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Father pays moving tribute to toddler son

by **Ryan Smith**
ryan.smith@bullivantmedia.com

A DROITWICH dad has paid tribute to his “giggly, happy” 21-month-old boy, Tobias-John Doyle, after two people were charged with his murder.

Simon Doyle, from Droitwich, has described his young son, who died in December 2023, as his best friend and said he put a smile on everyone’s face.

Mr Doyle’s tribute came after Omiel Gordon, 35, of Butterwick Drive, Leicester; and Shalom Morgan, 23, of Morledge Street, Leicester; were both charged with the murder of Tobias-John, more than two years after his death.

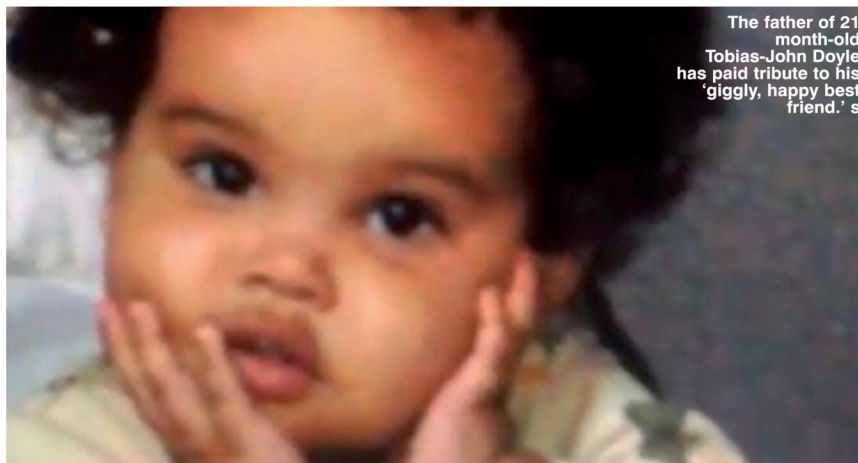
Gordon and Morgan have also both been charged with causing or allowing the death of a child and with child cruelty.

Paying tribute to his son, Mr Doyle told *The Standard*: “Tobias was really happy and giggly, he brought a smile to everyone’s face.

“He was my best friend and really was a breath of fresh air. He changed my life for the better, being around him was just pure happiness.

“He was perfect; he never got angry, never cried.”

A particularly fond memory



The father of 21 month-old Tobias-John Doyle has paid tribute to his ‘giggly, happy best friend.’ s

involved mornings with Tobias, when the toddler would whisper ‘dad’ to him, before eventually shouting it.

Mr Doyle also recalled how Tobias loved dinosaurs and would often pretend to be one.

The grieving father said: “I’d never felt love like that before – I just wanted to give him a good life.

“When you have a child, you share everything with them, your sandwich, your drink, your ice cream – they’re a part of you. I would tell all parents to cherish moments with your children, embrace the mess and don’t let the little things impact your life, because when the mess isn’t there any more, you’ll miss it.”

Police were contacted by East Midlands Ambulance Service on November 29, 2023, who were in attendance at an address in Mulberry Avenue, Leicester.

Tobias was taken to hospital from the address but sadly died on December 2, 2023.

Gordon and Morgan were first

arrested in November 2023, following Tobias’ hospital admission.

A complex investigation has since been carried out, during which family liaison officers provided support to Mr Doyle.

Gordon and Morgan appeared at Leicester Magistrates’ Court on Monday and, after appearing at Leicester Crown Court on Wednesday, both were remanded. Morgan will have a bail application hearing on Wednesday and both will appear at Leicester Crown Court on May 26 for a pre-trial preparation hearing.

Senior investigating officer, Det Insp Kevin Hames, said: “My thoughts very much remain with Tobias and everyone who is affected by his extremely sad death.

“This is a complex investigation and I do want to thank those who have provided support during this time.”

Droitwich vicar Rev Laura Handy also paid tribute to Tobias. She said: “Rest in peace, little man. You are so loved and will always be remembered by the many, many people your life has touched. Until we meet again, be at peace.”

Mr Doyle will run 50km this month, to raise money for child bereavement support charity Sands.

He has raised £220 so far. Visit fundraising.sands.org.uk/fundraisers/simondoyle to donate.

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YEAR six students at Alvechurch C of E Middle School have recently learnt vital life-saving skills as part of a human body topic.

During their learning, pupils asked questions around first aid and the heart.

A spokesperson for the school said: "With lots of cardiac arrests happening in the news and sport, it felt like a great learning opportunity to merge science with first aid."

The event was organised by Mr Pattison to raise awareness and the practical workshop

was delivered by Andy Thurgood, an emergency nurse and paramedic.

He taught the students how to undertake CPR.

The spokesperson added: "We would like to pass on our thanks for Andy for delivering such an engaging session."

Andy Thurgood, paramedic and emergency nurse, with Geore, Jackson, Erin, Freya and Mr Pattison, head of KS2 science. s



Here's where you can get help if needed

PEOPLE are being urged to make sure they get the right treatment over the May Day bank holiday weekend.

The Minor Injury Unit (MIU) at Bromsgrove's Princess of Wales Community Hospital will be open from 8am to 8pm everyday, including the bank holiday Monday. Extended x-ray services will be available from 9am until 5pm on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, May 2, 3 and 4.

People are urged to go to the MIU for minor injuries, rather than to A&E at Redditch's Alexandra Hospital or the Worcestershire Royal.

Waiting times are often shorter and patients can be seen a lot quicker.

MIUs are open throughout weekends and bank holidays, treating injuries such as sprains, simple fractures, cuts, burns, minor head injuries and wound infections.

Using the local MIU when appropriate helps reduce waiting times and keeps emergency departments free for more serious cases.

Pharmacies also offer expert confidential advice for minor incidents and illnesses as well as medicines for a range of minor ailments.

On May Day bank holiday Monday, May 4, in Bromsgrove, Knights Pharmacy, Birmingham Road, will be open from 12pm to 3pm.

The pharmacy at Tesco Extra, Coldfield Drive, Redditch, is open from 10am to 4pm and Boots in the Kingfisher Centre will be open between 10.30am and 4.30pm.

People can visit: 111.nhs.uk or call 111 to get advice from trained NHS staff, including signposting to the best service to meet their healthcare needs.

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See page **38**

Meeting called after fears over new housing

Residents alarmed by planning bids

by Ryan Smith
ryan.smith@bullivanmedia.com

A CALL has been made to ensure Droitwich's voice is heard after an influx of planning applications raised concerns.

Residents can gain a clearer idea of what different types of planning applications mean – and what role they can play in supporting or opposing them – by attending a meeting between 6pm and 7pm on Tuesday at Droitwich Community Hall.

Worcestershire County Councillors and other invited speakers will answer questions about the planning system.

County councillor Dan Birch arranged the meeting after residents expressed concern to him.

In December, plans for 100 affordable homes on a field off Tagwell Road were given the go-ahead. A recent bid to build up to 180 homes on land at Chawson Lane, and an application for 475 homes on land at Hanbury Road, have particularly worried residents.

Concern was expressed about the potential increase in traffic and impact on infrastructure.

Developer St Phillips, which submitted the mooted Chawson Lane development bid, said the local planning authority could not dem-

onstrate five-year housing land supply and the proposals would significantly contribute to addressing Wychavon's affordable housing crisis.

A transport assessment and travel plan for the Hanbury Road proposal, commissioned by Ainscough Strategic Land, concluded the proposed development was considered acceptable in transport and planning terms.

Coun Birch said: "We have seen an influx of planning applications within Droitwich Spa lately, with Tagwell Road, Hanbury Road and Chawson Lane. We will provide more advice and guidance as to how we, as a town, can influence planning applications.

"I see the comments and I obviously live in the town too.

"If it were up to me, we wouldn't be building in Droitwich at anywhere near the rate we have been.

"However, it is not up to me, nor often the council, to decide on where developers decide they want to apply to build – that's up to the landowners.

"Similarly, planning officers are tied down by both government housing targets and national planning policy.

"That's why, if we want to see the level of development reduce and, perhaps more importantly, the level of infrastructure increase, it's important we look at how we can work together to achieve this."



The team from Berry Hill MoT Centre – Will, Mick, Dave, Rob, Tess and Bob – are celebrating being shortlisted in the best customer service' category of the Automechanika Birmingham 2026 Garage Awards. s

Garage in with a shot at big award

A DROITWICH garage has made it through to the final of a prestigious award scheme.

Berry Hill MoT Centre Ltd has been shortlisted in the best customer service section of the Automechanika Birmingham 2026 Garage Awards.

The team will find out if they have won the accolade at the awards ceremony at Birmingham's NEC on June 3.

Berry Hill MoT Centre Ltd

has been going for three years. Prior to that it was part of the Blue Door Taxi Group and serviced the private-hire vehicles.

Rob Day, one of the directors, who has been in the motor servicing trade for 20 years, said: "This is the first time we have been shortlisted like this and we are all so proud.

"We all work as a team – from the mechanics and MoT testers to receptionists and office staff – and

we pride ourselves on our customer service."

The garage has 71 reviews on Google – all five-star – and testimonials mention customer service as one of the main reasons for using the centre.

Rob added: "If a car fails an MoT or needs work, we talk through the situation with the customer and show them behind the scenes – it's all about how they feel when they arrive and how they feel when they leave."

Road cordoned off after stabbing

A MAN aged in his 20s was taken to hospital after a stabbing in Frankley Beeches Road, in Northfield, at around 10.45pm on Friday, April 24.

He sustained serious injuries and the road was cordoned off the following day while forensic investigations were carried out.

Detectives have made extensive enquiries, spo-

ken to people living nearby and analysed CCTV.

Witnesses, or anyone else with information, should call police on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



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Connor turns on the jets

REDDITCH runner Connor Barker smashed the London Marathon in just over four hours, cheered on by family as he raised funds for Derwen College Charity.

Connor took on the 26.2-mile challenge in memory of his dad Brian Hodgkinson and to support his younger sister Amy, who is a performing arts student at the specialist college.

Connor has raised more than £1,500 for the school.

He said: "A massive thank you to my partner and family for attending and supporting me every step of the way."

"Making yourself heard in such an incredible atmosphere gave me the extra push when I needed it most! It meant the world to me having them there."

"To everyone who has donated and helped me prepare for this event: Thank you.

"Your kindness has been overwhelming and has made every single mile worth it."

"The atmosphere in London was amazing from start to finish – what an experience."

Bryony Wesson, Derwen charity fundraiser, said: "A huge thank you to Connor for all his hard work – the training, the long runs in all weathers and the incredible fundraising."

"He's been a brilliant ambassador for Derwen Charity and the young people we support."

Money raised for Derwen Charity helps fund additional experiences and opportunities for students and clients at Derwen College, helping them to develop independence, confidence and skills for adulthood.

Visit 2026tclondonmarathon.enthouse.com/pf/connor-barker to donate.



Jordan and Cian Adams have raised nearly £700,000 for Alzheimer Research UK. s

by Ashleigh Osborne
ashleigh.osborne@bullivantmedia.com

REDDITCH'S 'FTD Brothers' have raised almost £700,000 for Alzheimer Research UK and set off on their latest challenge this week: to run 32 marathons across all of Ireland's counties in 32 days.

Jordan and Cian Adams grew up with their sister, Kennedy, and parents, Geraldine and Glenn.

In 2010, mum Geraldine was diagnosed with early-onset frontotemporal dementia (FTD) at the age of 46, after years of symptoms and a long search for answers. She died in 2016, aged just 52.

FTD runs in the family due to a

mutation in the microtubule-associated protein tau gene.

After their mum's death, the siblings faced the difficult decision of whether to be tested for the condition.

Kennedy was found not to carry the gene but results confirmed Jordan and Cian had inherited it.

That means both will almost certainly develop symptoms in their early 40s and die within 10 years of diagnosis.

Despite that devastating reality, the brothers have dedicated themselves to fundraising and awareness for Alzheimer's Research UK.

On Sunday, Jordan and Cian started their marathon challenge in London, with Jordan running with a 25kg fridge on his back.

He said he wanted to show people that 'no matter what they carry, they don't have to carry it alone'.

He added: "I embarked on the greatest challenge of my life in many ways but, in all honesty, it is nothing in comparison to weight I have carried since the age of 15. The marathon has a funny way on offering a representation of the rollercoaster that is life – the ups and downs."

"To every person on Sunday who ran by me and shared kind words, who passed me water, who offered me a gel. To all of you who were deafening with your support on the sidelines – I can never thank you enough."

This week the brothers have covered Antrim, Derry and Donegal.

Their late mother was extremely proud of her Irish roots and the family has, sadly, lost 13 Irish relatives to the disease.

Visit www.gofundme.com/f/theftd brothers to donate.



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David Northcote with one of his pom pom makers. Picture by Marcus Miggins 1826005MMR1

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

A BROMSGROVE man inspired by his avid-knitter wife to invent a pom pom maker, is now looking for shops to stock his product.

It all began when David Northcote's wife June asked him to make some pom poms for her baby knitting.

In his search for pom pom making devices, David discovered one store had sold out and found that a pom pom maker he did buy was "well beyond him to operate" as it was extremely difficult to use.

He headed to his garden shed at home in Lickey, cut up some plastic and made his own version of the device.

David, who is 80 and long retired, told *The Standard*: "My wife was well pleased and told a few other family knitters about them.

"They were interested and so I made some more and sent them to her knitting friends. The comments which came back said they were 'easy peasy to use'."

That was enough to encourage David to patent his design. He sent off the forms and after just four weeks, the application was accepted and his design registered.

Over time, David experimented with different materials and, on the advice of the patent officer, has since submitted the patents for six variations of his creation.

He added: "Again, during this time I have shown more friends and other family members, who have all congratulated me and said how fantastic they are."

The garden shed innovator is now hoping to start a business and seeking outlets to stock his Easy Peasy pom pom makers.

"My wife said: 'David, you are 80', but I have purchased machines, printers, papers, hanging bags and have now pro-

duced many thousands of four different versions," said David.

He has written to a number of outlets including Dunelm, B&M, The Range, Hobbycraft and more, explaining his journey and offering them the chance to try out his pom pom makers with a view to stocking them.

He has been disappointed, however, after not receiving a single reply.

David contacted *The Standard* in a bid to "tell his story" to our readers and to see if we could help find a stockist for the Easy Peasy pom pom makers.

"This reminds me of when Mr Dyson started with his first invention," said David, "no one would listen to him so he invested in himself - and look at him now.

"I have financed all my invention and have now invested well over £4,000 from our OAP [old-age pension] savings but I am struggling to get anyone to give me a chance of even showing them my product, or how good and easy my invention is.

"It makes single and double pom poms and in 3D - something no other pom pom maker can do.

"I have also developed an extra large pom pom maker, designed for arthritic hands so it could be used as part of activity sessions in care homes, but still no-one seems interested.

"Research on the internet stresses the importance of getting kids away from watching TV and also that pom pom making is up 26 per cent in the last nine months.

"It has also increased its popularity on TikTok."

Any shops or outlets interested in trying David's Easy Peasy pom pom makers, with a view to stocking them, can contact *The Standard* by emailing editor@bromsgrovestandard.co.uk, or by calling 01527 588657.

Help garden shed inventor find home for pom pom maker

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Scout award winners

Linnea, third from left, alongside fellow Worcestershire winners of the award. s

by Ashleigh Osborne
ashleigh.osborne@bullivantmedia.com

A SCOUT from Redditch is celebrating after achieving the King's Scout Award.

Linnea Dudfield joined fellow winners at Windsor Castle, with chief scout Dwayne Fields.

Scout ambassadors including astronaut Tim Peake, climber Mahroof Mallika and adventurer Darren Edwards joined the celebration.

The award recognises outstanding personal achievement and is earned by scouts aged 16 to 25.

To achieve it, young people completed challenges including community volunteering, undertaking expeditions in wild country and taking part in five-day residential experiences in a new environment.

They also developed an existing talent or learned new skills that build on what they have gained through scouting. Along the way, the award winners delivered projects that made a remarkable impact and left a lasting legacy in their local communities.

Chief scout Mr Fields passed on his huge congratulations to everyone who achieved their King's Scout Award.

"This is something truly special," he said. "It shows the grit, determination and passion you've put into your scouting journey."

"You've stepped up, shown leadership,

pushed yourselves and made a real difference to the people around you.

"That's what being a scout is all about. "This award isn't just a pat on the back for what you've done so far, it's a reminder of the incredible potential you've got for what ever comes next."

"I'm excited to see where you go from here.

"Keep pushing forward, keep saying 'yes' to new challenges and keep leading the way."

King's Scout Award winner Linnea said: "Completing my King's Scout Award felt like the final step after working through all the sections and it's been a really rewarding journey overall. My expedition in Dartmoor was a great experience, shared with people I knew, where I was able to bring my navigation skills to the team.

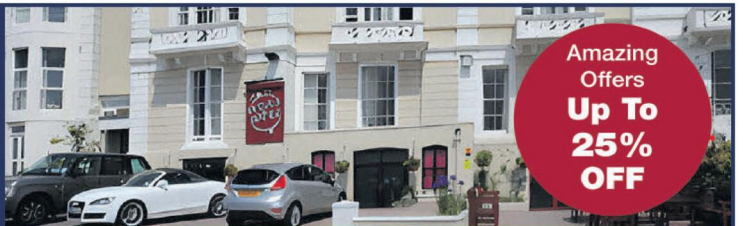
"Alongside this, I supported my local scout HQ as a young leader and developed my drumming by improving my technique, playing at school and with a band.

"I also worked through ballet grades as part of my physical activity. "Looking back, the award has helped me grow in teamwork, communication and confidence and I now feel much more comfortable speaking to people I don't know."

The annual event at Windsor Castle has taken place since 1934, on the Sunday closest to St George's Day, and is dedicated to celebrating the achievements and development of young people.

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Banned from keeping animals after dumping 90 rabbits in the woods



The rabbits who survived had to be rescued by the RSPCA after they were dumped in Chaddesley Wood. Picture courtesy of the RSPCA. s

A MAN and a woman who abandoned 90 rabbits in a wood in Chaddesley Corbett have been banned from keeping animals for life but have avoided jail.

After Kevin Lewis and Michelle Deakin dumped the animals, 23 of the rabbits were found dead at Chaddesley Wood, Tanwood Lane, in between Kidderminster and Bromsgrove, on November 11, 2024. The rest were found in poor condition.

Members of the public contacted the RSPCA and the charity brought the prosecution.

At Birmingham Magistrates Court, as well as being banned for keeping animals for life, Lewis, 49, and Deakin, 51, of Yardley Wood Road, Highters Heath, were both sentenced to 18 weeks in prison, suspended for 18 months. Lewis was also told to complete 25

Rehabilitation Activity (RAR) days and Deakin 20 RAR days.

Lewis pleaded guilty to two offences under Animal Welfare Act 2006 and Deakin pleaded guilty to one animal welfare offence.

RSPCA Inspector Boris Lasserre attended the scene and, in a statement presented to the court, he recalled how he found numerous dead rabbits.

"Some were scattered individually, while others were in groups."

"I also found two live rabbits."

"I gathered up and bagged all the dead rabbits I could find and in total there were 23."

A large number of the live rabbits were collected by members of the public, while 56 were taken in by Lucky Bunny and Friends Rescue.

Some of the rabbits presented with various health concerns and four - later looked after by a foster

carer - had to be transferred to the Birmingham Animal Hospital at RSPCA Newbrook Animal Centre in Frankley.

The defendants attended Newbrook Animal Centre four days after the discovery of the rabbits. As well as identifying themselves as the rabbits' owners, they confirmed they had released them into the woods.

Insp Lasserre went to the defendants' home and saw how the rabbits had been kept in two downstairs rooms.

A vet who examined 11 of the dead rabbits and two live ones taken to Newbrook Animal Centre said most smelt strongly of urine and ammonia and almost all of them had skin tears and lacerations to their ears, scrotums and noses. Some wounds were severe, with one rabbit having lost most of an ear lobe.

Two with lacerations had caused their testicles to prolapse. Many of the rabbits were underweight.

The vet described the wounds as 'traumatic', adding they were due to infighting between the rabbits over territory, social dominance, mating or food.

"Their presence suggested they had been kept in unsuitable social groups of mixed genders and ages and in poor housing which would have caused physical and mental distress for at least six to eight weeks."

In mitigation, the court heard the couple used to take in unwanted rabbits and cats but had become overwhelmed and were in £25,000 of debt.

Both defendants were told to pay a victim surcharge of £154, with Lewis having to pay a contribution to court costs of £350 and Deakin

£200 costs.

Speaking after the sentencing, Insp Lasserre said: "Financial hardship can be no excuse for abandoning pet rabbits like this as there are always other options."

"These poor rabbits were left to fend for themselves in the wild and it was shocking to see how many had been left to their fates."

"We can only thank the members of the public and Lucky Bunny and Friends who came to their assistance as a large number of live rabbits were taken to places of safety."

"Abandoned and neglected rabbits are an increasing problem and the RSPCA is seeing more and more coming into our care."

"Before considering such drastic action people should seek help and the RSPCA has a cost of living hub which is designed to assist owners."



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First marathon is real success

A REDDITCH charity runner has completed his first ever marathon at the age of 63, raising more than £2,000 for three charities.

Bernard Sugden smashed the five-hour mark in the recent Manchester Marathon, after only taking up distance running seven years ago.

He said: "With around 40,000 runners, the atmosphere was amazing and there were tens of thousands of supporters lining most of the route to cheer us on."

"It was a very emotional experience that made those months of training around the pavements of Redditch worthwhile."

"I couldn't have done it without the support of Redditch STARS members who organised training runs for the group of us who did the marathon and forced me to get out of bed for the cold, dark and wet training runs."

"I'm also so grateful to everyone who generously donated to my three good causes including Bromsgrove and Redditch Welcome Refugees (BRWR), helping me to exceed my sponsorship target."

The cash Bernard raised will also be split between the British Heart Foundation and Prostate Cancer UK

Bernard, a retired Nokia sales director, chose the Manchester Marathon after a close friend died during a heart operation in 2021.

At the wake, the man's daughter and her friend said they would tackle the marathon in his honour.

Bernard said: "I wasn't ready back then but now that I am, it had to be Manchester."



And, in answer to whether he would take on another marathon: "Well probably not as the last 10km were very hard and I really had to push myself."

"But I finished and was actually close to achieving my target time."

"So now the pain has subsided, I am already wondering if I could improve."

Bernard has Just Giving pages for all three charities.

Visit justgiving.com/page/bernard-sugden-10 for his BRWR page.

Bernard during the marathon. s

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"Yeah, he's alright, man!" - Liam Gallagher

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 - 14TH MAY: ELTON'S SONG - ELTON JOHN TRIBUTE
 - 15th MAY: THIS IS MERSEYBEAT
 - 16TH MAY: CLASSIC ROCK REVIVAL
 - 17th. MAY: CELEBRATING CELINE - A NEW DAY
 - 22ND MAY: FRANKIE - THE CONCERT (FT THE FALSETTOS)
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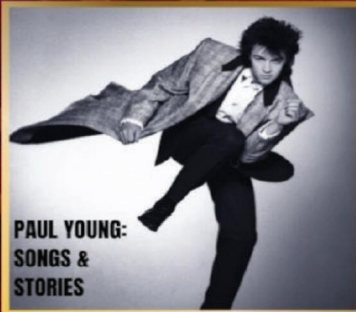
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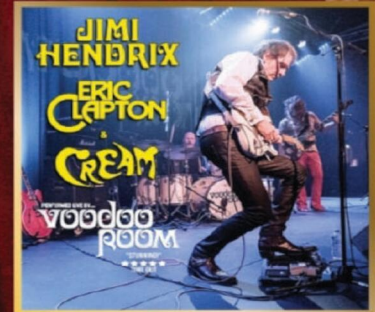
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12TH MAY 2026



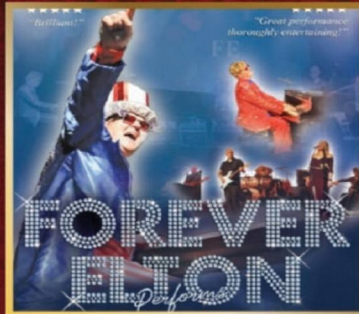
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School marks a half century of education achievements

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

AROUND 150 people – including former staff, students and previous head teachers – came together to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Chadsgrove School.

Richard Aust, head for 19 years from 1990 to 2009, and Deb Rattley, who recently stepped aside from the role to become chief executive officer of the institution, both spoke at the event.

Acting head Beck Gayden gave an insight into the school's history after gleaning information from the original admissions register and the headteachers' log-books.

She said the history books showed the first ever school in Catshill opened in 1856 and – comparing it to Chadsgrove's recent Ofsted report – said it was visited by inspectors in 1869.

Chadsgrove School officially

opened on April 27, 1976 and, by September of that year, there were 44 pupils.

In the first year, the children had a 'riding with the disabled' session – an activity today's pupils still participate in.

There was also a cheese and wine party for the community, attended by 120 people and, a year later, the local Women's Institute donated rose trees to be planted in the grounds.

By 1978, the school had 66 pupils.

Mr Aust praised everyone at the school, from the pupils to all the staff – including teachers, teaching assistants, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech language therapists, kitchen staff, drivers and more.

He said: "To everyone here: you are all heroes."

"The staff – both then and now – go the extra mile and care so much about the school and its pupils."

Of the students he said: "I think you have all had a tough start in



Former heads David Nicholas, Deb Rattley and Richard Aust at the school's 50th anniversary. s

life and have all had to work hard just to do the simple things.

"Many of you will have had operations and maybe faced discrimination but you have got through it all. And that is why you are all heroes."

The former head spoke about the differences between when the school opened and now.

"Back then there were only eight parking spaces, no computers, no changing rooms, no lifts on minibuses, no security – now we have a multi-sensory room, soft play, a music department and the post-16 to 18 Chadsgrove College."

Mr Aust said when the school

opened, Brotherhood of Man won Eurovision with *Save All Your Kisses for Me*, Harold Wilson had quit as prime minister and was replaced by James Callaghan, petrol cost 14p per litre and Mars Bars just 10p.

First head

Mr Aust also paid tribute to the first headteacher, Mr Nicholas, who started the ball rolling of a friendly and welcoming school.

Ms Rattley read a poem she had written about the school and said: "When I took over from Richard, he told me it was the best job in the world and he was right."

"It has never really felt like a job – this is a special school for special people with extra special staff. It's about trust, teamwork and friendships – years of learning, laughing and legacy – care, courage and community."

"And I hope it stays like this for many years to come."

To top off the celebrations, a special 50th birthday cake was created by the school's art and design lead, Nikki Taylor.

Chadsgrove School's catchment area covers most of Worcestershire, with pupils coming from Bromsgrove, Redditch, Rubery, Kidderminster and Droitwich.

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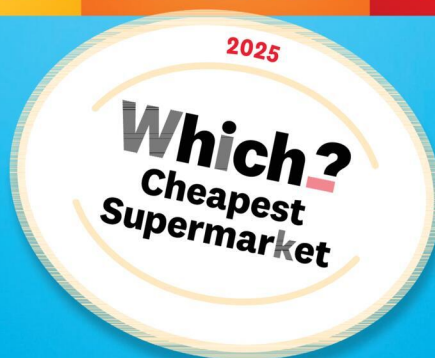


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Jordan Legg and Cem Tanyu from the 18th century group New France, Old England.



Re-enactors from Swords of Mercia showed what life was like between the 1300s and 1330s - the reign of Edward II.

Gareth Howell, the Medieval Medical Monk (infirmarer), from the Lord De Mowbray Group - he showed what healthcare would have been like 700 years ago.

Pictures by Tristan Harris. © Bullivant Media Group Ltd.



History comes alive

ALMOST 2,000 visitors descended on Bromsgrove's Avoncroft Museum for the Living History Festival - the venue's biggest event of the year.

More than 300 re-enactors showcased over 1,000 years of history on Saturday and Sunday.

There were Victorians, Vikings, Romans, knights, General Strike and women's vote campaigners and different eras of English, American and French armies, including Napoleonic troops and First and Second World Wars.

Weapons of years gone by, including swords, spears, canons and muskets, were displayed and demonstrated, along with domestic aspects - cooking, dancing, traditional crafts and past times, a medieval weaver, handmade tools, costumes, cloth and historic pottery.

The New Guesten Hall hosted food

and music through the ages with the Stream of Sound Choir and dancing group Gloriana.

The Bromsgrove Society of Model Engineers ran rides each day on its miniature railway and historical authors gave talks and signed books.

Lynda Case, Avoncroft's events and marketing co-ordinator, said: "Although it was the fifth Living History Festival, it was the first one that was organised totally in-house.

"We have spent many months booking traders and forging connections with some of the best re-enactment groups in the UK - many whom travelled great distances to take part.

"Groups were hand-picked and selected to cover 1,000 years of history from the Bronze Age onwards."

Two arenas offered a full timetable with everything from battle re-enact-

ment to a medieval fashion show.

Lynda added: "Visitors - many of whom came in costume - gave us wonderful feedback on the day.

"They were impressed with the fast-track entrance for pre-booked tickets and with the variety of the eras on display, with so much to do see and even buy."

Visitors enjoyed a variety of food and drink, including hot pork roles, tasty pasties, gallons of drinks and lots of ice creams.

Lynda added: "Many of the re-enactment groups I spoke with on the day commented on how engaging and interested the visitors were."

She thanked everyone who supported the event, adding next year's Living History Festival would be on April 24 and 25, 2027.

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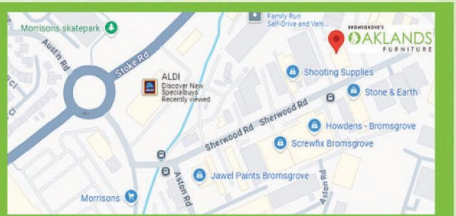
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All aboard for a unique celebration



ONE OF the World's most famous bus routes - the Number 11 Birmingham Outer Circle - celebrated its centenary on Sunday.

Every day, there are up to 36,000 journeys on the National Express West Midlands route which covers a 27-mile radius.

It is one of the longest bus routes in Europe and takes up three hours to complete.

The route has 260 bus stops, 233 schools, colleges and other educational institutions, 40 pubs, 19 retail centres, six hospitals and one prison - this route links some 15 commercial centres and passes by Cadbury World in Bourneville and the Villa Park football stadium.

The number 11 buses have changed where they terminate.

Since July 2021, 11A services have terminated at Perry Barr and then return as an 11C to Acocks Green, with 11C buses terminating at Erdington, returning as a 11A service to Acocks Green.

This has improved the reliability of the service due to roadworks and congestion along the route.

The route has also inspired a song by the Woodbines in 1999, a dance, and Bromsgrove author Jonathan Coe's bestselling novel

'Number 11'. There are two services on the 11 timetable which undertake the same route but in opposite directions - the 11C which goes clockwise and the 11A which goes anti-clockwise.

Adam Rideout, the head of customer experience and marketing at NX Bus said: "Bus is by far the most popular form of public transport here in the West Midlands and our iconic 11 service has long been a Brummie favourite since it first started some 100 years ago.

"With buses running up to every 10 minutes, single adult tickets still only £3 and a day ticket - allowing passengers to explore the region with unlimited travel on the day - only £5.20, it remains a very popular route that connects our customers in a number of key areas around the city and is part of the city's transport history."

Transport Museum Wythall will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of Birmingham's iconic 11 bus service next month.

The special trips on different buses through the ages of the 11 route are part of Transport Museum Wythall's anniversary celebrations which will take place on the late May bank holiday weekend - on Sunday and Monday, May 24 and 25.

Visit wythall.org.uk for more on the event. And go to nxbus.co.uk/west-midlands/services-timetables/ and click through for more on the number 11C and 11A and the times services run.

The famous number 11 Outer Circle bus route celebrated its centenary on Sunday. Picture by Tony Brown, via Tony Hunter. On May 24 and 25, there will be special trips on different buses throughout the ages of Birmingham's famous 11 route. s



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Lauren Galpin at David Lloyd Clubs and representatives from Acorns. s

Fun Run sponsors announced

THE OFFICIAL sponsors for the Wythall and Hollywood Fun Run have been announced, with David Lloyd Clubs in Solihull Cranmore and Bromsgrove set to return for a second time.

The event, set to take place on Sunday June 7, promises to be a day filled with excitement and community spirit.

David Lloyd Clubs is dedicated to promoting positive physical and mental wellbeing and supporting local communities.

Lauren Galpin at David Lloyd Clubs said: "We're incredibly proud to sponsor the Wythall and Hollywood Fun Run.

"At our Solihull Cranmore and Bromsgrove clubs, we strongly believe in the power of community and the importance of staying active.

"This event has been designed to be inclusive and welcoming for everyone, whatever their age or fitness level.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for families and individuals to come together, enjoy a

great day of activity and support an amazing cause like Acorns Children's Hospice.

"We're looking forward to seeing everyone at the starting line and cheering on every participant."

In the lead up to the event David Lloyd Clubs in Solihull Cranmore and Bromsgrove have been offering bespoke running-focused training sessions within its clubs to help members of all fitness levels kickstart their running journey and prepare with confidence.

Race winners will also receive David Lloyd Club memberships for one, two or three months.

It is not just the winners who are rewarded by the headline sponsor.

They will also be contributing to the goodie bags which every participant receives.

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Visit wythallhollywoodfunrun.org.uk for more information and to sign up.

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Charity match reaches its goal

THE PRIMROSE Hospice has praised the organisers of a charity football match which raised £18,089.19 for the cause.

The match took place at the end of March in memory of Bromsgrove Rovers legend Mark Crisp.

The match between the Birmingham All Stars and the Bromsgrove XI at the Victoria Ground was organised by Mark's son Max.

The cash was raised through ticket sales, a raffle and an auction of football merchandise, including signed premier league shirts.

Primrose Hospice fundraiser, Kelly Wetherall, said: "There was such a lovely atmosphere on the day, the sheer number of people who attended was quite incredible."

"All the pre-match help from individuals and support of businesses goes a long way to show how well Mark and his family is thought of."

"The support from the Harry Bennett Foundation and Tom's Fund charities is a great example of how football can bring people together."

"For patients with life-limiting illnesses and people experiencing bereavement, Primrose is a lifeline from the moment they are referred."

"It is with thanks to the generosity of people like Max and everyone who contributed to making the match a success, that Primrose can continue to provide these services."

Anyone who knows someone struggling with grief or who has been diagnosed with a life-limited illness can call the Primrose on 01527 871051 or visit: primrosehospice.org for more information on the hospice and the services it provides.

Max Crisp, Kelly Wetherall and Jacqui Crisp following the charity match which raised £18,089.19 for the Primrose Hospice.



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Safe travels

Training move set to benefit local prisons

A PRISON education provider is set to continue delivering education and training to support individuals in finding employment after release

Novus will deliver education in public prisons across the region under the Prisoner Education Service (PES).

Following a procurement process run by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Novus (part of LTE Group) will, on September 1, start delivering Core Education.

The contract covers eight prisons across the region including HMP Hewell in Tardebigge.

Peter Cox, managing director of Novus, said: "We have a long track record of effective collaboration with prison regimes and employers across the West Midlands and we are delighted to continue delivering education in this region."

"For more than three decades, Novus has been providing high-quality education and training in the prison estate, working with learners who are the furthest from the labour market.

"We are proud of our track record in supporting individuals into employment after



release, as well as the innovative practice led by our committed teams of education professionals.

"We look forward to working closely with His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to help more people in the West Midlands turn their lives around."

HMP Hewell is one of eight prisons in the region that is part of the continuing scheme to educate inmates. s



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Marketing youthful talent

A YOUNG Traders' Market will come to Bromsgrove to celebrate the Love Your Local Market drive and people aged 16 and over are being urged to get involved.

The new stalls' introduction will be a celebration of different generations of traders – from those at the end of their careers to those on their first day.

The event will be in Bromsgrove High Street between 9am and 4pm on Saturday, May 16,

The day will give young people the chance to build confidence and gain trading experience.

For more information, visit: bromsgrove.gov.uk/market and email: market@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk to register.



MP joins fight to save local museum

Chris Bloore, left, with Redditch Local History Museum trustees and a copy of *The Standard*.

by Ashleigh Osborne
ashleigh.osborne@bullivantmedia.com

TOWN MP Chris Bloore has thrown his support behind the campaign to find Redditch Local History Museum a new home, after it was served three months' notice to leave its current premises.

The museum contacted *The Standard* to help with the appeal and, since then, people have come forward with ideas and spaces that could suit the organisation.

Trustees described the notice to vacate as a devastating blow and said they had poured their souls and a huge amount of work into preserving the town's history.

Mr Bloore said: "Redditch Local History Museum is a vital part of

our town's cultural life and I understand why this news has caused such concern.

"Our history matters and we cannot allow important local heritage to be lost because of a lack of space or support.

"I'm keen to work with the museum team, the council and other partners to see what can be done to find a suitable new home before the July deadline."

Mr Bloore's office has already contacted Redditch Borough Council to explore whether any vacant town centre properties could be suitable for the museum's relocation.

Discussions are also taking place about a prominent and accessible new site for the collection.

The museum's trustees have warned the stakes are particularly high as Redditch continues its bid

to become UK Town of Culture 2028.

The venue has built a following of more than 7,000 people on Facebook and trustees say they are determined to make their case publicly and secure a future.

The MP said the museum's work was central to telling Redditch's story and protecting the town's identity.

"If we are serious about celebrating Redditch's identity and heritage, protecting the museum must be part of that effort," said Mr Bloore. "It is not enough to talk about pride in our town's history – we have to make sure history is actually preserved and accessible."

He added, the museum's role would be especially important as Redditch seeks to showcase its culture, heritage and community spirit on a bigger stage.

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MP calls for more patient support

REDDITCH MP Chris Bloore has called for stronger mental health and reintegration support for young cancer patients after securing a commitment from a government minister to meet with him and young people affected.

Speaking in a House of Commons debate on young cancer patients' experiences and outcomes, Mr Bloore highlighted the often-overlooked challenges faced by young people after completing treatment, particularly the social isolation and mental health struggles that can follow an 'all-clear'.

Drawing on cases raised in his constituency surgeries, he warned that, while the clinical phase of treatment was vital, too many young people were left without the support they needed to rebuild their lives and return to education, work and everyday routines.

He said: "One issue brought to my attention in my surgeries is that, after the often intensive clinical process of a young person going through a cancer diagnosis, getting treatment and getting through the other side, the period after the all-clear is an intense time of social isolation."

"Significant mental health support is required to help them reintegrate into school, college or work."

"Recovery does not end when treatment ends and we need a system that recognises that."

During the debate, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care agreed to meet with Mr Bloore and young people who have experienced cancer treatment, to discuss how post-treatment support could be improved.



The MP welcomed the commitment and said it was vital lived experience shaped future policy.

He added he was pleased the Minister had agreed to meet and listen to young people who had experienced it first-hand.

"Getting the all-clear should be a moment of relief but for too many, it marks the start of a different kind of struggle."

"This is about making sure no young person feels left behind after cancer treatment and that they have the support they need to move forward with their lives."

Mr Bloore now plans to arrange the meeting and encouraged young people in Redditch who had been through cancer treatment to share their experiences with his office.

Email chris.bloore.mp@parliament.uk to submit experiences to Mr Bloore.

Mr Bloore spoke during a House of Commons debate on young cancer patients' experiences and outcomes. s

Housing Secretary failing to answer key questions

IT APPEARS the Housing Secretary Steve Reed MP cannot answer the most basic questions about his Government's own housing policies.



Westminster Diary

Bradley Thomas MP writes for *The Standard*

Following his visit to Wythall last month, the Shadow Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Sir James Cleverly MP, questioned Mr Reed on the Government's housing targets.

Speaking in the House of Commons, Mr Cleverly stated: "Last week I was in Bromsgrove, a rural constituency facing an 85 per cent increase in its housing target."

"Neighbouring Labour-run Birmingham, which has significant brownfield capacity, has seen its target cut by more than 30 per cent."

"Targets are increasing by 37 per cent in Essex but decreasing by 11 per cent in London."

"House building has collapsed under this Labour Government, so why is the Secretary of State letting his Labour-run urban friends off the hook while dumping housing targets in rural Britain?"

The Housing Secretary failed to answer the question or to explain why Bromsgrove's housing target had been increased whilst Birmingham's had been decreased.

Instead, the Housing Secretary turned to political point scoring to deflect from being unable to justify the decisions.

Mr Reed is another Government Minister failing to answer a sim-

ple question on his own housing policy.

We all know why the Government cannot justify its 85 per cent increase in our housing target - because there isn't one.

I would have more respect for the Housing Secretary if he came out and said what we all know to be true - his housing targets are a purely political move to help his friends in the cities and to punish rural Britain.

Our green belt in Bromsgrove is under attack like never before and I'm doing everything I can to protect it.

There is enough brownfield land in England alone to build 1.41million homes on. That should be the Government's priority.

The Government should also bring empty homes back into use and scrapping Stamp Duty to free up the housing market.

There is so much more this Government could be doing instead of building on our green belt, but it is not interested.

I was elected with a mandate to fight to protect our green belt and that's what I'll continue to do.

**Bradley Thomas
Bromsgrove MP**



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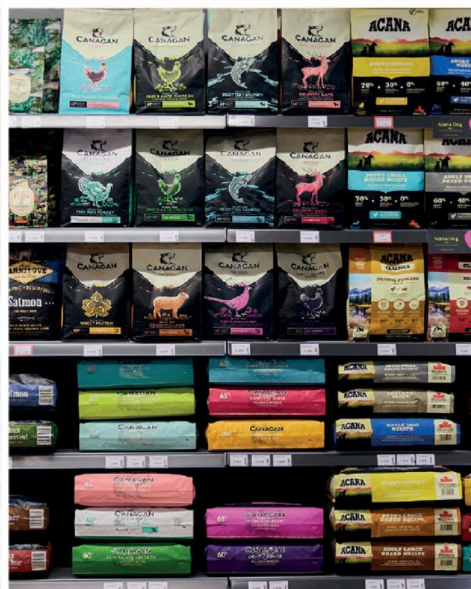
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Adrian Kriss is urging other motorcyclists to join the ride to raise awareness of Lindsay and Craig Foreman's plight. s

Biker's ride for pair trapped in Iranian jail

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

AN ADVENTURE motorcyclist is hoping to encourage others from across Worcestershire to join him on a ride to raise awareness of the plight of Lindsay and Craig Foreman, who are wrongly imprisoned in Iran.

The ride will take place on May 20 with the group meeting at Hopwood Services at 7am to reach the start point, at Queen's Gate, in London, at 9.30am.

The group will then journey past the Iranian Embassy to express their views at Parliament Square, where a petition will be handed to the government, calling on it to do more to get Lindsay and Craig released.

As *The Standard* went to press, the petition had around 67,000 signatures and it is hoped it will reach 100,000. If that happens, it will automatically trig-

ger a House of Commons debate on the issue.

Biker Adrian Kriss, from Bromsgrove, told *The Standard*: "Lindsay and Craig are now fast approaching 500 days of detention and the government has done nothing of meaning.

"I feel more needs to be done as this inaction sends the wrong message to governments of other countries who may well feel they could benefit in some sort of political way by detaining UK citizens.

"I suggested, and am now helping organise a ride-out passing the front of the Iranian Embassy and finishing at Parliament Square, where we will deliver the petition."

The campaign to get the Foremans released is being led by their children Joe, Toby, Chelsea and Kieran.

In a post on their campaign website – freelindsayandcraig.com – they say the pair were a "coach and a carpenter, full of curiosity and kindness, with no ties to any government".

The pair were on a '#PPK2K' trip

– a people-to-people global motorcycle adventure.

The Foremans' children said their parents had valid visas, a licensed guide and a pre-approved itinerary. They entered Iran on December 31, 2024, and visited Tabriz, Tehran, and Isfahan, where they were warmly welcomed by locals.

Their final stop was to be Kerman, on January 3, 2025, but they never arrived – their phones went silent and they did not check into their hotel.

On February 13 last year, Iranian state media said the pair were arrested on spying charges and, on February 17 this year, they were sentenced to 10 years in prison following a "sham trial by a sanctioned judge", their children said.

"That is not only a false accusation, but it's absurd – our parents are not spies," added the Foremans' children.

Visit eventbrite.com/e/ride-out-to-parliament-for-lindsay-and-craig-foreman-tickets-1986900130777 to book free spaces on the ride and c.org/DGwZRsTTyM, to sign the Change.org petition.

MP calls for better funding for hospices

REDDITCH MP Chris Bloore has reiterated his support for fair and sustainable hospice funding, following engagement with national charity Hospice UK and growing concern about pressures facing the sector.

Hospice UK has warned many English hospices are facing increasing financial pressure with rising demand and costs forcing providers to make difficult decisions about services. The organisation is calling for reforms to the funding model and increased long-term support to protect care.

Borough MP Chris Bloore. s



Mr Bloore said: "Hospices do extraordinary work for patients and families at some of the hardest moments in their lives. They provide dignity, comfort and expert care and they deserve a funding system that is sustainable and fit.

"We are fortunate, in our area, to have excellent local services including the Primrose and Acorns Children's hospices, which provide outstanding support to families across Redditch."

The MP said the matter is not just a national issue, and added: "We must make sure valued local services like Primrose Hospice and Acorns Children's Hospice are properly supported so they can continue their incredible work for years to come."

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Homes shock for the county

WORCESTERSHIRE has the highest percentage of 'inadequate' care homes in the West Midlands, according to a new report from online training provider High Speed Training.

The report, which analysed Care Quality Commission (CQC) data for over 13,500 care homes across England, found that 1.86 per cent of care homes within the county received the lowest rating.

The Care Quality Commission is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England.

They regulate health and social care, working with the public, systems and providers of care to protect people and to prompt and improve the quality of care given.

During an inspection, the CQC assesses a provider against five core pillars, known as the Five Key Questions. These questions ensure that every aspect of a resident's experience and the provider's clinical safety is evaluated.

A spokesperson for Worcestershire County Council said: "In line with all local authorities, the County Council receives daily updates from the CQC in relation to rating changes. We are currently aware of two care homes that are rated inadequate as of April 21 2026.

"None of the homes with this rating are run by the council. However, County Council teams work closely with care homes where the CQC has identified any issues relating to care quality to support improvements."

There are 173 registered care homes in Worcestershire.

A third care home which previously was rated inadequate, was re-rated as good on April 2.

New look for NHS staff to help show who's who

WORCESTERSHIRE Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust has introduced new clinical uniforms for more than 3,000 staff, adopting the new national uniform for the NHS.

Developed with input from NHS staff, patients and carers, the new national uniforms feature a clear colour-coded system designed to help patients, visitors and colleagues quickly recognise different clinical roles. The updated designs also prioritise comfort, durability and infection prevention.

Registered nurses, healthcare support workers, pharmacists and allied health professionals each wear distinct colours and name badges with role titles, making it easier for patients and families to quickly identify the right person for their needs.

The scheme follows feedback from patients, carers, and NHS staff, who highlighted that it could sometimes be difficult to distinguish between different roles on busy wards. Staff and patient representatives were closely involved in co-designing the new approach.

The introduction of the new uniforms is part of a wider effort to improve patient experience, safety, and communication.

The uniform also supports the trust's Net Zero commitment, made using Better Cotton Initiative (BCI)



The new uniform for a pharmacist and, right, the new uniform for a matron.



cotton and 100 per cent recycled polyester, reducing the use of raw materials and helping lower the carbon impact. Old uniforms will also be easier to recycle, helping to further cut waste.

Hannah Wilson, Deputy Chief Nursing Officer and Chief AHP said: "Our new clinical uniforms have been designed with NHS staff

input to ensure they meet the practical needs of the workplace. They focus on comfort, quality, and freedom of movement, while also making it easier for patients to identify staff roles. Clear identification supports patient confidence, safety, and teamwork across our hospitals."

Under the new system pharma-

cy technicians will wear sherwood green with a navy contrast trim, registered nurses will wear hospital blue with navy contrast trim and healthcare assistants/support workers will wear lilac with navy contrast trim.

Visit www.hacw.nhs.uk/recognising-our-uniforms for more information.



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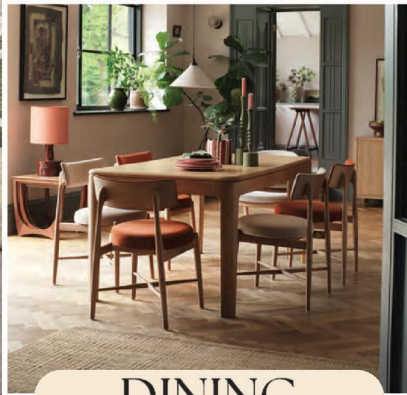
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The MP with volunteers. s

Joining up to make a tidy difference

THE COMMUNITY came together to join the 1st Redditch Scout Group to help clear up a garden in the borough.

The event, at the Scout Hut off Hadlow Close, brought together Scouts, leaders and local volunteers to tidy and improve the outdoor space used by the group and the wider community.

Redditch MP Chris Bloore, who also joined in the effort, said: "Scouting plays such an important role in helping young people build confidence, learn new skills and give back.

"This event was a brilliant example of teamwork and community spirit in action.

"I want to thank everyone who gave up their time.

"It's efforts like this that make Redditch such a strong and proud community."

During the visit, Mr Bloore met with young people and leaders from the group, hearing about their activities and the importance of maintaining welcoming, safe spaces for future generations.

Musical fundraiser aims to boost restoration bid

A LIVE music night at Severn Valley Railway's Kidderminster Station tea room will raise funds towards restoring an important piece of British history.

Local band After Hours will perform music from the 1960s, 70s and 80s from 6pm to 8pm tomorrow (Saturday, May 2).

The cash raised will go to the Stanier 8F Locomotive Society Ltd charity which is trying to restore the RE Memorial Locomotive No 48773 to its former glory.

The historic locomotive was built in 1940 to assist with the war effort and was numbered 307 by the War Department.

Following Hitler's invasion of Russia in 1941, Prime Minister Winston Churchill wanted to help Russian leader Stalin.

The Arctic convoys to Archangel and Murmansk are famous, but less well known is the second supply route known as 'The Back Door to Russia' using the ports of the Persian Gulf and Iranian State Railways. A contingent of 42 locomotives and 2,500 Royal Engineers (Railway Sappers) embarked for Iran in September.

With recent reports on the Strait of Hormuz dominating global headlines, it is fascinating to report this locomotive - based at the SVR - negotiated that very waterway as part of the convoy which arrived at the Iranian port of Abadan in early December 1941.



On display at the SVR's Engine House Visitor Centre at Highley, what was the War Department's locomotive No 307, is now displayed carrying its British Railways No 48773.

Returned to the UK in 1952 after service in Egypt's Suez Canal Zone, the locomotive was bought by the Society from British Railways in 1968.

Since then, the locomotive has travelled 152,000 miles on revenue earning service on the SVR and visits to other heritage railways.

In recognition of its military service overseas, 48773 was Dedicated as the Royal Engineers Memorial

Locomotive in 1986.

Subsequently, with the aid of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, the number of casualties was researched and in 2002, 354 names were recorded on a Roll of Honour now displayed at Highley.

Tomorrow's music night came about thanks to Maurice Preece from Bromsgrove who is the bass player for After Hours and is also a member of the Stanier 8F Locomotive Society.

Society chairman Je Ryan said: "We were delighted to accept Maurice's very generous offer and are looking forward to a hugely

The cash from the music night will go to the Stanier 8F Locomotive Society Ltd's fundraising campaign to get Locomotive No 48773 back on track. s

enjoyable trip down memory lane."

Maurice added: "After Hours band members have enthusiastically endorsed this event for an extremely worthwhile cause."

The amount needed to give the historic locomotive the extensive overhaul it needs to get it back on track will be more than £1million.

The charity has raised more than £170,000 to date.

Tickets for tomorrow's music night are £8.50, available from Maurice on 07766 755889 or visitors can pay on the night.

Visit 8fsociety.co.uk for more on the society and Locomotive No 48773.

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- ✓ 2 for 1 bar (6pm-9pm) on selected drinks
- ✓ Guided city tour of Liverpool
- ✓ Excursion to Chester

Optional excursion to Southport (£12pp)

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Bringing all the sounds of a musical golden era

New bid to tackle crime

A MUSICAL celebrating the 'Merseybeat' sound which originated from Liverpool in the 1960s will be performed at Bromsgrove's Artrix at 7.30pm on Friday, May 15.

This is Merseybeat celebrates the 1960s sound of Liverpool, direct from the world-famous Cavern Club.

This vibrant, energetic and exciting show features the Cavern's resident Merseybeat combo, The Shakers, plus guest artists Neil Ainsby as Gerry Marsden and Danie Cox as Cilla Black. And the show also features renowned Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse actor, Paul Codman, as the 'host with the most'.

This is Merseybeat is a love letter to Liverpool as, uniquely, every song in the show was performed by a Liverpool 60s artist, showcasing the city's world-beating musical heritage like no other touring production today.

Critics have described the show as 'outstanding' and 'must-see' while others said it was 'as close as time travelling back to that unique era as you can get'.

The story is set in 1963 in Liverpool when there is a 'whole lotta shakin' goin' on' in the Cavern Club - a backstreet beat cellar.

This is Merseybeat takes the audience from the depths of Number 10, Mathew Street, to the

'Beat Boom' which started there and over the next two years when 'Merseymania' ruled the world.

The show features all the big Mersey Sound hits, classic Cavern stompers and a shot of rhythm and blues (with just a little rock 'n' roll on the side, just for good measure) from The Beatles, Gerry and The Pacemakers, The Searchers, Cilla Black, Billy J Kramer and The Dakotas, The Big Three, Chuck Berry, Larry Williams, Little Richard and many more.

Merseybeat was the bedrock of the swinging 60s and the key that opened the door for the British Beat Boom in 1963 and the worldwide British invasion of 1964 with The Beatles leading the way.

As the story unfolds, viewers will experience the Cavern Club right up to the 'Merseymania' Hit Parade years when Liverpool was 'top of the pops'.

The show was devised, written and produced by Tony O'Keefe, the Liverpool musician/actor and founder of The Shakers who have been resident in the Cavern Club since 2006 and are Merseyside's foremost beat combo around today.

Since its debut show in 2018, This is Merseybeat has had a successful run around England and is now coming to Bromsgrove.

Visit artrixbromsgrove.co.uk for more information.



This is Merseybeat will bring the famous sounds of 1960s Liverpool to Bromsgrove's Artrix. s

WEST Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion has invested in two new 4x4 vehicles to help the force's officers tackle rural crime.

Statistics show a third of West Mercia's population lives in a rural area and the force covers 8,451 farms - the most in England and more than double the second-highest force total of Lincolnshire.

Due to off-road capability, the 4x4s will help officers access areas standard police cars struggle to reach, including: brideways, farm tracks, uneven ground and locations where road conditions can slow down responses.

This investment is a step forward in delivering a key priority within the PCC's Safer Communities Plan: 'supporting rural communities to feel safe'.

Recent progress includes the roll-out of rural crime training for call handlers, delivering a partnership with the NFU following feedback from the farming community and continued funding for five Rural and Business Officers.

Mr Campion said: "With West Mercia Police covering the fourth-largest geographical policing area in England and Wales, the mix of urban and rural landscapes presents unique challenges."

West Mercia Police Chief Constable, Richard Cooper, welcomed the investment adding it strengthened the force's ability to provide a visible and reliable police presence for rural communities and reflected the continued commitment to keeping people safe wherever they lived.

Call police on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 to report rural crime.

Artrix Bromsgrove
Book Now
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www.artrixbromsgrove.co.uk

FRIDAY 15 MAY
AT 7.30PM

This is MERSEY BEAT

DIRECT FROM
THE CAVERN



FEATURING HITS FROM ALL YOUR FAVOURITE CAVERN CLUB ARTISTS

SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, every column and every 3 x 3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9.

EASY

6			5	3				1
	5			1				3
3	1	9		2		4		
7			2	5				9
	6		1	7				4
1			6	9				5
		7	9			8		
	9		5				7	6
8			1	2			9	4

HARD

		5	3		7	2		
8	7						4	5
			1					
4								7
		7	2		1	8		
1								2
			6					
5	8						1	6
		9	8		5	7		

PATHFINDER

Beginning with the top highlighted letter, follow a continuous path of words associated with the given subject. The trail goes through each letter once, twisting up, down and sideways, but never diagonally.

Eminem

M	N	G	S	E	Y	R	S	E	T	W	A	Y	O
O	I	B	O	L	O	U	E	V	H	E	N	A	T
C	K	I	R	D	E	R	L	O	M	T	M	Y	S
V	O	C	S	L	A	E	F	L	E	U	A	N	E
E	R	E	L	I	M	H	T	T	H	O	M	H	E
B	Y	R	Y	D	S	S	W	I	S	I	E	T	I
U	N	E	S	A	H	R	E	I	W	H	N	E	N
S	I	L	S	T	O	O	L	D	N	E	O	H	S
D	O	I	K	E	Y	S	L	C	I	M	G	O	L
S	G	P	E	S	P	A	O	Y	M	I	N	W	I
I	N	A	R	E	N	L	S	E	T	N	A	G	U
F	G	H	E	M	T	E	R	T	U	O	E	L	N
O	R	T	M	O	B	E	T	L	O	S	T	C	S
A	I	W	E	K	R	R	S	E	R	E	I	E	C
M	Y	A	H	T	E	Z	U	J	O	C	N	E	N

Solutions opposite

CROSSWORD

1	2	3		4		5	6		7
						8			
9				10					
11					12				
13	14		15				16		17
18								19	
20							21		
22				23					

ACROSS

- As a fact (8)
- Heroic poem (4)
- Indigent (4)
- Quarrel (8)
- Sudden thrust (5)
- Anointing (7)
- Emotionally (13)
- Theatrical (8)
- Pipe (4)
- Building (7)
- Trap (5)
- Wise man (4)
- Gather (8)

DOWN

- End (7)
- Vertical (7)
- Absence of haste (13)
- Biased (7)
- Smoothly (7)
- Surgical instrument (6)
- Melancholy (7)
- Approaching (7)
- A sloping type (6)
- Word meaning complete opposite (7)
- Bounteous (7)

Scribble pad

LADDER

Using the clues provided, fill in each step of the ladder with a new word, changing one letter at a time.

- Rodents
- Unit of distance
- Small mammal
- State benefit
- Child's toy



NINER

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

- 639 gives an animal;
- 53124 gives a snake;
- 23178 gives a bird.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

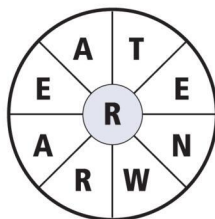
CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter. For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.

	5		2		7				20		21			
A	2	15	2	11		5	24	11	11	9	11		7	
B														
C		23			26	21	19			4		15	22	18
D														
E		26			13		3	13	17	8		12		11
F														
G	21	15	19	10	24			15						15
H								A						
I		4			19	22	18	T	19	18	13	4	11	14
J														
K		11				10		17		5			7	
L														
M	12	4	13	3	11	22	15	14	11				13	
N														
O	6						8		11	3	12	18	23	
P														
Q	25			21		16	11	11	4		11		11	
R														
S	19	7	11			15			15	1	11		4	
T														
U	11		11	4	7	15	18	9		18	4	6	13	
V														
W														
X														
Y														
Z														

WORDWHEEL

You have 10 mins to find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each must use the hub letter and at least 3 others. Letters may be used only once. You cannot use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one 9-letter word to be found.

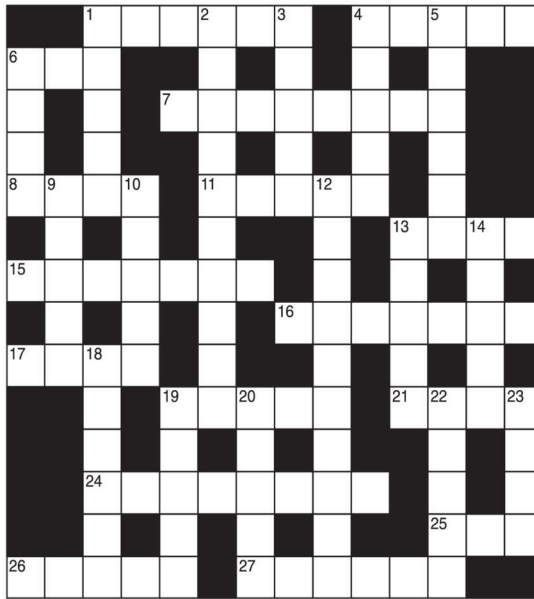


How you rate
 20 words: average
 30 words: good
 40 words: very good
 50 or more: excellent.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- Television series of the 1980s which starred George Cole and Dennis Waterman (6)
- One who cuts, prepares and lays stones (5)
- Ball, television and radio presenter who was the first female host of the Radio 1 Breakfast Show (3)
- Series of bands of coloured light obtained by diffusing white light through a prism (8)
- State of the USA, capital Salt Lake City (4)
- Surname of the President of the Republic of Uganda from 1966-71 and 1980-85 (5)
- King or prince of a race of people who occupied Peru before the coming of the Spaniards (4)
- Dilute acetic acid, used as a condiment, preservative, etc (7)
- See 21 Across
- 17 & 19 Across Northern constellation, the Great Bear (4,5)
- 21 & 16 Across Stage name of the actor, manager and composer famous for *Glamorous Night*, *Perchance to Dream*, etc (4,7)
- Surname of the novelist whose work include a series set in the imaginary county of Barsestshire (8)
- Card game in which each player is given five cards and calls the number of tricks he expects to win (3)
- See 4 Down
- Agricultural implement for mowing and reaping (6)



DOWN

- City in Saudi Arabia which was the birthplace of Mohammed (5)
- A morbid craving for alcohol (10)
- The right-hand page of an open book (5)
- 4 & 26 Polish-born chemist and physicist who, with her French husband, discovered radium in 1898 (5,5)
- According to Luke, Chapter 2, a "just and devout man waiting for the Saviour" (6)
- Light-coloured, Indian ox held to be sacred (4)
- City in Rhineland-Palatinate, on the river Moselle near the Luxembourg frontier (5)
- Carnivorous animal, allied to the dog, with disproportionately short back legs, which affect its gait (5)
- Science of describing or representing the features of a particular place in detail (10)
- Ancient British tribe whose leader was Queen Boadicea (or Boadicea) (5)
- Shortened name for a large instrument of the violin family, held between the knees and played with a bow (5)
- One of several varieties of sporting dogs, trained to stand rigid on scenting game (6)
- The largest living species of deer of North America (5)
- 20 & 22 French writer of science fiction, including *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (5,5)
- The remnant of the Long parliament, from 1659 to 1660, or from *Pride's Purge*, 1648, to its first dissolution in 1653 (4)

SOLUTIONS

ACROSS: 1 Minder; 4 Mason; 6 Zoe; 7 Spectrum; 8 Utah; 11 Obote; 13 Inca; 15 Vinegar; 16 Novelli; 17 Urea; 19 Major; 21 Ivor; 24 Trollope; 25 Nap; 26 Curie; 27 Scythia.
 DOWN: 1 Mecca; 2 Dipsonmania; 3 Recto; 4 Marie; 5 Simeon; 6 Zebu; 9 Tier; 10 Hyena; 12 Topography; 13 Icen; 14 Cello; 18 Setter; 19 Moose; 20 Jules; 22 Verne; 23 Rump.

General Knowledge Crossword

Crossword
 Across: 1 Actually; 5 Epic; 9 Poor; 10 Disagree; 11 Lunge; 12 Unicorn; 13 Sentimentally; 18 Dramatic; 19 Tube; 20 Edifice; 21 Snare; 22 Sage; 23 Assembly; Down: 2 Closure; 3 Upright; 4 Leisuriness; 6 Parlay; 7 Cleanly; 8 Lance; 13 Sadness; 14 Nearing; 15 Italic; 16 Antony; 17 Liberal.

Wordwheel Pathfinder
 WARRANTEE
 Business, Like Toy Soldiers, Without Me, Love the Way You Lie.
 Mockingbird, Lose Yourself, The Real Slim Shady, Recovery.
 Stan, My Name Is, When I'm Gone, The Eminem Show, Guilty
 Nine
 Rap God, Sing for the Moment, Berzerk, The Way I Am.
 BROACHING

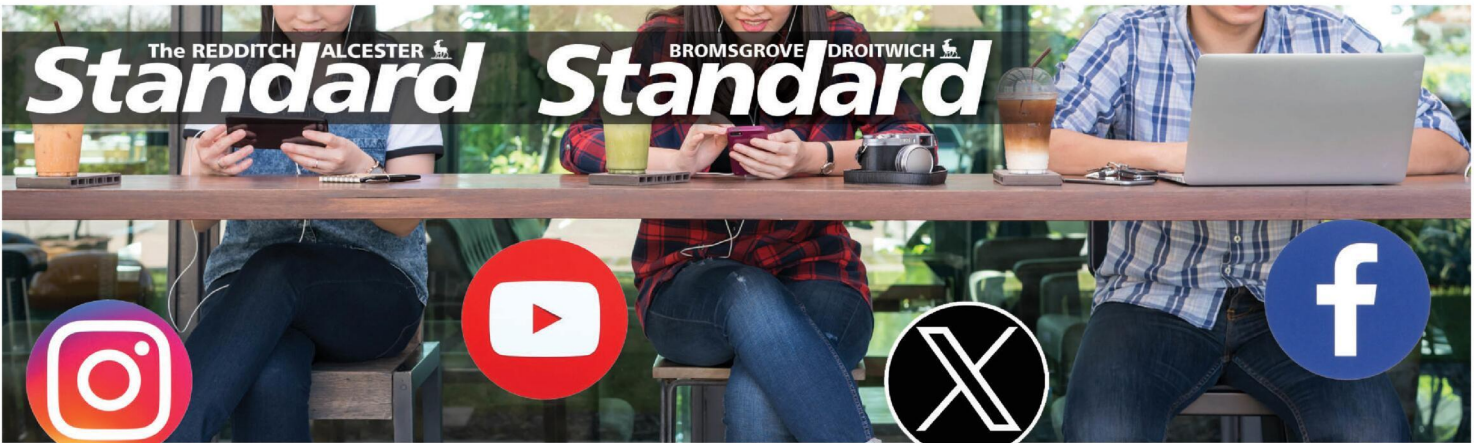
Ladder
 Dice, Mice, Mille, Mole, Dole,
 Doll, Roll.
 Codeword
 1=X, 2=B, 3=M, 4=R, 5=W, 6=L, 7=S, 8=K, 9=Z,
 10=G, 11=E, 12=P, 13=O, 14=D, 15=A, 16=V,
 17=C, 18=T, 19=U, 20=J, 21=L, 22=N, 23=Y,
 24=H, 25=Q, 26=F

6	1	9	8	4	5	7	2	3
5	8	3	7	9	2	4	1	6
7	2	4	1	6	3	5	8	9
1	5	8	4	7	9	6	3	2
3	6	7	2	5	1	8	9	4
4	9	2	6	3	8	1	5	7
2	3	6	5	1	4	9	7	8
8	7	1	9	2	6	3	4	5
9	4	5	3	8	7	2	6	1

Hard

8	3	6	1	7	2	5	9	4
4	9	1	3	5	8	2	7	6
5	2	7	9	6	4	8	1	3
1	4	2	6	3	9	7	8	5
9	6	5	8	1	7	3	4	2
7	8	3	2	4	5	1	6	9
3	1	9	7	2	6	4	5	8
2	5	8	4	9	1	6	3	7
6	7	4	5	8	3	9	2	1

Easy
 Sudoku



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DEATHS

SUSAN WYATT

11/5/57 - 23/4/26
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 Ex Husband Kevin
 and Grandkids
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 sweet one
 God Bless

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DEATHS

SIDLEY

**Anthony Hubert
Arthur George**



Aged 92 years

Passed away peacefully on
Monday 6th April 2026.

Beloved Husband to the late Edna. Much loved Dad to Julie, Andrew & Steven, and Grandfather to Shaun and Jorden.

Anthony will be greatly missed by all of his family and friends.

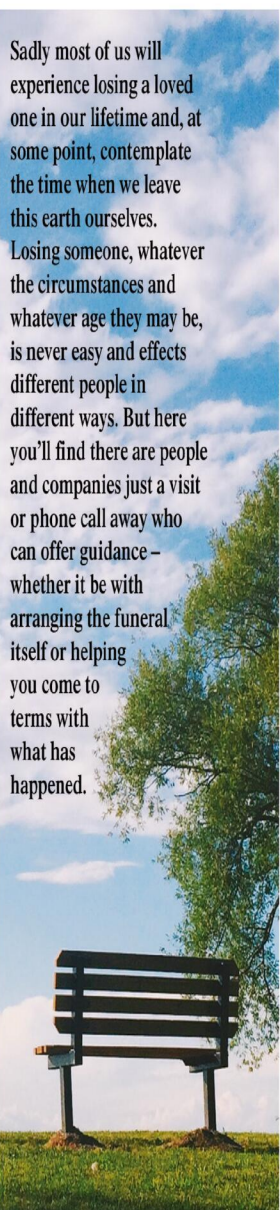
A service to celebrate Anthony's life will take place at Redditch Crematorium on Friday 8th May 2026, at 2.00 p.m.

Donations if so desired to Age UK Bromsgrove may be sent to

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Thank You



Sadly most of us will experience losing a loved one in our lifetime and, at some point, contemplate the time when we leave this earth ourselves. Losing someone, whatever the circumstances and whatever age they may be, is never easy and effects different people in different ways. But here you'll find there are people and companies just a visit or phone call away who can offer guidance – whether it be with arranging the funeral itself or helping you come to terms with what has happened.

IN MEMORIAM

In Loving memory of

Kenneth Llewellyn CHAMBERS

Passed away 10/3/97 aged 60 years

Brother to John, Brother in Law to Jennifer & Uncle to Charlotte & Family

Love & kisses

Miss you

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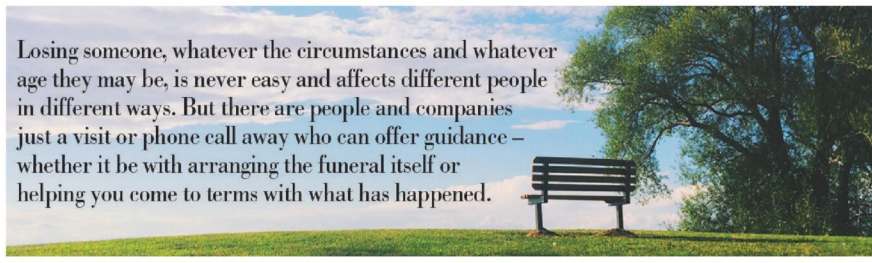
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LUNCHTIME SUPERVISOR

We currently have an opportunity for a Lunchtime Supervisor to join our team working Monday to Friday 11.15 a.m.-1.45 p.m., term time only.

Full details and the online application form is available through the School website www.bromsgrove-school.co.uk

Closing date for all applications is Monday 11 May 2026

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening, including checks with past employers and DBS

WINTERFOLD BROMSGROVE SCHOOL

PREP • PRE-PREP • NURSERY

TEACHING ASSISTANT - EARLY YEARS

To commence September 2026, we seek a qualified Teaching Assistant (Level 3) to join our team here at Winterfold House School

Monday to Friday 8.30 a.m.- 3.30 p.m. term time only, plus four weeks of holiday club work during school holiday periods.

Full details and application forms are available on the school website: www.winterfoldhouse.co.uk

Closing date for all applications is Monday 11 May 2026.

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening including checks with past employers and the Disclosure Barring Service.

FLAIR • DISCIPLINE • ACADEMIC RIGOUR

BROMSGROVE SCHOOL

FOUNDED 1553

We currently have the following opportunities at our Pre-Preparatory School

NURSERY KEYWORKERS

Monday to Friday 8.00 a.m.-5.00 p.m. (52 weeks of the year) or Monday to Friday 8.00 a.m.-5.00 p.m., term time only plus 8 weeks of work during school holiday periods.

We seek qualified, professional and personable individuals to carry out these roles, working with Nursery aged children in school.

Closing date Monday 11 May 2026

Full details and application forms are available on the school website: www.bromsgrove-school.co.uk

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening including checks with past employers and the DBS.



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Contract: term time only usually worked at the rate of 32.5 per week during published plus inset days.

Closing Date: 5th May 2026 (9AM)

Interview Dates: TBC

About Our School

We are a happy and successful High School with a Sixth Form. We serve the whole community of Droitwich and its surrounding villages, making our intake socio-economically diverse, which our entire staff play up to and thrive upon.

You are strongly encouraged to read our 'Information for Prospective Colleagues.' We expect that it will give you an even deeper feel for the community we serve, our ethos, our culture and what our school is like day to day.

About the Vacancy

Are you someone who loves working with young people and wants to make a difference in their school experience? We are looking for a dedicated individual to join our Cover Team. Whilst experience is preferred, it is not essential as we want to find the right person and will offer training to support development in this role.

As a Cover Supervisor you will supervise the classes of teachers who are unavailable for reasons including meetings, training, trips and short term illness. This is a key role in our school and we seek to appoint someone who is able to communicate, inspire and support our students to achieve their goals. A commitment to working collaboratively with colleagues and to continuous professional development should not be underestimated.

How to Apply

You will find a link to the job description, a person specification, information for prospective colleagues, an application form and further information on how to apply here:

<https://website.droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk/index.php/sc/hool/join-us/job-vacancies/>

If you have any queries please don't hesitate to get in touch via jobs@droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk

Droitwich Spa High School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.



WINTERFOLD

PREP • PRE-PREP • NURSERY

BROMSGROVE SCHOOL

We currently have an opportunity at WINTERFOLD HOUSE SCHOOL for a

TEACHING ASSISTANT

To commence September 2026, we seek a qualified Teaching Assistant (Level 3) to join our team here at Winterfold House School

Monday to Friday 7.45 a.m.- 6.00 p.m. term time only.

Full details and application forms are available on the school website: www.winterfoldhouse.co.uk

Closing date for all applications is Monday 11 May 2026.

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening including checks with past employers and the Disclosure Barring Service.

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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 Orders:

CHURCH LANE, HASELOR

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: Works to repair or replace defective manhole cover and frame.

Order Commences: 7 May 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 7 May 2026.

Access & Diversion: No diversion available.

Contractor: Customer Solutions Plus, Tel: 07918 389363.

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, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 01 May 2026



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MISCELLANEOUS

BEDS NEWDoubles £95 Singles £59 King size £159. Second hand doubles £49 Singles £29 Fridges £49 Freezers £59 Can deliver 07703 925662

RECLINER CHAIRElectric rise & recline £169 Manual recline chair £60 High seated chair £40 Can deliver 07703 925662

RUNNER BEANPlants, £2. a tray of 12 plants 8 foot canes 75p. 01905 778926

6 Skovby dining chairs tubular metal 'H' frame beige upholstery. £150 ono 01527 540006

MAMAS & Papas, large rocking horse on wooden frame. Very good clean condition (collection only) £45.00 Tel: 07934132759

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SALES & WANTS

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2 x lamb creep feeders 24 feeding slots £250 and £230 07813 443674

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Spa gearing up for derby clash in play-off final against Raiders

by Aaron Sutcliffe
 aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

FOOTBALL: DROITWICH Spa will play rivals Worcester Raiders in the Hellenic League Premier Division play-off final this weekend.

The Saltmen battled to a 1-0 victory against Cirencester Town in the play-off semi-finals as Josh Hurdman's late goal settled the tie at the King George Playing Fields.

And the victory has set up a derby clash in the play-off final between Droitwich and Worcester.

Raiders stunned league runners-up Roman Glass St George to reach the play-off final and book a date with Droitwich.

Spa completed a league double over Raiders after winning 3-1 at Worcester last month following a 4-2 home win against their rivals back in December.

However, Worcester beat Spa in both the Worcestershire Senior Cup and Wiseman Floodlit Cup this season.

Raiders finished six points and two places below spa in the Hellenic

League Premier Division table.

More than 500 supporters packed into Kingy's to watch the club's semi-final success against Cirencester.

Both Hurdman and Perry Moss went close early on before the latter forced a corner later in the half with a near-post effort.

Spa goalkeeper Joe Stockton then tipped Kyle Pitts' header over the crossbar with the away side's first meaningful attempt of the half.

The final chance of the first period saw Cory Rudd send a free-kick wide of the post from a promising position.

Droitwich almost broke the deadlock early in the second half as Jack Brighton's shot hit the post and Cirencester goalkeeper Ronnie Newberry gathered the rebound.

And Moss sent a shot narrowly over the crossbar as the game edged closer to the final whistle.

However, Hurdman eventually put Spa ahead with nine minutes left to play as he applied the finishing touch to a free-kick into the box from the left.

Droitwich play Worcester in the play-off final on Saturday, May 2 with kick-off at 3pm at the King George Playing Fields.



Tom Ingram leads a trail of drivers at Donington Park. Picture by Mark Cowdrill.

Team Vertu start BTCC season with double podium in last race

BTCC: DROITWICH-based Team Vertu began the 2026 British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) season with a double podium at Donington Park.

Reigning champion Tom Ingram and newly-signed driver Ricky Collard both stepped onto the podium in the final race of the opening weekend of the season.

Defending champion Ingram endured a nightmare start to his title defence with the driver disqualified from the first race.

Ingram thought he had made the perfect start to the season when crossing the line in first place.

However, Ingram received a post-race disqualification with

his car deemed to have a significant overboost.

That meant Tom Chilton's ninth-place finish proved the Droitwich team's highest finish in race one with Nicolas Hamilton 17th while Collard suffered a DNF.

Collard recovered to finish eighth in race two with Chilton further back in 13th place in another difficult race for the team.

Both Ingram and Hamilton did not start the race with the former's car suffering from an alternator failure.

However, Ingram showed his champion mentality to finish second in the final race of the weekend to secure a first podium finish of the season.

Ingram finished on the podium despite starting the race from the very back of the grid while Collard crossed the line just behind in third place.

Further down the track, Hamilton finished 18th while Chilton suffered a DNF.

Team Vertu team owner, Justina Williams said: "We have mixed emotions after the opening round as we know we could have had more points on the board, but we've also shown that we have a strong car and driver line-up with the result of the final race of the weekend.

"As a team, we need to take the positives from the opening rounds and come out fighting at Brands Hatch."

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