

BQ : BIT OF A CHAT

Bill Borde's examining the news behind the headlines



Famous cousins

You know what they say: everyone's related to someone famous. And the same goes for BQ's fledgling entrepreneurs.

Charlotte Rogers, founder of Castle Vale-based Aquatiser, is the second cousin of Aston Villa and England defender Joleon Lescott.

Rogers's dad, Cynrick Lescott, was born in St Kitts and Nevis, where his sibling gave birth to the Premiership star. Many of the family now live in Birmingham where they regularly get together.

Read the full feature on Charlotte Rogers on pages 20 to 25.



Balti chardonnay

I love news about counter-intuitive business success. A great recent example was UK-based Indian wine maker Soul Tree Wine winning a bronze award at the International Wine Challenge 2016 in London.

Based in Birmingham it was the only Indian vintage to scoop an award, and initially had me frowning in disbelief.

But then I discovered that the brand is stocked at 800 restaurants, hotels, bars and pubs across the UK.

Soul Tree's winemaker Dr Rajesh Rasal told me: "The Indian wine industry is very young, and a lot's gone into it, including borrowing from international best practices and applying them to the unique soils, climate and conditions in India."

From dunce to doctor

The Birmingham man who heads budget brand Poundland has revealed how his headteacher told him he'd 'never make anything of his life'.

Jim McCarthy, who grew up in Birmingham, told the story as he picked up an Honorary Doctorate from Birmingham City University for his outstanding achievements in business.

McCarthy said: "I decided to leave St Phillip's (Birmingham) at the age of 17, part way through my A-levels with the words of the headmaster ringing in my ears: 'McCarthy, you'll never make anything of your life.'

"I can't say that this drove me on to perform any better. But I certainly never forgot it!" McCarthy became chief executive at Poundland in 2006 and recently oversaw their acquisition of 250 outlets from 99p Stores.

You're pulling my chain

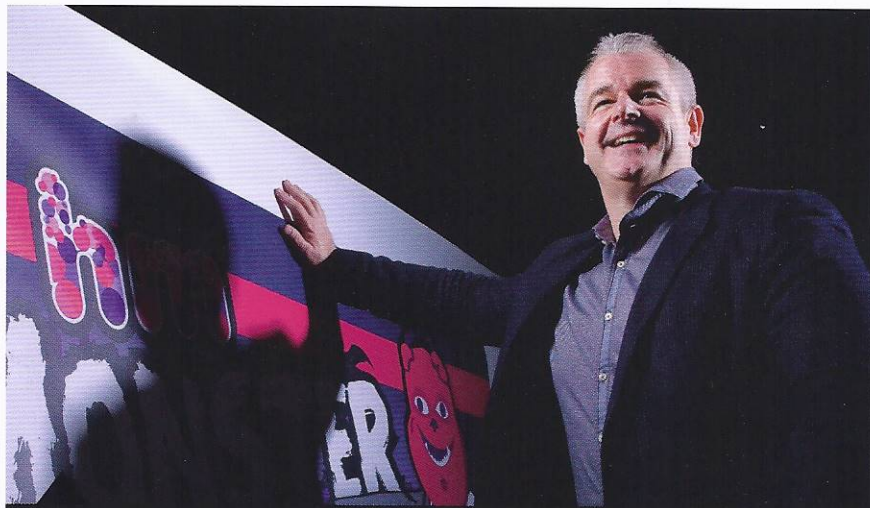
Some press releases just make me laugh – and tempt me to try out all sorts of word-plays. One that plopped (you'll get it in a minute) into my inbox last month was too good not to share: 'Flushed with success' was the PR's own headline on a story about a local toilet-cleaning company scooping a trio of awards.

We Clean Ltd, based in Rubery, wiped the competition (sorry about that) to win the 'Loo of the Year' Award at the national Loo of the Year Awards held in Solihull.

The company also splashed (do you see?) the award for England, and staff member Baba Sechan won Individual Attendant of the Year Award for top brushing as head housekeeper at Brindleyplace.

We Clean – formed in 2003 by directors David Harker and Paul Concannon – scours posh bogs at Birmingham Hippodrome, Symphony Hall, Birmingham Town Hall, the Assay Office, Solihull School and many other blue chip venues.

As the old saying goes, even the Queen has to ... (Editor: that's enough loo jokes!)



Tim's lady Blues

Giant sign entrepreneur Tim Andrews has proved what a ladies' man he is – by becoming chief executive of Birmingham City Ladies Football Club.

Andrews' new role for the Blues – currently in the FA Women's Super League – puts him in charge of all off-field activities to try to meet the team's financial demands.

Andrews, who also heads the Hollywood Monster signs company, said: "I've supported Blues from a young age and this is a dream come true."