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# Bilston


## magazine

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## PUBLISHER/EDITOR

Simon Archer  
Tel. 07534 603662

## EMAIL

magazinebilston@yahoo.co.uk

## WEBSITE

www.westmidlandsmagazines.com

## LETTERS/NOSTALGIA

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## Dear Reader,

Welcome to the February/March issue of the Bilston Magazine.

I'm writing this in mid-January, so the New Year, New Me thing is still going well.

This year I turn 59, so I'm not yet knocking on the door of the big 6-0, but I'm starting to walk down the path.

Like many men of my age, I've gained a few pounds over the years, and in my adult life, apart from a month, here and there, I've probably consumed too much alcohol.

I've been a member of the local gym for about 10 years, but you'd never know as my calorie intake has far exceeded the amount I've burnt off on the treadmill and rowing machine, so it's all been a bit pointless.

I'm also a bit fed up with downing a couple of paracetamol every other morning, after I've had too many drinks the night before.

On top of all that, I'd really like to get out and do more; walk up hills, visit statly homes etc, but the demon drink makes me so lethargic, that on a weekend, half the time, I'm too hungover to get moving.

So... this year I want to break that cycle and start living a bit healthier.

If more of us did this, things would be a lot better for the NHS, which in itself, is a good reason.

Of course, when you read this, it'll be three or four weeks after the 1st January, but that doesn't mean you have to wait til next year. Start tomorrow, or better still, start today!

I've already noticed a difference. I feel livelier, more focussed and my eyesight has definitely improved – and that's after just a couple of weeks.

The pounds haven't come off yet, but they will.

Let's see if I can keep it up. Progress report in the next issue.

Due to the increasing cost of print, more than ever, our advertisers are vitally important to the to the continuation of this magazine. Please have a look at their adverts and if you do purchase anything from them, PLEASE TELL THEM YOU SAW THE ADVERT IN THE BILSTON MAGAZINE!

The next issue will cover April and May and will be out on 5th April so if you want to be in it, please contact me by 8th March.

Enjoy your read!

*Simon*



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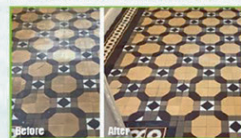
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# A Warm Welcome in Bradley



A very warm welcome awaits in Bradley as St Martin's Church Centre continues to open its doors to the community this winter. Thanks to a generous grant from National Grid Community Matters Fund, the Centre is able to keep the heating on at a toasty temperature through the coldest months of 2024 and is inviting more people to enjoy the warmth. Kate Watson, vicar of St Martin's Church says: "come and enjoy our warm spaces and save money by not heating yours! A warm welcome awaits. St Martin's Church Centre is a fabulous building and we're delighted to host many groups each week, with something for everyone."

Dawn Rodderick and Emma Mansell-Grey, volunteers at St Martin's Church Centre are excited about a new addition to the Centre's programme: a monthly community gathering called Bradley Connect. Dawn explains: "Bradley Connect is simply about getting together so we can make and build friendships and connect as a community. There will be games and crafts for the children, chat over refreshments and each session will end with a home-cooked meal for everyone. It's open to young and old and it's all free!" Emma is a friendly face familiar to many in Bradley and will be taking the bookings each month. "Bradley's a great community to be part of and we want to get together more often and really grow our community connections. We've chosen the 'after school' slot so that parents can come on their way home with children but really it's open to anyone of any age. It will grow and develop based on community feedback: let us know what you'd like to see included! Together we're stronger as a community."



Emma adds: "The National Grid Community Matters Fund has also given money for Warm Packs to help locals to save on their energy costs this winter. Maybe you need energy efficient light bulbs, thermal linings for some curtains, a high tog duvet or something else to keep your bills down, please get in touch and we'll see if we can help."

The next Bradley Connect is Tuesday 27 February, doors open from 3.20pm to 6pm. Look out for booking details on St Martin's Church Facebook page [www.facebook.com/stmartinsbradley/](https://www.facebook.com/stmartinsbradley/), phone **01902 546460** or email Emma on [emansellgrey@stmartinsbradley.co.uk](mailto:emansellgrey@stmartinsbradley.co.uk).

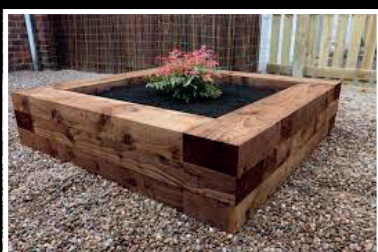
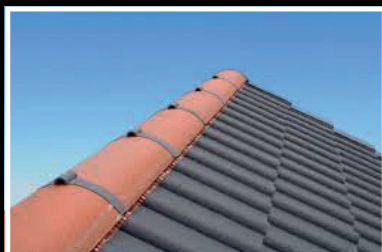
The Centre also hosts Hotchpotch Community Cafe on Friday mornings where everyone is welcome for a chat over a cuppa with cake and a soup lunch - all free! And you can take home a delicious freshly cooked meal from Hub for Grub at the same time, for a donation of just £1 per meal. And at the other end of the building on Friday mornings during term time is Sunshine Corner Stay-and-Play for babies and pre-schoolers with their carers. Then on Friday evening there's Ignite 5:14 children and youth groups. On Thursday evenings (from 9 Feb) K2Togs gather to knit, natter and crochet while on Wednesdays from 11.30am there's a lunch club with a two-course meal and lots of chat. Contact the Church office for more details on any of these or check out the church's Facebook page [www.facebook.com/stmartinsbradley/](https://www.facebook.com/stmartinsbradley/)

The Centre is also in discussions with a local charity to set up a money and debt advice centre including helping people check they're receiving all the benefits they're entitled to. The advice will be free to access and totally confidential. More details to follow soon.

Bradley Connect is funded by generous donors including the Spring Harvest Seed Fund, the Emma Doris Bussey Trust and private individuals. St Martin's Church Centre is also grateful for donations from Emma Doris Bussey Trust for the Wednesday Club, Ward Funds from local councillors and The Rotary Club to help run its many community activities. Energy costs will be covered this winter by the National Grid Community Matters Fund.



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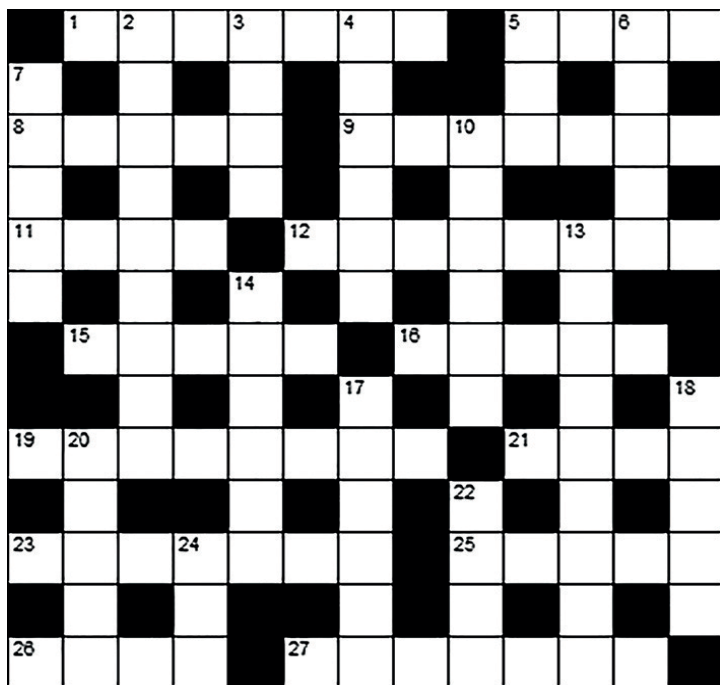
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# Crossword

Please see answers  
on page 47




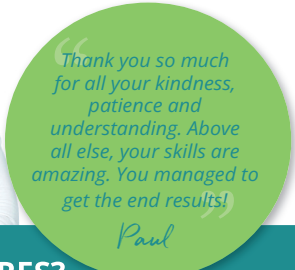
## Across

- 1 Loss of hair (7)
- 5 Royal male (4)
- 8 Permit (5)
- 9 Musical performance (7)
- 11 Curved structure (4)
- 12 Noblewoman (8)
- 15 Backless seat (5)
- 16 Jack in a pack of cards (5)
- 19 Contemplate (spiritual) (8)
- 21 Egypt goddess (4)
- 23 Small onion (7)
- 25 Flat-bottomed boat (5)
- 26 Grasp, clutch (4)
- 27 Proof of payment (7)

## Down

- 2 Assigned (9)
- 3 Daybreak (4)
- 4 Ordinary, unremarkable (6)
- 5 Ornamental fish (3)
- 6 Approaches (5)
- 7 Underwater detection device (5)
- 10 Slapstick circus performers (6)
- 13 Listen surreptitiously (9)
- 14 Mail service (6)
- 17 Effigy, maybe bronze or marble (6)
- 18 Benefit, advantage (5)
- 20 Volatile flammable liquid (5)
- 22 Adept, capable (4)
- 24 Chop, clip (3)



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*Paul*

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# Susan Vickers Foundation to Launch

## Creating Opportunities for Care Leavers

After the success of Susan's debut book 'Traced' which documented her journey through the 1970s and 80s during times of traumatic racism. Shortly followed by her second book 'Love Susan' which chronicles the reality of life as an adoptee, local broadcaster, Susan Vickers is now set to launch the Susan Vickers Foundation.

Following the enormous support and feedback from both books, Susan wants to address the huge gap that many care-experienced young people have in today's society, so they can enjoy the life experiences they deserve, enabling them to have a full and enriched future.

Susan says, "Remember how we all went to school? Yes, the place where we were taught to read, write, do maths, understand history, and explore geography. Then there were those nerve-wracking exams that tested our knowledge, skills, and abilities."

"But do you know what? Our education wasn't limited to what we learned in the classroom. We read books and newspapers, went on excursions to museums, enjoyed pantomimes, joined clubs, and played sports.

These experiences contributed to our wider knowledge, vocabulary, social skills, and self-confidence. They made us who we are today and helped us take part in society."



Unfortunately, not everyone has had the privilege of these cultural experiences. As a result, disadvantaged young people, including those who have spent time in care, are left out in many areas of employment and society. It's not because they lack ability but rather the confidence to take part.

That's where The Susan Vickers Foundation comes in. The idea is to provide cultural experiences to young people so that they can develop the confidence to know that they belong in all areas of public life.

Working together with local businesses and communities The Susan Vickers Foundation's mission is to help these young people build bright futures through access to education, mentoring, mental health resources, and career development opportunities. We believe that with the right support and guidance, care-experienced people have immense potential to thrive. Our foundation will also focus on developing self-sufficiency, resilience and social skills to help young people transition successfully to adulthood.

"Children who are in the care system, are there through no fault of their own, so it is unfair for them to begin adult life feeling like they are excluded from enjoying life to its full potential," says Susan.

To find out how you could help or to donate head over to [susanvickers.com](http://susanvickers.com).



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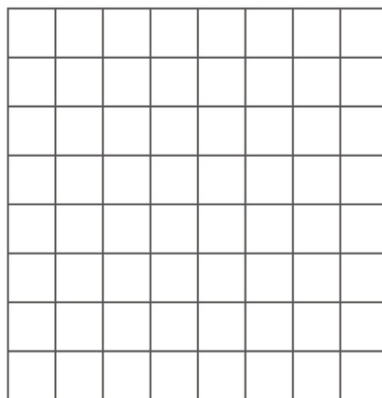




# Kids' Page

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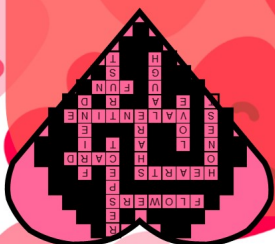
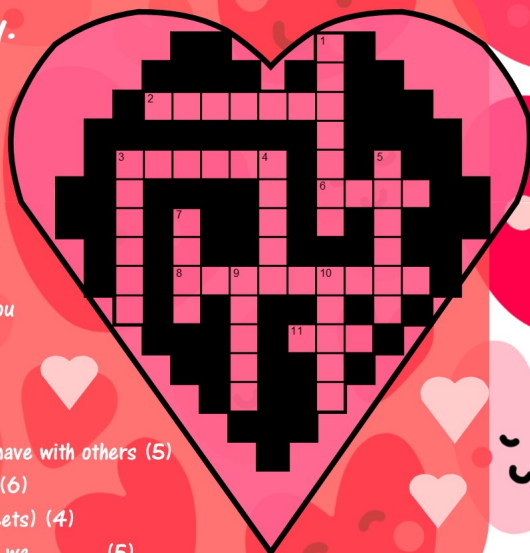
Across

- 2 A bunch of \_\_\_\_\_ (7)
- 3 The Queen of \_\_\_\_\_ (6)
- 6 Did you send a Valentine's \_\_\_\_\_ (4)
- 8 February 14th is named after Saint \_\_\_\_\_ (9)
- 11 Enjoyable (3)

Down

- 1 If you are considerate of someone's feelings you \_\_\_\_\_ them. (7)
- 3 If you are truthful, you are \_\_\_\_\_ (6)

- 4 It's kind to \_\_\_\_\_ what we have with others (5)
- 5 Do you have a best \_\_\_\_\_? (6)
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_ Hearts (cute little sweets) (4)
- 9 If someone tells a funny joke we \_\_\_\_\_ (5)
- 10 To \_\_\_\_\_ someone is to have faith in them. (5)



Crossword Answers

# Interview with Mitchell Lane



If you look at reels (videos) on social media, you may well have seen someone with a local accent, doing recipes for meals under a fiver.

**Meals By Mitch** have been a big hit with local people – and those further afield – as we all look to make a few savings as utilities, food and interest rates have increased massively over the past couple of years.

Magazine Editor, Simon Archer, caught up with Mitchell Lane to find out more about his newfound fame and success.

**SA: So, we know you're local by the supermarket receipts you show us on the reels, but where are you from exactly?**

ML: I grew up and spent most of my childhood in Bilston, which is probably where the strong black county accent comes from! I'm now living in Wednesfield with my partner and 3 kids.

**SA: What schools did you attend?**

ML: For my primary school I attended Holy Trinity in Bilston, then for my senior years I went to St Peters in Compton.

**SA: Do you have another job?**

ML: I still do the same day job which I've done for a number of years now; I work in a factory in Walsall which manufactures nuts & bolts. Of course the passion is with food though, so I try to be as involved with the cooking side of things as possible!

**SA: So, are you a professional cook or chef? And where did you learn to cook?**

ML: I'm not a professional chef no, I've always wanted to be involved with food... but life's got a funny way of working out sometimes. You get comfortable in a job and next thing you know you've got kids and your in your 30's. I'm just glad to be able to fulfil that love for food now and take part in food shows, TV and cooking workshops etc.

**SA: What or who prompted you to start doing the reels?**

ML: It started off during the pandemic lockdown of 2020; I was at home and I thought I'd show people how to still make some tasty food while cooking on a budget. Then one day someone on my TikTok asked me whether I could make a meal to feed 4 people for a fiver... then it went on from there.







**SA: When did you realise the reels were becoming successful?**

ML: It sounds a bit mad, but it still hasn't really sunk in how successful the reels have become. I'm still going about my day as normal, going to work, coming home, cooking tea etc. My day to day hasn't really changed all that much. I think when I got asked to do the BBC GoodFood show was a bit of an eye-opener into how successful things had become. It really hit home at that point.

**SA: How many people watch the recipes?**

ML: at this moment in time I couldn't even put a number on it! Some of the videos I've put up have racked up millions of views so it's really difficult to say. Still blown away by the outreach to be honest.

**SA: Has there been one that's been a big hit?**

ML: There's been a few that have done far better than I'd ever have expected... but the one that blew up beyond belief was the Christmas Dinner video I did in 2022. I basically showed people that you can make a fully loaded Christmas dinner to feed 6 people for 20 quid. I think it got over 6 million views and made Sky News and Newspapers. It was pretty incredible.

**SA: I hear you've published a book? Tell me more about that...**

ML: Getting to publish a book is probably one of my biggest achievements in life, not many people

can say they've published a book so it's all a bit surreal for me. It was published in April last year and got into the Sunday Times Bestseller lists... which still blows my mind.

**SA: So, what next? Another book? TV? Film?**

ML: My second book is due to be published on the 18th January... so not long to go! As for everything else, I just take it as it comes and don't plan ahead. I'm not going to get too ahead of myself. Whatever happens, happens. I'm happy with how things have gone up until this point so if anything else happens it is a complete bonus.

**SA: Who's your favourite celebrity chef (other than Mitchell Lane)?**

ML: Apart from myself, I've always quite liked Jamie Oliver... I always quite like Nigella (for obvious reasons).

**SA: Which would be your favourite recipe?**

ML: There's so many budget bangers out there... but one that really took my fancy was a roasted red pepper pasta I did towards the end of last year. Managed to pick up all of the ingredients for under a fiver and it was such a fresh tasting meal with a real depth of flavour from the roasted veggies.

**SA: If you were on death row, what would be your final meal?**

ML: I've always really loved my Caribbean food – would have to say a Curried Chicken, Rice & Peas, couple pieces of homemade fried chicken. Some flavours that would absolutely slap me silly!



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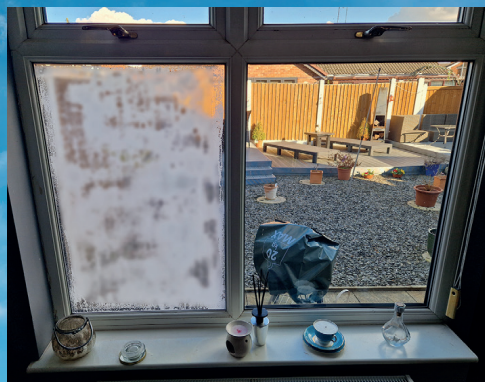
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**(usually monthly every 3rd Thursday)**

14th February, 18th April - 10 Manor Road, Wolverhampton, WV4 5PY

**Bilston Churchill Conservative Club**

**(last Thursday of every month)**

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**The Institute 1.30pm - 2.30pm**

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**WEDNESDAYS:**

**All Saints Church 10am - 11am**

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**The Institute 12pm - 1pm**

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# 'We're investing millions in Bilston,' says West Midlands Mayor Andy Street

Hundreds of new jobs are set to be created in Bilston, when 15 acres of brownfield land is transformed into a new employment site, including industrial and distribution warehouse buildings.

Mayor Andy Street, who leads the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) has confirmed that the ambitious scheme, in Bilston Urban Village, off Brook Street, is to receive millions of pounds to help clean up the site ready for building work to begin.

Andy said: "This is a classic case of my 'Brownfield First' policy in action – where we target old industrial sites that have been empty for years and clean them up to build new homes or new sites for businesses that create jobs.

"The idea is simple – we have lots and lots of old industrial sites in our region that have sat unused for years. I have brought hundreds of millions of pounds into the West Midlands to get them cleaned up so we can build on them again, instead of digging up the Green Belt, which nobody wants.

"This site in Bilston Urban Village has been empty for 15 years, and its industrial legacy means it requires extensive remediation.

"However, the WMCA is putting the money on the table to get it cleaned up so the developers can start building and get it back into use."

It is expected to generate up to 400 jobs once built.

The scheme will also be built to 'BREEAM Excellent' environmental standards, including photovoltaic roof panels and electric vehicle charging.

The Urban Village investment is just one of a number that it seeing millions of pounds invested in the area.

The family-run Wolverhampton company Drywall Steel Sections has secured £13 million to convert a long-derelict site into industrial units. The successful firm is already preparing to move to a new purpose-built factory on a brownfield site nearby, but the new units – for small



**ANDY STREET:**  
*West Midlands Mayor Andy Street says a 'transport revolution is improving' how local people get around the region.*

businesses – are expected to create around 150 new jobs.

And Darlaston has been identified as one of 55 most overlooked towns in the country and has been awarded £20million government investment to be spent over the course of a decade.

Innovative schemes are just the ticket for bus users

Andy Street says the region's bus network is on the road to a better future, thanks to innovative ideas that are driving up passenger numbers.

Andy said: "Buses are the backbone of our public transport network, providing hundreds of thousands of people with vital services every single day.

"Passenger numbers on our buses are now above pre-pandemic levels, but we are leading the way in getting even more people to climb aboard – from providing 600,000 free tickets to creating a charter to make sure passengers get a great service."

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) is offering thousands of people 'try-before-you-buy' bus tickets as part of a £19 million Government-funded scheme to persuade more people to use the bus.



*Millions of pounds are being invested in Bilston Urban Village.*

The incentive is being offered to employers to invite staff who travel by car to work to try the bus instead, meaning 600,000 free bus journeys.

Andy said: "This innovative idea is just one of many improvements that are revolutionising our buses, with cleaner zero-emission vehicles, bus priority measures on the new Sprint routes improving reliability, and some of the cheapest bus fares in the country."

Under the West Midlands Bus Passenger Charter, bus operators have also made a commitment to deliver a minimum standard of service.

Andy said: "The charter makes key commitments to improve safety and reassure passengers, including staff visibility at our bus stations and daily patrols by our Transport Safety Officers.

"For example, the charter also includes for the first time a 'last bus promise', which means that if the last bus is cancelled or doesn't turn up, we'll refund your ticket or compensate a taxi home.

"This kind of innovative idea – along with low fares, network protection, dedicated bus routes, reduced emissions and new railway stations like the one being built in Willenhall – is driving a real transport revolution here in the West Midlands."



**BUS RIDE:**  
*The new Bus Charter promises that if the last bus is cancelled or doesn't turn up, you can get a refund for your ticket or compensated for a taxi home*

Promoted by Max Hopfl, on behalf of Andy Street, both at 1-7 Langleys Road, Birmingham B29 6HR.





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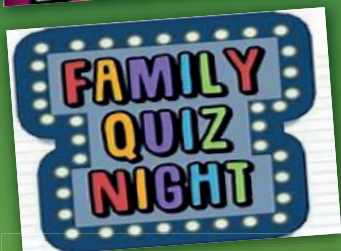
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# Wilde West Ambitions

Wolverhampton Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) fighter Tim Wilde is targeting 'a big 2024' after his highlight reel knockout, despite having had spine surgery just 16 weeks before the bout.

Known as Tim 'The Experiment' Wilde, the Wednesfield man knocked out American, Mike Hamel with a devastating right hand in November and it was his first fight back from lumbar discectomy surgery, which involves shaving down the affected spine disks.

Magazine Editor Simon Archer interviewed Tim, while he was away training in Poland, to find out a bit more about his journey.

- **When did you first get into fighting and in what discipline?**

I started martial arts at the age of around 7/8. I first started training in Shotokan Karate at Seamless Tubes in Wednesfield, Wolverhampton.

- **What weight do you compete at?**

I currently compete at a contracted fight weight of 155lbs or 70.3kg which is lightweight in MMA.







- **Where (and where) do you train?  
Days/times?**

I train 6 days a week, Monday to Saturday. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday I train twice a day normally 2 x 2/3 hour sessions. Wednesday and Saturday I train once (harder intensity) and I rest on Sundays. Most of my sessions are in Birmingham with my team Renegade MMA.

- **Who trains you (current and previous)?**

I train with elite level MMA fighters like Leon Edwards, Fabian Edwards, Tom Breese and many more, including fellow black country fighter Jai Herbert. I use various coaches from striking to wrestling to strength and conditioning.

- **How many fights, wins, losses have you had?**

My current professional record is 17 wins 4 losses and 1 draw. My amateur record for MMA is 9 wins and 1 loss. So a total of 32 MMA fights.

- **What about titles?**

I have won British and European titles on regional shows at both amateur & professional. My goal now is to win a world title in a big promotion.

- **What was your proudest moment so far?**



My last fight was my USA debut and winning that fight by KO against a highly touted American wrestler is up there as one of them for sure!

- **Who is your Manager?**

I am managed by Nima Safapour from Moments Fighters Management.

- **Any advice for beginners?**

Enjoy the journey and work hard and remember you never stop learning

- **What's next for you?**

I am ranked 9th in the world in Bellator MMA and I want to win a world title in Bellator MMA or PFL MMA and currently I am waiting for an answer on which route I will be taking. The powers that be are currently deciding what the path is for me until I know I just keep focused and training hard.

- **How long do you plan to carry on competing?**

I have enough people around me and in my team who will tell me when I should call it a day. I feel great and having the best performances of my career so retiring isn't even in my mind.

- **Who would you like to thank?**

I would like to thank all my sponsors, my team, my manager and all my coaches. Also a big thank you to everyone who supports me and follows my journey.





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# Windrush Scandal Explained



## Who are the Windrush generation?

The 'Windrush' generation are those who arrived in the UK from Caribbean countries between 1948 and 1973. Many took up jobs in the NHS and other sectors affected by Britain's post-war labour shortage. The name 'Windrush' derives from the 'HMT Empire Windrush' ship which brought one of the first large groups of Caribbean people to the UK in 1948. As the Caribbean was, at the time, a part of the British commonwealth, those who arrived were automatically British subjects and free to permanently live and work in the UK.

## What is the Windrush scandal?

The Windrush scandal began to surface in 2017 after it emerged that hundreds of Commonwealth citizens, many of whom were from the 'Windrush' generation, had been wrongly detained, deported and denied legal rights. As these shocking stories hit the headlines, Caribbean leaders took the issue up with then-prime minister, Theresa May. There was widespread shock and outrage at the fact that so many Black Britons had had their lives devastated by Britain's deeply flawed and discriminatory immigration system.

## Why did the Windrush scandal happen?

Commonwealth citizens were affected by the government's 'Hostile Environment' legislation - a policy announced in 2012 which tasked the NHS, landlords, banks, employers and many others with enforcing immigration controls. It aimed to make the UK unliveable for

undocumented migrants and ultimately push them to leave.

Because many of the Windrush generation arrived as children on their parents' passports, and the Home Office destroyed thousands of landing cards and other records, many lacked the documentation to prove their right to remain in the UK. The Home Office also placed the burden of proof on individuals to prove their residency predated 1973. The Home Office demanded at least one official document from every year they had lived here. Attempting to find documents from decades ago created a huge, and in many cases, impossible burden on people who had done nothing wrong.

Falsely deemed as 'illegal immigrants' / 'undocumented migrants' they began to lose their access to housing, healthcare, bank accounts and driving licenses. Many were placed in immigration detention, prevented from travelling abroad and threatened with forcible removal, while others were deported to countries they hadn't seen since they were children.

Their harmful and unjust treatment provoked widespread condemnation of government's failings on the matter, with calls being made for radical reform of the Home Office and the UK's immigration policy. In response to these demands, then Home Secretary, Sajid Javid announced in May 2018 that the Home Office would commission a 'Windrush Lessons Learned Review'.



# YOU Could Be Entitled to Compensation!

---

## Why you can claim

Before we start, we should clear up the massive misunderstanding that the Windrush generation is only those who came on the Windrush as it also encompasses the entirety of the Commonwealth who migrated to the UK between 1948 and 1973 and as a result of the Windrush Scandal the Windrush Compensation scheme came to be.

So, if you have ever had any issues because you couldn't prove your legal right to live in the UK, whether a big or small issue, you could be entitled to compensation.

### *This could be due to:*

- Losing access to benefits, housing and free healthcare
- Losing your job
- Being denied banking
- Missing education or a driving licence
- Being unable to travel
- Facing problems with
- Detention or deportation
- Impact on life

As a result of not being able to prove your legal right to live in the UK.

---

## WHO can claim?

### *You may be eligible to claim if:*

- You came to the UK from any COMMONWEALTH country before 1988 Your parents came to the UK from any COMMONWEALTH country before 1973
  - SOME Close family members (including grandchildren) may also be eligible.
- 

## How to claim

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE WINDRUSH COMPENSATION SCHEME,**  
Visit [gov.uk/windrush](https://gov.uk/windrush) Help Team or call **0800 678 1925**

### *If you need support filling your claim;*

- Contact independent advisers We Are Group on **0808 196 8496** to book an appointment at Sian Computers who will assist you in completing your application.
- Contact Sian Computers at **01902 651698** if you have any questions.
- Or scan the QR code to open up an online questionnaire





# Pat McFadden

## A Word from your Member of Parliament



### Memorial bench unveiled in memory of Ronan Kanda

My constituent Ronan Kanda was 16 years old in 2022 when he was stabbed to death, just yards from his home. Since then, I have worked closely with his family who are campaigning for tougher laws on the online sale of large-bladed weapons.

I recently joined Ronan's family for the unveiling of a bench in his name. It will serve as a permanent reminder of a young local boy who had his whole life in front of him. I am grateful to Openview Security Solutions Limited, Hilton Main Construction Limited and RG Builders who worked together to install the bench in memory of Ronan.



### Holocaust Memorial Day

I recently attended the Holocaust Memorial Day service hosted by the City of Wolverhampton Council and Interfaith Wolverhampton. Holocaust Memorial Day takes place on 27th January every year and it is an important time to reflect and honour the memory of those who died in the Holocaust and oppose all forms of prejudice and intolerance. As the MP for Wolverhampton South East, I also signed the book of commitment to mark Holocaust Memorial Day in the House of Commons.



### East Park parkrun

We have a great local park run in East Park and I enjoy taking part when I can. I completed my 50th parkrun in January. Parkrun is a free community event where you can come together to walk, jog, run, volunteer or be a spectator. It is a great opportunity to get outdoors and get healthier.

Thank you to all the amazing volunteers who make East Park parkrun such a success every Saturday. If you can help volunteer your time then please email [eastpark@parkrun.com](mailto:eastpark@parkrun.com), for more information visit [www.parkrun.org.uk/eastpark/](http://www.parkrun.org.uk/eastpark/)



### Contact me

If you would like to contact me, please get in touch by emailing: [patrick.mcfadden.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:patrick.mcfadden.mp@parliament.uk) or calling 01902 405762.

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# Richard Parker

for West Midlands Mayor

**I'm proud to be Labour's candidate for West Midlands Mayor. I left school at 16. I've since spent my career advising businesses across the West Midlands.**

I understand the pride and aspirations of the people here who work hard and want to get on in life. But we've been let down by this chaotic Conservative government. They crashed the economy and now we are paying the price.

I'm not a politician, I'm a businessman. I'm not prepared to sit on the sidelines any more. I have a plan to give the West Midlands a fresh start.



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PLAN**

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1309\_24 Promoted by Charlotte Walker on behalf of Richard Parker both at Terry Duffy House, Thomas St, West Bromwich, B70 6NT.



# Links to the Past

Black Country History with Tim Hamilton

## Asbestos Awareness

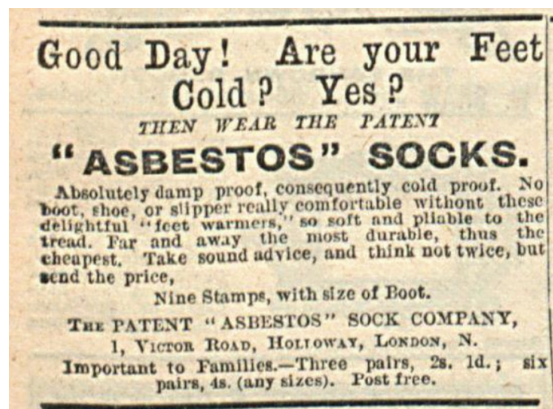


Hello, my name is Tim Hamilton. I've been passionate about history since childhood; in part due to all our family holidays to steam rallies, classic car shows, battle re-enactments and heritage craft fairs

which our calendars and lives revolved around. I have worked with museums for over 10 years and now form part of the Collections Team at the Black Country Living Museum where we take care of the 80,000 plus objects which have been acquired from local businesses and donated by people in the community over the last 50 years. In 2023 I began volunteering as a Trustee at the British Association for Local History, a national charity which promotes local history by offering talks and lectures, we host a podcast and publish a range of material from books to journals and a local history magazine.

Some of us have historic appliances and products tucked away in garages, sheds and lofts and sometimes in part due to how well made they are; still in our homes. Whether you live in an older property, have a penchant for

retro décor, or you're just a make do and mender there's one thing we should all be cautious about; Asbestos. Asbestos, which is classified as a human carcinogen, is known to cause cancer through inhalation. It is insidious by nature, in that it takes approximately 30 years for clinical manifestation of first exposure to occur. Which means that, while no person should ever be exposed to asbestos, the younger you are the most at risk you are of developing pleural disorders, mesothelioma or lung cancer and chronic high dose exposure may cause asbestosis, all of which contribute to around 5,000 deaths per year in the UK.



Asbestos, is a fibrous mineral that many industries used for decades in thousands of products due to its durability, affordability and fire resistant and sound proofing qualities. Because of this, it was commonly used in building materials through the 1950's right up until 1999 when it finally became regulated by law. It's recommended to be aware that buildings erected during this time could contain asbestos, but it is not usually a problem unless





the material is damaged or disturbed (that means no drilling or sanding in or around potential asbestos!). Key areas or objects that warrant caution usually include anywhere that contains electrical wiring and generates or is used alongside heat (baths, irons and ironing boards for example) but it can also be impregnated into laminates and resin products like Lino flooring and Bakelite. Asbestos is also found in war-time Gas Mask filters and protective clothing for firefighters and foundry workers, gas mantles - which are also known to be radioactive! And, (the one that shocked me the most) Kent Cigarettes that were sold between 1952 and 1957, that were marketed with their specialist "Micronite Filter".

And while we're on the scary train; here's where it gets complicated, you can't tell if a product contains asbestos just by looking at it, it doesn't have an odour and while 95% of asbestos is identifiable by its white colouring, it can come in brown and blue too. Furthermore, determining if a product has asbestos in it puts you at risk of exposure to asbestos fibres too small for the human eye to see. If in doubt speak to the Health and Safety Executive info-line for general advice on asbestos and to get a quote for safe removal and disposal contact Wolverhampton Homes, all of the contact details are below.

If you happen to come across a smaller object in your home such as a vintage travel iron,

hairdryer or the like (Please do reach out to me on Twitter and I'd be glad to offer any advice I can). I'd recommend bagging it in something like a clear zip lock bag, and labelling it clearly as suspected asbestos as a warning to others. I have on more than one occasion, in my work with museum collections, opened parcels of unsolicited donations of similar objects where asbestos has been visibly hanging out of the object! Having received many rounds of Asbestos Awareness training I have been able to reduce the possibility of inhaling fibres myself, but your unsuspecting family members or friends might not know what they have found and needlessly put themselves at risk.

If you or somebody you know has been affected by cancer, you can call the Macmillan Support Line for free on 0808 808 00 00, 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week. Advisers can provide emotional and practical support and information.

Enjoy your spring cleaning projects, stay safe and if in doubt; ask for advice!

✕ @MrTimHamilton

### Important Numbers:

Health and Safety Executive info-line:  
☎ 0845 345 0055

Wolverhampton Homes:  
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☎ 01902 554220.

Macmillan Support Line:  
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8am to 8pm, 7 days a week.

Further Reading  
Government guidance:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a82acede5274a2e8ab58c35/Asbestos\\_toxicological\\_overview.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a82acede5274a2e8ab58c35/Asbestos_toxicological_overview.pdf)  
Mesothelioma UK:  
[www.mesothelioma.uk.com/how-to-keep-yourself-safe-at-home/](http://www.mesothelioma.uk.com/how-to-keep-yourself-safe-at-home/)

# Top Winter Walks from the National Trust



Wrap up warm and enjoy some of the best walking trails at a National Trust place near you this winter.

Adventure into the countryside for invigorating cold-weather walks and soak up the beauty of crisp landscapes, cool air, and glowing sunsets. Meander along frosty paths in historic gardens, jump over puddles in parklands, or blow away the cobwebs exploring the hills and valleys of some of our most spectacular places.

Winter is the best time to notice nature and wildlife around you on your walk. Look for pawprints in mud and snow, listen for crisp notes of bird song and spot woodland residents foraging in the silhouette of bare trees.

Warm up after your winter adventure in a National Trust café or tearoom. Thaw out with a hot drink, shrug off the cold with a hearty soup or simply enjoy a well-earned sweet treat.

Put a spring in your step during the colder months with top winter walking trails near you:

## Shropshire

### Attingham Park

Upon entering Attingham's gates, the views open across 200-year old parkland to the Shropshire hills and the impressive Regency mansion emerges, against silhouettes of cedar trees.

Historic trees cluster in woodland glades and the River Tern meanders through the parkland attracting an abundance of wildlife including herons, swans and geese.

There's a number of walks including the popular Mile Walk which is suitable for pushchairs and mobility trampers, which are available to hire.

### Carding Mill Valley and the Long Mynd

With amazing views to be had on a variety of way-marked walks, the beautiful scenery at the Long Mynd is perfect for a bracing winter walk.

The Chalet Pavilion offers the perfect pitstop for a warming drink and tasty treat.



## Comer Woods, Dudmaston Estate



Trails crisscross Comer Woods, including the Explorer Trail a multi-use circular trail which begins and ends at the car park. Designed for everyone, including walkers, runners, cyclists and adapted wheelchair users. Stop off halfway along the trail at the Scout Camp, it's a great place to pause for some outdoor games.

A little further along the route, there's a great spot for den building. Challenge your family to build the best woodland shelter before continuing on your way. Follow the tree stump stepping stone path as you head out for more adventures.

## Staffordshire

### Kinver Edge and the Rock Houses

Blow away the cobwebs with a bracing walk on Kinver Edge. Climb to the top of the hillfort and take in a late winter sun rise or early sunset. On crisp, clear days enjoy panoramic views across three counties, Staffordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire.

## Shugborough Estate

On clear, crisp days a stroll around the pleasure grounds is great for admiring the views across the whole estate. For frosty trees, the purple sheen of silver birch and wild deer walking through the mist, you can't beat a climb up to the Triumphal Arch and onto Satnall Hills. With the dieback of undergrowth, it's easier to spot some of the mammals which normally use it for cover.



## West Midlands

### Wightwick Manor and Gardens

Winter is the perfect time to see the structure of the garden, the evergreen geometrical yew hedging appears bolder and the architectural lines of the terraces and balustrades are clearer. Pick up a warm drink from the tea-room and take a brisk walk across frosty lawns, past frozen pools and through crisp woodland.

### Moseley Old Hall

Wrap up warm and enjoy a gentle stroll through our garden and woodland. The Knot Garden looks particularly lovely after a dash of frost or a sprinkling of snow.

For more walks and further details visit:  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/walking](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/walking)





# Ormiston SWB Academy Christmas Family Lunch

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As is tradition, at Ormiston SWB Academy, we annually hold a family Christmas lunch for our wonderful pupils and staff, ensuring that all receive a complimentary Christmas meal with all the trimmings.



Feeding over 1350 people is no mean feat, but each year our wonderful catering staff manage to achieve this. Assisted by our senior leaders and Sixth form, the meals are served to the pupils, who enabling all to get into the festive spirit and enjoy the singing and dancing on offer.



It was great to see so many pupils and staff getting into the swing of things in December.

# Christmas performances return at SWB!!

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Christmas 2023 saw the return of both our Panto and Christmas Musical Showcase. The panto was actually years in the making following the postponements due to COVID 19.

However, nothing was going to prevent our determined staff and student body from displaying their talents when performing the Panto of 'Rumpelstiltskin'.

These performances take months (and in this case years) of hard work to ensure they are of high quality and this year certainly did not disappoint. Thanks has to go to Mr Stevens and Mr Tipton for their additional hard work, alongside Lainey Foster in Sixth Form and the students themselves.

We would also like to thank all family and community members who continue to encourage their children and attended in their 100's to support the academy. Your support does not go unnoticed.



# Wolverhampton Centre Stage for Kabaddi World Cup

Wolverhampton has won the honour of hosting the knockout stages and final of the men's and women's Kabaddi World Cup in March 2025.

The announcement has been made after the city secured £500,000 from the West Midlands Combined Authority's and HM Government's Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund to support the global event.

Aldersley Leisure Centre, home of top-class international darts and snooker, will stage the quarter-finals, while the newly-transformed The Halls Wolverhampton, will host the semi-finals and final.

As well as staging the group matches alongside Birmingham, Coventry and Walsall, Wolverhampton will also host the opening event as the West Midlands becomes the first destination outside of Asia to host the sport's most prestigious tournament.

It will feature the world's best kabaddi players from leading men's and women's teams, including India, Iran and Pakistan.

Kabaddi is the fastest-growing sport in South Asia, and the second most popular after cricket. Originating in India some 5,000 years ago, the contact sport sees teams broken down into raiders and blockers, with the aim of scoring points by entering opposition territory, tagging an opponent and making it back into their own half without being tackled to the ground. It is now played in more than 50 countries, having grown in stature as a mainstream sport.



The 2025 Kabaddi World Cup is being organised by England Kabaddi, Scottish Kabaddi and the British Kabaddi League. The West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC), the region's official economic development agency, will support and champion the event to ensure its impact is felt across the West Midlands and the UK.



Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal, City of Wolverhampton Cabinet Member for Visitor City, said: "We are delighted to be hosting the 2025 Kabaddi World Cup in Wolverhampton and the West Midlands.

"We're looking forward to welcoming men's and women's teams from around the globe and to hosting the finals, semi-finals and quarter-finals in our city.

"Events of this scale bring direct and indirect economic benefit and put Wolverhampton firmly on the map as a destination of choice for visitors."





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# Louis Theroux

## Interview

Esteemed documentary filmmaker Louis Theroux opens the lid on his latest triumphant TV return, and reveals how taking his work home almost killed him.

Louis Theroux has mastered the art of storytelling, introducing audiences to unique individuals and, in the process, allowing for profound self-exploration. Yet few understand the weight of such adventures and how taking these stories home nearly cost him everything.

Theroux reflects: "It's never as simple as just shutting down the camera and proceeding to the next assignment. The essence of documentary work goes deeper than that.

"Every encounter, every story – regardless of its duration – leaves an indelible mark on you. It's about recognising and internalising those shifts, understanding that each experience has, in subtle or profound ways, reshaped your perspective and arguably altered your narrative going forward."

For many, distinguishing between personal and professional spheres can sometimes prove to be a complex endeavour, and even for someone as intelligent and skilled as Theroux, the reality is no different.

In one memorable instance, he immersed himself in the world of America's most infamous White Aryan Resistance hate group, and admitted: "For that, the feeling of disquiet refused

to dissipate easily. Its grip remained steadfast and persistent."

Another instance – memorable for the wrong reasons – occurred when Theroux filmed one of his BBC Two specials called *Mothers on the Edge*, meeting women who have been admitted with a range of serious conditions – including depression, anxiety and psychosis. It had a profound effect on him.

"That one was testament to the silent battles many face, and it reminded me of the universality of human experience and emotion."

Theroux's encounters, with extremists, criminals and those on the fringes of society, often left him emotionally vulnerable.



"There were moments in the middle of the night when sleep would elude me, and other times when I could sleep but the result was tortuous," he candidly recalls. "Some experiences imprint themselves so profoundly that they're irreversible. If you find them hard to shake off, there is a real danger of them becoming an inseparable chapter of your personal narrative."

Yet Theroux refuses to let the journey keep him away from his passion. His latest interviews include boxer Anthony Joshua, Hollywood icon Dame Joan Collins, and whistleblowing activist Chelsea Manning.

Theroux says: "Working on new programmes was hugely gratifying. The guests were all absolute individuals in every way, and excellent in diverse ways, who have negotiated obstacles and grown to accomplish colossal feats.

"I am glad we are still talking..."



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# Bilston

magazine



WOLVERHAMPTON  
**YOUNG  
CITIZEN**  
OF THE YEAR  
**ROTARY AWARDS**



# The Wolverhampton Young Citizen of the Year Awards

*Do you know someone aged 13 - 25 who:*

- Has gone the extra mile to help others, their community, fellow students, work colleagues or someone in need.
- Lives, works or learns in Wolverhampton?

Nominations for the **Wolverhampton Young Citizen of the Year Awards** are open  
1 March to 31 May.

*For more information and to nominate visit:*

[www.wolverhamptonyoungcitizen.org.uk](http://www.wolverhamptonyoungcitizen.org.uk)



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 [@WV\\_MarketPlace](https://twitter.com/WV_MarketPlace)

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# Useful Telephone Numbers

## Community Centres

Bilston .....	01902 552267
Lower Bradley .....	01902 552212
Lunt .....	01902 552324
Portobello .....	01902 654650

## Emergency Services

Anti Social Behaviour Unit.....	01902 551188
(Out of hours emergency) .....	01902 552999
Police/Fire/Ambulance .....	999
Police (non emergency) .....	101
Crime Stoppers (anonymous) .....	0800 555111
Electrical emergency .....	0800 328 1111
Flood line.....	0845 9881188
Gas emergency .....	0800 111 999
Water emergency .....	0800 7834444

## Health Organisations

Arthritis Action.....	0203 781 7120
Bilston Heath Centre .....	01902 444003
Bilston Sports Injury Clinic .....	07445 119139
New Cross Hospital (switchbrd) .....	01902 307999
NHS Non-Emergency .....	111
Woodcross Health Centre .....	01902 675588
Wolverhampton City NHS Trust.....	01902 553909

## Local Councillors

### *Bilston South (formerly East)*

Gillian Wildman.....	07971 837375
Rashpal Kaur.....	07976 882469
Stephen Simkins .....	07775 007989

### *Ettingshall North*

Zee Russell .....	07880 176838
Jeszemma Howl .....	07816 085166
Jenny Cockayne .....	07527 388564

### *Bilston North*

Linda Leach.....	07771 836016
Rohit Mistry.....	number not available
Susan Roberts.....	number not available

## Help Lines/Others

Citizens Advice Bureau .....	03444 111 444
Childline.....	0800 1111
Nation Domestic Violence .....	0808 2000 247
RSPCA .....	0300 1234 999
RSPB.....	0845 1200501
Samaritans .....	116 123

## Places of Worship

Bilston Baptist Church .....	01902 401430
Bilston Methodist Church .....	01902 402137
Bilston Congregational Church .....	07704 322807

Bradley Methodist Church.....	01902 402137
Christ Church, Coseley .....	01902 687283
Church of God of Prophecy .....	01902 497370
Excel Church .....	01902 498781
Guru Nanak Gurdwara.....	01902 496135
Holy Trinity Oxford St .....	01902 493459
New Testament Church of God .....	01902 498861
Shri Durga Wbhawn Hindu .....	01902 354081
St Chads, Bilston.....	01902 494776
Stowlawn Methodist/Anglican Church ..	01902 402137
St Mary's, Oxford Street .....	01902 496306
St Leonard's Church .....	01902 491560
St Martins Church Bradley .....	01902 546460
The Asian Evangelical Church .....	01902 353705
Word of Spirit & Life Baptist Church .....	07976 713716

## Schools

Bilston C of E Primary .....	01902 558690
Christ Church C of E Primary .....	01384 818375
Field View Primary.....	01902 925701
Green Park School .....	01902 556429
Holy Trinity Catholic Primary .....	01902 240901
Hurst Hill Primary.....	01384 818845
Loxdale Primary.....	01902 558570
Manor Primary.....	01902 556460
Moorcroft Wood Primary School.....	01902 495943
Moseley Park Academy.....	01902 553901
Ormiston South W'ton & Bilston Acad ..	01902 493797
Stowlawn Primary .....	01902 556463
St Martin's C of E Primary .....	01902 925700
The Rosewood School .....	01384 816800
Villiers Primary School.....	01902 558993
Wallbrook Primary .....	01384 818985
Wilkinson Primary .....	01902 558971

## Libraries

Bilston .....	01902 556253
East Park .....	01902 556257
Spring Vale .....	01902 556284
Wolverhampton Central.....	01902 556025

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## Crossword Answers

From page 10



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