

LOVE AND OVER Observer



Locally owned, independent, free community newspaper

Thursday, December 17, 2020

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Wishing all our readers A Very Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year!

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A Community Christmas

WITH Christmas just around the corner, there is still much uncertainty about what families can and cannot do this festive season. Whatever happens, one thing is clear, the communities in Andover and all the surrounding villages are doing everything they can to ensure no one is left out in the cold this Christmas.

A Christmas Drive by local businessman, Andy Lavery to offer some Christmas cheer to local families in need is just one such initiative underway across the town.

Andy's aim is to provide £100 Asda vouchers to those in need. To date, the campaign has raised £7,400 towards Asda vouchers for anyone struggling to buy food or other essentials this Christmas.

Andy shared: "It's certainly not going to solve poverty, but after a really awful year for so many, all I'm asking is that the local business community come together, put their hands in their pockets, and give whatever they can spare for those who have very little. It will mean, at the very least, for that one day of a whole year, they can load their table, forget some of their worries, and celebrate with loved ones."

The pandemic has meant that more children than ever will wake up this Christmas on the poverty line. Last week, Save the Children reported that 60% of families on universal credit have had to drastically cut down on food and other basic essentials, with a third of them relying on charities for food and clothes."

This is not the first time Andy has asked Andover to help, during October half term, the soon to be dad, and Dawn Breakers founder, turned to his Facebook page to encourage friends and local businesses to dig deep. He felt passionately about supporting families after the Government's decision not to support free school meals over the half term. The generosity of the community raised £9,000 in a matter of days, putting food in the mouths of more than one hundred and thirty families.

If you are a family in need and would benefit from receiving the shopping vouchers, you simply need to go to one of the venues during the hours stated along with I.D and proof of address.

In a message to anyone thinking the vouchers could help their family, Andy said: "Please don't be embarrassed to ask for help, just pop in and get your voucher. No questions asked."

Vouchers will be available on: Friday 18th December from Dawn Breakers HQ: 20 Burnel Gate, West Portway, SP10 3SL between 11.30am -3.30pm; Saturday 19th December from Andover Aesthetic Practitioners; Reasons Fitness, 1 Parnell Court, East Portway, SP10 3LX between 8am -1pm; Sunday 20th December from Canto Gelato, 25 High Street, Andover SP10 1LJ between 10am - 2pm.

Local businesses who have been involved in the 'Christmas drive' include: Andover Radio/Love Andover; Clarion HQ; Dawn Breakers; Enhanced Networks; The Carpet Cleaning Lady; Kingsmead Wealth;

Multax; Quilter Financial Advisors; Ranson and Houghton Solicitors; SunLife and Web Squared Limited.

The Andover community has also pulled together to support twenty eight families in the Crisis Centre this Christmas.

Local woman Tania Hall, reached out to her home town to support families living in the Crisis Centre this December to try to make Christmas magical for those in hardship.

Tania originally set up the Andover Baby Clothing Exchange in Janu-

ary to collect unwanted clothes and baby equipment to donate to other families as well as "doing their bit for the planet."

Tania explained: "Due to the pan-

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ANDOVER College's Performing Arts department have showcased their talent and skills in a new way; live and virtual, fitting to suit our times. This year's pantomime, Beauty and the Beast was live streamed for all to watch through YouTube.

The annual pantomime is an event all those at the college look forward to each year. The pantomime is now available to watch on YouTube for the general public, local schools, students and staff at the college. Read all about this festive performance on page 28.

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Portland House, 55 - 57 High St,
Andover, SP10 1LP

Editor

Audrey Lucy
01264 883151
editor@loveandover.com

Accounts

01264 883100
accounts@loveandover.com

Sales

Ben Tuffin
01264 883100
ben@loveandover.com

Sharon Dewey

01264 883100
sharon@loveandover.com

News

01264 883100
news@loveandover.com

www.loveandover.com

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Rainbow book features local siblings' stories

LIKE many parents in the spring, mum Sadie Bryant from Andover was struggling to find fun and interesting things for her children to do during lockdown.

Sadie told Love Andover: "I found an author called RA Powell on a Facebook page who was offering a creative writing course and decided to get my two, Finley and Belle, involved.

As part of the course, they both wrote a story, 'Rainbow Puppy' was written by Belle and 'Mo and his Magnificent Mountain' was Finley's story. They then entered the Rainbow Writing Competition, which Mr Powell ran over the summer. Belle gained the highly commended award in her age category."

12-year old Finley who is in Year 7 at John Hanson and 10-year old Belle Bryant who is in Year 6 at Balksbury Junior School took part in the course and then won a competition to get their stories into print.

Sadie added: "When the lessons and the competition were over, RA Powell contacted the parents asking if we would be interested in putting all the stories together to form a book. I thought it was a fantastic idea. It has been very exciting seeing the book come together these past couple of months. Me and my husband could not be prouder of our two little published authors. A massive thank you to RA Powell for bringing the idea to life."

Finley and Belle's stories are featured in the new book which is published this week called Rainbows During Lockdown. It's a collection of 58 rainbow-inspired tales written during



lockdown by children as young as four from across the world.

Proceeds from the book will help raise money for charities that help vulnerable people during Covid-19.

Sadie concluded: "We are aiming to raise as much as we can for these two fantastic charities that have worked so hard during Covid-19 to keep vulnerable people safe."

Mr Powell shared: "I really enjoyed reading Belle and Finley's stories; they are both different and offer their own unique take on the rainbow theme. Belle's story is incredibly sweet and touches upon losing a beloved family pet, while Finley's story is set in Peru

and shines a spotlight on greed and unsustainable tourism. It has been a real privilege to work with them as they have been receptive to feedback and open to suggestions during the editing process, which are important qualities for any aspiring author."

The book is released by Blossom Spring Publishing and is available online at Amazon and at Waterstones. 100% of the author's royalties are being donated to ICUsteps, the UK's only intensive care patient support charity, and School-Home Support, a charity which helps families living in poverty to ensure their children are in school and ready to learn.

Walking home for Christmas

ON Saturday morning two local councillors were out walking for charity.

Cllr Nick Matthews and the leader of Test Valley Borough Council, Cllr Phil North embarked on a 12-mile trek from through the Bourne Valley, ending up at the village of remembrance, Enham Alamein.

The effort was to raise money for the veterans charity Walking with the Wounded. TVBC Armed Forces Champion Nick Matthews shared: "Six of us completed just over 12 miles from Coombe Gibbet to Enham, on the Test Way route. Donations are still coming in, so not yet sure of the total amount the team has raised, but expect it to be a very worthwhile amount."

At the time of going to press, almost £200 had been raised.

Further donations can be made to the charity which supports disadvantaged military veterans and their families, the charity says they "Empower veterans to regain their independence, thrive and contribute in our communities."

Further donations can be made through the website www.walking-homeforchristmas.com.

Participants at Coombe Gibbe



Festive initiatives connecting the community

Continued from the front

demic and money becoming even tighter, our services have been in great need. This Christmas we decided that we wanted to make Christmas magical for those in hard-

ship, so we put together a Christmas appeal to support the families in the crisis centre and in our community. It's been a great success and we are truly grateful for all the donations we have received."

The group is supplying parcels to

twenty eight families in the Crisis Centre and hoping to support fifty families in total by teaming up with the Christmas Cracker project run by RCS. They are taking donations up until Christmas, so if you wish to help by donating new gifts for children

and adults, any non perishable foods, Christmas coins or small selection boxes then please contact Andover Baby Clothing Exchange.

You can read about many other local community initiatives inside today's paper.



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Council leader slams proposals for new asylum seeker site in Test Valley village

THE leader of Test Valley Borough Council has slammed a government proposal to place a facility housing up to 500 asylum seekers on the edge of the village of Barton Stacey, near the busy A303.

The site would be located on Ministry of Defence land and would see asylum seekers, primarily young men, who have come into the UK on boats from the continent, staying in portacabins while they wait for their applications to be processed.

The council understands that Barton Stacey is one of the sites government is currently considering and they are expected to make a decision in the next few weeks.

Leader of Test Valley Borough Council, Councillor Phil North, said: "I completely understand the argument about disincentivising dangerous channel crossings facilitated by criminal gangs of people smugglers, but whether you think this country should house more asylum seekers or not, putting these individuals up in



temporary buildings akin to an open prison is the wrong accommodation in the wrong location. Apart from some dining and basic recreation facilities, there will be absolutely nothing for them to do. There are few places I would consider less appropriate for a facility of this nature and it concerns me that this would even be considered.

"With no substantial facilities in the vicinity, occupants of the camp will almost certainly want to access the A303 road services on foot. This represents a significant highway danger in them walking on land adjacent to the

road and in the carriageway itself. In my view, this is unacceptably dangerous to both the travelling public and the asylum seekers themselves. Many of whom will no doubt be tempted to walk to Andover to use the facilities in the town. Again, it is almost certain that they will seek to use the most direct route, which is the A303 itself. I would also suggest that with poor accommodation and easy access to the road network, many of them will abscond anyway and slip into the black economy.

An influx of 500 young men in a village with an existing population of just 1,000, would have an overwhelmingly detrimental impact. In other similar facilities this has led to an increase in anti-social behaviour and criminality.

Test Valley Borough Council has a good track record of supporting the Home Office, including through its active engagement and participation in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. It is right that this country houses its fair share of genuine refugees and taking them

directly from the camps rather than encouraging people smuggling is the right way to do it. It's our fear though, that because these individuals have arrived by nefarious means that there will be significant community tensions."

Cllr North added: "I have already written to the Immigration Minister, Chris Philp MP, setting out, in the strongest possible terms, the many arguments against this proposal. I have no doubt that local residents will be hugely concerned and I wish to reassure them that they have my full support in fighting this.

"o that end, the local MP Caroline Nokes and I have started a petition to try and get the Home Office to change their mind. I'd be grateful if you would consider adding your name to show the strength of feeling locally."

You can sign the petition at www.change.org/p/home-office-don-t-place-sub-standard-asylum-seeker-accommodation-at-barton-stacey

Transformation planned for BMX Track

TEST Valley Borough Council is proposing to transform the car park at Charlton BMX track to enhance the facility for visitors.

At a cabinet meeting, council chiefs unanimously agreed to back the work, which would include surfacing the part of the car park that is currently unsurfaced and installing new lighting and an automated gate.

The car park is used by a variety of clubs and groups, including the athletics club, BMX riders, the sports academy, hockey and rugby players and Andover parkrun.

TVBC is also working with Andover Football Club, which is owned by the authority, to explore the possibility of further increasing the number of parking spaces for community use to help tackle the issue of insufficient spaces at peak times.

The project will go to full council in January for final approval.

Leisure portfolio holder, councillor Ian Jeffrey, said: "These works will be great news for all those who use the site. The BMX track car park is popular with a variety of clubs and this will help to enhance the experience for visitors.

The proposal to increase the number of spaces for community use would hopefully provide welcome relief for all those who struggle to park at peak times."

Life Saving Equipment Legacy



THE Dawn Breakers family has raised £8000 for vital life saving equipment.

The sad passing of a young woman in Andover moved eighty local people to take part in twelve hours of HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training) classes. All individuals were sponsored raising around £8000 to provide four new defibrillators for Andover.

Andy Lavery, owner of Dawn Breakers told Love Andover: "A girl died a couple of years ago at a gym down the road, and she almost certainly wouldn't have done if a defibrillator had been available. There was lots of red tape to get them up but we're finally there. Thousands more people are now able to get a defib in seven minutes or less. This is a proven timeframe that saves

lives every day.

We run the same event every year, this was the latest cause. We've raised over 100k to date for local good causes."

The new locations where you can find the newly installed defibrillators are: Dawn Breakers HQ- 20 Brunel Gate, West Portway, SP10 3SL; King Arthurs Hall- King Arthurs Way, Andover, SP10 4BS; YMCA Andover Nursery- Smannell Road, Andover, SP10 6YG; Picket Piece Social Club and Village Hall- Walworth Road, Picket Piece, Andover, SP11 6LY.

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Stagecoach helps to connect families

STAGECOACH has announced their Christmas and New Year services for buses across Hampshire.

Stagecoach has been working with local authorities around the level of local bus services required for travel over Christmas. Passengers are advised to plan ahead as some routes may be busier than normal, particularly with reduced capacity on train services and engineering work impacting some rail routes. Christmas timetables are now available at stagecoachbus.com.

A Saturday service will be in place from Monday 21st until Wednesday 23rd December with some extra services in certain areas please check the website for details.

Thursday 24 December will be a Saturday service with last buses at about 8pm, please check our website for the last bus details in your area.

Friday 25th Christmas Day – no buses.

Saturday 26th until Monday 28th December - Sunday services.

Tuesday 29th until Wednesday 30th – Saturday services with some extra service in certain areas please check the website for details.

Thursday 31st December – Saturday service with last buses at about 8pm, please check our website for last bus details in your area.

Friday 1st January New Years Day – no buses.

Saturday 2nd January - normal Saturday service.

Sunday 3rd January - normal Sunday service.

Monday 4th January - normal school day service resumes.

Edward Hodgson, Managing Director for Stagecoach South, said: "Our transport services will play an important role in keeping people connected with their

families and friends and making the most of Christmas shopping opportunities. We are reminding people to plan ahead and check before travel. Full details of our Christmas timetables are available at stagecoachbus.com. I would like to thank in advance all my colleagues who will be working to keep people connected over Christmas and reassure customers that we have strict Covid-19 secure protocols in place to allow them to travel safely and with confidence."

Advice for customers: plan and book ahead wherever possible to try and avoid busy times and routes; use contactless to pay for your journey wherever you can; try to avoid making unnecessary stops during your journey; take a face covering to wear throughout your journey and also take hand sanitiser; if you feel unwell or have any coronavirus symptoms, please do not use public transport.

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School looks to the future



Ms Wilden and Senior Prefects

TEST Valley School is looking towards the future as it enters a new era.

Mrs Dean's executive leadership and management of Test Valley School will end on 31 December when Ms Wilden will become the Head Teacher and take on the leadership and strategic oversight of the School, as well as oversight of operational day to day management to provide direct support to parents and children.

Mrs Dean has offered her continued support and expertise as well as the continued support and mentoring from Westgate

School to Test Valley School. Mrs Dean's personal commitment will be formally recognised through her appointment to the Governing Body as an Associate Governor. Mrs Dean and Ms Wilden, together with their colleagues, have moved Test Valley School to being a school that expects great things of its pupils and provides the opportunities and support to enable them to pursue their own personal excellence. This new arrangement will provide the School with further stability during which further development can occur.

Heartbreak for the hospitality industry

IN our last edition, we reported on the plight of the pub landlord and even in what should be the busiest time of the year for our pubs and restaurants, the hospitality industry remains one of the hardest hit of all. There are national calls for a Hospitality Minister to be appointed, led by some well known faces including Hampshire based James Martin and fellow chef and restaurateur Tom Kerridge.

Locally we caught up with Landlady at The Queen Charlotte Inn in Andover, Victoria Harber.

Victoria shared her thoughts: "At the time of writing, I do not know whether Andover will continue to be in Tier 2. Or if we'll be put into either of the other tiers. Either way, anything other than Tier 2 would be best.

As the landlady of a local community pub, not only has three initial months then one following month of 'national lockdown' been hard, it has been exceptionally hard for the past two weeks in the tiered system.

The Tier 2 rules have made it so desperately hard - practically impossible - for many tenanted publicans. At the Queen Charlotte we decided to open, despite the restrictions which included insisting on providing a substantial meal. I now really appreciate that publicans like Alex and Romana Gillies at the Station Inn decided it would be too hard to open. They made a good decision.

I can't explain how difficult it is to encourage customers to this '95% wet-led' pub to come and have a substantial meal just so they can enjoy some aspect of being in a pub. However, I really must thank those customers who have clearly made an extra-special effort to come in and support their local.

The restrictions on not being able to sit with friends and having to eat have made it really untenable, we have to have the lights on, buy perishable stock and provide heating. Even things like having increased waste removal all adds up. These are unseen costs that we have had to endure.

It makes better sense for my pub to be closed than open.

This week I was hit with a £500 bill for having a BT Sports contract, this is their standard monthly charge. They are still charging me, even though we have not been able to open and show what little sport might have been available. I am sure you can imagine my choice words to them after receiving their invoice.

As Alex from the Station Inn said in the last edition of this newspaper, these costs are always there, despite only having the opportunity to service 5% of our normal trade.

It breaks my heart to consider we might have to close this week. We are a community pub and I really feel like I am letting down



Victoria Harber

those limited number of people who have come in to really support us recently. I feel like I've done everything I possibly can to survive and serve our customers, but it's a balance. It's a very real consideration now that the business can't continue if I am to support my family. Or vice versa.

My staff remain on furlough until we have clarity. But that means that in the past few weeks, I have worked every single day almost single-handed with cleaning, serving, cooking. It's mentally and physically draining.

If we were forced to close because of Tier 3 restrictions we would have had better support from the government and financial concessions like rent from the management company EI Group. Being in Tier 2 forces us to run at greater losses than if we were closed.

The late date of the government's announcement just doesn't give us publicans enough time to plan anything; this includes ordering beer and food, even arranging staff to work. Understandably the furloughed staff I would normally use have already made plans for Christmas.

It's gut-wrenching to have to make a decision that my family is better off by the business being closed. I am totally torn between supporting those few, loyal and lovely customers that come in to support our pub, against the realism of losing money."

Phil from The White Hart Hotel on Bridge Street confirmed its temporary closure last week while Lee and Yvonne at the Angel Inn on the upper High Street were told by owners Greene King not to open until Andover is in Tier 1.

Tim Martin, the founder of Wetherspoons told talkRADIO this week: "Politicians love to regulate pubs. That's possibly because politicians are dinner party goers and pubs are the antithesis of a dinner party. Shutting pubs and bars makes zero difference."

Mr Martin who created Wetherspoons 41 years ago and controls the John Russell Fox pub in Andover added: "It's a financial disaster, 600,000 people in the hospitality sector have already lost their jobs."

Kit Malthouse MP commented: "It's sad to see local pubs going through deeply challenging times, they are the fabric of our communities, and we've got to do everything we can to save them. I've long been a campaigner for our locals - be it pushing for beer duty freezes or business rates holidays. We've given a huge amount of help to local businesses during the past few difficult months, from grants to furlough to loans. Just this month we announced a one-off £1,000 grant in December for pubs that do not serve food. Hopefully this support will all add up and help and I'll keep working with my colleagues to see what more we can do for our pubs."

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Cooper's hair raising cancer crusade

LOCAL boy Cooper Ritchie-Green has achieved his goal of donating his hair to Little Princess Trust, while raising over £800, and counting, for Macmillan Cancer Support in the process. His mum, copywriter Beth Ritchie, tells his story in her own words.

"Cooper has always been 100% true to himself. Never one to attempt to fit in with the crowd, his family and best friends love him for his kindness and sensitivity, as well as his often comic eccentricity.

So when he came home from school back in early 2018 and said "did you know that you can donate hair to make wigs for kids with cancer?" I knew we were on the cusp of a Coop crusade.

The Little Princess Trust said that they struggled to find donations for their longest wigs, so from the outset Cooper was determined to grow his hair to their longest required length.

Cooper never really cared what his hair looked like, looks don't define people for him. But even without trying, Cooper's long hair did become a huge part of who he was, simply due to logistics! His football coaches at Andover Town Youth FC had to start carrying hairbands as part of their kit bag just in case Coop forgot his. But he only really put it up for playing football, preferring just to let it do its own thing, the perfect metaphor for Cooper's own approach to life.



The hair had to be washed and dried and divided into ponytails. Cooper's step mum, Roxanne Watts from Escape Beauty, gave him his new hairstyle after me and his dad, Stevan Green, had each cut off a pony tail.

Cooper's hair has been donated to Little Princess Trust, but he chose to have monetary donations go to Macmillan. Like many families, we have witnessed far too much cancer, and his grandad is currently living with it.

Cooper maintains that he never experienced any negativity about his long hair, even when he started year 7 at Winton in September. But there is no doubt that doing this has forced him to stand out from the crowd in a way that has been hard for him. When I asked Coop for a quote for this piece, he said, "Don't let other people put you down about what you want to do." I think this is advice that we can all try to live up to."

Cooper is accepting donations to Macmillan at his just giving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/cooperritchie-green>



If only we could have had a £1 donation every time someone had mistaken Coop for a girl in the last few years, we would have probably doubled our fundraising! None of us, Coop included, were ever perturbed by it though. Cooper is so comfortable in his own skin that he often wouldn't bother to correct people when they'd got it wrong.

Eventually his hair reached the 36cm he was aiming for, so last weekend, Cooper had his hair cut for the first time in nearly three years.

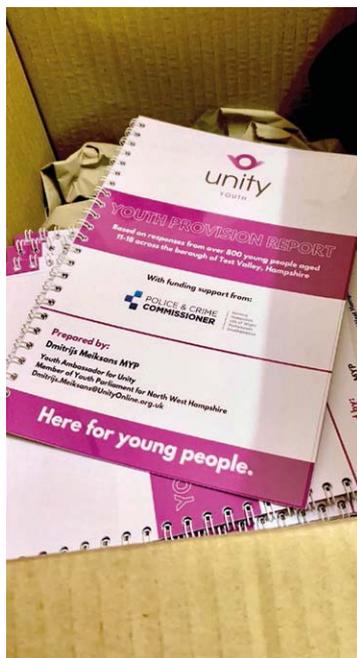
Valuing the voice of youth

UNITY Youth, a service provided by local Test Valley charity Unity, listened to over 880 young people after launching its youth provision survey in late September

The pioneer behind the Test Valley Community Helpline launched the survey late September, welcoming all young people aged 11-18 across the Test Valley borough to voice themselves on a number of issues that matter to them as well as share their ideas on a number of topics. The survey reached 883 responses from local pupils across Harrow Way Community School, John Hanson Community School, Winton Community Academy and The Rookwood School in Andover as well as The Mountbatten School in Romsey.

Dmitrijs Meiksans, Youth Ambassador for Unity and Member of Youth Parliament for North West Hampshire said, "We are absolutely thrilled with the result of the survey. This is just the first step we are taking to ensuring that the young people across Test Valley are listened to and that their voice is valued."

All of the responses have now been collated together in a 13-page youth provision report which has been distributed to Councillors, Members of Parliaments, decision-makers across the borough and beyond, to provide them with an idea of what young people think about existing provisions and opportunities, whether they feel safe within their communities and what they want to see in the future



in terms of activities, opportunities, events and youth support.

"The report is packed with evidence to support that young people do not feel listened to or catered for in the local communities around them," he continued, "Young people need the adequate opportunities, facilities and services to grow up to be confident and mature individuals of society. However, it is extremely reassuring that a majority of young people surveyed felt safe within their local community and when using local public transport."

The report, which can be

accessed by members of the public by visiting www.tinyurl.com/UnityYouthYPReport, found that 55.7% of young people surveyed did not think that there is enough for young people to do in Test Valley, with 430 of the young people surveyed saying that they disagreed with being listened to by local people in power, that being Councillors, MPs and Headteachers. It also saw 689 young people saying that they were not involved in any community/charity activities in Test Valley, and a further 730 saying that they did not volunteer. 495 young people also said that they want to do more in their community.

Terry Bishop, Chief Executive of Unity, said, "Unity would like to thank the participating schools and all the young people who have taken time to complete this survey, as well as the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for funding this project. We are delighted with the number of responses received. This snapshot will enable us to review the needs of young people across the borough and will help us to determine how we can address some of the concerns highlighted. However, it is not all gloomy and to see some of the positive comments is refreshing and it is equally important that we highlight that Test Valley is a very nice place to live."

Unity Youth wish to undertake more surveys in the future, to compare findings and identify further gaps than those identified in the report.

Christmas Menu

all served with a scoop of gelato or whipped cream

Crepes... £6.80

Santa's Mince Pie
Mincemeat filling, honey & shortbread crumb finished with a slice of orange.

Festive Cranberry
Cranberry compote, biscuit crumb and a dusting of icing sugar.

A Christmas Orange
Fresh clementines and warm chocolate sauce.

Glass of fizz... £6.00

2 Scoops of champagne sorbet served in a wine glass with fresh lemon & brandy snap

Subject to availability

Milkshakes

Gingerbread Man
Raspberry Pavola
Rum & Raisin
Red Velvet

£4.20

Waffles...

The Ambassador
Crushed Ferrero Rocher, chocolate sauce and chocolate curls.

£6.80

The Christmas Tree
Snowy white chocolates sauce, sweet decorations and finished with an edible star.

Christmas Spice
Cinnamon waffle crushed ginger nuts and chocolate sauce.

All served with a scoop of gelato or whipped cream

Expansion for one councillor's portfolio as another resigns

HAMPSHIRE County Council has announced the Cabinet portfolio for Recreation, Heritage, Countryside and Rural Affairs.

Councillor Edward Heron will be expanding his Countryside and Rural Affairs portfolio at Hampshire County Council to include Recreation and Heritage.

Councillor Keith Mans, Leader of Hampshire County Council, said: "I am delighted that Edward will be taking on a greater role in the County Council's Cabinet adding Recreation and Heritage to his role of Countryside and Rural Affairs. He brings a wealth of experience and expertise to this portfolio."

Councillor Heron was first elected to Hampshire County Council in 2009, representing the now Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge division. He was appointed to the County Council's Cabinet as Executive Member for Countryside and Rural Affairs in 2018. He is also a member of New Forest District Council and the New Forest National Park Authority.

Councillor Heron said: "I am delighted to be taking on this expanded role on the County Council's Cabinet and look forward to continuing the excellent work for Hampshire residents, undertaken across the Recreation, Heritage, Countryside and Rural Affairs portfolio."



Cllr Heron

Councillor Heron's latest role follows the resignation of Councillor Seán Woodward from Cabinet position as Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage.

Councillor Woodward, who has been a member of the County Council since 2005 left his Cabinet position with immediate effect this week, citing personal reasons and pressure of work. He will remain a County Councillor.

The Leader of Hampshire County Council, Councillor Keith Mans said: "I have accepted the formal resignation of Cllr Seán Woodward from his role on Cabinet. I wish to thank Seán for his support to my Cabinet."

HIWCF tackling fuel poverty this winter

THE Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Foundation (HIWCF) has launched the Surviving Winter 2020-2021 campaign to help tackle fuel poverty for older and vulnerable people struggling to keep warm at winter time.

The Surviving Winter Campaign is asking those in receipt of the annual Government Winter Fuel Payment to donate their payment if they are able to do so, to help those less fortunate.

As temperatures begin to drop leading most of us to boost up our heating thermostats, older residents in our communities need extra support. For people living within limited financial means, they simply may not be able to afford to top up their electricity meter to keep warm or they may be anxious about using their cooker to heat food, due to fear of the gas bill arriving on the doormat. Choosing to keep warm may mean using finances needed for groceries or medicine.

Surviving Winter grants are distributed through our key partners Citizens Advice Hampshire and The Footprint Trust Isle of Wight to help vulnerable people to stay warm, eat well and remain mobile during the coldest months, including practical assistance to travel to medical appointments or assistance with shopping for essentials.

Grant Cornwell MBE, HIWCF Chief Executive commented: "The Surviving Winter Campaign relies on generous donations from the public, where we ask residents in Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight to either recycle their Government Winter Fuel Payment if they are



able to, or to make a much needed donation to support the campaign. Last winter the campaign raised almost £16,000 from donors who felt inspired to help older people living in fuel poverty in our local communities."

Grant continued: "It is shocking to think that people in our communities may have died because they could not afford to heat their homes, with figures showing that 1,682 more people died across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight during the coldest months, and National Energy Action reporting that about 30% of excess winter

deaths were likely to be attributable to the impact of cold homes on people with respiratory and cardiovascular disease. This winter, the Covid-19 pandemic will pose a real challenge because many older people will be isolating or shielding at home to stay safe, making it more important than ever that we help those who are struggling financially to keep warm."

To apply for a Surviving Winter grant and for more information about the grants, please visit Citizens Advice Hampshire's website on www.citahants.org.

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Cafe elves busy creating magic

By Ella Palmer

EMMA and Danni, who set the 'pay it forward' trend in Andover this September have been busy behind the scenes making up Christmas hampers and Children's stocking fillers for Andover local families who may be struggling this December.

Danni shared: "The 'pay it forward' idea has been phenomenal. The scheme allows people to pay for a stranger to have a hot meal and drink. We have been able to provide meals to people that otherwise wouldn't eat, packed lunches to children of families that have felt the crunch from Covid, provided the homeless with sleeping bags, tents and camping equipment. Anyone can access the pay it forward vouchers at the counter in the cafe. If it wasn't for all of you amazing beings, we wouldn't be able to make this happen. I would personally

thank each and every one of you that has donated towards our projects. Every small contribution has collectively impacted the lives of many others less fortunate."

As part of the 'pay it forward' project, which proved to be very successful, the sisters have been busy fundraising to make up the hampers and buy children's gifts for those who may need a bit of help and Christmas cheer.

Emma added: "Christmas is a stressful time of year for lots of us, this year has been especially difficult and there will be lots of people really anxious about Christmas and how they will afford to fill the cupboards and put gifts under the tree for their children. We have been overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity of the lovely people of Andover and beyond. We realise there are many people struggling at the moment due to being isolated, loss of employment and health issues. This year has been a roller

coaster ride for all of us and we would like to give back to the community who have supported us in our many ventures. We would like to help anyone who may be struggling this Christmas with a hamper of food or small gifts for children."

If you or anyone you know are in need of help this Christmas head down to 'The Bridge Cafe' on Bridge Street, Andover, Monday - Friday from 9.30am - 2pm. Alternatively you can contact them on their Facebook page.

If you would like to donate to the Christmas hamper appeal, they are collecting non perishable food items, gift sets and children's items. These can be dropped off at the Bridge Cafe or contact them to arrange collection.

Emma concluded: "We would like to thank everyone from the bottom of our hearts for all the love and support this year. We hope you all have a wonderful and safe Christmas."

Extreme adventurer battles the elements

AS we approach Christmas our thoughts are with determined local man Jordan Wylie.

At the time of writing Jordan is cur-

rently anchored off the North Coast of Scotland waiting for a weather window, which seems to be a common theme for Andover's extreme adventurer.

Jordan started his 2,000 mile world record attempt to be the first person in the world to Stand-Up Paddleboard (SUP) around Great Britain, in July. This is a complete circumnavigation of the country - a journey which consists of over 3,200 kilometres of paddling.

To date Jordan has paddled over 2,300 kilometres after he left Wallasea Island in Essex on 26th July 2020, if he makes it to John O'Groats which is looking very likely, he will write history as the first person to have 'Stand-up paddled' from Land End to John O'Groats by open water alone.

An exhausted but determined Jordan told us, "The challenge is lasting much longer than I ever anticipated, to be honest I hoped I would be home before the end of 2020 but the relentless

British weather and winter climate is making it extremely difficult for me to make progress up here off the North Coast of Scotland.

I take positives in that I'm over half way and every paddle stroke takes me a bit closer to home but it's very tough being away from my daughter during the festive period but hopefully I'm inspiring lots of people through the spirit of adventure in these tough times that we are all having this year.

I would like to say a big thank you to everyone in Andover for their continued support, especially those awesome ladies at Angel Call Handling who have been with me, sadly not literally, from day one!"

Jordan will continue paddling through the festive period and hopes to be finished by late February or early March and he said the first thing he's going to do is get a good night's sleep then head to The Boot at Shipton

Bellinger for a Sunday Roast with his daughter.

Jordan is a former British soldier

and bestselling author. He is one of the stars of the Channel 4 programmes Hunted and Celebrity Hunted.



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Believe in the Magic of Christmas

THIS Christmas, Andover Rocks has been busy collecting donations to make up Christmas boxes for those who may be spending Christmas alone.

Paul Williams, Andover Rocks team member started the Believe in the Magic of Christmas project a few months ago. Marie Ponting, founder of Andover Rocks told Love Andover: "Paul's idea was to reach out to those feeling isolated and lonely this Christmas. He feels everyone should have something to open on Christmas day, as there are many who go without year after year.

December is a month where mental health can really be affected so the hope for the project is to put a smile onto a few faces and let people know that they are not alone and somebody, somewhere cares. With many generous donations from the amazing Andover community the Rocks team have accumulated over 38 boxes filled with all sorts of goodies and delights for both male and female recipients.

Rocks would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy Christmas and remind all that "in a world where you can be anything -be kind!"

Trio of national awards for radio station

ANDOVER'S local radio station has once again been recognised with three national awards.

The prestigious Community Radio Awards awarded the station three out of three accolades.

Former Winton student Luis Wyatt was recognised in two categories, including the uppermost award of Gold for Best Male Presenter. Andover Radio's Love Bus community project was a further award winner.

The annual Community Radio Awards recognises the best of almost 300 radio stations across the UK. In 2019, local singer-songwriter and Andover Radio host Alex Krupa won a Bronze Award for his country music programme at a lavish event in south Wales.

The event, hosted by BBC Radio's Sam Day who was last year's Gold Award winner said, "Luis has a really nice quality to his voice, full of energy and enthusiasm. He has a big career ahead of him. This was an excellent entry."

The annual Community Radio Awards recognises the best of almost 300 radio stations across the UK. In



2019, local singer-songwriter and Andover Radio host Alex Krupa won a Bronze Award for his country music programme at a lavish event in south Wales.

Luis commented: "Community radio is the only medium that can truly connect with its audience because it understands its needs. To be a part of keeping people company over this tough year has been a pleasure. Thank you to Andover Radio for giving me a platform to support the community."

18-year old Luis is a student at the Global Radio Academy media school in London. Luis is known for hosting radio programmes and events like the 2019 Christmas Lights Switch-On in Andover as well as his frantic Dancing in the Street videos, dressed as Superman, during the ini-

tial lockdown period.

Last year Luis hosted a special Christmas Day breakfast programme with local extreme adventurer Jordan Wylie, who is halfway through completing his world recording breaking attempt to 'Stand Up Paddle Board' around the British Isles.

The #LoveBus project was recognised for its ongoing support work around the Test Valley with a Bronze Award in Community Development Project of the Year.

Introducing the award presentation, Sam Day said, "This is about giving people a voice. It is so essential during this Covid-19 pandemic, people have really needed local radio - well done to everyone for keeping going in the face of adversity."

The #LoveBus project is part-funded by the National Lottery and provides 'detached youth work', identifying people who fall outside a normal education and support system and it was also



an essential part of the Love Andover Isolation Group at the start of the pandemic, assisting with the collection and delivery of prescriptions to the area's vulnerable.

The #LoveBus continues to act as a central point of support and help with a variety of projects to engage with people who may, through no fault of their own, be isolated from society's usual support structure.

Andover Radio founder David Harber said, "I am overwhelmed by the volume of great work that comes out of our offices every single day. To be recognised for our community work and quality of product for the second time in two months with now four national awards justifies my sense of pride in the team at Love Andover HQ."

Andover Radio also won the Best Community Group award from the Ben Cohen StandUp Foundation in November.

Andover Radio director Ben Tuffin added, "I am just pondering what I will write in my Grammy acceptance speech. Luis absolutely deserves his award. I can't wait to see him on stage hosting the national event next year."

The management team at Love Andover HQ wants to give its thanks to all staff, supporters and volunteers that make the organisation a multi-award-winning social enterprise.

Carols on the doorstep

PEOPLE from around Andover stepped out of their front doors last night, Wednesday 16th December to sing festive songs.

Carols on the Doorstep was a national effort to link radio stations across the UK to play festive, singalong songs to cheer people up after a torrid year. The event was arranged locally by Sarah Gisbourne from Love Andover FamilyLife. Sarah said: "We asked people to download lyrics from our website and tune to 95.9FM Andover Radio to singalong to the tracks. Some were carols like Good King Wenceslas and some were more popular songs like Merry Christmas Everybody by Slade. It was great to hear so many people taking part across the town."

The national event was to help raise money for mental health charity Mind. The special broadcast on Andover Radio concluded with a Christmas message from Chris Porter, senior minister at Andover Baptist Church.



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In Finding Andover We Found Home

HAVING relocated from Surrey last year, new Andover residents Julia and Mark Taylor-Weir have discovered a fresh joy in the town and are enjoying all that Andover has to offer.

Julia shares their story: "It all started on the Easter weekend 2019. Mark, my husband, had been very busy with work and fancied a change of scene for the holiday weekend. Being the organiser of the family, I went into mission mode to look for somewhere we hadn't been to before and that wasn't too far away.

We really enjoy woodland and trail walks and there was an area of outstanding beauty called The North Wessex Downs near Newbury that we hadn't previously explored. It happened to be near the 'Downton Abbey' house too so I could get a glimpse of that whilst we would be there – very exciting! Our normal place to stay would be a Premier Inn – does what it says on the tin and is very reasonably priced. So that's what we did... On that weekend we also discovered THE Greenham Common – Mark was very excited about that!

We ended up having such a fantastic time and really enjoyed the area which made me wonder what sort of costs would renting a place there be. I was amazed at what you could get for your money compared to what we were used to! It got me thinking, maybe it was time for a fresh start. After having closed my local kitchen



and bedroom fitted furniture design company the previous year, nothing now was holding us to Sutton in Surrey where we were then living. As long as Mark could get into the City for his work we could essentially go anywhere. And so my new mission began...

I started with Newbury, but that wasn't very practical as the trains went to Paddington which meant we would

need to get the ticket that went across London too which then started to make the saving in rent not so viable. We knew this was the area we liked, but I needed to find somewhere with a direct train link into South London...and that's when I found Andover. Turns out you could get even more for your money here. A three bedroom house for less than we were paying for our one and half bedroom flat!

I continued to do my research and decided yes this could be the place for us, so we came down for a day trip. We immediately felt very comfortable, the town had a lovely feel about it, lots of local shops – which I feel very passionate about - lots of local pubs – a big must! And so much character.

I started looking at house options, and organised a day of 'viewings'. As the day went on I started to get disheartened, none of the places felt right and yet I was sure this was the place we were meant to come to. We got to the last property, it felt a bit better, ticked most of the boxes.....we then went for a little wonder around the property area on Galahad Close after the viewing. The grass area was a nice, good play area for the local

kids and then we spotted a gate across the way not clearly showing what it led to, so we decided to investigate... it took us to Anton Lakes! That was it! What a hidden gem!

Within four months of that Easter weekend we had moved to Andover. The day we moved in so many of the neighbours came to say hi, asked if we needed any help. We felt so welcomed. This was so different to anything we had experienced before.

The town was great, just a twenty minute walk from the house. We would walk through the lake and people would say hi to you as you walked past – I love that!

There was a new leisure centre that you could swim at for a very reasonable price; its own theatre - we saw a Genesis tribute band there which was excellent; a cinema; great choice of supermarkets - what more could we want?

Within a few months we got the puppy we had planned for, now that we had a garden and lived in an area with such open spaces and I worked from home doing admin work, that plan fitted in perfectly. Through walking Jasper, our Welsh Springer Spaniel, I got to know some wonderful dog walkers who we would often meet for a walk together and give the dogs good interaction. Again, we felt so welcome.

We settled quickly, absolutely loving the area. At weekends we would get our OS map out and explore different areas - and pubs!

One of our favourite places to take

Jasper is the wood at Little London. But there are just so many places and trails to be explored! The views around here are also just stunning and then you would get to see a kite or two soaring so elegantly above you. It has opened a whole new world for us and we are absolutely loving it!

In September there was a classic car event in the town centre, this sounded fun and Jasper was old enough to go into town by then – although of course he wanted to say hi to everyone! It was there that we came across the local radio station. How great was that! I made a note of its station and just loved it! They played such a different variety of music compared to the mainstream stations and then I discovered 'The Mystery Year' program every weekday morning at 9am. What a brilliant idea! I do love my music and would play a long every day at home – not always getting the year right but enjoying the process anyway. Occasionally I would message in if I was definitely sure I knew the correct answer. Then leaving the radio on in the background for the rest of the day.

On Guy Fawkes night we came into town with some friends we had made through our dog walking community. We had such a fun night, so many people came out for it! There was such a sense of community. The fireworks were stunning! Gave the new year ones in London a run for their money that's for sure!!

The estate where we live apparently hasn't got the best reputation, but we have not experienced any negativity at all. In fact the complete opposite. One night just before 10pm we had a knock at the door, it was one of our neighbours – but not one we really knew – he obviously knew what car we drove and was letting us know we had left our lights on! How good is that?

Mark does a lot of trail running and was very pleased when he discovered there was a local trail running organisation, Andover Trail Events, and has volunteered on their races. I enjoy having my nails done as a treat now and then and found this lovely local company, Lunula Nail Boutique. I am now a regular customer!

We have enjoyed living here so much over the past 15 months that we decided to put down roots. We are now in the process of buying a house in Picket Twenty. We are excited about what the future holds and look forward to getting more involved in the Andover community. Thank you for making us feel so welcome! The Taylor-Weir's have landed!"



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Residents encouraged to recycle firs and give something back



ENHAM Trust in Enham Alamein opened its 26,000 strong Nordmann tree field to the public to pick and purchase their Christmas tree on Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th December.

To mark the occasion, Enham's Sadie Iveson and Kerrie Morley got into the festive spirit and took on Elf duty ensuring the trees were spruced up and ready for picking.

All proceeds will go to supporting disabled people to live, work and enjoy life through the charitable work of Enham Trust, providing supportive and accessible environments for people to live, personalised care promoting independence and access to activities, education and employment, resulting in self-fulfilment and achievement. When you're done with the tree, you can return it to Enham Trust who will recycle this into mulch for their gardens.

Enham Trust Head of Garden-

ing and Domestics Nigel Sully said: "We're thrilled to be able to open up our field to the general public and help bring some Christmas cheer into homes at the end of an incredibly challenging year. We have confidence in our COVID secure measures and the proceeds from all tree sales go to helping us fulfil our mission of enabling disabled people to live, work and enjoy life by continuing to provide our services to the thousands we are honoured to support every day."

Enham Trust will mark its centenary in 2021, 100 years after its incorporation following the Great War, as the first village centre for the medical treatment and training of ex-servicemen suffering from the effects of amputations, neurasthenia and shell shock.

To find out more about what's happening at Enham Trust, head to their website www.enhamtrust.org.uk or follow them on social media.

Children plant commemorative walk in community woodland



BETWEEN 16th - 27th November, Andover Trees United held their ninth annual Tree Planting Fortnight in Harmony Woods. Two weeks of tree planting that has been established in the Andover school calendar since 2012.

During the fortnight, twenty one British native standard-sized, about 10ft tall, trees and 250 small hedge-row trees were planted by ten school groups plus volunteers from the community. Three schools brought along and planted around twenty trees they had nurtured in their school nursery beds since last year.

Andover Trees United were able to buy 26 standard-sized trees thanks to a grant from The Tree Council. These trees have been planted to create a British native tree walk, or arboretum.

On Saturday, December 5th, in National Tree Week, a Whitebeam was added to the arboretum in dedication to the whole community, and was planted by the ATU youth team, supported by the Mayor, Cllr Hatley.

Some schools have dedicated their arboretum tree to someone special - and the arboretum itself is dedicated to all the lives affected by the 2020 pandemic. ATU founder, Wendy Davis shared: "The planting of the community Whitebeam on the 5th symbolises a time to reflect on the year, the generosity and kindnesses of community, and the lives lost and lives changed over

the past year."

Ten schools made their way to Harmony Woods over the planting fortnight. Another sixteen schools will join the ATU team in the New Year to help add more whips, young trees, to the hedge, supplied by The Woodland Trust, and to hang their own special labels on their arboretum trees, taking the total number of trees planted up to the yearly total of 1000.

In spring 2021, the arboretum will grow even further with the creation of a wildflower meadow and chalk scrape, scraping back the top layer of soil to reveal the bare chalk earth beneath, encouraging a diversity of chalk-loving plants. Chalk wildflowers will be sowed in the centre of the looped walk, and the pond will be extended.

Wendy concluded: "Now that the new arboretum is taking shape we can't wait to see how it will look in spring! We hope the local community will keep coming up to enjoy and look after it, too. A huge thank you goes out to all the lovely volunteers who planted the special trees for the schools that couldn't join us over the two weeks and whose hard work has ensured that the fortnight was a great success."

If you're interested in helping out, please get in touch via volunteers@andovertrees.org.uk. No prior experience of tree planting is needed, all will be explained and participation is free.

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Special Star Set To Shine

By Sara Gisbourne

THIS December, Jupiter and Saturn will put on a show for skygazers that hasn't been seen in approximately 800 years. Astronomers are calling it the Great Conjunction of 2020. On December 21, coincidentally the winter solstice, the two largest planets in our solar system will appear to almost merge in Earth's night sky.

Jupiter and Saturn will align so closely in the night sky that they'll

almost appear to collide from our vantage point here on Earth, creating a radiant point of light often referred to as the Star of Bethlehem or the Christmas Star.

To catch a glimpse of the phenomenon for yourself, make sure you have a clear view to the southwest about 45 minutes after sunset. The planets will be at their closest on Dec. 21, but the Christmas Star will be visible from anywhere on Earth for about one hour after sunset in the northern hemisphere for the entire fourth week of December.



If you're viewing with a telescope, you may also be able to see Jupiter and Saturn's largest moons orbiting them that week.

The next Great Conjunction this close won't happen until March 15, 2080, so be sure to take a peek out your window for a brilliant Christmas treat!

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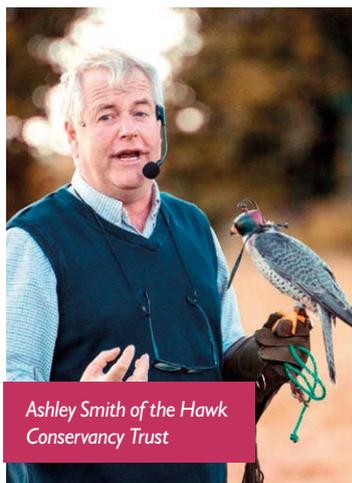
Father's vision for Conservancy Trust

THE son of a bird of prey charity founder says his father's vision could be the key to helping the organisation survive.

The Hawk Conservancy Trust, which undertakes conservation and research work throughout the UK and overseas, usually raises much of its money through the operation of its visitor centre near Andover in Hampshire but this year's lockdown periods and ongoing operational restrictions have led to a drastic reduction in the number of visitors able to purchase tickets.

Thinking hard about ways to address the shortfall, Ashley Smith, son of the Trust's late founder Reg is hoping the solution lies with the legacy of a wildflower meadow planted at the Trust in memory of his father 25 years ago.

Ashley explained: "We've reached a point where we have to do something unusual for us and appeal directly for support. We have a really supportive community who



Ashley Smith of the Hawk Conservancy Trust

have left us the answer with the wildflower meadow created in his memory."

Instead of just appealing for donations, Ashley and the team have devised a campaign to offer people the chance to adopt a plot of Reg's Wildflower Meadow. Supporters can become a Guardian of the Meadow, choosing their plot from among the six areas named after the wildflower species that thrive there and form the backdrop to many of the spectacular bird flying displays. Individuals can adopt for themselves or as an ethical gift and each plot holder will receive a certificate and inclusion of their name on the Guardians' signage. There is also the option to fundraise for a plot or simply club together with friends and family to share this together.

Adopters will be helping to preserve the future of the Trust so it can continue its renowned conservation, research and educational work to protect the world's bird of prey populations.

Created in 1995, the seven-acre meadow is an integral part of the visitor experience. Serving as a display arena and highlighting the importance of wild habitats and biodiversity for birds of prey, it has become a special place for many people - whether it be for memories of watching beautiful birds fly across the wild flowers; the setting for wedding photos; or a place to remember time spent enjoying nature with a loved one.

More information on the Guardians of the Meadow appeal and online adoption options can be found at www.hawk-conservancy.org/support-us/meadow-appeal.

have recognised our work to conserve birds of prey over the years, of which we're really grateful, yet we have never been in a position to feel forced to simply ask people for money to secure the future of the Trust. It was almost a revelation when I realised my father may



Wildflower meadow at the Hawk Conservancy Trust

Exploring Harmony Woods

By Graeme Davis

HARMONY Woods is part of the Jubilee Woods complex found on Augusta Park. The project to create a new community woodland started in 2012 by Andover Trees United. Outside Harmony Woods are more trees planted by Hampshire County Council.

The woodland has been planted using mainly deciduous native trees by school children and other community volunteers. The plan for the woodland is to have woodland glades, and the grassland has been planted up with native wildflowers. At the moment it is very young and open to the elements with grassland. This has attracted many meadow butterflies and birds like skylarks and grey partridge. It is not unusual to see a barn owl or kestrel overhead looking for a tasty treat. Many of the tree



guards have created refuge for harvest mice.

There is a fairly new small pond on site which has attracted dragonflies like emperor, broad-bodied chaser and black-tailed skimmer, as well as being a regular waterhole for House Martins.

Butterflies using the site include the marvellous black and white, marbled whites, meadow browns, small tortoiseshells and gatekeepers. There is also a nice selection of members of the blue

family of butterflies, like common blue which takes advantage of the large amounts of red clover on site, more recently the rare small blue has tried to colonise the site. Kidney vetch, its food plant, has been planted on a chalk mound to create suitable habitat to encourage this very rare butterfly to Andover. Sometimes, confused with butterflies, you might see burnet companion and mother Shipton moths which also fly during the day.

Tree planting to fightback against climate change



Some of the Sustainable Overton team volunteers planting trees donated by the Woodland Trust

By Ken Mackenzie and Alison Zarecky

TREES are our most powerful warriors in the battle against climate change. They lock up carbon, fight flooding and cool our cities. But there are simply not enough of them. The borough of Basingstoke and Deane, together with the whole of the UK, desperately needs more trees in order to hit the Government's 2050 carbon net zero target.

Sustainable Overton volunteers, who are the climate change community group set up last October by Overton Parish Council to combat climate change, took a positive step to make that happen, by spending Saturday

afternoon planting a new mini woodland at Sapley Lane Recreation Ground, Overton. This was made possible with the help of the Woodland Trust, the UK's largest woodland conservation charity, in their Big Climate Fightback campaign to get 50 million trees in the ground. Community groups and schools can apply for free tree packs for planting in their communities.

Ken Mackenzie, chair of Overton Biodiversity Society, shared: "Community efforts such as this are vital for raising the profile of woodland in Overton Parish and National Tree Week was a great time to do it. We look forward to more tree planting in the Parish and would like to thank the Woodland Trust for supplying the trees and tree guards and the volunteers for doing the hard work!"

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Kids set to eat for free throughout December

ASDA has today stepped up its support for families across the UK by offering children the chance to eat for free in its cafes throughout December.

All 216 of the supermarket's cafes are taking part and will provide children under the age of 16 with a meal completely free of any charge when accompanied by an adult. There are no minimum spend requirements or restrictions on the number of children in a family or group that can take advantage of this offer.

Asda expects to serve around 215,000 free meals to children from its cafes during December and is offering hot and cold menu choices such as fish fingers, chicken nuggets or sandwiches – all served with a drink and a piece of fruit.

Andover's Asda store is found at Anton Mill Road, SP10 2RW.

The free meals for children is part of Asda's Christmas kindness campaign, which aims to support local communities during difficult and unprecedented times.

Richard Dent, Asda's Vice President for Fresh Food said: "We know that it's been a really difficult year for families across the UK with many having to turn to food banks and local community groups for support which



is why we want to support as many children as we can during the festive period by offering them a meal in one of our cafes.

"I'm really proud that through our Fight Hunger Create Change programme, we are able to continue to support our local communities, especially at this time of year."

Earlier this month, Asda announced it would be providing an additional 1 million meals to support local food banks and charities over the festive period through its transformational Fight Hunger Create Change partner-

ship which supports both the Trussell Trust and FareShare.

The donations will primarily come from Asda's back of store donation programme which sends food to local charities and community groups and in addition, Asda's 387 Community Champions will also make donations on behalf of the store to their local food banks.

The retailer is also asking generous customers to support their local community by picking up an extra item and donating it to the food bank collection trolley in store.

Support for residents over Christmas period

TEST Valley Borough Council is urging residents to contact their local support groups early if they require help during the Christmas period due to coronavirus.

Across the borough, community groups have come together in response to the pandemic to pick up medicine, deliver food and run other errands to assist residents who are clinically extremely vulnerable or self-isolating.

Those who will need help over the festive period are being asked to speak to their support groups now to arrange deliveries to enable volunteers to organise their resources and plan around shop and pharmacy closures.

Anyone who isn't sure who to contact can call the Test Valley Community Helpline on 0330 400 4116 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, and they will put them in touch with their local group. This helpline will be open up to and including Wednesday 23 December.

Between Thursday 24 December and Sunday 3 January, anyone who requires urgent food or prescription

deliveries can call the Hampshire Coronavirus Support and Helpline on 0333 3704000, between 9am and 4.30pm. The Hampshire helpline will be open for emergency calls every day except for Christmas Day.

Leader of Test Valley Borough Council, Councillor Phil North, said: "I'd just like to reassure residents that if they require urgent help then they will be able to access it. But this is simply to make people aware that if they know now that they will require support to access food or prescription collection soon because they are isolating, then they would be best to request it before Christmas when it will be much easier for volunteers to assist."

I can't thank everyone enough for helping to look after their vulnerable neighbours and local communities during the pandemic. You have all made a massive difference to people's lives at an incredibly worrying time. Hopefully it will be a much brighter picture as we head into the new year with the vaccine being delivered across the country."

LOVEANDOVER
Observer

Got a story?
01264 883100

Andover families benefit from food voucher scheme

THERE will be a helping hand for over 34,000 vulnerable children, young people and their families in Hampshire this Christmas as we implement a food voucher scheme. It will be delivered in partnership with nurseries, pre-schools, childminders, schools and colleges during the school Christmas holiday and February 2021 half term week.

The scheme aims to help those facing hardship because of the COVID-19 pandemic and it is being funded from a £2.89 million grant from the Government's Department for Work and Pensions as part of a planned programme of supportive measures over winter.

The vouchers will be available to: all families whose children are eligible for free school meals; children being supported by a social worker; children receiving early help services from the County Council's Family Support Service; 2-4 year olds accessing childcare and eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium, or 16-18 year olds who were previously eligible for free school meals.

Councillor Patricia Stallard, Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People, said: "By introducing a food voucher scheme, we aim to ensure that no Hampshire child goes hungry over the Christmas and New Year holidays. I am also pleased that we have sufficient funding to provide vouchers to our care leavers and young carers.



Education providers will be the distributors of the vouchers. Each household will receive a voucher per child worth £15 per week, which can be used at a range of supermarkets. The scheme will help feed over 34,000 children in Hampshire. Additionally, we're providing schools and colleges with a discretionary grant fund. These grants will help support families who may not be immediately eligible for the voucher scheme but find themselves struggling financially; for example, where a parent has lost their job due to COVID-19. Schools can use these grants to help families with food and other

essential items, such as energy cards/tokens to pay fuel bills.

I would like to thank all our education providers for helping us to reach those in need of this support. They know their children, young people and families best so are far better placed to distribute the vouchers. With their assistance, we can help to ensure that vulnerable children don't go without necessities like food and heating over the winter."

Families who may be facing financial difficulties this Christmas are encouraged to speak to their early years or childcare provider, school or college in the strictest of confidence.



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For further information

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or see our posts on Facebook

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Santa Claus is coming to town



By Sarah Gisbourne

SANTA knows that 2020 has been a hard year and wants to assure the children of Andover that he is on his way and plans on being in town this week to give everybody a festive wave.

Santa is planning to climb aboard his sleigh and cruise the estates of Andover on Thursday 17th, Friday 18th, Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th December to offer some festive cheer and a big Christmas wave.

With some much needed help from his friends at HMG Coatings and NE Electrical, there are four planned

routes covering over thirty miles of sixty four Andover residential roads.

Santa hopes the children of Andover will come out wave hello as his sleigh is towed around the estates by his Santa truck. With lots of lights, Christmas tunes and maybe even some snow, he is hoping it will help put everyone in the festive spirit.

Much to the delight of many local families, Santa successfully completed his trial run around Picket piece on the evening of Friday 11th December.

You can keep up to date with the latest Santa news in Andover on his Facebook page, Santa Claus is coming to Andover town.

Families enjoy festive wreath making

By Sarah Gisbourne

FREE Family Christmas Craft Workshops took place in the Upper Guildhall on Sunday 13th December with Andover local artist Kaz Trinder.

Local families gathered together, and enjoyed learning how to create their very own paper wreaths to adorn their homes over the festive season.

Kaz Trinder shared: "We were treated to a wonderful setting in the Guildhall for learning to make Christmas paper wreaths. Whilst the Test Valley Brass band below the window played Christmas songs, families of all ages enjoyed spending time together creating the most amazing wreaths to hang back home. What a lovely way to spend what was a very wet Sunday."

Local Andover Mum, Natalie Vasey, who took part in this activity added: "The children – and adults – had a lovely time and are so proud of their wreaths. Thank you. Have a wonderful Christmas!"

This was one of the Christmas events organised by Test Valley Borough council this year.

For more local events please visit the event section online at loveandover.com.



Local Church Christmas Celebrations

By Sarah Gisbourne

YOU can once again attend places of worship in all tiers. The rules on who you can meet with whilst at places of worship will depend on your tier so it is important to check the rules for your tier.

Between 23 and 27 December, you may also attend a place of worship with members of your Christmas bubble. This applies in all tiers.

Local church Christmas celebrations in Andover include:

Andover Baptist Church: Live on their YouTube, At Andover Baptist Church you can enjoy Carols by Candlelight on Sunday 20th December at 8pm and on Friday 25th December, you can tune in

at 10.15am to, Is there light at the end of the tunnel?

St Mary's Church, Andover will also be enjoying a Carols by Candlelight Service on Sunday 20th December, and you need to sign up for everyone in your household who will attend this event taking place at St Mary's Church.

Join St Mary's Church on YouTube for Andover's big Community Christingle service on Thursday, December 24 at 4pm.

If you would like to attend St. Mary's Church for a traditional Midnight Communion service on Christmas Eve, you must book in advance and also to join in on the Christmas Day service at 10am on Friday 25th December.

St Paul's Church & Community Centre, Smannell Road, Andover

will be celebrating Christmas Eve online with a Christingle service at 4pm live on YouTube. This will be followed at 11.30pm when they will be holding a Midnight Mass service online via Zoom, live and interactive.

On Christmas Day, 25th December, they will be celebrating in person when you will need to pre-book your households/ bubbles to join them at St Paul's at 10am. They will also be online at the same time.

At the time of going to press, Andover was in Tier 2 but as guidelines and Tiers are subject to change, please check the current government guidelines and visit the events section of our website, LoveAndover.com for more local Christmas services and events in Andover.



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No return to sender for one local Elvis

THERE will be no 'Return to Sender' on the week running up to Christmas as Andover Radio has arranged for Elvis to deliver Christmas gifts to some special people in Andover.

Local man David Wiltshire has offered his Elvis stylings and is working with the Love Andover Elves to distribute a variety of unique festive goodies to people who may be unlikely to have family visit them on Christmas Day.

72-year old David is a huge Elvis fan and rarely turns down an opportunity to dress and perform as The King, or to help people in our local community.

Known as 'Lovely Elvis Wiltshire from Hampshire', the former builder with R Mouldings & Co, has agreed to put on his Blue Suede Shoes and join the troupe of Andover Radio Elves to be a Good Luck Charm to people in Andover who may face this Christmas alone.

Several times a day starting next Monday, Elvis and his Elves will be out with the Love Andover #LoveBus to distribute some special gifts to people in and around Andover. The popular local septuagenarian has agreed to serenade and supply people with 'surprise' gifts each day from Monday 21st December



until Christmas Eve.

"We already have a special list of special people who have relied on the Love Andover Isolation Help Group this year," says Community and Events Manager Sarah Gisbourne. "We think that a personal appearance from Elvis and his Elves bearing gifts from our #LoveBus will really cheer them up."

The #LoveBus and the Isolation Help Group are community projects, part-funded by the National Lottery and 95.9FM Andover Radio, with the aim of reducing social isolation.

"There are far too many people who will spend Christmas alone," adds Sarah who runs Love Ando-

ver FamilyLife. "We want to give them a meticulously planned, but ultimately unexpected appearance from The King, along with a specially arranged bounty of lovely things ahead of Christmas Day.

Victoria Harber, organiser of the Love Andover Isolation Help Group added: "We already know a few people that would love a special treat ahead of Christmas. I know it would make their Christmas just to know that others are thinking of them. There must be others we can help put a smile on their face next week."

In an effort to reduce the feeling of a 'Blue Christmas', if you know someone who – for whatever reason – is going to be alone on Christmas Day – and would appreciate a little 'we're thinking of you' hamper – please contact us with details on loveandover.com. Closing date is Friday 18th December.

Hamper contents will be specially prepared by arrangement, will be pre-agreed and will – of course – satisfy government guidelines and respect privacy, if required. Logistics mean not everyone nominated will receive gifts. Andover Radio will be in contact with those they are able to offer to visit.

Andover Christmas Tree Festival

By Sarah Gisbourne

OVER 70 Christmas tree blanks were distributed amongst nearly twenty local schools and nurseries in and around Andover for decoration and display until the end of term for their pupils to enjoy.

Participating schools include: Abbots Anne CE Primary School, Andover CE Primary School, Anton Junior School, Appleshaw St Peter's CE Primary School, Roman Way Primary, Vigo and Endeavour School.

The schools have taken film and photographs of the decorative process and they have now been collated into an online gallery and video montage, which can be viewed on the Test valley website

Leader of Test Valley Borough Council, Councillor Phil North, said: "Local schools have risen magnificently to the challenge of creating their own bespoke decorated trees, and I am looking forward to them sharing their endeavours with us online. It is an excellent way of linking the schools to the wider community and sharing in some festive fun."



Community Spirit High In Thruxton

THE residents of Thruxton once again showed their community spirit by hosting two special events at the weekend. On Saturday a group of local residents donned their festive outfits and took to the streets to raise money for the Charity <https://england.shelter.org.uk/> as part of their Big Walk Campaign.

There were Santas, Elves, dogs and even horses out on parade as the locals wandered around the village listening to festive tunes.

Event organiser Richard Smart shared: "I've never dressed as an elf before as frankly I don't have the figure for it, but it was great fun and the villagers once again donated a staggering amount of money for such a worthy charity as Shelter. The Andover Food



Bank is also dear to our hearts and it was great to see how many festive treats were donated along with essential food and hygiene products. The generosity of the residents of Thruxton never ceases to amaze me and since lockdown started in March we have raised a little over £16,000 for worthy causes.

Thankfully the weather was kind as were the amazing residents of Thruxton who donated £200 to the cause. Throughout the weekend residents also donated items for the Andover Food Bank which will hopefully make Christmas a little brighter for families in our wider community.

Let's just hope we all have a merry Christmas and that 2021 brings happier times."



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95.9FM ANDOVER RADIO

GRANT FRANCIS AND THE MORNING CREW

Five things to do during the school holidays in Andover



By Sarah Gisbourne

HERE are five things we think you shouldn't miss out on doing this Christmas half term in Andover with your children.

A Very Andover Christmas Hunt: Hidden around Andover Town area, there are 24 Christmas images. They can be found in local shops and businesses.

Your task if you choose to accept it, is to find them all. This is a just for fun free event that we have set up for you to enjoy over the School Christmas holidays with your family.

Visit Andover Museum: Andover Museum and the Museum of the Iron Age will be open Thursdays to Saturdays 10am – 4pm and Sundays 10am – 2pm up until 20 December, then open again on 29 to 31 December, Saturday 2 January 10am – 4pm and Sunday 3 January. Families can try a free coin spotting trail around the museum.

Free tickets can be booked via their website for a two hour visit at [www.hampshireculture.org.uk/andover-](http://www.hampshireculture.org.uk/andover-museum)

[museum](http://www.hampshireculture.org.uk/andover-museum).

Andover Heritage Trail: The Heritage Trail highlights some of the town centre buildings and streets that have played a part in Andover's history. Follow the trail using the leaflet and explore the streets and living history of the town from the Iron Age to the present day with a few stops in between. You can enhance your experience by downloading an accompanying audio trail. Visit the Test Valley website for further details.

Go for a walk: Graeme Davis has written us some articles on some great places to visit in and around Andover, these include: Harewood Forest; Ladies Walk; Anton Lakes Nature Reserve; Rooksbury Mill. These can all be found on our website loveAndover.com or you can read Graeme's latest article on Harmony Woods on page 13.

Christmas Eve Magic: On Christmas Eve at 6pm stand on your doorsteps and ring a bell or sing a festive song for two minutes to spread Christmas spirit and to help Santa fly his sleigh.

Let's end 2020 with a bit of Magic, Hope and Togetherness!

Official Hampshire school holiday dates are Monday 21st December – Friday 1st January, but several schools are taking the Friday before as an inset day or finishing early, so check with your child's school.



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From everyone at Love Andover HQ, we wish you a hopeful Christmas; we wish you a brave new year.

It has been TOUGH this year, and boy has it been tough for our wide range of local businesses. However, we think the companies, organisations and the people of Andover have been amazing through these most difficult of times. When we embarked on the new 2020, we all had hearts full of hope and opportunity; always trying to improve on what went before. And then came the growing noise of a horrible virus. A virus which changed our lives significantly. This meant that for many - for the very first time - they needed assistance, help and support, whether emotional or financial. Even the most successful of local businesses could feel or forecast the pain and strain of managing costs while purchases from customers were either significantly reduced, or in many cases removed completely. All while, often,

the hard costs of operating a business simply remained. In our beautiful part of Britain's green and pleasant land, here on the Hampshire Wiltshire border, we believe that our local businesses showed a kind of wartime resilience. A strength and commitment in harsh conditions. They learned to change and adapt or indeed just 'accept' with an "It is what it is" mentality. We even saw new enterprises like the Geek Emporium start-up - proving Andover's toughness in difficult times. This very newspaper was borne out of the Covid-19 pandemic, it exists to provide a way for our community to communicate. We must all communicate, share and learn. Today we continue to publish 5,000 copies of a free local newspaper, a newspaper with a commitment to promoting all that's good in and around our town. And we do this exclusively by promoting the work of - and with thanks to - our amazing advertisers.



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The companies listed on these pages are among the many who have seen-off adversity and understand that marketing a company is an essential constituent to a successful business.

Of course, this has happened at a time when simple continuation of operation was made much, much harder - let alone the immense uphill struggle to find ways to grow their business. Andover has a much higher than national average of local businesses around the high street area, which is why at Love Andover HQ, we consistently promote the need to #ShopAndover. These businesses really are the backbone of our society. Need your boiler fixing? Nigel at DJ Harris is your man. Need flooring? Then Simon and Scott at Options will help. If your cat looks at you in a funny way then John at Anton Vets will instinctively know the reason why. Supporting our local businesses has never been so important; the success of these businesses relies on you using them. Rather than stating any

detached economic statistic in the millions of pounds, please allow us to be emotionally subjective: If our local businesses fail, it's peoples' livelihoods, their homes and their families that are affected. We see the pain and anguish on the faces of businesses owners every single day. And, for them to get through this year's agony, we say "To the businesses who have been operating in town for decades - and to our newcomers - we salute you". We genuinely share the pain you have been going through. Whereas we have no doubt that some businesses have actually ended up doing rather well from government grants distributed by Test Valley Borough Council, in practically all cases of business owners we have spoken to, the grants (if deemed eligible by the council) barely scratched the 'surface of the surface'. It's with that in mind that we wish to thank and congratulate these shops, stores and businesses; as consumers we need you. In this last week before Christmas, we implore you to #ShopAndover.



Merry Christmas!

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We need our local businesses. You may read an annoyance of negativity from a limited number of local keyboard warriors (we can name them) who complain that Andover has "little to offer".

The reality is, if we – as consumers – do not use these local businesses, there genuinely will be nothing available; boarded-up stores in empty streets. However, don't be trolled by the inaccuracies of the few. If you care to investigate the number of 'closed' businesses in Andover, it's not our feisty local businesses that fail, it's the big national retailers. It's not even a circular argument, we consider it a simple solution: The local economy, the local businesses within it and the families that own and run our local businesses need you as a customer. Andover really does have a large array of businesses on offer. In this last week, towards the Christmas period, we'd like to think many of the almost 70,000 people

who live in our area will spend a little extra with a local business. 'Every Little Helps' as one massive brand will tell us, and they started as a small market trader. Even to the casual observer, the sheer resilience and commitment of SME's (Small Medium-sized Enterprises) through the Covid-19 pandemic must be worth a show of appreciation. Whereas a round of applause may be appreciated, a ringing till will make a genuine difference. Many of the businesses you see on these pages offer help, advice and guidance you simply cannot get from buying product online; they are experts in their field and the success of their business is based on providing a sense of satisfaction that goes way beyond your debit card payment being cleared. Simon at Andover Patio Centre and Monique at Infinity Care are prime examples of this, they don't just want your custom, they care passionately about your custom.

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From a backdrop of extreme difficulty, we do see some light ahead. Although the opportunity may not be immediately obvious to many, we believe in the power and strength of our local companies.

Constantly changing government rules, unclear guidance and the resulting cautiousness of shoppers will all combine to prevent any easy growth for businesses, but as we have already uncovered, many businesses are astonishingly irrepresible.



We fully acknowledge and appreciate those who are dipping into their business (and personal) savings, taking out loans and suffering to just keep going - all to serve the growing number of people who live in and around our wonderful town. We believe in the willingness and goodwill of the majority of people who live in Andover to support our local businesses, we believe in the commitment and strength of our local companies and we fully encourage a greater effort to #ShopAndover in the coming year. To our local businesses, through this Love Andover Observer newspaper, the loveandover.com website, the hugely powerful series of Love Andover social media platforms and our local radio station 95.9FM Andover Radio, we remain committed to supporting, encouraging and assisting with the use of our local shops. As local MP Kit Malthouse explained to us after the first national

lockdown, "It really is a case of 'Use them, or lose them'. We hope that you, together with us, we will make a special effort to #ShopAndover and buy from our brilliant local companies who have been through so much just to survive to ensure Andover's economic success for the future and help protect our local business owners, their livelihoods and families.

We think that the lyrics of Greg Lake's song set to the background of Troika from Prokofiev's Lieutenant Kijé expresses our feelings for you all after this difficult this year:

*I wish you a hopeful Christmas,
I wish you a brave new year.
All anguish, pain and sadness,
Leave your heart and let your road be clear.*

David Harber, founder Love Andover



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The changing face of the high street

ANDOVER BID is championing a campaign for local people to think before they buy and to shop local and support its businesses. Working with Andover businesses, BID has produced a short Christmas video telling people all that is good about the town centre, in addition to a series of ALSO (Andover Local Shopping Online) and ALSO extra videos, together with Discover Andover, a short presentation to show people that as well as visiting the town centre, they can buy from local companies on-line or click and collect.

Andover BID has also established InAndover, a comprehensive website for the town where all these videos can be viewed.

Andover BID's Steve Godwin explained: "The Coronavirus pandemic has made this year one of the most difficult trading periods for businesses large and small. Despite this and the challenges presented, businesses have rolled up their sleeves, adapted their business models and made their businesses COVID-19 secure for all our safety. This alongside government support has protected millions of jobs and livelihoods and businesses are the backbone of our country, creating economic growth and employing millions of people. Small businesses make a huge contribution to our country and it is vital today even more that that we support them on the High Street and online. We are reminded that they are the lifeblood of our communities and it is important we celebrate and support them all year round as they are the key to helping the country to build back stronger by creating jobs and growing the economy. Christmas and the next few months will be difficult for small businesses as we continue to work to control the virus over the winter and ensure that we all stay safe."

With small retailers and local businesses employing over 60% of people in the UK, now more than ever we as a community need to support local communities and businesses. With small to medium-sized organisations making up the largest number of businesses in the UK (5.9million) and the retail sector being the largest employer, providing the highest

turnover, it's clear that now more than ever we should be supporting local, independent retailers.

Andover Town Centre has so many amazing local businesses and here are some facts that you may not be aware of.

Buying local boosts the local economy: When spending with local retailers, the money stays in the local community, which means other businesses and people in the area benefit. If you spend online with large retailers, or buy from large corporations, the money tends to go elsewhere, and it isn't reinvested into the local economy. According to research by the CLES (Centre for Local Economic Strategies) for every £1 spent in local businesses, 63p is invested back into the local economy, where only 5p is reinvested when shopping out of town or online. Remember the main reason for spending local is community and helping empowering others to give back.

Unique & Original Products: Independent retailers often make their own unique products, or stock products from other independent creators. If you want to have your own unique sense of style, or you want to get a unique gift for someone, then shopping local is the way to go. This will give you more choice and variety than you might normally get in large retail chains.

Better deals: Local businesses are created by people with passion, a passion for entrepreneurship, a passion for growth, a passion for local communities. They care about the people in the area and aren't always focused on numbers like you'll find with large corporates who must report to a board of directors, or shareholders.

You'll find most local retailers are just as competitive as large retail chains, plus, you can normally haggle on price with independents, which is not something you can do online or in a chain store. Check locally before you go online when sourcing products.

Create local jobs: SMEs accounted for 60% of employment and 52% of turnover in the UK at the start of 2019. By supporting local businesses, you are also supporting the local community. Small and independent

businesses also tend to pay more on average than their larger counterparts. More jobs in the local area also attracts more investment to the area as people have more disposable income, this can mean more stores, restaurants, parks etc.

Personalised experiences & customer service: With local retailers you can get a personalised shopping experience. Owners here tend to learn more about their customers and help when they can. They are also able to offer advice on what to buy, or even order in unique sizes, colours, or options just for you. It's very unlikely you will walk into a big retail store and have someone know you by name.

Keeps the markets competitive: Local retailers add more competition to large multinational retailers. Supporting local retailers and keeping them in business means more competitive pricing, better quality goods, and better shopping experiences. Without this competition, bigger businesses become complacent, services suffer, and prices increase.

Encourages entrepreneurship: By shopping locally, you are encouraging entrepreneurship. When others see the success of smaller retailers, it inspires others to try to do the same. With advancements in technology.

Share/support business on social media: Do you have some favourite local businesses that you've enjoyed using, some local retailer that you've found some great gifts or products at? Give their Facebook, and other social media accounts a follow and share with your friends and family, this will help grow their exposure. Encourage them to shop local too, so they can also help in the effort to support local businesses.

Are you a small local retailer or business? Share other local businesses and make sure to support others in these times too, it really does go a long way. At such a difficult time it is important that we pull together as communities and try to boost those around us. Rather than try to get ahead of the competition we should be providing help and guidance where we can.

Give an online review: Another tool that can help when limiting

social contact, give your local favourite shop a review online, that could be on Facebook (or other social media platforms). This can be useful for those businesses who are able to sell their goods and services online.

Andover has over 100 independent local town centre businesses and that number is growing with new enquiries all the time. Watch in the new year for details of new businesses opening.



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First customers enjoy new Romanian supermarket

ANDOVER residents have welcomed Magazin Alimentar to town.

You can visit the newly opened Magazin Alimentar on Union Street, for all Romanian packed goods, including; meats, vegetables, frozen goods, in addition to foods from across Britain and other countries.

A warm welcome to yet another new Independent business in town. Anna and Nik are the only specialist Romanian Supermarket for miles, bringing a unique taste to town with Magazin Alimentar.

Business owner Anna Rosep said: "There is a real demand locally and as far away as Salisbury Winchester and Basingstoke. We are delighted to be in Andover and have found local people of all nationalities really helpful and friendly.

Andover Bid's Steve Godwin added: "There is no doubt about it, independent business owners are passionate about their vision for the future, Andover is a small market town geographically well-placed within Hampshire, it has excellent road networks and low-cost car parking which makes a great place to make a local investment. The Andover Bid works closely with all of its businesses and supports them in whatever way helps the individual business. We put a lot of resources and time into marketing



the town and encouraging people to shop local and support where they can."

When One Door Closes Another One Opens

By Maxine Hart

REDUNDANCY should be seen as a shift in the current, rather than a drought. A beginning, as opposed to an ending. One thing that might make it easier to see losing your job that way is the help of outplacement services.

If you are an employer, providing outplacement support to the people you're letting go of demonstrates your loyalty and culture – the legacy of which might affect your brand image either positively or negatively depending on how you handle it. The morale of your remaining staff will get a boost when they see that colleagues are given the necessary support when they leave the company.

Outplacement is a support service provided, and paid for, by some employers to help those they're making redundant transition to new jobs.

This is outsourced to experts. They can provide practical advice in the form of training materials and workshops, delivered in a combination of one-on-one sessions and group settings.

Topics covered include: career evaluation; guidance and coaching on potential future career paths – progression, diversion, or retirement; using more



targeted job hunting skills; developing and utilising networks e.g. friends, family, community, and ex-colleagues; CV writing; preparing for interviews; negotiating job offers.

Outplacement programmes should

not be 'off the shelf' but rather built to suit you. They can last for a few weeks or months depending on the requirements and they can help staff at all levels, from junior roles to senior managers and directors.

LOVEANDOVER Isolation Help Group

We are still here to help those most at risk during lockdown.

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Chantry Centre welcomes sustainable pop-up shop

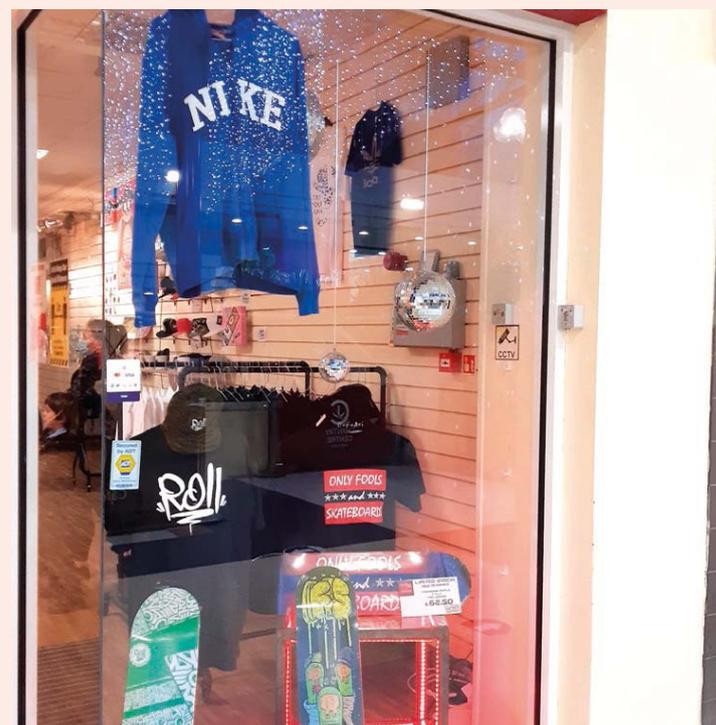
TEST Valley Thrift has opened its doors in the Chantry Centre to offer residents the chance to buy a selection of rare retro and vintage fashion.

With classic styles on offer from top brands such as Nike, Adidas and Ralph Lauren, the pop-up store, which is located just opposite Boswell's indoor seating area, aims to offer people the chance to shop for unique and sought-after items whilst encouraging customers to move away from buying fast fashion and shop more sustainably.

Alongside vintage clothing, the new pop-up shop will also be offering handmade accessories from independent suppliers around the country. This will include contemporary jewellery, household furnishings and trinkets.

Test Valley Thrift plans to work closely with teenagers and young adults in the community, with a view to liaising with creative departments at Andover College.

Owner of Test Valley Thrift Rob Metsoja, comments: "This is a fantastic opportunity to open a shop in Andover, providing great clothes and unique products to consumers. This year has been a very testing time for the nation, but we hope to deliver a lasting impression, improve the choice in our town centre and a chance to connect Andover with other creative outlets nationwide. We very much hope



that customers feel at home and receive a personalised experience within the store."

Test Valley Borough Council has ambitious plans for the future of the Chantry Centre as part of the town centre redevelopment project. In the meantime the council is actively looking at options for the building's under-utilised space. The council operates a flexible

easy-in, easy-out scheme for local retailers who may wish to trial a short term residence in a retail unit and raise their profile in the town before making a longer term commitment.

Anyone interested in a Chantry Centre pop-up shop can contact Colin Hares, at Test Valley Borough Council, on 01264 368000 or email chares@testvalley.gov.uk

Lifestyle Card Supports Tidworth

TIDWORTH Town Council is investing in the Lifestyle Card, a local loyalty card, in a bid to support local businesses and retail outlets.

The Council will purchase 300 cards that will be distributed to the Council's regular hall hirers and to staff in local businesses and shops. It will also encourage residents to purchase the cards via its website so that residents can obtain discounts. A year's membership will be at a discounted rate of £30 from the Council's website.

Discounts from the Lifestyle Card include over 700 local discounts of which many are independent businesses, cinema discounts plus well-known brands such as Sports Direct who offer 10% off all items.

Sean and Fiona Caruana, the owners of the Lifestyle Card company will distribute the cards to Tidworth businesses and retail outlets and encourage them to be listed on the card's website for free.

Mayor Cllr Mark Connolly said "I have been looking for ways in which Town Council could help local businesses and this seems like an ideal way for the Council to invest in the local economy. I would encourage all local businesses to take part in this scheme and ask as many residents as possible to purchase the card from the Council's website so that they can start making savings and boost the local economy."

Sean and Fiona Caruana shared: "We are delighted to be working with Tidworth Town Council in attracting footfall into the Tidworth town centre, as more than

ever, supporting local is paramount. Our cards offer people opportunities to save money covering all aspects of their lifestyle whilst supporting local business. For businesses, we offer a free designated page on our website to increase their visibility and enhance their digital presence, attracting potential customers from our 7000+ members. The only cost to them is their incentive to our members, which they decide upon. We look forward to welcoming Tidworth and district businesses on board. For more information www.thelifestylecard.co.uk"

Kristen Smith, Chair of the Tidworth Chamber of Commerce added: "Now, more than ever, we must unite to support our local economy. Most importantly, local businesses require as much support from consumers within our locality and consumers require value for money whilst working within more stringent budgets. This incentive will be a key driver to encourage spend and increase buying power to further increase revenue efficiency for all concerned, whilst we rebuild our local economy. The loyalty scheme allows for a community to come together and support Tidworth and its district. I would like to thank everyone who has shown their support to date and urge everyone to stay safe and shop local".

Residents of Tidworth can purchase the Lifestyle card at a discounted rate via the Tidworth Town Council site:

<https://tidworthtowncouncil.gov.uk/ttc-invests-to-support-local-businesses/>



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Hampshire Hospitals

Strategic Research Agreement for HHFT

SENSYNE Health and Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust have signed a Strategic Research Agreement.

The new agreement enables the ethical application of clinical artificial intelligence research on anonymised patient data to improve patient care and accelerate research into new medicines.

Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust receives equity stake in Sensyne Health plc and will receive IT research funding and a share of revenues.

The Hampshire Hospitals dataset covers 500,000 unique patient records, with 200,000 annual hospital admissions from a patient population of approximately 570,000 people. The new SRA with the Trust brings the combined total of anonymised data available for analysis by Sensyne to 6.1

million patients. The Hampshire Hospitals dataset includes oncology data that will enable Sensyne to build on its existing research into rare cancers.

Research will be undertaken to the highest standards of information governance and data security in accordance with NHS principles, the UK Government Code of Practice and data protection legislation.

Shirlene Oh, Director Strategy of Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said:

"We are delighted to be joining other NHS Trusts in signing a strategic research agreement with Sensyne Health. This will allow us to ensure that our staff and patients are able to take advantage of the very latest developments in medical technology and treatment. We very much look forward to working together over the next five years."

Andover man donates blood plasma

NHS Blood and Transplant is calling for people from the South East who were in hospital with COVID-19 to donate blood plasma.

Mark Parbery, 54, from Andover, stepped up and is one of the top convalescent plasma donors in the south east of England, with twelve donations so far.

Mark needed hospital care after falling seriously ill in April. During the early stages he was constantly passing out due to a high temperature. The vehicle technician spent a night in Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital before being discharged home.

Mark shared: "I was probably worse a few days later at home though, when I had difficulty breathing. I should have gone back to hospital but I was worried I would never come back out.

I couldn't even walk two steps. I reckon I was breathing 10% of normal. I felt if I could help somebody else, it's got to be worth it. It feels good to donate and

it feels safe. The staff are really good at making you feel welcome."

Mark registered to donate plasma on the NHSBT website and has now become a regular at Southampton Donor Centre.

Donors who received hospital treatment for coronavirus are more likely to have the high level of antibodies needed for convalescent plasma, which could help others in hospital struggling to develop their own immune response to the virus.

People of all levels of illness can donate, including people with minor symptoms but there is a special need for the most seriously ill people to donate as new analysis shows generally they have the highest antibody levels.

NHSBT is taking donations for the plasma arms of the RECOVERY and REMAP-CAP trials.

The trials will determine whether the antibody-rich blood plasma found in people who've had coronavirus could be an effective treatment for general use in the NHS.

Professor David Roberts, NHSBT associate medical director for blood



donation, said: "Our analysis shows people who had hospital care make our best donors. They have the highest antibody levels and their antibodies stay higher for longer. Your body quickly replaces the donated plasma and antibodies and it does not affect antibody levels in the long term.

We are grateful to people who have been willing to donate their plasma. Especially to those who were in hospital and will have had a difficult time this year. By donating, they could be helping to save lives."

If you've had confirmed coronavirus or the symptoms, you can volunteer today to donate plasma at www.nhsbt.nhs.uk or simply search online for 'donate plasma'.

Volunteers called for as local theatre confirmed as Covid vaccination site

LEADER of Test Valley Borough Council, Cllr Phil North has confirmed where the Covid Vaccination Sites are to be located, including here in Andover.

Cllr North explained: "Following discussions with our Clinical Commissioning Groups, I'm pleased to confirm that Test Valley Borough Council will be providing The Lights Theatre in Andover and the Crosfield Hall in Romsey to the NHS as venues for the rollout of the Covid vaccination.

These sizeable venues are needed, especially in the short term, as the early vaccines will need to be stored in fridges and administered to large numbers of people on a daily basis.

To help with the process, we're supporting our community services partner Unity to recruit and manage a network of volunteers to act as stewards at the centres. This support includes a grant of £10,000 to support the volunteer effort.

We've also agreed to provide free

parking in the West Street Andover car park for people receiving the vaccine and will provide free parking permits for those volunteering.

At the moment we have no confirmed date for the commencement of the local vaccination programme as this will be dependent upon the availability of the vaccine.

NHS clinicians have determined which people are to receive the first round of vaccines - and GPs will directly contact those patients in priority groups to allocate appointments. Please wait to hear from your GP. As other vaccines are approved by the regulator and more supplies are received the vaccine programme will extend to more people."

Test Valley-based charity, Unity, is appealing for volunteers to support the imminent rollout of the local Covid-19 vaccination programme.

In association with the Andover Primary Care Network, Unity has been tasked with recruiting an army of volunteers to help ensure

everything runs smoothly, including checking to make sure that people know what to expect when they go in.

Unity is looking for anyone who can spare anything from a few hours during the week or at the weekend, to full-time support in Andover.

Terry Bishop, Unity CEO said: "The scale of this task is almost unprecedented and so we really need the public's support. Our NHS colleagues have given their all to care for us and keep us safe and now it is our turn to step up and help them. If you, or someone you know can spare some time, even if it is just a few hours a week, it would be hugely appreciated. The NHS and all those at risk from the virus really need your support, so if you think you might be able to help then please do get in touch."

Those who are interested in providing assistance can register online at www.unityonline.org.uk or call 0330 4004 116 for more information.

Bad breath?

Why does my breath smell?

Bad breath could be caused by many factors. First try spending longer brushing your teeth and gums at home. Don't forget to brush your tongue afterwards. This can be done with your toothbrush or a tongue cleaner/scraper. After brushing, clean your toothbrush head well under the tap, you can even put it in the dishwasher for a deep clean! Make sure to change your toothbrush head every 2-3 months.

I do try my very hardest brushing and flossing, but I still find that I suffer with bad breath, what else can you suggest?

Factors such as dry mouth, gut health, smoking and the types of food you eat can also affect your breath. If you book an appointment with your dentist or hygienist, they may be able to identify the cause and offer solutions and information on how to eliminate the odour.

For further information, any concerns or to book your appointment with New Street Dental Care, please call 01264 301 301



130 New Street Andover SP10 1DR



Digital Dental Suite

01264 301 301

info@newstreetdentalcare.co.uk
www.newstreetdentalcare.co.uk



Health Matters

Seasonal delivery for Kingfisher ward

By Ella Palmer

STAFF at Andover war memorial hospital's Kingfisher Ward, reached out to the local community to bring some festive cheer for their patients this Christmas.

Due to Covid-19, Andover Hospital is not permitted to have Christmas decorations within the hospital this year. This news came as a disappointment to the staff and they reached out on Facebook, asking the local community for any donations to "help cheer up the patients this time of year."

It wasn't long before Georgie's Florist Reading donated a beautiful tree to sit outside of the ward and in true community style, the crew at Andover Fire Station rallied round to help secure the tree for the ward.

Your Move, also heard of the news and have joined forces to donate a tree and decorations for outside Andover's War Memorial Hospital bringing some festive spirit to Andover's local hospital.

If you would like to offer some sup-



port in decorating other parts of the hospital, including window stickers or anything which is outside to create some Christmas magic for patients and

staff this year then please get in touch with Sandra Nealeon 01264 835278.

Vicky Miles from the communications team told Love Andover: "Unfortunately this Christmas has to be a little different at our hospitals. In order to uphold our high standards of infection prevention and control practices that keep all of our patients and staff safe, we have had to look at other ways to share the Christmas spirit as COVID-19 continues to change how we work."

We are so grateful for all of the support we have received from the local community, the donations of Christmas decorations and even a Christmas tree outside the Andover War Memorial Hospital. We also want to say a huge thank you to Andover Fire Station for their help in safely securing the Christmas tree! It will go a long way to keep some festive cheer going through what is a difficult time."

Covid vaccine progressing at pace

By Kit Malthouse



BEFORE we say goodbye to 2020, I would like to update you on the rapid progress of the Covid vaccine.

We're the first country in the world to approve one and we are rolling it out at pace. The Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth, part of the NHS in Hampshire and Isle of Wight, is one of 50 hubs nationally to begin vaccinating patients.

Some of our local GP practices are taking delivery of the vaccine, and beginning to roll them out, from this week. Nurses, paramedics, pharmacists and other staff are working alongside GPs to carry out this huge logistical task safely - and our immediate priority is to offer it to older people, care home and frontline NHS workers. If you are in a priority group, you will be contacted by the NHS.

Practices are also working together to set up local vaccination centres in surgeries, community centres, and even at Hampshire Court Hotel in Basingstoke. And we will see more hospitals, surgeries and venues offering vaccinations over the coming weeks as the programme ramps up.

We end 2020 with real reason to be optimistic. But until the vaccine is fully rolled out, let's continue to follow the rules and look out for each other. I hope you get to spend some time with your loved ones over the festive period - Merry Christmas!

Celebrating our NHS heroes with Southern Health's Star Awards

LOCAL NHS Trust, Southern Health has announced the eleven winners of its annual Star Awards, a staff recognition scheme to reward teams and individuals who have gone beyond the call of duty and are passionate about providing the best possible service to the people they care for.

In total, more than 500 nominations were received from staff, patients, families and members of the public. A team of judges then had the difficult task of selecting a shortlist of 41 finalists across 10 categories, based around Southern Health's core values - People and Patients First, Partnership Working and Respect.

Andover's Bryony McGinty was named as joint winner in the Chair and Chief Executive Award category.

Bryony, an Occupational Therapist for Andover, Mid & North Hampshire recognised the

team were not providing the best therapy to patients with a motor neurone disease diagnosis and so decided to develop her skills on the condition in her own time. She now sees all MND patients referred to the team - providing personalised and goal-oriented care - and also uses her newly acquired knowledge to upskill colleagues.

Southern Health's Chief Executive, Ron Shields, commented: "Every nomination is a reflection of the compassion, hard work and commitment our staff provide to the people they support every day. I am honoured to lead an organisation with such a passionate workforce that is committed to delivering the best possible care to those who use our services. Of course this year, all our staff have gone above and beyond in their care of our patients and in tackling the threat of coronavirus and I am immensely proud of each and every one of them!"



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Arts & Culture

The show must go on...

ANDOVER College's Performing Arts Students have been intensively rehearsing since October for this year's pantomime performance of



Beauty and the Beast which brought many of the college's departments together to work on the show. The Performing Arts, Music and Dance students have been working together on various parts of the performance and Stage Management students were in charge of controlling the set design, lighting and sound for each of the three shows alongside Digital Media students for live streaming expertise.

All students involved have been in an academic bubble, following government guidance, to protect the students and staff. Group songs were pre-recorded in a Covid-safe environment to limit the potential spread of the virus.

Head of Performing Arts, Rob Collier shared: "The pantomime is an important part of the Christmas tradition at Andover College and is a great way to start the Christmas period with some festive cheer. This is even more important this year than usual. We are living

in extraordinary times which led to us needing to go to massive lengths to ensure that we are still able to present the Pantomime this year. The Pantomime shows that Andover College is all about teamwork. The staff and students all come together to create this incredible performance and they do it with such professionalism. This again has been more evident than usual as the students have had to adapt to the livestreaming environment. This has meant that we have been lucky enough to collaborate with the Music Students for the live band, the livestream aspect has been managed by our Stage Management students in conjunction with Digital Media Students. We are proud to give our students the experience they need to be prepared for the industry. The pantomime will always be my favourite time of the year and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the team this year and adapting to the

challenges that have been presented to us."

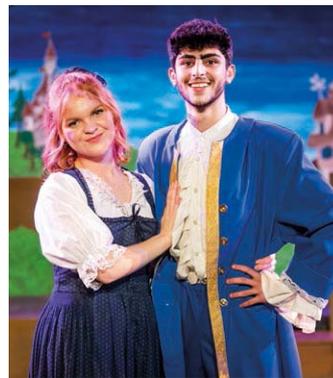
Emre, Andover College Performing Arts student, said "I am playing the character of The Beast in the Beauty and the Beast



pantomime. I am very excited to be playing the Beast as I have loved cultivating the character and making it unique in order to represent a meaningful persona on stage. From the first rehearsal to the last it has been wonderful creating this piece as we have

all worked very hard on and off stage. We would not be able to showcase this pantomime without the professionalism and support of the teachers and the team backstage. It's been a huge challenge to adapt to performing to a camera and not getting the immediate reaction we normally would but it's been amazing to adapt and experience new things while also putting on a live show in these difficult times. Overall it has been an educational yet brilliant experience and I can assure you it is a pantomime you cannot miss and we are honoured to be able to present something extraordinary to bring some much needed Christmas cheer directly into people's households."

The pantomime is available to watch on YouTube for the general public, local schools, students and staff at the college.

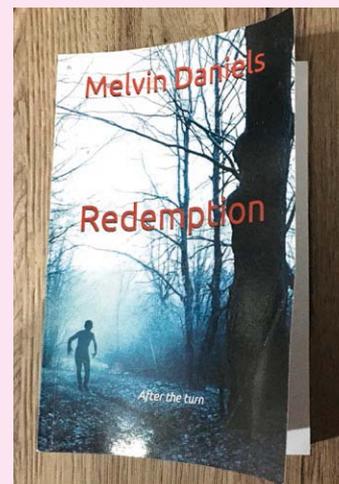


Andoverians living in a dystopian world

A virus had devastated the world. The dead have risen and civilisation is crumbling, Drew Barnes embarks on a quest to find his wife, taken by an oppressive regime who are eager to control the land.

That's the premise of a new book by local man Daniel Leavesley, writing under the pen-name Melvin Daniels. "Redemption - After the Turn" is his first book and it focuses on a post-apocalyptic world set in and around Andover.

In Daniels' new book, Drew Barnes stumbles across a group of survivors who have a score to settle as they strive for a better life. Drew is searching for his wife who was taken by a large group of people who have



taken claim of the area. The main character stumbles across another group of survivors who

have their own issues with the large group. They work together to try and achieve their goals.

Forget Zombies, the word isn't used in the book, but thin Zombies and you'll have a reasonable idea of the concept of Daniels' story.

The book is set after a global pandemic. Although the actual cause is yet to be revealed. Daniels is currently writing a sequel to the book, where the cause of the pandemic in Redemption will be explored.

As Daniel told Love Andover: "The global pandemic is not all they have to worry about."

The book is available on Amazon now or through the Love Andover online shop. www.loveandover.com/shop

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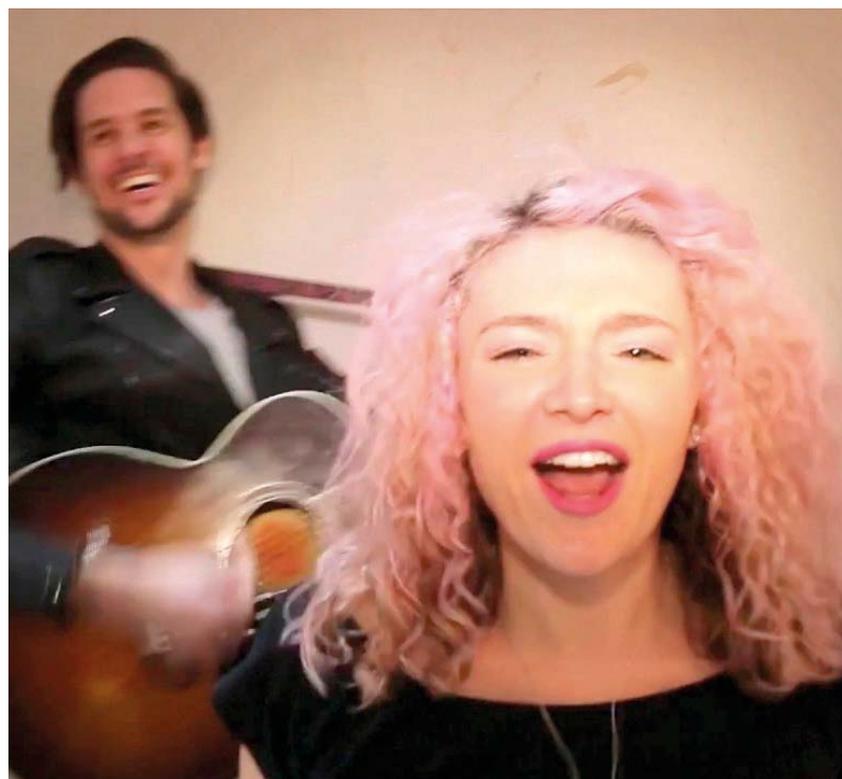
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Duo ready to ensure local music scene is staying alive



“NOW more than ever, we must keep the local music scene alive,” says popular local musician Marc Burford.

The owner of Sunrise Studios at Middle Wallop says whereas the recording industry may not have been drastically affected, he worries for the existing and emerging musical talent around Andover.

“I think a lot of musicians have used the downtime in lockdown wisely and have created more music. The main problem has been no live shows, equalling no socialisation or networking to build new connections and fans.

Everyone has been forced online which can have its benefits, but ultimately the majority of musicians thrive on the live music scene.”

To support Hampshire and Wiltshire’s local music scene, Marc is joining with popular local singer Maddison (‘Maddi’) Douch to host a special New Music Show on 95.9FM Andover Radio.

Marc and Maddi will host their first programme on January 10th

and they say that the programme can help promote the work of Andover’s existing and emerging musical talent. The programme will also be taken by Salisbury’s new local radio station.

“Now more than ever we need to keep the music scene alive,” says Marc. “I feel Andover needs a radio show that will promote new music in the area. If I were trying to breakthrough with my music in the area I’d jump at the chance to be on the radio.

It also brings back the connection to each other within the music industry, musicians will be able to hear each other talk passionately, share experiences, help grow the town and surrounding area’s music network.

Andover has a wealth of fantastic music to offer, the standard is very high. Over the last fifteen years, I’ve seen it change and develop and now more and more new artists are releasing their music, the music scene is continually growing.”

Marc and Maddi joined forces last year to release their folk-inspired track hit ‘Too Young’. Marc is glob-

ally known as the lead singer of Andover band Echotape. The band spent many years touring since the release of their debut EP ‘Sky Above Quarley Hill’. Last weekend, Maddi was excited to get out performing live again, as she added a festive soundtrack to the Christmas Gift and Food Fair. The singing teacher and multi-instrumentalist released a popular video of ‘We’ll Meet Again’ aimed at cheering-up people in care homes over the lockdown period.

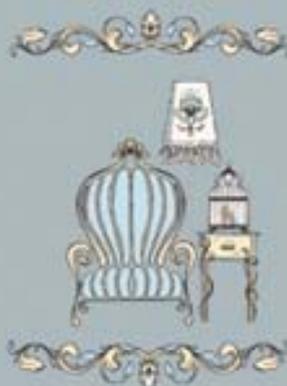
“One positive though the lockdown is that everyone has been continuing to support each other and keep on creating music,” adds Marc.

The New Music Show will focus on promoting and helping the town’s music scene. Marc and Maddi plan to have live guests on the show, feature a ‘hottest track of the week’ and discuss any live shows that might be planned. The programme will also feature advice on how to market new music and build a fan base.

More information can be found at their website www.thenewmusicshow.co.uk.

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Sensational Sharing Starters

WITH Christmas just around the corner, creating a starter that everyone can share is a fun and easy way to kick off the festivities. Both of these recipes will serve up to 8 people and could also be used as part of a buffet.

Baked camembert bread bowl

This camembert bread bowl works as a hearty starter, informal tear and share lunch, or perhaps as part of a vegetarian Christmas buffet.

Ingredients

400-500g round rye sourdough loaf
1 x 250g camembert
4 tbsp cranberry sauce
Splash of dry white wine
3-4 sprigs fresh rosemary
3-4 sprigs fresh thyme

Method

Trim the top from the loaf to leave a circle 1cm larger in diameter than the camembert. Cut down 2cm into the dough to make a circular hole, pulling out the bread. Spread the cranberry sauce all over the cavity, then sit the camembert inside. Score the top, pour over a splash of dry white wine and add the herb sprigs.

Wrap in foil and bake at 200°C/ 180°C



fan/gas 6 for 15-20 minutes. Uncover and return to the oven for 5 minutes until golden and oozing. Tear or slice to serve.

Cheese, cranberry and thyme fondue star

This fun, savoury Christmas bake is indulgent, comforting and equally delicious served as a snack with drinks or with a hearty bowl of soup.

Ingredients

7g sachet fast-action dried yeast
1 tsp caster sugar
275ml whole milk, warmed slightly, plus extra cold milk
500g strong white bread flour, plus extra to dust
1 tsp fine sea salt
2 medium free-range eggs
50g unsalted butter, softened
3 tbsp cranberry sauce, plus extra to serve

5 tbsp freshly grated parmesan

A few fresh thyme sprigs

1 whole camembert

You'll also need

Large baking sheet lined with compostable baking paper

Method

Dissolve the yeast and sugar in a little of the warmed milk in a cup.

Put the flour, yeast/sugar mixture and salt in a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook or large mixing bowl. Add 1 beaten egg, the remaining warmed milk and the butter.

Mix until you have a smooth, elastic dough. Leave the dough in the bowl, cover with a clean tea towel and leave in a warm place to rise for 45 minutes to 1 hour or until doubled in size.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface. Gently knead once or twice to remove any large air pockets, then divide and shape into 4 equal balls of dough. Roll out



each piece of dough into a circle, as if making a pizza base until each piece is 28cm across.

Lay 1 dough circle on the lined baking sheet, spread with 1 tbsp cranberry sauce, a sprinkle of grated cheese and a few thyme leaves, then lay another dough circle on top and repeat with the cranberry and grated cheese. Put the camembert or other round cheese in the middle of the circle, then arrange a third dough circle on top. Layer with the remaining cranberry sauce and most of the remaining cheese, then top with the final dough circle.

Gently shape the dough around the round cheese and press down to remove any air pockets then, using a sharp knife, make 4 cuts from the edge of the cheese to the edge of the dough circle. Cut each of the 4 segments you've created in half to make 8, then again to make 16 strands.

Pick up 2 strands of dough next to each other, lift and twist one strand clockwise twice, then twist the other strand counterclockwise twice to expose the layers. Replace the strands on the baking sheet, aligning the layers and pinching the strands together where the layers meet at the outer edge of the strands to form a point. Repeat with the other strands around the star.

Brush the star with most of the other beaten egg, then leave to prove in the fridge or at room temperature for 30-40 minutes.

Heat the oven to 190°C/170°C fan/gas 5. Brush the star with a little more beaten egg, then bake for 30 minutes until the bread is golden and baked through and the cheese is oozing. Serve straightaway, dusted with more grated cheese and strands of fresh thyme.



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Your regular puzzle challenge

No. 1465

Double Crossword

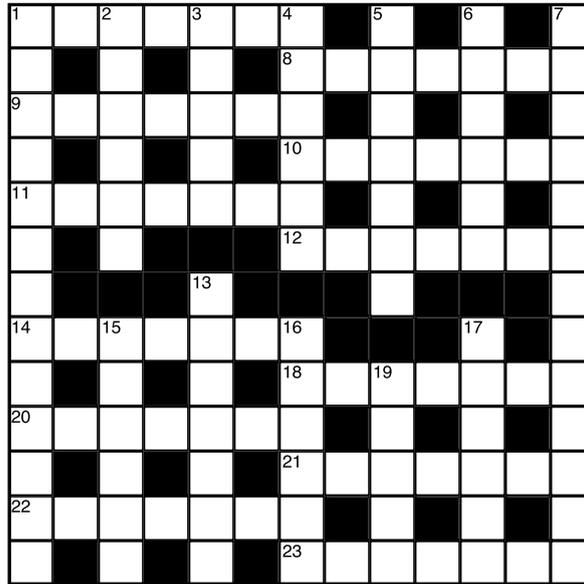
The puzzles are different but both use the same grid

Cryptic Across

- Where patients go towards the centre (7)
- Drink while producing untruth about a stronger one (7)
- To beat Len terribly can be defended (7)
- Not very bright to include Indian city in plan (7)
- Winding up dancing (7)
- Moving one's lip produced a letter (7)
- Climbing-frame found in the garden (7)
- Shops displayed rope I am twisting (7)
- Rowers from San Remo (7)
- Possibly a recurring medical disorder (7)
- A permit held by the runner (7)
- Relief to change gear? (7)

Cryptic Down

- & 2. Migratory bird capped as a footballer (13,6)
- Priest removed barb, I concluded (5)
- Hammer found on the snow? (6)
- I'm past my best as a result of the deadlock (7)
- Revolving drum came before the organ (6)
- A nameless germ spreading disease (6,7)
- Church right to accept woolly jumper's scale (7)
- Unrefined youth leader below the ground (6)
- Recipient of post with address unknown? (6)
- Weight remains the same even without me (6)
- One paid out and walked (5)



Quick Across

- Grey-headed bird (7)
- Come across (3,4)
- Tall animal (7)
- Bare-breasted (7)
- Wandering (7)
- Religious dissenter (7)
- Melodious (7)
- Put into words (7)
- Virgin Mary (7)
- Manner of speaking (7)
- Substitute (7)
- Curl of hair (7)

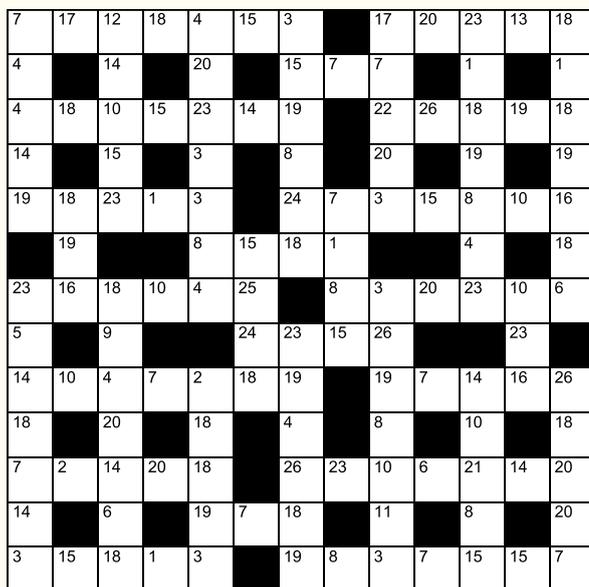
Quick Down

- Remind someone (3,4,6)
- Metallic element (6)
- Former Welsh county (5)
- Despicable person (6)
- Breathe in (7)
- Think up (6)
- Conker (5,8)
- Theatrical hangings (7)
- Lover of cruelty (6)
- Dealer (anag.) (6)
- Servile (6)
- Hickory nut (5)

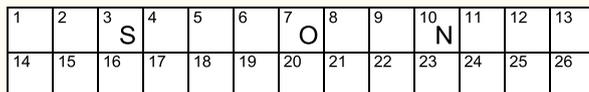
All puzzles on this page are supplied by Sirius Media Services. To try our new puzzle, Zygolex, go to www.zygolex.com - available in book form or as an app.



CROSS CODE



ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

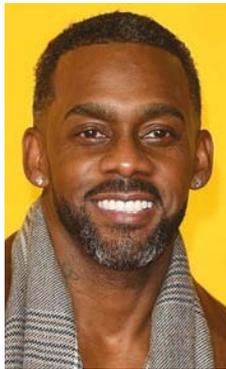


Each number in the Cross Code grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. You have three letters in the control grid to start you off. Enter them in the appropriate squares in the main grid, then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares.

As you get the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and control grid. Check off the alphabetical list of letters as you identify them.

Quiz Challenge

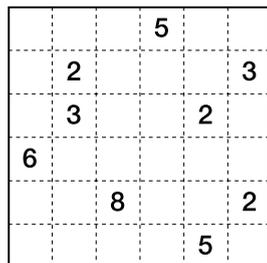
- What was the married surname of the actress born Sarah Kemble, who lived from 1755 to 1831?
- Sika and muntjac are species of which animal?
- Name the only country in Central America not to have a Pacific coastline.
- From 1982 to 1989, which former BBC newsreader hosted the Channel 4 game show Treasure Hunt?
- Comedian Richard Blackwood played a character named Vincent Hubbard in which TV soap opera?



Richard Blackwood - see Question 5

- The vocal chords are found in which organ of the human body?
- Whose 1981 version of the song Begin the Beguine topped the UK singles chart?
- Which actress described her role in the Harry Potter films as "Miss Jean Brodie in a wizard's hat"?
- What A is a company which operates the US passenger railway system?
- Name the winner of the Wimbledon 1997 ladies' singles who was sometimes known as 'The Swiss Miss'.

BOX CLEVER



Fill the 6x6 grid with as many boxes as there are numbers printed. Each box must be either square or rectangular and must contain just one of the numbers. The numbers show how many squares there should be in each box.

COMMON LINK

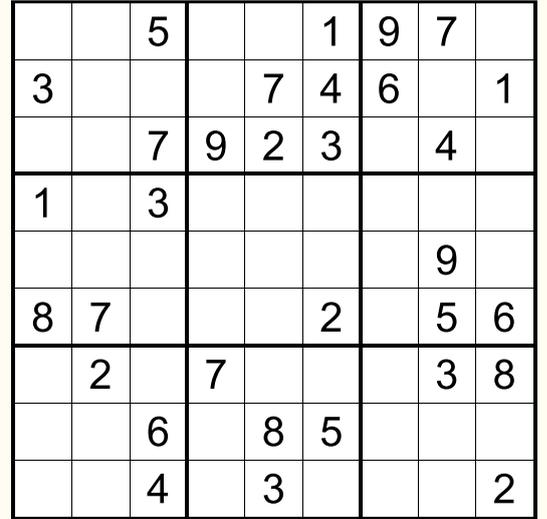
The answers to the following five questions contain a word or words which have a common theme. Can you find the link?

- What name is given to a female swan?
- Comma, Grayling and Grizzled Skipper are all species of what type of insect?
- Which character in Charles Dickens's novel Great Expectations is described as a 'pale young gentleman' who challenges Pip to a fight?
- What is the name of the Scottish biscuit traditionally made with white sugar, butter and oat flour?
- Who directed the 1968 sci-fi movie 2001: A Space Odyssey?

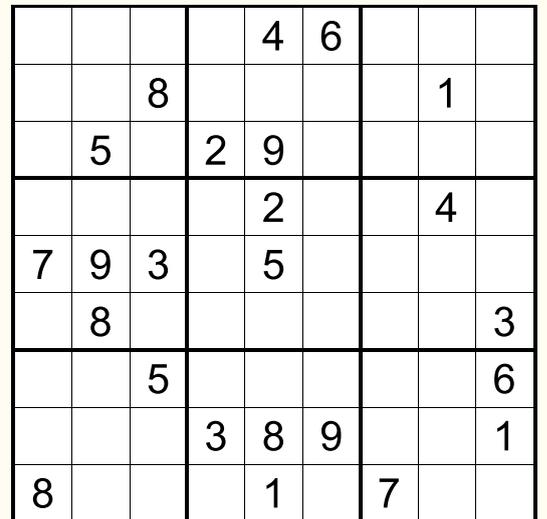
SUDOKU

Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9, and so must each 3 x 3 box.

Easy

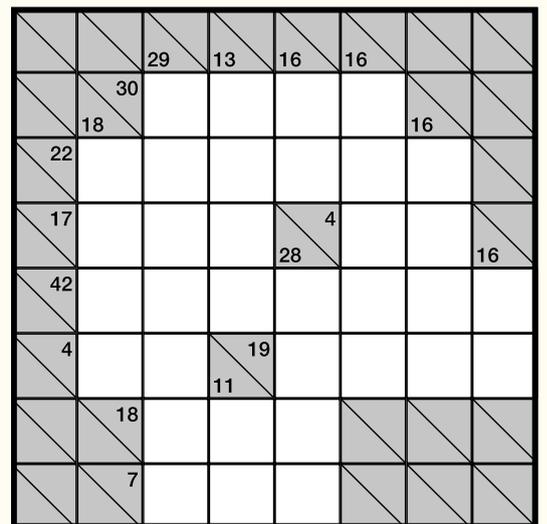


Hard



KAKURO

Fill in the blank squares in the grid with numbers so that each horizontal or vertical line adds up to the total given in the box either to the left or above it. Horizontal totals are given in the top right corners of the shaded boxes; vertical totals in the bottom left corners. You can use the numbers 1 to 9, but may not use the same number more than once in any run. The number may be used again, however, in the same row or column but as part of another run.



SOLUTIONS

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD:
 Across - 1 Inwards; 8 Run into; 9 Paced.
 Down - 1 Jog one's memory; 2 Chrome; 3 Dyfed; 4 Wretch; 5 Winger; 3 Rabb; 4 Sledge; 5 Impasse; 6 Redress.
QUICK CROSSWORD:
 Across - 1 Jackdaw; 8 Run into; 9 Mental; 19 Pecan.
 Down - 15 Sadist; 16 Leader; 17 Scene; 6 Invent; 7 Horse chestnut; 13 Barrel; 7 German measles; 13 Clamber; 5 Stanley; 3 Shortbread; 4 Shortbread; 3 Herbert Pocket; 2 Butterfly; 1 Pent.

COMMON LINK:
 Answers: Swan, Insect, Pip, Biscuit, Space Odyssey. Common theme: **SPACE**

EASY SUDOKU:
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
 8 3 2 6 1 5 7 9 4
 6 4 7 3 8 9 2 5 1
 9 1 5 4 7 2 3 8 6
 2 8 4 9 6 1 5 7 3
 4 6 2 3 5 8 1 9 7
 5 6 1 7 2 3 9 4 8
 1 5 6 2 9 8 4 3 7
 4 2 8 5 3 7 6 1 9
 3 7 9 1 4 6 8 2 5

BOX CLEVER:
 5
 2
 3
 2
 6
 3
 5

CROSS CODE:
 U T G B E R L F W A P Y H
 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26
 M V S C O D I X N K J Z
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
 10 Martina Hingis.
 Eastenders; 6 Larry; 7 Julio Iglesias; 8 Dame Maggie Smith (plays Professor McGonagall); 9 Amtrak;
 1 Sidons; 2 Deet; 3 Belize; 4 Kenneth Kendall; 5

Homes & Gardens

Bring a little festive cheer to your front door

WITH people planning to spend more time in their own homes over the festive season, why not brighten up your front door with this handy how-to guide with steps on how to create a modern Christmas Wreath by experts Bloom and Wild.

Gather your greenery and other materials: We've chosen a bouquet made up of lilac roses, some pine, thistle-like eryngium, a variety of wax flowers and other festive foliage! A great tip is to go rifling through your hedges to find some cracking wreath content! We've also chosen a 400 mm metal ring plus scissors, and thin wire - find

this online or at your local craft or garden store.

With your scissors, trim some shorter pieces of greenery and bundle these together, making sure that the lengths are varied and the stems are all together. With the wire, tightly tie the bunches together at the base - you'll create a few of these bundles in total for your modern wreath.

Once you've created your bundles or bunches of greenery, the next step is to connect them to the metal ring. Start by placing the base of the bundle against the ring. Using wire, wrap the base of the bundle

and the ring together. To ensure the bundle follows the curve of the ring, attach the bundle a bit further up using the same method. Depending on the length of your greenery bundle or your desired shape, you may need to affix it at a third point.

The last step? Add a second bundle, with the tips of the greenery facing the opposite direction - repeating the same steps as above. To cover

the bases of the bundles (and any wire), take a few spare bits of greenery - we like to use the thistle - and attach over top. Now all that's left to do is find a spot in your home for your wreath.





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ObserverMotors

Ford Mustang 5.0 V8 GT Convertible 10 Speed Auto

By Tony Yates

I know what some of you are thinking – what's the point in having a big fat muscle car that's draining the earth of all its fossil fuels and is about as useful as a watch with no hands. Well, if you think like that, then you would be wrong, because what the Mustang actually does is excite every strand of your body's nervous system and then if that's not enough – it will then swing into full attack mode on your internal organs and present you with one of the most thrilling drives you might ever undertake. So, in light of all this - what

battery-powered muscle car can you think of that will have the same effect on you as what the Mustang offers? Yep, thought so – there is nothing I can think of either.

Also, just because it has a very powerful 5.0-litre V8 engine – that does not automatically mean that you must drive it everywhere like you are taking part in a big budget movie car chase scene. To be honest – the Mustang GT is more than happy crushing the streets looking as cool as a cucumber.

This, of course, brings me back to the reason for owning a Mustang in the first place. By owning a V8 Mustang you will immediately make all your

neighbours insanely jealous – and if that's not enough of an incentive for you to sign a cheque for 48k– then remember this, you will overnight, become the coolest person on the planet.

Power and efficiency

Powered by a 5.0-litre V8 quad cam 32 valve engine with the addition of an induction sound tube. The Mustang is also as loud as you like - with more power and muscle than any one person would care to handle. Max power comes in at 450PS with the addition of 529Nm of torque. Max speed is around 150+mph and a 0-62 time of around 4sec (estimated).

I have to say that the sound from that V8 is intoxicating and it never gets boring. Plus, I am sure you all want to know what the MPG is? So, for all you eco-warriors, please look away now.

You can at a push return a combined 24.1mpg – not bad then when you consider the size of that engine. Also, I own a little VW UP GTI and on a good day if I push that really hard it

will only return 35 MPG. So, when you weigh it all that up – is 24.1mpg really that bad.....

On the road

A joy to drive no matter where you are going or on what road surface you are driving it on - also, because the Mustang is rear wheel drive you do need to remember that those rear wheels manage a massive amount of torque coming from that V8 engine which can get you from a standing start to infinity in no time at all.

Into the corners, it felt planted and not heavy or cumbersome at all. If you feed in the power at the right time - and into the right corner, then you will be rewarded with a massive amount of traction and speed in and out of every corner. Plus getting stuck behind a slower vehicle is a thing of the past in the Mustang - because it can easily propel you past pretty much anything that takes your fancy.

Design and technology

The look says it all really – owning a Mustang for me is about as exciting as it gets because it's all about its presence on the road and as I said earlier – that is something you just can't ignore. Remember The Ford Mustang is an

icon of such brilliance right back from when V8's were first produced and even in today's eco-friendly society the Mustang is still very much the star performer.

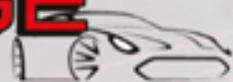
On the Inside you will find; a 12" digital LCD instrument cluster, Apple CarPlay, SYNC 3 – 8" colour touchscreen with 9-speaker DAB radio, USB & Bluetooth connectivity, auto headlamps, rain-sensing wipers, power folding door mirrors with Mustang logo projection puddle lamps, 6-way power adjustable front seats, Ford KeyFree system with Ford Power start button and Keyless entry. This, of course, is just the tip of the iceberg, the Mustang is fitted with plenty of gear, plus as this is a ragtop – you also get the bonus of having the roof down to have the wind-blown through your hair and the noise of 450 horses bellowing out from within the beast.

To sum up

The Mustang is an epic car and I am now a lost soul who needs some additional therapy - so I will be saving every penny I can - because I want one so much.

Price: From £48,245 (standard vehicle) – not including fitted options.

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Volvo XC40 Recharge Plug-in Hybrid T5 FWD Inscription Pro

By Tony Yates

THE car you see before you here is the lovely new Volvo XC40 'Recharge' – a car that I have simply fallen in love with. I tested a basic XC40 a while back and it was a lovely machine. But finally, after months of waiting, the new Plug-in Hybrid XC40 is now finally here sitting on my drive – looking even better than I ever imagined.

Power and efficiency

The XC40 Recharge is fitted with a 180hp three-cylinder 1,477cc petrol engine with 265Nm of torque. 0-62 is dealt with in around 7.3sec and it will max out at 112mph. For starters - I like this engine a lot because it's very refined and gets you around brilliantly with minimal effort needed on the loud pedal. The big plus point here though is its torque levels which makes overtaking effortless once that electric motor jumps in.

As I said, the XC40 Recharge is a plug-in hybrid, so you get the addition of an electric motor working alongside the petrol engine to boost you an additional 82hp – which will move you

along quite nicely actually. So that's a combined figure of; 258bhp and 425Nm of torque - petrol engine + electric motor. Plus if you do fancy driving on pure electric power alone as I did, you will cover around 22miles on one charge if you drive steady.

On the road

I expected nothing but the best – and I was right. For me, the XC40 ticks all the right boxes. And, it's on-road abilities are brilliant on pretty much any surface, so it's a big well done! Volvo from me. Volvo has also done a fantastic job of getting the chassis system to work efficiently on all surfaces - while still allowing it to feel like a normal road car, which when you consider the size of the XC40, that's a pretty hard trick to pull off truth be told.

Design and technology

Volvo's interiors are very similar across all their models now - and all are very 'plush'. Also, everything fits and works well with the driver and nothing is ever fussy or cumbersome, even the touchscreen display is simple to use and not complex. The seating is also very well designed and



Oncoming Lane Mitigation – automatically provides steering assistance if you unwittingly drift out of your lane, guiding you back into your lane and out of the path of any oncoming vehicles, Run-off Road Protection – automatically tightens the front seatbelts should the car inadvertently leave the road, while the front seat frames with a collapsible section reduce vertical forces to help prevent spinal injuries, LED headlights with active high beam, Climate control with CleanZone air-quality system, Rear parking sensors, Hill-start assist, Cruise control with speed limiter and a 12.3-inch active TFT crystal driver's information display.

To sum up

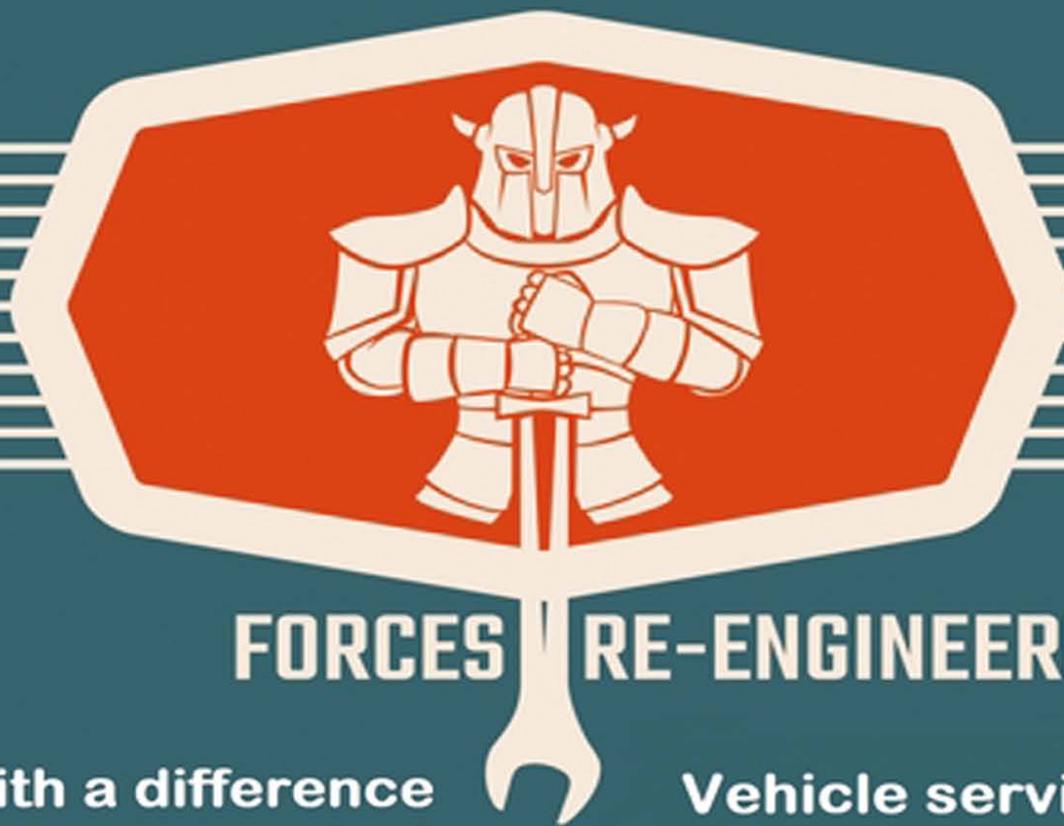
Driving the new XC40 Recharge is amazing - is like having a brand new friend who's prepared to do just about anything to make you happy. Seriously though, it's a great machine that will also do its utmost to please you every time you push the start button.

So there you have it, the XC40 'Recharge' is the perfect plug-in Hybrid. All that is left to say is I wish you all a Very Merry Christmas.

even after a day driving to Hereford & back, I still felt as fresh as a daisy, and unflustered thanks to how a Volvo makes you feel.

Some of the standard equipment in the XC40 Recharge Inscription Pro includes; Nine-inch centre console touchscreen with voice-activated control, Volvo On Call with app – available for your smartphone, smartwatch or tablet, this enables you to control various car functions remotely, and also

acts as an emergency and tracking service, Sensus Navigation – full European mapping with traffic information and lifetime map updates, Sensus Connect – allows you to access a range of web apps, Data SIM card – provides up to 100GB of data for 12 months, City Safety – includes pedestrian, cyclist and large animal detection, and front collision warning with fully automatic emergency braking, including at junctions.



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Kia e-Niro 64 kWh First Edition

By Tony Yates

DO you remember at the beginning of this year when I said I was going to be testing more EVs in 2020? Well after a week of living with the new e-Niro I'm happy to report that it's absolutely brilliant.

Power and efficiency

The e-Niro I recently tested was fitted with a permanent magnet AC synchronous type 64 kWh electric motor which develops 201bhp and 395Nm of torque which I have to say feels very lively and more than happy to be driven hard on the motorway or rumble around in urban towns, a large city or the tiny green village where I actually live.

Of course, it's an (EV) – which means - it goes like stink and the electric motor that propels you from zero to hero in no time at all is powered by a bank of batteries that are capable of storing a large amount of electricity.

Moving on. Well, I guess you all want to know what the range is I suppose? Well, again – I'm happy to report that I travelled well over 280 miles on one full charge.

Then, when it comes to performance – the e-Niro is more than capable of reaching 0-60 in just over 7.5 seconds (but it felt quicker), and in no time at all, it will reach a top speed of 104 mph. Not super fast, but the speed limits on the

UK roads are only 70mph max, so that means there's plenty left in reserve for the blistering overtaking manoeuvres you can make at every opportunity. Let's not forget the standing start from the traffic lights that tend to lead you into performing a 'Santa Pod' style sort of scenario with the car next to you.

Driving range

I suppose we all want to know what it can achieve in a real-life driving scenario and as I mentioned earlier – the Niro is pretty good on a full charge (280miles) Get the e-Niro into city mode and that can increase by quite a lot. So as you can see from the figures here, its pretty good truth be told. As for the battery? Well, capacity is 180Ah with 294 cells and a weight of 457(Kg) This means nothing to me of course because I'm not a scientist, but to some of you out there, it probably means so much more.

On the road

There is the extra weight that you need to factor in due to carrying many batteries – but to be honest, it felt just like any other crossover you care to mention - and it felt better than the petrol version of the Niro out on the open road I know! 'I just said that an EV is better than the petrol-engined version' of this car – but in my defence - it has to be said.



Design and technology

For me, Kia gives you a lot for very little money in my book, more than most actually. Some of the equipment on my test car in 'First Edition' trim included; 17" Alloy Wheels, 7" Supervision Cluster with TFT Colour Display, 8-speaker JBL® Premium Sound System, Smart Key & Button Start, Black

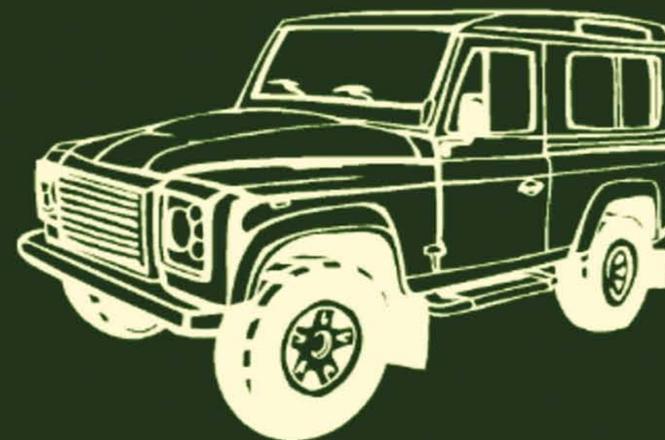
Leather Upholstery*, LED Headlights with Bi-Function Projection, 10.25" Touchscreen Satellite Navigation with European Mapping, Smart Cruise Control with Stop & Go, Lane Keep Assist with Driver Attention Warning & High Beam Assist, Forward Collision-Avoidance Assist and a whole load more features that makes the e-Niro stand out.

To sum up

The Kia e-Niro is a no-fuss crossover that in essence is just a really good stylish vehicle for any family wishing to find a perfect partner in the green world we now all strive to live in. Five stars for Kia.

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Mixed Results for CK Andover

WITH a number of fixtures taking place over the last fortnight, CK Andover's Melissa James shared an update on the mixed fortunes of the teams.

"The U11s came back from lockdown to play a very good Braishfield side who play in a higher league. We gave them a silly goal and we have to learn to clear our lines. That will come. We lost 7-1. I didn't think they were that much better than us. We gave them a game. The other great thing about U11s is I have never heard a parent moan. They are always positive and very very helpful. If team spirit won games then we would be top of the league.

U12's hosted top of the league Witchurch. We saw some brilliant challenges and kept our heads up throughout the game. The score line just wasn't on our side and didn't reflect the game we played. Player of the match went to Owen for his amazing performance, he just ran and ran, tackling and challenging the whole time he was on the pitch. A massive thank you to Paul our linesman and setter upper, Daniel our ref, Jonathan for his continuous coaching and Susan and Donna for the help setting up.

U13 Saints hosted Shooters Thistle in a league game. After four weeks off not really sure what to expect and the difficult playing conditions didn't



help. Overall a really good performance from our boys in a fairly eventful game. We ran our 7-3 winners with hat-tricks from Isaac and Shrayan and a goal from Byron.

U13 Royals took on South Newton & Wishford. We got off to a strong start going 1-0 up, they then equalised, we then managed to go 2-1 up... from there we made some errors at the back and ended up losing 5-2. There were some positives to be taken from the performance but still lots to improve on.

The U17s started the campaign again away to Worthys, not knowing what to

expect after the break with no time for a training session before the game. We started off on the front foot and within 10 mins had taken the lead with a great poachers finish from Mark with a tap in from 4yds out 1-0. Again we were totally in control and we got our second from an excellent free kick from Ben just inside the opposition's half 2-0. Slowly Worthys got back into the Match and from a clearance the ball rebounded off the back of one of our players into the back of the net, we went in at half 2-1 up. We started the second half as we went in under pressure and before

long we conceded a soft goal 2-2, for the remainder of the match we only created a couple of half chances but were second best and in the end lucky to hold on for the point after some cracking saves from Macca.

CK B played unbeaten Aldermaston development in the Peter Raynbird Cup. Our previous encounter saw us lose 5-2 in the first game of the season. This was the teams first game after lockdown #2 and fitness was on our mind. The game started with some great passing football from CK which resulted in our first goal in the first minute of the game! Credit

to Callum James for the finish. This was closely followed by a penalty to us, coolly converted by Luke Borley. Time now to get some composure and not get carried away! A poor challenge from the Aldermaston keeper followed by a kick in the back to Shane Borley caused some distraction and during this Luke struck the ball like a bullet and lobbed the keeper to take his second. Small revenge for the previous attack on his brother! Half time CK 3-0.

The second half was a little less eventful with Aldermaston taking a consolation goal and CK taking a 4th from a well organised free kick taken by Ben Synan and superbly headed in by Matt Robson. Final score CK 4-1 and through to the next round.

A very frustrating game away at AFC BERG saw CK somehow lose 6-3. We had started the game with a bare 11 because of work commitments, injury, illness and a mix up with the meet and kick off time, but started quite well considering we have had limited football of late.

The lads didn't let their heads go down and kept going. We eventually got 3 goals back, 2 brilliant finishes from Sam Clash and Connor Mumford converted a penalty after fine work from Ben Hammett-Brady saw him being brought down in the area. Unfortunately Berg added 3 more goals and won the game."

Getting to know: Andover Town's Football Players

CONTINUING our regular profiling of Andover Town Football Players, this week we meet our fourth duo who take to the pitch every week to represent our town: Brad Waters and Matt Devereux.

In our next edition, we will meet some more ATFC players.

ATFC PLAYER PROFILE



Name: Matt Devereux
Age: 21yrs
Height: 175cm
Appearances: 17
Goals: 0
Preferred Foot: Right
Preferred Position(s): Central Midfielder

Previous Teams: Winchester FC, Stockbridge FC, Gosport FC
Favourite Football Team: Nottingham Forrest FC
Favourite Footballer: Thiago
Favourite Meal: Pasta
Favourite Pass-Time: Music
Favourite Film/TV Programme Peaky Blinders

ATFC PLAYER PROFILE



Name: Brad Waters
Age: 18yrs
Height: 175cm
Appearances: 4
Goals: 0
Preferred Foot: Right
Preferred Position(s): Left Midfield

Previous Teams: Salisbury FC, Downton FC
Favourite Football Team: Leeds United FC
Favourite Footballer: Lionel Messi
Favourite Meal: Chicken with Green Pesto and Pasta
Favourite Pass-Time: Golf & Gym
Favourite Film/TV Programme Man vs Wild, Bear Grylls

Observer Sport

Inside: Mixed Results for CK Andover | Getting to know: Andover Town Football Players

From Football To Foodbank

ANDOVER Town Football Club has secured a win, perhaps not for themselves but for the town's vulnerable.

Their latest home games against Newport and Bemerton Heath Harlequins saw the Portway Stadium team lose 3-1 to Newport and they lost 0-1 when the final whistle blew on Tuesday 15th December in their league match against Bemerton Heath Harlequins, however people around Andover will benefit from the generosity of the team's players and the club's supporters.

Following the success of the club's October drive to get donations for the Andover Foodbank, their festive campaign was a further success. Darren and Caroline Cross from Cross Massage Therapy based at the Portway Stadium have received donations to the charity which assists people on low incomes. Caroline told Love Andover: "2020 has been a challenging year and left many families finding the weekly food shop a struggle. Andover Town FC is a community-orientated club primarily run by a strong team of volunteers who care about trying to make a positive difference in the local area. Donating items to the Andover Foodbank is a pragmatic and achievable way for us to make a contribution to those critically in need. We are proud of our players getting involved and grateful to our supporters who have donated generously."

Anyone still wishing to contribute to the growing collections, can contact Caroline via the Cross Massage Therapy website.



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