A CAMPAIGN has been launched to protect the Maypole pub in Halesowen. Customers fear its future could be in doubt after it was bought by New River Retail, which has recently purchased other pubs in the region.

In some cases it has applied to build a convenience store on part of the pub car park.

Supporters of the pub in Balsamoid Road hope to follow in the footsteps of campaigners who successfully secured ‘asset of community value’ status for the Baden Cross in Cradley Heath, giving it greater protection from developers, after it was proposed to have a neighbouring store.

A petition has been launched by the newly-formed Friends of the Maypole group. But New River Retail said no firm decisions had been made.

Chairman of Friends of the Maypole Geoff Dixon said: “We are aiming for 200 signatures, petitions will be up at the pub.

A spokesman for New River Retail, who acquired the Maypole as part of a portfolio of 202 pubs from Marston’s in 2013 said: “We are currently reviewing options for the site.”

Report by Janeet Lee

VETERANS are denied by France

A WOMAN has launched a campaign for Normandy veterans to receive their medals as soon as possible. Yvonne Russon, aged 50, fears her father-in-law Geoffrey Russon will not live to see his medal.

Black Country war veteran Geoffrey, who was 92 on Tuesday, says he feels ‘very despondent’.

The French government announced last summer that it would recognise all surviving D-Day veterans with the country’s highest honour, the Legion D’Honneur.

Geoffrey, who lives in Cradley Heath, applied for his medal shortly after the announcement was made in 2014. But his daughter-in-law said veterans have been told they will have to wait until next year. “Good job he and others like him didn’t ask the French to wait another year before they landed on the beaches at Normandy,” said Yvonne, who lives in Stafford.

“Not many D-Day Veterans alive. He is my hero.

“Has never asked for anything. He has worked all his life and is a very proud man.

“The wait for recognition is not acceptable.”

She is incensed that at a time when there is so much media coverage of the D-Day anniversary veterans are dying before they receive the medal that honours their bravery in France.

Geoffrey, who belongs to the Birmingham branch of the Normandy Veterans, said: ”Membership of our branch was in excess of 100. Now I am one of six veterans.”

Housebound

Geoffrey, who is housebound and was unable to make the trip to Normandy for recent commemorations, watched the events on TV.

“The wait for recognition is not acceptable.”

He said: “Some will not have this medal. It’s wrong. They were quick enough to get us over there.

“Geoffrey, who was a driver in the Royal Army Service Corps, believes the application, which also came from veterans across the world, including America and Canada.

Yvonne has emailed the French Embassy and other organisations which also think they will be able to help speed up the process.

She said: “I have no idea why it’s taking so long.

“Some will not have this medal. It’s wrong. They were quick enough to get us over there.

“The council is very proud of the work we have undertaken to improve the living standards of people across the borough in recent years, despite the problems we face in a difficult economic situation,” he said.

Dozens of new council homes across Sandwell are being renovated as part of a £70m project.

The work has been carried out at Homer Hill Park to improve access for its many visitors. The five pathways have been made in and around the perimeter of the park and now join up with the existing network of walking routes.

Some of the cash to fund the project came from the sale of the former crematorium lodge in Chase Road, Lower Gornal.

Diana Woodhouse, holding her father’s para motorpe’s beret, at the crematorium rose garden site where his ashes were placed.

Memorials on move

A WOMAN has criticised a decision to remove rose beds where she agreed her father’s ashes from a crematorium in the Black Country.

Sandwell Council is phasing out the memorials from Rowley Regis Crematorium as part of plans to overhaul the site but Diana Woodhouse is furious over the decision.

She says the ashes of her father, James Workman, who fought in the Second World War, cannot be moved as they were sprinkled directly into the soil beneath the rose beds 15 years ago.

Mr Workman lived in Tividale and died in 2005 at the age of 80. His 56-year-old daughter, of Shinwell Crescent, Tividale, said if she had known there was a possibility the bushes would be moved, she would not have agreed for her father’s ashes to be placed there.

Mrs Woodhouse said: “It is absolutely ridiculous. My dad was a paratrooper and fought for this country. He has been there for 10 years, his ashes are in the soil.”

The bushes are due to be removed once family leases on them have expired. Mrs Woodhouse’s lease is up at the end of this month. Families affected will be offered plaques in a new remembrance garden.

Sandwell Council leader Darren Cooper said: “I assure everyone that we will be providing alternative memorial options. We know how important memorials are for families.”

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POLICE

Gunshots are fired at house from car

POLICE have launched an investigation after gunshots were fired at a house from a car in Oldbury.

Wallace Rd was sealed off on Tuesday morning as forensic experts searched the area. Neighbours heard a loud bang at around 11.30pm on Monday. A grey Vauxhall Astra was seen speeding away from the site.

West Midlands Police spokeswoman Sarah Buxton said: “Police were called to Wallace Road in Oldbury following a report a shot was fired at a house.”

Contact police on 101.

IMPROVEMENTS

Work on new park paths completed

A £70,000 project to create a series of new footpaths through a Cradley park has been completed.

The work has been carried out at Homer Hill Park to improve access for its many visitors. The five pathways have been made in and around the perimeter of the park and now join up with the existing network of walking routes.

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CANAL

Swing bridge bid to link heritage sites

A PLAN for a swing bridge over a canal to link two of Dudley’s tourist attractions as part of a £3 million development has been lodged with Dudley Council.

Dudley Canal Trust has submitted plans for the bridge by its Todds End entrance. It would enable visitors from the Black Country’s industrial past with emphasis on its canal heritage.

INSIDE

Lenny looking back to 1970s

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Snooper club gutted in arson attack

Remains of the snooker club, Halesowen, is hoping to raise a quarter of a phone to use in the event of an emergency.

The aim is just to be in one piece after the roads are still slushy and the club will be on the Atlantic coast. It will be a well deserved rest.

Shakespeare on at Manor house

FANS of the Bard can see two Shakespeare plays at Sandwell's historic Manor House Museum this summer. One of them is 'Othello', which opened at the weekend, and the other is 'Hamlet', which opens next week.

Theatrical company Festival Players will present Shakespeare's comedy 'As You Like It' on Saturday and return on August 8 with an adaptation of Henry V. Both events will be held at the Manor House Museum, Hall Green.

Visitors to the Manor House Museum hosts the summer open-air productions.

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Visitors to the Manor House Museum hosts the summer open-air productions.

Boisterous games mean more patrols

YOUTHFUL boxes have been causing a nuisance by playing football in the street and running over gardens, according to residents in a Halesowen road.

Police say they will be increasing patrols in the area, where the problems we face today are coming from.

Town facing protest as traders told to stay open

PROTESTERS planning to march in Dudley against a new mosque have been urged to respect residents’ rights to live in harmony.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson said: “Dudley is a diverse borough, in which people from different backgrounds and cultures get on and work together.

In our region we respect the values of each other and the right that we all have to worship freely in whichever way we choose.

The right to peacefully protest will be protected but we expect everybody who visits the area to respect local people and their right live in harmony.”

His comments come as a group calling itself ‘All Football Fans/Firms Against Islamophobia (AFFFA)’ announced plans to march in the town on June 13.

It will be held after the protest is due to be held in Dudley after a number of Saturday.

Shakespeare on at Manor house

FANS of the Bard can see two Shakespeare plays at Sandwell’s historic Manor House Museum this summer.

The theatre company Festival Players will present ‘As You Like It’ on Saturday and return on August 9 with an adaptation of Henry V. Both events will be held at the Manor House Museum, Hall Green.

Visitors to the Manor House Museum hosts the summer open-air productions.

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Former chapel could sell for £100k

A CHAPEL which closed last year after more than six decades of service has been put up for sale. Bidders are being sought to take over the Cradley Forge Methodist Chapel in Quarry Bank, which has an asking price of £100,000.

The building in Hammer Bank opened in 1924 but closed at Easter last year.

Property firm Rightmove said the building, which is listed as a heritage asset, is in need of a major refurbishment.

The future of the site is uncertain, with Rightmove saying the building is suitable for a number of uses but is likely to be converted rather than demolished.

Quarry Bank’s Councillor David Sparks said it was important the new buyers don’t make too many changes to the building.

He said: “This chapel is part of the rich tapestry that makes up the community of the Black Country and I hope that whoever buys it is able to maintain that heritage.

‘There have been lots of examples elsewhere in the country where chapels have been converted into commercial and community sites that have fitted in with their localities.

“We have to be careful in the Dudley borough and the Black Country that we don’t lose our heritage. This chapel is part of the fabric of the community.”

The chapel, which includes a main hall, entrance hall, hall room, kitchen and lobby, played an important role in the community prior to its sudden closure last year, with choirs singing and other events regularly staged at the building.

Jobs are axed at youth centres to save money

MORE than 30 jobs have been axed as part of a shake-up of council youth centres across Dudley.

Dudley Council has cut £200,000 from the youth service budget as part of wider plans for £27 million of savings.

Voluntary groups will be drafted in to help run some of the activities at the borough’s seven youth centres.

The council has confirmed 27 youth workers had left through voluntary redundancy and six people were being redeployed to other roles within the authority. The hours covered by the staff equate to six full-time equivalent roles, the council said.

It runs centres at Halesowen, Lye, Wombourne, Gospel, Dudley, Russells Hall and Cooseley and activities for young people aged up to 25.

Although they have pledged not to close any centres at this stage, bosses want to reduce the amount of activity sessions run by the council and amount them to voluntary and community groups.

But they have pledged that there would be no reduction in the amount of activities and services provided.

The youth service runs holiday clubs, sports and information advice and guidance.

Youth workers also help people to access schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Charity role for the new mayor

THE new Mayor of Dudley has pledged to support five charities.

Councillor Steve Walmsley was sworn into the role in front of colleagues and invited guests on Thursday.

The former deputy mayor, 50, who lives in Kingswinford, has been a councillor for 11 years in total.

He picked five organisations to help — The Hope Centre, in Halesowen, The What Centre, in Stourbridge, Merry Masquerade, in Brierley Hill, The Georgia Unit at Dudley’s Russells Hall Hospital; and the West Midlands branch of Lupus UK, based in Cooseley.

Councillor Walmsley said: “It is a huge honour and a privilege to be the Mayor of Dudley. I hope you are all really looking forward to being ambassadors for the borough. Charity has always been something very close to my heart and I’m really excited about the opportunity the mayoral role gives to raise money for worthwhile causes.”

His wife, Jayne, was named mayoress, while Councillor Mohammed Hanif was sworn in as Deputy Mayor of Dudley.

Health service plans revealed

PATIENTS can hear about future plans for NHS services at a public forum on Thursday, June 18.

Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is holding a two-hour meeting at Brierley Hill Civic Hall from 2.30pm.

Dr Steve Mann, clinical executive at Dudley CCG, said: “GP’s in Dudley now know that the best support for emotional health and happiness needs to be in the right place at the right time and from the right person.”

To book a place at the meeting call Clare Hamilton on (01384) 321764.

Speeding crackdown

PEOPLE have been complaining about out-of-control motorists speeding along a road in Halesowen and now police can a crackdown on speeders. Officers will be conducting checks along Rossmore Road, off Hagley Road, in Hayley Green, during the coming weeks.

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Anger over noise led to man’s brain injuries

A THUG who left a young man with life-changing brain injuries after a row over early morning noise in a Halesowen street has been locked up for 18 months.

Trouble flared as Luke Britain and friends gathered outside one of their homes in Bloomfield Street West, Halesowen, at 5.30am after an evening out.

The noise disturbed a neighbour and her partner Jack Sutton, who both shouted at the group to keep quiet.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard that the revisors had apologised in an attempt to calm the situation and went inside.

But furious 26-year-old unemployed roofer Sutton was waiting when Mr Britain left the property soon afterwards, explained Mr David Swinmerton, prosecuting.

Punched

He blocked Mr Britain’s path and punched the victim twice in the face, knocking him to the ground.

The prosecutor continued: “There was an audible thud as his head hit the pavement.”

Sutton was dragged away by his partner. But Mr Britain had to receive emergency surgery at hospital after suffering a fractured skull and bleeding to both sides of the brain.

The August 15 attack has left him with restricted movement and ability to feel pain, a staggering impairment and unsteadiness on his feet, the court was told.

Miss Amrish Paratham, defending, said Sutton’s family had paid £20,000 for private treatment to help him end drug and alcohol abuse that had created mental problems.

He was now providing negative results in tests for substance abuse said the lawyer, adding: “He is making a real effort to change.”

Sutton from Niveters Close, Rowley Regis, admitted wounding and was sent to prison.

Judge Helen Hughes told Sutton: “A young man having an enjoyable night out with friends ended up in a neurological unit with life-changing injuries as a result of this unprovoked attack.

“Understand you were upset by people making a noise outside the property in which you were living at the time, but you could not control yourself. I would be failing in my public duty if I did not send you to immediate imprisonment.”

Alice’s adventures on the canal

DUDLEY Canal Tunnel are holding an Alice in Wonderland event during half-term.

There are craft activities on the towpath and an underground trail as part of the Wonderland theme, which continues today (Thursday) and tomorrow.

The caverns will be decorated with characters and scenery from Lewis Carroll’s famous books of Alice’s adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass.

The craft activities, including making tea-cup headwear and bread-and-butterflies, are 50p each and will run from 12pm to 2pm.

Hatter

The Mad Hatter will be in residence at luncheon times each day entertaining visitors with nonsense poems.

Heritage activity officer at Dudley Canal Trust Trip said: “We’re really looking forward to the event. Head into our tunnels is a bit like going down your very own rabbit hole.

“With craft activities and live character appearances, there is something for every Alice fan to enjoy.

Craft activity places can be booked by calling 0121 557 6265.

Don’t miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Around 100 workers at Sandwell Council face being moved to alternative roles during the next 12 months, as part of the latest round of budget cuts.

There will be no redundancies following a pledge made by bosses. Staff will instead receive training before being redeployed to fill existing vacancies.

Hundreds of workers have been laid off by the council in recent years amid massive cuts in funding from Government. But, in April, council leaders announced a ‘jobs promise’ and current staff were assured their jobs were safe, despite needing to make savings of £38 million by 2018.

Council leader Darren Cooper this week confirmed around 100 staff were expected to be redeployed by March 2018.

By moving workers to other roles, the authority can save cash by not paying out redundancy money.

Bosses also hope the ‘jobs promise’ will help to improve morale among workers.

Councillor Cooper said: “We have a ‘jobs promise’ which places means employes will be redeployed and retrained into new roles if their job is no longer required. At the moment we anticipate having to redeploy around 150 employees in 2015/16 as a result of re-deployment and redundany.

Around 300 workers were made redundant in 2014/15.

Pledge to move 100 staff to new roles

The council said it was ‘pulling no punches’ as they deal with the financial challenges faced by councils across the country and were being forced to make reductions to services as a result of the financial climate.

The latest round of cuts has been necessitated by a loss of £38m over 26 months generated at 4.5%.

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**Nordic walk activity at the Leasowes**

PEOPLE can try their hand at Nordic walking for beginners at The Leasowes in Halesowen.

Part of Dudley Council’s let’s get active outdoors programme, it utilises walking poles in order to give participants a whole body workout.

The moderately paced walk is led by a trained instructor and takes place every Thursday from 6pm to 7pm throughout the summer.

More advanced walkers can also join a faster pace group at 7pm.

Participants are asked to wear suitable clothing and footwear.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member responsible for health, said: “As part of the let's get health initiative, this free Nordic walking offer provides something new with other walkers.”

The Leasowes Historic Landscape and Nature Reserve is a beautiful environment to exercise in and Nordic walking offers the chance to try out something new with other walkers.”

Helping hand offered for Big Advice Day

DUDLEY Council for Voluntary Service is making it easier for people in the borough to mark the national Big Advice Day on June 18.

A social media survey was carried out with Halas Homes at Coffee Cups, Thornhill Road, Halesowen, from 10am on Tuesday. A deed in advice session will be held at the Dudley CVS offices in Allihn Street, Brierley Hill, from 2pm to 5pm.

**Classy brass at concert in church**

Musicians who appeared at St Margaret’s Church, Sam Pagett, Lauren Alexandra, Neil Greenway, Jessica Holgate

**COUNCILS in the West Midlands have used controversial spy powers almost 400 times over past five years.**

Surveillance powers have been used 388 times, to catch fly-tippers, graffiti vandals, noisy neighbours, and even dog fouling since 2010. Techniques vary from direct surveillance, such as following a suspect, to intercepting their phone records.

Sandwell Council has used powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 180 times since 2010.

Wolverhampton used it 152 times, Staffordshire County Council 53 and Dudley Council 18 times. Stafford Borough Council used it just five times. But the use of these powers has been cut dramatically in the past two years since local authorities were required to get magistrate’s permission.

The use of such powers has been hit by controversy after it was revealed police had been using the legislation on journalists to identify their sources.

Campagners say the law was passed to fight terrorism and serious organised crime but authorities were using it to intrude into residents’ lives.

Terrorism

West Bromwich East MP Tom Watson, who has campaigned for surveillance laws to be restricted, said: “RIPA was passed with the intention it would be used to fight terrorism and serious organised crime – not to spy on ordinary people.”

All councils say they have not targeted journalists.

Sandwell used the powers 95 times on trading standards investigations, 72 times in anti-social behaviour cases, ten environmental protection breach and three cases of benefit fraud.
Lenny visits teenage years in new TV show

IT'S Black Country life 40 years ago as told by one of the region's most famous sons.

And the people and places in Lenny Henry's new drama, Danny And The Human Zoo, will be much loved by the former local actor.

Lenny, born and raised in Dudley, said the piece is semi-autobiographical and gives a glimpse into life as a working-class teenager growing up in the 1970s.

It centres around the character Danny Feaver, a talented impressionist, and his working-class Jamaican family, as he rises to fame as a stand-up comedian.

The cast will include Arthur Darvill from Broadchurch, One Foot In The Grave actor Richard Wilson and Mark Benton from Waterloo Road.

Speaking of the drama, in which Lenny plays Danny's father Samson, he said: "I can't believe that we're finally shooting my screen play Danny And The Human Zoo!

"This is a fantasy memoir of the first two years of my career — my beginnings, working on the zoo, working men's clubs and all that stuff that happened to me in the mid-Seventies — but crammed into 90 minutes.

"I think, although it's not exactly what happened, we'll get a strong sense of what it might have been like for a young kid from Dudley to be suddenly flung into the maelstrom of this business we call show."

Locations

Filming has started and includes members of the Active Creative Training School (ACTS), run by Tonia Dade-Campbell in Wolverhampton.

The youngsters, along with Tonia herself, have been filming at locations across the Black Country and Birmingham. The 37-year-old has been running ACTS from Wolverhampton Heritage Centre, on Clifford Street, for two years, offering coaching and support for five to 18-year-olds interested in acting.

Tonia, who has four children of her own and is also a foster parent to two others, said the role meant even more due to Lenny's involvement.

Despite the joy of getting the role of Mrs Paterson, the mother of Cherry, who is a friend of Danny, she said: "I was more excited the kids had got the parts. The exciting thing for me about this project is it is Midlands-based, it is filmed in the Midlands and by Midlands actors."

It is an inspiration to up-and-coming young people from the Midlands — and the Black Country in particular — because it is easy forging a career in the arts."

The school runs on Saturday mornings between 9.45am and 12.30pm and there are plans to expand.

"They learn acting skills, audition skills, they have confidence building," Tonia said.

"Whenever they get asked to audition for a role, they are equipped. Young kids from Wolverhampton are getting opportunities that are not always easy to come by unless you are in London," she added.

Actor and comedian Lenny Henry with young actors from Wolverhampton Tyrique Douglas, Taylia-May Campbell and Tyrese McKenzie on set for his new drama, Danny And The Human Zoo. The drama, set in the Black Country in the 1970s, opens on Channel 4.

CRAIG HUGHES meets the young actors in Lenny Henry's Black Country television drama Danny And The Human Zoo.
Council could learn from fable of Pied Piper

IN Robert Browning’s classic poem “The Pied Piper” the failure of the coun-

cillors of Hamelin to keep their word results in cataclysmic consequences for

the townspeople and the council-

lours themselves.

There is a clear parallel between the

situation in Hamelin in 1376 and that

which pertains in Dudley in 2015.

Your column of May 21 quite 

bewails the repeated disruption to

life in the town, the loss of trade, the 

damage to Dudley’s reputation and the 

enormous cost of policing when right-

wing groups decide to target the town.

However, the simple fact remains

that had Dudley council implemented

the condition it presented to Dudley 

Muslim Association regarding the 

building of their mosque in that it

should be “substantially completed

before the end of 2008 or the council

would reserve its option to buy back

the site, then this situation would

be far from as bad as it is.

The demonstration by AFFFAI

scheduled for June 13 would not

now be taking place and, similarly, the

protests by Britain First and EDL earlier

in the year could have been avoided.

Make no mistake, the responsibility

for this divisive, dangerous and farcical

situation lies firmly at the feet of the

members of Dudley Council.

Maybe the incumments of Priory

Road feel quite secure so soon after an

election, but I would remind them of

the words of the good folk of Hamelin

who warned:

“Care, sirs, give your brains a

racking, to find the remedy we’re

lacking, or sure as fate, we’ll send you

packing.”

B WILLIAMS

Wrockley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Some sympathy for

harassed parents

I AM writing in reply to letter entitled ‘Don’t shout and

swear at children’.

I don’t like parents shouting and swearing at kids, who
does? But, now I have a teenager, I am far more under-

standing.

What you see is a child chasing a pigeon, but perhaps his

mother had asked him repeatedly to stay by her side and

not run away? Perhaps the child often chases birds and

gets lost? Perhaps the child had a penchant for kicking birds

(not all kids are as angelic as they seem)? Maybe they’ve

had a really stressful morning and this was simply the last

straw?

No one is a perfect parent and anyone who claims to be

is lying to themselves as well as everyone else. No one is

blessed with the patience of a saint, and although we

love our children to pieces, sometimes they do drive us to

the very edge of distraction and we lose our temper.

I am not condoning any form of child abuse, but perhaps

a little understanding that children can be frustrated at

times and we can sometimes lose our tempers, we’re only

human after all.

K. WATAN

Halesowen

A Liberal

Democrat

alternative

I’d like to say a huge thank you to all those who voted for me and for the Liberal Democrats in the Stour-

bridge constituency in the General Election.

We were not disgraced but we were beaten into fourth place, so cannot claim to have done well! For our

party locally the only way is up.

Mayors have realised that a 

weakened Liberal Democrat Party is a disaster at a time when there is such a need to defend social jus-

tice, tolerance and public services, and to promote international co-operation on peace, migration and cli-

mate change.

Nationally 13,000 have joined the Liberal Demo-

crats since the election. If you would like to help us re-

build, and you live in Dudley North, Dudley South, Stour-

bridge, or Halesowen and Rowley Regis, please contact

Simon Hanson or e-mail simon@

dudley-libdems.org.uk

CHRIS BRAMALL

Stourbridge

Tanalised Garden Buildings

No fine for WBA after fans invade

ASTON Villa are fined £2000.00 for ‘allowing’ fans to invade the pitch at the end of their cup match against Albion.

WBA have no fine, or any other punishment, despite their fans’ behaviour rip-

ping out seats and throwing them. Seemingly because they were the ‘away’ team and ‘responsibility’ was

thrust on the ‘home’ team.

Villa supporters ‘invaded’ the pitch through ‘silence and exuberance’ at their own team winning an FA cup cup-

match. They haven’t had much to celebrate so their behaviour may be under-

standable if not forgiven.

Blackpool have not yet been told what punishment, if any, they will get after the invasion by their fans which

caused the last match to be abandoned. The Football League has already ruled that the score at the time of

the match being aban-

doned would be the ‘result’. Fair play?

M COUG

Wombourne

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CHRIS BRAMALL

Stourbridge
A new exhibition has launched at Dudley’s archives centre celebrating two important historic milestones in local and national democracy.

This year is the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta, as well as the 150th anniversary of the incorporation of Dudley borough.

The Magna Carta was signed by King John at Runnymede in 1215 and was the first formal document stating that the King had to follow the laws of the land. It guaranteed the rights of people against the wishes of the king and paved the way for the trial by jury.

While 150 years ago, the municipal borough of Dudley was formed, being incorporated in 1865. It centred on the town of Dudley, along with the suburbs of Netherton and Woodside.

The new exhibition, called Democracy in Dudley, which has gone on show at the centre in Tipton Road, including treasures from the archives. It includes the original Charter of Incorporation complete with seal, four 17th century letters referring to Dudley Castle’s role in the Civil War; a Victorian copy of the Magna Carta and a facsimile of the Domesday Book.

Milestones marked at archives centre
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We do the lot in 5 days

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Mayor issue is a stumbling block

AS a name, West Midlands Combined Authority is probably the most sterile, dull and insipid term it’s possible to come up with. But it is, at least, not the dreaded Greater Birmingham.

With the Tories pushing forward on their devolution plans the race is on to make sure the West Midlands does not fall behind Greater Manchester and the emerging ‘northern powerhouse’ for funding and powers.

A few months ago council leaders were at pains to stress there would be no more bureaucracy and no new tiers of politicians claiming allowances or salaries at our expense.

Chancellor George Osborne, however, wants an elected mayor to tie it all together.

Essential
It is a perfectly reasonable wish.
After all, there will be a lack of a lot of power – transport, regeneration, skills and education – concentrated in the hands of this authority and some democratic accountability is going to be essential in order to hold its feet to the fire and stop one area benefiting at the expense of others.

The problem for the Chancellor is Birmingham and Coventry already voted against having a mayor for their respective cities when they were each given a referendum.

Imposing one without going back to the people, even though it is markedly different to what they were voting on before, would not go down well.

David Cameron, meanwhile, seems more relaxed about the mayor idea and says one size does not fit all.

This might give the council leaders of the Black Country, Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull - if they sign on the dotted line – a little wriggle room. But the more options they have on the table the longer it is likely to take to come to an agreement.

And time is of the essence when regions of the country are effectively competing against each other for scarce resources and funding.

As to what to call the authority Greater Birmingham rolls off the tongue. Most people, particularly potential investors, could point to the area on a map. Except as a name it ends up doing everything the Black Country has always resisted – rolling it out to the second city. The come...
London families offered £7k if move to the Black Country

LONDON boroughs have relocated dozens of families on benefits to the Black Country because it’s cheaper than finding accommodation in the capital.

One council is even paying families up to £7,000 to move out in a bid to free up space.

The authorities are housing private landlords in Sandwell and blaming the £26,000-a-year benefits cap.

But council leaders in the West Midlands say this is putting pressure on resources and housing here and claim it has vindicated their attempt to stop ‘benefits tourism’.

Two councils in London revealed they had sent 39 families to the West Midlands between them over the past year.

Newham Council alone sent 25. Thirteen of those went to Sandwell, three to Walsall and three to Wolverhampton.

Brent Council did not break down its figures but said it had relocated 14 households since April 2014.

Sandwell Council has also written to residents offering to pay them up to £7,000 to move ‘within or near the surrounding areas of Birmingham’.

It offers payments starting at £3,500 to vacate two bedroom properties up to £5,000 for a four or five-bedroom home, topped up with £2,000 to cover deposit and moving costs.

Brent Council had around 4,000 families on the housing waiting list yet Sandwell Council frequently has in excess of 7,000 on its waiting list.

Sandwell Council was criticised by a judge last year after it tried to introduce a test that said people had to have lived in the borough for at least two years to give up a house to move with council tax.

Councillor Margaret McLeenan, housing chief at Brent Council, said: “Our manifesto makes it very clear that moves are only to be considered in certain circumstances. This is simply about ensuring that we can actually house those who need it.”

Unfortunately, accommodation cannot always be provided in Brent.”

Pensioner would like to have his pots back

A pensioner is appealing for his plant pots to be returned after they were stolen from outside his home.

Two concrete pots were taken from the garden of Bryan Darby, aged 73, in Halesowen Road, Netherton, on Tuesday last week. They are grey and had plants in at the time.

“There are so many talented writers and poetry. It also set up to show them the opportunity to be really creative and showcase their skills,”

Mr Darby is hoping someone will return them. Call Brierley Hill Police on 0121 4484340.

Time for afternoon tea at the hall

Visitors will be able to enjoy afternoon tea in the rotunda of the royals for the first time at Himley Hall and Park.

For the summer months, the landmark venue on the Dudley-South Staffordshire is offering a new menu of ‘teaside’ cakes, ribbon sandwiches and warm scones.

Summer

“It’s just one of many things you can do at Himley Hall over the summer months.”

Afternoon tea will be available at the hall, which was once where royal newly-weds spent their honeymoon and princes and princesses were regular visitors, from June and throughout the summer.

“Sandwiches on offer include Wiltshire ham and tomato, free-range egg and mayonnaise and mature cheddar cheese and farmhouse chutney.

Warm scones are served with strawberry conserve and thick fresh cream.

The cakes on the menu include Bakewell tarts, lemon drizzle, lemon meringue and raspberry cheesecake slices. For further information call Himley Hall on (01384) 817817.

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10 Story contest is write stuff for youngsters

CLEVER children across the Dudley borough will be going head to head in a writing competition.

Primary school pupils will have their pens at the ready, competing for the title of Dudley Young Writer of the Year.

The award aims to celebrate the best in children’s fiction, non-fiction and poetry. It is also set up to showcase the talents of pupils aged seven to 11.

There will be two age categories for each subject – seven to nine years and 10 to 11 years.

The winners will be announced at a special ceremony in July.

Council leader Pete Lowe said: “There are so many talented writers at our schools. This competition gives them the opportunity to be really creative and showcase their skills.”

Entries can include newspaper reports, discussions, poems or any kind of creative writing. I’m looking forward to seeing some of the work they produce later this year.”

Prizes for the winners will include certificates, trophies and vouchers.

The vouchers have been donated by businesses in the borough. They include The Rye Market, Steurbridge, Waitrose, Steurbridge Waterstones, LouisOffice Supplies, Halesowen, intu Merry Hill and Tesco. The Rotary Club of Halesowen and Rowley Regis has also provided prizes.

Visitors will be able to enjoy afternoon tea in the rotunda of the royals for the first time at Himley Hall and Park.

Time for afternoon tea at the hall

Jobs advice on offer for teenagers

FREE drop-in advice sessions for young people in Wednesbury and Tipton have been set up.

Personal advisors from Sandwell Connections will be on hand to talk about apprenticeships and employment and provide support with CVs and interviews.

Sessions are targeted at people aged 15 to 19, and up to 25 for people with learning difficulties. Sessions are at Wednesbury Town Hall, in Holyhead Road, every Thursday from 11am-2pm. In Tipton, personal advisors will be at Holyfield Library, 36 Market Road, one Friday every four weeks, from 1pm-3pm, starting on June 12. They will also be at Tipton Library, Unity Walk, one Wednesday every four weeks from 1pm-4pm from June 24.

Outreach venues are due to be rolled out into West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis in the coming weeks.
After a biography at 24, TOWIE star Joey Essex will be signing his latest book, which readers can co-write.

REALITY TV star Joey Essex, who found fame on The Only Way Is Essex, will be signing his new book at Merry Hill Shopping Centre tomorrow (Friday).

He will be at Waterstones at 11am signing copies of The Book of You (and Me).

The 24-year-old television personality and DJ left popular TV show TOWIE in 2013 and has since appeared on a host of TV programmes, including winning celebrity winter sports show The Jump.

The all-action celeb also part in diving show Splash! and finished fourth in the 13th series of I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here!

Fragrance

The book, Joey's second, is designed as a journal and includes pages for readers to create their own story with him. His first book, Being Room, was a biography.

Former TOWIE stars Lauren Pope, Lydia Bright, Porscha McCann and Georgia Kousoulou were at Merry Hill earlier this month to promote the fragrance The Only Way is Marcus. They were on hand to meet fans near The Perfume Shop as the TOWIE stars marked the TV show's return to the Spanish resort.

BLIND fundraiser Dave Heeley has been announced as guest of honour for an annual fun run which is part of the Black Country Festival.

The popular marathon runner, known as Blind Dave, will be starting this year’s Black Country Run taking place in Halesowen on July 5.

Organisers have moved the road race event from its September date to coincide with this year’s Black Country Festival.

The festival, which successfully launched last year, brings together community, music and arts events during the month.

Dave, who lives in West Bromwich, recently competed in the gruelling 460-mile Marathon des Sables through the Sahara Desert.

He is aiming to raise £20,000 towards West Bromwich Albion’s charity The Albion Foundation which helps boost community sports and events.

The fundraiser has already been bought in £27,000 and hopes fun runs and events during this summer will help him hit that target.

“I’m really looking forward to doing a running on my door step. It might not be as hot as Sahara,” he said.

“We did the Black Country Run as Shrek last year,”

By Andrew Turton

try Run as Shrek last year.

This year, for a laugh, I’ll be with my two nudie, and we’ll be running it as The Three Blind Mice.

“I’ll be the good looking one this time, Quaff, it should be a great day with a good atmosphere.”

Rotarian Alan Bower, founder and organiser of the Black Country Run, said the event is going from strength to strength.

“Black Country Rotary Club of Halesowen and Rowley Regis started the event four years ago, we have raised more than £50,000 for good causes,” he said.

“We keep on getting bigger every year, we had 600 runners last year and this time we hope for more than 1,000.”

Blind Dave joined his 500 volunteers at Lifestyle Fitness gym, in Hagley Road West, Sand ton, to announce the event and meet sponsors.

A CHAMPION for cleft palate, Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS Eng, has spent more than ten years campaigning to “break the taboo over tooth teeth” and prove that high-profile dentures can indeed be nothing short of life-changing.

Evangelical about what new-generation denture prescriptions can achieve, he says the picture of solutions to deliver a more youthful, engaging smile has never been so great with the help of digital scanning in the creation of false teeth. A NEW generation of prosthetics and implant-retained dentures (implant-retained overdentures) can also help.

People have come to us with blemished teeth, sunken cheeks and plucked lips and we have been privileged to transform their looks, providing teeth that not only are aesthetically pleasing and highly functional, but also successfully support facial structures (but like their real teeth once did). It can take years of people,”

Can dentures ever be glamorous? “Emotionally, yes,” adds Steven.

“Surgical advances in technology, improved materials and revised clinical procedures are all helping to ‘de-stigmatise’ denture portability and provide a whole new sense of natural-looking glamour to what can be accomplished,” he says.

The Ultra Suction system is available for both upper and lower dentures.

ADVERTISMENT

A CUTTING-EDGE development that helps to resolve the stability problems faced by thousands of denture wearers is being offered by the Denture Clinic of Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS (Eng) GDC108353.

Prosthetics are held in place by tiny valve-operated suction devices which are built into the prosthesis. A clever diaphragm principle triggered by bite pressure on patients’ gums, creates a ‘sucking’ vacuum between the soft- tissue mouth lining and the prosthesis.

Steven, whose clinic attracts patients from as far as Spain, the Isle of Skye and the Isle of Anglesey, says: “In recent times we have seen, what I can only describe as a strident clinical step forward, with implant-retained overdentures. The introduction of ‘one-day’ implant procedures and suction solution dentures, all coming into mainstream dentistry.

However, we have clearly seen that technology which allows excellent fitting outcomes and our clinical solutions have never been so appealing.

Implant dentistry as a resolve for stabilisation issues is not suitable for everyone, neither is it all patients’ first preference. The Ultra Suction prosthetics system offers a possible alternative clinical solution.

“The beauty of this affordable technology is that it can deliver for the most patient excellent denture retainers without the invasive clinical procedures required for implant work.”

Lower dentures can often be troublesome when stability is compromised by shrinking gums and bone erosion – all part of the natural ageing process. Ill-fitting dentures create painful friction problems on gums and not least, can be a regular source of embarrassment.

Reduction

Steven adds: “The device can be mounted on upper or lower teeth and because of its efficiency allows us to consider a reduction in the size of the acrylic ‘plate’ which can improve speech and taste.

“We have always endeavoured to be on the very cusp of clinical development and this is another tool in our commitment to always try to deliver outcomes greater than patient expectations.”

For appointments at all clinics call

0800 0285185

The Denture Clinic
5 North Street, Dudley
West Midlands, DY2 7DT

Other clinics located at: Wolverhampton, Kidderminster and Solihull

www.denture-clinic.co.uk email info@denture-clinic.co.uk

Halesowen Chronicle Thursday May 28, 2015 11
A MATCHDAY programme from the 1888 FA Cup Final when West Bromwich Albion upset the odds to beat Preston North End, originally bought for one penny, has been sold at auction for £20,000.

The sale makes the historic piece of memorabilia one of the most expensive football programmes ever purchased.

The 1888 cup final was held in front of 19,000 fans at The Oval cricket ground in London, was a million miles away from the grit of the showpiece final that awaits Aston Villa and Arsenal at Wembley on Saturday. But like Villa this year, Albion went into the game as underdogs.

The following season Preston would finish the first Football League season undefeated and during their run to the 1888 final they thrashed Hyde 26-0. But on a March afternoon it was the Bagbies that were victorious, winning 2-1 to bring the cup to the Black Country for the first time. The programme, which was made up of just a single sheet featuring the team line-ups and an advertisement on the back, is thought to be one of the few that survive from the momentous day in the club’s history.

It was bought at Graham Budd Auctions in London on Tuesday by a private collector. A photograph of Albion’s 1888 FA Cup winning team was included with the programme.

In 2006, the programme from the 1889 FA Cup final between Preston and Wolves sold for £21,850, which at the time was the highest amount paid for a programme. Albion were appearing in the FA Cup Final for the third consecutive year in 1889 but after two heart-breaking defeats they finally got their hands on the silverware.

But another reason the programme is desirable for collectors is that the final ended in controversy, with many observers feeling that the referee had shown bias towards West Brom’s all-English 11.
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  - **ESSENTIALS BRESCIA**
    - Contemporary small sofa in brown fabric
    - **OVER 65% OFF TO CLEAR!**
    - **Was £899 Save £600**

- **£249**
  - **FURNITURE ORIGINS**
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  - **HTLC REMINA**
    - Large & small motion sofas, plus power recliner chair in Bellato cream fabric
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    - Large & small residential sofas, side power recliner chair in leather fabric
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  - **SALOTTI ITALIA CAIRO**
    - Luxurious corner sofa in leather or fabric
    - **50% OFF TO CLEAR!**
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  - **KINGSTOWN ARIZONA**
    - Model AZB600 double leather
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  - **SLUMBERLAND**
    - Newbury double (5’0’) storage divan bed
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  - **SILENTNIGHT**
    - Large & small motion sofas, plus power recliner chair in Bellato cream fabric
    - **OVER 50% OFF TO CLEAR!**
    - **Was £399 Save £250**

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**Huge discounts** available on all special orders and brand name furniture!
Demolition of church approved

PLANS to demolish a church in Cradley Heath, which was forced to close due to a six-figure restoration bill, have been approved.

Sandwell Council has granted consent for St Luke’s Church in High Street to be knocked down. It closed after almost 170 years of worship last October because of escalating repair costs, estimated at £700,000. The congregation at St Luke’s moved their services to St John’s Church, in Dudley Wood.

Rev Alicia Baker said demolishing the church was a ‘shame’ but there was little alternative. She hoped that the land, including the churchyard, would not be lost for public use.

Built in 1847 on the corner of Cornacreous Road, St Luke’s is one of the oldest buildings in Cradley Heath.

Super Bob can sing too

WEST Bromwich Albion fans packed into a bar in Cradley Heath to meet club legend ‘Super Bob’ Taylor.

Mr Taylor was at Jay’s in Garners Lane, Bromwich Albion to greet raised around £350 by performing his favourite song, Neil Diamond’s ‘Sweet Caroline, on the Ra rake’.

Super Bob’s meet and greet raised around £350 for charity.

Plans for rundown shops to be revealed at meeting

A PUBLIC meeting will be held to reveal plans to redevelop rundown shops after a community campaign for action.

Local people have been demanding action to tackle the eyesores shops in Colley Gade, Cradley, which they claim are blighting the area. Members of Cradley Action Group have run a two year bid to have the shopping parade revitalised.

Dudley Council officers will attend a public meeting held by Andy Turton

This is an interesting job with flexible working hours and a good rate of pay controlling your own team of distributors in your local area.

Picnic will celebrate chain strike

FAMILIES are urged to take a picnic to a festival celebrating women chainmakers. The event in Cradley Heath High Street on July 12 is being dubbed a ‘picnic with a purpose’.

Louise Blakeway, secretary of organisers Cradley Heath Creative, said: “We want people to share their favourite food with anyone who comes along and tell us why they love it so much. We’ll provide the eating gear – aprons, plates and services. There will also be activities for youngsters during the event from 11am to 5pm.

The festival as a whole will bring to life the victory of the women chainmakers of Cradley Heath through a whole day of trade, dance, poetry and performance. The 1910 Women Chainmakers’ strikers, led by Mary Macarthur, paved the way for the minimum wage.

Regional win for Kee Safety

THF chief executive of a Cradley Heath-based firm has won a regional award.

Chris Milburn, of Kee Safety, which supplies safety solutions and products, was chief executive of the year in the Midland final British Private Equity Awards. Kee, of Cradley Business Park, Pheasey Road, won the mid market management team of the year award.

Firm’s £1m forge will create jobs

MORE than £1 million has been invested into a state-of-the-art forge that will help a Black Country manufacturer increase sales and create five new jobs.

Kimber Drop Forgings, which employs 27 at its Gawne Lane site in Cradley Heath, has unveiled a new forge and aims to reach £5m sales by the end of the year.

Backed by the Regional Growth Fund and Sandwell Council, the investment was celebrated at an event where guests heard how the facility will be air-conditioned, sound proofed and features a 70 hundredweight hammer. Kimber will also take on five more workers at the facility, with a number of these expected to be apprentices.

“ar Don’t hear about many new forges being built in the UK so we’re delighted to put our sector on the map with this sizeable investment,” said Larry Joyce, group chairman.

Kimber’s Geoff Turnbull and Larry Joyce take a close look at the new forge in Cradley Heath.

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San Jose, the cosmopolitan capital, is where the adventure begins. Travel from here through jungle landscapes towards the very edge of the Caribbean Sea to reach Tortuguero National Park.

Two nights are spent in the Mawamba Lodge in the heart of this exotic haven. The area is a ribbon of thick rainforest criss-crossed by canals and waterways, and home to land turtles, lizards, monkeys, caimans and crocodiles.

Journey through the rainforest and across the lowlands to La Fortuna, and see the famous Arenal volcano that erupted spectacularly in 1968. The area is also famous for its hot springs and thermal baths – so take the opportunity to enjoy a visit to the Eco Termas springs.

Drive round the northern tip of the Tilarán cordillera on the stunning ‘Highway to Heaven’ to idyllic Monteverde set amongst lush forests.

Travel down to the central Pacific coast, and spend three days in a luxury hotel, near to the stunning Manuel Antonio National Park, the perfect background for rest and relaxation.

The final night is spent in San Jose, calling en route at the crafts town of Sarchi, where local crafts-folk vie to sell souvenirs from ‘Nature’s Paradise’.

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Erim’s Kilimanjaro coup

A STUDENT will be scaling the dizzy heights of Mount Kilimanjaro to raise money for Meningitis Research Foundation (MRF).

Erim Khan, from Tipton, is hoping to generate £2,980 for the charity by completing the six-day challenge in September. The trek is being run by Choose a Challenge who create tailor-made adventures for students.

The 20-year-old, Erim who is currently studying mathematics at Kent University said: “When I started to raise money for MRF my friends and family shared their personal experiences about this devastating disease – this not only inspired me to raise money, but also to continue to raise even after I reach my target.

“We started to raise money for MRF last year after each of my target. The services we provide are guaranteed and covered by our full public liability insurance policy. EcoPipe Plumbing & Heating Solutions concentrates on providing quality works that have made us the only pick of many residential and commercial clients in and around Midlands.

We are helping our Clients save money by planning, preparing and installing only the best heating systems!
New homes on way as part of centre’s £20m facelift

DOZENS of new homes will be built as part of the next phase of a £20 million transformation of the heart of West Bromwich. Offices will also be created during the next stage of the Urban 180 regeneration project, which is now underway.

The development sits on the corner of High Street and Bull Street, known as the Eastern Gateway site. It is the latest project following in the footsteps of the £200m New Square shopping centre and Sandwell College a revival of The Public.

The latest phase of work will be the construction of three bedroom houses and two-bedroom apartments. There will also be commercial and office space provided as part of the development.

The Accord Group’s executive director of regeneration Alan Yates said: “This is an important third phase of this fantastic award-winning development and forms a key part of regenerating the town centre area and we are delighted to be working in partnership with Sandwell Council on the next phase of the project. The homes are selling well and offer the local community a new, high quality housing option.”

Mayor for regeneration and economy at Sandwell Council, Nick Buhalski, said: “Eastern Gateway continues to play an important role in delivering the council’s regeneration priorities for West Bromwich.

“The new homes that are being delivered at Urban 180 will create a sustainable and modern living environment and will complement the work that has recently been completed in and around the town centre.”

The first phase of the project saw the construction of 18 apartments at The Public in the room homes while 34 properties were built and finished in October during the second stage.

WEST Brom boss Tony Pulis said the work of an inspirational hospice is helping him cope with a tough 408-mile rowing challenge from London to Paris. The Baggies head coach set off with a group of plcuky celebrities, sports stars and volunteers on the Tower to Tower adventure on Monday.

Pulis is taking part to help raise money for a children’s hospice – just a day after Baggies ended their Premier League season at Arsenal on Sunday.

The Tower to Tower Rowing Challenge sees the 24 rowers tackle the gruelling 450 nautical mile row over seven days. The crew will be battling against the tidal effects of the Thames and the Seine, and conquer a 36-hour Channel crossing to reach the Eiffel Tower. It is being staged in aid of the Donna Louise Hospice, which Pulis discovered during his time as Stoke City manager.

Rowers arrived at Tower Bridge at St Catherine’s Dock shortly before they set off at 8am – with crew members each completing stints of around two hours each.

Pulis will be among those taking his place in one of the two rowing boats being accompanied down the River Thames by support crews.

On his boat he was joined by comedians Nick Hancock and Hugh Dennis, former Stoke City midfielder Rory Delap and his wife Helen, The 57-year-old grandfather said: “We have a good team with us. Everyone is supporting each other.”

More than 2,000 fines have been issued to motorists caught park illegally by a ‘camera car’ in Sandwell in seven months.

It has been hitting the streets as part of a crackdown on rogue Sandwell’s 120 schools. Fitted with CCTV equipment that automatically blocks number plates, the car captures images of vehicles parked illegally – including on yellow zig-zag ‘keep clear’ markings outside schools.

A total of 2,011 fines, at £70 each, have been issued between October 13 and May 12.

Fines are also issued for illegal parking on red routes and bus stops.

Highways boss Councillor Marion Crompton said: “We’re responding to people’s serious concerns about road safety, especially outside schools and on school routes. Our top priority is protecting children’s safety.

“We know most motorists do take care and park legally but we need to get the message through to the minority who don’t. Please – mum, dad, grandparents, anyone – pick up a child up from school – the yellow zig-zags are there for a reason.

“The scheme has cost the council £45,000. But houses have defended the spending saying it was worth to reduce illegally parked and boost safety around schools.

Blaze factory is to be demolished soon

A PLASTICS factory in Oldbury which was destroyed when a huge fire ripped through it is expected to be demolished within the next month.

Roger Davies, operations manager at Teknor Apex, said final preparations were being made for the ruins of the flat Bank Road factory to be bulldozed. The majority of the 50-strong workforce remains on home leave almost a month after the blaze.

City’s square designs go on display

DESIGNS for a revamp of Centenary Square in Birmingham city centre are on display.

A competition, launched by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and the Birmingham Institute of Architecture, offered architects and designers the chance to transform the square.

Council chiefs say they want to create a ‘cultural hub and desirable space where residents and visitors alike can relax and socialise’.

Five designs were shortlisted from nearly 200 entries from around the world earlier this year, with the five finalists then given £5,000 to work on their ideas.

The exhibition takes place on the third floor and is accessible during the library’s opening hours of 11am to 5pm.

One of the rowers, Tim Winn from Branstion Golf and Country Club in Burton on Trent, with Baggies boss Tony Pulis.

The development sits on the corner of High Street and Bull Street.

The exhibition takes place on the third floor.

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Birmingham Dogs’ Home has a long and notable history in the care and protection of rescuing strays from the city streets of Birmingham and surrounding towns and villages in the West Midlands.

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

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

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

Rescued

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

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

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

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

Abandoned

Your help brings hope and happy tomorrows for abandoned dogs. Fundraising is the life’s blood of Birmingham Dogs’ Home. Without it we simply could not exist.

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

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

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

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

There are various fundraising routes available for those who wish to donate. Whichever, we at Birmingham Dogs’ Home are deeply indebted to those of you who work so tirelessly to help us help them ...

Abandoned faithful companion seeks loving new home. Happy disposition despite neglect. Just wants to give love and be loved.

Please call 0121 643 5211

WANTED

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www.birminghamdogshome.org.uk

If you cannot rehome you can help us with donations or sponsorship

10 New Bartholomew Street • Birmingham B5 5QS
Ladies hear Wiggin about steelworks

When Jasmine Pole was born, she weighed just 10oz after being born 11 weeks prematurely. This 17-year-old, who turns 18 next month, suffers from dyspraxia, which means she has difficulty remembering things, but does not have any other health problems. Her mother, Sue, said: “She has done really well and works extremely hard and is really motivated, while she also plays some sport.”

Jasmine had an emergency Caesarian after being rushed into hospital with pre-eclampsia, a pregnancy disorder characterised by high blood pressure and a large amount of protein in the urine. It places both mother and baby at risk. The disease includes poor liver and kidney function, as well as shortness of breath due to fluid in the lungs.

Home

I had an emergency Caesarian because she was big enough to be born.” She added: “She was born and came out crying and was rushed to the neo-natal unit — she was in there for six weeks.”

But Jasmine was eventually allowed to leave the hospital for home once she weighed 4lbs. Mrs Pole added that she did not notice what the effect of such early health problems would be on Jasmine as she grew older. However, the youngster went on to attend Crootwood Park Primary School in Kinver, before going on to study at college.

Sue has received support from a group that helps the families of children who have had difficulties at birth. She lives with her husband Jonathan, aged 53 and also has a son, Casey, aged 21.

When Jasmine Pole was 18, she turned around to tell the story of her life. At 17 years old, she has overcome health issues and is now on the verge of celebrating her landmark birthday.

Jasmine is currently studying a foundation course for children with special needs at Stourbridge College. The 17-year-old, who turns 18 next month, suffers from dyspraxia, which means she has difficulty remembering things, but does not have any other health problems. Her mother, Sue, said: “She has done really well and works extremely hard and is really motivated, while she also plays some sport.”

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The next meeting is on Thursday July 9 when the group will hear Peter Taunton, speaker for the evening. Mr Pole said: “He will be giving a talk entitled ‘Remembering Sid’, the speaker for the evening, who gave a very informative talk about the Kinver Blacksmith House. He gave a vote of thanks on behalf of the members.

Exhibitions were served by the committees and the raffle was drawn with three lucky ladies winning the prizes.

The next month’s sales table consisting of sweets and chocolates will consist of all items being sold.

The meeting will be held at Grange Court on June 2 when the speaker will be Margaret Homer with speaker Nigel Wiggin at the last meeting.

Margaret Homer with speaker Nigel Wiggin at the last meeting

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Pickup Points: Wolverhampton, Dudley, Halesowen, Stourbridge

Some of the biggest names in professional wrestling will be coming to the West Midlands next year. Popular American wrestling organisation TNA will bring its Impact show to Birmingham’s Barclaycard Arena in January. Top wrestlers Kurt Angle, James Storm, Matt Hardy and more are all scheduled to feature.

TNA president Dixie Carter said: “The energy and passion of the crowds on the 2015 UK tour was off the charts.

“In direct response to talking with the fans about what they loved and how we could take their experience to another level when we come back to Manchester, Birmingham and London in January 2016, we will be making some exciting changes on the next tour.”

Tickets for the event in Birmingham, which will take place on January 31, 2016, go on sale today (Friday) and will cost from £17.50.

WRESTLERS READY TO RUMBLE AT 2016 SHOW

International Festival of Glass founder Keith Brocklehurst with the colourful glass postcards

DELCIATE pieces of art have been brought together to form a giant glass wall to welcome visitors to this week’s International Festival of Glass in Stourbridge.

The sixth festival celebrating the town’s glassmaking heritage features breathtaking exhibitions of intricate artworks but the collection of glass postcards is considered by some as the jewel in the crown.

There are 168 postcards and each tells its own story having been delicately crafted by members of the Contemporary Glass Society and on show at the Rivington Glass Centre.

The group, which is known for coming up with unusual exhibitions, settled on the postcard for this year’s festival. Project leaders said they wanted to celebrate the postcard’s simplicity and the fact they can ‘say so much with so little’.

Victoria Schola, a former chairman of the group, said: “This deceptively simple form of communication is more than just words and pictures. “It delivers a glimpse of another life, a renewed friendship, a shared joke with a specially chosen image that all say so much with so little.”

The society previously worked with postcards and this year they’ve made a series of Olympic medals to mark the London 2012 Games and are hoping to impress again in Stourbridge.

HOMLESS FAMILIES’ TOTAL HOTEL BILL IS £180K

NEARLY £200,000 was spent last year on paying for homeless families to stay in hotels and bed and breakfasts across the Black Country and Staffordshire.

Taxpayers last year forked out more than £180,000 to cover the cost of overnight stays, latest figures show.

Wolverhampton City Council housed the most at 136.

A spokesman for Wolverhampton City Council said: “The council works hard to help and support families who are either at risk of becoming, or who have actually become, homeless.

“In cases where they have lost their tenancy, we work as quickly as we can to find them alternative accommodation.

“Until this is arranged, it is necessary for the council to provide temporary and safe accommodation while the assessments are carried out.

“We don’t place people in temporary accommodation any longer than is necessary and where possible, we seek to recover costs through housing benefit contributions.”

BENEFITS

Sandwell Council said it currently has 18 households living in the region. And in 2013 to 2014 it cost £46,283 to shelter residents with nowhere to go, with a net cost to the authority of £35,189. The rest is covered by housing benefits.

In Sandwell, deputy leader and cabinet member for neighbourhoods, councillor Mahboob Hussain, said the number of times a household stays in hotels varies, depending on individual circumstances, but normally it is for no longer than a week.

Dudley Council’s cabinet member for housing, councillor Gaye Partridge said: “As a council, there are situations where we have a duty to find people somewhere to stay until they find themselves homeless.

“Last year we helped 119 families find temporary accommodation in local bed and breakfast establishments.

“The majority of people stay between one and three nights and we are predicting a £25,000 spend on this service this year.”

In Walsall between April 2014 and April 2015, Walsall Council has accommodated a total of 61 households and of these, 21 had children. On average they stay seven nights.

The total cost is £8,024 with the council recouping the most from benefit contributions where possible.

PRINCE PRESENTS OBE TO ALBION LEGEND

WEST Bromwich Albion legend Brendon Batson has been presented at a ceremony in Buckingham Palace.

The 62-year-old has been recognised for his commitment in trying to eradicate racism from football. The former Raglan defender, who was affectionately known as one of Three Degrees along with Cyrilis Begg and the late Laurie Cunningham, helped blazed a trail for black footballers in the English game during the 1970s.

He has campaigned doggedly for equality for black players and coaches.

Batson, who made 172 appearances during a four-year spell at the Hawthorns, was named among the recipients of awards on the New Year Honours list. He received his OBE for services to football from Prince William at Buckingham Palace.

Batson worked for the Professional Footballers’ Association and more recently has been an adviser to the FA on equality and football development.

PRIME POSITION HOTELS

Summer Specials

Glastonbury Hotel

Eastbourne — Sussex Coast

11th-18th July 8 Days

The Glastonbury Hotel offers a prime position on the seafront. All rooms are en-suite with television and tea/coffee making facilities, most are accessible by lift. A warm welcome can always be assured by all the staff. This hotel offers everything you need for a relaxing holiday making sure you want to come back again. Holiday includes coach transport, accommodation, breakfast, evening meal, four excursions plus entertainment.

Summer Specials

Bournemouth — 8th-12th June 5 Days £215
Torquay — 15th-19th June 5 Days £199
Weston-s-Mare — 15th-19th June 5 Days £199
Isle of Wight — 15th-19th June 5 Days £229
Scarborough — 22nd-26th June 5 Days £225
Eastbourne — 29th June-3rd July 5 Days £199
Llandudno — 29th June-3rd July 5 Days £229
Torquay — 13th-17th July 5 Days £259
Nottingham & Peak District — 20th-24th July £179
Lakes & Borders — 27th-31st July 5 Days £239
Llandudno — 27th-31st July 5 Days £235

BOOK NOW!! Limited Space Available

STEAMING THROUGH THE SUMMER

Ashton Court Hotel

Exmouth — East Devon Coast

27th-31st July 5 Days

Since the Regency period when seaside holidays became fashionable, people have been coming to Exmouth to enjoy the scenery on the East Devon coast, where the River Exe joins the sea. With a two mile stretch of soft golden sands, tree lined promenade and beautifully tailored gardens, a relaxing stroll “along the prom” is always a joy.

This super 5 day break will include your coach transport to Exmouth and return, accommodation at the family-run Ashton Court Hotel, rooms with private facilities, English breakfast, evening meal with a choice of menu, various entertainment plus two full day excursions.

PRIME POSITION HOTELS

Coach Inclusive

St George Hotel

Great Yarmouth

13th-17th July 5 Days £185

The St George Hotel is in a wonderful central position directly opposite Winterton Pier, the ‘Centre of Entertainment’ in Great Yarmouth. All rooms are en-suite and have television and tea/coffee making facilities. This family run hotel offers a super level position just off the seafront, with easy access to many of the local facilities.

Whether you want a fun filled summer holiday or a relaxing out of season break Great Yarmouth and the Norfolk coast offers something for all ages.

Holiday includes coach transport, accommodation, breakfast, evening meal, two excursions plus entertainment.

Prime Position Inclusive

Coach Inclusive

Summer Specials

Pickup Points: Wolverhampton, Dudley, Halesowen, Stourbridge

Torquay Travel — Coach Inclusive Holidays

01803 212900

Torquay Travel, 78 Avenue Road, Torquay, Devon TQ2 5LF — www.torquaytravel.co.uk
New light shines on Modfather back on a dark drama with rock classic

The Mercha...
Manics mania
Rock giants at Civic – Page 23

Bescot Sunday Market
BIGGEST SUNDAY MARKET IN THE MIDLANDS

“BARGAINS FOR EVERYONE”
Attractions: Half Price Meat Auctions & All your favourite Market Traders!
Fun starts at 9am
Bescot Stadium,
Walsall FC WS1 4SA, FREE PARKING, J9 M6
07889 975701
All hard standing
Joe McElderry

POP & ROCK

Thu at 7.30pm, £15-£20.90
Prince OfWales Centre, Cannock, WS11 1DE.
Call 01543 412121

Ruby Wax

Friday, 7.30pm

Gatehouse Theatre, Stafford

This show is based on Ruby’s critically acclaimed book ‘Some New World’ which helps us understand why we sabotage our sanity without thinking about it.

Visit www.staffordgatetheatre.co.uk

The Beach Boys

Friday, 8pm

Barclaycard Arena, B’ham

The Beach Boys have had a torrent of hit singles and sold tens of millions of albums. They continue to update their own material, perform with the same imagination and style that marked their explosive debut.

Visit www.barclaycardarena.co.uk

Elvis Costello

Sunday, 8pm

Symphony Hall, B’ham

Following the success of his 2014 solo shows, Elvis Costello is back on the road with a new four-piece outfit, Dexters. His solo shows have been some of the most adventurous of his career.

Visit www.ths.co.uk

Joe McElderry is the X Factor golden boy with the 24-carat voice and the diamond personality which has made him one of the most loved young singers in the country.

Visit www.canrockcasedgov.co.uk

Jude McCourt

Sun at 8pm, £37.50-£42.50
Elvis Costello - Live at the O2, Bristol, WV1 1RE.

Saturday, 6.30pm

Back to Broadway

Thu at 7.30pm, £11-£26.90
Birmingham, B1 2EP.

Call 0121 236 4455

The Bali Brush Show

Sun at 11am, £20
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE.

Call 01902 333333

Godspell In Concert

Mon at 7.30pm, £23.90-£35.90
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4D5.

Call 0844 871 3011

The Rise And Fall of Little Voice

Fri at 7.30pm

New Alexandra Theatre, Wolverhampton, WV1 4AL.

Call 01902 572090

THEATRE

That'll Be The Day

Wed at 7.30pm, £11 - £26.90
New Alexandra Theatre, Wolverhampton, B5 4D5.

Call 0844 871 3011

The Curious Incident of...

Fri, Sat, Mon, Tue at 7.30pm, £13
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE.

Call 01902 573320

Birmingham Cabaret Festival

Fri at 8pm, £10
Birmingham, B2 8NQ.

The Siege

Thu at 8pm, £12
Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Birmingham, B1 2EP.

Call 0121 236 4455

Occasionally We Skype

Fri at 8pm, £10
Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, WV1 1SE.

Call 01902 321321

Mattress Mattress

Wed at 1pm, £10
Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, WV1 1SE.

Call 01902 321321

We’ll Meet Again – Hits From The Blitz

Wed at 2pm, £13
Prince OfWales Centre, Cannock, WS11 1DE.

Call 01543 576782

We’ll Meet Again

Thu at 7.30pm, £13 - £5
Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, WV1 1SE.

Call 01902 321321

DANCE

Embraced Burlesque

Sat at 8pm, £10
New Alexandra Centre, Wolverhampton, WV1 4AN.

Call 01902 572000

MADAME BUTTERFLY

Wrightend Castle Theatre, B5 4DS.

Call 0121 359 4014

Horrible Histories

Fri at 8pm, £6-£12
Wolverhampton, WV1 1SE.

Call 01902 321321

Open Mic Night

Mon at 8pm, £4
Ashside Barn, Cannock, WS11 1DE.

Call 01543 576782

Family History Buddy

Wed at 9.30am - 1.30pm, £6.50-£11.50
The Oak House Museum, Wednesbury, ST16 2LT.

Call 01384 374410

Coffee Mornings

Fri, Sat, Thu at 10am, £2
The Old Joint Stock, B1 2EP.

Call 0121 236 4455

Pete Green Sessions

Sat at 8pm, £4
New Alexandra Centre, Wolverhampton, WV1 1SE.

Call 01902 321321

DANCING QUEENS

Fri at 8pm

New Alexandra Theatre, Wolverhampton, WV1 4AN.

Call 01902 572000

THE BALLROOM

Fri at 8pm

Barclaycard Arena, B’ham

The Beach Boys have had a torrent of hit singles and sold tens of millions of albums. They continue to update their own material, perform with the same imagination and style that marked their explosive debut.

Visit www.barclaycardarena.co.uk

Discern

Mon at 7.30pm, £18-£24.90
Palace Theatre, Redditch, B98 8AE.

Call 01543 578762

The Blitz

Wed at 7pm, £11-£24.90
Palace Theatre, Redditch, B98 8AE.

Call 01543 578762

Embraced Burlesque

Sat at 8pm, £10
New Alexandra Centre, Wolverhampton, WV1 4AN.

Call 01902 572000

THE BASIL BRUSH SHOW

Sun at 11am, £20
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, WV1 1DE.

Call 01902 573320

Supreme Fabulutes

Fri at 8pm, £18.90
Birmingham Town Hall, B1 2EA.

Call 0121 200 3030

Ruby Wax – Sane New World

Fri at 7.30pm, £18-£24.90
New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, B5 4D5.

Call 0844 871 3011

The Curse

Fri at 7.30pm, £10-£27.50
Madame Butterfly, Walsall, WS3 4BP.

Call 01922 721305

Wax World’ which helps us understand most adventurous of his career.

This show is based on Ruby’s critically acclaimed book ‘Some New World’ which helps us understand why we sabotage our sanity without thinking about it.

Visit www.staffordgatetheatre.co.uk
Manic Street Preachers — drummer Sean Moore, bassist Nicky Wire and singer-guitarist James Dean Bradfield — have announced they would be playing special shows celebrating the 20th anniversary of their third album, The Holy Bible, the ticket sale for which begins 10am Monday and will be limited to five per person. Richey Edwards, who disappeared five months after the LP came out, would have celebrated his 50th birthday on Saturday.

The Manics have sold out all those dates, including Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Monday, after releasing a deluxe box set of The Holy Bible including BBC recordings of their last gigs with Richey Edwards.

James Dean Bradfield, Nicky Wire and Sean Moore have released two new albums, Rewind The Film and Futurology, in little over a year. They also sold out the Civic last year, treating fans to a storming concert. Other upcoming highlights include Brandon Flowers of The Killers at the O2 Academy in Birmingham tonight and the Beach Boys at the Barclaycard Arena tomorrow.

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It’s still A’dam fine city

By Leon Burakowski

That’s the perfect time to sip a Dutch gin (genever) at bars such as the atmospheric Bagijnhof, where the furniture is made out of old barrels.

Foodwise, Amsterdam has the lot, having been the port of a mighty trading nation. There are excellent Italian eateries, Indonesian and Thai places and an infeasible number of sugar-coated waffle shops. For the ultimate Dutch street food — besides a slippery herring — go to Vlaams Friteshuis Vleminckx. Only open in the afternoon, this hatch in the wall sells piping hot cones of delicious frites (chips), available with various tangy mayonnaises.

The Red Light District, located between tacky central drag Damrak and Chinatown, can be avoided if you are offended by the women in the windows and the X-rated shops.

It is Birmingham’s boast that it has more canals than Venice, 35 miles’ worth compared with 26. However, Amsterdam beats them both put together with 65 miles of waterways coiled around the centre of the Dutch capital.

Walking the streets flanking those canals is one of the great pleasures of a city break to Amsterdam. The grand trio of canals the Herengracht, Keizergracht and Prinsengracht have tall thin gabled buildings, most dating from Holland’s golden age in the 17th century when these were the homes and warehouses of rich merchants.

You can spend days wandering these watery thoroughfares, popping into cozy dark-wood cafes, trying nibbles at the ubiquitous cheese shops, rooting through the vintage clothes shops and getting the odd herbal whiff from the many coffee shops (or should we call them joints).

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Do you have a good news story?

Do you need to promote an event for a charity or a local good cause?

The Halesowen Chronicle needs local news stories for your local paper for you

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2. Fiona Bruce and the team visit Ashton Court in Bristol, where they examine a piece of street art by Banksy in a local doorway. Expert Rupert Maas reveals the details of the artist whose identity is a closely guarded secret. Others find include a 19th-century autograph that can smoke a cigarette, a rare metal engraved with a picture of the city’s suspension bridge, a clock that provides a surprise to its owner and a possnet pot that may have origins closer to home than expected.

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**FILM CHOICES**

**MONDAY**

*The X Factor* may appear to be on borrowed time, some have suggested that its creator Simon Cowell is losing his touch. And the likes of Red or Black? and Guess It Is Word were hardly as successful as his hit. *X Factor* and *Got Talent* franchises, were they? Nevertheless, the latter of that smash TV hit continues to go from strength to strength.

Among those who have been busy the buzzer and the magic four years were a group of people planning to hip-hop music, a conductor from Essex, a Russian film director, a turk, a burlesque dancer troupe from Hull, and a comedy hypnotist with a pet dig.

Although these acts have added variety, it seems most of the major contenders for the prize of £500,000 and the chance to perform at this year’s Royal Variety Show will once again be singer and acts.

Cromer Curium Scott, who was the beneficiary of Cowell’s Golden buzzer, and Siberian shadow dance en- actsm en would not have never children with the bookies before last week’s semi-finals got underway.

They were closely followed by Revelation Avenue, chair Cor Greenaway, opera singer Emma Jones and five-piece London dance act. Boyband. However, it seems an upset might not be surprised if there’s an upset tonight. After all, Scottish singer Susan Boyle was a massive odds-on favourite back in 2009, and ended up losing out to dance group Diversity.

Boyle has proved to be somewhat of an anomaly in the show, as she’s the second contestant who has managed to carve out a lucrative post-

So with the success of this series, will the awesome from *Cowell, Amanda Holden, David Walliams and Alesha Dixon* be back for the show’s 10th-anniversary run next year?

There have been rumors that Walliams may be about to quit the show, but in a recent interview with Radio Times, the comedian seems quite happy with his role, and was still旅游业 in the fact that he was voted the public’s Favourite Judge at the National Television Awards in February.

Nevertheless, despite Walliams’ NTAs award and the struggles of the X Factor, the show’s creator Cowell is in no doubt who is the main man.

*"I’m the opinion people want to hear," he boasted.

“Is it an anomaly true,” Walliams asks.

And with the ongoing success of BGT, who can argue?

**TUESDAY**

*Hannah’s Law*, Channel 5, 3.15pm

Premiere. A 15-year-old girl’s happiness is thrown into upheaval when her mother is sentenced to life imprisonment for murdering her father. Amd she spends the rest of her adolescence drifting from one foster home to another, but her mother remains a constant influence in her life. Drama based on Janet Fitch’s novel, starring Alison Lohman, Michelle Pfiffer, Renée Zellweger, Robin Wright and Billy Connolly.

**WEDNESDAY**

*Eagle Eye*, Wednesday, BBC1, 11.15pm

Thriller, starring Shia LaBeouf, Michelle Monaghan, Rosario Dawson and Michael Chiklis. (2008)

A 15-year-old girl’s happiness is thrown into upheaval when her mother is sentenced to life imprisonment for murdering her father. Amd she spends the rest of her adolescence drifting from one foster home to another, but her mother remains a constant influence in her life. Drama based on Janet Fitch’s novel, starring Alison Lohman, Michelle Pfiffer, Renée Zellweger, Robin Wright and Billy Connolly.

**THURSDAY**

*Hannah’s Law*, Channel 5, 3.15pm

Premiere. A 15-year-old girl’s happiness is thrown into upheaval when her mother is sentenced to life imprisonment for murdering her father. Amd she spends the rest of her adolescence drifting from one foster home to another, but her mother remains a constant influence in her life. Drama based on Janet Fitch’s novel, starring Alison Lohman, Michelle Pfiffer, Renée Zellweger, Robin Wright and Billy Connolly.
Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Quick Clues:
Across
1. Soother (6)
4. Boon (6)
9. Arrogance (13)
16. Tackle (7)
11. Fulde (6)
12. More quickly (5)
14. Composition (5)
16. Scope (5)
21. Unansweress (13)
22. Stable (6)
23. Health (6)

Down
1. Tripping (6)
2. Calm (13)
3. Extensive (5)
5. Replies (7)
6. Exaggeration (13)
7. Futa (5)
8. Dealing (5)
10. To be said (7)
15. Fonde (6)
19. Vapour (6)
20. Outcome (5)

Niner: POLYNESIA

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Double Crossword

Across
1. Be in no hurry and walk about (6)
4. To reveal hesitation quite found (6)
9. Telephone for legal help (4,3)
10. It’s obvious I’d enter the contest (7)
11. Put oil on an ore that has been prepared (5)
12. A trap set outside a second time (5)
14. New lamps put into service (5)
18. Game many take to (5)
19. Include a second mention of (5)
21. A fine leaning over a ramp, perhaps (9,5)
22. Strip a crooked side street (5)
23. Fresh petals set out on the table (6)

Down
1. Clipped at the quay side (6)
2. They support the game, perhaps (7,4)
3. Turner writes articles (5)
5. Not the sort of waterpipe common in most houses (7)
6. In dish-skinned, colourless and uncooked (5)
7. Snagged, but got it in the end (5)
8. He’s around at the pedestrian races (5)
9. Example of the most suitable type of humour that is found in clubs (7)
10. Fighting together and all about to die (6)
11. There may be a catch in it (5)
12. People mending pipes? (6)
13. Part of a jacket to copy in a fifty-fifty arrangement (5)

Last week’s solutions:
1. Tackle (7)
2. Calm (13)
3. Extensive (5)
5. Replies (7)
6. Exaggeration (13)
7. Futa (5)
8. Dealing (5)
10. To be said (7)
15. Fonde (6)
19. Vapour (6)
20. Outcome (5)

Puzzles

Sudoku

Thinking space
Three-bedroom house
is close to Warley Woods

A semi-detached residence in Wheatley Road, Oldbury, is close to Warley Woods.

With gas central heating and double glazing it is for sale through Derek Spire at £167,950. It has a porch, an entrance hall, a spacious lounge, a kitchen/breakfast room with an integrated dishwasher, a four-burner gas hob with extractor hood over and integrated oven and grill, a breakfast bar, utility, conservatory, first-floor landing, three bedrooms, a bathroom and a garden with shed. Contact Derek Spire on 0121 4204646 or visit www.derekspiresandco.com

Spacious home has a gallery and conservatory

This distinctive detached family residence in Rookery Road, Wolverhampton, includes impressive accommodation including a stylish kitchen and an elegant living room and dining room.

With ample off road parking, it is for sale through Skitts Estate Agents at £325,000. It has a living room with feature fireplace and sliding patio door to a conservatory, dining room and a kitchen with a range oven with an eight ring gas hob and stainless steel cooker hood.

There is a gallery landing, three excellent bedrooms, bathroom with a white suite including floor and wall tiling and a chrome heated towel rail. The rear garden has a patio and brick utility room.

Contact 01902 688688 or visit the website at www.search.skitts.net

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Classical Spain

Seven days various departure dates

Experience a unique blend of superb countryside, beautiful monuments, and wonderful art, on this classically Spanish getaway.

• Services of a coach driver/tour representative
• Free time in London
• Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Holidays (ABTAV 787X)

PRICE FROM £249

Dalmatian Coast

Dubrovnik, the Dalmatian Coast and Montenegro

Eight days various departure dates

• Return flights
• Seven nights half-board accommodation
• Tours of Dubrovnik, Montenegro, Dalmatian coastlines
• Visits to Mostar, Split and Trogir
• Visit to Krka National Park
• Services of a tour manager
• Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)

PRICE FROM £879

Isle of Wight and Osborne House

Two days departing August 28

• Return coach travel and ferry crossings
• Overnight half-board accommodation
• Entrance to Osborne House
• Visits to Ryde, Godshill, Yarmouth and The Needles Park at Alum Bay
• Tour and wine tasting at the Rosemary Vineyard
• Entrance to Ventnor Botanic Gardens and a cream tea
• Free time in Cowes
• Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

PRICE FROM £269

Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament

Two days departing Aug 8 and Sept 26

• Return coach travel
• Overnight half-board accommodation
• Entrance and guided tour of the Houses of Parliament
• Entrance to Buckingham Palace
• Free time in London
• Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

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PRICE FROM £139

London Weekend by rail

Two days various departure dates

• Return coach travel
• Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation at a four-star London hotel
• Ticket for the upper circle to see the evening performance of ‘Sinatra - The Man and his music’ at the London Palladium (ticket upgrades offered)
• Free time in London
• Services of a coach driver/tour representative
• Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4750)

PRICE FROM £139.95

Ferris Wheel and the Avocet Line

The Dawlish Railway

Four days departing July 10 and October 2

• Return coach travel
• Three nights half-board accommodation
• Railway journey on the Riviera Line from Exeter to Paignton
• Cruise on the River Exe with cream tea
• Railway journey on the Avocet Line from Topsham to Exmouth
• Free time in Exmouth and Torquay
• Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

PRICE FROM £49

PRICE FROM £249

Three-day option also offered from £189.95

• Services of a tour manager
• Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4750)

PRICE FROM £129.95

Three days departing September 18

Vist to the Alnwick Garden
• Services of a tour manager
• Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4750)

PRICE FROM £195

Three days departing September 19

• Return coach travel
• Two nights half-board accommodation
• Visit to Lindos
• Tour of Northumbria’s heritage coastline
• Entrance to The Alnwick Garden
• Services of a tour manager
• Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4750)

PRICE FROM £189

Strawberry Fields, Penny Lane and the Cavern Club

Three days departing September 19

• Return coach travel
• Two nights half-board accommodation
• Beatles Coach Tour and entrance to the Cavern Club
• Journey on the ‘Ferry ‘cross the Mersey”
• Visit to Liverpool
• Services of a tour manager
• Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Holidays (ABTA V7870)

PRICE FROM £119

London Weekend by rail

Two days various departure dates

• Return coach travel
• Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation at a four-star London hotel
• Ticket for the upper circle to see the evening performance of ‘Sinatra - The Man and his music’ at the London Palladium (ticket upgrades offered)
• Free time in London
• Services of a coach driver/tour representative
• Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4750)

PRICE FROM £139.95

Three-day option also offered from £189.95

• Services of a tour manager
• Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Omega Holidays (ABTA V4750)

PRICE FROM £129.95

Four days departing Sept 13 and Oct 11

• Return coach travel and Channel crossings
• Three nights bed and breakfast accommodation at Disney® Hotel Santa Fe
• Two day hopper ticket to both Disneyland Paris® and Walt Disney Studios® Park
• Services of a tour representative

Organised by Newmarket Promotions (ABTA V7870)

PRICE FROM £295

Disneyland® Paris

Bruges by Eurostar

Four days various departure dates

• Return coach travel
• Three nights bed and breakfast accommodation at Eurostar's Hotel Santa Fe
• Two day hopper ticket to both Disneyland Paris® and Walt Disney Studios® Park
• Services of a tour representative

Organised by Newmarket Promotions (ABTA V7870)

PRICE FROM £289

Dubrovnik, the Dalmatian Coast and Montenegro

Eight days various departure dates

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Stockists are members of ABTA – the Travel Association and hold an ATOL (Air Travel Organisers Licence) for holidays by air. Prices are per person (unless otherwise stated). Please note Star Extra Travel is unable to take bookings over the telephone. Please read brochures/web pages for full description plus terms and conditions. Dates subject to availability. Coach pick up points offered: Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton (with the exception of holidays by air, Eurostar and certain cruises).
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FREE Standard network rates apply.

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To reply to members from your mobile phone:
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0906 500 5650 calls cost £1.53 per minute plus network charges.

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Cheap and cheerful brand

By Graham Breeze

The motor industry is starting to take serious notice of the Dacia brand and the Sandero Stepway is one of the reasons.

Like many motoring writers I had my doubts about the longevity of the cheap and cheerful brand backed by Renault. But Dacia has given the Sandero an overhaul which opens doors to buyers wanting to take a step into the SUV market.

And that step comes at a price which is well within most buyers’ range. You certainly don’t need deep pockets with the Sandero Stepway Laureate $9,90 on test, hitting the road at only £10,995. Extras pushed the price up to £11,675 though the base model is only £8,300.

The Stepway is a great-value alternative thanks to SUV looks that are achieved by a raised suspension and good looking body cladding.

The Romanian manufacturer has really upped the game, with even the entry-level Ambiance model getting electric front windows, chrome interior detailing, MP3 connectivity, stability control, ABS and a gear-shift indicator.

The top-spec Laureate benefits from big-car technology such as a touch-screen multimedia system, air conditioning, cruise control with speed limiter and satnav.

The model also comes with three rear head rests, height-adjustable driver’s seat and steering reach, automatic door locking, ECO mode, a boot light, all-round electric windows, heated door mirrors, and a Media Nav touch-screen multi-media system.

There’s a new chrome grille, front fog lights, graphite door handles, leather steering wheel and gear knob, cruise control, rear parking sensors and a seven-function computer giving average fuel consumption and speed along with information on your next service timing.

Options on this model also included leather upholstery, metallic paint, a spare wheel, European mapping upgrade and an extended five-year warranty.

Consumption

There was a touring pack of front arm-rest, boot luggage net, roof bars and front and rear mats.

Running costs will really attract interest, Dacia claim fuel figures of 70.6mpg from the 1.5-litre model on the combined cycle and I managed to achieve close to that over a week’s driving – in fact I was beginning to wonder if the gauge was stuck.

CO2 emissions are only 105g/km on the model tested and with a top speed of 104mph and 0-62mph in 11.8 seconds this Dacia is no slouch.

The Stepway is the most comfortable Dacia I have driven, with no complaints from passengers about the usual hard seats or space, though it’s a tight fit for three in the back.

Boot space is impressive and easily passed the golf club test.

‘Dacia still offers you the cheapest way to get behind the wheel of a new car.’

Fold the seats down and Dacia fits the Sandero Stepway with a choice of two engines.

On both the Ambiance and Laureate models buyers can choose from a 0.9-litre turbocharged TCe petrol engine, or a 1.5-litre diesel unit, both sourced from parent company Renault.

The Sandero is not the best drive in class though.

Dacia still offers you the cheapest way to get behind the wheel of a new car but there will still be the worry of residual values for prospective buyers to consider.

The Sandero Stepway is a crossover at supermini prices and with its raised height is probably the company’s best looker.
Bristling with advanced technology and packing quite a punch from its 2.2-litre diesel and 3.7-litre V6 petrol engines, the Infiniti Q70 means business in the executive car market.

The brand isn't exactly looming large on the radar of buyers but exclusivity and value for money can go a long way.

The rear-wheel-drive Infiniti Q70 is powered either by a 3.7-litre V6 petrol engine in M37 guise, or by a 1.7-litre diesel which boasts 400Nm of torque to rival the class best.

There's also a 3.7-litre V6 petrol hybrid version. An 8-speed Adaptive Shift Control gearbox takes care of gear swapping duties and includes further driver assistance in the shape of DRM Downshift Rev Matching which blips the throttle on down changes and a Drive Sport mode which brings the wheel-mounted paddle shifters into the equation.

The Q70 is fitted with Infiniti Drive, a system by which drivers can alter the set-up of the car between four modes. There are Standard, Eco, Sport and Snow settings which adjust the throttle sensitivity, the transmission mapping, the level of ESP stability control intervention and the 4WAS 4-Wheel Active Steering system.

There's also a BSI Blind Spot Intervention system which uses radar to detect when there's a vehicle in the blind spot, warn the driver and intervene if the car is steered in that direction. BSI can actually brake selected wheels to create a yaw effect and move the car back into its lane away from danger.

The need to offer something different from the established German alternatives is not lost on Infiniti and as well as a host of technological features, the Q70 showcases the brand's distinctive styling themes.

The curvy lines and sportscar design cues aren't what we've come to expect in the executive car sector. The rear has an element of Jaguar XF about it and elsewhere there are hints of Hyundai Coupe.

Underlying the bodywork is a layout that's clearly geared towards an involving driving experience. The engine is at the front of the ladder-frame chassis but mounted behind the front axle to optimise weight distribution.

The suspension is a double wishbone set-up at the front with a multi-link system at the rear and a pair of anti-roll bars provide additional bracing.

The long wheelbase of the Q70 yields better cabin space than its swooping exterior lines would suggest. There's also a luxurious air about the place with standard leather trim with a mix of aluminium and piano black detailing.

There's an analogue clock at the centre of the dash (an Infiniti trademark) and a large display screen above through which the various ancillary systems are controlled.

Infiniti Q70 exclusivity and value are a big attraction

By James Parker

Brishing with advanced technology and packing quite a punch from its 2.2-litre diesel and 3.7-litre V6 petrol engines, the Infiniti Q70 means business in the executive car market. The brand isn't exactly looming large on the radar of buyers but exclusivity and value for money can go a long way.

The rear-wheel-drive Infiniti Q70 is powered either by a 320PS 3.7-litre V6 petrol engine in M37 guise, or by a 170PS 2.2-litre diesel which boasts 400Nm of torque to rival the class best.

There's also a 364PS petrol hybrid version. A 7-speed Adaptive Shift Control gearbox takes care of gear swapping duties and includes further driver assistance in the shape of DRM Downshift Rev Matching which blips the throttle on down changes and a Drive Sport mode which brings the wheel-mounted paddle shifters into the equation.

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The need to offer something different from the established German alternatives is not lost on Infiniti and as well as a host of technological features, the Q70 showcases the brand's distinctive styling themes.

Executive

The curvy lines and sportscar design cues aren't what we've come to expect in the executive car sector. The rear has an element of Jaguar XF about it and elsewhere there are hints of Hyundai Coupe.

Underlying the bodywork is a layout that's clearly geared towards an involving driving experience. The engine is at the front of the ladder-frame chassis but mounted behind the front axle to optimise weight distribution.

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Kevin McDonald wants Wolves to find an extra 10 per cent to win promotion as he admitted next season is a big one for the club.

Wolves finished seventh after being squeezed out of the top six on goal difference on the final day by Ipswich, their total of 78 points the highest at Championship level to miss the play-offs.

Boss Kenny Jackett is determined to lead Wolves into the Premier League and McDonald, who was the club's only ever present in 2014-15, is convinced further improvement is within their capabilities.

“We know we can improve that extra 10 per cent and who knows where that could take us?” said the Scottish playmaker.

“It will be a hard league again but, with everything in that dressing room, we’ll give it a good shot.

“We’ve come a long way and next season is a big year for us. This season has to be used as a motivation.”

McDonald believes Wolves should be proud of how far they have come after being in League One when the club was two years ago, and to think we’ve finished seventh and missed out on the play-offs on goal difference, we’d have been more than happy with that,” he said.

“We have to be proud of the work we’ve put in over the last couple of seasons.”

McDonald believes Wolves will be better equipped to challenge next time after adjusting to the second tier.

“We showed we can adapt our game to the Championship,” he said. “When we went through a tough patch teams were trying to stop us playing and it was hard to adjust. McDonald struck up an effective link-up with Benik Afoke and the Scot is confident he can continue to create chances for the strikers.

“I enjoyed the season – I was pleased with how I played,” said the midfielder.

“Producing assists is the main part of my game and, with the strikers we have, it’s all about trying to play them in and giving them chances.”

Bacuna looking for brotherly treble in cup

VILLA’S Leandro Bacuna is looking to complete an unlikely treble in this Saturday’s FA Cup final.

The 23-year-old will hope to follow in the footsteps of his brothers, who have both tasted glory this season.

Younger brother Jonathan helped FC Groningen win the KNVB Beker in the Netherlands last month, an equivalent of the FA Cup – earlier this month.

Oldest brother Johnson then followed up with more success for Harkemase Boys in an amateur league title decider.

It means the pressure is on Leandro when Villa look to win their first FA Cup in 58 years against Arsenal.

“It is brilliant for my family at the moment,” he said. “My little brother played the cup final in Holland. My big brother played in a final at amateur level and obviously we have the FA Cup final on Saturday.

“Juninho played in the last few minutes of the final and I was really pleased for him.

“It was a great atmosphere. I was really happy for him because it was his first season in the first team so to win a cup was great – especially as I didn’t get a cup while I was there.

“Both brothers will be in the crowd at Wembley along with the rest of the family. Leandro will be hoping to edge out Alain Hunte for a place at right-back.

“It is good to have that competition and have a good battle for your place,” Bacuna added. “It is going well for me at the moment and I can keep on playing in a few more games until the season finishes.”

Youngsters win final in extra time

A DRAMATIC penalty shootout victory over Wrexham United 24 hours before the semi-final saw Wolves Under-19s win the under-21 FA Cup.

The Wolves youngsters defeated Mexican outfit Chivas Guadalajara 4-3 on penalties after the game ended 1-1.

Younger brother Juninho helped Wolves into the semi-finals with a double as he edged his side to victory.

The Wolves youngsters beat Eskisehirspor in the quarter-finals before beating Red Star Belgrade 2-0 in the semi-finals thanks to a late winner from Connor Graham, who was the hero in the semi-final.

The 23-year-old will hope to follow in the footsteps of his brothers, who have both tasted glory this season.

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AFTER
ASHLEY Westwood says Arsenal's defeat was specially with the likes of Fabian Delph, Tom Cleverley and Jack Grealish having become a qualified coach at the tender age of 21. He has also been assistant manager at Sutton Coldfield Town.

Tividale football general manager Leon Murray said: "I'm pleased we've reached the conclusion of our managerial search because we needed to start preparing for the 2015/16 season and pre-season isn't too far away now."

"Phil and Ross have experience of the Evo-Stik Division One South and that was a key ingredient during this process."

"We've got a lot of hard work to get through in the next few weeks, particularly on the playing side to ensure we have a competitive side for the start of the season."

Dale's head of communications Steven Beach added: "I'm delighted to welcome Phil and Ross to the club. We initially held discussions with them on Wednesday and we were very impressed with what they had to say."

"We've had no indication he has played here, and he's a local lad, too. He's extremely popular in these parts."

**Benteke may be a nightmare for Gunners in final**

ASHLEY Westwood says Arsenal's defenders will be having sleepless nights over Christian Benteke and Villa's midfielders in Saturday's FA Cup final.

Benteke scored 12 goals in the final 12 games of the season and midfielder Westwood agrees the 24-year-old Belgian striker has rediscovered the form which made him one of the country's top strikers.

"He's had an ice break now and it's been a chance to get his head straight and get focused and he will be ready for it, I'm sure," said the 56-year-old, who made 409 appearances for Villa from 1977 until 1996. "You've always got these possibilities because anything can happen, but I'm sure if Brad Guzan comes in, he will do well.

"He's been the number one goalkeeper for a couple of years now and he will be absolutely first." Spink, who was at Villa Park on Sunday, was also impressed with 22-year-old Steer, who is cup-tied for the final after playing for Yeovil in earlier rounds.

"I thought Jed did really well considering his lack of first-team football," said Spink. "He has been a bit nervous coming into the team – it was a pressure game for him, but he looked confident. He has shown Tim what he can do in the future if he's needed."