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Smile! It's Love at First Sight

Proof that love at first sight leads to long-term relationship success

A staggering 22m* Brits admit to having fallen in love at first sight, with two in five of those still in a long term relationship with the other person after ten years, new research out today reveals.

The 'thunderbolt' research conducted among 1000 British adults by Gumtree.com, the UK's busiest dating website, reveals a nation of die-hard romantics, with 87% of Brits passionately believing in 'love at first sight' - a phenomenon also experienced by Bill and Hilary Clinton, Katie Holmes and George Clooney.

A nice smile, good eye contact and the sound of a person's voice are the biggest romantic 'triggers' among Brits who admit to falling instantly in love with a stranger.

However, of those that felt an instant attraction with a complete stranger who passed them by, only one third (33%) acted on impulse, plucking up the courage to make a 'connection' and talk to the other person.

Like a scene from *Sliding Doors*, the remaining 67% of people weren't brave enough to make the first move, and of those 77% admit to regretting not making contact right there and then. Sadly, one in ten (10%) Brits admit to regretting the missed connection for years afterwards and dream about what could have been with the other person.

Sophy Silver of Gumtree.com says, "It seems it's real love, not lust, at first sight for Brits, which will come as a real surprise to all the romance cynics out there.

For the die-hard but shy romantics, there's an opportunity to re-connect anonymously online through 'Missed Connections', where singles can post an ad

looking for the person they've had a moment with. For that group, it can be a case of 'love at first sight', which holds equal promise. The trick is to include as much detail as possible – from the colour of the person's hair to the colour of their eyes, what seat on the bus they sat at or whatever book they were reading at the time—that way there's little confusion and people reconnect with the exact person they passed by."

On Gumtree.com, hundreds of people post ads for 'missed connections' every week, with more and more people putting their hearts on their virtual sleeves in search for a stranger they've fallen for. Since January, postings for missed connections have trebled on the site, with a record increase in ads posted on Manchester (600%), Liverpool (500%) and Edinburgh (367%).

A posting from the Gumtree.com site reads:

"On the District line from Richmond. You had a red handbag and rucksack. You were reading *Saturday* on a Tuesday morning. You have the most amazing eyes. Just thought I'd let you know, you made my morning"

<http://www.gumtree.com/london/18/10609818.html>

Smile, you're in love!

For two thirds of Brits (66%) a nice smile is the biggest 'trigger' of romantic attraction. One in two fall for 'nice eyes', with 28% of Brits blindly falling in love with another person's accent or the sound of their voice. The way the other person dresses (26%), walks (19%) and their perfume or aftershave (17%) are the other biggest turn-ons, coming ahead of a person's hair cut (11%) and height (10%).

Other research highlights

- A quarter (25%) of those questioned admit to falling for a stranger in a bar or a club. Over one in ten (14%) people admit to acting on impulse and connecting with a complete stranger on a train and 11% of people have hooked up at a music festival
- 50% of Northern Irish have fallen in love at first sight while three out of five people (61%) in the North West have never experienced it
- 37.5% of Londoners would make a connection rather than see it pass by
- 12.5% of people in Northern Ireland most likely to make the first move
- 20.9% of people in Midlands have never made a move and still regret it to this day
- Almost two out of five men make the first move with 75% using eye-contact to grab a girl's attention
- A quarter (26%) of men find they fall head-over-heels at work while two in ten confess

- to finding their lady-love while out shopping
- One third of men prefer to stick to old-school charm and chivalry to 'woo' a stranger. Opening the door or giving up their seat on the bus or train being the most popular gestures
 - 4% of Scots to fall in love on a train, it happens to a quarter (25%) of Northern Irish on a bus – 66.7% of which have made a connection – and one out of ten people in Wales get 'revved-up' at traffic lights!
 - The research also points to an increasingly competitive market for British singletons, with 28% admitting that they devote more time to their work life than their love life and so are keen to snap up every 'love opportunity' they can get - even if that's on the tube commute to and from work

Example postings from Gumtree.com

<http://www.gumtree.com/london/97/10595997.html>

<http://www.gumtree.com/london/84/10555484.html>

<http://www.gumtree.com/london/43/10747943.html>

<http://www.gumtree.com/london/34/10775334.html>

When they made the alphabet they should have put U and I together

- Smile – It's contagious and will make you much more approachable
- Make eye contact – look across at the object of your affections, catch his/ her eye and then look away. Do it gently so that it appears natural and don't stare – it's a turn off!
- Make the first move. You might not get another chance so take a deep breath, move closer to the person you want to meet and open a conversation. Say hello!
- Avoid chat up lines at all costs. Who wants to hear "how was heaven when you left?" when you're running late for work having not had enough time to wash your hair and iron your suit? It won't do you any favours
- If you can't pluck up the courage to speak to that person then and there, don't loose heart – you can always post a missed connections ad. After all, you never know who reads them
- If you are going to turn someone down, do so graciously

- ENDS -

For more information or case studies please contact the Gumtree press office at Lexis Public Relations on 020 7908 6589 or email gumtree@lexispr.com

Notes to editors:

- Research carried out by Tickbox, surveying 1000 adults across the UK in June
- *based on latest population figures for UK of 60,209,500. Issued by the National Statistics Office.

About Gumtree.com

- Gumtree.com was created in London in March 2000 and now covers 60 cities in the UK, Ireland, Poland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Asia
- It is the UK's biggest website for local community classifieds including flat share, flat rentals and jobs

Fast Facts

- Around 5.5 million visitors a month
 - 20,000 new ads in a day
 - 100,000 ads live at any one time
 - Half a million new ads in a month
 - Three quarters of a million ads live on the site at any one time
 - 150 million page impressions every month
 - Gumtree.com users spend 5,360,000 minutes on the website each month
- Gumtree is your local community online. Home to all the things you'd expect from your local community; a place to find and advertise rooms, flats and houses, a notice board for selling and buying stuff, somewhere to find job or a date even just to chat with friends