Two men charged after fatal car crash

Two men have been charged after a bus stop car crash that killed a student from Oldbury.

Rebecca McManus was waiting at the stop on Hagley Road West, Bearwood, when a Mitsubishi said to have been driven by sales rep Sukinder Mannan, 32, crashed into it. Miss McManus, 21, was pronounced dead at the scene on May 31 whilst a friend, also 21, was seriously hurt.

Mannan, of Roundhills Road, Halesowen, was arrested within an hour of the crash. Computer engineer Indrjeet Singh, from Crambourn Avenue, Ettingshall, was arrested at his home on June 3. Both men have now answered bail and were charged with causing death by dangerous driving.

Mannan has also been charged with failing to provide a blood sample, whilst Singh faces a separate count of failing to stop at the scene of an accident.

They will appear at Sandwell Magistrates Court on Tuesday 2.

Miss McManus had attended King Edward VI College in Stourbridge and had been studying English Literature and creative writing at the University of East Anglia in Norwich.

Black Country Day thanks

ORGANISERS who masterminded the first ever festival to celebrate the Black Country will be honoured at a civic reception in Dudley next week.

The Mayor of Dudley Councillor Margaret Aston has sent out invitations to key players behind July’s festival to join her in the Mayor’s Parlour on Tuesday to thank them for their efforts.

Tens of thousands of people enjoyed the first Black Country Festival, marking off the Black Country Day on July 14.

HUNDREDS of people arrived in Halesowen to welcome in the festive season with the annual Christmas lights switch on.

A live stage show with dancers, motorised angels and even an appearance by Santa Claus left families smiling on Saturday.

There was also a fairground rides and games said on by Deputy Mayor of Dudley Councillor Steve Wallich led other dignitaries to push the button.

Members of Halesowen Chamber of Commerce helped organise the event alongside Dudley Council and Halesowen and Rowley Regis Rotary Club.

Traders had clubbed together to buy new digital lights for a revamped display in the town centre. New lights were put up along shops and over Hagley Street along with Christmas trees to turn the town into a festive wonderland.

Councillor Wallich said: “It kicks off Christmas in the borough as this is the first town centre to have their lights switched on.”

Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris helped turn the lights on alongside chamber of commerce chairman Wayne Edwards. Mr Morris said: “It is a good partnership between the chamber of commerce and the rotary club as everyone has got an interest in the development of Halesowen and have made a massive contribution.”

More pictures from the switch-on – see page 5

Let it snow – at the switch-on were Nathan Pauly and Georgia Harvey Duncan-Price

Granite, Quartz and Corian Kitchen Worktops
Template and Installation Service
Worktop Replacement Service
15 Year stain proof granite warranty and 10 year Silestone warranty
Bespoke vanities for bathrooms
Hearths and Fireplaces made to measure

Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, which employs 4,600 staff, is bidding to balance its books in the wake of Government funding cuts.

It could also require recruitment to vacant posts, although bosses say they will continue to recruit to “essential frontline nursing posts on wards and in the community”.

Earlier this year, the trust revealed it was facing a £6.7 million deficit.

Chief executive Paula Clark said the hospital trust board’s decision was not taken lightly. “Our priority is always to provide high quality patient care as well as protecting our workforce and, if we can get the vacancy controls right, then we can reduce redundancies,” she said.

‘Fan zone’ bid to rescue pub

THE Hawthorns pub is going to be transformed into a ‘fan zone’ by West Bromwich Albion.

The Grade II listed building will have live music, children’s activities, food, drink and merchandise stands and a big screen linked to the giant screen in the town.

The zone is inspired by similar projects across the country including one near Liverpool’s Anfield ground.

Officials aim to launch it for the next season at the derelict Halfords Lane pub.

Town centre lit up for festive season

Halesowen Police Station is one of three in Dudley borough that will close to the public amid £3 million cuts, the force has revealed.

The front counters at Halesowen, Dudley and Stourbridge have been earmarked to shut during the next 12 months.

In total 27 front offices across the West Midlands will close with more than 90 of the 170 jobs at risk.

Opening hours will also be reduced at Brierley Hill.

The front counter which is currently available 24 hours a day will be open between 8am and 10pm. Sedgley Police Station will act as a contact point, staffed by volunteers.

In Sandwell both Tipton and Old Hill stations will close to the public, as will the Smethwick counter which is currently open 24 hours.

Internet

West Midlands Police says the proposals to shut front counters follow an independent review, which shows the majority of the public no longer visit stations and instead make phone calls, use the internet or social media to contact officers.

But the plans have been met with anger and disappointment from councils, unions and several Black Country MPs.

David Vickers, a Conservative councillor in Halesowen who was a police officer for 28 years, said: “The concerns is that this eventually leads to stations closing all together.”

“Station and inspire the world. A ford it will make an area which is close to the public, as will the Smethwick counter which is currently open 24 hours.”

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Jayne with her whopping wedding party of 44 bridesmaids, 12 page boys, seven ushers and two best men and one best woman.

Here comes the bride with 44 bridesmaids.

MOST brides can find it tricky choosing what to have as their something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue.

But for Jayne Blakeway picking who was going to be bridesmaids proved a tough task – so much so that she decided to have 44 bridesmaids accompany her on her very big day.

The wedding party, also featuring 12 page boys, seven chief bridesmaids, seven ushers and three page boys walking the bride down the aisle, is thought to be the Black Country’s biggest.

The whopping wedding was a memorable occasion for the happy couple Jayne Blakeway and Shaun Lawrence and also friends, family and stunned passers-by.

Special seating arrangements had to be planned at St Paul’s Church, Blackheath, to accommodate the super-sized wedding.

There was even support from the Police Community Support Officers to manage the traffic as the group arrived outside the church, in Long Lane, on Saturday afternoon.

But luckily the wedding party did not have to travel far as the happy couple only live in Walsall Street, 200 yards from the church.

They made their way to the church on foot with bridesmaids walking behind alongside the page boys with the sound of The Chapel of Love by the Dixie Cups playing through speakers.

Jayne, aged 50, who works for a Housing Council in customer services for the adult social care department, has known Shaun since she was aged 16 and the couple romantically involved more recently.

Shaun, who works in road maintenance, proposed on Jayne’s 50th birthday in May and they wanted to get married on his 53rd birthday to add to the occasion. “It’s a true Black Country wedding and we don’t do things by halves,” she said. “I got the wedding I always wanted and it is extra special coming at this time in my life that I can share it with more of my family. I just wanted everyone to be part of the day.”

Jayne is already part of a big family with one sister and seven brothers and wanted as many of the family as possible to share in her happy day. The bridesmaids included friends, nieces, great nieces and great great nieces, each wearing various shades of purples, blues and pinks.

Four generations of the family took part. She went down the aisle with her youngest brother Stuart, 48, and her sister Yvonne, 71, and her husband Glynn, 70. All three gave her away and she was followed by all the bridesmaids and page boys. She picked Elvis Presley’s "Can’t Help Falling in Love" as her first dance while her happy friends sang along.

After the ceremony it was a quick journey to the reception in the Red Lion pub in Rowley Regis.

The happy couple said they plan to spend their wedding night in their home – and have a weekend break when possible to get away as a newly married couple.

Jayed arrives at church with her brother Stuart.

Jayed and Shaun, the happy couple.

Some of the 44 bridesmaid make their way to the church.

Call for talks over new site of mosque

MUSLIM leaders say they will consider another site for a mosque in Dudley in a bid to halt a costly legal battle with the council.

They will have fresh talks with council chiefs, despite their plans for a controversial mosque scheme on land off Hall Street getting the go-ahead last week.

Dudley Muslim Association is locked in a legal battle with Dudley Council over the land earmarked for the mosque with 625 minarets.

Hearing

The association will not be able to build the place of worship unless they win a Court of Appeal hearing, which will rule on the council’s bid to buy back the land.

The dispute has gone on for seven years and is next in the High Court.

Association director Dr Muhammad Ahmed said he wanted a meeting with council bosses and would consider an alternative site.

He added: “I would like to see the council reflect on the whole issue and seek a number of options.”

The land is owned by the association but the council won a previous High Court hearing to trigger a buy-back clause.

Street fun at big switch-on

SANTA will join Sandwell’s deputy mayor in a fun-filled family Christmas lights switch-on ceremony.

Councillor Shirley Howll, will officially switch the lights on in the Civic Square, on Thursday, November 27. Lots of family fun is planned from 4pm to 7pm with entertainers, a funfair and market stalls selling festive gifts.

Comedy street performers, sponsored by Black Country Touring, along with a ukulele group, brass band and gymnastics team will warm up the event.

Bette in Brum

SINGER and movie star Bette Midler is coming to Birmingham as part of her first UK tour in 35 years. Tickets go on sale tomorrow (Friday) for her show at the conference Arena in Birmingham (new name for the NIA) on July 9. Prices start at £50.

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**Combined authority name rethink if more join forces**

The West Midlands combined authority looks likely to be named ‘Birmingham and the Black Country’ but it may have to change if Coventry and Smethwick accept an invitation to come on board.

Council leaders in Dudley, Sandwell, Wolverhampton, Walsall and Birmingham have agreed to set up a combined authority to take on powers that may be devolved from London — given the move to devolve powers since the Scottish Referendum.

The name Birmingham is of the table but one proposed by Sandwell Council leader Darren Cooper is “Birmingham and the Black Country.”

Invitation

The senior councillor has still hoped that Coventry and Solihull would accept an invitation to join.

He said: “People are asking if we’ll be known as Greater Birmingham. The simple answer is no.

We will work on a name that will reflect the views of the local people, for example, it may be called Birmingham and the Black Country.

However if other councils join us, we’ll have to think of something else. Possibly, it could be the West Midlands Combined Authority. We’re hoping to confirm the official name early next year.”

**Bruno is still ring master for fans**

IT is almost 20 years since he lifted boxing’s heaviest world crown but Frank Bruno is still a knockout.

He had a room full of sports fans on their feet and chanting his name during a visit that helped raise more than £2,800 for Mary Stevens’ Hospice during a charity night at The Kingfisher Hotel and Club in Wall Heath.

The 53-year-old recalled the night of September 2, 1995 when he outpointed Olivier McCall over 12 rounds to win the WBC title.

“It was the moment that the dream I had as an eight year old came true. You don’t forget moments like that.”

Mental illness has dogged the former world champion since he quit the ring.

He added: “It was 20 years since I was last in the ring and I am still thinking about it. I have my good days and my bad days. It is not pleasant having the police come round and losing it after your marriage breaks up.

“But you have to be positive, grab your teeth, dust yourself down and get on with it because it is a tough world out there.”

The 53-year-old has now embarked on a fitness programme and is training for the Strictly Come Dancing show, which will make its debut on October 20.

He said: “I am not training for the Strictly Come Dancing show but I am doing fitness for my mental health.”

**News in Brief**

**Firm is backing Operation Santa**

A festive £21,498 in planned spending is helping Operation Santa — an annual appeal that helps give gifts to children throughout the West Midlands.

The details are still being worked on in consultation with the Leasowes group, who have helped organise the site, in planting a large community garden, marked with a memorial plaque.

**New recruits join Snow Champs**

MORE than 400 people have been recruited to become Snow Champs in Sandwell.

The new recruits will join the 7,000-strong team of volunteers who are called into action to help their communities in bad weather.

Council leader Councillor Darren Cooper said: “Snow Champs clear pavements and paths to help others get around.”

**Bruno talks about his boxing career**

Just knockout — Frank Bruno talks about his boxing career on a visit to Dudley
A CONSULTATION has been launched for residents to highlight the services they consider vital in Dudley as council bosses consider £5 million worth of cuts.

Dudley Council wants people to select the top five services across the borough that matter the most to them — from rubbish collections to children’s services and town centre improvements.

Bosun was looking at ways to find savings in the wake of Government cuts and, over the last two years, through Big Questions budget consultations it has attracted 7,000 views on council services.

The consultation runs through to January 25. Also among the money-savers already highlighted are plans to turn off some street lights after midnight and reducing maintenance of parks.

More than 700 positions have already been put for on roles as council bosses announce the latest raft of job losses.

Christmas is just around the corner and it seems that everyone is struggling to find the perfect gift for someone special.

There’s one small job that you have been meaning to do for years - Make Your ‘Will’

There’s one small job that you have been meaning to do for years - Make Your ‘Will’

There’s one small job that you have been meaning to do for years - Make Your ‘Will’

For information and appointments call 0845 678 7010 or 0121 429 3169.
Countdown to Christmas as town switches on lights

The Christmas Angel left her tree to join the crowds enjoying festive illuminations. A stage show with dancers, such customed characters as an angel and a robot, plus a personal appearance of Father Christmas, put smiles on faces.

It capped a great year for Halesowen and kick-started the festive season in Dudley, as Halesowen became the first town in the borough to switch on Christmas lights. Hundreds of people ar-rived in the town centre to welcome in the festive season on Saturday. And if it is the best display for years after traders got together to buy new digital lights to revamp the town’s festive front. Crowds fill the streets as hundreds turn out to mark the start of the festive season in Halesowen. Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris said it followed the success of the Halesowen in Bloom entry this year as local organisation continued to stimulate growth in the town.
An artist's impression of the planned mosque on land at Hall Street including 52ft high dome and 62ft minaret – the existing mosque on Castle Hill is now too small.

The saga of town's mosque heats up

Muslim community leaders have won permission but will their mosque be built? PETER MADELEY reports

It is a controversial long-running project that has provoked heated debate and divided communities.

Now, after a seven-year stand-off, planning chiefs at Dudley Council have given Dudley Muslim Association the green light to develop land off Hall Street to build a large mosque just outside Dudley town centre.

In the wake of the planning committee voting in favour of the scheme, a call has been made to also re-build community relationships in the town.

Khurshed Ahmed, director at Dudley Muslim Association, which put forward the plans, said it was now time to heal wounds that had opened up in the town as a result of the mosque debate.

Benefit

He said: "Family relationships within the town have been mucked up and it is about time we all started to rebuild."

The development will see a 52ft high mosque with a 62ft minaret and also include a 120-space two-storey car park, a sports centre, an enterprise and education centre and a community centre.

The Dudley Muslim Association says the project will be a boost for the whole town with non-Muslims able to benefit from the new education and sports facilities too.

But the decision to give the proposal the green light has resulted in angry responses from large sections of the community, many of whom are worried over the lack of parking, increased traffic congestion and the design of the buildings.

One of those who objected was Archie Pugh, aged 89, from Dudley. He said: "I was concerned about the design of the mosque would not fit in with the town's architecture and the increased traffic would cause gridlock around the site."

"The application did not comply with guidelines that stipulate the need for a locally sensitive design," he said. "In my view the whole thing looks grotesque."

The site earmarked for the new mosque is on land at Hall Street in Dudley Ward, aged 43, from Tividale, was one of the many who were left out in the rain. He said: "I got here at 5pm and couldn't even get inside. This is a bad decision for the town."

Many in the Muslim community say the town has been crying out for a new place of worship to replace the cramped Dudley Central Mosque in Castle Hill.

Shakil Ahmed, aged 49, from Kates Hill, said: "The town's Muslim community has grown a lot in the last 20 years and the mosque in Castle Hill is nowhere near big enough. People have a right to a place of worship."

Proposals for a new mosque in the town were first put forward in 2007. On that occasion the bid was thrown out because the authority wanted to preserve the land for development that could boost employment.

But an updated version of the scheme returned to the table in September. A total of 370 letters of support and a petition for the application with 1,719 signatures were sent to the council, while 885 letters were sent in opposing the project.

Councillor Qadir Zada, chairman of the development control committee, said he was satisfied the facilities would benefit the whole community.

However, the plans for the land, which used to be the Nuttall factory and warehouse, could still be halted by a High Court hearing early next year over whether the land should revert to council ownership.

A judge previously ruled the council could reclaim the land but the association has lodged an appeal against the decision.

Building work is on hold as leaders urge council bosses to negotiate a conclusion in the wake of plans being given the go-ahead.

Planning committee members voted five to three in favour of the proposals.

But Dudley Council is bidding to buy the land through the High Court appeal needed now be resolved. He is now urging council bosses to "reflect" and hold talks.

Dr Ahmed said building work would be on hold until the resolution of the case, which is due early next year. He said: "We hope that the council will now reflect on its position in light of the planning committee's decision and try to reach an amicable agreement so that we can put this whole saga to bed." he said.

"While the court case is happening, no work will get done. We would like to be able to negotiate. The ball is in their court."

Councillor Patrick Harley, leader of Dudley Council’s opposition Conservative group, said: "This is a great victory for the Muslim community."

"The latter, retiring at the election, made his feelings abundantly clear that if he was re-elected, he would put the extradition of British citizens who had fled to France with a pupil."

"But the farcical scenes in the High Court case are doing this Houserepresents... my over lives."

"It is a misconception about what we need to talk about Europe. I say that knowing full well that for many years the European Union has been central to our lives."

"We need to talk about Europe. I say that knowing full well that for many years the European Union has been central to our lives."

The saga of town's mosque heats up

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CONCERNING the report about Dudley being in a list of the worst towns to shop, the Black Country Living Museum. The shop councillors have failed it as the shops' rents and rates are too expensive.

Judith Foster, councillor in charge of regeneration, said there is nothing wrong with the town. Well, maybe at lunchtime as there are food outlets, but you cannot purchase a book since WH Smith closed. The market is behind schedule and most of the stalls empty.

Old drivers get taken for a ride?

I AM a 77-year-old driv- er with an unblemished driving record. Before re- tirement I was a qualified driving instructor having passed two advanced driv- ing tests.

In 2013 I attended a vol- untary driving course for older drivers at Oldbury council house, run by Dud- ley road safety department. During this course we were given the national collision statistics which show that accidents for older drivers in their 70s are at a lower rate than any other group.

With this in mind, why are older drivers charged extortionate prices for car insurance? A member of my family insured a 2 ltr en- gined car for a third of the price that I am quoted for a similar car. This is with the same company.

I contacted Aged UK who tell me that a cartel is in place which allows insurers to charge older drivers higher premiums. Is this age discrimination? If so, the law says that you can’t discriminate.

BRYAN HARRIS
Oldbury

Hippodrome issue needs intervention

I’VE been impressed by the efforts of Jonathan Ken- drick and the Friends of Dudley Hippodrome but I can’t help wondering why the omen has been placed entirely on them.

Hasn’t anyone on the council got any ideas about how to rescue this lan- guishing icon and turn it back into a going concern? Where’s the council’s busi- ness plan? Why’s it all down to an entrepreneur and a community group to come up with a viable pack- age of measures?

The council may be hold- ing back its application to demolish the building, but its leaders could well intend to reduce it to a pile of rub- ble unless either of the other two parties can give them a very good reason not to.

Councillors have a depress- ing tendency to reach for the wrecking ball when con- fronted with tricky prob- lems that require creative solutions.

In the case of the Hippo- drome, I hope that ulti- mately the people at the top of Dudley Council can cast aside this crude impulse.

I don’t doubt it would be the easier option but it would mean throwing a once brilliant local asset down the drain. The attitude of our council towards places of cultural importance when they’ve fallen on hard times is often crucial to their sur- vival. A decision by Wolver- hampton Council to save the Molineux Hotel entirely changed its fortunes.

J. Warington Tipton

Oldbury town does have a zoo, a castle and Dudley’s downfall, and it had an effect, but being in a list of the worse towns to shop.

With this in mind, why are you councils towards places of cultural importance when they’ve fallen on hard times not taking these into account. Hasn’t anyone on the council got any ideas about how to rescue this languishing icon and turn it back into a going concern. Where’s the council’s business plan? Why’s it all down to an entrepreneur and a community group to come up with a viable package of measures?

Councillors have a depressing tendency to reach for the wrecking ball when confronted with tricky problems that require creative solutions.

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J. Warington Tipton

Motorist is frustrated

ARE there any motorists as frustrated and angry as I am at the work going on in Stalling Lane?

We have had to put up with this disruption now for weeks.

Last Friday it took four changes at the traffic lights to get over, then stop and go area, which hap- pens every day.

Roads were blocked in four directions, buses didn’t turn up or were late, teen- agers couldn’t get to college and school, people were late for work.

Did anyone check the level of traffic on this road on a normal day before plans were passed for Lidl to be built?

Lord help us when the store opens.

I wonder how long it will be before there is an acci- dent?

S. BROUGH
Dudley

songs just not worthy

There is nothing which gives me more pleasure than hearing a good hymn, which makes Songs of Praise one of my favourite pro- grams.

Recently Michael Ball sang two of my favourite hymns, Abide with Me and Guide Me O Thou Great Re- deemer.

Michael ruined both hymns by singing versions which I had never heard before and don’t want to hear again.

These songs have done more than stand the test of time over the years.

J. GRANGER
Stourbridge

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Health trust rakes in more than £2m parking charges

A HOSPITAL trust raked in more than £2 million from parking charges last year.

The figures cover income received from patients and staff at City, Sandwell and Rowley Regis hospitals in the financial year 2013/14, and do not include fines. The amount dwarfs income received by some other hospital trusts.

The Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust brought in around £1m in 2013, while made around £605,000 the previous year.

Sandwell’s figure has come under fire from an MP who has accused the trust of employing desperate measures in a “lied to bolster hospitals’ coffers.”

“The figures, from a Freedom of Information request, show a total of £3.1 million was spent on parking by patients and staff at City Hospital, in 2013/14, while £605,170 was spent at Sandwell Hospital and £34,089 at Rowley Regis Hospital.

Overall £1.4m was spent by patients and visitors and £651,589 was spent by staff. West Bromwich East MP Tom Watson said: “For many years I have been critical of the high parking charges at Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Hospitals Trust. As a result, central government looks at hospital bosses seem to operate as if they are in a private business. They charge people to park in order to come into hospital.”

Clearly, the Trust needs a proportion of the income it generates to pay for the up keep of its car parks and security staff but £2.1 million is a much higher figure than I would expect.”

Vanya Rogers, spokeswoman for Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, said the car parks do not make any profit from the charges.

“All the money goes straight back into maintaining and improving parking, access and facilities services including 24-hour security, patrols and CCTV, ensuring enough parking spaces are available for patients and visitors who really need them, discounted parking tickets, staff shuttle buses, improving public footpaths and cycle routes and providing clear signage and road markings.”

Parking at Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Hospital Trust sites is free for up to 15 minutes and free for up to an hour if transient functions are taking place.

“There are also some people who find themselves in very precarious situations. There are also so many people without work.

“We receive donations from a number of churches around Smethwick, who have been very helpful.”

Outside of the food bank, which is held at the Holy Trinity Church, Church Hill Street on Tuesday and Fridays, Mr Roaney has been a member of the British Red Cross for 30 years. In 2004 he was given an MBE for services to Young People and to the community in Oldbury, after organising church youth clubs for 30 years.

He added: “You should never ignore people who find themselves in a crisis.”

“Clearly, the Trust needs a proportion of the income it generates to pay for the up keep of its car parks and security staff but £2.1 million is a much higher figure than I would expect.”
Girl group Little Mix lit up Merry Hill centre

The X Factor pop stars Little Mix join Bars & Melody and Sam and Mark switch on the festive lights at Merry Hill.

LITTLE Mix were on hand to give Merry Hill shopping centre's Christmas lights switch on the X Factor.

Thousands turned out to see the nation's favourite girl band make sure the festivities went with a bang.

The Salute singers were joined by a range of other performers including Britain's Got Talent runners-up and rap duo Bars & Melody.

The event was hosted by TV presenters and Free Radio's Sam Nixon and Mark Rhodes, from Darlaston, and the switch-on took place on the centre's 25th birthday.

Shoppers watched the traditional lights come to life and were treated to Little Mix performing before they did the honours. The girls performed three of their biggest hits — Salute, Move and DNA — as well as version of their track Hey, How Ya Doin? When they hit the plunger it also triggered a spectacular fireworks display.

Little Mix singer Perrie Edwards said: "We always love the crowds here because they just love to get involved. We just wanted to go out there and get everybody excited and ready for Christmas with a bit of festive cheer."

This week, the centre was revealed to be the best shopping centre in the West Midlands in a poll, beating the Bullring.

Dudley town centre's festive lights will be switched on on this Saturday. Dudley Mayor Councillor Margaret Aston and Father Christmas will start the countdown at 5pm. The Christmas tree in Stone Street Square will be the centre piece.

Festive lights will be switched on in Stourbridge on November 29 and Brierley Hill on December 6.

The X Factor pop stars Little Mix join Bars & Melody and Sam and Mark switch on the festive lights at Merry Hill.
New bridal store ready to book in

COMMERCIAL FEATURE

AFTER a nine-year stint based within Beatties, House of Fraser, the bridal department has finally decided to go it alone.

Adele Louise Bridal boutique will be opening its doors from November 21 in newly refurbished premises at 3 School Street, Wolverhampton.

Adele Edwards is the owner of Adele Louise Bridal and she has been based within House of Fraser in Wolverhampton with her bridal business, Bella Spor- sa, but Adele has now taken the decision to open up her own shop.

Having our own salon means we can offer more flexibility to our customers," explains Adele.

Champagne

Adele Louise Bridal will offer customers late-evening appointments for both fittings and viewings, as well as special events including a VIP weekend which will take place on November 22 and 23. The weekend will be a ticket-only event, with a champagne reception, canapes, the amazing designer Ian Stuart collection, as well as members of the Ian Stuart team, a solo opera singer, Mrs Cup and Saucer offering vintage afternoon tea, Rock Paper Scissors showcasing its collection of wedding stationery, California Hair Extensions, plus a fashion show.

Bespoke Creations and now Blooms formal hire have agreed to go along too.

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Warming to the autumn fashions

Say goodbye to those summer days – it’s time to enjoy what the autumn fashion scene has to offer.

THOSE long hot days may now seem a distant memory but never fear there are some real treats in store on the autumn fashion scene. These combine warmth, comfort and colour – bang up to date with the popular tartan look, wraps to keep out those chills and boots that combine style with comfort.

To go online too far to find the fashion, just pop into a nearby New Look store or go online and you can order them to be delivered into the store.

Colourful and cozy wrap – £15.99 Easy colour to match up – £64 Tan buckle ankle boot – £69.99
A FAMILY-run furniture business has announced that it is expecting to secure almost £7 million worth of overseas exports over the next five years and take on more staff.

Boro Foundry Ltd, which has been based in Lyne for 60 years, is a specialist manufacturer and supplier of castings and machined parts.

The overseas deals, worth £6.85 million in total, are to supply bespoke castings for renewable manufacturers and the power transmission industry, converting waste to energy.

The foundry employs 34 people, including five apprentices, and the new deals will allow them to recruit more staff to deal with the influx of new business.

**Expand****

Nick Morrell, from The Boro Foundry, is responsible for this new business development. He said: “The domestic market had been quiet for a while so, a couple of years ago, we decided to take the plunge and look seriously at new opportunities overseas.”

The new deals are secured as a result of a UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) government department designed to help UK-based companies expand and survive overseas in the international market.

The company first began working with UKTI in May 2013.

Mr Morrell said: “When we joined UKTI’s Passport to Export scheme, took part in market visits to Finland and Sweden and attended several classes, including a

**Work to start on schools reception****

WORK is due to start within weeks on a new reception building for school parties at Black Country Living Museum. Given the go-ahead by planners last year, the build-

**Overseas orders are boost for business****

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**Ends Sunday**

EVERYTHING MUST GO

THERE ARE ALSO MASSIVE DISCOUNTS ON ALL ITEMS MADE TO ORDER!
Cigarette probably caused death of homeless man

A HOMELESS man who died in the back of a burning car probably did so as the result of a discarded cigarette, a coroner has ruled.

Senior Black Country Coroner Zafar Siddiqui said he was satisfied there was no foul play regarding the death of 54-year-old Mark Palmer.

He was found after firefighters were called to deal with a burning Peugeot 306 car in a service road opposite Cradley Heath railway station, the inquest at Smethwick Council House was told.

Firefighters attended the scene at around 8.30pm on May 10, and police were called after Mr Palmer’s body was found in the back of the vehicle.

Fire investigator Lee Richards, of West Midlands Fire Service, said the blaze had started inside the car.

Mr Palmer was found lying across the back seat of the car, and beneath him was a cigarette lighter.

There were also cigarette butts and empty beer and cider cans.

There was no evidence of any accelerant being used.

Mr Richards added that Mr Palmer’s position indicated he had made an attempt to get out of the car.

Pathologist Dr Nicholas Hunt said Mr Palmer had chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, exacerbated by pneumonia, which meant he had difficulty breathing.

Burns and smoke inhalation that Mr Palmer suffered during the fire were the most likely cause of death.

He added that Mr Palmer’s lung condition was so severe that it would have killed him if it remained untreated.

Detective Inspector Warren Hinds said the car had not been used for some time and its owner David Towler was planning to scrap it.

When scrub merchant Jamie Dansky came to move the car, the doors were locked and there was a man asleep on the back seat.

Mr Dansky and Mr Towler agreed they would leave the car for the night, and considered what to do the next morning.

Mr Siddiqui said: “I’m satisfied this was an accidental death, on the balance of probability due to a dropped cigarette.”

Pupils from Cradley CoE Primary School putting wooden crosses in the grounds of St Peter’s Church in Cradley to remember soldiers from the area who died in the First World War.

Mr Cotton, from Cradley, said: “The graves were in an absolute state. It was like a jungle.”

Three classes from Colley Lane Primary School, Cradley CoE School and Gason Primary were invited to a remembrance service at the church.

Mr Smith, who has been playing since he was 11, started the Black Country Accordion Music group.

The group aims to raise about £1,000 at Cradley Heath Liberal Club from 2.30pm tonight (Thursday).

Tickets are £10 with a buffet meal at £7.

A bid to find Mr Gill’s relatives

RELATIVES of a man who has recently died are being sought by the Black Country coroner.

Stanley Gill died at his home in Halesowen Road, Cradley Heath, on November 9. Inquiries have failed to trace any member of the 79-year-old’s family.

A spokesman for West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman said: “We were called to the deceased man or his family of the 79-year-old. He has been attended to by paramedics and transferred to hospital.”

Mr Smith said: “My grandson was born in April. He had problems with his lungs and heart and had to have several operations.

The hospital saved his life and I wanted to do something to say thank you.”

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Schoolchildren visit restored war graves

Schoolchildren visit restored war graves at St Peter’s Church, Cradley Heath.

Caslon Primary were invited to a restorations event at the church.

Schools interested in sending their children to hang on the end of the bed at Christmas.

A Christmas stocking for under £10.

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Santa’s gone on safari at popular animal attraction

THEM are used to soaring through the jungle as a winter wonderland but a group of parrots are settling into their new home at West Midlands Safari Park.

Santa Claus himself was on hand to welcome the 52 Rainbow Lorikeets parrots to the Beveldge attraction last week.

A new enclosure, called Lorikeet Landing, has been created to feature during the park’s Santa Safari events which started on Saturday for the festive season.

The new exhibit is an all-weather, purpose built exhibit that is located in the attraction’s Discovery Trail.

The birds are a species of Australian parrot that is native to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, the Solomon Islands, Australia and New Zealand.

But while temperatures outside will plummet over the coming weeks, the birds will be keeping warm with temperatures at a steady and very pleasant 18°C (64°F)

Safari park spokeswoman Wendy Jackson said: “These beautiful free-flying birds have brightly coloured red, green, blue, yellow and orange feathers along with a curved red bill. And, unlike some bird species, it is hard to distinguish between the males and females.

“They really is a case of all things bright and beautiful. It’s the perfect opportunity for visitors to get up close to see these lovely little birds in this brand new walk-through exhibit that has been themed as a tropical paradise.

Santa Safari is open weekends to November 26 until Christmas Eve.

Nine out of 10 are now happy with 111 service

NINE out of 10 patients who used the non-emergency NHS helpline were satisfied with it since it was handed over to West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS), a report on the past years has shown.

During the previous year WMAS has received in the region of 500,000 calls into the service.

People can call 111 for advice when seeking help with non-emergency and out-of-hours health matters 24 hours a day.

A marked turnaround from when it was first introduced in April 2013, replacing the former NHS Direct, and call centres run by different providers were struggling to cope.

The non-emergency helpline was broken up into 46 contracts and NHS Direct itself was left in deficit and forced to close. The ambulance service took over in the West Midlands in November 2013.

Figures from a patient survey show 91.3 per cent were satisfied with the service received, 71.7 per cent of who were very satisfied.

Just 3.4 per cent were dissatisfied. There were also 88.8 per cent of users who said they were likely to recommend the service.

The service increased staffing levels and training, Daren Fradgley, NHS WMAS, said: “A considerable amount of work has gone into stabilising and developing the service over the last 12 months.

“There is no doubt that the public of the West Midlands now have access to one of the best quality and performing NHS 111 services in the country which is also clear to see in the feedback we are getting from the patients.

“A patient would also like to thank the entire team whose work has not only made this possible but also had a very positive impact on the public we serve.

“We are proud of what we achieved during the last year but we will not be resting on our laurels. We every chance to improve the service we offer to ensure it is the best it possibly can be, and patients continue to receive the highest level of care.”

Rachael Ellis, 111 lead commissioner, West Midlands, said: “Strengthened and West Midlands Clinical Commissioning Group is pleased to report that daily service is stable and that call volumes are increasing as patients realise the benefits of the service. It has been quick, responsive and helpful. We are now on track to increase month on month growth in the service.

City welcomes return of German Market

FIVE million people, 200 stalls and £90 million for the regional economy – Birmingham Frankfurt Christmas Market leads the way for festive attractions.

Covering nearly a mile stretch, running from The Bullring to Victoria Square and on to a big wheel at Centenary Square, the annual market has become a festive favourite.

It opened for the 14th year last weekend and five million people are expected to have visited it by the end of the six week run on December 22.

Fuel (sage) fills the air, and German lager and gluhwein will be gulped by the gallon as people peruse the wooden chalet-like stalls to buy treats, continental decorations or even a reindeer ride.

What started out as a speculative pilot project, encompassing just 10 stalls, has grown into the centrepiece of the West Midlands’ Christmas calendar — and what is believed to be the biggest German market outside Germany.

Widow died due to a rare side-effect

A WIDOW from Quarry Bank died in hospital following an operation to examine the cause of her abdominal pain, an inquest heard.

Assistant Black Country coroner Angus Smillie ruled that Joyce Thomas died from natural causes as her death was caused by a known side-effect.

The inquest heard that Mrs Thomas, an 83-year-old retired bookbinder from Church Street, had been admitted to Russells Hall Hospital on September 2 as a day-case patient for an endoscopic procedure after she had complained about intermittent abdominal pain.

Dr Sharron Shetty, consultant gastroenterologist at Russells Hall Hospital, said the procedure was not successful because Mrs Thomas was suffering from a hernia. A further examination revealed a ruptured spleen.

She was transferred to the intensive therapy unit and died on September 11.

Dr Sherty said damage to the spleen was a known side-effect of this kind of endoscopy, although it was rare, occurring in just one in 8,000 cases.

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City welcomes return of German Market

In your home for Christmas, plus MASSIVE DISCOUNTS available on all special order items!
Members enjoy the Harvest luncheon

THF Guild met on November 30 in the Community Centre, High Street. Following the usual business of the minutes a lively discussion followed on the reason for affiliation fees to be raised. It was agreed our comments should be forwarded to the Federation Committee.

The date and time of the Federation Carol Service Celebration was announced again and members were urged to attend as it gives the festivities a good start. It is open to non-members. Final arrangements were made for the Christmas luncheon at the Lodge, those requiring a lift were asked to make this known.

A request was made for a volunteer to take Sylvia Taylor’s place on the centre’s management committee as Sylvia had other commitments. Barbara White came forward. On November 28 the Wednesday Club will go shopping at Touchwood. The December meeting will be a Knit & Natter session with tea and win.

The Scrabble group will meet on November 27 and December 11. The ramblers will not run in December.

John Mobberley came to complete his Talk Do You Remember the 1940s? The evening was very much enjoyed and he was thanked on our behalf by Chris Holy. Josie Smith was thanked for the floral arrangement of poppies.

Ezid Fennis won the raffle prize.

Get ready to enjoy festivities

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Sign of a good talk on pubs

Black Country Society K-Jord Branch

The October meeting was held in St Mary’s Church Hall, Kingswinford, when the speaker was Anthony Collis with his tally of Guild pubs in the Black Country.

His talk with feedback was much enjoyed by members and friends.

There will be a Christmas meeting on the second Wednesday of the month, not the third. The date therefore is December 19 when entertainment will take place. Wine and mince pies will be served at the end.

Talks are open to members, friends and non-members with a small charge to cover refreshments.

All meetings take place in the Church Centre, The Village, Kingswinford, at 7.45pm.
Teacher of the year Kerry goes to top of her class

The assistant headteacher at Wolverley was nominated by deputy head Rebecca Hawthorne. She was amazed that she had been chosen for the award, adding: “I couldn’t believe it, because we have so many brilliant teachers here at Wolverley. “I have done a lot to do with the Church of England side of the school, and I think that is important. I think it was because we try to give young people a good foundation and a full holistic experience to prepare them for life, it’s not just about lessons and grades.” Miss Poole, who started at Wolverley as a trainee 10 years ago, said she loved teaching RE as it helped children ask questions about their place in the world. Wolverley head Bryn Thomas said: “Our motto is ‘Ambition Unlimited’, as being able to inspire our students to aim higher than they would have done before coming to the school is something that is extremely important to us. Kerry has been an inspiration to many of our students.” Miss Poole was reunited with her inspirational English teacher, Caroline Hoddinott, now headteacher at Halesowen High School, at a surprise celebration.
Colvin is manic and marvellous

Gerry Colvin Band
Newhampton Folk Club
Gerry Colvin is like 50's style icon Lornie Donegan spliced with manic comedian Lee Evans. Along with a great talent for music and an unstoppable string of original observations and songs he makes him an unforgettable comic. Too big for the packed upper room of the Newhampton Inn, Whitmore Reans, Wolverhampton.

Colvin is an engaging raconteur and spat much of the time between his enthralling songs claiming he would not do the very thing he was doing, talking. He was joined on stage by three excellent musicians—Londoner Welsh on guitar, Trish Keelan on accordion and Jerome Davies on double bass. Colvin, who has been around for years and is based on both sides of the Atlantic, straddles the folk, country, jazz and Americana genres. His versatility is seemingly endless moving from folk songs such as Alcohol and Me to the Latin beat of South American Dream. At times Colvin, originally from Barrow in Furness, is pure theatre his voice is not just serious but without getting heavy with songs such as The House of the Setting Sun which is about mental illness. One thing he is certain with Colvin, you get your money's worth.

Danny Farragher

Slava’s indoor snowstorm blasts the senses in this unique show

Slava’s Snowshow, Birmingham Hippodrome
BLIZZARD conditions hit Birmingham when this wonderfully weird show returned to the Hippodrome, as it marked its 25th year on tour of the world. To describe this production as a clown show with a wintery theme is to sell it short. It is more Salvador Dalí that Billy Smart.

Slava’s indoor snowstorm blasts the senses in this unique show

The combination of dream imagery, haunting music and slow-burning comedy is punctuated by show-stopping set-pieces. These include a cabowt that envelops the audience and an indoor snowstorm that remains one of the most sensational moments of stagecraft in modern theatre.

The show begins with giant bouncy balls being released into the auditorium. The clowns watch the audience become children, whatever their age, playing in Britain’s biggest ballpit. The only people left unhappy must be the Hippodrome’s cleaners, faced with mounds of paper ‘snow’ to clean up.

Leon Burakowski

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Praise for attempt to take gun off farmer

A FARMER shot himself when fears of losing his livelihood drove him to depression, an inquest heard.

David Fletcher, 59, told a neighbour ‘I need help’ before taking his own life with a double barrelled shotgun at his farmhouse near Steurbridge.

It is believed Mr Fletcher had financial worries and was concerned about the threat of TB among his cattle at Hereoa Gate Farm in Enville. Tests after his death showed that his livestock were clear of the disease.

His neighbour Mark Henderson was praised by West Mercia Police and the coroner for his bravery when attempting to take the gun from the farmer. Mr Henderson tried to get the gun off Mr Fletcher after he fired it at his car.

He told the inquest that he came across Mr Fletcher when his truck was blocking a lane early on July 10.

He asked if he was alright and Mr Fletcher replied ‘no, I need help’ before reaching for his 12 bore shotgun and firing at the back of Mr Henderson’s car. Mr Henderson got out of the car and approached Mr Fletcher who shot again, toward nearby trees. Mr Fletcher then attempted to take his own life, but the gun was not loaded.

The inquest heard Mr Fletcher walked into his house, saying: “This isn’t going to be any farm.” Another neighbour, Chris Nott, arrived to help but then both men heard a gunshot from inside the house.

Firearms officers from West Mercia Police found Mr Fletcher dead with a gunshot wound to his head.

The inquest, which reconvened Tuesday, heard Mr Fletcher had his firearms licence revoked in 1999 and had not re-registered it.

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He asked if he was alright and Mr Fletcher replied ‘no, I need help’ before reaching for his 12 bore shotgun and firing at the back of Mr Henderson’s car. Mr Henderson got out of the car and approached Mr Fletcher who shot again, toward nearby trees. Mr Fletcher then attempted to take his own life, but the gun was not loaded.

The inquest heard Mr Fletcher walked into his house, saying: “This isn’t going to be any farm.” Another neighbour, Chris Nott, arrived to help but then both men heard a gunshot from inside the house.

Firearms officers from West Mercia Police found Mr Fletcher dead with a gunshot wound to his head.

The inquest heard Mr Fletcher had his firearms licence revoked in 1999 and had not re-registered it.

Another neighbour, Chris Nott, arrived to help but then both men heard a gunshot from inside the house.

Firearms officers from West Mercia Police found Mr Fletcher dead with a gunshot wound to his head.

The inquest heard Mr Fletcher had his firearms licence revoked in 1999 and had not re-registered it.

Praise for attempt to take gun off farmer

A FARMER shot himself when fears of losing his livelihood drove him to depression, an inquest heard.

David Fletcher, 59, told a neighbour ‘I need help’ before taking his own life with a double barrelled shotgun at his farmhouse near Steurbridge.

It is believed Mr Fletcher had financial worries and was concerned about the threat of TB among his cattle at Hereoa Gate Farm in Enville. Tests after his death showed that his livestock were clear of the disease.

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Fond memories for Brownies and Guides

CAMPING, crafts and cooking are among the fun activities celebrated by a Guides and Brownies group as members past and present mark its 90th anniversary.

Grandmothers, mothers and daughters were among those who gathered at a party in honour of the 1st Netherton Guides and Brownies, which has a long tradition of family membership.

The pack was registered in 1924 although the current leaders say it was probably running for some time before official records were set up by the organisation.

For the last 60 years it had close links with St Andrew’s Church and met in a building known as Church House, in Hill Street. Meetings were held on Thursday evenings until the 1980s when the sessions relocated the group’s current home in the scouts’ hut off Cradley Road.

Brown Owl and Guide Captain Rachel Piper says: “We were invited by the 1st Netherton Scouts to join them in their premises. We held the party and reunion because we wanted to do something to celebrate the brownies being here continuously for 90 years. That is a great achievement and milestone.

“We sent out invitations to past and present members of the guides and brownies and the leaders. Lots of people who were members down the years came to join us, which has been wonderful. Some of them are well into their 80s but they wouldn’t have missed it for the world.

“They were reminiscing and telling stories about their camping trips. It was nice for them to remember and it was nice for them to meet the brownies who are with us now.”

There are currently 24 brownies who meet on Wednesdays and a group of 20 girl guides.

Activities at the reunion included display boards of memorabilia, including badges, blankets and old photographs of outdoor adventures, parades and meetings held over the decades.

Among the gems is a picture of the group camping at Astley Burf, Stourport, in 1925. Some are taken in the 1950s featuring the girls meeting the Queen's uncle the Duke of Windsor, who was King Edward VIII for just under a year before he abdicated the throne to marry Wallis Simpson.

Also on display were photographs from the 1980s when former Guide Leader Olywym Grainger was in charge. She ran the unit until 2000 when Mrs Piper, aged 43, took over the reins. Mrs Grainger, now 73, was among the guests at the celebration.

Former members recalled taking part in the traditional challenges, such as outdoor camping and singing ‘Magic Coins’. “The previous members used to sing it,” said Mrs Piper. “They still all remember the words.

“Brownies has always been a popular activity for young girls and even today parents still put their children’s names down on our list from as young as aged two to secure a place in the group.”

MEMORY LANE
By Deborah Hardiman

Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, November 20, 2014
Investment in training is key

A BUSINESS leader in the Black Country says businesses need to invest in training to move forward.

The latest Workforce Survey results, published by the British Chambers of Commerce, highlight that 92 per cent of businesses across the country have identified a skills shortage in at least one key area.

Skills are in demand for leadership and management, planning and organisation, languages, computer literacy and creativity.

Responding to the survey results, Black Country Chamber of Commerce President, Ninder Johal, said: “Businesses recognise that investing in training can drive higher productivity and increased profits. However, the findings make it clear that investment in leadership and management skills are crucial to enhance strategic thinking, foster innovation and motivate employees.

This is an area where the Black Country fosters innovation and motivates employees. Businesses in the area are encouraged to invest in training to develop their staff and improve overall performance.

FORMER Governor of the Bank of England and ex-Wolverhampton schoolboy Mervyn King has been appointed the president of Worcestershire County Cricket Club.

Lord King, a former pupil of Wolverhampton Grammar School, will be president for the club’s 150th anniversary celebrations next year.

The son of a Gornal headmaster, Lord King grew up in Canterbury and is a lifelong fan of the club. Outgoing president John Elliott, praised the appointment as “a wonderful decision and a great name to be associated with the cricket club.”

Lord King’s support for the Pears goes back to their first County Championship title triumph in 1964.

He said he was keen to play an active role in Worcestershire’s landmark season, and predicted exciting times ahead with the major redevelopment of New Road in the past decade and the young, talented squad which has earned promotion to Division One in the Championship.

Former Worcestershire wicket-keeper Elliott, who also spent eight years as club chairman, added: “He is a very passionate supporter of Worcestershire. He will be around on the cricket circuit as well and is going to help with our fund-raising for the 150th anniversary year.

“It’s a great name to have associated with the club.”

Lord King said, who is also an avid Aston Villa supporter, said the appointment was a great honour.

“My youth was spent at New Road watching the first Worcestershire side win the county championship 50 years ago. With the 150th anniversary next year, there is much to celebrate in our history. The future is even brighter.”

Albion medal beats estimate

AN FA Cup winner’s medal belonging to a member of the victorious Albion side of 1965 exceeded expectations when it sold for £13,000 at auction.

The nine carat gold medal went under the hammer for £5,000 more than the estimate. It had been the property of centre-half John Talbut who was in the starting XI for the match remembered for Jeff Astle’s extra time winner.

The centre half joined West Bromwich Albion from Burley in December 1966, for £30,000. He went on to play 144 league matches for the Baggies, during which time the club appeared in four League Cup finals. Mr Talbut ended his career in Belgium playing for KV Mechelen, who he later managed.

Graham Budd Auctions in London confirmed that 74-year-old Mr Talbut’s medal had gone to a private collector.

Owzat? Ex-bank chief Mervyn is now president of cricket club

A CHARITY based at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley is challenging people to combine festive fun with fundraising to help raise money for the hospital.

Those who take part will be asked to dress up as Santa and collect sponsorship for Santa Day on Friday, December 5.

Karen Phillips, Fundraising Manager, says: “All the money raised will go to the Make our Patients Smile Appeal which helps to improve our patients experience while they are being treated by us. It costs just £10 per adult to register,” she added.

“You will then receive your free Santa suit and a fundraising pack. There is no minimum sponsorship just raise what you can.”

More information can be found by calling Karen on 01384 456111 ext 4449. To find out more see dudleygroup.nhs.uk/our-charity/upcoming-events-and-campaigns

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Clerk Emma Hancock ready for Santa Day with Karen Phillips

Toxic gas cannisters found on bridle path

GAS cylinders have been found dumped on a bridle path.

Environment officers found the cylinders along a path off the Bridgnorth Road in Wombourne.

Of the 56 cylinders found, three were full of a toxic gas called chlorodifluoromethane, normally used in refrigeration. Damaged valves on all three cylinders prompted fear they could have leaked the gas into the atmosphere.

Inhaling chlorodifluoromethane can irritate the nose, throat and lungs, causing tightness in the chest and difficulty with breathing.

The three cylinders containing the gas were removed from the scene immediately by officers who took them to a safe storage area.

Environmental officers from South Staffordshire Council are appealing for information on where the cylinders may have come from. Call 01902 696200.
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Blackheath Christmas lights to sparkle

Sandwell’s Mayor will be joined by Santa in a fun-filled family Christmas lights switch-on in Blackheath.

Mayor Councillor Derek Rowley will officially switch the lights on in Blackheath town centre on Saturday 22 November at 6pm.

Lots of family fun is lined up during the day with entertainers, a funfair and stalls selling festive gifts from 3-7pm.

Blackheath ukulele group Strummers, Rowley Area Band, Rowley Hall Children’s Choir and St Michael’s Brass Band will entertain the crowds as well as performances from Coneygre Performing Arts.

Councillor Barbara Price, Rowley Regis town lead member, said: “I hope lots of people will come along and get into the festive spirit as well as support traders at our lights switch-on.”

A Tree of Light, in memory of loved ones, will also light up, with all donations going to Macmillan Cancer Research.

Christmas Day Lunch
(1.00pm First Seating, 3.00pm Second Seating)
STARTER
SOUP OR PRAWN COCKTAIL
MAIN COURSE
ROAST TURKEY WITH VEGETABLE & STUFFING
DESSERT
COFFEE & ICE CREAM
£19.95PP (ADULTS) £9.95 (CHILDREN UNDER 10)

Indian Christmas Day Lunch
Kha’s meal
(1.00pm First Seating, 3.00pm Second Seating)
The chef will make his own selection of starter, main course, side dish and choice of rice or naan and coffee included. This food may not be on our menu, he will create his selection. Including king prawn, sea bass or salmon.

£19.95PP (ADULTS) £9.95 (CHILDREN UNDER 10)

25% OFF E-Cigarette Starter Kit with this advert
(E-Liquids made in the UK)
Birmingham Dogs’ Home has a long and notable history in the care and protection of rescuing strays from the city streets of Birmingham and surrounding towns and villages in the West Midlands.

It was founded in 1892 on land that was made available by the late Sir Alfred Gooch Bart in New Canal Street, Birmingham, and proudly displayed the heading ‘Birmingham Home for Lost and Starving Dogs’ above its doors, a sign that is still present on the building, having been restored by its current owners.

Almost 100 years later - in 1987 - the Duchess of York officially opened the New Bartholomew Street home, which had been purpose-built to provide shelter and protection for over 150 abandoned dogs in comfortable kennel blocks with adjacent facilities, such as its own vets’ clinic, puppy unit and isolation block.

The home is a charity which can only survive through the generosity and support of the general public and benefactors from the local community. Without this we would be unable to carry on the vital work of rescuing and rehoming abandoned dogs.

Rescued

We at Birmingham Dogs’ Home are here primarily to ensure that the abandoned dogs coming into our care are rescued from their plight, reunited with owners who may have lost them or rehomed to families that will respect and nurture them.

Our rehoming procedure is designed and operated principally to be both practical and fair. It takes into consideration the high number of dogs brought into our homes on a daily and weekly basis as well as our desire to find the best possible home for each individual dog in our care.

The public are free to walk around our homes to view our dogs at any time during our opening hours of Monday to Saturday 11am - 4.45pm, but they should be aware that not all dogs are available for rehoming. Some are stray dogs due to be claimed by their owners while others are under assessment by our staff for either medical or behavioural concerns.

Once you have spent time with one of our dogs and are satisfied that you would like to offer the dog a home, our rehoming staff will take you through the various stages required to complete the process. No pressure is placed on anyone to offer a dog a home. We do stress, however, to anyone considering this option that they must take as much time necessary before deciding to reserve a dog in our care.

Abandoned

Your help brings hope and happy tomorrows for abandoned dogs.

Fundraising is the life’s blood of Birmingham Dogs’ Home. Without it we simply could not exist.

With no Government funding, we survive purely through the generous contributions of the general public, interested companies, groups, organisations and kind-hearted individuals who may or may not have purchased dogs from us and have remembered us in their Wills.

Legacies and other contributions are valued beyond compare and allow us to carry on providing care and protection for unwanted dogs.

This ensures that we can continue to rescue these unfortunate animals, oversee their welfare and good health and treat any conditions with first-class veterinary attention all with one aim in mind ... to see them happily re-homed to loving new families.

Our highly trained kennel team do the rest with loving pastoral care prior to their four-legged charges leaving for pastures new.

There are various fundraising routes available for those who wish to donate. Whichever, we at Birmingham Dogs’ Home are deeply indebted to those of you who work so tirelessly to help us help them ...
American classic Mockingbird being brought to life on stage

A MUCH-loved classic American novel comes to the stage when an acclaimed version of Harper Lee’s story of childhood, courage and racial prejudice, To Kill A Mockingbird, arrives in Birmingham.

The NIA in Birmingham will be the venue for the touring incarnation of Regent Park Open Air Theatre’s production. It has been adapted by Christopher Sergel from Harper Lee’s novel.

The Pulitzer Prize winner, set in America’s Deep South during the 1930s, was recently ranked the seventh most influential book in society in a survey commissioned by The Folio Society.

Lawyer

It takes a child’s eye view of events when young Scout’s small town lawyer father Atticus Finch defends a black man who has been accused of rape, despite widespread condemnation by their neighbours.

Directed by Timothy Slade, To Kill A Mockingbird opened Regent’s Park Open Air Theatre’s 2013 season to critical acclaim and popular performance.

It will be staged in Birmingham from Tuesday, November 25. Daniel Bette will play Atticus alongside Zark Karoon as the accused. Tom Robinson and Christopher Ackrill are the mysterious Boo Radley. Jemima Bennett, Ava Fettan and Rhys Howson will share the role of Scout.

For each event tickets are £10-28. The Christmas run at The Rep tonight, tomorrow and Saturday.

Holly night to get in a festive mood

THOSE in a festive mood can celebrate Holly at Christmas with the Buddy Holly and Billy Fury tribute to Michael Jackson by his two acts,

and Billy Spakemon.

Bouncers' view

GET the doorman’s view of a Friday night on the town when John Godber’s play about 1960s clubbing, Bouncers, revived by Re- form Theatre Company, is staged at Wolverhampton’s Arena Theatre tonight (Thursday) and tomorrow.

The Wulfruna Street venue, part of the University of Wolverhampton, is on Saturday hosting The Ugly Girls which has been described as a surreal slapstick musical. It features Liz Carr and is a show at the theatre by Disability Arts Touring Network.

A Black Country Poetry Night at the Arena on Wednesday, November 26, features Liz Berry, Emma Purshouse, Dave Reeves and Billy Stankoman. For each event tickets are £10-28. The Christmas run at The Rep tonight, tomorrow and Saturday.

Christine Caffrey

Miss Caffrey, who has worked in the TV soap story rooms for more than two decades, is to appear as Widow Partridge in the town’s panto, Jack and the Beanstalk.

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She will star alongsideimals, plus some newer material, from Go West on Saturday and China Crisis on Sunday.

Duncan James and Chris Gascoyne look forward to Jack and the Beanstalk in Birmingham

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sings it to him. Becomes agitated when he sheet music and wax.
FInancial journalist Martin Lewis has been frequenting our local bar recently, now, going inside tips on how we can better manage our money and how we can avoid common financial traps during these hard-up times.

In fact, the minus-providing expert is nothing short of a godsend actually, and it anybody knows him, Fri him.

Of course, Mr Lewis’s tips have been known to get him into trouble with the big guns of the trading world on the odd occasion, but from challenging underlying parking tickets to redacting how absurdly regarding those television adverts and employing last messages about mis-sold PPI, his advice has proved priceless (albeit the punt) in the past.

It’s with open arms and loud cheers that we welcome him back to the tally, alongside reporter Saray Khan – and it’s come at just the right time, and given the time of the year, there’s a noticeable theme to this.

The service kicks off on what’s been billed as Black Friday, the date marking the beginning of the Christmas shopping season. But if you’re already feeling because you won’t even increase pay to start when it comes to presenting-buying this year, Martin will be laying out the essential deals that you expect to find in stores and online.

Meanwhile, Martin and Saray visit a family in Hampshire for a personal stock take of all their belongings to help them raise money to pay for Christmas. And soon enough, any regrets they thought they’d have are forgotten, as they sell unusual clothes, mobile phones, buggies and toys.

The Christmas Idle Homes Show is also on Martin and Saray’s to-do list this week, as they give members of the public handy tips on how to draw up a bit of extra cash for the festive period, while Martin and Saray’s latest recruit, writer Matthew Bell, is given an interview.

So, how do we hope you’ve been able to become more conscious?

But while Martin is keen to impart his expertise, certainly doesn’t want to sound like he’s preaching, telling PA that he is not interested in making money from doing this.

Martin digs deep to find us the best deals on the money-saving expert of the week.

While the corresponding feature here in last season’s competition also saw the Bundesliga outfit record a victory, as they completely outclassed the Citizens en route to a 3-1 scoreline. Presented by Adrian Chiles.

Waterloo Road

BBC1, 8pm

Tiffany confronts Tiffy and Justin about their relationship, and after the two boys get into a fight, Tiffy worries her brother will spill the beans to Vaughan and Mike. The police descend on Waterloo Road when Kevin’s computer hacking on a multinational organisation is traced back to the school, sparking a major security risk, and Sonya’s short story looks set to jeopardise her future. When things go wrong, Tiffany asks Christina if she wants to come along...
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**Three-bed semi with no chain has wow factor**

**AN extended three-bedroom semi-detached property in Monmouth Road, Smeathwick, has a the wow factor with contemporary open plan ground floor living.**

It is for sale through Bairstow Eves at £264,950 with no chain. Having an exceptionally open plan dining kitchen with living space with French-style patio doors, it also has a porch, entrance hall, under-stairs storage, three bedrooms, a stylish bathroom, driveway and rear garden. The property is conveniently situated within Bearwood, close to High Street amenities, Warley Woods, Lightwoods Park and Warley Woods Golf Course are all near by, as is Lightwoods Primary School.

Contact Robert Oulsnam on 0121 429 9986 or visit www.bairstowees.co.uk website.

---

**Extended four-bedroom home ideal for a family**

**THIS four-bedroom semi in West Park Road, Bearwood, has had a £30,000 price reduction.**

It is for sale through Robert Oulsnam at a new price of £275,000 with no chain. The central heating and double glazing. There is a porch, entrance hall and reception room with bay window, the rear reception room has patio doors to the garden, a feature fireplace with gas fire. The modern kitchen/diner has light wood-effect units, gas hob, double oven and dishwasher. There is a corner bath and walk-in double shower.

Contact Bairstow Eves on 0121 544 6554 or visit www.bairstowees.co.uk website.

---

**Property**

**STOURBRIDGE, Ossett Close E3900 pcm Fees**

A well presented 2 bedroom semi detached home featuring: entrance hall, lounge, 2 double bedrooms & 1 single, fully fitted kitchen with appliance, bathroom & separate w.c. This property is located close to schools, shops and local amenities. This is also double glazed and centrally heated (both as spec).

**Halesowen, Longmore Road £795 Fees**

A property built in 2009 with features: 2 double bedrooms, family bathroom & separate w.c, study, living room, kitchen/diner with integrated appliances, garage, driveway parking for multiple vehicles, gas central heating, double glazing, recently decorated throughout and recently refurbished. This property is located close to schools, shops and local amenities. This is also double glazed and centrally heated (both as spec).

**Halesowen, Hagley Road £795 Fees**

A property built in 2009 with features: 2 double bedrooms, family bathroom & separate w.c, study, living room, kitchen/diner with integrated appliances, garage, driveway parking for multiple vehicles, gas central heating, double glazing, recently decorated throughout and recently refurbished. This property is located close to schools, shops and local amenities. This is also double glazed and centrally heated (both as spec).

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**Newly refurbished 3 bedroom semi detached house in Bearwood Road, Bearwood.**

Well presented, 3 bedroom, semi detached property, briefly comprising; living room, 1 double bedroom with en-suite, 1 single bedroom, fitted kitchen with appliances, family bathroom, gas central heating, double glazing, recently decorated throughout and recently refurbished. This property is located close to schools, shops and local amenities. This is also double glazed and centrally heated (both as spec).

**Excellent 2 bedroom 1st floor flat in close proximity of Halesowen.**

Featuring homes of 3 generous size bedrooms (master with en-suite), 2 bathrooms & master bedroom with en-suite, 2 allocated parking spaces, central heating. Ideal for Olive Lane Primary School and also accessible to schools, shops and local amenities. Large lounge/kitchen/diner with appliances, lots of storage and a separate shower room. EPC: B.

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**Well presented unfurnished ground floor apartment in Blackheath, Bearwood.**

A great well presented, unfurnished ground floor apartment in Blackheath, Bearwood. The property comprises; 1 double bedroom with en-suite, fitted kitchen with appliances, family bathroom, gas central heating, double glazing and recently decorated throughout. EPC: B.

**Well presented 2 bedroom end terrace property in Ninfield Road, West Bromwich.**

A really well present 2 bedroom end terrace property with features: entrance hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, family bathroom, gas central heating, double glazing, recently decorated throughout and recently refurbished. EPC: B.

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**Well presented 2 bedroom end terrace property in Hallsway Road, West Bromwich.**

This recently refurbished property features an open plan kitchen/dining/living room, 2 double bedrooms, family bathroom, gas central heating, double glazing, recently decorated throughout and recently refurbished. EPC: D.

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**NEW**

**Halesowen, Aldenwick Court £575 ppcm Fees**

A well presented unfurnished ground floor apartment in close proximity of Halesowen. The property comprises; 1 double bedroom with en-suite, fitted kitchen with appliances, family bathroom, gas central heating, double glazing, recently decorated throughout and recently refurbished. EPC: B.
Country residence has been rebuilt and improved

DETACHED country home, Greenacres, at Buckridge, Bewdley, is set in a private position in parkland gardens of over an acre.

It is for sale through Allan Morris & Co at £540,000. It has four good bedrooms, (two en-suite), a 180 x 5m lounge, new orangery, dining room, breakfast kitchen, shower room and utility, bathroom, a detached double garage with amenities accommodation above and a detached garden room.

Greenacres was rebuilt some 25 years ago and considerably improved. It has a sweeping drive-way approach with wrought iron security gates. The detached double garage comes with first floor annexe accommodation currently arranged as a guest suite with spacious L-shaped double bedroom and en-suite shower room.

For further information call Allan Morris & Co on 01562 747755 or visit www.allan-morris.co.uk

Six-bedroom home in a popular village

BEECH House, 46a Pinewoods Avenue, in the popular village of Hagley, is a six-bedroom detached house with views over fields at the front.

It is for sale through The Lee Shaw Partnership at £509,000. Accommodation arranged on three levels includes six double bedrooms with the two second floor bedrooms. It has gas fired heating with under floor heating on the ground floor, oak flooring to the principal reception rooms and entrance hall. Canadian oak fronted kitchen fittings with granite work surfaces, a conservatory, house bathroom, two en-suites, and double glazed windows. Contact The Lee Shaw Partnership on 01562 888111 or visit www.leeshaw.com website.
New Mondeo in the comfort zone

By Matt Joy

Ford has finally released its new Mondeo. Despite the looks, it is all-new. It concentrates on comfort more than before, and it has a range of new engines to cut emissions and improve fuel economy. Prime among these are new 1.0-litre turbo petrol and 1.5-litre turbodiesel motors that bring a new wave of downsizing to the family car class.

There are fewer dash buttons to come to terms with and Ford now fits a large touchscreen to operate many functions. On top of this, Ford’s Sync2 voice control system lets the driver change settings with simple commands while keeping both hands on the steering wheel.

At first glance, you could be forgiven for thinking the new fifth generation Ford Mondeo is not much more than a face-lifted version of the previous car. The overall silhouette is much the same, as is much of the rear-end style.

However, the slimmer headlights give a sleeker look that will be key to the Mondeo clawing back sales from the likes of the Audi A4 and BMW 3 Series that have proved so popular with their premium images.

If the Mondeo is not seen as quite as premium as those rivals from Audi and BMW, it easily better them for cabin space and load lugging.

Most UK buyers will opt for the Mondeo hatch or estate, with only the Hybrid version available as a saloon.

Wealth

There is masses of room in the rear and there is a wealth of adjustment to fine-tune the driving position which includes electric seat height adjustment. As for the boot, the hatch’s is large and the estate’s is cavernous.

Ford has made a conscious effort to make the new Mondeo an even more comfortable car than its predecessor. This means the new car’s suspension has a little more compliance that translates into a superbly smooth ride over any type of road surface.

Refinement is also top drawer, so the Mondeo is a class leader for hushed long-distance travel. The 2.0-litre turbodiesel can be a touch gruff at low revs, but settles into the background at speed, while the other engines are quiet and pull cleanly.

While more refined, the Mondeo retains its ability to hustle through corners with composed ease, though the new car’s steering is not quite as alert as the old model’s.

Starting at £20,795 for the hatch and £23,795 for the estate, the Mondeo is not as keenly priced as its arch-rival, the Vauxhall Insignia. However, the Mondeo compensates with a generous level of equipment that includes digital radio, climate control, cruise control, hill start assist, alloy wheels on all models and Ford’s 8in Sync2 touchscreen.

Ford may have lost sales ground to its premium rivals from Germany, though it’s hard to see many UK buyers abandoning their premium-badged saloons for a Mondeo hatch.

As for the boot, the hatch’s is large and the estate’s is cavernous.

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Pitching up an octave

By David Banner

You can trace the Skoda success story of the last couple of decades back to the original launch of one model: this one – the Octavia.

Right from its very first appearance in 1996, this has been a car that’s always supersized its value proposition, offering more space than the class norm. For first and second generation versions, that class saw competition amongst Focus and Astra-class family hatches. This Mk3 model though, has taken a step up in the world, virtually big enough to compete with Mondeos and Insignias in the larger medium range segment.

An Octavia then, that’s larger than ever before - and cleverer too – as it has to be to distance itself from the smaller, smaller Rapid model that hit the market a few months before this car arrived in the spring of 2013.

The Rapid is the car to choose for Skoda motoring as it used to be, light on frills and cutting-edge technology with more luxurious brands in the Volkswagen Group stable.

As with the Volkswagen Golf and the SEAT Leon, the German engineers who created this car took a pragmatic approach to driving dynamics, deciding that drivers opting for lower order engines wouldn’t care too much about cutting-edge handling response. So the sophisticated multi-link rear suspension is reserved for the performance-oriented VRS models, the most powerful of which uses the 2.0-litre TSI petrol unit borrowed from the Golf GTI.

Here though, we’re focusing on the mainstream variants that most Octavia customers will be considering. Most customers will opt for either the 1.2-litre TSI petrol model or the 1.6 TDI diesel we tried, both engines putting out 105PS. There’s also a frugal ‘Greenline’ version of the 1.6 TDI, offering up 110PS.

None of these variants feel very fast but you can perk things up a bit by recourse to the kind of hi-tech intervention you simply wouldn’t expect to find on a family-minded Skoda of this sort: ‘Driving Mode Selection’.

Simply use the infotainment touchscreen to select ‘sport’ and ‘eco’ driving settings, depending upon the kind of progress you want to make.

Mainstream

You’ll certainly enjoy all of this more at the wheel of one of the pokier mainstream variants, either the 140PS petrol TSI 1.4 or the 150PS diesel TDI 2.0-litre.

Skoda people will probably quite like the fact that the look and feel of this car is very similar to its predecessor. The similarities persist despite the difference in size: this car is 90mm longer and 40mm wider than its predecessor, making it all the more impressive that it also manages to be up to 102kgs lighter. But it’s when you lift the heavy bootlid that you get a feel for what this car is really all about. It’s absolutely huge, the 590-litre load area you reach over a notably low lip and 125-litres bigger than before. There’s 610-litres if you go for the Octavia estate model.

Has all this been achieved at the expense of rear seat occupants? No. ‘This MK3 model though, has taken a step up in the world, virtually big enough to compete with Mondeos and Insignias in the larger medium range segment.’

The two bodystyles – hatch and estate – are mates with 1.2, 1.4 or 2.0-litre petrol or one of the 1.6 or 2.0-litre diesels and there’s the choice of four main trim levels – S, SE, Elegance and VRS.

Whichever one you choose, your car will come with alloy wheels, tinted glass, climate-controlled air conditioning that also cools the glovebox, a height-adjustable driver’s seat, a four-speaker leather-covered steering wheel, a trip computer, an eight-speaker stereo with a DAB digital radio and USB and AUX in sockets and a hill holder clutch that stops you from drifting backwards on uphill junctions.

At the bottom end of the line-up, the alternative, with the same 105PS output, is the 1.2-litre TSI petrol model, a variant that might even work out cheaper over the short term given its lesser asking price and use of cheaper green pump fuel.

That’s thanks to a combined cycle return of 57.7mpg and a CO2 reading of 114g/km.

These are figures that fall to 53.3mpg and 121g/km if you opt for the 140PS petrol 1.4. Opt for the pokier 150PS 2.0-litre TDI diesel and you can expect 68.9mpg and 106g/km of CO2.

A Skoda in fact that can do everything you’d expect a comparable Audi to do – at a substantial price saving.
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Organised by Newmarket Promotions (ABTAV 787X)

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The spa town of Merano, with its Belle Époque buildings and fine gardens set between the high mountain peaks, along with the regions capital Bolzano, which boasts many castles and fortified buildings, a historic centre and gothic cathedral, are both on the itinerary of the Italian Tyrol tour.

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Bath and Oxford
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Organised by Newmarket Promotions (ABTAV 787X)

Florimania
at Hampton Court Palace
Two days departing March 14

PRICE FROM £109

A visit to the magnificent Magna Carta, the historic university city of Oxford, where a guided visit is made to the Bodleian Library and Christ Church College.

Organised by Newmarket Promotions (ABTAV 787X)

Strawberry Fields
Penny Lane and the Cavern Club
Three days departing May 29 and Sep 19

PRICE FROM £179

The spa town of Merano, with its Belle Époque buildings and fine gardens set between the high mountain peaks, along with the regions capital Bolzano, which boasts many castles and fortified buildings, a historic centre and gothic cathedral, are both on the itinerary of the Italian Tyrol tour.

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Olsson being backed to play until 40

ALBION boss Alan Irvine believes out-of-favour defender Jonas Olsson can play on until he is 40.

Irvine has rejected suggestions that Olsson’s recent injuries could take their toll and insisted the 35-year-old has many years of action ahead. “Having watched him in pre-season he wasn’t somebody who was lagging behind everyone else by any means,” said Irvine, who replaces Olsson with Joleon Lescott.

“He is a really good trainer. I certainly wouldn’t have said his legs have gone. Centre-backs can play until a really good age. I worked with David Weir, who played until he was 40. I don’t see a reason why Jonas can’t play until he’s 40 because as a mature, experienced centre-back you improve in turns of your positional sense even though you may lose a little bit of that explosive power you might have had as a younger player.”

Irvine says Olsson has reacted well to being axed from the starting XI. “It has hurt him,” admitted Irvine. “It has been something that has been difficult for him. But firstly he is a really nice person and secondly he is a great professional. He realises that things happen at different times and the only way to deal with it is to train as hard as you possibly can and be ready for when your chance comes. “There is no question that at some point we will have to put in other centre-backs. I expect Gareth McAuley and Jonas Olsson to play a part this season.”

Ollie having a go in the 36th.

Losing streak goes on for OHHC

OHHC 1sts 1 Old Halsenians 3

OLD HALSANIANs Hockey Club Men’s 1st XI continued their losing streak as they were dispatched 4-1 by newly promoted Old Silhillians.

The breakthrough came from Silhill’s corner forward which went through the legs of unfortunate goalkeeper Steve Charlton. Old Silhillians were able to double their lead prior to half time break.

The second half saw Hales struggle to get up to speed, and the visitors found themselves 3-0 up.

Old Hales did stage a slight fight back, when Tom Hickman scored a consolation. Hales went on to lose the match 4-1 after Silhill had doubled their lead prior to half time.

Ollie having a go in the 36th.

OHHC 3nds 0 Old Wulfrunians 2

HALF time Silhill doubled their lead and they broke and shot across Liam Jones into the corner. Just inside the second half Silhill doubled their lead. A 30 yard shot caught James Martin.

James Hill halved the ar-rears for TD.

A corner ended up being volleyed home for Silhill who went 4-1 up just after the hour.

Old Hales have to fight for victory

OHHC Badgers 3 Old Wulfrunians 2

HALF time Silhill had a lead. A second gift from the ball in midfield and they broke and shot across Liam Jones into the corner.

Just inside the second half Silhill doubled their load. A 30 yard shot caught James Martin.

James Hill halved the ar-rears for TD.

A corner ended up being volleyed home for Silhill who went 4-1 up just after the hour.

Carl Robinson on the move for Old Halesonians during their second clash with Bromsgrove

Riders rising from the ashes

BIRMINGHAM Brum-mies are set to rise from the ashes next season – with an application to enter Speedway’s National League.

Former club owner Tony Mois has confirmed he will be entering the Brummies – with their traditional yellow and red race jacket colours – in the third tier of the sport as a starting point to rebuild the club.

All home meetings will be staged at Perry Barr also racing at the Aldridge Road venue on alternate weeks as the Heathens aim to defend their title.

Said Mois: “I am delighted to confirm I have reached agreement with all parties for Birming-ham Brummies to submit an application to join the National League next sea-son.”

This is very much the first stage in a rebuilding process and if the team is a success and we get the necessary support from fans then I will be looking to take the club up into a higher level.

“I am pleased to see Bradley Heath survive and they will be the team everyone wants to beat next season. They have won the title for the last two seasons and will be going for the hat-trick.”

Thirteen is lucky for Ashfield

THIRTY-SEVEN leaders Paul Hirst, Billy Hinton, John Taylor, and Romford Town aim to defend their title.

Tom Slater put in a good show in the under-13 boys race for 37th, with Grace Slater and Elliot Thomas close behind.

The leader was again cut to 37th from 170 plus runners.

Grabbing the title for the last season. They have everyone wants to beat next season. They have won the title for the last two seasons and will be going for the hat-trick.”

Carl Robinson on the move for Old Halesonians during their second clash with Bromsgrove

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Express & Star
Old pub looks set to be Baggies' fan zone

AN Albion fans' spokesman has welcomed plans for a new 'fan zone' that will be launched on the site of a defunct pub right next to Th Hawthorns next season.

Official supporters club chairman John Homer believes the scheme, which is planned for the historic Hawthorns pub, will help deal with the 'dearth' of facilities for fans on match days and will be somewhere for the Baggs fans to gather.

The Baggs this week revealed plans for a new-match-day 'fan zone' in and around the Grade II listed building with the club hoping to demolish the east and west wings of the pub early next year to make way for the initiative for the supporters of the Premier League club.

The proposals for the site, on the junction of Hallfields Lane and Birmingham Road, include live music, children's activities, food, drink and merchandise stands and a big screen.

Homer said: "It is an admirable idea.

"There is a dearth of facilities for fans close to the ground and hopefully this idea will help do something about it. Fans struggle for things to do before the games so if this can help create more atmosphere near the ground then I am all in favour of it."

"If it encourages more young fans to come along with their parents because there is something they can do before the game, it can only be a good thing," added the chairman.

"If the game isn’t as good as they’d hoped, they will still have had a fun day out. It should help to improve the experience for the fans."

Halesowen sent Blyth away empty-handed with two second-half goals.

The score saw the Yeltz progress to the third qualifying round of the FA Trophy. Ben Halsey had to wait a while to bag his 101st goal for the club. But on the 30 minute mark he broke through the Spartans defence. He managed to get past Martin with a full-blooded drive but the Tipton keeper was equal to it.

Tivendale are taken out

Thistledown hit in the second half, almost forging ahead in the 47th minute when Simon Bateman agonisingly saw keeper Keith Rostill turn the ball over the top.

Alvechurch stepped up the pace again with Edwards heading a Shearer cross into the net without the goal's co-narrator, Joe Adams for the visitors cleverly weaved his way into the penalty area and Martin remained defiant.

But when Martin had his blood made with a full-blooded drive but the Tipton keeper was equal to it.

Tivendale 0

Stafford Rangers 2

STAFFORD RANGERS got the better of their Tivendale counterparts in the first round of the Dudson Sport Cup.

Leigh Dowling shot wide after a patient build-up by the visitors.

A Tivendale attack broke down early in the second half and Stafford went on the counter-attack. Chris Darcey was left unmarked in the box to side the ball home past keeper Charlie Price.

The goal brought the predictable response from the home side and Tivendale should have been level on 56 minutes when Luke Faskin missed the target from a good position.

On 70 minutes, Price had to parry the ball twice minutes later Cope fired past Price.

SECOND BITE FOR YELTZ IS FRUITFUL

Stafford Rangers 2

Tipton Town 1

WINDBOROUGH and DORSET WING is for the south-western half of the season.

The Baggs, who are traditionally quiet in January transfer windows, are eyeing up targets as they look to continue the major overhaul that began in the summer.

They are prioritising wingers and strikers after recruiting 10 new faces in the close season, while they could receive bids from rival clubs for out-of-favour duo Jonas Olson and Claudio Yacob.

Despite their mass recruitment following the departure of 13 players, the Baggs hierarchy acknowledge the need for further tinkering.

Head coach Irvine said: "It wasn’t possible to do all the homework that we’d like to do because of the circumstances."

"I had suddenly landed in this job, there were 13 players who had gone and there was a great big hole that needed to be filled as soon as possible."

"With some of the boys we got to ass them playing in the World Cup but French and Irish are about to play in the Euros and it should help to improve the experience for the fans."

Delight as Heathens live to ride into 2015


Blyth: Jeffries, Bell, Cummings 90, Watson, Hutchinson, Parker, Turrell (Perry 87), Wearmouth, Johnson, Martin, Wades, Quinn, Subs: Rivers.

Blyth Spartans 1

Heathens 1

Ben Halsey scored his 100th goal in a Halesowen shirt to give the Yeltz a second chance of beating Blyth. Halsey struck after 89 minutes when he lifted the ball over Blyth keeper Peter Jeffries after Ryan Hutchinson’s attempted clearance was blocked.

His century of goals have helped them to confirm both promotion to the Blue Square Bet North and a first FA Cup win in almost two decades.

The Baggies this week revealed plans for a new match-day ‘fan zone’ in and around the Grade II listed building with the club hoping to demolish the east and west wings of the pub early next year to make way for the initiative for the supporters of the Premier League club.

The proposals for the site, on the junction of Hallfields Lane and Birmingham Road, include live music, children’s activities, food, drink and merchandise stands and a big screen.

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“If it encourages more young fans to come along with their parents because there is something they can do before the game, it can only be a good thing,” added the chairman.

“If the game isn’t as good as they’d hoped, they will still have had a fun day out. It should help to improve the experience for the fans.”

New signing Michael Neale, centre, with promoter Gary Patchett and Will Pottinger.

CRAIGLEY fans raised the roof at the Cophorne Hotel in Brierly Hill after news broke of the club’s survival for 2015.

Almost 300 riders, officials and supporters packed the Earl’s Suite to hear the news that the reigning National League champions will be back to defend their title with home meetings at Birmingham’s Perry Barr Stadium.

And in a further boost for the sport it was confirmed the Brummies will also return to the track – also in the National League – after their mid-season collapse this year through financial troubles.

Heathens lost the use of Monmore Green which is only available for Elite League Wolves next year and there have been serious concerns over possible closure of the former Dudley Wood track.

But club co-boss Gary Patchett said: “It’s been hard, it’s been tough, but we have agreed an arrangement with Birmingham to share Perry Barr next year.

“We have done this purely because of the supporters. We have so far been unsuccessful in finding a piece of land to call our own in the Dudley or Sandwell. “I would like to thank Tony Mole at Birmingham and hope the Brummies fans turn out to support their side as well.”

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### SPORT

### Battle day

Old Hales have to fight for victory

Page 39

### Old Albion fans’ spokesman has welcomed plans for a new ‘fan zone’ that will be launched on the site of a defunct pub right next to Th Hawthorns next season.

### Tividale are taken out

Tivendale 0

Stafford Rangers 2

### French defeat for Under-21s

ENGLAND Under-21s throw away a 2-0 lead in their 11-match winning streak was ended by France in a friendly in Brest.

An early brace from Harry Kane was not enough to secure victory, Wolves duo Dominic Iorfa and Kortney Hause figured for England Under-20s as they beat Portugal on penalties.

### Second bite for YELTZ IS FRUITFUL


Blyth: Jeffries, Bell, Cummings 90, Watson, Hutchinson, Parker, Turrell (Perry 87), Wearmouth, Johnson, Martin, Wades, Quinn, Subs: Rivers.

Blyth Spartans 1

Heathens 1

Ben Halsey scored his 100th goal in a Halesowen shirt to give the Yeltz a second chance of beating Blyth. Halsey struck after 89 minutes when he lifted the ball over Blyth keeper Peter Jeffries after Ryan Hutchinson’s attempted clearance was blocked.

His century of goals have helped them to confirm both promotion to the Blue Square Bet North and a first FA Cup win in almost two decades.

The Baggies this week revealed plans for a new match-day ‘fan zone’ in and around the Grade II listed building with the club hoping to demolish the east and west wings of the pub early next year to make way for the initiative for the supporters of the Premier League club.

The proposals for the site, on the junction of Hallfields Lane and Birmingham Road, include live music, children’s activities, food, drink and merchandise stands and a big screen.

Homer said: “It is an admirable idea. There is a dearth of facilities for fans close to the ground and hopefully this idea will help do something about it. Fans struggle for things to do before the games so if this can help create more atmosphere near the ground then I am all in favour of it.”

“If it encourages more young fans to come along with their parents because there is something they can do before the game, it can only be a good thing,” added the chairman.

“If the game isn’t as good as they’d hoped, they will still have had a fun day out. It should help to improve the experience for the fans.”