

## Colin's Blog

# Happy New Year



*"Nope, no New Year's resolutions for me this year—  
I'm still working on a backlog dating from '87."*

Here we are again, at the start of a New Year, and bracing ourselves for more up's and down's in the world of politics, whilst juggling our finances in our bid to recover from the pressures created by our zest for making sure that those whom we care about, are rewarded with gifts, in the true spirit of Christmas. Of course, our gifts, are more likely to be products of

technology, useful items for the family, and toys galore for the children and, or grandchildren, rather than gold (after all, a previous government, sold much of our country's reserves), Frankincense (which has many medicinal uses), or Myrrh (which is also used for medicine, perfumery and incense).

Most of us these days would probably prefer the medicinal qualities of chocolate, or seek spiritual guidance (mine's a scotch).



I have never got my head around a Police Box becoming a Tardis, to get my head around Doctor Who, regenerating into a member of the fairer sex, without undergoing any medical intervention, is going to take some time!

Confused, but quickly moving on, my friend and colleague Peter Salmon, who is chair of Brentwood Neighbourhood Watch and involved with Crimestoppers has kindly put a short article together, which I am pleased to print below: -

Crimestoppers are an independent Charity and anyone contacting them with information about a crime does so totally anonymously. They will never ask your name and cannot trace your number so your identity is never known to them. This is also replicated if you report to them on line - encrypted so that they never know your details.

Even a reward is paid anonymously!

The past six months has seen an increase on the corresponding period last year of almost 25% in calls to Crimestoppers - and last year was a record year!

**In January, Crimestoppers will be 'refreshing their branding' and will also be launching a campaign about Rural Crime so please help them in their endeavours to make Essex a safer place to live and work. You can call them on 0800 555 111 or report on line at [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)**



Looking back at 2017, so much has happened, and, in common with previous years, there has been a mix of good and bad news, and sadly, much loss of life across the world, through wars, genocide, famine and poverty, as well as a number of natural disasters.

We are powerless, to change, much of the man-made atrocities caused through human conflict, greed, corruption, dictatorship, and radical extremist behaviour, which often stems from misguided religious beliefs.

Many of us either through charitable donations, volunteering, lobbying or other humanitarian efforts, try to make a difference, but the scale of the events, means that, often, the results, only make small inroads into addressing the problems.

Closer to home, in common with many of my readers, I worry about our future, and that of our children, grandchildren and beyond.

Having been around for seventy years, I experienced austerity after the second world war, and the gradual recovery, prior to the government of the day, committing us to membership of the EU, so I have no doubt, that we will not only survive Brexit, but, will flourish, at the end of the process, once our stability and sovereignty is restored. Over the years, as a nation, we have proved beyond doubt, we are made of strong will, and are adaptable to change!

Although, according to my late Father, I was considered to be 'Tone deaf,' (I was a member of my school and church choirs at the time), I have often sought comfort, inspiration and thoughtfulness, through my love of music and my varied musical tastes, through the generations.

Especially, when facing life's challenges, and during the times when one needs a confidence boost, or just some reassurance. Since retiring, I have had some time to review my collection of musical masterpieces, and have enjoyed playing some tunes that I have found very poignant at times of need, during various periods of my life.

Here's a quote from Twelfth Night written by William Shakespeare: "If music be the food of love, play on, give me excess of it; that surfeiting, the appetite may sicken, and so die."

Hopefully my appetite for good music, will play on, and last as long as I do!

My choice to confidently start off the New Year is of course: '*Climb every Mountain,*' from the wonderful 'Sound of Music!'

Even those of us approaching our twilight years, can aspire to inspire younger, and indeed, future generations, there is after all, no better gift than experience, especially when they can benefit from learning from the mistakes and achievements of older generations.

Sadly, fired by greed, misguided beliefs (through the misinterpretation of religious doctrine), or through aggression, corruption and dictatorship, the human race, has often failed to learn from, or heed, the lessons of past conflicts, the tragic loss of life, the loss of values, and the cause of famine, pain and suffering. Wouldn't it be great to see the cessation of conflict and hostilities, and the relief of famine across the world in 2018?

### **FRUIT AND NUT CASES ABOUND unless stopped!**

Thank goodness that a senior army officer has put a crackpot idea of belittling our armed forces on hold. Apparently in excess of £500,000 had be allocated to consultants in respect of changing the logo and image of our armed forces to appease the PC lobby. Most level-headed citizens would rather see the money spent on providing more safety gear four our brave soldiers, mariners and air force personnel, who risk their lives on a daily basis, so that we keep safe!

The latest crackpot suggestion from government sources is to recruit unpaid volunteers to protect our borders, ports and airports, along similar lines to the voluntary structure of the Special Constabulary.

I spent eight and a half years as a Special Constable, way back in the late 1960's through to the mid 1970's, so I for one, have nothing but admiration for those who continue to volunteer as Special Constables in these cash strapped, troubled times.

However, a word of caution. Guided by our government, Police Forces, are using the volunteers to endeavour to compensate for the loss of regular officers and PCSO's, in an effort to pacify or reassure the public. They forget to mention that, as a general rule, a Special Constable only has to agree to carry out a minimum of four hours duty per week, and most, also hold down full-time employment elsewhere. As always, there are of course exceptions, with some able to devote more time to their volunteer role.

It concerns me, that, government pronouncements, such as the border control idea, could be interpreted by some, as an attempt to lull us into a false sense of security, which takes me back to some of the public service civil defence announcements and instructions that came about during the second world war, into cold war era. At this point, perhaps, I should say "Don't panic Mr. Mannering!"

Mind you, it has to be said, our brave members of the Home Guard and the Civil Defence Corps, did a wonderful job, with little resources. (That sounds disturbingly familiar doesn't it!)

As we approach Brexit, there must be a firm commitment to protect our borders, in fact the whole of the UK from Terrorism. Illegal immigration, Piracy, Fraud, Drug Trafficking, and other illegal acts, which must be adequately funded, without half

measures! We are a proud nation, and, without fear or favour, we need to keep it that way! Colin.



**COLIN'S NEW YEAR'S  
RECIPE FOR LIFE**

Close the door on anguish,  
Rise above the pain, and  
Forgive and forget without regret.  
Open wide the window of  
opportunity

Look forward, but watch your step.

Tread towards a brighter future

With anticipation and respect.

Hold out your hands to do good work

Never your responsibilities should you  
Shirk.

Spread joy and understanding

To others who cross your path.

For those who dare to mock you,

Make sure you have the last laugh.

For they who do so without thought

Sometimes need a lesson to be taught.

Take care in everything you do In life,  
Do unto others what you would  
like them to do unto you  
Don't mess with peoples' futures,  
But give wise counsel where you can.  
Be fair to every woman, and to every man.  
Stand out in the crowd as one who cares  
Rising above those who lack the qualities  
That you, in your humility, possess!

**And finally from my 'Positive Thoughts' on  
the Circle of Life: -**

*Go forward, to the end of life's path,  
With faith in yourself and others.  
When dealt a blow, through illness,  
Tragedy or loss,  
Remember to reach for a helping hand  
That can comfort and understand.*

Colin I. Freeman  
Member of the Institute of Training and  
Occupational Learning

Right from childhood, I have always wanted to write children's stories, and I take my hat off to David Walliams, who obvious got there before me, and has written getting on towards twenty enthralling books for children and young people, Grandpa's Escape, is the latest one to hit the TV screen, and arrived on New Year's day. As usual, it did not disappoint!

Most of us are still young at heart, and can relate to many of the life experiences and moral content that he delivers, each time that he puts pen to paper. A good way to welcome in the New Year!

We need to encourage more children and young people, to put aside their X boxes, PS4's, and other technological devices, and immerse themselves into the written world. Away from the continual violence that we so often find on computer games, and indeed, across the TV channels, the results of watching them, explain the deterioration and behaviour patterns, that we often witness today, and which will be witnessed as they progress through the stress, turmoil and traumas of life.

For those of us who have been celebrating Christmas and the New Year, and, possibly over indulged, why not join the '**DRY JANUARY CAMPAIGN**,' check out this website for more details: -

<https://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/what-and-why>



### National Hug Day

So, in the spirit of community cohesion, why not take part in the 'National Hug Day,' on the 21<sup>st</sup> January. An opportunity to hug each other in the spirit of kindness, thoughtfulness, and unity, and to show the world that *we care*. A word of warning, perhaps you should seek the permission of those that you want to hug first, to avoid misinterpretation, litigation or condemnation, from anyone involved, or observing, so as not to fall foul of the PC brigade, or those who think such action has sexual connotations!

New Year's Eve, saw the tragic deaths of three young people in London by stabbing, then in the early hours of New Year's Day, a fourth young person was also stabbed to death in London. Police say that they were unrelated incidents, but, one wonders if the stabbings were drug or gang related. I understand that that brought the total stabbings to around eighty incidents involving young people in 2017, then the first one in 2018.

Our Police are facing ever increasing challenges, during a time when they seem to have ever decreasing resources, and one wonders what the future holds for our generation, and those that follow!

Finally, a big thank you for all the kind comments that I have received about my blog over the last year, and the many good wishes that I received from my readers at Christmas.

My blog can also be read on the Epping Forest District NhW website: -

<http://www.eppingforestnhw.org.uk/>

*Colin*

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