

Police hunt men who stole woman's handbag



LEFT: This man was seen walking off with the handbag inside a blue carrier bag. s



RIGHT: Three men were involved in the distraction theft. s

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

POLICE have released these pictures after a woman's handbag full of cash was stolen in Kidderminster during a distraction theft.

The incident happened around 12.50pm on June 23 when the woman parked in the Weaver's Wharf car park and went to Lloyds Bank on Vicar Street to withdraw cash before returning to her car.

Between 12.58pm and 1pm she was distracted by two men in the car park, after she had placed her bag containing £1,000 in cash on the passenger seat of her car.

One man claimed there was something under the car she needed to be aware of and the second man stole her handbag.

He then gave the bag to a third man who put it into a blue carrier bag and walked off up the Mall and along Vicar Street and High Street. He was seen, around 1.02pm, at the

bus stops at Coventry Street / Blackwell Street.

It is believed the other two men walked towards the canal and turned towards McDonald's on the towpath.

PC Andrew Forbes, from the Kidderminster Police town centre team, appealed for witnesses and said: "We are looking for any dash cam footage or eyewitnesses to identify any of the men or vehicles involved."

"We would also like to hear from anyone who may have information about the men seen in the hats in the first image and the man with the bag in the second image as we believe they may be able to help us with our enquiries."

He urged witnesses or anyone who knows who the man pictured is to email the Kidderminster Police town centre team at: Greenhill.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk with the details.

Visit this story at kiddermisterstandard.co.uk for more pictures.



Senior PCSO Andrew Stevens with Coun Vicky Caulfield and members of the newly-formed Sutton Farm Community Speedwatch group. s

Group aims to boost safety

MEMBERS of Kidderminster's first ever speedwatch group met last Friday.

The Sutton Farm Community Speedwatch is a volunteer scheme operating with the support of West Mercia Police to encourage motorists to drive safely and within the speed limit.

The enthusiastic group is addressing speeding concerns on Bewdley Hill and Sutton Road.

Coun Vicky Caulfield, who represents the area on Wyre Forest District Council and helped set it up, said: "Residents often

contact me with concerns around speeding on these roads, so I'm really pleased that, thanks to the police and our group of volunteers, we are able to do something about it."

"We aren't here to catch anyone out - it's all about raising awareness and making our roads safer for everyone."

To get involved with this Community Speedwatch, email: Vicky.caulfield@wyre-forestdc.gov.uk or, to find out more about setting up a speedwatch in another area, email: andrew.stevens@westmercia.police.uk for more information.



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SVR inspired to mark 200 years of rail

THE 'INSPIRATION' train, which is touring the UK to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the British railway system, made its first stop in Kidderminster on Friday.

The train – aimed at inspiring interest in British railway history and careers in the industry – was welcomed by the Severn Valley Railway (SVR) on platform two of the Kidderminster Station.

It will be available to view by visitors until the end of Sunday, July 6, before it heads off to Birmingham Moor Street where Chiltern Railways will welcome visitors from July 8 to 10.

Denise Wetton, Network Rail's central route director, said: "The West Midlands are at the Heart of Britain's Railway, making it the perfect location for the first two stops of the Railway 200 national tour."

"This unique train will offer visitors an experience that show-



cases the railway's vital role in Britain's past, present, and future and I hope it inspires thousands of visitors from across the region who will be among the first in Britain to experience it."

More than 200,000 people are expected to visit the 'inspiration' train as it travels across Britain in the next 12 months, visiting a total of 60 locations.

The celebration is also aimed at inspiring young people and

others to consider careers in the railway industry by highlighting the variety of different roles available. The train consists of four carriages: 'Railway Firsts' showcases important moments in the development of the railway system and 'Wonderlab on Wheels' hosts interactive exhibits which allow visitors to test their engineering skills. 'Your Railway Future' presents some of the hidden roles in the railway industry and 'Partner Zone' will vary as the train changes locations.

Emma Roberts, programme manager for Railway 200, said: "This special exhibition train is a new, free national visitor attraction, offering an unforgettable

experience for hundreds of thousands of people across Britain, including many schoolchildren.

"It will excite, enlighten, entertain and inspire them to take a fresh look at the railway, as part of its anniversary celebrations."

For the final two days of the Inspiration's train's stay in Kidderminster on Saturday and Sunday, there will be an additional showcase of various historic trains and other vehicles.

These include the current and cutting-edge LMS 46115 Scots Guardsman and the HydroFLEX, as well as steam and diesel locomotives such as the Highley and Autotrain.

The Battle of Britain Memorial

plane, a Lancaster bomber, will also be featured in a flyby.

Booked visits will take place between 10am and 5pm with on-train experiences lasting up to an hour.

Virtual tours of the exhibition are available for those unable to visit in person.

Admission to the train is free, though tickets must be booked in advance. Normal entry fees apply to Heritage Railways and other private sites.

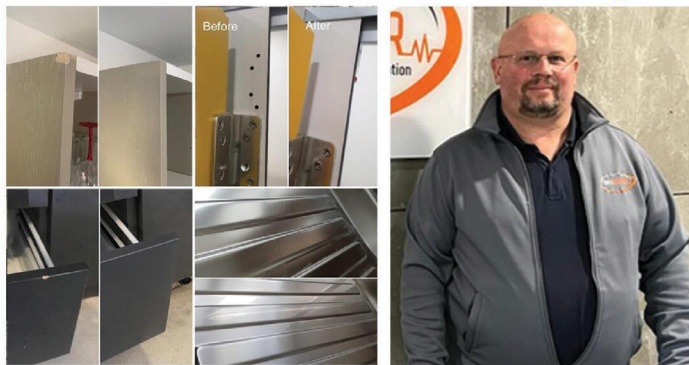
Visit railway200.co.uk/inspiration to book tickets and find out more about train locations and for further details on Railway 200 and opportunities to get involved.



ABOVE: The Severn Valley Railway welcomed 'Inspiration', the Railway 200 exhibition train, last Friday. LEFT: Alan Hyde of Railway 200 with Network Rail's Denise Wetton and SVR managing director Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster at the Severn Valley Railway. Pictures by Jack Boskett. s



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For even more ideas of what's on locally visit

www.visitsevernvalley.uk

www.bewdley-museum.co.uk



Bewdley Museum

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See page 30





ABOVE: Several roads were flooded when the mains pipe burst. BELOW: Severn Trent were still repairing the roads as the Standard went to press. Pictures by The Kidderminster Drone.

Massive flood as mains water pipe bursts

by Tristan Harris
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ROADS were flooded and homes were left without water after a mains pipe burst in Kidderminster last Friday.

Worcestershire County Council was forced to carry out emergency closures on roads as they became submerged following the incident in Green Street around 1.30pm.

Among the roads shut were Green Street, Castle Road, Dixon Street and The Ringway.

Severn Trent sent its engineers to the area to carry out emergency repairs on the burst water mains.

When the floodwater subsided, some homes were still left without water, while others were left with poor pressure and discoloured water as it returned to their taps.



New Road while we repair the road.

"We would like to thank you to the council, the emergency services and those who were affected by the burst.

"We know that roadworks can be disruptive and would like to apologise for any inconvenience caused."

On Wednesday, Severn Trent said on its website: "Whilst the repair continues, we also have teams in the area working to restore the water supply by moving water around our network.

"As a result, you may experience lower water pressure and/or discoloured water as the supply returns.

"This is nothing to worry about and as our works progress your water supply will return to normal."

And on Monday, after the pipe was fixed and water supplies were reconnected, several roads were still closed, needing to be repaired because of the ferocity of the cascading water and the need for engineers to get to the pipe.

As the Standard went to press, a Severn Trent spokesperson told us: "Our team has now completed repairs to the burst on Green Street in Kidderminster. However, traffic management is still in place at Castle Road, Green Street, Dickson Street, and

Brilliant efforts by youngsters rewarded in inaugural awards

CHILDREN from eight schools across the Wyre Forest were recognised for their outstanding achievements at an inaugural awards ceremony.

The Severn Academies Educational Trust held its Growing Brilliance Awards to celebrate pupils' success in several categories – leadership, community and diversity, enrichment and personal development.

The trust covers Baxter College, Kidderminster, Stourport High School, Stourport Primary Academy, Wilden All Saints CE Primary, St Bartholomew's CE Primary, Wolverley Sebright Academy, Far Forest Lea Memorial CE Primary Academy and Hartlebury CE Primary.

Every school nominated one pupil from each key stage for each of the four categories.

A total of 70 pupils received certificates at the ceremony which was held in the theatre at Baxter College at the end of last month. Each school also chose one outstanding overall winner.



Some of the award winners from across the trust's eight schools at the ceremony at Baxter College. s

Matthew Carpenter, chief officer of the trust, said: "We are delighted to have launched these annual awards honouring the accomplishments and contributions which our pupils make to their school communities, alongside academic effort and success.

"We have a culture that values brilliance and sets high expectations across our family of schools.

"The awards are just one example of how our trust promotes collaborative efforts that benefit our children, young people and celebrates our community."

Police arrest boys over car theft

FOUR boys suspected of being involved in a car theft in Kidderminster have been arrested.

It followed a police chase on Sunday.

West Mercia Police said around 12.55pm, an authorised pursuit took place after officers spotted a vehicle suspected to be involved in a car-key burglary.

The car was heading towards Kidderminster and its tyres were successfully punctured by

officers using a stinger. As the driver of the suspect vehicle tried to make off, it collided with two other vehicles on Norton Road in Stourbridge.

Four boys – three aged 17 and one aged 15 – were located and arrested after attempting to flee the scene.

Mobile phones, drugs and a hammer were seized from the vehicle.

All four were held on suspicion of theft of a motor vehicle which

related to an incident in Kidderminster on June 20. They were further arrested on suspicion of dangerous driving, failing to stop, and going equipped to steal.

One of the 17-year-olds was also arrested on suspicion of driving whilst under the influence of drugs, driving without a licence and driving without insurance.

The 15-year-old has been bailed as enquiries continue and the other boys remain in police custody.



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SVR goes full steam ahead for Ages event

TO COINCIDE with the **Railway 200 Exhibition, Severn Valley Railway (SVR) has its 'Train Through The Ages Event' tomorrow and Sunday, July 5 and 6.**

SVR has a busy timetable with a number of locomotives working the line between Kidderminster and Hampton Loade from 9am to 7pm.

The event is a must for rail enthusiasts and admission entitles visitors to ride as many engines as they can in historic carriages.

People can also visit The Engine House at Highley, which is open from 9.30am to 5pm (last entry at 4.30pm) and sample real ales in the SVR's pubs.

Among the locomotives in service are the LMS 46115 Scots Guardsman, paired with the SVR's BR maroon carriages, thanks to David Smith and West Coast Railways.

The GWR 4930 Hagley Hall is paired with GWR carriages and the GWR 1450 will operate in push-pull mode with an Autocoach.

LMS Stanier Mogul 13268 will be paired with LMS carriages and a pre-grouping goods train and there will be the 1877-built Chaloner and 1902-built 'Holy War', narrow gauge footplate rides at The Engine House.

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

Others include BR Class 52 D1062 Western Courier, BR Class 50 50033 Glorious and BR Class 108 DMU.

People can also see inside HydroFLEX, the UK's first hydrogen-ready passenger train, developed and tested by Porterbrook in Warwickshire, on display at Kidderminster.

Branchline trains of the 1900s with steam-powered Autotrain will be hauled by GWR 1450 and the resident DMU railcar.

There will also be 19th century narrow gauge locomotives on display and in operation at The Engine House, offering footplate rides from 10.30am to 4pm.

There will also be a flypast, with thanks to the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, by a Lancaster bomber – the most famous and successful RAF heavy bomber from the Second World War.

Modern rail vehicles will also be on display at Kidderminster.

Visit svr.co.uk for more information.

• **Special visit to mark Railway 200 – See page two**



The Starfish team – the winners of this year's Little Trinity Nursery swimming gala. s

Youngsters jumping in at the deep end

RED Ladybirds from Little Trinity Nursery made a splash at the annual summer Swimming Gala in Kidderminster.

The event offers families and carers the chance to see the progress their children have made in the pool since September.

Nursery manager Gaynor Carter said: "The gala is a fantastic opportunity for them to demonstrate their newly-acquired water skills to families, as well as experience their first

taste of friendly competition as they strive to do the very best they can."

The Red Ladybirds competed in teams of Sharks, Jellyfish, Starfish and Dolphins, swimming on their fronts and backs and manoeuvring fun objects in the water. Each child took a plunge as they jumped into the deep end and swam the length of the pool with the support and cheers of their families, carers and staff.

Statistically, drowning is still one of the most common

causes of accidental death in children – many children have their first swimming experiences when they start at Little Trinity.

Gaynor added: "Swimming ensures children remain safe when playing in water and provides lots of fun and health benefits."

"It is truly satisfying for all our staff to see how much each child has progressed over the nursery year and just wonderful to be able to share with parents."



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Running to say thanks a decade after spinal op

A WOMAN from Bewdley has celebrated ten years with a new spine by running the Birmingham Half Marathon to raise funds for the hospital which gave her the life-saving treatment.

Grace Winterburn, 21, along with her family raised an impressive £7,500 for the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital (ROH) in Northfield, Birmingham.

A decade ago, at the age of just 11, Grace, who had severe scoliosis, had spinal fusion surgery.

Scoliosis is a condition where the spine is curved, limiting breathing, heart function and digestion.

The 12-hour procedure left Grace with two titanium rods and 23 screws in her spine.

Despite having this metalwork in her spine, Grace is proving that people with scoliosis can lead full and active lives and proved that when she took on the Birmingham Half Marathon.

Grace said: "On the starting line I felt so nervous. I wanted to make sure I just absorbed it all."

"There were so many people on the starting line who felt the same but for me, this was kind of my victory lap, celebrating what my body can do."

"I just want other people who have scoliosis to know that you are strong and you can do hard things."

The funds raised will be split between both the paediatric outpatient care and spinal services at the ROH - both departments directly supported Grace as a child. Elaine Bunn, the fundraising officer at the Royal Orthopaedic Charity, added: "We'll be working directly with the teams to make sure Grace's donation is invested in the areas she cares most about."

"Grace will be involved every step of the way."

Visit: rohcharity.org/gracescoliosis/ for more on Grace's story.



ABOVE: Grace Winterburn has raised £7,500 for the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital Charity after running the Birmingham Half Marathon. s

LEFT: Grace with her family on the day of the race. s

NEWS in brief

TOYS TAKEN: THIEVES stole children's toys, power banks and Rayban sunglasses from a car while it was parked in Vine Street, Kidderminster.

The incident happened last Friday evening.

DRIVEWAY: A SILVER Honda Civic was stolen from a driveway in Jubilee Drive, Kidderminster.

The theft took place between 10pm on Saturday and 4am on Sunday.

CAR KEYS USED: TWO BMWs were stolen during a double car-key burglary in Stourport in the early hours of Monday morning.

A property on Stagborough Way was targeted at 3am.

After gaining access to the property via the back door, the thieves took the keys and then escaped with a white BMW, with the partial registration number 'SYZ' and a black BMW which had the partial registration 'PVL'.

The brazen raiders tried to steal a third vehicle but were unsuccessful.

Police are investigating the above crimes and have urged witnesses or anyone with information to call officers on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Alternatively, email: ofpsp.snt@westmercia.police.uk with any details which could help officers with their enquiries.

Officers also want to hear from people who saw anything suspicious in the area at the time of the incident or if they have CCTV or video doorbell footage.

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Bewdley Carnival



LEFT: There were all smiles on the floats at Bewdley Festival on Saturday. 2725002MMR15



RIGHT: A gnome themed float delighted the crowds. 2725002MMR4



Morris dancers provided a traditional feel to the parade. 2725002MMR4

PICTURES BY MARCUS MINGINS

Floats, fireworks and fun

HUNDREDS of people descended on Bewdley on Saturday for the annual carnival which boasted the longest parade since the new committee was formed two years ago.

The parade journeyed through the town centre and there was a variety of activities and events to enjoy.

Among them were live music, a food court, local and town traders, a fun fair, the Riverside live music stage and a family area in Jubilee Gardens with live entertainment, traders and garden games.

As well as providing a popular day of activities for people

by **Tristan Harris**
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to enjoy, Bewdley Carnival also raises funds for good causes and not-profit organisations.

This year, the carnival organisers pledged £2,000 for the Friends of The Maypole, which is vying to safeguard the historic green land at Maypole Piece for future generations.

On the Friday night before carnival day, there was an impressive fireworks display at the Riverside.

Posting on Facebook after the event, the carnival organisers said: "It was an absolute scorcher on Saturday, but you

still came out in your hundreds to support the day."

They thanked everyone who took part in the parade, adding the 'competition was fierce this year'. They also thanked all the traders and guest traders who 'kept smiling throughout the day despite intense heat and, at times, high winds'.

There was a shout-out to the wonderful marshalls who gave up their time free, adding the event would not have been able to take place without them.

And they paid their gratitude to all the bands and acts which performed for free to enable the carnival to raise more cash for charities, as well as the

entrants in the best-dressed window competition and everyone who helped out behind the scenes.

Organisers added: "So much hard work goes into putting on an event like this, including a 5am start on carnival day, but seeing you and your families enjoying the celebrations is what makes all that hard work worth it."

For more information and pictures, head to the Bewdley Carnival Facebook page and bewdleycarnival.co.uk – the Bewdley Carnival website.

Go to kidderminsterstandard.co.uk for more images of the day and turn over to page eight for your pictures.

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Bewdley Carnival



The monster trucks were in town for the parade. 2725002MMR5



Bewdley Rotary Club ensured everyone was in good elf. 2725002MMR13



Bewdley Concert Band were among the groups providing live entertainment. 2725002MMR12



Bewdley Mayor, Coun Nicole Harper, meets the Wizards of Dogz. 2725002MMR16



The Scouts offer a float of a different kind. 2725002MMR8



What's the weather like up there? 2725002MMR7



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Bewdley Carnival



The floats travelled over the river. Picture by the Kidderminster Drone. s



The Wizard of Dogz provided a very colourful float. Picture by Sian Thomas. s



The Second World War-themed 'Women at Work' display. Picture by Sian Thomas. s



The Wheely Different Theatre Company were among the performers. Picture by Elaine Kirby. s

IT WAS cameras at the ready when Bewdley Carnival got into full swing on Saturday. The event boasted something for everyone and, with that in mind, we asked you to send us your pictures of the day. And you did not disappoint. Here is a selection of your memorable moments from an amazing day.



This tractor was one of many vehicles in the parade. Picture by Sian Thomas. s



There was live music throughout the day. Picture by Elaine Kirby. s



The balloon seller did a roaring trade on a fine summer day. Picture by Elaine Kirby. s

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Delighted with all the support

KIDDERMINSTER veteran Steven Walker and his dedicated family want to thank the local community for supporting their fundraising for veteran charity groups around the area.

Vets eVenTS is a part of the Kidderminster and Wyre Forest Veterans Breakfast Club which meets every Saturday at Larchwood Farm, Silverwoods Way in Kidderminster.

Mr Walker, who is supported by his dedicated family - including Deborah, Sophie and Shayne - said he was delighted with the support that has been provided so far from local residents and gave his thanks to Forces Support charity shop in Worcester Street.

The shop, which is open everyday except Sundays from 8.30am to 4.30pm, is a military bereavement charity which pledges not to forget fallen heroes or their families.

Mr Walker said the shop manager there had been extremely supportive and donated prizes, including cuddly toys for the tombolas at events.

Among them are The

Steven Walker wants to thank the local community for supporting the group's fundraising efforts. s



Barrington Bash which Coun Fran Oborski MBE and Coun Adrian Beavis, chair of Kidderminster RBL, attended, along with the Far Forest Car Boot. The Walker family was also at Bewdley Carnival last weekend, spreading the word and raising funds.

Everyone is welcome to the Kidderminster and Wyre Forest Veterans Breakfast Club to talk to the empow-

ering members to improve mental health and wellbeing.

The Wheely Different Theatre Company (WDTCo) recognises the work of the group and all the work it does to put on shows or events in the community.

Visit: 'Kidderminster and Wyre Forest Veterans Breakfast Club' at facebook.com for more on the group and the latest updates.



Mayor, Coun Doug Hine, with members of the Royal British Legion and other representatives. s

The Mayor of Kidderminster, Coun Doug Hine, with the Armed Forces Day Flag. Pictures by Miriam Cunliffe Photography. s



A FLAG raising ceremony took place in Kidderminster to commemorate Armed Forces Day.

Kidderminster Town Council said it was honoured to organise Wyre Forest's Armed Forces flag flying service this year.

The occasion is dedicated to remembering, recognising, and honouring all those who have served and continue to serve in the Armed Forces.

The Mayor of Kidderminster, Coun Doug Hine, led the proceedings on June 23 and

proudly raised the Armed Forces Flag as a symbol of the community's united support and appreciation for those serving past and present.

Coun Hine said: "A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined us to commemorate the start of Armed Forces Week by attending the Armed Forces Flag Flying Ceremony."

"We'd also like to thank Wyre Forest District Council for hosting the ceremony at Wyre Forest House."



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Man injured as car ends up in field

A CAR crashed in Bewdley and ended up on its side in a field. The incident happened around 12.30am on Tuesday in Arley Lane, Shatterford. A Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service crew from Wyre Forest Fire Station was called and, after ascertaining no-one was trapped, made the vehicle safe. Two people had got themselves out of the vehicle and one was treated by West Midlands Ambulance Service paramedics. His injuries were not thought to be serious and he was taken to the Worcestershire Royal Hospital for further assessment. West Mercia Police also attended the incident.

Chicks rescued

FIVE PIGEON chicks were rescued from a first-storey ledge in Kidderminster. A Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service crew from Tenbury Wells Fire Station was called around 4pm on Saturday after concerns were raised by a member of the public. Firefighters used a ladder to access the ledge and then lifted the young birds to safety. The incident was resolved by 4.47pm.



LEFT: Mayor of Kidderminster, Coun Doug Hine, addressed those gathered at St Mary and All Saints Church.

RIGHT: The mayor met a number of civic dignitaries. s

Pictures by Miriam Cunliffe Photography. s



Mayor on parade for service

THE MAYOR'S annual Civic Sunday Service took place at the town's St Mary and All Saints Church on June 22. Mayor, Coun Doug Hine, was joined by fellow Kidderminster Town Councillors, past mayors, honorary freemen of the town and the CEO of the town council. The group paraded from the town hall to the church where they were welcomed by the High Sheriff, Rev Hayward Osborne, civic dignitaries and members of the community. The annual Mayor's Civic Sunday event formally marks the welcome of the newly-elected Mayor and serves as an opportunity to bring together civic leaders, community representatives, and residents. The theme of this year's service was Sanctuary Sunday, a key part of

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

Refugee Week. Readings highlighted the Christian message of 'love thy neighbour as yourself'. Coun Hine said: 'I'd like to thank all that attended the service. "It was a good opportunity to express our care and compassion to refugees – those whose lives are turned upside down by war, oppression and climate destruction. "A huge and heartfelt thanks to all who attended and supported the event and sincere thanks to St Mary and All Saints Church for kindly hosting the service and to the Wyre Forest Refugee Group, Standard Bearers and all guest speakers for their valued contributions to this meaningful occasion."



The group paraded from the town hall to the church prior to the civic service starting. s

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Will you be lining up with the Wolverley Village Players for the next pantomime in January? s

Theatre group's casting call

AN AMATEUR dramatic group has issued a rally call for new members to join its ranks.

Wolverley Village Players has recently celebrated its tenth anniversary and performs a pantomime every January at Wolverley Memorial Hall.

Details of the next production will be announced at a launch night at the hall at 7pm a week on Monday, July 14.

With details of the January 2026 production being revealed, anyone thinking about being part in it is urged to go along.

As well as on-stage roles, there are also behind the scenes places to be filled.

Rehearsals are usually on Monday evenings from September.

In January 2025, the group performed 'Beauty and the Beast of Bodenheim' to sell out audiences, who gave positive feedback on the theme and amazing tree costumes which were designed by local artist Debbi Gould.

Visit: wolverleyvillageplayers.co.uk to contact the group or for further information on getting involved.

Visitors impressed by new-look Old Court

THE NEWLY revamped Old Court Building in Kidderminster was showcased to the public when a day of guided tours took place last Thursday.

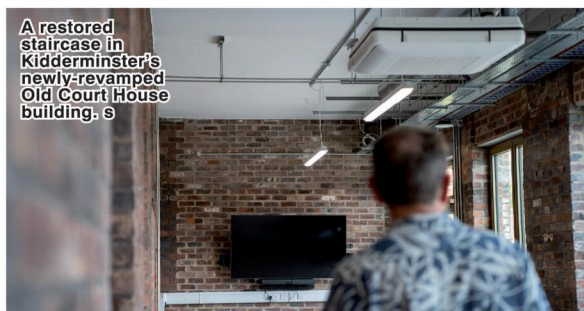
There was positive feedback overall from more than 60 residents who signed up for the event.

Many visitors were impressed with the results of the work transforming the former Magistrates Court by Wyre Forest District Council.

This regeneration was funded by Future High Streets Fund (FHSF), which prioritises the development of struggling high streets.

Coun Dan Morehead, Wyre Forest District Council's Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Planning and the Green Agenda, said: "We knew that there were people who have been interested in the transformation of the building so we

A restored staircase in Kidderminster's newly-revamped Old Court House building. s



opened the doors to show them what has been achieved.

"Modern facilities and improvements mean The Old Court now pro-

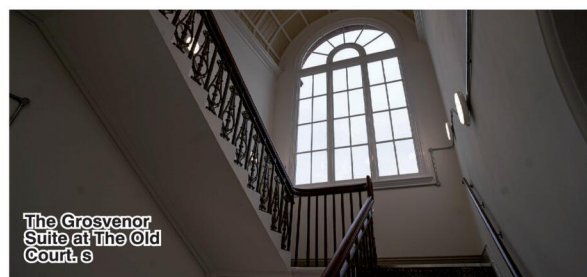
vides event space available to rent alongside country-wide innovation projects."

There is now opportunity to access individual workspace, meeting rooms and shower facilities thanks to this restoration scheme, as there are now three floors of the Old Court and a court chamber which has a seating capacity of 120 people.

The project also upgraded outside public space, including a pedestrian route through town and a small children's play area.

For more information about letting a space in The Old Court contact letting agent (Harris Lamb) via Sara Garratt.

Email: sara.garratt@harrislamb.com or call 0121 455 9455 or 07876 898280 for more information.

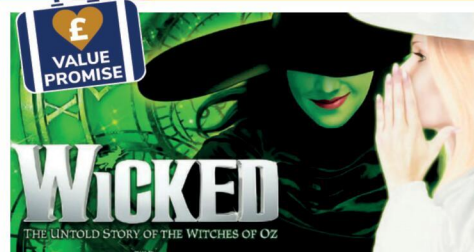


The Grosvenor Suite at The Old Court. s

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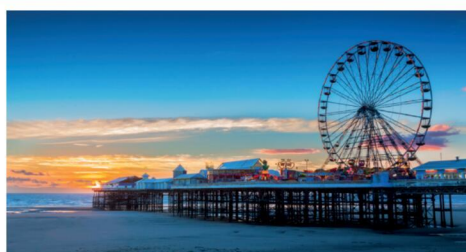
Wicked is the sensational musical that hits stages like a twister with its electrifying score, stunning sets and a story that turns Oz on its head. Full of memorable songs such as No Good Deed and Defying Gravity, this is guaranteed to leave you spellbound!

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*for details dates and to book www.avoncroft.org.uk

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The 2025 Phoenix Challenge team at the top of Pen Y Fan. s



Event with a view to raising funds

RESIDENTS across Worcestershire and Herefordshire are encouraged to get involved in an upcoming challenge in honour of a local firefighter who died of cancer in 2021.

Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service's Phoenix Challenge has 60 places available for an adrenaline-pumping experience at St Peter's Church in Hereford.

Residents can conquer their fears and descend the side of the church while supporting the Fire Fighters Charity.

Organiser, Firefighter Spencer Jones, said: "Whether you're an experienced abseiler or a first-timer, this event is perfect for everyone.

"Don't miss out on this thrilling opportunity to make a difference and have a blast at the same time. See you there."

Abseilers will pay a non-refundable £25 registration fee to secure their place which covers the cost of the abseil with a promise to raise a minimum of £100 each via a Team JustGiving page.

A range of ages are welcome to take part, however the minimum age for participants is 12, and anyone under the age of 18 must have parental or guardian consent at point of registration.

There will be a range of slots to choose from on the day, starting at 9.30am and finishing at 4.30pm.



The abseil - at St Peter's Church, Hereford, on August 23 - will be held in memory of Stu Crebbin and raise funds for the Fire Fighters Charity. s

Rising to the challenge

AN ANNUAL fundraising event held in tribute to late Bromsgrove firefighter Stu Crebbin has raised even more funds for charity.

Stu's Phoenix Challenge saw his former colleagues complete the Brecon Beacons 10 Peaks Traverse (East to West) which Stu took on himself in 2020.

The event, which must be completed in 24 hours, remembers Stu who was based in Bromsgrove with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. He died in March 2021, aged 46, after a 12-month battle with cancer.

Despite having intense chemotherapy and immunotherapy sessions in the lead-up, Stu completed most of the challenge with his Phoenix Challenge Team.

This year the team retraced the

steps of the original route walked by Stu. Despite rain and fog adding to the complexity of the challenge, spirits remained high and the group completed the 38-mile route in 19 hours.

But now there is a new challenge ahead. Spencer Jones, who heads up the fundraising activity, said: "In line with Stu's vision of fundraising inclusivity, the Phoenix Challenge continually adapts.

"The next event this year is a Church Tower Abseil.

"To date we've raised £25,700 - our target is to reach £30,000 following the tower abseil in August."

The most recent Phoenix Challenge has raised over £650 for the Fire Fighters Charity.

Visit: justgiving.com/page/spencer-jones-11 to donate.

Guests not taking part in the abseil are encouraged to come along and support.

The abseil will take place outside St Peter's Church, St Peter's Square, Hereford, on Saturday, August 23.

The Phoenix Challenge has raised £25,700 for the Fire Fighters Charity since 2020 and is aiming to take that total beyond £30,000 with the St Peter's Church abseil.

It was set up in honour of the late

Bromsgrove based firefighter, Stu Crebbin, who took on the momentous Brecon Beacons 10 Peaks Traverse (East to West) himself in 2020, prior to his death.

Now teams of firefighters take on the challenge annually in Stu's memory with the service organising other events all-year-round to raise more funds.

Email Spencer Jones at: sjones@hwfire.org.uk to sign up.

Quarter Jewellery and Malvern Goldsmiths



Quarter Jewellery (The most reasonable jewellers in Worcester) has now been open for 18 years, I have always endeavoured to run the shop as jewellers were run when I started in the jewellery trade 59 years ago. Five years ago we were lucky enough to acquire the lease of 28, Belle Vue Terrace, Great Malvern a beautifully fitted Victorian pharmacy, now reborn as Malvern Goldsmiths

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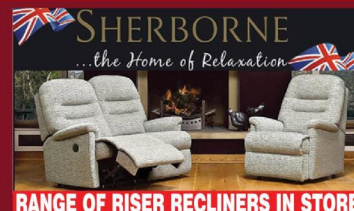
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Colleagues and volunteers took part in the environmental activities at Bradley Thurstfield Court in Kidderminster. s

Making a difference

EMPLOYEES from Platform Housing Group has been taking part in voluntary environmental activities in Kidderminster.

The work was part of the company's ongoing Communities Connected campaign.

Platform staff and customers collaborated for two days of environmental action at Bradley Thurstfield Court and nearby Mill Street as part of the drive.

Volunteers joined in with a large scale litter-picking across both locations.

The local Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator and other residents were also involved in plans for the area, with one resident, Frank, sharing his idea to transform scrubland sections into spaces to grow

vegetables and other plants.

Nicholas Richardson, community engagement officer at Platform Housing Group and organiser of the events, said: "We are so proud of the work that has taken place in Kidderminster."

"By working in a partnership with our customers, we're not only tackling environmental issues but also building stronger relationships and promoting positive mental and physical wellbeing."

"When people feel a sense of belonging, it leads to stronger, more connected communities."

The Communities Connected programme continues to run events across the region, making a positive difference in local areas and building deeper community ties.

Hospice prepares to open new store

A NEW St Richard's Hospice superstore is set to open in Stourport at 10am tomorrow (Saturday, July 5).

The new shop, which is currently accepting donations to raise cash for the cause and looking for volunteers, will open its doors at Tannery Retail Park, Lombard Street.

The store will be accepting donations of pre-loved clothing, furniture, homeware, books and more.

Volunteers are needed and may take up roles in serving customers at the till or prepping stock for sale.

The store will be open Monday to Saturday from 9am to 6pm, and on Sundays, from 10.30am to 4.30pm.

Stourport resident, David Bishop, who received care in the hospice's In-Patient Unit earlier this year, is scheduled to cut the ribbon on the new store.

He said: "I was admitted to the hospice in December last year expected to die."

"Five weeks later I came out on crutches and I am here today."

"I still have hurdles to overcome, but my 'never give up still I rise' attitude means the story isn't closed just yet."

"St Richard's is a special place, with a team of special people, that survives mostly on donations."

"I owe them my life".

Dan Corns, associate director of retail operations for St Richard's, said: "We have been hard at work



Sue Birch, the assistant shop manager of the Stourport Superstore, which is due to open tomorrow (Saturday). s

getting the store ready to open and are really looking forward to welcoming in customers and donors to enjoy the new retail space.

"It's set to play an important role in generating the funds we need to provide our specialist care, at a challenging time for hospice charities across the country."

"Our grateful thanks to everyone involved in getting the store ready to open, including all our brilliant volunteers."

St Richard's Hospice has 18 total shops across Worcestershire, with a retail income of £3million annually, all of which goes toward supporting patients and their loved ones.

St Richard's Hospice is an independent charity providing free, expert care for adults with incurable illnesses, also supporting their loved ones and carers, of which the hospice team annually supports more than 3,100 people.

Including patient care and other necessary support services, it will cost £12million for the hospice to be ran this year.

Visit: strichards.org.uk/latest-volunteering-vacancies/volunteer-at-stourport-superstore to sign up to volunteer.

Go to: strichards.org.uk for more general information about the charity.

RANGI ZA AFRICA

All of my artwork is original works and are all one off.

I or no other artist can paint two painting the same, all paintings on display are my own work of which most I have sketched and taken photos of the subject and completed in my home studio and gallery.

You may have heard a lot of artists say we did this painting from live subjects, yes only to a degree, as from experience I have yet to see a bull elephant pose for you... Or a buffalo stand and pose for you... We all use photos and our own sketch work

to fall back on to and the most graceful thing about art is that we all have our own "fingerprint style as to how we paint"... No body can teach you to paint or draw, all someone can do is to show you and help you.... But finally, you will be the one holding the brush and pencil.... So, in my opinion... "practice" is the only way... I do take commissions on all subjects so please feel free to ask...

My name is Satvinder Gill and I was born in Africa, in a lovely country called Tanzania, which was called Tanganyika during the colonial time in the 50's and early 60s.

I was extremely lucky to have had a great childhood and a lifestyle I can only call "born free" as my uncles were hunters and safari people, so I grew up with wildlife all around me. I did a lot of sketching and drawings while on safari or family trips out on picnics to the National Park.

When I moved to England I attended Art School in London, but I just couldn't get used to the way I was asked to paint Art. So, I would say I am very much self-taught.

I have had exhibitions in London, Ireland, Europe and of course Africa.

This is my first exhibition in my new hometown Bidford and I am hoping it will be one of many.

So, I would like to welcome you all to take a trip on the "wild side" with my artwork

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As the school year winds down and summer stretches ahead, parents across Worcester face the familiar challenge: how to keep their children active, engaged, and entertained during the long holiday break. That's where Team Super Sports steps in – with an exciting, energetic, and safe environment for kids to thrive, learn, and, most importantly, have fun!

Team Super Sports has become a household name in Worcester for providing high-quality, action-packed holiday camps for children aged 5–13. This summer promises to be the best yet, with more activities, more energy, and more unforgettable memories for every child who joins.

Held at convenient, local venues with excellent facilities, Team Super Sports camps offer a wide range of activities to suit all interests and abilities. From football and cricket to dodgeball, athletics, obstacle courses, and even some creative team challenges – no two days are ever the same. The aim? To inspire confidence, improve fitness, and nurture social skills in a fun and supportive environment.

What sets Team Super Sports apart is its passionate team of qualified coaches and enthusiastic leaders

who are not only experts in sport, but also understand the importance of building self-esteem and encouraging teamwork. Safety is paramount, with all staff fully trained and DBS-checked, giving parents peace of mind while their children enjoy a summer of excitement and growth.

And it's not just about physical activity – Team Super Sports believes in developing well-rounded individuals. Each day includes structured sessions that balance active games with moments of reflection, team-building exercises, and opportunities for every child to feel included and proud of their achievements.

Parents regularly report that their children come home from camp buzzing with excitement – tired in the best possible way and eager to return the next day. It's no surprise that many families return year after year, and places fill up fast.

Whether your child is a budding sports star or just looking to try something new, there's a place for them at Team Super Sports. With flexible booking options, competitive prices, and multi-day discounts, it's a hassle-free way to keep children busy, active, and happy over the summer holidays.

So don't wait until the last minute – secure your child's place today and make this summer one to remember. With limited spaces and high demand,



early booking is strongly recommended to avoid disappointment.

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Little Shop of stars in memorable show

REVIEW:
Little Shop of Horrors,
Theatre 282

LITTLE Shop of Horrors is a musical with a bit of everything – dark comedy, bizarre scenarios, moral dilemmas and even some touching moments.

It is a roller-coaster of emotion and tone. It centres on a failing flower shop when an unexpected opportunity, in the form of a mysterious plant, presents itself. With that, comes a growing appetite for fame, fortune and fresh blood, that just might change lives.

The first half sets the scene with catchy toe-tapping numbers and plenty of comedy. The second one takes on a more sinister turn, raises moral dilemmas and manages, somehow, to keep the comedy, albeit darker.

This was Theatre 282's first musical and the talented cast did a sterling job telling the tale of this cult classic.

Everyone played their part in the production. Andy Partington was great as shop owner Mr Mushnik – both capturing the character and competent as he sang in the musical numbers he was involved in.

Talking of vocals, Martin Salter's wonderful soulful voice was perfect for the plant 'Audrey 2' as it begged to be fed with its 'feed me' catchphrase.

Louis Wharton – who I thought was somewhat Joe Lycett-like – was fantastic as the evil dentist and Audrey's abusive boyfriend Orin Scrivello. He delivered the 'Dentist' number excellently and was hilarious in Now (It's Just the Gas). He also doubled as the suave but sleazy Skip Snip, offering Seymour fame and fortune.

The ever-present Emily Addis (Ronnelle), Charlotte Hipkiss (Chiffon) and Annabelle Blower (Crystal) made for a terrific trio. From the opening 'Little Shop of Horrors' prologue, 'Da Doo' and 'Ya Never Know' to the finale, they were pitch-perfect throughout. They were great on the songs involving just the trio provided equally wonderful backing vocals for the other numbers.

And Alex Thompson and Lydia Peters were a super pairing for the main roles of Seymour and Audrey – made to play those parts.

He portrayed his lovable down-on-his-luck character magnificently and she, the love interest, were wonderful to watch – both individually and even more so when they were together. Their harmonies were almost heavenly.

Their 'Suddenly Seymour' duet at the start of the second act had the real 'aww' factor as you had been willing them to 'give it a go' since the start. And during the moving 'Somewhere That's Green' (reprise), there was complete silence – you could hear a pin drop.

Peters' performance of 'Somewhere That's Green' in the first act was the vocal performance

of the night. The set was functional, providing the backdrop for all the scenes needed – the flower shop, the street on Skid Row and a dental surgery.

The Audrey 2 aspect – in all its stages of development was also very well done – shout-out to its operators, puppeteers Izzy Boneham, Charlotte Salter, Eleanor Hipkiss and Amy Cooper.

And kudos to Sam Fitter and her team for pulling this fantastic production together and staging it so well.

Blakedown Parish Rooms was also a nice intimate venue for this production, reflecting off the stage the cosy feel and atmosphere of the flower shop on it.

Tristan Harris



Talented pupils hit the right note

THERE was a musical triumph for students at Kidderminster's Holy Trinity School and Sixth Form as 27 of them excelled in their Music Medal Exams.

This cohort of 27 students aged seven to 10 years old achieved unprecedented success in their Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music Copper and Bronze Music Medal Exams.

The school's head of music, Sarah Paterson,

said: "All the children put themselves forward for these external exams, showing tremendous intrinsic motivation and commitment."

"There is a fabulous positive peer pressure in the music department and a tradition of quality recorder playing, with students actively seeking to make music with their friends."

Holy Trinity students enjoy an indulging music curriculum adapted to each student, which helps

to build resilience, perseverance, and endurance for life beyond the classroom.

Ms Paterson added: "It is well known that music offers a wide array of benefits for physical and mental wellbeing, impacting mood, cognitive function and even physical health."

"It is of course a powerful tool for emotional expression and social connection which is plainly evident among these talented students."



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Caring People, Caring Places: The heartbeat of our community

In every corner of our towns and villages, there's a quiet network of people and places who make care their calling.

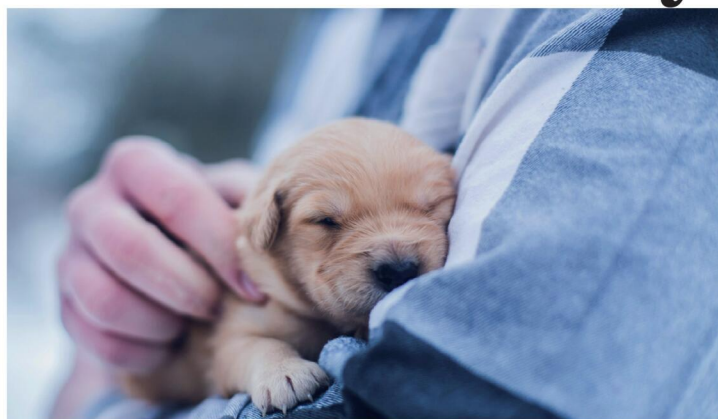
From the vet who checks on your family dog like it's their own, to the funeral director who offers gentle guidance during life's most difficult goodbyes, these unsung heroes are woven into the very fabric of our daily lives. This isn't just about care for the elderly – though they are, of course, a cherished part of this picture – but about the many ways compassion shapes our communities, across all ages and walks of life.

At its heart, Caring People, Caring Places is a celebration of humanity. It's about those who dedicate themselves to the wellbeing of others – people who don't just do a job, but perform a service rooted in empathy, patience, and

dignity.

Take, for instance, the local solicitor who offers free advice sessions on will writing, ensuring peace of mind for families at any stage of life. It's not just about legalese and paperwork – it's about offering reassurance, answering difficult questions, and helping people plan with clarity and care.

Veterinary clinics also tell a powerful story of compassion. Ask any pet owner and they'll say the vet is a lifeline during tough times – when the dog has eaten something it shouldn't, when the cat needs emergency surgery, or simply when a furry friend is nearing the end of their life. These clinics often extend their care beyond animals, understanding how closely our emotional health is tied to our pets. Many offer grief support and work closely with rehoming charities to give abandoned animals a second chance at love.



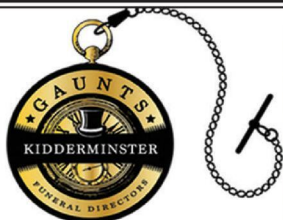
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CARING People CARING Places



Speaking of second chances, fostering and adoption services are a profound example of care in action. Across our region, there are families opening their doors – and their hearts – to children who need stability, support, and love. Social workers, carers, and support staff



dedicate their careers to making sure that vulnerable young people find not just shelter, but a sense of belonging.

And while we're on the subject of homes, care homes and supported living facilities continue to provide more than just a roof and regular meals. Many of these places are hubs of life and activity, staffed by people who understand that dignity, independence, and companionship are vital at any age. Increasingly, intergenerational projects and pet therapy schemes are breathing new life into care spaces, offering residents laughter, stimulation, and purpose.

But care doesn't stop at the front door. Funeral directors – some of the most quietly compassionate professionals in our communities – play a deeply important role in helping families navigate loss with grace and respect. Alongside them, stonemasons craft lasting tributes that honour lives lived, with each inscription carved in memory and love. These trades might not often make headlines, but their impact is profound and lasting. And let's not forget the smaller, sometimes overlooked services that make a world of difference. The kennels and catteries that provide safe havens for pets when families are away; the hearing aid specialists who reconnect people to the sounds – and conversations – they've been missing; or the volunteers who give their time to animal shelters and community centres, ensuring no one is forgotten.

These people and places aren't glamorous, and they rarely seek the spotlight. Yet they form a backbone of care and community that deserves



recognition. Their work is local, personal, and essential. They remind us that "care" isn't a service – it's a value. One that's practiced every day in countless acts of kindness, patience, and professionalism.

It might be easy to picture care as something reserved for our oldest citizens – and yes, their needs are crucial – but Caring People, Caring Places shines a light on the broader picture. From children finding safe new homes, to pets being lovingly rehomed, to families finding comfort and support through life's major

transitions, this is a celebration of care in all its forms.

So next time you pass the hearing clinic, walk past the vet's office, or drive by the local foster services banner, pause for a moment. Think of the people inside – doing quiet, tireless work to make someone else's life a little easier, a little warmer, a little more human. Let's support these people, these businesses and these organisations.

Because caring isn't just something we do. It's who we are.

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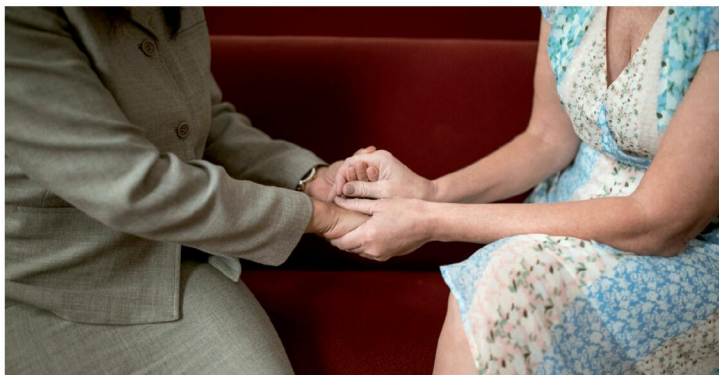
CARING People CARING Places

The Circle of Care: How Support Travels Through a Community

Care has a quiet momentum. It doesn't shout. It doesn't seek credit. But when one person chooses to help another, something remarkable happens – it spreads.

Welcome to the Circle of Care: an invisible, ever-turning wheel powered by acts of kindness, big and small. In towns, villages, and

cities across the country, people are stepping up for each other – and in doing so, sparking a chain reaction of compassion. It often starts with something simple. A hot meal left on a doorstep. A schoolchild giving up their seat on the bus. A stranger paying for the coffee of the person behind them in the queue. These gestures might feel fleeting to the giver, but to the person on the receiving



end, they can be transformative. Not just for what they provide – but for what they inspire. Take the story of a local couple who began cooking extra portions of their evening meals and delivering them to an elderly neighbour

during lockdown. That neighbour, once isolated, began knitting hats and scarves for a women's shelter in return. The shelter staff, moved by the gesture, started offering monthly pop-ups with free toiletries for the homeless.

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CARING People CARING Places



And volunteers at those events? Some were recipients of care themselves, now giving back in kind.

This is the Circle of Care in motion. It grows not by obligation, but by invitation. It says: You've helped me – I want to help someone else.

At the heart of this cycle is connection. Care doesn't exist in a vacuum. When we see someone doing good, we're often reminded of our own power to contribute. It's why communities respond so passionately to fundraising pages, food drives, or community clean-up days. They aren't just supporting a cause – they're continuing a story.

And it's not always the obvious moments that carry the most weight. A listening ear. A ride to a doctor's appointment. Watching a neighbour's child for an hour so they can rest. These are small acts – but they build trust, dignity, and belonging. They lay the foundation



Local Facebook groups often help this local newspaper and help act as the new town square – offering everything from babysitting swaps to urgent appeals for missing pets. Behind each post is a person reaching out, and another person reaching back.

And when care flows in a circle, no one is left behind. Those who give today may need help tomorrow. Those who receive today may be the first to offer it next time. It's not a straight line. It's a cycle. A rhythm. A shared responsibility.

So if you've ever wondered whether a small act of kindness really makes a difference – know this: it does. Not just to the person you helped, but to the person they go on to help. And the one after that. And the one after that.

Because care is contagious. And once it's set in motion, it rarely stops.

Let's keep it turning.



for a community where people feel safe to both give and receive care.

In schools, children are learning this too. Many are now taking part in kindness challenges – writing positive notes for classmates, helping with litter picks, or raising funds for local charities. Teachers report that once a culture of kindness takes hold, it becomes self-sustaining. "One child brings in a tin for the food bank, and suddenly the whole class is donating," said one headteacher. "They inspire each other."

Businesses are joining the circle as well. A bakery offering leftover loaves to a shelter.

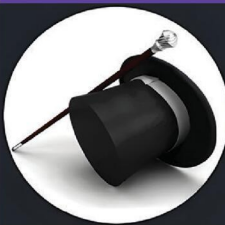
A taxi firm giving discounted rides to cancer patients. A florist donating unsold blooms to a hospice. These aren't marketing stunts – they're reflections of what it means to be rooted in community.

But the beauty of the Circle of Care is that you don't need to wait for permission to enter it. You only need to ask: What can I do, right now, with what I have? And that answer will look different for everyone. For some, it's time. For others, it's resources. For many, it's simply attention – noticing when someone is struggling and showing up.

Even digital communities are catching on.



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Linda's growing reputation nets her a top Plant Heritage accolade

by **Sonny Rackham**
sonny.rackham@bullivantmedia.com

A RENOWNED plant expert and collector from Hagley has won a prestigious award for her decades-long efforts in horticultural conservation.

Linda Eggins, a Japanese laurel (*Aucuba Japonica*) expert and National Plant Collection Holder, has won Plant Heritage's prestigious Brickell Award 2025.

The award - named after the Plant Heritage charity's founding member and vice president Chris Brickell - celebrates excellence in cultivated plant conservation.

The judges commended Linda for her dedicated research and conservation efforts over several decades.

In particular, they noted her important work to untangle the plant group's complicated names and classifications, as well as her collaboration with others, including sharing her knowledge and plant material across the UK and internationally.

Through her passion for these plants and her storytelling, she has helped to persuade others to appreciate their diversity and their interesting history.

Linda said the accolade was a great honour.

"I certainly didn't think when my late husband and I started the collection in 1976 in our back garden, I'd



be awarded at RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival for my contribution to the genus.

"I can hardly believe it."

Linda was presented the Brickell Award 2025 by The Royal Park's head of horticulture Matthew Pottage on Monday at Plant Heritage's stand at RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden

Festival.

Her and her late husband initially started the *Aucuba* collection in their garden in Clent before being carefully transferred to Winterbourne House and Garden in Birmingham in 2016.

Here, visitors can admire cultivars planted out in the garden and the collection itself is proudly displayed

on the University of Birmingham campus for the public to see.

Linda has published several articles, reports and even a book (*'A Virgin for Eighty Years - Aucuba, An Overlooked Treasure'*) in 2021, telling the fascinating story of why the first plants brought back from Japan failed to produce their trademark

berries. She did a month-long tour of Japan to see native *Aucuba japonica* growing in the wild, how they are propagated, grown and developed in nurseries and used in public spaces and gardens.

She is now considered an international authority on all things *Aucuba*.

Every year, Linda collects propagated material as required, keeps an inventory of back-up plants and has even donated specimens to prestigious botanical gardens worldwide, including Birmingham Botanical Gardens and Glasshouses, The Harold Hillier Arboretum, Bodenheim Arboretum and The Raulston Arboretum in the USA.

Gwen Hines, CEO at Plant Heritage, said: "Linda has dedicated many years of her life to understanding, growing and caring for *Aucuba japonica* and telling their story, which is inspiring.

"Her passion shines through and her important contributions to plant conservation make her a worthy winner for our Brickell Award 2025."

Gwen Hines (CEO, Plant Heritage), Cecilia Bufton (Chair, Plant Heritage), Linda Eggins (Brickell Award 2025 winner), Matt Pottage (The Royal Parks) and Dan Cartwright (Winterbourne House and Garden). Photo by Plant Heritage. s

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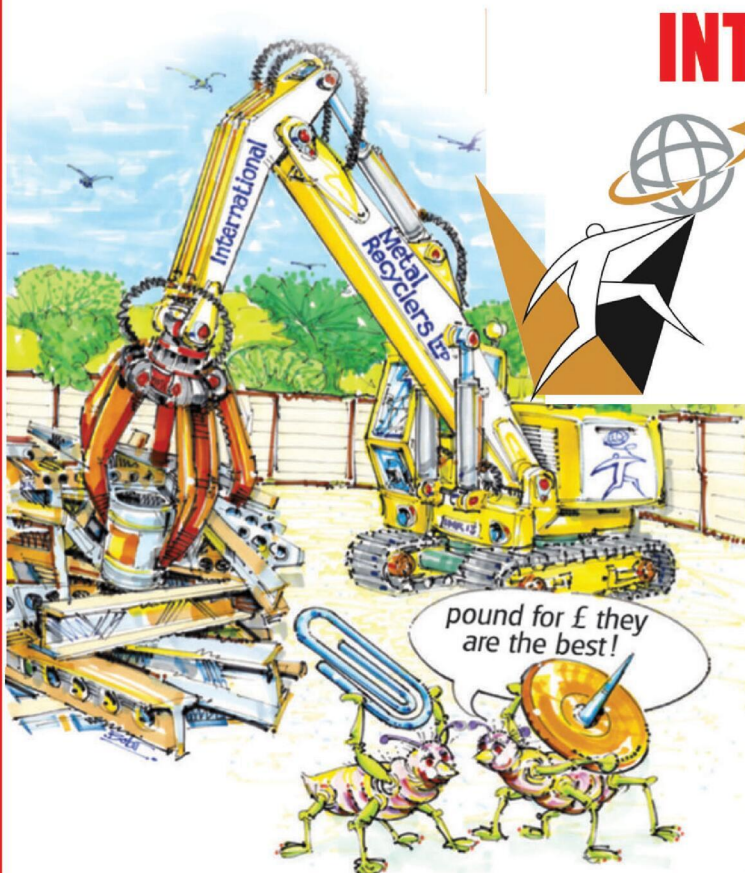
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Packed festival enters third week

AS THIS year's Bromsgrove Festival enters its third week, there are still plenty of events and activities for a variety of tastes to enjoy.

Music

On Sunday, July 6, Blackwell Concert Band will be the latest to take to centre stage in the district council's Bands in the Park series. The free concert takes place between 2.30pm and 3.30pm at the Jubilee Bandstand in Sanders Park. People are urged to bring along a picnic, a blanket or chairs, and enjoy the programme which boasts marches, jazz, calypso, blues, pop, rock, film scores and more.

The next in the series of Festive Classics comes to Avoncroft Museum's New Geusten Hall on Wednesday, July 9. Michael Lunts' Home Service presents a humorous view of life on the Home Front to mark the 80th VE Day. The performance, which brings the 1940s to life, starts at midday with lunch at 1pm. Tickets can be bought for just the concert or for lunch as well. Visit: festiveclassics.co.uk or call 01527 832492 for more information or tickets.

The John Richards Band will be at Bromsgrove Folk Club at 8pm on Thursday, July 10. Billed as one of the UK's best songwriters, he will be accompanied by a group of excellent musicians.

Tickets are available in advance at bromsgrovecarnival.co.uk or on the door.

Next Saturday, July 12, there will be the latest Cake and Coffee Concert at St John's Church. Starting at 10.30am, the free short concert will feature the Singing Villains and the Thompson-Cox Family Jazz Quartet - offering light a capella vocal music and a jazz selection. Email: Steve.cowperthwaite@gmail.com for more information. The event will be followed by coffee and cake and the Spire Project Open Day (see 'Other events' below).



A day of music with food and craft stalls will take place in the garden of The Hop Pole pub in Bromsgrove from 1pm to late next Saturday, July 12, to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Live Aid. Bands will perform all day, including Hot Space, a Queen tribute act, which will close the event. The performance is free, people can just turn up.

From 3.30pm to 5pm, next Saturday, July 12, there will be the Retro School Assembly Singalong for grown-ups. During this event



The outdoor cinema returns as part of the Bromsgrove Carnival weekend and this year, Moana 2 and Wicked will be screened. s

at Fairfield Village Hall, pianist Christa Hugo will take viewers back to their primary school days via a host of well-known anthems, including 'Give Me Oil in My Lamp', 'Lord of the Dance', 'He's Got the Whole World in His Hands' and more. Visit christahugopianist.co.uk for tickets and more information.

Theatre

The renowned popular theatre group Oddssocks Productions bring Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream to Bromsgrove's Avoncroft Museum on Sunday. The doors open for this outdoor

performance of one of the Bard's most favourite plays at 5.30pm and the show starts at 6.30pm. The evening promises magical, fast-paced, hilarious comedy. Visit: ticketsource.co.uk for tickets and oddssocks.co.uk or avoncroft.org.uk/whats-on for more information.

The Sound of Music is being brought to Artrix by the Queensbridge Musical Theatre Society from Tuesday to Saturday, July 8 to 12. Performances of this classic start at 7.30pm each weekday evening and at 12pm and 6pm on the Saturday. Visit artrixbromsgrove.co.uk or call

01527 361324 for more information and tickets.

Cinema

There will be free outdoor cinema in Sanders Park next Friday, July 11, to kick off the Bromsgrove Carnival weekend. The children's film at 5pm will be Moana 2 and the main event, at 8pm, will be Wicked. Although the event is free, people need to book tickets and donations per vehicle are requested. People are urged to bring their chairs and blankets and drinks (no alcoholic drinks to be brought). There will be drinks served from an on-site licensed bar and popcorn and sweets available. Visit this story on our website to click through to the ticket link and go to bromsgrovecarnival.org or the Bromsgrove Carnival Facebook page for more details.

Other events

The Spire Project Open Day - from 12pm to 3pm - will enable visitors to the historic St John's Church to find out how and why Worcestershire's tallest spire is being rebuilt. There will be experts on hand to chat about the restoration and interactive 'Side by Side' activities. The event is free and people can visit: stjohnsfriends.co.uk or email: stjohns.church@gmail.com for more information. Alternatively, visit: facebook.com/FriendsStJohnsBromsgrove for more.

Visit bromsgrovecarnival.co.uk for more.



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- ✓ Ticket to ABBA Voyage at the ABBA Arena with coach transfers (dancefloor, standing)
- ✓ Free time in London for shopping & sightseeing

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SUDOKU

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

EASY

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

HARD

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

PATHFINDER

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

Musical films

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

Solutions opposite

CROSSWORD

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

ACROSS

6. Propriety (7)
7. Rush out suddenly (5)
9. Call for (5)
10. Refined (7)
12. Mix together (11)
14. Intelligence (11)
18. Flagrant (7)
19. Perfect (5)
21. Concur (5)
22. Qualified (7)

DOWN

1. Answer (5)
2. Idea (6)
3. Purchase (3)
4. Slang (6)
5. Expressionlessly (7)
8. A region's weather (7)
11. Abundant (9)
13. Likeness in certain respects (7)
15. Vent (6)
16. Severe trial (6)
17. Match (5)
20. Pale (3)

Scribble pad

LADDER

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

- Wear out
- Dismiss an employee
- Travel charge
- Ranch
- Heat up

TIME

WARP

NINER

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

- 739163 gives a bird;
- 9446789 gives a second bird;
- 215587 gives a young bird.

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

CODEWORD

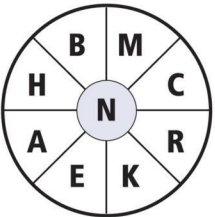
This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter. For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.

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

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
									U			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
											N	

WORDWHEEL

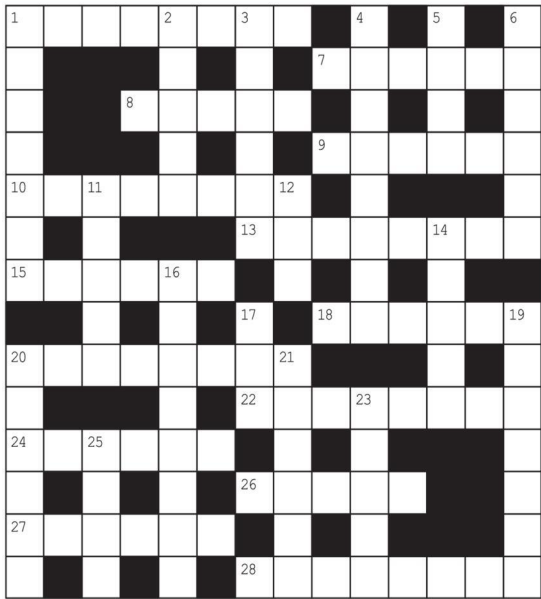
You have 10 mins to find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each must use the hub letter and at least 3 others. Letters may be used only once. You cannot use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one 9-letter word to be found.



How you rate
15 words: average
20 words: good
25 words: very good
30 or more: excellent.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- 1 See 12 Down
- 7 The coupu or its fur (6)
- 8 Score of one over par for a hole in golf (5)
- 9 Zodiac sign 'The Fishes' (6)
- 10 French Protestant (8)
- 13 Country of south-east Asia, capital Bangkok (8)
- 15 Large prawns (6)
- 18 See 5 Down
- 20 Orchestral composition illustrating a poetic idea (4,4)
- 22 Richmond is the capital of this state of the USA (8)
- 24 One who governs during the illness, etc., of a sovereign (6)
- 26 & 14 Down Morasses east of the Shannon, Republic of Ireland (3,2,5)
- 27 Fibrous pod used as a sponge (6)
- 28 A former British coin (8)



- DOWN**
- 1 God of wine (7)
- 2 Electrode at which positive current enters a device (5)
- 3 The dwarf leopard (6)
- 4 Art of boxing (8)
- 5 & 18 Across Novelist famous for The Mask of Dimitrios, Journey Into Fear, etc (4,6)
- 6 Small active plant pest (6)
- 11 Corn in general (5)
- 12, 1 Across, 19 Down & 25 Down Poem by Oscar Wilde (3,6,2,7,4)
- 14 See 26 Across
- 16 A fop or coxcomb (8)
- 17 Monetary unit of Bulgaria (3)
- 19 See 12 Down
- 20 Marine reptile (6)
- 21 Shrubby plant or tree with 'flowers' of small, fluffy, yellow balls (6)
- 23 Thin, fluid mortar for filling joints (5)
- 25 See 12 Down

SOLUTIONS

General Knowledge Crossword

ACROSS: 1 Ballad of 7 Nurtur; 8 Bogyey; 9 Pices; 10 Huguenot; 13 Thailand; 15 Scamp; 18 Ambler; 20 Tone Poem; 22 Virginia; 24 Regent; 26 Bog of 27 Looftah; 28 Farthing. DOWN: 1 Bacchus; 2 Anode; 3 Ocelot; 4 Pugilism; 5 Eric; 6 Capisi; 11 Grain; 12 The; 14 Allen; 16 Popinjay; 17 Lev; 19 Reading; 20 Turtle; 21 Milmosa; 23 Groat; 25 Gaol.

Wordwheel Pathfinder

Oklahoma; Seven Brides for Seven Brothers; West Side Story; The Sound of Music; Paint Your Wagon; Buggy Malone; Moulin Rouge; La Land; Les Misérables; Cabaret; Singin' in the Rain; Doctor Dolittle; Mamma Mia!; Calamity Jane; An American in Paris; Mary Poppins; Hairspray; Sweet Charity.

Codeword

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

Ladder

Warm, Warp, Time, Tire, Fire, Fare, Farm, UPHOLSTER

Niner

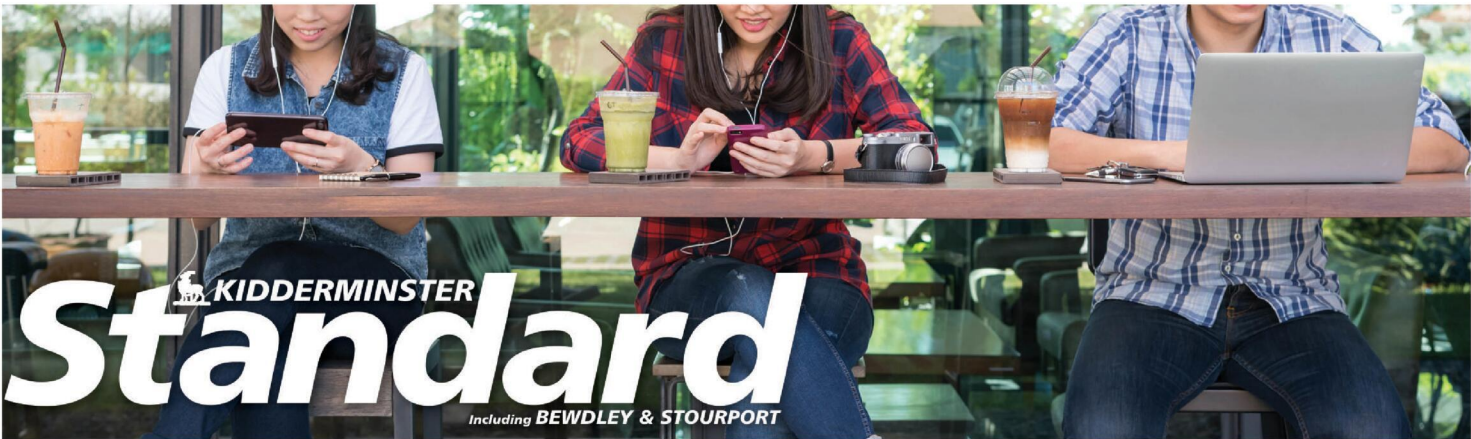
La Land, Les Misérables, Cabaret, Singin' in the Rain, Doctor Sound of Music, Paint Your Wagon, Buggy Malone, Moulin Rouge, Oklahoma, Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, West Side Story, The

Wordwheel

BENCHMARK

General Knowledge Crossword

ACROSS: 1 Ballad of 7 Nurtur; 8 Bogyey; 9 Pices; 10 Huguenot; 13 Thailand; 15 Scamp; 18 Ambler; 20 Tone Poem; 22 Virginia; 24 Regent; 26 Bog of 27 Looftah; 28 Farthing. DOWN: 1 Bacchus; 2 Anode; 3 Ocelot; 4 Pugilism; 5 Eric; 6 Capisi; 11 Grain; 12 The; 14 Allen; 16 Popinjay; 17 Lev; 19 Reading; 20 Turtle; 21 Milmosa; 23 Groat; 25 Gaol.



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Pizza Bae Worcestershire Ltd

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16.07.2025

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Skoda to take top awards

SKODA has dominated the 2025 Auto Express New Car Awards by claiming four category wins along with the coveted Car of the Year award.

The new Elroq took top honours by winning both its sector and the overall title.

The brand's latest all-electric SUV was joined on the winner's podium by the Octavia, Superb and Kodiaq.

The Elroq's win marks the fifth time that a Skoda model has been named Auto Express Car of the Year.

Leading the charge was the new Elroq, which was named Best Mid-size SUV of the Year. The second Skoda to be built on the Volkswagen Group MEB platform, the Elroq, impressed the judges with its broad skill set and intelligent design.

The Auto Express test team said: "It offers impressive performance and all of the practical touches that Skoda is now famous for to make it a front-runner in the family electric car class."

"An SUV-sized car for hatchback money, the Elroq is impressively spacious compared with

similarly priced alternatives."

The Octavia took top honours in the competitive Family Car category.

Summarising the Octavia's appeal, Auto Express's road test team said: "In some ways, the Skoda Octavia has transformed significantly over the years, but in the key areas where it excels – comfort, practicality and value for money – it hasn't."

"Few family cars offer this much space, let alone combined with such a comfortable driving experience."

The Octavia's latest win makes it one of the most successful models in Auto Express awards history.

It was crowned Auto Express Car of the Year and Family Car of the Year in 2021, while the estate model took the honours in the Estate Car of the Year category in 2021 and 2022.

Another Skoda adding to its already sizeable award collection was the new Superb, which again proved unbeatable in the Best Estate Car category. Repeating its victory from 2024, the Superb wowed the judges with its practicality and unbeatable value.

The Auto Express road test panel said: "The Superb Estate delivers on space, quality and cleverness just as strongly as the previous model. There have been thoughtful improvements to the interior design and to the hybrid powertrains to boost efficiency and lower running costs."

"It roundly covers all the bases a family car buyer looking for something with additional practicality could want. For those not taken with an SUV, the Superb Estate makes for a brilliant package."

The new Kodiaq took a comfortable victory in the Large SUV sector. The SUV impressed the judges with its practicality, driving experience and attention to detail.

The judging team said: "We're fans of the second-generation Skoda Kodiaq because it builds on the proven formula of the original model. It's spacious, efficient and features plenty of clever touches, while the cabin has taken a step upmarket when compared with the original. A cargo volume of 2,035 litres is among the best of any seven-seat SUV on sale."

Auto Express Editor Paul Barker said: "It was another fabulous year for Skoda."

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Harriers replace Golden Boot winner Hemmings with Sho-Silva

Tobi Sho-Silva has completed a move to Kidderminster Harriers. Picture courtesy of Kidderminster Harriers FC.



by Aaron Sutcliffe
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

FOOTBALL: ADAM Murray believes 'established number nine' Tobi Sho-Silva will fill the void left by last season's top scorer Ashley Hemmings at Kidderminster Harriers.

Hemmings completed a move to National League South side Dagenham and Redbridge for an undisclosed fee despite initially agreeing to remain at Aggborough for the 2025/26 campaign.

The 34-year-old scored 30 goals last season to top the National League North goalscoring charts and also won the division's player of the year award.

Hemmings departs Harriers after six seasons with the club

during which time he scored 94 goals in 264 appearances.

However, Harriers have acted swiftly to replace Hemmings with experienced striker Sho-Silva from Maidenhead United.

The 30-year-old previously played in League Two for Carlisle United where he scored four goals in 21 appearances.

He managed just one goal in 18 appearances for relegated Maidenhead in the National League last term.

However, he has helped two of his former clubs, Carlisle and Sutton United, to promotion.

And Harriers boss Murray believes Sho-Silva will thrive playing in a lower division.

Murray said: "Everybody's looking for centre forwards this season, and that's probably why it took it a little bit of time to bring another

number nine in because they are sparse.

"We wanted an established number nine. We could have gone out and took maybe a young guy from an academy that hadn't been out and been tested, but we wanted someone that had been successful, that had won promotions, that knew what the level is about.

"It took a little bit of time because obviously Tobi's played higher than this level for a long time, so to get him to come to drop to this level was a big ask for him, but he bought into the project, he wanted to be part of what we're looking to do.

"We feel his attributes can really help the group. I do feel dropping down a level will be able to get more goals out of him in the way, in the style that we play.

"But he brings a mentality of winning, he understands what promotion looks like, so that's a big factor and probably why we went for a more established player.

"He had offers in the league above at the last minute, and he turned them down to come to us and he's willing to relocate to the area with his wife to really buy into the project.

"All those little things go a long way because when someone's so committed to what you're doing you know that they want to make it a success as well."

ADIGUN ARRIVES

Harriers have also signed young forward Jason Adigun from Dagenham.

Adigun spent last season on loan at Eastbourne Borough where he played under current Harriers boss Murray.

The 21-year-old scored six goals and provided seven assists in 25 appearances in the National League South last season.

Adigun can play as a striker or out wide and came through Charlton Athletic's academy.

Murray said: "Jason was someone I wanted to bring in, he came to us on loan at Eastbourne last season.

"If I'm being totally honest, he totally changed our season. He is another young one and is an unbelievable talent in terms of his ability, and his ability to

create and score goals.

"He is at a great age and has a hunger to prove a point.

"There was a lot of interest in him from the EFL and his thing was that he didn't want to go into the EFL and be a squad player - he wanted to be playing and be given a platform.

"We're giving him that opportunity. It's really strange in how it has happened with Ash Hemmings going the other way, it wasn't planned but it has worked well in terms of being able to replace someone in that position.

"Jason is at the start of his career but he has the ability to score and assist and he's another one I'm looking forward to working with."

BELOW: Youngster Jason Adigun has made the move to Aggborough. Picture courtesy of Kidderminster Harriers FC.



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