large amount of questions, such as how much the library would cost to run.

"They blatantly denied that the library was at risk of closing, and said it was due to 'sustainability'. They failed to elaborate on this and denied it was a cost

issue, although they later backtracked on this.

"We were simply told to fill in an online survey, which was attacked by many people at the meeting for its complicated nature. Having attempted to fill in this survey myself, I can confirm it was riddled with confusion and would especially confuse older people, who are the most likely to protest against the nature of the library."

The general consensus from the people at the meeting were that they were happy with the library how it is, and they didn't see the need to change it.

Alex continued: "Personally, I understand times are changing, but Shenfield is a growing community as many people pointed out and would be left without a library. We have been told the findings from the consultation will be delivered in the new year."

Cricket club announces new captain



Roy Smith has been announced as Shenfield Cricket Club captain. The experienced batsman will move to the club from Hornchurch.

Speaking about retuning to club as captain, he said: "I'm excited to be joining Shenfield as captain.

"It's a lovely family club with a good Colts set up and I will be looking to get promoted back to the Premier League.

"I had five good successful seasons at Hornchurch, and hopefully the success will rub off on Shenfield."

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Tributes paid to murdered backpacker



Tributes have been paid to a former Brentwood school girl who was murdered whilst backpacking in New Zealand.

Grace Millane, a former Ursuline Convent High School pupil, was remembered by current students at the school's chapel which was opened on December 14 for a remembrance event.

Grace moved to the University of Lincoln following her schooling in Brentwood and she graduated with a Bachelor of Advertising and Marketing in September.

She then went missing in Auckland on December 1 before a police search was launched.

That search ended the next day after finding a body on the outskirts.

A 26-year-old man was subsequently charged with Grace's murder.

The backpacker's family said: "By the amount of pictures and messages we received, she clearly loved

this country, its people and the lifestyle.

"We all hope that what has happened to Grace will not deter even one person from venturing out into the world and discovering their own overseas experience.

"We would like to thank the people of New Zealand for their outpouring of love, numerous messages, tributes and compassion.

"Grace was not born here and only managed to stay a few weeks, but you have taken her to your hearts and in some small way she will forever be a Kiwi."

Grace's dad, David, had flown to New Zealand to visit the place where her body was found.

She had been travelling alone for two weeks, following a six-week group trip through South America.

Police believe she was killed between December 1 and December 2. Police investigating said the force was building "a timeline of the circumstances".

Organisations get more than £16k

Hutton and Shenfield Union Church has received funding from Brentwood Borough Council.

The money will be used to support a monthly free playgroup for dads, grandads, babies and pre-school children – aimed at single dads and those dads at work during the week.

The fund, which was set up to help with causes and projects that improve the quality of life for people in Brentwood, had £16,300 available.

Applicants could apply for grants of up to £2,000 for projects and initiatives that benefit Brentwood communities. These projects must be delivered in the

borough by the end of 2019 and should demonstrate volunteer or community involvement.

Brentwood Borough Council's chairman of community, health and housing committee, councillor Chris Hossack, said: "It's always good to see the community putting forward such a broad range of initiatives that support the wider community.

"It is always unfortunate that we are unable to support them all, but for those who were unsuccessful, we are offering feedback on their application and helping them see if they are eligible for funding from elsewhere."



BURGHART for BRENTWOOD



Alex Burghart MP for Brentwood and Ongar



As I write this the extraordinary year that has been 2018 is drawing to a close – but you will be reading it at the start of a new year.

The year has ended in a whirl of events in Parliament around the pending Brexit deal, with things changing at such a pace that anything I write now may be out of date by tonight – let alone by **VISION's** January publication date.

Here in Essex the year has passed unbelievably quickly. I've continued in my quest to visit all schools in the constituency and been impressed by the creativity of our primary school children. This was reinforced by the wealth of artistic talent brought forth on my Christmas card competition which was won by Imogen (aged nine) from St Helen's Junior School.

I've held meetings with farmers, businesses,

hospital staff and social workers. I've shadowed police officers and ambulance crew on shift, and have welcomed the Chancellor, Philip Hammond, back to his childhood town of Shenfield to give a talk to party members.

I've supported constituents in their cases involving housing, benefits, visas and child maintenance. I've supported campaigners for a lift at Brentwood Station, helped residents of Hunter Avenue in their battle with the rail authorities, and looked into Essex County Council's consultation on libraries.

The new year will bring more of the same and many new issues too. As ever, if there's anything you'd like me to visit, look into, campaign for, promote or pontificate about please do let me know. I hope you had a wonderful Xmas – here's to a wonderful 2019.

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From Stevenage to Superstardom

Fresh from claiming his historic fifth World Championship, we look at where Formula One icon Lewis Hamilton came from and why he's still got plenty of gas left in the tank.

Formula One is an extraordinary sport where everything can change in the turn of a wheel, but at the Mexican Grand Prix in October, Lewis Hamilton's straight-line, dogged determination was the driving force as, despite finishing fourth, he claimed his fifth F1 Driver's Championship – the world's greatest racing driver and proof, beyond doubt, that the 33-year-old Mercedes man is one of the all-time greats.

As it stands, only legendary Michael Schumacher – with seven world titles – sits in front of him, and there are aching similarities between the pair, notably in their dedication, relentless attitude and fastidious approach to racing.

Born in Stevenage to humble beginnings, it was Hamilton's father who noticed his six-year-old son's potential when he gave him a remote-controlled car. For Anthony, who had moved to the UK from Grenada with his parents in the 1950s, this was a chance to give his son the life he never had, and over the years he would make incredible sacrifices, even at one point holding down three jobs to further Hamilton's development.

Now, over a quarter of a century later, the racer's life is a million miles away from those early days in Hertfordshire. Famous, successful, adored and a hit

with the ladies, you wouldn't blame the former McLaren star if he called it a day, jetting off to Monaco to enjoy his vast wealth. But Hamilton is as ambitious as ever, as noted by two victories in the final two races in Brazil and Abu Dhabi after he'd already clinched the title.

Respect and recognition from the UK public came, even though Hamilton's persona leaves some with mixed emotions towards the star. He is very much a 'Marmite' figure – in the racing world universally admired, but in straying into the world of celebrity, with all its Instagram-fuelled clumsiness and bravado, Hamilton attracts criticism.

While the tabloids will talk, it is ultimately the public who matter for Hamilton, and if he ever feels his place in our hearts is dwindling, he need only look at the appeal he has annually at the BBC Sports Personality of the Year awards. Having scooped the prestigious gong in 2014 and been runner-up in 2007 and 2008, Hamilton came so close to rounding off 2018 with another title when claiming second place in a lavish event in Birmingham in the middle of December.

He said: "I have got my family with me tonight – it has been a really, really long journey and I am proud of what this year has produced.

"It really was a dream for us all as a family to do something different. We all set our goals very, very high, and we have achieved a lot, but of course I still want to go further, and that's what next year can bring... but I am very proud in this moment."



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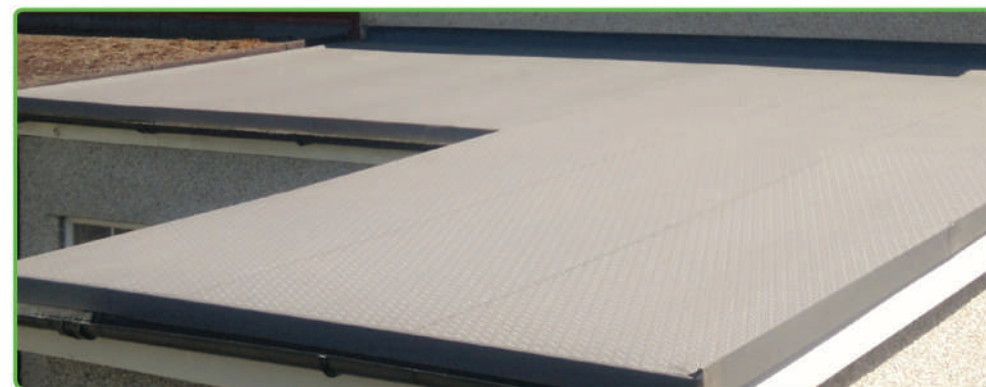
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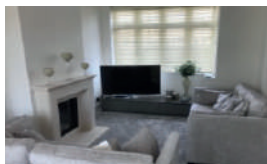
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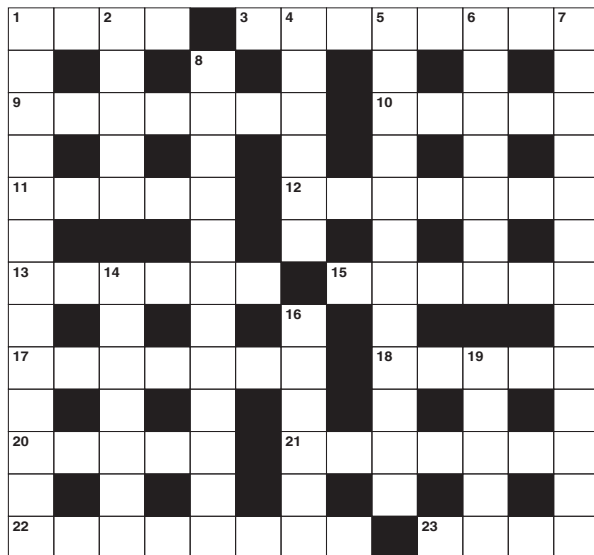
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ACROSS

1. Gear wheels (4)
3. Combine into one (8)
9. Person proposed for office (7)
10. A sense (5)
11. With speed (5)
12. Widening at the bottom (7)
13. Distinct being (6)
15. Season before Christmas (6)
17. Cigar (7)
18. ___ Mirren: *The Queen* actress (5)
20. Facial protuberances (5)
21. Large area of land (7)
22. Author (8)
23. Blast of a horn (4)

DOWN

1. Gradual healing (13)
2. Third Greek letter (5)
4. Unique (3-3)
5. Popular takeaway food (4,3,5)
6. Simian (7)
7. The ___ : intellectual movement (13)
8. Contagiously (12)



14. Long locks of hair (7)
16. State of mental strain; anxiety (6)
19. Foreign language (slang) (5)

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- The sunset on Mars appears blue.
- Stars are hot and give off their own light, which is why we can see the stars at night.
- The sun is one of at least 200 billion stars in the galaxy.
- The speed of light in space is about 300,000,000 metres per second.
- A year on Mars is almost twice as long as a year on Earth.
- Most planets have at least one satellite in orbit around them.
- Mercury is the smallest planet and Jupiter is the largest.
- Earth is the only planet not named after a god or goddess.

SUDOKU

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		7	5	1	4	6	
		5	7				
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		3					9
	1				7		

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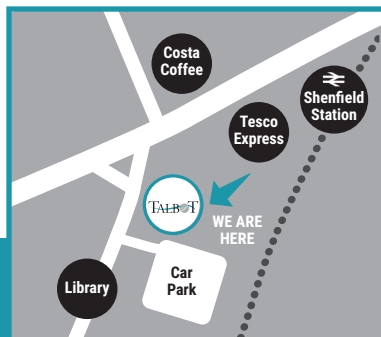
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BOOST happy hormones

It can be hard to remain positive and motivated this month, with a combination of cold weather, empty purses and the inevitable return to work after Christmas playing havoc with your mood.

1. **Oxytocin** – The Love Hormone

This feel-good neurochemical is centred around the notion of trust and is vital for maintaining healthy relationships. You can stimulate oxytocin by simply touching another person; with a quick hug, by holding hands or by indulging in a massage. Being comfortable with your sense of touch is important in improving your social interactions and can help create positive bonding experiences with those around you.

2. **Endorphins** – The Euphoria Hormone

Endorphin is also known as the counter chemical as it helps to balance your stress levels, boost your mood and reduce anxiety. The easiest way to release this hormone is with a full on belly laugh, so next time you are feeling stressed, share a joke or amusing anecdote with a friend or colleague. Laughter really is the best medicine.

3. **Dopamine** – The Motivational Hormone

This clever chemical is responsible for feelings of pleasure and reward which in turn motivates you to repeat a specific behaviour. A good way to ensure you have regular releases of dopamine is to break down your goals into step by step manageable objectives. Sufficient sleep and regular exercise can also help regulate dopamine levels in your brain.

4. **Serotonin** – The Confidence Hormone

Serotonin controls how you feel from one minute to the next. High levels result in feelings of satisfaction and accomplishment, whereas low levels are associated with loneliness and low mood. A quick way to boost serotonin is by reflecting on your past successes as well as increasing your vitamin D intake and being kind to others.



HEALTH & FITNESS





Lapland 2019

Photo credit: Roman Babin/Shutterstock.com

PLAN THE ULTIMATE SANTA EXPERIENCE

Imagine your children's faces waking up on Christmas morning in a log cabin, surrounded by snow and all set to meet Father Christmas himself. Think it is out of your price range? Start shopping around now and you could save £100s.

Choose your destination

One of the most popular destinations is Rovaniemi, the capital of Finnish Lapland. It is only a 10-minute drive to the Santa Claus Village and offers a wide variety of shops, restaurants and bars. Yllas, in northern Finland, is best for those wanting a peaceful stay combined with stunning scenery. If a thriving night scene is what you are after, then look no further than Levi, where you might get to see the Northern Lights. And Ruka is the perfect destination for skiing enthusiasts, with 29 runs available.

All-inclusive or independent booking?

Depending on your budget and list of requirements,

it may be cheaper for you to book your accommodation and your flight separately. Finnair, TUI, Norwegian and Thomas Cook airlines all fly from the UK to Lapland and you can get some great deals in the January sales.

Determine your wish list

From dog-sledding to reindeer sleigh rides, to snowmobile safaris, Lapland has so many once-in-a-lifetime activities that the whole family will love. Not forgetting of course, the unmissable Santa Claus Village where your little ones can meet Father Christmas and all his elves.

Decide on dates

Many families want to wake up in Lapland on Christmas morning, but this is by far the most expensive time to visit in the whole year. Consider visiting in early December for a very similar experience but at a much cheaper price.

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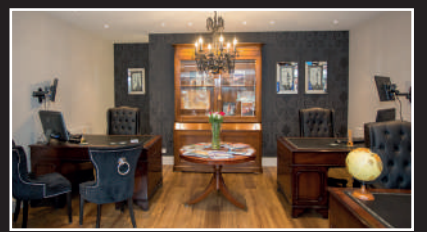
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The New Year is upon us and you most likely have your New Year's resolutions sussed out. Perhaps your resolution is to be more active and stick to a fitness routine, or you strive to be in a better financial situation by this time next year.

If like us, your resolution is to keep up to date with the latest beauty trends, we have your back. Jump on the January beauty bandwagon and take note of these cool spring trends.

HOLLA AT HARMONIOUS HAIR

The slightly wet, wavy hair look is what everyone is craving this month. Think cool waves, and a fresh, light bounce to give the illusion of just washed hair, even on those extra busy mornings. Start with dry hair and smooth over a generous amount of curling hydrating oil onto the ends. The oil will give the shiny, 'just washed' hair feel that lasts all day. For unruly hair, a frizz taming gel will go a long way.

GET LIPPY

That festive, bold lip you were sporting last month is taking a step back in January. Matte nudes and browns are to take centre stage in your make up bag this month. But if you're not quite ready to ditch the red then why not pick a muted red or flushed

pink to create the illusion of naturally tinted lips.

SPARKLE-EYE

If like us you're missing the Christmas sparkle, you will love this trend. Sixties eyes are back. Glittery eyeshadow will carry you all through spring. For a subtle glitter eye, a small amount will take you a long way. If you're prepared to go that little bit extra though, double layers of pressed on glitter is hot this year. Imagine a full on, slicked foil effect.

NEW YEAR, NEW MAN - WITH BEARD

Fancy growing a beard in 2019? Whether you're thinking of growing or maintaining your facial hair, keep your hair soft and nourished. Use a beard oil to tame the frizz and keep the hairs in their place and a moisturising balm to condition the hairs and to minimise dry skin and flakiness.

SANS BEARD

Keep your skin supple and protected throughout the colder months by using a hydrating face moisturiser and remember to exfoliate weekly. An exfoliator containing salicylic acid will help to break down dead skin cells which can clog pores and cause breakouts.



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EGG-CELLENT IDEAS

Egg is pure protein which fills you up for longer, keeping hunger at bay until lunch, so indulge your inner bodybuilder and get cracking. From omelettes stuffed with ham, spinach and goats cheese, to perfectly poached domes atop English muffins, and even with your classic 'soldiers', eggs are almost definitely the elusive breakfast of champions.

OAT SENSATIONS

They're cheap, healthy and one bag goes a very long way, but that doesn't mean oats are the boring option... far from it. Even a brekkie standard like porridge can be jazzed up with various fruit compotes, nuts and seeds. You can also add them to a smoothie, or mix with yogurt, berries and grated apple overnight for creamy bircher muesli. If that doesn't appeal, even toast with maple syrup to make your own granola (it tastes way better than the shop-bought version).

PERFECT PARFAIT

Want to get posh for breakfast? Make a parfait! Layer yogurt, granola and fresh fruit in a glass for a breakfast that looks like a dessert but is actually your Monday morning saviour.

PANCAKES, PANCAKES AND MORE PANCAKES

Pancakes — they're easier than you think, and very cheap. Just beat eggs, flour, sugar, milk and baking powder together and fry in batches to create those gorgeously fluffy American pancakes you see in films. Just add bacon, maple syrup and lots of black coffee.





Healthy VEGAN MEALS



Feeling up for a challenge? Vegan is the word on everyone's lips this new year. Whether you fancy trying something new or you are looking to eat a little bit healthier in 2019, we have a selection of delicious, easy and nutritious food ideas to get you through January effortlessly.

BUDDHA BOWL

The Buddha bowl is such a fun and creative way to eat lunch and can be adapted to include any toppings you like. A delicious suggestion is to chop tomatoes, broccoli and some lettuce and then arrange in a bowl. Add chick peas and some sliced sweet potato to the bowl. You can easily make your own salsa with diced tomatoes, lemon juice, onions and coriander as well.

VEGAN CHILLI

This chilli is perfect for a cool January evening. Grab your slow cooker and throw in some chopped mushrooms, onion and peppers. Measure 60g of quinoa and lentils per person and throw this in too. Then add half a can of kidney beans, a tin of tomatoes and a generous helping of sweetcorn. Flavour the pot up with a tablespoon of chilli powder, one teaspoon of cumin and one teaspoon of basil. Then finish off with 100ml of vegetable stock and leave to simmer on low for around four hours. Serve with some brown rice and top with chopped coriander and spring onions.

BANANA NICE CREAM

This is a simple but fun ice cream recipe that children will love to join in with and make. With only four ingredients, you can't go wrong with the chocolate chip nice cream. Mash together four bananas, maple syrup and vanilla extract and blend until smooth. Then simply stir in some cacao nibs and freeze until firm.

Photo credit: www.popsugar.co.uk

Valentine's Day

Thursday 14th February 2019

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Online Dating DICTIONARY



TECHNOLOGY

You think you have got the hang of online dating; swipe right for yes, left for no, always meet in a public place, but then the lingo just keeps on evolving.

CASPERING

Aptly named after the loveable ghost Casper, caspering is a friendly alternative to ghosting (where you completely ignore someone you have previously been corresponding with). Instead you make your feelings clear and let them down gently.

Example of caspering: "I have really enjoyed getting to know you, but I don't think we are compatible."

BREADCRUMBING

The act of sending out suggestive but non-committal messages to someone you like online; just like you are leaving a trail of breadcrumbs.

Example of breadcrumbing: "I'm not sure if meeting up is a good idea right now. I did dream about you last night though."

PEACOCKING

As the name suggests, peacocking is when you

act like a peacock, using your physical appearance to obtain attention from potential suitors.

Example of peacocking: Posting multiple pictures of yourself looking fabulous on Instagram, Facebook and all other social media and tagging everyone you know.

FREECLIMBING

An online dating faux pas, freeclimbing is when you go mad googling someone you have been matched with prior to even meeting them.

Example of freeclimbing: Trailing through old Facebook photographs desperate to see what their ex looks like or googling their employment history.

SNEATING

Undeniably one of the worst dating actions, sneating is when someone goes on a date purely to bag a free meal or night out. A sneater will have no physical or emotional investment in the other person, it is purely monetary.

Example of sneating: "I'd love to go out with you. How about we make a real night of it? Dinner, drinks, show?"

As a landlord you're in a unique position in that your property isn't a home, it's a business. From a large stately home to a city-centre flat, regardless of your property size you'll want to protect your investment. That's where landlord insurance through Coversure comes in, helping to protect you from a range of risks that modern-day landlords face.

Considering your property could be affected by unruly tenants, natural disasters and thieves, it's crucial to ensure you get the correct level of protection. Below we'll highlight the key components you should consider including in your cover.

Buildings Cover

This does what it says on the tin and helps to protect you against the costs to repair or rebuild the property if it is damaged or destroyed by fires, flood or accidental damage. This forms the cornerstone of most property insurance based policies.

Contents Cover

Do you furnish your property for your tenants? If you

leave contents in your rented property, contents cover is crucial to keep you protected. From sofas to white goods, with contents cover you can gain financial assistance with repairing or replacing your contents.

Rent Guarantee

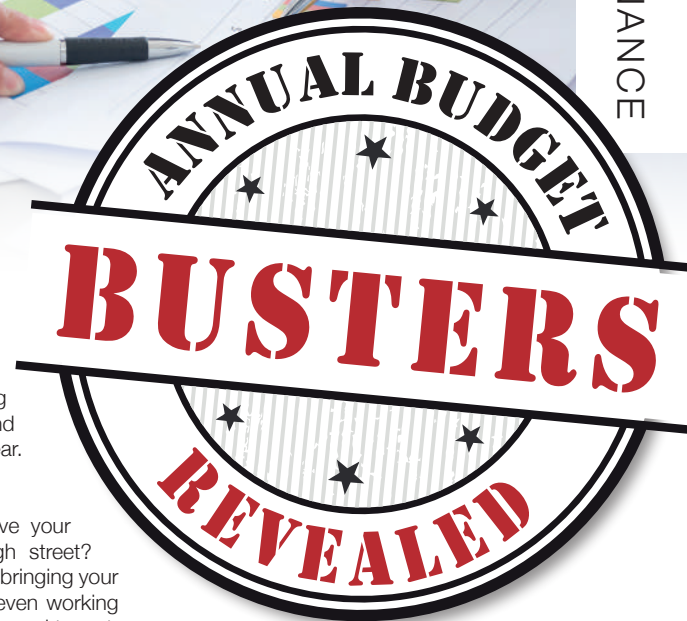
As a landlord, if you're not getting rent, you're losing out on your investment. So if anything forces your property to be vacant, such as renovation or repair, rent guarantee can continue to provide an income to you.

Liability Cover

If a tenant or a visitor ends up gaining an injury, becomes ill or damages their possessions due to a fault of your property then you could be held accountable in a court of law. Landlord's liability cover helps to protect you against the compensation from these claims.

Want To Know More?

The team at Coversure Brentwood can assist you with all your landlord insurance needs, simply call Coversure Brentwood on 01277 295504 today.



An increase in expenses can be the death of many SMEs who have to compete against larger corporations for customers as well as wholesale goods.

Check out our top tips for cutting back on your monthly expenditures and stay firmly in the black this financial year.

1. EVALUATE YOUR OFFICE SPACE

Is it really necessary for you to have your business based directly on the high street? Could you consider going mobile and bringing your services directly to your clients? Or even working from home? Alternatively, if you are a good tenant, try negotiating with your existing landlord for better lease terms.

2. NEGOTIATE YOUR SUPPLY COSTS

It can be easy to become complacent with your suppliers, especially if you have built up a solid and friendly relationship with them. But you must remember that business is business and failing to ask for discounts could be the difference between you staying afloat or going under. You should always check competitor rates regularly and feed back your findings to your current supplier to negotiate a better deal.

3. BARTER FOR GOODS AND SERVICES

This may seem like a concept taken from the

caveman years but bartering for services is actually a win-win situation for both parties involved. If you have a particular skill, why not offer this to another local business in return for one of their services? This can also help you build good relationships with them.

4. ANALYSE ADVERTISING SPEND

It is vital to regularly analyse how effective your current advertising is. SMEs can often benefit from local media as it is a trusted medium that yields quick results. Having a strong social media presence is also essential in this day and age and free if you are willing to create and update your accounts yourself.



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REACHED YOUR HALF-CENTURY? HOW TO PLAN FOR RETIREMENT

Once you reach 50, it's time to get serious about planning your retirement. True, it could still seem ages away, and you may not be thinking of giving up work anytime soon. However, putting a retirement plan together will help you understand what your finances will look like when you decide to take life easy.

Retirement planning isn't just about getting your money organised, although that's vitally important. Depending on your circumstances, you may want to think about completely changing your lifestyle, moving home, travelling the world, or simply putting your feet up. And like all big projects in life, the more time you can invest in thinking it through, the better.

Start by taking stock – Getting financial advice will help you get a true perspective on how your pension planning is shaping up. We will help you work out the value of your current plans, including your state pension entitlement. If you've lost track of pensions held with past employers, now is

a good time to get them traced. If you've several pension plans, we will be able to help you work out if it would make sense to consolidate them.

And don't just think about pensions; having money in ISAs will help in planning your retirement income tax-efficiently.

Do your sums – Don't leave it until the last minute to work out how much money you'll need to live on in retirement. Some costs will go down, like travel to work, but others like utility bills are likely to increase as you spend more time at home. Factor in the cost of the travel, holidays and hobbies you're likely to want to pursue when you have more time.

As part of the service at HCR, we take the time to understand our clients unique planning needs and circumstances, so that we can provide you with the most suitable solutions in the most cost-effective way. For a free review of your current pension plans and financial situation, please contact Andy Costin, Independent Financial Adviser on 01277 654153.



Who do you think becomes the guardian for your children?

It's never too early to make provisions for your children

YES it is difficult but it is essential to face the possibility that young children could be left without parents to care for them. Who would you want to look after your children if you were to die? If you do not decide, the local authorities and courts will decide for you. Their idea of the 'best' care for your children may be very different from yours. Be aware too that an unmarried father does not automatically become guardian to his children.



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MOTORING

The road TO NOWHERE?

THE FURTHEST YOU CAN DRIVE FROM THE UK

We've all been excited by the fanciful notion of getting in the car to embark on some kind of hedonistic adventure, albeit with the idea of returning a day or so later refreshed and revived from the freedom of the open road.

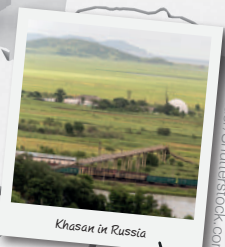
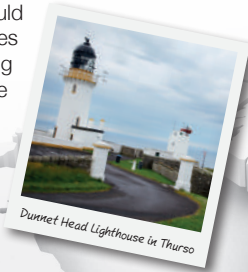
But what if you just kept on driving... on and on into the worldly wilderness... where exactly would you end up? The answer, of course, is Khasan, in Russia.

Yes, it's true. A trip from any part of the UK using only designated roads (and the Eurotunnel in order to escape the UK) would land you on the most eastern border of North Korea.

But if you don't fancy traversing for over a week across the Eastern Bloc, there are other trips that are plentifully fanciful.

HEADING SOUTH:

Using London's Charing Cross station (the capital's accepted 'central point') as a starting position, you could venture as far as Sagres in Portugal before running out of road, a driveable distance of 1,520 miles.



Now then. who's driving back?

HEADING NORTH:

Venture north and you'll wind up at Dunnet Head Lighthouse in Thurso, having driven some 688 miles and crossed only one border.

HEADING WEST:

If your steering guides you in a westerly direction you'll rock up at St Davids on the west coast of Wales, the UK's smallest city with a population of just 1,800 people. You can get there on one tank of petrol as it's little more than 257 miles away.

HEADING EAST:

But several petrol stops – and a straight face at passport control – will be required if you're to make it all the way to Khasan.

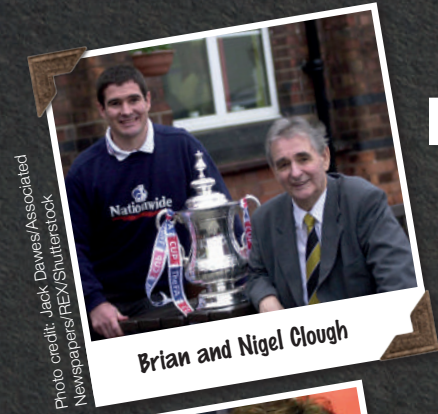
You'll have driven through Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Poland, taken in Belarus and the Russian capital itself, Moscow, clocking up 7,573 miles whilst undoubtedly losing the will to live, but will have achieved the furthest driveable route from our fair isle.

Photo credit: Stefan Brudei/Shutterstock.com

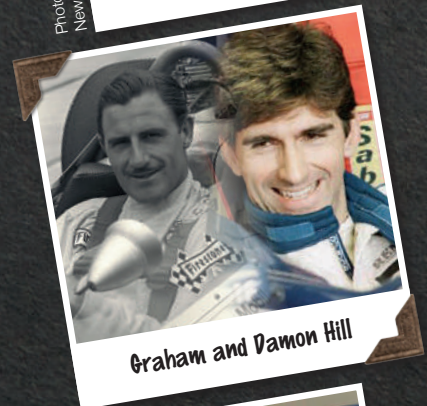


SPORT

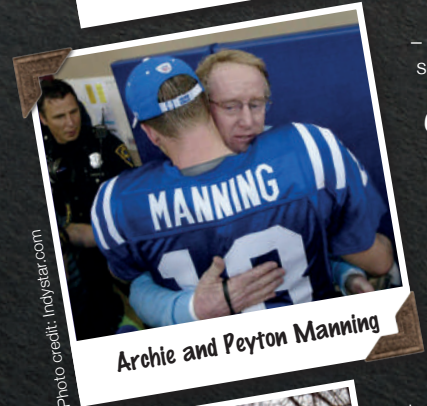
LIKE Father LIKE SON



Brian and Nigel Clough



Graham and Damon Hill



Archie and Peyton Manning



Eidur and Arnor Gudjohnsen

THE WORLD'S GREATEST FATHER/SON SPORTING DOUBLE ACTS

BRIAN AND NIGEL CLOUGH

While Brian was one of a kind in guiding Nottingham Forest to two-time European greatness, his son was emerging as someone who, on the pitch, could do everything his father could off it. It's no coincidence that Forest's last major top-division stint had the dad in the dugout and his son – an England international – on the pitch, before both went their separate ways and Forest's fortunes slumped.

GRAHAM AND DAMON HILL

It was bittersweet for British F1 racer Damon Hill upon clinching his first and only world title – with Williams in 1996 – that his father Graham wasn't there to see it. His dad was killed while piloting a light aircraft in bad weather in 1975, when Damon was just 15. Graham had clinched two world titles, in 1962 and 1968.

ARCHIE AND PEYTON MANNING

While Archie singlehandedly drove forward a poor New Orleans Saints NFL team across a playing career of 13 years before retiring in the early 1980s, his son Peyton made it to two Superbowls and is regarded by many as the greatest quarterback in the sport's history – a modern-day icon with Indianapolis Colts and Denver Broncos.

EIDUR AND ARNOR GUDJOHNSEN

What links these two Icelandic footballing legends is arguably their longevity. Arnor, who played for Anderlecht against Spurs in the 1984 UEFA Cup Final, continued club football beyond his 40th birthday, while Eidur, a hero at Chelsea who scored Champions League success with Barcelona, finally hung up his boots in 2016, aged 38.

Now, a third Gudjohnsen – also Arnor – is on the starting blocks, having signed for Swansea City.

Photo credit: 90s Football Twitter

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Train to Teach Essex #1

Billericay School, School Road, Billericay, CM12 9LH

January 9, 4.30pm - 7pm



Train to Teach Events ☒ **Teaching**

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Our free Train to Teach events will provide you with a wealth of information on how to get into teaching and how to apply for training in Essex.

ESSEX LEGENDS

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The event will allow you to attend a presentation on the different teacher training options, speak to primary and secondary teacher training providers, talk to current trainee teachers and practicing teachers, find out if you are eligible for a bursary or scholarship, find out about Subject Knowledge Enhancement courses, receive tips about completing your UCAS application and personal statement and find out how to arrange school experience at a local school.

Cercle francais de Basildon et Billericay

The Fold (Billericay Arts Centre), 72 Laindon Road, Billericay, CM12 9LD

January 11, 8pm

Club meeting, Fete des Rois, and talk in French by Brigitte Whiting Un tour a Madagascar, with food to sample after the talk.

Finance Career Talk

Finance Career Talk

Billericay School, School Road, Billericay, CM12 9LH

January 15, 6pm - 7.30pm

Interested in careers in the finance sector? Then come along to Billericay School.

Speakers from Essex and London based employers including accountancy, insurance and investment companies.

Open to students from all schools in Essex for those in Year 13 and considering finance roles. Parents and carers welcome.

Shenfield U3A event

Mountnessing Village Hall, Roman Road, Mountnessing, CM15 0UH

January 16, 10.15am - noon

U3A monthly meeting. Speaker Dr Jane Pearson talks about Essex Hospitals before the NHS.

For more information, visit u3asites.org.uk/shenfield/home

Hope Mums – Your Views

Long Ridings Primary School, Long Ridings Avenue, Shenfield, CM13 1DU

January 19, 10.30am - 12.30pm



An event for single mums and their kids.

We'd love to hear what you thought of Hope Mums in 2018, what worked, and what didn't?

We need your help to plan an amazing 2019 for you all. If you're new or been with us a while come and tell us your ideas.

Kids will be supervised by our DBS checked kids' workers, drinks and snacks provided. FREE event.

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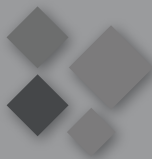
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