

THE DAY THE CHABLIS DIED



Pictures: ALAMY, GETTY

DOOMSDAY: A vineyard comes under assault from the elements. Inset, some of the huge hailstones that devastated this year's chablis vintage

By Dominic Midgley

Hailstones as big as eggs batter grapes - so some wine prices are about to soar

THE "apocalypse" came to Jean-Christophe Bersan's vineyard in central France on the last Friday in May. At three o'clock that afternoon his rows of vines looked "beautiful" in the early summer sun. Then the menacing dark clouds arrived.

"Huge hailstones fell," he said later. "We went to find shelter. For nearly half an hour, the rain ravaged everything in its path. Twenty centimetres (8 inches) of hail and 40 millimetres (1.6 inches) of water were enough to transform our vines into a huge torrent of mud. After the storm, all our hills were white, as if it had snowed."

In less than 30 minutes his verdant idyll, which has been producing chardonnay grapes to make the distinctively "flinty" white wine called chablis for generations, was reduced to a "lunar landscape".

And Bersan is just one of dozens of winemakers in the region who have been hit by a perfect storm of meteorological phenomena. Crops already blighted by

frost and heavy rain in April were pummeled shortly afterwards by hailstones the size of eggs. More than 1,000 acres of prized vines have been all but destroyed. The national farming organisation declared a "state of catastrophe".

"There are different estimates but there are strong signs that the 2016 vintage of chablis could be cut by as much as 50 per cent," says Richard Bampfield, one of only 206 Masters of Wine in the UK and a consultant to the supermarket chain Lidl.

The looming shortage means prices are bound to rise in the coming months and now is the time to stock up.

The good news is that supermarket chains such as Lidl, which sells around one of every 20 bottles of wine bought in the UK, have plenty of chablis on the shelves as things stand and there are a number of alternatives for wine drinkers prepared to extend their repertoire (see panel below). Lidl's buyers suggest a

muscadet or a white bordeaux for those looking for a value alternative while Bampfield recommends a macon villages or a saint-veran from the southern Burgundy region, which escaped the devastation wreaked on its northern neighbours.

More far-flung options include a picpoul de pinet from the Languedoc in southern France. "It is unoaked, lighter than the chablis, but goes well with fish and other seafood and can play the same role as a chablis even though it is made from a different grape," says Bampfield.

ARISE in the cost of chablis is not the only problem facing the British wine drinker. The pound has fallen steeply against the currencies of all the major wine-producing countries following the Brexit vote with the result that prices of

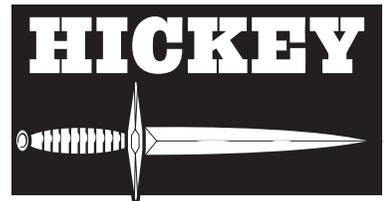
everything from French claret and Italian chianti to Californian pinot noir and Australian sauvignon blanc are likely to creep upwards in the coming months.

The major beneficiaries of this situation could be UK vineyards. British wines were once seen as a bit of a joke by the snooty Old World producers of Europe but in recent years brands such as Nyetimber, Gusbourne and Chapel Down have been producing white and sparkling wines that have performed well in international competitions.

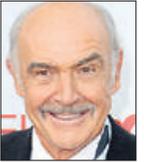
Indeed, at a blind tasting in Paris organised by the British wine expert and author Matthew Jukes to coincide with St George's Day on April 23 this year, many English sparkling wines were voted superior to champagne.

Among the successes was a £40 bottle of 2009 Nyetimber sparkling wine produced in West Sussex. Nine members of the 14-member panel considered it better than a £65 bottle of Billecart-Salmon Grand Cru champagne.

"Cheers!" as we say in Britain - or "Sacre bleu!" as they would say in France.



CELEBRATED author Roald Dahl, whose popular book *The BFG* has now been adapted for the big screen, long held a grudge against James Bond star Sir Sean Connery, pictured.



Dahl, who wrote the screenplay for 1967 Bond film *You Only Live Twice*, claimed the Scot was tight-fisted when it came to buying drinks for colleagues. "He was the only man making a million in the film and he never stood anyone a round," observed the former RAF pilot and intelligence officer, who died in 1990.

Sir Sean, now 85, has long taken issue with rumours of penny-pinching, however. "I'm not stingy," he once insisted. "But I'm careful with it. I don't throw my money around. I come from a background where there was little money. One doesn't forget a past like that."

SCREEN veteran Robert Redford is opposed to the idea of his classic film roles being resurrected for remakes.

The *Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid* and *All The President's Men* actor says: "I think the idea of doing a sequel or a remake is a waste of time, a waste of money and a waste of energy. There are too many new stories to tell to waste your time and money on a story already told."

He adds: "I wouldn't want to see a remake of *Butch Cassidy* (1969) or *The Way We Were* (1973). There has been talk about that but I always say, no." Hollywood executives might beg to differ.

RECALLING former Conservative prime minister Sir Edward Heath - who would have turned 100 this month - veteran scribe Richard Ingrams casts doubt on the late politician's musical skills.

"He convinced himself that he was a great conductor, though professional musicians giggled about him behind his back," Ingrams writes uncharitably in *The Spectator*. "Once, the string players of an orchestra all tuned their instruments up a semitone to see if he would notice... which he didn't."

AS Prime Minister Theresa May establishes herself in Downing Street, "lookalikes" of her predecessor David Cameron will presumably be feeling the pinch since he left office.

It was previously claimed the most successful Cameron impersonators could earn as much as £500 a day when booked to appear at corporate events. Professional Theresa lookalikes, meanwhile, are said to be thin on the ground.

HAVING followed in mother Jerry Hall's modelling footsteps, Georgia May Jagger, pictured, admits to raiding her mum's 1980s jewellery collection.



Predicting Jerry's old gold chains and big bangles will soon be in fashion again, Georgia says: "The 1980s was all about that big, chunky costume jewellery and I think that's going to come back."

She has so far resisted dusting down any of Sir Mick's garish old stage outfits.

SHADOW chancellor John McDonnell's bizarre television appearance at the weekend leaves him a target for widespread mockery.

The Labour politician embarrassingly opted to deliver a message straight to camera during an interview on BBC One's Andrew Marr show, emotionally appealing to colleagues to stop those "willing to destroy our party".

Former Labour adviser-turned-comedy-performer Matt Forde mischievously observes: "John McDonnell's appearance on Marr was phenomenal. Whoever wrote it deserves a comedy award."

E-mail me at: hickey@express.co.uk

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Chablis 2014, £7.99

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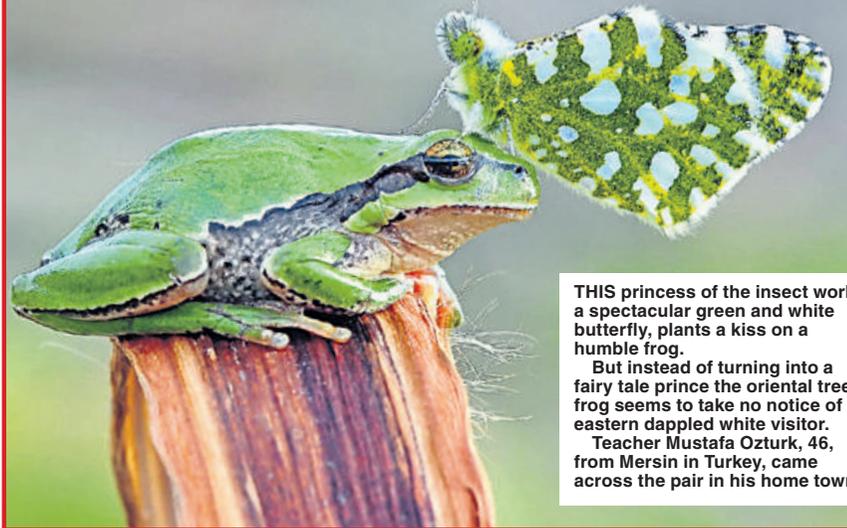
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Picture: MUSTAFA OZTURK/SOLENT

Butterfly princess kisses her frog



THIS princess of the insect world, a spectacular green and white butterfly, plants a kiss on a humble frog. But instead of turning into a fairy tale prince the oriental tree frog seems to take no notice of its eastern dappled white visitor. Teacher Mustafa Ozturk, 46, from Mersin in Turkey, came across the pair in his home town.

Warning: Too much TV can kill you

WATCHING too much TV can kill you, a new study claims. Hours slumped on a settee raises the risk of dying from a blood clot on the lungs. Japanese scientists studied the viewing habits of more than 86,000 people aged 40 to 79. They found that every additional two hours of watching TV per day increased the risk of a fatal pulmonary embolism by

40 per cent. People who watched five or more hours of TV daily were more than twice as likely to die early than those watching fewer than 2.5 hours. Pulmonary embolism usually begins as a clot in the leg or pelvis which breaks free and becomes lodged in a small blood vessel in the lungs. More than a quarter of people who suffer an untreated pulmo-

nary embolism die and death can be sudden. Professor Hiroyasu Iso, from Osaka University, said pulmonary embolism is less common in Japan than Western countries but it may be on the rise. Writing in the American Heart Association journal Circulation he warned: "The Japanese are increasingly adopting sedentary lifestyles."

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HOW COULD HARRY HAVE COPEDED WITH HIS GRIEF?

By Adrian Lee

Trying to sweep death under the carpet is harmful, say experts. It's important to be honest and all right to cry

THE sight of the two young princes walking behind Princess Diana's coffin was enduringly poignant. With their father at their side, William and Harry, heads bowed, marched from St James's Palace in a united and very public display of grief. For the boys, who were aged just 15 and 12 at the time of their mother's death, the funeral in 1997 was the most difficult of days.

At the time the pair won widespread admiration for the manner in which they appeared to cope with the loss of Diana, killed in the prime of her life in a car crash in Paris. Now, however, Prince Harry has revealed that he bottled up his feelings and regrets not talking about his mother's death until he was much older.

In an interview yesterday Harry, now 31, admitted he didn't start opening up until about three years ago. "It is OK to suffer, as long as you talk about it," said the prince. "It is not a weakness. Weakness is having a problem and not recognising it and not solving that problem."

It has echoes of the approach taken by his elder brother. William never shed any tears because he has the "Windsor ability to keep his emotions hidden", claimed royal chronicler Penny Junor in her 2012 biography of the Duke of Cambridge. It was William's way of protecting himself, she said.

According to bereavement experts the princes' adoption of the "stiff upper lip" is a common mistake made by children following the death of a parent. "It is absolutely typical for boys and girls to try to sweep grief under the carpet," says Stacey Hart, trauma specialist for Grief Encounter, an organisation that specialises in supporting bereaved children.

SHE adds: "Usually they take their cues from adults around them who don't want to upset children by crying in front of them. It sends the wrong message that it's not okay to cry and be sad. All too often you also see attempts to get life back to normal and children returning to school much too soon, when they should still be grieving. Children end up going into denial."

It's not known if William and Harry had counselling after Diana's death but Stacey believes it should be offered to all children over the age of three. Additionally, it's vital for surviving parents and other families to talk openly about death.

"It's important to have those difficult conversations and be honest about what has happened," she says. "Children can retreat to a very dark place if they simply hold everything inside."

"If you are not open with children they find it difficult to ask questions and process what has happened. They might worry that the other parent will also die."

She also believes in the use of treasured family photographs and



IN SHOCK: Harry and big brother William could hardly take in all the floral tributes outside Kensington Palace

the creation of memory boxes containing keepsakes of the person who has recently died. Confiding in close friends, drawing, play therapy, remembering happy times together and writing letters and poems to someone who is no longer around can all bring comfort.

Frequently children are kept away from the funeral of a parent but Stacey believes it was the correct decision by Prince Charles to allow his sons to attend Diana's service at Westminster Abbey. "We encourage that, even at quite a young age, because otherwise children feel left out," she adds.

It's estimated that only about one in seven children receives professional help following the loss of a close relative. Alison Thomas, of the UK's biggest bereavement charity Cruse, says thousands of boys and girls are missing out because many people consider

death to be a taboo subject. "Children, particularly boys, think they are being brave by not talking about death," she says. "Bottling up grief is a coping strategy but it can store up problems for later in life. You'll find that birthdays and other important dates are triggers."

CRUSE works with 5,000 bereaved young people each year, typically offering six one-hour sessions. The charity has a website, Hope Again, which is aimed specifically at under-18s. "Family support is crucial but it also helps to talk to a properly trained stranger," adds Alison, the organisation's manager for children's bereavement care in South Wales. "It can lift a huge

weight from your shoulders." She speaks from experience, having lost her own mother at 16.

"As Prince Harry acknowledges, seeking help is not a sign of weakness," says Alison. "There is no need to struggle on your own. You never really get over the death of a parent but with help you can learn to live around it. Harry is doing a wonderful and brave thing by speaking about the way in which he dealt with his mother's death. By admitting his mistakes I hope others will benefit."

It's predicted that comments by a role model such as Harry will spark a flurry of calls to bereavement charities. Experts warn that bottling up grief can lead to nightmares, drug and alcohol problems, self-harm, depression and relationship difficulties later in life.

So it seems you really can die from a broken heart.

STARS WHO MOURN

IT'S not just children who struggle to deal with the death of a loved one. As celebrities who have spoken about death show, even when we're grown up there's no manual for grief...

PRESENTER
Paul O'Grady, whose partner of 25 years Brendan Murphy died from a brain tumour in 2005, says: "After the funeral I howled for three days. Then I let go."

"Now if I find a reminder I don't weep. I just have some quiet reflection. I still can't believe it, sometimes I wake up and think he's on holiday. Then I'll go somewhere we went to and I feel like an old ghost."

"But you've got to lick your wounds, do things in their memory and get on with it." O'Grady, now 61, recalls people around him "walking on eggshells" immediately after Brendan died, aged 49.



CORONATION
Street star Bill Roache, whose wife Sara died unexpectedly at the age of 58 in 2009, said his first instinct was to protect their children.

"From the moment she died I started to plan things. I thought, 'the top priorities are making sure our Verity and Will are OK.' Nothing else matters."

The 84-year-old actor, who was married to Sara for 31 years, had a favourite photo of her blown up and placed in the hallway of their home. "Every morning I come down and say 'hello love, how are you?' I still can't believe she's gone."



THE wife of magician Paul Daniels, who died from a brain tumour earlier this year aged 77, said she found comfort in thinking about the happy life they'd shared.

Debbie McGee, 57, who was married to the star for 30 years, added: "You can't just cry and scream, so what do you do with it? Now I've learned to block those feelings out and choose when I remember him."

"As a friend said on the day of his funeral, 'You'll get through it because the worst has already happened.'"



Pictures: WIREIMAGE; GETTY

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PETER ROBERTSON talks to the Bucks Fizz hitmaker about the painful legacy of a coach accident that occurred in the 1980s

AS SINGER Bobby G waved his nine-year-old daughter Millie off on a week-long school coach trip recently, he couldn't help feeling anxious. Yet it wasn't just paternal protectiveness that was making the 62-year-old star, best known for his Eurovision hit *Making Your Mind Up* with 80s band Bucks Fizz, nervous.

For Bobby, who now lives in Tiverton, Devon, with Millie and his wife Heidi, 45, that particular mode of transport is a painful reminder of an accident that could have killed him. More than 30 years on, he is living with the long-term effects.

On December 11, 1984, Bobby and the three other original members of Bucks Fizz – Cheryl Baker, Mike Nolan and Jay Aston – were all injured, along with their crew, in a horrific coach accident. As they returned from a gig in Newcastle their tour bus collided with a lorry.

Mike and Cheryl were catapulted through the windscreen. Mike was left in a coma while Cheryl broke three vertebrae in her back. Jay suffered a stroke that temporarily paralysed her left side.

Bobby, who had been sitting in the lounge area at the back of the coach, was flung forward 15ft into the band's manager Jill Shirley. "I injured my neck, three vertebrae in the middle of my back and my knee," he explains.

Following the accident Bobby, who was told at the time he would suffer from a bad back for the rest of his life, was treated twice a week at Headley Court, the famous Armed Forces rehabilitation unit in Epsom, Surrey, for two years.

"I had treatments, manipulations and traction," he recalls. "It was six months before I had some movement of my neck. Yet, still, whenever I turned, my joints cracked and it was really loud inside my head. Specialists said they could fuse the joints together but I refused as that would have restricted all my movements.

"The damaged vertebrae were immensely tender so I couldn't sit on anything hard and the slightest touch would cause searing pain. My back often used to go into spasm and I'd then spend two days crawling on the floor."

HE RECALLS: "In different clinics, I had physiotherapy and other manipulations for almost 10 years. I got quite depressed with constant backache. Ever since, I have found that if I don't move around I stiffen up. That has been the worst thing over the years.

"Before I go to bed I have two cups of tea so I get up to go to the toilet in the night as movement is good for me. If I do have a good night's sleep, it'll take 30 minutes in the morning to get myself moving.

"I still sometimes have treatments and massages to keep my body loose. I got around £15,000 in insurance from the crash but I've probably spent 10 times that on treatments over the years."

Bobby G, real name Robert Gubby, was born in Epsom and expelled from school at 14 for non-attendance. He became a



BOBBY G

I'VE SPENT £150,000 TRYING TO CURE MY BAD BACK

THE GROUP: Original Bucks Fizz members, l-r, Jay Aston, Mike Nolan, Bobby G and Cheryl Baker

PIECE OF THE ACTION: Bobby G now performs as Bucks Fizz with his third wife, Heidi, and two other singers

self-employed builder but throughout his 20s sang in pubs and clubs. He performed in cabaret with comedian Jim Davidson and understudied in the London production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* before auditioning for Bucks Fizz.

The group went on to win the Eurovision Song Contest in 1981, topping the charts in eight countries. International stardom followed and the band had a string of hits including *Land Of Make Believe* and *My Camera Never Lies*.

However, after the coach crash a series of line-up changes within the

group began, including at one time Dollar singer David Van Day. In 1997 Bobby was granted ownership of the name Bucks Fizz and registered it in his wife Heidi's name and the pair still perform as Bucks Fizz with two other members.

A rival line-up featuring Cheryl, Mike and Jay was set up but in 2011, after a bitter legal dispute, a judge confirmed Bobby's right to use the name Bucks Fizz.

Despite the stress it caused, Bobby says: "I'm so appreciative of all that happened to me.

"Going through the court case and reading up about intellectual

law, as much as it was a pain, was really interesting and I enjoyed doing it. I don't know if I'd have enjoyed it if I'd lost it though."

Cheryl, 62, Mike, 61, and Jay, 55, now perform as Formerly Of Bucks Fizz with new band member Bobby McVay.

Bobby G, who also has an adult son and daughter from two previous marriages, is happily settled in Devon with Heidi and Millie and every few years he has a full medical with his GP.

"I'd very much like to live to old age, particularly as I have a young daughter," he says. To this end he steers clear of processed food,

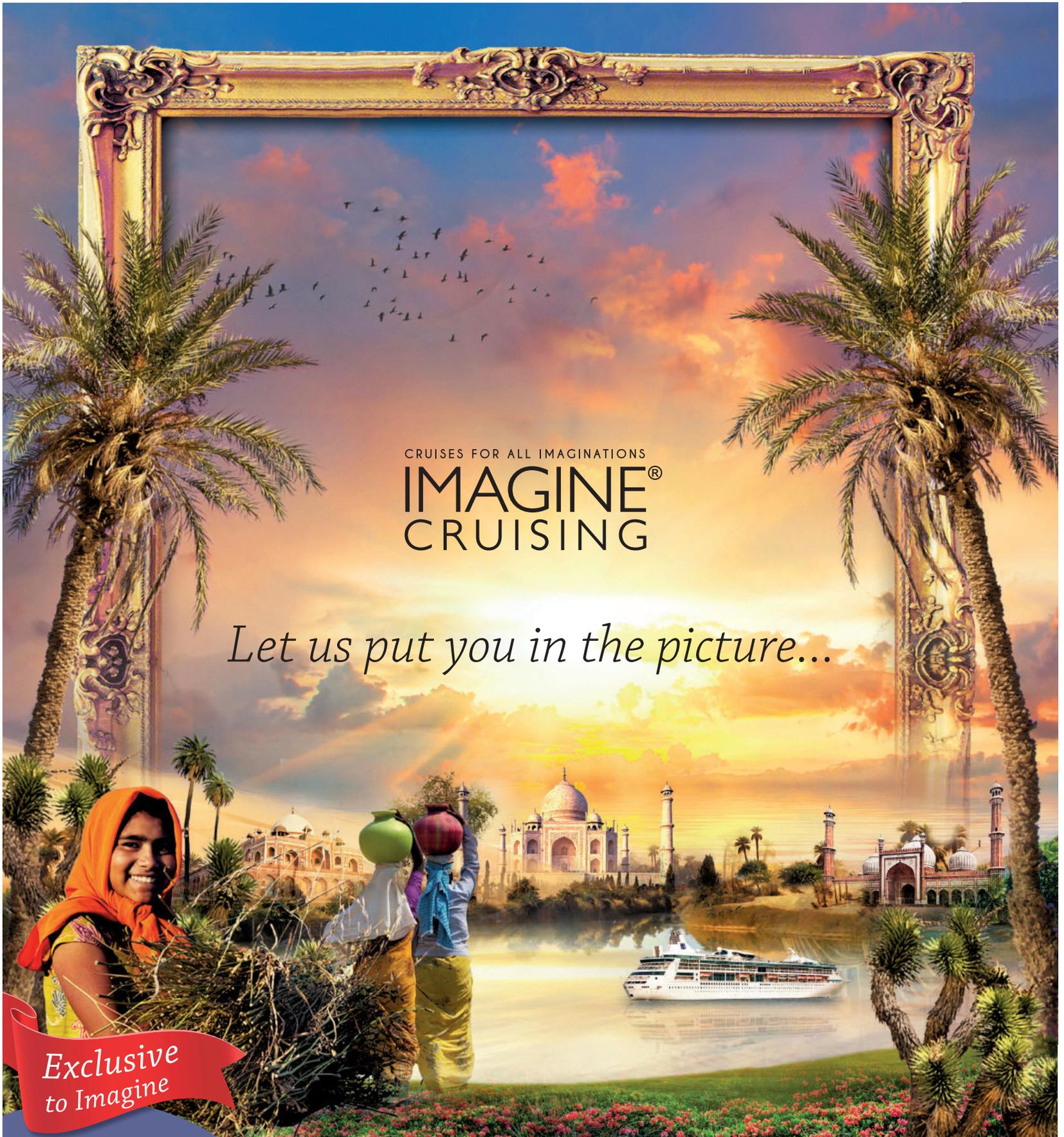
drinks redbush tea and decaf coffee and tries to stay very active. "I don't go to the gym but I play golf unless my back is bad," he explains.

He says performing the famous Bucks Fizz dance routines keeps him moving too, although, he adds: "We don't do many head movements.

"I've always moved my head slowly since the crash and I still feel stress in my shoulders but as I'll be 63 next month I don't know how much is to do with getting older."

● For more information on Bucks Fizz and tour dates visit bucksfizz.co.uk

Pictures: PETER ROBERTSON, LFI



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You'll then spend a few relaxing days at sea where you can enjoy the experience that comes with cruising on the ms Zaandam. Musically themed, you'll notice nods to this throughout the ship; from musical memorabilia dotted around such as signed guitars by Queen and The Rolling Stones and the huge Baroque-style Dutch pipe organ that dominates the heart of the ship.

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You'll then tour the remote Falkland Islands with their British quirks and isolated Punta Arenas, at the tip of Chilean Patagonia. Local legend has it that if you touch your foot to the monument of a Magellan native, you are sure to return to the city.

Relaxed Ushuaia has an end of the Earth feel, just across the Drake Passage from Antarctica. Get a beautiful view of the city and the Beagle Channel by hiking up the Glacier Martial, or trek around Tierra del Fuego National Park. Cruise around the Cape Horn and the southernmost point of Tierra del Fuego, passing the snow-capped peaks and toothpaste-blue glaciers. Enjoy the beauty of the Chilean fjords and scenic Lake District before you disembark in hilly Valparaiso, home to brightly-coloured buildings and a bustling harbour. Its ramshackle charm is a final reminder of South America before you fly home.

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