

BUSINESS EYE

The unsung heroes

WRITTEN BY

ALEX PRATT



Founder of Serious Readers in Bierton and chairman of Institute of Directors South

www.bucksherald.co.uk
@bucks_herald

This week's non-sense masquerading as prophetic insight comes to you from the Derbyshire hills near Matlock where I have come to celebrate the 80th birthday of my girlfriend's ex-husband's father, Den.

The fact that I am here at all and welcomed so warmly with open arms is a story in itself about the nature of modern-day re-engineered families, but it's not what has most caught my attention this weekend.

The event was organised

by Den's daughter Helen, who displays all the wonderful characteristics you'd expect of a modern matriarch who spends her days caring for others as a doctor in the NHS; detailed preparation and planning, care and attention directed towards each and every person present, and a warm approach that places everyone immediately at ease.

Helen's altogether lesser-half Ben, a surgeon himself, ran around lighting fires and doing precisely what he was told. Wise man. Ben is an extraordinary bloke. Not only does he save and improve lives every day, but he is an officer in the army reserve, decorated for gallantry, and prepared to risk his life, and give over his time to saving others in harm's way on the front line.

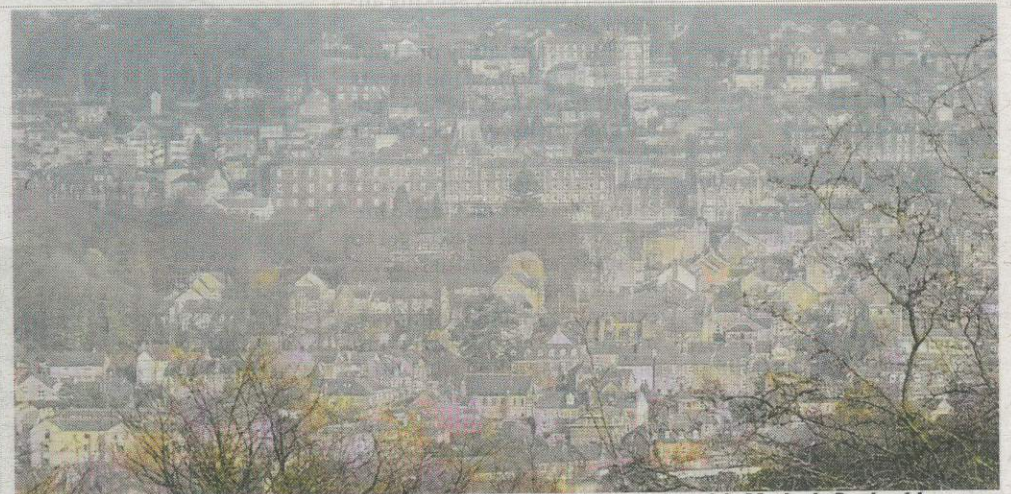
You just know when you are being hosted by two people with such love for others that its going to be a great weekend; and it was.

Then there was Roger. Im-

agine you were to have a major paragliding accident that destroyed your legs to the extent that when you went under the knife the surgeon explained that it was unlikely he would be able to save them beneath the knee. That was Roger. But what was so extraordinary about Roger was his devotion to the service of others as a volunteer on an RNLI Lifeboat. This was his motivation to walk again.

What sort of bloke is fired up to force himself to recover from such devastating injuries, and I saw the horrific scars, because he's so determined to carry on decades of being there to save others' lives at sea? Someone who has the brave mindset to run into the burning building, or in Roger's case hobble. Who hobbles into a burning building on rebuilt legs to save others in trouble? Not Roger, obviously, because he's on a lifeboat and not a fireman, but you get my drift.

His other half, Liz, explained how much she loves



Alex has been contemplating the meaning of being British while on a break in Matlock, Derbyshire

volunteering to look after those with special needs, made more remarkable by the fact that Liz also lost her husband to early onset dementia and lived with the anguish of caring for him over many years as he drifted away. But Liz still knows how to party! Remarkable.

Meanwhile, birthday boy

Den, who at 80 years old still walks several miles on most days, is only now even thinking about giving up work and only then because his kids are nagging him. What's more, he was not phased in the least by a 90-foot abseil off a viaduct in the stormy wind and hail.

In these days of political nar-

cissism over Brexit, if you are ever left wondering what is left that makes Britain strong and great, you need look no further than Den, Helen, Ben, Liz and Roger.

Look around you. It's the unassuming, quiet ones getting on with it without fanfare who put the Great into Great Britain.