Beatles forerunners star turn at Romstock

JOHN Lennon's former band The Quarrymen steal the spotlight this weekend when they perform at the Romstock music festival.

The Quarrymen, which Lennon started in 1956 before he went on to form The Beatles, will perform on Saturday with some of his former bandmates in the line-up.

Rod Davis, a former schoolfriend of Lennon's, will feature alongside Colin Hanton, Len Garry and Charles Newby – who have all performed alongside various members of The Fab Four.

The festival is held at Romsley Playing Fields, St Renolds Road, Romsley, near Halesowen.

The Quarrymen booking came about after the festival's band co-ordinator Mark Moran's father, Mr Davis, who now lives in London, even has a plaque on a house around the corner to where he lived in Woolton where the Quarrymen used to rehearse.

Mr Moran said: "I've always been a huge Beatles fan and it got me wondering whether The Quarrymen were still going.

Birthplace

"I always remember that famous photo of The Quarrymen performing at the Woolton church fete. There was this blue plaque on this detached house which states it's the birthplace of The Beatles. The Quarrymen recorded there and I just thought 'wow'."

"I managed to get in touch with Rod Davis to ask what the chances are for them to come and play at Romstock – and they have agreed. I couldn't believe it – it's amazing.

"It is a great opportunity for Beatles and music fans in general to embrace musical history on our doorstep."

Lennon formed skiffle band The Quarrymen at Liverpool's Quarry Bank School before Paul McCartney and George Harrison joined the line-up. The band later evolved to become The Beatles.

Rod said the original members of The Quarrymen reunited when they were persuaded to take to the stage when they all attended The Cavern Club's 40th birthday in 1997 and have been playing together since. Three of the original band members – Rod, Colin and Len – are set to take the stage at the festival. They will be joined by Chas Newby, who played bass with The Beatles during several gigs, shortly after Stuart Sutcliffe's departure. Rod said: "I met John when I was five-years-old at Sun day school and then we later went to the same school when we were 11-years-old. When we were 14 we formed The Quarrymen.

"I was one of the original members of The Quarrymen – I started off as the banjo player, I only played alongside John.

"People joined the band and people left – I left as they became more of a rock 'n' roll group.

"I was more interested in blues and you can't have a banjo player in a rock 'n' roll band. Paul McCartney actually took over my place."

Mr Davis, who now lives in London, even has an iconic photograph of The Quarrymen on the back of a truck at the St Peter's Church garden fete in Woolton, Liverpool, taken in 1957 by his father. He said: "The photo of the group on the lorry was taken by my father. The lad in the check shirt sitting next to the drummer is of course John Lennon.

"The tea chest bass player in the photo with his back to the camera, Len Garry, who played in the group with John and Paul, will be on gui tar and vocals on Saturday."

Danger

The drummer in the photo, Colin Hanton, who played with John, Paul and George is on the famous recording of 'In Spite of All the Danger' and 'That'll be the Day' which are tracks three and four on The Anthology.

Mr Davis added: "We are really looking forward to this weekend. Our performance will feature four guys who have all played with various members of The Beatles.

"We play the music we were playing in the 1950s. There are so many Beatles lookalike and soundalike bands but people want to hear the music that inspired them in the 50s."

The festival, which is in its seventh year, runs from Friday to Saturday, with some of his former bandmates in the line-up.

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Mr Davis said: "I always remember that famous photo of The Quarrymen on the back of a truck at the St Peter's Church garden fete in Woolton, Liverpool, taken in 1957 by his father. He said: "The photo of the group on the lorry was taken by my father. The lad in the check shirt sitting next to the drummer is of course John Lennon."
New glimpse of village for 2022 Games

A new artist’s impression reveals what Birmingham’s Commonwealth Games Village will look like when it welcomes sportspersons and women from around the world in 2022.

After providing a temporary home for 6,500 athletes and officials during the Games, the village will then be converted into 1,000 more permanent homes as the heart of a regeneration plan for the Perry Barr area of the city.

Eventually up to 3,000 new homes will be built around the north-west of Birmingham. The games village will include accommodation, dining, medical, transport and essential services for athletes and team officials and will be situated on a 50-acre (20-ha) site off the A453 Aldridge Road.

The site is the current location of the old University of Central England (UCE) and Birmingham City University (BCU) campus near Perry Barr greyhound stadium and the One Stop Shopping Centre and is just a mile from Alexander Stadium, which will play a pivotal role during the games.

The competitors and officials will be housed in a mix of one and two-bed apartments as well as three and four-bed town houses. After the Games, the accommodation will be converted and become available as a mixture of homes for sale or rent, including some offered at social and affordable rent through the city council’s Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust and In-Reach rental initiative.

As part of the village development, there are plans to invest in wider infrastructure in the surrounding area, including the introduction of a SPRING (South Perry Barr) rapid bus service along the A34, and work to upgrade Perry Barr railway station.

£30m technology campus wins support

A bid for a new £30 million college campus in Dudley has been given the go-ahead by the Department for Education.

The creation of the Institute of Technology which Dudley College bosses say could transform the town centre.

Proposals led by Dudley College will see land redeveloped in Tipton to take our proposal forward. Dudley North MP Ian Austin welcomed the plans.

The college’s chief executive officer and chair of the board of Dudley Academies Trust, said: “I believe the proposal to create an Institute of Technology at the heart of Dudley is an ambitious vision whose time has come. “I feel we had a very strong bid and I’m delighted we have been selected to take our proposal forward.

“Developing a technologically skilled workforce and providing an even wider range of career pathways for the people of Dudley is what this bid is all about. “The fact that other regional colleges have been successful too is particularly pleasing and it looks like further education colleges in the West Midlands are leading a renaissance in technical education.”

Innovation

The bid was backed by other organisations including The University of Wolverhampton, Thomas Dudley, Dudley and Dudley NHS.

Plans to establish the institute is part of the creation of an ‘innovation park’ in Dudley.

It one of only a small group of approved bidders across the country – and now needs final sign off by government before building can begin.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin welcomed the news, saying: “Further investment in Dudley and the wider region is always welcome. I’m backing this bid all the way. Well done Dudley College.”

The campus will provide hi-tech facilities for advanced level skills training in technology, according to bosses. It will provide progression routes from Dudley College’s other skills training centres, Advance I and Advance II. The Innovation Park will bring together a number of initiatives that would cluster research and innovation centres together including the Very Light Rail Innovation Centre.

It will be built between the Black Country Living Museum and Dudley Zoo.

The second stage of the process to secure the final go-ahead for the project will begin in July with government backing expected by the end of the year.

Other successful bids included proposals led by Solihull College and joint bid from North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire Colleges.

Meanwhile, Dudley College of Technology is among 52 schools and colleges to have been named among the first T-level providers.

The T-levels are technical qualifications at A-level standard and have been described as the greatest shake-up of technical education for 50 years.

An artist’s impression of the Institute of Technology which Dudley College bosses say could transform the town centre.

Games Village impression

Transport chiefs back motorway bypass plan

A CONTROVERSIAL new 40-mile motorway through countryside skirting the Black Country has been backed by transport bosses.

Midlands Connect is considering plans for the ‘Western Strategic Route’, which would connect the M5 junction 4a at Bromsgrove with junction 2 of the M54, near the Walsall business park.

The transport body’s new report says the route would offer the biggest benefit for improving journey times and supporting economic growth.

It says the route could reduce traffic on stretches of the M6 and M5 by one fifth, and could also reduce journey times.

The exact path has not yet been finalised, although it appears to mirror the Western Orbital scheme and the Wolverhampton Bypass, thrown out twice before. Initial plans suggest it is set to pass near Cosall, Codsall Wood, Pershore, Pattingham, Wombourne, Dudley, Stourbridge and Kidderminster.

The report details 10 recommendations to tackle congestion including measures to make the best use of the M6 Toll, new park and ride sites, and introducing ramp metering on the M5 Junctions 1 and 2.

Midlands Connect director Maria Machesney said: “The recommendations are a bold statement of intent to see what is required to make the Midlands’ motorway network fit for purpose.

Jeremy Bloom, of Highways England, said: “We will have to listen to what the future will help us to develop an investment strategy that solves the problems.”

Tom on motorway for city concert

MUSICIAN and radio presenter Tom Robinson will play in Birmingham on a new UK tour in October.

His band will be at The Glee Club in The Arcadian, Hurst Street, on October 30. The Tom Robinson Band had a string of hit singles in the 1970s including 2-4-6-8 Motorway. His solo hits in the 1980s included Be Here to Love You.

Tom, aged 68, has a show on BBC Radio 6 Music.

Art and dance at family fun festival

A COMMUNITY fun day is being held as part of a Festival of Learning. Dudley Wood Neighbourhood Learning Centre in Dudley Wood Road will also connect up to 45,000 homes in the area.

It will include crafts, health advice, children’s dancing and an art display.

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###新闻摘要

报纸标题：Halesowen Chronicle  Thursday, June 7, 2018

- **FREE**
  - 可以容纳30个摊位的游行由当地的舞蹈团represent，其成员代表英格兰参加了2013年6月22日至7月2日的Sitges，接近Barcelona。

- **FISH**和 chip shop customers were served by a male voice choir as they waited for their orders.

- **Drama Finding Your Feet** will be shown as part of a movie matinee programme on July 2 in Stourbridge.

- **Call 01384 397 177**

- **Call 01384 476 306**

- **Call 0121 421 2111**

###房屋建筑商帮助跳舞

一个房屋建筑商有一个180个座位的表演场地，可以容纳一个当地的舞蹈团。今年夏天在Stourbridge将有四场表演。

- **Call 0121 550 1444**

###公园故事走

STORY walks will be held as part of a National Bookstart Week event in Stourbridge. Free picture books for youngsters and craft activities take place at Mary Stevens Park tomorrow (Friday) from noon to 2pm.

###波斯猫计划在前商店游行被拒绝

**Just the place for a sing-along**

**Patience praised over roadworks**

**NEWS IN BRIEF**

- **Patience praised over roadworks**

- **Tribute band set to play the Best of Foo**

- **Find feet at town hall movie show**

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PETROL stations in the Black Country were targeted more than 3,000 times in a year by fuel thieves, with Dudley one of the worst hit areas, new figures show.

MP for Dudley South Mike Wood is urging police and fuel stations to work hard to ‘cut out’ the crime.

West Midlands Police is now encouraging businesses to operate pre-pay policies to help foil criminals who speed off from petrol forecourts without paying.

The figures show that from May last year to April this year, there were 1,070 incidents in Sandwell, 725 in Dudley, 653 in Walsall and 632 in Wolverhampton.

Mr Wood said: “This is not a victimless crime. The cost of these thefts are felt by honest motorists. We need police and petrol stations to work as closely together as possible to really cut this out.”

West Midlands Police lead for business crime, Supt Harvi Khattak, said: “We work closely with petrol station managers and the British Oil Security Syndicate on tackling this issue.

Policy

“While encouraging businesses to take steps to minimise the likelihood of them becoming a victim – such as operating a pre-pay policy and installing good quality CCTV – we also routinely share images of fuel theft suspects on our Flickr and Facebook pages.”

The figures show the number of biking incidents across the Black Country has decreased across the year. In May last year there were 353 incidents of petrol theft, compared to 205 in April.

In a guide created for retailers this year, the Association of Convenience Stores claimed the annual cost of biking to UK stations was £128million.

Mr Heeley, from West Bromwich, will be taking part for the seventh year. He posed for a picture outside the clinic.

“We work closely with petrol station managers and the British Oil Security Syndicate on tackling this issue.”

A MAN died after suffering a cardiac arrest in Ambleside.

Emergency services were called to High Street at around 11.10am on Friday following reports of a one-vehicle collision. A man in his 70s was taken to hospital but later died.

The road was closed by police, close to the junction of Vicarage Road, and reopened around an hour later.

James Aground, West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman, said: “On arrival, crews discovered a man in cardiac arrest. Unfortunately, shortly after arrival at the hospital it became apparent that nothing could be done to save him.”

“Ambulance staff took over and also administered advanced life support which continued en-route to Basset Hill Hospital. Unfortunately, shortly after arrival at the hospital it became apparent that nothing could be done to save him.”

Two arrested after man hurt in attack

TWO men, aged 31 and 23, were arrested on suspicion of assault after a man was attacked near the Mount Pleasant pub in Kingswinford.

Police, paramedics and Midlands Air Ambulance were called to Cot Lane on Sunday at about 4.50pm. The man, in his 40s, remains serious but stable in hospital.

Two arrested after man hurt in attack

Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, June 7, 2018

**Blind Dave runs up support for road race**

Blind Dave Heeley and Seamus with Alan Bowler, Halesowen and Rowley Regis Rotary Club and store manager Darren Burke.

Mr Heeley last took part in the Sutton Coldfield 10km, and before that the Birmingham 10km. He plans to run the 10km, which starts at 10am, and the family fun run at 11am.

He said: “Not only will it be a great event for runners but it will also raise money for many good causes in the Black Country and beyond.”

The race starts and finishes in Halesowen town centre. Enter at www.theblackcountryrun.com

A LARGE recycling depot will be built on the former Helix factory site in Lye after planning bosses gave the thumbs up to the scheme.

The family-run facility will move to a different part of the plot formerly occupied by the stationery giant, in Engin Lane, and is expected to create around 50 jobs.

The company, which recycles aggregate material for the construction industry, currently operates from an unauthorised site in nearby Bott Lane. The applicant wrote to Dudley Council insisting it was ‘paramount for all concerned’ that the firm be allowed to remain.

The current site, which has no planning permission, is the subject of a council enforcement notice.

Principal planning officer Peter Reed said the company had been there for more than 12 months and there had been no accidents reported there or problems arising from its presence.

Councillor Mohammed Hanif, who represents the area, said he had received several complaints from residents about noise from the business and asked for six-monthly noise monitoring checks to be made.

The depot, which will process 40,000 tons of waste a year, has been given permission to operate from the site for three years.
Football fans help stem cell donor plea

Football fans helped encourage a man to sign up for the Anthony Nolan stem cell register at a tournament in memory of Olly Wilkes.

The Olly Wilkes Memorial Football Tournament took place at Thomas Collegate Academy, in Brierley Hill. It was jointly run by Olly’s family – father Simon, mother Lynn and brother Ben – and his former club Withymoor Colts, in memory of Olly, aged 22, who took his own life last year.

Mr Lennart Poulsen, defending, said: “The bomb hoax was not a deliberately malicious act. It was the result of temporary psychosis resulting from heavy intoxicated, but he takes full responsibility.”

He received a call in March to say he was a potential match for someone in need of a stem cell transplant and went to the London clinic to donate.

Anyone aged 16-30, in generally good health, can join the register. Visit www.anthonynolan.org or fill in details and providing a DNA sample via a cheek swab. At a similar event last year, 22 people signed up, including Matt Beveridge, 26, of Wombourne. He received a call in March to say he was a potential match for someone in need of a stem cell transplant and went to the London clinic to donate.

Top award for Sabbath’s Ozzy

Birmingham-born Ozzy, aged 69, will be recognised for his almost 50-year career.

The singer founded Black Sabbath in 1969 alongside guitarist Tony Iommi, bassist Geezer Butler and drummer Bill Ward before leaving in 1978. Ozzy reunited with Iommi and Butler for a 2013 album, called 13. In February last year the trio brought the curtain down on the band’s career with the final show of a farewell tour in their home city.

Two-year prison sentence for hospital bomb hoaxer

A DRUNK whose bomb hoax led to major disruption at a hospital has been jailed for two years.

Norman Taylor told a horrified support worker on the second floor of Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley that he had explosives in the holdall he was carrying.

The 45-year-old then pulled out a screwdriver and ran off with the bag as the building was put into lock down, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Taylor had already called police to say a bomb had been placed at the hospital, leaving his correct name and phone number before going to Russells Hall himself on September 7 last year. He was on bail at the time.

“Patients were moved, ambulances were redirected to other hospitals and police, specialist units were put on standby,” said Miss Laura Culley, prosecuting.

Police rushed to the hospital and Taylor’s home but he had already left. He was detained by security staff. The defendant was so drunk he had started to hallucinate, a psychiatrist confirmed.

He received a call in March to say he was a potential match for someone in need of a stem cell transplant and went to the London clinic to donate.

Anyone aged 16-30, in generally good health, can join the register. Visit www.anthonynolan.org.
Tony Blair – Iraq casts a shadow that will last the rest of his life

Bishop Curry’s 14-minute wedding sermon – attention span was not the issue

Victoria Beckham – was said to be ‘mortified’ after confusing actresses

Reality is that they are not stars at all

Showbiz names? Didn’t recognise one of them!

The BEST OF

PETER RHODES

VICTORIA Beckham was said to be ‘mortified’ after mistaking Thandie Newton for Zoe Saldana. I sympathise. As I admitted recently, in the blood-and-guts epic The Revenant, I had great difficulty telling Leonardo DiCaprio from the grizzly bear. The Misses Newton and Saldana? I’m sorry, I haven’t a clue. The problem is that there are simply so many celebrities today. I’ve just put down a newspaper supplement with a double-page spread of alleged showbiz stars. Didn’t recognise a single one of them. It seems those whose names are preceded by ‘reality star’ are, in reality, not stars at all.

In October last year I wrote: “Harvey Weinstein is... deliciously easy to hate. But as this affair deepens and the Hollywood swamp is drained, don’t be surprised if some of your favourite stars turn out to be wading in the ooze.” But I never imagined Morgan Freeman would be in the frame and begging forgiveness.

A READER suggests, I might have gained more from Bishop Curry’s 14-minute sermon at the Royal Wedding if I had a greater attention span. Believe me, attention is not the issue. It’s all a question of whether or not you are abeliever. If you believe there is a supernatural deity somewhere Up There who created the universe, loves every one of us and has prepared a place of eternal bliss in the afterlife, then sermons such as this must be wonderfully uplifting and faith-affirming. If, on the other hand, you believe there is no God, and that religion is a system designed to keep people in their place with the promise that if this life is awful, things will be great when they’re dead, then you probably realise all God-botherers are at best deluded and at worst dangerous. I have heard many holy men banging on about the Love of God and the joys of Heaven but I’ve yet to meet one who wants to go there.

If nothing else, the arrival of the new Duchess of Sussex is a reminder that we’re not all known by our first names. Many of us, for reasons of family tradition, personal choice or the demands of showbiz, are known by a middle name. Thus, the Duchess is Rachel Meghan Markle in much the way that the US megastar is William Bradley Pitt, the former Beatles is James Paul McCartney and the ‘Rivers of Blood’ MP was John Emoch Powell.

A USEFUL thing about being known by your middle name is that you can use your first name on official documents. And that means that when an envelope arrives addressed to William Pitt or James McCartney, you know it’s not from a friend.

You may get a glow of satisfaction about Russian oligarchs being called to account by UK authorities and made to explain how and when they acquired their riches. But remember this. A quarter of all the income tax paid in Britain is paid by the richest one per cent of income-tax payers. While a moral crusade is heart-warming, dirty money is still money and it may be that the best way to fund the NHS is to look the other way.

ACCORDING to the Sunday Times, rising ocean temperatures may soon make wetsuits obsolete in the seas around Britain. Excellent news. Unless you have a perfect body, the black-rubber wetsuit is the most unkind and unforgiving item of clothing. I saw a woman on Loch Lomond mounting her jet ski. She was a large lass, clad in a wetsuit, straddling the saddle with her ample bum in the air and a jet of water shooting up between her legs. It was unforgettable, and not in a good way, and yet from her satisfied smile, she obviously thought she looked like a Bond girl.

I GAVE an example recently of the casual effing and blinding directed at Tony Blair in online debates over everything from Syria to Brussels. I recall writing, after the 1997 General Election, that impossible as it seemed, this young and popular new Prime Minister would one day be the most hated man in England. But who could have imagined that 11 years after he resigned as PM, Blair would still be so energetically despised by so many who once adored him? Blair is desperate for what politicians calls ‘legacy’ but Iraq casts a shadow that will last the rest of his life.

GRAEME ANDREW

No longer saddled with rude drivers

FOLLOWING a forced leave of absence from my bicycle saddle (basically through laziness) I am now fully back roaming the Black Country on two wheels – at least to my place of work anyway. And, I have to say, apart from a couple of predictable clashes with drivers of white vans who really do think the rules of the road are basically Fast & Furious to 8, things have definitely improved.

In the two years or so I have been off the road, pedal-power wise at least, there is a noticeably more relaxed attitude to me in my bright yellow top, gliding past past flashes of cars in the bike lanes leading up to traffic lights. I have found in the past that however courteous one driver might be to allow me access across a junction, there will be one, or several, hotheads much more courteous in the queue behind them, who almost amuse their vehicle at my nuts and bolt me with the accompanying high revs and hand gestures making cycling a somewhat daunting prospect.

Not so now though. After a couple of weeks back in the saddle, I am pleased to report there is usually space allowed to my right-hand side – apart from some aforementioned idiots in vans. Also there is no pressure to give up the road to other cyclists who leave me in their dusty tracks.

Of course, it’s all been said, sensible sharing of the public highway works both ways. Bikes of all types ignore everything else on the road to make mad dashes around and in front of cars. Unless you have a perfect body, or can manage to do the gear changes on a muddy road, it is no surprise there are tensions.

The only thing I have found disappointing is previously when I was too- and often for being a self-proclaimed commuter, on the motorways, with the gives a few miles. However, with the advance of the internet, I have been point out what roads I have worked out distances of travelled round, including cycling. I worked it out as a round four miles... and yet for me, it feels like a marathon!

I have tried to suffer the ignominy of being overtaken by older, heavier cy-

To change tack, I have to admit I have come to realise that my bike simply can’t go as fast as other bikes...I’ll probably be a bit of bike to the gears, chains/tyres etc... and nothing to do with the rider of course!

GRAEME ANDREW

Compost heap not my idea of fine dining

JAPANESE knotweed, what do you know about it? Or dandelions, or nettles? Now I thought the answer was pretty obvious. I knew from the most powerful weedkiller you can find.

But while attending to television gardener Alys Fowler, that is completely wrong. Not only do the former Gardener’s World presenter have a rather strange name, but it seems she also has a rather strange idea about what to do about garden weeds. Last week she told the ‘Law Yer Festival that instead of killing them, we should try eating them.

Yum, yum. Now look, I’m the first to admit to being a dreadful gardener. Every year I spend a fortune on plants that will all within a couple of weeks. Only last month I applied to an advert in a national newspaper featuring pictures of glorious blooms, offering “two beautiful hanging baskets” for £20. And then they arrived – just two plastic bowls and a bit of chain. No flowers like in the pictures, just two plastic bowls for 20 quid. So I’m gubbled as well. But while I know nothing about gardening... or gastronomy for that matter – it still seems difficult to comprehend that suckling into the compost heap represents the future of fine dining.

Next week it is Alys Fowler, Blenheim, one of those avant-garde chefs loved by the food critics in The Guardian, says he spent Wednesday last week rummaging around a car park in Norwich looking for edible weeds. According to him, there is a strange idea about what to do about garden weeds. Last week she told the ‘Law Yer Festival that instead of killing them, we should try eating them.

“I think it is lovely, it is like a light version of watercress,” he says.

Simon Rogan, with two Michelin stars to his name, is another fan, although he prefers nettles and dock leaves. Nice.

Then there is Tiffany Francis, who has gone so far as to write a recipe book on the subject. She just loves DLLs, using the heads to make biscuits and the stems to make soup.

Now I probably ought to tread carefully, for if things go wrong, some souls somewhere has probably decided that disparaging garden weeds is the next big ‘hatred’ crime. But while this sort of thing might go down well in the storm in the tender parts of London, the North West of England and even car parks in West Bromwich catching on around here.

A few years ago, food critic Jay Rayner said there was nowhere good to eat out in the Black Country, because the people didn’t want to pay for good food. Well, not any more, Jay, but I think I’ll stick with the steak.
Velodrome needed to encourage cycling

I am a grandpa and a cyclist. I have two granddaughters who are both really keen on cycling, particularly if you are a young child. The roads are dangerous and have little to no provision for cyclists and cycle racing facilities are few.

If you want your kids to experience the thrill of riding an indoor velodrome then a trip to Derby or Newport (Gwent) are required. I have no idea how busy parents find the time or the money to get their kids to either of those velodromes regularly enough for their kids to learn the skills required to race on the track or to experience the real thrill of riding the boards.

I know that the parents of my grand kids couldn’t and it falls to me as grandpa to do this. Many children are not fortunate enough to have grandparents with the time, money and transport to do this.

Sport is not just some added extra, it is absolutely essential for a decent and enjoyable life. Taking part should not require high incomes and the sorts of jobs that allow lots of time off. Cycling is a tremendous sport. I have never been that good a rider but have been riding my bike and occasionally competing from when I was eight, I am now 62. How many other sports can you do this in?

An indoor velodrome for the West Midlands is a great idea. Somewhere managed and run by the interests of cyclists, by cyclists to encourage cycling at all levels could be a great success.

PETE MARSHALL
Stourbridge

Set the right example in household

All a teacher with 40 odd years experience in primary, secondary and special edu-
cation, I find it both annoying and ironic that the two problems most frequently laid at the door of schools are littering and bullying – are the two issues schools spend most time, effort and money striving to eliminate. Peter Rhodes, Ipswich

Wake up, council, to blinding attraction

DUDLEY visitors and businesses are missing out on the Peaky Blinder phenomena, created by filming at the Black Country Living museum close to the Hippodrome site.

While Peaky-themed bars are opening all over the country, there is nothing in Dudley. There’s even a Peaky Blinders tribute band called the Peaky Blinders, yet Dudley cannot see the tourist attraction staring them in the face.

A plan to open a Peaky Blinders Museum made from a collection of photos of the gang and police uniforms has received £145,000 of Lottery cash and hopes to create a Victorian lock-up similar to where the real gang were held. Wake up Dudley Council, Peaky’s big business on your doorstep.

MICHAEL CLIFF
Walsall

10 tax those who have benefited

FOR many years I have advocated funding the NHS through taxation. Now, with the NHS at crisis point the government has succumbed to common sense, propos-
ing that most ordinary taxpayers pay up to an extra £2,000 per household per year to improve a dire sit-
tuation caused by successive Conservative governments.

But this crisis was completely avoidable. The To-
fes took power from Labour in 2010 based on a promise to cut taxes, which they did, the main beneficiaries being the wealthiest and the multi-national companies.

The government claim to have put in more funds than ever, then massively cut funds under the guise of efficiency savings. Now they want us to cough up for their misme-
agement. They should substantially increase corporation tax so those who benefited most from the tax cuts would put the most money back in.

MICHAEL CLIFF
Walsall

“Really handsome Kitchen..."

Danni & Martin Walters, Hasbury

“Hagley Kitchens took care of everything in our fantastically designed modern kitchen...” Graham and his team made everything simple.” Pam & Steve Hughes, Rowley Regis

“Graham gave us our perfect kitchen, a great local company.” Doreen Colley - Hayley Green

Hagley Kitchens created the kitchen we have always dreamed of, and his team completed the installation and tiling to a perfect finish... Thank You.” Wayne & Julie, Wordsley

“Nothing was too much trouble”

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✔ Tiled roofs washed and cleaned

For all of your external cleaning requirements, call the experts at BTF Cleaning Services!!
Cropds steam along to vintage show

PETROL heads and steam buffs could admire cars and trains from across the decades at a special steam spectacular.

The fifth annual Vintage Transport and Country Fair at Himley Hall and Park was held over the weekend and saw vintage steam train, 1973 Grand Torinos and other rare classic cars.

Visitors could have a trip down memory lane to have a look at a variety of vehicles on display. There was plenty to keep enthusiasts engaged, with attractions including fairground organs, tractors, classic cars, vintage motorbikes, cycles and vintage fire engines.

There was also the likes of a classic American army Jeep, an Austin 7 Opel, and even a 1932 MGJ2. The event ran for the whole weekend and was believed to bigger and better than before.

It developed from being the former Steamer Sunday event to a full vintage vehicle display and country fair, bringing exhibitors from across the country since its smaller beginnings.

Visitors could also enjoy family-friendly events including a children’s funfair and have a look around arts and crafts stalls, vintage stalls, hand-crafted collectables as well as listen to live music.

Chainsaw

They could enjoy a bite to eat from a variety of food stalls and watch a chainsaw carving demonstration.

Meanwhile, youngsters can enjoy a special day out at Himley Hall and Park as the site stages its annual Under-Five’s Day later this month. The popular Dudley Council event, which features activities and entertainment for youngsters under the age of five, takes place on Friday, June 29, between 10am and 4pm.

Himley Hall and Park’s own beach – complete with giant sandpit, buckets and spades – and Punch and Judy shows will be on offer throughout. Baby and Toddler Sense, Music Bugs, Rugby Tots, Creation Station, Kung Fu Cubs, Moo Music, Hartbeeps and Baby Ballet will all be making an appearance.

Councillor Ian Kettle, cabinet member for responsible for halls, said: “The under-fives day is one of the region’s largest pre-school events and we are expecting over 4,000 visitors to the park on the big day.”

“For the first time this year, we are introducing a 20 per cent saving for parents and carers who wish to book online in advance.”

Adult tickets start at £5 and children’s at £3.50. Car parking is free.

Tickets can be booked by visiting www.himleyhallandpark.co.uk/under5s. To apply for a stall, email jacki.wynn@dudley.gov.uk for a booking form, or call 01384 817822.
Waste plant scheme earmarked for approval in spite of fears

A CONTROVERSIAL bid to build a huge energy facility overlooking the M5 looked set to go ahead this week – despite a last-ditch attempt by MP Tom Watson to block it.

The plans were put on hold earlier this year after councillors demanded more information but the scheme was recommended for approval at a meeting taking place last night (Wednesday).

Labour deputy leader Mr Watson sent a letter of objection on behalf on his West Bromwich East constituents complaining the building would be too large and could lead to traffic problems in the area. A petition against the plant, described as an ‘enormous monstrosity’ by one resident, was signed by 450 people.

However, planning experts at Sandwell Council say they are satisfied with the scheme, paving the way for the development to go ahead. They said they were unconcerned by the scale of the building, stating it would be a ‘landmark’ for the area.

Doubt

The 10,000 sq m energy recovery facility would be built at Giffards Recycling, off Kelvin Way, in West Bromwich, and convert 400,000 tons of waste into electricity a year.

A planning report ahead of a meeting last night, when a final decision was expected to be made, said: “There is no doubt that the building and chimney would be visually imposing, particularly when viewed from the M5, canal and wider area. However, it is considered the proposal would represent a landmark building similar to the college building.

Officers said increased traffic would have no significant impact on surrounding roads.

Centre to aid people with disabilities

A NEW assisted living centre will open in Dudley tomorrow (Friday).

Opening in Cedar Avenue, Quarry Bank, it will support people with disabilities and health issues with access to information about equipment and support for the home.

Councillor Nicolas Barlow, Dudley Council’s cabinet member for adult social care, said: “Without support from local businesses, Midlands Air Ambulance Charity wouldn’t be able to save lives every day.

Ambulance ball hosted by celebrities

A FAMILY-RUN Jewellery business will add sparkle to the Midlands Air Ambulance Charity’s Ball and Recognition Awards for the second year running.

T.H. Baker will be the headline sponsor for the prestigious event later this month, which will be presented by Vernon Kay and Nina Hossain.

The event, now in its seventh year, will take place on June 15 at the Vox Conferencing Centre in Resorts World, on the Birmingham NEC site.

Award sponsors also include JM Bailey, Fusion Communications, EBC Group, M6 Toll, Phoenix Group, HomeXperts, McLaren Birmingham, Uniqy 4 and Yogurt Top.

The event will recognise the life-saving work of the airlift heroes, generous volunteers, fundraisers, local business partners, and the inspirational stories of airlift heroes, all who will be honoured for their achievement.

Phil Higgins, managing director for T.H. Baker, said: “We have always been supporters of Midlands Air Ambulance Charity since it first came into operation in 1991, and over the past few years our support has become even stronger.”

Sofia Voutianou, corporate partnerships manager for Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, added: “Without support from local businesses, Midlands Air Ambulance Charity wouldn’t be able to save lives every day.

Time for poetry

A POETRY event is being held in Dudley Library during Careers Week next week.

Led by writer and performance poet Emma Purchese, an event is running in the St James’s Road venue on Tuesday from 11am to 1pm.

It is free but places must be booked on 01384 815555 or by e-mailing carA发展规划和营销建议，社会媒体推广，和电影节活动。

Alex, who lives with 25-year-old partner Grace, describes his music style as similar to indie rock band Arctic Monkeys, indie folk band Fleet Foxes or folk band Bon Iver.

Teacher Alex is in tune for top award

A PRIMARY school teacher was in tune to win a top music competition. Alex Ohm, a singer from Upper Gornal, beat 2,000 other contenders in the up-and-coming Pirate Prodigy contest, which scouts the best musicians in the nation.

As part of the prize, he will be performing at festivals all over the country and be coached by top producers.

The 30-year-old supply teacher, who used to work at Olive Hill Primary in Halesowen, said: “It was such a big shock. But I think the biggest shock was all the support. People all over the world were voting for me in the end, it was very humbling and overwhelming. It wasn’t what I expected at all.”

An expert panel of industry mentors and judges will now support, develop and promote Alex’s career in music.

He will receive one-to-one mentoring and masterclasses to help launch his career in the music world and also be given studio time with professional producers who have worked with Florence + The Machine.

As part of the prize he will also be treated to free video production, expert branding and marketing advice, social media promotion, and festival slots.

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Alex Ohm, from Lower Gornal, who has won a national online music competition.

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Andy’s recognised for 40 years of spadework

DUDLEY Zoo’s longest serving employee has been recognised for a career of work keeping the grounds looking their best.

Gardener Andy Palmer began work at the site on leaving school in 1979. To mark the milestone, the 56-year-old planted an acer called Crimson King by the summer beach. Ow Bin Ya Sands, with colleagues from the gardening team and zoo director Derek Grove.

Mr Palmer, who lives in Lower Gornal, has been working at the zoo since finishing his studies at Ellowe Hall School at the age of 16. “I left school on the Friday, started at the zoo on the Monday and I’ve been here ever since,” he said. In 2003, Mr Palmer planted a silver birch tree to celebrate 25 years of service.

For his 40th anniversary, Mr Palmer was presented with £200 of gift vouchers by Mr Grove.

Meanwhile, a Brazilian tapir at the zoo was treated to a carrot-stuffed cake to mark her first birthday. Keeper Josh Lexton combined all of Luna’s favourite fruits, veg and pellets to create the special treat and then broadcast a video on Facebook.

Luna was born on May 28 last year to parents Chico and Menna, who has had five other babies, after a 13-month pregnancy.

FOOTBALLER’S wife Rebekah Vardy will pound the pavements at Dudley Zoo for children in need.

The 36-year-old, married to Leicester City and England striker Jamie Vardy, will join Barnardo’s Big Toddle next Tuesday. She will take to the Castle Hill zoo with her children and Telebuddy Po to officially launch the fundraiser, which gets under way at 11am.

Barnardo’s ambassador Rebekah, who appeared on last year’s ’I’m a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!’ said: “I’m really looking forward to taking my little ones to the Big Toddle at Dudley Zoo.

“We are really glad to be supporting Barnardo’s and this is a really fun way to raise some money and spend time outside with your family at the same time.”

Admission is £7.50 for adults and over-fives, but free for toddlers, with medals for all participants and free refreshments.

Proceeds will go towards the charity’s work.

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**Streets ahead with unique artwork**

"WHEN I told people I was knitting the Express & Star, they thought I’d lost it."

Hazel Thomas is speaking about the eye-catching piece of textile art she and friend Helen Page have created for the Royal Express & Star Art Gallery.

The pair are members of the Bantock Bodgers group whose vibrant interpretations of some of the street’s most historic buildings are real show-stoppers.

The spotlight has fallen on the street following a successful bid for Heritage Lottery funding by the city council to conserve, repair and restore some of its oldest and most handsome buildings.

The exhibition showcases the road, telling its history in words, craft pictures, sketches, models and collected stories, illustrating why it was singled out for conservation. Hazel, aged 70, of Oxley, and Helen, 71, from Halesowen, took six months to complete the textile art.

“We decided to create a pre-1930s version of the building and had help from Hazel’s husband David and my partner Steve and a friend Carolyn, who made the non-textile parts,” said Helen.

Other pictures include a replica of the Congregational Church that used to stand on the street, telling its history in words, craft pictures, sketches, models and collected stories, illustrating why it was singled out for conservation. Hazel, aged 70, of Oxley, and Helen, 71, from Halesowen, took six months to complete the textile art.

“We decided to create a pre-1930s version of the building and had help from Hazel’s husband David and my partner Steve and a friend Carolyn, who made the non-textile parts,” said Helen.

Other pictures include a replica of the Congregational Church that used to stand on the corner of Queen Street and Market Street – where the Job Centre now stands – before it was demolished in 1971.

A hunt by gallery staff to find people who used to worship at the Victorian church almost 50 years ago was successful with a handful of former congregation members attending the exhibition opening – including a couple who married at the church in the 1950s. Kay and Fred Hobbs, from Compton, had met and fallen in love at the Royal Hospital in Wolverhampton where they worked in research in the pathology laboratory.

Kay said: “It was a lovely church to get married in, not least because you could take wonderful group photographs on the steps outside so you could see everyone.”

Fred, a former deacon of the church, said: “It was very sad to see it go but the combination of an elderly congregation and the cost of maintaining the building meant it couldn’t survive.”

At the centre of the exhibition is a scale model of the street produced by first and second year students from the University of Wolverhampton’s School of Architecture and Built Environment.

They have also completed a laser scan not only of the exterior of the street, but also an internal scan of one of the street’s typical Georgian townhouses. It is planned to create 3D graphics to be incorporated into a Queen Street App due to be launched in September.

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41% of people decide where to shop as a result of seeing advertising in local media - ahead of supermarket promotions (25%), direct mail (21%) and TV advertising (19%)

SOURCE: The Newspaper Society - Consumer Catalyst 2014
Amy waltzes back into the Strictly TV ballroom

A PROFESSIONAL dancer based in Dudley will return to Strictly Come Dancing as part of the biggest line-up of professionals ever.

Amy Dowden, 27, is one of 18 professional dancers who have been selected to perform with star partners in the sixteenth series of the hit BBC One show. She was selected to return after joining for the first time last season when she was paired up with comedian, actor and television presenter Brian Conley. The pair made it to the fifth week.

The dancer, originally from Wales, said: “I am really excited for the show, I cannot wait to start again.

Last year was so much fun and I learned so much, I made some lifelong friends including Brian Conley. It was great fun to work with him and we are still in touch.

“I am always nervous for the show but the day you are not nervous is the day you should hang up your shoes. I am always nervous for my partner too.

Me and Brian got to the fifth week but hopefully I can do better this year. I just have to wait and see who my new partner is.”

Amy has been dancing since she was eight and decided to pursue dance as a career when she was 18. She went on to win the 2017 British National Championships, is a four-time British National Finalist and reached the semi-final of the World Championship in 2015. She runs a dance academy called Art in Motion, on the Thornleigh Trading Estate.

Three new dancers will join Strictly – Graziano Di Prima, Johannes Radebe and Luba Mushtuk – when it returns in the autumn.

Dudley dancer Amy Dowden was all smiles on Strictly Come Dancing last year alongside comedian Brian Conley
MEMORY LANE
By Alec Brew

TETTENHALL Transport Heritage Centre has unveiled its new two-wheeler display, thanks to help from Pallet Tracking Systems of Willenhall. It reflects the long history of Wolverhampton in building bicycles and motorbikes, a heritage which goes back to the beginnings of both, and names like Sunbeam, AJS, Villiers, Wearwell, Halesowen, and Viking are included.

The metal-working skills which existed here during Victorian Times were easily adapted to making bicycles, and the trade soon flourished with, at one time, more than 80 bicycle makers.

These varied, from the huge ones, like Sunbeam and Star, to the small makers, very often at the back of bicycle shops like Dugmores, Halesowen, and Fred Williams.

The whole trade was boosted by cycle racing at Molineux. Huge crowds of up to 10,000 people turned out to watch on a cycle track created in the gardens of Molineux House, which only stopped when Wolves moved over to build their new stadium on the site.

Wolverhampton’s Percy Stallard then became one of the pioneers of British Road Racing. The Wolverhampton Wheeleers Cycle Club is one of the oldest sporting clubs in the city, and they found a new home when Aldersley Stadium was built in the 1950s, with a cycle track around the outside.

Manufacturers returned to cycle racing after the war, with major teams operated by Viking and Wearwell, who made some of the last two-wheelers.

Perhaps it was a natural progression from bicycles to motorbikes, some of the earliest of which were just bicycles with a small engine fitted, but soon some of the greatest names in British motorcycling came from Wolverhampton.

Prizes
Every year the TT Races on the Isle of Man were the pinnacle of motorcycle races, and it was often Wolverhampton firms like Sunbeam, AJS and HRD who were vying for the top prizes, but there were many other smaller makers, like Clyno, Wolf, Diamond and Sharratt.

All the bikes at the TTHC have been donated, and they are always looking for others to add to the story of the city’s two-wheel heritage.

Telling story of city’s two-wheel heritage

An AJS motor-bike tester out on the road

The new two-wheeler display

The Viking Cycle Team in the 1950s

Percy Stallard, a pioneer of British road racing

Some of the badges with very familiar names

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Young performing arts students from Stagecoach Halesowen To feature in Guinness World Record attempt.

Stagecoach Performing Arts Halesowen students will be joining thousands of other students in an attempt to break the Guinness World Record for the largest simultaneous performance of one show.

Celebrating the 30-year anniversary of Stagecoach, students from Stagecoach Halesowen will join up with schools nationwide and abroad (including Germany, Canada and Malta) to stage Disney’s Beauty and the Beast Junior. Performing simultaneously at 6pm BST on 1st July 2018, the world record attempt will be commemorating three decades of Stagecoach schools sparking children’s creativity through singing, dancing and acting classes. Upwards of 12,000 children will be involved, across 150 venues around the world.

If successful, Stagecoach will break its own record, which currently stands from 2008. Ten years ago, Stagecoach organised the largest simultaneous performance of one show for its 20th anniversary, achieving 66 performances of Glad Rags across the UK, Ireland and Germany.

Principal Wendy of Stagecoach Halesowen said, “Our fantastic students can’t wait to perform Disney’s Beauty and the Beast Junior and are thrilled to be creating happy memories to last a life time by performing in such an exciting world record breaking attempt.”

Disney’s Beauty and the Beast was released in cinemas in 1991 and is one of the most beloved animated films of all time. In 1994 it was transformed into a spectacular, award-winning Broadway musical by the Disney Theatrical Group, which has been seen by over 25 million people and continues to enchant audiences around the world. Most recently, this ‘tale as old as time’ has again been reinvented, this time as a live-action feature, which was the world’s top-grossing film of 2017, re-affirming its enduring appeal across multiple generations.

Stagecoach boasts a talented alumni base of A-list celebrities and actors. The selection of Disney’s enchanting classic is highly appropriate, with two former Stagecoach students, Emma Watson and Nathan Mack, having played the protagonist Belle and Chip the teacup, respectively, in the film of Beauty and the Beast released in 2017.

Stagecoach Performing Arts Halesowen is part of a network of more than 700 extra-curricular Performing Arts Schools worldwide. Stagecoach aims to make a difference in its students lives by teaching Creative Courage For Life® and many children have gone on to study and work in Performing Arts from blockbuster films to countless roles in local theatre productions.

Stagecoach Performing Arts Halesowen continues to build on its successful Saturday classes with a new Sunday morning school opening September 2018. Classes take place every weekend during term time. Early Stages classes are available for students aged four to six years and Main Stages classes are for students aged six to 18 years.

For more information about future classes and workshops at Stagecoach Halesowen, please visit their website at stagecoach.co.uk/halesowen or call 0121 531 7430.
Take a spin through the health benefits of cycling

By Liz Connor

ELITE cyclists from all over the world will soon descend upon France for this year’s Tour de France. The world’s most famous cycling race will see 22 teams go head to head for more than 2,000 miles, ending with a magni-
cent sprint down France’s iconic Champs-Elysées.

For an energetic workout that’ll burn calories, torch fat and clear the mind, nothing beats the challenge of getting on two wheels.

If you manage to complete the exhausting 23-day TdF for instance, you could burn off up to 118,000 calories – that’s the equiva-

lent of 20 Mars bars per day.

Thankfully, you don’t have to pedal across France to get a decent workout from cycling, however. Even if you just choose to potter around Shropshire’s picturesque country lanes, regularly finding time to get on your bike can bring some pretty impor-
tant benefits for both mind and body. And now that the sun is shining, there’s never been a better time to get inspired by the likes of Joanna Rowsell and Chris Froome.

Here, fitness expert explains more about the health and fitness benefits of cycling...

1. You can’t help but live long

It should come as no big surprise that low levels of physical activity have been linked to a myriad of serious and life-threatening health conditions, and a cycling a day can be one of the most gentle and enjoyable ways to get moving.

“There’s lots of evidence to suggest that cycling can promote long life,” says Bryan McCulloch, a clinical manager and physi-

otherapist from Pure Sports Medicine (pu-

resportmed.com). “For instance, a study published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, conducted on over 80,000 Brit-

ish adults, found that cycling participation produced a significant reduction in causes of mortality – including cardiovascular dis-

ease, diabetes and cancer.”

Another study, published in the British Medical Journal, found that commuters who cycled had a 52% lower risk of dying from heart disease, and 40% lower risk of ischaemic heart disease, and 40% lower risk of suffering with sleep issues,” says Mc-

Cullough. “There’s lots of evidence to suggest that cycling can promote long life,” says Bryan McCullough, a clinical manager and physi-

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ease, diabetes and cancer.”

Another study, published in the British Medical Journal, found that commuters who cycled had a 52% lower risk of dying from heart disease, and 40% lower risk of suffering with sleep issues,” says McCullough. “Just as little as 20-30 minutes of cycling can boost your quality of sleep.

Commuters who cycle have a lower risk of heart disease than those who don’t.

2. You can lose weight

If you’re looking for a way to lift your spirits, cycling could be just the tonic to get you moving.

Although swimming and running are high on the list when it comes to easy exercises that promote the calm and relaxation needed to fall asleep peacefully, if you find HeadSpace appealing but don’t have the time of day to control your body clock and help us to feel sleepy at night. Apple phones now come with a Night Shift setting that warms your screen with or-

cycling on alternate days is enough to have a significant impact on sleep quality.

Getting enough sleep is vital for overall health, and plays a role in improving your mood and balancing your hormone levels, while ongoing sleep deficiency is linked to an increased risk of conditions including heart disease, kidney disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and stroke.

4. It can boost your mood

If you’re looking for a way to lift your spirits, cycling could be just the tonic.

It’s basically an alternative way to achieve what is known as ‘runner’s high,’” says McCullough.

“The euphoria you feel after a rigorous cycle is all down to the exercise-induced release of endorphins within the body, whose job is to transport fat away from arteries.

In fact, The British Medical Association produced a summary of its sleep research and found that the body suppresses melatonin – a chemical which promotes the calm and relaxation needed to fall asleep peacefully. If you find HeadSpace appealing but don’t have the time of day to control your body clock and help us to feel sleepy at night. Apple phones now come with a Night Shift setting that warms your screen with or-

Cycling is an effective way to shake off stress and having company can make for a more interesting ride.

3. You’ll sleep better

We all know there’s nothing worse than staring at the ceiling in the early hours of the morning, willing sleep to come. So next time insomnia strikes, think about cycling your commute home instead.

“Cycling can be tiring work and it has been shown to have a significant positive effect on those who suffer with sleep issues,” says McCullough.

“Just as little as 20-30 minutes of cycling will boost your quality of sleep.

If your’re looking for a way to lift your spirits, cycling could be just the tonic.

As little as 20-30 minutes of cycling can boost your quality of sleep.

THAT dodgy car alarm blaring at 3am. The neighbour’s dog barking. The dental ap-

pointment you just remembered you were supposed to book...

But don’t let your fear and legitimate reasons why so many of us don’t manage to clock up the optimal nightly sleep.

There’s no denying that getting plenty of rest is an essential part of a healthy and happy lifestyle. A good night’s sleep aids brain function, helps balance hormones and blood sugar levels, safeguards your immune system against mood swings and repair blood vessels.

While your smartphone might be one of the things preventing you from drifting off into blissful sleep every night, it could also be part of the solution – there are now a number of apps designed to help you fall asleep faster and easier. Here’s our pick of the best apps to help you get a good night’s sleep...

1. Pzizz (pzizz.com)

This clever app creates per-

sonalised soundscapes to help you relax and drift off to sleep peacefully - think of it like the sleep DJ you never knew you needed. Simply plug in the amount of time you’d like to snooze for, and the app will adjust a timed mix to lull you into a deep sleep and gently rouse you when it’s time to wake up. If you struggle to focus at work in the daytime too, there’s also music designed to help you work faster and more effectively.

2. Headspace (headpsace.com)

This comprehensive meditation app has hundreds of different guided and unguided meditations to help you switch off. Using helpful animations and soothing instructions from British co-founder Andy Puddicombe, the app’s free 10-day trial talks you through 10 easy exercises that promote the calm and relaxation needed to fall asleep peacefully. If you find HeadSpace appealing but don’t have the time of day to control your body clock and help us to feel sleepy at night. Apple phones now come with a Night Shift setting that warms your screen with or-

3. Twilight (twilight.urbandroid.org)

Studies have shown that the blue light emitted from your device screens (smartphones included) can make the body suppress melatonin – a chemical which promotes the calm and relaxation needed to fall asleep peacefully. If you find HeadSpace appealing but don’t have the time of day to control your body clock and help us to feel sleepy at night. Apple phones now come with a Night Shift setting that warms your screen with or-

4. Sleep Cycle (sleepcycle.

Don’t identify as a morning person? This intelligent alarm clock analyses your sleep patterns so it can wake you up during the lightest sleep phase, which is the natural waking point. Simply plug in your phone by your bed and Sleep Cycle will do the rest - monitoring your bedtime movements to track your sleep patterns. In the morning, you’ll get a full report of how well you slept, with handy graphs illustrating how long you were asleep, how much deep sleep you got and what your sleep patterns are.

5. Sleep Taker App (visualhype.net)

Napping is a tricky thing to get right: Sleep too much and you’ll risk feeling even worse than you did before you nodded down. VisualHype’s Power Nap App comes set with a nap timer that only goes up to half an hour (experts say that any longer than 20 minutes will leave you feeling groggy and unbalanced), and includes built-in soothing audio tracks to help you nap more effec-

6. Auto Noise Lite (tmssoft.com)

If you live in a busy urban area, sound pollution can be a major contributor to the noise that you need to drift off peacefully is to cut out the back-

ground noise. Next time your neighbours are having a house party, try putting in your headphones and lis-

Up to a merit, cycling is also one of the most enjoyable forms of exercise you can find. “As with most things, long bike rides are best done with friends,” says Williams.

“So if you’re looking to build your physical fitness, why not take on a big cycling chal-

enge?”

6. Auto Noise Lite (tmssoft.com)

If you live in a busy urban area, sound pollution can be a major contributor to the noise that you need to drift off peacefully is to cut out the back-

ground noise. Next time your neighbours are having a house party, try putting in your headphones and lis-

ting to white noise, a type of deeply relaxing sound that is produced by combining audio of all different fre-

quencies together (babies love it!). This app has plenty of natural and man-made sounds to help you out to.

Best apps for helping you get a good night’s sleep
CAROLE KING’S BEAUTIFUL STORY

SUNDAY BUFFET
ADULTS £10.95  CHILDREN (UNDER 8) £5.95
2 FOR 1 SUNDAY - THURSDAY
(Intent in main course only!)
Surcharge for fish and king prawn (T&C’s apply)
T&C’s apply
DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE
2 FOR 1 2015

HELP YOURSELF TO AS MUCH AS YOU LIKE
Including Bank Holiday’s
OVER 20 ITEMS

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HELP YOURSELF TO AS MUCH AS YOU LIKE
Including Bank Holiday’s
OVER 20 ITEMS
Sheworkedhard and went out and got it, which makes her inspirational

She worked hard and went out and got it, which makes her inspirational.

To Advertise your Pub, Restaurant or Venue
please contact Sarah Childs on 01384 353258

Goin’ Wild for the Carole King story

ong before she was a chart-topping music legend, Carole King was an ordinary girl with an extraordinary talent. Beautiful, which features at Wolverhampton’s Grand Theatre from Tuesday to June 16, tells the inspiring true story of Carole’s remarkable rise to stardom.

It shows her journey from being part of a hit songwriting team with her husband Gerry Goffin, to her relationship with fellow writers and best friends Cynthia Weil and Barry Mann, to becoming one of the most successful solo acts in popular music history. Along the way she wrote the soundtrack to a generation, including one of the best-selling albums of all time, Tapestry, and countless classics such as (You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman, Take Good Care of My Baby, You’ve Got a Friend, So Far Away, It Might as Well Rain Until September, Up on the Roof, and The Locomotion.

Beautiful – The Carole King Musical will roll into Wolverhampton’s Grand Theatre this week and we caught up with leading lady Brontë Barbe to find out what it’s like to play the star.

What are you most enjoying about playing Carole King in the UK tour of Beautiful: The Carole King Musical?

The songs! The music is amazing; it’s just the best. I haven’t played a part like this in my career so far. I also love how everyone in the company on tour with us is so nice; it’s a big family feel, which is lovely.

Have you always wanted to be on stage and had the performing bug?

Yes absolutely I have. My mum’s always performed – she’s done a lot of amateur dramatics and my surname is a singer so it was always in the family. I started dancing when I was three in baby ballet, and I took dance lessons for years and years but I didn’t actually want to be a dancer. In fact I was always singing, and I think my mum told me that I would be in the park and singing The Little Mermaid to other kids on the swings! I also used to sing Titanic down the phone to my grandma and she used to cry, all that sort of thing! So yes, I’ve always wanted to perform really. I started doing drama at a young age and doing shows with my mum where I would play the child and things like that. There’s nothing else I’ve wanted to do really, I’ve been so firm and set on it. The first time I was on stage was when I played the littlest angel in the Nativity play at primary school, and I’ve loved it ever since.

Were you familiar with Carole King’s work prior to joining the show?

Yeah I was. I’ve had Tapestry for years actually. When I first got a record player I bought it because my Mum said, ‘you have to get this album it’s amazing’, but I didn’t realise until listening to it just how many songs that I already knew were actually written by Carole King. Then I saw the show in the West End and realised there are loads and loads of songs I was pleasantly surprised to know, but had no idea were written by her. Some of her songs have filtered into my head without me knowing through the TV or radio.

Was there something in particular that drew you to the role of Carole King, or do you identify with her at all?

Totally, she is so determined, particularly as a woman starting out in the time she did, working in the industry she did. She knew what she wanted, so worked hard and went out and got it, which makes her very inspirational. However, she is also a very relatable character I think.

What is life on the road like? Is there one thing you absolutely couldn’t be without?

My favourite thing in the world is Lush so every town or city we visit I find a Lush because it makes me feel very calm. Most of the time I try and tour with my little dog so that helps. Lots of little things like putting pictures up in my dressing room and having a certain type of tea before the show help me to feel calm and ready to perform. We aren’t in each venue for long but it’s nice to feel a little bit settled.

Do you have any particular rituals for pre or post-show?

I just drink tons and tons of water. I always have an interval orange as well like a football match, I always have one, as it’s so good for energy and no matter how I’m feeling I just feel great after an interval orange, it’s very helpful.

Do you have a dream role that you’d love to take on?

This is absolutely a dream role, being able to play Carole King every night and sing her songs. I would also quite like to be in a period drama. I love to play inspiring women and there aren’t that many fully female-led shows out there so playing Carole King is wonderful.

Carole King is an icon of the singer songwriter world and an idol to many. Do you have any idols that you look up to?

Oh yeah totally. I would probably say Julie Walters and Victoria Wood. My idols are lots of female comedy geniuses. However, playing Carole King every night is great, she’s definitely iconic!

The tour stops in Wolverhampton, does this venue have any significance for you?

Wolverhampton is great because I can stay with family which is always lovely.

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.
Offering a warm welcome

Managers Paul and Carol always ensure a warm welcome to customers both old and new at Blackheath’s Shoulder of Mutton pub.

For all the sports fans they boast three large TV screens featuring all sports on Sky, BT and all BOX OFFICE Events not to mention AT THE RACES.

For those who like ‘doing’ rather than ‘watching’, there is the availability of the pool table and dart board.

**Loyalty**

The pub itself boasts a wide range of ciders, lagers, wines and spirits including four ‘Real Ales’ which they rotate weekly. Regulars very often enjoy ales such as Bathams, AJ Ale, Oakham, JHB, Stanway To Heaven and MA Pardoes Entire, plus many more!

The pub also run a loyalty scheme which means customers can get 10p back on their card for every pound they spend.

A pub spokesman added: “With a juke box and free WiFi to compliment the regular entertainment every Friday, customers cannot ask for much more from a local pub!”

Lots of Exciting upcoming entertainment, look out for their adverts or check out their Facebook page.

Gary is ready to shine as he gets closer to the fans

It’s been 20 years since Gary Barlow last played Birmingham’s Symphony Hall. Now the Take That frontman is back with two shows, on Thursday and Friday, June 14 and June 15.

The last time Barlow played a string of venues this size, which included Wolverhampton Civic Hall, the demand was so high he could have sold some venues out six times over.

The Cheshire-born singer said: “I had such a lot of fun back in 2013 when I played those smaller venues because you’re so much closer to the fans. The audience always seem to love the intimacy of it all too.”

Barlow found worldwide fame as a member of Take That. Since forming in 1989 the group have won eight BRIT awards, sold more than 45 million records and over eight million concert tickets. He has also become a familiar face on TV via a stint as a judge of The X Factor and his own talent show Let It Shine.

He is one of Britain’s most successful songwriters, having written 14 Number One singles as well as being a six-time recipient of an Ivor Novello Award.

In recent years, Barlow has also turned his attention to the world of theatre, composing for the hugely successful production Finding Neverland, working alongside screenwriter Tim Firth to write the music and lyrics for musical The Girls and also working alongside his Take That band mates to produce The Band, featuring the music of Take That.

New opportunity knocks for Crush

CLIFF Richard’s hit 1963 film Summer Holiday has been turned into a feel-good musical.

It is coming on tour at Birmingham’s New Alexandra Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday, June 12 to 16 featuring Ray Quinn, as Don, the role originally played by Cliff in the film, who heads on a fun-packed trip in a London bus across Europe in search of a good time and a brilliant summer.

Along the way they pick up a girl singing group and a young American pop star who is on the run from her domineering mother.

The show features such vintage Cliff hits as In the Country, Summer Holiday, Bachelor Boy, Move It, Living Doll, The Young Ones and On the Beach.

Pianist turned actor Bobby Crush, pictured, the Opportunity Knocks winner recently seen in Last Laugh in Vegas, will co-star as Don’s long-suffering agent Jersey. Crush says folks are in for a treat.

“My friend Darren Day toured with it some years ago. This is a great show.”

Crush found fame after featuring as a teenaged pianist on ITV talent show Opportunity Knocks. “The young people that don’t remember, I tell them it was the forerunner to The X Factor. It had the same impact on a career that X Factor does and it was great for me. Opportunity Knocks got me a recording contract, a six-album deal with Philips records, plus an agent. It was a great start.

“We only had BBC 1, 2 and ITV. That was it. It wasn’t diluted like it is now with satellite stations. You could get 17 million watching a week, these days that’s unheard of. I went from £12 a week as an office boy to supporting Jack Jones at the London Palladium on £150 per week. In 1972, that was a lot of money. It really changed my life.”

Take a poet as the main attraction

Poet and Peaky Blinders actor Benjamin Zephaniah has hit the road for his first solo UK tour in eight years, including a home date at Birmingham Hippodrome Hall next Friday, June 15.

The Handsworth-born writer and broadcaster published his autobiography last month, entitled The Life And Rhymes Of Benjamin Zephaniah. “They say you’re supposed to mellow with age but I haven’t. If anything, I just seem to be getting more militant,” says Zephaniah, who is honorary patron of The Vegan Society.

Influential play is brought up to date

In a collaboration between Birmingham Repertory Theatre and Birmingham International Dance Festival 2018, 100 local performers will breathe new life into 19th century play Woyzeck, from June 15 to 23 at the Centenary Square theatre. Georg Büchner’s Woyzeck has been described as one of the most influential plays ever written. In this new production directors Roxana Silbert and Rosie Kay, and writer Leo Butler, create a Woyzeck for our time. Woyzeck is the story of a young soldier who has started to hear voices in his head. Roxana Silbert, artistic director at Birmingham Rep, said: “Woyzeck is a powerful story that has been sharply brought up-to-date. It’s about the impact of war on communities, the pressure on a young person trying to make ends meet and ultimately about how love can be devastatingly destroyed.”
A slimming expert says there’s no need for anyone in Halesowen to look so thirsty to lose weight, after new research found that filling their bodies with fluids, we can lose calories with larger amounts of foods.

The two groups were monitored over a time period of 14 weeks to explore the plan based around low energy dense foods reported increased feelings of control around their food choices and a greater confidence in weight – skipping meals, food replacement therapies and by placing a curfew on eating late at night.

For further information please contact michaela on: 07901583236 or press/eat-more-not-less/
which sees the country lunged

Poldark

and Hugh is determined to

consider having a child, and

murder, while Ross is helpless

6.30

Regional Programme.

6.30 BBC News.

8.00 Antiques Roadshow.

12.30

Regional Programme.

Edwardian society. (R)

11.50 Great Art.

12.30

Bargain Hunt. (R)

12.30

Ninja Warrior UK. (R)

12.30

Lifeline.

12.30

Buffy.

12.30

Ninja Turtles. (R)

12.30

Hotel Transylvania (2012)

1.35

Family Guy

12.30

Buffy

12.30

Hotel Transylvania (2012)

8.00pm). Kirsty Gallacher and

professional athletes to raise

money for children’s charity

The game is played at Manchester United’s Old Trafford Stadium, with England captain

Robbie Williams taking on a team led by Joel Dommett. Among the

cast are Judi Dench, Eddie Izzard and Sir David Attenborough.

11.35

Death Wish 2

12.10

Hulk (2003)

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Earth

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**FILM CHOICES**

**MONDAY**

**Cry for Justice, Channel 5, 3.15pm**

Couple Kate and Joe, who have longed to be parents together, are delighted when Danica, a child Kate gave up 17 years ago, comes to stay. Thriller, starring Cindy Busby, Jon Prescott and Sienna Pond. (2018)

**WEDNESDAY**

**Strangers in Amish Country, Channel 5, 3.15pm**

When her son is falsely accused of murder, Jackie Staples, Drew Seeley and Brian Ames. (2018)

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**GEORGE KEEGAN FOUNDS HIS GUN FUND ON THE FIREFLY LINE**

The critically acclaimed comedy drama is back for a second series – and like the first run, it’s following Charles Keegan through the events of the previous run. That’s when he on screen fiancée Elvis Harte (Luke Pasqualino) was killed in an explosion, leaving his character George Lane heartbroken.

Keegan says that George will continue to cope for her throughout the series: “She’s had six months of not having a future, she’s now throwing herself into work. She’s definitely not over Elvis at all and you’ll see throughout the series that the death has really affected her.”

It’s also been a tough time for the actress. She says: “It was really, really strange. Luke and I started on the series all the same time together and it was so odd when he left. It was a hole and I definitely missed him.”

“We literally started the next episode the day after Elvis died. Luke left on a Thursday and on a Friday we started to film episodes. It took a long time for me to adjust as all our storylines were always based around Elvis and the ‘will they, won’t they’ situation.”

At least the actress, who first found fame as feisty Tina on Coronation Street, can take some comfort in the fact that she wasn’t the only one affected by the storyline. Our Girl fans were also devastated by Elvis’s death. She says: “I was in Malaysia at the time and it was then when I cried in the UK. I looked at my phone and it had gone crazy. I remember that all the women’s hearts on Twitter were broken that night.”

However, in this second episode, Georgie may not get too much time to dwell on Elvis, as she meets undercover Special Forces operative, Bonny (Oliver Farn) – and he doesn’t seem too impressed.

Keegan says: “They get off to a rocky start as George sees him in Nigeria where he shows a child out of his way. But obviously good looks two shows George won’t stand for that and ends up confronting him.”

She adds: “You soon see that he is the Head of Special Forces and has taken over Elvis’ role but he is totally different. He’s very angry at the time, very old school and isn’t emotionally led, he also hasn’t got a woman in his life.”

However, you see him and 2 Section as a ‘new mix which is really exciting.”

And there’s even more drama, as 2 Section try to trade the detained soldier of a rebel leader for an imprisoned Nigerian military medic, unaware their captors are setting a trap. It leads to a tense stand-off, but will everyone make it out alive this time, or is Keegan going to have to deal with more early morning messages from fans?

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**PICK OF THE WEEK**

Michelle Keegan stars in Our Girl, Tuesday, BBC1, 9pm

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**BEST OF THE REST**

**THURSDAY**

**ITV World Cup 2018**

ITV, 10.45pm

Gary Lineker is joined by Alan Shearer and Jermaine Jenas to look ahead to the tournament in Russia, assessing the chances of the leading contenders in the 21st staging of the finals. The chances of England, the only home nation to qualify this time around, are assessed, while the trio offer their thoughts on which nations have the greatest chance of glory, and which players are likely to shine. Germany were victorious four years ago and are among the leading contenders.

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**FRIDAY**

**The Crystal Maze: Celebrity Special**

Channel 4, 4.9pm

Richard Ayodele presides as Dennis Wise, Roman Kemp, Birley Fielday, Biz and Kate Price compete around the four zones, tackling various challenges to win crystals.

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**Dear Reader**

The Martin Lewis Money Show Live, Tuesday, 8pm

Michelle Keegan finds herself in the firing line once again.

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

Cryptic Clues:

Across
6. Race movement begins under his orders (7)
7. Each one always yawns initially (5)
9. The last of the screen dramas (3)
10. Fruit used in mimicking on stage (9)
12. Shows off mannequin - racing type, perhaps (6,6)
15. Like a heavenly show? (4-7)
17. Caviar about being unpunctual, but waver (9)
19. Be prostrate as story? (5)
21. Started, for example, in prohibition (6)
22. Obligatory process in book production (7)

Down
1. Candidates do so before they can sit (5)
2. Vessel seen in colour, no doubt (3)
3. Fatman part of the castle (4)
4. Subdue because of strength? (9)
5. He can’t do without glasses (7)
6. Learner relieved - it’s on his (6)
11. Airs appeal in estimation of value (9)
13. Impassiveness (9)
14. Lawfully begins under his orders (7)
15. Despondent (11)
16. Consequent (9)
17. Innumerable (9)
18. Stumble on prohibiting (5)
19. They have their value (9)
20. Strange ring worn by theologian (3)
21. Chief (7)

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BOOK your tickets, slap on the sunblock and get ready to eat. If you love strolling around outside, listening to live music while tucking into artisan pizzas and scoffing huge burgers with sauce that drips down your arms, you’ll certainly want to attend a few of these food festivals over the coming months.

LATITUDE, Henham Park, Suffolk, July 12-15 (latitudenattenstravel.com)
Latitudine is scrapping fast food vans in favour of proper street food, with their Street Feast this year. Tuck into precos (Portuguese steak sandwiches) from Growlers, Argentine meats from Up In My Grill and beef tenderloin from Salt Shed. Be sure to grab a seat at the live recording of BBC Radio 4's The Kitchen Cabinet with restaurant critic and MasterChef judge, Jay Rayner, too.

JIMMY’S FESTIVAL, Ipworth, July 21-22 (jimmyfestivals.co.uk) Whether you’re entering the festival’s much-hyped sausage eating competition or not (go on, you know you want to), you can learn butchery with Jimmy Doherty’s head butcher Jonny Farrell, and catch cookery demos from vegan YouTube aficionado BOSH! and grill expert, DJ BBQ.

WILDERNESS, Combury Park, Oxfordshire, August 2-5 (wildernessfestival.com)
It’s all about banqueting in style at Wilderness Festival – especially as Yotam Ottolenghi will be in the kitchen. If you can’t nab a much-coveted seat though, there’s endless feasting opportunities, whether you’re a carnivore (Berber & Q, Patty & Bun) or animal free (try a huge Homeslice pizza or Petersham Nurseries’ vegetarian menu).

PUB IN THE PARK, Tunbridge Wells (June 6-8), Knutsford (September 7-8). (pubintheparkuk.com)
Chef Tom Kerridge’s festival celebrating British pubs and British grub is going on tour this year. As well as live sets from Will Young and Mel C, you can check out ‘gastro pub pop-up’ versions of Tom’s Michelin-starred restaurants, and see chefs James Martin, Jason Atherton (amongst others) and Atul Kochhar showcasing their trade.

THE BIG FEASTIVAL, The Cotswolds, August 24-26 (thebigfeastival.com)
Roll up to Blur bassist Alex James’ farm for Craig David, James Arthur and Basement Jaxx, as well as a serious roster of chef talent. Raymond Blanc, Marco Pierre White, Mark Hix and Gizzi Erskine will all be sharing their knowledge; there’s hands-on kitchen fun for the kids, and (of course) a cheese bar – Alex is obsessed with his cheese.

The festival is perfect for families with plenty of kid-friendly entertainment and activities such as Peppa Pig and her brother George, and CBeebies stars Justin Fletcher and Andy Day.

RIVER COTTAGE FESTIVAL, Axminster, August 25-26 (rivercottage.net)
Not yet got to grips with pickling? You’ll want to catch the fermentation masterclass at this year’s River Cottage Festival, if you can manage to drag yourself away from the fire pit, where goat meat pioneer James Whetlor will be hosting cook outs.

ABERGAVENNY FOOD FESTIVAL, Wales, September 15-16 (abergavennymyfoodfestival.com)
Whip your taste buds into shape with Abergavenny’s expert tasting sessions, take a foraging tour (then use what you’ve collected) and spot chefs including Anna Jones, and Stephen Harris from the Sportsman.

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Lovely six-bedroomed detached in a popular spot is new to the property market

An open day on a brand new bungalow in Lower Gornal is taking place this Saturday from 11am to 3pm. People are invited to just simply turn up to the event at 21a Vale Street, Upper Gornal, Dudley. The property is being marketed by Skitts estate agents, having an asking price of £185,000. This new build detached bungalow is extremely stylish throughout ready and waiting to move into.

UPPER GORNAL
£185,000

This impressive modern residence has been built to a particularly high standard and forms part of a three-stage development, with two further dwellings to soon be completed. Interior viewpoints are highly recommended to fully appreciate this outstanding bungalow.

With gas central heating and double glazing, it has an entrance hall, a living room with patio doors leading out, stylish kitchen area off fully fitted with integrated appliances, a fashionable shower room with good size shower cubicle, off road parking with potential garage space and a pleasant rear garden with decking area and lawn area.

Contact Skitts estate agents on 01902 686868.

The Heathlands, ROWLEY REGIS £595 pcm

An extended 3/4 bedroom detached property, being located in a quiet cul-de-sac, is this very well presented 3 bedroom house with en-suite, a further well appointed bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, allocated parking.

Close to Rowley Regis train station & all bus routes. Featuring an open plan lounge/fitted kitchen with a bay window, bathroom with shower, downstairs WC, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen with a range, gas central heating, double glazing, allocated parking.

Clement Road, HALESOWEN £595 pcm

A well presented 1st floor apartment within this very high standard Building Centres briefly comprising of: 2 double bedrooms, master bedroom with en-suite, open plan lounge/kitchen, house bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, allocated parking.

Hollins Avenue, HALESOWEN £250 pcm

An attractive 1st floor apartment close to Halesowen Town Centre is this self-contained studio flat with separate kitchen, lounge and bedroom.

Stour Court, HALESOWEN £350 pcm

An attractively presented 1st floor apartment close to Halesowen Town Centre is this self-contained studio flat with separate kitchen, lounge and bedroom. EPC: C

Modern ground floor flat in Cowley Road in Cradley Heath with rear garden and patio area.

Wilson Court, WORCESTER £325 pcm

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751 Wordsley Court, WORDSLEY £525 pcm

A well presented 1st floor apartment close to Cradley Heath train station for Cradley Heath shops, bus and train links. Featuring 2 double bedrooms, large lounge, kitchen, 2 bathrooms, gas central heating, double glazing, allocated parking.

Cox Lane, COWLEY HEATH £500 pcm

An attractively presented flat in Cowley Heath with rear garden and balcony area.

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NEW

Comonbe Road, ROWLEY REGIS £595 pcm

This new build detached bungalow in Lower Gornal is extremely stylish throughout ready and waiting to move into.

In a sought-after residential location, it is for sale through Andrew Cole Estate Agents at £185,000. It lies in a corner position and has an imposing frontage and benefits from having a large block paved driveway.

KINGSWINFORD
£595,000

This fine home has a versatile layout over three floors and is ideal for a large family or cross generational living.

It is further enhanced by a detached purpose-built annexe at the rear.

The rear garden is a courtyard style for easy outdoor entertaining with a beautiful garden room.

The high standard of the internal fixtures throughout includes a high specification dining kitchen, a fitted cloakroom/WC, two en-suite’s and house bathroom.

There is an excellent lounge, play room and study. A full and early inspection is recommended.

Contact Andrew Cole Estate Agents on 01384 288188.
The design has been perked up with more colour options

By Carmel Stewart

Ford’s EcoSport compact sports utility vehicle didn’t get the rave reviews hoped for when it was first launched in 2014. Critics didn’t like the interior materials, the design, the ride, the handling. In fact, bar the engines, there was very little they did like.

Roll up the extensively revamped mid-life version which even comes complete with improved ride, handling and looks which have just about managed to hold on to the distinctive features, sparing it from being subsumed by the one-look-fits-all-SUV school of design. There is also the addition of 4WD version which should boost its appeal.

The line-up still includes Ford’s excellent multi-award winning 1.0litre EcoBoost engine strutting its amazing stuff across the Ford range. With 100ps at its disposal it’ll travel from a standing start to 62mph in 12.7 seconds and on to a top speed of 111mph. Clearly not a world beater but more than enough for a practical family vehicle and, with an average 54.3mpg, it’s not too hard on the wallet. A 100ps and 140ps unit are also available.

Ford’s 1.5litre 105ps diesel engine combined with front-wheel drive is on the option list along with an all-new six-speed manual gearbox. Joining the list is an all-new 1.5litre 125ps diesel EcoBlue engine which now adds Intelligent All Wheel Drive technology to the mix so no complaints there.

The design has been perked up with more colour options, a redesigned front end, new headlight and fog light housings, LED daytime running lights, a new-look exterior colours to choose from.

There’s a redesigned front end. There are also 12 exterior colours to choose from. Thankfully, the designers have not relinquished the quirky side-hinged rear door – albeit opening the wrong way for a right-hand drive vehicle. Many do not like it but, to me, it adds character which can be enhanced by selecting the new ST-Line trim and going for a contrasting roof colour.

Inside, the EcoSport is a comfortable place to be with soft touch surfaces, plenty of storage spaces, ergonomically designed seats, a high driving position, a user-friendly eight-inch touch screen and mercilessly uncomplicated dash. Ford has added seven choices of ambient lighting so ‘occupants can match the ambience to their mood’. Not sure how that will pan out on the M1 on a Friday evening, but nice try.

One slightly old-fashioned feature to smooth the furrowed brow - at least of anyone over 50 - is the inclusion of a CD player – a delight to those for whom streaming is a technological mystery. The height adjustable boot space is 334 litres, more than enough for a family shop or carefully selected holiday luggage.

The addition of an ST-Line trim, which includes SYNC 3, adding all the essential Apple CarPlay and Android Auto connectivity gizmos, cruise control with adjustable speed limiter and a rear-view camera to save the unwary from those sneaky low walls and strategically placed boulders, is another plus for the new EcoSport.

Visual exterior ST-Line cues include unique bumpers, side skirts, black roof rails, 17-inch alloys, ST-Line badging, contrasting roof and colour co-ordinated door mirror housings. Inside, there is a leather-trimmed flat-bottomed steering wheel plus partial leather seats, flat-bottomed steering wheel plus partial leather seats, stainless-steel sports pedals. Prices start at £17,295 for the Zetec trim; £19,295 for the Titanium trim; and £20,095 for the ST-Line trim. On the road, the revised EcoSport is comfortable and composed thanks to the optimised suspension and adjusted steering parameters. The ST-Line adds sports suspension which firms up the ride but not uncomfortably so. Ford’s incredible 1.0litre EcoBoost engine eagersly responds to all demands made on it, well-matched as it is to the six-speed manual gearbox.

An automatic transmission is also available. So, all in all, nothing to complain about and plenty to enjoy.
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SPEEDWAY at Monmore Green has revved past the 90-year mark. The stadium first became home to speedway in May 1928 but got off to a spluttering start when one bike failed to start.

A crowd flocked to see the first big clash between Englishman Fred Creek and American Lloyd ‘Sprouts’ Elder but the engine on Elder’s machine refused to fire.

However, not one to let the crowd down, Elder borrowed Creek’s bike to put in some spectacular demonstration laps.

Wolverhampton got a taste for the roar of the engines and since then riders have clocked up countless laps of the Monmore track. And 90 years later fans are still coming in their thousands.

The first time a Wolverhampton team actually raced around the track was in July 1929 against Warrington and Wolverhampton-born Tommy Deadman, who was employed by the Sunbeam Factory and was the biggest star at the time.

Merged
Then, after two mediocre seasons and poor crowds, they closed for 20 years.

It was revived again in 1961 but the Wasps, as they were then known, only won a miserable five meetings out of their 36 league encounters and finished at the bottom of the table.

Down the road, Cradley Heathens lost £6,000 during the 1953 season and were at risk of folding but instead merged with the Wasps. The team was led by Brian Shepherd before he retired and then Harry Bastable but he switched to Birmingham so he could ride at a higher level.

Racing resumed at the stadium in 1954. There was another seven years of silence at Monmore until speedway was relaunched in 1961 with the new Wolves team in the second tier of British speedway. The team were Provincial League winners in 1963.

But that same year devastation hit when the stands caught fire, resulting in the track’s closure and major renovation as a new stand was built.

In 1965, the Provincial League and the National League merged, putting Wolves into top-tier racing for the first time – and they have remained there ever since except for three years in the early 1980s.

Injuries
Olsen made 179 appearances and scored a total of 2,248 points. In 1986, Wolves signed American Ernolmenda who won 10 of his 15 meetings but the team did not finish any higher than seventh in the league during his time at the club.

The first time a Wolves team actually raced around the track was in July 1929 against Warrington and Wolverhampton-born Tommy Deadman, who was employed by the Sunbeam Factory and was the biggest star at the time.

In the same year, the club raced against Leicester and won the Midland Cup final.

The organisation is moving up to 30 of its staff from Loughborough Technology Centre to Kudhail House.

There are also plans for judo to be held at the centre for the Commonwealth Games. It could see a new arena built for the sport.

Report by Charlotte Callear

In 1965, the Provincial League and the National League merged, putting Wolves into top-tier racing for the first time.

THE British Judo Association is moving its headquarters to the Black Country for the first time – and they have remained there ever since except for three years in the early 1980s.

Many legends have raced around the track, from Ole Olsen to ‘Sprouts’ Lloyd Elder.

Olsen arrived at Monmore Green at the start of 1970 and won the World Championship final in 1971 and 1975 but the team did not finish any higher than seventh in the league during his time at the club.

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Tragedy has also struck the venue with the deaths of riders such as Gary Peterson during the 1975 Midland Cup final and severe injury suffered by Swedish rider Fredrik Lindgren who suffered head, neck and back injuries in August, 2011.

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In 2001, they were sponsored for the first time by Parry’s International who back them to this day.

The team have enjoyed their most successful period over recent years, becoming Elite League champions in 2002, 2009 and 2016.

DOORS open at 6pm, with the first bell at 7. Tickets are £40, or £45 on the door. VIP ringside passes are £60.

Williams tops bill at new fight night venue

WOLVERHAMPTON’S Kyle Williams tops the bill on BCB Promotions’ ‘Emerging Stars’ boxing show this weekend. He will fight defending champion Thomas Enomba over 10 rounds for the English bantamweight title.

Saturday’s show will go ahead at Willows Banqueting Suite, Bath Street, Willenhall, after the original venue, Wolverhampton’s Starworks Warehouse, was hit by a fire.

The show had then been moved to Wolverhampton University but has been moved to Willenhall and will now go ahead as planned.

The packed undercard features Antony Woolery, Lauren Johnson, Levi Ferguson, Sean Davis, Craig Morris, Damian Kiwic, Connor Parker, and Constant Lee.

Doors open at 6pm, with the first bell at 7. Tickets are £40, or £45 on the door. VIP ringside passes are £60.

To buy, contact any of the participating the boxers via Facebook or visit boxingtickets.com.
Tributes paid to DK rugby stalwart

GRAHAM Robbins, centre with former internationals Jonathan Davies, and Phil Vickery

Graham Robbins, centre with former internationals Jonathan Davies, and Phil Vickery

TRIBUTES have been paid to a rugby stalwart who spent four decades at Dudley Kingswinford. Graham Robbins spent more than 40 years involved with DK in various roles as a player, chairman and then president. The proud Welshman, described as ‘the life and soul’ of the club, passed away on May 29 following an illness.

Rugby secretary Pete Edmonds said grandfathers-of-five Mr Robbins would be greatly missed by all involved with the club. Mr Edmonds said: “Graham was the life and soul of the club – a massive part of it. He was originally a player, served as chairman and moved to be president. He will be very sadly missed and was one of those people who was the face of DK when you went down to the club.” Mr Robbins, who lived in Kingswinford, leaves behind his wife Joan, children Darren and Nicola and grandchildren Sophie, Tom, Jack, Harvey, and Zach.

He worked in the steel industry, moving from his native Wales to South Africa before settling in the Black Country in the early 1970s.

A club statement said: “Graham was one of those guys that you immediately associated with DK. His presence will be missed at first team games, both by the DK stalwarts and the committee men from all the clubs we currently play.”

Graham’s memory will burn bright at Heathbrooks.”

Tributes paid to DK rugby stalwart

Final jigsaw piece sought by skipper

JAMIE Harris (69) and Masnurrah Zaazad (65) not out saw Halesowen to 203-7 at Lennington but William Masinghe (78), Waqar Ahmed (69) and Salimah Hameed (48) not out put Lennington into a strong position as they achieved a four wicket win with nearly four overs remaining. Eddie Rhodes took 3-49.

Captain Alexei Kervenev said: “We were probably 20-30 runs light on that but we’ve played decent cricket. Our bowlers worked really hard to get us in with a shout. We will be looking at our batting line up this week to see where we add with it as we need shure up a few holes. But we need to be more consistent.”

“We are still playing well for most of the game but we just need to get that final piece of the jigsaw right.”

The 2nd and 3rd XI stormed to comprehensive wins against West Bromwich Dartmouth and Hallow Tavereeners respectively. For the Seconds, Mohammed Shauib with 35no backed up by Richard Cox (35no) to Reyaan Ahmed’s 4-23 and Siddesh Chavan’s three for a third straight fixture, despite riding the chequered flag in heat seven. Even that was down to the line.

The Firsts play Shifnal on Saturday at 1pm with former international Graham Robbins, centre with former internationals Jonathan Davies, and Phil Vickery.

CRADLEY roamed to the club’s biggest win in almost four years with a 68-22 demolition of Buxton on Monday night.

The Motor Quad Heathens were always major favourites with the visitors severely depleted through injury.

And they dominated from start to finish to return to the top of their National Trophy group.

Heathens got their night off to the perfect start, opening with four, 5-1 maximums. In fact, they only failed to claim a race winner in one single heat, when Buxton skipper Tom Woolley took the chequered flag in heat seven.

Even that was pushed hard at Talented ton Drew Kemp choused down to the line.

Punished

Kyle Bickley started to a 15-point handicap after breaking the tapes in the initial staging, but soon worked his way into second place before pushing Woolley all the way.

Kyle Bickley steered to a 15-point maximum – his second unbeaten meeting in succession, skipper Adam Rowan led by example with a pair maximum of his own and Alfie Howlett hit double figures for a third straight fixture, despite riding round for third in heat 13 with a slow puncture.

Chris Widman was a part of three maximums and Jason Edwards had a solid night in his first meeting in the main body of the side.

Heathens now lead the way on 14 points.

Home and away meetings against rivals Birmingham are to come, but first they face a pivotal trip to Leicester to face Coventry on Sunday.

CRADLEY riders Kyle Bickley and Mat Davis missed out on the front row as the restarted race was completed without too many issues, which then entranced the监察 and and then avoided crashing again before the red flag came out.

Kyle Bickley spoke of his delight after recording another faultless performance in the Heathens’ huge win against Buxton on Monday night.

The teenager powered to a second consecutive 15-point maximum in a dominant 68-22 win for his side, leaving Bickley unbeaten in both his meetings against the Hitmen.

“Right from my first race everything just clicked,” he said. “I didn’t make any mistakes and I was really pleased with how I rode.” The win was the Heathens’ biggest win in almost four years, leaving confidence sky-high in the Cradley camp.

And it means the team return to the top of their National Trophy group, ahead of travelling to Coventry this weekend.