

Dates for your diary

By Lauren John

'Love is in the Air' but what will you do if Cupid's arrow hits you? February 14th sees Stock Brook Manor in Billericay hosting a Valentines bistro event, so why not splash out and treat your loved one to a four course meal and champagne in a great venue if you're a partygoer then head to Brentwood on the 15th as Bar West One holds a high energy Salsa party, and don't worry about having two left feet because the night also includes free Salsa and Merengue lessons. But if there are old romantics who got down on bended knee recently, maybe a trip to Hylands House would be more helpful. There they will find a wedding fayre packed to the brim with ideas and inspiration to make their special day all that it should be!

Web links: www.stockbrook.com,
www.salsaclub.co.uk, www.weddings-essex.co.uk

'It's only Rock and Roll...' but you might just like it, and both acts featured here fly the flag for Essex too! If you're looking for some haunting, acoustic pop then Sarah and Dave from Alone Me will entertain you all evening at St Anne's Castle pub in Great Leighs on the 17th, meanwhile high energy, indie pop act, The Amber Plan appear at Anglia Ruskin university in Chelmsford on the 24th.

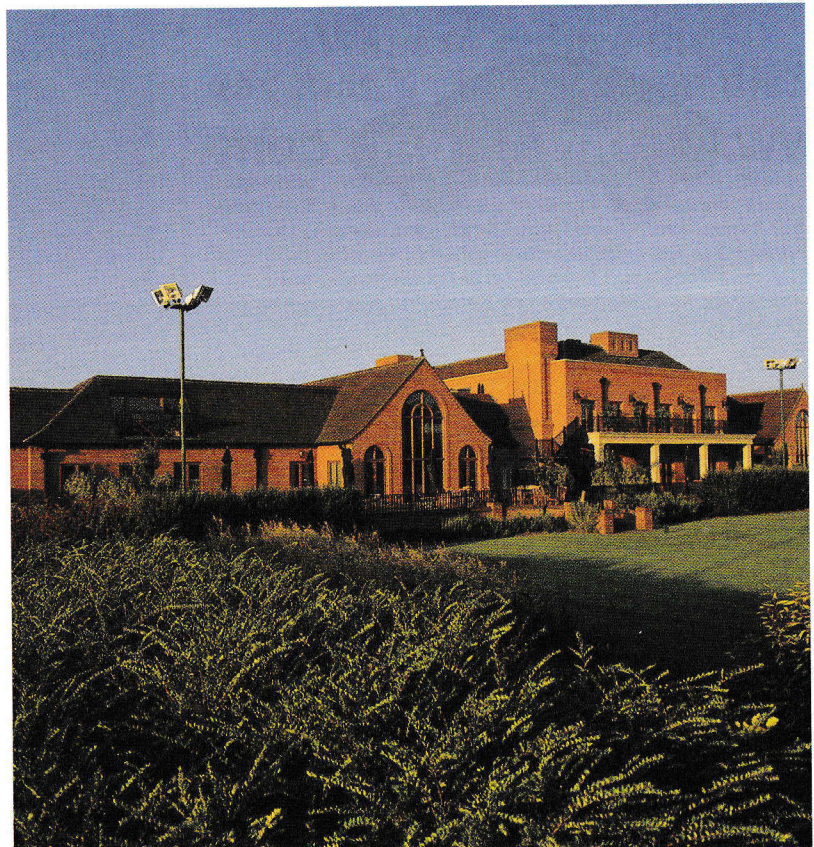
Web links: www.aloneme.com,
www.theamberplan.net

If Who Dunnit? is the question, then Sweeney Todd is the answer, and the pick of this month's theatre is a musical thriller about that famous and very barbaric barber. Presented by a local amateur operatic society, performances run from the 26th until March 3rd. But this isn't a production for young eyes, so if you're looking for a good way to introduce your children to the theatre, then what better way than a trip to see Sooty's Magic Castle. Sooty and all his friends promise lots of music, mess, and mayhem in their brand new show, also at the Civic Theatre from 14-17th February.

Weblink: www.chelmsfordbc.gov.uk/theatres

You never stop learning in this life, but if your children think they are 'too cool for school' then why not try some learning with a difference at Hanningfield visitor centre. 8-12 year olds can take part in wildlife discovery days full of activities, games and crafts. These events take place on 14th and 16th February and cost £8 per person. The sporty types, who can't sit still haven't been forgotten either. Riverside Ice and Leisure in Chelmsford has a packed programme full of half-term activities for all ages, including a 5 day crash course in the pool and daily kids camps from 12-16th February.

Weblinks: www.essexwt.org.uk,
www.chelmsfordbc.gov.uk



Before you know it the 2012 Olympics will be here, and of course Essex will be joining in sports biggest celebration by hosting the Mountain Biking event. But you don't have to wait until then to check out the venue. Weald Country Park in Brentwood will be holding a guided tour and history walk on the 18th. However it'll be a load of rubbish at Chelmsford Museum on the 24th as they launch an exhibition all about what we throw away! Find out what's become study material for archaeologists, and what happens in our modern day recycling depot.

Contacts: www.essexcc.gov.uk/countryparks, Chelmsford Museum (01245) 605700

Dates for your diary: Essex Book Festival kicks off on March 1st and with events all across Essex featuring some of our favourite authors and promising new talent, it's something not to be missed. Check out www.essexbookfestival.org.uk for all the dates, and more on who's appearing. You can also book in advance for Colchester Zoo's new 'Be a Keeper for a Day' scheme. From March 31st anyone over 15 years of age has a unique chance to get up close and personal with anything from birds of prey to sea lions.

Visit www.colchesterzoo.org.uk for all the details.

All information correct at time of going to press.

To submit listings for future guides please email details to Lauren.john@btinternet.com