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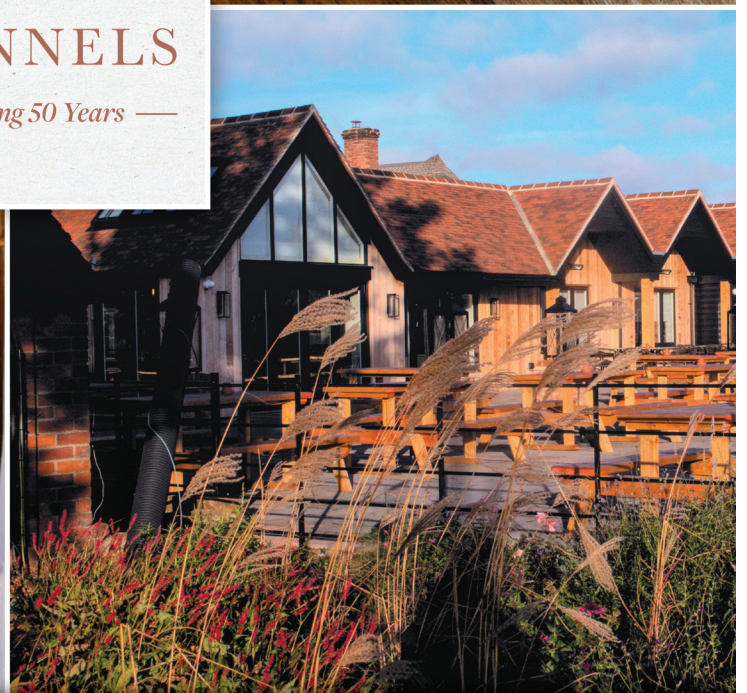
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## IT'S OVER!

If you've ever seen the movie *Little Voice* and watched Michael Caine, playing the part of Ray Say, a third rate talent spotter of usually third rate acts, stagger on stage and sing with undisguised angst about the end of his career as everything turns to shit for him, then you'll know exactly how *The Edge* feels, as this is probably its last ever edition.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know your editor has said that before, but this time, I'm (pretty) sure I'm not telling porkies.

So am I angry?

Yes, I am, a bit. Because I've known some really good times over *The Edge's* 27.5 year history (and I honestly couldn't have imagined such longevity would ever pan out when I took issue *numero uno* to the printers way back in late September 1996). The annoying part is the fact that I'm pretty sure I've regularly delivered some pretty decent editions throughout the years, containing thoughtful content from thoughtful contributors, which is always well laid out, while surely no-one can ever question either the look or the feel of *The Edge* whenever you pick up a copy and it's in your hands.

But clearly these days that's not enough. The world's changed, perhaps *The Edge* hasn't changed with it, and all anyone ever looks at is their own mobile phone. Folk simply walk along staring at the bloody things. What's more, you often see two people sat together in a restaurant, yet they're not even conversing, preferring to interact with their respective mobile phones instead, which can't be right.

When the likes of Facebook came along and all the rest of it (including Instagram and bloody TikTok), sure, *The Edge* never embraced it, simply because it found it of no interest whatsoever, and that's 100% on me. My bad, as they (seem to) say these days. But being 'a one man band', it's hard to do everything yourself; you simply cannot master everything, and it was at that point that I really needed someone to take control of *The Edge* online (which is pretty much non-existent) while I stuck to what I know best.

Unfortunately that never happened. That person never materialised.

*C'est la vie.*

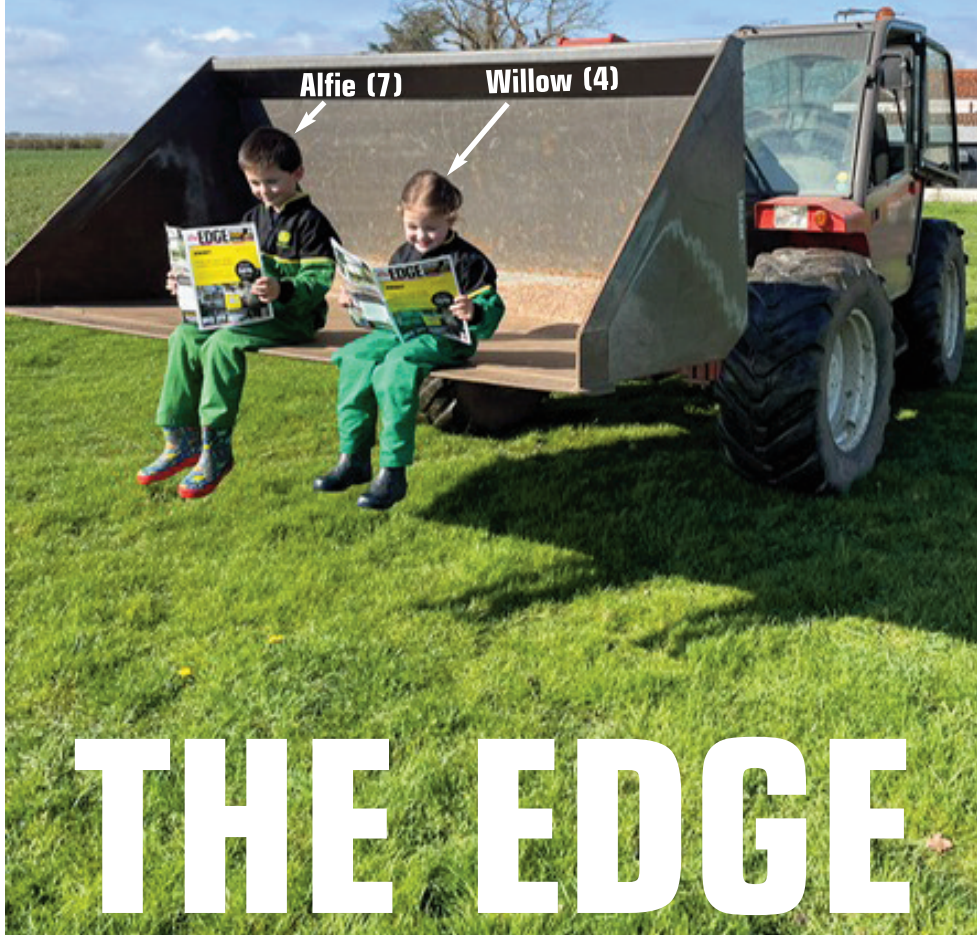
So let me state, for the record, my sincere thanks to both *The Edge's* contributors (those who have written for the publication) and it's advertisers over the years, without whom none of it would have been possible.

But there's no point dwelling on it. As Roy Orbison wrote and Michael Caine so eloquently sang, "It's over".... unless somehow, *somehow*, *The Edge* can resurrect itself in the run up to Christmas for one final hurrah, although that's out of my hands?

So what now for a washed up old editor soon to be aged 63?

Well, I'm not sure, but I'm open to offers.

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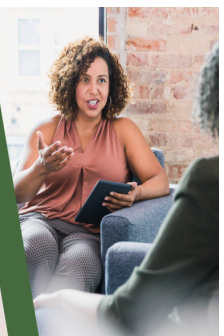
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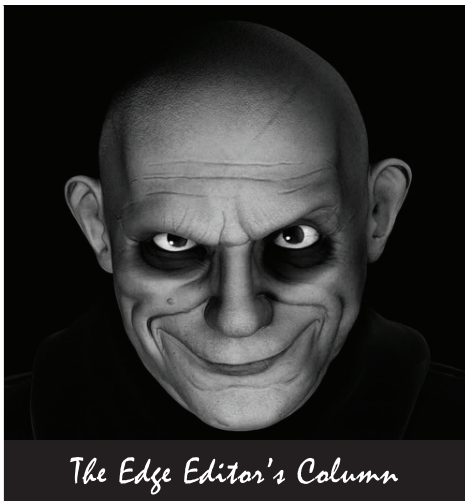
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## The Edge Editor's Column

### WASTE & RECYCLING

I cannot believe that, after launching a six week public consultation to let local folk have their say as to whether to keep the current booking system at local recycling centres (i.e. including our very own local tip at the Springfield/ Boreham interchange) or to ditch it, in favour of the former 'turn up and chance your arm' option, Essex County Council apparently received 18,000 responses with the majority of residents wishing to *keep* it for cars/vans.

Oh my word, surely the booking system was only ever warranted and useful for weekend trips to the dump from the evidence I've witnessed over the years, and how anyone can disagree with your editor on this particular subject quite frankly I find to be outrageous.

### THE BEST TIME OF THE ENTIRE YEAR IS RIGHT NOW

Spring. New life. Colour. Hope.

### WIKIPEDIA

The Edge is actually mentioned under the heading of Chelmsford. Fair enough, it's only one line and you do have to search for it, but it's there nonetheless. I quote: "A popular publication is the free 'Edge' magazine, a primarily volunteer effort aimed at older Chelmsfordians." Aye, I'll take that.

### HARDY

Do you remember on this page last month I told you that I now buy all of my wine from the Majestic Wine Warehouse in Springfield Road, as opposed to purchasing from a supermarket?

Well (obviously), I've had call to pop in there again recently and this time an excellent Scottish chappy by the name of Hardy assisted me.

Naturally he managed to bump up my average SPB (spend per bottle) from £7.49 to £8.49 (the crafty jock), but it was worth it, as I explained to him what I thought I was after and my god, he's a knowledgeable bugger, although without a hint of pomposity or one upmanship, which was appreciated.

What's more, he even printed out a 'Product Knowledge' page on a sheet of A4 which gave me a resume of each of the 6 bottles I'd purchased, before gentlemanly carrying them all boxed up out to my car for me.

In a word, brilliant service...and you readers know that I don't say that about very much at all these days.

### ARSE

So I was surveying with Lurch, Scott and young Jake (well, I say 'young', but he's actually 27) when I noticed the latter wasn't wearing a belt (which is a crime, right? Otherwise

what are those loops around the top of your jeans flapping about for?). So I said to him, "If I didn't wear a belt, my jeans would be around my ankles."

But that wasn't because my jeans in question were too big; it's simply the fact that my arse seems to have totally disappeared these days.

"Yeah," said Jake, "my dad says that too." (His dad's 3 years younger than me, readers, so Jake's now started calling me 'Grandad'!) Seriously though, where does a bloke's arse go to? I don't exercise anywhere near as much as I used to do, but one thing I still do is squats, though without weights, as I thought they might help keep it at least a little 'peachy'. But clearly not, as instead, I am shaped like a human tadpole.

### FINAL EDITION

So here we are. I've reached the final bit of space of my final Editor's Column. How the hell do you 'sign off' after such a very long time?

Tell you what, I'm not going to. Because it's like Deaks says (see page 20), issue 321 sounds so much better than going out on issue 320, but what I really, *really* want is to produce the September, October, November and December editions on the run up to Christmas this year, so let's see if between us (and all of you advertisers out there are going to need to play a big part) we can't cobble up four more editions and then I'll definitely retire, I promise, as Mrs Edge will have already done so by then.

So come on, get your advertisement bookings registered right now!

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## 320 Edge mags

Yes, that's how many editions your editor has produced to date and I have a single copy of each. But does anyone want them? You know, for posterity, or whatever? I did once contact the Essex Museum to see if they were interested, but I never heard anything back, so presumed not. And I did always think that one day I might like to read them all, whilst sat by the fire-side (before burning 'em) in later life, but Mrs Edge would simply like them out of the hoose right noo (well, you know what women are like).

"What's done is done," she says. "There'll be a lot less clutter if you get rid of them." Clutter?

Bloody clutter?

I dunno.

It's 27.5 years of my life. Surely there's bound to be stuff in them that'll no doubt bring me fond memories, were I to keep 'em all and read 'em all one day. But sometimes you've just got to let go, haven't you? And make a clean break, as it were.

It's odd though, as clearly The Edge has been 'the greatest thing since sliced bread in the history of Chelmsford' to my mind, yet clearly the likes of the Essex Museum don't see it that way.

So I suppose what I'm saying is that if any of you avid readers out there would like the whole damn lot (one copy of every single issue - although maybe there might be one or two missing somewhere in the mix?) then simply get in touch.

Mind you, it'd make you a proper weirdo.

[shaun@theedgemag.co.uk](mailto:shaun@theedgemag.co.uk)



## They won't shell themselves

Well they won't, will they?

Someone's got to do it!

So I snapped this young lass doing just that in Thai a Roy Dee's in Leeds recently, whilst on yet another surveying trip oop north.

As I think I've already mentioned, from my limited experience of 'Evenings Out Oop North' - bearing in mind that ours usually consist of a couple of pints in a Wetherspoons, followed by a Thai and then bed by 10pm - I do prefer Leeds to the likes of Liverpool, Manchester or Newcastle, which I'm reckoning puts me in a minority so far as you southerners are concerned, doesn't it?

So where's your favourite place oop north?

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# WHAT THIS PICTURE SAYS TO THE EDGE...



"Caen Hill Locks on the Kennet & Avon Canal, Wiltshire."

These are the 29 locks that have a rise of 237ft over 2 miles with a 1-in-44 gradient near Divizes in Wiltshire that Edge sis'-and-bro'-in-law will once again have to tackle on their narrowboat as they at last come out of hibernation to rejoin the land of the living out on the waterways after spending the winter moored up in a marina just a couple of miles south at Foxhangers Wharf.

What a prospect, eh, readers?

Twenty-nine of the buggers, one immediately after the other.

And it's not as if you can have a rest or a brew part way through. Oh no, because once you start, you simply have to complete the task/course before you can get anywhere.

They are actually known as 'One of the Seven Wonders of the Waterways' (true) and it takes between 5 and 6 hours to get through them all.

Seriously readers, you don't just 'nip anywhere' once you're living on a narrowboat or a barge. Everything has to be planned, even more so since they bought their craft and sold their car, although I have to say, they seem to have taken to life 'floating about' like a pair of ducks to water.

And they're already planning where to moor up next winter and it's looking like it might be Llangollen Marina on the River Dee in Denbighshire, Wales, which was the one and only time Mrs Edge and I spent a week with them on a hired narrowboat and your editor even had a shot at 'driving' it!

Llangollen's lovely though, so we'll definitely be visiting them there.

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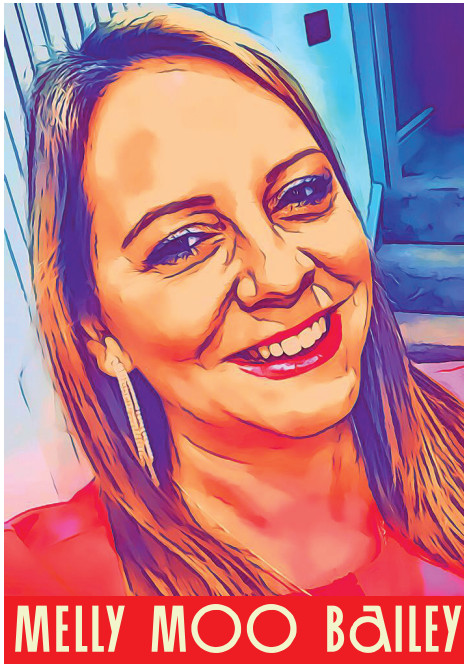


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## The Legendary Old Seadog

You may recall from my previous column that 2024 has not been the best so far as health goes for us, particularly in relation to my dearest Dad, the 'Old Sea Dog'. After several months of what appeared to be repetitive respiratory flare ups, he finally 'ran aground' in January and ended up in hospital for three weeks. He was discharged with enough medication to sink a ship, and advised he would be monitored as an out patient. However, no monitoring whatsoever occurred and a few weeks later, the poor old Captain ended up dropping anchor back at the hospital, where he spent another 8 days in a holding bay awaiting transfer to a ward for proper assessment and treatment, and even then I suspect he was only moved because I had made a formal complaint.

This time they decided they should try to drain his lungs (why this wasn't done, or even considered, during his first hospital stint I truly cannot fathom), but half-a-litre of infected fluid lighter and one fully re-inflated lung later, Dad was feeling much better, although obviously still very weakened from his 6 week hospital incarceration. However, our annual weekend family trip was looming and this

year it was to a gorgeous house on the Norfolk Broads and Dad was absolutely insistent that he be discharged in time to go. Everything was crazily up in the air until the eleventh hour, but in true Captain style, he managed to burst out of hospital and execute an escape late the very night before we were due to go, thus the trip was ON.

The house we rented was called 'Still Waters' in Hoveton and it couldn't have come with a more fitting name. It was a stunning, modern dwelling, sitting right on the backwater in Wroxham, and the best thing was it came with its own boat and mooring.

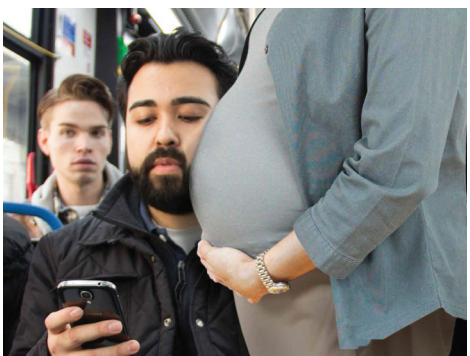
By the time we fought our way through the after school traffic and arrived, the Captain and his First Mate (my stepmum) had already landed and taken the boat for a test drive down river. They reported a potential issue with the engine, but the next day we realised this was easily solved by ensuring the fuel tank was placed slightly differently.

Thereafter we spent an idyllic, peaceful few days all together on the Broads, away from the stresses and strains of every day life (apart from our three kids, obviously). There is something so liberating about escaping the chores, the schedule and neverending job list, even for a little while. The house also came with a free heron, who we named Henry, and he would come and tap on the glass every night with his beak, looking for scraps. He was a real character and his confident antics and air of indignance made us all laugh. On Saturday, the sun shone, which made a real change after the neverending monsoons of late, and we had a lovely few hours on the river where we idled up to Coltishall and had a tasty pub lunch on the riverside. On the way back we may have had a slight collision due to a steering misjudgment and a low hanging tree, but fortunately everyone ducked in time.

When dad was at his most unwell in January I really was very fearful that we may have shared our last adventure. It was a thought too awful for me to contemplate and I wished and prayed with all my heart that we would get to have another. Our weekend in Norfolk truly was that gift, and there are no words to express just how grateful I am to the NHS, the universe, and fate, that we all got to go.

The truth is there is truly no way of knowing when the final sea dog adventure will be, and perhaps that's a good thing, so the creation of our memories together are not tainted or overshadowed by that realisation. All I do know is our weekend on the Broads was everything I could have hoped it would be. Every moment of sitting talking together, laughing about silly stuff, cruising down the river in our little boat, and even a few raucous games of poker, was so incredibly precious.

And on that note, readers, in a similar vein, you never know when the last ever edition of the legendary Edge will grace your fingertips. This may yet prove to be it, in which case, the magazine you hold in your hands right now could well turn out to be worth money one day, as the last ever printed edition. So look after it (and each other). Writing this column and sharing my life with you all over the past few years has indeed been a pleasure and a privilege.



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## "I says, I says, Ashley!"

Booming Corrie butcher Fred Elliott, played by actor John Savident, sadly passed away last month, readers, at the tender age of 86. He quickly became a firm favourite with northern soap fans after joining the cobbles some 30 years previously. Over the years, several prominent storylines focused on Fred's disastrous love life, which included three marriages and numerous failed proposals. He also developed a formidable on-screen double-act with his character's son, Ashley (played by Steven Arnold), who worked alongside Fred in tut butcher's shop and was never sure of his true parentage. ITV said: "As Fred Elliott, John Savident firmly established himself in the pantheon of Coronation Street greats (what an honour, eh, readers - *wink*) with his peerless comic timing, combined with a deep pathos arising from his outstanding dramatic skill, which made Fred an unforgettable iconic character who provided great joy to millions of viewers over the years. He will be missed by all at the station and on the famous cobbles."

Guernsey-born Savident, whose character spoke in a broad northern accent and routinely repeated himself, similar to the way Looney Tunes character Foghorn Leghorn speaks, was written out of the show in 2006 (*booooo!*), but not before winning the proud prize of 'Best Comedy Performance' at the 1999 British Soap Awards. Some of his other screen credits include Yes Minister, The Avengers, Doctor Who, and the Stanley Kubrick movie, A Clockwork Orange.

## Nostalgic Noises

Strange as it may seem, the Nokia mobile phone ringtone from the nineties is one of the sounds that a lot of people miss the most. Your editor absolutely loved his Nokia as I used to be able to text on it without even looking at the screen as I walked into town on a Friday night for a fair few beers, back in the day.

Other nostalgic sounds we apparently miss are the clacking of typewriter keys and a VHS tape being inserted into a video player (eh?). Some bloke belonging to the company that commissioned this research (who shall remain nameless on the grounds that it doesn't matter one iota) of 2,000 adults said: "When it comes to the science of nostalgia, our senses are amazing at picking up memory cues. Sound plays a huge role in triggering memories and the emotions associated with them, the results of which remind us of how important our hearing is when it comes to remembering things, places and connecting those memories with people."

The study found that 69% of us felt that certain noises genuinely help improve the quality of our lives (really?), while almost half feel certain sounds can help lift our mood. Twenty-five per cent agree that certain sounds can definitely help make us sleep and reduce anxiety. Well, I don't know about you, readers, but I'm struggling to think of any sounds from the past that I miss, although I guess there must be quite a few.

What about the milkman (whatever happened to him?) and his pints of milk jangling together in tall glass bottles of a morning. That's a fond and distant memory from days gone by, isn't it just?

I also love the sound the bell makes whenever you enter or exit The Stores in Great Waltham for a breakfast or brunchtime treat, as it always reminds me of the sound I associate with entering a sweet shop back in my school days.

Oh and what about the ringtone a proper old bakelite telephone used to make, which was fantastic when they rang and you'd always wonder who was on the other end of the line and hey, it was never someone from a bloody call centre way back then.

The Edge also likes the noise made when wheels are changed on F1 cars in the pits, but then that's a current day sound, isn't it?

Can you readers think of any other nostalgic noises you miss?

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# AMY in SRI LANKA

When regular Edge columnist Deak's mentioned that the Edge Ed. might appreciate a guest travel blog, I immediately put pen to paper (in a digital sense) and came up with the following, **writes Amy Creffield.**

After a fun week in Bali with my friend for our 40th birthdays, it was swiftly on to my next solo adventure, running through Kuala Lumpur airport hell-for-leather in an attempt to catch my connecting flight to Sri Lanka with an incredibly tight window of just 1.5 hours. It's never a good idea to sit at the back of a plane when you've got a connecting flight to catch as it took me over 30 minutes to get off the damn thing.

Miraculously, I made it through security and to the gate with just 10 minutes to spare, so a swift trip to the ladies was a very much needed relief! Whilst in there, something at the back of my mind told me to have a quick check for my passport. So I searched through my bag before emptying the contents on the floor in a blind panic, then patted myself down, only to realise it was gone! After quickly figuring out which way I had come from, I sprinted back to a security desk and tried to explain my awkward situation to one of the member of staff. However, the language barrier didn't help me one iota, but she eventually and most calmly picked up my missing passport and handed it to me, much to my exquisite relief. Phew! So I then ran all the way back to my gate, thinking I'd almost certainly missed my flight, but I made it in the nick of time, despite screeching to a halt at the check-in desk in a ridiculously flustered state.

Thankfully, this wasn't a sign of things to come. Sri Lanka airport was chaotic to say the very least, and I had no idea what was going on or where I needed to be, so I simply joined a queue with the masses and hoped for the best. A backpacker soon kindly told me that I needed to complete an entry form, which unfortunately meant leaving the queue and rejoining it once again, right at the back, although luckily I was no longer in a hurry. After an hour in the queue and a 4.5 hour flight I definitely needed the ladies again! To be honest, I could have found them simply by following the stench with my nose and after a quick peek inside I decided I'd just have to wait until I reached my hotel. Seriously, a hole in the ground with a length of hose beside it and a somewhat semi-flooded floor was simply not for me. Even stood outside the airport moments later, waiting for my Uber, the unedifying stench had seemed to follow me!

I spent my first night in a basic hotel near the airport as it was late, but after a typical (not) Sri Lankan breakfast of omelette, sausage and pineapple, it was time for me to climb over a huge, dead cockroach on my way out to meet my driver. Five hours spent in a car with a stranger in a foreign country can be quite unnerving, but I buckled in and enjoyed some stunning views in between snoozing. I woke up upon reaching Adam's Peak, the mountain I was planning to climb the following day. I then checked into a guest house where the views were equally as stunning; it was so green for miles with nothing but the sound of wildlife.

I had traditional Sri Lankan curry for dinner and it was delicious, although I was conscious I'd be climbing a mountain the very next day and wasn't sure what the 'toilet situation' might be like, so I resisted clearing my plate. I was in bed around 10pm with the hope of



getting a few hours sleep before getting up at 1:30am to start the climb at 2.00am, so that we could get to the top for sunrise.

I was raring to go, even at that ungodly hour, and with my head-torch switched on as it was genuinely pitch black, I didn't really know where I was going, but everyone else seemed to be walking with intent, so that was good enough for me. I really enjoyed the climb, all 60,000 steps. It was tough and I'd not done anything like that since Scaffel Pike in the Lake District over 10 years previously, so I was a bit out of practice. Adam's Peak is a sacred mountain in central Sri Lanka and



a pilgrimage with a hollow sacred footprint at the summit. I had to stop a fair few times to catch my breath and the locals completely put me to shame, even though the majority only wore flip-flops, while some were even barefoot with children and babies in arms too. But the sunset was so worth the climb as it was absolutely stunning and so very tranquil, but damn, it was also another 60,000 steps back down to terra firma! My legs were a quivering mess and I was full of regret, but I honestly had no time to think about that as my driver was picking me up at 11am for my next four hour drive to Ella.

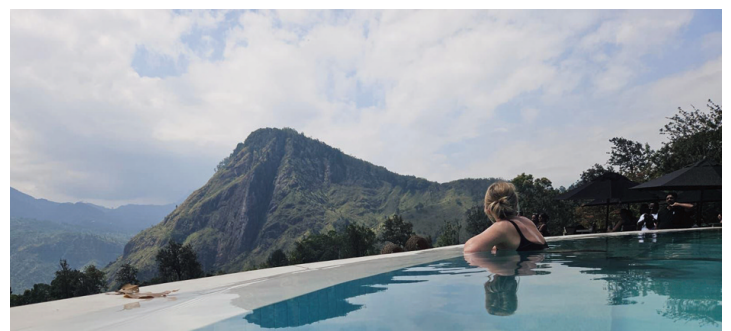
Ella is beautiful, absolutely stunning, what with it's countryside, rice fields and water falls. I stayed in a nice, small hotel on a hillside with an infinity pool overlooking the fields and the famous Nine Arches bridge. And that was fortunately me for three days, exploring on my own, while I spent my last day there at a pool club catching some rays, along with a great view of the peak I'd climbed but a few days earlier.

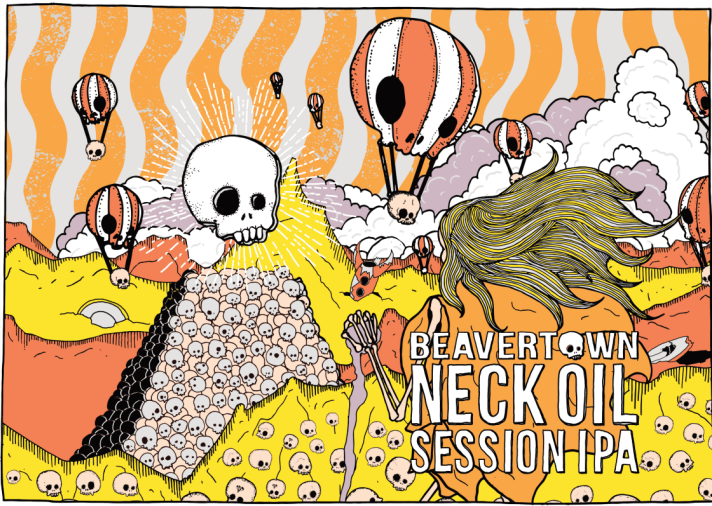
I was starting to really switch off and was falling in love with Sri Lanka and fortunately I still had one more leg to go, because I wanted to see some elephants. So I headed down to the coast to spend the last three days of my trip on the beach at Unawatuna, which meant a stop off at Yala National Park for a safari. Which meant yet another early start as I was picked up at 3.00am to get to the safari meeting point for 5.00am. I climbed into the jeep, which I was sharing with a family of four, who very kindly offered me some cookies. And boy, what a trip it was. We saw elephants, water buffalo, mongoose, warthogs and many more animals which totally blew me away. It was honestly breathtaking as we got so close and these animals who were in their natural environment, as opposed to being chained to trees. All in all, it was the true icing on the cake for me, something I'll remember forever.



Naturally I was then ready for some downtime on the beach, dipping in and out of the Indian Ocean, as I played 'chase the shade' with the sunshine, as my pale skin turned all shades of red.

I've travelled to a few countries in Asia before and Sri Lanka is definitely right up there as one of my favourites. What's more, I wouldn't hesitate to go back.





## Neck Oil v Maltsmiths IPA

So far as The Edge is concerned, there's only one winner here, and it definitely isn't Neck Oil.

But it seems to be all over the place these days, doesn't it? What's more, I've unfortunately noticed a couple of local establishments who've seemingly ditched their Maltsmiths (4.6%) in favour of Neck Oil (4.3%); what on earth's that all about?

The latter promotes itself as 'a zingy session beer', whereas Maltsmiths IPA apparently has 'caramel undertones'.

But if you'd prefer to cut the crap, to The Edge's palate at least, Maltsmiths IPA tastes like a proper pint of ale, whereas Neck Oil's all a bit fruity and fizzy and, dare I say it, a bit 'wind and piss'.

Yes, you can definitely argue that it's simply a question of taste; but personally, I think you can also argue the notion that people who prefer Neck Oil might also be partial to the odd lager.

What's more, I think it's a proper bugger that pubs are seemingly reluctant to serve both, while it's never bothered me that I might be in the minority when it comes to what I like to quaff. After all, just because more people might like something doesn't make it superior, does it?

Maltsmiths, as it's name suggests, has a true 'malty' taste, whereas Neck Oil definitely tastes 'thinner' and as though it's been concocted to make you burp.

That said, it certainly seems to be the new kid on the block, while it's 'ale counterpart' (one which has definitely proved popular with the masses) is probably Doom, which to be truthful I've never been much impressed with either.

Bottom line, I guess it simply always annoys me when something new comes along and does well, when in reality, it isn't all that.

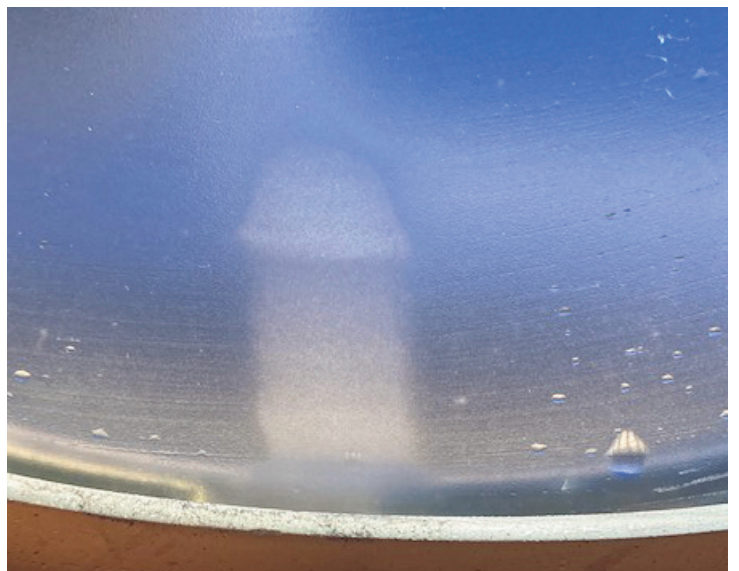
Yes, a pint of Neck Oil on a nice summer's evening might quench the thirst rather nicely, but just the one, hey? Because given the choice, I'd favour Maltsmiths any day of the week.

What's more, Neck Oil's golden in colour and I simply don't do golden ales. You shouldn't need to describe the colour of beer, should you? But to The Edge's mind, it's never been bloody golden.

That said, surveyor's Scott and Lurch both disagree with me; but then they do come from Essex, don't you, lads?



Woke up one recent Sunday morning on the bro' & sis'-in-law's narrowboat in Devizes, only to discover this immaculate ickle 'CONDENSATION PENIS' at the bottom of one of their portholes. Don't ask us how it got there, or whether their cat Alfie had been up to no good, but isn't it amazing, readers?



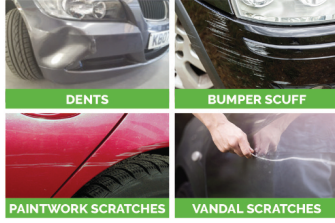
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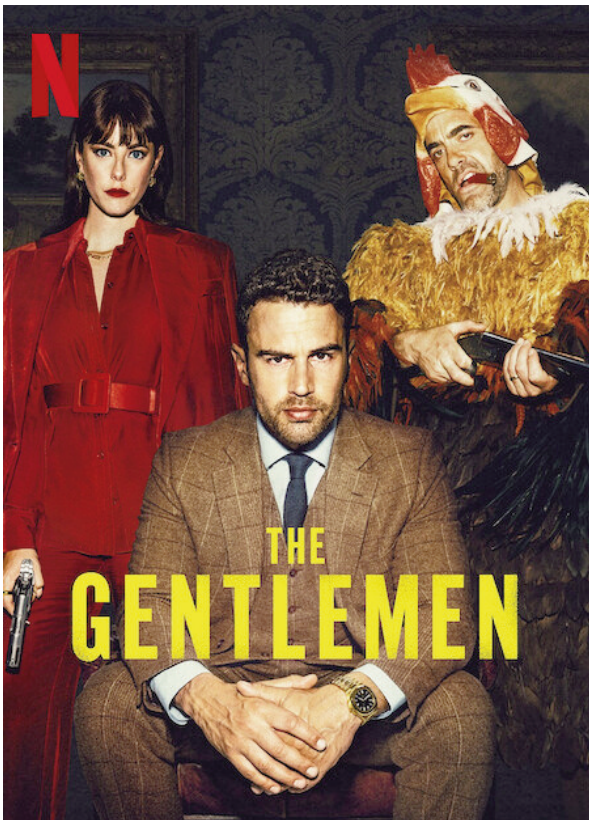
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## ONE TO WATCH...



A Netflix Classic

## The Andy Gardener Column

Is this really the end of The Edge?

If it is, then it's unfortunately been a very short spell for me writing this column!

However, I do very much commend our editor for soldiering on for so very long (some twenty-seven-and-a-half-years) and I will miss The Edge very much indeed. It's a shame there's no-one to take over the baton, but I would like to say to all the long time columnists, thanks for entertaining us all and I'm writing this as a genuine long time reader, rather than as a writer, as my spell has been so short I didn't even get to meet anyone.

I hope I haven't jinxed it! I went through a spell in the 90's when every firm I joined 'went to the wall' and my CV started to look very shabby indeed by the time the new millennium arrived.

I worked for Harrison Gibson, Keddies, Worrickers, Owen Owen and Britannia Music, all in seemingly rude health at the time of my arrival, but they all went bust.

### APRIL

One of my favourite months of the year as we finally come out of the bad weather and gloom of the winter, the clocks have gone forwards and we start planning day trips, events and breaks away with renewed enthusiasm. Having said that, this is a record breaking year for rain so far and as I sit here writing this column mid -March, it's still tipling it down outside.

Also, we have had six birthdays in our house inside the past twelve weeks, so April heralds a fortunately quieter period, with no more excessiveness until Christmas now!

### ON THE RADIO

I recently celebrated 4 years at Phoenix FM with a very special guest called Sofia Wolfson who came all the way from New York. She played three songs in our studio, two of which will be on her debut album out later this year, and she is also writing her first novel, so she's been a very busy girl.



This was her only 'work engagement' during her week spent in London, so I'm happy to be able to attract guests from all over the world, especially as in my first year during the pandemic we couldn't even meet with other presenters, let alone guests. Of her week over here, Sofia said, "It's been as dull and wet as I expected, unfortunately."

I'm just relieved Greater Anglia managed to get her out of London for a short while!

### SOMETHING GREAT ABOUT CHELMSFORD (pt. 2)

Finally, I would like to give you some good news following my mention of the Hot Box venue in last months editions.

And the breaking news as I write is that Hot Box have been awarded a grant from Essex County Council to enable them to train 60 volunteers who will then be in place to put on a two day music festival in the city called 'Sounds Good' on Friday and Saturday 13th/14th September. So if you know anyone who wants to get into the music and photography sector, then simply check their social media channels.

We have also been promised artists who would not normally be attracted to play in our city, so it does 'sound (very) good' indeed.

Thank you to The Edge, and goodnight!



## Your Editor LOVES this photo!

Every now and again I assist Lurch's right-hand-man, Scott Grace (right) on surveying expeditions and when his two-year-old daughter, Emilia, saw this photo of your editor (below right), her dad informed me she quickly got it into her head that she wanted to impersonate me, and apart from shaving all of her hair off, I honestly don't think she's made too bad of a fist of it.

What do you reckon, readers? Have to say, I never thought the day would come when I had my very own High Vis jacket, but they're so warm (and totally waterproof too), and I may look the part, but trust me when I say that *anyone* could do what I do. But then Lurch and Scott always need a 'bodsworth' on hand in order to do what they do, which is the clever bit.

But what's been so incredible about the job has been some of the places I've been to, up and down the country, plus the likes of Scotland and Jersey too. Not to mention some of the banter, which is what you miss out on when you've been sat in a small office box room for the past 27.5 years, tap-tapping away on a bloody keyboard for the vast majority of that time.

But as this edition may very well be the last, it's looking as though that might well be over.



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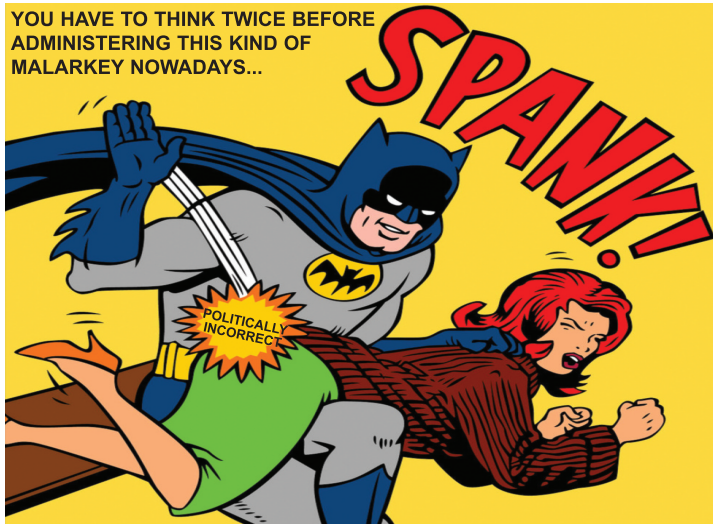
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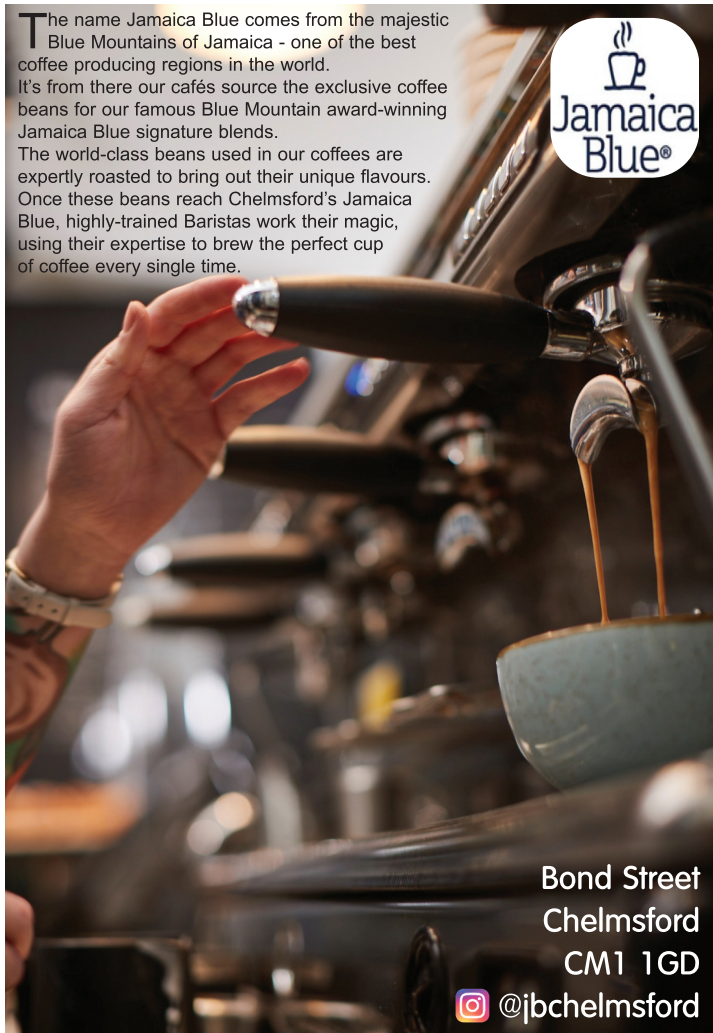
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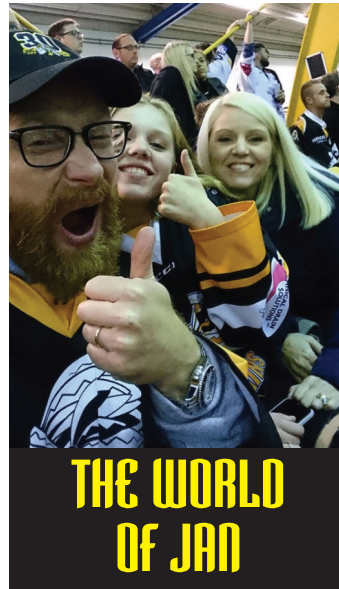


The name Jamaica Blue comes from the majestic Blue Mountains of Jamaica - one of the best coffee producing regions in the world. It's from there our cafés source the exclusive coffee beans for our famous Blue Mountain award-winning Jamaica Blue signature blends. The world-class beans used in our coffees are expertly roasted to bring out their unique flavours. Once these beans reach Chelmsford's Jamaica Blue, highly-trained Baristas work their magic, using their expertise to brew the perfect cup of coffee every single time.



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## 1984

No, not the George Orwell book/movie, but the year two classic films came out and now celebrate their 40th anniversaries. Ghostbusters and Beverly Hills Cop, to quote Peter Venkman, "Came, saw and kicked box office record's ass!"

Both showcased the many talents of comedians that started their careers on the conveyor belt that was Saturday Night Live and would go on to dominate the big screen throughout the 80's and early 90's.

The reason I bring these two movies up is that at the end of last month, Ghostbusters had its third (not including the all women's edition) sequel coming out, while Beverly Hills Cop has a whole new chapter in the series entitled Axel F this coming summer.

I am particularly looking forward to seeing Eddie Murphy, who was a massive influence on my sense of humour during my youth, especially with his super-quick, fast-talking wit and ability to talk himself into good situations as well as getting out of some bad ones, back on screen as an older (maybe wiser?) Foley, still causing chaos and mayhem whilst taking down the bad guys.

Judging from the trailer, it looks as though it contains the majority of the original cast from the first two movies to really rack up the nostalgia.

Hopefully these two films can do a similar job to the Top Gun sequel, Maverick, and satisfy us older fans, whilst getting some new ones on-board along the way.

Even though that's a tough benchmark to reach, I'll most certainly be sitting down, just like Serge, with a 'double espresso with a little lemon twist' in strong anticipation that the heat will indeed be fully back on.

## THE GENTLEMEN

Please, please tell me you lovely people have had the chance of getting round to watching this Netflix masterclass?

The one good thing to come out of Covid was the fact that TV companies chucked a lot of money at new shows and films for 'straight to streaming' platforms, whilst none of us were allowed out. And it seems that trend has continued with this latest Guy Ritchie offering.

The budget really shows as this eight part series travels along at break neck speed. It's loosely set in the same world/realm of the original film, with the same title, which was released back in 2019, starring Matthew McConaughey plus a very slimy Hugh Grant indeed. It really does deliver on all fronts and is what you would genuinely expect of a Guy Ritchie production.

Which is, of course, gangsters, drug dealers, travellers, twists and turns, plus a banging soundtrack and mayhem aplenty. Each episode is like a mini-movie in its own right and its far too easy to binge watch, but how can you not? So put it on your Netflix 'to watch list' now!

## THE JURY

This C4 social experiment was filmed in our very own Shire Hall in Chelmsford, with the objective being to see what happens when you place two groups of 12 jurors - each totally unaware that the other group existed - both observing the very same 'real life' case portrayed by actors word-for-word as it happened in the 'real world', and seeing whether both groups would come up with the self same verdict.

I won't say too much about it in case you're yet to watch it, but it did send a shiver down my spine to realise that someone's life is *really* in the hands of 12 complete utter strangers, each with their own interpretation of the case, and how egos can get in the way of facts. Indeed, one guy in particular celebrates like he's just won the lottery after seemingly bullying some of the other jurors into his way of thinking.

If the Football Association happened to be watching, they probably snapped him straight up after the show and put him in charge of VAR, judging by some of the criminal decisions we've seen made this season!

Stay healthy. Be lucky.  
'Til next time,  
The Polak.

x

## This month's front cover advertiser...

In 1928, Mr Clifford Stubbings Snr ('Poppy') purchased the Channels farm and started to extract gravel and sand by hand. Poppy and his wife Henrietta started a family and had two children, Tony and Joan. In September 1939, war was declared and the Channels farm was hit many times. Poppy took on the role as 'Head of the Defence Volunteers' during this time, a role he took very seriously indeed, and he proved to be a great leader. Once WW2 was over, he returned to digging for sand and gravel and helped construct new roads in the area. In 1948, Tony joined his father in the gravel industry and this saw the opening of Mid Essex Gravel, which took gravel extraction to another level. Tony married the love of his life, Brenda, in 1953, and they went on to have three children, Sara, Richard and Simon. In 1963, at the age of 67, Poppy sadly passed away, so it was time for Tony to take the reins. He continued extracting gravel and with Richard joining his father in the late 70's, they reinstated the land to a small golf course, which in 1979 would see them awarded the Sand & Gravel Association award for such a magnificent achievement.

July 1974 saw Clifford Anthony Peter Stubbings (Tony) first opening Channels' doors to the public, starting out as a 9-hole golf course. Then, on 7th June 1977, a further 9 holes were added, along with the 14th century farmhouse becoming a small clubhouse where members could enjoy refreshments within a warm, fun and friendly atmosphere. It soon became a huge success and slowly grew over the following years.

In 1982 the stunning 17th century thatched Essex Barn was converted and started to host events, from golfing dinners, charity nights and parties, giving more families the chance to enjoy the facilities on offer. Tony ensured many fun events took place and this saw a few famous faces from that decade visiting Channels. Actors Robert Powell and Bernard Cribbins, singer Shakin' Stevens, comedian Jasper Carrott, football manager Sir Bobby Robson, Prime Minister Margret Thatcher, The King of Malaysia, and even three times Grand National winner Red Rum have all stepped through the front doors of the Barn, which quickly became an ideal venue for all kinds of events, especially weddings, as its gorgeous surroundings really do make for the most perfect setting.

1994 further saw the introduction of the Little Channels complex, giving even more people the opportunity to get active with their families and enjoy the outdoor lifestyle.

2010 celebrated Tony's 80th Birthday. This true gentleman, that was so full of life with a generous, kind and warm heart, had become integral to the core values that Channels always aim to impart upon their guests.

In March 2020, with a very heavy heart, it was announced that Tony ('Gramps') had passed away. He was the kindest soul that left all of his family with a huge hole to fill, so Katie (Tony's eldest grandchild) and her team embarked upon a great plan to honour him.

Over the years, Channels has undergone 5 major transformations. However, this latest one proved to be the biggest yet! Just over a year later, in May 2021, the new look Bar & Brasserie reopened with a 21st century makeover. A huge extension was added to the restaurant, bar and outside patio/dining area, which created an incredible space for even more families and their friends to enjoy (and you can even take your four-legged friends along with you). Feeling like you're away in the Med during the balmy summer months, with 'live' music nights, mouth-watering food from Head Chef Dan Pitts and his brigade, along with a delightful drinks menu, all served up by restaurant manager Amy Nicol and her incredible team, Channels certainly has emerged as one of the ultimate destination dining restaurants and bars in the south east of England. And now, at the heart of the all new Channels/Beaulieu development, Channels continues to offer a warm and friendly welcome from staff who really do love their jobs, many of whom have been part of the 'family' for years, including the legend that is Dave Perry who's seen 38 years' service thus far!

So when you come to Channels, you really do feel like it's a 'home from home', and you really will become part of the family, experiencing fun and enjoyment each and every time you return. Indeed, Channels believe that their staff and core values are what make them so very special, and they look forward to welcoming you soon. For more information about weddings, menus, drinks, events etc., please visit their website [www.channelsestate.co.uk](http://www.channelsestate.co.uk) Also keep an eye out on their social media platforms for new events taking place this year to 'Celebrate 50 Years of Channels'.

[www.theedgemag.co.uk](http://www.theedgemag.co.uk)



From L to R: Amy, Dan, Katie & Dave Perry, wishing you all a warm welcome at Channels.



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**COME ON!**



## Last one, readers!

What's the point in The Edge struggling along and not asking for a couple of quid from its readers, eh? After all, you get a little pleasure out of the mag each and every month, don't you?

This Edge fundraising malarkey came about because things were getting a little too tight on the financial front. Fact is, they still are.

I'm pretty much 'doing The Edge for nothing' right now and if I could simply 'make do' with the advertising revenue generated, then believe me, I would, as I've done for the past 27.5 years.

But it's gone way beyond that these days, as in the past we never had Brexit, and what with the paper The Edge is printed on being imported from Europe, surely you can guess the rest?

Yet me asking you to donate on a monthly basis, or at least whenever you pick up a copy of The Edge, simply isn't working. Because frankly, the vast majority of you don't, do you?

Oh sure, things are tight at the moment. The Edge gets that as it has its own gas central heating and electricity bills to pay.

But the bottom line is that if you regularly read The Edge and you like it and you want to 'do your bit' by making certain it will still be available throughout 2024, you know what to do, don't you?

Only it's pointless just leaving it and relying on others to take care of things, because they won't, and the mag will simply not be here one month (like Jan'24) and that'll be it. *Over. Done. Nada.*

The ball's entirely in your court. So please play your part in helping to keep the good ship HMS EDGE afloat, readers. *Thanks.*

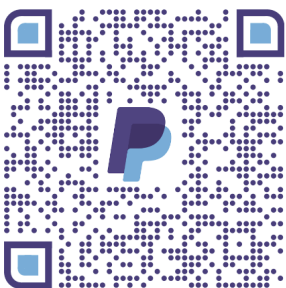


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## Grimes' Gripes

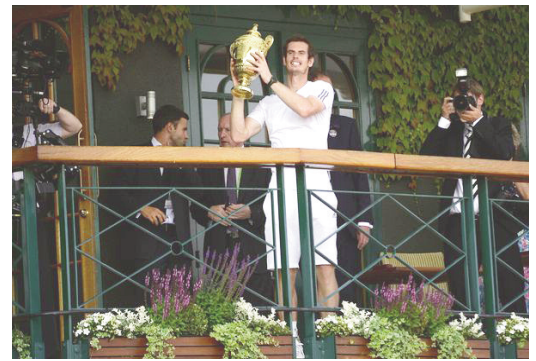
I wanted to obtain an England replica rugby top last year when the Rugby Union World Cup was on, but he price tags attached were around the £80 mark. In a previous article, I recall moaning about the hefty cost of football replica tops. However, this would cost me even more than one of those and would get worn a lot less. So, if you must know, I didn't buy one in the end. But it made me think, how much are other sports tops and are they reasonably priced, or simply a total rip off? An American football top costs even more, around the £120 mark. Whereas a basketball top's fairly reasonable, but then it is a vest! Then again, cricket tops are around the price of football tops, which is a (bad) joke.



## 'Live' Sporting Occasions

I really want to see a proper rugby match one of these days, but the costing and availability of tickets has hindered me so far. But it's made me think about what sporting events I have attended over the years. Such as a tennis match at Wimbledon in 2013 when Andy Murray won Wimbledon. We actually had seats in court one, watching an exhibition match,

but me and the missus got to see Andy bring the trophy out onto the balcony, which was great. I've also attended a cricket match with a work mate at the Essex cricket ground and got quite burnt in the process as it was



a really hot day. And, of course, I've obviously seen the Chelmsford Chieftains ice hockey team play at the Riverside Leisure Centre, not to mention watching my beloved Spurs on numerous occasions.

## Public Transport

Public transport is an essential lifeline for many people. It can often be the only mode of transport to get them from A to B, so it's a great shame that it is not entirely reliable. In many urban areas, public transport has faced its fair share of challenges, while Chelmsford's very own network can often test the patience of a saint.

I use it infrequently as I have a car, but when it's in the garage for a service or repairs, then I will use public transport, with mixed results. I recall one time, back in 2018 I think it was, when some cows had wandered across the A12 and delayed my bus. I was waiting for it for ages, expecting it to come, but it didn't. So I ended up walking to work and being late. And I only found out it was 'Cows on the A12' when I eventually arrived.

I have family members who use public transport to get around and they are not always best pleased about it. There can often be cancellations at the very last minute, or route changes. I mean, if you have finished a long day at work and simply want to get home, delays are the last thing you need to contend with. There also seems to be less bus services to the likes of Chelmer village and Springfield these days, yet more to the newer areas of Beaulieu Park. Furthermore, waiting at a bus stop in the dark, cold and wet weather of winter is never much fun, when buses are often cancelled or delayed. And, as we know, getting normal traffic into the city centre to pick people up after cancelled public transport is never easy during peak times. Furthermore, like many other cities and towns, you often get a fare increase or two right here in Chelmsford, yet these always seem to outpace the improvements that are so sorely needed to the service. But don't even get me started on our rail service, which regularly uses buses or coaches as a 'replacement service'.

## Hiatus?

It sadly seems The Edge will be no more, or at least have a hiatus for a few months. So I might be back in touch with you readers later on the year with some more of my moans and gripes, or I might not. We shall inevitably see. So 'bye for now'.  
Victor.

## St. Helier Market, Jersey

You know what it's like, don't you?

You visit somewhere, you see something, and you mentally compare it to what you've got back at home.

In this particular instance, the wonderful, Victorian market in St. Helier, Jersey (designed by a bloke from Brighouse, Yorkshire, no less).

Therefore, the question begs, could Chelmsford do better?

Well could we? Because to The Edge's mind, Chelmsford could *always* do better.

So what do Chelmsford market stallholders think, The Edge wonders, one of whom regularly advertises in this very publication (see Bob's Doors, page 6)?

Could Chelmsford's current market be transformed to a thing of more beauty, or is it's location, beneath a dated car-park, against it?

All I know is that it was a positive pleasure to walk around the market in St. Helier. It felt light, bright, clean, airy.

Wishful thinking, perhaps, because The Edge is never convinced by anything Chelmsford ever does, or promises.

We're just a small town that 'pretends' to be a city that's regularly gridlocked because our infrastructure is so pants. And does anyone honestly think 2028's 'hamburger' roundabout will change anything?



## Why can't Chelmsford have a gold postbox?

Oh, it's apparently because you only get one if you had a Gold Medal winner at either the 2012 Summer Olympics or Paralympics.

Bugger.

Because they look so very nice and regal, don't they, and they mark the first occasion in modern times that the colour of postboxes in the United Kingdom were changed from their original red.

Bottom (left) is one The Edge saw in Marlow, Buckinghamshire, while the one on the right was clocked in Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire.

Originally intended to be a temporary measure, due to a positive public response, they were decided to remain as a permanent tribute, with each box additionally receiving its own special plaque.

The project was organised by the Royal Mail's own in-house communications team and The Edge reckons all credit to them, as they really do look spectacular and definitely add 'a certain something' to any town's high street.

Do you know, readers, that the very first postboxes, or pillarboxes as they are also known, were erected as long ago as 1853, a year after some trial boxes had been erected in Jersey (Jersey yet again!).

They were initially painted green, to blend into the landscape, but later repainted red to have entirely the opposite effect.



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**Greetings, readers.**

Happy April to y'all and thank you kindly for all of your birthday wishes. What a lovely bunch you are. I did go ahead with the birthday party, but at the time of writing and submitting this column to The Edge Ed., the party is still a few days away, so I guess I'll have to fill you in on the debauchery that took place in my May column. That's if you do not read about it before in the national press and indeed if there even is a May edition of The Edge, as you simply never know.....

When I first started writing my column here, back in 2019, I shared many stories of my adventures of my time spent working in London. Many of those stories I have subsequently included in the book I have written about my life called 'Deakin Speakin' - tough times don't last, tough people do' which I hope to publish sometime this year. Yet it was because I was given the opportunity to write in The Edge every month that I decided I could go one step further and write a book of more than 80,000 words. I am sure you will agree, that is some jump, from a little over a one thousand word article to an 80,000 word book. What's more, I had never written before I began writing this column, other than a few hundred thousand business letters and emails during a career spent in London spanning forty years. So with the sad end seemingly in sight for this mighty little fanzine, I just wanted to thank you all for reading my nonsense over the past four years, which is almost fifty columns by my calculations, and I want to say how much I have enjoyed your feedback. In fact, it's been the feedback that has kept me going, as it tells me that people are actually reading my column and not skipping my page for one of the many other more established, and frankly more accomplished, columnists that write in this popular organ.

I would also like to thank Shaun, our esteemed editor, soon to be esteemed *former* Edge Editor, for the opportunity to write in his mag. The opportunity has allowed me to do something that I never imagined I would ever do.

In view of his announcement on this very page last month, where he said he might call it a day on a nice round number of 320 editions (with this very issue indeed being number 320), I feel the need to bid you farewell one more time (in fact, I'm in danger of doing more farewells than Frank Sinatra). Simply because I am not at all sure if I will get an opportunity in edition #321 as messages arriving from 'Edge Towers' strongly suggest there won't be one. However, what I say is, "Isn't issue number 321 an even *better* number to go out on?" To make it a true Dusty Bin moment! (Hands up all those of you who know what I'm talking about?) No one could do those quick finger movements like Ted Rogers, could they? Oooh, missus!

I was talking about comic geniuses in my last column, wasn't I. That catchphrase 'Oooh, missus' of course belonged to yet another comic genius, Frankie Howard. "Titter ye not, oh please yourselves!" But some of you might need to Google Ted Rogers and his '3-2-1' catchphrase, while I suppose some of you might also need to Google Frankie Howard too. Oh dear, I feel that I am losing my younger audience by the paragraph. Perhaps I need to find something to write about that's more 'down with the kids'?

How about Raye? I had never heard of Raye before the BAFTA's were on the tele the other week. I suppose it's another sign of getting old when you discover the country's biggest recording star on an awards show where she is being honoured with a record nine BAFTA's for her accomplishments over the past 12 months and this has completely passed you by. There is no way Oasis, Blur or any of the BritPop stars of the past would have escaped my notice, so I'm now beginning to feel like my dad who would sit through Top of the Pops moaning about the 'racket' being produced by Slade, T-Rex and Sweet. However, I think he had a soft spot for Elton John, as did I. What's more, I still do! But I'd better not mention Gary Glitter, which is a shame as he was definitely my favourite popstar as a prepubescent teenager.

Dad died in 1981 when I was just 21 years old, but how I'd love to watch an episode of Top of the Pops with him now and agree with his every word.

Which reminds me, a song very much from my dad's era is currently being banned by countless radio stations because it supposedly promotes date rape. The song, written in 1944, long before date rape even existed, is 'Baby, It's Cold Outside' and was sang by Dean Martin and Marilyn Maxwell. It contains the worrying lyrics:  
*(I really can't stay) But, baby, it's cold outside  
(I've got to go away) But, baby, it's cold outside  
(This evening has been) Been hoping that you'd drop in  
(So very nice) I'll hold your hands they're just like ice  
(My mother will start to worry) Beautiful, what's your hurry  
(My father will be pacing the floor) Listen to the fireplace roar  
(So really I'd better scurry) Beautiful, please don't hurry  
(Well, maybe just half a drink more) Put some records on while I pour.*

Really? Oh come on, how frightening are those words? Have these ridiculous dogooders listened to some of the lyrics in rap music? Rap music that calls women bitches and hoers is apparently alright with them, but Deano's lyrics they find offensive? It's a (sad) joke and the world has officially gone mad. Even though all along the super cool Dean was a sexual predator, who would have thought it, eh? So I worry now for Marilyn Maxwell. If only the #metoo movement had been around then to save the poor girl.

However, I am keen to finish my column on a positive note and it doesn't get more positive than this, folks. I have another grandchild - whoop, whoop, whoop! *Back of the net!* Jesse Drew Deakin arrived just before midnight on 5th March and he joins the incumbent apples of my eyes which are Lachlan James Deakin and Aurora Pearl Deakin, see edition #315. Needless to say, they are all the most beautiful grandchildren in the world, but then I would say that, wouldn't I? I am truly blessed, honestly I am. So well done to both mum and dad, my son James and my daughter-in-law Amy. Great work, guys. More please. *More!* And I so love the photo below, which is of Jesse coming home, bless his little cotton socks.

I honestly don't know if you will see me within these pages again next month, or ever, come to that? Perhaps not. But one thing I do know is that spring is here and summer is just around the corner, so what's not to like about that? So take care of yourselves and be nice to one another. Until another time, and maybe another place, ta-tar for now. It's been emotional.

**TTFN.**  
**DEAKS**  
**Email: gmdeakin@googlemail.com**  
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Postnote: Please join the #onemoretimeshaun movement and sign up to my petition at [www.savetheedge.com](http://www.savetheedge.com) and then perhaps, just perhaps, we might see edition #321 one of these days. And did you know that if a petition reaches 100,000 signatures it must be discussed in Parliament? Not many people know that. So let's get The Edge Ed. in Parliament, which would be a laugh! OK, OK, I'm joking, so please don't write in as there is no petition! Although if you would like me to start one...???



## Clash of the Titans: Joshua's Power Punch Sets Stage for Ultimate Showdown

In a dazzling display of pugilistic prowess, Anthony Joshua, the former heavyweight boxing titan, squared off against Francis Ngannou, a behemoth from the world of mixed martial arts, in a bout that had fans perched on the edge of their seats. With Joshua's boxing finesse and Ngannou's raw MMA power, the clash was nothing short of a spectacle, especially considering Ngannou's commendable boxing debut against the current heavyweight monarch, Tyson Fury.

The anticipation was palpable, the stakes high, and the clash lived up to every bit of the hype - albeit briefly. Joshua, with his trademark precision and power, sent Ngannou tumbling to the canvas within two rounds, delivering a knockout punch that will echo throughout the annals of boxing history. But this wasn't just a victory; it was a statement.

At ringside, Tyson Fury, with his gaze fixed on the unfolding drama, must have felt a twinge of respect, if not concern. With an undisputed clash against Oleksander Usyk on the horizon, the stakes couldn't be higher. Yet the boxing world's appetite for blockbuster fights remains insatiable. Should Fury triumph over Usyk, a showdown with Joshua seems inevitable - a battle royale that promises to be the biggest

fight of all time. The sheer magnitude of this potential bout, in terms of both prestige and financial windfall, has fans and pundits alike buzzing with anticipation. This is the fight the boxing world yearns for, a duel destined to be etched in the annals of sporting glory.

## Guy Ritchie's Masterstroke: 'The Gentlemen' - A Return to Cinematic Glory

Guy Ritchie's 'The Gentlemen' marks a triumphant return to his filmmaking roots, delivering a masterpiece that effortlessly intertwines wit, sophistication, and sheer insanity. In this riveting crime comedy, the enchantment lies not just in the storyline, but in witnessing the orchestrated chaos come to life. Ditch any preconceptions tied to Ritchie's recent detours into mainstream adaptations. Instead, reacquaint yourself with the creative genius who gifted us 'Snatch', a cinematic gem that remains endlessly quotable. (Netflix)

'The Gentlemen' is quintessential Ritchie: a concoction of complex characters, a compelling narrative, and a visual feast that commands your attention. It's an audacious, insanely captivating crime drama that blurs the lines between artistry and anarchy. Here, Ritchie revisits his cinematic hallmarks, presenting a film that's not only possibly his finest work to date, but also a showcase of his signature blend of humour, mystery, and technical prowess.

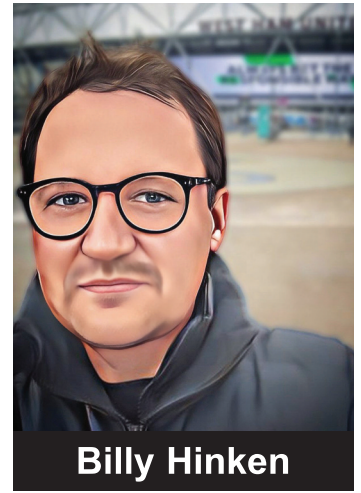
Regardless of its plot intricacies, 'The

Gentlemen' stands out as a testament to Ritchie's ability to craft engaging, visually stunning narratives around the most enigmatic of characters. These characters captivate, pulling you into their world, where you're left yearning for more. Ritchie has fashioned a film that feels like a theatrical play, yet is imbued with the magic of cinema - a gritty, stylish and utterly enjoyable piece that captures the essence of noir, while delivering an unforgettable experience. The real joy stems from simply indulging in the spectacle of madness that Ritchie orchestrates so masterfully.

## Time for Change? The Conundrum of West Ham's Tactical Stalemate

As a West Ham fan, it's with a heavy heart that I find myself amongst those advocating for a change at the helm, questioning David Moyes' tenure as manager. This sentiment might seem bewildering to the broader football community, especially considering Moyes' monumental achievements with the club - clinching our first piece of silverware in four decades and infusing our evenings at the London Stadium with the thrill of European football, not to mention being comfortably nestled in the league's upper echelons, regularly securing victories.

However, my grievance lies not with our results, but with the manner of our play. West Ham's approach has become tediously predictable: a deep-seated defense awaiting to spring counter



**Billy Hinken**

attacks. Despite boasting a squad teeming with talent, it feels as though our players are shackled; their creative flair curbed by tactical conservatism. Our attacking trio, featuring a Brazilian virtuoso, an English prodigy, and a Ghanaian superstar, find themselves frustratingly marginalised, their impact blunted by our strategic rigidity.

Football, awash with financial stakes, often sees fans dream of greener pastures. Yet, at its core, the game is a spectacle, a form of entertainment. Sadly, the uninspired brand of football that's become our hallmark under Moyes has dulled my eagerness to witness the action firsthand. The excitement that once fuelled my fandom has been eroded by a style of play that's frankly become a chore to watch.

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# ONLY JOKING!

## GRIZZLY

A man is hiking in the woods and comes across a huge grizzly bear. The bear stops. The man stops. The bear looks at the man. The man looks at the bear. The bear raises one arm. The man raises one arm. The bear scratches its head. The man scratches his head. The bear takes a step sideways. The man takes a step sideways. The bear squats down and takes a shit. The man shakes his head and says, "Ah, you got me there. I already did that the moment I laid eyes on you."

## EXPLAINING UNDERWEAR TO ALIENS

"We have smaller, secret pants, that we wear beneath our normal pants."

## OLD TIMER

An old cowboy walks into a barber's shop for a haircut and a shave. He tells the barber he can't get all his whiskers off these days, because his cheeks are all wrinkled. So the barber gets a little wooden ball out from a cup on the shelf and tells the old cowboy to put it inside his mouth to spread out the skin on his cheek. When he'd finished, the old cowboy told the barber it was the cleanest shave he'd had in years, but he wanted to know what would have happened if he'd accidentally swallowed the little ball. The barber replied, "You'd simply bring it back to me in a day or two, once nature had taken its course, like all the old timer's do."

## AUTHENTIC SIMULATION

Don't know about you, but during a movie, if they go underwater, I like to hold my breath. You know, just to see if I could survive in the same situation. But by Christ, I almost



drowned during 'Finding Nemo'.

## LITTLE JOHNNY

Little Johnny walks into his parent's bedroom, just as his Dad is rolling on a rubber. Dad, quick as a flash, falls to the floor and starts looking beneath the bed. "Wotcha doin', Dad?" asks his son. "I er...I thought I saw a mouse," says his father. To which Little Johnny laughs and says, "Wotcha gonna do, f\*\*\* that too?"

## SIX WORDS WHICH EVERY MAN SHOULD TEACH HIS SON

1. FINE. No, it's not fine at all. She's basically just ending an argument. You might as well go live in the garage.
2. NOTHING. It definitely means something, but nobody's quite sure what.
3. GO AHEAD. Under no circumstances do that. She is not giving you permission. She's basically just daring you to try it. So don't.
4. WHATEVER. A woman's way of saying 'f\*\*\* you'.
5. THAT'S OKAY. No, it's not. What's more, if you do it, you'll be in big trouble later.
6. WOW! Of course it's not a compliment. It's just her way of saying, "I didn't believe anyone could be that stupid."

## DENTIST

I see the dentist by the bus station has been arrested for drug dealing. Just goes to show that you never really know anyone, do you? Honestly, I've been going to him for almost fifteen years and I never even knew he was a dentist.

## HEAVEN

Father Murphy walks into a pub in Donegal and says to the first man he sees, "Do you want to go to heaven?" The man says, "That I do, Father." The priest says, "Right you are. Then go and stand over there against the wall." Then the priest asked the second man, "Do you want to go to heaven?" "Most certainly, Father," he says. "Right, then go stand over there by that other fellow," was the priest's reply. After which, Father Murphy walked up to O'Toole and said, "Do you want to go to heaven?" O'Toole said, "Oh no, I don't think so, Father." The priest said, "What? I don't believe this. You mean to tell me that when you die, you don't want to go to heaven?" O'Toole said, "Oh, when I die? Yes, yes indeed. It's just I thought you were getting a party together right now."

## BUS W\*NKERS

A guy, a little worse for wear, gets on the C8 at Tesco. While he's fumbling for his change, the driver closes the door and moves off. The drunk, caught by surprise, staggers all the way to the back of the bus. Eventually, once he regains his balance, he gingerly makes his way forwards as the bus stops at the traffic lights at Riverside House. He manages to get to the front just as the lights change and once again, the sudden lurching of the bus causes him to reel back from whence he came. And the same thing happens outside the prison, and again at Stump Lane. As the bus turns by The Endeavour, the driver calls back, with a little too much glee in his voice, "Hey, are you ever gonna pay your fare?"

Our tipsy friend, hanging onto a pole as the bus accelerated once again, shouts, "Why the f\*\*\* should I? I've walked nearly all the way to where we are right now."

## TRIP ADVISOR

I contacted Trip Advisor and they said it'd be best if I left my laces undone.

## ASHAMED

I'm ashamed to say that I once flashed my boobs to get off a speeding fine. The officer quickly walked away in disgust while shouting over his shoulder, "Mate, you're sick. You need to go on a diet."

## PASSIONATE

Her: "Since you've been on this diet, your kissing's become much more passionate." Him: "Passion be damned. I'm just probing for scraps of food."

## IMAGINARY FRIEND

You know it's going to be a long day when a policeman knocks on your door and serves you with a restraining order from your imaginary friend.

## NEW QUACK

So I signed up to a new surgery and managed to secure an appointment (yeah, this is a joke, so bear with). I sat there while the Doc read through my extensive notes, before he looked at me for a few moments and eventually said, "Well, you certainly look a lot better in person than you do on paper."

## THE WIFE

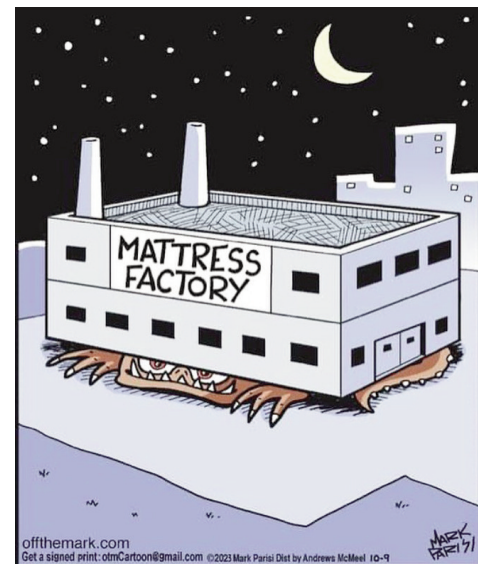
The wife said to me, "Can I ask you a stupid question?" I replied, "Better than anyone, my love."

## LOSS OF TASTE

The missus and I went for a Covid test. The nurse asked me if I had experienced a sudden loss of taste? Quick as a flash, my wife butted in and said, "No, he's always dressed this way as long as I've known him."

## WIZARD OF OZ

When I was a child, my Mum took me to see the movie 'The Wizard of Oz'. Only for the life of me, I simply couldn't fathom how a person with no brains could possibly function in this world at all. So thank you, Facebook, for the enlightenment.





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## The Blind Pig

5 Mulcaster Street, St. Helier, Jersey, JE2 3MJ.

The Edge has always thought Chelmsford's Wine Cellar, at the bottom of Duke Street, would have made an excellent little 'den of iniquity', such as Jersey's jaw-droppingly sublime Blind Pig.

And the beauty of it is, apart from the outstanding 1920s decor, is that you simply wouldn't know it was there at all - *unless you know* - as there's no signage outside whatsoever, which this publication happens to think is pure class.

The Blind Pig is simply an incredibly small hideaway for discerning types who appreciate a little warmth, quality, quirkiness and are in need of a little 'cocoonment'.

Strangely enough, it reminded your editor of Arthur Daley's Winchester Club, but by way of its seclusion only, as what is revealed before your very eyes cannot fail to blow you away. In fact, I cannot recall having said that about *anywhere*, if indeed I ever have.

If you're a regular and the type that likes to sit around a table chatting in convivial surroundings, you can even buy a bottle over the bar and then 'store' it in your very own private lock-up box (with its own key) until your next visit, if you haven't polished it off the same night.

The Blind Pig is incredibly warm and cozy and you immediately feel enveloped after stepping inside and walking down a mysterious staircase, particularly after being outside in a chilly Channel breeze.

It also reminded me of 'Eyes Wide Shut', the Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman movie...it's simply got that kind of a vibe!

Who was in there? No-one. Just Lurch and I on a surveying trip. But hey, it was just after 7:00pm on a midweek evening, so who knows what it's like on Friday and Saturday nights, although one of these days, I'd love to find out.

Oh and they were playing 'Sinnerman' by Nina Simone (although I prefer the Gabriel Abreu Uehara version as the intro's better) when we walked in, which suited the ambiance perfectly.

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## FAREWELL to THE EDGE

Well, our editor tells us that this is the final edition of *The Edge*, so what can you say in a final article for a publication? Very little, is the answer.

I have found it entertaining, writing articles as an 'old fart' and being given a free reign to write about anything I so choose. In fact, I've been able to moan at just about anything. Yet in the 5 years I've been writing this column, what has really changed? Answer: not much, but *everything*.

The pandemic of 2020-21 for many of us changed how we worked. Many now use digital platforms and WFH ('Work From Home') which these days has become part of our working culture.

Cash has seemingly disappeared from our everyday lives; everything is paid for by card or 'tap' and those firms who failed to adapt have closed down.

The hospitality trade has shrunk dramatically as numerous outlets closed during the various lockdowns. And what of the shops and town/city centres? They are certainly much quieter than of old, with many people opting to buy online instead, especially as delivery and the ability to return items has now become so much easier.

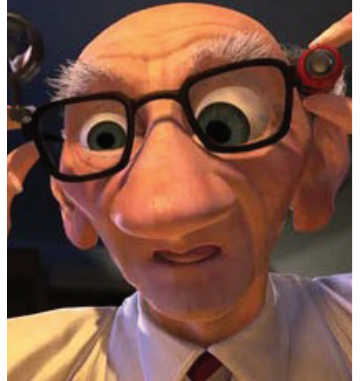
But what's *really* changed?

Very little, or so it seems to me. The economy of the country was tanking before the pandemic came along and its now doing so in spades. In fact, things have got even worse. We've had cutbacks, interest rate rises, and public services are in a right old mess.

The NHS, despite doing a masterful job during the pandemic, still can't cope and is likely never to be able to do so *unless* there is some kind of massive reset. A seven million figure on their waiting list is simply totally unachievable and there are just not enough hospitals, beds or staff however much we pretend the NHS can cope. No, it simply can't.

Our roads and infrastructure are a disgrace. Just look at the mess that is called the A12,

## FOGEY'S CORNER



MSS (the MYSTERY Silver Surfer)

which will only continue to get worse. And what hope is there for our public transport system, which every so often seems to operate on a strictly Stop/Start/Whatever function.

Then there's the new rail station at Beaulieu. Thing is, you've got to have a regular train service to make the new station work, and because there isn't one, people will continue to use their cars on our pothole ridden roads instead, whilst all journeys will continue to take forever.

One thing we didn't have before Covid was the threat of a European or Middle East war, yet both of these now look inevitable. Already some of our European allies are instituting a conscription of sorts, so how soon is it likely to happen over here in the UK?

On a lighter note, the Premier League remains unchanged. Manchester City, Liverpool and Arsenal continue to rule the roost, while my team Spurs, as always, continue to be all 'Spursy'. Meanwhile, Manchester United always seem to be in a constant state of confusion and marooned in a Sargasso Sea of failure, while other teams get promoted, relegated, but really, nothing seems to change.

However, we *have* had an unprecedented change in Government leaders as well as a change in monarch, although the country as a whole has not benefitted from either. In fact, we have a very wobbly PM and a monarchy that can't even take a decent photograph!

So with that, I wish you all the very best for the future. As one thing's for sure, you'll need it!



## “LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!”

If there's one genre sorely missing from the current cinematic filmscape, it's that of the classic action film. Ones with larger than life muscular heroes called John, a side order of quippy one liners to go, and enough testosterone to grow hairs on your chest upon watching them.

Huge hits in the 80's and 90's, these type of movies were driven by box office legends such as Schwarzenegger, Stallone, Van Damme and Bruce Willis, yet they all but disappeared come the end of the century.

In the early 00's we saw the rise of the IP, or 'intellectual property', which was basically huge franchise movies that dominated the box office, such as Harry Potter, Lord of The Rings, Pirates of The Caribbean and The Hunger Games to name but a few.

Then from the late 00's onwards, superhero films reigned supreme and there was no space for mere mortals to rescue hostages from terrorists when we had Gods battling to save the universe. The 'metoo' movement, although important for the time, pivoted too hard, condoning any 'toxic male behaviour', and so those 80's and 90's hero's were considered a thing of the past, relics to be consigned to history and replaced with the 'strong independent woman' in film. Sure, there have been a few exceptions, with the likes of Jason Statham being able to carve out a respectable career, but none of his films have been box office juggernauts. And no, the Fast & The Furious franchise does not count in this category as it's horrible CGI trash. (At least after the first one). Thankfully, those good folks at Cineworld have acknowledged this sad state of affairs and are bringing back some all time classics to the big screen for their up-and-coming 'action season' this month. But of course, you don't have to make a special trip to the cinema to see any of them, as they are all available to view at home easily enough. But if you haven't seen them before, or want to experience them once again as they really should be seen, tickets are just a fiver! So grab that fizzy drink and carton of popcorn and let's head back in time for some explosive fun...

### Commando (1985)

Arnold Schwarzenegger tried his hand at comedy several times with mixed results. But for every Twins or Kindergarten Cop, there was also a Junior or, god forbid, Jingle All The Way. Why Hollywood action heroes felt the need to make comedies I have no idea, with Stallone also getting in on the act with Stop, Or My Mom Will Shoot, a film I have never seen, nor have any intention of doing so. Why would you need to make a comedy when a film like Commando provides far more laughs than it probably intended to? It may not be the best Schwarzenegger vehicle of all time, but it is the most outright fun.

Schwarzenegger's impossibly macho hero 'John Matrix' (was there ever a better name in action cinema?) wages war against a powerful South American dictator who makes the mistake of kidnapping his daughter, Jenny. Forget Liam Neeson and his set of 'special skills', John Matrix is a one man army whom, in his own inimitable words, "Eats green berets for breakfast!"

Arriving in cinemas at the same time as Stallone's 'Rambo: First Blood Part 2', this similarly themed action romp is less serious than the aforementioned and is one of the greatest unintentional comedies of all time, thanks to it's endless stream of highly quotable one-liners. Most memorable of all is when Schwarzenegger impales main henchman Bennet, a sort of crazed steroid induced Freddie Mercury, onto a gas pipe and says, "Let off some steam, Bennet!" Fun Fact: Left on the cutting room floor during editing was a scene in which our Arnold chops off a bad guys arm and then proceeds to beat him around the head with it, whilst murmuring "Need a hand?", which is a crying shame it never made it to the final cut.

### Predator (1988)

I have already extolled the virtues of this classic in great detail in a recent previous issue, so I won't go into it all again. Suffice to say, if you haven't seen Predator before, or haven't seen it on the big screen, do yourself a favour and "Get to da choppa!" (Sorry, I mean, get to the cinema.)

### Demolition Man (1993)

It was Commando going up against Rambo: First Blood Part 2 that initially fuelled the long standing rivalry between Stallone and Schwarzenegger, and although Stallone had bigger success in the 80's, Schwarzenegger undoubtedly came out on top in the 90's with Total Recall and the seminal Terminator 2. But Stallone had a few worthy successes up his own sleeve and in 1993 he gave us the one-two punch of mountain based actioner Cliffhanger, as well as futuristic thrill ride, Demolition Man.

Set in the near future, where a peaceful utopia has been established, violent criminal Simon Phoenix (a brilliantly unhinged Wesley Snipes) escapes his cryogenic prison to wage havoc amongst an unprepared and weakened society. The only way to stop him is to free disgraced cop John Spartan (Stallone) from his own cryo-prison to help track him down.

The film is quite remarkable in how it predicted the future, with driverless electric cars, zoom style conference meetings, a future woke leftist culture that considers 80's action films too violent for modern audiences, and wiping your arse with 3 sea shells; okay, maybe not the last one.

Fast paced with an almost perfect blend of big budget action, tongue-in-cheek humour and a script that actually has something to say, Demolition Man also introduced audiences to one Sandra Bullock, who although had been in some minor parts previously, this was her first role in a major blockbuster movie, in which she impressed studio exec's and audiences alike. So much so, in fact, she was offered a role in a film about a bus (remember that one?).

Fun fact: Sandra Bullock almost never made it into the movie at all. She was a last minute replacement for actress Lori Petty, who minced off set after several days shooting, due to 'creative differences'.

### Speed (1994)

After the success of Die Hard, every studio was trying to make their own Die Hard variant. Such as 'Die Hard on a Boat' (Under Siege), Die Hard on a Plane (Passenger 57), Die Hard on a Mountain (Cliffhanger) and...erm...oh yes, Die Hard on a Bus. Yet what on paper seemed like a daft idea (a film about a bus), Speed became one the biggest hits of 1994.

The reason for that success is easy to see. The premise is incredibly simple. A bomb is attached to a bus and if it drops below 50kph, then *kaboom!* The bus explodes, our heroes are dead and the bad guy wins. Such a simple concept allows for a series of outrageous set pieces to take place as the cops and FBI do everything they can to clear the roads and prevent the bus from dropping it's speed to a deadly level. The title of the film is also appropriate in that it is relentless from start to finish. There's no room for fluff or filler here, as it's straight into the action from the get-go with a brilliantly orchestrated and nail biting hostage scene in an elevator, before jumping on the bus journey from hell and finishing on a runaway underground train. There is literally no time to even catch your breath, while audiences at that time where not accustomed to such a relentless pace of movie.

What else made the film a success was the casting of it's two main leads. Keanu Reeves had proved his action chops before in Point Break, but for this he had obviously hit the gym hard, with his muscles straining out of his white t-shirt and sporting a new buzz-cut, he had women and men alike swooning over his dashing good looks. But the real star was the breakout performance of Sandra Bullock, who's career went



## Andrey Eley's MOVIE REVIEWS

stratospheric after this movie. Playing sweet, yet feisty passenger Annie, she captured hearts with her gorgeous looks and undeniable on-screen chemistry with Keanu. I must admit, I became completely obsessed with Sandra Bullock after this film and she has remained my on-screen crush ever since, even sitting through Speed 2, the worst sequel in movie history. Fun Fact: Quentin Tarantino was approached to direct Speed, but turned it down. He was, however, a big fan of the completed outcome.

### The Rock (1996)

Nicholas Cage had not really done any action films prior to The Rock, and had been told he was too goofy to be an action star. Determined to prove critics wrong, The Rock became part of an unofficial Nicolas Cage action trilogy, along with Con Air and Face-Off, all absolute classics of the genre.

The Rock is another Die Hard style set up, in so far as hostages have been taken on the prison Island of Alcatraz and if the terrorist's demands are not met, they will unleash their chemical weapons upon the good citizens of San Francisco. The only people who can stop them are nerdy chemist Stanley Goodspeed (Cage) and ex-British secret service agent John Mason (Connery), who must infiltrate Alcatraz, shut down the chemical weapons threat and rescue the hostages. All in a days works then.

From director Micheal Bay, known for his unique style of 'Bayhem', The Rock is pure 90's excess, with super fast edits, slow motion pans, vehicular destruction on a massive scale and Cage ad-libbing his way through the sheer daftness of it all.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about this film is a long standing fan theory that Connery's character is in fact his James Bond alter ego under a different name. This has come about due to him playing a British secret service agent who would be around the right age after his last 'official' Bond film, Diamonds Are Forever. What's more, after Cage introduces himself as Stanley Goodspeed, Mason says, "Well, off course you are," which is the exact same thing Bond says to Plenty O'Toole in Diamonds Are Forever, upon her introduction. Naturally it's probably all purely made up speculation, or is it?

Fun Fact: The car chase was shot and added after the film was completed, as it was felt there wasn't enough action in it. And the music during the car chase is the same music Hamz Zimmer would go on to use in Pirates of The Caribbean.



## Skip Etiquette by Jackie Williams

I recently needed a skip. This wasn't just for your general household clear out. I had a really big problem. A 20 metre, double skinned, 5' 6" high wall, that had began to lean precariously into my neighbour's garden. It had always had a bit of a tilt to it, but something during the last month had 'tipped it over the edge' and the movement was visibly noticeable. Though I would deeply regret losing it, it simply had to go.

And so, at enormous expense, my brickies ordered me 2 huge skips.

Of course, the first problem was where to put them. Living in a Victorian terrace doesn't leave a lot of room to manoeuvre, even with a private access road at the back. So I made and erected signs asking people not to park there on the necessary dates. I mentioned that the space was for the removal of a dangerous wall. I even found a couple of stray bollards to guard the area, but people totally ignored all of my pleas, tore down the signs, removed the bollards, and parked their cars just where the skip lorry needed to unload.

After much head scratching and consternation, another neighbour came out and allowed us to put one skip on his small hardstanding. It would have to be swapped with the other when full. I was annoyed with the inconsiderate drivers who park on our private road, even when they don't live here, but relieved that I have generous neighbours, so awaited the arrival of my brickies the following day in relatively decent spirits.

But come the morning the wall was supposed to be removed, a second problem with skips left in public places became clear. My guys discovered that it already contained a large armchair, a pink sink, and several broken flower pots. I'm not sure of the usual 'skip etiquette', but surely you only put your rubbish into someone else's skip when they have finished putting their own rubbish into it? However, apparently not! And it was a huge, deep skip. Who wants to climb into one of those to remove anything? And where would you put it?

So the guys began taking the wall down. Well, it actually fell down on the very first tap of the hammer. Yes, the whole 20m of it, in one huge WHUMPPPP (well, I did say it looked precarious, didn't !!) But with no one hurt (and me feeling extremely relieved that I wasn't going to get 5 years for manslaughter if it had crushed anyone), my fellas began clearing it up. They worked like demons and gradually filled all of the remaining room left in the skip.

But by the next morning there was also some broken fencing, a window frame, and a St. Patricks Day hat on top of my rubble. The skip lorry guy grumbled, but put the hat on his head.

"All this yours?" he asked.

"Nope," said I. "Just the brickwork."

He nodded and swapped the now overfilled skip for an empty one.

After which my brickies worked like demons all over again, but then a third problem became apparent. With the amount of wall still left to clear and the original room of the first skip taken up with the armchair etc., there was some concern that I might need yet another one, and I began to feel light headed at the thought of the extra cost. But they managed to somehow pack it all in. There wasn't an inch of room left, but by now it was Friday night and the skip couldn't be picked up until the following Monday morning.

So, by Saturday afternoon, 3 cushions, a rusty barbecue, and a battered violin case had also been added. Then by Sunday morning a rotten Rattan settee had been thrown into the mix. And by Monday morning a large stump of a tree, and atop that, sitting proudly, the toilet that matched the pink sink that went into the first skip.

My skip man arrived and frowned at the overflowing container.

"Just bricks, you said?"

"Yep, just bricks," I said.

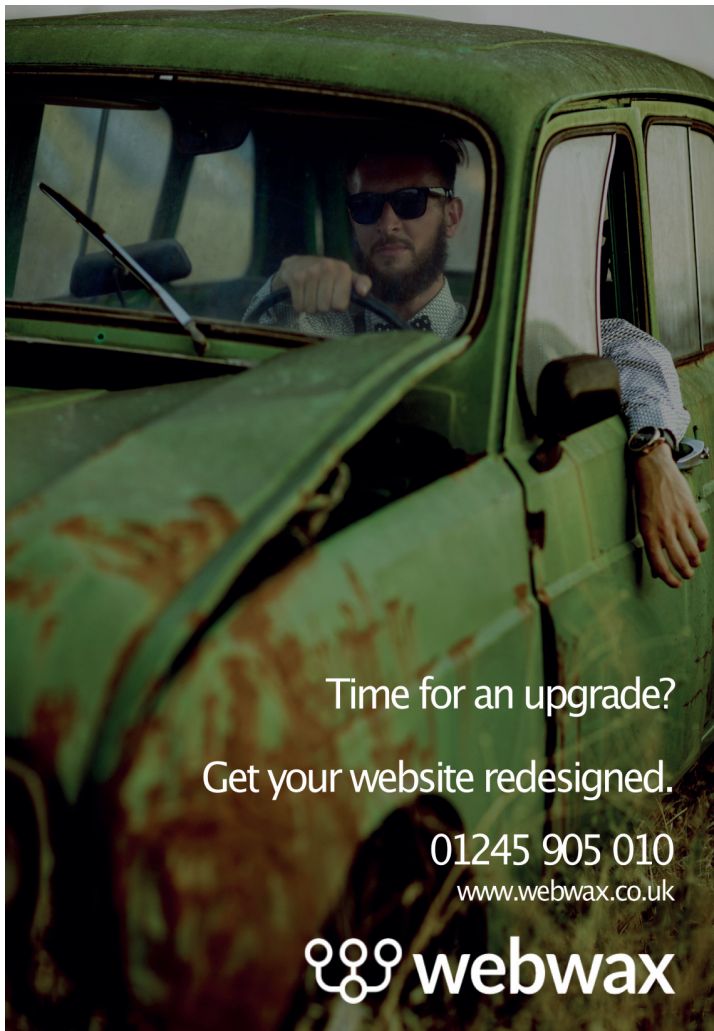
"Don't you have anything extra that you want to chuck on top?" he added, sarcastically, as he grimaced at the pink toilet sitting at least 2ft above the fill line. I shook my head. "No," I said. "I take all my own unwanted rubbish to the dump. It's free, after all."

Every man needs a good woman behind them (or a decent bloke, if that's the way you swing), so I'd just like to thank MY wife for poking up with me for all of these years while I've been compiling THE EDGE, including all of the highs, and the lows, of which there've been numerous.


And here she is, taken on a recent jaunt to Tenerife with some of her 'girlie friends', whilst I was stuck back 'ere in not so sunny Chelmsford, signing off on these April editions. Tut!



'Sinnerman' was playing  
when we walked in  
(see page 23)



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CALLING ALL FOGEYS

Eat your heart out Pamela Anderson

## Age should be celebrated, not apologised for!

2024 will be the last year of The Edge, so let's truly celebrate *fogeyism* by all you 65+ readers sending in your snaps, as this could be your last chance to appear in the local equivalent of Playboy magazine. The more interesting the photograph, the better, so do try to use a little imagination as The Edge is anxious to see all of you *FOGEY'S IN ACTION!*



Simply email your 'fogey fotografs' to [shaun@theedgemag.co.uk](mailto:shaun@theedgemag.co.uk) and keep your fingers crossed!



## Max Headroom's BIZARRE NEWS

### UNITED AIRLINES PLANE MAKES EMERGENCY LANDING AFTER WING STARTS 'COMING APART' DURING FLIGHT



A United Airlines flight from San Francisco to Boston was forced to make an emergency landing after a passenger spotted one of its wings 'coming apart' during the flight, Headroom reports.

"Just about to land in Denver with one wing falling off," noted one passenger on social media. "I've been shitting bricks and honestly think I've soiled myself," commented another.

Meanwhile, the wife of a passenger on the plane posted her husband's video onto Facebook, mentioning it was believed the damage had been caused by a bird strike. "Must have been a f\*\*\*ing golden eagle," she quipped.

"My brother-in-law thinks it must have definitely been a bird strike as the flaps were deployed," was another conclusion.

"I was sitting right on the wing and the noise after reaching altitude was much louder than normal," said another. "When I opened my sun-shade the wing looking like this (above), FFS," added another.

The Boeing 757-200 flight was carrying 165 passengers and landed in Denver at around 05:15am local time, where they were put on a different flight and arrived in Boston a few hours later.

A passenger later described the experience to The Edge, stating, "So we took off and I immediately heard a really strange buzzing noise, but it faded away pretty quickly, so I didn't think too much of it. Only then I noticed that the whole leading edge of the wing was disintegrating before my very eyes and I immediately followed through."

The Federal Aviation Administration are said to be investigating the incident and refunding passengers with sets of clean underwear.

### MEANWHILE, A DRUNK MAN IN BUSINESS CLASS...

It's always men, isn't it, readers? Naughty, naughty, men, men, men, with this particular naughty drunk business class passenger on a flight from Dubai, having to be wrestled to the ground and restrained with zip-ties after headbutting a flight attendant.

The man, who is said to have been drunk, drunk, drunk at the time, was filmed squaring up to the male cabin crew member in full view of his fellow passengers.

Fortunately he was immediately pushed to the floor while a female staff member (HURRAY FOR WOMEN!) was seen pulling a bunch of cable-ties out of a bag (a bit like Paul Daniels used to pull a rabbit out of a top hat) before handing them to her waistcoat-wearing colleague to do the honours.

The passenger was taking the three-hour flight between Dubai and Islamabad, Pakistan, when he decided to get 'completely trolled'. After reportedly being given multiple warnings by the onboard team after he began 'causing a disturbance' and 'frightening passengers', he was later said to have quickly become 'extremely violent'.

Footage taken after the arrival of the flight in the Pakistani capital shows the man slumped in a wheelchair with a piss stain around his crotch as he was handed over to the rather cross looking authorities.

## ...AND IT'S GOODBYE FROM HIM!

The email landed from E.E. to warn us all of the impending April deadline, along with an additional note, which said we should treat this as our last article as he was pretty much certain to be pulling the shutters down, what with this latest edition of the mag being an 'even' number (which was indeed a factor), and I sort of get that, not ending on an odd number. However, the ongoing external pressures have always been very real for a self-styled fanzine printed on such good quality stock.

Just as E.E. has a heavy heart, I too, with an equally heavy heart, have decided to *definitely* call time on my own columns by *definitely* make this my last ever article in The Edge. And it's a good time numerically for me too, as it's ten years since I first dropped into this far flung corner of the mag.

I was also about six or seven years in before I ever dared allow a picture of my good self to appear within these very pages, as my bosses were somewhat 'concerned' when I declared this outside interest. Yes, dear readers, in some sectors of banking, things like writing for The Edge have to be declared as an 'outside interest', so it was simply easier to remove the risk and use a non de plume (as in MOTCO), until proven the bank wouldn't collapse because of my scribbles in a regional rag.

Just imagine: 'Massive Italian/German bank survives bankruptcy and the credit crunch, only to be bought to its knees by a tweed clad scribbler in Chelmsford!' I guess you can never be too careful, but if only most big banks really had been a little more so.

There were certain constants to be had over the past decade of this monthly exercise. We have established, beyond doubt, that Columbo remains king of all detectives, there is no room in life for bad ice-cream, and that Rossi's of Southend's plain vanilla from the churn is simply the greatest ice-cream in the world, therefore James Sinclair, please, *please* take note and do not meddle with the current recipe in any way, shape or form.

Another solid is the lady from the window company in the doorway of B&Q. No, we have never asked her for a quote, but we were concerned when she disappeared for a few weeks, so asked after her, and do ask how she is each time we leave the store. Another piece of absolute knowledge that has been cemented in fact over this period is this; one should never join any village club, activity, or society, that has the word 'Midsomer' in its name. Otherwise you will be a gonner for sure, meeting your death in some kind of gruesome, yet ironic way. Oh and never look up and utter the immortal words: "Oh, its only you." Or *boof*, that will be the end of ya!

I have always tried to bring a slightly different look to matters with my columns, as opposed to just whinging, which is something my friends will tell you I am perfectly capable of doing. Looking back, I still think my best line ever put into print was in fact about ice-cream. I mentioned that good ice-cream should be "as rich and thick as an aristocrat's eldest son." I love that line and believe me, I have met some very decent, affable, chaps from some very good homes throughout the years, but oh boy, a lot of them are as thick as can be.

Which brings us sadly to another remaining constant of the last decade, and most of our country's late history, as I have often asked these affable chaps if their fathers have ever asked for their money back from the various public schools they had paid good money to. But as one said to me in a friendly exchange when I challenged him, "Thing is, old son, I will get the money anyway, so it doesn't really matter." And he's damn right, but then here's a classic inequality that burns into the deepest part of my council house soul. I envied the confidence, and sometimes even arrogance, of these chaps, as a privileged tide of life would carry them to the best beach regardless. It was theirs in the beginning and will remain ever so. And as I have worked hard to chip away my sharp, harsh, Romford edges, educate, improve etc., they will

no doubt admire my efforts from the sun deck above. Things changed slightly in the eighties and nineties as it really looked as though a true meritocracy was emerging. I did well, I cannot deny that, and I will dine out on stories from that period for a very long time. Though sadly, tragically, these days, I myself will be picking up the bill, as it won't be on expenses any more!



As the new millennium arrived and the old order started to reassert itself and tighten its grip on the little people once again, unfortunately the gap between rich and poor was reopened and widened at an alarming rate. Because these days the rich now have almost Victorian levels of wealth and power, except it is not from dark satanic mills, but rather a modern techno version of it all. I always tried to leave the politics to Edge columnist Kingpin, as he did it so well. I loved his columns, along with our monthly burst of sunshine from Steve Ward, the mag's former San Diego correspondent.

Just for the record, who indeed is behind the MOTCO mask, sometimes also known as Motson J. Tweedstrangler? Well, I am a 63-year-old chap who originated from Harold Hill, near Romford, and more lately from Braintree, yet someone who lived in Chelmsford for 30 years. I married my school sweetheart forty-two years ago and have three (adult) children. For gainful employment, I have worked in banking almost all of my life, most of it as a futures trader on LIFFE (which is one of those blokes in a brightly coloured jacket shouting and hand signalling that you may remember from the film 'Trading Places' with Eddie Murphy and Dan Ackroyd, which could be your final monthly 'look up', all of you younger readers! After that, I moved around in banking, sales and trading, but these days I work in surveillance. In fact, I am part of the bank's very own internal rozzers, aiming to catch the wrong uns!

Despite my decade long running gags about tweed - and I really do have a penchant for tweed and have a fine selection of jackets and suits to support my claims, along with an Imelda Marcus fascination with shoes - when I have finally departed this mortal coil, there will be no skeletons in my closet, just shoes! A bit of a late finisher, I completed my education gaining a degree, at some 50 years of age, from the Open University. Aside from my family cheering me as I walked across the stage in my robes, were two key figures; Leon, who is responsible for my MOTCO tag, and my old headmaster, TJB. One was an old boss who persuaded me into doing the degree in the first place, as well as turning down the pay rise that I really wanted, which is some kind of persuasion, you have to admit. While my old head was a lifelong friend and mentor, who is very sadly missed, but if you ever see my old, vintage Golf GTI convertible around Chelmsford, well, that used to be his as well. Life throws up some interesting hook-ups as we wend upon our weary way, including the complexity that is the sentient being holding the infernal meddling erasing and altering pen in the hand of E.E.! (You're fired, Motco! Signed, E.E.)

As is my usual ending, I will sign off with a corny joke, as I see no exception to the rule here. And that is: 'Saying goodbye is like trying to fold a fitted sheet - nobody really knows how to do it properly.'

So sincerely, the best of luck in figuring out the folds in your own life's journey!

And it's goodbye from him.

Yours aye,

*Motchy*

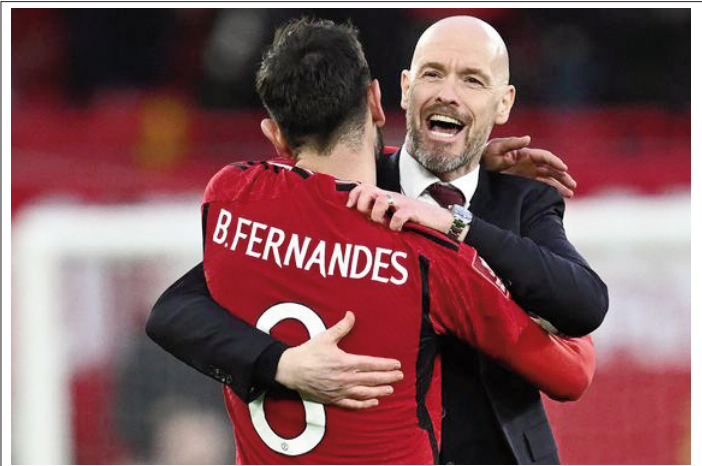


## TOTALLY TRACIE

### “MONEY, MONEY, MONEY!”

Thank you for all of your lovely comments last month. So seeing as you enjoyed it so much, I thought I would write you another of my childhood tales. When I was young, a man would knock on our front door every Thursday evening to collect my Grandad's 'Spot the Ball' entry', along with the 25p entry fee. My Grandad would literally spend all week staring at his entry form, lifting it to the light, turning it all angles, until he was satisfied he had all of his crosses (kisses) in the right place. Every week he would say to the collector, "Look after that one, it's definitely a winner!" Some weeks my Grandad would also do an entry for my Nan, who would always moan from her knitting that it was a waste of good money. To which he would say, "But Vi, just imagine if we won?" And my nan would huff and puff and click her knitting needles even louder in protest. You always knew when my Nan had a bit of a strop on as she would bash out a jumper in no time. For those of you who are way too young to know what 'Spot The Ball' was, it consisted of 'a football photograph - minus the ball' - and on the entry form you had to mark your crosses where you thought the ball might be. A staggering 3 million people would regularly sit there, studying the photograph, every single week for hours upon end, hoping to put one of their crosses in exactly the right place and hit the jackpot. The original photograph, complete with the ball, would then be shown in the 'paper the following week and the lucky winner photographed with a cheque of up to £250,000 plus a bottle of champers. Back in the day, champagne was the preserve of the rich, while poor folk would drink Pomagne (aka fizzy cider) and pretend it was champers! Working class folk constantly 'chased the dream' and a way out of the 9-5 drudgery, long before the National Lottery came along. I remember people started getting technical (or desperate) in their quest to win and would invest in an 'Ink Stamp' of 100 crosses for £1 that they would stamp on the picture in the hope that one of their crosses would be in exactly the right spot. And every week, when my grandad found out that he hadn't won, he would shout and curse that

they had 'doctored the photograph' as the ball could not possibly have been where they said it was. "It's a fix!" he would cry, followed by, "I'm not entering ever again." Until the following. Back in the day, everyone used to dream about winning the Premium Bonds, the Football Pools, or Spot the Ball. My grandad's brother actually won the football pools one Christmas, much to my grandad's disgust. He had two sons, Peter and Paul (but there was nothing biblical about those two rogues) and neither of them got along with the other. At family gatherings they would sit at different tables, each causing trouble. Uncle 'Wiggy', as he was affectionately known to the family, due to the ridiculous 'syrup' he wore (that he claimed was his own hair) won half-a-million quid. So quick as you like, the two sons put their differences aside (money heals, after all) and the family were reunited. They bragged to everyone that they were moving to Spain to build villas next to each other and 'live like kings' (this was in the 1970s). Well, true to their word, the villas got built, with Uncle Wiggy residing in between each of his sons and we all received postcards telling us of the highlife they were living. My Grandad would moan, "My bloody brother didn't even give me a shilling of his winnings!" while my Nan would chip in with, "After all we bleedin' well did for him," when to be honest, all I can ever remember is her constantly moaning about him. Well, the highlife lasted for 2 whole years until they all had a massive falling out and one of the brothers tried to drown the other in a huge water feature which was called 'Fuente de Vida', which roughly translates (ironically) to 'The Fountain of Life'. Uncle Wiggy then fell over whilst trying to stop them killing each other and broke his hip. The Police were called and one of the brothers was arrested and thrown into jail for a year, before being extradited back to the UK, never to be allowed to return to Spain. But the story gets worse, as the villas had no Spanish planning permission, so could not be sold individually, only as a whole - and no-one wanted three villas together, while the taxes were crippling, so the government eventually took action and seized them all. After which the money started to dwindle away until there was nothing left and they all eventually limped back home to Blighty and a future spent working in factories. Uncle Wiggy, with a hip that never healed properly, spent the remainder of his days in an old people's home until dementia finally got to him and he spoke of nothing but bull fighting and Sangria. So they upped his medication, on account of him chasing after the (very large) matron around the home, stark bollock naked and waving a tea towel above his head, whilst trying to spear her with a pointed stick! My Grandad then used to say, every week after not winning 'Spot the Ball', "It's probably for the best, Vi. We're happy as we are, aren't we? Who needs a Spanish Villa anyway?" And I guess, looking back, they were happy and 'all the richer' for not winning the Football Pools. So the moral of this story must be, enjoy what you have and live for today, for we never know just how rich we really are. Have a good month.



### Sunday 17th March F.A. Cup Quarter-Final MANCHESTER UNITED 4 LIVERPOOL 3 (AET)

What a game.  
What a result.

Which could honestly be a total game changer for Ten Hag, in much the same way as Mark Robins', manager of United's next opponents, Coventry City, in the forthcoming semi-finals, solo headed effort away to Nottingham Forest, back in the 3rd round of January 1990, is often credited for saving Sir Alex Ferguson's job at Old Trafford, after three years at the helm with (supposedly) nothing to show for it.

And it could be said that Ten Hag was in a similarly precarious position, had United not stormed back to break Liverpool's hearts with a dramatic 4-3 victory after extra-time.

Which was the right result, The Edge thinks, as Liverpool failed to put the game to bed when they had the opportunity, and Klopp knew that, yet on this occasion, they fluffed their lines.

So as a supporter of no particular team, but a lover of football nonetheless, this publication would like to see the season close with Arsenal as league champions, Scousers the runners-up, and City in third, but isn't it far more likely to be the other way around? What a season though, to have not one, not two, but *three* teams in genuine contention for the title in April. What other European league offers you that?

Your editor would also like to see Spurs pip Villa for fourth place and Luton Town to *somehow* avoid relegation. After which United lift the F.A. Cup and, by way of consolation, Manchester City retain the Champions League trophy, on the grounds that you cannot beat 'spreading the love'!



*You have been reading issue number*

# 320

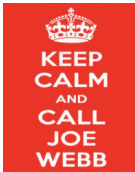
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