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**Hungry seals
dining out!**

Page 3



Picture: Terry Eagan



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Editor

Gary Skentelbery

Production

James Bryan

Advertising

James Balme
01925 631592 opt 1

Editorial

01925 631592 opt 2

Email

info@warrington-worldwide.co.uk

Websites

www.culchethlife.com
www.frodshamlife.co.uk
www.lymmlife.co.uk
www.warrington.tv
www.warrington-worldwide.co.uk

Address

New Media Centre
Old Road Warrington
WA4 1AT

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PHOTOGRAPHS of Grey seals feeding on plentiful fish stocks in the River Mersey proved hugely popular with many of our online readers and although not welcomed by local anglers, some positives can be drawn from the sightings.

Clearly, pollution levels in the Mersey have improved greatly helping the local fish population, which in turn has attracted seals further inland. While this is good news for the environment - it is not good news for the fish, with local anglers concerned about the impact on the fishing stock!

While bringing some joy for local wildlife watchers and photographers, hopefully, the seals will be returning to their more natural environment soon, giving our fish stocks the chance to replenish.

In the meantime, if any of our readers see any seals or other interesting wildlife action, please keep the pictures coming!

Writing these notes prior to the Prime Minister's road map out of lockdown hopefully, we will soon see things starting to return to some kind of normality in the near future, although I suspect there will be a "new normal" for some time to come until the vaccinations have had a chance to take effect. According to the latest Government information ALL adults should have been vaccinated by the end of July - so fingers crossed we can look forward to the summer with optimism.

As well as the tragic death toll, with more than 500 local residents already succumbing to this terrible disease and many more suffering the ill-effects, the impact on the local business community has been devastating for many.

As well as supporting those in need it is more important than ever that we support local businesses and shop local as and when we can.

Meanwhile, I look forward to the day when we can stop reporting on the daily COVID-19 updates of new deaths and cases which is hopefully not too long-off.

Little did we know, when the

pandemic was announced last March than almost 12 months on we would still be dealing with the consequences after three lockdowns.

The Government say they hope this is the last full lockdown - lets hope so, although no promises are being made!

Deadline for the April issue of Warrington Worldwide is March 16



Tracey Turton

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Hungry Grey Seals spotted dining out in the River Mersey

LARGE Grey Seals have been captured on camera dining out on apparent plentiful fish supplies in the River Mersey at Woolston.

One large seal was spotted gorging on a giant Pike in the River Mersey at Paddington Bank, Warrington, by New Cut Heritage and Eco-Trail volunteer Terry Eagan.

Terry captured the action on camera as the Grey Seal gorged itself on a large Pike in Mersey adjacent Paddington Bank then headed downstream towards Kingsway Bridge.

A few days later Local photographer Tony Marsh captured images of another grey seal on the Mersey near Woolston tip.

Local anglers believe it was feasting on a bream.

Seal sightings on the Mersey have been on the rise in recent years, with cleaner water and larger fish stock.

There have been numerous seal sightings in the Mersey in recent years – and judging by the size of the Pike it is no surprise they keep returning for more!

Most sightings have been near Warrington Rowing Club or near the stretch of the Mersey near Victoria Park.



Picture: Tony Marsh



Picture: Terry Eagan

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Musicians team up to pay tribute to Viola Beach

FIVE years on from the tragic loss of Warrington band Viola Beach, 12 musicians have teamed up to release their own tribute of the band's hit "Swings and Waterslides" for charity.

With the music world at their feet the band members Kris Leonard (guitar and vocals), River Reeves (guitar), Tomas Lowe (bass guitar) and Jack Dakin (drums) and their manager Craig Tarry, tragically died following an accident on their first European tour in Södertälje, Sweden on February 13, 2016.

Now 12 musicians have come together from across the town to re-record in lockdown, their own version of the Viola Beach classic, with the message "We love you. We

miss you. We hope you would have loved this."

"Swings and Waterslides" was launched on the eve of the 5th anniversary of the tragedy.

All proceeds from the single will be donated to the charities of the families choosing.

Find it via the below links:
iTunes Pre-order: <https://smarturl.it/SwingsItunes>

Spotify Pre-save: <https://smarturl.it/Swings2021>

Featuring: Joe Banks (The A.V

Club), Lucy Bell, Jamie Boyle (The K's), Ed Dowling (The Zangwills), Nathan Greenfield (Aligners), Liam Hillyer, Jessica Luise, Calan Nickle (Sienna), Chris Peake (Filthy Tricks), Olly Thornton (Uno Mas), Amy Woodall (Crawlers) and Cal Bate.



When you think you need A&E, contact NHS 111 first

Local residents are being asked to use a new way to access A&E as part of the latest phase of the NHS national 'Help Us, Help You' campaign.

You should now contact NHS 111 first if you need urgent care, but the condition is not life threatening. By contacting NHS 111 first, you will receive expert advice from a team including health advisors, nurses, paramedics, doctors and other medical specialists.

Depending on your individual needs, NHS 111 can book time slots at the most appropriate local NHS service, including urgent care centres, GP practices, pharmacies or A&E, if required. Some specialist services also have slots which can be booked directly via NHS 111 so they can be accessed without needing to attend at A&E.

Contacting NHS 111 first will help the NHS keep you and your family safe during the coronavirus pandemic, by supporting social distancing in waiting areas and ensuring people receive the right care in the right place, in a more timely and safe way.

You can contact NHS 111 when you need medical help fast, but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is a fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. The service is available online and by phone 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

If you or your loved one has a life-threatening illness or injury then you should always use 999 and if you do arrive at A&E without contacting NHS 111 you will still receive medical care. The most seriously ill patients will always be prioritised first.

Just think 111 first. When you think you need A&E, contact NHS 111 by phone or online.

Charlotte Nichols MP
Warrington North

If you live in Warrington North and have an issue you need help with or would like to book a surgery appointment, please get in touch.

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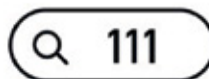



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Grand idea as bar owners join forces to breathe new life into empty town centre building

TWO Warrington town centre bar owners have teamed up to help breathe new life into empty premises on Bridge Street with the aim of creating an upmarket cocktail and wine bar called The Grand. The former Co-op building next door to The Academy has been empty and falling into disrepair since the closure of the Fusion Sports Bar and nightclub.

Now Mike Mason, who owns PJs, The Institution and Hop & Co and James Glover who owns Hideout and Block One, have teamed up on a joint venture called The Grand, which they hope will be open by June, subject to lockdown restrictions, following an initial £250,000 renovation.

The building is currently being renovated with the aim of creating an upmarket cocktail and wine bar, with future plans for a restaurant on the 1st floor and a rooftop terrace.

Commenting on the new project Mike said: "Our aim is to bring an upmarket facility to the lower end of Bridge Street to compliment our other businesses in the town.

"We are hoping we will be open by June in time for the summer, subject to the lockdown restrictions.

"This part of town has required some much-needed investment and

will cater for people who have been visiting the Cultural Quarter or the cinema and looking to extend their night out.

"It is a big space and we have an idea to include a restaurant and possibly a rooftop terrace, similar to the one above the Treasury building."

The building was once a Co-op store prior to various other bar venues over the years but has remained empty since the Fusion Bar closed.

A Facebook page promoting the forthcoming venue says: "Situated on the up-and-coming Bridge Street in the heart of Warrington, The Grand offers guests world-class cocktails, Fine wines and Craft Beers."



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Warrington again defies the national trend with strong performance on the High Street

by John Laverick - Warrington & Co

I suppose like buses they come along in threes. Not only were we in the middle of lockdown, but the increasingly unpredictable weather decided that both snow and flooding were the order of the day and we saw significant and very real impacts on people and their lives. I have experienced this at first hand and it is distressing enough when it happens without Covid – with Covid it must have been very testing indeed.

The Vaccine rollout is obviously a very successful programme and I get a sense of returning optimism and expectation of normal times ahead, but it does start to remind us that some of the issues we have to deal with will return to sharp focus in the coming months. The unpredictable weather will remain a challenge and we need to consider significant weather events more than we do at the moment. Perhaps the build back better idea needs to be considered with a renewed focus on climate change and its more extreme weather events.

Warrington has again defied the national trend and demonstrated a continued, strong performance of its high street and local economy despite the pandemic, following

the latest figures from Centre for Cities. The positive performance of Warrington's town centre in December has seen the town nestled in the top 10 for both comparative footfall and spend across towns and cities in the country and I believe that the town centre will once again be on the front foot once lockdown is eased as it was in the autumn last year.

To help guide some of the changing nature of the Town Centre and a moment I am sure you have all been waiting for has arrived; and the new Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document is currently being consulted on. I am sure this will generate debate and enthusiasm from all, hopefully not to the extent seen with the Handforth Councillors, but it is

an important piece of work that sets out how we would like to see developments come forward in the Town Centre.

Lockdown has affected younger people in the Borough significantly. If you are 16, about 10% of your life has been affected by Lockdown in some way or other, at a time when you are looking to set out the first steps on your working life. To help and always hugely popular, and regularly attracting around 900 young people, the Young people Apprenticeship Fair will again be run this year. It is usually held at the Engine Rooms at Birchwood Park. However, the current restrictions mean that this will be hosted on the 'Learn Live' platform on Wednesday 3 March. The 2021 Apprenticeships & Job Fair provides businesses with the perfect opportunity to showcase their employment and apprenticeship opportunities to 16-18 year-olds who are looking to



John Laverick

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enter employment this year.

When combined with the establishment of the hubs mentioned last month, I hope this will help address some of the impact seen in young people's lives over the forthcoming years. The thing that always makes me stop and think is that the majority of people who will benefit from the changes to the Town Centre that we are proposing are probably still at School. Or hopefully will be soon.

Seventh annual Apprenticeships Fair is just the job

WARRINGTON & Co. is gearing up to host the seventh annual Apprenticeships & Jobs Fair which has already attracted big names including Barclays, United Utilities and Sellafield.

Always hugely popular, and regularly attracting around 900 young people, the event is usually held at the Engine Rooms at Birchwood Park. However, the current restrictions mean things will be done differently this year, with a special online event.

Hosted on the 'Learn Live' platform on Wednesday 3 March, the 2021 Apprenticeships & Job Fair provides businesses with the perfect opportunity to showcase their employment and apprenticeship opportunities to students and school leavers, from across the borough.

The event is particularly aimed at 16-18 year-olds who are looking to enter employment this year. Companies at the event will have entry-level job vacancies and apprenticeship programmes available, in a range of sectors and specialisms.

Visitors to the virtual event will see a short video for each company and will be able to interact via chat rooms for Q&A with company representatives – usually existing apprentices who are able to talk about their role.

Companies at the event will represent a range of sectors, including accountancy, business administration, construction, customer services, design, engineering, health & social care, childcare, hospitality & catering, HR, IT & Communications, logistics and marketing.

Warrington Borough Council Leader, Cllr Russ Bowden, said: "Our Apprenticeships & Jobs Fair is always a huge success, attracting some top North West companies, and allowing young people to make important decisions about their future careers.

"Although the current restrictions mean we are having to host this event online, we are still expecting this year's event to be hugely popular. Indeed, one benefit of holding a virtual event is that there are no restrictions on how many people can attend.

"Make sure you take up this fantastic opportunity to hear from high profile employers about apprenticeships and job opportunities that are available in the area."

Big names already confirmed for the event include Barclays, Sellafield and United Utilities showcasing vacancies across all disciplines, and more companies are signing up every day.

Sponsors for this year's event are The Pledge and United Utilities.

The Warrington Apprenticeships & Jobs Fair 2021 takes place on Wednesday 3 March, from 6pm-8pm.

For more information, email inwardinvestment@warringtonandco.com or call 01925 442371.

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Project to keep memory of village heroes alive to mark 100th anniversary of war memorial

A PROJECT to keep the memory alive of a village's war heroes will help mark the 100th anniversary of Appleton Thorn's war memorial later this year.

For several years local resident Liz McAloon has been working on the project about the men from the Appleton Thorn area who enlisted in WW1 and WW2 – including 52 who enlisted during WW1 when Appleton Thorn had less than 100 inhabitants!

As well as details Liz has also been busy building up a picture library of the servicemen thanks to newspaper archives and appeals on social media, although some details are scant so she is appealing for help from relatives of the servicemen to fill in the missing details.

Pictures collected include John Edgerton-Warburton, (pictured right) taken with permission from family member Charles Foster and the Arley Hall Archives.

Another photograph is a family photo of John (usually called Jack) Bostock, who is shown with his mother, Mary, and his wife, Dorothy.

Explaining how she started the project Liz said: "Every year when I have attended the Remembrance Service at Appleton Thorn War Memorial I've listened to the sad list of names being read out.

"Although recognising a few names of local families, I thought as the years passed, the men were becoming forgotten as living people. Therefore a few years ago, as a very personal project, I started to research into the people named on the War Memorial.

"I also looked at the "For King and Country Roll of Honour" certificate which is displayed on the wall to the left of the font in St. Cross Church. This lists the 52 men from Appleton Thorn and the surrounding area who joined the Armed Forces in 1914 – 1918. At this time there were less than 100 inhabitants in Appleton Thorn mostly from a small number of outlying farms. The subsequent absence of these men must have made family and working life in our agricultural area very difficult.

"Therefore I embarked on this

project to find out more and record this further information about these men and their families, hoping this would add poignancy to their stories. However, as yet information about people who died after 1918 is difficult to find as many records haven't so far been released."

Liz added: "Regarding the overall project, whilst I've unearthed much information to date, I am also hoping to find further meaningful information and photographic records of people from the Appleton vicinity including any stories that their relatives might remember. Virus lockdown has interfered with gaining access to other communal sources of information eg library

archives, and therefore I would welcome any help from local folk into investigating and sharing their family war connections in the run-up to the important centenary anniversary of the Appleton Thorn War Memorial."

The 100th anniversary of the village war memorial is set to be marked at St. Cross Church on Remembrance Sunday, later this year.

Liz said the project had been a "Godsend" for her and her husband Kevin, helping keep them busy during lockdown.

Anyone with information to help with the project can contact Liz via lizmcaloan@gmail.com



Thinking of a holiday in the UK? Then BAS & Cyclehouse have got it covered!

With the situation as it currently is, many of us will be starting to think about our summer holidays and the reality of what this might look like. The truth is, nothing is certain at the moment, however many of us feel safer and more secure in planning a UK break, as opposed to our normal foreign holidays and if this is you, then here at BAS and Cyclehouse, we've got you covered!

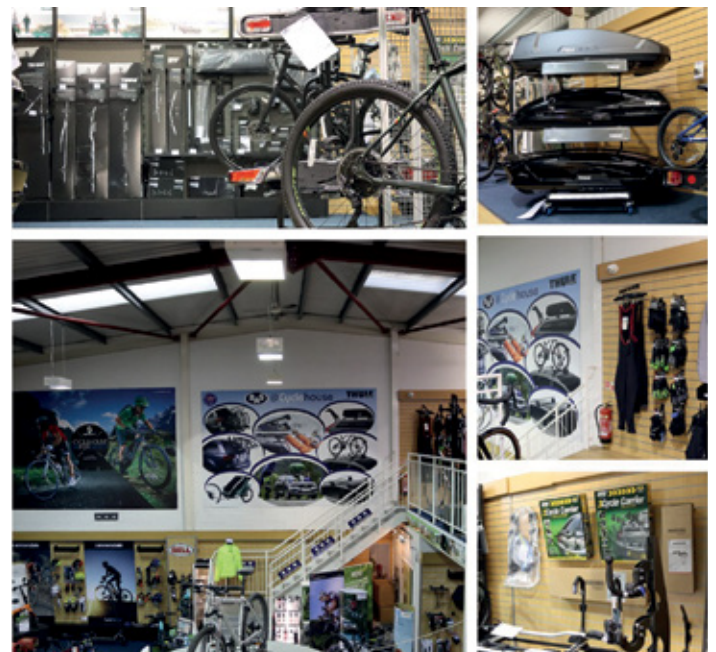
It is no surprise that caravan sales have dramatically increased in the last year and one leading caravan sales company said that 71% of caravans sold in June last year were to first time buyers. There is no doubt that staycations are on the rise and could be for the foreseeable future. Our wide range of towing and leisure accessories will help you to get the most of your break and ensure that happy memories are created, in what has been a very challenging time for all.

If you are looking at towing either a caravan or trailer or using a towbar bike rack, then BAS can provide you with all the towing

adaptations/accessories you will need, including a full fitting service for towbars and electrics. We have a huge range of cycle carriers to accommodate all vehicles and budgets, ensuring that you get the right option for you. If it's water sports you're interested in, then we also have a wide range of water sports carriers and accessories, perfect for that adventure break. Our range also includes a wide selection of roof top boxes, ideal if you are travelling with family and need that extra storage space.

Cycling has played a huge part in many people's 'lockdown lives' over the last year and its popularity certainly isn't showing any signs of slowing down. Cyclehouse have a huge range of bikes available to suit all ages, levels and budgets and they also provide a repair service, ideal for tuning up the bikes that have been sat in the garage over winter.

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Cancer patient who was diagnosed with three cancers in three years urges people to support The Christie

A WARRINGTON cancer patient who was diagnosed with three different cancers in three years, is urging people to support key projects and supported by The Christie charity.

David Hutson, 62, was diagnosed with three separate cancers in three years – throat cancer in 2016, skin cancer in 2017 and prostate cancer in September 2018.

He became the first patient to be treated at the world famous cancer hospital using a revolutionary radiotherapy machine – the MR-linac.

This £5.3m machine was funded entirely by The Christie charity and David is urging potential supporters to support The Christie charity this year.

He said: "Almost everyone has had a terrible year due to coronavirus but cancer patients have been some of the hardest hit over the last 12 months.

"The Christie charity helps fund revolutionary lifesaving equipment and treatments like the MR-linac. It's projects like this that make such a difference to patients like me. That's why it is so important for people to support The Christie charity in 2021. I can't thank The Christie enough for everything it has done for me."

Patients and fundraisers at The Christie are urging people to support key projects and services funded by the charity.

Income is down by a quarter compared with a normal year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Christie charity is raising money for vital projects including a new Christie centre at Macclesfield which will transform cancer care in Cheshire, the High Peak area of Derbyshire and parts of North Staffordshire, providing care closer to home for more than 1,500 existing Christie patients a year and with around 40,000 appointments a year.

Another incredibly important project being supported by The Christie charity is the construction of a world-class cancer research facility to replace the Paterson building which suffered devastating fire damage in April 2017. This will allow scientists, researchers and consultants to all work together in one place, developing and shaping the latest personalised and innovative cancer treatments.

Head of fundraising at The Christie charity, Louise Stimson said: "This is an incredibly difficult time for us all. We know that many of our supporters and fundraisers have been struggling as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as cancer patients.



"At The Christie charity, we are doing everything we can to continue to support cancer patients and their loved ones.

"We work hand in hand with the hospital to support patients during treatment so they can receive the very best care, benefit from the latest research, the most advanced equipment and support services that make life a little easier.

"As a charity, we have been hit hard. The loss of income directly impacts the support we can offer the hospital. We have never needed our supporters more – each and every penny raised makes a difference."

One of the ways the public can support The Christie charity is by

taking part in the newly launched 'Christie Challenge' for 2021. This challenge encourages people to complete six fundraising activities for The Christie over 12 months, no matter how big or small. The challenge can be completed with friends, family, work colleagues or solo. For each activity the fundraiser completes, they will earn a part of a jigsaw medal, which when completed makes up a rainbow Christie embrace. Fundraisers can sign up for The Christie Challenge at www.christies.org/challenge.

Anyone who would simply like to make a donation, can call 0161 446 3988 or visit the website at www.christies.org/donate."







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“Last orders please...!”

By Nigel Garner

As the 31st. March 2021 deadline approaches to the end of the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), let's take a look at what you need to know.



The scheme, launched by the Chancellor and provided through the British Business Bank, is focused on providing financial support to SME's who have experienced lost revenue and cashflow difficulties as a result of coronavirus.

As providers, MBM Capital are able to offer a fast application process to all business' seeking CBILS support. In addition to the Government paying the interest for the first 12-month period and upfront fee, you could also benefit from NO repayments for the first 12 months.

Business' can apply for a loan up to 25% of their annual turnover and decisions are typically offered within 24 hours. A quick completion of the paperwork prior to pay-out and the funds are deposited to your business bank account within 24 hours

To be eligible, your business will need to meet the following criteria:

- Be a UK based business that has been adversely affected by coronavirus
- Have a turnover in excess of £200,000
- A minimum trading history of 3 years
- Over 50% of turnover must be from trading activity (i.e. not from investments)
- Demonstrate that the loan is solely for business purpose
- The loan is for trading in the UK

So, if you still haven't taken advantage of the scheme, but feel that the finance could really help your business now or in the near future, then it's well worth considering taking out a CBILS loan.

Applications can be submitted up to the end of 31/03/21, after that, CBILS will no longer be available to access.

Contact MBM Capital on 0345 680 1895 and one of our relationship managers' will guide you step by step through the process from application to completion.

It is important to remember that when taking a CBILS loan, that your business is liable for the full loan amount. The CBIL scheme provides a guarantee to the lender, not to the business. While we want to help as much as we can, the information here is provided solely for information purposes and should not be considered financial or legal advice.



MBM Capital offer flexible finance solutions to suit your business and would love to discuss your needs to show how we can help give your business a quick cash injection. Contact us by calling us on 0345 680 1895.

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Warrington set to receive £5.5m to repair potholes



WARRINGTON Borough Council is set to receive around £5.5m in Government funding to repair potholes.

Councils across England have been allocated their share of £500 million for highways maintenance, with the funding expected to fix the equivalent of 10 million potholes across the country. Warrington Borough Council will receive just short of £5.5m in funding in phases between now and 2022.

It is the second of 5 equal instalments from the £2.5 billion Potholes Fund, providing £500 million a year between 2020/21 and 2024/25, announced by the Chancellor in the 2020 Budget – and is part of wider funding the DfT provides for road maintenance, totalling over £1.1 billion across England in 2021/22.

With the average pothole costing around £50 to fill in, the funding will ensure that the equivalent of 10 million potholes can be rectified, making thousands of local roads both safer and easier to drive and cycle on.

The news has been welcomed by MP for Warrington South Andy Carter who said: “This is great news for motorists and cyclists across Warrington. I'm sure we are all prone to curse as we stumble across potholes on the way to work, the harsh Winter has meant existing potholes are getting worse and new ones appearing.

“As ever, I will be closely monitoring Warrington Borough Council to ensure it is spent on

sensible projects rather than unnecessary consultations. We know where the hot spots are, Stockton Heath and Great Sankey are particularly bad, and a number of residents have emailed in over the past year so I look forward to the work getting done.”

Transport Minister Baroness Vere said: “We know potholes are more than just a nuisance—they can be dangerous to drivers and cyclists alike, and cause damage to thousands of vehicles every year.

“The funding allocated today will help councils ensure roads in their area are kept up to standard, and that the potholes that blight road users can be dealt with promptly.”

The DfT has already invested heavily in pothole filling since 2015, including the £296 million Pothole Action Fund, which ran from 2015/16 to 2020/21. It also topped up highway maintenance investment in 2018 with a one-off £420 million boost to all highway authorities in England, including London.

The government is committed to supporting motorists. Through Road Investment Strategy 2 (RIS2), the government is investing £27 billion in the biggest ever roads programme – with £10 billion of the record-breaking sum specifically for road maintenance, operations and renewals.

College students fundraise for mental health charity Mind

WARRINGTON & Vale Royal College's Creative and Performing Arts department got active throughout February, while raising money for mental health charity Mind.

Staff and students completed one mile of exercise per day throughout the lockdown period, whether it be walking, running, riding or even skating!

The fundraising idea came from first-year Level 3 Art & Design student Molly Horrocks, who recognised that many people need support more than ever during these challenging times.

Molly said, “So much is uncertain at the moment, especially for young people. I'm aware that lots of young minds are at risk and wanted to help them receive the support they deserve.”

Becky Rogers, Curriculum Leader for Art & Design, assisted Molly with organising the event and was pleased to see the department get involved.

She added “I'm delighted that the department took part in this event and raising money for such a worthwhile charity. The campaign also encouraged people to stay active and improve their own mental and physical wellbeing.”

The goal of the fundraising campaign was to raise awareness of the importance of mental health and support the incredible work of Mind. The charity helps over 6,500 children, young people and adults each year in the local region.

Nina steps up with positive impact as new Head of Private Client at FDR Law

SINCE joining Warrington based FDR Law in January this year Nina Sperring TEP has already made a positive impact as Head of Private Client.

Not only has Nina organised the FDR Law Step Challenge, she has also been busy introducing herself to clients and restructuring the department to meet the needs of their clients going forward.

Nina joined FDR from Bartletts Solicitors in Chester where she was Head of Private Client and managed their Hoole office.

Nina is a member of the Society of Trusts and Estate Practitioners (STEP) and has recently taken over

from Stephen Lawson on STEP's England and Wales Committee and their Worldwide Council.

Between 2007 and 2011 Nina was a member of the Junior North Wales and Cheshire Lawyers Division and held positions as Publicity Officer, Fundraising Officer, Chester and North Wales Law Society Representative and Student Representative. Nina was also the co-founder of the Cheshire and North Wales Young

Professionals Group.

Outside of work Nina enjoys spending time with her family, fell and trail running, kayaking and walking her lively Cocker Spaniel.

FDR Law can trace its roots back over 250 years providing legal support across Warrington, Cheshire and the North West.

If you are interested in speaking with Nina or another member of the Private Client team then please contact FDR Law on 01925 230000 or via email nina.sperring@fdrlaw.co.uk



Signing – a chance to learn an extra language

A NEW initiative to encourage more Warrington people to take up sign language as an extra language and skill, is now available to local residents.

The Signs4Life scheme is to help people to communicate and engage with children and adults who may have hearing impairments.

Hana Riaz, Signs4Life partnerships officer, explains "There are more than nine million hearing-impaired people registered in the UK. We have already worked with social workers, housing staff, teachers, the local NHS, and Royal Mail.

"We wanted to open our programs to the general public, who might also have an interest in learning sign language, especially now that many people are stuck at home during this third lockdown. We are offering a free 6-week British Sign Language program, which you can enjoy and access from the comfort of your homes, delivered through Zoom".

Signs4Life is leading efforts towards a society in which people with disabilities have full access and are working to raise the public and political awareness of disability provision.

For more details on the free community program, due to start after Easter half-term, email Hana, on community@signs4life.org marking your email as "Cheshire".

ANDY CARTER MP
WORKING HARD FOR WARRINGTON SOUTH

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Unique partnership helps keep memories of RAF Burtonwood alive



The Evolution of the RAF Burtonwood Heritage Centre (Part 1)

By Heritage Centre manager John Cotterill



A unique partnership between the RAF Burtonwood Association and Gulliver's World has ensured memories, which could have ended up in landfill, have been kept alive.

The RAF Burtonwood Association was formed in 1987 at a reunion in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA. The founders were Aldon Ferguson and Col Walter W 'Dewey' Ott (USAF Ret'd) who was Chief, Flight Test in WWII and came back as Base Commander in 1949.

The purpose was to perpetuate the memory of those who served at Burtonwood and the work they undertook.

Initial publicity comprised information boards at local shows, talks in Westbrook Library and the production of the Burtonwood Times quarterly magazine. As the membership grew Marks & Spencer, through manager Mike Davies, kindly offered us surplus space in their brand new out-of-town superstore at Gemini.

Here was had the opportunity to display artifacts and photographs illustrating the story of the base.

The 47th Area Support Group of the US Army at Burtonwood supported us by providing

information board in the main square of their Headquarters, Times Square and also hosted our UK reunions in 1988, 1990 and 1992.

Marks & Spencer needed to expand into the space loaned to us so we retreated back to the main site. Burtonwood Association member Ian Murphy suggested the empty Police control building at Gate 12 and obtained permission to occupy one half. It was a small building divided into two non-intercommunicating rooms. We moved a small number of exhibits into this area and it effectively became our first foothold into the main site (Site 8). Ian was ambitious and soon requested access to the second area which he gained. It was then necessary to partly remove the dividing wall

which was achieved and we now had exhibition space at the main entrance to the site.

RAF Burtonwood closed in June 1993 and the US Army soon had the entire building on Site 8 (also known as Header House) empty.

Warrington Borough Council saw the potential of the site to hold a major weekend exhibition to promote Warrington and in particular the site of the airfield which was to be redeveloped. They used Header House to mount a substantial exhibition called the Business Connections Exhibition.

They invited every large business in the area to exhibit and did everything to attract American companies. This was to exploit the

past use of the site by the American military and hoped to persuade them to open new sites here. (This was ultimately achieved with companies like Amazon, ASDA/Walmart, Domino Pizza now well established on the site). The RAF Burtonwood Association

was invited to participate and we were offered a large exhibition area to promote ourselves.

Another opportunity to publicise the Association was kindly offered by Warrington Museum. They suggested an exhibition in the Museum entitled 'Keep 'em Flying'.

This was one of the phrases coined during WWII to maintain the production rate of aircraft through the base. The exhibition occupied the entire upper floor and was professionally laid out and developed by the Museum staff.

This exhibition was so successful that it ran for nine months and the Museum advised it was the most successful exhibition they had ever mounted.

When the time came to vacate the base due to the proposed new developments Ray Phillips, the owner of Gulliver's World Theme Park located on part of the original airbase site, approached us with an offer to provide accommodation.

He and his organisation proposed building a purpose-built structure for us, help with new exhibits and even help in staffing it. Clearly, there had to be a two-way deal and the concept was it would become an attraction as part of the theme park, attract additional visitors as well as securing a way of keeping the Memory of RAF Burtonwood alive. The heritage centre includes the cockpit of a Skymaster which

was one of the main planes to be serviced at the base.

Gulliver's Julie Dalton said: "It has been a pleasure to support the Burtonwood Heritage Centre over the past fifteen years in their goal to keep the memory alive. The Airbase performed a critical role in both the world wars and beyond and its effect on Warrington and the people who lived here should not be forgotten. These memories would have been lost and the thousands of amazing artifacts that tell the story would simply have been sent to landfill. Together with the association, we welcome over 20,000 visitors through the doors per annum, including many local school children who are always wowed by the role their home town played in the wars.

We were delighted this year for the very first time, to receive a lottery grant to support us through the pandemic. This grant now means that we can start and rebuild the visitor numbers and look again to expanding the centre with even more exhibits.

Gulliver's has been completely committed to keeping the memories alive for the last 15 years and looks forward to supporting for another 15 years and beyond."

Part 2 next month – Moving into Header House.



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Coffee shop plan for historic Parr's Bank building

A **SECOND** planning application has been submitted for the historic former Parr's Bank building in Winwick Street, Warrington.

Hotel developer YP Group has submitted proposals for part of the ground floor to become a coffee shop and flexible events venue.

Proposals to use most of the Grade 2 Listed building as a 16-bedroom hotel were submitted last year and work has already started on site.

The original application was for part of the ground floor to be converted to create a reception area, guests' lounge and lobby.

The bedrooms would be on the first and second floors of the three-storey building.

It was made clear at the time that part of the ground floor space would be retained for an alternative future use which had yet to be determined.

Now the new application indicates that a coffee shop/bar and flexible events venue is envisaged.



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By David Watkinson

Looking forward to some degree of normality

As I am writing this column I am, like everyone else, awaiting the budget on Wednesday March 3rd with bated breath. Before that, there is expected to be a "recovery plan" announced on Monday February 22nd. There are many rumours circulating about what these will include, but as both will most likely have passed before you read this it seems pointless to speculate on the precise measures included.

One thing is certain, however. With the success of the vaccination program, together with the fall in infections as a result of the lockdown, people are looking forward to the return of some degree of normality in the not too distant future. Therefore, in either the budget or the pre-budget recovery plan the Chancellor will announce the future financial measures in Covid assistance that will sit alongside Boris Johnson's roadmap out of lockdown. We shall look at all these measures once they are announced.

A second thing that is certain is that the changes in the off-payroll working (known as "IR35") regulations that were introduced in respect of contractors working within the public sector in 2017 will be extended to all contractors working within the private sector from the start of the new tax year on 6th April. Originally, this extension was due to take place in April 2020, but this was delayed for a year

due to the Covid pandemic.

IR35 ensures that contractors who

- a. Provide services through their own intermediary, normally a Limited Company of which they are director/shareholders; and
- b. Would have been an employee if they provided their services directly to the client pay broadly the same tax and National Insurance contributions as an employee.

Before 2017 it was the responsibility of the contractor to determine whether they were within the IR35 regulations and to calculate the deductions accordingly. Unsurprisingly, the end result was that the majority of contractors decided that IR35 did not apply to them, resulting in lower income to the Exchequer. In 2017, the responsibility for determining the status of a contractor who provided their services to a publicly funded client was transferred from the contractor to the client, with substantial penalties being payable by the client if they incorrectly determined that IR35 did not apply. Unsurprisingly, most clients determined that their contractors were subject to the IR35 regulations, and deducted tax and national insurance accordingly.

The Chancellor has been under some pressure from trade bodies representing Contractors to delay

this again. As well as arguing that the "clients" have had other matters to worry about, such as survival, and have had insufficient time to prepare, these bodies argue that Contractors provide a large amount of flexibility in the labour market. In particular, they do not enjoy the benefits that are bestowed on employees, such as holiday pay, sick pay and maternity pay. Also, they do not have any of the employment protection that is enjoyed by employees. They argue that experience in the public sector has been that Contractors are reluctant to pay the price of employment without receiving any of the benefits. This reluctance, they say, will hinder recovery from Covid, and is a burden that the economy cannot afford at present. The Chancellor has consistently resisted these pressures to delay.

However, there has been small concession that has been very recently announced. HMRC have confirmed that it will adopt a light touch to penalties in the first year. Additionally, in an attempt to dampen down Contractors' fears of retrospective legislation, they have also promised not to use any information collected under the new regime to open any enquiries into previous years' returns.

That promise, however, is subject to a number of conditions that cause a degree of nervousness.



Margaret Black and David Watkinson

HMRC has stated that it is subject to them not suspecting any fraudulent or criminal behaviour. It is also subject to the caveat that "The scope of our compliance activity is not solely related to the application of the off-payroll working rules, but includes all arrangements that result in less tax being paid than should be the case, such as tax avoidance schemes that claim to avoid the rules". Anyone who has dealt with HMRC will know that caveats such as these are open to a wide range of interpretations, most of which will not be favourable to the taxpayer.

Only time will tell whether these changes will cause any delay in the economy recovering from the current lockdown. However, a third thing that is certain is that we will provide all possible assistance to any clients whose own interpretations of the rules disagrees with those of HMRC.

For further information on changes in the budget please keep an eye on www.warrington-worldwide.co.uk/ where we will provide details as they become available.

WatkinsonBlack have considerable experience in all areas of taxation and business services, including the provision of a very cost-effective payroll bureau service. If you want to arrange a no-obligation initial meeting on any business 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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"Massive honour" says Jack Hughes as he is chosen to captain Warrington Wolves



JACK Hughes says it is a "massive honour" after being chosen to captain Warrington Wolves for the upcoming 2021 Betfred Super League season.

Hughes has become a mainstay with the Wire since joining in 2016 and shared the leadership of the team with co-captain, Chris Hill last season, with the two players lifting the Challenge Cup together in 2019.

Hill, who is celebrating his testimonial season, will step down from captaincy duties after five seasons allowing him to focus on his own performances whilst remaining committed to supporting Jack in his role going forward.

Commenting about his role as captain, Jack Hughes said, "It's a massive honour and something I'm really proud of."

"Obviously, I understand the weight and responsibility that comes with the role and it's something I'll take extremely seriously."

"I'll uphold the highest of standards at all times - any leadership role would require that - but I'm extremely proud."

Meanwhile the Wire will face Castleford Tigers to kick-off their 2021 Super League campaign, at Headingley on Sunday March 28.

All six of the opening round fixtures will take place at the home of Leeds Rhinos, behind closed doors, but all live on Sky Sports.

Steve Price's men will face Castleford in the sixth game of the weekend, with kick-off at 2.45pm.

Club season ticket holders will be able to watch the games for free via the Our League app.

Meanwhile, this year's Magic Weekend will take place on September 4/5 at St James' Park Newcastle.

The format of the season has changed due to the late start, with teams scheduled to play 25 rounds - rather than the usual 27.

The Grand Final will take place at Old Trafford on Saturday October 9, with St Helens looking to defend their back-to-back Super League crowns.

Rhodri Jones, Super League chief commercial officer said: "With the start of the season a little over a month away, Super League would like to thank all our clubs, Sky Sports, our partners and the RFL for their tireless work in helping us make these announcements today."

"We look forward to continuing to work together throughout the 2021 season to deliver what promises to be another fantastic season."

"Whilst it is frustrating for all involved to not be welcoming fans back into our stadiums for the start of the season, we are hopeful that as the situation in the country continues to improve and the vaccine rollout nears completion, we will be seeing fans enjoying live sport again soon."

"We will continue to work with all of our stakeholders to ensure that we are ready to deliver the return of fans in a safe and secure way."

Price set to leave Wolves at end of 2021 season

HEAD Coach Steve Price is set to leave Warrington Wolves at the end of the 2021 season after making the "huge decision" to return home to Australia with his family at the end of his current contract.

He leaves with the club's blessing as the hunt begins for his successor.

Price joined The Wire ahead of the 2018 season, taking charge of 91 Warrington Wolves games to date, reaching both domestic finals in his first season and going on to lead his side to Challenge Cup success against local rivals St Helens at Wembley in 2019.

The Australian will remain in charge of the first team for the upcoming season and will return home to Australia with his wife and their three daughters once his contract expires at the end of the

current term. Price said: "Warrington Wolves is a wonderful Club and one that I am hugely proud to be able to represent. I cannot thank everyone enough for the opportunity given to me."

"It has been a huge decision but after speaking at length with my wife and daughters, we all feel that it will be the right time to return home once my current contract expires at the end of the forthcoming season."

"In the meantime, I remain wholly committed to the Club and getting the absolute best out of our playing group throughout 2021 to leave Warrington Wolves in a powerful position both on and off the field."

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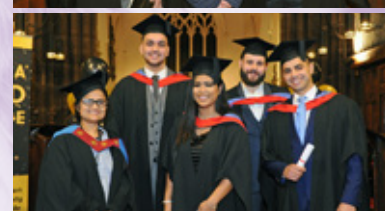
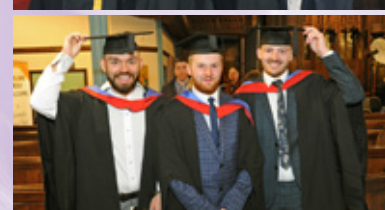
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