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BREXIT, SCHMEXIT!

UK ends 2017 with 'world's strongest economy'

Britain ended last year as the strongest of the world's advanced economies with growth accelerating in the six months after the Brexit vote, it was revealed on Thursday.

Business activity hit a 17-month high last month, meaning that the economy grew by 2.2 per cent last year - more than the six other leading nations, including the US, Germany and Japan. Far from slowing after the referendum in June, as predicted by the Treasury and Bank of England, growth appeared to have improved. GDP grew at 0.3 per cent and 0.6 per cent in the first two quarters of last year, compared with 0.6 per cent and an estimated 0.5 per cent in the final period.

'some degree of crisis'

Andrew Haldane, chief economist at the Bank of England, suggested that economic forecasters were facing a "Michael Fish moment" over their mistaken predictions. Mr Haldane, comparing the profession's failure to spot the 2008 recession to Fish's infamous assurance of "no hurricane" on the eve of the great storm of 1987, said yesterday: "It's a fair cop to say that the profession is to some degree in crisis."

He also admitted to

shortcomings in pre-Brexit predictions, saying that "the data has surprised to the upside". He insisted that the Bank's errors were "more a question of timing than of a fundamental reassessment of the fortunes of the economy" and warned that inflation would squeeze household incomes this year.

'horror stories'

He said that a slowdown was still likely. The Bank is forecasting growth this year of 1.4 per cent, which would put the UK in the middle of the G7. However, Steve Baker, the Brexit-supporting MP, said that the performance of the economy since the referendum was a reproach to those who warned of dire consequences. "This is another moment to reflect that the horror stories that we were told simply didn't come to pass," he said.

An assessment by Cambridge University criticized "flawed and partisan" Treasury forecasts of Britain's economy outside the



POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE? Andrew Haldane, chief economist at the Bank of England, suggested that economic forecasters were facing a "Michael Fish moment" over their mistaken predictions.

EU. Only one, the fall in sterling, had proved correct, according to the Centre for Business Research. Treasury predictions on the prospects of trade outside the EU came in for particular criticism in the academic assessment published last month.

robust performance

"We have looked very carefully at what the Treasury has said about this and we find it work very flawed and very partisan. It is not objective," Graham Gudgin, one of the authors of the report, said.

Britain's robust performance means the

economy heads into 2017 on solid ground. James Knightley, UK economist at ING Financial Markets, said that it "indicates that the UK economy has strong momentum".

The purchasing managers' index survey of business activity across the services, construction and manufacturing industries also pointed to further hiring by companies. It was released before official GDP data for 2016 as a whole on January 26.

Recruitment across all three industries accelerated at the fastest pace in 11 months and, in a positive sign for the months ahead, new orders in the services

sector, which accounts for four fifths of the economy, hit a 17-month high. Chris Williamson, chief business economist at IHS Markit, which produces the survey, said: "The UK economy ended 2016 on a high. Hiring has also revived alongside upturns in new orders and business confidence."

Using historical comparisons of PMI surveys and official GDP numbers, he said that the survey pointed to growth in the final quarter of 0.5 per cent.

December's PMI reading for services, which was jointly produced with the Chartered Institute of

Procurement & Supply, rose from 55.3 to 56.2, with any figure over 50 indicating growth. It beat forecasts of 54.7 and was the strongest since July 2015. It took the composite index of all private sector activity, including manufacturing and construction, to 56.7, a 17-month high.

Mr Williamson warned that the strong growth rate and signs of rising inflation could force the Bank to raise its official rate from the record low of 0.25 per cent. "All of which adds weight to the argument that the next move by the Bank of England is as likely to be a rate hike as a cut," he said.

News From Britain

UK military to build prototype 'laser weapon'

The UK Ministry of Defence has officially awarded a £30m contract to produce a prototype laser weapon.

The aim is to see whether "directed energy" technology could benefit the armed forces, and is to culminate in a demonstration of the system in 2019.

The contract was picked up by a consortium of European defence firms.

The prototype will be assessed on how it picks up and tracks targets at different distances and in varied weather conditions over land and water.

Peter Cooper, from the UK's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), headquartered at Porton Down, Wiltshire, said the project "draws on innovative research into high power lasers so as to understand the potential of the technology".

'Ahead of the curve'

He added that this could "provide a more effective response to the emerging threats that could be faced by UK armed forces".

The MoD has been finalising the agreement with the consortium, called UK Dragonfire, for several months, but it has now formally announced them as the winning contractor.

A spokesperson for the MoD told BBC News that the demonstrator was not being developed to counter any specific threat, but to assess whether such weaponry could be delivered as a capability for the armed forces.

But in general, directed energy weapons could potentially be used to destroy drone aircraft, missiles, mortars, roadside bombs and a host of other threats.

The US military has been experimenting with high energy lasers for decades. But, until recently, technical hurdles had prevented them from being used on the frontline.

However, the US Navy fielded a laser weapon system called Laws for testing on the USS Ponce during a deployment to the Gulf starting in 2014.

It hit targets aboard a small boat which was directed to speed towards the navy ship and also shot a small drone out of the sky.

The Minister for Defence Procurement, Harriet Baldwin, said that "truly groundbreaking projects like the Laser Directed Energy Weapon" would "keep this country ahead of the curve".

If the demonstration is successful, the first laser weapons could come into service in the mid-2020s.

New chat show for UKIP's Farage

Former UKIP leader Nigel Farage is to present a daily chat show on the London radio station LBC.

The Nigel Farage Show will air from 19:00 to 20:00, Mondays to Thursdays, with the host describing it as "full of opinions, callers and reaction".

He tweeted: "I invite listeners to agree with me, challenge me & together we can lead Britain's conversation."

Mr Farage, a friend of US President-elect Donald Trump, is an MEP for South East England.

He resigned as UKIP leader last summer, but returned on an interim basis after his successor, Diane James, resigned



FARAGE: keeping a high public profile following his UKIP resignation

only 18 days into the job. Mr Farage's former deputy, Paul Nuttall, won the second leadership contest of the year.

Mr Trump has said Mr Farage - among the

first politicians to visit the president-elect after his victory last year - would make a "great" UK ambassador to the US, but Downing Street responded that there was

"no vacancy". The former UKIP leader has previously taken part in occasional Phone Farage shows on LBC. The new regular slot begins on Monday.

EU: access to single market 'not on sale'

The UK will be unable to buy privileged access to the single market after it leaves the EU, says one of the top UK officials to have worked in Brussels.

Jonathan Faull, who retired last week, said that access to the single market "is not something that's on sale".

He also warned the UK should not assume it can broker a deal with Angela Merkel if she wins re-election as German chancellor.

Theresa May plans to trigger the Brexit negotiations by the end of March.

But Mr Faull said

that Britain has one important card to play in the EU negotiations - cooperation on European defence.

The warnings by Mr Faull, who served in the European Commission for 38 years, come as the government scrambles to assemble its Brexit negotiating team in the wake of the resignation of the UK's EU ambassador, Sir Ivan Rogers.

He is to be replaced by Sir Tim Barrow, a former UK ambassador to Moscow.

In his interview with BBC Newsnight, Mr Faull cast doubt about

an idea, which is being promoted by senior Whitehall officials, that the UK could pay for privileged access to the EU's single market.

This would be designed to circumvent the rules of the single market whose members, including Norway which is outside the EU, have to accept the free movement of people and the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice.

David Davis, the Brexit secretary, confirmed last month that the government was considering the idea.

Mr Faull said: "Can you buy access to the

single market? It's not something that's on sale in that way. I find that rather extraordinary."

The former European Commission official pointed out that Norway is bound by two core rules of the EU - accepting the free movement of people and abiding by the European Court of Justice.

Theresa May has indicated that she would like to have some access to the single market.

But the prime minister is to confirm in a speech later this month that the UK will have two fundamental red lines in

Cont. on page 2, col. 1



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EU access:

cont. from page 3

its Brexit negotiations - control of its borders and freedom from the ECJ.

Mr Faull suggested that if the UK cannot accept the fundamental rules of the single market it would be regarded as a foreign country: "I don't think it is a question of buying your way somehow into the single market."

"You're a member of the single market as a member of the EU or the EEA. Or you're a foreign country outside it, and you conclude agreements with the EU - if you want to and it wants to - regarding the way in which your goods, services, capital and people move

around.

"Or you don't and you have one or two international rules which apply and that's it, that's a choice to be made by both sides."

Newsnight was speaking to Mr Faull as part of a profile of Michel Barnier, the former French foreign minister who is the EU's chief Brexit negotiator.

Downing Street expects Barnier to adopt a hardline stance once the Brexit negotiations are formally under way when Theresa May triggers Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty.

But in private, ministers believe that Angela Merkel will take a more benign approach if she wins re-election as German chancellor later this year.



Queen 'feeling better', says Anne

The Queen is feeling "better" despite missing a New Year's Day church service at Sandringham, her daughter the Princess Royal has said.

Princess Anne spoke to well-wishers outside the church after attending the service with her father Prince Philip, brother Prince Edward and other royals.

Buckingham Palace said the Queen (pictured, above) is "still recuperating" from a heavy cold.

Missing church was a "precautionary measure" in cold and wet weather and there was "no sense of undue concern".

Twelve days ago the palace said both the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh had heavy

colds and had cancelled their plans to travel to Sandringham on 21 December.

They left for their Christmas break a day late, travelling by helicopter instead of train.

Prince Philip has since made a full recovery.

The Queen did not attend the Christmas Day service at her Norfolk estate, the first time she has missed the service in many years.

The New Year's Day service at Sandringham was led by the Bishop of Norwich.

Princess Anne's husband, Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence, who accompanied her to the service, added that the Queen was feeling "not too bad".

Handwritten Diana letters sell for £15,100 at auction

Six handwritten letters from Princess Diana have sold for £15,100 at auction.

One candid letter from Diana to ex-Buckingham Palace steward Cyril Dickman, revealed Prince Harry was "constantly in trouble at school".

Another note described how young Prince William "swamped" his baby brother with "an endless supply of hugs and kisses".

The letters form part of about 40 lots from Mr Dickman's former estate, which sold for £55,000 in total - exceeding the estimate price of £13,000.

Cheffins, a Cambridgeshire auction house, said the lots were "a unique collection of royal memorabilia".

Bidders from as far away as Australia, Japan and the US were trying to purchase the items.

In a letter on headed Kensington Palace paper dated 20 September 1984, Diana thanked Mr Dickman for "such a lovely card" following the birth of her youngest son, Harry.

She wrote: "William adores his little brother and spends the entire time swamping Harry with an endless supply of hugs and kisses, hardly letting the parents near!"

"The reaction to one tiny person's birth has totally overwhelmed us and I can hardly breathe for the mass of flowers that are arriving here!"

That letter sold for £3,200, having had an estimated auction price of £400-600.

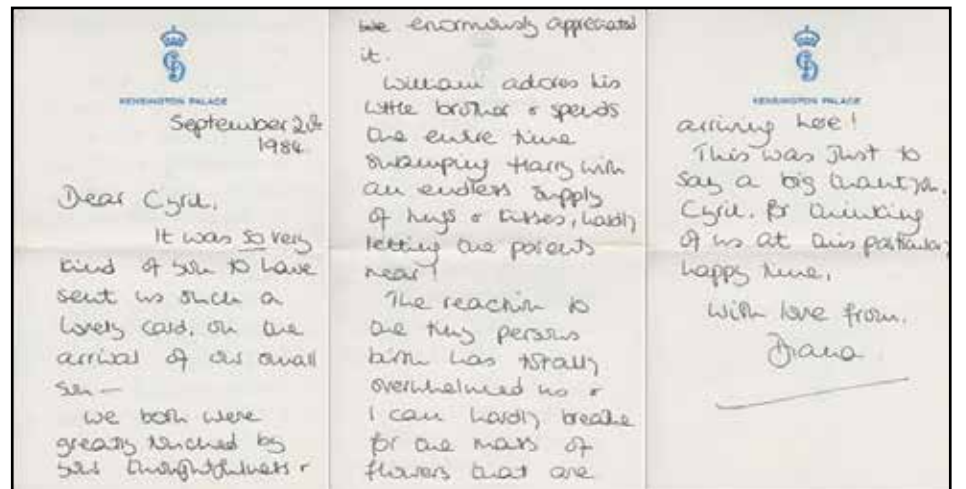
In another, dated 17 October 1992, Diana says how both young princes "are well and enjoying boarding school a lot, although Harry is constantly in trouble!"

This sold for £2,400 - after an estimate of £600-900.

The items were being



DEVOTED MOTHER: many of Diana's letters concerned her young sons



sold by the family of the late Mr Dickman, who was head palace steward for more than 50 years.

Described by Cheffins as "a favourite of every member of the Royal Family", he received handwritten notes from other senior royals dating back more than 30 years.

The collection sold at auction also included

letters, cards and photographs from Prince Charles and Princess Margaret, and Maundy money.

In one letter from the Queen written on Windsor Castle headed paper, she thanks Mr Dickman for his "thoughts and sympathy" following the death of the Queen

Mother.

More than a dozen Christmas cards, including some from the Queen, Princess Diana and the Prince of Wales, were bought for £2,200.

Unopened boxed wedding cake from the Queen's marriage to Prince Philip in 1947 also sold for a few hundred pounds.

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News from Britain



ARTER: the Bournemouth midfielder suffered a stillborn baby daughter

Player sacked after Twitter abuse

■ Hitchen Town player sorry for “disgraceful comments”

A non-league footballer has been sacked by his club after abusing AFC Bournemouth midfielder Harry Arter over the death of his baby daughter.

On Tuesday, the Premier League club lost a three goal lead to draw 3-3 at home with Arsenal.

In a tweet sent to Arter, Hitchen Town player Alfie Barker said: “At least you didn’t lose your kid”.

He added that the result was “big hype for disappointment like the nine months leading up to your child’s birth”.

Barker, 19, later apologised for his “disgraceful comments”.

Following outcry over the tweets, which have now been deleted, Hitchen Town cancelled Barker’s contract.

It said: “The club adopts a responsible approach to social media

and would expect any player connected to Hitchen Town to do likewise.

“In the light of the player’s irresponsible and anti-social behaviour, we are terminating Alfie Barker’s registration and relationship with the club with immediate effect.”

Codicote FC, where Barker had been playing on loan, said it was “disgusted and appalled” by the comments.

autism

Arter has a tattoo which is dedicated to his daughter Renee, who was stillborn in December 2015.

The 27-year-old’s fiancée Rachel is currently pregnant and due to give birth next month.

Just days after their loss, Arter starred as AFC Bournemouth recorded

a surprise 2-1 win over Manchester United.

Speaking about his daughter last month, Arter said he “wasn’t in a good place” after her death.

“There are days when I feel like a normal person, or how someone who hasn’t lost a baby would feel,” he told *The Guardian*.

“But then it will just hit you, driving along and suddenly you see something that triggers your mind.”

It later emerged that Barker suffers from a mild form of autism for which he takes medication and that on the night of the tweet he had ignored medical advice by combining the medication with alcohol. He was reported as saying he was ‘deeply ashamed’ of his comments and hoped to apologize to Arter in person.



“I’ll ring ahead next time,” the Queen told one anxious guardsman

Queen ‘nearly shot’ by Buckingham Palace guard while walking late at night

■ Security personnel mistook Her Majesty for one of several intruders who have gained entry to Buckingham Palace in recent years

IT IS ONE OF THE PERKS of being a member of the monarchy that you have armed guards watching over you at all times.

But that apparently almost backfired for the Queen when she decided to take a late-night walk around the palace grounds and came close to being shot.

From time to time her majesty is said to struggle to sleep. During a spell of insomnia, the 90-year-old will occasionally put on her coat and go for a short stroll, an ex-guardsman told *The Times*.

Late one night, he said he was patrolling inside the perimeter of the Palace walls when he spotted a figure in the darkness.

Thinking that he had caught a potentially dangerous intruder, sneaking into the Royal residence at 3am, he shouted: “Who’s that?” But to his surprise, it was actually the Queen.

“Bloody hell, Your Majesty, I nearly shot you,” he is reported to have said, on impulse.

Perhaps realising this

wasn’t the tone to be used when addressing the Queen, he told *The Times* he expected a telling off. But the Queen reportedly took responsibility for putting him in such an awkward position.

“That’s quite all right,” she replied. “Next time I’ll ring through beforehand so you don’t have to shoot me.”

It is believed the encounter happened at the Queen’s normal weekday residence, Buckingham Palace.

In 2013, Prince Andrew was also mistaken for an intruder and confronted by armed police as he walked in the vast gardens.

Police said no weapons were drawn but issued an apology to the prince, despite the palace having been subject to several real security breaches in recent years.

In August, a 22-year-old man was arrested just after 4am after climbing over a security fence. He was spotted by officers monitoring CCTV.

In May, Denis Hennessy, 41, climbed

over barbed wire and roamed the palace grounds for about 10 minutes while The Queen, Prince Philip, and Prince Andrew were in residence.

When he was found by officers he repeatedly asked them: “Is Ma’am in?”

Before that, in 2013, a man scaled the perimeter fence and was found at around 10pm actually inside the building, in one of the State Rooms. None of the royals were home at the time.

The news of the near-shooting comes at a time when the public is particularly tuned into the Queen’s wellbeing. The elderly monarch was not seen for a fortnight over the Christmas period due to poor health.

She missed a New Year’s Day church service at Sandringham because of a lingering heavy cold, and just a week before that she and her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, were forced to delay their journey from Buckingham Palace to their Norfolk estate after she fell ill.



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May to visit Trump in the spring

Theresa May is to visit US President-elect Donald Trump in the spring, Downing Street has said.

In December the PM's joint chiefs of staff, Nick Timothy and Fiona Hill, travelled to the US to build links with the incoming president's team.

A source said Mrs May "looks forward to visiting the new president in the spring".

The meeting is expected to take place at the White House and could be as early as next month, it is understood.

The December trip by Mrs May's closest aides was part of efforts to build a relationship with Mr Trump ahead of his inauguration on 20 January.

The president-elect first invited the prime minister to visit in a phone-call shortly after his election victory in November.

It had been expected that she would visit Washington in the early months of 2017.

It wasn't all bad...

A homeless man from Edinburgh has thanked the tourist who flew him to Sweden for Christmas for her "incredible act of kindness".

Jimmy Fraser, 54, was begging in the city when Annis Lindkvist and her sister, Emma, stopped to ask him for directions. They got talking and struck up a friendship; after Annis returned home, she invited him to stay with her and her family over Christmas – and paid for his flights and passport. They took him to an ice hockey match and Christmas markets, and have now asked him back for Easter. "It was a beautiful experience," he said.

Woman used hammer to fend off Viagra OAP

A woman has been cleared of attempting to murder an 89-year-old man after she hit him with a hammer to fend off his unwanted sexual advances.

Gillian Lavery, 43, was cleaning Tom Winter's flat in Clydebank when the incident happened on 16 February 2016.

He had arranged to have sex with a younger woman but when she did not turn up he told Ms Lavery: "I have already taken my Viagra. You are doing it."

A jury found her not guilty after accepting she acted in self defence.

Ms Lavery's trial at the High Court in Glasgow heard that she had been acting as a cleaner for the pensioner and both had known each other for a number of years.

Winter claimed that they had had sex together on three or four occasions during that

time.

He told the court that on the day of the attack, Ms Lavery had called to say she was going to visit him and he believed she was coming to his flat for sex.

'Mystery woman'

But he said he told her to get out after she mentioned that she was expecting a friend.

Winter claimed he then walked out in front of Ms Lavery before being repeatedly struck with a hammer.

Photographs of the OAP after the incident showed him with bruising to his head, face, arms and legs.

Under cross-examination, Winter admitted that he had also been expecting "a mystery woman" to turn up that day.

He told the jury: "Gillian said she was bringing someone up... if the mystery woman



MISMATCHED COMBATANTS: Tom Winter and Gillian Lavery

did not turn up, I would have sex with Gillian with her consent."

'Not going anywhere'

During her evidence, Ms Lavery admitted that she had previously had sex with Winter and that she had been at his flat when he had sex with other women.

The accused said the pensioner asked her to visit that day as a woman

called Sarah was coming up and she could make her "feel comfortable".

But she recalled Winter became "angry" when the woman did not show up.

Ms Lavery told the court: "He said that he had already taken his tablet...his Viagra."

She said Winter then told her: "You are not going anywhere. She is not here, so you are

doing it."

Ms Lavery said she tried to flee from the flat but the pensioner hit her with a walking stick.

She said she hit him with a hammer that had fallen from a table to "get him off me" before fleeing.

Ms Lavery was cleared of attempted murder after the jury took just half an hour to find her not guilty.

London museum bids fond farewell to Dippy the dinosaur

Britain's Natural History Museum bid farewell to its most famous exhibit, Dippy the diplodocus, on Wednesday after almost four decades of greeting visitors before being dismantled ahead of a national tour.

For 35 years, the huge skeleton cast, 4.25 metres (14 ft) high and 21 metres long, has been the first sight visitors see when they enter the London museum's main entrance.

On Thursday, a team begins the three-week process of dismantling Dippy before conservators spend 12 months preparing the delicate plaster-of-Paris cast for the journey around Britain where it will go on show at eight locations from 2018 until 2020.



NOT SO DIPPY: the diplodocus was originally a gift from Andrew Carnegie in 1905

From the end of 2020, a bronze cast of Dippy will then go on display outside the museum.

Scottish-born American industrialist Andrew Carnegie originally

presented the 292-bone cast to the museum in 1905, and it has held its prominent position in the main entrance hall since 1979.

Dippy will be replaced

by a 25.2 metre real skeleton of a blue whale as part of a major overhaul.

Diplodocus was first described as a new type of dinosaur in 1878 by Professor Othniel C.

Marsh at Yale University. The herbivore species lived sometime between 156 and 145 million years ago and belongs to a group called sauropods, meaning 'lizard feet'.

For lasting change, say GOODBYE to New Year's Resolutions

2017 is here! In this week's blog we are going to go against tradition and finally put an end to all New Years Resolutions...

The fact is that resolutions are attempted every year and by February, most people have given up

British snapper hailed a hero after freeway fire rescue

LOCAL BRITON Austin Raishbrook was hailed as a hero this week after rescuing a man from a burning vehicle on the northbound Harbor Freeway in the early hours of Sunday morning.

Raishbrook, a Brits in LA member and owner of RMG News, was out filming when he saw the stalled car on the freeway get rear ended and burst into flames. According to news reports Austin leapt into action, smashing the window of the burning vehicle and dragging out the unconscious occupant. He stayed with the man until the California Highway Patrol and paramedics arrived.

A law enforcement source said the unnamed driver was 'doing well' and that "it would have been a very different situation if he (Austin) hadn't rescued him".

A source told the BW that Austin, a father of two, escaped with just a slight singeing to his hair.

and are back to their old habits. So here's The Body Camp solution - and it's so easy!

All you have to do is pick out some time in the day and give yourself ten minutes. Stick to this for 30 days in January! We call it simply the 10BCDC (10 Day Body Camp Daily Commitment).

10 BCDC works because if you do anything daily for a period of time it becomes a habit and part of your daily lifestyle. We are all just a collection of daily habits that build up over time and we will be using the 10 BCDC to build habits into your daily life that take very little precious time from your busy schedule.

Just simply follow the 3 Step challenge:

Commit to 10 minutes everyday of something that effects you positively.

Choose from the



HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH? Committing to too much change for New Year is a self-defeating strategy

following -

- A meditation
- Yoga
- A lovely walk
- A slow steady jog
- A weight training session
- Sitting down, breathing deep and closing the eyes, saying positive affirmations to yourself such as "I

have all I need within me now".

Eat a meal mindfully Help someone or listen to someone

Then post a picture of which one you are committing too at "thebodycampibiza" on instagram or #thebodycamp on Facebook

Watch how your

10 BCDC becomes a habit - just like a muscle which gets used everyday - guess what happens? The muscle gets stronger and stronger, and before you know it, 2017 is off to a brilliant start!

I am personally jogging slowly for 10 minutes, everyday at a

slow pace in January... it is addictive and I am already enjoying the benefits!

Enjoy your 10 BCDC and start the New Year with a ten-minute healthy habit that will stick for life!

Ricky Parcell
Master Trainer
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Meet A Member: Richard Shelton

Meet Richard Shelton from London who moved to LA four years ago to pursue both his music and acting careers.

Was there a particular reason you chose LA?

Dreams can come true! I portrayed Frank Sinatra in the hard-hitting drama, 'Rat Pack Confidential' in London's West End (nominated 'Best Actor in a Leading Role') and it confirmed a fascination both with him and the lives of the Hollywood acting and music greats. I wanted to experience LA for myself, to see where those dreams became realities, and make my own dreams come true.

I'd enjoyed success in the U.K. including being a series regular, Dr Adam Forsythe, on 'Emmerdale'; singing at Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club, for Prince Charles at Windsor Castle, at Elton John's White Tie & Tiara

Ball and with the BBC Concert Orchestra, but I still felt I wanted to grow and develop in America. LA was the right place to start following my dreams.

Recording my album, 'An Englishman in Love in LA' at Capitol Studios alongside Sinatra's band mates saw that dream come true, and I am very honoured to have received great reviews.

What do you miss most from home?

The small things - the everyday London banter; ambling around Soho and going for an espresso in Bar Italia; poking around a bookshop; deciding to go to Columbia Flower Market on a whim.

What was your first impression of LA and has it changed since? If so why?

The endless possibility and scope to dream,

which hasn't changed. When I watched 'La La Land', it summed it all up very nicely.

What do you find the biggest difference is living here versus London?

How long it takes to get anywhere and the necessity to plan! In London, I'd cycle everywhere. The journey from East Dulwich to central London is only 30 minutes and I love the feeling of freedom of being on my bike. It also means you can be more spontaneous which appeals to me. But driving to auditions and meetings in LA is certainly a more comfortable and a much cooler way to travel. And if I don't get the job, well, at least I'm rejected in the sunshine!

Do you have a hidden gem in LA that you want to share with us?



SHELTON: loves LA's "endless possibility and scope to dream"

A hike up Fryman Canyon! The steep ascent gets the heart racing and the long, slow descent allows you to dream all you like.

What would you suggest to others who are thinking about making the move here?

I'm a big believer in the saying, 'We come this way but once and our time here is brief.' If there's something you want to do in life - and you have the capacity - do it! But be clear why you're coming. Be clear what you have to offer and keep your feet firmly planted on the ground. And then, most

importantly, enjoy it!

Lots of our members join our group Brits in LA seeking out words of wisdom - what is the best piece of advice you've been given?

The best advice I was given was harsh but true. Don't ask what LA can give you. Rather, ask what you can give to LA. When you've discovered that, the city will start to unfurl its secrets, pleasures and joys like a peacock's tail. Los Angeles is a long way from Wolverhampton, where my dreams first started

Lastly, how can we find

out more about you? Are you working on anything at the moment?

Lots of places! I'm performing my Edinburgh Festival sell-out show, 'Sinatra and Me' on Friday 20th January at Vitello's Club, 349 Tujunga Ave in North Hollywood. The show looks at the life-long synchronicity between my life and Sinatra's, plus music from my recent album, 'An Englishman in Love in LA'. Visit vitellosrestaurant.com/purchase-tickets

For more information: text 'Shelton' to 22828, visit richardshelton.co.uk or Twitter @RichardShelton.

The British Weekly Crossword by Myles Mellor. #258

Across

- 7 Gandalf, for one (6)
- 8 Glean (6)
- 9 Old wanted poster word (4)
- 10 Finding out new things (8)
- 11 Catalog (7)
- 13 Churchill's "___ Finest Hour" (5)
- 15 Cracked (5)
- 17 Cultivation (7)
- 20 Team game (8)
- 21 Beanies (4)
- 23 Get really hot! (6)
- 24 It has its ups and downs (6)

Down

- 1 All-inclusive (4)
- 2 One behind the other (6)
- 3 Worship (7)
- 4 Pitcher, of a sort (5)
- 5 Ab exercise (6)
- 6 Equestrian sport (8)
- 12 Coffee/rum liquor (3,5)
- 14 It's dangerous to be on this (3,4)
- 16 Refrigerate (6)
- 18 Pendant with a picture (6)
- 19 Composer of "Bolero" (5)
- 22 Importune (4)

Solution to Puzzle #257

1	G	R	A	N	D	M	A	8	S	T	R	A	7	W	
	A	W	E	B	T	A	E								
9	S	H	A	M	P	O	O	10	E	A	G	L	E		
	E	K	E	A	E								K		
	S	T	E	R	N			11	R	E	P	L	A	C	E
									D	D			S	N	
13	E	X	C	E	S	S	17	H	O	O	K	E	D		
	M	O													
	B	E	N	E	A	T	H	19	T	I	L	E	S		
	A	Q	T	E	D	E									
23	S	K	U	L	L	24	S	N	O	W	M	A	N		
	S	E	A	T	O	O	G								
25	Y	A	R	D	S	26	S	H	R	I	N	K	S		

The British Weekly Sudoku by Myles Mellor & Susan Flanagan #258

SUDOKU by Myles Mellor and Susan Flanagan

Each Sudoku puzzle consists of a 9X9 grid that has been subdivided into nine smaller grids of 3X3 squares. To solve the puzzle each row, column and box must contain each of the numbers 1 to 9. Puzzles come in three grades: easy, medium and difficult.

Level: Medium

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

Solution to Sudoku #257

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

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ARIES: Please keep a low profile this month as the planets are preparing to move forward swiftly. They will start benefiting you in February so the best thing all round is start nothing you cannot finish before end of this month.

TAURUS: What a change in pace you are due for and in order to prepare for this second wind you need to clear all unfinished tasks to make space for the new. By the end of the week you will be able to chill out a little.

GEMINI: Travel is going to be more frequent as you are working to settle your overall life. All that is happening will ultimately be for the best. You should leave negative people and situations in the past now.

CANCER: To not bend in the wind when it's stormy can damage the tree. The same is true of you, so stay pliant and flexible in some emotional situation you are dragging along behind.

LEO: Mars the fire planet in a cousin sign to you will bring a situation to a head in your financial area or that of someone close to you. The good news is if you take control now you will be in good shape by the end of this month.

VIRGO: Any frustrations you have in any area of life, (most likely work) will not get better by taking your frustrations out on others around you. Jupiter in your money area will show up for your benefit in general.

LIBRA: You are ready for a very new and much healthier lifestyle and it's right on time for the New Year. Family situations are going to be much on your mind for the next couple of weeks so makes this your priority

SCORPIO: Jupiter in the subconscious part of life is currently bringing baggage from the past to the door. This is not bad, just emotional, so deal with it head-on and know that this is necessary to prepare you for very positive change soon.

SAGITTARIUS: Know that sometimes we are not always supposed to know why some things happen until the timing is right. Life will be more stable as we move to the end of the month. Saturn is still living beside you and he has not completed preparations for dramatic changes in your life.

CAPRICORN: This is the beginning of your personal New Year and it can be the beginning of a lot of your ongoing problems being laid to rest. The lovely new moon over the recent holiday signaled time for action from you. Happy Birthday.

AQUARIUS: Jupiter in your cousin sign now is shining his bright light over your life. As this is going to be for most of this year ahead it's time to plan your priorities. You are on the move in more ways than one.

PISCES: You have a very welcome visitor currently. Venus is settling in along with Neptune your boss and it should be a very creative time in many ways. Look to doors opening and doors closing behind you. It's all positive!

Love a Regency tale? Try the 'When You Wish' trilogy

■ Exclusive interview with Alexandra Ivy, the author of an acclaimed Regency trilogy, which focuses on three scandalous sisters

"My first love has always been Regencies," says *When You Wish* author Alexandra Ivy.

"A lady in the age of the Regency would have been tightly bound by very specific rules of society. A proper young female would have done everything in her power to make sure she didn't create a scandal. I wanted the opportunity for them to operate outside the strict expectations, so I gave them a jewel thief for a father which meant they were already outside the norms of polite society."

When You Wish is a trilogy of novellas about the Cresswell sisters. Each sister makes a wish.

In *A Christmas Wish*, Sarah and Lord Chance want to locate a priceless diamond. Sarah runs a school in a disreputable area of London, Chance takes her to the most scandalous places, but



he can't scandalize her. They realize their connection is more precious than the diamond.

In *A Valentine's Wish* Emma, is ruined by her father's arrest as a jewel thief. She leaves London to hide in Kent, where she keeps running into Lord Hartshore.

In *The Wedding Wish*, Rachel wants to annoy Lady Broswell, who considers Rachel competition to her own daughter snaring the most eligible gentleman in the area. Anthony

Clarke is a recluse inventor, and very handsome. He's always talking Rachel out of her outrageous plots. Rachel finds Lady Broswell has a second daughter Julia, who she's been hiding.

"When I first started plotting the book I already knew that I was planning to write three connected stories," says Ivy. "So, I wanted to create three sisters and explore the family dynamics. Each individual person handles stress and controversy in a different way. And they each have needs that are different. But in the end, they're family. And they must stick together."

Ivy says her whole life changed as a result of being an author. "When I was young, I grew up in a small town in the Midwest. I spent hours in my local library dreaming of dashing characters and distant

lands. But I'll admit that despite my dreams I never truly thought that I would grow up and actually spend my days writing the stories that had been spinning around my head. Plus I've been able to travel to fabulous cities to meet my readers and to fan-girl over my favorite writers. I was even invited to France by my publishing house. It's been a dream come true."

"Regency readers are unbelievably knowledgeable about the era," says Ivy. "They would notice even the smallest mistake. I spent months researching maps, letters and diaries from the time period, and historical manuscripts. It's impossible to be able to know everything, but it's important to capture the flavor of the time. How they traveled, and

the entertainment they enjoyed and the political tensions. It's always a danger to get so lost in the research that you forget to concentrate on telling your story."

Ivy maintains her own library of books about the Regency era to keep track of what was happening in England, Europe and Russia during that time period.

Ivy has written 33 Regencies and historicals. Other series that she's currently working on include the *Guardians of Eternity*, the *Sentinels*, and *Bayou Heat*. Several of her books have made bestseller lists at the New York Times, USA Today, and the Wall Street Journal. Her paranormal books have been nominated in the best vampire category.

Ivy has recently started to write romantic suspense with her *Ares* series. *What Are You*



**Book Corner with
Gabrielle Pantera**

Afraid of? will release in 2017. She's also working on her next *Bayou Heat* book, which she writes with Laura Wright.

Ivy is based in a rural area along the Mississippi River to the north of Hannibal, Missouri. She was born in Casper, Wyoming.

When You Wish by Alexandra Ivy. Kindle version File Size: 1799 KB, Print Length: 488 pages, Publisher: Lyrical Press Publication Date: November 8, 2016, Sold by: Penguin Random House Publisher Services. Language: English, ASIN: B01BRFLI5W \$9.99



Have and Have-Nots but it is easy to forget there is also a massive chasm between those and the Have-Nothings. The Kimberly Moore Foundation believes that every child deserves a dream come true, and



WHAT MAKING A DIFFERENCE LOOKS LIKE: Kimberly Moore and Eileen delivering toys on New Year's Day as part of Kim's Adopt-A-Letter campaign

May I be the last to wish you a Happy New Year!

I am not certain what general etiquette dictates, but I start to feel a bit awkward saying it after January 3rd - or is it like the Christmas decorations and should be put to bed after Twelfth Night?

Talking of traditions, I have already broken half of my New Year's resolutions. I blame Janus (January), the God of new beginnings. He is often depicted with two faces that have been interpreted to mean he had the ability to look back and reflect whilst looking forward to the future, hence the custom of making pledges and promises to oneself on NYE.

Broken resolutions aside, I have decided to make New Day Pacts instead. Twenty-four hours feels a lot more achievable, plus if I manage to stick to it the following day, I can give myself an extra pat on the back instead of slumping into disappointment. Aiming low may sound like I'm a defeatist, but as Dave Dunseath (author of *Aim Low: Quit Often, Expect the Worst, and Other Good Advice*) points

out, "every time you aim low, you'll feel like you've died and gone to Disneyland". As many of you know, I will try (almost) anything once!

The resolution I am intent on keeping, is to practice random kindness on a daily basis. It may sound a bit clichéd, but I truly believe that this is a simple and effective way to make the world we live in a better place. Kimberly Moore, of Adopt-A-Letter helped me get off to a great start; on New Year's Day she invited me accompany her delivering toys and gifts (a massive thank you to all of the Brits in LA members who donated!) to less privileged families living in the outskirts of Los Angeles. It was as equally rewarding for me as it was to the people receiving our help - so a win-win all round. We came upon so many different situations that had caused hardship, including a lovely family who had lost everything in a recent house fire. The parents had to tell their three children that Santa must have forgotten they had moved, in an effort to explain away the absence of Christmas this year.

I know we are all aware of the divide between the

has been trying to fulfill unanswered letters to Santa since 2007. She said that these surprise visits often serve as a catalyst that then go on to start a chain of positive events and hopefully happier communities. We sometimes forget that giving someone a glimmer of hope (and

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random kindness!) can often be the pivotal moment that turns a life around - something that we can all relate to, as that glimpse of a brighter horizon is the main attraction that brings so many of us to California.

Who made a promise to get healthier in 2017? Then you might be interested in TheFitExpo.com this Sunday January 8th at the Los Angeles Convention Center. Make sure to say hello to fellow Brit in LA, Olympic

Champion Audley Harrison MBE, who can be found by Box n Burn from 3pm-5pm.

Lastly, we are excited to announce that the sign up for our 10th Annual Toscars film competition has opened up to everyone - I guarantee that you have never experienced anything like being a potential Toscar nominee before. It is one of the best ways to immerse yourself in the madness of the upcoming award season

and a unique experience that you will never forget. Find your inner parody! Visit www.thetoscars.com for full details.

First Pub Quiz of 2017 is on January 10th with Craig Young as your host. In the Maharajah Room at The Pikey in Hollywood - visit us on Facebook @BritsinLA to find out more. You can also email us at info@britsin.la if you have any questions or comments.

Cheers!
Eileen

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Spicing it up! Mel B rocks on Broadway as Roxie Hart!

Mel B looked just sensational as she flashed her pins on the Broadway stage playing the part of Roxie Hart in Chicago last week.

The former Spice Girl amazed the audience with her skills performing in New York City as the murderous character in the popular gangster musical.

Wearing matching red lipstick and nail varnish for the role, the mother-of-three looked glam dancing in a bowler hat and cane, and an all-black stage outfit, finished off with fishnet tights and silver heels.

"If you're into high heels, you want them the higher the better," the X Factor judge said just before her debut as the American murderess, Hart.

After years of criticizing others, she finds herself on stage. She seems unfazed, saying she made frequent visits to the recording studio in her Los Angeles home to prepare.

The singer and TV star shot to fame as part of the five-piece Spice Girls,

known for its girl-power attitude thanks to songs like Wannabe and Spice Up Your Life. The group marked its 20th anniversary this year, which also happens to be the 20th anniversary of Chicago. But Mel B said none of the members managed to pull off a tour or an event to celebrate.

Mel B, who since the Spice Girls' chart-topping exploits has become a sought-after TV judge, said she's relishing the chance to play a jail inmate who kills her boyfriend and sings about her new-found celebrity.

This isn't her first time on Broadway, however. Mel B received rave reviews playing Mimi in Rent back in 2005. But this time her task has Bob Fosse-inspired choreography, skimpy outfits and killer songs such as "Me and My Baby."

"My nine-year-old said, 'Why did you choose that part? It's such a big part,'" she said. "And I'm like, 'Cause it's good to challenge yourself.' And

then I'm thinking, 'Why did I choose that one?'"

Mel made her debut in the award-winning show on December 28 and revealed her opening night performance broke box office records.

She wrote on Instagram: "Wanna say a big thank you for all your support for my opening night last night, we broke a box office record yippeeee, come see it it's such a great show if I may say so myself @chicagomusical #roxiehart #girlpower".

The America's Got Talent judge is keeping herself busy as she's also set to appear in new episodes of Channel 5's Lip Sync Battle UK alongside Professor Green.

She revealed she's keen to work with the rapper on some new music – as well as the planned Spice Girl reunion.

Mel said: "We have spoken about working on some music together and it's something we are going to work out."

Love me a bit of Mel... Well done Scary, I am SO coming to see you!

POSH CRUSH: Matt Goss admits he once had the hots for Mrs. Becks!

Former 80's heart-throb Matt Goss has revealed that there was an ultimate pop couple that never quite came to be - he and Victoria Beckham.

The Bros singer made the astonishing confession as he prepares to go back on tour with his brother for the first time in decades.

The 48-year-old former boyband star admitted that he had a crush on the star - but he wasn't willing to compete with Becks.

Oo-er! Matt's revelation comes after former Spice Girl Victoria revealed in her autobiography that she fancied the singer during his 80s heyday.

She wrote: "I was convinced I was going to marry Matt Goss. I was so obsessed."

Now Matt has confessed at one point the feeling was mutual – but unfortunately they were never meant to be.

He told Closer magazine: "Victoria is such a lovely girl. I had a crush on her too, but I think she made the right choice."

Victoria went on to marry David Beckham while Matt has been connected to a string




of beautiful women – Mel Sykes and, most including former MTV recently, singer Rebecca host Daisy Fuentes, Ferguson.



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TOO MUCH TOO YOUNG:
Alli celebrates as Chelsea are put to the sword at White Hart Lane

DELE REIGNS AT THE LANE

Alli's one-two batters Blues

Tottenham ended Chelsea's attempt to make Premier League history with a 14th successive victory as the title pacesetters were well beaten at White Hart Lane Wednesday night.

Spurs moved up to third place as headers from Dele Alli either side of half-time made the difference to leave Chelsea five points ahead of Liverpool in second place.

Alli rose to meet Christian Eriksen's cross in first-half stoppage time and the same pair combined to put the game out of Chelsea's reach in the 54th minute.

Eden Hazard had Chelsea's two best chances in each half but Spurs closed out the victory in comfort to put north London rivals Arsenal out of the top four and leave themselves seven points off the top after their fifth successive league win.

Tottenham's season was at a tipping point after a disappointing Champions League

exit at the group stage and the poor performance in defeat at Manchester United in early December - but they have responded magnificently.

Mauricio Pochettino's side are gathering impressive momentum, illustrated by the manner in which they overcame a Chelsea side that was starting to carry an air of impregnability.

The 4-1 wins at Southampton and Watford served as a warning that Spurs were approaching the sort of form that carried them close to the title last season and this performance confirmed their growing confidence and stature.

Spurs have recaptured their intensity and energy and when this is bolted on to the quality provided by the likes of Alli and Eriksen, it makes them a formidable prospect.

Manchester City had already found Spurs too hot to handle at White Hart Lane this season - and Chelsea suffered a similar fate.

Alli endured a quiet start to the season, perhaps in the aftermath of England's debacle at Euro 2016 - but the 20-year-old is firing on cylinders now.

Alli's headed double made it seven goals his last four games, the third time in succession he has scored twice in a game after doing the same at Southampton and Watford.

Pochettino said before the game that he regarded Alli as "the most important player to emerge in English football in recent years".

And at White Hart Lane the £5m signing from MK Dons backed

cont. on page 19, col. 3

Premier League						
TOTTENHAM (1)... 2 CHELSEA (0).....0						
Alli 45, 54 Att: 31,491						
	P	W	D	L	F	A Pts
Chelsea	20	16	1	3	42	15 49
Liverpool	20	13	5	2	48	23 44
Tottenham Hotspur	20	12	6	2	39	14 42
Man City	20	13	3	4	41	22 42
Arsenal	20	12	5	3	44	22 41
Man Utd	20	11	6	3	31	19 39
Everton	20	8	6	6	28	23 30
West Brom	20	8	5	7	28	24 29
AFC Bournemouth	20	7	4	9	29	34 25
Southampton	20	6	6	8	19	25 24
Stoke	20	6	6	8	24	32 24
Burnley	20	7	2	11	22	31 23
West Ham	20	6	4	10	23	35 22
Watford	20	6	4	10	23	36 22
Leicester	20	5	6	9	24	31 21
Middlesbrough	20	4	7	9	17	22 19
Crystal Palace	20	4	4	12	39	37 16
Sunderland	20	4	3	13	19	37 15
Swansea	20	4	3	13	23	45 15
Hull	20	3	4	13	17	44 13



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Sat 1/7 9.30am Preston NE v Arsenal

Sun 1/8 8am Spurs v A. Villa (TBC)

Mon 1/9:

11.45am Cambridge vs Leeds

Tue 1/10 League Cup Semi Final

Noon Man. Utd v Hull

Wed 1/11 League Cup Semi Final

1145am Southampton v Liverpool

Sat 1/14 English Premier League

7am Swansea v Arsenal

7am West Ham v Crystal Palace

7am Watford v Middlesbrough

7am Hull v Bournemouth

7am Burnley v Southampton

9.30am Leicester v Chelsea

Sun 1/15

8am Man. Utd v Liverpool

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