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October / November 2025

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P8

Darlaston & Wednesbury Life

Contents



P16



P18

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 6. Editor's Welcome | 20. War Paws |
| 8. Charity Cup's Milestone | 25. Kids' Puzzles |
| 10. Crossword | 26. News in Brief |
| 12. Rendering & Insulation | 29. Trade Services |
| 16. New Website Launched | 31. Crossword Answers |
| 18. Wednesbury Rotary Club | |

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Dear Reader,

Welcome to the Oct/Nov issue of the Darlaston & Wednesbury Life magazine.

I must start off by saying a massive well done and thank you to all those who volunteer around this area.

You would be amazed at how many people do something for nothing (no pay and often very little praise) in our community.

I'm not even going to attempt to mention them all, but if you know one of them (school governors, litter pickers, music festival and event organisers, Rotary and Lions members, Scout and Guides leaders, neighbours who put peoples' bins out etc) maybe just tell them they're appreciated.

The world would be a lot worse off without them.

Anyway, I have some big news.....drum roll..... I've launched a new website – WestMidsLife.com – which went live on 1st September. There are several reasons for doing this;

Firstly, I often don't have enough space in the magazines to satisfy the demand from people who send in articles and features and I don't like disappointing them. Now, I can put their piece online or maybe put part of it in the magazine and rest on the website, as there's no limitations on space.

Secondly, more and more of my advertisers are asking for digital options and previously, I couldn't help them with that. Also, I can give them a far bigger audience – there are 6.8 million people in the West Midlands!

Finally, although people tell me they love the magazines, there will come a time (not yet!) when printed magazines are past their sell by date. I need something in place for when that day comes.

I do need to stress, the new website is not an online magazine, but there will be elements of what you enjoy in the magazines, on there.

There will also be an extensive 'What's On section' so if you have an event coming up that you'd like to promote. Please email me the details.

I hope you like it. Check it out; www.WestMidsLife.com

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 December and January and will be out on 4th December so if you want to be in it, please contact me by 1st November.

Enjoy your read! *Simon*



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Charity Football Competition Notches up a Century

by Steve Gordos

When industrialist John William Hunt came up with the idea of a football competition to raise funds for the local blind, little did he know it would be still going strong a century later.

The J W Hunt Cup has embarked on its centenary season, having raised nearly £450,000 for the Wolverhampton, Dudley and Districts Institution for the Blind which later became the Beacon Centre. His love of football and a desire to help the community led to the competition which bears his name.



A superb trophy was commissioned with handles in the shape of crocodiles, the crocodile being the symbol Chillington had adopted to go on all its products.

Sadly, Hunt died on December 10, 1925, before the first J W Hunt Cup was staged. He was 82 when he died at his home, Maycroft, Ash Hill, Compton, Wolverhampton after being taken ill. He had retired as Chillington chairman three years earlier.

Out of respect, plans for the cup to be played in the 1925-6 season were shelved, so the inaugural meeting was held on Thursday, September 16, 1926, at the Molineux Hotel. The hotel building, now extended and housing the city's archives, has on it a blue plaque to mark the historic meeting.

Wolverhampton Wanderers were represented at that meeting and from the beginning have been stalwart supporters of the J W Hunt Cup. By coincidence the old blind institution was in Waterloo Road, just a short distance from Molineux.

The first 13 finals were staged at Molineux, beginning with a 2-0 win by Short Heath United over Cannon Iron in 1927. Short Heath won three more finals and

their total of four triumphs has never been equalled. Wolves continue to allow Molineux to be used and, in all, it has been the final venue on 56 occasions.

The J W Hunt Cup president Alex Hamil is a former top-flight ref. "It's a great competition," says Hamil, "and it may now be unique as it is open to clubs from different leagues." Hamil added: "We have had great support from the clubs and local companies over the years." Hamil was in 2013 awarded the MBE for services to football and the visually impaired.



A dinner will be held at Molineux, in September next year on the anniversary of the founding meeting and a book charting the history of the cup will be published. Written by committee men John Hughes and Steve Gordos, J W Hunt Cup Centenary will contain details and photos for every final as well as a history of the cup and the figures who have served it well. It also features the historic occasion in October, 2021, when a J W Hunt Cup first-round tie between Old Wulfrunians and Bloxwich side Lane Head saw an English record for the most kicks in a penalty shoot-out. There were 44, Old Wulfs winning it 19-18 after the game had ended 3-3.

Another great industrialist and benefactor, the late Sir Jack Hayward, once said of the cup "It's part of Wolverhampton's history."

He was spot on with that verdict and Alex Hamil adds: "We have a great committee who ensure the competition runs smoothly." Clearly, the J W Hunt Cup's future is in safe hands.

To read the full article and to see more photos, visit www.westmidslife.com or use the QR Code.



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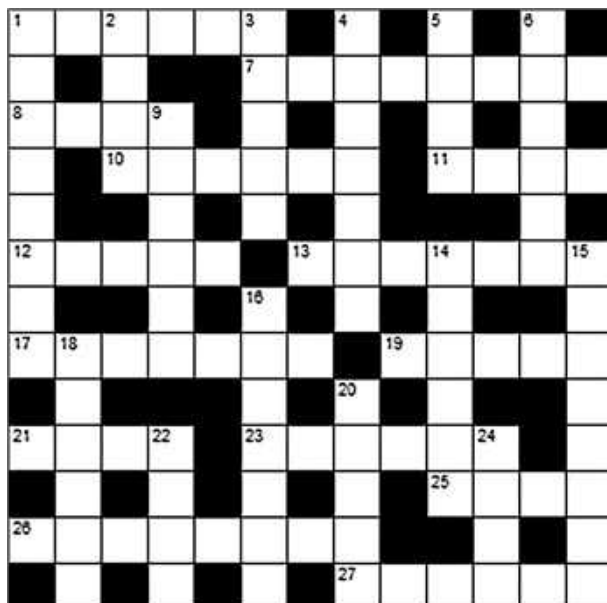
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Crossword

Please see answers
on page 31



Across

- 1 Motionless (6)
- 7 Leftover (8)
- 8 Partiality (4)
- 10 Dried grape (6)
- 11 Pin, tack (4)
- 12 Head of a monastery (5)
- 13 Highly contagious viral disease (7)
- 17 Stress (7)
- 19 Lightweight wood (5)
- 21 Clasp, clench (4)
- 23 Kitchen appliance (6)
- 25 Duty, function (4)
- 26 Camouflage (8)
- 27 Alcove (6)

Down

- 1 Deduct (8)
- 2 Slightly open (4)
- 3 Fresh, chilly (5)
- 4 Disjoined, apart (7)
- 5 Norse god (4)
- 6 Extreme scarcity of food (6)
- 9 Hairdressing establishments (6)
- 14 Ice dancer (6)
- 15 Lurch, reel (8)
- 16 Egotism, arrogance (7)
- 18 Insect with pincers (6)
- 20 Influence, authority (5)
- 22 Piece of paper, leaf (4)
- 24 Prickly plant with flowers (4)

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The Benefits of Rendering and Insulation

In a world increasingly focused on energy efficiency, rendering and insulation stand out as essential techniques for modern, sustainable building. When applied effectively, they can radically enhance both a structure's thermal performance and aesthetic appeal.



Energy Efficiency & Comfort

Proper thermal insulation significantly slows heat transfer through walls, reducing heating bills in winter and cooling demands in summer. In the UK, uninsulated walls can account for up to 25% of a home's heat loss—making insulation a vital investment. Modern systems—such as External Wall Insulation (EWI)—combine insulation with a protective render. This envelope retains warmth, reduces energy use, and enhances comfort. Additionally, insulation mitigates condensation and mould by keeping interior wall temperatures above dew point, safeguarding both building and occupant health.



Durability & Weather Protection

Render acts as more than a decorative finish—it

shields the insulation layer from rain, UV exposure, and damage, extending its lifespan. Certain renders even enhance fire resistance, offering added peace of mind. With texture and colour options ranging from traditional mineral to sleek silicone or brick-effect finishes, rendering also enables homeowners to tailor their property's curb appeal.



Added Value & Sustainability

Well-insulated, rendered homes often command higher resale values. They reduce reliance on heating systems, lowering carbon emissions and supporting the UK's net-zero goals. Together, these features contribute to high-performance buildings—spaces that are energy-efficient, thermally sound, and more sustainable in operation.

Community Spotlight: Ecotex Contracts Ltd in Bilston

Local expertise matters—and in Bilston, residents are fortunate to have **Ecotex Contracts Ltd**, a family-run specialist with over 25–30 years of experience providing affordable rendering and solid-wall insulation for both domestic and commercial properties across the West Midlands. Based at **43 Broad Street, Bilston**, their team has completed more than 10,000 projects, earning excellent reviews for their craftsmanship and reliability.

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New Website Launched for the West Midlands

At the start of September, a new website was launched with the aim of bringing the people of the West Midlands closer together.



WestMidsLife.com will have a comprehensive What's On section, along with pages on Food & Drink, Homes & Gardens, Finance, Education, Occasions, Entertainment, Health & Beauty, Business, Travel, News, Property, Charities and Motoring.

The news and articles will be about people, places and organisations from across the whole of the West Midlands, so advertisers will now have a potential audience of 6.8 million people.

Editor, Simon Archer says, *"I do need to stress, it's not an online magazine, but there will be elements of what you enjoy in the magazines, on there. Although the magazines remain strong, this will take us on to the next level with a far greater reach, more flexibility and more options."*

"The advantages of the new website are enormous, for instance, I usually don't have enough space in the magazines to satisfy the demand from people who send in articles and features and I don't like disappointing them. Now, I can put their piece online or maybe put part of it in the magazine and rest on the website, as there's no limitations on space."

"Secondly, more and more of my advertisers are asking for digital options and

previously, I couldn't help them with that. Also, I can give them a far bigger audience – there are 6.8 million people in the West Midlands!"

The 'What's On' section is designed so readers can see at a glance what events are taking place using the Calendar.

This saves people having to visit each venues' website to see what shows are on.

WestMidsLife.com is launching with a huge social media campaign and a series of radio adverts to drive visitors to the site.



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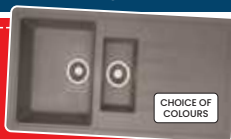
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Rotary Club of Wednesbury

New Club President Peter Hughes is now well into his year in office and is enthusiastically looking forward to leading the Club into the forthcoming busy Festive period.

The annual Variety Concert, for senior citizens will be on Saturday 15th November 2025 at Central Methodist Church Hall, commencing at 1pm. This Ticket-only event, which includes an extensive raffle, features local talented artists and, with the valuable assistance of the Inner Wheel Club, tea will be served during the interval. Tickets are a nominal £1 each.

Preparations are now under way, once again, to bring Father Christmas to the streets of the Town - this year, weather permitting, we shall commence on Friday 28th November and will then be out on every week-night (except Thursday 18th December) up to and including Tuesday 23rd. Although we value the magnificent support we enjoy from various Groups during the annual marathon, more help is always needed - anyone who would like to come out with us would be made very welcome - each evening the Float starts at 5-30pm, finishes at 8pm at latest, and normally covers between 3 and 5 miles.

For **Concert tickets** and, also, to volunteer to help on the **Christmas Float**, please contact **Kate Evans: rotaryclubwednesbury@gmail.com**.

Obituary

It is with considerable sadness that the Club is mourning the passing of Rotarian Malcolm Johnson, after a long illness.

Having been a stalwart Member for many years, Malcolm's enthusiasm and friendly de-

meanour will be missed by us all.

From day-one of joining Rotary in 2010, Malcolm through himself into being involved in all the Club's activities but was particularly synonymous with his astute running of the Annual Grand Raffle, which has raised significant sums over the years, towards the staging of the Annual Carnival.

However, I am sure he will be best remembered for acting as Father Xmas on the Club's Xmas Float, a role from which he derived so much personal pleasure, at the same time as making so many people happy.

*Malcolm was a good, good, man and we are all the poorer for his passing.
May he Rest in Peace.*

Needless to say, next year's Carnival is already in our thoughts and will be held on **Saturday 11th July 2026 - please put the date in your diary.**

Our thanks again to the support we enjoy from Riverside Housing and, of course, from Editor, Simon Archer, who continues to include our reports in the excellent Darlaston & Wednesbury Life magazine.

Mike Warner
Rotary Club of Wednesbury





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War Paws: Giving a Voice to the Forgotten Animals of War

In every conflict zone, amid the destruction and uncertainty, there are silent victims who are too often overlooked—the animals. Dogs and cats left behind when families flee, strays wandering through bombed streets, and beloved pets separated from the soldiers and contractors who bonded with them during deployment. War Paws exists to be their lifeline and their voice.



Founded with the belief that no animal in any country is more deserving of compassion than another, War Paws in Wednesbury work tirelessly to alleviate suffering and restore hope. While our roots are in Iraq, our reach extends into Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, and other regions torn apart by war.

We step in where few others can, offering practical aid and a compassionate presence for both animals and the people who love them.

Our mission is not only to rescue but also to rebuild. War Paws organises rescue and rehoming efforts, placing vulnerable dogs and cats into safe homes both locally and abroad, including the UK, EU, USA, and Canada.

We are especially proud to support serving soldiers and contractors who want to reunite with

the animals they befriended in war zones—giving both human and animal a chance at healing together.

But true change requires more than immediate rescue. That's why we prioritise education, working with local communities to promote animal welfare, humane husbandry, and responsible ownership.

We implement Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programs to reduce stray populations humanely and carry out rabies vaccination campaigns that protect both animals and people. These initiatives not only ease suffering but also build safer, healthier communities.

At our core, War Paws is a beacon of hope. We believe that compassion should not stop at borders or species, and that even in the darkest places, kindness can flourish. By rescuing, educating, and empowering, we work toward a future where no animal is forgotten, no matter where war has left its mark.

We always need monetary donations which can be made via a number of options on our website and social media.

Social media follows help us as well and we are always in need of toys! Bedding not so much as it's pretty hot in Iraq! Food we can accept for both cats and dogs.





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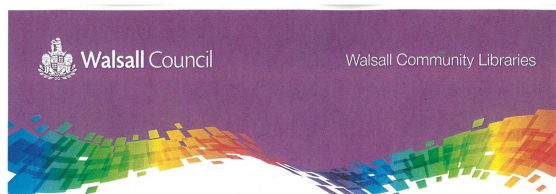
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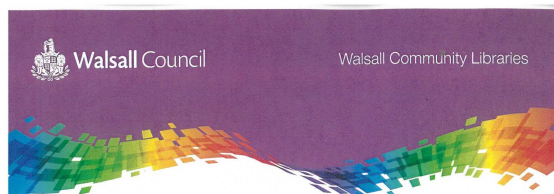
10.00am-10.45am

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Lego Club

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for upcoming dates

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Heidi 07972 530778

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Kids' Page

Can you find the Seven differences between the two pictures?



Why didn't the skeleton go to the Halloween party?
Because he had no 'body' to go with.

What do ghosts wear when their eyesight is bad?
Spooktacles.

Can you find all the spooky words hidden in the grid?



boo
cat
ghost
pumpkin
scary
skeleton
spider
sweets
treat
trick
witch
wizard



SOLUTION



News in Brief

Darlaston All Active Community Shop

Darlaston Town Hall has a new community shop that will open Friday 31st October.

The Mayor of Walsall, Cllr Louise Harrison will be cutting the ribbon on the day at 11.15am.

It will be called the Little Local and will be run by a dedicated team of volunteers and will be open.

The opening hours will be 10am to 1pm Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday and also 5pm to 7pm on a Thursday evening.

Town Hall Manager, Sharon Felton would like to invite members of the community to the open day, which will have fun activities for the family, including face painting arts /crafts etc.

Little Local will offer shopping options to help people save money. Sharon says, "The shop will rely on surplus stock so our stock may vary week to week. We will also be serving hot meals (takeaways) at a reduced cost.

There will be a small membership fee of £2 per person, per year.



Walsall Council pays tribute to the late former Mayor, Doreen Evans

The Mayor of Walsall, Councillor Louise Harrison, and the Leader of Walsall Council, Councillor Mike Bird, have paid tributes to former Walsall Mayor, Doreen Evans, following news of her passing.

Mrs Evans, known as Mrs Farrell at the time, was a member of the Labour party, and was first elected to represent Darlaston South in May 1987.

She served as Mayor of Walsall in 1999-2000 and retired from the Council in 2004.

During her mayoral year, she worked hard to raise funds to support Macmillan Walsall Cancer Care appeal and The Sister Dora Hospice appeal.

The Mayor of Walsall, Councillor Louise Harrison, paid tribute to the late Mrs Evans.



Doreen Evans - Former Mayor of Walsall

"I extend my condolences to the family, friends, and all those mourning the loss of our esteemed former Mayor, Doreen Evans.

"Mrs Evans served Walsall and our communities as a Councillor and later as the Mayor of Walsall over the course of three decades, and this dedication to public service is truly remarkable. "We honour the invaluable contributions she made to our town, and my thoughts are with loved ones during this difficult time."

The Leader of Walsall Council, Councillor Mike Bird also paid tribute to Mrs Evans.

"It is with great sadness that we mark the passing of former Mayor Doreen Evans, who was a dedicated public servant, and whose contributions to Walsall spanned decades.

"On behalf of Walsall Council, I extend our deepest sympathies to Doreen's family and friends. Her legacy will live on in the lives she touched and the positive impact she made on our borough. We are grateful for her service and proud to honour her memory."

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Crossword Answers

From page 10



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Darlaston & Wednesbury Life

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