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Editor's Comment



It was a great honour to be at the launch of the Warrington Business Awards at Warrington Peace Centre - the living memorial created in the memory of the two boys who were tragically killed by a terrorist bomb attack 25 years ago.

March 20 1993 is a day which will live in my memory for the rest of my days. Not only was it an act of terror on my home town, I had to cover the atrocity as a local journalist.

From that very dark day in our town's history came the Peace Centre, a lasting legacy to Tim Parry and Johnathan Ball and the dream of Tim's mum Wendy.

Together with husband Colin and the response of Warrington as a town, we can all look back on that tragic day as a catalyst for change and new beginnings, as the hand of peace was outstretched across

the Irish Sea.

So much good has come from that dark day, which was a major turning point in the peace process.

Now 25 years on the good work continues, with the Foundation4Peace charity, based at the centre, now offering support to victims of terror as well as educating young people on the benefits of peace and reconciliation.

The Peace centre has also become a great venue and it was fantastic to see the business

community getting behind the charity at the Business Awards launch event.

As the longest serving patron of the charity, it was certainly a time of reflection and now, in the 25th anniversary year, it is important for us all to remember how good triumphed over evil and that as a community we should dig deep and ensure the great work carries on well into the future.

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Princess Anne to attend bombing 25th anniversary event



Picture courtesy Chatham House

THE Princess Royal, Princess Anne, will be attending the 25th Warrington bombing anniversary event taking place on Bridge Street on March 20.

She will attend a special service to commemorate the bombing which claimed the lives of 12-year-old Tim Parry and three-year-old Johnathan Ball and injured more than 50 shoppers including young mum Bronwen Vickers who later died as a result of her injuries.

Tim's parents Colin and Wendy Parry, who campaigned to raise funds to create the Warrington Peace Centre as a lasting memorial to their son and other victims, will also be at the event, part of a number of events to mark the 25th anniversary.

The Warrington bombing atrocity, when the IRA planted two bombs in bins on Bridge Street, just weeks after carrying out an attack on the Winwick Road gas works, was seen as a major turning point in the Northern Ireland troubles, leading to the Good Friday agreement.

Warrington as a town, gained respect around the world for the way it responded to the tragedy, offering peace and reconciliation, forging strong links with the island of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The special commemoration service will be taking place on Bridge Street at 11.30am and members of the public are invited to attend.



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Super League stars secure their futures

RUGBY league players are enhancing their playing careers and securing their futures thanks to Sport & Exercise Science courses at Warrington & Vale Royal College.

The Sport & Exercise Science HNC and HND courses are designed to provide students with the opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding underpinning a range of sport science disciplines. This includes training and fitness, sports physiology and injury, psychology and sports performance. The course also develops students' research, personal and professional skills.

Fantastic

St Helens RFC players Jake Spedding and Ben Morris are enrolled on the HNC, while Widnes Vikings co-captain Joe Mellor, is enrolled on the HND at the college's Warrington Campus.

Joe said: "The course is fantastic – I have definitely learned a lot about the psychology of rugby and sport in general, that I am able to take away and apply to my playing career. What I am learning will also play a massive part in my future and will help me to continue working in sport once my playing days are over."

"This is a two year course but after that I want to go off to university. I still don't know



completely what I want to do but I know that the course will help me with whatever I decide."

Jake, who has played for St Helens since he was 15, added: "I am really enjoying the course so far. I can relate a lot of the things I am learning, back to what we are doing in our training sessions at Saints."

Joe, Jake and Ben are just three professional rugby league players to enrol on the course in recent years, with previous students including former Wolves player and New Zealand captain Roy Asotasi.

Craig Atherton, lecturer in sport, said: "The sport & exercise science

course is an exciting programme for both those already working within the industry and those looking to enter it. For players like Joe, Ben and Jake, the course will prove invaluable both during the rest of their playing career, and after it too."

"We're really proud of our sporting links at the college and the fact that we have professional athletes completing the course proves that we have both the industry experience and knowledge to help them succeed."

To find out more about the opportunities available at Warrington & Vale Royal College, visit wvr.ac.uk

Marathon mission for council leader



WARRINGTON Borough council leader Terry O'Neill (pictured), has been appointed as a trustee of the London Marathon Charitable Trust.

Cllr O'Neill was nominated by the Local Government Association to replace Cllr Sonja Crisp, who is retiring.

The London Marathon Charitable Trust was created in 1981 by Chris Brasher and John Disley, the founders of the London Marathon, to meet one of their founding aims to raise money for sport and recreational facilities. Their vision was that the surplus from the London Marathon and all future events organised by London Marathon Events Ltd would go to the trust.

Cllr O'Neill said: "I'm proud to be appointed to such an important charity. The work that the trust does to inspire and help people to get active is vital to the health and wellbeing of the nation."

Sir Rodney Walker, Chairman of The London Marathon Charitable Trust, said: "Terry's experience in the world of community sport brings invaluable experience to the trust and we are delighted to welcome him to the board."

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Warrington economy continues to fare well

By Steve Park

Last month the economic think tank 'Centre for Cities' published its Cities Outlook report; their annual 'Healthcheck' on the UK's 63 cities.

The report provides a useful and independent barometer in assessing how Warrington is performing economically in relation to the rest of the UK and I'm encouraged to report that Warrington continues to fare well.

Warrington is classed as a city in the report due to the size of its population currently standing at 207,000.

This year's report focusses on the impact that artificial intelligence, automation and other technological change will have on jobs over the next 12 years to 2030.

The report concludes that all cities are likely to see an increase in jobs, across both the public and private sectors, thus replacing any jobs lost to technology. Indeed the findings conclude that the UK job market and economy is at no more risk now to automation and globalisation that it has been over the last century.

It predicts that cities with relatively weak economies are less likely to prosper and particularly those which are more dependent on welfare.

Warrington's economy continues to perform strongly and Warrington features eighth highest in the UK in terms of the number of private to public sector jobs. Nationally it is the only urban economy in the North to feature in the top 10.

Moreover in its table of 'Cities and jobs likely to see an increase in demand to 2030', i.e. those cities which have been successful in attracting jobs to date and react to the changing labour market, Warrington was ranked as sixth best in the UK, the only city in the

North of England in the top 10 and it ranked higher than London who was placed ninth.

Warrington also has the highest GVA in the North of England with an average of £49,400.

Next month Warrington & Co. will be announcing the findings of our Annual Property Review which looks at the trends and uptake in the commercial and residential property market over the last 12 months. These stats are now in their 20th year and provide an interesting measure of the growth and strength of Warrington as a residential and business location. I've had a preview of some of the figures and, once again they are very encouraging. I'll report more next time.



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Steve Park
MD of Warrington & Co.

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Actor with a booming voice – and the odd expletive!

ACTOR Brian Blessed – he of the booming voice and commanding presence – is to visit Warrington's Parr Hall later this year.

The star of stage and screen, who has appeared in everything from Shakespeare to Flash Gordon and Star Wars, will be in town on Thursday September 30.

An Evening with Brian Blessed is one show not to be missed. His iconic eloquence and sense of humour is guaranteed to capture your attention from the moment he walks on stage until the moment he leaves, as he regales audiences with stories from his illustrious career that spans more than 50 years.

Spellbound

With fascinating anecdotes ranging from the comedy of Blackadder to the serious drama of Shakespeare, in addition to tales from his adventures up Mount Everest and Mount Kilimanjaro, this personal talk with one of the nation's greatest actors is set to leave audiences spellbound.

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Slydigs prepare for 'true homecoming'

EXCITEMENT is growing as Warrington based rock 'n' roll band Slydigs are set to headline their first ever gig at the town's Parr Hall to help celebrate five years of local music promotion via WarringtonMusic.co.uk as they prepare for their true homecoming.

The show on Friday March 16, which will feature three other local bands, is the first to be booked at the Parr Hall with a Warrington band headlining since Viola Beach, who were scheduled to play in October 2016 before being tragically killed while on tour in Sweden.

The event, which will feature a tribute to Viola Beach, celebrates five years of WarringtonMusic.co.uk created by local music promoter Lee Harman.

Joining headline act Slydigs are special guests, Funk Rock Soul Collective, The Winachi Tribe, Psychedelic Rockers, Psyblings and Fuzz Pop four piece, The K's.

The show will also be filmed and broadcast at a later date by the local University and College media students from the town, as well as being broadcast live on Radio Warrington.

Lee said: "It is hugely exciting to be bringing these four artists to the Parr Hall, and with just over a month to go it has been amazing to see the excitement build in the town for what will be a special show.

"We're bringing in big arena effects to the Parr Hall and no expense spared in making this the highlight of five year's of running [WAM].

"Each of bands provide something unique to the event but all are blazing a trail for Warrington artists.

"The Winachi Tribe are warming up for the show by touring the USA West Coast, starting from Hollywood Boulevard on 1st March. The K's have just been announced for Kendal Calling and Psyblings are pushing the boundaries of their sound.

"Make sure you buy a ticket, as this is the last time you'll be able to see these bands together in a 1,000 capacity venue!

Slydigs Front man Dean Fairhurst said: "This gig is a milestone for us and signifies just how far we have come from starting out in Warrington many years ago.

"It will be our biggest Headline show to date and for it to be in our home town is incredible. Its our true homecoming. Now announcing this very special headline show at the biggest, most prestigious music venue in the town is, for me such a special occasion."

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LiveWire and WDP going the extra mile again!



LIVEWIRE Warrington and Warrington Disability Partnership will be going the "extra mile" at the Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub on Saturday March 3 from 4pm-7pm for the charity's annual sponsored swim.

LiveWire have been a big supporter of Warrington Disability Partnership and is delighted to continue a close relationship with the charity.

The Swimming event has been a mainstay in WDP's fundraising calendar for several years. Last year's event took place at the Woolston Neighbourhood Hub, with dozens of members of the public and friends and family of WDP taking part in the annual swimming event, raising valuable funds for WDP.

Warrington Disability Partnership is an internationally acclaimed charity that is led by disabled people, and delivers a range of services aimed at supporting disabled people to maintain their mobility and independence.

Dave Thompson MBE DL, founder and chief executive said "The going the extra mile sponsored swim offers the opportunity to disabled people like myself to show what we can do, and it offers an enjoyable and healthy way to anyone to help raise funds to support our work at WDP. We invite anyone to join us to complete just a few lengths or if you're up for a challenge, join us to swim one mile (64 lengths). On behalf of our team at WDP, I would like to say a huge thank you to the team at LiveWire for their continued support".

Dave said "Remember, it's about what you can do that really matters". More information on the Warrington Disability Partnership's Sponsored Swim at LiveWire Warrington's Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub will be announced in the coming weeks.

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New community orchard planted

A NEW community orchard has been planted along a greenway between the Westbrook and Callands areas of Warrington thanks to an initiative by local residents and the Land Trust charity.

The Trust, which owns the regenerated Westbrook to Dallam Greenway, is working with a group of enthusiastic residents, the Friends of Westbrook Orchard, to plant apple, pear, damson and cherry trees.

The Friends group has so far raised more than £3,500 to fund the first 40 trees which will then be available for local residents to harvest fruit and use as an outdoor classroom.

Around a dozen volunteers joined contractor Continental Landscapes and the Land Trust at the first planting day. The Friends will take on the long term management of the orchard, organising harvest events and public signage.

The Land Trust, which has its national headquarters in Birchwood, is keen to give the Friends group every support.

Landscape and community officer Mary Doyle said: "This is a fantastic project to create a wonderful new orchard which can be enjoyed by everyone."



"We are happy to give the Friends group our full support. They deserve great credit for coming up with the idea and then getting the project off the ground."

"Green spaces, particularly in urban areas, are very important for health and well-being. By planting trees which not only look beautiful but are also productive, the new orchard is set to become a great community resource which will literally bear fruit for many years to come."

For more information about the Land Trust go to the website www.thelandtrust.org.uk.

Woolston – and its fascinating history – to go on show

RESIDENTS of the Woolston area will be able to learn about the history of their part of Warrington at an event on Sunday, February 25.

The New Cut Heritage and Ecology Trail group are holding their annual open day at the Alford Hall, Manchester Road, Warrington from 10am to 4pm.

There will be displays on the history of the New Cut Canal, the heritage and ecology of the area, birds, walks on local rights of way and children's activities.

Residents of the Woolston and Martinscroft areas will be able to

locate their own houses on old, historic maps – if their houses are old enough! There will be displays by the Carbon Landscape Project, the Lancashire Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency, Latchford History Group and other local groups. A talk on the history of Woolston and Martinscroft will be given between 12 noon and 1pm.

Many old photographs will be on show and there will be a chance to learn about the amazing wildlife corridor between Paddington Bank and Woolston Weir.

More details are available on the website www.newcuttrail.com.



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Nominations now open for Warrington Business Award

Pictures: Andrew Collier Photography

NOMINATIONS are now open for the Warrington Business Awards 2018 following a sell out success launch event at Warrington's Peace Centre.

Guest speakers at the unique launch event were Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, and Liverpool City Region Metro Mayor, Steve Rotherham, who were joined at the occasion by actress Sue Johnston, who has been a supporter of the Peace Centre for many years.

The event saw the launch of 12 Awards with the winners to be announced at the Warrington Business Awards 2018 on the 8th June 2018, again to be hosted in a stunning marquee at Lymm Rugby Club.

The Warrington Business Awards 2018 are sponsored by Redwood Bank and Warrington & Co.

Jennifer Roulston, Partner at FDR Law and member of the Warrington Business Awards organising committee, said: "The launch event was a fabulous night. Bringing both mayors to Warrington made it a unique event and we are grateful to both Andy and Steve for joining us to launch the Warrington Business Awards 2018. The Awards this year promise to be bigger and better than ever with various awards allowing businesses and individuals from across our diverse

economy to be rewarded for excellence. Nominations are now open!

"The committee was delighted to launch the Warrington Business Awards 2018 at the Peace Centre, as this year the Awards will be supporting the Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Peace Foundation's Unique Achievement campaign, which marks the 25th Anniversary of the Warrington bombings and the unique work the Foundation has undertaken since."

At the event both Mayors praised the work of the Peace Foundation and recalled their memories of the Warrington bombing, 25 years ago this March.

They also talked about devolution and gave their opinions on the possibility of an elected Mayor for Warrington.

Both agreed that taking control away from Whitehall and "being in charge of your own finances" was a positive step.

During a Q&A with the audience they urged Warrington to join forces with Manchester and Liverpool to give the North a "stronger voice" and help create a NorthWest Powerhouse.

Their main concern for the region was the transport infrastructure.

Liverpool's Metro Mayor Steve Rotherham said: "With Liverpool, Manchester and Warrington



pulling together we can create our own Northern Powerhouse and compete with anyone in the world."

Meanwhile Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham, who grew up in Culcheth, added: "Whatever devolution deal is offered for Warrington and Cheshire, get one and then together we can do things."

Money raised from the Business Awards this year will be donated to the Peace Foundation to mark the 25th anniversary of the Warrington bombing.

Peace Campaigner Colin Parry told the audience how the Foundation had played an

important role following on from the three most recent terrorist atrocities in London and Manchester by supporting more than 750 victims. It was becoming more and more difficult to secure funding for such initiatives.

He added: "In this 25th anniversary year this is our unique opportunity to reach out to businesses and the corporate world in way we have never had before."

He urged business leaders in the room to look at ways of supporting the charity.

To Nominate for an Award please go to the website www.warringtonbusinessawards.co.uk.



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College works to raise students' aspirations

A WARRINGTON college is working with two of the world's leading universities to raise the aspirations of young people.

Priestley College is hosting several events over the next couple of months with academics from Oxford and Cambridge and some of the college's former students who are now studying at Russell Group universities.

It is hoped these events will inspire young people who might otherwise not have planned to attend university.

Mark Salmon, a senior tutor at the college, said: "There are still fewer young people from the North West applying for places at the UK's top universities than there are from other parts of the country."

"We are determined to ensure that our students will see every university place as achievable and to raise their aspirations by working closely with the Russell Group, particularly Oxbridge."

In January, Priestley hosted a masterclass that was attended by more than 100 young people from the region.

Theme of the masterclass – which was designed to take students way beyond the A-Level syllabus – was "Consequences" and several tutors from Priestley conducted the lectures.

Oxbridge have also asked Priestley to host an event aimed at giving Year 12s the skills they need to secure places at Britain's best

universities.

Academics and members of their two universities' admissions and liaison teams will advise students on what they need to do to stand out from the crowd and submit a competitive application. Tutors will also receive advice on writing references.

Students who have applied to Priestley – and who have predicted grades that suggest they could study at one of the UK's top universities – have also been invited to 'An Evening With Oxbridge'.

They will hear from academics Dr Catherine Sumnall (Cambridge) and Dr Peter Claus (Oxford) about the admissions process and how their tutorial teaching systems can benefit those who are academically motivated and engaged.

"Events like the one being held at Priestley are important to help provide the extra information and inspiration that some young people need to achieve their full potential," said Dr Claus.

Many of the students who attend An Evening With Oxbridge will go on to join Priestley's Graduate programme like former Lymm High School pupil Greg Horne.

Now in his second year at Christ Church, Oxford, he said: "The Graduate programme was fantastic because it connected me with intellectually challenging people and made Oxford seem like a real possibility. The activities such as debates boosted my confidence and prepared me for the rigorous interview process."



Greg Horne at Oxford

MP hits out over "white elephant" HS2 rail line

WARRINGTON North MP Helen Jones has again hit out over the controversial HS2 high speed railway.

She attended a debate on the West Midlands to Crewe proposals for the line and called for "a proper, integrated hub at Crewe."

This, she said, would make the proposed spur line through Warrington "absolutely redundant."

After the debate, Ms Jones said: "I have always maintained that the Hoo Green to Bamfurlong spur is the whitest of white elephants."

"Sadly, if it goes ahead it will devastate two villages in Warrington and inflict serious environmental damage."

"The case for the spur has been seriously undermined with rising costs and crucially the provision of a transport hub at Crewe which would make it redundant."

"A proper integrated hub at Crewe would also enable many more towns in the North West to benefit from HS2."

If the spur line is built, the villages of Culcheth and Hollins Green would be badly effected, and there would also be an impact on Lymm."

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My Warrington Remembers...

By Gordon Gandy

IN a regular feature Radio Warrington's Gordon Gandy, who has been running his "mywarrington" website covering the town's history for many years, looks back at some of the town's famous families and historic buildings.

This month he looks at Robert Garnett & Sons, Furnishing Contractors, Cabinet Makers and Upholsterers.

Robert Garnett Snr was born in 1806. He was a cabinetmaker and founded Garnett & Sons. He died in 1877. It was his son, also called Robert, who was the powerhouse of the company.

Robert Garnett Jnr was born on the 6 June 1830 in Penketh. He

married Mary James on 15 Sep 1859 in Stanwix, Carlisle and they had one daughter. Garnett's was a well-respected firm of cabinetmakers and he was a generous local benefactor to many churches. He laid the foundation stone at Penketh Methodist Church. The workshop was a familiar landmark on the Warrington skyline with its Italianate crenellated water tower.

His showroom on Sankey Street was designed by Chester architect John Douglas. Garnett's described the building as "an imposing four-storey stone edifice to the Gothic style of Architecture". The factory was on Barbauld Street to the rear of the showroom and they had other shops in Chester

and Southport. William Roberts, his younger brother, oversaw the premises in Chester.

Robert Garnett Jnr died on 9 Apr 1903 at Hall Nook, Penketh and was buried in Sankey. Robert left over ten million pounds in today's money in his will. The Garnetts were great philanthropists and gave a lot to the poor, they built churches and schools so the poor of society could be educated.

The Site later became the CWS printing works, but the building had been empty and derelict for about 60 years before demolition was begun in December 2017. The famous water tower, built in 1906, is also being demolished.

Meanwhile, the former



showroom on Sankey Street still exists. From 1913 it was the home of Woolworths until the company closed down in 2009, and is now a pound shop.

To contact Gordon email warringtongordian@gmail.com and read more at www.mywarrington.me.uk



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Exhibition pays tribute to inspirational women

A special exhibition created by local artists has opened at Warrington Museum and Art Gallery paying tribute to a group of inspirational women.

"Nevertheless, she persisted" celebrates the role of women in our society, and how that role has changed over the years.

Special guest at the official opening of the exhibition was Warrington North MP Helen Jones who congratulated the artists on their "fantastic work."

Just 100 years ago, life was very different for women across the UK and the world.

In a society that saw a woman's place as being in the home, most did not enter into further education or a profession, and women were unable to stand as an MP, or even vote – until 1918.

This year marks the centenary of women winning the right to vote, and in celebration, people up and down the country are paying tribute to the brave women who fought for that right.

To remember this huge socio-political milestone, Warrington Museum & Art Gallery has created a remarkable display that takes a look at some influential Warrington women who broke the mould.

Delving into more than 100 years of local and national records, the museum has managed to uncover some fascinating stories about women who fought for equality, in addition to some contemporary accounts what life is like for women

in Warrington today.

Some of these accounts are woven into a vibrant piece of embroidery created by a group of local artists, some of whom are part of the Womanstanley art collective.

Depicting the stories of women both past and present who made a lasting impact on the national and local scene, this piece offers visitors a rare glimpse into the lives of local, strong women from all generations.

Sophie New, one of the artists who worked on the embroidery, said:

"We're extremely honoured to have been asked because I love Warrington, and representing women in art is a big part of our work, so we are delighted to be involved."

Artists Emily Calland and Michelle Price also worked on the tapestry, while Roxy Ball managed to capture the militant nature of the suffragettes through an eye-catching baton and balaclava, and Abigail Henry created a thought-provoking video to run on a loop.

The display has already attracted a number of visitors, including the

Warrington North MP who is also featured on the embroidery.

She said: "First of all I think the artwork is fantastic, and this entire exhibition is very interesting. There are some women described here that I just didn't know about."

"In Warrington I would like there to be more research on women who fought for the vote in Lancashire and Cheshire, many of whom were working class women."

"I hope that thinking about the anniversary of the 1918 vote will encourage more women to become

involved in their communities, and in politics, and to get their voices heard."

The exhibition is now open to the public at Warrington Museum & Art Gallery until Saturday 28 April.

Helen added: "We're so lucky that so many of these battles were fought over a hundred years ago, but there are still battles to be fought and I hope this exhibition will inspire more women to get their voices heard."



Why companies shouldn't be afraid of millennials and should be utilising apprentices

Many small and medium-sized businesses shy away from employing young people. There is a belief that they may need "babysitting" or looking after and that they will be a hindrance to a company rather than an asset.

Often it is believed to be a safer bet to employ somebody older with a larger skill set and more experience. We all know that experience is key in a lot of roles, but where will the next generation gain that experience from if there is nowhere to get it from?

Here at Morgan Branding, we have a small team which includes bright and ambitious teenagers. This for us, works very efficiently and effectively. We have two apprentices (aged 19), and two part-time college students (aged 16 & 17).

Historically apprentices have had a reputation of being a way for employers to get access to 'cheap labour'. The apprentice becomes the skivvy and

spends all day making cups of tea for very little money. It was a way to pay less than the minimum wage. Well that is not the way apprenticeships should be seen in 2018. For many millennials, university is not the right path in life and there are many exciting and innovate companies using apprenticeships as a career pathway.

Employing millennials can be a great way to grow a business, they are enthusiastic, adaptable and not set in their ways. Ideas are viewed from a modern perspective which can help a company prosper.

Morgan Branding attributes a huge proportion of its early growth to its close-knit team. We have a group of creative, hard-working individuals that work tirelessly to help our clients businesses grow.

For most of our team this is their first office based "9-5 job." As employers we have to take on the responsibility of educating them on how to conduct themselves in the work place. Customer service skills that may have been learnt by working in bars, shops and restaurants are essential transferable skills that can be a huge asset. Due to our team's age, they are of a learning mindset. Whether they are involved in apprenticeship schemes

or not - they have just spent 13 years in education! They are valuable assets in a fast-moving environment due to their energy and enthusiasm and may even be able to educate other staff members on new skills.

If you want to ask more about opportunities within Morgan Branding, or if you are a business owner that wants to ask Callum about the companies he has used to train apprentices please feel free to get in touch.



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Council secures funding boost for Centre Park Link bridge project

WARRINGTON Council has secured a funding boost of more than £3m towards the Centre Park Link bridge project.

The government announced the £3,685,904 for Warrington as part of an £866 million investment in local housing projects nationwide.

The Centre Park Link project proposes a bridge crossing across the Mersey from Chester Road, just north of Gainsborough Road. This crossing would join onto an extended Slutchers Lane leading from Wilson Patten Street. A new signal controlled junction is to be constructed at each end of the new link on Chester Road and Wilson Patten Street.

Cllr Hans Mundry (pictured), executive board member for highways, said: "We are delighted to have once again been successful with a bid for major infrastructure funding."

"The plans for the Centre Park Link will deliver a new bridge and link road from Chester Rd to Slutchers Lane to alleviate traffic congestion around Bridge Foot and Chester Road. It will also provide



a link to land south of Centre Park which currently has no access."

The Centre Park Link project will also bring forward approximately 465 homes in a location that is within a walkable distance from the town centre and both railway stations.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, said: "This fund finances vital infrastructure such as roads, schools and bridges, which will kick-start housing development in some of Britain's highest-demand areas."

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Financially yours

By David Watkinson

Reducing your tax liabilities

As we approach the end of the tax year it is time to look at some tips for reducing your tax liabilities. As usual, however, you should never let the tax tail wag the dog.

One of the best ways to reduce tax is by making pension contributions. To get the relief in the current year then the contribution must be made before 5th April. The maximum contribution that can be made (gross) is restricted to the lower of £40,000 or pensionable income. However, everyone can contribute £3,500 gross, or £2,800 net, even with no pensionable income. Despite threats to the contrary tax relief is given at the tax payers marginal rate. It also reduces relevant earnings when looking at child benefit or the loss of personal allowances. Hence, if your relevant earnings are just above £50,000 then making a pension contribution could reduce them to below this level enabling you to claim and retain child benefit. A pension contribution could similarly reduce your relevant earnings if you are lucky enough to have earnings above £100,000 and so are losing some or all of your personal allowance.

For example, if your earnings are £123,000 then making a net pension contribution of £18,400 will reduce your tax by £13,800 in total of which £4,600 is given at source, meaning that the tax actually payable is reduced by £9,200. Therefore, you will get an investment of £23,000 for a net cost of £9,200! At the other end of the spectrum, a non-earning spouse can get an investment of £3,500 at a net cost of £2,800.

Whilst it may be too late for the current year, if you have a spouse or partner being taxed at a lower marginal rate than yourself, then you should ensure that assets are owned, and income received, by the lower earning partner. Following the introduction of the Dividend Allowance and the 0% Savings Tax Band then this now applies primarily to property income.

And talking of dividends, if you operate through a limited company then you should ensure that you fully utilise the dividend allowance. Up until 5th April 2018 this is £5,000 per person, so the first £5,000 of dividend income is tax free. From 6th April 2018 it is anticipated that this will be reduced to £2,000 per person. Subject to any anti-avoidance provisions, holding shares in your company jointly with your partner means that currently £10,000 can be received tax free, or £4,000 from 6th April plus, in both cases, any unused personal allowance.

WatkinsonBlack have considerable experience in all areas of taxation and business services, including providing a very cost-effective payroll bureau service. If you want to arrange a no-obligation initial meeting on any taxation or accounting matter then please contact us. Please note that these ideas are intended to inform rather than advise and you should always obtain professional advice before taking any action.

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David Watkinson and Margaret Black

Warrington makes rugby league history with first PDRL match

by James Gordon



HISTORY was made at Victoria Park as Warrington were defeated 22-10 by Leeds in the first ever Physical Disability Rugby League match played in the UK.

A vibrant crowd, including celebrities and rugby league personalities, enjoyed a groundbreaking contest which it is hoped will lead to increased inclusion and participation in PDRL.

The Wolves took advantage of one of the main rules of PDRL, which allows two able bodied players in the team of nine, to field former star Toa Kohe-Love and ex-England full-back Shaun Briscoe, who now works for the club's foundation, the driving force behind the PDRL team.

Able bodied players, who play wearing bibs, are not permitted to score, kick or run more than 10 metres. The game is played over two 25 minute halves with unlimited subs, no scrums and no drop goals. It is full contact, with the exception of two players on each side wearing red shorts who are tag only.

Australian comedian Adam Hills earned the honour of scoring Warrington's first ever PDRL try, but the Wolves trailed 16-4 at half time following tries from Chris Hall, Josh Butler and Simon Brown.

Captain Jason Elkahe and Craig Jensen caught the eye in front of a packed crowd, while keen rugby league fans may have spotted BBC Radio Manchester presenter Jack Dearden turn out off the bench for the Wolves.

But just as was the case in Super League on Thursday night, the Rhinos proved too strong and came away with the win, despite a late try from Chris Whittle.

All in all though, rugby league and the community was the winner – and PDRL looks to have an exciting future.



Poor decisions rob Yellowows of Wembley dream

by James Gordon

THE advent of technology has a lot to answer for. Now it even means that you can't reflect on a game of non-league football without frustration and despair.

Warrington Town's dreams of reaching the FA Trophy final at Wembley were ended with a 2-1 defeat at National League South Wealdstone.

The late goal, an unfortunate fumble by Tony McMillan in what was a beach of a goalmouth, caused enough heartbreak, without then seeing video replays of other key incidents in the match that went a long way towards knocking Paul Carden's men out of the competition.

An early disallowed goal for Jamie McDonald, who pounced on a rebound after Tony Gray's shot had been tipped on to the post, didn't really cause much of a reaction during the game itself, but the video replay certainly raises questions over the offside flag against him.

That "goal" came after just 12 minutes and at a time where the Yellowows were looking very confident and assured, perhaps even more so than they had done away at National League Ebbsfleet last month.

The fact that both those teams have been drawn in to first half substitutions when facing the Yellowows this season is testament to Carden and his troops.

As it was, having kept the score at 0-0, the hosts were able to get themselves back on track and their tactical switch on the half hour mark certainly changed the balance of the game in their favour.

But still, in the second half it was the Yellowows who were having the better chances and they should have taken the lead on a couple of occasions prior to the most controversial incident of the match.

It seemed fairly innocuous at the time, but the video replays show little if no contact with centre half Edward Oshodi before he dramatically fell in the box to win the penalty that would break the deadlock.

Watching those two incidents back leaves a bitter taste in the mouth.

After the Yellowows had prepared as professionally as possible once again, travelling down south the night before the game and putting the players up in a hotel – they would have taken the advantage to train at a local club had they not had to delay leaving time until 6pm to accommodate the players' work commitments – it is a frustrating end to what had been an increasingly fascinating journey that had taken in 10 games in the competition this season.

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