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Issue No. 125    March 2010    **FREE EVERY MONTH**

## Lift off!

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# Editor's Comment



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THE first round of job cuts are set to start at Warrington Borough Council with the possibility of around 1,800 going over the next three years.

I am told new technology will help the council become more efficient despite a 20 per cent reduction in the near 9,000 strong workforce.

Meanwhile we are told the council is facing "unprecedented times" due to the tough economic conditions and while every attempt is being made to seek voluntary redundancies, I have no doubt some people will lose their jobs - something which was unheard of at one time in Local Government circles and the public sector -

welcome to the real world.

A word of warning - don't become too over reliant on new technology - while humans are far from perfect new technology can be even less reliant!

I recently had to go through the best part of two days of no internet service because a server upgrade by BT - aimed at improving my service resulted in us being cut off from the outside world!

Lengthy investigations eventually led to the discovery that an engineer

had connected our new improved service to the wrong socket.

Anyway once the issue was resolved we ended up back online with no significant improvement in service - a classic example if it isn't broke, why fix it?

So there you go - a warning for human beings and new technology a recipe for disaster!

## 'Health gap'

IT will take more than 20 years to close the Warrington "health gap" which results in the town having 19 areas which are among the worst 10 per cent for health inequalities across the nation.

Even if the new sustainable communities strategy achieves its aims, there could still be five areas still in the worst 10 per cent by 2030.

This is revealed in a progress report on the Warrington Partnership's health inequalities strategy which is currently being refreshed following recent criticism of the borough by the Audit Commission in its Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

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# Lift off for Orford Park

**WORK has kicked off on Warrington's £30 million Orford Park community sports village more than 17 years after it was first proposed.**

Scheduled to open in November 2011, key partners in the ground breaking project, including members of Warrington Town FC and their star striker, Orford born Chris Gahgan, attended a special turf cutting ceremony on land off Winwick Road.

Thanks to major cash injections from national and regional sponsors work on the public, private and voluntary sector development is now underway.

The project was first thought of in 1994 by councillor Mike Hannon, who was on hand to see the project get under way with residents, community groups and key partners.

Council leader Ian Marks said he was delighted and proud Warrington Council had played a "key role" in bringing the various partners together.

Warrington North MP Helen Jones said she would like to thank those who had the vision for the project and all the funders and those who had put work into the project.

"We will see a remarkable development in the Orford area which will benefit all members of the community, especially young people."

NWDA Chief Executive Steven Broomhead said the £30 million "partnership investment" would provide a major boost for the local economy.

"This is a unique regional project with massive benefits on the health and social inclusion agenda which will contribute to the local economy

with new jobs for local people."

The turf cutting ceremony was performed by local resident Anne Barton from The Orford Neighbourhood Project (TONP) and Maggie Williams, head of William Beaumont. They were joined by Barbara Clarke - local resident and representing Orford Park Executive Group (OPEG) and local footballer Chris Gahgan from Warrington Town FC, one of the many organisations to benefit from the new facility.

Fifty acres of land will be transformed into a valuable community asset providing a wide variety of leisure, health and education facilities on one site.

There will be football pitches, library, health centre and numerous other facilities.

The village is designed to promote

healthy lifestyles and independence, increase the number of people participating in physical activity and improve lifelong learning, the local skill base and employability of local people.

The sports village will not only provide a focal point for the local community and boost local pride and identity, it will also represent a London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games legacy for the North West. The North West Development Agency is funding £3.6million towards the scheme.

Partners include Sport England, the Football Foundation, NHS Warrington, William Beaumont High School and Warrington Collegiate.



*Pictured: Anne Barton from The Orford Neighbourhood Project (TONP) and Maggie Williams, head of William Beaumont.*

*Front cover picture shows Anne and Maggie with some of the project partners.*

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Hello and welcome to my monthly column . . .

# Hypnotes

by Michael Mahoney

## Inner security

Do you feel secure in your self? We all know the importance of making our home and car secure, we know generally where it is safe to walk alone at night. So what other security is there? The other obvious one is financial security; millions of us have had that tested over the last couple of years. There is job security too; nowadays there are very few jobs which bring long term financial security.

Reflecting on how things are now compared to how they were even 10 years ago, the things we took for granted, the secure job, the assured financial income, the security of owning bricks and mortar have all largely evaporated.

Few of us have the security we once enjoyed, and unfortunately the loss of these securities in our lives can have a large impact upon us, not only materialistically, but emotionally too.

So do you feel secure inside? The feeling you may once have taken for granted, that no matter what life threw at you, you would be able to deal with it, work it out, find a solution to it. Is that still there?

For some people it won't be, too many negatives have happened, been

forced upon them or forced from them, for them to feel secure. So many things outside of their area of influence could well have evaporated that once enjoyed feeling of security. Once that security is lost, many things are perceived as threats, from simply driving the car, to socialising, to going to work, relationships becoming more difficult and so much more.

We have seen over recent years how quickly things can change. Many people expect more challenging times after the pending general election too.

So it might be worth some thought now on how we are going to deal not only with what we have to deal with in our lives at the present, but what we can do to prepare for the coming challenges. We need to seriously consider building up our inner resources,

Our internal resources can be restored fairly quickly, and once these are re-developed and strengthened then we can start to feel secure again. We can learn to see things through new eyes, we may not be able to always change external events and situations, but we can see them differently.

If we create a quiet confidence and strength inside ourselves which we can

Michael Mahoney is a Clinical Hypnotherapist. He has research, and patient trials experience.



He is a member of the Hypnotherapy Association, an associate of the Primary Care Society for Gastroenterology, he is a non NHS service provider and Private Health Service Provider

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call upon at times of difficulty, then the impact is not as deep or wounding, emotional recovery can be quicker, discovering options of choice, developing new considerations, re-thinking problems and developing solutions can become easier. We need to build a reservoir of confidence and security inside.

And it all starts with recognising that we are the controller of our own thoughts. The often asked question, is the glass half full or half empty is a good example. If we have our health we are lucky, we can get through anything. If we have positive emotional resilience we can find comfort in difficult times, that no matter what is going on we can remind ourselves of what we do have, of those who love us, the people we care about, the skills we have. All these can help. So take a few minutes each day to simply be still and think about what and who you have in your life, and what you are able to achieve.

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## Business chief slams highway improvements

**A BUSINESS leader has slammed proposed highway "improvements" on the busy A49 at Warrington which are set to cost an estimated £3 million.**

The work involves removing a roundabout on Long Lane which is used by an average of 4,500 vehicles an hour and replacing it with a traffic light controlled junction.

Warrington Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive Colin Daniels said: "Yet again the Borough Council's transport/traffic experts are proposing "improvements" to this junction by removing the traffic island and creating a junction controlled by traffic lights only.

### Déjà vu

"They claim 'that this work will help to reduce congestion in the area'. I wonder where the evidence is for this claim? Or more likely is this a case of déjà vu especially when you remember the same claim for the removal of the traffic island

at the Asda Junction on Cromwell Avenue which has left us with a problem that previously didn't exist and our transport/traffic experts were found wanting for failure to do the proper research.

### Worsening

"The Chamber of Commerce makes no apology for our campaign to reduce the cost to business and the residents of the worsening traffic congestion in the town where the only answer our transport and traffic experts have is more traffic lights, which in themselves it is universally acknowledged, cause both delays and congestion!"

The scheme aims to improve the A49 Winwick Road, A50 Long Lane and Hawley's Lane junction.

It is expected site works will take about six months, although a date has not yet been fixed, but the earliest possible is July/August because of other works scheduled for the town centre during the summer.



## Local firm wins national contract

WARRINGTON'S largest law firm, Forshaws Davies Ridgway (FDR), has successfully re-tendered to be on a major public sector legal panel.

FDR's commercial department includes a highly experienced public sector team which works for national, regional and local public sector bodies and their experience and expertise has been rewarded by winning a coveted position on the northern panel of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

Deborah Hodd, Head of Commercial at FDR and a public sector law specialist, said: "We are extremely proud that the work of our public sector team has again been acknowledged by HCA. It is an honour to be on the HCA panel of fifteen firms nationwide."

Stephen Woodall, Partner at FDR, said: "HCA oversee many exciting developments across the region and the country. Our re-appointment means that our exceptional team will continue to be involved at the heart of many of these projects."

## Window Dreams

by Christina

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## Mum comes highly recommended - by her daughter!



A SATURDAY girl at Window Dreams enjoyed her work so much that when a vacancy for a sales consultant came up - she recommended her mum.

And now Janet Lord has joined the team at the Egypt Street store, just at an exciting time for the shop when the new season's curtains, wallpapers, fabrics and accessories come in.

Owner of Window Dreams Christina Houghton said Janet was originally a customer who heard the shop was looking for a Saturday girl. She recommended her daughter Rebecca, who was studying textiles at Nottingham University.

When Rebecca returned to university she returned the favour and recommended her mum for a part time post.

Janet, who lives in Thelwall, previously worked for Hancock and Woods in Warrington and Stockton Heath for six years.

She is thrilled to join the award-winning business and is 'fascinated' by the variety and quality of the materials on offer.

# Business support you can rely and trust

**BNI is the world's largest business networking organisation where members can generate real business for each other.**

A classic example is when Wales based photo agency and imaging library Welshot Imaging organised a photographic tour to Hong Kong and were let down by their travel consultant at the last minute.

They were able to turn to BNI for help and Warrington based Linda Crowder (pictured) from Stockton Heath Travel came to the rescue.

Welshot's director Lee Iggulden recalls how BNI came to the rescue: "I am in trouble and need your help" those are the words I emailed to Ewan Sturman, Andrew Wells and Teresa Carnall, all of whom I know and respect, through BNI.

"I was at a loss, I didn't know which way to turn or what to do. All I knew was I had 10 Welshot Imaging clients waiting to give me money to pay for a Photographic Workshop to Hong Kong in April and I had lost trust in our Travel Consultant....I immediately fired off that email, then impatiently waited, I really didn't know where to turn.

After getting off the phone I had a phone call from Ewan, giving me a name and a phone number of Linda at Stockton Heath Travel.... I

phoned her and she must have thought I was bonkers. I explained that I had sold something and no longer had a supplier. I also told her upfront that I had just spoken with someone else so she would not think me dishonest.

Linda calmed me down, said she would do her best but it was a pretty big ask, as an ex travel consultant, I knew that finding the same package for the same price was nigh on impossible. But I immediately felt safe with Linda though and this was partly because I had a recommendation from someone I trusted and had that special bond that only BNI can give you.

Linda was constantly on the phone with me that day, even telling me that the other travel agent I had spoken with could be overheard talking to the same travel supplier company so you would think I would have got the same package right? **WRONG!!!** What came back from the 1st agent was a NO go, no way whatsoever was it going to happen....

Linda came back with an "Its ok

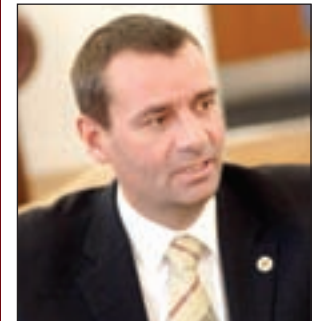


but will take a bit more work".

I asked Linda why she could and the other couldn't. I got a simple reply that made me realise I had the best person, "because I asked the right questions and I listened to you."

I, without a doubt got through this problem with the support of fellow BNI members, trusting someone was instinctive and one less thing to worry about. The membership fee is worth that alone. Linda and Stockton Heath Travel will be the ONLY people we will get to organise our Welshot Imaging Photographic Workshops with in future and has made me even more determined to build those special BNI relationships.

Stockton Heath Travel is an Independent Travel Agency based in the centre of Stockton Heath and has won awards Nationally over



If you would be interested in getting more business contact Ewan Sturman at ewan@networkingprofit.co.uk or on 07834 884 237

the past few years.

Linda said: "I have been a member of the Warrington Chapter of BNI for more than 8 years and have built up a good working relationship with other members and we have gained each others trust and therefore feel confident in recommending their services to others.

"The success of BNI is shown in the support we get from Ewan Sturman and our members both in our own group and throughout the NorthWest."

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March

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# March is another jam-packed month at Pyramid & Parr Hall with enough fantastic comedy, music, drama and dance to make time fly until the Easter break!

### Gordon Smith

Internationally renowned medium and star of *Psychic Therapy & Most Haunted*, Gordon Smith joins us on March 22 so don't miss your opportunity to see the man who has captivated audiences worldwide!



### Freddie Starr

March 23 sees the return of one of our favourite madcap comedians! Freddie Starr is no stranger to Parr Hall and we're delighted to welcome him back for an evening of his legendary comic antics!



### Martin Simpson

Lovers of traditional music will be absolutely spoilt for choice on March 27 when award winning Folk master, Martin Simpson takes to the stage at Pyramid whilst Grimethorpe Colliery Band, made famous by hit film *Brassed Off*, arrive at Parr Hall.



### Swan Lake

On March 28, Vienna Festival Ballet returns with lavish costumes, stunning scenery, international stars and the glorious music of Tchaikovsky to present the timeless, *Swan Lake*. Don't miss your opportunity to see this breathtaking production.



### Beating Berlusconi

Beyond March, we are delighted to welcome back Turf Love Theatre Company after a sell-out performance at Pyramid last season with smash hit comedy *Beating Berlusconi* on April 16 & 17. Based on the bizarre true story of a Liverpool fan who watched the 2005 European Cup Final sitting next to Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, we are delighted to give you another opportunity to catch this hilarious comedy!



**And all this is just a taster of what's to come! Visit [www.pyramidparrhall.com](http://www.pyramidparrhall.com) for full details of our fantastic Spring season!**

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Image: Blek le Rat 2006 'Beggars'



## Charity celebrates its next 10 years!

FAMILY support charity Home-Start Warrington, which celebrated its 10th birthday last year, launched its next 10 years with another party.

The event, at the Gateway, was attended by the Mayor, Brian Axcell, leader of the borough council Ian Marks, other members of the council, Warrington Primary are Trust and representatives of the local business community.

Home-Start has existed in Warrington since 1999 and recruits and train volunteers to befriend and support families with children under five. The scheme currently has 36 trained volunteers who provide a minimum of three hours support to a family each week.



The number of volunteers is due to rise to over 50 by the summer, therefore delivering over 150 hours of support per week, totaling more than 6000 hours a year.

Family support co-coordinator Kate Griffiths said: "Since the economic downturn the demand for our support has increased, but we have been very fortunate that we have had plenty of Warrington people looking to volunteer to support families in need. When I joined Home-Start three years ago, we only had around 15 volunteers. By this summer we will have over 50. That is a credit to the people of Warrington."

Home-Start chairman the Rev Stephen Kingsnorth said: "Sometimes our funding has been rather hand-to-mouth over the last 10 years, but nevertheless we could celebrate our 10th anniversary last year, because we know so much has been achieved over the years. So many children and families have benefited through the support we have been able to give - volunteers and staff lives have been affected too! We are looking forward to the next decade."

"These are tough times for those from institutions and organisations sorting out their budgets - but Home-Start offers such a brilliant service and we believe it is great value for money."

Anyone interested in getting involved with Home-Start Warrington should phone 01925 652320.

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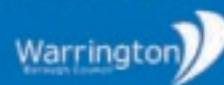
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# Financially yours

By David Watkinson

## Make the most of your financial position

AS we approach the end of the tax year, 5th April, then it is perhaps time to make a few simple checks to ensure that we are making the most of our financial position.

**Personal Pensions**

There is one major change that will be taking place at the end of this tax year, and that is the minimum age at which you can take your tax free lump sum and start drawing on your pension. Currently, you can do this at any time from the age of 50. However, on 5th April, the minimum age increases to 55.

As always, you should also review your contributions into your pension. Basic rate tax relief is received at source. However, any relief at the higher rate needs to be claimed in the year during which the contribution was made. Therefore, you will receive the tax relief twelve months earlier by making any additional contributions before 5th April. This effect is magnified if you are under self-assessment as they will also decrease your payments on account of the following year.

**ISA's**

ISAs can be a useful tax planning tool, especially for higher rate taxpayers or those with substantial investments. Once an investment is made through an ISA then all income received from that investment is tax free, and any Capital Gain on the sale of the investments is free of Capital Gains Tax. However, the amount that any one individual can contribute into an ISA each tax year is limited. For the current tax year, the most that can be contributed into an ISA is £7,200 if you are aged below 50. Of this, a maximum of £3,600 can be invested in a cash ISA, ie basically a bank or building society account rather than stocks and shares. If you are 50 or above then this limit has recently been increased to 10,200 of which £5,100 can be a cash ISA.

**Spouses Personal Allowances**

Transfers of assets between spouses are ignored for all tax purposes. Therefore, if there is one spouse with surplus personal allowances, or indeed if one spouse pays tax at a higher rate, then there may be scope for transferring income from the tax payer or higher rate taxpayer to the other spouse. This could apply to bank or building society accounts, shares, or indeed to rented properties.

If you are in business, then there may also be scope to pay your spouse a wage, thus reducing your own tax. However, always remember that for this to be effective the wage must be commercially justifiable, and must also be paid separately from any housekeeping or other transfers.

***WatkinsonBlack are pleased to advise on these matters. Please note that these ideas are intended to inform rather than advise and you should always obtain professional advice before taking any action.***



*David Watkinson and Margaret Black*

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**Did you know?**

The Chinese make a clear distinction between eating to live and eating for pleasure. Everyday meals predominantly consist of energy-rich 'shushi', or 'principal food' such as rice and noodles.

They are complemented by 'fushi', or 'secondary food' such as flavourful - but superfluous - meat or vegetables. However, at times of celebration, eating for pleasure is the order of the day, with banquets dominated by rich and varied dishes.

**What our customers say**

Thank you for providing the Hog Roast, Barbeque and Chilli Pan at our recent staff event. A particular thank you for the last minute changes and for accommodating our requests.

You and your staff were very professional throughout the day and we have had positive feedback from our staff and we will definitely consider booking you for future events.

*Event Co-ordinator,  
Manchester United Football Club*

**Honey Roast Duck with Mustard Mash and Caramelised Onion & Red Wine Sauce**  
Recipe for 4

**Ingredients:**

- 4 x 8oz Duck Breasts, skin on
- Mustard Mash**
  - 900 gm Maris Piper Potatoes
  - 55 gm butter
  - 55 ml milk
  - 25 gm whole grain mustard
  - salt to taste
  - ground nutmeg
  - ground white pepper to taste
- Caramelised onion & red wine sauce**
  - 2 large Spanish onions - thinly sliced
  - 220 ml red wine
  - 11 chicken/veal stock
  - spring fresh thyme
  - 55 gm butter
  - salt to taste
  - ground black pepper to taste

**Method:**

Score Duck breast with sharp knife and season, add to hot oil skin down for 2 minutes and turn, remove from pan after further 2 minutes on other side, add to baking tray in oven for 20 minutes on 200c, ensure skin is crisp and remove from oven and rest for 5 minutes before serving.

**Mustard Mash**

Wash and peel potatoes and boil in salted water till they are just cooked. Drain the potatoes and return to the pan with the butter, milk and seasonings. Mash together and add mustard.

**Caramelised onion and red wine sauce**

Heat the oil in a saucepan over a moderate heat. When the oil is hot add the thinly sliced onions and stir every few minutes to allow them to caramelise. Add the red wine and reduce by half. Then add the stock, and again reduce by half. Soften the butter and add the stock mix with the finely chopped thyme. Season to taste.

**To serve**

With a piping bag and plain nozzle, pipe a spiral of mustard mash in the centre of a suitable warm serving plate. Cut the honey roast half duck in half and lay against the potato and then carefully pour the sauce around the potato and duck. Garnish with a little fresh herb and a twist of ground black pepper.

# Carers praised for 'grit and determination'

CARING staff who pulled out all the stops to reach vulnerable people during treacherous weather conditions this winter have won praise from their employers. Fast-growing care-at-home provider Bluebird Care, which has offices in Sankey Street, Warrington, says it has been impressed by the grit and determination its dedicated staff showed.

They braved freezing temperatures and deep snow to extend a lifeline to hundreds of people.

Director Tom Farrell said: "Many of them had to dig out their cars to get to work and were driving on icy roads. We are extremely grateful to them for their commitment."

"Many of our elderly customers rely on their carers to help them get washed and dressed in the morning and without them they just can't operate - it is a vital service."

Mr Farrell said hard-pressed ambulance crews across Britain were forced to announce they could only handle calls involving life-threatening conditions. But just before Christmas, a Bluebird Care worker helped rescue a diabetic man who had slipped on ice and was stranded with a broken arm - unable to move. Doctors later said her swift actions helped to save his life.

The company, which has branches across the country, recently recognised the performance of its regional offices at an awards ceremony where it praised continued high levels of service and announced the creation of additional jobs, despite the recession.

# Bridge chaos goes on - and on!

TEMPORARY driving restrictions on Warrington's Cantilever Bridge, which should already have ended, are to continue until the middle of May.

Work on repainting the bridge structure is seriously behind schedule - mainly because of adverse weather conditions, including the heavy snow early in January. As a result, the borough council has extended the temporary order to enable the restrictions to continue until May 17.

The Latchford bridge is Warrington's only high level crossing of the Manchester Ship Canal and has been controlled by temporary traffic lights since the canal company started painting in October. The restrictions have caused traffic chaos for people travelling in and out of the town from the south at peak periods. Alternative routes are signposted and involve Wash Lane, Knutsford Road, Kingsway South, Hunts Lane, Wilderspool Causeway, Grappenhall Road, London Road and Ackers Road.

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# Memory lives on



**WARRINGTON Wolves have proudly unveiled 'Mike Gregory Way' at The Halliwell Jones Stadium in honour of the Warrington and Rugby League legend who captained club and country.**

All fans visiting the Halliwell Jones Stadium will now turn off Winwick Road onto 'Mike Gregory Way'.

Many turned out for the unveiling including members of Mike's family, club representatives, past players, and many Wolves supporters.

Warrington Chairman Steven Broomhead said: "This is a club that's investing in its future and also remembers its past, the legacies that we have here, and it is really fitting to unveil the road sign here today for Mike Gregory Way, celebrating Mike's enormous contribution to the club over the years."

Mike's wife Erica and his two sons were at the stadium to unveil the sign. "Thank you for this unique way to pay tribute to Mike and to remember him. It will be there for eternity and beyond, and it's extraordinary. It's a

way I couldn't have imagined it happening. And for the boys in their lifetime to show their children and their grandchildren, it is an incredible legacy for the boys to have. You wonder how much the boys remember so having things like this is a way of making it absolutely concrete for them and that is the biggest gift anyone could give to me because in a way Mike lives on."

It was Jackie Melling who spotted Mike at Wigan St Patrick's and he still remembers him to this day.

"The nice thing about Michael Gregory was that it was never at the expense of anyone else. He was so well respected by his peers, by the people he touched and worked with in later life. He was such a nice man."

## In touch with space tourism

WARRINGTON students stood within touching distance of a real space rocket and had the chance to learn more about the British space programme.

Pupils at Woolston High School and Lysander High School, Padgate, got the low down on space travel when they were visited by the Starchaser Rocketry Programme.

Starchaser is a British space programme working on the idea of space tourism. The school visits aimed to give pupils a view of the Skybolt Rocket - a completely reusable rocket.

The Starchaser team delivered a presentation about the history of the programme and its current mission to send a rocket into space.

Members of the team were on hand to explain the science behind the rocket and demonstrate the technology used in space flight.

The event was organised by Aimhigher Cheshire and Warrington, one of 44 Aimhigher area partnerships working to widen participation in higher education by young people from under-represented groups.

Teresa Wong, Aimhigher Cheshire and Warrington vocational development officer (Science, Engineering and Construction) said: "These sorts of events are fantastic for broadening our young learner's minds, sparking their imagination and encouraging them to strive for their goals."

The Starchaser rocket and pupils at Woolston High School.



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