

Sport

FEATURE: It's 70-up for Northampton Amateur Boxing Club

By Andy Durrant

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This year is a very special one for Northampton's oldest amateur boxing club which is marking its 70th anniversary.

Northampton Amateur Boxing Club (NABC), which is based in Ash Street off the Mounts, was founded in 1953 and is the oldest amateur club in the town with hopes of turning pro-am by 2024.

One of those behind the beginnings of the club was John Morris, who at the time was an 18-year-old journalist at the Chronicle & Echo and went on to become the first sports editor at BBC Radio Northampton and general secretary of the British Boxing Board of Control (BBBoC).

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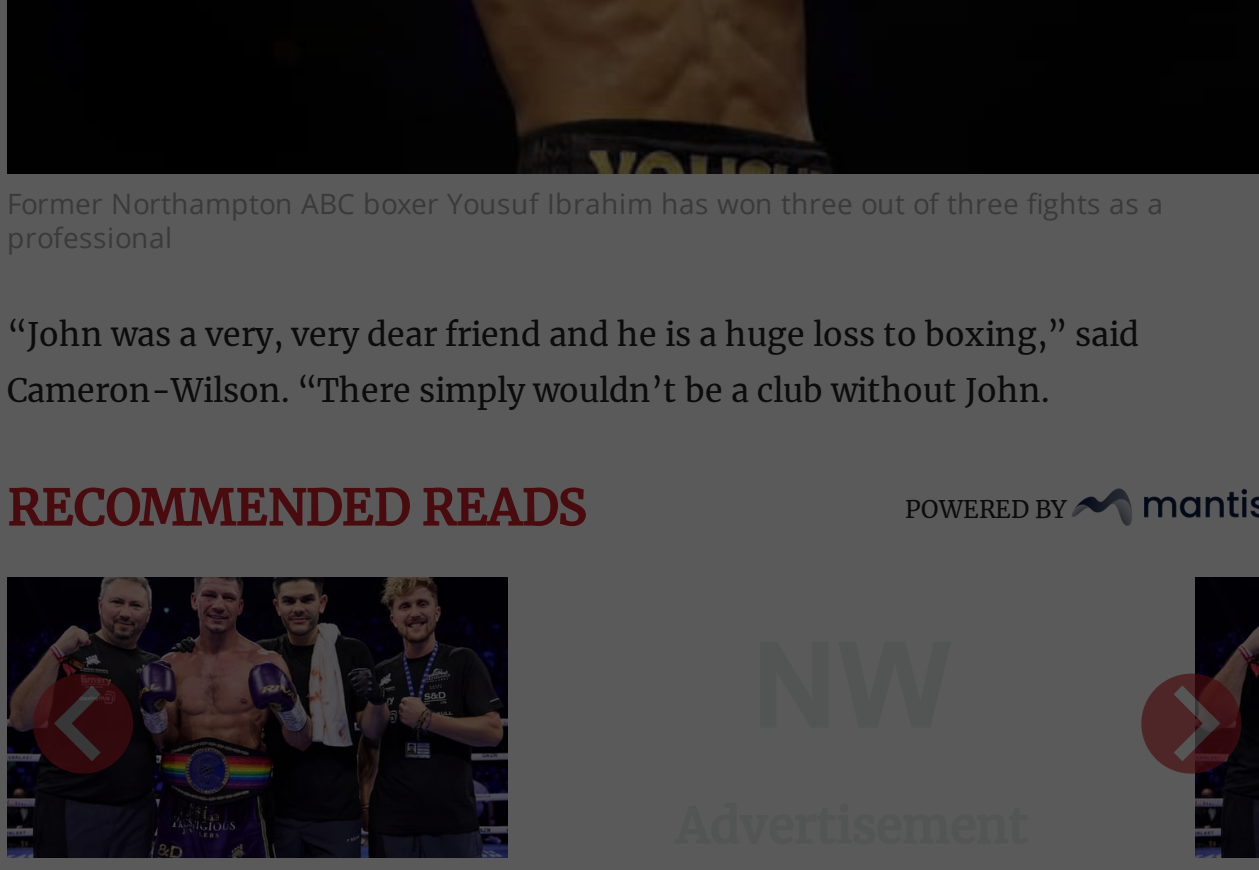
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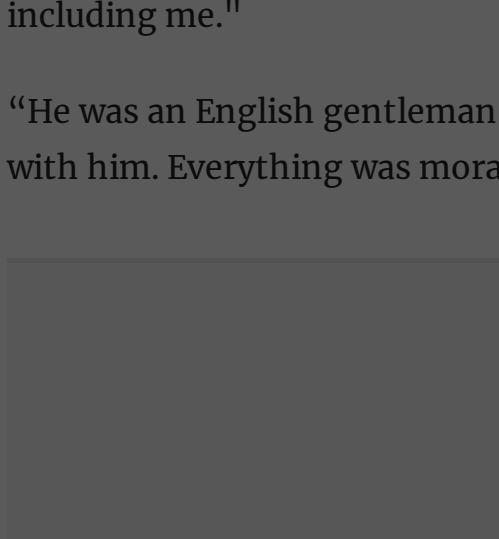
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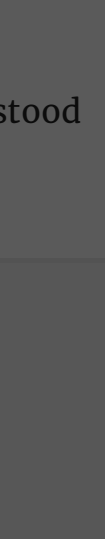
Former Northampton ABC boxer Youssif Ibrahim has won three out of three fights as a professional

John was a very, very dear friend and he is a huge loss to boxing," said Cameron-Wilson. "There simply wouldn't be a club without John.

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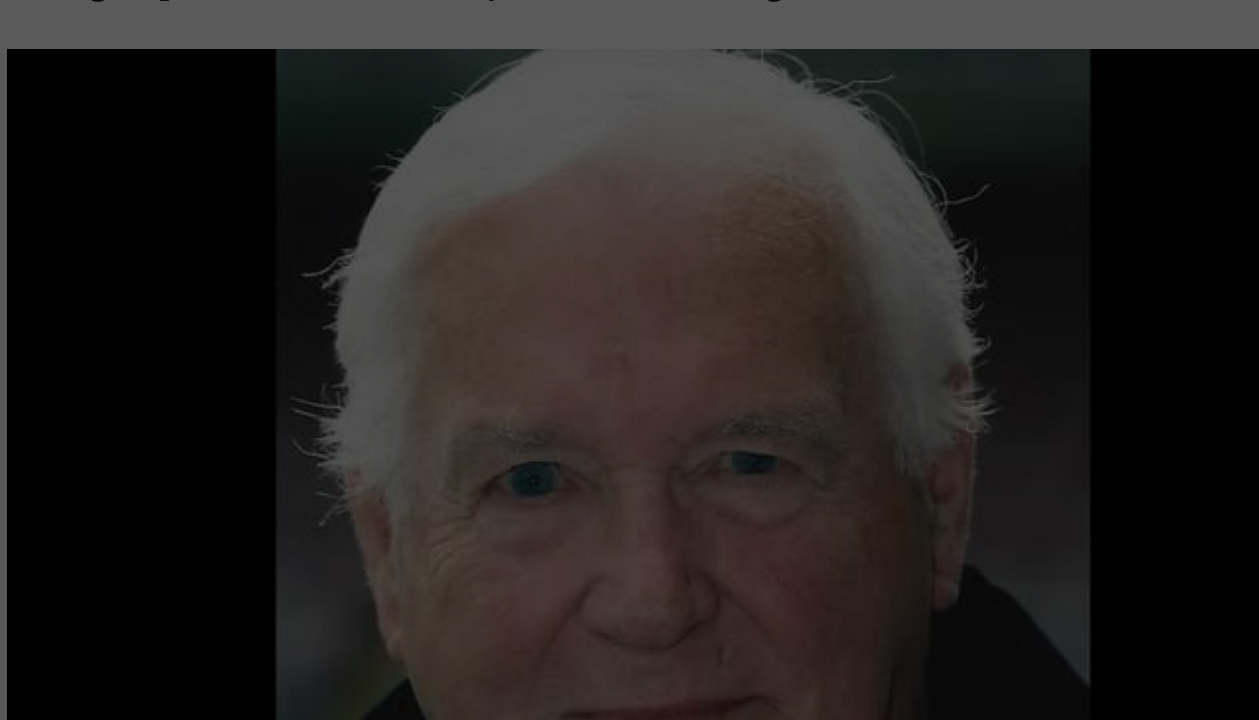
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"He was part of the opening energy of the club and getting people involved, including me."

"He was an English gentleman, but you always knew exactly where you stood with him. Everything was morally and ethically right with John."



John Morris, who sadly passed away last year, was a big supporter of Northampton ABC.

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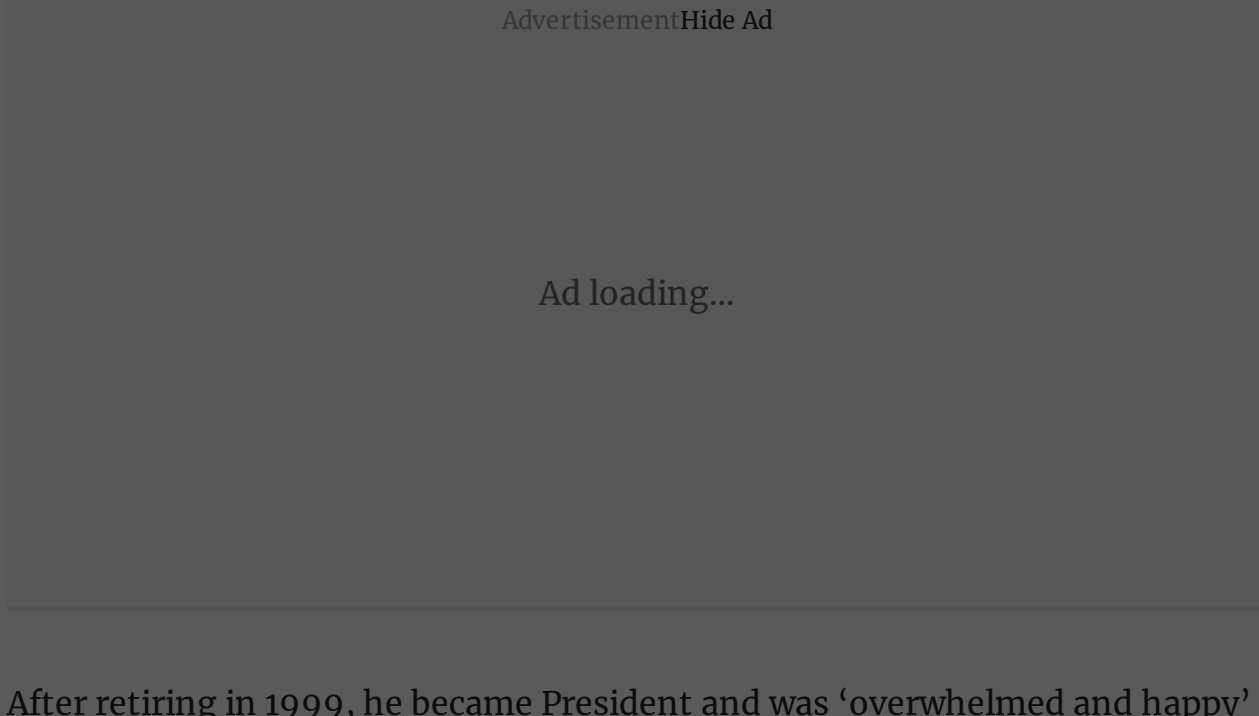
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Morris was instrumental in the careers of many boxers and was on first-name terms with many world champions.

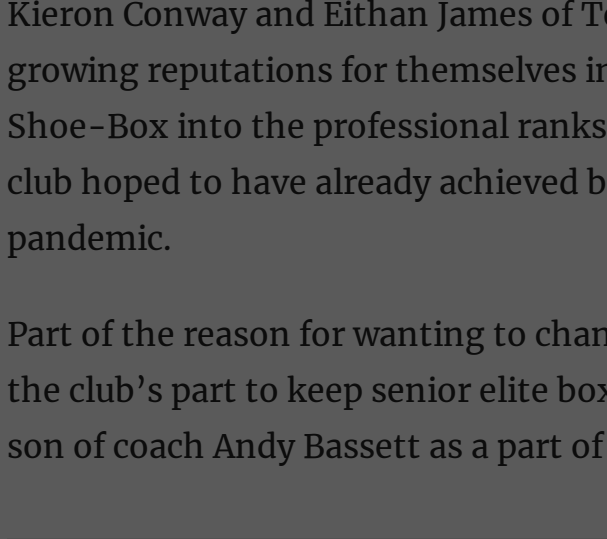
In the late 1950s, he travelled to America where a young, previously unheard-of boxer noticed him and offered him an interview – the boxer's name was Cassius Clay!

Although Morris's career took him all over the world, the club remained close to his heart, every year he would make significant financial donations to the club.



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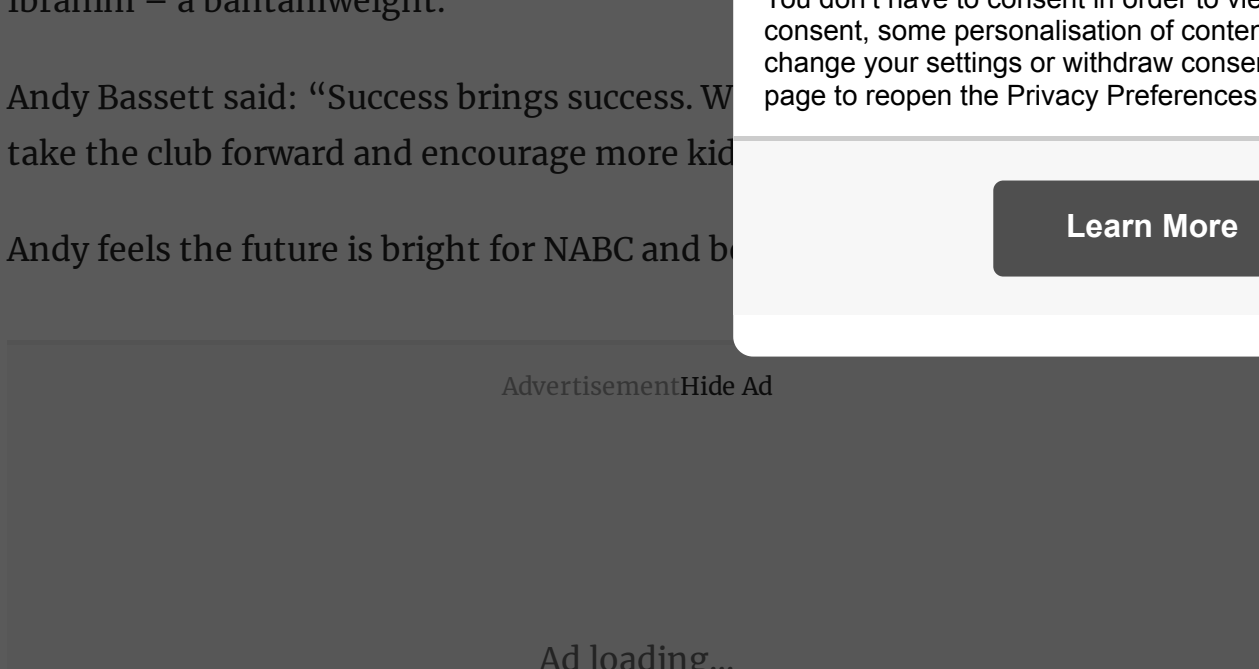
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After retiring in 1999, he became President and was 'overwhelmed and happy' with how the club was progressing.

The boxing scene in Northampton is currently in particularly good health, with Far Cotton Boxing Club's Chantelle Cameron putting the town firmly on the map by becoming the UK's first undisputed female world champion.

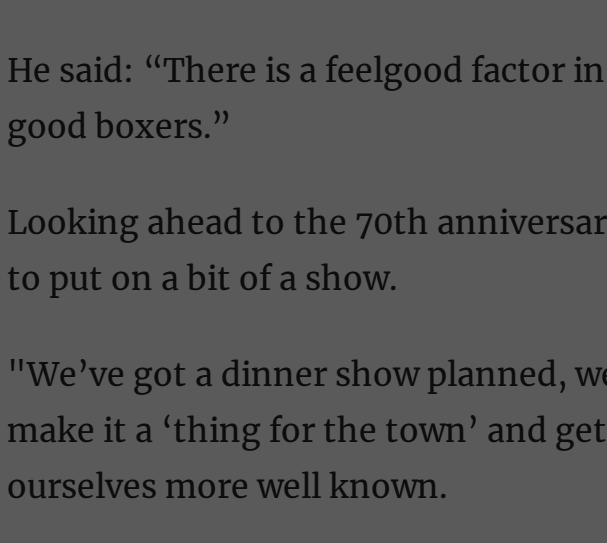
Kieron Conway and Eithan James of Team Shoe-Box are also gaining ever-growing reputations for themselves in the sport, and NABC hope to follow Shoe-Box into the professional ranks by January 2024, a transition that the club hoped to have already achieved but which was delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Part of the reason for wanting to change to professional status is a desire on the club's part to keep senior elite boxer and middleweight Toby Bassett, and son of coach Andy Bassett as a part of the club.

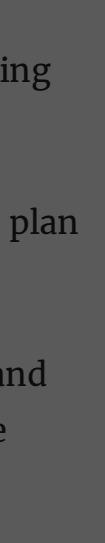


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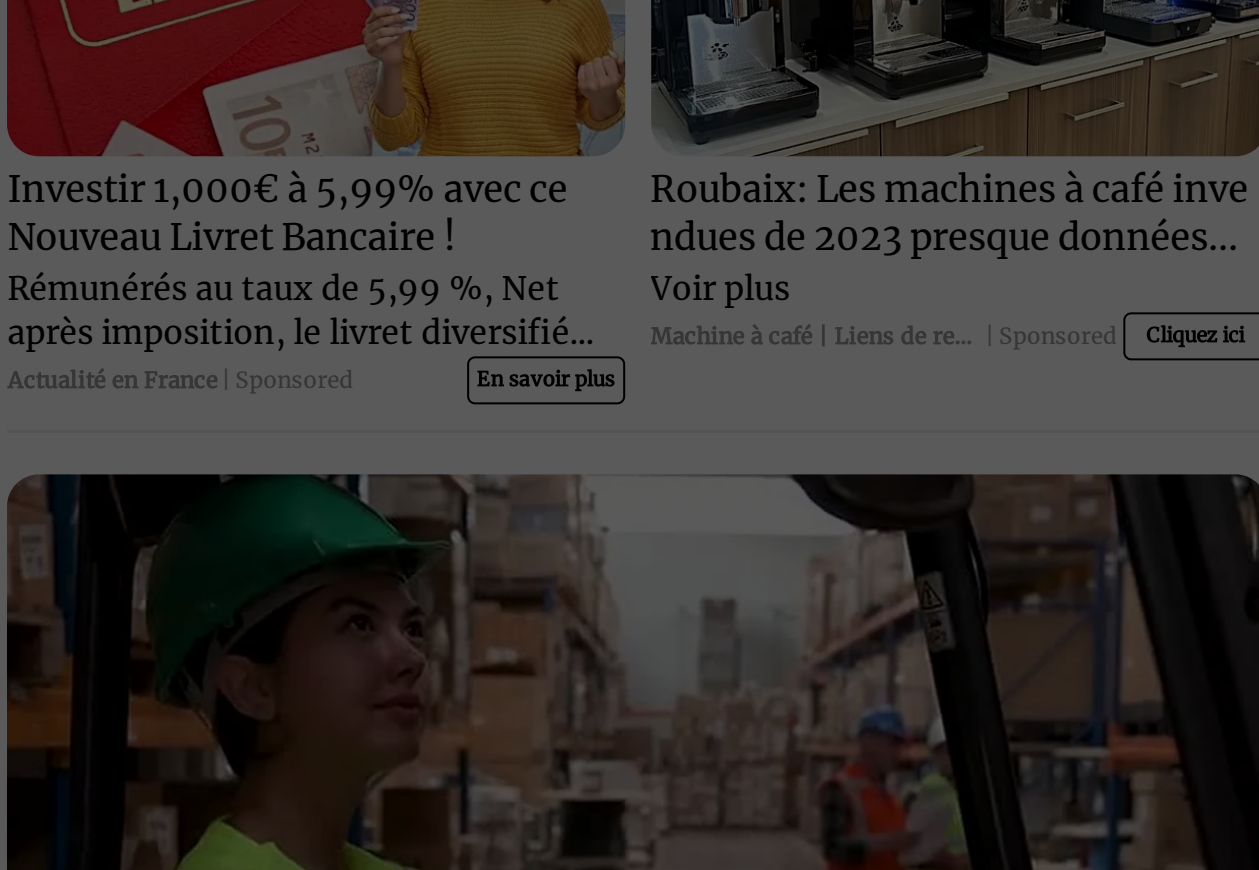
He said: "There is a feelgood factor in local boxing – all clubs are producing good boxers."

Looking ahead to the 70th anniversary of the club, Andy explained: "We plan to put on a bit of a show.

"We've got a dinner show planned, we want to get businesses involved and make it a 'thing for the town' and get out into the community and make ourselves more well known.

"We're looking at venues and hope to announce details soon."

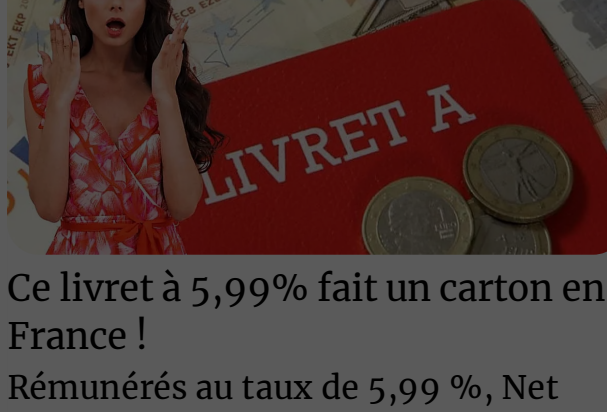
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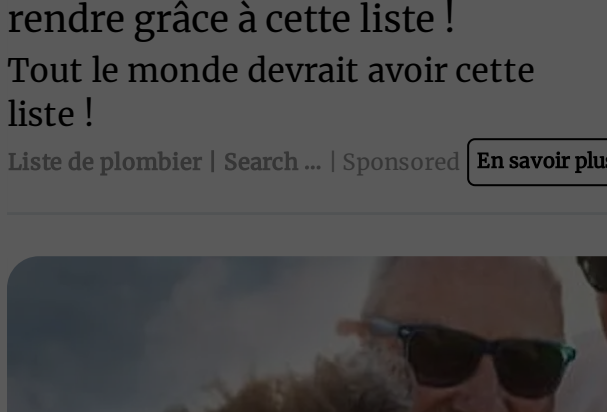
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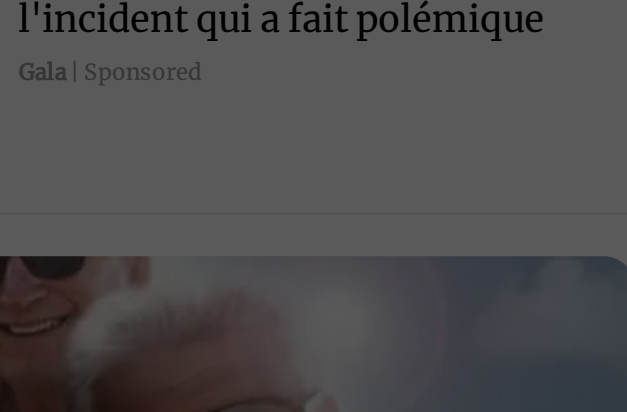
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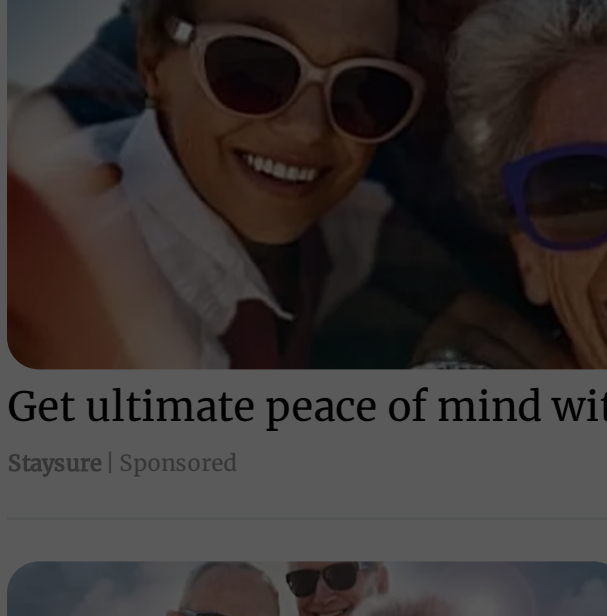


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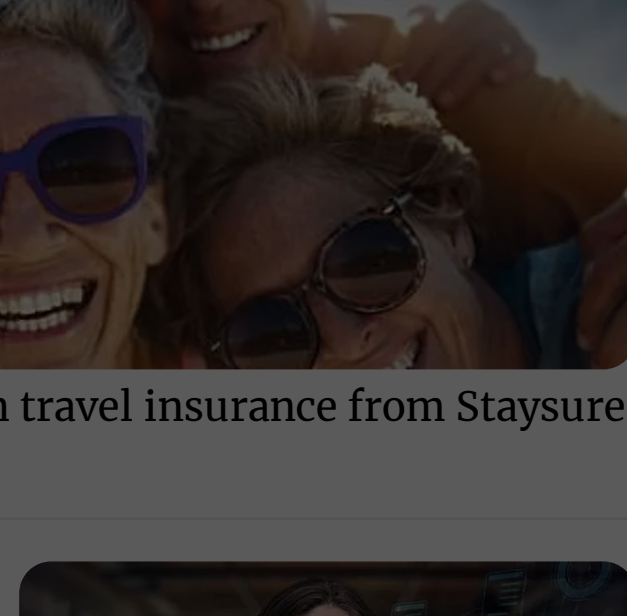
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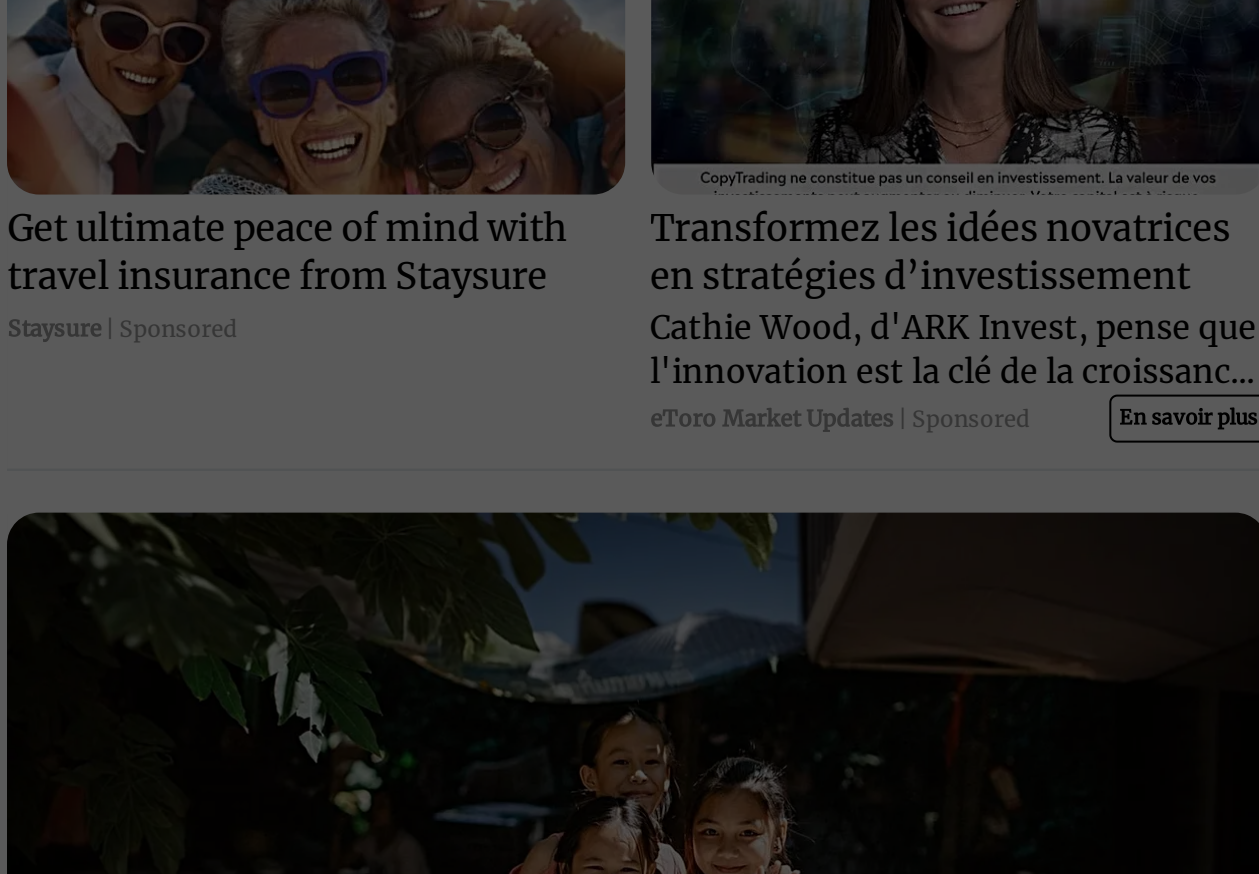


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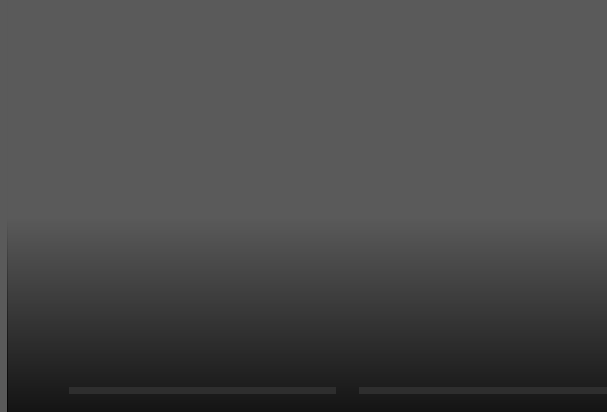


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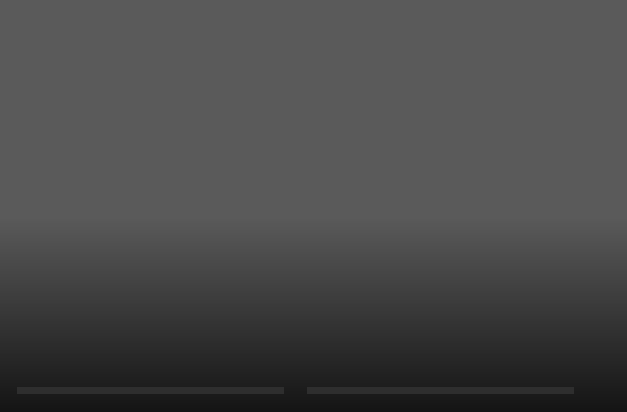
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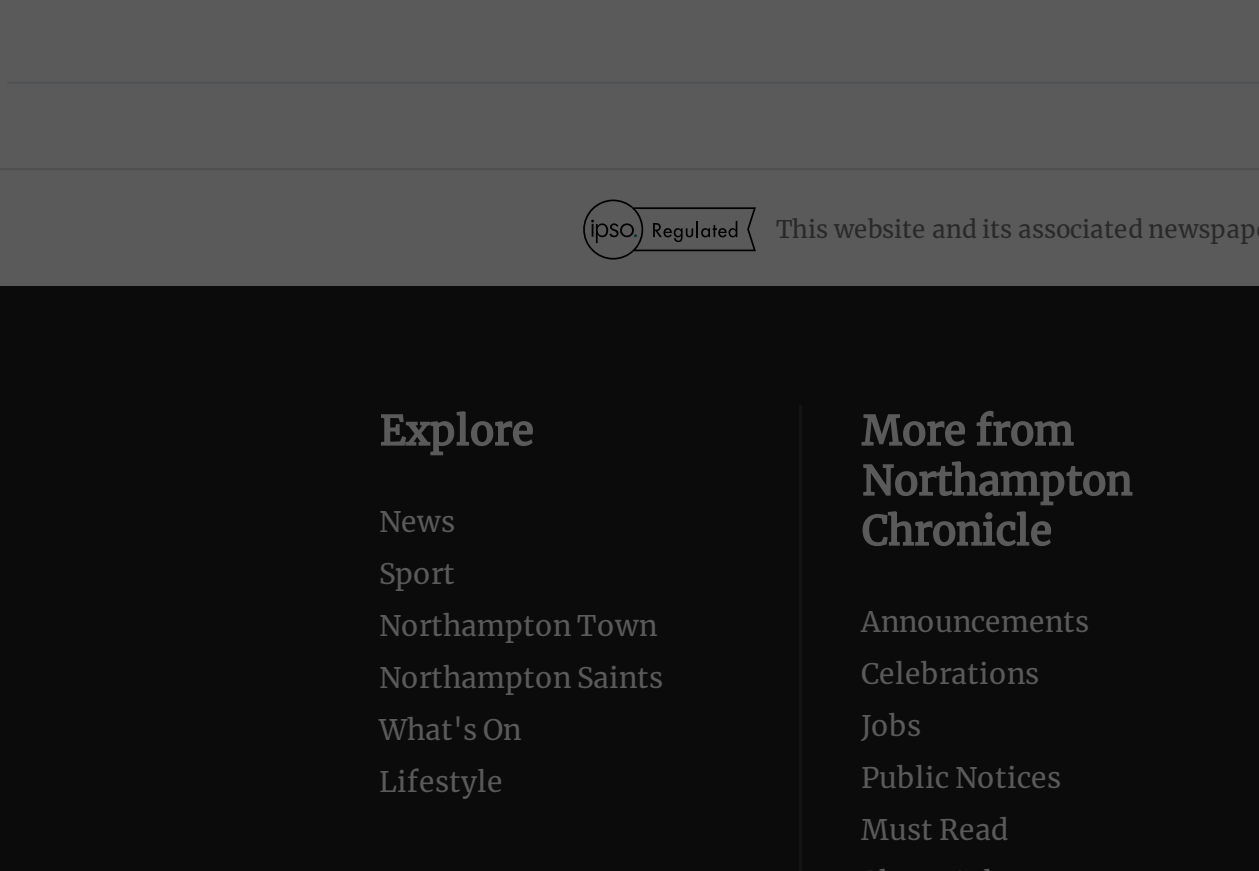


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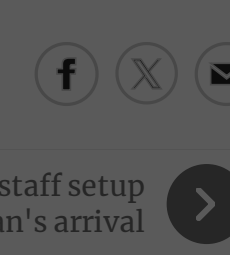
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