**Borough loses bid to be city**

POLLICE have seized cocaine with a street value of £1.4 million after smashing a suspected drug dealing operation in Stirchley.

The operation was planned to take place in a house in Hall Road, Amlwch, and an associated raid took place in another property in Dennis Road on Friday night.

Four men were arrested and held for questioning.

The operation last Thursday was part of a crackdown on a drugs network believed to be dealing across the West Midlands.

A police spokesman said they swooped on the address following arrests made by the public.

The four arrested men were later charged with conspiracy to supply cocaine and brought before magistrates in Wolverhampton on Saturday.

Police said the operation was designed to target those involved in drug dealing in the Dudley borough.

A police spokesman said: “We were aware of reports of drugs being supplied in the Dudley area, and we took action to arrest people and disrupt drug dealing.

COUNCIL chiefs and business leaders today insisted the Dudley borough has a bright future despite failing in its bid for city status. They admitted that more work needs to be done in the area but said regeneration projects would see local towns transformed in the coming years.

MPS remain positive for the future

MPS ACROSS the Dudley borough said they were disappointed the city bid had not been successful but said the outcome was still bright for the borough – and pledged to support future applications.

James Morris, MP for Halesowen and Rowley Regis, said: “Although it’s a shame that we were not successful, Dudley Council deserves credit for taking the initiative and putting together such a strong bid.”

Stourbridge MP Mypopl: “I am very much hopeful that the next time the opportunity arises for Dudley to bid, it will be successful.

“Although I was right behind Dudley’s bid for city status, it’s not the be all and end all of the region’s prosperity so there is nothing to be dispirited about,” he said.

Ian Austin, MP for Dudley North, said city status could have been a catalyst to attract new investment, new trade and new jobs.

“Like everyone who grow up in Dudley I can remember the town’s better days, but if we dare to accept that our best days are behind us,” he said. “We need a new plan, I want to see concerts and plays in the castle and I want to see a university campus in Dudley. Above all, we need new ideas to attract new investment and new jobs.”

Dudley’s bid, which was made for the entire borough, was submitted in May 2011 just days before the closing date and highlighted its history and heritage as the “jewel in the crown”.

It was announced on Wednesday that the borough had lost out, with Chelmsford, Perth, Stockton and St Asaph, North Wales all becoming cities to mark the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee.

Dudley Council Leader Councillor Les Jones said he was disappointed the bid had been unsuccessful but insisted it had been “important” in raising Dudley’s profile.

He said he was keen for the borough to try again for city status – if the council had more time to draw up its bid.

The council admitted it had spent just £500 on its bid.

**Boost**

Although “we haven’t won, I believe the whole process has brought a boost to the borough and really helped to get it noticed,” he said. “We always said this was a speculative bid and we took a relatively low-key approach but we always believed we had a chance of winning.

“We will take positives from this and move forward with our regeneration projects for the future.”

He added: “I would definitely consider making another bid if the opportunity came up. I would like to have a bit more notice and have time to get some more public support behind the bid.”

Regeneration chief Councillor Angus Adams said: “I’m very disappointed, especially considering the towns that have won, as I feel Dudley has just as much to offer as any other city. It战略布局 gives an area prestige but I don’t think this will deter potential investors, and I’m happy with the impact that the bid has had.”

He said the £10m project to revamp Castle Hill in Dudley showed the borough was “punching its weight” and had ambitions to be one of the country’s top tourist sites.

**Specialist team may tackle bad tenants**

DUDLEY Council is considering setting up a specialist team to deal with bad tenants after latest figures show more than 800 complaints were made about anti-social behaviour at council homes in the last year.

The figures also show tenants from six households were evicted. Residents say there are recurring problems – and they feel the council should be cracking down on bad neighbours.

In total there were 823 incidents in the borough reported to the authority over the last 12 months. The council says it is now looking at setting up a specialist team to deal with anti-social behaviour.

The figures are made by people concerned about noisy neighbours or gangs of youths congregating outside their homes.

The total of incidents reported has fallen from 1,200 in the previous financial year.

A report to Dudley Council scrutiny was subject to independent appraisal is currently being undertaken, with a Wirral Manager’s role in anti-social behaviour taken into account.

Councillors said the figures were “encouraging” and that they did not want to deter people from reporting problems.

The figures show the number of complaints has fallen from 845 in 2010/11.

Dudley South MP Chris Kelly added: “I don’t think this will deter potential tenants, but we must ensure we are proactive in our response to anti-social behaviour.

**Work starts on welcome**

WORK will get under way on a £300,000 scheme to create a new welcome plaza featuring a shop and café at Dudley Zoo in September next year.

It is the latest project in a £4.5m project to transform the zoo’s famous Tecton Hill.

The project is currently on time and on target.

**£1.4m of cocaine is seized in police raid**

**Fire chiefs question plans for a new fire station in the Black Country.**

The scheme will see the fire stations in Halesowen and Cradley Heath closed, with a new station built to cover both areas. The location of the station is undecided.

The fire station in Hagley Road, Halesowen, is due to close on March 31, with its firefighters redeployed in the area.

**Fundraiser for crash victim**

A FRIENDRAISER for the crash victim has been arranged.

Alex Bidcock, landlady Mandy Jordan, Carl Wood, Gavin Molinsa and Kirsty Jordan held a charity night in aid of 46-year-old Andrew Shaw at The Church Tavern.

CUSTOMERS at a Black Country pub have held a fundraising night for a friend who suffered serious injuries in a car crash.

Andrew Shaw, aged 48, was involved in the crash just over two weeks ago, when his car collided with a lorry in Coventry. The self-employed shed builder of Park Road, Quarry Bank, Brierley Hill is still in an induced coma. He also had to have his leg amputated. His wife Rose is keeping vigil at his hospital bedside. His friends and landlady Mandy Jordan organised a fundraising night at his local pub the Church Tavern, High Street. Gavin Molinsa, aged 23, of Old High Street, said: “We understand he is no longer in any danger, but still very ill.”

The event included an auction of goods donated by customers and businesses.

**Clown makes marriage proposal in the big top**

HALESOWEN

A CLOWN has made a marriage proposal in the big top.

Mother’s Day treat being laid on at the museum

**Ring of truth**

**Mum to a tea**

**High five**

**Girls proud to battle their way to the finals**

**Celebrate**

**Spotlight**

**Specialist team may tackle bad tenants**

**Dudley Council is considering setting up a specialist team to deal with bad tenants after latest figures show more than 800 complaints were made about anti-social behaviour at council homes in the last year.**

**Fire chiefs questioned**

**FIRE chiefs welcomed members of the community to a consultation event to discuss plans for a new fire station in the Black Country.**

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The event included an auction of goods donated by customers and businesses.
New fire station plans in spotlight

Residents refuse to give up the fight

**CONTROVERSY:** Plans for a new fire station in the Black Country have come under the spotlight at a planning inquiry on Wednesday.

Halesowen Fire Station is due to be closed at the end of the month.

A new station is to be built to cover the area currently covered by Halesowen and Cradley Heath.

Councillors have batted to save the Halesowen station but the costs of the legal battle proved to heavy for them to continue the fight.

Before the new station is completed, Halesowen will be covered from the existing Cradley Heath station.

Campaigners recently admitted defeat in their bid to force court action.

The location of the new station is yet to be decided, but fire chiefs have given residents the opportunity to discuss with them their concerns.

A three-hour consultation event was held at Reddall Hill Primary School in Cradley Heath at the weekend.

This was the second of two consultation meetings which are being held so people can voice their opinions about the proposals.

Michael Bird, who has lived in Halesowen for 50 years said: “It’s worrying, I didn’t really like the idea when I heard about it, and so I came down here to see what was going on.”

Carl Pruden of Carnegie Road in Rowley Regis said: “I was very shocked when I heard they were closing down the station. It is worrying for people here, it will always be when they say they are going to move your fire station further away. Of course it all depends on where it is built.”

**Liz Hill:**

Liz Hill whose trusty bike was stolen from Russells Hall Hospital, Dudley

A HOSPITAL worker who always goes the extra mile to help patients in need has fallen victim to a heartless bicycle thief.

Liz Hill, a ward clerk at Dudley Russell’s Hall Hospital, was distraught to discover her trusty bike had been stolen at the end of a 12-hour shift.

She had parked it in the bicycle rack at the main entrance to the hospital. The 38-year-old, who is also a hospital “customer care ambassador” often used her bike to return possessions left behind by patients.

She said: “I now won’t be able to help my patients in the same way, as I am having to walk everywhere. It upset me and makes me angry to think I can’t help.”

**Handbook for tenants**

COUNCIL tenants in Dudley can find out about their repairs and maintenance rights and responsibilities in the updated handbook.

It includes information and guidance about the council’s repairs service and is being distributed to all new tenants. It will also be available online.

Councillor Adrian Turner, said: “This handbook lets tenants know how Dudley Council can help, what is on offer and what to do in an emergency.”

See www.dudley.gov.uk

**Council online**

DUDLEY Council’s next full council meeting will be broadcast live online.

The authority’s 72 councillors will gather on April 14 for a full council meeting. It will take place at Dudley Council House, Priory Road, from 6pm. Visit www.dudley.gov.uk.
Concern as homes scheme moving too slow

A SCHEME to develop part of a Black Country town has not progressed as quickly as expected and concern over traffic congestion remains a key problem to be solved, councillors claim.

Crown Centre was due to go under in the spring concert by Hagley Old Edwardians Golfing Club and its facilities for the disabled, next to St Michael's Church, Bridgnorth Road.

The spring fundraising concert is to be held at St Michael’s Church, Bridgnorth Road, on March 17 at 7.30pm.

Inquest opens on grandfather

AN INQUEST has opened in connection with a 79-year-old man who had been taken to hospital after a fall. Geoffrey, aged 79, was admitted to Stourbridge’s Kingswinford hospital on March 12 with a bleed to the right leg caused by a fall at his home.

No one was injured.

Old news is good news

LOCAL historians and people researching their ancestors will get tips on using newspapers as a source for information at a talk organised by the Black Country History Society on Thursday, March 15 at 7.30pm.

The talk, by Dr Colin Chapman, will be at the Black Country Living Museum in Dudley on March 28 at 7.30pm.

It will be open to anyone interested in their family history or local history.

Improving

Officials said they planned to work with developers on improving road junctions along Windmill Hill to try and deal with the problem.

But they said more radical measures such as buying up land to widen carriageways were not feasible in the present economic climate.

The pitter patter of penguins

The pitter patter of tiny webbed feet has been echoing around Dudley Zoo.

Keepers are accompanying 10 week-old Humboldt chicks, Pete and Louis, on their morning poolside strolls.

The youngsters’ daily waddle takes them from the bird cabin, where they are being reared, 256 yards across the site to the pool where the zoo’s 70-strong penguin breeding colony is.

Curator Matt Lewis said the chicks had been hand-reared because their parents had deserted the eggs.

It may be a long time before anyone can see baby penguins putting their feet forward with their keepers for a morning walk to the pool, but taking them there during the day will help them adapt to an indoor pool when they are more independent.

Meanwhile a teenage animal lover has landed her dream job as an apprenticeship at Dudley.

Bethany, 16, has been made an assistant with the zoo’s 70-strong penguin breeding colony and their enclosure.

She left Ellowes Hall School in February and now works at the zoo.

She said: “I love animals and it is a dream job.”

The zoo prides itself on its animal conservation efforts and the chick project is part of the world effort to preserve the species.

To find out more, visit Dudley Zoo’s website, http://www.dudleyzoo.co.uk.
I’m not clowning, will you make me happy?

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

THIS advert, I am assured, is in the window of a local corner shop: “Astronomical telescope for sale. Use it to look at the Mickey Way.”

DAMMIT, it has happened again. I stay in all day waiting for a delivery and, at 11.20am precisely find on the doorstep the courier’s card, timed at 11.16am, announcing “Sorry, we missed you!”

Note the exclamation mark. The proper punctuation for a note of regret is a simple full stop. The exclamation mark is a way of saying: “We won’t!”

At what stage in the delivery driver’s training do they learn the art of knocking on the door with a feather and running like hell?

STRANGE, isn’t it, how few jobs and even fewer Olympic sports, allow men and women to compete on genuinely equal terms and yet a TV show, Total Wipeout does it right after night? And makes us laugh into the bargain. The girl getting walloped by a giant rubber spider was so over-the-top - a Marilyn Monroe/Rock ‘n Roll revival.

The girl who got hit was one of two women who got hit on the opening night of the Zippos Circus tour at Dudley’s Merry Hill shopping centre.

The spectacular show took a romantic turn as Emilion Delbosq broke off at the end of a comedy routine with a marriage proposal for his fellow clown and long-term girlfriend Andrea.

As he went down on one knee, Emilion was joined by the couple’s three-year-old son Lewis. Andrea gleefully accepted.

“I was shaking, it was such a surprise to me,” said 29-year-old Andrea. “Everyone was smiling, and I thought: ‘what’s going on, something’s going on as they wouldn’t let me leave after the routine. It was mine and something we will always remember.”

Andrea had unwittingly been the subject of a comedy magic routine.

At the end of the skit, she headed backstage but was stopped by Emilion and ringmaster Norman Barrett MBE.

Andrea was wide-eyed and brought her hand to her face in shock as Emilion passed the microphone to ask Andrea Mihut to marry him.

SHE thought he was just clowning around – but little did circus performer Andrea Mihut know that her comedy partner was about to pop the question in the big top.

**100 sign up to ID scheme**

A DUDLEY metal recycling firm’s ID scheme which aims to combat the sale of stolen metal has topped 100 names. Mason Metals in Brierley Hill started the scheme in January. It was recently mentioned in Parliament as an example of good practice.

The project was devised to meet and go beyond local politicians’ calls for more traceability on scrap metal transactions following an explosion in thefts of lead, iron and copper.

Commercial manager Neil Woodall said membership was now approaching 150 with customers returning to the site daily with questionnaires and relevant ID.

“We have around five people signing up every day, which is brilliant,” he said.

“The scheme is voluntary so there is no pressure, but hopefully the fact that there is such a scheme running and many customers are happy to join says all about the validity of business done here.” Mr Woodall said the firm also completed waste transfer notes and were fully compliant with the British Metals Recycling Association’s code of conduct.

**Lions hold sale**

DUDLEY Lions Club will hold a table top sale on Saturday March 17 to fund research into brain tumours.

It takes place at the Pen-onion’s Club, Kent St, Upper Gornal from 10am to 1pm. Some tables are still available. Call 07776894754 for details.

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Police say park youths need to be kept busy not banned

A DUDLEY MP is calling for more help for the elderly during the cold winter months.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin has signed up to Age UK’s ‘Get a Buddy’ pledge after new figures showed that last winter there were almost 22,000 additional deaths among pensioners in England and Wales.

In Dudley North 60 more people died during the winter of 2009-2010 than during non-winter months.

In the West Midlands as a whole the figure was 3,800.

He wants more support for measures older people can take before a cold spell and is challenging energy providers to produce simpler tariffs.

Mr Austin has written to the Secretary of State for Energy urging action.

He said: “Each year thousands of people die due to cold related illness.

“In my constituency 60 more died during the winter of 2009-2010 than during winter months,” added Mr Austin.

“Let’s give some backing to Age UK’s pledge so that we can help raise awareness of the dangers of cold spell and keep the older people in our community.”

Flowers event
A FLOWER arranging event will take place at Stourport Civic Hall next month.

Floral artist Andrew Lloyd from Stourport Florist will be giving demonstrations on April 4 at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £10. Book on 01299 822575.

Horses plan gets backing
AN ACTION plan to tackle the problem of stray horses plaguing streets around Dudley in the future has been backed by councillors after a year-long trial proved a “major success”.

Dudley Council was forced to rethink the way it dealt with the stray animals following a surge in calls from residents about horses causing problems in streets and parks last year. An agreement was drawn up with police and the RSPCA to remove the animals found wandering near to highways. Around 120 horses have been collected and removed outside the borough since the launch of the action plan.

The partnership now forms part of the action plan that was supported by Dudley Council’s regeneration and culture scrutiny committees last week.

The plan is expected to be given final approval by the authority later on this year. Under the scheme, residents will be encouraged to report stray horse sightings to the police or council wardens.

Sixth form advice
PARENTS and pupils are invited to a sixth form open day at Holy Trinity International School, Kidderminster, on March 20 from 9am until 7pm and staff will give advice. Call the school on 01562 822929.

MP calling for more cold help

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SKATE ramps and sports areas could be built at a Black Country park to tackle anti-social behaviour – after police refused to ban youths gathering there.

The facilities at King George V Park in Walsall – expected to cost around £31,000 – could include a shelter. The idea was put forward by the police and Dudley Council after scores of complaints about vandalism attacks. Residents wanted a dispersal order giving police power to break up groups in streets around the park. But officers said the law was not enough strong for the laws to be enforced. And instead they have suggested building an area for youths to encourage them to behave responsibly. A sports coach could also be employed to hold sessions in the evenings at the park.

Another measure will be keeping smaller entrances to the park open during the evening so police can access the site more quickly if there are reports of trouble.

This situation will be constantly monitored to ensure it does not lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour and the gates will be locked again if concerns are raised.

Residents are looking to set up a ‘friends of the park’ group to move the plans forward and provide an outlet for any issues.

Ward councillor Geoffrey Southall said: “Youngsters in the area have drawn up a wish-list of what they would like to see at the park. It is all in the early stages and we would have to sort out funding and a planning application. The police said there was not enough evidence for a dispersal order.”

A report to the Brierley Hill Area Committee stated: “A suggestion was made by the police to create a youth area west of Bells Lane about 100m into the park and encourage usage by lighting it at night.”

Organiser Martin Jones and library assistant Rachel Shepherd

STORIES and photos from people in a history project as part of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

All Saints’ Church, Sedgley and Sedgley Library have organised recordings over the past 60 years.

Memories are made for this

PERSONAL memories from people in a Dudley-based project as part of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

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A FATHER who attacked a puppy — punching, kicking and swinging it by its lead — has been banned from keeping dogs and fined.

Shaun Meusz, from Oldbury, claimed in court he loved his three-month-old rotweiler-mix as much as a member of his family. He was found guilty of causing unnecessary suffering to the animal.

The 24-year-old shocked Sandwell magistrates by asking if the puppy could be put down instead of rehomed.

Sentencing Meusz, district judge Graham Wilkinson said: “A true dog lover would never treat a dog like this.” The court heard Meusz was spotted abusing the puppy called Max in Bearmoor playing field, Cradley Heath, at 11am on March 8 last year.

Witness Sonia Beynon said she saw Meusz picking the dog up by its skin. When the dog ran away, Ms Beynon said he kicked it so it rolled forward before he grabbed it and punched it in its face. She told the court she challenged the defendant, telling him “don’t be so cruel” but was told to mind her own business.

Meusz then lifted the dog off the ground by the lead and continued to kick it.

At the time of the attack, Meusz was on bail for being in possession of a pitbull-type fighting dog. The dog, Leo, had attacked another in Wordcroft Close, Cradley Heath, in August 2010. For both convictions Meusz, 24, was ordered to pay £2,500, given a six-month community order and a two-month curfew. He was banned from keeping dogs for five years.

Mr Simon Bradshaw, defending, had argued it was an isolated attack and stressed his client’s genuine attachment to Max.

THEIVES are repeatedly stealing sandstone coping stones from a historic wall in Himley – more than 60 £10,000, have gone in the last year.

Thieves are stealing the heavy cap stones, worth an estimated £10,000 each, to order – and she is appealing for passers-by to report any suspicious activity near her mile-long wall.

Sheena Hamilton by the wall, next to Himley Hall, which is at the heart of the Himley Park conservation area, next to Wombourne and Himley.

The land is part of the Himley Hall Estate, which is protected by the Centre for Archival Research in the West Midlands. The park is thought to be about 200 years old. Sheena, aged 69, who together with her husband, 60-year-old Paul Burcher, owns 78 acres of land, Wombourne and Himley.

Himley Hall, on Stourbridge Road, is open six days a week. The centre will be reduced from next month.

THE OPENING hours of a Dudley Council centre will be cut from April 2.

The Dudley Council Plus, Castle Street, offers residents services such as the chance to pay bills and get advice on issues, including housing. The centre now opens until 6pm on weekdays but from April 2 its opening hours will be from 8am to 5.30pm weekdays and from 9am to noon on Saturdays.

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Passionate about our town centre

IN RESPONSE to Mrs LS Holden, Feb-
ruary 23, “Councillors should focus on
our town centre”.

Dudley Council is passionately com-
mmitted to our proud town centre and to
suggested otherwise is unrealistic and
unfair. The centre is a crucial part of our
heritage and central to our future plans for
the borough. It hosts a bustling market place, first class
college, world-class tourist attractions,
popular cinema and leisure complex
and busy offices with more redevelop-
ment plans taking shape everyday.

New Heritage Regeneration Limited is
co-ordinating physical redevelopment
in order to revitalise the town’s streets:
squares, key buildings, parks and
gardens. Dudley College’s £500million
campus is under construction and this
will help us to educate, future genera-
tions while acting as a proud signaler
of opportunity and ambition.

Recently we consulted with residents
and traders over film of proposed
improvements to the well-used market-
place including the layout and appear-
ance of the market.

The Coundon House site is under
negotiation for a major supermarket
with a 400-space car park and we are
in discussions around the disused café
near Stone Square. Furthermore,
more, a comprehensive redevelopment
of the Castle Hill site that attracts
600,000 visitors every year will provide
a single gateway to the town’s thriving
tourist quarter and a purpose-built
new archive building.

It is understandable to feel unsettled
in such challenging times but residents
and visitors alike know we will con-
tinue to work with them and our part-
tners to do the very best for Dudley.

COUNCILLOR ANGUS ADAMS
Cabinet member for
regeneration

Dudley Council

Raises a smile on question
of debt

I HAVE a very smile when I
heard that Chris Kelly is
asking what is happening
about the Russells Hospital
Private Finance Initiative
(PFI) debt.

Is he not aware that it was
a previous Tory government
that saddled us with this
PFI fiasco in the first place,
together with GF Buckland-
by’s privatisation of our
city’s health service?

At least the latter got
money for the district general and
unfortunately the patients
and always has been but
never profit from this
disaster despite
ridding themselves
of this
terrible
crime.

ALAN ASHMAN
Sedgley

Alternative needed to
the main parties

SO JAMES Morris’ legal challenge to save our fire station
may well be true. But
around Wall Heath and
compared with the thou-
sands of residents in and
years. It is totally right that
quarry.

IN RESPONSE to Mrs LS heldon, Feb-
mitted to our proud town centre and to
suggest otherwise is unrealistic and
our heritage and central to our future
college, world-class tourist attractions,
tion plans taking shape everyday.

LETTERS

POST

Halesowen Chronicle, Chronicle
Editorial, 51-63 Queen Street,
Wolverhampton

E-MAIL
dudleychronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

LETTERS to the Editor

Halesowen Chronicle. Thornwall, Wolverhampton
WV11 6Y

Letters should be signed and MUST include name, address and telephone
number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.
Cuts approved during heated council debate

A total saving of £733,000 has been earmarked for the closure of residential homes. Some £100,000 will be saved over the next year by reducing residential care for people with learning disabilities. Social care teams for elderly and disabled people will be cut from five to two to save £250,000.

Councillor Mohammed Hanif said: “These plans have targeted the vulnerable.”

David Blood, Dudley’s cabinet member for finance, said: “We have deferred some of our original proposals where we believe that further work is required so as to mitigate the impact on vulnerable people.”

A BID for European funding for a multi-million-pound glass museum in the Black Country is due to be submitted within days — but could take up to six months to go through.

A total of £2 million is being sought from the European Regional Development Fund for the development on the old Stuart Crystal site in Walsall. The museum will house collections from across the region and is expected to attract thousands of visitors.

But bosses have warned the process could take up to six months — and a planning application will not be made until the funding has been secured.

Site owners Complex Developments say they are confident the bid for cash will be successful and they hope the museum could be open to visitors by 2014.

Arsonists

The project was thrown into doubt last summer when arsonsists gutted one of the Grade II listed former factories.

And vandals attacks since then have forced bosses to step up security.

The application for funding is being drawn up with Dudley Council, as the museum is part of the authority’s regeneration blueprint for the borough.

The British Glass Foundation, a charity set up to preserve the region’s collections, is also helping to raise money for the project.

Plans have been in the pipeline for four years for the museum to be linked to the Red House Glass Cone, via a tunnel.

A housing estate development is also being planned for a neighbouring section of the site. Ian Harrabin, director of Complex Developments, said: “We are waiting for European funding before a planning application is made and we are about to submit the details.”

Teddy bear up for bids

A 22 TALL teddy bear will be auctioned off by the Mayor of Dudley for charity.

Councillor Michael Evans has listed the brown cuddly toy on eBay to support his mayoral charities, the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association and the leukaemia unit at Dudley’s Russel Hospital.

As well as gaining the teddy’s collection to be auctioned, the Mayor will be invited to tea with the “London’s hottest gents” taken to place bids, visit www.dudley.gov.uk.

Councillor Evans said: “This is a wonderful opportunity to help support those worthwhile causes.”

Seeking to grab £2m
CAMPAIGNERS battling to save a Kingswinford care home put their case to council and charity chiefs – telling them it would be tragic if the closure went ahead.

Relatives of residents at New Bradley Hall care home fear it is too late to save the home after the council revealed there would be funding cuts of more than £700,000 to residential homes in Dudley borough.

At a meeting last Wednesday campaigners, rounded on Dudley Council officials demand- ing answers on the proposed cuts.

They claim the council has already made a decision on closing New Bradley Hall despite promising to consult on the future of care homes.

The cash has been provided to allow the authority to take steps to help people remain in their homes or return there following a stay in hospital. It has been given from a £50,000 fund announced by housing minister Grant Shapps in January.

It comes as the future of the home was discussed at a meeting at Age Concern Sedgley’s headquarters in Elleymore Road.

The first of five consultation events was held by charity Age UK Dudley which is looking at long-term options for the Compton Drive home.

Campaign action group member Phil Vanss said: “What on earth is this farce of a consultation about because I was in total shock when I heard that £713,000 of cuts are going to be made in the closure of care homes.”

Authority chiefs insist the figures are only provisional and they will listen to the public.

Councillor Les Jones says new budget figures will be drawn up if it is decided to keep the home open. Dudley Council official Brendan Clifford, said during the meeting, said no formal decision had been taken yet.

WYRE Forest District Council has been given £50,000 to help ill and disabled residents adapt their homes.

The £50,000 fund awarded in February is part of a £1.6m government scheme to help 600 people in Dudley borough.

WYREForest Council chief executive Steve P SEAL said the council was taking steps to help people adapt their homes or return there following a stay in hospital. It has been given from a £50,000 fund announced by housing minister Grant Shapps in January.

Campaigners shock at level of possible cuts

Amber Hughes as Annie with Holly Watson, Amelia Jones, Melissa Pollard, will also be appearing.

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Majority of schools in region are doing well

NEARLY two thirds of schools in the Black Country and Staffordshire inspected by Ofsted have been rated as good or outstanding.

The latest information from inspections carried out in schools show there were 584 visits by inspectors carried out across the region between October and December with 379 schools, or 64 per cent rated as outstanding or good.

In total 34 per cent of schools were providing satisfactory education while two per cent or a total of 17 schools were inadequate. Those schools were placed into special measures.

Dudley had 17 schools, or 10 per cent declared outstanding with 53 said to be good, 30 satisfactory and three listed as inadequate.

Pleased

Dudley Council’s cabinet member for children’s services Councillor Liz Walker said she was pleased with the figures.

“Our schools have once again done well and it shows the facilities we have in the borough are in good health,” she said.

Of course there is always room for improvement and I am confident that our schools will be able to achieve this.

Positive Ofsted outcomes recently in the area have included Portman Sandown First, which was graded as Outstanding and Alexandra High School, Tettenhall and Heath Primary, West Bromwich, both officially ranked as good with ever-growing improvements.

Electoral list reminder

RESIDENTS in Dudley are being reminded not to miss out on their chance to vote in the local election May 3.

Anyone who may not be able to get to their local polling station on election day can apply for a postal vote, or a proxy vote on 01384 814740.

Dudley Council is urging people to ensure they are on the electoral register by the April 18 deadline.

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STUART Reeves had always known two generations of his family once lived in some of Kinver's historic rock houses but he has now discovered the family link is even stronger.

His father William and grandfather Sydney lived in one of the cave dwellings, which date back to the 18th century, in the 1900s.

Thanks to new research by the National Trust, Stuart, 57, has found out his great-grandparents were also living in another of the houses at the same time. The occupiers of that house are listed as Mr and Mrs WH Reeves and Stuart believes his great-grandfather’s name was also William, like his late father, who died 10 years ago. The family lived in the two caves from 1902 until 1937.

The house, where his father and grandfather lived, has been restored by the National Trust and is known as Martindale Caves.

Stuart, from Kinver, visited the rock houses when he discovered more about his family’s connection with the dwellings.

“The van driver, of Dark Lane, said “My father was only young when he lived there so he never spoke about the rock houses.”

Up to 11 families lived in the cave homes.

STUART Reeves, whose great-grandparents lived in the house

STUART Reeves, whose great-grandparents lived in the house
Cancer survivor launches campaign

Checkout assistants Deena Taylor and Julie Goodridge with cancer survivor Susan Richards, from Sedgley, as they launch a new early diagnosis campaign

A GRANDMOTHER who survived cancer has helped launch a new campaign aimed at saving lives by highlighting the importance of early diagnosis.

Susan Richards, aged 56, from Sedgley, visited her GP in 2008 with stomach problems and was told she had cancer.

Because of the early detection the cancer had not spread to other parts of her body and she was able to have surgery to prevent it returning. Her twin sister Edna, from Tipton, was diagnosed with lung cancer just weeks later but the disease was too advanced for surgery. She died on Christmas Day 2008, aged 52.

Mrs Richards was at the Tesco superstore at Burnt Tree Island last week for the launch of a new £10 million scheme.

Tesco has named Cancer Research as its charity for the year and aims to fund 32 early diagnosis projects across the UK.

Improvement plans move a step closer

PLANS to build homes in Cradley have moved a step closer to reality after housing associations expressed an interest in developing the site.

Dudley Council wants to sell off land in Foredraft Street to fund improvement work in the town. Shops, apartments and a car park are set to be built on the A458, Windmill Hill, after plans were approved in August.

A report, which went before the council’s regeneration, culture and adult education committee last week, said the authority was working with a number of housing associations which may want to develop the site.

It also said funding may be available from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to launch the project. The scheme forms part of a wider plan to improve Windmill Hill, which has been identified as a priority by the council.

Work will include road widening and improvements on car parks and footpaths.

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Artists and pupils create gates with a local angle

TWO artists – one of them a descendant of Lord of the Rings author JRR Tolkien – have worked with pupils to create a Dudley-themed school entrance.

The new gates and fence have been unveiled at Quarry Bank Primary School, High Street, after youngsters chipped in with their own drawings and designs. The project was brought to life by artist Tim Tolkien, great-nephew of the world-famous author, who has a studio in Cradley Heath.

Mr Tolkien was first commissioned to create the fencing by Dudley Council in 2009 and has since worked with youngsters on their drawings and designs.

He re-interpreted the drawings for inclusion on the fence, which includes imagery of computers, mobile phones and pictures depicting the town’s industrial past.

Former Quarry Bank pupil, 57-year-old cartoonist and author Geoff Tristam, then created a potted history of Dudley in Black Country dialect, which will run along the length of the gates.

Mr Tristam, of Eggington Road, Wollaston, designed the cover of UB40’s debut album Signing Off and was recommended to help out by staff.

Pupils also pitched in with their ideas of what the town will look like in the future.

Mr Tolkien said: “It has been a fantastic project and I am really pleased with how it has turned out.

“I went into the school to work with the children and collect their stories and pictures to be put into the piece. I have also been delighted to work with Geoff.”

New sports club opens

CHILDREN and young people with disabilities can join a new free sports club in Halesowen. Adapted sports will be run at the weekly inclusive sessions, being held at Huntingtree Park from noon on Sundays.

Inclusive Club includes, rounders, table tennis, boccia, cricket and indoor curling. Call 07557323173.

Artists Tim Tolkien, below, and Geoff Tristram, with the new gates they have collaborated on outside Quarry Bank Junior School.
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Buy With Confidence
Scrap dealer was caught stealing Asda trolleys

A SCRAP dealer was caught by police stealing supermarket and milk trolleys worth close to £400, a court heard.

Gary Fletcher, aged 39, had stopped at traffic lights at the foot of Castle Hill, near The Stadium Hotel, Dudley, when officers stopped him. Police made him drive to a car park on Castlegate Park so they could examine the contents of the vehicle. Inside his van were four shopping trolleys from Asda in Brierley Hill and two Dairy Crest milk trolleys.

Dudley Magistrates Court heard the haul was worth £380 to the father of seven.

Fletcher, of Leys Road, Brockmoor, pleaded guilty to a charge of theft on January 23 at a hearing last week.

Mrs Maxine Jarrousse-Jones, prosecuting, said Fletcher had claimed to police that the trolleys had been left in a skip in Adelbert Street near the Asda supermarket. She added the trolleys had been clearly marked as belonging to the two firms.

“The defendant does state he believed they were abandoned but did not make any attempt to contact Asda or Dairy Crest,” Mrs Jarrousse-Jones said.

Mr Ian Windridge, defending, said his client was working legitimately as a scrap dealer earning around £100 a week.

“He fully accepts he was driving the van with the trolleys inside,” he said. “He has been working as a legitimate scrap dealer in the area – he asks people if he can take their metal to be sold.” Chairman of the bench, Mr Alan Reeves, ordered him to serve a two-year conditional discharge with £85 costs.

Mother of a tea party

Alison Hyatt invites people to a Mother’s Day tea at Haden Hill House

People are being invited to give their mothers a treat by tucking into tea and home-made cakes at a Cradley Heath beauty spot this month.

The traditional afternoon tea is being held on Mother’s Day at Haden Hill House Museum.

The Victorian gentleman’s residence in Barrs Road, will host the event on March 18 between 3pm and 5pm. Jane Hanney, museum services manager at Sandwell Museum Service, said: “Those who come along are in for a treat with some lovely cakes, snacks and treats.” Booking is essential. Afternoon tea is £7 per person and is open to adults and older children only. To book call 01384 569444.

Boy, 10, rescued from fall

A 10-YEAR-OLD boy had to be rescued after falling down a steep embankment in Dudley.

Ambulance crews were called to Knowle Hill Road, Netherton to find the youngster stranded halfway down the incline. Fire crews from Brierley Hill were called in to help rescue the youngster, who had suffered injuries to his back and leg. The youngster was taken to hospital.

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Rowley Regis Golf Course & Driving Range
£10m revamp launched for borough tourist sites

A multi-million pound project which will revamp Dudley’s biggest tourist attractions and see a £6 million archives centre built has been launched.

The scheme will include a new joint entrance for the Black Country Living Museum and Dudley Zoo.

Building work will start next month on the archives centre, based on the site of the former Royal Brierley Crystal factory in Tipton Road, after ground work has been carried out in the coming weeks.

At the same time a new road will be built between the museum and zoo as part of a £10m revamp that will also include a new visitor centre and car park.

Baroness Hanham, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government, was due to formally break the ground during the launch event last week before being given a tour of the site.

Councillor Angus Adams, Dudley Council’s cabinet member for regeneration, said: “This is the start of the project, when it all comes together and we put spade in soil for the first time.”

“We are absolutely delighted that work is due to start on the regeneration of Castle Hill that will attract hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.”

It is hoped the centre, which will house Dudley’s archives dating back to the 12th century, will be completed by summer 2013.

The building will also have a local history library, a conservation studio, a lecture theatre and conference rooms.

Gospel truth for church

Parishioners from Kidderminster have set themselves the task of learning a chapter from St Mark’s Gospel off by heart.

St Mary’s and St Barnabas churches set the challenge for Lent.

The first performance takes place at St Oswald’s church on March 18 and the second half at Holy Trinity Church Trimpell the following week.

Getting growing are Birchen Coppice Primary School pupils, from Kylie Smith, Garth Evans, Brian Wilkes, with back Demi-Lee Foster, Chloe Carter, Bradley Davies, Patryk Pikor and Jordan Care

Plotting for success

Explaining the cost of quality rather than apologising for something less

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OFTEN IMITATED NEVER EQUALLED!
Easter weekend from March 31-April 15, packed with family-friendly themed activities is hosting an egg-cellent Easter fort-perfect for chocolate lovers of all ages, and you could be there.

Monday (April 6-9) during which children will be able to take part in an exciting Easter egg hunt and enter a creative Easter bonnet competition. With the opportunity to watch the talented chocolatiers at work in the Chocolate Making Zone, and the chance to have a go at writing your name in fresh liquid chocolate, it means the interactive Purple Planet, performances from jugglers, ventriloquists, magicians and puppeteers. Including the magical Cadabra ride and the famous Cadbury brand by visiting the attraction during its Heritage Weekend.

April visitors can learn about the history and heritage associated with the famous Cadbury brand by visiting the famous Cadbury brand by visiting the attraction during its Heritage Weekend.

For more information, or to arrange a trip, go to www.cadburyworld.co.uk

Take a rip on the magical Cadabra ride or watch as handmade chocolates are decorated with family-friendly themed activities.
36 single mum, petite slim and very pretty, seeking caring funny guy to be with and become my Mr Wonderful.

Dads welcome.

Singles

LADIES WORLDFIND

MISSizzy 33, likes boys with style, flexible, JESSICA 32, single mum, medium build, tunes, 45-50 yrs, seeks male for friendship.

MISSizzie 33, single mum, medium build, tunes, 45-50 yrs, seeks male for friendship.

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is by no means celebratory. But interesting is that the programme what makes the English tick. A few days ago, we set out to find out what means to be English, and what makes the English be the English, and what kind of things the English think are the English way of doing things. It’s a bit of a challenge, as we’ve been trying to measure something similar or different from the home nations. Which is also interesting is that the programme is by no means a celebration on the back for the English everywhere. — in fact, in some cases, it’s quite the opposite.

**Saturday TV**

**Choice**

**BBC1**

- **9.00** Celebrities 2000: BBC1
- **12.05** Escape to the Country (R)
- **12.45** Pick: Qualifying Highlights: 2.15
- **19.30** Line of Duty (R)

**BBC2**

- **9.00** Celebrities 2000: BBC2
- **12.00** Escape to the Country (R)
- **12.35** Pick: Qualifying Highlights: 2.15
- **19.30** Line of Duty (R)

**ITV1**

- **9.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA: 10.35
- **12.00** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA: 11.20
- **12.20** ITV News: Weather
- **12.30** Live: Cup: Football: Everton v Sunderland (Kick-off 12.45pm)
- **19.30** Film: Death on the Nile (1978) Agatha Christie’s Murder, with Peter Ustinov. 5.30
- **20.30** Saturday Night News: Weather: 4.15

**Channel 4**

- **9.00** The Zone; ITV News; Weather.
- **10.00** 6.00
- **12.00** Film: Besieged. (1998) Drama, Television Programme. (R)
- **19.30** Film: Cromwell. (1970) Historical
- **20.00** Film: Hitman (2007). Crime, Drama, starring Millican and Sugar Ray
- **20.30** Film: The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones. (2013) Fantasy, based on the novel by Cassandra Clare.
- **21.00** Film: Sydney: Sex and the City
- **21.30** Film: The Green Berets. (1968)
- **22.00** Film: Rumor (1995) Drama: based on the novel by John Grisham.

**Channel 5**

- **9.00** Midsomer Murders: Animal Victims. Uk
- **9.30** Midsomer Murders: Animal Victims. Uk
- **10.00** Midsomer Murders: Animal Victims. Uk
- **10.15** Midsomer Murders: Animal Victims. Uk
- **10.30** Midsomer Murders: Animal Victims. Uk
- **11.00** Inside Hollywood.
- **11.20** The Cleveland Show
- **11.50** SuperCasino.
- **12.00** SuperCasino.
- **12.15** The Gossip

**Digital**

- **9.00** Midsomer Murders: Animal Victims. Uk
- **9.30** Midsomer Murders: Animal Victims. Uk
- **10.00** Midsomer Murders: Animal Victims. Uk
- **10.15** Midsomer Murders: Animal Victims. Uk
- **10.30** Midsomer Murders: Animal Victims. Uk
- **11.00** Inside Hollywood.
- **11.20** The Cleveland Show
- **11.50** SuperCasino.
- **12.00** SuperCasino.
It can be difficult to distinguish between a repeat and a new episode of Antiques Roadshow as all the main attractions are always on the ancient side and the format of the show hasn’t changed for decades. Some of the antique experts clearly spend their free time in a dusty, some of the antique experts clearly spend their free time in the show’s 17th and 18th series, and in which Jeremy Clarkson, Richard Hammond and James May get up to more motoring mischief. 9.00 Crime & Punishment: Mr Pritchard finds the remains of the annual servants ball, prompting him to wonder if there’s more to life than service, while Hallam and Persis continue their dangerous affair. 10.00 BBC News; Regional News. 10.25 FILM: War of the Worlds. Based on H.G. Wells’ novel, Spielberg’s sci-fi thriller, starring Tom Cruise and Dakota Fanning and Justin CH for the highest-scoring couple. 10.00 ITV News; Weather. 10.15 Caps with Cameras. Following officers. 11.00 Sky Sports Football. The final at St James’ Park, Newcastle. 12.10 The Zone: TV News. Headlines. 2.20 River Monsters. 3.25 ITV Night/Talk. 4.00 Rugby Union: Six Nations Highlights. 148 BBC News. 6.00 Breakfast. 2.55 Match of the Day. (R) 5.00 The Andrew Marr Show. 6.00 The Big Questions. 11.00 Country Track; (R) Weather for the Week Ahead. 12.00 Sunday Politics. 1.00 Blears Hunt, 130 A Caution of Sport. (R) 2.00 Formulas 1. Australian Grand Prix. 4.00 Racing Programme. 5.00 Ladbrokes. 5.45 Logos. 5.46 Land Girls. (R) 6.35 BBC News; Regional News; Weather. 7.00 Countryfile. Matt Baker, Julia Bradbury and Ellie Harrison explore the New Forest, while John Craven heads to Scotland to investigate deer culling. 8.00 Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce and the team investigate further. A new episode of Antiques Roadshow, where items of interest include a sky’s camera, a quill and a papercraft.
Brain Gym

Codeword

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

Double Crossword

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

Cryptic Clues:

Across
7. Answer the medium hopes to get at a search? (8,3)
8. Cut’s coat in far from smooth condition (9)
9. Five hundred and one over (4)
10. Violent outcome from Recife (6)
12. Damages when father returns with friends (6)
14. A ship, it’s about to help (6)
16. Part of a revolver to develop (6)
18. Help performer like to get (4)
20. Arrived at a certain conclusion (4,4)
22. Presumably he hopes his achievements won’t always be minor (6,7)

Down
1. Where you might finish if you take flight (6)
2. Provisionally he’s a supplier (8)
3. Turn up before it graphics (4)
4. Recommend a lawyer (8)
5. Supported, yet not allowed to proceed (4,2)
6. Left in the corner, it may be jammed (4)
11. Reckon tea-time’s been altered (6)
13. Purchase some clever agencies (8)
15. This club is much patronised by geniuses (6)
17. Supporting a football team, perhaps, and not in an illegal position (2,4)
19. One she quoted following a band (4)
21. Rush job for a dressmaker (4)

Quick Clues:

Across
7. Nursery tale character (3,3,4)
8. Acknowledged (8)
9. Sell (4)
10. Fondly (6)
12. Scold (8)
14. Lelange (5)
16. Captivate (6)
18. Popular idol (4)
20. Recall (8)
22. Impartial (13)

Down
1. Incitement (8)
2. Mourn (6)
3. Revise (4)
4. Unatable (8)
5. Tremble (6)
6. Robe (4)
11. Astround (8)
13. Burlesque (8)
15. Mispal (6)
17. Drive mad (6)
18. Way out (4)
21. Chief (4)

Sudoku

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

Last Week’s Solutions:

Cryptic: Across: 1 Hike; 8 Calamitous; 9 Senorita; 10 Leer; 12 Reverend; 14 Totals; 15 String; 17 Asign; 18 Coke; 21 No thank you; 22 Bass. Down: 2 Interested; 3 Echo; 4 Plaint; 5 Impart; 6 Athletes; 7 Face; 11 England; 13 Epitaph; 15 Ann's; 16 Inn's; 20 Allusions; 21 Frighten; 22 Dash. Cryptic Clues: Across: 3 Hike; 6 Calamitous; 8 Senorita; 9 Leer; 10 Reverend; 11 Totals; 12 String; 13 String; 14 Asign; 15 Coke; 17 Coke; 18 Coke; 21 No thank you; 22 Bass. Down: 2 Interested; 3 Echo; 4 Plaint; 5 Impart; 6 Athletes; 7 Face; 11 England; 13 Epitaph; 15 Ann's; 16 Inn's; 20 Allusions; 21 Frighten; 22 Dash. Cryptic Clues: Across: 3 Hike; 6 Calamitous; 8 Senorita; 9 Leer; 10 Reverend; 11 Totals; 12 String; 13 String; 14 Asign; 15 Coke; 17 Coke; 18 Coke; 21 No thank you; 22 Bass. Down: 2 Interested; 3 Echo; 4 Plaint; 5 Impart; 6 Athletes; 7 Face; 11 England; 13 Epitaph; 15 Ann's; 16 Inn's; 20 Allusions; 21 Frighten; 22 Dash. Cryptic Clues: Across: 3 Hike; 6 Calamitous; 8 Senorita; 9 Leer; 10 Reverend; 11 Totals; 12 String; 13 String; 14 Asign; 15 Coke; 17 Coke; 18 Coke; 21 No thank you; 22 Bass. Down: 2 Interested; 3 Echo; 4 Plaint; 5 Impart; 6 Athletes; 7 Face; 11 England; 13 Epitaph; 15 Ann's; 16 Inn's; 20 Allusions; 21 Frighten; 22 Dash.

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2
Andrew Grant is handling the sale of this handsome home – known as The Lindens – overlooking parkland in Hagley.

**Period home in a sought location**

**DESCRIBED as an exception**

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**period home in the**

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**sought-after village location of Hagley,**

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**The Lindens in Hall Lane**

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**is on the market priced at £769,500.**

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**The property occupies a fine position**

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**overlooking historic Hagley Hall park**

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**land estate on the edge of the village,**

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**which offers a selection of individual**

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**shops and restaurants together with**

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Birch Road
* Modern link detached house
* Three bedrooms
* Conservatory
* Rear garden
* Viewings recommended
Oﬀers in the region of £243,950

Aston Crescent
* Traditional semi
* Three bedrooms
* Through living room
* Separate dining room
* Enclosed gardens
Oﬀers in the region of £199,350

Kingsway
* Semi detached house
* Three bedrooms
* Extended lounge
* Double garage
* Rear garden
Oﬀers in the region of £147,950

Plot 6 Rosalie Gardens
* Brand new detached family house
* Four bedrooms
* Principal bedroom with ensuite
* Three reception rooms
* Detached double garage
* Gas central heating & double glazed
* £350,000
* Part exchange considered

Gower Road
* Traditional style semi detached house
* Two bedrooms
* Lounge
* Kitchen
* Rear garden
Oﬀers in the region of £275,000

Douglas Road
* Spectacular detached house
* Three bedrooms
* Kitchen/Diner
* Two further bathrooms
* Large garden
Oﬀers in the region of £264,950

Site at 61-63 Hurst Green Road
An opportunity to acquire a residential building site in popular residential locality with planning approval for three two bedroom bungalows and site area extending to 1,357 sq yds (0.523 acres) 1,130 sq m (0.151 hectares) or thereabouts.
Oﬀers in the region of £225,000

BUILDING PLOTS Adjoining 21 Woolpack Close
An opportunity to acquire two residential building plots with planning permission for a two bedroom detach- ed bungalow and a two bedroom detached bungalow.
Oﬀers in the region of £79,950

28 Gideons Close
* Semi detached house
* Two bedrooms
* Side garage
* Gas boiler heating radiators
* Fully carpeted and same appliances
* Available April 2012
Monthly rent of £550

Flat 3 Highgate House
13 Parkfield Road
* Self contained flat
* One bedroom with wardrobe
* Kitchen with oven, hob & fridge
* Lounge with electric ﬁre
* Excellent location
* Available from 1st April 2013
Monthly rent of £375

35 Spinners End Drive
* Self contained 1st ﬂoor ﬂat
* One bedroom with wardrobe
* Kitchen with oven, hob & fridge
* Lounge with electric ﬁre
* Excellent location
* Available from 1st March 2011
Monthly rent of £375

11 Old Port Close
* Ground ﬂoor ﬂat
* Unfurnished
* One Bedroom
* Allocated parking
* Electric heaters/GD windows
* Vast roof
Monthly rent of £237

74 Worcester Road
* Detached oﬃce building
* Extremely well presented
* Prominent position & good location
* Prime retail/property or oﬃce
* Gas boiler/roll top radiator
* Re: £185.67 sq. m (1,996.81 sq. ft)
Annual rent of £25,000

90 Station Road
A detached unit situated in convenient location in easy walking distance of Old Hill Railway Station.
Comprising workshop, oﬃce, male and female toilets, oﬃce parking.
GDA: 2014 sq. m (2,180 sq. ft).
NIA: 248 sq. m (2,675 sq. ft)
Annual rent of £12,500

Estate House, 821 Hagley Road West, Quinton, Birmingham B32 1AD

www.andrew-grant.co.uk
HOW times change. The first Fiat Panda arrived in 1980 and has become a design classic, thanks to a strict approach to keeping things simple and cheap.

The result was a functional, slab-sided car for people without much money, and with simple, flat (and cheap) glass, simple (and cheap) suspension and a clever (and cheap) rear seat of canvas stretched between two poles that lifted out to produce a Panda van, more or less.

Now, more than six million sales later comes the third generation Panda and it’s no longer nearly so utilitarian, or so cheap. Competitively priced is how I’m sure Fiat would put it, but it’s arrived in a fiercely fought part of the new car market and had better be good.

It looks like a slightly larger (all round) and more rounded version of the second generation Panda that arrived in 2003 and is, says Fiat, safer and more economical than before.

It also comes with the chance to have a potential design classic under the bonnet if you tick the right box, as I did for the test car.

Called TwinAir, it’s a tiny two-cylinder petrol engine that uses a turbo and clever technology to provide more power than you’d expect and claimed terrific economy (although more of that later).

Price from £9,499 to £12,250, there’s a choice of three petrol engines and a lone diesel. The test car, in mid-spec Easy trim cost £10,750.

In more rural parts of Italy, physical and spiritual homeland of the Panda, you’ll still see plenty of old models about, a lot of them with four-wheel drive and ideal for life on a smallholding.

Expect to see all-wheel drive offered on the newcomer before too long, but on Britain’s mainly tamed and only occasionally snowed upon roads, the front-wheel drive Panda ought to do well enough.

The test car, faced with nothing more onerous than some pretty Cotswolds lanes, looked the part on the outside with simple, smoothly contoured lines and, inside, did a decent job of disguising the fact it had to be built to a strict price limit.

Without driver’s seat height adjustment (£50 extra) and with the optional (£720) space robbing sunroof fitted there was an immediate conflict between head and roof, eased by retracting the roof blind and letting the sun shine in through the tinted glass above. A car without the sunroof proved more accommodating.

Most of the new Panda’s increased length has been given over to increased rear seat room, helped by thinning the front seatbacks. From September you’ll be able to buy a Panda with a sliding rear seat, while the car is now available with a middle seat headrest and safety belt to make use of the new car’s extra width.

But the Panda is all about driving, once you’ve fired up the TwinAir engine and pulled away, to a soundtrack that’s recalls a tuned-down race track refuge. Give it some revs and this little baby fairly flies, although you’ll have a hard time checking its pace thanks to a desperately overretd speedometer face. A ride that turns choppy on less than perfect surfaces didn’t help.

After 40 miles of fun the trip computer read 44mpg. Not bad but not brilliant. Time to try harder on the economy front.

My passenger switched seats for the drive back to base and played very lightly with the accelerator as though it was heated to furnace temperature and changed up when the dash indicator told him too.

All this restraint improved matters to a still-middling 49mpg and miles off the 67.8mpg quoted in the mandatory Euro test. There’s only one conclusion, you might as well enjoy life in the latest little 4x4.
A RECORD number of 28,500 visitors attended one of the country’s premier motoring shows.

Race Retro, which was staged at the National Agricultural Showground at Stoneleigh in Warwickshire provided a wide variety of displays and exhibitions for classic car, sporting, supercar and motorcycle fans, over a period of three days.

A rally stage set in the extensive grounds gave spectators the chance to see, in full-blow dramatic action, the famous rally cars of yesteryear including the Metro 6R4, Subaru Impreza 555, Audi Quattro A2, Lotus Sunbeam Talbot, Porsche 911 ST, Ford Escort RS1600 and Works Mini Cooper S.

VIP visitors included pop star and renowned motorist enthusiast Jay Kay, of Jamiroquai, who was treated to the “ride of his life” through the special stage by rally hero Iornn Walkerd – in Jay’s own Porsche 914. Jay later went on to buy a California Highway Patrol motorcycle from the auction, which he is to use in his next video.

Other records tumbled at Race Retro through Silverstone Auctions, who reported the sale of a 1960 Triumph Jaguar for £288,000, 1960 Aston Martin DB4 for £170,000 and a crash helmet worn by the late legendary Formula One driver Ayrton Senna, which sold for £175,000.

The massive show halls included a gigantic auto jumble at which classic car drivers could spend hours searching for that elusive part for their cherished motors, or find rare tools and equipment to complete that long-term restoration project.

Local companies exhibiting at the show included Classic Motor Cars of Bridgnorth who had two of their fully restored Jaguars on display and Midland Automobile Club, organisers of Shelsley Walsh Hill Climb, who had a stand with several specialist cars on show.

By Tony Adams

Nick Goldthorp and Andrew Turvey with Jaguars on the Classic Motor Cars of Bridgnorth stand
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HYUNDAI have revealed a new turbocharged version of the 1-2 door Veloster sports coupe at the Geneva Motor Show.

Through the addition of a turbocharger, engineers at the Hyundai Motor Europe Technical Centre in Rüsselsheim, Germany, have boosted power output and increased low-end torque to best suit European driving tastes and enhance driver enjoyment.

The Veloster Turbo is the first Hyundai to feature the company’s 1.6-litre GDI engine with a high-compressions, twin-scroll turbocharger. In European specification, this new T-GDI unit generates 190 hp and 265 Nm of torque. In the UK, the Veloster Turbo offers 140 ps and 167 Nm.

Hyundai’s industry-best Five Year/100,000 mile warranty and assistance and five years of vehicle health checks.
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When looking for a builder don’t be shy about asking about to see jobs they have already done and talking to the previous customers about their experience, if you have the chance. Also be sure to check for membership of a trade association, such as the Federation of Master Builders. 

Ask for details of how the builder should be paid and agree a payment plan in advance. This should be in instalments, as parts of the project are completed. Always make sure the builders’ quote covers everything you would like done, including supply of materials, removal of rubbish and ‘making good’ after the work is finished.

For extra peace of mind and reassurance, get the work covered by an insurance-backed warranty, such as those offered by Build Assure or other providers. Build Assure offer a wide range of insurance products to suit your individuals requirements, www.fmbbuildassure.co.uk.

The Federation of Master Builders (FMB), the largest trade association in the UK construction industry, http://www.fmb.org.uk/fab/.

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01902 674840.

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07857 145544.

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07940419397.

VW Golf 1.4, £1,495.
01384 274612.

VW Golf GTI 1.8T, 05 plate, 16,000 miles, MOT July, very quick car. £5,000.
07861 292805.

VW Golf 1.4, 04 plate, 20,000 miles, very quick. £1,595 ono.
07508 866377.

VW Golf GTI 1.8T, 2002, £2,995.
01384 341008 or 07813 317774.

01384 356690 or 07979 095549.

VW Golf 1.4, £1,600.
01384 356690 or 07979 095549.

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07863 900077.

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07940419397.

VW Polo 1.0, £750 ono.
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01384 356690 or 07979 095549.

VW Polo 1.0, silver, 1995, MR reg, 120,000 miles, MOT Sep, trade. £1,300.
07846 680905.

VW Golf Cabriolet (CD) 6lhe sports top. £6,500.
07846 680905.

01384 356690 or 07979 095549.

VW Golf 1.4, £1,600.
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VW Golf Cabriolet (CD) 6lhe sports top. £5,995.
07863 900077.

VW Golf 1.8 16v Dynamic, 3 door, 05 plate, excellent condition. £1,095 ono.
07940419397.

VW Polo 1.0, dark blue, 1998, 88k, 12 months MoT, tax till April, very nice condition, £950 ono.
07890 524863.

VW Polo 1.2, (02) 11 plate, 115k, towbar, electric, long tax and MoT, £8,950.
07747 757662.

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SPORT

WODENSHAM'S back-to-back pressure on the senior ABA competition in the Midlands. Box Bowater wasd to box twice in less than 24 hours but was spared a second yellow card for a high foot and Olsson, who was a colossal figure until his two second-half indiscretions, had been spared the first fight when his equalising goal was disallowed.

ASHLEY Young after a weaving run by the little man of one of the club’s great ever-turnovers in 60s. He also played for Birming- ham and in retirement ran a tobacconist and sweet shop in West Bromwich. He later ran a post office in Stour- bridge and lived in the town until struck by ill health.

ALBION are in mourning after the death of Ray Barlow at the age of 85. The 1954 FA Cup-winner, regarded as one of the club’s greatest ever players, died last night after a long illness. The 1954 FA Cup-winner, regarded as one of the club’s greatest ever players, died last night after a long illness.

ALBION’S three successive wins cheered everyone at the club – and not just the fans. There was little sign of complacency in their performance and a remarkable month that lifted spirits and turned the fortunes around. The Hawthorns, arista Steve Mudie, was a stick. But a stick United gave Albion a gentle reminder of where they stand in the Premier League’s established food chain. Bundle fans might point to a hint ofiquity over second-half penalty decisions at each and that looked oddly similar but both went the way of the home side and the whiff of controversy surrounding the first yellow card that led ultimately to the dismissal of key defender Jonas Olsson.

20 minutes from time gave a pin of one of the club’s great ever-turnovers in 60s. He also played for Birming- ham and in retirement ran a tobacconist and sweet shop in West Bromwich. He later ran a post office in Stour- bridge and lived in the town until struck by ill health.

The tackles that brought Jonal Olsson a second yellow card and dismissal

BOWES was at the Baggies in the ABA senior Midlands final for the second year running and was in no mood to be upstaged. He was set to fight twice last year but had his dream of becoming a professional boxing world-champion dashed in the Midlands finals.

THE tackle that brought Jonal Olsson a second yellow card and dismissal

The tackle that brought Jonal Olsson a second yellow card and dismissal

Danny Welbeck challenges Liam Ridgewell

by Craig Birch

Doodly had a walk-over to Sunday’s national premier finals.

Meanwhile, Ricky Summers has revealed he’s going to turn profes- sional after his dream of becoming a senior ABA amateur national amateur came to an end.

He was set to fight twice last weekend but falt at the first hurdle with a regional semi-final defeat to Alton ABC’s Frederik Murphy in Lichfield last Saturday night.

That denied him at spot on the following day’s Midlands finals where Impact ABC’s Jamal Ledoux claimed the 81kg title by beating Murphy. Summers and his camp from Liam ABC, Dudley, were left to protest at what they insisted was a harsh decision the first time around against Murphy.

The Black Country Fighter was docked two points by the referee from a combination of holding and hitting on the break, leading to his unanimous points loss.

The 24-year-old, an ABA national semi-finalist last year, is also carrying a perforated eardrum, but still hopes to make his England debut for his country’s select team against Wales at the weekend. But, whatever happens, his move to the paid ranks is imminent.

He said: “I will be trying my chances in the pro ranks now, I have been asked to do it by a lot of people and I need to sit down and weigh up what is best for me.

“There’s not much left I can do now as an amateur.”

Priory Park ABC’s Luke Pad- dock was beaten in the ABA senior Midlands final for the second year in a row by Karl Shuttle ABC’s Ian Brown at 63kg.

Hope to give a wi-fi Hotkey and give a reminder

Microsoft among other the- reponsive terms for the Visitors while Wolves and Aston Villa fans be avoided if possible.

To get a second booking, the midfielder had to go for a second yellow card late on.

The second half started much like the first with Albion’s mission becoming nigh-on impossible. Shane Long to sting the palms of De Gea.

But controversy engulfed the second half at the Hawthorns. The tackle that brought Jonas Olsson as a second yellow card and dismissal.

There were some challenges are still a little too big.

As the half wore on, the home side piled the pressure on Ben Foster’s goal. The second half started much like the first with Albion’s mission becoming nigh-on impossible.

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Shane Long to sting the palms of De Gea.
Ben’s bonanza as he races to victory


SPORT

Ben Fund (6-7pm).

WEDNESDAY team Total Control Racing have signed up Nicolas Hamilton for the NewAir Asia Renault Clio Cup UK season.

Hamilton, brother of F1 driver Lewis, won the 2009 British Formula Ford Championship.

He is the son of ex-F1 driver and former British champion Les Hamilton.

The 18-year-old will be partnered by promising saloon car newcomer Rob Smith.

“I’m really happy to be part of the team,” he said.

“No progress last year was fantastic and with all of the experience I gained, added to him amazing determination, we’re sure he can snap a few surprises – it’s a pleasure to be working with him.

“Barr has shown some really encouraging pace in the few tests he’s done with us and we’ve got very high hopes for what he can achieve as the championship moves forward, he’s definitely one to watch.”

Smith, who has a test outing with TCE last month, said he was delighted to agree a deal.

Ben Fund (01902 319461)

SSP KIRK

Ben’s bonanza as he races to victory

HOME STAR Ben Barker triumphed in speedway’s opening season of Ben Fund Speedway.

He survived a semi-final shoot-out, taking second place behind Danish star Nicki Pedersen as the two joined Brumman Danny King and Chris Harris in the final.

Coventry ace Harris had looked the likely out-and-out winner going into the denouement, after some trademark passing from the back, some better than the heat eight effort which took him from fourth to first in a lap 13 odd.

Barker surprised Nicki Pedersen in heat 15 with a driving move up the inside out of two to twist victory from the three.

Ben Fund (01902 319461)

Ben’s bonanza as he races to victory

FORMER Halesowen striker Michael Nardiello hit a hat-trick in the Ipswich Town reserves 2-1 defeat against the American Pirates.

Nardiello’s first came in the sixth minute when he fired home from a Katy Ayliffe cross.

The hosts punished 10-man Yeltz in added time, when Nardiello completed his hat-trick.

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McGrath was sent off.

Haseley did even better to tap home on 58 minutes.

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