

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## Coffee with a kick

**BARMAN** Martin Bell will be jetting to Holland this summer, to compete in the international finals of a contest to create the most imaginative coffee-based drink.

The 26-year-old, from Nantwich in Cheshire, beat off competition from coffee-making experts from all over the country to win the UK finals of "Coffee in Good Spirits".

He said, "I used a mix of gin and Dubonnet. It was a brave move because you would expect a sweet spirit in coffee. The gin's bitter flavour really worked well with the espresso bean."

The finals will take place in Maastricht in June.

## Bumpy ride in Surrey

**SURREY** has been declared Britain's pothole capital with a major pothole every 70 yards on the country's roads.

A website that allows the public to register potholes as a warning to other drivers claims that the county is the most potholed.

Last year, the local council filled in 56,000 potholes but, this year, the pothole target is expected to reach at least 80,000.

Remember when Paul McCartney sang, "How many holes does it take to fill the Albert Hall?" — he probably knows now.

## Trees for degrees

**STUDENTS** get through a mountain of paper completing their courses. Now, one university aims to give something back, with their Degree Tree project.

Kirsty Smith, who graduated at the University of the West of England in Bristol last summer, came up with the idea to offset the pile of paper she'd used for her studies.

So, 6,000 trees were planted in Malawi, one for every graduate.

This year's students are now being invited to pay £3 for their own Degree Trees.

The trees are crucial for the local community in Malawi, as they will grow fruit and be a vital source for local agriculture.

# Ancient spirit made Ursula write book

## — and put her in hospital when she didn't like it!

**A**UTHORS often say that they felt they just had to write their book — however, leading hypnotherapist Ursula James insists that literally was the case with her.

In fact, she claims that an ancient spirit made her write it — and put her in hospital when Ursula didn't follow her instructions!

The Source, just in shops now, is described as A Manual of Everyday Magic and is the tale of two Ursulas.

Not just modern-day Ursula, one of the leading hypnotherapy practitioners and teachers in the UK, but also Ursula Sontheil.

She's better known as Mother Shipton, the 16th-century Yorkshire healer and prophetess who was burnt at the stake.

And if being commanded by an ancient spirit sounds mad, you don't need to tell Ursula.

"Mother Shipton was actually a very real part of my life when I was a child and suffered from very serious physical bullying," Ursula told *The Weekly News*.

"But I soon learned not to talk about it because it sounds slightly bonkers.

"I cut it out of my life until I turned 40 and felt like having some magic in my life.

"That's when she came back as a figure that started talking to me again — at which point, I thought I'd gone mental.

"I thought I needed to check myself in for some psychiatric care.

"It's one thing for a child to have an imaginary friend, but it's something else entirely for an adult.

"I was starting to wonder if there was something wrong with me.

"As well as my hypnotherapy, I write science papers and teach at medical schools including Oxford and Cambridge, so the voices in my head made me think I was going mad."

by Bill Gibb

Ursula listened to what the spirit was telling her about magical rites and rituals and gave those to other people to see if it worked.

She did indeed find others reporting having magical things happen in their lives.

But failing to follow the instructions for writing a book that the spirit was happy with proved a painful experience.

"What I came up with was my version of her book, not hers," explains Ursula.

## Excruciating

"As a result, she put me on my back in St Mary's hospital in Paddington for three weeks.

"I was completely paralysed, I just couldn't move. My back went completely.

"Then this figure came back to me and said, 'You write my book and I'll free your back'.

"The doctors could find absolutely no physical reason for me not being able to move.

"I had X-rays, MRIs, ultrasound, every possible test going.

"But the pain was excruciating. It was the worst pain I've ever been in.

"And if someone comes into your mind and tells you they can take this away, you'll do whatever they say.

"If someone said to take a tablet that'd make you better, you'd take it



Ursula James.

— and in effect that's what I did for Mother Shipton.

"And once I finished the book, that was the last I heard of her. And I truly hope it is the last I hear from her.

"I hope people who read the book will understand it's written exactly as it happened — and I certainly don't claim to understand it all.

"And also that they'll learn enough to be able to do magic for themselves.

"As well as the two stories, there are prophecies and spells, too.

"Although there is some dark stuff in the book, it's not a misery memoir.

"It's not just about how to survive, but also to thrive. At the end of each chapter, there are rites and rituals that I hope can make a difference to people's everyday lives."

The Source: A Manual of Everyday Magic by Ursula James is published in hardback by Preface £12.99 and is in shops now.

# CRIMEFIGHTER KEN?

**IN** his time as Ken Barlow, he's been everything from a schoolteacher to a newspaper editor — but a crime fighter? *writes Ron McManus.*

For 10 years, William Roache, who plays Ken in Coronation Street, has been a keen volunteer with Crimestoppers, the national charity that allows people to report crime anonymously with just a phone call.

"I became involved after being invited to a Crimestoppers charity dinner," said William.

"The cast of Coronation Street get invited to a lot of charity dinners, but I was interested in learning more about Crimestoppers.

"I'm lucky in that I've never been a victim but, by the

end of that dinner, I decided I was going to be the Crimestoppers patron!

"I do worry about people who find themselves in awful situations because of crime, but I was struck by the charity's simplicity and effectiveness."

Almost 20 people a day are arrested following a Crimestoppers call and, every five days, someone is charged with murder, thanks to Crimestoppers.

## Unapproachable

"Another big problem at the moment is gun and knife crime," said William.

"All these people carrying guns and knives are completely unapproachable — even by their family.

"But with Crimestoppers, you can give information with no fear of the consequences. It is anonymous.

"We've all seen the news about 'confidential' files being lost but, when you call Crimestoppers, you aren't asked for your name or any other personal information."

Crimestoppers are on 0800 555 111.

## Zebra crossing dug back up

**A ZEBRA** crossing has been dug up almost as soon as it had been installed — because the lights weren't ready to be switched on.

The crossing had been installed on a busy road in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, along with other traffic calming measures, at a cost of £185,000.

However, the electrical provider had not got round to connecting the lights.

"Everything had been nicely done," said local councillor Terry Lyons. "The road had been beautifully surfaced, but they had to come back and dig it all up."

