Residents want traffic calming measures after accident

CALL TO TAME DANGER ROAD

CONCERNED residents have called for traffic calming measures to be installed on a ‘dangerous’ Dudley road which they say is blighted by speeding motorists.

Residents living in Dreadnought Road, Pensnett, are due to launch a petition calling on Dudley Council to take action as they fear it is only a matter of time before there is a fatal accident.

It comes after the latest crash on the road which saw a motorist taken to hospital.

Carl Evans, aged 29, who lives on the road, said: “I’m scared to walk my three-year-old daughter down the road due to speeding motorists.

“Myself and my wife sit in our living room at night waiting for a bang and a crash to happen. Cars speed along the road all hours of the day. I would definitely like to see traffic calming measures installed on the road.”

Concerned

Proposals for traffic calming measures have been backed by local councillor Judy Foster, who represents the Breckmoor and Pensnett ward.

She said: “I am concerned about the incident which took place.

“I will speak to residents, the council and police to see if we have got a problem down there and call for action if appropriate. I would back traffic calming measures if needed.”

The latest incident happened shortly after 11pm on February 21 when emergency services were called to reports of a car that had rolled over.

A passenger had managed to get out of the vehicle through the back window and was taken to hospital by ambulance with several injuries.

Taxi driver Muhammad Ilyas, from Dudley, is presented with the Good Citizen’s Award by Chief Constable Dave Thompson

A BRAVE taxi driver who helped officers arrest a violent robber who attacked a pregnant woman with a hammer in Dudley has received a West Midlands Police award.

Muhammad Ilyas was driving by when he saw the horror attack take place, which left the woman – aged in her 30s – with a fractured skull at Dennes Green.

As a fellow passer-by went to comfort the victim – who had a child with her – Mr Ilyas joined another man in following the attacker to ensure he didn’t escape justice.

Officers arrived promptly and arrested the 49-year-old attacker when he emerged from the parked car and tried to snatch an elderly woman’s handbag just minutes before the hammer attack, which took place on October 28, 2016.

The attacker went on to be jailed for a minimum of 10 years at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

Mr Ilyas, aged 25, from Dudley, has been awarded a Chief Constable’s Good Citizen’s Award in recognition of his bravery and public-spirited actions in helping to catch the vicious robber.

This award was handed over to Mr Ilyas by Chief Constable Dave Thompson during an awards ceremony at the West Midlands Police Force’s Tally Ho! base in Edgbaston.
THE trust that runs Russells Hall Hospital has been criticised by a councillor after spending almost £12 million on agency staff in one year.

Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, which runs the Dudley hospitals, spent £11.7m in 2017 because of the shortage of staff.

In a report revealed following a Freedom of Information request, Councillor Paul Brothwood, leader of the Dudley Ukip group, said: “This figure is scandalous. It is an extortionate amount of money.

“We have a real concern on temporary staff. We want to see money invested in the service that staff represent.”

Data has also show that almost half of the money – 47 per cent – was spent on cover for nurses.

For the financial year of 2016/17, from April to April, the Trust spent £107.7m on permanent staff, while the cost on agency staff was £11.1m.

Its agency spend in 2015/16 was £9.5m while its permanent staff spend was £17.9m.

Diane Wake, chief executive of the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, said: “We use agency staff to cover staff shortages and ensure our patients are safe and cared for by appropriately skilled staff at all times.

“Because of the high demand on our services throughout December and January, we opened extra beds in the hospital and used a number of temporary staff to support us in caring for these extra patients.

“Our use of agency staff will obviously reduce once we are able to fill vacant posts and we are doing all we can to recruit.”

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn in Stourbridge town centre with Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson, right

Mr Corbyn poses for a selfie during his visit

Mr Corbyn chats with staff at the Chemistry Cafe

A MENTAL health trust had learned from its mistakes following the suicide of a young man from Dudley, a coroner concluded.

Brandon McDonald, of Beech Road, had been deeply affected by the deaths of his grandfather and a close friend, an inquest in Oldbury heard.

He was also upset by a breakup with his girlfriend and had got into trouble with the police after breaching a restraining order.

The body of the 20-year-old, described as having complex mental health needs, was found in woods near Dudley Zoo, on September 9 last year. Hours earlier he had sent his aunt a text message, saying: “I’m sorry, I love you all.”

Mr McDonald, a labourer, had gone to Buckley Fields Hospital, part of Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, about five weeks before his death but he was turned away, the inquest heard.

He had an appointment booked for August and had been told he would have to wait until then.

The Nhs trust admitted they ‘did not fully realise the extent of his true feelings’ after holding an inquiry and put in place an action plan to reduce the risk of a similar tragedy.

Concluding that Mr McDonald took his own life, Black Country coroner Zafar Siddique said the trust accepted it had fallen below its usual standards.

“In my view they have learned from their mistakes,” he added.

MP joins better education group

DUDLEY North MP Ian Austin has joined a new Parliamentary campaign to improve education in order to tackle long-term youth unemployment in the Black Country.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Education brings together MP’s and education experts to work for improvements.

Labour MP Mr Austin said he will use his membership to promote his campaign for improved results in schools, more apprenticeships, higher levels of technical education and new university facilities in the Black Country.

“I’ve always said we need to make education and skills our number one priority, not just to give young people a first class start but to attract new investment in new industries and new jobs and to help adults get new jobs too,” he said.

Coroner says Trust ‘learned lessons’ after man’s death

Mr McDonald's death

Mr Corbyn in call for more police officers

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn in Stourbridge before pledging that a Labour Government would recruit 10,000 extra officers.

Mr Corbyn tweeted afterwards: “I’ve been talking with police officers in Stourbridge. The Tories have cut police numbers and left forces without the resources they need. Labour will recruit 10,000 extra police officers. You can’t protect communities on the cheap.

“There is no doubt that crime is being made worse by police funding cuts,” he said.

“If you have fewer officers on the beat and then you have slower clear up rates, which becomes part of the problem.

“There are also general issues of dislocation where you close youth centres and dismiss youth workers.

“We have to invest in the police but we must also invest in what I call the social infrastructure that goes around people’s lives.”

Despite a shocking increase in knife crime which has seen 21 stabblings in the West Midlands so far this year, he rejected calls for compulsory prison sentences for those found guilty of carrying a blade.

Mr Corbyn said: “A mandatory jail term is not necessarily the answer. Community service and restorative justice can be a much more effective tool.”
**Car did somersault after 80mph chase**

The father-of-two was seen to go through red lights and, on returning to Netherton Road, he reached 80mph as he headed for Cinder Bank, causing officers behind to call off the chase because of danger to other road users.

One of the officers was heard to say ‘He’s going to kill someone’ just seconds before the Megan’s mounted a roundabout, sending it into a somersault before landing back on its wheels.

Police Ratcliffe-Thompson at the scene and called an ambulance for the pregnant passenger.

The court heard that the defendant had borrowed the car from a family friend.

Mr Sam Forthry, defending, said Ratcliffe-Thompson was autocratic and suffered from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. He had broken up with his partner shortly before the incident but they were now back together.

She added that he ‘panicked’ when he saw the police car because he knew he was uninsured and had no license.

Ratcliffe-Thompson, of Victoria Street, Cradley Heath, pleaded guilty to dangerous driving and driving without insurance or a licence.

Judge James Burridge, QC, handed him a 10-month jail term but suspended it for two years, with a requirement to take part in a rehabilitation course.

He also imposed a three-month curfew, from 9pm to 6am, and banned him from driving for 30 months.

**Members of lorry jacking gang are sentenced**

**THIEVES** escaped with almost £500,000 worth of metal after targeting 11 lorries in as many months, a judge has heard.

Loads of aluminium, sheet metal and copper piping were taken between November 2016 and last October, from Dudley’s Shapton Park Crown Court was told.

Foreign drivers were hired by the vehicles and members of the gang then drove off with the truck and its cargo, said Mr Graham Ruswell, prosecuting.

In one case the thieves were forced to flee by a driver armed with a hammer in Walsall, while the gang were fended off by another who refused to leave his cab in Cradley Heath.

The gang used a tracker block to stop the stolen lorries being monitored after escaping with a total haul worth £470,000. The trucks were driven across the country to sell and the tutor unit was swapped for a cab on false plates.

On August 17 a truck with £55,000 worth of copper was taken. Five days later a driver with a load of copper valued at £89,000 was parked in Wednesbury.

A batch of tyres was stolen from Central Compound where Mills and Anthony were cleared of causing the man’s death by dangerous driving.

**Call for volunteers at park anniversary event**

VOLUNTEERS are needed to help stage a festival event in the Black Country this summer. The Tividale Park Festival on July 7 will include music, food, drink and entertainment.

The event is the idea of Tipton Road, Dudley, welcomed a record-breaking total of 351,778 people. In 2016, the popular museum welcomed 206,100 visitors.

Laura Wakelin, deputy chief exec, wants more people to come to the museum than in 2015, which in itself was a fantastic year.

**Record visitors figure at museum**

The Black Country Living Museum celebrated its busiest year in 2017. More than 330,000 visitors walked through the doors of the museum last year, eight per cent on its previous record attendance.

The museum in Tipton Road, Dudley, welcomed a record-breaking total of 351,778 people. In 2016, the popular museum welcomed 206,100 visitors.

Laura Wakelin, deputy chief exec for communications and marketing, said: “That’s 20,000 more people coming to the museum than in 2015, which in itself was a fantastic year.”

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**Man admits being the getaway driver**

A 53-year-old man has admitted acting as the getaway driver for a raid on a convenience store in Steadley.

Delroy Nettleford, of Studmore Road, Dudley, pleaded guilty to the robbery at the One Stop shop in Worcester Street, Studley, on September 1.

The plea was entered on the day his trial was due to start. It was accepted by the prosecution that the man was the driver and only became aware that he was wanted by police after he left the store.

The robbery was remedied in custody until March 27.

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**COUNTY NEWS**

**Sabbath rocker to host charity lunch**

BLACK Sabbath legend Tony Iommi is hosting an exclusive lunch to raise money for a new hospital cancer unit.

The event will take place on April 20 where the rock guitarist will share stories from his life and career, touring the world with one of the biggest bands of all time. He will be raising funds for the Solihull Hospital and Heartlands Hospital charities for a new cancer centre at Solihull Hospital. The lunch will be held at the Opu Restaurant in Birmingham.

Tickets are £100 each or £950 for a table of 10. Tables can be booked by calling 0121 371 4852.

**Maternity survey for boosting care**

HEALTH bosses have said women who gave birth at a hospital during either January or February could receive a survey asking about their care.

Mothers who gave birth at Russell Hall Hospital could be surveyed in April about care they received.

The National Maternity Survey, which is being run by the Care Quality Commission, will ask women about their experiences of antenatal care, childbirth and postnatal care.

The results will provide the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust with feedback to help improve quality of care and the experience of women using maternity services.

**Museum tour is being signed**

MONTHLY British Sign Language tours are being offered at the Black Country Living Museum in Dudley. They run at 2pm and 3pm on Saturdays with the next on March 31.

House tours of the Tipton Road site are conducted completely in British Sign Language for deaf and hard of hearing visitors with no spoken interpretation. Other dates are April 28 and May 19. Book in advance by calling 0121 520 8054 or e-mailing bookings@bcim.org.uk.

**Bronze for brewery’s stout festival offering**

A Black Country brewery won a bronze award at a national winter ales festival.

Fixed Wheel in Blackheath was chaired in the category of the Great British Beer Festival Winter in Norwich with Blackheath Stout, a five per cent alcohol brew made at the micro-brewery’s base on Long Lane Trading Estate.

**Lucky escape six months before fatal fall**

Another man was left hanging from railings after trying to climb the same ‘faulty’ gate as Chris Brookes, an inquest was told.

The incident happened just six months before the tragedy at Wolverhampton bus station on October 29 when a man tried to climb over the gate and slipped, but was saved as he was caught on railings and was left hanging last April.

The inquest into the tragic death of Mr Brookes, of Tame Road, heard he was on his way home from a night out as he went through a fire exit at Wolverhampton bus station, which could not be opened from the outside once shut, onto an outdoor ‘balcony’.

He is believed to have walked along a narrow path – between a brick wall and metal railing – towards a gate which connected to the bridge near the railway station. Mr Brookes fell 40ft onto the road below. He was taken to Birmingham’s Queen Elizabeth Hospital but medics were unable to save him.

Since the death of Mr Brookes, the first fire escape leading outside has remained locked and will be fixed so it can be opened from both sides, the inquest was told. Extra emergency lighting and warning signs have been installed and a push bar placed on the faulty door. It also emerged at the inquest that a security team did not respond when Mr Brookes set off an alarm as he opened the first fire exit.

Tim Johnson, deputy managing director at City of Wolverhampton Council, said: “We understand that the corner will be formally requesting further information from us and other parties.”

**Father killed in late night gate tragedy**

A YOUNG father plunged 40ft to his death trying to climb over a faulty gate at a bus station, an inquest heard.

Chris Brookes mistakenly believed a gate was locked and decided to scramble over it after becoming trapped between two fire exits at Wolverhampton bus station.

But the Dudley-born man slipped and plummeted onto a bus lane of Wolverhampton ring road. The 23-year-old’s death came six months after another man almost died by trying to scale the same gate.

Fire safety inspector Stephen Clegg told the inquest Black Country Coroner’s Court: “I don’t believe that gate was locked. When I looked, I concluded it was faulty. There’s a knuck. If you don’t hit it right, it appears locked.”

Coroner Zafar Siddique, who recorded a conclusion of accidental death on Mr Brookes said he will now write a Preventing Future Deaths report.

Mr Brookes, of Oldbury, had been out celebrating brother Craig Brookes’ birthday but got separated from the group. His brother told the inquest that Mr Brookes, an assembler at Etta Fans in Kingswinford, was probably trying to get home when at the bus station at 2am on October 29.

He suffered a fractured skull, ribs, spine and arm in the fall and died as a result of a head trauma, pathologist Dr Paul Hiley said.

Mr Brookes, who died before partner Sarah Jayne Collins gave birth to his second child, had taken a small amount of cocaine and had 108mg of alcohol in 100ml of blood.

**Rural fringe of town is selected for new homes**

THOUSANDS of homes could be built on the edge of the Dudley borough after the area was identified as a ‘prime location’ to help meet a housing shortfall.

Land near Stourbridge has been included as one of the preferred sites in a report assessing where tens of thousands of properties will be built over the next 25 years to meet the needs of the rising Midlands population.

An ‘urban extension’ could be created, providing between 1,500 and 7,500 homes, according to the report.

Housing bosses are coming under pressure to commit to sites for new developments.

Land needs to be found for more than 20,000 homes to be built by 2038 and, with space at a premium in densely populated areas such as Birmingham and Wolverhampton, officials have had to look further afield.

A report on the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area also said there was an emphasis on councils across the West Midlands to ‘work together to meet housing needs’.

The site south of Dudley is one of four to be identified for ‘urban extensions’, with the others being in Staffordshire – north of Penkridge, east of Lichfield and south of Tamworth.

Finer details of where the site will be have not yet been revealed.

Stourbridge councillor Nicolas Barlow said he would be opposed to plans that threatened green belt.

He said: “I would be disappointed to have new housing built on green belt when we know we have got significant brownfield sites that are absolutely no use at all.”

**Amritsar flights from Birmingham**

AIR India’s new twice weekly non-stop service to Amritsar from Birmingham has been launched.

The airport saw Indian drummers and dancers waving their way through passengers who were joined by VIPs, business leaders and members of the Sikh UK community for the first flight on February 20.

Amritsar connects to the established Delhi service from Birmingham Airport. The service has carried more than 600,000 passengers in the four months it has operated using the Boeing 787-8 ‘Dreamliner’ aircraft.

Manager Paul Peat, Birmingham Airport, said: “The Midlands has the biggest Asian population outside of London in the UK and as it is great news that we are making more of India accessible to our passengers for business, leisure and to visit family and friends.”

Sarah Jayne Collins with Chris Junior, named after his father who died weeks before he was born.
AN ‘irreplaceable’ brass book stand which had been used in services for 90 years has been stolen from a church near a century ago by a hero’s war widow has been stolen during a burglary.

Thieves broke into the vestry at St Mary’s Church in Oldwoods taking the stand and food donated for the congregation for the Black Country Food Bank.

The book stand was given to the church by Elizabeth Lambert, wife of Gunner Arthur Henry Lambert, four years after his death during the First World War in 1918 and has been used at services ever since.

The church was open to the public at the time of the theft but valuables were locked away in the vestry.

A bolted door was forced by the crooks.

Church leaders have appealed for the book stand, which holds the Bible on the altar during services, to be returned. St Mary’s has been closed during the day following the break-in, while officials look at increasing security.

There had been previous attempted break-ins.

Parish administrator John Sutton said: ‘I’m disappointed more than anything. We do try to help people who are in need as far as we can. If they had just come and asked us we would have helped. They didn’t have to break in, damage the church and help themselves.

‘We would like to have the book stand back so it can be used again in the church.’

Arthur Lambert grew up on Hagley Road, close to where the Tesco store is today, and had an affinity with the church, where he was a choir boy and Bible class conductor before going off to war.

On the movie – ‘The Fizzogs’

Dancing Grannies with Paula Goodyear at the Dudley Fountain Arcade Cafe

A CAFE owner in Dudley has become a major sponsor for a Black Country film.

Paula Goodyear from the Dudley Fountain Arcade Cafe has given her support to the Fizzogs’ fundraising drive to develop a film script with writer-director Ben Field.

The ‘Dancing Grannies’ are raising money via a crowdfunding page to make a teaser tape to present to producers and investors in the film industry.

So far they have generated more than £600 towards their £2,000 bid to catch the eye of Hollywood bigwig.

Paula backed the project after being introduced to the group of 160 children to treat to Black Country All Stars.

The fashion show, which costs £5 per ticket, including welcome drink, was pictured with them at the Theatre Royal, Dudley, last weekend and has generated more than £600.

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Problem with America is too many guns not too few

WHILE searching through the multitude of television channels (looking for anything, just anything that might be vaguely watchable to pass time, I stumbled across a repeat of a Channel 4 series called It Was A Bengt in the 70s.

Now I know l’m probably a little behind curve on this one, but I really don’t watch much TV these days. There’s just too many talent shows, celebrities-mak- ing-idiot-of-themselves shows, chat shows and never-ending gritty crime dra-mas about Sarah Lancashire muddling into a shaky camera to make it worth-

Anyway, for those not familiar with the format, It Was A Bengt in the 70s centres around paid-up members of the liberal elites, plus a handful of comedians no-one has ever heard of wearing loud shirts, re-peatedly putting their head in their hands venturi ng the content of television programming in the 1970s. The Sweeney, Carry On Films, Top of the Pops, all came in for a good kick-

ing, along with various public safety in-

formation films which might be offensive to Generation Snowflake. Even an ATV news interview with Dave Hill from Slade was shown for some reason.

What amused me though is what the likely motives were of those who watched the show. Now I don’t doubt for one moment that the people behind the programme thought it would be to hear about the Antony Gormley’s observations on how much the perceived society has be-

come compared to 40-odd years ago. But I can’t help but think just turned out to see a few clips from Confessions of a Window Cleaner.

RANK stupidity. Not fair to the fans. Mean. Fortunate that they are still having a field day about the escapa-

ces of W. Bromwich Albion stars in Barcelo-

nia. What nobody has so far revealed is the make of the taxi they are alleged to have snaffled. Was it a Ford? Good chance, or maybe a Peugeot, VW, or Audi. I’ll wager that the taxi was nothing-

with the Mercedes badge. No way. That’s the one with three points.

DONALD Trump has come in for stick for sugaring Bry Rees should get paid extra if they carry pistols to protect pupils from anything.

Thankfully, that is probably not neces-sary here but it has given me an idea on adding the menace of anti-social behav-

ior. Equip dinner ladies with Tasers, the likes of which have been getting the drop-on-

ning litter and doing graffiti.

Arming teachers is not the answer

BEFORE the bodies had even been buried after the Florida school massacre, some gun enthusi-

siasts were claiming that, if only the teachers had been armed, the gunman could have been killed before he killed anyone. What hope can there be for people who genuinely believe that the problem is not that America has too many guns (last count about 300 million), but too few?

And, hell, why stop with arming the teachers? The kids can only be truly safe when every din-

ner lady has a 44 Magnum. God Bless America.

DID we all notice in Endeavour (ITV) that Morse visited a motel called Crossroads in a village called Kings Oak and the cleaner was a Mrs T? Next week: mass murder in the village of Trumpton – six firemen and a miller in the frame.

UNDERSTANDING weather-related head-

tales. ‘Beat from the East brings Libyan snow-bomb nightmare’ – it will be a tad chilly next week.

MATHS for beginners. A reader reports buy-

ing Briefings for Brexit, a website devoted to the ensuing (some would say stifled) benefits of quitting the EU, face an uphill battle. For this is not merely an argument about politics, economics or any other lecture-theatre subject. It goes deep into the human spirit. Just as some infants depend on a comfort blanket, so some adults need a catastrophe blanket. Their natu-

ral mind-set is to believe they are on the brink of nuclear annihilation, DDT poisoning, the com-

ing ice age (remember that?), global warming and, in the last few decades, plastic pollution. The hugely intelligent men and women behind~ vaulter before joining the police. Now, that’s the one with three points.

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9
Velo carbon footprint must have been huge

I see that Birmingham Council say that last year’s Velo Birmingham cycle ride was a huge success.

This is hardly surprising since Birmingham undoubtedly made a lot of money from the participants.

The countless businesses, residents and visitors to the Black Country, Staffordshire and Worcestershire who suffered financial loss, or whose day was ruined by the associated road closures, would undoubtedly disagree.

After last year’s event, I was told by Dudley Council that, before another Velo is approved, an impact assessment would be completed. I hope the results of this are duly noted.

In particular, its environmental impact would be interesting to see.

Apart from 15,000 cyclists travelling to and from Birmingham, a fleet of vehicles went out to deliver and collect the road-closure warning signs, then all the cones and barriers, followed by marshals driving out to enforce road closures on the day.

For an event claiming to support the green credentials of cycling, its carbon footprint must have been huge—and that is before you take into account the huge mileage that must have been covered by unfortunate people attempting to bypass the web of closed roads.

If Birmingham Council and the organisers wish to make Velo Birmingham a regular event, then let them keep it within Birmingham so that its disruption falls on Birmingham rate-payers and everyone else can get on with their lives without interference.

David Anscome, Stourbridge

Thank you to nurse for help at roadside

On February 16, at approximately 3.30pm, my husband was forced to stop his car whilst driving in Cot Lane, Wombrook, due to the fact I was feeling extremely ill.

I exited the car and was doubled over with pain, was also violently sick. In my distress, I noticed another car had also violently sick. In my distress, I noticed another car had pulled up behind my husband’s car. A woman in a nurse’s uniform exited the car and came over and gave me assistance and advice. It was not a pleasant situation for her to be in and there was no obligation for her to do so. I would like to offer, on behalf of myself and my husband, our deepest gratitude and thanks for her unsolicited help and kindness.

Janet Bayliss
Wall Heath

WHEN I was a youngster many years ago, it was a delight to go shopping around Dudley town with my mother.

There were all the top shops and also some lovely eating places where you could sample our local cuisine.

But turn forward the years and what do we have now?

No top shops but lots of charity shops, pound shops, bookies and, most of all, boarded-up shops, as well as run-down shops.

I also notice rubbish dumped in the main High Street along with bedding material strewn all around the town, also taking over many shop doorways.

Is it not time that the council and police get tough on the homeless people taking over the doorways and move them on from our poor, unrecognisable town?

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Man used freezer to hide illegal tobacco

A SHOPKEEPER who hid illegal tobacco inside a freezer and in drawers has been ordered to carry out 150 hours of unpaid work.

Sywash Mashkhaty, owner of European Food Express in Dudley High Street, pleaded guilty to seven offences.

Wolverhampton Magistrates Court heard that during an inspection in August 2016 trading standards officers found 1,765 packets of cigarettes and tobacco without the necessary health warnings, which had evaded excise duty. Five brands were also found to be counterfeit.

The haul was discovered hidden in drawers under a meat counter, inside a freezer cabinet and in a car parked at the rear of the premises.

The duty evaded was estimated to be more than £10,000.

Mashkhaty’s employee and previous owner of the business Najibullah Asakzai, 24, pleaded guilty to aiding and abetting the offences. Asakzai, of Haig Road, Dudley, received a 12-month community order and a 12-month night curfew and was ordered to pay £1,652 costs and a victim surcharge of £85.

Tobacco was destroyed.

Name is chosen by Kadida poll at zoo

DUDLEY Zoo’s first female gelada baboon has a name – thanks to social media.

The Castle Hill attraction invited people to pick their favourite name for the newborn from a choice of three. Zoo bosses have now announced the youngster is called Kadida. More than 400 people joined in the zoo’s Facebook poll with Kadida taking more than half the votes. Around 150 animal lovers liked Tulia and the third option of Amhara reached 57 votes.

Senior keeper Jodie Dryden said: “It was lovely to receive so many votes from followers and we’re delighted with the name, which is of African origin. We’re already using it and are even calling her Dida for short. Her cheeky little personality is starting to come out and our latest smiley shot of her shows she’s got six teeth. She has two teeth at the top and four at the bottom and she’s even attempting to tuck in to some hard veg.”
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Police in witness appeal after crash

POLICE have launched an appeal for witnesses after a two-car crash near Halesowen.

West Mercia Police has appealed for people to come forward if they witnessed the accident near Hunnington last month, which saw two people taken to hospital.

A Vauxhall Vectra and a Honda CR-V were involved in a collision near the Blashford Park on Bromsgrove Road. The driver of the Honda, a man in his 40s, sustained serious head injuries. Police said the driver of the Vectra, a woman in her 50s, sustained minor injuries. The crash occurred at around 7pm on Monday February 19.

Investigating officers are now looking to speak to anyone who witnessed the crash, as well as the occupants of a vehicle which was believed to have been travelling in front of the Vectra.

Call West Mercia Police on the non-emergency number 101, quoting incident reference 5608 of February 19.

Cannabis plants are found by police raid

ALMOST 200 cannabis plants were discovered following a police raid on an address in Dudley.

The plants were found at a property in the Dixon Green area, near Kates Hill, after police acted on intelligence provided by the community.

Officers shared the details of the find on social media site Twitter, posting: “198 Cannabis plants seized from address in Duxons Green area today by Sgt Turner and the NHT, with @FSU_WMP Dudley A unit.

“Local intelligence from members of the public really does help make these things possible so please report any suspicious activity.”

The find was welcomed by St Thomas’s ward councillor Shaukat Ali.

He said: “The police have been doing a really good job. They have come across a number of cannabis plants and found and destroyed them.

“Cannabis has a massive impact on the education of young people and ruins lives.”

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Picture this! Artists showcase best work

THE work of almost 30 artists is on show at an annual exhibition.

The Brierley Hill Society of Artists has returned to the Red House Glass Cone in Wordsley with its showcase, which runs until March 18.

It features watercolours, silk prints, oils, pastels, textiles, acrylics and lino prints including landscapes, portraits, still life and drawings. There are nearly 120 framed prints on display, plus 95 unframed prints and a total of 27 artists are represented.

Venice

Pieces include local scenes such as the cone itself, the Clent Hills, Black Country canals, as well as scenes from further afield including Venice. Some of the most popular portraits with a local flavour include Sir Lenny Henry as well as Peaky Blinders favourite Tommy Shelby, played by Cillian Murphy.

All work is for sale with pieces available from £10 upwards.

There is also a small children’s exhibition and the group hopes that this will grow as younger members join the group.

The Red House Glass Cone, on High Street, Wordsley, is open from 10am to 3pm Monday to Friday and 11am to 4pm at weekends. Admission is free to the art exhibition.

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FOCUS ON SEDGLEY & GORNAL AREA

Councillor faces action after ‘imbeciles’ outburst

SEDGLEY councillor Bill Etheridge is facing a Dudley Council ethics committee over claims he made ‘derogatory, disrespectful, threatening and inflammatory’ comments about Labour councillors.

Mr Etheridge, who is also a West Midlands Ukip Euro MP, is alleged to have breached the council’s code of conduct for comments he made in videos on his Facebook page last year.

In the videos, uploaded following a council meeting, he described the Labour group as a ‘procurement of imbeciles’, labelling them ‘socialist do-gooder bleeding heart Communist rat bags’ and ‘pathetic tin pot nobodies’.

He also referred to the authority’s ‘crony Mayor in his Dick Whittington outfit’, and suggested it would be best for the people of Dudley if the Council House was demolished with all the councillors inside it.

The complaint against Mr Etheridge was submitted by Labour group leader, Councillor Pete Lowe, and followed an investigation and an interview, the warning was submitted by the Rev Graham Usher, the Bishop of Dudley, who called on Mr Etheridge to apologise.

It prompted an independent investigation by John Austin, who concluded that the councillor had breached the members’ code of conduct for comments he made in videos on his Facebook page last year.

He said Councillor Etheridge failed to value colleagues and ‘engage with them in an appropriate manner’, treat people with respect, and showed disrespect towards the Mayor, Councillor Dave Tyler. He accepted Mr Etheridge’s ‘ill chosen’ comments about the Council House being demolished had been ‘tongue in cheek’.

Councillor Etheridge insisted that he stands by every word he said in the videos.

He dubbed this week’s hearing a ‘kangaroo court’ and said he would not be attending it.

by Peter Madeley

Anthem choir summer show

A CHOIR is celebrating its second anniversary, and recruiting for its summer show in Sedgley.

Anthem Voices, based in Wednesfield, has more than 60 members. It offers two community choirs. Last year Anthem had a sell-out charity concert raising more than £1,000 for a Dudley based Muscular Dystrophy Group.

Anthem will be celebrating its 24th anniversary, and performing in Wednesfield in May.

For more information, contact 07795 521227 or 07903 836497.

The group will be joined by Fusco Academy of Dance and with0ut learning disabilities is a charitable organisation involving adults with disabilities.

Open Stage Drama Group formed in 1995 and produces inclusive theatre and works with its members to develop skills in the dance, drama and music.

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The Doc says Duncan was the greatest of them all

Now 89-years-old, The Doc proudly stood up in front of a packed audience at Dudley Archives centre to recount his fondest memories of ‘Black Country boy’ Duncan, who died aged 21.

The pair had played against each other in Duncan’s international debut for England in April 1955 against Scotland at Wembley Stadium.

The Doc said: “Duncan was outstanding. So much skill and strength and at 18 he was the finished article, a complete player. I feel even to this day what a tragedy it is for his family, his club, for the boy and for the country.”

“Duncan Edwards Day on October 1 – the anniversary of his death. The Doc said: “Duncan was outclass. You don’t realise or to book, please call:

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Paedophiles and rapists on loose – two for a decade

MORE than 50 convicted sex offenders from across the West Midlands are at large – including two who have now been on the run for more than a decade, according to official police figures.

Forces in the West Midlands, Staffordshire and West Mercia told our sister daily, the Express & Star, they do not know the whereabouts of 55 sex offenders. The figures include paedophiles and rapists and show the region has the second highest number of missing sex offenders in England.

Staffordshire Police has lost track of five sex offenders, while West Midlands Police said 46 had gone missing, with five going on the run since the start of this year.

West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police said four were at large, including one who has been missing for 11 years. West Midlands Police are also trying to track down a sex offender who disappeared in 2000.

Concerns

The figures, released under the Freedom of Information Act, have prompted concerns over child safety, with politicians on all sides urging police to redouble their efforts to snare registered sex offenders.

West Midlands Police refused to name those missing, insisting that doing so would ‘breach a third party’s data protection rights’.

Chief Inspector Nicola Court from West Midlands Police Integrated Offender Management Unit, said investigations were ‘in place’ to trace all 46 missing offenders. Staffordshire Police said investigations were ‘in place’ to trace any individual that goes missing or doesn’t comply with their reporting requirements.’

Second World War fighter aircraft, including a Spitfire and Hurricane, are the latest aircraft added to the list of attractions for this year’s RAF Cosford Air Show.

Visitors to the event on June 10, which celebrates 200 years since the formation of the Royal Air Force, will witness aerial displays from an assortment of historic aircraft.

Organisers have announced that a rare Mk 1a version of the Supermarine Spitfire would be performing in the flying display, a first for the RAF Cosford Air Show.

This particular Spitfire, known by its registration N2200, fought during the Battle of France in 1940.

It was tasked to provide air support for the evacuation of Dunkirk. During combat with German fighters, N2200 was hit by a German aircraft and forced to land on the beach at Sangatte, and the pilot taken as a prisoner of war. The Spitfire remained on the beach, slowly buried in the sand, until 1986. The airframe was returned to the UK in 2000 and after a lengthy restoration flew again in 2014.

Spitfire N2200 recently starred in Christopher Nolan’s critically acclaimed film Dunkirk thus repeating the true history of this aircraft.

It has been confirmed that a genuine Battle of Britain veteran Hawker Hurricane would be present airfield.

Spitfire and Hurricane to star at show

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There is always something to do for the family at Saltwells
It’s an age old tale of fun for Quartet

Quartet has an all-star cast. Quartet features Paul Nicholas, Wendi Peters, Sue Holderness and Jeff Rawle and tells the charming tale of four ageing opera singers. The show, which opens at Birmingham’s REP on Tuesday and runs until March 10, tells the story of Cecily, Reggie and Wilfred, who reside in a magnificent retirement home in Kent.

The humour circling the halls is that the home is soon to play host to a new resident. Word is, it’s a star. Jean arrives and old rivalries resurface, secrets are revealed and chaos unfolds, but in true theatrical tradition - the show must go on.

Paul Nicholas is best known for his work in The Real Marigold Hotel and Just Good Friends. Wendi Peters starred in Coronation Street and Oh What A Lovely War!, Sue Holderness played Marlene in Only Fools and Horses and The Green Green Grass while Jeff Rawle became a household name in Harry Potter and Drop The Dead Donkey.

Their work in the new revival of the bitter-sweet comedy has dazzled critics. Quartet was created by the Oscar-winning writer Sir Ronald Harwood and is a celebration of the twilight years and the hilarity of growing old disgracefully.

The character who causes the disruption at the Kentish retirement home is played by Sue Holderness, who featured alongside Boyce in Only Fools and Horses.

GENERATION

She says: “My character in Quartet, Jean Horton, was a major star in the world of opera. In her heyday she was known as one of the finest sopranos of her generation. She retired very early, apparently to settle down and spend time with her children.

“We discover during the play that there was rather more to it than that. She is a diva. She still thinks of herself as a major star and expects all those around her to jump to her every whim. She’s really rather a monster – so thrilling to play.

“The four characters are very different and seeing them interacting is great fun. Ronald Harwood is the most wonderful writer. I’ve been blessed in my career to be offered roles written by some of the very finest writers – Alan Ayckbourn, George Bernard Shaw, Terence Rattigan and, of course, the genius John Sullivan. Ronald Harwood is up there with the best of them.’’

She relates to the play because it focuses on the ageing process. “You ask me to give advice about the hilarity of growing old! Much of it isn’t hilarious at all. Bits of you start to creak and the memory goes walkabout. My character in this is waiting for a new hip and is in constant pain, which probably accounts for some of her grumpiness. But my advice would simply be to keep going. Walk a lot, eat well and laugh. Laughter really is the best medicine – so come and see Quartet.”

Actor Paul Nicholas has been enjoying working with his fellow cast and is happy to be on the road.

“It helps that we’re playing old people, other than Wendi who’s a child. If you’re working with slightly more mature actors they’ve been there and done it all, so it’s a bit more easy-going.”

He was looking for a role that reflected on growing old and was delighted when he stumbled upon Quartet.

“I was looking to do something for an older guy and I came across this play. I thought it was excellent and very well written. It’s a very good comment on what it’s like to be older, especially as an older performer – the difficulties, the fun, the various moods and things that become apparent when you get older.

“There’s one great line ‘we don’t actually change, I’m still the same person’. It’s true, we do basically stay the same. I try to anyway. Every so often you get a job that makes you think ‘that’s really good’, and this is one of those occasions.

When people come to see it, particularly older people, will recognise things that happen. It sounds awful but it’s actually quite funny. As long as you can keep your sense of humour above anything, you’re OK. Being old can be very enjoyable and you can still have a lot of fun.”

Wendi Peters has enjoyed being on the road since leaving Coronation Street, where she played Cilla Battersby-Brown.

“I think it’s going to be a lovely tour. We go to really lovely venues. I think it’s going to be a lovely, sedate tour with lots of cups of tea, lots of sightseeing... as well as doing the play in beautiful theatres.

“I saw the film when it first came out and again when we started rehearsals. I was pleasantly surprised at how different they are. The film is beautiful and very gentle... the play is outright funny!”

“We’re laughing at bits ourselves, and we had a select audience the other day and were thrilled at how much they were laughing out loud. There probably isn’t a page of dialogue that goes by without a big laugh.”

Jeff Rawle, meanwhile, thinks the comedy is touching.

“It’s very funny because the whole point is that they’re ageing opera singers who were successful in their day so they’re all highly individual and eccentric people, all together in various states of decay. In some ways, they’re starting to return to their childhoods and their past has become very important to them.

“I think people living with older parents, or who are getting old themselves, will recognise the traits – but they’re dealt with great humour. It’s very well written.”

Andy Richardson

● For more entertainment news and reviews see Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.
On crest of the Waves

Breakthrough band Pale Waves are riding the crest of success with tour dates selling out as the My Obsession quartet prepare to play for a full house at Birmingham’s O2 Academy 3 tomorrow night (Friday).

This month the Kohl-eyed indie pop outfit formed at Manchester University are more than living up to the ‘next big thing’ status afforded by the BBC Sound of 2018 listing and NME Under The Radar award. This month they release The Tide, a new track from their forthcoming All The Things I Never Said EP, a follow up to their singles My Obsession and New Year’s Eve.

Everything Everything have further refined their jangly angular take on indie rock with fourth album A Fever Dream, again distinctive due to the soaring vocals of Jonathan Higgs, and they will be in concert at the O2 Academy on Saturday.

The Modfather himself, Paul Weller, formed The Jam and Style Council frontman and a solo success for 26 years, is in concert at the Genting Arena tomorrow with songs from across his 40-year career including 13th studio album A Kind Of Revolution. The StrYPES support. Then on Saturday the Genting hosts the prize of Ramblebottom, Elbow, as Guy Garvey and co bring their Little Fictions tour with more majestic melancholy rock.

Leeds outfit Hookworms bring their electro-pysch-pop, as heard on their recent Microshift album, to the Hare & Hounds in Kings Heath on Sunday and international eight-piece Superorganism, who have released brilliant pop track Everybody Wants To Be Famous, showcase their self-titled debut album at the O2 Institute in Digbeth on Monday.

George Ezra brings his soulful folk to the Hare and Hounds next Thursday (March 8), the same night reactivated synth pop legends Blancmange play the venue’s other room.

Great entertainer in his price range

THERE was a brilliant moment at The Royal Variety Performance when Brian Conley was standing on stage with his old mate Bradley Walsh.

“I’m going to do an impression,” Brian said. “This is Bradley Walsh.”

He then took off from the audience at the London Palladium and as Brian looked on, none the wiser, Brian wrapped cellulose around his face so that his nose was squashed and his eyes wrinkled. He turned to face the audience, aped his mate’s accent and stood right next to him.

“I’m Bradley.”

The audience roared. And then he started to jog across the stage. Bradley looked at Brian, jaw dropping somewhere near the floor.

“What are you doing, Brian,” “The Chase.”

Boomp.

Conley has been entertaining people for 45 years, having got his first paying gig at the age of 12.

During that time, he’s made five Royal Variety Performance appearances and been the lead in such musicals as Me and My Girl, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Hairpray, Oliver! The Music Man, Barnum and Jolson for which he was nominated for an Olivier Award.

He’s also won a raft of TV awards and a British Comedy Award.

He’s not done badly for a kid who was in the remedial class at school.

He’s on the road again with his one-man show. It’s called Brian Conley – Still The Greatest Entertainer In His Price Range, a typically self-deprecating title.

The show is at Wolverhampton’s Grand Theatre on March 10 and he’s added a matinee because the evening show is almost sold out.

He will also be at Lichfield Garrick on April 6 and Birmingham’s New Alexandra Theatre on May 13.

Changing wombs with mirth and music

Former EastEnders star Cheryl Ferguson will join Maureen Nolan, Casualty’s Rebecca Wheateley and comedienne Hilary O’Neil in Menopause The Musical at Wolverhampton’s Grand Theatre – an all-singing all-dancing comedy that’s likely to bring you out in a hot flush!

The show is set in a department store where four women with seemingly nothing in common meet by chance and make fun of their lives experiencing “The Change”. The production is even sponsored by a health supplement for ladies of a certain age.

Packed with one-liners and lots of classic pop tunes, Menopause The Musical is at the Lichfield Street Theatre for one night on Monday. See grandtheatre.co.uk or call 01902 429212.

It will also be at the New Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham on April 28.
The host interviews former Baywatch star and Playboy centrefold Pamela Anderson, who reflects on her challenging and turbulent personal life. She talks about her first husband Tommy Lee, whom she married following a whirlwind four-day courtship, and discusses the nature of her recent relationship with WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange. She also opens up about her role as an animal rights activist, including persuading Vladimir Putin to ban the import of seal products into Russia.

Pamela Anderson

1.15 Triathlon.

Football Focus.

11.55 Film: My Brother the Devil.

Weather for the Week Ahead.

Classic Mary Berry. (R)

10.00 Saturday Kitchen.

11.30 Britain at Low Tide. The actress discovers the majesty of the River Thames.

Saturday Night at the Movies. (R)

11.35 Arthur's Own Farm. (R)

2.30 Gordon's Life Stories.

3.00 John Bishop Live. (R)

3.50 Superfoods: The Real Story. (R)

4.00 Double Jeopardy.

4.45 Ripper Street. (R)

5.00 Minder.

5.05 American Dad.

5.55 Mickey Mouse.
Suction dentures

CHANNEL 4

Copy dentures
• Relines
• Implant-retained dentures
• Soft linings

8.00 Call the Midwife. 8.30 Hold the Sunset.
10.30 Match of the Day 2.
10.00 BBC News.
11.00 Factual Entertainment. (R)
11.30 Chapman reviews the day's two
thumb.
12.05 Film: The Simpsons. (R)
12.00 News; Weather.
12.30 Film: Whip It. (2009). Returning to
Robin's relationship
shape of it.
12.45 Nothing. (R)
13.00 Sign Zone: Question Time. (R)
13.15 Nothing. (R)
13.45 Film: (2002) Animated Series. (R)
14.00 Nothing. (R)

My Family. (R)

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Lee goes from one disaster to the next in returning sitcom

**FILM CHOICES**

**WEDNESDAY**

**Memento**, BBC1, 11.45pm

An insurance investigator suffers from short-term memory loss after an attack with his wife was also raped and murdered. Unable to remember events for more than a few minutes, he is determined to track down the killer and relies on copious note-taking and reminders tattooed on his body to aid his mission.

Christopher Nolan's thriller, starring Guy Pearce, Anne-Marie and John Cusack. (2000)

**THURSDAY**

**A Bone to Pick: An Aurora Teagarden Mystery**, Channel 5, 3.30pm

In a small Illinois town, a female detective finds more secrets than she can handle.

**FRIDAY**

**Captain America: The Winter Soldier**, Channel 5, 3.20pm


**SATURDAY**

**The Gadget Show**, Friday, Channel 5, 7pm

The events boasts upgraded drones, upgraded VR headsets, upgraded televisions and a stream of new robots to help around the house. Meanwhile, Jon Bentley joins Craig Charles in a ‘versus’ challenge to see if cutting-edge tech can put them on a par with professional decorators. Jon and Craig have access to the finest aids that tech has to offer, while the professionals have to rely on experience, skill and traditional tools.

**Gardener’s World**, BBC2, 8.30pm

New series. The imminent arrival of spring heralds a new gardening year at Longmeadow, as Monty Don reveals his new plans for the year and takes stock of any winter damage. As well as offering seasonal hints and tips, the presenter embarks on a mission to reduce the use of plastic in his garden, starting by exploring alternative containers to use for seed sowing. Adam Frost brings his design expertise to a tiny back yard to demonstrate that, with a bit of ingenuity, every inch of space can count. A Wolverhampton couple show off their inspirational garden, packed to bursting with surprises. Includes a weather forecast for gardeners.

**SUNDAY**

**The Good Life**, BBC, 9pm

This is a period drama set in a rural village in 1940s England. The series follows the lives of two couples who abandon their urban lives to live off the land.

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**PICK OF THE WEEK**

Not Going Out, Thursday, BBC1, 9pm

The critically acclaimed comedy returns for a new series. Following the lives of a group of friends as they navigate the challenges of friendship, work and relationships.

**FILM CHOICES**

**MONDAY**

**Forbidden Secrets**, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A recently divorced woman returns to her family home to begin rebuilding her life, but her stay turns into a nightmare when she has frightening visions of her troubled childhood, during which her mother tried to drown her. Determined to face her fears, she visits the institution where her parent resides, and inadvertently triggers a series of terrifying events. Thriller, starring Kristy Swanson and David Keays. (2005)

**TUESDAY**

**Bond of Silence**, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A woman searches for answers after her husband is mysteriously murdered while trying to abduct a wild teenage house party on New Year’s Eve. However, as she tries to find out the truth, she faces society at every turn from the party-goers and their parents. Drama, starring Kim Basinger, Greg Grunberg and Charlie McDermott. (2010)

**WEDNESDAY**

**The Revenant**, BBC2, 9pm

The police use the video footage Fatima provided to track her husband and Bhuram, while Nathan tipsoff of betrayal. Meanwhile, Kali, who played the ditsy Daisy from series three, was actually never meant to be a regular.

**THURSDAY**

**The Great Celebrity Bake Off for Stand Up To Cancer**, Channel 4, 4pm

The famous faces battle it out for charity.

**FRIDAY**

**Coronation Street**, Channel 5, 7pm

The story of the residents of Weatherfield.

**SATURDAY**

**This Morning**, BBC, 9am

The popular morning show features celebrity guests and celebrity guests.

**SUNDAY**

**The Sunday Night Show**, Channel 5, 7pm

The latest celebrity news and interviews.

**FILM CHOICES**

**TUESDAY**

**The Revenant**: The story of the residents of Weatherfield.

**WEDNESDAY**

**The Great Bake Off**: The famous faces battle it out for charity.

**THURSDAY**

**Coronation Street**: The story of the residents of Weatherfield.

**FRIDAY**

**Royal Variety Performance**: The most star-studded night on TV.

**SATURDAY**

**This Morning**: The popular morning show features celebrity guests and celebrity guests.

**SUNDAY**

**The Sunday Night Show**: The latest celebrity news and interviews.
Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:
Across
1. They should show some interest at the way clerics are dressed (11)
9. What the gravestone reveals will produce a fear (9)
10. Cutting an earth defence needs an industrious worker (9)
11. He's one of a panel in any case (9)
13. He's unlikely to be in a class of his own (7)
14. One going in the vessel for a trip (8)
16. Sheep doctor going round old Ireland (8)
18. Asian country surrounding an American state (7)
19. Part of the reason I continue a kind of boom (5)
20. Fractionally, it's on top (9)
21. The water regulator needs a light touch (9)
22. White cat is only an ounce! (4,7)

Down
2. A rest in the afternoon, apparently (3)
3. One who finds things of consuming interest (3)
4. You'll find me involved with this as a doctrine (6)
5. Omit what was once indicated in a crossword, one hears! (7)
6. Somehow get in RA&A as a serious actor (9)
7. Outstanding pieces for cinemagoers (11)
8. This may well detect a change of heart (11)
11. Golfer who makes regular deliveries! (11)
12. Action that changes the tablet (6)
13. Bird pole with line round old Ireland (7)
14. Remove the covering from a lath (5)
15. Bury (6)
16. This may well dress (11)
17. Some interest at any case (5)
18. Halfway through the way clerics are dressed (11)
19. What the gravestone reveals will produce a fear (9)
20. Whitewash (7)
21. The water regulator needs a light touch (9)
22. Unceasingly (11)

Quick Clues:
Across
1. Concoalment (11)
9. Sheap (9)
10. Warranty (9)
11. Foo (5)
12. Cost (7)
14. Accompany (8)
16. Busy (6)
18. Momentum (7)
19. Teacher (5)
20. Worldwide (9)
21. Choose (3)
22. Lubricate (3)

Down
2. Employ (3)
3. Dwarf (5)
4. Effused (6)
5. Whet (7)
6. Thorough (3-3-3)
7. Harmful (11)
8. Recall (11)
12. Exclusion (9)
15. Aleviate (7)
17. Against (6)
18. Bury (6)
19. Claw (5)
20. Lieutenant (3)

Sudoku

Last week’s solutions:

Quick Clues:
Across
1. Evita Peron; 2 Thrush; 3 The Rockies and the Appalachians; 4 78; 5 Oklahoma; 6 Kew Gardens; 7 Babylonian; 8 Gannet; 9 Agronomy; 10 USA.

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.

Last week’s solutions:

Quiz: 1 Eva; 2 Thrush; 3 The Rockies and the Appalachians; 4 78; 5 Oklahoma; 6 Kew Gardens; 7 Babylonian; 8 Gannet; 9 Agronomy; 10 USA.

Niner: NIGHTMARE

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.

{grid with numbers and letters}

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Golden temples, bathtime with elephants, knocking up Tom Yum soup or wandering through a bustling night-time market, it’s all part of a holiday in Thailand’s second biggest city.

For those more used to Bangkok, Chiang Mai is a refreshing change. More relaxed, the emphasis on culture and exploration rather than the nightlife. The place just feels friendlier and more laid back. A lot of that is down to the almost legendary politeness of Thai people. The waai, the greeting with the slight bow and the hands pressed together, becomes infectious. Chiang Mai is in the north of Thailand, surrounded by mountain greenery. And, thanks to Qatar Airways, getting there is simple these days.

**COMFORT**

The airline runs regular flights to Doha, the capital of Qatar - and from there it offers a direct service straight to Chiang Mai. It is still around 16 hours of flight time, but Qatar Airways prides itself on comfort and service which eases the stresses and strain of a long journey.

The Shangri-La in Chiang Mai is part of a chain of luxury five-star hotels, with big comfortable rooms well equipped with air-conditioning – a must when the average temperatures are around 30°C or more and the humidity is high, particularly at night.

My tour group and I got to experience the humid Thai evening when we headed out to explore Chiang Mai’s Sunday night street market. Around 10,000 people regularly pack into the streets of the historic city centre to visit the hundreds of stalls selling handicrafts, most made by the local hill people. And then there is the street food. Our guide, Ms Rattiya (’Call me Yaya’) explained that most Thais eat out in the evening. As in many well-developed Asian economies, people work long hours and, rather than cook when they get home, it is easier to go out. As a result, restaurant and street food is both reasonably priced and very good.

An early start the next morning saw our minibus climbing the 2,500ft to reach the Wat Phra That Doi Suthep temple – almost.

The final 290 steps are up a Naga staircase, decorated with dragons to reach the temple itself and its huge Chedi, or golden spired pagoda, which contains partial relics of the Lord Buddha. It is a wonderful experience but visitors need to show some respect – Thais take their Buddhist faith seriously. Meanwhile our non-stop schedule took us across the city to the Chiang Mai Thai Cookery School, where Chef Pon introduced us to the mysteries of Thai cuisine.

He showed us what to do, and we then got on with it, eating each dish as we finished cooking it. Those self-made dishes did mean that it was a struggle to find space for more food at the traditional Kantoke dinner that evening.

While we sat on cushions on the floor to dine – easier for some than others – the main entertainment of formal dances showcased local culture.

And then for something completely different. The following day was a trip to the Thai Elephant Care Centre, at Mae Sa, near Mae Rim. Getting close to these magnificent animals was a lifetime experience.

It’s been two decades since I was last in Thailand and I can’t say I was impressed. Very touristy and a bit seedy. Chiang Mai was a revelation. Relaxed but packed with things to see and do.

SIMON PENFOLD
A remarkably spacious and recently built four double-bedroomed detached family home with an integral garage, 14 Cinder Road, Lower Gornal, is for sale through Taylors Estate Agents at £315,000 with no chain.

With gas central heating and double glazing, this property is excellently situated within walking distance of the village and also within walking distance of open fields.

Features includes en-suite shower rooms to two of the bedrooms, two generous reception rooms and a large well-equipped dining kitchen incorporating a laundry section.

In more detail, a canopy porch covers the front door, leading to the imposing reception hall. This has a staircase and handrail to the first floor and an understairs store and an understairs cloakroom/WC.

The separate dining room has a bow window with vertical blinds to the front. The elegant lounge has French doors opening out to the rear garden, a feature Oak-effect overmantle with a marble inset and hearth and a gas living flame fire.

The breakfast kitchen has coving, ten down-lighters, windows to the rear and side with vertical blinds and a part-glazed door to the outside and ceramic tiled flooring. It also has an extensive range of ‘satin-cream’ finish wall and base units, work surfaces, an integrated four-ring gas hob with a stainless steel glass feature extractor canopy above, split level fan assisted electric double oven with cupboards above and below, an integrated fridge/freezer, plumbing for a washer/dryer and dishwasher and concealed lighting over the work tops.

Upstairs, bedroom one lies to the front and has a part tiled en-suite shower room. Bedroom two is to the rear and has a half tiled en-suite shower room. Bedroom three is positioned to the rear, while bedroom four overlooks the frontage of the property.

The bathroom is half tiled and is fitted with a white suite with chrome detailing and with ceramic tiled flooring.

Outside the rear rear garden includes a slabbed patio and paths, an external double socket outlet, panel fencing on concrete posts to the three boundaries and ‘astro turf’.

KEY FEATURES
Recently built detached
Superbly finished
4 double bedrooms
Integral garage
Walking distance to village

AGENT: Taylors
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EMAIL: sedgley@taylors-estateagents,co.uk
CRANWELL GREEN Wombourne
Price £595 pcm
EPC rating: D
• A well presented semi
• Breakfast kitchen
• Downstairs WC
• Two bedrooms
• Good size garden
• Sorry, no DSS
• Sorry, no pets
• Fees apply

WAKE GREEN ROAD Tipton
Price £400 pcm
• A well presented property
• Ground floor flat
• One double bedroom
• Garage to the rear
• Convenient location
• Sorry, no DSS
• Sorry, no pets
• Fees apply

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- Sought after Sedgley address
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EPC rating: B

SUNNINGDALE ROAD Sedgley
Price £250,000
- A beautiful link-detached
- En-suite Northway location
- Extended bathroom
EPC rating: E

CHARNWOOD AVENUE, Sedgley
Price £260,000
- A beautiful ’dormer’ house
- Sedgley location
EPC rating: F

FOXLANDS DRIVE Upper Gornal
Price £249,950
- A lovely modern detached
- Pleasant cul-de-sac location
EPC rating: TBC

SANDYFIELDS ROAD Sedgley
Price £200,000
- A modern semi-detached
- Open aspect views
EPC rating: TBC

BREEN RYDDING DRIVE Coseley
Price £197,500
- An excellent size detached
- Through lounge diner
EPC rating: TBC

GREAT WESTERN WAY Kingswinford
Price £195,000
- Himley View Kingswinford
- Only 3 years old
EPC rating: B

THE RIDGeway Sedgley
Price £184,950
- En-suite Sedgley location
- Close by to local amenities
EPC rating: D

AUTUMN DRIVE Lower Gornal
Price £131,950
- NO UPWARD CHAIN
- Potential rear parking
EPC rating: D
HIMLEY, School Road
A SUBSTANTIAL, DETACHED COTTAGE with a LARGE and BEAUTIFULLY ESTABLISHED PRIVATE GARDEN SETTING, running down to the stream with fields beyond, offering a LARGE GATED DRIVEWAY. The accommodation is INCREDIBLY SPACIOUS and Attractively Presented throughout, including FOUR GOOD BEDROOMS. EPC E

£389,950

KINGSWINFORD, Cot Lane
A SUBSTANTIAL, TRADITIONAL DETACHED BUNGALOW set within a highly regarded address with a LONG FRONT/SIDE BLOCK PAVED DRIVEWAY and GOOD SIZED PRIVATE REAR GARDEN. The property requires updating and offers VERY WELL PLANNED and SPACIOUS layout which TWO GOOD BEDROOMS. With NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC D

£299,950

WOMBOURNE, Wodehouse Close
AVAILABLE WITH NO UPWARD CHAIN. Enjoying a desirable cul-de-sac position, set within the Pool House Farm development, offering a LARGE FAMILY layout, which includes two reception rooms, Huge Kitchen, Utility Room, FOUR BEDROOMS with En Suite Room and House Bathroom. DRIVEWAY, GARAGE and a level rear and side garden EPC E

Offers in the Region Of £259,995

COSELEY, Ivyhouse Lane
A wonderfully presented DETACHED family home located in the Cooseley area. As well as having gas central heating and double glazing this property also benefits from; porch, hall, guest W/C, through lounge, snug/ sitting room, dining-kitchen, utility room, Conservatory, FOUR BEDROOMS, family bathroom, enclosed rear garden and driveway offering ample parking. Viewing Essential EPC: B SEDGLEY

Offers in the Region of £249,950

KINGSWINFORD, Chelford Crescent
A BRAND NEW DETACHED FAMILY HOME with 10 Year NHBC Warranty, backing onto a nature reserve, with a GENEROUS, PRIVATE and LANDSCAPED REAR GARDEN plus a GOOD SIZED DRIVEWAY, offering a HIGH SPECIFICATION and INCREDIBLY DECEPTIVE layout, which includes THREE DOUBLE BEDROOMS, with En suite. EPC B

£239,950

DUDLEY, Quentin Drive

£229,950

LOWER GORNAL, Keats Drive, Straits
NO UPWARD CHAIN. COMPREHENSIVELY MODERNISED, gas centrally heated, double glazed bungalow with panoramic distant views comprising; hall, lounge, enlarged bathroom, utility room, stunning 22’4” through ‘hub of the house’ dining kitchen with comprehensive range of ‘arts & crafts’ oak style units (double French doors out to garden), two double bedrooms, garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY

WAS £235,000, NOW £229,000

WOLVERHAMPTON, Camberley Crescent, Ettingshall Park
Spacious Freesthold THREE DOUBLE BEDROOM gas centrally heated double glazed detached family home. The property has been conscientiously maintained over the years but offers further potential comprising; porch, hall, lounge, separate dining room, breakfast kitchen, three double bedrooms, bathroom, garage, sheltered garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY.

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**Lovely house in exceedingly popular area is now available**

**SEDGLEY**

£449,950

Whiteoaks, 32, Catholic Lane, Sedgley, Dudley, is an extremely well presented and extended four-bedroomed detached home set in a much sought-after area.

This residence is for sale through Berriman Eaton Estate Agents at £449,950.

This attractive detached home has been extended to give family accommodation with a large dining/kitchen, lounge/dining area, sitting room, master bedroom with en-suite, three further bedrooms and a family bathroom. The property has gas central heating, double glazing (triple glazing to some rooms) and under floor heating to part of the kitchen.

The sitting room has a walk-in bay window to the front and two windows to the side, engineered oak laminate flooring and a feature fireplace with a living flame gas fire.

Call 01902 326366.

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**Splendid home in a sought-after spot**

**DUDLEY**

£219,950

This splendid, detached three-bedroomed family home in St James Road, Dudley, lies within the catchment area for Castle High School.

It is for sale through Trinity Property at £219,950.

Within walking distance from Dudley town, it has off-road parking and a garage, a large dining room, a spacious breakfast kitchen with panoramic views, three good sized bedrooms, a large loft room, decking and extensive gardens to the rear. In more detail an entrance porch leads to an entrance hall with stairs to the first floor. The kitchen, an L-shaped room, has a range of wall and base units, a breakfast bar, built-in oven with hob over, a utility and a door to the rear garden.

Contact Trinity Property on 01384 213 395.

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**DUDLEY**

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This stunning three-bedroomed bungalow in Raggees Road, Kingswinford, has awesome views. Redecorated throughout and having a tiered rear garden, it is for sale through loveyourpostcode.com at offers in excess of £174,950. It is also available to rent. Please ask for details from the agents.

Its accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hall, a living room, kitchen, conservatory, three bedrooms and a bathroom, a driveway and a garden.

A spokesman for the selling agent said: “This lovely detached bungalow offers off-road parking, three bedrooms and all the views you could want.

“Picture the scene, its a peaceful Sunday morning you’ve walked to the local shops to collect your newspapers and then you stroll back home to have a spot of breakfast on the patio and just admire the spectacular views from your very own back garden.

“It may not be Lake Garda or the Pyrenees mountains but its the best the Midlands has to offer and its simply stunning.”

The agents are expecting a lot of interest.

Contact loveyourpostcode.com on 0800 862 0870.
Like driving a GTi but cheaper!

By Sharon Walters

Honda’s top-selling engine from the tenth generation Civic line-up is the much praised three cylinder which displaces a very modest one litre.

And joyfully it is too by all accounts, with its 127bhp that are perfectly up to the job with excellent fuel economy helped along with excellent fuel economy helped along with its 127bhp that are perfectly up to the job with excellent fuel economy helped along. Take a quick look at the car and you might think the rear seats could be a little cramped for anyone approaching six foot, especially if you have a tall person in the front, but that’s not the case. There’s plenty of head, leg and arm space.

Inside, its previous class-leading space (including an enormous 478 litres in the boot, which can be stretched even further by flipping the rear seats down) remains at the top of the segment. Agile handling assist makes the drive even more enjoyable

The Sport Plus trim I drove also has an adaptive damper system which at the push of a button can give you either a comfortable highway cruise or a firm yet agile ride when high-performance handling is needed around winding roads.

The car steers with a very well-judged pace and corners so precisely, feeling very firmly gripped to the road. The ride is impressively supple for a car with sporting dynamics, and adds to the premium feel inside the cabin. Perhaps you can now see why I was so keen to get behind the wheel as often as possible.

There’s a choice of seven different trims and three engine options with prices rising to £30,995 for the range-topping Type-R. Honda says: “Building on its 40-year heritage, the car stays true to the original Civic concept of a ‘car for all people, a car for the world’. It is a marriage of distinctive design, sporty styling and versatile practicality with a renewed focus on rewarding driving dynamics.”

And I can’t disagree with that, even in the slightest.

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History: 25 years of Vauxhall Corsa

By Adam Weller

Since launching to the UK in 1993, the Vauxhall Corsa has become a staple of UK roads, with two million examples of the hatch sold since its debut. The Corsa’s predecessor, the Nova, was one of Britain’s most popular hatches throughout the 1980s. However, by the end of it’s run, the Nova – sold as the Opel Corsa in Europe – was starting to look decidedly dated against rivals such as the Ford Fiesta. Fortunately, a replacement was in the pipeline.


With the introduction of the Corsa in 1993, Vauxhall up-ended the hatchback market, with the car curving, modern style proving to be a sales hit, and cemented the nameplate’s reputation as a dependable car for small families and young drivers alike.

The Corsa gradually evolved throughout the 90’s with minor facelifts, before being replaced in 2000. However, the design lived on for many years in the Chinese and South American markets.

VAUXHALL CORSA C (2000-2006)

The second UK Corsa was launched in October 2000, and proved to be everything a sequel should be; bigger, sharper and more modern, with more trim and engine options than the previous generation.

The second-generation car proved that the Corsa was here to stay. It was the most popular supermini on the market from 2002-2005, before production stopped in 2006. It was also one of the best-selling cars of any type in the UK, a feat which the Corsa has continually achieved ever since.

VAUXHALL CORSA D (2006-2014)

The Corsa D was the first to be bestowed an all-new platform and new, sweeping styling provided a sleeker, sportier edge to the Corsa. This was further accentuated by a facelift in 2010.

The Corsa D was the longest-running Corsa thus far, which is a further testament to its design.

VAUXHALL CORSA E (2014-PRESENT)

The Corsa D was on the market for some eight years, and as such, is the longest-running Corsa thus far, which is a further testament to its design.

Much like the shift between the first and second-generation, the current Corsa is an evolution of its predecessor, rather than a clean slate. The styling was altered to be more in line with the other stars of the Vauxhall range, with a larger, more striking grille, and an entirely revised look inside and out.

To this day, the Corsa is still one of the biggest-selling cars in the UK and will likely continue to feature prominently on the sales charts for the next 25 years as well.
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Call now for more details on our exclusive Ford Focus offer.
The effectiveness consultancy Benchmarketing recently analysed what happens when companies include press advertising in their media mix.

They looked at more than 500 econometric models, covering a five-year period and, as the table here shows, they found that adding newspapers dramatically increases the effectiveness of other media.

In the automotive sector they reviewed companies that ranged from the big spending German goliaths of the industry to medium sized independent carmakers.

And they discovered that by adding newspaper advertising to their campaigns, they cranked up their effectiveness by over 70%.

**Increased effectiveness using newspapers**

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<th>Retail</th>
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<th>Finance</th>
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<td>2.8x</td>
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So, whatever the size your business or budget, get motoring into newspapers.

For the full story and more details: newsworks.org.uk/effectiveness

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The Rio is effectively Kia’s Ford Fiesta rival. While it might not be something you’ve ever heard of, it has actually been around for a fair few years. While not the obvious choice to many in the supermini market, alongside popular choices, it is worth considering just in terms of value for money.

It now gets Kia’s relatively new 1.0-litre T-GDi engine, offering 99bhp and 232Nm of torque. Kia launched its new fourth generation Rio last year, giving it a fresh new look and increasing its size. As one of Kia’s best-selling cars, it is paramount that it got it right in the competitive supermini market.

It has received Kia’s now trademark front slim grille, and a raft of safety technology, allowing it to compete against rivals from Ford and Seat, which both launched new versions of their popular superminis last year. Smart new LED DRLs have also been added, while the infotainment system has been completely redesigned, accessible via a smart seven-inch touchscreen.

Our Rio test car came with Kia’s 1.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine. It’s a flexible engine, offering decent performance and low running costs, and ideally sized for new drivers.

The cabin of the Rio is very well laid out, and everything is logically positioned. The seven-inch touchscreen also makes the Rio’s interior look fresh and modern, which it largely is.

It’s spacious too, with plenty of room up front and the rear should be big enough to seat two adults comfortably.

The Rio is an extremely well-equipped car that represents superb value for money. This top spec ‘3’ model might seem a bit expensive at £16,785, but considering what you get for the money, it’s a great deal.

As standard you get 16-inch alloy wheels, automatic lights and wipers, LED DRLs, cornering function lights and electric folding and adjustable mirrors.

On the inside you get faux black leather upholstery with front heated seats, a seven-inch touchscreen that includes satellite navigation, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, rear parking sensors and a reversing camera.

On the safety front, it has autonomous emergency braking, lane departure warning and hill-start control. On our 300-mile snowy journey, though, the braking assist refused to work because of the snow blocking the sensors at the front.

The Kia Rio is a great-value, well-equipped and spacious supermini. In top spec ‘3’, it is laden with all the equipment you’d ever need, and for that reason is the pick of the range.

The 1.0-litre T-GDi engine is also fantastically capable on the motorway and around town.

Model as tested: Rio 1.0 T-GDi ‘3’ Eco

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CHEVROLET 1.5 Silver 2011 plate, good clean car inside and out, 43,423 miles, MoT Till December 2018. Any trial 01902 356841 / 01902 239448.


CARS UNDER £1500

VAUXHALL CORSA 1.3 2008, only 46,000 miles, 2 previous owners, long MOT, serviced regularly by the same garage, MOT till March 2019, full service history, original paint, 5dr manual hatchback, very clean, £2,599 ono

RENAULT KANGOO ML16DCI4161CC 2011, 117,000 miles, air con, h/b, l/r, cd, cruise control, diesel, CD, Navigation System, side loading door, £2,599 ono 07879 403302.

CLASSIC CARS

RENAULT TWIZY 2015, metallic black, electric, low mileage, 15,000 miles, long MOT, 1 owner from new £8,995 ono

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AO SMITH PISCES 2007, Electric Hot Water Boiler, £400 ono.

FORD TRANSIT CONNECT T200 2006, new belt, brakes, full service, new battery, MOT, two owners, never been welded, drives great, £1,500 ono. 07655 707038

FORD TRANSIT T300 59 reg. white, 133,000 miles very clean, £3,100 ono. 07836 589893.

RENAULT MASTER 2.3 2001, only 19,000 miles, long MOT, 2 owners, very clean, £3,599 ono. 07797 064631.

AUDI A4 TFSI 2006, manual, 2L, 152k, blue metallic, 5dr, MOT, one owner, sunroof, no accident damage, new cambelt kit etc Jan 17, good clean condition £2,000 ono 07854 949737.

VAUXHALL CORSA 1.0 2005, white, long MOT, 90,000 miles, £2,495 ono.

MERCEDES BENZ C180 SPORT Coupe Automatic, 2010 (60), FSH, Sat Nav, Air con, stereo, etc, MOT November, high miles but immaculate throughout. £3,495 ono. 07873 640957.

VAUXHALL CORSA 1.3 CDTI 2008, full service history, good condition, £3,495 ono.

MERCEDES BENZ E300CDI SPORT AUTOMATIC 2010, 103,000 miles, full service history, low mileage, MOT October, £3,599 ono.

RENAULT MEGANE CC 2007, 1.6, black, manual, £3,500 ono.

MERCEDES BENZ E270CDI 2002, grey, full service history, MOT till September 2018, very clean, £3,599 ono.

VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2 2005, 105,000 miles, lady driver, £3,495 ono.


VAUXHALL VECTRA 1.9 CDTI 2006, grey, manual, long MOT, low mileage, £3,295 ono.

VAUXHALL VIVARO 2006, 1.9 CDTI, MOT till June 2018, £3,295 ono.

RENAULT KANGOO ML16DCI4161CC 2011, 117,000 miles, air con, h/b, l/r, cd, cruise control, diesel, CD, Navigation System, side loading door, £2,599 ono 07879 403302.

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Questions of sport for Albion and Glassboys

LEGENDS from West Bromwich Albion and Stourbridge FC will go head-to-head in a Question of Sport evening to raise money for a local charity.

The likes of Darren “Big Dave” Moore and Glassboys boss Gary Hackett will face off in a charity version of the TV sports quiz with all money raised for the Mary Stevens Hospice. It takes place on Thursday April 5 in the clubhouse at Stourbridge FC’s War Memorial Athletic Ground.

Alongside Moore, Team WBA will comprise Ian Hamilton, James Chambers, Mark Naylor and an as yet unnamed fifth player, while Team Stourbridge will feature Andy Pountney, Jon Ford, Matt Webb and Craig Slater alongside Hackett.

Organisers have also told supporters to expect “a couple of guests” and “rolling subs” as the players will also be taking time out to chat with fans on the night.

Tickets are £8 including a fish & chip supper. To book, visit Marystevens.co.uk/event/question-of-sport or call (01384) 377778.

Legends on the ball for fundraising clash

ALBION heroes will take on a Glassboys Old Boys XI for the Jane Webb Memorial Trophy – with charity set to be the big winner on the day.

The game is on April 5, with the third annual legends match between the two sides in aid of Mary Stevens Hospice. It kicks off at the War Memorial Athletic Ground at 2.30pm. The first game ended in a 1-1 draw, while Baggies were victorious last year with a 6-4 swindle.

Last year’s gate surpassed 3,000, a sell-out for Stourbridge FC. The games have helped to raise more than £40,000 for the hospice over the last two years.

The Jane Webb Memorial Trophy is named in honour of a hospice supporter who was the inspiration for the game.

Fundraisers at the hospice collaborate on the event each year with original organiser Matt Webb, a former Glassboys player and Mark Naylor, elite development goalkeeping coach at West Bromwich Albion.

Admission is £10, or free for under-15s.

One man went to now – and Stayed for 42 years

After 42 years of preparing Wolverhampton’s pitch for some of the most famous names in cricket, Barrie Richards’ innings is over.

The Corporation Road groundsmen has seen stars such as Vikram Solanki, Moeen Ali, Wasim Jaffer and Baroness Rachel Heyhoe Flint all shine at the crease he has lovingly tended for four decades.

Now he is set to embark on a new chapter after confirming his retirement. And he leaves with a secret. He isn’t even a cricket fan!

“I’m like the ‘gives fan’ that is forced to go and watch the Albion every week!” Barrie joked.

“Growing up, I played rugby for Newport in Shropshire. I also played football. Cricket just wasn’t a game that thrilled me. I just couldn’t get excited by it.

“But from the moment I started studying grass and green keeping at college I wanted to be a groundsman.

“Being outside is in my blood. My dad was a farmer – and stayed for 42 years.

“As soon as I arrived for the interview I knew it would be perfect for me and my family.”

Barrie reveals having for his interview at Danescourt on a bus with his son Andy in tow in a carpark.

“A member called Mollie Mackworth came and picked us up,” he said. “Then another member felt sorry for us so he gave us a lift back.

“Danescourt is the nearest so I arrived for the interview I knew the job would be perfect for me. There was a little button down the road and they said that came with the position. My wife, and I were wanting another child so it seemed ideal.

“The local schools were good. It was semi-countri

they needed.” Barrie and his wife Ann welcomed two daughters while living in the bungalow. And he quickly struck up a rapport with a number of high-profile players.

“I may not be the biggest cricket fan but the one thing I’m really going to miss is the camaraderie with the players,” he said.

“Very special people have passed through this cricket club over the years.

Rachel Heyhoe Flint was one of the most lovely ladies you could ever meet. You could always have a laugh and a joke with her. She had a great sense of humor.

“Vikram Solanki is a good friend. Whenever he comes to the ground we always have a chat. I get on really well with Vikram.

“But they have all been great. I have not had any argument with any of them. Of course, they always praise the pitch when they have won! Then blame the pitch when they have lost! But you soon get used to that. But it was always a laugh coming in and having a beer with the players after a game.

“A multiple winner of groundsmen of the year, Barrie has some of the steadiest hands in the Birmingham League.

And he says hard work is the secret to keeping a pitch so immaculate for so long.

“It’s a devotion not a job,” he said. “At times it feels like you are working 24 hours a day, seven days week.

“When you have 25-acres to look after, there is always something to do. I developed skin cancer 12 years ago but I think you just have to put that down as an occupational hazard.

“This was me, though. I couldn’t have worked in an office all day. I wanted to be outside with nature.”

“Has a number of highlights during his time at Wolverhampton. But he admits the team’s victory in the National Knockout in 1999 really stands out.

“Most highlights was winning the National Knockout in 1999. That was great.

“We had loads of crowds from all the local cricket clubs going down to Lord’s.

“We even had our local rivals Walsall getting a coach together. It was a really big thing.

“Ann and I went down with the team. We stayed overnight and had lunch at Lord’s and went out on the ground. It wasn’t bad for someone who doesn’t like cricket!

“Prove groundkeeping is in the family blood, his son looks after the fairways at nearby South Staffs Golf Club.

And it’s spending time with his family that Barrie is most looking forward to in his retirement.

Support

“My daughter Julie lives in France so I’m looking forward to being able to go over there and stay with her,” he said. “My wife Ann passed away fairly recently and we had hoped to see more of the countryside together. When she died, I just lost it and know I had to retire.

“I have got five grandchildren and three step-grand children, they will keep me busy. I’ve had a full life really so it’s time to slow down.

“Barrie will still be a regular feature at Danescourt. I’m still going to come and support the team and barrack them,” he added.

“I’ve got so many friends here and I know I can always come back and have a laugh.

“I’ll miss the players but I’m not going to miss running out to put the covers on when it rains. I’ll have a big smile on my face when I see the new groundsmen doing that.”

Rhino has sights on powering to victory

By James Moul

“I may not be the biggest cricket fan but the one thing I’m really going to miss is the camaraderie with the players.”

Tickets are £35 general admission (£40 on the door) and £60 (VIP Ring-side to include buffet and waitress service). Call 0845 111 2900 or see https://boxingtickets.com/
Yeltz leave it late to grab all the points

Halesowen Town 3 Matlock Town 2

HALESOWEN earned three precious points after hitting two late goals in a stunning late comeback.

The Tigers were on course for a third straight win when Spencer Weir-Daley was left free in the sixth yard box to bend past Matlock’s debuta
tant goalkeeper Jordan Pierrepont from Jack Kelly’s third minute corner.

But Halesowen failed to build on their early lead as Matlock captain Shaun Harrad claimed the equaliser and three minutes later the Gladiators dominated possession and had a great opportunity after 26 minutes when Ed Cryleby took advantage of a poor header from Ash Chur
ton, only for Dan Platt to make a fine blocking save.

The visitors finally took a 2-1 lead in the 56th minute when Harrad was called off his own post and Caunt snatched a 93rd minute wide effort straight at Platt.

Weir-Daley almost regained the lead when he rattled the crossbar with a 55th minute shot.

Matlock continued to be profligate and missed another sitter in the 57th minute when Michael Warburton latched onto Platt’s sliced clearance and craved for Harrad to balloon over the bar from just five yards out.

The visitors finally took a 2-1 lead in the 56th minute when Cryleby stepped inside his marker and his shot from the edge of the area deflected off a defender beyond Platt.

The Yeltz introduced Roland Abgor with eight minutes remaining and turned the tables with a dramatic turn- around. Abgor brought the scores level at 2-2 after slotting home an 88th minute cross from Weir-Daley.

King then headed home the crucial winner in the third minute of injury time following a fine cross from the right by Ivar Lawton.

Kelly’s eye on his future with Town

HALESOWEN Town man Jack Kelly has set his immediate future to the club after turning down an approach from Evo-Stik Premier rivals Rushall Olympic.

Defender Kelly has made 31 appear-
ances for the Yeltz this season, scoring four goals. His latest strike was against the Lion.

The club said in a statement: “Jack said he wanted to show his loyalty to the players and supporters and do everything possible to keep the Yeltz in the Northern Premier League.

At half-time during Halesowen Town’s match against visitors Matlock Town at The Grove, Keith McKenna was intro-
duced as the club’s new manager.

McKenna is currently youth team manager at Halesowen and made five appearances for the Yeltz first team in 1983, scoring on his debut in a 4-1 vic-
tory over Crawleray Town.

Hagley through to regional finals

CHAMPIONS Hagley returned to form in the WCB Indoor League North division, beating Quatt by 10 wickets.

Quatt started well with Ryan Whelid (38) and Ed Parker, though the latter went in the third over. Alex Biddle joined the contest and the score accelerated until he was run out. The lower order came and went until Craig Jones and the returning Whelid added late runs. After both departed, Quatt were bowled out for 92.

Debutant Lee Nightingale (28 no), partnered by Joe Lennon (28 no) set about the Quatt bowling and on their retirement the next two batters continued the assault to win with three overs to spare at 84-4.

In the other game, Chaddesley Corbett beat En
villex by eight wickets on the last ball of the game. Enville opener Matt Branch (34 no) and Jeyd Howells (32 no) set off at a brisk pace until the former Branch retired with the score on 38.

Debutant Jay Willis (28 no) joined Howells and maintained the run rate. With their retirements the remaining batsman perished as they looked for runs and Enville ended on 180-3. In reply, Chaddesley started cautiously but when Enville’s change bowlers were introduced Chaddesley in
creased the run rate, with three out of the top four retiring.

The gap narrowed – 1 w were required in the final over and the scores were level with one ball left. Chaddesley went for the big hit and scored the four needed to win at 114-2.

Meanwhile, Hagley progressed to the regional finals at Edgbaston on Sunday by beating Staffordshire champions Snedeg CC. They play Bed
dfordshire winners Potton Town in the semi-finals.

Ball awaits tougher tests in the ring

KINGSWINFORD fighter Danny Ball is looking to build on his explosive start to professional boxing with another eye-catching performance this weekend.

The 21-year-olds fight on BCB Promotions’ The Class of 2018 at Walsall Town Hall, on Saturday.

Ball has only done six rounds overall in his first three fights, with his scintil
lating power ending two of his bouts pre
maturely in the first round. Saturday’s fight will be his last scheduled four
counder before he moves up to six.

He feels he has a lot to improve on and he is hoping for a tougher test.

“I couldn’t have asked for a better start to my career,” Ball said. “But this is just the start and I just have to keep focused and keep it up.”

“There is still plenty to work on. I want to build on this win even more and I want to get a few more rounds under my belt.

“I want to be tested in this one so I know what my limits are so I am hoping for a tough fight.”

The super welterweight has been matched against the tough Danny Litt
tle, who stopped previously unbeaten Jordan Clancy last time out.

Ball added: “I want to make it excit
ing and give the people something to enjoy here.”

And another thing there will be a title fight at the end of the year. If I get another stoppage then I should get fast tracked to bigger and better.”

Speedway sponsor stays loyal to club

CRADLEY Heathens have received an off-track boost with Motor Market con
tinuing their role as title sponsors head
ing into the 2018 campaign.

The car dealer ship has backed the Heathens for a number of years and stepped up their involvement in 2015.

The club will enter another fourth season as the Motor Market Heathens and owner Dean Bridge is delighted to keep supporting his boyhood speedway club heading into the National Trophy.

Bridge said: “As far as we’re con
cerned, there wasn’t too much of a ques
tion about continuing. We’re pleased for it to continue.”

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