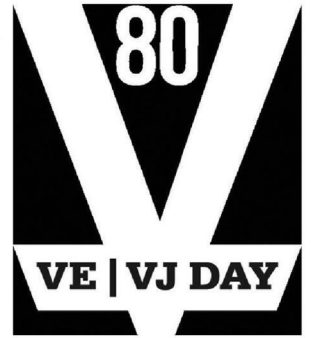




# Standard


**VE Day 80th Anniversary Supplement**
**1945-2025**

## MARKING 80 YEARS SINCE VE DAY: A Time to Remember, Reflect and Honour

**E**ighty years ago, on 8 May 1945, the streets of Britain erupted with joy and relief as Victory in Europe was declared and the Second World War in Europe officially came to an end.

For those who lived through it, VE Day was more than a moment in history—it was the day the darkness began to lift after nearly six long years of conflict.

Today, we honour the courage and sacrifice of those who served on the frontlines and those who kept the home fires burning. This 80th anniversary is a time not only for celebration but for remembrance. Across our town and villages, families gather with memories—some joyful, some bittersweet—of a generation that gave so much and asked for so little in return.

As part of this special edition, we're proud to feature personal stories from local veterans and the families who carry their legacy forward. Their accounts are a powerful reminder that history is not just something we read in books—it lives in the memories, photographs,



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and whispered stories passed down through generations.

From the factory workers and Land Girls to the soldiers who fought in Europe, North Africa and beyond, the people of Britain came together in a show of unity and resilience that continues to inspire. And when the war finally ended, they didn't just rejoice—they rebuilt. Streets that once echoed with the sound of air raid sirens became places of peace and progress once again.

In 1945, communities gathered around radios, danced in village halls and filled town squares with laughter

and song. This year, we remember in a different way—perhaps with street parties, church services, or quiet moments of reflection. However we mark it, the message is the same: we will never forget.

We would also like to thank the local businesses whose support has made this commemorative issue possible. Their contributions ensure these stories of bravery and endurance continue to be told, and that new generations can learn from the past.

To those who served, we say thank you. To those who lived through those uncertain years, we offer our deepest respect. And to those who keep their memories alive—through stories, photos, medals in dusty drawers, or names in family trees—we stand with you in remembrance.

Eighty years on, VE Day reminds us that peace is something worth fighting for, and freedom is never free. Let us honour the past not just with words, but with a renewed commitment to the values that victory defended: unity, courage, and hope.



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# COMMEMORATING VE Day 80

IN BROMSGROVE & DROITWICH



## BROMSGROVE

**T**HE BROMSGROVE Branch of the Royal British Legion will be holding a Memorial Service at Crown Close to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day on May 8.

The service will start with the standards parading from Amphlett Hall to the Cenotaph at 10.45am.

A VE Day flag will be raised before the start of the service.

The town council is marking VE Day 80, the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe, at the heritage centre on May 8.

Droitwich Spa Town Council start the day with a flag raising hosted by town errier, Edgar Harwood at 9am outside St Richard's House in Victoria Square.

Afterwards, the Heritage and Information Centre's Droitwich at War exhibition will be on display from 10am to 7pm. The exhibition is also viewable from May 1 to May 15.

A little later on there will be a war memorial service in Victoria Square with the Royal British Legion from 11am.

The events will kick off again in the afternoon with a traditional 1940s showing of Punch and Judy from 4.30pm until 5pm at the Heritage and Information Centre. The centre will also feature entertainment with a live singer performing for an hour and half with 1940s and WWII themed music from 6pm.

Later on, the 2516 Droitwich Squadron Air Cadets will march outside of St Richard's House from 7.45pm with a Beacon Lighting in St Augustine's Church closing out the evening at 9.30pm.

The Salvation Army band will play a 20 minute set from 9.10pm, until the beacon is lit at 9.30pm. The mayor, councillor Alex Sinton, will read out a tribute.



Wreaths will be laid by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, the Bromsgrove District Council chairman and leader, along with Armed Services representatives – the Navy, Army and Royal Air Force. Other wreaths will then be laid.

Everyone is welcome to attend and anyone wishing to order a wreath can contact Jeff Evans by emailing: [bromsgrove.chairman@rbl.community](mailto:bromsgrove.chairman@rbl.community) or by calling 01527 576251 and leaving a message.

Mr Evans said: "The memorial service will be a poignant reminder of our history and the enduring importance of honouring those who have served and continue to serve our country."

## DROITWICH SPA

**R**ESIDENTS are being encouraged to celebrate VE Day 80 by attending a variety of events in Droitwich Spa.



Droitwich Spa Town Council invite you to celebrate VE Day 80, which marked the end of the war in Europe and WWII



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# Monumental book to focus on town's past

by **Sonny Rackham**  
sonny.rackham@bullivantmedia.com

**AN AMERICAN clergyman with ancestral connections to a prominent 16th-century Droitwich family has written a book about their legacy in the town which is still visible today.**

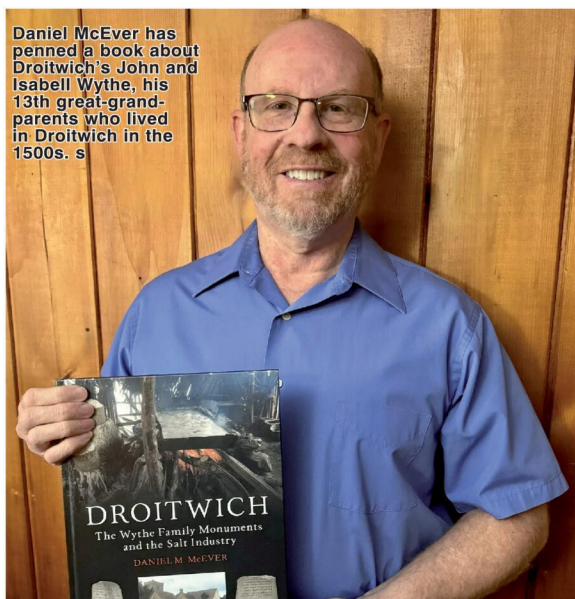
Author Daniel McEver is the 13th great-grandchild of John and Isabell Wythe, who lived in Droitwich in the 1500s.

Monuments to them still stand in St Peter's Church and their connection to the town's salt industry provides inspiration for some content in the book - Droitwich: The Wythe Family Monuments and the Salt Industry.

Daniel has been a keen genealogist for over 40 years, always focusing his research on the historical context and culture in which his ancestors lived.

His inspiration for this book came from one of the biggest highlights in his genealogical exploits - visiting his ancestor's monument in Droitwich back in 2022.

Whilst visiting England to attend the International Mendenhall Reunion in Swindon, he made the trip to St



Daniel McEver has penned a book about Droitwich's John and Isabell Wythe, his 13th great-grandparents who lived in Droitwich in the 1500s. s

Peter's Church in Droitwich alongside his cousin Allen Singleton to see them.

They were shown around the church by local historian Philip Bowen.

Daniel said: "This pilgrimage was a truly remarkable experience, as I had been looking forward to seeing John and Isabell (Moore) Wythe's monument in particular for over 20 years."

"We had a great visit with Mr. Bowen, and this experience at the church is what inspired me to write my book."

After his visit, Daniel became highly motivated to learn all he could about the monuments, how they came to be damaged and what he could understand about the family's coat of arms.

He also wanted to know the historical context of the period, before and after the monuments were created.

He said his book was about more than just the monuments and his ancestors.

He provides 80 images and illustrations and discusses relevant events from Henry VIII to Charles II with the growing strife between Parliament and the Monarchy. He also delves into how reform theology rooted in the Protestant Reformation led to the rampant destruction of monuments, particularly during the English Civil

War. The book also provides a broad and updated history of salt manufacturing in Droitwich in a nod to the Wythe family's connection the industry.

Daniel added: "After doing all my research and writing this book, I have gained great pride in my ancestral connection to Droitwich."

A copy of the book is currently housed in Bodleian Old Library in Oxford and has recently been accepted at The Hive in Worcester and Droitwich Spa Library.

Visit: [tinyurl.com/droitwichwythefamilymonuments](http://tinyurl.com/droitwichwythefamilymonuments) for more information.

**RESIDENTS across Droitwich and the rest of the county headed to the polls yesterday for the Worcestershire County Council elections.**

The count for the town's seats, including Bowbrook, Droitwich East, Droitwich West and Ombersley, will take place today at Pershore Leisure Centre. Our reporters will be at the counts across the county.

Visit: [droitwichstandard.co.uk](http://droitwichstandard.co.uk) from 10am for our live coverage of how the results unfold.

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# Raising awareness of hospice as medicinal garden heads to show

by **Tristan Harris**  
tristan.harris@bullivantmedia.com

**A NEW garden being created for the Primrose Hospice will go on display at the RHS Malvern Spring Festival.**

The plot is the brainchild of Marc and Darryl Harbourne-Bessant from Bromsgrove company FB and Sons Lawns and Landscapes which wanted to design a mindful retreat offering solace, space for reflection and a deep connection to the past and present.

The garden has been inspired by the landscapes surrounding the hospice and the historic life of St Godwald. The hospice is on St Godwald's Road and the church named after the saint is also nearby.

After losing the garden's main sponsor, FB and Sons has launched a fundraising page for people to pledge cash to the project.

All of the patrons' name will appear on a special plaque when the garden is relocated back into the hospice grounds - scheduled for September this year.

There it will be a quiet and peaceful space for reflection and a sanctuary for the whole community to enjoy.

## The design

The garden will encompass a variety of features, including a 'wind telephone' housed in a hand-crafted wattle and daub gazebo. A wind phone is not connected to wires or any 'earthly system'. It was originally created in Japan by Itaru Sasaki as a way to hold one-way conversations with loved ones who had died. The wind phone will be one of just five in the UK and will add to the tranquil environment.

Another feature will be the Primrose Memory Tree which will be temporarily relocated to the show garden. The tree, bearing the names and stories of those cherished, offers a place to celebrate life and share memories and is a symbol of a life loved.

The garden will also boast a mindful labyrinth of scented herbs, a wildflower glade and textured standing stones, inspired by the ancient landscapes of Brittany



Marc and Darryl Harbourne-Bessant have designed the tranquil show garden for the Primrose Hospice.



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where St Godwald lived centuries ago.

Through the materials used, there will be an emphasis on sustainability. Reclaimed stone, UK-grown timber and other repurposed items will all reduce the garden's carbon footprint, while pathways of crushed whelk shells - a fishing by-product - highlight the beauty of thoughtful reuse.

The planting is rooted in native species, chosen for their resilience, medicinal history, and role in supporting biodiversity.

## 'Raising awareness'

FB and Sons and the Primrose are delighted with the link-up and excited about the garden's creation.

Marc said: "We knew we wanted to design a garden space for a hospice as we are all too aware of the incredible work hospices do across the country.

"From our first visit to Primrose, we could see how vital their work is to support patients and families.

"The Day Hospice site in Bromsgrove has beautiful grounds that are used extensively by the children and families of those in Primrose's care."

Angelique Dalton, the Primrose CEO, said: "The opportunity for the Hospice to be part of the RHS Malvern Show is just incredible and would not have been possible without the support of Marc, Darryl and the FB and Sons team.

"We are all so excited the garden will be transported and planted here at the hospice after the show has finished.

"This will enable the patients and clients we support, as well as our volunteers and staff, to benefit from this beautiful garden.

"We cannot wait."

"They added whilst they were aiming for a highly-coveted gold medal at RHS Malvern, the garden's inclusion would hopefully raise awareness



of the work the Primrose does. Angelique added: "That is enough of a reward for us."

The fundraising page has a target of \$6,000 and more than £2,000 has


been pledged so far. Visit: [gofundme.com/f/st-godwalds-retreat-a-show-garden-for-rhs-malvern-2025/](https://www.gofundme.com/f/st-godwalds-retreat-a-show-garden-for-rhs-malvern-2025/) to donate.

An artist's impression of how the garden will look. s

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See page **26**



# Hoping to fulfill her rugby dream

by **Sonny Rackham**  
sonny.rackham@bullivantmedia.com

## A WOMEN'S rugby player from Bromsgrove is calling on the community for funding to help her represent Jamaica in the 15s competition next month.

Danielle Jordan-Taft, who has previously represented England's netball team and Jamaica's rugby sevens team, needs support for her self-funded spot in the Caribbean nation's large-sided rugby games.

The funds will cover flights, accommodation, and essential expenses to make the tour at the end of May possible.

She said: "Playing for my country is a huge honour,

something I take immense pride in every time I put on the shirt."

Over the last three years, she has personally funded her sporting tours but is finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with the financial strain of competing.

Jamaica 15s women's rugby team is set to compete in the Rugby Americas North (RAN) Women's XV's Championship against Mexico on May 24 and Trinidad and Tobago on May 31.

The championship is the premier rugby union competition for women's national teams in North America and the Caribbean.

The games serve as the regional qualifier for the Women's Rugby World Cup (WRWC) and the newly established WXV competition.

At the time we went to press, Danielle had raised

nearly \$1,300 towards her goal of \$1,800.

She added: "I know this is a lot of money, and I'm truly grateful for any support.

"I'm passionate about helping grow women's rugby and the future of Jamaica rugby, and I already do my fair share of voluntary work to support this cause.

"Any donation, big or small, is deeply appreciated and never taken for granted.

"With your support, I can keep representing my country with pride and continue pushing boundaries for women's rugby, let's make this dream a reality, together."

People can follow Danielle on Instagram @danajt1 to stay updated and be a part of her journey.

Visit: [gofundme.com/f/support-danni-to-play-rugby-15s-for-jamaica](https://gofundme.com/f/support-danni-to-play-rugby-15s-for-jamaica) to support Danielle.



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**DANIELLE JORDAN-TAFT**

I'M HEADING TO **JAMAICA** TO COMPETE IN **RUGBY 15S**, REPRESENTING MY HERITAGE AT THE **HIGHEST LEVEL!**

National women's netball and rugby player, Danielle Jordan-Taft, from Bromsgrove is appealing for funding support to continue representing Jamaica's national rugby team. s

## Man attempted to snatch child

POLICE are investigating an attempted abduction of a four-year-old child in Longbridge.

The incident happened around 11.30am this morning (Wednesday) on Bristol Road South.

A man approached the child and tried to grab their arm but was stopped by the woman. He then fled towards McDonald's.

Thankfully the child was not injured and West Midlands Police is offering support to the child and their family as officers work to identify and locate the person involved.

Police said CCTV was being reviewed and officers have been speaking to people in the area as investigations continued.

Insp Matt Shaw from Birmingham Police, said: "We understand how dis-

treasing the incident will be to the community but rest assured we are taking this incredibly serious.

"We are appealing for anyone who was in the vicinity at the time to speak to us if you haven't already."

He urged everyone in the area to help with the investigation by coming forward with any information they had and asked people to check door-bell camera or dash cams footage from their cars as it could help police with their enquiries.

And he added: "We have stepped up our patrols in the area.

"If you see officers out and about and have any concerns please speak to us."

Anyone with any information should submit it via Live Chat at: [westmidlands.police.uk](https://westmidlands.police.uk) or call 101 to pass on the details.

For all the latest news log onto [www.bromsgrovestandard.co.uk](http://www.bromsgrovestandard.co.uk)

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News in brief

A TEENAGER suffered serious injuries during a vicious attack in Fernhill Heath on Saturday.

The 17-year-old boy was riding his e-scooter on Dilmore Lane around 9pm when he was assaulted by a group of unknown men.

He fell from the e-scooter and sustained serious injuries to his body.

He was taken to hospital for treatment and has since been discharged.

Det Insp Natalie Arrowsmith, from south Worcestershire Police, said officers had been carrying out several lines of enquiry in a bid to identify those involved.

She urged witnesses or anyone with information or dash cam footage from the area at the time to email details to: mohammed.waliat@westmercia.police.uk or call police on 01905 331099.

A MAN was charged in connection with a crash in Bromsgrove around 4pm on Monday which saw a car end up in a hedge on Hanbury Road.

Bhupinder Sandhu, aged 58, of Broad Lane, Wolverhampton was arrested and charged with failing to provide a specimen.

He is due to appear at Worcester Magistrates Court on May 27.

Firefighters were called and crews from Bromsgrove and Droitwich attended.

The driver had already got himself out of the vehicle following the incident which happened near to the Jinney Ring Craft Centre.

# MPs urged to get talking to 'end the SEND crisis'

by **Ashleigh Osborne**  
ashleigh.osborne@bullivantmedia.com

**A SUPPORT group for parents of children with special education needs (SEND) and autism has invited MPs from Worcestershire to a meeting to discuss the need for improving services across the county.**

The SEND National Crisis Worcestershire and North Worcestershire Autism Parents Support Group includes more than 2,000 people, and was started after SEND services in the county were given the lowest lowest possible rating.

The group claimed there had not been any real effort from the newly reformed Parent Carer Forum to realise change, and wanted to find a different approach to try to enhance momentum and accountability for the families of Worcestershire, but more widely the use of public funds in local government.

Tracy Winchester from the campaign group invited all Worcestershire MPs to attend a 'round table' meeting, altogether, with parent-carer representatives of both groups. During the session, they will seek a shared narrative and strategy to move things forward at pace in Worcestershire



SEND services.

Redditch MP Chris Bloore, has assisted the groups to form this opportunity, and said he hoped all Worcestershire MPs would make time in their diaries for this very important issue affecting many constituents.

The meeting is scheduled for 1pm on Wednesday, May 14, directly after Prime Minister's Questions at the Houses of Parliament in a

bid to secure the attendance of all Worcestershire MPs.

**'Real progress needed'**

Ms Winchester said: "The parent-carers served by both SEND National Crisis Worcestershire and North Worcestershire Autism Parents Support Group continue to witness failure on the part of the Worcestershire SEND Local Area

Partnership, to make the changes and improvements required to see a real difference 'on the ground'.

"We knew, as a collective, we needed to try a different approach, and to see everybody coming together to achieve the improved services which our children and young people need is the priority.

"We hope the Worcestershire MPs will join us is working together to seek those changes to SEND services, collectively".

Mr Bloore added: "I'm pleased to welcome SEND National Crisis Worcestershire and North Worcestershire Autism Parents Support Group to Parliament for this vital roundtable.

"SEND services across Worcestershire have been failing families for far too long, and it's clear urgent action is needed.

"I hope all six Worcestershire MPs will attend so we can work together - across party lines, with the council and dedicated parent-carers - to deliver meaningful improvements.

"This must be about more than just plans.

"It must lead to real progress on the ground.

"Our children and young people deserve a system that works for them—and we owe it to families to deliver it."

**Redditch MP Chris Bloore with Tracy Winchester. s**

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# Rosie's Flying Visit heading to festival date

**DROITWICH** artist Rosie Philpott, famous for her 'wonky' paintings, will be unveiling her latest creation at this weekend's St Richard's Canal Festival.

by **Tristan Harris**  
tristan.harris@bullivantmedia.com

Rosie first burst onto the local art scene in 2012 with her 'Wonky Droitwich' painting, depicting Droitwich Spa's High Street in a quirky style.

Since then, Rosie has made a career of selling her wonky paintings at local festivals and venues.

At her first festival of the year, Rosie is excited to release a new painting entitled 'Flying Visit'. The piece depicts the Railway Inn pub, the Pamela May Community

Canal Boat and the Flying Scotsman.

Rosie said: "I had great fun putting together this composition, depicting a sunny afternoon with a surprise visitor."

"I know the Pamela May (which I have painted many times before) is moored here, as well as a brilliant view of the railway in the distance so there was a lot of interest to include."

"The famous 'boy on the bike' remains, although he seems to have missed the Flying Scotsman hurtling past."

Rosie has been so busy

with commissions that it has been a couple of years since she has released a new painting.

The festival in Vines Park presents a rare opportunity to see an original Rosie Philpott on display.

The original, A2 in size and framed in a solid oak frame, is for sale, along with limited-edition giclee prints in sizes A3 and A2.

The piece, along with others from her collection, will be available to view on Rosie's stall from tomorrow (Saturday) to Monday (May 5).

Email [rosieposeartist@gmail.com](mailto:rosieposeartist@gmail.com) or visit the website [rosiephilpott.co.uk](http://rosiephilpott.co.uk) for more on Rosie and her work and to get in touch with her.



Artist Rosie Philpott will be unveiling her latest wonky painting 'Flying Visit' at the St Richard's Canal Festival this weekend. s

## MP impressed by 'inspiring' Hub

BROMSGROVE'S MP has praised the 'inspiring' work of the team behind the town's newest youth-led organisation.

Bradley Thomas visited The Hub Bromsgrove which hosts drop-in support for young people, as well as lots of activities and group events.

The team also offers mentoring, school-based groups and alternative provision.

Originally based at Bromsgrove Baptist Church, The Hub moved to its brand-new home on Market Street about six months ago.

Following his visit, Mr Thomas said: "It was inspiring to visit The Hub and to learn more about the hard work that went into turning an idea into reality. "From mental health sup-



Bradley Thomas MP with the team from The Hub Bromsgrove.

port to alternative provision wanting to support local good causes and projects to consider supporting The Hub." Email [info@thehub-bromsgrove.org](mailto:info@thehub-bromsgrove.org) to support The Hub.

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# Charity duo to reach for skies

**TWO college students are raising funds for the Royal British Legion (RBL) by doing a charity skydive.**

Mia Argyle and Tegan Milne are studying uniformed protective services at Heart of Worcestershire College.

Throughout their lessons they have learnt the importance of public and military service and have decided to raise money and awareness for all those who have made the sacrifices that provide everyone with the freedom they enjoy today.

Their goal is to raise dona-

by **Ashleigh Osborne**  
ashleigh.osborne  
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tions towards The Royal British Legion to aid the serving armed forces, veterans and their families.

To do so, they will conquer their biggest fear – heights – by completing a skydive out of a plane at 14,000ft.

They have smashed their fundraising target of £1,000 but hope to raise as much as possible.

Mia said: "Fear has always been holding me back and keeping me within my comfort zone, but I believe I can

prove to myself and others that I am strong, and I can face my fears head on. At the end of the day life is meant to be lived to the fullest.

"And I believe it is about seizing opportunities, embracing challenges and making the most out of the time we have."

Tegan added: "It has always been a dream of mine to complete a skydive, and what better way than honouring a cause that is close to my heart."

As students in uniformed protective services, they are training to serve and protect our community with cour-



age, dedication and resilience.

These core values align with the mission of the Royal British Legion, an organisation that has been a lifeline

for members and beneficiaries of the Armed Forces community since 1921.

By participating in a charity skydive for the RBL, the pair said they would not

only be supporting a worthy cause but also enhancing their own growth and sense of duty.

Visit [gofund.me/9390c92d](http://gofund.me/9390c92d) to donate.



## Runners have new Project to go the distance for charity

TWO EMPLOYEES from The Project in Rednal will take on the Birmingham Half Marathon this Sunday, May 4.

Mel Jaunzems and Lottie Robinson, who both live in Bromsgrove, are hoping to raise funds for the charity which provides advice and services across Birmingham.

The organisation, which was started in Rednal 35 years ago and has been based their ever

since, assists with issues, such as welfare benefits, homelessness and debt and it also connects people to services in their areas to improve wellbeing.

The Project also works with Redditch Foodbank via Acts of Kindness, offering financial inclusion advice to those in need.

The funds raised from Mel and Lottie's run will enable The Project to help people quickly in

crisis at a time when it has never been more needed.

The AJ Bell Great Birmingham Run is the Midlands' biggest running event which starts and finishes in the heart of the city.

Mel has undertaken the run a couple of times before for the charity whereas this is the first time for Lottie who only recently joined The Project.

The pair said they were both dedicated to The Project, and

hoped to raise as much as they could so to help as many people as possible with the daily challenges they face, especially in the cost-of-living crisis.

Visit [ajbellgreatbirminghamrun2025.enthouse.com/pf/melinda-jauzems/](http://ajbellgreatbirminghamrun2025.enthouse.com/pf/melinda-jauzems/) for Mel and Lottie's fundraising page and to donate.

Mel Jaunzems and Lottie Robinson will tackle the Birmingham Half Marathon to raise funds for The Project. s

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# New counselling rules will offer protection

**A BROMSGROVE psychotherapist is calling for greater regulation of private sector counsellors over fears growing numbers within the industry are presenting themselves as professionals without the necessary qualifications.**

Helen Townsend, an accredited psychotherapist with over 17 years experience, is joining forces with professionals and governing bodies to advocate for government regulation of the sector following growing concerns.

She believes implementing a regulatory framework, such as those provided by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA), would enhance the quality and safety of counselling services while protecting the public from potentially harmful practices.

With the NHS struggling to meet demand due to excessive waiting lists and restrictive criteria for Talking Therapies, many people are turning to the private sector for support.

But the lack of regulation in the UK means vulnerable individuals are at risk of encountering unsafe practices.

Helen recently met with Bromsgrove MP Bradley Thomas to discuss the urgent need for mandatory government regulations for counselling and psychotherapy services.

Mr Thomas thanked Helen - who he said had helped many constituents - for raising the issue, adding he supported her cause.

"I look forward to working with Helen as we seek to protect patients and promote the valuable work of accredited counsellors and psychotherapists."



### Further support

Labour's health minister Stephen Kinnock has also pointed out issues with unregulation and Health Secretary Wes Streeting noted an 'overdiagnosis' of mental health conditions.

It is believed social media platforms have exacerbated the problem, with adver-

tisements promoting quick-fix courses such as 'become a counsellor in a weekend'.

These courses allow individuals to set up counselling services in their communities without adequate training, insurance, or a complaints policy, leaving vulnerable clients without recourse in cases of malpractice.

Helen stressed the importance of rigorous initial training spanning four to six years, supplemented by 30 hours of annual Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

She also advocates for professional membership subscriptions, monthly clinical supervision, insurance, enhanced DBS checks, and GDPR compliance to ensure ethical and effective care.

Helen, a member of the National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society (NCPs) and the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), is urging the government to address these issues and introduce regulations.

**Helen Townsend, an experienced Bromsgrove-based psychotherapist, is calling for better regulations of private sector counselling to protect the public from potentially harmful practices. s**

**GET INVOLVED:** RESIDENTS are being encouraged to celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE Day by taking part in a host of scheduled events organised by Droitwich Spa Town Council.

A variety of activities for VE Day 80 will take place at Droitwich Spa Heritage and Information Centre on Thursday, May 8.

The important day will start with a flag raising by town crier, Edgar Harwood, at 9am outside St Richard's House in Victoria Square.

The Heritage and Information Centre's Droitwich at War exhibition will be on display from 10am to 7pm. The exhibition is also viewable from May 1 to May 15.

Visit: [droitwichstandard.co.uk/news/droitwich-at-war-exhibition-to-showcase-life-during-world-war-two/](http://droitwichstandard.co.uk/news/droitwich-at-war-exhibition-to-showcase-life-during-world-war-two/) for more information on the exhibition.

There will be a war memorial service in Victoria Square with the Royal British Legion from 11am.

In the afternoon there will be a classic 1940s Punch and Judy show from 4.30pm until 5pm at the Heritage and Information Centre, along with a live singer who will perform 1940s and wartime music for an hour-and-a-half from 6pm.

At 7.45pm, the 2516 Droitwich Squadron Air Cadets will march outside of St Richard's House from 7.45pm and a Beacon Lighting in the St Augustine's Church grounds will close the evening at 9.30pm. Prior to that, from 9.10pm, The Salvation Army Band will play a 20-minute set.

Mayor of Droitwich Spa, Coun Alex Sinton, will also read out a tribute.

And residents are being encouraged to eat fish and chips to pay tribute to the brave fisherman who fished the seas and the farmers and land girls who toiled in the fields. Fish and chips were not rationed by then Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

**SERIOUS INJURIES:** A TEENAGE girl was taken to hospital after being hit by a bus in Frankley. The incident happened at 3.14pm on Monday in Arden Road.

One ambulance, a paramedic officer and a MERIT trauma doctor with a Critical Care Paramedic attended the scene.

The girl was treated for potentially serious injuries before being taken to Birmingham Children's Hospital.

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Richard Crane, from Charford in Bromsgrove, with his Austin 8 CWT van.



Mollie Weaver, three, from Northfield, in a 1957 Morris Minor Traveller.



Simon, from Mortons Funeral Directors in Northfield, with a Mini hearse.



This Rover Maestro 500 L 2.0 Perkins Diesel is a recreation of one of the vehicles used by West Midlands Police between 1985 and 1995.

# The cars are still the stars in rally

**THE 'BIGGEST and best ever' Pride of Longbridge Rally took place in Cofton Park - 20 years to the month of the collapse of MG Rover.**

More than 1,000 cars - all built in Longbridge - descended on south Birmingham with a multitude of models from Austin 7s to Minis, Metros, Montegos, Maestros, Allegros, MGs and more.

Organiser Gemma Cartwright MBE said: "It's been amazing.

"The weather has been kind to us, we've had people come from near and far for us.

"We've had enthusiasts, lots of ex-Rover workers and Austin ex-apprentices, people from abroad.

by **Tristan Harris**  
tristan.harris@bullivantmedia.com

We've done really well.

"Pride of Longbridge is more about the cars - it's about the community around it.

"We recognise the collapse of MG Rover 20 years ago which was devastating to our community and celebrating the heritage."

Australian Mark Bell, an MG and Rover enthusiast, travelled all the way from Melbourne to be at the event and presented Gemma with a Rover Car Club Australia cap.

He said: "I have been an enthusiast of Rover cars for about 50 years since I had my first ride in a P6B and then I owned one.

"I joined the club in the early 1990s and wanted to be here because of Pride of Longbridge. It was nice to find out what was happening here and I realised this was an important year - 20 years since the collapse of the Longbridge plant and production.

"I told my wife I was going and now I'm here. It's absolutely fantastic - there's so many great cars here."

Simon Haddleton, from Mortons Funeral Directors in Northfield, took a quirky 1964 Mini Woody hearse 'Bert' - named after Herbert Austin who formed the original Austin Motor Company - to the event.

He said: "As it was born in Longbridge, we thought it would

be fitting to have Bert here today. It's been creating quite a stir with everyone who has come down here today."

He added it was popular with people who used to work at the Austin or MG Rover and Mini enthusiasts.

Richard Crane, from Charford, Bromsgrove, brought his Austin 8 CWT van along to the rally.

He said: "I owned this exact model 21 years ago and used to use it for social, domestic and pleasure drives.

"Then by sheer chance I saw it on YouTube on Mathewsons on the TV show Bangers and Cash and decided to buy it back.

"And now, as it was built in Longbridge, I thought I would bring it down today."



Pride of Longbridge organiser Gemma Cartwright MBE with Mark Bell who had travelled all the way from Australia to be at the rally. Pictures by Tristan Harris. © Bullivant Media Group Ltd.



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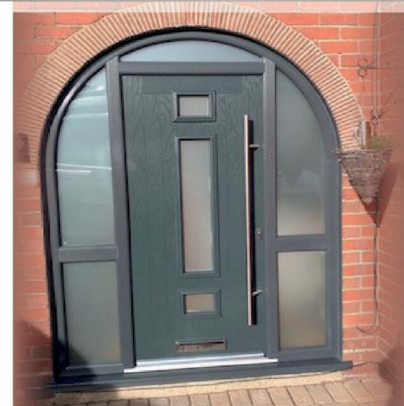
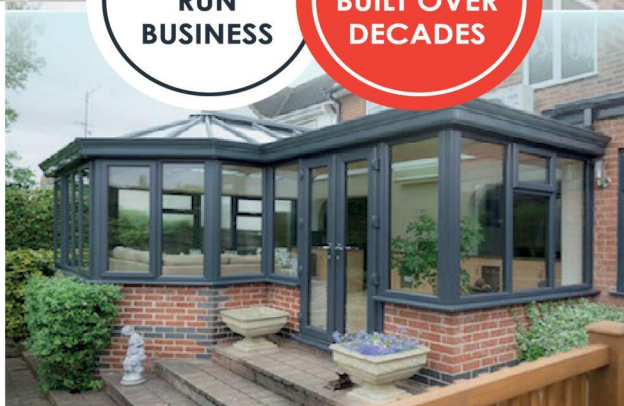


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# 300 Gymshark jobs on the line as profits drop

by Sarah Mason  
sarah.mason@bullivantmedia.com

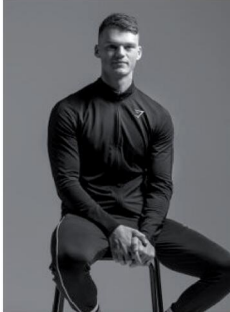
**ACTIVEWEAR** Gymshark has put the future of almost 300 jobs on the line, despite hitting record revenues of more than £600m for the first time.

The Solihull-headquartered brand, co-founded by billionaire entrepreneur and former South Bromsgrove High School student Ben Francis, has entered into a consultation period with 296 employees, nearly a third of its workforce.

The move was first reported by Drapers and comes on the heels of Gymshark's latest financial results, which revealed revenue rose to \$607.3m for the year ending in July 2024, up from \$556.2m the previous year.

It marks the 12th straight year of sales growth for the business, but that top-line success contrasts with falling profits.

Pre-tax profit declined for the third consecutive year,



**Gymshark co-founder Ben Francis.**

dropping to \$11.8m from \$13m in 2023, down from \$27.8m in 2022. It comes following a major investment in the brand's global expansion, including new store openings in the UK, the US, and the UAE.

In the UK, the brand continued its brick-and-mortar expansion. The new Bond Street store became Gymshark's fourth physi-

cal retail site, following the opening of its flagship on London's Regent Street in October 2022, its Westfield Stratford City store earlier this year, and its first international location in the Dubai Mall.

Gymshark's headcount rose from 853 to 881 over the year, though that figure is now set to fall sharply as the firm looks to restructure operations amid the financial pressures.

To support its expansion and operations, the company secured a new £120m revolving credit facility in May 2024, led by HSBC and a consortium of banks. The agreement includes an additional £60m accordion option over a five-year term, offering further financial flexibility.

Gymshark was founded in 2012 by Ben Francis and Lewis Morgan. It reached unicorn status in 2020 after US private equity firm General Atlantic acquired a 21 per cent stake, valuing the company at more than £1bn.

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# Rising costs are hurting our crucial businesses

**APRIL** marked the start of the new financial year, which meant many local businesses were met with rising costs and new uncertainty.



## Westminster Diary

Nigel Huddleston MP writes for The Observer



From April 6, bill increases introduced by the Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer came in, placing fresh pressure on family businesses, farmers and employers across Worcestershire.

This followed a deeply concerning Spring Statement which exposed the consequences of Labour's economic mismanagement.

After raising spending by £70billion, taxes by £40billion and borrowing by £30billion, the Chancellor is now scrambling to correct her own mistakes. Economic growth forecasts have been halved and hardworking families are being left to foot the bill.

Of particular concern is Labour's cap on Business Property Relief which could see long-established family firms face inheritance tax for the first time in generations – forcing many to break up or sell.

I've heard from GP surgeries, care providers, charities

and hospitality businesses all alarmed by Labour's tax hikes, red tape and cuts to business rates relief. Confidence is being lost, and investment delayed.

Family businesses employ nearly 14million people and contribute more than £200billion to the UK economy.

They deserve certainty, not more costs and confusion. I will continue to stand up for them in Parliament.

### Supporting pubs

I was proud to sponsor an event in Parliament celebrating our brilliant pubs.

In Droitwich and Evesham, 91 pubs and three local breweries support more than 1,600 jobs and contribute £55million to the local economy.

Labour's decision to cut business rates relief from 75 per cent to 40 per cent and hike employer National Insurance contributions puts these community hubs at risk. In

Worcestershire alone, pubs face an average rates rise of more than £4,500 next year.

If you support our pubs, please sign the petition on my website.

### Fighting modern slavery

It was extremely disappointing to see Labour MPs block an amendment that would have prevented taxpayer money being spent on solar panels linked to modern slavery. This was a cross-party issue of principle.

The UK must follow the example of countries like the United States and ensure our green transition does not come at the expense of human rights.

I am pleased that, after pressure from the Conservative MPs, the Government has now U-turned and used our common sense approach to ban solar panels linked to modern slavery.

### Backing a Ban on Phones in Schools

I voted to ban mobile phone use during the school day. Sadly, the Government blocked

our amendment. Phones can impact children's wellbeing and I believe a consistent, legal approach is needed.

### A rare Saturday in Parliament

On April 12, Parliament sat on a Saturday to debate emergency legislation on British Steel. I support protecting steel jobs, but the rushed process and the scale of the powers being granted raised serious concerns.

The Conservatives proposed a sunset clause to ensure these emergency powers would be time-limited and subject to review, but sadly, it was not even allowed to be debated.

The Government must now be fully transparent about the costs, oversight, and long-term implications of this legislation.

With spring in full swing, I encourage everyone to enjoy some of the fantastic festivals and community events coming up across the constituency - it's a great time to get involved and support our local culture.

**Nigel Huddleston MP,**  
Member of Parliament for  
Droitwich and Evesham

## Police handed £3m boost for 66 more jobs

A MULTI-MILLION pound funding boost will allow West Mercia Police to hire dozens of new officers into neighbourhood roles over the next year.

Government funding of £3 million will cover the hiring of 31 neighbourhood police officers as well as 20 PCSOs and 15 specials across West Mercia.

Earlier this month, Home Secretary Yvette Cooper announced the funding for 2025/26 as part of its Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee programme to bring in 13,000 extra officers by the end of Labour's parliament.

Each force in England and Wales has been allocated a budget based on the Police Funding Formula with West Mercia Police receiving £3,108,283.

Speaking on behalf of West Mercia Police Federation, Steve Butler said: "We welcome plans to boost neighbourhood policing, an area severely hit by the budget cuts, with the links into our communities being hard hit and public confidence in policing being dented.

As part of its plans, the Government wants every neighbourhood in England and Wales to have dedicated teams spending their time on the beat, with guaranteed police patrols in town centres and hotspot areas at peak times.

In announcing the funding, Ms Cooper said: "The heartbeat of policing tradition is seeing bobbies on the beat, but for too long, communities have been feeling abandoned as crime soared and neighbourhood police disappeared."



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# Raising funds and awareness

**FUNDRAISING** events to support the Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI) will take place at HoW College to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

The activities will be held at the Redditch and Bromsgrove campuses on Tuesday (May 6) and the Worcester campus on Wednesday (May 7).

The events bring together students from a range of courses to honour the bravery and resilience of the armed forces and to raise vital funds for RBLI, an organisation dedicated to supporting veterans.

Celebration highlights include a student-run bake sale, featuring a variety of homemade goods including cupcakes, brownies, and cookies.

The sale will be set against the nostalgic backdrop of a 1940s-themed student recreation space, decorated and soundtrack by a playlist curated by students.

These will include wartime classics from the D-Day Darlings.

The events will also showcase educational leaflets designed by students to raise



awareness about the significance of VE Day and the work of RBLI.

A number of students from the Public Services course will be leading the days, recognising the historical and ongoing importance of service to the country.

Matthew Chadwick, a light vehicle maintenance student in Bromsgrove, said: "Celebrating VE day and marking the 80th anniversary is important to me because it is such an important part of history and we can't allow it to be forgotten."

"My great grandfather was a B17 mechanic in 1942 and he was based in Africa where he would help repair planes that had flown in from completing bombing raids. "We can't forget the sacrifices that so many veterans made for us."

Three RBLI representatives will attend the Redditch event to show their support.

Gerry Marsden, Chairman of The Redditch Branch of the Royal British Legion, said: "The Royal British Legion motto is 'Service not Self' and we celebrate the students at HoW College and give thanks to their fundraiser."

"We stand together in honour of those who served, providing unwavering support to the Armed Forces community - past, present, and future."

Additional fundraising efforts include two student-led skydives taking place in May, showcasing HoW College's broad commitment to charitable causes this term.

People can visit: [justgiving.com/page/howcollegefundraiser](http://justgiving.com/page/howcollegefundraiser) to donate.

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LEFT: Alex Wolswijk, Luke Greenwood and Aran Sullivan from the BrumVik Vikings. RIGHT: Suffragette Ellen Davison, First World War civilian Willow Pinchin, Connor McGrath from the First World War and James Homer from the 1911 Railway Riots. FAR RIGHT: Cpl Ian Cowling with the Vicker's Machine Gun, part of the Great War Society. Pictures by Tristan Harris. © Bullivant Media Group Ltd.



First World War re-enactors paraded on the site.

# History comes to life

AVONCROFT Museum was packed and buzzing during the two-day International Living History Festival.

More than 400 re-enactors showcased 700 years of the past – all spread out over the 19 acres of the site and its 30 historical buildings.

Medieval groups and vikings demonstrated combat, soldiers from numerous eras were marching on site and others were speaking to the visitors – more than 800 in total - about what they were watching and experiencing.

Among the scenes created were some from the First and Second

by Tristan Harris  
tristan.harris@bullivantmedia.com

World War, American revolutionaries, Romans, and Victorians.

The re-enactors – spread across 40 camps – used the historic buildings as part of their amazing reconstructions.

As well as combat, they illustrated what daily lives were like from work and crafts to cooking and general living conditions.

Among the copious highlights were Vikings battling it out with Napoleonic troops, medieval weavers and sail-makers teaming up with stone age settlers, storytellers sharing tales with

dancers and musicians. Billed as a 'true family event, packed with education and entertainment', it was a truly incredible experience.

There were also trader stalls, selling historically inspired artefacts from jewellery and hats to handmade tools, costumes and cloth to historic pottery.

A medieval kitchen display and multiple mead-makers were among the traders.

A 'Meet the Authors area' with talks and presentations were also held across the weekend in the Historic Long Room (upstairs), with music and dance in the Guesten Hall.

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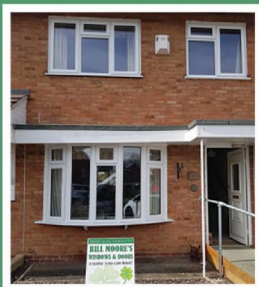


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Edwin Elmhurst from the Tudor Lygett Household.



Inga from the Svartland (Black Country) Vikings.



Elaine Smith, Helen Carter and Robin Mellor from the On War Service First World War re-enactment group.



Mark Page and Tom Jones from the Les Poilu d'Angleterre.



The Victorian Association brought its Diehard re-enactors to the venue.



Steve and Kathy Cashmore depicted life in 1953 in Avoncroft's 1946 prefab.



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A beautiful sunny springtime scene posted by Vicki's Tropic Skincare. s



A view of the Boathouse Cafe at Arrow Valley Lake by Kerry Louise. s



Fishing at Coughton Court by Jen Hopkins. s



The Hanbury countryside by Alan Giles. s

# Springtime in full focus

**WITH Easter, a break from school and some fantastic springtime weather, many residents of all ages headed out and about to make the most of the sunshine.**

We put out a call on our Facebook page for your pictures of what you got up to during this time off work, school and college and you did not disappoint.

There are plenty of places to go in the borough and throughout Worcestershire – wonderful venues, country

by **Tristan Harris**  
tristan.harris@bullivantmedia.com

parks and green areas to spend your leisure time.

As you would expect, country parks proved popular with visitors who went for walks or enjoyed food and drink at cafes, while others indulged in the beauty of nature and family-friendly activities.

Lakes glistened under longer daylight hours, and the trees burst with fresh green leaves and cherry blossoms. Families fed the

ducks, geese, swans and other water birds while cyclists pedalled their way along the paths and others enjoyed picnics on the grass.

Worcestershire in springtime offers a refreshing reminder of new beginnings, hope, and community spirit.

And, with another bank holiday upon us, there will be plenty of time to go out and enjoy the sunshine.



An Easter art diorama by Ellouise Eades. s



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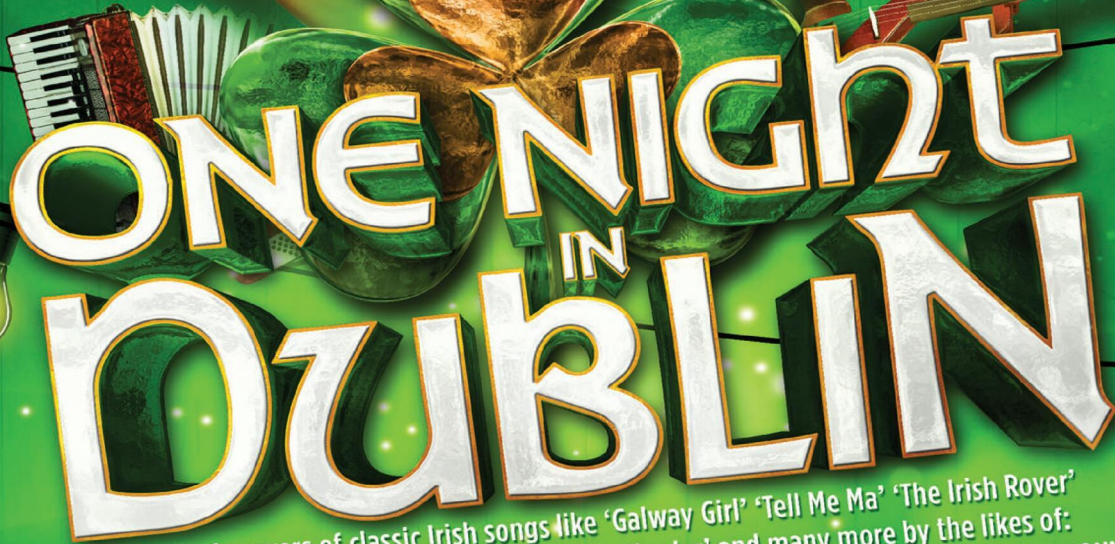
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Hewell Grange is the topic of this month's history society talk on Monday, May 12.

# Hewell Grange in the spotlight

**REDDITCH History Society continues its season of local and national history talks with a presentation on the Hewell Grange in Tardebigge from 2pm to 4pm on Monday, May 12, at the Oasis Christian Centre.**

The presentation: 'Hewell Grange: Is the landscape worth the 2\* designation given it by English Heritage?' will be delivered by David Whitehead, of the Hereford and Worcester Gardens Trust.

The talk will concentrate upon the house, the family and the landscape in the 18th and 19th centuries, and from the Gardens Trust perspective, the restoration of the Quarry Garden and the potential for the parkland and gardens to become a major tourist attraction.

A spokesperson for the history society said: "We are especially pleased to welcome David Whitehead as our speaker, as he was a history teacher at Redditch County High School early in his long teaching career, and will no doubt be a familiar face to some members of our audience."

"David has written several books, including one on the Parks and Gardens of Herefordshire, and contributed more recently to its companion volume about Worcestershire."

The Redditch History Society meets from 2pm until 4pm on the second Monday afternoon of each month. Non-members are always welcome, for a £4 entrance fee, and refreshments are available after the talk for just 50 pence per person.

Further details of the 2025 season can be found online at [redditchhistorysociety.org.uk](http://redditchhistorysociety.org.uk) or on a leaflet, available at Redditch Library and The Palace Theatre.

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# New estate agents opens town office

A VARIETY of activities were held to celebrate the official opening of a new estate agents in Bromsgrove.

The event to launch Oakhams at 2, High Street, Bromsgrove, took place on Saturday.

There was plenty of fun for all the family, including football freestyle workshops, free slushies, free coffee, balloons and more.

More than 400 chocolates were given out, along with £5 off vouchers for the Steamhouse Cafe which is down the road from Oakhams' office.

A competition for people to guess how many keys were in a jar was also held with the closest guess getting a £200 gift voucher to spend at The Queen's Head pub in Bromsgrove.

The event was such a success that the company's director Nick Oakes has decided to host another event, similar to the launch, tomorrow



Oakhams' sales negotiator Jamie Southall gave out free chocolate. s

(Saturday, May 3) for those who missed it the first time. That will take place from 11am.

Visit our website at [bromsgrove.standard.co.uk](http://bromsgrove.standard.co.uk) for more pictures of the launch.

## Stalls, food and fun at Blue Cross fundraiser

THERE will be fun for all the family at the latest fayre to raise funds for Bromsgrove's Blue Cross.

The event will take place at the Romsley Scout Centre Playing Fields from 10am to 3pm next Saturday, May 10.

Among the attractions will be craft stalls, pre-loved goods and

food and refreshments.

All funds raised will help the Blue Cross care for more cats, dogs and small animals at its rehoming centre on Wildmoor Lane in Catshill.

Saffron Parry, assistant manager at Blue Cross in Bromsgrove, said: "Blue Cross relies on the support and donations of pet

lovers to continue our vital work changing the lives of sick, injured and homeless cats, dogs and small animals.

"Entry to the fayre is free and dogs are welcome to come along too."

Email [bromsgrove@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:bromsgrove@bluecross.org.uk) or call the team on 0300 777 1842 for more on the event.

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# New Couch to 5k sessions to start

**NEW Couch to 5k courses are set to start across Bromsgrove and Redditch this month.**

The nine-week courses are designed for absolute beginners and offer an easy way to get fitter and healthier for anyone, whether you've never run before or want to get back into being more active.

Anyone that wants to ditch the couch and start running are welcome at any session people do not need to book, and sessions are completely free.

### Bromsgrove

There will be sessions on a Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Monday sessions will be held from 6pm at The Ryland Centre Track (first session on Monday, May 12).

Wednesday sessions will be held at 10am at Sanders Park Bandstand. Thursday sessions will be held at 9.30am at Catshill Meadow.

And Friday sessions will be held at 9am at Hagley Playing Fields.

### Redditch

There will be kit availa-



Abbey Stadium is one of the venues for the new Couch to 5k courses.

ble free to collect tomorrow (Saturday, May 3) at Batchley Support Group, Oasis in Woodrow and Inspire Support Services in the Winyates Craft Centre.

At the Abbey Stadium track, sessions take place on Sundays at 10am, Mondays at 7.30pm and Wednesdays at 7.30pm.

At Stitch Meadow, Arrow Valley Lake, they will be held on Mondays at 10am and at 7pm on Thursdays.

Other sessions take place at 6.30pm on Wednesdays at Matchborough Pond, at 6.30pm on Thursdays at The Field in Woodrow (meet by Studley Road car park), 9.30am on Fridays at Batchley Pond and at 9am on Saturdays in Morton Stanley Park.

The weekly sessions, which

are all free, are led by Run Leaders who hold official qualifications from England Athletics and provide a course which is fully endorsed by the NHS. Participants are advised to attend three sessions a week on whichever days are ideal.

Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Council sports development officer, Hayley Gwilliam, said: "The health and mental benefits of taking part in a Couch to 5k course are amazing and can really set you up for a good week or day. It's no surprise it is such a high attendance activity, even more so over spring and summer."

Contact the council's Sports Development team on 01527 881404 or [sd@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:sd@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk) for more information.

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# Family Notices

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## DEATHS

**Vincenzo D'Elia**  
(Formerly of Rossini Restaurant)  
Sadly passed away on Monday 21st April 2025.  
A much loved Husband to Margaret. A wonderful Father to Alessandro and Riccardo and a special Nonno.  
Vincenzo will be profoundly missed by all of his family and friends.  
The funeral mass will take place at Our Lady & St Joseph Catholic Church, Alcester on Thursday 15th May 2025 at 11.00 am.  
This will be followed by burial at Alcester Cemetery.  
Flowers if desired or donations for Our Lady & St Joseph Catholic Church Alcester may be sent to Thomas Brothers Funeral Directors, Greyfriars, Birmingham Road, Alcester. B49 5QF. 01789 330939  
Thank You

## DEATHS

**Michael Imms**  
It is with deep sadness that we announce the sudden and unexpected passing of our beloved father, Michael Imms, on Sunday, 20th April 2025.  
He was much loved by his family, friends, and the wider community, and his presence will be dearly missed by all who knew him.  
A funeral service to celebrate his life will be held at Redditch Crematorium on Tuesday, 20th May at 2:00pm.  
All who knew him are welcome to attend and pay their respects.  
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## PUBLIC NOTICES

### PUBLIC NOTICES

#### Warwickshire County Council

**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984**  
 Warwickshire County Council has made the following Temporary Traffic Order:  
**A4023 COVENTRY HIGHWAY, MOONS MOAT, MAPPLEBOROUGH GREEN**  
**Order Effect:** Road closed to southbound vehicular traffic between northbound slip road for A435 and southbound slip road for A435  
**Reason for Order:** Carriageway resurfacing, weeknights only, 2000-0600hrs.  
**Order Commences:** 6 May 2025 for up to 18 months  
**Anticipated Completion:** 10 May 2025  
**Access & Diversion:** A435 Northbound slip road, A435 Northbound, Ullenhall Lane and back onto the A435 Southbound. Access/Egress to/from Amazon Depot (Redditch Gateway North & South) will be maintained.  
**Contractor:** Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

**COVENTRY HIGHWAY, MAPPLEBOROUGH GREEN**  
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic from the slip road junction with Redditch Eastern Gateway onto A435.  
**Reason for Order:** To enable cabling works, overnight 2000-0600hrs.  
**Order Commences:** 22 May 2025 for up to 18 months  
**Anticipated Completion:** 23 May 2025  
**Access & Diversion:** Coventry Highway, Alcester Road, Birmingham Road and vice versa.  
**Contractor:** OCU Group, Tel: 02039 274 618

Warwickshire County Council proposes to make the following Temporary Traffic Orders:  
**D51680 HIGHFIELD ROAD, STUDLEY**  
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic from Station Road to Stapleton Road.  
**Reason for Order:** Drainage work, 0800-1700hrs.  
**Order Commences:** 19 May 2025 for up to 18 months.  
**Anticipated Completion:** 23 May 2025  
**Access & Diversion:** Lansdowne Road, Hilmorton Drive, A448, Station Road and vice versa.  
**Contractor:** Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

**EVESHAM ROAD, SALFORD PRIORS**  
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic.  
**Reason for Order:** To enable works to install a new water connection.  
**Order Commences:** 19 May 2025 for up to 18 months  
**Anticipated Completion:** 23 May 2025  
**Access & Diversion:** Evesham Road, School Road, Salford Road, Norton Road, Alcester Road, Harrington Lane, Abbots Salford Road, Anchor Lane, Crest Hill and vice versa.  
**Contractor:** RNR Traffic Management, Tel: 07852 380 338.

For all of the above temporary orders, pedestrian access to and egress from properties and land situated adjacent to the length of road to be closed will be maintained at all times. Vehicular access will be maintained where possible.  
**To report any problems with these works or for further details of our current & planned roadworks visit our website warwickshire.gov.uk/roadworksmap or call us 01926 412515.**  
 S Duxbury, Assistant Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance.  
 Shire Hall, Warwick, CV34 4RL Date 2 May 2025

### PUBLIC NOTICES

#### BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL & REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Advertisement Key: ADVST = Wider Publicity, CAS = Conservation Area Setting, MAJ = Major Development.  
**25/00454/FUL MAJ CAS ADVST**  
 Site: Kingfisher Car Park 7, Church Road, Redditch, Worcestershire.  
**Proposal:** Full planning application for the development of 53 no. retirement apartments (Use class C3) including vehicular access, car parking, landscaping and associated infrastructure.  
**Application forms and plans may be inspected online** <https://publicaccess.bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk/online-applications>  
**Comments can be submitted online, via email to** [newplan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:newplan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk) **or in writing** Planning Services, Redditch Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH.  
**Comments should be made within 17 days of the date of this publication. The Council does not acknowledge comments but will make these available for inspection online.**

## PUBLIC NOTICES

#### BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL & REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Advertisement Key: LB = Listed Building.  
**25/00459/LBC LB**  
 Site: The Crabmill Inn, 122 Birmingham Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 0DF.  
**Proposal:** Refurbishment of existing beer garden.  
**25/00458/FUL LB**  
 Site: The Crabmill Inn, 122 Birmingham Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 0DF.  
**Proposal:** Refurbishment of existing beer garden.  
**25/00465/LBC LB**  
 Site: Cast Iron Bridge, Hewell Grange, Hewell Lane, Tardebigge, Worcestershire.  
**Proposal:** Repointing of stonework, new resin-bound paving and paint finish to ironworks.  
**Application forms and plans may be inspected online** <https://publicaccess.bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk/online-applications>  
**Comments can be submitted online, via email to** [newplan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:newplan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk) **or in writing** Planning Services, Redditch Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH.  
**Comments should be made within 17 days of the date of this publication. The Council does not acknowledge comments but will make these available for inspection online.**

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## Aston Martin launches DBX

### Aston Martin has announced a new DBX flagship, DBX S.

With the dynamic appeal of DBX707 and an engine enhanced by technology transferred directly from the forthcoming Valhalla supercar, DBX S offers one of the most engaging and responsive driving experiences delivering even more power, reduced weight and more assertive design. With a suite of exterior and interior enhancements to match, the DBX S certainly has its own undeniable identity.

Aston Martin CEO, Adrian Hallmark, said: "The introduction of DBX S not only reaffirms our commitment to producing the most exciting, rewarding and beautiful cars, it also sends a powerful statement of intent about our ambitions not just for DBX, but for the Aston Martin brand."

At the heart of the new DBX S lies an upgraded version of the acclaimed Aston Martin 4.0-Litre Twin-Turbo V8 powerhouse. By using turbo technology transferred directly from the upcoming Valhalla supercar including its larger compressor wheel diameters and other internal improvements, power is raised by a further 20PS to 727PS and provides even greater urgency at the very top of the rev range, making DBX S's performance even more memorable. The result is a 0-62mph time of just 3.3 seconds and reduction in acceleration time from 0-124mph (200km/h) of 0.3 seconds. Top speed remains unchanged at an impressive 193mph.

Further enhancing both performance and its perception is a modified exhaust system amplifying even more character to the natural

voice of the thunderous V8 engine and exploiting the full the opportunity presented by the engine's turbo enhancements.

As with its DBX707 stablemate, DBX S distributes its power between the front and rear wheels in variable proportion – including an ability to send 50 per cent of its torque to the front and up to 100 per cent of its torque to the rear wheels alone – through an innovative 9-speed 'wet clutch' transmission, which removes the need for a conventional torque converter, delivering extreme performance on launch from standstill. However, the DBX S gearbox has been further modified to provide an even more memorable driving experience. Change up points are adjusted to reflect the car's extended rev range, while downshifts in Sport and Sport + modes when the car is in auto-

matic are even more aggressive.

In addition to the power upgrade, a number of measures have been taken not only to significantly reduce the kerb weight of DBX S, but to do so in an intelligent and highly selective fashion that ensures that mere weight loss is just one of attributes resulting from these actions. A prime example is the new optional carbon fibre roof presented in a glorious single weave pattern which, at almost three metres square, is by far the largest such carbon element ever fitted to an Aston Martin. Specification of the carbon roof sees the removal of the roof rails, and as a combination not only saves 18kg of mass, but does so from the very highest point of the car, reducing its centre of gravity and therefore enhancing both stability and agility further.

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# Team VERTU make stunning start to BTCC season with four podiums

by Aaron Sutcliffe  
 aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

**BTCC:** DROITWICH-based Team VERTU top the British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) teams standings after securing four podium finishes on the opening weekend of the season.

Team VERTU driver Tom Chilton took a commanding victory in race three while Tom Ingram finished second in all three races at Donington Park.

The Droitwich team lead NAPA Racing UK by virtue of the finishing positions in the final race of the weekend.

Chilton said: "A race win in the final race, and third in the points is a really pleasing way to go into Brands Hatch and my favourite circuit on the calendar, although we haven't had it all our own way.

"However, we fought through and to score the first win for Team VERTU this season and help to secure the team award for the weekend as a whole is mega.

"We were able to really make the most of the pace we had in the car.

"NAPA Racing are also very quick, so it isn't just us and I feel the others were playing catch-up a bit, so it was important to really maximise what was available.

"We know the others will improve but we really made the



most of a strong winter testing programme to hit the ground running and deliver the results."

Ingram added: "This season will be one where you can't adopt the kind of approach of always being in the top six - now we realistically need to be pushing for the podium each weekend.

"It's going to be a very competitive season, but we have started it strongly, which is ultimately what we needed to do.

"Clearly, we were very strong, as were NAPA Racing, but we

know that there are others on the grid who are going to improve as the season goes on and the impact of the new turbo boost rules really takes effect.

"We've made our performance count this weekend to pick up three strong results, and I'm really pleased for Tom to get the win as he deserved it."

Team VERTU finished the first weekend of the season in style as Chilton and Ingram secured a one-two.

Chilton stormed to victory after starting on pole by virtue

of the reverse grid draw.

And Ingram followed Chilton home as the Coventry driver completed a clean sweep of podium finishes.

Chilton also finished seventh in race one and sixth in race two.

Team VERTU's Adam Morgan enjoyed an impressive end to the weekend as he placed 10th in race two and fifth in race three after suffering a DNF in the first race of the season.

The team's other driver, Michael Crees, finished 18th,

17th and 19th respectively across the three races.

Team owner, Justina Williams said: "This has been a fantastic way for us to start the season and although it is still very, very early in the title race, it's clear that the hard work that has gone in over the winter has put us in a strong position.

"We're now reaping the rewards of the fact that we were able to get out testing at Anglesey before Christmas thanks to the support of Vertu, as it provided us with that early information of what we needed to do to deal with the removal of the hybrid systems.

"From the moment we hit the track, we've been quick and to come away with a win, four podiums and the team's award is fantastic.

"Not only have Tom and Tom done a fantastic job, Adam has also driven brilliantly on his first weekend in the car and we've seen good progress from Michael considering this was his first real time behind the wheel.

"We can take a lot of confidence from the weekend but there is a long way still to go, and we need to make sure we don't rest on our laurels."

The BTCC season continues at Brands Hatch on the weekend of May 10 and 11.

Tom Ingram (left) and Tom Chilton (right) celebrate after finishing on the podium at Donington Park. Picture by Darren Price.

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## The nationwide events programme



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- A Military procession will start from Whitehall, ending at Buckingham Palace in London. Followed by a flypast, including Red Arrows military aircraft.
- HMS Belfast will host a street party onboard the ship.
- The Together Coalition and The Big Lunch will encourage communities to hold street parties and barbecues across the country.

### TUESDAY 6 MAY

- A ceramic poppy installation of 25,000 poppies will be on display at the Tower of London.
- Historic landmarks across the UK will be lit up in the evening.

### WEDNESDAY 7 MAY

- A Victory in Europe Day parliament choir event will be held at Westminster Hall at the Palace of Westminster
- Letters to Loved Ones live at IWM North with the National Theatre

### THURSDAY 8 MAY

- Remembrance service will take place at Westminster Abbey.
- National Theatre film 'The Next Morning' released online to the public.
- VE Day 80 concert in Horseguards Parade.

### FRIDAY 15 AUGUST

- The Royal British Legion will host a remembrance service at the National Memorial Arboretum.



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# The Royal Family took part in the celebrations



**T**he British Royal Family also played a central role in London's victory celebrations. Huge numbers of people surged down The Mall to Buckingham Palace, where King George VI, Queen Elizabeth and their daughters, Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret, soon appeared on the balcony to wave to the cheering crowds. In total, the King and Queen made eight appearances on the balcony, and at one point were joined by Winston Churchill. While the King and Queen were waving to the crowds for the last time that evening, their daughters were secretly mingling with the jubilant crowds below them. The future monarch, Princess Elizabeth, and her sister Margaret had been allowed to leave the palace and take

part – anonymously – in the party-like atmosphere. Princess Elizabeth later recalled, 'We stood outside and shouted, "We want the King"... I think it was one of the most memorable nights of my life.' King George VI, like Churchill, also gave a radio address. In it, he praised his subjects' endurance and called for a lasting peace. He also paid tribute to those who could not join in the celebrations, saying: 'Let us remember those who will not come back...let us remember the men in all the services, and the women in all the services, who have laid down their lives. We have come to the end of our tribulation and they are not with us at the moment of our rejoicing.'



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