

## Team England dancers wearing their kit with pride

FOUR secondary students have collected their kit for a prestigious dance tournament, despite the event being postponed until 2021.

Year 10 student Jessica Collins and Year 8 girls Arabella Sumption, Faith Ebdon and Olivia Hopkins – who all attend New Rickstones Academy in Witham – were due to represent England in this year's Dance World Cup.

But the competition has been delayed because of the pandemic and will now take place in Rome next summer.

The blow has been softened after the girls were given their Team England kits

which they have been wearing with pride.

Arabella said: "Back in 2019, Complete Dance Studios intermediates and seniors auditioned to represent Team England in the Dance World Cup in Rome.

"We qualified, which is amazing, and now form part of Team England, competing against other countries."

Sally Pasquale, head of PE at New Rickstones, said: "This is an amazing achievement for the girls and their dance group. New Rickstones Academy are very proud of them, and wish them luck for next year."



TEAM ENGLAND: Arabella Sumption, Faith Ebdon, Jessica Collins and Olivia Hopkins

# Crook used burgled bank cards to buy his fast food

## Raider targeted homes and broke in while children slept inside

By Ellis Whitehouse

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A PROLIFIC crook has been jailed for nine years for stealing bank cards and using them to buy food at McDonald's.

James Hearne carried out six burglaries across Essex – including properties in Witham and Wickford – in which he stole bank cards and keys which he used to take victims' cars.

A court heard the 29-year-old carried out his crime spree from November 2019 to March this year, breaking into homes while his victims were asleep in bed.

On March 16 this year, he forced open the front door of a home in Friern Walk, Wickford, and stole a Vauxhall Corsa, iPhone and a purse.

A bank card was later used to buy food from the McDonald's on the A127 and at a Premier convenience store.

During a break-in at Laburnam Way, Witham, on March 17 he again stole bank cards while children were sleeping in the home.

Another incident elsewhere in Essex saw Hearne steal a BMW, which was later found partly dismantled in a "chop shop" in Romford.

Hearne, of Hitchin House, Romford, admitted six counts

of burglary, five counts of theft and four counts of fraud at Basildon Crown Court.

Alexandra Monaghan, mitigating, said Hearne had got himself into debt and resorted to crime as he had lost his job, and had the threat of bailiffs coming to his property and taking his possessions.

She added: "He did not deal with it very well. He started taking drugs and drinking.

"He fell in with the wrong people and he tried to think of quick solutions to make money for his family.

"It was done out of a desperate situation.

"This will be the longest and hardest prison sentence

that he has ever served."

The court also heard how Hearne had been offending since he was a juvenile.

Sentencing him, Judge Andrew Hurst said: "Five of them were at night when the residents were at home and asleep.

"In Witham the children were present at the home as well.

"You purposefully thought you were going to make quite a lot of money.

"It seems to me that committing a burglary is what you do and you do not care about people's property and the effect on them when they are targeted."



BEHIND BARS: James Hearne has been jailed for nine years for burglary

## 256k people are not working

A THIRD of the Essex population is on furlough or universal credit due to Covid-19.

Data from Essex County Council has shown there were 40,000 newly unemployed workers and 216,000 furloughed workers in greater Essex at the end of May, which works out as about 29 per cent of all employed residents.

In response, the council says it is developing a "robust plan" for what it can do in the short, medium and long term to create jobs and support the economy to recover in Essex.

Key to the plan is restarting tourism – which prior to the Covid-19 pandemic was worth £3.4billion to the county's economy.

It has launched the 'Great Adventures, Close to Home' campaign, which will run for ten weeks and provide information on what is open, as well as the best times of day and safest way for people to visit.

County Hall finance boss Tony Ball said:

"With roughly a third of the Essex population claiming universal credit or on furlough there is an enormous challenge facing all of us.

"We know that having a job is more important than just earning money. Having a job is the best way to improve health and lift communities out of deprivation, which is why the Essex economy is our number one priority – not only to provide jobs but to provide healthier futures for our residents."

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# Safer Summer Days Out

Find out everything you need to know to enjoy a fun-packed, safe summer in our 4 page guide later in today's edition.

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