

# Your pizza or your life!

## Brave Westside warden Enoch defies threat of gunman in car

By Tony Collins

Westside warden Enoch White was determined to enjoy a pizza he'd just bought for his late-night break – even when a gunman demanded he hand it over.

Enoch and a colleague were walking along Broad Street when a car suddenly pulled up and the driver pointed a gun at him through the open window.

But when the gunman demanded the pizza that Enoch, aged 62, had just collected from Pit Stop in Broad Street, the warden calmly replied “hell, no”.

The terrifying drama happened shortly before midnight on Monday, 26 August.

Enoch, from Kingstanding, said: “We had just moved some people who'd been harassing passers-by outside the post office in Five Ways.

“We were walking back to the office but stopped off at Pit Stop for a takeaway pizza to eat during my break. As we got to the corner of Granville Street, outside O'Neill's bar, a grey VW Golf pulled up.

“The driver was shouting something which I thought was him asking for directions, so I walked over to the car. As I asked ‘can I help you?’ he just pointed a gun at me through the open window and said ‘you're dead’.

“His eyes were really crazy look-



Turn to page 2

■ Westside warden Enoch White with his favourite Hawaiian pizza.



Sam and Mohammad Labban.

## Meet Brum's new golden couple...

Birmingham has a very special place in the heart of Mohammad Labban, the new general manager at the Hyatt Regency Birmingham hotel – as it's where he proposed to his wife, Sam.

Mohammad has worked at some of Hyatt's most luxurious hotels all over the world, but now he's looking forward to bringing his years of hospitality expertise to the city where Sam studied at university and where his journey towards wedded bliss began.

Full story: Page 3

## Burst water pipe chaos

Businesses were left counting the cost after a water main was accidentally damaged during extension work to the Midlands Metro route along Broad Street on 26 September.

The damage to the nine-inch mains pipe led to water gushing along the centre of the road, which severely disrupted the Broad Street area and left restaurants, shops and other local businesses without any water for up to a day.

Full story: Pages 4-5

Westside is brimming with stories

By Mike Olley

Westside BID general manager

Welcome to the second edition of Westside World, the newsletter that both highlights the successes and tackles the challenges in your business area.

We're chuffed to bits that so many members have given us such positive feedback on the newsletter. And we're even more delighted that so many of you have tipped us off on stories for us to chase.



Please continue to do this. Westside World is for the people who work here, and so we need a continual flow of the stories that matter for you and your businesses and organisations.

Remember: Westside BID is here to champion what's made you happy and to fight your corner when things go wrong. Our Westside World reflects this activity, along with our new website and exciting social media posts.

Thanks for taking the time to read, and please email [info@westsidebid.co.uk](mailto:info@westsidebid.co.uk) with all your ideas and any queries.



Published on behalf of Westside BID, the Business Improvement District is constantly working towards creating a more attractive, better marketed, brighter, safer and cleaner business environment in Birmingham's Westside entertainment area. Westside BID was voted in by 350 businesses in the area in August 2015, with a 99.75% yes vote (the best in the UK). Westside BID is based at Quayside Tower, 252-260 Broad Street, B1 2HF.

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# Suspect arrested over pizza threat

From page 1

ing and he seemed to be as high as a kite. He said 'I mean it, I'm going to shoot you now'. Then he said 'give me your food' and I just said 'hell, no!'

Enoch said he told his colleague to note the car's registration, at which point the gunman dropped the firearm in his lap and sped off towards Five Ways. Enoch was able to flag down a passing police car and pass on the details.

He added: "Nothing fazes me. I just thought he's not getting my food. My attitude was I'm black, I'm hungry, and he's not getting my Hawaiian pizza. There was a gun pointing at me and I just thought 'if it's my time, it's my time, there was nothing I could do about it.'"

Westside BID general manager Mike Olley said: "This just demonstrates the calibre of people we have working as wardens. And it also says a lot about the quality of food available on Broad Street – this was obviously a pizza worth dying for!"

A spokesperson for West Midlands Police said a 46-year-old



Enoch White enjoys a well-deserved snack and (right) the Pit Stop restaurant.

unemployed Birmingham man had been arrested after the incident. He has been charged with possession of a firearm with intent to cause fear of violence, possession of a firearm, and dangerous driving, as well as a number of unrelated offences.

He has appeared in court and has been remanded in custody, with a trial date fixed for February 2020.



Birmingham's Broad Street in 2002 – as envisioned by Paul S Cadbury in his 1952 book.

## Broad Street goes back to the future

This is how a modern Broad Street was imagined by a future-gazer back in 1952.

The image comes from a book called Birmingham – Fifty Years On, which shows plans for what famous locations such as Broad Street, New Street and Colmore Row could look like in the year

2002. The detailed sketches by author Paul S Cadbury – from the Cadbury chocolate family – visualise clean and quiet streets, futuristic buildings – and hover cars.

The book, which was found in the Library of Birmingham, was originally published by The Bournville Village Trust.

Pete Richmond, chief executive of Bournville Village Trust, said: "It is fantastic to see these images being shared again today, and they act as an important reminder of the lasting legacy and influence on design and place-shaping of the Cadbury family on the wider city of Birmingham."

# Brum is where the heart is for new Hyatt boss



New general manager Mohammad Labban outside the Hyatt Regency Birmingham and (below) enjoying the stunning city views.

By Steve Dyson

Mohammad Labban has experienced luxurious five-star hotels all over the world, including top venues in India, Jordan, Egypt and Dubai.

But romance means that Birmingham beats all of these exotic locations for the new general manager of the Hyatt Regency on Bridge Street, because this is the city where he once proposed to his wife, Sam.

"Birmingham has always been a very special place to me," said Mohammad. "It's where my wife went to university and where I chose to propose to her many years ago."

"I cannot wait to explore everything that this glorious city has to offer and have a feeling that my family and I are going to feel very at home here."

Originally from Beirut in Leb-

anon, Mohammad studied Hospitality Management in Cyprus and as a young graduate he was quickly snapped up by the Hyatt hotel group.

He began his career more than 20 years ago in sales, marketing and business development, working at many locations including the Hyatt Regency Jeddah, Grand Hyatt Amman, Park Hyatt Dubai and Hyatt Regency Dubai.

His first general manager role was in India at Hyatt Regency Pune, followed by the Hyatt Regency Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt and more recently leading the opening of the flagship Hyatt Regency Aqaba Ayla Resort, on the Red Sea coast of Jordan.

Mohammad said: "I was inspired from a young age by the dazzling glamour of the hotels I saw in Hollywood movies, and so I was always destined for a career in hospitality."



"Once I started at Hyatt, I've remained loyal to the brand for an exciting career spanning 22 years in some of the most luxurious hotels in Asia."

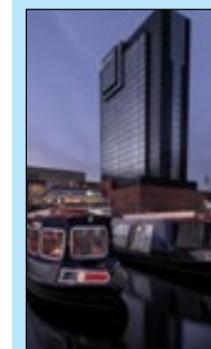
"Working in different countries and cultures gave me valuable insights into the hotel industry, particularly as general manager

in Aqaba, Jordan. That's where I led the pre-opening operations of the hotel, building the team from employee number one to a fully-staffed hotel in 18 months."

"Launching that hotel in December 2018 was my most memorable career moment to date – but I've got plans for many more."

In his new position as general manager at Hyatt Regency Birmingham, Mohammad plans to continue developing what he describes as its "outstanding reputation" in the city.

He added: "My commitment to delivering outstanding service will be vital in the way I lead all departments here, ensuring every guest has a truly memorable experience. I've had some amazing opportunities with Hyatt so far and I am now really looking forward to successfully undertaking this fantastic experience at Hyatt Regency Birmingham."



### Hotel is a prime ministerial favourite

- Hyatt Regency Birmingham is a four-star, 319-bedroom hotel.
- It stands at a height of 75 metres (246 ft), and has 24 storeys.
- The hotel cost £37 million to build and was completed in 1990.
- The Hyatt is located opposite the Library of Birmingham, The Rep Theatre and the International Convention Centre.
- It is also just five minutes' walk from the exclusive Mailbox and Bullring shopping centres.

- Birmingham's 'Golden Mile' of Broad Street is just around the corner, as is Gas Street Basin and Brindleyplace.
- The hotel has been used for various party conferences, and the last five Prime Ministers have all stayed there.
- Aria is the Hyatt's signature restaurant, sitting under a glass atrium. The hotel has a fitness centre and a 16-metre, heated indoor pool.

# Water burst left

## Broad Street businesses are counting the cost of ruptured mains pipe

By Tony Collins

Westside BID businesses were left counting the cost of a burst water main which severely disrupted the Broad Street area and left them without any water for up to a day.

The damage to the nine-inch mains pipe was caused by workers involved in extending the Midlands Metro route along Broad Street.

It led to water gushing along the centre of the road, but also cut off the mains supply to restaurants, shops and other local businesses.

A number of BID businesses left without water following the burst on Thursday, 26 September are currently considering compensation claims due to loss of trade.

Among those worst affected was Piccolinos restaurant in Brindleyplace, which was without water for 24 hours.

Georgia Pomes, manager at Piccolinos, said: "Our water went off in the morning and didn't come back until the morning after. We had at least 30 customers booked in advance but we couldn't open without water."

Dave Murphy, manager at The Malt House pub in King Edwards Road, was forced to close his premises until 6pm.

He said: "Around 90 per cent of our trade is lunchtime and early evening, so we only took about £500 on the day which is massively down on what we would normally take. I reckon there will be a few compensation claims going in."

Similarly, Siamais restaurant in

Brindleyplace was shut until 5pm and lost up to 50 covers, while other BID businesses affected included Bank restaurant, Cielo restaurant, Baguette du Monde, Yorks Café, the Ikon Gallery, Pushkar restaurant, and Jury's Inn Hotel.

A spokesman for Severn Trent Water said they were able to bypass the damaged pipe so that all but 25 customers had their water back on within hours.

He said: "The final 25, who are likely to be businesses, unfortunately were connected to the damaged part of the pipe and so didn't get their water back until the pipe was fixed. It was a really tricky repair due to the location of the damage and so it did take a little while."

Midland Metro Alliance said it wanted to thank everyone inconvenienced by the loss of water supply for their "patience and understanding" during the period until supplies were restored.

Its statement added: "The team at the Alliance worked closely with Severn Trent Water to restore normal supplies as quickly as possible."

"We would urge any business which was without water and could not trade to contact their insurance company directly for any business interruption assistance."

Mike Olley, Westside BID's general manager, said: "Many of our members suffered a loss of business arising from the chaos of this burst pipe, but we are nevertheless grateful to the fast reaction from Alliance workers to contain the damage and help businesses wherever they could."



■ Tankers were parked near the ICC as repairs got underway.



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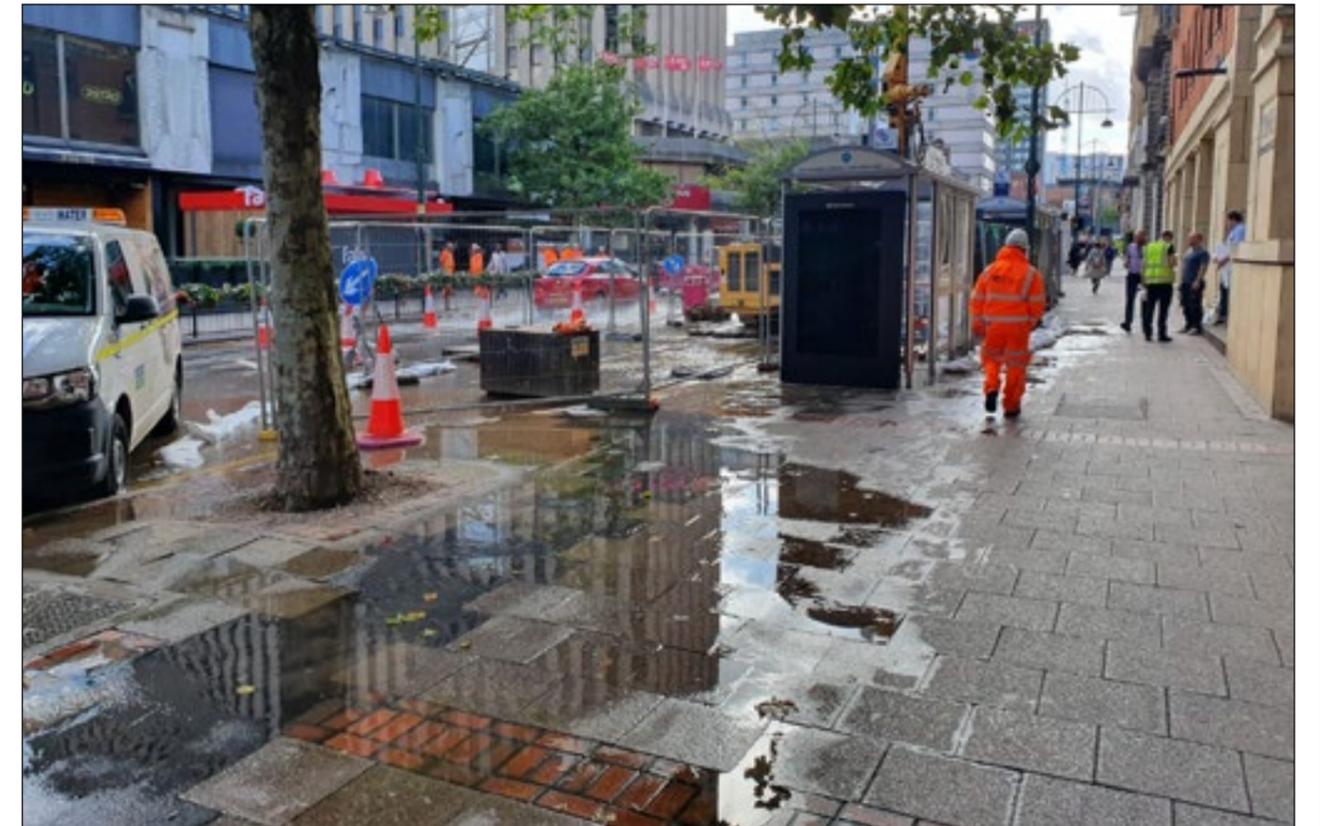
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■ Teams of workers were drafted in to repair the damage.

# us high and dry



■ Footpaths along Broad Street were left waterlogged and deserted after workmen working on the Metro link damaged a water main.



■ Some 25 businesses around Broad Street were forced to shut down until water supplies were restored, losing hours of valuable trade.

# 42-storey tower joins city skyline

By Sharon Dunn

This is how the new skyscraper on Broad Street will look when built.

Property developer Moda is breaking new ground by unveiling Birmingham's tallest residential tower at a cost of at least £118 million.

Set for completion in 2022, The Mercian will be Birmingham's tallest residential tower at 42 storeys, changing the city's skyline forever.

The building, designed by Birmingham-based Glenn Howells Architects, is located on the former site of renowned nightclub The Click Club at Burberries, which hosted bands such as Blur and New Order between 1986 and 1990.

The Mercian will have 481 apartments for rent, offering hotel-level service and a host of on-site amenities including a 24-hour concierge



■ The Mercian Tower will enjoy stunning views across Birmingham.

service and smart lifts that register when residents enter the building and are ready and waiting at ground level.

With completion coinciding with the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, the development will also provide residents with quality health and wellness zones, including a 200-metre open-air running track on the roof.

The funding deal to support the construction for the tower reported-

ly included a £118 million deal with Goldman Sachs.

Johnny Caddick, managing director at Moda, said Birmingham was growing faster than any other regional UK city.

He said: "We wanted to reflect Birmingham's hard work, history and tenacity with a building that harnesses the city's heritage and purpose and combines it with unrivalled forward thinking to bring next-generational living."



■ Tower costing at least £118m.

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## Upton bowls a strike at awards

The Hollywood Bowl on Broadway Plaza is basking in the glory of achieving further national recognition in its company's annual awards.

The centre was awarded the accolade of "Amusements Excellence" at the recent Hollywood Bowl annual conference.

Paul Upton, general manager of Hollywood Bowl in Broadway Plaza, said: "We were recognised as the number one in the entire company for our revenue growth.

"Our revenue has gone up by a phenomenal 40 per cent year-on-year, and we were also recognised for the quality of our amusement offer, stock controls, cleanliness and machine care.

"There are 60 Hollywood Bowls around the country so this is a special moment.

"We also won Centre of the Year two years ago, so we came back with a bang after a year off," Paul added.

"It's just nice to be recognised for the work we've done.

"It's recognition for the way we operate and look after our machines, but also making sure we have all the merchandise in stock



■ Broadway Plaza's Paul Upton (right) celebrates his success.

for the big films at the cinema," he said.

"Also, our cleanliness standards are through the roof.

"Birmingham Broadway is a relatively small site so we've gone toe-to-toe with the big fish and come out with the crown."

# Alert warden helps to catch bomb hoaxers

By Tony Collins

A Westside warden has been praised for her observation and "powers of deduction" after helping to prevent two bomb hoaxers from potentially causing widespread disruption on Broad Street.

Nicola Hebberts has also been recommended for an award after spotting the two youths, who were already suspected of making one hoax call, before following them when they left the area.

The warden team had been alerted to the bomb hoax threat by police during one of their regular meetings on the evening of Friday, 4 October.

Senior warden Peter Willis, who was on patrol duty with Nicola, said: "The police told us they were dealing with an ongoing incident regarding a bomb threat against a premises on Broad Street.

"They had already confirmed the threat as a hoax but, because the suspects hadn't been detained, they were concerned there might be more hoax calls, each of which would have had to be investigated as if it was genuine.

"Our worry was that premises would have to be evacuated, which would have proved costly and disruptive."

After the meeting with police and venue managers ended, Peter and Nicola continued their patrol towards the Popworld bar on Broad Street.

Peter added: "Nicola spotted two youths and, as we walked past, one of them started to make a gun sign towards her.

"Nicola just got the feeling that these two could have been the bomb hoaxers because she immediately said to me: 'That's them, they're the ones the police are looking for.'

"I was sceptical as we hadn't been given any descriptions, but Nicola was sure she was correct,



■ Westside warden Nicola Hebberts helped to catch bomb hoaxers who targeted Broad Street.

so I radioed security at Brindleyplace to put a camera on them while Nicola kept an eye on them.

"The police were able to see what Brindleyplace was looking at and confirmed they were the two suspects.

"The youths walked off, but we

followed them over the canal onto the Arena car park where police detained them.

"Without doubt, because of Nicola's observation skills and powers of deduction, we were able to prevent any major disruption on the night."

Nicola simply commented: "I was just doing my job."

But Westside BID general manager Mike Olley praised Nicola, saying: "Clearly Nicola has an intuitive intellect which is outstanding, and I will be putting her forward for an award."



■ Chandra Singh.

## Culinary expert is new ingredient at Pushkar

One of Birmingham's best curry restaurants has appointed a top culinary expert as its new executive head chef.

Chandra Singh, who has a wealth of experience in fine dining and Michelin-starred restaurants, has

joined Pushkar, based at 245 Broad Street, as the restaurant's executive head chef.

Mr Singh began his career with India's famous Taj hotel group and became well-versed with Indian and European

cooking, working with many top restaurants across India.

He then moved to London in 2005, spending over 14 years working in some of the capital's top, award-winning fine dining restaurants

including The Painted Heron, Bangalore Express, the Michelin-starred Tamarind and Cinnamon Kitchen.

Call 0121 643 7978 or email dining@pushkardining.com to book a table at Pushkar.



■ Reunited: From left, Paul Smith, Gladstone Small, Jason Ratcliffe, Michael Bell, Trevor Penney, Asif Din, Neil Smith, Dermot Reeve, Dominic Ostler, Lord Mayor of Birmingham Coun Mohammed Azim, Graeme Welch, Michael Burns, Jasper Carrott and Tim Munton.

# Bears treble team Broad Street Walk

Warwickshire County Cricket Club made history in 1994 by winning the County Championship, the Sunday League and the Benson & Hedges Cup.

The unique season included Brian Lara's world record of 501 not out for the Bears at The Oval in the B&H semi-final.

Now, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the feat, Warwickshire's treble-winning team has been presented with a special commemorative plaque at Edgbaston.

Westside BID honours Warwickshire County Cricket Club's legendary treble-winning team from 25 years ago with a place on its Broad Street Walk of Stars. TOM JACKSON reports

And a special stone will be installed on Broad Street following the redevelopment work which will take the Metro tram all the way to Five Ways.

Jasper Carrott, chairman of Westside BID's Broad Street Walk of

Stars, said: "The achievements of Warwickshire's treble-winners in 1994 are rightly recognised as some of the greatest in the history of county cricket.

"However, it is also one of the greatest sporting achievements that Birmingham and the wider region of the West Midlands has known.

"As Bears fans, we have so many great memories of the 1994 campaign, whether it's the Lord's finals, Brian Lara's world record 501 not out at Edgbaston or the moment that we clinched the treble with the Sunday League win at Bristol.

"It was a very memorable time for many of us and it's right, in the year that marks the 25th anniversary, that we recognise the team on the Walk of Stars."

Warwickshire's treble-winning exploits came under the leadership of captain Dermot Reeve alongside vice-captain Tim Munton, while the campaign also caught the head-

lines thanks to the performances of West Indies cricket legend Brian Lara.

The presentation was made by Jasper Carrott and the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Coun Mohammed Azim, at the Years of the Bears gala dinner for Warwickshire players past and present at Edgbaston, which also recognised 125 years as a first-class county.

The event was hosted by BBC Sport broadcaster Pat Murphy, author of 'The Greatest Season' – a book about the treble-winning exploits.

Neil Snowball, chief executive of Warwickshire CCC, said: "Celebrations around the 25th anniversary of the treble have formed an important part of our plans for this year, including Pat Murphy's 'The Greatest Season' book, speaker sessions with various players and the commemorative blue plaques that have been installed at Edgbaston.

"It's fantastic that the celebrations are being celebrated more widely and that the Warwickshire class of 1994 is to be recognised alongside so many icons of Birmingham and the West Midlands on the Broad Street Walk of Stars."



■ The legendary 1994 Warwickshire County Cricket Club team.



■ Dermot Reeve (left) and Tim Munton show off the spoils of victory.



■ Winning the County Championship and (right) 'The Greatest Season' by Pat Murphy.



# bowl into of Stars



■ A triumphant Brian Lara celebrates his world record of 501 not out.

# Brum's greats honoured in heart of city

The Broad Street Walk of Stars is a walk of fame-style installation on the pedestrian pavement of Broad Street in the Westside area, honouring notable people from the city or with significant connections to it.

The scheme is organised and funded by Westside BID, and each star is considered and selected by the Walk of Stars committee, chaired by city comedian Jasper Carrott.

The 45 stars honoured since 2007 are:

1. Ozzy Osbourne, Black Sabbath band member
2. Jasper Carrott, comedian
3. Noddy Holder, Slade band member
4. Murray Walker, sports commentator
5. The Archers, soap opera
6. Norman Painting, Phil Archer in The Archers
7. Tony Iommi, Black Sabbath band member
8. Aston Villa's 1982 European Cup-winning team
9. Tony 'Bomber' Brown, WBA footballer
10. Frank Skinner, comedian
11. Gil Merrick, Birmingham City footballer
12. Ray Graydon, Walsall manager
13. Julie Walters, actor
14. Gary Newbon, TV sports presenter
15. Lenny Henry, comedian
16. Beverley Knight, singer
17. Joan Armatrading, singer
18. Chris Tarrant, broadcaster and comedian
19. Birmingham Royal Ballet
20. David Bintley, dancer
21. Roy Wood, Electric Light Orchestra, Wizzard and The Move band member
22. Bev Bevan, Electric Light Orchestra and The Move band member
23. Matt Croucher GC, Lance Corporal awarded the George Cross in 2008
24. Laurie Mansfield, theatrical agent for Jim Davidson, Ken Dodd, Cannon & Ball, Tommy Steele and others
25. Sir Keith Porter, military surgeon
26. Nigel Mansell, racing driver and 1992 Formula One World Champion
27. Malkit Singh, musician
28. Harry Moseley, champion child charity fundraiser
29. Jaki Graham, singer
30. Ellie Simmonds, Paralympian champion swimmer
31. David Harewood, actor
32. Jeff Lynne, Electric Light Orchestra and The Move band member
33. Trevor Francis, Birmingham City footballer
34. Ian Lavender, actor (Private Pike in Dad's Army)
35. Dennis Amiss, cricketer
36. Ann Haydon Jones, first left-handed female Wimbledon winner
37. Steel Pulse, the band
38. Toyah Willcox, singer
39. Don Maclean, comedian
40. Geezer Butler, Black Sabbath band member
41. Jamelia, singer
42. UB40, the band
43. Black Sabbath, the band
44. Bill Ward, Black Sabbath band member
45. Warwickshire County Cricket Club, 1994 treble team



■ Winners Ian Lavender and Jasper Carrott.



■ UB40 with their star.

## Bar's kind gesture to Cook staff

A Broad Street cocktail bar scored loads of social media 'likes' when it offered a free meal to any Thomas Cook employee hit by the travel operator's collapse.

Revolution, based in the Fiveways Leisure Complex, made the touching gesture via Facebook with a message that read: "FREE LUNCH FOR THOMAS COOK EMPLOYEES."

The bar then added: "Come grab a free lunch dish and take a breather. We can't imagine the shock and stress that you're currently under, so we'd like to offer you a little something to help. Enjoy any dish from our lunch menu for free. Simply show us a recent payslip to get yours."

Thomas Cook went bust in September, leaving thousands out of work.

The Revolution offer was for a limited period just after the news broke.

# Banking on staff to aid homeless



■ Westside BID chairman Dipesh Mistry reaches the finish line in Birmingham city centre.

By Tony Collins

**Bank staff in Birmingham have been going the extra mile in aid of a charity that feeds and supports homeless people in the city.**

And stepping out in front was Westside BID chairman Dipesh Mistry, who is the local director of NatWest Bank in Birmingham.

Dipesh led the way as around 35 NatWest staff collectively ran more than 200 miles on 20 September to raise money for the Midland Langar Seva Society, founded in 2013 to provide hot food and drink to those living on the streets and on the poverty line.

The aim was to cover the 42 miles that connects the 14 NatWest branches across the Birmingham region, with individual staff choosing how far to run between branches.

Dipesh, who has been chairman of Westside BID for more than three years, took on the challenge of running the 26 miles from the NatWest branch in Stourbridge to Birmingham city centre.

He said: "Midland Langar Seva Society is NatWest's chosen charity for this year, but it also links in to the work that the BID is doing in supporting homeless charities in Birmingham."

"We had plenty of bank staff who were up for the challenge of running between branches. It was an inspirational thing for them to get involved in."

NatWest staff have so far raised more than £4,000 from their collective efforts.

Dipesh added: "I ran 26 miles from our branch in Stourbridge to the city centre via Halesowen, Smethwick, West Bromwich, Perry Barr and Brindleyplace where we have a centre."

"Other staff ran other legs from different branches. Some ran a few miles such as Solihull to Shirley, or Harborne to the city centre, while others did 20 miles. It totalled well over 200 miles if you add it all up."

Dipesh is well used to running as he completes a half-marathon every Sunday. "It's not competitively, just for my own well-being and general fitness. I have been running for about 14 years, so this was something I have been training a long time for," he said.



■ Dipesh Mistry celebrates with members of the NatWest team.



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■ An artist's impression of the new £13.2 million transformation of Birmingham's Symphony Hall and (inset below) inside the foyer.

# Symphony Hall set to make grand entrance

By Tony Collins

**Top musician Hozier got a sneak preview of Symphony Hall's £13.2 million transformation ahead of a sold-out show at the top venue, which kicked off his UK tour.**

The Irish musician, whose single Take Me To Church went triple platinum, was invited to have a close-up look at the Making an Entrance project which aims to redevelop Symphony Hall's public foyer areas.

In addition to a new foyer performance space for free and low-cost activities, there will be dedicated spaces to host learning and participation projects.

This is aimed at offering a richer and more welcoming experience, including an enhanced food and beverage offer, refurbished toilets, additional disabled toilets and changing facilities.

Hozier was joined on his 15 September visit by local musician James Attwood, who has been involved in the young people's music programme at Town Hall Symphony Hall since 2017.



Plans for the revamp of the 3,000-capacity Symphony Hall, which officially opened in 1991, have been formally submitted to Birmingham City Council by Performances Birmingham Ltd, which runs the concert venue.

The scheme, devised by Page\ Park Architects, would see the current wall facing Centenary Square demolished to make way for a new glass facade with a dedicated entrance to Symphony Hall as opposed to the one inside the International Convention Centre.

Nick Reed, chief executive for

Town Hall Symphony Hall said: "We currently reach over 18,000 people with our learning and community programmes and we hope to reach thousands more in the transformed spaces this project will create."

"As significant cuts are made to music tuition in our region's schools, this transformation will support local talent by providing an enhanced space for people to be musically creative."

It is hoped that the project can be completed in time to host the Conservative Party Conference in 2020.



■ Hozier (right) and James Attwood.

## Pub guide hails real ale gems

Real ale fans will be eager to know that the latest edition of the Good Pub Guide has mentioned two pubs in the Westside BID area as "worth a visit".

One is the Tap & Spile on Gas Street, the canalside pub on three floors which opens onto the towpath.

The 2020 guide, published this autumn, says the Tap & Spile welcomes children and dogs, has a "decent range of wines and enjoyable, good-value food including grills and pizzas", with one of its bars opening until 4am.

The other is the Brasshouse at 44 Broad Street, a "spacious bank conversion with enjoyable, good-value food from tapas, burgers and pizzas up", a selection of "well-kept Marstons-related ales and guests, craft beers and cocktails" and "efficient, friendly service".

# i-Krave a new way to serve fast food



Happy chefs cook happy food... the team at i-Krave, in Broadway Plaza. Picture: Tom Marsden

By Tom Jackson

Business owner George Zhao is living the dream of starting his own company, while also looking to change the way that traditional Chinese takeaways operate.

George is celebrating the first anniversary of i-Krave, which now employs 11 staff at its premises in Broadway Plaza, Ladywood Middleway, following its successful first year.

But as well as creating local employment, the 37-year-old entrepreneur is also hoping to bring the Chinese fast food and takeaway industry bang up to date.

George said: "The current Chinese takeaways are still very traditional. They are still like they were 20 to 30 years ago."

"After carrying out research, I thought there weren't many takeaways that were modern. They should have a modern feel and also be of a high standard."

i-Krave specialises in a fairly small range of popular and proven food dishes such as spare ribs and sweet and sour, the ones that George says "people love and are successful".

He said: "I previously worked in a range of restaurants and takeaways and could see how they operated. Part of one of my jobs involved coming up with ideas, but I found the mindset difficult to change."

"At i-Krave, we believe in a fresh-look takeaway with high-quality food and service. We are transparent in every way and super compliant."



"We also treat our staff well because we believe that happy chefs cook happy food."

George, who was encouraged by friends and family - especially his parents - to follow his dream, says the business has gained a lot of regular customers over the past year.

"Customers say they appreciate our efforts and come back time and time again. Every compliment makes us work harder."

i-Krave started at a time of increasing competition in the fast food takeaway industry.

George added: "It's very worrying that a lot of takeaways are closing down or changing owners, and new delivery companies like Just Eat have disrupted business. Traditional Chinese takeaways, such as those run by a husband and wife, are struggling."

"My vision is that we set the benchmark for other takeaway businesses to improve."

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Birmingham Rep has teamed up with First Class Legacy to raise awareness about youth violence and help young people to stay safe.

# Rep helps to put youth violence centre stage

By Tony Collins

Birmingham Repertory Theatre has been playing a key role in raising awareness about youth violence affecting the streets of Birmingham and elsewhere.

The Rep has been working with youth community engagement organisation First Class Legacy to deliver a summer programme aimed specifically at young people, in conjunction with its own Lightpost Theatre group.

The programme culminated with

Lightpost performing a play called Mally at Ladywood Health Centre which told the moving story of a young man facing a variety of obstacles on his journey to manhood.

Nathan Dennis, director of First Class Legacy, said: "This project aims to positively engage young people to let them know that 'your life matters' as well as helping them to make positive decisions around

how to stay safe in the current climate of youth violence.

"Theatre, drama, role-play, storytelling and peer involvement from Lightpost Theatre have all helped facilitate these sessions."

Mr Dennis said the programme followed the Ladywood Your Life Matters project, which First Class Legacy launched in March this year in partnership with The Rep, supported by Birmingham Youth services and funded by the West

Midlands Police Crime Commissioner.

Then, in May, a young man was fatally shot in Birmingham which led to a candle-lit prayer vigil attended by First Class Legacy's outreach team and staff, who supported more than 80 young people.

Mr Dennis said the summer project had gone well with lots of positive feedback from the young people who attended. He added: "We asked the young people about the emotional benefits of taking part in the project and one young person said 'it's nice to be around people who care for you'."

"We also asked why this project is important and we had lots of perspectives and reflections come through. For example, one young person said 'it keeps people off the streets'."

"Another reflection given by a young person was the project 'gives the youth awareness about youth violence and shows positive decision making'."



The Rep and First Class Legacy hope their work will encourage positive decision-making behaviour.

# Art shows offer an escape from winter

■ Cartography of the Unseen and (bottom right) Deep Into the Darkness, Waiting, both by Meryl McMaster.



■ (From top) Bay Pollution, Looking In and Nomad 1 by local artist John Walker.

By Sharon Dunn

Two major new art exhibitions will help to bring a warm glow to Ikon Gallery visitors this winter.

The contrasting exhibitions will both be on display at the gallery for almost three months between 4 December this year and 23 February, 2020.

Birmingham-born artist John Walker, described as one of the leading abstract painters of the last 50 years, has produced a selection of new work entitled "New Paintings".

At the same time, the Ikon Gallery will also be showcasing "As Immense as the Sky", an exhibition of photographs by Native American Meryl McMaster, a Plains Cree from Saskatchewan in Canada.

John, who studied at the Moseley School of Art and, later, the Birmingham College of Art, went on to achieve international success which saw him divide his time between the UK and New York, as well as several years in Australia.

He now lives in Maine, USA, which was the inspiration for what he calls his collection of "anti-scenic" paintings. He explained: "I can't paint the scenic part. I'm anti-scenic. It took me about ten years before I could paint the place even though I was living there. I found a place where it smells, and all the garbage comes in, and that allowed me to paint because it wasn't scenic."

A spokesman for Ikon Gallery said: "John left Birmingham more than 50 years ago to explore new

landscapes, literally and artistically, and it is a privilege to have him back with us for a long-awaited homecoming."

Meryl, who comes from a rising generation of indigenous artists in Canada, has captured images across various Canadian provinces, including ancient sites and early settlements, with the aim of acknowledging the effects of colonisation.

She has also interpreted stories collected from relatives, friends, and community elders.

She said: "I want to bring specific awareness to the broad consequences of colonisation and how the mentality of greed and/or lack of foresight is still impacting us today."

Selected works from her 2017 series "Edge of a Moment" are also presented at Ikon, which nods towards the wider environmental consequences of colonisation.



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# Banging the drum for Broad St on local TV

By Tony Collins

Westside BID has been extolling the virtues of Broad Street in a special video on the attractions that the entertainment zone has to offer.

The two-minute screening, entitled Visit Broad Street 2019, was featured on the West Midlands Live programme, broadcast by local satellite channel Birmingham TV.

It was fronted by Westside BID chairman Dipesh Mistry who spoke about the "energy" and "buzz" of the Broad Street area.

The video was supported by Midlands Metro Alliance as a way of demonstrating that Broad Street remains open for "business as usual" despite disruption from the ongoing Metro extension work.

Dipesh told the TV audience that his responsibility was to ensure that the Westside BID board focused on making the area a "brighter, cleaner, safer place for people who visit and live in Westside".

He said there was "always an energy and buzz" along the street during an evening down Broad Street, and that there is "always something going on ... a great mix of people visiting the area, and a real buzz".

Dipesh said: "What makes Broad Street a really popular destination is that, first of all, there is a lot of history in terms of some of the venues. One of the venues we've had here for over 100 years."

Dipesh described how people frequently used Broad Street as a location to celebrate special occasions, such as a significant birthday,



■ Dipesh Mistry praises Broad Street's attractions on Birmingham TV.

a wedding party, or a special family occasion.

"We've got more than 40 restaurants or cafes to eat at and we've also got over 30 bars that are here to suit everyone's pockets."

The video also featured Matt Sharp from O Bar on Broad Street who said every bar imaginable could be found on the road.

He said: "It's a mile long, full of bars, clubs and restaurants. The beauty about Broad Street is that it's all in one area, so you don't

necessarily have to go 'taxi here, taxi there'.

"You can start from the bottom end of the street and work your way up."

"Broad Street has got it all, it's got it for everybody. To put it simply, it's perfect for the best night out."

The video can be seen at <https://vimeo.com/362258716> and on Birmingham TV on Freeview channel 7, Sky Guide 117, and Virgin Media 159.



# Spreading the word at Brummies Networking

By Luisa Huggins



■ Networking organisers Richard Heathcote (left) and Iwan Thomas.

Westside BID members have been invited to attend free monthly business networking events that already regularly attract up to 100 people.

Brummies Networking meets from 10am to 12 noon on the second Tuesday of every month at Grosvenor Casino at Fiveways Leisure Complex on Broad Street, organised by Richard Heathcote and Iwan Thomas.

Richard, who founded the group, said: "Business networking is a vital element in any company's awareness-generating strategy, but not everyone wants to take the risk on events that command fees or costly annual memberships. That's why

Brummies Networking offers free monthly events with zero meeting fees and zero annual membership fees.

"Our events are already attracting 70 to 100 people and everyone attending can be guaranteed a lively event in an informal, friendly atmosphere. There are no 60-second slots and no meeting formats, allowing for pure and open networking throughout."

"It's business networking: stripped back. Simply filled with lots of great people and businesses to connect and develop relationships with."

Richard added: "We have a diverse member base, ranging from small businesses right through to large and multinationals."

"There'll always be someone useful to meet and talk to." Mike Olley, general manager of Westside BID, said: "Brummies Networking is a great monthly event that can really help our members to make more people aware of their products and services."

For more information on Brummies Networking visit <https://brummies-networking.co.uk/faqs/>, follow @brummiesnet and subscribe to the podcast @brumpod.



■ Upcoming musical highlights include Smethwick's Chickenbone John (left), and performances by The Nitecrawlers (above) and the Mark Harrison Band (below).



# Dreaming of a Blues Christmas in Westside

By Tony Collins

A famous live Blues music nightclub brand is getting ready to celebrate Christmas for the first time in nearly 50 years.

Henry's Blueshouse was home to music legends such as Led Zeppelin, Status Quo, Thin Lizzy, Rory Gallagher and Birmingham's own Black Sabbath when it first opened at The Crown in Station Street in 1968.

It closed less than three years later, but Henry's is now back and has an array of top performers lined up to delight fans in the run-up to the festive season.

Henry's Blueshouse nights, organised by Big Bear Records, are now held every Tuesday at The Bulls Head on Bishopsgate Street, off Broad Street.

Forthcoming shows include Kent DuChaine from Minnesota, one of



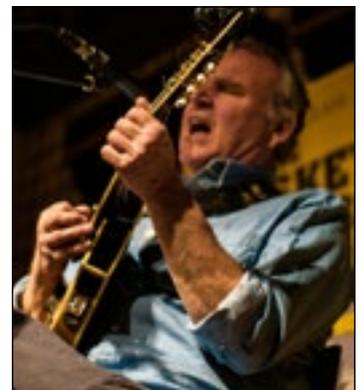
■ Kent DuChaine from Minnesota (left) and The Whiskey Brothers will be delighting fans of the Blues.

the world's most respected acoustic guitar players, and Chickenbone John from Smethwick, famed for making cigar-box guitars.

Each performance includes a regular Blues Talkin' slot when a Blues musician or personality talks

about their roots and what the Blues means to them.

Jim Simpson, managing director of Big Bear Records, said: "Despite all this mass merchandising of bands today, the Blues can still attract a sold out audience every



Tuesday, which we're sure will continue in the run-up to Christmas."

Jim explained that Henry's Blueshouse took its name from a "particularly handsome" Afghan Hound belonging to a neighbour. It closed in 1970 when the fledgling Black Sabbath of Ozzy Osbourne and Tony Iommi fame went on tour with Jim as manager.

Explaining why he decided to revive Henry's earlier this year, Jim added: "We've been working in the Blues all those years and it has never gone away. We put Blues on during the Birmingham Jazz Festival, which is always popular, and there are a lot of good bands around."

Check out Henry's Blueshouse listings at [www.bigbearmusic.com/henrys-blueshouse/](http://www.bigbearmusic.com/henrys-blueshouse/)



■ Henry's Blueshouse will host performances by Arthur Ebeling (left) and Will Killeen in coming weeks.

**Do you have a story for Westside World? If you have something to tell us about, or if you would like us to highlight the work of your business in our winter edition, please contact [info@westsidebid.co.uk](mailto:info@westsidebid.co.uk)**